# Transcript: In-01-F

[0:00:00]

**Interviewer:** Hello. Nice to see you

**Respondent:** Hi, nice to see you too. Let me just fetch my glasses. I put them somewhere here….Oh, I’ve found them. Good. Alright, how’s your day going so far?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah not too bad. What about yours?

**Respondent:** Oh, it’s good I just had a coffee so I’m all energised and ready.

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much for finding time today to speak to me. I really appreciate it.

**Respondent:** Ok, you’re welcome. I mean…I’ve just finished my PhD so I kind of know how hard it is to collect data.

**Interviewer:** Yes, it definitely is. I’ve found it the hardest part so far.

**Respondent:** Yeah, yeah so I was like ‘Oh, I can find an hour or two to help’ so its fine.

**Interviewer:** Oh thank you. Yeah, so it will approximately last around an hour-

**Respondent:**  Ok

**Interviewer:** Its very much semi-structured so I will give you plenty of time to talk and expand on things as you want. I have some questions to ask as well. I’ve got a recorder so recording it if that’s alright?

**Respondent:** Alright, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And yeah, I’ll just potentially write some notes down as you’re speaking just for things to kind of catch up on and er to ask you about erm at later points if that’s ok?

**Respondent:** Oh, ok. Sure

**Interviewer:** Great! So-

**Respondent:** Just do what you have to do.

**Interviewer:** -[laughs] so is there any questions you have before we get started?

**Respondent:** Er, well no. Nothing specifically. So yeah, I like vaguely remember what I filled out before for the questionnaire but yeah, I’m open to answer all possible questions you might have.

**Interviewer:** Ok, great. Right so, the first bit is I would like to know about how music relates to your identity. So I won’t interrupt you. I will just listen and take some notes to follow up on.

**Respondent:** Ok

**Interviewer:** So how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

**Respondent:** Mhmm. Well, the first thing is that...well my mum enrolled me in music school so music is something I know maybe a bit more than the usual listener. So I used to play the piano and for me it was not something that was my original passion but I really enjoy singing. Then, for my personal identity I really adjust to music tastes of my friends, which is quite interesting because whenever I switch between groups of friends I usually adjust to whatever music they listen to. So I have a pretty wide range of music interests because yeah I always find something I like in whichever genre I run in to. Basically, my sister is very influential. She plays music loud. She would probably be like kind of a pop/rock person…so I would say that the music I enjoy…yeah rock music, some indie and erm.. considering identity, I well I am not a person who would say ‘Oh, this is like my absolute favourite artist, composer or genre’ because I really like to widen my tastes and explore music. I really enjoy finding out what others listen to and yeah maybe trying to find something which we both know. Yeah I don’t…identify myself with like a particular listener of one particular genre or something. Also, my family they’re like into all different music. So, my uncle plays bluegrass and it’s something er that I might not particularly like but its still entertaining. I can see why he likes it. And yeah. I don’t know if you have some additional questions.

**Interviewer:** That’s great. Ok, so when you say then that your music tastes are very much influenced by your friendship groups could you give me an example of how your music how your friendship groups have changed your tastes?

**Respondent:** Ah, yeah. So…when I started university much of the local bands that were kind of available for like going to concerts with my friends were, I would say, rather punk/rock bands and that’s something I might not have listened to before. So, I think that’s probably the the biggest kind of shift and influence my friends had but also kind of the local environment because that was accessible. Then I also lived in the U.S for a while and also there rather than well then I had I was in a friend group which were mostly Southern Americans so then reggatone was a big influence so then I kind of learnt some of those songs. But the local music would also be something which is between rock and country music let’s say and that’s something that I enjoy more personally for an example. So yeah, those. My sister particularly enjoys exploring Christian rock and metal bands because she likes to er respect like the Christian kind of background we have. She likes a bit of the kind of melodic metal groups or rock bands rather than something which is kind of usual gospel music which she doesn’t really enjoy that much.

**Interviewer:** Mhmm. So when so when you’re with your friends would you say that you listen to their music?

**Respondent:** Well yeah. So because, well I’m Serbian. How we spend time is often at smaller house parties rather than going out. If I was going out clearly a big influence would be ex-Yugoslavian rock music or some popular pop music. Also,we have big influences of kind of well they kind of call it Balkan music but its kind of the gypsy melodies that are going through our our traditional kind of usual music. But er considering that my friends are a bit alternative because we are biologists, ecologists and we tend to be in herds or groups together, I would say that I was under a lot of influence of quite good quality like punk/rock music and rap music because that’s something that most of my friends would enjoy.

**Interviewer:** And then, what-

**Respondent:** I think yeah what’s important is that there’s a lot of good lyric writers in these genres like really especially like Serbian rap music so that’s something I can appreciate from kind of that point of view.

**Interviewer:** And then what about when you spend time without your friends, so like in your own private, personal time what…would you still listen to the tastes of your friends or would you listen to something different?

**Respondent:** So I would try to remember some of the artists which I might like. So when I’m listening to music that somebody else is playing if I like something I would ask ‘Who’s the artist?’ and probably look them up. So then I would sometimes listen to that music even in my personal time. But, for an example, I think I’m mostly influenced by the usual American pop and rock. I think I listen to way more American pop than anybody else in my friend circle and that’s kind of something which you can hear everywhere and I move around a lot so I would say its just something I am exposed to the most.

**Interviewer:** So do you feel then that music is an important part of your identity?

**Respondent:** Well…I find music really important as in background noise for work [laughs]. So I would say, er identity-wise I really like to look up lyrics I can identify with so in in that sense, yes I always do appreciate good lyrics or more than just like catchy tune or whatever. I would say that yeah I kind of, if I have time, I like to play music which I find, well its that’s kind of hard these days but, decent [laughs]. Yeah, decent. So its not just about swearing or cheating or whatever but something that has a bit of a deeper meaning. There’s a few of those bands which are popular these days too.

**Interviewer:** So, do you have any kind of music then that you really dislike?

**Respondent:** I really dislike the popular Serbian music I would say because er that’s something which when I’m going out you can hear in most of the clubs and I really dislike it. I think that’s the most off-putting music [laughs]. It’s pretty shallow. The lyrics are awful and erm yeah that’s something which truly just makes me roll my eyes and wonder why I am there at all.

**Interviewer:** You keep coming back to the idea of lyrics being important to you but then also the fact that you use music for like background noise-

**Respondent:** Ah-ha, yeah.

**Interviewer:**  -So, do you still choose to listen to lyrical music, erm music where lyrics are important, even when you’re working? And it is just background noise or is it for really in-depth listening experiences?

**Respondent:** Ah ok. Yeah, I do make the difference because usually I like to choose some either upbeat tunes or some that I just really like for some personal reasons to have as music when I’m doing something around the house, taking a shower or when I’m active or waking up. But when I work, I rather listen to movie soundtracks, game soundtracks or just classical music in general. I really like to have any music which is made for a symphonic orchestra to be in the background when I work because its less distracting.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so do you feel that there is a particular time or particular event that you’ve used music to express who you are either to your friends or family?

**Respondent:** Well, hmm. I don’t know. Well in my...yeah within family not really. We don’t have the habit of sharing music that much but I have some friends who are er deeply interested in some kinds of music. We like kind of introducing each other to new artists or songs. So yeah, with some of my friends we share music and do it like each one plays a song that the other one probably doesn’t know.

**Interviewer:** And and do you take into account what they might like when you’re introducing this music or is it just purely ‘this is what I like and I want you to listen to it’?

**Respondent:** So, the last time I recall doing this it was kind of mixed. We would do either pick a song from a genre or it if there is something…so an artist we both like but choose different songs which we like most or it would be specifically something which is aimed at discovery like ‘Oh, you probably haven’t heard of about this’. For example, if it is somebody who was a foreigner I might also try to play something which is in Serbian er just for them to hear the type of music we have and try to translate a bit. Its erm kind of funny lyrics type of thing so they can actually understand what the song is about. So, I find also those kind of things interesting. I don’t know. When I was in the US the big thing was Despacito so everyone was listening for that and then my friends were like ‘Oh, but do you know what the lyrics mean?’ so then then they actually taught me what the lyrics were so yeah, the song is really not that good [laughs].

**Interviewer:** [laughs]

**Respondent:** I didn’t like it to start with but then I disliked it even more [laughs]. I mean they did really force that onto us last summer. It was too much.

**Interviewer:** [laughs] So how does this music translate to your Spotify listening? Do you have all these songs stored on your Spotify library or do you just have a selection of them?

**Respondent:** Mhmm. Well I started using Spotify…so I used to live in in Serbia until recently and then I started to study abroad. So in Serbia Spotify is not er supported-

**Interviewer:** Oh ok.

**Respondent:** -so we use Deezer instead and I don’t like it. But then I had Spotify because in each country I am in I have to sign up with the country I’m in at the moment so I’ve used the Italian, the U.S and the Dutch one so the three different types. What I dislike is that even though I am in those countries as a foreigner what intrudes my lists somehow when I’m choosing playlists is the national some national music which I might not understand. So, I might not understand the lyrics-that was the case with Italian music [laughs]-but at least they make a bunch of good music so it was fine. Then what I would do is, yeah so yeah, I was using Spotify actually connected through Shazam so whenever I would hear a song I like I would look it up with Shazam and save it to yeah then Spotify was connected so it was a good way to discover music. And then, yeah, I would sometimes find either like an artist or a song that I like. I have like kind of like a *[playlist name]* which is mostly fun songs that I save for my own playlist so I have just one playlist and I dump everything in. So I save things like artist or songs I save them in the library for kind of having them to look…for making it easier to look it up later. My favourite songs I save in this one playlist so I can play it for myself and that’s kind of my favourites list.

**Interviewer**: As you are obviously changing Spotify in each country, were you er were you adding the same songs…did you have to re-add all the songs to your music library?

**Respondent:** Erm no. Everything remains saved-

**Interviewer:** Oh, ok.

**Respondent:** -So all the music is accessible everywhere but the playlists which are featured are usually country specific. So, for example, even the though the names of the playlists are kind of similar so it would be like ‘Happy’ or ‘Coffee House’ or something like that the music would often in the playlist be mixed. Most of it would be in English but some of it so the last one was Dutch so I don’t know like any Dutch. When a song would come up and I’m not having premium and I cannot skip too many songs I would be very frustrated [laughs]. But yeah in any case yeah nothing is lost so everything is tied to my account-that’s something which I like that wherever Spotify is supported my library stays with me.

**Interviewer:** Ah ok. So do you feel that Spotify then reflects your musical identity?

**Respondent:** Yeah, I think that well if somebody looked at my library certainly there might be things they could conclude from some of the artists I’m following. But I think its still a pretty diverse and it would be hard to kind of make any conclusions about my identity just based on viewing my my what I like and what I have saved in the library.

**Interviewer:** Since using the platform do you feel that your erm musical identity has become more diverse or more fixed?

**Respondent:** I would say more diverse because I was mostly listening to music on YouTube before. I think YouTube creates more of a bubble because the suggestions or playlists it it er as you play they’re yeah they more kind of make uniform paths so I think it really limits you to certain genres you listen to already. So, I think with Spotify its more easy to discover new music because you can really browse anybody’s public playlists. You can browse based on the mood and that’s something I like too. So, for an example I myself not discovered too much kind of chill music, something for like a chill afternoon, but when I use Spotify that kind of music is more accessible and I can find very nice playlists which I enjoy.

**Interviewer:** So, do you have connected friends on your Spotify account?

**Respondent:** Maybe a few but I don’t really use that feature.

**Interviewer:** Oh, ok. So, although your friends outside of Spotify potentially influence what you listen to, would you say that your connected friends on Spotify influence what you listen to on Spotify?

**Respondent:** Yeah, I would not say so because most of my close friends are in Serbia where Spotify is not supported. I don’t actually have that many friends who actively use Spotify so that’s kind of a limitation here. The friends I have they usually don’t make their own playlists and I can’t access their libraries because they are kind of in a personal space not in a public space. So, I think the primary way we exchange music is when we are in a common space and somebody plays from a computer or something and then we all kind of suggest and choose the music together.

**Interviewer:** Ok

**Respondent:** Yeah, more like in a kind of small group meeting, dinner or something where we would kind of commonly together decide what to play, what to listen to.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So I would like, if I can, to understand a bit more about your music streaming practices on Spotify and how you might choose to stream music online throughout the week. It’s about your everyday streaming practices, so about the music you tend to listen to, how you choose that music and potentially the service features that you use when on Spotify. So, how do you use Spotify to listen to music and what types of music do you listen to through it?

**Respondent:** Well...erm when I play music for myself I usually choose for the mornings, if I am alone and can play music loud out-loud, I would choose like road trip music or kind of a happy playlist or something which is easy to wake up to. Then there is also either like soundtrack music or kind of coffee house music, which is good for me as background music when I work in the afternoon. And when I play music with others around I would probably most likely either try to choose a genre or a mood which is suitable or play my own playlist. So, whenever somebody says ‘Oh, play something like in the background’ I would probably start off with my own playlist if people like it, because that’s something I know I enjoy, but yeah or just choose an available playlist already. I’m not too much into making too many of my own playlists er because I’m lazy [laughs] and I can’t commit to it enough. Also, just the playlists I find available they’re yeah pretty good for what I need. They just do the job.

**Interviewer:** And where do these playlists come from? Do they come from your friends or from Spotify itself or er the public playlists on Spotify?

**Respondent:** Yeah so they’re the public playlists and usually I find what I want in the like browse/overview part. Then if I look through it and there’s nothing interesting then I go to the genres and moods part so then I choose something which is suitable for a specific moment. And then let me see…I think sometimes when I want to discover new music I try the discover mode but I found that very often the discover features are pretty recent music, like recent releases, and very often I just don’t like them. They’re very much influenced by the country I’m in and also a lot of it is some rap or trap music or pop music which yeah I really cant relate to. So they are too many songs in those kind of playlists that I just dislike. So, I like to choose a playlist I kind of know I will like so I don’t have to skip songs all the time.

**Interviewer.** You’ve said that Spotify isn’t available in Serbia so is there a reason that you chose to listen to music through Spotify when you were in other countries as opposed to, I don’t know like say, Last.fm or Apple Music?

**Respondent:** Yeah, well I don’t know how I got Spotify specifically. I think it was just most accessible and erm well I just didn’t try out Last.fm maybe because there’s not too many people in my surroundings who were using it. I think just the popularity of Spotify kind of makes it the first suggestion to try out and what I like about it is that even when there is new releases they’re added pretty quickly. So, I’ve mentioned Deezer as the kind of app people usually use in Serbia but erm I really don’t like their interface. I don’t like their playlists so there’s a lot of…it’s really hard to find related music and playlists based on mood so it requires much more personal effort to actually kind of reach the stage of having likeable music readily available for you. I did not try out Last.fm or Pandora so I heard about them but actually really I tried out only Spotify and it just fit my needs so I didn’t search further.

**Interviewer:** Mhmm. So, do you feel then for you Spotify requires less effort to kind of get music that you like?

**Respondent:** Yeah, I think it’s the easiest. I mean probably I can’t say much as I didn’t compare it to other services but I find that its super easy to find likeable music. I think the names of the playlists are pretty intuitive, that the genre and moods really have fitting playlists and enough categories for them to be specific enough to actually find what you want. I really like how little effort I need to put in to finding music I like. If I would be playing music on the radio probably finding a radio playing some 80s/90s music would be something which a lot of people find kind of well-known or relatable or something which is more neutral than very specific to a genre so I think that would be easy. But whenever it comes to a radio which plays something which is specific to yeah either music of a nation or some more local music it would be much harder to find something I like. So, for an example when I’m abroad when I was in Holland or Italy and didn’t speak their languages that fluently yet I just, for an example, couldn’t listen to radio because I could not understand any of their lyrics and then I can’t fully enjoy the music because, for me, it makes sense to listen to music only if I understand the lyrics or, if its just instrumental, then its fine.

**Interviewer:** You’ve talked as well about how you don’t like using the discover feature on Spotify because you feel its mainly national music that you perhaps don’t like. Are there any other service features that you chose to use when you’re on Spotify other than the discover?

**Respondent:** Yeah, so I usually try the charts or charts new releases and discover. I tried all three of them. So discover, as much as I understand, is a bit more tailored to the person’s taste, based on library, so that might be a bit better. Sometimes when I really want to discover newer music I try the top charts list or the new releases and I think that’s more related to what I said earlier then that a lot of the music is in some popular genres or in a language which I don’t know so then probably that’s when I have a harder time finding what I like.

**Interviewer:** Have you ever used the for example the Radio feature on Spotify or the Daily Mixes or anything like that?

**Respondent:** Oh, actually I use the 80s radio because yeah that’s er kind of the music that I can enjoy and also some of my other friends like so I think their 80s radio is really good [laughs]. I think that’s kind of something really everybody can enjoy so yeah it’s pretty nice music [laughs].

**Interviewer:** So, what is it about the 80s music then that you like?

**Respondent:** Well, I actually…hmm I don’t know. I like that how many songs I actually can recognise because I can recognise probably most songs from the 80s because I was born in 1990 exactly. So, I know the 90s music but I would say I don’t like it as much as the 80s music. I think the 90s music is a bit more pop and a bit more soft than the 80s music. Maybe a bit less diverse. Erm so yeah, for those reasons. Also, just when I need to play something I would probably first go with something most people like so 80s really works for most people [laughs].

**Interviewer:** When you go onto Spotify do you always know what you want to listen to is it or do you have to actively search or how does that work?

**Respondent:** Well, I usually don’t spend much time searching. Usually, when I turn on Spotify most of the time its for just having some either morning or like work-time music and I choose a playlist pretty quickly and yeah if I don’t like it I just switch it. For me the best thing about Spotify is that I don’t have to spend a lot of time searching so I really don’t search a lot [laughs]. I’m not super picky but yeah erm I’d say I very rarely sit down and actively l search and discover because yeah also because I’m not paying for the premium version right now because I’m also going to lose my Spotify privileges, probably tomorrow. But erm because I can’t skip too many songs for me it’s important that I choose a good playlist where I don’t have to skip too much. So also its much harder to explore when you don’t have a premium page because its erm yeah harder. I think it is even impossible to open up some playlists. You have to play them on shuffle because there is no other option. Also, when I’m looking up a particular song usually it opens a playlists with like that song and remixes and I find that annoying so even though using Spotify for free is already a great experience because of the existing good playlists I think it really pays off to use premium because it’s not that expensive. Also, there is like a family version which is even cheaper so erm yeah I think it can be a bit limiting in the sense of exploring when you don’t have a premium account.

**Interviewer:** So you talk about when you select music for waking up to or music for work that you pick playlists. Do you always pick playlists or do you sometimes select individual songs?

**Respondent:** I usually choose playlists. For an example, what’s the name of the song? There is...‘Walking on Sunshine’. That’s like my top waking up song [laughs] but other than that I like to make it a bit more diverse. There’s a lot of erm like happy...I look it up by keyword so it’s like either ‘happy’ or ‘wake-up’ kind of music so I choose just a whole playlist and that way I’ll also discover new music so its kind of interesting. Usually, they are really happy and upbeat so I like that and otherwise my personal playlist mostly consists of upbeat songs so its some that I really can sing along to erm so that’s something which is always a bonus like ‘Oh, I know this one and I can sing it’ [laughs].

**Interviewer:** [laughs] Do you have any other particular styles or playlists that you listen to at any other times of the day or for any other events? You’ve talked about waking up and obviously working but is there any other music that you tend to listen to at other specific times?

**Respondent:** Maybe sometimes in the evening I would listen to something so yeah kind of the keyword would be chill, chill music. Chill or coffee house music that would be something for the evening. And actually for work music I would most often try to look up movie soundtracks and that’s something I enjoy most. Sometimes it would be a specific movie soundtrack. For example, ‘Interstellar’ is something which I really like but also I do like to find a playlist that I’m not very familiar with because that makes the music less distracting. It makes the music more diverse and for working, certainly, I would rather go for something I’m not super familiar with while for wake-up music I would go with something which I’m super familiar with because of like the sing-along bonus [laughs].

**Interviewer:** Do you tend to have your Spotify set to public or private?

**Respondent:** I’m not even sure…I think that my playlist, the only playlist I have, is set to public but I’m not sure about library. Erm I really don’t mind it either way.

**Interviewer:** So you wouldn’t consciously make a decision whether to make it public or private for a particular reason?

**Respondent:** Yeah, yeah so whether it was fixed whether it’s public or private I wouldn’t mind. I really probably like to share my library with some people if I needed to but I think also it makes more sense to share a specific artist or playlists or it really doesn’t matter. So, I don’t think that’s its an invasion of my privacy if my yeah if what I liked was public. Erm, but yeah I don’t mind it either way.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So you say that you add a lot of music to your music library through Shazam. How often would you say that you actually add songs to your music library?

**Respondent:** It depends on the period. I think erm yeah the last time I added for example a lot of songs I was with friend in a bar having a coffee and I think just whoever was playing the music right then was one of my favourite DJs [laughs]. I was just putting all the songs through Shazam and I was like ‘Oh, this is just like a really good good playlist’ because there was somebody playing the music so he had a pretty good taste. It was mostly 80s music [laughs]. I guess he had an easy job. Anyway erm sometimes I add a few if I’m at friends and I like their music taste it would be more songs at a time and sometimes for a whole for like a month or two I would just not do it at all. Also, when now when I’m at home…so when I’m out of a country where Spotify is not available I can use it for only fifteen days so now when I’m out of erm the Netherlands, where I was using it last time, it will disconnect through Shazam too so I can’t even add playlists. My whole Spotify account becomes unavailable for me when I’m in my home country and that’s something I’m kind of angry for because I would really like if they fixed this problem with the support. If the account was available everywhere especially for I mean probably there are users who also pay for premium and I would understand it even if they went for a vacation which is longer than fifteen days they would really like to have their account available.

**Interviewer**: Do you ever delete anything then from your music library?

**Respondent:** I don’t think so. I’m kind of a person who never revisits anything I kind of save, download or whatever so I don’t de-clutter [laughs]. That’s kind of not my thing but I er from my personal playlist there are some songs that I don’t like that much after some time and I remove them from my kind of favourites playlist.

**Interviewer:** So, am I right in thinking that you said that you’ve only got one playlist on Spotify and that’s *[playlist name]*?

**Respondent:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** How did this get started?

**Respondent:** Well, I really wanted to have a playlist where I would really know and like all of the songs that are in it and I really wanted it to kind of be er upbeat. I had a hard time finding upbeat music where I would like everything. I think it’s a bit easier so that would be music that I would most actively listen to, probably that’s the music where I most pay attention to the lyrics the most. I think that’s why its hardest to find a playlist which would like match er my erm tastes the most. I think that was kind of why I had the need to collect these songs in a personal playlist. When I’m listening to anything where I’m a bit more absent or working or focusing on something else then I really don’t mind what’s going on in the background. Its music which I kind of can appreciate in terms of setting the mood or being there in the background but, as I said, its not music I would explore myself to create my own playlists. Its just I really like that the music is kind of bland [laughs] and the songs are similar and not distracting so its kind of yeah good to have some music in the background but I really yeah don’t pay that much attention to it.

**Interviewer:** So *[playlist name]* then would be you would play it when you really wanted to focus on the music?

**Respondent:** Yeah, so that would be when I really have free time for example. Also, sometimes when I exercise I can play that or in the morning or in the shower. I’m a singing in the shower kind of person so that’s the perfect playlist. Erm or when I have friends over and they’re like ‘Oh, just play something’ so then they would not mind the music. I would not really yeah my focus could be shifting and it would be more of a social event so then it would not be that much of a distraction. It would still be music that I actually like.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And what kind of songs have you got on there?

**Respondent:** I would say most songs on there would be some yeah originating from er America and being like pop songs. Also, I added some songs which are from like very different genres but which I particularly like. So I would say that a lot of them are really just one song by one artist that was popular for some reason or like I heard it somewhere or somebody else liked it and kind of its contagious so I liked it too. I would say that it’s a very diverse playlist but there’s a lot of erm yeah like American pop and rock music. Also, probably a lot of Ed Sheeran songs I would say [laughs]. He is kind of a favourite [laughs].

**Interviewer:** I see. Is there a reason then that you’ve never decided to make another playlist? That you’ve just kept all your music in one playlist?

**Respondent:** Yeah, I think I didn’t have a need for separate playlist because for all my other needs I have er really good public playlists available. Also, I’m very lazy so even if the playlist is pretty diverse I really don’t care [laughs] so its just lump it all together and that’s it. I don’t like to…so this is something I just really didn’t invest a lot of time in it so I really enjoy listening to music but like not investing a lot of time in er the discovery so.

**Interviewer:** Ok so moving on to your music discovery. Would you say that you like to discover new music? Are you a person that enjoys finding new music?

**Respondent**: So, yeah I would say that because I was not exposed to a lot of music growing up, when I started having like larger groups of friends, meeting up with them, I kind of missed that because there was nothing in particular that I could say I liked or something I could recommend. So, then I think there was a pretty big discovery er kind of going on like high school, university days for me and then I think also growing up my taste is probably shifting more towards some, I don’t know, pop, country music even something which is more slow let’s say as well. Indie music as well...so yeah, that’s a kind of huge influence lately. But then I think in those cases where I want to kind of shift or broaden my musical interests that’s where Spotify comes in because erm I’m not I might not be familiar with how some genres are called or what are like the main, most famous artists but I can find a playlist based on a mood and then find a bunch of music I actually like so I think that’s what makes it kind of easy. I don’t have to know artists’ names or genre names, I can just go in and like look up music by mood and then find a lot of things I like.

**Interviewer:** So would you say Spotify er your discovery of new music mainly comes from Spotify or elsewhere?

**Respondent:** I think lately it was mostly Spotify because erm yeah I did a PhD so you know how it is its pretty isolating [laughs]. So yeah the problem was that I was in an office with other people so it was noisy and I needed music to cancel out the noise. And then it was so it was really hard to find enough music that is instrumental that I don’t know well enough so er it doesn’t distract me. I would say the most music that I have in my life or right now I discovered er yeah through Spotify. The most songs which I have saved in the Spotify library are from Spotify. Then, I do have some music on my computer and then that’s more influenced by my friends.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So is there then specific service features that helps you to discover new music on Spotify?

**Respondent:** I would say that like the top line like the er I think it’s the hmm...that like the overview section or whatever is the top line of the browse section I usually scroll through that and pretty much I find a playlist which I think I will like. Most of the time I would pick like summer playlist, upbeat playlist or a road trip playlist because I know that there are enough songs which are happy, kind of sing-a-long songs, that I can discover. When I need a chill time I would just choose like coffee house, chill soundtracks so yeah that’s kind of the two opposites I would go for.

**Interviewer:** Mhmm. So, do you have an example of like a particular song or artist that you’ve discovered specifically through Spotify?

**Respondent:** Hmm let me think…erm probably there are some so I rather discover songs than artists because I just yeah I just play a playlist and sometimes I will just add that one song to my favourites and not look further. So I think when I go to my library I have way more songs listed out than the different artists. So very rarely do I know the artist enough to say ‘Oh, I like this artist now’.

**Interviewer:** And when you discover new music do you prefer something that is kind of the same as your current tastes or do you like to discover something different?

**Respondent:** Well hmm…I think when I want to discover something different I would rather go to my friends who listen to different music because if its music which I’m less familiar with I think I can appreciate it more when somebody else is already kind of emotionally connected to it and identifies with it. I would say when some of my friends when I know that they like some particular music that I’m not familiar with I would ask for recommendations from a friend while for Spotify I actually listen mostly to music erm I already like. I don’t think I discover yeah that that widely. Still, it does widen my knowledge of music I already kinds of music I already like but I don’t think it helps me go broader than that.

**Interviewer:** Ok and do you think that is because of how you personally use it or how Spotify presents the music to you?

**Respondent:** Well, I think it’s a mix of both. For one, I’m choosing playlists pretty fast and I’m pretty yeah narrow in my choices so I would say that’s one part of it. And I think that the music which kind of pops up in the top playlists is usually pretty recent and there’s a lot of, I would say, in general pop and rock which is er very widely liked and available. So, I think there is a bit of a bias in generally what’s presented but I would not say that its user specific bias, as in creating a bubble, but more a popularity-based bias so like an over overall global popularity of some music.

**Interviewer:** Mhmm. I just want to quickly go back to something that you’ve said earlier that in as you’ve been growing up you’ve kind of enjoyed more of the pop/country/Indie music and music that is more slow. Why do you think that is?

**Respondent:** Well I think that before the setting in which I would listen to music would mostly be social and I think most people enjoy more either upbeat or more hard music, as in rock for an example, or really there is a lot of punk bands which are quite good er in the like local area so that would be much different from what I would explore and like kind of growing up. So, I don’t know. Maybe I wanted to kind of have a more exquisite taste in music so I was like ‘Oh, I want to discover something which is more chill’ erm yeah partially [laughs]. But also kind of yeah just a widening of the taste and exposure to the music. I actually really like some of the Italian music I was exposed to, especially because there was a particular influence from friends because they were like ‘Oh, we are going to an Italian rap concert are you going?’ and I was like ‘Sure, I am’. So yeah now I know most of the songs of that guy because I think he is yeah really clever with his lyrics. So yeah, there’s yeah different influences erm and I really don’t explore that much on my own. If there is something that I really which really like catches my ear well in a new playlist then yes. But I would say like a really good artist I’ve discovered would be Maggie Rogers and I actually discovered her because a video popped up when one of the other like famous musicians heard her song for the first time and he started crying so it was like a viral video of her music being introduced to somebody else and being so emotional. So, I think she is really good and she is kind of doing a mix of country/electronic...that’s what kind of she said but I would not, I don’t know. It’s kind of chill but also kind of melodic music which I really like.

**Interviewer:** And do you listen to this slower music at particular times?

**Respondent:** Hmmm yeah I would say that that’s something which now I might actually add to my favourites playlist if I like it enough, even though it is mostly upbeat. I don’t mind when I’m playing it on shuffle its kind of ok if its mixed. But I don’t know erm…sometimes yeah when I have free time, even if its not long a lot of time, like I’m getting ready to go somewhere I do prefer coming back to some music which I recently discovered. I do like kind of remembering the names of either artists or playlists and kind of like yeah reinforcing whatever I liked recently.

**Interviewer:** I’d like to would now about whether you think Spotify reflects like your Spotify library and the music in there reflects who you are? Do you feel that Spotify allows you to construct and manage your musical tastes?

**Respondent:**  Erm well, yeah I think so because both what I can save in my library and in playlists is really kind of easy to manage and I would say that even having multiple playlists is pretty easy because its so easy to add songs whenever you kind of bump into one that you like to save it in one of your playlists. So, I think it’s what makes Spotify really good is how easy it is to manage your playlists and your library because yeah with just one click you like or unlike an artist, a song, add it to the playlist or remove it from the playlist. So, I think the user interface is just really friendly and that’s kind of a plus.

**Interviewer:** So do you feel that the user interface influences any of your music choices at all?

**Respondent**: I would not say so. I think my choices really mostly depend on my mood because that’s the keyword by which I search. But I really dislike that erm I can find playlists which I like in general but that I cannot kind of block a song. There are certain songs which I find highly irritating and if it comes up in a playlist I might like totally not revisit that playlist at all er so that that’s something which I find is missing and I see that a lot of people were complaining about this but it seems like a feature which might be hard to add. There are certainly artists and songs which I wouldtotally not want to hear ever again and just, I don’t know, block them from my account so they never play [laughs].

**Interviewer:** What kind of artists are you talking about? Which ones would you block?

**Respondent:** Oh, the one music that really irritates me is trap music. I really really dislike trap. I find some of the rap artists like clever or talented but I think trap is just a very lame version of rap and I just can’t stand it [laughs].

**Interviewer:** So you would go for blocking a whole genre? [laughs]

**Respondent:** [laughs] Yes, yes. If I can I would just block it altogether because I’m not going to discover anything good there [laughs]. I’m really open to all the other genres but like this one I would totally block altogether [laughs].

**Interviewer:** Ah, ok. Do you feel like then the music on Spotify that you’ve saved is a good reflection of who you are?

**Respondent:** Erm the one on my favourites playlist yes but I think sometimes erm I save whole artists just because somebody said ‘Oh, well they’ or I just find one song and I never listen to even a whole album but I like an artist. So I would say that the songs do reflect me, like in the library the songs or even on my playlist either, they do reflect my personality way more than the artists I’ve liked. I think it is more rare that I like an artist but sometimes I just like them to just have them saved in the library to maybe revisit once but I never do it so yeah.

**Interviewer:** Oh ok. And obviously there is a lot going on at the minute about how these kinds of platforms collect data about us, how do you feel about Spotify kind of seeing what you listen to? Does that in does that influence your choices or bother you?

**Respondent:** No that doesn’t bother me. So I think a lot of people are very scared, very into some conspiracy theories and I don’t know. I really don’t mind any service collecting like any of my data and I don’t find music taste that personal. I don’t find it invasive if anybody knows what I listen to or if it is shared with anything so I understand that that the commercial value this data can have but erm I really don’t find it intrusive. So I just don’t mind it that much.

**Interviewer:** Ok. We’ve talked a lot about music discovery and how you’ve how you discover music through playlists and through your friends but obviously there are a lot of ways on Spotify that they recommend music specifically for you, like similar artists and daily mixes and discover tools. Do you ever listen to those specific recommendations?

**Respondent:** Yeah sometimes yes. I do choose like the daily mix sometimes. I just don’t…yeah I don’t think I like them that much because when I was in so the problem is that I don’t like the music of my country so even if I had like daily mixes and discoveries for my country I would not like them. But also all the three countries in Italy and the Netherlands I just don’t understand the language that much to enjoy the local discovery options and in the U.S they have such a bad taste that I can’t…Also, whatever is in the top playlist, whatever is recommended, it is very often very recent rap or trap music or whatever so it is just weird and I don’t like it. So, that’s why I don’t really like the kind of ..what are they called…er the new releases, the charts. Those are kind of browsing categories that I found very useless. I think its useful for those who really like their national music and who maybe are clubbing enough to be influenced to listen to more modern music. I think the music there is just not filtered by quality at all. Its just filtered by its new and its popular and I just that usually just doesn’t fit my taste.

**Interviewer:** Mhmm. What do you think about the similar artists feature? Would you use that as a feature that you get music recommendations from?

**Respondent:** Yeah, yeah so it would be if I was viewing like a specific artist and then similar ones to that one...hmmm I didn’t use that that much just because I really don’t visit artists’ pages or however they’re called. So, I usually visit playlists and that way I discover more artists but actually more particular songs that fit the mood so that’s what I enjoy most. Also, I kind of think that Spotify suggestions for similar artists, whenever I did look into them, that they were not that similar or as much as I would have expected. So, I expect them to be either way more similar yeah I just think more similar than what’s offered.

**Interviewer:** How do you mean? So similar in what way? What would you be looking for in in the similar artists that would make you think ‘yes, I will listen to that person’?

**Respondent:** Well, particularly yeah I think its pretty hard to find something similar like even within a specific genre you might not like all the artists so I think it would be like also similar voice of the main singer, which might be interesting, or similar like music-playing style or beat or kind of sequence melodies. Something which is like erm like an ear-worm for an example. I think yeah it might be really hard to find something which is actually similar er artist-wise. I think they just yeah differ quite a lot, even within a single genre.

**Interviewer:** So has there actually been any of Spotify’s recommendations that you have actually loved?

**Respondent:** I do sometimes listen to the new releases and charts just to kind of catch up with some newer music but genres and moods er like browsing that way is the most useful for me. Probably more moods than genres when it comes to that because I think that’s the most kind of clear and intuitive way to organise music for the reasons I browse music and it is really for a specific mood or time of the day.

**Interviewer:** So, if Spotify had erm more diversity or more similarity do you think you would listen to their recommendations? What do you kind of look for in a recommendation? Do you want something very similar or would you prefer something really diverse?

**Respondent:** I would say that most people really have a specific taste in music and I would say me too that I do like discovering new things but as I said when I kind of discover something widely different from what I listen to its through friends. When I use Spotify, I think it’s more useful to have suggestions that are more similar to what you like but not too much. Maybe have the possibility to diverge into similar genres but…so I would like to have that open as a discovery feature but erm not like widely different from what I listen to normally.

**Interviewer:** Right well that is all the questions then from me. Erm, yeah so that’s great. Is there anything else that you would like to expand upon or talk about in terms of your music listening or Spotify use?

**Respondent:** Well I mean er just a last comment that like even when there’s kind of like music that I don’t listen to at all…I have a friend who really likes metal and she would like play me a song and she’s like ‘This is awesome’ and it would be even in German, as she studies German, so she would be like ‘This is such a good song’ and then I kind of can appreciate it but probably wouldn’t be something I would listen to in free time but erm that’s kind of like a discovery mode which does broaden kind of your common knowledge and that’s something I still appreciate in a way even if I won’t listen to it myself ever again. So yeah, that’s very useful. I think it would be nice to have some very diverse playlists just for kind of this unexpected discovery because I think this way, the way music is organised, its really easy to find something you would expect but very hard to find something which yeah you would bump into very hardly on your own.

**Interviewer:** That’s interesting. So, you’re saying that even if its not necessarily your taste in music that you are still able to appreciate it at a point in time?

**Respondent:** Yeah, yeah that’s kind of the point.

**Interviewer:** That’s an interesting point. Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Respondent:** Er no. I think that’s kind of it. I mean I’m just kind of disappointed that I can’t use Spotify everywhere and also I’m kind of a recent user er because I think I’m using it for about maybe two years or something like that. I just didn’t have the need to discover new chill music before and this was the best way for me to have playlists that are more diverse than what I could find on YouTube but still fitting to a mood. That’s what I really like.

**Interviewer:** So, what are you doing now then for your music listening while you are in Serbia?

**Respondent:** Well, today Spotify still works.

**Interviewer:** Holding on to Spotify until the last minute then!

**Respondent:** Yeah [laughs] but I don’t know what I will do after because I’ll probably move [laughs]

**Interviewer:** [laughs] Do you feel lost when you don’t have access to it?

**Respondent:** Yeah, I’m really frustrated because there’s still no support because a lot of people have complained. I think I’ll have to go back to YouTube as that’s kind of the best option but the problem is when I played YouTube from my phone then it has to be the open app so that’s kind of frustrating. And I don’t like how really YouTube creates a bubble. Its really more limiting and how what you get exposed to.

**Interviewer:** Mhmm. How do you feel like how do you feel its more limiting?

**Respondent:** I think the playlist that I kind of bump into are playlists of specific artists or maybe like their whole discography or an album. I think people more so I think because YouTube is a video-based platform there is more erm video content being shared, not just music videos but also like personal videos, funny videos, whatever so like a lot of vlogging going on so I would say that just YouTube was not built for it and er therefore the playlists there are usually not reflecting. I don’t think a lot of people have these playlists like ‘Oh, this is like my music tastes’ or ‘This is a genre’ or ‘I’m a DJ and I made this playlist for you guys’. I don’t think they would just do that on YouTube as its not that convenient. So yeah I go to YouTube for like news and er I don’t know to access some TV shows that I can’t view on TV at home and they are available online things like that but yeah it’s just not convenient for music. Yeah, but for workouts for an example I download playlists which are mixes which are specific beats per minute so that its consistent and there’s a really good website for that like erm..steadymusic or something like that. So I yeah for workouts, I usually use those.

**Interviewer:** So do you feel that that’s something that Spotify doesn’t offer to you? The ability for playlists beats with beats per minute?

**Respondent:** Yeah, I think that’s something so I just didn’t bump into this feature but I would find it useful. I think Spotify actually has a very good kind of background to how it streams music because I think, compared to some other apps, it does kind of download the music a bit in advance so even if the connection is like the internet connection is not that good it doesn’t interrupt your music that much. So I think if someone is for example doing jogging outdoors, they would really appreciate having this kind of beats per minute playlists which also are played through Spotify and not interrupted with network disturbances. I think that’s really useful. I tried workout playlists on Spotify and I find that the music is very er yeah very monotone and it’s like really annoying. I don’t know what kind of music it is but I just find it super annoying. Its this kind of ‘Oh, gym, let’s get buff’ kind of music and I usually just jog and do yoga so I don’t it its just...probably there is some trap as well [laughs]

**Interviewer:** [laughs]

**Respondent:** Could be.

**Interviewer:** No, that’s really interesting.

**Respondent:** Yeah whatever kind of music that is its just yeah not my type. There’s erm also kind of like 80s mixes for like 130bpm and I’m like ‘This is like this is great’ [laughs]

**Interviewer:** This is on your app and not Spotify?

**Respondent:** Yeah this is a thing I download from this website. I can tell you which one it is if its going to help? Erm I think its just…is it steady 130? Or is it? Erm…let me check. Yeah steadymixes.com erm so I really like that website because a lot of the mixes that people make are downloadable so I can play them off my phone without interruption when I run and that’s kind of useful. For yoga, I have an app which just plays music on its own so I’m just like ‘Oh, I don’t even have to browse for it’ [laughs].

**Interviewer:** That’s great.

**Respondent:** Yeah, I guess my main feature is like lazy, lazy to do anything. If the app does it for me then I’m like super thankful [laughs].

**Interviewer:** [laughs] Well, thank you so much for the interview. I really appreciate it. I’ll let you get on with all the other stuff you’ve got to do for the rest of the day. But thank you so much.

**Respondent:** You’re welcome. I’m glad if this helps.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, it really did.

**Respondent**: I hope your research goes well. Its an interesting topic. I mean I wish I had more freedom to what my PhD thesis was about [laughs]. It was not this interesting.

**Interviewer:** Well, no but everyone says that about their own PhD research. Nobody by the end finds their own PhD research interesting and everyone else does [laughs].

**Respondent**: Yeah, I know [laughs]. Its like you’re just stuck with it for so long it just you stop liking it. Even if it was totally your top idea at the time you’re just like ‘Oh no way, why did I get myself into this’.

**Interviewer:** Very true.

**Respondent:** Well, yeah. Ok. well good then. Gad I could help and this was just well yeah very chill interview so it was not a big deal.

**Interviewer:** I’m glad. Well thank you so much.

**Respondent:** Well, yeah ok. Well have a nice day. I hope the research goes well. Ok bye.

**Interviewer:** Thanks so much. Bye.

[Transcript end]

# Transcript: In-02-F

[00:00]

**Respondent:** Hello?

**Interviewer:** Hiya.

**Respondent:** Hello.

**Interviewer:** Hi. You alright?

**Respondent:** I’m ok. How are you?

**Interviewer:** Good, thank you very much. How are you doing this morning?

**Respondent:** I’m fine. My brother he’s moving back to university today so I’ve been helping him move boxes and things so. Sorry, I’m just trying to log into my laptop so that we can have a proper conversation.

**Interviewer:** Ok. No, that’s fine.

**Respondent:** It says I’m connecting on the video call but I don’t know. It says you’re not online.

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Respondent:** Maybe if I come off of this call and then call you again?

**Interviewer:** Yes, ok. Yes, that’s fine I will cancel this call.

**Respondent:** Hello. You alright?

**Interviewer:** I’m ok. Right well thank you for taking the time to speak to me this morning, I really appreciate it.

**Respondent:** That’s ok.

**Interviewer:** What’s going to happen is the interview is going be about an hour and its very much based on the responses that you give so I will give you plenty of time to talk and expand on things as you like. I also have some questions for you as well. When you’re speaking I might take a couple of notes as things to follow-up on that I might not have understood or want maybe to know a little bit more information about. I’ve also got a recorder on so I’m recording our interview is that’s ok with you?

**Respondent:** Yes, that’s fine.

**Interviewer:** That’s everything from my end. Have you got any questions before we start?

**Respondent:** No I don’t think so.

**Interviewer:** Ok, well let’s get going then. So firstly, I would like to know whether you feel that Spotify reflects who you are? So while you’re talking I won’t interrupt you. I will just listen and take some notes but do you feel that Spotify allows you to construct and manage the music tastes that you have?

**Respondent:** Yes I would say so. I really like making playlists for different occasions or different moods and things. Some of the people I follow the people that I enjoy their playlists the most are the ones who do similar things to me that have got lots and lots of different ones even if some of the songs on there are quite similar but yeah I do think it’s quite tied to who I would like everyone to receive me as if that makes sense. I really enjoy listening to music and I think it’s a big bit of who I am and what I’m interested in.

**Interviewer:** When you say it allows people to receive who you are, do you feel that you’re aware of people watching what you’re listening to or is very much ‘this is what I like so this is what I’m playing and this is what you can see’?

**Respondent:** I do know that sometimes people do see what I’m listening to and they’ll text me and say ‘I can see that you’re listening to that’ but otherwise I just sort of listen to whatever I like and sometimes people have said to me that they’ve listened to one of my playlists, or they follow some of them, and they really enjoyed them so yeah I think that being able to see what other people are listening to is a really good feature.

**Interviewer:** Do you feel in any way that the Spotify interface influences your music choices when you’re on there?

**Respondent:** In what sense? Like with the Daily Mixes and…

**Interviewer:** Yes, so when you go on there, the home screen, what you see, what it recommends for you, how it’s kind of laid out.

**Respondent:** Yes. The Daily Mixes certainly I do make good use of. With regards to the homepage, I’m just going to look now. With like different poppy ones and like all the different genres and things but I wouldn’t say I necessarily listen to that many of the Spotify-created ones. I quite like the discover tab and I always end up liking the ones they recommend really but yeah the Daily Mixes I definitely make good use of and then also seeing what other people are listening to I think is helpful because I follow a lot of people with similar music tastes to myself.

**Interviewer:** So what is it then that you like about the Daily Mixes? What make those particularly appealing to you?

**Respondent:** I quite like that they seem to have the different genres down as far as what it is that I enjoy listening to and I also like that a lot of the songs on there are songs that I already enjoy so I know that whatever one I click on there will be something on there that I already know and probably enjoy and then anything else is just like a happy coincidence I guess but yeah, I do think they are quite useful.

**Interviewer:** Is there ever have you ever come across one that you really don’t like and you think ‘why have Spotify put this together for me’?

**Respondent:** No, I wouldn’t say so. Sometimes I’m quite surprised by the like it’s always got a pop one, it’s always got like Taylor Swift and Marina and the Diamonds on there and I think I do listen to pop music but not regularly enough to make it like its own mix. The others are far more relevant to what I normally listen to. So surprising in that sense but otherwise it’s still music that I enjoy.

**Interviewer:** So at the minute there’s been a lot about how platforms like Spotify are collecting data on us. Are you aware that this is happening behind the scenes, of when you’re listening Spotify is collecting that data about you?

**Respondent:** I mean I’m not really surprised and I suppose you sort of give that bit of yourself away whenever you sign up to Facebook or Twitter or whatever so at this point if they want to see what I’m listening to that’s fine. It’s not as much private information as say Facebook or your own email or things but yeah I’m sort of not surprised to be honest.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So going back then to recommendations. Where do you tend to get your recommendations, your music recommendations, from?

**Respondent:** Sometimes people recommend things to me and then I follow like Pitchfork online and I follow them on Spotify as well and they’ve normally got like “what’s new” playlists. Then otherwise the discover tab, which is normally very well it’s normally exactly the type of thing I like to listen to so I don’t really have a problem with that. The people that I follow they’re usually very good like if I were to click on whatever they’re listening to or their playlists normally I like them. So yes it’s a very comprehensive I think way of listening to music and finding new things to listen to.

**Interviewer:** So would you say most of your music recommendations come from online sources or do you ever get them from say friends or family offline?

**Respondent:** I’d say it’s mostly online.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So what do you think then about the music that Spotify recommends to you?

**Respondent:** I quite enjoy it. When I’m working I usually don’t like to listen to music that I already know because there’s a temptation to sing along or whatever so I usually will listen to music I don’t know and then if it gets stuck in my head or my brain becomes aware of it its usually a good indication that I am enjoying the music. So whenever I am working that’s like the best place for me to find new bits to listen to but quite regularly they get added to different playlists, like I’ve got a monthly one with all the ones I’m enjoying of the moment.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So is there any particular recommendations that you’ve either really loved or really hated from Spotify?

**Respondent:** Let me see. I always quite enjoy when I’ve got like ‘This is’ and then the artist’s name. So there’s Beach House, Mac DeMarco, who I hadn’t really been aware of before I started listening to their playlists but he’s one of my favourites, Cigarettes After Sex I really like them and just lots of different ones really that you’re sort of vaguely aware of. Different artists but then they’ve compiled it so well that it allows you to delve into them deeper. I do think that’s a helpful feature as well.

**Interviewer:** Ok so are those artists that you’ve just mentioned have those been recommended specifically for you by Spotify or is it a case that you’ve heard them and then searched for them?

**Respondent:** Some of them were definitely recommended to me. The Beach House one. I think the Cocteau Twins were recommended to me as well, Mac DeMarco, Bon Iver I think as well. Then once I was aware of it, that they did such playlists, I was very keen to find all the other relevant ones that I knew I would like.

**Interviewer:** Ok so would you say then that Spotify’s recommendations influence your music listening quite a lot?

**Respondent:** Yes, I would say so because I suppose if you’ve only ever heard of an artist once and you listen to say their top top most popular songs then you never get to listen to the rest of their music but those playlists always I think they are always quite long they are about an hour, an hour and a half so there’s always a good selection on there. Then through that I suppose it helps your own recommendations to develop and then you know just clicking through to see like whose been featured on a track or whatever. Yes, I do think it’s quite helpful.

**Interviewer:** And then how much do the people that you, because you say you follow quite a lot of people on Spotify in terms of their playlists, what kind of influence would you say that they have over your music listening?

**Respondent:** The ones I like the most are there’s like ones for different moods and things, like if you’re feeling sleepy or sad or whatever. I will just play them because I obviously don’t know all of the artists on there or all the tracks so it’s very easy to just listen to and then again when my ears pick something up it’s usually a good indication that it’s a good playlist. I think the being able to follow other people is one of the best aspects of the Spotify interface.

**Interviewer:** What makes you say that?

**Respondent:** I feel like music listening can be quite like solitary activity if you would choose to have it that way and I know that certainly there are times when I will just sit in my room and listen to music and not want to talk to anyone but I think being able to see what other people are listening to is always quite nice. I make a point of following people with similar tastes to myself so I know that, broadly speaking, it will probably be something I enjoy as well.

**Interviewer:** How similar do you feel that the Spotify recommendations are to what you already listen to?

**Respondent:** I would have said before I started using Spotify properly some of the stuff that was being recommended to me now wouldn’t have been similar to what I liked at all, like a lot of rap music or dream pop and things, which I haven’t really listened to before. But now, maybe three years down the line, I would say it is quite on it with regards to my own tastes, which when I was a teenager it was just like rock music and emo music and things so I wouldn’t have said that I would have enjoyed like rap and things but yeah, I think Spotify gets it right most of the time.

**Interviewer:** Do you like it that the music is similar or would you like them to recommend you something very different?

**Respondent:** I suppose it depends on what basis they’re recommending something very different. I don’t know if there were strands of it of whatever genre or artist that maybe had some relationship to what I was listening to then maybe I would like it but I’m not sure. I suppose it depends just how different it is and why it is that they’re recommending it. I’m always open to listening to new things but I think if it was consistently recommending things that were really out there then I would just probably steer clear of the discover tab.

**Interviewer:** Ok so now I want to talk about how music relates to your identity. So how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

**Respondent:** Oh gosh. I don’t know, fairly constant I’ll be honest. I don’t know. In what sense do you mean?

**Interviewer:** Well do you feel like music is an important part of who you are?

**Respondent:** Yes, I would say so. I will quite often just spend hours listening to music and doing nothing else whereas I think some people think that’s a bit odd. My ex-boyfriend said he didn’t like music at all. I think that’s a very peculiar thing to say. So I do think it’s a big part of who I am and I think there is enjoyment to be had from discussing your own music tastes or similar music or likes or dislikes from other people.

**Interviewer:** Is there a particular time that you feel you’ve used music to reflect who you are either to your friends online or offline or in a certain situation?

**Respondent:** Certain situation? Not sure. I think what I listen to can sometimes be a good reflection of maybe the type of person I am, like stereotypes that might come with listening to a certain artist like Mac DeMarco. My boyfriend said that me and my denim jackets and my rolled up jeans and things he said there’s no one on earth who is more of a Mac DeMarco listener than I am. I do think it can be quite reflective of who you are as an individual.

**Interviewer:** Is that a conscious choice then because you’re talking about, because I don’t know Mac DeMarco at all, are you talking about how your fashion style reflects his type of music and what he would wear?

**Respondent:** Well not like I’m choosing to copy how he dresses but for some reason it just does just seem to be reflective of that sort of like slackery, indie-ish type of music that’s very chilled out and is just like the guitar and nothing else. It’s not a conscious decision that I make it just seems to be a running theme with people that like Mac DeMarco.

**Interviewer:** Is there ever been any instances where you’ve decided to play a certain song in front of your friends saying ‘I really like this’ and played it in front of them?

**Respondent:** Yes, when I’m discussing music. I used to have a friend where we had a collaborate playlist and we would put music on there for the other person to listen to and vice versa. I’m always quite keen to show off whatever I’m listening to.

**Interviewer:** And do you feel that those choices that you show off you do consciously thinking that your friends are going to listen to them and so you might choose things that they like or is it specifically things that you like that they might not?

**Respondent:** I think it would be things that I would like but they might not. I think broadly most of my friends have similar music tastes to me but there are some aspects that I can think that a certain person definitely wouldn’t like but if I was showing someone a song or an album it would probably be because I would like it but then if they asked for a recommendation I would never pick something that I would think they wouldn’t like. I would always try to tailor it to their own tastes.

**Interviewer:** Do you get asked for recommendations quite a lot?

**Respondent:** Yes, I have some friends who maybe love music as much as I do and have similar tastes so sometimes they’ll come to me and say ‘Give me an album to listen to that you really like’. I think I do it too. I get a bit bored of whatever I’m listening to and I’m keen for someone else to have an input and just recommend something to me that I wouldn’t have necessarily listened to had I not been prompted.

**Interviewer:** And you don’t feel that Spotify gives you that kind of music that you wouldn’t listen to without being prompted? You’d have to go to you like get it from your friends?

**Respondent:** Yes, it’s not that the music would necessarily be really out there but I think sometimes a human being’s input that maybe knows how you’re feeling or knows what you enjoy and what they enjoy as well can sometimes be more helpful than just whatever the algorithm is recommending.

**Interviewer:** What kind of music do you like then and what do you dislike? Is there a particular genre or artists?

**Respondent:** There’s quite a few artists I like. I like Beach House, Brockhampton, Mac DeMarco, Childish Gambino, Tame Impala, Lorde, HAIM or HIAM however you want to pronounce it, Cigarettes After Sex, what else? Unknown Mortal Orchestra, The Blossoms. And then as far as things I don’t like? I’m not a big fan of I suppose it would be called ‘dance music’ or whatever sort of music gets played in a club I guess, unless it’s like really popular like it’s been played on the radio like that new Calvin Harris and Sam Smith song I quite like that one but I wouldn’t necessarily have gone out looking for it had it not been played on the radio. Things like The Chainsmokers so its like very I think a lot of them sound very similar. I don’t like grime really or hip-hoppy music but otherwise I’d say its quite broad.

**Interviewer:** So you wouldn’t then classify your music likes as a particular genre?

**Respondent:** No, not really. I would much rather it be defined on terms of different artists.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So what makes the Calvin Harris song different? Why is it that particular song that seems to have drawn your attention?

**Respondent:** I think partly because I did hear it when it first came out. I think it was trending on YouTube so I listened to it and then my friend sent it to me and said ‘Do you like it?’ and I said ‘Well I’m not that sure’ and he called me a swine or something for not liking Sam Smith. But then I kept hearing it being played on the radio and I think it is a bit of an earworm its quite catchy so I don’t know what it is that makes that one different to any of the others. Maybe I would enjoy that sort of music if I listened to an entire Spotify playlist of it but that one sort of stands out as an example of something that’s contrary to my normal habits.

**Interviewer:** And would you be willing to say to your friends ‘Oh, I actually like this Calvin Harris song’ or is it something that you would keep private for yourself?

**Respondent:** No I would I would go back to my friend who kind of called me a swine and say ‘Actually on second listening I quite enjoyed it’.

**Interviewer:** So do you feel your music choices and your music tastes and preferences have changed over time or have they always been very similar?

**Respondent:** I would say that they have definitely changed over time. When I was in secondary school it was all quite like emo, gothy music, basically what I would define now as very loud, but I think over time I had a period where I was like maybe my first year of university where I wasn’t using Spotify. Even though I had an account, I used iTunes and I can’t really remember the reason why I moved over to Spotify but I got a premium account and I sort of started to move over, like all the saved albums that I knew I would like, and sort of let it build from there and through that and Spotify’s recommendations and the people I follow I think its developed into something that is much more. It’s not as narrow-minded. It’s kind of whatever I enjoy listening to rather than being stuck to within like rock music. Whereas back then I definitely would have defined it as “I only like that sort of music’ whereas now it would just be whatever I enjoy listening to.

**Interviewer:** So do you feel then that it’s Spotify that’s potentially caused that change in your music taste or do you feel it’s something outside of Spotify?

**Respondent:** I think everyone grows up a bit from who they were in secondary school but I think it’s partly who I follow on Spotify and then yes, I would say that their recommendations and their Daily Mixes helps a lot too.

**Interviewer:** And are your music tastes very similar to your friendship groups’ music tastes?

**Respondent:** Some people’s yes and then some people’s absolutely not. My ex-housemate she was all into I think she based a lot of her music taste off of what her parents really enjoyed so it was lot of, and her family was Irish, so a lot of it was Irish folk tunes and the things that her parents listened to when they were growing up and sometimes I’d come downstairs into the kitchen in the morning and be hearing Irish folk music and that’s the farthest thing from what I would want to listen to in the morning. Then some of my friends quite like grime and hip-hop and things and that’s not my thing really. Some of them really really like pop music and I don’t mind it but it’s not something that I would make a b line for really.

**Interviewer:** And are there any particular life experiences that you feel have shaped your music taste? So, for instance, going to university or having a boyfriend or something like that? Have any of those kind of life experiences shaped what you like or dislike?

**Respondent:** Definitely with regards to having a boyfriend. I think you pick up what they listen to or like songs that you associate with the relationship. I wouldn’t say maybe going to university helped me. I think it helped develop me as a person, not only with regards to what you enjoy listening to, so I think it was sort of a very organic development away from where I was when I left school and where I’m at now.

**Interviewer:** Ok so getting back to Spotify. Do you feel then that it allows you to express who you are through music?

**Respondent:** Yes, I think so. I don’t think it’s the same as if you have an Instagram and it’s like perfectly curated with all the pictures you want on there. I think that can do a better job depending on who your audience is. But as far as putting across what it is you enjoy listening to, I suppose you have to be one of those people that really puts stock in like the stereotypes that exist with listening to a certain type of music. But yes, I think it can help you almost like curate your sense of self.

**Interviewer:** Do you think then there’s a greater risk of being stereotyped through the music that you have on your Spotify than out in the everyday world?

**Respondent:** Yes, I would say so. I think because it’s so open for everyone to see so I think yes, you could click on anyone’s profile at random and make an assumption about who they are depending on what it is they listen to or the playlists they have saved or created.

**Interviewer:** And do you feel that you consciously use Spotify to reflect your musical identity or is it just something that has happened organically?

**Respondent:** I think it’s organic. I don’t tend to cater or censor anything that I’m listening to. It is what it is. It’s what I’m listening to. If someone was to click onto my profile at random there would be nothing there that, well I don’t think, that I would say ‘That’s not indicative of who I am or what I enjoy listening to’. I think it broadly reflects all my different tastes.

**Interviewer:** So have you got your account set to public for people to be able to see?

**Respondent:** Yes, yes.

**Interviewer:** Is there a reason that you’ve decided to have on public rather than private?

**Respondent:** I think it was set to public when I set it up but I don’t know. It doesn’t really bother me that people can see it and I’m very nosey and like seeing what people are listening to as well.

**Interviewer:** And as well do you feel that your music tastes have become more diverse or more fixed since using Spotify?

**Respondent:** I’d say more diverse.

**Interviewer:** In what kind of way do you feel that they have become more diverse?

**Respondent:** I think because there’s so much on there and they offer it to you in more ways that just ‘listen to an album’. You can listen to an entire playlist of a particular genre. Things that you wouldn’t necessarily have come across if you were just listening to the radio or looking for music online. I think the way it’s set up does do a good job of expanding your tastes because they’ve created a playlist with a particular theme or artist in mind that I wouldn’t have necessarily strung together myself. So yes, I would say it helps with making more diverse choices.

**Interviewer:** So I’d like to understand a little bit more about your music practices on Spotify in terms of how you use Spotify to stream music throughout the week. Have a think about your everyday streaming practices and I’m interested in listening to how you tend to listen to music, how you select the music and the different service features that you use in your music streaming.

**Respondent:** I would say that the thing I probably come back to the most is the monthly playlist that has the things that I am enjoying most currently. I think that probably gets played maybe two or three times a day. Then after that I would say its either a particular artist, so like the Spotify artist playlists or the ones that I’ve done myself, and then whatever album or albums that I’m currently enjoying because it does feel like you get into a cycle and then gradually phase some of them out and then bring others in.

**Interviewer:** So is there a reason then that you particularly chose Spotify as a platform to use for music streaming? Have you ever used anything else?

**Respondent:** I used to have iTunes but I think that was really only because I had an iPhone and because it comes with a Mac. When I was in school and I would still be buying CDs there was like every CD I’d ever owned on there so it was very convenient and I remember back when I did use to have iTunes I would sometimes think ‘God what if I lost all my saved music? How would I even begin to build up another collection?’ But I’ve had the Spotify account since 2008 I think when it first became a thing and I remember girls at school talking about it, at this point there were no adverts. So, I’ve always had it but it hasn’t always been in use. But it’s I think since 2016 I’ve been using it as the only thing that I listen to music on.

**Interviewer:** So what happened in 2016 that made you completely go to Spotify?

**Respondent:** I really don’t know. I think I became more aware of different artists that I liked and I didn’t want to always be buying the album as you would have to do on iTunes and I didn’t want to always be illegally downloading it from YouTube. So, I thought I would just pay for the premium account, which I got cheaper as a student anyway, and knew that it would have everything on there. I think it, even though it took a bit of time to move over albums or remake playlists, I think it was worth it in the end.

**Interviewer:** So you’ve talked a little bit about using the Discover and Daily Mix feature when you stream music, are there any other particular features that you use on Spotify for your music streaming?

**Respondent:** Let me have a look. Sometimes I use the genres tab. It was mostly I think, upon reflection, when I was at university and I wanted music that was quite calming, like classical music, or it was like white noise or like rainforest noises or something and they’ve got all of that so I would use the genre tab to find things like that. If I was going to the gym, I would use the workout ones and also sometimes when I’m trying to get to sleep I use the sleep genre bit but otherwise I would say that the Daily Mix is probably, of all the features that they offer me, that’s the one I use the most.

**Interviewer:** So roughly how many tracks then do you have in your Spotify library currently?

**Respondent:** Oh god. I remember at Christmas I hit the, for the ones downloaded on my phone, I hit the cap and I think that was I think it’s 3300. But on here I don’t know is there a way to count? I don’t know. I’ve got a lot of albums. I tend to save playlists more than I save albums or particular tracks. I think because if I needed a saved playlist it would be while I was travelling or something and wouldn’t want to use Wi-Fi or 4G so I would always save the ones that I think I would like if I was on a train somewhere. So, in fairness I think it’s more saved playlists than saved albums.

**Interviewer:** And are the playlists ones that have been created by Spotify or the other users that you tend to save?

**Respondent:** It’s kind of an equal mix to be honest. I’ve got some of them here like 70s music, road trip music, 90s music, party classics. Those are all Spotify ones and then ones that different artists have done, like one that Paramore did for their latest album and their influences for that, but then otherwise it’s generally music created or playlists created by other users.

**Interviewer:** So are playlists then quite important to you?

**Respondent:** Yes, I would rather listen to a playlist I think than a whole album because I think I prefer the variety of knowing that it could be of however many hours long. You don’t have to do anything it can just shuffle away and listening to different artists is, I think, it’s more interesting than listening to an album.

**Interviewer:** So how many playlists have you created personally?

**Respondent:** Ok I’ve got 23 of the monthly ones, which I have saved and then I’ve got another 23, very serendipitous, of different themes or moods or like party ones and things.

**Interviewer:** Ok so which out of those would you say that you play the most?

**Respondent:** I would say the ones that are more thematic than monthly.

**Interviewer:** So can you give me an example of a thematic one you have?

**Respondent:** I’ve got one that’s ‘happy music’. I’ve got one that’s ‘really sad music’, music that’s ‘favourites’, one that reminds me of my first year at university, one that’s all mainstream poppy music that I like, one that’s like you’re really sad but you want to have a dance, one that’s good for music playing through speakers, one that’s just for chillaxing. So yes, so lots of different ones on there.

**Interviewer:** Would you say then that they are very situation or time dependent?

**Respondent:** Yeah, I would say so. There are obviously ones I listen to more regularly but yes, I think because they are so often based off of say a certain idea, like feeling sad, then that’s just very much dependent on whatever you’re feeling on that particular day.

**Interviewer:** So it seems like a lot of them that you have are based on mood aspects. Is there any of them say based on particular situations, so like if you were at the gym or a work playlist or a waking up playlist? Do you have any that are kind of time dependent on there?

**Respondent:** Not ones that I’ve made myself. I have some that other people have made like going to the gym or like trying to focus while you’re at work or if you’re like drawing or something. Otherwise yes there’s nothing like that that I’ve done.

**Interviewer:** And you’ve talked a lot about your monthly playlists so tell me a bit how your monthly playlists work.

**Respondent:** It’s normally made up of music that I’ve either discovered through the Daily Mixes or the discover tab. It never tends to be music that I’m already aware of and that’s quite rare. It’s always new music that I’ve listened to. So, I just start it at the start of the month and then by the end of the month I’m tired of them and I want a new playlist. It works quite well as signposting what it is that you’re interested in at that time and it’s always nice to go back and remember what you liked in a particular month or whatever. I like the system of it.

**Interviewer:** So would you say then that the monthly playlists are very different from each other?

**Respondent:** They can be. Some of them are a lot longer I don’t really know why that is and I mean in terms of artists it can be quite random like there’s never a month where it’s like all pop music or indie music or anything like that. It’s usually just whatever I’ve enjoyed that month. So, they’re normally about an hour long, maybe just a little bit over.

**Interviewer:** And why did you start creating these playlists? What was it about them that made you decide to do a monthly playlist?

**Respondent:** I think it was partly because when I had iTunes I would always have a playlist of whatever music I liked but in the end it was always very long and you weren’t always hearing, especially if it was on shuffle, you weren’t always hearing what it was that you really liked. You might hear something that you liked from half a year ago so I think doing it monthly, or maybe even like bi-monthly, is a good way of keeping it succinct and I know that there are other people that I follow that do similar ones.

**Interviewer:** And do you ever go back and relive that music? So say that, we are obviously in September now, so do you go back to like your February playlist and listen to it or is it very much ‘that’s in the past now. I won’t go back and listen to that music’?

**Respondent:** No, I do go back to them if not just to sort of relive whatever it was that I enjoyed at the time. I know that every December Spotify does your top songs of the year and I always really look forward to it because I’m always really interested to see what I’ve ranked up as the highest plays. I’m sometimes a bit surprised but yes, it’s not something I do regularly, but I do like to go back and maybe if I’m just a bit bored one day I’ll go back say a whole year and remember what it was I was listening to at that time.

**Interviewer:** Would you ever consider deleting one?

**Respondent:** No, I don’t think I could. No. Not only just because I’ll have a month missing but just because I wouldn’t want to lose the music that I’ve saved because, for whatever reason, I enjoyed it at the time. So no, I don’t think I could delete them.

**Interviewer:** So it sounds like one of the main things you use Spotify for is the playlists. What is it about playlists that you really like?

**Respondent:** I think it’s because, like I said, it’s not like listening to an album. Even if you really enjoy an artist’s work it’s not necessarily true that you would enjoy all the songs on one album. I feel it’s so much easier to get enjoyment out of playlist because you can tailor it to what it is that you want to listen to whether that’s just an artist’s top songs that they’ve done. I know I’ve definitely got those that I’ve made myself, or if it’s thematic or mood or whatever I feel like it’s so much easier to gain enjoyment from a playlist.

**Interviewer:** When you start your music streaming, when you go onto Spotify, do you have something specifically in mind that you want to listen to?

**Respondent:** Not necessarily unless I’m doing work and I want to listen to something that’s sort of quiet and relaxing but otherwise it’s all on a bit of a whim to be honest unless I’ve got something specific in mind or I’m really enjoying a particular album. Like Ariana Grande’s latest album that just came out, I think in the middle of August, I was consistently listening to that and really nothing else so maybe like the ten days after it came out. I suppose it just depends on the situation that I’m currently in and what I’m enjoying, otherwise its sort of just a click on whatever and hope for the best.

**Interviewer:** And when you say click on whatever is that normally one of your playlists, somebody else’s playlist, would you search? What would you do?

**Respondent:** Probably first would be the monthly one that I do and then after that it would be the Daily Mix if I’m happy to just listen to something on shuffle. I think that that’s usually what I end up doing.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Do you feel like you listen to particular music at certain times in the day? So do you feel that you listen to particular music in the morning versus middle of the day versus evening?

**Respondent:** I’m not a 100% sure that I do to be honest. I think it’s normally much more about sort of the mood I’m in. I would say maybe in the evening I’m not likely to be listening to really really loud or clashy music. It would probably be something a bit more relaxed but otherwise I would say no it would just be however I am feeling really.

**Interviewer:** And what about days of the week? Would what you listen to on a Friday be different to what you listen to on a Monday, as an example?

**Respondent:**  Maybe if I was feeling a bit sad that it was Monday but otherwise no, I think it would probably be consistent the whole week.

**Interviewer:** Oh ok. So you feel that maybe your music choices are more mood dependent than anything else?

**Respondent**: Yes, yes I would say so.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And do you have connected friends on Spotify?

**Respondent:** Yes, yes I do.

**Interviewer:** Does that change how you listen to music? So when particular friends are online.

**Respondent:** I’m always very nosey. I think it’s because on the sidebar of the desktop and when you see someone playing whatever it is and it sort of snaps up to the top it can catch your eye. I’m always sort of aware when someone’s online and what they’re listening to but otherwise I wouldn’t say that it really alters what I’m doing.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And you say that obviously your Spotify account is set to public, is there any point that you have changed it to private?

**Respondent:** No, I don’t think so. I did recently because it was made in 2008 so it was when there was no integration with Facebook or anything like that so it’s got its own username rather than off of your Facebook profile so I recently unlinked Facebook but otherwise if someone knows my username then they can still search for me. I don’t think it’s ever been private. I think it’s always been public.

**Interviewer:** And was there a reason then that you decided to unlink it from Facebook?

**Respondent:** I think it was because at the time I wanted to delete Facebook and I was quite concerned that if I deleted my Facebook account then was it going to get rid of my Spotify. I think I would suffer through Facebook if it meant keeping my Spotify account. Then I realised that I had the account for so long that it’s its own entity rather than being based off of my other accounts so I was able to unlink it.

**Interviewer:** So in terms of your weekly music streaming, obviously with the scrobble logs on Last.fm, it seemed that Beach House was your most played artist of the week. Is there a reason that you like that particular artist or that you choose to listen to it so frequently?

**Respondent:** They are one of my favourites to be honest. But I recently made a playlist that had all my favourite ones on there and it’s about three hours. I think because I’ve just made the playlist, I’m quite keen to listen to it. But I think I listen to them quite a lot anyway.

**Interviewer:** And what is it about their music that you like? How would you describe it?

**Respondent:** Oh god. I think it’s quite dream poppy. It’s very relaxed or very electronic but it’s not noisy at all. It’s sort of music you could fall asleep to but then the ones on the playlist that I’ve made are all the ones I really like. Sometimes I do listen to them when I’m trying to fall to sleep so in that instance I tend to play the ones like the playlist I have that has all of their music on because that’s about eight or nine hours but otherwise yes I think its I just listen to them a lot.

**Interviewer:** And as well from your scrobble logs it seems that when you start listening to an artist you listen to that artist for quite a substantial amount of time, even though their songs aren’t necessarily from the same album. Is there a reason that you choose to listen to an artist as opposed to lots of different artists?

**Respondent:** I think it’s because I do enjoy the artist ones, whether it’s Spotify ones that Spotify has made or ones that I have made and particularly with the Spotify ones I probably listen to them a hundred times already so I know the ones that are on there and I know I enjoy them. It’s just easy listening to know that you can put that playlist on and you’re probably going to enjoy every song that’s on there.

**Interviewer:** And then the other interesting thing that came out of your observation was that on the Sunday just gone you listened to I think it was about two times as much music as any other day in the week. I just wondered if there was a reason why if it was just that particular Sunday or Sundays in general that you feel that you listen to more music?

**Respondent:** The Sunday just gone, what was I doing? I don’t even remember what I was doing that day so I really don’t know. I don’t have an answer. I think it might be because I’m looking for a job so I’m spending time cooped up in my room, writing applications and things so I think the music is just on constantly but as to why it was almost double to what I listen to otherwise I don’t know.

**Interviewer:** Ok. I didn’t know if there was something going on.

**Respondent:** I don’t think so.

**Interviewer:** Obviously if there was it wasn’t significant enough for you to remember.

**Respondent:** No clearly not.

**Interviewer:** So how often then do you feel that you add music to your Spotify library? Is it something you frequently do or very rarely?

**Respondent:** Do you mean in terms of playlists or?

I**nterviewer**: Well, both. Do you add a lot of playlists or artists or even individual songs?

**Respondent:** To my monthly ones I added, funnily enough, that Calvin Harris and Sam Smith song. I added that one on to the monthly one yesterday and then otherwise when I’m adding like albums and things it tends to be a lot in a short space of time because I’m clearly worried I’m going to be on the train somewhere and have nothing to listen to. So, if I know I’ve got to travel somewhere or I’m going to be doing something where I think I might not have Internet, I’ll tend to download a lot of albums or playlists. Otherwise, I would say that it’s a slow trickle of songs being added to playlists.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And then do you ever remove songs from your music library?

**Respondent:** Sometimes if I’ve downloaded one that I can play offline sometimes I might remove them but I don’t think I get rid of them all together. I might just because I know there is the cap on what you can have downloaded sometimes that gets cycled around. But no, I don’t think I ever get rid of anything completely.

**Interviewer:** Is there a reason for that do you think?

**Respondent:** I think it’s probably because I know, with a lot of the music I listen to, I will come back to it at some point so even if I don’t like it in that moment I’ll have like phases where I’ll only listen to Beach House, clearly, and know that it will still be saved on there. I don’t think I ever have a reason to get rid of anything.

**Interviewer:** The last bit I would like to talk about is discovering new music. Do you are you a person that likes to discover new music?

**Respondent:** Yes. I do enjoy it.

**Interviewer:** Why would you say that you enjoy it?

**Respondent:** I think it can be very easy to feel as if your music tastes can become stale if you listen to the same things over and over again and it never changes so I’m always keen for that aspect. It is just always nice to discover a new song that you enjoy.

**Interviewer:** And how do you tend to discover the new music? Is it purely from Spotify or is it from elsewhere?

**Respondent:** I would say it’s generally Spotify whether or not that’s the Daily Mix or the discover tab or someone that I follow if I’m listening to one of their playlists. I think generally speaking it is probably Spotify related.

**Interviewer:** And do you like the music that Spotify recommends to you?

**Respondent:** Yes, I think they broadly hit the nail on the head as it were. Even if I listen to a song that I wouldn’t necessarily add to a playlist because I didn’t like it as much as another song, there’s never really been anything where I think I don’t know why you’ve recommended that to me.

**Interviewer:** If you ever felt like that do you think you would stop using the platform?

**Respondent:** No, I don’t think so because there’s always a way to discover new music. But maybe my use of Spotify would be solely just my own playlists or the people that I follow because yet again you have a problem where all of your music tastes are on one platform and not saved anywhere else so I don’t think I would stop using it. Maybe I would just have to find another way to discover new albums or artists.

**Interviewer:** And my last question is do you feel that being part of this research, my PhD research, have you kind of changed or reflected on anything that you do on Spotify?

**Respondent:** I think it did during the week because I knew that we would have this on today and I knew that you were going to, at some point, look at what I had listened to. There were times where I thought ‘I wonder how much music I’ve listened to’, ‘I wonder what I’ve been listening to’ because it’s not something that I normally reflect upon. I think it did sort of make you aware but not in a way that made me feel like I had to change what it was that I was listening to.

**Interviewer:** Ok good. Well, I really appreciate you taking the time to chat and share your Spotify experiences with me. It will be very very beneficial and interesting for my PhD research. Is there anything you would like to add or anything you would like to expand on from your perspective?

**Respondent:** I don’t think so. I mean I do just think it’s a really really good platform and even though, as with anything, there are probably things that could be improved there’s nothing about it that would push me over to Apple Music or whatever other platforms there are. I think it works best for me. It might not work for other people but it does work for me.

**Interviewer:** Are there any improvements that you would like to see on the platform yourself when you talk about improvements that they could make?

**Respondent:** It’s not really to do with the music. I think sometimes the desktop app can be quite buggy. Sometimes the friend’s bar won’t show up so I have to close the thing down and reopen it again. But otherwise nothing that I can really criticise in terms of the music that they put on there or the playlists they create. I think sometimes the app it can just bug out a little bit.

**Interviewer:** No that’s really interesting. Well thank you so much Isabella. I really appreciate it and I will now let you go and get on with your Saturday.

**Respondent:** That’s ok. I hope it’s useful to you.

**Interviewer:** It definitely is and it’s really interesting as well. I really enjoyed speaking to you.

**Respondent:** Thank you. Thank you for speaking to me.

**Interviewer:** No problem. Alright thank you very much.

**Respondent:** That’s ok. Have a good day.

**Interviewer:** Bye

**Respondent:** Bye

[End of transcript]

# Transcript: In-03-M

[00:00]

**Respondent:** Hello?

**Interviewer:** Hiya. Are you alright?

**Respondent:** Hey. How are you?

**Interviewer:** I’m good thank you. Sorry I think we were trying to call each other at the same time because there was so much ringing going on.

**Respondent:** Oh right. Yes, sorry. I’ve never really used Skype before so-

**Interviewer:** Oh ok so this is your first time on Skype?

**Respondent:** Yes. Sorry about that.

**Interviewer:** That’s alright. No, don’t worry. No problem at all. Well thank you for taking the time to speak to me today. I really appreciate it. I know it’s difficult obviously with time differences and everything, trying to get a time that works for everybody.

**Respondent:** Yes, of course. Yes, no worries.

**Interviewer:** Great. So, in the interview then today it will approximately last around about an hour and it’s very much you leading it. I will ask some questions but then let you speak and expand on things as you wish and bring things up as you want to. I will write some notes down while you’re talking but this is for prompts for me for things to follow up on or things that I perhaps haven’t understood and want to ask you a little bit more about. Also, I’m recording it if that’s ok with you? I’ve got a little sound recorder by my laptop just so I can record the interview to use in my research later on.

**Respondent:** Yes, sure that’s absolutely fine.

**Respondent:** Have you got any questions before we start?

**Respondent:** No. That’s absolutely fine. Go right ahead.

**Interviewer:** Ok, well let’s get going.

**Respondent:** Sure

**Interviewer:** Firstly, I would like to know a little bit about how music relates to your identity. So how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

**Respondent:** Sorry could you elaborate on that a little bit more?

**Interviewer:** So do you feel that music is important to who you are, for example?

**Respondent:** Yes sure. I’d definitely say that yes. I guess the certain genres of music can sort of say a few things about your life. I guess I listen to a lot of sort of EDM I guess kind of party music. I guess I’m kind of at that age and phase where I like to hit a few clubs and stuff every now and then sort of go to festivals with my friends and stuff.

**Interviewer:** So have you got a particular time an instance that you’ve used music to reflect who you are either to your friends or family?

**Respondent:** Yes well I guess when people just ask what music I’m into and t that’s usually the kind of music that I’ll show them. As to what kind of person I am I guess I like going out and like meeting lots of people who are into that sort of type of music as well. Is that what you’re getting at?

**Interviewer:** Yes-

**Respondent:** Oh sorry.

**Interviewer:** So would you say then that a lot of your friends and perhaps people that you meet have the same music tastes as you?

**Respondent:** Yes definitely. It’s more the friend group that I’m hanging out with they’re all into the same music yes.

**Interviewer:** So do you when you show people music that you like or play something for somebody do you take into account the fact that person might not like it so you adjust your taste or is it very much ‘this is the music I like and this is what I’m going to show or play you’?

**Respondent:** Yes no so I’ll definitely adjust my tastes. Sometimes I’ll have an idea of what a person’s into so I’ll find music that is more maybe suited to the type of genre that they’re into. For example, I’ve got some friends that are into the same sort of stuff as me and I’ve got another friend who might be into rap music or maybe someone who’s into more rock music for example and then so I’ll show them the songs that I also like in that genre rather than being just constantly EDM stuff.

**Interviewer:** But you still feel that you like that music so it is a reflection still a reflection of who you are even though you’ve slightly changed it a little bit?

**Respondent:** Yes, definitely.

**Interviewer:** Ok, great. So you talk about EDM and that definitely comes through in your online observation throughout the week. There’s definitely a lot of dance music in there crossing multiple sub-genres. It came out that your top artists were Pendulum and Drake. Are you surprised by that or not surprised?

**Respondent:** Yes, well because that song by Pendulum my friend actually just showed me that that song just before I started doing the survey so I went and listened to it a lot that particular week. But yes, Drake is actually quite surprising to be honest like I do like his music but I’m surprised that he’s a top artist.

**Interviewer:** Yes. Because I mean what is it about so did you like Pendulum before your friend showed you the song or was it just because your friend showed you the song that you were interested in them?

**Respondent:** Well yes, I didn’t even know they existed before but then I listened to that song and I really liked it yes.

**Interviewer:** And do you feel that you’re then going to explore more of their back catalogue or is it just that particular song that you that you like?

**Respondent:** Yes so I think I did explore a couple more of their songs, I don’t quite remember, but I didn’t like the other songs as much so I sort of stopped exploring.

**Interviewer:** Oh ok. And then what about Drake? How does Drake then fit in to your music likes?

**Respondent:** Yes so Drake I usually like his more laid back music so not so much his…how do I say it? Obviously, I’m not just into EDM like it’s one of the styles that I’m really into but Drake I might listen to if I’m just doing some work or something like I might listen to some of his more quiet stuff or…yes something like that.

**Interviewer:** So they’re the kind of that’s the kind of music that came out as what you listened to most over the week. Is there anything that you say that you actively dislike in terms of music choices or genres?

**Respondent:** Like music genres that I dislike in general?

**Interviewer:** Yes, that you would never-

**Respondent:** Or as in the stuff I heard over that week?

**Interviewer:** Yes, so things that you just personally would never listen to because there’s something about it that you just don’t like.

**Respondent:** I’d say like general genres that wouldn’t listen to would probably be I’m not a huge fan of opera or country music but in general I’ve got a pretty open mind. The styles of those two there’s not really any specific one that I strongly dislike.

**Interviewer:** What is it then about opera and country that you don’t particularly like?

**Respondent:** For me opera I just I can’t stand the high-pitched singing, which I just I find the sound to be quite irritating and country I can’t really point out a particular element I guess.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Respondent:** Yes, I guess it’s just not really my thing.

**Interviewer:** So do you think that your musical identity has perhaps changed over time, say as you’re growing up or as you’ve moved friendship groups, or has it remained quite consistent?

**Respondent:** Oh no it’s definitely changed a lot.

**Interviewer:** How would you say it’s changed?

**Respondent:** Well, I’d say obviously when I was younger and stuff you just listen to a lot of kids’ music and that. Then it’s sort of it’s dependent on, like you said, what friends I’m with. Like when I was at primary school I had a friend that was really into his techno and stuff so like Basshunter, Sandstorm that sort of thing so I got into that real dance kind of techno music. Then throughout intermediate/high school my friend group were into rock/heavy metal kind of music so I listened to that for a while. Then pretty much after I left high school that’s when my current friendship group they were really into more the party scene and stuff so festivals and things like that so that’s when I got into the sort of EDM stuff that you’ve probably noticed over the week.

**Interviewer:** Yes. So just going back to something you’ve said in your answers. You said that you obviously used to listen to kids’ music what kind of music would that be?

**Respondent:** Oh jeez [laughs]. Like music similar to the do you know Shrek the film-

**Interviewer:** Oh yes.

**Respondent:** Yes, that kind of kids’ music. I know stuff like Alvin and the Chipmunks, pretty much whatever a popular movie that I’d seen in the day was. I would sort of listen to that kind of soundtrack music I guess.

**Interviewer:** Aha, ok. So when you say that your tastes have been very much defined by the different friendship groups that you’ve been in do did you like that music that they liked from the offset or was it you then actively listened to it because they were your friends?

**Respondent:** Yes, so it was I guess I got exposed to that kind of music. Before I didn’t really know it existed but then after getting exposed to it I found that liked it and picked it up and started listening to it myself. I didn’t just listen to it because they would listen to it I actually genuinely enjoyed listening to it myself.

**Interviewer:** So do you get quite a lot of music recommendations then from your friendship group?

**Respondent:** Yes, definitely do.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So you talk about going to festivals quite a bit in the answers that you’ve already given. Are festivals something that you really enjoy going to? And is that because of the music or for other reasons?

**Respondent:** Yes, absolutely. So yes because some of my friends live a little bit further away and so usually we’ll try to plan a few festivals throughout the year that we’ll try to get to and go to. We enjoy it all like the music and just getting together and hanging out with each other pretty much yes.

**Interviewer:** And are those are those music festivals based on a particular genre of music or are they quite diverse the ones that you go to?

**Respondent:** Yes, I’d say most of them are probably based on more the electronic/dance music but some can be can have a little bit of variance. It might be with a few different floors with different DJs playing but it’s all essentially the same sort of stuff, like it’s electronic but maybe different sub-genres within that.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So you talk about obviously your music tastes being same similar to your friendship group but do you have a would you say that you have a friendship group on Spotify? Do you have connected friends on there at all?

**Respondent:** Yes. So they’re friends that I follow some of their playlists and other friends I’ve got like collaborative playlists with.

**Interviewer:** Oh ok. So how do the collaborative playlists work?

**Respondent:** Basically, you can make a playlist then you can add people to it and then you all just put songs that you like in the playlist.

**Interviewer:** And would you say there is one of you that mainly takes the lead on adding the songs or is it quite even between all of you?

**Respondent:** I’d say it’s actually pretty even. Yes, we all contribute about the same I’d say.

**Interviewer:** And is it all kind of the same style of music that you add into there or is it different stuff?

**Respondent:** Yes, it’s essentially all pretty much the same.

**Interviewer:** Ok and is there ever a time that somebody’s added something or you’ve potentially added something to there that hasn’t been received very well? Like your friends have been ‘why have you added this?’

**Respondent:** We sort of we, probably even if it was we wouldn’t really, I mean I’ve heard a couple of songs I’ve listened to and gone ‘Oh this isn’t really me’ but there isn’t something I’ve actively disliked like ‘I want to get rid of this song’. But I don’t that’s the thing I don’t think we if someone added a song the other person didn’t like I don’t think we would actively go and tell each other that if that makes sense?

**Interviewer:** Yes. Is there a particular time you can recall that you’ve used music to express who you are? Is there kind of like an event or situation something like that where you’ve actively used a song or a genre to show somebody that this is who you are?

**Respondent:** Not particularly to be honest. I don’t really express myself through music especially because most of the music I listen to now is not really a whole lot of meaning behind it. There’s not really many words more just sounds and stuff like that. I can’t really say that I’ve used it to express any particular part of my life. I mean I’ve used it to express that I like that type of music but yes not really to represent a certain part of my life or anything like that. No.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Now I just want to move a little bit onto Spotify. So do you feel that Spotify, the music that you have on Spotify, is an accurate reflection of who you are as a person, in terms of your music tastes?

**Respondent:** Yes, I’d say that was pretty accurate. Yes.

**Interviewer:** Is it do you have quite a diverse selection of music on there or is it all very similar?

**Respondent:** No, I’d say it’s quite diverse. I use different playlists to categorise different types of music that I’m into and stuff like that.

**Interviewer:** And so if somebody looked at Spotify at your Spotify music library do you think they would get a good idea of the person you are?

**Respondent:** Yes, I definitely think that they would.

**Interviewer:** And then since using the platform do you feel that your identity has become more diverse on there or more fixed through your music?

**Respondent:** Oh sorry what was that?

**Interviewer:** Since using the platform do you feel that your musical identity has become more fixed, in terms of your music preferences, or more diverse?

**Respondent:** Oh I’d definitely say it’s become more diverse.

**Interviewer:** Oh ok. In what kind of way?

**Respondent:** Well, I think just because you’ve got access to so much more music that it sort of allows you to be able to listen, especially being able to listen to friends’ playlists and I said that collaborative feature before. I think you tend to just naturally discover more music through that. Well, I I’ve found that anyway.

**Interviewer:** So you feel then that you’ve discovered more music through your friends rather than through the platform recommendations or features?

**Respondent:** Yes, I probably would say that I discover more through my friends but that’s not to say that I haven’t discovered it through the platform’s features, they’re definitely great. But probably I more so through my friends yes.

**Interviewer:** Ok and has there ever been a time when you’re connected friends on Spotify have influenced your music choices? Have you changed what you’re listening to because who you can see online at that particular time?

**Respondent:** Yes, I’d say that that’s probably affected me at a point.

**Interviewer:** How so? How do you think it’s affected you?

**Respondent:** Well, I guess I just see someone who’s into certain kinds of music and so sometimes I’ll listen to that kind of music as well. I guess I it’s an almost you sort of see someone listen to something and make I don’t know maybe it creates a little bit of pressure saying that maybe I should listen to that kind of stuff too.

**Interviewer:** So is it so then do you feel that you’re influenced in terms of you want to be perceived by that person in a certain way or is it that you see that they’ve listened to a song and think ‘Oh that could be good to listen to’? What kind of way has it influenced you?

**Respondent:** Yes well I guess sometimes if I think that I’m listening to a particular song and I think ‘oh this song sounds a bit weird’ or ‘I don’t really like it’ and so I wouldn’t really want my profile to be left as that’s the last song I listened to and then that friend might come and look at it and be like ‘Oh that’s pretty weird. Why did they listen to that?’ Does that make sense?

**Interviewer:** Yes, that makes sense. Yes, that’s great.

**Respondent:** Ok.

**Interviewer:** Ok so I want to now move on to understanding a bit more about your music streaming practices on Spotify, thinking about how you use Spotify during the week. I’m interested to hear about the music that you listen to and how you tend to select it. So how do so how do you use Spotify for your music listening?

**Respondent:** My pattern would be usually on Monday I’ll listen to ‘Discover Weekly’ to try and find new music on there but I often find that it seems to suggest the same sort of music that I’m not really into even though I tried to tune it because you can tell ‘I like this song. I don’t like this song’. It still seems to show me the same sort of stuff so I don’t really find anything useful on there. And then I’ll always just I’ve got like a few friends’ playlists that I’ll watch. When new songs go on there I’ll usually listen to them as I’m more bound to like those and I’ll also use the it makes these ‘Daily Mixes’ as well. So, I’ll try to use those ones for new music. Then outside of that I’ll just listen to my own playlists, l for example if I’m catching a bus to class or work then I’ll just I’ll shuffle one of my own playlists.

**Interviewer:** So how do you find ‘Discover Weekly’? You say the music is very similar. What do you mean? Similar in what way?

**Respondent:** I mean I guess the way I’d explain is that a lot of the music that I find that popped up in there for me was kind of really I’d say underground rap maybe. It’s just really been rap music that I don’t really, you know from very small artists, that I don’t really know and even though I’ve disliked a lot of the music then the next week it will be the same sort of stuff.

**Interviewer:** So do you find then the ‘Daily Mixes’ that you like the songs in there more than the ‘Discover Weekly’?

**Respondent:** Yes definitely.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So, is there a reason that you use Spotify specifically to stream music? Are there any other platforms that you use at all?

**Respondent:** No, not really. The main reason why I use Spotify is actually because my mobile provider pays for it that’s the main one. Because I was actually looking at maybe trying Apple Music just to see what features they’ve got but obviously a big one is that it wouldn’t be paid for so that’s pretty much the reason why I’ve got Spotify yes.

**Interviewer:** So you have a so is your account premium?

**Respondent:** Yes, it is.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Are there certain things that you like or dislike about using Spotify?

**Respondent:** Yes, obviously I like how easy it is to find music and just you know don’t have to obviously you’ve got the subscriptions above that you don’t have to pay for each song or go hunting on the Internet for it. It’s all there. I don’t know there are a few things about Spotify that I find its functionalities quite limited, things like smart playlists or song ratings things like that. I can find that can be a little bit buggy if you know what I mean? Like it’s sometimes it just doesn’t work as expected.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** For example, if my Internet is not that great sometimes it might drop for a little bit and then my Internet will come back up but then Spotify seems to take quite a long time to recover and so my music stops for quite a while and that that can a bit frustrating.

**Interviewer:** Yes. So you’ve talked about using the ‘Discover Weekly’ and the ‘Daily Mixes’. Is there anything else that you use on Spotify in terms of their features? So do you use, for example, the radio feature on there or anything like that? The similar artists tabs? That kind of thing.

**Respondent:** Right yes. Yes, I use the radio a little bit. I’ve also used their ‘Release Radar’ playlist a little bit.

**Interviewer:** How do you find them?

**Respondent:** I find ‘Release Radar’ is pretty good. So yes that’s the one where it’s it pretty much just gives you all the new songs of the artists I usually listen to and it’ll just chuck their new songs in there each week. The radio, for me it’s I’d say like fifty-fifty. Like sometimes it’s good, sometimes it’s bad. I really notice a particular pattern when it’s good or bad…yes I think it’s probably dependent on the artist maybe? Sometimes when I listen to EDM it’s pretty good and most artists are good but in certain other genres maybe not so great.

**Interviewer:** So do you use these features then specifically for music discovery or for something else?

**Respondent:** Yes, for just for music discovery.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Do you have you got any idea roughly how many tracks you have in your Spotify music library?

**Respondent:** I’d say probably somewhere near a thousand.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And are these all the same artist or genre or do you feel they are quite eclectic?

**Respondent:** No, I’d say that they are quite spread out, quite different.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Has that been a conscious choice to have it quite eclectic or has that just happened over time?

**Respondent:** No, I think it’s just happened over time.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So your scrobble logs show that you actually listen to quite a lot of different artists. Again, is this something that you’re conscious of when you start streaming music or does this just happen?

**Respondent:** Yes, I guess I’m pretty conscious of it. It’s sort of I’ll stream different types of music throughout the day I guess and also maybe it’ll depend on mood. If I’m feeling quite upbeat and in a good mood I’ll probably put on some faster or more upbeat music or if I’m obviously if I’m just doing some work or something like that then I might want some more laid back music and then sometime if it’s later on in the night and I feel like sitting down a little bit then I’ll put on some slow music.

**Interviewer:** And would you say that the laid back and slow music is still within the dance genre or do you go to different genres for that kind of music?

**Respondent:** Honestly, it’s a bit of a mixed bag. I’d say that some of it would still be in the dance genre but I mean some of it is completely different. So I’d say both.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So when you go on to Spotify do you know what music you want to stream or is it a case that you’re looking through different things not knowing what you want to listen to?

**Respondent:** Honestly that just depends. Sometimes yes, I’ll go to Spotify and knowing exactly what I want to listen to. Sometimes I’ll make a queue and then other times I’ll just I’ll hit shuffle on a playlist or two and see what happens.

**Interviewer:** And how do you find the shuffle function?

**Respondent:** Honestly not that great. I found that with large playlists it often tends to shuffle the same songs quite often.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And obviously with your playlists being and your music choices being quite eclectic, do you mind that when you shuffle it perhaps mixes genres and artists in quite different ways or do you find actually that experience of music listening quite enjoyable?

**Respondent:** Yes. I do find it enjoyable so, I don’t know if this is useful or not, what I’ll do is I’ll make playlists loosely based around different genres and then I’ll have another playlist which is just everything pretty much chucked in together and so if I feel like listening to a specific genre then I’ll shuffle that playlist up otherwise I’ll just shuffle the playlist with everything in it.

**Interviewer:** No, that is really interesting, really interesting. So you’ve started to talk a little bit about what you would sometimes listen to during the week. Can you expand on how your music listening potentially changes over the week? So from your Monday morning to the weekend how does well does your music streaming change and, if so, how does it change?

**Respondent:** Yes, so I wouldn’t say that it changes on a day-to-day basis. It’s more just the general mood of that day so if I’ve got an event coming up towards the end of the week then generally I’ll probably listen start listening to that like more upbeat EDM type music. During the beginning of the week I’d say it’s probably more like I said ‘Discover Weekly’ so I feel like discovering stuff so in that case it can be pretty random it could be almost anything. And middle of the week basically it’s just mood dependent. I don’t think any week would be particularly the same to be honest. Yes so I couldn’t really give you a weekly outline of what kind of music I listen to on a day-by-day basis. Sorry.

**Interviewer:** No that’s fine. That’s ok. So you talked about discovery on Monday. What about music for work? Do you listen to music while you’re working?

**Respondent:** Yes, I do. So usually music I listen to at work would be the more laid back music so it’s not because EDM is I found it’s quite hard to listen and focus on work at the same time.

**Interviewer:** Yes, it’s quite intense [laughs].

**Respondent:** Yes [laughs]. It it’s pretty hardcore so yes I’ll usually find a laidback playlist. Sometimes, I mean I didn’t do it last week I don’t think, but sometimes I’ll go on Spotify and I might just find one of their random playlists like you can sort of browse by moods and go into one I think there’s one called ‘chill’. You can just yes I’ll just shuffle one of those and just yes. Because it’s just background noise I guess.

**Interviewer:** Yes ok. So, is it always music from Spotify that you would listen to for work or is it any of your own personal music that you would listen to?

**Respondent:** It’s yes it’s mostly music from Spotify.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And would that music be what you’re familiar with or not familiar with?

**Respondent:** A lot of the time when I work or do something where it’s like music is a background thing I’ll try to put on something new because then I’m not actively focusing on the music but then if I hear a song that I like it’ll jump out and grab my attention and that’s how I try to find new music.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And then what about over the weekend? Do you feel your what you listen to over the weekend changes from during the week?

**Respondent:** Yes, definitely. Well usually over the weekend it’s mostly EDM and stuff because I’m usually go to a friend’s place or something like that and we’ll have or it’ll be a party because I’m in my 21st age and stuff so it’s quite a lot of partying and stuff so…it’s more of when the EDM side comes out.

**Interviewer:** Yes ok because it was interesting just over the week that I observed that you had you played the least music over the weekend. Was there a reason for that or did is that just kind of how it happened this weekend?

**Respondent:** That yes that probably would have been how it happened this weekend because my friends take turns at playing music at parties and stuff so obviously I’m not playing the music then. Yes, I guess it doesn’t show up.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Then what about the festivals that you talk about? So when you’re coming up to a festival do you actively choose to listen to artists or the music styles that you’re going to be listening to at the festivals?

**Respondent:** Yes. I generally do that.

**Interviewer:** Ok-

**Respondent:** That’s pretty accurate.

**Interviewer:** -yes ok. So, going back then to your choices of music based on mood when you choose music is that to put you into a certain mood or get you out of a mood a certain mood?

**Respondent:** I’d say it’s more to put me into a certain mood.

**Interviewer:** Ok

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And is that always the chill stuff for work or is there other kind of music that you listen to based on mood?

**Respondent:** I’d say pretty much all the music I listen to is based on mood-

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Respondent:** - I’d say like 90% of the time. I mean sometimes I’ll just I’m not in a specific mood so I’ll just put on a random mix of music but most of the time like when I put on one of my specific playlists like it’s to get me into that mood, whether it’s a chilled out one or a more hyped up one I guess or whatever the mood is at the time.

**Interviewer:** And do you use do you often use the Spotify’s own playlists based on mood or is it more your own music that you use for getting yourself into a particular mood?

**Respondent:** Yes, it’s more my own playlists or a friend’s playlist but not Spotify’s own ones generally not.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So how have then how have your music choices changed since you started using Spotify?

**Respondent:** Music choices changed? Well, I guess I’m a bit more random now. I’ll just sometimes I’ll try out a playlist of music that it’s it’ll still be in I’ll still be within my niche, it’ll still be in the same sort of genre that I usually listen to, but you know I’ll listen to a lot of songs that I probably wouldn’t of bothered listening to or tried listening to if Spotify wasn’t there like the songs weren’t readily there. It’s like sometimes I’ll just listen to a pre-made playlists or a friend’s playlist instead of just listening to my own music.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And do you always have your account set to public on Spotify?

**Respondent:** Yes, that’s set to public.

**Interviewer:** Is there a reason for that?

**Respondent:** No, not really. I guess I share music with a few of my friends. We always want to share our music together so I mean so not really too worried about it.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And do you feel that because you have your account set to public that sometimes your listening choices change because of that?

**Respondent:** Yes, I’d definitely say that. Probably I’d fix it a little bit.

**Interviewer:** Ok in in what way then do you feel that that changes?

**Respondent:** I said before I think it was certain people are online I listen to certain types of music but sometimes then I’ll also if I feel like listening to something that might be a little bit strange or I look a bit weird I might just set it a temporary private setting.

**Interviewer:** So there is occasions then when you do change you account your account to private?

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Does that happen quite a lot or is that not very often at all?

**Respondent:** No, it’s not very often.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So getting back then to your music library on Spotify, how often would you say that you add tracks to your library?

**Respondent:** I’d say maybe not as often now as I used to. Maybe two or three times a week.

**Interviewer:** And when you say ‘not as often as you used to’ do you think there is a reason for that?

**Respondent:** Yes I guess it’s just this year I just haven’t really discovered as much music as I used to. I’m not really sure why particularly but…

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Respondent:** Yes, I just haven’t found as much stuff that I wanted to add recently I think.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So when you then listen to your on Monday when you tend to do the discovery features is there not much music then that you add to your library from that?

**Respondent:** Sorry what was that?

**Interviewer:** So when on a Monday when you say you typically use the ‘Discover Weekly’ and ‘Daily Mixes’ do you find that you don’t tend to add much music from those discovery tools?

**Respondent:** Yes, I’d say that’s pretty accurate.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And have you do you ever remove songs from your music library? Do you ever delete them?

**Respondent:** Yes I do occasionally but not very often-

**Interviewer:** Ok so what

**Respondent:** -Generally it will be it’ll be old songs like I think sometimes because obviously playlists are quite big and sometimes I’ll hit shuffle and then [inaudible] if I hear a song quite often that I find myself skipping quite a lot then I’ll make an effort to go on and remove it.

**Interviewer:** And what is it about that song then that makes you want to delete it?

**Respondent:** Yes, good question [laughs]. I guess it’s the majority of it is after I hear a song a few times, especially if it’s I’d say maybe a modern pop song where it’s just you know hear it initially and you’re like ‘oh that’s nice’ and then you listen to it a few times then it sort of, I don’t know, I don’t enjoy it as much anymore so I’ll remove it. I guess it’s just my taste sort of changes a bit and I don’t like that song much anymore or that type of genre much anymore I’ll get rid of it.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So say then things that you’ve liked from your friendship groups in the past, so when you were talking about the rock music, would you then now not would you if you came across a song that of that genre that you used to like would you actually delete it from your library now?

**Respondent:** Yes, I would probably delete it. I’ve made it I’ve made a little playlist that’s got a few of the songs that I really like from that time but l I hardly ever touch it.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Respondent:** So I would take it off my playlists that I listen to quite often because I just skip over it most of the time.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So you talk about playlists quite a lot. Are personal playlists on Spotify quite important to you?

**Respondent:** Yes, definitely.

**Interviewer:** In what ways are they do you feel that they are important?

**Respondent:** I find that they’re great for organising my music. I find it very easy to categorise all the stuff that I’m into.

**Interviewer:** And -

**Respondent:** Because I think if I. Sorry.

**Interviewer:** No, you carry on. Carry on.

**Respondent:** Oh sorry yes so basically I think if I just had all my music in one giant library I find myself skipping heaps of songs and it would be really annoying trying to find what I want to listen to.

**Interviewer:** So how then do you tend to add organise your playlists?

**Respondent:** Mainly by genre-

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Respondent:**  -yes pretty much just by mood or genre.

**Interviewer:** So in terms of genre then obviously there’s you’ve brought up that you like EDM so are there other types of playlist genres that you’ve got or are they sub-genres of EDM?

**Respondent:** No, I’ve got other ones. Hang on let me have a look…yes so there’s a bit of rap, a bit of house music, a bit of other stuff so there’s other genres that I don’t even know what genres they are sort of a mix of stuff that sounds similar maybe Indie maybe. Yes, I wouldn’t be able to categorise it very well, low-fi something like that and then I’ve got a big playlist that’s got everything for if I just don’t really know what I want to listen to at the time. You can shuffle that.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So how many playlists then would you say that you actually have on your Spotify account?

**Respondent:** Maybe ten, fifteen?

**Interviewer:** Ok. And what about the collaborative ones. How many of those do you have?

**Respondent:** I have...six.

**Interviewer:** Ok and are the collaborative ones all with the same friends or are they different groups of friends?

**Respondent:** No, they’re different groups of friends.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And so if they’re different groups of friends do they contain different styles of music or are they all broadly quite similar?

**Respondent:** Yes, they also contain different styles of music.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So out of all of your playlists then which would you say is the one that you most often play?

**Respondent:** I’d say that that would be a mix of between the EDM one or the more laid-back one. I wouldn’t know which one I listen to more often to be honest.

**Interviewer:** Ok. What is it about those two that you think makes you play them the most?

**Respondent:** I guess they just encompass my mood the best most of the time. I’m either in a mood where I just want to kick back, not focus on the music so much, or I’m if I’m getting ready to go out for a night or something like that or just feeling in a good mood then I’ll be listening to the other music that’s more I guess more hyping, hypes you up.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Yes, that’s really interesting. In terms of then discovering new music so would you say you’re a person that likes to discover new music?

**Respondent:** Yes definitely.

**Interviewer:** What is it about discovering new music that you that you like?

**Respondent:** It’s honestly hard to say. I just get a really good feeling when I find new music. It listening to music just makes me happy and so when I find new songs I like then it puts me in a good mood. I like a huge range of stuff and I listen to music quite a lot so if I didn’t find new music I think I’d get sick of the existing stuff I had pretty quickly.

**Interviewer:** So how do you tend to discover new music?

**Respondent:** Well mostly through my friends’ playlists or those collaborative playlists. I’d say that’s probably the main way and then another I mean every now and then if I’m watching a movie or something I might hear a song on there, I mean it’s pretty rare, but sometimes I’ll hear a song there and I’ll like it. Sometimes through Spotify’s built-in playlists or discover features but that’s pretty rare. Sometimes a friend will recommend they’ll just tell me ‘look up this song’ and then I’ll have a listen to it and if I like it then I’ll add it to my playlist.

**Interviewer:** So would you say then that most of your music discovery comes from Spotify or from elsewhere?

**Respondent:** I’d probably say elsewhere.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So where so elsewhere in terms of your friends?

**Respondent:** Yes mainly.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So do you feel then that Spotify actually does help you to find new music?

**Respondent:** Definitely it does yes.

**Interviewer:** How do you feel how do you feel that it helps you to do that?

**Respondent:** Well, I feel l just because it’s got such a vast amount of music on there. I think the main thing on Spotify is that the music is so easily accessible and that they do have those built in playlists that you can go and look through but also being able to look at your friends through Spotify if that counts-

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:**  -because then you can look through other people’s playlists and see what they’re listening to.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** And I mean a little bit through the discovery features I guess. For me, like I said, ‘Discover Weekly’ hasn’t been super effective for me but ‘Release Radar’ is pretty good and the ‘Daily Mixes’ are pretty good as well.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So you say that obviously Spotify makes new music easily accessible is there any times that you’ve actually searched for new music and not used and not found it through their discovery tools? So have you ever actually browsed for new music?

**Respondent:** For a particular song or just a particular or a certain type of music?

**Interviewer:** Yes so you’ve well either really. So have you, instead of obviously looking at what Spotify has on their recommendations, have you ever actively, I don’t know, heard a band or a song and then actively searched for it on Spotify?

**Respondent:** Oh yes definitely. Quite a lot of the time yes.

**Interviewer:** Ok and do you do you feel that’s an easy thing for you to do?

**Respondent:** Yes. It’s pretty easy well usually what will happen is because I’ve if you hear a song on the radio or in a movie or you’re walking around somewhere and that’s when you hear it then generally I have to, I mean if I really like then I’ll get a few of the lyrics and then I have to google that to get the name of the song. Then I can look it up on Spotify.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So have you got can you think of a specific example of a song or an artist that you’ve discovered on Spotify that you’ve really liked?

**Respondent:** A song or an artist? Nothing really jumps out at me. Most of the stuff I’ve discovered recently has been through friends.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Respondent:** No, I can’t really think of one off the top of my head. Sorry.

**Interviewer:** That’s ok. That’s no problem at all. So when you discover new music do you prefer that to be similar to the tastes that you already have or something completely different?

**Respondent:** Honestly, I don’t really mind in that regard. I’d say I’m pretty open to most types of music so if it’s something new that’s cool but if it’s something along the lines of I’m into that’s also cool as well.

**Interviewer:** Ok and do you feel that Spotify in terms of their own features, so not thinking about your friends’ playlists or your collaborative playlists but Spotify itself, do you think that is it helps you discover music that’s completely different?

**Respondent:** Yes, I definitely think it does, especially from having especially from having the browse feature there. I’ve said that you can look through different genres and there’s a lot of different sub-genres within some playlists [inaudible] so that’s pretty cool.

**Interviewer:** Ok that’s great. So the final bit that I want to think about is whether you think Spotify reflects who you are. So do you feel that Spotify makes it easy for you to construct and manage your music tastes?

**Respondent:** Yes, I think it makes it makes it pretty easy. I agree with that yes.

**Interviewer:** Is there any kind of aspect in particular that you think makes it easy?

**Respondent:** Aspect that what sorry?

**Interviewer:** An aspect of Spotify that makes it easy for you to construct and manage your music tastes on there?

**Respondent:** I mean obviously I think the playlist is a great feature and then it’s so easy to find music. Before that you’d have to go buy it on the high street or find it on YouTube or something like that so I think it just sort of centralises the whole thing if that makes sense. It like it makes it one place where you can go grab and put it on a playlist and then it’s just convenient I guess.

**Interviewer:** And does its interface at all influence your music choices?

**Respondent:**  No, I wouldn’t say that.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So obviously, well at least in the UK recently, there’s been a lot in the news about how online platforms are collecting and using personal data. Are you conscious that Spotify is collecting data when you stream music at all?

**Respondent:** Yes, I am.

**Interviewer:** And does that bother you or are you not bothered by it?

**Respondent:** No, it doesn’t really bother me.

**Interviewer:** Ok. In what kind of sense does it not bother you?

**Respondent:** Well, I believe the information that they clicked in, because it’s coming from so many different people, I think it would just be largely crowd sourced. I don’t think they would collect it just to target you specifically so I think I believe that they’re just getting it to improve their platform. I don’t really see what their incentive would be for getting one specific person’s information to spy on them or anything like that so. I don’t really have a problem with them getting their information like I just assume they’re using it for the benefit of their platform.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And say if they were collecting information just about you would that change the way that you felt about the platform or would you still not be that bothered by it?

**Respondent:** I guess that would depend on the degree of information. Yes, I guess if they were targeting me specifically then I would be a bit concerned.

**Interviewer:** Ok, that’s very interesting. So we’ve talked a little bit about Spotify recommendations are there any particular recommendations that you’ve either loved or hated?

**Respondent:** Recommendations as in like from those like ‘Discover Weekly’ playlists and stuff like that?

**Interviewer:** Yes or from a say Spotify similar artist tabs so their tools features that they have for recommendation.

**Respondent:** Yes so I mean the similar artists I found have been pretty good. Yes. Other recommendations from radios and stuff they, like I say, have been a bit of a mixed bag no strong feelings there. I would say like ‘Discover Weekly’ has been pretty bad for me though like I’d say that needs a bit of improvement.

**Interviewer:** How would you like them to improve that? What would make that a better feature for you?

**Respondent:** Well, I think just making the stuff they’ve given me more accurate because the songs that they give me they seem to be in the same niche genre and they don’t seem to change very much, like at all, even though my listening tastes are quite different so I think it would be nice to see it more adapt to what I actually listen to I guess.

**Interviewer:** So when you say you would like it to be more accurate do in what kind of sense do you mean ‘accurate’?

**Respondent:** Well, the music that they put in there is it’s not even within from the same it does it’s not very similar to the music I listen to so I mean I guess it’s the point of ‘Discover Weekly’ but it’s all very very each song in there is very similar to one another so if you don’t like one of the songs you probably won’t like any of them in there. So when you tell it that you don’t like the songs it continues to put those kind of songs in there anyway. It doesn’t really shift through genres, it doesn’t change the genre or it doesn’t try to match the stuff you already listen to.

**Interviewer:** And do you feel that the recommendations that Spotify gives to you influence influences your music listening?

**Respondent:** Yes I’d say that it influences it a bit, not a lot. I mean I’d say that it’s probably more influenced by my friends.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So the last question I have is being part of my research has that made you reflect or change the way that you have used Spotify at all?

**Respondent:** Yes, I guess it has a little bit. Yes it’s sort of made me think about, especially the part where how I maybe change the music I listen to a little bit when certain friends are online, that made me reflect over that a little bit.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Well, it’s been a great interview. Thank you very much for taking time out of your day to speak to me. And it’s been really useful and interesting and will definitely help me in my PhD research. I really appreciate it. Is there anything from your side that you want to expand on or talk about that we’ve not touched on?

**Respondent:**  No that’s fine. No, I wish you all the best with your research and I’m glad I could help.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much. Enjoy the rest of your day over in New Zealand.

**Respondent:** Yes, thank you very much. You too.

**Interviewer:** Thank you. Speak to you soon. Bye.

**Respondent:** Ok thank you. Bye.

[End of transcript]

# Transcript: In-04-M

[00:00]

**Interviewer:** The way it’ll work is that the interview will roughly last around an hour and it’s very much about you talking about your experiences and uses of Spotify. I have some questions to ask but I will let you expand and talk about things as you wish. When you’re talking I might write a couple of notes down but that’s just purely for me to maybe talk about something later on or ask you something that I’ve maybe not understood or that I’d like a little bit more detail about. I’ve also got a recorder here. It’s just a voice recording so just recording what you say. So before we get going is there anything any questions that you have or any other information you would like before we get started?

**Respondent:** No not really.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So firstly I’d like to ask you a little bit about how music relates to your identity. So how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

**Respondent:** As a music listener?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** That’s pretty interesting. I don’t think I’ve ever really thought about it. I think music makes up a huge part of my personality and my identity because of who I listen to and the ideas I get from that music and the fact that it’s one of very few topics or areas that my family, anyone in my family, or any of my friends actually talk about, like relate to. I’m not totally sure how else to expand on that at least at the moment. Maybe I’ll think of something a little bit later.

**Interviewer:** Yes, of course. So when you say you get ideas from music, what do you mean by that?

**Respondent:** Take for instance David Bowie’s ‘Black Star’, which is probably one of my favourite albums. It’s just how different artists or even different people deal with like death, dealing with knowing that they’re going to pass away soon. How he interprets his death is very different to say how Leonard Cohen does. His last album, I can’t remember the name, but it’s just different topics and different perspectives on how to deal with certain trauma and stuff. Or for instance how I might relate to like abandonment issues. For instance, with ‘Carrie and Lowell’ by Sufjan Stevens it’s not just a way for me to take ideas on how to process this stuff but it’s also a way for me to relate to I guess my family and how they’ve dealt with these issues or even my other friends.

**Interviewer:** And when you talk about then how they deal with things like that, so about death and abandonment, is that very much coming from the lyrics or from the sound or a bit of both?

**Respondent:** I think it’s a combination. It depends on the person because I know for instance my brother and well most of family they kind of focus on the actual musical aspects, the production and stuff, while I tend to focus more on the lyrics. But I think it’s a healthy mix overall though.

**Interviewer:** So when you listen then to a song you really listen to the lyrics?

**Respondent:** Yes, I try my best to. Sometimes I can’t always catch everything in which case I’ll try to use something like Genius which if it’s possible they usually have like lyrics and stuff, like other people’s interpretations of the those lyrics, which always helps in trying to form type some type of discussion about it.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So then would you say then that music is an important part of who you are?

**Respondent:** Oh definitely. Of like things I’m interested in, it’s probably second most important aspect of me.

**Interviewer:** Ah ok. So what would you consider then to be the first most important aspect to who you are?

**Respondent:** Probably my interest in film which in fairness incorporates a lot of music too. So there is a lot of interplay there.

**Interviewer:** I’m sure. Has there been a particular time that you’ve specifically and consciously used music to reflect who you are to somebody else?

**Respondent:** I want to say yes and it’s kind of hard at the moment because I think it happened a lot in the first half of this year because I went through a really kind of bad break-up. It was a combination of that and trying to explore other aspects to get my feelings across. I think that that would probably be the times that I did I had done that the most. For instance, I remember showing a lot of my friends what is I would say my favourite song and my perspective on this song changed before and after this break-up. The song was ‘Something About Us’ by Daft Punk. I remember showing a lot of my friends that just because it means an incredibly amount it means a lot to me and so it kind of changed how my mood and my overall mental state changed.

**Interviewer:** Ok and when you showed your friends that were you conscious about what they would think about that, your music choice, or was it very much ‘Well this is me and I’m not bothered if you like it or not’?

**Respondent:** No. I think a lot of times I’m very conscious about what I show people because I know that not everyone has the same musical tastes that I do. So usually when I share something I either want it to be something that I feel is pretty universal to enjoy or something that’s very specific to me and I know they may not but I know they might have maybe an adverse reaction to it at first or something. I think I stay very conscious about what and who I show certain music, or even certain tracks, and stuff too.

**Interviewer:** So if you thought then that your friends wouldn’t like a song that you particularly liked, would you choose not to share it with them?

**Respondent:** Yes, I actually do think so.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So you’ve talked about music to convey feelings and moods. Is that always the way that you select and pick music?

**Respondent:** Actually yes. I think pretty much all the time I try to have the music that I’m playing, or that I show other people, reflect how I’m feeling at the time or how I’m thinking. Even if it’s like more like pop music or it’s something to put on in the background I try to have it kind of reflect who I am at that moment.

**Interviewer:** So when you choose music then for mood, how to you select it?

**Respondent:** Yes, I definitely think it’s what I’m currently feeling and where I am at that moment, not necessarily where I want to be or where I’m trying to go.

**Interviewer:** And also the importance of lyrics, are lyrics important to you in all your song choices?

**Respondent:** I think it largely depends on the artist but also I guess the number of times I’ve listened to that song. So how I tend to listen to music, at least at first, is more of an overview, trying to take in as much as I can, and say then, the second or third time I’m listening through, I’ll pull up the actual lyrics and I’ll try to go through them with the song and see how they relate.

**Interviewer:** So would you say that there is a specific genre of music you like?

**Respondent:** Yes, I definitely think hip-hop or rap would be at least a genre I listen to the most and it also happens to be one that’s very heavily focused on the lyrics. I don’t think that it’s a coincidence that I enjoy that genre a lot.

**Interviewer:** It’s interesting you say that actually because looking through your scrobble logs this week, well last week, Kayne West came out as the artist that you’d streamed the most during that week. Would you say that’s an accurate reflection of your weekly streaming?

**Respondent:** I mean I think on a week-by-week basis it might change on who that is. I definitely enjoy his music a lot and I think it’s mainly due to the fact he released so many albums this year and one of them is like my favourite album of the year. Actually, his release of ‘Yay’ and ‘Kids See Ghosts’ I’ve been listening to a lot since their release so I think it’s pretty reflective at the moment but not necessarily for this same week next year or last year.

**Interviewer:** Oh ok. So what is it about him then currently that you’re really liking?

**Respondent:** I think it has to do with the vulnerability and that it begins like with ‘Yay’ and the title of the opening track is called ‘I Thought About Killing You’, which is a very different way of him opening up an album. It’s different than all the other ones which kind of just throw you in. This one leads you on, it’s more of a spoken word about him trying to deal with his mental health, his relationship with not just the media but also with his family and everything. I mean even the album art says what was it? It was ‘I hate being bipolar, I love it’ or something along those lines and so that’s more about a focus on exposing yourself and saying ‘These are the problems that I deal with’ and trying to work through them. I think that the ideas that begin on ‘Yay’ are kind of fulfilled on ‘Kids See Ghosts’, which is a collaboration with Kanye West and Kid Cudi. They both have obvious, not obviously, they both have been going through a lot, not just by themselves but also between each other-the relationship hasn’t exactly been the best over the last few years. To me it feels like they’ve found a perfect pair with each other and that, for instance there’s a track called ‘I’m Free’ on ‘Kids See Ghosts’ which, to me, it feels very existentially free and that it doesn’t matter what the problems they have now they feel free, they feel they’ve finally mastered everything that they could do, at least at this moment. They’re free to do or be who they are.

**Interviewer:** That’s great. So would you say then when you listen to music you also then, because you’ve obviously talked about Kayne West and him being bipolar, does their outside life influence how you listen to their music? So the things that they’re going through in their personal life out in the media do you take that into account when you listening to it?

**Respondent:** Yes definitely. For instance, that’s what happened with I think his name was Ameer Vann, who was a member of Brockhampton, and prior to that, before he was removed from the group, I believe he was accused of sexual assault, like over like a five-year period over and over and being abusive towards his then-girlfriend and everything. To me, that kind of really put a huge stain on his aspect of the music, which is why I don’t really listen to the first three ‘Saturation’ albums which are the albums he appeared on. And he is also on the cover art for those albums. I would say the stuff that happens outside of the music definitely influences how I interpret and how I consume the music too.

**Interviewer:** So even if you felt that their music, their songs at least, were a reflection of who you are and were very significant to your identity at the time, you would choose not to listen to them if they’ve became a bit controversial in their personal lives?

**Respondent:** Yes, I think ultimately it depends on the type of controversy and how frequent and how serious it is. So for Kanye every album cycle there is always some controversy and this time it was him coming out in full support of Donald Trump and then it was his comments on TMZ and everything. But to me at least I feel that’s normal for him because it’s happened with ‘Yeezus’ when he was talking about, on his interviews with Sway, him coming out and talking about he feels shunned by the fashion industry and everything. He feels like he is an artist but he can’t get anywhere and stuff like that or during ‘The Life of Pablo’ during his tour all of his rants and everything and talking about how Jay-Z had people out to kill him and stuff. Yeah, he is very weird.

**Interviewer:** Controversial definitely. Ok so then also looking at your scrobble logs, as you’ve reflected on yourself, there is a lot of rap and hip-hop in there and then there was also some Beatles in there. How do they fit in to your music tastes?

**Respondent:** Oh, I absolutely love The Beatles. I didn’t ever have the chance to listen to them until they came to Spotify and I’ve always wanted to listen to them but I never had the money or the opportunity to actually listen to their actual records. They kind of fall in and out for me of how often I’ll listen to them. Usually it’ll have to be a reminder because I know Paul McCartney has an album or he’s released a few singles recently and so that spurred me on like ‘Oh, I need to I need to go back and listen to The Beatles’ and I should you know?

**Interviewer:** And how do you feels that plays in with your existing music preferences?

**Respondent:** I feel like it’s very different I would say because a majority I know looking back on my, like often times through the Spotify data, because I’ve used Spotify I think for three or four years now, often times it’ll be rap or hip-hop artists that make my ‘End of the Year’ or ‘Throwback’ playlists and I know Kendrick Lamar is actually my number one most listened to artist and then The Beatles kind of rank somewhere near there. To me, it’s always surprising that I’ve listened to The Beatles enough that they end up being one of my most popular artists, especially when they are completely surrounded by other hip-hop or rap artists.

**Interviewer:** So are you saying then that they are a band that are completely removed from your normal choices? Or are there other artists that you listen to that have similarities with The Beatles?

**Respondent:** I think they are pretty far removed because I’m just thinking through a lot of my music and most of it is mainly just strictly hip-hop or rap so there are not really any artists that are similar to them in either instrumentation or genre I would say, at least that I listen to.

**Interviewer:** So we’ve talked a fair bit about your music likes. Is there anything that you really dislike?

**Respondent:** No, actually not really because I try my best to be open to music just because I might enjoy it. It might be something that I need at that moment. My brother and my sister we will often send music to each other and stuff and we’ll show music to each other, we will like sit down and listen to an album together and everything. It’s very interesting and I think because of that type of experience I’ve been more open to listening to other genres, other pieces of music and stuff.

**Interviewer:** Ok. You’ve spoken about liking the lyrical content of music, the emotion and mood of music. Has this always been the case or is it something that has changed over time?

**Respondent:**  Yes, it’s definitely changed over time. I know during middle school I used to listen to a lot more rock I guess, as the kind of giant genre it is, a lot more of that type of music and less hip-hop and everything. It’s also changed in that it was very angsty and it was around the time that my mum had left so, for me, it makes sense that I would gravitate towards that type of music. Now that I’ve matured a bit and kind of reconciled with that I’m able to explore different areas. I think it mainly began with listening to Kendrick Lamar’s ‘Good Kid, M.A.A.D City’, back in 2012, so from there it was like ‘Man, I’ve been kind of missing out on all this good music’. I think with that it was a shift in less in genre focus but a shift in lyrical content. When I was listening to rock music a lot I didn’t really care about what they were saying, I was just listening to how it felt and now it’s more about ‘Oh, what are they trying to say? What are they trying to tell me?’

**Interviewer:** So do you ever listen to rock now? Is there any time that you go back and revisit some of your old favourite songs or is that now a genre that doesn’t appeal to you at all?

**Respondent:** Yes, I don’t think it’s a genre that really appeals to me honestly. I think it has to do with the fact that because of what it meant to me at the time it’s a period I’d rather not revisit so I think that’s mainly why I kind of refuse to, at least the music that I did listen to. A lot of my friends listen to rock music and a lot of heavier rock and everything so when they play music I’m perfectly fine. I enjoy it but it’s not something I’ll go out of my way to listen to.

**Interviewer:** So have a lot of your music choices have been shaped by your life experiences?

**Respondent:** Definitely, definitely. For instance, I had loved David Bowie’s album and Leonard Cohen’s when they were released but I didn’t really revisit them until after my break-up. I think part of that has to do with the subject matter, it’s death. At least for me it was a metaphor for the death of that relationship and that was the linkage. I know in the beginning of the year that’s really what I was listening to a lot, even though they’re typically out of genre for me. Not only that but also for instance Death Grips. I think it was ‘Powers that Be’ I was listening to quite a lot at the beginning or towards the first six months of this year, until the release this summer. The subject matter that Death Grips talks about it’s very serious, very I guess dark. It’s very taboo I guess so in that way I can relate to it. It was similar to how I was feeling.

**Interviewer:** So would you go and intentionally find this music? So, obviously at this point in your life, did you think ‘Leonard Cohen is exactly what I need to hear so therefore I’m going go back and listen to him’ or what is very much by chance that it suddenly appeared again in your life?

**Respondent:** I think it was a little of both. The Leonard Cohen is more of the latter, where it started appearing in my Daily Mixes. I was like ‘Wow, I need to revisit that album because it sounds like exactly what I need right at this moment’. But it was different than say with David Bowie or Death Grips where I was like ‘Oh, I already know that this is something that I want to listen to, that I need to listen to’.

**Interviewer:** How would you describe Death Grips’ music? I’m not familiar with them.

**Respondent:** Yes, I always have trouble trying to explain what Death Grips, like their music and their sound, is. I guess the best I could try to describe it is it is experimental noise rap. It’s super weird because there’s only three members and they don’t really rap. I mean they’re also from very different genres too. So it’s very unique, at least in my experience. It’s unique in that they’re trying to push the boundaries of hip-hop and rap because they don’t rap and they don’t really have a lot of the staples of being a hip-hop group or anything. So that’s probably the closest but they’re very adamant about like an industrial or noise sound.

**Interviewer:** Ok. They sound very interesting. So what about your friendship groups? Are your music tastes similar to your friend groups?

**Respondent:** Not, no. Actually they’re not. It’s something that I’ve noticed time and time again. Because I mentioned earlier that some of my friends, this one particular friend group which I’ve had the longest, they tend to listen to more rock music and well heavier music and everything, more in that rock and other sub-genres. They don’t tend to listen to most of the music that I listen to, like hip-hop or tap or anything in the sub-genres in there, which is pretty interesting. I think, I don’t remember what day it was, but we were hanging out and we were going to, because my friend has just gone through a break-up, and so we all decided we need to spend time together, we need to hang out. Normally, the driver will play the music and its usually System of the Down or something along those lines. But his phone was dying so I was like ‘Alright well let me play the music’ and that’s really the only time that they ever are exposed into the hip-hop genre is when I’m the one doing it. It was actually convenient because I was playing ‘Kids See Ghosts’, I just played the entire album straight through, and I had asked them after ‘Oh, what did you what did you think of the album?’ And they they enjoyed it so I was like ‘Oh’. It made me feel validated in my interests.

**Interviewer:** So would you say then, because of that difference, your friends have never influenced your music tastes?

**Respondent:** Yeah, I think that pretty accurate honestly, at least for that friend group. There might be songs here and there but beyond that it’s really my thing.

**Interviewer:** Do your friends tend to react to the music that you listen to? Do you consider their reaction before playing it to them?

**Respondent:** Yes definitely. That was one reason why after we got out the car I asked them ‘Oh what did you think of that music? What did you think of that album?’ That was mainly why kind of probing like if I play more music are you going to enjoy what else I play? That was why. Because I know that I’ve played Death Grips for them and they’re just like ‘No, this isn’t for me’. So it’s like bands like that. Stuff even by David Bowie to an extent some other friends in that they’re like ‘Oh, it’s nice but it’s not something I’m going to listen to’, that’s usually how they phrase it. I also feel it is kind of them being generous and being very ‘I don’t really like this but I don’t want to hurt your feelings’. It’s that type of response.

**Interviewer:** I see. I would like to move on to thinking about how do your music likes and music tastes translate to Spotify. So if I looked in your Spotify music library do you think that’s a good reflection of who you are?

**Respondent:** Yes definitely. I think it’s pretty reflective of me because I know I’ve hit the max because there’s like a 10,000 song cap that you can save. I think this needs to be higher because I want to listen to so much more music. A lot of that music is hip-hop and a lot of the ideals that are there are very much of trying to be a better person, trying to be a good person and maybe wavering a little bit but that’s part of the struggle and everything. But there’s also like a little mix of like ‘Oh, I need to listen to this’. That mainly comes into like stuff out of genre so I know I have a bunch of Johnny Cash albums saved that I’m like...

**Interviewer:** Oh sorry I lost you there.

**Respondent:** It’s ok.

**Interviewer:** Sorry you were talking about the Johnny Cash albums.

**Respondent:** Yes, that it’s something that I’m l working through. It’s like ‘Oh, this is something I’m interested in’ and I don’t know yet whether it is reflective of me, I guess not like content-wise. Though I guess in a way that I’m interested and I’m constantly like trying to…

**Interviewer:** Oh sorry.

**Respondent:** It’s ok.

**Interviewer:** Skype obviously doesn’t like us talking about Johnny Cash. So I’m so sorry but going back to Johnny Cash. So you have albums in there that you’ve not yet listened to and you were talking about how that looks in your music library.

**Respondent:** Yes. I don’t know yet if it’s reflective of me content-wise but I think if you know who I am then you know that I’m always listening like always looking for new music to listen to. So I think in that way it’s reflective and that it’s stuff out of genre that’s a-typical of what I would be listening to.

**Interviewer:** So you would say then that your music library is not just of songs that you are listening to now but also songs that you intend to listen to in the future?

**Respondent:** Definitely.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Are there any of your old tastes in music in there?

**Respondent:** I think pretty much from when I’ve developed my current tastes I guess. That’s the oldest it’ll go to. I mean I have music that’s ranging from different decades but it’s also stuff that I’ve developed in the last 6-ish years. But anything before that not really, I don’t really include that at all.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So how do you decide then which artists you’re going to put in there as potential likes in the future? For instance, how come Johnny Cash got added to your music library?

**Respondent:** It’s because of the movie ‘Logan’. They used his cover of ‘Hurt’ by Nine Inch Nails. So I was like ‘Man, I forgot how much I really like that music’. Also, my brother really loves Johnny Cash. Granted he just loves music but I know he was listening to it a lot and at some point, I don’t quite remember when, that also like ‘Oh, well he enjoys that music and he enjoys a lot of music I enjoy’ so it’s something I think he thinks at least is worth checking out so it’s probably worth my time too.

**Interviewer:** So since then using Spotify do you feel that your musical identity has become more diverse or more fixed?

**Respondent:** That’s very interesting. I feel like it goes through cycles. Sometimes I don’t add any new music or anything and it’s very fixed. But at times I feel there’s massive changes, like when I was listening to The Beatles a lot or when they first were added to Spotify I was listening to a lot of bands from that time and of that genre and stuff. But I like to think there’s a bedrock of artists that I enjoy and that I’ll always come back to but above that is people that I want to listen to and that are very dependent on my mood and how I’m feeling, where I’m at in my life I guess.

**Interviewer:** So you’ve talked about Spotify having this song limit that you don’t particularly like or don’t agree with. What would you be adding then if you didn’t have that limit now? Is there anything currently you want to put in there but not able to because of the song limit?

**Respondent:** I just think it has to do with artists that I want to listen to that I am kind of at my limit now and that I don’t have yet. I know, for instance, that I had a lot of who is it? I had a lot of Tupac’s albums and they’re massively long, they’re like an hour and a half like each, and so there’s like 20 songs and everything. He has like a dozen albums. But when I reach my limit I decided ‘Alright well I’m not going to listen to a lot of this music so I might as well just get rid of it’. I think it’s about extending the artists that I listen to and music that’s available. There’s Artic Monkeys. I think right now I only have their one album ‘A.M’ on there but if the number of songs was extended I would definitely add the rest of their music because it’s something I want to check out eventually and save and everything.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any connected friends on your Spotify?

**Respondent:** Connected friends?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** I think I have a few. I know my brother is on there and I know maybe two or three friends are there. But I’m honestly not sure. I don’t really check that part of it sadly.

**Respondent:** That’s ok. So when you’re online you’re not particularly noticing who else in online and what they’re listening to at the same time?

**Respondent:** No, I usually listen to music like this is about me. While it’s interesting usually the people will just send me stuff. So if they are listening to it at the moment they will usually just send it to me anyway and I’ll try and listen to it. I guess I do that outside of Spotify. It’s more like ‘Well if you have music that you want to share then share it with me’ and it’ll just coincide with them listening to it on Spotify or something.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So I would like to now if I can understand a little bit more about your weekly streaming practices on Spotify. Thinking about how you use it everyday, how you tend to listen to music, how you select it and what features you might use. So how do you use Spotify to stream music?

**Respondent:** Well usually on my phone, primarily on my phone. I think very rarely I’ll play it off of my laptop but basically I use it on my phone that’s it. Sometimes I’ll stream it to my PS4 while playing games or when I just want to listen to music and need to get other stuff done I’ll stream it to the Chrome Cast that’s on the TV in the living room.

**Interviewer:** Is there a reason then that you tend to use it more on your phone than on your desktop or your laptop?

**Respondent:** I just think it has to do with convenience. It’s easier just to open the app and start playing music than it is to wait for my laptop to turn on and everything because I don’t really use my laptop all that much now.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Just going back to what you said about listening to music when you’re gaming. Obviously games have their own soundtracks now and people invest a lot of money into creating that soundtrack. Why do you decide to listen to your own music when playing games rather than the actual music that’s been created for the game itself?

**Respondent:** I think it has to do with how often or the type of game it is. For instance, I think at the beginning of this week I was playing Spiderman, Marvel’s Spiderman. I think it was last Friday. I could be wrong about that date but during that time I didn’t listen to music while playing the game at all because I wanted the first experience to be of the game. Pretty much since I’ve finished that game and I’ve played it on a different save or whatever I’ll listen to music while I play it. I think it has to do with I want my first experience of this game to be of the game but pretty much after that it’s like whatever.

**Interviewer:** And in those cases how do you use your own music?

**Respondent:** A lot of the time it’s time for me to listen to a new album or something because it’s there in the background. That way I can get a general sense of like ‘Did I enjoy this?’ or ‘Now it’s time for me to dive deeper’ or ‘Why didn’t I enjoy this?’ I try to go from there, usually that’s how I use it. Because if I’m playing a game, it’s usually that I can just turn my brain off, like one of the few times that I can actually rest and relax.

**Interviewer:** Are there any particular service features that you use on Spotify when listening to music?

**Respondent:** Service features?

**Interviewer:** So I mean like thinking maybe about the discover tab, Daily Mixes, Discover Weekly, the Radio-those kind of features.

**Respondent:** Oh yes. I use pretty much all of those. I often use the Daily Mixes to find music or something. I think they give you five Daily Mixes and I usually jump from one to one everyday. And the discover I’ll use that from time to time. The Radio I don’t realise I use it but I use it a lot because after an album ends it’ll usually start the Radio of that artist or that album and I’ll just let it play and everything.

**Interviewer:** And out of those, are there ones that you enjoy using more than others?

**Respondent:** I would say the Daily Mixes. That more curated stuff that’s particular to my tastes because I feel that it matches what I’ve been listening to at the time and what I might be interested in. Because I know one of the Daily Mixes lately has been of just movie and video game soundtracks and it was like ‘Oh, that’s like super dope’ because lately I’ve also been listening to movie soundtracks and I was like ‘Oh, these are other songs, these are other soundtracks that I enjoy’ or from movies that I enjoy. So it gives me some other bits to try to go off of.

**Interviewer:** And what is there a particular feature that you won’t use at all?

**Respondent:** I don’t necessarily think so actually. At least none that I can think of at the moment at least.

**Interviewer:** That’s fine. So just thinking about your streaming practices then on scrobble it looks like you stream a lot of the same artist consecutively, is that a choice you’ve consciously made?

**Respondent:** A little bit yes actually. Just because I was saying when The Beatles popped up it was like ‘Oh, I want to listen to more of The Beatles’ and everything so I made sure that I listened to more of their music, even if it wasn’t like all of their music like I normally would. It’s like when Mac Miller passed away earlier this week, or last week, I made the decision to check out that stuff. Even though it didn’t pop up on my scrobbles because it wasn’t music that I was interested in but other artists he’s associated with, which is why I was listening to Ab Soul I think yesterday or the day before. I just listened to a lot of his ‘Do What Thou Wilt’ because I know he was featured on that album and I really liked it. Another, and then from there, it was other members of TDE, for instance Kendrick Lamar. I know that that I’ve played a lot and it was also like ‘Oh man, that was an album that I really enjoyed. Let me play it again or let me play one of his other albums’.

**Interviewer:** So just so I understand when you’re playing these artists is it an album’s worth of music or are you playing them from your library or are you playing them from an artist playlist?

**Respondent:** From an album. I play at the beginning of an album to basically when I don’t want to listen to it anymore or I’ll skip a song or something. But it’s usually like I start at the top of an album all the way down to the finish.

**Interviewer:** So do you ever use the shuffle feature for album listening or is it very much you listen to it track by track?

**Respondent:** Track by track. I used to because I didn’t have a choice when I didn’t have Spotify Premium. I would play it with the shuffle but pretty much since I’ve had Spotify Premium, because I want the album experience, so I’ll play it from like I want to listen to this album, I want to experience this album I guess-that’s more accurate to what I am saying. I want to experience this album I don’t want to just listen to the songs on the album.

**Interviewer:** So then when you add artists to your library do you very much add their whole album rather than individual songs?

**Respondent:** Yes definitely. If I like a song from an album then I’ll add the entire album because I hope that it’ll be something that I’ll enjoy.

**Interviewer:** And do you ever kind of use the top of Spotify and browse or do a keyword search for anything?

**Respondent:** No, I don’t think so. I mean actually that’s not true. I’ll look up artists and everything and I’ll use the ‘Artist Like This’ I think where it’s other related artists so I’ll do that. But I don’t ever use keywords for genres or anything, it’s just artists that I’m already familiar with or that I know the name of and I’m like ‘Oh, let me go and check that out’.

**Interviewer:** - What are your thoughts then on the ‘Artists Like This’ feature?

**Respondent:** I actually I love it because it’s how I find a decent amount of people honestly. Because I know, there’s a few people, I know recently I found Jpegmafia because I went to the ‘Related Artists’ from Death Grips and Jpegmafia was there and it was someone that someone else suggested after I had found them. I was like ‘Oh, well if they enjoy this then I’m going to enjoy this too’ because we talk about music a lot me and this friend.

**Interviewer:** And do you feel that ‘Related Artists’ are very similar and do you like that similarity or would you prefer more diversity in there?

**Respondent:** A little of both. I feel the ‘Related Artists’ should be a little similar and there’s some that should be similar but more different with their sound and everything. So I feel that it should be a healthy mix of those two types of related artists.

**Interviewer:** Alright. So when you go onto Spotify then do you normally know what you want to stream when you go in or is it very much you’ll look through your library and pick something?

**Respondent:** It’s both but I think mainly the latter where I’m like ‘I want to listen to music. I don’t know what though’. I’ll just look through what I have and everything. But sometimes when I want to show someone I’m like ‘Oh, I want you to listen to this. I want you to’. But I think it’s mainly just looking through what I have and playing from there, whatever seems interesting.

**Interviewer:** Ok because I was going to say so then when you look through how do you then make a decision about what you want to listen to?

**Respondent:** Sometimes it’ll be an artist that I’ve been wanting to listen to and I’ve been working through. I’m like ‘Oh, this is someone’ that I feel like this is the time for me to explore new music. It’ll be a whim type feeling or other times it’s like ‘Oh well I know I enjoy their music’ and I don’t really need to, I’m not really in the mood to try to find something new or break something down so I’ll listen to them. For instance, Low Roar is like that, which is someone that I know popped up a decent amount though probably not as often as I’m thinking. Kendrick Lamar is like that, Kayne West and everything. They are artists that I know I enjoy their music and I don’t necessarily have to thinkabout it when I’m listening this time because I’ve already done that process earlier.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any typical weekly streaming practices? For instance, is there music that you would listen to on a Monday then on a Friday night, a weekend? Do you have any weekly patterns?

**Respondent:** Not any pattern that I’m conscious of at least. It’s just I listen to, as far as I can tell, I don’t have a pattern but I’m sure if you wanted to you could look through a year’s worth of data and find a pattern.

**Interviewer:** So you don’t feel like you listen to different music on a particular day or at a particular time of day?

**Interviewer:** No, it’s pretty random I guess.

**Interviewer:** Ok and how about music for background noise? How do you use music for background noise?

**Respondent:** I think it has to do with I think it depends….

[Ringing tone]

**Interviewer:** Hi

**Respondent:** Hey sorry about that. My wifi.

**Interviewer:** Oh, that’s ok. I wasn’t sure if it was my wifi or your wifi but never mind.

**Respondent:** Yes, it was. Sorry about that.

**Interviewer:** It’s ok. Are you alright to continue? So we were talking about then background music versus your active listening and how you listen to background music?

**Respondent:** Oh yes so if I have chores or I need to clean the house…

**Interviewer:** Oh, there we go. We’re back.

**Respondent:** Sorry I should have turned off my wifi. There’s a problem going on with my wifi. But what’s it called? I tend to listen to music as background noise when I have like things I need to do around the house or when I need to do stuff. But active listening if an album was just released I’m like ‘Oh, I need to listen to this. I need to absorb it and everything’. That’s usually how I treat it. Even though they’re different like I want to revisit it.

**Interviewer:** I was just going to say do you listen to different kinds of music as background noise when you’re doing work or chores around the house?

**Respondent:** No, I don’t think so. It’s just my music. I will throw on whatever I was just listening to basically. Also on an artist radio or something.

**Interviewer:** So do you have your Spotify account set to public or private?

**Respondent:** I think I have it set to public.

**Interviewer:** Is that a conscious choice that you’ve set it to public?

**Respondent:** Yes, actually it is. Because I don’t have anything that is of particular interest but if other people want to check it out and see what I’m listening to they’re free to do that. I think it’s similar to how I have my Instagram set up and everything like it’s a public account, like if people want to look at it or anything they’re free to and whatever. Oh the wifi’s back ok.

**Interviewer:** Has there ever been a time when you’ve listened to music privately? When you’ve turned your Spotify to private? Have you ever done that?

**Respondent:** No. I think maybe at first to see what the features are like, just to see how it works, but other than that no. It’s been public the entire time.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So talking about then your Spotify library a little bit more do you ever remove songs from there at all?

**Respondent:** Yes, all the time, well maybe not all the time but a lot of the time usually when I hit the song limit I’m like ‘Alright well who’s an artist that I don’t listen to? Oh ok well let me get rid of some of their albums’ and stuff like that. It usually happens like that.

**Interviewer:** Ok. What about when you’ve not hit the limit? Have you ever removed an artist then?

**Respondent:** Yes, for instance with Brockhampton. That’s what happened. I decided to take their music off of my listening because it made me feel a little uncomfortable, even though they’re extremely hard working. Their music is great in its own right it’s just their first three albums were a little uncomfortable for me. So it’s usually things like that or someone that I really don’t want to listen to, like I have no intention of ever listening to their music in which case I’ll take them off.

**Interviewer:** Is there any of it that’s perhaps related to your music identity? Like you think that music isn’t really relevant to who I am right now.

**Respondent:** Yes actually. Granted although I think the other two already kind of play into this though it’s more of a subconscious decision about ‘Oh this isn’t me’ which is why I would remove certain artists. I know I had Migos their first album ‘Culture’, at least ‘Culture’ I don’t know if that’s their first album or not, I had them on there for a little bit but then I was like ‘Well, this doesn’t really feel like me so I’ll take them off’. Though if I ever want to listen to them I can just look them up. I can just look up the album name and everything.

**Interviewer:** Great. So we’ve talked a lot obviously about you listening to artists and albums but what about playlists? Are playlists important to you?

