

The History of Recorded Music from phonographs to Spotify®



1877

The phonograph was the **brainchild** of prolific American inventor, Thomas Edison. For the first time, people could listen to recorded music at home.

1890

The New York Phonograph Company (now known as Columbia Records) opened the first **purpose-built** recording studios. They looked very different then – entire orchestras would squeeze into a **soundproof** room and play into a large horn.

1930s and 40s

In the early 1930s, the first vinyl record and an early record player were launched, but they were a **commercial flop**. Columbia Records continued the development of this technology and in 1948 brought out the first LP (long-playing record), which was quickly adopted as the new industry standard.

1950s–70s

The vinyl record prevailed as a preferred listening format, but in the late 1950s, with the growing popularity of rock and roll, the transistor radio also became a **mainstream** way to listen to music for free. Cassette tapes were launched in the 1960s and the first personal device for listening to music, the Sony Walkman, was launched in 1979.

1980s and 90s

Music videos **came into prominence** in the 1980s when MTV was launched. Around the same time, the first compact disc (CD) was pressed. The first CD player retailed at \$1,000! The portability of the Walkman helped the cassette tape outsell the vinyl record for the first time in 1988, but by the end of the 1990s, cassettes had **fallen by the wayside** and the CD was king.

2000s

The turn of the century **heralded the arrival** of the digital revolution! CD sales **started to decline**, giving way to the new digital format, the MP3.

2010s

The MP3 **remains in the ascendancy** for digital music and continues to be **the predominant choice** of legal music providers. But as long as there have been digital music files, there has been digital music piracy, which has hurt music sales over the last few decades. The increase in online music streaming through subscription-based organisations like Spotify has gone some way to raise awareness and address the piracy problem. Yet, as streaming services have continued to grow, there has also been something of a **backlash** against them from artists who blame them for **the downturn** in their royalties. But even as new technology has continued to push out the old, one of the oldest forms has **enjoyed a resurgence**. Vinyl records have developed a loyal **fan base** amongst a younger generation, and in the UK vinyl sales reached £20 million in 2014. Whether their popularity will continue into the future remains to be seen in the 2020s.

5 In your notebook, complete the sentences with the compounds from Exercise 4. Which of them are true?

- 1 The phonograph was the **brainchild** of Thomas Edison.
- 2 The first **?** recording studios were developed in 1980.
- 3 The first studios weren't **?**. A lot of noise leaked in.
- 4 There was a **?** against cassettes in the 1980s and their sales declined.
- 5 Downloads became a **?** way of buying music in the 2000s.
- 6 Vinyl records will continue to have a devoted **?** among younger generations.

FOCUS ON WORDS | Success and failure

6 **1.27** In your notebook, divide the phrases underlined in the text into two groups: Success and Failure. Then listen and check.

7 **SPEAKING** Choose the most appropriate phrase and write it in your notebook. Then discuss the questions in pairs.

- 1 Have any of your favourite bands split up and come into prominence / fallen by the wayside? Which ones?
- 2 Do you think music streaming will remain in the ascendancy / herald the arrival? Why?/Why not?
- 3 Will illegal download sites give way to / enjoy a resurgence of legal ones? How come?
- 4 Which songs, singers or bands have been a commercial flop / a downturn?

FOCUS ON WORDS | Nouns from adjectives

8 **1.28** In your notebook, form nouns from the adjectives in the box using the suffixes. Then listen and check. Find examples of these words in the text.

ascendant aware popular portable predominant
prominent resurgent

-ance/-ence	-cy	-ity	-ness
?	ascendancy	?	?

9 **SPEAKING** In your notebook, complete the sentences with an appropriate noun or adjective from Exercise 8. Do you agree with the statements? Why?/Why not?

- 1 Streaming will no longer be the **predominant** music format within five years.
- 2 Most teenagers show no **?** of the importance of music copyright.
- 3 It's unlikely that there will be a **?** in CD sales.
- 4 These days, musicians don't need record companies to become **?**.
- 5 **?** artists who work with charities are just interested in self-promotion.
- 6 The increased **?** of music means that people don't listen together any more.

FOCUS ON WORDS | EXTRA Nouns from adjectives

10 **1.29** Make more nouns from the adjectives in the box and add them to the table from Exercise 8. Then listen and check. Write an example sentence for each noun.

abundant affluent authentic careless consistent
diligent effective private reluctant simple

Live music venues exist in abundance in London's West End.