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B*tch Better Have My Money: The Impact of the Super Bowl Halftime Show on an Artist's
Brand

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ABSTRACT

The most-watched entertainment performance in America each year is the Super Halftime Show, for which the performers are not even directly paid. How did the greatest gig in America become that? What does it do for the performers? And what does it say about America that the premiere entertainment spectacle happens at a football game? This thesis demonstrates how the show has evolved from marching bands in the 60s to the pop star moment that we know now. This research paper also explores an artist's incentive for wanting to perform in the Halftime Show, despite not being directly paid to do so. After analyzing how artists' brands are impacted from the halftime show through promotions, viral moments, and viewership, this study argues that Rihanna's performance in Super Bowl LVII had the largest impact on her brand out of any artist to perform in the halftime show. The study also examines key themes such as how social media impacts an artist's brand, how the halftime show is a sign of the times and where the halftime show may go in the future.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Super Bowl Halftime Show creates memorable moments. Whether it was Lady Gaga jumping from the top of the stadium, or a left shark gone viral in Katy Perry's performance, to the Justin Timberlake / Janet Jackson wardrobe malfunction or Beyonce's powerful message about race relations, there have been many talked about and influential moments in history of the show. Each year, the halftime show stands as something of a sign of the times. Despite what most may think, the artists who perform at the halftime show are not paid, but the media impact value is more than enough of a motivating factor for these artists to perform on the biggest stage. Rihanna's product placement of her Fenty Beauty product during her performance earned her \$5.6 million in sales. Lady Gaga's album and song sales increased by 1000%. Jennifer Lopez gained 2.3 million followers across social media platforms following her performance. The list goes on. Like so many artists, Lady Gaga describes the halftime show as a "culmination of her career" in her documentary "Five Foot Two."

This study examines how the halftime show developed from marching bands to a 13-minute star-studded performance, which has become the greatest gig in America. The study will then measure the brand impact on seven artists following their performance using the following metrics: self-promotion (ex: new album, tour, beauty product, etc.), viral moments, and viewership.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Super Bowl is a football game played annually between the top teams in the National Football Conference and the American Football Conference to determine the champion of the NFL (National Football League) (Carroll, 2024). The Super Bowl is the highest rated regularly scheduled broadcast in the United States by a considerable amount. In fact, the Super Bowl takes up 19 out of 20 spots among the most watched television programs annually (“Newswire,” 2024). Over the past decade, it has routinely garnered viewership over 100 million. In 1967, the NFL and the American Football League were separate leagues and agreed on a merger. As a part of the merger, they decided to have a game between the champions of the separate leagues. By the second year of what was initially called the NFL v. AFL championship, the game coined the name Super Bowl. High level football games, both college and professional, typically have some form of entertainment at the halftime break, so the organizers of what was to become the biggest football game ever needed to think of what to do at halftime (Carroll, 2023). This paper examines that progression and the implications for an artist when they perform in the halftime show as well as pop culture and the music industry as a whole. To fully understand the impact of the Super Bowl Halftime Show, it is necessary to explore how the NFL got to this point. Defining each direction that the NFL took will provide context as to how this 13-minute performance became the greatest gig in America, why this performance is truly the sign of the times, how the performance impacts an artist’s brand, and whose performance had the biggest impact on their brand.

1967 – 1992: Marching Bands and a Whole Lot of Random

The mission of the Super Bowl Halftime Show started off as many intermissions do: to fill time. The main audience of the show from the early years of the performance were simply just the fans in the stadium. It was a brief break meant to entertain fans who were not stuck in bathroom and concessions lines. Most of the shows during this era featured marching bands and other seemingly random acts.

The first Super Bowl, for a game that was actually called the AFL v. NFL World Championship, was remembered for the men zooming around on jet packs before the game and marching bands during the halftime show in 1967. In 1970, we saw the first glimpse of established stars getting pulled into the mix with Broadway and movie star Carol Channing performing. However, the marching bands continued to stick around with this direction for the coming years (Berkowitz & Gamio, 2018). The stadium and its attendees heard concert-like sound quality that covered the stadium for the first time in 1976 and production continued to improve the following year with a Walt Disney Production performance.

The light-hearted randomness persisted, but Steelers Head Coach at the time, Chuck Noll, made sure the spectacle remained focused on football in 1979 when the “Salute to the Caribbean” performance took eight minutes to clear the field, delaying the third quarter. Knoll threatened to pull his team in protest of the tomfoolery (Berkowitz & Gamio, 2018).

In 1983, the audience saw a performance involving audience participation for the first time where over 100,000 people held up synchronized colored flash cards forming a pattern around the stadium. Creativity and innovation trended upwards with the start of the super stages in 1985. This was the first time a large stage had to be assembled on the field during the halftime

show. The set was 32 pieces, using as much lumber as a three-bedroom house (Berkowitz & Gamio, 2018).

Organized chaos continued as 1,200 performers took the stage in 1988 in Radio City Music Hall's performance, which included 400 swing band members, 300 Jazzercisers, 88 tuxedoed pianists on 88 Kimball grand pianos, 44 Rockettes, two college marching bands and Chubby Checker (Berkowitz & Gamio, 2018).

Over the years, advertising during the Super Bowl has become one of the most sought-after opportunities of visibility for a brand in the world. This sponsorship theme is apparent in the halftime show partners as well and was put on display for the first time in 1989 when a 3-Dimensional advertisement for Coke started off the show (Berkowitz & Gamio, 2018). This marked the beginning of large sponsors for the halftime show and its value has grown exponentially since, with recent partners as Pepsi and now Apple Music.

The year 1992 became a catalyst for change. CBS was televising the Super Bowl that year. The Halftime Show featured two Olympic skaters and singer Gloria Estefan. During the time of the performance, FOX aired a new live episode of "In Living Color" – an incredibly popular comedy show at the time featuring creator Keenen Ivory Wayans and his brother, Damon, among other celebrities like Jim Carey. CBS lost 10 ratings points to FOX. Not only were the NFL and television network not gaining any viewers from the Halftime Show, but they were now losing them if they did not satisfy their audience. It was time for a rebrand. How can the NFL capitalize off the halftime of the Super Bowl?

Table 1 Super Bowl Halftime Show Performers from 1967-1992

YEAR	PERFORMANCE
1967	University of Arizona and Grambling State marching bands

1968	Grambling State band
1969	"America Thanks" with Florida A&M University band
1970	Carol Channing
1971	Florida A&M band
1972	"Salute to Louis Armstrong" with Ella Fitzgerald, Carol Channing, Al Hirt and U.S. Marine Corps Drill Team
1973	"Happiness Is" with University of Michigan marching band and Woody Herman
1974	"A Musical America" with University of Texas band
1975	"Tribute to Duke Ellington" with Mercer Ellington and Grambling State band
1976	"200 Years and Just a Baby" Tribute to America's Bicentennial
1977	"It's a Small World" including crowd participation for first time with spectators waving colored placards on cue
1978	"From Paris to the Paris of America" with Tyler Apache Belles, Pete Fountain and Al Hirt
1979	"Super Bowl XIII Carnival" Salute to the Caribbean with Ken Hamilton and various Caribbean bands
1980	"A Salute to the Big Band Era" with Up with People
1981	"A Mardi Gras Festival"
1982	"A Salute to the 60s and Motown"
1983	"KaleidoSUPERscope" (a kaleidoscope of color and sound)
1984	"Super Bowl XVIII's Salute to the Superstars of the Silver Screen"

1985	"A World of Children's Dreams"
1986	"Beat of the Future"
1987	"Salute to Hollywood's 100th Anniversary"
1988	"Something Grand" featuring 88 grand pianos, the Rockettes and Chubby Checker
1989	"Be Bop Bamboozled" featuring 3-D effects
1990	"Salute to New Orleans" and 40th Anniversary of Peanuts' characters, featuring trumpeter Pete Fountain, Doug Kershaw & Irma Thomas
1991	"A Small World Salute to 25 Years of the Super Bowl" featuring New Kids on the Block
1992	"Winter Magic" including a salute to the winter season and the winter Olympics featuring Gloria Estefan, Brian Boitano and Dorothy Hamill

(McCarriston, 2024).

