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SEX AND
MUSIC



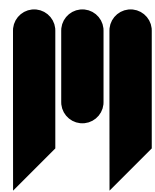
WHAT SHE
WANTS
TO HEAR



We asked 1,660 women why music makes them go crazy, fall in love, and jump into bed. Listen up, guys

Sex, Love, and Rock 'n' Roll

The right song, show, dance tune, or riff can arouse her. Men, listen for your cue
By Rachael Maddux



MUSIC AND SEX ARE AS INTERTWINED as two lovers' legs. Sure, men are the stereotypical record geeks, but music pierces women just as deeply. From Frank, Elvis, and the Beatles right up through Justin Bieber, every girl has her early days of swooning and squealing. As we grow out of those first flushes of longing, the role of music in our lives shifts. It becomes a source of ecstasy and identity, of comfort and power, a force as intense and complex and potentially transcendent as sex itself.

Just as we women have a "type" when it comes to men, the same is true with our musicians. Some prefer the sensitive sort with the scruffy face and coffee shop gig, while others fall for the wild man with the dirty stories and whiskey breath. Still others fancy the high-energy type who keeps us dancing all night and then pulls us out of bed for a run in the morning.

When dating, we're often less concerned with muscle tone or facial symmetry than with ears—specifically, what a guy pipes into his. You'd be hard-pressed to find any female music fan who hasn't vetted a potential conquest's tastes. It's not judgment; it's knowing yourself.

Bonding over a shared love of music can be heady. We meet a guy at our favorite band's show and there's already an endorphin high of the deeply loved music exploding onstage before us. Add the dark room and the crush of the crowd all but mandating body contact, and half the work is done. But even in workaday scenarios, like when we hear a man humming our favorite song, meeting someone who loves the music we love can be like an express pass into his brain, his heart. Also his pants.

Here's the thing, though: A man's taste in music is hardly a perfect predictor of compatibility, chemistry, or even civility. (After all, Charles Manson had a solid record collection.) A well-fitting band T-shirt or a thoughtful playlist can mean a man is someone whose finger we'd want on our click wheel. But in the end, in music as in sex, it's a matter of circumstance, of total dumb chance, of the right chemicals squirting out into our brains at the right time. Sometimes all a woman wants or needs is some



Previous spread (left to right): mrsoulstisfaction@gmail.com vintage T-shirt, The Cost vintage shirt and bracelets, The Great Frog NYC necklace and rings; Citizen Cotton top, American Apparel pants; Any Old Iron NYC necklace, Topshop cuff and bracelets; mrsoulstisfaction@gmail.com vintage T-shirt, American Apparel shorts, Wolford tights, The Great Frog NYC rings, The Cost NYC bracelets; The Cost NYC top, Armani Exchange pants, Topshop bracelets, The Great Frog NYC rings

This page: mrsoulstisfaction@gmail.com vintage T-shirt, American Apparel shorts, Topshop ring and bracelets

frothy 3-minute pop nonsense to help her burrow through a stupid life rut, and sometimes all she needs is a guy who'll do the same. We run a risk when we blur the lines between our men and our music. Sometimes love festers and spoils, and the collateral damage isn't so much to our hearts or our precious time but to whatever music got dragged into the mess with us. What came first, the scene or the soundtrack? Thank God you have more music; as useful as it can be in sparking love or lust, it's even more capable of totally obliterating bad memories. Then sometimes the risk pays off: When I first met the man who's now my husband, we were teenagers. At about the same time we

found ourselves falling in love with each other, we were also falling in love with music—music that we still share, albums that still transport us back to our earliest days together: Wilco's *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, Neil Young's *Harvest*, the White Stripes's *White Blood Cells*. These beloved albums are now some of my all-time favorites; I can no more imagine my life without them than I can imagine my life without my husband. Do I love them because I love him? Do I love him because I love them? The answer to both questions, of course, is yes.

RACHAEL MADDUX'S GREATEST HITS CAN BE FOUND AT RACHAELMADDUX.TUMBLR.COM.



