

## Season 2 Episode 2:

### “Love Songs”

**Gabe:** Hi listeners. So this is our little podcast. We are taking a look at various love songs in a post-Valentine's world. Love is in the air. Love is the season. As my mom would say, love is everywhere. You just got to look for it. So today, we're going to be looking for that in these pieces of music we've chosen, which I think are all quite different, show a lot of artistic range and show just how many different ways there are to interpret this feeling known as love.

The song that I chose is "Absolutely Cuckoo" by The Magnetic Fields and I'm not the biggest Magnetic Fields fan in the world. A lot of people who like the Magnetic Fields, they really like The Magnetic Fields. They really like them. Um, one of my friends probably listens to everything that The Magnetic Fields have done and I've only listened to, probably, I've never even listened to the entirety of their album, *69 Love Songs*, but this is the opener. And I think it, you know, it really sets the tone for the rest of the album, as well as introduces you to Stephin Merritt as a songwriter. If you had not heard their work before, it has a lot of elements that I think are really unique to him. He certainly takes a lot of influence from the Great American Songbook. You know, we're talking Gershwin, we're talking Lorenz Hart, we're talking Rodgers and Hammerstein, you know, just like everyone. Hoagy Carmichael. You could just keep going. Some Duke Ellington too, you know, one of the best. Scott Joplin. But yeah, so it has this sense of just like...you know, why we call it the Great American Songbook is, you know, it's the closest thing I think we have to, like, a real cultural export where these pieces of music had, like, such a hold over people. They were interpreted so many different times by so many different artists. What I think is great about them is that every artist can sing these songs and reinterpret them and give them their own flavor. And I think it was Stephin Merritt's work in The Magnetic Fields, especially with this album, he writes literally 69 love songs. It's insane. How do you write 69 love songs? And then each one is different, stylistically, they're each touching upon, I think, different ideas about love, which I didn't even know you could have 69 ideas about love, but I guess he can.

This piece in particular, it's a really interesting opener. I think it's very, it's short, it's like a minute and 30 seconds, minute and 50 seconds, or I don't think it hits two minutes. But immediately, you know, you got these vocals that kind of go off in different directions. They kind of get panned. And I think it's a duet between himself and himself, which I think is really a cool idea. Very interesting. Um, and you know, he talks a lot about, um, you know, "Don't fall in love with me yet. We've only recently met," and how he is so...he as well, also falls in love so easily that, you know, if the affections are not returned to him, that he will think about jumping into a lake, I believe, which is, you know, not, probably not the first thing you should do if you get rejected.

But, um, I, I think it's really funny, it has a lot of humor too. It's a bit campy too. And you got like this ukulele being played. It's like, when is a ukulele ever used as, like, a central instrument in a popular musical song? Not, not, not that often. And you get all these beautiful synths, kind of, like, you know, sounds and textures. There's no drums. There's...I don't really think there's like a bassline to it. It's very much, like, very sparse, but it feels very full, very like, uh, you know, you're being welcomed into this world. This kind of, I dunno what I would call it. This kind of cool, crazy, eclectic, a little different look.

There's some humor. There's a lot of humor there. Obviously it's a bit ironic a bit, but also sincere at the same time. It pokes fun at a lot of these clichés of, I think, love songs and kind of the way that we write about them in general, but at the same time, also understands that there's a reason that these things, like, keep coming up, why this emotion keeps coming up, why people keep writing on it, because it's sincere, because it's human and you can make fun of it, but you also have to, you know, take part in it as well.

So, uh, I guess my question to you folks is how do you think, like when you heard the song. What were your initial reactions? Did you feel kind of this sense of, like, what you would usually think about in a love song, the lyrical content, the instrumentation, and the production. Did it read to you like that? Did it give you a bit more of like, I dunno, *This is something different that I haven't heard done before*. And did you feel like it, like I was talking about, was it

taking from the Great American Songbook? Was it being inspired by other things you may have heard along the way?

**Allison:** It gave me like, this kind of, like, indie movie type of love vibe. I don't know if you get that, but it's funny because, and I'm sorry if this doesn't answer your question, but the notes I wrote down when I was listening are two things you already talked about, but like how it's like ironic, like, especially with that first line, um, "Don't fall in love with me yet," I love it when, like, love songs start off like that because it's like, it adds a little bit of, a little bit of spice. And then also, like, the minimalism, it evokes, like, intimacy to me. And so like, I guess like, how you said it, like, it sounds full, but at the same time, like, it's super, like just sparse and kind of, like, you feel, like, close to the sound. And I think something about that just makes, for me, it just makes it, like, feel like a love song.

