Buckethead Pikes: An Analysis and Recommendation

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Executive summary

Buckethead is a guitar virtuoso from California. He literally plays guitar with a bucket on his head. He also happens to be one of the most prolific artists of all time. To date, he has produced over 300 solo albums, 275 of which are part of a series of albums called *pikes*.

I actively run a YouTube channel advocating for Buckethead and his work: the channel is called the *Buckethead Disciple*. My channel aims to introduce people to Buckethead in the most truthful, informative, and helpful way possible. The final info graphic will be posted on my home page and help my viewers get to know Buckethead's Pike series a little better.

Most of all, given the results of my analysis, my final graphic will help people new to Buckethead know to start listening to some easy rock albums (given that they sell the best), and stay away from his experimental work.

(To be honest, I am also hoping that Buckethead's manager sees this document so that he sees that I look smart and capable and so he will hire me to be his replacement.)

Data background and cleaning

The data comes from Buckethead's website, bucketheadpikes.com. More specifically , the website links to his Bandcamp profile which contains his entire pike discography.

The data I obtained were assembled by a researcher who uploaded most of the information on Wikipedia. There was not a lot of need to clean the data, but it was missing album sales per pike. I managed to extract sales per pike from Buckethead's Bandcamp website, and join it to the data from Wikipedia. From that excel document, I converted it to a CSV file and loaded in into R.

