Opinion

Instagram has ruined music for me

By REX NAYLOR
Staff Writer

Since November 2022, Instagram allows users to choose a song to accompany their post. At first, I was a huge fan, as it let me make my post just how I wanted, but lately, scrolling through Instagram has become a headache.

It's not because people use songs I don't know; rather, similar accounts use the same handful of songs for the same type of post.

For example, when Dave and Tems released "Raindance" in October 2025, nine out of 10 posts about an end-of-season recap for sports would use the song. I liked this song when it came out, as I had been anticipating the album for years.

Within a week, the song was overplayed and stale, so I made the tough decision to remove it from my playlist.

Similarly, posts from high school graduations would feature the same handful of songs by the rock bands Red Hot Chili Peppers and Oasis. I didn't have a problem with either band before these posts came flooding in, but now certain songs have become unenjoyable.

"Wonderwall," "Live Forever," "Scar Tissue" and "Californication" are permanently ruined because of these nearly identical posts popping up over and over again. Before these posts, I listened to these songs very often, nearly every day.

What annoys me most is that many of the songs used aren't original, in my eyes. There's no point in using a song that's so popular and

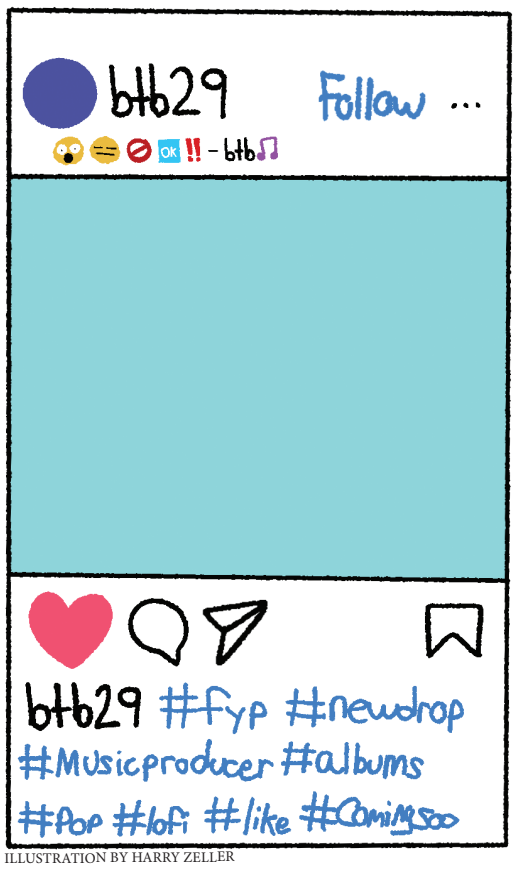

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY ZELLER

widely known for a post that's meant to be personal and showcase individuality.

Of course, people should be able to post whatever song they want to; ultimately, it's no one's business to police what song is used on a photo dump or season recap.

However, because of the wide variety of songs to choose from, picking songs that are popular makes me feel like I have no original taste whatsoever. Say I want to use "Hey Nineteen" by rock band Steely Dan for a post, but I've seen people listen to it more often and use it on posts; I'm going to feel disinterested and unoriginal if I put it in my post.

I'd even feel weird if I used any Steely Dan song at all, because if "Hey Nineteen" is so popular, why use a different song? The argument goes around in circles in my head, and it ceases to leave me be.

Even if I know the meaning to half of the songs by the artist, and I've seen videos of how the songs were made, seeing the song used by other people would only discourage me from using it in a post.

Instagram used to be a place for me to discover new music; now it's become a virtual dumping ground for people's identical music tastes.

Social media as a whole has incentivized conformity instead of individuality through algorithms. The reason to use something personal and important to an individual is nonexistent. Personal listening experiences to cherished songs have turned into background noise from 15-second snippets.

New music doesn't really have a chance to establish itself and become a staple song that becomes timeless. Imagine if hits from the 2010s became unlistenable because of immediate abuse from the algorithm.

Songs made by bands like Oasis, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Steely Dan are diminished to aesthetic tropes. Certain songs are meant to go with certain photos in posts, they aren't used because someone thinks the song is good, rather, it matches the visuals.

To me, it wouldn't make sense to listen to Steely Dan in the dead of January, and I probably wouldn't use one of their summertime-sounding songs for a winter snow post.

Sounds trend on Instagram Reels and TikToks, making them sound mundane, so chances are whatever song I heard has already been heard by thousands of others. What used to be a great tool for sharing and discovering has turned into a never-ending cycle of killing songs before they can grow.

There's no point in anticipating an album just for the song to be reused and abused for months; it takes out all the excitement for listeners.

Yankees fans have bigger problems than Aaron Boone returning

By MAXWELL ADAMS
Staff Writer

The price of being a New York Yankees fan is that there are always expectations. Those expectations typically are World Series or bust; at least, they have been for as long as I can remember. When those expectations aren't met, we want to see change. Fans want to see some kind of effort to right the ship in an area of the team that was considered to be a reason for not being able to compete for that championship run.

At the conclusion of the Yankees' 2026 campaign, that source of frustration for fans, for one reason or another, is manager Aaron Boone, whose return for the 2027 season was publicly confirmed by the Yankees on Oct. 21.

There is certainly a valid argument against Boone returning. The nearly 20-year World Series drought that has continued through his nine seasons as Yankees manager is reason No. 1.

Other reasons include his well-documented postseason shortcomings. He is 27-30 in his tenure, with one World Series appearance, and has made multiple questionable decisions throughout playoff appearances. One of those questionable decisions was perhaps the most prominent example this year, with Yankees center fielder Trent Grisham batting leadoff in an elimination game. It is worth asking, though, how much of that truthfully falls on Boone's shoulders.

