

This isn't an essay on what I listen to, per se, but rather, how I can and will cycle through intensity, familiarity, identity, and brutality over a rather short amount of time. I have not exclusively written about music or Heavy Metal much in depth since my July 2024 blog, [The 80 Metal](#). I was attempting to explain my complicated tastes in Heavy Metal from that point of view of the summer of 2024. I was explaining the love I have for those bands, albums, songs and their impact on me during that time. 40 bands, 80 songs, filtered through a post-pandemic-era rediscovery where time expanded just enough to let new music in a little deeper. It was structured, intentional, almost archival in nature. A snapshot of what stuck to my ears during that time. Snapshots can lie by omission. They freeze motion, and in doing so, erase the system underneath—the repetition, the return, the quiet gravitational pull that keeps certain sounds in orbit long after the first hit fades or was even a hit at all other than your own preferences and why one or many love/hate this song, full record or band at all.

To actually see what I was doing instead of what I thought I was doing, I had to go outside of Spotify itself. I pulled this data using a third-party tool, [Stats for Spotify](#), which exposes metrics the base app doesn't bother showing. Top bands, most played jams for the past year, and the last 50 recently played songs—instead of the handful of surface-level entries Spotify feeds you through the app. It's not perfect, but it's close enough to reveal patterns. That's all this needs to be. From here, this isn't about ranking or building another "Top" list. This is a breakdown of behavior. The constants, the rotations, the repeats, and the outliers—what stays, what fades, what comes back, and what never really leaves at all.

Top Bands

The bands below are a mixed bag. If you know them or not really depends on whether or not you consider yourself a Metalhead and what Non-Metal bands one listens to. Now, there are whole online discussion groups of what constitutes what a Metalhead actually is, but for this breakdown we will stick to the basics. If you listen to Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Metallica, Sepultura, Pantera, Slipknot, Korn, Devil Driver. You qualify. If you listen to Disturbed, Five Finger Death Punch, Falling in Reverse, Bring Me the Horizon and Asking Alexandria. You still qualify, but just barely. Insert jackass smiley face here. Basically, if it's got distortion in the guitars, fast double bass drumming, some clean bass with a combination of aggressive vocals, it's Metal. At least for this essay. We are talking about my random tastes here and why this/that resonates with me for what reason. The band lists are broken up into 3 separate lists. Top bands for the last 4 weeks, 6 months and 1 full year. We can only talk about so many of them, but if anyone that reads/watches this wants to know why I like one band/song over another. Just let me know. I will gladly tell you. I take my personal tastes in music pretty seriously. I can explain to a degree why I like this song or band over another. A lot of these are constants while some have increased in frequency due to that band's new album and touring cycle.

Avatar

No, not the really long movies with blue alien thingys. Avatar is a hard band to pin down to what to call them as far as what subgenre of Heavy Metal to categorize them as. They don't really belong in just one. Their style falls somewhere in the middle of Melodic Death Metal, Groove Metal, Alternative Metal, Avant-garde Metal, with a pinch of Americana sprinkled in there. When I first started listening to the band I didn't know they were from Sweden. They sounded, "too Americana," to be from there, but lo and behold they are. Their earlier material was definitely Melodic Death Metal, but as some records and tours passed, they refined their sound to more along the lines of Groove and Alt Metal that appeals to a broader audience. Their late 2025 release,

"Don't Go in the Forest," has been proving to be a real top tier record for 2026. The title song, "Don't Go in the Forest" is amazing. Has a great melody and caught me right away. Then I heard an acoustic version of the song and I am not sure which one I like better. "In the Airways" is another banger on the record and "Captain Goat" really showcases how the band can be way more than just another heavy band. They bring a lot of range and have a tendency to be extremely memorable live. At some point they will come close enough by me so I can board the train to Avatar Country.