A Guy's Guide to the Essential Mix Tape

Express your deepest feelings without actually having to, you know, express your deepest feelings
By Steve Almond

1 THE NOT-SO-SUBTLE-SEX BEG

Every mix I've ever made for a woman has carried one of two implicit messages: (a) Sleep with me. (b) Please don't ever stop sleeping with me. You need at least one track that's designed to induce erotic and limbic abandon in its recipient. I always go with "The One" by Cee-Lo Green, a joyously blunt proposition camouflaged as a feminist dance anthem.

4 THE MAKE-HER-YEARN TRACK

Before a guy was able to lurk on Facebook after a breakup, he'd sit by the phone, thinking surely she'd dig out that mix he gave her. So always include one song ripe with sexual nostalgia. My go-to was "Last Good Taste" by Dayna Kurtz, in the hope that Kurtz's sultry, yearning growl would induce the desired state: a thirst for whiskey and the bad decisions it engenders.

2 THE NEXT-LEVEL ENTREATY

Me and my pal Rich were drinking one night and complaining about our love lives. I mentioned that I was having trouble getting my girlfriend to take me seriously; he put on Etta James's epic cover of "Take It to the Limit." Her voice rose rapturously over a gospel choir. Soon I was complaining to Rich that I needed more space.

5 THE HAPPY BACKSLIDE ANTHEM

I realize the Marvin Gaye classic "Sexual Healing" is the designated anthem for makeup sex, but the song has two inherent flaws. First, it's a cliché. Second, it's only 4 minutes long. A better option is "And the Healing Has Begun" by Van Morrison. Over an aching violin, Van makes an impassioned plea for reconciliation. The whole endeavor exudes a sensual sloppiness that just feels right for backsliding. Bonus: It clocks in at 8 minutes.

3 THE JUJITSU CONFESSION

Men take women for granted in most relationships. Period. We stop paying attention. We stop listening. Eventually the woman gets fed up, and fighting ensues. It is at this thorny juncture that you need a song designed to acknowledge culpability, a kind of musical apology. Consider "Angel from Montgomery" by Bonnie Raitt and John Prine, a stunning acoustic duet about a couple looking back on the wreckage of their failed marriage.

6 THE FULL EMOTIONAL MONTY

Just in case makeup sex devolves into acrimony, include "You Don't Miss Your Water" by Otis Redding. It's heart-crushing blues, and when I hear it, I still think of my college girlfriend, naked and beautiful in the blue light of midnight. I may have listened to the song too late, but it went on the first mix I ever made for my wife.

STEVE ALMOND IS THE AUTHOR OF *ROCK AND ROLL WILL SAVE YOUR LIFE*.

97%

OF WOMEN SAY THEY WOULD SWOON IF A GUY MADE A MIX TAPE FOR THEM

48%

OF WOMEN SAY IF A MAN JUST TRIES TO DANCE, IT'S SEXY—EVEN IF HE'S NOT ANY GOOD AT IT

THE DANCE MOVE HALL OF LAME

YOU SHOULD BE DANCING, YEAH—BUT LIKE J.T., NOT LIKE THIS

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE'S CHIEF CHOREOGRAPHER, MARTY KUDELKA, SAYS "SHOWING CONFIDENCE—even if you're faking it—is more impressive than trying too hard." Less is more: "Stick to a simple one-two step: left to right, right to left," he says. Men who use their upper body are seen as better dancers and therefore more attractive, a German study found—and JT proves it. "If you watch Timbaland and Justin in the studio, as soon as the beat drops, they lean back together," says Kudelka. "If you lean forward, it just looks goofy. But when you lean back, your whole upper body gets involved—your shoulders are going with you." —LAURA ROBERSON



THE POINT
"That's just awkward," Kudelka says. "Women may laugh, but they don't actually think it's funny."



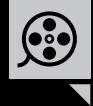
IN-HER-FACE LIP SYNCING
"It's probably a crutch, but it's a bad one. Even if you feel like it's helping you relax, it's corny."



BREAK DANCING
"Who wants her man flopping around on the floor?"



NECK NIBBLE WHILE GRINDING
"You need to go home at this point. Get a cab."