1993 – 2004: Jackson to Jackson

For the first time in history, the Super Bowl Halftime Show drew more views than the actual game itself. None other than Michael Jackson changed what was once just an intermission forever. He was the first massive star on this stage – providing the NFL and its fans with a glimpse into the value, potential and power of the halftime show. The King of Pop stood motionless for 90 seconds before he started his performance while the crowd in the Rose Bowl roared. For the following years, we saw other big names take the stage like Tony Bennett, Patti LaBelle, Diana Ross, James Brown, The Blues Brothers and more. 1988 marked an iconic

mashup between Boyz II Men, Smokey Robinson, Martha Reeves, Queen Latifah and The Temptations. We saw Stevie Wonder in 1999 and Phil Collins, Enrique Iglesias, Christina Aguilera and Toni Braxton in 2000 (McCarriston, 2024).

The mashups proved successful for the halftime show, until the collaborations appeared a bit forced. The ultimate melting pot in 2001 featured Aerosmith, N'SYNC, Brittany Spears, Mary J. Blige and Nelly – a star-studded lineup without a doubt. However, did Aerosmith really need Justin Timberlake and Brittany Spears to help them sing “Walk This Way”? Probably not (McCarriston, 2024).

The following year, U2 delivered a tribute to the 9/11 victims. Shania Twain and Gwen Stefani collaborated in 2003 for a girl power mashup of “Man, I Feel Like A Woman” and “I’m Just A Girl.”

The year 2004 marked the end of this pop era when the infamous “Nipplegate” broke the internet. In what was called a “wardrobe malfunction”, Justin Timberlake pulled off Janet Jackson’s top exposing her for less than a second. Rumors flooded that the incident was staged, but others explained that only part of her top was supposed to come off – not the entire thing. Regardless of whether the act was intentional or not, “the incident contributed to the growth of digital video recorders, the rise of YouTube, and of course, the expansion of the networks' use of several-second broadcast delays during live events,” according to the Washington Post. MTV got the boot after producing this performing, marking the end of this pop star era as we knew it.

Table 2 Super Bowl Halftime Show Performers from 1993-2004

YEAR	PERFORMANCE
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1993	"Heal the World" featuring Michael Jackson and 3,500 local children. Finale included audience card stunt
1994	"Rockin' Country Sunday" featuring Clint Black, Tanya Tucker, Travis Tritt, Wynonna & Naomi Judd. Finale included flashlight stunt
1995	"Indiana Jones and the Temple of the Forbidden Eye" featuring Tony Bennett, Patti LaBelle, Arturo Sandoval, the Miami Sound Machine and stunts including fire and skydivers. Finale included audience participation with light sticks
1996	Diana Ross celebrating 30 years of the Super Bowl with special effects, pyrotechnics and stadium card stunt. Finale featured Diana Ross being taken from the stadium in a helicopter
1997	"Blues Brothers Bash" featuring Dan Akroyd, John Goodman and James Belushi (also featuring "The Godfather of Soul" James Brown and ZZ Top)
1998	"A Tribute to Motown's 40th Anniversary" including Boyz II Men, Smokey Robinson, Queen Latifah, Martha Reeves and The Temptations
1999	"Celebration of Soul, Salsa and Swing" featuring Stevie Wonder, Gloria Estefan, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy and tap dancer Savion Glover
2000	"A Tapestry of Nations" featuring Phil Collins, Christina Aguilera, Enrique Iglesias, Toni Braxton and an 80-person choir
2001	"The Kings of Rock and Pop" featuring Aerosmith, 'N'Sync, Britney Spears, Mary J. Blige and Nelly
2002	U2, 9/11 Tribute

2003	Shania Twain, No Doubt and Sting
2004	Janet Jackson, Kid Rock, P. Diddy, Nelly and Justin Timberlake

(McCarriston, 2024).

2005 – 2010: The Last Great American Dynasty

The sharp contrast between the 2004 controversial performance and the 2005 approach is striking. Paul McCartney took the stage in 2005 by himself for a neutral and not scandalous performance, making it clear that the NFL wanted to get as far away from what happened in 2004 as possible.

With arguably the exception of Prince performing “Purple Rain” in the pouring rain, the NFL continued down a safe path of celebrating seasoned artists with The Rolling Stones, Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, Bruce Springsteen and The Who. There were a few issues with this direction. First off, the fan demographics of these artists are arguably very similar to those watching the game. According to the Sports Business Journal, out of the 2005 Super Bowl demographics, 84% of viewers were white, 60% were men, and 58.9% were above the age of 35 – heavily aligning with the fanbases of these bands. With Michael Jackson in 1993, the NFL saw the first glimpse of the power of this performance as viewership during Jackson’s performance outnumbered viewership during the game itself. By choosing artists whose fan demographics align heavily with the demographics of those already watching the game, the NFL misses out on an entire new audience.

Secondly, the NFL valued the celebration of an artist and their career in this direction. While these performers in this era are nothing short of musical legends, their performances are

not creating viral moments, spiking viewership, or creating a lasting impression in a viewer's mind. To keep the viewers from taking a bathroom break or grabbing another drink during halftime, a tasteful amount of unpredictability and flashiness needs to be present. People want to be entertained, not reminded how old their favorite bands are getting and thus, how old they themselves are getting. In this direction, the NFL valued celebration while forgetting to balance relevancy. In the next and final era, the NFL finally finds the sweet spot of celebrating an icon in the music industry, but doing so while they are still relevant.

Table 3 Super Bowl Halftime Show Performers from 2005-2010

YEAR	PERFORMANCE
2005	Paul McCartney
2006	The Rolling Stones
2007	Prince and the Florida A&M marching band
2008	Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers
2009	Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band
2010	The Who

(McCarriston, 2024).

The NFL Gets it Right: Pop Star Palooza

The Black Eyed Peas were the first to bring us back into the era we now know and love: Pop Star Palooza. Their upbeat and catchy performance filled with current radio hits marked a

start to a series of pop culture icons. From Madonna, Beyonce, Bruno Mars, and Katy Perry to Lady Gaga, Jennifer Lopez, Shakira, the Weeknd and Rihanna, this start studded list delivered captivating performances each year filled with intricate choreography, innovative stage setups, quick costume changes, jam packed setlists and more. With these peak performances, the NFL's approach each year becomes more sensible. For example, Jennifer Lopez and Shakira joined forces together in Miami and paid homage to Latino culture in their performance. The first ever Hip-Hop Super Bowl Halftime Show was done in Los Angeles. The NFL finally understands the power they possess with this 13-minute performance and as a result, the league has hit their stride.

