Exploring the Soundtrack of Happiness: The Influence of Music on UNC Asheville Students

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Abstract

This project explores the types of music, specifically individual songs or musical pieces, that most significantly contribute to the sense of happiness among the Spring 2025 student body at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. I conducted surveys in two phases to gather demographic information, students' self-assessments of their happiness while listening to a set of songs, and qualitative data on what factors contribute to a song's perceived happiness. In the first phase of surveying, respondents shared songs that made them feel happy, and based on these results, I selected seven songs that best represented the collective data to use in the second survey. In the second phase, respondents listened to the selected songs and self-assessed their levels of happiness before and after listening to each song. Findings indicate that pop music is most strongly associated with happiness, with rock, hip-hop, and other groove-based types of music following closely behind. The majority of the chosen songs were upbeat and in a major key, which aligns with common perceptions of happy music. Also in the second phase survey, students were asked two open-ended questions following the survey surrounding their thoughts on music and happiness. It was noted that most students did not need the lyrics of the song or the sound of the song to have a happy intent, as long as the song had something that gave it a happy feeling to the listener. The results of this study can serve as the foundation for future research into how different musical genres and specific tracks can influence emotional well-being. By examining the relationship between music and happiness, we aim to better understand the role music plays in shaping the emotional experiences of the campus community. These findings also contribute to broader conversations about the psychological effects of music in general, especially among this age demographic.

Introduction

Music has a powerful influence on human emotion. It can send chills up your spine, make you cry, smile, or bring you back to your childhood. Over the years, the advancement of technology has allowed us to take music on the road, going from Walkmans to iPods to mobile phones. As music becomes increasingly mobile, we can escape what is happening in the world, be provided comfort, and add a soundtrack to our lives (Potter, 2020). For college students in particular, music can serve as a method of self-care. College students work to balance many commitments between school, independent projects, part-time employment, and personal life, all at a time when their sense of self is still developing. Professors notice these things in their students and wonder how to care for their students effectively (Field, 2023). Through all of this, music can be a way for people to alleviate their mood during stressful circumstances or relax after tense experiences.

On a personal and professional level, music has always been something that has made me happy. Whether it's playing my instrument or listening to music in the car, I can always find something that sparks joy. As a performing musician, I work to ensure the proper feeling and expression is translated to the listener through the use of dynamics, modality, and rhythm, as I've learned that when one listens to music, those

aspects can either draw them in or deter them; it depends on what the musician tries to accomplish. Studying the connection between music and the communication of feeling has been a focal point of my undergraduate degree program, which spurred me to engage with this study.

This project has evolved from a juncture in my life as I look beyond an undergraduate music degree into postgraduate music therapy studies. As an aspiring music therapist, I want my future patients to find comfort in music. I am interested in music therapy because it can help with the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social needs of people through music. Music therapy's applications are wide-reaching; examples include refining motor skills by learning how to play instruments (Ragone et al., 2021), developing group socialization skills by playing in an ensemble (Eren, 2015), or alleviating stress and pain by listening to music, for example, patients experiencing chemotherapy found a decrease in pain after going through music therapy (Tang et al., 2021). In this project, I wanted to engage specifically with how people can feel happiness and comfort simply by listening to music.

This project explores the types of music, specifically individual songs or musical pieces, that most significantly contribute to the sense of happiness among the Spring 2025 student body at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. I elected to focus on happiness because understanding one emotion is the key to managing emotional well-being. People enjoy talking about what songs they like, which was a further incentive for them to participate in my surveys. As a college student myself, I have observed peers listening to their music as a form of comfort, walking to class or in their free time, and I was curious about the effects music had on their moods, both from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. To gather these types of data, anonymous surveys were used as the method of information gathering. They offered flexibility and accessibility for responses, as compared to focus groups.

Instead of using pre-made top 10 lists or Billboard's Top 100, I wanted the songs in Phase 2 of my survey to have music that was representative of what college students actually listened to. Through an initial round of anonymous surveys, data were collected on songs that make the student body happy.

Background

Past studies used various methodologies to examine music's capacity to induce happiness, several of which I adapted for use in this project. The scholarship examined three main areas: emotional responses to music, preferred genres, and how happiness and sadness are embodied in music.

A study from 2009 by Peter Hunter measured the quality of emotional reactions elicited by various pieces of music. Hunter found that participants have happy feelings when listening to music with faster BPMs (beats per minute) and in a major key, and sad feelings when listening to music in minor keys with slower BPMs (Hunter et al., 2010). Lunqvist researched whether or not music changes the emotion of the person listening and found that the listener tends to experience the feeling associated with the song (Lunqvist et al., 2008). Mori and Iwanaga examined whether lyrics can change the emotional perception when the lyrics change to have sad or happy lyrics. They also

tested translated songs. Mori found that regardless of the nature of the lyrics, the piece of music induced a sense of pleasure in the listener (Mori & Iwanaga, 2013).

A study by Gürgen looked at Turkish university students' levels of preference for different genres of music. Gürgen found that men and women had different preferences in styles of music and that overall, the Turkish students who responded had a greater affinity for Western music (Gürgen, 2016). Potter examined what genres of music college students listened to through the decades, from the 1960s to the 2010s. It was found that musical preferences have not changed significantly throughout the years, with students primarily listening to pop, hip-hop, rap, and alternative (Potter, 2020).

