

Phonograph and Vinyl Records

It was not until 1877 that the first iteration of the record player, the phonograph, was invented by Thomas Edison. The phonograph is a device for playing music recordings through vibrations. It functions together with the records themselves. The vibration waveforms are engraved and compressed on the records. To play the notes, the playback stylus on the phonograph will rotate on the records and trace along the engravements. Afterwards, the engravements and the playback stylus will generate vibrations together, producing the recorded sounds mistily. Before the invention of vinyl records, records were made of brittle and scratchy shellac. As a result, the sound quality was not satisfactory as the sounds recreated were often too vague that they affected the quality of the music itself and the musical experience for the listeners.

In order to replace shellac records, people introduced vinyl records to the market in the 1930s. Vinyl records are conventionally in black and are made of polyvinyl chloride. The collaboration of the phonograph and vinyl records remained in fashion during the first few decades of the 20th century. Even so, due to the rise of CDs, vinyl records were no longer manufactured in Hong Kong since 1992. Although vinyl records production has halted, a swarm of vinyl records enthusiasts remained loyal to purchasing vinyl records as unique and collectable items for their enjoyment and collection. They think that digital music cannot outdistance the hazy but vivid sounds that vinyl records can afford. They began this trend called the “nostalgia”, reviving the old formats of music through accumulating vinyl records of their favorites. Aside from nostalgia, the mentality of accumulating what is already out of print accounts for the explanation of this phenomenon. Numerous acclaimed Hong Kong singers such as Leslie Cheung, Roman Tam and Anita Mui had published their music via vinyl records in the past. Following their deaths, the records of their music works were in great

demands. For veteran music lovers, they enjoy congregating and sharing with one another vinyl records from their private collection, in remembrance of the good times and people from the past.

(Reference list removed, text shared with the writer's consent)