Zakk Wylde/Black Label Society

How can I not talk about the living legend. The last of a long line of Old School Rockers, now considered more a relic of a gone by age. However, none of that is actually true. I still remember the first time I heard that first riff on the music video for "Crazy Babies" in 1988. I was hooked on Zakk Wylde after that and I was barely 10 at the time. Zakk Wylde and his band Black Label Society have been busy with a new record for 2026 and it's probably the best Hard Rock record this year. Is it Metal? Sure. Is it Hard Rock? Also, sure, why not? Zakk checks all the boxes. He was Ozzy's guitarist from 1988-1997 before he started taking time away from Ozzy to do Black Label Society. Zakk had already been on his own with Pride and Glory and his solo album "Book of Shadows," which is one of my all-time favorite records cover-to-cover. The last decade or so Zakk started a new band called Zakk Sabbath. Basically, Zakk and friends just play nothing but Ozzy era Black Sabbath tunes and its amazing. I got lucky enough to see a show in October of 2016. The man played nearly 2 and a half hours nonstop. Coming out into the crowd and just melting faces one solo and squeal after another. Black Label Society's new record, "Engines of Demolition," has so many stand out songs on it that you need to just go and listen to the whole record. I am a firm believer of the full-length album and with how records and streaming are today. We get more extended play releases, 4 to 5 song mini-albums, and single song releases, over the full-length record. However, it is making a comeback. The final song on the record, "Ozzy's Song," was written for the legend, Ozzy Osbourne. May he rest in peace. Zakk Wylde does it all. He played with Ozzy. Helped Pantera do reunion shows so the people could enjoy Pantera again. He gives us an awesome Sabbath tribute band as a real tribute. All the greatness that is Black Label Society and his own solo/acoustic stuff that makes you feel like the 1970s classic era of Rock all over again. If you don't have something from Zakk in your attack. Are you even a Metalhead?

Gideon

Gideon started as a Christian Metal band but have since transitioned into Nu-Metalcore & Southern Grit. Nu-Metalcore and Southern Grit is a mashup of rhythmic, "bouncy" grooves and aggressive vocal delivery of Nu-Metal with the raw intensity of hardcore punk. It is characterized by a "stomping" Southern attitude and high-energy breakdowns that emphasize rhythmic muscle over the traditional melody. Gideon has a "what if Pantera came out today," sound.

Hirie

Hirie is one of those oddities for my musical choices. It's now May 2026. Beach and pool weather here in South-West Florida. Hirie is both a single artist and a band name. Hirie is not Heavy Metal. Their music is mainly R&B with an emphasis on pop-reggae, ska, and dub, characterized by angelic sounding melodies, sophisticated horn arrangements, and a chill vibe. There are songs that have a more Rocky/Sublime-feel but usually stays inside the R&B/Reggae/Hip-Hop mold. I like her stuff when I need something chill that isn't full of rage.

Malevolence

If Gideon was to Pantera for the modern day. Then Malevolence would be associated to the supergroup with members of Pantera and Corrosion of Conformity, called Down. Malevolence, like Avatar, I thought was American, but another band from the other side of the world that sounds more Americana Metal than some American-based bands. A powerhouse of the UK Metal scene from Sheffield, England, formed in 2010. They are widely celebrated for a "swaggering" sound that seamlessly fuses the aggression of hardcore with the heavy, bluesy riffs of NOLA-style Sludge, Doom, and Groove Metal. Despite their northern English roots, the band draws heavily from New Orleans Sludge icons like Crowbar and Down, alongside the precision of Pantera and the brutality of Hatebreed. Some standout Malevolence face melters are: "Keep Your Distance," "Down," "Above All Else," "Remain Unbeaten," and "Self Supremacy."

SiM

From Tokyo, Japan, SiM (Silence iz Mine) are not a true Nu Metal band. It is easy to call them that, but they are so much more. They came out during the tail end of Nu Metal, survived its fall from grace, continued to do their own thing, and now in 2026 with a "sort of 1990s revival" as of late, have been just touring, recording and guest collaborating with other bands. They are a "fusion" of Punk Rock, traditional Heavy Metal, and Reggae. Their style and sound appeal to younger audiences, but it doesn't matter. **They slam.** Their newest single, "FiVE TiMES DEAD," is a really catchy track. This is another international band relative to the United States that sound more American than American bands do. I have played this band for people that don't love Heavy Metal and they liked this band. I very much want to see them live. If you like the bouncy, fun, Nu Metal vibe, SiM is a great band to experiment with.