Ferrari's research on classical music examined what makes different pieces sound happy, such as what baseline is used, how the scene is set and orchestrated in an opera, and how the rhythm is interpreted by the listener (Ferrari, 2013). Hunter's research used scales to identify the emotional perception of each piece of music he played for the participants (Hunter et al., 2010). Dharani used the Oxford Happiness scale and the STOMP test to determine correlations between happiness and preferred music. It was found to have a significant relationship (Dharani, 2020). My study uses the definition from Sutton's article "What is Happiness? Understanding the Happiness Paradox" on happiness: "experiencing the combination of positive feelings, satisfaction, joy, and purpose." I used a modified version of this definition when designing the criteria for my survey (Sutton, 2024).

Delimitations

This study does not aim to learn the best or worst song. It uses music that was selected in Phase One of my research to achieve a relevance of time and place among the UNC Asheville student body. I have structured this research to methodically pick music, free from personal bias. With that goal in mind, I had to rely on my expertise and judgment to determine if the chosen music was suitable for my study. Some decisions had to be made regarding initial song choices that were selected and had to be cut down due to time limitations.

Methodology and Results

In order to study the types of music, specifically the individual songs or musical pieces, that most significantly contribute to the sense of happiness among the Spring 2025 student body at UNC Asheville, the project was broken into two distinct phases. Phase 1 consisted of the initial survey, which asked anonymous UNCA student respondents to submit three songs that made them happy. From this data, songs were chosen for Phase 2, where anonymous student participants rated the chosen songs based on how the songs impacted their happiness levels.

Because this project has a multi-stage process, the methods and results sections of this paper will be organized by phase. Phase 1 and its results will be discussed first because the results from that phase directly relate to the methods of Phase 2. The results from Phase 2 encapsulate the overall results for the whole project.

Overall Procedure for Data Collection

Phase 1: What songs make UNCA students happy?
- Created Phase 1 survey
- Distributed Phase 1 survey
- Collected Phase 1 results

Phase 2: Do these songs elicit happiness in UNCA students?
- Analyzed Phase 1 results
- Created Phase 2 survey
- Distributed Phase 2 survey
- Collected Phase 2 results
- Analyzed Phase 2 results

Phase 1 Methods

The Phase 1 survey asked participants to list three songs that made them happy according to the definition "experiencing the combination of positive feelings, satisfaction, joy, and purpose" (Sutton, 2024).[1] In order to form a personal connection with the participants and their happiness, all songs were chosen by student participants. At the end of the survey, participants were asked to select the genres they listened to and to list any not represented.[2] The results from this portion were gathered to see what people generally listened to regularly.

Sampling for Phase 1 of the project was done in various ways. The survey was handed out on paper with the QR codes, emailed to classmates, handed out in the Highsmith Student Union, sent to class group chats, and distributed to peers to send it to their contacts.

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[1] Reference Appendix A for the survey.
[2] Reference Appendix D for results.

Phase 1 Results

Group Name	Genres	Observations
Pop (55 Songs)	Alt-Indie	Repeated song: "Pressure to Party" by Julia Jacklin. Popular Artists were: Billie Eilish (3 songs), Chappell Roan (2 songs), Jack Johnson (2 songs), King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard (2 songs), Taylor Swift (2 songs), and AJR (2 songs)
	City Pop	
	K-Pop	
	Pop	
	Pop Rock	
Groove-Based (30 Songs)	Hip Hop	Popular artists were: Kendrick Lamar (4 songs), Doechii (2 songs), and Latto (2 songs)
	Rap	
	R&B	
Rock (40 Songs)	Alt-Rock	Repeated song: "505" by Arctic Monkeys. Popular artists were Disturbed (2 songs), Fleetwood Mac (2 songs), Gorillaz (2 songs), VIOLA (2 songs), Talking Heads (3 songs)
	Metal	
	Math Rock	
	New Wave	
	Rock	
Soundtrack (12 Songs)	Game Soundtrack	*How to Train Your Dragon* (3 songs), Disney (3 songs), Video Games (2 songs)
	Movie Soundtrack	
	Musicals	
Instrumental (10 songs)	Classical	No matching data, the two Chopin pieces were listed by the same person.
	Jazz	
	Soundscape	
American Roots (11 songs)	Alt Folk	No matching data.
	Country	
	Folk	
Other (6 songs)	Peruvian Cumbia	No matching data.
	Religous	
	Russian Pop	
	Russian Folk	

Figure 1. Observations from the songs given in the Phase 1 survey and their associated genres and groups.

A total of 69 responses from participants were collected. Of the songs submitted for Phase 1, there was not a significant amount of overlap or commonality in the selections. The most popular genres were Pop and Rock. Because there were so many unique submissions, any repeats in artists or genre might seem significant. However, as the researcher, my goal was to balance the data to represent the selected population. If the same person submits the same artist twice, a tilt in the balance might superficially

skew the results. Based on the results of Phase 1, the Phase 2 methodology was developed.

Phase 2 Methods

The goal for the Phase 2 survey was to learn about the impact a representative sample of songs from Phase 1 had on respondents' happiness levels.[3] Once results were collected from the Phase 1 survey, all songs were put into a chart and labeled with a genre (see Figure 1). There were 27 genres listed in total. Each genre was assigned under a more prominent umbrella, resulting in 7 categories: **Rock**, **American Roots**, **Other**, **Instrumental**, **Pop**, **Soundtrack**, and **Groove-Based**.

