Editorial:

‘It’s been too late for a long time’

Sometimes it’s hard not to be a little jealous of our parents’ generation when they complain of watching their favorite rock stars age ungracefully. We may have never seen firsthand what Robert Plant looked like before his jowls gave in to gravity or recall a time when Keith Richards didn’t look like an animated corpse, but we at least understand that watching time take its toll on our musical heroes is better than losing them at an early age.

Clearly, not all rock legends from decades passed survived to sing their children lullabies about groupies, psychedelica and rock in its heyday, before it fathered pop music’s bland and aesthetically unhealthy offspring. Baby boomers felt the pain of losing Hendrix, Bonham, Moon, Morrison and a handful of their musical peers too soon. The rock ‘n’ roll lifestyle claimed its share of victims for the Reaper, but it was also the understood penalty of living too hard and rocking too loud.

Nowadays, our musical heroes are still claimed by drugs. And we idolize lonely singer/songwriters whose lives end in accidental deaths or tragic suicides that peter out into murder suspicions. Since the music industry exhausted the vast majority of its finite energy supply in the glory days of rock ‘n’ roll, musicians and their songs are a little more unassuming than they used to be. The image of the rock star is a hackneyed one that’s best saved for Halloween costume ideas; it’s hard to take a musician seriously when his grimy hair hasn’t been washed for days and his open shirt leaves nothing to the imagination, though we wish it had extended the courtesy.

This generation’s musical heroes aren’t larger-than-life idols. They’re singer/songwriters to whom we can relate. It often feels as though the only difference between us and them is that they’re willing to open up the diaries of their music to share with an empathetic audience. They sing of the things that make more sense as we grow up and we find that the songs they write get us through some marches on. Our generation’s musical heroes are made not of sex and sweat and over-indulgence, but rather intuitiveness and tears and never appearing quite at home in the limelight.

It’s hard to say goodbye to the singer/songwriters we adore. The first losses — Kurt Cobain, Brad Nowell, Jeff Buckley — hit us right on the cuff of adolescence. They became symbolic and martyred, their songs posthumous reminders of musical talents who went out with a bang at the zenith of their fame.

And it hits even harder as we grow older. On Oct. 21, 2003, many of us found out that it’s not easy to balance the busy life of a college student while taking the time to mourn a fallen hero. We were paralyzed with grief when the news of Jimi Hendrix, Bonham, Moon, Morrison and a handful of our peers came to pass.

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All students look at their bills from Rider when they receive them. For those of us who are business students, we look through the list of things for which we are billed and spot that Wall Street Journal fee of $19. When that item first appeared on my bill, which was before I began my sophomore year two years ago, I remember thinking, “I didn’t even subscribe to the Wall Street Journal! What is this crap?” Of course, I shouldn’t be crying over 19 bucks per semester, but that’s not the principle of it. When I returned to Rider that year, I discovered that all business students were given access to the Wall Street Journal, both in print and on the Internet.

At the time, I didn’t realize the significance of having the Wall Street Journal available for my personal use. As a sophomore, I was just starting to get into my business classes, and I was not that aware of what was going on in the business world. As I got into my upper-level business courses, my professors began to force students to become acquainted with the Wall Street Journal by assigning homework that required us to read, summarize and retrieve articles from it.

Over time, as more classes required that I use the Journal, I began to pick up the paper every day and read it for my own enjoyment.

Going back to my sophomore year, the first year the Wall Street Journal was available to business students, I remember seeing stacks of papers on the wall at the end of the day neared. Very few students made good use of having the newspaper available for a small fee of 19 bucks.

Now, in my senior year and two years after the implementation of this idea, there are far fewer Wall Street Journals sitting on the wall at the end of the day. That can mean two things: either more students are taking copies of the paper, or the school is supplying a smaller number of them.

All Rider business students should take advantage of having the Wall Street Journal available to them. It keeps us up-to-date on the happenings in all aspects of the business world.