**Ashley:** Yeah. When I first heard it, my first impression was "I've Just Seen a Face" by The Beatles. It reminded me a lot of that, of like the style and everything. But what was different, really stuck out to me, like you said, the duet between himself and himself, like you hear the voices just slightly overlap and the phrase elisions and the, enjambment. It captured, like, the sense of insecurity and anxiety that you get when you first fall in love with someone. And like Allison said, it was totally indie movie love. And middle school. My middle school life was an indie movie, so it just reminded me of my middle school crushes and all that kind of stuff.

**Gabe:** I think that the indie movie, uh, yeah, it really does feel like an indie movie. You're being welcomed into something, which I think is...a lot of indie movies are taking from the sound of these sort of songs, the sounds of these artists, uh, to create that sort of feeling. One thing I really like about the song, which I usually will hate in most other pieces of music is when two lines rhyme, like every line is just like a rhyme, a rhyme, a rhyme, it's just pairs and usually that's, like, it, in my opinion, like when I hear that, it's like, *Oh*, usually that's done by very young songwriters, you know, that you think, *moon, June, gloom, boom*. Like it just...many, many years ago, decades ago when songs were being written in like the forties and the fifties, and they're very simple and very kind of like a bit hokey, um, they would just have these paired rhymes that are, like, very basic. Anyone could have come up with them, I would guess. But yeah. When I hear this, I'm like, it's pretty interesting that that's

the choice he makes to just rhyme everything, because it also adds to that feeling I think of insecurity of like, you know, he's just kind of speaking off his mind immediately and like saying all these things that, you know, sometimes when you're really in that emotional space of, you know, falling for someone and feeling really just like you want it to work out, almost like you want it to work out more than you actually like the person? I think some...that happens to me a lot, but it ends up, uh, creating...like, it sounds very scattered and very, like he's saying so much that he should not be saying, but at the same [time], it's like, we've all been there. And I think that's really important. You never want to talk about...no one ever wants to write a song about how, you know, you're, they're kind of failing at serenading someone or failing at kind of courting someone. And I love the last few lines. "It's only fair to tell you. I'm absolutely cuckoo." You know, just, just putting it right out there and being like, yeah, I'm a nutcase. And you know, I'm just looking for the right person, but I'm also just looking for a person. It's almost a little too tender, at least in terms of the sound, the instrumentation, the vocal timbre. I think it's kind of funny in that way that it reads, it's like, so soft, almost like it's poking fun at itself, which is nice. A lot of self-deprecation, and if you, if you've seen Stephin Merritt interviewed, he's a very ornery guy, very like, I mean, I wouldn't say grumpy, but very kind of like blunt and matter of fact, and just...how he talks is very low bass voice. And it's just, so, yeah, there's just, so I love that. Self-deprecation, just poking fun, and it is tender. It is excruciatingly tender. And, you know, but the love can be that way. Sometimes, sometimes you gotta just, you know, get the baby talk out and just, you know, kind of be a baby for a second or two.

**Allison:** So my song is "Cómo Te Quiero" by Khruangbin. Gonna expose myself, the first time I listened to this song, I was like, *This has to play at my wedding or I'm not getting married*. Just because like, that's like, I don't know if you've ever felt, like, that feeling when like a song makes you blush, like when a song is just so good that it's like, wait, I'm embarrassed because it's like, it's like everything that you've been like looking for in a song.

So, yeah. It's like one of my favorite songs ever. But, um, "cómo te quiero" means "how I love you", and I see it as, like, an answer to the first song on this album, "Cómo Me Quieres," and basically, that

means “How do you love me, or how much do you love me,” and the story behind that song is that her name is Laura Lee. I think she's the singer in Khruangbin, but they don't really have, like, she's the speaker, let's say the speaker. ‘Cause she kind of just, like, whispers in the background, but basically like her grandfather was like, before he passed away, he would ask her, “How much do you love me,” and the only answer he would accept was, “With all of the world.” So that's why the song is, uh, the album is called “Con Todo El Mundo”. And then I kind of see, like, “Cómo Te Quiero” as an answer to that as well. And so I guess, like one of the, one of the things I was thinking about this Valentine's Day is like a non-romantic type of love. And I didn't even like, realize that this song had, like, a backstory of being like, um, showcasing her love, like to, to her grandfather.

