

Your Name

Dr. Anthony Atkins

English 201

Date

My Playlists > Cool Title

Baptized an Episcopalian and having grown up in the Catholic Church, it stands to reason that I may be a little confused about my religious views. My father once said something that I whole-heartedly agree with; he said that it doesn't matter what religion you belong to as long as you are thankful for that which God has given you. I also believe that you should try to be a good person, and above all to appreciate everything in life, whether it is another person's achievements, a special event or moment, the people in your life, or to value yourself for being the way God made you. My taste in music tends to reflect these views. Instead of having an iPod full of all the latest songs that everyone in the world are listening to, my playlists contain music that reflects on my appreciation for many aspects of my life, including an appreciation for hard work.

As people, we would not revere or idolize movie celebrities and sports stars if we did not believe that they can do something that we cannot. In my own life, I find that I am in awe of anyone who is passionate about something and works hard to perfect their skill. I wonder at my father's ability to fix anything we present him with, I admire my roommate's talent for crocheting out a scarf every couple of days and, in fact, the only time I ever feel attracted to a specific male friend of mine is when he is bent over his keyboard playing his latest composure. Chris works hard on his music, and he has trouble thinking of new lyrics that have never been heard before. Watching his struggles, I can appreciate lyrics that make you sit back and think

about them for a while after you hear them. I'm not talking about contemporary music, as most of the lyrics today can be found duplicated in every other song. I'm talking about music that was made in a time when writing music was for music's sake, and not for the next paycheck. The Beatles have always been a favorite group of mine, and one of their most thought-provoking songs, in my opinion, is "Eleanor Rigby." The line "Waits at the window, wearing a face that she keeps in a jar by the door. Who is it for?" always makes me wonder at how John Lennon could even think of such a poetic and thoughtful way to describe a lonely woman. Also, no other song can make a mental image come to life in my mind quite like the battle Don McLean describes between the marching band and the football team in his song "American Pie." In fact, the entire song I consider to be lyrical genius. Billy Joel speaks of the regulars of a bar in his song "Piano Man," and says, "Yes, they're sharing a drink they call loneliness, but it's better than drinking alone." I love how Joel is inferring that individually they all are very lonely, but none of them are alone in their solitude. These songs represent musicians that I appreciate for the thought and time they put into their lyrics, almost as if they themselves appreciate the idea of the events or people they include in their compositions.

It is the little moments in our lives that make up our special memories. In a way, a memory, either good or bad, is a respect for a specific event in one's life. When I listen to "Isn't Life Strange," by the Moody Blues, my mind races back to the spring of 7th grade when my family visited our best friends who were living in San Francisco. Taking a tour of the city, "Uncle" Mike turned up the CD player as we were racing across the Golden Gate Bridge and we all sang at the top of our lungs, "How hard man will try, the sea will not wait, you know it makes me want to cry cry cry!" It was a wonderful "togetherness" moment. "The End of the World" by R.E.M. brings to mind a similar situation. My friends and I "pimped" out Jake's Astro van

for Senior Prom instead of renting a limo and Jake made a CD mix for our ride to and from the dance. On our way to the Prom, I looked around the van as we were all belting out the lyrics to that song and thought to myself, “So this is what it means to be young.” When I was in Australia this past summer doing volunteer work with a group of students from across America, we would all congregate in one cabin at the end of the day to eat dinner and relax until we passed out from the day’s hard work. After about a week we were all as comfortable with each other as if we had known each other for years. It was the kind of situation where you will tell a perfect stranger your life’s history because you know you will never see them again. All of a sudden, The Kinks’ “Lola” started to play over the speakers, and we all stopped what we were talking about to sing the line “Lola, lo, lo, lo, lo, Lola.” I value that moment because no matter how different we all were or where we came from, at that second we were all the same, simply because we all knew the words to some old song. I appreciate all of these songs for the moments they represent and the people I’ll never forget.

