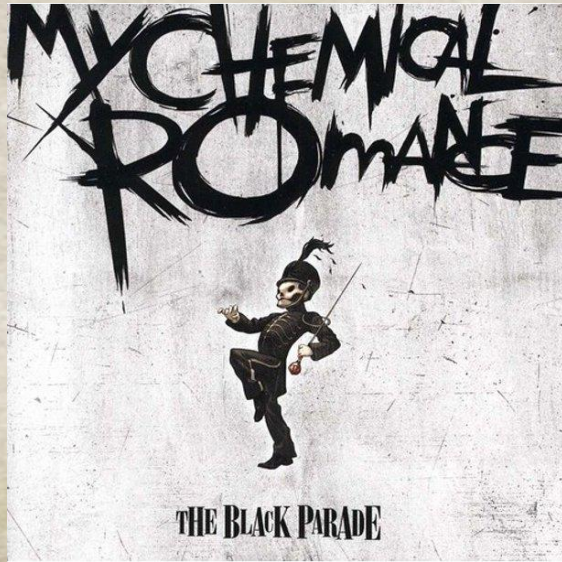


# THE BLACK PARADE:

*HOW MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE HANDLED DEATH  
THROUGH MUSIC AND AESTHETIC*



Steph Balloqui  
COMD Theory  
Final

# THE STORY OF THE BLACK PARADE.

The Black Parade tells the story of “The Patient”, a man dying of cancer. The listener follows The Patient through death, the afterlife, and his reflections on life after passing. The idea is that the afterlife is someone reliving their happiest memory- for The Patient, this is when his father took him to see a marching band.





## THE PACKAGING.

The album cover features a character referred to as “Pepe”, who is shown marching as the leader of a Marching band would.

Besides that, it features the band’s logo at the time as well as the album title. It’s My Chemical Romance’s Simplest album cover yet the most recognizable.



## COVER OF THE VINYL VERSION





## COVER OF THE 2016 REISSUE



COVER OF THE LIVE ALBUM "THE BLACK PARADE IS DEAD"





# THE BACK COVER AND CD DESIGN FOR THE FIRST EDITION



IN 2007, THEY WERE NOMINATED AT THE GRAMMYS FOR BEST BOXED OR SPECIAL LIMITED EDITION PACKAGING FOR THEIR DELUXE RELEASE BOXED SET FOR THE BLACK PARADE





## THE LOGO.

The logo for this era of the band was actually very similar to many bands in the same scene at the time, and it doesn't match thematically to the album- it was just a popular style of font for emo bands at the time.



# EXAMPLES OF OTHER BANDS USING THIS POPULAR STYLE OF LOGO FONT







## THE ARTWORK.

The art direction/concept art was done by Gerard Way, lead singer of My Chemical Romance. Way did the artwork for the band's first two albums And is a comic book artist most known for The Umbrella Academy, his comic series that Got adapted into a hit Netflix show.

James Jean was the artist for the band's promotional Artwork such as the album covers and posters. He is known for his work with Prada as well as Some movie posters, including The Shape of Water