Table 4 Super Bowl Halftime Show Performers from 2011-2024

2011	The Black Eyed Peas, Usher, Slash
2012	Madonna
2013	Beyonce
2014	Bruno Mars, Red Hot Chili Peppers
2015	Katy Perry, Lenny Kravitz and Missy Elliott
2016	Coldplay, Beyonce, Bruno Mars
2017	Lady Gaga
2018	Justin Timberlake, The Tennessee Kids
2019	Maroon 5, Travis Scott, Big Boi
2020	Shakira, Jennifer Lopez, Bad Bunny, J Balvin, Emme Muniz
2021	The Weeknd
2022	Eminem, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Kendrick Lamar and Mary J. Blige

2023	Rihanna
2024	Usher, Alicia Keys, Jermaine Dupri, H.E.R., will.i.am, Lil Jon, Ludacris

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The primary research method for this study was analyzing seven artists whose performance in the Super Bowl Halftime Show had a significant personal brand and pop culture impact. The core factors that I focused on were promotions, viral moments, and viewership. Promotions included anything from a new album or single to a world tour, beauty product, documentary, or notable increase in social media following. Since artists took different self-promotional approaches, I took note of specifically what the artist was trying to promote, if anything, and what the outcome of that promotion was. Self-promotion is arguably the artist's largest financial incentive and gain in doing the halftime show. Viewership refers to which performances were the most viewed at the time the performance aired on television. In terms of viral moments, I focused on the parts of their performance that drew large amounts of attention, specifically on social media, as a meme or "wow" factor moment. These viral moments may be what sticks in a viewer's mind (ex: left shark). Lastly, I also noted if an artist had a unique circumstance when it came to consistency across the study. For example, I analyzed Beyonce and Bruno Mars, who have both performed twice in the Halftime Show. They each had a solo performance in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Beyonce and Bruno Mars then joined forces with Coldplay in 2017, so I addressed their performance from both years. Jennifer Lopez and Shakira split their setlist for their collaboration in 2020, so I also acknowledged that having two stars in one show could have affected the artist's brand impact.

Obtaining information about Super Bowl Halftime Shows is a bit challenging as there is no single repository for every halftime show. The games rotate broadcasting rights on each major network and the performance was not something people thought much about in the '60s and 70s,

making sources varied. However, via YouTube, I was able to watch every halftime show. For the information I gathered on the performances that I analyzed, I found through newspaper articles, online websites, magazines, social media posts, interviews and more. These sources are cited extensively in the bibliography.

In terms of selecting which seven artists to analyze over the dozens of artists who have played the halftime show, I specifically only focused on artists from 2011 to now because this is when the NFL hit its stride in how to get the most out of this 13-minute performance. Ultimately, these seven artists had the highest viewed shows out of mostly *solo* Halftime Show Super Bowl performances. For example, I recognize that the 2022 performance featuring Eminem, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Kendrick Lamar and Mary J. Blige was among the most viewed as it was the first ever Hip-Hop halftime performance. However, because there were so many artists in this performance, their brand impact could not have been measured against an artist who performed throughout the entire or majority of the show in another year. In this way, I focused on the most viewed halftime shows and eliminated different variable performances to keep the analyses as consistent as possible, focusing on the impact of a singular artist's brand.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

The NFL pays for the staging and production of the event, which does cost millions of dollars, but the NFL does not pay the artist directly for performing in the Super Bowl Halftime Show. This section analyzes what each artist gained by performing in the Super Bowl. It may surprise many to learn that artists aren't compensated directly for their halftime show performances. However, when considering the immense exposure that the event offers with practically the entire nation tuning in, the absence of direct payment is understandable. Forbes Music & Entertainment Writer Zach Greenberg notes, “If you think about it from the perspective of, you know, how much would you pay for it if you were a brand to have a 30-second spot, it's probably 3- or \$4 million for a commercial. We're talking a 12-minute show for these performers. And it's essentially a commercial for them – for their albums, for their tours. You know, there's not really another opportunity like it in the entertainment world.”

For this reason, this study primarily evaluates the impact of an artist's brand from the Super Bowl performance based on how effectively they leverage this platform for promotional purposes. Artists have the freedom to orchestrate promotions for upcoming albums, tours, documentaries and more around their Super Bowl buzz. For example, StubHub traffic jumps at least 50% for all halftime acts and sometimes much more. Specifically, searches for Lady Gaga and Beyoncé spiked by a factor of more than 100 after each of their performances (Greenberg, 2020). How an artist chooses to take advantage of this platform has arguably the most significant impact on their brand, constituting one of the three key factors that was analyzed in this study. The other two factors are viewership and viral moments.

Brand Impact Analysis of Beyonce

Beyonce is one of two artists in this study who have performed twice in the Super Bowl Halftime Show. For the purpose of measuring her individual brand impact, I focused on mainly her 2013 solo performance while addressing her cultural impact from the 2017 halftime show where she joined Coldplay and Bruno Mars with a powerful message.

Beyonce's 2013 halftime show was nothing short of impressive. From intensive choreography and flawless vocals to a complex stage setup, jam packed setlist and a Destiny's Child reunion, the performance highlighted every bit of Beyonce's talent and work ethic. Her set design cost about \$600,000 alone, not including production costs or technical equipment (Lindner, 2024). With an 8-minute setup, the stage was built from 41 moving carts rolled onto the field. The stage included two pits on both sides where 1,000 fans stood in the negative space of an outline of Beyonce's face profile – which also happened to ignite in flames in the beginning of the performance. PepsiCo, the show's sponsor at the time, organized the crowd aspect of the show, receiving more than 100,000 fan submissions (Luckerson, 2013). The stage setup also included a 16-ft lift and a video stage floor that rose up mid-performance to form a video wall the stretch 32 feet wide (PLSN, 2013). She was joined on stage by 120 backup dancers and dressed in a costume created by New York designer Rubin Singer, who says his team of 14 put in 200 manhours on the outfit (Nordyke, Couch, & James, 2013).

Leading up to the performance, Beyonce had fallen under some criticism as she decided to use a recorded track when she performed at President Barack Obama's inauguration January just a month prior to her Super Bowl performance (Hare, 2013). However, the rumors were put to rest when she flawlessly delivered impressive vocal performances to her most popular tracks

including “Crazy in Love”, “End of Time”, “Baby Boy”, “Bootylicious”, “Independent Women”, “Single Ladies”, “Love on Top” and “Halo”.

Her performance garnered over 104 million viewers making it one of the top three most watched segments of the Super Bowl in 2013 (Gallo, 2013). The rumored reunion of Destiny’s Child with Kelly Rowland and Michelle Williams did not disappoint when the two popped out onto the stage for an extravagant collaboration and iconic moment celebrating the music of Destiny’s Child. Beyonce’s performance created a buzz online with Piers Morgan even calling it “best half-time #Superbowl performance EVER” (Stern, 2013). First Lady Michelle Obama, Jimmy Fallon and Adam Lambert were among other notables who jumped to Twitter to rave about Queen B and her performance. Just a few hours after getting off stage, Beyonce announced “The Mrs. Carter Show World Tour” which was set to start in June just four months later. Her fierce performance served as the perfect trailer for her upcoming tour.

