

STUDENT LIFE

If you're happy and you know it... Top ten songs featuring handclaps: Part One

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Over the past few years, I've grown a bit tired of college and yearned to drop out, find some friends to write a dozen sappy my-boyfriend/girlfriend-just-dumped-me-now-I'm-so-lonely love songs, and dedicate my life to recording the perfect pop album with just handclaps. No guitars, no drums, no bass, no keyboards, just palms and fingers slapping together for thirty minutes straight over sugary-sweet lyrics. Okay well, I guess I wouldn't have to drop out of school to do that, but whatever. So until that day comes, I'll continue to keep searching the shelves for the best songs with handclaps. While this list isn't a comprehensive catalog of the best handclapping tunes ever, it is an eclectic look at how the handclap standouts in many genres.



The Raveonettes
"Noisy Summer"

This is the new wave. With a sound and style that exudes '50s and '60s pop and fashion, guitarist Sune Rose Wagner and bassist Sharin Foo are music's modern-day Bonnie and Clyde. Forget Beyoncé and Jay-Z: The Raveonettes write and sing about the wicked, wild and dark side of love, lust and sex. Taken from their major-label debut, *Chain Gang of Love*, "Noisy Summer" is a fuzz-frenzied, bubblegum-pop masterpiece. Echoing handclaps only open the song; then, twenty seconds in, the drums pick up where the clapping leaves off while

the Danish duo harmonizes with happy-go-lustly lyrics ("Chewin' on a whip / Your little dress is tight / Gonna make me burn / Gonna make it right") over eardrum-shattering distortion. If pain is your pleasure, this is your remedy.



Ellie Greenwich
"I Want You To Be My Baby"

One of the twentieth century's most prolific Brill-Building songwriters, Ellie Greenwich has written some of pop's finest tunes including "And Then He Kissed Me," "Be My Baby," and "Chapel of Love" among many others. In 1968, she released her own album, *Composes, Produces, and Sings*, which featured the single "I Want You To Be My Baby." Her raspy voice on the track is stunning – she yells, she screams, she begs for her baby, all while maintaining a clear, persistent and sassy vocal delivery. While the handclaps are slightly lost amongst the drums and brash horn arrangement, their presence is completely evident via call-and-response vocalists who (as I like to visualize) are jerking their hips and slapping their hands together in the background whilst Greenwich belts the lyrics out like it's all just another Saturday night at the hop.

Stay tuned next week for part two of the top ten songs featuring handclaps!



Lumidee
"Never Leave You (Uh Oooh)"

Lumidee was a sweet-faced teenager from Spanish Harlem when this, her first single, blew up the charts in 2003. Her sparse, echoing, soft voice is the perfect compliment to the song's diwali rhythm, a Jamaican dancehall-influenced beat laced with the catchiest polyrhythmic handclaps you've ever heard. Although it's true that the claps found within the rhythm are mechanical, they're still completely irresistible and infectious. Other songs have incorporated the diwali rhythm such as Sean Paul's first major hit "Get Busy" and Wayne Wonder's slow-jam "No Letting Go," but neither has pinpointed the pop sensibility of the handclapping-influenced beat quite like Lumidee.



The Go-Go's
"We Got the Beat"

As the foremost new wave all-female band of the late 70s and early 80s, the Go-Go's had everything, from top-10 singles to \$300-a-day coke habits. And while those drug and alcohol addictions eventually faded into obscurity, *Beauty and the Beat*, the group's debut LP from which "We Got the Beat" was culled, remains one of the greatest rock n' roll pop albums ever. "We Got the Beat," produced by

the legendary Richard Gottehrer (who also wrote one of handclapping's finest tunes, 1963's "My Boyfriend's Back" by the Angels), embodies all characteristics of the Go-Go's: energy, effervescence, vintage girl-group charm. Almost two minutes into the song, the bass and guitars drop out completely, while the unstoppable drumming keeps a pulsating beat over the other band members' call-out lyric: "We got the beat." Then, in perfect pop fashion, handclaps join the drums in unison while Belinda Carlisle, the group's lead singer, wails: "Everybody get on your feet / We know you can dance to the beat." And the kids still do today.



Mirah
"Oh! September"

Mirah Yom Tov Zeitlyn is her name, and lo-fi indie pop gems are her game. The first time I heard this song, it was the middle of the summer, and I was in my friends' apartment in Brooklyn. A few days later, I found myself humming it on the subway to and from work, singing the chorus inside my head over and over. "Oh! September" carries hints of doo-wop (with Mirah and backing vocalists actually chanting "doo-wop" throughout the song), twee-pop and those ever-enchanting girl-group harmonies. Her lyrics are cute and catchy ("Meet me at the back shack baby / You'll bring your little ukulele"), and the on-off handclaps (they're only present during choruses and near the end) just add to the song's overall sweetness. It's the perfect tune for an all-out dance party or a late summer evening sitting on the porch sipping lemonade watching the sunset with a few good friends.

American Idol wins the gold in ratings war

By Justin Plansinis
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Both the Winter and Summer Olympics have been very popular on television for decades; however, the Winter Olympics have always lagged behind in popularity compared to the Summer Olympics. This year, the Winter Olympics might even lose out in the ratings war to FOX's "American Idol."

February is one of the primary sweeps months. November, February and May are the three months when networks pull out their best material to air because advertising rates are set during these three periods. The more viewers a network attracts, particularly in the valuable 18 to 24 male demographic, the more money that the network can charge for advertising time. "American Idol" is one of FOX's top rated shows, while the Winter Olympics airing on NBC have become an increasingly unpopular television event. Media analysts are predicting that "American Idol" will likely beat the Winter Olympics in the ratings for the month of February.

The Winter Olympics and "American Idol" will air against each other four times: at 8 p.m. on Feb. 14, 15, 21 and 22. Even though "American Idol" is now in its fifth season, the ratings for the show

are still holding and, in fact, gaining momentum. The Winter Olympics have managed to win every timeslot since it started; however, they barely beat ABC's Sunday night lineup of "Desperate Housewives" and "Grey's Anatomy." "American Idol" is an even more formidable beast than either of those two shows, so NBC executives are predicting trouble.

Idol has already taken the gold for Tuesday night. Nielsen ratings show that FOX averaged a 13.5 rating/20 share in primetime with NBC in second place with an 11.3 rating/18 share. Interestingly enough, Tuesday saw the beginning of the men's figure skating competition. This portion of the Olympics draws a huge number of young female viewers, and that is the same demographic that makes up the largest portion of the American Idol audience.

The averages for both programs indicate that "Idol" should definitely win out over the Olympics during every competing timeslot. The Winter Olympics have gradually declined in popularity over the years leading to a significant drop in ratings. New sports such as snowboarding have been added in recent years in order to draw in the extreme sports audience, but the results have been less than successful.

What does this mean for the future of the Olympic Games? Some students on campus think that the Olympics should take pri-

ority. "People should be watching the Olympics," said A. M. Gray, Creative Writing 06, "They should be cheering for their country."

For some students, commercials provide the answer to viewing both. "Every commercial I just switch back and forth between 'American Idol' and the Olympics," says Sabina Medilovic, History and Political Science 05. With VCRs and TiVo in wide use, the networks are probably going to be more worried about this than the viewers.

The Winter Olympics and "American Idol" appeal to the same fan base and have a lot in common. Both judge the performances of talented (or in the case of "Idol," some not so talented) individuals. The Winter Olympics are hardly in danger of being cancelled or anything like that, but the decline in their popularity may be cause for concern.

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