Two songs stood out in the Phase 1 results, as they were the only two to be named twice in the data by unique individuals: "505" by Arctic Monkeys and "Pressure to Party" by Julia Jacklin. To select the other songs for the Phase 2 survey, a combination of random selection and informed decisions based on musical characteristics was used.

Group Name	Song
Pop	"Pressure to Party" by Julia Jacklin
Groove-Based	"i" by Kendrick Lamar & "Funny Thing" by Thundercat
Rock	"505" by Arctic Monkeys
Soundtrack	"For the Dancing and the Dreaming" (*How to Train Your Dragon 2*) By Gerard Butler, Craig Ferguson & Mary Jane Wells & "Resort Island: Can You Feel the Sunshine?" (Sonic R) by SEGA and Richard Jacques
Instrumental	None
American Roots	"Amazing Grace" by Reba McEntire
Other	

Figure 2. Songs that were picked and their associated genre grouping for Phase 2.

For the Phase 2 survey, students were asked to listen to seven songs picked from the first survey's results. After listening to a song, participants were asked a series of questions about their reactions to the chosen song. Previous studies have had respondents listen to 30 seconds of music (Hunter et al., 2010), but this survey had participants listen to each song in its entirety to fully evaluate the song's effectiveness on happiness.

Following the songs, participants were asked the following open-ended questions to understand students' viewpoints on music and happiness qualitatively.
1. Does music need to sound happy for it to be happy?
2. Do song lyrics need to have a happy connotation for you to feel happy?

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[3] Reference Appendix B for Phase 2 survey.

At the end of the survey, participants were asked to select the genres they listened to and to list any not represented.[4] The results from this portion were gathered to see what people generally listened to regularly.

Sampling for Phase 2 of the project was done in various ways. The survey was handed out on paper with QR codes, emailed to classmates, handed out in the Highsmith Student Union, posted on the anonymous posting forum, YikYak, sent to class group chats, and distributed to peers to send it to their contacts.

Phase 2 Results

The second phase survey collected responses from 45 students, who were not necessarily the same as those from the first survey.

	How happy does this song make you? (Averaged out of 5)	How happy does this song SOUND? (Averaged out of 5)	How much do you like this song? (Averaged out of 5)	Do you know this song? (Percentage responded "Yes")
"505" by Arctic Monkeys	3.578	2.822	4.273	79%
"Amazing Grace" by Reba McEntire	2.822	2.867	2.909	90%
"For the Dancing and the Dreaming" (*How to Train Your Dragon 2*) By Gerard Butler, Craig Ferguson & Mary Jane Wells	3.644	3.818	3.75	42%
"i" by Kendrick Lamar	3.933	4.222	3.911	31%
"Pressure to Party" by Julia Jacklin	3.533	3.089	3.733	16%
"Resort Island: Can You Feel the Sunshine?" (Sonic R) by SEGA and Richard Jacques	3.867	4.822	3.341	27%
"Funny Thing" by Thundercat	4.022	3.889	3.933	62%

Figure 3. Averaged ratings out of 5 for each song in three categories, along with how well the song was known in a percentage.

For the question regarding the previous recollection of the song, I assigned a numeric value of 1 to the "Yes" response, 0 to the "No" response, and 0.5 to the "Maybe" response. By doing this, I was able to see how well-known the song was, based on how close the results were to either 0 or 1. The closer to 1 the result was, the more known the song was. I then averaged all of the numeric values assigned to the slider bar for the happiness ratings: "How happy does this song make you?," "How

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[4] Reference Appendix E for results.

happy does this song SOUND?," "How much do you like this song?," and the initial happiness and final happiness ratings located at either end of the survey.

Key Findings and Discussion

Analyzing effects on human emotion is a big task. An even bigger task is arriving at conclusive evidence that is understandable and can be interpreted. One research finding was a mood increase from the beginning to the end of the survey. This shows that the music listened to positively affected the listener. The initial average rating started at 3.222 out of 5 and ended at an average of 3.911. This is approximately a 21% mood increase overall. 66.67% of the respondents reported a higher rating, 26.67% reported staying the same, and 6.67% reported a lower rating than the starting rating relating to their individual happiness.

Phase 1 wholly discarded any expectations I had for the results. When designing the project, I had expected participants to list popular songs, which would inevitably cause overlap in the data. This would have made Phase 2's methodology much simpler. However, the variety of music listed means the campus is diverse in its listening habits, which is also shown in the number of genres submitted.[5] The most popular genres were pop and rock. This leads to the following observations for Phase 2, where I examined the impacts of a selection of songs yielded from Phase 1.

Musical Analysis and Connections to Data

"Pressure to Party" by Julia Jacklin was listed twice in the Phase 1 results. This is interesting because only 16% of participants from Phase 2 knew that particular song. This shows some disconnect between Phase 1 and Phase 2. "Pressure to Party" also had scores of around 3 for all three categories: how much the song made people happy, how happy the song sounded, and how much people liked the song. This song most likely got these ratings because of the lack of change in the song. It stayed at a constant level of loudness and did not have many repeated phrases throughout the song.

Overall, based on the data received, "Funny Thing" by Thundercat is considered to be the "happiest" song of the songs studied. It had a rating of 4.022 out of 5 for how happy the song made participants, a 3.889 rating out of 5 for how happy the music sounded, and it was liked 3.933 out of 5 for how much the song was liked. The lyrics talk about wanting to have fun on top of a funky beat that is quite catchy to most audiences.