And so like, I was like, *Oh, that fits like what I was thinking about, like, kind of perfectly*. So, yeah, that's all I have to say about that. But I guess one of the questions that I was thinking of was just like specifically, because this song, like, it has like words, but they're very faint and like, they're, like, so faint that you almost, like, don't even notice that they're there. So I guess it's just like, not even specifically considering this song, but it can be in any song, like what makes a song a love song when it's only, like, instrumental, like when it's only an instrumental, because, like, how can it like achieve that, like, feeling of being full of, like, happiness and, like, just, like, love for another person. And it's specifically in, like, a non-romantic type of relationship.

**Liv:** I mean, I think for me it can be purely associative, like either associations that I have with hearing the song at a certain time or place or with a certain person, or like, cultural associations I have with romantic music, whether that be through, like, movies, where there certain songs are used in more romantic scenes, or scenes that depict some kind of love or, I mean, anything in media where certain sounds are associated with love in some way. Yeah. I mean, if anyone wants to speak more to that, that'd be cool.

**Ashley:** Yeah, I totally agree with Liv in, like, the cultural associations with sounds and whether it's chord progressions or melodic lines. I feel like now that I'm in college, I try to listen not so analytically. So when you sent that song, um, it was really cool there was, like, a language barrier I think, for all of us. So it just really

proves how universal that sense of love was for all of us. And I feel like when I was listening to it, it was like I was in a really warm blanket. And that's all I really focused on. I didn't listen too hard. It was just me settling into the ambience and it was really nice.

**Allison:** I was going to say, um, yeah, that's both really good points. And like, I feel like when I have associations with certain songs, I like to preserve my associations with them. I kind of have to, like, be listening to them in a certain setting, cause [there's] something sacred about it to me where, like, if I'm playing this song in the car, like literally no one can say a single word because, like, I want it to stay, like, sacred in that kind of sense.

So, yeah. But then it can also be, like, having associations with the song and especially in relation to another person. It can be kind of bad because then if that person isn't a part of your life anymore, then it's like, you don't want to listen to that song anymore. And it makes that song all of a sudden, like it's not a good song anymore. So yeah. That's the flip side.

**Liv:** That's honestly interesting that you bring that up because I know that's a really common phenomenon. Um, personally, I feel like if I ever, like, lose touch with someone or have some kind of falling out, whether it's like friendship or romantic, whatever songs we had together still for me retain those purely positive memories. Like I've never had a song ruined for me, because to me, the song is like a portal into the good times for whatever event it was. I don't know if that's just me, but I was, I guess I was wondering if anyone else experiences that.

**Gabe:** For me, um, more so than what kills a song, being the things that the people associated with that song in my life, but more so, like, once I've played a song or covered a piece of music, and I've kind of let it go out into the world. That's when I almost disconnect from the song for awhile and can't listen to it for a bit because it's like, I don't know. I guess it's like, it's placed in your life. Like for me, at least as a musician, its, like, place in my life is important up to the point where I feel like I've expressed what that song is trying to express, and once I've done that, it's like, you know, if I feel comfortable with the way that I did it, then it's kinda hard to go back and listen to someone else doing the song and being like, *Oh yeah, it hits the same way.* 'Cause it, now, now it's like you, you've kind

of seen it through maybe a different lens, but also thought, um, something that you said, Allison, that was very important. It's thinking about music and listening to it with other people and hearing these songs with other people.

When you're, you know, you have such a close association with it when it means so much to you personally...there's some music that I love to death that if it was my soul transcribed into sound waves, those would be the pieces of music I'd want to represent those, but I think, sometimes, when you try to show people, even your closest friends, some of the music you hold so dear to your heart, and if their reactions, aren't the way you want them to react, the way that you feel about this music, when people don't feel that way about it, it's for me, it's a bit heartbreaking. Like I know, it's not like, *Oh, they don't get it*, because it's like, what is there to get? It's very subjective, but it's also like, it's just so weird how music can have that particular effect, certain, just certain types of songs sometimes can have such a great effect on someone's life and then someone else hears it, and they're like, this is not so much the same.

**Allison:** Yeah. That's kind of crazy how, like a song can be like, you can like, feel like so deeply, like, linked to it and in a way that, like, can't be communicated to someone else when like you're sharing it with them. And so, yeah, that kind of sucks because it's like, when you share a song with someone, like, you're right. Like you do want them to be able to share the same feeling that you receive from listening to that song and interacting with that song. But that's like, they're only hearing, like, the sounds, they're not experiencing the feeling that you are getting. So, yeah. It's interesting.