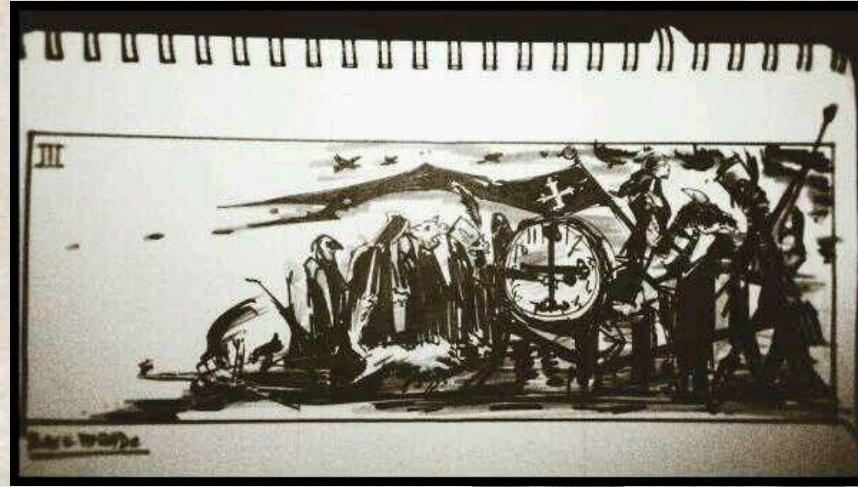


## EXAMPLES OF CONCEPT ART FROM GERARD WAY





# COMPARISON OF WAY'S CONCEPT ART AND JEAN'S FINAL PRODUCT



## THE BAND'S APPEARANCE.

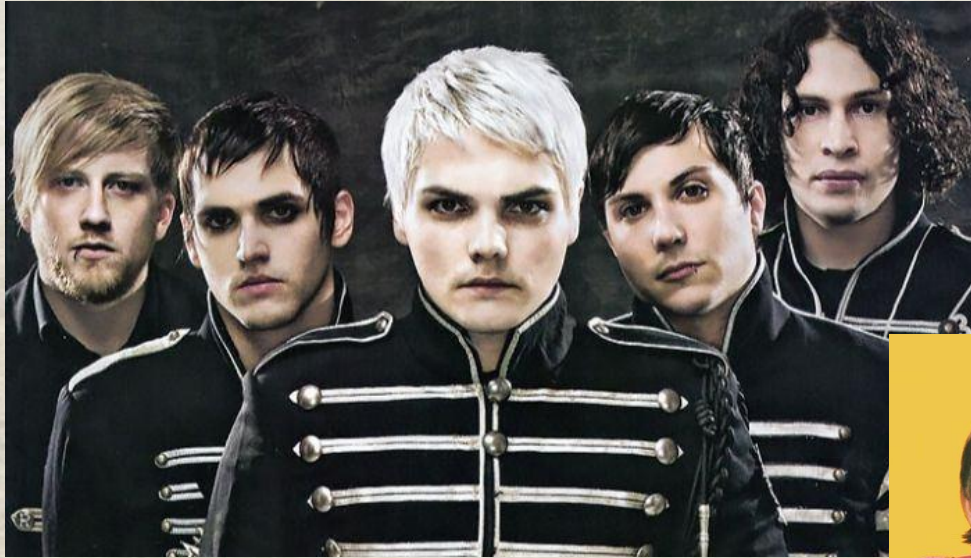
The band wanted to take on  
The role of the in-concept band  
The Black Parade, and stuck to  
The marching band and death motifs  
By wearing all black marching band uniforms.

Gerard Way also cut his long black hair and  
Bleached it platinum blonde to make himself  
Appear sickly, like The Patient.





The band were inspired by the marching band outfits that The Beatles wore for their concept album, The Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts' Club Band.



## THE MUSIC VIDEOS.

The music videos played a huge role in conveying the story of the album, and helped to establish the tone, mood, and visuals in a way that the audience could connect to. The music videos also helped them gain more popularity through MTV, with Welcome to The Black Parade even premiering on the channel.

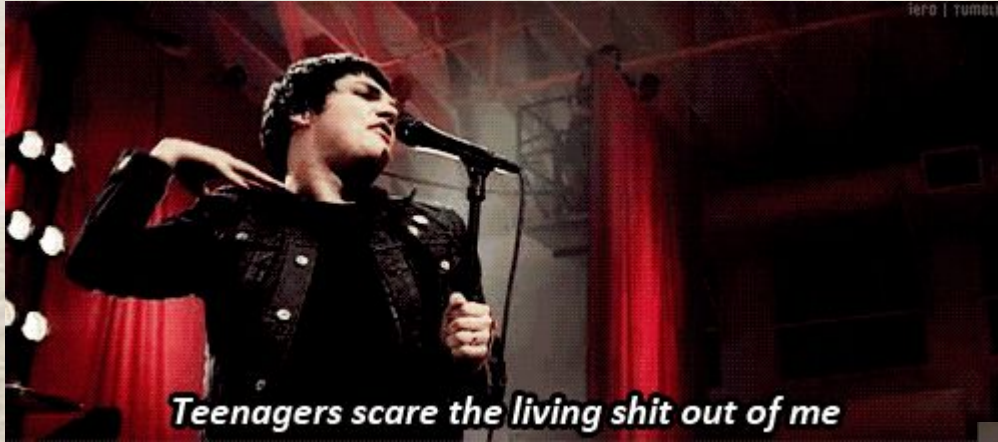




WELCOME TO THE BLACK PARADE introduced us to the character of The Patient and the concept, as well as the in-universe band and ideas, of The Black Parade.



TEENAGERS is a music video that pays homage to Pink Floyd's The Wall, another inspiration for the album.

