



# The Top Nine

I'm not really sure about this picking favorites business anymore, but anyway I gave it the ol' college try. The top five are definitely my favorites, but the rest I kinda guessed at.

These are all my personal favorites. They all conform to my set of standards. My philosophy of music is that it's aural emotion, and best served raw. I love imperfection; voices that aren't perfectly in sync, blissfully off-key playing, things that let you know it's a pissing, farting human making the music. I believe the human voice is the most expressive instrument in music, and thus, the focal point. In a voice I like, once again, imperfection, soul, and some pain; I like a guy who sounds like he just got dumped. Great songwriting is also essential, something I can't define but I know it when I hear it. Lyrics are icing; a great singer can make the mundane transcendent. Honest lyrics are what I value. And last but not least there's an x-factor; a mixture of joy and pain, both being enriched by the existence and awareness of the other. In other words, I don't like really happy music, it depresses me, but I don't like miserable music either; I like a balance.

So... here's my top nine. I'll print my number one, undoubtedly the most beautiful forty-seven minutes of music ever created in the history of the world, next week.

10. Raw Power - Iggy and the Stooges, The greatest punk album ever. Fierce, noisy, and bouncy. Fulfills my desire for noisy junk.

9. Lola Versus Powerman and the Moneygoround - The Kinks, Much like the Stones I prefer the Kinks more human 1970-ish material to their earlier, more poppy, polished stuff. An incredibly underrated band.

8. Rickie Lee Jones, A wildy emotional voice and beautiful accompaniment a la Van Morrison.

7. Let It Be - The Replacements, The ultimate garage rock album. Freewheeling, fun, and sloppy. For those who care, the album features "Androgynous", which was covered by the Crash Test Dummies on their debut.

6. Spike - Elvis Costello, An odd choice to be sure, but none of EC's albums stand out; they're all great. Naked vocals, great songs and about as much compassion as Elvis can muster make this my favorite.

5. Loaded - The Velvet Underground, Okay, I'm about these picks. These are definitely great all time. This one's very inspiring, especially after White Light/White Heat. A wonderful mixture of chaotic rockers and touching ballads.

4. Sticky Fingers - The Rolling Stones, I've already said enough about this one.

3. Shoot Out the Lights - Richard and Linda Thompson, The hidden treasure of our time. Poetic, epic, majestic, and moving. If you can find it you won't be around here - buy it.

2. Music From Big Pink/The Band - The Band, counting these two as one because I can't choose between them. These guys encompass all that's great about rock 'n' roll: intense emotion, ragged spirit, it's all here, and they're Canadian even

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