**Respondent:** Not really actually. Maybe one playlist because I only have one playlist that I’ve ever made and it was just to kind of give people a general sense of like ‘These are the artists I listen to. This is the music I listen to’. And I believe it’s called *[playlist name]*. I just called it *[playlist name]* because I was lazy and *[playlist name]* was like ‘Oh, it’s an insight into who I am’ the music I listen to. Someone asked for that on Instagram like ‘Oh, do you have like a playlist of who you listen to?’ and I was like ‘Yes no but I’ll make it right now’.

**Interviewer:** So what kind of music did you put on there?

**Respondent:** Everything actually. Not everything everything but I believe I put 2 to 4 songs from every artist. So I tried to make it like a little bit of a narrative but after that I think I got like maybe an hour in, like music-wise, of doing that and I was like ‘This is too much effort’ for this long of a playlist. Because I think the playlist is almost 12 hours long or something like that. It’s incredibly long. I was like that is not something I feel that I can curate but I have intentions of actually starting other playlists that I can curate because they’re smaller and everything.

**Interviewer:** And did you even include artists like The Beatles on that playlist that you gave to somebody else or was it very much with the rap and hip-hop genre?

**Respondent:** I believe I did include The Beatles. I think I included more than four songs actually but it was kind of like just because I have a lot of hip-hop or rap saved that ended up being on the playlist a lot so it is what it is. But it wasn’t a conscious decision to mainly have it dominated by hip-hop or rap it was just because that’s what I listen to the most.

**Interviewer:** So what’s the reason then that you’ve not created any other playlists after that? Is there a reason?

**Respondent:** I just have a lot of trouble thinking of ideas of like ‘This is a playlist that I want to make’. Like if there’s a particular topic or theme or something that I want to make a playlist for. I just have trouble thinking of music that gives me that feeling because I’ve listened to a lot of music so it’s hard to think back to how all of this music felt and everything.

**Interviewer:** So how then do other playlists fit into your music listening? Do you have friends that create playlists that you listen to? Do you listen to Spotify’s own playlists?

**Respondent:** I think I listen to Spotify’s own playlists, recently they had a playlist ‘Songs to Sing-Along in the Car’ and because me and my sister, every Tuesday and Wednesday or so, we have to pick up our cousin and drop him off at home and stuff and she doesn’t like going to do that alone so I’ll look through that playlists, or other playlists similar to that, and find music that we enjoy and stuff. Just have fun with it. But I know she has one playlist that she adds music to all the time but I can’t. I can’t listen to that just because it’s so massive.

**Interviewer:** So the Spotify playlists then that you choose to listen to do they tend to be themed on artists, genre, mood or something else?

**Respondent:** I think mood, most of all, or yes mood. I don’t tend to listen to artist’s playlists, I think maybe one or two with I think recently SZA’s playlist like ‘This is SZA’ just because I wanted to listen to some of her music that wasn’t I didn’t want to sit down and listen to ‘Ctrl’ like that so I was like ‘Oh well I enjoy her music so let’s listen to what else she has there’.

**Interviewer:** Ok and then what about music discovery? Are you a person that enjoys discovering new music?

**Respondent:** Yes. I pride myself on finding new music, like I don’t know it gives me a rush of like ‘Oh this is this is great. I’ve found music that I love or something. I really enjoy this. I like this artist and I want to find more’.

**Interviewer:** How do you tend then to discover new music?

**Respondent:** Actually, sometimes it’s through stuff I see online whether it’s on particular subreddits like /r/HipHopHeads or stuff like that or whether it’s through video reviews from like ‘The Needle Drop’ and stuff. I think most of all, it’s mainly from my friends and family and stuff sending me music. I know I’ve found this one artist called Yeek, like Y-e-e-k, and a few other similar artists like that through my brother and everything and my sister.

**Interviewer:** How do their music tastes compare to yours?

**Respondent:** Not at all.

**Interviewer:** Oh right.

**Respondent:**  Not even close.

**Interviewer:** So what then music do they send you? Do they send you music that they think you will like or music that that they like?

**Respondent:** Yes like it’s weird to answer like that but it’s music that they like that they think I’ll enjoy.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And how often do you actually enjoy it?

**Respondent:** I tend to enjoy it a lot, especially from my brother because that’s something he loves to do is find music that he thinks other people will enjoy and send it to them. I know he does that a lot to me and I’m like ‘Why did I not know about this song?’ It’s like right around where I have been looking and everything and I didn’t find it. My sister for her it’s mainly like ‘This is what I’ve been listening to lately and I enjoyed this so I’m going to send it to you’ and everything.

**Interviewer:** And then you’ve also talked about discovering music from films. How often does that happen?

**Respondent:** Sometimes. I know I think it’s X-T-E their song was featured in ‘It’. Yes so I found them and that song through the movie. And then there was at the opening of ‘Justice League’ there was another song that I found like that. It’s just little titbits here and there but I mainly, for music wise, go for their soundtracks and stuff, which sometimes includes that stuff too so. It’s really convenient.

**Interviewer:** And do you yourself do you feel that you help people to discover new music? Are you the type of person that sends music to other people?

**Respondent:** Oh yes all the time, especially like my brother because there’ll be times where we’re just sending music back and forth all the time. But it’s also like I’ll send it to friends and stuff too or I’ll post an Instagram story about this is what I’m listening to and whatever so it’s like that.

**Interviewer:** So how does Spotify feed into your music discovery? Do you feel that it helps you or is it actually that you find discover new music outside of Spotify?

**Respondent:** I think it’s a healthy mix. I know I’ve found Concorde’s ‘Sons’ and Siames’ ‘The Wolf’ because of music videos that they had on YouTube and oh what’s it called? Studio Killers. I found them, those three, and some other artists because of music videos that they had that I found and was playing off of YouTube. And so I started listening to them on Spotify. But other times I’ll find music on Spotify then I’ll look them up on YouTube to see if there’s a music video or something, like see how that relates to the music and everything, so I think the strongest relationship is between Spotify and YouTube for discovering music and it kind of goes back and forth.

**Interviewer:** So how exactly do you discover new music on Spotify? What’s the process behind finding that new music?

**Respondent:** It’ll begin usually I’ll listen to an album and it’s like ‘Alright well let me continue listening to this album in the background’ and I’ll go to the artist’s page and I’ll see ‘Related Artists’ and from there I’ll choose like I’ll listen to like because Spotify has a ‘Top 5 Most Listened To Songs’ from each artist and I’ll play those and if I enjoy those I’ll follow the artist and everything and I’ll save a few of their albums. Then I’ll just repeat that process, like I’ll start one of their albums, let it play through and everything like ‘Oh I really enjoyed that’ and so I’ll go back to the ‘Related Artists’ and everything and find it through there or I’ll go back and go from who I originally started listening to and find other artists like that.

**Interviewer:** So do you find the artist looking through different artists that you discover more music than say you would in the Daily Mixes and discovery tools on Spotify?

**Respondent:** Yes definitely. I think, at least for discovery, it’s just because I don’t use it often enough which is a personal thing. It’s just I don’t use it, which I feel if I used it more often it probably would be more useful to me. But I find more music like that than using their Daily Mixes.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So do you feel that Spotify has been a helpful tool in letting you find new music?

**Respondent:** Definitely, definitely. It’s been pretty much nothing but positive.

**Interviewer:** What would you say is an artist or type of music that you’ve discovered exclusively through Spotify rather than anywhere else?

**Respondent:** I’m trying to think. I mentioned earlier Jpegmafia. I found them through Spotify. And later on their stuff just started popping up on my feeds and friends started talking about them, like with particular their latest album ‘Veteran’. But also Injury Reserve or someone like Yeek and stuff or what’s it called? There’s one particular album. I cannot remember who the artists are and I feel so bad. They did cover music for Twin Peaks, which I found in I think my discovery like artists they suggested to me and I was like ‘Oh, that’s dope’, or it was like new music, and they had just released that album, which I think it’s a few years old now. But it was dope, I was like ‘Wow, this is amazing’ because I enjoy Twin Peaks so I was like ‘It’s dope’.

**Interviewer:** Great. Just a couple of things I’ve also noticed from the observation of your music streaming last week that I was just quite interested in. So on the Saturday it looks you didn’t scrobble any music at all was there a reason for that? Is that a typical Saturday where you wouldn’t listen to music?

**Respondent:** I’m trying to think of what I did Saturday because I was thinking about that actually. I think Sunday I was like ‘Oh I don’t think I listened to music at all yesterday’. I think it was because I was sleeping. I slept. That was mainly why. But that’s usually not very typical. I usually listen to some music but to have nothing occur that day is very weird. It just happened. I was also busy, I was cleaning that day too, so when I wasn’t sleeping I was cleaning but I was playing videos instead I just let them play through. And we were watching movies and stuff so there was all this other material in place of the actual music.

**Interviewer:** So do you actually then listen to music online in other sources apart from Spotify?

**Respondent:** Yes, like I said through YouTube and stuff. It’s mainly where I’ll listen to music just because it’s easy to.

**Interviewer:** Do you use any of the other streaming platforms? So Apple Music or Pandora or anything like that?

**Respondent:** No, I don’t, not anymore. I used to use Pandora a long time ago but not anymore. I guess technically Google Play Music because some of the music I have downloaded on my phone isn’t available on Spotify. So I know I have ‘Compton’ by Dr. Dre on there and I have ‘Exmilitary’ by Death Grips on my phone. So when I’m in the mood I have to use Google Play Music to play those songs.

**Interviewer:** So what were the reasons for switching from Pandora to Spotify?

**Respondent:** The freedom, the choice to play the music that I want. Because Pandora I enjoyed it because it was cool. It was like Internet radio and I just put it on in the background but when I switched to Spotify it was like I get to choose individual songs I want to listen to. So it was like this is so much better for me.

**Interviewer:** Yes, I see. So the other interesting thing I noticed is obviously you’ve mentioned yourself how you like to listen to rap and hip-hop and then on Sunday there was some Ariane Grande and Martin Garrix in your streaming.

**Respondent:** Oh yes.

**Interviewer:** It was interesting because that seemed very different to the other music that you’d listened to.

**Interviewer:** Yes, I didn’t really think about it because I enjoy her music. Like I feel like I’m in the mood to listen to some of her songs. It just happened. I think it was similar to when I was listening to Two Door Cinema Club. It was like I feel like I’m in the mood to listen to them or One Republic. Like their song ‘Counting Stars’ and everything. But I don’t think I have her saved at all on my Spotify account. I think it was because I was asking my sister about what she thought of ‘Sweet’ or ‘Sweeter’, I think it was the album. But she hadn’t listened to it so I was like ‘Ok well why not listen to a few songs myself’.

**Interviewer:** It was just interesting to obviously in all your other music that those artists popped up.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Now want to move on to thinking about Spotify a little bit more. So do you feel that Spotify allows you to construct and manage your musical tastes?

**Respondent:** Yes definitely. I think it’s just because I see my account on there as an extension of who I am and I’m not totally aware if people can see who I follow, like music wise, but if they can I want to make sure it’s artists that I’m interested in, that I listen to or artists that I’m venturing out into. I want to give off the idea that I listen to diverse music. It’s not monolithic in that I only listen to hip-hop, I only listen to rap. I want it to be more nebulous and everything with the cross-over genres and stuff. And that’s also one reason I constructed the playlist because I wanted people to see that I listen to more than just that, more than just hip-hop. That there’s other in here that I mix in in order to help even out I guess.

**Interviewer:** And do you feel that Spotify’s interface influences your music choices at all?

**Respondent:** Yes. Sometimes, oh what’s it called, it made me a little angry but like when Drake released ‘Scorpion’ how his face was plastered on everything. So because of that I was like ‘I don’t want to listen to Drake at all’. I might have had music saved from it on my account from there, like not from there but prior to that, but I was like ‘This is like eurgh’. So I completely removed him from my account in any way I could because of things like that. But other times it’s like because the Daily Mix is right in the middle of the screen when I open the app I’ll tend to listen to that, I’ll go to those first.

**Interviewer:** And earlier you were talking about one of Kanye West’s albums and the album art and the album notes that go with that. How does that translate into how you use Spotify?

**Respondent:** Yes, it’s very interesting compared to like YouTube where it’s just a bit of the video so it’s not necessarily meant to give off anything beyond that. I enjoy that aspect about Spotify is that when you see the album it’s the cover art and everything and, to me, I feel that that’s a huge draw for a lot of people, me included in that. I was obviously going to listen to the Kanye West but I like that he’s still bothered to have something interesting there. And that it also like gave you an idea about what the album is going to be like. Because he’s done that before, with say ‘Yeezus’, where he actually didn’t have cover art or anything. When he released the album it was literally just a clear case, a clear like jewelled case, of the CD and that was it. But the best way they could try and translate that was take a picture of that on white background and everything. But or other artists like Kendrick Lamar with ‘To Pimp a Butterfly’ because that was actually the first instance I had seen the album art for his album and I later looked it up what it was. But it was very interesting. It was like ‘Oh, this is very different’. I could recognise the White House in the back and everything and I was like ‘That’s interesting. I wonder why this of all places?’ And it was a reference to a line he said in the album and I’m having trouble remembering what song in particular it was he said it on. It might have been ‘Blacker the Berry’ but I could be wrong about that totally. To me, it’s always interesting to see what people, how people create the album art and how that draws me in. Because those reactions are very positive, they’re very different than say my reaction to seeing Death Grips’ ‘Year of the Snitch’ album art where I was just totally confused. I was just like ‘This is very’ well it’s very typical of them but it’s also very different from the other artwork that they’ve had and everything. It’s like ‘What am I getting myself into?’

**Interviewer:** So thinking about Spotify there’s been a lot in the media about platforms collecting and using our data for various different things. How do you feel about the fact that Spotify is collecting data on you? Is that something that bothers you or doesn’t really matter?

**Respondent:** It’s very interesting because I’m younger, I’m only 19, so I only know this post-9/11 world where all of these companies and everything are collecting data on me. This is the only world I’m familiar with and it’s provided a weird contrast between me and my father, who is he’s only 23 years older than me but he is in his mid-forties. He knows a world that wasn’t like this and it’s very different. Granted I’m still very wary. I don’t enjoy that these massive companies are collecting this data and selling it to advertisers and everything or collecting it in order to improve the function, which I mean I can agree to that, but I don’t necessarily agree that they should be able to sell my data to advertising companies. But for me it’s something that bothers me incredibly but it’s sadly something I’ve accepted as a reality and a fact of the world I live in and that it was an edge that we have jumped off and there’s no way to get back up. It’s something that we have to live with and try to work around and work with from this point on. And it seems very dystopian at times honestly but I guess I’ve become more complacent with this new normal-this new normal, I mean this normal- than anything else.

**Interviewer:** That’s a very interesting outlook on it definitely. Thanks for that. So obviously one of the ways that Spotify uses its data is to try and tailor its recommendations to your tastes. What do you think to the recommendations that it gives you?

**Respondent:** I don’t think any algorithm will ever be perfect. I mean it’s just about improvement and I commend them for that. The recommendations it gives me I think sometimes they’re hit and miss other times they’re spot on with who I’ve been listening to and everything. I mean overall it’s something that I think is a mild success and I just hope it improves as it continues on because sometimes they produce duds for me, like this is an artist, an album that I have no interest in. But most of the time it’s like ‘Oh that’s another artist I’m interested in and this is something they were featured on’ or something and I’ll like check it out and everything.

**Interviewer:** So when you say then that you would like some of their recommendations to improve what would you like to see in you recommendations? How could they improve them for you?

**Respondent:** It’s hard to say because I’m not totally certain what it is that they take most into account to produce recommendations, whether it has to do with the artist and that the sound of the album is or the genre that it’s classified in or is it necessarily how this artist is featured in other work so. But I think if there is something I would want to be worked on more is the features, how they’re you know other music that this artist has worked on, whether that be whether they worked on production or an actual verse or hook or something on the music. Something else or maybe even just other people signed to a particular label. For instance, it feels weird to keep coming back to Kanye West but for instance his music label Good Music just based off of purely listening to Kayne West I would never, not like in a million years, never get suggested Pusha T, who makes very different music yet he frequently collaborates with Kayne West and other artists on that Good Music label. So it’s stuff like that. Like if there’s a label that’s available like if the artist has a label that they work on and that they frequently collaborate with I would love that incorporated maybe more than it is now.

**Interviewer:** So from that respect then would you appreciate music recommendations that are very similar or actually diverse?

**Respondent:** I think overall it depends honestly. If it’s a recommendation about a particular artist I would want to hear…oh I’m not totally sure. I mean on one hand I would want a more diverse music experience but on the other hand if you’re recommending it to me I also want something that’s relatively similar to what it is that you kind of recommended me from. So I I’m not sure honestly.

**Interviewer:** It’s tricky isn’t it. So has there been any particular recommendations from Spotify that you’ve either loved or hated? Any that you can think of?

**Respondent:** I don’t think there’s anything in particular that I can think of. Maybe there’s like one or two artists or albums but I can’t that’s something that I’ve just incorporated into my music by this point. Like how I found them is totally lost on me.

**Interviewer:** Ok but generally do you do you feel that recommendations that they give to you you really enjoy or you really dislike?

**Respondent:** It’s generally positive. I would say I don’t think there’s any artists that I’ve hated or I’ve not liked. It’s always artists that I had a ‘meh’ response to or ‘This is interesting but it’s not something I’m going to check out’. It’s either ranging from that type of response to like ‘I really enjoy this artist and I want to hear more from them’.

**Interviewer:** And do you feel that their recommendations do influence your music listening a lot or is your music listening influenced by things other than their recommendations?

**Respondent:** I would say probably 40/60. 40% they have an influence on the music I listen to and everything but I’d say a majority of my influence musically is from outside sources.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So my last question I have is obviously you’ve been part of my PhD research and answered a questionnaire, you’ve done the online observation and had an interview. Has being part of that made you made you reflect or change any of your Spotify practises?

**Respondent:** I don’t think it’s changed any practices. I think it’s made me more aware of who I listen to, how I consume music and everything or when I listen to music the most. And before it was just kind of a subconscious thing like it was ‘I’m in the mood to play music so I’m just going to play music’ but I never really it wasn’t until this observation period and everything that it made me aware that I listen to music to start my day off and everything or that type of stuff. Then it also made me aware of who are the artists I’m listening to because even though some of them I listen to a lot, like Kayne West and Kendrick Lamar and everything, it also made me aware that I tend to repeat who I listen to a lot and it’s something that I might have been aware of but it wasn’t something I was conscious about wanting to change, which is something I want to do from this point on. You know not necessarily repeat artists or albums or anything like that totally, you know at least not as egregiously as I have over this last week or so.

**Interviewer:** That’s really interesting for you to say. Ok well thank you for the interview. It’s been so interesting and you’ve raised a lot of really interesting points. It’s just very interesting to talk to you about your music taste and it’ll greatly help me in my PhD research so thank you a lot for that. Is there anything from your side that you want to talk about or expand upon that we’ve either talked about before or haven’t talked about?

**Respondent:** I’m trying to think. I think the only thing is something to add on to that last question was it also made me aware of how I incorporate music into my life as well as how people might get a general sense of who I am through the music I listen to and everything. When I played the ‘Kids See Ghosts’ for my friends I was aware that that was in the observation period and everything and so it kind of made me more conscious about the music I suggest to people and I was already conscious like ‘Oh maybe they don’t like it’ but it was more of ‘Maybe this is music that’s very niche’. It’s not something that everyone will listen to. But it also got me more thinking about why I enjoy the music I do. You know why I keep coming back to Kayne West and his production and everything, why I keep coming back to these artists, and as well the relationship with music and my other interests, like with films and video games and everything. It made me more aware of how I use it, how it’s been in my life and everything. Because of this observation period and everything it also sparked more conversations with my family about music and it was also the type of music. Most of the music that I listen to is all explicit, at least I kind of strive on listening to the uncensored versions of songs and everything, and that was part of a conversation my family was having about us growing up, me and my sister and my brother growing up, and that we were listening to music like that-uncensored-but when it came out on the radio and everything it was censored. That kind of led on into the other media we’ve consumed, whether that be movies or stuff. It was very interesting. It was something that I kind of took for granted. It just made me aware and I guess appreciative of not just that this is obviously something that you can build an entire PhD around but also people spend their lives doing this entire stuff. It’s super cool. It’s absolutely amazing.

**Interviewer:** So have you never really had a chat with your family about your music choices before?

**Respondent:** No honestly no. I haven’t. It’s just something that I felt was interesting. It really only could have come on because of my participation in this. Like we’ve talked about music but it’s always about something that was super relevant, whether that be a recent album release or something, but it was never about particular music interests. It was always about an album or an artist or the relation to that, that’s it. It was nothing beyond that.

**Interviewer:** So having that discussion then with them now has that affected your music listening at all?

**Respondent:** Yes yes I feel like it has because I know my sister and my dad they listen to very different music than I do but because of that it’s also like I want to incorporate some more music that they listen to, whether that be stuff that they grew up listening to or not or whether it be a favourite album because I know one of my dad’s favourite albums is by The Bee Gees and it’s something that I’ve always wanted listen to but I’ve never felt it was appropriate for me. It’s not a sound it’s not a genre I’m too particular with. And so it’s like understanding why my dad enjoys that music and everything made me appreciate the music I like and that it’s also like these are artists that I can go and listen to and see why my dad would enjoy them and everything. The same is true of my sister, with particular artists and particular albums. Even though surprisingly both my sister and my dad don’t really like listening to albums. I realised that it was also true for a lot of my friends, which I thought was super interesting, that most of them just listen to a single song by an artist or something but they don’t sit down and listen to an album as an experience or anything.

**Interviewer:** That’s all so interesting to hear. Well I’m glad you found it enjoyable and it’s sparked some discussion between your family and your friends. It’s really great to hear.

**Respondent:** Definitely. I I’ve enjoyed it honestly.

**Interviewer:** Good. Well I’m really glad. Well that’s everything from me that I need to ask you. Is there any other comments that you wanted to make?

**Respondent:** No not that I know of.

**Interviewer:** Ok well that’s great. Again, thank you so much. I’ll let you get on now with the rest of your day and what you’ve got to do but I really appreciate you obviously taking the time and sharing your thoughts and some things that are very personal in your music experiences with me so thank you so much.

**Respondent:** Of course and thank you for I don’t know I guess letting me participate this far and everything.

**Interviewer:** No problem. It’s been great to have you taking part so thank you.

**Respondent:** Of course.

**Interviewer:** See you soon. Bye.

**Respondent:** Bye.

[End of transcript]

# Transcript: In-05-F

[00:00]

**Respondent:** Hang on one second. Hi.

**Interviewer:** Hi. Are you alright?

**Respondent:** Yes, just give me one second. Sorry. Hi.

**Interviewer:** Hi. Is it alright to talk now? Is it convenient for you?

**Respondent:**  Yes, totally fine.

**Interviewer:** Oh, thank you. Well thank you for finding time to speak to me today. I really appreciate it.

**Respondent:** Yes, not a problem at all.

**Interviewer:** So the way it’ll work today is the interview will last around about an hour but it’s very much based on your responses. So I’ll give you plenty of time to answer and expand on your answers as you wish. While you’re talking I might take some notes down but that’s purely for me if I don’t understand or wish to ask you something about something you’ve said later on if that’s ok?

**Respondent:** Yes, absolutely. I know Skype has a record feature if you felt like you that it would be better just to record the whole thing. I’m fine with that.

**Interviewer:** So I have actually got a little recorder by my laptop so that will be recording our conversation if that’s ok?

**Respondent:** Yes, absolutely.

**Interviewer:** Yes and then obviously it’ll all be made anonymous when I talk about the results or any kind of data in my PhD.

**Respondent:** Oh yes for sure. Go for it.

**Interviewer:** Great. So do you have any questions then before we get started?

**Respondent:** No, I read through everything you sent over and everything looks fine to me.

**Interviewer:** Perfect. Ok so the first bit I’d like to ask you is about how music relates to your identity. So how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

**Respondent:** Oh god. That’s kind of a hard question. I’ve always grown up around music. It’s just something that’s comforting. I quite like the community aspect of it so I’ve been going to shows by myself since I was about 14, sneaking into clubs that I had no business being injust to go see shows. But it is quite a community aspect I find and I guess that’s kind of what I identify the most with is that it does bring a lot of people together. That’s a really hard question to answer.

**Interviewer:** Sorry. That’s probably not the best as a starting one. Would you say then that music is important to you as a person?

**Respondent:** Yes, absolutely.

**Interviewer:** Ok and has there been a particular time when you’ve used music to reflect who you are to somebody, for example friends or family?

**Respondent:** I wouldn’t say necessarily to reflect my personality. There’s never really a time I mean there’s definitely times where different genres of music speak to me differently. But it’s more of a sharing experience I guess. It’s more like ‘Look at this cool thing I’ve found. I’d love for you to hear it’. Now obviously depending on the party you have to censor it. If something’s inappropriate you don’t show it to maybe your mum and dad or co-worker. I don’t know how closely though I identify specific music to my own identity though.

**Interviewer:** Ok so would you say then there is a particular genre that you like?

**Respondent:** Yes, I mean I’ve liked different things at different phases of my life and I mean as you get older I think so I was very much in that emo, punk-rock scene in the mid-2000s. That was very much where I lived and loved my music and I think at the time I was like ‘This is so underground, so experimental’ but it it, now you look back, and I’m like ‘Everybody was listening to that’. But at this stage of my life, in my mid-20s, I’m still more pulled into the rock genre than anything. I listen to a lot of alternative rock, a lot of indie rock. I still like a little bit of the punk and emo scene but there’s really not nothing that I wouldn’t listen to. There’s stuff that you know it’s not my first choice but in my real house those kind of genres.

**Interviewer:** Ok so you would say then that there is no music that you actively dislike or would choose not to listen to at all?

**Respondent:** I mean there’s definitely stuff that I would never put it on myself. I don’t listen to I don’t actively seek out rap or hip-hop. I don’t actively seek out country/western. I don’t actively seek out, there’s another one I was going to bring up but I can’t really remember it, I guess it doesn’t really matter if I can’t remember it. But primarily oh metal. I wouldn’t actively seek those things out. Now if they stumbled upon me I’ll still be open to it. I usually try to give a song a fair thirty seconds and if I can’t do it then I just won’t listen to it. But based on my own experience, based on where I go to get my music, it’s very rare that those things fall into my lap.

**Interviewer:** So then you talked obviously how you previously used to listen to a lot of emo music and then your tastes have changed. Is there something that sparked that change?

**Respondent:** I think some of it is just how that fell off. It isn’t really a huge scene anymore and I think primarily a lot of the people I use to go to those shows with we also diverged into different paths in life, went to different universities, moved to different cities and then as you meet new friends new things kind of fall into your viewpoint. I’m originally from Halifax in Canada but I grew up in Toronto and I went back out east for university so when I went back out there a lot of that music taste is a lot of country, a lot of folk music and a fair bit of indie-rock, especially at the university I went it’s a very small school. So as you got more exposed to the artists that would come to such a small place and that’s kind of how my tastes evolved, it just kind of moved away from that into something else and I think as you become an adult you your tastes change right? It’s primarily of what you’re exposed to but it’s also just an evolution I don’t think you can necessarily explain but it just happens.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that that evolution was maybe affected by any friendship groups or actually your change in location at the time?

**Respondent:** Yes, absolutely absolutely. I think had I stayed in Toronto for university or a major city centre, where you do get more artists that come through, I think maybe I would be a little bit more interested in pop music or hip-hop or whatever it is. And it’s not to say that I don’t like some of those things it’s just that they’re not things that I actively seek out and I think ah I don’t know what it is, it’s just a good bonding stuff. I find folk music very much brings people together in a very weird way. It’s not that you like the entire album, it’s maybe one or two songs. It’s why people still sing ‘Wagon Wheel’ I believe it’s a band called Old Medicine Crow or something along those lines of that or ‘Stand By Me’ like those kinds of folksie songs. Like everybody somehow connects around them.

**Interviewer:** And what about your friends? How do you feel that they’ve potentially influenced what you’ve listened to?

**Respondent:**  So my university friends they’re really avid music fans so they’ll constantly send stuff my way. They’ll say like ‘I like this song. You should listen to it’. And I have a similar friend here in Toronto same thing. We’ll swap playlists all the time. We go to a lot of shows together, whether it’s somebody that I really want to see or she really wants to see, and we’ll introduce each other to different artists that way.

**Interviewer:** So looking at your scrobble log from your last week of streaming the top two artists that came out as the ones you most listened to during that week were Albert Hammond Jr and then Great Big Sea. Would you say that this is an accurate reflection of your music tastes?

**Respondent:** Somewhat. I mean Great Big Sea sure. Not necessarily of yes and no with tastes. Great Big Sea is a band from east coast Canada. They’re very big. It’s more comfort music than anything. It’s very homey. Albert Hammond Jr I think that came out of there was a YouTuber I like that I follow on Spotify. She was playing it and I think it was one of those things where I did like it and I just put it into a playlist and it might of just recycled a couple times.

**Interviewer:** Ok ok. And also I’ve noticed that your music tastes are very diverse and eclectic in terms of traditional genre boundaries. Is that something that you are conscious about or that’s just something that just happens as a result of the music that you listen to?

**Respondent:** I think some of it just kind of happens. I mean the nice part about Spotify is that it shows stuff, your friends’ activity, so sometimes there’s something I haven’t heard of that I’ll click on. I don’t really feel particularly attached to any genre. There’s definitely ones I gravitate towards more, but yes I just find what I like and I stick it on a playlist.

**Interviewer:** Ok and would you say that in terms of your Spotify library and the genres that you have and that you listen to is that very much a reflection of your current tastes or would you say you’ve actually got some music on there that you liked when you were younger and you would perhaps revisit?

**Respondent:** Yes, I mean not currently on my library. I do archive all of my playlists so I have stuff that goes back to some time in 2016. So sometimes I flip through that and then I’m kind of reminded of a song that I really like but I also keep those your top songs of 2017. There was another one that Spotify generated. I think it was it wasn’t your ‘Summer Rewind’. They did another one that was supposed to be about songs that would have been relevant when you were maybe oh your Time Capsule thing.

**Interviewer:** Yes, the time capsule feature. Yes.

**Respondent:** Yes. so everything that’s in that is very reflective of stuff that I listened to in between being like 14 and 17 maybe. So I do play that playlist relatively frequently. I have it downloaded on my phone. It’s one of those playlists that when you know you just want to sing in your car.

**Interviewer:** Yes, I know.

**Respondent:** You can kind of go to that. So yes I definitely do have songs that I go back to and, especially with this Time Capsule sometimes I’ll just go on a spiral of an artist I haven’t listened to in a while and sometimes I’m pleasantly surprised that they’re still making music other times I’m like ‘Why haven’t they kept going?’

**Interviewer:** Ok. So moving on then to talk a little bit more about Spotify. Do you feel that Spotify enables you to express your identity through music?

**Respondent:** Yes hmm. I think in a sense yes. I mean it definitely is very reflective of how I’m feeling in that month. I do log all of my playlists because I like to look back on them and I look back at things that happened at different points in my life and I’m like ‘Ok’. So I have a boyfriend. I met him last summer and if I look at the playlists between July and August they are all so soppy and overly romantic and it definitely expressed my identity in that moment of someone who had met somebody and was very excited about it and hopeful about where it was going to go. So I think yes and no. I don’t necessarily think it identifies or reflects your identity to other people unless they know you really well. Though I have friends that follow my friend activity and one of them did mention last year she’s like ‘Why are you listening to all of these kinds of songs?’ because she knows that’s maybe not necessarily I don’t particularly like ‘Oh I’ve got to listen to like a cutesie little love song’. But she could tell. She also follows my I make monthly playlists so she was following along those. But unless somebody really knows you that well they’re not necessarily going to pick up on it. I think even in the times even in those moments, you might not necessarily know yourself that that’s what you’re gravitating towards. So I think it’s very reflective of what’s going on in your life in that moment maybe more so that your actual identity as a person.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Since using the platform do you feel that your musical tastes and preferences have become more diverse or more fixed?

**Respondent:** I think more diverse honestly. I really like the discovery features on Spotify and I think having been able to find artists that I like and then the system being smart enough to say like ‘These are new releases based on stuff that you have listened to before’ or create the discovery weekly playlists and recommend things. I’ve been able to find other artists. Whether or not they stray super far away from what I’ve listened to previously they’re all still relatively in the same vein. Sometimes I stumble upon new songs and then that changes the whole dynamic so the oh gosh what was the band that I was thinking of? I can’t remember. When I was listening to St Paul’s ‘Broken Bones’, it was the one that played that song I think you it mentioned earlier, I’ve listened to them previously, like a few months back, and I really like them but it brought up more like a soul-rock sort of vibe. So it brought up a lot of Nathanial Rateliff and The Night Sweats, another band Alabama Shakes, like sort of borders country but more soul but more rock. So I think it kind of depends on what you’re listening to.

**Interviewer:** But in general then you would say that you like the discovery tools on Spotify? You use them quite a bit?

**Respondent:** Yes, absolutely. I every Friday open my Release Radar and that’s usually all I listen to on a Friday.

**Interviewer:** And then what do you have any connected friends on Spotify?

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And do they influence your music listening at all?

**Respondent:** Some more than others. I have some. There’s also some YouTubers I follow because they post they’re big music fans. There are some whose music tastes align a little bit closer to mine and there’s others who have stuff that I would never listen to. So I’ve got a friend, I’m looking at it right now, she’s listening to Kanye West and I would never click on that. But there are some friends that just based on their tastes I’ll give a listen to something if I don’t know what it is just because I know that I generally like what they like.

**Interviewer:** And what about when you’re listening to music are you conscious of people being online and watching what you’re streaming?

**Respondent:** No, not at all.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So in terms of, you’ve obviously talked about how you feel music has got this kind of community feel and a sense of sharing music through going to gigs and shows. How does that translate to your Spotify experiences?

**Respondent:** A fair bit. I guess maybe this is relevant so last year I went to thirty-eight shows over the span of the year. So there’s obviously artists that I know that I want to see and then based out of those shows, depending on who the opener is, if I don’t know them I’ll usually look them up just to see if I like them. Even if I don’t do that usually after the show there’s probably going to be about one or two songs that I like and I’ll go and look for it. That will then end up diversifying my library a little bit more.

**Interviewer:**  And what about do you feel that for you Spotify has a community feel itself as a platform?

**Respondent:** Not particularly, no.

**Interviewer:** Alright. So even though you’ve got connected friends on there you still don’t get that community sense?

**Respondent:** No, not really. I think it’s one of those things that the friend activity is cool. You can see what people are doing but I don’t think it necessarily rallies you behind the music quite as much as something like MySpace used to do. So when I was younger I loved MySpace because of the ability to find new bands and whatnot and it really I think was the pioneer of what has led into things like Spotify but you were able to get on those community platforms as well and talk to people about it whereas Spotify doesn’t really have that function. You have to really know who you’re looking for in order to find the friends, your friends, or you’re going to end up just following random people and I think sometimes when you follow random people you don’t really end up with something that you actually want to look at. I think with the introduction of things like Facebook, like Instagram whatever bands don’t really need their fans to connect on something like Spotify, even though maybe I think that would be a cool feature.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So just going back to you talking about that when you’re listening to music and see people online you don’t necessarily feel that your music tastes change and then obviously when you’re playing music for your colleagues and your friends does knowing that they’re listening to it does that influence what music you play?

**Respondent:** I mean I definitely make conscious choices if I’m trying to show somebody something. I probably wouldn’t play my dad some of the heavier stuff that I like just like. I wouldn’t play something with a lot of explicit language to a colleague or any of my nieces or nephews. I think simply because it does have to fit the scenario that it’s in. So there is a conscious effort but, for the most part, I think because I know what my music taste is there are bands I would never play for somebody but there’s a lot I probably wouldn’t necessarily think about too hard but depending on the person too right? If I wanted to show you a song and I knew you really well and I knew you would like this particular song

**Interviewer:** Oh sorry I lost you there temporarily.

**Respondent:** Oh it’s ok. If I knew you really well and I knew ‘Ok she really likes bands like Kings of Leon and this has a similar sound and I really like this’ then I can show you that stuff. So there is some conscious effort but it’s not necessarily as specific as this particular exact song. It’s more like ‘Oh this band also has a similar vibe and this song is good and I like this one maybe she’ll like it’.

**Interviewer:** So then just to clarify so when you’re playing this music is it that you’re taking into account the tastes of the people that you’re sharing it with or is it that you’re conscious of how you might be perceived through your music choices?

**Respondent:** It’s 50/50 honestly. I think it depends on the scenario really. What I play while I’m at work I know needs to be a certain level of needs to be like. I can’t be playing heavy rock music or explicit rap in my office because it’s not appropriate. And the relationship I have with my colleagues is not that where I can necessarily play them something that is explicit and whatnot just because we don’t have that kind of relationship. I don’t know them well enough to know what would actually offend them in terms of music. So in that case, if I was thinking about that, I would be worried about what they would think of me. But if I was sharing it with somebody, like a friend or a family member, I wouldn’t necessarily be so worried about what that particular song says about me if that makes sense?

**Interviewer:** Yes, that makes sense. Thank you for expanding on that a little bit more. So I’d now like to move on to talking about your music streaming practices on Spotify so how you kind of stream music throughout the week. So how do you tend to listen to music on Spotify and what types of music do you listen to?

**Respondent:** I tend to listen on my computer primarily throughout my workday. I do listen to it in the car a little bit on my phone but also I like listening to podcasts and audiobooks as well so I utilise Apple Podcast and Audible. But if I’m not into that I will listen to music in the car. And then just in terms of, sorry you said like what music?

**Interviewer:** Yes, yes.

**Respondent:** So I make new playlists every month. Occasionally there’s a song or two from the last month that might come in on like day thirty or thirty-one that I still would like to listen to so I use that as my starting block for my new playlist. And generally for the first two weeks of the month it’s kind of a flip-flop in between last month and the current month’s playlist. I’ll pick up on things, like my Discover Weekly, my Release Radar and, if I come across something, I’ll add it but if I’m not feeling anything then I’ll actively seek out a playlist that either I’ve already made that I know I like or I’ll go into the browse category and see you know ‘I’m really feeling this kind of vibe today. I’d like to see if Spotify has any recommendations of other bands that are in that vein’. It’s kind of funny to me that the two top bands that you mentioned my main band that I’ll always go back to if I can’t find anything is the Arkells and I have spent think they said I played like 370 hours-worth of their music last year even on Spotify. I still have those stats too when Spotify sends those so if you think that would be helpful let me know. I have no problem passing that along. But there’s artists that obviously I know I like everything they play, I know all the lyrics, I can put it on and I’ll be happy.

**Interviewer:** So is there a reason that you’ve chosen Spotify as your streaming platform?

**Respondent:** An ex introduced me to Spotify a few years back and I liked it initially because it was it was a free service. It was really easy to use. There really wasn’t anything else quite like it on the market. I was sick of iTunes. I didn’t really want to go through the whole process of downloading the music off of some other site. I’ll be perfectly honest with you I stole music, everybody does that, so I was just sick of doing that process. I knew it wasn’t good for my computer so this seemed like a good way. They’re clearly paying royalties on the music, which I thought was cool, so that’s kind of why I leaned that way. And then things came along like Apple Music and Amazon Music and the Apple one I looked at it and it just it never really stuck. I thought the platform for Spotify was a little bit better and I was obviously familiar with it. Then Amazon Music I’ve never touched. I have it on Prime but for some reason I’ve just never had any interest in giving it a go so I’ve stuck with Spotify. And the price of it is not that bad either. I don’t really have any qualms about paying for premium and I like the ability to download the music and listen to it offline, not have to use my data and things like that.

**Interviewer:** So you’ve chosen premium for the additional service features that you got?

**Respondent:** Yes so I was getting annoyed mostly by the ads because they play so frequently. And they’re really annoying too. They’re not even funny ads. The company I work for has an ad on Spotify and it’s so cringy to listen to. I don’t know what it is I don’t think radio ads have really gotten I don’t think they’ve really gotten the hang of new media very well. But I like the ability to download the music and because I’m on wifi so frequently at the start of my day I know if I’ve added anything within the last night it’ll end up on my on my playlist, like there’s only so many times realistically where I’m out of range of wifi so I won’t have my playlist updated. I also have good music with me, which is nice, and it doesn’t take up a ton of space on my phone.

**Interviewer:** So just looking again at your scrobble logs it seems that you listen to lots of different artists consecutively so where is that music coming from? Is it coming from a playlist or your music library?

**Respondent:** Probably from a playlist. I do have one set up for September and I do listen to that relatively frequently. The music that comes from that depends on if I’m going to any shows, if I’ve seen anything that I like on my friends’ activity that’s piqued my interest, my Release Radar, my Discover Weekly, any of the discover features. I don’t listen to a ton of radio but if it’s on I might hear something there that I like. If I’m watching a movie or whatever that’s where some of the music comes from that. But primarily it’s the one main monthly playlist. That’s where a lot of the consecutive songs are probably coming from.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And do you use any of Spotify’s other service features? So you’ve talked about the Discover Weekly but is there anything else you tend to use on there?

**Respondent:** I do use the Daily Mixes not as much recently but again it’s another thing that if I know I need feel good, happy music that I know I’ll love and I’ll like and I just really can’t be arsed to look for something those are a good place to go as well. That’s kind of it though really.

**Interviewer:** What about do you use any of the similar artist tools?

**Respondent:** Oh yes I do use that. Sorry.

**Interviewer:** And how how do you find that as a feature?

**Respondent:** It’s hit or miss truly. Sometimes it really depends. So I’ve just pulled it up here and it says like ‘Suggested for you based on this artist’ and the first four artists they’ve listed I know all of them. If maybe they were a little bit, yes even if I go onto the next page I know everybody there. I have to go to about the third page to get to some bands that I don’t know. It is a good feature. I think I have to be in a particular mindset to want to use it because I use Spotify so frequently while I’m working it really is background music to me. So if I’m in a mood where I can kind of focus on the music a little bit more then I have no problem using it but if I’m actively doing something that takes my attention a little bit further away from it then I prefer to have something on that I already know I like and that I’m not going to be surprised when maybe there’s a sudden shift in how the music works.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So approximately then how many tracks would you say that you’ve got in your Spotify library?

**Respondent:** On a whole?

**Interviewer:** Yes. Have you got any idea?

**Respondent:** Oh good god give me one second. I can look since January. I’ve got to have close to a thousand.

**Interviewer:** Ok great. Would you say that these are all very similar artists and genres or are they quite an eclectic mix?

**Respondent:** I would say that there’s definitely a lot of consistency but you would see a few things that probably wouldn’t necessarily fit with everything else.

**Interviewer:** And so the ones then that don’t fit with everything else how have you come to discover those?

**Respondent:** So sometimes it’s just music that I’ve liked previously. I’m looking at a July playlist that I have The Clash and The Sex Pistols and a couple of things like that and then a lot more mellow rock and that’s stuff that I used to listen to a lot more when I was younger. And it might just be something that I was reminded of it somehow through other forms of media. Some of the other ones too, like I know I have a Van Morrison song on a different playlist. Instagram has now updated to include some music features and because that’s not accessible in Canada right now if I don’t know the song sometimes I’ll just look it up because I would like to know what it sounds like, especially if it’s I have friends in the UK, I have friends in the States and sometimes they have different music tastes and it’s interesting to see what it is that they’re listening to.

**Interviewer:** And so when you go on Spotify do you usually know what you want to listen to before you start streaming or do you go on having no idea what you want to listen to?

**Respondent:** Depends on the day truly. Most times when I get on Spotify I just put on my playlist and carry on from there. Then sometimes I’ll decide ‘Oh I really want to dig a little bit deeper down this rabbit hole’. But there are days where I wake up and I’m like ‘I really really really want to listen to this today. I want to put it on’ so I do.

**Interviewer:** Oh ok. So I just want to explore a little bit more about the types of music you listen to during the week. So you’ve talked a little bit about how you listen to music for work so how does that work? Are you listening to it on a speaker or through headphones?

**Respondent:** Primarily headphones.

**Interviewer:** Ok and how have you selected that music for work?

**Respondent:** So I do listen primarily through headphones. Depending on how my day is going though sometimes I just have it playing through my speakers. Everything I pick is meant to suit the mood. There are certainly days where I know I need to be fired up a little bit more and I’ll listen to something maybe a little bit more energising. But if the day’s just kind of mellow I’ll go with the flow with that. I generally try to pick things that I know I like but if, for whatever reason, it starts going through my speakers it’s not going to be super offensive to anyone around me.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So is this type is this music for work normally something that you are actively listening to or it’s just background noise?

**Respondent:** It depends on the day honestly. A lot of my work is spent interacting with people over email so there’s a lot of times where I can’t actively listen to the music. There are times, and it’s primarily seasonally, there’s times where I’m a little bit more focused on something like an Excel spread sheet or I’m on the actual phone and then it just becomes background noise. But even with background noise I kind of know what’s playing and I’ll probably just mutter along under my breath with it so it’s there in the background but it’s not really in the background if that makes any sense?

**Interviewer:** Ok. Is it all music that you’re familiar with and that you know?

**Respondent:** Not necessarily. I think I played I was looking for something a little bit more chill the other day and there’s like an ‘Autumn Acoustic’ playlist that I looked when I was browsing you know like how you can browse a mood. I found that and I don’t necessarily know everything on it. There was definitely things that I wasn’t surprised to see on there and that I know. And occasionally if it is background, I think it was supposed to be background noise at that point, you might catch part of a song or something where you’re like ‘Oh, I like that’ and then I’ll put it in a playlist and keep it.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So you’ve mentioned there the idea that you’ve searched for a playlist to reflect your mood. Is that always how you play music for work or do you ever play music from your own library or playlists?

**Respondent:** A fair bit from my own playlists. Usually my monthly playlists like if there’s a song I really like and I know it’s not appropriate for work I generally don’t put it on the playlist because my monthly playlist is just my go to. And again, like I was saying, if my headphones came disconnected from my computer I don’t want something playing that might really disturb someone around me. That being said there’s never really been an instance where that’s happened and, if it does, I’d catch it pretty quickly. I always keep my music to a really respectable level so not a lot of people can hear what’s going on outside of my office. But there’s days where I know I want something I want the whole playlist to sound like this so I go and I find a playlist that sounds like that if that makes sense?

**Interviewer:** Yes, yes that does. So we’ve obviously talked about music for work but is there any other times or events during the week or situations that you choose to use music for?

**Respondent:** Yes absolutely. I play it when I’m in my house all the time, not so much this week-I had a lot going on this week. But yes I’ll play it while I’m at home. I mean sometimes you want to enjoy other forms of media so I like to watch the news while I’m at home and things like that but if I’m cleaning around the house or I’m driving in my car or I have friends over I’ll put on some music in the background or just to actively listen to. And then I would always select something if I’m getting ready for a party or whatnot. So I went to a wedding last Friday. It might not have been on my Spotify but the girls and I all got ready together and we definitely were playing something that Spotify had generated.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So would you say then that the music that you listen to in either your house or while driving your car or getting ready to go out is very different to the music that you would listen to at work?

**Respondent:** No not really. I think everything still flows together. Sorry my phone’s dying so I’ve just got to go grab my charger. It’s still kind of all on the same vein and that same playlist that I make every month I’ll still listen to that at home quite frequently because I enjoy the music that I’ve put on there obviously. But there’s sometimes different situations in your house that you know maybe you can play something a little bit more explicit or you can play your music a little bit louder and whatnot.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And then what about when you said that you were selecting music with your friends to go to the wedding how does that usually work? Is it equal that you all pick music to play or is it more one person picking the music?

**Respondent:** Usually it’s one person. I always find in those situations that everybody anytime I’ve had anyone select a oooh we are back on. Anytime I’ve been in a situation where we have to share a playlist or we’re all listening to stuff together we usually tend to gravitate towards hits. So things that people, and not current hits or top 40, stuff that everybody knows those songs because they played them all when they were growing up so I’m sure you’ve been to a party where somebody puts on like Destiny’s Child or Spice Girls or whoever because you know all those songs and they’re feel good, happy and pump you up. So that’s usually how it goes. Somebody picks some sort of playlist that includes things from the early 2000s, mid-2000s that everybody knows and everybody will be content with.

**Interviewer:** Yes, yes. So just again talking about your online streaming over the course of last week. I noticed that you didn’t listen to any music over the weekend, at least that was recorded on scrobble, is that typical of your weekly streaming?

**Respondent:** No, this weekend was a little all over the place. I was out and about and we had post-wedding stuff and all those things. It really depends. If I’m more homebound I’ll have music going on or I’ll have music going on while I’m in the car. This weekend because I was with so many people and I had people in my car you know. Sometimes I think when we were in my car somebody else played their music. And then I can’t really remember what I did on Sunday, why I wouldn’t have played music then. I think it really just it’s not necessarily reflective. I think sometimes on the weekends because I’ve got more going on and I’m not necessarily in a space where I can listen to music throughout the day or I’m with other people and their music tastes have to be taken into account or somebody else is playing something off of their phone I think that’s generally what happened. But there’s definitely music still around it’s just how it’s being played is a whole other story.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And would you say that your account is mostly, on Spotify, is mostly set to public or private?

**Respondent:** Public as far as I know.

**Interviewer:** Has there ever been a time where you’ve considered turning it on to private?

**Respondent:** I think I’ve turned it on to private maybe once. I’m not really sure what the circumstance was but it’s never something that I feel ashamed about or I have to turn my phone off. Actually, you know what I remember what it was. I was listening to a comedy band and their songs have really awkward titles-that’s why I turned it off. And my dad does follow me on Spotify and sometimes he’ll message me and be like ‘Oh, I like the song that you were playing’. I think that was why but there really isn’t a whole lot of point in my mind. The whole point of Spotify is to be able to share music and discover new music so I don’t really see why I would.

**Interviewer:** Ok that makes sense. So how often then do you tend to add music to your library?

**Respondent:** I would say definitely every Friday so at a minimum weekly. But for the most part every few days or so.

**Interviewer:** And where is that new music coming from?

**Respondent:** So the Release Radar, Discover Weekly but also the recommended songs because I do have that turned on so my playlist will just keep going.

**Interviewer:** And have you ever removed songs from your Spotify library?

**Respondent:** Removed? Unless it was mistakenly added, like maybe I’ve picked a song that wasn’t actually the one that I intended to put on there, but generally no.

**Interviewer:** Ok so say you added it a while ago and you don’t really listen to it anymore you’d still keep it on there?

**Respondent:** Yes because like I said so I don’t really ever use my Recently Played or the part where it says ‘Your Library’, actually I didn’t realise that I still have songs in there. The Your Library feature where it looks like you just add all the songs into there if you want them I used to use that a lot, I don’t anymore. I just default to the playlists. So if there’s a song that I don’t listen to anymore it’s still in that playlist because there’s probably a reason that it’s in there. It just means that it hasn’t suited me at this point in my life, it doesn’t mean that I won’t go back to it at some point it just means that right now it’s it doesn’t hold appeal for me.

**Interviewer:** So is there a reason then that you stopped using Your Library as like your go to way of adding music or organising your music?

**Respondent:** I think it was because I like having the music downloaded onto my phone. The playlists tend to stay smaller than if I was to use the full library feature because the library will get huge and it’ll take up way too much space on my phone. And then like you said there may be songs on there that I haven’t listened to in a while and maybe don’t want to. And then it does become a pick and choose thing of ‘Oh I want to take that out because I don’t listen to it anymore’ and ‘Why is it showing up?’ and then trying to edit the whole thing down. I personally like being able to have kind of archive to look back on like you know ‘What was happening in September 2018? What was I listening to then?’ Now I have that but it’s primarily because of the of the space factor on my phone.

**Interviewer:** Ok so I’d like now to talk a little bit about playlists. Obviously, playlists have come up quite a few times when we’ve been talking. So would you say playlists are very important to you?

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And why are they important to you?

**Respondent:** I think they’re important one because they give me a something to structure like I can structure a whole playlist around it. I know my September one is a little bit random. If you were to listen to it though the full way through I do think that it has quite a good flow to it. But I think it gives me a place to gravitate towards and if I know I just want to listen to everything that’s been making me happy this month I can go there. If I want to look for something that fits sleepy time in Wisconsin in January, there’s a place to go to find that. So I think playlists are good because they, depending on what you’re looking for, you can always find something that fits your mood or genre you want to discover or if you’re getting introduced into a band for the first time. I just think they’re a good way to kind of organise a collective idea of what it is that you want to listen to if that makes any sense? Whereas if you have the library if you were to listen to my library the full way through, even though I haven’t updated it in a very long time, it would make zero sense in terms of how it all flows together. Whereas the September playlists that I have going on right now, even though there are some songs that if you were to put one next to the other they don’t make quite sense, if you listen to the whole thing on the whole you figure out where my mind is at some point.

**Interviewer:** Ok so how did these monthly playlists get started? What was it that made you want to start these monthly playlists?

**Respondent:** Oh god that was years ago.

**Interviewer:** Oh so they’ve been going them for quite a long time?

**Respondent:** Yes, I know I started a playlist for Christmas I think in sometime in 2015/2016 there abouts and then I think I had heard some other things on the radio that I liked and I knew my phone was getting low on space so I made a playlist for the month. And then I just carried on that way.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And are they named by month or are they named in another way?

**Respondent:** So my monthly playlists are named by month and I have some that go back into 2017. I had started the process of, I think last summer, to start putting them you can download the full list and then put then into an Excel spreadsheet so I had been doing that and then deleting the playlist altogether because I wasn’t listening to things from last summer. But I do have some playlists that are specific to particular events and I also have two playlists that are associated with particular people.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So your monthly playlists then do you go back and revisit them at any point or is it just mainly an archive that you never touch again?

**Respondent:** No, I do go back to them. It’s usually like I remember a song I liked sometime in July will it still be there? Then I’ll go and see if it’s still there and if it is great and if not then I know I’ve got a little bit of a of digging to do. I will go back and look for things if I remember that I like them. There generally is a fair bit of crossover at the beginning of the month sometimes that lasts all month long so I’ll listen to stuff from August and it could carry well full into September. Usually, I have August and September saved on my phone so that when I’m in the process of making a new playlist I can listen to the old one or I can carry on with the new one.

**Interviewer:** And then what about your playlists then for particular people and events? How have they worked? How have they come to be?

**Respondent:** So the event playlist, the main one that I have, was centred around a concert. Though it was just to hype me up for that concert and listen to all the music together. I knew who all the openers were, I knew who the main band was so I wanted to be able to shuffle through and feel how all that would sound together. As for the people the first one is just music that one of my friends sends me and he has a very strange. He’d be a good person for your study truly. He has a very very strange mix of music and I like to keep it all together and remember where it came from. And then the other one is based on my boyfriend and he has, again probably somebody good for your study but he doesn’t have Spotify, he has a very strange taste in music and at the beginning of our relationship it was all music is very important to him, music is very important to me it’s part of the reason we’re together. So I was constantly trying to, he hates my taste in music and I’m not a huge fan of his, so we are constantly trying to see what songs that we do actually like together. So it’s an archive of songs that I know I’ve sent him previously and songs that he has sent me over the course of the relationship. And then I have another one of songs that we’ve actually collectively agreed that we like. It’s only six songs but we’re getting there. Our goal is to get to ten by the end of the year so we’ll see what happens. And I think that’s part of my music tastes from last summer particularly. I was like ‘Ok so he’s sending me this stuff’ and in the process of looking at the stuff that he likes even though I’m not a fan of all of it there were some that I do like, not fully but I did like them, so based on this sound could I find something else in my library that he would like? And going from there.

**Interviewer:** How often then do you play these playlists? For example, the event that you went to or the people like obviously your boyfriend and friend, do you play those quite regularly?

**Respondent:** The event playlist I played it again a lot this past June because there was a similar event so it got updated to reflect, it was like a day apart, so it got updated to reflect that and I did listen to it semi pretty frequently all throughout June. Again, it’s another one of those ones because it was probably my favourite artist and a lot of really good supporting artists that I also like. It’s another playlist that’s very feel good, happy. I know I’ll be happy listening to it so I do default to that a fair bit. As for the friend playlist it really my friend’s playlist it really depends on my mood. It’s more I’d have to be able to focus on the music a little bit more because it’s one of those ones where I don’t really quite know what I’m going to stumble upon. And then the one from my boyfriend it’s really only when we’re together that we listen to it.

**Interviewer:** Ok and what about Spotify’s playlists. Do you ever listen to the playlists that they’ve created or the playlists that other people have created and made public?

**Respondent:** Not quite so much. Things that other people have created outside of Christmas during Christmastime generally I’ll listen to whoever has made a playlist and I’ll be very happy with it, especially because you know sometimes different bands do different covers of song and it’s fun to discover a classic song that you love done in a different style by another artist that you didn’t know made Christmas music. I will listen to some Spotify generated playlists. On Thursdays I usually give the ‘Throwback Thursday’ a little go through. Thursdays are usually my days at home so I can play music as loud as I want but it’s a good way to start the morning. But it’s more like I would say it’s more like I’m looking for the moods, the mood playlists. I’m not looking for I never really go through like the ‘This is Punk’ or ‘Discover This’. It’s more like I want my music to reflect this exact way that I’m feeling right now.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So going onto music discovery. Are you a person that likes to discover new music?

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And why do you feel that you like to discover new music? What is it that makes you want to discover new music?

**Respondent:** I’m not really sure. It was definitely a part of growing up for me that I was actively seeking out new bands. I think some of it was because I wanted to not be the person that was listening to what everybody else was listening to so that I could be slightly pretentious in that way. But I think some of it is just interesting, like you can find an artist that you really like and be able to support them. I like being able to find smaller bands. I usually find I like their sound a little bit more. I’m trying to gather my thought here. I don’t know I just think it’s one of those things, like sometimes you don’t want to listen to something that you know. You want to look for something that you don’t know.

**Interviewer:** And how do you tend to discover this new music?

**Respondent:** So Discover Weekly is the big one, sometimes the ‘based on the artist you might like this’. Other times it’s just sometimes they do like a featured artist thing on the top page and sometimes I’ll go through that. Spotify though isn’t always like I tend to discover a lot of new music just based on shows I go to. I find new littler bands and then I’ll like them and then it expands you know then it tells my Spotify to find more things. Whereas I find if I’m not going to shows Spotify won’t really give me too much to discover.

**Interviewer:** So are there any other ways you discover music outside of Spotify or would you say it’s mainly you discover new music through Spotify?

**Respondent:** Spotify and going to shows primarily. And then you know friends here and there like they’ll know somebody that maybe I don’t know about. But I’d say shows are a big one. I like going to festivals and I find festivals are really really good for introducing you to artists that you don’t necessarily know.

**Interviewer:** And would your friends have similar music tastes to yourself so they then can give you recommendations?

**Respondent:** I think on a base level yes. I think we share a lot of common artists that we like together and we know we can go to the same shows together. But I think there’s definitely divergences that maybe go they still connect in a way but not in quite so obvious a way if that makes sense?

**Interviewer:** And is there then a band or artist or song you can give credit to Spotify for having discovered for you?

**Respondent:** Not off the top of my head truly.

**Interviewer:** That’s ok. So when you discover new music would you say that you like it to be similar to things you already listen to or something different?

**Respondent:** I think a lot of people ok you might have to go with me on this one because I’m not sure if it’s going to make sense at the end of it. A lot of people want something to be the same but they also want it to be different. So same same but different if that makes any sense? I’m open to hearing things that aren’t exactly like the normal music that I listen to but I don’t want them to be so far removed from it that it’s like ‘Woah. What am I listening to?’ does that make sense?

**Interviewer:** Yes, that makes sense. So how would you feel then if Spotify did give you something that was wildly different to your current tastes?

**Respondent:** I think it would have to be on a on a case-by-case basis truly. It has the Release Radar, which I love now that they have like ‘I don’t like this song. I don’t like this artist’ I love that, it does occasionally do that to me. It’ll throw something out there and I’ll be like ‘What am I listening to? How did it ever decide that I wanted to listen to Wiz Kalifa? Or whoever.’ I have no idea where it’s decided because your Release Radar is usually based on music that you’ve already saved, music that you’ve played so for me I’m like ‘Where the hell did this come from?’ Sometimes those are very jarring and I’m like ‘Why am I listening to this?’ other times it’s not quite so bad. So there was a song that I got this past week that was by it’s a collaboration between Bastille and Marshmello, who’s a DJ. I know where it’s gotten it from because I do like Bastille and I have been to a Marshmello show but I wouldn’t necessarily listen to him consistently. I know I have a song on a playlist because I listened to it after the festival that I saw him at. So it did kind of throw me through a loop for a second but then it kind of fits in with everything else that I’m listening to because on the one hand I do like Bastille, it fits in with pretty much everything I like, I have listened to Marshmello before so it kind of works and I’m ok with that. But then there’s times where you’re like ‘What the hell have you done here Spotify? Why would you do this to me?’.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So talking then a bit more about Spotify. So do you feel that Spotify allows you construct and manage your music tastes quite well?

**Respondent:** Yes absolutely.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And what about its interface? Do you find that quite easy to use?

**Respondent:** Yes, that’s probably why I haven’t switched to something else to be perfectly honest. It’s easy to use. I also think like I’m 26 I’m not a dinosaur but at the same time I feel like I am. I don’t really want to look for something else I know how this works. If it had a dramatic redesign, I might have an issue with it.

**Interviewer:** So do you then feel that it that interface influences the music that you listen to?

**Respondent:** A little bit yes. I think because of the way that their main browse page is it definitely pulls me in to different things and makes me want to listen to particular stuff. The one thing that is kind of a deterrent to it is when you open it back up it doesn’t necessarily load onto the browse page. It’ll open on to whatever you’ve had open last so sometimes my default is just to go straight to my playlists and not look for anything else. If it landed initially on the browse page, I might be a little bit more inclined to see what Spotify wants me to listen to.

**Interviewer:** And what about when it does the featured artists?

**Respondent:** It’s a toss up to be honest. Because I find a lot of the times their featured artist is someone who doesn’t really need to be featured. We all know who Justin Bieber is why does he need a feature? I give Spotify a lot of credit where I think iTunes, Apple Music and, truthfully I don’t have a ton of experience with Amazon but I only expect it’s the same, I think they do a lot to help smaller artists get promoted. However, I do feel those featured artist pages they don’t do enough. They usually just toss up somebody that, regardless of if you like them or not, you already know who they are. So it’s not really like they’re tossing up people who are smaller and or maybe not in your market and you can actuallydiscover somebody new.

**Interviewer:** So in that respect then would you prefer the featured artists to be somebody lesser known or somebody that’s more similar to your own tastes?

**Respondent:** You know what I think in a lot of respects I think in a lot of ways I would always I think most people would always prefer it’s somebody who is similar to their tastes. However, I’m a big supporter of people that want to make music that are, for whatever reason, they’re going against conventional careers. And I think if a smaller artists who’s from middle of nowhere, playing the banjo while also using a rain stick if they want to feature, even though I might not totally love it, go for it. I’d probably be more inclined to click on somebody whose name I’ve never heard of in my life and listen to a couple of songs and say ‘You know what? It’s not for me but good for them’ than necessarily somebody who I already know.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So in general then do you feel that the music on Spotify is a good reflection of who you are?

**Respondent:** Yes, I guess so. I’m not I’m not here’s my thing: I think music reflects a lot about what is going on around you. I don’t necessarily think it reflects who you are as a person if that makes any sense? I think there’s a lot of I if you look at what stereo like when the Columbine Incident happened. Black metal, Marilyn Manson really got thrown under the bus as for reasons why these boys were so bad, like they were terrible people. They blamed the music-‘That’s who they are. They listen to terrible metal music’. I don’t think it’s necessarily reflective of who you are. I just think that there’s something about the music that draws you in that you identify with, whether that’s because you need something a little bit heavier because you know your emotions are very heavy. I don’t know if it’s your full personality, your full identity, I think it’s more where you are in your life, what experiences you’re having at the moment.

**Interviewer:** No that makes sense.

**Respondent:** I think that my music right now reflects a lot on what’s going on in my life and the moods I’ve been in over the past let’s say six weeks. I think it’s very reflective of that for sure. If I look back on all of my music over the past two years, I can see the evolution of where I was in my life. I can see the evolution of how I was as someone at 23 versus now at 26 you know somebody who was a student versus somebody who now has a full-time job and a home and all those good things. In the course of that evolution I can see my black and blue periods, I can see my very high and happy periods but I think that the actual core of myself is still the same. It’s just if you’re trying to chalk it up to my full identity I don’t know if it’s necessarily going to reflect.

**Interviewer:**  Ok. Would you say that’s true of how you use music in general or is that just true of how it is on Spotify?

**Respondent:** I think in general.

**Interviewer:** Ok. So in terms of your, I don’t know, CDs or something would you say that you use CDs in the same way that you use Spotify?

**Respondent:** Truthfully, I really only use Spotify. I do have CDs still but they’re not something I use. I will buy a CD at a concert purely to support that artist but it’s usually something that just gets chucked in the centre console of my car and I never touch it again.

**Interviewer:** Ok, ok. I don’t know about in the US and in Canada but there’s been a lot of things in the media over here in the UK about how these online platforms are using our data and that means there has had to be a review of terms and conditions and GDPR. Does it bother you that Spotify stores and uses your data or is it not something that you think or care about?

**Respondent:** Truthfully, it’s not something I think or care about. I think, from my own perspective, the only time I would really care is if they were taking things that I feel belongs solely to me. So my credit card information, pictures I have on associated with my Spotify, which is just one and I don’t really care that much about it. If they were stealing things like that that I felt were proprietary and my own I would care so much but things like my age, demographic information, so my age, where I live, what kind of music I’m listening to I don’t really care so much about those things. I get it it’s a business and a lot of businesses function on knowing who your demographic is and what they’re attracted to in those particular areas.

**Interviewer:** So they obviously well it looks like they use the data to produce recommendations for individual users to kind of tailor the music that it suggests to you. So in that respect what do you think about their recommendations for you?

**Respondent:** I think for the most part they’re pretty good. I would say a lot of them are not necessarily things that I don’t already know about. I think some stuff they’re trying to recommend…so if I look at my recommendations right now. So my top ones right now are a band called Trapper Schoepp, don’t know about them, Bleachers, know about them, Lunar Bay, know about them, and Jesse Ray, know about them. So I think in some respects, and those last three bands I definitely have songs saved by them maybe months ago not recently, I think in some respects it is very good. They do give me good recommendations and I think I might only have one or two songs so it’s fair for them to say like ‘Hey remember these people. We recommend them for you again because there’s a new album’. I think they’re good but I think they could do better.

**Interviewer:** So how then for you do you think that they could improve?

**Respondent:** That is a good question. I think that addition of the recommended songs is very good however, I think a lot of those times there are a lot of the same music. It’s still bands I’m very aware of that I have saved or a song, like I’m looking now, I’ve definitely saved at least six of these songs looking at my playlist recommendations. I think they need to look at the thing on a whole and say like ‘Ok well that’s already been saved. They know who that is. Let’s wipe it clean’. I think the other thing too is I really like being able to support local music and I don’t think they’ve gotten quite so good at so they have the national charts, so like ‘Trending in Canada’, ‘Viral in Canada’ whatever. I don’t think they’ve got so good at trending down into actual city markets, which I think would be a big bonus because I love being able to go and see smaller bands in Toronto and I think you know having that would be I would enjoy that personally.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Yes that’s a really interesting idea. My last question is obviously you’ve now been part of all three phases of my research, so the questionnaire, the online observation and now the interview. Do you think being part of this has made you reflect or change any of your Spotify practices at all?

**Respondent:** I mean initially when you said you were going to observe my data I was kind of like ‘Oh does she like just want to me send her a log’ and then the first day I was like ‘Oh I hope I don’t listen to anything too weird and that she’s kind of like why?’ But and I think honestly, truly it was more just me being like ‘I’m Canadian she’s from the UK. What will she think of Canadians?’, which is something that I’m weirdly very conscious of. I was actually in England two weeks ago and every time I’m there I feel very defensive over my accent. I’m like ‘I don’t want anyone to think I’m an American’. I think it did give me a second to be like you know ‘What is she going to ask? What does my music say about me?’ and then I think I sort of forgot about it truthfully. So there definitely were, and over the course of the conversation, there’s definitely some lingering thoughts in my mind like ‘What does my music say about me?’ but at the same time it’s not a foreign conversation that I haven’t had before. I have spoken to people about ‘What do my tastes say about me?’. I know from my boyfriend he thinks I have terrible taste in music but I know for a lot of my friends I’m the person they gravitate towards to tell them about a cool song or a good band or whatever so I think in a lot of ways you do become a little bit defensive over your choices and how they appear to a person, especially if you’ve had sort of a mixed review in what people think about your tastes.

**Interviewer:** Well I mean it’s been super interesting to obviously observe what you’ve been listening to. I mean a lot of the stuff I wasn’t really aware of. I don’t know if that’s a UK/Canadian thing or just in terms of my own preferences. But then it’s been a really interesting interview and you’ve brought up some really interesting stuff that will move my PhD forward so I’m really thankful for you sharing it all with me.

**Respondent:** Yes absolutely. When you posted it on Reddit I was like people do post a lot of ‘We’re doing this for our PhD like can you help us out?’ and I thought like this was one of the first times I saw something that I just give me one second here sorry about that.

**Interviewer:** That’s no problem.

**Respondent:** I think it was one of the first times that I was like ‘Oh this is something actually interesting. This is something that I would actually like to participate in’ because I do so strongly have music ingrained in my day-to-day life and there’s never really a day where I don’t have Spotify open. So it was one of those things where it is very interesting and it is a very interesting time with the way that we do stream music and whatnot and everything that’s going on in the States with changes to their royalty laws and whatnot. It is one of those things that I’m very happy that I was able to help you.

**Interviewer:** No definitely. I mean is there anything you’d like to expand or touch upon that we’ve not spoken about during the interview at all?

**Respondent:** Honestly like it really depends on how you want to take your research right? Like there’s anything you thought you needed to expand upon or ask. I’m more that happy, and I hope you know that, if you need anything else, please come back. I am more than happy if you wanted to observe my behaviour for a month, for six months go for it. I really don’t care. And if you had more questions next week, or in two weeks I’m more than happy to talk to you again. I just think it’s kind of cool. It’s a cool idea. I think, as something to expand upon, I think it’s very telling from that Reddit group is that Spotify is missing a function because people go there to share playlists, to talk about music, to talk about local bands that they like and how they’re using the service. So it does show a slight disconnect. In all the ways that Spotify succeeding there’s one area where they’re not and that’s putting together the people that want to talk about the music and to get together to share in that kind of community. It’s just it’s not quite there. And I would say one other thing, which actually now I’m reminded, I went to a show last night which is why my voice is sort of wonky. I went to go see a lovely English artist. I went to go see Frank Turner last night.

**Interviewer:** Oh yes.

**Respondent:** Yes and he played in a tiny tiny club in Toronto and it was absolutely fantastic. But Spotify has the Concerts feature, which is really really cool, but, I think it was Ticketfly if I’m not mistaken, they used to have some sort of community where you could come together and talk about who was going to the show, if people were doing things before blah blah blah blah. That’s something, again, like there’s community and you should want people to reach out and talk about the band and you know ‘Who’s going to this show?’ and all those kinds of good things. Actually, you know what it is? It’s Bandsintown. I don’t know if that’s a thing in the UK? It’s a thing over here and you can it just tells you that there’s concerts but there’s a forum and people can discuss. When I was at the show last night I was talking to two guys. One of them was from Manchester and the other was from Belfast and there was a third one sorry and he was from Toronto. They gave us all these little pins and I was like ‘What the hell is this?’. It’s for a community and it is on Facebook and it’s called the ‘Solo Armada’ and it’s for people who go, it’s a big thing in the UK and it’s just started to come over to Canada, and it’s for people who go to concerts alone but maybe don’t necessarily want to. And the fact that there’s a community around that, that there’s recognition that a lot of people do go to shows by themselves because whether they just don’t have somebody to go with or they don’t have friends that like the same music or they’re out of town or whatever it is. It’s clear that people are trying to make those communities themselves and I think that’s an area where Spotify should be expanding upon is that historically music is a huge part of community. If you look at any society music is part of celebration, it’s part of the grief process for death like it’s a huge thing that binds people together and I think that for all the good stuff that they have done, with the friend activity and whatnot, now they need to start connecting strangers in a better way.

**Interviewer:** So almost making it a bit like a more of a social network than it actually is?

**Respondent:** Yes, I think so. I don’t know how old you are and I’m not going to presume because that’s very rude. But if you were on MySpace, like way back in the day, MySpace is kind of the original social network really. Their music space was amazing and you used to really be able to connect with people over that way. And even if you look at torrenting websites from back in the day, so things like LimeWire and Napster, they always had a chat function associated with them and a forum associated with them. So then it becomes ‘Well why isn’t Spotify doing that?’ Is it just because they think that market is being served by Facebook? That’s all well and good but it’s kind of been a proven point that Facebook is dying. It’s not something that people are connecting over. And then you go ‘Well are people just substituting Instagram in for Facebook?’ Yes, but more people have a stricter privacy settings on their Instagram and for good reason. A lot of people don’t really want to give out access to their photos like there is a lot of fake profiles out there. But if it’s just music, if that’s literally the only detail you have about yourself is what you listening to, what artists you’re following, which communities you want to be a part of, you know you still get to protect your identity probably in a very big way and you still get to connect with other fans and maybe then you don’t have to go to a concert alone. And I will say this I have met tons of wonderful, lovely people at concerts and we’ve become very good friends and all that stuff. So yes it’s one of those things that I think based on your experiences of Spotify, based on my general experience with sorry not with Spotify with Reddit, with going to shows just generally it’s very much a community thing and it’s just kind of the one area where Spotify is falling flat. They’re relying on you already utilising your own community not necessarily introducing you to a new one.

**Interviewer:** And if you were to make that suggestion would that community be based around particular artists or genres of music? Because I mean obviously you can already see what your friends are listening to but from what you’ve said it’s like you want to go beyond friends that you’ve already made.

**Respondent:** Yes, I think I mean obviously you can connect maybe they can make things like oh ‘The Toronto Indie Rock Scene’ or whatever or you can already follow artists and it says like gives you recommendations of other artists that people who like these artists might like. I think you can centre yourself either round where you live locally and looking for people that also like the same music but you can also centre yourself around the artist itself. Like we live in a very cool time where you don’t actually need to be in the same city to be very good friends with somebody. For a lot of people like sometimes that’s the only way they can make friends is through the internet and music is a big part of that. Like it’s very rare that people don’t connect with their friend in some way over music.

**Interviewer:** That’s a very interesting point that you’ve brought up. I’ve never really thought about Spotify in that respect.

**Respondent:** That was my last-minute thought. Yes so I think there’s lots of room for it to this is the other thing too is it really is the stepping point off of something like MySpace and iTunes and it really is the pioneer of the streaming service. And if you look at something like Apple Music, they don’t have an interface even close to this. They don’t have a sort of connective property that works in the same way and Amazon Music is a lot of the same from what I can tell. So they’ve done a lot of the right things. It’s just whether or not they keep that momentum up and I think if you look at the history of how streaming or electronic music has worked over the past fifteen years or so people will move on quite quickly. People have no loyalty. They want the thing that will give them the best experience so if you don’t evolve quickly and adapt you will die essentially. I think Spotify for all the good things they do I don’t think people will be loyal to them if they if Apple Music was Apple Music is a competitor but is it that good of a competitor that people will want to keep it?

**Interviewer:** So for yourself do you feel that Spotify has changed as a platform since you’ve been using it?

**Respondent:** Yeah absolutely. I think the discover feature was added over the last probably the last two years. When I first started before you very much had to already know what you were looking for. So my default was to listen to the radio in the car in the morning and then I could listen to my own music on the way home whereas now I don’t necessarily have to do that. I can do that on my own through the discover function.

**Interviewer:** So for you Spotify then has changed for the better in the additions that they’ve made?

**Respondent:** Yes absolutely. I think they’ve done a very good job listening to being competitive and listening to people. So like Netflix came out with you can have up to four people on this service for x amount more dollars. Now Spotify has the family plan so they clearly understand how people utilise the service that usually a lot of people in the same house are probably using it but they have different tastes so how do they make the price effective but also let everybody do their own thing. So I think they’ve made a lot of right steps it’s just they need to keep that up.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** And I think the good thing too is that they very much listen to the market. So I don’t know if you’ve done any research into Tidal. Tidal was the streaming service that Jay-Z tried to launch and that failed spectacularly, like absolutely spectacularly. There’s definitely people that still listen to it but it didn’t listen to the market. And I think I remember when it came out the price was huge. It was not affordable for most people. Even for somebody who is an audiophile, you would have to use that service connected to the right speakers in order to get the sound that they were promising. And I think it was one of those things where because it came out so badly the first time around no one, I think it does still exist, nobody has given it a chance since. So that’s the same thing with Amazon like definitely people use Amazon. It’s there…people like it. People like the experience, there’s clearly a market for it. Sorry I’m just going to move really quick. There’s clearly a market for it but it’s not competitive and I don’t know why that is. I think maybe it’s just one of those things where people don’t think of Amazon for everything because, even though it is a source of everything, maybe this is a realm that they shouldn’t be playing in which is why really Apple Music and Spotify are the go tos. I personally don’t know anyone who uses Apple Music. I don’t know why that is. Maybe people just don’t like the interface or whatnot but there’s clearly something that Spotify has done that has given them all the right steps to make them competitive and make them kind of the top marker.

**Interviewer:** And what about have you ever used Pandora at all?

**Respondent:** Pandora wasn’t available in Canada for a very very long time.

**Interviewer:** Oh ok.

**Respondent:**  So by the time it came round that’s the other thing too. Canada is like the orphan child-we don’t get anything. So when Spotify did come out it was like a bigrevelation because it launched here quite quickly after the US launch. But Pandora wasn’t here for ever and ever. There was another music service that I used-8tracks. I used that a lot before Spotify.

**Interviewer:** And what was that like?

**Respondent:** It was purely playlists but similar to Spotify in the sense that it had all of the like ‘Looking for this kind of mood’. And it was all people had generated, like it was community based, everybody had generated these playlists and then they had their own that they had generated.

**Interviewer:** Oh I’ve not heard of that one, whether it wasn’t available in the UK or not I don’t know but I haven’t heard of that one before.

**Respondent:**  It was just a website so the chances are yes it was. Pandora was really funny. I can’t because I know that there was a website but I can’t really remember why it regionally didn’t work but it just was one of those things that I remember hearing about it and being very excited about it and it just not coming to Canada, which Canada is a very under-served market. We don’t get a lot of the same. I think part of it is because of our copyright law here. I’m not very familiar with it so I can’t give you any expert insights but from what I can tell that’s kind of what it is. But a lot of stuff will launch here like last and it’s why things like the Instagram music portion and all that haven’t come up into Canada yet, despite the fact that every other country seems to have it for a month and a half now.

**Interviewer:** Yes it must be frustrating.

**Respondent:** It’s a little bit odd because so my boyfriend is English-he’s actually from Portsmouth. When I told him I was talking to someone that went to the University of Southampton he was like ‘Oh I don’t know if you should be talking to her’ [laughs]

**Interviewer:** [laughs]

**Respondent:** But I can’t remember what the point was of talking about him but oh yes because I have a lot of friends that are in the UK and I follow them on Instagram and they all get to utilise those kind of features and a lot, especially influencers, that’s something they get to use and because they do use music really to reflect their style. It’s one of those things where you’re like ‘Eurgh I can’t listen to this. Now I have to actually like put in effort and actually like go look it up’. But in some ways it’s better because then I do have to give myself the chance to listen to the full thing and not just a 10 second clip of it.

**Interviewer:** Yes. So you actually go and actively look for it afterwards?

**Respondent**: It depends on the person to be honest. There’s two influencers from the UK who I really like and one subsequently has a friend who’s sort of on the fringe who I also follow and she has pretty good music tastes too. I will go and seek that stuff out because I’ve heard stuff in their videos before and I’m like ‘Oh yeah like we kind of have similar taste’ and I’ll go look it up and generally I’m pretty happy with it.

**Interviewer:** Oh ok. Well hopefully it’ll soon be coming to Canada.

**Respondent:** Yes absolutely. I mean it’s good because it keeps my Spotify busy.

**Interviewer:** Yes but still frustrating.

**Respondent:** A little bit. Anyways it was lovely to talk to you.

**Interviewer:** Yes thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

**Respondent:** And again if you need anything, like if you have a five second question and it occurs to you at 3am in the morning feel free to email it to me. I like or if you want to do a second week of observation just let me know. I have no issue with it.

**Interviewer:** Ah that’s very kind of you. I do really appreciate that.

**Respondent:** Yes of course.

**Interviewer:** Thank you again for the interview.

**Respondent:** No problem. Anyways have the best Thursday ever and hopefully I’ll hear from you soon.

**Interviewer:** Yes ok. Speak to you soon.

**Respondent:** Ok bye bye.

**Interviewer:** Bye.

[End of transcript]

# Transcript: In-06-M

[0:00:00]

Respondent: Hello.

Interviewer: Hi, are you alright?

Respondent: Hi, how are you?

Interviewer: Good, thank you very much. Sorry about all the hassle this morning, I do apologise.

Respondent: Oh, no it slipped my mind, I was on the train yesterday and it usually has wifi, but the one I was on, wifi was not working.

Interviewer: Oh, typical (laughing).

Respondent: It completely slipped my mind after that, sorry about that.

Interviewer: No, don’t worry. It’s just, the universities over here, I don’t know what they’re like in America, they are so strict on like, getting consent forms signed before you do anything.

Respondent: I’m sure it’s the same, yeah. It makes sense.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely. Well, I appreciate you finding the time anyway this morning, to speak to me. I am sorry if it meant you had to get up a little bit earlier.

Respondent: No, it didn’t.

Interviewer: Oh, that’s good.

Respondent: I’ve been up for a while. I just had to be downtown, so I figured I would do it at a café rather than rushing around.

Interviewer: Yeah, that’s a good plan. So, the way it is going to work then today, the interview will approximately last around an hour, but it is very much led by yourself. So, I have some questions to ask, but then will let you expand and talk about things as you wish.

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: And, while you are talking it might be a case that I am writing a couple of notes down. They are things purely for me to maybe talk to you about later on, so if I have not understood something, or if I would like a little bit more detail about something that you have said, I will write a couple of notes down while you are chatting.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: Also, I have got a recording device by the side of my laptop to record our interview, if that’s okay with you?

Respondent: That’s fine.

Interviewer: Perfect. So, do you have any questions before we get started?

Respondent: I am curious, what exactly is the goal of your study?

[0:02:00]

Interviewer: So, basically it is looking at, so music has always been used as a way for people to express themselves and present themselves to people as part of their identity about who they are. So, it is looking at how those potential ways that music has allowed us to do that have translated online, and whether they have translated online. And, because streaming, and in particular Spotify, is such a big deal at the minute, looking at how that probably works from a Spotify perspective. So, it may be that I find out that music on streaming platforms is an important aspect of the way we construct, and manage, and perform who we are, or it might be actually that it is not translated online and we don’t use streaming platforms for that way. Does that make sense?

Respondent: It does, I see where you’re getting.

Interviewer: Good, I’m glad. Okay, so if it is alright with you then we will get started.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So, the first part that I would like to ask you about is how and whether music relates to your identify, so who you are? So, how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: So, I would say yes to answer your question, very much so. And then, as a music listener I think I am pretty … I think the act of listening to music is a pretty important part of my everyday life. This week was actually a really busy week, so like if you looked back on it, if you were to look back at my Last.fm you would see there are times when I am pretty much listening to music for 10-12 hours a day, for an entire week. I didn’t have the opportunity to this week, so it was a little bit of an off week. But, like music, the act of listening to music is something that I value very much. And, while I don’t have that connection with most of my friends, the friends that I do connect with as far as talking about music and experiencing music, like that is a very important aspect of our friendship, one that I value. Because, it can be a rare, like some people don’t make music and the act of listening to music such an important part of their lives, and when I can find someone like that, we can have that bond, we can connect in that way.

Interviewer: So, what is it then that you value in the act of listening to music? What is it that appeals to you?

Respondent: The thing that I think I find myself most interested in about music, is hearing new music that I haven’t heard before that gives me that sensation of excitement, and hearing something that excites me. It is like, I was joking with my friends probably a couple of months ago at this point, that like Spotify, and listening to Spotify, almost takes on like a Pokemon game aspect, like you are constantly searching for that song, and when you find that song you listen to it over and over again, and then share it with your friends. Because, I don’t know, there is just something really special about finding a song, or an album, or a band, or a new artist that excites you and gives you that weird emotion that only music can. I think that, more than anything, like I am not a huge fan of nostalgia, though I do listen to music from my childhood, that is not really what drives my music. I think it is constantly searching out something that feels like I have never heard it before, or anything like it, and is still good just from a musical quality stand.

Interviewer: So, when you say then that you like to search out something new, is that something new that is quite similar to your existing taste, or is it something that is quite different to what you already listen to?

Respondent: It’s immense. Like, I have found things that I have just never heard anything like before, just because culturally I have just never been exposed to it. And, I am slowly, if I find something like that, like I was listening to African music, Sudanese music sometime over the summer, I found a bunch of albums and I started like, chasing through all these albums because I had never heard anything like it before. It was so different from anything that I had listened to, but I still found it good. So, if I find that it is a bonus because I am experiencing something completely out of my culture, out of my comfort zone, or whatever. Yeah, I think that a big part of it tends to be stuff that sounds similar to what I already listen to, probably just because I am more likely to come across that kind of music.

[0:06:55]

Interviewer: But, you wouldn’t be averse to, if you came across something that was very different, you would still be willing to listen to it and potentially like it?

Respondent: Absolutely. I think that’s a bonus, yeah. Finding something like that expands your musical horizons, I think it is even more special because it is like unlocking something you have, even culturally, you have just never heard before. If you can find that and enjoy it, then I think that is the important part. I am never going to listen to something just because it is different, it has to make me excited and like, sound good to me. But, if all those things are there and it is something I have never heard before, then I think that is more exciting.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you obviously have talked about the value that music has in your life. Would you say that is related to your identity, so who you are as a person, or not?

Respondent: I think so. It is a tough question to answer, because I think there are things that make up my identity so to speak, more. But, I would be lying if I said that, like my friends know me as a person that listens to music, like I spend a significant amount of money on speakers for my home, and an amplifier, an entire set up just because I like to listen to music that much. So, I think it would be disingenuous for me to say that it is not a big part of my personality, but it is not deliberate. Like, there are things that I do more deliberately to kind of telegraph who I am as a person, than listening to music. I say that, and I am actually wearing a shirt for an artist, but that is just like not something that I typically do (laughter).

Interviewer: You have not specifically planned it for the interview (laughing)?

Respondent: No, I didn’t. I was going to say like, ‘I’m not wearing a music shirt,’ but I was like, ‘Oh, I kind of am,’ (laughter), but typically I wouldn’t be.

Interviewer: Okay, I will have to trust you on that one (laughing). So, you say then that music is important to your identity, but not as important as other things. So, what would be kind of, something else that you would consider pivotal in displaying your identity?

Respondent: So, I am vegan, and I think that that is more … like, I go to vegan events, and I seek out friends that are vegan, and do specifically things that celebrate the vegan lifestyle. I am a fan of the New York Giants football team, and I think that is a big part of my identity, you know I wear New York Giants shirts, and you know I have posters of the New York Giants, not posters, but like framed pictures of the New York Giants and memorabilia in my house. So, I think that those other things are more a part of my identity. I am a Systems Engineer, and I am really into the idea of being a nerd(?), I identify as a nerd(?), so to speak, so maybe something like that. The more I talk about it, the more I think that maybe music is, I don’t know the answer to this question (laughing), I’m doing a really bad job (laughing). Maybe listening to music is a bigger part of my identity than I realised.

Interviewer: That’s interesting in itself. I mean, has there ever been a time that you used music specifically to reflect who you are to somebody else?

Respondent: Well, maybe. Not for a long time, but when I was younger, like making a mixed tape for someone as a sign of affection. But, these days, I don’t think so. I am sort of, it has become so … I think my music tastes tend to be so outside of what my friends’ musical tastes are that I have almost just made it a very personal thing. So, it is really an important part of my identity to myself, but maybe not to others, because it’s like, I think somewhere along the line it has become where I have just realised that other people aren’t going to care as much as I do, so it really is like, I love this music, I want to listen to it and experience it all the time, but most people aren’t going to care, so I am not going to waste my time like, flashing it in people’s faces, so to speak.

[0:11:35]

Interviewer: So, the reason then for you not sharing the music with your friends, is that because you appreciate that it is not their music choice and they might not like it, or is it that you have some kind of level of concern about how they will look at you for liking that music?

Respondent: Oh no, definitely the former, not the latter. Like, my friends know what kind of music I listen to, but I actually, so at that point when I have people at my house, I know like I am not going to play this music because no-one is going to like it. So, I have music playlists etc, that I play when people are over, that I wouldn’t listen to normally, because I know it is going to be more powerful for them. But, yeah if I am in the car and I have friends in the car, I am on a road trip and I am driving, I will apologise and say, ‘You guys know the music I listen to, I am going to listen to some weird jazz, sorry about that, you deal with it’.

Interviewer: Okay. So, what type of music would you say that you like?

Respondent: As far as type, it is a difficult question to answer, because I listen to so many different types of music. I listen to a lot of genres. It is more about the quality of music. I think, if you go through my Last.fm you will see that there is jazz there, you will see that there is metal there, you will see that there is rap, you will probably find African music, you will probably find music from other parts of the world, not just western music. But, you will also find some pop music, you will find classical music, you will find video games soundtracks, movie soundtracks. As long as I find it good and it excites me, I am going to listen to it. I don’t think that I lock into any particular genre. Like, this shirt that I am wearing is a hip-hop producer, he passed away, I don’t know if you can see it. But, I probably don’t listen to hip-hop as much as I do other genres, not because I don’t like it, but because I am just always listening to lots of different types of music.

Interviewer: So, you talk about then, the quality of the music being something that you strive for when you listen to music. It might be a difficult question, but what do you mean by quality of the music?

Respondent: Yes, that is a difficult question. I think, maybe quality isn’t the right word. So, not the quality of the recording, or necessarily the quality of the production, though I do find myself drawn to good production music. When I say quality of music, I mean just the composition. Are there really interesting chords being used, or is there an aspect of the music that sounds really fresh whilst still speaking that music language that I am familiar with? Sometimes I will hear something and it reminds me of a song, but it is like a brand new take on a song, like a brand new take on a melody that maybe was used in a different song, or a brand new take on a chord progression that was used in a different song. And, it is like, ‘Ahh, I really like this song, now this is a song that sounds kind of like it, but it is completely different, this is exciting’. So, when I say quality I mean, yeah just like mostly the composition,

Interviewer: Okay, so can I ask, do you have any music background at all, because you are talking about chord progressions and melodies?

Respondent: Yeah, I do. So, I took music theory in high school, so I was in the music theory programme for four years of high school. The last two years there was an independent study, a course called Composition 2, while I was taking music theory. And, I also played instruments on my own, self-taught guitar and keyboard. And, then that was really the end of me taking it seriously. Since then you know, I will play guitar sometimes, I have music producing software on my laptop, if I get excited about something I’ll have a thought, ‘Right, I’ll make some music,’ but not very often, like once or twice a year. I’m not into making music the way I used to be, but I do have that, there was that brief five/six/seven year period when I was either studying music or just really making music.

Interviewer: Okay, and do you feel then that that has perhaps influenced your taste in music, having that kind of background?

Respondent: I don’t think so.

[0:16:52]

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I think that my musical tastes were, as I was getting into high school, like I think the reason that I got into music was because it allowed me to, or at least the idea was that it was going to allow me to understand the music that I had found myself slowly getting into. It was that other way around. But, I don’t think that I learned it, because in high school I don’t think I learned enough to really allow me to seek out specific types of music, or unlock certain things about music that I didn’t understand. Like, I don’t listen to avant-garde music, and I remember learning a bit about avant-garde music and kind of like decoding it, and just maybe if I had taken music theory in college I would have got to a point where I could kind of listen to music on that cerebral level and kind of picked it apart, but I don’t think…

Interviewer: Okay, and also just again going back to the idea of music having some intrinsic quality for you, how then do you feel about more commercial kind of music, so the music that is like, in the top ten of the charts? Does that kind of have the same appeal for you?

Respondent: It can. It is the same rules right, if it is exciting then I am going to latch onto it. There was this song, let me do a quick Google search, I’m going to find the name of the song.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Okay, so Elle King, there is a song called Ex’s and Oh’s, I don’t know if you have heard of it, but it is apparently a very, very popular song. I heard it on like a TV show or something and I remember talking to my girlfriend like, ‘Oh my God, this song is amazing’. And, I was like listening to it over and over again, and she was like, ‘Yeah, this song is always on the radio’. I just don’t listen to the radio, so I had no idea, but I kept listening to it, I didn’t care, like I don’t care if something is commercial or not, it’s not really a filter with which I use to decide what to listen to or not. So, I’m okay with it. I guess that I don’t listen to the radio, and I probably don’t know exactly, I’m not into exactly the most commercial music, top 40 music, billboard music, but that’s not to say that I don’t think some of it has, if it’s good, it’s good.

Interviewer: Okay. So, looking at your scrobble log from last week, you will have to forgive me if I don’t pronounce the name of them right, because I admit there are two artists or groups that I have never heard of. So, Balam Acab came out as the artist that you have seen the most, and then the second was the Marcus Hedges Trend Orchestra.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: Do you feel that they are quite good reflections of your music tastes, I mean what is this music like? Because, I must admit I have never heard of either of them.

Respondent: So, the first one is, how do I describe it? Kind of like, maybe like experimental hip-hop. So, he is a guy with a background in metal, heavy metal, and then started producing this electronic type of music, very sample heavy, kind of glitchy music familiar with ad-lib.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: So, for instance the beats are going to be very similar to ad-lib, or even like a little bit of (inaudible 0:20:44) the samples. The second one is, it’s video game music, so it’s like, I am thinking of an album I am listening to, Ocarina of Time, which is a Zelda video game. So, that soundtrack, and kind of just recomposed it, not recomposed it, it is the same music but just added to it, kind of arranged it with an orchestral sound even though everything is synthesised using computers, yeah.

[0:21:27]

Interviewer: Okay, and would you say that this is very similar to the other types of music that you listen to, or something very different?

Respondent: I would say that neither of those are outside the realm of what I would find myself listening to from time to time.

Interviewer: Okay. So, we have talked about your music likes, but do you have anything that you particularly dislike, that you wouldn’t really ever listen to?

Respondent: Definitely. I am trying to think. Wow, how do I kind of like, describe that? So, I think one song that I kind of couldn't stand, and maybe it’s indicative of like the kind of stuff that I don’t like to listen to, but Taylor Swift had that song, Look What You Made Me Do.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And, it annoyed the hell out of me, I don’t know why, but every time I heard it, and I was hearing it a lot when it came out. I just couldn’t, I wouldn’t say it made me angry, it didn’t make me angry but it was definitely bordering on it, like I would just roll my eyes, and I just didn’t, like I say once I realised it was becoming popular I got really frustrated. It wasn’t good, that’s my opinion (laughing). But, everybody thought it was … so, stuff like that. I think if it doesn’t really challenge the listener, or really reward the listener musically, it kind of becomes a thing that I just don’t want to listen to, it kind of irritates me.

Interviewer: So, then would you say it is more specific songs that you tend to dislike, rather than whole artists, or whole genres of music?

Respondent: Definitely. I would definitely say that.

Interviewer: So, have your musical choices and tastes changed over time, or have you always liked this type of music?

Respondent: So, I think they have definitely got rawer. Like, since Spotify has come along, the way I listen to music has changed. I am exposed to so much more music, and I can do it in a very specific way. If I come across a song that I like, or an album that I like, or something, I can create a station based off of that and find new music that is similar to that. So, because I am doing that, I have been able to grow the types of music, really expand the types of music that I listen to, and I don’t think I had that opportunity before Spotify. I had Apple Music for a while, its discovery services have just been awful by comparison, Spotify is just very good with recommending things that you will like. So, I think that in that way my musical taste is growing, because I have had the chance to listen to more stuff, but I don’t feel that it has changed, insofar as if I heard the stuff that I am listening to now, before Spotify, or maybe even when I was younger, I probably would have enjoyed it as much then as well, if I had to guess.

Interviewer: So, are you saying then, just to clarify, that you feel that maybe by using Spotify it has kind of expanded your access to music, rather than changed your taste?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. And, do you feel it is just Spotify that has given you that, or has there been something kind of off Spotify? So, I don’t know, like a change in location, or a change in friendship group, that has ever perhaps influenced your music taste?

Respondent: You know what, not recently. But, a long time ago I think I did, actually yeah I can think of a couple of incidences where I was either exposed to a certain genre of music in the right context with the right people, that maybe made it more powerful to me, and maybe that I have latched onto it because of that. Or, just being around people and hearing music that I had never heard before, which maybe I would have liked anyway but just didn’t have the opportunity to. But, that is sort of what Spotify is doing anyway, so it is like a social version of Spotify. It’s kind of a new way of just exposing you to things. I don’t know if that answers your question?

[0:26:31]

Interviewer: Yeah, it does. I mean, so when you talk about, there has potentially been a certain context that has changed or exposed you to different music, would you be able to give me an example of that kind of context?

Respondent: Yeah. So, I have a friend whose time I value, like we have a good friendship. He has a good sense of humour, and I have the same sense of humour, and we laugh a lot, and I think I enjoy hanging out with him because we laugh so much. And, he likes to listen to very, I don’t even know what to call it, just like virtuoso guitar, really complex guitar compositions. Very heady like soloists, and guitar virtuosos that will make this amazing music, and it is just guitar and maybe a little bit of music in the background. And, before listening to this music with him I had always disregarded it as being technical for technical’s sake. But, after listening to it with him, and around him, I think I have developed an appreciation for this type of music to the point where I incorporate it into the quotation of stuff that I listen to, and I would have to think about it a lot, but I am pretty sure that him being someone that I saw favourably, being a close friend of mine, had something to do with the fact that I was willing to become a little bit more open about listening to it, rather than just disregarding it as complex for complexity’s sake, which I did before.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s interesting. So, because before you have spoken about how you feel that most of your tastes aren’t similar to that of your friendship group, am I right in thinking that?

Respondent: That’s correct.

Interviewer: So, when you are with them then, what type of music do you tend to listen to?

Respondent: When I am with the people whose musical taste is not like mine?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: It depends on the person. Like, if I know that they are into dance music, then I will probably put on dance music. If I know that they are into pop music, then I might just like find a playlist that has pop music on that I can tolerate, or that I know is going to be good, and put that on. If I’m in a situation where I want to play music for the broader … sometimes if it is a smaller group, I will just put something on that everyone will listen to.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you very often then take into account the taste of your other friends when selecting music, to listen to in those circumstances?

Respondent: Definitely, yeah. I mean, if I am playing host to a bunch of people, then definitely, I am not going to sit there and force them to listen to like this weird playlist that I have put together. So, I am definitely more conscious of what it is they don’t want to hear, and what it is they are going to be comfortable listening to.

Interviewer: And, do you have people, like connected friends on your Spotify account?

Respondent: I do.

Interviewer: And, does that influence your music listening at all?

Respondent: Very rarely. I was actually thinking about that recently. Like, if I am listening on my phone, then obviously I don’t really see what my friends are listening to. But, if I am on my laptop it has that friend feed on the right-hand side, and it doesn’t really connect me to the music that they are listening to as much as it does just that they are there and active. It is kind of like this really abstract way of being like, ‘Oh, my friend is listening to music. Let’s see what they are listening to. Oh, they must be working because they are listening to like, very calm relaxing music to try and focus’. But, to a point I don’t really think that I find myself exploring what it is that they are listening to. Maybe because, I don’t know, I don’t know why, but no.

[0:30:55]

Interviewer: Okay. What about, so you see people online, like particular people, does that make you change what you’re listening to, or do you very much carry on listening to what you were before?

Respondent: Yeah, I’m not going to change what I am listening to. Like, I know that my listening is public, I don’t care. It’s no value in misrepresenting myself at all. I can't imagine why I would do that. I can imagine why I would do that, but I don’t think that that is really a situation that I am going to find myself in.

Interviewer: Okay. So, moving on to talking a bit more about Spotify, so do you feel that Spotify has allowed you to express your musical identity and your musical tastes?

Respondent: Not really, other than a more convenient way to play music. But, it has not given me a platform or a way to express any aspect of that listening. I mean, I suppose it could potentially expose my friends, whoever, to something that I am listening to. So, maybe inadvertently it does, but not deliberately, it is not a tool that I use in that way.

Interviewer: Okay. Are there any other music listening streaming tools that you use in that way?

Respondent: What do you mean, in that way?

Interviewer: So, to kind of, consciously express your identity through music?

Respondent: I mean, Mixcloud is one that I use just to listen to music. I have found myself sharing mixes that I have heard, with friends that I know listen to the same type of music. YouTube, that’s another one. It’s very rare that stuff is not on Spotify, but if it isn’t, I will seek it out wherever I can, and YouTube is definitely one where I can find something, especially live shows. But, not as far as expressing myself, no.

Interviewer: Okay. So, in terms of your music tastes, do you think through using Spotify they have become more diverse or more fixed?

Respondent: More diverse.

Interviewer: Okay, how so?

Respondent: Like I said before, it is a lot easier to come across music that I just wouldn’t have come across otherwise. And, I think it also allows me to explore music based off of that. So, it is just an exploratory thing, and it is just, if you don’t know about a certain type of music, it is a type of music that is primarily listened to in a different part of the world than you live in, and you don’t really have access to it other than you know, maybe you will get lucky and come across it in a magazine, but Spotify gives you the opportunity to explore it and be exposed to it in a productive way. Like, you are not just randomly searching for things that sound like, you are not randomly searching for an artist whose name sounds like what you are listening to, you can actually like kind of traverse around recommended artists and radio stations based off that artist, and you can really explore the type of music in a productive way.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s great. So, I would like to now move onto talking about particular music streaming practices on Spotify. So, in terms of how you stream music throughout your week, how you select what music to listen to. So, how do you tend to use Spotify for your music listening, and what types of music do you tend to listen to on there.

[0:35:14]

Respondent: Can you explain what you mean?

Interviewer: So, let’s start off then, so what service features do you tend to use when you are listening to music on Spotify?

Respondent: So, Monday mornings I usually use Discover Weekly, I like to use that as like a jumping off point to kind of see what new interesting stuff they recommend. And, then once I do that, I typically find myself on Mondays and Tuesdays exploring those artists, so I like usually throw them into a playlist, and I’ll also create maybe a radio station off of them, or I will jump around through their catalogue and see what other albums or songs they have that might strike me the same way. And, that is usually the first couple of days of the week.

Interviewer: Okay, and how do you feel that those service features work for you? So, what are your overriding impressions of the Discover Weekly and of the radio station functions?

Respondent: Discover Weekly is pretty hit and miss, right. Like, there are times where six or seven songs are really good, where the whole Discover Weekly playlist on the whole has been pretty fun. But, then there has been other times when like every single song just sounds like crap, and I just don’t get much use from it then, those days. But, on the whole, it tends to be pretty useful. Sometimes it is absolutely awesome, sometimes I will spend a week listening to a new artist that I have never heard of before that I feel really excited about, because they have recommended the right stuff. And, the radio is similar, usually if I am creating a radio station from an album it is because I want to explore something that I am already pretty familiar with but I am just lazy, or something that I have never heard before and I want to kind of familiarise myself with that genre. It tends to be pretty good, definitely better than Apple Music.

Interviewer: Okay, so if then the Discover Weekly isn’t really hitting it that week, how then do you tend to look for new music?

Respondent: The stations, definitely. I will create a radio station based off of a playlist that I have, like all kinds of things, you can create a radio station off just about anything. So, yeah if I am using Spotify to discover music, creating radio stations off of something that I like, or whatever. I don’t think there is any other, I don’t look at other people’s playlists, I don’t do any of the other social stuff, so I think that is just about it.

Interviewer: Okay. And, what it is about the radio station feature that you really enjoy using?

Respondent: Just, the amount of music that you get to hear that is curated by this album, like that nails it, I think. If I make a radio station off an artist, I am pretty certain that most of the stuff that I get back is going to be similar to that artist, you know. It’s going to be well within the circle that I am looking for, and I can always thumbs down if it is not, like you can always quickly get out of there, listen to the next song.

Interviewer: So, talking about other service features, do you ever use the Release Radar, the Daily Mixes, or the Similar Artists tab?

Respondent: You know what, I used to use Similar Artists, but the other two I did not. Yeah, I feel like I should explore Spotify a bit more, especially given how much I use it. Because, this stuff that you are talking about, like I don’t know what those things are.

Interviewer: Okay, no that’s fine.

[0:39:45]

Respondent: But, they sound great. Like, if I’m using Spotify all day long every day, why am I not searching around all these different features that they offer, if I trust them? I may as well, but I don’t.

Interviewer: So, you say though that you used to use the Similar Artists tab. Is there a reason that you don’t use it anymore?

Respondent: Because, I find that just creating a station is more efficient, and it is more hands-off. So, I can just start it and go about my business, go about my work and do whatever, versus having to like check out this artist, okay now check out this artist. The less I have to interface with Spotify, the more I am probably getting from it.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you have talked about that you had a go at using Apple Music, and you didn’t particularly enjoy it. What is it about Spotify that made it better than Apple Music? What is it about Spotify that draws you to using that more than any other streaming platform?

Respondent: Yeah, so it was last summer actually, last July. For the 4th July like five friends and myself got a house, and on the way up there was a couple who were in my car and they were watching each other’s music and like adding to a collaborative playlist that they had. And, that was the first thing that kind of made me think, ‘Okay, last time I used Spotify it wasn’t this good, it didn’t have anything so mature. Like, what’s going on?’ So, we spent the weekend listening to music obviously, but I didn’t use Apple Music, I was like, ‘I want to check on Spotify’. So, I was using Spotify with them and watching how they used Spotify, watching the social aspect of it. Like, being able to … if I wanted to listen to something I’d go on Spotify, and if you were friends with each other, you could see what they were listening to. That sort of latched me onto it, and then once I started using it I saw how much better the discover features were, the radio features were, and Discover Weekly and all that stuff, I realised Apple Music just didn’t have anything that accomplished the same thing. Like, they have recommendations, but I stopped using Apple recommendations because they were never sensible recommendations, the music that I was getting back was never similar to what I was listening to. They had like recommendations, I forget what they call it, but they would basically create a playlist based on what they think you would like, and I would never like any of it. But, switching to Spotify that weekend just made me realise that Spotify’s features, the social made me interested, but their recommendation features blow the Apple ones out of the water, that is what I find myself using the most.

Interviewer: So, you talk about, well it sounds like you have used Spotify for a long time, but maybe had a period where you didn’t use it, is that right?

Respondent: That is correct, yeah. I started using Spotify, and then as Apple Music started, I guess it opened up(?) and I switched to Apple Music. Spotify didn’t have very many features at that point, so switching to Apple Music, Apple had more features. And, then in the time that I was using Apple Music, Spotify got its act together and really started putting together some really cool features. And, that is when I switched back.

Interviewer: Okay. So, have you got any idea how many songs that you have in your Spotify library now?

Respondent: I have no idea. I always want to go in and clean it up, because I will add a song, and it’s an album with just one song in it, I need to clean it up. But, I have no idea.

Interviewer: So, when you say clean it up, do you mean delete songs from it, delete songs or artists from it?

Respondent: Yeah, like go back and listen to that one song, maybe listen to that album, and then get rid of it if it was just a song that I added, you know. Get rid of it if it is something I am never going to listen to again, or save the entire album if it is something that I really want to explore. I have all these like breadcrumbs of saved albums that I just need to fix. So, if I am going through my albums just to pick an album out, I see so much stuff, I am like, ‘What is this?’ Like, the majority of the stuff in there, I have no idea what it is. And it is because I have saved it, maybe I liked something about the song, or maybe I thought, ‘Oh, I bet this album is going to be good,’ and then I just never listened to it. So, I just need to go in there and like, explore all of the breadcrumbs that I have left for myself and get rid of the stuff that I don’t think I’m going to listen to.

[0:45:15]

Interviewer: So, in that kind of respect your music library doesn’t just have things that you are listening to currently, but things that you intend to listen to in the future?

Respondent: Right.

Interviewer: Okay. And, so what is it about something that would then make you delete it from your music library?

Respondent: Just, not liking it. Like, because I’ll do that sometimes, I’m like, ‘Alright, time to explore what I have in my albums,’ and if I listen to it and think, ‘What is this? This doesn’t sound good,’ and if I like maybe listen to a song or two off that album, and just feel like there is nothing that excites me about this, who knows why I saved it, I’ll delete it.

Interviewer: So, in that kind of respect then, is it kind of then that you obviously liked it at a certain point, but don’t like it anymore? Or, is it that you never actually listened to it and assumed that you would like it, and now don’t?

Respondent: The former. I definitely only save stuff for a reason. Like, if I hear something that strikes me in that way, I will save it. But, a lot of times I find that maybe I was just in a weird mood, or maybe it reminded me of something, and it wasn’t that I actually liked the song, but that it reminded me of something, so I thought, ‘I will probably like this’. That tends to be what it is. You know, sometimes I will hear, I will go back and I will listen to the song, and I am like, ‘Okay, I get why I saved it, but I was wrong about this’.

Interviewer: Okay. So, when you go on to Spotify then, when you open it up, do you usually know what you want to listen to at that point, or is it a case that you will go on there, maybe have a look around, and then decide?

Respondent: Yeah, I typically know what I am going to listen to. Or, at least what I want the music that I am about to listen to, to sound like. So, I may not have an artist in mind, but I may think, ‘Oh, I want to listen to some classical music, I want to listen to something with strings,’ and then I will maybe search around and see if I can find something that kind of sounds like what I want. Then, if I find it, I’ll save it, maybe create a station, something like that. But, there are times when I am like, ‘I want to listen to music, I don’t know what I want to listen to right now,’ and then I usually fall back to something that I used to listen to when I was younger.

Interviewer: Okay. So, when you say then that you want to, as an example, listen to music with strings or something like that, what is it about? Is it something about the situation, the context of how you are feeling, that makes you want to listen to that type of music?

Respondent: Sometimes, I am sure. It depends, like sometimes I will just want a certain type of sound, I will just want to listen to a certain sound. Other times, like maybe I want to create a really calm, or like maybe I am going on a run and I want to listen to something really fast and heavy. So, it depends. There have been times when I just want to listen to something really mellow, and quiet, and peaceful, and calm, so I will like sit down and say, ‘Okay, what do I have that sounds like that?’ Or, ‘Who can I find that sounds like that?’ That is when I will look through, I’ll do just a search for like, ‘Ambience playlist,’ on Spotify and find something, like maybe a couple of playlists, skip through a couple of playlists, and find something that sounds like what I want and play it. Then, maybe I will save it if it’s good.

[0:49:02]

Interviewer: Okay. So, you have mentioned there a couple of times that you have like patterns of listening to music. So, going back, you said that Monday and Tuesday you tend to explore the new music that Discover Weekly has given you, And, you have also mentioned in what you have just said about having music to exercise to. Are there any other times in the week, or during the day, that you will tend to listen to specific music?

Respondent: So, I do listen to, so I rock climb, and there are times in the week where I do climbing workouts, but that is similar to running, then I’ll find something that is very upbeat, that’s when I’ll listen to really like, just like bangers, hip-hop that is very heavy, very roboto, because it will put me in that mindset where I can get the most out of my workout. With running, obviously it is all like techno or something of that tempo. But, I think that is it. So, like obviously, if I am on a date with someone and we are hanging out, we would put on like a romantic playlist, that might be another example.

Interviewer: And, what about music for work? Do you listen to music when you are working?

Respondent: I do, but there is no type. Like, sometimes I will listen to really droney, if I need to hyper focus, I will listen to something really droney without any words. Sometimes I will listen to folk, that type of music. I am listening to music when I work all of the time so it falls under like my regular listening habits, I will listen to anything, any type of music while I work.

Interviewer: And, does that music, the music that you use for work, does that tend to be music that you are familiar with, or something that you don’t know?

Respondent: Both.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Yeah. I will find myself sometimes actually listening to something that I have never heard before while I am working, and I’ve realised, ‘Oh, I like that song, I have been working for the past 30 minutes and I completely missed that whole album, I am just going to play it again’. So, yeah it is both. Or, sometimes I will be in the middle of listening to something that I am more familiar with, and I will put that on. It doesn’t deviate from my pluralistic habits very much. In fact, I would say the way I listen to music at work is my pluralistic habits.

Interviewer: Okay. So, in that kind of respect then would you ever say that you actually listen to music as background to something? Or, are you always kind of doing this active listening where you are recognising the song, picking up if you like things?

Respondent: Yeah, I would say the majority is active listening, but there are times where I literally put music on that I know is not going to distract me. Like, if I need to hyper focus, so I have one playlist in particular that is called Reading, and it is a bunch of moody(?) songs that are very, they are good, some of them are very good, but they are not so exciting that I am going to stop and want to listen to them, so it definitely becomes like background music. There is this band called The Sun and they are like a very, very heavy, droney band, and they will sometimes have an eight minute song and it never changes chord progression, it is just the same chord over and over again, it becomes almost hypnotic, and it allows me to hyper focus. So, there are times where I have to listen to music like that, or just not listen to music at all. But, that’s pretty rare. There are incidences of that, but it is not super common. I am usually able to like concentrate, whatever I am listening to.

Interviewer: And, what about your Spotify account, do you have that mostly set to public or private?

Respondent: It’s public.

Interviewer: Is it always public?

[0:53:33]

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So, there has never been any incidents where you have ever consciously decided to switch it to private?

Respondent: So, this actually contradicts what I was saying before, doesn’t it? There is like a little small playlist of stuff that I became self-conscious about, that is like, this is really not music that I feel like many people know what I am listening to, and that playlist was sent to private. And, I may be listening to that playlist for like a week or two. And, that is the only incidence I think I can ever imagine where I actually become self-aware in that respect, and I made that private. But, that is really it, that is the only time that I have ever made my music private, and it was only for that playlist, and maybe at the most a month, but I think it was for like, a week or two.

Interviewer: Can I ask what it was about that playlist that made you feel self-conscious about it?

Respondent: Yeah. So, I’ll tell you what it is about this playlist. It is just [Respondent bringing something up on his computer]. So, the first artist is Evanescence, the second artist is A Perfect Circle, the third artist is Deftones. Not so much Deftones, but Evanescence and A Perfect Circle were always music that I just felt, and another artist is Chevelle (laughing), are just music that I have always kind of associated with the working people, just like the music itself has always struck me as very not-redeemable in any aspect. And, then I actually heard an Evanescence song and I was like, ‘Yeah, this is really good,’ and it turns out their singer made an album of songs, and it was just her and strings arranged in the background. So, anyway I heard this song called The End of a Dream, and I was like, ‘This is really, really good,’ and I listened to it maybe like, six times in a row. And, then a couple of months later I heard a song by A Perfect Circle that I kind of had that same stereotype about, and I thought, ‘That song is really good’, Then I created a playlist, and I started adding a couple of songs that I would encounter that I just didn’t think I would like, and one week I found myself listening to this playlist and then I thought, ‘Oh shit, I don’t want people knowing I’m listening to this music,’ just because I had this preconceived notion about it, and I assumed of course that everyone else had this preconceived notice about it. And, I made it private, because it just made me self-conscious.

Interviewer: Okay. And, how often do you listen to that now, or is that something that you have not listened to since?

Respondent: I played this playlist out, like I listened to this playlist over and over and over again. So, the magic of these songs kind of wore out.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So, I don’t know that listening to it would really give me the same emotion. So, no I haven’t really listened to it since then. But, I definitely can see myself going back to it, like listening to the songs again, they are good songs, they are really awesome. I should probably make them public, I should probably own up to the stuff that I listen to.

Interviewer: (Laughing) Just, something else I wanted to ask you that came from your scrobble log, it looks like, at least from the weeks that I observed, that you tend to stream a lot of songs from the same artist at one time. Would you say that is usually how you stream music during the week?

Respondent: I would say that is not uncommon. I am a dinosaur in that respect, like I like to listen to an album.

Interviewer: Okay, so there is like, an album’s worth of music?

[0:58:13]

Respondent: Yeah. But, I also really enjoy playlists, so it is probably a 50/50 split. Like, I’ll queue up three albums from an artist, or I will listen to a playlist that I know I like, or I will listen to a radio on Discover Weekly. Those are pretty much my three main methods of listening.

Interviewer: So, when you listen to an album, do you tend to listen to it sequentially, like as it is intended in terms of track numbers, or do you put it on shuffle?

Respondent: I definitely put it on the normal order that it was intended to be, the way it was recorded.

Interviewer: Okay. So, if I can, I would like to actually now move on to talk about playlists. So, you have mentioned them a few times, so would you say playlists are quite important to you?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And, roughly how many playlists do you have on Spotify? Have you got any idea?

Respondent: I don’t. I have a lot.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I probably listen to a third of them, but right now I would say I have about 30/40. Probably 30, of which I probably listen to 7 regularly.

Interviewer: So, what is it about playlists then that you like? Why have you found yourself creating so many of them?

Respondent: So, there is one playlist in particular that is like my main playlist where I just put songs that I know really, really speak to me. Like, I hear a song for the first time that I really, really like, I will throw it into this playlist. And, that one is just kind of like, it’s just like a really easy way for me to keep track of something that I really, really like. Like, I can put that playlist on you know, for the most part, and I try not to listen to this playlist too much, because I don’t want to play out a lot of the songs, but I know that if I put on this playlist it is a bunch of stuff that I really like. So, I use that one in that respect. The other ones that I listen to often are more genre focused. So, I will put them on just to kind of allow me to quickly tap into a certain type of music.

Interviewer: Do you have any on there for kind of a specific occasion, or related to a specific person, or a specific mood?

Respondent: Yeah. So, I do have a make out playlist, that is specifically for that, that is like the romantic thing I was talking about before.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I have one called, so are you familiar with the show, I think it is from the 90s, called Felicity?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Okay, so I have this playlist called *[playlist name],* which is, so it actually started as a joke with a friend of mine, we were listening to music and I was like, ‘This sounds like it would have been on that show Felicity, except this is a really good song’. And, then we were joking and saying, ‘Oh, this is like a *[playlist name]* song’. So, I created a *[playlist name]* playlist and it has like a lot of kind of acoustic, folky, just the kind of music that I think would fit on that show if it was airing that today. I have only seen a couple of episodes of the show, so it may be good, I don’t know.

[01:02:01]

Interviewer: (Laughing) So, you have kind of got a sense of what it is like and what kind of music you think would be appropriate for that?

Respondent: Exactly.

Interviewer: Okay. And, what about, I think you mentioned briefly about collaborative playlists. Do you get involved in those?

Respondent: I tried with some friends, it didn’t work, everyone had a different idea of where the playlist should go, and I think it kind of like just burned out for everyone. I do have some friends that do use collaborative playlists, and I have tried to use collaborative playlists a couple of times, and I think it is a really cool idea, and I can see situations where it would be very useful to me, but I just haven’t … like, I think for couples in particular, it would be a good idea. More, you know, like maybe if you are planning a wedding and you are making like a collaborate wedding playlist, or an occasion like that, like maybe, ‘Oh, we’re having a Christmas party, let’s make a playlist for that,’ that kind of thing. But, as far as just a social way to make a playlist for your friends, I tried a few times, and it has never worked.

Interviewer: Okay. And, do you feel that that is because you have different tastes in music, or there was no clear idea of what the playlists were for?

Respondent: I think, it’s just not, yeah I think playlists, other than the couple of examples I have just given you, tend to be like one person’s very personal vision of what this is going to sound like, and if you have a couple of people working on it together it is very rare that all the nuances are going to be synced up. So, it will start to kind of pull in different directions, or someone hears a song and is like, ‘This is really good,’ and puts it in, just because it is a new exciting song. So, I think playlists don’t make sense to be collaborative because they are very type music, and it is difficult to get that many people on the same page.

Interviewer: Yeah, that’s fair enough. So, what about Spotify playlists, so the ones that Spotify creates, or other users create, do you listen to any of those?

Respondent: I do. Not often, but I do. That is typically like, if I want to tap into a certain mood. Like, I saved one called Peaceful Indie Ambience, and I think I searched for, ‘Ambience,’ and that playlist came up, and I just needed something super calm so I could get a bunch of chores done around the house. It was like, I didn’t want to listen to a podcast but I wanted to have something on, couldn’t really think of anything that I wanted to listen to, searched for, ‘Ambience,’ listened to a couple of songs off that, thought it was really good, put it on, it was awesome, so I saved it.

Interviewer: Okay. Would you say then that you personally don’t really create playlists for moods, but you search for them on Spotify instead?

Respondent: No. Like, if I am lazy, I will search for them on Spotify, but I have created playlists specifically. Like, I have one called *[playlist name]*, that’s the one I was talking about before, I made that specifically for reading, but I have found that I use it whenever I need a very calm background music.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I have another one that I created called *[playlist name]*, which is like just really calm jazz, and I tend to use that when I am driving in the morning, or at certain times where I just want to listen to that very autumn jazz feeling. So, I will definitely create them, but I also tap into Spotify as well.

Interviewer: But, you would say you use your own more than you would use Spotify?

Respondent: Yeah, definitely.

[01:06:18]

Interviewer: Okay. So, you mentioned that obviously you listen to a proportion of the playlists that you have quite regularly. What is it about the other playlists that mean that you don’t tend to listen to them as much?

Respondent: There were ones that I created thinking that I was going to add to them actively, and it turns out that things didn’t work out.

Interviewer: So, would you ever go back and revisit an older playlist? Or, is it very much that they are kind of archived, and you never touch them anymore?

Respondent: No, I did that this morning. I put on a playlist with the expectation that I was going to add to it, and I didn’t. I was like, ‘Do you know what, this is bad, I am probably going to delete it’. I just didn’t get around to deleting it. But, they are there because I haven’t … it is just like the albums, I do need to clean up my playlists, I don’t need 30 playlists that I don’t listen to. I just need to spend some time cleaning them up. I actually had a couple of playlists not too long ago, that I made into one big playlist, and I use that a lot. So, instead of like four little playlists, I just put it into one, and I use that one. So, certainly I don’t, because there is probably some pretty cool stuff that I just haven’t listened to for some time, that I could throw in another playlist and actually get use out of.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I’d like to now move on to talk about how you discover new music. So, would you say that you are a person that very much enjoys discovering new music?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And, what is it about discovering new music that you particularly enjoy?

Respondent: Just, there is some excitement that I can't exactly put into words, that I get when I am hearing something for the first time, that sounds really good. It is just exciting, it is like I was saying before, my friend and I were talking about it being like, it’s like when you find that song, or that album, or that artist that really touches you, it’s like, ‘I should have been listening to this all along’. It’s exciting. I am sure there is some chemical that is released in the brain, and it’s like I am getting a big dose of that, and it’s like I have a good day with that album, and I’m like, ‘I found this, and maybe we could listen to another album that they have put out,’ and I am like, ‘Oh, this is just as good’, It’s just a super exciting thing.

Interviewer: And, when you are discovering this new music that you say you find exciting, are you constantly adding those songs to your music library, or it is just the case that you are listening to them then and there?

Respondent: Oh no, I am definitely saving them, yeah. Like, that’s what I live for, when I’m opening Spotify, that is what I am hoping will happen. So, I am definitely, definitely going to save that. That is going to be like a new anchor point off of which I am going to look for new music.

Interviewer: So, how often would you say that you are adding new music to your library?

Respondent: Pretty frequently. Like, Discover Weekly, let me get this week’s Discover Weekly up. I didn’t really spend too much time listening to it, two, three, so there’s four songs on this week’s Discover Weekly that I clicked, ‘Like,’ and that will automatically get saved to your albums, and that’s probably it on average, three or four songs every Monday. And, then throughout the week, maybe twice that. It is a lot. Like, when I said I have a bunch of albums and I need to clean them up, I really need to listen to the stuff that I have liked them for so I can maybe find some new stuff. But, it’s time consuming, like I also don’t want to make listening to music a job, you know. That’s why I tend to have all of these crumbs, they kind of just sit there and like, maybe the next time I am on an airplane, or maybe the next time I am on a road trip and I am driving, then I will get to explore those. But, in the meantime it is just a bunch of junk that sits on my albums list waiting to be rediscovered.

[01:10:40]

Interviewer: So, do you think Spotify has made it easy for you to find new music?

Respondent: Yes, emphatically.

Interviewer: And, is that just through their discovery tools, or through the way that the platform is?

Respondent: The discovery tools, yeah. Like I said before, their radio, Discover Weekly, is a great provider of music.

Interviewer: And, would you say then that you tend to discover most new music through Spotify?

Respondent: Yes. Definitely most, not all.

Interviewer: So, do you tend to get recommendations from anywhere else?

Respondent: So, there has been in the past, I am going to say, past five years, it may be longer than that, definitely longer than that, but it has been on my radar for the past five years. The way TV shows do their music has become this really, really interesting way to find new music. Like, there is this hospital show, and I can't think of the name of it, Grey’s Anatomy.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Respondent: I remember watching this show and thinking, and I never watched a ton of it, but I watched about a season’s worth, and I remember thinking, ‘Man, whoever is doing the music for this show is very, very good at their job,’ and there must be this whole like business and industry around getting your song onto this TV show, because someone is going to pull their phone out, they are going to use Shazam, they are going to find the name of the artist and they are going to buy an album, they are going to add it, they are going to listen to it on Spotify or whatever. Like, there is a lot of HBO shows, like Girls is one, and there is one HBO show about, I forget what it’s called, High Maintenance. Watching these shows, you end up hearing really, really good music, so you bring out your phone, into Shazam, find that, and it is a pretty cool jumping off point in that respect. So, I think that is like, what did you ask me? Have I answered your question (laughing)?

Interviewer: Yeah, I asked you if you discovered new music from elsewhere apart from Spotify?

Respondent: Yeah. So, like TV shows, movies. If you are out, that is another one, if you are out, like take a photo, into Shazam, and it tells you what you are listening to.

Interviewer: So, you don’t then feel like you tend to get recommendations from say, any friends or family at all?

Respondent: I do, but that tends not to pan out too often. Because, friends will be like, ‘Oh, listen to this,’ and I will listen to it, and I am just like, you know. Sometimes a friend will recommend something, and I will really like it, like our buddy who was talking about recommended virtuoso music, but that is few and far between, it really is. And, not to say that my friends don’t have good taste in music, because a lot of them do, but the stuff that excites them is not the stuff that excites me. So, I appreciate it, but I am not going to catch onto it or listen to it specifically.

Interviewer: Okay. And, what about the new music that you discover, would you say it is quite similar to what you already like?

Respondent: Give me one second.

Interviewer: Sorry?

[01:14:41]

Respondent: Sorry.

Interviewer: That’s okay. I was just saying, so when you are looking for music discovery, are you looking for something that is very similar to what you already like, or something very different?

Respondent: Neither. I think I tend to come across stuff that is similar to what I already like, but that is just because of the nature by which I am finding music. I tend to find music I listen to by using like Spotify’s tools which is going to build up from something that I listen to anyway. But, I am definitely open to finding stuff that is nothing like what I listen to.

Interviewer: And, do you tend to feel that Spotify does provide you with new music that is very similar to what you already listen to? Or, would you say it does provide you with that kind of diversity?

Respondent: It tends to give me stuff that I am already listening to. Discover Weekly is one that has been pretty good at recognising stuff that is outside my listening circle, but not super often.

Interviewer: So, are you saying then that some of Spotify’s recommendation features are recommending artists or songs to you that you have already encountered yourself?

Respondent: That happens.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: It’s annoying when it does, but I get it.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I would just like to now move on and talk about whether you feel that Spotify, the stuff that you have on Spotify, is a good reflection of your music tastes. So, do you feel that Spotify itself allows you to construct and manage your music tastes quite well?

Respondent: Can you repeat that?

Interviewer: Yeah. So, I was just saying, do you feel that Spotify allows you to easily construct and manage your music tastes on there?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: How is that easy for you, on there?

Respondent: Creating playlists is one. Just allowing me to almost impulsively save things, like the (inaudible 01:17:15) is so low, curating music that I think it really lets you just kind of be impulsive, just a trail of a certain mood, or sound, or genre, like it really just adds something. Like, it’s two clicks and it is saved in this thing that you have just created. So, it doesn’t get in the way of you actively listening to music in the way that it used to. Like, years ago you had to go to a record store and buy an album. Or, you had to get out a cassette tape so you could record something, or download the song from here to here, or whatever. With this, it is two clicks, you are listening to it, in two clicks it is added to something, and then it’s stored in that playlist where you can tuck it away for later, or save an album. It’s just easy to make music that you like, really accessible at any time.

Interviewer: Do you feel that its interface influences the kind of paths that you take on there, or the music that you listen to?

Respondent: I don’t think so. No, I don’t think so, other than making it easy. I don’t think it influences me, at least not in a way that I am aware of. Maybe it does and I am just not aware of it.

[01:18:42]

Interviewer: So, I mean for instance then, when you open up Spotify on your desktop or on your laptop, do you tend to click on things that are on the initial page, or focus on say the featured artists? Or, do you very much go in there and do your own thing?

Respondent: Yeah, the latter. I don’t think, I don’t know what it looks like when I launch it. I am going to relaunch it just to see, but no I definitely don’t. I don’t pay attention until that is off. I remember people were complaining about, what was it? Oh, Drake, there was like Drake everywhere, and I didn’t know what these people were talking about, because I like launch it, and I immediately look to the playlists, or I immediately look to like the thing that I am putting it on. Yeah, I see, so there is an overview part, no I don’t look at this stuff.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah, it’s interesting, the Drake thing has come up quite a few times in the interviews that I have done so far (laughing).

Respondent: You know, there are people that are really hyper about it and it’s like, ‘Why is everyone…?’ because I swear, I didn’t even notice.

Interviewer: (Laughing) It obviously didn’t work on you?

Respondent: No, it didn’t. Because, like I said, when I open Spotify, I am pretty specific about what it is I am opening it for. Like, I am not opening it to pass a look at it. It is like when you open your browser, you don’t look at like your most recent visited tabs, or you don’t look at the stuff that comes up by default, because you are going to a specific website. If you open your browser for music, it’s like I have got to go to the bookmark, or go to the thing that you know you wanted to do, you are not going to pass and just look at your browsers, like recent tabs, or whatever. It’s the same thing with Spotify, I open Spotify and go to what I was here to do.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I don’t know about in America, but over here in the UK there is a lot in the media at the minute about how platforms are storing and using our data. Is this something that you are conscious or worry about when using Spotify?

Respondent: No. It is something I am definitely aware of, especially in the industry that I work in, but I don’t care (laughing).

Interviewer: Okay, so it’s not something that you are bothered about at all?

Respondent: I’m not preoccupied with that at all.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Other than that one incidence where I kept that playlist private. That was just like, I didn’t let my friends know (laughing).

Interviewer: If Spotify knows, that’s okay (laughing)?

Respondent: Yeah, I don’t care.

Interviewer: Because, obviously the way that they use this data, well we think, is obviously to produce more user specific recommendations.

Respondent: So, I was going to say that is a good point, it benefits me for them to take my data and analyse it. So, the more I am giving them, the better results I’ll get. Cool, win/win.

[01:21:53]

Interviewer: And, when you say better results, what do you mean? Like, what would the recommendations have to be like for you to think, ‘Yeah, that is a really good recommendation,’ or, ‘I’m glad that they have taken my data and given me this’.

Respondent: Like, if they get better at understanding what I like, to the point of being able to pull things way outside of my listening sphere, and know that I would like it, then that’s great, that’s perfect. And, I don’t think they are quite there yet, they tend to play it safe with their recommendations, but who knows what they are working on. But, if they were to get to that point, like that is one example of something that I think would be really beneficial, them understanding my listening habits.

Interviewer: So, say if they did go a little bit more outside your sphere and pulled something out of thin air that you didn’t like, would that change the way that you viewed the platform? Or, would you think, ‘Oh, well they had a try at giving me something really unusual, and it has just not quite worked’.

Respondent: Yeah, that would not be good. I see what you are saying, and they have to take risks in order to understand if the new method is successful or not. But, I mean at the end of the day I am listening to Spotify because I like listening to music that I enjoy, so if I got too many of those misses, it would start to irritate me. It would probably enforce my opinion of the platform negatively. So, I can see why they have to kind of, play it safe.

Interviewer: Yeah. And, can you remember off the top of your head, any recommendations that you have either really loved and felt were spot on, or have really hated and thought, ‘Where have they got this from?’

Respondent: Yes. So, they recommended this band called Fuzz, and it was actually, the lead singer / songwriter / guitarist of Fuzz is an artist who I assumed I would not like. His name escapes me, Ty Segall. Yeah, Ty Segall. By them recommending Fuzz, which I really liked, and then figuring out what this was all about, I realised that I in fact do like Ty Segall, I just didn’t think that I was going to like him for some reason, and I don’t even remember why, maybe I heard like one song that he put out that sucks, or I had a bad connotation for some reason, but I would have specifically avoided Ty Segall. They recommended it, I heard it, it sounded new and different, and pretty of my radar, and I ended up discovering Ty Segall as a result. I think that they did a good job of recommending something that I probably wouldn’t have found on my own.

Interviewer: And, has there been anything that you have really not liked that they have recommended?

Respondent: All the time. Discover Weekly, when they added the ability to click, ‘I do not like this song,’ it was pretty exciting for me because it let me proactively tell them, ‘I don’t like this, don’t give me this’. But, yeah looking at my Discover Weekly, the artist is U.S Girls, the song is Sororal Feelings, and I heard it and I was thinking, ‘This is a terrible song, I do not like this song’. So, I don’t know what made them think I would. But, I was able to correct them. And, yeah that happens all the time.

Interviewer: And, do you think that being able to tell them that you don’t like the song has actually worked? Do you feel that they have then not produced recommendations like that again?

Respondent: I don’t know. I haven’t given enough attention to whether or not I hear stuff like that. And, because I don’t save my Discover Weekly, I can't go back and see what stuff I didn’t like, so I don’t know.

Interviewer: Okay. So, my final question is, obviously you have now been part of all three phases of my research, so the questionnaire, the online observation, and the interview. Has being part of this at all, made you reflect on or change any of your existing Spotify practices?

Respondent: It hasn’t, no. I mean, other than the emails between the two of us, I didn’t really give thought to the fact that I was going to be observed, so I don’t think so.

Interviewer: No, that’s fine.

[01:26:55]

Respondent: I just wish, I think in retrospect I wish I would have used it more. Like, there are instances where I actually listened to stuff on YouTube, because it was just something that I wanted to listen to at the time, but who knows if it would have been more beneficial if I would have listened to Spotify more. But, in any rate, the answer is no.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, I mean I did notice from your scrobble log actually that on, let me have a look, what day was it? On Monday, well the week that has just gone, you listened to no music at all, and very little music on Sunday. Is that usually the case, or is that just because you said earlier that you have had a crazy week at work?

Respondent: Yeah, Sunday I typically watch football, so I am not listening, like during the fall, I am not listening to too much music on Sunday. I have people over watching football, or I am just watching football myself. Monday, I was definitely listening to music all day, but it was just not on Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Yeah, on another platform, probably YouTube, or possibly Mixcloud. I don’t remember, but it wasn’t Spotify.

Interviewer: No, that’s fine.

Respondent: But, Sunday I don’t listen to any music.

Interviewer: So, even though it wasn’t on Spotify, music kind of still filled your day in some respect?

Respondent: Yeah. I remember what I was doing, and what I was working on, and 100% I was listening to music all day.

Interviewer: So, would there be a reason then that you would choose to listen to music on YouTube rather than music on Spotify?

Respondent: Live performances, so there are a lot of live performances on YouTube where there is stuff that I want to hear that they just didn’t record, or like there is a very special live album. There are still a couple of albums that just don’t exist on Spotify. So, that’s pretty much it. Or mixes, like if there is a DJ and he puts together a mix, obviously that is not going to be on Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, that’s great, that’s all the questions from me, so thank you so so much for taking some time out of your day to speak to me, it has been really, really interesting speaking to you, and it all will hugely benefit my research. I mean, is there anything from your side that you want to talk about or expand upon, that we have not yet discussed?

Respondent: I don’t think so. Just like, pointing out that Spotify is probably as important in my life as email, or Facebook. It is just a really important part of my daily life, just because of the amount of music that it gives you access to. That’s about it. It’s been interesting talking…Cool. Well, I better get off.

Interviewer: Yes, thank you so much. And, I will let you now get on with your day.

Respondent: Alright, thanks. Have a good day.

Interviewer: Yeah, you too. Bye.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-07-F

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Right, okay I’ve started that and I’m just going to place that there between us. So, yeah, thank you for especially after all your work as well that you’ve been doing on campus, your job, it’s probably the last thing but I really appreciate it.

Respondent: That’s okay.

Interviewer: So, the way it’s going to work, it’ll last around about an hour but it’s very much led on your responses so I’ve got like an interview schedule so some questions that I would like to ask you but it’s up to you how much you want to expand and talk about things and I may ask you questions based on then what you say.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: So while you’re talking it might be a case I just write some notes down, that’s just purely for me to check up on if I’ve not understood or if I’d like a little bit more detail or for things to maybe ask you later on, if that’s okay. Right, fab so do you have any questions before we get started?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Okay, let’s get going then, so the first thing I’d like to know is how music relates to your identity, so how would then you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: I’d say that music is something that’s really, really important to me, always has been, it’s something that’s quite key to the kind of friendship groups that I’m in and I try and go to a lot of gigs, I go to festivals and it’s something that I feel is kind of like influenced the politics that I’m interested in and it kind of speaks back in the other direction as well. And, you know, I met my partner at a concert so it’s something that has been a really, really big part of our lives together as well.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. So, when you then talk about it obviously being kind of significant to your friendship groups, is then music something you see as more a communal thing or is it solitary and private?

Respondent: I think it’s both like it’s definitely an activity even at home with my wife like sometimes I’ll just be like I’m just going to go off, just listen to music for a bit and chill out but also that kind of joy of sharing music that you love with someone and then getting to go to that communal like live experience with someone, I love going to gigs with people so, yeah, I think it’s both equally really.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so do you feel then you’ve got quite a similar taste to your friendship group and your partner as well?

Respondent: Some of them, yeah, and the ones that I have we’re constantly kind of trading back, have you heard this, have you heard this? Less so now we’re getting old but (laughs).

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, okay. So, would you say then that music has always played an important role in your identity or is it something that relates maybe more to your past or your present?

Respondent: I think equally, like the first time that I was kind of consciously listening to music was when I was like 11 or 12, when I got to high school the friendship group that I made was through the music that we listened to that we all liked kind of alternative music and it’s always kind of informed a lot of things in my life, although I engage less with new music new it’s still something that is so important to both like personal and social life.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay, and can you think of a time then when you’ve used music to reflect who you are to somebody? Has that ever been the case?

[0:03:08]

Respondent: Yeah, I think definitely like I always think it’s an important question when you meet someone and you’re getting to know them, finding out the music that they’re into and you can tell a lot about, you know, somebody’s politics, the sort of person that they are, the sort of things they’ve been through even sometimes by the sort of music that they’re drawn to and the sort of music that they would recommend to somebody else. So, for instance like feminist stuff like I quite like Riot Girl, music from the early 90s and that kind of, you know, you can tell, if somebody says oh, yeah, I like Riot Girl stuff you know they’re a feminist, if they say they’re into punk stuff you know generally that they’re probably kind of left leaning politically.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Do you think that’s always the case? Do you always feel that maybe people that like punk music have certain political views?

Respondent: Not always but I think it’s kind of a general thing that, you know, people that are very heavily involved in that music scene generally tend to reflect a lot of the politics in that scene.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so in terms then of your kind of political viewpoint, how does that relate to the music that you actually listen to?

Respondent: So like I say, I really probably see from like the observation stuff like I tend to listen to a lot of female fronted bands, I like stuff that is quite explicitly political, stuff like Camp Cope that talks a lot about sexism, sexism in the music industry, in relationships and stuff like Billy Bragg that kind of talks about politics and is kind of hopeful particularly in the current time that we’re in that’s very for me where I kind of stand. It’s a pretty bleak time of Trump and Brexit and stuff that’s going on to having that music that’s almost like protest music, it’s something that can kind of give you hope and, you know, I was at Glastonbury when they found out the result of the Brexit Referendum and being in that space and through, you know, a lot of the bands explicitly referenced it and changed songs in their set to talk about what was going on so I think it’s something that’s really important. But also like the personal stuff, you know, like the cliché thing of like you’ve had a troubled upbringing, listening to people singing about their troubled upbringing can be quite cathartic.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. So, when you’re then when you’re kind of listening to that music what is it that’s important to you about that music? Is it the sound? Is the lyrics or is it the person at the front leading it? What are you looking for in that?

Respondent: I think all three but I’m really drawn to lyrics, like I listen to lyrics and if they’re not… One of the reasons that I like physical copies of music as well as using Spotify is that I like to be able to physically look and read the lyrics and if they’re not available I tend to look them up online and trying to kind of, you know, figure out what somebody’s talking about. And sometimes it’s nonsense, like I like System Of A Down and half of their lyrics are just pure rubbish (laughs) but, yeah, I think I am drawn to that but it’s also the sound, you know, I like guitar music, I like electronic-y music, I tend not to like as much things like rap and hip hop it’s just not my kind of thing.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so, you would say then that you like music outside of the political spectrum as well?

Respondent: Yeah, definitely, there’s some people that I like that are generally just stuff that… like Matt and Kim who I listen to, you know, they’re not people that are at all political in the music that they make but it’s fun, it’s music that makes you feel good when you listen to it.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so then how would you view other people that listen to particular types of music? Would you automatically associate that with a political view and if so, does that affect then how you perceive them as an individual?

Respondent: Potentially, maybe not so much their politics but like if it’s somebody… like when you meet somebody and you say, ‘Oh what kind of music are you into?’ and they say ‘Oh a bit of everything’ like I always think oh maybe we’re not the sort of people that are going to get on because music is something that’s so, so important to me and I think just generally when you meet someone and you find you have that in common generally it means you’ve got a lot of other things in common not just politically but the sort of films you like, the sort of art that you’re interested in and, yeah, I guess people just sort of group together in that way.

[0:07:05]

Interviewer: Yeah, so then if I ask you what is the type of music that you like, that you enjoy how would you describe that?

Respondent: That’s hard, so obviously like I said female front and stuff, I like stuff that’s kind of punky, stuff that’s kind of folky, general like older stuff that would be classed like alternative or rock, a little bit of metal, less so now I’ve mellowed in my older years, yeah, anything like that. And I do like some electronic-y stuff as well but, yeah, just that kind of stuff that would generally be described as alternative, stuff that generally doesn’t make it into the charts in this country.

Interviewer: Mm hmm because looking at your online observation I would say that there was kind of less of the chart stuff that’s current now and more kind of the not really old but the alternative stuff like the Yeah Yeah Yeahs like to me they seem, you know –

Respondent: That was my teenage years.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, so would you say that you listen to music more that’s not older but has been released in the past more than you would listen to current music?

Respondent: Yeah, I think when I do listen to new music it tends to be by bands that have been around for a while and that I got into when I was younger, there are occasionally new bands, like I do use Spotify to try and find new music and bands like Camp Cope that I mentioned that are contemporary I listen to but, yeah, I’m getting older now and I do find comfort in that music that I liked when I was younger and stuff that’s in that kind of style,

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so do you feel then that your musical identify then hasn’t necessarily changed as you’ve grown up?

Respondent: Yeah, I think it’s diversified but I think I still sort of fit within the same box really.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so then what do you mean by diversified, can you give me an example?

Respondent: So, in my early teens it was all like new metal type, that kind of stuff and then as I got older and found like Riot Girl music, started listening to my parents’ punk CDs and records and stuff and then as I’ve got older I’ve got more of a tolerance for like singer songwriters and stuff like that so I do listen to a wider variety than I used to definitely.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, because I mean from your online observation the artists that you scobbled most during the week that I looked at were the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Sleeper, would you say they’re quite accurate reflections of your taste?

Respondent: Yeah, I mean Sleeper, the reason I’ve been listening to Sleeper a lot is that although they’re an older band I’ve only just got into them, I’m going with my friend to see them so I tend to listen to… I go through phases with certain albums, really listen to that for a while and then move onto something else but, yeah, it tends to be that, yes, I would say that they’re reflective of the sort of music I like definitely.

Interviewer: Okay, and then what about music then that you really dislike? Is there anything that you would never listen to or you would hate it if somebody put on for you?

Respondent: Jazz (laughs).

[0:09:56]

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: I just don’t… I understand it’s wonderful and the people are very talented, not by cup of tea at all, can’t identify with it at all, not so much like I said hip hop and rap and stuff, you know, I understand it’s got a really important place in music history and it does important things but it’s just not my cup of tea and a lot of chart stuff now I’ve got no idea what’s in the charts.

Interviewer: Okay, and is that kind of because of the sound or the lyrics or what is it about –

Respondent: I think a bit of everything like, yeah, I know I keep saying that, yeah, because I like music that is kind of by people that are quite political generally women, you tend to see a lot less kind of politically, well, maybe not so much now in the charts, people like Beyoncé are kind of coming out as feminists and stuff but, yeah, I think I just I’ve found my niche and I’m quite comfortable in it.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, okay, that’s… Well, I think everybody finds their niche don’t they and feel comfortable in that. So, talking then about your musical identity I want to talk a little bit more, do you feel that it has always been the same as it is now?

Respondent: I think when I was younger I definitely used more labels like as a teenager you find labels for yourself because it helps you fit into a peer group so I would have identified as like a grunger and more so that like now I would talk more about the genres of music that I like and the bands that I really love than kind of give myself a particular label but, yeah, does that answer the question?

Interviewer: Yeah, but in terms of labelling yourself then because obviously like a grunger has like a certain style associated with it and obviously it’s reflected by the music as well that has a certain style so did you encompass all of that kind of the look, the attitude or was it just the music?

Respondent: It’s always kind of been like I more so when I was younger always wore band shirts, loved band merch like used to Tippex on my school bag the bands that I liked, patches all over everything so I’ve always kind of wanted to display and be proud of the music that I like and like in my house now we’ve got about 650 CDs in there, although that’s a really stupid number of things to have on display, me and my wife both have them on display in the living room because we like that they’re kind of a talking point and that people can see that that’s what we’re into and it can kind of spark discussions and stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah. And would you say then that perhaps the change in what you liked and what you now like has been shaped by any kind of life experiences or change in location or anything like that?

