

NORAH JONES

## Soundtrack Of My Life



The platinum sweetheart of jazzy piano pop—she's sold some 40 million albums worldwide and has nine Grammys in her trophy case—recently teamed with Danger Mouse (a.k.a. Brian Burton) on her fifth album, *Little Broken Hearts* (out now).

"I know in my head what I want sometimes, but I'm not a gearhead, I'm not a knob turner, so I kind of needed somebody who was a partner to help me with that stuff," says Jones, 33, of working with the Gnarls Barkley member-turned-go-to producer for the likes of Beck and the Black Keys. "Brian ended up being way perfect for that. I was really excited to work with different grooves and try to get some different sounds." Not surprisingly, the woman who's collaborated with everyone from OutKast to Dolly Parton also has an eclectic list of the albums, artists, and songs that have influenced her. —JASON ADAMS

**The song that made me want to be a singer**  
"You Send Me," Aretha Franklin



"Her version is so beautiful. I listened to that so much when I was a kid and just sang along and imitated it and did my best to keep up with her. I think I could sing from a very early age. I had a natural sort of ability to match pitch and just kind of...I knew how to sing. But I definitely had to find my own voice. When I was older, that came."

**The first song that I was obsessed with**  
"Hallelujah," Jeff Buckley

"I used to play this on repeat. I love his version of 'Hallelujah.' I mean, I love Leonard Cohen's original, too. Of course I didn't really know who he was until later. I kind of discovered him this way. And I love the Leonard Cohen song 'Suzanne.' There are so many good versions of that one, too."

**The album that reminds me of my first love** *Talking Book*, Stevie Wonder  
"Especially the song 'You Are



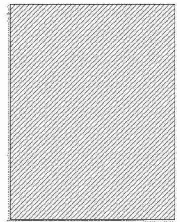
the Sunshine of My Life.' We listened to that a lot."

**My favorite soundtrack album** *Thelma & Louise*  
"My mom and I took a road



trip to Alaska from Texas [where Jones grew up], and we couldn't agree on anything, because I was 11 and so I wanted to listen to *The Little Mermaid* or something. The *Thelma & Louise* soundtrack was our favorite thing that we could both agree on. We pretended we were Thelma and Louise, because it was just the two of us in the car for three

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Norah Jones

"I love that guitar solo, and every time it comes on, I'm like [*makes guitar sound*] Nah nah nah nah, nah nah. I also air-drum sometimes. My favorite for that is Nirvana's 'Smells Like Teen Spirit.' I used to do that one a lot in junior high."

**My favorite breakup song**  
 "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right,"  
 Bob Dylan



"There are so many good breakup songs, and Bob Dylan had a lot of good ones, especially 'Don't Think Twice,' the one where he's, like, walking away... I used to make sad mixtapes when I was a teenager called 'Sad Songs.' [*Laughs*] But I don't know if those same songs would make me cry now. It's going to take a lot more than that to make me cry now."

**My favorite collaborator**  
 Willie Nelson

"Getting to sing with Willie for the first time on stage, we did a Kris Kristofferson song, 'Help Me Make It Through the Night.' So fun. I grew up listening to Willie. Hearing his voice come out of his body in person, it's so freaky. Even now that I've known him for 10 years and he's become a really sweet person in my life, it still gives me the chills when I see him sing live. When we put out the ...*Featuring* album [the 2010 Jones comp that also includes collaborations with artists like Out-Kast, Foo Fighters, and Herbie Hancock], it seemed like a silly idea. Then we put all the songs together and it

was like, 'Wow, I feel so cool now.' It was fun getting calls from Andre 3000 and Dave Grohl and Ray Charles."

**My favorite hip-hop song**  
 "Push It," Salt-N-Pepa  
 "I love 'Push It'—I think I have to go with that. I was also a pretty big MC Hammer fan growing up. I had Hammer pants. He was my first concert. It was amazing. *Here comes the Hammer!* [*Laughs*] Oh my God."

**My favorite love song**  
 "Breathless," Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds

"So good! I don't know what it is, but it's just like a good you're-so-happy-in-love-and-you-just-want-to-dance song. That will get you up in the morning."

**My 12 a.m. jukebox jam**  
 "Little Bit of Rain,"

Fred Neil  
 "Oh, yeah. Fred Neil. Such a good song. I've been listening to it late at night. [*Sings*] 'Remember the good times...' That's such a great late-night song. And I love 'Haitian Fight Song' by Charles Mingus. It actually makes me want to do interpretive dance. Super interpretive."



Willie Nelson

**My go-to karaoke songs**  
 "Welcome to the Jungle," Guns N' Roses;  
 "Underneath Your Clothes," Shakira

"I like singing these songs because they have interesting, unique voices to imitate. And for me, since I'm a singer—I'm *Norah*, I'm, like, a *singer*—it would be kind of silly to just go in and sing like myself. So it's more fun for me to imitate people who have interesting voices. My Axl is good; my Shakira is really good."



**The band I'm currently obsessed with**  
 Dr. Dog

"I've been into [Philadelphia indie rockers] Dr. Dog lately. I don't have the new album yet, though. I've got to get it. I really just discovered them."

**The song I like performing most**  
 Her 2011 Danger Mouse and Daniele Luppi collaboration "Black"

"It changes on every tour. Right now I have a new band, and we just played our first show. I started putting 'Black' in the set, and that's been really fun. And it's fresh because we've never done it. It was sort of time for a new band, and I didn't really want to just put a group of musicians together who didn't know each other. A bunch of friends of mine are in a band, so I just hired them."

**The song I wish I'd written**

"Heartache," Lowell George  
 "It's just a great song and it's got a lot of really interesting chord changes that will trip you up. But it still just sounds so simple and beautiful at the same time." ■

weeks. It was a good soundtrack for that."

**A song I love that people might not expect**  
 "Gimme Some More,"  
 Busta Rhymes "It's one of my favorites. I just love how fast he can say words."

**My favorite song to play air guitar to**  
 "Down by the River," Neil Young

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