DOI: doi.org/10.28939/iam.debats-138-1.4
ISSN 2530-898X (print)
ISSN 2530-8262 (digital)

Beatles and Boomers: Music Fandom as a Resource for Well-being

Candy Leonard
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLAR
candy@candyleonard.com
ORCID: 0000-0001-9135-3378

Received: 09/02/2022
Accepted: 17/04/2022

ABSTRACT

This piece weaves together three separate areas of research and shows how baby boomers' lifetime of deep engagement with music and music fandom are resources that can be leveraged by fans, families, and healthcare professionals to extend healthspan, mitigate loneliness, and otherwise improve quality of life for this first generation of "old fans" and those that follow.

First, drawing on an in-depth qualitative study of Beatles fandom, I will show that the band's constant presence in the culture and in boomers' lives through six critical years of development had a profound and enduring impact, and that this experience has been a lifelong resource for resiliency and well-being. Then, looking at research in neuromusicology and music therapy, I will show the many ways music functions as a health technology for older adults. Finally, looking at these issues in light of current and predicted decline in cognitive functioning and other indicators of well-being in this generation, this article proposes that boomers are uniquely primed and positioned to benefit from the therapeutic use of music for overall health and as support for the gerotranscendent stage of adult development.

Keywords: gerotranscendence, Beatles fandom, well-being, music therapy, cognitive decline, boomer health

SUMMARY

Corresponding author: Candy Leonard. candy@candyleonard.com
Suggested citation: Leonard, C. (2024), Beatles and Boomers: Music Fandom as a Resource for Well-being. *Debats. Journal on culture, power and society*, 138(1), pp. 33–46. DOI: doi.org/10.28939/iam.debats-138-1.4

INTRODUCTION

A unique confluence of technological, demographic, and other cultural factors—a "perfect storm"—made possible the frisson that occurred when the Beatles emerged on the world stage in 1964 and instantly became ubiquitous. Global media debated Beatlemania's impact on young people, critiqued their music, and probed their personal lives. Meanwhile, through extraordinary talent and modern marketing, the Beatles proceeded to enchant a generation. They opened young people's ears to music and made it a necessity in ways it had not been for previous generations. (Leonard, 2015).

The Beatles were a constant, joyful presence in the lives of millions of predominantly white baby boomers, offering a compelling and complicated nonstop flow of music, images, and ideas during six critical years of child, adolescent, and young adult development. The wraparound experience of hearing and watching the Beatles evolve in real time had an impact on tens of millions of first-generation fans—now in their sixties and seventies—that was profound and enduring.

Other artists from that era also have a loyal aging fan base—Bob Dylan, The Rolling Stones, David Bowie, and those mentioned in the quote below come to mind. But the Beatles' cultural authority and omnipresence in the sixties so informed the zeitgeist of boomers' formative years that the band still holds positive resonance for older adults across an eighteen-year age range, no matter what else they were listening to. A female fan born in 1946 recalled:

> I had a dear friend who smoked pot, loved the Grateful Dead, wore Eastern dresses, and knew

> nothing about politics. I was political and countercultural and I didn't use drugs. But we both liked the Beatles. (Leonard, 2016, p. 153).

This fan, a male twelve years younger, put it this way:

> Not everyone was listening to the same thing anymore—there were more options—Cream, Hendrix, Simon and Garfunkel, the Doors, the Monkees. But the Beatles were a common denominator regardless of what else you listened to. (Leonard, 2016, p. 153).

Along with the Beatles and other music of consequence, the post-war generation in the US grew up with great expectations—despite Cold War "duck and cover" drills, Vietnam, assassinations, and civil unrest. A cool young president promised this first tv generation a man on the moon by the end of the decade, and science delivered. The oppressive conformity of the post-war years was yielding to an ethos of greater personal freedom.

Landmark voting rights legislation was passed and Johnson's social welfare agenda lifted millions out of poverty. College was affordable for those who wanted to go. Emergent styles in the arts offered more expansive visions of the human experience. Baby boomers were infused with Great Society optimism while rejoicing in a pop music renaissance, devouring and cherishing texts that heralded a new era of human flourishing.

The West did enter a new era, but it was not the Age of Aquarius many were hoping for. Backlash to the liberalizing trends of the 1960s ushered in neoliberalism and a drastic cultural shift away from intrinsic and towards extrinsic values. After forty years of deregulation, market-driven individualism, soaring income inequality, and underfunded social supports, many of those great expectations have gone unmet, though hope is not necessarily abandoned.

