

Is It Music To Your Ears?

I don't listen to music unless I'm somewhere it's played for the masses - like supermarkets or shopping malls, places where pop songs are meant to soothe us savage beasts and keep us shopping. I'm a talk radio junkie. The only time I turn my radio to a music station is at Christmas. Christmas carols fill me with feelings of peace on earth, good will to men - that is, if they're played after Thanksgiving. Every year carols seem to be played earlier than the year before. This year I heard them before Halloween. If this trend continues, it's going to change Christmas. Instead of singing Silent Night, children will sing Silent Fright. Instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh, the three Wise Men will bring ghouls, Frankenstein and murder. Oh yes, and when Joseph and Mary knock on the door of the inn to ask for a place to stay, they'll say trick or treat. Every Sunday I sang hymns at church. Abide With Me, Amazing Grace, Rock of Ages - I learned my favorites by heart; but the old standbys are being replaced by new hymns. These are 7/11 hymns. Instead of singing wonderfully descriptive phrases, the same seven lines are repeated eleven times. I went to the opera several times before I realized opera is like the opposite sex. You don't have to understand it. You just have to listen and applaud appropriately. In fact, understanding the opposite sex would be a lot easier if a libretto-type translation of what they were saying appeared over their heads. Because jazz doesn't have a libretto, I don't have to understand it. I can just feel it. Every singer and musician seems to feel it differently. Jazz encourages spontaneity and individuality. It's more than music. It's a life message. We could all jazz up our lives a notch or two. I do, however, understand country western songs. I understand the girl is going to leave, the truck is going to be repossessed and the dog is going to die. Country western puts my life in perspective. My worst day wouldn't be bad enough for a country western song. Then there's soul. When I think soul, I think Ray Charles. Of course, when I think Ray Charles, I also think pop, country and jazz. Although soul is described as rhythm and blues mixed with gospel, maybe any music you feel is soul - soul-ly for pleasure.

About the Author

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