Respondent: Yeah, just like growing up I used to listen to a lot of very angry music because I didn’t have a great time in my teens so stuff that kind of reflected how angry I was feeling and how miserable I was feeling I was really drawn to whereas now as things are better so there’s a much wider variety of stuff that appeals to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so then it sounds like you were kind of using music for mood and emotion…

Respondent: Definitely.

Interviewer: …is that still kind of the case now or not so much?

Respondent: Definitely, definitely, not so much it always… like because then it was generally like a I’m unhappy, music is something that really gives me comfort whereas now it’s kind of more of a celebratory thing as well and more of a thing that can kind of be shared in a celebratory way but it’s still if I’m feeling shit I still a lot of the time will just be like I’m just going to plug in headphones just listen to Spotify for a bit and chill out, like I’ve got loads of playlists that are based on my moods and stuff.

[0:13:25]

Interviewer: Oh okay, mm hmm and so are those playlists then to getting you out of a mood or is it very much based on the mood that you’re in right then and there?

Respondent: I think sometimes like I’ve got an *[playlist name]*…

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: …which is generally stuff that if I’m feeling crap and I just need to wallow for a little bit that’s the music that I listen to, it’s songs that just allow me to feel that in a kind of safe way and then get myself out of it but then I have a happy playlist for, you know, if I’m in a good mood or if I want to bring on a good mood that’s the sort of stuff I’ll put on.

Interviewer: Okay, so as well you’ve said about your friendship group so some of them have similar tastes to you, some of them not so much, do you have anybody connected on Spotify at all?

Respondent: No, it’s not something…

Interviewer: You don’t use that feature?

Respondent: …no, because a lot of my friends are older despite me desperately trying, not many of them use Spotify which I think is such a waste because it’s such a wonderful resource.

Interviewer: So, am I right then in saying that it’s not because you don’t want to use that feature it’s more that you’ve not got people on there who –

Respondent: Yeah, I think the people that I know generally wouldn’t be interested in that. I’d love to have a nose to see what people are listening to and the stuff they recommend and their playlists and stuff.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so going more onto Spotify now, do you feel that that allows you to express who you are through music do you think?

Respondent: I think so, maybe more so like you say if I had a network or if I… I guess you can connect it to Facebook but I haven’t. If it was something that could be kind of more communal like that because it does feel like it’s just something like I use the account and my wife uses my account, other than that no-one ever sees anything that’s on it but, yeah, I suppose it could be more so than it is.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, but do you still feel then it allows you to express who you are through music despite not having that community, communal feel about it?

Respondent: Yeah, I mean I find it really nice that I have this place where… and generally pretty much everything that I like is on Spotify, I can only think of about three or four albums off the top of my head that aren’t on there so just having that one place where that’s where all of the music I like lives and I can explore new music and I’ve got my playlist. And it’s like a reference point that you can use and we have a soundbar that it links up to in the house so it’s really easy if you’re saying to someone ‘Oh have you heard this?’ to then just connect it really quickly so it’s just like a place to sort it all and keep it all.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, and do you feel that your music listening has become more diverse or more fixed since you’ve started using Spotify?

Respondent: Diverse I’d say because it takes the… like as I said, I really feel it is still important to buy physical copies of music and I still do but Spotify gives you the opportunity to legally explore other music without there being any cost if you don’t like it, you know, before if you’ve wasted a tenner on an album that you hated then that’s money down the drain whereas now I’m already paying for a subscription so I can listen to a couple of songs by someone and I do use the like recommended function sometimes just to kind of go down a little rabbit hole and find what’s out there and occasionally find stuff that I do really like.

[0:16:31]

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Do you ever replicate what you’ve got on CD to your Spotify music or is it they’re very much these are my physical, this is my physical and this is my online?

Respondent: It’s the same, it’s the same stuff pretty much, there’s a wider range of stuff on Spotify, like I generally only buy an album if I maybe like two or three songs on it at least and if I have got a physical album I like to get all of the albums by that artist whereas Spotify it’s much easier to just be like, well, I just like that one song, I’ve listened to a few more of their songs and not so keen on them but it’s easier to just kind of dip in and out of somebody’s back catalogue.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay. So, I’d now like to go on to talk a bit more about Spotify and talk about any streaming practices you have when you use the platform so things like how do you decide what you listen to? What service features you use and any kind of typical weekly stream patterns you feel that you have.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, when you use Spotify what types of music do you tend to listen to on there?

Respondent: I think just the same sort of stuff I’ve got on CD like a lot of female fronted, a lot of like guitar-y music but then a little bit more exploration into other stuff. A lot of the time like if I’ve read an article online or something or if somebody’s recommended something I’ll go and listen to two or three songs to decide whether that’s something that I want to look into more.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, and what kind of service features are you using when you’re on there?

Respondent: What do you mean like –

Interviewer: So, are you using for example, the radio stations or the discover tabs or similar artists?

Respondent: I use the similar artists because I find that’s generally quite accurate, occasionally – I don’t know how it’s set up to do that – but like when it finishes an album or whatever it will just start playing something else that’s similar and a lot of the time that… I don’t even know what it’s called or how to turn it off, but that generally is quite useful but the radio thing I’ve got absolutely no idea what that does.

Interviewer: What do you feel about this similar artist feature? When you say it’s pretty accurate what are you looking for?

Respondent: So like so if I looked up a band that I liked and generally I would see other bands that I liked within that and then if there was another band, normally it’s a band that I’ve kind of heard the name but never listened to, never had the access to listen to so I think, well, if they’ve pigeonholed it with all of these in my past experience, you know, I like all of these bands I’m probably going to like this one too so I’ll give it a go.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And when you’re looking for similarity are you looking the more female fronted things, are you looking for the things that kind of express the same political views or the similar genre?

Respondent: Everything really.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Everything, it depends on my mood as well, if I’m feeling like I need somewhere to go and be angry at the state of the world then look for more political stuff but if I’m… like because I have really bad insomnia so a lot of the time I just leave it on overnight while I’m trying to fall asleep and then it’ll be more just listening for the sound, you know, stuff that sounds similar that’s going to be like a comforting thing.

[0:19:43]

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And have you ever used either the Daily Mixes or Discover Weekly?

Respondent: I don’t think so.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I’ve used those like the playlist that come up on the home screen, sometimes I dip into them and a lot of the time they’ve got some decent stuff in.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. So why did you choose Spotify as a streaming platform? Is there a reason at all?

Respondent: Because it was £4.99 for students.

Interviewer: Ah, yeah, but is there something that kind of gravitated you towards that, say, Apple Music or have you even tried anything else out?

Respondent: I don’t use Apple stuff at all, I have an Amazon music thing through Amazon Prime but don’t use it, don’t really understand it, it’s not a very user-friendly platform I don’t think whereas Spotify it was so easy to download the app, it speaks to the soundbar we’ve got, it’s synched up with everything very nicely and it was very cheap. And before I got a subscription to it just using it with the ads, once I’d seen the variety of stuff that was on there I thought it was worth giving it a go and now even when I’m not a student I have to pay like 15 quid a month, there’s no way I’m getting rid of it.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. So, you’ve spoken about CDs, having a huge CD collection, so how does that work in terms of Spotify, having the physical CDs as well?

Respondent: To be honest, now I can’t remember the last time I put a CD in the CD player.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Respondent: Yeah, because it’s just easier because we’ve got the soundbar and it’s a good quality sound system that it’s linked to it’s just easier to search for an album on Spotify but like I said, I think it’s really important to still have – I don’t know why I’m a dinosaur – to still have those physical copies and as well because there are albums that sometimes disappear from Spotify and I like the fact that when you’ve got a physical copy that’s never going to happen it’s yours.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: But we collect vinyl as well now so (laughs)…

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: …just to add more expense into the mix.

Interviewer: So, what do you like about having this physical thing that is music?

Respondent: I think the fact that it’s yours and no-one – unless you get broken into or there’s a fire or something – like I don’t like the kind of transience of stuff that’s online, the fact that albums can disappear and reappear, that the account might get wiped and then I’ve lost everything and I’ve got to kind of start from scratch. And also the fact… like I bore so many with it when I’ve had a drink, like the fact that when I was growing up I sat with my parents’ vinyl collection and my parents’ CD collection and I looked at the covers and I listened to what they were listening to and that really shaped the kind of music that I started dipping in and out of and some of the stuff is stuff that I still really like now and I hate to think that when me and my wife have children that everything will be online because you haven’t got that kind of… it’s just a list, you haven’t got that like spread of that just sitting there physically with all that stuff around you, looking at the covers, holding it, feeling it is just such a different experience to it just being a list online, it feels overwhelming almost the amount of music that’s online.

[0:22:53]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, but then how do you feel when people come round to your house and then see all the CDs on the shelf, do you feel conscious about your music choice being on display or actually is it something you’re really proud of and you want people to look at?

Respondent: Yeah, it’s something that we’re quite like both of us quite proud of, you know, if they don’t like it they’re in our house, it doesn’t really… and I like that we’ve got quite a big collection, I like that a lot of the time people say, ‘Oh I really love this’ and it starts conversations and I like that kind of aspect of it that you find out more about people because they’ll be flicking through and they’ll say, ‘Oh I love this’, ‘Oh love this’ and it’s just a really nice kind of bonding thing.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so you say then you would be able to ascertain more from seeing people’s shelves of CDs rather than seeing their Spotify account?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so actually, I think there’s just something about it being a physical thing but then I know a lot of people now that only use Spotify or only download music so maybe not so much in 5, 10, 20 years.

Interviewer: And would you ever get rid of a CD?

Respondent: [Exhales].

Interviewer: Would you ever take it off the shelf and either put it away or even throw it out altogether?

Respondent: I think in the last 15 years I’ve got rid of 2 (laughs).

Interviewer: Oh okay, and what was it about those two that –

Respondent: Just that I’d bought them, normally I’ve bought them online after I’d had a drink and there was one song that I liked on it, like the Automatics album with Monster on it, like I liked that song but the album was dreadful, see I never got past that one song (laughs) so that I was like I can just have that song online, just that one song, I do not need this CD taking up room.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, but then how does that relate to your Spotify library? Do you readily delete stuff from your Spotify library?

Respondent: No, the only stuff I’ve ever deleted… sometimes I move things about on different playlists but the only thing that I’ve ever deleted is some of Brand New’s music because of, well, do you know about the singer from Brand New and –

Interviewer: No, I don’t.

Respondent: So, he was involved in a… I think they officially called it like a sexual misdemeanour thing so he basically it came to light the end of last year that he had been trying to liaise with underage teenage girls online and I felt that like, you know, I’ve still got the CDs and I loved, I loved their music dearly but I couldn’t keep listening to it on Spotify because of the thought that even if he’s only making a couple of pence every 100 times I listen, I don’t want to be endorsing that, I’ve already spent the money on the CD I don’t have to keep actively streaming it.

[0:25:38]

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, so it wasn’t necessarily then that you didn’t like the music anymore it was that the thing in his private life was quite controversial?

Respondent: Yeah and it’s not something that I wanted to support.

Interviewer: Yeah, so do you feel then like a lot of the artists that you have either on CD or in your Spotify library that you know a bit about their own personal life and that perhaps reflects in the music that you like as well?

Respondent: Yeah, definitely, if I really like a band I tend to have a nose on Wikipedia and then go through the references at the bottom and actually read the… I like reading the interviews, I love seeing people live when I’ve got the opportunity to, I do tend to really immerse myself in a band when I like them.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay, so I’m wondering then so looking at your online observation again you seem to… like you’ve just said like you hone in on an artist and then you tend to stream a lot of their songs one after each other within the same listening session and even within the same day as well, is this normally how you stream music?

Respondent: Yeah, there’s kind of two ways that I do it so either I’ll listen to a playlist that I’ve arranged or I’ll listen to an album almost like I would on a CD generally without skipping stuff.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so then your playlists have you got playlists that are artist specific or is that very different?

Respondent: I’ll just have a look. I think generally I’ve got one that’s just female fronted but the rest of them I think are just like named after my moods where I’ve got one that’s just, yeah, so one of them’s just music that I liked when I was a teenager, there’s one playlist that I have shared with friends actually that’s like music that our friendship group, we’ve been friends for like 15 years, that we all like but, yeah, the rest of it is just kind of sorted by like*[playlist name]*, *[playlist name]*, *[playlist name]*, *[playlist name],* which is pop songs that I like (laughs) yeah and then just like named after moods really.

Interviewer: Okay, so going back then to the you streaming artists in succession, is that from one album or is that from multiple albums?

Respondent: Generally I tend to listen to an album like I would have done with a CD.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, and is that sequential listening, so are you listening to track 1, 2, 3 or are you skipping and shuffling?

Respondent: I used to shuffle but now I’ve kind of got in the habit of listening to it through because I kind of feel like a lot of the time people make an album as a body and it’s meant to be in that order and it’s got a start and it’s got a finish so it’s kind of nice to keep it in that order.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. And then also on the Friday and Saturday from the week I’ve just observed you streamed very little music, is that usually the case or is this just a one off for this week?

Respondent: I’m trying to think what I was doing on Friday and Saturday. I’m interested because I generally listen to a lot of music.

Interviewer: Or it might have been that you obviously mention that you listen to music offline.

Respondent: Yeah.

[0:28:31]

Interviewer: So, I didn’t know if there was a reason or if it was just your own –

Respondent: Oh, I know what it was, it was because I had been working all day and I was absolutely shattered, I went to bed really early and then Saturday it would have been watching TV in the living room kind of day.

Interviewer: Catch up on everything.

Respondent: Yeah, so yeah, that was why I wasn’t… yeah, generally if I’m really, really tired then I won’t be.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I’d like to ask a little bit about I notice from your questionnaire that you share an account, from what you said you share the account with your partner.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, how does that work between the two of you obviously sharing a Spotify account?

Respondent: So, it’s my account, I pay for it…

Interviewer: Okay, mm hmm.

Respondent: …but she listens to it and it’s generally the rule like because sometimes I’ll listen to it when I’m working in the office here and sometimes she’ll listen to it when she’s in her office but the kind of rule is that if I’m on it she comes off (laughs) like if I need to listen to it she kind of gives me priority because even though we have a joint account we’re both paying for it. She does have her own playlist though of a couple of things because generally we have the same taste in music, there’s a couple of bands that I really like that she hates so she’s got playlists of semi-approved stuff and we do sometimes share it with the dog, so sometimes we’ll put like classical music playlists on, not stuff we’ve compiled but just stuff for him to listen to if he’s in the cage all day.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: It’s ridiculous, he’s spoilt.

Interviewer: So, with your partner then do you let her add songs to your Spotify library?

Respondent: I would be miffed if she added songs to my playlists because they’re mine, yeah, as I say, she’s got her own playlist to add stuff to and I would be really pissed off if she took stuff off of my playlists.

Interviewer: Okay, and do you ever then listen to her playlists and does she ever listen to your playlists or are they kind of very separate?

Respondent: Yeah, I mean to be honest, most of the music crosses over and there’s not really anything on her playlists that I wouldn’t choose to listen to, she listens to a lot more like classic, well, she loves the Rolling Stones and stuff in that vein so she would kind of prioritise listening to more stuff like that but, yeah, I listen to her playlists sometimes and if we’re like in the car and stuff we always listen to hers, she drives so…

Interviewer: Oh okay so, yeah, she gets priority there.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, is there a reason that you decided to share an account between you?

Respondent: Just cost.

[0:30:59]

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: If we had unlimited money we’d definitely have our own accounts.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay. So, have you got any idea roughly how many songs you’ve got in your Spotify account?

Respondent: In what, what like on playlists?

Interviewer: Yeah, well, in like your music library.

Respondent: I don’t even know how to… so I’m not tech savvy, I don’t know.

Interviewer: But do you feel like there’s quite a lot in there like are you impressed with the number that you’ve got or do you feel that you could add more?

Respondent: I don’t know, like I don’t even know how to access those stats, I don’t know what would appear in my library, like I know on the playlists I’ve got like 600 songs on some of them.

Interviewer: In one playlist?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent: That’s my falling asleep when I can’t sleep playlist.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And I will just keep adding and adding and adding because I like listening to a playlist and not coming across the same stuff for a while but, yeah, I do like the fact that it is… I mean I assume it’s unlimited that I could just keep adding and keep adding and keep adding and I do like that about it.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, I think they’ve set a maximum of like 10,000 songs.

Respondent: Okay, it’d take me a while to get up there (laughs).

Interviewer: And would you say that your Spotify music library is quite eclectic or very specific?

Respondent: I would say it’s reasonably eclectic, yeah, I think so.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, and would you say it’s eclectic across genre or…?

Respondent: Yeah, genre and kind of time, like I know it kind of gravitates more towards stuff that’s like 70s, 80s, 90s, noughties, and not so much newer stuff but, yeah, I think it sort of spans different genres and stuff.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And when you go on there do you know straight away what you want to listen to, like do you open Spotify thinking I want to listen to that song?

Respondent: Only sometimes, when I listen to albums generally I’ve got in my head the album that I want to listen to and I’ll search for it like I would putting a CD in a CD player, sometimes if I’m… more like when I’m using it as something like for mood I’ll put a playlist on and just let it, you know, I know that I’ve picked it all and just let it kind of decide for me what’s going to happen next.

[0:33:02]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay, and then do you think then you’ve got any like streaming patterns during the week like is there anything you gravitate to on a Monday versus a Friday versus the weekend?

Respondent: I don’t think so, I know like I tend to use it at certain times of the day like getting ready, going to bed so I guess more in the week would be stuff that like my calm playlist for instance, the one that I use when I can’t sleep like stuff like that whereas at the weekend I’ve generally got more time to sit and listen to albums and I’ll put it on when I’m doing housework, I’ll put it on when I’m doing other stuff so then I think I tend to listen more to albums.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And then what kind of music then do you listen to when you are getting up and ready in the morning?

Respondent: That’ll generally be whatever’s my like latest thing that I love so at the moment it’s been Sleeper just because I’ve recently discovered their stuff, before that I think it was Camp Cope like had only just heard it, really loved it, wanted to listen to it all time, it was like in my head when I wasn’t listening to it so…

Interviewer: Yeah, and do you have then any music for any other situation so when you’re working like you have been the last few weeks or when you’re doing your PhD stuff, is there different types of music you would listen to at those times?

Respondent: Yeah, like when I’m trying to focus on something I’ll generally put stuff on that I kind of find more calming, stuff that I get too involved in and want to either sing along to or just listen to and give all my attention to I kind of try and save that for times when I am just in bed or when I’m just sitting on the sofa just want a bit of time to listen to music.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so when you’re working then would you say that that is still familiar music or are you picking music that’s unfamiliar to you?

Respondent: Sometimes I pick stuff that’s unfamiliar sometimes I go for like stuff like Kaki King that’s like instrumental or stuff that, yeah, just stuff that… like more singer songwriters and stuff that’s a bit gentler and that’s not as scream-y and shouty and I don’t know, I just find it easier to kind of have that as a background sound and a comforting background sound rather than being something that I’m fully invested in.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so when it is a background sound would you say that you’re not paying attention to the music at all or is there instances when you’re still actively listening to it?

Respondent: Definitely still because sometimes I find myself typing (laughs) the lyrics –

Interviewer: Oh really?

Respondent: And kind of singing along in my head but, yeah, I guess there are some times when I’ve kind of zoned out on a whole album like there’s a thing called Sparrow Sleeps where somebody’s… like do you know what…?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: So basically it’s a guy that he started it for his daughter and it’s like lullaby versions of rock songs so a lot of it is like pop punk stuff from the early noughties like Blink 92, stuff like that, and I find that incredibly soothing so sometimes I’ll have that on in the background because it’s like a familiar song but in a gentler unfamiliar way…

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah.

[0:35:55]

Respondent: …so I kind of like stuff like that.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. So, in terms of your Spotify account, have you got it set to public or private do you know?

Respondent: I think public.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, and is there a reason that you have it on public?

Respondent: I think just that I, I don’t think anyone would care, I’ve got nothing to hide like I don’t think anyone would be interested in it and if they are, okay, fine.

Interviewer: Yeah. Are there any occasions that either have happened or you foresee happening in the future where you would maybe decide to change it to private?

Respondent: Maybe like my list of like angsty teenage music that I listen to is a bit embarrassing (laughs).

Interviewer: Okay, what is about that music then that you think is embarrassing?

Respondent: I think just like it’s stuff like Slipknot and Korn like those kind of bands that are very like angsty men shouting about things and it’s very much of its time and a lot of the time like musically I don’t find it particularly engaging anymore but it’s something that still holds a real emotional link because it takes me back to that time so I still enjoy listening to it but if I heard it now I’d hate it so, yeah, I think that stuff’s the only stuff that I would be less willing for people to see.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s interesting so you feel then that you like it now because it is attached to a time that’s already gone by.

Respondent: Yeah, memories and –

Interviewer: Yeah, memories and that kind of thing rather than actually enjoying it now.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s really interesting. So, how often do you add music to your library?

Respondent: Pretty much every week.

Interviewer: Every week.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And is there a source where that music’s coming from?

Respondent: Erm most of the time it’s stuff that I’d forgotten that I liked like something will twig my memory and I’ll think oh, yeah, I loved that song, I’ll find that song, I’ll find more stuff by that artist and add it that way. Sometimes it will be recommendations from other people, they’ll say have you listened to this? I’ll listen to two or three songs, if I like it I’ll add. I never add songs that I haven’t listened to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And what about removing songs?

[0:37:57]

Respondent: I don’t really think I do, I remove the stuff I’ve downloaded just because of the capacity of my phone but other than that, other than like I said brand new there’s nothing that I’m aware of, I just tend to switch it around to different playlists.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that you do that? Why do you start switching it?

Respondent: I think more because like the playlists get to the point where they’re very… like the calm playlist, I need to split that into two things which is music that I find calming and music that helps me sleep because they’re two different things but I tend to like kind of bunch it and then segregate it.

Interviewer: In terms of your downloaded music that you have on your phone, for a start when are you using that downloaded music?

Respondent: Normally just like commuting when I haven’t got Wi-Fi access.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And do you change round then the music that you have downloaded to your phone?

Respondent: I wasn’t until my phone was full and then Spotify was taking up 16 gigabytes of memory on my phone so I deleted most things except for the albums that I… like the albums that I really want with me when I’m travelling into campus and things.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, and what makes you really want those albums at that time?

Respondent: I think they’re just stuff that I’m listening to a lot at the moment so one of them’s like the new Courtney Barnett album, Camp Cope’s albums, stuff that I’m giving a lot of time to at the moment, yeah, rather than… you know, like the albums that I would class as like my top ten albums of all time and the bands that I really love aren’t necessarily on that, it’s the stuff that I’m listening to a lot at the moment so like one of the Sleeper albums is on there at the moment.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so how often do you feel like you rotate that music? How long is it before you kind of not give up on that artist but they become less important to your time right now?

Respondent: Probably like a couple of months I tend to listen to stuff to death (laughs) until I’m sick of it but then I still love it, it just goes, you know, back into rotation sort of thing.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so even though you’re kind of fed up of it at the minute you do revisit it at some point later?

Respondent: Yeah and I’ll have that same sort of relationship with it like I did initially but, yeah, I like to kind of binge things and then, you know, let them kind of fall back into the stream and then binge them again later on.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay. And just then moving on to the idea of playlists, would you say playlists are quite important to you?

Respondent: Definitely.

Interviewer: What is it about them that you find important?

[0:40:23]

Respondent: I just like the fact that you’ve got an easy label for the sort of music and you can just fill it up with, you know, there’s no parameters on what you’re putting in there and it’s really easy on Spotify to switch stuff about, yeah, I just, I love that feature, it’s my favourite feature.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so your playlists then are quite dynamic in the fact that you create them but then you move stuff around?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there any playlists that you’ve just kept as is, so from when you’ve created them to now is there any that are –

Respondent: I don’t think so.

Interviewer: Oh okay, mm hmm. And so what do you create playlists for? What are the purposes of these playlists?

Respondent: It tends to be to just… like I’ve got lots of mood based or event based like we’ve got one that we put on if we’re having a barbeque, one that we put on if we’re driving, one that the idea was that I would create the playlist and I would use it when I was walking but then I put too much on the playlist and couldn’t store it on my phone but those sort of things they tend to be, yeah, mood based and then I’ve got a couple that are like, like a particular band that I like but I really don’t like their new stuff so it’s a playlist of their older stuff that I really do like just so if I press shuffle play I’m not going to get the stuff I hate.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And there’s a couple of playlists I follow that are like, like soundtracks and stuff like the Handmaid’s Tale, I really like the music in that so I’ve got that playlist on there at the moment to kind of explore it more and then sort it into my own playlist.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so has that playlist, have you got those songs from Spotify or has somebody already created that playlist for you?

Respondent: Someone just created that and I found it on Spotify and then there’s a few songs that I’ve really liked on it that have then kind of moved into my own playlist and those playlists I’ll delete like I listen to them for a bit. And I use like artists recommendations so like Courtney Barnett for instance she put together like a playlist of stuff that she liked and I’ll kind of skim through that, listen to that a few times and then like cherry pick the stuff that I like, put it into mine and then delete that because that’s not mine.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And would you say that’s… I mean how many people’s playlists do you follow or do you actually not follow anybody’s?

Respondent: I don’t think I follow… I’ve got a few that I’ve added, let’s have a look, I’ve got a few that I’ve added but I don’t think there’s any that I’ve like kept on there, yeah, so at the moment the only one’s that aren’t mine are like an alternative 80s one, the Handmaid’s Tale soundtrack and the Glow soundtrack oh and the Kim Deal’s introduction to The Breeders.

Interviewer: And do you feel that there’s a reason then why you particularly don’t have many of other people’s playlists?

Respondent: I think I just like to be in control of it (laughs).

[0:42:56]

Interviewer: Okay, yeah, that’s fair enough and what about Spotify playlists, the ones that Spotify created do they feed into your music listening at all?

Respondent: I do use them occasionally and they tend to be more like when we’re doing the housework like there’s a Britpop one that my wife often finds and puts on and I like those ones for that purpose but again, there’ll generally be a few songs on there that I don’t like so it’s not something that I would kind of keep and use regularly, I’ll just pick it and organise it in my own way sort of thing.

Interviewer: Okay, so apart then obviously from your playlist for moods do you have any that are attached to memories or people, like people from your life?

Respondent: Yeah, I’ve got one that is, as I said, like the two friends that I’ve had for like 15 years it’s very like placebo orientated because that was the band that we met through.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Can I ask is that a collaborative playlist or is that you’ve curated that for them?

Respondent: I’ve curated it, I would like them to collaborate but neither of them will use Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay, so how do you share that with them or is that just literally so you can reflect on your friendship with them?

Respondent: I shared the link with them I think on Facebook Messenger so they can listen to it but obviously with ads because they haven’t got a subscription.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay, and that’s the only one then that’s necessarily attached to specific people?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so. I know me and my wife have been talking about creating one with like a lot of the songs that we had at our wedding but like I said, our music taste is so similar anyway.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, and then what about because you said that you go to quite a lot of gigs and live music, are any playlists you’ve created attached to those live events?

Respondent: No, but I would quite like, again grand plan to create like a Glastonbury one of all the songs that remind me of Glastonbury experiences and stuff.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so you would actually then like to create more playlists?

Respondent: I think so, yeah, I really like the fact that I can just keep adding.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, you’ve mentioned a couple of times about your playlists for sleeping, so how did that get started and what kind of music have you got on there?

Respondent: It’s a mix of stuff, it tends to be stuff that’s more like sounds softer more like singer songwriter-y stuff than big shouty bands, I think that was the first playlist I actually started because when I first started using Spotify that was the thing that I was using it for first of all and realised that it kind of had this wonderful capacity for being able to use that and I can just leave it playing and then fall asleep but, yeah, does that…?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, so how many songs then would you say you’ve got on there?

Respondent: I think there’s six hundred and twenty something.

Interviewer: Wow, and are you constantly adding to that?

Respondent: Yeah, pretty much, there might be a few less actually because I moved some to another playlist.

[0:45:40]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, what was it then about those songs that made you want to move them?

Respondent: The fact that I didn’t find them particularly calming, like on reflection I put them on there because I thought they were songs that would help me sleep but actually they’re just songs that I really like and probably need to be somewhere else because they’re not things that induce sleep.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so how does music for sleeping work for you? Is it very much then that becomes background noise?

Respondent: I think I mean it’s still stuff that I’m actively listening to because I’m not doing anything else so it’s got to be stuff that I do really like, I wouldn’t put stuff that I’m not as familiar with on that playlist but, yeah, just stuff that I find calming, stuff that just sounds nice.

Interviewer: Yeah. And how does that relate to your partner?

Respondent: She’s got a chronic illness so she’s got Crohn’s Disease and Fibromyalgia so she plugs in with a Kindle to help her get to sleep which is where my playlist came from because I was sick of the fact that she was plugged in and I had no-one to talk to so…

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, okay so it’s not then like you’re conscious of her taste and what she might find calming it’s just for you?

Respondent: No, it’s headphones, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So, moving on then to music discovery, would you say you’re a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: Yeah, I love listening to new stuff, I love that thrill of finding something that you really, really love and then getting to find out about the band, looking through their back catalogue, I find that really exciting.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And would you say that when you discover new music it’s current music or is it actually music that’s –

Respondent: It tends to be older.

Interviewer: Okay, and how do you tend to discover that? Where does that come from?

Respondent: Normally it’ll be the personal recommendations from people whose kind of music taste I like, we’ve got a lot in common so I assume that if they like it I’ll probably like it. Sometimes it’s stuff that I’ve heard live like at Glastonbury, you know, you get to see a big variety of stuff and then I think oh I liked a couple of their songs I’ll go and listen to the stuff and other times it is through like reading an article online where they’ve referenced, like that’s how I found Camp Cope they were talking about like political music, feminist music now and because of Spotify I was able to just go and listen to their stuff and think oh I do really like this but, yeah, it’s kind of a variety of sort of -

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so when people recommend it to you is that just in kind of conversations you have about music or is it through some kind of social media or…?

Respondent: A bit of both, like I do take notice when people like post on Facebook and stuff about albums that they really love I think you can really get to know someone by… you know, there was this thing going round on Facebook a little while ago and people were putting like their top ten albums of all time.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

[0:48:13]

Respondent: And I loved reading that and listening to some of that stuff and kind of getting to explore why that meant so much to someone, I thought that was a really nice thing but other times it is just a general, you know, you’ll just be talking about stuff, ‘Oh, well, if you like so and so have you heard blah blah blah?’ and then you kind of get to go down those kind of roads.

Interviewer: How does that relate to you discovering music on Spotify? Do you tend to discover new music on Spotify or is it that your recommendations have come from somewhere else and you’re just adding it to your Spotify account?

Respondent: I think normally it’s stuff that it’s come from some other source and then because Spotify makes it so easy and within the price of the subscription I can then search for it on Spotify, it’s only occasionally that it’s stuff that kind of plays through and then I discover kind of through Spotify.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so do you ever use Spotify’s recommendations? Does that help you to discover new music?

Respondent: Sometimes, sometimes and there’s some stuff that I do really like that I found on there but I do still, I prefer that kind of community thing of it being something from someone you know or from something that I’ve read rather than it being something that’s just decided by an algorithm.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so then is that related to an idea of trust? Do you trust people that you know more than you trust Spotify or…?

Respondent: I think so and because music is such an important part of my life that the fact that you can… if somebody’s talking about something that they’re passionate about that you can do that and you can kind of share that with them and you can understand that about them, I really like that.

Interviewer: Mm hm, so would you credit actually then Spotify with discovering any of the music that you’ve discovered?

Respondent: It facilitates the discovery so it’s music that I wanted to seek out but pre-Spotify it would have been more difficult to do so like I used to before Spotify go and search for stuff on YouTube, before YouTube it was a case of having to buy or borrow albums and that obviously like I was saying before, you’re investing in it then so it’s a lot harder to dip in and out of stuff whereas Spotify just makes it so easy.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. The recommendations then that are coming from other people, what is your process then when you go onto Spotify?

Respondent: Generally I’ll ask them for two or three songs or an album that they recommend, use that as a starting point or sometimes, you know, like it comes up with the top four or five, use that because if that’s their most well-known stuff but then a lot of the time the stuff that’s most well known isn’t like the stuff that I like the most so my priority would be if I’m speaking to someone what songs do they recommend? What album do they recommend? Or if I haven’t got that luxury then using Spotify’s system.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, and how far then does that discovery go? So, you listen to those two songs that they’ve recommended, is that the point where you decide, okay, I either like this person or not or do you actually do then more listening around?

Respondent: Yeah, generally like I add those couple of songs to a playlist so then I’m listening to them more but it’s not something I guess that I’d really consider that I liked that band or something or I really liked that band until I’d properly listened to full albums and knew a little bit about the people behind it as well, I like the little bios on Spotify.

[0:51:36]

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah. So, when you’re discovering new music are you looking for something that’s very similar to your current tastes or are you looking for something that’s very novel and different?

Respondent: A bit of both like I like that similarity, you know, I do gravitate towards stuff that sounds quite similar but also I like the fact when you can tell straight away what band it is you’re listening to either by the singer’s voice or the sound of the guitars or the content of the lyrics, I like that kind of stuff standing out for a particular reason.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so going back to something you said right at the start, how then did you discover the Riot Girl stuff or was that something that you were already aware of?

Respondent: Yeah, so it started in my teens pre-YouTube, pre-Spotify, I got really into Hole after seeing a song, I used to watch a lot of music tv, I used to just live on Scuzz, Kerrang and MTV2 when that existed and I heard a whole song that I absolutely loved, they were my favourite band throughout my teens. And then through that did a lot of, a ridiculous amount of reading so I had a lot of free time like interviews and through that had kept seeing the phrase Riot Girl and how Courtney was positioned kind of against the Riot Girl movement and then used Napster and stuff to get hold of Bikini Kill and got really, really into Sleater-Kinney and that kind of stuff. But, yeah, normally it will be like a starting point with something and then delving more into that kind of scene that that person’s associated with.

Interviewer: Mm hmm and then have you kind of duplicated that onto your Spotify, so although that discovery happened pre-Spotify is that still very much part of your –

Respondent: Yeah, I’ve got *[playlist name]* –

Interviewer: Oh you have (laughs), it’s right in there, I see. And in terms of your music that you like for its political basis where are you discovering that music from?

Respondent: That stuff tends to be more online like the stuff that I read because I tend to read a lot of like feminist-y articles and queer stuff as well stuff by queer musicians, like I really like to kind of prioritise so, yeah, it will tend to be articles or stuff like sometimes even the suggested stuff that comes up on Facebook’s quite good, that is less through my friends who are kind of a lot of them, you know, a lot of them love their 90s stuff and they’re not so much listening to new stuff because we’ve all reached that age where we’re quite comfortable in our taste.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. So, when you’re reading then the articles, is it music related articles or is it articles about feminism and there just happens to be a band referenced in there?

Respondent: Yeah, a lot of the time or it’ll be stuff about, yeah, politics or it will just be, yeah, a lot of the time it’s a real tangent thing that someone will mention something or it’ll be like a comment on Facebook on a different band thing that they’ll mention something and I’ll think oh I’ll go and listen to that so it’ll be like a little accidental discovery.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. So for Sportify then, so moving then more onto now like how you feel Spotify maybe reflects your music tastes, do you think it’s a platform this has allowed you to construct and manage your music taste or is it something that’s actually replicated what you already had?

Respondent: I think it’s replicated what I already had but it’s so much more convenient, it just facilitates huge volumes of music being stored in one place and easy discovery, easy legal discovery of new music or, you know, old music that I just wasn’t familiar with. It’s something that I always tried to do but it’s just made it so much more convenient and as somebody that’s got a lot less free time now, that’s something that I really appreciate.

[0:55:26]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so do you feel then the platform influences what you listen to at all? Does what you see on the home page or its recommendations influence the paths you take in your music listening or is it very much –

Respondent: I tend to ignore that but sometimes I’m interested in seeing kind of what it brings up.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Is there a reason you ignore it?

Respondent: I think just because I’m quite comfortable with the way that I already do things. I’m always impressed with the stuff that it does throw up, most of the time I do like it but I’m just set in my ways.

Interviewer: Okay, so even if it then produced something that was very similar to what you like and, you know, was like this next group, a female led band, you still perhaps wouldn’t explore that just because it’s come from Spotify?

Respondent: I think possibly without it coming from another source it wouldn’t be something that would jump out at me unless I had specific free time, you know, I had time to kill, that’s when I’ll go down those rabbit holes and explore what Spotify’s got but I would always prioritise real people.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s really interesting. Is there a reason for that?

Respondent: I guess Spotify just feels more artificial like people are more complex than computers so, I don’t know, although it’s something, you know, it does throw up really personal stuff and it stores a lot of information about me and so can predict a lot of stuff about me fairly accurately, it just feels more comfortable that being a human thing rather than something that’s online.

Interviewer: Do you feel that there’s something then that Spotify could do to improve that kind of experience that would make you trust it more than like you trust the people where you get the recommendations from, is there anything it could improve or get better at?

Respondent: I don’t think so, like I’m a sociologist like I’m all about people, yeah, I don’t think… I would think it already does a really good job I just don’t engage with it as much as I could.

Interviewer: Okay, but do you still think even if I looked at your Spotify library so despite you not using their platform stuff that it throws at you, do you feel that that is a really good reflection of who you are?

Respondent: I think so like because of the amount that I use it and the way that I use it I think it is an accurate kind of representation of the music that I like and the way that I construct my identity with music.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so my next question might be quite interesting because you are a sociologist but it might be different in the viewpoints that you gave based on that, so obviously there’s a lot in the media at the minute about how these kind of platforms are storing and using our data that we have on there, are you aware of this when you’re on there and does it bother you or does it not bother you?

Respondent: I think much less than it does on Facebook and stuff like that because like Facebook I can clearly see stuff that I message people about then appears in suggested ads like it’s so artificial like it’s so obvious that it’s doing that. And with my music taste it’s something that I’m more willing to share, it’s something that I would already share anyway, I don’t feel like it kind of gives as much sensitive personal information away, yeah, you know, I can see potentially the risk of if somebody was listening to a lot of politically orientated stuff in a really authoritarian regime that that could be then used against them and flag them up as a person of, you know, potential concern but there’s so much data on so many people I think Spotify is the least of my concerns with anything that’s online.

[0:59:16]

Interviewer: Okay, mm hmm because obviously with the ways we think, well, one of the ways we think that they’re using this is to obviously steer more user specific recommendations so knowing that they’re using your data in this way does that not tempt you even a little bit more to look at the recommendations?

Respondent: Maybe, maybe, it’s something… you know, I do recognise the value of it but I’m always going to put people over Spotify.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And again from your perspective this might be really interesting, do you feel that Spotify itself sees you as an individual user or do you feel it’s very much pigeonholing you into –

Respondent: No, I don’t think it pigeonholes, I think it certainly picks up from, you know, when I do listen to stuff that’s a little bit different that that then throws up different stuff that will appear on the home page and things, I don’t really care if it sees me as a person, it’s not a person like. I don’t engage with Spotify thinking that I want a personal relationship with it, do you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah, it doesn’t bother me if it’s not so I’m not really fussed if it is.

Interviewer: No, that’s all really interesting so my last question is that obviously you’ve now been through all three stages of my research, the questionnaire, the online observation and today’s interview, has being part of this research made you kind of change or reflect anything that you’re currently doing on Spotify?

Respondent: I think I was conscious through the observation period.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: Yeah, it was something that I… like every time I listened to something I was just thinking somebody can see what I’m listening to which was a bit weird.

Interviewer: How did that feel weird?

Respondent: It just feels like kind of exposing like, you know, you can see how many times I’ve listened to a Sleeper album, just that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Do you feel like you’d have felt as conscious if it was a friend or somebody that you knew?

Respondent: No, I don’t think so but then on the other hand I guess like through this conversation in the interview do I want to go and explore more stuff that Spotify can do that maybe I’m not making the most out of?

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so what type of thing were you thinking about?

Respondent: Like using more of its recommendations and looking at the radio thing, whatever that does, that kind of thing and I’m going to… I haven’t even looked at that Last.fm thing yet but just see the information on that.

Interviewer: Yeah, so see what –

[1:01:43]

Respondent: Because I did really like last year like Spotify put a thing together of like My 100 top –

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah, at the end of the year.

Respondent: I loved that, yeah, I loved that and I found it quite surprising and I really, really appreciated that that existed.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so surprising in kind of what sense?

Respondent: I did not realise how much I’d be listening to certain bands.

Interviewer: Oh really? Yeah, so you’ll be able to see that on Last.fm so depending on how long you use it for you can… so I’ve just been looking at it for the last seven days but you can look at it through the whole of your Last.fm history so you can see, right, what you were listening to in the last seven days your top 10 artists versus what you’ve listened to in the last month and how that potentially –

Respondent: Okay, oh that’s interesting, yeah, I think I would like that, thank you.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think you’d find it interesting. So, yeah, that’s all of my questions so thank you again so, so much.

Respondent: That’s alright.

Interviewer: It’s been really interesting talking to you and hearing about how you use music and what it means to you. Is there anything else that you want to talk about that we’ve not touched on or you would like to expand upon a little bit more?

Respondent: I don’t think so, the only thing that… I don’t know if it’s worth mentioning like when we talk about identity construction through music I’ve got a lot of music tattoos, I don’t know if that’s something that’s relevant, I’ve got a few lyric tattoos and like that’s a album cover and stuff like that, like it’s something that, you know, like I said I used to Tippex it on my bag and stuff, it’s something that I really like people to see and I love that moment where like you’re wearing a band shirt and someone says, ‘Oh I love that band’ and that moment of connection you have with a total stranger, like I love that.

Interviewer: So, it’s like the physical manifestation of your musical identity?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, and that collective thing of being at a gig and that moment when everybody is singing along to the same thing, that’s just incredible with nothing that beats that apart from sex (laughs).

Interviewer: But like having these like physical symbols, do you ever feel conscious about it? No? Never bothers you what other people…?

Respondent: No, because generally the sort of stuff that I listen to the only people that recognise it are people that are into the same sort of stuff, it’s not stuff that kind of people that would maybe not share the same opinion of it generally aren’t aware of it so…

Interviewer: Mm hmm, but what about like stereotyping, do you feel that you might be stereotyped for the music that you listen to?

Respondent: I think of all the things in my identity the music that I listen to is probably the least, I’m been heavily tattooed, I’m queer like it just is, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah, no, that’s really interesting, yeah, because obviously like the Riot Girls stuff I did a bit of research on that a while ago and obviously like the views that those that love it have versus the views that other people had and have of it, are very different so I didn’t know if you’d kind of experienced any kind of stereotyping with that?

[1:04:34]

Respondent: Yeah, and I always feel like the Riot Girls stuff is… like it’s a bit holier than now and I tend to like the bands that are more kind of on the fringe of it like Sleater-Kinney, like Hole that were sort of associated with it but didn’t really immerse themselves in that label.

Interviewer: So, it’s like more the inference of that feminism rather than explicit?

Respondent: Yeah, and stuff that’s not just that like Sleater-Kinney are a really obviously political very feminist, very politically outspoken band but they’re not just that, they also sound really, really good and they talk about other things and they raise awareness of other things.

Interviewer: No, that’s really interesting.

Respondent: Yeah, it’s a really interesting… and I just like what they do and I love the fact that they just didn’t engage with the media, they kept it all really DIY with scenes and stuff and I love that kind of fuck you to the music industry and –

Interviewer: Yeah, the mainstream kind of aspect of it.

Respondent: Yeah, but if we never had Sleater-Kinney they would be my number one recommendation for everyone.

Interviewer: Okay, I will definitely go and check them out, that’s it, that’s on my Spotify tonight. Thank you so much.

Respondent: You’re welcome.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-08-M

[0:00:00]

[Dialling tone]

Interviewer: Hi.

Respondent: Can you hear me?

Interviewer: Yes, I can hear you; can you hear me okay?

Respondent: Yes, just give me a second because I have the sound going wrong, can I just -?

Interviewer: Yes, no problem, sort it out by all means.

Respondent: I think I’ll have to call you back, just give me a second.

Interviewer: No problem, I’ll speak to you in a minute.

[Dialling tone]

Hello?

Respondent: Hello.

Interviewer: Is that better?

Respondent: Yes, it’s much better, I didn’t have the sound on my headphones and I just couldn’t hear you properly.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. Sorry, I didn’t know if the first person I called was the right person!

Respondent: No, I didn’t hear you because I was in the kitchen and I was, “I think somebody’s calling me” and then I just came to the bedroom.

Interviewer: That’s no problem, as I say I was just a little bit unsure but I do appreciate you making time to speak to me this morning.

Respondent: Do you want me to set up the webcam? I can just pick it up?

Interviewer: It’s entirely up to you. If you want to make it a video call, that’s fine, if you want to just stick to audio that’s also fine; I have no preference really.

Respondent: It’s because I don’t have the webcam because it stopped working but I just could try…

Interviewer: No, that’s fine, honestly a voice call is perfect. So yes, so thank you again for speaking to me this morning, I do really appreciate it. The way it’s going to work is that the interview will last around an hour but it’s very much led by you so about how much you want to talk about things, how much you want to expand on things. I have some questions that I would obviously like to ask you as well. While you’re talking, I’ll try not to interrupt you but I may take some notes down as things to follow up on with you. So, maybe things I haven’t quite understood or things that I would like more information about, if that’s okay?

Respondent: Yes, no problem, sorry for my English as I’m not a native speaker.

Interviewer: No, don’t worry! It sounds perfect to me, it sounds better than mine! (Both laugh) Also, I’ve got a little audio recorder just by the side of my laptop and that’s just obviously recording the interview, as long as that’s okay with you.

[0:04:30]

Respondent: I read it, don’t worry.

Interviewer: Perfect, so do you have any questions at all before we get started?

Respondent: No questions.

Interviewer: So, let’s get started then. So, the first bit I’d like to know is how music relates to your identity. So, how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: Can you put the question in another way?

Interviewer: Yes, of course, so would you say music is important to you?

Respondent: I understand now, yes, I feel – how to explain this? I started – well, you have seen what I listen to and I started listening to this kind of music really early, in my seventh, eighth year old because my father listened to it as well and I have this phase when a lot of bands and groups were mainstream like FMFAO, David Guetta and everything when I was 12 and I tried to force myself to like that because everybody liked it, so I forced it and I did not enjoy it at all and I was sometimes an outcast, listening to hardcore, to punk, to metal and everything and it did not feel good but it was what I listened and what I liked and a lot of the songs had ideas and I could make it up, I was, “This makes sense to me” and when I was 13/14 at school, a group of kids dressed in black and everything, they were, “Do you listen to this?” because of my backpack, it is full of badges of bands and, “Do you listen to these?” and they took me in and take me, they took me to a concert and everything changed then. I found this little niche of people who appreciated the same music as me and it was really different and I just can’t connect the same way to people I don’t listen to. I do every day even in college and everything but it’s just not the same thing, it’s very personal to me.

Interviewer: Okay, so then you, am I right then in saying that the music that you currently listen to was liked by your father?

Respondent: Yes, he listened to it. A lot of CDs I have and own passed to me from him.

Interviewer: So, would you say then that your music taste is mostly, has mostly been influenced by him?

Respondent: I think at the beginning, yes, but what I listen to nowadays has nothing to do with what he listens to when he used to listen; it’s very different. But, I think the base which is the punk and old-school rock, I still have it and I still listen. I went to see Aerosmith last year, but it’s really different what I listen to nowadays, it has evolved. But, I think it plays a main role in it.

Interviewer: So, would you say then now maybe your friendship group has – is more influential on what you listen to?

Respondent: 50:50 because I have this group of people that I go to concerts with and have a lot of fun but in the same group of people, there are people who just can’t stand even rock itself. They listen to EDM and they listen to their stuff and that’s it.

Interviewer: So, the friendship groups then that listen to EDM and the more mainstream stuff, what do you feel about their music? Do you ever listen to it or have to listen to it obviously when you’re with them?

Respondent: When we sometimes go to the beach or something, the car plays a bit of punk, a bit of this, a bit of that, but nothing too extreme like those really heavy basey EDM songs and neither something too metal with very harsh voices; keep it in the middle.

[0:08:47]

Interviewer: So, in those situations then, who tends to pick the music when you’re in the car?

Respondent: We usually have playlists if you, I don’t know if you can see it, but I used to listen to a lot of playlists I have and we roll(?) them together, so we listen to that.

Interviewer: So, going back then to this group of friends that you found that took you to your first gig and that changed your experience with music, you said that they had a particular style in terms of what they were wearing and how that might be associated to the music; have you then adopted that kind of style in terms of the clothes that you wear or is music very different from your fashion style?

Respondent: No, I’ve always dressed with black clothes and everything. I don’t really have this metal head everything, I just like plain dark clothes and a t-shirt with a band and… but I usually dress a lot of – I have this pink sweatshirt so not all black, but I have always dressed with dark colours; I think it’s my taste, independently of the song, even when I tried to force myself with EDM and everything, I used to dress like that, it’s just how I like it. But, they used to dress with some chains, black clothes, those – the Dr Martins and everything.

Interviewer: So, you’ve mentioned a couple of times that you’ve forced yourself to try and like EDM; why did you feel that you need to try and force yourself in to liking that kind of music?

Respondent: I didn’t know about a lot of gigs and a lot of music, I used to listen to the mainstream punk which was Offspring, Sex Pistols (inaudible 0:10:45), Green Day. It was what I had to hand so I could listen to it, I didn’t do much search on it to find new bands and everybody was, “I like this”, they could get LMFAO and everything, especially LMFAO, they were huge those years (laughs). But, I didn’t like it and I was, “Something must be wrong because…” and I just tried, because when I said, “I don’t like this, I like to listen to this” and they listened to the (inaudible 0:11:30) or something and they were, “I don’t like this because it’s – the voice is very harsh, the sound is – it’s not very clean, everything was very aggressive” and I’m, “Something must be wrong, so I’m just going to try and listen to this and eventually I think I’ll like it”. I was entirely wrong, I never used to like it. There is some dance artists, I don’t know how to say it but DJs or something like (inaudible 0:12:08), I listen to them, they have a nice playlist on Spotify, they are very chilled so I just put it on the background when I’m studying or working because they’re not very aggressive, they’re smooth. I like to listen to that and I listen to some rap but it’s not my main genre.

Interviewer: Okay, is there anything in particular that you don’t like about that genre of music?

Respondent: Not really, I just don’t – about some other Pop-y songs, I don’t really like the lyrics, I just can’t hear it, it’s the main thing because I admit that even Justin Bieber or One Direction which are like the opposite of metal, they have these catchy tunes but I just can’t – I don’t really like it, it’s nothing, it’s nothing in particular, it’s just something that I don’t think it – it feels to me the same way other types of music feels.

Interviewer: So, when you’re listening to music then, what for you is the most important part? Is it the lyrics that you enjoy listening to or is it the tune or is it the instrumentation? What is it that draws you to a particular song?

Respondent: The songs I feel most connected to and the ones I keep listening to are because of the lyrics; I enjoy lyrics a lot and I search lyrics a lot and I like reading them. I don’t know any reason in specific but I really like the tunes as well. But, I think lyrics mostly.

Interviewer: Is there a particular thing that draws you to the lyrics, if they talk about a certain thing or is it just that it depends on the song?

[0:14:00]

Respondent: I would say the ones that talk about feelings and everything, I feel connected to the most.

Interviewer: So, can you remember a time when you’ve used music as a way to show somebody who you are as a person? So, for example, have you ever played music to friends or family to reflect who you are?

Respondent: Yes, it happens more than I’d like (inaudible 0:14:37) because a lot of people – because of the stereotype they’re, “You dress black, you listen to this” so it’s already there but the first thought that I’ve been – they’re, “Oh you listen to Metallica or you listen to Slipknot” which are the most mainstream of metal and I have to go to them, “No, I don’t, it’s different hardcore and punk and metal and this and everything is different and there is a niche for everybody” and I have to literally, to show them, and they’re, “That’s just noise (inaudible 0:15:20) levels” and it’s not but it’s okay (laughs).

Interviewer: So, when you play music to them, are you aware of what type of music you will play? So, do you select a song that they might like because it’s not so intense? Or, is it that you pick a song that you really love and you’re not bothered what they think about it?

Respondent: When they ask me, show me – it depends, I have sometimes, “Show me a song, a really aggressive one” and I’m, “Are you sure you want it? You’re not going to like it, I know for a fact that you won’t” and they’re, “Show me something very aggressive, what you listen to, show me what is the most opposite of what I listen to” and they usually get very surprised, but when they ask me, “Show me what you listen to” I tend to show something that’s very melodic because if you have a lot of extreme metal (inaudible 0:16:23) even in death metal or black metal that they sing, it’s very melodic, you don’t even notice that it’s extreme metal, it’s very different, so I usually tend to show them that.

Interviewer: And, is there a reason then that you personally pick something more melodic than probably the more extreme things that you listen to?

Respondent: I think it has to do with my evolution of what I listen to because one of the first gigs I went to, there was this super heavy metal band and I was, “In no way I will ever listen to this” and now I listen to that and even heavier but my transition with, I suppose again, playing with – listening to one of these bands that’s very melodic because a song has three minutes; one or two is very melodic, very sing(?), very happy and the other has these very harsh voices and that’s what got me in to it and then I moved on and moved on and moved on, so that’s why I showed them that.

Interviewer: So, broadly then, what type of music would you say that you like and what type of music would you say that you dislike and perhaps would never listen to?

Respondent: I really like hardcore music; it’s a genre, it’s hardcore punk, it’s a crossover between punk and metal. So, it’s metal sound with punk lyrics. I would never listen to what my brother listens to (laughs).

Interviewer: Why, what does he listen to?

Respondent: He listens to XXXTentacion, Lil Pump and those – I like some kind of rap but that doesn’t for me (inaudible 0:18:19). He listens to it and I let him play it, but I really don’t like it.

Interviewer: So, there isn’t much crossover between you and your brother, so you never give your songs – give songs to your brother to – recommendations to your brother to listen to and he doesn’t really recommend music for you?

Respondent: No, we do it back and forth because he listens to some punk, nothing too aggressive or – but he listens to it and I listen to some rap and so he likes rap, he shows me something that I might like and I show him some punk that he might like but those very opposites of extreme music are, in his part, those Lil Punks and everything, he doesn’t show me that and I don’t show him the Sex Pistols of punk; I keep it very plain (both laugh).

[0:19:08]

Interviewer: Okay, so looking at your online observation for the past seven days, the artists that came out that you most listened to, the first one was The Offspring and the second one was Terror; would you say they’re quite reflective of your music taste?

Respondent: The Offspring, yes, in the punk-wise. Terror is (laughs) – Terror, I don’t really like them, but they released an album on Friday and they’ve been hyping the album a lot and the album, I think it’s really good, so I’ve been listening to them a lot, really a lot and discovering them because I really like the album. So, I just got in to them; it’s really new territory but I really liked it.

Interviewer: But, you said though that you didn’t like their stuff from before?

Respondent: I saw them live when they were beginning and I really didn’t like it but they were really new to the scene and everything and then they released an EP and two albums and it was very normal to me, it didn’t catch me. But, this album and the last one, I really liked it and because of the new album, so this past seven days, I was, “I really need to listen to this again”.

Interviewer: Okay, so do you think then it’s a change in your own musical taste that maybe now you like them, or is it a change in what the band have done themselves that you like?

Respondent: Yes, they changed a bit because they got a new guitarist that likes a more old-school hardcore style and the lyrics are really good in this album. They had some lyrics about – they were very punk, they were hardcore punk to the core, because they complained about society, about political unfairness and everything and now they just went full hardcore on it and I really like it, so yes.

Interviewer: Yes, because a lot of punk music obviously expresses things about social disharmony and political views; is that something that you relate to in the lyrics or is it just something that you enjoy listening to?

Respondent: No, I enjoy it, I really like to have this anarchy inside it; I’ve always been involved with movements within my school and within my college, when we try to fix things, we have this – when it was, I think last – I don’t know if it was three years ago or last year, we didn’t have – in our labs, we don’t have the security we need to wash our eyes or everything because it’s a chemistry lab and they didn’t want to change everything we wanted to, so we – I gathered a few students, took it – I don’t know how it works there but we took it to our superior in the Students’ Association and they were, “If you want to do it and you think you can do it, just do it” and we organised the day and we did a strike and we eventually got everything changed and now we have new labs.

Interviewer: Wow! So, you started a bit of an uprising?

Respondent: Yes, and… we changed it.

Interviewer: That sounds good. So, as well looking at your Scrobble log information, it looks like you listen to – well, you did listen to, in the last seven days, very few artists; so, you listened to a lot of music but a lot of it was from a very little number of – a very few number of artists. Is that generally how your listening works or do you actually listen to a lot of artists and it just didn’t show in the last seven days?

Respondent: In the last seven days, one that showed up for sure was Candy; they released an album as well, so I listened to it. I think it reflects – I usually, I keep two or three weeks listening to four or five artists and this past few weeks were different because a lot of new albums came up these weeks but I usually listen to a lot of artists but not by intention because I have these playlists and I like using the Spotify Release Radar and the pre-mix(?) playlists; I just want to get the name… they’re like the daily ones, let me just… ah, they have the daily mixes and sometimes I scroll through them and they have these – one is full of grunge, one is full of punk and I usually just choose the one I feel like and listen to it.

[0:24:33]

Interviewer: So, would you say your musical tastes have changed over time or have they very much stayed the same?

Respondent: I think it’s stayed the same; it didn’t change. It changed a bit, but not much.

Interviewer: Do you think there’s a reason why it stayed the same?

Respondent: To be fair, I don’t really know. There was this phase, I used to listen to a lot of grunge but that’s it, that was my only phase.

Interviewer: And, was there a reason for that phase? Was it influenced by a friendship group or a band you’d seen or anything like that?

Respondent: I saw Chris Cornell live when I was really young, here in Lisbon, my father took me and I was amazed, I was literally amazed. I don’t have the webcam but I’m literally having chills right now, I was amazed by everything, by the sound, by the voice, by the type of music, I was amazed by everything and for a few years from that, I listened to a lot of grunge, a lot (laughs). I think that was the main reason if there is one.

Interviewer: Okay, and so – but you don’t listen to that much grunge now?

Respondent: I like listening to grunge to study and to chill or when I’m waiting or something like that.

Interviewer: And, do you feel any of your music tastes have been shaped by life experiences? So, obviously you’ve talked about the music that your dad likes and how that influenced you at the beginning, but is there anything else that has perhaps happened in your life that has changed the music you listen to or influenced the music you listen to at all?

Respondent: I would say, and I’d bet on it, hardcore, but with the lyrics, with feelings and self-esteem issues, because I have ADHD but really severe and I had a lot of problems having friends and everything and I was really aggressive as a kid and I have a lot of problems and everything and they talked about loneliness and being sad but you have to try and keep up and everything and I just listened to it and it was – I never thought I had it in me, saying some part, but how do I explain this? But, I was very angry all the time and when I started listening to full of anger music, filled with rage and they were talking about – but they weren’t talking about, “Let’s punch this and break this” they were talking about something I could feel as well but with the anger I felt, it was very face-to-face(?) to me, that’s why, when I go to a gig, it’s so personal to me.

Interviewer: So, that’s a really interesting point and so, you say that you listened to this music when you were really young as well, so seven or eight I think you said. Did you like it because of the aggression and the lyrics and the idea of loneliness, even from that young age?

Respondent: I don’t really know. I remember listening to it with my father, I really have good memories of it and I’ll show(?) you some(?) but I don’t think I have – I know I enjoyed it but that’s it.

Interviewer: So, going back to your friendship groups then, would you say your music taste is quite similar to that of your friendship groups or quite different?

Respondent: Yes, I met almost all of them (laughs) – I met all of them in a concert (inaudible 0:28:45) about three years back, but we were at the same school and we never talked and I met them at the concert!

Interviewer: So, then they are quite similar; your friends are quite similar to yourself?

[0:28:58]

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And, do you have any connected friends that you have on Spotify?

Respondent: Sorry?

Interviewer: Do you have any friends that you connect with on Spotify?

Respondent: Yes, I follow all of them; I can send you a print if you want.

Interviewer: So, your connected friends on Spotify again are quite similar to your music tastes?

Respondent: Yes, and sometimes when they listen to something new, I like to click on it and check it for myself.

Interviewer: Okay, so moving on then more to Spotify, would you say that Spotify allows you to express your musical tastes quite well?

Respondent: Yes, even the playlists they’re doing the Summer Revival or something and your Year in Review or something, those playlists they’re really metal and punk influenced, so yes.

Interviewer: Is there anything you’ve ever been surprised by in the Year Review?

Respondent: When they pick up that one artist I listened to once and I think, “This is crap” and I just – I don’t want to listen anymore and they go pick it up (both laugh).

Interviewer: So, how do you think then Spotify allows you to express who you are through music? Are there particular service features that make that easy to do for you?

Respondent: I have it connected to everything, literally. I have it connected on Facebook, so people that go on Facebook, if they pass the mouse, the cursor, on my name, it shows what I’m listening to. I have it connected on Discord; Discord has this feature where you see your username and then under it there’s playing (inaudible 0:31:00) or playing Spotify and if you go through and click on “Playing Spotify”, it shows the music, the album, the year and everything and then if you are my friend on Discord, you can click “listen with friends” and we start this private chatroom where we listen to music together and you can interact and change the song and I can change it too.

Interviewer: And, how does it make you feel then, that all these people, so on platforms like Facebook and Discord are seeing what you’re listening to?

Respondent: Can you remake the question please?

Interviewer: Yes, so obviously when you’re streaming music, because of the way you’ve got your Spotify connected to other things like your Facebook and Discord, a lot of people are able to see what you’re listening to. Is that something that you enjoy or are conscious of or even think about when you’re choosing the music that you are listening to?

Respondent: I used to hide a lot of what I listen to and now I’m more open about it, but I like keeping the streaming(?) because the servers and even in Facebook, I really have few friends on Facebook, they’re picked one by one and on Discord, I’m on a few servers with friends, so I like keeping it streaming and everything connected so they just can join in and they’re, “I’ve discovered this new band, listen to it” and stuff like that, I really enjoyed having it open because everybody can just join in and show me something.

Interviewer: So, you then have it more open so then people can be, “Oh that person likes similar music to me” and then an send you recommendations for what you might like as well?

[0:33:00]

Respondent: Yes, and on some servers, on Discord, I have people that listen to nothing what I listen to and they’re just, “I listen to these synth(?) pop rock band and listen to this” and I’m, “Yes, it’s really cool” and I try and, “Show me more” or something, so it’s fine, I (inaudible 0:33:16).

Interviewer: And, since you’ve used Spotify, do you feel that your music tastes have become more diverse or they’re more fixed?

Respondent: More fixed; that’s one of the problems, I don’t…

Interviewer: Could you explain that to me a bit more?

Respondent: For example, the (inaudible 0:33:40) mixes, they’re everything you’ve listened to, they’re – you have to listen for hours for something new to appear. The recommendations are everything you heard or very similar or even a band you just heard once or everything, I think they get really fixed.

Interviewer: So, would you like Spotify to recommend you more diverse music then?

Respondent: Yes, even if I don’t enjoy it, because even on the Release Radar, when there’s some songs or some cover of a band I like, I’m just, “I don’t like this song” and they know I don’t like this song but I like this artist so they just keep throwing me at it. But, for example, I listen to the new Eminem album, I’ve listened to a lot of it but they just don’t throw me – not even Eminem because they know, “You don’t like it, you just listen to it because it’s new”. I don’t know, I’m assuming you listen to it because it’s new but you listen to a lot of metal and a lot of punk and a lot of rock and a lot of grunge, so I’m just going to keep throwing it to you, I don’t even… so, I don’t really like that. Even if I don’t like it, I can show to Spotify I don’t like it, so they just keep – they can keep throwing new stuff at me.

Interviewer: So, do you feel then in that sense, Spotify have stereotyped you as a particular type of listener?

Respondent: Yes, even my brother and I have some friends that complain about it. I used to like some new stuff but they’re, “Even if it’s new stuff, it’s new rock and I want some new stuff I’ve never listened to”.

Interviewer: How would you feel though say if Spotify recommended you some new EDM music; what would you feel about the platform then?

Respondent: I wouldn’t like it but it depends – I speak for myself, because I’m very open-minded, I like hearing everything as I said. I can’t stand some pop songs or EDM but I listen to Don Diablo and Steve Aoki, I like listening to it, they have some cool playlists that are very chilled. I wouldn’t mind at all because I just can say, “I don’t like this song” or even if it’s this very hardcore EDM artists that’s very basey and very everything, I just say, “I don’t like this artist” and they’re, “Okay, we stop throwing at you this artist”.

Interviewer: So, then actually then, you feel that perhaps you’ve not found anything new since using Spotify because even the recommendations they give you, they tend to be bands that you’ve already heard or listened to, even if it’s just one song?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: That’s really interesting. I’d like to move on to talking just a little bit more about Spotify as well, so is there a reason that you use Spotify to stream music? Is there a particular reason you use it?

Respondent: I used to download a lot of music, like everybody… and I used to download it all but I also have a lot of records, but I like listening on the go, so that’s why I download a lot and then it starts showing Google Play and everything with the music service. I don’t have Apple Music because I’m on Android and these are – was the first streaming service I listened to, but that was very bugged(?) and yes, on the browser was (inaudible 0:37:43), I think it’s better than Spotify and (inaudible 0:37:47) on the browser but on the go it’s horrible, it’s a really bad experience and the app, it’s not user-friendly. I don’t know how it is now, whether it’s better but I stopped using it because it’s not user-friendly at all. And, I discovered Spotify because of Xbox Live because one of the – they throw to the mix Spotify and I searched on it and it has the artists I like too, it’s like Deezer, it’s even cheaper, so I’m going to change. And, the app was – when I started using Spotify, the app was a bit buggy(?) as well but I was, “It’s still early days, let’s wait on it” and it got way better and it’s really good and the sound quality, it’s quite different as well.

[0:38:41]

Interviewer: Did – you obviously mentioned about using Deezer before, did that let you show others on Discord or Facebook what you were listening to, or is that just solely a thing that Spotify enables?

Respondent: Deezer lets you on Facebook, on Discord I don’t know but Discord is really new, it’s three or four(?) years old, that’s all.

Interviewer: So, you say then you’ve got records as well.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, so do you ever listen to your records at all?

Respondent: Yes, when I’m at home I tend to listen to the records. I have this home system that can feed four CDs and I just put the four which I want to listen at a time and I listen to them and I have a vinyl player as well and I used to buy a lot of vinyl.

Interviewer: Is there a reason that you choose to listen to music in that way when you’re at home, rather than listening to Spotify?

Respondent: When I listen to… CDs not really, I just use them for listening. Normally I’d use Spotify, but the vinyl I use it most for reading because of the sound, it’s really different. But, I started buying vinyl because of the special editions with colours, so that’s the main reason I bought them and when I owned 20 I was, “I better buy a vinyl player” (Interviewer laughs) and then I started listening to it and I really enjoyed it and, “I’m going to keep listening to it”. I really enjoy the sound; it’s very different.

Interviewer: So, different in what way?

Respondent: I don’t know, it’s the – it’s not better, it sounds worse, it’s not so clean as a CD or even Spotify; it has this different feel to it, I really enjoyed it.

Interviewer: So, with your CDs and your vinyl then, are they bands and songs that you have on your Spotify as well or are they just songs that you have on CD?

Respondent: No, they’re both but I have a lot of bands and songs that I only have on vinyl and CD, they are not on – the bands are not on Spotify.

Interviewer: I see, okay. And, is there – because obviously a lot of music listening is now moving online and people aren’t buying as many CDs now; is there a reason that you still like having CDs and vinyl?

Respondent: It’s mainly for the support of the band, it’s mainly but there are some records that in CD are really cool; they have these booklets and everything but it’s mainly for the support of the band.

Interviewer: In what kind of sense do you mean support for the band?

Respondent: I usually buy them at the gigs, they usually carry(?) so I buy them there, directly from the band so that’s good.

[0:42:00]

Interviewer: Do they also then act like memories of the gig or are they just a collection of music?

Respondent: Yes, I have a lot of them signed by the band members.

Interviewer: Well, that’s definitely something you can’t get through Spotify (laughs). Okay, so how do you tend to stream music on Spotify? Is it mainly through your music library or playlists or Spotify recommendations?

Respondent: Spotify recommendations, I use the Daily Mixes and Release Radar. When I know there are a lot of bands releasing new stuff, I just put the Release Radar on and it fills me up on everything I missed but I usually tend to listen to a lot of playlists.

Interviewer: Okay, so in terms of the Release Radar and Daily Mixes, what do you think about those as features? Do you find them good and you enjoy listening to them or would you like improvements?

Respondent: I think the Release Radar is really good. I’d like it to be updated more than once a week because a lot of stuff keeps coming up and they just update it once a week. The Daily Mixes are really good but sometimes they get their genres off because sometimes I have this only grunge daily mix and I just put it on to study or something and then it throws me extreme black metal and I’m, “No, this is not what I want – I really enjoy it but not now, thank you!”

Interviewer: (Laughs) So, looking again at your online observation period, it looks like you stream one artist for quite a long period of time when you’re listening to music; is that something that you usually do or is that just from just the week that I’ve seen?

Respondent: I did it most this week because of the new records but I usually do that because I like to keep listening to it and a lot of times, when I – for long periods, I’m playing or I’m reading and everything, so I like to – I just put it on repeat, the album or the artist and they just keep going on.

Interviewer: So, when you’re listening to this artist, is that from a playlist or is that you listening to an album’s worth of music from them?

Respondent: It’s mostly – it’s an album but if it’s in a playlist, they show up a lot of artists but the playlist is on repeat anyway, so…

Interviewer: So, when you listen then to an album from an artist, do you listen to that in order? So, you listen to track one, two, three until the end or do you listen to it on shuffle?

Respondent: In order.

Interviewer: Is there a reason you think that you listen to it in order?

Respondent: Not really but I like listening to The Offspring on order but that’s different because The Offspring have this intro to the album, this intermission and descending(?) and they usually tend to be comical and really funny.

Interviewer: So, you’ve talked about using the Release Radar and the Discover Mixes when you’re online; is there anything else that you – any other particular features that you use? So, for example, do you use the “similar artists” tab or the radio feature or anything like that?

Respondent: The “similar”, sometimes I use it; the “radio” I never use, never.

Interviewer: Is there a reason that you’ve never used it?

Respondent: I’ve clicked on it a couple of times and I’ve looked at it and it was my reaction, “Nah, I don’t feel like listening to whatever this is”.

[0:46:02]

Interviewer: And, you’ve never used it again?

Respondent: I never used it once; I just clicked on it, looked at it and I’m, “I’m not listening to this, I’m going to listen to something else”.

Interviewer: Alright, so in terms then of your Spotify music library, have you got any idea how many tracks you’ve got on there?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Would you say it’s quite a lot or not that many?

Respondent: Yes, because I tend to save the albums and the artists and artists are a lot – most of them I don’t really listen to them for years, but I save them because sometimes they appear on it.

Interviewer: So, have you ever – do you normally delete things from your music library or do you always keep it on there?

Respondent: I tend to save it but I keep them because they’re hand-chosen, they’re picked, so I know I like it, so I just keep it up(?).

Interviewer: So, even if you haven’t listened to something for quite a while, you would still keep it?

Respondent: Yeah, when I was – I did a surf trip in the summer and I put it on shuffle and it started playing ACDC and I didn’t listen to them for years now and, “I am really enjoying this” so yes, I just keep it.

Interviewer: So, would you say the songs and artists in your music library are very similar or very different from each other?

Respondent: Very different.

Interviewer: Okay, different in what way?

Respondent: Mostly in genre, because I have, in my artists I have Eminem and then I have Batushka which is a black metal band. So, they’re really opposites (laugh).

Interviewer: Yes, they are! So, when you go on to Spotify, do you normally know what music you want to listen to?

Respondent: Not really; that’s why I use the Spotify Playlists; I just keep one and put it on shuffle.

Interviewer: So, that tends to be what you normally do? So, you go on to Spotify and you normally pick a playlist?

Respondent: Yes, my last seven days were not the normal use of Spotify because of the massive release I got, there was the (inaudible 0:48:45) album, the Terror and some (inaudible 0:48:46) stuff new as well and Citizen, there was a lot of new stuff, so it was a mad seven days.

Interviewer: Okay, and what about The Offspring stuff, was that – because they’ve not released anything, have they?

Respondent: No. It’s a band I really enjoy and I listened to them when I went surfing and I really – it’s a band I really enjoy.

[0:49:18]

Interviewer: So, when you pick then playlists, are these playlists that you’ve created or that Spotify has?

Respondent: I would say 50:50 because I have a lot of playlists done by myself and some done by Spotify, but I also follow a lot of playlists that I found on Reddit because I am on Reddit a lot and in terms of hardcore and punk and metal, some people are, “I created this playlist, give it a check” and if I like it, I usually follow that playlist.

Interviewer: Okay, so you get then your playlists from quite a range of sources?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: So, during the week, do you have any particular patterns of music that you listen to? So, for instance, do you listen to anything particular on a Monday and then is that different to a Friday and is that different to a weekend? Or, would you say your music listening is pretty much the same throughout the whole week?

Respondent: When I am with a lot of work from school and work, I tend to listen to a lot of stoner rock or grunge at night, when I’m reading or just resting a bit, before going to sleep I just – because they’re not so aggressive, they’re more chilled, so I like listening to those genres, yes at the end of the night.

Interviewer: And, what about when you’re doing your college work, are there any particular types of music that you listen to then?

Respondent: I like, as I said before, I like studying with grunge but not really, I can really listen to some aggressive and extreme metal and be okay with it and study.

Interviewer: So, when you’re chilling at night and then doing your work, are these bands – are you picking bands that you are familiar with or things that you’re not familiar with?

Respondent: I usually play playlists, so it’s something I already know what’s going on.

Interviewer: So, would you say even when you’re doing these things, you’re still actively listening to the music or is it very much a background noise that you’re not paying that much attention to?

Respondent: When I’m – at night, when I listen to rock and grunge then it’s more of listening to it and just resting a bit. If I’m reading something, it’s maybe background noise but when I’m working it’s, for sure, background noise.

Interviewer: And, are there any other types of music that you listen to at specific times? So, you’ve mentioned surfing a couple of times or before going out, is there anything in particular that you listen to?

Respondent: Yes, when I – we have this thing, we have this playlist (inaudible 0:52:24) and that we listen to when we go skating or surfing, we usually tend to listen to that, because it’s very happy, it’s very light-mooded.

Interviewer: And, just looking at your – again, talking about your online observation, on not the Saturday just gone but the Saturday before, you didn’t Scrobble any music at all; is that usual or was that just a random Saturday?

Respondent: This Saturday?

Interviewer: So, last Saturday so it’ll be the 22nd.

Respondent: I was not home, I was at a wedding; (laughs) that’s the reason.

[0:53:07]

Interviewer: I see, so do you normally still listen to a lot of music on a Saturday and that was just a one-off?

Respondent: Yes, this one was a one-off.

Interviewer: Okay, so do you feel that your music listening has changed since you’ve used Spotify?

Respondent: Yes, I listen to a lot more, I’m all the time almost listening to music, you’ve noticed! (Laughs)

Interviewer: Yes, you do listen to a lot. So, would you say that the types of music that you listen to have changed or just the amount of music that you listen to has changed?

Respondent: Mostly the amount; I think the genre but that was with Deezer as well, because I started listening when the – I started listening to this hardcore and more aggressive metal bands; it’s because I had this power(?) of search for new music that I listened a lot. But, that’s different because I could Google it, but I didn’t, so I guess it changed a bit, yes.

Interviewer: And, I’m guessing because you say that your music listening is quite open, that you have your Spotify account set to public?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Have you ever had it on private at all?

Respondent: I do private sessions when… but it’s different. When my mum wants to listen to something in the car or something, I put it on private so – but it’s not because of the other people seeing it, it’s because Spotify tracks what I listen to and then recommends me my mum’s songs and when I put it on private, it doesn’t track it. So, it doesn’t recommend it; that’s the only reason. If it didn’t recommend it in that amount of time that I am listening to songs with my mum, I would keep it public.

Interviewer: So, has your mum got a very similar music taste to you or not really?

Respondent: Part of my family is Spanish and she is Spanish and listens to a lot of flamenco and everything, so I really don’t like it so I’m, “If you want to listen to it, we’ll listen but it’s on private, I don’t want any recommendations”.

Interviewer: But, then how – so, but you wouldn’t keep it private just to make sure nobody was watching what you were listening to?

Respondent: No, we had this house party a few months back and we were listening to dumb stuff, stuff we would never listen to. But, I got recommendations for two months off that, so – but I keep it public and a lot of people were, “What are you listening to?”

Interviewer: (Laughs) So, it doesn’t bother you then that people can see what you listen to at different times of the day?

Respondent: Not really, but it annoys me a bit with the recommendations because Spotify is not really consistent with it, because, as I said before, I listened to a lot of Eminem when the new album released and they didn’t recommend me anything at all, not even similar artists. But, then one night a few hours playing EDM and everything and I got two months of recommendations of EDM artists and everything.

Interviewer: Yes, that’s really weird. So, would you be interested then in them recommending you more rap music?

[0:56:54]

Respondent: Yes, but I would say that to all the genres as well.

Interviewer: Okay, so there’s not then a particular genre that you wish to explore, so it would be all genres of music you’d be willing?

Respondent: Yes, I am complaining with the rap because it’s – I have J Cole and I have Eminem and I have Kendrick Lamar in my saved artists and I… but they just don’t recommend it because I don’t listen to them that much.

Interviewer: Because those artists seem quite different to obviously what I’d seen for the last seven days. So, is there a particular time that you tend to listen to Eminem and Kendrick Lamar and J Cole?

Respondent: Mostly when I feel like – Eminem I didn’t listen for a few years now, but with the new album I really thought that I should check it out and I did.

Interviewer: So, then you don’t listen to that music at a particular time, it’s just when something new comes up?

Respondent: Sometimes I’ll listen to it but I don’t think it’s a particular time, I just listen to it when I feel like it.

Interviewer: So, you’ve also mentioned that gigs are a really important thing to you; does the live music that you go and see influence what you then listen to on Spotify?

Respondent: Yes, because a lot of the support groups that go are usually really small bands and everything and then I go check up on them on Spotify.

Interviewer: And, are you able to find most of them on Spotify?

Respondent: Some no, but I don’t really know why they’re not because I used to have this band with college colleagues of mine, and we were able to put it on Spotify but some bands are travelling Europe as support of a big band, they just don’t put it – I don’t know why, I don’t know the reason but they just don’t, that’s why I buy CDs. When there’s this support group that I really like and I know I’m going to check him up online, I buy the CD or the vinyl or something they have so I could keep it to listen, because I know there’s a chance I won’t find it.

Interviewer: And, what is it about gigs that you enjoy so much? Is there a particular thing that you – there’s a reason why you like them?

Respondent: They’re really close and personal; that’s the main reason. I’ve noticed when we go to these small venues, the stage is belt level and everything is really close, the artists are talking to you. We have this really close and personal venue, it’s ten minutes from my house and usually, before the gig, even if it’s this huge group of hardcore or metal, they’re chilling with the fans and talking about everything because we’re not much, we’re 500 or something and the venue is sold out. So, before the gig, they’re talking to the people and everything, they’re really open with everybody and the stage is so – and there are no barriers, no security and so it’s very close, I really enjoy that. When I went to see Aerosmith, I went to this huge – it was huge, I’ve never seen so many people and it didn’t have that because I was really far away from the stage, it had a lot of security and so on and when I go to these gigs of hardcore, it’s nothing like that, it’s very close.

Interviewer: And, you were obviously saying about the experience with you and the band; what about you and the other people that are there listening to that music as well? Do you get a shared feeling with them as well?

Respondent: Yes, we have this joke, where I surf it’s called Santa Cruz, it’s not California, it’s here in Portugal though. We have a Portuguese punk band, it’s our biggest punk band in Portugal, they’re quite big; they went to a festival there, two guys that never met before in their life were hugging and crying at the end of the gig in front of us and we were, “What the – what is going on?” (Interviewer laughs), that was three or four years ago, but when I go to gigs, you – because it’s a niche, it’s not a lot of people listen to this type of music, you always find the same people, it’s always the same, you see them. Even if you – I’m in Lisbon but if you go to a concert you find the same people, it’s always the same people and you have this – you can talk to them because it’s always the same people. You can just talk to them, it’s really friendly and a friendly environment.

[1:02:21]

Interviewer: That’s nice, that sounds like a good environment to be a part of.

Respondent: Yes, that’s what brought me when I started going to gigs, because, as I said before, I had this loneliness and I couldn’t fit in and I didn’t know what to do and I went to one gig and everybody was so relaxed, despite the aggressive music everybody was happy, very relaxed, very friendly. When I went to another gig, the same people, same environment, another gig and so on and so on and so on.

Interviewer: That sounds really good. So, in terms of the music then you add to your Spotify, how often do you add new things to your Spotify library?

Respondent: It’s mostly when I find something new on Reddit or when I go to a gig and I really enjoy a support band.

Interviewer: What about in terms of the Release Radar; do you very often add things that you’ve heard in the Release Radar to your music library or not that often?

Respondent: Not really that often, because it usually shows some songs I don’t really enjoy or some artists that I don’t really enjoy so I usually check on the Release Radar for the new stuff that comes out from the bands I already follow.

Interviewer: And, do you ever remove songs from your music library?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Never?

Respondent: I don’t think so (laughs).

Interviewer: Is there a reason that you feel that you never remove anything?

Respondent: What I listen to and I know I like it, so I just keep it.

Interviewer: And, how often do you – so, if something has been in there, how often do you revisit that music? Do you go back and listen to something old each month or is it each year?

Respondent: Mostly on the summer because I tend to – I like travelling a lot and when I do these travels and I have people to go with me, I usually listen to some old stuff.

Interviewer: Is there a reason for that?

Respondent: I don’t know, I just – I feel like it, that’s – (laughs)

Interviewer: Well, that’s fair enough. So, moving on to playlists then, you’ve mentioned playlists quite a few times, so do you feel that playlists are quite important to you?

Respondent: I don’t think so but it’s how I listen to a lot of music because… how do I put this? I want to listen to this and I’m going to listen to this and I have a playlist with a lot of stuff, I just shuffle, play and I keep it on and that’s how I do it.

[1:05:21]

Interviewer: So, in that – is it then related to the amount of music you can have on there, that you can listen to at one time?

Respondent: Maybe, because I have playlists with a lot of songs, maybe 1,000, they’re really big.

Interviewer: And, do you have a lot of playlists?

Respondent: Yes, I think I have 20 something.

Interviewer: And, how have you organised or created these playlists? Are the playlists created based on mood or the purpose of them or the genre of music?

Respondent: Genre and purpose; I’ve been going to this metal festival in Spain, Resurrection, and I have one for each year I went to it with the new(?) French bands, but it’s mainly purpose and genre.

Interviewer: So, then in terms of this one for the music festival, how often do you go back and listen to the music from the previous years?

Respondent: I listen to them quite a lot actually.

Interviewer: And, you still feel that that music is important to you, even though it’s from a number of years ago?

Respondent: Yes, and I have some memories of it and I keep the playlists, I like – it’s a thing I like doing, I put a silly name and a silly picture with the playlists I do, so – but they’re really unrelated and I like doing this, so I like listening to those playlists because they have a purpose and they have this silly thing I do, so I like revisiting them.

Interviewer: And, is there a playlist that you feel that you play the most?

Respondent: For sure, my main one which is the longest, which is one I did a few years back, to our first travel with my friends; that’s the first one I did and I keep listening to that a lot of times.

Interviewer: Is there a reason that you listen to that one a lot?

Respondent: I don’t know, it has a lot of music, I just checked 1,000 and something, so yes, so it’s wide open. It’s public and it has a lot of songs from different artists and a lot of genres, so I just like playing it.

Interviewer: So, how often do you create new playlists to listen to?

Respondent: I usually don’t create a lot of playlists because mine have a purpose or something, but I follow a lot of playlists I find.

Interviewer: And, why is it then that you follow the playlists of others? Is there a reason that you choose to follow them?

Respondent: Not really, they’re really short but I enjoy them. When I find one on Reddit and when they share one, because they’re really short and they have one “best of” one artist or “best of” a genre, I just keep them when I want to listen to music I really enjoy it.

Interviewer: And, so the playlists that you follow, do you only get those from Reddit or do you get those from other sources? So, do you search for particular things on Spotify?

[1:09:09]

Respondent: I find it most on Reddit. I follow some playlists that are done by bands but I think that’s new because now the bands can – the artists can publish a playlist. Counterparts, which is a band I really like, they did this thing where the set(?) list for their concert, for their tour, was their playlist they made.

Interviewer: And, what about Spotify doing playlists, do you ever listen to the playlist that Spotify has created?

Respondent: Sometimes, but I don’t really like them because they have the genres very off. They put punk in a hard rock or something; I don’t know, I don’t really enjoy them.

Interviewer: And, what about their playlists for different things, so their playlists for mood or I don’t know, for going to the gym, have you ever listened to playlists that aren’t – Spotify playlists that aren’t related to genre?

Respondent: I listen to the mood ones, to study and everything, they have a really cool one which – it was a – how did they call it, the genre? It was electronic (inaudible 1:10:26) something, I don’t really remember. It was the only playlist I used to listen and then they changed it and now I don’t listen to it anymore, to…

Interviewer: Is there a reason that you don’t listen to it anymore?

Respondent: The playlist, it changed; when they updated Spotify last year, I think it was last year, they changed a lot of playlists and those playlists of moods and everything and that playlist was removed and transferred to another and I don’t like it, so I just stopped listening to it.

Interviewer: And, are you involved in any collaborative playlists at all?

Respondent: Yes, in the House of Fans(?) one which I’ve found on the Reddit of hardcore.

Interviewer: How does that work? How often do you add music in there?

Respondent: I added a few songs and that’s it; I think I added a few two weeks ago but it’s a really big playlist as well, so I don’t find it necessary for me to add anything, because there are already a lot of artists.

Interviewer: But, do you listen quite regularly to that playlist or not at all?

Respondent: Yes, because it’s made by the Reddit group and sometimes – and that’s a Reddit, a lot of Redditors post their own bands and their own stuff which is very new (inaudible 1:12:13) it doesn’t matter, but it’s their stuff what they made. So, I like to listen to it because it’s a lot of new stuff I’ve never listened to.

Interviewer: So, going on now to discovering new music, would you say that you’re a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: Yes, even if it’s outside my genre of music.

Interviewer: And, what is it – why do you feel that you like to discover new music? What is it about it that you enjoy?

Respondent: I really enjoy new stuff.

Interviewer: So, where do you discover new music from?

Respondent: Mainly Reddit, that’s a lot of Reddit, yes.

[1:13:12]

Interviewer: Any from friends at all?

Respondent: When we find something, yes, we share it, we have this Facebook group where we share stuff or on our Discord server we share it as well, but mainly Reddit. They have posts and posts every day with a lot of stuff.

Interviewer: And, of those posts, do you look up the music that they have done quite a lot or is it something that you perhaps visit once a week, see what people have posted, or are you watching that daily?

Respondent: No, (inaudible 1:13:56) even, in that one but I follow a lot of daily – I follow daily the sub(?) Reddit.

Interviewer: And, what about Spotify? Do you use Spotify to discover new music?

Respondent: Not really, sometimes I found one or two bands by Spotify but not really.

Interviewer: Is there a reason you feel that you discover more new music from Reddit than from Spotify?

Respondent: It goes back to what I said before; I think they just – they’re really restricted with everything. I can go to a playlist of “discover artists” and 99% of the bands they’re going to put me on are something I already listen to and I have saved on my library and when – even when I go to Spotify playlists, which I don’t do anymore, I go to the punk essentials and in the middle of it, it’s Guns and Roses, it’s just not punk, not “punk essentials”; it’s hard rock, it’s very good but it’s not punk, so that’s why I stopped listening to it.

Interviewer: So, in that sense then, do you feel that Spotify have perhaps mixed up the genres of music, that they assume that it’s actually one genre but to you, it’s not?

Respondent: They do quite a lot because my brother complains about it and even – I don’t understand about electronic music genres, but my friends that listen to EDM, they say, “This is house when it’s clearly this” and for me, it’s the same but if you say so, I’ll believe it!

Interviewer: Yes (laughs), well I guess if you know more about it then you can say it, can’t you?

Respondent: But, that’s the main complaint I’ve been hearing about.

Interviewer: And, do you feel that that’s the same for you as well, that you would like them to be more specific in those genres?

Respondent: Yes, I don’t think if it’s public anymore because we are approaching new year but – well, you’ve seen my Scrobble, but they said that the main genre I listened last year was pop and I was, “How? Just how?”

Interviewer: I would not say that you’re a pop listener at all!

Respondent: Exactly! And, I have a friend, a close friend, that listens to only black metal – only, but only, they said he listened to mainly rock. He was, “How do I listen to – how? Explain it!”

Interviewer: I don’t think I’ve even seen a black metal genre category on Spotify at all.

Respondent: There is one that’s called “extreme metal”, I have that playlist. I just want to find it… but no, I know the genre it is and – I’ve found it, oh but it’s not made by Spotify, I didn’t know that. It’s called “Black Metal Top Tracks” and they’re not made by Spotify, I thought they were.

Interviewer: Oh, so it’s made by another user?

Respondent: No, it’s made by I think a company, it’s called Sound Drop, I don’t know them. I follow a lot of playlists by Empiricon(?) which is a merch(?) department store.

[1:17:31]

Interviewer: And, what kind of music then do they provide in their playlists?

Respondent: They have some really nice – they have this pop, they have some pop playlists, they have some old school rock, they have some blues playlists, they have everything. Even pop, Ed Sheeran and everything, they have a lot of genres.

Interviewer: Yes, because I’ve never heard of – or at least in my own experience, I’ve never noticed that there are companies that create playlists, I obviously look more for the specific users rather than companies.

Respondent: I know some companies do, like Empiricon(?) and everything but I don’t find many but I know some do because I follow them.

Interviewer: So, I would now like to know whether you think Spotify reflects who you are. So, do you feel that Spotify is a good way for you to construct and manage your musical tastes?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: In what way do you think that?

Respondent: Because if you set up Spotify as default, which is what I have on linkup, the – not even – you don’t have to link it up to Reddit and Discord and Facebook and to everything, but if you just keep it as default, as public and do the social media part which is follow and follow back, everyone can see what you are listening to and everybody will know what you listen to and everybody will know, “Well this one listens to Ed Sheeran, this one listens to Selena Gomez, this one listens to Terror” and so on. So, it’s very public about it.

Interviewer: And, what do you think about Spotify’s interface? Do you feel that that influences your music choices at all?

Respondent: Yes, because it always opens on the browser part but the browser, I don’t think so because I use it mainly on the browser but I don’t think so because it just opens what you – like on Netflix, what you were listening to before.

Interviewer: So, when it opens on to what you listened to before; are you more likely to carry on listening to that?

Respondent: I don’t know but I usually don’t. I like changing what I listen to. Only when there’s new releases like this past seven days, I like listening and listening and listening.

Interviewer: And, so in the last seven days when you’ve listened to the new releases, how long would you say that you tend to listen to that music before you then move on to listening to something else?

Respondent: When there are a lot of – when there’s only one album, I listen to it for four or five days; I explore the lyrics, I listen to it carefully and also background noise and everything and when there are a lot of new releases, I like listening to it for a couple of months before I move on.

Interviewer: And, is there a reason that you decide to move on from that? Is it that you get bored of it or you know…

Respondent: What I usually do, I select some of the songs, put it on playlists, I just add them to playlists I have before but I save the album to before and download it on my phone and everything and just keep listening to it.

[1:21:27]

Interviewer: So, going back to the interface then, the reason that I ask is obviously because a lot of people, even on the Reddit group, were saying about Drake’s exposure on Spotify when he released his new album; did that influence you to listen to more Drake stuff?

Respondent: No, I didn’t really listen to it but I’ve noticed, because even with the genres I listen to, sometimes the “discover” and everything – I don’t know now the word in English but the photo that appears on, it has nothing to do with the artists I listen to and what they are, they’re just random artists and there was a time a lot of Taylor Swift went on.

Interviewer: (Laughs) And, how do you feel about that? Does that annoy you or does it not bother you at all? Are you encouraged to listen to Taylor Swift through that?

Respondent: No, I don’t – it doesn’t really bother me, it’s just something I noticed because it’s very obvious but I don’t really care about it.

Interviewer: So, if I looked at your Spotify music library and your playlist, do you think I’d get a really good idea of who you are as a person?

Respondent: Maybe, yes.

Interviewer: What makes you say “maybe”?

Respondent: Because as I said, I listen to a lot of punk and a lot of hardcore, which is my main genres I listen to and there are a lot of ideologies on those songs, that’s obvious, but that doesn’t mean I believe in everything they say. So, I think that’s why “maybe”.

Interviewer: Yes, that makes sense. So, I don’t know about how things are where you are, but at the minute there’s a lot going on in the UK media about how companies like Facebook are using our personal data. Does it bother you that Spotify is collecting data about you when you’re listening to music?

Respondent: Yes, I don’t really like that, I usually try – Spotify, Facebook and everything, tick everything off that doesn’t allow them to collect research on me.

Interviewer: Why don’t you like that aspect of it?

Respondent: It feels everything very targeted, that’s why. Even the Facebook ads and everything, now I use ad-block for a few years now. I have some white lists on some stuff but that’s the main reason.

Interviewer: So, obviously we think that Spotify are obviously using part of the data to produce music recommendations that are specific to each user. So, in knowing that it’s collecting data to produce recommendations, does that make you feel better about what they’re doing or not?

Respondent: No, but it’s different, they have different tabs for it. On the – I don’t know if it’s on the settings or advanced settings or in the profile management part, in the browser, but you can tick it off, it’s different. They have it separate where they say, “We want to collect music for recommendations” and you have to say “yes” or you can’t use Spotify because it’s part of the terms of agreement and then they have the part where they say, “The (inaudible 1:25:09) for this and this and this” so they know it’s different and they have it different, so you can just go and tick it off.

Interviewer: So, have you unchecked – have you unticked both of those or -?

Respondent: No, only the for research and ads and everything, I only untick(?) that.

Interviewer: So, do you feel that – obviously knowing that Spotify are watching what you listen to, what do you feel about their recommendations then that they are giving to you?

[1:25:40]

Respondent: I like their recommendations but as I said before, I like more widespread but even artists and genres, similar stuff, not only the same for listening to something I already listen to or something I already know I like, I can just go and open on my library.

Interviewer: Okay, so you’ve spoken before about how you’ve discovered a lot of new music through Reddit. Would you say that’s also where you get most of your recommendations from, for music listening?

Respondent: I don’t think so.

Interviewer: So, where do you tend to get music recommendations from?

Respondent: Mostly from friends or – but that’s it because even if something – when something shows up on Reddit, something I don’t know, I’m going to listen for the first time, but I do that with almost every genre, I am very open-minded on that but that’s it.

Interviewer: So, just going back to Spotify recommendations, is there a particular recommendation that you can remember that you really loved from Spotify or actually really hated?

Respondent: The month to month period they were – they were recommending me the EDM stuff. Because there was a time when they stopped it and they were these really pop songs, even Maroon 5 showed up on it and I’m, “I don’t really like this, it’s so annoying!” because I could listen – because it was ridiculous because a playlist made by Spotify could show up metal, metal, punk, Drake, metal, metal… how? No, it was not consistent at all because it could show Drake, Drake, Drake, Drake (inaudible 1:27:51) no, it was my genres, then one random song that I would never listen to and then my genre again.

Interviewer: So, I just would like to explore that a little bit more because obviously you have said that you would like greater diversity in what they recommend to you, but there you’ve just said that when they have put a random song in to music that you would normally listen to, that you didn’t like it. So, how does that work?

Respondent: When I say these recommendations, I want diverse genres, it’s because they have this – if you go to your profile, they have this “discover” and they have this – how do I explain this? They have this “discover new punk”, “discover new grunge, new rock or new pop” and everything, they usually – but they usually don’t do that, they – that’s what I wanted because the Daily Mix, you have new stuff and old stuff, old being something you already listen to and they have the old stuff and new stuff of only punk, of only grunge, of only rap and of only this and only that. When it’s “discover new stuff” they don’t get a genre, they just chose something because I don’t really enjoy that, that’s why I don’t listen to Spotify recommendations at all.

Interviewer: So, just so I understand, so you would like more diversity in the music that you’re recommended but not to be included in the genre that you’ve already listened to?

Respondent: Yes, because if I’m listening to rock, I don’t really want to listen to – or punk or hardcore or metal, I’m feeling like listening to rock. I don’t want any genre there, I just want this…

Interviewer: So, what you’re saying is then that they could give you all recommendations of a rock genre and you’d be quite happy with that and then if they separately recommended you stuff from say pop music, that would be okay, just so long as they were separate and lot within the same listening environment?

Respondent: Yes.

[1:30:17]

Interviewer: I get it, okay.

Respondent: I would be way more open to click on something that is “new pop” and I’m, “Okay”.

Interviewer: Yes, but as long as it doesn’t interrupt another genre of music that you’re enjoying at a different time.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so the last question I’ve got to ask you is obviously you’ve now been through all three stages of my PhD research, so you’ve done the online questionnaire, you’ve done the one week observation and done the interview; has being part of the research made you either think about or change the way that you use Spotify?

Respondent: Yes, when I was with the forms, when you sent me, I was really, “She’s going to see I listen to only trash!” (Interviewer laughs) and I listen to a lot of stuff that makes no sense at all. That was the main thing and that’s what I listen to just…

Interviewer: So, did that make you feel conscious then that I was watching what you were listening to?

Respondent: It made me think, “What do I listen that they’re going to see?” but it made no sense that I was thinking that because I have everything set to public and everything linked to everything, but I don’t know, it was very in the moment of – with the forms and I’m, “Hmm…” it was something very momentarily.

Interviewer: Do you think though that momentary thing was perhaps because obviously when you’re allowing your Spotify to be open, it tends to be your friends that you’re sharing it with. So, when it’s open on Facebook, you’ve obviously got Facebook friends and when it’s open on Discord, you’re obviously with friends there and that perhaps it was because I was somebody that you didn’t know?

Respondent: Maybe, but I have Spotify on public so anybody can just go and check it out and I have a lot of playlists public; I posted them on Reddit and everything, so it’s public all the way. But, no, it was very momentary.

Interviewer: For a second (laughs).

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Well that’s great, thank you so much for talking to me today, I really appreciate it; there’s been some super interesting stuff that’s come out of today that I’ve really enjoyed listening to and I’m sure will be hugely beneficial to my research. Is there anything else you wanted to talk about or expand upon that we’ve either talked about briefly or haven’t talked about at all?

Respondent: No, not really, I think…

Interviewer: Well in that case then, I’ll let you get on with the rest of your day.

Respondent: Thank you.

Interviewer: Thank you so much, I really appreciate it.

Respondent: No problem, thank you. Good luck with everything.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

Respondent: See you.

Interviewer: Thank you, bye.

[End of transcript]

# Transcript: In-09-M

[0:00:00]

[Dialling tone]

Respondent: Hello?

Interviewer: Hi.

Respondent: How are you? Can you see me?

Interviewer: No, I can’t see you actually.

Respondent: Oh, I think it’s coming up here. I can see you now.

Interviewer: That’s good, I still can’t see – oh, there we go, perfect.

Respondent: I’m using my roommate’s laptop but – you’re frozen but is it going to be fine do you think?

Interviewer: Yes, I think so. Can you hear me alright?

Respondent: Yes, I can hear you; can you hear me?

Interviewer: Yes, I can hear you perfectly. If the video doesn’t end up working it’s alright, we can just switch it to a normal call if that’s easier.

Respondent: Yes, whatever works so (inaudible 0:01:18) and then if not – yes.

Interviewer: Perfect, well thank you for making time to speak to me this morning, I really appreciate it.

Respondent: Yes, I think this is great. So, what are you researching exactly?

Interviewer: So, I’m over here at the minute doing a PhD and the field I’m in is web science but within that, you study different areas. So, I’m actually based in the Faculty of Music and looking at how people are using Spotify and how this is potentially changing the way that they listen to music.

Respondent: Great, okay, that sounds cool.

Interviewer: So, this is the final stage almost of my research because obviously you guys have done the questionnaire, you’ve done the online observation and then obviously today is the last part.

Respondent: You’ve been working on that for months then?

Interviewer: Yes, it feels like it (laughs).

Respondent: Oh my god! That’s cool.

Interviewer: Thanks. So, the way it’s going to work today is the interview will last roughly around an hour and it’s very much based on your responses, so I’ll give you plenty of time to talk about things as you wish and expand on things where you want to. I have some questions here for you as well that I would like to ask. It might be a case that while you’re talking I’m writing down some notes but that’s mainly for me to check back with you about things I’ve either not understood or want to know a little bit more about and then also I’ve got a little recording device here which is just by the side of my laptop which is recording our audio, if that’s okay with you?

Respondent: Yes, that’s definitely okay.

Interviewer: Perfect, so do you have any questions before we get started?

Respondent: No, I’m ready to go.

[0:03:11]

Interviewer: So, the first bit is I would like to know how music relates to your identity. So, how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: Well, I wouldn’t say music is – I’d say the music I listen to is an expression of myself (inaudible 0:03:30) but I listen to a lot of different music. I listen to rap and also indie; I don’t listen to country and anything like that but I listen to a big variety and I’m a very open person, so that reflects in that sense that I’m very – I’ll take whatever, I don’t get offended or disgusted or anything like that and actually(?) my music tastes – also there’s certain artists that I relate to a tonne and it feels like listening to music is more like a – it’s a self-reflection sort of thing.

Interviewer: So, when you say that you relate to artists, what do you mean by that?

Respondent: For example, there’s an artist, I don’t know if you saw him (inaudible 0:04:22) who – this song called “Heavenly Father” and his name is Isaiah Rashad, he’s a rapper and that song in particular and therefore the artist, I just – I feel that song in a sense, I feel like that song is me. If I were to show someone through a song how I feel about things, or myself, that would be that song.

Interviewer: So, what is it about then that song that makes it your song? Is it the lyrics that you can relate to? Is it the artist’s back history or is it the sound in general? What is it about it?

Respondent: It’s all three but it would be lyrics first and then the artist and then the music itself but it’s… it goes, “Everybody telling me a lie, Lord you gave me something for a soul” and so I’m, “Yes, that’s so true, I feel that way” but I – so, the song is called “Heavenly Father” and he’s not just talking about – he’s talking about not having a father basically and he’s talking both in a spiritual sense, I guess about God or whatever, but also his own father. And, I myself, I had a dad growing up but he was very abusive and things like that and so the lyrics are like that. But, also, I’m not a Christian, I’m an atheist, agnostic or whatever, but the idea of – because I was Catholic and then I did feel a loss, a spiritual loss of a father but – and he’s also, it seems to me he’s looking for truth or meaning in the world and then it seems like everyone is not about that or not really caring and so I relate to that and that’s in the lyrics and then also with his own history similar to mine, with his father and then it sounds great.

Interviewer: Is this – because I’ve not heard of this song; is this quite a recent release or has this been a song that’s been out for a while?

Respondent: It’s been out for about three years, so three or four years, so it’s pretty recent.

Interviewer: So, would you say then – has there been songs before this one then that you’ve experienced as your song or is this just very particular to this song and this artist that you’re feeling that synergy between them?

Respondent: No, I feel that for a tonne of songs. The song I’ve listened to most, because I’ve tracked my Last FM stats for four years now, three and a half years, and there’s a song by – have you heard of Travis Scott, the rapper?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: So, his second mix tape, he had a song called “Days Before Rodeo, The Prayer” and that’s another song where I’m, “Yes, I feel that way”. And, that’s almost – that one I would say even more the music than the lyrics, the way the music is, the atmosphere of the music, it’s anxious… (demonstrating), “I’m still not satisfied; I’m doing well but why am I not fulfilled yet?” and I get that from the music itself and so that’s – there’s tonnes of songs where it’s, “Yes, that’s me!” Right now I’m feeling the Heavenly Father song the most but definitely there’s a lot more.

[0:08:23]

Interviewer: So, would you say in general then that music is really important to you?

Respondent: Oh yes. One time we had – some stuff happened at my house and we had to go to my mum’s friend’s house and I didn’t have my phone with me. Anyway, I basically didn’t have a chance to listen to music for a couple of days and when we came back home finally, the first thing I did was listen to music because I can’t imagine a day without listening to a song.

Interviewer: And, has music always been important to you or is it something you’ve experienced quite recently?

Respondent: Since about maybe 11 years old, yes. Since growing up, when that big brain change happens at 11/12 years old, you know?

Interviewer: I was just going to say, that’s really interesting that you pinpointed the age of 11 as being a significant time for you; was that just because you experienced a sense of growing up?

Respondent: Yes, well it’s a lot of things. It is completely having to do with the self, because like I told you, I had nobody as a father and I started listening to Eminem which actually (laughs) – it seems like a common thing like that but – so, basically I discovered for myself Eminem and I think everyone goes through an Eminem phase it seems, but that’s when I… so, I don’t know, it’s like coming out of – as a child, I didn’t – I wasn’t going to go on YouTube or anything and listen to music but around that age things started to change for me. I really don’t know, I really don’t know what it is exactly but it was around that age. I think it has to do with access to the internet.

Interviewer: Okay, so do you feel then that your music tastes have changed over time or have they been very consistent?

Respondent: No, they’ve changed a tonne over time.

Interviewer: How do you feel that they’ve changed?

Respondent: Well, like I said, I went through an Eminem phase.

Interviewer: Would you say right now you’re out of that Eminem phase? Would you say then now you’re not in an Eminem phase? Because obviously he’s just recently released an album, so would you say that music is very much in your past?

Respondent: Yes, it’s very much in my past. So, I’m out of that phase where – it’s, when I listen to his albums that I used to listen to, it’s like going back in time for me. So, I don’t think I can appreciate them as much as what I did then.

Interviewer: I totally get that. So, do you feel that your music tastes have changed in any other way?

Respondent: Oh yes, so I’ll continue, so going in to high school, freshman year, I went through another phase of – where I’d listen to exclusively classic rock, Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin, Queen, all those guys, 60s, 70s music and I shunned rap for a little bit and basically only listened to that sort of music, the Beatles, just classic rock and so it changed in that sense and then it changed again in tenth grade and there’s been tonnes of changes but the next big one was in tenth grade when I told myself, “Okay, I’m going to listen to rap again” and at that time, Yeezus by Kanye was the big controversial rave review album and so I’m, “Okay I’m going to pick that one to get in to” which – it was a great choice in the end but I couldn’t have picked a less rappy rap album. So, it changed in that sense and then it changed again when I started listening to female artists, whereas before there’s this weird notion that I didn’t want to seem effeminate, so I started listening to Lana del Rey and stuff the next year and then twelfth grade, more of the same, but then freshman year at college it changed again because I took a “History of Popular Music” class and we went over everything and that’s everything and that’s when I started listening to some punk even, soul music, and that’s when I was, “Okay I could(?) really listen to anything” and I listened to pop and everything, whereas before I would have felt weird about it, but now I just really don’t care and I just listen to whatever I like.

[0:13:40]

Interviewer: So, it’s interesting that you’re able to pinpoint specific times when you feel that your music tastes have changed. Has that do you feel been something that’s happened organically or has that been a change of environment, a change of friendship groups or some kind of influence coming from elsewhere?

Respondent: No, it definitely has to do with – for example, I changed to listening to female artists, because I took a bunch of history classes, I’m a History Major now and I took a bunch of history classes in high school and all those forced me to challenge my own thinking and inertions(?) and so I did a lot of self-reflection in high school and I realised, “Well why shouldn’t I – why do I feel weird about listening to strictly female artists?” the idea that, “Oh, that’s gay”. So, it was the influence of my schooling, I would say, and also for the change from listening to Eminem to listening to only classic rock was a peer change because I didn’t like my peers who were listening to rap, not because of the rap but I didn’t like them and so I was almost, “Okay I’m going to listen to music that’s not like that at all”, a whole new(?) type thing.

Interviewer: That’s really interesting, so do you think then that you specifically chose to listen to classic rock to fit in with a new friendship group or was it that you actually liked the music?

Respondent: It was that I actually liked the music because I didn’t really know anyone else that was listening to that music.

Interviewer: And then the other thing I’d like to go back to is when you say you made a conscious choice to listen to female artists, was that a choice to listen to female artists in the genre that you were interested in at the time or was that an excuse to explore whole new genres of music for you?

Respondent: I hadn’t thought about that but I think more listening to different genres because I don’t listen to a lot of, if any, female rappers; there’s really not that many. So, more listening to a different genre.

Interviewer: So, going back to your friendships, do you feel that your music tastes are quite similar to your friendship group’s?

Respondent: Yes, well music tastes, okay… yes, they’re definitely similar, yes.

Interviewer: Because I found what was interesting, looking at what you listen to, is that your music tastes are actually very eclectic. So, are your friends’ music tastes also very eclectic?

Respondent: Eclectic meaning…?

Interviewer: So, there was lots of different genres, lots of different periods of time that were covered, current artists, older artists, bands, individuals, there was quite a range in there.

Respondent: Well, I’m thinking of one friend who has also very eclectic… but other friends, they – I’m similar in their rap music taste but I don’t know that they listen to the other stuff that I listen to. So, I would say one of my friends who I value highly, I’m close to, he’s like that but most of them are not.

Interviewer: And, so have you ever used music as a way to express who you are to somebody else, whether that’s a friend or a family member, you’ve specifically chosen to share music with them in an act of self-expression?

Respondent: Oh yes, 100% (laughs). So, I was in a relationship with a girl for a couple of years and that first dating, getting to know each other stages, I – do you know Bon Iver? I played Bon Iver to her and told her, “This is how I feel”, so yes, definitely.

[0:18:05]

Interviewer: So, in that sense then, it sounds like you chose music based on your emotion, so you wanted to express your emotion; is that often the case when you share music with other people?

Respondent: Oh yes, it’s always the case – well, 95% the case. It always feels like what I’m playing now, whatever I’m listening to, is how I’m feeling.

Interviewer: So, when you’re sharing this music with somebody else, are you quite conscious of the song that you’re choosing? So, taking in to consideration what they like and what they might not like and then also what they might think of you when they listen to that music or is it very much, “This is how I’m feeling right now and I’m going to share it with you”?

Respondent: No, I consider their taste. Sometimes – because my ex girlfriend didn’t listen to a lot of rap and she had a negative view of it, so I was cautious to show her those songs because she didn’t like the sexism in it. But, the primary concern I think is showing them whatever the song, how I feel, but I do consider, “Well are they going to – how will they feel about it?” I wouldn’t show my mum a rap song because she’s not going to get it.

Interviewer: And, what about – because obviously the song Heavenly Father, that seems quite personal to you; would you also be willing to share something – a song so personal to you with other people or is that very much for your own private listening?

Respondent: No, I share it – I share everything, that’s – another big song that I like is called – it’s by Mac DeMarco and another song that I feel like it’s one of those songs and it’s called “Passing Out Pieces” and the whole song is about how he’s just an open book and so if you’re asking if I’m private about that or personal about it, no.

Interviewer: So, obviously I’ve seen what you’ve streamed in the last seven days from your Last FM Scrobble logs. For you, what kind of music do you consider music that you like and music that you dislike? Is there a really clear divide between the two?

Respondent: Yes, so it’s clichéd but the music has to be meaningful in some sense because I’ll listen to “hype” music but most of that music I choose to listen to, it has to be – I have to feel it, you know what I mean, an intuitive… so, it has to have a lot of emotion.

Interviewer: So, is that then cross-genre? So, you would be willing to listen to say a song that reflected your emotions from pop, from rock, from rap or is it very much based on one specific genre for you?

Respondent: No, not at all, if the song – it can be any genre if it makes me feel…

Interviewer: And, what would you never choose to listen to? Is there any genre or any type of music that you would never choose to listen to because you absolutely hate it?

Respondent: (Laughs) Well, I’d always give it a chance but I’ve found it very – I have a hard time listening to country music and I think it’s just because I don’t have similar values to – I haven’t listened to a lot of country music but I find it very – I find it difficult to relate to the values and thoughts etc. of country music. So, it’s a genre I’m…

Interviewer: You’re just not in to! (Both laugh)

Respondent: Yes, not at all. Yes, I don’t like it.

Interviewer: That’s fair enough. So, looking at your Scrobble logs, from the last seven days anyway, the most – the first artist that you streamed the most is Vampire Weekend and then the second one was Smashing Pumpkins; do you feel that’s quite reflective of your taste?

[0:23:00]

Respondent: No, actually, that was a weird week because I listened to this one Vampire album a tonne and then the Smashing Pumpkins, that’s just one song, so it’s not… so, usually it’s a rapper up top, so it is different.

Interviewer: You have got quite varied artists because you’re also listening to obviously Kanye West like you’ve said, Harry Styles and Blink 182, so would you say you do listen to a great variety of artists?

Respondent: Yes, I would say that 100%.

Interviewer: So, talking about Vampire Weekend, I was going to ask you, because it did look like you were streaming an album’s worth of music each time they came up. So, was that the case then last week?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And, was there something about that album that made you want to listen to it?

Respondent: Yes… the whole album sounds really pretty to me, pretty, you know? And, I don’t know what it is exactly, there’s a song called “Step” on there that I love and a song called “Hannah Hunt” that is emotionally weird for me, but yes, I don’t know why I listened to the album so much, it was just pleasing and also some of the emotions are – I got I think.

Interviewer: So, since then listening to this album, have you been tempted to listen to any of their previous stuff or is it very much just this album of music is currently appealing to you?

Respondent: No, I’ve listened to some of their other – I’ve listened to whole albums but I’ve listened to some songs on their other album, they have a song called A-Punk and The Oxford Comma (laughs).

Interviewer: Yes, they’re their most popular ones I think. So, I’d like to move on then to talking a little bit more about your Spotify account. So, for a start, do you have connected friends on your Spotify account?

Respondent: I do, yes.

Interviewer: So, you’ve mentioned that broadly your music tastes are very similar to your friendship group; are they very similar to those people that you’re connected with on Spotify?

Respondent: Yes, so I follow four people, I follow my good friend, I follow another friend only because I know I like the songs he listens to and then I follow my sister’s just because – whatever, but my one sister and I have very similar tastes and so do the – only on one of those do I not have very similar tastes with, with one of my sisters but they’re mostly very similar tastes.

Interviewer: So, do you feel that you intentionally use Spotify as a way to express your music taste?

Respondent: Yes, because I have a tonne of playlists, probably 10 or 15, for different genres and moods and stuff and I put a little picture of it… and I have a little write-up for each one of my playlists and so if I know someone’s on Spotify, I tell them to follow my playlist.

[0:26:45]

Interviewer: So, then when you tell them to follow your playlist, are you quite conscious of what’s on there or are you very willing to share that with other people no matter what their music taste is?

Respondent: I’m very willing, no matter what their taste is.

Interviewer: So, obviously playlists sound important to you but what about your music library? Is that something that you feel if I looked at, I would get a very good idea of who you are as a person?

Respondent: Oh yes, 100%. If you looked at my main playlist which is where I have every song that I like, you would get a good idea and some of the stuff you get is that there’s varied stuff, like you’ve noticed, and then you also see some big artists that are on there a tonne. So, you get a good idea. I think you can tell a lot by someone’s music taste, more than a lot of stuff I think.

Interviewer: So, from your perspective then, what do you feel that you can ascertain from somebody’s music taste?

Respondent: Well, for one, it’s, “Okay, do they listen to “popular” music or do they listen to obscure music or somewhere in the middle?” Because you can tell – not that it’s good or bad that they listen to either type but if someone listens to obscure music, that would tell you that they’re either individualistic or they’re saying “no” to what’s popular, they’re saying “no” to the mainstream – so, that tells you that. And, if they like a lot of popular songs and that’s mostly it, there’s nothing wrong with that but it does tell me that, “Well, okay well what makes you unique?”

Interviewer: Yes, that’s really interesting. But, where then would you put yourself on that spectrum?

Respondent: And, then (laughs) this is where I’m, “Yes, I like both!” (both laugh) I’m (inaudible 0:29:10) special.

Interviewer: Well, from what I’ve seen from Scrobble, there is some popular ones on there and then there is some very – more obscure and unique songs on there, so no, I’d agree with you on that one. So, then going back to Spotify, since then you’ve used that platform, do you feel that your music listening has become more diverse in what you listen to or actually more fixed?

Respondent: No, definitely more diverse because – okay, so before, my primary music listening was – before Spotify, was either pirating it or YouTube. With YouTube, it shows you music similar to what you’re listening to, so you stay in that zone. But, with Spotify, they have all the different playlists and occasionally I’ll venture in to one and I like it and so that’ll open up an entire genre. So, Spotify has 100% made it where I listen to more varied music.

Interviewer: So, do you think that diversity then has come from your own exploration of what’s out there or is it from the music that’s been recommended to you from Spotify?

Respondent: I think it’s more of my own exploration, because – but without Spotify I wouldn’t be as tempted or as – no, I think it’s around curiosity in the end but Spotify (inaudible 0:30:55), “Oh, it’s right there, why not?” I get in to a comfort zone with music. I listen to a lot of different types of music but I rarely listen to new music because it’s – well, with the music I know I like, I don’t have to – there’s no risk in it, I’m going to get that reward. But, when I go and listen to new music of whatever genre, I do that much less often because there’s the risk that – and even then I know it’s going to take – I guess I’m lazy with it because I know it’s going to take me more than one listen to figure out if I like it or not and so I just – I choose not to do that work.

Interviewer: So, then how do your connected friends on Spotify potentially influence that music listening or don’t they influence it at all?

Respondent: Oh, they influence it – like I said, I have that one friend I respect a tonne and I love him and I see he’s listening to a song on Spotify and I’ll add it to the queue to check it out and so I’ve discovered some artists because of him. There’s this one song called – there’s this one artist called Rex Orange County that I discovered through doing that. He, in a way, in a sense showed me and I’m forgetting the name but Rainbow Kitten Surprise also is another one, I don’t know if you’ve heard of those two guys but yes, so they do influence because I’m, “Oh, well what’s he listening to?” because I know he has similar values as me.

[0:32:40]

Interviewer: So, obviously it’s this – because he’s a particular friend of yours, you share similar music tastes, what about anybody else? Is there anybody else that you will automatically add songs to your queue of music listening or is it just specifically that one friend that you trust?

Respondent: It’s specifically that friend, yes. Because I have another friend that – in person, we listen to a lot of music together and he’d show me all the time and I’d, “Yes, man!” but we have different – we have similar values and stuff, we definitely – I like him a lot, who he is, but we have way different tastes and so a lot of the times, I just – I don’t get it, the stuff he listens to, even though it’s similar.

Interviewer: That’s really interesting. So, I’d like to understand a little bit more about your music streaming practises on Spotify specifically. So, how – thinking about how you stream music throughout the week, how you select this music and what features you tend to use. So, how do you then choose – how do you listen to music on Spotify and what types of music do you tend to listen to on there?

Respondent: Yes, okay, so like I said, I have a big playlist with about 1,000 songs in it that I call *[playlist name]* and that’s what I play throughout the day, but I’ve noticed that at different times of the day, I find it hard to listen to some genres. If it’s really late at night, I don’t like listening to rap, I like listening more to indie music, Bon Iver, indie – whatever that means but Lana del Rey, Feist, slow music like that, raw music. But, what I do is mostly I just play songs off that playlist which I’ve made and that’s pretty much it and other times, if I’m doing a certain genre or depending on what time of day it is, I’ll (inaudible 0:35:00) to my other playlists.

Interviewer: So, you’ve then said that you listened to certain types of music more in the evening, slower music. So, is that very much a conscious choice on your part, that you get to a stage in the night and you know that that – you need to listen to slower music?

Respondent: Yes, yes… I don’t know what it is but… a lot of rap is the doing – trying to overcome your stuff, your issues or preparing to overcome or whatever and then, I feel like at the end of the day, when the day is over and it’s – now it’s time to reflect on what’s happened or how you feel.

Interviewer: Is there any other particular times of the day that you feel that there are certain styles of music you either want to listen to or can’t listen to? So, you’ve said that’s in the evening but is there a pattern for obviously in the morning or while you’re working or something like that?

Respondent: Yes, and if it’s very early morning, 6am, 5am and I’m awake, then I’d also feel – because that feels like a holy hour, not necessarily a religious thing but it feels sacred, very calm and – you know? So, then I also find it difficult to listen to rap and I listen to – the stuff I listen to late at night too.

Interviewer: And, what about days of the week; are there patterns in the days of the week? So, for example, something that you would listen to on Monday versus something you would listen to on Friday and then something you would listen to over the weekend? Or, is there not that change in the days of the week?

Respondent: No, there’s not, no. No, it has more to do with – it also has to do with the weather and stuff like that, but not so much the days of the week.

Interviewer: Okay, so what do you mean then by it has to do with the weather? Would you be able to expand on that a little bit more for me?

Respondent: Yes, so it’s been raining a tonne here in (inaudible 0:37:25) Colorado where I live and it rarely rains but then I also listen to more introspective music and maybe mellower type stuff, whereas say it’s the summer and it’s sunny, I listen to more bravado – yes, type rap, I don’t know why but… and if it’s winter – oh, that’s another thing; there’s music I listen to that depends on the seasons. Winter… for example I listened to a tonne of Kanye and an album I listened to a lot in the winter is 808s and Heartbreak. So… but yes, the weather and the season has a lot to do with it.

[0:38:20]

Interviewer: So, then what other music would you listen to, dependent on the season?

Respondent: Well again, it’s fall now and it’s calmer, gloomier, so I listen to a tonne of Bon Iver, Kid Cudi, darker music, moodier music, whereas in the summer I listen to happier music, more upbeat music, ASAP Rocky songs that are, “Woo, yeah!” or happy songs – yes, confident songs, whereas the fall, winter, it’s gloomier and it’s sadder music.

Interviewer: So, do you feel then the change in the seasons in your types of music, is that related to the kind of context of your environment of it obviously being darker and colder and then warmer and sunnier in summer, or is that related to your emotion and mood at that current part of the year?

Respondent: I think it’s a little bit of both. The summer has been a happy time for me throughout my life; school is out, you’re with your friends and for me personally, my dad would be working during that time so he wouldn’t be home during the week and so that was nice. So, there’s that, there’s the, I guess memories maybe, but then also it isn’t – the weather allows you to do more so I feel happier, but then during the winter, you don’t have to be inside all day but there’s more of a wall to going outside; you can’t just go outside, you have to consider the weather. But, it’s not really a big physical thing, we have all the modern technology but it’s a psychological block, “It’s so cold outside” and that has been a time where I’ve – it seems like every winter I get – I don’t know if it’s seasonal affective disorder, something like that, SAD, but I’ve been sad or depressed during those times a lot and I think that has to do with the weather, lack of sun, but also winter break happens and I don’t have – I reflect on my own person and my family relationships and my own relationships. Like I said, I had a girlfriend and we broke up and so it’s a sad time because during the winter it’s supposed to be – you’re with your family, your relationships and it’s all cosy and warm and I feel lonely and I don’t really have that, and so then that reflects in what I listen to which is sadder, “Oh I’m so lonely” type music (laughs).

Interviewer: So, do you prepare for this change in the seasons? Do you have playlists specifically for the seasons to almost – so, you’ve got something immediate to listen to, or is it that you then go and search for music that fits that time of year from either a more main playlist or just through the browse feature of Spotify?

Respondent: No I – well, I do use the browse feature for that sort of thing a lot but no, I mostly – I don’t have any seasonal playlists but I’ll definitely just go through my main playlist and I’ll shuffle a lot depending on the season. So, but then also on the Spotify homepage, it has the moods things like that or the playlists it recommends and they do a seasonal type thing, so I might listen to that for example.

Interviewer: So, we’ve obviously talked about your changes of music for season, weather and then times of the day. What about for things like going to the gym or doing your studies or work or do you have specific music tastes for those contexts and situations?

Respondent: Yes, so I run a lot, so I have a running playlist and it has up tempo. I have a playlist called *[playlist name]* because I go to a school – we’re the mavericks(?) and so one time I made a playlist for a friend who – he was a taxi for the school for drunk kids and I made that playlist and it’s party dance music, but if I’m in the car and I’m “hype” with my friends or whatever, or if I’m just feeling good, super-confident or whatever, then I’ll play that. So, yes, I have genres for running, being in the car, that playlist and then I don’t listen to music when I study because I get distracted but yes, I do have – at least those two playlists for certain activities.

[0:44:00]

Interviewer: And, do you feel that those playlists for those activities are very different to the music in your main playlists?

Respondent: They’re not different but I don’t listen to them as much usually. I also have a playlist for road trips.

Interviewer: Okay, so when you go on to Spotify, do you immediately know what you want to listen to or is it a case of you go on there and do a bit of searching around and eventually pick something?

Respondent: Usually I just go – usually I know, if I’m not doing a specific way, then I just go to the daily and then whatever, skip, skip, skip until, “Yes, okay, I like that” but so usually I just go straight to the daily but if I am feeling a certain emotion, then I’ll go to different playlists.

Interviewer: So, would you say then the playlists and the music that you have in your Spotify library, they are quite eclectic or are they very samey?

Respondent: No, they’re definitely eclectic.

Interviewer: And, do you have your Spotify set to public or private?

Respondent: It’s set to public, yes, but okay yes, that’s another thing; it’s set to public but a few playlists or maybe just the one is set to private and I have this playlist called *[playlist name]* and it’s just – it’s a safety one, if emotion(?), if stuff is really bad, I go to that one and that one is private.

Interviewer: So, just to expand a bit more on that, is that then because that music is very personal and private to you or is it because there’s some kind of embarrassing songs on there? What makes you specifically keep that one private out of all your music choices?

Respondent: It’s – the music is very special to me, it’s – I’m not embarrassed at all by the music I listen to but I don’t know, it’s almost like – it’s a playlist for when things are really bad and it’s almost like I don’t want to – if a follower or a friend saw that I was listening to that playlist, and they went on the playlist and they saw a description and stuff and the songs, they would be able to pretty much gather my emotional state and I guess I just wouldn’t want to show that state, the lowest state.

Interviewer: So, you’ve spoken quite a lot about how you use music for emotion. Is that – do you use it in that way to get you out of a particular emotion? So, say you’re feeling sad, do you pick something happy to then make you feel better or do you pick something that very much reflects your current emotion that you’re experiencing at that time?

Respondent: No, it’s always something that – I never try to – it’s almost more like I’m exploring how I feel. So, it’s never about changing it, it’s always about, “Okay who else…?” in whatever million artists, “Yes, me too” and so it’s about feeling, “Oh okay, you’re not the only one who’s felt this way or feels this way”, which – that in itself makes me feel better. So, I guess in a sense it is about making myself feel better but not – but through feeling it and through knowing that other human beings have felt that but not through playing happy music, because I feel like that would be trying to deny how I feel and forcibly trying to change it, instead of just accepting I have that emotion and then letting myself feel it.

Interviewer: So, almost working through what you’re feeling?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: So, obviously you’ve said that you have a particular playlist that you keep private. Other than that, is all your other music listening public?

[0:48:20]

Respondent: Yes, that’s the only private one; everything else is public.

Interviewer: Is there a reason that you’ve decided to make your music listening public?

Respondent: Yes, well for one, it’s a default but I’m aware that I’ve never felt like changing it (laughs). It’s an egotistical thing, but I want other people to know about my music tastes and it’s, “Hey, what’s up? This is me” and I want to show the world, “Oh, this is me”.

Interviewer: So, when people or particular people are online, it doesn’t necessarily make you feel conscious or feel like you need to change the current song you’re listening to?

Respondent: Well… not anymore, but I’d sometimes keep in mind, when my girlfriend and I were together, she’s going to see I’m listening to this song and I wonder what she’d think about it. I wouldn’t change it ever but… if I was listening to a song that’s pretty degrading towards women, maybe not as the main point but you know how rap is, and I would be, “Hmm I don’t know what she’d feel about that” but I’d still never change it but it would make me think – just with her really, I can’t think of anyone else I’d care about what they think about what I listen to.

Interviewer: So, we’ve talked about playlists, are there any other service features that you use on Spotify, so do you use the “Discover” tabs for instance or the radio function, the Daily Mixes, Release Radar, anything like that at all?

Respondent: Yes, I’ve used them all but I don’t really use them a tonne. I’ve used Discover Weekly but that’s very rare that I’m feeling the courage to go out of my comfort zone with new songs and then I use the radio, it comes on after every song in the playlist is done, so sometimes I let it go but I’ve found the radio services pretty bland and not very good and then sometimes I use the Daily Mixes but also rarely because I don’t want to go out of my – it’s, I know what I like and there’s a risk in playing something I’m not sure if I’m going to like it and then I don’t know what the Release Radar – I know if an artist that I like a lot has new music and for artists that I know I like and they have new music, I let it – whatever, maybe I’ll come around to listening to it but I don’t feel, “Ah, he just came out with this album, I’m going to listen to it”.

Interviewer: Okay, so it’s really interesting because you talked about the idea of risk -

Respondent: What’s that?

Interviewer: You talked about the idea of risk when you’re using Spotify’s own features; do you feel then that Spotify doesn’t necessarily know who you are as a music listener and that’s why there is this idea of risk when you use their features?

Respondent: Well, theoretically Discover Weekly and from what I’ve read by other people, it’s, “Oh it’s really good” but I don’t know if it’s so much that Spotify doesn’t know me or my music taste, but I just know that very particular – if I like a song or not but I’m not, but in a sense I am… and I know I’m very picky with the music and even to myself…

Interviewer: So, has there then been some kind of past instances on Spotify that they’ve given you lots of music that you don’t like and that’s why you are a bit reluctant to use them?

Respondent: Yes, yes, because especially with the radio, it’s – the radio, say if I put NARS Radio, it’s completely inferior to Pandora for example. If I put on NARS Radio, it’ll play these weird – not weird but obscure NARS songs that aren’t very good and if it does that sort of thing over and over, or it’ll just play songs I like or I think it’s got to be (inaudible 0:53:21) with that. What am I answering here again? (Laughs)

[0:53:25]

Interviewer: So, the idea of risk and has there been lots of times that you’ve not liked the things that the features have given to you and is that a reason for not using them?

Respondent: I think it’s part of it, yes; I think it’s part of it. Because I know it’s recommending me some artist that I know I already – I’ve listened to them before, a long time before and I know I don’t like him(?) and so it’s, “Hmm…” it’s a computer can only come so close to knowing that sort of thing, if ever, it’s…

Interviewer: So, in a previous answer, you mentioned Pandora, so are there other streaming platforms you use for your music listening aside from Spotify?

Respondent: Not really, but that’s the thing though, if I do feel like listening to new music, I’ll often go on Pandora because I know – because I have a history of liked and disliked songs, and I know that they’re better at recommending songs.

Interviewer: What gives you that impression? Why do you feel that?

Respondent: Because in my experience when I’ve used it, it has recommended better songs.

Interviewer: So, when you say “better”, in what sense do you mean better?

Respondent: Songs that I like! (Both laugh) Yes, that’s what I mean, not better songs but if I go to the Beatles playlist or whatever and I go up and down songs I like and don’t like, it’s learned what I like or what I might like, it’s done a better job from my experience in choosing songs that I’ll like.

Interviewer: So, do you feel that Spotify hasn’t quite got that right yet, for you?

Respondent: Exactly, yes I feel that way completely, I think that’s – Spotify is great, it can’t do everything – it could do everything but that’s – those little thing are just bonus things with Spotify, the radio, it’s terrible I think but it’s there and that’s nice.

Interviewer: So, it’s really interesting because a lot of people that I’ve spoken to so far, cite the features that Spotify has, like the Release Radar and the Daily Mixes as being a particular reason that they’ve chosen Spotify as their music streaming platform, but for you that doesn’t sound like it’s the case. So, what is it then that leads you to Spotify for your music streaming as opposed to just being on Pandora the whole time?

Respondent: Yes, okay well I think the biggest thing and it’s completely important to me is that Spotify looks pretty or it looks good, it’s aesthetically pleasing, the UI – the UI I think is great and all I really want is the ability to stream and download any song and anything else is just neat but – and then to be able to play that and it looks good and in Pandora, they don’t really – it’s ugly I think. Google Play, I don’t like the UI, I don’t like the UI of Apple Music when I had an iPhone, so it’s a matter – the big thing is how it looks.

Interviewer: So, what is it then specifically about Spotify’s user interface that you find appealing?

Respondent: I like the black, I don’t know it’s clean, it’s consistent. I love – I guess it’s everything but on my android, I get a lot of the album artwork when it’s locked, it’s nice, that’s everything. I don’t know, it’s – I don’t know why but it just looks better to me.

Interviewer: Do you feel then that the user interface influences your listening at all?

Respondent: Well, for one it starts off at home and if it didn’t start off at home, when you open the app or open the desktop app, then I don’t think I would ever really have cared to go listen to those playlists they have, so yes.

[0:58:16]

Interviewer: And, the other interesting thing that’s come out about the user interface is how do you feel about the artists that are promoted on the user interface? Does that influence your music listening? So, for example, when Drake was plastered all over Spotify, were you more drawn to listening to Drake or was that something that really irritated you?

Respondent: I wasn’t irritated but I also didn’t care for it – whatever! I like Drake but I – I wasn’t irritated, nor was I, “Oh I’ll go listen to some Drake” it was, whatever, because they always have some artist that I don’t care about on there, which is fine.

Interviewer: Because yes, some people have some very strong opinions about Drake being – (both laugh)

Respondent: Yes, I saw because they’re always so angry about it!

Interviewer: Yes, so in terms of then your Spotify Music Library, how often do you add new stuff in there?

Respondent: Maybe – I think the most I go with not adding anything is two or three weeks maybe, so – but pretty occasionally, not every day but…

Interviewer: And, where are those new songs coming from? Are they things that you found yourself or songs that you’ve read about or are they coming from friends or -?

Respondent: The biggest one has been friends. For example, if we’re hanging out or something and there’s a song or we’re at some place and there’s a song playing and then I get – or they show me a song, then I might add it if I like it, but for example I have a friend, she’s in the army now, but I asked her, “Hey, play me a song” because I was calling(?) and we were hanging out and then so she put a song and I listened to it and I added it and the song is pretty good. It’s “Chocolate” by 1975 but just more of the memory of her showing it to me and it was a time when we were all hanging out every day and that makes me happy to think about that, so it’s almost I like that more. So, much of the songs that I add to my playlist, that I like, it has to do with an experience with that song.

Interviewer: So, a memory of a person or an experience?

Respondent: Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: Okay, and then what about removing stuff, do you ever delete songs from your library?

Respondent: Yes, yes… and that’s a self-expression thing because there was a song on Grand Theft Auto 5 that I had saved three or four years ago and I never really listened to it but at one point I did listen to it and it’s called – it’s vulgar and it’s, “Oh fuck this bitch, wash my dick” something like that (laughs) but I don’t like the song any more and I also – I don’t like it when it plays on shuffle, I’m, “Yikes!” but I also don’t want people to think that I’m misogynistic, so I deleted that song off the playlist eventually.

Interviewer: So, you delete songs that you feel no longer express who you are.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: So, would you say then your library is quite current?

Respondent: Well, let me take that back for a second. That one in particular was, “No, I’m shunning that” but I’ll skip a tonne of songs, but I’ll leave them – because it’s also nice, part of it, I keep most songs up, although I do delete songs like that one, but I also do enjoy the – it’s a history of it, so I keep it because it shows where I was at or…

[1:02:16]

Interviewer: So, do you often go back and re-live that history or is it just something that’s there that can remind you but you don’t actually listen to any more?

Respondent: It depends on what happened. There’s certain – I’ll look through my playlist and I’ll remember what was happening during that time and if it’s now a bittersweet memory and I’m, “Ugh, I don’t want to listen to that because I don’t want to be reminded of that time”.

Interviewer: The other thing I found interesting is that from your Scrobble logs, it looks like that you use the love heart to mark which songs you particularly love. Is there a reason that you started doing that?

Respondent: No, not really because I don’t – it’s, what’s the word? Arbitrary but no, I just – whatever!

Interviewer: So, is there a reason that you choose to like those particular songs in that way? What makes them different from the other songs that are in your music library?

Respondent: Well… if I get curious and look, “What’s my most played song?” or something and then I think the fact that it’s my most played song is already the heart itself and then so it’s just colouring it in in a sense.

Interviewer: Okay, so I’d like to move on to talking a bit about your playlists. So, would you say that playlists are important to you?

Respondent: Yes, because it makes it – so, if I’m feeling a certain way or doing a certain thing or whatever, the season or whatever, however that is, it makes it so – it’s meal prepping, Sunday meal prep, you know? So, I have it ready to go, I don’t have to go and buy ingredients and stuff and list everything. I know I like to eat that or listen to that at that time or whatever and that way it’s ready to go.

Interviewer: That is a really interesting metaphor that totally works! (Both laugh) So, then how often are you creating these playlists?

Respondent: Not that often. I’m always adding to the daily one but I think the last time I created a playlist was six months ago.

Interviewer: Okay, so it’s more then that you add to existing playlists rather than creating new ones entirely.

Respondent: Yes, exactly that.

Interviewer: So, *[playlist name]* you’ve mentioned a few times, so is that your main playlist that you most often listen to?

Respondent: Yes, that is the one.

Interviewer: So, how did that get started? What sort of stuff is on there?

Respondent: Well, originally I just had one playlist and I’d add songs to it and that’s how it started. Later on did I make different playlists for whatever, but that’s the OG(?) one.

Interviewer: So, what makes it then that you chose to create your – a playlist, rather than just completely running the songs off your Spotify library?

Respondent: (Laughs) Well, I don’t know, it was more just not really being aware even that – not knowing too much about the library feature of Spotify and… (Call disconnects and reconnects)

Interviewer: Hello?

Respondent: My phone died, can you still hear me?

Interviewer: Yes, I can hear you.

[1:06:45]

Respondent: My laptop died but this is better because I can actually see you this time so – (both laugh). I didn’t know how you were responding but – what was the question again?

Interviewer: So, what makes you – why did you put all your songs in to one playlist, rather than just playing it straight from the library?

Respondent: Yes, well I don’t know, I don’t have an answer, I don’t know.

Interviewer: So, when you’re listening then to your daily one, do you listen to it sequentially or is it on shuffle?

Respondent: It’s on shuffle but – most of the time it’s on shuffle but sometimes it’s on – it’s not on shuffle, it’s I’ll add songs, there’s ten or 15 songs that I’ve added over the course of the two or three weeks or months and I still have these same beliefs and emotions most of the time and I know that I’ll probably like those songs and so then I’ll let it just play, but most of the time I play on shuffle.

Interviewer: So, what kind of music then do you most often listen to on your daily playlist? Is there a particular – because Smashing Pumpkins one song came up quite a lot; is that because it’s on your playlist or is that just because you particularly love that song?

Respondent: I particularly love that song; I didn’t know it existed until a week ago but no, well it’s – it is on my playlist and it is up there, so a lot of times, when I go to my playlist and I’ll hit *[playlist name]* and I’ll scroll through the top ones to start it off and that one has been a favourite of hitting that one and then either hitting shuffle or letting it go after, but then I just – I like that song a tonne. Have you heard that song? I didn’t know about it, it’s so great, it’s awesome!

Interviewer: (Laughs) So, aside from then *[playlist name]*, how many other playlists do you have on your Spotify account?

Respondent: I think ten maybe?

Interviewer: And, what are those playlists for? Are they for specific things?

Respondent: Well, I’m using – the mic doesn’t work on my… my microphone doesn’t work on my laptop so – but I can show you… there it is… okay, there’s one called *[playlist name],* which I made for a friend. *[playlist name],* *[playlist name]*, there’s 60s, 70s, 80s because – there’s one for The Beatles, there’s one for Beck, soul, modern folk, there’s one called *[playlist name],* (both laugh), there’s *[playlist name]*, I stole that name but –*[playlist name]*is one. I could (inaudible 1:10:26), basketball, there’s one for basketball so that’s an activity and there’s one called *[playlist name],* there’s one called *[playlist name],* there’s one called *[playlist name],* one called *[playlist name],* so yes.

[1:10:41]

Interviewer: Okay, so a lot of them then seem to be quite genre based or artist based; is there a reason that you’ve decided then to create these yourself rather than using the genre-based ones that Spotify has?

Respondent: Yes, well – okay, well the Beck one, these are just songs recommended from a friend for Beck and sometimes Spotify, those are – they have those (inaudible 1:11:09) the artist, yes, sometimes they have good songs but they also have, “Why is this still in this playlist?” so, yes, that’s why.

Interviewer: Okay, fair enough, so do you actually ever listen to Spotify’s own playlist at all?

Respondent: Yes, so if I’m new to the artist I might listen to that playlist, but most of the time, when I’m new to the artist or I want to check out the artist, I just go to their top songs and that’s how I tend to find what songs people like from these artists.

Interviewer: So, then you would never use – you would never use Spotify’s own one for – say if you’re feeling sad or if you’re feeling happy, you would more go to your own music.

Respondent: No, I’ve used those. Yes, I don’t subscribe to any of them but – oh, you know what, another thing, sometimes I listen to those on all private, the sad ones. I guess thinking about it – it’s kind of sad but yes, so I do listen to those a lot, or not a lot but a good amount.

Interviewer: Just going back then, so when you say you listen to those on private, do you mean the Spotify based playlists or the sad playlists?

Respondent: Both the sad for my own or the sad Spotify – I don’t want people to know.

Interviewer: Okay, so those are the only circumstances then that you would have it on private though still?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: That’s really interesting. So, we talked about playlists, I’d now like to go on to how you discover new music, so are you a person that enjoys discovering new music?

Respondent: Like I said, I’m cautious to do it but when I do discover new music it’s – yes, I enjoy it a tonne but then I’ll overplay the song or something like that.

Interviewer: Yes, well you see because I find it really interesting because obviously looking at what you listened to for the last seven days on Scrobble, you have quite a diverse range of music that you’ve obviously come across somehow and that you’ve discovered and yet, you talk about having this comfort zone of music and obviously being conscious about the risk. So, how have you then been able to discover such a diverse range of music but still been concerned about risk?

Respondent: Well, so there’s no risk in the type of song, there’s that. How did I come to discover it? Well for one, by Reddit. I like looking up “Top Ten Albums Ever” things like that, looking up very revered albums and artists, so that and Reddit, so the internet.

Interviewer: So, it tends to then come from your own exploration, that you discover these things.

Respondent: Yes.

[1:14:42]

Interviewer: So, what is it that -?

Respondent: There is a little bit from Spotify.

Interviewer: So, what do you tend to discover from Spotify, versus what do you discover from Reddit? Is there a difference in those discoveries?

Respondent: Yes, most of the songs that I’ve added from Spotify playlist have been the one – when you go to browse or whatever and you go by mood or activity, let me look… it says “mood” here… most of the songs that I’ve added from Spotify have come from those types of playlists.

Interviewer: So then rather than from their specific discovery features like Release Radar, you’ve actually just come across them from when you’ve been listening to playlists?

Respondent: Exactly, yes.

Interviewer: That’s really interesting. So, then what do you discover through Reddit? What kind of things have you discovered through there?

Respondent: Well, not so much anymore but I used to go on – have you heard of Hip Hop Heads on there?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: I used to go a lot on that and so, Kanye West, everyone – I’m sure you have an opinion on Kanye because everyone does but the – it was everyone hated Kanye, everyone hates Kanye in a sense, but when I started going on Hip Hop Heads, they liked Kanye and I was, “Hmm…” and that was very attractive because I actually liked being part of the – we’re on the “in”, you know? So, their praise of Kanye meant that – made it to me, to where I’m, “Okay I’ll give them a shot” and then now I get it and then artists like Danny Brown who’s an obscure-ish rapper; I would have never across if it wasn’t – if they weren’t, “Oh yes, this guy is great”.

Interviewer: So, you’ve discovered those kinds of artists from Reddit. Is there anything or any artist or song that you credit Spotify, just Spotify, for having discovered for you?

Respondent: Well I’m pretty sure Bon Iver, I didn’t get that from Reddit and I don’t know where I got it from, but I think Bon Iver… I think that was Spotify.

Interviewer: So then, do you feel like there’s a difference – so, as well sorry, do you get any new music from your friendship groups or particular friends online or anything like that?

Respondent: Yes, my friend, he’s a guy I listen to a lot of music with and we have very different taste but occasionally there’ll be a song and it’ll be, “Yes…” and then my friend *[name],* so there are a lot of the songs I get are – listening to in the car with friends and be, “Oh whoa!”

Interviewer: So, do you feel for you then there’s a difference in the new music discoveries that you make through people, so the people that post on Reddit, your friends, the people – the connected friends that you have on Spotify, versus Spotify as the platform?

Respondent: Say that again, I’m sorry?

Interviewer: Do you feel for you there’s a difference in the way that you feel about the music that you can discover from actual people, so people on Reddit, versus what you can discover on an algorithm-based platform?

[1:18:42]

Respondent: Yes, because like I said, when it’s a friend, then maybe a little bit with a community on Reddit maybe, but when it’s a friend and they recommend it, it’s more significant because then they’re also saying, “You would like this” and it’s a social thing, they’re saying something about themselves and about you, they’re communicating to you and that’s more meaningful to me so I’m more inclined to…

Interviewer: Do you feel like there’s an element of trust there as well? Would you say that you trust people more than perhaps you trust the technical underpinnings of Spotify?

Respondent: Yes, 100% because I think – like I said before, a computer is great but it’s one of those things, can a computer or a robot, can they ever really truly get it?

Interviewer: And, as well when you’re discovering new music, do you prefer to discover something that’s similar to what you already like or something that’s really, really different?

Respondent: More similar but although sometimes I’ll be, “What’s that?” be curious about way different but mostly similar though, which would – that’s everything.

Interviewer: Yes, similar means a bit of everything (both laugh). Okay, so going back then to talking a bit more about Spotify, so do you feel that Spotify has allowed you to manage and construct and develop your music tastes?

Respondent: Yes, yes, because it’s so easy, it’s so simple to do; you just search it. And then the ability to create playlists allows me also to put stuff on the side, to try out for later and yes, without a platform for that, I guess you could do that on YouTube. I don’t know, it’s so liberating with music streaming because it used to be you went to the store and bought a CD and there was a much bigger risk there but there’s virtually – there’s no real physical risk because it’s online and it’s not really real.