ACTION! HOLLYWOOD HEATS IT UP WITH MUSIC

CLICHÉS (THAT WORK)

"Unchained Melody," The Righteous Brothers
Ghost

"Take My Breath Away," Berlin
Top Gun

"I Will Always Love You," Whitney Houston
The Bodyguard

"(I've Had) The Time of My Life," Bill Medley and Jennifer Warnes
Dirty Dancing

"In Your Eyes," Peter Gabriel
Say Anything

INTROSPECTIVE

"Look After You," The Fray
Jumper

"The Blower's Daughter," Damien Rice
Closer

"Falling Slowly," Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova
Once

EXPRESSIVE

"O Mio babbino caro," Kiri Te Kanawa
A Room with a View

"Tennessee," Hans Zimmer
Pearl Harbor

PASSIONATE

"Kissing You," Des'ree
Romeo + Juliet

"These Arms of Mine," Otis Redding
Road House

"Secret," Maroon 5
The Wedding Date



"When it comes down to making out, whenever possible, put on side one of *Led Zeppelin IV*," Mike Damone, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*



The Legend Begins

A high school nerd's secret weapon: the irresistible serenade
By John Legend



WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, NOBODY would have guessed I'd end up engaged to one of the world's most beautiful women. I was a nerd, the youngest in my class, and 8 inches shorter than I am now. I had no game.

But I did have music. I could sing and I could play piano, so my go-to way of establishing my cool was a good old-fashioned serenade. And it usually worked. These days, I sometimes sing for my fiancée, Chrissy Teigen. (Not too often, though—it's like talking shop at home.) Some of my songs are about her, and she loves that she can hear them first, at home. That's romantic.

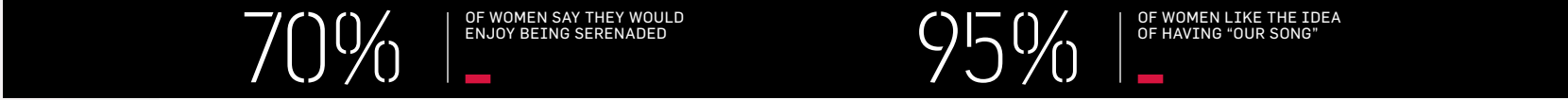
But if you don't have any musical chops, you can still use music to romance a woman. Say she's coming over for dinner. Make a playlist reflecting your taste and personality, but then aim a little higher—with songs that have the coolness you aspire to. Show her that she should want to be part of the "you" experience.

I used mix tapes when I was young, too. That's a way for you—or any guy, regardless of his musical talents—to be romantic and show a woman that you have good taste, that you put in some effort, and were thinking about her. But don't just pick current songs. Go beyond the obvious and surprise her. Show her that your musical knowledge extends beyond the Top 40.

A good love song is an audio landscape—it's gorgeous, it's lush, and it takes you places. Marvin Gaye did that. It may be a little cliché to have Marvin on your mix, but the man made a lot of sexy music—his voice was beautiful, his arrangements sensual. He remains one of my primary influences. Great music has the power to put you under a spell. When I'm writing and arranging music, that's what I'm aiming to do. That said, you never know how your music is going to affect people.

My first hit, "Ordinary People," has shaped a lot of relationships. Seven years later, people still tell me that song saved their marriage. They've used it as a point of conversation, like therapy. There's a new song, "All of Me," on my upcoming album, that couples will appreciate. It's about Chrissy, and it's honest and real. Anyone who has been in love will relate to it.

Chrissy certainly loves it.



What If You Hate Her Music?

