

12/6/25



Boomers, Millennials, and Gen's X-Z,

As we last left it, I was preparing to vacate my home of San Diego. A mysterious offer had presented itself at we'll just say, a *challenging* time. However, decisions from my past life came back to haunt me, and the decision became much simpler. It is with great remorse I offer an apology for breaking my perfect attendance record (something I actually fought for every year of my adolescent life, but alluded or otherwise escaped me for K-12) and not sending out a November 2025 ROTM. Of course I could offer a delayed release, and complete one retroactively. But that honestly just wouldn't sit right with me. In some twisted, roundabout way, I do try and keep a moral code about my own mental quirks. This started as a group for me to share my musical taste with the younger generation, and those closest to me. It then kind of evolved into an effort to provide quintessential classic albums that I believed should be staples in anyone's record collection – records that never really made their way to the top of the purchase list but deserved a spot in anyone's rotation. Slowly but surely, it has returned to its original form of me sharing my taste in music with those closest to me, and whoever else may randomly stumble on to DanAmatoArt.com's Record of the Month page. All that said – my choice for the ROTM is often based on what I'm feeling or going through that month. Depression Cherry may have been a solid choice for November 2025, had it not already been previously selected.

I decided that after 10 years in the Whale's Vagina, it was not just my own, but the universe's decision to turn the page, and start a new chapter. However, contrary to most structured literature – I have no idea where this chapter will lead me. Upon leaving San Diego, I spent a week floating around Joshua Tree. Recovering – mentally *and* physically – from the move out process, learning how to eat again, catching my breathe, and putting distance between myself and what did in a way end with a funeral but is yet to be classified as a tragedy. This much needed escape from reality allowed me to collect myself (and re-pack my car) enough to head to Texas. I spent two weeks in Denton, attempting to settle into a temporary situation. Unfortunately, this just didn't check the nurturing, recovery, or healing boxes I needed in an environment at this time. I packed about 50% of what I'd brought to Texas hastily in my tired 2011 Ford Edge SEL and headed East. I landed with some close friends in Huntsville, AL for a few days, but ultimately felt the call of what once was, and headed north to New York. Props to my amazing, loving, and very confused dog, for powering through a full cross-country pilgrimage, not throwing up in the car once, and taking in all the head-out-the-window scents the southern half of American has to offer. I'm not sure that he's 100% settled into New York, but he's certainly handling the sub-20-degree weather better than I.

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Despite NY being the state in which I've existed longer than any other – I've never actually had the chance to live as an adult in NYC. I'm not sure this is in fact the plan, but I must say that I truly felt drawn here. It's all been one hard, impossible, and slightly disappointing choice after the other for about a month, so I hope the reader can understand that deciding a record of the month to match the energy I've been carrying just wasn't the healthiest choice, for me. I did, however, have some sort of an "everything you've ever done has led you right here to this very moment" moment the other day. An epiphany of sorts, in which I believe my healing was finally, truly able to begin.

So, in the spirit of unconventionally arriving at exactly what I needed to start a new chapter, let's do something different to tie off this rollercoaster of a year. As many readers may know – I am consistently ranked as a top **1% in the world** Spotify listener. Yes – that is an actual stat. As of the third quarter of 2025, Spotify has ~713 MILLION monthly active users. So yeah, I can confidently say I am a *music guy*. Another interesting stat – fewer than 1% of the human population has completed a marathon, and your boy has completed **2**. So, between the Spotify usage and the Marathon stats – I truly am a once in a lifetime guy.

This year, I'd like to share my **Your Top Songs 2025** Spotify Playlist with you all. I get that this may come across as lazy – I don't have to breakdown an album in full, cheap – I don't have to purchase a record for active subscribers, or corny – despite my lack of social media presence, I am still aware of the stigmas associated with Spotify Wrapped sharers across multiple platforms. The last thing I want to be is a Facebook Mom, but I do believe this playlist fits the bill in this instance.