The good news is that this generation of older adults are better educated, smoke less, are more inclined to exercise, and have longer life expectancy than previous generations. Many are "aging successfully," a somewhat problematic concept (Calasanti, 2016) which, most basically, means free of disability or disease, high cognitive and physical abilities, and meaningful interactions with others (Rowe and Kahn, 1987). The bad news is that a recent study shows reduced levels of cognitive functioning in boomers compared to previous generations (Zheng, 2021).

Contributing to this reduced cognitive functioning are lower household wealth, lower likelihood of marriage, higher levels of loneliness, depression and psychiatric problems, and more cardiovascular risk factors, including obesity, physical inactivity, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, and heart disease. Further, it is predicted that cognitive impairment will become more common as the cohort ages. The increasing suicide rate is a concern as well (Krans, 2016).

Governments and other institutions around the world are ill-prepared for so many people living so much longer in states of economic precarity and poor health. Efforts to address the needs of this population are too often characterized by siloed, privatized approaches, tech solutionism, ageism, and an emphasis on lean efficiency to maximize profit.

In 1971, David Bowie advised young music fans to "look out" because "pretty soon now" they were "gonna get older." And here we are. But the life-enhancing aspects of music fandom—awesome aural experiences, sharing a passion with others, playfully engaging with texts, examining artifacts—become even more potent and valuable with age. Fandom expands into a different kind of resource, meeting a wider range of needs.

Recognizing that baby boomer identity and worldview were uniquely and extremely informed by the music of their youth, a growing body of research on fandom across the life course has emerged since Harrington and Bielby (2010) first introduced insights from gerontology into fan studies and called on others to do the same.

There is now a rapidly expanding literature on aging fans, much of it focusing on how the meaning, enactment, and experience of fan identity change with age (see for example, Vroomen, 2004; Bennett, 2013; Kotarba, 2013; Harrington & Bielby, 2017). This work is important for our understanding of the interplay between media, fan practices, and adult identity in later life. But with 10,000 boomers turning sixty-five every day (America Counts, 2019), their ongoing engagement with the music of their youth is a valuable resource with broad, societal implications.

Drawing on *Beatleness: How the Beatles and Their Fans Remade the World* (Leonard 2016), I will show how boomers' experience of growing up with the Beatles is stored deeply in their consciousness as a lifelong resource for resiliency and well-being, and that this generation's lifetime of deep engagement with music and music fandom are resources that can be leveraged by fans themselves, families, and health-care professionals to extend healthspan, mitigate loneliness, maximize engagement, and otherwise improve quality of life for this first generation of "old fans" and those that follow.

BEATLES AND BOOMERS: A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP

The Beatles came to play a role in fans' lives that fits no existing category. Its scale, duration, and intensity distinguish it from other parasocial relationships. Many said the Beatles were not merely "like" family but were as important to them as family. A male fan born in 1950 explained: "They were more than a band; they were like your relatives. You felt close to them and knew so much about them. They were family. I identified with them intensely, and trusted them." A male fan five years younger, said, "They had as big or maybe even bigger impact on me than close family members" (Leonard, 2016, p. 255).

Several said the Beatles were like "surrogate parents," filling emotional voids and providing comfort their real parents could not. A female fan born in 1949 said, "My parents were alcoholics and there was lots of stress in the house. The Beatles took me away and made me happy" (p. 263).

Many felt the Beatles "had more interesting and useful things to say" than anyone else in their lives. A male fan also born in 1949, said, "I was learning more from them than I was from my father, who always called me a schmuck. They were guys older than me who understood things I was trying to understand" (p. 263). A female fan born in 1958 whose mother was "a career woman at a time when nobody's mom worked" said she and her siblings raised themselves, and "spent a lot of time alone listening to the Beatles" (p. 263).

Fans were grateful for the hope the Beatles provided during hard times and "took comfort in knowing the Beatles were in the world" (p. 255). A male fan born in 1950 said, "When I was young and I wanted to harm myself, they made me so glad and happy. I wanted to be alive so I could hear them. If not for them life would have been horrible for me" (p. 264). A male fan born in 1949 said, "They helped keep me sane during a turbulent period in which my family suffered several deaths and illnesses. I internalized qualities I admired in them and drew great strength from my identification with them" (p. 256).

