

MUSIC TO DANCE BY
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Music, say the dictionaries, is an intelligible combination of tones into a composition having structure and continuity; agreeable sounds having rhythm, melody or harmony. Melody is defined as a sweet or agreeable arrangement of sounds; tunefulness. Unless the words “agreeable” or “intelligible” have come to mean other things to younger listeners, there is not much music or melody played today by those amusingly named, travelling minstrel groups which perform at dancing functions. The “music” performed by these groups is primarily rhythmic noise, - and extremely loud noise at that.

According to a recent news story, acoustical engineers have warned that the high intensity and decibel rating of sound in modern amplified music can produce damage to ear-drums and permanent deafness. The use of ear plugs is recommended for those constantly exposed to this type of music. This suggestion is discarded by most teenage devotees who maintain that loudness is all important, and that unless you vibrate to the sound you are not with it.

During the Christmas Holidays we vibrated uncomfortably to the music of a group called the Stonecutters. The organization was primarily an assembly of microphones, amplifiers and loudspeakers hooked up to wire-strung slabs of bizarre shaped plastic. This mass of electronic equipment, which occupied three-quarters of a small bandstand, was attended by four or five expressionless humanoids who had learned to twist control knobs and strum wires more or less in unison. The Stonecutters were aptly named. The sound they produced resembled that of a section of pavement-breaking air hammers; the “musicians” themselves, in dress, hair and countenance, recalled a gathering of Stone Age primitives whose repetitious gibberings and shuffling gyrations were punctuated at intervals by raucous animal screams.

At the dance, the jumping teen-age and college set unanimously acclaimed the Stonecutters as the greatest. Most of the older generation (ex-rugcutters and earlier relics) in attendance, whose ears had survived the assaults of innumerable musical fads including the brassy blasts of big-band swing and the frantic percussions of Krupa, could only hope for damaged ear-drums and the bliss of permanent deafness.