

## Love What You Love Podcast

### Episode 13: New Wave Music with The Fantastic Plastics

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Hey, I'm Julie Rose. Welcome to *Love What You Love*. I'm an author, creator, and enthusiast, and I've always been fascinated by the things that people are super into, because they're always a unique expression of curiosity, and joy, and wonder. So every week I'll introduce you to another fascinating human who's into really interesting stuff.

Welcome back! Or, Welcome! This podcast exists to give you a bit of a rest; a bit of a respite, and to add a little light into the world. Speaking of adding some light into the world, let's get right to this week's guests.

The Fantastic Plastics are a neo-new wave duo who mix new wave, synth punk, and electro elements with sci-fi-inspired lyricism, and a hell of a lot of fun and energy in their twice-weekly livestream performances on Twitch. I had a great time talking with Miranda and Tyson back in May about touring, streaming on Twitch, playing the theremin, connecting with an audience over the internet, and so much more. Find out why The Fantastic Plastics love new wave music, and why you might learn to love it too.

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**Julie:** All right, Tyson and Miranda Plastic! Thank you so much for joining me.

**Miranda:** Thank you so much for having us!

**Tyson:** Greetings, citizen!

**Julie:** [laughs] I am super excited to talk to you guys. I think I revealed to you before we started talking that I'm a little bit of a fan girl here. My husband introduced me to your stream, and it's total flashback for us, but I'm really fascinated to know how you guys got into doing '80s and '90s new wave covers. Where did that start?

**Tyson:** I was raised on a commune, and it was founded in the mid '90s, and similar to the way the Amish, sort of, stop time in 1860, this commune stopped time in 1996. So to us, that was the latest music and that's all we knew.

**Miranda:** And we're really into synthesizers and that kind of sound, so I think that it really peaked in the '80s and got brought back a little bit in the '90s.

**Tyson:** And one of us is telling a lie.

**Miranda:** Guess which one!

**Julie:** [laughs] I love it! So, why are you into synthesizers? Were you always musicians? How did you get into music?

**Tyson:** For me, I started in high school. I was really inspired... It had to be the first time I heard "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Someone played it for me and I was like, "Holy cow! I think I could do this." So that inspired me, so I've been a wannabe musician, basically, my entire adult life; in a bunch of different bands, and writing music, and stuff. I met Miranda through a friend, and she actually helped for many years with my other bands. She created costumes, and did choreography, and was a backup dancer on another project.

**Miranda:** And then, I guess, fast forward to when we got together as a couple. Tyson moved to New York where I was living, in New York City. And he missed playing gigs and stuff, because he had been in bands since he was a teenager. So, I kind of learned the parts of another band member that was in this band before me... I was in band, like, in junior high. I played the clarinet, and I've always been into music, and I would have little toy keyboards and things to play around with as a kid, but I never took piano lessons or anything formal. So, I basically... Tyson taught me some parts, and I started learning music by ear, and that's still what I'm doing now. I don't really read music or anything, but I guess just learning on the fly.

**Tyson:** The synthesizer is just a really cool sound. The synth part in "Just What I Needed" by The Cars, or...

**Miranda:** So iconic. Everyone knows... Like, people sing along to the synth part almost more than the words.

**Tyson:** Yeah. I always found that more fascinating. I always thought the guitars kind of sounded like white noise. They were necessary to the music but the synthesizers, to me, were always the coolest sounding things in any song.

**Miranda:** And it sounds so futuristic, too, and we're both really drawn to that.

[clip from "Perfect Strangers"]

**Julie:** Right. So is that what drives the kind of covers that you do? Because you cover Devo, and Berlin, and very iconic synth-pop bands from the '80s. Have you ever thought of covering other kinds of new wave bands, like New Order or groups like that?

**Tyson:** It's kind of funny. For our stream, because we're gearing it towards new wave we cover a lot of the new wave classics, but I think we find it more interesting when we can take a song that *wasn't* a new wave song and try to put some kind of new wave spin on it. It's funny you mention New Order because we do a cover of "Lump" by the Presidents of the United States, and in my mind when we were composing the arrangement, we were trying to think, like, "If New Order had written 'Lump', how might that sound?"