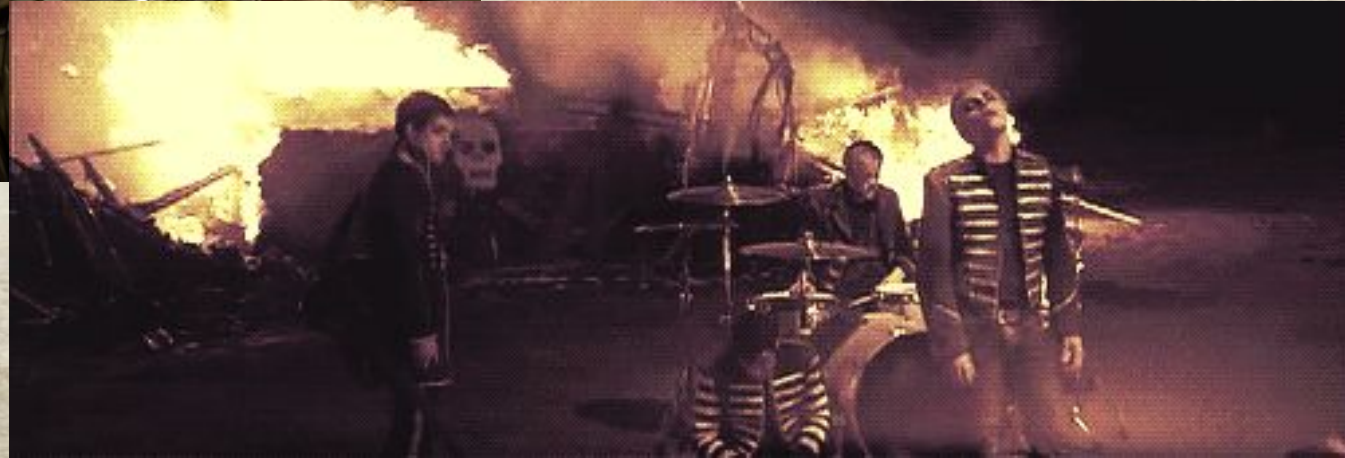




I Don't Love You is the weakest music video of this era, displaying a couple who are growing apart- a lost love that The Patient experienced.



Famous Last Words depicts the death of The Black Parade- showing the Parade Float going up in flames and the band members escaping the chaos.





## THE LIVE PERFORMANCES.

The Tour and other live performances were known for being extremely theatrical, with the band performing as The Black Parade in their uniforms, and stage makeup that made them look sickly or dead. Gerard Way would even be rolled out on a hospital gurney at the start of the show, and perform the first song as the character of The Patient.

The band aimed to give audiences the experience of being present inside the world of The Black Parade.



## HOW THE STAGE WOULD LOOK NIGHT TO NIGHT





The band's performance on SNL helped My Chemical Romance be exposed to a different audience while staying true to the persona of the concept.



# THE MERCH.

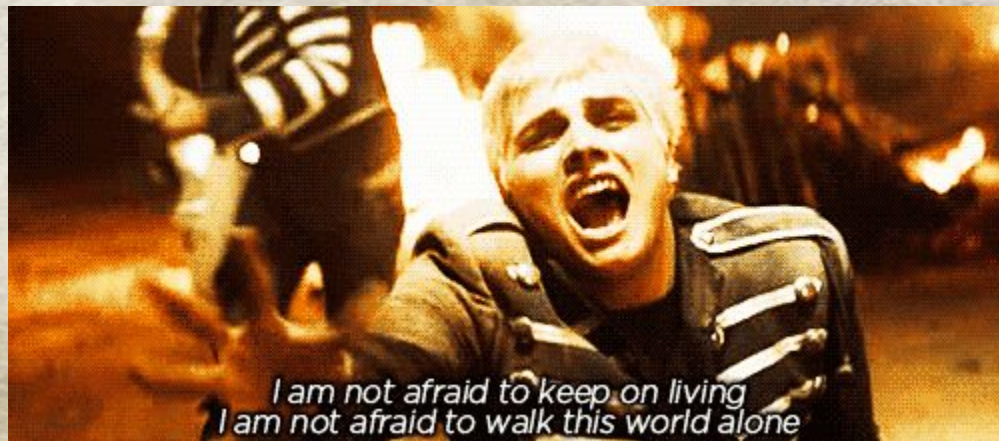
The merch was fairly simple, with some pieces designed to look like they were designed for marching band members or even designed to look like marching band uniforms, such as the hoodie.