Or if she hates yours? You can work it out

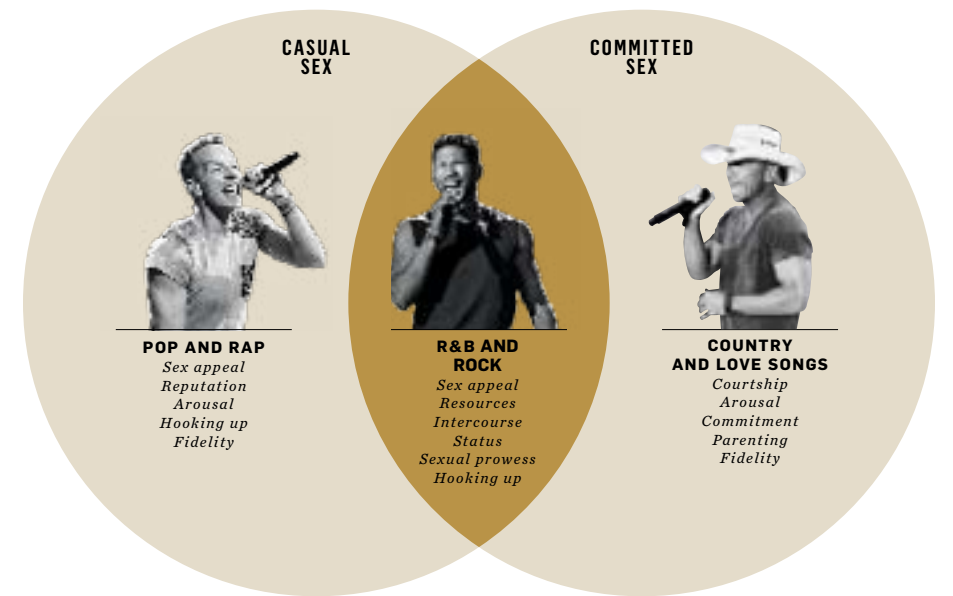
SHE LOVES KESHA, YOU LOVE Chesney. Are you doomed? A study from Taiwan found that sharing musical tastes can intensify attraction, but a clashing of tastes has no effect. In our survey, 37 percent of women said it doesn't matter if your playlists sync up (only 16 percent said it's crucial). So share your songs and listen to new stuff together, says Gail Saltz, M.D., a New York City psychiatrist. Joint exploration can be exciting. "Women are more likely to be sexually turned on when they feel like they're mentally connecting," she says. —LILA BATTIS

PEEK AT HER IPOD

Most likely to put out on a first date
Nirvana • Metallica • Linkin Park
Kanye West • Gorillaz • Daft Punk • Eminem • Pink Floyd

Least likely to put out on a first date
Coldplay • Adele • Lady Gaga
Katy Perry • Kings of Leon • The Strokes • Radiohead • Muse

Source: Tastebuds.fm survey



WHAT SHE WANTS, WHEN SHE WANTS IT

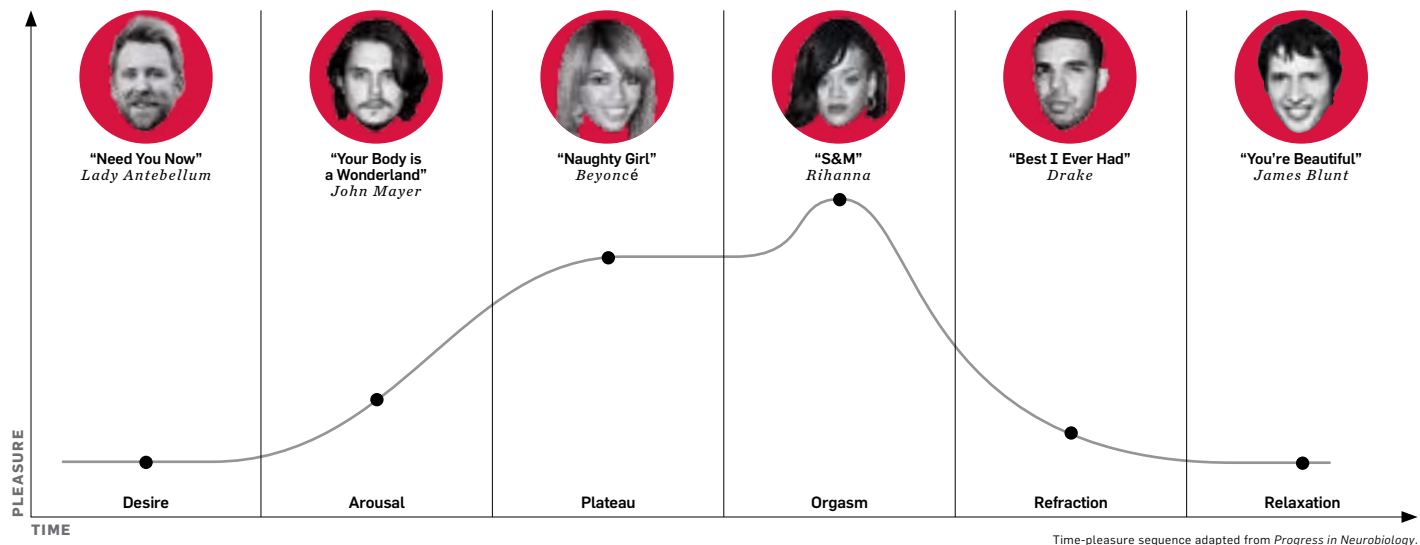
WOMEN TOLD US R&B AND ROCK WORK FOR BOTH CASUAL AND COMMITTED RELATIONSHIPS. THE *JOURNAL OF EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY* ANALYZED THE SEXUAL CONTENT OF POP, R&B, AND COUNTRY SONGS, AND THOSE THEMES (SHOWN ABOVE) CONFIRM WHAT WOMEN SAID.