**Miranda:** Yeah. When we're on Twitch - that's probably the next thing we're going to talk about - people often ask us to start covering certain other... Once they hear us playing covers, they like the style we're doing of covers, then they're like, "Can you guys play New Order? Can you do B-52's? Can you do this? And that?"

**Julie:** So let's talk about Twitch. I can't say that most of the people who are listening to this podcast are going to know what Twitch even is, so maybe you can talk about what Twitch is, why you're streaming on it, what does that mean to stream on Twitch?

**Tyson:** I'll just give you a warning that I'm ridiculously passionate about this.

**Julie:** Good! That's why I like it!

**Tyson:** I have been evangelizing anyone that will, like, sit and listen to me talk about this. The first thing I would try to clear up for anyone is that Twitch sort of has this reputation of being a place where kids go to watch other kids play video games. And while the numbers that they have, those make up most of the numbers, that is just such a small part of what Twitch is. Twitch has music streamers like ourselves. They also have makers, people that are building technology, and building gadgets on there. They also have, like, botanists. Sometimes there's a guy on there that's a New York City bike messenger and you can watch him do his route all day long.

The cool thing about it, and what I think is coming really soon once people become fully aware of this, is it's like a Pandora's box. Once people start watching Twitch, and they realize they can interact and become part of the media they're consuming, it makes everything else seem so basic. It's almost weird to now go back and watch Netflix or Hulu and binge-watch something, because you're like, "I want to talk about this!" It's such a passive experience.

**Julie:** So for people who have never been on Twitch; like YouTube, you go and watch a video, you stay out of the comments section because that's a cesspool, you just don't do that. So you can do, like, livestreams on YouTube, but the level of interactivity isn't the same. So Twitch is geared to be livestreaming, and with an audience that is interacting with each other, and with you, in chat during the stream. Is that right?

**Miranda:** Exactly. I think part of it are the emotes... We could go into a long conversation about that, but it's not just the conversation too, but there's little emojis and different things that go... It's a whole language.

**Tyson:** Yes, and each streamer, the longer that they're on Twitch, the more, like, custom emote slots they can unlock. So you basically build a library of your own custom emotes for your channel, but then when you subscribe to other channels you get those emotes, and they take on a lexicon. They have meaning. As a streamer, we're watching and we can see those emotes, and this weird hypnosis happens where that, sort of, translates into people cheering in front of us.

**Miranda:** Yes. It takes us out of being in our basement looking at a monitor and just, like, yelling into a microphone. [laughs]

**Julie:** That's what I was going to ask you. You guys stream from your house, and you've got a really unique setup. Besides music and your performance, it's super compelling to be immersed in this early '80s aesthetic. Can you talk to me a little bit about how you stream, and how you set up what people are seeing on their screens?

**Tyson:** We basically decided to try to replicate our live performance as much as possible on Twitch. So, if you notice we have a projector in the background that, kind of, covers the wall and ceiling, and that's just a projector on the floor. That kind of represents what we did live, but then we've tried to evolve it for the stream.

Lately one of the things we've been doing is wearing these uniforms that we can chroma key. So, we have the projection in the background with these, like, '80s graphics that our collaborator Chicken Burger Disco made. But then on top of that we have clothes that also are projection maps.

**Miranda:** Green screen.

**Tyson:** Green screen clothes, yeah, so we have this Max Headroom thing going on at the same time.

**Miranda:** And the graphics are very reminiscent of '80s Memphis period.

**Tyson:** Yeah, the Memphis art movement. And then we're standing next to each other, and interacting with each other, and playing, and singing. Visually, we're just trying to create the live performance as much as possible.

**Julie:** And you guys have performed at South by Southwest and some other large events as well as playing local gigs, right?

