

LOVING LYRICS

Messages of love are in the lyrics when they're playing 'your song'

Originally published in *The Blade* on Sunday, February 11, 2007

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Nothing says "I love you" like a song by The Gap Band.

Go ahead and sing along:

*You were the girl that changed my world.
You were the girl for me.*

Recognize it? This romantic little ditty became a favorite of Valerie Pioch and her husband, Fritz, when they were in college in the early '80s and went dancing on Thursday nights. In fact, it became "their song."

*You dropped a bomb on me, baby.
You dropped a bomb on me.*

"We would dance to this song and my husband would make the bomb sounds as we danced, and that became our song. It seems to this day whenever we go out dancing they play our song for us so that we get to dance to it together," said Mrs. Pioch, 45, of Ottawa Hills. "He still does that sound."



Love songs come in all shapes and sizes. You never know what's going to make one special for a couple making puppy-dog eyes at each other.

Maybe it's the lyrics that describe their romantic chemistry. Maybe it's the beat that touches them to the soul. Or maybe it's the circumstances in which they heard it — on a first date, during a first dance or first kiss.

Kirk Patrick knows all about this kind of thing, having spent more than 30 years in the radio industry and taking more than his fair share of song requests. He's program director at WWWW-FM (105.5), where he does the afternoon drive shift.

GREATEST LOVE SONGS

1. "I Will Always Love You" Whitney Houston
2. "Love Me Tender" Elvis Presley
3. "My Heart Will Go On" Celine Dion
4. "Open Arms" Journey
5. "Maybe I'm Amazed" Paul McCartney and Wings
6. "Unchained Melody" The Righteous Brothers
7. "Endless Love" Lionel Richie/Diana Ross
8. "Your Song" Elton John
9. "I'll be There" The Jackson 5
10. "I Don't Wanna Miss a Thing" Aerosmith

SOURCE: VH1

"[When] some people are making a Valentine's Day request, they're trying to send a message to someone," he said.

It could be anything from the romantic "Wonderful Tonight" by Eric Clapton to the more unconventional "I Hate Myself For Loving You" by Joan Jett.

All that matters is that it's "something that speaks to both people in a relatable, emotional way," Mr. Patrick said.

Mike Abrams, program director for The Heart, a love song channel on XM Radio, has his own thoughts on what makes a romantic tune: "The sappier, the better."

He added, in an e-mail, "A good love song would consist of something that has a good melody, which lets you remember it for years to come."

Lots of people look to older, classic songs to express their feelings. Somehow, Ricky Martin's "Shake Your Bon-Bon" just doesn't do it for them.

David Coleman, a Bowling Green State University graduate who calls himself “The Dating Doctor” and is an adviser to the romantically challenged, said there’s an easy explanation.

“I wouldn’t exactly call the music that’s being played today music that we’re going to fondly remember,” he said.

Of course, if it’s a modern love song that’s playing when you meet your future spouse, maybe the fact that it’s sung by Britney Spears won’t matter.

As Valentine’s Day approaches, people all over the area are remembering their special songs and the stories behind them. Here are a few:

“Unchained Melody” by Ronnie McDowell
Debi Beam, 49, Woodville

In the early '90s, Mrs. Beam was living at an Air Force base in Michigan with three kids while her husband, Mike, was deployed in Spain as part of Operation Desert Storm. This was the song that she sent him. “I guess your heart grows fonder when you’re not around [each other],” she said. “It reminded me of everything that he and I meant to one another.”

MOST AWESOMELY BAD LOVE SONGS

1. "Hero" Enrique Iglesias
2. "Is This Love" Whitesnake
3. "Joanna" Kool & the Gang
4. "God Must Have Spent a Little More Time on You" *NSync
5. "You're the Inspiration" Chicago
6. "The Search is Over" Survivor
7. "Get Here" Oleta Adams
8. "Truly Madly Deeply" Savage Garden
9. "When You Close Your Eyes" Night Ranger
10. "Heaven" Warrant

SOURCE: VH1

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“Angels Among Us” by Alabama
Betty Marlow Miller, 74, Elmore

The song was playing as she drove home after the first time she met her eventual husband, Tom. Both had lost their previous spouses after many years of marriage, and they played this song at their wedding because “we feel our late mates are angels among us, and we feel comfortable being remarried.”

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“Forever and Ever Amen” by Randy Travis
Kristin Wells, 34, Sylvania Township

Her husband, Mick, turned this hip-hop fan on to country music, too. At their wedding, they played this as their special song, which says “I’m gonna love you forever.” “Every time we hear it, we always text or call each other,” she said. “Everyone once in a while, he’ll put the [song] on and we’ll dance to it.”

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“Wonderful Tonight” by Eric Clapton
Tom Spy, 49, Sylvania Township

When Mr. Spy was dating Sharee Youssef in the early '90s, he remembers hearing the song on the radio for the first time on the way home from work. The lyrics struck him like lightning. “It’s exactly how I felt about her,” he said of his future wife. Turns out it was one of her favorite songs. “Every time we hear it at a wedding, it’s guaranteed that we’re dancing.”

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“September in the Rain” by James Melton in the movie Melody for Two
Dorothy Schwartz, 89, Maumee

She married Arthur Schwartz in September, 1937, the same year the song came out. “It’s the history, really, of my honeymoon,” she said. The newlyweds took a trailer to a lake, where it proceeded to rain every day. “We never got out of the trailer,” she said. “It was wonderful.”

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“Higher” by Creed
Erin Mathias, 31, South Toledo

She and her future husband Joey, 28, would do karaoke a lot when they were dating, and he would sing this song. “That was a song that we both really enjoyed. Every time we heard it, we would dance at a wedding,” she

said. It became their song, until they got married, when they embraced "Our House" by Crosby, Stills, & Nash.

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"This Time" by Troy Shondell
Betty D'Emilio, 61, Oregon

This song goes: "This time we're really breaking up ... this time there'll be no goodnight kiss." Mrs. D'Emilio and her future husband, Dominic, dated off and on before marrying in 1965. At one point when they had "broke-up," she went to a dance with someone else and he went to the dance with the old girlfriend of the guy she was with. "Somehow during the dance, we got back together and the guy that I came with got back with his old girlfriend," she said.

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"I Knew I Loved You" by Savage Garden
Eric Sills, 40, Maumee

After he and his future wife Sandra Kosek-Sills, 39, had been dating for about six months, Eric made her a compilation CD and this song was on it to show how much he cared. "It hit her on a strong emotional level," he said. "She called me up as soon as she heard it. It was me telling her that I thought I'd found the right person."

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"Music! Music! Music!" by Teresa Brewer
Maria Schwarz, 78, Oregon

Mrs. Schwarz was living in Germany in 1951 when her American pen pal and future husband, Frederick Schwarz, came to visit. She showed him around; he offered her this song, which begins, "Put another nickel in / In the nickelodeon." She remembers: "He wasn't a good singer, but he just liked the song and he started to sing that song to me."

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