"Resort Island: Can You Feel the Sunshine?" from Sonic R by SEGA, Richard Jacques was considered to sound the happiest, with a 4.822 rating out of 5. With 27% of the participants knowing the songs, it shows there wasn't a bias for known songs. "Resort Island: Can You Feel the Sunshine?" most likely got a high rating for how happy it sounded because of its nostalgic factor. It is reminiscent of older video game soundtracks that most of us grew up listening to.

The most liked song was "505" by Arctic Monkeys. On the scale for how much a student liked the song, it received an average rating of 4.273 out of 5. This song was

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[5] Reference Appendices D and E.

found to be the least happy song out of the seven choices. This shows that songs can be liked without making the listener happy. This Arctic Monkeys song gained popularity on the social media app TikTok in 2020, which is a possible explanation for its familiarity. Its grunge-like quality has been popular since its 2007 release.

The most well-known song was Reba McEntire's "Amazing Grace." However, it had the lowest scores for all three categories: how happy the song makes you, how happy the song sounds, and how much the song is liked. This shows that even well-known songs aren't always favored. This is most likely due to its religious quality. While there are individuals on campus who have religious beliefs, the atmosphere is primarily secular.

The two songs that elicited similar responses were "For the Dancing and the Dreaming" by Gerald Butler, Craig Ferguson, and Mary Jane Wells, and "i" by Kendrick Lamar. They all scored high 3s, except the Lamar song had a low 4 in the how happy the song sounds category. The *How to Train Your Dragon* song was more well-known, which surprised me because of Kendrick Lamar's popularity. Lamar's song had a more consistent happy energy than the *How to Train Your Dragon* song. "For the Dancing and the Dreaming" had a slow start to the piece because of its theatrical use in the story.[6]

Open-Ended Questions Discussion

The last part of Phase 2 was the open-ended responses. The first question asked if the music needs to sound happy to be happy. 78% of the respondents said it did not need to sound happy, listing reasons like memories associated with particular songs, how the song relates to the listener, and interpretations of the music. The rest of the respondents who answered yes said the song does need to sound happy and listed reasons like the beat and tempo that were important to them.

The second question asked respondents if the lyrics needed a happy connotation for a song to be happy. Almost 96% of the respondents said the lyrics did not need to be happy. This shows in the data as well. Kendrick Lamar's "i" has a really happy beat with some uplifting lyrics, but the song's overall message is that the world is a harsh place. The participants noted that a good beat can make even sad lyrics sound happy. Interestingly, this seems to contradict what 78% of participants answered in response to the first question, "Does music need to sound happy for it to be happy?" My interpretation of the data for how the music sounds is that listeners gravitate toward the groove and beat of any particular song. With that being said, I do think it matters to listeners how the song sounds based on responses from both questions.

Limitations

There are a couple of reasons why the research may not have garnered the most representative results. Since the research was conducted through surveys, we could not control whether or not respondents listened to the selected music all the way through or if they listened to the music in a quiet space, as the directions stated. This could impact the results by not giving the respondents enough time and quiet to evaluate how the music made them feel fully. Another limitation is the compounding effect of the music.

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[6] Reference Appendix F for full breakdowns of each song.

There was nothing built into the survey that served as a "palette cleanser" to create the mental space needed to judge the subsequent songs beyond the written directions, which participants could have ignored.

This survey is not representative of the whole campus due to the inability to reach out to the entire student body. Only 45 people of 2,925 current UNC Asheville undergraduate students responded to Phase 2's survey, which is only 1.5% of the undergraduate students on UNC Asheville's campus.[7]

It is also possible that a majority of the participants for both Phase 1 and 2 were music majors, since that is the group of students I am closest to. However, since the majors of the participants were not collected, it cannot be said for sure. This can influence the results by not gathering a diverse group of students.

Happiness in music is only one facet of the emotional intensity music can evoke. It is possible that happiness was not the only emotion felt when listening to the selected songs, which could also influence results.

Conclusion

This project explores the types of music, specifically individual songs or musical pieces, that most significantly contribute to the sense of happiness among the Spring 2025 student body at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. While a specific song was never found to establish which song ever written had the highest impact on happiness (frankly impossible), it was found that most students prefer pop and rock when finding songs that make them feel happy. It was also found that each of the songs studied had different aspects that made them happy; for example, the of "Funny Thing" is probably due to its beat and happy-sounding lyrics. Some songs might sound happier than others, while others may like songs that don't necessarily make them happy. UNC Asheville's campus has a wide variety of musical tastes, which made this project particularly interesting.

The power music has over individuals because of its emotional value or its recollective nature will be studied for many years; this project captures information from just one time and place. For future research, observing a group of participants for an extended period of time with daily logs to learn about listening habits might be a more nuanced way to approach this kind of research question. It would also be fruitful to study other emotions and their effects on listeners and have a wider variety of music to listen to. Overall, this project has solidified how important music is to UNC Asheville students and how responses to music can represent a college campus identity.

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[7] See UNC Asheville's Key Facts and Figures webpage

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Appendix A
Phase 1 Survey

Demographics

Are you a UNCA student?

○ Yes

○ No

When will you graduate? (Spring/Fall and Year)

When will you graduate? (Spring/Fall and Year)

Age

Song Choices

For the next three text boxes, please pick three songs, one in each box, that makes you feel objectively **happy**. These songs do not need to "sound happy" or have "happy lyrics."

For the purposes of this survey please define **happy** as "experiencing the combination of positive feelings, satisfaction, joy, and purpose."

