

Activity	The Worst Song I Ever Loved
Aim/ Key learnings	<i>Participants will explore creative responses to music and take part in a creative non-fiction writing activity</i>
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group activity for teens or adults • A professional development activity to encourage innovative thinking and especially alternative ways of approaching music collections
Preparation and Materials Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recordings of bad songs • Writing materials (For the Fictionary Ice Breaker) • A dictionary
Duration	As required

Outline

This game is based on Matt Finch's TWSIEL and Daniel Nester's The Worst Song I Ever Loved.

It is a writing activity suitable for a writer's group, for a library looking to engage people with its music collections (for example, it could be made into a community writing competition), or as part of a broader cultural festival like Fun Palaces.



Need further information?

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How to Play

Break the ice and warm up the participants with a round or two of Fictionary – a guessing game where players try to bluff false definitions from a dictionary.

The main activity is to explore the question: What was the worst song you ever loved?

You can prime the participants by playing them some songs which might be considered bad, alongside writing about those songs. In the test version of this activity in Parkes, NSW, we played Bob Dylan's *Masters of War* alongside Greil Marcus' *Stories of a Bad Song*; and Barry Gibb and Barbra Streisand's *Guilty* alongside [this blog post by Bob Stanley](#).

Participants then brainstorm as many song titles as possible to get a feel for the sort of songs they might discuss before narrowing in on a particular song, and beginning to consider key questions:

- Why did you/do you love this song?
- When, where, why, and how, did you realise you fell in love with this song? What did you do back when you loved this song? Activities? Friends you hung out with? What kinds of clothes was I wearing when I heard this song? What group of friends did I have? Did I dance to this song?
- Did you know the song was terrible then, or did someone take you aside and convince or remind you of it being terrible? Or did you not realise until years later?
- Do you still love this song; even though it is now considered horrible/not hip/differs from your current tastes?
- When and how did I realise or teach myself that this was the worst song I ever loved?

Now give the writers time to either create a short piece of writing, or present notes outlining such a piece.

This game is adapted from TWSIEL / The Worst Song I Ever Loved and used with permission.

Need further information?

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