By Monday afternoon after the Super Bowl, 16 songs and 12 albums entered the iTunes sales chart between Beyonce and Destiny’s Child, illustrating that Beyonce’s digital sales were up more than 230% and Destiny’s Child sales were up by 600% (Kaufman, 2013). Beyonce sold a total of 220,000 songs by the end of the week and an additional 60,000 with Destiny’s Child. Specifically, Beyonce’s “Crazy in Love” saw an increase in 203% (Caulfield and Eggertsen, 2022). Between the tour announcement and increased in sales, Beyonce’s self-promotion undoubtedly shined as a significant impact on her brand.

Beyonce joined the Super Bowl stage again in 2017. On the day before taking the stage with Coldplay and Bruno Mars, Beyoncé dropped her lead single off her next album, *Lemonade*, called “Formation.” The video includes references to Hurricane Katrina and rallying cries to the “Black Lives Matter” movement. The next day, Beyonce made a strong statement about race

relations in the United States by performing her debut single in the halftime show. Beyoncé's back-up dancers were dressed in all black, with black berets and afros — reflecting the way members of the Black Panther Party dressed in the 1960s (Zaru, 2017). At one point, Beyoncé and her dancers stood in an "X" formation as a reference to Malcolm X, paying homage to one of the most celebrated figures of the Black liberation movement. Beyoncé's outfit was also similar to Michael Jackson's outfit he famously wore in his 1993 tour. Following her performance, Beyoncé announced that she would be going on the Formation World Tour. The proceeds will help those affected by the water crisis in Flint, a Michigan town that has not had access to clean water in more than a year and is also predominately Black (BET, 2017).

Her performance created various reactions with many conservatives feeling as if her performance as "too woke", while others saw themselves represented and heard during her powerful performance. Former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani was one of the first to criticize the performing saying, "This is football, not Hollywood. You're talking to middle America when you have the Super Bowl. So, if you're going to have entertainment, let's have decent, wholesome entertainment" (Kristian, 2016). Beyoncé, who continues to push boundaries culturally and musically, was ahead of her time with this performance. Nowadays, we see the NFL and its teams show public support for racial issues, however, Beyoncé's performance came years before this movement from the NFL. Her performance provided into a glimpse of how more athletes, artists and celebrities will find their voice and use their platforms to stand up for what they think it is right. Beyoncé quite literally changed the game through her halftime show performance. She had a massive impact on culture and society just as much as she has had an impact on her own personal brand as a result of this performance.

Brand Impact Analysis of Bruno Mars

Super Bowl XLVIII marks one of the most boring games in the championship's history. The Broncos were scoreless in the first half and the Seahawks entered halftime with a 22-point lead. FOX and the NFL needed a boost to keep audiences engaged. Bruno Mars did just that. Despite the falling TV rankings because of the uncompetitive game, Mars made this Super Bowl the most-watched TV show in U.S. history at the time with the number of viewers peaking at his performance (Patten, 2014). 115.3 million viewers tuned into the Bruno Mars Halftime Show and not only maintained viewership during a blowout of a game, but also broke the record for most watched Super Bowl Halftime Show. Mars beat the record at the time set by Madonna in 2012 by over a million views.

Mars started his set off with a wholesome rendition of "Billionaire" sung by a children's choir before entirely switching gears and delivering a powerful drum solo opening on a moving stage – immediately setting the tone for what was about to be an incredible performance by Mars and his band. He moved into his classics like "Locked Out of Heaven", then "Treasure" and finally "Runaway Baby" before an explosive appearance with the Red Hot Chili Peppers where the groups joined forces for "Give It Away". Mars concluded the series of energetic songs with a tribute to the United States Armed Forces before a picturesque performance of "Just the Way You Are" accompanied by fireworks lighting up MetLife Stadium.

Mars entered the halftime show following a successful couple of weeks after winning the Grammy for Best Pop Vocal Album and receiving nominations for Record of the Year, Song of the Year and Best Pop Solo Performance. The nominations continued as Mars received two Emmy nominations for his Super Bowl performance in Outstanding Short-Format Live-Action

Entertainment Program and Outstanding Lighting Design / Lighting Direction for Variety Special (Natividad, 2022).

In all, the show cost around \$11 million to put on, but as per usual, paying Mars is not a part of the cost. "The halftime performance at the Super Bowl is the single most important live appearance an artist can make," says Gary Bongiovanni, president, and editor-in-chief of concert data outfit Pollstar. "And with the pressure on, Bruno Mars crushed it. I would not be surprised if he more than doubled his number of fans overnight" (Greenburg, 2014).

Bruno did close to just that. He became the second most-searched term on Google on the day of the Super Bowl totaling over 2 million hits (NPR, 2014). His album, *Unorthodox Jukebox*, climbed from #7 to #3 with sales increasing by 92%. His first album, *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*, rose to #11 on the charts and increased sales by 58%. He sold over 389,000 digital songs and 107,000 combined album sales in the week following the Super Bowl alone (Caulfield & Eggertsen, 2022). Aside from the recording breaking viewership numbers, the largest effect that the halftime show had on Mars was in his second leg of North American tour dates for The Moonshine Jungle Tour.

Bruno Mars sold out three concerts faster than any artist in his home state of Hawaii at the Blaisdell Arena (Gray, 2014). Before Mars' halftime show, few very tickets remained available on the primary market for his tour as many shows were already sold out. The average price of a ticket on the secondary market was \$500. The average price for tickets on the primary market ranged from \$49-100 but rose to \$70-181. Ahead of One Direction and Jason Aldean, The Moonshine Jungle Tour became the most expensive show in the U.S. during the summer of 2014 (Lawrence, 2014).

The massive demand in tickets led to some legislative action as well. Due to the increased resell activity that occurred during the week of the Super Bowl, Hawaii Senate President Donna Mercado Kim introduced the “Bruno Mars Act” which would have limited all ticket purchases within 48 hours of the on-sale at the physical box office, ensuring that those who go to the box office get a ticket. The law did not pass through at the conference committee despite gaining traction after passing through the Hawaii State Senate (Lawrence, 2014).

On an NPR podcast, Forbes Music and Entertainment Writer Zach Greenburg weighs in on the financial impact that the Super Bowl could have on Mars and his career: “That's where the majority of these big acts make their huge dollars. And if you take someone - especially like Bruno Mars, who's only now kind of getting up into the \$700,000-800,000 per night gross range - this is going to probably push him over the million-dollar mark, which is occupied only by the likes of Beyonce and Paul McCartney and kind of people of that stature, who've done the Super Bowl before” (NPR, 2014).

Bruno Mars was also featured in the 2017 Super Bowl joining forces with Coldplay and Beyonce. He sang “Uptown Funk” and had an epic back-and-forth dance break moment with Beyonce. This performance garnered 112 million views.

Brand Impact Analysis of Katy Perry

Katy Perry’s Super Bowl Halftime Show was a record-breaking performance. Her show was seen by 118.5 million viewers, topping the previous record set by Bruno Mars in the year prior by an astounding 3.2 million viewers. Perry’s halftime show outperformed every part of the

2015 Super Bowl except for the final stretch of the game where the Patriots had a fairytale comeback (Gallon, 2015). Her performance currently sits at over 95 million views on YouTube.

Perry's performance included four different costume changes – the most changes by any performer ever (Clark, 2015). She began the show in a fire-branded skirt riding in on a massive mechanical lion to the song "Roar". After a choreographed version of "Dark Horse" and a unique Lenny Kravitz collaboration to "I Kissed a Girl", Perry changed into a beachy corset top and skirt for a lighthearted performance of "Teenage Dream" and "California Gurls." Missy Elliott joined the stage for a total of three songs while Perry rocked an oversized black jersey. Then, for her final number, Katy Perry looked glamorous as ever in a one shoulder shimmery dress to cap off the set with a floating performance of "Firework" as she glided in air throughout the arena on a shooting star lift.