Song Choice One. Title and Artist

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Song Choice Two. Title and Artist

Song Choice Three. Title and Artist

Genre Preferences

Please select genres that you listen to. These labels are broad overviews that encompass many sub-genres. If there is a genre not listed, there is a text box at the bottom of the section.

Please select from the following list.

☐ Alternative

☐ Anime

☐ Avant-Garde/Experimental

- ☐ Blues
- ☐ Children's Music
- ☐ Classical
- ☐ Comedy
- ☐ Country
- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Disney
- ☐ Easy Listening
- ☐ Electronic
- ☐ Enka
- ☐ German Folk
- ☐ German Pop
- ☐ Fitness and Workout
- ☐ Folk Music
- ☐ Hip-Hop
- ☐ Holiday
- ☐ Indie Pop
- ☐ Industrial
- ☐ Inspirational - Gospel & Christian
- ☐ Instrumental
- ☐ J-Pop

- [ ] Jazz
- [ ] K-Pop
- [ ] Karaoke
- [ ] Kayokyoku
- [ ] Latin
- [ ] Metal
- [ ] New Age
- [ ] Opera
- [ ] Pop
- [ ] Rap
- [ ] R&B/Soul
- [ ] Reggae
- [ ] Rock
- [ ] Soundtrack
- [ ] Tex-Mex/Tejano
- [ ] Vocal

Please list any other genres not included.

Powered by Qualtrics

Appendix B
Phase 2 Survey

Informed Consent

If you would like a copy of the consent form, please download it
from the following link

[Consent form](#)

I consent to be a part of this study

○ Yes

○ No

Initial Happiness

On a scale from 1-5, 1 being the worst ever mood to 5 being the happiest I can be, what is your initial mood before starting this survey?

For the purposes of this survey please define happiness as the combination of positive feelings, satisfaction, joy, and purpose.

|	1	2	3		4	5
Please select a rating			○			

Happiness

Do you know this song?

○ No

○ Maybe

○ Yes
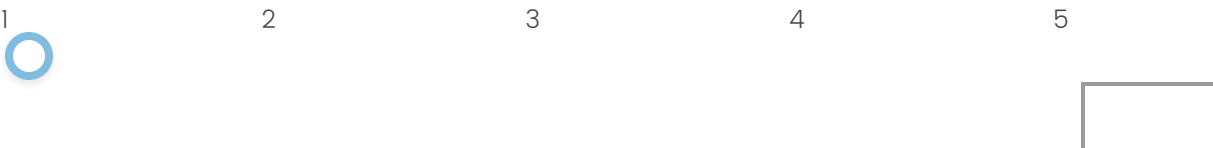
How happy does this song make you?

For the purposes of this survey please define happiness as the combination of positive feelings, satisfaction, joy, and purpose.

	Extremely unhappy	Somewhat unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Somewhat happy	Extremely happy	
	1	2	3	4	5	
Please select a rating	◯					☐
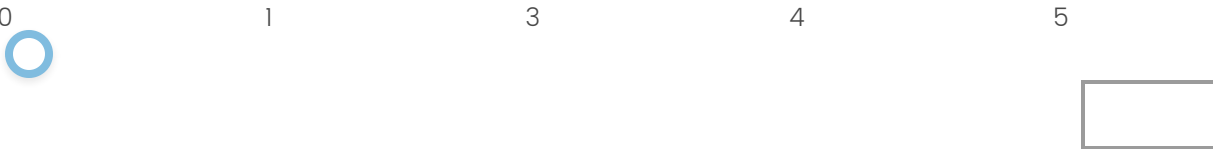
How happy does this song SOUND?

	Extremely unhappy	Somewhat unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Somewhat happy	Extremely happy	
	0	1	3	4	5	
Please select a rating	◯					☐
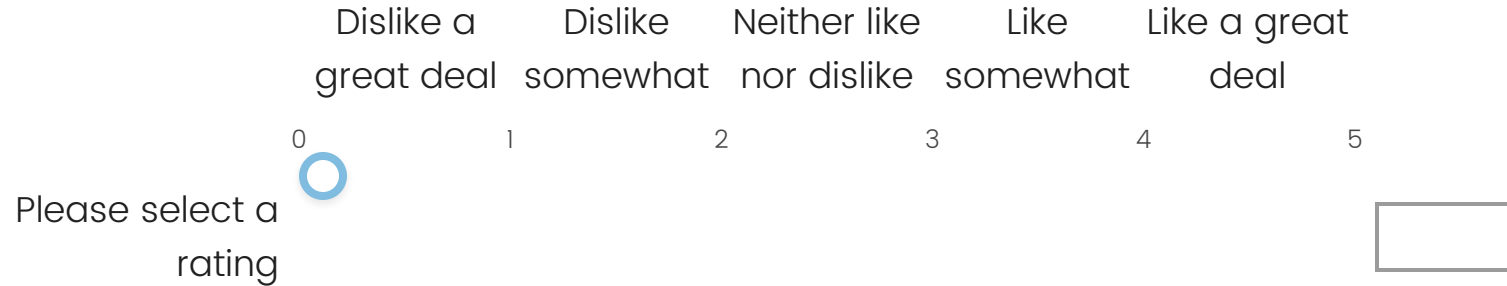
How much do you like this song?

	Dislike a great deal	Dislike somewhat	Neither like nor dislike	Like somewhat	Like a great deal
	0	1	2	3	4	5

Please select a rating

Conclusion Discussion

Does music need to sound happy for it be happy? Explain to the best of your ability.

