Every Tuesday, the music industry rewards loyal fans with a fresh batch of shiny new discs from their favorite artists. Kanye West, 50 Cent, Hot Hot Heat and The Go! Team all have releases today, for example, each costing the consumer a pretty penny—and that’s just the tip of this week’s wannabe-selling nothing of releases. Thousands of CDs get released yearly, but how many of those could you really call original?

Sure, argue that Kanye’s rhymes bring something fresh to the table, or that hailing behind the moniker of indie makes something unique; the truth is that most music these days is just a rehash of what’s come before—just Timberlake is derived from Michael Jackson; Amy Winehouse grabbed her schtick from the Motown girls of the ’60s; Simple Plan is pure junior high campers’—quality or not, it’s basically just grabbing at what has already been done.

What music needs is an old-fashioned time out. A five-year cool-down period, during which nobody releases anything new.

Sound crazy? Listen up: I’m not advocating the end of music or touring, or setting prices of CDs above in some self-righteous “lock-off” to recording artists. But if everyone could just take a break from releasing derivative crap, I think we’d all be better for it, artists included.

It wouldn’t be the first time that defunct big-name artists could live off of their established fortunes, and most smaller bands make more money off of tours anyways—and they could always teach music lessons to pay the bills. Record execs could take a hiatus into the regular business/marketing world, and audio engineers could develop new technologies to better the quality of recordings.

But back to music itself: without having to worry about making a release that pleases their record label or sells by the bucket, artists would begin to actually explore their music again and probably come up with something totally new and sexy. Two years is too short of a time span for any change to occur—that’s the average waiting time between an artist’s albums—and ten years is too long. But in five years, something could actually happen to pull music out of the repetitive underground it’s presently stuck in.

Plus, fans would actually seek out quality older music instead of waiting for some young, sexy singer to make a certain style or era cool again. There’s an almost century-long backlog of recorded music that doesn’t get the respect it deserves from new generations of music lovers. Why waste everyone’s time and effort making mediocre new tunes when the old stuff crackles with the excitement of having invented styles and genres? Stores like HMV could dig into the back-catalogues and re-release worthwhile but-deserving music to a new generation of fans.

Is it really that crazy to have five years without new music? Nobody has ever come close to not hearing everything that’s already available—you probably wouldn’t even look into five albums that get released today. So give music a chance by actually giving it a chance to figure out something new.

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