Individual figures

```
library(tidyverse)
library(sf)
library(ggplot2)
library(forcats)
library(scales)
```

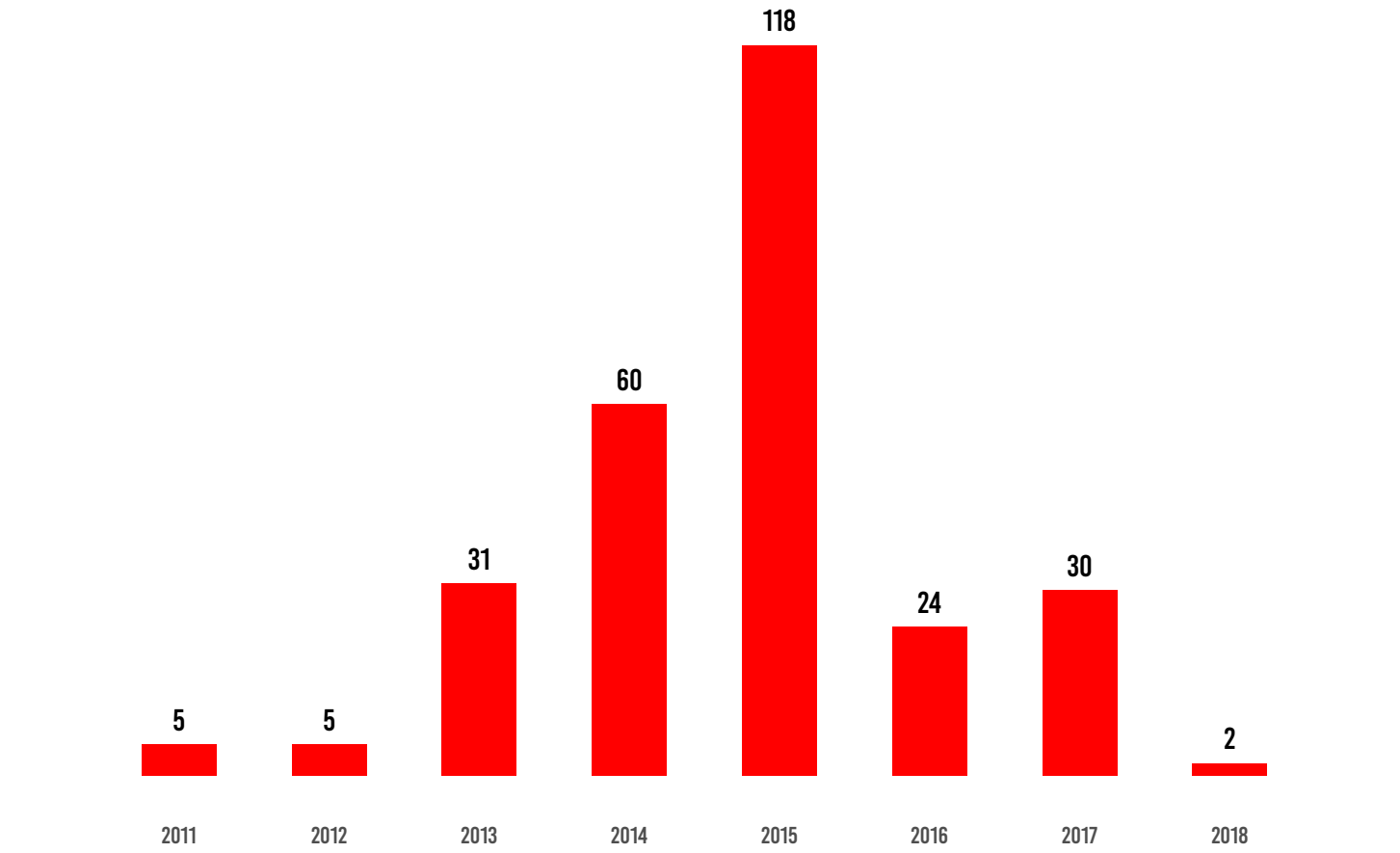
Figure 1

```
bucket_data <- read_csv("data/BucketData.csv")

by_year <- bucket_data %>%
  count(Year)

column <- ggplot(data = by_year, aes(x = Year, y = n)) +
  geom_col(fill = "red", width = 0.5) +
  scale_x_discrete(limits = unique(sort(by_year$Year))) +
  theme_minimal() +
  geom_text(data = by_year, aes(label = n, family = "Bebas Kai"), size = 4.0, nudge_y = 4
) +
  theme(panel.grid.minor = element_blank(),
        axis.text.y = element_blank(),
        axis.text.x = element_text(family = "Bebas Kai"),
        axis.title.x = element_blank(),
        axis.title.y = element_blank(),
        axis.line.x = element_blank(),
        axis.line.y = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.minor.x = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.major.x = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.minor.y = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.major.y = element_blank(),
        panel.background = element_blank(),
        plot.title = element_text(face = "bold", family = "Bebas Kai",  size = rel(2.0),
                                  hjust = 0.5)) +
  guides(fill=FALSE) +
  labs(title = "Pike Releases Per Year")

column
```




```
ggsave(column, filename = "output/column.pdf", device = cairo_pdf,
       width = 7, height = 5, units = "in")
ggsave(column, filename = "output/column.png", type = "cairo",
       width = 7, height = 5, units = "in")
```

