

Getting into the Groove: the vinyl revolution.

Do many people actually watch TV ads any more? Thanks to DVR's, we can all skip past the boring/unoriginal ones. In reality, that adds up to an awful lot of ads we don't reckon are worth watching. The days of strong original concepts, with a clever memorable idea at their core, are disappearing.

We've also had the rise and rise of lacklustre, usually acoustic cover songs. It's a trend that began to really take hold in 2008, thanks in part to the 'John Lewis' effect. Today almost 80% of TV ads now feature some kind of music soundtrack, and by my reckoning 50% of those are now cover songs, with numerous unremarkable ads wrecking the memory of once great songs, (like John Lennon's Real Love), and some not so great songs too. Along with Simon Cowell's X Factor finalist hijacking the Christmas No. 1 almost every year, a seasonal and obligatory John Lewis ad now makes for a dull and predictable Christmas playlist for someone like me.

All of which got me reminiscing about the good old days. In particular, my good old *vinyl* days when music was much more *mine* and much less of a commercial commodity. I collected over 1400 LPs before CDs effectively consigned the format to history for new releases. They're all still played, because they will always be very special to me.

So when I saw this recent headline, it cheered me up no end.

Vinyl record sales soar by a staggering 500 per cent in just three years.

Yep! Incredibly, vinyl sales in 2016 will top more than two million for the first time in 30 years!

Just three years ago even music industry insiders were dismissing the vinyl revolution, so this might seem like an overnight sea change. But the truth is that vinyl has been threatening a full-scale comeback for years — with people of all ages once again buying old-fashioned LPs, ditching CDs and switching off iTunes and Spotify for the magic of classic vinyl LPs.

Quentin Tarantino has even built an actual record store in his Hollywood Hills mansion, saying: 'A vinyl album is a piece of art. It deserves to be loved and it deserves to be filed in the right place.'

The surprise growth has come from sales of new releases by mainstream artists. The biggest selling vinyl album last year was Adele's '25', with 120,000 copies sold in 2015 alone. Vinyl is back, as collectible and desirable as ever.

For many, vinyl will always be the real thing. The only way to *really* hear the music. It's the sound, you see. That 'open' sound that came with the old technology is more authentic. And it came slipped into a sleeve that was perhaps destined to become

iconic and priceless, and with liner notes for me to devour on the way home from the record store before I fired up the turntable.

Something to treasure forever, vinyl provides a lasting road map and soundtrack to a part of my life that the soundtracks of today are no way groovy enough to match.