The Beatles provided a way for awkward or quirky young people to be "accepted into a group for the first time" and many "still feel grateful to them" for that as well (p. 262). The Beatles were the friend who accepts you and "never judges you" (p. 263). As one female fan born in 1954 recalled, "They were my salvation until I could find real people who would make me feel like they made me feel." Asked how they made her feel, she said, "Understood; that I was okay the way I was" (p. 263). The Beatles made fans feel validated and supported as individuals. A female fan born in 1952 recalled:

> Everything I did, all the phases I went through, I followed and I actually learned from them. I think they were my friends when I was growing up. They made me feel special. Even though I

> didn't know them personally, it was like they were right there (p. 263).

The Beatles' message to a male fan born in 1957 was, "It's okay to take chances and push the envelope." A female fan of the same age heard, "Stand up for what you believe" (p. 261). Fans heard the Beatles saying, "Be yourself," "Be confident in who you are," "Follow your dreams," "Don't let the world drag you down," and "Don't be afraid to be different" (p. 262).

Fans of all ages thought they were "the perfect age to be part of it." A male fan born in 1951 said:

> I have always felt that I couldn't have been luckier than to be born in the summer of 1951. Being fully into them was a teenage, adolescent experience that was unique to our generation. The Beatles were and still are the biggest and best thing that has ever ha-ppened in my life. (p. 258)

The earliest memories of mid to late boomers are infused with Beatles. A female fan born in 1955 said, "They enhanced my childhood. They gave me something to hope for. They entertained me, but they also made my little bubble bigger—more worldly and attractive. They made us feel cool and bigger and older than we were, like we could be part of this."

A female fan born in 1961, one of the youngest interviewees said, "I have a powerful attachment to them because I was becoming a conscious human being at the time when they were everywhere." But the impact at the other end of the age range was also significant. A male fan born in 1947 said, "They made me question accomplishment without fulfillment."

Gratitude and joy are mentioned frequently. Fans "can't overestimate" or "express" the amount of joy the Beatles brought them. It's a feeling they "never want to let go of" (p. 264). A female fan born in 1957 says she was "hardwired for joy with the Beatles." The overriding emotion is also joy for this female fan born in 1951: "They brought me so much joy when I was growing up, and still do" (p. 264.) A male fan born in 1956 remembers the Beatles bringing forth new emotions: "I always felt in my heart that they were very special and meaningful to me. They sparked something in me that was new—inspiration, excitement, joy, happiness" (p. 264).

Fans cite moments that, for them, capture what one female fan born in 1961 called "the shimmer of joy" in their music: the cowbell on "A Hard Day's Night," the hand claps on "Eight Days a Week," the feedback on "I Feel Fine," the fuzz bass on "Think For Yourself," the count-in on "Taxman," the alarm clock on "A Day in the Life," the harmony on "Because," or, back to the beginning, Lennon and McCartney singing unison on the chorus of "She Loves You"—a record described by one female fan as "pure joy on a piece of plastic." (pp. 264-265)

It's quite common for fans to say "I grew up with them" because of the band's ubiquity during the sixties. A male fan born in 1956 recalled, "They were part of the fabric of your life, the backdrop." A male fan born in 1948 described it this way: "You brushed your teeth, you went to the bathroom, you went to school, you listened to the Beatles" (p. 139).

The phrase "I grew up with them," captures not only the band's constant presence but how they stimulated fans' intellectual, emotional, social, aesthetic, and spiritual development. As a female fan born in 1956 explains, "I grew up with them and because of them. They'd put something out there and I was ready to receive it" (p. 256). A female fan born in 1961 said, "As a Beatle fan, your mind is open to possibilities, more and sooner" (p. 257). Through their songs and their own high-profile seeking they encouraged fans to question and quest. Several fans said, "They made us think about things in different ways" (p. 257).

The Beatles' output functioned as an alternative curriculum, a spiraling curriculum to wander through repeatedly, getting something new each time yet also enjoying its familiarity. Now in their sixties and seventies, fans are still doing this.

The Beatles kept fans in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978) where material just beyond their grasp is understood with the help of older peers. Early on, fans came to expect the Beatles to provide them with joyful, immersive experiences, and by repeatedly exceeding those expectations the Beatles created delight.

A reservoir of trust was established, ensuring fan engagement as the band's output required more work. Even those who said they were frightened by "Strawberry Fields Forever" were nevertheless in-trigued and kept listening (Leonard, 2017). The Beatles challenged this generation in a wholly unique way.