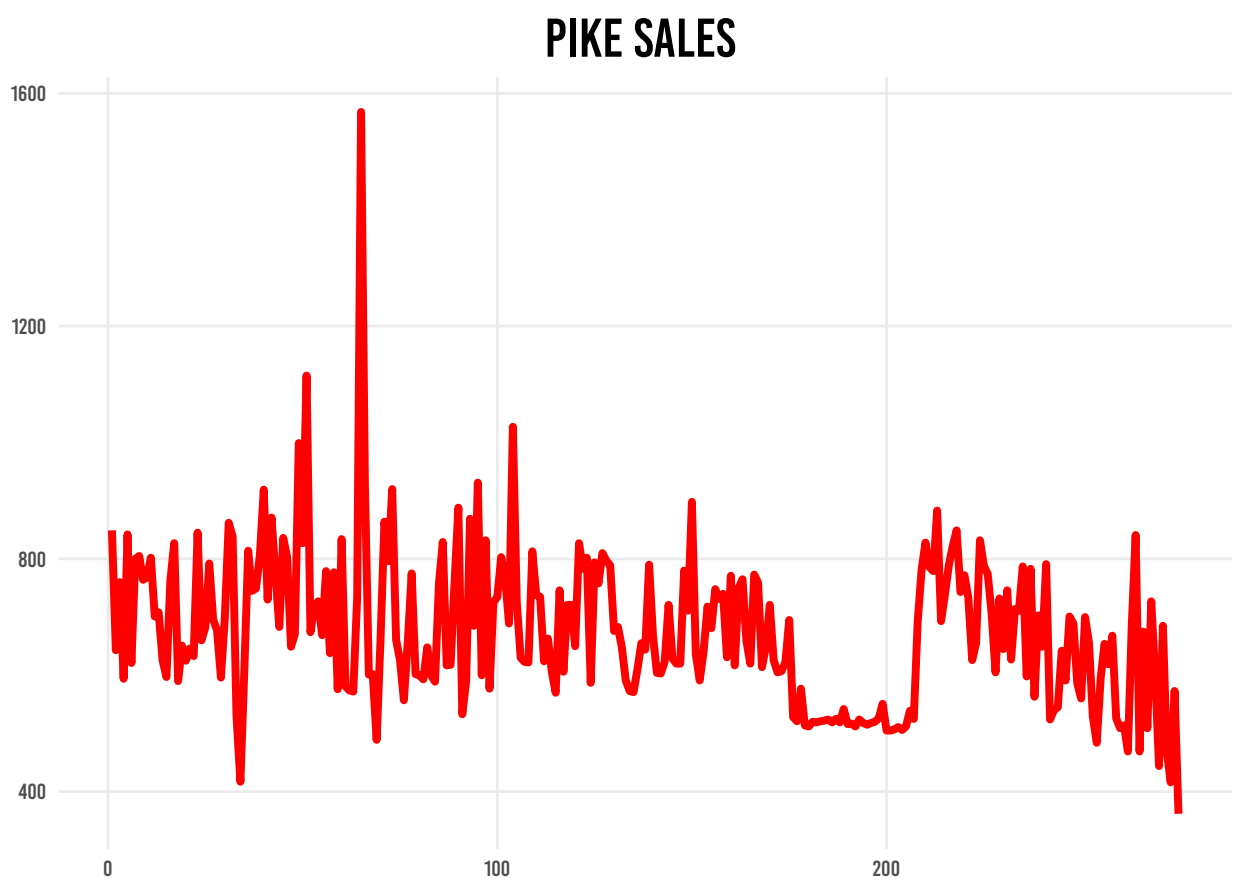
This is a graphic that shows the relationship between time and Buckethead's Pike production. This is the reader's first exposure to the *truth* of Buckethead's prolific work. The years 2014 and 2015 should be particularly impressive, given that most bands release in ten years what Buckethead produces in a month.