Following her halftime show, Perry's most recent album *Prism* jumped back into the top 20 in the Billboard 200 for the first time in eight months. Her overall catalog of albums increased in sales by 38% and three of Missy Elliot's albums re-entered the top 100 albums (Caulfield & Eggertsen, 2022). Between production, the stage, costumes and special effects, the performance is estimated to cost around \$10 million (Lindner, 2024).

Aside from viewership and costume changes, Katy Perry changed the game in a way that she most definitely did not anticipate. Her backup dancer who coined the name "left shark" became an overnight sensation and meme. At the end of "Teenage Dream", the left shark appeared to forget the choreography looking off beat and out of place. The notoriety quickly grew on social media. Videos, memes, and funny captions took over the internet following Perry's performance. Snoop Dogg tweeted, "If you were wondering that was me in tha Shark costume!!"

NPR tracked down the man behind the costume. Bryan Gaw, who had been touring with Katy Perry for five years, shut the rumors down saying that he did not forget the choreography. This part of the performance was a freestyle-based dance segment. He purposely rehearsed this portion of the song in a goofy manner to fit the character. “You have flexibility because you are your own character,” (Harrell and Green, 2018). When asked why he thought left shark went viral, he harped on the fact that, “This is an underdog. It’s an everyday person.”

NBC host and television personality Meredith Vieira described the meaning and gravitation towards left shark perfectly during her speech at the 2015 Boston University graduation ceremony. “The shark on the right knew every dance move and performed perfectly. But it was the left shark, the one who went rogue and danced to his own crazy beat, who stole the show. So don’t ever be a conformist for convenience’s sake. Or as Mark Twain put it, ‘Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it’s time to pause and reflect,’” (Camenker, 2023). Vieira encouraged students to not “strive for somebody else’s notion of perfection.” Left shark means to be yourself.

This social media frenzy created a new consideration for the halftime show: How “meme-able” is a performance? And how does virality contribute to the success of a performance in the current digital landscape? “I just hope at the end of the day that over 100 million people are all smiling in unison,” Perry told reporters before her performance. “If you can imagine that happening, I think there's going to be an incredible energy that goes across the world.” (Conway, 2015). Katy Perry gave a fun and spirited performance with something for everyone and most importantly, with America’s new favorite underdog by her side. Katy was undoubtedly able to accomplish a shared smile in her halftime show.

Brand Impact Analysis of Lady Gaga

All eyes were on Lady Gaga during this Super Bowl Halftime Show after she took to Instagram to say that she will not have any guest performers joining her for the 13-minute performance. Her caption also stated that she would be dedicating “every second to the love, diversity, compassion, and wild spirit of our fan base. To that kid who felt unwanted, or the grown up who remembers how hard it was to find acceptance. This is for you. It is also for those whose hearts and minds have opened to our message.” Following the election of President Donald Trump into office and the political message from Beyonce in her 2016 Halftime Show, many people anticipated that Gaga would use her platform to make a political statement of her own in 2017.

Gaga’s message was simple: unity. She started off singing an acapella mashup of “God Bless America” and “This Land is Your Land” from the top of NRG Stadium before jumping off the roof and dropping onto stage. Gaga stated in an interview prior to her performance that the “only statements I’ll be making during the halftime show are the ones that I’ve been consistently making throughout my career. I believe in a passion for inclusion, the spirit of equality and the spirit of this country, one of love and compassion and kindness,” she said. (McDermott, 2017). This shined in her performance.

Following her patriotic moment, Gaga went into a highly choreographed and upbeat performance of “Poker Face” and “Born This Way” in a studded bodysuit and bedazzled boots. “Telephone” and “Just Dance” were performed flawlessly and included a section where Gaga even played the keytar. She slowed things down with a heartfelt rendition of “Million Reasons” and gave a shoutout to her parents. The iconic intro of “Bad Romance” played before Lady Gaga jumped back on stage in a crystal bottom and a white sparkling football-uniform. Gaga was raised

on various lifts while flawlessly performing vocals and choreography before she ended the performance jumping off stage and catching a football.

With this multi-faceted performance, Gaga attracted 117.5 million viewers – the 2nd largest audience in Super Bowl history and one million shy of beating the record set by Katy Perry (Legrand, 2017). Her performance garnered an immediate high response on social media as the Lady Gaga concert led to a spike in smartphone and tablet usage by 32%. Viewers were posting on social media by the masses as there were a total of 2.2 million tweets during the halftime show and 5.1 million tweets about the performance (Fang, 2017). Many of the tweets surrounded the “meme-able” viral moment of her performance – Gaga jumping off the roof of the stadium. The internet became immediately obsessed with the photos and videos from this iconic moment. Gaga herself became her own Left Shark as people were captioning the moment with “me jumping into conclusions” or “jumping into DMs like” (Careaga, 2017). Her performance currently sits at 99 million views on YouTube as well.

Gaga also saw arguably the largest increase in music sales as a result of her halftime show. The sales of her albums increased collectively by 1,980% selling 24,075 albums on the day of the performance. and 14,364 on the following day (Beech, 2017). Her most recent album at the time, *Joanne*, specifically saw a growth of 1,552%, and Gaga’s *The Fame Monster*, released in 2009, increased its sales by 4,753%. *Born This Way* also increased sales by 3,384% with the actual song “Born This Way” increasing sales by 4,457%. Her daily songs streamed more than doubled on Sunday reaching 5.4 million streams and then almost tripled as her streams climbs to 7.5 million on Monday. “Million Reasons” was the most streamed song with 730,000 streams on Sunday and 940,000 streams on Monday. *Joanne* jumped from No. 66 to No. 2 on the Billboard charts and *The Fame* re-entered the top 200 at No. 6 (Caulfield and Eggertsen, 2022).

A few hours after her performance, Gaga announced her 2017 Joanne World Tour and posted a teaser to her Instagram (Lynch, 2017). And a few months later, she announced her Netflix documentary titled “Five Foot Two.” The documentary shows Gaga’s process of writing and producing *Joanne* and her battle with various health issues. The documentary ends with a behind-the-scenes look into her preparation and execution of the Super Bowl LI Halftime Show where she describes these 13-minutes as a “culmination of her career.” Gaga’s celebration of her old and new music in combination with quirky moments from this pop icon that we all know and love, like jumping off the top of the stadium, made this performance most definitely just that.

Brand Impact Analysis of Jennifer Lopez & Shakira

Jennifer Lopez and Shakira’s electrifying performance was the first of its kind for a few reasons. This was the first time in Super Bowl history where two Latina women headlined the performance (Canal, 2020). This was also the first year where the Super Bowl Halftime Show was co-produced with Jay-Z and his entertainment media company, Roc Nation. The NFL announced the partnership in August of 2019 illustrating a conscious effort by the NFL to improve its social justice efforts and overall reputation after receiving backlash (and low ratings) for the previous year’s halftime show starring Maroon 5. Roc Nation will now serve as the league’s “live music entertainment strategist” moving forward.

This initiative has proven to be successful right from the start. In conjunction with the 2020 Super Bowl held at Miami’s Hard Rock Stadium, Jay-Z orchestrated a vibrant spectacle that not only celebrated Latin pride but also showcased the rich tapestry of cultural diversity that thrives within the city. This was the exact boost that the halftime show needed.