The Beatles trip to India to study meditation in 1968 captured the attention of fans and the world press. Many younger fans remember thinking "it was part of their mystique." Others thought they "needed guidance" or "just didn't want to be bothered anymore" (Leonard, 2016, p. 158). Some thought the Beatles "were lucky to have the money to travel to places like India and seek truth, not caring what anyone thought" (158). A male fan, age seventeen at the time, said the Beatles "made everyone think about aspiring to spiritual enlightenment" (p. 159).

Recalling the Beatles trip to India at its fiftieth anniversary, *American Veda* (2010) author Philip Goldberg said,

> It was as though planet Earth tilted on its axis in February 1968, allowing India's ancient wisdom to flow more easily and quickly to the West. The infusion would impact healthcare, psychology, neuroscience, and especially the way we understand and engage our spirituality. (Goldberg, 2018)

Spirituality remains part of the Beatles meaning for fans of all ages (Leonard, 2021). But spiritual themes in their music and the phenomenon itself may have special relevance for older fans as a resource for moving towards gerotranscendence, a stage of adult development which will be discussed further below.

Fans had strong reactions to news of the Beatles breakup in April of 1970. A female fan, age fifteen at the time, remembers the day vividly: "It was my mother's fortieth birthday party that day; I was devastated, like someone died. I sat in my room and cried. I was heartbroken" (Leonard, 2016, p. 246). Another female fan, also fifteen at the time, explained "it was like your parents getting divorced; you were never alone in the house and always felt safe, then one day they break up and you're devastated." Many said it was "like losing a family member." (p. 246)

A male fan, age fifteen at the time recalled, "It's like they were saying 'the seventies are starting, you're on your own'" (p. 253). A male fan age, eighteen at the time, put it this way:

> I was heartbroken when they broke up. I was graduating high school and going off to college. I was starting a new chapter of my life, and the thing I had to hang on to was gone. I had to grow up but I continued to carry them inside me. They are part of me and always will be. (p. 253)

BEATLES FAN PRACTICES

What Beatles publicist Derek Taylor referred to as "the twentieth century's greatest romance" (1996, p. 3) continues into the twenty-first.

Fans from all over the world discuss the Beatles 24/7 on social media, where an interesting post can elicit hundreds of comments in minutes. These conversations are stimulating for fans of all ages, but for lifelong fans, reviewing lived history and joyful experiences that still hold positive energy functions as a kind of reminiscence therapy, which has been shown to relieve depressive symptoms and improve well-being (Routledge et al., 2016).

Though the connection is virtual, it reduces loneliness because something personally meaningful is shared (Hari, 2018). In addition, nostalgic experiences increase confidence and motivation, and disrupt thought patterns that perpetuate loneliness (Abeyta

et al., 2020). Often considered a reactionary response to discontent in the present, nostalgic reflection is a way of accessing meaningful memories from the past in order to approach the future with greater purpose (FioRito and Routledge, 2020).

Though most fans discussing the Beatles on social media have never met, or perhaps see each other occasionally at Beatles events, shared love for the Beatles is a basis for genuine friendship, even among people who might have little else in common. When someone becomes ill or shares the loss of a parent or a beloved pet, others post heartfelt responses. Posters thank their "Beatle family" for the support. This fan, a child of seven when Beatlemania erupted, put it this way:

> The Beatles have made my life joyous. My children listen to the Beatles, my home is filled with Beatles memorabilia as well as music. They taught me about love and kindness and how music can touch my heart. The internet has connected me to other fans and a world of new friends. (Leonard, 2016, p. 271)

Fans share pictures of their Beatle rooms, spaces of refuge from life's stressors, where they're surrounded by images and objects with deeply personal yet shared meaning. Though not all fans have the luxury of a Beatle room, fans display Beatle images in their homes for the same reasons family photos are displayed: to elicit feelings of love, gratitude, and self-continuity. A casual glance can provide a comforting interlude.

For first generation fans, the Beatles have been the most consistent, enduring, and unfailing thing in their lives, aside from their own sense of continuous self—and the two are intertwined. Friends, spouses, and jobs come and go, children grow up and move away, yet "side two" of *Abbey Road* is as reliably pleasing—if not more so due to remastering—as it was a half a century ago.

Beatles tourism generates £82 million annually for the city of Liverpool, and the Beatles-related economy is expected to continue growing long into the future (Liverpool Echo, 2016). Standing at the shelter in the middle of the roundabout at Penny Lane is affirming and satisfying because it makes real what the song conjured in imagination countless times.