**Tyson:** Yeah! We toured. In 2017 we were on the Vans Warped Tour, so we toured coast to coast on that for the summer of 2017. When we lived in New York we toured up and down the east coast quite a bit with different bands. So we were a road band forever, and we were really reluctant to get on Twitch. Our friends and our manager were trying to get us on there two years before we ever got on the platform. Now that we're fully immersed in it, we really don't want to tour ever again. [laughs]

**Julie:** [laughs]

**Miranda:** Once in a while, if it's really something we don't want to miss. But yeah, just the grind of trying to tour little local venues and stuff is... I don't know if that's going to be a thing anymore for us.

**Julie:** Yeah. It's got to be real lifesaver for you too, now that you couldn't even do gigs.

**Tyson:** How fortunate were we to have been on here a year before it started. We're just now... A year into being on Twitch, we're just really, fully established on there. We had a slow start, but for the last six months we've really been trying to stream two or three nights a week, three or four hours at a time. So yeah, we're really fortunate because a bunch of our friends are trying to get on Twitch, or Facebook stream... They're trying to get into streaming for the first time and they don't fully appreciate that it's not something that happens overnight.

**Miranda:** There's so much technology and things behind the scenes that need to work in order to get the sound right, and the right kind of camera, at least so that people can see you and hear you. Really, that's the key.

**Tyson:** And you're building a community, and that's the part that takes the time. I mean, once you figure out the technology, you've got to build a community. It takes a while. It's not just... You can't just get on Twitch, and stream, and then be done for the day. We actively watch and support other streamers every day of the week, for hours a day. I have it on in the background all day long while I work as my background music.

It's like a real music scene in that aspect. If you're in a local music scene and you just go... the only time you go to shows are when you play and you never support anyone else, you're never going to have a fanbase in your local scene. It's the same thing on Twitch. You've got to support it.

**Miranda:** Be a part of the community.

**Tyson:** And it's great. We've found so many cool bands, and people, and I can't say enough nice things about it.

**Julie:** The other night there was a Raid? Is that what that's called? What is that?

**Tyson:** Oh, yeah. That's one of the coolest things about Twitch. When you're streaming, and you have your audience that's watching you, and when you're done for the night, or the day, a Raid is when you take your audience and you move it to another stream. That's another way of community building, and it also shares your audience with someone new that they may not know. Then usually that person will then reciprocate in some way later if their times line up. It's a way of just expanding the community. The other night we got Raided by one of the biggest music acts on stream.

**Miranda:** A\_Couple\_Streams, or ACS.

**Tyson:** That's their name, A\_Couple\_Streams. They Raided us with, like, almost 800 people.

**Miranda:** We were just doing our thing, and we had maybe close to 100 people, and then all of a sudden you have almost 1,000 people watching you. It's a little nerve-racking at first, but we tried not to think about it too much and just keep going.

**Tyson:** The great thing about that, not only now are you sharing your audience with someone else and vice versa, but then the aggregation of the music channel, it's bumping you up. If you just go browse the music channel, it lists it by who has the most viewers. So for that night, as you're climbing, you're going to get more random people that didn't even know you exist because the platform itself is growing all the time. I'm sorry, this is really deep nerd...

**Julie:** No, I love it! It's amazing. I want to talk a little bit about your process of writing original songs. You do a lot of covers, but you have over, like, 20 originals. So how do you guys write those songs? How do you collaborate on them? What's the process?

**Tyson:** We have 20-some originals we play on Twitch, but you know, our whole catalog is probably closer to, like, 60 or 70 songs.

[clip from "Bad Day"]

But we don't play all those on Twitch because some of them are just too hard to recreate. There's three of us in the band, actually. One of the members doesn't play live with us anymore. They used to before Miranda joined. He goes by the name Chicken Burger Disco.

**Miranda:** We even have an emote for him that's his... It even has a chicken head.

**Tyson:** He does, like, our drums and bass for most of the songs, and he also does the visuals, like all the projection stuff. So, all three of us go about writing in a different way and it comes together as a collaboration.