Before the performance, the NFL had announced that there would be more songs than in any previous halftime show (Pareles, 2020). With two headliners, that meant cramming a whole career into six minutes. The entire 12-minute was an electric mashup of the two's most popular songs starting with Shakira, then Lopez, then the two joined forces. Songs like "Empire", "Whenever, Whenever" and "Hips Don't Lie" shined in Shakira's segment while "Jenny From the Block", "Get Right", and "On the Floor" created the ultimate JLo fusion. The two collaborated on "Let's Get Loud", "Born in the U.S.A." and "Waka Waka" to close out an exhilarating act.

Aside from incredible vocal performances, what really shined in this performance was the choreography. From belly dancing, crowd surfing, knee sliding across the stage, pole dancing and drumming, Lopez and Shakira proved that they can still do it all. Social media exploded with astonishment, highlighting Jennifer Lopez's extraordinary performance at 50 years old, and acknowledging Shakira's remarkable energy on her 43rd birthday, the very day of their electrifying performances (Mack, 2020).

According to Spotify, JLo and Shakira's streams jumped by 335 percent and 230 percent after the halftime show (Barbour, 2020). Specifically in Shakira's catalogue, "Empire" streaming increased 2,135%, "She Wolf" by 905%, "Whenever, Whenever" by 705%, and "Hips Don't Lie" by 430%. For JLo's streaming statistics, "Get Right" increased by 735%, "Waiting for Tonight" by 685%, and "Let's Get Loud" and "Jenny From the Block" by 500% (Crowley, 2020).

In addition to the performers' ages going viral on social media, the Internet instantly exploded with reactions to Shakira's high-pitched sound while moving her tongue. It coined the term "tongue thing" on social media as many viewers were perplexed by the action. Within

minutes, footage of the moment had become a gif and meme (Harmata, 2020). Others pointed out that the sound was an interpretation of a traditional Arabic called a zaghrouta, an expression of joy and celebration (Chiu, 2020). The trending moment on Twitter was just a celebration. Jennifer Lopez also honored her heritage by wearing a feathered cape that showed the Puerto Rican flag on one side and the U.S. flag on the other.

Jennifer Lopez and Shakira's thrilling performance currently has over 307 million views on YouTube, making it the most watched halftime show on social media by over 44 million views.

Brand Impact Analysis of Rihanna

Rihanna's performance was already expected to captivate audiences worldwide as it was the pop star's first performance in seven years. However, the unprecedented impact on her brand from this performance exceeded all expectations. To begin the list of recording breaking statistics, Rihanna's performance officially became the most watched Super Bowl Halftime Show of all time with over 121 million views, surpassing the record set by Katy Perry in 2015 by over 2.5 million views. Prior to the performance, Rihanna revealed that "it's gonna be a celebration of catalogue in the best way we could've put it together. You only have 13 minutes, and that's a challenge, so you're trying to cram 17 years of work into 13 minutes" (Johnston, 2023). The pop star said that the expansive setlist went through 39 revisions, and it showed as Rihanna toured us through 12 of her best hits within those 13 minutes. Her performance felt

polished and playful, yet very self-assured. There were no surprise guests or costume changes as Rihanna did not need to prove anything. Her iconic music and swaggering aura spoke for itself.

Rihanna's performance included a state-of-the-art setup with moving, elevated platforms. She set the tone for the performance starting with "B*tch Better Have My Money" before running through hit after hit from "Where Have You Been" and "Only Girl (In The World)" to "We Found Love", "Rude Boy" and more. Rihanna was backed by a horde of backup dancers through her medley of hits performing various arrangements on the floating stages. The pop star was dressed in a red monochrome ensemble, while her dancers dressed in white puffy jumpsuits and sunglasses. After playing more of her most popular hits, Rihanna's performance ended with a picturesque performance of "Diamonds" as fireworks lit up the Phoenix sky.

Rihanna was truly the real winner of the Super Bowl. According to brand performance tool, Launchmetrics, her performance generated \$88.3 million in media impact value. That's 27% of the total Super Bowl coverage (Santoreneos, 2023). For example, one of the biggest takeaways of Rihanna's performance was the surprise pregnancy announcement of her second child. This resulted in over 10 million Google searches of fans and viewers searching to see if the rumors were true before her team confirmed it after the show (Fitzgerald, 2023).

Once it was announced that Rihanna was the halftime show performer in September 2022, the stakeholders and partners involved wasted no time in creating marketing campaigns and activations. 2023 marked the first year that Apple Music sponsored the Halftime Show. They delivered an expansive marketing campaign with their Rihanna commercial/trailer accumulating over 54 million views and over 4 million likes on Instagram (Roberts, 2023). Fenty Beauty released a limited collection of Super Bowl themed beauty products leading up to the event with a viral TikTok to show off the new products. Rihanna's clothing company, Savage x Fenty,

posted that there would be popup shops of their gameday collection. Even after the game, Fenty Beauty posted a viral TikTok breaking down Rihanna's entire makeup look and which of her products that she used (Roberts, 2023). Sephora, Fenty's exclusive retailer, also made ads for Fenty leading up to the game that earned 2.7 million impressions across TikTok and Facebook (Bozin, 2023).

Leading into the Super Bowl, Rihanna's performance arguably overshadowed the actual game itself for many viewers with various referring to the event as the "Rihanna concert" instead of the Super Bowl (Cashmere Agency, 2023). Savage X Fenty sold a shirt that said, "RIHANNA CONCERT INTERRUPTED BY A FOOTBALL GAME, WEIRD BUT WHATEVER," which sold out before the game even started (Gamboa). On the actual day of the game, the Google search volume for "Rihanna" was double the amount of the search volume for the "Super Bowl" with many proudly displaying their disinterest in the actual football portion of the Super Bowl (Cashmere Agency, 2023).

During the performance itself, Rihanna included a simple three second product placement using her Fenty Beauty Invisimatte Instant Setting and Blotting Powder. It was a quick powder touch up with no clear branding, but the small act was enough for #FentyBeauty to be trending on Twitter following her performance. According to Brandwatch, mentions of Fenty Beauty increased by 717% on Twitter and TikTok resulting in \$5.6 million in earned media for Fenty Beauty for the first twelve hours after the performance and an additional \$2.6 million for her clothing business Savage x Fenty (Adeptoro, 2023).

Fenty Beauty's sales for the month of February skyrocketed, showing its best monthly performance ever. The company showed \$44.1 million in earned media value and a 72% month-over-month growth rate – both the highest among its competitors (Donnendfield, 2023). The

beauty company saw a 49% increase in brand mentions totaling 12.4k which is the greatest share among all competitors.

There were arguably more viral moments to come from Rihanna's performance than any other halftime show. Various dance breaks from the 13-minute performance gained large amounts of TikTok popularity as people tried to learn the choreography. Additionally, during the show, a striking moment unfolded as a multitude of Rihanna's dancers stormed onto the field at the onset of "All of the Lights," quickly evolving into a viral meme across social media platforms. Similarly, the initial image of Rihanna's intense stare down before her performance started captured the internet's attention, and the ensembles worn by the pop star and her backup dancers served as enduring inspirations for Halloween costumes, resonating with fans even eight months after the Super Bowl.