Do song lyrics need to have a happy connotation for you to feel happy? Explain to the best of your ability.

[text box]

What is your mood after listening to the selected music?

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please select a rating ⃝

[text box]

Genre Preferences

Please select the genres you listen to. These labels are broad overviews that encompass many sub-genres. If there is a genre not listed, there is a text box at the bottom of the section.

Please select from the following list.

☐ Alternative

- ☐ Anime
- ☐ Avant-Garde/Experimental
- ☐ Blues
- ☐ Children's Music
- ☐ Classical
- ☐ Comedy
- ☐ Country
- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Disney
- ☐ Easy Listening
- ☐ Electronic
- ☐ Enka
- ☐ German Folk
- ☐ German Pop
- ☐ Fitness and Workout
- ☐ Folk Music
- ☐ Hip-Hop
- ☐ Holiday
- ☐ Indie Pop
- ☐ Industrial
- ☐ Inspirational - Gospel & Christian

- ☐ Instrumental
- ☐ J-Pop
- ☐ Jazz
- ☐ K-Pop
- ☐ Karaoke
- ☐ Kayokyoku
- ☐ Latin
- ☐ Metal
- ☐ New Age
- ☐ Opera
- ☐ Pop
- ☐ Rap
- ☐ R&B/Soul
- ☐ Reggae
- ☐ Rock
- ☐ Soundtrack
- ☐ Tex-Mex/Tejano
- ☐ Vocal

Please list any other genres not included.

Demographics

Are you a UNCA student?

○ Yes

○ No

When will you graduate? (Spring/Fall Year)

Age

Powered by Qualtrics

Appendix C
Phase 1 Data

Title	Artist	Genre	Grouping
Queencard	(G)I-DLE	K-Pop	Pop
Excursions	A Tribe Called Quest	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
Chiquitita	ABBA	Pop	Pop
World Outside	Abstract, Hits Different	pop	Pop
2085	AJR	Pop	Pop
Burn the House Down	AJR	Pop	Pop
Ordinary	Alex Warren	Pop	Pop
Back to Black	Amy Winehouse	R&B	Grove-Based
Heart Don't Stand a Chance	Anderson .Paak	R&B	Grove-Based
Honey, I'm good.	Andy Grammar	Pop	Pop
505	Arctic Monkeys	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
505	Arctic Monkeys	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Detroit	Badflower	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Someone to you	Banners	Pop	Pop
Not even once	Benjamin William Hastings	Religious	Other
Love on Top	Beyonce	R&B	Grove-Based
They Don't Know	BigXthaPlug	Rap	Grove-Based
Birds of a Feather	Billie Eilish	Pop	Pop
Lamour De Ma Vie	Billie Eilish	Pop	Pop
lunch	Billie Eilish	Pop	Pop
The Last Goodbye (The Hobbit)	Billy Boyd	Movie Soundtrack	Soundtrack
Uptown Girl	Billy Joel	Pop	Pop
Besties	Black Country, New Road	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Maria	Blonde	Rock	Rock
Bekhauf	Bloodywood, BABYMETAL	Metal	Rock
Hooked On a Feeling	Blue Swede	Pop	Pop
Sweet In The Morning	Bobby McFerrin	Jazz	Instrumental
Holy Ghost	BØRNS	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Mo Chicken	BossMan Dlow, French Montana	Rap	Grove-Based
Wachito Rico	Boy Pablo	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
I Always Wanted A Brother (Mufasa)	Braelyn Rankins, Theo Somolu, Aaron Pierre	Movie Soundtrack	Soundtrack
Gratitude	Brandon Lake	Religious	Other
Boot Scootin' Boogie	Brooks & Dunn	Country	American Roots
Respect	BTS	Pop	Pop
Ruby, Are You Mad at Your Man	Carolina Chocolate Drops	Folk	American Roots
Home to You	Cate le Bon	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Red Wine Supernova	Chappell Roan	Pop	Pop
Pink Pony Club	Chappell Roan	Pop	Pop
Ballade no.1 in G minor op.23	Chopin	Classical	Instrumental
Nocturne in Eb Major	Chopin	Classical	Instrumental
Our House	Crosby, Stills, and Nash & Young	Rock	Rock
Wandering Under the Moon	Dan Romer, Joe Pingu	Country	American Roots
Rich Girl	Daryl Hall and John Oates	Pop	Pop