Figure 2

```
less_new_bucket_data <- read_csv("data/BucketData.csv")

line <- ggplot(data = less_new_bucket_data, aes(x=Pike, y=Sales))+
  geom_line(color = "red", size = 1.5) +
    theme_minimal() +
  theme(
    axis.text.x = element_text(family = "Bebas Kai"),
    axis.text.y = element_text(family = "Bebas Kai"),
    axis.title.x = element_blank(),
    axis.title.y = element_blank(),
        axis.line.x = element_blank(),
        axis.line.y = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.minor.x = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.minor.y = element_blank(),
        panel.background = element_blank(),
        plot.title = element_text(face = "bold", family = "Bebas Kai",
                                  size = rel(2.0),
                                  hjust = 0.5)) +
  labs(title = "Pike Sales ")

line
```




```
ggsave(line, filename = "output/line.pdf", device = cairo_pdf,
       width = 7, height = 5, units = "in")
ggsave(line, filename = "output/line.png", type = "cairo",
       width = 7, height = 5, units = "in")
```

Now we start getting to the nitty-gritty of the analysis. This is the viewer's first exposure to how well Buckethead's pikes have sold in the past. The most obvious phenomena is the flatter line towards the 175 through 205 region. That was Buckethead's **Happy Halloween** pike series. The Happy Halloween series was a series of 32 Pikes that Buckethead released between the 1st of October and the 1st of November (1 pike every day). The albums are all experimental, scary, Halloween sounds. Given the nature of the sound of each pike, the sales were not that high, though several people still bought them. This gives the reader *insight* on Buckethead's music style. While he is known to be a guitar shredder , he loves Halloween, and disembodied music. Since that series did not sell very well, it leads the viewer to want to seek more *truth*: does one genre tend to sell better than another? Notice that the fonts and colors *repeat* when compared to the previous chart. All charts will have the same font families and colors.