**Liv:** I chose "Close to You" by The Carpenters because my mother used to sing it to me to go to sleep when I was a little baby. This song has become increasingly important to me throughout my life. It has always symbolized a kind of motherly love to me. But then when I saw Todd Haynes's movie *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story*, that was really influential because it's made with Barbie dolls and Todd Haynes is my favorite filmmaker, and it really got into the tragedy of her life and the mythology around her as a figure. Similarly, Dr. Mitchell Morris here at UCLA has a book called *The Persistence of Sentiment: Display and Feeling in Popular Music of the 1970s*, and he has a chapter about Karen Carpenter, so yesterday, I took a look at that. I thought about Karen and this song and

everything. And I was like, all right, I got to really figure out what this means to me. So the thing about Karen Carpenter is that she died very young from heart failure, um, because she had anorexia and she was one of the first people to really publicly go through that.

And it's brutal to watch interviews with her and documentaries about her, 'cause she wholeheartedly denies it there, you know, treatment was not great at this time. Public knowledge was not there. And then she has this beautiful, really deep, rich voice, basically coming out of this, like, dying frail body. And I don't mean to be so dark, but it's like, I mean, when I was, like, going through the same struggle that she went through, it was just, it was insane to think about her life. And like, I don't know. I just, I get, I get emotional about these things. 'Cause it reminds me of my mother and reminds me like how disappointed my mother was in me when I was really sick and, you know, thinking about Karen Carpenter and her singing the song and then my mother singing the song to me, there's just a lot in there. But, um, what I wanted to comment on were two things. So first off in, um, in Mitchell's chapter, he talks about how Karen Carpenter is miked really close to her mouth. Like, it sounds like you're standing right next to her. Like she's just whispering in your ear, which sort of evokes this nurturance, and also this, like, eroticism that he writes about, sort of where, I mean, he sort of compares like, the way that the singer's mouth adapts to your imagination too, like the way that a mouth might adapt to another mouth when they're kissing. Just a thought. But, so there's that element where I don't think it's too hard to read into this song and her voice. I don't think it's too hard to read, like, a love into it. Like whether it's an erotic love or a motherly love. The second thing being the sort of discordance between her body and her voice. So yeah, I guess first off you can feel free to respond to either question here, but thinking about, like, how the voice can evoke intimacy, if you want to respond to that, or like technologies for recording can evoke intimacy. The other thing would be how the knowledge of the destruction of her body affects the way we hear her voice, given that her body is sort of always present in our mind when we hear recordings, I'm sort of thinking about like, the loss of her body, the loss of her life, the loss of childhood, if this was a song that you grew up with too, as well as like the loss that is inherent in recordings. So if you don't want to address such a dark



topic, um, no worries. But yeah, I was wondering like also, do you guys have any connection to this song or to The Carpenters? I think sentimentality is also a good thing to bring in here. That's the whole reason Mitchell writes about her. That's all I have. Thanks.

**Gabe:** I think my mom told me that this was like a song for her and my dad. I don't know if it got played at their wedding or something, but I know that she really loved the song. I remember when it appeared in the Simpsons movie, she was like, *Oh my God*, like way back in 2007, I even remember that. I was like, *Oh my God*, that song, um, that might've been the first time it had appeared to me. It is a masterpiece. It wasn't just through, like, pop culture, like, osmosis or whatnot. It was actually like, *Oh, I'm hearing this song now*. I'm hearing it for the first time, and it's like, *Oh my God*. But I think, yeah, there's, there is this intimacy created in the way that they record her voice. And I think for me, the human voice is like the most special instrument, and I can say that because I'm a singer, but I also play other instruments and people are too hard on singers. Singing is not easy. We all know this. It's hard to get good at it, and it's really hard to capture the voice correctly because, you know, I mean, you do lose a lot of inherent quality that you would get in a room, uh, when you are recording someone so close, miking them so closely. You're getting a lot of breath and you're getting a lot of, uh, what I like to call what are called I think the resonators, you know, your teeth and your gums and you hear those things a lot more. They're a lot more present and you hear breath and many more elements present when creating the sound of the human voice singing. I think they did such an excellent job of, like, the only way you could get any closer was if you were, if she sang the song right in your face. Even if you saw the song played live, it would not be the same experience because there's a lot more space probably between you and the artist now.