Interviewer: So, then in that sense, do you feel that you’ve potentially tried out more because there is not that financial or physical investment in – like there is a CD, you can literally just click on a tune, listen to 30 seconds and decide if it is for you or not.

Respondent: Yes, and you know what, and even more so because it’s easier for me to pay five, ten dollars than to even pirate because otherwise I’d… because I have been pirating since I was 12 too until I got Spotify at 16. So yes, definitely.

Interviewer: It’s a good legal alternative.

Respondent: Yes, and artists get paid something. I’m not really…

Interviewer: So, I don’t know about over in America, but at the minute there’s a lot in the UK about how platforms are collecting data about us and using it and selling it on, so a prime example being Facebook. But, how do you feel about the fact that Spotify is collecting this information about you, when you’re using it as a service, does that bother you at all?

Respondent: I didn’t know that, so thank you…

Interviewer: Oh sorry! (Laughs)

Respondent: No, no thank you, for real… I just, it doesn’t bother me in the sense that I don’t know enough about that; how – what can they even do with my data? What do they have? My email, phone, all my music stuff, friends and all that, but I’m just – I’m thinking to myself, “Well, what could they actually do with that?” Ads, right? Personalised ads that get at your little brain but I don’t have ads because of Premium, so it doesn’t bother me but it potentially could.

[1:23:33]

Interviewer: So, for example, one of the ways we think that Spotify is potentially using data is it’s recording what you’re streaming and how many times you’re streaming it, to produce these recommendations for you, specifically for you. So, in that sense, if it’s doing that, what do you actually feel about the recommendations that it is giving you?

Respondent: Okay, well in that sense, I think it’s great that it does that. Although, and after this conversation I’m going to check out that Discover Weekly and select that to give it another shot, but like I said, so far it’s lacklustre and like I tell you, I hypothesise that it just might be that a computer can never truly get that and if it does then yikes!

Interviewer: So, am I right in thinking that, although potentially Spotify is recording what you’re streaming and trying to use this to give you recommendations that it thinks you’ll like, that actually you don’t actually like them that much?

Respondent: Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: And, is there a reason for this? Is it the type of music that they’re offering you or the type of artist? What is the reason that you don’t feel like you like their recommendations?

Respondent: Yes, thinking about it now is - I might just not like that they put a lot of obscure stuff there and then a weird social thing… let me think about it for a second but… it’s almost like I don’t want to like really obscure things because I want to be able to share it with my friends and stuff like that. I don’t want to be alone in it, I want to be part of a group (laughs), because it does recommend a lot of obscure stuff.

Interviewer: So, when you say “obscure”, do you mean not popular stuff or not genres that you’re interesting in; in what sense do you mean “obscure”?

Respondent: In the sense that the songs have very low play counts. Yes, so it’s – talking about it out loud, this is going to change now that I realise it, but it’s almost being scared to like something that a lot of people don’t, which I need to think about that because I strive to not worry about that but, yes.

Interviewer: So, you say you strive but then, so do you feel that maybe you perhaps realise that maybe you do?

Respondent: Yes, exactly, so now I talk about it, “Hmm, maybe – wow! Maybe I’m not so much that”.

Interviewer: That’s really interesting because that relates to my final question, so my final question is, obviously you’ve now been through three of the phases of my research, so you’ve done the survey, you’ve done the week of online observation and then you’ve taken part in the interview today and has that caused you to change or reflect on anything to do with your music streaming?

Respondent: Yes, the big one being – I’m going to check out the Discover Weekly stuff more, but honestly I’m ashamed – not ashamed but I’m, “Oh wow, that’s not – you’re not about that” with – in regards to being afraid to not be part of the herd, you know?

Interviewer: Well, that’s really interesting that that’s come out of this discussion with you because it’s been a super interesting conversation with you and how you use music and what it means to you, so thank you so much for sharing all that you have with me today. Is there anything from your side that you would like to talk about or expand upon that either we have discussed or not discussed at all?

Respondent: Well, I just – I want to just tell you in general that – it must mean a lot to you too. Can I ask you, what does it mean to you, music?

Interviewer: In terms – oh, music? So, music has always been a huge part of my life, both academically – I’ve studied music and socially. And, it’s been quite – I’m very much a person that I enjoy going to gigs and festivals, so I like the social experience of music and sharing that feeling with other people and I’m very much for how the music makes me feel. So, I’d like to think that I like quite a broad range of music but one of my particular favourites is dance music and the feeling that it gives you as the song’s heightening and then the drop in the music and everybody just goes crazy. So, yes, it’s very much for me based on emotion and social experiences and personal experiences and I did go through an Eminem phase as well (both laugh).

Respondent: (Inaudible 1:29:19).

Interviewer: I know! When you said it, I was 13, 14, living through life, annoyed teenager, that was my Eminem phase (laughs).

Respondent: Yes, cool.

Interviewer: Yes, but it’s also incredibly interesting hearing other people’s experiences of music listening because music has been really important to me and maybe I thought that it was just a few people that music was really important to, but actually, speaking to the amount of people that I have, it’s important to a lot of people for a lot of reasons and a lot of different reasons as well and it’s just been so interesting. So, yes, I hope you won’t think ill of me for being a dance music fan!

Respondent: No, not at all (both laugh). Not at all, for real, not at all, that’s great. Hey, one thing too is – I like that music expresses things that people are unwilling to talk about or express and I guess that’s true of every type of art but I enjoy that a lot because it goes to the whole human experience. A lot of the time it’s the stuff that your friends don’t really talk about or… so, I like that.

Interviewer: It totally makes sense. Alright then, well I’ll let you get on with your day because obviously it’s still morning time over there but it’s night time over here.

Respondent: Oh, is it? It was nice talking to you.

Interviewer: Yes, and you, thank you so much.

Respondent: Okay, bye, have a good day.

Interviewer: Bye.

[End of transcript]

# Transcript: In-10-F

[0:00:03]

Interviewer: Right, so thank you very much for making time to speak to me today, I really appreciate it, and for taking part in all that you have done so far. So, the format of today’s interview is that it’ll last around an hour and I have some questions that I have, kind of, created to ask you, but it’s very much based on your own responses. So, you can expand on things as much as you wish, talk about things as you like. It might be a case that while you’re speaking, I write things down. That is more for me, so if there’s something that I haven’t understood or if there is something that I’d like to ask you a little bit more about, I’ll just take a note and then that’ll remind me for that later on. So, before we get started, do you have any questions from your side about how it’s going to work?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: No? Okay. Well, let’s get started, then. So, the first thing I’d like to ask you is about how music relates to your identity. So, how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: I guess I listen quite casually most of the time. Where I’m doing a PhD in music, I think… and I did my undergraduate studies in music, music’s always, sort of, played a part in my life, meaning often academically and, also, my listening has been stipulated by my studies rather than by me personally, but, therefore, especially in the most recent years, I’ve, kind of, adapted, sort of, my own sort of personal listening often in, sort of, quieter times or, sort of, on my own, that sort of stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, so when you say that you’re a casual listener, do you mean that in the sense that you listen to music infrequently or that you have it on as background noise rather than really focusing on the music? In what kind of sense do you mean ‘casual’?

Respondent: Well, I really struggle, possibly from where I study music, to listen to music in the background when I’m working, so often it looks like I don’t listen to music very often. I listen to it a lot, maybe, when I’m driving or those sorts of activities where it is technically a background sound to what I’m doing, but I can be more focused on it than… yeah, so if I was working, I find that I like to sing along too much to do it whilst I’m working. I, kind of, can’t focus on my work and the music. But I don’t normally just listen to the music; I’m normally doing something else at the same time, but something that doesn’t require… it sounds really bad because I said I do it whilst I’m driving, so it doesn’t require too much brainpower. Something that’s more of, like, an automatic habit, like driving, kind of, you know how to drive, you’ve learnt how to do it, and so I then use music in that situation.

Interviewer: Okay, and so do you feel that music is quite important to you? Like, would you say it does have a role in your identity?

Respondent: Yeah, I say music… I feel that… I never know whether it impact my identity or I feel that music reflects my identity, the music I listen to, especially where I listen to music, maybe, as my, how I feel my identity’s changed through my life, and I actually listen back to music from different periods of my life quite often and maybe I see it more that way, that, kind of, what I happen to be listening to at the different points in my life, kind of, reflect who I was or how I was acting at those different points in my life. It’s, kind of, like a history book of my change in identity.

Interviewer: And so how does that history book work? How do you feel that your musical reflection of your identity has changed across your life? Are there any times that you can pinpoint as there’s been that change?

Respondent: Yeah, so when I was, sort of, I don’t know 16-18, I was very into, I guess I was quite teenaged and I was quite, kind of, grumpy and, kind of, angry with the world and angry with everything, and the music I listened to very much reflected that. There was a lot of listening to My Chemical Romance, Blink-182 and quite, kind of, harsher-sounding music, more, sort of, aggressive, and then I can also pinpoint, like, boyfriends growing up and, sort of, like, there was a guy I was going out with when I was about 16 who there’s a brief blip in this, sort of, dark music that I listened to where I listened to The Script non-stop for about a year. So, The Script always reminds me of that identity and that bit of my life where I, kind of, was very happy for a short period of time. And then I think I also see it as my musical, it’s almost like my musical tastes depicted by my emotions or by how I feel I want to be reflected or I want to, sort of, build on.

[0:05:26]

Interviewer: So, in that kind of sense then, would you say that this change in the musical reflection of yourself has been more emotion and mood-based rather than, I don’t know, kind of, changes in your friendship groups, changes in your location or any life experiences?

Respondent: I’d say, like, for example, if we go back to when I was listening to, like, My Chemical Romance and, sort of, “emo” music, in quotation marks. I was in a friendship group and we were all listening to that, so all my friends were listening to those songs, and they used to come in parties and we used to all run and scream the lyrics because we all knew it, so I think though we got into it because we were in this, sort of, grungy kind of hating everything environment, we all listened to it because we all listened to it, and it was, kind of, very networky very, sort of, based on that environment, and I think a lot of my younger teenaged life was like that, that I listened to the music that my group listened to, and we, kind of, connected over that. But I’d say once I came to university, that changed in that my musical listening became very much my own, and I stopped just listening to music because of a network and a group, and a society. I, kind of, listen to… I have, like, the weirdest, most eclectic… well, probably not the weirdest, but a very eclectic musical taste now with such diverse stuff that I listen to, but I might go through, like, a couple of weeks of just listening to very acoustic music and a couple of weeks of listening to something else.

Interviewer: So, at the time, then, when you were listening to emo music and that was very much the same as your friendship group, was that a conscious choice to listen to that music because your friends liked it, or were you a friendship group because you all liked that music to start off with?

Respondent: We were a friendship group because of where we were, so, like, it was a very location-based friendship group. We, kind of, all grew up in the same area. I’d say I started listened to it because my friends listened to it, so I would probably never have had access to those groups. It was, kind of, before emo music was, like, a fashionable thing. I remember, like, my younger sister starting to listening to it when she was about that age, and she was about six years younger than me, so it, kind of, became fashionable so much later, but my friends were listening to it, so I got into it, but then I’d say, from that, I developed friendships because I was listening to it, so it was, kind of, it started me listening because friends were and, sort of, gaining that group, but then when I moved on to sixth form college, I gained a lot of friends through our joint love of that type of music.

Interviewer: Okay, and then what about your friendship groups now, would you say that your music tastes are similar to that now or is that not so much a factor anymore?

Respondent: I’d say I didn’t form friendship groups based on our similar music tastes, but I’d say maybe just because of the similarities between me and my friends, we’ve ended up having similar music tastes, though I think everyone I know has quite a diverse music taste, so I think I relate to some aspects of my friends’ musical tastes. So, for example, some of my friends are really into Taylor Swift, and the rest of us also love Taylor Swift, and we went to a Taylor Swift gig, and that was really fun, but I also know that the same friends, one listens to really weird, well, I think really weird, old, sort of, monk songs, that’s what I’m going to call it, old music, and I cannot listen to that, I just don’t enjoy it. Even though I did a degree in music, no, thank you.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So, I think because it’s not something that you form a friendship over, maybe, in the same way as I did when I was in, like, college, I, kind of, formed a friendship or I was listening to music because my friends were listening to the music, I think you find out that you’ve got similar music tastes rather than become friends because of them.

[0:09:30]

Interviewer: Yeah, no, that makes sense. So, we’ve talked about friendships groups, obviously, potentially, changing your musical tastes. Is there anything else that, potentially, has happened in your life that has had that same kind of impact?

Respondent: Well, I used to do the stereotypical young teenaged girl of a break-up then leading to, like, playlists of really sad, soppy songs about love falling apart. I remember listening to Red by Daniel Merriweather, is it, like, on repeat after a break-up once, so I definitely did that for a while. I think music, sometimes I end up relating music to an event or a situation, or something… Like, it’s not stipulated by a group of friends and it’s not necessarily even a whole style or genre, but it might end up being singular songs become connected to, sort of, a memory or an emotional response. For me, I always remember things like people’s first dances at weddings are always weird. Like, if you ask the person’s story behind why that’s their song, there’s always some weird sort of situation that, kind of, unfolds. I’ve got a lot of, sort of, a lot of my, sort of, listening has come from being connected to people who maybe are no longer around, be it because they’ve passed away or… sort of, my dad, when he used to travel, I had a lot of his music he introduced me to that I’d listen to because of that, reminding me of those sorts of things, and I think a lot of my music taste when I was younger came from influence from my parents on both sides, like, back when you didn’t have iPods to plug into your car when you went on a drive. My step-dad had one of those, like, 12 CDs under your car seat thing that, like, rotated the CDs, and so I had a massive love of Oasis growing up because we had, like, three Oasis CDs in this… and, like, the African Black Mambo Choir was one of the CDs, as well. Again, a really random thing that I ended up getting into as a kid because one of the CDs was this thing and they used to sing ‘Swing Low Sweet Chariot’ and so car journeys meant ‘Swing Low Sweet Chariot’ by the Black Mambo Choir and ‘Wonderwall’ by Oasis.

Interviewer: That’s very different.

Respondent: Very. So, I think a lot of it was that sort of stuff. Yeah, I think that’s, kind of… I mean, a lot of my music taste nowadays is influenced by being recommended it by maybe a friend or maybe I’ve caught a snippet on the radio and, kind of, gone, ‘Ah, that might be interesting,’ and, kind of, carried on through that… but, strangely enough, I ended up getting recommended a lot of music, not new music, so, like, a lot of the time my new music taste is actually everyone else’s old music taste. So, quite recently, someone said to me, ‘Have you ever listened to The Wombats?’ and that’s a really old band and I’d never listened to The Wombats, so I went and listened to The Wombats for a while, so that’s, kind of, very different.

Interviewer: So, going back, then, to, kind of, the music that’s linked with events or, like you were saying, your step-dad’s car, do you ever go back and relive that music or is that very much from that time and that’s where it stays?

Respondent: No, I constantly… so, my most recent, for example, most recent thing I’ve been listening to on my phone on Spotify in the car is a 2000s playlist.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Respondent: It’s, like, memories of 2000 and I’ve just been going back and listening to all the tracks from, like, the 2000s and growing up. Because so much of my life has been analysing music and scrutinising it and, kind of, like, taking it apart, what I love about music that’s connected to, like, an emotion or a time or a place is that I don’t feel the need to analyse it in the same way as I do with other music. Like, with new music, when I listen to new music, I often feel the need to do, ‘How was that made? Let’s take it apart,’ and I, kind of, have this gut instinct to, kind of, try and scrutinise it in some way. What I love about music from growing up and emotions and places and people is that I just love the music, there’s no, sort of, need to scrutinise it or need to, kind of, work out what’s going on. I just, kind of, loved it before and so I still love it now, and I often, sort of, enjoy knowing all the words already to a song, just singing it.

[0:14:19]

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. So, when you’re scrutinising songs, then, is that very much then the basis for whether you like them or not, because I’m imagining you’re talking about things like harmony, instrumentation? Does that then, that scrutiny that you’re doing with new music determine whether you like it or not?

Respondent: It often stops me liking music…

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: …more than anything else. So, where I do a lot of stuff with copyright cases, my problem is that I look into music too much and I realise how a lot of it comes from something else, and then I lose appreciation for the artist’s work because of that. I think I also like, from the, sort of, scrutiny stuff, I like music that’s more complex, so it makes me not enjoy, sort of, more simple music as often. It’s why I like finding new music. Again, I’ve not lost my ability to just listen to music in the sense that if the song that I first hear happens to be whilst I’m in a car driving with a load of friends somewhere, then it becomes an association with that event and then I’m fine, but I, kind of, can’t just sit and… I guess when I was a kid, I used to just sit and listen to music in my room all the time. I don’t do that anymore, as such.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s interesting. So, then, is there a time that you can pinpoint where you’ve used music specifically to reflect who you are to somebody else, whether that’s friends, a partner, family? Can you ever remember putting a song on and using it to express yourself?

Respondent: I guess the most connected thing I can think of is when me and my partner got together. We spent a long time trying to work out whether we were similar people growing up, like, would we have been friends if we were in the same school, like, really random things like that, and one of the ways we did that was through music. So, we used to sit down and play each other songs that we listened to when we were, like, 14 and be, like, ‘Oh, did you listen to this band? Did you listen to this song?’ like, and, kind of, find out whether we were, like, whether we, kind of, were similar at different points, and we found out we were. Not the whole time. There was a period of time when we both were into, sort of, Blink-182 and Green Day, and that sort of stuff, but I think it’s funny, on reflection, that that’s how we thought to identify who we were at 14/15 was based on the fact that we both liked Blink-182 and Green Day. That meant we were similar in our heads. I don’t know if I actively do it. As in I don’t know if I play music and go, ‘This is me. Listen to it.’ That makes me think of a Lizzie McGuire song. Is it Lizzie McGuire? ‘This is me’. It’s a song about –

Interviewer: I’m thinking of the one from The Greatest Showman.

Respondent: There is that one, as well. Yeah, there is one from Lizzie McGuire, as well.

Interviewer: I think I was past the age of Lizzie McGuire.

Respondent: Okay, good show. So, I don’t think I purposely play music and go, ‘This is who I am. Like, this is me,’ kind of thing, but I think I don’t often do it about me now, I wouldn’t ever, sort of, go, ‘This is me. Look at my Spotify playlists,’ or whatever, like, ‘This is who I am,’ but I often do it to reflect who I was. So, if I talk about who I was growing up, even in, like, a conversation, not an interview about music, I still list the bands I was interested in as a kid, and I still see that as me explaining my identity to someone.

Interviewer: And so do you feel, then, it was more of a reflection of who you were at a certain point rather than who you were at that specific moment?

[0:18:12]

Respondent: Yeah, definitely. I think we were both explaining who we were at different points in our life and, kind of, going, ‘This is who we were. This is…’

Interviewer: Yeah, and were you very conscious, then, about the music that you were picking when you were showing them, or were you, kind of, ‘Well, this is what I liked at this point, so no matter what you think about it, I’m going to show you anyway’?

Respondent: I think because we did it a bit later on in our relationship, I just didn’t care. Everyone knows I have a really bad knowledge of music for someone who does a PhD in music. I just don’t know much music, I just don’t. I was very much a CD child in the sense that, like, I listened to a CD by a person, and that’s what I listened to. I didn’t listen to, like, a massive range of music, and now I just have, like, random songs by people that I know. People, therefore, assume that I know the whole of that person’s music, and I don’t, I know this one song. So, I, kind of, just… I don’t know if I’d have been different with other people, but with him, I didn’t have any fear of him judging me or thinking… like, me feeling self-conscious about it in any way, not at all.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I know you’ve described your music taste as being quite eclectic, but, broadly, what types of music would you say that you like and what types of music would you say that you dislike?

Respondent: I like a lot of, kind of, acousticy, kind of, like, music, kind of, solo instrument, kind of, popular, I guess popular music in that sense. I don’t often enjoy listening to, kind of, really heavy, sort of, dance and house music in the car or on my own. I think, for me, they’re very time/place-specific. Like, they’re great on a night out or they’re great, like, getting ready with friends and dancing around, it’s funny, but I wouldn’t listen to them on my own. I really, really, really dislike screamo and really heavy metal music. Just I can’t listen to it. It might be because I’m a singer and it just makes me think they’re ruining their voices and ending their careers, but, anyway, I’ve a very strong opinion about that sort of music. I’ve always enjoyed, kind of, like, verging on pop, rocky kinds of music, like, you know like when there are, kind of, quite a lot of electric guitar, kind of, bands. I do love, like, kind of, bands, like, kind of, like, your, kind of, Coldplays and, sort of, group effort – Rolling Stones, kind of, Beatles, kind of, everyone coming together – but I do listen to a lot of, sort of, classical music, as well. I don’t listen to much jazz. I listen to quite a bit of, kind of, classical piano. I love piano and I love, probably, the violin. I like things where there’s, like, a solo melody that you could sing along to, but it’s more complicated than that…

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Respondent: …like, on the surface. So, I don’t really like pieces where you can’t find a tune.

Interviewer: So, you’ve cited quite a lot of different types of music when you say things that you like, and then you’ve said about the melody. So, is the melody something that you would be drawn to in classical music and in the band kind of popular music that you’re talking about?

Respondent: Yeah, everything.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: It’s, kind of, like, the one thing I’ve found that connects my music taste is, like, I love things where there’s a prominent melody where you can sing along to it. So, I can sing you a violin concerto’s melody, because the reason I love that piece is because I love the violin’s… it’s called ‘Lark Ascending’ by Vaughan Williams and it’s my favourite violin piece, but I love it because it’s such a prominent violin melody, you could just sing it. Whereas I struggle with just big orchestral (inaudible 0:22:17) kind of classical music where it’s, kind of, got loads and loads of parts and doesn’t quite, it’s not just… Like, I love, sort of, the solo instruments or, like, having a singer in a band – you’ve got a melody you can, kind of, sing along to, kind of, connect with.

[0:22:33]

Interviewer: Yeah. So, then is the melody a factor in why you don’t like screamo music or is it just purely the vocals?

Respondent: I think it’s a mixture. I can’t sing to screamo music. You have to scream, don’t you? I just don’t… I think the sound’s a bit unpleasant, personally, I think it’s a mixture of not enjoying… I wouldn’t want to reproduce that sound myself and, yeah, not having… I love music when I can interact with the music, and the problem I find with stuff like screamo or really heavy rock music where it’s, kind of, like, shouting, and stuff, is that I can’t interact because I can’t… Me interacting is singing and dancing and just, sort of, throwing myself in there, and I can’t do that to those sorts of music.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I mean, looking at your Scrobble logs, then, from the last week, Ed Sheeran came out as the most played artist that you had in the last week, and then Coldplay was number two, so do you feel they’re quite accurate reflections of your musical taste or are you surprised by that?

Respondent: I go through, like… With Ed Sheeran, I, kind of, like, don’t listen to him for ages and then I listen to him, like, all of his albums in one day. (Overspeaking).

Interviewer: I obviously must have got that week.

Respondent: It’s like I just, kind of, it really is, kind of, like, I will pick a car journey and just be, like, ‘You know what, I really fancy Ed Sheeran today,’ and that’s what I’ll listen to. Coldplay’s probably come up quite a lot because it’s quite prominent in the 2000s and, as I said, I’ve been listening to a 2000s playlist recently, and they were quite big with ‘Yellow’, and stuff. And, also, most of my listening this week’s been, kind of, in the bath, so it’s, kind of, like, quite calm, quite more acousticy kind of chilled music, whereas other weeks I might have done more listening, like, driving, and that might be slightly different, or, I don’t know, walking the dog, or something, again, my listening might be slightly different. It depends. I’m a bit obsessed with this playlist at the moment, so I’d probably listen to it anyway. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Because, I mean, there was nothing of, kind of, the classical music that you like on your Scrobble logs. Is that just something that you don’t listen to through Spotify? Is that something you listen to elsewhere, or is it just that didn’t show up last week?

Respondent: It just didn’t happen last week. I think I, kind of, go through phases with it. I think the thing with the classical music, especially, is I don’t listen very often to it, but when I do, I listen… It’s, kind of, like, different listening. Like, when I’m playing maybe, like, some Debussy piano music, or something, I, kind of, would do that and I’d probably actually listen to it, I probably wouldn’t try and read a book at the same time, whereas when I’m in the bath, I’m reading a book and playing some acoustic music in the background. It’s, kind of, a bit different. Also, if I’m up late, that’s when I end up playing a lot of classical music, strangely enough, sort of, like, closer to midnight, whereas this week I’ve been going to bed quite early, so I’ve not been listening to quite so much classical music in that sense.

Interviewer: Is there a reason you listen to it close to midnight?

Respondent: I don’t know. Maybe because Radio 1 is really rubbish when it’s close to… in my opinion, when it’s close to midnight, so I usually listen to Classic FM on the radio around that time, so I got into the habit of it. Maybe sometimes when it’s, like, date night, we listen to classical music because it’s quite nice background music for, sort of, date-nighty, kind of, thing, and then I, kind of, get involved, a bit too excited by it, I start trying to be the drum, or something. Yeah, it doesn’t go well. So, I think I listen to it less when I’m working, as well, when I’m, like, quite actively doing PhD research in classical music. I listen to it quite a lot over the summer, for example, when I’m, sort of, not having to focus on the music I’m listening to.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. So, we’ve talked about your musical taste, in general, but do you feel that that translates then into your Spotify listening? Do you feel that Spotify allows you to express who you are through music?

Respondent: I think it would if I used it that way. Like, I can see how you could. I’m more use Spotify to listen to their generated playlists. I’m really into their generated playlists at the moment. I think they were really naff for a while, and they used to just be really weird, kind of, collections of music that didn’t make sense, but they’ve, kind of, got into this phase at the moment of doing, sort of, time period stuff, which I really like. I definitely have, in the past, used Spotify to, kind of, like, maybe create a playlist for music I like. So, like, a while ago, I regenerated one called *[playlist name],* which was just music… I was really into The 1975 in the car. I don’t know why. Just in the car. I just loved them in the car, so I generated a playlist with their music and some other music that, kind of, connected to it for the car. We always do, like, a massive Christmas party playlist. I think you might get an idea of my identity if you looked back at all my listening, like, over the year. (Inaudible 0:28:17) it might be quite scary what you could work out about me by looking at my listening over the year, if you found, like, patterns in how I listen and what I listen to, when. I wouldn’t say, I don’t purposely try and develop an identity for other people to look at on Spotify. It’s not like I, sort of, sit there and go, ‘Ooh, other people are watching. Let’s do this.’ Whereas maybe I used to when I was younger, like, when I was, sort of, like, 16, maybe I cared more what people thought of what I listened to, whereas now, actually, I just couldn’t care less. I’ll just listen to what I want to listen to. If I just want to listen to the Frozen soundtrack for a whole afternoon, I will just listen to the Frozen soundtrack for a whole afternoon, and I have been known to.

Interviewer: Okay, so no matter who’s online, you would listen to that?

Respondent: Yeah, I’d be happy to, because I just, I don’t think it really… It doesn’t really bother me what people think about what I listen to. I do remember when Spotify first released that feature, you know, where you could see what other people… and it used to come up on everyone’s Facebook feeds.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I do remember being nervous then, like, when I was, sort of, like, 14/15/16.

Interviewer: Okay. Why was that?

Respondent: I just remember thinking… I had, like, all the cool kids from school on my Facebook, and being, like, ‘Oh, what if they find out I’m really in love with,’ I don’t know, ‘The Script,’ and it’s not a cool band, ‘And, like, they think I’m really, like, silly or, like…’ I’ve always been really into musicals and, like, ‘What if they’re not into musicals and I don’t fit in?’ Then I think maybe as my confidence in my own identity has improved, I care less what other people think of my identity outwardly.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you’ve talked about playlists. So, have you got a general Spotify music library or is it everything’s in a playlist?

Respondent: As in, like, have I, like, saved songs to listen to?

Interviewer: Yeah, yes, yeah.

Respondent: I don’t know. I’ll have a look. I’m not sure if I have. I’m sure I have at times. I’m just into playlists at the moment. It, kind of, varies. Your library, songs. I do have lots of songs. I do have lots and lots of songs. Most of them are Christmas songs. I do love Christmas. I, kind of, go through phases. I don’t think I’ve saved anything for quite a while.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Oh, yeah, the first thing I saved was ‘Say Something’ by Great Big World, that was one. Ooh, I’m playing something, no. But, no, I don’t really just save songs. I save albums more, but maybe that’s just from growing up and listening to albums a lot, and I’ve definitely followed artists. You know you can, like, follow people, can’t you?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: I’ve definitely gone, like, ‘Oh, I love that artist, I’ll follow them so I can see if they release a new song,’ or something, and just have access to that back catalogue quite easily. I think maybe with the way I grew up with, sort of, CDs, and stuff, I still listen, quite often I will just listen to an album. I’ll, like, put on (inaudible 0:31:22) album in the car, and, like, ‘This is what I want to listen to right now,’ but it does depend on… I don’t know what it depends on, but it does depend on, like, the week. As I said, this week’s been playlists, but maybe next week, it’ll be albums.

Interviewer: Okay. So, when you listen to albums in the car, do you then save those to your Spotify account or is that just you listen to them but not save them?

Respondent: I guess I just, nowadays, I just forget to save them.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I definitely did when I had, like, the free version, I tried to make sure I could keep them to go back to them where they were, but where I have, like… Now you have so much Internet on your phone and, like, everything, I just can search for it so easily. I don’t need to have it somewhere easy to get to, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense, yeah.

Respondent: So, I don’t… I listen to the same ones a lot, so, like, I could easily have had them connected, but I don’t think I save them, because I, kind of, forgot you could, really.

Interviewer: So, if I looked through, then, your saved music, do you feel that that accurately expresses –

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: No? Okay.

Respondent: Because I don’t save enough.

Interviewer: And what about, then, if you don’t save enough, what about deleting things? So, you scrolled through and you said, ‘Ooh, that’s the first one I ever added,’ and you’ve got quite a lot of Christmas songs in there. So, do you delete things that are on there or is that a permanent storage of everything?

Respondent: No, that’s permanent. The only things I do occasionally unfollow are, like, a playlist. So, I might have thought the playlist was really good to start with, and then, actually, maybe it’s changed, maybe the person who’s curating the playlist has changed it a bit, if I’m following someone else’s playlist, and I don’t like it so I unfollow it. Or I have occasionally been known to delete old playlists or old, like, collections I’ve made of music myself, maybe because I don’t feel that… maybe because I feel I don’t need it anymore, it doesn’t mean anything (overspeaking).

[0:33:28]

Interviewer: Okay. So, since you’ve used Spotify, do you feel that your music tastes have become more diverse in what you listen to, or actually more fixed?

Respondent: I’d say more diverse.

Interviewer: Okay, in what kind of sense do you feel that they’ve diversified?

Respondent: Because I have access to more music, so I… Although I still have the habit of listening to an album and listening to a whole album, I listen more to things like playlists or listen more to things like they have that radio function, don’t they…

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: …and things like that, so I listen to more those sorts of things, and, also, I have the ability of, like, someone, like I said earlier about The Wombats, someone says a band to me, before, I would have had to, like, go and buy it or, like, illegally download it, or something. I probably wouldn’t have gone and bothered, whereas now it’s so easy to go and listen to other music, I listen to this music and then I’m, like, ‘Oh, actually, I really like that artist. I’ll follow them,’ and go back and listen to the music another time. So, I think it’s a mixture of probably the people I’m around recommending the music to me, but having the ease of being able to find the music and have access to it has made me listen to more types of music.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah. So, I mean, I’d like to go onto talking a little bit more about Spotify and how you use Spotify. So, I’m interested now in hearing a little bit more about your everyday streaming practices, so how you use Spotify, how you tend to stream music, and what kinds of service features you use. So, how, then, do you use Spotify to listen to music, and what kind of music do you listen to on there?

Respondent: So, I mostly use my phone. I don’t think I ever really use the web portal thing. It’s mostly listening whilst doing something else, so maybe whilst driving, or in the bath, reading a book, or occasionally in the background whilst just sat talking with people. I obviously use it for research, and things. So, I might be finding music out for my PhD, kind of, looking for different music. I’m often using the search bar, I think because, as I said, I don’t really save the music to my account, so I spend my life, sort of, searching for an artist or going back to things. A lot of what I listen to, if I’m just enjoying music for a personal thing, is playlists. As I said, it used to be my own playlists or maybe me and my partner might make a playlist together, but in the recent maybe last four or five months, it’s swapped and I’ve been listening to a lot of the Spotify-curated playlists and occasionally some other random person who’s made their playlist live that I like. I don’t know what else to say about how I…

Interviewer: Okay. No, that’s fine, that’s a really good start. So, I mean, is there a reason that you chose Spotify amongst all these other online streaming platforms to us? Is there something that drew you to it?

Respondent: Well, I started with Apple Music…

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Respondent: …because I got it free with my phone. I don’t know what it was about it, but it just didn’t work with me. Spotify, I had the free version first and then they had that, like, pay tariff where you can pay with other people, and *[partner’s name]* already had it, so I joined up to pay with him. I love the fact that it integrates with other apps I use, so, like, I use Waze for, like, my driving, and it integrates into Waze, so, like, the satnav will cut out, like, dim the music and speak over it, so it integrates really nicely for that. I’ve always liked… it’s quite like a big catalogue of music, so I like Spotify for that. I guess it’s, kind of, what everyone uses. Like, it’s, kind of, why I ended up using it to start with, it’s, kind of, because so many people were, like, ‘Oh, have you tried this?’ and I was, like, ‘I’m going to try it.’

[0:37:30]

Interviewer: Okay, and then when you’re on there, how do you tend to stream music? So, obviously, you talk about playlists quite a bit. Is that most often how you stream music, both now and in the past, or has that changed?

Respondent: That’s changed. That’s become a thing recently. I always used to dislike the playlists generated by them, so I went from a phase of just listening to albums. So, I, kind of, started off using it exactly how I’d have used my own catalogue of music. I mean, obviously, when I was a kid, I used to have, like, my iTunes that had, like, all the music on, and, like, did stuff like that. But, again, I still (inaudible 0:38:05) listen in albums or, like, the occasional song. Before they had good playlists on Spotify by other people, I used to generate my own playlists, but more often than not, I’d forget to generate the playlist and I’d do that thing where you can, like, queue the music, and I’d sit down just before when everyone turned up and I’d just sit there queueing loads of music, so I’d, kind of, forget to make it as a playlist, as such, but I’d, kind of, make almost, like, a temporary playlist because I’d set the songs. (Inaudible 0:38:36) maybe a bit more structured, I’d set them in a specific order and how I wanted them to come on. The thing I like about the queueing, as well, is if you’re in, like, a social situation, other people can be, like, ‘Oh, can you add that?’ and I’d queue it in, add it in for later, so I do that a lot, and then, yeah, the playlists, as I said, and the albums. I’ll occasionally use that, like, radio function. I have to, like, not know what I want to listen to, to do that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Like, if I’m, like, kind of, in this, sort of, indifferent mood. It’s normally, like, if I’m on a train, or something, and I’ve not got, like, a book or, like, maybe the tube. Obviously, it won’t be the tube because (inaudible 0:39:17). Anyway, something like the train and, like, I’m sat on a train and it’s, like, only, like, 15 minutes to my stop, and I don’t really want to read anything or don’t want to work, (inaudible 0:39:26) nice wireless headphones and so I might flick onto the radio function and be, like, ‘Just play me something, let’s just have a listen,’ but I’ve got time to, kind of, focus on the music and enjoy it. So, I do that.

Interviewer: So, how do you find the radio function? Do you feel that that’s a really good service feature that they offer?

Respondent: It’s alright. I think I’ve not quite… It’s not quite fitted in with my tastes yet, like, the music doesn’t all, I don’t like all the music, and things like that, which is fine because I’m often in the position that I want to hear different types of music. I feel it’s maybe the feature that’s grown least with the platform. So, like, the playlists are really improving and they’re getting better at, sort of, integrating them in a clever way. Maybe they haven’t with the radio feature yet, which is why I don’t use it very often, considering how much I used to listen to the radio, so it, kind of, would make sense for me to enjoy that. Like, it’s a nice idea, I like the idea of, I like being able to have access to, like, newer music, kind of, like, you would on the radio, like, music you wouldn’t necessarily listen to. It’s, kind of, how you used to always find out your songs was, like, through the radio, so it, kind of, makes sense.

Interviewer: Like, as a tool for discovery, something like that?

Respondent: Mm.

Interviewer: And so is there anything, any other service features that you use? Do you use things, I don’t know, like, Discover Weekly, the Daily Mixes, the Timehop?

Respondent: Yeah, are they the things where they, like, say… yeah, I’ve done the daily mixes where they put the different music in, you have the different choices, don’t you?

[0:41:04]

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: And, like, I had one, it was, like, The Kooks was in one and I was, like, ‘I haven’t listened to them in ages,’ and so I clicked on that and that was quite fun. I don’t use that very often. I’ve seen the Discover Weekly but I don’t think I’ve ever used it. I’ve done the daily mixes, they’re quite… I find the problem with them is they can be quite a mixture in the daily mixes, and so I might click on it because I’m, like, ‘Oh, I really fancy listening to that band. Well done for recommending me that band,’ but then I get into the thing and I’m, like, ‘Oh, I don’t want to listen to any of the rest of this.’

Interviewer: Oh, so you, kind of, pick and choose from them?

Respondent: Yeah, so I can’t… I often find that with the sorts of tools they have, it, kind of, sparks something in me and then I never end up using the tool because I actually go, ‘Actually, I just wanted to listen to this one bit of the thing that you suggested. I’ll go and listen to it differently.’

Interviewer: Yeah. So, it sounds like, then, you do quite a lot of active searching when you’re on Spotify.

Respondent: I think I’m very active. The thing is I don’t really… accept when I’m, like, addicted to a playlist and I’m just listening to that playlist a lot, but I get bored of it, so I might listen to it for, like, a week, but every time I’m listening to music, I’m listening to this playlist, and then I, kind of, get bored of it and I, kind of, actively search and maybe I’ll spend, like, a couple of weeks just actively listening to lots of random things as I search, and then I might fall across something I fall in love with again and listen to that constantly for a week.

Interviewer: So, if you’re doing this active searching, then, quite a bit, is it a case of that you know what you want to listen to before you go on Spotify, so then you know to search for it, or is it that you see things and it, kind of, clicks something in you and you think, ‘Oh, I want to go and look for –‘

Respondent: The latter. So, either it’s something as soon as I open on Spotify, something goes (click fingers). So, maybe in the daily searches, I see, like, a recommendation of a song that they suggest, and that makes me search for something, or it might be someone in the real world, not online, who says something that makes me search for it, or a song in a shop, or something.

Interviewer: Okay, and so do you have, kind of, like, typical weekly streaming patterns when you’re on Spotify. Are there, kind of, things that you notice throughout the week in terms of, I don’t know, like, times of the day or even days of the week where you experience a pattern in your music listening?

Respondent: So, I often listen driving places, as I’ve said, but, obviously, I don’t drive consistently places, so that does change. I normally listen to music in the evenings. If I’m choosing to listen to music, it will be after working hours, maybe over dinner, into the evening. That’s when I’d choose to put music on, like, on purpose, myself. Yeah, I don’t listen to the music in the morning. That’s really random, but I just don’t, unless I’m in the car, but I don’t commute first thing, so it doesn’t ever really happen in the morning. But then my most, like, listening when I’m actually listening to music is always in the evening.

Interviewer: So, then you don’t feel that you potentially listen to different music on a Monday versus what you’d listen to on a Friday night versus what you’d listen to Saturday/Sunday?

Respondent: Friday night’s always very different.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Friday night, I’m always really - I think everyone is - pumped and excited and, like, ‘Yeah,’ and so… but that is always reflected in my music. Like, it definitely is. I would say Sunday evenings are normally more – if I listen to music – it’s more relaxing because it is Sunday and often it’s I’m eating dinner, sat in the lounge with *[partner’s name],* chatting about something, and so we put on some background music. I probably most listen to music on a Saturday afternoon/evening because we are most likely to listen to music then. Maybe if we’re doing housholdy, choresy, kind of, sort of, things, I, sort of, listen to it then. During the week it’s probably all the same. I wouldn’t distinguish between the days during Monday to Friday. I just know that Friday evening, I normally… that’s when we have date night and that’s normally when we put on… we don’t put on just background, calm music. It’s, kind of, like, actual, kind of, like, singalong music.

[0:45:05]

Interviewer: So, what kind of music would that be? Would you be able to give me an example of a song or an artist or a genre that you’d put in?

Respondent: Mostly, it would be, like, the top charts.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Because I like… I don’t listen to them very often, but I would, sort of, on, like, a Friday evening, listen to, I don’t know, who’s in the charts at the moment? People like Ariane Grande, I think Taylor Swift pops in and out all the time. Those, sort of, like, upbeat songs, kind of, stereotypical pop songs with, kind of, like, an upbeat attitude.

Interviewer: And you both like that type of music, or would you say that’s more reflective of you or more reflective of *[partner’s name]*?

Respondent: I’d say we both like it. I probably listen to it… I’d possibly listen to it during the week, whereas he might not, but we both enjoy it on a Friday. It’s, kind of, like, kind of, like…

Interviewer: Ready for the weekend.

Respondent: ‘Yeah, yeah,’ kind of, like, (inaudible 0:45:56). (Laughter).

Interviewer: And then what about, then, in different situations? So, you’ve talked about listening to music in the bath and music while you’re driving. Are they very different types of music?

Respondent: Yeah, often. I mean, it does depend. Sometimes they end up being the same, but in the bath, I’m normally reading and reading does require a little bit more focus… This sounds so bad. It’s making it sound like I don’t focus when I drive. It does require a little bit more focus, as in you need to actively think about the reading to understand the plot, so maybe the music is a little bit more backgroundy, and, actually, that’s probably the time I maybe listen to music I don’t know, like, acoustic music, but I wouldn’t be able to tell you that I listened to a song I didn’t know because I’m not focusing on it, but often that is the most playlisty time for me because it doesn’t matter really what’s on, I just want some sound. Driving, I’m actually focusing on the music, and the road, I promise, but I am focusing on the music. I’m normally singing along, so I want it to be songs I know. I wouldn’t want to listen to something that I didn’t know already, and I often skip in playlists at that point. So, in the bath, I wouldn’t skip, I’d just leave my phone playing, it can play whatever it likes. In the car, I’m very actively changing my music and making it… because, obviously, I can’t search because I’m driving, so I use a playlist set up and skip the songs I don’t want to listen to at that time, which is when maybe my listening habits aren’t perfectly represented, because it might say a load of songs that actually I’ve just skipped.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, and are there any other situations you feel that you listen to music, so, I don’t know, for working or exercising or household chores?

Respondent: I always listen to music when I got to the gym, but I’m not really going to the gym at the moment, but when I have listened to the gym, I’ve always… quite pumpy… the only time I, kind of, listen to dance music, like, really… like, I listen to the music for a very different purpose. It’s not to, like, enjoy the music, I don’t want to sing along because I’m in the gym and, like, people will look at me weirdly – well, I think they would look at me weirdly – but I do it as in it’s normally quite a fast beat. There was a fab thing when I used to run on Spotify where they’d design a playlist on the speed of your steps. I loved that. That was fantastic for running because I just got music that basically fitted in with the beat and what I was going, so I used to use music very differently in that situation, the kind of beat and kind of… and used to keep myself going. Like, it’s, kind of, like, (inaudible 0:48:22) you can get to the end of the song, like, keep running, like, you’ll be fine. Sunny dog walks, I always listen to, like, podcasts. I don’t really listen to music. I, kind of, do more, sort of, that sort of listening. When else would I listen? Trains, as I said, but that’s, kind of, similar to the car, except I can’t sing, though I have been known to (inaudible 0:48:47) because I get too involved in the music, I get too excited, and so I occasionally do listen on trains, and then, yeah, background music in the house. They’re probably my main ones, like, weekly.

[0:49:03]

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, and so in all these different situations, are you listening to music publicly, like, is it showing up, like, do you have your Spotify account set to public?

Respondent: I’ve not changed it off it if that’s (overspeaking).

Interviewer: Okay, is that, like, a conscious choice that you’ve not changed it off it?

Respondent: It doesn’t bother me. So, I think I remember everyone doing it. It doesn’t bother me if people see what I listen to, so I’ve not purposely changed it off or on, like, at all.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you feel that there’d ever be a circumstance where you might consciously decide to change it to private or not?

Respondent: No, unless, for any reason… The only reason I’ve ever turned any social media private is for fear of, like, job prospects in the future, but I would be really surprised and slightly scared if there would be jobs that would be affected by my listening taste in music, so, no, but that’s, kind of, the only reason I ever put anything private.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, yeah, that’s fair enough. So, if we now go on to talking about playlists. Playlists have come up quite a bit when you were talking, so would you say that playlists are really important to you and your music listening?

Respondent: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: Yeah? What makes you say that?

Respondent: I’d say because I’ve become someone who loves listening to lots and lots of different tracks but centred around something. So, maybe it’s… I just love, if I’m in, like, a bit of a reminiscing period, I’m, like, ‘I really want to listen to music from the 2000s when I was, like, growing up. Like, I really want to listen to that again,’ and so I love listening to music around that sort of theme. The other, sort of, playlist I’ve enjoyed listening to, kind of, Christmas stuff, as I said. Normally that’s my own playlist. So, I think it’s because I like, even within one album of music, the mood can change quite a lot or the themes can change quite a lot, and that sort of stuff, and I like the kind of consistency in a playlist, the, kind of, connection between all the music.

Interviewer: So, then, would you say that you listen to more playlists that are, kind of, themed or more that are based on emotion?

Respondent: Ooh.

Interviewer: So, themed and thinking about, kind of, like, music for Christmas or, like, music for a certain situation, or would you listen to, kind of, happy playlists or sad playlists?

[0:51:37]

Respondent: Well, my big ones have been, as I said, the 2000s one that I’ve just listened to, songs to sing in the shower, which was a Spotify playlist for a while – I loved that playlist. So, they’re, kind of, like… They’re about… They’re not as simple as, like, a simple mood, like happy, sad, stuff like that. They are, kind of, like, associated with a context, but they’re probably mood reflected, but songs to sing in a shower are happy, upbeat songs to get you going, you know, they, kind of, they are mood, and the same as 2000s, the reason I love it is because it’s associated with growing up and events, and those sorts of emotions. So, it’s probably more mood, but it’s, kind of, a bit more of a complicated mood than just happy songs.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, okay. So, are these playlists, then, that you’re talking about, are they ones that you’ve created or that have come from Spotify?

Respondent: It’s funny, the ones like the Christmas playlist, and stuff like that, you said, they’re the ones I create, so I create the event-based ones, so if it’s, like, for the car music or workout music, I’d create my own playlists. If they’re more a mood one, they’re normally created by Spotify. So, that songs to sing in a shower one was a Spotify one, my 2000s one is a Spotify one, and that’s more, like, that sort of stuff.

Interviewer: Okay, and do you feel, then, that there is a reason why for some, you create, and then for other things, you’re happy for Spotify to create them? Do you feel like there’s a reason behind that?

Respondent: Yeah, I feel that maybe the event ones, I don’t feel that Spotify creates them that represents me. So, like, with Christmas playlists, I always find they never quite reflect my enjoyment of Christmas music and, kind of, a wide variety of Christmas music that I quite like, whereas, like, songs from the 2000s, I probably remember all the big hits and all the big songs are probably what I mostly remember, and they seem to get all of them in a playlist.

Interviewer: Okay, because, I mean, you talked about Spotify, feeling like they’ve improved their playlists, so in what kind of sense do you mean that they’ve improved them, well, for you?

Respondent: They’re better at recommending music for me…

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: …through the playlists fitting my tastes better, they connect better with what I, kind of, would want to listen to.

Interviewer: Do you mean in terms of, because, I mean, obviously, they don’t create specific playlists for you, so do you feel, then, you feel that they are suited better for you because the music is more mainstream and popular or that it is more diverse or…

Respondent: Maybe it’s that they’ve got, in a way, because they’ve become more complex, what they are trying to represent in a playlist. So, for example, not having just a… It always to be, like, good mood playlists, and stuff like that, whereas now, it’s, like, song you can sing to in the shower, and things like that, and I think it really encapsulates that mood, the playlists are successfully working on, ‘These are actually songs I would stand in the shower and sing to. I don’t know how you’ve managed to work that out, but you have,’ and that’s what I feel they’ve managed to do. It’s like with the 2000s playlist I’m listening to is not just called ‘Songs from the 2000s’. It’s something like, oh, yeah, oh, no, that was another playlist I was listening… ‘All about the 2000s’ and it’s, like, really, like, upbeat, kind of, like, singalong 2000s. In the bath, I was listening to ‘Acoustic Hits – Oldies but Goodies’, kind of, like, they’re all, kind of, like, more complicated titles than just songs from this period.

Interviewer: So, are you saying, then, that they’ve potentially narrowed their focus of their playlists, which has made them better for you?

[0:55:17]

Respondent: I think they’ve narrowed the focus of their playlists, but, naturally, it makes the music broader. So, it’s like they’ve, kind of, stopped just focusing on one or two artists in their playlists that meet the category requirement. They, kind of, have gone, ‘Actually, we need all the songs in this playlist to really reflect this specific emotion, and to reflect this specific emotion, that means we’ve got to have a lot of different artists,’ so in that way, the diversity’s increased, but in another way, they now all reflect the same mood, so it’s decreased the diversity of mood, kind of, from different things.

Interviewer: Okay. I mean, so how often would you say that you create your own playlists?

Respondent: Every couple of months.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Respondent: So, not… I’m listening more times… You know, I listen to, maybe, three or four times a week, Spotify, ish, on average. Some weeks every day, some weeks three or four times, and I’d say, yeah, I’d say then only every couple of months would I actually… I always create one around Christmas. I normally create one in summer-time at some point, and then, maybe, a couple of others dotted around the year.

Interviewer: Okay, and do you have one that you feel is… I mean, obviously, you’ve talked about the 2000s playlist at the minute. Would you say that that is the most played playlist that you have, or is there something else on there that you feel you play more?

Respondent: It’s probably my most played this week. This is probably my most played playlist. It’s called *[playlist name]* and we set it up for my 21st birthday party, but it wasn’t just me who created it. It was me, *[partner’s name]* and my two sisters, and we sat down and the four of us created a playlist that reflected, basically, every song we’d liked in the last 21 years of my life. That’s probably my most played playlist and it’s four people’s music tastes, but all of our music tastes have overlapped significantly, and I’m very close to all of them, so it, kind of, reflects that. I really want to listen to that playlist now, but it’s, kind of, got everything in and it’s, kind of, like, really diverse. It’s got Mumford & Sons, it’s got Aretha Franklin, it’s, kind of, got, like, everything in it. In a way, I’d almost argue that’s, like, my music library. Like, that’s where I’d go if I just wanted to find a song that I know I listen to a lot. It would be in that playlist and I’d just scroll down and go, ‘Oh, yeah, that’s the song,’ and play it from there. That’d, kind of, be where I’d go.

Interviewer: So, then, even though that was for your 21st, that’s still very much part of your present day listening?

Respondent: Yeah, and we haven’t done it recently, but I think a year after, we added songs to it, so we do…

Interviewer: You do update it.

Respondent: It’s the 21st birthday playlist that comes out whenever there’s an event. It, kind of, gets updated each event and, kind of, built upon. So, it’s, kind of, like, a collection through history, so it, kind of, will be the base of our wedding playlist, as well. Like, we will add the songs to it to make our wedding playlist. It’s, kind of…

Interviewer: So, that’s very interesting that you’re in the process of creating a wedding playlist, and presume, is that a collaborative playlist with you and your partner?

Respondent: And everyone else.

Interviewer: And everyone else, okay. So, how is that working, then? So, is everybody just adding things as and when they feel like it?

Respondent: Well, it’s mostly people just say something to me and I add it.

[0:58:41]

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So, it’s, kind of, like, someone goes, ‘Ah, no, I love that song,’ and I go, ‘Oh, yeah, so do I,’ and quickly add it. Like, we, kind of, just are keeping going all the time what we want.

Interviewer: Yeah, but do you feel, though, that you’re, kind of, this person, like, the barrier to whether it goes in –

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: - the playlist or not, or is that you and *[partner’s name],* or is it *[partner’s name]?*

Respondent: It’s probably more me. It’s me and *[partner’s name],* but it is more me because I don’t… he forgets to put things in it, so it’s probably more me in that sense. But I don’t think, unless I actively hated a song, I wouldn’t not put it in.

Interviewer: Oh, so it’s not necessarily, then, about your likes or something that expresses your relationship, then?

Respondent: No, it’s more like I want everyone to be dancing at my wedding, so it’s more like songs that everyone will get up and dance to, but I wouldn’t put a song in that I wouldn’t dance to.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s fair enough.

Respondent: Because I want to still be dancing, so I don’t want other people to play songs (inaudible 0:59:35)..

Interviewer: Okay, so then what about music discovery? Do you use playlists for music discovery or do you get that from somewhere else?

Respondent: I guess I do naturally, in some of my playlists, end up discovering music, as in when I listened to ones like songs in the shower, I did find some songs – I can’t think off the top of my head what they were – but there were some songs that I hadn’t heard before that I ended up really liking. Most of my music discovery is probably not through Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Though I do occasionally through, like, the daily mixes, and stuff like that, I will occasionally get some songs. Most of it is still probably through people. Most of my song discovery comes from *[partner’s name]* in that he will say, ‘Ah, I was listening to this band today,’ and I’ll go, ‘I don’t know who they are,’ and I’ll go and find out who they are. Or, like, friends, and things like that. But I guess, occasionally, I get it through Spotify. I used to discover loads of music because I used to listen to the radio a lot, Radio 1, all the time, driving everywhere before I got Spotify, and I’d say, in a way, I discover less music, less new music now. I discover more old music. I don’t think that’s a bad thing.

Interviewer: And so that discovery, new discovery of old music, is that coming from people or is that coming from Spotify?

Respondent: More people, but it is from both, but it is more people-oriented.

Interviewer: Do you feel that there’s potentially a reason why you feel like you discover more music through people than through Spotify?

[1:01:15]

Respondent: It’s probably trust networks…

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: …because I really trust that *[partner’s name]* knows my music taste, and *[partner’s name]* would know what I’d like or not like, and so I’d make the time and the effort to listen to it because I trust in the people who recommend me music.

Interviewer: So, broadly, would you say, then, you’re a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Respondent: Yeah, I do.

Interviewer: And is there a reason for liking that discovery?

Respondent: Because it’s fun. I don’t know, it’s just fun, it’s just enjoyable. I just enjoy it, just, kind of, I don’t know, getting new things to listen to, new, sort of, memories associated with new music, and all that sort of stuff, as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, so when you discover music on Spotify, is there a specific tool that you use, because, obviously they’ve got a lot of, they’ve got the Discover Weekly, and stuff like that, so do you use those tools or is it just through searching and playlists that you tend to find new music?

Respondent: It’s mostly searching and playlists, or, occasionally, you know when you generate your own playlist and then, like, you get the recommendations at the bottom?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Sometimes those, I get stuff from there. I might go, ‘Oh, I don’t know that one. If they think it’s related to the songs in my playlist so far, maybe it is,’ and I’ll listen to it, but other than it already being in someone else’s playlist, like Spotify’s playlists, or something, then that’s how I mostly find music, through those.

Interviewer: And can you think of an example of a time that you’ve either really loved some music that you’ve found through Spotify through one of their tools or something that you’ve really hated?

Respondent: I used to not listen to their playlists because I didn’t like all the music in them other than my song that I wanted. So, if I found a playlist because of a song I really liked, I wouldn’t listen to the rest of the playlist because… I wouldn’t listen anymore because the rest of the playlist, I didn’t think it related to it and I didn’t like the music it had recommended to me for that playlist. I can’t think off the top of my head a song I, like, really loved that they told me to listen to. I’ve rediscovered music, like music maybe I’ve forgotten about growing up. I’ve done a lot of that recently, where I’ve, kind of, re-found a band that I completely forgot about.

Interviewer: And has that come through Spotify –

Respondent: Yeah.

[1:03:30]

Interviewer: - or has that come through your own searching?

Respondent: No, through Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So, like, The Monkeys came back up and I was, like, ‘I completely forgot about them. I loved them,’ and, like, relistened to their whole music, and that was then, and that was a… and the same as The Kooks when it was under one of the daily things.

Interviewer: Oh, yes, yeah, the daily mixes.

Respondent: I didn’t actually listen to the daily playlist thingies, but I saw the names of the bands underneath and went, ‘I completely forgot about them,’ and went and listened to them. So, it was, kind of, like, indirectly they recommended it.

Interviewer: Kind of, by accident?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, when you’re discovering new music, do you prefer something that’s very similar to your current tastes or something that’s very different?

Respondent: I would say it’s probably normally quite similar, which is funny because I want to say different, but I think I do, kind of, have music I like and music I don’t like, generally, so I probably stick quite close.

Interviewer: Okay. That’s fair enough. Okay, so the final bit is I’d like to talk about whether you think Spotify reflects who you are. So, as a platform, do you feel that it enables you to easily, kind of, manage and construct your musical tastes?

Respondent: Yeah, I’d say easily. I think it’s got a wide catalogue that allows you to, kind of, tailor… you know, you can make your own playlists, you can, kind of, save your own music. I think you could quite easily make it what you wanted to make of it. I’ve never felt restricted by Spotify, to, kind of, be able to listen to what I want to listen to.

Interviewer: I mean, this might be different for you because you’ve said that you just listen to it on your mobile, but does its interface influence what you listen to at all?

Respondent: I don’t think so. I mean, I do like it when the playlists come up, I look at the pictures. Like, is it a good picture, and then I’ll click on it because the picture looks good, so, in a way, that, kind of, is an influence of them.

Interviewer: What about when they’re, kind of, promoting certain artists?

Respondent: I never really notice that.

Interviewer: You don’t?

Respondent: No, I never really notice their promotions. Because someone mentioned it the other day, they were, like, ‘Oh, did you see this promotion?’ It was one of Ed Sheeran’s ones. I was, like, ‘I didn’t even know he was promoting on Spotify.’ Maybe I’m just a bit oblivious to advertisement, but… which is, kind of, what I’m like on everything, so it’s not just a Spotify thing – I’m just a bit oblivious. I used to be more aware of it when I had the free version and, like, in the adverts, they’d be, like, ‘Have you tried the new dance playlist, something, something, something?’ but now I’m on the paid version, I don’t get any of that.

[1:05:59]

Interviewer: Yeah, so it, kind of, prevents that. So, I mean, obviously, there’s a lot going on at the minute about how platforms are collecting our data, in particular Facebook. Does this knowledge of… Well, I mean, I imagine you are aware, as a web science student, that Spotify is collecting data about us. Does that affect your use of Spotify or impact your listening when you’re on there?

Respondent: It doesn’t impact mine, but that’s because I find it really interesting, what they’re doing with it. I think… I don’t really feel like I have anything to hide from what they’re finding about me, and I read some fascinating articles recently about how they can predict the way that our society is voting through our music listening habits.

Interviewer: That’s interesting.

Respondent: And I just thought it was fascinating. For me, I don’t really care if they know which way I vote, but I found it fascinating that they thought they could predict it from what I was listening to. For me, that was like, ‘Wow.’ But maybe it’s, kind of, my academicy brain just, kind of, like, wants the knowledge rather than closure.

Interviewer: So, knowing, then, that they are taking, well, using your data, I mean, one of the things we think they’re using it for is the recommendations. So, then, how do you judge the recommendations in thinking, well, that’s come from your data? Do you think they’re quite reflective of your music taste, do you like them?

Respondent: I think they’re getting better. For example, the playlists I get recommended by them to listen to are normally quite accurate. I’ve found, like, three or four of my favourite playlists by playlists they’ve told me to listen to, so they must get some idea from my data that says that I should listen to that, which I quite like because I’d rather not trawl through thousands and thousands of playlists and try and work out what one I want to listen to, so I quite like the fact that they tailor it in that way. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So, would you then be in favour of the platform being more tailored than it currently is, or are you a person that’s interested in it broadening up?

Respondent: That’s hard. I think for my general listening habits, I’d rather it was more tailored, but I think there’s a problem with tailoring it too much in the fact that you get stuck in your own little bubble and, kind of, your own little view of what’s going on, which I think you do need to be careful of. I think we’re not there yet, personally, I don’t think it’s there yet, I think it’s still broad enough at the moment, and I think it could get a little bit more tailored and still be alright, but I think if it gets much more than it already is, we will all get stuck in a bubble of just always listening to Taylor Swift if you only listen to Taylor Swift.

Interviewer: But in that kind of respect, do you think you’re looking at it from two perspectives? Are you looking at it as music listener versus as a research student?

Respondent: Yeah, 100%. The music listener just says, ‘Yeah, narrow it down, get it more filtered. Like, I want nice, like, what I listen to to be recommended to me really well. I want you to know that I don’t have that song in my library but I’m going to like it because you see what I’m connected to,’ but the sort of, researchy person, kind of, goes, ‘Please don’t make it too narrow, like, keep everyone’s ideas broad.’

Interviewer: It’s interesting that there are those two sides that, kind of, seem to compete when you’re on there.

Respondent: Yeah.

[1:09:35]

Interviewer: So, I mean, my final question to you is you’ve obviously now been through all three phases of my research. So, you’ve done the survey, you’ve done the online observation and you’ve done today’s interview. Has that caused you to, kind of, reflect or change anything that you’re currently doing on Spotify, or not?

Respondent: It hasn’t with me, but I might be different. Where I already do a lot of web science research, and that sort of stuff, I was already aware of a lot of stuff going on contextually. It’s funny, the only thing that made me change when you were doing the online observation is it made me want to listen to music more often through the app so you’d have more data.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: My brain was going… because the thing is I don’t listen consistently, and so because I don’t listen consistently, I was, like, ‘Oh, is she going to get, like, a fair representation of what I normally listen to and how I listen?’ but because it ended up being postponed, you’ve actually done it on a true week, but if you’d done it a week ago, and maybe that’d be interesting to look at, but if you’d gone on the previous week before that, I actively, every time we were listening to music, I was saying to *[partner’s name],* ‘We need to put it through my Spotify, not through your Spotify. It’s got to go through my Spotify.’

Interviewer: So, I’ve, like, ruined your attempt to provide me with an accurate reflection.

Respondent: But, actually, then, you’ve ended up with an accurate reflection, so you’re probably better off.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, in that week, then, where you were conscious of it, I mean, apart from the frequency of your music listening, do you feel that you were tailoring –

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: - it in any other way? It was just that you were listening to more?

Respondent: It was just listening more often, just to make sure that you had enough data. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Well, thanks for that.

Respondent: That’s alright. More songs to analyse.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, yeah, so that’s the end of our interview, so thank you very much for sharing your experiences with music.

Respondent: That’s alright.

Interviewer: From your side, is there anything you would like to expand upon or talk about that we’ve not talked about so far?

Respondent: No, I don’t think so.

Interviewer: Okay. (Overspeaking). Well, that’s done.

Respondent: Perfect.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Respondent: That’s alright.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-11-M

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: - a very relaxed interview. It’s very much led by you, so obviously I’ve got some questions that I’d like to ask you, but you can talk and expand on things as you wish, or if you choose not to answer something, that’s absolutely fine as well, it’s entirely up to you. And, the idea is it’ll roughly last around about an hour. So, before we get started, do you have any questions from your side as to what it’s going to be like or anything?

Respondent: No, I’m just interested in sitting across the table on the other side. When I did mine it was around a different topic. I’ve forgotten how many interviews I did. I discovered that the interviewing part was the most fun part of that part of the research. I also discovered that the transcribing and coding, oh my God! (Laughs) So, you’ll have that to look forward to.

Interviewer: Okay, so I will just mention that when you’re speaking it might be a case that I write some notes down but that’s just basically prompts for me, things to follow up on or things that I’ve maybe not understood from what you’ve said. So yes, that’s what you’ll see if I’m doing some writing. So, the first part I’d like to ask you about then is how you feel that – or whether you feel music is associated with your identity? So, could you tell me a little bit about how you would describe yourself as a music listener first.

[0:04:11]

Respondent: I’ve a lot of varied interests musically, as a listener, as a musician, mostly frustrated but I am capable of using a blues harmonica. So, I like that sort of music, I’ve enjoyed classical music from childhood, I had a couple of good teachers in my formative years and they taught me about things like that. I’ve had a number of musical mentors over a lifetime and they’ve taught me about all sorts of different interesting kinds of – and genres of music. So, yes, it’s hard to say but as far as identity, many and varied is my musical interest.

Interviewer: So, would you say then that music is very important to you and to your identity?

Respondent: Absolutely, yes, very much.

Interviewer: How would you feel – how do you see that?

Respondent: I don’t know, it’s hard for me to describe, it’s… it enriches every day. I very rarely go without music for any long period, very rarely. Some days I like silence; most days I like many and varied. So, sometimes I’ll listen to jags of this, that or the other, sometimes it’s bar(?) music, sometimes it’s contemplative, chill-out, all sorts of different moods.

Interviewer: So, if you feel that music is an important part of who you are, can you think of a time when you’ve explicitly used music as a way to express who you are to other people?

Respondent: Oh sure, particularly in social settings, if I’m having a party I will build a mix for it, things like that.

Interviewer: And, is that your taste in music or is that considering the taste of others who will be in the social setting with you?

Respondent: Both, it depends on what the social setting is, whether it’s going to be up-tempo, whether it’s music for dancing, whether it’s music for conversing, sitting around a dinner table, that kind of thing, so it is subjective to the gathering and to the moment.

Interviewer: And then, so you’ve obviously talked about how you are a musician; do you see there is a difference between your identity as a music listener, your identity as a musician and your identity as potentially a musical performer or are all those things interlinked for you?

Respondent: They’re all together. Yes, I’m not sure what to say.

Interviewer: So, do you feel that the music that you play, perform, listen to and practise, is quite cohesive amongst those potentially different or similar identities?

Respondent: My abilities and my focus as a musician is – stands in some contrast to the range of my musical interests and moods. I have a fairly narrow repertoire and I have a very large range of musical interests that are not easily addressed with a harmonica. I have spent time over the years with a guitar and keyboards but have never gained the ability, the expressive ability with those instruments because – time. So, yes, I would say that my musical interest is far wider than my capability.

Interviewer: So, talking then a little bit more about your music interests, broadly – you’ve said it’s quite varied; how would you describe the music that you like or your musical likes?

Respondent: Well, it’s hard to say (laughs), I’ve got like I say a pretty broad range from classical, of all sorts, historic, modern, various instrumental instrumentations, various approaches from Madrigal to opera to segaldio(?) to – all across the board in that realm, to electronica, some metal… some hip-hop, some beat, some – all sorts, Afro, world music, some new age, some this, some that, rock, blues. Not a big country and western fan and there are some things in the genre that I enjoy but, as a genre, I pretty much leave it out and there aren’t very many that I leave out but it’s just never interested me musically.

[0:11:14]

Interviewer: So, when you say it’s not interested you musically, in what sense do you mean? Is it something about the sound or the lyrics or the performance style?

Respondent: I think it’s more about the culture that I perceive. I’m not a big fan of the cultural mind-set that I perceive, so that’s a form of social construction that leaves me cold, the – what is it? About (inaudible 0:11:48) prison and dogs and pick-up trucks and beer and so on.

Interviewer: So, what would you say – is there anything that you could say across all the genres that you’ve mentioned that you like, which are hugely eclectic and very varied, is there something in that that draws you to all of those genres? So, obviously you’ve said about the culture of country and western you not relating to, but what about your musical likes? Is there something in each of those that you do relate to or enjoy?

Respondent: You’ve pricked me; I think that one of the keys that I forget about with country and western is that the people who produce it and I mean across the board, are very, very talented musicians and that shouldn’t be forgotten, but I think it’s the musicianship that I most enjoy across the genres. I really admire solid musicianship and that’s why I say there are some bits of country and western that I can go with and it’s because of dazzling musicianship and strong talent, well-developed talent and good craft, strong song writing skills for example. There are a few people that I really do admire who have made a lot of country music but, by and large, I will leave that out. So, having said that… I’m thinking that there are, there are all sorts of different things that you get from music, right? You get all sorts of emotional responses. One of mine that I go to from time to time on a mood has to do with… really moving… powerful, operatic pieces. There are some that bring me to tears just about every time because they are so powerful, they are so emotive and the performances are so strong. That, I can really get behind because it is – it’s a fascinating response.

Interviewer: Do you get that response because obviously opera is in many, many languages, so is it something about the music that’s creating that emotional response for you or is it the lyrics, the sound of the voice, the orchestration?

Respondent: I think in many cases it’s – I’m thinking of a couple of different operatic pieces that I really admire. One is from – it’s the Quartet from Rigoletto. In particular, the one that Pavarotti did with Dame Joan Sutherland and I think it was – I can’t think of the other performers but that has dazzled me for years. Another one is a couple of different pieces from Lochmay(?). I get teary because it’s so good and it is – and I don’t understand the French in the Libretto and I don’t understand the Italian in Rigoletto, but I know what’s going on in the story as it’s evolved, so it’s the voices, it’s the orchestration, it’s the choral interplay that I find so dazzling and I think that not least, it’s a number of musicians in these two instances that are at the top of their powers and their dynamic interplay is astonishingly good. After listening to pieces like that, I often wonder, “What are the pieces that I’m not aware of and how do I find them?” that kind of thing. That’s how my musical interest runs. So, one of the things that I do, and Spotify in particular, it’s been a terrific tool for many and varied musical interests. Back in the day I had I think several hundred LPs and when I transitioned out of the States, I gave them away. I couldn’t keep them going forever, so I gave them all away and when I arrived in the UK, I think I had already discovered Spotify, it was pretty new at the time and not long after arriving, I decided that I would pay for a subscription because it was just ridiculously cheap for the value that you got and mostly it’s been a good experience. Every once in a while they disappear my playlists and that kind of thing, so that’s irritating, but what they do is they allow me to amass a collection not dissimilar to the one that I used to have in boxes of LPs and I can play them however I like. So, what I will do with playlists is either build them out of an interest that is from memory and I’ve recaptured a number of the albums that I used to own. And, the other thing that I will do is collect things by genre and another thing that I will do is listen to online streams like for instance SomaFM or Streaming Swiss Jazz that kind of thing and there are what – thousands across the musical spectrum? Every once in a while, probably in the order of every couple of months, I will spend an afternoon working at my desk and listening to music as I’m doing that. So, it’s doing the sort of work that I don’t have to focus on entirely, so I’ve got room for music to come in and I will stream something off one of the online radio streams and when I catch something that resonates, I will look it up on Spotify and put it in a playlist and I’ve done this many times over the past ten years and I slowly build up a playlist and at some point in time I’ll go on to the next one. So, it’s a case of collecting tracks over the space of a week maybe and then going, “Yes, that’s what I’ll listen to for a while”. Those are typically modern, I’m not sure what the genre would be and a lot of times it’s mixed, it’s just whatever is – I’m interested in at the moment and then the rest is much more focused.

[0:21:04]

Interviewer: So, do you think then originally you were perhaps using Spotify as a tool for replication of your previous physical collection and then it’s become a music discovery?

Respondent: In the beginning, yes, it’s been – I’ve done a lot of discovery with it. I haven’t found… that’s not fair… I do use their recommender system on occasion and every once in a while they’ll pop up something new and fresh. For example, this morning on my way in, I listened to a few tracks from Derek and the Dominoes and after the fourth track, I think I only have four tracks in that playlist, after the fourth one there was a track that – it flips over in to their recommender. So, they followed those with an absolutely perfectly apposite track, one that I’d never heard before, and it is amazing, it is absolutely amazing! It’s “A Day in the Life” by Jeff Beck live and it’s jaw dropping, it is so good. If you haven’t heard it, it’s…Oh god, it’s Beck on guitar with a band and it is nuanced and then it is crashing and then it is all sorts and it starts out as just this really light-touch, you heard the news today, “Oh boy, buy(?) the guitar” and it goes through an entire maelstrom in the middle and then it comes back to the refrain and it’s absolutely delightful.

Interviewer: So, in that sense Spotify then got it spot-on for you?

Respondent: They got it spot-on for me this morning and so, what I’ll do with that is I’ll go and find that album and find out what else is in that album that I like. I really like that track so they hit it on the head this morning, absolutely.

Interviewer: And, do you understand why they recommended you that? Was it very similar to what – was it similar genre or sound or -?

Respondent: Well, Derek and the Dominoes is Eric Clapton and the gang from back in the early 70s and so following that up with a track by The Beatles, reimagined by Jeff Beck as a guitar and then a full-on rock assault, really fit, really fit the bill but moved the needle, okay? So, it’s updated, I’m not sure when the track was done but I’ll have to go and find out. In that case, they did their job well and I look forward to following up on that. I have seen them do similar kinds of things, so when I get to the end of a playlist, they will carry on with their recommendations for what might – ought to be in the playlist too and frequently, they’ll get it right. Sometimes not so much and sometimes I will go ahead and click “add” so I use it in that way as well. I have not spent much time with LastFM over the years. I know that they do similar recommendation things. I will have a question or two for you because I’m really curious not only about your research but about the insights that you’re gaining through this research, I think there have got to be some fascinating things in music discovery for example.

Interviewer: Yes, so going to your music discovery though, is it often the case then that Spotify will recommend you a track, often at the end of your playlist and then that will prompt more active discovery on your part? So, then you will go and search for that artist and then search around -?

Respondent: Sometimes yes, sometimes no, it’s really subjective to the moment, to whether or not I have enough latitude to give some time and effort to that or whether I’m busy with other things and the music is wallpaper and I can’t be troubled to do anything with it. And, there are times in such circumstances where I will take a moment to jot down a track name and then follow up when I’ve got the time to do that. So, this morning for example, I was just arriving here at the university when this last track came across and it left an impression, I had to find out who it was. I had imagined somehow that it was Clapton but it wasn’t. It was just something about the guitar work.

[0:26:40]

Interviewer: A good way then to start the morning! (Laughs)

Respondent: Yes, it was great.

Interviewer: So, I’d like to go back to obviously the idea of you previously having an LP collection. There’s been a lot of research about physical ownership versus online what they all “borrowing”; do you see that there’s any difference for you personally, between the investment and the feelings that you had about your physical LP collection to now how you feel about your Spotify library and the playlists you have on there?

Respondent: That is an interesting question; I’m not sure how to… It gets in to ideas of ownership, of physical things, all of that. I would be… that’s the thing with Spotify, you don’t really own anything, you have access and if anything, the only thing that you might own with Spotify is your track listing. It seems to me that once or twice I have worked out how to download that, because that is important to me. If that disappeared today, I would be unhappy about that because I would lose track of a lot of things. My current track listing amounts to several thousands of tracks and I wouldn’t possibly be able to remember all of that and some of it would be a loss. There are a lot of things on there that I don’t listen to hardly ever. Similarly, with a record collection, that has its plusses and minuses. Having to lug it around, that’s a minus, having a wall full of records, plus (laughs), it’s like having a wall full of books which is my favourite. I like the idea of not – on the one hand it’s nice to have all that stuff and on the other hand it’s nice to not have all that stuff. I find that getting rid of things is really deeply satisfying these days (laughs). Anyway, I don’t miss the record collection; I would miss the track listings, I should maybe take out my insurance policy (Interviewer laughs), download the listing, put it in a file that I can find again, if I need to. If I need to change services for example. I think it’s safe to assume that unless civilisation grinds to a standstill, Spotify or somebody like them, is going to be serving up tracks forever, so I don’t worry about losing that information over time, but I do want to safeguard it just the same, because it’s important to me, to be able to hear those things.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you’ve invested a lot of yourself in to the Spotify tracks that you have on there?

Respondent: To a certain degree but that was something that I did willingly and over a long period of time, so yes, it would be a drag to lose it but I don’t feel that it’s – that I’d be losing part of myself, I don’t know.

Interviewer: Do you think Spotify though is a good reflection of your musical identity?

Respondent: I think that’s fair to say. It’s not very often that I find that an interest goes unrequited by Spotify; they’ve got most everything that I’m interested. Every once in a while, I will find an album, for example they used to have Brian Ferry’s Bete Noir, they don’t anymore, so if I want to listen to Bete Noir, I have to go find it on my old iPod. That’s just how it is because Mr Ferry or his label decided that album had to go.

Interviewer: Because I was going to ask you something about that as well, because obviously with the varied musical taste that you have and it going in to the classical realm as well and the various subgenres of that, how well do you feel that that is represented by Spotify? Because there’s a lot of people within that domain of music that feel that classical music and its sub-genres aren’t very well represented.

Respondent: Are under-served?

Interviewer: Yes.

[0:32:44]

Respondent: I think that it’s reasonably well represented. I tend to gravitate to certain artists or composers or orchestras because I like experimentation. For instance, I’ve curated a bunch of Mozart tracks in a playlist and I find that there are different versions of the same pieces by different orchestras, by different sinfonia and so forth that I like more or less in comparison. A few years ago I discovered that - what is it the, I think it’s the Bournemouth Sinfonia did some wonderful work by Michael Haydn, that I really enjoyed and who knew that Bournemouth would be cranking out some really gorgeous stuff! In other places I get snobbish, in the sense of I’m not a huge fan of Placido Domingo but Pavarotti is something else again, so I go that direction as well. I have found that an awful lot of the music that I’ve heard, and this goes back to when I was listening to LPs and I was able to get them at the local library, what is it… what’s the label, it’s a brilliant label… most of the things that I found on that label were of exceptional quality. So, oh gosh… the gamut, the core of classical music, was so well represented on that label, so that was one that I always paid attention to.

Interviewer: So, do you feel that your – have your musical tastes always been as varied or has this been a change or a development over time that you can pinpoint?

Respondent: My musical interests have been varied for a very long time, since high school, easily since high school. At the time I had – well, ever since, I’ve had a lot of friends who recommend a lot of things and I’ve been to many, many, many live performances across genres and learned a lot about music in that fashion. Growing up in the States in the 70s, a lot of rock shows, that kind of thing and then further in to the 80s and 90s, I was able to indulge interest in theatre and in opera and in sinfonia concerts and in ballet and so forth and that’s really been a function of having the time and the means to pursue those interests and living in communities where they were available. So, that was just how that all came about for me, but my interests were varied going back a very long way. I discovered in… I think in the late 60s and the early 70s, I was a kid and I had the opportunity I think at the time to attend a concert at the Seattle Symphony Orchestras and I was absolutely dazzled. Up to that time, I had not seen that calibre of performance or musicianship. I was interested in classical music at the time, in the greats, but I hadn’t seen it and that really focused my interest from a very early age. So, yes, I was interested in the contemporary music of the time which was rock and roll and had learned a thing or two about different genres of music coming up through school, like you do, but that really got my attention and that really made me understand that it was fun to not be exclusive in your interests, it’s entirely possible to have a zillion different interests, so I enjoy that.

Interviewer: So, would you say then that your friends were pretty exclusive? When you were back in high school, were they quite exclusive in their music tastes and that it was just a case that you cross multiple different friendship groups or were your friends actually quite varied?

Respondent: Yes, I think a lot of my friends had varied interests. Some were seekers, they were interested in pushing the boundaries and finding out more and more and more about who the interesting and intensely creative artists were and pursuing that, down that direction or in those wider directions because there’s such a world of interest. And, coming out of high school, I had friends who were going off to different cities and getting exposed to the cultural scenes in those places and then bringing it back and I was learning from them about all that. I started coming to London back in the 70s and that expanded my musical interests as well, so as I got out in to the world, it became larger and larger and that was great.

Interviewer: And, then what about live performances as well? Do you think – was that solidifying your taste in that genre or was that an exploration in genres? How did the live performances feed in to your music likes?

[0:41:02]

Respondent: If I had to characterise the things that I was seeing back in the 70s, it had to be mostly rock and roll shows, rock concerts, bar bands, all sorts, but largely in, “Well, can you dance to it?” that direction. But then of course you had to go to prog rock and a lot of that you couldn’t dance to (laughs). Well, Pink Floyd doesn’t lend itself to dancing so well. You don’t boogie! So, that was I’d say early days it was a question of paying good money for rock shows primarily and, like I say, as time went on, my many and varied interests led me in other directions. So, I started going to classical performances of various kinds, along with lots of rock shows. I still go to all sorts, I… I’m trying to think what we’ve done this year… I’m having a hard time trying to remember.

Interviewer: (Laughs) Is that because there’s been so many?

Respondent: Not this year but let’s see, my wife and I have been to a fair number of concerts since I’ve lived here over the past eight or nine years, mostly rock shows I’d guess, a few jazz singers, different kinds of things. We saw Hugh Laurie at Brighton a few years back, we’ve got a show coming up this month, another one next month, world music and nasty rock, good fun!

Interviewer: So, you’ve talked about your friends being an influence on your listening when you were younger; do you have connected friends on Spotify at all? Do you have that friend stream going down the browser page?

Respondent: I’m familiar with a couple of people that I’ve never met that I’ve – I’m not sure where they came from, I think they probably tracked in to something that I had play-listed and so I had a look at what they were doing and enjoyed some of it. I found that that doesn’t always pan out; sometimes you hit some interests, common interests, which I find really fascinating, trying to understand how that works. It’s particularly among people who have a zillion different musical interests, it makes perfect sense that you would have common interests and uncommon, okay? That, we all hear things differently; some things resonate really well, other things not so much. I have a pair of friends, a couple who live where I lived in Washington, they’re still there, I’ve been a privileged guest at a number of their parties over the years. They have amazing playlists and I’ve just been so dazzled by what they’ve put together. That just says to me, maybe not so much that they have good taste but we have common taste, we have musical interests in common and I’ve been really pleased to hear what they’ve come up with and I have asked them, they said “no”! (Laughs) Yes, that was harsh. They’re delightful people!

Interviewer: So, you don’t really feel then the people that you have on your Spotify necessarily influence your listening?

Respondent: Yes and no. I will say yes and no. I can think of two people right off, three, whose names I recall. I’ve found that we have shared interests but we have divergent interests as well. So, some of the stuff they like, I like, and otherwise not so much and I think that nobody is following any of my playlists right now and that’s fine, I don’t care, I don’t curate that stuff for anybody else. I take that back, I did create one playlist for my brother. I have many brothers, one of them plays drums and guitar and all sorts, a very talented musician but over the past dozen years he’s had a drum kit in his spare room and he’s been bashing that, so I created a playlist and I think I pointed it to him one time and I doubt that he ever uses it. But it’s just, it’s a collection, my brother *[name]* is a rock musician, has been for a long, long time and I just put this list together, it’s all a bunch of rock songs but across the range of different rock songs. Some of them he knows, some of them he might not know. What I did with that playlist was put together a whole pile of different drum things, so different timings, different beats, all of the different stuff that you get across a range of rock music, so that was the one track, playlist that I built for somebody else.

[0:49:02]

Interviewer: And, what prompted you to create that? Was it to show him the various styles of music that were available or for him to play or -?

Respondent: No, he would – I think at one point I was living in his house a few years ago over the months when I couldn’t be here, so after graduating from Southampton my student visa stopped and at that point, as an American, I can only stay in the country six months out of the calendar year. Problematic for my relationship but we weren’t married, so we’ve solved that problem! And, probably should have figured it out long before, would have saved a lot of time and trouble. In any case, I was living over there at the time and he would sometimes come to the rumpus room and start playing the drums as I was sitting there listening to the playlist that I had and that led me to, “Yes, I should just build one for him”, so that’s what I did.

Interviewer: But, then in terms of other music, you see it as that you’ve created it for yourself and not conscious that anybody else might listen to it?

Respondent: The other things that I’ve done? Yes, those are all for me and I would not be surprised if other people, like the people who found my playlist previously, I don’t know if they’d take any interest, I don’t think there are any followers on any of those; I haven’t noticed lately.

Interviewer: And, do you feel then that maybe Spotify has influenced your music listening at all? So, for instance, since you’ve been using the platform, do you feel that your music listening has become even more diverse or more fixed? Do you feel it’s influenced it at all?

Respondent: That’s a dandy question. As a vehicle, they have allowed me access that would have been much more difficult if I had to keep buying LPs, far more difficult, because an awful lot of the things that I have are either one-off or obscure. I’m pleased to be able to say that they’ve got a lot of obscure material, very, very much so, so that’s terrific. I had, in my record collection I had a number of things that most people in my world had never heard of and I basically was getting those from people who were, “Ah, but you’ve got to listen to this”. So, I would go get that. They have been extraordinarily helpful in providing access to an awful lot of tracks that – so much so that, like I said earlier, I wonder what – I’m imagining that there have got to be hundreds, nay thousands, of tracks that I would love if I knew what they were and if I knew how to find them. So, for instance, the one that they gave me this morning, “Thanks guys!” that was really terrific, I will probably overplay that over the next couple of days and then I’ll be able to move on.

Interviewer: So, is that – obviously like you say, it is about access and about how many songs they’ve got on there, a ridiculous number.

Respondent: Millions.

[0:53:29]

Interviewer: Yes, is that a concern then for you, that there’s perhaps something on there that you would really love and enjoy listening to but that you – it doesn’t seem to be within your circle?

Respondent: That’s the dream. I will find things or I may never find them, so Jeez, that’s like, “What’s the right lottery number?” I wish I knew the key to that, I really wish I knew, “What are all the things that I am going to love?” but I don’t know, it’s the funny thing to – I think it goes to where you come from, where you’ve been. Something that interests me now probably wouldn’t have interested me ten, 20 years ago, who knows? Lately I’ve been listening to, on a recommendation from an old friend, I was talking with another brother, this was back a few months ago, I was talking with my brother *[name]* on the phone and he mentioned our common friend *[name]* and I said – we were talking about music for some reason, recorded music, and I said, “Ask *[friend’s name]* –“ I think *[friend’s name]* had come in the room and he’s an old friend of ours and a music buff, a long time but I could tell you stories, he could… amazing guy! I said, “Ask *[friend’s name]* what he’s listening to, what’s he got on heavy rotation right now?” and the answer came back, “Lake Street Dive”, have you heard of -?

Interviewer: No, but I did see that you had been listening to them in the week that I observed, but I’ve never heard of them.

Respondent: They are a five piece group from – I don’t know, some place back East in the States, Michigan? Don’t know… romantic, really solid, amazing musicianship, all vocalists. The lead vocalist has a phenomenal voice, god she’s good! I was fortunate enough to catch them at a concert in Seattle a couple of months ago, holy smokes, you just wanted to cry! And, so what it gets to is there are a couple of tracks in their recent work that absolutely get me, right? It’s the beat, it’s the instrumentation, it’s the lyrics, it’s the musicianship and it’s just right there, really just what you like and the rest is good but there are just a couple that stand out and go right to my pleasure centre. So, you know what I’m saying? So, when you hear something that just absolutely resonates right now, I had that kind of experience this morning with this Jeff Beck tune, just, “Holy smokes, what’s this? I like it!” and until you hear that, you won’t know and that is subjective as well, so where you’ve come from and what you’ve – what resonates for you now, in the moment.

Interviewer: So, it sounds like you’re a person then that really enjoys discovering new music.

Respondent: I do, I do, I heart discovering new music, it’s… I can’t do it fast enough, that’s a problem for me. Back when I went across – I went to the show that they did over in Seattle and I went home after and I put a few tracks on heavy rotation and I wore them out; in the space of two days I just wore them out and it took a while to get back to where I like them again, you know the feeling?

Interviewer: Yes, so is it often then that you’ll play something that you’ve discovered on heavy rotation first?

Respondent: Exactly, that’s a problem for me but it’s like that cigarette, “Oh god I’ve got to have…” or whatever, that doughnut, whatever craving you’ve got, you’ve got to go get it again and then after a while it’s, “Oh no, not another!” (laughs)

[0:59:19]

Interviewer: So, with your music discoveries then, do you always get – because it sounds like you get a really intense, emotional, personal connection with that song and you’re, “Yes, that’s me”. Does that always happen when you discover new things that you like?

Respondent: No, I wouldn’t say so, it’s just – I think in the moment and it’s nuanced as hell, so it’s organic, you can never tell. There are some things that are more or less dependable but – and there are times when I’ll self-throttle and (inaudible 1:00:07) with my interests because I want to keep it.

Interviewer: And, as well with just likening music discoveries for a craving, so is there then a certain period that goes by and you realise you’ve not discovered any new music and you think, “Oh my gosh, I must go out and look for some”?

Respondent: No, well maybe a little bit… yes, it’s when I notice that I’ve been listening to this playlist over and over for a time, that’s when I will diversify, so I’ll revisit older things and it’s good to do that, for me, it really works for me to mix it up and I’m cheerful that I’ve got so many playlists in my collection that I can skip across to all kinds of different genres and feels and moods and so forth, that helps. And, then every once in a while I’ll go, “Hmm, yes, it’s getting about time I got to make a new collection” and I think I’m there right now, I think I’m there. I’m not sure – I feel like the thing that I first surfaced this morning, I’m not sure if that starts a new playlist or if that just goes tapped on to the Dominoes, but I think it’s – I’m getting to where I need to start creating a new one.

Interviewer: And, where does this new music come from? Does it tend to be on things that you’ve found or does it tend to be from friends’ recommendations or Spotify?

Respondent: It can be all of that. Normally when I set about to creatively do a new list, I will start listening to online radio and I’m thinking that I probably ought to start looking further afield.

Interviewer: Is this Spotify’s online radio or just any online radio service?

Respondent: I normally use SomaFM, are you familiar?

Interviewer: Not particularly.

Respondent: It’s a – I gather it’s a non-profit in San Francisco. When I discovered them, they were – I think they had maybe half a dozen different streams that they did and they had I think just a few different streaming formats for each of those stations. They now have maybe a couple of dozen different stations so it’s Soma.FM and multiple different streaming formats, MP3 and AEC and FLAC and so forth. They have lots of different streaming choices and I like the different notional threads that they provide. The one that I’ve used most is called Groove Salad, that works for me!

Interviewer: It sounds very – (laughs) such a random name.

Respondent: I’d recommend it. They’ve got tonnes of different musical approaches, various sorts of house and chill and vocal and trance and all kinds, interesting stuff.

Interviewer: So, what led you to that? Were you – did somebody make you aware of it or did you -?

Respondent: That was years ago, that was back in the 00s, 90s and 00s, I was a software developer in Seattle and one of my friends said, “Here is SomaFM, listen to this” and it was great for when you were head down coding, mostly instrumental stuff and mostly trance stuff, so it lent itself really well to doing coding kinds of things; it was easy.

Interviewer: And, then what about recommendations of new music that come from friends? Do you have those trusted people that you take on board their recommendations and perhaps others you wouldn’t?

[1:05:47]

Respondent: Yes, it just depends on who it’s coming from and how much salt you have to take it with. I have a whole bunch of friends who have good taste in music or at least convergent taste in music, so I will pay attention to their interests. My son is 23, he’s been guiding some of my musical taste for a number of years now. He (laughs) likes all kinds of stuff; some of it I like, some of it I don’t care for so much, so he’s like his dad, he’s got lots of different interests and I think he gets to indulge it rather more often than I do in terms of live performance, he does that a lot and he lives in a community where that happens a lot, where it’s available just about every night, so he – when he’s able to, I think he goes and goes out head-banging.

Interviewer: (Laughs) So, he’s been – he’s guiding you in to different music rather than you guiding him or is it -?

Respondent: Well no, I think it’s fair to say that I’ve guided him a lot. He has picked up a lot of my interests. It’s been educational, having kids is really educational! Do you have kids?

Interviewer: No, not yet.

Respondent: So, he grew up listening to all the music that his mother and I listened to and that was all sorts of different things and it’s really charming when he discovers – I think he was 15 when he discovered Jimmy Hendrix and I think he discovered Nirvana around the same time and it’s stuff like that that is really endearing. Seeing him appreciate Star Spangled Banner for the first time is just – wow! It’s very cool and as I say, he has introduced me to all sorts of whacky things over the past eight years. Since about the age of 15, he’s had lots of different interests and has brought all kinds of different tracks in to the house that I might not have done, so I appreciate that too and other things, not so much.

Interviewer: So then how does Spotify fit in to this new music discovery? Are there particular tools that you use? So, for example the similar artist tab or daily mixes or things like that, that help you to discover new stuff?

Respondent: I don’t use those very often; I find them disappointing most of the time.

Interviewer: In terms of they don’t produce anything new or things that you like?

Respondent: They’re really hit and miss; they’ve very hit and miss. I find that they are so…less than reliable, that I don’t use them very often.

Interviewer: Are there any of the platform tools that you use consistently or -?

Respondent: If there’s one, it will be the end of playlist recommendations and that’s - usually that’s because I’ve got to the end of the list and I’m still listening and I’m willing to, at least for a little while, give them the benefit of the doubt. Every once in a while they’ll pull something out of a hat, so I’m good with that.

Interviewer: So, do you feel that that’s more – that is a more reliable way for finding music that you like rather than the discover features that Spotify has on their site?

Respondent: Just ever so slightly, yes. How would you say… more often I will find music some place else and then curate it in Spotify, that’s been my usual approach. If I can find it, then I’ll playlist it and if I can’t then I ordinarily just forget about it and move on and go and find something that I can find.

Interviewer: For you, what would Spotify have to do or produce that would mean that you would find new music reliably on their platform? Is there something you could pinpoint?

Respondent: If I had to write an algorithm for that, I don’t know how I would approach that. I think that kind of question is the sort of question that you might get at a Google interview; I don’t know the answer. I just don’t know how I would approach that algorithm, it beats me!

Interviewer: So, if we go on to talking a little bit more about Spotify, so when you go on to Spotify, what tends to be your usual practices?

Respondent: Oh, we’re running late.

Interviewer: Sorry, have you got somewhere that you need to be?

Respondent: I do need to be some place else.

Interviewer: That’s absolutely fine, sorry about that.

Respondent: That’s alright, I’ve got somewhere that I need to attend.

Interviewer: Well, thank you very much, I really appreciate that.

Respondent: I’m sorry to cut it short.

Interviewer: That’s no problem at all, not a –

[End of transcript]

# Transcript: In-12-M

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Hi!

Respondent: Can you see me?

Interviewer: Yes, can you see me?

Respondent: Yeah, I can.

Interviewer: Perfect!

Respondent: You look a bit down in the right corner though, if that’s helpful.

Interviewer: Oh really. Is that better?

Respondent: Ah cool. Absolutely, brilliant. No worries.

Interviewer: Thank you!

(Laughter)

How are you?

Respondent: I’m good. I was about to add you and I was getting really frustrated about all, well Skype is all so new now, and, oh, I couldn’t find anything.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know, because I like, I typed in your email address and like nothing came up and I was like, “This is so weird,” so then I just like typed in your full name and then something came up.

Respondent: Oh because I sent you, I told you in the email it would be like, so maybe –

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: - because that’s my Skype profile.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Like, I’ve like four emails.

Interviewer: But no, perhaps it had to … it had to like search your full name so I don’t really know.

Respondent: Oh, there’s only one of me though.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Well, yeah, your name is quite easy, there is only one of you on there.

Respondent: Yeah. It’s a bit frustrating as well, on like Facebook, “Oh there’s only one person named Keith”.

Interviewer: Yeah, so then they definitely know it’s you which can be a good thing or a very bad thing.

Respondent: Very bad thing most of the time.

[0:01:19]

(Laughter)

So how is this strategy, how do you want to start off?

Interviewer: Okay, so I have got some questions to ask you based on like your music listening and your use of Spotify, so I will ask some questions but then it’s really based on your responses really so how you want to kind of talk and expand on things. Then maybe some things that you don’t want to talk about as well, which is perfectly fine, you can say, you know, you don’t want to talk about it or whatever comes up.

Respondent: Please, please stop me if I talk too much.

Interviewer: Oh no, there’s no such thing as talking too much, there’s not such thing.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: But yeah, so it’s based really on your responses and while you’re talking it might be a case that I write some notes down …

Respondent: That’s fine.

Interviewer: … for kind of things to follow up on or maybe things that I haven’t understood.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: I’ve also got like a little recorder here which is just audio recording our call.

Respondent: Okay. So you don’t like, you’re not fussing about the time or anything?

Interviewer: No, no. No. Well, I mean ideally the interview will last around an hour.

Respondent: That’s fine.

Interviewer: But, yeah, as I say, it just depends on how much you want to talk about things and kind of what you have to say.

Respondent: Anything that will aid your research I think.

Interviewer: Oh good.

Respondent: It’s like aren’t we here to do science?

(Laughter)

Interviewer: So, have you got any questions before we get started?

Respondent: No, not really. Oh, did you get access to my Last.fm account?

Interviewer: Yes, yes, I had a quick look through before our interview today, so yeah, I’ve had a quick look through the last seven days.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: So yeah, so that’s what I’ve just concentrated on because by the looks of things you’ve got a whole history on there.

[0:02:58]

Respondent: Yeah, there’s a lot of things. I have seen myself to listen more to music now though than like the first part of the week but it’s more like this is when the stress starts, so …

Interviewer: Oh really?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Stress in terms of uni stress or …?

Respondent: Yeah, just in terms of being frustrated, be like my day not adding up, being like listening to death metal all the time.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Oh no! So with your Last.fm then, do you purposely track your music or is … or …?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: So also I noticed you were like with devices and stuff that we would … so basically like I use my phone now but I have … I’ve actually just added my Last.fm account and my Spotify account together so I don’t need to stress with device tracking.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: But like everything I’ve been listening to in a week is on my phone anyway, so you don’t need to.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. No, that’s fine. So I mean is there a reason then that you’ve decided to track your own listening?

Respondent: I just started in 2013? I think just … so in 2013 Last.fm had like, they had an entitlement on Spotify. They were like – is this part of the interview?

Interviewer: Yeah, well, I’ve got the recording going but no, it doesn’t have to be.

Respondent: Yeah, no … yeah, like … Last.fm just sort of advertised being like, “Last.fm to Spotify,” and I was like, “Cool, I’ll add on”.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And then like the aftermath of sort of like, “Why am listening to a lot of music and I get to discover more stuff?” But it’s also … it’s also just like to take in the surreal amount of music that I listen to in those stressing periods of my life.

Interviewer: Oh okay. No …

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: I just, I find it really interesting because you’re the first person I’ve come across that is actually actively using Last.fm for their own purposes and to record their own music – music listening. Nobody else that I’ve spoken to has kind of been doing that, so I was just, I was just really surprised and interested.

[0:05:01]

Respondent: Oh no, it’s cool. I’m not like, I’m not on it as often as I would on Facebook obviously. But I know it’s still there, I’m keeping check on it maybe once a month. Sometimes I’m discovering new bands, sometimes I’m just trying to out compete my friends in listening, the amount. I have a friend of mine, he listens so much more than I do. Yeah, I like to … like the average of songs, I go through a day, like it’s on average around 40 or something. But so like my highest for a week would be 683 or something.

Interviewer: Wow!

Respondent: 600 and something. Either it was 83 or 23, I don’t know. I’m just like saying, I don’t remember clearly.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: Yeah, and it was totally like uni, it was the end of my dissertation, I lived alone, like altered my sleeping pattern completely, I like, I woke up at 2.00am in the morning.

Interviewer: Oh gosh.

Respondent: 2.00pm and worked all the way through the night because it was just quiet and I listened to music all the time. So, yeah, that’s, yeah. Did we talk about it, by the way?

Interviewer: Pardon?

Respondent: What did we talk about, by the way?

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Respondent: No, like what was the question?

Interviewer: Oh no, no, it was just asking if, you know, if there was a reason why you started tracking your own music listening.

Respondent: No, it’s just interesting basically.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So if we kind of go back to some of the questions that I’ve got prepared.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: The first things I would like to you about is how and whether you think music is an important part of your identity.

Respondent: So, by the way, how do you define identity, because …

Interviewer: So I see it as identity can be very different, there is a potential to be different people in different contexts depending on who you’re with or what kind of role you’re performing so, for example, you as a student versus you with your friends, there might be some difference in that. But kind of thinking whether music allows you – is a resource for you to use to express who you are, whether that’s self-expression, so you're expressing it internally, or whether it is an outward expression to other people.

[0:07:20]

Respondent: Oh yeah. Then could you just repeat the question so I just …?

Interviewer: Yeah, so I mean do you feel that music is important to you and that it is something that you use for your identity work?

Respondent: Yes, it is. I'm probably an addict.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: Yeah. It’s in a very bad reason so I use music a lot for stress or just sort of like to calm down my own emotional responses. I also … I also use music to get high sometimes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And not that I’m using any external drugs but sometimes I just get high on music. I don’t know why but I’ll be like just sitting there listening and like just having a really, really, really good time. Other times … yeah, other times I use it as like a … to be more myself in a room, let’s say you're in an awkward social situation, like one of those horrid postgraduate parties where no one is actually partying and I feel like I’m just going to put something on because I know I’ll be more chilled and I’ll probably get this … I’ll get the ball to roll, I’ll get people to talk if I just relax and I just need to listen to this. So, yeah, it’s basically like … it’s … yeah, it’s so important to me that like I couldn’t … I probably couldn’t survive much without it for very long. I’d be like starting to make my own music or something.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Yeah. Do you want any expansion on anything?

Interviewer: So I mean I’m kind of interested then, so when you say that you kind of get a high out of music and you use it for, to manage emotional responses, is that certain types of music then that you use in particular situations?

Respondent: Hmm … the high is like I can’t really explain, like I can’t really predict that I’ll be high on this music.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so it’s not something that you put on and you know that that is going to give you like a music high?

Respondent: No, that’s what’s so weird about it. It’s … so it’s probably like some kind of emotional overload or like some really good stimuli and it’s because I can’t predict it, I usually sort of end up using the situation as best as I can. So just how to frame this. Also I’m foreign so sometimes there’ll be some breaks just to …

Interviewer: No, that’s fine, that’s fine.

Respondent: Yeah, so like, do you know Tash Sultana?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: Like the Australian?

Interviewer: No.

[0:10:01]

Respondent: She’s an Australian multi-instrumentalist and she – I don’t think her latest album is that good, but she has some live recordings on YouTube and they are like watched 20 million times or something and I like, it was last year when I was like doing a stats course and I was at university and I suddenly just listened to her, you know, like this makes me high, like in a … like in a endorphin sort of overflow like … like you’re drunk but not drunk high, and you feel like really happy and just sit there and be like sort of relaxed in your happiness. And that was literally all the time when listening to these recordings, so I sat one and a half hours just listening to it. But if I would hear it now I wouldn’t be … I wouldn’t get high with that.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: So it’s just happens occasionally and I don’t know what I’ll be high of, it’s just I’ll be high for some weird reason.

Interviewer: So there’s kind of no consistency then in the music that gives you that high?

Respondent: No. There’s another, I think there’s another song on my playlist, I’m also terrible with music names, so I just sort of like, if I have to look for something I go through my whole playlist but there is like one guitar solo on one of the songs on my *[playlist name]* right now and the *[playlist name]*, I don’t know if it shows up on Last.fm or something, but it’s called *[playlist name],* it’s a weird mix of Norwegian and English.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: It just means *[playlist name]*. And there’s just the 2.0 version and like that guitar solo, that makes me high. But it’s such a short time, it’s only just like using it whenever I have the opportunity, and there’s like some … so I wouldn’t say to the extent that there’s some other sort of like when I get really, like I … I don’t control my emotions, but I … I … what’s the word? I help deal with my emotions through music. So I would guess that some other songs they appeal to me in a good way and I feel good about them dealing with my internal like sort of frustration and stuff. From these songs, like there’s a song from a band called Blood Command right now which is like punk rockish and I don’t all listen to punk rock, I listen to a lot of stuff, but right now this appeals to me because it just takes off the edge of all the frustration of me not having done as much as I should do on my uni courses. And it just makes me feel good so that I’d say that if on a scale from one to ten, ten or ten or would high then Blood Command may be makes me like a four, so it’s like decently good but it’s not giving a high good but, yeah, it’s very unpredictable. I don’t, I can’t really talk with my feelings and ask them what they want today, I just have to go through and sort of … I usually have like a sort of a … yeah, like an intuitive like I might like something that hard today and then I start off with maybe well-known … maybe a well-known death metal band that I’ll just work myself out from there and I’ll basically like feel my way around. I won’t think, I’ll feel my way around.

Interviewer: And what about then when you’re feeling stressed? Is it kind of very much you feel your way around what music you want to listen to or do you have certain music that helps you, you know, when you are feeling stressed?

Respondent: I have certain music that helps me when I feel stressed but I will also be like in the adventurous corner as well.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Which is really great with Spotify because it will just keep on playing the similar tracks afterwards. So I’ll probably like, as today, go to Blood Command and then Blood Command suddenly, maybe something from, not that this is has happened, but maybe Linkin Park with Numb will start playing and I’ll be like, “Yeah, this appeals to me,” and then I post like on that and there’ll be more music like that later because of it.

[0:14:20]

Interviewer: Okay. And obviously as well kind of being Norwegian, do you feel that that kind of influences your musical identity or not?

Respondent: Sorry for laughing, it’s not meant to be rude.

Interviewer: No, no, no, don’t worry, don’t worry.

Respondent: Yes and no, so this death metal I love, it’s metal definitely. It’s Kvelertak and they’re like, they’ve been touring with Metallica – are they still going? I think it’s Metallica or something.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: And they are Norwegian, so I like, I was told by my Norwegian friends to go and listen to them. But they’re very international now because like apparently no one ever listens to the lyrics when you listen to metal so in that sense, yeah, some, I can find some Norwegian music appealing to me, but it’s also … I think it’s very few songs in like sort of the hardcore spectrum that I actually listen to the lyrics. I more listen to the sound.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So if I was going to listen to lyrics I would probably more go like with Leonard Cohen or something like that, something like that’s more down to it and I sort of can actually pick out and get a grasp of what they’re on about.

Interviewer: So how often then do you say you would pick music for its sound versus for its lyrics? Do you tend to go for more of one than the other?

Respondent: Sound is like 85% of the time.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Like it’s … if I … or 90% maybe, because if I have like a … if I actually have a break from my studies, let’s say I have a list on Spotify called *[playlist name]*. I can like send you the playlist screenshot if you want that. So there’s like I’ll have a list called *[playlist name]* which is all just rock.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: It’s not really – it’s just because it’s been cooked, basically.

Interviewer: I was going to say, these all have very unusual names.

Respondent: Yes, and there’s one called *[playlist name]*.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Which is just like really easy, it’s what you play in the morning when you’ve been out and you're hungover and you just need to take a chill.

[0:16:33]

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: And there is one called *[playlist name]* just for the pun.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah, but so in like … what was it was talking about? Erm … I can’t remember, I was going to say some playlist in there.

Interviewer: So, sorry, you were saying about music for sound versus music for lyrics, so you said those sort of times –

(Overspeaking)

Respondent: Yes, so I have a playlist called *[playlist name]* which is basically whenever I sit and drink whiskey for myself and sometimes feel a bit sad for myself and it’s all with music that’s like Melody Goodall, Leonard Cohen, it’s all music that I can pick the lyrics from. And sort of empathise with the song in the lyric sense. So I feel a bit bad for listening to so much music and not really ever thinking about the … thinking about the words.

Interviewer: Aha. Do you think though that is perhaps something to do with the genres of music that you like?

Respondent: The genres of music? Hmm … I don’t know, like that’s probably like more based on being Norwegian to be honest.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Because sort of like you listen to a lot of English music when you’re young but you don’t have the English ability to pick the, pick it quick enough, so you just end up with like taking in all the … all the sound in the first place. Like I notice with Norwegian music when I actually listen to that, that’s very rarely, and it’s not that they’re bad, it’s just that very little of it appeals to me. That’s sort of when I take the song for the words first and then go, and then the sound.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So it’s probably something of a language barrier to be honest.

Interviewer: Okay. So then broadly speaking, what would you say is music that you like? How would you define your music likes?

Respondent: That’s very difficult. Someone once told me that a girl that says she listened to everything is just saying that because she doesn’t know any better and a guy saying he listens to everything – I’m not generalising.

Interviewer: No, no, no, that’s okay.

Respondent: And a guy saying that is because he can’t really choose because he just has too much to choose from.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: And that’s probably where I am but like main like … I don’t know, like it’s, on Last.fm you can see like this chart, it goes like genres being like R&B, jazz and stuff. And like mine’s always like all of the genres and be like maybe one of them’s more prominent that the others but they're all there. So I don’t know, like I’m a very energetic person so anything … anything with a lot of beats. I’m not lot like the Skrillex person but I just … most of the time there needs to be drums. I have a friend of mine, she does … she listens to a lot of alternative and indie and it’s not, there’s nothing bad within alternative and indie but she has a … there’s an artist on her playlist that he’s basically just whistling into the microphone and I don’t have the patience for that. And there are, yeah, so genres? If you just go with big ones, that must be rock, electro and … rock, electro and … soul maybe?

[0:20:12]

Interviewer: Hmm mm. Okay.

Respondent: And then funk/soul. Yeah, but like that’s not really descriptive in the sense that like if I say rock that would be metal and it would be like punk rock. But if I say electro it would, it doesn’t mean that I’m constantly clubbing and listening to Avicii, it would be more like listening to – have you heard of London Electricity?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Yes. That would be like listening to London Electricity and stuff like that.

Interviewer: And so having obviously these quite varied genres that you like, do they kind of come into your listening at particular times or in particular situations?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So I was – yeah, so for instance, is there a time that you’re like, “Oh okay, I’ll pick something from the rock category today versus something from the electro category of music”.

Respondent: Then again that’s the difficult topic to – it’s not that I don’t want to talk about it. I want to talk about it, it’s just really difficult to talk about it because that’s again what I feel like not what I think about.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So that’s like I feel like there’s some rock today. I think my emotional state is more appealing for rock today than it is electro.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: There is also like a lot of classical stuff, but that’s my study list, so I just need something without words.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Just take your notes, don’t worry.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: So but then, so then what about the music that you really dislike? Is there anything that you would actually never, never listen to?

Respondent: I was … some … I’m not saying that I wouldn’t listen to it, but because I think that’s a bit like rejecting in a sense.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

[0:22:00]

Respondent: But I was at a Jamaican restaurant with a girl I’m dating yesterday, and they had like put on this like, it was so over Jamaicanised that it was like, like you could not pick another country if you were to guess which country it is, like restaurants.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: And they had like this Bob Marley inspired music, like Bob Marley’s good, there’s nothing wrong with him, but it was just like, oh …

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Yeah, I couldn’t like, some Jamaican inspired music, it’s probably like … yeah, I hated it.

Interviewer: Aha. But so then –

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: But there’s not like a genre then that you would say that you would never touch?

Respondent: No. Because that would – I’m a very openminded person so in that sense like it … I don’t know, but like a genre that doesn’t appeal to me would be … because I do end up listening to them anyway.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: Maybe like experimental folk.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: It’s something like that. I’m not saying that there’s anything bad about it, it’s just that I’m not finding myself to … yeah, whenever someone plays that I’m like rolling my eyes and be like find some other kind of, something that actually stimulates me.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: Because it’s all about stimulation in the end actually.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. Okay, well I mean so looking at your Scrobble logs from the last seven days, I don’t even know how you pronounce or say the name of the artists you Scrobbled the most but it’s like three exclamation marks.

Respondent: Oh, that one. Yes. They’re English. We don’t know how either.

Interviewer: I was going to say, I was like, “I’ve no idea what this band is,” it’s like three exclamation marks.

Respondent: So I have a friend of mine that I met while studying at Goldsmiths and we, it turns out that like we literally have the same taste in music. Like I would say to him that I listen to these and like a band. When I was 14 in Norway no one know who they were and then he like, I think they were Kids in Glass Houses or something.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: And he would be like, I was at a gig with him like, and we would just like compare or log or like things we liked and he was like, “Yeah, that one, this one, this one”. It would be like 95% of the time every single thing is right. And he sent it to me, he was like, “This popped up in my Discovery list, like you have to listen to it,” and I was hooked immediately, I was like … like so the girl I’m dating right now, she’s a bit of like a normal person, she’s like, “That’s not normal, that’s not normal,” and I’d be like dancing in the bathroom, going like, “This is amazing”. And just playing it on repeat constantly.

[0:24:37]

Interviewer: So what type of music are they?

Respondent: I don’t know. I don’t know. They’re like … yeah, I would say it’s definitely bordering between indie and … indie and … what else? Like it’s quite like indie and sort of pop in a good way. So, yeah, there’s like … it’s also remembering what part of the music is the best. It’s a bit difficult, but I don’t know, it’s just … it just makes me want to dance most of the time. Not that I do but I just sit there being … it’s like a go to to be happy basically. But then again I find myself to not using it if I’m like a really stressed environment and then listen to that song. I don’t want to … in a sense I don’t want to cover that song with negative emotions. I want to use it when like, yeah, it’s like you want to sit in front of the fire in your cottage, that’s a very Norwegian…And drink hot chocolate when you're in a good mood, not when you are about to fail your exam the next day.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So, yeah, it’s a bit like that. And also maybe I feel I should show you. Like so I have a Motorola … Motorola phone.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: Which is at home, and they’re basically modular. So you can add things onto them and that’s probably also, if this aids your research in anyway, you can basically add a speaker to them, so I’m, as a student, I have one of those and that’s what I listen to on my phone all the time.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: So it’s either on speaker all the time or I just use these.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So that’s why. I just thought I should add in while I remembered.

Interviewer: Yeah. No, okay. So but going back to this band with three exclamation marks that we don’t really know how to say their name, is that then, do you feel that they are representative of your music taste or is that something that you’ve really just discovered new and had on heavy rotation recently?

Respondent: So like I looked into some of their other music and that didn’t really appeal to me. It was only this song.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: So I would say this song appeals to me as a person. But not necessarily the band.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: So, yeah, that’s also why it’s like, if I like a song but I don’t like a band the song won’t be on repeat all the time.

[0:27:05]

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: It’s … yeah, I don’t know why I didn’t like it, but I was … it’s really that I have the time to sit down and be like, “I now have time to go through a band’s three or four latest albums to try to find out if there’s something else here”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: I’m a bit too lazy for that so that’s not going to happen. So no, but maybe like if … so I know I haven’t had them on heavy rotation recently but … and also that’s probably an English band that I pull out a lot of lyrics as well, so that would be Electric Light Orchestra.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. That didn’t come up in your top ten last week, no.

Respondent: No, they’ve been like probably last year they were like on heavy rotation. But that’s a band that I would say sort of express me as a person. Yeah. Interesting that we should talk about the three exclamation marks band.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: I’m going to Google them afterwards and see how you say their name.

Respondent: I think they’ve just done a very hipster thing, like sort of like …

Interviewer: Yeah, like quirky. (Laughter)

Respondent: Yeah. It’s …

Interviewer: So you said just then that Electric House Orchestra is a band that is something that represents you.

Respondent: Yeah, Electric Light Orchestra.

Interviewer: In what kind of sense do you feel that they represent you?

Respondent: Erm … I … that’s a really good but also a hard question.

Interviewer: (Laughter) Sorry!

Respondent: No, no, it’s fine. Erm … so like the beat cycle is good. It’s not too over the top. Also like how they visually represent themselves at gigs, assorted lights. At least it was a lot of lights but now you have Daft Punk and stuff but … there’s a given rhythm, they’re like the tax orient(?), they’re not like too deep but you can sort of see them as too deep or like a bit deep, like you have the … there’s some like Last Train to London that always goes through my head when I’m trying to catch my last train to London.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: I don’t know. It’s maybe some of the texts are deep. I find them to appeal to me not in that base but it’s just like maybe like a bit like sometimes I feel they’re singing about rubbish but I don’t care because it appeals to me in a way and I don’t know why and how but I just like it.

[0:29:43]

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: It’s one of those few bands I can listen to literally every single thing they’ve ever made and, yeah, just if I was to pick one band for the rest of my life it would be ELO.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. Okay. That’s really interesting.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So can you think of a time then when you’ve actually played music to somebody as a way to kind of express who you are to them? So whether that’s like friends or family or a partner, have you ever done that?

Respondent: Not as in, “I’m now going to who I am by playing this track”. Maybe could … does having someone on the radio count?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: So, the girl I’m dating, and me, we were driving to Southend. Have you ever been there? So we were driving to Southend like … last Saturday basically. And there was a song that came on the radio and I don’t remember the song but it’s very sort of nightclubish and beaty, in a 90s kind of way. And I was like just starting dancing in the car and be like not giving a shit, and she was like, “Oh no, not again”. And I was like, “This is so me,” I’m not going to like, yeah, that’s at least a recent situation. I’ve also like tried to show one of my friends like … like, “Oh you should check this song out,” but it’s usually like, and it’s so me like, there’s an Irish post … is it? I think it’s post-metal or something, it’s like one of those really … really weird genres. And it’s called Adebisi Shank.

Interviewer: No, never heard …

Respondent: Have you heard of it?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: And it’s really hard, there’s no lyrics whatsoever and I would like, I tried to show to a friend like, “This is so me,” and would agree and then he wouldn’t mind the band and then he would come back to me one year later and be like, “Have you seen these guys? They’re Adebisi Shank,” and I’d be like, “Dude, I showed you a year ago”.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: But, yeah. It’s weird to … I’m not really the one to dance too much in a nightclub so it’s, I’m not like visually too expressing myself.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But I guess my sisters would feel that I express myself all the time because I play very loud when I’m home.

[0:32:13]

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: Not disturbing loud but just loud enough to be socially accepted but still way too loud.

Interviewer: Aha. (Laughter)

Respondent: So …

Interviewer: So when you’re kind of saying to people, “Oh this music is me,” are you kind of conscious about their own likes and the views that they then may have of you because of the music that you like?

Respondent: I'm conscious about showing them what I am like but I’m not conscious about, you know, what they might think.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: It’s more like … so this might be like a bit personal, I’m sorry, I’m not trying to tell a weeping story, but so I think music in a sense has aided me to accept that I’m not necessarily like … in Norway, like everyone has a very sort of grey and white vision of what a person should be like and it’s a very conformist society. So if you don’t conform you have a problem.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And so they don’t like people dancing.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: Yeah, they don’t. Like you can do that in a nightclub, you jump up and down. But like being like a very … it’s not a, no, they just, they would just be like, it would like a stereotypical German thing, just look at you, be like, “What are you up to? What are you on about?” So I think music aided me in a sense in that way and like when I’m like in Norway now there’s this conscious basically … like just my personality’s basically, “Well that’s your problem not mine”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So I would probably play some kind of song and start dancing around and my friends would be like, “Oh God, no, not again”. And I wouldn’t be like, “Oh shit, do you not like it?” It’ll be like, “Well that’s your problem and for some weird reason you're still here”.

[0:34:00]

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So, yeah, yeah, is that a good answer?

Interviewer: And because I mean at the start of the interview you were talking about how you and your friend the other year were like comparing music choices.

Respondent: Hmm.

Interviewer: So how did that come about? Is that kind of similar to what we’ve been discussing, like you were trying to express yourself in your music?

Respondent: No, no. How did it come about? It’s just that we had a very similar taste so we were just constantly sending each other music and that’s like – *[friend’s name]* is British, so like he has probably another cultural platform. And so … yeah, we just started sending each other music because we were like, “We have to aid each other in like adventuring like …” yeah, the horizon basically. And, yeah, so also a very sort of vibrant personality. It just felt normal to be honest. At some point we also tried to have a shared Spotify list so we could like add in songs but we also tried to – I at last tried to like say, “If we don’t like it we delete it”.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So that you end up with like a list.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Where there was only music you commonly liked. But it seemed that like I felt bad for deleting his stuff and he felt bad for deleting my stuff. So it didn’t work. At some points I would like add like seven songs and he would add like seven songs, eight or ten, and I’ll just discover my list to be only *[friend’s name]* and I’m like, “What the hell?”

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: Yeah. So … yeah, I don’t know, what was the question again?

Interviewer: About kind of how it started where you were comparing your music likes with each other.

Respondent: Yeah. Like it’s just because we were like just basically like enjoying – we were basically like aiding each other in feeling good basically. Like I, you know, I probably know you’d feel good with this song and then you’ll – I’ll feel good, you think I’ll feel good with this song but just give each other. It’s a bit like being like maybe exercising buddies or something, you go out for a run together.

[0:36:17]

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean do you feel then that you’re music – that like your musical likes have been quite consistent or do you feel that they’ve changed or perhaps progressed over time?

Respondent: Progressed like in what way?

Interviewer: Well kind of changed or diversified, expanded a little bit to what you used to listen to?

Respondent: Hmm, no. Like this might also be like a bit problematic because we are both very open to music experiences, so if someone like, if I send him something that he was like … sorry. I just put my phone on silent.

Interviewer: No, that’s fine.

Respondent: So he puts … if he gives me something that like he would think might be way out of my ballpark I’d be like, “No, that’s not out of ballpark”. I have also exchanged music with other people and I know that even though they haven’t sent me anything when I’ve sent them things they’ve been like, “I didn’t think I’d like this but I love it”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So I’ve apparently now in my friend’s place in Norway become that guy. Or this is like a paradox as well because my dad, he like … maybe like it’s the last bit of pride he thinks he has left or something, he’s like my music taste is great and you just listen to shit.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: And then all my friends are like, “You really know this shitshow”.

Interviewer: (Laughter) So then where did the exchanging music kind of come from? Was it that you were listening to stuff and you were kind of like, “This would be perfect for a friend that I have,” or …?

Respondent: No. No. It’s sort of very egocentric in a sense. It’s like, “Oh you’ll really enjoy this, I’m just going to show you”. It’s a bit like that when you like see a kid, like kindergarten or nursery and like make a drawing and they’re really proud of it and you personally you think it’s shit. But you like, you can’t say that. So you go, “It’s really nice”. So it’s people like me having that egocentric sort of thing, it might be like, “I don’t fucking care”. Like, “I really like this and I really like it and I want your confirmation that it’s awesome. I think you’ll like it”.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: And then apparently for some weird reason they do too. Oh of course, like sometimes they don’t and I never hear anything again.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But that’s Norwegians for you, they don’t tell you anything, they just sit in silence with like their own thoughts and stuff.

Interviewer: But so what about your own music taste? I mean, has that developed from you being younger to now?

Respondent: Yeah. It was very much like early punk rock at some point. Like 14? I was never … I was never someone that would be like … I would never even … I would never be like the stereotypical 14-year-old being like in rages with my parents and do drugs and sniff glue and stuff. I wouldn’t do that. I’d be like very nice. I’d be like perfect schoolkid. I wasn’t a perfect schoolkid, I was an absolute terrible student but at least my parents saw that I wasn’t like ungracious in that way. But I think my music taste was like … it was because … when I was 14 that was like just before Spotify came out so it was very much LimeWire. I hope I’m not like taken to the cops for this. Yeah. It’s been mostly LimeWire and µTorrent for downloading things. And … so it’s like the discovery thing, that was minimal, that was like nothing. So listened to, I tried to listen to something that my friends listened to because they thought they were really cool listening to Metallica and Guns and Roses. I didn’t really like it, I tried to pretend to like it. But I found that I liked … so Rise Against which is an American punk rock band. They have very political messages that I didn’t necessarily agree with and probably don’t today, but I still listened to it. And then I would do AC/DC, very sort of like just rock in general. And so now that I have like a new horizon, like it was very much around – yeah, so I think like rock and like when I got Spotify I discovered Muse and I’d listen to some techno, but it would be like nightclub techno. Like Skrillex and stuff. And I basically, I parted a lot from it. I think it sort of … I parted as well so I basically like expanded as a human being.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Because I had my awakening when I moved over here. Because you don’t live in a society where you need to conform anymore. There is some acceptance for individual like prosperity.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

[0:41:26]

Respondent: And also like have you heard about Goldsmiths, University of London?

Interviewer: No, I know of it but I don’t …

Respondent: Okay, so it’s very liberal, like …it’s like insanely liberal, like the culture there. Someone came in their pyjamas one day and no one bothered. It’s like, or someone would be like, it’s an art student, an art student pooped in a box for an art project. And everyone was like, “That’s brilliant, that’s amazing”. So like there’s very high self-acceptance and like when I was like, “Cool, I can be myself now,” and like just sort of escape to my shell, and so I think the music taste I had also expanded. So you can see like oh suddenly I’ll listen to Lundgren(?) just to … I was hoping to get acceptance for my music taste. Friends of mine were like, I have a friend called *[friend’s name],* the one in Portsmouth, and he was like, “I mean you have really good music taste,” he just spontaneously said like out of nowhere and I was like, “What? First of all, how do you know and like second thank you”.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: But that’s also like Spotify because you can follow people’s music tastes.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: So yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, so then you kind of credited then like your diversification in terms of obviously having access to Spotify and then going to university in the UK?

Respondent: Yeah. So basically like when I discovered new music that wouldn’t be like … before I came to the UK I was very conscious of what everyone thought of me.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So I would also think that the music I played, that could be viewed on Spotify, would have to be according to what they thought of me.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But now like when I discovered music in the UK it was more like, “Well I like this and I’m going to be comfortable with showing that I like it too”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

[0:43:27]

Respondent: And sometimes you luckily just forget about it, but again like, yeah, there’s also like a band I use a lot when I study which I find myself to listen to still to this day. It’s like a DJ that released some electro, like slow pace electro.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: He’s called Blackmail(?). And it’s just basically a scroll that you scroll on the album cover and I think that was like a … so I see like I’ve parted from that phase after having to listened to thoroughly amount of that, so it was 2013/14. 14, yeah. When I … so you, by me, so I know, I signed the consent form for like seven days but you can take a massive like that time. Yeah, and also there’s a lot of as … yeah, there’s a lot of rap in Norwegian. So rap in Norwegian works. But sentimental moments usually are like, I have a … I think in August 2013, or July or August 2013, I was in hospital for two weeks for a lung operation, surgery thing. And like I listened to a Norwegian rap band called Karpe Diem.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: It’s Karpe Diem with a K not a C.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And they’re basically like they’re Pakistani and Indian Norwegians and they’ve basically flipped Norwegian music on its head. And they have really good sentimental texts that even though they mostly talk about being foreign in what is supposed to be your home country, you can still sort of like find some sort of like … well, I basically have grown up in Norway and now I live in England and sort of feeling on the outside in your home country?

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So yeah. Yeah, I know my brain is weird so sometimes I just mention stuff but yeah.

Interviewer: No, well, it’s all really interesting, so no, don’t worry, carry on.

Respondent: Okay, yeah. All for the science.

Interviewer: Yeah! (Laughter) All for the research. (Laughter)

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So what about your friends? Do you feel like friends have or family members or a person has influenced your music tastes?

Respondent: I think my dad tried to influence me but didn’t succeed. Actually I’ve been listening a lot to The Eagles like in the later years and it’s a really, like and Mark Knopfler. He showed me Mark Knopfler. But he likes to think that he is like, has this grand music thing because in his friend circle, apparently, he’s the one with the grand music taste.

[0:45:53]

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: So influenced? Not family wise. No.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: If anything they’ve influenced me to go where they don’t if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Okay, hmm mm.

Respondent: My mum doesn’t even listen to music but dad’s like, that’s her thing because she … I think, oh, she has like some mental struggles so like she can’t take more mental stimulation than there already is. She’s – I don’t want to, but for this, this is all for the like … so she doesn’t listen at all. She basically hates the idea of music. So like you want to listen to this really cool song in the car and she has to be there and everyone will just have to turn down the volume and be like sit in silence. But yeah. So I think it’s more like I felt at home as if there was a resistance against actually listening to something like that was, that they hadn’t discovered before. And in that way maybe I was influenced to explore. But other than that, no.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. And then what about friends? Do you feel like your music tastes have been influenced by friendship groups at all?

Respondent: Er … obviously *[friend’s name]* was like … like we’d explore it together, so basically influencing each other. There is like one friend that like I felt like I wanted to belong and I see now that they have quite a good music taste. He’s like basically a lecturer from the 90s, he’s like Scooter and stuff. So yeah, in that sense, yeah, I’ve probably been like discovering Scooter a bit more after that.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Erm … but yeah, it’s not in a massive sense. I feel mainly like I identify that I’ve mainly discovered like most of the stuff I listen to is like a result of my own work because yeah, it’s been … it’s sort of like it feels like my safety box. I’m not sharing it too much with anyone else.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. But then having said that do you have your account set to public? Have you got the friends list down the side of the page?

Respondent: I do. I do. I have. It’s probably also to like trying to influence them.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: So it’s not necessarily me taking it from them but from them taking influence from me.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

[0:48:26]

Respondent: So I have a … I have a Norwegian friend called *[friend’s name]* – very Norwegian name – and he, sometimes he has showed me like some stuff that he listened to and sometimes it’s actually good. We had, we listened to Coldplay together when we were in like 2012 and his brother was able to like he had a contact at some music store so he was able to get the Mylo Xyloto album before it came out. So we discovered that together. And in that sense, but he’s, basically his music taste hasn’t – I sense that it hasn’t developed that much so I’m like … “No, no, no thanks, I don’t …” sometimes I chitchat with him and I play along but I don’t feel stimulated to the extent. He … I was at a party with him and I actually pulled up a song. It’s from … it’s a … I think it’s a British band. I don’t … I think the song is maybe called Stardust or something. It’s a really like beaty … like it’s a slow beat sort of party track. And … is it Superman? Superman? No. And he was like, “Oh my God, this is amazing.” The only problem of mine was that that was the amazing song I had in my list. But yeah. I don’t know. Yeah.

Interviewer: So but then do you feel conscious that people are watching what you are listening to? Is there kind of then this pressure there to kind of be perceived in a certain way and play a certain type of music so you’re seen a way by these people?

Respondent: I notice the pressure. I do. Obviously I guess that, but then with me it’s that … if I started trying to sort of be perceived as like how I maybe wanted them to perceive me I’d arrest myself in doing that and go, “Fuck this like because it’s too energy and it’s not going to lead to me being happy”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: It’s just going to lead to me to conform, so no.

Interviewer: Okay. So if we can talk then a bit more about Spotify …

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: … do you feel as a platform it allows you to express who you are through music?

Respondent: Oh, by the way, for the last question.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Respondent: I might like … I might sort of like part from what the rest of the people mean for like music and identity but that’s very much like the thing, that’s because I’ve become aware of this, so I’m just like, yeah, I’m being socially involved. That’s why. But about Spotify.

[0:51:15]

Interviewer: So do you feel that it is a platform that it allows you to express who you are through music?

Respondent: Yes, absolutely.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. How do you feel that it allows you to do that?

Respondent: That depends on how like in what sense you think people perceive it because I’m curious about that, I don’t really know how to answer your question.

Interviewer: Okay, so I mean I guess in a sense like does it allow you to construct and manage your music tastes, do you feel that what is on there is reflective of who you are? Do you have access to that kind of music that allows you to reflect who you are?

Respondent: I do, absolutely.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: I organise it in a way that is very me. I mean most of it is public I think. Not many people subscribe. I think I have one or two. And one list is like a lot of subscribers, but that one’s from the … from the Reddit, Spotify from where we’ve heard each other.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Because we try to make local lists of like two songs per Redditor.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And there was some Chinese guy, he destroyed everything. He just like … he would just, he had like 3,000 tracks of Beyoncé. So like the public playlist wouldn’t work and it was like it was working so and he just like, he just destroyed it so many times and we were like, like … so I basically like, what we ended up doing was like backup copying the list that we’d made before he started ruining stuff. Put it into Spotify and be like, “Hi guys, just look at this”. One with like 12 or 22 subscribers or something, that’s from that.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And I haven’t dared deleted it ever since. I don’t know if anyone listens to those anymore. But yeah, like, yeah, I organise like I want, I have like *[playlist name]*, *[playlist name]*. I have my absolute like favourite list. Spotify had like this starred function at some point.

[0:53:18]

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: They took that away. And now my absolute favourite list is called *[playlist name]*.

Interviewer: (Laughter) Okay.

Respondent: I just thought *[playlist name]* sounded amazing.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: So I put *[playlist name]* down. And it’s like literally this list to always come back to, like there would never be a mistake, there would always be some kind of, most of the songs, like I make sure that most of the songs aren’t in any other playlists.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So that when I come back to it it’s like always like the best list, you just listen to it, it’s like always that that saves you. I have also like a really neat starred list. It’s like songs I hold true and like sort of like that means a lot to me. But *[playlist name]* is like, it’s just amazing music.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: It’s … yeah.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. So what warrants then you starring a track? What warrants you like kind of making that an important thing in your library?

Respondent: Yeah. Like it’s a … usually like an emotional sort of track, just appealing to maybe like a … a period I was maybe under like, not necessarily stress, but like when I had lung surgery that wasn’t a very happy period. When I like, I have, so I finished sixth form and I was about to go to uni and sort of like that summer there. I listened to – I worked in a warehouse with a guy that listened to Porcupine Tree.

Interviewer: No, I haven’t heard of them.

Respondent: So basically Porcupine Tree is like a band that they don’t engage anymore but they are from a very, very good musician. He lives in Hemel Hempstead? Like he can literally like go on the street and will not be noticed and he fills Royal Albert Hall every single time. So I haven’t – one of the – like I think the song is called Trains. It’s like experimental alternative metal.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And it just, it means a lot to me, like I was driving from my friend’s, I was driving my mum’s car, it had this song on like the FM receiver in the car, driving through this tunnel and just listening to it. It’s like that kind of songs that I put in the starred list, the favourite list, because they mean a lot to me.

Interviewer: So, sorry, you mean in terms they’ve got memories attached to them that are important for you?

Respondent: Yes. I feel I would clutter if I listened to them again.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

[0:55:43]

Respondent: So, yeah, but a bit like sort of bookmarks from my emotional past.

Interviewer: That’s a lovely way to describe it.

Respondent: Thanks.

Interviewer: So what about then, since you’ve used the platform do you feel that your music tastes have diversified or that they’ve become more fixed?

Respondent: No, they’ve diversified, definitely.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Respondent: Yeah. It’s … I’ve just discovered more and sometimes I even like discover backdoors to genres I thought I’d never like.

Interviewer: Aha. And do you feel that then Spotify for you – because it sounds like among genres that you like, some of them are quite niche, like they’re quite small subgenres. Do you find that Spotify allows you access to that?

Respondent: Yes, I do.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Even like, didn’t Spotify like around Christmas or something last year, they put out a playlist on all the songs that had less than 1,000 likes on it. Or 1,000, less 1,000 plays.

Interviewer: Really? Aha.

Respondent: So people could go and discover something they like would never have the opportunity to do.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: But I have read like a bit into the algorithms of how the discover playlist works and it seems like it’s favouring some kind of like massive genre.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And it’s favouring like it’s like pulling towards it because I’ve had … like sometimes I loved my Discovery playlist and I sort of in the beginning I treated my Discovery playlist as my everyday list.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But at some point it started to like merge towards … like it felt like I was like finding songs from the Billboard Top 100 list on there and I didn’t like that.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So in that sense I stopped using Discovery playlist and like just put it away, tried to take it up like every six weeks or something hoping that I’ve given it enough sort of food for thought.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: To give me something good.

[0:57:41]

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: But I feel it’s a bit sad that it will base itself on what I listen to and try to pull me towards something that’s like mainstream.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm. So even then when you left it for that period of time did you not feel that it did improve at all?

Respondent: It took like, at first it took a very, very long time before it improved. So, yeah, nowadays I don’t listen to too much which makes me a bit sad actually because it feels like I’ve … it feels like … it feels like Discovery – no, Spotify has become like … even they say there’s still as much about discovering, it feels like that’s not true anymore. They’re a bit more about pleasing the shareholders and the stock market when they bombed everyone with Drake.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah. A lot of people are angry about that.

(Overspeaking)

Respondent: I completely went at the music.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: And I hate Apple Music so …

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: There’s nothing wrong with Apple but it’s just, yeah. It’s …

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So yeah. I also stopped using Spotify at some point. I think it was 2013. I tried Google Play Music.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Was there a reason?

Respondent: But it did not work and I was very quickly back on Spotify.

Interviewer: Oh really? (Laughter)

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: What made you then go away from Spotify? Was there something?

Respondent: It had nothing to do with Spotify, it was just like the usability to be able to … because I had a … I had a … one of the early Office Windows surfers things and it couldn’t take Spotify, Spotify didn’t have an app for Windows 8. Very understandable. So it’s more trying for like convenient to fit devices. It’s more about fitting devices.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Hmm mm.

Respondent: So I’ve even had a thought of looking into Apple Music again.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But I think that’ll be a very long time away and that’s probably also now because – not because of necessarily the competition but more that Spotify seemed to be interesting in pleasing other groups than their consumers.

[0:59:36]

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm. So when you say other groups you mean like their shareholders and the record labels and people behind the scenes?

Respondent: Yeah. Obviously this is like they have to do that to stay afloat but then again like I’m a consumer in that it’s in my power to change if I want to.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah, of course. Okay, so I would like to know a bit more about your Spotify streaming practices.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So when you kind of go onto Spotify, what do you tend to do? Do you tend to search or choose a playlist, like what do you tend to do as soon as you go on?

Respondent: So usually it starts off with just me going to the *[playlist name]* every day above the list.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: *[playlist name]* and just start a track. And then it’s just basically in the beginning it’s a bit like background noise. But it’s not, it’s background noise appealing to my feelings. And then I might become bored, I’m like, “Oh I’ve been listening to this so much now I need something new”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And I’ll be like, “Hey, wait,” like I remember this band, I’ll try to find them. And then I start listening and sort of searching up. I have had very few moments recently where I’ve been able to sit out purely on Spotify and be like it’s just me and Spotify now.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: But yeah, so that’s … and I guess it’s always like, which it annoys me as well because I think if I go on Spotify now, that Spotify is quite … so it’s, I’m on Spotify and then actually to find my *[playlist name]* list I have go into playlists and then I have to go really far down, so it usually takes me a while but it’s like, yeah, it’s … I don’t know, like, yeah, I just find myself to always do it. Though I actually have the time to become bored of trying to find the *[playlist name]*.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And sometimes I just like, “No, can’t be bothered, I’m just going to search for something else”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Or I listen to a podcast which also happens.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Yeah. And then I pick up cues from like if I listen to a podcast so that maybe has like a bit of a – yes! Oh yeah. I follow other people that I don’t know about and I just find like a list.

Interviewer: Aha.

[1:02:00]

Respondent: That’s like … like the inspiration behind this artist maybe.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And then I just list follow that list and I pick a lot of stuff from it. That’s a way to explore. And then usually that artist will have some like Song Radio and I’ll listen to the Song Radio and I’ll find something more.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So … yeah. It’s … yeah, it’s been – or if my like, my emotions go like, “We don’t need any *[playlist name]* today. We just need something heavy,” so it’s like a … it’s a dreading feeling, it’s like does it feel alright, does this feel right? We should … so I’ll be like, I picked Rammstein the other day and just listened to Du Hast which is like a very … I don’t know, I’ve listened to it so many times and it like, yeah, which is interestingly also the only song my mum likes I think. Du Hast. In my dad’s car, poof!

(Laughter)

It probably says a lot about her emotional state, but still.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Okay, so you’ve talked about using like Song Radio and Discover Weekly. Do you tend to use any of Spotify’s other features? So like the Daily Mixes, the Release Radar?

Respondent: Release Radar not so much. Release Radar is more like … it’s a bit sad so I try to follow like artists and stuff but mostly like the artists I’d like to know about isn’t the people that I already know about. It’s the people I don’t know about. Also Release Radar has like a bit of a sad habit, like you go onto Spotify and like it all says like, “Taylor Swift! New album!” and like actually I don’t know that. I’m not going to – I’m not going to tap it, I’m not going to listen to it. Get out of my way, I want to listen to my music.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So like I have a bit of a negative emotion related to them doing that which makes me not like Release Radar that much. Song Radio it’s like, Song Radio is basically, basically my –

[Pause]

Interviewer: Oh sorry, I just lost you.

Respondent: Oh. Okay, how much did you lose?

Interviewer: I heard where you were saying about Taylor Swift and then you said, “Release Radar is basically …” and then that’s where I lost you.

Respondent: Oh, did I say that? Release Radar is basically … I don’t like it, I have some negative emotion towards that.

Interviewer: Yes, yes, yeah.

[1:04:34]

Respondent: So Song Radio is basically it’s sort of this … Song Radio is basically my Discovery Weekly list now.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: Because of the … because of the … because of basically Discovery Weekly just pulling towards mainstream.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: There’s probably some algorithm in Song Radio that does the same but it doesn’t feel like it.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: And I like to think of myself as a rational human being but I find myself to say a lot of feeble(?). So and the, yes, the Daily Mixes, sometimes. Mostly I listen to anything that has ELO in it and like a lot of my Daily Mix is like ELO this, ELO that, ELO this.

Interviewer: Oh okay, like across like multiple of your Daily Mixes?

Respondent: Yeah. There will be so many lists with like different ELO tracks.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So l listen to them sometimes but mostly it’s my own lists and like to add them in. Also, so when I’m thinking like, when I get tired of some music in my *[playlist name]*, I have a massive list which is like steadily growing bigger. It’s called the *[playlist name]*.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: Taking some inspiration from Elon Musk. And it’s basically like, so I just dump the in the *[playlist name]* instead of deleting them because I probably wouldn’t have the heart to delete them. And then I’ve been like in more an increasing way today actually lists for like this, this week, been like listening more to like my … my *[playlist name]*, so like I would play shuffle when I got onto it, it would pick a song, then I would get off, like take shuffle off so that I would basically stay in that category and be like, “This is what I listened to a year ago”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And just listen to it and, yeah, it’s been like, oh, there was … yeah … I was … I’m sorry if this is TmI, but I was with a girl in bed and we were listening to it and I was like, I wasn’t too much into the activity we were actually supposed to be doing, I was right into, “Listen to this song, it’s really good”. She wasn’t too happy about it. But she actually went like, “Yes, hand me this song”. So was like, I sent her the Twenty One Pilots before they had the music for the superhero film. They have like the … they have a song where they sing about a car radio.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Which is really good. And I was like, “Oh shit, I listened to this, that’s good”. And she was like, “Yeah, that actually is really good, can you send it to me?”

[1:07:16]

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So there again I guess I influenced someone.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Well, I mean, like looking through your Scrobble logs again, it seems that you kind of have periods where you listen to the same artist one, you know, for a long period of time, whether that’s an album’s worth of music or a collection of music.

Respondent: It’s usually like probably a track on repeat.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: From *[playlist name]*.

Interviewer: Aha. And then you have kind of this more times where it’s different artists after each other which I imagine is your playlists?

Respondent: Hmm.

Interviewer: Okay. Because I mean there was some surprising things in what came out of your Scrobble so there was kind of instances where you were listening to Abba, Taylor Swift.

Respondent: Oh yes.

Interviewer: So are these contained in one of your playlists or …?

Respondent: So, okay, I’m following like a list right now. Do you have bad time? Do you have little time? Are you in a hurry?

Interviewer: No, carry on, carry on. If you’re okay I’m fine.

Respondent: Yeah, I’m good. I have the rest of the day.

Interviewer: Fab.

Respondent: Let’s not hope it takes the rest of the day.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: No. Yes, so I’m following like a list by apparently like a Norwegian band that I came across that I thought was English. They sing in English. So I was like, “That’s weird,” because they have like, we have this Ø with a slash through it, it’s called “Ø” and they were like, why are they, they were called Baby Glød which is Baby Glow basically. And I was like, “That’s really weird, they sing in English, are they English? Are they just trying to be hipster?” So I checked it out and it turns out they’re Norwegian and they had like this really good inspiration list that was like partly niche and part like you have Abba, you have Eminem, you have like so many like normal things and I was like, first of all I felt a bit of acceptance for actually listening to Abba and then, yeah, I put them on so it’s probably where the Abba comes from.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Yeah, because I saw Eminem in there as well and that seemed to be very different from what most of your music choices seem to be.

[1:09:26]

Respondent: I have a big list of rap as well. I had been listening a lot to rap previously.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But it’s usually like I have, like I listen to rap that has more of messages, sort of like … so I study political science or political economy but like I’m very interested in the philosophy aspect so it’s more like the sort of like basis for why they ended up doing this. And sort of trying to see for like racial traces and stuff in the rap music in the first place. This is very … yeah, but I also just listen to like, I had tickets to Ja Rule at some point. I just really like his album so if you go on, I think he’s one of the most played albums I have.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: On Last.fm.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Because I listened to him like all the time in 2013 or 2014.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: What else? Yeah, there’s some Abba. Also there might be like on Last.fm, so I was in Belgium last year with my history professor, we were driving around in a car, and I was the only one with Spotify Premium so I could play offline and download tracks. So obviously with a carful of British people, everyone wants to listen to Abba. So we played Abba for an insane amount of time and it came out as like the most listened to artist of 2017. So yeah, there might be a lot of Abba related there as well.

Interviewer: Aha, aha. So when you go on Spotify do you always know what you want to stream?

Respondent: No, but I know the mood. I know my emotion.

Interviewer: Okay. Aha.

Respondent: So I know like … I’m sorry, I can’t give you more specific answers.

Interviewer: No, that’s fine. No, this is great. This is great.

Respondent: Yeah, I don’t know what I want to stream but I know which mood I’m in.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: It depends like if like I just came, let’s say I just came home from a lecture and I’m not in any kind of mood, then it’ll be the *[playlist name]*, it’ll just start there.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And I try to add in, so the Song Radio constantly goes on, or I see some other friends listening to something and I listen to that too.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

[1:11:30]

Respondent: But yeah, it’s usually the emotion, like I will finally get rid of this day, had a terrible statistics course where no one knew anything and professor was an absolute idiot and I’ll probably listen to something like … yeah, I’ll be like a kind of relieving song.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: I’d probably put on the exclamation mark, exclamation mark, exclamation mark.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: And be like start off with that and be like looking – basically like looking for something that’s similar. I’d probably go to the *[playlist name]*. And then while I’ll still also browsing my brain for trying to find something else. And then also ready to Spotify if I’m ready, there’s a good place to just discover music.

Interviewer: Aha. Okay, so I mean it sounds then like quite a lot of your music listening is based on mood and emotion. Are there particular moods and emotions that you go to music for or is it just all emotions?