**Miranda:** I usually like to start with lyrics because I'll have more of a subject of a song that I have in mind that I want to get out there. But Tyson and Chicken Burger Disco start a little bit differently.

**Tyson:** I usually start with, like, an acoustic guitar and just, kind of, write a chord progression and a vocal melody. Chicken Burger Disco usually starts with drums and bass. It's pretty interesting; the best songs we have are when all three of those forces join together on one song.

**Julie:** Is there a favorite original that you guys have written that, maybe, was really hard to write but you ended up loving it?

**Miranda:** Maybe "Disconnect." That's one we struggled with, and we did so many different versions of it, and in the end... It was like we were overdoing it and we, kind of, took things away and we liked the end result.

**Tyson:** Yeah, addition through subtraction, they say. It's a funny thing, because I think if you ask any songwriter, they will tell you that the best songs are the ones that wrote themselves, or that they didn't remember writing, or they put the least amount of effort into. So, the songs where you have to work it to death usually end up being the ones that, like...

**Miranda:** Are like, "Urgh!" Frustration tied to it.

**Tyson:** And those are usually... When I said we have 60-some songs in our catalog, the 25 that we play are probably the ones that were the easiest to write. And the other 40 or

whatever are the ones that were really hard to write because then they become really hard to perform because they took a lot of forcing to happen.

**Julie:** So, when you're performing for a stream versus performing for a live audience, there's a lot of differences, I'm sure, both technically and energetically. A lot of performers really get a lot of energy from being in front of a live group.

**Miranda:** Nothing can ever replace that feeling. The last show we played live was actually a house party here locally, and just the energy of the crowd really got us pumped up. We were in this small room in a basement and people are, like, crowd-surfing, and moshing, and stuff. Obviously, you can't get that energy when we're livestreaming, but it's just a different... Tyson kind of mentioned it before, with the emotes, and just...

**Tyson:** Yeah, it becomes a weird... I don't know why I keep using the word hypnosis, but you become hypnotized by it, and it does suck you in and make you feel like... The interaction of the people in the chat start to feel like people in front of you. It's very strange. I think the biggest difference, for us, between our live performances and our Twitch streams are that when we play live, our live set's usually anywhere from 35 to 45 minutes. In that time we'll usually play 10-12 songs.

**Miranda:** With no pause between, just go, go, go.

**Tyson:** Yeah, no pause, no chatting. And ten of those songs will be originals and we'll usually do one or two covers. It's a full adrenaline rush, and it's like, literally at the end of that 45 minutes, we're like...

**Miranda:** Drenched in sweat.

**Tyson:** Yeah, and dead tired, and completely drained because of the adrenaline. But when we stream, we stream anywhere from three to five hours, and we'll play, like, 30-40 songs. It took us a while to figure out how to control our adrenaline and control our energy to be able to pace ourselves for that time so that we don't start off insanely pumped up and then be dead by the end.

**Miranda:** We do a lot of talking in between songs and chatting with the viewers and stuff. So, it's super interactive, and very different, obviously, than playing a live set where we have to jump on stage, set up our stuff as quickly as possible, and then as soon as we're done we have to tear everything down, and then hopefully you have time to talk to a few people afterwards. It's all very rushed when you do the live shows.

**Tyson:** To be quite frank, it sucks playing live. [all laugh] Let's just take an average show. Let's say we're going to play at a bar or a nightclub on a Saturday. Our set time probably won't be until 11 o'clock at night, but at 4 o'clock in the evening we're already starting to tear down our stuff, load it up, then we'll drive to the venue, have dinner.

**Miranda:** Get the merch ready.

**Tyson:** Get the merch ready, check into a hotel, and then the doors open up at the venue, let's say at 8 o'clock. Then we have three hours to kill, we're just standing around for three hours, then we have to rush to set up. You play for 45 minutes. You rush to tear down. Then you've got to hang around until the bar closes, until 2 a.m., and then you go back to your hotel, or drive home. And during that time you've spent almost 12 hours of your day to, basically, be on stage for 45 minutes. It's expensive, too. If you have to take time off work to go to the show...

