

# Stark Raving Sane: On Music Snobs

By Catherine SWEET



**"And one time, at band camp..."**

It's only natural for us to hold certain preferences for music. We have preferences for everything. It also seems natural to defend what we like, but why is there such an innate need to trash things we don't like? It's not a game. Jeez.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could all take a moment to give all music a chance and try to hear what makes it special? This is a huge exercise in thinking outside the box. Just say, "I don't really like this sound, but someone does. Why?"

Think of the organizational feat an instrumental Dave Matthews Band set is, or Eminem's word-smithing. You've even got to hand it to Britney Spears for outright *owning* the media over the past few years.

I've confessed before that I'm a total pop casualty. Although I can recognize that it might not be the highest *quality* music, it's doing what it set out to do: make me happy. Honestly, I don't care: "S Club Party" still makes me want to dance. They're not Beatles - so what? Technically, they're a success.

We all have to do this exercise a little bit more in our lives. Not just in music, but all things. My philosophy is, I'll try it at least once. The basic rules of etiquette tell us that turning down an offer of a raw oyster because it's "gross" is rude. Someone *lives* for raw oysters and you calling their favourite food "gross" may not endear you to them. At least now, I can say, "No, thank you. I've tried

them in the past and I'm not fond of oysters."

They don't have to know that that first time I tried a raw oyster I gagged on it and hacked it up in my palm in front of a whole bunch of American tourists. I did eventually eat it, but I don't think I'll be going down that road again.

Back to the point. Try to expand your understanding for things that don't turn you on. That appreciation will make you a more tolerable person. And isn't that what we're all trying to achieve?

That all being said, I have to air a beef with the enlightened readers of *The Cadre*. If I go out to a drinking establishment and a cover band is playing, there are a couple of songs that will make me stand up and leave. "Summer of '69," and "American Pie," are on my hit list. It's not that I dislike those songs. On the contrary, they're all quite enjoyable. It's just that it's so *done*. I am bored to tears from hearing "Brown Eyed Girl" played by any schmuck who can strum three consecutive chords on a borrowed guitar.

I know that originality is kind of against the point of a cover band, but come on! How about throwing in a little Beastie Boys? Some Duran Duran? Cake? I would drop dead if a cover band started playing "Short Skirt Long Jacket" in a pub. Know what else? I'd die happy, too. But if they played "Barrett's Privateers," as the coroner was wheeling me out, I'd reanimate just to trash the amps.

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