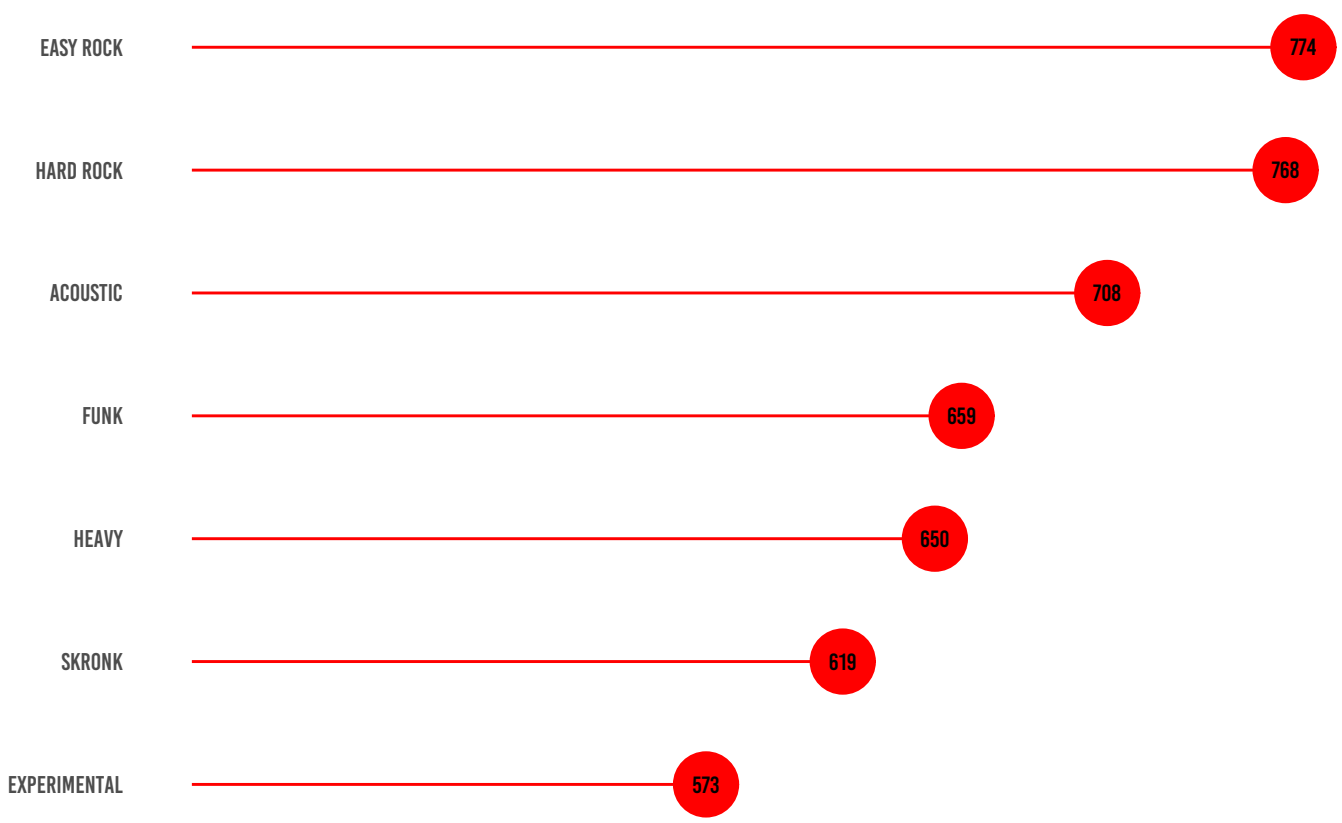
Figure 3

```
new_bucket_data <- read_csv("data/BucketData.csv")

pike_cumulative <- new_bucket_data %>%
  mutate(Sales = as.numeric(Sales)) %>%
  arrange(Genre) %>%
  group_by(Genre) %>%
  mutate(average = as.integer(cummean(Sales))) %>%
  filter(Pike %in% c("258", "268", "273", "169", "274", "260", "275")) %>%
  arrange(desc(average))

lollipop <- ggplot(data = pike_cumulative, aes(x=reorder(Genre, average), y=average )) +
  geom_pointrange(aes(ymin = 400, ymax = average, fatten= 20), color = "red") +
  geom_text(data = pike_cumulative, aes(label = average, family = "Bebas Kai")
            , size = 3.0) +
  theme_minimal() +
  guides(color=FALSE) +
  coord_flip() +
  theme(panel.grid.minor = element_blank(),
        axis.text.y = element_text(family = "Bebas Kai"),
        axis.text.x = element_blank(),
        axis.title.x = element_blank(),
        axis.title.y = element_blank(),
        axis.line.x = element_blank(),
        axis.line.y = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.minor.x = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.major.x = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.minor.y = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.major.y = element_blank(),
        panel.background = element_blank(),
        plot.title = element_text(face = "bold", family = "Bebas Kai",
                                  size = rel(2.0),
                                  hjust = 0.5)) +
  labs(title = "Average Sales By Genre")

lollipop
```




```
ggsave(lollipop, filename = "output/lollipop.pdf", device = cairo_pdf,
       width = 7, height = 5, units = "in")
ggsave(lollipop, filename = "output/lollipop.png", type = "cairo",
       width = 7, height = 5, units = "in")
```