Say he wasn't the manager of the Yankees but instead managed Oakland Athletics. Those fans would be absolutely ecstatic to make a World Series and reach the playoffs eight of the last nine years. They'd be in division races every year, winning division titles along the way. If you gave them the resume Boone has built in the Bronx, those fans would be elated.

That doesn't apply to Yankees fans, though, a fanbase known to be beyond restless.

It is very easy in this age of sports for fans and the media alike to paint the coach as a scapegoat for a team's struggles. However, coaches don't construct the roster, often have little to do with player development and have to work with what they are given.

What Boone was given by Yankees general manager and senior vice president Brian Cashman this season was a lefty-heavy roster that hit more for power than for average or anything else, along with clear holes at four starting field positions that were not addressed during the offseason.

Cashman is responsible for that area, and this was the roster he constructed and gave to Boone. If anybody deserves to be at the top of the scapegoats list for the Yankees' struggles, it's Cashman.

Extending a $20 million qualifying offer to Grisham with Yankees outfielder Spencer Jones coming up through the system and poised to have a role on the Yankees' big league roster, was an error by Cashman. He also chose not to address third base issues during the 2025 offseason, trusting that his trade in 2025 for third baseman Ryan McMahon would pan out. It did not, as McMahon has hit .213 with a .280 on-base percentage, a .359 slugging percentage and a .639 on-base plus slugging since becoming a Yankee.

Cashman let the team enter the season with two left-handed catchers who struggle to hit. Yet, his shortcomings extend beyond the 2026 season, too. This is the same guy who failed to re-sign former Yankees second baseman Robinson Cano in his prime, gave former Yankees center fielder Jacoby Ellsbury a $160 million deal and traded legitimate prospects like infielder Ezequiel Duran and Josh Smith, who turned into solid big leaguers for former Yankees outfielder Joey Gallo.

Where is his accountability?

It certainly isn't coming from chairman of Yankee Global Enterprises, Hal Steinbrenner, who backed his general manager during his end-of-year press conference, saying, "Cash is great every year. He built a championship roster."

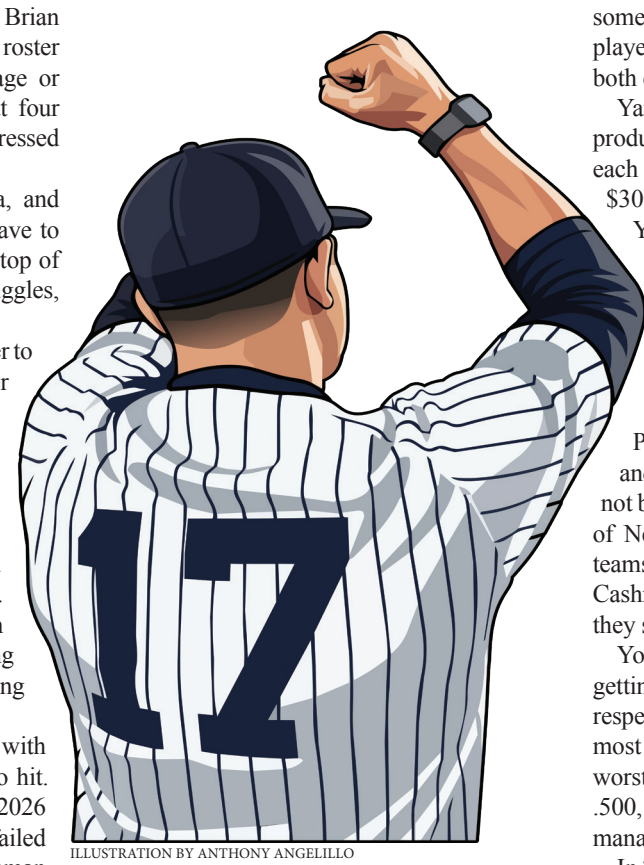

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY ANGELILLO

That is quite a statement following a sweep in the Division Series. Yes, the Yankees were without their best player, right fielder Aaron Judge, but one player does not erase the fact that they scored five runs in three games against the Tampa Bay Rays in the American League Division Series. A championship roster doesn't go completely off the rails after losing one player. Just look at the 2021 Atlanta Braves without right fielder Ronald Acuña Jr.

With comments and views like these, it seems as if the fans and ownership have different standards for what is acceptable, which is never a positive situation for a franchise. Even so, at some point, we have to acknowledge that the players are the ones going out there and failing both ownership and the fans.

Yankees designated hitter Giancarlo Stanton's production and games played have declined each year as he continues to earn money on his $300 million contract. Top prospects such as Yankees right fielder Jasson Domínguez and shortstop Anthony Volpe are not panning out at the big league level.

Judge has struggled in the postseason, a problem that could drastically deteriorate his legacy if the Yankees don't win a World Series during his career. Players they bring in, such as McMahon and second baseman Jazz Chisholm Jr., have not been able to perform under the bright lights of New York as they did with their previous teams. Those are pieces that were relied on by Cashman to perform, and the bottom line is that they simply haven't.

You don't solve any of those problems by getting rid of a manager whom the locker room respects and who has done more with less than most managers could do in his shoes. Boone's worst season still saw the Yankees finish above .500, and he has the second-most wins among managers since taking over nine years ago.

In 2019, he eclipsed 100 wins with more than 30 players having stints on the injured list. He has dealt with injury issues in other seasons, too, and still found his way to the playoffs almost every time. Those managers don't grow on trees. Address the roster, address the people making the roster and then we can worry about the guy making the lineups. That's how you fix the New York Yankees.