Remembering Mac Miller and the Rise of Drug Overdoses

By Emily Scoular

Sept. 7, 2018 -- The world was presented with the shocking news that rapper Mac Miller died at the age of 26. Many thoughts and prayers were shared all across the world as further news revealed that Miller had succumbed to an apparent drug overdose.

Miller -- who’s real name was Malcolm McCormick -- had a dream just like any other kid. He was born and raised in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area, where he first got his start in music. He began rapping in his early teens, putting out his own music and collaborating with other musicians where he lived.

He released three mixtapes by the time he signed with his first record label in 2010. From there, Miller’s career began to really take off. Selling out concert venues all across the world, Miller released a total of five studio albums in his time in the spotlight.

Miller’s personal life was just as big a conversation as his musical career. Notably, Miller’s two-year relationship with fellow singer Ariana Grande caught the attention of many media outlets. The two called it quits back in May 2018.

His struggle with drug abuse was also poignant during his time in the headlines. Miller had previously uncovered that he used drugs to cope with the stress of touring and his new-found fame. The primary drug of choose which Miller struggled with the most was lean: a mixture of prescription strength cough medicines that consist of the drugs codeine and promethazine. Miller talked about other struggles with drugs, such as cocaine, and was arrested for a DUI in May 2018.

While it has not been revealed what drug caused the overdose, fans and others rose up in support and shared in the mourning of this young star.

Death by drug overdose has risen over the past decade and there does not seem to be a stop in the near future. The music community experienced a similar scare this past July when singer Demi Lovato was rushed to the hospital after a drug overdose.

Fortunately, Lovato pulled through and entered rehab after the incident, but this comes after her relapse after being six years sober. Lovato also credits mental health as a reason to seeking out drugs, much like Miller.

Hollywood is no stranger to drug addictions and losing talent to their demons. Names like Amy Winehouse, Janis Joplin, and Jimi Hendrix all died of drug addictions at the age of 27. Heath Ledger and Corey Monteith both died before reaching age 35, and Elvis Presley and Whitney Houston died of drug overdose before they were 50.

The passing of Mac Miller marks the end of an era for the rapping community. Unfortunately, if the trend continues, Miller will not be the last great name to join the list of celebrity overdoses.

If there is one thing to learn from this tragedy, it is that society must put more emphasis on mental health care. More advanced and readily available treatments for mental health should be presented to try and limit people’s drive to harmful drugs.