This chart (notice how it is the same font family, color, and legend style! #*repetition*) demonstrates the average number of sales by Pike genre. The viewer quikly sees that the best selling genre is Easy Rock (jazzy, groovy, guitar tracks with less distortion) and the lowest selling genre is his Experimental stuff. The viewer can see this and come to one of two conclusions: either they should check out his Easy Rock stuff, or check out pretty much anything, but be aware that his Experimental stuff might not resonate with them. Notice how the values are ranked in order, that way it is clear to tell which ones are higher (or lower) than others. This will *enlighten* readers to potential genres and music styles that they might be interested in.

Also, to make sure that *contrast* was significant, I made the bar that leads to the sugary lollipop circle rather thin, while the circle was rather large to demonstrate the significant difference in size. That way, the viewer can more esily distinguish genre sale discrepancies.

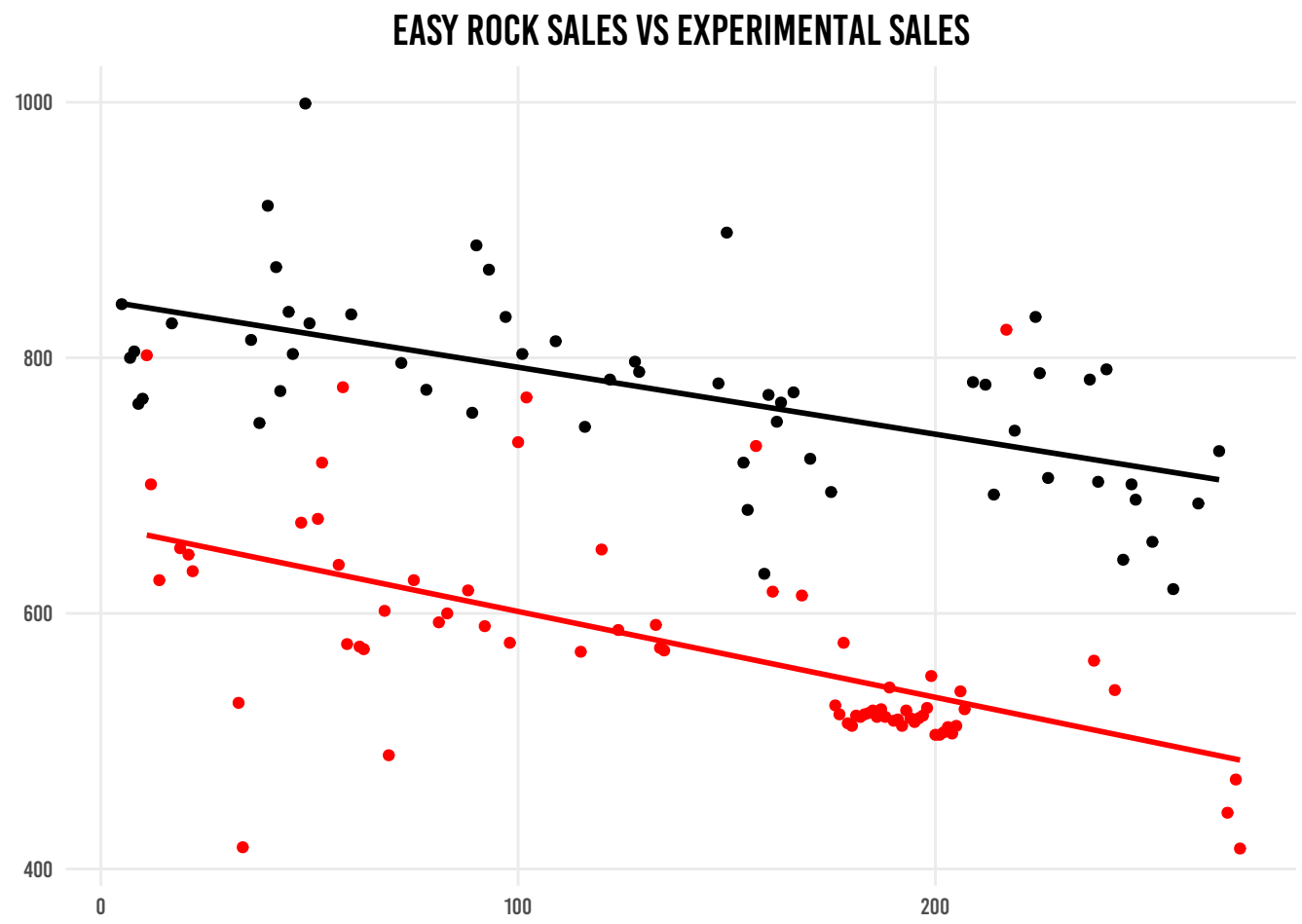
Figure 4

```
lessers_new_bucket_data <- read_csv("data/BucketData.csv")%>%
  filter(Genre %in% c("Experimental"))

lesserss_new_bucket_data <- read_csv("data/BucketData.csv")%>%
  filter(Genre %in% c("Easy Rock"))

dot <- ggplot() +
  geom_point(data = lessers_new_bucket_data, aes(x = Pike, y = Sales), color = "red") +
  geom_point(data = lesserss_new_bucket_data, aes(x = Pike, y = Sales)) +
  geom_smooth(data = lesserss_new_bucket_data, aes(x= Pike, y = Sales),
              se = FALSE, method = lm, color = "black") +
  geom_smooth(data = lessers_new_bucket_data, aes(x= Pike, y = Sales),
              se = FALSE, method = lm, color = "red") +
  theme_minimal() +
  theme(
    axis.text.x = element_text(family = "Bebas Kai"),
    axis.text.y = element_text(family = "Bebas Kai"),
    axis.title.x = element_blank(),
    axis.title.y = element_blank(),
    panel.grid.minor.x = element_blank(),
        panel.grid.minor.y = element_blank(),
        panel.background = element_blank(),
        plot.title = element_text(face = "bold",
                                  family = "Bebas Kai",
                                  size = rel(1.5),
                                  hjust = 0.5)) +
  labs(title = "Easy Rock Sales vs Experimental Sales")

dot
```

