
Guns N' Roses Hard Rock Band

Guns N' Roses is a famous American hard rock band known for and adored for its dangerous and unpredictable behavior. The band is also notorious for its iconic duo of Slash, the guitarist, and Axl Rose, the lead singer. The duo had a falling out when Slash began working with Michael Jackson who was facing allegations of child abuse. Rose was molested as a child by his father, so he wanted nothing to do with Michael Jackson and was mad that Slash was working with him. Guns N' Roses went on a reunion tour entitled "Not In This Lifetime..." which was the first time that the iconic duo have taken the stage together since 1993 so they must have made up. The tour was supposed to consist of a short run of shows with an estimated gross profit of over \$100 million at \$3 million a night. Their tour is still ongoing with an expected total of 159 shows. It has produced \$480 million at \$3.85 million a night making it the 4th most profitable tour behind Coldplay, Rolling Stones and U2. To add to their popularity, a little over a month ago they reissued a remastered version of their album Appetite for Destruction which was originally released in 1987. The album has returned to Billboards top album charts in the tenth spot which is extremely impressive.

In 1991, they released the song November Rain which speaks of a powerful message of being grateful for every moment especially with those you love. The song lasts a duration of 8 minutes and 59 seconds and this is after editing, as it was originally 25 minutes long when Axl wrote it. No matter how good their music is, my attention would not be kept for 25 minutes so I am glad they shortened it down. Still at almost 9 minutes, November Rain is the longest Top 10 hit. A year later in 1992, they released an elaborate and expensive music video for November Rain. The video is based on a short story called Without You by Del James. It begins with Axl getting married to Stephanie Seymour, his girlfriend at the time, in a little chapel in the desert. Slash walks out of the church to enrich the viewer with his epic guitar solo. From there we go back to the happy couple at their reception where it begins to rain and everyone runs as if the rain is painful. The next scene cuts to Stephanie Seymour's funeral in the same church she and Axl were just married in. This situation is every lover's worst nightmare just like it is Axl's which is why the song conveys the message to cherish everything you have especially loved ones. November Rain was able to reach fan bases across many generations and across various countries. I find it surprising that statistics show 83% of the views coming from outside the United States with the top viewing country as Brazil. Recently, it became the oldest video to reach one billion views on YouTube with about 560,000 views a day.

Reaching one billion views is a great accomplishment but it is not unheard of. There are 100 videos with over a billion views on YouTube. The remarkable aspect of November Rain is that it is the first video that was created before YouTube was established to reach this threshold, proving that it is still a hit song to this day. To be honest, I am shocked that this is the first and only song pre-2005 to reach this level of a billion views. I imagine it might be because YouTube is predominantly accessed by Generation Z which encompasses the age range of 2-19 currently, so they are not as aware of the music before them. Most of the videos with a billion views are current popular songs like Despacito by Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee and See You Again by Wiz Khalifa. Child videos like Masha and the Bear and Crazy Frog are 2 billion view and 285 million views ahead of the rock anthem respectively, yet they are nowhere near the caliber of November Rain.

Whether for good or for bad, YouTube has most definitely affected our music industry. YouTube was launched in 2005 and gained popularity quickly becoming the second most popular site behind Google. Somehow the website has survived even though it lost money until Google acquired them and began to sell advertisements on the site. YouTube offers its users, like young new artists, a jumping off point to launch their material and receive feedback from their viewers. According to budding artists, YouTube offers exposure and acts as “facilitator of a creative renaissance rather than a death sentence” (Forde). On the other hand, big artists despise YouTube because they make very little profit and the site exploits the safe harbor exemption in copyright laws. “Artists earned more from vinyl sales in 2016 than they did from YouTube payments for viewings of music,” (Forde) which I imagine is very low as I do not think I have ever touched a vinyl record in my life. The safe harbor exemption allows the site to be free from guilt if a user uploads other artists’ music without a license. However, as soon as the artist makes YouTube aware that a video is violating the copyright laws, the site is forced to take it down. Despite their abhorrence for the video streaming site, all big artists still use YouTube as a source of publishing their music and music videos because their success relies on their fans who all use YouTube. Last month, Google and YouTube launched YouTube Music, a music streaming service. However, this service is currently flopping compared to the big players, Spotify and Apple Music. The home screen looks like it was copy and pasted from Spotify just with less features like the personalized playlist. We will have to wait and see what updates they bring to YouTube Music.

Guns N’ Roses had a flare for chaos which is why its fans loved seeing them perform live so much. Bands like Guns N’ Roses are iconic and will always have popularity. YouTube has allowed younger generations and international people the ability to experience and enjoy this music. The site also offers aspiring artists a platform to develop their skills and receive exposure. Regulating YouTube could be better so bigger artists do not have their rights violated regarding copyrights. It is difficult to gauge whether YouTube has positively or negatively affected the music industry, but it is not going anywhere so the two will need to keep working on ways to coexist and collaborate.