Respondent: Yeah. There is. Sometimes I try to get sort of an emotion out from it and I would turn to a certain song. I’m just trying to like, there’s a song playing in my head right now and so there is a Norwegian artist called Ane Brun. She does covers of most of the stuff and she has like a song called Big in Japan which is a cover but she’s a really decent like lowkey very good cover of it. And that would be a cry song for me. So I would probably like, yeah, I would sense that something is off or I like … or the, yes, or I’d like just like have a song in my head and there’s like my head is very musical. I know there’s a lot of musicians in my family, like at least my granddad was like massive. He wasn’t popular but he was just, he was a very musical person. So there would, I’m probably talking about like, so there’s, yeah, emotions and they’re also, yes, obviously will look for a song in order to provoke an emotion but there is a lot of the time just a lot of music in my head and I would go to Spotify in order to get the relief of listening full-time to this song. That happens a lot. And it would usually feel like my head always knows what song I need and it’s in a weird way maybe I think it’s like the subconscious being like, “So we need to talk about this,” and it’s through this song, this is going to be the medium of me actually provoking something in it. But yeah. Yeah, I go to a song to be happy, I would probably … like I’m talking to you right now, but afterwards I’ll probably … yeah, I’ll try … I’ll probably put on some kind of music that makes me want to work. So I’ll put on a Norwegian rap song which is, I mean they sing about mental health and how you cannot, you can’t get to the top of the Mount Everest unless you take one step at a time. And I know that they – that will sort of like in a way like psychologically prime me into doing something, sort of. Yeah. It’s a bit like hacking myself in order to get stuff done.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. Okay, so I mean, so obviously there you’ve started to talk about music that you use for working. So is there a difference then between the music that you choose when you’re doing your uni work?

Respondent: Yeah. I listen to a lot of classic.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: Also London Electricity. Weird enough, like that’s a typical like you sit there and write your essay and you feel stressed, or not necessarily just feel stressed, but you sit there and write your essay and you just need … yeah, that’s London Electricity, like the one of the first albums that lasts like 40 minutes or something. But usually there’s a composer called Alexandre Desplat. He did the music for … oh the English film that’s like basically Queen Elizabeth’s dad that couldn’t speak.

Interviewer: Oh yeah, I know which one you mean.

[1:16:09]

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah, he did that film music.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: So there’ll be a lot of that film music.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Because it’s just really like lowkey. And it’s just like good, it’s good background noise that’s comfortable.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: I would wear these, so they have Sound of Isolation.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And I would read. So, yeah, there would be like, I don’t … I can’t have … I need silence. Well, not silence, like I can’t sit in a library because I do … I do this when I read and talk to myself. But yeah. That’s … I listen to a lot of lowkey stuff.

Interviewer: But it’s still music that you are familiar with that you pick to have on when you’re working?

Respondent: Yeah. I also sort of seek out new sort of like when I’m browsing, if I just find myself browsing or listen like, I have Sound Hound on my phone, I use that a lot. I connect to Sound Hound. The only reason I bought Sound Hound was because, okay, it was like I had heard about it, but you can also do something in Sound Hound so that whenever you listen to a song you need to find it. It will add it to your Spotify playlists.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So I have like an adventure section that I haven’t used too much recently. On Spotify there’s basically all the stuff I discover from other sources, so I like I listen to a song and I hear it and I like, I put it on my phone and be like, “Yes, I need to listen to this song”. I’ll put it in my list. So I’ll be seeking out if I find like an acquired tone(?), that would be nice to read to. I will put it in my reading list. I was on the … in the city town of Colchester the other day and they played Marlena Shaw which is like a, she’s a soul artist and I was like, “I’m pretty sure I heard this before. I really like it, I really need to listen more to it”. And I went like up to the speaker, in Soho(?), “Oh, it’s Marlena Shaw, I’ve heard this a lot, I’ve listened a lot to it”. And now she’s back in my playlist. So yeah.

Interviewer: And what about in other situations. Do you have music that you have for other times of the day or for other things that you do?

Respondent: Yeah. Get up in the morning.

Interviewer: Aha, okay.

Respondent: I just need to listen to something that’s really hard and harsh.

Interviewer: Okay.

[1:18:34]

Respondent: So Slipknot.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. That is quite a wakeup call.

(Laughter)

Respondent: Yeah, it is.

(Laughter)

And there will also be some Norwegian Kvelertak, the Norwegian death metal band or metal band, punk metal or something like that. They’re really harsh as well. Like they basically have like a … they have like to the extent I can pull up lyrics they have a middle phase in a song where they’re basically saying, “I don’t want to go to work again”. Yeah, and it’s like, it’s like they sing harshly but they’re like they growl a bit but not too much, so that’s good. I avoid everything, everything that could – yeah. The bad music categories that I would absolutely avoid, everything that growls.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: Like I don’t understand, I don’t … oh, I just feel really bad for the person doing it because he would probably like do something with this road.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. Erm … yeah, sorry. What was the question?

Interviewer: So like ever, so you were talking about music for waking up to that obviously you put something heavy on.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Any kind of other situations, so what about like for weekday versus weekend or evening?

Respondent: I don’t really, in my head, there isn’t much of a week or weekend. It’s just a week. Constant uni work.

Respondent: I try to take Saturday off. Really interesting, everyone has the day off, I don’t understand that. But so yeah, maybe when I’m like … not when I’m eating because I need visual similarly but … also, by the way, if you need like, if you think, when you’re doing your research and your … if you wonder about anything else just ask me. That’s nothing to worry about.

Interviewer: Oh that’s great, thank you.

[1:20:35]

Respondent: And … what else? What other times of day? Erm … so right now at I’m at uni I’m sort of like establishing music listening habits again.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But I would be … yeah, so during the summer. I would work in a grocer’s stall and we would have really mundane tasks like sort of like stacking, I don’t know, stacking … just stacking pots of curry in like obviously like a terrible like, you’d have to get it in and like I, yeah, I’d be listening like, being at work and doing my day and stuff, so that period of being of being at work basically. I would listen to – I would have to like take the customers into consideration so like if my aisle was clear I would listen to music. Yeah, I’d listen to something like Leonard Cohen or something like really lowkey, just to like … like I think a lot like apparently normal people don’t do this, but I think all the time. Like I am basically a worrier. Which is also why I probably listen to music that much.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But yeah, so I just, I need to sort of, in order to do a mundane task I need to sort of like babysit my imagination and my sort of like energetic part of my brain. So I would put on Leonard Cohen, for instance. Which is not really like a face of the day but the face of the day where I have a mundane task would be at work, so …

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. Okay, and are these – so when you listen to music do you always do it publicly? Are you kind of always showing it to other people on Spotify?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. I sometimes joked about like … I’ve done a private session two or three times. That was like in 2014 or something.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Or 2012 before Last.fm.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Where I’d be like, I’d put on private session because I don’t want them to see that I’m listening to Justin Bieber.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: But Justin Bieber isn’t that bad. He’s really good. I just … I don’t like the person but I like the music. Like there’s like … yeah. So I’m not doing that anymore. I lived with a Northerner, a Geordie, at some point and he really liked Norwegian children’s songs.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Like sort of like the like … the like … so the really easy ones and be like the melody would be like bumpy in some sense, it would be like … and I was like, “Yeah, I’m going to just put private session on”.

[1:23:21]

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: I don’t want my friends thinking, “What’s going on?” So in that sense I would use private session but no. Like … not often. I don’t really care too much. So it’s also probably like for the social prosperity of going to Goldsmiths, living in a very sort of liberal … like I went to the … I had a … I was wearing a sort of a one piece condom suit at some point, dressed as a devil, and I went into publicly shop. And the cashier was like, “Are you alright?”

Interviewer: So then now then when you listen to Justin Bieber you listen to Justin Bieber publicly?

Respondent: Yes, I have no problem with that. It’s basically my friends’ problem if they have a problem with it.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm. Okay. So I mean so you talked about adding songs through like Sound Hound and through Song Radios. How often do you feel that you add music to your Spotify account?

Respondent: Recently it hasn’t been often enough.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I was really happy, I found like some decent track the other day. I found like a lowkey funk track. I was like, “Yes, a new song!”

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: “Something’s wrong with me because there hasn’t been much change in that list recently.” But … shall we say like it varies a lot because I could say once a week and that wouldn’t be right. So maybe if I say … so if I say once every second week but that would be like just to find like a statistical …

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah. Like example.

Respondent: And then when I add that there would probably be like five songs.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But then also like there’s always like, “Is this song good enough to be added or not?”

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And also increasingly nowadays is being like, “Have I listened to that before?”

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Because there’s been a lot of music.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah. And but then do you actually listen to all the stuff that you add to your account, so obviously like when you’re doing it on Sound Hound do you then actually go and physically listen to it afterwards?

[1:25:31]

Respondent: Yes. Because it ends up in *[playlist name].*

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: That’s the whole idea.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: Like I’m probably a music hoarder, but that’s that I feel I deal with the small needs *[playlist name]* is that it’s not so big that you’ll always like find something that you haven’t listened to in a while. There’s like a … there’s an event for that. This is the stuff your brain likes right now. So that’s why we have it. But like the *[playlist name]*, it goes from being 30 tracks to 70 tracks.

Interviewer: Oh okay. So –

Respondent: So it can be big as well.

Interviewer: Aha. And you're changing that then quite frequently?

Respondent: I try to.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So like when I feel like I don’t like this anymore or like I’ve listened, I’ve exhausted this song, I take like massive chunks of it and throw it in the *[playlist name]* and then also I’ve told myself that if there are some songs, I try to like sort them out so that I don’t like that song. I wouldn’t mind never listening to that again. It’s not that I hate it but … so I would just delete it. But sometimes that gets like if I have 70 to sort through then my goal is to have the *[playlist name]* list at 15. It gets a bit too much so I just take the whole thing, throw it in *[playlist name]* and then just delete it whenever I am in the *[playlist name].*

Interviewer: Hmm mm. So you do then … you do delete music on a occasion?

Respondent: I do.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. And that’s just because you don’t tend to like it anymore?

Respondent: Yeah, it’s more like … so … so because I have so many lists for everything, I really, I hate deleting music. So I also track my music progress, not just in Last.fm. I track it on the IFTTT.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: Do you know what IFTTT is?

Interviewer: No, no. I don’t.

Respondent: So it’s If This Then That, it’s basically an internet service that connects different services so that like I’ve connected my Outlook Calendar to my Android phone so that whenever there’s an event in my Outlook Calendar, my Android phone will go on mute for that event.

Interviewer: Ah!

Respondent: Which is really great for classes.

[1:27:34]

Interviewer: That’s very clever.

Respondent: So If This Then That has connected my Spotify and a spreadsheet in Google so that every single thing I add to my *[playlist name]* list will end up in a spreadsheet in Google.

Interviewer: Wow! That is super organised.

Respondent: So it’s like, yeah, I’m sorry about this, I probably have OCD. I don’t but …

Interviewer: So why did that start? What was the purpose then of popping it, of putting it into the spreadsheet?

Respondent: Because I really hate like … it’s just like a massive list basically, with like, which has like song name, artist and time you listened to it or something. I could probably try to find that list if you wanted. I don’t know. Is that of interest or it’s…So I don’t know how frequently it’s been updated. I might have changed something, I’m just telling you that it’s …

Interviewer: No, no, no, that’s fine.

Respondent: But so like I’m … this is not flaunting anything but I’m considered to have quite a good memory.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Erm … probably not with numbers but just like, so I can usually navigate my way, so like let’s say there was sometime two summers ago that I was listening to a song in my mum’s car while driving across a bridge and I’ll be like, “What song is that?” And I’ll go into my spreadsheet or something or Last.fm or something and be like, “Okay, so that’s 2016, it’ll be summer, okay, what else did I do that day? There must be some event around here”. And then I’ll try to find that song. And it’s just literally I just hate deleting stuff.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And because it’s not like … it’s not like it’s a physical hoarder, it’s not like my kitchen is full of stuff I find in the street because it’s like digital I’m allowing myself to hoard stuff.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: So I just like to be in control of that actually always knowing if I need to know something I’ll just know that.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And my brain works a bit like that as well but like having a digital medium makes me sort of take things at ease, don’t need to fuss about it or stress about it.

Interviewer: Yes, yes. So then would you say your spreadsheet is more then used for a memory aid? Like something pops into your head, you can’t quite remember the song and the track so then you’ll go back and kind of look at it through your spreadsheet history?

[1:29:55]

Respondent: Yes. And the most interesting thing is I’ve never really confronted my spreadsheets.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: For me it feels good to know that it’s there so I don’t need to delete it.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. So then, so it sounds then like you have a lot of music from a long time period as well. So how often then do you listen to stuff that you’ve recently added versus to listening to stuff that you added five years ago?

Respondent: Most of the –

[Pause]

So just most of the time I listen to new stuff.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So it just becomes like a massive backlog, but I’d rather have it than not because it’s those moments when you like … maybe … maybe I’d be lucky enough to have one glass of whiskey on a Friday evening tomorrow. I don’t know.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: Because apparently I’ve lost out of my 90-page of stats. So if that’s the time then I don’t want to discover anything because I just want to like feel comfortable, I just want to sit in my own cocoon, and I’ll be either going on *[playlist name]* or *[playlist name]*, or I might actually go back on Last.fm and see what I listened to like a year ago and be like, “I like this”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: It’s like I then want my comfort zone but I also want my comfort zone to be … be like in a good size. I don’t want it to always be the same stuff.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. Hmm mm. Okay. So I would like to move on now to talking a bit about your playlist. So it sounds like playlists are incredibly important to you.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah? Okay. So can you … can you talk me through then some of the playlists that you have, so I mean we’ve talked about the *[playlist name]*. I’m imagining that’s a playlist in itself.

Respondent: Yeah, that’s the *[playlist name]*. I’m just starting Spotify right now.

Interviewer: And yeah, so you’re kind of talking to me a bit about some of the playlists that you enjoy and kind of how they got started.

Respondent: So I have, I see now on my playlist, I have a playlist called *[playlist name]*.

Interviewer: Hmm.

[1:31:52]

Respondent: So that was a guy on Reddit that said like, “If you're going to listen to Elvis at some point you have to listen to Elvis in Memphis”.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: Because that’s apparently his best album.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And I listened to it and I loved it. So I made a playlist out of it and I’ve been listening a lot to Elvis ever since especially only that album. How did …? So I have some, I see it, I have some playlists that are basically just like albums but playlists so I can download them separately because if you download the album it will save itself and when it saves it goes straight into my *[playlist name]* because I have this thing on IFTTT that when I find a song I save the song and it sees, “Oh you saved this song, that means I’m going to put every single song you save I put into the *[playlist name]*”.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Hmm mm.

Respondent: It’s just convenient so I don’t need to move stuff.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So I saved a lot of albums which is like have you heard of Gang of Youths?

Interviewer: No, but they were your – they were, I think they were the second, yeah, they were the second most played for the last week.

Respondent: Yeah, so basically Gang of Youths is … it’s one of those like I’ve now started to tap more into listening to lyrics and the music.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And they have really, really philosophical, deep lyrics that like, there, but also rap, rock group and … but they’re really deep.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: I listened to that, let’s see … so *[playlist name]*. That’s just a sleeping list that I can have on repeat for falling asleep if I – it’s very rarely that I actually need, that I fall asleep with the list but I have it, nonetheless.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: Oh God. So I have like, I have *[playlist name]* and *[playlist name]*, that’s like … but they’re not sort of – and they’re not in like a, they’re not in a folder.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And then I have two folders, one called *[folder name]* and one called *[folder name]*.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And then on *[folder name]* there is Discovery Weekly, there is a *[playlist name]* that I’m a member of in Norway, there is some other lists that I have just followed.

[1:34:12]

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: There is my Sound Hound music, *[playlist name]* which is basically like … I think just … yeah, I don’t know what that list is about but it says *[playlist name]*.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And Like From Radio, all the tracks I’ve liked from radio.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And then the *[playlist name]*, or the *[folder name]*, I think I’ve – okay, so I’ve added, so like basically you know when you have like a song that you listen to when you’re like in sixth grade or something?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: Like but Spotify didn’t exist.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: So I created a list that right now only has one track but the idea of the list is to sort of like go like, “Oh once upon a time I listened to this,” and you’ll like, “Well Don’t Stop Moving by S Club 7.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: So I have, so then, yeah, it was sort of like … to have based on a time, so a year, like in the life.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: I have *[playlist name]*.

Interviewer: Right. Okay.

Respondent: Which I don’t know what kind of impression you have of me but like I might come across I have a very, very big ego. Not that I … not that I’m evil against anyone or anything, it’s just that apparently everyone points out that your ego is quite big. I probably have more than enough for everyone.

Interviewer: (Laughter) So what’s on *[playlist name]*?

Respondent: Yeah, so I basically have Alphas Beware(?) I Am Your God, that’s my list.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: And it just is music that it’s like right it’s like three tracks and it’s just music that makes me feel really good.

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: Like, yeah, so that was like a massive problem when you’ve grown up in Norway, it’s all conformist, you're not allowed to think that you're good.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: That’s a social law in Norway. And Sweden and Denmark. Like because of the how the community works you’re not allowed to think that you’re better than others, so I’ve had to build my ego for quite some time.

[1:36:07]

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: So Alphas Beware, I Am Your God, that’s my *[playlist name]*. I don’t know what moment I was in when I made that list.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: So, yes, that sometimes, I think to myself.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: That’s not a public list by the way. I don’t think so.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: So I have, yeah, I have *[playlist name]* which is basically just like – they’re all list sort of broad genres, because like there’s a lot of niche and I just like, rather like this is definitely *[playlist name]* because there isn’t too much real instruments, I’ll throw it in *[playlist name]*. *[Playlist name]*, that’s more like … a bit like … a bit like study lists on speed because like reading or being like, I need to feel that time and I have a list for that.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: It will be full of Justice, Flume, Torvis Difca(?), a Swedish artist. Also I have *[playlist name].*

Interviewer: Hmm mm?

Respondent: Which is called in Norwegian it’s [Norwegian] which is basically *[playlist name]*.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: And it’s like full of everything that goes on Norwegian radio and I’m like a bit sort of … I don’t feel insecure about having it but I feel insecure about actually listening to it.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Respondent: So I’ve, it’s near a list, so if anyone discovers it’s like, “I know this is mainstream”. It’s like if you like something here, it’s your problem.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: So this, I play this list when I pick my sisters up, sister up from the airport. She’s such a mainstream taste and she’s like apparently, according to her, she has the best taste in the universe.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: And she just listens to Billboard Top 100 all the time. I have a *[playlist name]* which is like a bit similar to Alphas Beware but it’s just a dumb, it’s a bit lower.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: So I have a funk list which is called *[playlist name]*. Obviously funk music. It’s all very much genres.

[1:38:13]

Interviewer: Aha.

Respondent: I have, I’m sorry, are you very prone to bad words?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: Okay, so I have a country list called *[playlist name]*. Pretty bad puns.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: Which is I feel a bit bad for naming it that because I’m starting to like a lot of country.

Interviewer: Aha. So you put that list together when you didn’t like country?

Respondent: No, but I felt like I had to gather, I like a bit of country so I’ll be like, I’ll try to find some country music I like. There’s probably some country music I like out there.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: I’m probably just like perceiving like country music from like mainstream stuff, they don’t always play the best.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So it was an aim to also like get into a genre I don’t have too much experience with. I’ll like I’ll look into it. I have the *[playlist name]* that I told you about and *[playlist name]* and the *[playlist name]* list and the *[playlist name]*. I have a *[playlist name]* which isn’t too big. It’s like four tracks. Then I have *[playlist name]*. And then the list that *[friend’s name]* and I came up with together, we had no idea what to call it, so we put in brackets, *[playlist name].*

Interviewer: Okay, and it’s kind of ended up like that?

Respondent: Yeah. It’s just, yeah.

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: And then I have *[playlist name]* which is just all classic tracks but I haven’t added to much to that list recently which is like I’ve noticed but I still, yeah, haven’t.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: *[playlist name]* list. Pretty long actually.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

[1:39:53]

Respondent: And then I have another list I haven’t told you about. This is basically my party list.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Respondent: But the interesting thing about a party is like you can never play tracks that are so you, you can never like show off yourself at a party because the most important thing at a party is to make the guests or those that you are showing music have a good time. That’s the point of a party.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So you can’t, like I think I learned this, so there’s a, have you heard of Electro DJ, a band called Overwork?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: Okay, so have you seen like the Go Pro advertisement sort of like.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: So there’s some beaty music to that and that’s most likely Overwork.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So I was at a party in Norway 2012, a student party, and I really liked that song at that time so I played it and no one liked it. And I quickly realised so because and like the whole party vibe just dropped out a bit. And then I just told my friend who was just like staring at me and thinking, I was basically picking the tracks, I was just like, “Play Rihanna”. Cheers (Drink to That). And I did that and everyone fucking loved it, no one was like, and I sort of learned at that time that it’s not about what you like, it’s about playing something everyone else likes.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So I picked a lot of tracks in *[playlist name]* and I called it *[playlist name]* because apparently that’s a word for when everything goes in slow motion but it’s not the slow motion word, it’s another word. Either that or I just made it up. Yeah. So it started with the Cheers (Drink to That) song and there’s basically like just really good music for that you can play at a party that would be a safe bet for everyone to pick up on.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. But then you don’t tend to listen to it for your own personal music listening?

Respondent: No, it’s basically like … yeah, it’s like Earth Wind and Fire and Katy Perry and stuff.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But yeah. So that’s it I think.

Interviewer: Okay. It’s quite interesting though that you have all these playlists that are like broadly based on genre but you’ve not chosen to give them their genre names. Is there a reason for that?

[1:42:08]

Respondent: No, of course not. There is a reason for that. It’s because it appeals to my emotional basis, so my emotions, they don’t talk genre names. They talk, “What do you feel like names”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. So you weren’t ever then tempted, I don’t know, to call one of your playlists like Happy Music or …?

Respondent: Everyone does that and it’s like … I’m so sorry, you probably do that. I wouldn’t … I wouldn’t do that. It’s … if I called something Happy Music it would be like, “Well is there an expectation that I should be happy when listening to this?” I don’t like to make expectations for myself.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm. Alright.

Respondent: But like, yeah, so I just name it what I feel like. Yeah.

Interviewer: So out of all of those then, which one would you say that you play the most? Is the *[playlist name]*?

Respondent: Yeah, I’ll send you a screenshot of it. It’s the *[playlist name].* So it’s just like whatever I liked, it’s not necessarily that there needs to be a reason for something.

Interviewer: Aha, aha. And you were saying – you were saying earlier that *[playlist name]* also like had a, was a special thing. .

Respondent: It’s like, I don’t know, like so I’ve been in an environment where everyone had to take care of their traces.

[1:43:55]

Interviewer: Right. (Laughter)

Respondent: Yeah. So like in Norway you have like, in the end of sixth form, you have like a thing where everyone goes out and parties, it’s a very … it’s a thing that everyone does, it maybe, but it’s like really big in Norway, so like loads of money and stuff. And everyone has like these similar pants, like these like, so black, they’re red, blue or black.

Interviewer: Oh yes.

Respondent: Depending on what you’ve done. So basically like you're in a nightclub and you have like, I think it’s 1st April, everyone just like, you walk with the pants inside out before 1st April and then you turn them on the night, 1st April, and I was like in that nightclub and be like everyone has to – everyone has to like, drunk or not, get off their pants, turn them and put them on again. And we were like, me and my friends were like, “We have to have some psychedelic underpants on”. And then it’s sort of like coming from that, like you look good in underpants, you’re like, “Look at my underpants”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So it’s like it’s something you’re not ashamed of liking. It’s like I really like this and it just … it makes me feel good that … it’s probably also like a bit like with my ego. I don’t fucking care. Like it’s your problem not mine.

Interviewer: So when would you then tend to listen to *[playlist name]*?

Respondent: It’s when I felt like in a … I need something good in my life. I need … probably I don’t have a glass of whiskey in reach or I don’t have like I’m not Harvey from Suits or anything. But so like, yeah, I need something in my life, I need something … maybe I would have wanted to have a chocolate, I can’t afford a chocolate. I’m going to listen to *[playlist name]* because I need something like positive.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. Like a feelgood kind of music?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. So if I can I’d like to move on to music discovery. So it sounds like you’re very much a person that likes to discover new music.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Where do you kind of get most of that discovery from?

[1:45:56]

Respondent: Erm … well there is Song Radio, we’ve already sort of talked about that.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. So does it tend to be the radio and Sound Hound is your main, and the songs, yeah.

Respondent: Song Radio, sometimes radio. I can’t listen to radio in Norway because there’s just mainstream music there.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: But you can listen to like sort of … niche shows. They have like a … they have a radio DJ, probably a bit like here in the UK, that plays like techno music for like … like … like your pre-drinks party. I don’t know if you have those in the UK. But in Norway it’s so expensive to drink alcohol that you basically drink everything in your living room before you head out and buy one beer. And you sort of have like a music list, so like in Norway like a lot of those songs are like forced in. It’s like the German word. But so … yeah, I don’t discover music on the Norwegian radio because it’s all mainstream.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But sometimes some of the radio DJs talk about what they listen to personally and like Arcade Fire, for instance. And one of the DJs said like Arcade Fire, I listen so much to Arcade Fire. And I was like, “Hmm, I’m going to check out Arcade Fire”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And it was really good and I really like it. But, so yeah, I can’t really explore there. It’s more like … yeah, it’s the Song Radio on Spotify.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And then it’s whatever you pick up like it’s Spotify, so sometimes like shops have a Spotify thing.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But they can’t play personal Spotify because that’s against the rules. So they have a bit like a Song Radio Spotify where it just goes like random and they have no idea what’s on.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And this like, whatever I pick up as background noise in a shop, like I’d be like, “Hmm, oh cool”. I'd be … I’d be listening to that and I pick it up on my Sound Hound or … or you can also do like Google, you can be like, “Okay Google,” or something.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, hmm mm.

Respondent: So yeah, yeah, that’s sort of where I get it from. And like also film music and, yeah, Reddits and … those are basically my factors.

[1:48:16]

Interviewer: So you feel then that Spotify’s own discovery features don’t really help you that much?

Respondent: Song Radio does but Discovery Weekly no.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. Okay. And when you’re discovering music do you prefer music that’s very similar to what you’re currently listening to or are you open to something really random?

Respondent: It’ll be completely out of the ballpark.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: It’ll be like, I just … I put it in my *[playlist name]* knowing that if I don’t like it I can just delete it.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: Because it’s like if I’ve gone fond of a song or if it’s been there a lot of time and I haven’t skipped it, I’ve listened to it, then I will have a hard time deleting it.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. Okay, so I just want to talk a little bit more about Spotify itself. So I mean you’ve said that you feel that it’s a good platform for you to kind of construct and manage your music tastes.

Respondent: Hmm.

Interviewer: But does its interface influence how you organise or what you search for or what you see when you’re on there? Do you feel their kind of influence from that perspective?

Respondent: Because I’m mostly on my phone, no.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: They also changed it now to make it simpler and for me it was like, “Well now I’ll spend even more time in my own library”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So they have like the … I think it’s called the – yeah, it’s the private section.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, yes, yeah.

Respondent: So you go there and be like this, what did you listen to last time, and this is what’s been like most on it, and I sometimes go there. But it feels like, it’s started, it is starting to feel a bit like my own living room.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Like I know everything that’s there and I know what the comfortability and like there’s my TV and there’s like … not that I have a living room, but you get the sense. So it’s … yeah, in a sense I can peek out of the window but it’ll still be the same garden.

[1:50:09]

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: So I’m still, I’m feeling like my … like the discovery is like a bit less.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Respondent: But I also notice that Spotify in Australia, and this was, I don’t know if this is still a thing, but they put out a beta test of the Spotify app in Australia and it was basically like the app was just pure discover. It was like you had no list, you had nothing, you just had your Spotify account and then listen to something, it was like, it was pure discover all over the place.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And I really want to install for that. I think I’d spend a lot of time on it. But yeah.

Interviewer: But then how would you feel as somebody that has a lot of playlists and like a lot of collections of their own music, how would you feel if that wasn’t then a feature?

Respondent: Hmm. Oh that would be mayhem.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: I’d hate that.

Interviewer: So you’d kind of like want a mix of both?

Respondent: Yeah, I want – that’s why I sort of like discovery playlists. I just don’t like the algorithm of it. So I’ve sort of like parted a bit from it. And now instead of using Discovery Weekly playlists I just listen to other playlists people have, like Up, so I had like … well, a certain American girl she was like apparently doing some kind of playlist related to a music festival, she worked on – I’ve had all of this out on Facebook. And she doesn’t know me obviously. And she had made a playlist based on the band … is it called Of Monsters and Men? And so a lot of my taste from like 2014 I think was based on that list because I’ve got so many sort of basically hashtags.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: To discover new music.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So, sorry, now it’s a bit blank.

Interviewer: No, it’s okay.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Just bear with me, I’m just going to go turn my lights on because I’ve gone ever so dark. Just one second.

[1:52:17]

Respondent: Yeah. I’ve got to think about that. How long have been sitting?

Interviewer: Quite a while I think.

Respondent: Yeah.

[Pause]

Interviewer: No, okay, that’s better. Yeah, so –

Respondent: We’ve been sitting here for two hours.

Interviewer: Oh my gosh, no way. Are you still okay to talk?

Respondent: I’d be okay with like 15 more minutes.

Interviewer: Yeah, that’s fab.

Respondent: If that’s alright. We could also like talk more like later, at a later stage?

Interviewer: Yeah, no, no, that’s, I think, yeah, 15 minutes should be perfect.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: So I guess then do you feel then the recommendations that Spotify give you have narrowed then over time and you don’t kind of like that?

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: That’s – sorry for not elaborating on it but that’s perfect, that’s the answer.

Interviewer: Aha. So what would you kind of then be looking for in recommendations to make them worthwhile for you?

Respondent: I just … so it might also be that I have like a stereotypical sort of like sense of what the discovery list is now about and they’re sort of avoiding it. But … what I think I tried to make a playlist to just like save as much of my Discovery Weekly as possible.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But yeah, it’s … I just don’t want them to pull me towards mainstream music because that makes me feel like I’m not really about discovering anymore.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: It makes me feel like I don’t sort of … yeah, like I’m … like I’m … so they … they … maybe I talk a bit too, I’ve paused, but say the difference between iPhone and Android is that and iPhone is basically like a garden with a fence and Android is a bit like a jungle.

Interviewer: Yes.

[1:54:08]

Respondent: And I was starting to feel more about being in a garden with a fence now than the jungle I originally thought Spotify was.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Yeah, that’s a very fitting analogy for that kind of, that feeling.

Respondent: Hmm.

Interviewer: Because I mean obviously from what we –

(Overspeaking)

Respondent: Or a fenced off jungle basically.

Interviewer: Obviously what we know is that Spotify is collecting data on your listening, what you’re listening to, to produce its recommendations, so are you conscious when you’re online that it’s collecting that data about you?

Respondent: I am. I am.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: Which is why I’ve sort of stopped listening to Discovery Weekly hoping that my listening history other places will affect what that Discovery Weekly list comes up with.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. So you don’t then necessarily mind them collecting your data?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: No?

Respondent: I should probably be. I deleted my Facebook the other day and completely started a new one because of –

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent: Yeah. My friends were like, “Are you alright?”

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: But yeah. No, not on Spotify. I think it’s unfortunately a part of a new reality.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: And, of course, I can be mindful about what I do.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But I share my listening statistics, I do. I can’t see the danger of sharing them.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. But then I guess it must be frustrating for you to think, “Well they are collecting all this data about what I’m listening to but then I’m not really feeling the recommendations that they’re giving to me”.

[1:55:36]

Respondent: Erm … yeah, but I don’t think of it as a trait.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Like I think of them as separate products.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: So if there was like you said like as if I’m like … they give me, they take, they give.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But I think of them as two separate, I’m like, “Well everyone does that nowadays”.

Interviewer: Hmm mm. Okay.

Respondent: Everyone takes the information.

Interviewer: Aha, aha.

Respondent: Because in the end of the day you’re choosing to use this product.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: But yeah, so … yeah. Sorry, I don’t really remember what your question was.

Interviewer: So what I was saying is that they supposedly use the data that you give them.

Respondent: Yeah, to –

Interviewer: To store about you and then to use that as a way to produce recommendations for you. So kind of looking at what you’re listening to and what you could be listening to.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: But then –

(Overspeaking)

Respondent: But it also seems like they have a third factor.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Their algorithm like pulling you towards some kind of as it’s a model basically.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: And that, I mean … I am annoyed about, so I’m trying to feed this algorithm as much variation as possible. Not spending time within the recommendations that they give me because I feel like that would be negative towards the algorithm within itself because I would basically respond positively that I’m choosing to listen to something it came up with.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah.

[1:57:11]

Respondent: So that when I actually come round to my Discovery Weekly playlist it … that time I choose and really want something that’s never listened to before or not chained to any kind of artist.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: I … I would hopefully find something I like.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: Which also makes like a point before they had like, they had related artists.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: For … they don’t have that anymore.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: They have stuff that people that listen to the stuff listen to.

Interviewer: Hmm mm.

Respondent: And this annoys me a lot because like that’s basically like the difference between genre and the difference between what other people like and I’m sorry, I don’t really, I’m not really interested in that.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

Respondent: There’s a lot of songs I would have never discovered if it hadn’t been for that. Other people didn’t know – like it was related to genre but it wasn’t related to what other people listen to.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm. Yeah, that is very true. They have kind of made that transition in that kind of feature. Okay, so my final question is obviously now you’ve been through all three phases of my research, you’ve done the survey, done the online observation, you’ve done the interview. Has that caused you to kind of reflect or change any existing Spotify practices you have?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Not at all?

Respondent: No, I thought it was really cool.

Interviewer: So that’s good. But that was – that’s good. I mean I think the benefits of you –

(Overspeaking)

Respondent: I was a bit … I was a bit sort of like, “Er … Er …”. But not like, “Er …”. I did think about it but I’m like in the end I was like, “I can’t be bothered”. Like, no, to some extent to be proud to be honest. Like so I originally disagreed with you in giving you my password. I don’t know if you remember. I’m really happy you don’t remember because I sort of realised reading through your email that you’d like to have a look at my list before having the interview and I was like, “It’s two hours to the interview, I’d rather give her the password”.

Interviewer: I mean, no, that’s, but I mean if you wanted to send me the screenshots that would have been fine. I think with our –

(Overspeaking)

Respondent: No, because it would be, have lots of screenshots. That’s the problem.

Interviewer: Oh. Because like I mean we’ve been talking by email for a long time.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And it was probably laziness on my part that I was like –

(Overspeaking)

Respondent: No, no, it’s not.

Interviewer: I don’t know what, I don’t, can’t remember what he said and I’ve got all these messages.

Respondent: It’s fine, it’s fine. It’s absolutely fine.

Interviewer: But no, I’m –

(Overspeaking)

Respondent: I feel like you’re part of my life now, so we have to keep talking.

Interviewer: (Laughter) But no, thank you for letting me look through your Scrobble logs. It was …

Respondent: No, it’s fine.

Interviewer: It was really useful.

Respondent: You can have a peer around. I'll change the password in a week. So whatever, and if you feel like you want to know more, like I, obviously you’re a really nice person to talk with but…In the end of the day you're here to do research.

Interviewer: Hmm mm, hmm mm.

[2:00:06]

Respondent: So I was like thinking in any way I could aid that I’d be happy to.

Interviewer: No, well I mean you have. It’s been so, so, so fascinating talking to you.

Respondent: No, thanks, fascinating person, that’s my ego.

(Overspeaking)

Interviewer: You definitely are. Honestly, you definitely are and, yeah, it’s just been great. Is there anything from your side that you want to talk about that we’ve not yet talked about or expand upon?

Respondent: No, because I’m been trying to cover the traces as we go along. That’s why I just pop in with something.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. No, that’s been great.

Respondent: Okay. No. No, not that I think of.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: I just wish you the best of luck with your PhD.

Interviewer: Oh thank you so much, I really appreciate it.

Respondent: I really hope you don’t stop doing this because that would be like basically my work obsolete.

Interviewer: (Laughter) I feel like I’m too far into it now. (Laughter)

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: There’s no turning back.

Respondent: The point of no return’s been past.

Interviewer: (Laughter) Yeah.

Respondent: No, I wish you a great day and good luck with your project.

Interviewer: Oh thank you so much. Thank you again and, as I say, I’m sorry it’s took so long but you were just so interesting to talk to.

Respondent: No, Jesus Christ, it’s fine.

Interviewer: But I will leave you alone now but thank you very much.

Respondent: No, it’s fine, I’m going to go and make dinner.

Interviewer: Yeah, it sounds like a good plan. Alright, speak to you soon. Bye!

Respondent: Bye.

[2:01:15]

Interviewer: Bye.

Respondent: Have a good day.

Interviewer: You too!

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-13-F

[0:00:00]

[Skype calling tone]

Respondent: Hello?

Interviewer: Hi, are you alright?

Respondent: Hi.

Interviewer: Hi. Is everything okay?

Respondent: Yeah, it’s okay.

Interviewer: Good, good.

Respondent: I’m at a café right now, so just so you know.

Interviewer: Oh, that’s alright. Are you still alright to speak now, or is now not a good time for you?

Respondent: I’m still alright to speak.

Interviewer: Fab, fab. Well, as long as you don’t mind speaking in public, that’s perfectly fine, that’s not a problem with me at all.

Respondent: Yeah, it’s fine with me.

Interviewer: Okay, great. So, thanks for agreeing to speak to me today, I do really appreciate it. So, the way it’s going to work is the interview will last around about an hour, but it’s very much based on your responses. So, I’ve got some questions to ask you from obviously what I’ve seen from your survey and from your streaming activity, but then it is up to you to elaborate or talk about things as much as you want to. So, I’m recording the interview, I’ve got a little recorder by my laptop, if that’s alright?

Respondent: Yes, that’s alright.

Interviewer: Perfect. And it might be a case that while you’re talking I take some notes down. That’s really just for me, if there’s something maybe I’ve not understood from what you've said or would like to follow-up on. So yeah, so that’s all from me, have you got any questions before we start?

Respondent: I don’t think I have any questions, specifically. Maybe, I guess my one question is just like how did you think of doing this for your research paper?

Interviewer: So, for my Masters’ research I looked at, back in the day, iPod culture. So, I did my first Masters when iPods were a huge deal and everybody listened, you know, to music on the go through their iPod. And obviously, that’s kind of now changed and music listening has gone online hugely, and Spotify is kind of like the big deal now, and streaming is a big deal now. So, it’s kind of translating my research from iPods to streaming, and actually the interesting ways that people stream music, and what they use their music streaming for.

Respondent: Hmm.

Interviewer: Does that make sense?

Respondent: Yeah, it does.

[0:02:50]

Interviewer: Right, okay, so if everything’s alright with you, to get started?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So, my first question is thinking about how music relates to, well potentially relates to, your identity. So, broadly, how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: I’d say I’m an avid music listener.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Let’s see. I love always listening to music. I’ve literally had, you know, everything from like the Walkman CD player to, my mom at the time when the like first iPod came out, it’s not like afford it, but she bought me kind of like a regular MP3 player (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, I used that for a while. And, you know, eventually I had a iPod touch, and then eventually I just used my iPod classic mainly until streaming came along, because I realised there is so much music I’m unable to like download and buy, and like streaming just became a good option. And I didn’t want Pandora cos it was shuffle based, and I wanted to listen to albums and specific things. And so, that’s kind of when I made the transition between my iPod classic and having Spotify.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then, at first I had Spotify Student, but then when the Student price expired everyone was like, ‘Oh, just go back to using free’ but then I was like, ‘No, I can’t go back now, like I’ve had no ads. I need to listen to music like without ending’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, that’s pretty much where I am, like today I listen to music like without ceasing.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I listen to music on the way to work. Now Spotify has podcasts, and I listen to podcasts on the way to work. Like I used Spotify in my senior year when I was doing like a dance thing, like I used Spotify to play the songs. I use Spotify to create mix. At my church, sometimes they use Spotify to share what songs that the worship team are singing.

[0:06:01]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, definitely like I use Spotify for like everything, for a playlist at parties, and even now like Spotify’s kind of random shuffler, like I let that play too if I wanna find new music. I have Spotify connected to my PlayStation, to my phone, to my computer, I use it download, and I have Spotify Family actually.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like I have such a need, I feel like I have such a need to listen to music unfiltered, honestly, like without ceasing that I’m willingly paying the $15 for like my family. My grandparents don’t use it often, but I feel like this music’s so important to me that I don’t care the price because in my mind I want them to be able to listen to music whenever and wherever they need it, without like second-guessing.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I like pay for that so they have it on hand. And my mom’s also on my Spotify Family.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I have a housemaid, and I added her because in my mind I’m just like I cannot fathom, I don’t want my housemaid to be listening to ads.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like music just needs to go, because for me it’s such a part of everything that I do, every feeling, every emotion. Like I feel like I hate for others, but I specifically hate for myself. You know, if I’m in a angry mood or something and I need to listen to something quick that reflects my emotions, I don’t want ads (laughter).

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I just want it go straight to the(?)…

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. So, I feel the exact same, yes. When you’re kind of used to no ads, and then reverting back to ads, it’s so difficult.

Respondent: Yeah (laughter).

Interviewer: So, just going back to something you said. You said that you have a need for music, so how would you describe that need? What kind of need does it fulfil in your life?

Respondent: I feel like, for me, music helps me feel like complete. Or I’m really bad at expressing my emotions in words sometimes, and so I feel like a lot of songs and those things, like people have already written it out. Or even sometimes just the beat.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like, I don’t know if you’ll see, but like I listen to like some new score music sometimes because even that, like it’s not a song, but it’s still like the music goes through varying emotions.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like The Great Gatsby album, like listening to it, it just goes through those emotions. There’s not a lot of words. And even sometimes like movies without music kind of feel empty, yeah, just like that, just like how movies without music may feel empty, I would feel like very empty without it (laughter).

[0:09:08]

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, when you then use music for emotional purposes, you mentioned about even the beat. Like, do you kind of grasp onto the lyrics of the song, or the melody, or the beat? What do you see in terms of emotion in that music that really draws you to it?

Respondent: I think sometimes it definitely depends on like the emotion.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like when I was in junior high, you know, there’s a lot of like, you know, angsty teenage music out there that’s like ‘Oh my feelings, I’m so hurt’. So, I listened to that a lot as like a junior student. And I think like when I was in high school I think, oh this sounds so cheesy but I know it. In High School Musical 3, basically, there is the song when he’s like so confused and he’s like, ‘Oh, do I wanna follow basketball or go to like Julliard?’ or like, ‘I don’t know what I wanna do, like I’m just so angry and confused’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And like I listened to that song a lot at high school because I also felt very like angry and confused, and I felt like the words are really like what I was saying.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then sometimes, like I just need a beat to like calm me down if I feel like I’m so angry or something, sometimes something without music, just something very simple, just going through it can help like feel better, and just like let go of it. Like kind of The Great Gatsby album can help to let go. And I also like La La Land, because both of those scores have kind of like a dreamlike quality to it. So, it’s like if I’m feeling like angry or something, or restless, definitely the score for La La Land I listen to a lot when I feel restless because it moves, it goes between moving slow and fast, and I feel like the music fulfils my need to be like moving faster than what I might actually be doing at the moment.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, when you use music for emotion, do you tend to use that as a way to work through your emotion, or to get you out of a particular mood or emotion? How does that kind of work?

Respondent: Yeah, I’d say like both.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: It’s like helping me get into it, or just helping me. Sometimes if I’m sad, honestly, I listen to like sad music. It kind of amplifies it a bit, like just letting myself be sad.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Sad music allows me to just be sad, as opposed to once I start talking to people, people talk to me and then they’re like, ‘Why are you so sad?’ and they kind of want me to move on.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But sometimes, like if I’m sad, sad music helps me just like stew in it for a bit until I’m ready to bounce back.

[0:12:14]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then, kind of like, yeah, sometimes if I’m frustrated, and I know I’m frustrated and I wanna move past it, then like sometimes listening to something that’s exciting or happy, or the singer’s also frustrated, can kind of help me like just work through it myself.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then once I move past that, then I know like, ‘Oh, I’ll switch the song to something else’ to like whatever new feeling that I’m feeling now, so I can continue to move on from that frustrated feeling, and now I’ll feel like happier.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, would you say then, for you personally, music is quite integral to who you are, quite integral to your identity?

Respondent: Yes, I would say that, very much so.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like when I was in junior high and like middle school, like, you know, when my mum always got mad at me or whatever, I would try to avoid her taking my iPod.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Like she can take my cell phone or whatever, I mean, I didn’t have a cell phone till I was 13, but like she can take my cell phone and she can take all that and stuff, but she can’t touch my iPod or else then I feel like I’m losing my mind.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I feel like I have no way to express things.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, talking about that expression, do you feel that you've ever expressed who you are through music to somebody else, whether that’s a friend or family member?

Respondent: Yeah. Like sometimes when I meet people, it’s bonding over music.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: Or just sometimes, when I’m riding the bus with my friends and listening to things, like a lot of people these days they like tag their friends in a meme to like express like, ‘Oh, like this meme shows how I’m feeling’. But in high school I used to always have like split headphones, not split headphones, but, you know, like regular earphones, because I was always wanting to take an earphone out and have someone else listen.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. It wasn’t until recently that I’ve kind of embraced headphones on the head, which like over-ear, just cos what’s over-ear you can’t share it. But I’m sharing music during my journey a lot less, cos in high school you’re going the same way with your friends or things like that, but these days I can just send the song on like Facebook Messenger or something.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, when you’re sharing that music then with your friends, do you feel very conscious about it? Kind of, are you considering their preferences in music versus yours, and then how they might perceive you through the music that you show to them? Or is it very much, you know, ‘This is the music that I like, and I’m going to show you, no matter what you think about it’?

[0:15:24]

Respondent: I think it ends up being a little more of the first, sometimes.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I mean, with my really close friends who I’ve had since like junior high, I’ll share them any song, even like random troll songs or parody songs, like I’ll share anything to them. But sometimes, you know, people from church I might not share like Panic At The Disco.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: But maybe I’ll mention, I’ll mention that I like Panic At The Disco. But then, sometimes I won’t play their whole album in a car or anything, you know, I’ll just be like, ‘Oh, this song is great’ unless I feel like they’re ready to kind, it’s not like it’s insulting(?), but like unless I feel like they’re ready to kind of receive that music, I won’t really share it. I will just share another music that it’s of like a similar vein, but I feel like that they might enjoy.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And it depends. Sometimes, if it’s like we’re on the train, I’ll just share anything because then I’m like, ‘Oh, I’m getting off soon’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And sometimes if it’s in a car, I’ll think a little bit more on what I’m gonna share.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, broadly then, how would you describe the music that you like, and the music that you dislike? Are there particular genres or styles of music, in both of those categories?

Respondent: Music that I like? I like musicals, I like instrumentals, I like scores. I like RnB, I like hip hop, I like quite other things. I think music I dislike, sometimes it tends to be if I don’t vibe with the feelings, or if the music just doesn’t vibe with me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Or, sometimes EDM, I don’t like it because it might give me a headache.

Interviewer: Okay (laughter).

Respondent: But then occasionally some songs have like a EDM phase, and I’ll like it. I think there’s a Zedd that, I forgot what it’s called, like there’s a Zedd song which I don’t actually like the album. I have the album on my like iPod, but I don’t really like the album, but then I like one of the songs. There’s like an acoustic version of one of the Zedd songs, and I’m like, ‘Oh, I really like this, I vibe with this’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then, it’s like the original version that I’m like, ‘I don’t wanna listen to this at all’ (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, in that case then, is there something about the choices of instruments, or the kind of overall sound of the music? Cos obviously I imagine that the lyrics are the same across both versions –

Respondent: Yeah.

[0:18:22]

Interviewer: But it’s kind of conveying them in a different way?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Because the acoustic version, there’s a little more like white space and there’s a lot of guitar sounds and it’s very soft, while the original version of that song is definitely faster. And the acoustic version, the singer, it’s like a male singer, and I think the original version is like, what’s that robot that sings? (inaudible 00:18:55) something, something. It’s like a different singer, so it’s a different vibe. And just like the BPM is like a lot faster, and so I think I like the acoustic version.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I like very chill songs, for the most part.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And yeah, I think for the most part I like things that are quite chill.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, looking at the last week of scrobble logs on your Last FM, the two top artists from last week came out as, I apologise if I pronounce this wrong, is it Lauv, L-A-U-V?

Respondent: Oh yeah, yeah, Lauv.

Interviewer: That came out as your most streamed artist. And then the second most streamed was Craig Armstrong. So, I mean, could you tell a bit about those artists cos I’ve not heard of either of them, to be honest? So, what is their sound kind of like?

Respondent: Lauv, how can I describe? The sound, it’s pop music, definitely.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And it’s kind of, I guess, like pop, RnB. It’s very easy going, is it?

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I don’t even know how to describe it. I only found out about that artist like last year from an undergrad student. And at first I was like, ‘How do you even say their name?’

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Like, ‘What are they?’ like, ‘What’s happening?’ But then, once I finally listened, I was like, ‘Oh, I really like this, this is quite chill’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And some of the latter songs, I really felt like the beat was warm, like you could really dance to, not like dance in a club, but like if you are gonna choreograph a dance it would be like great for that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like I really liked it. And then Craig Armstrong, he writes scores for movies. So, that’s actually The Great Gatsby.

[0:21:04]

Interviewer: Oh okay, that makes sense now, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So –

Respondent: Cos last Sunday, well I sit with my friends while they study. I don’t have anything to study, so I started watching The Great Gatsby. And then after watching it, I was watching like certain scenes, and then I remembered how much I love the score (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, then, that spurred you on to listen to it on Spotify?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ah, okay (laughter). So, I mean, would you say that these two are broadly reflective of your music taste, or is it just from that particular week?

Respondent: Let me… Also (inaudible 00:21:54) (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Because it’s not unusual for me. I don’t know like if you looked at previous weeks, but like you might be able to tell like sometimes I will latch on to something, and I’ll listen to it until I’m tired of it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, it’s kind of like if you’re looking, you’ll see like, what the heck, like Craig Armstrong like came out of nowhere.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then it’s like what I listen to like all the time.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: But that’s just because I was reminded of it, and now I’m really into listening to it again and again.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Eventually, but then you’ll also see like oh, like maybe two weeks ago, I listened to La La Land non-stop, and it just hasn’t been listened to this week.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And it’s cos like right now, sometimes I’ll just, it’s kind of like putting a song on the shelf, and then I’ll listen to it until I’m personally(?) tired.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Yeah, because I was going to ask you about that bacause, I mean, just even in the week that I’ve looked through, so like last week, it seems like you do kind of latch onto artists. So, the Lauv artist, it looked like you were listening to that on repeat, was that the case?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[0:23:17]

Respondent: I was listening to that album like a lot cos I was like, ‘Oh yeah, it’s like I forgot like The Sea Gray(?) and then I keep listening to like the same song over and over again.

Interviewer: Uh huh, yeah. And then, the other one that I noticed which was quite interesting was the Ariana Grande song, Thank U, Next, you listened to for quite a prolonged amount of time over one day.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Were you still like actively listening to that song, or was it that you were doing something else and it was just constantly playing in the background?

Respondent: Yes, so any song, any songs that I listen to between, what is it? Any songs I listen to between like 9am and like 4pm, Monday through Friday, I’m usually at work.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And so, I play a lot of songs. But then sometimes I’m okay with listening to like one song for a whole day.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so like Thank U, Next I like really got into it, and I was like, ‘Oh my God, this song’s just the greatest’. I listened to it on the way to work, I listened to it like at work, and I listened to it after work. And then I listened to something else, but then I’ll be talking with someone and they’re like, ‘Oh, have you heard Thank U, Next?’ and I’ll go back to Thank U, Next.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And yeah, I’ll like listen to (inaudible 00:24:41) for ever (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, do you often then listen to things on repeat? And then kind of what happens, where is there the point then that you’re like, ‘Actually, I’m not going listen to this anymore’?

Respondent: Just like when they just get tiring.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: (Laughter) I feel like there’s no other way to like explain it, just like a song might just get tiring.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But not instantly, it’ll take a while.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I don’t know, sometimes they get tiring because I no longer feel the need to listen to it. Sometimes it doesn’t get tiring, but someone might introduce me to a new song, or I might rediscover an old song.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. But then, will you always eventually go back to that song or artist after a certain amount of time, or is it once you are tired of a song, that you never return back to it?

Respondent: No, I go back.

[0:25:54]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like the only times I’ll like never return to songs is if I actually like hate it or something. Or, you know, I kind of like, what’s that song? Yeah! (inaudible 00:26:13) like yeah, by Usher featuring Lil Jon.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like that song, I will like never by myself while I listen to that song. Cos I used to listen to that song, but then one year I made it my ringtone in the morning, and it just so traumatising (laughter) –

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Respondent: To hear Lil Jon scream, ‘Yeah!’ every morning, so I don’t listen to that song like casually. Like I’ll listen if I go to a party, if someone wants to bring it up.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I don’t like turn to it myself.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, it does make sense if you had it for your alarm, you know, for a long amount of time, yeah, that would make sense (laughter). So, going back then to your musical likes and dislikes, would you say that they’ve been pretty constant throughout your life, or do you feel that they have kind of changed and moved on?

Respondent: I think they’ve pretty constant, but then I start getting more selective.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like in high school I started listening to like Korean pop music, and so I was really willing to listen to like all different types, all different kinds. But then now, I’m at a point where it’s like I just listen to artists I like (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And if someone gives me a suggestion that’s along the same vein, I might listen to it. But, at this point, like I kind of just stick with the artist that I like.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: It’s not a lot of variety. Yeah, so it’s like I think in that way, it’s kind of changed cos I tend to stick with things a lot more these days. And that’s why a lot of things I do listen to kind of always rotate back to whatever I listened to maybe like a month ago.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Because there’s not really a need for new stuff, unless sometimes I do listen to like the Spotify playlist and there’ll be like 90% things I’ve listened to before, and then 10%, those are just new stuff.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so I’ll give that a chance, and I’ll be like, ‘Oh, this is interesting’. But I don’t seek out new stuff unless I like hear it on the radio and I instantly think like, ‘This song is a bomb, like the song is the absolute (inaudible 00:28:45)’ like things like that.

[0:28:47]

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, have your musical tastes ever been shaped by say friendship groups, or family members, or changes in your life, at all?

Respondent: Yeah. So, these days I listen to a lot of Christian music. I listen to a lot of CCM, which is contemporary Christian music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, you might see like a lot of Hillsong or Elevation Worship, things like that. But I like never knew, I’d never listen to Hillsong or Elevation Worship like before I was a first year.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, before 2014 I like never listened to those things because the music that I listened to in church was different. We listened to a lot of like gospel music and like veins of that, so a lot of black singers, things like that. And even then I didn’t listen to a lot of variety because, you know, in junior high it felt like I got tired, like I was tired, that my mom always listened to this Christian music. I was confused and I was like angry at like my Christian identity, and I didn’t want to listen to any Christian music. And I like hyped myself up with like Fergie and like all that stuff,

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then, kind of once I got to college, the church that I started going to was playing like Hillsong, Elevation Worship, those things, and I was like, ‘I’ve never heard this in my life’. And then, I started missing gospel music, and that’s when I started to listening to gospel music a lot more on my own in my first and second year. But then, by my third year, I would say caught on to like some of the music that my church sang, and I like started adding into my playlist, my Spotify playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I have a few Spotify playlists. I have one that’s Christian music, and right now it’s mostly gospel music. But like every day and every week like I’m still adding new CCMs that I’ve like heard at church or something like that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And they might start something new so example, like change over time, tied to like my identity and tied to like the surroundings around me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Because now I listen to a lot of CCM, and like my family doesn’t really listen to new songs or know what these songs are.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And some, they enjoy it, like when I play it, and then they start listening to it too.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But it’s still a new field for me. And I’m still adding songs to that playlist because like there’s still a lot of CCM songs that like I’ve never heard that my church will sing, and so I’ll like add it.

[0:31:34]

Interviewer: Huh, okay. So, it’s almost then like discovery through church that you’re finding these CCM songs that you’re adding?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, And what about your friendship group? Would you say your musical taste are very similar to that of your main friendship group?

Respondent: Actually, yes. So, one of my best friends, like I have three main friends basically.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And they’re Chinese American. One of them, she’s not like tied to music as deeply as I am, but she like listens to it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: It’s like I live with her, and she’s my housemaid. And she’s not like an avid music listener, but she does listen to music. And she listens to like similar things, but not a lot of the similar pop music I listen to. Like she doesn’t always listen to Ariana Grande, you know, she doesn’t listen to the scores. She’ll listen to a musical like if I say like, ‘Let’s go to this musical’ but it’s like she won’t know stuff like the back of her hand.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then I have another friend, like she’s in the same friend group, and she literally like listens to everything I listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And sometimes she’s the one that suggest music to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And she knows that it might take me a while. So, like she’ll suggest to me something when it comes out, and then I’ll be like, ‘Oh, I’m not feeling this’ and then six months later I’ll be like, ‘Oh, this song’s great!’ and she’ll be like, ‘Isn’t it great, like I sent this to you six months ago though’ right.

Interviewer: (Laughter) So, what is it then in that six months that changes for you?

Respondent: Sometimes it’s just when I’m listening to the song I’m not like very receiving of it at the moment. Like sometimes the beat might be not the way I want it to, or like I just don’t feel it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then like six months later I’ll hear it, and I might be in a new setting, my mind’s in a different space, and I’ll be like, ‘Wow, this song is (inaudible 00:33:39)’ (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter) And then you have to go back and admit to your friend that actually you like it (laughter).

Respondent: Yeah. And so, her tastes are very much the same as mine, so she always like enjoys that.

[0:33:52]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: For that girl we see a lot of concerts together, and she’s also willing to go to concerts that I go to. So, like I bought tickets to see Shawn Mendes next year (laughter) and she’s willing, she said that if I can’t find anyone she would go with me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And that’s just like earlier this summer I went to Panic At The Disco.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And my friend who was supposed to go with me almost cancelled, and so this girl said, ‘If that girl cancels on you, I’ll go with you’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then also this summer there’s a Korean artist that came to Boston, and she was like, ‘Let’s go see him’ and I was like, ‘I haven’t listened to anything he put out since his first single, but sure’.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: And then, like I had a good time. Like she came with me to see Aladdin, the musical. She was down for seeing Hamilton when Hamilton’s at Boston, and so like we saw that. When we were in Korea we went to like two concerts together (laughter). So, like we have very similar taste, and if there’s a concert or anything we’ll like go to it. When one of our favourite artists came out with a new CD, actually they came out with a revamp of one of their CDs, it’s like a special edition, you can only buy it during a certain time of day.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I was like, ‘This is a tragedy because I sleep at night’ (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: And so she was like, ‘I’m gonna wake up, I’m buying it’ and like she bought two, you know. And last time that artist came out with something, I bought two.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like one’s for me, one for her. So, like we have such similar taste, there’s like never a problem for us.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And anything I listen to, like she’ll pretty much listen to, and I’d be like, ‘Hey, this is great’, so.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then our other friend, our third friend, she listens to a lot of Chinese music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[0:35:51]

Respondent: She listens to some American music, but she listens to a lot of Chinese music. So, the two other friends. Sometimes my friend and I don’t always follow-up with some Chinese artist, but our other friend knows our taste, she knows our music taste, cos there are some Chinese songs like we like it and we share and we’ll take a lot. So, she knows our American and music tastes, so if she finds something, like she’ll send it to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: She’ll recommend a song and she’ll be like, ‘Oh, I feel like you would really like this artist’ or, ‘Like this new song’.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, do you have connected friends on Spotify at all?

Respondent: Do I? I think I do. I mean, like I follow some people.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So…

Interviewer: And do they have any influence on what you listen to?

Respondent: Yes, so in terms of, as I told you, like listen to like CCM and getting to know more CCM that my church sang.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: At first I wasn’t adding any CCM to my Christian music playlist, and I was just like, ‘I don’t know what this is’. So, I followed my friend at church, I followed his playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And he has a worship music playlist, and so I follow that. And I actually listen to his playlist quite consistently because, I mean, it’s not like he purposely curated that playlist to have a theme.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But it’s still a good playlist. And then, yeah, from time to time I do like, sometimes when I get in a car I might look up those playlists, cos I know sometimes people don’t always like what I have to listen to, so sometimes I look up their playlist and I pick what I wanna listen to from music they already like saved.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And, obviously, thinking about people can see what you’re listening to, does that affect your listening at all?

Respondent: No, I think I turned that off because I was just like, I didn’t understand what’s the point of people seeing what I’m listening to, like on the side.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But, in terms of making playlists, like it doesn’t really affect me cos I know the only people who are looking at my playlist are people who just might wanna get to know what I’m listening to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[0:38:26]

Respondent: But I think 90% of the time, people looking at my playlist, it’s just me on someone else’s Spotify, you know(?).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Like if I get in the car and their phone’s the only phone connecting, then I’ll go to a public playlist that I have, just so I can listen to my own stuff.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, do you feel then that Spotify is a good platform for allowing you to express who you are through music?

Respondent: I think so. At first I was a little tempted to switch to Apple Music cos my friends are telling me like Apple Music has a lot more streaming rights for Korean music, and a lot of Asian music. But then I was like, ‘You know, I think I’m fine with what Spotify has now’. Obviously, sometimes, I like might turn to SoundCloud or something if a song’s missing or artist is missing.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Just for like for the longest time there’s an artist that I liked, but they weren’t on Spotify because they just never had that contract.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I was like, ‘It is always so like agonising’ and I had to listen to that on my –

Interviewer: It’s frustrating, yeah (laughter).

Respondent: Yeah, and then I had to listen to it on SoundCloud, just to listen to like the top songs.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I think, as a whole, like I think Spotify’s very well for like music streaming.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And like once they acquire licences(?), it’s very great.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I mean, obviously, sometimes you can tell like they might be having troubles because like if you look at like the La La Land complete album, there’s like Japanese next to it and I’m like, ‘Did they just licence this from like Sony Japan rather than –‘

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Cos I think maybe their contract expired with like the American version, cos on one day you just search up La La La Complete Experience and it had Japanese next to it, and you’re like, ‘What is this?’

Interviewer: (Laughter),

Respondent: And I think I try to keep up (inaudible 00:40:33) sometimes if they’re having these problems with things like that because I just wanna know like is it affecting my listening, and(?) like how it’s gonna affect me as a user, some of the public choices that Spotify makes.

[0:40:48]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like when Jay-Z created TIDAL and pulled all of his Beyonce stuff off of Spotify, and I was like, ‘Oh my God, my life is in ruin’ (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But, I mean, eventually he returned some of the albums back to Spotify. But it’s still like, you know, remiss, like I’m so sad, like there’s some Beyonce stuff I can’t listen to, because it’s not on Spotify.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But, I mean, I’ll live because most of the stuff that I want to listen to, like I don’t always listen to Beyonce on a daily, or even on a monthly, so it’s never a big like loss when it’s not there.

Interviewer: Do you think there would ever be an artist that they would lose that would then push you into actually changing to another streaming service?

Respondent: I think it would have to depend on like what that streaming service is offering.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Because for one artist, no, they won’t lose me for one artist. But say they suddenly like wiped all musicals, and I would just be like, I’ll be so confused, like, ‘What’s happening?’ Like a musical that I loved when I listen to. And so, it would have to be like a plethora of artists. And then, I would have to see all of those artists on like the same site.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Cos if they cancelled their contract with Spotify, but like half of them did YouTube music, and then a fourth of them did TIDAL, and another fourth did Apple Music, then it’s like I can’t switch to one platform because they’re all scattered around.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, if a good chunk of what I listen to switched to another singular platform, then I would maybe switch to that platform.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I think it would take a lot. Because then also there’s also the possibility that I would just see what’s the cost (laughter).

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: And if(?) the cost of two. Just like for video streaming between my mother and I, well my mother pays but we have Netflix and Hulu.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then, in addition to that, my aunt has Direct TV, so she allows us to use her login.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: In America, if you go to some websites, you can insert your cable provider and they let you watch a show.

[0:43:34]

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: Yeah. So, between the Netflix and Hulu my mum has, and my aunt’s cable account, like I can watch many things. And I think that’s the way that I like it. And so, if a good chunk of artists that I liked left Spotify, but then if a good chunk of artists I did like still never left and are only exclusively on Spotify, then I would contemplate having both.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay, so, I mean, since using Spotify, do you personally feel that your music listening has become more diverse, or more fixed?

Respondent: Hmm. Maybe a little more fixed. I don’t listen to the radio like now since I’m like, ‘Oh, I’ll listen to Spotify without ads’ like ‘Why would you listen to the radio?’ (laughter). Radio has like a straight five minutes of ads, the radio plays songs you don’t want. Sometimes, like night-time, I don’t know if that’s like if all of America, but in my area at night-time some of the radio stations like have like DJs and it’s like remixes, and it’s like, ‘It’s ten o’clock, I still wanna listen to normal music’ (laughter). And also like Spotify allows, I can choose like what podcast I wanna listen to, things like that. So, it just allows me to keep up(?) the things orderly, and I can do what I want, when I want, where I want.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I’ve become very like focussed on all of these songs I listen to, I already listen to these artists I like, I already like. Like, I mean, it’s hard sometimes because they’re not always as global as you would want, but they’re still a good provider for like content.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: It’s very enjoyable.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Because, I mean, like when I was a kid, I was also that kind of annoying kid who always brought CDs everywhere, just so I could switch them in my CD player.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I would make like three CD mixes on my computer so that I could swap out a mix if I wanted to. So, I kind of always been choosy about what I wanna listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But, in the past, it’s not like I had a greater effort, because the thing is like even if I have a CD, if I get into someone’s car, they can choose not (laughter) to like play my CD, because they’re like, ‘I don’t like your curated like playlist’ like, they’re like, ‘I’m gonna listen to the radio’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[0:46:24]

Respondent: But with Spotify I can easily like play what I want, when I want. And then, if someone’s like, ‘Can you skip the song?’ or, ‘Do you wanna listen to something a little more happy?’ like I can still use Spotify to go to what they want, while I can also switch for something that fits their category and fits what I wanna listen to, and then play that (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, what was it then that initially kind of encouraged you to sign up to Spotify? Was it kind of the access to music, or the way you could stream music? Was there something in particular that drew you to that as your streaming platform of choice?

Respondent: I think at that time there was only like Spotify and Pandora, there wasn’t YouTube music and there wasn’t like Apple Music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Cos before Apple Music became like streaming like Spotify, it was just iTunes., like you have to buy a song.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I was, ‘I don’t wanna buy every song I wanna listen to’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And, to be honest, I also disliked the thought of like taking the chance of always downloading the songs you wanna listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Many digital have gotten by this by using LimeWire, that’s(?) not one of them (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Even though I got like a chunk. But I started using Spotify, and I think my friend probably suggested it to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then, I used the student price because like someone told me like, ‘Oh, you’re a student, like sign up’. So, actually, I don’t think I got Spotify until, was it first year? Maybe senior year of high school, first year of college.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I’m not so sure. I can check (laughter).

Interviewer: No, it’s okay. No, I mean, yeah. So, do you also use Last FM then as well, because I mean when we’ve been talking via email you said you already had your Last FM account set up?

Respondent: Am I on? I (laughter) don’t even remember why I had made a Last FM account, honestly.

Interviewer: Alright (laughter). It’s just kind of there? (Laughter).

Respondent: Yeah. My God, cos I’m like looking at some of these other songs that I listened to, cos if you click like ‘all time chat(?)’ it’s like you’ll see all like the old chats. And I think that’s from my old iTunes or something.

[0:49:18]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Cos like some of these songs are songs I kind of just like dabbled in, I can like tell you that as a fact. Honestly, for that I think I just made it because, you know, you wanna show your friends like, ‘Oh, this is what I’m listening to’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: (Overspeaking).

Interviewer: So, it wasn’t then necessarily a way for you to purposefully track your music listening, it wasn’t for any kind of reason like that?

Respondent: Maybe it was.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: I mean, I honestly think the only appeal of Last FM is that I can see what I’m listening to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I’m pretty sure that like when I got it, I knew that, like I’m gonna be able to see what I’m listening to. Oh, actually, yeah, that’s probably it, because I used to listen to iTunes, cos I used to have iTunes as my primary computer like music player.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And with iTunes, I think like maybe like a few times a year (laughter) probably more than a few, but a few times a year I would go to iTunes and sort by ‘listen’ to see like what’s my first listen to something, like how many times have I played this exact song? Like, ‘I’m so curious’ like what song. So, I used to really be into that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like, just knowing, like I just wanted to know like what song I listen to the most.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, then, does that kind of intrigue go into Spotify, cos they kind of produce like an end of year chart, don’t they, for individuals as to what you've listened to the most throughout the year? So, is that something you listen to when it kind of appears on your Spotify account?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: I(?) spend a lot of time, and have that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[0:51:26]

Respondent: And then, I was like, ‘Oh, I guess I can’t really see’, hmm, I think that’s why I got a Last FM account, cos my Spotify you can’t see what you’re listening to, how many plays.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, like when you can’t see how many plays, I’m like, ‘How am I supposed to know like what’s my favourite song?’ you’re like, ‘How many times have I listened to this?’ Cos then iTunes tells you, but Spotify doesn’t tell you.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then, I think I gradually forgot about it cos I was just really into like listening, and then became more about listening than like, ‘Okay, like I don’t care anymore like how many times I played it, I just want to play it a lot’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then, once I started doing that, like end of year playlist, here’s what you’ve listened to, I live for that, it’s so great. Because then like I listen to those, and by the end of the year sometimes you forgot that like, you know, in February you played a song like 500 times, and maybe there’s not another song you listened to for the whole year that much.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then, by the end of the year again I’m like, ‘Oh my God, like I forget like I listened to this song, like I was really into this sing, like this song really lifted me up’. Like but the end of the year sometimes I’ve forgot about songs from the beginning of the year, and I think it helps keep track.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: You know, I make a playlist and like Spotify there’s also so much music out there, like I can be listening to Ariana Grande for days, and then like I could forget like one song on the album that was great.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Or like sometimes there’s artists like you don’t always listen to, but then, you know, three months later you’re like, ‘Oh, I love that artist, but I forgot that the song is my favourite’ (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like the end of the year, having to see like, ‘Oh yeah, like this is a song I listened to, like oh yeah’. And I get surprised like sometimes at the amount of what songs I listen to, because like maybe I think I listen to Ariana Grande a lot, but then it’s like oh actually I’ve listen to like S Club 7 or –

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Because then it would be like all consistent, like that dark(?) thing would be like a more consistent like every two weeks I’ll listen to S Club 7, rather than like it was just for this month that I listened to Ariana. So, it’s like sometimes you forget that some of the most consistent things you listen to rack up, because you feel like, ‘Oh, I only listen to it every other week’. So, yeah, I love those like end of year things.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Well, so it’s almost a shame that it’s only end of year, and not like end of every six months or something (laughter).

[0:54:08]

Respondent: Yeah. Because I re-activated my Last FM for this, I was like so shocked because like two weeks ago there was a song that I listened to like a lot in one day, and it’s such an outlier. And then I felt so ashamed, yeah, I texted my friend and I was like, ‘I listened to this song all day and I can’t even remember, and I played during work’. I think like someone asked me a question at work, so I had to like turn down the volume.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I was like, ‘It says I listened to it a few hundred times, but I don’t even know what it sounds like’. And then, it’s just like, you know, every week it might say, ‘Oh, you listened to La La Land like 50 times max’ and it’s like, ‘Well, it feels like it’s more because then it’s like every week, actually’.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: If not like once a week, like every week, like this random new La La Land in there somewhere.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I think like I kind of had forgot about the use, like how intriguing Last FM was to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Just cos these days I’ve gotten used to like not having it, and just Spotify creates an end of the year playlist for me.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, when you go onto Spotify then, is there a particular way you navigate around the platform to stream music? Kind of are there patterns of what you will do when you go onto Spotify?

Respondent: Yes. So, my Spotify account, I mean does Spotify also like, you know, edit itself, not edit, updated, like the way it looks.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, it kind of shows me like my heavy rotation.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Sometimes I don’t even like go farther than that (laughter) just cos it’s like, ‘Oh, yeah, I’ll just go back to listen to that’. Cos it has like the recently played and your favourite albums and songs, so it just like encourages me to play the same stuff that I like played before.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like nothing feels like it has to change, because they have all of this. And then they have like a jump back in, like stuff that maybe I haven’t listened to in a while.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[0:56:44]

Respondent: But I was super into. And then it has like your top podcasts. But then like, in the bottom is all best of artist, popular playlists and popular stuff. And then sometimes I listen to those, but like it’s not always a thing.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then, yeah, I very much like rotate around my recently played, a lot.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Kind of, yeah, I just always going back to like what I usually do.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And what about their service features? Do you use anything like their Release Radar or Discover Weekly, Daily Mixes, the radio feature, for example, do you use any of that during your typical streaming?

Respondent: Sometimes I do.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I just took like some (inaudible 00:57:49). But sometimes I use those, especially as like if I’m at work, I might use it, the stations. Actually, there’s only four stations I’ve ever saved (laughter). Like I don’t save stations common, cos I don’t listen to them commonly.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then, my Made For You playlist, sometimes when I don’t know what I wanna listen to but I do know like I like it cos of my Daily Mixes, like my Daily Mixes I think are the best example cos I already know they’re gonna be like full of songs that I already like.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, if I can’t decide, then it’s like, ‘Oh, yeah’ or if I’m like cleaning it’s like, ‘Oh, yeah, like, why not just listen to a Daily or like, yeah, the Daily Mix?’ because it’s easier.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, I mean, you've said there then that you like the Daily Mix because it’s almost guaranteed that you will like what’s on next because it’s based on what you’ve listened to before. So, then, how do you feel about the kind of Discover Weekly that they give you and the Release Radar? Do you kind of go into that, or not so much because it’s not guaranteed that you will like it?

Respondent: Oh, yeah. Not so much because it’s not like guaranteed that I’ll be into it, yeah. I just don’t like listen to a lot of like new stuff (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh. Okay.

Respondent: So, yeah.

Interviewer: So, those kind of things, they don’t really interest you on the platform?

Respondent: I mean, once in a while they are (laughter) interesting.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like there is the occasion like random day that I’ll just be like, ‘Oh’ you know, like, ‘What should I listen to? I’m not sure’. I have like such a complex, like I don’t know at all like what to go for. And I might do it. Sometimes I click on it, like the Release Radar I click on it, and then I look around. But, obviously, sometimes it’s filled with unfamiliar names.

[1:00:18]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then sometimes it’s not, so then I’ll click on it. And then if I’m on the bus, I’ll just like click on it and let it play.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then, if it gets like to a point that I don’t like it, like I’ll just change it.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, is it then often a case that when you go onto Spotify, you know what music you want to listen to?

Respondent: Yeah, like there’s a high guarantee that I’m just listening to something I’ve already listened to before.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And so, during the week, we’ve talked about music for work, so you say that you use music a lot for work, and sometimes you actively listen to that and sometimes that becomes background noise that you don’t even realise you’re listening to anymore. But are there any other times in the week where you will listen to specific music at all?

Respondent: Hmm. Definitely on my way to work, listen to something that might pick me up, but something that helps me start my day.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And like Sunday, like on my way to church. Wednesdays and Fridays I usually go to like a small group at church, and I walk there, it’s a 30 minute walk. So, I’m usually looking for something that’s gonna match my pace, something that’s a little upbeat, or something that’s making me feel exciting.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Yeah, so especially like when I’m travelling in a train or walking, like that’s the time that I’m really looking to listen to music to like keep me up.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And so, what kind of music then would you chose in those situations to like pick you up?

Respondent: Fast music, definitely. I listen to like musicals sometimes when I’m walking, like musicals or music that feels exaggerated a bit.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, kind of like my Sam Smith’s album, Thrill Of It All, it’s a very mellow album but the backgrounds of it, and what he’s saying, it’s very, you know, like dramatic, almost in a sense. And so you kind of feel like oh like listening to it, I just always feel like a need to like (inaudible 01:02:54).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I really like listen to that. And then like Thank U, Next it’s just like not just am I into it, listening to it, but it’s a very good, like the beat is fast.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[1:03:09]

Respondent: And so, I listen to that. Like recently I listened to like Aladdin, the Broadway musical.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Just things that really feel like it’s an adventure, I don’t know. Musicals definitely, cos the musicals are notorious for when you’re watching a musical, they’re walking and doing this music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, that kind of stuff is very interesting to me. Just like I feel like I can walk and kind of play with my pace, play with what I’m doing.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Not feeling alone because this music is encompassing a sense of like familiarity, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. And so, do you feel that you very often add new music to your Spotify library?

Respondent: I think I try, but I don’t try hard (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Like Thank U, Next was a easy transition because I’ve already been listening to Sweetener felt like a billion years now. And then, it was just like one day I was like, ‘Oh, I guess I should give Thank U, Next a listen (laughter) because, you know, other people are like talking about it’ but I didn’t really care about it when it came out.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Cos when it came I was like, ‘Oh, I’m still listening to Sweetener’ like (inaudible 01:04:36). But then one day I was like, ‘Oh yeah, maybe I’ll like see what the hype’s about’. And I loved it. And Spotify also suggests you stuff, I don’t know if you know, but like, you know, sometimes when you open the app it has a pop-up and it’s –

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah, ‘The artist you listen to has a new track’ or something. So, like, I knew that Greatest Showman was coming up with like Greatest Showman Re-imagined.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I didn’t really care, but then like one day I logged in and a pop-up was like, ‘Oh, Panic At The Disco released The Greatest Show’ and I was like, ‘Oh, time to listen’ (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like those two songs are like the newest songs that I guess I’ve listened to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Oh, I only listened to Sweetener, actually I never listened to Sweetener before, but I was listening to a podcast on the way to work. It’s the New York Times podcast called Podcast.

[1:05:38]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And they were discussing Sweetener. And then, after I listened to a whole podcast about the talk about it, I was like, ‘I guess it’s time for me to listen to Sweetener’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then, I was like, ‘I love this’ you know. So, then that’s how I got down that like Ariana rabbit hole.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So.

Interviewer: And then, what about removing songs? Do you remove a lot of songs from your Spotify library?

Respondent: No. I’m like a hoarder.

Interviewer: (Laughter) A music hoarder.

Respondent: Yeah, I have a playlist I can go for like three days (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I don’t remove stuff. I think it’s either I add it, or I don’t.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So, like I’ve recently watched like Moulin Rouge, and I think like the music is very intriguing, but it doesn’t stand out or pop to me yet.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I think like maybe in the future like I’ll be like, ‘Oh, I remember that song I listened to, like Ewan McGregor sang, like what an interesting thing’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like I feel like I could go back to it. But right now like it’s on my recently played, because I looked it up one day, but I haven’t actually like played it recently.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Just because I listened to it once, and then I was like, ‘Okay, it’s not for me right now. Maybe in the future I’ll go back to it’ but, like, yeah.

Interviewer: And do you find yourself often going back then to that kind of music? So, you've like listened to something, you think, ‘Oh, not for now’ but do you ever actually end up listening to it, or is it just there on you Spotify library but never gets played?

Respondent: Okay, there are definitely some songs…Like I’ve added to, yeah. Okay, like I said, I’m a hoarder.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I have a playlist that’s all like Black American artists.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I don’t listen to that whole playlist, sometimes I actively skip a lot of songs on that playlist, unless I’m in the mood for it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: It’s just cos the playlist is so generic, not generic, general, cos it’s literally any Black American artist that I like.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, the styles are very different. Like, I mean, both Nicki Minaj and Drake are rappers, but they rap in a different style.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so it’s like I’ll go to that playlist, so I’d listen to it in a certain type of music, where, in essence, I’m kind of like creating my own like, this is like, you know, 500 hours of music, and I will keep forwarding until I listen to the songs that I only wanna listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, if we can move on now to talk about playlists. You've mentioned playlists a few times so, I mean, would you say playlists on Spotify are important to you?

Respondent: Yeah, that’s how I listen to a lot of stuff.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Because a lot of times, like I said, hoarder, I just dump a lot of stuff. I make general playlists, and I dump a lot of stuff into those playlists. And so then those playlists always come up because there’s always something within that playlist that I will want to listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, what do you mean then by ‘general playlists’?

Respondent: So, like I said, I have a playlist that’s just Black American artist, and then I have a playlist that’s just, cos, you know, there’s so many types of Christian music, I have a playlist that’s for like modern Christian music, or modern Christian artists. So, these artists don’t sing like CCM, they don’t sing worship songs, they sing like hip hop, like, you know, Christian rap.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Or they sing like RnB songs with like Christian undertones. So, I have a playlist for that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I have a playlist that’s just for musicals.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[1:09:43]

Respondent: So, that’s like every musical I could have ever seen, listened to. Like, you know, Hamilton and Rent and Allegiance, like they’re all in the same playlist, but they all have different vibes.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, I kind of like dump those things into one playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And, like I said, I follow some people’s playlists, but sometimes those are a little more curated.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I just dump a lot of stuff on some playlist, and I listen to it. And things like Panic At The Disco, I love that Spotify has a discography as a playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I mean, not that I’m gonna listen to every exact Panic song at the time, but in one playlist it has every Panic song ever, so I can listen to anything I want.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And the same for Fall Out Boy, they have a playlist that’s just all Fall Out Boy songs, and I like that.

Interviewer: And what about Spotify’s other playlists? I mean, do you ever kind of listen to their playlists that they’ve created for mood or a certain event?

Respondent: Sometimes, if I’m like at an event and I’m like, ‘Oh, I don’t know what they’re playing’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I’m like, ‘Oh, let me look at this’. Or if I’m in a car with kids and I’m like, ‘I don’t listen to kid music’ I go to those like playlists. Sometimes, when I want to listen to Shawn Mendes, and so I don’t think Shawn Mendes has released enough. I mean, he’s released a lot of albums, but Panic At The Disco’s will be like, what, like seven or something, including like their live albums. And like Shawn Mendes just hasn’t done that. So, they have a This Is Shawn Mendes, which like I listen to some of their This Is albums.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then sometimes I like using the voice feature on my phone, so I’ll just be like, ‘Google, play this’. So then I’ll just say like, ‘Oh, play Adele’ you know, especially sometimes if I’m driving. I’m more willing to listen to random Spotify playlists when I’m driving, cos I’ll just be like, ‘Well, play Adele’ and then it will say like, ‘Playing, this is Adele’ and I’ll be like, ‘Not what I wanted, but okay’ (overspeaking).

Interviewer: (Laughter) ‘I’ll go with it’.

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: So, with the artists that I observed you having streamed this week, so like the Lauv, is that coming from a playlist then or is that an album’s worth of music?

[1:12:30]

Respondent: It’s an album’s worth.

Interviewer: Okay, so –

Respondent: Yeah. So, sometimes with that album I like that album alone. So I do save some stuff, because then if I wanna specifically listen to something, I’ll listen to the album. Like there’s a song Open Heaven River Wild, but Open Heaven River Wild, that’s the album, I only have two songs on the album saved. Which, in its own right, kind of becomes like a quote unquote ‘playlist’ because it’s not the whole album, it’s just those two things that I like from that album. And I don’t want to create a new playlist, and so I just save those two songs.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I’ll listen to those two songs like on repeat.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, out of all the playlists that you have, is there kind of one that you tend to steer towards more often than the others?

Respondent: Yeah, maybe. I would say it’s musicals.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I think it would be a toss-up between musicals and my Christian playlist, because those playlists are some of the most like general.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Sometimes if I listen to regular quote unquote like ‘(inaudible 01:13:58) music’ I’ll go to the album (inaudible 01:14:00) and I’m looking for a specific song when I go to there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But, for musicals, if I’m in a mood, sometimes I just go to my musicals playlist to find a musical I wanna listen to, because I already know it’s there.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, broadly then, what is it about playlists that you like so much if, you know, you feel that that is the main way you listen to your music? What is about them that kind of you like so much?

Respondent: That I can keep adding and they never end (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: That I can like make a playlist of anything, or delete it when I want.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I don’t know. I mean, I don’t wanna do like a psychoanalysis speculation, but like I use basically like –

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: You know (laughter) I would be that kid in junior high, and especially even elementary school, I would bring my CD player to school, and during recess I would listen to my CD player.

[1:15:14]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Just sit there and listen to my CD player during recess. But, obviously, it’s such a tragedy because the CD, like my little holder, my like waist holder, it can’t hold like more than like two CDs. You know, if you got one CD in your CD player, and then like two other CDs that maybe you’re like, ‘Maybe they’ll get scratched, but it’s worth it, bringing them out the house’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like you can’t put that many CDs, like bring it with you.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I kind of became like master of like mixed CDs. Like I’d always burn CDs, like I will always burn CDs.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And like that’s something that I always used to do, like basically like create my own playlists, cos that’s basically like a burned CD is, like a playlist.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And so, I really liked that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, I think like when it comes to streaming, like that kind of carries over.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like why should I be tied to only listening to these two artists separately? Like why should I waste my time, when I can just have one big playlist and keep shuffling? And so, like I listen to only what I wanna listen to. (Overspeaking) -

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, then, you feel then that playlists are actually something that you enjoyed in the past with mixing CDs, but just translated into an online environment?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, I now want to talk a bit about music discovery, if that’s okay with you? So, would you say that you’re a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: I do. I would say I do, but as I said before, like sometimes it takes me a while to like get into it.

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Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Or I’ll be like, ‘Oh, I like this, but I don’t like it as much’ like. So, sometimes I like something, but sometimes I won’t like it enough to pause like listening to Ariana Grande on repeat (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh (laughter).

Respondent: Cos I’m listening to that one song on repeat, and then, you know, maybe when I’m finished with that one song, I’ll revisit that song previously(?).

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[1:17:33]

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, I mean, would you say then that you don’t necessarily actively seek out new music?

Respondent: Yes, that is correct (laughter).

Interviewer: So, then, if you do find new music, where does that new music tend to come from?

Respondent: People’s recommendations and Spotify’s recommends. Like it’s always recommendations.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Or, sometimes, randomly, I’ll hear it somewhere.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like, what’s that song? Young Folk, Young Folk by Peter Bjorn And whatever. Like that song, I heard that song like in 2000-and-something because it was used in a promo for Gossip Girl (laughter).

Interviewer: Ah.

Respondent: And then I didn’t have like Shazam or anything at that time, and I only heard the whistling part. And so, like I could not for the life of me, like I was so into it but I could not for the life of me find it. And I think if there’s any song that I was like very vigorously looking for, it would be that song.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Because then once I heard it in like a bookstore, and I was like, ‘This is the song that I’ve been looking for’.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: And like I went to ask like someone. Well, I worked at that bookstore, and I want to ask like my boss, and I was like, ‘What song is this?’ and they were like, ‘Just go check the iPod’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I was like, ‘Oh my God’. So, like, that’s the type of thing that might happen to me, like I hear something and I’m like. ‘Oh, I’m super into this’. Like the only reason that in the past you can see I listened to this score for Avengers: Infinity War (laughter). Like that had been because I was watching Infinity War and I was just thinking, ‘What beautiful melody is, like maybe I should listen to it’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I did.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like that might be how I discover new music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But usually it’s like my friend shares it to me.

Interviewer: And, I mean, how you describe the film, and obviously the TV series Gossip Girl, is that kind of the same with the musicals that you like, or do you like the songs from the musicals before you go to see it?

[1:19:52]

Respondent: I do like songs from musicals before I go to see it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like it just always has to do with eventually me liking it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Kind of like the first time I listened to Hamilton I was like so confused, cos my mom was the one that was like, ‘Listen to this, it’s great’ and I was like, ‘Oh, what is this weird stuff she’s really into?’

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Then like a month later, not even a month later, by the end of the car ride, I was like, ‘This isn’t bad’. So, when I went back I listened to it in my dorm, and then I was like, ‘Oh, I really like this’. And then I listened to it like a thousand times, you know, like before I even went to see it. And then I had seen it this summer in London, and I knew like every word and I was like so into it and I like loved it. And I’m (inaudible 01:20:50) like, you know, especially putting musicals on CD, or streaming I guess, it’s really good because not everyone can afford to see a musical, like I can’t always afford to see a musical.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But sometimes the music is good enough, like Hamilton I was like blown away when I listened to it. I looked up the lyrics, I loved it. I loved like the plot of everything, and I was like, ‘I’m so into this’ before I saw it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then, in another case, the musical Anastasia.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I loved the animation movie Anastasia, and so then I tried to listen to the musical and I was like, ‘I don’t get this. What is this? What am I listening to? Trash’ (laughter). But then I still wanted to see it because I was still like, ‘I still wanna see this’ even though I didn’t get into the music before I saw it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I watched it, and then after I saw it I was like, ‘This album makes sense’ -

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Like, ‘I love it, it’s so beautiful, Ramin Karimloo’s voice is amazing’. Like I was just like floored, and I like kept playing it on repeat, and I was in love with it.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, I mean, if I pushed you and said where do you discover the most of your music, would you say it was Spotify, your friends, or kind of elsewhere?

[1:22:19]

Respondent: My friends.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I think a lot of music suggestion comes from them.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: If I was ranking it, I would kind of rank Spotify and my friends equally, just cos like I trust my friends because they know me.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: In a weird way, also I chose Spotify because its algorithms know me (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like they have algorithms to know like what kind of like BPM I like, what kind of tune I like, what artists are similar to other artists, like those things. So, when I once in a while, like once a month I say, I would listen to like the discovery things.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I’ll find something. Sometimes I won’t be immediately into it, but then I might take a screenshot if I think it sounds nice, and I’ll go back to it.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And you also mentioned about pop-ups on Spotify, does that tend to be how you discover new music, through their pop-ups that they give on their app?

Respondent: Well, usually their pop-ups are of artists I already like, so yeah. I mean, I might find something new, but it also depends how much I like it. Cos sometimes they have pop-ups about like Bethel Music or Elevation Worship, and I’m just like, ‘Dismiss, dismiss’.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: But then like if there’s a pop-up, you know, if my pop-up about Panic, and I was like (inaudible 01:23:52) where it came out with their new album, and that was a pop-up, and I was like, ‘Listen right now’ like I couldn’t click it faster (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, when you discover new music then, would you say you like to discover things that are quite similar to what you already listen to, or are you open to something very, very different?

Respondent: Usually it’s quite similar.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, if it was something very different, you wouldn’t chose to listen to it?

Respondent: Not always from the get-go.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But unless like someone really insisted, like highly insisted, then I might. And I think that type of stuff I might get from my friend.

[1:24:39]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Cos Spotify, they try to stick to like, ‘We know what you wanna listen to’, like they recommend music that’s similar to what you already listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, if it’s new music that’s very different, it would have to be recommended by a friend.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Because then I would trust that my friend knows like, you know, they know what I like and I don’t like. And so, it would definitely have to be something that they say is worth a listen.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. So, I just want to move on now to thinking about whether Spotify is a good reflection of who you are. So, do you feel that Spotify makes it easy for you to manage and construct your music taste as a platform?

Respondent: Yeah, I think it does.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I think sometimes because I end up listening to the same thing all the time, it does get a little like muddled because it thinks like, ‘Oh, like this is what you’re listening to, this is what you wanna listen to, this is the only thing that you’re really here for’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: As opposed to like, honestly, like YouTube, YouTube sometimes they like reach back. YouTube sometimes is like, ‘Oh, you listened to this two years ago, we think you might like something similar’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I’m like, ‘Where did you get this from?’ (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Like, ‘What made you think that this is true?’

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then, sometimes it is true. Like, I don’t know.

Interviewer: Do you feel then that Spotify perhaps is just based on your current preferences and likes, rather than things that you’d perhaps listened to six months, a year ago?

Respondent: Yeah. Spotify is like a good representation of what I currently listen to, while I continue to listen to like that type of stuff.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And does its interface influence what you listen to at all? So, I mean, we’ve talked about the pop-ups, and it sounds like that kind of, depending on what the pop-up is, does lead you to listening to that music. But is there any other aspect of their interface that kind of influences how and what you listen to?

[1:26:57]

Respondent: Like, a bit.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Just cos if it’s something I always listen to, yeah, because their interface basically, when you log in it shows you heavy rotation of what you've recently listened to. Like sometimes the screenshot I sent you, like that’s what it looks like, and so I end up thinking like what I wanna listen to right now, and I pick something I’ve already listened to previously.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. But even though with that, do you still feel that if I looked at your Spotify account, I would have a good idea, or at least you would think that that was a good reflection, of actually who you are?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. I mean, is your music on there quite eclectic? I mean, you’ve talked about musicals and CCM –

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: But, I mean, are there kind of a range of genres and musical styles on there?

Respondent: There’s definitely a range, because it’s like there’s stuff that I don’t listen to all the time, but it’s still there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like the playlist that I said that’s like Black American artists, like that has a lot of like rap or like, what is it? Like sometimes I just don’t listen to that as much like right now, it’s like the artists like Majid Jordan, like they’re such a good duo and I love listening to their stuff.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I’m just not listening to it right now.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And probably as winter goes on I might, because they have such a vibe that kind of feels like it’s a winter vibe (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. So, you've mentioned before Spotify’s algorithms, so are you kind of aware that it has got this algorithm going on behind the scenes that’s directing music recommendations to you?

Respondent: I would assume, yeah, I just assume like, you know, that they have algorithms that are really looking into what I’m listening to, what I might listen to, things I listened to once and maybe haven’t listened to since, so that they can give me like tips and suggestions. I mean, my Daily Mix that they send to me, like I sent you a screenshot, so like the Daily Mix like it shows you the album covers of like some of the music that it’s gonna suggest to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, like if I listen to a Daily Mix, I usually pick based off like, ‘Oh, like I see that they’re gonna suggest to me like Harry Styles and Tori Kelly, so I’ll listen to that’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[1:29:39]

Respondent: Sometimes Spotify like slips in things, and I’ll be like, ‘What is this?’ But then sometimes it’s like an absolute like bop, like what’s his name? Daniel Caesar.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like the artist Daniel Caesar. Like I never listen to him before, and then one day they like kind of just slipped him in.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And the first time I heard it, I was like, ‘What is this?’ And they also slipped in like two more of his songs, and I was just like... And then I got interested, and like I looked up the artist and then I looked up his albums, like. So, I don’t know. I mean like, you know, some people are super scared of technology, but I have like much faith in these algorithms that they will give me something good (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, then, obviously thinking that, do you like then the music that Spotify recommends to you on the whole? Because if this is the way the algorithm’s working, do you feel that it is obviously working and producing good recommendations for you?

Respondent: I think like on the whole it is.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And like I definitely believe that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then sometimes I just get so caught up in like, ‘Oh, I don’t really wanna listen to something new, I’ll just listen to the same thing as before’.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, going back to Spotify’s recommendations, do you feel that they are quite similar to the music that you already like, like you can see why they have recommended it to you? Or is sometimes very out there?

Respondent: Mostly I can see why they’ve recommended it to me, because sometimes, even if I don’t listen to an artist a lot, like they’ll know that I listen to it like a few times every so often, you know. And it’s not just like based off like BPM and things like that, they base it off of like who has this artist collaborated with.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like Majid Jordan, they’re actually Canadian, and they’re at Drake’s label. So, occasionally I do like listen to Drake. And sometimes I listen to like Cardi B, but I only like two songs. And like, you know, sometimes I listen to like Mac Miller, like those things like randomly.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[1:32:26]

Respondent: But some of those random inserts kind of create its own story where Spotify might have enough information to say, ‘Okay, she listened to Mac Miller and Drake, let’s suggest to her’ or they’ll be like, ‘Oh, she listened to Drake and Cardi, let’s suggest to her a song that’s like Drake featuring the Migos or like Cardi featuring Migos’ because like Cardi’s partnered with Migos before.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: It’s all like good suggestion on their half, but then sometimes I’m like, ‘Ahhhh’. Yeah. Cos like I’m not really invested in Cardi B.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like I like the song, I like it. I like that she’s featured in Bruno Mars’ song.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I don’t listen to Invasion Of Privacy. I’ve never listened to the whole album.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, it’s –

Interviewer: Yeah, that’s interesting that it’s done that then, that it’s assumed that because you've listened to it a couple of times you are a fan of that music and of that artist.

Respondent: Yeah, cos I mean like I get it. Like if I listened to like one British artist every so often, and then it’s gonna be like, ‘Oh, even though you don’t listen to this person as a whole, maybe you like British artists’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I’ll be like, ‘Yeah, but I only like that person’ (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: But it’s a noble effort on their part, on behalf of their algorithm.

Interviewer: Yeah, they’re like trying, they’re trying (laughter). Okay, so –

Respondent: And like YouTube has similar.

Interviewer: Has similar what, sorry?

Respondent: Like I think like YouTube is a little similar, but it just gives you more options.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Cos like if you listen to a song or watch a video on YouTube, it gives you like similar channels, similar artists, anything with that like SEO keyword, like it’ll pop up on the right.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But it’s not as detailed as Spotify.

[1:34:39]

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. So, my last question to you is obviously you've been through each stage now of my research, so you've done the survey, you’ve done the online observation, and you've done the interview. Has that, from your part, made you reflect or change anything about your current Spotify practices?

Respondent: No (laughter).

Interviewer: No? (Laughter).

Respondent: No, I don’t really (overspeaking) anything.

Interviewer: That’s good, that’s good. You weren’t kind of conscious that I would see what you were listening to, or anything?

Respondent: No, because I already know, like through my life so many people have already like told me, they’re like, ‘Oh, your music is like a mixed bag’. (Inaudible 01:35:23) cos, you know, like Drake, Cardi, like Majid Jordan, but then also like Korean pop, you know, occasion Chinese pop, and then sometimes like British pop. And I’m like definitely like go back to NWYNC. Like it’s all over the place, so.

Interviewer: Uh huh, yeah. I mean, yeah, from the week I observed, it definitely came across as very diverse and eclectic in the artists and the styles that you listen to.

Respondent: Yeah (laughter).

Interviewer: So no, that’s great. Thank you so much for speaking to me, it’s been a great interview and so interesting to listen to you talk about music and how you use Spotify, so I’ve thoroughly enjoyed speaking to you. So, thank you so much.

Respondent: Oh yeah, no. I’m always willing to like participate in surveys and things cos I’m like, ‘Oh yeah, people need research to do stuff’.

Interviewer: (Laughter) Yeah, definitely. And finding participants is sometimes the hardest thing.

Respondent: Definitely.

Interviewer: But I know you've been sending me screenshots, so I will check them when I come off because they’ve kind of been popping up on my screen and then disappearing, so I’ll have a look at them in more detail when I’m off the call.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, cos I was just like thinking while we’re talking and you were mentioning like the UI, like user interface, just like how I see the UI, like what pop ups first, like.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: It’s very good examples of how everything’s so different.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But it always pops up (laughter).

Interviewer: Yeah, no, I will definitely have a look at those, definitely will. I mean, is there anything from your side that you want to expand upon or talk about that we’ve not yet talked about?

[1:37:19]

Respondent: Maybe not like too much, cos I know like I listen to a lot of like Spotify, but sometimes I listen to YouTube.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, (overspeaking).

Interviewer: Is there kind of a difference then of when you would listen to Spotify and when you would listen to YouTube?

Respondent: Yeah. I actually do go to like live music streams, like the low vibe chill on YouTube (laughter).

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: Cos that’s like live, uninterrupted, kind of like jazzy music like hour.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So that like while I’m cleaning or studying or if it’s like a public setting. Like sometimes I use that at work, when we have a presentation.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Cos I just might need to show students something, and I need background music like.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And like definitely like SoundCloud, like sometimes I find mixes that I really like.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But because these people aren’t like artists or things like that, like I’ll just listen to a SoundCloud.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Yeah –

Respondent: So.

Interviewer: I’ve never used SoundCloud myself, so I’m not fully sure how that works as a platform.

Respondent: Yeah. I’m not too sure about like monetisation or anything, but I know like as a business like they have a similar model like, but it’s more people on it, people can upload anything they want, so. Like sometimes I look for some specific things. You know, it’s just kind of all over the place, like SoundCloud as a platform (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like sometimes if I wanna listen to like a rip from a TV show, like I can find it there. Or like YouTube too.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[1:39:21]

Respondent: But I think I like SoundCloud because like I can close like the programme without the music turning off.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, uh huh.

Respondent: But –

Interviewer: I’ll have to look into that, yeah, because as I say, a couple of people have mentioned it during the interviews, but it’s just not something that I’m hugely familiar with.

Respondent: Yeah. I don’t know anyone who uses SoundCloud as like their main programme, you know. Like everyone uses SoundCloud in addition, because it’s always like a thing or two they can’t find, and so they turn to SoundCloud for that. But it’s never like my main thing. Or especially cos I have a Android, so sometimes my phone battery like is dying.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And in Android you can do like a battery-saving mode, and so like if I do that battery-saving mode it turns off high-powered apps like Spotify.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: Yeah. So, I can listen to Google Play. Basically Google Play is where I downloaded everything from my iTunes and uploaded it to Google (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh (laughter).

Respondent: So, I could listen to that, but sometimes the music’s so old.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like it’s actually quite sad.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: It’s like ripped from like 2003, so the quality of like…it’s like, you know, 120 like kilobytes and it’s like ‘Ahh, that’s disgusting, my ears are bleeding’.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Basically, Google Play and SoundCloud, cos SoundCloud can be accessed on the internet, like I don’t always need the app.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So, if my phone’s dying, I can listen to SoundCloud no problem.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, it’s kind of almost like your back-up sometimes for music listening?

Respondent: Yeah.

[1:41:33]

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. No, well that’s been great. Thank you so much, I really appreciate it.

Respondent: No problem. If you have like any other questions or like follow-up things that you’re just itching to know, like definitely let me know cos I always listen to music. And if you wanted to even take note a little bit more, like I mean my patterns are really all over the place –

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: And it’s not really fair. But if you did wanna know more about like specific artists or like, you know, ‘Why did you listen to this that day?’ like, ‘What’s controlling this?’ you can always reach out to me.

Interviewer: Oh, that’s great, that’s so kind of you, I really appreciate that. Right, well I will let you get on with your Friday evening.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, thank you so much and yeah. Alright, well that’s great, thank you so much.

Respondent: Have a good evening.

Interviewer: Yes, you too. Speak to you soon.

Respondent: Bye.

Interviewer: Bye, bye.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-14-M

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Conversation, if that’s okay?

Respondent: Sure, of course.

Interviewer: Great. So, before we get started then, is there any questions that you have about what’s going to happen?

Respondent: No, I don’t think so.

Interviewer: Okay, well that’s great. Well, in that case then, let’s get started.

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: So, the first bit I’d like to ask you is whether and how music relates to your identity. So, while you’re talking I won’t interrupt you –

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: I just might take some notes down, as I said. So, how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: I mean, that’s kind of a big question I would say, yeah (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter) Sorry, it’s quite broad to start off with.

Respondent: Yeah, I mean, music is pretty important to my identity, I’d say. I mean, I (coughs) listen to it a lot (laughter). I feel like the last couple of weeks I’ve actually been a little slower cos of podcast, but usually I spend a lot of time, like eight hours a day, listening to music because of my commute. So, you know, I spend a lot of time alone with my thoughts and with the music that I listen to. And so I think at least, personally and like inwardly, it’s a very important part of my life.

Interviewer: Okay. And do you feel that that has always been the case? Has music always been something that has been important to you?

Respondent: Yeah, I would say for almost as long as I can remember. When I was really young I would listen to the radio as I went to sleep, like when I was like four or five years old, going on to, I mean, for a very long time. You know, when I was in my pre-teens and early teens it was listening to CDs and cassettes as I went to sleep, and in long car rides. And it’s always been, yeah, very important to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And so, you've just listed there a lot of mediums in which you listened, or have listened, to music in the past. Do you still listen through all of those mediums, so the radio and your CDs and cassettes, or is it now just purely on streaming platforms?

Respondent: So, I collect vinyl records.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I would say that the majority of my listening comes from streaming, just because it’s easier, and it’s so easy to discover new music that way.

[0:02:25]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I’ve always found that my way of supporting the musicians is, you know, the ones I really like I usually will pay to see in concert or buy their records, which I love, it’s just kind of bands’ artwork almost.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I will listen to the vinyl, you know, from time to time, but it’s more of a sit-down session type of thing rather than on the go. My record player’s not in my car, so.

Interviewer: Uh huh, yes, okay.

Respondent: But other than that, you know, I’m not listening to CDs. Occasionally, the radio, but that’s only if the car I’m in for some reason can’t connect to my phone.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, the vinyl records then that you have and you kind of have as a collection and for artwork, how does that translate into your Spotify listening?

Respondent: Well, I would say, I mean, I’ve been on Spotify pretty much since they came to the US, which was after Europe. And I would say that the best thing that Spotify has done for me is allow me to broaden my tastes, you know, through the Discover Weekly playlist or the personalised playlist I’ll discover new music. My favourite band in the world right now, that I’d never heard of, I discovered two years ago cos of a random playlist on Spotify. Now I own all their records, you know, I go see them in shows and buy their merchandise. So, I would say that’s the most important thing that Spotify has been able to do.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, the music that you have on vinyl, do you also have that in your Spotify library as well?

Respondent: Typically, typically. I have, you know, a lot of older records and stuff that was, you know, gifted as part of collections, or I bought as part of a collection So, some of the vinyl that I have is, you know, not something that I probably have in my Spotify collection. But the majority of, I would say, the new vinyl that I’ve bought that’s, you know, newly released, that all that music is probably saved in my Spotify.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And then, how do you listen to music on vinyl, and how do you listen to music on Spotify?

Respondent: I would actually say I’m pretty similarly. I’ve always been [sound cuts out] to(?) full albums. I’m a big fan of, you know, listening to full albums and collecting, you know, large concept albums and stuff like that. So, my favourite bands, you know, I feel that you can’t just pick off one song from the album, you gotta listen to the whole thing. So, vinyl records were kind of designed around that, you know, you can only fit so much music on one side, so they were arranged in a specific way that you were meant to listen to them. So, sometimes I listen to them, for the most part I listen to full albums like that. But Spotify, I do have a couple of like mixed playlists that I make that I will listen to from time to time as well, which vinyl obviously cannot do.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. So, for you then, do you feel that music is important to your identity?

Respondent: Oh yeah, yeah, without a doubt. I mean, I love talking about music, and sharing music with people. And I think that, you know, who you listen to, and what type of music, and the variety of music that you listen to, can say a lot about a person.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[0:06:10]

Respondent: You know, when I meet new people, that’s one of the first things that I’m interested in is what type of music do they like. I think it can say a lot about a person.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I think that what I listen to says a lot about me.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay, that’s interesting. So, then, how would you describe then your musical tastes?

Respondent: I would say, you know, I feel like you ask most people that and they’re gonna say, ‘I listen to everything’.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: (Laughter) I do listen to a lot, you know. I go through phases. I find, you know, if there’s some sort of genre that strikes me, I’ll kind of absorb into that genre.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: A lot of what I’m listening to is like progressive rock and roll right now, but I’ve got through southern rock and, you know, an electronic music phase, and a classic rock music phase, and a, you know, Australian psychedelic rock music phase.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: So, that’s kind of how I go through these, you know, phases of what I like. But certainly, I like some pop music, I like rap, rock, like really all over the board.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. But you have mentioned though quite a lot of rock there. Would you say that’s a predominant music taste, or is that just reflective of what you’re listening to at the minute?

Respondent: I mean, I use those terms so loosely now because, I mean, the genres have changed so much and I feel like, you know, specifically rock and roll, there’s a lot of people are talking about, you know, ‘Is rock and roll dead? Is rap the new king?’ And I’m like well, no, I think rock and roll has just become more niche and divided into sub-groups where, you know, specific people like that type of music but, you know, not enough people like it for it to be pop, like pop on the radio.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I say, you know, a lot of rock and roll, sure, sure that’s certainly where it is. But I do listen to, you know, Kanye West (laughter) is one of my favourite artists of all time. Pretty Lights is an electronic artist that I would also put in one of my top artists of all time. So, certainly a lot of rock and roll, but if you go into like my top ten list, which I would be hard to list, there’s certainly some variety there.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, it sounds then like you have moved through quite a lot of different genres in your music listening, so how has that changed, and perhaps why has that changed?

Respondent: You know, I think, you know, when you listen to a lot of music, things get stale over time, you know. Sometimes in a bad way, sometimes not so much. But always listening, looking for something new. And sometimes, you know, you turn over a stone and it’s something that you’ve never heard before, and you’re like, ‘Wow, I really like this, and let me go down this hole for a little while. And I found this band, and they’re connected to this band, who is also really good. And someone who produced that band produced this band, and that’s also really good’.

[0:09:24]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And, you know, you find record labels that have a lot of bands that you enjoy, so you kind of look around there. Then those kind of genres will connect to something else, and then you kind of go in that direction. So, I feel like that’s kind of just how it’s evolved for me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And for the most part, you know, any band that I’ve loved since I was a teenager or whatever, I would still say that I love, to this day. You know, I’ve never turned on my back on some of these bands, like some people do, I think.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, you wouldn’t then necessarily say that there’s music that you don’t listen to anymore from your past, you still feel that you listen to that?

Respondent: Maybe not. You know, like I went through when I was in college, everyone was going through the big electronic music phase, it was like 2008, 2009, dubstep was getting big.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I listened to a lot of it then, it was kind of what you did, but I don’t put on dubstep music now, like I wouldn’t listen to that sitting at my desk. I don’t think I’ve elected to play dubstep in five years. But I don’t look back and say, ‘No, I hate that and, you know, I’m over it now’.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, is there a reason then that you don’t listen to much dubstep anymore?

Respondent: I don’t know, it doesn’t interest me as much anymore. I’m not going out and partying with my friends (laughter) so it’s not as appealing as it used to be.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: You know, and a lot of what I do, you know, I’m not gonna, I don’t know, sitting in my car while I’m working, or sitting at home and then listening to dubstep just seems odd by itself (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter) Yeah, I guess it could be odd (laughter) yeah.

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: So, because, again, you’ve mentioned a lot of different types of music and kind of discovering different things. Is there something that all these different genres, or different things that you like, have in common? What draws you to liking this music?

Respondent: Oh, I don’t know, that’s a tough one to think about, you know. I think the first thing that I wanna jump to is authenticity, but I don’t even think that authenticity is it because sometimes I really like just good pop music where I’m like, ‘Wow, this is catchy and someone, you know, thought up this incredibly catchy song’. And that’s interesting to me, but it’s not, you know, necessarily authentic, as I would define it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I like emotional music, you know, or maybe music that evokes an emotion.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I think that would be the main connection, but then again at the same time all music for me kind of evokes an emotion, and maybe that’s why I like, or have transitioned through, so many different genres.

[0:12:18]

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And would you say then, cos you mentioned Kanye West earlier –

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: Do you listen to Kanye West because he evokes emotion from you?

Respondent: Oh yeah, absolutely. I mean, one of the most real and emotional, I think, musicians out there. I mean, that puts himself on the line, and I think that’s incredible. So, I would definitely identify with that.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And have you got any particular types of music that you dislike and perhaps wouldn’t ever listen to?

Respondent: Again, I mean, they all kind of blend together, which makes it tough. Like, you know, American pop country is probably my least favourite. You know, I don’t wanna listen to Toby Keith, and I can’t even really name any of them. But I dislike that type of music so much. But, you know, that’s as close as it gets. But some people will just say, ‘I hate country music’ but I don’t hate country music, I love southern music, I just don’t like that, you know, beers and trucks and flags southern pop country music, you know, music that we have here.

Interviewer: Okay. So, what is it then about that music that you dislike?

Respondent: In that I’d say it’s the opposite of authentic, it’s almost like American propaganda in a way. So, I mean, I can see how people can escape in it, and it’s just like, you know, other pop music, Katy Perry and all that. But I just never identified much with the trucks and beer and American flag type of theming of that music.

Interviewer: Okay, okay, that’s fair enough. So, obviously, looking at your scrobble logs from last week, it kind of created a top ten of the artists that you listened to. And the one that you streamed most often, at least last week, was Deerhunter.

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: And that was by quite a significant number that you streamed that the most. And then the second was Steely Dan.

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Would you say that these are reflective of your general music listening tastes?

Respondent: So, The Deerhunter is the band that I was saying about two years ago I discovered on Spotify and have become my thing. So, I’ve listened to them (laughter) if you were to go, you know, Spotify sends out the year round-up or whatever, for 2018 I have it was like 600 hours of Deerhunter I think, maybe more than that. It was something absurd, it was over half of my listening was Deerhunter (laughter).

Interviewer: Wow (laughter).

[0:15:04]

Respondent: So yeah, that is definitely indicative. Steely Dan? I love Steely Dan. I think I just put on an album one day and let it play for a little while, which is probably where all those came from. So, yeah, I mean, pretty indicative. I don’t listen to a ton of Steely Dan all the time, but I do listen to a lot of The Deerhunter (laughter).

Interviewer: Okay. So, I mean, I’ve never heard of these two artists or bands, so would you be able to describe for me the kind of music that they create?

Respondent: Sure. I mean, I don’t know if you mean that but you have undoubtedly heard Steely Dan, they’ve got a lot of big hits.

Interviewer: Maybe then it’s just that I don’t recognise the name.

Respondent: Yeah. I’ll pull it up now (overspeaking) drive me nuts. Do It Again, Reeling In the Years, Dirty Work. I mean, yeah, huge hits(?). Ricky, Don’t Lose That Number, Hey Nineteen.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, Steely Dan, they were around in like the ‘70s and the ‘80s and ‘90s, and they made kind of like highly produced, jazzy rock and roll.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And The Deerhunter, the reason I love The Deerhunter is because they’re genre defying. They showed up on a playlist for me for progressive metal, which is really intense music, and they are not really intense, they’re very theatrical. They have a five album series that’s one storyline set around World War One, that goes from like a post-punk, hardcore in the beginning, the first album, second album, and then by the end it’s this beautiful orchestral opera that’s incredible. And they have another album called The Colour Spectrum where they make four songs for every colour in the rainbow, plus black and white, and each of the songs is thematic around the colour. And it’s amazing, it’s all over the place, the genre, so.

Interviewer: Uh huh, it sounds very interesting.

Respondent: Yes, I could, you know, proselytise for them forever –

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: And talk about them for a long time, but I’ll try not to because it drives my friends crazy (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter) So, do you like them then because they have defied genre boundaries, or is it something else that draws you to them?

Respondent: Like what initially brought me into them, it maybe wasn’t even that. I discovered over time of listening through their discography how different and genre-defying they were. I think the emotional aspect of it is what drew me to it originally.

[0:18:11]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: It’s sad and melancholy music, which I love. Some people don’t like listening to sad music, but it’s one of my favourite things, so that definitely was what drew me into them. And then, as I explored their discography more, and started noticing the genre changes, that was certainly a huge appeal to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And would you say Deerhunter and Steely Dan, there is anything in common about those top two artists from your last week?

Respondent: Yeah, certainly. There is definitely Deerhunter songs that could be inspired by Steely Dan, for sure. But I think maybe that’s just part of how The Deerhunter pull from a lot of older music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But yeah, definitely some in common.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, do you feel that there’s ever been a time where you've used music to reflect who you are to somebody?

Respondent: Yeah, certainly. I can’t think of any specific instances, but I’ve definitely said, ‘Hey, if you wanna understand how I’m feeling, listen to this song’. I mean, I think certainly music has spoken for me like that.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And kind of in what kind of context have you used that? Can you think of anything?

Respondent: I mean, sometimes there are just complex emotions that are hard to like, you know, apply meaning to and describe to someone.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then sometimes you listen to a song. Well, for me, you know, I’ve listened to songs and said, ‘Hey, that is exactly how I’m feeling, and perfectly put into words and the emotion of the music’. And so, I think that’s usually when I’ve pointed to that, with strong emotions.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, you’ve talked about music for emotion quite a bit, so how important is it to you that music evokes some kind of emotion?

Respondent: I don’t know if it’s like a chicken or the egg thing, you know, if I like the music because it evokes emotion, or just that the music evokes emotion and that’s, you know, why I end up liking it. But (coughs) yeah, I mean, yeah it’s important I think, yeah. I mean, even if it’s not, you know, the happy or sad are the main ones. I mean, there’s, you know, the emotion of being happy around your friends, or with like the electronic music and the dubstep and stuff it was, you know, evoking an emotion of craziness and fun with your friends, you know, it’s –

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: So, sometimes it’s not even the deeper emotions, but some of the more superficial ones, and I can like that too.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, is it then that you’re feeling a particular emotion and you’re searching out music that meets that, or is it that you’re listening to music and then that evokes an emotion in you?

Respondent: (Laughter) It’s actually something I’ve thought lot about before, you know. If you’re depressed and listening to sad music, is it helping or is it hurting?

[0:21:34]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I don’t know, I don’t know. I think sometimes, you know, I’ll hear a song that I haven’t heard in a long time that has, you know, a very specific memory attached to it, and it’ll come on and, you know, in an instant I’m transported back to that moment, and that can make me feel a certain way.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Or I can feel a certain way and, you know, that makes me wanna seek out music that compliments that feeling as well.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And would that music that you seek out, would that be something from a playlist, or an album, or a particular artist? How does that tend to work?

Respondent: You know, if I’m reaching back for something, I’ll typically know what I’m looking for. Do you mean as far as new music goes, or…

Interviewer: So, say that you went onto Spotify and that you felt a particular way and wanted some kind of music to listen to.

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: So would, for example, you select one of Spotify’s playlists that supposedly met that emotion, or would you actively go and search for something and pick an artist or a song or, you know, something by yourself?

Respondent: Yeah. I would probably have something in mind, for most. You know, I’ve used the Spotify like mood playlists before, yeah, a couple of times, but I never really like them too much. There’s a couple that was like, you know, homework music or background music, that I think is specifically not emotional, and that’s the stuff that I’ve kind of listened to there. But if I am feeling a certain way, I’ll typically have something in mind that I will seek out specifically.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, if I was to ask you, how would you describe yourself, your musical identity?

Respondent: Hmm. I mean, how do you mean?

Interviewer: So, is there kind of a particular song that you maybe feel is perhaps reflective of you in particular? Or a genre, or a style or a sound that, you know, kind of conveys who you are through music?

Respondent: Yeah, for me, at least in my life currently, and I think that’s particularly why as well that band The Deerhunter has stuck out so much to me, is I identified with, you know, the actual story because it is, you know, a story-based album.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I identified with the emotions in the song, and I think that’s why I want to end up telling all the people around me about it to a fault. But that’s something that I would point to, at least at this point in my life, and say, ‘This represents me specifically’ and I can, you know, kind of tie my identity around that.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And so, do you feel then that your musical identity has changed over time at all?

[0:24:55]

Respondent: I think, you know, like fringe aspects of it certainly, but the core of it I don’t think has really changed over time.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: From when I really started getting into music and listening to music, I think that’s pretty much stayed the same.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, what would that core be, then?

Respondent: I just think that emotional connection to music is the core of it. You know, I’m trying to think of what my first albums I had. I had cassettes of like Weird Al Yancovik, I listened to those and laugh, or I think I had like Backstreet Boys, you know. But then, eventually, when I really started getting into music as my identity, it would probably be around 5th Grade, middle school.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And at that time everyone, I remember specifically, everyone was getting into rap, and I just wanted to be against the grain and I listened to other things that actually made me feel something rather than, the rap at the time was I think pretty ridiculous.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, yeah, I mean, that’s just kind of stayed with me since then.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, at that time then, when you were in 5th Grade, was it obvious to everybody else that you were going against the grain at that time?

Respondent: (Laughter) To specific people, I’m sure. My parents, I think. Some of the, you know, the kids at school, certainly. I mean, that’s when the cliques kind of emerge and, you know, you kind of find your group of friends with similar thoughts. So, you know, I hung out with other people who, you know, listened to the same music as me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I think, as far as mainstream went, yeah, that people thought I was against the grain.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, has there been any life experiences that you feel might have shaped your music tastes?

Respondent: I mean, yeah, definitely. I mean, I’ve done all sorts of things, whether it’s like going to music festivals, I mean, that’s a huge experience that was great for me. You know, the emotions, the great emotions of the festival have been tied to bands that I listen to still to this day. So yeah, I think certain life experiences have definitely had pretty profound effects on what I listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Has there been anything like a change in location or a change in situation or friendship groups that might have shaped your music tastes?

Respondent: Yeah, I mean, you go through a breakup and you listen to sad music for a year. I mean, yeah, I mean, that’s the main example I can think of. But yeah, certainly, you know, you get sad and you go down a sad music hole and find new music, so yeah.

[0:28:03]

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And then, what about your friendship groups? So, are your music choices very similar to that of your main friendship group?

Respondent: Yeah, I would say so. I think mostly because I listen to a lot of different music, that I can kind of identify with what most people like about music, so I can usually find something relatable there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I would say there’s few people in my friend group that probably listen to as much. One or two I can think of that are also very into music and listen to, you know, even very different music that I do, but still quite a lot of music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But, yeah.

Interviewer: And how do they react then to your love of Deerhunter, because it sounds like that’s something that you share with them?

Respondent: (Laughter) I try not to go too crazy.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: You know, (overspeaking). A couple of people, you know, I’ve actually gotten into the band, which has been cool.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But, you know, some people see just through the passion and, you know, see the silly, and as being a fanboy, I mean, everyone’s fans of something.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But it’s sort of an inward joke, you know, amongst The Deerhunter fan community about how crazy and obsessed all the fans are.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, what about your friends that you’ve mentioned that have different music tastes to you? How do they kind of shape your music listening, or don’t they?

Respondent: Oh, no, they definitely do. I mean, one of my good friends who I go to a lot of concerts with, he has a really wide variety of taste in music, but kind of in a different direction from me. So, he brings me music all the time that, you know, I’ve never heard that I go on to like, and I think vice-versa.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: We’ve definitely introduced each other to music over the years.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And that sharing of music then, are you conscious about what music that you share with that person, or is it just, ‘This is what I like, and I’m just going to share it with you?’

[0:30:14]

Respondent: I’m probably pretty conscious of it. Like in spreading The Deerhunter, you know. It’s hard to just say, ‘Hey, I like this band, go listen to them’ because there’s so much different stuff in there. So, you know, there’s been a few people who I’ve like hand-picked a couple of songs that are probably different for each person, and say, ‘Hey, I think these are the ones that you would like, and maybe you can find a way from there. And, you know, if not, that’s fine’. But yeah, that’s how I would do it.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you kind of take into consideration then their tastes when you’re sharing music with them?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: Okay. So, then the other interesting thing you’ve mention quite a few times is you going to shows, concerts and festivals.

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: So, how important is it for you going to those kind of live events?

Respondent: Oh, it’s really important, and it certainly was very important to me when I was in my like early 20s and late teens. Like I was living in the city at the time, in Boston and, I mean, there was a year where I went to a concert a week at least. Me and a group of friends basically went to Bonnaroo, a festival here in Tennessee, every year. We went seven years straight. So, that was, I mean, it was a huge part of my life was seeing live shows.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I still love it, but I’m becoming a little bit cynical as I get older, and being around all these young 18 year olds kind of drives me nuts. So, I try and find more seated events now than I used to, but…

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, what is it then about live shows that you enjoy so much?

Respondent: I mean, it’s the connection to the band, they’re right there playing for you.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Bands can, you know, improvise and do different things. And you can, you know, have chances to see, you know, specific covers. And I find that really interesting, just seeing people actually perform the music that they write.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay.

[Loud noise]

Respondent: Sorry, if you can hear my dog (laughter).

[0:32:37]

Interviewer: Oh, I wondered what that was, I wasn’t sure if that was a sneeze or something (laughter).

Respondent: (Laughter) No, it’s my dog.

Interviewer: (Laughter) Okay. So, moving on then to talking a little bit about Spotify. So, what does Spotify really mean to you as a music listener?

Respondent: I mean, it’s a great tool. It’s the easiest money I spend every month, I would say, just for the ease of access of listening to music. It’s essentially the price of a CD a week, which is, for me at the height of my CD buying phase, was about what I was doing. So no, it’s great, it’s huge.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. Do you use it then purely for ease of access to music?

Respondent: Yeah, ease of access and discovery of new music, I would say that’s the main reasons I listen to it, or use it.

Interviewer: Okay. So, do you feel that that the platform allows you to express who you are through music?

Respondent: It used to be way, way better, and it’s a constant source of pain for me that they’ve been removing features slowly and slowly for over the years. And all the social aspects that I used to think made Spotify really amazing are now kind of gone.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: That I find I really unfortunate, cos now I just use it really for listening to myself and discovery, you know.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Before, you used to be able to message friends and follow friends, and like I had these long message chains with individual people where we would just send each other songs back and forth and comment on them.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I thought that was the absolute best part of Spotify. And when they removed that, I was pretty upset.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So yeah, now it’s more like I just use Spotify to listen to music, and if I share music it’s through some other platform.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, you’re saying that it was better in the past because of the social aspects of it that perhaps aren’t there now?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, I think so.

Interviewer: Okay. So, do you go somewhere else then for those social aspects, to kind of chat about music and send songs back and forth?

Respondent: Yeah. So, you know, recently Discord, I don’t know if you've ever used Discord?

Interviewer: No.

[0:35:00]

Respondent: It’s a programme just like Skype, price Skype competitive, on the computer and your phone. But you can make your own server with chatrooms and like voicerooms, and you can talk with other people.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then it also has like a message board, so you can share links to music. I think you can actually integrate Spotify right into it.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: So, you can see what your friends are listening to at the time ,if they elect to have that. And then I think you can post links right into it that you can play right from the app itself.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, that’s been kind of good, but it’s not quite the same.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: If I were to search out communities, I think it would be good, but I haven’t quite yet.

Interviewer: Okay. So, with Discord then, is it something that’s a bit like Facebook that you have to search out friends and people that you know and add them, or is it something that’s a bit more like Twitter that anybody can see what you’re doing?

Respondent: No, you would have to search it out. Actually, it started out as like a means for guys playing video games to speak to each other.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, you know, you would send an invite link to someone, who then can join.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: But it’s becoming really popular, and it’s used for all sorts of things, definitely not just video games anymore.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And, you know, generally people will post open links to their website or something like that. So, if there was some sort of community, they could make it pretty easily accessible. But you can’t just like browse around and join in.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And have you personally found a benefit to using it?

Respondent: I mean, I use it all the time, it’s how I communicate with friends that I’ve made, you know, all over the world.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: You know, some through video games or, you know, some old friends from high school I still keep in touch with through it. So yeah, I mean, that’s definitely been a huge improvement for me.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And then, how does that relate directly to your music listening, or does it not?

[0:37:09]

Respondent: I mean, a little bit here and there. You know, if I wanted to make the social aspects of Spotify that are now gone, I can kind of recreate there, but it would take a little effort. Like I did try and make a room in it where I can have, you know, a programme that would play music that people suggest and all of that, but I didn’t wanna have to put in the effort or moderating it and finding people and promoting it and all that stuff, so I just never went with it. Whereas, when all that stuff was integrated into Spotify, it was all in one spot.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And it sounds like it was easier as well?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, just then going back to Spotify, so you said that you feel Spotify does allow you to express your identity. Is there a particular way in which it allows you to do that?

Respondent: I mean, at this point, I mean, the social features I think were the most important part of doing that. And now I can still kind of see, at least if I’m on the desktop version, which I think I’m one of the few that still uses is regularly, I can see what my friends are listening to, that I’m friends with on Spotify.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I assume if they are also on their PC version, they can see what I’m listening to, and in that sense it kind of it a part of your identity. But no, it’s not like people can really access Spotify in a social way anymore to see, you know, who I am, based on what I listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh. But say if I went on there and kind of browsed through your music, do you think I would get a good sense of who you are through your music tastes?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, I would say, definitely.

Interviewer: Okay. So, then, talking a little bit more about connected friends. So, it sounds like you do have some connections still on Spotify with people?

Respondent: I mean, when I first made the account, I mean, it must have been like seven or eight years ago I think now when I came over to the US. And at that time I’m pretty sure you had to integrate it with Facebook.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Which I had at the time, but I haven’t used Facebook in like three or four years now, but I think some of my original friends are still connected, though right now that whole section isn’t even working on the app, so I don’t know.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: Does having connected friends on there shape your music listening at all?

Respondent: Yeah. I mean, there’s only a few of them, like I have like, okay, I reloaded it and it’s working now. So, there’s about 15 or 16 people that are showing up on the sidebar now, and it shows what they’ve listened to. The furthest back is seven days ago. So, I do use that from time to time if maybe I don’t know what I wanna listen to, or if I see someone I like and they’re listening to something interesting I’ll, you know, just click on it, try listening to it.

[0:40:01]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And similarly, Discord, like the communities that I’m already involved in for like gaming and stuff, those people still show what they’re listening to, even though it has nothing to do with music specifically. But I will use that as well to kind of look for new music.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, then when you kind of click on what people are listening to, are there certain people that you will click on their music choices, compared to others? Or is it just kind of luck of the draw type thing that you pick whatever’s on there?

Respondent: I would say there’s probably certain people who I’m more likely to pick from, but there’s also certain people who I think, ‘Oh, it’s interesting that they’re listening to that, maybe I should try listening to that’ and I do that too.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And then does it shape the music that you listen to when you see people online?

Respondent: Well, like -

Interviewer: In terms of do you make different choices?

Respondent: No, no I don’t think so.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And then, what about following people on Spotify, do you follow anybody?

Respondent: Just those friends that I have on the side.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I think you can follow artists and stuff, but if I have, it hasn’t seemed to have had any effect on me.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Is there a reason that you’re not interested in doing that, kind of following artists?

Respondent: I mean, I feel like I probably have on here, and I don’t know if there’s somewhere where it’s showing me that, but it’s not showing me anything. And, for most part, I avoid the homescreen on it because it’s all just advertisements, and I really hate advertisements.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: So, I just kind of go right to My Artists or My Playlists, or My Library, and go from there.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay, that’s really interesting. So, since then you’ve been using Spotify, and it sounds like you’ve been using it for quite a while. Has your musical taste changed since you’ve been on there?

Respondent: Oh, yeah. I mean, the last, so if we say it’s seven years, which I think is about right, I’ve gone through a variety of changes in taste and phases of what I’m listening to, certainly. And I have a few e-mails, like I think I have my top songs of 2018 and 2017 and 2016, I have all the playlists still saved from the end of the year.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And you can definitely see a clear difference.

[0:42:35]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: The 2016 one, I had not yet discovered The Deerhunter, so they are not on there at all, and then 2017 and 2018 they make up quite a bit of the playlist. But, yeah, you can certainly, just looking at that, see a huge change in what I listened to over the last three years.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And do you feel that that change has been shaped by anything in particular? So, either Spotify related, or outside of Spotify.

Respondent: No one thing particularly, but certainly there are many different variables that have played into the changes.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I can’t say that there’s one thing specifically. I don’t think Spotify would really have that huge of effect, other than, well, the main effect being that I discovered The Deerhunter through them, which was pretty huge in my musical taste.

Interviewer: Uh huh, yeah, alright. So, then, going on to talk a little bit more about Spotify then. So, I’d like to be able to understand a little bit about your streaming practices when you’re on there, so about how you use Spotify to stream music throughout your week, and kind of your everyday practices. So, I mean, have you used any other streaming platforms, either now or in the past, as well as Spotify?

Respondent: Since Spotify has come out, I would say no. I used Pandora before Spotify was here, but that has real no appeal to me at this point.

Interviewer: Oh, really? Why do you say that?

Respondent: I don’t know if it’s changed, but having no choice on the music, I never liked that. And then you can only skip so much. And then the playlists always got really bad because you would over curate them, and so you’d end up getting the same songs all the time, So, I didn’t really like that much. I don’t use the Spotify radio feature very much either, so.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And why don’t you use that very often?

Respondent: I like to have I think a more specific control over what I’m listening to, generally.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: If I want to discover new music, I’ll go to like the Daily Playlist I think they make, that usually covers a few different genres that I’m currently listening to.

Interviewer: Oh, the Daily Mixes?

Respondent: Yeah, that’s what it is, Daily Mix.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, usually I can find one of those that I like, and I’ll use that for discovery. That’s how I discovered The Deerhunter, it was a Daily Mix.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, uh huh.

Respondent: Uh huh. And so, yeah, like going I have six Daily Mixes right now. You know, like one is kind of hip hop, one is kind of like electro, indie, pop, one is like bluesy American music, one is like psychedelic rock, and one is like all the prog metal stuff that I listen to. So, they’re pretty well curated. I usually just kind of pick one of those.

[0:45:40]

Interviewer: (Overspeaking) -

Respondent: And those are nice cos they put in some music that you already definitely listen to, and they mix it in with new music as well.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, how often then when listening to those, do you actually find something that you enjoy, and that it’s kind of new for you and you like it?

Respondent: I mean, pretty frequently, when I listen to them.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I’ll usually just add the song, whatever the song is that I heard, I’ll add it to my library.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And that’s kind of my reminder later. If I’m flicking through my artists and I see someone that I remember I heard from a playlist, I’ll kind of explore a little bit. If I don’t like it I’ll remove it, and if I do like I’ll probably add more to my personal collection.

Interviewer: Okay. So, what then drew you to using Spotify?

Respondent: Oh, definitely the ease and the access to all the music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Right before this, the only real competition, you had CDs, you’d had iTunes, which I have always hated, and you had Pandora, which had no personal selection. So, I mean, I had already been following Spotify before it was coming to the US cos I heard about it in Europe and loved the idea of it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Just being able to really listen to anything without having to go to the store was huge, and not having to buy every individual song.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. I mean, so you say obviously ease of access to different things. Is that things that then you actively search for when you’re on the platform, or is it just things that kind of Spotify shows you on your homescreen or in your Daily Mixes?

Respondent: Usually it’s something that I would pick out specifically.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: It was like I can listen to all of my CDs without having to open up my CD case.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then also I can listen to all of the CDs at the store without having to buy them and, you know. So, I thought was pretty important.

[0:47:41]

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then typically then, how do you use Spotify to stream music? Do you have certain practices when you go on there?

Respondent: You know, so I will use it in my commute for work.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And it’s usually I open it up on my phone for that, and just go right to My Library. And I’ll either have an artist in mind from the morning that I wanted to put on for my commute, or a playlist in mind that I wanted to put in. So, I usually just hop on that and then just kind of let it go.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then at home, I’ll listen to it if I’m at the computer or if I’m doing something around the house. And sometimes I’ll do a little bit more searching if I’m at the computer, it’s just kind of easier on the big app.

Interviewer: Hmm. And are there differences then in the types of music that you listen to during your commute versus any other time of the day?

Respondent: I wouldn’t say so, probably not.

Interviewer: Okay. So, looking again at your scrobble logs, it seems that you tend to listen to songs by the same artist one after each other. So, where is that music coming from?

Respondent: Oh yes, I think that goes back to kind of what I was saying before, I have always liked to listen to full albums.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, actually there’s a band in here that’s right up at the top, Porcupine Tree, I’d never heard of before, and just listened to them I think yesterday, maybe, or two days ago. So, that I just kind of started with the song that I had first heard. I think it might have been on reddit or something like that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I just kind of let that whole album play through, but then it just kind of kept going. So, it kind of went for as long as I wanted to listen to it.

Interviewer: Okay. So, it sounds like then you listen to music quite a lot based on albums, is that correct?

Respondent: Yeah, typically.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, do you listen to that sequentially, so you listen to tracks one, two, three till the end, or do you shuffle through them, or select individual songs to play?

Respondent: I typically go start to finish.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Sometimes I’ll wanna listen to a song in the middle first and I’ll just start there and go to finish. But I won’t shuffle, usually I won’t shuffle around an album. Most of the albums that I listen to really can’t be shuffled around.

[0:50:07]

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay.

Respondent: But yeah, I mean, going through the scobble list you can see where I’ve put on a playlist and you can see where I was listening to full albums, for sure.

Interviewer: Yes, definitely, definitely. So, is there a reason then that you prefer listening to full albums?

Respondent: I think usually, at least the albums that I like, they’re telling a story or, you know, it’s a whole complete thing. And usually I want the whole complete thing, that’s just part of it.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. No, that makes sense.

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: So, like you’re saying, you can tell a difference in your scrobble logs when you’re listening to albums and then when it looks like you’re listening to a playlist.

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: So, how do you decide then when you’re going to listen to an album, and when you’re going to listen to a playlist? Are there kind of different contexts or different situations involved in that?

Respondent: Yeah, so just going through here looking at it, like the full albums I listen to here, you can see The Deerhunter, and the reason I do it with them is because they’re stories, one song bleeds into the next, you know, you kind of can’t really pick up here and there.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: Same with that Porcupine Tree, there’s a couple others in here. But sometimes the playlists are just good individual songs from albums that aren’t like that, you know. Right, I can just pick a song out of it. And I have themes for my playlists, it’s like I have only a couple. One is like underground hip hop, and one is more of the prog rock, one is more of the like southern American blues rock. So, I’ll kind of put those on randomly.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I’ve one that’s all female singers that I love. So that’s like another one that just I like the theme of a playlist with all female singers.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And the genres are all very different, but I enjoy the playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, the playlist that came up during your scrobble, are they ones that you've created, or ones that Spotify or somebody else has created?

Respondent: Either me, or I have a couple of collaborative playlists that are between me and one other person.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, uh huh. So, at the start of the interview then you said that you normally stream music for around eight hours a day. How does that kind of work? In what situations are you streaming music, and what music are you streaming?

Respondent: I’m in the car a lot for my job, I like travel doing sales. So, my commute from home to where I start is about an hour and a half, so that’s already three hours in the car, plus travelling in-between stores. So, that kind of adds up real fast.

[0:53:10]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I do split that kind of with podcasts now, too. So, I do listen to a lot of podcasts as well.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I go through phases, sometimes I’ll want to listen to more music. But my listening habits on the road are the same as at home, I wouldn’t listen to different music.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Sometimes I’ll start an album in the shower, and then I’ll finish it in the car ride in the morning.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, the podcasts that you’re kind of drawn to, is there a reason that you feel that you’re now perhaps listening to more of those than you were before?

Respondent: They’re just interesting, and they’re good at passing the time.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And when you’re spending that much time in your car, like I can put on a podcast that generally lasts the perfect amount, like an hour to an hour and a half, it gets me, you know, from home to work.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, that’s why I like that. Plus, I like learning new things, typically the podcasts I listen to you learn.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So yeah, that’s why I go with those.

Interviewer: Okay. And then also you mentioned about, you know, your music not necessarily changing when you’re at home and when you’re at work. Is there anything else that might change how you listen to music, or what music that you listen to, aside from being at home or at work?

Respondent: Nothing that I can really think of. I mean, I listen to what I listen to, and I don’t think really the where I am affects that.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And what about, though, how you’re feeling, or who you’re with, does that affect it at all?

Respondent: Oh, I mean, yeah, definitely how I’m feeling, I’ll match up the music with how I’m feeling.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: If I’m in charge of what I’m listening to, yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Who I’m with? Yeah, yeah, absolutely, I try and put on something that both of us would enjoy, you know, or all of us will enjoy rather than just me.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, still then looking at some of your scrobble log data. So, it seems that on Tuesday 5th you listened to more music on that day than any other day. I just wondered if there was a reason for that at all?

[0:55:32]

Respondent: Oh, I’m looking through here just to, but that’s just probably my longest day in the car, I’m guessing. Or, no, no, yeah, there’s a good amount in the morning up until like 12:15 or 1 o’clock, yeah you can see when I get home from work, perfectly, 1 o’clock, and then you can see when I sit back down at my computer at 5:15 and put on a playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So yeah, I think that explains that, it’s like I listened to it for work and then I got home and listened to it for a while too.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. Also, I’m just looking here as well, it also seems that you listened to a lot of music in the early hours of the morning. Is there a reason for that, or a situation why you’re listening to music early hours of the morning?

Respondent: I’m looking, cos I’m like is it early cos I’m up early for work, or is it early cos I’m up late at home?

Interviewer: So, there’s like -

Respondent: But usually it’s work, and what I’m here is 6am, yeah, I work early in the morning.

Interviewer: Okay, okay, and what –

Respondent: If I’m on the road usually by 5:30, 6 o’clock.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And then, what about the kind of music that’s just past midnight? So, I think like on 6th you were listening to music past midnight. And then, I think there was somewhere else where you were listening to music at around 2am in the morning. Is that because you’re up and about for work as well?

Respondent: No, I have a pretty terrible self-control when it comes to sleep, so –

Interviewer: (Laughter) Oh, right.

Respondent: (Laughter) So, I’ll be up at very random hours listening to music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So yeah, like I don’t see any 2ams, I’m sure that there is though. I was up till 2am last night, I’m sure music was on.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. Is there any difference then in the music that you listen to in the early hours of the morning than at any other time?

Respondent: I can’t think so, specifically.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s fair enough. So, roughly, have you got any idea about how much music you have in your Spotify library?

[0:57:48]

Respondent: So, they’ve changed things so many times over the years, it’s frustrated me. They used to have a starred playlist, and that was my favourite, that’s how I kept all my music, and then they got rid of that so I’d start adding artists.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Respondent: I don’t know if I could look somewhere and see, but probably a couple thousand songs, I would say.

Interviewer: Okay. And how you describe then the music in your library?

Respondent: It’s just a pretty accurate representation of what I listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Generally, if it’s a band I listen to, I follow them on Spotify, I think that’s what you do, right? And we’ve kind of talked about that, but –

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Or save them, maybe it’s not follow, it’s save, I save the artist.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I save the albums that I like.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: And then, if I’m listening to one of those playlists, I’ll usually save just a song, until I listen to that song more to discover if I like the artist.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, would you say then, personally, it’s all very similar music in there, or would you say it’s very eclectic?

Respondent: No, no, it’s pretty eclectic, it’s a good mix of all the music I listen to, which I think is a good mix.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, when you go on to Spotify, do you know exactly what you want to listen to when you go on, or do you kind of search around for something to listen to?

Respondent: It’s probably like 75, 25. 75 I know what I want, 25 I’m gonna look around, maybe I’ll browse through My Artists and say, ‘Oh, I wanna listen to them’.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, then in that kind of case, how do you eventually come to make the decision that, ‘Oh, I want to listen to that’?

Respondent: I don’t know, different ways. Sometimes I just can’t figure out what I want, I’ll just keep scrolling up and down and up and down, and eventually I’ll just pick something randomly. And sometimes I’ll say, ‘Oh, that’s fine’ and leave it, or sometimes I’ll immediately change it cos I’m like, ‘No, that’s not the one, that’s not what I wanted to listen to’.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay.

Respondent: So, yeah, it’s certainly different.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And do any of Spotify’s features help you in your music listening when you want to decide what to listen to? So, we’ve already talked about the radio feature and the Daily Mixes, but do you use any of their other features at all?

[1:00:20]

Respondent: Not really, I would say, not really.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Is there a reason for that?

Respondent: Well, I mean, the only other feature they have really is curate a playlist, right, at this point?

Interviewer: Uh huh. Well, I mean, would you consider the Release Radar a curated playlist?

Respondent: Oh yeah, I guess so.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I browse that from time to time, but I haven’t really gotten a whole lot from that. Generally, if there’s a band that I like, I’ll know that they’ve got new music coming out.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Yeah, I go through it from time to time, but I never really get much out of that.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay.

Respondent: And then the curated playlists, I’m just not really that into. For the most part, it seems like blatant advertisement, cos it’s advertising me stuff that I definitely won’t like, and it should know that I won’t like.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, yeah, I just kind of avoid the homescreen and the curated playlists.

Interviewer: Okay. And do you use the Similar Artist tabs?

Respondent: Oh yeah, yeah, I forgot about that, yeah I use that all the time.

Interviewer: Uh huh. How do you find that?

Respondent: What do you mean?

Interviewer: So, do you think it’s good, it’s successful at what it’s trying to do, or that it’s pretty poor as a feature?

Respondent: No, it’s pretty good I would say. You know, when you get the like Daily Mixes, or Discover Weekly, they’ve already picked the songs for you. So, if you’re going into related artists, you have to search around yourself, and that can be a little bit more difficult, but you might have more success.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But, you know, I use it a lot if there’s a band that I really like and I wanna find more music like them.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, on your Spotify then, is your account mostly set to the public setting or the private setting?

Respondent: I think it’s always public.

[1:02:24]

Interviewer: Okay. Has that been a conscious choice on your part?

Respondent: I think so. Yeah, I’m trying to look at it, yeah. I’m not on Facebook, so it’s not like it’s posting all my stuff on Facebook/ I think it used to do that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I feel like if I’m listening publically it’s just showing a few people who might have that connection on the right side of the screen still, what I’m listening to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I think I might have shared a playlist or two on the reddit at one point.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, those were public. But yeah, there’s no real connection to real life, so I don’t mind it being public.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. And has there ever been a time that you can recall that you've changed it to private?

Respondent: Yeah, I think I listened to the new Ariana Grande song last week cos my friend sent it to me.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I think I put it on private for that. Not because I didn’t want people to see me listening to Ariana Grande, but because I didn’t want Spotify to think that I want to start listening to Ariana Grande.

Interviewer: Oh, I see, so it’s kind of more about the platform and then what they’d produce for you, more than what your friends would think?

Respondent: Yeah. I’ve had friends who use their Spotify as like the work playlist, and then people put in other music, and then it starts affecting their Daily Mixes with songs they don’t necessarily want.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: So, like with instance with the Ariana Grande song, I just put it on private so I don’t start getting Ariana Grande suggested to me every week.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. Well, I mean, Ariana Grande seems quite different to the music that you at least streamed last week.

Respondent: Uh huh (laughter).

Interviewer: So, I mean, did you enjoy the song?

Respondent: No, not really (laughter). Yeah, but, well, it’s my friend who I talk to about this. I think Ariana Grande is extremely talented. And she was on Saturday Night Live a few years ago, and that was the first time I’d ever really listened to her.

[1:04:30]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I was like, ‘Wow, this girl is amazing. She’s got an incredible voice, she’s beautiful, funny, she can act’ all this stuff. So, every time a new song comes out, my friend sends it to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And like, yeah, there’s some music’s just not good, bleugh. So, it’s my ongoing joke that she could be the full package if she would actually sing like a good singer, and not make these terrible pop songs.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. So, is that a friend then that you often send music back and forth to, or was it just kind of a joke that they sent you’re the Ariana Grande song?

Respondent: (Laughter) No, no. We send music back and forth. We actually have a collaborative playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, since they ended that old social messaging feature, we made a collaborative playlist, and we just add music to it. So, if I see new music added, I know to listen to it from him.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, how often would you say then that you add new music to your library?

Respondent: It’s hard to put a real time period on it. Like sometimes I go through heavy phases of music discovery of where I’m actually like working on looking for new music, cos I’m maybe bored or whatever with what I’m listening to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And in those phases I’ll add a lot of new stuff. But then, sometimes, I reach the point where I’ve discovered enough that I have to explore, and I won’t really add more.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. I’m wondering, because obviously you’ve said that you listen to music while you’re commuting, does that affect how often you’re able to add music to your library? Or perhaps even, I don’t know, like change music? So, say that you didn’t particularly like what you were listening to, does your commute kind of affect the music that you listen to, and your ability to change that?