**Miranda:** Paying for the hotel, and the gas, and everything else.

**Tyson:** And the food... So, our goal was always, basically, to break even and maybe make a little extra on merch. But on Twitch we don't have any of that. It's in our basement. We just walk down to our basement and for four hours we're playing.

**Miranda:** And then we're done. We just do back up.

**Tyson:** Whether we make money that night on Twitch or not doesn't really matter to us because we made money by not having to spend money. The opportunity cost of playing live shows is so high now that I just can't imagine us doing it... We'll do it from time to time for friends, or for fun events. But our rate that we're going to charge for live shows has gone through the roof because of the opportunity cost. [laughs] It's not that we're making a bunch of money on Twitch, but we're saving a bunch of money.

**Julie:** And what is the revenue model on Twitch?

**Tyson:** There's three basic revenue models on Twitch. There's actually, probably, five but I'm going to give you the three basic ones. The number one revenue model on Twitch would be direct donations. That happens outside of Twitch. That can happen through, like, PayPal, or Venmo, or Patreon, or whatever you want. That's where you basically have a chatbot that keeps dropping a link and people can donate to you. We don't pimp that out too much because, again, we're just mostly doing this to raise our profile. That's the best way anyone can donate.

The second way is what they call a subscription. A viewer can subscribe to your channel and it's, like, \$5 a month, I think. What they get from subscribing is they get these custom emotes that we talked about that they can use. They get access to private events that you can do within Twitch. There's some other benefits to being a subscriber.

**Miranda:** They don't have to watch ads.

**Tyson:** Oh yeah, it's ad free. Then as a streamer, depending on if you're a partner or an affiliate, you get, basically, 50% of that money. So for every \$5 you get \$2.50 per month. Then the third way is what they call 'bits' or 'cheers', and it's kind of like an in-Twitch currency. People buy these bits and then each bit is worth a penny. So people will cheer, like, 500 bits and that's, like, \$5. It's kind of like being at a bar and having, like, a piano man playing, and you throw money in a tip jar.

**Julie:** Got it. So now, when you're playing, Miranda, I noticed you have a very interesting instrument. You've got your synth setup... Is it called a theremin?

**Miranda:** Yeah! You got it right.

**Julie:** What the heck?! It's such a cool sound, but why a theremin? How did you learn to play it? What does it add?

**Miranda:** Well, obviously we're both really influenced by old sci-fi movies and that kind of spacey sound. Tyson used to play the theremin in one of his early bands, so he kind of introduced me to it. The theremin was invented 100 years ago this year. It was originally invented as, like, an alarm system. Basically, the antenna that you see that I'm, like, flailing around in my hand, the closer you bring... See, it's the only instrument that you don't touch to play, which is pretty cool, and kind of appropriate for the times right now. But the closer your hand is to the antenna, the higher the pitch, and the farther away your hand, the lower the pitch. Then there's a volume loop on the side of it too so you can control how loud and how quiet and in between notes.

We mostly... we just add it to songs as, kind of, like a textural extra synth and just for effect. I like to spaz out on it and play it. If you go to YouTube and look for people playing the theremin there's people that play it the "proper" way, more controlled, and playing individual notes, and all that. But I use it more as, like, an extra texture, I guess.

**Julie:** I know you guys do a lot of samples from, like, old sci-fi movies. How do you guys decide when you're going to use a sample? What's your process there?

**Tyson:** We were working on our act, and we knew that... especially in New York where the set times were so tight and you had such a limited time to start and stop. With us using backing tracks we had the advantage of, basically, knowing exactly how long our set would be because we would build a playlist. The samples were just to keep us from talking between songs.

**Miranda:** We were told we should not have too much banter, just stick with our music.

**Tyson:** Yeah. So, some of the older songs just have ridiculous samples that have nothing to do with the music. They're kind of funny, just to lighten the mood. Later songs, we've tried to pull in samples that somehow relate to the music in some way.