There are three individuals in my life right now that I dedicate three specific songs to. My current boyfriend and I have been friends for a very long time. A year ago I was in a bad and emotionally abusive relationship. I truly believe Patrick saved me from any more pain when he took me aside and told me that I deserved better than that. We’ve been dating ever since, and every time I hear “Face Down” by The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus, I thank God for having such a wonderful and loving friend and companion as him. One of my other best friends, Lara, and I have almost nothing in common, except for the fact that neither of us know exactly what we’d like to have as future careers. This mutual fear helps to bond us together, and “Peace of Mind” by Boston is our song because it talks of a hectic life and indecision, but blissfully not having to stress over it. We listen to this song together and take solace in the idea that maybe we should

not live life so hastily, and that maybe it is ok that we do not have our futures planned out hour-by-hour and day-by-day. However, boyfriends and I may break up, and Lara may for some reason slip out of contact with me, but Jenna and I have been best friends since the womb. Since we were kids our karaoke song has been Sheryl Crow's "All I Wanna Do." As children we did not understand the full meaning of the song, yet we definitely knew the lyrics to the chorus, and no matter how stressful our lives become, or how far apart we live from each other, we always remind each other that all we want to do is "have a little fun," (Crow, All I Wanna Do) and get to know ourselves a little better before we die.

One of the biggest things I appreciate in life is that God made me the person that I am. I'm certainly not perfect. I'm naïve and gullible, I'm uncomfortable in large groups of people, and I like to think that I'm in control of everything in my life even though I know that I am not. I try to be positive all the time, and I like that about myself. Since I was a child I have loved Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers' song "I Believe in Santa Claus," because the world they portray in that song is the way I like to think the world actually is. I do believe that "there's always hope when all seems lost," and that "when someone hurts us we should forgive and forget," (Parton, Santa). Christmas songs should not be restricted to the Christmas season. My mother and I have always quoted the song "I Hope You Dance" by Lee Ann Womack. Womack says that we should never get so big as to think that we are greater than the wonders that God has given us, such as the ocean. She sings of never taking life for granted and always moving forward through life with a positive attitude. When I'm having a bad day or doubting my own abilities I play this song. Another song that, until recently, I did not understand the full meaning of the lyrics but have always related to my life is "Tubthumping" by Chumbawamba. No, I cannot relate to

“pissing the night away,” but I do live my life by their line, “I get knocked down, but I get up again. You’re never gonna keep me down.”

What does get me down is the thought that people may be taking more and more for granted. My roommate fights with her parents over the phone all the time never making a single thoughtful comment. Instead of walking on a beautiful day, I see students hoping on the bus to go from one end of our small campus to the other. When I take a look at the students who do walk to their classes, most of them are plugged into their MP3 players and I have to wonder how much time we as a people spend listening to music. If people do not listen to music that helps them reflect upon the things they appreciate in life, the events that made them who they are, the people that they love, or lyrics that provide introspect into themselves, as I do, I shudder to think of what those people actually *do* listen to.

Works Cited

- The Beatles. "Eleanor Rigby." Revolver. Parlophone/Capital. 1966.
- Billy Joel. "Piano Man." Piano Man. Michael Stewart. 1973.
- Boston. "Peace of Mind." Boston. Epic Records/CBS Records. 1976.
- Chumbawamba. "Tubthumping." Tubthumper. EMI. 1997.
- Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers. "I Believe In Santa Claus." Once Upon a Christmas. RCA. 1984.
- Don McLean. "American Pie." American Pie. United Artists. 1971.
- The Kinks. "Lola." Lola versus Powerman and the Moneygoround. Pye/Reprise. 1970.
- Lee Ann Womack. "I Hope You Dance." I Hope You Dance. MCA Nashville Records. 2000.
- The Moody Blues. "Isn't Life Strange?" Seventh Sojourn. Deram/Polydor. 1972.
- The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus. "Face Down." Don't You Fake It. Virgin. 2006.
- R.E.M. "The End of the World." Document. I.R.S. Records. 1987.
- Sheryl Crow. "All I Wanna Do." Tuesday Night Music Club. Bill Bottrell. 1994.