Fans feel both privileged and humbled seeing the Beatles childhood homes. That these homes, some rather ordinary, are historic "blue plaque" sites affirms fans' belief in the Beatles' historical significance and fans' own sense of being part of history. These feelings are empowering and can mitigate the ageism that considers fannishness inappropriate in adults.

Many fans look forward to remastered music and buy it as soon as its available, despite having purchased it in many previous formats over the years. Demos and outtakes reveal the Beatles' creative processes and offer glimpses into the mysteries of their craft. Candid banter is of great interest because fans gain insight into who they are as real people.

Part of the appeal of Peter Jackson's *Get Back* (2021) —documenting the band's daily activity in the weeks leading up to their last live performance on the Apple rooftop on January 30, 1969—is that it includes demos, outtakes, and banter. The music and images of the embodied Beatles are primordially familiar yet still seems fresh.

Since 1974, Mark Lapidos has been convening fans for three days of "Beatleing" at the Fest for Beatle Fans, which takes place annually in New York and Chicago. The Fest draws fans of all ages from all over the US and beyond for live Beatles music, panel discussions, author presentations, films, vendors, art shows, trivia contests, and most importantly, to just be with other fans. Attendees say it's the "three of the best days of the year" and they "can't ask for a better vacation" (Leonard, p. 272).

Attending these gatherings is an act of self-care. Fan practices—sharing things one finds meaningful, listening to favorite music, group singing and music-making, engaging with texts, reminiscing, moving to music—are all health-promoting. The

fans jamming all night in the lobby may be losing sleep but they're preventing the cognitive decline of healthy aging (Román-Caballero et al., 2018).

A RESOURCE FOR WELL-BEING

Documentaries like Alive Inside (Rossato-Bennett, 2014) and the work of Daniel Levitan (2019) and Oliver Sacks (2007) have raised public awareness about the power of music. Yet, boomers' lifelong engagement with the Beatles and other music is an underutilized resource for addressing cognitive decline and other health issues.

Musical leisure activities and music therapy have many potential benefits for cognitive, motor, emotional, and social functioning for normal aging as well as for older people with neurological illnesses such as stroke and dementia (Särkämö 2018). Simply listen-ing to favorite music improves brain plasticity and may have long-lasting effects. (Fischer et al., 2021).

For many music fans now in their sixties and seventies, the practice of listening to music fell away gradually over years of work and family responsibilities. Today, internalized ageism may inhibit boomers from expressing enthusiasm about the music of their youth because it doesn't seem age appropriate. A Beatleness interviewee born in 1953 who "didn't have much to do with the Beatles for long stretches of time" (Leonard 2016, p. 270) realized an important source of joy had been missing from her life.

A 2016 study found millennials listen to 75% more music than boomers (Resnickoff, P. 2016). More recently, a 2019 study by Deloitte found only 20% of boomers subscribe to a music streaming service, and they value the service least among all ages groups (Ciampa, 2019). No reasons are offered but it's a worthwhile research question. Perhaps boomers perceive an unwanted agent interfering in their intimate relationship with music. Artful album covers and liner notes are absent from the music streaming experience, perhaps making it less appealing for some. Technostress could also be a factor (Nimrod, 2018).

Based on my own experience as a volunteer working with healthy people in their seventies and beyond living alone in the community, people this age have enormous interest in learning how to stream music and make playlists. They will eagerly tell you who their favorite artists are. Music streaming services like Spotify should consider offering discounts to older adults, as they do for students.

Musicologist Even Ruud considers music a "cultural immunogen," something people use in their everyday lives to improve their health and well-being. (Ruud, 2013). Thinking about the millions of older adults whose well-being would be enhanced by reconnecting with the Beatles or any music they love, several strategies come to mind.

Adult children could ensure aging parents, especially those living alone, have frictionless access to their favorite music. And while it may seem less impotant than social security numbers and passwords, adult children should know what songs their aging parents' would be most responsive to. That information is important for music therapists working with Alzheimer's or stroke patients who may not be able to communicate but will respond to music stored deeply in memory.

In primary care settings, providers could take a moment to ask older adults if they have access to music and encourage them to listen on a regular basis. In addition to the health benefits of making patients feel cared for in a personal, holistic way, it could hasten a cultural shift, beginning with this first "rock generation," that routinely encourages music for well-being and integrates it into care practices when appropriate.