But with this, you take that little piece of music, put it on your CD, or you put on a playlist on your Spotify or whatnot, and you hear it. And it just immediately, it's like, um, her voice just comes in and it's right there. It's very present and very like, your attention is lush as the orchestration is for this piece of music. Your attention is on, I think, on her voice the entire time. It just draws you in so easily. Also, to comment on your second question, cause I, I too did a lot of thinking on this one. I was talking about Billie Holiday, um, for

one of my presentations, how much we project onto musicians, especially when we have the after knowledge of where they were at the time of recording certain pieces of music and how that influences how we interpret those pieces of music.

You know, we can end up projecting a lot of things that might not be the case. Might not be why the person is singing the way that they are singing. You know, we tend to want to believe that like, these performances are so good because the people performing them are alive through those songs. As beautiful as some recordings are, sometimes people just go in and they can do it. Like they don't even have to think about it. It's just, they're there. Sometimes people get very into...it creates such a close relationship between them and their performance of a song that it becomes a bit of, I think a personal, you know, reflection, but also it's like, um, you know, you can make a personal reflection of anything if you really want it to. It's just, uh, I think songs also just have a particular, uh, power because, you know, you hear them. So you hear them in there, they're in your ear and then they're out your ear pretty quickly, I'd say, for a majority of pieces of popular music. But the resonance of it just stays with you a lot longer. And I mean, nowadays, it's a lot easier to go back to music and just listen to it over again, repeat a song, uh, one after another. Back in the day when this song was probably released, you had the whole record and you played that record and the song would come on and you could always skip to it, pull the needle and like, do that, but you know, it's a bit different. That creates a different dynamic between you and the music, I think. But it's, yeah, we do end up putting a lot of like this pain and this kind of like self-destruction onto the song, whether or not it needs to be there, but I also think that like the music, if it's going to serve a purpose, uh, it needs to serve the purpose that you, that you want it to do, what you want to get out of it. And it's, it's difficult to try to hear things completely unbiased, or completely without context, because context will always be there and will always influence how you interpret.

**Ashley:** Um, before I was even, like, conscious about the close miking thing and like, breath as music, when I was younger, I related to Karen's voice a lot, like Liv said, it's very maternal and loving and I associate her voice with love. And as I grew up, I actually used to get made fun of because of how low my voice was.

And they'd be like, *Oh, you're a girl, but your voice is so low. And it's so ugly.* Like, I was an Alto. In preschool, like my voice was just always really low and I always had to adjust my voice and make it sound like I was talking in my head voice like this, and I've always had to exaggerate it. And I even struggle with that today. Um, I find myself talking in my head voice a lot and adjusting the pitch of my voice. And I didn't feel secure about it until really this year. So Karen's voice was just, it's so beautiful and so widely praised for its loneliness and its richness. And I just love her so much because of that, because it was someone I could look to as inspiration and feel more secure about myself.

**Allison:** So just briefly going back to how, Liv, you were talking about, she was miked, like really close and it was just really close, it reminded me of a conversation that we were having in 127 last week about ASMR and how like, because like, I dunno if you guys have watched ASMR or listened to any ASMR, but, like, how the mic is so close, and so like, because of like that distance, it feels like super intimate to the point of where like...ASMR is obviously like, stigmatized as, like, really weird. And people don't want to listen to it because I don't know, they think it's, like, too intimate or something, but I don't know. That just reminded me of that. And as far as, like, my associations with the song, I actually, on a regular basis, listen to Frank Ocean's version, which samples Stevie Wonder's talk box version of "Close to You". So it's like a completely different vibe. And it also has, like, completely different lyrics as well. But I feel like, because of my associations with "Close to You" by The Carpenters, I get the same...like that it's sampled, then like sampled again, I get, like, the same feelings, like, evoked through it, even though it has a completely different sound. And it's really only, like, the similarities are, like, present in the background noise and, like, the very last line of the song. So, yeah. I just thought that was interesting as I was listening to it.

**Jennifer:** So the song I chose was "The Louvre" by Lorde because I feel like it just, like, captures this feeling of infatuation and, like, falling in love with someone for the first time. And, like, I love how the chorus just, like, delves into this, like, dreamlike sequence. And, like, the beat almost sounds like a really fast heartbeat to me, like illustrating these really intense feelings of love. And then I also love the ending because it's just, like, so dreamy and it just feels really

reflective. And it's nostalgic to me, because it's like, I feel like it's like the perfect soundtrack to, like, reminisce on, like, memories you've had with someone, or like, maybe, like, fantasize about memories you could have with someone. So I was just wondering what kind of emotions the song evoked for you guys.