As for streaming, Rihanna saw a 390% boost in overall song sales with the twelve songs featured in her performance up 976% in sales. Her album sales also increased by 301% (Mandler, 2023). Most notably, "Bitch Better Have My Money" increased streams by 2,600%, "Diamonds" by 1,400% and "Rude Boy" by 1,170%. Rihanna's overall Spotify streams in the U.S. grew by over 640% as well (McIntyre, 2023).

Rihanna stirred massive anticipation from her fans online having not released new music in over 6 years. Much of her fanbase was anticipating a new album or tour of some sort from the popstar, but that is not the direction that Rihanna took with this platform. Rihanna's strategic maneuvering and electrifying halftime performance epitomized the opportunism and potential of the halftime show. Capitalizing on the Super Bowl's massive platform, she orchestrated a masterclass in brand elevation, leaving an undeniable mark on pop culture and redefining the halftime show as a tool for artistic expression and commercial success.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Beyond the three key factors that were analyzed (promotions, viewership, and viral moments), there are additional considerations and factors that are unique to each year of the Super Bowl Halftime Show.

Sign of the Times

The Super Bowl Halftime Show often serves as some kind of sign of the times, illustrating cultural and societal events and trends over the years. The halftime show serves as a cultural thermometer, reflecting the mood and sentiments of the country. In years past, it has shown that it can be especially tied with events leading up to the Super Bowl. From U2's 9/11 tribute to various political statements such as Beyonce's 2016 "Formation" performance, a celebration of Motown's 40th anniversary in 1998, the celebration of hip-hop in Los Angeles in 2022, and other various moments, the halftime show is an annual measurement for America to celebrate, heal or express itself on the grandest scale. This illustrates how sports, entertainment and pop culture have evolved into a platform where artists and celebrities are able to make bold statements. Additionally, it demonstrates the dynamic relationship of how pop culture influences our society and conversely, how society influences pop culture.

The Rapid Rise of Social Media and How it Variably Impacts an Artist's Brand

The analysis of each performance is not complete without considering the impact of viral moments. For example, Katy Perry's left shark meme created a different level of buzz for the performance, which would not have existed without the presence of social media and memes. Similarly, Lady Gaga's jump from the stadium roof, Rihanna's dancers storming the field during "All of the Lights," and Shakira's iconic "tongue thing" are all examples of viral moments that dominated social media during the time of their performance. These moments all share a common trait. They linger in the viewer's mind long after the performance is over. These moments from the performance gain the most traction online and remain collectively etched in the memory of audiences.

Because of how much social media has grown, this may add some inconsistencies to the study considering social media was not as widespread even 10 years ago as it is now. Therefore, measuring a moment's virality in comparison to other years and in proportion to the state of social media at that given time is increasingly complex. The playing field across the last decade is not even. Was there as much of an opportunity for Beyonce in 2013 to have a viral moment as there is for an artist now? It is doubtful.

Social media platforms have almost tripled their total user base within the last decade. From 970 million users in 2010 to now over 4.95 billion users in 2023, the rapid expansion of social media cannot be overlooked (Dean, 2023). Lady Gaga's performance led to a spike in smartphone and tablet usage by 32% totaling 2.2 million tweets during the halftime show and 5.1 million tweets about the performance (Fang, 2017). Many of those tweets were talking about her viral moment jumping off the roof of the stadium. These statistics illustrate how social media has significantly affected the public's response to halftime shows. While there is no real, significant

data to suggest whether a viral moment had a direct impact on an artist's music sales, for example, some moments observationally seem to influence an audience's perception on the halftime show. Therefore, an artist takes full advantage of this performance's potential when they create those viral moments that take over the Internet and resonate with an audience long after they finish their performance.

Why Rihanna Wins

Overall, Rihanna's Super Bowl Halftime Show performance had the largest impact on her brand out of any artist to headline the Super Bowl. The strategic execution illustrated what the halftime show can achieve in terms of brand impact and cultural resonance. Rihanna's efforts should be a blueprint for future performers to use the platform of the halftime show to their fullest advantage.

First off, Rihanna's performance broke the viewership record with over 121 million views. Her performance also has over 222 million views on YouTube as of today. Rihanna's setlist allowed for 17 years of music to be celebrated in a flawless medley that kept you on your toes, but also did not feel rushed.

Furthermore, Rihanna's halftime show marked a pivotal moment in Super Bowl history, as multiple moments from her performance blew up on social media. From Rihanna's intense stare-down before her performance to the surprise pregnancy announcement, the iconic entrance of her backup dancers during "All of the Lights," and the product placement for Fenty Beauty, Rihanna content dominated social media. Additionally, various moments of eye-catching choreography created countless TikTok trends of users trying to emulate the moves. Social

media was raving about the pop star – so much so that Google searches about Rihanna surpassed those for the Super Bowl itself.

Where Rihanna’s impact really shined were her strategic marketing and promotional efforts before, during and after the performance. By strategically aligning with brands such as Apple Music, Fenty Beauty, and Savage x Fenty, Rihanna ensured that her own brands and partners took center stage throughout the entire spectacle. This seamless integration not only elevated the visibility of Rihanna's ventures but also proved to be very lucrative, with the release of limited-edition products tied to the event and a substantial surge in music streaming. Rihanna’s performance yielded an astounding \$88.3 million in media impact value, highlighting the power of her strategic approach to brand collaboration and self-promotion.

Rihanna opened her performance with the song “B*tch Better Have My Money”, which proved to be fitting given the financial benefits that she saw from the performance. “B*tch Better Have My Money” represents not only how Rihanna has had the biggest impact on her brand from the halftime show, but also the fact that these artists have a massive financial incentive for performing in the Super Bowl – if they use the platform correctly. Thus, it became the title of this thesis. Rihanna took full advantage of this opportunity, combining her musical talents with her business savviness to create an utter domination of pop culture, despite not having released music or performed in over six years. Rihanna redefined the possibilities that could come from having a Super Bowl platform and forever cemented herself as a premiere pop culture icon.

Where It is Headed

After many different eras and evolutions of the halftime show, the NFL has hit its stride within the past decade. This is due to a variety of reasons and changes within the league's approach. Recently, in 2019, Jay-Z's company, Roc Nation, partnered with the NFL as their Live Music Entertainment Strategist. This collaboration aligns with the NFL's social justice initiative, Inspire Change. "The NFL has a great big platform, and it has to be all-inclusive," Jay-Z said following the deal announcement (Durney, 2023). Jay-Z's involvement illustrates the league's commitment to diversity and social impact.

Jay-Z's influence has been pivotal, especially in securing headline acts for the Super Bowl halftime show. For example, Rihanna actually declined the opportunity to perform at the Super Bowl in 2018 in support of Colin Kaepernick, who took a knee during the national anthem in 2016 to protest racial injustice. However, with the NFL's new stance toward social justice issues and Jay-Z's influence, Rihanna changed her mind. In an interview leading up to Rihanna's performance, she noted, "there's still a lot of mending to be done in my eyes, but it's powerful to break those doors, and have representation at such a high, high level and a consistent level." Jay-Z's influence also led to the first ever halftime show in Super Bowl history where two Latina women headlined the performance when Jennifer Lopez and Shakira shared the stage in Miami. Jay-Z also made the celebration of hip-hop halftime show come together with the star-studded lineup of Eminem, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Kendrick Lamar and Mary J. Blige. This shift, with the Roc Nation partnership, has paved the way for a more diverse group of artists and genres to be celebrated on the Super Bowl stage.