Family members could also be sure loved ones in residential care have access to music, even if they have to provide it for them. Research shows "wash and feed" and "too busy" mindsets are barriers to

the widespread therapeutic use of music despite awareness of its known benefits to both residents and staff. (Garrido et al., 2021, p.1197). An older fans' encounter with the Beatles scrapbook they lovingly curated as a teenager, or other memorabilia, could activate memories and encourage communication.

Because hearing is the last sense to go, favorite music can also ease the process of dying. As Harrington observes in her study of fandom and the US death system, "the potential remains for fannish identities and practices up to the moment of death" (2019, 197).

Music is also useful for pain management, with no side effects. According to Tia DeNora's research on music as a medium of consciousness and a "health technology," people suffering from chronic illness can use music to "instill courage" and a different attitude toward pain (2015, p. 112). Perhaps adding music therapy to care plans could mitigate the "silent epidemic of chronic pain in older adults" (Domenichiello and Ramsden, 2019) and the associated problem of polypharmacy (Yeager et al., 2020).

Online social learning platforms have been effective in connecting older adults with shared interests, thus mitigating the negative impact of the social isolation necessitated by the pandemic. (Heape, 2021) I led a 12-week series called "Growing Up With the Beatles" on one such platform where participants shared stories as we listened to music, discussed images, and moved through the Beatles timeline and contemporaneous historical events.

Like the blue plaques on the Beatles' homes, these conversations—among people who are technically strangers, yet aren't—are empowering because they situate boomers in proximity to events in collective consciousness that are also uniquely theirs; events they lived through and witnessed. The sessions tap into rich veins of deeply stored memories and offer opportunities for insight into former selves, adding continuity and coherence to participants' ongoing personal narrative.

Age brings added poignancy to reflection, often with heightened spirituality and movement toward gerotranscendence (Tornstam, 2011). With this stage of development comes greater feelings of connection to past and future generations, less attachment to egoic identity, and a shift away from materialistic concerns and superficial relationships. Gerotranscendence can also bring about "emancipated innocence"—a playful, carefree state with little concern about the judgement of others.

Music therapist Faith Halverson-Ramos uses music in a variety of ways to support gerotranscendence, noting that spiritual themes in Beatles' songs such as "The Word" and "Within You Without You," may be especially resonant for boomers (2019).

The enduring music fandom of older adults also suggests new models of community living after retirement. Ninety percent of boomers want to "age in place" despite the potentially high cost of doing so (Khalfani-Cox, 2017), and show little interest in typical 55+ communities (Geber, 2021). Communities based on fan identity may hold the answer, as evinced by the success of Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville (Regan, 2021)—though many boomers would find that particular aesthetic and lifestyle unappealing, unaffordable, or both.

Based on their study of aging Grateful Dead fans, Adams and Harmon (2014) have explored the possibility of an intentional retirement community for fans of the Grateful Dead, and conclude a community based solely on musical taste might not be sufficiently appealing but could serve as an initial filter for identifying subcommunities (Adams and Harmon, 2018).

Similarly, one could envision a retirement community based on Beatles fandom as an initial filter for identifying subcommunities (Leonard, n.d.). Age-restricted communities follow an 80/20 rule in the US, thus fan-based retirement communities would be intergenerational, with significant benefits for all involved. (Jacobs, 2021).

Millions of boomers are raising grandchildren, starting businesses, and volunteering in their communities. Many are retired and thriving; many are struggling. They've shed the great expectations of their youth but have not abandoned hope. Many want to stay healthy and engaged, working alongside young people to preserve democracy and a habitable planet.

I'm not suggesting music or Beatles fandom are the keys to health and happiness for today's older adults, or that it can mitigate the ravages of neoliberalism or of unhealthy lifestyle choices (Shen 2019). But we know that fan activity and listening to favorite music bring joy and enhanced well-being to boomers' lives today—just as it did a half century ago—and should be encouraged by those who care for and about them.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Abeyta, A.A., Routledge, C., Kaslon, S. (2020, June 23). Combating Loneliness with Nostalgia: Nostalgic Feelings Attenuate Negative Thoughts and Motivations Associated With Loneliness. *Frontiers in Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01219

Adams, R. G., Harmon, J. (2014). The Long Strange Trip Continues. In Harrington, C. L., Bielby, D., Bardo, A. (Eds.), *Aging, Media, and Culture* (Chapter 9). London: Lexington Books.