Respondent: Yeah, maybe a little. It’s not like I’m sitting down in my car and driving and trying to discover new music at the same time.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so it’s something then that you’d be familiar with that you’d put on when you’re commuting?

Respondent: Yeah, but at the same time, I can’t say I haven’t put on one of those Daily Mixes or something.

[1:06:44]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I think that they’ve made it kind of easy. I have now phone mounted on the dashboard, so I can just hit the plus button, you know, without being too dangerous, I think.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I also can’t think of a time I’ve done that, so (laughter).

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Alright. So, that’s adding music, but then what about deleting music? Do you delete any of your music from your library or a playlist?

Respondent: No, not really.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Is there a reason that you don’t delete music?

Respondent: Oh, well, I wanna be able to have like a catalogue of what I’ve listened to over time.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Even if I don’t listen to it anymore, I might come back to it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So yeah, I want that there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: The only times I’ve like deleted something is if, generally not even then though, sometimes I’ll hear a random song I like and save that song to see if I like the rest of the band.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I don’t. But I still like that song, so I leave. You can go through my artist list and you’ll see which ones I have full albums saved of, and which ones just one song.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, how often then would you say that you revisit your past catalogue of music?

Respondent: I’ve done it from time to time and have like resurgences in like certain genres that I’ve listened to that I haven’t listened to in a while.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I mean, it’s not often, but I definitely do it.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And is that sparked by something, that, you know, something sparked a thought and you then go back and listen to something from your past?

Respondent: Sure, I mean, you know, it could be an emotion or a memory or something like that, but I would say that most of the time when I do it is when I’m maybe bored with what I’m listening to now.

[1:08:37]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I remember, you know, I’m like, ‘Oh, there’s stuff that I used to listen to, that I haven’t in a while, you know, maybe that won’t be as boring’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, that’s when I’ll kind of go back down (overspeaking).

Interviewer: Okay, okay. But never to dubstep (laughter).

Respondent: (Laughter) I mean, not typically –

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: But I do still listen to like a lot of different electronic music or electronic-influenced music, but no, not a lot of dubstep.

Interviewer: So, then, I would like to talk a bit about playlists now. So, are playlists something that are quite important to you?

Respondent: Not super important. I used to not like playlists at all, cos I was -

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Respondent: Yeah, well, when I was a little bit younger, like ten years ago maybe, I was more of a purist, like I said, with full albums.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But then I started liking the challenge of making a good playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Of making different songs from different people flow together, thematically maybe, or musically. So, I’ve kind of enjoyed that. And I have a few playlists that I think turned out really good, and I listen to them somewhat frequently.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: There’s like four of them, four or five of them.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But other than that, they’re not hugely important.

Interviewer: Okay. So, what would you say then makes a good playlist, in your opinion?

Respondent: I think just that, you know, that the music flows well together, despite being, you know, different. And I generally try and assign like rules when I’ve made these playlists, be like, you know, only a certain amount of one artist, or, you know, deciding what the theme is ahead of time, and then kind of working on it from there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[1:10:28]

Respondent: So, I have a few playlists that are just collections of a genre, and then I have a few that are like a specifically tailored playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And so, when you’re creating them then, so you say that you often start out with a theme.

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: So, is it that you feel that you have a need for a playlist, or is it kind of, ‘Oh, I just want to put a collection of music together’?

Respondent: Yeah, I think it would be fun. Like, for instance, that one that I have that’s all female singers. So, I was like, ‘This will be interesting’. I was like, ‘I have all these female singers that I really like, across different genres, and I think it would be interesting to pull a playlist of that all together’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then another instance, I have a playlist that’s all songs that are longer than seven minutes long.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Respondent: So, like those are kind of those themes. And then I have one that’s just like underground hip hop, that’s a collaborative between me and a different friend of mine.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I have one that’s like I call *[playlist name]*, of just like all the British bands that were getting big in America in the 2000s.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So yeah, so those were kind of like my themes.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, some of them definitely sound more specific than others.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Is there a reason that you've made some broader than others?

Respondent: No, no, I’d say. I mean, some, like the more specific ones, I kind of like that challenge, and it’s fun for me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then the broader ones are like, well, something I can just throw on as a genre, maybe, like my own curated genre playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And those songs in your playlist, have they come from your existing music library, or have they come from songs that you've searched for to fit that theme?

Respondent: Usually from my library. Though like more specific ones, I went through artist by artist. Like the songs longer than seven minutes, I went through all my artists and found all the songs longer than seven minutes that I liked, and threw them on there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[1:12:43]

Respondent: So, yeah. And then, if I’ve found new music that’s longer than seven minutes and I like it, I’ve added it since.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And –

Respondent: But the other stuff, yeah, for the most part it’s just coming from my library.

Interviewer: Okay. And would you say that there is one that you play the most?

Respondent: Let me look through here. I made one recently that’s just sad music, I’ve listened to that a couple of times.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: No, they go through phases.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I had one that was all this like, I call it *[playlist name]* or *[playlist name]* but I listened to that a lot for like two years.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I haven’t listened to it in a while.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And do you feel now that there are different times when you listen to a specific playlist? So, as an example, is there a specific time or situation where you will listen to the one of songs longer than seven minutes, versus the one that’s based on a genre or the female artists?

Respondent: I typically use those playlists when I’m not trying to like think so much about what I’m listening to, if I don’t wanna like go back, keep flicking back to Spotify to find a new full album or artist to follow along with.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, typically, it’s like when I’m at home, playing video games or like doing something else, or like I’m on the road but I’m thinking, so I can miss songs here and there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: That’s kind of when I put on those playlists.

Interviewer: Okay. So would you say then they’re more of a go-to as background noise?

Respondent: Yeah, some of them, and some of them I think are like a showcase. I think a lot of people really like that songs that are seven minutes or longer playlist, because typically playlists are not supposed to be like that. It’s like a 20 hour playlist.

Interviewer: Wow (laughter).

Respondent: Yeah. So, like a lot of people have liked that, a lot of my friends. That’s just kind of a showcase of those music.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And then, what about your collaborative playlist? You've mentioned those a couple of times, so how do those work?

[1:15:02]

Respondent: Well, for a long time, before I was doing what I’m doing now, I was in this warehouse space where it was me and a friend of mine kind of facing each other with computers back to back, but we’re always listening to the same music in the room. So, a lot of my collaborative playlists are with him, and it just started as us being able to add music for us to listen to at work.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then a couple of the other ones, I have two others that are just kind of replacements for that old social system.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: People who I shared music with before, and who shared with me, but we don’t really have that spot on Spotify to do it anymore.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, would you say your collaborative playlists are also based on a theme, as your personal ones are?

Respondent: Yeah, so my collaborative ones are the genre ones, I think, for the most part, yeah.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Yeah, I’m looking through it, yeah, they’re all the genre ones.

Interviewer: Uh huh, oh right. And then is there kind of a person within that collaborative playlist that tends to add music more than another, or is it pretty equal?

Respondent: Actually, well now I’m thinking of it, not much has been added to any of these playlists in a while.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Some of the ones where it’s just me and a friend sharing back and forth have a couple in the last month or so.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But they’re all playlists that we kind of established a while ago that are still good. And so, we only add songs here and there, at this point.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. So, in a sense then do you kind of feel that those playlists are complete?

Respondent: No, I think they’re in a good spot, but there’s always room to add more of those ones.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: We started by going backwards, and so basically all the music that we already knew that fit the playlist is on there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, anything going forward is just gonna be, you know, something that we missed, or new.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay.

[1:17:03]

Respondent: So, it won’t be added to as often.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. So, what would happen if say one person added something that perhaps another person didn’t like or agree with? Would that song get removed at all?

Respondent: No, cos you can just skip it (laughter).

Interviewer: Okay (laughter).

Respondent: You know, I don’t think we had the problem, to be honest, and all the playlists were pretty good.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, alright. You mentioned your end of year playlists.

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: So, are they quite important to you?

Respondent: They’re always interesting to listen to, but I don’t listen to them regularly.

Interviewer: Oh, alright.

Respondent: When they first came out I was like, ‘Oh, this is good, it’s an interesting collection of all the music I liked over the year’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I don’t go back and listen to them often.

Interviewer: Uh huh. But do you keep them?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, I keep them.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. Is there a reason then that you perhaps keep them, but don’t listen to them that often?

Respondent: It’s an interesting chronology, chronologically, just to see what I was listening to when.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay.

Respondent: Before, when Spotify first came out, they had the starred playlist, you would star music that you wanted to keep.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And that stayed in the order that you put it in.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I always loved that because you could see the date that it was added, and I could go like, ‘Oh, this is what I was listening to at this time’ and everything was in there chronologically.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, it’s not that, but at least having those top 100 songs of the years is interesting.

[1:18:39]

Interviewer: I guess it’s kind of the nearest thing now that there is to that star system.

Respondent: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: Hmm. And so, what about Spotify’s playlist, the ones that they’ve generated themselves? So, I mean, they do ones for moods, for purposes, for types of music. Do you ever explore those?

Respondent: No, no, not at all.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Do you not like them or, what …

Respondent: I mean, I’ve looked through them a couple of times before, a couple of them, and like I’ve probably at some point tried to put them on to see if they were any good.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I found that I just did a better job myself.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s fair enough (laughter).

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: So, now moving on to discovering music. So, would you say you’re a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: Oh absolutely, I welcome it, every time.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And what is it then, why do you say that, why do you love it?

Respondent: I mean, I just love music and getting to have a new connection, experience a new connection with some music is awesome, I love that feeling.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And like with The Deerhunter, it was huge for me cos I’d never heard of them.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: They were from around where I live, and they had like eight albums.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, discovering them and liking them was huge for me. It wasn’t like I just found a new band with one album, I got to explore this huge discography and like over time, and really develop a huge connection with it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Yeah. And so I love those connections.

Interviewer: So, obviously then it sounds like they’ve been around for quite a while before they were recommended to you.

Respondent: Yeah.

[1:20:20]

Interviewer: So, where did that recommendation come from? Is there something that you already listened to that’s kind of similar that, you know, could base it?

Respondent: Yeah, that was from a Daily Mix for other similar type of music that I was listening to at the time.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: And it’s funny cos they’d actually come up a few times for me, I think on that same Daily Mix, but the songs that had come up were not ones that were good to get me into them, like I didn’t like them at first. And then I heard then one specific song came on and I was like, ‘Wow, I really like that one, maybe I should look into it’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, in general then, what kind of music would you say that you like to discover?

Respondent: Like as a genre, do you mean?

Interviewer: Yeah, well, I mean, do you kind of gear towards a specific genre?

Respondent: No. I’m really open to anything that I like, so it really can be anything. Sometimes it’s like well, I haven’t explored this genre at all, so by exploring it now I’ll discover a lot of new music that’s in that genre.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But if someone were to show me something completely different and I liked it, it wouldn’t stop me.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Oh, so do you prefer then to discover music that’s quite similar to what you listen to already, or something that’s very different?

Respondent: No, but I think that the times of greatest musical discovery, for me, have when I discovered something I like from a genre that I haven’t explored.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: So, like with The Deerhunter, I was like, ‘I’ve never really listened to any band like this before’ so I then went on a mission to try and find other bands like that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I had a little success, a couple of other bands that came up that I now enjoy.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, that’s just kind of the ease of it. But, at the same time, doing that I was also listening to the new Kanye albums when they came out, and discovering that, so it’s not like I was specific to one genre.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, how do you then discover this new music?

Respondent: Usually it’s through Related Artists, or through the same playlist that I might have discovered it on from the first place.

[1:22:49]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: There’s a couple of different sub-reddits that I browse that I find new music from time to time.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, those are kind of my main ways.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And are the sub-reddits, what are they based on, what’s the theme of those sub-reddits that you go to for music discovery?

Respondent: There’s a couple of just general ones.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Is that where I got signed up for this from, I think was reddit? I can’t remember.

Interviewer: Yes, It was reddit, yes –

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: It was the Spotify specific group of reddit, yes.

Respondent: Ah, yes, okay. So, I do, I’m on the Spotify sub-reddit. I’m on, I think, just music, listen to this.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Which are both okay. And then genre specific, I’ve a couple of genre specific ones that I like.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And then, do you tend to discover music from anywhere else?

Respondent: That’s probably the majority of the music I have discovered is from those ways but, you know, I still get the occasional, you know, hear a song in a store, you know, that happens from time to time. Or a friend shows me something that I had never looked at before.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But the majority of it, I would say, is from those other reasons.

Interviewer: Okay, so the majority then would be from either Spotify or reddit?

Respondent: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. So, I mean, you’ve talked about similar artists and Daily Mixes as being kind of tools to discover music. Is there anything else that you use on Spotify specifically for discovering new music?

Respondent: No, that’s probably it.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, then, would you say those are quite successful tools that allowing you to discover new music?

Respondent: They’ve certainly been pretty successful and, like I said, some of like my current favourite music has come from those ways.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[1:24:48]

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, I would say, at least recently, Spotify has probably been the best way of discovering new music for me.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I’d like to now know whether you think if Spotify reflects who you are as an individual. So, do you feel that it allows you to easily construct and manage your musical taste on there?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And how do you feel it allows you to do that, are there any specific ways?

Respondent: I mean, it’s just in the collection of music and what that says about me, I think. Not a lot of people, unless they’re sitting at my computer, could really go through I think everything that I have in here, but, like you said, if they did I think they would have a really good idea of the type of person I am, just by reading through music if they’re that type of person, so.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And going into more detail about Spotify itself as a platform, what do you think to its interface?

Respondent: Pretty good, right now. I think it’s been better in the past.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: They make lots of changes often, and it’s something that a lot of companies do that drives me absolutely crazy.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: It’s like they’ve got these UI developers, and once the product’s done they don’t just fire them, so they have to do something, which is constantly change the UI.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, that does drive me a little bit nuts, but it’s fine. It’s intuitive enough to go to artists and play the music you like, it does what I need it to.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, what do you like about it right now as it is?

Respondent: I mean, I can’t really point out specific things about the interface that I like. It’s simple enough to use, it’s intuitive enough. Especially on, you know, the computer, easy enough than, you know, you can use it with one hand on the phone, I think that’s maybe something good to point out. But my biggest frustration has been their removing of features, slowly, over time.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So yeah, I think that over time it’s become more simple, less features. And I’m not a huge fan of that.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, we’ve talked about obviously them removing the social features –

Respondent: Uh huh.

[1:27:17]

Interviewer: Which you kind of enjoyed how they were before. Is there anything else that they’ve kind of removed or changed that you kind of don’t see as an improvement?

Respondent: I’m trying to remember exactly how it worked and when it was, but they used to have apps right in the Spotify, at least on the computer, that kind of did some of the mood stuff playlists, but it seemed like it was more based on some sort of algorithm rather than hand-curated playlists. So, I liked that at the time. And, you know, I think I can get an app from like Pitchfork Magazine and it would show like you could listen to the music that was in the articles that they had written about, stuff like that. I thought those were all pretty cool features, and I didn’t see a real reason for removing them.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, if you were then to make changes to Spotify the way it is now, how would you like to see it changed?

Respondent: Oh, I mean, I’m not a huge fan of social media as it is, but I think that Spotify was one of the great places where it could be used without having this scary, ulterior motive that most of the other social media sites have. It’s like it’s just people listening to music, and I wanna know what my friends are listening to, and discover what other similar people to me are listening to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I don’t understand why that’s not possible right now, that I have to get curated playlists.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Which I’m assuming that they’re paying for in some way or another, but I should be able to say like, ‘Oh, see this person also listens to all these things that you listen to, what else are they into?’

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: I wish that there was an easier way to kind of go with that.

Interviewer: Okay. And in that kind of sense, are you talking about kind of the sense of seeing what your friends, so people that you know, are listening to, or much broader and wider than that, so seeing what lots of different people –

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Who you don’t know personally, are listening to?

Respondent: I mean, I’d like a little bit of both cos I kind of like to do the discovery on my own. And maybe I’m alone in that, where people just kind of want it spoon-fed to them. But I like going through and kind of rationalising it on my own, why might I like this artist? Or why might this person who likes similar things to me also like this?

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then also being able to share back and forth. I just think that there’s a lot of potential, socially, for music on it that isn’t really being used right now.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Would you say then that you discover a lot by yourself now, in terms of music, on Spotify?

Respondent: Yeah, I mean I’m still using Spotify’s systems, whether it’s the Related Artists or the Daily Mixes to an extent, but I still feel like I’m putting in the work, you know, to do it. Whereas, if I’m just opening up a curated playlist from the front page of Spotify, it doesn’t feel as good.

[1:30:39]

Interviewer: Hmm.

Respondent: You don’t get that emotional connection.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, can I just get you to expand on that a little bit more? So, what do you mean by you’re putting in the work?

Respondent: I mean, I think it’s like a journey of discovering new music, and thinking about why you do or do not like something.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And hearing music you don’t like is a good way of doing that too.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so, as you kind of make your way through these artists, I think you might have a better chance of discovering things on your own, that maybe Spotify wouldn’t specifically put in front of your face.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And that those discoveries might be more impactful that way.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay, okay. So, as an example then, so if Spotify gave you an artist from the Similar Artist tab, would you then feel that you were doing some kind of discovery then after that on your own about that artist?

Respondent: Yeah, cos it’s like alright this artist is related to the one you’re listening to, but it’s not really giving you any more than that. So, I can go to that artist and go to their top songs and, you know, that might be where I start, and kind of flick around there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then maybe I find a song I like and I go to that album, and I’m like, ‘Alright, maybe this whole album will be something that I like’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And that discovery process, I think, is a lot better, for me. And it might just be my taste in liking full albums and stuff like that, some people might just want that quick and easy fix. But I think that discovery is important to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, it sounds then like you’re always digging a little bit deeper than what Spotify initially gives you?

Respondent: Yeah, sure, and I want the personal connection to the music.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay, that’s really interesting. So, do you feel then that Spotify’s interface actually influences your music listening?

Respondent: Interface, influence it? I mean, it must have in a way because I don’t think that anyone pointed out these features to me, the features that I use, you know. So, I definitely saw those in the interface and discovered how to go in that direction on my own.

[1:33:00]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But yeah, yeah, it was certainly the interface that did that.

Interviewer: Okay. And then also, picking up on something you said earlier about how you avoid the homescreen on Spotify. So, what’s kind of encouraged you to avoid the homescreen?

Respondent: Well, there was that error where like Drake’s new album came out and (overspeaking).

Interviewer: (Laughter) So many people have spoken about this (laughter).

Respondent: (Laughter) But I mean it’s like that all the time.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And it’ll be like I’ll have a band that I love, that I know Spotify knows I love, coming out with an album at the same time. But that’s not advertised, but Drake is. Just, I don’t know, there’s something about the over-advertisement just drives me nuts.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, would you then appreciate it if different artists were advertised? So, not thinking of Drake, if somebody else was advertised, would you still avoid the homescreen, or would you be more willing to engage in it?

Respondent: I would be more willing to engage if it was actually more tailored towards me.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: There is stuff that’s tailored towards me on there, it’s just buried underneath the advertisements and the Spotify curated playlists. Like I don’t need to see the Beast Mode playlist every time, I’m never gonna listen to it.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: And I haven’t yet, so why is it still there?

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I mean, I get the business practices behind it, but it’s just the screen, the homescreen, doesn’t offer a lot to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, you would then prefer it if it was more personalised to you?

Respondent: Yeah, I mean as it is right now, I go just right to My Library. And it’s either I go right to My Artists, and that’s the main screen that I keep up.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Or if I’m listening to a playlist, that’s what’s up. But I’m never defaulting to that homescreen.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I believe a while ago it was a little bit different. I think it used to be a little bit more personalised with new artists you might and stuff like that, and I think I was into it back then. But the change here, I haven’t liked.

[1:35:08]

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, can I ask then as well, are you a Premium or a non-Premium Spotify user, a free Spotify user?

Respondent: I’ve been Premium since the day it came out.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. And what’s kind of drived that, why did you decide to go straight away from Premium?

Respondent: Well, at the time I believe it was, I don’t know how it works, I forget, you couldn’t shuffle. I’ve just never used it not Premium, so.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I think Premium it was the saving music, listening to whatever I wanted in what order, I think those are all the big things for it at the time. I can’t remember what the reasons not to do it are, but…

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. It was just interesting cos obviously you were saying about the adverts, and then I wondered if you were a free user that what having to endure listening to adverts every five songs or whatever (laughter).

Respondent: (Laughter) I forgot about that too, I would have hated those.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, so –

Respondent: And definitely other people have had Spotify not Premium playing, those ads came on and they’re annoying.

Interviewer: Uh huh, yes.

Respondent: Louder than the music, yeah, drove me crazy.

Interviewer: So, do you foresee a time where you would ever stop using Spotify as your streaming platform?

Respondent: I mean, I’ll use whatever is the easiest and most convenient. I like Spotify a lot.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I’m not loyal to it. If something came out that was Spotify with all those social features that I was missing, I would absolutely switch to that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So. And especially as, over time, like I’ve said, they’ve been kind of removing features I’ve enjoyed, that doesn’t inspire a whole lot of loyalty as well.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So yeah, I mean, I would switch, but so far nothing’s come out that’s appealed. And I looked into TIDAL when that came out, but it didn’t really interest me, so.

[1:37:01]

Interviewer: Uh huh. Say if you decided to change, how would you feel about your existing music library, and obviously potentially losing that or transferring that over, would that be something that you’d take into consideration if you changed?

Respondent: Yeah, I suppose so. I mean, it would suck to lose, you know, this compilation of all the music that I listened to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: The history and stuff, not so much. But just having the music saved would be huge, and losing that would be crazy.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And it’s certainly something to think about, we think about this a lot, especially with all sorts of digital media when you buy it, when you rent, you know, a movie or buy a movie through Microsoft or Apple, what happens when Microsoft or Apple goes under, you know?

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: What happens to your stuff? So, it’s certainly something I’ve thought about, but it’s not an issue right now to me.

Interviewer: Okay. So, when you’re listening to Spotify, are you kind of aware that Spotify is collecting data on your music listening?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And how does that make you feel?

Respondent: That, I don’t mind too much, I think. I’m pretty conscious of data collection currently, but what I listen to, that doesn’t really bother me too much.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I mean, nobody really knows exactly how Spotify is using the data, and how they’re tailoring their algorithm –

Respondent: Right.

Interviewer: But we obviously think that part of that could be used as a way to recommend music to you. So, if they’re collecting your data and then producing recommendations, how do you feel that their recommendations are for you?

Respondent: So, well, I mean it seems to be working so far, but I think that there’s always problems. The main problem with that (inaudible 01:38:59) all the time is that sometimes there’s stuff that the algorithm is just never gonna pick for me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Stuff that I don’t know I’ll like, they have given no indication that I would like.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[1:39:12]

Respondent: So, I think that goes back kind of to the self-discovery on music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But as far as it is going now, I don’t mind it that much.

Interviewer: Okay. So, aside then from Spotify recommendations, do you get recommendations for your music listening from anywhere else?

Respondent: Just really reddit or, you know, passing talking to friends, something that like, you know, texting back and forth between some people.

Interviewer: Hmm. And do you feel that in terms of then the algorithm that they’re using for recommendations, is there any kind of way that you feel, for you, that they could improve their recommendations?

Respondent: Oh, I just don’t know enough about the science to that. I mean, it does a good enough job, better than anything else ever has, so I don’t really think too much about it.

Interviewer: Uh huh. For example, would you like greater diversity or similarity in what they’re recommending to you?

Respondent: I think it’s diverse enough, what it gives me. It sees what I’m listening to and mixes it up enough.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Okay, yeah, that’s great. So, my very last question is you’ve obviously been through each phase of my study, so you’ve done the survey, you’ve done the observation, and then today you've done my interview. In doing any of these, has it kind of made you change or reflect on any of your Spotify practices?

Respondent: I mean, it’s certainly helped me reflect on it, and talking about these things it’s good to be forced to form an opinion. Sometimes it’s something that I hadn’t thought about before, some of the questions that you asked me. And I’m, you know, happy to have been able to think about them and put an answer together.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, yeah. It’s good to be able to think critically about, you know, why you like something and what the connection is, so.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Especially something that is so important to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh. No, well, it’s been great speaking to you. It’s raised some really interesting things and, yeah, it’s just been great to hear how you use Spotify and how much music means to you, and it will hugely benefit my research, so I really can’t thank you enough for taking the time to speak to me, and to do all three phases as well.

[1:41:37]

Respondent: (Laughter) Yeah, of course I’m happy to help. Like I said, music is a passion of mine, so I’m happy to help people who are looking into it.

Interviewer: Uh huh, that’s great. So, before I go, is there anything that you would like to add or expand upon or perhaps discuss that hasn’t been brought up yet?

Respondent: No, I mean, I think that I was pretty thorough, we went over a lot, I can’t say that I didn’t get any thoughts in.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I’d love to, you know, certainly follow-up with whatever you’re doing, I’d love to see what comes of it.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely. I mean, I’m still kind in the data gathering and analysing phase at the minute –

Respondent: Right.

Respondent: Wonderful, yeah, I know these things take a long time, but I look forward to seeing what comes of it.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, that’s great. Well, I’m glad you've enjoyed being part of it, and again thank you so much.

Respondent: Yeah, no problem at all.

Interviewer: Right, well, I’ll let you get on then with your Saturday now.

Respondent: Thank you so much. Have a good night.

Interviewer: Yes, I’ll speak to you soon.

Respondent: Take care.

Interviewer: Bye.

Respondent: Bye.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-15-M

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Can you hear me all right?

Respondent: A little distortion but I can hear you now.

Interviewer: Thank you for this morning for sending over your consent forms, I appreciate it.

Respondent: It's okay. I didn't print them out, I signed them digitally. Is that okay?

Interviewer: That's absolutely fine, yeah. Just as long as they've got your signature on there and a date that's all I really need. Lots of people have done it digitally and then some people have printed it out and scanned it back in, so just as long as I have something it doesn't really matter how it's done. The way it will work today is the interview will last around about an hour, and I have some questions to ask you that are some general questions, but also some that are more related to your streaming over the last week that I've observed. It's very much based on how much you want to expand and elaborate on things and talk about music and your streaming. While you're talking I've just got a pad and some paper by the side of my laptop, so I might take a couple of notes down. That's not a problem, it's just if maybe I want to ask you something a bit later on it's just a note for myself, or something I'd like you to expand upon or maybe explain a little bit more, I'll just write it down. Also I have a little recording device by the side of my laptop, that's just audio recording our interview today if that's okay with you.

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: Good. Before we get started, do you have questions about what's going to happen?

Respondent: No, I'm just curious to listen to the questions.

Interviewer: Okay, great then, let's…

Respondent: Is my listening history enough? I wasn't listening to a lot of music this weekend, is that enough?

Interviewer: It's fine, it's just to help me develop some questions about your streaming and just see what vaguely you tend to listen to, and the times and what types of music you tend to listen to during the week.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: The first bit I'd like to talk about is whether you think music relates to your identity. How would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: I'm not sure how to explain it when it's about identity because I don't play any instruments, I listen to it, but I do think it's a big part of who I am. Since childhood, the biggest hobby of mine was either watching TV or listening to music, so I owe a great part of my accent and English fluency to (inaudible 0:03:56) songs. Coming from an area where we all speak in Tamil, listening to music and watching TV so much was one resource of English for me. In a way I could say that it was a part of me because certain songs and the philosophies I heard from it shaped my behaviour a bit. A good example would be Be As You Are by Mike Posner. That's a song which I really liked a lot. I do consider music as a part of my life, and it shapes a part of my identity as well.

[0:04:44]

Interviewer: When you were listening to music, was it a conscious way for you to be able to learn a different language, or did it just kind of happen like that?

Respondent: It just happened. Most of the time I prefer listening to the lyrics more than the music. It didn't happen consciously, but unconsciously I was picking up certain words, how they pronounce it, the phrases and idioms. I wasn't consciously observing that, but since you spend a lot of time listening to them it naturally entered my mind and just got stuck into it.

Interviewer: You've mentioned there you listen out for lyrics, so how important are lyrics to you in a song when you're choosing what to listen to?

Respondent: This is different. Since when I was like 17 to 20 I wasn't listening to a lot of pop or rock songs, I was listening to EDM or dubstep, songs don't have lyrics at all. At that point of time due to a lot of personal issues I got into a bit of depression, so when I started listening to songs, like not EDM and dubstep, I started paying attention to the lyrics and naturally completely stopped listening to those EDM or dubstep, and started listening to songs which has a lot of good lyrics and music both.

Interviewer: Okay, that's interesting. What draws you to the lyrics? Do you have a particular type of lyrics that attract you?

Respondent: Mostly the catchy stuff. My last obsession was Foster the People's Pumped Up Kicks. It's not a good song, it's actually a song about a guy who has a gun and going to shoot in a school. That time it was just a catchy lyric, but most of the time I prefer lyrics that can raise a story or talks about someone's life, like The A Team by Ed Sheeran, a song about a person who was lost and something. I don't know whether I am attracted to the catchy songs or the ones with the meaning, but most of the time when I'm listening I pay attention to the lyrics as well.

Interviewer: Generally then, what does music mean to you as a person?

Respondent: A fallback, like something that relaxes me or something that helps me step away from the normal world. Imagine after a hectic day when I'm at the university, I'm there from eight in the morning to six in the evening and I have to walk a long way, take a train and stuff, so it helps me during commute. I don't feel tired when I'm listening to the music, or let's assume when I'm running or working out or something, music is a way of escaping from the moment and its routine. That's what music is to me, and I guess it's something all of us share in common. That's something we can to talk everyone about. When you meet someone new most of them don't read these days, so music is something which we all have in common, which we all can share. You can even judge a person by their music taste.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you've done that, or you've experienced that from somebody else?

Respondent: People judge you based on the songs you listen, I don't understand why people do that. Like for example, they have a mindset that people who listen to death metal or those hard rock songs, they are like emotic(?) or gangsters or something, I don't know. Maybe it's the media which created a perception towards that only the bad guys listen to those music. If you tell someone that you like EDM or dubstep, they automatically assume that you are a party person or something. I don't know how people do it, but people do judge you based on your music tastes.

Interviewer: Is music important to you?

Respondent: Yeah, important in the sense I don't think I can be there without music. I do have other hobbies like reading or I draw or something, so I just read and go for walk or something, but music is something which I am used to since a young age, since a time of radios and stuff. Music is important to me, like if suddenly it's taken away from me, I'll be feeling like a part of me - not a part of me, but huge chunk of my activities is missing out.

[0:09:47]

Interviewer: Okay, that's great. How would you describe your music tastes?

Respondent: It's heavily unpredictable. Music tastes which have gone through from, let's assume when I was 12 or something, to what I'm listening to now, it's completely different. I'm not even sure whether the songs which I am liking now I would have liked it two or three years back. Since when I was 10 to 14, something, I never used to listen to the Western ones. I used to listen to a lot of regional ones, Tamil songs or Kannada music. When I was 14 or something I got exposed to Linkin Park, Eminem and stuff. I actually just started listening to them because other kids thought it was cool, but once I felt it was much better than the regional music, I started listening to a lot of them. That's when this happened, picking up those words or certain phrases. Once I went into college I guess my taste was altered depending on the surroundings I was in. College roommates, all of them were into EDM or dubstep, so since you keep hearing it in the background, I started listening to it too. I moved in alone when I was 19, and that's when I started listening to songs which had good lyrics. I just got my Spotify subscription in 2018, so since then it's like I don't just have one particular taste, most of the time I listen to random playlists. Spotify has a lot of playlists like the beautiful songs in the world, or songs for moods, right? If I am sleeping I'll play the ones on the mood list, if I'm going on a run, Spotify has moods for everything. I guess my music taste now is completely different from what it was earlier because of certain features in Spotify like those moods. Most of the time it also depends on the people, who am I following? On the desktop of Spotify you can see the songs which your friends are listening to right now. That's how I found a lot of good songs, and after moving to France I found a lot of songs on Shazam. I'll be going for market or standing in the Metro, I'll just hear a good song and Shazam it and listen to it.

Interviewer: That's really interesting that you do that. You’ve said that your music tastes have changed over time and that has been potentially caused by your surroundings or what other people have listened to. In those cases, have you actually liked the music that you've then been exposed to, or was your taste being shaped by your friends?

Respondent: Most of the time I do think I like the songs, but sometimes I can't really differentiate whether I'm actually liking it or I'm listening to the song because it has been continuously playing on the sites. Maybe when I was young I just listened to songs because others thought it was cool or I might be missing out, but now my music taste is like I just listen to songs when I really like it, or sometimes I experiment. Like the Spotify genres or moods, I just experiment, I don't make any judgements in advance. I listen to it with an open mind, if I like the song I'll add it to a playlist. I even have a separate playlist called 'internet recommendations' or something where I'm accidently playing a song and I like it, I just add it to that playlist. Maybe in the past my music taste was shaped completely by the surroundings or what my peers listened to, but now I'm kind of cautious with it, but I do experiment with different stuff.

Interviewer: When talking about your music taste, you've not mentioned any genres or specific artists. Would you say you could classify your taste by genre, or not really?

Respondent: No, but I'm bad at classifying songs by genre. Nowadays I might think this song is rock or it's hip hop, but let me see it on Last.fm, it's a pop song. You will notice, every single song that I listen is either classified as pop or something, so I can't really say that I could classify by genre because I'm weak at it. I can label certain artists whom I really like: Coldplay, Imagine Dragons, and then a lot small artists like Rag'n'Bone, all the famous songs. Every single artist has one or two songs that's really famous, like Hoobastank's The Reason or this Foster the People's Pumped Up Kicks. A lot of artists, but if I can particularly point to two or three artists I would say A. R. Rahman from India, Anirudh from India, Imagine Dragons, and Coldplay.

Interviewer: What draws you to those artists and bands? What is it that you like about them?

[0:15:17]

Respondent: Coldplay songs are a perfect balance of both good lyrics and good music. There are songs for every mood, like if you're sad you have a Coldplay song, if you are sleepy you have a Coldplay song, if you are happy you have a Coldplay song. Imagine Dragons, I don't know how I got attracted to them, but when I observe my Last.fm listening stream, Imagine Dragons is my most scrobbled band. I don't really pay attention to it much, but I also observe that I have been listening to a lot of Ed Sheeran's songs, but I guess it has something to do with Spotify's algorithm. Most of the time when they just randomly shuffle play the songs, it keeps repeating the same songs. The shuffle is pretty bad, I feel like whenever I shuffle it I keep listening to the same ones. One of my playlists has more than 110 songs, but I feel like I have been listening to the same 25 or 30 songs.

Interviewer: Oh, gosh.

Respondent: There are certain songs which I never even remember having it on my playlist. I wrote to Spotify many times complaining about these bad shuffle algorithms, there are even a lot of Reddit posts complaining that. Someone said that they have 1,200 songs in their playlist, and still they keep hearing less than 100 songs. They all complain Spotify favours certain artists over the others.

Interviewer: In the bands and artists that you like, is there something that perhaps they have in common, either about their music or their sound or something?

Respondent: What is in common? I never take interest to learn about their personal lives, so I can't observe anything in common. I think they all come up with a really good tune. Since most of the time it's just random, I don't observe what's so common between them. I can't remember, I guess most of the time it's the catchy music plus good lyrics, that's catchy too. Portugal. The Man, that was a band which I just discovered recently, like Feel It Still and Live in the Moment. I never try to pay any attention to what's common in them, but there is a certain tune which I really like. Have you heard of Daft Punk's Instant Crush?

Interviewer: Mmm hmm.

Respondent: That's a song which like, it's one of a kind to come across a song which is just like that. When I was trying to find songs that are similar to that, that's how I found a lot of these bands. Like John Mayer is a famous artist, but I've never heard of his songs before. John Newman's See You in a New Light (sic), that's a song which was close to Instant Crush, so I started listening to that. In the suggested songs I saw Foster The People's Pumped Up Kicks, or Arctic Monkeys' Do I Wanna Know?. I guess what's common between them is they all appear in songs you may like on Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay, so they've all come from Spotify.

Respondent: Spotify, you listen to a song, you like it, you start radio of that song. All the songs that comes under that radio, I like them, or most of them, not everything. Sometimes I found this Capital Cities Safe and Sound; although it was similar to the songs which were like Daft Punk's but I didn't like them. Spotify is what I find in common, what they think matches with my music taste I like.

Interviewer: You said that you like catchy music. What do you mean by catchy music?

Respondent: Tunes that get stuck in your mind for a while, like the stuff you keep singing in the bathroom or whenever you are doing something.

Interviewer: Do they have a particular sound about them, or a feel?

Respondent: I'm just thinking about the catchy songs which I've had in the past and I don't think they have a common theme, it's just that they rhyme, they go in a proper tune. They sound good even if you don't have the music in the background, like Queen's We Will Rock You, or some of The Weeknd's songs. They all sound good even if you sing yourself without that music. I guess that thing I can find common in all the catchy tunes.

[0:20:05]

Interviewer: Looking at your scrobble log from last week, I've only looked at last week, your top two artists that you've streamed the most. The first one was Foster The People and then…

Respondent: But I listened to it for like…

Interviewer: I was going to ask you about that, it seems that you only listened to that one song from them. Is that true?

Respondent: Yeah, it was stuck in my mind. I keep listening to it but I still don't feel bored. The music is too catchy, I even changed my ringtone after that. The song is actually not a good one, I don't understand how I'm attracted to it. It's about a guy called Robert who grabs his dad's gun, goes to shoot his friends in school. I don't understand why, like my friends were judging me, like, 'Dude, are you seriously listening to this song? Are you planning to blow up the school or something?' Yeah, I like it a lot.

Interviewer: I'm with you though, because I didn't actually realise what the song was about because it sounds such like a happy song. It just gets stuck in your head and then somebody was like, 'Do you know what that song is about?' I was just like, oh my gosh, I can't believe I like it.

Respondent: I never listened to songs like these before. Yeah, the tune is catchy, but I've never listened to those songs about killers or something. This was something different, so that's why I was telling you I don't really understand what my music taste is like, it's just that I find something catchy or the music is interesting, I just listen to it.

Interviewer: Have you explored any of their other music at all?

Respondent: (inaudible 0:21:50)

Interviewer: Foster The People, obviously it's just the one song that has shown up on your scrobble logs, but have you explored what else they've done?

Respondent: Other songs I did try, but nothing is as catchy as this one. I didn't search for the songs, I just opened Foster The People on Spotify. It shows by most streams on site, so I just played two other songs and the starting itself was not good. Last.fm just records the song if you scrobble for more than 50%, right, so they didn't appear on it.

Interviewer: What was it about their other music that didn't attract you so much?

Respondent: Maybe because I developed an expectation that all of their songs will be like this, but it didn't turn out the way I expected it to be. Maybe that's why I was disappointed or something.

Interviewer: Okay, that's fair enough. Your second most streamed artist from last week was Imagine Dragons. Would you say they're quite reflective of your taste?

Respondent: I listen to a lot of Imagine Dragons songs, the last two of their albums I really like it a lot. Excluding this Spotify, we have an Alexa at our place and it plays from Amazon Music. If you observe that as well, I'm not sure how I can set up scrobble with that because my roommates also play songs with that. I don't want it to mess up my listening reports, but most of the time we'll be listening to Imagine Dragons and Coldplay on this. Imagine Dragons is something I listen a lot because Imagine Dragons is a band who I feel like is really good with the lyrics. They come with all sorts of lyrics, most of them are like motivational, or something everyone can relate with. I personally feel Imagine Dragons is a band which represents my music taste. Their old songs were even better, like Demons, Monster, it was from an album called Evolve I guess. I like that album more than their most recent one.

[0:24:03]

Interviewer: It looked like on occasion you streamed some other types of artist, so as an example on Friday, and you'll have to forgive my pronunciation, I really apologise in advance, you listened to some different sorts of music. One of them was Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy.

Respondent: That's an Indian, not a band actually, Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy are three different artists. Once in a while they come together and compose music for movies. One more thing, all the Indian artists I listen to, they are not independent artists. All of these songs appear on movies, so these artists don't have one particular genre, all the songs depends on the type of the movie. For example, I guess the most songs I listened to was from Sarkar. Sarkar is a movie that's about a political debate and a romantic relationship, so all the songs will be in that particular genre. That way I don't think I can let an Indian music artist define me, because in India lyricists are separate, artist is separate, the ones who appear on the video are separate, and the music mostly depends on the kind of movie it is. So I can't really relate, but A. R. Rahman is generally good in respect of the lyrics because his music is just magical and it's a huge part of my childhood.

Interviewer: How have you come to discover that music? Is it through the movie?

Respondent: It's from the movie, yeah. Most of the Tamil songs, we find it from the movie.

Interviewer: Do you listen to these artists at certain times? Is there a time that you'll go and listen to something like this rather than Foster The People or Queen?

Respondent: On Friday we listened to Indian music because my Indian friends came here. They wanted me to play some Tamil songs, so I just connected it to the speaker and I was playing. Even if I don't do that, sometimes I just feel like I want to listen to a Tamil song and I'll just play it. Most of the times when I'm playing a lot of English music at once and I just feel like I've been missing out on the Tamil ones, I just go back. When other friends come up, their ringtones will be some movie song from India and it will be one of the catchy parts, so when the ringtone rings I just listen to two lines of it, it will be stuck in my mind, I'll be like, I want to listen to it now. Connect to it, listen to that song, and then just close it.

Interviewer: We've talked a bit about your music likes. Have you got any music that you dislike?

Respondent: Can't really think of anything, but I don't like the songs which growls a lot, lyrics which I can't listen to. I usually tend to avoid those death metal, nu-metal and stuff, but even there I like a song called Chop Suey by System of a Down. I can't really think of any songs I dislike because I completely tend to avoid them. Most of the people here listen to pop, and even in the malls or public places no one plays those hard rock or death metal songs. I don't dislike any songs, but I think I completely avoid a certain genre of music. I don't even remember whether I listen to country songs or not. It's not like I hate them, I really like old songs of Taylor Swift or (inaudible 0:27:53), but it's like I don't listen to them at all. It's not a conscious choice, but since I think my musical taste is limited to what Spotify says or what I hear in public, I don't listen to much of country or metal stuff.

Interviewer: Okay, that's fair enough. Has there ever been a time where you've used music to express who you are to somebody else?

Respondent: Whenever someone is feeling down or when they say something, I just go to certain lyrics of the song, something. Last week I tried to skate in the university and then just fell on there, so I just played Taylor Swift's Delicate: 'This ain't for the best, my reputation has never been worse'. It's like, I just recall certain lyrics from a song, and when someone is sad or something I send them songs. I send those musical gifts on chat once in a while. When we are texting something and I suddenly link a particular incident with a song, I just send a song lyric. Other than that, I don't. When I really like someone I ensure that I get their Spotify up, or their playlist link at least. Most of them have Apple Music, so I did try buying Apple Music as well just to listen to those songs, but I didn't like it much. I don't suggest other people something based on a song, but sometimes if I really think someone is interesting or something. There have been times where I just ask a random stranger on the train for their musical playlist. That's how I discovered this band, not Maroon 5, this is other, smaller band. I can't recollect the name, but I listened to two or three songs of them when I was on a train, someone was sitting next to me playing on their phone, so I just asked them for their Spotify playlist. I don't view music as something, but when I meet someone or when I like someone I just ask, 'Can I have your music taste, your playlist?' or something.

[0:30:11]

Interviewer: Why do you feel that you ask them for that? Is there a reason that you ask them?

Respondent: Most of the time I don't listen to the same songs over time. At one point of time I was a huge fan of One Direction, I used to listen to a lot of their songs. But then since you keep listening to the same 13 or 14 songs every time, and I used to listen to music for at least one hour a day, which means I listen to the same songs every day, after a while I'll just completely forget about it. At the time when I feel like my playlist has been old or not been updated in a while, I just ask someone else, 'Can I get your playlist?' I guess that's how I developed a taste for Coldplay or Linkin Park. When I was listening to the same kind of songs for a while, I wanted some change, so I'll just ask my friends. If I think someone has interesting music taste, I'll just ask them for their playlist so that I can update my songs list or listen to a new kind of music. Not new kind actually, new artist, because I think most of the songs are either pop or soft rock.

Interviewer: Asking a stranger on a train for their playlist is something very brave to do. Why in that circumstance did you ask them?

Respondent: I tried to find the song on Shazam and find the artist by myself, but the bus was too loud that Shazam or Google Assistant couldn't work. I was a bit scared, I went to ask her but then I got scared. If it was a guy maybe I would have felt more comfortable and asked him directly, but since it was a girl I didn't know how to ask. Before getting down, the guy who was sitting next to her got down, so I asked, 'Can I take a seat?' and then I told her, 'You have really good music taste, could you share your playlist?' It was from Tidal or something, I didn't have Tidal so I had to take a photo of her phone, and then I came back and played them on Spotify.

Interviewer: Was it worth it after all that? Did you find something that you liked?

Respondent: I took a photo of 20 songs or something, I found nearly seven or eight interesting. Most of them were Spanish songs. I listen to Enrique Iglesias, but I don't listen to the Spanish songs of Enrique. I found some six or seven good songs of Enrique which was in Spanish.

Interviewer: Okay, so it sounded worth it in the end.

Respondent: It was worth it, yeah.

Interviewer: As an example, have you ever played a song for somebody to kind of reflect who you are, so you've put something on that you like for somebody?

Respondent: I don't remember doing it. No, most of the time someone will just say, 'Could you play some songs?' so I just think if I feel like this song is really good, I want them to listen it, I play to them. That's how I played Foster The People to my friends and then they started judging me, so I don't think I'll be doing this in the future.

Interviewer: When you're playing them that music, are you taking into account other people's tastes when you're playing something for them? Or is it, this is the music I like so I'm just going to play it?

Respondent: Oh yeah, that's a bad habit, I never really care about what kind of music. No, but certain songs of mostly the Indian counterparts, we have a lot of languages. I don't even understand what my roommate speaks, we both talk in English although we are from India. Certain times when they play a song from Hindi or Telugu or Malayalam, I'll be like, 'Hey, I have a similar song in Tamil too,' and then I'll play it. That's the only time where I think I consider the other person's taste as well, but most of the time I just play the song I recently like. When I share music within people from India, I even know people from Belgium who listen to Bollywood songs, so to them I tell them, 'If you like Amit Trivedi or Arijit Singh, you might also like this guy,' and then show them. Most of the other times I don't think my friends also consider my taste, they also just come and play the songs they like, I also go and play the songs I like. I never really thought about it, from next time I'll just pay attention.

[0:34:59]

Interviewer: Do you feel that your music choices and music tastes have been shaped by your life experiences?

Respondent: A lot, yeah. Sometimes it depends on, like I told you, how I came out of EDM and dubstep because I felt like I was in the hostel, I was never with my parents, I was far from home. It was not in France, it was in India. I thought I will feel more sad when I moved to France, but this experience has been interesting. In India when I was studying in my university, initial days I didn't feel any different. I thought I was fitting in, so I was just trying to listen to songs which others felt good. Then once I felt like I am alone, I started spending more time with myself, I stopped caring about what others listened to and then started listening to songs I really like. My music taste depends on the situation or what sort of experiences I'm going through by then. I don't think I have changed much since moving in here. I guess my experience and my song taste depends on what I hear in public, but there are certain points of time where my music taste was heavily dependent on what I was going through at that moment. For example, if I tried to fit in with someone, even though I didn't understand Hindi I was trying to listen to Hindi songs because all the other people were listening to it. I tried listening to Eminem or Akon or Linkin Park when I was 14, like then I was just introduced to English music because the cool kids in school used to listen to them. From there I became what I am now due to my tastes. I never thought about this, why don't I ever think about this?

Interviewer: It is interesting to think about sometimes, you don't often reflect on your own music choices that much.

Respondent: I never even thought like, why do I like this particular song? Why am I listening to this particular artist?

Interviewer: Would you say your music choices are the same as your friendship group?

Respondent: It was, it used to be. Not just friendship group, something was the most popular thing among friends. I guess once you attain a certain maturity, to me it happened when I felt like I don't really make any difference just by joining to people. Now I think I never really enjoyed EDM or dubstep and I was just listening to it because others used to, but now I don't really care whether people like the music I like. Since I have good pairs of earphones and headphones, I don't even have to get others approval, I just listen to what I really like. Sometimes even in public places or when my friends come over for cooking, they play songs which I don't really like. I don't know why but I don't like listening to Beyoncé or Nikki Minaj. Ah, I remember now, I don't like rap. I don't like rap at all, just now I remember. I listen to Eminem, but there are a lot of wannabe rappers now who sing a song without any meaning, so I tend to avoid it a lot. I have a roommate who is currently obsessed with a song called Panda. The lyrics don't make any sense, the guy was just trying to sing stuff without caring about what the songs mean. There's no relation between the first line and the second line. People play songs like that, instead of trying to blend in I just put on my own headphones and listen to what I like. Now I don't think my music taste depends on my peers, I just listen to the ones I really like.

Interviewer: You say that you like Eminem but you dislike rap, so what makes Eminem different to other rap artists that appeals to you?

Respondent: Eminem just doesn't try to rap, all his songs have a certain meaning, or at least it has a good subject. Others like Machine Gun Kelly, they don't even make sense, they just rap something, I don't understand why. I listened to Eminem at such a young age and older songs like Not Afraid or Lose Yourself. Since I had a liking to Eminem in the early days, I don't listen to current Eminem songs. His recent album was just horrible, the one before that was also horrible, but all the older songs of Eminem which came out five, six years earlier was really good. I don't know, maybe I'm judging too quickly because I just listen to certain songs. Like this XXXTentacion, when he was shot every single song on Spotify's trending list was his, but I don't understand why people listen to him. Is it because he was dead? None of the songs really made sense. Maybe it's just not my taste, but I don't like the current day rappers or hip-hop artists.

[0:40:38]

Interviewer: Moving on to talking a bit more about Spotify, what does Spotify mean to you?

Respondent: A lifesaver. Before Spotify I always used to pirate music, I never really paid for it. iTunes was there even before I had Spotify, but since I was young and I didn't feel like I should be paying for music, I never really cared about iTunes. Spotify, I was using the free version initially, but then I felt it's good and I don't mind spending three cups of coffee's cost for a music subscription. I bought it, and since first three months it's just $10 my plan was to cancel it after the $10, but then I realised I used Spotify more than any other thing. I just decided to stay with it and then we got a family subscription. I link it to all my cousins, it's not even my actual family, like five of those cousins are using Spotify. I don't think what I can do if Spotify is gone. I did try iTunes for a while because iTunes has a good student discount which costs like just $1 per month in India, but their playlist generation algorithm wasn't so good and that interface was just bad on Android. iTunes on MacBook was good, but iTunes on Android wasn't nice. I think since I study computer science, I prefer stuff which has a really good UI or functionality. I felt like Apple Music was designed by someone who doesn't care about how the users feel. Spotify paid attention to all the micro details, so I like a lot of things about Spotify.

Interviewer: Do you feel that Spotify allows you to express who you are through music?

Respondent: To my friends, yeah. Express, I don't know. Spotify has a huge library and all the songs are available, so by express if you mean like when people come over and I try to show my music taste, I guess yeah, Spotify does it pretty well. Even those sidebars where people can see what I'm listening to, I guess Spotify does a pretty good job in helping my express my music taste. More than expressing, it helped discover new stuff. Just imagine when I used to pirate songs, I just download songs I really like. I don't try to experiment with new genres or stuff, most of the time it would just be what other people say. Now, since Spotify has all those mood playlists and stuff, Spotify helps me discover new artists. More than express I guess, Spotify is helping me to understand what kind of music I really like.

Interviewer: Since using the platform for your music streaming, has your taste in music changed or altered?

Respondent: Not changed, but I started discovering more songs from a similar genre. Earlier when I was listening to music offline, I still remember I had like 270 songs on my phone; 100 of them were regional and 170 was from outside, and I just kept listening to them in loop. Now since joining Spotify, I started listening to a lot of other music like soundtracks from movies. I just actually wanted to play Game of Thrones theme to a friend, but then since I played it and left it there, all other songs of Ramin Djawadi started playing. I was just like, 'Okay, this feels good,' because when I'm studying or something I don't want to focus on lyrics, just those plain music was helping me to focus. When I was listening to those songs I actually discovered Hans Zimmer. Hans Zimmer is the guy who has been playing in all *Inception*, *Interstellar*. I listen to his music on movies, but I thought those were just soundtracks and people don't really document, or those songs are not available anywhere. Spotify is the reason why I found those all. I discover new types of music because of Spotify.

Interviewer: You've mentioned a couple of times about connected friends and being able to see what's on the screen. How does having connected friends on Spotify shape your music listening?

[0:45:45]

Respondent: The feature is not actually perfect, there is a lot of room for improvement, but it's good because I can see what my friend is currently listening to. There are certain songs which I might have not listened to it in years, and then I'll see a guy listen to it on the right corner. It happened the day before yesterday, a guy was listening to Aerosmith's Don't Wanna Miss a Thing, so that song which I used to like a lot at a certain point, but then I completely forgot about it since I was listening to new music now. Suddenly when I saw him listening to that song, I just played that song, so that's something the friends bar is good for. It helps to find when people are lying. My friend will be saying he's sleeping or something, but he'll be playing some party playlist. I guess the feature could be really improved. When you click on play it just plays the current song, it doesn't let me listen to - let's assume me and my friend both want to listen to the same songs at the same time. Spotify doesn't do that, but on Discord if you connect your Spotify, you can sync your music. Whatever your friend plays, your Spotify will also play the same thing. I created a post on Reddit for that as well, but they didn't pay any attention. The consumer base is huge and my voice is just a small one. They are putting efforts to improve the platform, but this is small stuff. Being from a computer science background, I don't think these features are hard to implement, I don't know why they are not paying attention to it. Maybe because there are some other reasons, like it might break something.

Interviewer: You've said there about clicking on music that your friends are listening to. What about you, does it shape the music that you're choosing to listen to when you see people online?

Respondent: Yeah, sometimes when I'm in a library or something I'll just put on my headphones, I'll be listening to something. If I get bored of listening to my playlist, I'll just see what others are listening to. I'll just keep switching between and if I like some song I'll switch to that song and listen to it. That's the problem what I complain now, if I click on play what my friends are streaming now, after that song it just starts playing something else instead of just playing what my friends are listening to. The good thing is that they show what album or which playlist they are playing from, so sometimes I just go to the playlist and let the whole playlist play instead of just one song. That was a feature I guess which was just added recently, so I guess Spotify is trying to make things easier.

Interviewer: If you see particular people online and you're streaming a particular type of song or music, do you then change what you might listen to because you see people online? So not necessarily clicking on what they're listening to.

Respondent: Sometimes you just think that's a good song and then you just switch back. I don't think I do it a lot of times because I just play it and minimise it and do other work, but when I open the tab and see what other people are listening, it does change my mind at times. Whenever I see someone listening to Daft Punk, I feel like I should listen to it and I just go there. Most of the time since music is playing on the background you don't pay attention to it, but I guess when I see the screen on what people are listening to I do switch to that.

Interviewer: Do you follow anybody on there? Do you follow artists or playlists, users?

Respondent: Around 35 to 40 people I guess. There are like some friends of my friends, and then some ten or 12 artists. I'm going to unfollow the artists because it doesn't really make any difference. If I follow artists I get notified when they release a new album, but other than that I don't just simply follow. At first, by default Spotify follows all your Facebook friends when you create an account. I realised I was following around 40 people and nearly 30 of them never even use Spotify, they just created an account and left it. I unfollowed them all, and currently the ones I am following are pretty active there.

Interviewer: How do you decide who to follow?

Respondent: At first I just follow everyone, I don't unfollow anyone, but then I'll see their activity on the sidebar and see if they haven't been active for a long time. I just unfollow them, that's it. I don't have a rule as to how I do it. The day before yesterday I unfollowed a college friend of mine because he used to be really active but then I don't know what happened, he hasn't played any songs in the past 25 days or something, so I just unfollowed him because I don't think it makes any difference.

[0:51:05]

Interviewer: What about artists? How do you decide which artists to follow?

Respondent: I just simply follow the ones which the initial, like when you created an account it asks for some artists you like to follow so that it can generate a music preference, right? I don't think I followed anyone after that because I know these are artists I listen to and I have those playlists, so I don't remember following any artists recently. Except I just followed an Indian artist who is in USA because I didn't want to forget his name and I didn't have any playlist on that, but other than that I don't follow artists anymore. The one thing worth following an artist just I think is they notify you if they release a new song. I get those news irrespective of these because Google, or sometimes I even get a mail, or whenever an artist releases it will be on the top Billboard. I don't think following an artist makes any differences, so I don't follow them as well.

Interviewer: I'd like to move on now to understanding a little bit more about your music practices on Spotify, so for example how you stream music throughout the week and what types of service features you use. How do you use Spotify to listen to music, and what kinds of music do you listen to on there?

Respondent: I don't listen to music much now, but if you see my scrobbling history, between May 2018 to December 2018 was at the peak because I was interning at a company. They said people are free to use their headphones everywhere, so I was listening to music from the morning until the evening. I would just randomly play off some playlist and then during commute, if it's a morning commute I'll be listening to some energetic songs, if it's an evening commute I'll be listening to some slow, peaceful songs so at least I can just come back and sleep. During work, it depends. If I want to focus on something I'll just play songs without lyrics, and if it's just like some casual retyping work or mailing someone, I'll just listen to the normal ones. Sometimes out of nowhere I'll feel like I should listen to this song, I'll just play it, forget it, then it will just play similar songs that will be going on. Mostly this is what I do, morning I listen to the energetic ones, night while commuting I'll listen to a bit peaceful ones so that I could sleep. When I'm running around or something I listen to songs with really high tempo, because I feel like my running really syncs with the number of beats the music is playing. Even I observe it when I'm driving, so I just connect my phone and play some songs. If it's a peaceful or slow song I'll be driving at some 60 or 70, and out of nowhere if it's an energetic song I won't even realise it but I'll be going up to 95 or 100. Most of the time while driving I don't pay attention to the songs, I just have a playlist called all-time favourites and I just play it. Other than that, during commute and other stuff I have certain playlists, I'll be listening to this one or that one.

Interviewer: Are those playlists ones that you've created, or do they come from Spotify?

Respondent: Two playlists were from random people, like my running playlist, I don't even know who made it. One of my friends told me you can listen to this one, so I listened to two songs off it, I liked it, so I saved the playlist. I don't remember the guy's name. It has a lot of followers, I guess it has around 800 to 900 followers, so people do like it.

Interviewer: Why did you choose Spotify as the platform to stream your music from?

Respondent: I started with the Indian ones like Saavn or Gaana, but the thing was their songs were limited to the regional ones, just the popular ones from Western media. They don't really have any listening suggestion algorithms or something, so in Saavn and all, you can just listen to what you want or follow some playlists. They will have like Tamil top 50 right now, Hindi top 50 right now, or hits of a particular artist. Those were free so I was using it for a while, but then I heard about iTunes and Spotify in a machine learning class. They told me people nowadays use machine learning to recommend songs for others, so that's how I heard about iTunes and Spotify. iTunes there was no free version, Spotify had a free version with that, so I was listening to Spotify. Then I heard about iTunes student discount, so joined iTunes for three months, didn't like it. I felt like even though Spotify's free version has a lot of limits, like you can't skip more than three songs a day, I still felt like it was much better because the songs were really good, the shuffle option was… I mean, when you play an existing playlist, I wasn't paying much attention to it because I was switching back and forth between piracy, iTunes, and Spotify. After a point I just completely ditched iTunes and switched to Spotify. Now I pay, I don't think I'm changing to anything else now. In between I even tried Pandora, but since I got so used to Spotify's interface I don't think I can make a switch right now. I even tried YouTube Music, but there are a lot of minute details in Spotify I really like. They have those behind the lyrics feature which gives you some interesting facts about the song. I really got used to it, and I don't change much. If I take something, start using it, I don't frequently switch since I get attached to it, so I don't think I'm going back off Spotify. Now I'm not paying, my cousin is paying, so it's like free Spotify from him, why switch? I'm just going to use this.

[0:57:38]

Interviewer: You mentioned that your Spotify is under a family subscription, so how does that work for you?

Respondent: I guess what I'm doing now is illegal and Spotify might suspend my account soon, because two of my cousins are in USA, one is in Australia, I am in France and the other one is in India.

Interviewer: Wow, all across the world.

Respondent: We are registered as a family, but according to Spotify's rules all the people must be living under the same roof and same address. What we did was once we visited my cousin, we all sat there, created an account, added it to it, and then we just left somewhere. Now I guess Spotify might suspend it soon, so until then I will probably be using this.

Interviewer: I've never had a family account, I just have my own Spotify account. On that, are you able to see other people's music libraries, or is it just yours that you can see?

Respondent: Family subscription is like, you can add five accounts to a single subscription, that's it. I follow three of my cousins, two of them just listen to a completely different kind of music like the Spanish ones or something, so I don't really follow them because it doesn't make any difference. The other three I follow, I see them listening to songs. Sometimes they will call me, like, 'Dude, why are you listening to this particular song? Are you sad or something?' You're like, no, I'm not sad, just felt like listening to it. Two weeks ago I saw one of my cousins listen to Passenger's Let Her Go, Adele, all breakup songs, so we called him up and we were teasing him like, 'Are you going through a breakup? Why have you been listening to these breakup songs lately?' That's the only thing we talk about. Normally we don't even call each other, but once we find some irregular patterns in someone's music taste, we just call them up and make fun of them.

Interviewer: It's interesting that you pick that up, that obviously a pattern in somebody's music listening has changed and therefore you're prompted to talk to them and ask if everything is okay.

Respondent: We do that, yeah. I feel like your music taste mostly reflects what mood you are currently going through. Obviously if someone is listening to a lot of sad songs at once, we think he is sad and call him up. Maybe it's not necessarily true, like because I'm listening to Foster The People on loop doesn't mean that I'm planning to bomb my school. Since a lot of songs keep going on, we just think that maybe the other people is not feeling well.

Interviewer: It sounds like you've been using Last.fm for a while as well. How does that play into your music streaming?

Respondent: I just added it because most of my friends were listening from different platforms. I had a friend called *[name],* I really liked his music taste a lot, but then he didn't think he must pay subscriptions to apps. Most of the time he listens to songs on YouTube, download it and listen to it offline. We have to find a way to find out what the other guy is currently listening to, so that's how we found Last.fm at first. Initially I didn't set it up to scrobble with Spotify, I just downloaded the app, created an account and left it. Without my knowledge it was scrobbling in the background, and then I was just using it to see what *[friend’s name]* is currently listening to. If he sets a song as obsession, that means the song is good. I was using that to see back and forth, but then after some time, like towards the end of the year, I got a report: you've been listening to these songs for this much time. I was like, that is interesting. That's how I discovered I listen to a lot of Imagine Dragons and Coldplay. I don't know how I found your research though. Was it from Reddit?

[1:01:51]

Interviewer: Yes, I posted it on the subreddit about Spotify.

Respondent: Okay, maybe that's how. After I saw your thing I just set it up to scrobble Spotify automatically. Until then it was just I had the Last.fm app on my phone, it would just scrobble to what I was listening on mobile, and whatever I was listening on my laptop wasn't scrobbled anywhere. After seeing yours I just set it up in such a way that it automatically scrobbles.

Interviewer: How then do you typically use Spotify to stream music?

Respondent: How then, like…?

Interviewer: When you go on there do you use particular service features or are there particular ways that you listen to music while you're on there?

Respondent: I just say, 'Hey Google, play this playlist,' that's it. Sometimes I don't even open the app, I just leave the phone there and then use the voice commands. The headphones also has Google Assistant in it and all the (inaudible 1:02:52) features, so I don't even have to open the app, I can just say, 'Play this playlist'. I switch back and forth, that's it.

Interviewer: Would you say most of your listening does come from playlists?

Respondent: Yeah, playlists, mine or, yeah. I notice Spotify even shows up what I've been currently listening to. Every I open the app it says, 'Start where you left off,' and then shows the playlist which I was listening to it last. I've been listening to the same songs a while, but other than that now I'm also listening on YouTube Music. YouTube Music wasn't there in India, but here I just play it at once.

Interviewer: I was going to ask you, so from your scrobbles it looks like you do listen to different artists one after each other. Is that music then coming from a playlist?

Respondent: It is, yeah. My playlist actually, it's all-time favourites I guess, or custom daily or something, so it's a combination of songs. I have found a service which lets me sort the songs by alphabetical order, Spotify lists or something. I just connected my Spotify to it, sorted the songs by alphabet, so when it plays most of the time it's just from different artists.

Interviewer: When you're on there, do you use any of their service features? I'm thinking of things like the radio, daily mixes, discover weekly, release radar.

Respondent: Didn't turn out well for me. Tastebreaker or discover music was okay-ish, but I use the custom playlist feature and Billboard top one. Just use those, and sometimes I use the moods, like every time when I go for a sleep or something. Those songs are not recorded on Last.fm because all the sleep, lo-fi songs are not by famous artists, those are just like, play music. I do listen to them, but especially like towards the end of the year, Spotify sent a mail saying Tastebreaker something. I don't know why did they think my taste was so bad, I had like songs of Korea, Japan, and some other songs. Tastebreaker might be something I might like, but this had completely different from what I like. Since then I don't listen to those discover stuff, but then I play those daily mixes once in a while. Daily mixes are just songs what you have saved and what you have added to your playlist, but shuffled in a way that all the songs with a similar tempo are sorted together. So daily mixes once in a while, and most of the time it's my playlists. I randomly open an artist and just shuffle, I do it a lot with Imagine Dragons. There is a playlist called Imagine Dragons Discography, which has all the songs of Imagine Dragons, so I'll just open it and shuffle it so it keeps playing. I don't want to listen to a same artist for a while, so that's why I prefer listening to custom playlists, because it's mixed and it has all sorts of music.

[1:06:18]

Interviewer: Have you got any idea roughly how many tracks you have in your Spotify library?

Respondent: I have around 110 songs*[playlist name]*, 107 songs in *[playlist name]*, ten soundtracks, 22 *[playlist name]*, 102 *[playlist name]*, and around 98 songs in *[playlist name]*. I can even remember the exact amount.

Interviewer: I was going to say, that is so specific. That's the most specific answer I've ever had.

Respondent: I remember this because it always shows number of followers and number of songs.

Interviewer: How would you describe that music in your library?

Respondent: I don't mostly go to the saved songs because saved is just random, but I mostly listen to those playlists. I have tailored them according to what I feel like listening, like *[playlist name]* which I just generally blast often. If I particularly feel like I should listen to soundtracks alone or Tamil songs alone, I have playlists set up. Most of the time I just don't go and play from others but I'll just play something of mine, once all the songs are over it will just play songs you might like. All the playlists have some four, five songs at the bottom, so it keeps playing. If I like that song I'll just add it to the same playlist and then move on.

Interviewer: Was it Imagine Dragons that you discovered through Spotify itself?

Respondent: No, Imagine Dragons I discovered from YouTube.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Was there a band that you specifically discovered from Spotify?

Respondent: A lot artists whom I listen to two or three songs - once again, I'm just opening my Spotify so that I can see. Artists like Hans Zimmer and Ramin Djawadi, I never knew they made songs which are available on streaming platforms. Some of the older bands like Monkees, what's the other band? Bee Gees. Bee Gees and other older stuff I discovered through this, but most of the time it's just those soundtracks which I found after coming to Spotify. I never knew that all the songs which you hear on background of a movie are recorded into songs, so Hans Zimmer and Ramin Djawadi are two of my biggest finds on Spotify. I never listened to Beethoven, Mozart and others, but recently I've been listening to Beethoven. I found a playlist called This is Beethoven on Spotify, I listened to those certain symphonies and it was too good.

Interviewer: Things like Hans Zimmer then and Beethoven, where have you discovered those from? If you're not really using release radar and discover weekly, where have those things come from?

Respondent: It was completely by accident. One of my friends, I told him Game of Thrones theme music is the best and he told Sherlock theme music is the best. We called a person who doesn't watch both Sherlock and Game of Thrones, we told him we'll play both the themes, you just say which one is better. When we played, that song got over and I forgot to stop the music, so it just started playing all other Ramin Djawadi music, so I started listening to Ramin Djawadi. When I was playing This is Ramin Djawadi, I discovered Hans Zimmer, and then when I was listening to Ramin Djawadi and Hans Zimmer, it started suggesting other music artists like Clint Mansell or Beethoven and others, because I've been listening to those kind of large concert or live performance music.

Interviewer: Are they coming then from the end of a playlist, so when it carries it on?

[1:10:45]

Respondent: Mostly end of the playlist, or it's, 'You might also like'.

Interviewer: When you go on to Spotify, how do you choose what to listen to?

Respondent: I'll just open the app, whatever comes in front I will just play them. When I opened it now, recently played screen pops up and it shows all the songs so I'm just like, okay, just play this, that's it. Most of them say jump back, jump back in stuff which I have listened to recently. The front page decides what I'm probably going to listen (overspeaking).

Interviewer: When you go on, do you normally know what you want to listen to?

Respondent: Sometimes I really make up my mind, like I told you, like when I'm cycling or running I know that I'm going to go for this one, but at those times I have a custom shortcut set on my phone. I have a thing on my mobile desktop, so if I just click that, the running playlist starts. If I have a song in mind or if I'm sure that this is what I'm going to listen to, I just directly go to the playlist. If it's not, I just open the apps and see, okay, what am I going to listen now? Then just click something and play. Most of the time if I start a playlist I don't go and switch it, I just lock my phone, put on headphones, and just try shifting inside the same playlist instead of going to another one.

Interviewer: In a typical day, can you give me an example of the types of music that you listen to, how you listen to that music, and perhaps why you've chosen it?

Respondent: Nowadays I just mostly walk a lot and there's no time for running around because college is hectic, but previously it was like that. Every morning during commute I listened to some energetic songs like Bastille's Pompeii or American Authors' Best Day of My Life. During work I listened to songs that are not so fast, not too slow, the normal ones, and then when I'm coming back I listened to some pleasant songs, and before sleeping I'll just listen to some soundtracks. It was like that before, but nowadays I'm not even listening to music as much as I used to do, but still nowadays it's just a playlist. I'll just open, play some playlist, that's it and go. I don't think I have a specific thing like I have to play this now, play this now. Other than that, I told you when all my Indian friends come over we listen to those Indian songs.

Interviewer: Is there a reason now that you don't listen to as much music as you did before?

Respondent: Yeah, because my current lifestyle has completely changed from how I used to be. Earlier I used to go by bus, which was around 30 minutes during the morning and 30 minutes during the evening, so that time I used to listen to that. During classes you can't listen to music, but when you are working you can listen to music, so that has also changed. Whenever I come back now, earlier I don't cook, I have my parents make food and I can just eat it, come back for a while and then sleep. Now I have to cook, and once I'm done with cooking I have to do the dishes, I'm not in the mood to listen to songs any more. I sort of go back and sleep, so I'll just do that.

Interviewer: The joys of moving out of home.

Respondent: It hasn't turned out well for me, but it has been a different experience and I do like it.

Interviewer: You've talked about how music might change in terms of situation, so when you're commuting or anything. Do your music tastes change based on anything else?

Respondent: Current activity I'm doing and the situations, I don't think anything else changes it.

Interviewer: Do you have your Spotify account set to public or private?

[1:15:01]

Respondent: It's public. I don't have anything embarrassing not to share there, so I just set it on public. No one searches for my profile or something. I've never even seen how many follows I've had, one second. Oh, I have 25 followers, I never realised that, yeah. I don't pay attention to it, the only thing I see is what my friends are currently listening to. Other than that, I don't see anything.

Interviewer: Why did you decide to have your account set to public?

Respondent: Because by default it's public and I didn't want to change it to private. Everything of mine is mostly public, even my Facebook, Instagram, everything is on public because I don't share what I'm doing, where I'm going or something. I feel like I have nothing to hide, I just left everything open. My Reddit profile is private, I am sure that none of my friends know my actual Reddit name. Other than that, everything is just public.

Interviewer: Has there ever been a time when you have changed your account to private?

Respondent: Yeah, sometimes when friends come over and they play songs, there's a mode in Spotify which lets you, like private session or something, which it won't record in your listening history and it won't appear on - no, I think it will still appear on Last.fm, not sure. At those times when someone else plays I switch, like how you go to incognito on YouTube because your cousin wants to watch some Dora the Explorer videos. Those times are when I'll change, other than that, no, I don't. Since I am living alone now and most of the people have their own stuff, no one borrows my phone or anything, so I don't feel the need to keep everything in private.

Interviewer: When other people have used your Spotify account, what has then made you change it to private?

Respondent: Because it will mess up my music history. I don't want to listen to Miley Cyrus or Ariana Grande when I come back next time. Spotify's generation algorithms heavily depend on the songs what I am listening to, and even the slightest change might change the algorithms, so I don't want to do it. I regretted it a lot due to my YouTube history. On YouTube I follow certain channels like Kurzgesagt or Vsauce, so I am interested in watch those curious stuff, I'm not interested in celebrity gossip. Once a few of my classmates, girls came, they started playing some Late Night with John Oliver or (inaudible 1:17:48), but since then even the advertisements I get on YouTube or all the suggested songs or the trending page, everything was about celebrity gossip. It made me annoyed a lot. Whenever people come over, I'm signed in on YouTube only on Firefox, so people when they come over they just get Chrome, so I know that's what they are going to do. In Chrome YouTube is not signed in, so I don't care what they play. On Firefox I am sure that no one opens YouTube and plays stuff, and even on mobile I don't let people play videos on YouTube. YouTube also has a feature called incognito, I'll switch to incognito, give it then get it back. The recommendation thing is the only thing that bothers me, that's why I don't usually (inaudible 1:18:42). It's okay if they play something similar, like back at the university I had a roommate, we both mostly used to watch the same stuff, so sometimes he would just open and search for some lecture from Berkeley or something. That's fine because I'm interested in that topic as well, so that doesn't affect the history any way. If you're playing something completely irrelevant and suddenly YouTube assumes I have completely changed as a new person and my current interests went from computer science to Carl Sagan something, so I don't like that.

Interviewer: That makes sense. In terms of your Spotify music library, how often are you adding new songs in there?

Respondent: How often do I add? These days, like especially in the past two weeks, when I went to Belgium I added some 20 songs in a single day because I was staying in a youth hostel for three days. Every day, especially in the bar, they played some really good songs, so I have to record the song on Shazam, find it, add it to playlist. I did it a lot then, but most of the time I don't find any other songs. Most of the malls in France just play the popular English songs, but even sometimes there are a lot of popular songs which I haven't heard. Safe to say I discover like, ten songs per month on average through the public, and others are just like the songs you may also like.

[1:20:17]

Interviewer: What about deleting songs? Do you often delete things?

Respondent: There are songs which I've never listened to in some five, six years, but I still don't delete because I hope some day in the future when I'm scrolling through I might click it and play. I completely stopped listening to One Direction recently, but still their songs aren't removed from my playlist because I know some time when a certain event happens, like I used to write a journal, so sometimes when I open and read the journal I might think of a particular song, so I've never removed anything.

Interviewer: How often then do you feel that you actually do go back and listen to songs that you previously did?

Respondent: When someone else listens to it. Not just that song, but if they listen to that particular artist or a song that sounds similar to that. I used to listen to a lot of Bruno Mars, and then day before yesterday I saw a guy listening to some 24 (inaudible 1:21:22) or something. It suddenly reminded me of 24K Magic, so even if something that triggers a memory of that song or something, maybe this is close to this one, I just go back and listen.

Interviewer: Now talking about playlists on Spotify, are playlists something that are important to you?

Respondent: Yeah, playlists ensure that I'm not just playing some random songs. I told you, when I'm commuting in the morning I don't want to listen to sad, dull, boring songs, so those times playlists ensure that I am just listening to songs which I really want to. When I'm sleeping sometimes I have done it like listening to those custom songs which I made for sleep. I'll just play a random playlist and out of nowhere someone will shout, like I played a normal playlist and out of nowhere Adele shouted, 'Hello from the other side,' and I have to wake up again. Playlist feature is a necessity to ensure that you are just limiting. Let's assume that friends come over and they are drinking or something. They don't want to listen to some sad songs there, so playlists help you limit the songs to a certain tempo or certain genre you're just wanting to listen to. Playlists is an important feature.

Interviewer: How many playlists do you have on Spotify? How many have you created?

Respondent: My created playlists will be like, seven I guess. Ones I created on Spotify, (inaudible 1:22:58), *[playlist name]*, *[playlist name]*, *[playlist name]*, (inaudible 1:23:05) *[playlist name]*. Okay, the playlist which I made alone is like, seven something, but then there are two, three other playlists which I followed from other people, and the random songs. Spotify doesn't have almost all the Indian songs, especially the Tamil ones, because they haven't launched in India yet, so someone from USA who speaks Tamil put an effort to collect all the Tamil songs on Spotify and make it into a playlist, so I follow those. Once one of my friends was listening to his cousin's friend's playlist, it was good, so I also followed him. I don't even know who he is, he also doesn't know who I am, but I am following his playlist.

Interviewer: How do you decide when you want to make a playlist, and how does that work?

Respondent: The last playlist I made, I guess that is private playlist, like once I Shazam, so it's like *[playlist name]*. I just made it during my trip to Bruges because I've been listening to a lot of songs, but I'm not sure that I completely like it because I might have liked it there but I might not like it again. I made a playlist called *[playlist name]* and every time I Shazam some song and find it, I add it to there. There are other songs also like suggested by friends. Sometimes my friends will say, 'You must listen to this song, you might listen to this song,' so I just add it to that playlist. I create a playlist when I feel like I need to create one to separate it. From the last three playlists I've created, I guess this is the pattern. Either when I'm discovering something new or someone is suggesting something, I do that.

Interviewer: Would you say that they're based on theme or genre, or something else?

[1:25:07]

Respondent: Not just theme or genre, because sometimes when I go with friends they play some songs which I don't even know what genre it was under, but if I still like it I just add it to them. It depends on the stuff I like. I told you, I don't know how to classify my music taste because I can't even differentiate a song between pop or rock. Someone told me Coldplay is a rock band, I can't believe it. How is that even a rock band? Imagine Dragons is considered pop, but Coldplay is rock, how? I thought like rock songs are something which has a higher tempo and a bit with a lot of music, and pop was something that's sweet or something. Pop just means popular songs, any song that is popular can be under pop, so I stopped believing in the concept of genres and I just listen to artists now.

Interviewer: Out of all the playlists that you have, is there one that you play the most?

Respondent: *[Playlist name]*, because *[playlist name]* has songs from every language, every year. The older songs, Happy Together by The Turtles which was released in 1970-something, and the newest is from 2018, so *[playlist name]* is something which I've added everything. I don't even delete songs from it, it has a lot of songs from like One Direction as well but I don't remove it. It's just like the playlist has all the songs which I have been obsessed with at one point of time. That's my most played one.

Interviewer: Do you find yourself listening to specific playlists at certain times of the day or in certain circumstances?

Respondent: Yeah, most of the time it will be *[playlist name]* or something on *[playlist name]*. I listen to them and the regional songs as well. Since Spotify doesn't have a lot of Tamil songs, I play the *[playlist name]* as well. I keep playing my personal playlists most of the time, I just don't know how I choose it. I'll feel like I must listen to some regional song now, or I might want to listen to Hans Zimmer, I'll just simply open it, that's it.

Interviewer: What about Spotify's own playlists, do you use those?

Respondent: I don't simply go play Spotify's own playlists. If I feel like I've been listening to my own playlists for a long time, I'll just open that and play. Other than that, I don't play this most. I use Spotify's radio feature a lot, so I'll be listening to a song, if I like it and I don't feel like playing my own songs, I'll just start the radio. I feel the radio keeps suggesting me the songs which I already know or which are on my playlists already. When I play Foster The People, in the playlist I had Instant Crush, New Light, Taylor Swift's recent album, so I feel like they also put in a lot of songs which I already know that might be close to it, but still the radio feature is good compared to Spotify's playlist stuff.

Interviewer: What is it about Spotify's playlists that you don't particularly enjoy?

Respondent: It's not like I don't enjoy, there are certain stuff which I follow, but most of the time Spotify's playlists are not curated just for me. Currently I was listening to The Most Beautiful Songs in the World, I'll like few songs, but few songs I'll be like, how did they even put both of these songs in the same playlist? That's something, and if I listen to two or three consecutive bad songs, it just ruins my mood to listen to music. I'll be like, just forget it, I'm going to do something else. That's why I don't prefer listening to unknown playlists. There are certain playlists like Brain Food. Brain Food is a playlist which I like because I have listened to most of the songs, all of them are more or less similar, I like them all. Brain Food was made by Spotify, so I listen to that, but I won't listen to other playlists because it might ruin my mood by suggesting four, five consecutive bad songs.

Interviewer: Going on to discovering new music, would you say you're a person that likes to discover new music?

[1:30:17]

Respondent: I do like, but I think I am not that big of a discoverer compared to my friends because every time you see them they won't be listening to a same artist. I have friend called *[name],* he has more than 1,800 songs on his Spotify, because they are fine with experimenting. I guess my music taste is limited because I'm afraid that I might find something boring and it might ruin my mood, but they are fine with it. I don't really decide whether I like music or not on the first attempt. If I like something I'll add it to the playlist, or I'll add it to saved and then if I really like it, I'll then add it to a playlist. That way, I don't often open my saved music because saved is something which generally sometimes when I'm listening on a radio I might simply add it, but I might not like it in the future. It goes to my saved, if I like a song it goes to my playlists. I guess I am not that good of a discoverer because I'm just evaluating myself considering my fears. I do think I really enjoy discovering new music, but I am not discovering as much as others do because I'm not putting in enough effort or I'm not willing to take a risk.

Interviewer: When you do discover new music, what type of music do you like to discover?

Respondent: Nothing specific, but just something which I'm already familiar with, or completely new genre of music. With Foster The People, I don't know what genre it falls under but I just hope I like it, that's it. When I'm trying to discover something new, it's something that matches my current mood or something that's catchy, that's it.

Interviewer: How do you tend to discover new music?

Respondent: Most times on the radio. If I'm finding 20 new songs, at least 17 or 18 of them are from the radio, and others are like people also listen to, or playlists you might also like. Most of the time it's from the radio or the outside Shazam I told you. I'll be listening to a song in public, just Shazam it and play it then.

Interviewer: What about your friends? Do you get any kind of new music from your friends?

Respondent: I don't really keep a track of them. I guess yeah, most of the time we do share music with each other, but most of the time we won't remember who actually found the song first. I guess even that has a huge part, but I don't really keep a track of it.

Interviewer: What about Reddit? You obviously use Reddit, does that help?

Respondent: I do try Reddit, but not as much as I expected I would find. There's a subreddit called r/listentothis, I subscribed to it hoping maybe I'll find a lot of good songs. I did discover that listentothis, mostly they share songs which are not by popular artists, niche stuff which are like simple songs which are not famous, but they think that you should listen to it so it comes up. I find it hard to follow that because if I like a song, I try to find more songs of a similar artist and those songs are just one good song by a particular artist. I did find a good song on that, there was an artist called Lukr. I listened to one of the songs, it was good, but then when I tried listening to the other songs it wasn't that great. He was some small, independent artist, so I stopped listening to that. Once in a while some r/askreddit people suggest songs, I'll just take them, add it to the internet recommendations playlist, and then listen. Because Reddit is a huge platform, people from all over the world are there and they have different music tastes, it's hard to find songs, but yeah, sometimes you hit a goldmine. In one of the askreddit I found Portugal. The Man, so it really depends. On the right subreddit or the right post at the right time, you will find songs, else you will just find stuff that disappoints you.

[1:35:04]

Interviewer: What about Spotify then, do you think for you that is a good platform that allows you to discover new music?

Respondent: Especially the radio feature, I think it's really good. I don't think I would have explored this many artists if I was stuck to pirating. Even YouTube just suggests songs which has a lot of views, not based on songs which you actually like, so Spotify is an important thing when it comes to the discovery of music, especially for niche artists and finding what my friends listen to.

Interviewer: Do you feel that Spotify allows you to construct and manage your musical tastes well?

Respondent: Yeah, the playlist feature just lets me sort and define what I like, but I think I have been doing this even before Spotify. Even when I used to pirate music, on my laptop I'll have folders for this, for this, and the old music players I used, even they had a feature called queues. I'll make a small folder, name it *[folder name],* so if I just drag it into that player it will just play those songs. That was my way of sorting music or making a playlist. Spotify made it easier, but I think I would have still done the same even without Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay, that's really interesting. What do you think of Spotify's interface?

Respondent: Amazing. They have actually put in a lot of thought into designing, especially the desktop client is amazing. That's the main reason why I'm not interested in going back to iTunes or any other platforms, because the UI is thoughtful, they have a native dark mode which is a must. Most other apps still haven't launched their dark mode, but Spotify's default interface is dark, which I liked. The timing, the don't bring a huge change right out of nowhere. Even if they are pushing some change, they ensure that they do it in small phases so that you don't feel any different to it. UI-wise, I don't think there's any application right now that could beat Spotify. I hate Google because most of Google's UI, or basically like Google Play Music, I don't like it at all because the navigation bar and everything is just so blunt or bad. Spotify is good even on the lock screen, it's clean, the widget is good. UI-wise, I don't think anything could beat Spotify right now.

Interviewer: Okay, that's saying something. Is there anything about its UI that you don't like, or that you would change?

Respondent: Currently, looking at the app, nothing. Maybe because I am so used to this interface I don't want to change anything, but I really wish they would put some effort into the friends activity thing. They could show a lot of what my friends are listening. I am opening *[friend’s name]* profile, so it just shows the overview and public playlists. There must be an option where people can share their personal music history. There are four tabs now, I guess I can show my screen. Can you see my screen now?

Interviewer: No, I can't see it.

Respondent: Wait, start sharing. Can you see it?

Interviewer: Yes, I can see it.

Respondent: This is one of my friends, I do like listening to his songs. How you can see this public playlists and followers, there must be another tab here like listening history or something, which will show what songs he has been listening to recently. I don't think that's a hard feature to implement, but it would have been really nice if they added that feature.

Interviewer: How do you feel you would benefit from seeing somebody's listening history?

Respondent: Most of the time I see what my friends are currently listening to. I don't know about me, but I think a lot of other people discover new songs by seeing what their friends or people who they are following are listening to. If they could set up an easy scrobbler like this, I don't think it must be hard for them to just show the listening history of what people have been listening to. That's the only thing I would change if I get a chance to change Spotify. Other than that, I think Spotify is all good.

Interviewer: How much do you think the interface shapes what you listen to?

[1:40:17]

Respondent: Sometimes I feel like I'm being manipulated into listening to a particular artist or a particular song. Like I told you, sometimes if I'm clueless and I don't know what to listen, I'll just open the Spotify app and whatever shows up first. Now if I open it I will probably go with soundtracks or all-time favourites because it's being shown right on top. It is the purpose of the UI to make people feel easy. Let's assume I'm tired and I want to listen to something. If I just open up and it just simply lists everything like what Apple does, I might be like, I'm not in the mood to search for songs, I might just throw it away. Since they show you like, you might want to listen, they actually are good at this. Especially when I'm going to sleep, if I open up it will just show four playlists which I usually listen to during that time. The interface sometimes is a huge player in deciding what I'm going to listen to now.

Interviewer: Would you ever stop using Spotify?

Respondent: No, as I told you, UI-wise Spotify is perfect. They have a good music collection, and recently I guess they signed with Sony Music so a lot of music which I used to listen to when I was young came back. They are expanding steadily and I guess this April or something they are launching in India. Once they launch in India it will be like every single I am listening to will be available on Spotify. Subscription is cheap, UI is amazing. There is no other service that's as good as Spotify right now. Yeah, iTunes has a much bigger collection, but the playlist suggestion feature is not good and I'm not even sure that they have a feature called radio. The friends tab is basically dead in Apple Music, you can just see what songs, what playlists your friends have. I don't see any other app that could beat Spotify right now. At least for the next three or four years I don't think I'm switching.

Interviewer: You're not changing any time soon. When you're listening to Spotify, are you aware that the platform is collecting data on your listening?

Respondent: I know, I am someone who is completely against those privacy concerns. You could see from my social media that I (inaudible 1:42:58) sharing my stuff, but then Spotify just collects my music interests. It's like every single service you get comes with a fee. Spotify is letting you use this good platform for just €15 per month for five people. They have to figure other ways to make money on you if they have to pay the producers, music labels and stuff. Either you should pay more, or you must be willing to sell a part of yourself. If that's the case you're not supposed to use Android or any other Google platforms. At first I was pissed, but now I came to understand that there is nothing else I could do about it. At least they are being transparent about it, like you can see what data they are collecting about you and you can even download the data and see. I don't think collecting my music history is creepy, I am using their service. What Facebook does is creepy, trying to manipulate me or manipulate my interests by making me support Trump, that's creepy, but Spotify I'm fine with it.

Interviewer: You probably know yourself, we're not totally sure how they are using their data.

Respondent: The year-end reviews actually shows much more like… That's why I even connected stuff like Last.fm, because it gives me a glimpse of what I am. By the end of the year I could see I had listened to a lot of this, a lot of this, so this is something I'm actually willing to trade in for a feature. I don't think I can personally keep a track, like I can make an Excel sheet and put a tick on every time I listen to Imagine Dragons or A. R. Rahman. Considering that this is a huge feature and I value it, maybe they could give an option like if you don't want those yearly reports and if you just want to listen to music, you can opt out of data collection. Other than that, even if they are changing something I'm okay with it because they don't collect my activities outside Spotify. All they are collecting is my listening behaviour, my moods at what time, what I listen to, so that's fine. Facebook or something, they record what I'm doing outside Facebook as well, that's creepy. This is okay.

[1:45:24]

Interviewer: We assume that obviously they're using data to then train their algorithm and produce recommendations, so if that is the case, what do you think about the recommendations that they give to you?

Respondent: I guess their recommendation engine is good because they are collecting the browsing habits of everyone. Everything is clearly mentioned in their terms and conditions. They even explain, this is what we use your data for, you can download a copy of your data if you want there. I even understand what they're using it for and I don't think the platform will be this good if they don't collect my data, so I'm absolutely fine with it, I don't have any issues. Even if they make any major changes in the privacy policy, I will still probably stick to it because it's like I don't have any other choices.

Interviewer: Do you feel the recommendations are good that they produce because they've had your data?

Respondent: (Overspeaking) concerned about privacy maybe you can stop giving your personal data, like make a dummy email account and create a Spotify ID with that and maybe use that. Instead of connecting your Facebook, following people, you can make everything private and just don't go online, just download songs offline, turn it off.

Interviewer: In terms of recommendations, would you prefer greater similarity in what you're getting recommended, or more diversity in what you're being recommended?

Respondent: I guess recommendations, Spotify does a good job with both. Sometimes it's songs you like, and even new taste stuff you discover, but I guess the songs you may like is good because it generates from my history. Genres you may like is probably coming from my friends, and most of them have bad taste of music maybe. Those new discovery genres are bad, but even when I listen to other things sometimes, it is good. Both are good, I think both are necessary because you don't just want to limit yourself within a particular genre. It must be both and more of stuff you like, because even though I might be interested in discovering new genres, I might prefer listening to the same music because I'm so used it, or I like this particular genre because there might be a reason behind it.

Interviewer: Okay, that's interesting. My final question is obviously you've been part now of all three phases of my study, so you've done the survey, you've done the online observation, and then today you've done the interview. Has that caused you to perhaps reflect or change any of your Spotify practices at all?

Respondent: The first one, the survey, I just filled it because I have been using Spotify a lot at that time. Second, learning observation, I think my observation during the time when you took the survey was better than... Maybe you could have asked a lot more questions with my previous data because I don't think I actually listened to a lot on this. Today I really thought a lot about the questions you asked, like do you ever understand why you are listening to particular music, or how do you discover genres, or how your external situations change the thing. Now I'm actually thinking a lot about it, but I never realised I switched from Linkin Park to EDM to John Lennon or John Newman to the current songs I'm listening to. Now I might sit back and think about it. Today's session was good, today I had a lot to think about. I looked into myself and I was trying to justify or explain why I did certain activities, it was good.

Interviewer: It has been really interesting talking to you, and the responses that you have given, it showed that you have put a lot of thought into how you're answering and what you're answering. I really appreciate it, doing all three phases and then talking to me today. It has been so interesting and useful for my research as well, so thank you so much.

Respondent: Glad that I could help.

Interviewer: Before I go, is there anything you would like to expand on or talk about that perhaps we haven't so far?

[1:50:03]

Respondent: How many people took up all three phases?

Interviewer: It has fluctuated, so the first lot I interviewed 15 people, so they have done all three phases. This second round I'm doing now to try and catch people that perhaps I didn't speak to before, at the minute there's eight or nine. It's not too bad, but originally I think my survey reached 650 people in the end. I guess people having the time and having the interest in doing all three phases, that can differ depending on who you are.

Respondent: Much more interesting because I used to listen to a lot, but I couldn't have explained how I Shazam stuff or not because I didn't used to do a lot of it. I think this was interesting.

Interviewer: I'm glad you found it interesting, I'm really pleased. Thank you for spending some of your Sunday talking to me, I'll now let you get on with whatever you've got to do, whether that's studying or something else.

Respondent: I'm sorry, you know I completely forgot that I'm supposed to have a talk now. I slept at two in the morning and then I just woke up around 9:45.

Interviewer: Oh, gosh.

Respondent: I was rushing, 'Could you please call me after ten?'

Interviewer: There was me thinking you were doing some important uni work, and that's why you needed the extra time.

Respondent: Usually Sundays I don't work much, I just doze off.

Interviewer: Okay, I'll let you go then.

Respondent: Thank you, bye.

Interviewer: Thanks, bye.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-16-F

[0:00:00]

[Skype ringing tone]

Respondent: Hello?

Interviewer: Hi.

Respondent: Hi.

Interviewer: Hi, how are you?

Respondent: I’m good.

Interviewer: Good, good. Just let me, hang on, just let me turn my volume up a little bit on my laptop so I can hear you better.

Respondent: Perfect.

Interviewer: Ah, that’s better, I can hear you better now (laughter). How are you, are you okay?

Respondent: Oh yeah, I’m great, I’m happy to help.

Interviewer: Good, I’m really pleased. Thank you so much for taking the time out of your day to speak to me, especially as it sounds like there’s a holiday over there at the minute?

Respondent: (Laughter) Yeah, I’m on vacation for the whole week, actually.

Interviewer: Oh, nice.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there anything in particular?

Respondent: No, it’s just because I’m a teacher, so we have school vacation weeks every so often.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. So, it’s the same actually here in the UK at the minute, it’s like half-term for the schools, and the schools have got a week off here as well.

Respondent: Nice.

Interviewer: But yeah, so thank you then for doing it today, I really appreciate it. The way to work is the interview will last around about an hour, but it’s based really on your responses. So, I’ve got some questions to ask you that are general questions, some things that have come up from observing your streaming for the last week. So, I will ask you those, but then you can respond and elaborate on those if you wish. While you’re talking I might take a couple of notes down, but that’s just really if I’ve not understood something you’ve said and maybe want clarification, or maybe want you to talk a little bit more about it. And then, yeah, I’m audio recording the interview, I’ve got a little audio recorder device by my laptop, but as I say, that’s just for audio, if that’s alright with you?

Respondent: Yeah, that’s fine.

Interviewer: Perfect. So, before we get started, have you got any questions your end that you would like to ask?

Respondent: No, not really (laughter).

[0:02:17]

Interviewer: Okay, well then let’s get started then. So, the first bit is I’d really like to know about whether and how music relates to your identity. So, how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: Well, I listen to all different kinds of music, but I guess it really depends on my mood or what I’m doing that specific moment. I have different playlists and different artists that I listen to if I’m like on my way to work, or if I’m cleaning, or if I’m at work. So, it pretty much just depends on what I’m doing. But I mostly listen to, like I prefer rap and hip hop, but I listen to all different kinds of music.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, for you, what does music mean to you?

Respondent: I don’t know. I feel like it’s a pretty important part of my life, I’m like always listening to music in the background if I’m like playing a video game, or if we have people over. I like music cos it helps me connect to the artist, and like listening to the lyrics, and like getting really into that and like having it tell a story.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, would you say then most of your music choices kind of have a story to them?

Respondent: Yeah, I’d say. I mean, l love like a good beat but, you know, I really like it when an artist has like really meaningful lyrics that like give a message or a moral or just, you know, tells a story, I love story telling.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And when you say then that you like to kind of connect with the artist, is that just in terms of their music and what the lyrics are saying? Or is that kind of what’s going on outside of the music, so their personal life and what they’re doing?

Respondent: Yeah, I mean, I guess I’m open to like anything. I love when I learn that an artist actually writes the lyrics rather than like another person writes the lyrics for them. I feel like I’m more inclined to keep listening to that artist because I feel like my opinion would be like they’re more invested in their music.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, when you’re listening to music, how much then are you concentrating on the lyrics as you’re listening to music? Or are the lyrics a focus of why you’ve chosen that song?

Respondent: Sometimes like if it’s a new song that someone has recommended to me, then I’ll probably listen to it and like look at the lyrics at the same time, just to sort of understand what the song’s about.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Sometimes I’ll just listen to it if it has like a catchy tune.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, do you kind of discriminate in the music that you like, based on lyrics?

Respondent: No, not usually. If I like the way that it sounds then I’ll keep listening to it, even if the lyrics are kind of simple or silly.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: Okay. And have then lyrics always been important to you in your music listening?

Respondent: No, I don’t think so. I feel like probably more recently, as I like really start to discover new music and new artists, I’m more, you know, likely to look up the lyrics of their, you know, hit songs, than I would have like maybe five or ten years ago.

[0:05:32]

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And do you feel that there’s a reason then for that kind of change that you've gone through in, you know, researching the lyrics?

Respondent: (Laughter) I don’t know actually, I’m not sure why. I mean, when I was in high school, of course I still like loved like writing lyrics in my notebook and like, you know, like my profile online, like that kind of thing. But I feel like that was more like cos I felt like I connected to the song. I feel like now it’s more like I just am interested in other people, and the lyrics kind of help me see that person.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so you've said that, so does that mean then you don’t kind of look for the lyrics to reflect you, necessarily?

Respondent: Right, yeah, cos I mean I listen to music that’s like talking about like doing drugs or like killing people.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: I was like, I don’t do that (laughter). Yeah. But no, you know, so it isn’t necessarily mean like I feel like I relate to the artist.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I like to just kind of get into their head.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And see what they’re like. Cos I’m so interested in other people and I love like, you know, getting to know people, and I feel like that’s a good way of getting to know a person.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. So, how would you describe then your music tastes?

Respondent: I don’t know. So, like I said, I primarily listen to like rap and hip hop, just because that’s what I like, and I love like, you know, like a fast beat that makes me feel good. But, you know, I do sort of verge out into like pop and like indie and kind of slow music. But, for the most part, I feel like it’s not that diverse.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, what draws you to rap and hip hop as a genre?

Respondent: I think the beat, like the actual music, I love like a quick pace.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like, you know, being able to speak very quickly, but also very clearly, and I feel like that’s really like a talent that I wished that I had. (Laughter) So, I admire that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Yeah, I feel like that’s probably why.

[0:07:52]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I teach literature and like poetry, and I like to make the connection between music and poetry, even though my students don’t always agree. And I feel like rap and hip hop is like spoken word and like slam poetry.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Which I love, and I try to get my students to love, and so I’ll like try to play like a rap song for them (laughter). Be like, ‘This is like poetry’. So, I feel like that’s probably why I prefer it, because I love like spoken-word poetry and it sort of resembles that.

Interviewer: Uh huh, well, you sound like one very cool teacher (laughter).

Respondent: (Laughter) I’m not, but okay.

Interviewer: (Laughter). Well, within that genre then, are there particular artists that you like, that you would say were your favourites?

Respondent: Yeah, so I love like Childish Gambino, he’s probably like my most recent like heavily listening. I love Kendrick Lamar, and I’ve been listening a lot more to him. I love working at a school cos the kids all tell me like a new artist to listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, A Boogie With A Hoodie is another one that I love, I’ve been listening to him a lot lately. Who else? Those I feel like are like my, you know, my top. But I love like Drake and Cardi B and some of the more like poppy mainstream. Post Malone, I’m just going through my playlist that I listen to all the time.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: (Laughter) Yeah, but I really like Post Malone. So, I feel like those are like probably like my rotation, like pretty mainstream.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And so, I mean, how would you then describe those artists? What is it about those in particular that you enjoy listening to?

Respondent: Er…I don’t know, I mean they have so many different songs. And again, I think what it comes down to is it makes me feel good when I listen to them.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, obviously last week I observed your streaming on Last FM. And the top two artists that came out from your streaming last week was Sleeping At Last was the one that you streamed the most, and then the second was Tall Heights. So –

Respondent: (Coughs).

[0:10:22]

Interviewer: I’ve never heard of either of those, whether they’re groups or people, so what is that music like?

Respondent: So, those bands are actually like very like indie, like folk, very slow.

Interviewer: Oh okay, uh huh.

Respondent: It’s funny cos they’re from a playlist that I listen to while I’m at work with the students in my classroom, so I’ve like curated an appropriate playlist (laughter) -

Interviewer: (Laughter) Okay.

Respondent: Of like kind of nice songs that like they have good lyrics, they have like a good music to them, but they’re like very like calming, and they like sound really nice.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I have a whole playlist of just like really nice songs that like make you feel good when you’re listening to them, and like they kind of lift your mood a little bit. They’re not like funny or like silly, but they just sound really nice, they’re very well-made.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: And I often will get requests from students that I’ll put on there. And so, I know one of my students is like obsessed with Sleeping At Last, so there’s a lot of that band’s music on this playlist (laughter) because of that student.

Interviewer: So, then are these people that you like as well, or have you picked them specifically because they are appropriate for work?

Respondent: (Coughs) So, Tall Heights I’ve heard of before, I don’t know if I’ve seen them perform live or not. But I feel like I’ll start with bands that I know that will be like an appropriate song to listen to while you’re like doing an assignment.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I’ll like put in those songs that are recommended for me on Spotify, and then it’ll just sort of grow from there. So, there’s not anything in particular that I like about either of those two bands.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: One of them has a really good cover of that song by The Proclaimers –

Interviewer: Yes, I saw that, yes.

Respondent: I’m Gonna Walk 500 Mile (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh (laughter).

Respondent: And so, the students love that one, so we listen to that one like over and over and over again.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: So, you know, that. And then, you know, I’ll hear more of that band and I’ll know that there’s not gonna be any swears or anything like, you know, graphic said in them, and I’ll know that I can put it on a playlist that I listen to at work.

[0:12:39]

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And then, is this playlist kind of more for background noise? What’s the intended purpose of this playlist?

Respondent: Oh, honestly, it keeps them quiet (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: It’s funny, I always have music playing in my room because I like having a background noise, but it really does help keep students from feeling like they have to fill the void of silence by talking to their friend.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, it really does help distract them from like their peers, because they’ll just listen to the music while they’re doing their work instead of talking to the person next to them because it’s so quiet it’s uncomfortable.

Interviewer: Okay. So, then, would you say then those two bands that you streamed the most last week are reflective of your general tastes?

Respondent: No, probably not actually.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I’m sure it’s because, you know, I listen to music when I’m at home and when I go to and from work, but the biggest chunk of time when I’m listening to music is while I’m at work, it’s constantly playing.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, you know, from Monday through Friday, if I’m playing it from like eight until two, those bands are gonna be coming up over and over and over again as my top played, you know, for the week.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I feel like personally, I wouldn’t chose to listen to those bands if I wasn’t at work, or if I wasn’t like having my parents over and I don’t wanna listen to (inaudible 00:14:14) music (laughter) or something.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. So, probably then If I had observed you this week, your streaming might have been completely different to how it was last week while you were at school?

Respondent: Yeah, probably (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. Okay, that’s really interesting that, yeah. So, then we’ve talked about music that you like, but is there anything that you dislike, any kind of music?

Respondent: I don’t know, I mean I’m sure there’s music that I haven’t listened to before.

[0:14:40]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I’m not like super into like techno or house music, that’s not really like my kind of thing. I like country music and western music, but not like too much.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: You know, I don’t think so. I’m pretty open, I’m pretty open-minded when it comes to music and, you know, I’ll try to listen to different types of bands and see if I like it and I’ll continue listening to it. But I feel like there’s not any particular genre of music that I’ve, you know, despised or said like, ‘Turn that off’ or anything like that.

Interviewer: Okay. But obviously you mentioned house and techno that you’re not too fond of, so what is it about those two genres of music that don’t appeal to you that much?

Respondent: I don’t know, I feel like maybe because it’s like very repetitive and it makes me think of like a club or like a nightclub, and I’m not really like a nightclub kind of person.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like if I’m at like a bar that has like a dance, you know, floor, then I might be more into it because of the setting, but I wouldn’t like put it on at home while I was reading or like playing a game (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter) Yeah, okay, okay. So, can you recall a time where you've ever used music, specifically, to reflect who you are to somebody else?

Respondent: Yeah. I can’t think of anything specifically but, you know, I definitely love like sharing music that I love with the people that I care about.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I like receiving that as well. I love when someone mentions a new artist or a new song to me because they’ll think I like it, then I’ll probably listen to it like right away.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: You know, I like sharing my tastes, and I like getting tastes from other people.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I can’t really think of a time. Maybe like when I was in high school and I made someone like a mix tape or something (laughter) like cos I had a crush on them, but (laughter) I can’t really think of anything specific though. But, you know, I know that there probably has been instances.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, when you share music then, how does that normally work? Who are you sharing it with, and what types of music are you sharing?

Respondent: My closest friends, probably like if we’re gonna be in the car or if we’re at someone’s house, you know, hanging out, then, you know, we might put on some music that we’re interested in. I play new music that I like with my students. Probably yeah, probably my friends and my students are the ones who I interact with the most.

[0:17:26]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: My brother and sister, a little bit here and there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: And so, when you’re sharing this music, do you take into account the music preferences of those who you’re sharing it with? Or is it kind of like, ‘Well, this is the music that I like, so I’m going to play it and share it with you regardless of whether it’s your taste or not’?

Respondent: (Laughter) I don’t know, I feel like most of the people that I am close with have similar taste, you know, that I do, so I feel like it wouldn’t be too far off if I played a song that I like because I would feel like the person I’m sharing it would know.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Or like I feel like they will like it too.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, do you feel that your musical identity has changed over time at all?

Respondent: Yeah, I feel like it ebbs and flows. When I was in high school, you know, for sure I was into like punk and like emo because I felt like that’s like who I identified as.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I still listened, you know, even in high school I still loved like hip-hop, I liked country a lot more when I was in high school. But now I feel like it’s sort of, you know, gravitated more towards like rap and hip-hop.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But, you know, I’ll go through like a two week or a three week phase where like all I listen to is like John Mayer (laughter) (inaudible 00:18:51) or like acoustic music, and so, you know,..But I almost always fall back into like hip-hop.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, what do you feel then has sparked that change from obviously going from punk to then rap and hip hop?

Respondent: I don’t know. I feel like it was probably like when I was in high school, when I was in, you know, like junior high, my friends and I would often like go see bands play, we had friends who were in bands, and those were generally like the kinds of music that they would be playing.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, that would be more likely the kind of music that I would be listening to, just because of who I was around, how I felt like I, you know, perceive the world as like my life sucks (laughter), and like that was like, you know, the best way to say that, even though it didn’t suck. And so, you know, that kind of music, you know, made me seem like, you know, I could connect personally to that music, or at least thought I could.

[0:19:50]

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And now, is there kind of that personal connection with rap and hip-hop?

Respondent: No, not really, I just like it, you know. I feel like a good song can like just make me feel good and like pump me up. I like to use music to like pump me up and like start my day. Like I’ll like put in on really loud when I’m on my way to work, and like I’m a generally happy person and I don’t know if that contributes to it, you know, significantly or not. But, you know, I like to like feel good, and I wanna listen to music that makes me feel good.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I feel like hip-hop, specifically, will generally make me feel that way.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. You’ve mentioned obviously like a random two weeks can crop up here and there –

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: Where you listen to acoustic and John Mayer. Is there something that kind of encourages that change in music listening at those points?

Respondent: Honestly, I feel like it like has a lot to do with the weather, honestly.

Interviewer: Oh, that’s okay.

Respondent: Because, you know, in New England we have like very clear seasons, and so in the summer I wanna listen to like beachy music and, you know, or sort of like Rasta and like Jamaican music. And then in the fall I wanna listen to like acoustic and John Mayer, right? (Laughter)

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: So, I feel like a lot of it, honestly, has to do with the weather. Like I feel like if it rains, I feel like if you could go back and look to see like how long I listen to John Mayer and how long it was raining outside –

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Like it was correlate (laughter). I really do feel that way, yeah(?).

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, then, which happens first? Is it kind of raining and then you take John Mayer, or (laughter) –

Respondent: Right (laughter). I wish I could tell you, you know. I will probably like wake up and like listen. Like I’ll like get in the car and I’ll be like, ‘Oh, it’s kind of gloomy today, let me listen to John Mayer’ (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh. But that’s very interesting, that obviously you feel that your music taste change depending on the weather.

Respondent: Yeah (laughter) if it’s like gloomy outside, or like if I’m feeling sad, I wanna also like have my music make me sadder (laughter).

Interviewer: Yeah, no, it works, it works. So, it sounds like you use music for mood, is that right?

Respondent: Yeah, I feel like that’s pretty spot on.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So then, do you use music to reflect your current mood, or to change you from your current mood?

[0:22:14]

Respondent: I don’t know. I feel like it’s probably a reflection of my mood. I don’t think I could make it change my mood.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Well, maybe, but I don’t know, I guess it depends. But probably more like it reflects my current mood.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. So, what about life experiences, do you feel that your music choices have been shaped by life experiences?

Respondent: I don’t know, I don’t think so. I haven’t really had anything profound happen to me.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: At least, not that I think is profound (laughter). So, I don’t think that there’s been anything that, you know, has made me change my style of music. I think just as I grow as a person, I think it just kind of changes with me.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. And then, what about your friendship groups? Would you say your music is very similar to your friendship group?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so. My best friend, I’d say we have like pretty parallel music taste.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then, you know, my other closest friends, I feel like we have like some things that overlap and then like, you know, a lot of things that are different.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I feel like generally there’s like a lot of overlap. I don’t have any close friends that are like clear opposite music taste than me.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And has that always been the case, where there’s been overlap in your friendship group?

Respondent: Yeah, probably. Cos I feel like growing up, music was like a really big part of us. Like hanging out with our friends, we would always have music on or, you know, or we’d be going to see like a friend’s band. And so I feel like it would always, you know, be sort of something that has to do with music, hanging out(?).

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And do you have connected friends on Spotify at all?

Respondent: Like those who can see my music?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: I might, but I don’t use that feature, is there is one.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: I think there are some friends from when I first started using Spotify, when I first made an account, but I’m not sure. Like I don’t follow anyone else’s like playlists, or anything like that. But I will share a playlist with friends, and they’ll share a playlist with me like through text messaging.

[0:24:40]

Interviewer: Okay. Is there a reason then that you don’t kind of use those social features on Spotify, so the kind of connected friends down the side of the screen, or following people?

Respondent: I guess I didn’t really even realise that that was there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But also, it could be because I mostly listen on my cell phone, and I don’t know -

Interviewer: Oh yes, it doesn’t show, it’s only like on the desktop versions.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah, I almost never listen on my laptop or at work because I have like a speaker that can connect to my phone at home, and Spotify, the website, is blocked at my work. So, I just listen to what I have downloaded on my cell phone, and I connect it to a Bluetooth speaker.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I almost never use it as a desktop application.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, talking a little bit more then about Spotify. So, what does Spotify mean to you, as a music streaming platform?

Respondent: I remember when I first heard about it I thought it was like kind of silly because I had my like iTunes library, and I didn’t really understand the value of the application. You know, then I started using it more and more when I realised like what it could offer me in terms of music that I didn’t already own.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, you know, I feel like I like the way that it connects me to new music, with like their curated playlist to my taste, I really like that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I haven’t tried any of the other platforms before, or I haven’t tried TIDAL, I haven’t tried Apple Music, but I don’t see myself switching over at all.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I mean, what then made you move from iTunes to Spotify, or actually do you still use both of those?

Respondent: No, I don’t use iTunes anymore. I think when I was in college I used iTunes a lot more because I had already had like so much music that I kind of procured over the years.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I don’t remember when, you know what, I think it was after college when I started driving and was able to connect my phone to my radio, I feel like that was probably what shifted it over because I didn’t have like an iPod. I had an iPod, but I feel like this just helped me with more music listening like on the go, rather than an iPod.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And do you feel then, is there any difference from the music that stored on iTunes to the music that you now have on Spotify?

[0:27:25]

Respondent: Yeah, for sure. The music that I had, I don’t even know if I still have it, was like from high school, so it’s like emo and like punk and, you know, like music that I typically don’t listen to so much anymore.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: You know, again, maybe if the weather is feeling (laughter) different –

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Then I might put it on. But yeah, I feel like I probably very rarely listen to the music that I had previously downloaded through iTunes.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay, okay. So, do you feel then Spotify, as a platform, allows you to express who you are through music?

Respondent: Yeah, I mean, I feel like it allows me to do that like to myself, like I can make a playlist. Like I literally have like a John Mayer playlist that I put on when it’s raining (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I also love like the radio aspect that they have where you can go to an artist or song that you like and go to like that quote unquote ‘radio’ and it will create a playlist similar to that artist or that song. I use that feature a lot.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Especially if I’ve found a song that I really, really like, that I wanna keep listening to, but I wanna see like what other songs are out there that are similar to that, that I might like just as well.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And how do you find then the radio feature? Do you feel like you discover a lot of different music through that or, I mean, how do you find it?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so. And it’s tough when I’m like driving because, you know, if I’m not driving then I’ll like, you know, open up my phone and I’ll try to save that song, or I’ll move it to like a playlist that I listen to more often. But sometimes, you know, it’s hit or miss because then I might skip over a song that I just didn’t like, or that I’ve heard before and wasn’t into.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I feel like, for the most part, it’s a good way for me to find music that I haven’t heard of before.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. So, what then drives you to using the radio feature in particular?

Respondent: Honestly, I probably use it the most when people are like over, or if I’m going to a friend’s house like for a party, or if we’re gonna go out and we wanna put music on.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I feel like someone will like suggest a song or an artist, and rather than just playing the whole discography of that artist or that one specific song, I’ll just put the radio on, and it’s usually good enough.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. Would you ever kind of use it in any other contexts?

[0:29:55]

Respondent: Yeah, sometimes if I am driving and, you know, I don’t wanna listen to any of the playlists that I already have, for whatever reason, I might go to a song or an artist and put the radio on, and I’ll just play that on my drive.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. So, I mean, since you've started using Spotify, do you feel that your musical tastes have changed?

Respondent: Maybe a little bit. I think, obviously, I’ve learned of new bands and new artists, that I probably wouldn’t have heard of before had I not been using it. So yeah, I feel like it has helped me open up and listen to music outside of the general area that I stick to.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And would you say that that is primarily a result of Spotify itself, or has that kind of come from an influence outside of Spotify?

Respondent: Probably a little bit of both.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I have friends that work at the office that’s nearby here for Spotify, and so they tell me like when events are happening so I can go. And almost always it’s a band that I’ve never heard of before.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so it’s cool cos then you can go and listen to the band. And most of the people that are in attendance haven’t heard of the band either, but they’ve been selected specifically because of their musical taste.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And so they’ll send them an invite, they’re like, ‘Hey, you haven’t heard this band, but you might them, and so come and watch them for free’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: There’s been a few bands that I’ve gone to see through, you know, the office when they put on shows there, that I had never heard of before that I still listen to now.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: So, it’s like a little bit of that, but then sometimes it’s a little bit of like, you know, a new artist might come out and it like pops up a little notification, and I might try it out and see how it goes.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. So, I would like to now move on to understanding a little bit more about your music streaming practices on Spotify. So, kind of how you stream music throughout the week, what service features you use, and how you select the music that you want to listen to. So, how do you use Spotify to listen to music, and what types of music do you generally listen to?

Respondent: What was the first part of the question?

Interviewer: So, how do you use Spotify to stream your music?

Respondent: So, I use it on my phone.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[0:32:24]

Respondent: And I’ll usually connect it. I almost always connect it while I’m driving.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I very rarely listen to the radio.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: It’s almost always just it starts to play from my phone. But then, I would mostly say I listen to it while I’m at work.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like in the classroom.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Okay.

Respondent: And so then, personally, you know, I would still listen to like rap or hip-hop genres and artists, but if I’m at work then I’ll do more like a pop or a folky, indie.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, you say then you’ve obviously used Spotify while you’re driving rather than the radio. Is there a reason that you’ve chosen to listen to your music on Spotify rather than something that’s on the radio?

Respondent: Commercials, probably, is a big part of it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I’m not like a huge fan of like talk radio, but I do listen to podcasts on Spotify as well. So, I’ll listen to podcasts while I’m driving, or sometimes when I’m at work, at home like cleaning or doing the dishes.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I often feel like when I did listen to the radio, I would hear a song that I like, but then it would keep playing over and over again and I would lose my interest in it because of how overplayed it was. But at least, you know, if I’m playing it on my phone, I can just skip it, no problem.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, when you’re playing music through your phone, is that music that you've downloaded, or are you using kind of 4G and Wi-Fi to be able to stream?

Respondent: Mostly music that I’ve already downloaded.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, how have you picked what music to download, and what’s kind of not been downloaded?

Respondent: So, I have like a playlist that I like use for new music that I like. I’ll add to that playlist, and I have that one downloaded.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I have the one that I listen to at work most of the time downloaded. I have a large capacity on my phone, so I have a lot of playlists that are downloaded.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

[0:34:31]

Respondent: So, one of them is the release, I’m looking at it right now, but the Release Radar, so that changes like I think like very Monday or something.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: It’s just new music. So, I like to download the playlist that I’m gonna be listening to the most.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. So, I mean, you’ve mentioned that you've never used any other platforms for streaming, but what in particular has led you to using Spotify and not change to anything else?

Respondent: I feel like it has almost every artist available, you know, with a few exceptions. So, I feel like there’s no reason to change over because it already has what I’m looking for.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, how do you tend to use Spotify to stream your music?

Respondent: Can you be more specific?

Interviewer: So, kind of when you go on there, are you using different service features, are you using something that you've created, are you using something that Spotify’s created?

Respondent: It’s a mix. So, I have a lot of playlists that I’ve made myself, that I listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I also like the playlists that Spotify makes. I’ll listen to those, especially the ones that change. I listen to (laughter) Starbucks has a lot of podcasts, not podcasts, playlists, that I know don’t have swears on them –

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: So, I use that one at work too, it’s very nice.

Interviewer: What type of music then is on the Starbucks playlists?

Respondent: Oh my God, they have so many, They have like RnB, hip-hop and rap.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: They have like one that’s called like Dinner Party and so it’s like kind of nicer music that’s like kind of quiet. There’s like a whole bunch of them that they have that I’ve like followed.

Interviewer: Okay, I didn’t even realise Starbucks did playlists (laughter).

Respondent: Yeah, I think I found it by accident cos I was looking for something and it came up as like a user, and I clicked and there was lots of different playlists and I thought, ‘This is perfect’. And they’re all like 12 hours long, so it’s perfect. So, I’ll just put one on, and then it will just play for the whole day.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. So, once a playlist starts playing, so for example one of the Starbucks’ ones, how likely are you to kind of switch from that to then something else? Or, is it that this playlist is 12 hours long and I will listen to it for as long as I’ve got Spotify on?

Respondent: Probably, I just put it on and then I’ll forget about it.

Interviewer: Okay.

[0:37:06]

Respondent: Especially if I’m at work. I get there about 45 minutes early, I’ll put a playlist on, you know, I’ll just like pick a random one. Sometimes it depends on what class I have that day.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I know that some of my students like a particular kind of music, other ones like this. So, I have a couple of different ones that I chose from, depending on who I’m gonna see.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I’ll pretty much just put that on the whole day.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: The only time I might change it is if I leave my room and I take my phone with me and it will stop playing, then I’ll have to like actively go on and, you know, put the music back on, I might switch it to a different playlist. But, for the most part, I just like set it and forget it.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And it’s interesting there then you say that you have kind of specific songs for certain classes. So, do you kind of gear the playlist to what the activity that the students will be doing, or are you considering their tastes in that as well?

Respondent: Could you say that again, you cut out for just a second?

Interviewer: Oh, sorry.

Respondent: That’s okay.

Interviewer: So, when you’re talking about picking playlists for particular classes, is that considering the activity that the students will be doing during that class, or is that actually considering, ‘Well, so-and-so likes this kind of music, so I’m going to put a playlist on that reflects that’?

Respondent: I feel like it’s more so like the dynamic of my classroom.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: You know, I have a couple of different playlists like I know that my freshmen really like.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I have a playlist that I know that my seniors really like. So, I’ll like usually put on those ones when I have them in class.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: But, you know, I also use it for like sound effects, like to be funny. So, like we’ll play Jeopardy and I’ll put like the Jeopardy theme song on. Or like I have like a graduation playlist that I put on or my seniors on their last day, just to mess with them. I use it like for fun, like, you know, little things.

Interviewer: Hmm.

[0:39:12]

Respondent: But yeah, because I get to know my students like pretty well, I have them almost every year, you know, of their high school career.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, you know, I really get to know them, and try to figure out like what works for them as a whole.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And, I don’t know, I feel like it’s pretty successful.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But sometimes I might put like a more relaxed playlist if like I want them to be more relaxed.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But yeah, I mean, I might put on like a more energetic playlist if we’re gonna be doing something that’s like hands-on or like a little bit more exciting than like a lecture.

Interviewer: Okay. So, how then do the students react to you playing music during their class?

Respondent: So, I don’t know. I feel like they’re okay with it, obviously I wouldn’t put it on if they were someone that had a problem with it. But my students I feel like, as a whole, really like music also, so I feel like they like that there’s something in the classroom that we have in common.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And it’s also like weird when I don’t have music on, if like my phone is dead or it’s in the other room or something. But like people will walk into my classroom and they’ll be like, ‘Oh, it’s so nice in here’ and like, ‘I feel it’s like a spa, like there’s like nice music playing’.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: Like I just want like a nice like calming, safe environment. So, my students, sometimes I’ll let them listen to headphones if they’re doing like an independent assignment, or for using the computer.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I know that sometimes students might listen to their own music, but some students will chose to just listen to what’s on in the classroom.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, alright. So, I mean, I was going to ask, cos on your streaming activity from last week it looks like you stream a lot of different artists one after each other. But I’m guessing from what you've said that that music is coming from a playlist?

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Yeah, most likely.

Interviewer: Okay.

[0:41:05]

Respondent: I don’t often listen to like one artist like whole, unless it’s like a new album that I might be interested and I’ll listen to like the whole thing once, and then pick and chose songs that I like and put them on a playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, then, would you say most of your listening comes from playlists?

Respondent: Yeah, I’d say almost exclusively.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I mean, what about other service features on Spotify? So, you’ve obviously mentioned that you like the radio feature, but kind of what about the other things that they offer you? So, I’m thinking of the Discover Weekly, the Release Radar, the Daily Mixes, those type of things, do you make use of those?

Respondent: Yes. I definitely make use of Discover Weekly and Release Radar. Not so much the other, you know, they have the Daily Mixes. What I do like about those is that they do lump them together based on genre, so I’m not gonna be listening to a playlist that has like wildly different genres in it.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I notice that they put, you know, similar artists together.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But another feature that I really, really like is when I’m adding songs to a playlist that I might not be familiar with, I like when you go to the bottom of the playlist you can add the songs that they feel like is recommended for that specific playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: One other thing that I found out that I thought was kind of fun was if you make a playlist with a specific name, Spotify will try to figure out what songs could go in it, depending on what you typed in for the name.

Interviewer: Okay, uh huh.

Respondent: Yeah (laughter). So, I like messing around with that. Sometimes I’ll put, you know, like ‘Dinner Party’ and then it will like give me suggestions based on what they think would go in a playlist named Dinner Party.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And how accurate, how good do you find that, kind of those recommends?

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: So, the recommendations at the end of your playlist, and then the recommendations based on the name of playlists?

Respondent: I feel like, you know, there are sometimes I’ll put something and it won’t come up with anything.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I haven’t tried it in a while. I think when I first found out about it, I tried it like a bunch –

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: And like my friends and I would be like trying like –

[0:43:21]

Interviewer: You’re like, ‘What else can I type in?’ (Laughter).

Respondent: Yeah, right, like, ‘What can I stump Spotify with?’ But I feel like it’s pretty good. Like sometimes I’ll just put something in and I’ll add like, you know, the songs that they recommend, and I’ll just play that just to see what it looks like or what it sounds like. And, you know, I’m usually pretty satisfied with it.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, I mean, going back to something that you said just a little while earlier, that you kind of use Discovery Weekly and Release radar, but not some much the Daily Mixes. Is there a reason for that?

Respondent: I honestly think it’s because the Discover Weekly and Release Radar are like so prominent when I open up the app.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: They’re like the first ones that are there, whereas the Daily Mixes I would have to like actively go and search for.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And then, what about the Similar Artists feature, do you use that at all?

Respondent: Sometimes, but not really, not too much.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Do you not find it very useful?

Respondent: Sometimes I will if I’m like exploring a genre that I wanna like listen to more music, I’ll go to the Similar Artists and listen to a couple of the tracks from there.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But, for the most part, I don’t know why I don’t use it more often.

Interviewer: Okay. So, in terms of your Spotify library, have you got any idea how many tracks you've got in there?

Respondent: No, I’ve no idea (laughter).

Interviewer: No idea? Okay, no that’s fine, no, don’t worry.

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: But broadly then, how would you describe the tracks that you have in there?

Respondent: You mean the ones that I’ve downloaded?

Interviewer: Well, I mean, that’s a question in itself. Do you use the library feature on Spotify, so when you save tracks and they go automatically into your Spotify library, do you use that, or are they saved straight to playlists?

[0:45:20]

Respondent: No, they’re basically just in playlists, I would say, yeah. Do you mean like when you save like a whole album?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah –

Respondent: Oh, okay.

Interviewer: Or even individual songs, and they will –

Respondent: The individual songs?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So, sometimes I will if I’m listening to like Release Radar and I know if they’re gonna change it. Like I said, if I’m not driving then I can like hit like the heart button and it will go into like my saved folder.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I often forget about it, so I won’t go until I think about what the song was.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I’d say like I have a couple of albums downloaded that I saved because I wanted to listen to that whole album once straight through.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But the only one that I go back to over and over and over again is the Hamilton soundtrack (laughter) like I listen to that all the time (laughter).

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: So, that –

Interviewer: So, that’s the musical Hamilton?

Respondent: Yeah (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, that’s like the only album that I listen to like from start to finish more than once.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: I feel like everything else that I have in there, I’ve listened to it like once, and then I will just pick and chose what songs I like.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, then, what makes the Hamilton soundtrack different?

Respondent: Oh, it’s so good (laughter). It’s phenomenal. It’s hip hop, so like it aligns with my taste.

[0:46:49]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I highly recommend it, it’s very good (laughter). It’s phenomenal. I did see the performance in Boston and it was very good, but I had already listened to the soundtrack like for like a year before.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. So, you've talked about that as an album that you listen to quite frequently. Do you listen to some playlists more than others? So, I mean, you’ve said about playlists, that you download those that you most listen to. So, how do you decide that?

Respondent: So, I have a lot of playlists that I’ve downloaded that I forget about because I’ll make a new playlist of different songs. But I try to make playlists, and I try to like lump them together with similar songs. So, like I have a playlist that’s all like upbeat hip-hop that I’ll listen to like when I’m in a good mood and when I feel good, and like that’s the one that I usually listen to like on my way to work.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I also have a playlist of like newer songs that I want to listen to more. So, I’ll add in songs that I hadn’t heard of before to this playlist, that’s the one I probably listen to the most.

Interviewer: Okay. So, how then do you ultimately decide what music you’re going to listen to on Spotify? So, when you go on there, do you normally have an idea of what you want to listen to?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so. I pretty much have like the one playlist of like newer songs that I like, that I wanna listen to. But I have other playlists that I might like remember and I’ll say like, ‘Oh, I wanna listen to this song’ and then I remember, ‘Oh, it’s in this playlist, I like that playlist’ and I’m gonna go and listen to that specific playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, most of the time you know what you want to stream?

Respondent: Yeah, I would say.

Interviewer: Okay. And in a typical day then, can you tell me a little bit more about your streaming practices? So, kind of when, where and what music you stream during a typical day?

Respondent: I definitely listen to it when I get in the car.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I only have about a ten-minute commute to work, so it’s not very long.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then, right when I get into work, my phone connects to a speaker that I have in my classroom, and I generally will just start listening to music then.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I’ll have it on in the background for nearly the entire day until I leave for the day.

[0:49:32]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I listen to it on my ten-minute ride home from work.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And then I don’t always listen to music when I get home, but I will sometimes if I’m gonna be cleaning or doing like dishes or if I’m playing like a video game, I might put it on in the background.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. So, I mean, do you feel that those kind of situations, so kind of the commute to and from work, while being at work, and music for video games, do those types of music differ at all?

Respondent: No, except for the one that I put on like while I’m at work.

Interviewer: Uh huh,

Respondent: Because I wanna make sure that I’m not putting anything at work that’s inappropriate, or that has like violent themes in it or swear, like, you know, ridiculous amounts of swears in them.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Other than that, like on my commute home from work, to and from work, and then when I’m here, I’ll probably listen to like my preferred genre of music.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And do you feel that varies depending on what you’re doing or how you’re feeling?

Respondent: Yeah, sometimes, and sometimes I might put like a podcast on if I’m in the middle of it. It’s tough when I have a short commute. I don’t listen to podcasts as much as I’d like to, I do like podcasts.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Respondent: But yeah, I mean, sometimes like I’ll just like be on the app and I’ll see like a playlist that I hadn’t heard of before but like someone else made or that Spotify made, and I might put that on, just to see what it’s like. But I wouldn’t like sit there and like listen to it, I would have it on as background while I’m doing something else.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, then, how much then of your music listening would you say is background noise versus active listening?

Respondent: I’d say it’s probably like 60% background noise, 40% active listening.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: Yeah, I feel like it’s mostly background noise, you know, taking into work.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And then, what about different times during the week? So, do you find yourself listening to different music at different times in the week?

Respondent: Yeah. I mean, I go to bed early, so (laughter) I don’t listen to music like too late. But I don’t put it on when like I’m about to go to bed, but, you know, I have a speaker in the kitchen so, you know, if I’m cooking or doing something I’ll put it on.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

[0:51:59]

Respondent: But, I don’t know, I feel like the selection that I chose doesn’t change based on like if it’s really early or if it’s really late, I’d probably listen to the same thing at both times.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And is there a difference between something that you would listen to on Monday morning versus what you would listen to Friday night?

Respondent: (Laughter) I don’t know. I mean, I guess it depends on what I’m doing, right? Like if I’m like waiting for people to come over then I might put something on, or like if my friends and I are like getting ready to go out, I might put something that’s like a little bit more exciting, that’s very energetic.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But yeah, I guess it depends on what I’m doing. If I’m just sitting here reading or doing nothing I might put something a little bit more mellow.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. I mean, so you've talked about music for the commute and music for work. Is there anything else that you kind of use music for, to kind of accompany any activities or anything?

Respondent: I don’t know. I think that’s probably mostly what I do, you know, from my specific streaming.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. No, that’s great, that’s great. Just one interesting thing from your scrobble log last week. So, when I was kind of observing it, it didn’t look like you had streamed any music at the weekend. I just wondered if that was typical, or whether you were listening to something that you’d perhaps downloaded that wouldn’t show on the log?

Respondent: Oh, so I do mostly listen to my downloaded music. So, that’s not reflected in the scrobble (laughter) I don’t know how it works. So, when I listen to music, I mostly am listening to like what I have downloaded for offline.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay, okay. So, then, would you say then you normally do listen to music at the weekend?

Respondent: Yeah, I would say, probably. Maybe if I’m driving a little bit further away to go somewhere, I might listen to like a podcast more than a song. But yeah, definitely still listen to music on the weekends.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Probably more so if I’m driving or going somewhere.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay, that’s great. So, you mentioned that you had some connected friends on Spotify, although you don’t use it very much. Would you say having your connected friends on there ever plays into your music streaming at all?

Respondent: No, probably not. I almost never look at it, I forgot about it.

Interviewer: (Laughter) It’s not important to you?

Respondent: (Laughter) Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So, then, what about your streaming? Do you stream your music publicly or privately when you’re on there?

Respondent: You mean like if I make a playlist?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah. Or even kind of when you are listening to individual songs, you can choose whether you’re letting your connected friends see what you’re listening to or not.

[0:55:00]

Respondent: No, I don’t know what my settings are, so I’m not sure how to, you know (laughter).

Interviewer: Is there kind of a preference you would have then, whether you would stream your music publicly or privately?

Respondent: I would probably have it private.

Interviewer: Okay. And is there a reason then that you would prefer it private than public?

Respondent: I’m a pretty private person when it comes to like social media.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I’m not a sharer, you know, to like Facebook or anything like that. So, probably just because of that.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. So, in terms of your music listening, how often are you adding new music to what you’re listening to?

Respondent: Probably like multiple times a week.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And where then are those kind of new music choices coming from?

Respondent: Mostly from suggestions that I get from people around me, and from the playlist that Spotify makes.

Interviewer: Okay. And then what about removing music, do you ever take music off from your streaming?

Respondent: (Laughter) No, almost never.

Interviewer: Really? Is there a reason?

Respondent: I’m a deep hoarder.

Interviewer: So, why then do you not remove songs, is there a reason?

Respondent: So, I have a bunch of playlists that I’ve downloaded on my phone, and I know that in the past I’ve like deleted them or I like, you know, change it so that it’s not downloaded.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But it never actually removes itself from my phone, like the storage is still there, taking up space. So, the only way for me to actually remove it if I needed space on my phone would be to like delete the whole app and then re-download it. So, I just leave it (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter) Well, that’s fair enough. So, then, going back then to your playlist that you download, how often are you switching those around? So, how often do you download a new one and perhaps temporarily remove one from your downloaded selection?

Respondent: I don’t know, I feel like there’s no pattern, you know. I think it just depends on like what I see when I open up the app.

[0:57:19]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: You know, it says right, when I open it up, like what I listen to the most, so I’m more inclined to just keep going to that one.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: I think the only way that I would like switch it up to a new one is like, again, like if it’s a rainy day, or like if I’m getting in the car with like a childhood friend I might like put on music from like when we’re at high school, like just for fun. But, for the most part, I’d say I pretty much like stick with the playlists that I listen to the most.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. But again, but you would never delete a playlist from your –

Respondent: No (laughter).

Interviewer: No, okay.

Respondent: I tried, but it didn’t take away the space on my phone, so I figure, ‘Why bother?’

Interviewer: And so moving on then to talking about playlists a little bit more in-depth. So, would you say playlists are important to you?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so.

Interviewer: Uh huh, and why do you feel that they are important to you?

Respondent: Cos I wouldn’t probably never like just hit ‘play’ like on something that would have like multiple different genres, I don’t know, that’s not like my style.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like I wouldn’t have a playlist that has like country and indie and hip hop like and folk and techno, I wouldn’t. You know, I generally tend to like lump my playlists together like in that specific way. And so, I have a couple of playlists that I like, that I almost like have themes. So, I have a playlist that’s like all female rappers and hip-hop artists.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Like I have a playlist that’s like all rappers who are from Asian countries, so that I can like listen to like more diverse types of rap and hip-hop.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: (Laughter) I have a playlist that’s like all songs about like butts and like shaking your butt. Yeah. But, you know, those are some playlists that I like have downloaded on my phone that I’ll like listen to like if like we’re gonna get ready to go dancing, I’ll like put the butt playlist on. It’s like very funny, so like it’s a good laugh.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I generally like tend to like, you know, create my playlists that like have a specific, not a purpose, but like a theme, almost.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Uh huh, okay. And so, would you say then that your playlists are very genre-specific?

Respondent: Uh huh, yes, for sure.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And then, how do you decide then on the themes that you want to base your playlists around?

Respondent: (Laughter) I don’t know, I feel like it’s just like, you know, whatever is around me that inspired me. Whether it’s like an article that I saw online that was like, you know, top 25 songs from this kind of movie or whatever, I might be like, ‘Oh cool, like I wanna out that on my playlist’.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: You know, I think it just really depends on like external factors.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: Or like if I’m making a specific playlist for a specific event. So, like I might have like people coming over and we have like a theme party or something, and I might put that on, or like a holiday playlist or like a Halloween playlist, that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. So, then they’re more based on liked a specific one-off event, or can they be used multiple times?

Respondent: (Laughter) I guess it depends on what the playlist is.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So, like I have like a holiday playlist that has like all different types of like Christmas and Kwanzaa and Hanukah music that I listen to like pretty much all of December.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, like, you know, that one obviously, but then it’s only in December. But, I don’t know, I guess it depends on what the specific thing is.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, out of all of the playlists that you have then, what would you say is the one that you play the most?

Respondent: Probably the one that I add to the most and play the most is one that I have like newer songs that I either just recently heard of, or that I listen to a lot and haven’t gotten sick of, or don’t wanna get sick of.

[1:01:38]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Or wanna keep listening to.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. I mean, would you say that your playlists are quite time-dependent or situation-dependent?

Respondent: No, probably not.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay, No, that’s alright. And then you mentioned earlier about playlists for work can often been a collaboration between what the students like and what you like, so how does that tend to work in creating a playlist?

Respondent: When we’re actually listening to the playlist, a few students might say, ‘Hey, can you put this song on?’ and so I’ll just go on my phone and I’ll put it up next. And usually if I like it, or if I feel like it fits, then I’ll add it to the playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And does there have to be kind of a general consensus among the students that they –

Respondent: No (laughter).

Interviewer: No? (laughter).

Respondent: No (inaudible 01:02:31) –

Interviewer: They each get one song (laughter).

Respondent: Yeah. If one kid wants it, then that’s fine (laughter).

Interviewer: Okay (laughter). But you kind of still decide whether or not it’s appropriate and fits in with that playlist?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Uh huh, right. If it’s like wildly outside the genre then I’m not gonna put it in, or I might find it in like another one of my playlists that I have for work, I might fit it in there.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. And then what about Spotify’s own playlists, do you kind of use the ones that they curate or other people curate on there?

Respondent: I feel like mostly I listen to the ones that Spotify makes, that have like the different like moods or themes, more so than a random playlist that I might come upon if I’m searching for something.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And so, in terms of Spotify’s playlists then, you obviously have ones yourself for themes. Do you have your own playlist for moods, or is that something that you would just use Spotify’s ones for?

Respondent: I think I have a few that are like for specific moods and like situations, but for the most part I would probably find a Spotify playlist that’s already been made specifically for that.

[1:03:48]

Interviewer: Uh huh. And how do you find their playlists, are you quite happy with them or would you prefer something different to what they provide you?

Respondent: I’m usually pretty happy with them. If I want to like add to it then I’ll just use the songs that are on that playlist and I’ll add them to my own playlist, so I can remove or add songs that I like. And so I’ll create like a more personalised playlist, based off of what they’ve added. That might like start a playlist for me, cos I’ll start with some of the songs that they have on there, and then I’ll add to the songs, add to it the songs that I’m interested in.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay, that’s really interesting. So, what then, in general, is it that you like about playlists?

Respondent: I like listening to a variety of different artists within the same genre.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Also, I would rather listen to multiple different songs and artists over one particular artist straight through.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And is there a reason that you kind of prefer that in your listening, rather than listening to one artist for ten songs at a time?

Respondent: I don’t know why. I feel like I’ve always been that way, I’ve always been like a mix CD, a mix tape, like all different types of, no not types of music, but all different songs and artists.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Usually like different artists throughout the whole thing.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I don’t know, I just prefer playlists over straight up listening to an album or an artist.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. So, going on then to discovering new music. So, are you a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: Yes, for sure.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And what is it about that kind of discovery that you really like?

Respondent: I don’t know, I love especially like local artists.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I love like giving smaller, independent, especially local artists like more plays, more hits.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Also, I’m a curious person and I love like learning, so I love to like even learn about new artists.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And I wanna like stay relevant, and see like how music changes within a specific genre, I like to see that sort of shift through like new artists that I’ve found.

[1:06:14]

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. So, in terms then of you discovering local artists, does that happen through Spotify, or elsewhere?

Respondent: So, I feel like it’s a little bit of both. So, I have friends that work for the office and they put on shows, and a lot of times they’ll put shows on of local artists.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, if I can go and, you know, watch them and see if I’m interested, then I’ll be more likely to like listen to them, and even like add them on like Instagram or follow them on Instagram. And maybe that would be like an instance where I would look through like similar artists, because there might be some more like local artists within that.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But yeah, I feel like it’s mostly through that. And then sometimes it’s like a kid or a co-worker who is like, ‘Oh, have you heard of this band before? Have you heard of this artist? I think you’d like it’ and then I will like add them.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And in this music that you’re discovering, either in terms of the local artist or those that have been recommended to you, I mean, what type of music? Is it kind of genre-specific music, or a bit of anything?

Respondent: It’s mostly rap and hip-hop.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Okay. So, then, would you say that you prefer to discover music that kind of reflects your current taste, or something completely different?

Respondent: Probably reflecting what I currently listen to.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And then, so, how would you tend to discover this new music? So, we’ve talked about the shows and the kind of recommendations from your colleagues, friends and students. Are there any other ways that you tend to discover new music?

Respondent: Yeah, I definitely use those playlists that Spotify creates of new music.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And especially like the ones that are specific to rap and hip-hop, I’ll typically, you know, listen to those, I’ll see what comes up. If there’s something new that I haven’t heard of before I might add it to a playlist that I already have so that I can listen to it later.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: Or at least remember to listen to it later.

Interviewer: Yeah (laughter) okay.

[1:08:22]

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: So, would you say then, in that sense, your music discovery mainly comes from Spotify, or from outside of Spotify?

Respondent: Probably mainly from Spotify.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. Is there an example then that you have of somebody that you’ve exclusively discovered through Spotify?

Respondent: Yeah, I can’t remember his name. He’s actually a local artist, he was a local rapper that I found. What else? There’s a few artists that I had never heard of before that had popped up on like some of their playlists that are of like new music, that I add to my specific playlists. Are you looking for like a specific name?

Interviewer: Well no, it doesn’t matter either way really.

Respondent: Oh (laughter).

Interviewer: But you feel then that you have just exclusively discovered people through Spotify?

Respondent: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay.

Respondent: Because like I’m on Instagram and I follow Spotify and Instagram, like even there like they posted like an ad or something of a new musician who came out that I had never heard of before, and I was like, ‘Oh, that looks cool’. So, I went and listened to it, and it was actually like really good. And so now I have that on my playlist that I listen to more often.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So, it’s kind of then like Spotify, but through other social media as well?

Respondent: Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, okay. So, in terms of Spotify then, what do you think of its interface?

Respondent: I like it, I don’t have any complaints. Like I have an iPhone and I know that it’s typically better on an iPhone than it is on Android.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But there’s been like some things that I’m not like super into. Like my app will crash sometimes, like that’s not really like the interface of it. But there’s some playlists that like have videos in them rather than just songs, I’m not really into that, cos I’m just gonna be listening to it like at my house or while I’m driving, I’m not gonna be like looking at my phone watching a music video like while I’m listening to a playlist.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, I’m not like super into like the videos that they’ve been adding into their specific playlist.

Interviewer: So, I mean, is there anything in particular that you really like about it, on the interface?

Respondent: It’s easy to use, so I have no complaints about that. And I like that, you know, when I go right to it, it has, excuse me, it has like my top genres, so I know that if I like click on those I can find music, or discover music that Spotify feels like I would like.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: So, you know, I like that, I like that there’s all the different options available.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Even (inaudible 01:11:30) they like a mood section, so like playlist about being in the car, or singing in a shower. So, like, you know, it’s pretty curated to specific things that I would probably like.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. And, I mean, do you feel that the interface shapes your music listening?

Respondent: I don’t know. Probably not, cos I think it’s changed, like the user interface has changed, you know, since I started using it, and I feel like that’s kind of independent of my music shifts.

Interviewer: Uh huh. What about in terms of they kind of bring up as kind of the recently played tracks, or your top tracks? Do you steer towards them perhaps more because they’re there?

Respondent: Yeah, probably. So, when I go to like My Music it will say like the last playlist that I listened to, so I’m more likely to listen to that one again because it’s so easily accessible, I can just click on my phone and it will just start playing right from there.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. And how do you feel then as well about sometimes they have featured artists on there? Does having them on there shape the music that you listen to at all?

Respondent: Yeah, probably, cos when I go on to my app on my phone, like a little thing might pop up that says like, you know, ‘This artist has a new album’. So, I might be more likely to click on it and actually listen to the album, where I might not actively go listen, look for it.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Respondent: So, yeah, I think that that definitely has helped me like find new music that artists that I already know, rather than like a new artist.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. So, you find those things quite helpful and useful?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so.

Interviewer: Okay. I mean, are there any changes that you personally would like to make to the interface, or to the platform in general?

[1:13:25]

Respondent: I don’t think so. There was one that they recently added, an explicit content filter, which I was very happy about, especially because I work with children and I don’t ever want to be put in a situation where I’m doing something inappropriate. So, I was very happy about that. I was like looking for that for so long (laughter). Yeah, it’s a lot easier now. But, I mean, other than that I don’t really feel like there’s anything more that the app could do.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: Or like any kind of features that I’m looking for.

Interviewer: Okay, okay, no that’s great. I mean, would you ever consider to stop using Spotify? Is there anything that might happen that you would actually say, ‘Oh, I’m not going to use it anymore’?

Respondent: I mean, as long as it stays the way that it is, and nothing drastically changes, I don’t see me to stop using it.

Interviewer: Okay. So, generally then, do you feel that Spotify, in terms of the music on there, is a good reflection of who you are?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And their recommendations, do you feel that they’re a good reflection of your tastes?

Respondent: Yeah, for sure. I feel like their like analytics and data collection are like pretty spot on.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: When it comes to music that they think I would like, I feel like they’re usually successful.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Well, I mean, that was the next thing I was going to ask you, so are you kind of aware when you’re streaming music that Spotify is collecting data about you?

Respondent: Uh huh, yeah, for sure.

Interviewer: Uh huh. And does that bother you, or is that not something that does bother you?