**Allison:** I also really liked the ending. I wrote, like, it's simple and it fades, like it could go on forever, and this is really corny, but that's kind of how love is. Like, it can go on forever. And I also thought the ending was like, kind of, not a big, but, like, a contrast to like the rest of the song as a whole, and so in that sense, it, like, stood out. It stood out to me 'cause it was just really intimate and, yeah, I'd never heard this song before, 'cause I don't really listen to Lorde, but yeah, it's great.

**Gabe:** I thought the lyrics are pretty spectacular. I also, uh, I've never really given Lorde the chance. No, not for any bias against her, just usually it's, um, I'm not the biggest fan of Jack Antonoff as a producer, but this was certainly a really interesting piece of music where, especially at the part where it's, you know, "megaphone on my chest, broadcast the boom, boom, boom," there's something, I dunno, very hypnotic about it. And very, like, I just wanted to keep hearing that being repeated over and over again. I just wanted to lose myself in it. And I'm going back to what I said previously about the lyrics. I think she was fairly young when this album was released and with this song being on the album, it's really interesting to kind of see how she's writing about love, how she's kind of writing about this relationship with this person. "Summer slipped us underneath her tongue / Our days and nights are perfumed with obsession." Like, this is, like, some pretty interesting visual imagery, as well as, like, just, I think, a very unique, like, I don't know if I've heard lyrics describing a relationship with someone quite in the way that she does it, you know, so it's really a very interesting piece of music, especially because it just doesn't have the sounds that I usually associate with a love song. It's kind of nocturnal and a bit dark and heavy, you know? But obviously, this is a very dark and heavy subject that she's dealing with. But yeah, it's a really beautiful, really moving, piece of music.

**Ashley:** Yeah, I loved the lyrics too. Like I was never a huge Lorde fanatic. I have to admit, I used to think it was "Lordy". So I'd be like, "Lordy, Lordy, Lordy, love her so much." And the part where she's

like, um, we're art and we're in the back of the Louvre but it's still the Louvre, I really liked that part. And it's like, she's capturing her relationship through the lens of a third person watching and how she's seeing her relationship from the outside and seeing how beautiful it is and how it's grown, I thought that was really special. Yeah, it was just really pretty. And it wasn't like the type of love where it's like, *Ask Mommy for permission or Daddy for permission! Do they like them?* It was like, *No, it's just us eloping. We're traveling the world and it's dark and bright at the same time.*

**Liv:** It feels so incredibly young and sincere, and I love that, because that's how I feel. And there's also this sense that I think before, *before I knew what love was*, I, I was like, *Oh, I can, I can talk about this*, and then I, I feel like after that, I was like, *Yeah, I just keep repeating myself. I just don't even know what to say. I'm just full of these ridiculous little overly sincere, um, sound bites.* And I feel like that is reflected here. It also reminds me of "Us" by Regina Spektor, same energies. It's...I love this, like, wholehearted type of love song.

**Ashley:** So pretty cheesy, but I chose "Let It Be" by The Beatles because when I grew up it was The Beatles or it was The Carpenters, like pick one. So I just have so many childhood associations with that song, and it really isn't an overt love song. But when I think of that song, I think of love. When I think of love, I think of that song, and it's a song that takes me really far back in my childhood. Like it's one of the first songs I ever remembered. Or when I was young, like I have very vivid memories of listening to it and being two years old and being in like, running around the garage when my dad's working on stuff. So I used to have like this little toy, I forgot what it was called. It was like my music center. And it was like a little red keyboard, like about a foot or a little less than two feet long. And it was just a toy, like it made frog sounds and made dog sounds. You could record yourself, playing a simple melody on it and play it back to you. And one of the songs that I had was "Let It Be," which is really odd because all these songs were in the public domain, like "Jingle Bells" and like, random folk or American traditional songs, and then there's "Let It Be," no idea how they got past that when it comes to, like, licensing and stuff, but it did. And that was one of the first times I ever touched anything piano, and obviously I ended up playing the piano and

“Let It Be” [has a] really strong piano presence. And I knew that if I ever learned to play piano, I would want to learn that song.

And I guess it was a really special way for me to connect with my dad, because a lot of our parents in the area I'm living in are immigrants that fled from the Vietnam War and there's intergenerationality, there's a passing on of trauma. There's me having bad memories of a war I never grew up with and I never lived through and it's there, it's present in our community. It's everywhere. And it's something we talk about all the time and we're not able to say specific words and specific dialects, or have specific flags flying because of it, and “Let It Be” was just a way for me to feel content and really connect with my parents, because it was a way I could connect with them without having a clash in, like, politics, which is obviously something we clash a lot about, or just traditional values, customs, all those sort of things. And I just have really early memories of it.