Skindred

Speaking of bounce. Skindred is just like SiM, but they are from the UK and hit the mainstream at the peak of Nu Metal, in and around 2004. Another band that isn't exclusively a Nu Metal band. Sure, they bounce. Sure, they do a lot of hippie-hoppee stuff. Sure, they are Metal. Sure, they have a DJ. So, what. Their new record, "You Got This," just hit a few weeks ago at the time of this writing and its great. It checks all the boxes but one. It's too short. The record is only 33 minutes, which is a very minor gripe. Who doesn't want more from a record? The band is still as heavy as they used to be. They are a lot of fun. Their songs are well done and are catchy. If you are on a boat and there is a party, I am sure there is some Skindred in the DJ booth somewhere. The title song, "You Got This," stands out. "Can I Get," "Do It Like This," and "My People" are also super catchy songs that if terrestrial radio still played new Rock/Metal on the radio these tracks would be on it.

Spite

Spite... Straight up. Piss and vinegar. This has to be one of the heaviest bands on this list. Their sound is unapologetically relentless in their aggressive, "spiteful" themes of misanthropy and pure rage. Their songs are just one breakdown after another. It's like the band only exists to put on pure brutality at live shows for a very dedicated fanbase known as the "Spite Cult." The rapid-fire vocals, often transitioning between guttural lows and high-pitched screeches. The crushing blends of Deathcore breakdowns with the high-speed energy of Nu-Metal and Hardcore. Stand out songs are: "Lights Out," "New World Killer," "Caved In," and "Kill or Be Killed."

Tallah

What do you get when one of the most recognized Rock/Metal drummer's sons forms a band and makes them stop mid-listen just to ask, "How the hell did you come up with that?" You get Tallah. Formed in 2017 by Max Portnoy (son of Dream Theater's Mike Portnoy) and vocalist Justin Bonitz, the band doesn't lean on the name—they outrun it. Max handles drums, but his role as the band's studio bass player was intended to inspire a more experimental and raw direction for their newer music, taking advantage of his technical proficiency on the instrument. Justin's vocals are a throwback to the Nu Metal era along with bringing his own vocal range and nuances that make him an additional instrument and not just the singer of the band. The DJ scratches are also a nice touch. Even Mike Portnoy has said outright that some of the material Tallah puts together is beyond what he could comfortably play. **That tells you everything you need to know.** They get tagged as "Nu-Core," which makes sense on paper—there's that early 2000s bounce sitting underneath—but it's pushed way past that. It's faster, more erratic, more layered. I just call it Nu-Metal pushed into something more Experimental and Progressive. It shouldn't work as clean as it does, but it does—and that's the whole point. And that is beautiful. I'd love to see them live.

VOLA

VOLA is another oddity to my listening behaviors. The main reason. I absolutely do not like Sleep Token. And VOLA gets thrown in with them far too often to my liking. VOLA predates anything related to Sleep Token by a decade. The comparisons are fair as they sound similar at times, but not at all accurate. Their shared use of polyrhythmic "djent" grooves and melodic vocals on the surface makes sense. However, when you start to dig deeper, as I often do, you start to see the differences that matter to me most. VOLA seamlessly blends Technical Progressive Metal with 80s Synth-Pop and Industrial Rock. VOLA offers a more organic live experience where electronic layers are triggered in real-time rather than relying purely on static backing tracks. Led by Asger Mygind's melancholic harmonies, their discography—from the crushing technicality of "Inmazes" (2015) to the refined "synthesis of *Friend of a Phantom*" (2024)—shows off their musicianship-focused evolution. Despite a devastating 2025 warehouse fire that destroyed their equipment, a massive fan-led response has propelled them into a successful 2026 world tour. Stand out cuts from the band include: "Whaler," "Cannibal," "Bleed Out," "Hollow Kid," "Straight Lines," "These Black Claws," "Head Mounted Sideways," and "24 Light-Years."