# THE IMPACT.

The Black Parade is still considered to be one of the greatest albums to come out of the 2000s, and was even ranked #361 on Rolling Stone's 500 Greatest Albums of All Time. Many people who once viewed bands like My Chemical Romance as less than were now praising the band, and it's blend of music, live performance, and art defined My Chemical Romance as a band that changed how emo music was seen and appreciated.

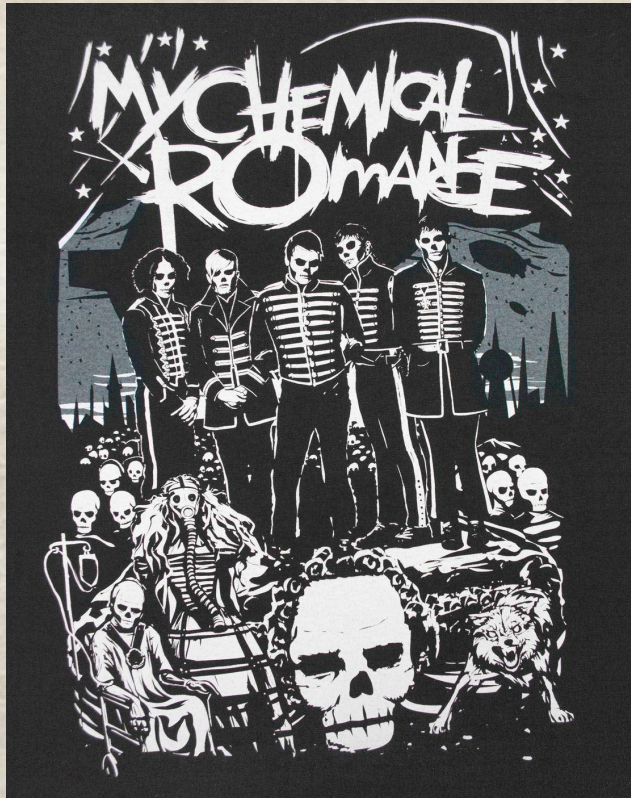


Fans of My Chemical Romance have also embraced the album, and many members of The MCRmy consider it their favorite album by the band. It's handling on sensitive themes, it's visual impact, and it's seamless ability to blend art and music make this album groundbreaking to this day.

The album's impact also extends to other realms, such as Funko pops, Lego sets, and tattoos that the fans get. Which adds to the artistic impact of the album.







## THE "WHY THIS SHIT MATTERS".

“Commercial culture depends on the theft of intellectual property for its livelihood. Mass marketers steal ideas from visionaries, alter them slightly if at all, then reissue them to the public as new products. In the process what was once insurgent becomes commodity, and what was once the shock of the new becomes the schlock of the novel. Invariably, early expressions of sub- or alternative cultures are the most fertile sampling grounds, as their publications or zines are the first to be pilfered. Invariably pioneers of radical form become wellsprings for appropriation. Rebellion of any kind breeds followers, and many followers become a demographic.”

- Steven Heller



# ...HUH?

Basically, ideas and concepts get recycled all the time, and can be marketed to a new audience. My Chemical Romance were definitely not the first band to do a concept album (nor was The Black Parade their first or last concept album). But the difference with The Black Parade is that It can be treated as a universal idea- we all will experience death in our lives, and we all wonder- What will happen after we go? What will the afterlife be like? Have I been the person I want to be while I'm still alive?

My Chemical Romance started out by creating a concept album inspired by The Beatles and Pink Floyd, and wanted it to surround their ideas of the afterlife. They turned themselves into a different band using performance, and helped the audience visualize this afterlife through art. They recycled the idea of a concept album, yes, but made the idea their own through music, performance, and art. And in the process they connected to fans, both old and new.

This is what design should be about- taking things like music, art, performance, and taking ideas from the past and paying homage to the past, while making the final product its own separate identity, and trying to do it better. And I think My Chemical Romance exceeded.





**THE END.**

**QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? CONCERNS? DEATH THREATS?  
SPEAK NOW OR FOREVER HOLD YOUR PEACE.**



# THE SOURCES.

Steven Heller, The Underground Mainstream

Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour & Robert Venturi, Learning from Las Vegas

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