So for Paul, he had a dream. It was before The Beatles were breaking up, but he could sense that it was happening. So he went super hard, like he's partying hard, he was clubbing. He was drinking and smoking a lot, I believe. And he had a dream that his mother Mary came to him and told him that it was all right, and to just let things be and to be content and let things happen. And then people think this song is really religious, like, especially with like the chord progressions, like “Amen” all over the place. But for him, it was just him and his mom, so it's really beautiful. Just seeing from his story, how so many people have different associations with it, and I have associations with that song 'cause of childhood, my dad and Paul's voice and The Beatles themselves. I just loved them so much. I always wanted to be a Paul, but the older I get, the more I realize I'm a John and the more other people tell me that I'm a John, um, whatever, both are amazing. I love them though.

So, obviously, like we've all lived through traumatic and terrible times and that song was always what I turned to, because it wasn't something that preached toxic positivity, which I absolutely despise seeing on social media, like, *Just be happy, like who cares about trauma? Just move on. Don't think of it that way. You should be happy. Make sure you're living this way. Make sure you're not looking at this*, and lifestyle gurus, like, spitting stuff at me, like, no, I need to see both. Like, life is a spectrum. I can't just limit myself to all the happy parts or else

I'm going to feel empty and I don't want to feel empty. So that song tells me to just allow things to happen, but also to not be a victim of my circumstances so that I can reflect on it. And you guys probably already know, like I'm a total Slytherin, like, I'm super ambitious and I let that ambition take advantage of me to the point where I'm living way too far in the future, or I'm living way too far in the past where I'm just reflecting and doing so much introspection that life is really just passing me by. So listening to that song really puts me back into the moment and it gives me a sense of love because it makes me feel content and it makes me absorb what's going around me right now. It's a way for me to collect my senses and, sorry, like this might be getting a little heavy, but I guess my biggest question for everyone here is, do you think love at its essence, is it defined...[is it] really like a singular sort of love or are there multiple different types of loves? And just for me, I guess what I'm trying to express with this song is that all love is the same for me, at its root. If I had just looked deep enough, it's the same exact feeling. It doesn't matter. Whether it's romantic, if it's parental, if it's with my siblings, my dogs, it's all the same. And another holistic question, I guess, regarding all of these songs, is, has your song changed for you over time? Because I know "Let It Be" has, especially, like, I'm 19 now, and obviously it means something very different to me than when I was two, I was probably thinking about, like, random crap. I don't even remember. It's too hard. Too much about -- I was thinking about when I was two, because it probably wasn't coherent. So, yeah, those are the questions I have for everyone here.

**Gabe:** I remember, probably, my first memories of music were The Beatles too. I remember screaming lyrics to, like, "Yellow Submarine" out the window of my car and kind of like, that was the [moment], like, when I was like five or four and I was like, I want to pursue music as like, the thing I want to do with the rest of my life. And it hasn't changed since then. And I have a lot of, you know, my parents, uh, bringing me up and raising me on this and buying me those CDs that essentially, you know, it's like this interesting relationship you create with, um, I don't know if your parents are, uh, are influencing your tastes and showing you music, if music is an important aspect of their lives, they're probably going to give to you what they were listening to when they're younger. But as you know, now that I think about it a lot, um, how my parents were

both born in the 50s, so they're a bit older, and were alive when all this music was coming out for the first time. And so it must have been a very interesting thing. You know, when I was like in the early 2000s, just a young little cat, and, and they were buying like The White Album and stuff on CDs, and, like, playing it must've been such like...they would have been that age when they were first hearing that music. I think like, as you're talking about...you get older as the songs mean different things, I always, um, will have, like, a good portion of a year, like, or every couple of years, will have a good portion of whatever year it is, where I'm just like listening to everything that The Beatles did for a while, just 'cause I'm, like, listening with fresh ears and listening to it with a different kind of...being a different person than I was, you know, a couple of years before or, less, a changed person than I was. But, um, I think for me, the love comes in a lot of different forms. I think I've had love for things in a lot of different ways. And it's an emotion that I think is both. I want to be able to express more and express how I feel about things and express this kind of, uh, you know, it's hard to describe love besides being loved, but, you know, just express that, kind of that appreciation for something or someone, but also, you know, at times can be a very heavy thing to deal with when you are, you know, falling for someone or falling out of love with someone or kind of managing, you know, that. When I think, when I've split up with people, it's kind of this acknowledgement...and then when it really affects me, it's like, obviously I do care about this person a lot, things aren't working, and it's better that we separate then for us that continue to destroy, like, whatever relationship we may have left. Um, but it's interesting how it's like, it's to me, it's like...the love that may have started this relationship has, it's now transformed into something different where it's like, obviously I've been with this person for a good amount of time and shared a lot of, at least however long it had been, shared that with them, shared that portion of my life. And they showed that portion of their lives with me, um, some in some way. Um, but how that kind of, that, that initial feeling kind of transforms in even one year, like, feeling less close to someone, feeling like this kind of, this gap, or like, you know, the space that is being created, um, how you may still feel love, but it's going to be, for me, at least, it's a bit different, a bit more melancholic, maybe in a bit more like, obviously this person has been a very important part of my life and has been, uh, just