Adams, R. G., Harmon, J. (2018). Intentional Sub-communities and Identity Continuity Among *Baby Boo*ers: *Grateful Dead Fans*. In R.A. Cnaan and C. Milofsky (Eds.), Handbook of Community Movements and Local Organizations in the 21st Century (pp.337-351), Springer. DOI:10.1007/978-3-319-77416-9_21

America Counts (2019). By 2030 all baby boomers will be age 65 or older. *US Census Bureau* https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/12/by-2030-all-baby-boomers-will-be-age-65-or-older.html

Bennett, A. (2013) *Music, Style, and Aging: Growing Old Disgracefully?* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Bowie, D. (1971) Changes. *Hunky Dory*. RCA Records

Calasanti, T. (2016) Combating Ageism: How Successful Is Successful Aging? *Gerontologist*, 56(6), 1093-1101. doi: 10.1093/geront/gnv076.

Ciampa, D. (2019, August 7). Boomers haven't shown a 'whole lotta love' for music streaming. *Deloitte Perspectives*. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/boomers-havent-shown-a-whole-lotta-love-for-music-streaming.html

DeNora, T. (2016). *Music Asylums: Wellbeing Through Music in Everyday Life*. New York: Routledge.

Domenichiello, A.F. and Ramsden, C.E. (2019). The silent epidemic of chronic pain in older adults. *Progress in Neuro-Psychopharmacology and Biological Psychiatry*, 93, 284-290.

FioRito, T.A. & Routledge, C. (2020, June 3). Is Nostalgia a Past or Future-Oriented Experience? Affective, Behavioral, Social Cognitive, and Neuroscientific Evidence. *Frontiers in Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01133

Fischer, C.E., Churchill, N.; Leggieri, M.; Vuong, V.; Tau, M.; Fornazzari, L.R.; Thaut, M.H.; Schweizer, T.A. (2021) Long-Known Music Exposure Effects on Brain Imaging and Cognition in Early-Stage Cognitive Decline: A Pilot Study. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, 84(2), (pp. 819-833).

Garrido, S., Markwell, H., Andreallo, F., & Hatcher, D. (2021). Benefits, Challenges and Solutions for Implementing Personalised Music Playlist Programs in Residential Aged Care in Australia. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare*, 14. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A673852970/AONE?u=mlin_m_minuteman&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=255c3a3f

Geber, S.Z. (2021) Hey Senior Living Pros: Boomers Don't Want Your Old, Tired Communities. *Forbes*, May 11, 2021.

Goldberg, P. (2010) *American Veda: How Indian Spirituality Changed the West*. New York: Harmony Books.

Goldberg, P. (2018) How the Beatles' Trip to India Changed the face of Spirituality in the West, *Elephant Journal*. https://www.elephantjournal.com/2018/02/how-the-beatles-trip-to-india-changed-the-face-of-spirituality-in-the-west/

Halverson-Ramos, F. (2019) Music and gerotranscendence: A culturally responsive approach to ageing. *Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy, Special Issue* 11(1), (166-178).

Hari, J. (2018). *Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression – and the Unexpected Solutions*. New York: Bloomsbury USA.

Harrington, C. L., and Bielby, D.D. (2010). A life course perspective on fandom. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13(5), 429-450.

Harrington, C.L. and Bielby, D.D. (2017). Aging, fans, and fandom. In M.A. Click, & S. Scott (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media Fandom* (pp. 406-415). Abingdon: Routledge.

Harrington, C.L. (2019). Til death do us part? Fandom and the US death system. *Journal of Fandom Studies*, 7(2), 189-206.

Heape, A. (2021). Loneliness and Social Isolation in Older Adults: The Effects of a Pandemic. *Perspectives: American Speech-Language-Hearing Association*. 6 (6), 1729-1736.

Jackson, P. (Director). (2021). *Get Back* [Film]. Walt Disney Studios; Apple Corps; Wingnut.

Jacobs, K. (2021). Don't Mind the Gap in Intergenerational Housing, *The New York Times*, Sept 2, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/02/style/housing-elderly-intergenerational-living.html

Khalfani-Cox, L. (2017). Can You Afford to Age in Place? *AARP*, February 14, 2017. https://www.aarp.org/money/budgeting-saving/info-2017/costs-of-aging-in-place.html

Kotarba, J.A (2013). *Baby Boomer Rock 'n' Roll Fans: The Music Never Ends*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Krans, B. (2016, December 5.). Baby Boomer Suicide Rate Rising, May Go Higher with Age. *Healthline*. https://www.healthline.com/health-news/baby-boomer-suicide-rate-rising-031515

Krznaric, R. (2020). *The Good Ancestor: A Radical Prescription for Long-Term Thinking*. New York: Experiment Publishing.