Wednesday 13

Joseph Poole aka Wednesday 13 is the definitive "Duke of Spook," a prolific frontman who has spearheaded the Horror-Punk and Sleaze-Metal genres since the early 1990s through projects like Frankenstein Drag Queens from Planet 13 and the Murderdolls. His solo work is a macabre celebration of B-movie horror, campy humor, and high-octane Porn Metal. The band's latest release, *Mid Death Crisis*, late 2025, marks a deliberate return of the band's creature-feature vibe with heavy guitar driven riffs, and spooky themes. *Mid Death Crisis* is "leave-your-brain-at-the-door" anthems like: "In Misery," and "The Devil Commands." Front to back this is a solid album. Its heavy, but not "so heavy" that it scares people away. If you love White Zombie before Rob Zombie dissolved the band you would love this record and love this band. They have a bunch of bangers from other records dating back to 2005. Go on a deep dive. It's well worth it.

Top Artists (Last 4 Weeks)

1. Black Label Society
2. Clutch
3. Tallah
4. Dokken
5. Electric Callboy
6. Zakk Wylde
7. Skindred
8. Bon Jovi
9. Wage War
10. Rob Halford
11. Born Of Osiris
12. Allegaeon
13. HIRIE
14. Avatar
15. Queensrÿche
16. Wednesday 13
17. LEVELS
18. Extreme
19. Wake up Frankie
20. VOLA
21. Scorpions
22. Sevendust
23. Bleed From Within
24. Within The Ruins
25. Fit For A King
26. Saigon Kick
27. Dååth
28. Lynch Mob
29. ERRA
30. Winger
31. Meshuggah
32. Twelve Foot Ninja
33. Whitechapel
34. Fozzy
35. Bullet For My Valentine
36. NOVELISTS
37. A Perfect Murder

Top Artists (Last 6 Months)

1. Avatar
2. Black Label Society
3. Type O Negative
4. Clutch
5. Wage War
6. Sevendust
7. Malevolence
8. Dokken
9. Scorpions
10. Wednesday 13
11. Architects
12. Upon A Burning Body
13. Fit For A King
14. Bon Jovi
15. Seven Hours After Violet
16. 3 Doors Down
17. Anthrax
18. Lynch Mob
19. Zakk Wylde
20. Electric Callboy
21. Rob Zombie
22. Skindred
23. Tallah
24. SiM
25. Queensrÿche
26. Spite
27. Allegaeon
28. ERRA
29. Creed
30. Fozzy
31. Ozzy Osbourne
32. Bullet For My Valentine
33. Winger
34. Winds of Plague
35. Wake up Frankie
36. Poison
37. Currents
38. Gideon
39. Extreme
40. Twelve Foot Ninja
41. Damn Yankees
42. All That Remains
43. Finger Eleven
44. Gojira
45. Volbeat
46. VOLA
47. HIRIE
48. Leo
49. The Pretty Reckless
50. Dark new Day

Top Artists (Last 12 Months)

1. Wage War
2. ERRA
3. Dokken
4. Fit For A King
5. Avatar
6. Alice Cooper
7. Sevendust
8. Bullet For My Valentine
9. Allegaeon
10. Type O Negative
11. SiM
12. Upon A Burning Body
13. Black Label Society
14. Bon Jovi
15. Orbit Culture
16. As I Lay Dying
17. Within The Ruins
18. Ozzy Osbourne
19. Enterprise Earth
20. Queensrÿche
21. All That Remains

