

The Difference Between Musicians and Artists:

Musician: One who sings songs not written by them or in the case of a band, a song not written by a band member.

Artist: One who writes and performs their own material or in the case of a band they perform material written by any band member past or present.

Basic Idea:

- To define the difference of a musician and an artist, in the music business.
- To explain why there is such a difference and how it is possible to define the difference.
- To define which types and periods of music show the most prominence in each department.
- To possibly create a list of the best/most influential musicians and artists any why these people are so important.

The Difference Between Artist and A Musician:

An artist is a performer that writes or co-writes most of their material. You can't expect Paul McCartney to write every last thing he performs, no you can't. But most of his work is original, whether solo or with the Beatles.

Most artists rarely ever quit working or retire either. A good example of this would be Marianne Faithfull, her first album was released in 1965 and her latest in 2000, with plenty of work between those years. Artists aren't as prone to saying "You know, I'm satisfied knowing that I've got enough money to live like a king for the rest of my life, so I'm going to quit now."

Artists are rare and hard to come by. In the 1990's there were essentially no new artists emerging from the music scene. In the 90's we heard from such artists as U2, Pink Floyd and the Rolling Stones. For people looking for artists, they just looked back into the 60's, 70's, and 80's.

The 1990's were the decade of musicians. A musician is simply someone that performs the material a record company or a producer puts in front of them. Madonna is a perfect example of this, she's hardly written a note of music in her life. Yet she's popular.

Musicians can occasionally throw in a line or two of song on an album, but three lines don't make someone an artist. On Cyndi Lauper's 1983 debut "She's So Unusual", three songs had minor input by her. That doesn't justify being an artist, considering that Pink Floyd's 1967 debut "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn" was solid original material. So it isn't that hard to pan out 10 or so original songs.

Why There is a Difference:

We need to have a dividing line somewhere, defining today's packet of stuff on MTV and the stuff were going to hear years after it's release and still enjoy years after it's release. I draw the dividing line by calling them musicians and artists and then defining them. There isn't any other practical way you could define the differences.

There is a difference between being an artist and a musician. In many cases the

differences maybe less acknowledged than they should be. I shall use NKOTB and U2 as my examples. NKOTB formed in the mid-eighties, U2 formed in 1979. NKOTB disbanded in 1993, in the present day U2 is still a very much so active band. Who's the musician? NKOTB. Who's the artist? U2.

Artists often have a longer life span in the music business than musicians. Roger Waters (ex-Pink Floyd) is a perfect example, over 35 years in the public eye. His voice may not be what it was in 1979, but he can still write and sell an album and enjoy it.

Musicians often have short times in the public eye. It doesn't take long for a musician to become yesterday's news. Anyone care to tell me where Laura Branigan went? Madonna is one of very few exceptions to this rule because while doing other peoples work she is still able to keep re-inventing herself.