This page: mrsoulisatraction@gmail.com vintage T-shirt, Casabella panties, Cheap Monday chain, The Great Frog NYC rings; opposite page: Ryan Pfluger/August Legendi, Fox/Getty Images (Chris Martin), Michael Buckner/BET/Getty Images (Usher), Iyva S. Savanok/Getty Images (Kenny Chesney)

PRESS "PLAY" FOR SEX

MUSIC AS SEXUAL LUBRICANT? HERE'S WHAT WOMEN—AND SCIENCE—TELL US

WATCH THE SEX SCENE FROM *TOP GUN* ON YOUTUBE. THEN HIT MUTE AND WATCH IT AGAIN. IT'S not as hot without "Take My Breath Away," is it? Women agree: Two-thirds of the women we surveyed said music during foreplay helps turn them on faster. (More than half said sex lasts longer when it has a soundtrack.) "Music sets the tempo for sex, making it more of a joint activity," says Elizabeth Rae Larson, M.S., director of the Seattle Institute for Sex Therapy, Education, and Research. But the wrong tunes can backfire. Women told us you should start with sweetly suggestive music, and then ease your way into tunes that match the desired tone of your romp—kinky, romantic, energetic. Our survey produced the playlist below. —L.R.



40% OF WOMEN SAY DIRTY LYRICS MAKE THEM FEEL MORE SEXUALLY ADVENTUROUS

44% OF WOMEN SAY MUSIC ENHANCES THE SENSORY EXPERIENCE OF SEX



Sing Your Heart Out

Any guy—yes, even you!—can pull off a serenade. The key is to not take yourself too seriously. And to follow the advice of these experts.

1 KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Take it from a pro who knows: "If you can barely play guitar, don't try to tackle a Hendrix song. If you can barely sing, don't try to be Sinatra," says country singer Easton Corbin, whose album *All Over the Road* hit shelves in September. Keep it simple—and show some confidence, regardless of your vocal abilities. "Most women just want you to own the moment that you've created for them," says Corbin.

4 CHOOSE YOUR SETTING CAREFULLY

Spare her the bedroom serenade. What Corbin suggests: Build a backyard campfire after dinner one night and fire up your vocal cords then. That way it feels less like an awkward musician-audience scene, and she won't feel pressure to nod or sing along as she listens. And don't freak if the lyrics suddenly escape you: "Just hum the tune. It'll still go over well with your girl," Corbin says. Romance covers all flaws.

2 BUT MAYBE LEARN GUITAR

Mastery of an instrument can imply mastery elsewhere, says Moushumi Ghose, M.A., M.F.T., a sex therapist based in Los Angeles. "Women really crave someone who is fearless and who can maneuver through the world," she says. Your obvious choice: guitar. "The acoustic guitar evokes a lot of emotion," Ghose says. "It's a stripped-down instrument—there's not a lot of frills." Nearly half the women surveyed said it's the sexiest instrument (followed by piano at 26 percent).