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| 22. Wednesday 13 | 32. VOLA | 42. George Lynch |
| 23. Testament | 33. Lamb of God | 43. Spiritbox |
| 24. Mushroomhead | 34. Lynch Mob | 44. Skid Row |
| 25. Architects | 35. Creed | 45. Dream Theater |
| 26. Alice In Chains | 36. Scorpions | 46. Bleed From Within |
| 27. Leo | 37. Slaughter to Prevail | 47. Shokran |
| 28. Zakk Wylde | 38. Extreme | 48. Sylosis |
| 29. Clutch | 39. Queen | 49. Job For A Cowboy |
| 30. Wake up Frankie | 40. Tallah | 50. Anthrax |
| 31. Whitechapel | 41. Winds of Plague | |

Shifting from bands to actual songs we get another mixed bag of favorites, new songs that have just been released. Some of these are some of my favorite songs as of right now. This list is basically saying what comes on the most through the app for the past month, 6 months and 1 year like the top bands. The only real difference here is some of these top tracks were purposely chosen and not just random songs coming on. However, that is also, in part, at play. I have very well thought out playlists and a lot of the time I will select one of these playlists and just hit random. But there are also times I will flip through a playlist and intentionally pick a song or just search the platform for a song and play that.

Gray Matter Mechanics – Apassionata Ex Machinea — Allegaeon

I found this song by chance a few years back on Liquid Metal through XM radio. I had not heard of the band when I heard this song. Its technical. It has progressive elements. It uses classical elements and its brutally heavy. This song made me take a listening deep dive on their material and now they are one of my favorites. A lot of Metal bands today will fuse elements from other genres with heavy music but Allegaeon does it so seamlessly. Its not fluff or extra stuff for layers. Its part of the song. The acoustic guitar work in this song is excellent. It's like listening to multiple different songs and then you realize, this is the same song. They are doing this more and more and I hope they continue to do it. This song might be a decade old now, but it's a really good one, and a great example of how very heavy music can be intricate and complex.

Refined In the Fire — Winds of Plague

“*Refined in the Fire*” is a laugh at fear because you're insane that exemplifies Winds of Plague's symphonic brutality of “*evil fucking fears me.*” The song might be up there in age, coming out in 2010, but it is a true long-term banger. The song has so much spiteful nature to it. It has hardcore roots, which I love, and still new sounding for how old this is. It's 3:07 long and still worth it every time it comes on. That is why it shows up so much. That is why of all the songs that play often on my playlists, this one is worth saying something about.

The Show Must Go On/Who Wants to Live Forever — Queen

A 2-for-1 here, as these 2 songs represent the same exact thing. Life, Dream, Work, Death and having to go on knowing you either don't want to or you do not deserve to. They keep coming back around because they have to. They are there to remind me I am still human. I am still connected to those dreams even though they are just that. The dreams of a dying man.

The Regulator — Clutch

It's Clutch. Does it even matter what song was chosen? I rediscovered this song through the 2025 remastered release of the 2004 Blast Tyrant and Basket of Eggs bonus release on the band's Spotify account. Both versions of this song are super unique when compared to one another but very cool to listen to. Clutch has a sound that can go in all sorts of directions. Both songs are mood music. Soaked in blues that has come to define their sound. They reinvent it as a soulful, acoustic piece without losing the haunting vibe of the original lyrics. People will know it from "The Walking Dead." I will know it from Clutch being an awesome band and this song is just another of a long list of Clutch.

Outsider — Within the Ruins

"Outsider" is precision. That's the word that keeps coming back with this band. Within the Ruins doesn't rely on groove the same way some of the others on this list do. They are tighter, faster, more calculated. The guitar work is almost mechanical at times—rapid-fire, clean, and relentless without falling apart. It's not chaos. It's controlled. This is one of those songs that keeps showing up because it scratches a very specific itch. "Left with no home, I have been disowned. Forever left alone, I have become the outsider."

Fury — Wage War

I like anthems about rage or that drive forward. "Fury" does this for the entire 3:19. "Fury" is organized aggression. Wage War doesn't overcomplicate what they do here. It hits exactly where it needs to. Everything about the song feels intentional, from the pacing to the transitions. It's not trying to reinvent anything. It's just doing it better than most. It delivers the same punch it did in 2019. "I am the fury." Says everything you need to know about this song.