there. But it's not in the same way that it was, I guess. If that makes any sense.

**Allison:** I'm trying to gather my thoughts. I feel like for me, all of the different types of love that I experienced, they all feel very different and I can pinpoint how well, not like I can't describe them necessarily, but when I feel them or when I'm, well, I mean, 'cause you're always, you're always feeling love. If you have love for anyone or anything, that's like a constant thing. But like when I'm acknowledging that I'm feeling love, um, for a certain person or thing or group or whatever, I can feel that it's different than like another type of love that I have. I don't know if this makes sense. But one thing I feel is that like the loss of that, like, person or thing, like the pain always feels the same. Like, no matter like, whether it was like a family member or like a friend or like an experience or something like that, it always feels the same. And it's always really, it, it sucks, but, um, yeah. I don't know if that makes sense. And for, for "Let It Be," I like, like you had said, it's like, not explicitly like a love song, but like I had never thought of it that way until you like sent it in the chat. And I was like, *Hmm*, because I associate this song with like going out to like my local karaoke spot with my friends and then just like playing this song and like screaming it, even though it's not like a screaming type of song, but so yeah, I guess I associate it with pre-pandemic karaoke and in that sense, like listening to it made me think like, *Wow, I really, like, loved those times and those people and those moments*. And it also got me thinking, like, can like love and nostalgia be like, synonymous to an extent? Because like, I mean like everything from the past is like, with nostalgia, so like, romanticized. And so like...I don't, I'm literally not making any sense, but yeah.

**Jennifer:** Um, Allison, I can kind of relate to what you were saying, because, like, I used to think of love as a very, like, nostalgic kind of thing. Like, I always felt nostalgia for the past, like with friends and things like that, but I'm trying to, like, move past that and like live more in the moment and live in the present. I feel like "Let It Be" kind of captures that same message, because it's just about, like, basically, like, everything happens for a reason, so just, like, let it happen. Cause like, what will happen will happen. So yeah, I liked the uplifting message of it and, yeah, it's a great song.

**Liv:** “Let It Be” was my third grade teacher's favorite song, I think. And he would just play it incessantly. Like every Friday, we would get up and sing “Let It Be” or something. So that is, yeah, that's another, like, nostalgic interpretation of love. This is just like a brief thought on the different kinds of love. I think after thinking while everyone was talking, I arrived at like, yeah, I do experience different kinds of love, but then it's like little different, like, spheres or pockets of love that are sort of combined onto certain people or certain experiences like, you know, domestic, like family love, friendly love, romantic love, and, you know, you can put all of those on, put them on people and things in as many combinations as you like. I feel like that's the best way to explain it. ‘Cause like with a romantic partner, I feel like it's just like all the kinds of love. You're like, oh, they're your friend, and you know, you want to live with them and they're your family and then you...romantic love. So that's why it could be intense because it's like, all different kinds of love converging, but that was just my thought on that. But go Beatles!

**Gabe:** Well, I just wanted to say thank you all for sharing these beautiful pieces of music. You know, I think, like we talked about previously, or like I talked about previously, is that, all these songs cover quite a range of experiences and places that people have been when they are in love or falling out of love and have successfully made it into our lives and you know, maybe helped us to interpret this very complex feeling. And, you know, I think one thing to keep in mind, though, for me at least, is, you know, love songs are love songs. They aren't love in maybe a way that we usually think about it. But, you know, the love songs, like I said before, I think some of the greatest songs ever written are love songs, and there's a reason people keep writing them, because we all want to keep listening. And, you know, hopefully that will be the case for this crazy little, uh, experiment we call the human experience. But I hope everyone has had a really good night. I certainly have, and, you know, just love getting to hear other people talk about their favorite pieces of music, because you know, music is awesome and, you know, we're in a very good place to be talking about music. So, yeah.