Additionally, sponsorship surrounding the halftime show has evolved significantly. Apple Music became the sponsor of the halftime in 2023 starting with Rihanna's performance,

which began a new era of collaboration between the sponsor and featured artist. Apple Music rolled out content, marketing and features tied to the pop star's upcoming performing. They even launched Halftime Hype Radio, a 10-part series reflecting on some of the most notable Super Bowl halftime performances, and Rihanna Revisited Radio, an eight-episode roundtable exploring the star's cultural impact. Apple Music spent \$1.2 million across YouTube with video ads to promote and tease Rihanna's upcoming performance (Bozin, 2023). It is expected that the new sponsor and performer will have a strong connection, given their shared affinity in the subject, unlike past sponsors like Pepsi and Bridgestone in years past.

Over time, the halftime show has developed from a way to fill time to a premiere pop culture moment and a celebration of an artist's career and legacy. It is not for artists in their prime or on the brink of stardom. The halftime show thrives when the performer has an extensive catalogue and remains highly relevant. The NFL has hit this sweet spot with these pop culture icons who can not only generate immense anticipation but also resonate deeply with audiences and contemporary cultural trends. For a variety of reasons, the halftime show now just makes sense.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

This study took an in-depth look at the history of the Super Bowl Halftime Show and explored the power that one nationally televised gig has on an artist's brand. The halftime show is the greatest gig in America because the entire country is tuned in to watch a celebration of one artist, who gains a cultural status that they did not previously have. Every year, one artist is the lottery winner of a 13-minute commercial of their career. Because of the platform of sports, artists have the capability to reach millions of people who may not otherwise be tuning in to hear their performance.

Through this thesis, I learned that media outlets, sponsors and sports leagues did not axiomatically understand what they had with the Super Bowl until very recently. It took decades for the parties involved in the halftime show to grasp the power of the halftime show in terms of promoting products, an artist or ideas. This study also has practical implications for the public relations field. It is important to be aware that every time an artist or public figure is in front of the public, they have an opportunity. Once people grasped this in terms of the halftime show, artists began to think very carefully about how they wanted to present themselves under these specific circumstances. If people are going to study this topic further, it would make sense to do specific deep dives on individual artist and their decisions. Would they have approached the halftime show differently?

The NFL has taken the halftime show in a variety of directions, but they now understand the power that can be harnessed from the halftime show when you balance artist relevancy with

celebrating their career. We have now arrived at the sweet spot of the halftime show. This performance illustrates the immense influence, reach and platform of sports. The scale of viewership and media coverage surrounding the Super Bowl has transformed the halftime show into a coveted opportunity for artists to make a lasting impact globally. The halftime show serves as a strong representation of how sports can provide a unique platform for artists to reach audiences across the globe through its massive audiences and societal impact.

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Education

The Pennsylvania State University | Schreyer Honors College

- Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications | Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations
- Certificates: Smeal College of Business Fundamentals; Sports Journalism; Diversity Studies

Professional Experience

National Football League (NFL)

*Phoenix, AZ
February 2023*

Super Bowl LVII Communications Staff

- Distributed pre-week and game day credentials to over 5000+ local, national and international media outlets
- Provided media operations support at NFL Honors and Super Bowl LVII at State Farm Stadium such as set up press box pre-game, resolve credential issues, and assist with post-game press conference operations and quotes

Penn State Football

*State College, PA
April 2021 - present*

Social Media Intern

- Contributed 7+ million views and 640,000 likes to @PennStateFball channels with combined 1.7M+ users
- Conceptualize and execute creative content strategies and deliverables, track social media metrics, integrate trends, and organize photoshoots
- Recorded 18.7 million impressions and 951,534 engagements in Week 1 of 2023 - 3rd highest among CFB teams
- Support cross-functional operations for official visits, National Signing Day, Rose Bowl, Peach Bowl, NFL Pro Day, NFL Draft, ESPN College GameDay, FOX Big Noon Kickoff, and NBC Big Ten Saturday Night Football

Minnesota Vikings

*Eagan, MN
July 2022 - August 2022*

Fan Engagement Intern

- Executed marketing initiatives during NFL Training Camp at TCO Performance Center such as Chuck for Charity, Vizzy Club, Kids Zone, player autographs, and Vikings Kids Club
- Supported operations, sponsorship, marketing, and community relations departments
- Served as a team ambassador for an average 2,500 fans daily (30,169 total), sold over 2,400 Vikings Kids Club, and contributed to the highest camp show rate for the Vikings (62%)

Penn State Women's Athletics Initiative, Teammates for Life (TFL)

*State College, PA
July 2023 - present*

Manager of Media Relations

- Lead public relations and media relations efforts for the launch and execution of Teammates for Life
- Develop and manage relationships with campus, local, and national media members; pitch TFL stories regularly
- Curate press releases, media pitches, launch calendar, website, interview prep FAQs, fundraising brochure, etc.
- Manage calendar and media appearances of Char Morett-Curtiss, Olympian & Seven-time Big Ten Coach of the Year
- Facilitate interview requests from media for access student athletes from 14 different sports on behalf of TFL

Oak View Group

*Philadelphia, PA
June 2023 - August 2023*

Global Partnerships Intern

- Assist in prospecting partners, building proposals and pitching OVG's 360 properties, owned/operated venues, and 3rd party services
- Delivered capstone project of building out contractual and activation campaigns for three brands for the NBA/NHL Arena Alliance
- Built a prospecting list for college athletics including existing naming rights deals, university contacts, multimedia rights holders and NIL opportunities; created a talent acquisition study to increase diversity in OVG

Penn State Athletics

*State College, PA
November 2020 - December 2022*

Marketing and Fan Engagement Intern

- Support marketing strategies and creative campaign execution through fan engagement, event planning, game day activation, grassroots marketing, and community relations to promote Penn State Athletics
- Led in-game production for men's wrestling dual meet against Ohio State with 15k+ fans and for the 2nd highest attended men's ice hockey game in Pegula Ice Arena history

Leadership

Association for Women in Sports Media (AWSM) President

April 2022 - June 2023

- Plan engaging networking events and weekly speaker meetings for the largest collegiate AWSM chapter in the country
- Oversee an executive board of 16 people to help and moderate meetings with speakers from the NFL, NBA, NHL, and ESPN

Bellisario Fellow

April 2022 - present

- Selected as one of 15 students based on academic performance, career development, and involvement in the Bellisario College to serve as an ambassador for the college, mentor first-year students, meet with donors, and assist in recruiting high school students

46Live

September 2022 - present

- On-air host for the largest student-run philanthropy in the world; 46-hour broadcast to 80 countries and 200,000+ viewers
- Shared compelling stories about journeys of THON families and dedicated dancers; amplified awareness and support for THON's mission by advocating for pediatric cancer research and fundraising efforts throughout the broadcast.

Skills and Awards

- **Skills:** Communications, Organization, Content Strategy, Project Management, Media Relations, Fan Engagement, Sports Marketing, Leadership, Brand Strategy Development, Public Relations, Adaptability, Detail-Oriented, Leadership, Public Speaking
- **Awards:** Michigan Sport Business Conference BIG Initiative Winner, Deans List 7/7 Semesters, Bellisario College Merit-Based Scholarship, Schreyer Honors College Academic Excellence Award, The Penn State Provost Award, Lawrence G. and Ellen M. Foster Scholarship