**Miranda:** The *1984* quote, kind of...

**Tyson:** Oh, yeah. We have this song called "Overtime!" that a lot of people like, and we have a quote from the audiobook version of *1984* that starts it. In a perfect world, if we had all the time and energy in the world, we would use the samples to tell a story, to try to link our whole show together. But ain't nobody got time for that. [all laugh]

**Julie:** Okay, I was a teenager when new wave was a thing. I want to know what you think are the best and the worst new wave songs or albums.

**Miranda:** That's tough.

**Tyson:** For me, I like... specifically there's a certain era of new wave I like, and it's between the years 1977 and 1981. It was kind of the era when the guitar was still a heavy part of new wave, before it went purely electronic. Some of my favorite records are, like, the first B-52's record, the first Devo record, *Are We Not Men?*, and those first Cars albums are really great. I can't say I have a favorite, but I really think that new wave jumped the shark in the mid-to-late '80s when it just got absurd in some way. I don't know what I mean by that exactly, but they started to use a lot of computers for programming the drums. A lot of the stuff started to sound plastic and not in a *Fantastic* way. What about you, Miranda? Oh, I see what you're looking at...

**Miranda:** Yeah, I think my favorite new wave artist is Gary Numan. And to what Tyson was saying, the reason why is because he mixes, like, real bass guitar and guitars with synths, and some synth bass, and it's not just purely, like, everything-synthesized drums, everything... So, it kind of has that more rock element to it, I guess. A little more edgy.

**Tyson:** Gary Numan is the epitome of new wave. He is definitely the...

**Miranda:** He's the king. We think.

**Julie:** Did you see... There's a couple videos on YouTube of him performing recently, and he still sounds amazing.

**Miranda:** Yeah!

**Tyson:** We saw him perform his album *The Pleasure Principle* a few years ago, cover to cover.



**Julie:** No!

**Tyson:** That's probably the best new wave record.

**Miranda:** He put on such an amazing performance. It was mind blowing. That guy... We think he might be a vampire or something. He's never aged.

**Tyson:** It's kind of strange, though, because there are different levels of new wave. To me, Devo gets lumped in with new wave, but to me Devo is its own thing. It's like nothing else. It's so weird, and out-there, and non-conformist. Then you have The Cars, who took your standard rock-n-roll formula and put synthesizers on it. That's quite a difference.

Then if you take the B-52's, then you've got a band that was basically trying to write songs for house parties. They also had some weird doo-wop influence in there. So it's hard to just lump everything together. But I know a lot of people talk about bands like A Flock of Seagulls, and A-ha. At least, in my opinion, that's sort of the beginning of the bad part of new wave. I think those hits are great songs, and I think those things are great, but I think that opened the door for something was, like, so commercial and not as interesting as what some of those other folks were doing.

**Julie:** What is it about Devo that you think is so interesting? I'm fascinated by that.

**Miranda:** They have a whole universe built around them and a whole philosophy. It's not just the music.

**Tyson:** It's a philosophy as much as it is a band, and I think their philosophy really resonated with me. I was, like, already writing songs in similar veins... I knew of "Whip It" of course, and I knew "Girl U Want" because those were the big singles. But someone was like... This guy, Ed, I remember he was like, "You need to listen to their lyrics. You need to hear what they're trying to say." And that just blew my mind because there was a whole philosophy behind what they were doing. It was an art movement. Everything they predicted is, sadly, becoming very true. Maybe it's obvious if you look at the way humanity has trended. But they're all about the de-evolution of society, and the entropy of man. That movie *Idiocracy* is basically Devo's vision on screen. Sorry, that's kind of a downer.

**Julie:** Yeah, thanks, Tyson. [laughs] I'm kidding. Let's switch gears then and say, what about performing, playing music, being on Twitch, whatever... What brings you joy?

**Miranda:** It's hard to pinpoint. Everything does. It's a way to connect with people that we never would've thought was possible. We have people that we talk to that are in Germany, and Australia, and South America... That brings me joy, definitely, that our music is actually reaching people and bringing them joy. That's what really makes me happy.

