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Ageing and Popular Music: Representation, Fandom, and Time.

The question of how age intersected with popular music began to be researched in the first two decades of the twenty-first century, around fifty to sixty years after Elvis. Pop, that ephemeral product of the mid twentieth century had had its fifteen minutes of fame, but it was still hanging around, and for people born in the mid-century, known as 'boomers' (Katz 2014, 2018), it was still a meaningful part of people's everyday lives. Researchers who had grown up with popular music as the soundtrack to their lives were starting to question how they negotiated popular music as they, themselves, aged beyond their own youth (Bennett 2006, 2012, 2013, 2018).

This paper covers three main areas that are important for understanding the relationship between popular music and ageing. The first is how age is represented in contemporary western popular cultural discourses. The second turns to the experience of fandom and ageing in relation to popular music and the third outlines theoretical concepts around time that emerge from considering the current contexts of production and consumption of popular music. Popular music is used in its largest sense, encompassing genres beyond pop, to include punk, folk, and rock. The paper uses work from scholars of popular music, ageing studies, and sociology (Gullette 2004, Gardner 2020, Hansen 2022).