The top tracks are all over the place if you just glance at them. Different genres, different decades, different styles. All triggering old memories and/or new dreams. But once you start lining them up across timeframes, the pattern shows itself. These aren't just songs I like—they're songs I go back to, whether I realize it or not. We didn't even get into all the oddities in these lists or the Classic Rock/Metal that still finds its way in. That's part of the point. The lists aren't just there to rank songs—they show what I consider essential, what I consider strange, and how all of it ends up living in the same personalized jukebox.

Top Tracks (Last 4 Weeks)

#	Track Name	Artist
1	Gray Matter Mechanics Apassionata Ex Machinea	Allegaeon
2	All About Lovin' You	Bon Jovi
3	Broken and Blind	Black Label Society
4	Name In Blood	Black Label Society
5	Let It Burn - Live in Paris 2018	Avatar
6	Ozzy's Song	Black Label Society
7	Disconnect	A Perfect Murder
8	Pedal to the Floor	Black Label Society

#	Track Name	Artist
9	MAD (feat. Ice Nine Kills)	TX2, Ice Nine Kills
10	One Hand Killing	Twelve Foot Ninja
11	Hell Child	Lynch Mob
12	Refined In the Fire	Winds of Plague
13	How Far Will We Go	Kip Winger
14	Headed for a Heartbreak	Winger
15	Autumn Changes	Zakk Wylde
16	The Gallows	Black Label Society
17	Above and Below	Black Label Society
18	What We Know	Tallah
19	Tekkno Train	Electric Callboy
20	Lost Prayer	Zakk Wylde
21	One	Dokken
22	More Than Words	Extreme
23	Spoonman	Soundgarden
24	The Hand of Tomorrows Grave	Black Label Society
25	Broken Pieces	Black Label Society
26	Hard Rock Woman	Dokken
27	Vox Populi	Crooked Royals
28	Boxcar Shorty's Confession (Basket of Eggs)	Clutch
29	It's Another Day	Dokken
30	Vanilla Paste	Tallah, Fire from the Gods, Chelsea Grin, Guerrilla Warfare
31	Bloodlust	Wake up Frankie
32	The Show Must Go On	Queen
33	Song of the Swamp	Wage War
34	Simian Hive	Inferi
35	Better Days and Wiser Times	Black Label Society
36	Lord Humungus	Black Label Society
37	Hunger Strike - EP Version	Halestorm
38	Blazin	HIRIE
39	You Got This	Skindred
40	My Primeval Obsession	Tallah
41	Eager Tides	Midwinter
42	Seppuku	Born Of Osiris
43	The Regulator (Basket of Eggs)	Clutch
44	Into the Pit	Fight
45	Outsider	Within The Ruins
46	Back to Me	Black Label Society
47	As Fate Undoes	Tallah
48	Dusk to Day	Polaris
49	Red Fur	Veil Of Maya
50	Murderer	Impending Doom

Top Tracks (Last 6 Months)

#	Track Name	Artist
1	Don't Go in the Forest	Avatar
2	Broken and Blind	Black Label Society
3	You Got This	Skindred
4	Smile	Taproot
5	Tonight We Must Be Warriors	Avatar
6	Paradise	Seven Hours After Violet, SHAVO
7	Get in Line	Avatar
8	Who Wants to Live Forever - Queen Cover, New Mix	Breaking Benjamin
9	Let It Burn	Avatar
10	Sangre Del Toro	Upon A Burning Body
11	Song of the Swamp	Wage War
12	Name in Blood	Black Label Society
13	Sad Man's Tongue	Volbeat
14	American Werewolves in London	Wednesday 13
15	Meteor	Architects
16	Is This the Real You	Sevendust
17	Over and Out	Twelve Foot Ninja, Tatiana Shmayluk
18	Bonfire	Sevendust
19	Gray Matter Mechanics Apassionata Ex Machinea	Allegaeon
20	The Show Must Go On	Queen
21	Fury	Wage War
22	Gloom	Seven Hours After Violet, Shavo
23	All About Lovin' You	Bon Jovi
24	Seeing Red	Architects
25	Another Ghost	Upon A Burning Body
26	Child	Avatar
27	Too Numb to Cry	Zakk Wylde
28	Day Tripper - Medley	Type O Negative
29	Lullaby (Death All Over)	Avatar
30	By My Side	3 Doors Down
31	Cry....	Seven Hours After Violet, Shavo
32	Refined In the Fire	Winds of Plague
33	Let It Burn - Live in Paris 2018	Avatar
34	Slow Burn - Stripped	Wage War
35	Subtle Hustel	Clutch
36	The Gallows	Black Label Society
37	Painkiller	April Art
38	Above and Below	Black Label Society
39	Death and Glitz	Avatar