Leonard, C. (n.d.). candyleonard.com/projectblackbird

Leonard, C. (2016). *Beatleness: How the Beatles and Their Fans Remade The World*. New York: Arcade.

Leonard, C. (2015, January 26). 7 ways the Beatles changed boomer childhood overnight *Huffington Post*. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/candy-leonard/beatles-changed-boomer-childhood_b_6494786.html

Leonard, C. (2017, February 22). When the Beatles brought psychedelia to prime time. *Huffington Post*. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/when-the-beatles-brought-psychedelia-to-prime-time_b_58adbc3ae4b0598627a55f2c

Leonard, C. (2021). Beatles Fandom: A De Facto Religion. In Ken Womack & Kit O'Toole (Eds.), *Fandom and The Beatles: The Act You've Known for All These Years* (pp. 1-54). Oxford University Press.

Levitan, D. (2019). *This is Your Brain on Music: Understanding a Human Obsession*. London: Penguin.

Liverpool Echo, (2016, February 8). The Beatles add £82m a year to Liverpool economy. https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-35523070

Nimrod, G. (2018). Technostress: measuring a new threat to well-being in later life, *Aging & Mental Health*, 22(8), 1080-1087, DOI: 10.1080/13607863.2017.1334037

Regan, T. (2021, July 12). Demand Surges for Latitude Margaritaville Communities as Brand Seeks Westward Expansion. *Senior Housing News*. https://seniorhousingnews.com/2021/07/12/demand-surges-for-latitude-margaritaville-communities-as-brand-seeks-westward-expansion/

Resnickoff, P. (2016, June 2). Millennials Listen to 75% More Music Than Baby Boomers, Study Finds. Digital Music News. https://www.digitalmusicnews.com/2016/06/02/millennials-listen-more-music-baby-boomers

Román-Caballero, Rafael & Arnedo, Marisa & Triviño, Monica & Lupiáñez, Juan. (2018). Musical practice as an enhancer of cognitive function in healthy aging - A systematic review and meta-analysis. PLoS ONE. 13. e0207957. 10.1371/journal.pone.0207957

Rossato-Bennett, M. (Director). (2014). *Alive Inside* [Film]. Projector Media.

Routledge, C., Roylance C., Abeyta A.A. (2016) Nostalgia as an Existential Intervention: Using the Past to Secure Meaning in the Present and the Future. In: Russo-Netzer P., Schulenberg S., Batthyany A. (Eds.,) *Clinical Perspectives on Meaning*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-41397-6_17

Rowe, J.W. & Kahn, R.L. (1998) *Successful Aging*. New York: Pantheon.

Ruud, E. (2013). Can music serve as a "cultural immunogen? An explorative study. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being* 8(1), 1-12. DOI:10.3402/qhw.v8i0.20597

Sacks, O. (2007). *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. New York: Knopf.

Shen, A. (2019) Marketing Preventive Health to Baby Boomers: What if Unhealthy Lifestyles are Attributable to the Counterculture? *Journal of Macromarketing*. Vol. 39 (2), 151-165.

Taylor, D. (1996). Introduction to *Beatles Anthology* 1. Apple Corps Ltd/EMI Records Ltd.

Thomas, B. (2015). *Second Wind: Navigating the Passage to a Slower, Deeper, and More Connected Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Tornstam, L. (2005) *Gerotranscendence: A Developmental Theory of Positive Aging*. Springer.

Vroomen, L. (2004). Kate Bush: Teen Pop and Older Female Fans. In A. Bennett, & R.A. Peterson (eds.), *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal, and Virtual* (pp. 238-253). Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge: Har-vard University Press.

Yeager, C.A., Maginga, S.M., Hyer, L. (2020). The Impact of Polypharmacy on Health and Quality of Life for Older Adults. In L.T. Duncan, (Ed.), *Advances in Health and Disease*, Volume 21 (pp. 1-56). New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Zheng, H. (2021). A New Look at Cohort Trend and Underlying Mechanisms in Cognitive Functioning. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, Volume 76 (8), 1652-1663. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa107

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Candy Leonard

Candy Leonard is the author of *Beatleness: How the Beatles and Their Fans Remade the World* (Arcade, 2014; 2016) and has written about Beatles fandom, boomers, and pop culture for a variety of publications, including academic volumes on the Beatles. She is an independent scholar with a PhD in Sociology from the University of New Hampshire and an MA in Human Development from Teachers College, Columbia.