While there are certainly some surprises throughout this 100-song-long playlist – such as Kanye and Paul Wall's *Drive Slow* cracking the Top 10 – this playlist does really cover a lot of ground in terms of my range in taste. Chock full of *Daft Punk*, *Jay-Z*, *A\$AP Rocky*, *Fred Again*, *Caroline Polachek*, and *Mac Miller* – this playlist gives the listener a window in who, and what I am. As a music guy – a lot of my personality comes from things I hear, and subsequently, feel. In a year of ups, downs, and all-arounds, several assumptions can be made:

1. I've been searching for something
2. I've needed injections of confidence quite frequently
3. I've gone back to my roots in areas of unsuredness
4. I've embraced nuances, advancements, and growth
5. **The more things change, the more they stay the same**

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While this month's write up quite literally features my 100 most played songs, in order of plays – I'd like to offer the user a "spark notes" of the playlist, and offer right here and now, my own Top 20 songs of the recorded 100. My personally ranked Top 20 are as follows:

1. Digital Love – Daft Punk
2. Hold Tight London – The Chemical Brothers
3. New York – Rufus du Sol
4. One More Time – Daft Punk
5. Idioteque - Radiohead
6. Never Ending Math Equation – Modest Mouse
7. I Will Possess Your Heart – Death Cab for Cutie
8. On The Beach – Caroline Polachek
9. Seen It All – Jeezy, Jay-Z
10. Alive Alone – The Chemical Brothers
11. This Must Be the Place (Naïve Melody) – The Talking Heads
12. Radiate – The Chemical Brothers
13. Destiny – John Talabot
14. Love Shy – Electricque Boutique Mix – Kristine Blond, Electricque Boutique
15. Althea – 2013 Remastered – The Grateful Dead
16. Strobe – deadmau5
17. The Story of OJ – Jay-Z
18. Funny Papers – Mac Miller
19. Firestarter – The Prodigy
20. Easy Goodbye – Emma Louise, Flume

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I hope the approaching 2026 year brings the reader (and myself) a sense of clarity, prosperity, adventure, and passion. In an ever-changing world, it is more important than ever to have a sense of direction that you believe in. A purpose. Something to work for, that challenges you to step out of your comfort zone. To break down barriers, be strong, brave, honest, and true. To do what you yourself may not even believe you are capable of. Life, and the world, are truly what you make it. You are the only one that can prevent you from attaining what you want. You are the only one that can set limitations that hinder your growth. And you, are the only one that can take what's yours, change the game, and control your destiny.

Keep it Surreal,

Dan Diego



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Past ROTMs:

November 2023: Desire, I Want to Turn Into You – Caroline Polachek

December 2023: Depression Cherry – Beach House

January 2024: MTV Unplugged Live from New York – Nirvana

February 2024: Actual Life 2 – Fred Again..

March 2024: Music from the LOTR Trilogy – The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra

April 2024: Greatest Hits: Volume 1 – James Taylor

May 2024: Hybrid Theory – Linkin Park

June 2024: Ursa Major – Third Eye Blind

July 2024: Live 1997 – Daft Punk

August 2024: White Ladder, Live in Austin – David Gray

September 2024: Tidal – Fiona Apple

October 2024: Kid A – Radiohead

November 2024: Alive 2007 – Daft Punk

December 2024: Ten – Pearl Jam

January 2025: Balloonerism – Mac Miller

February 2025: Ceremonials – Florence + The Machine

March 2025: Narrow Stairs – Death Cab for Cutie

April 2025: Pang – Caroline Polachek

May 2025: 4:44 – Jay-Z

June 2025: Third Eye Blind – Third Eye Blind

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July 2025: Live from Joshua Tree – Rufus Du Sol

August 2025: Magic – Bruce Springsteen

September 2025: Push the Button – The Chemical Brothers

October 2025: Mac Miller – NPR Tiny Desk

November 2025: LEAVE OF ABSENCE

December 2025: Your Top Songs 2025 – DanDieg0