Title	Artist	Genre	Grouping
Bleach	Dexter and the Moon Rocks	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Come on Eileen	Dexys Midnight Runners	Pop	Pop
Money for Nothing	Dire Straights	Rock	Rock
Down with the Sickness	Disturbed	Metal	Rock
The Sound of Silence	Disturbed	Metal	Rock
LSE	Divino Niño	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
NISSAN ALTIMA	Doechii	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
Multiply	Dora Jar	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Guarda Come Donodolo	Edoardo Vianello	Pop	Pop
Ptolemaea	Ethel Cain	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
In a good way	Faye Webster	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Die With a Smile	FJK	R&B	Grove-Based
Gypsy	Fleetwood Mac	Rock	Rock
Dreams	Fleetwood Mac	Rock	Rock
Broken Jaw	Foster the People	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Nights	Frank Ocean	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
My Way	Frank Sinatra	Jazz	Instrumental
For The Dancing And The Dreaming (How to Train your	Gerald Bulter, Craig Ferguson, Mary Jane W	Movie Soundtrack	Soundtrack
Rats	Ghost	Metal	Rock
Ikariotiko	Giannis Parios	Russian Pop	Other
Aries	Gorillaz	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Humility	Gorillaz	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
It's No Fun	Grace Enger	R&B	Grove-Based
Free Now	Gracie Abrams	Pop	Pop
Eyes of the World	Grateful Dead	Rock	Rock
Kill v. Maim	Grimes	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
You'll Always Find Your Way Back Home (Hannah Mont	Hannah Montana	Movie Soundtrack	Soundtrack
Dreamboat	Hiatus Kiyote	R&B	Grove-Based
Someone New	Hozier	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Banana Pancakes	Jack Johnson	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Bubble toes	Jack Johnson	Pop Rock	Pop
Blue Bossa	JJ Johnson Quintet	Jazz	Instrumental
Forbidden Friendship (How to Train your Dragon)	John Powell	Movie Soundtrack	Soundtrack
The Downed Dragon (How to Train your Dragon)	John Powell	Movie Soundtrack	Soundtrack
Death Korps of Krieg	Johnathan Young	Metal	Rock
There Are Other Ways (EPIC: The Musical)	Jorge Rivera-Harrens	Musical	Soundtrack
Pressure to party	Julia Jacklin	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Pressure to party	Julia Jacklin	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Devil in a new dress	Kanye West	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
euphoria	Kendrick Lamar	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
Mr. Morale	Kendrick Lamar	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
tv off	Kendrick Lamar	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
I	Kendrick Lamar	Hip Hop	Grove-Based

Title	Artist	Genre	Grouping
C'mon	Kesha	Pop	Pop
Let Me Mend the Past	King Gizzard and Lizard Wizard	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Catching Smoke	King Gizzard and Lizard Wizard	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Holy War	King810	Metal	Rock
Good Friend	Kudo	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
Diet Mountain Dew	Lana Del Rey	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Georgia Peach	Latto	Rap	Grove-Based
Big Mama	Latto	Rap	Grove-Based
Deceptacon	Le Tigre	Rock	Rock
Meet Me In The Woods	Lord Huron	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Elsa	Los Destellos	Peruvian Cumbia	Other
Color Your Life (Persona 3 and 4)	Lotus Juice	Game Soundtrack	Soundtrack
Cake	Lupe Fiasco	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
Thrift shop	Macklemore	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
Lean On	Major Lazer	Pop	Pop
Dream a Little Dream of Me	Mammas and the Pappas	Folk	American Roots
I see the light (Tangled)	Mandy Moose and Zachary Levi	Movie Soundtrack	Soundtrack
OH! TENGO SUERTE	Masayoshi Takanaka	City Pop	Pop
Hallucinogenics	Matt Maeson	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Break My Stride	Matthew Wilder	New Wave	Rock
Need it	Migos, YoungBoy Never Broke Again	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
Know Who You Are (Moana)	Moana	Movie Soundtrack	Soundtrack
Pans labyrinth lullaby (Pans Labyrinth)	Moomietroll	Movie Soundtrack	Soundtrack
Plug In Baby	Muse	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Nice to Meet you	Myles Smith	Pop	Pop
Pocket full of Sunshine	Natasha Bedingfield	Pop	Pop
Homesick	Noah Kahan	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Counting Stars	One Republic	Pop	Pop
Hey ya!	Outkast	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
Nine in the Afternoon	Panic! At The Disco	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Heart Breaker	Pat Benatar	Rock	Rock
Naughty boy	Pentagon	K-pop	Pop
Poof	Phillip Lassiter	Jazz	Instrumental
Sweet Tea	Polyphia	Rock	Rock
Bicycle Race	Queen	Rock	Rock
Bless the Broken Road	Rascal Flatts	Country	American Roots
Tippa My Tongue	Red Hot Chili Peppers	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
Ariel Ramirez	Richard Buckner	Folk	American Roots
Resort Island: Can You Feel the Sunshine (Sonic R)	Richard Jacques	Game Soundtrack	Soundtrack
Take The A Train	Richard Tee	Jazz	Instrumental
Duke Ellington	Sammy Miller Congregation Band	Jazz	Instrumental
Good Life	Sammy Rae & The Friends	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
A Bar Song	Shaboozey	Country	American Roots

Title	Artist	Genre	Grouping
Take Me Back to Eden	Sleeptoken	Metal	Rock
Turn My Swag On	Soulija Boy	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
Penguin isle by stereocity	Stereocity	(Math) Rock	Rock
Springtime Again	Sun Ra, His Arkestra	Soundscape	Instrumental
making flippy floppy	Talking Heads	New Wave	Rock
nothing but flowers	Talking Heads	New Wave	Rock
This Must Be the Place	Talking Heads	New Wave	Rock
Moth Wings	Tape	Soundscape	Instrumental
The Last Time	Taylor Swift	Pop	Pop
New Romantics	Taylor Swift	Pop	Pop
Third Coast	Teezo Touchdown	Rap	Grove-Based
Marbles	The Amazing Devil	Alternative (Folk)	American Roots
Yellow Submarine The Beatles	The Beatles	Rock	Rock
Shine a little light by the black keys	The Black Keys	Rock	Rock
Outstanding	The Gap Band	R&B	Grove-Based
Mr. Brightside, The Killers	The Killers	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Always Then	The KVB	Alternative (Indie)	Pop
My Blue Heaven	The Smashing Pumpkins	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Wake Me Up	The Weeknd, Justice	R&B	Grove-Based
We're Going to be Friends	The White Stripes	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Funny Thing	Thundercat	R&B	Grove-Based
Plastic Jesus	Tia Blake	Folk	American Roots
Forty six & 2	Tool	Metal	Rock
Wine or the Weather	Tophouse	Folk	American Roots
Dancing in the Moonlight	Toploader	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Dicked Down in Dallas	Trey Lewis	Country	American Roots
Trees	Twenty-One Pilots	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Balloon	Tyler the Creator, Doechii	Rap	Grove-Based
Wobble	V.I.C.	Hip Hop	Grove-Based
Brown Eyed Girl	Van Morrison	Classic Rock	Rock
Count what you have now	Vantage	City Pop	Pop
Wish It On Your	VIOLÀ, AViVA	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
Drinking With Cupid	VOILÀ	Alternative (Rock)	Rock
W Pieśni Modlitwa Słowain	Volhv Ridnovir, Percival Schuttenbach	Russian Folk	Other
Amazing Grace		Religious	Other