Respondent: No (laughter). No. It’s funny, I’m more inclined to share with strangers than like with my friends on Facebook. So, like I don’t mind data collection if it’s gonna be for something like Spotify, you know, as long as it’s being used to like improve and like innovate then I’m cool with it. You know, they’re not like taking my data and selling it, then there would be a problem.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. So, because then it’s kept kind of in-house, in Spotify, that it’s not so much of a problem for you?

Respondent: Uh huh. And I like like at the end of the year they do like, ‘Your listening for the year’ and I like that. I like to look, I love to like look at the little profiles that say like how many minutes you listened this year and like what your top artists are. I love like looking at those things cos I love data analysis also. So, I love to see like what that looks like, you know, like in a graph or in a graphic.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh, okay. So, we’re not really fully sure what kind of Spotify is using the data for and how they train their algorithm for recommendations, but we kind of have a sense that it is mostly for the recommendations. So, in that kind of sense, you feel that the recommendations are actually good for you?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so. I’m sure they try to push some artists more than others, and I feel sometimes that will come up. Like if a bigger artist comes out with a new album, they might push that specific artist, or put that specific artist on like multiple playlists.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But other than that, I feel like it’s pretty good.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I mean, when you say then they push some artists more than others, do you feel that they are artists that actually you’re interested in, or that you’re not interested in?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so. Because I still listen to like pop, you know, rap and like mainstream rap, that are like popular.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I would probably like more if I got those like kind of notifications of like a new artist that is like sort of up and coming.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: But I think that more likely people are gonna be listening to like the artists they’ve already heard of, so that’s probably why those notifications come up.

Interviewer: Uh huh, okay. So, my last question then is, so obviously you've been through all three phases now for my study. So, you’ve done the survey, you've done the week’s online observation, and then today you've done the interview. And I was just wondering whether that has made you kind of reflect or change any of your Spotify practices?

Respondent: I don’t know, I might like go back and look at some of the playlists that I’ve been hoarding.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Respondent: (Laughter). But like, I mean, I don’t know, sometimes I’ll, you know, scroll back through what I had previously. I have a lot of playlists that I like followed, so I might look through those after this. But I mean probably not, but yeah I think, you know, this definitely has like made me think about like how my streaming really does reflect like what’s happening around me.

[1:18:24]

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Respondent: And like the specific songs that I listen to, or playlists that I might make, really is like a result of like my situation, or my mood. And so I feel like that’s probably the biggest takeaway.

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. Well, that’s great. So, I mean, when you say though you might go back and look through those that you’re following and the older playlists you have, do you tend to often go back to them and listen to the older ones that you have, or are they just there as kind of an archive?

Respondent: They’re just there. I might like scroll through, cos I think like, ‘Oh, I thought I had a playlist that was named this’ and I’ll like go through (laughter) and then I’ll be like, ‘Oh yeah, I forgot all about those things’. But they’re like, you know, all the way at the bottom, I have to go find them (laughter).

Interviewer: Uh huh, uh huh. No, well, I mean it’s been great talking to you today. It’s been really interesting listening to what you have to say, and how you use music. And the fact that you use music in the classroom I think is great, I would have loved that.

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: But no, it’s been really, really interesting and so helpful for my university research. So, thank you so, so much.

Respondent: Yeah, you’re welcome, anything to help.

Interviewer: I mean, is there anything, before I go, that you would like to touch on or maybe elaborate on, or something that we’ve not talked about at all?

Respondent: No, I don’t think so. I feel like as long as you got everything that you need, I’m good.

Interviewer: Yeah, no, it’s been really great, really insightful and interesting.

Respondent: Great, well thank you so much, I appreciate it.

Interviewer: No, well thank you for taking the time –

Respondent: (Laughter).

Interviewer: And I hope now you can enjoy the rest of your school holiday in peace (laughter).

Respondent: I will (laughter).

Interviewer: Alright, thank you very much.

Respondent: Thank you, bye.

Interviewer: Thank you, bye, bye.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-17-M

[0:00:00]

Respondent: Hello?

Interviewer: Hello.

Respondent: Hi.

Interviewer: Hi, can you hear me okay? Oh, hang on one second.

Respondent: Can you hear me?

Interviewer: Yes, can you hear me alright? Oh.

Respondent: Hi, can you hear me?

Interviewer: Yes, can you hear me okay?

Respondent: Yeah, I can hear you.

Interviewer: Good, sorry, I updated the operating system on my laptop the other day and for some reason it hadn’t allowed access to the camera and microphone, so I don’t know what’s going on. I apologise about that.

Respondent: It’s always a mess with the microphone and stuff like that. It’s….

Interviewer: It’s helpful having a microphone! So yeah, so hopefully that’s sorted now, but as I say, I could hear you but I don’t think you could hear me and I was trying to frantically press buttons but it’s sorted now.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So thank you for speaking to me on a Saturday morning, I really appreciate it.

Respondent: You’re welcome.

Interviewer: So the way it’ll work today is the interview will last around about an hour, but it’s very much based on your responses, so how much you want to talk and elaborate on things. I have some questions to ask you that are general questions that I’ve asked to everybody who’s partaken in an interview. And I also have some questions that are more specific to your music streaming that I’ve looked at on Last.fm over the last week. I’ve also got a little audio recorder by the side of my laptop, which is recording our interview – is that okay with you?

Respondent: Yeah, it’s completely fine, yeah.

Interviewer: Perfect, and while you’re talking, I’ll try my best not to interrupt you, but it may be that I just am jotting some notes down while you talk and that’s basically just things that I might want to ask you about later on or if I’ve not understood something that you’ve said and want a little bit more detail about. So it’s kind of prompts for me just while you’re talking.

Respondent: Okay, no problem.

Interviewer: Okay, so before we get started, do you have any questions about how the interview will work or about anything in general? Right, okay, so if you’re happy then to get started…

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, so firstly then, I would like to know about whether you feel music relates to your identity. So how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: What do you mean exactly? How I see myself as a music listening, like, what do I like from music? Or when do I listen to music? Or…?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, a bit of both, so, I mean, how do you feel music is important to you? How does it…what’s the role it plays in your life?

Respondent: Okay, yeah, well, I guess first of all, music helps me to focus a lot, especially at work. I like to have my earphones, you know, and put in some playlists and then I can completely focus on my tasks. It’s kind of like I’m in a bubble, you know, and there’s nothing else around me. So there’s that. Also I like it when I’m trying to relax, sometimes I just like to put some music and just lay in my bed or in my couch and just do nothing, I guess. It just helps me to relax sometimes. And then also to party, in a sense, like, well, when I’m going to some party with some friends or when I organise something, I’m always putting some playlists, I can’t stand the idea of having a party without music, you know, I think it’s just…it just helps the flow of the party, I guess.

[00:07:10]

Interviewer: It sounds then like you use music quite a bit in your life then for different things?

Respondent: Yeah, exactly. I think it’s always…it always helped me in some part of my life basically, you know. Like, it’s like I can’t do something without it, and I forgot to say that, but sometimes I’m going running, you know, and I can’t just run without music, because I’m getting bored or, you know, so I’m putting some music on and I guess it’s focused my mind on something else, so it’s easier to do a task or to enjoy something.

Interviewer: So would you say music is quite important to you then?

Respondent: Yeah, completely, completely. I think I can’t imagine my life right now without music, it would be so much different, like, yeah, it represents a huge part of my life, yeah.

Interviewer: How then, when you say you can’t imagine your life without music, how then would you feel if there was no music in your life?

Respondent: Well, I guess it would be pretty boring, I guess, because, like, that’s a tough question actually… Like, yeah, I think it would be sad, kind of, you know, because music makes, like…it makes me feel emotions, you know, it makes me feel something and without music, it would be, yeah, just boring I guess. It’s really difficult to answer that.

Interviewer: Sorry, that’s a tricky question to ask.

Respondent: Don’t worry, but like, yeah, I actually don’t know how it would be like. I think it would be horrible, basically.

Interviewer: And do you…I mean, what role does music play for your identity – do you think it has a role for your identity?

Respondent: Well, I think, yeah, kind of, I think without music, my life would be kind of different from what it is right now. Because I met some of my friends thanks to music, thanks to some (inaudible 00:09:34) of music, like when I’m attending some venues or concerts, I met a lot of great people, I’ve met a lot of future friends, so definitely it’s kind of changed my life, I think, so yeah, it played a huge role in my life, yeah.

Interviewer: And then, in terms of meeting people through music, is it just that you’ve kind of met them through going to concerts and other music venues, or is it that you’ve kind of discussed music with other people outside of those venues and found similarities in your tastes?

Respondent: Yeah, most of the time it’s going to some concerts and then meeting people there. I’m also following sub-Reddits about EDM music, you know, and I like to read what other people think about music. I’m not actually writing anything, I’m just reading, but yeah, I think the most important is going to some concerts and then you meet people who like the same music as you and then you discuss with those people and then you discover that you have a lot more in common, so yeah.

Interviewer: So are concerts quite important then for you? Do you go to quite a lot of them?

Respondent: Well, I’m trying to, actually. What’s difficult is, like, I’m living in France and not in Paris, so we don’t have a lot of huge concerts, so I’m trying to go as much as possible to some concerts, but yeah, it’s pretty difficult with the localisation.

Interviewer: Okay, and what kind of concerts then do you enjoy going to?

[00:11:27]

Respondent: Well, I like going into small concerts, I guess, when there’s not too many people so you can…how can I say that, you feel closer to the artist when he is playing, like it’s not going to a festival for example where you are in the crowd, you are just like a little ant, you know.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah! Right at the back.

Respondent: Yeah, exactly. So in small concerts like that, like maybe 200 people, something like that, you can truly feel the music there I guess and it feels more intimate, I guess, a bit. So I’d rather go to some concerts like that rather than huge festivals.

Interviewer: Okay, and I mean, are these concerts, do they tend to be a specific style of music or are they quite diverse, the ones that you go to?

Respondent: Well, actually, it’s about an artist, like, in these small concerts, in the small rooms, I guess. They’re trying to get, like, it’s a small place, the location of the concerts, so they are trying to bring small artists and…I don’t remember your question, sorry.

Interviewer: So, that’s okay. So my question was what type of music is it that you go to these concerts for? Is it all the same style of music or are they different?

Respondent: Well, actually, I just look at the line-ups, if I can say that, and if I see an artist that I have listened to in the past or that I like, I’m just going to go to the concert. It doesn’t matter the genre of the music, you know, like if it’s pop, rock or electronic, I don’t really care, as long as I like the artists, I’m probably going to go.

Interviewer: Okay, so do you feel that there has ever been a time where you’ve used music to reflect who you are to somebody else?

Respondent: I’m not sure about that, I think I…actually it’s kind of difficult because I’m kind of shy about letting people know what I’m listening, because it really feels like a part of myself and showing what I listen to to other people, it’s like, you know, revealing who I really am in a sense, you know. So yeah, I’m kind of shy about that, you know, I’m trying to…especially the kind of music that’s not really popular, I guess. I don’t want people to think, like, “Oh my gosh, he’s weird listening to that kind of music, it’s pretty bad,” you know. So I don’t tend to let other people listen to what I listen to.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. So there’s never then been a time where you’ve shared music that you like with a friend or anything like that?

Respondent: Yeah, actually, there’s been one or two times, where I shared my music. I think it’s been with my best friend and the other time it’s been with my girlfriend, so yeah, I need to have a strong connection with the other person to, you know, let them know what I listen to. I think your question was what I was going on to say.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, I was just going to say, well how did those experiences then with sharing music with your best friend and your girlfriend; how did they go?

Respondent: Yeah, well actually, it went pretty well, like, especially with my girlfriend. I met her discovered a lot of artists, a lot of music that she’d never heard before and that she liked a lot now. So it was kind of a beautiful moment, like, you know, you share something that’s really precious for you and the other person is feeling the same thing and it kind of made us connect better, you know.

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, how would then you describe your music tastes?

Respondent: Well, I’m really more about electronic music, basically. Like before I got Spotify, so I think it was in 2013, something like that, I didn’t really listen to a lot of music, especially not electronic music, I hated electronic music.

[00:16:54]

Interviewer: Oh really?

Respondent: At that time, yeah. Completely. And then I got Spotify and it was pretty amazing because it helps me discover a lot of songs, so I was more into radio songs, I guess, at first, pop songs, things like that. And then I met two friends later that year who introduced me to electronic music and then my music tastes kind of gravitate around this electronic thing, you know. So basically that’s what I listen to the most.

Interviewer: Okay. I mean, that’s really interesting then that you didn’t like it before and then something obviously changed.

Respondent: Yeah, exactly, yeah, because I thought it was just like noise, you know, and the more I listened to it, the more I enjoyed it and then my tastes changed completely, that was pretty crazy, yeah?

Interviewer: I mean, do you feel that your friends then had influence in obviously you liking that genre, or was it just that you were able to discover things that you perhaps hadn’t listened to before?

Respondent: Well, I think before, I was kind of closed to enjoying electronic music. I had the idea that it was just noise and that it wasn’t really music so I didn’t try to enjoy it and try it. But then, when I was hanging out with my friends, they were constantly listening to this music, so I was trying to have a good time, so I was listening more to the music and the more and more I listened to it, the more and more I liked it basically. So yeah, they had a huge impact on me liking electronic music there.

Interviewer: So within that genre then, are there particular artists or DJs that you gravitate towards or is it just the genre as a whole that you enjoy?

Respondent: Well, maybe not the genre as a whole because there’s a lot of genres in electronics. I’m liking more, like, not the things that are too hard, you know?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah, like the trance things or the hard style electro, I don’t really like that. It’s more, like, chilled things or melodic things, you know. And some artists that I really like are Porter Robinson, I heard his album Worlds and it’s really curious, because at first, I hated the album and then I listened to it again and again and then I’m in love with the album, you know, so it’s pretty funny how music works sometimes.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah. So what then made you change your mind from disliking it to then eventually liking it?

Respondent: Well, I think when I listen to it for the first time, it was really, really different from what I used to hear, like, sometimes electro can be repetitive, you know, like you hear a song, you hear another song, and it’s like always the same thing sometimes. Well, with this album, it was clearly different, I think, it was…yeah, it was completely different, and I wasn’t used to listening to crazy things like that, I wasn’t really…yeah, used to. And then after listening to it many times, well, I saw something else about it, I don’t know, it’s really complicated to explain that. Yeah, I don’t know, the music kind of reached through me better, I guess, I don’t know.

Interviewer: Okay. I mean, so how would you describe Porter Robinson, that sound?

Respondent: Well, it’s…when I hear the album, I think I’m, like, in another world, you know. I think it’s basically like watching a movie or a TV show, like a great movie or a great TV show, like going into the story of the artist, you know, you’re going into what he’s trying to tell you, what he’s trying to…the message he’s trying to send you and you’re completely in this world. And I think also what I loved about him after is that it wasn’t like an album just with a compilation of songs and just an album. I really felt that he was trying to tell a story with his music. So I think that’s what I liked about it.

[00:22:14]

Interviewer: Okay. So is there anything outside of electronic music that you would say that you like or is it very much that electronic music, you know, music within that is your favourite?

Respondent: Well, I guess for my daily music, I think it’s all electronic music, but sometimes, like when I’m hanging out with friends or when we are having a party, we like to listen to older music, you know, like music from the 80s or 70s, things like that.

Interviewer: Okay, so what kind of songs then does that include?

Respondent: That would be, like, Queen for example, or Earth, Wind and Fire, you know. I like basically disco music or funky music, things like that.

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, is there a reason then that when you’re with your friends and maybe having a party, that you would listen to 80s and disco music rather than electronic?

Respondent: Yeah, because I think this kind of music, like disco music or 80s music, I think everybody knows them, you know, so everyone can enjoy them, there’s not like a… With today’s music, especially with music I listen to, it’s not really the kind of music you listen on the radio for example. So people won’t know the music and will be, like, “What is this? I don’t understand, I don’t know the music.” So when we are doing a party, we like to just throw a bunch of music that everybody knows, everybody will like and we just enjoy listening to it, dancing to it and, yeah, that’s why…

Interviewer: Having a good time.

Respondent: Sorry?

Interviewer: Having a good time.

Respondent: Having a good time, exactly. Exactly.

Interviewer: And do you listen to that type of music at any other time in your life, or is it just kind of when you’re with your friends having a party?

Respondent: Well, I guess it kind of depends on my mood, I guess, like sometimes when I’m sick of listening to playlist about electronic, I like to just switch to another genre or another kind of style of music. So sometimes I’m going to go back to the old classics and have a listen to it, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, and what about then music dislikes – is there any kind of types or styles of music that you really don’t like?

Respondent: Well, I don’t really like…what I said earlier, like with electronics, the things that are a bit too hard, you know, a bit too…yeah, a bit too crazy, I guess. And also I’m not really a fan of R&B, rap, things like that, you know. There’s some songs I can enjoy, I think, like the popular ones are sometimes pretty good, I can listen to them without feeling bad, I guess. But it’s not a genre that I really enjoy or that I particularly try to discover, I guess.

Interviewer: And is there a reason for that? Is there something about the type of music that you don’t like?

Respondent: I don’t know if there’s a reason, it’s just I… It’s not the things that sounds best to my ears, I guess, so I just try to avoid that. Even though sometimes it’s true that there’s some songs that I kind of like sometimes, it’s a bit funny because like there’s an R&B song for example that I don’t want to like the song, but I’m liking it, you know.

[00:26:07]

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: So yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I mean, talking then about your music likes, so over the last week of your Scrobble logs, the artist that came out as the one you listened to the most was somebody called San Holo. I hope I’m pronouncing that correctly.

Respondent: Yeah, I think it's correct.

Interviewer: And you listened to that quite a lot more than you listened to anything else. And then the second most popular one that you listened to was Flume. So would you say those two are quite reflective of your music tastes, or are they quite different to what you normally listen to?

Respondent: Well, about Flume, I listen to it kind of a lot because he released a mixtape recently, so I give it a go and listen to it. But that is actually a thing that I don’t really like about Last.fm is sometimes you see a top artist that you don’t really enjoy but just because you hear a lot of his songs, you know, it appears at the top. So yeah, I’m not really a fan of Flume, I mean, I don’t really care much, I guess, it’s not the best things I listen to. But yeah, I listened to his new mixtape just to… I guess to discover new music. So I think that’s why he’s going at the top.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, so I mean, I’ve never heard of Flume, so what kind of music is that?

Respondent: I think it’s still electronic, but it’s like…I don’t know, there’s probably a genre to describe this, but I wouldn’t be able to tell you the exact genre, I guess. But it’s still electronic basically.

Interviewer: Okay. And then what about San Holo?

Respondent: Yeah, San Holo actually I really like this artist, like, back from last year, I think, or two years ago, I don’t remember. And recently he was doing a concert in Toulouse where I live, so it was, like, last Friday, I guess. So I went to see him and I had a blast, it was pretty amazing. And so, that’s why I listened to it a lot, I listened to his album quite a lot in my car or at work because I just saw him in the concert, so I was trying to recall the emotions I felt in this concert, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay, and so that makes sense then why he appeared a lot in that week.

Respondent: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: So, I mean, what’s his kind of music like? Is he electronic as well or something else?

Respondent: Yes, it’s also electronic, but it’s more like… I think it’s like Porter Robinson in a way because he’s trying to…how can I say, this, like, it’s still electronic but it’s really difficult to describe music! I think he’s trying to be more melodic and he’s also trying to convey a story, you know, a message, I guess, in his songs. And it’s clearly not the kind of songs you would normally listen to, you know. So yeah, I kind of like this idea to shuffle…not to really shuffle, but to...yeah, I don’t know how to say that. But basically it’s nice that same artist that are trying to do something different from what you normally hear, you know. And I quite like this, I quite like him for that, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, and so would you say then that he might appear on…if I’d done other weeks, he might appear in the music listening for other weeks as well?

Respondent: Yeah, I guess so, because he’s… I mean, I don’t think I’m going to get sick of him right now. So I’m probably going to listen to his album a lot again. He’s also releasing new music kind of frequently, every time he’s releasing music, there’s a lot of chance that his song will go in my playlist and I will be listening to it quite a lot, so yeah, I think you will see him again.

[00:30:58]

Interviewer: Okay, okay. So in terms of your music tastes and your music identity, do you think…? I mean has this stayed the same for a long period of time or has it changed?

Respondent: Well, as I was saying, I was more into pop things before using Spotify. After that, I listen a lot to EDM, but even in the genre of electronic music, I think there’s a lot of other genres, I guess, like sub-genres. I know it really evolved in me because sometimes I like to listen on shuffle of my whole saved songs on Spotify, and sometimes it makes me listen to a song that I set, like, two or three years ago, and I know that at the time I really loved the song, but now, it’s like, “Nah, it’s not that great,” you know. So I know my music taste is evolving, it’s just sometimes you don’t really realise, it’s when you listen to your past songs that you know that, “Oh yeah, it’s not the same things I used to listen to.”

Interviewer: And do you think there’s anything in particularly that’s caused that evolution in your music tastes?

Respondent: It’s quite an interesting question, actually. If I think about it, I’m not really sure because, like, to me, it feels like my music taste basically never changes, because you don’t really see it happening, it just changes and you don’t really realise it at the time. So I’m not really sure what’s…is there something that makes me change my listening habits. I guess maybe it’s the fact that when I first listened to EDM music, I only knew, like, the more popular artists. So I was just listening to them, so I was only enjoying their music. When I tried to discover more artists, more songs, it’s really where I think my tastes shaped better, I guess. So I think it’s when I discover more and more artists that I really could say, “Okay, I’d rather listen to this than that,” and that’s how I made my tastes in music, I think.

Interviewer: Okay. So do you feel that discovering these artists has come from anywhere in particular?

Respondent: Actually, I think it’s more thanks to Spotify, I guess, because their algorithm or whatever they are trying to call it, it’s pretty nice, like, when you listen a lot to an artist, sometimes they are pushing you another artist or another song and when you listen to it, like, “Oh yeah, it’s pretty nice too,” and then you listen to this artist and then Spotify pushes you another artist etc. etc. So I think it’s how I discovered most of my music, I think.

Interviewer: And is that something then that you enjoy that Spotify pushes you these artists?

Respondent: Yeah, completely, I think it’s pretty awesome. Every Monday they are creating a playlist, like, Discover Weekly, I think it’s called?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah, and I think it’s pretty great because they are putting a lot of different things in this playlist and sometimes the music is not really good, but sometimes it’s an insta-like, you know, and you’re like, “Woah, this artist is amazing, how did I not know him earlier?” And I think it’s pretty great, because it really helps you to really shape your tastes even better, you know. So I really enjoy that.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s really interesting. So going back as well to when you started using Spotify – so you mentioned that before you liked pop music more as a genre, and then you started using Spotify and then that led to you liking EDM more. Do you feel… I mean, what do you feel was the reason for that evolution there – from pop music to EDM?

Respondent: Well, I guess… Well, I’m not sure Spotify was the reason I changed to the EDM genre; I think it was more thanks to my friends, but what really helped is that Spotify has a huge catalogue of music so if you listen to an EDM artist for example, then it’s going to propose you something else, like, right away, you know, like you can do some kind of radio playlists, I think it’s called. So I think it’s what helps me, along with my friends, of course, discovering more EDM music and thinking I like them better actually.

[00:36:39]

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. So talking about your friends then, do you feel that your music tastes are quite similar to your friendship group?

Respondent: I think some of it is the same, like, not all of it, but, like, I think it’s more… Like there is the most popular songs, like the radio songs, I guess, that everyone kind of likes, so I think we have the same tastes with that. But also, like most of my friends also like EDM music, maybe not what I exactly listen to but we have some music in common that we both enjoy, or that we all enjoy.

Interviewer: Okay. So do you have any friends on Spotify? So do you have, like on the desktop version, the screen…?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you have access to that?

Respondent: Yeah, completely, completely, and it’s also a way to discover new music I guess, because sometimes I see a friend listening to a song that I don’t know of and I’m going to take his…the playlist he’s listening to and I’m going to play the music and play the other songs from the playlist. Yeah, it really helps me also discover what my friends like and sometimes it’s something that I will like too.

Interviewer: And are you kind of…when your friends are playing music, are you more attracted to the genres that you already know and the artists that you already know or is it that sometimes you’ll just click on something not knowing what it is?

Respondent: Well, most of the time, I’m seeing if they are listening to something I also like or if it’s some artist that I already know of. So I’m like, “Oh, nice, he’s also listening to that, that’s pretty nice,” and that’s about it. And sometimes if I saw them listening to something I really don’t know of, I’m going to have a listen just to see what it is. Like if I already know the song and the artists, I’m just going to say, “Okay, he’s listening to that, that’s nice,” but if it’s something I really don’t know of, I’m going to try to listen to it just to see what kind of music he’s listening to and if it might interest me.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s great. So moving on then to talking a bit more about Spotify, what do you feel Spotify means to you?

Respondent: Well, I think it’s kind of my…what it means to me, I think it’s kind of like, how can I say that… It’s kind of like a big collection of CDs, you know, but compacted in a phone or in a computer. So it’s…yeah, I think it’s like a personal CD player in a way, where you have all your collection, all the music you like, and yeah, I don’t know.

Interviewer: Okay, no, that’s great, that’s great. That was a tricky question to answer. So I mean, do you feel that Spotify allows you to express who you are through music?

Respondent: Well, I think yeah, it kind of allows me to express myself because I can really choose my music, I can really organise my music how I want, so, like, in a way, when I organise myself with some playlists, I can see instantly what I am, you know, like what I like to listen to, because I have a playlist for electro music, for summer music, for dance music, for 80s music, things like that. So yeah, in a way, without even realising it, you can see what you like, just by your habits of what you listen or how you organise your music.

Interviewer: Well, I mean, because we’ve already talked about how perhaps some of your music listening has changed through using Spotify, so your discovery of artists in the EDM genre. But since using the platform, has the way you listen to music changed at all?

[00:41:26]

Respondent: Do you mean if I changed my habits of using Spotify, like how I used to use it?

Interviewer: Yeah, so I mean, so like the ways that you listen to music – so as an example, would you say that through using Spotify you listen to more music than you did before or do you listen in a different way?

Respondent: Okay, yeah. Well, definitely I’m using it in a different way, like, at first when I was using Spotify for the first time, I was just browsing the Spotify playlists, like the big playlists, like the ‘Today’s Top Hits’ you know, things like that. Or I was going to the moods sections, you know, where you have a focused mood, or travel or sleep, things like that. And I was trying to listen to music in those kind of playlists, I guess. And now I rarely use them, I mostly like… It’s either I mostly know where I want to listen so I’m going to search it directly, or I don’t really know what I want to listen to but I know that.. Like, for example, something I do quite a lot is sometimes there’s a song I really, really love, so I’m going to launch the radio stations for the song, you know, so Spotify is trying to create a playlist around that song, so I can discover new songs. So that’s something I quite like doing, like, for some songs or some albums for example. And I think it’s doing a great work, yeah.

Interviewer: And so, when you use the radio station, do you feel that most of the time, the songs that are then generated from that original song are quite similar and songs that you quite enjoy? Or does it kind of depend?

Respondent: Well, actually, I think it improves with time, because I remember using it some years ago and it was sometimes good, sometimes bad, it was pretty random, I guess. But I think it’s, the more I listen to music in Spotify, the more Spotify knows about me, so now it’s frequent that I’m listening to, like my playlist for example, and when the playlist ends, it automatically learns the radio for this playlist and sometimes, I’m listening to 10 songs from the radio playlist, and I’m like, “Woah, this is pretty great,” and I just realise that it’s not my playlist anymore, it’s a radio, and it’s like, “Woah, all these songs I love and it’s not even in my playlist already.” I think sometimes it’s doing a pretty good job, yeah.

Interviewer: So you almost then don’t notice what’s yours and then what Spotify has produced for you?

Respondent: Can you repeat please? Sorry.

Interviewer: So at the end of the playlists, you almost then don’t realise actually what the music is that you’ve put on to then the ones that Spotify has added to the end of it?

Respondent: Yeah, exactly, because Spotify is a bit tricky because when it is launching your radio, it is putting songs you’ve never heard before and songs you already saved, so you don’t really know when it’s your playlist or not, you know. And you listen to a lot of different songs, then you’re like, “Wow,” I really thought it was my playlist sometimes, it’s pretty crazy.

Interviewer: Okay. So then what about connected friends on Spotify? So we’ve talked about them briefly before in a response that you gave, but do you feel that connected friends on Spotify influence your music listening while you’re on there?

Respondent: Well, I think, not really except for one or two friends of mine, because well, they’re not really as active as me, I guess, on Spotify. And also what’s a bit disappointing is that it’s only available on the desktop version.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah.

[00:45:55]

Respondent: Because I mostly use my mobile phone to listen to Spotify and you can’t see what your friends are listening, so it’s pretty bad.

Interviewer: Oh yes, I hadn’t… I’d forgotten that you can’t get it on the mobile app, can you?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, that’s crazy they haven’t done the same thing like this on the phone. It’s pretty bad, I think. But so yeah, sometimes I listen to… So there’s a friend, for example, that I know, he’s organising his music in playlists, like, for example, he’s currently listening to March *[playlist name],* so when I see him listening to this playlist, I like to go to the playlist for the month and listen to what he actually listened and what he actually liked this month.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: And sometimes there’s songs that I really like and so I add them to my playlists and it helps me discover new artists, new songs, so that’s something I do quite regularly, yeah, taking the playlists of this friend.

Interviewer: So would you say…are you attracted to that friend’s music because you already know there some similarities between you?

Respondent: Yeah, kind of, yeah, because like, I know our taste in music is pretty much the same or really close, so I like seeing what he’s listening, because sometimes he even likes songs that I previously listened to, so it’s like, well, it’s pretty funny to see that. And sometimes I know that he’s going to listen to songs that I really like, so he’s a reliable friend for the music, I guess.

Interviewer: And do you think that happens the other way round? So do you know whether he listens to what you listen to on Spotify from obviously seeing you online?

Respondent: Well, I think sometimes he’s kind of doing the same thing because it happens when on his playlists, I see, like, two or three songs that are the last songs I added to my playlist so I know he listened to the playlist and grabbed some songs from there.

Interviewer: You’re like, “They’re my songs!”

Respondent: Yeah, exactly, exactly! But it’s pretty funny because we talk about that after, you know, and we’re like, “Oh, you also like this, oh, you also like that.” It’s a way to connect more with my friend, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay. So I’d now like to move on to talking a bit more about how you use Spotify to stream music. So thinking more about your everyday streaming practices and what you tend to listen to and how you pick that music. So how do you tend to use Spotify to listen to music and what types of music do you usually listen to on there?

Respondent: Okay. Well, in the morning, when I’m waking up, I used to listen to music like when I was getting ready for work, but I don’t do that anymore, but that’s something I used to. Now I listen to the music on my car, on my way to work, so definitely, like in the morning for sure. And then, for the day, I think it’s a bit random, it really depends on my mood or if I have some…I lost the word for what I was trying to say. Some constraint, I guess, some constraint that makes that I can’t listen to music, so it’s a bit random. Sometimes I’m going to listen to music all day, sometimes it’s going to be only in the morning or only in the afternoon, so it really depends, and after I’m listening to Spotify on my car on the way back from work, and after that, at home, I don’t think I listen to Spotify quite a lot. Sometimes if I know that I need to listen to my Release Radar playlist or Discovery Weekly, playlists you know. Because that’s also something I quite like to do, like, on Monday when the Discover Weekly playlist is created again, it is updated. I will always play the playlists from beginning to end to see what new music I will like, and I do the same on Friday when the Release Radar is updating again. So that’s kind of my checkpoints where I always do the same thing on Monday and Friday.

Interviewer: And do you think that you discover quite a bit of new music from Discover Weekly and Release Radar?

[00:51:07]

Respondent: Quite a lot actually, I think Discover Weekly is a bit better than the Release Radar, because sometimes there’s no quite good songs that are releasing so you listen to the playlist and you’re like, “Yeah, everything is not that good.” But the Discover Weekly I think it’s trying to make you listen to all songs that you didn’t know of, like, back from 10 years ago, so there’s like, a lot more songs that it can help you discover. So I really enjoy listening to these playlists because it really gives me some…it’s really different from what I like to listen to usually, you know, because I only listen to one or two playlists in a row, like, I always… It’s always the same songs, so it’s like, “Oh, I know this song, I know this song, I know this song,” and when I listen to the Discover Weekly, it’s always new songs, so it’s always like a fresh hearing of music. So it’s pretty nice.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s interesting then that you actually find a difference between the two of them.

Respondent: Yeah, completely, yeah. It’s really, really different, I think.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, I was going to mention, because obviously observing you for the last week, it did seem that your music listening isn’t continuous, so you’ll listen to some music in the morning, maybe some in the afternoon and then some in the evening and there’s kind of gaps in between. But I guess that’s then because, like you say, there are constraints that don’t allow you to listen to music all the time.

Respondent: Yeah. Exactly.

Interviewer: So, I mean, is there a difference in the music that you then play in the morning, then in the afternoon and then in the evening?

Respondent: I think it doesn’t really matter if it’s the morning, the evening or the afternoon. I think it more depends on my mood, I guess. Like, sometimes if I’m waking up and I’m grumpy, I guess, I guess I’m going to listen to something more chill, more relaxed than my usual playlists. So yeah, I think it really depends more on my mood than the time of the day, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, and so when you use music for mood, are you using it to get you out of a mood or to put you into a certain mood?

Respondent: I think most of the time… Well, actually, that’s a good question. What am I listening to music for? I think a lot of times, it’s to put me in a different mood, like especially before going out, for example. Like, I like to have some party music to put me in the mood of going out, you know, and just shake myself a little bit before going out. And trying to think if I’m using it to get me out of a mood, but I don’t think so actually.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: No, that’s fine. So when then we were talking earlier, you mentioned that you used to use music for waking up and getting ready, but you don’t really do that anymore, is there a reason for that?

Respondent: Well, there used to be a reason because for a short amount of time, I was living with someone else in my apartment, so I couldn’t really use music because that would have woken the person up, you know. So I tried to be more quiet in the morning so I stopped using it. But now, yeah, no, I think it’s kind of like the habit has gone, you know, and so I don’t really…how can I say that, I don’t really…it’s not a reflex any more to take my Spotify and put some music on in the morning, I guess. It used to be a habit and now it’s just gone, but it may come back some day.

[00:55:51]

Interviewer: It’s not a habit at the minute?

Respondent: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: And earlier as well you mentioned that you use music for other purposes, so music to relax, for work, for exercise, does the type of music for those situations change at all or is it very much constant?

Respondent: Well, I know that when I’m working, I’m just listening to playlists I configured, like, my playlists, I guess. When I’m running, I like to put a whole album, you know, so I know exactly when the album is starting and when it’s ending so I can… I use that to help me run better, I guess. And then for my mood, like when I’m just trying to relax or things like that, I’m probably going to use a playlist from Spotify, like I’m going to browse the catalogue from Spotify, I’m going to find, like, a chilled things, you know, and I put a chill playlist or things like that. So that’s kind of three ways I use Spotify differently depending on what I’m doing.

Interviewer: That’s really interesting. I mean, other than what you’ve mentioned previously, are there any other situations or things that you use music for that we’ve not yet discussed?

Respondent: I also like to put on music when I’m doing, like, the chores, like, when I’m cleaning the apartment or washing some dishes, you know. So it kind of helps me do these tasks better because otherwise it would be, like, a huge pain to do that but now with music, it’s better.

Interviewer: And is there a type of music that you listen to when you’re washing the dishes and doing the chores?

Respondent: Well, not particularly, I guess, I just either put my playlist or put something random, it really depends, I guess. But there’s no specific playlist for doing the chores.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. So, I mean, why have you decided to use Spotify as your streaming platform? Is there a reason?

Respondent: Well, sorry?

Interviewer: Is there a reason that you’ve decided to use that one above any other?

Respondent: Well, I guess it was just because it was the…I don’t know. Like, I think the design of the application was more appealing than other ones, like, I know that’s when I was in high school, I think, I used the streaming service Deezer, I don’t know if you know it, yeah?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Okay. And I remember using it and I quit it some time after that just because I wasn’t really fond of music at the time and when I decided to go back to a music streaming service. I remember the Deezer interface was not really beautiful, I guess. And also, like, it was at the time, Spotify was, like, booming I guess, so every other friends were using it; it was really popular I guess. So I think that plus the fact that the interface was pretty nice, made me go to Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay. So have you tried out anything since using Spotify or have you only just used Spotify?

Respondent: No, I think I always stayed with Spotify, well, I don’t know if you can count that but sometimes I’m listening to music on either YouTube or Soundcloud, you know.

[01:00:05]

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: Because some, unfortunately some music or some remixes are sometimes not available on Spotify, but that’s pretty much the only reason I’m switching to something else. But I’d rather have something, well, everything in only one application than going sometimes to one, sometimes to the other, like, I don’t really like to switch like that, you know.

Interviewer: Well, I mean, I’ve never used Soundcloud before, are you…is it a bit like YouTube that you just stream music and it doesn’t save, or is there a way to save music to a library in Soundcloud?

Respondent: Well, I think…I’m not really using Soundcloud as regularly as Spotify or YouTube, I think it’s just kind of the same as YouTube, like, you can save music to some playlists and then listen to your playlists, but the interface is not that great, so I’m only using it when the song is exclusive to Soundcloud, I guess so I can’t find it either on Spotify or YouTube. But it’s definitely not my first nor my second choice.

Interviewer: Okay. And then what about your use of Last.fm, so you mentioned in an email that actually there is quite a lot of kind of history on your Last.fm. How do you use Last.fm for your music listening?

Respondent: Well, I think I discovered Last.fm one or two years ago, I think, and I really liked to the idea to have statistics about your music or maybe anything else, you know, that… And I think that’s pretty…it’s kind of a shame that Spotify doesn’t offer that already, because it’s really great, like, especially at the end of each year, Spotify is kind of doing a playlist of your top songs for the year, and I really loved listening to the old songs that I used to listen to at the time, and I kind of want to know exactly which songs I listened most to and how many times I listened to it, you know. And Spotify doesn’t offer that, so that’s why I created an account on Last.fm.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: And yeah, I really like to see my top tracks for the last month for example so I can say, “Okay I love this song, so now I can try to listen to other music from this artist or ty to create a radio playlist about that song.” So it really helps me this way to see what I really enjoy and to discover new music again.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s really interesting that you use last.fm in that way. And then what about Reddit, because obviously you’re part of the Reddit community; does that shape what you listen to elsewhere or do you just kind of engage on that but it doesn’t really affect your music listening?

Respondent: Well, I guess it can…I’m not sure it’s shaping my music tastes, but I think it helps me sometimes to listen to artists that I didn’t know of or to songs that I wouldn’t have heard otherwise, you know, because it’s a broad Reddit, I guess, so there’s a ton of generals, a ton of discussions, a ton of things like that. So sometimes I like to listen to something and like, “Oh, okay, that’s pretty good,” and I see that people are saying, “This song is pretty nice, you can also listen to this song,” and it’s a way to discover new music more than anything else, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay. And then so, you’ve mentioned a couple of the features on Spotify that you use for listening to music, so Discover Weekly and Release Radar; do you use anything else on there for streaming music?

Respondent: That’s a good question; I don’t really think so, because I don’t really know all of the things Spotify does to help you listen to new music. No, I guess aside from the Release Radar and the Discover Weekly, I guess there’s nothing else that helps me. And the radios, of course.

[01:05:05]

Interviewer: So have you never used then the Daily Mixes?

Respondent: Oh yeah, I forgot about that, thank you. Well, actually, I use it a little bit. I think it’s pretty nice because I think the Daily Mixes are set in a way that, like, you have one Daily Mix for each of your genres that you like, I guess. So I know that I have one mix for electronics, one for pop, one for French things, things like that. And I used to listen to that a little bit, you know, but now it really feels like I don’t really need it anymore or that it’s a bit too much, because when you have six Daily Mixes, sometimes you don’t really know what you want to listen to, so I go back to my produced playlists or to something I want to listen, so…

Interviewer: Okay. And so, the Daily Mixes then, the one that you’ve described as having French things on, what kind of… Because I was interested obviously because you live in France and you are French and I didn’t know if that affected your music listening. And obviously I saw David Guetta on there but didn’t know if you listened to kind of any other traditional French artists or French music.

Respondent: Well, sometimes it might happen, like, it’s a bit tricky because in France like, we don’t have the same…the most popular genres in France are a bit different from what people listen to worldwide, I guess.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: A little bit. So how can I say that…so it’s really rare that I am going to listen to some French songs, sometimes it might happen, but most of the time, I don’t really like that, especially because I’d rather listen to some music with some English lyrics, you know. I don’t know why, but I kind of like better to sing along with English lyrics than French lyrics, I really don’t know why. So I’m not really a big fan of French music, I guess.

Interviewer: No, I was just kind of interested whether it would come up, whether you did listen to any particular French artists.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So this might be a difficult question, but roughly how many tracks/songs would you say you have in your Spotify music library?

Respondent: Can I cheat? Or not?

Interviewer: You can cheat if you want to!

Respondent: I think it should be 2000, I guess, something like that.

Interviewer: And how would you describe those songs in there? Would you say they’re very similar or quite diverse?

Respondent: I think it should be really interesting to listen to the songs I said from the beginning to nowadays, because I really think that you could see the progression of my tastes in music because sometimes I try to shuffle all the songs I’ve saved, just to have a bit of nostalgia, you know. And sometimes I go back to one of the first songs I saved and you can clearly see the difference between before and nowadays, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. And then how do you tend to select the music that you listen to on Spotify?

Respondent: What do you mean exactly?

Interviewer: So when you go on there, do you know what you want to listen to beforehand or do you search for something?

[01:09:22]

Respondent: Well, I think I know what I…well actually, it’s either I know that I want to listen to a specific playlist or I know I want to try something else and I’m going to…I don’t know, launch or start a radio about a song, or start a radio about an artist, things like that. But before launching Spotify, I know if I’m going to listen to some playlist or something completely different.

Interviewer: Okay. So, and then when you’re streaming music, do you tend to stream music on the public setting or on the private setting of Spotify?

Respondent: It’s always on the public settings, yeah. I don’t really mind that much.

Interviewer: So is there a reason then that you’ve decided to have it on public?

Respondent: Well, I guess it was like the default settings, I guess. And then when I asked myself the question, it didn’t really bother me that people could see the thing I’m listening to right now, I guess. It’s just…because at best, it could just, helps friends so that they listen to some kind of music and makes them listen to the music and maybe then going to say, “Oh, that’s pretty nice,” So I guess why not leave it public, yeah.

Interviewer: Have you ever changed it to private at all?

Respondent: I don’t think I did that. For a while I used, there’s like a privacy settings, I think, so it’s for an hour, I don’t really remember, you can listen to whatever you want and it’s not going to appear in the feed, your friend activity feed. I used that when I listen to some songs that I used to listen in high school or before that, that I kind of like but it’s a bit…I wouldn’t want my friends to see that, you know.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. So why then wouldn’t you want your friends to see what you’re listening to when you change it onto private?

Respondent: Because the songs that I listen to when I’m on private, it’s like old songs that are not really… I don’t really…there’s a word for the songs and it’s like, (inaudible 01:12:04) songs or songs that are not really too serious, I don’t know. How can I say this? I don’t really know.

Interviewer: What type of songs, can you give me an example of a song?

Respondent: I guess most of the time it’s going to be French songs that we used to listen to when we were 10 years old or 12 years old ,you know, so I don’t know if there’s, like, something similar for songs worldwide, I guess. But yeah, I don’t know, it’s the French songs that were popular at the time, but now when you look at it with nowadays eyes, it’s just completely bad, you know!

Interviewer: It’s bad but you still enjoy listening to it every now and again.

Respondent: Yeah, but I think everyone likes to listen to the songs but no-one is going to admit it you know.

Interviewer: So in terms then of your music library; how often do you tend to add songs into there?

Respondent: Well, I guess I’m thinking if I listen to a new song, I know I’m going to listen to this song at least one or two times, you know. I’m adding it to my saved songs on my library, yeah.

[01:13:39]

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So yeah, if it’s just a song that I kind of like but you know, it’s just nothing else, I’m just going to pass by it even though I might like it a little bit, but if I know I want to replay the song, I know I have to add it to my library.

Interviewer: Okay. It sounds then like you really carefully think about what you want to add on there and what you don’t?

Respondent: Yeah, kind of, yeah, I only want songs there that I know I like and I know I might like in the future, you know. Because I don’t really want, like, in two years, listening to songs that are…or even in two weeks, have songs that are really bad in there. It’s really, like, it really describes all my tastes in music from the beginning to now, so I want something as sure as possible, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay. No, that makes sense. So what about then removing songs from your library – do you ever remove songs?

Respondent: That’s…I think it might have happened, like, one or two times, because there are songs that I used to, that I added, and when I listened to that today, I was, like, “Why would I add that to the library?” But really I try not to mess with it, like, I try to let it like it is, because in a way, it’s a part of me from before, I guess. So I try to let it like that.

Interviewer: Okay, and how often then do you go back and relive the music that you put on there at the very beginning?

Respondent: I guess it happens once a month or maybe twice a month, something like that. Sometimes when I’m sick of listening to my playlist or when I don’t know what I want to listen to, I just have a go and shuffle my whole library and try to experience something else. Or something I used to experience but not now.

Interviewer: And when you’re experiencing that, like, the music that you put on there at the very beginning, do you still enjoy it as music?

Respondent: Well, some songs I know that I don’t enjoy them as much as before, some songs and it’s the same and there are some songs I really love because I can remember the time, the first time I heard the song, you know. And it brings me back to this day, like it brings me back to another place, another time, you know. And I think music is really strong with that, it really makes you go back in time with just a song. It’s pretty nice, I think.

Interviewer: Okay. So moving on then to playlists, which you’ve mentioned a couple of times while you’ve been talking. So are playlists quite important to you?

Respondent: Well, yeah, pretty much, like, actually, I don’t have a lot of playlists curated by me, made by me, but it’s really the place I kind of always go when I know I want to listen to something that I like, I go to my playlist. So it’s really important, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So why then do you feel that they are important to you?

Respondent: I think because it kind of represents my current tastes, you know. Like, what I enjoy at the time, so it’s important because I can have all the songs that I currently like directly on one place, for example. I don’t have to search for a particular song and then find another song in another place. Everything is organised like I want.

Interviewer: So what type of playlists then do you have?

Respondent: Well, I actually have…my main playlist is the playlist where I put all the new songs I listen to.

[01:18:12]

Interviewer: Okay, so that’s not kind of genre or anything specific; it’s just new songs?

Respondent: For this playlist, yeah, I also have some playlists that are genre-based. But my main playlist is just new songs. I try to put only songs from two months ago that I listened to, so when I see the first song on the playlist that’s been added in two months ago, I try to do a little clean-up and only keep the most recent songs.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: And after that, yeah, I have a playlist of the listen later music, you know, like a bit like in YouTube, like if I know there’s an album I want to listen but I don’t have the time right now, I’m putting everything in this playlist. It’s also the case when I’m discovering a new artist, I put the 10 most played songs from the artist and put them in this playlist. And after that, I have…well, I have some playlists for depending on my mood or for example, I have some summer playlists, you know. Like, it’s the kind of songs I like to play when I’m in my car, when it’s hot outside, like, I have sunglasses, I have everything and it really feels pretty nice.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And then I have a playlist with all my best music that I know I will always love them, you know, even three years from now. And then I have some playlists from Spotify that I saved also, that are not really my playlists, but I like to have in my library. So yeah, I think that’s pretty much it.

Interviewer: Okay, you have a fair few then that you’ve curated yourself?

Respondent: Yeah, I have, I don’t really have a lot because I kind of always like…my main playlist where I put all the songs I like right now, it’s not really based on the genres of the music, so I can put basically everything in it, so that’s why I only have one playlist, I could separate it in more things depending on if it’s electronic or pop, but I like to put everything in the same place. And yeah, after that I just listen to Spotify’s best playlists.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, I mean, I’m interested in particular in the one that you say that is like a ‘listen to later’ and then the other one that is the top 10 most played songs of an artist. So I mean, what then makes you want to put music in something that you know, if kind of for listening to later?

Respondent: Well, it’s actually like, for example, if I hear a song from an artist that I really enjoy and I’m, like, “Wow, I really need to check out this artist because it might really interest me,” so I’m going at the page of the artist and sometimes, you know, I don’t have the time to listen to everything or I just don’t feel like listening to this right now, so in order for me to remember to check out this artist, I just put the most played songs from him or just his album or his two last albums, for example, I put everything in the *[playlist name]* so sometimes when I don’t know what to listen, I go to this playlist and I’m listening to what I should listen, I guess. Sometimes the playlist is completely empty, sometimes there’s like a hundred songs or (inaudible 01:22:33).

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So then it’s not a ‘listen to later’ based on one artist, it’s literally you put everything in there that you’ve just not had a chance to listen to?

Respondent: Yeah, exactly. It’s just like a…it’s a bit of a mess sometimes. But I put everything in there, you know, it’s a bit like in YouTube, like you have this little icon where you click on it and it goes to your Watch Later playlists, I guess. So Spotify doesn’t have that, so I did it myself in a way. So that’s how I get it.

[01:23:07]

Interviewer: And then what happens when you have listened to it?

Respondent: Well, when I listen to it, it’s either I like it and I put it in my playlists, my current playlist, I guess, or I don’t really like it and I remove the song from the playlist and I move on to the next song. Sometimes I don’t really know if I like it so I let it there for a while and I try to go back to the song a bit later. So yeah but most of the time it’s either I like it and I keep it or I remove it from the playlists.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, I mean, because you mentioned it in your main playlist of new songs you kind of keep them in there for around two months…

Respondent: Yes, something like that.

Interviewer: …and then you try and update it. In your *[playlist name],* is there a kind of a timeframe where if you’ve not listened to it, it gets automatic…you then delete it anyway, or can it be in there for years and years and you know, you’ve still not got round to it?

Respondent: No, it can…the music there can stay whatever, how long it takes, you know. It just, sometimes it just depends on when I have the time or when I want to listen to this playlist, but it could stay there for two years, I really don’t mind. I try to keep it as empty as possible, I really try to sometimes force myself to listen to the playlist to clean it a little bit, but if it stays really long, I don’t really mind at all.

Interviewer: Okay. And do you feel your playlists are for kind of particular times of the day or particular events, or is it just you listen to whatever you feel like?

Respondent: About *[playlist name]*?

Interviewer: Well, about any of your playlists.

Respondent: Oh any, okay. Well, it really depends on either my mood or if there’s an event, for example. Like, if it’s for a party or chilling outside on a day of summer for example, or something else, I don’t know. It really depends on the events I’m doing. But most of the times, I’m trying to listen to my main playlist, I guess. And I think that’s about it, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s great, thank you for that. So in terms of discovering new music, are you a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: Yeah, truly, I really like it because sometimes it happens very rarely, but sometimes you listen to a song and you automatically love the song and it’s almost like you fall in love with the song, you know you like it, you will like it forever, like, it’s amazing. So I really like to have this kind of emotions, you know, when you listen to music and it’s like you discovered something crazy, you know. So in order to get that, you obviously have to listen to a lot of songs, but yeah, I kind of like the process of listening and discovering new music.

Interviewer: And when you discover new music, is there always this emotional connection you have to it, or does it depend on the song?

Respondent: Well, it really depends on the song. Sometimes I’m listening to some music and I’m like, “Well, it’s not that good,” so I skip it. Sometimes, “Ah, yeah, that’s pretty good, okay,” but it’s really rare when I listen to a song and it’s an insta-like, it’s just too good to be true, you know. It happens really rarely but when it happens, I know it and I’m happy I continue to discover new music.

[01:27:24]

Interviewer: Okay. And so what kind of music then do you like to discover?

Respondent: Well, I guess it’s music from the genre I liked, so it’s mostly EDMs. Sometimes it might be something a little more pop or a little more chill, I guess, I don’t know. But I think mostly it’s electronic music, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, Have you ever discovered anything that’s really widely outside of your preferences and you’ve actually really loved it?

Respondent: Well one time, yeah, I actually loved a rap song, and it was pretty crazy, because I usually don’t like this sort of music, but this time it was, you know, I couldn’t control myself from loving the song, you know, I just loved the song and that was about it. But I think it’s happened, like, once, maybe twice. It’s not common at all.

Interviewer: Okay. And do you remember what the song was then?

Respondent: Yeah, actually, it’s a song from a French artist, a French rapper, a French R&B guy, I guess. So I could give you the name of the song if you want maybe?

Interviewer: Yeah, tell me what it was?

Respondent: Well actually, it’s a French song, so the title is in French, so I don’t know if that’s…

Interviewer: You’re testing my French now!

Respondent: Yeah. So well, the artist’s name was Vald, so it’s V.A.L.D and the name of the song was Désaccordé. It’s like…how can I say this? It’s like…I guess it’s kind of ‘out of tune’, you know.

Interviewer: So it would be discord? That like out of tune?

Respondent: Yeah, kind of, yeah, I guess. Like it’s something that is not harmonious, it’s like, out of tune, I guess it is, yeah.

Interviewer: And so what was it about that song that you really enjoyed out of not liking the rap genre in general?

Respondent: I think it was the melody, the beats of the songs. I don’t know, I think it’s…how can I say this? I think it just…I liked the rhythm of the song, the beat of the song, like it was pretty nice, you know. So yeah, I just kind of liked it.

Interviewer: That’s interesting, obviously that it was very different to what you usually listen to.

Respondent: Yeah, completely. It’s like you…if you look at the top 12 from all time, I know I have all electronic things and you have this at the end right now, it’s sitting there, it’s pretty crazy, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. And so how then do you tend to discover new music?

Respondent: How often?

Interviewer: How do you?

Respondent: Oh, okay. Well, I actually have two main sources from listening to new music, so obviously Spotify, with the Discover Weekly playlist and the radios. And also I follow a lot of YouTube channels that are releasing a lot of songs, so I think it’s like one or two songs a day for each channel, so I try to listen there quickly to the new songs that they are releasing and yeah, if I like the song, I search it on Spotify and I add it to my playlist.

[01:31:36]

Interviewer: Okay. So would you say then you discover music mostly through online sources?

Respondent: Yeah, definitely, yeah. Definitely.

Interviewer: Okay, so do you feel then that Spotify is a good platform for helping you to find new music?

Respondent: Yes, definitely. I think it’s my main source of music discovery, I think, yeah. I think what is really great about Spotify is that the more you listen to songs on it, the more it knows about yourself and it can propose you more, better songs, I guess. Songs you will probably love. So yeah, I think it’s better in quality, Spotify, yeah.

Interviewer: So you feel then that the recommendations it gives you have got better over time then?

Respondent: Yeah, definitely. Completely.

Interviewer: Okay, so do you feel then that Spotify allows her to construct and manage your music tastes quite well.

Respondent: Could you repeat the question please?

Interviewer: So do you feel that Spotify allows you to construct and manage your music taste? So does it allow you to organise music in the way that’s useful for you?

Respondent: Yeah, definitely, like, you have some…I can create some playlists in Spotify and what’s also great is that you can create folders, I guess, so if I like a lot of electronic playlists, I can put them all in a folder called *[folder name],* you know. So this way, when you want to listen to songs related to a mood or to a genre, you can search that really easily, I guess. So for that, it’s pretty great, yeah.

Interviewer: And what do you think about Spotify’s interface?

Respondent: Well, I think it’s pretty nice. There are some things that I don’t really like, I guess sometimes it’s a bit too cluttered, I guess, especially on the left, like, on the desktop version at least. There’s a lot of things and sometimes you don’t even know where you currently are. But for the most part, I think I kind of like it, like, there’s one thing I don’t really like about it, it’s that you can’t really… If you are on an artist’s page for example, you can’t search for a particular song in the page, like you have to go to the main search bar and to look it up globally I guess. So there’s that and there’s also the fact that I think you can’t see the release dates of the songs and the albums, like, you only have the year of the song, but not the month or the day. I think it’s a bit…because sometimes you like a song and you really want to know when it was released or if it was released at the same time as another song or another remix. Or sometimes I would like to have this info and you don’t have it so it’s pretty…it’s a shame, a bit, I think.

Interviewer: Yeah, I hadn’t noticed that, but yeah, that is a good point, they don’t have that kind of information for each song and album.

Respondent: They only have it for the latest release of the artist for example, so if you go to an artist, you have the latest release and you have the exact date, but then it completely disappears so it’s a bit too bad.

Interviewer: Yeah, it’s annoying.

[01:35:55]

Respondent: Yeah, and also, you can’t…something I like to do, for example on YouTube, Like, if you go to a channel, you can sort the videos from the channel, from the most popular to the least popular, you know. So you have the video with the most views first. And sometimes Spotify does that on the artist page, but sometimes it only shows the songs from the latest album of the artist, so you can’t really see which song is the most popular, so it’s a bit tricky sometimes to get this information.

Interviewer: Okay, and what about then things that you really like; is there anything you really like about the interface?

Respondent: Yeah, I guess… I guess, I guess, I guess… I like the fact that you…the way you can save a song, I think it’s really easy to do that, like, you just click save and it’s saved, you don’t have to worry about it. And it’s synchronised pretty great across devices, so that’s pretty nice. I also like the art style of the playlists Spotify is creating, you know. Like the top hits from today for example, I don’t know how they call that, “Today’s Top Hits,” the art style is pretty nice I think. So I kind of like that, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. I mean do you feel that its interface influences your music choices when you’re on there?

Respondent: Well, I guess a little bit, like, for example, there’s this music sometimes where I clicked on a playlist based on the cover, you know, for example, so there’s definitely that. After…but after, I don’t think it’s really influenced my choices that much, I guess. So yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you ever foresee in the future there being a time or a reason that you would stop using Spotify?

Respondent: That’s a good question, actually. I think maybe I would stop using Spotify if…maybe if there would be, like, another service – another streaming service that would be, like, with more contents, you know, I guess. Like with all the songs you want., because in Spotify you don’t sometimes have the…you don’t have, like, unofficial songs, you know, like sometimes there is a song that I really like and there’s someone who’s doing a remix about it, and obviously it can’t go on Spotify because it’s not really legal, I guess. So you can’t find that on Spotify, so if there would be a streaming service with all that, like, all the music from everywhere, I might switch to that. Also if I could get all my music from Spotify to the new streaming services, because I don’t want to lose my playlist, my songs and everything.

Interviewer: Well obviously you’ve had Spotify a long time, so there’d be a lot on there to kind of lose, potentially.

Respondent: Yeah, exactly that, that’s the thing that I’m a bit afraid of, you know, losing everything you had on there.

Interviewer: I mean, when you’re on Spotify and using Spotify, how aware are you of Spotify collecting data about your music listening?

Respondent: How aware am I?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, do you kind of…are you kind of aware that that is happening?

Respondent: Oh yeah, definitely yeah, I’m pretty sure they are tracking every single thing I’m doing. Even when I’m clicking on a playlist, even if I don’t play any songs, I think they are thinking, “Oh, he went to this playlist, so it might interest him,” I think they are gathering a lot of data about me, about everyone, I guess.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: To be fair, I don’t really mind because I don’t really see how that would impact me in a negative way, you know. Maybe I’m wrong, of course, but I think, you know, I really don’t think it’s harmful, I guess.

[01:40:47]

Interviewer: Okay, yeah, that makes sense. I mean, like you said, we obviously don’t know what kind of stuff they are tracking and exactly how they’re using it, but we kind of assume that it might be used to produce the recommendations that then it’s giving to you as an individual.

Respondent: Yeah, and…sorry.

Interviewer: No, you carry on, carry on.

Respondent: What I wanted to say, like, it might track everything also to target better ads at you, but since I’m using the premium version, like, I don’t have any ads, so I don’t see how they could sell my data to some ad services, because I pay for the services, for the premium, so yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, that’s one of the joys of premium, not having all the ads interrupting your music.

Respondent: Yeah exactly, exactly it could be really obnoxious sometimes, yeah.

Interviewer: But I mean, if it’s using it for the recommendations, do you think then the recommendations it’s giving to you are accurate for your tastes?

Respondent: Yeah, I think, well, the first few weeks or the first few months I used it, it was a bit like the algorithm didn’t really know who I was, you know. So it was a bit random sometimes. But yeah, I think definitely the fact that it’s tracking all the tracks I’m listening to, it can really help me discover new music based on me, you know. So if they have to track my every move to give me some new music, well, I don’t mind.

Interviewer: You’re quite happy about that.

Respondent: Yeah, exactly. As long as they don’t do anything else, it’s fine.

Interviewer: Yes, just give you good music, that’s fine.

Respondent: Exactly, exactly.

Interviewer: I mean, in terms of the recommendations, would you prefer more similarity than what you’re getting or more diversity or are you happy with the way it is?

Respondent: Well, I guess sometimes I like the fact that, especially in the Discover Weekly, it gives me some music that are really similar to what I’m listening to and sometimes, like one or two songs, it’s completely different, like, it’s still electronic most of the time, but in another sub-genre, I guess, something a bit more obscure. And sometimes I hate it and I can…there is…they added a button so you can say, “I don’t really like this song,” so that they know you don’t really like this kind of song. So that’s also pretty nice. But sometimes, yeah, it makes you discover a completely new style of music, and I think it’s also great because you’re not staying in your comfort zone, in a way, like in your area that you already like. It helps you discover something out of your music tastes, like, something you might not know you will like, you know.

Interviewer: I mean, so was the Vald song that you liked, was that recommended to you from Spotify or did that come from elsewhere?

Respondent: No, that did come from elsewhere actually.

[01:44:28]

Interviewer: Oh, okay, okay.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. I was just going to say because it would be interesting then if something like that appeared in your Discover Weekly.

Respondent: Yeah, definitely, definitely. But I think most of the time, yeah, Spotify is recommending you, like songs with the genre that you like the most, I guess, so I know it sometimes it can a bit go out of track of what you like, but never to extremes, I guess.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, that’s great. Well, my final question to ask is obviously now you’ve been through all three phases of my study, so you’ve done the online survey, the week’s online observation and today you’ve done the interview. I was just kind of wondering whether that, going through that has caused you to change or reflect on any of your Spotify practices?

Respondent: I don’t think it’s changed my Spotify practices, but definitely makes me, like, wonder, you know, like if music was really reflecting who I am, you know. So I asked myself this question, like, I am really the music I listen to, is it really who I am, you know. And in a way, that’s…it kind of, yeah, it can make me think about that a little bit, so…

Interviewer: And what was the conclusion that you’ve drawn from that or are you still thinking and reflecting on it?

Respondent: I think I went to the conclusion that indeed, it’s a bit who I am, you know. Like, I really think it’s… I think I shaped my music tastes and then now my music taste is kind of shaping who I am, you know, it’s like a reverse flow, you know, Like I think, just based on the songs that I like, you could, like, create a portrait of who I am, you know, like only based on that.

Interviewer: That’s really interesting of you to say.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, no, that’s great. So that’s all from me, so I mean, is there anything that you wanted to touch upon or talk about that we’ve not yet talked about?

Respondent: No, I think that’s about it, I think. So yeah.

Interviewer: Well, I mean, thank you so, so much for being part of my research. I mean, for obviously doing the online observation and the survey and then taking time out of your Saturday to speak to me, I really appreciate it and it’s been so, so interesting listening to what you have to say.

Respondent: Well, thank you for doing a thesis on something so interesting actually, it’s pretty nice. I can’t wait to read what your conclusion on the subject.

Interviewer: Yeah, but it’s always nice to hear that other people find it interesting, because often when you’re doing this yourself, you’re in, like how you described earlier, a “music bubble,” you’re in this little research bubble and you actually don’t know whether anybody else will find it interesting or not!

Respondent: Yeah. But it is really nice that you had, like, 500 responses from your…

[01:48:21]

Interviewer: And thank you for…your English is far, far better than my French ever would have been in an interview, so thank you for that.

Respondent: Thank you, I was a bit scared at first, because I was like, “Man if I don’t understand what she’s going to say or if I don’t fully know how to speak, it will be a bit embarrassing.”

Interviewer: Oh no, honestly, it was perfect, absolutely perfect. And obviously with my accent as well, it was great.

Respondent: You have quite a bit of an accent, that’s true, yes.

Interviewer: Yeah, I do, yeah. But no, thank you so much and I’ll now let you get on with your Saturday in peace.

Respondent: Yeah, thank you very much, thank you.

Interviewer: No problem, thank you, I’ll speak to you soon.

Respondent: Nice, see you.

Interviewer: Bye!

Respondent: Bye.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-18-M

[0:00:00]

Respondent: Hello?

Interviewer: Hello, can you hear me?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Hi.

Respondent: Good morning.

Interviewer: Hi, nice to meet you. Well thank you for taking time out of your morning to speak to me, I really appreciate it.

Respondent: Certainly.

Interviewer: So the way it’ll work today is the interview will last about an hour. But it kind of depends on the responses that you give me and how much you wish to elaborate on questions that I have for you. So some of the questions are general questions that I’ve asked everybody, and some of them are more specific based on what I’ve observed in your streaming activity for the last week. So yeah, so while you’re responding to the questions, I might just write a couple of notes down, I’ve got a notepad by the side of my laptop. That’s just basically if I haven’t understood something or maybe would like you to elaborate more on it or just reminders for me. So I might just do that while you’re speaking. I’ve also got a little audio recorder just by the side of my laptop so that’s just recording the audio from the interview so then I can obviously use it in my research. But I think that’s everything. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Respondent: No. Not at this point no.

Interviewer: Okay, well, if any crop up during the interview or at the end, by all means feel free to ask, that’s no problem at all.

Respondent: Cool.

Interviewer: Okay. So let’s get started then.

Respondent: Alright.

Interviewer: So firstly, I would like to know whether and how you feel music relates to your identity. So how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: Yeah, I definitely think music is important to my identity. On top of my full-time job – I’m a marketing person, you know, sending emails and playing in Photoshop, things like that – but my side job and my schooling, I guess, I’m a DJ. So my degree is radio and television production, I wanted to get into radio, be a radio broadcaster, because music really has an impact on my moods, you know, it can cheer me up, it can shift my mood one way or the other, and so that’s why I wanted to get into radio and then didn’t end up pursuing a radio career, but still wanted to play music for people and for their moods, and so that’s when I got into DJing, so now I’m a wedding DJ, I’m a DJ, like, corporate events and parties, things like that. So I think your question was, you know, how does music relate to my identity, you know, I don’t necessarily define myself by the artists or the songs that I’m listening to but by the fact that I do consume and really enjoy a lot of music. I pretty much always have a song in my head or music playing at home, at work, there’s almost always something keeping me company, if you will.

[00:03:52]

Interviewer: Okay. That’s really interesting then, that obviously you’ve got a job that involves music as well. Do you feel that your tastes and who you are as a DJ kind of interlink or is the DJ side more catered to other people’s tastes than perhaps to yours?

Respondent: There is some overlap between what I would listen to on my own and what I would play. But for the most part, because I’m working with the clients and the clients have specifically, you know, either given me songs or given me an indication of what they like to hear; that’s typically where I try to play it, I’m not trying to show off, you know, “Here’s a band that I’m into,” or, you know, “I just discovered this new album,” or whatever. There’s a little bit of that but it’s like, you know, “You’ve told me you like X and how can I expand beyond X that’s still going to be something that you guys like and enjoy and dance and part to and have fun with,” but you know, I’m not going to try to go way leftfield, I just want to, within the realms of their approachability and enjoyment, I want to try to expand on what they’ve given me in terms of their requests and what they want to hear.

Interviewer: Do you feel then in some sense that you’re almost performing the role that Spotify has perhaps in your life?

Respondent: Oh yeah. Yeah, for sure. And Spotify is a great, you know, teammate and asset if you will, in terms of research and discovering new music for me. I think you really hit the nail on the head, Spotify will throw a thousand songs at me and then I’ll filter that out and say, “Okay, you know, here’s 10 that I might take to this event or that event and use in some activity that I have coming up.” So yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, what role has music got for you?

Respondent: Music has a couple of roles. I mentioned that it really impacts my mood, it helps me either focus or concentrate on work, it helps give me energy in the mornings or at home, it can help sort of boost my mood if I’m in…if I’m feeling grumpy or just crappy from whatever – it can shift that around. And certainly has an impact on nostalgia. You know, taking me back to certain times or memories or points in my life where maybe I first heard that song or that artists or was listening to that a lot. I’m instantly transported back to that time when I hear some of those artists. You know, I tell my wedding couples all the time, like, I graduated high school in the year 2000, Nelly was super-big at that time. I don’t listen to Nelly, I don’t own any Nelly CDs, but if I hear a Nelly song, I’m immediately taken back to 2000s and sort of that era, hanging out with friends, you know, Nelly was just on the radio, he was on at parties, etc. So I hear a Nelly song and I’m instantly, like, “Oh, okay, this is what it's like to be 18 again and to be relatively carefree and all that.” So you know, like I say, the nostalgia is another big part of what music does for me.

Interviewer: Okay, so, I mean, when you use music then for mood, do you kind of have specific go-to music for that?

Respondent: Um, yeah, depending on where I’m trying to go with my mood, there’s…. When I was in college, I had a hard rock-themed radio show, so we were playing metal and fairly aggressive music. High energy, loud, quick tempo, so if I really need a good boost of energy, if I want to get kind of aggressive or kind of energised, that’s a place I’ll go. Bands like Killswitch Engage and Avenged Sevenfold and Nonpoint, Slipknot, that kind of thing. Around now, at home I have a newborn, so he’s keeping me up at night and we’re tired a lot, my wife and I, so I have a couple of good morning sort of wake-up playlists that are, like, mid-tempo but positive, like, Stevie Wonder, it’s Al Green, Sharon Jones, a lot of soul music. And that’s generally what I’m listening to a lot these days is just soul, but then particularly, you know, I’ve chosen a couple of those songs, the soul songs that are mid-tempo to kind of, you know, just you start to move a little bit, you start to feel that music in your body, and that physicality, for me, helps just kind of get my blood flowing, get my day started, get the day and my mood and my energy moving, where it otherwise would…or rather wouldn’t. If my wife drinks coffee, I’m not a coffee drinker, but I’ll listen to a good playlist and get some good music on and that tends to be sort of my coffee.

[00:09:49]

Interviewer: Okay. That’s really interesting. So I mean, have you ever used music as a way to represent who you are to somebody else at any point in your life?

Respondent: Yeah, you know, I mentioned my wife, that I’m married, and I’ve given her…we’ve sort of given each other back and forth, some mix tapes and playlists of songs that either speak to a moment in our relationship or speak to our tastes, like, “I’m into this and I want to share it with you.” Or, “Here’s a band I like and a sort of romantic-y song, and so…” It’s a mix of both worlds, “It’s appropriate for you, my wife, and also something that I like and I’m going to slowly introduce you to it or expose you to it through these one or two songs.”

Interviewer: And so are you kind of then taking into account your wife’s tastes when you’re picking what music to share with her?

Respondent: Yeah, absolutely. You know, if it were…because obviously if it were a friend, it would be totally different entirely, but let’s pretend it was another ex-girlfriend or something that had different tastes; the playlist would absolutely be different again still. Even if I was trying to communicate sort of the same…you know, ‘love you’ feelings, or romantic or whatever, their tastes are absolutely a factor, because you want it to be approachable and enjoyable for them. You’re not just trying to force something on someone or potentially turn them off or scare them off or have the opposite of the intended effect.

Interviewer: And so aside then from your wife, have you actually shared music with friends, for example?

Respondent: Yeah, not…I’m trying to think if I’ve done any playlists like that. I don’t think I have. I’ve mostly been sharing, like, an artist through Spotify, share an artist page or share an album or even the “This is…” sort of artist collection of playlists that they have on Spotify. I may share those because it’s just sort of a really good introduction or all-encompassing sample of that artist. Like, “Here, it’s already sort of tailored down, check this out and get a feel for the artist and for their sort of overall sound.”

Interviewer: Okay, and are you kind of conscious when you’re sharing or using that music to reflect who you are to others, or is it something that doesn’t particularly bother you?

Respondent: How do you mean? Like, am I sensitive to their response?

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: I always want them to…my hope when I’m sharing something like that is that they’re going to love it. You know, they’re going to be over the moon and be excited and, “Oh yes, this is great, I love it, and this is my new favourite thing.” That’s the perfect outcome. But 99% of the time, that’s not the outcome.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Respondent: They might acknowledge, they might listen, they might say, “Oh, you know, it’s cool, I like it.” But music is so personal that rarely do you spontaneously get introduced to something that is just absolutely perfect and you fall in love with. So I’m aware of that going in, that I’m probably not going to get the perfect outcome, but it’s fine. You know, someone else’s enjoyment or lack or, or whatever, doesn’t take away from my ability to listen. I can still enjoy whatever it is and I’m trying to share it in the hope that they’re also going to enjoy it and they’ll also get some pleasure out of it. But if they don’t, if they want to go in a different direction, that’s fine too. Ultimately, I just want…I know how important music is for me and I want other people to find enjoyment through music, whether that’s stuff that I’m playing for them or introducing them to or things that they’ve found on their own, that’s fine.

[00:14:26]

Interviewer: Okay. So broadly then, how would you describe your musical taste?

Respondent: In terms of like what artists or genres that I’m into?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, in terms of either genres, artists, sounds of music that appeal to you?

Respondent: Sure. I would say I’m…right now I’m really on a big soul kick and that’s probably been over the last five years or so. Prior to that it was a lot of indie artists, especially female vocals. And then prior to that, it was probably almost entirely metal, hard-rock metal. You know, in college and, like, high school and college, my musical tastes were really aggressive, I was a typical suburban teenager that, like, my life was not hard, but somehow I thought it was and so I had a cathartic release through this aggressive music. Now, 15 years later, I’m like, “You’re an idiot, you didn’t realise how easy life was for you, how blessed you were,” but it’s fine. It’s like, that’s what teenagers do, they think the world’s out to get them and so, you know, I released some of that tension or frustration by listening to music. But now, today, between being married, I have two kids, I’m way more mellow, I’m a little bit more relaxed, so I’m listening to music that is also more relaxed. And I’m exposed to more relaxed music – obviously at weddings and things, you’re not paying very much metal.

Interviewer: Well, you never know, depends what type of wedding, I imagine!

Respondent: This is true. Occasionally I do get a couple that want something a little aggressive, we get a mosh pit going. But for the most part, it’s fairly safe, calm, you know, energetic but a different type of energy.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. .Okay, Well, I mean, going from the heavy metal aggressive side to then the indie music with female singers and then the soul, that’s quite different music really and how it’s changed. Do you feel that there is a particular reason for that change in your music taste?

Respondent: Yeah, I think my wife has been a big factor in that. And it’s weird, because it’s not that she’s introducing me to these artists, or, like, I’m not integrating her tastes in that description. She listens to pop music, boybands, you know, really kind of heavily-produced, late 2000….2000s pop, Hanson and Jonas Brothers, and Backstreet Boys and that kind of just very, very produced pop music. So there’s not overlap in what I’ve just told you that I listen to. But it’s sort of that maybe it’s that middle ground between my aggressive…the metal and the soul, or rather… let’s try that again. The middle ground between the metal and pop is perhaps soul music or indie. It’s still guitars and still a band playing but different tempos and different instrumentations and obviously a different message, lyrical content. So she’s…I think she’s just pulled me from one end of the spectrum towards the other end, but it’s not that I’m necessarily just building on her tastes or fully integrating her tastes, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes perfect sense, definitely. So then what is it about soul right now that’s attracting you to it?

Respondent: That’s a great question. You know, lyrical content is part of it, that it’s just more relatable to current…you know, my stage in life. I’m thinking of, like, Leon Bridges and Sharon Jones. And Leon Bridges is writing a lot of love songs and he’s just kind of sweet vocals, which is sort of where I’m at. He’s a little slower tempo, that’s where I’m at in life, you know, when I’m listening to music, it’s when I’m at work doing something, or maybe at home cooking or hanging with my kids, so those are slower tempo kind of times. So it just feels more appropriate or sort of fits nicely with whatever it is that I’m doing in my life, it just meshes in sort of naturally. And so I think that’s…I’m trying to think of how I got exposed to some of the artists in the first place but now that they’re here, it’s just like that’s felt more comfortable. Like a nice fitting pair of shoes or something, and you’re just like, “Okay, yeah, this is good, I’m just going to stick with this and find more that gives me sort of the same feeling or the same vibe.”

[00:20:22]

Interviewer: Okay. And do you ever go back and kind of revisit the heavy metal and the indie music, or is that very much in your past now?

Respondent: No, for sure, I do go back and I’ll listen nostalgically, but I…metal in particular, I go back and listen to the artists and the albums from the time that I was listening, not necessarily their new releases. You know, so, like, Slipknot for example continues to release albums, they’ve put out an album every three or four years, I’ve given those new albums one or two listens just to check it out, “Yeah, no, I’m good,” but I’ll go back and listen to their first two or three albums and love it because it’s so familiar, it’s comfortable, it has sort of a known… I remember the albums; I remember everything else I was doing when I was listening to those albums. I remember playing them in the dorms, you know, and talking to other kids in college about Slipknot and going to Slipknot shows, and it was just… They were related to the rest of my life, so I still get some of that memory and the nostalgia back when I listen to those albums from that time.

Interviewer: Okay. And then what about then music dislikes; have you got any kind of artists, genres, style of music that you really would never listen to?

Respondent: I don’t love rap, especially the sort of a mumble rap thing going on right now that’s not my style. And it, you know, being a DJ, there are times when you have to play music that you aren’t into or straight up don’t like, and so I have some of those requests that I have clients that, you know, “Hey, we want to hear Travis Scott or…what’s the other dude…Sheck Wes,” you know, “We want to hear Mo Bamba” or whatever, and like, I’m not into it, I wouldn’t kind of listen to it on my own, but the client wants to hear it, the guests want to hear it, fine, you know, I’ll play it and they can enjoy and that’s okay. But the only times I’m going to be listening to it on my own is for research, is for event prep and sort of trying to stay prepared and stay aware of what’s current. There’s never a time when I’m like, “Ah, let me relax with some good old Travis Scott,” and you know, just put on the current whatever, I think Spotify calls it the “Rap Caviar” playlist. I will listen to it again for research, but I would never, ever listen to it for personal pleasure.

Interviewer: Is it just the mumbly lyrics that you dislike about the genre or is it something else that doesn’t appeal to you?

Respondent: It’s probably a little of everything. You know, it’s the lyrics, it’s the tempo, especially the current rap is, like, really, really low tempo, it’s like 65-75bpm, it’s just… I don’t get it, you know, and it’s just funny because that’s how I know I’m getting old, because I’m like, “Oh, okay, current music that young people are into…” it’s not that I don’t enjoy it or, like, “Okay, I understand why other people do,” I don’t understand why people enjoy it, it’s just so leftfield and so different to me, that I’m like, you know, “These young kids listen to their crazy slow rap,” I don’t know what’s going on, I don’t understand any of it. And so, like I said, that’s my awareness of, “Oh yeah, I’m not the target audience anymore for music and for new artists.”

Interviewer: Yeah, I’m probably with you on that, don’t worry! So looking at your Scrobble logs from last week, the artists that you seem to stream the most was Haley Reinhart?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So she was the most streamed and then the second was Longbeach Dub Allstars. Now, I’ve not heard of either of those two, so would you be able to kind of explain to me what their sound is?

[00:25:04]

Respondent: Sure, so Haley Reinhart is…she was an American Idol contestant and she has sort of an old-school soul tonality to her voice, and so her music goes right along with that. In fact, the reason why I was listening to her last week, she just released a new album called ‘Lo-Fi Soul’ and so she just sort of embodies that 60s soul sound, but it’s current, you know, it’s new music now. Her voice and her music just kind of feels warm and comforting, you know, it’s like… I don’t know if you’re a drinker, but you know, a nice bourbon or a scotch, you just feel the warmth from it. It’s sort of that feeling. It’s just a little bit comforting and again, sort of mid/low tempo, you just feel relaxed, you sort of melt the tension off of you. And then Longbeach Dub Allstars, are, if you’re familiar with the band Sublime?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: Back in the 90s, well, they were, like, California-punk, touched a little bit on punk, touched a little bit on ska, their singer died of a drug overdose and then the rest of the band grabbed up some other singers and they have…they’ve created a new band, that’s Longbeach Dub Allstars, so there’s a different vocalist on each song. And they’re…so listening to that is a combination of nostalgia, because the album was released in, I believe, like, 1998/’99, so that was, for me, that was prime high-school/college years, and it’s also sort of a warm beachy California sound. So I’m in Chicago in the US, and it’s…we’re right at the end of winter and spring is just barely starting warm, so we’ve melted off all of our snow, but we’re not yet to having the sunny days and grass growing. But we had a couple of 50° days, which is like, you don’t have to wear a coat, but it’s still kind of cold. So for me, Sublime/Longbeach Dub Allstars is perfect for that, it just, like, I’m trying to call out the sun with music. You know, it’s great for driving the car, put the windows down, feel the wind through your hair, but like, pretend that it’s summer and pretend that you’re at the beach, even though you’re really not. And I put on Longbeach and my son was in the room with me and he goes, “Dad, is this beach music?” And I was like, “Yeah, yeah, kind of, kind of.” And he goes, “I feel like swimming.” And I was like, “Exactly, I feel like swimming, like, I’m just going to force that summertime feeling onto us, even though it’s 40° and we’re stuck in the house because it’s raining and gross and muddy outside.” We can pretend that it’s sunny and summertime by what we’re listening to.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. And so , I mean, if I then looked at your streaming in another week, do you feel that Haley and Longbeach would feature in another week’s streaming or do you just feel that they’re particular to now, to last week?

Respondent: Haley Reinhart could go either way, because she’s got the new album out, that’s why I was listening to her, you know, I just really wanted to hear the new album. But I only listened to it, I think, once, so it’s sort of too early to really have an opinion, “Do I want to go back and listen more or not?” Longbeach Dub Allstars…I listened to them again, I guess it was Saturday, Saturday or Sunday, I was holding my infant son and we were just sort of relaxing, I was trying to get him to take a nap, so it’s, again, kind of quiet, kind of mellow hang-out music. So I was holding him and singing along and trying to calm him down. So for next week, when it’s actually going to be decent weather and sunny and my son will be in a different place, probably won’t hear Longbeach Dub Allstars again as my top artist, it will probably shift to something else.

Interviewer: Okay. And then talking a bit more about your music tastes, would you say they’re quite similar to your friendship groups that you have? I mean, you’ve mentioned that they’re not quite in keeping with your wife’s tastes, but do you have friends with similar tastes as yours?

Respondent: I have friends where I overlap with a couple of artists and bits of our tastes, but I tend to be the outlier. I listen to a lot more music than I think most of my friends, both naturally just I like music and I want to listen to it and then obviously because of the DJing side of things. I’m researching and sort of continuing to build my personal libraries and my professional library to stay on top of what’s current, what people are into etc. So I think a lot of my friends will stick with what they have known and have loved whereas I perceive myself as staying a little bit more aware of what’s current and sort of up and coming.

[00:31:12]

Interviewer: Okay. And then what about…do you have friends on Spotify at all?

Respondent: Yeah. I do, I have a couple of actual friends, like, people that I know. And then people that I have just started following because they have an interesting playlist or there was a suggestion through Reddit and I sort of found their profile through there and was like, “Oh, cool, okay.” And there’s a couple of celebrities – I use the term loosely – but people with a public profile, you know, there’s, like, one reporter from NPR, like, he was talking about his musical tastes and I was like, “Oh, okay, this is cool,” and I found his profile on Spotify and I started following him. And so I have used that as sort of an introduction or a way to get more exposure to music and artists and stuff that I wouldn’t necessarily find on my own.

Interviewer: Okay. So then how do you decide then who to follow and who not to follow?

Respondent: You know, generally I will…if I find a playlist worth following, then I’ll look at the profile that created it and see what other playlists they have and see if any of those other playlists catch my eye. And if there’s two or three playlists that catch my eye, then I’ll start following the profile itself. And then as I’m at work and I use the desktop version, you have a little friend feed on the side, I’ll pop back and look at that and look through a little bit of what people are listening to and see again, if any of that sort of catches my eye, I might check it out, I might follow a playlist. A friend of mine has a playlist that…she calls it, “The epitome of me,” and I’ll just pop into that every now and then, and it’s cool, it’s a nice eclectic mix and it’s a lot of stuff that I would never, ever find on my own. And so I’m, you know, I deliberately go to that playlist when I’m like, “Alright, now I want to find something new, I want to check out something different than what I would find on my own.”

Interviewer: Okay. Just then to pick up on something you’ve just said; it was that you kind of see if the playlists are worth following, so this might be a tricky question to answer, but what then makes them worth following? What are you looking for in that playlist that makes you then follow them?

Respondent: Yeah, it is a tricky question. Usually what I’m looking for is a little bit of a balance between what I know and what I don’t know. So it’s, you know, with a playlist usually, there’s a theme or there’s sort of an overarching idea. And so, you know, I take that idea and I look at the idea and then I’ll look at the artists or the songs that I know and recognise. How do they match up with the idea? And if they do, then that makes me curious about the other artists that I don’t know or songs that I don’t know. And so, then I’m curious about the rest of the playlists that that profile had put together, and it’s like, “Okay, cool,” it’s a natural, “If you like X, then you’ll like Y,” you know, I understand where their head is at or what was the thinking when they chose the things that they chose, the items that they chose. And I get it and I’m tracking with it and it makes sense to me and it also appeals to my tastes.

Interviewer: Okay, so moving on then to talking a little bit more about Spotify; so what does Spotify mean to you as a music streaming platform?

Respondent: I really enjoy Spotify… What does it mean? It is a music collection in your pocket but it’s also music discovery. You know, I think that, for me, that’s as important as the variety or the full breadth of their collection. You know, they have, whatever, 30million songs or something. Obviously I’m not trying to listen to 30million songs. You know, I’m listening to a thousand songs or whatever is in my personal tastes. But the discovery is really, really helpful in the suggestions that Spotify themselves make, the playlists that they have made and then the social sort of connection to other profiles and other playlists. I do a ton of wedding research for cocktail hour, for dinner music, for dancing. Last week I had a wedding that the groom used to be a bouncer at a country line-dance bar, and so he was like, you know, “Yeah, we can play a little country, we like country, but we don’t want to go too, too, too much because a lot of the guests aren’t into it.” Okay, I don’t normally play very much country, so I need to go research that, I need to find out, like, what’s current and big and what would be played in a country and line-dance bar. So I turn to Spotify, and I was just looking up ‘country wedding reception, ‘country dance’, ‘country line-dance’, ‘country bar night’ whatever, playlists like that, and that was my research. You know, I listened to a couple of songs, I took a couple of the songs that they had given me as their requests, I put those into a playlist and then looked as well at the suggestions that Spotify makes at the bottom of the playlist to see if any of that had the right energy, kind of the right vibe for the reception. So I think your original was, you know, how do I like Spotify and how do I use it?

[00:37:54]

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I love it, you know, again, it’s much more convenient and easier than carrying around all of my CDs. It’s obviously much more affordable than buying all of the albums that I would listen to. It’s a great opportunity to get more exposure to music that I would never find or would never spend the money on otherwise. You know, I guess the one thing that I don’t like is that it’s almost too easy to get music, and this is where I’m going to sound old and sort of crotchety, but you know, when I was younger, you had to go buy an album, you had to go to the store, like, it was a very conscious effort of, “I want to hear this music, I’m going to make the labour, make the decisions to spend my $10, spend an hour getting in the car or walking or whatever, to go to the store, to buy the album, to come home, to open it up, to put the CD in the player, to hit play, to, like, have that time.” Whereas now, Friday mornings, I’ll open up the ‘new release’ list or playlist or my Release Radar in Spotify and just hit play and I’m immediately listening to whatever. And it’s just that disposable too. I mentioned Haley Reinhart and wanting to hear new album, and I listened to it but I couldn’t tell you really anything about it, because, you know, I didn’t invest anything to find it or to listen to it. It was 10 seconds to type in her name and click play. Whereas 10 or 15 years ago, I would know the tracklist, I would know some of the lyrics, I would be aware of some of the songs at least, because I would have bought the album and looked at the artwork and looked at the tracklist while the CD was playing. You know, I would have had a much more deliberate listening experience versus now, I can just hit play and hear whatever and I may or may not actually be paying attention to it.

Interviewer: Okay. So do you have any deliberate listening experiences outside of Spotify? Do you still go and buy CDs or, you know, pick certain albums to go and buy and own?

Respondent: I’ll say maybe once or twice a year, I’ll actually buy an album. And that is expressly, you know, only for the purpose of supporting that artist a little bit. You know, I know my 10 bucks a month through Spotify, they’re going to get, you know, a penny or whatever from my listening. But if I go buy the album, then that artist gets $3, pretty much, or whatever the case is. They get a little bit more is the point. And it’s a little bit more of a…I guess a vote, or a sort of a, like, “I see you and I like what you’re doing and keep doing more of it” than it feels like, “I listen to it a couple of times on Spotify, whatever, great, it’s not bad, but so did a bunch of other people who barely even know who the artist is,” like, a couple of times a year, when I really, really want to show some love to that artist, that’s when I’ll go buy the album.

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, if I looked through your Spotify library and the music that you’ve got on there, do you think I would get a sense of who you are through your music?

Respondent: I’m not sure, honestly. Yes, hmm that’s a really, really interesting question. I feel like yes, but then also, because I know how much I play, you know, music that isn’t necessarily for me… For example, all this week, with my newborn, we’ve been playing, my wife and I have been playing rain sounds playlist overnight, and I’ve deliberately, knowing that we have this observation going on, I’ve been switching to private sessions.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, mm hmm.

[00:42:30]

Respondent: Because I’m like, otherwise, she is going to get this list of, like, “All this fool listens to is rain music. All day long.” No, no, it’s just overnight, it’s white noise to try to keep my newborn asleep because he seems very, very jumpy. So normally I don’t do that, and, you know, I would still be switching the rain sounds, I would still be switching to private listening because I don’t want Spotify to pick up on that and start giving me suggestions of the greatest…you know, rain (inaudible 00:43:00).

Interviewer: Rain sounds ever…

Respondent: Right, You don’t need that. One playlist is enough, plenty, thank you. But when I’m listening for a wedding and I’m doing that kind of research, I don’t turn off the private listening or whatever, I let Spotify take that, it’s okay. So you would get a little bit of a sense of some of my personal tastes. Obviously, I’m like, “Here’s what I would define as my listening, the things that I like,” but you would also get a taste of…”Where’s this other stuff coming from? Occasionally he listens to some country and occasionally he’s listening to, like, a slow dance playlist, or all these songs about their daughters, and like…” If you’re really, really paying attention, it might seem a little out there. If you had the context of, “Oh no, he’s a wedding DJ,” then you’d be like, “Alright, I get it, now it makes sense.”

Interviewer: So I mean, I find it interesting then that you obviously don’t switch to private listening when you’re researching weddings. So I mean, how do you feel that that then shapes the suggestions that Spotify gives to you?

Respondent: I’m okay with it. I think it does shape a little bit, but it makes…you know, it goes back to my overall use of Spotify. If I were only using it for personal listening then I would either have a separate account or I would turn it off or whatever, I would make steps to draw a hard line in the sand. But because I use it for research, those…if it’s going to come through with those suggestions, that’s okay, I’m open to it, I’m welcoming to some feedback or ideas that I can…I will choose then to filter, “Oh hey, you know, I like this song that’s on my Discover Weekly, not for me, but for a wedding playlist or for some other event or activity.”

Interviewer: Okay. So then would you say then your…do you use Spotify to express your identity or do you use it for other purposes?

Respondent: I do think it’s a fair representation of my identity, yeah. You know, I don’t think of it in those terms, you know, it’s not like I have an itch to express myself and I turn to Spotify, but I do think, like one of the first things I said to you was that music impacts my mood and so I will use Spotify to bring out certain elements of my personality or help steer me in a different direction when I’m feeling grumpy or crabby or just I can’t quite get going, then I will use music and I will use Spotify to pull out this element of myself or push down the grumpiness or whatever it is to sort of steer and shape and shift where my mood is at.

Interviewer: Okay. So since using the platform, do you feel that your music tastes have changed?

Respondent: Yeah. For sure. I’ve continued to get a little bit more mellow. I have also been more open to new opportunities or new exposure, you know, where I’ll have, again, couples make a request and they have a suggestion or a guest has a request, and I’ll take that and I’ll listen to it, you know, I’ve picked up I don’t know how many dozens of artists that I, again, wouldn’t have found probably on my own, or wouldn’t have expected to find on my own, but got into them because of the suggestions and feedback from a wedding or an event.

Interviewer: Okay. So again, just moving on to talking a bit more about Spotify; so I want to kind of now think about your everyday streaming practices on Spotify, so the kind of types of music that you tend to listen to during the day, how you select that music and which services features you use. So I mean, how do you listen to music on Spotify?

[00:47:43]

Respondent: I probably listen to the Discover Weekly and the Release Radar with the most regularity.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: They’re, you know, they’re sort of my how I kick things off, I guess. Hold on…I just lost you. You know, and that’s entirely because they’ve…the lists have been great, they’ve been helpful and they’ve connected with my tastes and what I’ve been into at the moment. Beyond that, I will listen to a lot of the ‘Made for you’ playlists, so they call it ‘The Daily Mix’ but it’s never daily. And Spotify’s done actually…I kind of love the way that they’ve segmented those mixes out. I assume that they do this the same way for everybody, but for me, I have sort of a post-hardcore punk playlist, and there’s a soul playlist, and there’s a….straight metal playlist and then there’s like, kids pop music that I listen to with my son; that’s grouped under one. And so it’s helpful to, when I’m in a mood but I don’t really have a specific artist or album or song that I’m looking for, “Hey, I want something a little bit aggressive,” then I’ll go to the metal playlist or the sort of post-hardcore punk thing. “I’m feeling a little mellow” I’ll go to that daily mix that’s more soul or indie. So you know, they’ve just been…Spotify has helped take some of that…some of the research and some of the, like, time you spend thinking about what you want to listen to, Spotify has helped just get into listening. It’s also helped…normally, you go back to what you know, you’ll stick with what’s familiar, it’s helped break me out of just listening to the same artists or albums, the same routine over and over. Spotify has helped kind of branch out from that. If I know that I’m looking for, like, previously when I wanted something aggressive, I would have gone to this album or that album or this artist. But now, with the Daily Mix, I can get sort of an approximation of that, I can get sort of a mood, but then get a whole ton more of variety through that Daily Mix.

Interviewer: Just bear with me, I’m just going to switch my light on because it’s got really dark.

Respondent: No worries.

Interviewer: Sorry, that’s a bit better. Okay, so aside then from the Discover Weekly, Release Radar, Daily Mixes…is there any other particular service features that you use when you’re on Spotify?

Respondent: The playlist suggestions, those you build to have a playlist, you know, forgive me if I’m explaining something that you already know, but…

Interviewer: No, no, go for it.

Respondent: But it’s build out a playlist, you can, you don’t make suggestions, Spotify will make suggestions down at the bottom, there’s usually, like, six or eight at a time then you can sort of refresh that list. You can add them into the playlist or you can refresh the list if you like, and, “No, those quite aren’t fitting.” Those have been helpful, again, as a wedding research-type tool. And also I used to be an Uber Driver, so I had, like a playlist that was sort of chill, mid-tempo and I would look at those suggestions frequently, for, “How can I continue to add to this playlist?” and it would, you know, it just gives you more music that’s sort of along the same vibe, the same energy, maybe some of the same artists. But you know, it’s just been super-helpful of saving some of the time and effort to go through and research individual playlists and listen to those playlists. Spotify’s kind of done that work for you and they’ve cherry-picked out, “Hey, based on 10 songs you’ve already put in this list, here’s a handful more that might fit what you’re going for.”

Interviewer: And you feel that they’re often quite in keeping with the vibe of your playlists that they’ve been generated from?

Respondent: I think they’re okay for the amount of work, which is to say there’s no effort at all. I think it’s great. In terms of my investment of time, energy… If they give me one in 20 songs that I like, “Okay that’s a good one,” then that’s fine. I don’t expect a lot from that list, I don’t expect that list to be a perfect home-run, because they can’t know exactly what vibe I’m going for, but I appreciate them throwing out, you know, here’s a handful of suggestions that are sort of close to the vibe and I’ll dial it in as I need to get closer.

[00:53:25]

Interviewer: Okay. So, I mean, why did you pick Spotify as the platform for your music listening?

Respondent: I actually used to be an Rdio listener, back in the day, and I loved Rdio.

Interviewer: Oh, I don’t know what Rdio is – you’re going to have to fill me in if you don’t mind, sorry.

Respondent: No, no, it’s fine. It’s not all that different, I mean, it was a music streaming service, R.D.I.O. and up until, let’s say maybe 2013 or 2014, was when they shut down. And you know, I really, really enjoyed Rdio a lot of the same ways that I like Spotify. They were…it’s choose a ton of artists, choose a ton of albums and playlists. One of the things that was different was they were a little bit more social, so you could see more of other people’s reactions to an artist, you could get more suggestions from other people and then you could also share with other listeners, you know, with friends, like you had an inbox, you could share music and send suggestions and talk about, “Here’s what I’m listening to and you should check this out,” you could listen together with people and so I used to do that a lot with a co-worker. We would send each other songs all day long, and, you know, “Here’s what I’m listening to, check this out,” “Oh cool.” We were just constantly sharing stuff back and forth, and that was sort of my music discovery. Spotify’s probably…Spotify certainly gives you a lot more music because it’s not a person who’s thinking about, “Hey, you should hear this song.” It’s the computer and the algorithm and the servers and whatever; they can churn out a zillion song suggestions in a second’s time. But you know, the suggestions that I got from my friend, from my co-worker were almost always perfect, they were spot on. So there was…that’s the balance. Spotify gives you a lot more, but they were not as…maybe not as perfect as the other suggestions. So then when Rdio shut down – finally I’ll answer your actually question of how did I get to Spotify – Rdio shut down and so my co-worker and I were like, “What are we going to do? We need something else – what are our other options?” And we tried out a couple of services at the time and Spotify was the best fit and has continued to be sort of the best option. This was pre-Apple Music, I think Google Music was around, but it wasn’t great at the time. I think their service has improved, from what I understand, but I have no reason to turn away from Spotify or really even look into other options.

Interviewer: Okay. So what else then were you trying out at the time when you were trying out Spotify?

Respondent: What other services?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: Let’s see if I can remember. Pandora was certainly one. I think I heard about Deezer but never got around to actually trying it. I’m not sure…I don’t honestly know if we really tried anything else, I think, you know, it was sort of we got into the research phase and Spotify seemed like, you know, between the variety of music, the price point, the ease of use and sort of the ubiquity, it was like, “Okay, I’m pretty sure Spotify’s going to be the winner in this,” and it was and has been.

Interviewer: And do you feel that and your co-worker still share music on Spotify even though it’s a different platform, or has that relationship kind of changed because of the switch in platforms?

Respondent: The relationship has definitely changed. Spotify is a part of that, but also we’re not working together right now. We have both moved on to different positions, so we don’t have the daily face-to-face. But I do think the fact that Spotify got rid of their inbox, that there’s not, like, in-service sharing the same way that Rdio had it. I think that would have had an impact if we were still working together and were still, like, sort of close colleagues.

[00:58:30]

Interviewer: And then how do you feel then the recommendations compare? So the suggestions you get from Spotify versus what you had from Rdio?

Respondent: I’m pretty happy with Spotify’s recommendations. I think Spotify’s are better. I’m certainly looking for more help now. At the time, I was only starting to get into wedding DJing, so I wasn’t doing as much research through Rdio that I’m doing through Spotify. And so, you know, if Rdio’s suggestions weren’t… I guess I wasn’t leaning on Rdio’s suggestions the same way that I do Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah, that makes sense, yeah. So how do you use then Spotify to stream music? Kind of when you go on, what do you look for, what do you go to use in order to stream your music?

Respondent: You know, like I say, I’ll sort of start my week with the Discover Weekly. I check out the Release Radar and the new releases. And then I’ll go browse a little bit by genre and find playlists and you know, choose something based on the sort of the mood that I’m in or the mood that I’m trying to cultivate. And then, I would say probably the third most common way is I will just go search for a specific artist or album. There are times too when I’ll search for a playlist by name or by theme, like, the other morning I was cooking breakfast, and so it was like, you know, for me, come in and search for the breakfast playlist, and found it was, “Get in the Mood” or “Start the Mood” or something like that, that was not specifically breakfast, but was the same energy and start the day off sort of on a happy, happy, energetic note.

Interviewer: Okay. Because obviously looking at your Scrobble log from last week, it seemed that at least last week, you tended to listen to different artists after each of that. Is that kind of typical of your usual streaming habits?

Respondent: Yeah, I do, because I tend to listen to more playlists than a variety of artists. I think that’s pretty standard for me to have a… You know, I would say, like, the number of artists and the number of songs is much closer than I would expect to find on sort of a normal or traditional user who’s going to stick with one artist for 10 or 15 songs, like a full album. I tend to keep a higher ratio of song to artist ratio.

Interviewer: No, you’re definitely right, because obviously looking at the numbers, the tracks you Scrobbled were almost the same number as the different artists that you Scrobbled as well, so yeah, you’re right in that, at least for last week anyway.

Respondent: Yeah, and that’s, you know, I mean, anecdotally, that’s pretty typical. And I know you’re only looking at a week, but I have noticed that myself, you know, it’s… They’re pretty similar and then I’ll have, like, a small handful, let’s say half a dozen artists that really rise above, way above everybody else. Like one of my favourite bands is a band called Thrice and I listen to a lot of Thrice normally, and so each year, like my year-end wrap-up, yeah, Thrice is my top artist and then everything is like, is way down below.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Just because I don’t have a lot of artist repetition, I get more variety and as we said, the sort of a one-to-one correlation between artists and songs, maybe not one-to-one but it’s… I’ll listen to one artist and two or three songs from them versus one artist and 10-12 songs from them.

Interviewer: So then what type of music is Thrice?

Respondent: Oh, Thrice is punk, like post-hardcore, they’re more in the metal side of things, but not entirely. They have mellower songs, they have acoustic songs, the singer has been a worship leader at a church, so they have some, like, Christian undertones to some of the music as well. So they’re…I don’t know, they’re…I would put them towards the heavier end of things, but it’s not nearly as heavy as Slipknot and Killswitch Engage and you know, those artists.

[01:03:55]

Interviewer: Okay. Well, they sound, definitely with all the influences, they sound like a really interesting band.

Respondent: Yeah, oh yeah, they’re great. I mean, I love it. And you know, again, they’re one that I like because there is a lot of variety. Song to song, through an album, you’re not, like, you can still tell it’s Thrice but it’s not, “Hey, here’s the same song again, it’s just some different chords.” It’s like, “This is a totally different song,” you know, “That one was aggressive and heavy and high energy; this one is going to be more mellow and low tempo,” I mean, they have a really good variety and a mix and so that is one factor that I like is just you come in for Thrice and you get a whole mess of different sounds.

Interviewer: Okay. So when you go on to Spotify, do you usually know what you want to listen to before you start streaming?

Respondent: I would say it’s probably half of the time. Half of the time, and even then, when I know what I want to hear, it’s… I don’t know or not looking for this particular artist or album, I’m usually again going for sort of a sound. But then the other half of the time is, you know, I’m open for whatever and kind of, “Spotify, show me what you’ve got,” and usually, when it’s that mood, or I’m just open to whatever, I’ll start listening to Discover Weekly or one of the playlists like that and it will…it’ll help me realise what mood I’m actually in. So I’ll come in thinking, like, “I’m open to whatever, just let’s go,” and then a couple of songs in, it’ll play something that’ll trigger me and go, “Okay, you know what, actually I lie that, I want more of that” rather than the open variety and open format, “No, let’s go for heavy or poppy or mellow or whatever it is.”

Interviewer: Okay, so then in a typical day, what kind of things do you use music for and what kind of music are you using?

Respondent: You know, I use music to help me concentrate, to sort of stay productive at work, again to set my mood, both at work and at home. You know, I don’t listen to much music in the car. I drive, but I listen to podcasts in the car. So usually music is sort of the background or the accompaniment to whatever else it is that I’m doing at the moment. And like I say, most of the time that’s either I’m at work and I’m doing my work stuff, or I’m at home and doing chores and helping out around the house, playing with my kids, whatever.

Interviewer: Okay, well, I mean, we’ve talked a little bit how the music for your mood might change according to what mood you’re in, but are there any other changes in the music that you use? So for example, is there a difference in the music that you would use for work and then what you might listen to at home?

Respondent: I think at work, I am more diverse, so I’m open to pretty much anything, because at work, either I have headphones, so I’m the only one listening, or I’m in my office and so, you know, there isn’t much spill-out to impact my co-workers, my colleagues. At home, I tend to be a little bit more aware of who else in the family is around.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So if my wife is around, I’ll slant ones way, if my son is around, I’ll slant another way. You know, over the weekend, for example. I put on a 80s hair metal playlist specifically because I was sitting with my son, like I wanted to expose him to ACDC and Guns’n’Roses and sort of that music. And he was okay with it, but you know, I don’t know if I would have put that on had I been by myself, it might have been something else, it might have been a podcast, but because he was right there, it’s like, “No, let’s check out this and see how it fits with your little five year old head.”

[01:09:01]

Interviewer: That’s quite some musical education for a five year old.

Respondent: He’s real big on the Lego Movie 2 soundtrack.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: And so, I tried to just bring a little more variety. There’s nothing wrong with it and I love that he gets enjoyment out of it but you know… We’ve done a teeny bit of travelling here in the States and he’s got a little globe in his room and I’ve shown him, you know, “Here’s Chicago and here’s where we are. Here’s St Louis where we’ve gone, here’s Florida where we’ve gone, here’s…” you know, whatever. And I always try to make the point of, like, “Here’s this big globe that’s everything else,” you know, “We’ve talked about this portion and there’s all of this,” and so I’m trying to kind of make that same point with music. “I love that you enjoy this pop and this Justin Timberlake and Bruno Mars and whatever, but that’s this much of music, it’s just a teeny little fraction compared to everything else that’s out there. Which isn’t to say that you need to listen to that other stuff but be aware of it, check it out. Open yourself up to it and then if you still say ‘that’s all great, I don’t want it’….”

Interviewer: That sounds great. I love that you’re doing that with your son. So what about then particular days of the week; is there a difference in music that you listen to during the week versus the weekend as well, for example?

Respondent: Yeah. Weekdays, because it’s work and we have a pretty regimented schedule around the house, you know, I’m listening… I think probably with more regularity and with more consistency, you know, again, it’s Discover Weekly, it’s my Release Radar, it’s my Daily Mixes etc. At home, you know, I put on music whenever there’s an opportunity, when we’re kind of quiet, we’re hanging out, my son’s not, like, overly chatty and then what that music is will vary all over the place, just depending on what it is that we’re doing, you know, if we’re playing with Lego, then it might be more like classical or sort of just chill background music. If we’re in the kitchen cooking, then it might be something with a little bit more energy. You know, if we’re cleaning, then it’s definitely going to be more energy and if my wife’s around then she has some input and say and she’s got strong opinions on music as well. The weekends I definitely have more ears involved versus just my own/

Interviewer: Okay. And then, because I was interested because on just looking at your Scrobble logs, there was one…well, I think it was Friday, you started listening to music at 2.39 in the morning and then right up until around five o’clock in the morning; is that kind of… I mean, what were you doing with that music?

Respondent: That was the newborn.

Interviewer: Ah.

Respondent: So I have the newborn and we were hanging out. So that’s not normal. Generally speaking, our house wakes up about six and we’re kind of a 6am to 9-10pm household. But the newborn makes his own rules.

Interviewer: Yeah, I can imagine.

Respondent: So yeah, we had some days where we’ve been up much earlier and music is, you know, either…I don’t know exactly what was playing then, but that may have been some of those rain sounds, that may have been like a chill playlist. I know I have a couple of, they’re like, baby…like lullaby songs that… I think the name of it is, like, “Lullaby Songs That Won’t Make You Commit Murder,” because it’s not just plinky versions of Bruno Mars or whatever, like, they’re legit songs from legit artists, but they’re just a little bit more acoustic and sort of quiet. And so I like that playlist because it’s…I don’t focus in on it, like, there’s a…an artist called Rockabye Baby and they do, like, lullaby versions of…it’s played on a xylophone, of Metallica or Lady Gaga or Bruno Mars or Red Hot Chili Peppers or whatever. My wife really likes those. I have trouble with is, to like, fall asleep because I’m trying to figure out what the song is. I’m listening more actively and more intently than I would otherwise. So that’s where I like the sort of acoustic mellow…it’s not explicitly intended to be lullaby songs, they’re just chill songs. I like that because I don’t have to actively listen to decode, “What is this? What’s going on here?”

[01:14:30]

Interviewer: It kind of then defeats the whole purpose of the lullaby if you’re actively listening, yeah.

Respondent: Exactly.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Okay.

Respondent: “I’m supposed to be trying to fall asleep but I’m very much not.”

Interviewer: So, I mean, when you’re streaming all this music, do you tend to use the public or private setting on Spotify?

Respondent: Generally public. The only time I really go private is if I’m aware, you know, I’m usually not trying to hide anything from my friend list. I would be hiding things from Spotify, from the recommendation engine, you know, that I don’t want…if I’m listening to whatever it is, I don’t necessarily want you to give me more suggestions based on this particular day’s activity.

Interviewer: Okay. That makes sense. So in terms of your music library, have you got any idea kind of how many songs you’ve got in there?

Respondent: I don’t. I have not…I never really have gotten into the point of saving songs or artists

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: I follow artists but I don’t, you know, like there’s the ‘my saved songs’, I don’t have anything in there at all. I just…it was never part of my habit to do so. And I knew that there was a cap of, just from reading on Reddit, there’s a 10,000 song cap, so I was like, “I’m not going to bother.” I know what I like and I know what I’m going to listen to and I can go find stuff, the search is quick enough, whatever. So I have playlists that I’ve built for me, for my son, for home, for whatever, certain opportunities, but I haven’t actually saved any songs or albums.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. So when you come across a song that you like, do you kind of save it into a playlist then or do you just kind of keep a record of it in your head and then will search for it at another time?

Respondent: Yeah, it’s a little bit of both, yeah, I mean, if it fits into a playlist, then I’ll throw it into a playlist, otherwise it just goes in my head and hopefully I remember it and you know, can come back to it. I’ve had some artists that I’ve liked and forgot about but then Spotify will give me back on the Discover Weekly. I’m like, “Oh yeah, this guy!” And then I’ll get back into it and that helps lock it in. But generally it’s just in my head.

Interviewer: Okay. Wow, that’s impressive. So I mean, then are playlists then quite important to you if you’re not saving music into your library?

[01:17:21]

Respondent: Yeah. I have a ton of playlists, and you know, maybe a third of those I have made and I curate and then the other two thirds are ones that I stumble across either in my own searching or on Reddit or from somebody else’s recommendation and I will just hold onto those for research.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I mean, what kind of playlists then do you tend to create for yourself?

Respondent: They are usually for a specific mood or a situation. You know, like I said, we’ve got a family shuffle and there’s music for the family when we’re just hanging out. My son’s got a playlist of music that he’s been into, you know, a lot of that is movie soundtracks and stuff. Like I say, when I was an Uber driver I had a playlist that I would put on when I was driving, when I had a passenger, you know, it was just sort of a mellow, whatever. I’ve got at least a dozen different cocktail and dinner hour playlists for weddings. And then I have some other ones from times in my life, when, you know, “Here’s my college radio station music. Here’s….You know, back in the day when I used to work at Best Buy and here’s this from this other friendship or a concert that we went to or a trip that we took or whatever.” The playlists are related to that sort of an idea or a theme that I’m trying to capture.

Interviewer: Okay. And out of all of those, is there kind of one that you play more often than others?

Respondent: Probably my son’s playlist gets the most activity. You know, and that’s just because when he’s around, he likes what’s familiar and so he’ll ask for it, he’ll request it. Other than that, I’m not sure, you know, some of the playlists are… I don’t frequently listen to, I’ll make it and it’s there and in a sense, that’s how I’m saving my music. You know, that’s how I’m capturing those memories or that idea and I know it’s there if I need it again, because that is the idea that you’re jotting down in your notebook. You don’t necessarily go back to your notebook every day and look back at that idea or edit the idea, but you know it’s there. So yeah, six months, a year, two years from now, you’re like, “Okay, yeah, I can flip back through the notebook and find that idea and then maybe expand on it,” but I know that it’s preserved in some sense when the time comes, when I need it.

Interviewer: And would you say your playlists are quite dynamic, so you’re constantly adding, deleting things from that, or are they very static so once you’ve made them, that’s it, they’re left untouched?

Respondent: I would say they’re mostly static, you know, I’m thinking about my son’s playlist is probably the most dynamic because he’s five and a half now, so we’ve been running this playlist since he was born, and that’s a lot of change, so, you know, shows and movies that he was into when he was little, he’s outgrown. And he’ll tell us, like, or he’ll skip a song, and we go, “Oh, okay, I’m going to remove that out.” So his is very, very dynamic but typically, I would say mine are probably more static.

Interviewer: Okay, okay.

Respondent: Set it and forget it.

Interviewer: And then what about discovering new music; are you a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: Yes. I do. I think I have the same normal struggles that anybody has of welcoming new music sort of into my life.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Respondent: You know, I’m, like, to break that inertia of an artist you don’t know or you’ve never listened to or whatever, but I like to check it out, I like to explore that, I like the exposure and I don’t think I… I like having recommendations so I won’t necessarily just go out, like, you know, “Play whatever new music for me,” but if it’s coming from a trusted source or I understand why it’s being recommended or suggested, then I’m super open to checking out whatever and then forming an opinion based on that.

[01:22:40]

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, what kind of music do you like to discover? Is it quite similar music to what you’re listening to or quite diverse?

Respondent: I think, you know, it’s mostly similar. We all want to believe that we are very diverse, but you know, if you were to say, like, “Hey, here’s some African tribal beats album,” like, I’m not going to listen to that. I’m not going to get excited about that, most likely. But if you’re like, “Hey, here’s this and it’s sort of neo-soul, you know, with modern production and female vocals or whatever,” then I’m like, “Oh, okay, cool.” That ticks off two of the three boxes or, you know, I have some familiarity and some comfort already in that, and so I’m willing to, like, “Yeah, let’s go, let’s get on board with that.”

Interviewer: Okay, and then where do you kind of discover most of your new music from?

Respondent: Outside of Spotify, a lot of suggestions come from podcasts, you know, so it’s either an artist that is being interviewed on a podcast or just the background music that they’re playing. You know, and they’re like, “Hey, that was so-and-so; they’ve got a new album out, check it out.” “Oh, okay cool. I liked that song,” logically, you know, there’s a good chance you’ll like more of the album or more of their music so go give that a couple of listens on Spotify.

Interviewer: And you mentioned Reddit as well, does that play into… I mean, how does that shape your music discovery?

Respondent: Yeah, I’m on a couple of Reddit Spotify playlist sub-Reddits that I subscribe to, so I get a lot of, you know, I probably look at 10 playlists a day that come from those sub-Reddits and you know, if one catches my eye or is a cool theme or is something unique, then I may follow it or give it a couple of listens or whatever. So I’m not, you know, there are other sub-Reddits where you can find, like, an individual artist or check out this song every day, I’m not looking at those, I am looking at full-on playlists. “Here’s this collection of songs that it’s some triggers or some theme or some overall idea,” “Okay, cool, I’ll learn more about that.”

Interviewer: Okay, so I mean, would you say then that most of your music discovery comes from Spotify or from elsewhere?

Respondent: I would say most of it comes from Spotify. All of it happen on Spotify, you know, that’s where almost entirely all of my music listening is coming from. Maybe 99.999% of everything that I hear is coming from Spotify. And so, you know, it’s a little hard to, like, differentiate what comes from…what was a recommendation that I found through Reddit and just listened on Spotify, what was a recommendation that came from Spotify’s proper algorithm, but I would say it’s…the slightly majority is probably from Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay. So just moving on then to talking a bit more about Spotify’s system and its recommendations. So what do you think of Spotify’s interface?

Respondent: I like Spotify’s interface. My complaints are that it seems to be kind of slow to search and actually puling things up are slower than I feel like they should be or they need to be. But otherwise, I’m pretty happy, you know, the mobile interface is easy to use, it’s been streamlined recently, it took a couple of days to get used to those changes but I’m used to it now, it’s fine.. The desktop version is great; I use it all the time and really don’t have any complaints at all, other than the sort of the slow speed of the searches. But otherwise, yeah, I’m generally pretty happy.

Interviewer: Okay. And do you feel that it kind of shapes what you listen to then, their interface?

Respondent: Hard to say. I absolutely, Spotify and, like, the playlists, the sort of ‘made for you’ playlists, 100% those shape my listening. Absolutely no question. Does the interface itself impact? Yeah, I guess it does, because, you know, thinking about what happens when I open the app; when I open the app and there’s sort of the timely playlist based on the mood, like, it’s Sunday morning so here’s a breakfast one and here’s a work-shift playlist and here’s a, you know, whatever. And those are strictly driven by the interface and sort of how it’s laid out, so yeah, definitely.

[01:28:10]

Interviewer: Okay. And do you foresee a reason that you would ever stop using Spotify as a platform to stream your music?

Respondent: There would have to be a significant improvement, you know, like a challenger, another competitor, that’s the word, that was markedly better and/or Spotify would have to take a massive step in the wrong direction. They would have to, you know, really tank some services. So in the near feature, no, I don’t see myself changing. I’m very happy, you know, my wife is happy, she likes Spotify, they’re expanding their services by, here in the States at least, they’re offering Hulu alongside your Spotify subscription. Okay well, that’s great, that’s just more bang for your buck. And they, like, have recently purchased Gimlet Media, which is a podcast company that I like, I listen to a bunch of Gimlet podcasts and I’m curious that, okay, Spotify is investing themselves or really deliberately trying to get involved in this other arena. You know, all of my listening is either music on Spotify or its podcasts somewhere else. And now if they’re trying to get heavily involved in podcasts, I’m like, “Oh, okay, am I going to eventually, within the next year or two, shift my podcast listening into Spotify?” Or find myself listening to more stuff that’s actually produced by Spotify instead of just cultivated by them. So you know, if you were to ask me do I anticipate within the next year listening more or less, I think I’ll be listening more.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I think I will probably be listening to… I don’t currently listen to any of the podcasts on Spotify, I use a different service, and I could foresee that shifting into Spotify and out of the other service.

Interviewer: I mean, is there a reason then that you don’t use Spotify’s podcasts currently?

Respondent: Because their podcast integration is relatively new, it’s three or four years, but by the time that they got involved, I sort of already had my method and my service set up and all that. And so, you know, like, that’s just a sense of inertia, like, if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it. And early on, Spotify’s podcast player wasn’t great; it didn’t have some of the options of, like, skipping forward little bits of time, listening at a faster pace, some of the things that are now like a basic podcast player, it didn’t have. They do now, but again, where’s my motivation to change? If my current service is working and I’m already set up and I’ve got roots, then there’s no sense or no rush to make a change.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. And as a user of Spotify, how aware are you about it collecting data on your music streaming when you’re on there?

Respondent: I’m very aware. I mean, like I mentioned the Discover Weekly and the Daily Mixes, I mean, those are entirely based on my listening, my activity, everything that I’m doing. They wouldn’t exist if Spotify wasn’t collecting and thinking about what else I’m listening to. So I mean, I’m super-duper aware of it and I’m okay with that and that’s like, one of the features that I really like is how much they are suggesting based on my activity.

Interviewer: So it’s not then something that necessarily concerns you when you’re on there at all?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: No, you know, I don’t…my music listening isn’t overtly private or got anything I’m concerned about sharing. Obviously if I’m, you know, if I’m getting into radio or if I’m a wedding DJ, I like to share music, I love it, you know, listening with other people. Music listening is sort of a social activity for me, so I have really no concerns or fears or worries or hesitations to, you know. If somebody wants to be aware of what I’m listening to, fine, go for it.

[01:33:04]

Interviewer: Actually, that’s reminded me of something I was going to ask you in terms of your playlist – have you created a playlist to kind of expose yourself as wedding and events DJ? Is there something you’ve created where you can say to your clients, “Oh, listen to this?”

Respondent: I am in the process of doing that now, yes.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: So I’ve…most of my DJ experience has been through another company, so I’ve just been sort of a hired hand to go out to events that they have booked, and have over the recent years started booking on my own and now sort of this year, I’ve been consciously and deliberately expanding my company’s presence and that’s one of the ways I’m doing that is I’ve just started a Spotify profile and I’m slowly starting to build some themed playlists exactly like you say.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: That I can share out, you know, hey, I clap to a couple and, like, “What are you guys into, what do you like? Oh, okay, check out this playlist that might match your tastes,” and they go, “Okay, cool, yeah, we trust him, we feel comfortable with him now.”

Interviewer: But that is then something separate to your personal playlist?

Respondent: Correct.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Yeah, it’s a different account entirely.

Interviewer: Okay. So then my final question is, obviously you’ve been through all three phases of my research now, so you’ve done the survey, done the online observation today, we’ve done the interview; I was just kind of wondering whether that has caused you to reflect or perhaps change on any of your current Spotify practices?

Respondent: You know, the interview is making me think a little bit about what I’m doing, perhaps a little more than I would normally or on my own, but I don’t think I’ve done any changes, you know, the private listening that I have with, like, the rain sounds with my son, I would have done that anyway. I wasn’t trying to hide that from you, again, I was trying to hide that from Spotify algorithm, “Don’t learn these songs.” So I don’t think, you know, our relationship has changed how I’m interacting with Spotify, but I am thinking about it a little bit more and a little bit differently.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Well, I mean, that’s all the questions from me, I mean, did you have anything that you wanted to expand or touch upon that we’ve not yet talked about?

Respondent: No, you’ve let me give you very long-winded answers, so I feel like I have communicated a lot of it. You know, I’m curious what you’re looking for or what is your hypothesis, I guess? You know, when you were starting this and when you were thinking about, like, “Hey, I want to research Spotify and how people are interacting with Spotify and what’s driving the decision to be members or users,” whether you’re ready to share that now or if that’s, you know, hang tight for the full study, whenever that comes out, I’m fine either way.

[01:36:11]

Interviewer: I mean, so, for my masters, which feels like ages ago now, I was looking at iPod culture, which was really prevalent at the time, and now we’ve kind of moved far past iPod culture and now the significant way to listen to music is streaming, so I find that kind of shift in itself really interesting and the ideas around ownership and kind of picking and choosing what you listen to really interesting because there’s no physicality with music anymore, you know, that you’ve touched upon when we’ve been talking. So kind of interested in how practices are potentially changing or being shaped by the fact that we’re using these streaming platforms and the investment that people have had in the past with music and, “This is my LP collection, these are my CDs on the shelf, come and look at who I am in terms of my music choices,” is that still happening? Are people still investing themselves when there’s no physicality in when it’s just a streaming platform, so that’s kind of what really drove me towards doing this. In terms of what I’m finding, it’s kind of a very…it’s very interesting, so obviously, it’ll all tie together in my PhD. So yeah, so it’s really, really interesting, and you’ve only added to that today. I mean, as I say, it’s always interesting to talk to people and it’s been really interesting talking to you and added to the fact, you’re a DJ on top of that has really brought a different dynamic into your responses as well, so thank you so much.

Respondent: Of course. Of course, yeah. Very good, no, I’m definitely curious to hear it. I think a lot about how listening to music and getting involved in music has changed from when I was a kid and when I got into a music, like I talked about physically going to the store and buying an album, and I think about how that’s going to impact my son and what is his music listening experience going to be. I don’t feel like it was a huge leap or change from my parents to me, you know, they changed format from LPs and records to 8-tracks to tapes to CDs. But the idea was, as you’re aware, you still had something physical, so you had to go and buy it, you still had to interact with it and put it in a physical player. There’s just the form factor changed a little bit, quality or whatever. To go from physical item to streaming is a huge shift and so I’m, like, I’m watching my son, he’s my own little research subject of, you know, is he aware of what’s involved in the production of music; the time and energy cost, and how is that shifting, how he interacts with the music and you know, what’ll he be doing in 10 years, 15 years, when he’s really truly making his own choices and separate it from what mom and dad push him towards or encourage him to listen to and what he’s entirely deciding on his own. You know, how are things going to be for him. And then obviously what service or platform or method or, you know, how will he actually be getting that music? Will it be Spotify or will it be…who knows what?

Interviewer: Yeah, who knows by then?

Respondent: Right. So anyway, I’m super-curious, probably more than…as a parent, you are curious about everything that your kid’s going to do and how is life going to be different for them. I mean, that’s part of the ride. But I think music is one of my top things that I’m really trying to observe in my son and just, you know, sit and watch and see how it impacts him and how his life is going to be different than mine in terms of how he’s consuming music.

[01:41:48]

Interviewer: Well, it’s just interesting in the fact that I remember when I was younger, I begged my parents for a CD Walkman for however many Christmases, and when I got it, it was my pride and joy and to think, you know, there’s not kind of that thing there for children now and as kind of growing up, how are they going to listen to music, because I mean, I’m sure CD Walkmans won’t come back into fashion, but who knows?

Respondent: Well, and even, you know, I watch…he’s in kindergarten, but he’s going to an elementary school, so it’s grades kindergarten through sixth grade, so I figure it’s 5/6 year olds through, like, 12. And I watch the kids walking through our neighbourhood, who have phones, who have, you know, Bluetooth headphones in, they have their big over-the-ear ones or just little nub in-ear, you know, so I’m aware of sort of, as you say, that’s their version of the Walkman, but with an almost infinite world of music at their fingertips. How aware are they of any of the stuff they’re listening to? Whereas you and I, if we were listening to, like we had five albums. So you knew those five albums.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Front to back, you knew every little breath and hiccup and beat change and whatever. You knew all of it. Whereas music now feels maybe more disposable, you know, it’s a song is hot right now and it’s hot for three or six months or whatever, and then you may never listen to it again. And you’re never getting deeper than maybe those surface one or two hits with an artist to… I don’t want to get too frilly of, like, their artistic vision or their statement for the world, but just to get more depth of whatever it is that they’re trying to put out into the world. You know, I couldn’t possibly tell you a second Travis Scott song. I have no idea of what a second Sheck Wes song is. But I know, and I’ve played the heck out of their big hits, you know, at my weddings and events like that. So it really is interesting and I’m curious to hear your results and your thoughts on sort of that disposability of now, and its shifting over the last 10 years.

Interviewer: And I think it’s as well, the shift in, at least what I’m finding kind of people’s awareness of data collection.

Respondent: Sure, yeah. I do think Spotify is, you know the data that they’re collecting, to my knowledge, is music-oriented, you know, it makes sense for them, as compared to – if you asked me the same question; how do I feel about Facebook knowing every damn thing I’ve ever done. I don’t love that. I have a Facebook account but I don’t have a Facebook app on my phone, I go through the mobile website. So I think Spotify either smartly or deliberately or whatever, they’re only taking and only playing with the information that makes sense for them. They’re not being greedy. Or just like, “Give us all the data and we’ll figure it out.” That’s why, you know, if that were the case, I would start to get more hesitant and more reserved. But I feel like Spotify’s at least, “Hey, we’re a music platform so we want to know about the music you’re listening to.” Alright, that’s fine, it makes sense and it connects back again to the service that they’re actually providing.

Interviewer: Yeah, so it’s that you’re almost not taking a liberty in what they’re collecting; they’re only collecting what’s necessary.

Respondent: Right.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. No, that makes sense. And also, as well, it would be interesting what your son listens to to express his teenage angst when he gets there.

Respondent: Yes. Yes, absolutely. You know, I used to listen to the Insane Clown Posse, ICP, and during one of their interviews, I think about this all the time, they were…one of the guys says, “Parents complain about us, they say we’re not appropriate, they say we’re bad, we’re a bad influence, whatever, and, like, parents have been saying that forever. They used to say it about Elvis, you know, ‘This is terrible, you’re making kids think dirty thoughts’ whatever. They used to say it about Jimi Hendrix, they used to say it about Guns’n’Roses, now they say it about us. In 20 or 50 years or whatever, the kids who listen to us are going to be complain about all that alien music, it’s a terrible influence and makes kids want to go to space or whatever,” and I think about that all the time. I’m like. “Oh, he’s so right, he’s absolutely right,” and that’s where, you know, instead of the Mo Bambas and Travis Scotts are making myself aware of how old I am, that I’m now to the point of being that parent who’s like, “What the hell are these kids listening to?” And that’s the next step, you know, it really is going to be, you know, the alien music that’s corrupting the youth. Yes, yeah. You know, the sentiments have never, ever changed, they’re exactly the same, it’s just the target of that sentiment.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, definitely. Well, as I say, thank you so much for today. I’ll let you…I’ve taken up far too much of your time already, so I appreciate it so much and I’ll let you get on with the rest of your day now and yeah, thank you again so, so much, I really appreciate it.

Respondent: Sure. Thank you, have a good night.

Interviewer: Yeah, you too, thank you, bye.

Respondent: Bye.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-19-F

[0:00:00]

(Connecting on Skype)

Interviewer: Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed this evening. I really appreciate it. The way it’ll work is the interview will last around about an hour, but it’s based very much on your responses, so how you want to elaborate on things, how you want to answer questions, how much detail you want to give, so it’s entirely up to you. I’ve got some kind of general questions that I’ve asked everybody that’s been part of an interview and then I’ve also got some ones that are more specific to what I’ve observed on your streaming activity for the last week.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: So while you’re talking, it might be that I jot a couple of notes down. I’ve got a notepad by the side of my laptop. That’s just for me, if maybe I haven’t understood something or I’d like you to elaborate or something or maybe explain a little bit more about it, so that’s by the side here. And then on the other side I’ve got a little audio recorder so that’s just audio recording our interview ready to use in my research, if that’s okay with you.

Respondent: Yep, totally.

Interviewer: Perfect, okay. So before we get started, do you have any questions at all?

Respondent: No, I think we can get started.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, if anything does come up or you want to know why I’m asking you certain questions, feel free to just speak up throughout the interview. That’s no problem at all.

Respondent: Okay, cool.

Interviewer: Right, so the first bit I’d like to ask you is whether and how you think music relates to your identity. So how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: I would say that I’m a very avid music listener. Since I was young, I – like my aunt and my uncle listen to a lot of music and I would look through their iTunes and pick out a song, or try to grow a collection of my own music that I think I liked or wanted to get into, and so Spotify really wasn’t a thing. I mean, those weren’t things at all. I did listen to a lot of CDs (inaudible 0:05:19). But I really got into probably collecting music when iTunes was a thing. I mean, obviously it’s still a thing, but when Spotify and streaming weren’t a thing. Like I would try to grab iTunes playlists and libraries of other people to grow mine. And when Spotify came along, it kind of just changed the game. I don’t even use iTunes anymore, because there’s so much music available, and I use it a lot to discover new music. That’s one of my favourite uses of Spotify. So back then when I was using iTunes, new music would come out every Tuesday and they had a free single a week. I would download it every week, and also just look through the iTunes Store to see what new music had come out, and I would pick stuff to go through and to listen to, and I still do that up to today using Spotify. Like every Friday I’ll look through all the music, because I just want to hear everything, you know. So I’ve always been like a really hardcore music listener, I would say.

[0:06:39]

Interviewer: Okay, that’s interesting. So do you feel that you’ve adopted similar practices on Spotify to what you did on iTunes, or would you say you use the two very differently?

Respondent: I think it’s kind of similar but it was harder with iTunes because when I was looking through what music came out, you know, you could only preview like 30 seconds.

Interviewer: You had to decide in those 30 seconds, yep (laughter).

Respondent: And I didn’t want to buy everything. It was just too much. I couldn’t do that. I’d have to go to YouTube or find somewhere to download songs because it would just be too much. So when Spotify came around, I probably started using Spotify my freshman year of college. I had just graduated this past year, 2018. Because I saw that like, you know, 99 cents for three months, the first three months, and I did it and then after that I was hooked. The whole Spotify Premium experience where you have all this music accessible to you, it really changed the game for me. So that was really different with the whole iTunes thing. I can only preview little pieces of it. It was like a lot more effort for me to look up the songs I actually wanted to listen to, and Spotify’s just like right there for me at my fingertips. I’m like doing it constantly and listening through so many things.

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, what does music then mean to you as an individual?

Respondent: Hmm, I don’t know. I think it’s a very core part of me, a very big part of my personality. A lot of people know that I love music and I’m always listening to music, and it’s not just, you know, me with my headphones on all the time. I’m always at concerts. I love going to see live shows. And a lot of people know this about me, so I feel like it’s one of my defining traits.

Interviewer: Okay. So has there ever been a time where you’ve used music to reflect who you are to somebody else?

Respondent: Yeah, I would say so. Well, I share a lot of music with a lot of people, and as I’m going through new music I’ll be like, “Oh, I like this and I think someone else would like it,” I would share that. (Inaudible 0:09:45) as much about how the song reflects me. I like to listen to the music itself. I’m very technical that way. I can pick out each instrument and hear the bassline and the drums. So there are a lot of songs I don’t know the lyrics to because I’m too busy paying attention to the music and not the lyrics.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Respondent: My sister’s like the opposite way. She’ll know a lot of the lyrics and she’ll connect that way. She’s more narrative that way. I’m like more technical in a way. I like the beat or the melody, or I’ll follow the harmonies or whatever. So I don’t know, music in the sense of like the words and the lyrics, I don’t often listen to it and I’m like, “Oh, that’s how I feel and I’m going to share it with somebody because this reflects me.” It’s just always something I like or something technical I like about that music and I’ll share that with someone else. And I think even that whole explanation says a lot about me.

[0:10:52]

Interviewer: So when you’re sharing then music, who do you tend to send this music to?

Respondent: A lot of my friends from work. There’s one particular friend, we always go back and forth, because she listens to Spotify all the time also so we’ll always share with each other. Or I’ll send a lot of music to my cousins. And sometimes I’ll do the little thing where you share to your Instagram story, so all my followers will see what I’m listening to, and I feel like that gives people online, whoever’s following me, a sense of what I like and who I am as a person too.

Interviewer: So when you’re sharing music with these people, is it based on your likes or is it based on what they like, or is it a mixture of both?

Respondent: I think it’s a mixture of both. I like a lot of different kind of music and a song I’ll share with one person is – I don’t share it with every group.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so it’s like for a particular –

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, it depends on what I think they like too.

Interviewer: Okay. So going back then to the music that you described that you like and that you look for technical aspects of it, can I ask, do you have any musical background that draws you to that kind of side?

Respondent: Yeah, well, when I was younger I used to take piano lessons. I didn’t really continue the full way through so I’m not as good at piano now, but then I taught myself guitar, so I play a little bit guitar. And also my family is really musical. Going on what I was talking about earlier, I play the guitar. My uncle plays the ukulele. He used to be in a band. And that’s just my mum’s side of the family. My dad’s side of the family loves music too. My cousin right now is studying music business at Birkland College of Music, so he was very in the music game. And we all just listen to music a lot, so I get a lot of what I like from my family members. They really influence the kind of music I liked growing up and to now.

Interviewer: Okay. So what type of music then would you say that you enjoy listening to?

Respondent: Okay, I like so much music but I think my top would probably be alternative or indie, but also a lot of hip-hop and R&B and a lot of pop, of course. I can’t forget that. And a lot of pop punk also probably. But those are my top, I think.

Interviewer: Well, they’re quite diverse genres really, going from alternative indie to hip-hop, so is there something in those that are similar that attracts you to them?

Respondent: Hmm, I’m not sure. That’s a good question. A lot of the time there’s just like something I’ll find catchy. I right away have very physical reactions listening to – like I can’t avoid bobbing my head or tapping my foot, and that’s how I know I like it. So I don’t know, whenever I just find something that’s catchy or – I don’t know.

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, when you say that you listen to music itself, is there something about the music itself in those genres that draws you to them? So you mentioned earlier that instrumentation, the beat, the harmony, is there anything like that that draws you to those particular genres?

Respondent: Hmm, I guess really – well, for hip-hop, for example, I really am interested in all that production. I mean, if you watch the Genius YouTube videos, they would like get the producers that produce the songs and go through it. I watch those constantly because I think they’re just so interesting, where they like break it down and what kind of software they used and what sounds they picked and why. I think that’s so interesting, and that’s probably one of the reasons I’m very interested in hip-hop. I wish they did more genres like that on the Genius channel.

[0:15:59]

Interviewer: But they mainly concentrate on hip-hop, don’t they?

Respondent: They do. I mean, they do some different ones but, yeah, it’s mostly hip-hop and rap, but it’s still interesting. And their other series is music videos and I love that too, learning about the director and they just go through scenes. Yeah, I love that whole behind the scenes kind of production.

Interviewer: And do you feel that plays then into your enjoyment of the music? So knowing what happens behind the scenes, does that shape then how you listen to the music?

Respondent: Yeah, I guess it just makes me appreciate it more. Like I’ll listen more intently. I mean, I kind of listen intently naturally anyway because of that, but after watching a video and then going back to listen to it, I’m like, “Oh, that’s how they did it,” or, “This is why they made that decision.” And certain things make more sense or it just makes it more fascinating or interesting. I feel more impressed by the song, the work that was put into it. I just think it’s a really cool process and everything.

Interviewer: Okay. So within these genres, are there particular artists that you enjoy at all or is it just the genre as a whole?

Respondent: I do like the genre as a whole. I looked at my (inaudible 0:17:31) it looks like my main person was Kanye West.

Interviewer: Yes, I was actually going to ask you about this, because obviously looking at your Scrobble logs, Kanye West came out as the artist you stream the most, followed by Her Songs. So are you surprised by those two or do you feel they are reflective of your general music taste?

Respondent: I am not surprised by Kanye West because he was also my top artist when Spotify does their ranks at the end of the year. He was my number one artist, I think because – was it just this year or last year that he came out with his new album? I listened to that whole – he samples a lot of old songs and I really like that, because growing up with my family I listened to a lot of music from the ‘70s, ‘80s, I appreciate that, and again like the whole production of it. I know he’s such a controversial guy (laughter). When I saw that he was my top artist at the end of the year, I almost felt bad. I didn’t feel bad. I was like, “Oh my god,” because it’s that whole weird conversation about separating art from the artist. It’s so complicated, because I don’t want to support that kind of guy but (inaudible 0:18:58) just so good. I won’t deny that he produces good music. And like I said, I really like the production of things.

Interviewer: And then what about Her Songs, because I’ve never heard of that. Are they an artist? Are they a band? I’ve got no idea.

Respondent: Yes, so I actually haven’t listened to that EP that I was listening to over and over again prior to this past Friday. I started listening to them because I went to a show, so that’s the reason. So Her Songs is actually a project that was I think headed by one of my – this girl, her name is Dani (Marcia 0:19:44), and she’s kind of sort of Instagram famous. One of the Instagrams I follow is Pick Up Jazz.

Interviewer: I’ve not heard of it, no.

Respondent: Okay, there’s this Instagram called Pick Up Jazz. It was started by this guy, Sam Blakelock, who’s I think from New Zealand or Australia or something, but he’s in New York now, and he’ll just feature artists who post videos of them singing or playing the guitar or making a beat. And I think it started as like a jazz Instagram account, of course, but it grew to more genres and things like that. But she was one of the people that started getting famous off of Pick Up Jazz, and it turns out that she goes to Berkeley too with my cousin, so they’re friends, and that’s how I learned that she was going to have a show this past Friday in the city. So she came up with this project where she and four or five other girls who are fairly Instagram famous, they’re from the Pick Up Jazz community, they all got together in LA and just spent like a week together writing songs and producing songs, and they released this EP. It’s like all these women from all over the place. I think one’s from New Zealand and one’s from the East Coast, West Coast, whatever. And yeah, they came out with this EP recently and that one girl, Dani, was playing a show, and that’s the reason – before the show I was listening to that EP a lot and after the show, because all the songs are stuck in my head, I was listening to it again, so that ended up being one of my most scrobbled songs for the week because of that timing.

[0:21:41]

Interviewer: So if I look then at your Scrobble logs, I don’t know, in like a month’s time, Her Songs might not actually feature as one of your topmost –

Respondent: Yeah, it might not, yeah, especially because they only have like five songs out. And a lot of times when I’m listening to new music, I’ll go through an album that has just come out and then pick my favourite songs and put it in a playlist and those will end up being songs I play often and the rest of the album I don’t really play as often. So in a month’s time you might see Alright by Her Songs, because that was one of my favourites still because I’ll probably still be listening to it, but probably not the other songs.

Interviewer: Okay. How would you describe their music then? Is it quite jazz based?

Respondent: It’s kind of like jazz, hip-hop, soul kind of, like that mixture, that fusion of those kinds of genres. I really like that, you know, like hip-hop, jazz, soul kind of music.

Interviewer: Okay. Then what about music dislikes, is there anything that you feel that you would never listen to?

Respondent: (Inaudible 0:22:59) always really hardcore metal (inaudible 0:23:05). I don’t think I could handle listening to that all the time. I don’t know how people do it. And I say country to people when they ask me that a lot. I’m not a big country fan, although if it leans more towards like the poppy side or a folksy side, I could probably listen to it, but otherwise I don’t really listen to that.

Interviewer: Okay. And what is it about then those genres that you don’t particularly enjoy?

Respondent: I don’t know. It just doesn’t (vibe 0:23:39) with me. I just don’t feel the same way for some reason. If it comes up on the radio, I’ll want to change it.

Interviewer: Well, that’s fair enough, that’s fair enough. So I mean, do you feel that your music or choices have changed over time at all?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so. I think it’s expanded, widened over the years, especially because when I was younger I was listening to songs geared for younger kids that played on Radio Disney, you know, songs that played on Nickelodeon or whatever. I was for a long time just kind of stuck on those. And then with the whole new iTunes thing and the Spotify thing, things opened up. I had so many more options because I wasn’t just listening to Radio Disney or whatever songs for kids came on TV, and having the influence from my aunts and uncles and my mum and dad. You know, I’d be in the car and my mum (inaudible 0:24:51). As a kid, I would still be trying to listen to my own music but then as I grew up I got more open to listening to everyone else’s music and realising I liked all these other things. So it’s just expanded, I think, my music taste, to the point where now every Friday I’m picking out new things that are interesting, what I like and don’t like and stuff like that. I’m very open to listening to other music now.

Interviewer: Okay. So it sounds then like your family and friends have perhaps influenced your change in taste in music. Have any life experiences or situations perhaps shaped the change in your music tastes?

[0:25:43]

Respondent: Hmm, maybe. I mean, I guess just as I got older and, yeah, my mum allowed me to go to more live shows and concerts, or when I went to college in the city, because I went to NYU and there are so many small venues in that area of New York where people are playing all the time, just those kind of things. As I’m getting older and being exposed to more things, that also changed stuff because I’m again just being exposed and I’m more open to hearing different things.

Interviewer: Okay. So you mentioned a few times about your love of going to concerts and live shows. What is it about those kind of events that you enjoy?

Respondent: I guess the feeling of just being there, you know. It’s not just something that you’re hearing in your ears when you have your headphones in but you feel the bass reverberate in your body. Again, with the whole technical production side of me, I love being there and seeing the lights change and their cues to certain moments in the song or stuff like that. It’s just an awesome experience every time.

Interviewer: So would you say then you go to quite a lot of live shows and gigs throughout the year?

Respondent: Yeah, I do. I go to a lot of them (laughter). I have like a running list and I already have tickets for the upcoming months.

Interviewer: Oh, so you plan well in advance (laughter).

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, I do.

Interviewer: And what about your friendship groups, would you say your music tastes are very similar to your friendship groups’?

Respondent: Yes, I do, because I think that’s one of the big things on how I get along really well with all these people, because we listen to all the same music. There’s like almost never a time when I’m hanging out with my friends and we’re not listening to music. Or even if we’re in the car, we’re listening to the same music. That one friend from work I was telling you about, we got way closer after we started sharing music with each other and realised how similar music tastes we have. So yeah, I think that’s a part of my relationship with my friends too.

Interviewer: And what about your friends on Spotify? Do you have friends that you follow and can see what they’re streaming on Spotify?

Respondent: I don’t have a lot of friends on Spotify, because my real life friends who I do follow on Spotify, we don’t really use that – well, I personally like to look at what everyone’s listening to and click on it, but I don’t think the people I follow – well, some people that I follow are famous people so they don’t follow me back and see what I’m listening to, and some of the friends that do follow me back, we’ve never really talked about it. Like I myself just see what they’re listening to. Sometimes I click on it and see what their playlists look like. I follow two of my friends’ Discovery Weeklies because I like to see what shows up on their Discover Weekly playlist too. But I don’t really use that feature – we don’t really talk about that.

Interviewer: Oh okay, but you do like to watch what they are –

Respondent: I do like to watch, yeah, but I’ve never had an instance where someone has come to me and was like, “Oh, I saw you were listening to this.” I’ve probably done that to them.

Interviewer: They’re probably watching what you’re listening to but just not saying it either (laughter).

Respondent: Yeah, maybe it’s just like a passive thing. I mean, I do like that whole activity feature of Spotify. I feel like in the beginning they wanted to make it more of a social thing but it just didn’t work out that way. Because I remember there being a feature like where you can just share directly on Spotify, but we don’t do that. Like I’ll just share through a text message, you know, and they’ll open it and it’ll open Spotify. But as like a social platform, I don’t think I use Spotify for that really. Like I said, I just check out what they’re listening to but it’s very passive.

[0:30:54]

Interviewer: Okay. So moving on to talking a bit more about Spotify, what does Spotify as a platform mean to you?

Respondent: I don’t know, I couldn’t be without it, to be honest. Ever since I got Spotify, especially the Premium version, every day – like I’m listening on my commute – because I live in Jersey but I work in New York so I take the train in and out every day, and I’ve been doing that since college, because I didn’t live on campus, I commuted into the city every day. I don’t know, like my day wouldn’t be the same if I was on the train every day without music, and so Spotify is just like constantly playing for me. Even at home, I’ll just have it playing on speakers, or in the car, instead of listening to the radio, I’ll plug in my phone and play it on Spotify, because the radio’s not the same.

Interviewer: Okay. And so do you feel that Spotify allows you to express who you are through music?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so, because the whole, you know, sharing with other people what I listen to, I feel like – like I want people to know not only that this is what I listen to but I want you to listen to this because I think it sounds good. Like I want everyone to experience what I’m experiencing. And yeah, like I said, people know that music’s a big part of my life. I’m always listening, and sharing is part of that, and I feel that says a lot about me.