5 HAVE HER JOIN IN

A 2009 study in *BMC Neuroscience* shows that when people played music together, their brain waves synced up. "There's tremendous intimacy in making music together, and making music is very physical," says Meghan Hinman, M.A., M.T.-BC, LCAT, a psychotherapist who practices music therapy with couples. Music engages your limbic brain, or emotional center, and can help you express your feelings, she says. Bonus (maybe): "Music is often a mirror for what's happening in the relationship."

3 STOP WORRYING

Our survey reveals that it really doesn't matter whether you sound like Jason Mraz or Tom Waits. What's important is that you don't make the performance too intense. Likewise, Corbin says, "Don't choose a song that's too serious. Go with one that reinforces your feelings for her, without being a clichéd wedding song." Ghose concurs: "Be truly genuine and honest about what you're singing. That's what can make a connection happen."

6 TAKE IT ON THE ROAD

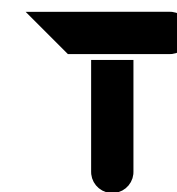
Harness all that emotion and physicality and go public at a friendly karaoke gathering. "There's an adrenaline rush that comes with being in front of a crowd," Hinman says. That makes for a great memory, and the thrill can carry over to the bedroom. You can be Marvin Gaye to her Tammi Terrell—try "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," a crowd pleaser that builds to a well, climax. —L.R. AND JULIE STEWART

This page: Jason Lovvris/FilmMagic/Getty Images (Charles Kelley); Jason Merritt/Getty Images (Mayer); Charles Sheas/AP Images (Beyoncé); Steve Granitz/WireImage (Rihanna); Alexander Tamargo/Getty Images (Drake); Dave Hogan/Getty Images (Blunt); opposite page: Levi's top; Casabella bra and panties; The Great Frog NYC Rings and bracelets



Love in the Club

How music can make a dance-floor kiss feel like sex in public
By Laura Roberson



THE NIGHT WHEN EVAN KISSED ME ON the club's dance floor, I was wearing a silk dress that brushed like a whisper across my body, making me feel sexy and free. I'd just stepped off the floor when I saw Evan, my ex, on a couch with a drink and a friend. "Want to dance?" he called out over the thumping bass. I nodded, and then he was behind me, the whisper of my dress now silenced by the press of his body. "Dancing with you reminds me just how sexy you can be," he murmured, or probably shouted, though only I could hear him. Then he tilted my head back and kissed me. In that moment, the pounding beat occupied my body; the energy of the room became the force of our kiss. It was electrifying.

That surge wasn't just lust. The music had hijacked my brain—in a good way. Neurologists say the chills triggered by music are a type of brain response similar to those seen during sex. The eroticism of music, combined with Evan's intimate touch and the thrill of being on public display, transformed his simple kiss into an insanely pleasurable, total-body experience.

The mash of bodies made me feel both protected and exposed in an arousing, anything-can-happen kind of way. I was free to lose myself in the kiss, to let go despite the risk of being seen. There wasn't a drop of alcohol in my system that night—it was the music that gave my body permission to surrender.

WHEN THE MUSIC TAKES OVER

LOTS OF SEXUAL MEMORIES HAVE A SOUNDTRACK, THE WOMEN IN OUR SURVEY TOLD US. LET'S LISTEN IN

"My boyfriend was studying for the LSAT, and I stopped by for a quickie wearing only a trench coat. I was blasting Rihanna's 'S&M' in the car during the ride over."

MJ, 22

"He undressed me to the beat of the music. He never missed a beat and kissed me the whole time. Impressive."

ALEXIS, 32

"I was fooling around one of the first times with a new man, and his cell alarm kept going off, repeating the same song over and over—no way were we stopping."

AMY, 26

"On my birthday, my long-distance guy called me from a Coldplay concert. I could hear both my boyfriend and Chris Martin singing 'Yellow.' Ménage à serenade!"

NAOMI, 23

"Giving a blow job as Phil Collins's 'In the Air Tonight' played in the background. He climaxed at the drum solo."

ERIN, 22