

And this week...

I have been thinking about music a lot this week, probably to avoid thinking about the vicissitudes of life, but also because one of my close friends gave me an ear worm by sending me a link to a video of *The Year of The Cat* by Al Stewart to wish me a happy start to the Lunar New Year. This is the longest a song has stayed in my head since *Dance Monkey* by Tones and I, which holds the record at six weeks; forty two days where I thought I was going to go batty.

I have never been musically inclined; in my mind because I am bad at mathematics and therefore cannot analyze a score, dissect the different strands, and bring them back together to make a perfect harmony. It is, I think, one of the reasons that jazz is hermetically closed to me. To me it is nothing but jangle and discordance though I intellectually know that that is not the case. I have a college friend who can recognize a song within the first few notes, a talent which has thus far escaped me. I am always the person in the room emphatically saying “nope, don’t know this song” until part way through, when I realize that -- of course -- I do.

That being said, I listen to music constantly and went to many a rock concert in my youth. I am sure that I am using more of my brain (portions that could be much better utilized I am sure) to retain the 80s lyrics of my adolescence than I should. Many songs are so engrained that, when I hear them on the radio and they come to an end, I automatically start singing or humming the first bars from the next song on the album – even if I haven’t listened to the album since I was a teen – and startle myself when the radio segues to a completely different artist.

Over the years, I have also started to pay attention to the message that comes from what I am humming. For example, on the way home from signing my divorce papers, I started to hum a song which I knew well, but could not identify

at the time. I hummed it off and on for several days until I suddenly realized that I was humming the childhood classic “If You’re Happy and You Know It Clap Your Hands”. And a point goes to my subconscious...

I have yet to really correlate music with cooking – I don’t put on certain songs when making specific dishes or play, say, Dean Martin, to set the mood for an Italian meal. That being said, bopping around the kitchen to a good tune or chopping to a beat must add to the experience, so I have decided to conduct a mini experiment for my own edification by playing different music styles or specific playlists each night and seeing if my cooking style changes or if any of my dishes suffer from my lack of auditory attention to my recipes.

Music aside, lots of good recipes came out of my quiet kitchen this past week:

[Kung Pao Brussels Sprouts with Tofu](#)

[Lentil-Veggie Bowl](#)

[Spiced Orange Shrub](#)

[THE Best Egg Salad](#)

[Crispy Spiced Chickpeas](#)

[Warm Winter Vegetable Buttermilk "Caesar"](#)

[Dandelion Green, Acorn Squash and Cannellini Bean Salad with Pomegranate](#)

[Molasses Dressing](#)

[Refrigerator Clear-Out Cakes](#)

[Pork and Pea Shoots](#)