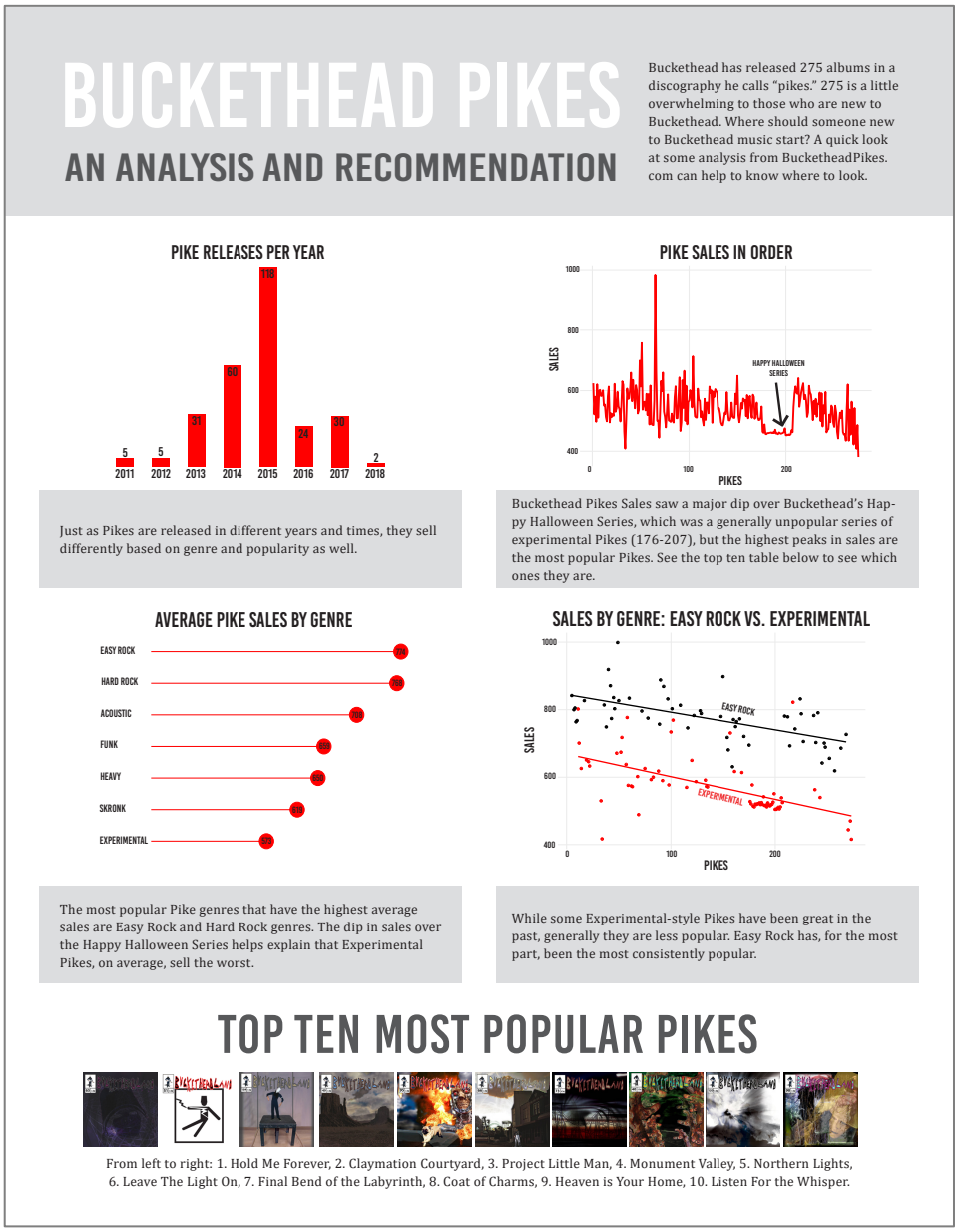



```
ggsave(dot, filename = "output/dot.pdf", device = cairo_pdf,
       width = 7, height = 5, units = "in")
ggsave(dot, filename = "output/dot.png", type = "cairo",
       width = 7, height = 5, units = "in")
```

This chart is two-fold. It shows that generally, across the entire discography, Experimental stuff has always not sold as well as Easy Rock, but also that not all Easy Rock Pikes sold better than Experimental, and that there are some Experimental Pikes that people **loved**! But for the most part, this chart re-inforces the fact that people generally prefer Easy Rock to Experimental music. I'm loving the *repetition* in font, color, and title *alignment* by the way. Also notice that throughout these charts the titles have been bolded to add *contrast* to the other text on the documents, and eventually in the final graphic.

Final figure

I assembled everything together onto the following graphic, but also added some general facts and other graphics for the reader to use as pike recommendations.



Though the Buckethead Disciple color scheme is red, white and black, upon assembling the colors and graphs, I found the color black to be a bit overwhelming. I switched to a light gray, and it made it much easier to look at.

The font family *Bebas Kai* is the primary font for the Buckethead Disciple, with the font family *Cambria* as a nice serif font to help aid reading smaller text. Readability aids in **functionality**.

The text boxes, graphs, and titles are all aligned and centered. I added some features that I didn't know how to do in R (like the arrow on the second chart). I have also arranged all the charts to be close to one another, **proximity** aids in overall recognition, interpretation, and understanding.

The general takeaway from the graphic is that if you're new to Buckethead, try out his Easy Rock stuff, or something from the top ten list. Buckethead has produced a lot of Pikes, and not all of them sell the same, in fact, his experimental stuff is significantly less popular; nevertheless, the **truth** of the matter is that Buckethead is extremely prolific, and has an impressive range of musical abilities, not only in his vast array of genres, but in his significant album production.