**Tyson:** I mean, the most precious commodity in life is time. It's the only thing you can't buy more of, and these people are giving us their most precious commodity, and for hours on end, multiple times a week. It's...

**Miranda:** Overwhelming.

**Tyson:** Yeah! It almost makes me tear up sometimes when I think about, like, how long people watch us for, and how much they like what we're doing. It becomes addictive, and there's the adrenaline to it, and it's scratching the itch of our creative side. I don't know, it's overwhelming to say the least. We do not take it for granted in any way, shape, or form. Sometimes it really plagues our mind because while we're playing, as our

numbers get bigger and we have more and more people in chat... if we were to try to keep up with what everyone's saying to us, we would never get to play a song. So we try afterwards to even go back and make sure, if we've missed something someone said, that we'll talk about it in our Discord channel or bring it up next time, because we don't take any of it for granted. Not at all.

**Julie:** Has this branched off into other interests that you want to get into eventually?

**Tyson:** There's this weird science to Twitch. Your goal as a Twitch streamer is, obviously, to become as big as possible, but there's kind of a ladder you climb on Twitch. The thing you want to get to is what they call a Partner. When you start out you're a Streamer, and then you become what they call an Affiliate. And when you become an Affiliate that's what unlocks the door for you to be able to have people subscribe to you and start, potentially, making money on Twitch. Then, as a Partner it opens up all sorts of other doors.

So, for the last couple months we've been really trying to make Partner, so all we're doing on Twitch is our music stream, and we have so many more ideas that we want to do, but we know that it will probably bring in less people, which will hurt our chance to make Partner, but once you've made Partner you're golden. You're free to do whatever you want, so we have many ideas we want to bring to Twitch that have nothing do with music but are creative.

Miranda wants to do... She's done it once before, basically, Twitch Craft, where she shows her seamstress skills and makes things on screen. We want to do some stuff with animation, and some weird talk shows... Just experimental things that we can't do yet. Music is, like, one-third of our creative output, but it's 100% of what you see right now on Twitch.

**Julie:** Is there anything in this process of being on Twitch, playing new wave music, whatever... Anything that has been so surprising to you?

**Miranda:** The most surprising thing to me is the range of... I guess, what we imagined the people who our music would reach out to, and then what it actually is. There are so many people that have reached out to us and said, "This is the music I've been waiting decades for!" Exactly what you said, they were teenagers in the '80s when the kind of music we're playing was big, and they've been waiting for something... the new evolution of it, at least. I guess we didn't really see ourselves as that, but now we see it and we're like, "Okay, we're definitely filling this void."

**Tyson:** The age range of our audience is incredible.

**Miranda:** Yeah, there's teenagers or younger kids who've never even heard of it.

**Julie:** Really??

**Tyson:** Yes, there's children, and we know of people in their 60s that are tuning into Twitch, never knew what Twitch was but heard about us, or knew of our existence, and now are on this platform. That is overwhelming in its own right. I think that blew our minds. We just assumed most of our fans would be in their mid-20s to maybe mid-30s, something like that. But to see this age range of people that enjoy us, and then interact with each other sort of anonymously in our stream... We know stuff about them that they don't know about each other, so it's funny when we know someone that's young that's talking to someone that's older, and they're having a great conversation or debate in our chat

while we're playing. And I'm just thinking, "If you guys met each other in real life, you probably wouldn't even look at each other, let alone have this amazing conversation."

**Julie:** What would be the most frustrating thing for you?

**Tyson:** Time, I think.

**Miranda:** Time, yeah. When we stream, and as Tyson mentioned, we do for several hours, we're pretty exhausted afterwards, and then we have to get up in the morning and go to our... We both work from home, fortunately, so that worked out for us. But then we have to give it our all at our day jobs. So we wish we had more time to just do everything we want to do, and have time to rest, and everything else.

