

Pop Rocks in the Summertime

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As the days get warmer my closet is beginning to shift into a new version of itself that is undoubtedly a reflection of my new playlists, favorite artists, and media inspirations alike. People often talk about how characters, and films inspire their style, but it's not often I see people discuss the effect music has on one's appearance as well, at least not definitively. With the influx of micro trends, and what some might call surface level expression of subcultures, it feels like people forget how much music can inform a culture, and that culture, as opposed to aesthetic, is what truly informs a style.

If you were to look at my summer playlist you'd find a lot of alternative r&b, afrobeats, and rock n' roll. Rock is explicit, oftentimes sexually explicit, and I believe that raw expression of liberation is what I admire most about the genre. Summertime is free. No school, nothing to worry about but your next adventure. No snow, clear roads, open sky, driving miles on end with your hair blowing in the wind, freely. That's what summer means to me, and I believe that the carefree nature of the season is the same as the essence of rock. Rockstars can often be found wearing clothing that society may deem too scandalous to be worn on a world stage. Like the music, a band's wardrobe is loud and bold. The clothes make a statement just as unapologetic as the music, as much as the song, as much as the feeling. What is the feeling? The feeling is freedom, more specifically, freedom of expression. I believe that feeling is the same reason so many rock stars are styled in an androgynous, queer fashion, and oftentimes are queer themselves.

One artist I'm taking into summer is Chappell Roan. As a midwest princess myself, Chappell's debut album, *The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess*, could easily be the background track of my entire life up to now. There's a deep sense of yearning for intimacy, freedom of expression, and fulfillment that drives its way through every track. This yearning is something Chappell can only relieve if she achieves freedom from the confines of her environment, the midwest. Despite Chappell's music being categorized as pop, her stylistic choices, both fashion and writing wise, are arguably reminiscent of a rockstar. The self-proclaimed "Super Graphic Ultra Modern Girl" loves drag inspired looks, each one bursting with charisma like pop rocks. These looks are the perfect accompaniment to the raunchy, camp, vibrant lyrics heard on the album. Chappell does an excellent job using her clothes to elicit a presence, and personify whatever story she intends to share.

This summer, as I've finally escaped the midwest, I'll be somewhere on the coast listening to crashing waves, and crashing drums alike. I am forever grateful to rock n' roll for encouraging me to exist loudly, freely, and as authentically as possible. I would encourage others to explore how their taste in music influences their style, and look beyond clothes just matching a vibe. What does music make you feel, and what is the story told? How do your clothes make you feel, and what are you trying to express by wearing them? When you ask yourself these questions, your stylistic choices are charged with pieces of yourself and personality. If you love and appreciate fashion, there is nothing more gratifying than understanding who you are on the inside, and getting to share that with the world using what you've got on the outside.