Interviewer: So do you feel then that you share music intentionally as a way to reflect who you are?

Respondent: I don’t know if I do that intentionally. I think it’s just something I want all of us to experience, you know. I don’t think I mean to send it to someone to tell them, “Oh, this is how I’m feeling today.” Because I don’t know, I do listen to different types of music, I think, depending on what mood I’m in. I’m always changing my mind. Like every day I wake up and get on the train, I have to scroll through a lot of things before I decide about what I want to listen to, because I don’t know what I’m feeling. So I don’t know.

Interviewer: Okay. So since using the platform, do you feel that your music choices have changed at all?

Respondent: Yeah, I think so. I think it’s introduced me to so many new artists and new kinds of music, kind of like subgenres. I feel like I’ve been introduced to so many new things since Spotify. It’s a great platform for music discovery, and I hear people say that all the time.

Interviewer: And have you found that that’s mostly positive for you, the discovery aspect?

Respondent: Yes, yes, I love it so much.

Interviewer: Okay, so I would like to now move on to talking a little bit more about how you use Spotify, so thinking about your everyday streaming practices, how you select the music to listen to, what types of music, and the service features that you use. So my first question is how do you use Spotify to listen to your music?

Respondent: Yeah, I mean, like I said, I do it often on my commute. That’s probably most when I’m like on it and active. Every day I wake up feeling different so I’m not sure what I want to listen to for the day yet, so I will often go through playlists that I already have and see which one – because I have so many different playlists for different things. Like I have playlists that are time based, so I have an ‘80s playlist of ‘80s songs I like, or a ‘90s playlist of songs from the ‘90s that I like, but I’ll also have playlists by artists, so songs that are all by John Mayer, who I was listening to recently, or songs that I like that are by Kanye West. I also have a playlist called *[playlist name],* which are songs I’m just into at the moment. And I also have this really long running play list that I call *[playlist name]*, because – you know how I was saying I do the thing where every Friday I’m looking through all the new albums, seeing which ones I might be interested in. It’s a lot of music (laughter), it’s a lot to get through, so sometimes – especially if I don’t feel like listening to that genre of music of a new album that just came out, I’ll stick it into this really long playlist I have called *[playlist name]*, and it’s just all this new music in a whole like 700 song long playlist.

[0:36:41]

Interviewer: Wow, that is long (laughter).

Respondent: It’s long. That’s the most recent playlist I’ve been listening to, because when I’m in the mood I’ll go through it and I’ll organise it into playlists by the month it came out, just because it just grows my collection of music.

Interviewer: So it’s really interesting that you then organise it by month it came out, so do you have playlists then for every month of the year?

Respondent: That was a new thing I started last year, because I used to have this really long playlist just called *[playlist name]* and it kind of served the same purpose of me listening to music and then budging it into this – like I said, I’ll go through an album and pick my favourites. Those favourites would end up in this *[playlist name]* playlist, but then when that playlist got so long, you know, it would be hard to listen through everything, so when last year came around I had the idea to separate it by month, so then they all became shorter and it was easier to go through all the songs. Because when a playlist is so long like that, especially if you want to shuffle – I know people have complained about their shuffle feature because sometimes it just doesn’t go through all the songs. It’ll just repeat. So I mean, I still have that *[playlist name]* playlist but starting last year I’ve been going by month, so I have like a whole year of (inaudible 0:38:19), like from January all the way through to December of new songs that came out that month.

Interviewer: And are you finding that a much better way to organise your music?

Respondent: I think so. I like it because I get to – I mean, compared to the *[playlist name]* playlist, which ended up being almost a thousand songs already, each month ended up being 100 or less, and I think it’s cool because seeing those numbers, you know, I’m like, “Okay, so all the good music came out in July because I have 178 songs in my July playlist, and nothing good came out in March because I only have like 20 songs in that playlist.” And I think that’s just a funny way of seeing when all the music I like came out.

Interviewer: And is the music in those playlists very similar for each month or is it quite diverse?

Respondent: I think it’s diverse, because so many different people – because what I do when I look through the – I just go to the New Releases tab on the Spotify app and just look through that. I know so many people come out with different stuff every Friday. I mean, it’s still kind of curated because I’ll skip albums that I don’t think I’ll listen to. Because when I go through that New Releases page, I’ll click on it first and see who the artist is (inaudible 0:40:04) I’ll look at their similar artists or what playlists their songs show up on, and then I’ll decide is this something I want to listen to, and if it is I’ll add it to my *[playlist name]* playlist and if it isn’t I’ll just skip it. But I really look to see if it’s something I think I’ll be interested in.

Interviewer: So when your next music on Friday, that’s not then coming from Release Radar or something like that. It’s coming from the actual New Releases tab on Spotify.

Respondent: Yeah, I actually don’t look at the Release Radar that often, yeah. I think because I know that’s so curated, and even though I’m still kind of curating what I listen to, I feel like there’s still a lot more options that I’m looking at when I look at the actual New Releases page, because I’m seeing like all the albums that came out, not just songs that Spotify is picking for me. So I actually don’t look at that as often.

[0:41:12]

Interviewer: Okay, that’s really interesting. So just going back to your monthly playlists, obviously now we’re in April, I mean, do you kind of stick to the month’s current playlist or is there a time that you would go back and listen to, I don’t know, your playlist from November last year?

Respondent: Actually I haven’t really gone back to listen to those monthly playlists. I’m often going back to listen to other playlists I’ve created based on different things, not just like when they were released. Also because I got stuck because there’s so much – that’s why I have this *[playlist name]* playlist I haven’t even gotten to this year yet. I’m in November of last year in my (inaudible 0:42:00). I’m like going in order and weeding them off that playlist as I listen to them so that I know it’s been checked off. And I guess I don’t really create the monthly playlists to go back and listen to them when I feel like, but it’s just like kind of a timeline and an archive for me. Like I’m hoping once I finish going through all of 2018, so the rest of November and December in my playlist of what new music came out, I want to go back to each month and then pick my favourites from that and then make my own top 2018 for me. Like I know Spotify created a good one for me at the end of the year. I was really impressed by that 2018 Wrapped playlist that they made for me because it really took me back through my 2018. But then I want to use the monthly playlists when I’m finished with it to make my own top songs from 2018. But yeah, I don’t really go back to listen to each month individually. I go through my other playlists that I’ve made depending on what mood I’m in.

Interviewer: Okay, well, I mean it sounds like you’re *[playlist name]* playlist is quite dynamic. You’re constantly adding and deleting stuff.

Respondent: Yes, I am.

Interviewer: I mean, are your other playlists the same or do you just tend to leave your other playlists as they are and then never touch them?

Respondent: Yeah, my other playlists are not the same like that. The *[playlist name]* playlist is pretty much the one that I’m really moving things in and out of. The other playlists are mostly – like one day a couple of years ago I had just created a certain playlist by genre. Like I have an indie playlist and like a pop punk playlist, and when I first created those I kind of just stuck a bunch of songs in there from what I knew, and now they’re just like these really long playlists I like to shuffle through. And then as I go through new music, if it fits into that genre, I’ll add it to that playlist. I don’t really delete anything though.

Interviewer: Okay. And so which one out of all the playlists that you have do you feel like you listen to the most?

Respondent: That’s a good question. I cycle through them very evenly, I feel. Okay, I’m going to look through them (laughter). I actually have a folder of my playlists that I listen to the most called *[folder name],* because it’s the playlists I usually listen to. So I have a playlist called *[playlist name]*, which is actually just all the playlists I used to have in iTunes. I just put all those things in one big, big *[playlist name]* playlist, and I like to listen to that a lot because sometimes I just like want to listen to (inaudible 0:45:30). A lot of the songs I listen to in the 2000s, 2010s or whatever, I’ll open my *[playlist name]* playlist because it takes me back to that time. And then my indie playlist is on here. That’s another one of my usuals. I have an *[playlist name]* and that’s a lot of ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s music that I like to listen to, and I have my pop punk playlist. I have a playlist that’s like more mainstream pop that I sometimes listen to. And then I mentioned this playlist that I have called *[playlist name]*, which is kind of like a mix of a lot of different songs that I’m just into at the moment. But that used to change more often but I haven’t changed it as much recently in like the past year so it’s still the same songs. But that’s also one of the playlists I add to. Sometimes when I’m going through my *[playlist name]* playlist and I really like a song, I’ll put it in my *[playlist name]* playlist because it’s something I know I like and want to listen to more often.

Interviewer: Well, it definitely sounds like you have a lot of playlists.

[0:46:51]

Respondent: I have so many playlists (laughter).

Interviewer: So I mean, how and why are playlists important to you?

Respondent: I guess just because, like I said before, each day I wake up feeling like I need to listen to something different. I also feel like – my small attention span probably has something to do with it too. Like I’m really bad at watching television shows because I can’t sit through and binge. My brain just doesn’t work that way. I’ll watch two episodes of something and then have to change the show, especially if it’s shows that are like 40 minutes long. I can barely watch two of those. So sometimes I’m the same with music, where like maybe one day I feel like listening to all this indie music or alternative music, but there’s a point where I’ll get tired of it and need to switch to some other genre. So I just have like a bunch of different playlists for that and they’re all organised in very different ways. Like I said, certain playlists are all genre based. Certain playlists are just – like I have a folder that are just playlists of artists, or my decades playlists. It’s all just different for whenever I feel like listening to those stuff because it’s always changing.

Interviewer: So say if you were to wake up in the morning and feel – I don’t know, that you need to feel energised or you felt a particular way, do you have certain playlists that you know you’ll listen to if you’re feeling a particular way?

Respondent: I have a couple but not a lot because I don’t often base it on my mood. When I say mood, I mean like, “Oh, I just feel like listening to acoustic folksy music today,” but I don’t connect that to me feeling sad or – I don’t know. I don’t often think about it in terms of my emotions, I guess.

Interviewer: So it’s kind of then more based on the sound that you want to hear rather than how you’re feeling.

Respondent: Yeah, just what kind of vibe I’m feeling today.

Interviewer: Okay, that makes sense. So I mean, why did you pick Spotify out of all the platforms to stream music from?

Respondent: I think when I first signed up for Spotify, one of my friends from college was probably a main influence in that, because she would use it constantly, the same way as – she’s actually in a band and plays a lot of music and listens to so much music, and I think she was a really big part of convincing me that Spotify was a good platform. So, you know, based on her influence and the whole – their promotion with the 99 cents each month for the first three months and then being on the student plan for the rest of the time really kept me there. And again I really like the discovery aspect of Spotify. I think it’s really good in that sense. And it just – I don’t know, I just like the features a lot and I just use it all the time. And I’ve tried other platforms. Like I had signed up for Apple Music before and for Title, and they weren’t the same for me.

Interviewer: Oh okay. What was it that you didn’t like about them?

Respondent: Well, one, I didn’t really like their user interface. It just wasn’t the same for me. I feel like Spotify is – I’m moving things around so much and creating playlists so much that – I don’t know, it has to be so user friendly and easy to edit and add things on. I guess I didn’t like the way Apple Music and Title were like that, and I didn’t feel the same way about the discovery feature, which is really important to me as a person who likes to listen to and find new music. And I think sharing music is easier. I know a lot of my friends use Spotify more, so again sharing is easier that way. Like I have a couple of my cousins who use Apple Music and it’s hard when they want to share a song with me if it’s on Apple Music. So I don’t know, I just like Spotify the best out of the things I’ve tried.

Interviewer: Okay. Because I mean, previously you’ve mentioned like using YouTube and even Instagram for music, and obviously being part of Reddit. Do those platforms feed into your Spotify listening or are they quite separate?

[0:52:42]

Respondent: Hmm, I would say YouTube’s fairly related, because the music I listen to on Spotify, I also really like to watch the music videos, and so YouTube now kind of has a sense – like they’ll recommend me stuff kind of like Spotify recommends me stuff that it knows I’m into, and they’re usually both right. Like I’ll click on something I haven’t heard of that they’ve recommended to me and it matches my music tastes. So YouTube I kind of use in the same sense, not as much as Spotify obviously, but I think it’s very similar with YouTube. But yeah, and Reddit too, I think, because I subscribe to those – I’m obviously subscribed to the Spotify Subreddit, but also I’m subscribed to like just the music one, and there’s one called Listen to This, where people just share music that they want other people to listen to, and I’ve learned about a lot of music that way too. Or like on Instagram too, people that are sharing to their stories like I do sometimes.

Interviewer: So would you say then that – do you use Reddit and Instagram more then for music discovery, so finding new music?

Respondent: I don’t use those specifically for music discovery. Those are kind of like bonuses because I follow those kinds of things. It’s primarily Spotify that I’m using for music discovery because that’s where I’m really looking through that New Releases page or looking through – even my friends’ discovery playlists because I know they have similar music tastes to me but don’t always listen to the same artists. They probably have new artists on their lists that I’ve never heard of. So it’s like really Spotify for me where I discover new music and listen to music.

Interviewer: And are there any particular service features you use on Spotify? So we’ve talked about Release Radar and that maybe not being used at all, but is there anything else you use on there?

Respondent: I like the Discover feature itself, like not just the Discover Weekly but the page for Discover where it’ll recommend albums or artists, and you can scroll through a whole bunch of them. Because the thing about those Release Radar playlists and even the Discover Weekly playlist, it’s just a song. It’s by song, and I want to listen to the whole album. I don’t want to listen to just one song by one person. Like I want to listen to the whole thing and get that whole experience. Like with New Music Friday, for example, I used to use that a lot to try to get new music, but again they would only feature one song from a whole album that came out and I want to listen to the whole album. So now I use New Music Friday’s playlists a lot less and just look through the actual new releases so that I can look at the albums that came out, because I don’t want to just be stuck with the one song, their single that will play on the radio. I want the whole thing.

Interviewer: Okay, so then when you find an artist, will you always listen to their entire album from beginning to end?

Respondent: Yeah, when the new releases come out, I listen to the whole album and then I pick the songs that I like. It’s not like whatever Spotify features in New Music Friday. I listen to them all myself and determine which ones are my favourites, which ones go on what playlist that I want them to go to and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Okay. And do you use anything like the Daily Mixes or the radio feature? Have you ever used those before?

Respondent: I’ve used them before. I don’t use my Daily Mixes as much but I wish I used them more. Like I kind of forget they’re there, but they’re good. When I do look at them, they’re good mixes, so I want to listen to them more often. And I like that they change often because I need that. I need the change. The radio I sometimes use, not as often, but if I’m just in the mood to listen to a certain kind of style or artist but don’t want to just listen to that artist only, I’ll turn on the radio based on the artist. I think Spotify always generates a good station for those type of stuff too. So I don’t use those that often but I have before and I like those features. Sometimes I just forget they’re there because I’m so used to going through by playlists.

[0:58:28]

Interviewer: Well yeah, I guess you’ve got so much of your own music to go through (laughter).

Respondent: Yeah, so they’re good. Sometimes when I’m tired of listening to my own playlists, those are good features, because a lot of the time they will have music that I’ve heard before and like and are similar, but they’ll also pop in some new music which also just hits everything that I want Spotify to do for me. So those are good features. I just don’t use them as often.

Interviewer: Okay. I mean, have you got any idea how many tracks you’ve got on your Spotify library?

Respondent: Is this like the library where you have saved things?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, or do you not really use that very much?

Respondent: I don’t use that very much. I don’t often save things to a library. I just put them in my playlists, yeah. So like if I went to like My Songs, I wouldn’t use that probably.

Interviewer: So when you’re saving new music that you like, it goes straight into a playlist.

Respondent: Yeah, I don’t save it to my library. I don’t really use that feature. A lot of the times it’s kind of like not exactly what I want it to be, because when I’m listening to new music I’ll download it for offline use and that automatically saves it and I’ll do it by album. That doesn’t mean every song on that album ends up being a song that I like. But (inaudible 1:00:14) because I had it downloaded for offline use so I could listen to it on the train or something, and then I’ll undownload it and leave – well, the things that are downloaded will be the songs that I like, whatever’s left, especially if I add it to a playlist that I have set to be downloaded. So I feel like the songs in the library feature is not always accurate because something will end up getting removed anyway because I just do it by playlist. I don’t really use that.

Interviewer: Okay. So how do you tend to select music to listen to on Spotify?

Respondent: What do you mean?

Interviewer: So when you go onto Spotify, where do you first go to to start listening to music?

Respondent: Oh I see. I mean, I do click on the little library tab on the phone but I’ll go straight to my playlists. I scroll through them and see which one I’m feeling for that day. I don’t often go to the Made For You section with all the mixes, like I said. I want to do that more often but I automatically go to my playlists because I have so many. I don’t really look at songs either. Sometimes I look at artists or albums if I’m in the mood to just listen to one album or one artist, but really most often I’ll go straight to playlists and look through what I have and pick one I’m feeling that day.

Interviewer: Okay. So in a typical day then, what type of things is your Spotify music accompanying? So we’ve talked about your commute, how you use it on your commute on the train. Is there anything else during your day that you tend to use Spotify for?

Respondent: I mean, nothing specifically, just sometimes after the commute and I’m already at work, I’ll keep it playing in my ears when I’m in the office, or at home I’ll play it out loud on a speaker after I get home from my commute. So if I could keep them on all day, I probably would. I mean, I can’t because I’m working. But if I’m not with other people in the office or I’m just doing my own thing at my desk, I’ll usually also have music playing. I’ll just have my headphones in. Or I guess a lot of times in the car, whenever I’m in the car I’ll be using Spotify.

Interviewer: And do you feel there’s a difference between the music that you use for your commute and then music that you might listen to at home and then in the car?

[1:03:15]

Respondent: I don’t think there’s much of a difference. It really all depends on what vibe I’m going for at the moment, and that’s always changing.

Interviewer: Okay. So I was going to ask you about the gaps in your music streaming but obviously, like you said, it sounds like that’s because you’re at work and can’t listen to it.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: The other thing, just looking at your Scrobble Logs, that I was interested in is that you sometimes listen to music in the really early hours of the morning. So like on the 31st, you were listening to music at 2am or something like that. Is that music accompanying something? Is there a reason that you’ve got music on at that time?

Respondent: I don’t know.

Interviewer: Let me have a look what day it was. It was the 31st and then, yeah, it looks like you start streaming music at 2.23am and it goes right the way up till 4.15am.

Respondent: Really?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: Did I fall asleep to music (laughter)? Let me look on my Last FM thing. I’ve never used Last FM before this. I wish I knew about it, because I love the Wrapped feature at the end of the year and I love looking at my stats. I’ve never used Last FM. I didn’t know you could get these kinds of stats all year round.

Interviewer: So I mean, if you go onto – I think if you go on your profile page and then it’s under Scrobbles, and then you can narrow it down by day.

(Pause – searching online)

Respondent: Okay, now I’m looking for my Scrobbles (laughter). I see a recent tracks. Oh, I’m looking at overview, am I supposed to go somewhere else?

Interviewer: Yeah, let me have a look on mine. So if you are on your profile page, underneath the library there is something called Scrobbles.

Respondent: So I should click on library first?

Interviewer: Yes, click on library first and then click on Scrobbles, and it’ll bring up general stats about your listening and you can select to look at it at particular days or dates or whatever. And as I say, this was on the 31st March.

Respondent: Yeah, I see 28 Scrobbles on the 31st March.

Interviewer: So when you’re on Spotify, do you mostly listen to music via the private or public mode?

Respondent: I do the public mode, and I think that’s because I know I like seeing people’s activity so I keep my activity public also.

Interviewer: Has there ever been a time that you’ve switched it to private at all?

Respondent: No, I don’t think so. I always have it public. I don’t really think many people are following me anyway so I don’t know who looks at that, so I don’t really mind that it’s public all the time. Besides, I like people knowing what I’m listening to because that is part of my sharing experience.

Interviewer: Okay. So do you feel conscious of what you’re listening to when you see certain people online or does it not bother you?

Respondent: No, it doesn’t bother me. Well, most of the time I’m listening anyway I’m on my phone and I don’t see that activity tab, because I only see that when I’m using my computer and I don’t use my computer as often. I’m usually on my phone when I’m listening to Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay. So in terms of discovering new music, would you say that you’re a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: Yes, 100 percent.

Interviewer: And what is it about it that you – why do you like to discover new music?

Respondent: I don’t know, I guess just there’s so much good music out there and I just want to give as much of the music I can a chance to listen to because I like so many genres. It also probably stems from me when I was younger, trying to go through everybody else’s – because I didn’t know until I was influenced by other people certain music, so now I like to keep open because I don’t know until I’m listening to it, so… And it’s a nice way to just collect it and then I like to share it with people, especially if they haven’t heard something. It’s always such a cool experience to hear something for the first time and (inaudible 1:10:22) and continue to follow (inaudible 1:10:24).

Interviewer: Okay. So would you say then, do you like to discover similar music to what you already like or do you like to discover different music to what you already like?

Respondent: I think I often end up discovering music that’s similar to what I already like. A lot of the time it’s like, you know, new artists who play music of the same style or genre that I’ve just never heard of before because there are just so many artists out there. But I’m not opposed to listening to things that are different. Like I don’t often, for example, listen to dance or EDM music but there are certain songs that I do enjoy of that style so I don’t mind being introduced to more of that kind of music.

[1:11:31]

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, what are the ways in which you tend to discover new music?

Respondent: I guess it’s just really my system of going through the new releases. Sometimes when my friends share with me certain music. On occasion when I’m out or when the radio’s being particularly good that day, I’ll Shazam something and later listen to it on Spotify. That’s another way that I sometimes get new music.

Interviewer: So would you say then that your discovering new music mainly comes from Spotify or elsewhere?

Respondent: Definitely Spotify.

Interviewer: Okay. So do you feel then that Spotify as a platform allows you to construct and manage your musical tastes quite well?

Respondent: Yes, totally.

Interviewer: Are there particular ways in which it allows you to do that?

Respondent: To construct my music tastes?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Hmm, I don’t know, I guess just the certain discover features it has where it like recommends to me – because it’s like tracking all of that so it knows what I like and it’s really good at recommending new stuff but of the same kind of like – you know, it’s still within my music tastes. Spotify’s just really good at that.

Interviewer: And then what about its interface, what do you think about Spotify’s interface?

Respondent: I like its interface. I really like – well, first of all I like the colour. All the apps I use are like dark mode. That’s probably one of the reasons why I can’t do Apple Music. Title at least was also a black interface, but I don’t like Apple Music’s white interface.

Interviewer: I’ve never even tried Apple Music so I’ve got no idea what that looks like.

Respondent: Yeah, it’s alright, but I’m so used to having everything on like dark mode or night mode, and that’s an advantage of Spotify because it’s all black, so I really like that. And I really like the amount of clicks it takes is not – I mean, I feel like there’s some ways it could be easier, but when I’m listening to something and want to add it to another playlist and there are the dots in the corner, I can just add to a playlist or add it to the queue, I like that option too. I really like that. On the computer, I really like the activity bar and all the album art when I’m looking through the new releases pages. It’s just four albums each in a row. I really like how that’s organised. Or they’re doing this new thing with the whole playing videos when you’re listening to certain songs. I think those are cool. Or even just having videos on Spotify, that’s fairly new and I think those are cool.

Interviewer: Is that something you would like to see more of?

Respondent: Yeah, probably. I’d probably use it more on this and less on YouTube if I could (inaudible 1:15:19). And it’s cool that they have a podcast feature too. I don’t use it as often but, you know, they’re really expanding. They’ve got a lot of new features.

[1:15:34]

Interviewer: Is there anything then about the interface that you don’t like?

Respondent: Hmm, what don’t I like? There are certain things that they just recently changed I didn’t like. Like with my *[playlist name]* playlist, I have to constantly edit it, delete, and now when you click on Edit Playlist, it opens up a new kind of thing for you to delete whereas before it all happened on the same page. Once you pressed Edit, all it did was show up like the little red minus signs on the side if you wanted to delete it. Now that opens up something else. I think that was like its most recent update and I didn’t like that. I don’t like that on the computer version I can’t see the date of when a certain thing was released, which is important to how I use Spotify with the whole do it by month and year kind of thing. So often when I’m using the computer and going through that *[playlist name]* playlist and I’m not sure if it had switched from – like since it’s a giant playlist and ordered chronologically, I don’t know when the last song of October was till it switched to the next song in November on the computer because it won’t show me the date. I have to go through my phone and go to that album and then scroll and look through what the release date was. Like I wish the release dates were more present.

Interviewer: So is that a thing on the desktop and the mobile app, or does the mobile app show the date next to the song?

Respondent: Well, it doesn’t say anything next to the song. I kind of wish it did. I kind of wish it had – like you know how a song has the option to – you can look at the song credits?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: I like that. I think that’s fairly new. I really like the song credits feature, but I wish another option was just other info, like the release date for each song. It doesn’t have that for each song so I have to click on the song and then click on Go to Album and then look at the date under the album. They only show the date with the album, and that’s only on the mobile app. Like I can’t see the date on the desktop app. I mean, it’ll give you the year but not the exact date (inaudible 1:18:19).

Interviewer: So I mean, do you feel ever that Spotify’s interface influences your music choices?

Respondent: Hmm, probably. Like the home page on the mobile app, for example, has a bunch of recommendations itself like right there. I do like that it’ll tell you what’s recently played, because a lot of times I’ll go back to that. It has this – like I’m looking at it right now, your Heavy Rotation, or like the music you had on repeat. But then when you scroll down more, it’ll recommend its own Spotify playlists, different moods and genres. And I like that it’ll say – like I have this whole thing that says (inaudible 1:19:28) 1975 and it’s just all different playlists from Spotify that it’s recommending to me, and I’ll have happy and sad songs, and this is just like all on my homepage. So sometimes I’ll scroll through that when I’m trying to decide what I want to listen to for the day. I like that feature. It even has like – not only does it have recommendations by artist but also playlists. Like it’s giving me playlists that are more like *[playlist name]*, like my own playlists. So Spotify itself can influence what I’m listening to because I’m looking at it and, you know, it’ll probably – I’ll see something and be like, “Oh, I want to listen to that today.” So (inaudible 1:20:17).

[1:20:20]

Interviewer: So do you often then listen to Spotify’s own playlists even though you have so many of your own?

Respondent: I do often listen to Spotify’s playlists. I have like a folder of Spotify made playlists in my own library of some of the genres I like, because I think they really do have some good playlists. So yeah, I have a lot of those too that I follow.

Interviewer: Okay. So would you ever consider not using Spotify anymore? Would there ever be a reason that you would stop using it?

Respondent: I cannot think of one (laughter). I just like to use it daily. It would just be weird to not be using it.

Interviewer: So you’ve not come across a valuable alternative that might tempt you.

Respondent: No, not yet at least. Right now it’s really Spotify is my top. I use it every day.

Interviewer: Okay. And when you’re using Spotify, how aware are you that it’s collecting data on what you’re streaming?

Respondent: I mean, I know that and I don’t think about it though often, so I kind of forget. But it’s not that I’m unaware, because I know they do the Wrapped every year and they can tell you the exact minutes you’ve been using Spotify for the whole year. I think that in itself is super cool so I don’t really pay attention to the fact that it’s collecting data on me, even though that kind of sounds scary. But I really do like looking at all the stats at the end of the year.

Interviewer: Okay. Because I mean, we think that they’re obviously using the data as well to give you recommendations for what you might like, so do you feel that their recommendations are good for you?

Respondent: Yeah, I think they’re pretty spot on most of the time with the recommendations. I almost always like the music that ends up in my Discover Weekly and I know that’s based on what I’ve already listened to.

Interviewer: I’m interested because from what you’ve said, it sounds like actually a lot of the music you discover is based on your own research rather than what Spotify is giving to you. So I mean, where are you seeing the recommendations explicitly from Spotify? Is it mainly in the Discover Weekly or are there other services you’re using?

Respondent: I see it a lot in the Discover Weekly or like just the regular Discover page.

Interviewer: Can I ask, is the Discover page still personalised to you or is that just very general?

Respondent: No, it’s like personalised to me. Yeah, it’s like this page right here, I’m on the app. Like there’s a Discover page and it’ll give you your Discover Weekly playlist and your Release Radar, but also if you scroll down it’ll have Top Recommendations for You and it’ll be like whole albums. So it’s not just like a playlist of songs, which sometimes I don’t want because I like to look at the whole album. Like I have Top Recommendations for You and then it has a bunch of albums there, and then it has Suggested for You based on the Notorious BIG, because I was listening to Biggie recently.

Interviewer: I saw on your Scrobble logs, yeah (laughter).

Respondent: That also had to do with a show, because I went to this dance performance this past Saturday and one of the songs they used was a Biggie song and then that just put me in the mood, so I end up listening to Spotify’s artist playlist. I like that this is artists’ playlists. I use those a lot. But it also has Similar to the Smiths, because I was listening to the Smiths a couple of days ago. Similar to Maggie Rogers, I was listening to her a couple of days ago. And it’ll give me like albums.

[1:24:47]

Interviewer: Oh I see. See, I’ve never used the tab itself.

Respondent: Yeah, like the whole Discover tab has all these different things. It’s not just the playlists.

Interviewer: I just use Discover Weekly and Release Radar, so I didn’t realise that the tab was still personalised.

Respondent: Right. I don’t use those at all because I like I guess the big picture. I like going through a whole thing and not just the specific songs that Spotify’s recommending me. That’s why I like going to the Discover tab because it’s recommending me whole albums and whole artists. It’s not albums and artists I’ve already listened to. It has a lot of stuff. Like it’s given me a lot of different albums and artists based on my albums and artists. Because you listen to Paramor, listen to this. Similar to (inaudible 1:25:45) listen to this. And they’re like whole albums, which I like.

Interviewer: Yeah, as I say, my awareness of that tab was very minimal but I’ll definitely check it out and see what it’s got on there.

Respondent: Yeah, I like that tab. But I also think I see some of their recommendations when I use the radio feature or the Daily Mix feature. A lot of the times those mixes and the stations are made up of songs that I already know and have in playlists, but it’ll have other songs sprinkled in there that I don’t know and I’ll discover new songs that way too. That’s where Spotify recommends based on what I’m listening to. It’s like those are the main places I see where Spotify is recommending to me and they’re always good, I think. Yeah, it’s me like curating my own –

Interviewer: Yeah, doing all the work (laughter). So my final question is obviously now you’ve kindly done all three phases of my research, so you’ve done the online survey, you’ve done the online observation and then today you’ve done the interview. I was just wondering whether that’s maybe caused you to change or reflect on any of your current Spotify practices?

Respondent: I don’t know if it’ll change certain practices with my listening on the app, but I definitely will probably keep using Last FM (laughter). Yeah, I really like the stats. And now I’m thinking about these stats in a different way, of how they reflect who I am as a person, because I guess I don’t really think about that as often. You asked me a lot of questions related to that and I had almost a hard time answering because I don’t think of how much it reflects who I am and my identity, but it does. So now maybe going forward I’ll probably start thinking about that more often.

Interviewer: Well, that’s great. I mean, thank you so much for agreeing to do all three phases. It’s been so interesting to talk to you tonight as well. I mean, is there anything else that you would like to discuss or touch upon that we’ve not yet talked about?

Respondent: I don’t think so. I mean, I thought this whole research project is so cool and that’s why I agreed to do all three phases. And how has this been for you? I feel like you’ve learned a lot from a bunch of people.

Interviewer: It’s been so interesting. I mean, obviously I use Spotify in my own way, but realising how other people use Spotify in so many different ways. I never knew it was possible to use Spotify in all those ways. But it’s been nice because obviously I’ve been doing my PhD for around three years, so yeah, you become like a little bit desensitised to it, but then when you talk to people and you hear their experiences with music and Spotify, it’s like, “Oh my god, I love this,” all over again. So it’s been really, really nice. And as I say, you’ve been great to talk to. It’s been so, so interesting to hear what you’ve had to say, and it will greatly help what I’m doing, so I just can’t thank you enough.

Respondent: I’m glad, I’m glad I got to be a part of this. (Inaudible 1:30:53) all these great responses.

Interviewer: Right, well, if you have no other questions or anything then I’ll let you get on with your evening.

Respondent: I think I’m good, yeah, thank you.

Interviewer: Okay, well, thank you so much and I’ll speak to you soon.

Respondent: Okay, great, can’t wait to hear back from you.

Interviewer: Alright, thank you, bye.

Respondent: Bye.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-20-M

[0:00:23]

Respondent: Hi.

Interviewer: Hi, how are you?

Respondent: Let me turn off the thing that I’m listening to, it’s bleeding through here.

Interviewer: Oh okay, yeah, no problem.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: Is that better?

Respondent: That’s fine and nice to meet you.

Interviewer: Yeah, nice to meet you too, thank you so much for taking time out of your afternoon to speak to me I really appreciate it.

Respondent: No, it’s my pleasure.

Interviewer: Oh well thank you very much. So, yeah, the way it’ll work is the interview will last around about an hour but it’s very much based on your responses so how much you would like to elaborate and expand on things and, you know, how much you want to talk about your music and Spotify so that’s entirely up to you.

Respondent: Oh right.

Interviewer: While you’re talking I will try my best not to interrupt you, sometimes that’s easier than other times.

Respondent: Oh, don’t worry about it.

Interviewer: And while you’re talking I’ve just got a notepad by the side of my laptop so I might take a couple of notes about the things that you’ve said to maybe expand upon or ask a little bit about later on and then on the other side of my laptop I have a little audio recorder and that’s just audio recording our interview to then obviously use for my research if that’s okay with you?

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: Perfect, okay, so before we get started is there anything you would like to ask from your side? So, if you’re happy then to get started?

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: Okay. If there’s any questions or anything that come up during the interview feel free to stop me and ask them, that’s not a problem at all.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: Okay? So, firstly I would like to know whether you feel music reflects who you are, so how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

[0:04:52]

Respondent: Well, music has always been very important to me, I started out on classical music, my mother was a classical pianist, at least she had studied it and used to play quite a lot in the house and I started piano lessons at the age of eight and practised every day classical of course and that’s mostly what I listened to as a child with a little bit of Broadway musicals but not much else, maybe folk music, this was of course back in the 50s, I’m 71. And then later I was a kind of a hippy in the 60s, I was into a lot of rock and roll and stuff that was trendy and then very oddly in the 70s I stopped listening to popular music almost completely, I got very into opera and jazz for a while but I really lost track of popular music until somewhere around the 80s when I started watching MTV so I would get to know the songs that they featured a lot. And then there isn’t much else to say except that now with Spotify I have the opportunity to listen to anything I want so I’m very much going back and filling in the gaps of the stuff that I missed and learning about new kinds of music that I had never paid much attention to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: I would say my tastes are very eclectic and I approach things almost more as a scholar or at least a collector rather than following necessarily things that I’m really passionate about, it’s a little cooler than that, a little more objective. And I’m a big list maker so I like to find playlists that are, you know, The 100 Greatest Metal Songs or the 100 Greatest Dance Music, I especially love lists like that that say what’s the… because there are a lot of genres that I don’t have much familiarity with because I ignored them when they were, you know, popular and so I don’t want to waste my time on second rate stuff if I don’t have to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: Or if I can find a list that says 100 Greatest that’s what I like to hear and it’s really a question for me of kind of just filling in the gaps of my musical knowledge as I said rather than necessarily stuff that I love to listen to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay, that’s –

Respondent: So, that should give you stuff to start with anyway, I mean I didn’t really answer your question.

Interviewer: I mean that is a really interesting response to that question, so do you feel then if you feel that your music listening is now a case of filling in the gaps, is that all your music listening now is? Do you ever kind of listen to music that you absolutely love anymore just for your own personal satisfaction?

Respondent: Yes and I do almost all my music listening on Spotify now so I make my own playlists and a couple of them are my all time favourite songs or pieces of music so I’ll listen to those occasionally but not really that… yeah, I guess I can say that, yeah, I occasionally will go back and listen to things that I have really loved during my life.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, mm hmm, so at what point then did you decide that your streaming activity was going to fill the gaps? What encouraged you to make that decision?

Respondent: Well, I used to be a very heavy subscriber to Reddit and there were various different Subreddits one of which is to Spotify Subreddit and I’m not exactly sure how this happened but people do post playlists on that and I decided to post a playlist of my own to see if anybody else was interested and that gave me an incentive to really research certain genres of music so that I could really do a good playlist for other people to listen to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: And I think I started with dance music because I got curious, dance music is one of those things that was always in the background for me, I was never a big dancer but, you know, you hear it on the radio and when you go out sometimes and somewhere around the 80s it became a very different kind of thing, it was the first time that people had really started referring to it as a genre on its own and to me what that means is when you start talking about something as a genre you’re separating it from other genres and before let’s say about 1980 there was just pop music and then you could say oh, well, that’s disco or that’s, you know, heavy metal or whatever but dance music as a separate genre didn’t really start until the 80s and then of course you get house music and all that stuff which I knew nothing about any of that. So, I thought, well, let’s build into that and see how it evolved and changed from something that was just a typical top 40 hit that… In the 60s and 50s what we now call dance music was just a song you could dance to, there wasn’t anything special about it, in fact most of the really big pop hits were songs you could dance to because that’s what people wanted to do. So, I started with the 60s and I did a playlist called *[playlist name]*… this is so academic sounding it’s almost embarrassing, but I did a playlist called *[playlist name]* in the 60s and then in the 70s there was too many I had to divide it into two so I did the *[playlist name]* and the *[playlist name]* which is pretty much the disco era and that’s about as far as I got with dance music and that was my first playlist that I posted to Spotify and each one is about 100 songs so there’s a lot of depth to that, I had to do a lot of research.

I love doing research, this is the kind of thing you know that I do, unpaid of course but just for fun I love to research topics so I did a lot research on what was dance music in those different years and in the process of doing that I really learned to enjoy listening to it and then I went on from there to thinking what is the cutting edge music at any given time? And I ended up doing a list that went all the way back to 1948, it stopped at 1988 and the idea was to do two songs per year which turned out to be about the right number that would really show how pop music, rock and soul music, black music and rock, evolved during those years. And that I’ve spent a lot of time on over the last year or two and I’m still working on my list on that so that to me is my major accomplishment really over the last couple of years, I have a certain pride in that list, I really feel like I really have managed to spot like the songs that really were ahead of their time or at least on the cutting edge of their time and had an influence on other music later on. So, if you want to talk about punk music well there’s something they call proto-punk which is songs that… you know, punk music proper really starts in 1976 with the Sex Pistols and The Clash and the Ramones but before that there were songs that really paved the way for punk like The Stooges and even going all the way back to The Kings and the Stones so I thought, well, how far back can you go with this stuff and really, you know, find something that really reflects what was going on at the time? So, you could kind of say I had the attitude of a historian a little bit too.

[0:13:57]

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: But you wanted to talk more about the music that I love myself that really reflects who I am I guess, and there I would have to say I’m kind of stuck in the 60s. As I said, I was a hippy, I was using drugs, pot and acid, you know, so I listened to all the… which was very much represented in the music of that time so I loved the Beatles of course, probably my favourite group of all time was The Incredible String Band and also Bob Dylan, The Birds, the Jefferson Airplane, you know, all that kind of stuff. I was at Woodstock in ’69 so you can kind of call me the Woodstock in the Woodstock generation.

Interviewer:Mm hmm, okay, well, I mean so just going back briefly to your playlists that you’ve created so this history of the two songs per year, is that intended for your personal use or…

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: …what were you going to do with that once you’ve curated it all?

Respondent: Well, I posted it on Reddit and didn’t get a lot of response because I think most of the people on Reddit are quite a bit younger than me and are not really interested in old music especially… I mean my terminal year was 1988 which is before most of these people were born but some people did find it very interesting and one person in particular really raved about it and she said she was playing it in her office and all the people in her office were listening to it which made me feel really good that at least somebody was as interested in this subject as I was.

[0:15:53]

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: I also postedit it in a group that was called, a Subreddit that was called Past Old People, which I am, I admit it and it’s fun to go there and get questions from young people and one of the questions was how has music changed during your lifetime? Well, as I said my lifetime started in 1947 so the answer is a lot, it’s changed a lot in many different ways and gone in many different directions and I thought that rather than try to summarise that in text and prose I would post that list and they could see for themselves how music has changed. And I found it just a really fascinating project to do, I learned a lot not just about newer music but about old music going all the way back to the black music of the 40s and early 50s which was far superior to the white music of that time which was very square and corny and has not aged well. But the black music if you go back to the 40s it’s still, you know, listenable I mean it’s still fun to listen to and so I went on ahead and I limited myself to one song per group because I didn’t want to, you know, even though that technically if you want to talk about who is on the cutting edge I mean it would be all Beatles and Bowie and, you know, people like that. But that also helped me to focus a little bit on learning more about stuff that I had never paid any attention to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. So, then what’s your next project? Do you feel that you have any more music gaps to fill?

Respondent: Yes I do, lately I’ve been listening to heavy metal.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Heavy metal playlists on Spotify that I am listening to that are like bests of heavy metal or heavy metal through the years chronologically and so far I have to say I haven’t turned into a fan yet. Some of it’s very good especially the early years it’s just, you know, it’s kind of just very naive and crude and not that great and, you know, after a while it’ll kind of… There’s a very narrow range of what they do in heavy metal I mean the lyrics are all about death and doom and, you know, in a very adolescent kind of way I mean it’s like the way you think just the appeal that sort of thing has to a young man especially of the teenage years and then they have the power chords on the guitar and the guitar solos and these screaming vocalists and, you know? Some of it has a certain amount of artistry to it but most of it so far I’m finding really doesn’t and then I think I’m going to go back and pick up on dance music again because I never really did get to the 80s and that’s a great decade for dance music and I want to really find out more about it.

You know, one of the things that’s happened really could call the 80s a decade when the idea of a music genre was invented and all of a sudden radio stations would specialise in one thing or another, you know, what we call college rock here in the US which would be just strictly alternative and indie and punk, post-punk and that kind of thing but even dance music’s split into a lot of different genres and metal too, there’s, you know, death metal, doom metal and all these things. So, it’s just an intellectual curiosity really to find out what all these terms mean, you know, what is the difference between death metal and doom metal? I don’t know yet but I’m interested in it.

And then the other thing that’s happened to me recently is realising that I have been kind of neglecting classical music and that there is a lot of classical music really that I had never listened to, you know, one of the great things about Spotify it used to be that if you wanted to listen to something specific you had to go out and buy a record or a CD, that got expensive very fast, I mean you could tune into a classical station but you were at their mercy of what they wanted to play. And so if I really want to listen to, you know, the symphonies of Sibelius or Mahler or, you know, the works of any particular composer that I like like Stravinsky, you know, you would have had to spend a fortune and now I can just look everything up on Spotify and not only is it all there but there are multiple choices of recordings, you know, which orchestra and which conductor and which performer and it’s wonderful, it’s just a treasure trove.

[0:20:50]

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: So, I’m looking in that direction a little bit more. I’ve never been one to listen to background music, I don’t like it, if I’m reading a book say I always turn the music off because my mind is such that I just I can’t focus adequately on two things at the same time and they interfere with each other, you know, so I can’t read properly and I can’t listen properly, you know? So, there are only certain times when I like to just turn everything else off and just listen but I’m doing that more at my age than I used to do so I’m really starting to put on music that I just listen to and I put on my headphones and I close my eyes and, you know, have the cat here on my lap, that kind of thing so I don’t know if that answers your question.

Interviewer: No, that’s great I mean I admire the fact that you can objectively listen to music, I’m not sure if I could put myself through listening to a heavy metal playlist without feeling a sense that I was enjoying it so I mean that’s quite a, you know, you obviously persevere with it to listen to it but not necessarily enjoy it.

Respondent: Well, no, I enjoy it but I don’t love it, it’s not quite me but I’m pretty sure it’s not going to be my favourite but, you know, again listening with headphones you can really pick out the details and I can kind of, again because of my intellectual approach and study like, okay, what is the drummer doing and how does that differ from what drummers did ten years earlier? Or the base player or what is the background beat or listening to pick up the details and that’s why it’s really fun to listen to things from maybe the late 70s on when they really started to create the music in the studio and they would record things that maybe they couldn’t even play live because there were too many parts or, you know, too many moving pieces like the synthesisers and the drum machine and all the different parts that had to work together to create the sound they were looking for. And you can really hear that when you listen with headphones as oppose to it just playing in the background somewhere, you know, on speaker so anyway, yeah, it’s an analytical intellectual approach but that’s what I enjoy.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, have you always been that way with music?

Respondent: No, I would say definitely not, in fact, now when I go back to old songs I can hear details that I completely was unaware of when I first heard them, that’s especially true with things like the oldies of the 50s and the 60s, you know, like I was noticing the other day I was listening to some songs by Chuck Berry and I thought, wow, he had a really great back-up band I mean his drummer was really sharp and, you know, does just the right thing and the piano player also. Actually his piano player turns out to be fairly well known but, you know, to hear things like the musician like the instrumentalists on old pop songs when of course when I listened to them the first time on the radio in the 50s and 60s you’re mostly focused on the vocalist and the lyrics and the tune and didn’t really pay any attention to any of the other musicians. Hang on a second, I’m just going to get some water here.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Sorry.

Interviewer: That’s okay.

Respondent: My mouth gets dry when I talk a lot. Okay.

Interviewer: Okay –

Respondent: So, yeah, go ahead.

[0:25:02]

Interviewer: So, I mean so you’ve talked about how you’ve shared music in the past on Reddit, do you share music that you enjoy in any other ways?

Respondent: No, technically I’m on Facebook but I almost never post anything there, I’m not a social media person, I don’t have Instagram or Twitter and I don’t know anybody who really loves the same kind of music that I do or enjoys [cuts out] so, no, I really… In fact, I’m trying to figure out a way now when I make up these playlists, figure out a way to share them so more people can appreciate them, you know, which is a little bit part of it is ego just to say look how smart I am to figure out, you know, all this old music that is just historical now. And it would be a lot of fun to be appreciated for the work I’ve put in which is actually quite a lot, of time anyway, you know, not hard labour but I mean taken me quite a lot of listening and reading. I love to read about music too and, you know, this is all kind of just developed in the last couple of years really. [Coughs] Sorry.

Interviewer: That’s okay. So, aside then obviously from kind of the research you put into it, how would you describe your musical tastes?

Respondent: Erm let’s see. Well, again I really love classical music and I’ve listened to it since I was very young and I played of course the piano so I love classical piano, certain composers I especially love. Do you want a list or…?

Interviewer: Yeah, I mean if you’ve got kind of some that you really admire that would be great.

Respondent: Yeah, well, I’ve gone through different periods. My mother was a huge fan of Brahms, that was her favourite composer so we listened to a lot of that together, I like chamber music as well as piano music and then at some point I developed an interest in opera and I lived in San Francisco for many years and used to go to the opera there and that was my biggest musical passion for a long time. This was wonderful, it was the golden age I think, one of the golden ages, of opera singing and we heard all the famous stars came to San Francisco, Joan Sutherland and Pavarotti and Marilyn Horne and Birgit Nilsson and all these really famous singers and I had a subscription and I used to go a lot, I was very passionate about opera for a long time. But again, that’s one of those things where since I’ve moved to Iowa I don’t really have the chance to hear it live, occasionally will listen to some recordings and of course the Metropolitan Opera New York does a weekly live broadcast every Saturday afternoon and I listen to that.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: So let’s see, opera and classical and then in my hippy days I was telling you… Oh and I went through a folk music period because my sister was a guitarist and she loved folk music so I would listen along with her and we actually started ahead of the big folk music boom which was the very late 50s maybe ’58/’59 and before that there were people like Richard Dyer-Bennet who was an Irish singer who had a real cult following, beautiful tenor voice and he would sing a lot of old folk songs, a lot of the old classic, the really old songs, I loved that. And Joan Baez and then Bob Dylan came in but he of course was more of a composer than somebody who just sang actual folk songs but they still call them folk music.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: In the early 60s that was very big and you had Bob Dylan, Peter, Paul and Mary, you know, a whole bunch of other people and I love to listen to that. Barbara Streisand when she first came in I really loved, I was passionate about her, her first few albums when she was more of a cabaret singer and then as I say, we got into the very hip stuff with the Beatles and the Stones and Bob Dylan and so forth. You know, in those days we used to get stoned and sit around and listen to music I mean that was a very common thing to do and you would kind of just, you know, enjoy the psychedelic aspect or the… I don’t know what other word there is but of all those performers and, you know, again some of the same names and you’d listen to them over and over and you’d listen with other people and you’d kind of all experience it together and that was lot of fun, you know, to… I think everybody probably does that at that age but in some way we were the first generation who really did that, you know, I think the pop music prior to that you wouldn’t really sit around and listen to, I mean adults would they would listen to Frank Sinatra or if you were a jazz fan you’d listen to all the great jazz groups of that period but we were the first ones to really take rock and rock that seriously to think that maybe the lyrics had some kind of profound message to it and that you should listen very carefully see if you could figure out what they were trying to tell you. And then that culminated in Woodstock of course and the era of Jimmy Hendrix and Led Zeppelin and the people like that and then as I say it got much more fragmented, there was much less music that I felt like had a real profundity to it maybe Joni Mitchell. As I say, of course The Incredible String Band I listened to over and over they were probably my number one group and also a folk group called Jim Kweskin & Jug Band who were just really funny more than… very, very talented musicians but they played very, very entertaining funny music it was just great to listen to, I loved them. And I went to hear them live and went to hear The Incredible String Band live, I saw quite a lot of these groups live in the late 60s and then my life kind of changed around 1970 and music became a much less important thing to me, I’m not quite sure why.

[0:31:51]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay, so I mean so you’ve given me quite a lot of examples of the music that you like, what is it about that music that draws you to it?

Respondent: Okay, well, different things depending on what it is, with the classical music I really studied… Well, hmm, it’s a very (inaudible 0:32:19). It’s always a mixture of emotion and intellect, you know, my mind is always working and listening to what the music is doing, how it’s put together technically and at the same time the emotional charge that it has, it’s really something I would have trouble verbalising I think. But I don’t listen usually to match the mood I’m in or to change the mood I’m in, it’s not a mood thing it’s just admiration for the craft of the composer and the performers so I’m talking about classical now, admiration for their craft and just sheer joy of the beauty of the music moves me more than anything else. It doesn’t really matter so much with the mood of the music, I mean it could be tragic, it could be comic, you know, I don’t try to match my mood that way but, you know, I’m building on a lifetime of having listened to this stuff and some pieces like the Marriage of Figaro by Mozart opera I listened to as a very young kid and loved it and just I’ve listened to all my life and I always enjoy it, it always makes me feel good, you know, just the sheer genius of Mozart is just awe inspiring. And it’s a different list from the music I play when I play the piano, I have favourite composers there too because they’re fun to play but I maybe would rarely sit down and listen to them, for example Bach, I love to play Bach on the piano but I rarely sit down and listen to Bach.

Interviewer: Is there a reason for that do you think?

Respondent: Well, again Bach is a very specific kind of challenge to play because he has very intricate counterpoint and as a pianist you have to learn how to play it, it’s a question of the fingering, learning the fingering which is very complicated, you know, his music can be very complicated so it’s a real fun challenge to learn to play a piece by Bach and to perfection of his harmonies and, you know, how the harmony progresses as you move through the piece and how he uses the counterpoint to bring the same melody back in a different guise and then, you know, counteract it with other things. But listening to that is not as enjoyable for me I guess maybe because I feel like I never get a performer who’s really doing what I think should be done with the music, you know? And same thing with Chopin, well, Chopin is a little different, there are some Chopin recordings that I love to listen to and again he has an emotional depth but also an intellectual charm in working out the harmonies and the rhythms and the choices that the interpreter makes because Chopin is a composer who offers you a lot more choices as a performer than most composters do, you can vary the tempo, you know, there’s a thing called rubato and you can slow down and speed up to reflect what you’re trying to express and it’s completely different with every performer and that’s fascinating to listen to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

[0:36:10]

Respondent: And then of course I love to… I still do listen occasionally to opera especially my favourite operas but I don’t have the patience. One of the problems of classical music is it takes a long time to get through some of them usually, you know? A symphony, like yesterday I listened to a symphony by Mahler that I hadn’t heard in years and it’s over an hour long, it’s maybe like an hour and a half long, it’s huge, it’s one of the longest symphonies ever written. And I enjoyed listening to it especially because I hadn’t heard it in a while and by the time I got done I thought, okay, that’s it for that one, you know, I don’t feel like I ever need to listen to it again whereas one of the things I like with pop music, you know, broadly speaking is how concise it is, you know, they make their musical point in three minutes or two minutes or, you know, five or six minutes but they don’t go on and on and on with it they come and everything is very concentrated. And it’s amazing what you can do in a two or three minute song, I love that aspect of it because I’m basically kind of impatient mentally, I don’t have the patience to sit down and do the same thing for two hours in a row, I rarely do that.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay.

Respondent: And the internet indulges people like that who have short attention spans so…

Interviewer: So, I mean going back you’d said earlier that one of your favourite bands of all time was The Incredible String Band.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: So, I mean how would you describe that band?

Respondent: Well, very original, nobody was doing quite what they did, they were very eclectic in their use of instruments, they used all kinds of different instruments and borrowed heavily from folk music recordings of ethnic music from around the world and that kind of thing to the point of plagiarism quite often. And the lyrics were very kind of mystical but also mystifying, you could never quite understand what they were talking about but it clearly had something to do with mystical experiences and they did it all with a very minimal sound I mean they were strictly acoustic instruments. I don’t know if they ever used electric guitars but they would use whatever was to hand, kazoos and little, you know, finger drums and flutes and tin whistles and, you know, different on every song. I don’t know if you know them at all, have you ever heard of…?

Interviewer: I’ve not heard of them at all, no, that’s why I’m interested to know what their sound is.

Respondent: I see, well, they were Scottish or they are Scottish, Robin Williamson was the lead singer who had a lovely tenor voice that I loved to listen to and they did have that kind of British folk style to them but as I say, they were completely original and really like nobody else but very of the moment in the late 60s. I think they were very popular in the UK actually much more so than here but they had a lot of fans in the US too and they toured Europe, you know, several times and originally it was just two guys and they played all the instruments then sort of two women were sort of added to the group who added a little bit different flavour, maybe not quite as… They were professional musicians and it was kind of… they kind of gotten away sometimes, they weren’t always really adding anything to the music. But, yeah, so it was really just the mystical lyrics and the evocative sounds and the other worldly kind of flavour of the music, oh I just really loved them, I still do listen to them sometimes. But, you know, the other thing that happens and maybe this is a characteristic of people who when they’re young you get really passionate about something and you listen to it over and over and then all of a sudden you feel like oh, I don’t need to listen to that anymore, you know, I can evoke it for myself anytime I want or just, you know, I’ve gotten everything out of it that there is to get, I’ve squeezed all the juice out of the orange that’s there. So, I do have a couple playlists of my all time favourite songs, I had the… this is going to sound really silly, I had the feeling if I ever were to become demented or had Alzheimer’s that maybe if I had a playlist that somebody could play me that I put together when I was still, you know, mentally sound that it might revive some kind of ideas within me that otherwise wouldn’t be there because that is true with music that if you listen to it even when you’re very old or, you know, your mind is really going, the music will still make sense to you.

[0:41:32]

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: And so I put together a lifetime favourite list of all the songs that I have enjoyed throughout my life and my thought was I’ll leave instructions with somebody to play it for me when I go into dementia but that’s kind of a silly reason and I do still listen to it just for fun sometimes.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, mm hmm. Well, I mean so I don’t know if you’ve looked at your scrobble log from the week that I’ve observed but last week so you listened to a lot of different artists which makes sense in terms of how you’re describing your music listening to me, I think you nearly had as many artists as you had track streams.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: But the one that came out as what you listened to the most was Prince and then the second was Mahler.

Respondent: Oh Mahler yes.

Interviewer: Gustav Mahler yes, yes, so do you think those two are quite reflective of your broader music tastes?

Respondent: Yes and no or no and yes respectively, Prince is somebody that I did not listen to very much when his music was coming out although I did have one of his albums, Sign of the Times, which I played a lot. I have always liked him but I never really had a priority to listen to his music but now I’m trying again to fill in my knowledge of what he was all about and I just heard a podcast last week where they were talking about his album Dirty Mind and so I thought, well, I better listen to that which was an earlier album before he really kind of exploded and so I listened to that and I listened to a few other things like I wanted to make sure I had the right song on my survey playlist so it doesn’t really reflect my taste, my personal taste although I do like him but he’s not on my top ten ones by any means.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: The Mahler I listen to the Mahler third I think is probably what you’ve got down there…

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: …which as I said, that’s his longest symphony it has six movements so that would show up as six different tracks on Spotify and that piece I’ve heard of course for many years and hadn’t heard in a long time and I thought, well, let me listen to that just so I can go to that Mahler place, you know?

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: And again it’s always with me a question of filling in the gaps of I’m much more likely to listen to something new that I want to learn about than I am to revisit my favourites of the past, and I know a lot of people aren’t like that, they have favourite artists and they listen to them over and over but I’m always more wanting to learn about new things. And even with a composer that I’ve listened to a lot in the past, you know, if I haven’t listened to him in a long time maybe I’ll go back and, you know, relisten to see if there’s more to be gotten out of it than I used to get out of it.

[0:44:59]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay, well, I mean so we’ve talked quite a bit about your music likes, now I’m not sure what response I’m going to get from you but is there any music that you absolutely can’t stand and would never listen to?

Respondent: Ah that is a good question. Well, it was a long time before I learned to like hip-hop, rap music and I still am not a big fan but I felt like I had to start listening to it to make out my, you know, music on the cutting edge list because of course, starting in the 80s that was a very, very important genre of music and so far the early stuff is very primitive and not terribly well constructed and kind of corny really to tell you the truth but I listened to quite a bit of that when I was making up this list so I’m a little more educated about it. The pop music of today does nothing for me, if you want to talk about Beyoncé or Ariana Grande or Bruno Mars or any of those people even Kanye West and, you know, I know who they all are but I really don’t listen to that stuff at all, to me it just sounds very manufactured and fake and I just don’t get any real emotional charge out of it. I feel like I know too much about how the music industry works today and the producers and who are working behind the scenes are really crafting this music almost according to an algorithm and it’s very hard for me to listen to. Anything Katy Perry, Kelly Clarkson, any of those people just does nothing for me so in a sense maybe that’s showing my age and it’s one of the reasons why I stopped my list at ’88 because, you know, after that… well, I did like grunge music at the time quite a lot and I watched all the vid- because I was watching MTV and you’d see the videos and, you know, and Nirvana and Alice In Chains and all those people, Stone Temple Pilots and the Smashing Pumpkins. Then somewhere around 19- in the middle of the 90s I stopped listening to current music and I’ve never really caught up with it again.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: It doesn’t hurt my ears but neither do I… you know, it doesn’t do anything for me.

Interviewer: Okay, well, that’s fair enough. So, I mean it sounds like your music tastes have changed quite a lot over the years in terms of the things that you yourself enjoy.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: I mean is there a reason for this change in your musical taste?

Respondent: Well, that would depend on the circumstances of my life at the time, you know, like I say, when I was a kid my mother was a passionate lover of classical music and she imbued me with that then I went away to boarding school and summer camp and spent most of my year in one or the other of those two places and that was the era of the transistor radio, there was always somebody who had a radio going with the latest pop songs on it and I heard them over and over and liked some, didn’t like others so much. And then there was my, you know, druggie period and then I was listening to all the music that was relevant to that and then that all came to an abrupt halt around 1970 I stopped taking drugs, I started doing transcendental meditation but that didn’t really affect my music listening at all, I was never listening to the new age music or anything like that. But I lived in San Francisco and of course as I said, they had the San Francisco Opera and I started living… I’m gay and I started living with this guy whose taste was completely different from mine whose background was completely different from mine who was lost in a weird place of elevator music and didn’t really have much interest in music at all for himself and his tastes were very old fashioned and strange. And I kind of stopped listening to music during that period and then after a while we broke up and I was on my own but I still didn’t really listen to music very much except just to turn on the radio in the car maybe on my way to work but even then I would be more likely to listen to talk shows. And, you know, then it became a question at some point I was hanging out with people who were audiophiles and it was all about your stereo equipment and how perfectly you could reproduce some music you were listening to. And the only effect that had on me was to become kind of a snob about the quality of the reproduction of the music more than the music itself but I never had the money or the wherewithal to put together a top notch stereo system so I couldn’t really bear to listen to the scratchy old LPs and then when CDs came in everybody was very snobbish about the early CDs they said the sound quality is inferior to the LPs, I don’t know if you know about that whole argument…

[0:50:24]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, yes, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: …the quality of audio files and so it’s almost like rather than listen to a second rate reproduction of something I’d rather not listen at all so I really kind of stopped listening to music almost for a couple of decades there except the occasional concert orchestra or opera that I would go to. And I think I can really say that it wasn’t until the internet came in that I really started listening to music again so we’re talking about maybe the last, gee I don’t know, last five or ten years, Spotify and before that it was Pandora which is very unsatisfactory in many ways because you can’t control what you’re listening to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: But then with Spotify you can find anything and listen to exactly what you want and that revitalised my listening to music. Also, I live in an area where there are very few choices on the radio so, you know, that’s another… I guess what I’m saying is it depends on the vehicle for listening almost more than on the content and if I’m dependent on radio and there aren’t very many good radio stations I’d rather not listen at all. And as I say, I don’t like background music particularly except when I’m driving but around the house I never turn on the radio and have it running in the background while I’m doing housework or whatever, I just don’t do that.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay, that’s great. So, talking about Spotify then, what does Spotify mean to you as a platform?

Respondent: Everything, I mean, you know, the other day I was (laughs) I hate to keep coming back to the research that I do but somebody had posted a playlist that was songs from 1900 to 1999 and I thought oh this is exciting, this is right up my alley but I looked at the list and there was… I don’t know why he said 1900 there was nothing earlier than, you know, maybe the 50s or 60s so I thought, well, why don’t I do a list like that and get one song from every year from 1900 to 1999? And 1900 is a really primitive era for recording they had just barely started doing it but on Spotify I was able to find, you know, some stuff that was from 1900.

Interviewer: Oh gosh, I am surprised.

Respondent: Yeah, well, in those days they were wax cylinders not even discs and then the discs came in I think a couple of years later but they didn’t have much and it wasn’t very good but the fact that it was even there, you know, again was astonishing. Also world music, you know, I got interested in Cuban music at one time, well, there’s tons and tons of stuff, you can go back to the 1930s and listen to Cuban recordings from the 1930s and they have tons of stuff. As long as it’s been reissued in a digital format at some point, put on CD then somebody will upload it to Spotify and there are a few things that I haven’t been able to find but really almost anything you want you can find on there and that’s the exciting part for me. And plus curated lists people will say the best of this and the best of that and whole albums you can listen to a whole album, like I say I listen to Prince, Prince’s Dirty Mind all the way through and there are other albums that I have turned into playlists that I can listen to when I get around to it.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: So, the variety I guess is the number one answer that I would say and –

Interviewer: So, do you feel that you use Spotify to express who you are through music?

[0:54:16]

Respondent: Mm, I would say yes but maybe not in the same way that other people do it because I’m more interested in diversity than in passionate love for a particular artist or particular song so like I said, I’m always trying to hear new things that either I missed when they came out originally or never really was that interested in and now I have the time and the leisure, I’m retired, so I have all day to listen if I want to, you know, as I say it’s filling in the gaps and that is who I am in a sense. It’s not that I have never had passionate emotions about music but it’s been more of an intellectual interest all my life I think.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, mm hmm, so I mean since then using the platform do you feel that your own musical identify has changed and the way you listen to music has that changed or has that stayed relatively the same?

Respondent: No, that’s changed and has been different in different periods and like I say, when I was younger I would listen obsessively to the same artists or songs over and over and I no longer do that so that has changed definitely, I’m not sure if that’s what you’re looking for but…

Interviewer: No, that’s perfect, that’s perfect, so on there do you have connected friends at all, so like when you’re on the desktop version do you have kind of friends showing what they’re streaming down –

Respondent: No…

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: …I don’t do that at all, no.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, is there a reason that you don’t use that feature?

Respondent: It never occurred to me. I’m not real big on social media and that whole aspect of the internet, I’m kind of a loner when it comes to that, I don’t really share things with other people.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay.

Respondent: (Inaudible 0:56:23) you know, something.

Interviewer: Yeah, well, I guess then instead of sharing it on Spotify you’ll tend to share it on Reddit instead.

Respondent: Well, I’m no longer on Reddit.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: I had to break it off because I was spending way too much and getting way too involved with it and I just one day felt like this is not how I want to spend the rest of my life, my older years on Reddit because… I’m not sure why, I think I was kind of obsessing on it and spending so much time that I wasn’t leaving time for other things that I’d really rather do.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: And even when I was on Reddit I did not spend most of my time on the Subreddits that involve sharing music, I did a little bit but other than the times when I was posting these playlists on Spotify and downloading other people’s playlists too and I did quite a bit of that and I still have a lot of those in my collection. If somebody had a title that intrigued me and, you know, like music to listen to on an acid trip, well, in my day of course it was a whole different list that it would be today so I’m curious about what people would be listening to today so I downloaded that one but, no, no, even on Reddit I wasn’t doing a lot of sharing of music, no.

[0:58:07]

Interviewer: Okay, okay. So, I’m interested in understanding a little bit more about your everyday streaming practices on Spotify so I mean what made you pick that platform out of all the others out there as kind of the one to use when streaming your music?

Respondent: Well, I was lucky enough to start listening to Spotify at a time when they had different rules than they do now, I don’t have premium, I don’t pay for it but I’ve been grandfathered in to the ability to choose exactly what I want to listen to at any time which is now only available apparently to premium subscribers but because I subscribed so early I still have that.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent: The only disadvantage of not having premium now is that I have to listen to ads which of course I, you know, don’t especially like but I can put up with so, you know, maybe at some point I will subscribe to premium so that I can have complete control over what I listen to. But other than that, you know, they have good search capability, you can find other people’s playlists that meet your needs and I’m not sure, I can’t really say anything about the sound quality which I guess a lot of people don’t think is very good because I guess they use the MP3 format and a lot of people don’t think MP3 is very good audio. I did subscribe to TIDAL which is advertising they have much better sound quality but they want $20 a month which is crazy. That is a lot and so I de-subscribed from that, it’s not worth it to me, the difference… I can hear some difference but not enough to be worth $20 a month.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay, so I mean when you go onto Spotify then how do you tend to stream your music, what kind of things do you use for your music streaming?

Respondent: What do you mean?

Interviewer: So, when you’re on there do you know what you want to listen to as soon as you enter the platform?

Respondent: Yeah generally, I’m either searching for specific artists or a specific song or a specific album or listening to a playlist, I tend to use Shuffle quite a lot these days. When I’m just listening for fun I usually use Shuffle, like if I had a playlist that I’m interested in either one that I’ve made or somebody else has especially… well, especially if it’s one that I’ve made I’ll just go to Shuffle because I don’t necessarily want to hear everything in the same order all the time. Other than that I’m, you know, I’m still doing research and still making up playlists so I look for very specific songs, sometimes I go there because on some other website I’ve read about somebody or some song and I want to hear it so I go look for that specific song, I do that quite a lot like if I’m listening to a music podcast and they’re talking about Prince say or Michael Jackson or whatever and it’s something that I haven’t heard, I’ll go to Spotify so I can hear it so I can understand what the article or the podcast is talking about, I do that a lot.

Interviewer: Okay. And then how does the album listening that you’ve talked about fit into your streaming practices?

Respondent: Well, again it’ll be either getting a recommendation from somebody like this is the greatest album ever made or something, you know, OK Computer by Radiohead or something like that so then I’ll go to listen to that and I’ll listen to that all the way through or something from the post punk era or, you know, something that I’m trying to learn more about and… you know, when I say exploring things to learn about them it’s not just because I think they’re important historically, it’s in the hopes that I will enjoy them too, you know, if somebody says this is the greatest album ever I’ll say, well, I want to hear that, you know, let’s hear why it’s good and if I agree or not. So, yeah, so it really is all admittedly to enhance my own enjoyment but my enjoyment is in learning new things rather than just listening to the same old stuff all the time.

[1:02:55]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, mm hmm, okay, so in your streaming do you use any of Spotify’s service features?

Respondent: I tend not to, you mean like the Daily Mix and that stuff?

Interviewer: Yeah, Daily Mix, Discover Weekly, Release Radar, that type of thing?

Respondent: Very, very rarely because I found for instance on the Daily Mix a lot of times they just repeat the same titles that I’ve already listened to, they’re not giving me anything different that I would add to what I already enjoy or what I already know so I tend not to use their recommendations features very much.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. So, have you got any idea how many tracks roughly you’ve got in your Spotify library?

Respondent: Thousands without any doubt.

Interviewer: And I imagine they’re all quite eclectic as well.

Respondent: Yes, they’re quite eclectic and it doesn’t mean that I’ve even listened to them all but I’ve made up playlists, for example I had one of *[playlist name]* and there’s an immense collection of old Cuban music, I don’t know why that got singled out but I downloaded the whole… not downloaded but saved the whole thing and I’ve only listened to a fraction of it but it’s all there somewhere and African music too is another one that I got interested in for a while. And I never throw anything away I mean why would I? So, yes, I’ve got thousands of items on my playlists, in my library.

Interviewer: Okay, so in terms of selecting music to listen to, are you kind of most of the time using the search feature that you’ve mentioned or are you picking music based on anything else?

Respondent: Well, I either use search or go to playlists that I already know about either ones that I’ve created or other people have and listen on those, about evenly divided between those two methods I would say.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And then in a typical day then how are you using Spotify for your streaming and what kinds of music do you stream throughout the day?

Respondent: Well, again it depends but mostly the last year or two I’ve been working on my own playlists on developing them so I will either listen to the stuff that I’ve already put on the list or search for alternatives that might be better selections for the list, yeah.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: And that’s based on my own recollection of what was the important music during that period or research I’ve done for stuff that I don’t know that much about, you know, I go to the web quite often to find lists like I thought, well, I need to have a, let’s say I need to have a song by Hüsker Dü, you know, in the 1980s so then I will search on Google for greatest Hüsker Dü songs. And there will be tons of lists that people have put up, you know, my favourite Hüsker Dü songs or some rock critic will have listed here’s the ones that you must listen to by Hüsker Dü and so then I will go to Spotify to find those songs, listen to them and decide for myself which one I think is the best and most important and add to my list so I have one song by Hüsker Dü. And because that was not somebody I listened to at the time they were recording, I rely on the opinion of people who are either, you know, so called experts in rock and roll or just big fans who have their own favourite songs. It took a lot of time to get a song by the Grateful Dead because as I’m sure you know, the Grateful Dead has the most fanatical cult following of any rock group ever, people make their whole careers out of, you know, recording and talking about it and listening to Grateful Dead songs and there are many books written and whole websites about them. And all their live concerts were recorded usually in very good quality so if you want to know what was the best performance ever of Dark Star it’s very easy to find somebody who has an opinion on that and that’s what I ended up doing on my list it’s like I got the one that had the highest rating, you know, on the consensus of Grateful Dead [cuts off] so that kind of thing is very helpful to me in filling in the gaps on my list which is really my main interest at this point.

[1:07:44]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, mm hmm. And do you feel that what you listen to changes at different times of the day or perhaps on different days or different situations?

Respondent: Well, I’ve discovered very interesting phenomenon which is that sometimes as I’m just kind of sitting in my recliner here I feel like just it would be nice to drift off to sleep, it’d be nice to take a nap so unlike most people who might put on the most soothing music to listen to, I find that the most… music that really has a strong beat and it might be kind of loud like the heavy metal actually puts me to sleep.

Interviewer: No!

Respondent: Yes. Something with a really strong beat it’s like I can just kind of focus in on it and let my mind go, not think about anything and just have this music on in the background and I drift right off to sleep, so hard rock or heavy metal or any of that kind of stuff. I don’t usually have the volume up all the way but that repetitive, that strong repetitive beat really puts me to sleep and I don’t know why that is, that’s very odd.

Interviewer: That is quite an achievement to sleep to heavy metal music.

Respondent: Yeah, or really beat heavy dance music, you know, or that kind of thing I’ll just drift right off so I don’t go figure.

Interviewer: And so do you have any other go to genres for certain things that you do during the day?

Respondent: No, not really because usually when I’m listening I’m not doing anything else I just listen and I have very irregular sleep habits these days so I will sleep during the day and be awake at night quite often and it doesn’t really matter, whenever I’m awake if I want to listen I’ll just listen to the same stuff I don’t, no.

Interviewer: Okay. So, when you’re streaming music are you streaming it on the public setting of Spotify or the private setting?

Respondent: Oh I never use the private setting.

Interviewer: You never use it.

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Is there a reason that you’ve never kind of used that setting for your streaming?

Respondent: I’ve never saw any reason to use it, what does it even do? Does it just mean that people can’t tell what you’re… I don’t know, what does it even do?

[1:10:09]

Interviewer: Yeah, so the private setting kind of means that nobody else can watch what you’re streaming when you’re online and also it kind of shields it from Spotify so people sometimes use it if they’re listening to music that they don’t want to have then picked up for personalisation.

Respondent: Oh I see, no, no I don’t care about that at all, I didn’t even realise they were doing that so, no, I just as soon have it public, I have no secrets from Spotify (laughs).

Interviewer: So, we’ve talked then how you don’t necessarily delete music from your music library but how often are you adding new stuff in there?

Respondent: Daily.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Respondent: Yeah, well, I was when I was on Reddit, I would go into their Spotify Subreddit and people were posting their own playlists, I would quite often save those playlists to listen to later and quite often I have never gotten back to them to listen to but they’re all there if I ever want to. Now it’s not quite so much of that kind of thing because I’m not really on any social media platform right now but as far as my own stuff, yeah, and I’ve been also… Well, as I said I have a couple of different ways of saving stuff that I especially like just to listen to and one of course is Your Favourite Songs with the little heart which I do for something that I really kind of like and would love to hear again. And then I have my *[playlist name],* which is stuff that I listen to from my earliest childhood all the way up to the I guess up to the present although most of them are pretty old, of songs that are representative of what I used to listen to so that’s two examples of places where I put stuff that I especially like and want to make sure I don’t forget about. And then I’ve had a couple of interesting playlists like *[playlist name]* is strange, exotic and bizarre music with a haunting atmosphere or a tropical flavour, you know, like literally voodoo music from the Caribbean or some other haunting songs that, you know, have been recorded over the years, that’s kind of a silly list but it’s kind of fun so a few things like that.

Interviewer: Okay, so I mean playlists have come up quite a few times when you’ve been talking about using Spotify so are playlists quite important to you for your music streaming?

Respondent: Yes they are because that’s the way my mind works, I’m a categoriser and a list maker so I will come up with an idea for, you know, certain types of music that I want to group together and I’ll make a playlist out of it or I will go to somebody else’s list who’s done the same kind of thing.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so have you –

Respondent: So, I (overspeaking) playlists a lot.

Interviewer: Yeah. Have you got any idea how many personal playlists you have created?

Respondent: Well, that’s a little tricky because when I was creating my *[playlist name]* and I wanted to have two songs for every year, I would collect songs from a certain year so I have a playlist for every year so I have then my *[playlist name]* playlist, my *[playlist name]* playlist and that would be like the semi-finalist of the finalist to be chosen which would be narrowed down to two so to make sure that I didn’t miss anything that might be really worth putting on the list. So, I have subsidiary playlists like that that I don’t really listen to but that I collected and/or use it as an organising method to organise songs by year and also sometimes by artist so I have a lot of those so that adds up to a pretty good selection of the number of playlists but as for the absolute number of playlists that I have under my own name, I don’t know if you kind of look I don’t know if they tell you that or not, easily 100 for sure.

Interviewer: Wow, that is a lot.

[1:14:54]

Respondent: Yeah, I would say probably around one hundred and something, over 100, you know.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, mm hmm, so how many of them are then linked to genre in year and how many are kind of other types of playlists that you have?

Respondent: I would say maybe two thirds of them were ones that I put together to make my master lists and the others are either ones I’ve gotten from somebody else or that I put together for a different reason.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And how often do you actually go and listen to them? Is there kind of one that you have that you listen to most of all?

Respondent: Well, I still listen to, you know, once I’ve done my own curated playlists I then will quite often go back and listen to them to enjoy my brilliance in selecting just the right songs or just for fun to listen to and those are the top of the top, those are the ones that I really stand behind as being worth listening to and so I will go back to those and listen to them myself. And then from time to time I’ll listen to the ones that I never got around to from Reddit or other people see what’s in them and if they’re worth listening to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And do you have then one that you feel is like your go to playlist that you listen to most often?

Respondent: That would be my music from the *[playlist name],* that’s really my master list that I spent more time on really than everything else put together and I’m still working on it, I still make changes to it.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so that’s as well what I was going to ask, are your kind of collections of curated music are they quite static in that once you’ve made them you then never add or delete anything or are they quite dynamic that you’re constantly editing them?

Respondent: Well, that depends on the list, the dance music lists I think are pretty set because I was very inclusive in those, I really put in anything I could think of that would qualify as dance music from the years that were concerned so the 60s and 70s is what those are and those I’ve pretty much left alone. If I find something new that I didn’t know about I might put it in but I don’t shuffle them around or delete things because there’s no limit to the size of the lists. See, the *[playlist name]* is trickier because I wanted to limit myself to two songs per year and one song per artist or group and that meant I had to set priorities, I’m constantly saying okay, well, the Stones let’s get rid of Give Me Shelter and put back in Satisfaction because it’s really more important than Give Me Shelter though I think Give Me Shelter’s a better song. So, the criteria it depends on my shifting criteria as to whether I’m going for what I consider are the best songs or what I consider were the songs that were most cutting edge for their time.

Now, I ended up having to put more than two songs to some of the years because it was just too hard to cut it down that much but I still limit the number of songs per year and so I have to do a lot of editing to that list as I come up with new ideas and learn more about for example, the 80s which I wasn’t paying much attention to at the time or the post punk era which to me now is extremely important and wonderful and I love to listen to the songs from the late 70s or early 80s. That was sometimes called… By the way you might be interested in the second, the second British wave after the Beatles and so forth and then the post punk era you start getting all The Clash and The Cure and the… Who are those guys? My memory’s failing me. Anyway, all those people from that era.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. So, just remind me then so what years then does *[playlist name]* go from and to?

[1:19:24]

Respondent: It starts in 1948 and it goes to 1988 so it’s a pretty big list actually, it’s about 90 plus songs on that list.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And then what about Spotify’s playlists, do you ever listen to the ones that the platform itself creates?

Respondent: No, I can’t say I do, no.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Is there a reason that you don’t really listen to them?

Respondent: No, just I’m more interested in exploring for myself rather than having Spotify… I don’t know, no, I really can’t think of a good reason for that, just not something I’ve ever been interested in.

Interviewer: Yeah, that’s fair enough. So, moving on then to music discovery, so would you say you’re a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: Yes, well, new to me not necessarily music that’s coming out in 2019 but music that I haven’t heard before, yes, I’m very interested in that.

Interviewer: And why are you so interested in that? What is it about discovering new music that you enjoy?

Respondent: Well, I do this in other areas too, I like new subject areas, I read books on things that I don’t know about, I just have a very questioning mind, I’m always wanting to learn new stuff that I didn’t know about and certainly with music too because as I say, it’s filling in the gaps, I know certain areas pretty well and then I like to expand beyond them or, you know, go to things that are completely new to me, I just always find it interesting, I love learning about new things.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And would you say there are types of music that you like to discover more than others?

Respondent: Well, now it’s been the pop music of the past, of eras that I didn’t really know much about and also world music, you know, like I say Cuban music or African music, Middle East, areas like that, almost anything really I’m pretty open and now as I say, I’m starting to learn about hip-hop, that’s going kind of slowly because I still don’t quite get it. Well, some people are…it’s been hugely influential and it’s bled into other kinds of music too like pop music, I’m not against it I just it’s taking me a while to kind of get the feeling of it, you know?

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, I can imagine. So, I mean has there ever been any types of music that you’ve really wanted to research or kind of listen to that Spotify hasn’t had or have you not come across that?

Respondent: There were some things that I was disappointed…. They didn’t have much gospel music.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

[1:22:39]

Respondent: (Inaudible 1:22:39) especially old gospel music it’s very sparse on Spotify, I was disappointed in that because that has been one of my great interests at one time. I’ve gone through periods of my life when I was really interested in certain genres or types of music and then I would drop them and go onto something else, like at one time I was really interested in jazz music and now I rarely listen to it and gospel also I went through a period with that.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: So, yeah, there have been periods when I’ve been passionately interested in one particular kind of music and that I might when I’ve gotten as much out of that as I felt like I, you know, or for whatever reason I would then move onto something else.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. So, what do you consider to be your main sources for music discovery?

Respondent: The web and either seeing something referred to in passing or, you know, researching on the web to see what people consider the best of a genre or period so the web rather than social media, I mean I don’t use social media at all really but I still Google things a lot –

Interviewer: Mm hmm, so when you’re talking about the web then are you talking about kind of using search engines like Google or...

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: …are there particular web pages that you go to, you know, to kind of look -

Respondent: Well, there is one website that I found very useful when I was doing my main playlists which is DigitalDreamDoor, I don’t know if you know about that?

Interviewer: No, never heard of that one.

Respondent: Yeah, it’s digitaldreamdoor.com and they have tons and tons of lists like literally they will have The 100 Best Songs of 1952, I mean it’s really amazing, it’s an absolutely essential resource for somebody who’s doing the kind of collecting that I was.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: And then there are other things like Pitchfork, it’s a very good source for finding recommendations for music, they also do a lot of lists, The 100 Greatest Songs of the 80s, The 100 Greatest Albums of the 90s all that kind of stuff, very, very definitive and then there’s other ones too that I’ve used more than once.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. So, do you ever use any of Spotify’s discovery tools?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: No, so the recommendations that they give to you in terms of things like similar artists, Discover Weekly, you kind of never engage with?

Respondent: A little bit, a little bit, sometimes they’ll list you might also enjoy at the bottom of my playlists they’ll have a few things but they’re usually things that I already know about.

Interviewer: Ah okay.

Respondent: And they have trouble with my list because it’s so eclectic.

[1:24:44]

Interviewer: I was going to say, yeah, I bet they… because obviously most people have kind of particular genres that they gravitate to but with your listening I imagine Spotify’s thinking there could be 20 people using the same account (laughs).

Respondent: Well, as I say, I will sometimes accept one of their recommendations but the problem is a lot of times they just relist the things that I already have on my list which isn’t helpful at all so…

Interviewer: So, I mean do you feel then in that kind of sense that Spotify still allows you to construct and manage your music tastes if, you know, you don’t feel their recommendations are on point for you?

Respondent: They could be a little more helpful, they could provide more tools for people that are making up playlists and I’m going to have a little trouble here remembering but I have thought at times that I wish there were ways to organise things differently. They have improved that now, they have better tools now than they used to have but for example, when you have as many playlists as I do it sometimes takes an annoyingly long time to find the one you want or if you have very long playlists it takes time to find a particular song on the playlist but I’m probably not using search as much as I could be because I know you can search… you can type in the name of one of your own playlists and search and will find it right away so really that’s what I should just do, instead I find myself a lot of times just scrolling and scrolling and scrolling which is annoying, you know, so I’m probably not using the tools that they already have as much as I could be.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, but you feel for yourself it requires some more organisation tools for you to get the most out of it?

Respondent: Yeah, that would be nice.

Interviewer: I mean in general then what do you think to its interface?

Respondent: Of Spotify?

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Respondent: I think it’s pretty good and I think they’ve recently improved it and… Oh I know one that was driving me crazy was adding a song to an existing list, so you’re listening to a song and you click where it says save to playlist and you find your playlist and you add it to the list and it’s always put down way down on the bottom of the list and it’s very difficult to move it up but now they’ve fixed that it’s much better now.

Interviewer: Mm hmm but do you feel that its interface influences or shapes your music listening?

Respondent: No, not really except that obviously if I already have something in a list it’s easier to just go to the list and find it than to look for something new, I don’t know but, no, that’s not a major factor for me.

Interviewer: Okay. And do you ever foresee a time where you feel like you might switch to a different platform and not use Spotify?

Respondent: Well, I thought of switching to TIDAL because the report was that their audio quality was better but one of the problems of that is that then I’d have to transfer the lists that I really care about over to them and then there was supposed to be an easy way to do that but I couldn’t make it work and so I gave up on that so the investment that I already have in Spotify makes it likely that I’ll keep using them indefinitely but if somebody came up with something that was better and it was easy to transfer my lists over there then, sure, I would do it.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

[1:29:33]

Respondent: And I may switch to Spotify Premium at some point just to lock in the stuff that I already have and not to have to listen to the ads but for now I’m fine with the set up that I have.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. I mean in terms of I mean you’ve made an incredible investment in obviously creating all these playlists, have you got them stored elsewhere outside of Spotify or some kind of record of them that exists beyond Spotify?

Respondent: No, I haven’t done that and there probably is a way to do it, I probably should look into that that I don’t get stuck sometime with some horrific crash that destroys everything I’ve already done, that would be terrible.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Okay, and when you’re on the platform how aware are you that it’s kind of collecting data about your streaming when you’re on there?

Respondent: I never think about it.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Is it something that bothers you or doesn’t really bother you?

Respondent: It doesn’t bother me at all, in fact I wish they would use that to come up with better recommendations for me, maybe I should look into that a little bit more than I have because they do come on every day with those Daily Mixes and all that stuff and maybe I should make more use of those, maybe I should look into those a little more.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, I mean in terms of then of when you say you would like them to use it for better recommendations, what is something or some things that would make recommendations better for you? What are you kind of looking for in what they give you?

Respondent: Something that I haven’t already heard that’s similar to stuff I do listen to so to help me explore even further.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. So, my final question is that obviously now you’ve been through all phases of my research so you’ve done the survey, you’ve done the online observation and today the interview, I mean has that caused you to reflect or change any of your existing Spotify practices at all?

Respondent: Well, only what we just said that maybe I should be looking more at their recommendations than I have been and also to think about whether there is some platform where I could share all the work I’ve put into this with more people I mean I’d love to do that, I’d love to have people listening to my lists and it didn’t really happen with Reddit but maybe there’s some other platform where that would, you know, be more likely to happen.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. On what was it, the platform, the Digital Dream Door that you talk about, do they not allow you to put your own content on there? Is that an avenue -

Respondent: I don’t think that’s what they’re about so much, they have a group of people that prepare these incredible lists and I don’t know where they come from or how they know each other, I’ve never looked into that as a platform to me it’s just a website.

Interviewer: Ah okay.

Respondent: I’ve never thought of sharing anything there but I should look at it and see what else they’ve got.

Interviewer: Mm hmm, well, definitely because you’ve invested all this work and effort it would be a shame not to have other people look at it.

[1:32:49]

Respondent: And maybe someday I will go back to Reddit and share again and see what happens but that’s something I haven’t pursued as much as I probably should have.

Interviewer: Right, well, that’s all the questions from me, so is there anything from your side that you would like to touch on or expand on or, you know, talk about –

Respondent: No, I wish you the best of luck, I think this is going to be a big job, I think…

Interviewer: Yes, it feels like it (laughs).

Respondent: …interviewing people one at a time for an hour each is going to take up a lot of time I think by the time you get something that’s statistically meaningful if that’s what you’re going for.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah.

Respondent: (Overspeaking) but I think it’s a great idea and I think you’re right on the cutting edge of what’s happening now so, no, I think it’s really worthwhile research and I wish you the best of luck. I think you have a really good attitude and I think you’ll probably do very well.

Interviewer: Oh thank you very much, that’s very kind of you, it’s always nice to hear that other people find what I’m doing interesting because…

Respondent: No, I think it’s very interesting.

Interviewer: …yeah, I mean because I mean you’ve probably found yourself when you’re researching you kind of become in this bubble and you’re like will anybody else find it interesting or is it just me? So, it’s always good to hear.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, that’s absolutely the issue so…

Interviewer: Yes, yeah, well, thank you so much for taking time out of your afternoon, I thoroughly appreciate it.

Respondent: Well, I enjoyed it very much and I enjoyed having a chance to be more explicit and, you know, verbal about the things that I do because it made me think about it a lot.

Interviewer: Yeah, well, I mean fascinating, it’s been fascinating to hear you talk and about what you use Spotify for and all the research you put into it, it’s been so, so interesting so I can’t thank you enough for agreeing to have an interview with me.

Respondent: Okay.

[1:35:26]

Interviewer: Alright, well, thank you so much, I’ll let you get on then with the rest of your day.

Respondent: Alright, nice to talk to you –

Interviewer: Alright, speak to you soon.

Respondent: Alright.

Interviewer: Bye.

Respondent: Bye bye.

[End of Transcript]

# Transcript: In-21-M

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Right, I’m going to put the recorder there and hopefully it’ll pick up both of us. So right, thank you very much for agreeing to take part in an interview today, I really appreciate it. The way it’ll work is the interview will last roughly around an hour, but it’s very much based on your responses to questions, so how much you want to elaborate or talk about things. As well, if there’s anything that you don’t want to talk about, that’s perfectly fine as well, no problem, just say so. So I have some general questions that I’ve asked everybody that I’ve interviewed so far, and also some ones that I have based on the streaming that I’ve observed in the last week. So I’ll try not to interrupt you when you talk, but it may be a case of I just jot down a couple of notes while you’re responding. They’re purely just for me to kind of…if maybe I’ve not understood something or maybe I would like you to expand on something a little bit more, they’re just prompts for me to follow up on. I’ve also got a recorder audio-recording our interview today, so if you’re happy to do that?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, so before we get started, is there anything, any questions that you have about how it’s going to work or anything like that?

Respondent: No, just ask me.

Interviewer: Okay. So firstly I’d like to know a bit about whether and how music relates to your identity. So to get us started; how would you describe yourself as a music listener?

Respondent: I think I probably have different music for different kind of parts of my life. So probably kind of…favourite music, but then also music that kind of is me at different times. So like, probably you don’t just…isn’t…probably my identity’s probably for music is probably sometimes might look different at different times, like, maybe in the mornings, I would be different, like, getting…quite upbeat and things, and then that’s probably also similar for my general kind of preferences, like quite upbeat and dancey music. But then, I also probably have a bit more of a mix as well, especially on long drives or sometimes just, like, if you’re in a different mood, like, to probably… But generally, most of the time it’s probably like this upbeat, dance kind of… I don’t know, a feel-good type of music.

Interviewer: Okay. So when you say then ‘different music for different parts of your life’, can you explain a little bit more what you mean by that?

Respondent: So I’d probably have…probably throughout my life I’ve had different phases of change of music preferences, so probably when I was younger, I liked sort of more rock music and punk rock music, and then I also liked kind of throughout time, like, different types of acoustic, kind of chill-out music, which sort of suits the mood if I’m just wanting to feel a little bit more relaxed, like a Sunday afternoon type vibe. But then, I’ve also had periods of time of kind of preferring more pop music and dance-y music and then a lot more kind of house-type dance music. And so then, sometimes it’s more of a mood of preferring to go back to kind of remembering some kind of…almost like childhood…classics from my life. But then, as well as having those phases, it might…they kind of feed into sort of day-to-day. So like in the mornings, like I said, I’ll have some upbeat, like dance favourites, that kind of wake me up and get me going for the day. And then I’ll tend to then, when I get to work at school, I’ll tend to have, I’m in a classroom, probably some more pop/chilled-out music, partly in case other people come in and children come in, but then also just to kind of get in a focus, so you’re ready for working, like a happy focus. And then after school, I tend to sometimes have…that can be more dependent on the mood, like, if I’m doing paperwork and marking books on my own, but that’s when I sometimes might put on some of the rock music and things just as, like, a kind of background music. And if I’m…if later I go and do some exercise or something, I’ll have some house/dance music, but maybe just from my favourites or just stick on a playlist and that’s obviously that classic upbeat exercise music. And then, if I know I’m going out or getting ready to go out, then I’ll have some of my kind of favourite DJs on to sort of get me in the mood. But partly you always puts, like, it’s my favourite beats or tracks.

[00:06:42]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay. So just then for me to understand, so when you say, ‘different music for different parts of your life’, you’re talking about different music for different phases of your life and also different music for different times of the day and times of the week?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. So in terms of then talking about these phases of music change that you’ve touched upon. Is there anything that you feel has inspired that change in your musical taste over time?

Respondent: Probably the people around me has probably changed things, inspired things, so I mean…not that I just like music just because that’s what people around me like, but you tend to…I think people tend to…and I think I have kind of had similar social preferences to the people around you because that’s why they’re the people around you. That’s why you like those people and sort of a circle, if you like, those people. And music is often quite centric…quite a social thing, so you not only is it something that might be a talking point for me and friends, but it might be like an actual activity, so whether you’re going to, like, a gig, or whether you’ve got music on in the background somewhere, so you’re all kind of enjoying the same music and so it would be twofold – you’re listening to that music and enjoying it, also you probably would be not doing the same thing, so we probably would have different friends. So there’s that – the people around me, but then also, I think then I’ve always kind of…when I listen to music, I’ve always been one of those people that will always look at the related artists and things. So I remember when I was younger, like, we would also…like the rock music, like punk-rock music, but then some of my friends were liking some of the more metal, like rock-metal music, like Metallica and things, and I did for a while, but then I did deviate in terms of I tended to get, like some more of the pop-rock music, which probably… Like I say, it was probably from me doing quite a lot of music exploring with the whole looking at related artists and things, even like way back before you really… Before people downloaded music, I remember if you looked at CDs on HMV websites, they had, like, “Related to this artist – you might like…” on CDs and things. And then, yeah, I guess meeting different friends kind of…I still had the similar…same friends, but I’d introduced to some kind of some new music styles that people were doing, and I think kind of took preference to some of those, so I’ve ended up with quite an eclectic sort of collection of musical taste. That a lot of newer ones that I prefer and again, then kind of created my own sort of preference playlists, not just actual playlists, but like, collection of artists that I prefer, which are similar to one group of friends and similar to another group of friends. But kind of got my own preferences within those genres.

Interviewer: Okay, so I’m kind of interested in that you say that you kind of formed the whole connections through music, so I’m wondering which way round did that happen? Were you friends with the people first and then kind of were interested in the music that they liked? Or were you interested in the music first and then became friends with people who had similar music tastes to yourself?

Respondent: It’s possibly a hard one to work out in terms of it…

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: In some ways, it… I think when I was younger, those kind of happened… It almost feels like they happened together, but maybe there was one over the other in terms of… I think probably influences probably were passed down and you would lean towards your preferences as well, maybe, like, in school. I think at high school and things, I think… If you end up in certain social groups, and then probably preferred that music, but probably then whilst social groups were still more fluid, then probably would then kind of make more social connections with lots more people and older people and as I grew older, with those music preferences. So I probably did…it probably initially was some friends that brought those music tastes through, because I think you’ve got to get those from somewhere, and I think at an early age, like, 13/14, you don’t… I didn’t kind of go out and seek a variety, like a whole collection of different genres and then just choose my preference. I think that was probably influenced from the friends that I ended up with. But then, like I say, I think from then having the musical preferences, that did make friendships. And then, later on with a bit of a swing from rock music to dance music, I think a similar thing happened probably – friends and people that I ended up being around probably made me think more and listen to other things and other genres of music that then being within that, having some of those preferences in terms of music and probably general, like, and other things probably, like, because it influences fashion and activities, probably then created some more…made friendships from those preferences.

[00:14:16]

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Okay. So you just said there then, that it influences fashion and activities – in what kind of way do you mean? Would you mind just expanding on that a little bit more?

Respondent: So when I was younger, I think probably from being, like, a really young, like primary school, and probably just…if I wasn’t in school uniform, I probably just wore, like, tracky bottoms and t-shirts and all, like, kind of general sportswear and very casualwear stuff. But then, being influenced and being around people that…they liked lots of rock and metal music and punk music, led me to kind of wear the same styles of clothes, so I’d often wear rock-band t-shirts, maybe, like, baggy jeans, although I think fashion’s probably…as well as being music, influence…time influence as well in terms of, as the years change. And then, and kind of big chunky trainers and things like that. But then, later on in the years, probably changed, when my music tastes got more broad and then kind of mainstream and then dance-orientated, probably was more conscious of mainstream fashion and I think probably changed places that I was going to which was…going to different places with friends and then obviously making new friends because of the places I was going to. So rather than going to gigs and rock music-based places, tended to…a lot of activities, places, gigs and clubs and things and bars and things like that, have a music base, like a music background and… So those places would then change to more mainstream, more dance clubs and bars and things.

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, how do your music tastes relate to your friendship groups now?

Respondent: They’re now…I’m becoming old…(laughter). I probably have just kind of a few, more of a…what’s the word? Like more ranging, eclectic connections, so like, I still speak to a few of the friends and people that had some of my early, like, preferences with and social circles with. Although, some of those people have kept their music preferences and some of those people have changed music preferences, a little bit like me, but still the same friends. And then some people, friends that I’ve kind of gained through later years, I will share music preferences with them. So my later-year friends and my music preferences are more mainstream and dance that I’ve picked up with some of the friends that I still connect with them and so I listen to that more because that’s…my new preference. But I still listen to and share sort of older and new preferences with old and new friends – even though both sets are kind of depleted, I’ve still got those different…multiple sort of options.

Interviewer: So it sounds then…so do you go back and revisit music from kind of…well, the music that you would listen to when you were younger?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And is there a particular time when you would do that?

Respondent: Normally…probably two times; one time is probably when I’ve almost kind of got sort of time on my hands, almost, sort of like if I’m…I don’t know, if I’ve been off for a while or if I’ve got a long drive and I want to change the style of music, or might be kind of be off work for a while and again, like a change or just think back and think…just…sometimes my old memories just pop in your head and so I might play some old music and then get into it for a little bit of time. Or like sometimes I use the time after school when the children have left at work to play something different, because dance music and mainstream music is the most played in my life, if I had like a ‘life record’, you know, it would be like a life album and most of the tracks would be mainstream and dance music. But then I’d probably have a small section of, like, rock and punk music, or pop-rock music. So that’s kind of a nice kind of background music sort of time. But so it would be like times when it’s almost times without purpose, so like, when it doesn’t matter about necessarily having my new favourites, and it’s more kind of relaxed, when I go back to some of those. And then times with more purpose tend to be my newer, modern mainstream favourites, because they’re kind of favourites that they have more of that effect of being uplifting or focusing or feeling good because they’re my favourites and perhaps they’re playing when I’m out.

[00:21:10]

Interviewer: Okay. So right, so we’ve talked about how friendship groups have inspired a change in your music tastes. Have there been any other circumstances that perhaps might have changed your music taste? So life experiences or anything like that?

Respondent: I can’t think of any, but then a bit like the friendships thing, I think these things almost happen sometimes not so consciously and so there might have been, but I think friendship changes and things is probably the main change. Probably…yeah, I think so, although I think becoming an adult, sort of ages, 18/19/20, I always felt like a bit of a change in terms of… I know some, obviously some people still carry on liking rock and metal music when they’re adults, which is fine, a lot of my friends did, but for me, maybe because it was a bit part of my teenage years, it felt for me almost as if when I started hearing more music, I kind of felt like it was a childhood and teenage part of my life and so, I was...I kind of slowed down some of the activities, like didn’t…it was kind of more reluctant to go to gigs where you might have, like, mosh-pits, or like different kind of atmospheres. And so, and I tend to enjoy the atmosphere and the dancing of more mainstream clubs and things, I sort of became, like, late 19/20 and I think with more people enjoying that, like, and having… So I tended to…I think maybe there is a thing that I changed a few locations a couple of times, I changed jobs a couple of times. And so when I was meeting new people, more often than not, everyone…general people and people without… Unless you know that they are in a more specific group, like a rock and metal group, then people will just go to a place that plays a bit more mainstream music and so that’s…mainstream music is a bit more akin to dance music, I would say, than some of the forms. So I…because you might go to a nightclub and they play dance music. So that’s probably another factor.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Getting old.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s great. So broadly then, what does music mean to you?

Respondent: I think most of the time it’s just about… I think it just helps with a feeling, so I think a lot of the time for me, music is about feeling happy, so I’ll usually… So I know that I can put some of my favourite music tracks on in the morning, particularly ones that have got upbeat tempos and bass-filled, and that’ll make me kind of feel good for the day and happy. And I think I had the same…probably had the same feeling when I was younger with the different genre of music, so when me and my friends like rock and punk and metal music, I would always like the bands and the tracks that played music at a fairly fast tempo and had, like, a good bassline and things, even though it was a different genre, I think I still had a preference to the similar attributes to rock and punk music. Like I say, in terms of being upbeat and fast tempo and bass, melodies and things. So those same attribute, I think I really accredit to mainstream dance music now, which I have more preferences to, that give me that good feeling of…When I used to play more sport, so kind of put those songs on before and feel a bit of a… I guess it gives you a bit of an adrenaline rush and would make me feel good, that kind of happy feeling of listening to it. And I think it’s probably a similar feeling that I would get if I went to a rock-band gig or a dance DJ in a club of that happy vibe and feeling of being upbeat, and then I probably carry that into playing…when I’m getting ready to go out or in the car going somewhere, so I have that kind of happy feeling from it.

[00:27:44]

Interviewer: So, for you, has music got a role for your identity?

Respondent: Maybe this is the same thing like making me feel…giving me that happy feeling. And a sort of…the question feels similar to the last one.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Is that…?

Interviewer: Yeah, that’s fine, no, that’s perfect.

Respondent: I must admit, it’s no different.

Interviewer: No, that’s fine. So, I mean, has there ever been an instance where you’ve used music to reflect who you are to somebody? So for example, have you ever played a song to somebody to kind of show, “This is me; this is what I like”?

Respondent: Yeah, there’s probably different occasions, probably when I would consider what I’m playing. And probably consider what I’m playing to want to show who I am. So there’s probably some songs that I might listen to and I think, “That’s not really what I listen most of the times, I probably don’t want people to think that is me.” Like, maybe if I have other people in the car, I might skip to…or I will often… I’ve got, like, a car playlist, which is mostly just my favourite dance tracks, and…but so I might be in the car and I might have had a journey where I’ve put on sort of an old metal band just for a change, to think back to, but then if I know I’m giving someone a lift in the car or something, I would probably… I would probably make sure before they get in the car, I would switch to my current car playlist, so they don’t think, “Oh, he…” Well, I guess there’s nothing bad that they would think, but I would say I guess I think…so they know what I want to…I want them to think of my personal…music personality is, so I think I’ve always thought about it.

I remember on the…when people used to use iPods, I had an iPod, on it there was one of the playlists that the iPod seemed to automatically create, which I quite liked, was my top 25 most played tracks, and I’d play that, just because it was quite a nice way of listening to your favourite tracks without having to make a… But occasionally, like, I would hear a pop song on the radio and think, “Oh, I really like that,” and so I’d end up playing it quite a lot on my iPod and it would appear in my top 25 tracks, and it might be, like, very different to some of my other songs. So then, I would always think, “Oh, if someone else…” because sometimes, I would probably…iPods were (inaudible 00:30:51) on phones, people tended to share, so sometimes my friends, particularly when I was at school or high school, like, we were round a friend’s house, we might put one of our iPods on and make a playlist or share some music or let each other pick tracks. I remember I’d delete the pop song, remove the pop song off my most 25 played, so that they didn’t hear it if we were in the car or if we were playing it together. And so they knew kind of what my most preferred tracks were, apart from this odd anomaly, which I thought, “I don’t want that to be a part of my perceived music personality,” because I knew it would be, like, it was very different to what I normally was like. And would…I knew as well that I would probably, it would be a temporary one as well, despite the fact that I probably played it 30 times or something. So I remember I tended to do that. And I think, yeah, I will, like I say, change the music in my car. I feel like there’s more… There’s other times when I probably choose what songs I’ve got in based on who I think might be around, but normally, it’s similar to those instances, so I can’t think of actual times, but I’m pretty sure that I do think about it quite consciously a lot and normally it’s just to show what I consider to be my most preferred styles and artists and tracks because I think subconsciously and consciously, I want those to be what people think of me, because I don’t want people to get me wrong and I kind of don’t want people…I guess I just want to portray what my kind of true preferences are.

Even with my car playlist as well, like, sometimes if there’s a…there might be, like, I might occasionally… What I sometimes might do is if I’ve had, like, a period of time where I’ve heard…been listening after school or sometimes, one of the old rock-pop songs, or rock-punk songs that I used to listen to, I might then think, oh, I have this memory of, “Oh yeah, I do really like that,” and then listen to it for quite a bit, and then I think, “I might download that to my phone and car playlist” because I might then listen to that a few times before and after school. But then, I’ll probably take that off, I probably won’t leave that on, that car playlist, which is my most…the time when I tend to play music most, just because I always have music on in the car. And I’ll drive every day to and from work especially, those are the times. But I’ll probably take that rock song off my car playlist after a little while, after a few days or so, so that I’ve had some listens of it, but it doesn’t then feature on what’s playing out of my car for other people to hear, so they don’t think that… I wouldn’t mind them thinking, knowing that I’ve heard it or liked it, but I wouldn’t want it to be the main part of my perceived music personality.

[00:35:04]

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So I do…I probably do, so conscious/unconsciously, construct my perceived personality in terms of music listening, just in a similar way to what people probably do with their social media timelines and things in terms of… I’m sure people will only post things that they want people to see about them, like nobody posts… People only post when they’re having a good time or when they’re doing things that they want people to know about, or photos that they want people to see of them. Nobody posts the photo with the spot or anything or when they’re… But I probably do that with my music.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. That’s really interesting that you do that, no, thank you. So how would you then describe your music tastes? What kind of music do you like?

Respondent: Mostly dance music with the strands of pop-dance music and strands of kind of more housey-dance music. And then that’s my main preferred music style, but sometimes I’ll just like to unwind with some punk-rock music or some chilled acoustic music.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Okay, what is it about that type of music that draws you to it?

Respondent: Mostly…I think I said this, but mostly the upbeat tempos and I quite like the loud bass, but I think that probably is akin to my…what I said about music giving me a feeling, because there is a physical feeling, I think you get from a high tempo beat and a big loud repetitive bassline, or interesting bassline. I think we probably to get a physical feeling with that, particularly if you’re…if you’ve got the music turned up loud or if you’re out somewhere that’s loud. So that probably helps with the happy, upbeat feeling that I get from it. And I think those would probably…they’re still…that’s still what makes me like some of the punk-rock music as well or what I would look for in that style. And then sometimes I like some kind of folk-acoustic music if it’s more kind of feeling more relaxed or slower and then it’s just looking for something that I feel is probably like a catchy…some kind of catchy lyrics and a nice guitar melody that is like easy-listening, but not too slow.

Interviewer: Okay. So you’ve mentioned about lyrics being important in the kind of folk-acoustic styles that you listen to. Would you say that’s important to you in dance music or not so much?

Respondent: I think I do like songs that have some kind of catchy vocals in. Partly I think that helps kind of…helps that happy feeling that you can sing along and it gets stuck in your head and goes over and over in your head. But it’s probably more important in the folk music, sorry, acoustic music, because there isn’t that feeling of the big bassline or the fast beat and those melodies that you get in dance music. So I think that in acoustic music, probably the melody and the vocals and the lyrics are probably more important. I remember, as a teenager, the lyrics are often like lyrics that meant something to me, as like, an emotional teenager, I’d often like lyrics that would, I’d often think, “Oh yeah, I can relate to that.” But as I got older, I just like maybe more vocals that are either just catchy or can…or that I think of being cleverly put together and maybe don’t so often mean so much to me.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Okay. So within the genres then that you’ve said that you like, are there particular artists in there that you would class as your favourites?

[00:40:36]

Respondent: So, probably, I’d probably have to say my favourite artist was Oliver Heldens, but in dance music. And then, his music is kind of…his music is very bassline, very house, dance/house music, solid bassline, and so other similar artists to him I then tend to like, so Tiësto and Hardwell and some other artists like that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And then I quite like some of the more pop acoustic artists like Jack Johnson, Ed Sheeran, David Gray, some of those nice, chilled-out acoustic, folk artists, but that have got some more, like, pop, up-tempo lyrics.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Okay. So I mean, looking at your scrobble log from the last week, the artists that you stream the most was Aviici, and the artist that you streamed next was Medusa, I think that’s how you say it, So would you say those artists are reflective of your music tastes?

Respondent: I think those styles and their kind of music would be reflective of my tastes. I think they’ve probably become my some of my most played because I found a… Sometimes when I do like looking at related kind of music to what I like, and I found...I just found a playlist recently that I’ve been playing a lot in the mornings at work and in the afternoons at work, just it was called, “Massive Dance Hits,” so sometimes when I kind of… Every so often, every kind of couple of weeks or two, or four weeks, I do look for some new music in my life, and usually look for new music in those styles. And so I’ll either look at related artists or if anything’s come out from the artists that I like in particular, like, if there are any of my favourite artists have brought any new music out. So if Oliver Heldens or Diablo have brought out some new music. And then…otherwise, if not, I’ve recently started looking at some of the playlists that Spotify recommend, and there’s one called, “Massive Dance Hits,” came up and it’s got some of the latest sort of pop-dance tracks, so that Medusa one and the Aviici one although I do like a lot of Aviici’s music, they’re, I think two of the first tracks in the “Massive Dance Hits” playlist that just came up. And that was a really cool playlist that I would just put on and I enjoyed all the tracks that were on, but I remember, I know it would always start with the Medusa playlist, so obviously every time I listened to that playlist, that song would play. And then I think the Aviici one was like second or third, and so I then listened to those songs and actually, there was a couple that I really, really liked and I put then put them onto my car playlist. So, yeah, just found that playlist and really like it so that’s kind of been my playlist over the last couple of weeks and I will probably find a new one in the near future, so when I get bored of it or want something new, but they probably are reflective to my playlist, so they probably are reflective of what I enjoy listening to.

Interviewer: Alright. Because yeah, I was going to say, those artists were the ones that you streamed the most, but it seemed to be that you listened to, like, one Aviici song lots of times and one Medusa song. So is it the artist in general that you like or just those particular songs that you seem to have streamed a lot last week?

Respondent: Well, I like Aviici as an artist and I’ve got lots of…I do listen to a lot of other Aviici songs, and that… Medusa, artist I… I don’t know if I looked into other tracks, but I think they’re… I think I might have heard a couple of others and I wasn’t so keen, so I think it’s just that track, but I would probably say it’s just, like, a temporary preference and it’s gone along with that playlist that I liked. Probably, because I liked that track and not the rest of…not some of the others by that artist though, I probably wouldn’t put him on my kind of top-played car playlist for other people to hear because I wouldn’t want to portray him as a favourite artist – I just liked that song for a little while, probably almost like my own fashion, or my own phase artist as well as just sort of… And so, yeah, I think then going…just touching back on another thing that we said before, I probably, on my regularly played playlist, car playlist, I’d only put artists that I’d want people to know were my top artists or preferred artists, so that Medusa one probably, I wouldn’t want to put that on there but I have been enjoying listening to that track because it’s quite catchy, it’s got a high-tempo, repetitive beat and it’s got a cool bassline.

[00:47:27]

Interviewer: Mm hmm, okay. And the other thing I noticed from your scrobble log was that you seem to listen to a fair few remixes of dance songs, so is there a reason that you’ve chosen to listen to a remix rather than the original?

Respondent: Yeah, I do always like looking for remixes of songs. I think… I quite like…often a remix will… I think often the song, even dance or pop music songs that get released, like, the radio edit is a certain style and certain tempo for sort of mainstream radio audiences, and then often a remix will have more dance drops in it and be of a slightly higher tempo and have a higher bass, so I often look for remixes like that, which I’ll then enjoy more. I often enjoy remixes of pop songs, which often might I might like that have, like, nice vocals or a nice kind of melody in them, but I wouldn’t necessarily listen to them because they were becoming a bit boring without…before, if they were just a radio edit, and then I often think, I will often like a remix of a pop song, if it’s kind of been remixed with that high tempo, bigger basslines, with some of the dance drops.

Interviewer: Okay. And so, when you find those remixes, do you still tend to listen to what you call the ‘radio edit’ of the track, or then will you only listen to the remix?

Respondent: Often, artists will make a few remixes or there’ll be a few different remixes made and I’ll find I preferred one, and then I tend to… That will be, like, my new favourite version of that song or that track, so then I’ll just usually listen to that because then I’ll feel like, I’ll often feel like that’s, to me, a better version of that song.

Interviewer: Okay. So we’ve talked quite a bit about your music likes, but is there any music that you dislike and would never listen to?

Respondent: I probably have music that I…not so much don’t…would say I dislike, but wouldn’t ever listen to on my own. If I was with some friends, I do have…sometimes some of my friends that like dance music and have got…even to my friends…some of my friends, just any of them, sometimes have some of their own eclectic tastes and also have a variety of their own music preferences, and some of them like rap music and some of them like rap/hip-hop music. And if I’m with them, and so on, I’ll happily listen along and sometimes kind of enjoy being around it as a change, but I’d never play it on my own because it doesn’t…I think I don’t necessarily…I’ll enjoy it while I’m with them but it doesn’t do anything for me in terms of my favourites or my preferences and what I look for in music. And I would always avoid classical music because…I guess I don’t like to…I wouldn’t like to listen to music too kind of intently, like, for listening to the different melodies and changes that you get in classical music in terms of listening to it for sort of…for appreciating it. I don’t think I appreciate it. And I also…instead of finding it relaxing and calming, I probably would find it boring, or just like, I would like for something more upbeat. So although, having said that, I think that’s why…I probably have enjoyed…I’ve heard some orchestral versions of dance songs and so that is a classical style of playing music but they’ve done something kind of a…sort of thing that’s been upbeat etc. They’re not going to do it in the…given it those, because if they play dance songs, it’s given it those characteristics that I look for in music.

Interviewer: So then you would listen to these orchestral versions of dance songs?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Right, that’s great. So, I mean, talking a little bit more then about your use of Spotify for music listening. So what does Spotify mean to you?

Respondent: Could I take a quick break?

Interviewer: Okay.

[00:52:43]

Interviewer: Right, okay. So just to reiterate then my question; so what does Spotify then mean to you?

Respondent: I think it’s just an easy and free way of playing lots of…I guess two things, I guess. It’s an easy way of finding new music that’s related to, or different music in the same styles that I will probably like, so, like, the “Massive Dance Hits” playlist that it gave me, lots of those songs I have only listened to because of that. And also it gives me that thing of finding some new music, so that I think, like, I do like to…I’ll play music quite a lot, and so I’ll play my favourite tracks a lot, so it’s always nice to find some new favourite tracks. So it’s given me that. It’s also, sometimes, wanting to find some new music to listen to and having a different kind of rotation of music, kind of reminded me of some of the old songs that I like listening to. So when I play some of the pop-punk and punk-rock music that I enjoyed from years and years ago, it’s then had related tracks, which I also liked in the past but had forgotten about, so then enjoyed those for a little while. And I think…the other that Spotify does is… It kind of means that I’ve got an easy source of playing some continuous music without having to kind of do much thought about it. It just takes the kind of the thought away from it, it kind of does the choosing and the legwork for me, because alternatively, if I’m looking for new music, I want to listen to what the artist or the track sounds like if I’ve just heard some, then I would YouTube. And I know now there’s a YouTube music app, and I can… But I would listen to…find a track on YouTube and listen to it and sometimes the related sort of videos or items are not always…don’t always seem to be so chosen for music listening in terms of… It’ll often just have other tracks or videos of that artist and so, it doesn’t link, it doesn’t lead so well for finding new, different music. And so on Spotify, I can… I feel I can just set it to be playing some music and it’ll play things that I’ll enjoy or will be okay. If I kind of want to set some music off for a long period of time without just playing the same favourites playlist that I’ve got set up myself, so say, at work, before or after work, I can just set off a playlist on Spotify to play, like, a dance playlist or one of the other kind of…even one of the more generic playlists that it might give in certain styles, and I know that I can just press play on that, because I’m going to be working for an hour, doing some work for an hour and it’ll just play in the background and I’ll enjoy that music.

Equally, if I’m doing some exercise in the living room, then I can just set Spotify up to play some dance music or some music that I know will be upbeat and I’ll enjoy listening to while I exercise, and that will…it will just kind of do the playing and choosing for me and rather than me setting up my own…like, looking through my own music or again, rather than the playlist with the same songs that I listen to a lot, it’ll just do that for me. So it kind of is that kind of personal music assistant to play music for a long time that won’t get boring and won’t get too repetitive because it can just choose the new music for me and I know I can just set it off and then just kind of just get on with other things.

Interviewer: It’s a good way to put it – personal music assistant.

Respondent: Yeah, I should apply for a job! Marketing.

Interviewer: So do you feel then that Spotify allows you to express your identity through music as a platform?

Respondent: Yeah, I think the fact that when you picked up some of those most played tracks and artists, although they aren’t my favourite artists, they would represent my favourite music and the characteristics of my favourite music that I would choose. So it would represent…I think it does mostly show what I listen to and my sort of music personality. Probably if I…I think, because I use iTunes and Apple Music a little bit as well, and sometimes listening to music on YouTube if I’m looking for a specific track to play every now and again, I probably don’t use Spotify enough to really show my music personality. It does a bit but I think if I just used Spotify, it would show my personality even more because say, like, my heavy rotation is just do a few playlists and a few things, but I listen to music outside Spotify. So I think if that was included in what Spotify thinks and knows about me, then it would, on my laptop, playing things like that, it would show an even more accurate assessment of my music playing.

Interviewer: Okay. It’s interesting then that you use quite a few music services. So I mean, then, what’s the reason then for using iTunes, Apple Music, YouTube and Spotify?

[01:00:01]

Respondent: Just different horses for different courses.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

Respondent: So that… So YouTube is more just, usually if I want to listen to the whole track of one artist, because I’ve got… It’s really quick because I’ll just, as soon as I press it on YouTube, it’s got the search bit there really. It’ll also show the video of the artist, because I only have Spotify on the free version, I can just… It’s much easier to search an artist and a song specifically on YouTube. I’ve…because, again, I’ve only got the free version of Spotify and because I’ve got a large collection of music already on iTunes…

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: That…so when I want to listen to my music offline, so, like, moving around in the car or somewhere away from Wi-Fi or away from home, I like that nice collection of music on my phone that’s stored. So I have, like, some downloaded music using iTunes as like, my kind of official, preferred music listings. So Spotify is like exploring music, and then if it’s a top track that I really like and I think it shows me then it makes it onto my…I guess makes it into my ‘ready to buy’ music. So then I will buy and download that onto iTunes, because obviously I won’t want to download and buy everything I listen to. So it will be if I think, “Oh, I’d like to listen to that and I like listening to that for a long time,” then it’ll make it into my ‘to buy’ iTunes, so that iTunes would be the music that I’ve decided I really like and wanted to buy and download, that I will probably listen to for a long time and also will show my music personality if anyone else was to listen to it in the car. And so that’s where I’ve kind of got the three different musical tools.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I mean, going back to iTunes then, because you mentioned about iPods earlier on. Is the collection of music you have on iTunes back from the days where you would own an iPod or is that a recent collection of music on there?

Respondent: So, the collection accrued over years, it’s not changed, well, it has changed, but… So it is a collection on iTunes from, what, 15 years ago, however, I will have deleted some music along the way and added more music gradually a little bit at a time, like, a couple of tracks a month sort of thing. But I think I ended up needing to delete a lot of music at one point because of the storage I had on an iPod, so I kind of got rid of lots of tracks that I had stopped liking or listening to much. So at that point, probably did delete a lot of punk-rock tracks when I started to diversify my music tastes. And some tracks that I probably thought, “I used to really like that but I don’t listen to it ever,” I probably deleted some of those at some point. And at one point, I had an iPhone that I had limited storage on so I deleted quite a bit of music from iTunes. But yeah, there is still a range of music from different phases of my life on that list, but more of a majority of recent years styles and tracks because that’s more recently been added, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay. And so, another question related to iTunes is; is there a reason that you buy and download music on iTunes rather than just having the premium version of Spotify and you pay for the premium version?

Respondent: Yeah, I think almost….I always feel this feeling of…that it’s mine and it’s in part of my life, so I think before downloading music ad even before downloading or streaming music, which was the thing,, you know, when people would buy CDs. Because when I was an early teenager, well, when I was teenager, people still bought CDs more. And I would always like thinking, “Right, I’ve got that CD, that’s kind of like my…I’ve supported that artist because they’re my favourite artist. I’ve got the CD of them. And also, that’ll kind of last me, like, I’ve got that CD; that’s like a show of my personality and what I like and also it’s there kind of to keep.” And in addition, it’s maybe some…I can’t think of the word, like maybe like some memorabilia-type, almost like memory keepsake thing of it. It might be a bit more so with CDs in terms of, in the past, with having an actual physical item. I think that people nowadays saying they often do it with a lot of records in terms of, like, having that record and knowing they’ve kind of got that in terms of…almost like, I imagine, like an old person with a vase or an ornament or a painting that like having it as a thing that’s like a keepsake. But I think linking that back to the iTunes or Spotify thing, I think if I’ve downloaded it, I’ve got it. I know it’s not quite so physical, but it’s almost like it’s mine, it’s on my phone, I can then transfer it onto my laptop or…I’ve got that as a track. And I don’t know, almost like if it’s…I wonder if I’ll…Spotify still, I know that I could download the premium version and download and have those tracks on a playlist offline or something, but I would almost feel it more temporary and less connected to me because I’ve not got it. And also, I guess, maybe because I’ve heard a lot of tracks that I’ve downloaded from years ago on iTunes that it’s then more, like, that’s more my personal library of music that I want to add to and it feels much easier and better to have it all in one place, my personal library, rather than going, “Oh, I’ll just download new music now and have new music on Spotify.” But then, having to switch or whatever.

[01:08:26]

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, so then, you’ve used YouTube, you’ve used…well, you use iTunes, you use Apple Music, so then, what drew you to Spotify? What is Spotify fulfilling in your music streaming?

Respondent: The purpose more of exploration probably primarily in terms of its features for showing other similar artists or artists you might like. So I think partly because maybe because I have less sort of, like, a music scene of going out and listening to and hearing new music out or anything like that, particularly with dance music, not hearing so much or not having… Not being, like, not listening to the radio, say, or wanting to hear new music I’ve not heard before. Spotify can do that in terms of bringing up new similar music. And I do often want to kind of introduce some new tracks into my kind of music listening from day to day. So that’s it, mostly, that exploration and giving myself new tracks and artists to listen to. And then again, it’s just the personal music system of just being able to play it. So it sort of serves those two roles for me.

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, since then, using the platform, has your music changed that you listen to since using Spotify?

Respondent: I don’t think my musical preferences have used from using it, it’s just given me lots of new tracks that will mean that I probably have just heard new tracks that I liked and enjoyed so I just had…it’s just made me happy from having lots of new tracks that I can enjoy rather than...so I don’t get sick of some of the regular ones that I’ve played, or put me in touch with new music which I might not otherwise have heard.

Interviewer: And are those new tracks – is that new music, are they coming from artists that you already know or are already aware of, or are they coming from artists that you’ve never heard of before?

Respondent: Maybe a mix, but more so to the artists that I hadn’t heard, that are just similar to the artists that I like. Mostly because it will bring up some tracks from artists that I already know and like, but I tend to have...to know about their tracks first, so on social media, I’ll probably get a notification or see that one of the artists that I primarily follow and prefer have released, are releasing a new song or sharing a new song. So then Spotify is really good for those, to me, for those other artists that I don’t…aren’t so familiar with.

Interviewer: And on Spotify, do you have connected friends on there? So kind of when you’re on the desktop version, do you have the right-hand column showing what friends are listening to on Spotify?

Respondent: No, I don’t use that feature.

Interviewer: No? Is there a reason you don’t use that feature?

[01:12:16]

Respondent: I think probably…I’ve always felt that maybe I don’t use it enough and also, I think also because normally I’ll use Spotify at purposed times, so like, I might have it on at work and then obviously just want to get on with some writing or some work and so wont’ want to be looking at it, I kind of want it on in the background. Or yeah, I don’t know. I don’t think it’s probably feature that I do sort of at the minute want to use for those kind of reasons.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I quite like using Spotify the way it is for just that, like, every so often hearing that new track.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s fair enough. Okay, so I’d now like to move on to understanding a bit more about your music streaming practices on Spotify, so therefore I’m kind of interested about how you might use Spotify during the week to stream music. So I mean, how do you tend to use Spotify to listen to music?

Respondent: What do you mean – how do I use it?

Interviewer: So are there certain features that you will use to stream music?

Respondent: I might look for…if I know I want to play some things that I know I like, I might look on, like, ‘recently played’ or ‘heavy rotation’. Sometimes I might play my daily mix, although, that might be more again if I want to play it at home for something I know I’ll like, because my daily mix is just, it tends to just be songs from artists that I already know and tracks that I already know I like. Whereas, like I said before, with one of the questions, from Spotify, I like hearing some new music from similar artists, so the daily mix doesn’t tend to do that. It could do with, like, your ‘daily exploration mix’, which I’m not aware is a feature, but I should definitely put it to them. And so, I will look for, like, that’s why I think I look for possibly some of the, almost like generic ones that will be a bit more new, so that’s why I look to, like, the “Massive Dance Hits” playlist or, like, “Top dance hits” or something that sounds like it’s quite current in styles in some current playlists that people have created from Spotify for current or latest music from those types of music that I will like.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Okay. So, I mean, you’ve mentioned there daily mixes and the recently played and heavy rotation. Are there any other service features that you use on Spotify? So, for example, do you use Discover Weekly, Release Radar, Taste Breakers, the Radio feature, do you use any of those at all?

Respondent: No, but maybe more so because I’m not so familiar and I’ve not taken the time to really explore any of those features.

Interviewer: Okay. Is there any other reason or is it just that you’ve not had the time to explore?

Respondent: Yeah, just that really.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think there are some things that you would be interested in?

Respondent: Only if they are going to give me some slightly new and current music, that it’s my kind of…like, exploration but through very similar tracks to what I would like to listen to for new music.

Interviewer: Okay. So when you’re on Spotify, do you have songs saved into your music library?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Okay. So you don’t use the library at all?

Respondent: No, only that I, like I say, favourite artists to help tweak my…tweak the playlist that it brings up for me.

[01:17:27]

Interviewer: Oh, okay. So is there a reason then that you don’t use the music library on there?

Respondent: In terms of creating playlists?

Interviewer: No, in terms of… I mean, in terms of saving songs into a music library, like you would on, say, iTunes you have the music library?

Respondent: Maybe because I quite like just having…just, like, a bit more of an openness to exploring some new things on there. So I would just save, like, saving tracks that I want to listen to again and again to iTunes and probably keep Spotify for that kind of open exploring. But will probably…but do think I could probably save a few more bits and bobs to my library just to help tailor my suggestions.

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, is…so you say that you save your favourite artists, so how do you decide what artists to save and why do you do that?

Respondent: I guess the top… I guess I just choose the artists that are my favourites and I think will give me…that I would like similar music to be found for, but also maybe like my favourite ones.

Interviewer: Okay, so these favourite artists, are they all coming from the same genre or different genres?

Respondent: So most of them are dance and house, dance music artists, but there is sort of three or four folk-acoustic artists sort of...four or five or six rock…maybe four or five rock music artists with the majority of them, like, maybe 12/15 dance/house music artists.

Interviewer: And so through doing that, do you feel like you are being recommended better playlists?

Respondent: I think so, because those things seem to come up.

Interviewer: Okay. So how do you select then, the music that you want to listen to on Spotify?

Respondent: Well, I probably just look and see if the title of it, the title of the playlist that’s on there is something that I think will be of interest, so like I said about the “Massive Dance Hits” ones or there was one that…there was “Chilled Dance” that interested me, or sometimes I’ll click on a favourite artist and the ones that I like, and I’ll listen then I’ll just look for that title, if that’s one that I think that’ll be interesting, listen for a bit and then say, “Oh no, I don’t like that one, I’ll put it in the bin,” and choose another sort of title that I think will have, that will be of interest, because I might not necessarily know all of the tracks, which is what I’m interested in.

Interviewer: So it sounds then like when you go on Spotify, you don’t necessarily know what you want to listen to? Or do you know?

Respondent: I’ll usually know the area or know the style of music and feeling I’m in the mood for. But then, usually when I’m on Spotify, I want something different that I don’t know about.

Interviewer: Okay. So in a typical day then, what are your streaming practices?

Respondent: So typical day might involve getting up and doing a little bit of living room exercise with a favourite artist, like Oliver Heldens on, with some house/dance music on as background exercise high-tempo music. Then being in the car on the way to work with my iTunes playlist, my favourite songs are mostly dance songs, then being at work and having some background but new Spotify playlist on, like, just a dance playlist on Spotify that I might just pick up on a new track and think, “Oh, I like the look of that, I’ll save that one and listen to that more in future or look into that more in the future,” but then might also just have some dance songs that are just on in the background and it doesn’t matter if they’re not my favourites, because I might just have them on and be doing lots of other things. Then I’ll probably, when more people are about at work and children are about, I might put something a bit more general or chilled on. And then after school, when I’m still at work, when the children have left the classroom, I will put on…say if I’m marking work or doing some work just on my own and there’s not many other staff around, I might just then put on some of my, like, pop/punk/rock playlist from Spotify, that are based on some of the artists that I do like, which I’ll often play some of the songs that I’ll often think…I’ve liked them from a previous time, and I’ve forgotten about that artist. That’ll often be kind of catchy, easy-listening pop/punk/rock music that again is kind of a nice while I’m doing things. And then later, on the way back from work I’ll probably have my iTunes favourite playlist in the car with my favourite songs on, which is mostly dance tracks again from my favourite dance artists. And then that might be it for the day unless I, say if I’m getting ready to go out for something, occasionally I might have, again, either some generic Spotify dance, or probably more…I might have on Spotify a dance playlist that I’ve enjoyed recently that might be similar artists or also tracks that I know I like.

[01:26:18]

Interviewer: Okay. So in terms then of music that you listen to at work, so you say that when not many people are in you tend to listen to dance music and then when more people come in you tend to listen to more chilled music – why do you change that, the type of music?

Respondent: I should probably edit that in terms of…when there’s other staff around, they’ll probably pop into my classroom and probably listen to an artist so we’ll have the dance music, I don’t turn that off. But only when the children come in, I’ll put on more…maybe more pop or chilled music as my dance preferences aren’t probably 10-year-old, classroom…a good environment for the 10-year-old classroom coming into school, that sort of…

Interviewer: Yeah, I can imagine. And then during the day, you mentioned that often after you get out of the car on the way home, that’s it for your music listening, so why do you…why don’t you tend to stream music in the evening?

Respondent: Well, at that point it’s usually already sort of post-six o’clock, so most of the day’s gone, and then the television might be used at home, so there’s not really a music playing, sort of opportunity usually. Like I say, unless it’s a weekend and I’m going out or then there might be the opportunity to, but usually in the evening, I’m just watching television, so…

Interviewer: Okay. And then what about…do you feel that your choices of music change based on different days? So would you listen to something different on a Monday morning versus a Friday evening versus your weekend?

Respondent: No, I think mostly those preferences would stay…mostly that sort of music preference timeline would stay the same Monday to Friday at least. In the weekend, it would probably just mean on the weekend that it might be more activity-dependent, so on the weekend, I’ll probably have a favourite dance artist on again if I’m doing some living-room exercise or some favourite dance tracks played if, as I say, getting ready to go out, or if…I might find some easy-listening house…easy-listening kind of chilled dance music if I’m, say, doing this…for background music if I’m doing some work on my laptop. So then yeah, so I’ve got quite a regular sort of system and Monday to Friday, and then the weekend. It might change; it might be a little bit more activity-dependent.

Interviewer: Yeah, because I noticed on your scrobble log that last Sunday you didn’t…or the Sunday just gone, you didn’t listen to any…you didn’t stream any music through Spotify at all – is that kind of usual or was that just a one-off?

Respondent: That might quite often be the case on a weekend, on a weekend day. I might be doing other things and so there’ll be less music streaming going on at home. Obviously I won’t be at work, so a lot of the music streaming that I often do, quite a lot when I listen to Spotify at work quite a lot, obviously that won’t happen at a weekend, and at home the TV will probably be on more often than music. So there may often be cases at a weekend when there isn’t any music on unless basically something like my favourite track-list in the car.

[01:30:41]

Interviewer: Okay, so we’ve talked about then music for when you get up and exercise in your living room and in the car and work; are there any other times that you stream music? Any other purposes or contexts that you stream music for?

Respondent: No, I don’t think so.

Interviewer: Okay, no, that’s fine. So in terms of curating your music, you mention that you don’t save songs to your music library but you save artists, so how often are you saving these artists?

Respondent: My main favourites have probably stayed the same for a long time now, so I’ve not added any for a long time, so I’d say probably for the past year, most of those saved artists have probably stayed the same, maybe just with one or two tweaks, with one maybe, for me thinking, “Oh, yeah, I don’t ever listen to that, let’s change them then,” and maybe one or two being added, but mostly that doesn’t change much.

Interviewer: Okay, so you neither tend to add or delete them very often?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Okay, and then in terms of playlists, obviously your car playlist has come up quite a bit, but am I right in thinking that that’s based on iTunes?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah? Okay, so firstly then, are playlists quite important to you?

Respondent: I’d say yes in terms of creating my own sort of personal library of, like, favourites. Then again, I’ve got that on iTunes. And then again, the playlist from Spotify is quite important for finding new music in terms of, like, pre-selected playlists for me for just having on and using that as almost like the radio for discovering new tracks.

Interviewer: Do you have any personally curated playlists on Spotify?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: No, so you just tend to use the service feature ones?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. So tell me then a little bit about your car playlist? So how did that get started?

Respondent: Because I like listening to music a lot in the car and I guess when…the way I started moving a bit further away from CDs and more into downloading music, I would download music a bit more and then have…and also realised that my sort of favourite tracks were more spread out over different artists. And I think also, particularly with dance music, I find, a lot of dance, like, DJs are, because there’s a lot of… because of the remixing of songs and how, when DJs play a lot, I’ll sort of often play other DJs tracks or other tracks and play those. There’s…you get a lot less kind of music releases and album releases in terms of albums and actual songs, and DJs, I think that you…as opposed to maybe some of the styles of music like… So with rock music, you’d probably be thinking, “Well, this band will…” so if I just pick a band, like Blink 182 might…that I used to listen to and I still like but it’s on the backburner of a playlist, will probably record a song together because they’ll need to come together as a band and play that song, and then probably release that song and they might have recorded like 10 songs as part of an album, so when they go and play gigs, they’ll play songs from all their albums, and so you might be thinking, “In a year or two, they’ll release another album and that’ll be some new release coming out from that artist for me.” But with dance DJs, you tend to find they don’t release albums of music in the same kind of way, because they’re always creating new music that’s often just tweaking music and when they play live, they’ll play…they’ll be more continuously in terms of music that’s just altered and tweaked and they might play a lot of remixes of other people’s songs. So they’re not necessarily creating separate, brand new, coming together of songs as such. So I do find with dance DJs you need to, if you’re going to have, like…if I’m going to and listen to them live, I want music from DJs to listen to in the car, to have quite a few different DJs that I know songs from.

[01:36:49]

Interviewer: Okay. So I mean, then is your car playlist…is that a static playlist so that you never…in kind of how you originally created it is how it is now? Or are you adding things, deleting things from it?

Respondent: It will…it’s a slow-changing evolution of songs. So it’s some songs that are like…some of my absolute favourites that have stayed on there for a long, long time, like months and even a year or two or more. Or even a couple of years or more. And then I’ll probably maybe add a song, I don’t know, every…add a song every kind of month or so or couple of weeks maybe. But then, every couple of months or so, I’ll maybe delete couple of tracks, and so it is changing and evolving but only slowly and stays very similar for long periods of time. And it sometimes might stay the same for a couple of months.

Interviewer: Okay. So then, when you’re adding and deleting tracks there, why are you choosing to add and delete things? What is it about those tracks?

Respondent: So, adding tracks will just be usually a new track that I’ve heard of that I really like from an artist that I’m a big fan of. So like it might be if I really like the new Oliver Heldens song or it might be a new song that I’ve got into that I’ve heard on Spotify playlist, but I hadn’t heard of it before. And then, if I delete some tracks on it, it might be that I’ve thought, “I’ve listened to that song a lot of times now in the car, or I did listen to it a lot of times and now I’ve since listened to it a lot of times, and not listened to it as much,” and so will just want it more in my general iTunes library but not on my playlist of listening songs, kind of every day is a lot. And I might think, “Oh, I still like that but I don’t want it to be seen as one of my absolute favourites” as well.

Interviewer: So do you have any other playlists on iTunes?

Respondent: No. And I have had some in the past, so in the past I’ve had a gym one, but more recently, I quite like with my new gym I quite like the music that they have on in the background and I’ve maybe found it…I quite like actually just focusing on the work-out and having the music more in the background and not faffing around with sorting my music out. So I don’t have a gym one anymore. And I have had like an after…like a post-holiday, pre and post-holiday playlist, with like a list of tracks that were synonymous with that holiday, and that I listened to out on that holiday, like an Ibiza playlist, but I haven’t been on holiday for a while, so I don’t have a holiday playlist.

Interviewer: But have you kept those playlists or have they been…?

Respondent: I had a playlist…the last two holiday playlists, when I got a new phone, the playlists all went from my new phone, so although I was able to keep the same music, all the same music I’ve transferred, but the playlists disappeared. So I don’t have those playlists anymore, so that’s another reason why then I created a new one and created a car playlist.

Interviewer: Okay, but how then…so if you created a new car playlist and you said that there’s songs on there that you’ve liked for years and years and years; how did you kind of remember…?

Respondent: Well, they would be, like, my absolute favourites.

[01:40:59]

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Respondent: I know those songs because they’re my favourites, and there’ll perhaps be half a dozen or a dozen of those and then since I’ve just added one or two every month or so.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. So then what is it about Spotify that means that you don’t create your own playlists on there?

Respondent: I think it just goes back to me using Spotify for the purpose of exploring and a way to listen to new music and if I created my own playlist, I wouldn’t have the time in my life when I would be listening to or getting that new music or anything because like, I like having that kind of separate in the car time, and having those songs as, like, my own keepsake songs on iTunes and then keeping… And then having a time to listen to music I don’t know about at other times.

Interviewer: Okay, so, I mean, when you’re then selecting which Spotify playlist to listen to that they’ve created, what draws you to particular playlists?

Respondent: Just the title if it sounds like it might suit my style and favourite genres and then I will just be open to going with whatever tracks I then listen to, and usually I also pick one that sounds like it’s got new release tracks on, because then they’re going to be more new to me.

Interviewer: So what about…do you ever listen to playlists on there that are genre-related?

Respondent: Only for, like, school/work purposes for if the children are in class and things. So it might be not for my own personal reference then, more for using it as a tool for music for kind of for me and other people, as with the children. When it’s like I look for maybe like a chilled working playlist or…there was one called “Coffee Break” that I thought sounded like it would have easy-listening background music, which it did.

Interviewer: Alright, so moving on then to music discovery, are you a person that likes to discover new music?

Respondent: Yes, that’s my main purpose of Spotify really. I like every so often just to let in a little bit of new music, so every so often I’ll just take a couple of new tracks or possibly a new artist into my life.

Interviewer: Okay. So what is it then about music discovery that you like?

Respondent: Just not…so just then I’m not getting kind of bored of the same…bored of the music that I like and the excitement of a new track and a new track that’s similar kind of track that I like, that isn’t… I guess just that an extra new track that I would like that I always like taking on kind of new enjoyable music.

Interviewer: Okay. So when you’re discovering new music, what types of music do you like to discover?

Respondent: Still for a while now, for a few years now, I’ve been liking discovering new house/dance music.

Interviewer: So then, is that music then that’s quite similar to your existing preferences?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, and then how then do you tend to discover this new music?

Respondent: Through the sort of the generic new release genre playlist on Spotify.

[01:45:31]

Interviewer: Okay, are there any other ways that you discover new music other than those playlists?

Respondent: Only at looking at my favourite artists and if they’ve either released new music or if there’s any other similar artists being promoted via them.

Interviewer: So do you feel then that…how does Spotify then help you to discover new music, if that’s what you’re using it for?

Respondent: Through its genre playlists mostly.

Interviewer: Can you remember a particular artist or track that you’ve discovered exclusively through Spotify that absolutely loved?

Respondent: I think…maybe not an artist, but then definitely some favourite tracks, so like, a Cheat Codes track called “Who’s Got Your Love?” and a Hardwell song called, “I’m Not Sorry,” which again are new tracks, but I probably wouldn’t have heard them unless it was on this playlist on Spotify. And also some of the…I think there is some tracks from some of my favourite artists that have come up to me via some of the playlists on Spotify and there is some of the house/dance songs that I haven’t probably explored that artist as such but tracks of artists that I haven’t previously known like…I’m not even sure if I say it right, but there’s a track called “Moonlight” by Gaullin, which I really liked that I wouldn’t have heard from before. And some others that I can’t name.

Interviewer: So, I mean, you’re discovering music then specifically through playlists and favourite artist releases and the similar artists; what about your friends? Do they have any kind of role in your music discovery?

Respondent: Not anymore.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I don’t think…no, I don’t think for years.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think there’s a reason then that they don’t anymore or…?

Respondent: Yeah, just that probably when I see my friends nowadays, we tend to go out more, like out in places, whereas probably I would perhaps previously in years before, see my friends…if we spend some more time at someone’s house, then perhaps we would have had someone’s music on. .

Interviewer: Alright. So the final bit I’d like to talk about is whether you think Spotify reflects who you are. So do you feel that Spotify allows you to construct and manage your music tastes?

Respondent: Yes, it probably does give those features that…I think it just has allowed me to find new music through me putting in my current preferred taste has given it a chance to provide new music which is similar, which kind of almost developed my own taste and given me new music in the same taste that I already have. And through that, I guess is kind of continued and enhanced my enjoyment of music of those tastes because it’s continued to provide me with new music following what I’ve indicated as my current preferences.

Interviewer: And, I mean, what do you think of Spotify’s interface?

Respondent: It seems to work for me.

Interviewer: Yeah, is there anything in particular that you like about it?

Respondent: I think I like that it brings up…some of the recently played and some of the main suggestions are near the top and they’re fairly user-friendly and you’re able to click on those main things first.

[01:51:53]

Interviewer: Do you feel that that interface influences the music that you listen to?

Respondent: Yeah, only in that I didn’t want to spend ages looking for different music so I quite like it to be fairly easy to…fairly readily available and easy to find.

Interviewer: What about dislikes – is there anything that you dislike about Spotify’s interface?

Respondent: No, only… I mean, the only things that would probably change if I got the premium version, so…

Interviewer: Okay, Is there anything then that’s stopping you from getting the premium version?

Respondent: Because I want the free version.

Interviewer: Okay. Can I ask why?

Respondent: Just for the cost.

Interviewer: Okay, so it’s cost-related.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, that’s fair enough. So are there any changes that you specifically would like to make for the platform? Is there anything you would like to see changed?

Respondent: A daily exploring mix.

Interviewer: A daily exploring mix. Why would you like to see that?

Respondent: Because often my…so the daily mix is with music that…I don’t know if this is akin to how much time I spend on it or lack of time I spend on it, but my daily mixes are obviously mostly my…mostly a lot of the songs that I know and not many ones I don’t know, so it would be good if there was ones that are daily mixes but only from artists not on my artist library.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So then it would be all new artists but all related to my preferred artists, because that’s my main purpose of it.

Interviewer: So what is it then about this daily exploration mix that you would like that would make it different then to your Discover Weekly or Release Radar?

Respondent: I don’t know about these Discover Weekly and Release Radar features very much.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Because it sounds to me like they might fit something similar to actually what you want.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: So they come under “Music for you”. So I mean, you’re looking at them on your phone, do they…are they…would they kind of be of interest to you?

[01:55:32]

Respondent: Some of them I’m aware of and some of them I’m looking at that I’m interested to listen to, so that’s…

Interviewer: Okay. Well, that’s good then. So I mean, do you ever foresee a time where you would stop using Spotify?

Respondent: Not that I can predict without knowing what the new features are, features that on occasions could be introduced into the future. But as currently I predict that I’ll carry on using these platforms in the same way.

Interviewer: Alright, okay. I mean, so there’s been a lot in the media recently about how online platforms are collecting and using our data when we’re online, so when you’re on Spotify, are you aware that it is collecting data about your music streaming?

Respondent: They can have my data.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Why do you say that?

Respondent: Well, I guess I think they’re the things that I’d like, so if there’s more of it about, then I’m more than happy, so if they want to think that everyone…if everyone else wants to say that they don’t want their data collected and they collect my data and they say, “Oh, look at how popular dance music is,” and then they might suggest more of it, then that’ll be fine with me.

Interviewer: Okay, so you see it then as a beneficial thing.

Respondent: Yes, I quite like that…yeah, as long as they’re not taking my dental records, then like anything…they’re not taking any personal information, are they? They’re just taking my music preferences, so that’s…they can collect away.

Interviewer: Okay, so I mean, we don’t fully know how they are using this data that they are collecting, but we assume that it’s for producing recommendations, so in that kind of sense, how good do you feel their recommendations are for you?

Respondent: I think it’s been good as far as I’ve seen in terms of I have found new artists and I think I’ll probably find some more, but,. So yeah, but I obviously think it probably would be better if I continued to use it more, like, I probably use it…I probably currently use Spotify, I don’t know, like half an hour to an hour most weekdays, but I would probably stick to a lot of similar things and some of the similar playlists, especially in the past couple of weeks, I have. So if I carried on, if I used it more, if I listened to a variety of more things, I mean, yeah, it probably would enhance that element even more, but I think it’s a good thing.

Interviewer: Okay. Alright, so then my final question is that obviously you’ve now taken part in the online survey, you’ve done the online observation and today you’ve done the interview, has that caused you to reflect on or perhaps change any of your Spotify practices at all?

Respondent: I don’t think it’s changed anything. I think probably I realised that I do have, like, certainly a lot more purpose to certain elements of music listening.

Interviewer: What about, because I mean, obviously you’ve not realised about the Discover Weekly and the Release Radar, is that something that you feel like you might explore a bit more after this interview?

Respondent: Yeah, this is definitely a new discovery which I think I’ll look into.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. So I mean, that’s everything from me. Is there anything that you would like to expand on or touch upon that perhaps we’ve not talked about so far?

[02:00:02]

Respondent: No, I think that that’s everything.

Interviewer: Okay, well thank you very much again for being part of today’s interview, I really appreciate it. It’s really offered some interesting insights that will really help my PhD, so thank you very much for being part of everything.

Respondent: Okay, thanks.

Interviewer: Right, thank you.

[End of Transcript]