#	Track Name	Artist
40	Overcome	Creed
41	Boxcar Shorty's Confession (Basket of Eggs)	Clutch
42	Imperfect Picture	Malevolence
43	Hand of God	Upon A Burning Body
44	In The Airwaves	Avatar
45	Blood to the Leech	Malevolence
46	Who Wants to Live Forever	Queen
47	Shelter Me	Cinderella
48	Pedal to the Floor	Black Label Society
49	Ghost	Clutch
50	The Regulator (Basket of Eggs)	Clutch

Top Tracks (Last 12 Months)

#	Track Name	Artist
1	The Show's About to Start	Wage War
2	Meteor	Architects
3	Breaking the Mirror	Fit For A King
4	Fury	Wage War
5	Refined in the Fire	Winds of Plague
6	Let It Burn	Avatar
7	Low	Wage War
8	Outsider	Within The Ruins
9	The Rumbling	SiM
10	Blood and Water	Memphis May Fire
11	Dark Matter Dynamics (feat. Adrian Bellue)	Allegaeon, Adrian Bellue
12	Casket of Rust	Enterprise Earth
13	Relapse	Wage War
14	Godspeed	Wage War
15	Who Wants to Live Forever - Queen Cover, New Mix	Breaking Benjamin
16	The Great Stone War	Winds of Plague
17	The Show Must Go On	Queen
18	Kill Tomorrow	Mushroomhead
19	Tower of Pain	Fit For A King
20	Over and Out (feat Tatiana Shmayluk)	Twelve Foot Ninja, Tatiana Shmayluk
21	One Hand Killing	Twelve Foot Ninja
22	Ever Higher	George Lynch, Jeff Pilson
23	Painkiller	April Art
24	Gray Matter Mechanics Apassionata Ex Machinea	Allegaeon
25	Snowblood	ERRA
26	Obsolete	Of Mice and Men
27	Hex Unending (feat. Dan Sugarman and Ice Nine Kills)	Dååth, Dan Sugarman, Ice Nine Kills

#	Track Name	Artist
28	True Colors	Wage War
29	Flying Whales	Gojira
30	Don't Go in the Forest	Avatar
31	Hollow Kid	VOLA
32	The Saw Is the Law	Whitechapel
33	Kiss of Death	Dokken
34	No Rest No End (feat. Spiro)	Dååth, Spiro
35	End (The Other Side)	Fit For A King
36	Somebody Someone	Korn
37	Self Sacrifice	Wage War
38	Happy Hunting	Wage War
39	Under the Sun - Every Day Comes and Goes	Zakk Sabbath
40	Nail5	Wage War
41	Through the Light	Kadaver Dolls
42	Magnetic	Wage War
43	Fall In Line	Mushroomhead
44	Where Dreams Are Broken	Enterprise Earth
45	Murderer	Impending Doom
46	Who Wants to Live Forever	Queen
47	Bat Country	Betraying The Martyrs
48	Subdivisions	Allegaeon
49	The King Welcomes You to Avatar Country	Avatar
50	Smile	Taproot