**Tyson:** Because we definitely need our day jobs to pay the bills, and for health insurance, and these things. That's the most frustrating thing, the balancing act of making sure that we're making our day jobs happy and doing the best we can there, and then trying to find time to create new content and have energy to do what we're doing on Twitch. In a perfect world, that's all we would do, the creative part of it. But in the United States of America in the year 2020, that's nearly impossible.

**Julie:** So if someone listening to this podcast was new to new wave, where would you suggest they start, besides your stream, of course?

**Tyson:** Honestly, I would just go to YouTube or Spotify, and just type in "new wave," and just start with playlists people have already made. It's probably going to be your common greatest hits. You're probably going to have "I Ran (So Far Away)," and "Rock Lobster," and "Whip It," and "Just What I Needed," and "Cars" by Gary Numan, and "Video Killed the Radio Star," but that's where we all started. Why not start with the hits and then dig deeper? People have some amazing playlists out there.

The coolest thing for us, actually... This still blows my mind. Because all these people that were, like, teenagers during that time period, they're now suggesting music to us that we didn't know exists, like deep cuts, underground new wave bands, and some of them are just blowing our minds. Like, "Holy crap! This is excellent!" Stuff that we would have never found otherwise. But yeah, start with the basics. They were hits because they were great. Some of those songs were no joke.

**Julie:** If someone wanted to start, maybe not streaming on Twitch, but just getting to know Twitch, how would you suggest they start?

**Miranda:** I think just, kind of, browsing in the main channel and seeing what comes up. You can go down a whole wormhole and find people. Even people who are thinking about streaming on Twitch, we suggest that's the best thing to do too, is just watch other musicians on Twitch and learn the culture. You never know what you can find on there. You have to take the time.

**Tyson:** That's the only downside right now, of the music section in Twitch. There's no way to aggregate by genre. It's actually the best part *and* the worst part, because you might think, "I want to go watch a heavy metal band," or whatever kind of music you like, and you can't sort it by that. But it's opened our minds to so many styles of music and new musical acts. A lot of people on there do covers, or they play over YouTube videos, so it opens your mind to all this new music. The only advice we can give you is just to get on there and spend time. It takes time. If you watch something you don't like, there's a thousand more people on there you can watch until you find what you're looking for.

**Miranda:** Exactly.

**Julie:** Is there a holy grail song or band that you want to cover but you haven't done so yet?

**Tyson:** Probably Gary Numan.

**Miranda:** Yeah, Gary Numan, or B-52's probably equally. So many people are like, "Can you guys please cover these? Please!"

**Tyson:** I want to cover "Private Idaho" by the B-52's.

**Miranda:** That's a holy grail song for sure.

**Tyson:** And "Cars" is probably Gary Numan's most famous. We should probably do that at some point. I would like to figure out a way to put a new spin on Kraftwerk. That would be fun.

**Miranda:** Yeah! Or David Bowie. It's hard to narrow down. There's so many.

**Tyson:** But right now "Private Idaho" by the B-52's is probably the holy grail because that would be the most representative of who we are, I think, and what we look like, and what we do.

[clip from "Telephone"]

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Guess what. They made Twitch Partner! I'm excited to see what these ambassadors from the future are going to bring to us.

You can find the Fantastic Plastics all over the internet, starting with [TheFantasticPlastics.com](http://TheFantasticPlastics.com), and [Twitch.TV/FantasticPlastics](https://Twitch.TV/FantasticPlastics). I'll link to everything in the show notes, of course. I'll also include links to Miranda and Tyson's favorite nonprofits, as well as a rotating list of my own favorite nonprofits.

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Zeke Rodrigues Thomas at Mindjam Media provided amazing editing assistance. Thank you Zeke, as always. You can find Zeke at [MindjamMedia.com](http://MindjamMedia.com). Also, huge thanks to Emily White for the episode transcripts, which are available to patrons at [Patreon.com/LoveWhatYouLovePod](https://Patreon.com/LoveWhatYouLovePod).

As always, be good to yourselves, be good to each other, and love the hell out of whatever it is that you love. You need it, and we need it. Thanks for listening. Let's hang out again soon.

### **Links:**

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