Appendix D
Phase 1 Genre Preferences

Genre	Percentage of Participants	Number of Participants
Rock	73%	41
Pop	70%	39
Indie Pop	68%	38
Alternative	66%	37
Hip-Hop	64%	36
Rap	59%	33
R&B/Soul	50%	28
Instrumental	48%	27
Jazz	43%	24
Classical	39%	22
Country	39%	22
Soundtrack	39%	22
Dance	38%	21
Electronic	38%	21
Folk Music	38%	21
Latin	34%	19
Blues	32%	18
Metal	32%	18
Avant-Garde/Experimental	25%	14
Vocal	23%	13
Anime	20%	11
Disney	20%	11
New Age	18%	10
Reggae	18%	10
Easy Listening	16%	9
Fitness and Workout	16%	9
Industrial	16%	9
Holiday	14%	8
Comedy	13%	7

Genre	Percentage of Participants	Number of Participants
Inspirational - Gospel & Christian	9%	5
J-Pop	9%	5
K-Pop	9%	5
Opera	9%	5
Children's Music	7%	4
Karaoke	4%	2
German Folk	2%	1
German Pop	2%	1
Tex-Mex/Tejano	2%	1

Appendix E
Phase 2 Genre Preferences

Genre	Percentage of Participants	Count
Pop	84%	42
Rock	78%	39
Alternative	76%	38
Hip-Hop	66%	33
Indie Pop	66%	33
Rap	62%	31
R&B/Soul	56%	28
Soundtrack	48%	24
Electronic	46%	23
Instrumental	42%	21
Metal	42%	21
Jazz	36%	18
Punk	36%	18
Classical	34%	17
Dance	34%	17
Video Game Music	34%	17
Blues	32%	16
Folk Music	32%	16
Anime	28%	14
Country	28%	14
Ambient	26%	13
Disney	26%	13
J-Pop	20%	10
K-Pop	20%	10
Avant-Garde/Experimental	18%	9
Comedy	18%	9
Easy Listening	18%	9
Goth	18%	9
Latin	18%	9

Genre	Percentage of Participants	Count
New Age	16%	8
Screamo	16%	8
Vocal	16%	8
Reggae	14%	7
Holiday	12%	6
Opera	10%	5
Children's Music	8%	4
German Pop	8%	4
Fitness and Workout	8%	4
Tex-Mex/Tejano	8%	4
Karaoke	6%	3
Inspirational - Gospel & Christian	4%	2

Appendix F
Phase 2 Musical Breakdown

Song	Tempo	Key	Form	Key Features	Other Notes
"505" by Arctic Monkeys	140 BPM	D Dorian	Chorus, verse, verse, chorus, verse, chorus	Voice disortion, second half is heavier than the first half in terms of orchestration and volume	This is a love song about going back to a place that makes you happy.
"Amazing Grace" by Reba McEntire	80 BPM	C Major -> C# Major	Chorus, verse, verse, chorus	Bended notes on acoustic guitar, ornamental singing	Rhythm of lyrics does not change between verse and chrous. Lyrics talk about God's Grace in saving people.
"For the Dancing and the Dreaming" (How to Train Your Dragon 2) by Gerard Butler, Craig Ferguson & Mary Jane Wells	76-188 BPM	C Major/A Minor	ABBBC	Whistle melody. Instrumentation includes: flutes, choir, drums, claps, tambourine, and high strings. Comic relief in third voice.	Love song between husband and wife. Uses themes from other parts of the movie franchise. Song does not follow strict tempo, ebbs and flows with the singers.
"i" by Kendrick Lamar	120 BPM	C Minor	ABABACB'DE	Funky rhythm, distored guitar, rhythmic singing	Lyrics talk about self love in a harsh world.
"Pressure to Party" by Julia Jacklin	142 BPM	E Major	AAABCB	Heavy electric guitar. Constantly repeats "Pressure." The song doesn't change much melodically or chord-wise.	Love song about being nervous in social situations.
"Resort Island: Can You Feel the Sunshine?" (Sonic R) by SEGA and Richard Jacques	114 BPM	G Major	ABCABCDECA'C	Heavy synth use reminiscent of old arcade games.	Uplifting lyrics with short and boucy articulations.
"Funny Thing" by Thundercat	110 BPM	G Major	ABAB	Funky bassline, reverb and synth	Wispy singing, lyrics talk about wanting to be with a person and have fun.

Figure 4. Musical breakdown of all of the songs included in Phase 2.