If the most played songs over time are my habits, then most recently played songs is my behavior in real time. This isn't curated like the playlists are. Nothing here is ranked. The list itself isn't intentional. However, listening to music is very intentional, and at times specific songs are chosen for specific reasons. With all the new albums from bands I follow dropping over the last month heading into summer 2026, the recently played list becomes a mix of everything—shuffle runs from playlists, deliberate full-album listens, and whatever else slips in between. At the time of this writing, there's been a flood of new material from bands I keep in rotation—Black Label Society, Skindred, Wage War, Paleface Swiss, ERRA, Testament, Lamb of God, Attila, Rob Zombie, SiM, Nekrogoblikon, and Sylosis. Late 2025 also gave us new releases from Avatar, Fit For A King, Wednesday 13, and Signs of the Swarm. All of that adds noise to the list, but it doesn't distort it. If anything, it exposes it. Even with all the new material, the same patterns show up—clusters of the same bands, repeated songs, and sudden shifts into something completely different before snapping back again.

The bands we love. Those songs that keep coming back, the ones that don't leave, and the ones that show up out of nowhere and stick just long enough to matter. So, there will be a playlist at the end of this that becomes a snapshot of this whole essay. More like a controlled slice of everything that's been moving—some of the songs mentioned here, some pulled from the lists, some that didn't make it into the write-up at all, but belong there anyway. Just a working sample of what this all sounds like when it's actually in motion. That's really what this has been about the entire time. Not what I listen to, but how it moves.

The cycles between intensity, familiarity, identity, and brutality. The constants, the rotations, the repeats, and the outliers.

Recently Played

#	Track	Artist(s)
1	End (The Other Side)	Fit For A King
2	Gray Matter Mechanics Apassionata Ex Machinea	Allegaeon
3	Demolisher	Slaughter to Prevail
4	Red Fur	Veil Of Maya
5	Eager Tides	Midwinter
6	Blazin	HIRIE
7	The Philosopher	Dååth, Dan Sugarman, Ice Nine Kills, Rafael Trujillo
8	Silent Lucidity (Re-Recorded)	Queensrÿche
9	The Greatest Fear	Parkway Drive
10	Under the Same Sun	Scorpions
11	How Far Will We Go	Kip Winger
12	Separation Anxiety	Faith No More
13	Anarchy-X	Queensrÿche
14	Murderer	Avatar
15	Refined in the Fire	Winds of Plague
16	Forgotten Memory	Zakk Wylde
17	Eyes of Burden	Zakk Wylde
18	The Levee	Zakk Wylde
19	Darkest Hour	Zakk Wylde
20	Lost Prayer	Zakk Wylde
21	Lay Me Down	Zakk Wylde
22	Tears of December	Zakk Wylde
23	Autumn Changes	Zakk Wylde
24	Holy Diver	Killswitch Engage
25	One	Dokken
26	Between Heaven and Hell	Black Label Society
27	My People	Skindred
28	Do It Like This	Skindred
29	Big Em Up	Skindred
30	Glass	Skindred
31	Broke	Skindred
32	This is the Sound	Skindred
33	Born Fe Dis	Skindred
34	Can I Get A	Skindred
35	You Got This	Skindred
36	Call Me When You're Sober	Evanescence
37	Silly Love Songs	Wings
38	Renegade	Styx
39	Close to the Bone	Armored Saint
40	Ozzy's Song	Black Label Society, Zakk Wylde
41	The Gates	Guilt Trip, Malevolence, Rough Justice
42	So Help Me God	Malevolence

43	Serpents Chokehold	Malevolence
44	DOWN (Feat. Malevolence)	While She Sleeps, Malevolence
45	Ozzy's Song	Black Label Society, Zakk Wylde
46	The Stranger	Black Label Society, Zakk Wylde
47	Broken Pieces	Black Label Society, Zakk Wylde
48	Pedal to the Floor	Black Label Society, Zakk Wylde
49	Is This The Real You	Sevendust
50	Misdirection	Sevendust

The Randomness of Controlled Chaos

by David-Angelo Mineo

5/4/2026

3,867 Words

Playlist: Loops Play On

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5giidjarHFjuKoG7gxm0QR?si=2aa4b748eed642ec>