

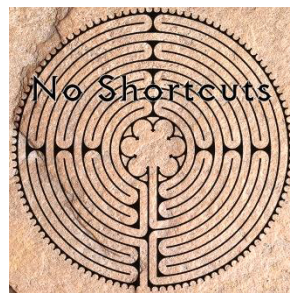
If you want something done right... you have to do it right. That usually means, as Heather Maloney’s song reminds us, “no shortcuts.” But in some circumstances, a shortcut provides a provides a useful—and perhaps entertaining—means to an end.

When I started choosing songs for this edition of my yearly playlist of collected music worth listening to, doing it well meant no shortcuts. Lots of reviewing, listening with fresh ears... but I found that many of the artists I was considering provided more than one song that was worth sharing. In order to keep a playlist under the 80-minute limit imposed by the length of a CD, I had to cut out additional songs from many of the same artists that I still wanted to share.

After making my final decisions (for the *No Shortcuts* playlist), I looked at the leftover songs and realized that it was a pretty fun playlist by itself. The playlist of leftovers (*Shortcuts*—note the difference between the labyrinths) mirrored the first playlist in many ways, including many of the same artists, song types, and over-all arc. Thus, you get a double-helping to listen to this time around. Once again, the majority of the tracks for this compilation are fresh tunes you may not have bumped into. I encourage you to check out videos for these tunes where they exist, although I can’t speak for the advertisements that inevitably accompany some of them. My comments are embedded in the digital files, as are the lyrics when I could get them. Enjoy.

No Shortcuts/Shortcuts. Featuring: *electronic, funk, grammar humor, a dancing violinist with dubstep leanings, merengue, country, choral sublimity, humor in poor taste, guitar artistry, Christian music in varying styles, alt. Latino, folk, soundtrack/trailer music, alt. rock, experimental pop, and stuff even I have no solid answers on how to classify.*

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1. Overture – Beats Antique – *A Thousand Faces-Act 1*

Beats Antique is one of those quirky artists I've followed for a while now. The new album, *A Thousand Faces-Act 1*, was perhaps even quirkier than usual. Dance electronica with a steampunk feel at times. This album has a more theatrical feel than previous releases. Try it on a system with a subwoofer, and see how well the sub-100Hz bass comes through on this track. | If your eyes can handle it, there’s a live video you may enjoy at youtube.com/watch?v=pShAzeIsBPc, including their piece *Kismet*. | Visit beatsantique.bandcamp.com

2. *From the Sky* – Black Object – *Black Object*

My friend Grey is a soundtrack aficionado. He told me about positionmusic.com, which has all sorts of stuff, including music for film trailers and such. Sometimes I just surf through the site listening to samples, and often I bump into tunes I really like. Black Object caught my ear and held it, and here is a little taste for you to enjoy.

3. *Oh My Gawd* – The Floozies – *Tell Your Mother*

Does this song have any redeeming qualities? Well, for one, it made me smile. Mark V. came to the house and asked, "Have you heard The Floozies?" We plugged his music player into the speakers, and a few minutes later I was hooked. Compliments of soundcloud.com.

4. *Word Crimes* – Weird Al Yankovic – *Mandatory Fun*

If I have any heroes, I have to admit that Weird Al would be in that small group. Ever since hearing the accordion-only versions of his earliest parodies, I've admired his wit and talent. I wanted to put *four* of his new songs from the *Mandatory Fun* album on this collection, and it was hard to choose. Oh, and the videos make the songs even better. Go see for yourself. The video for this song is waaaay better than the video for *Blurred Lines*. After all, when have you ever heard a song use the word 'nomenclature' in a rhyme? |

Video at youtube.com/watch?v=8Gv0H-vPoDc

5. *Poisoning Pigeons in the Park* – Tom Lehrer – *The Remains of Tom Lehrer*

I was asked to perform a few songs for the Riverside Raconteurs storytelling bonfire in Grand Rapids in the summer; also, I've always wanted to find an appropriate venue to perform this inappropriate song. I got more people to laugh than were offended, so I'll count it as a success. Thanks to Tom and Marcia for the invite and the opportunity, and to my mother for nourishing my somewhat twisted sense of humor. |

Video at youtube.com/watch?v=yhuMLpdnOjY

6. *Shatter Me* – Lindsey Stirling, featuring Lzzy Hale – *Shatter Me*

I honestly don't remember who turned me on to Lindsey Stirling's music. Grey? Liam? Mark? Wanda? Here's a woman who dances around while playing violin to a fusion of pop and dubstep; obviously the video is an important element to her songs. This is a surprising gig for the singer, Lzzy Hale from Halestorm, who usually goes for an edgier crowd. Lzzy Hale's voice reminds me of Marta Jandová (who did some vocals for *Apocalyptica*), which caught my ear right away for this tune. | Video at youtube.com/watch?v=49tpIMDy9BE

7. *Merengue Gitano* – Mark Towns – *Flamenco Jazz Latino*

Thanks to Pandora.com. While listening to a Rodrigo y Gabriela station, this came up and got my attention. This reminds me of more than one party I've been to. Fun!

8. *Somnium* – Rodrigo y Gabriela – *9 Dead Alive*

Roberta and I had the opportunity to see Rodrigo y Gabriela in August without having to travel to some other state, and brought many friends with us to a show in Grand Rapids. As expected, the show was fantastic. They had a lot of fun on stage, and we had a lot of fun in the crowd. | Live video at youtube.com/watch?v=YEJrZoerM0c or a studio cut at www.amazon.co.uk/gp/mpd/permalink/m3EGLP2HI8BJPH

9. *No Shortcuts* – Heather Maloney & Darlingside – *Woodstock EP*

Heather Maloney opened for Rodrigo y Gabriela's concert at the Meijer Gardens. While her guitar playing is great, it was her voice that captured my attention, and is featured in this track. |

Video at youtube.com/watch?v=lfcdBjK5Zzs

10. *Black Hole of Truth* – Danielle Rose – *Defining Beauty*

I bumped into Danielle Rose at an NPM Convention a couple of years back, and return to her music here and there as time goes on. One of her tracks was on my collection last year. This is the song that stuck this year.

11. *A Little Bit* – Amanda Vernon – *Acoustic Collection*

I've known Amanda for many years, and have always been thrilled to hear her sing. She recently did some live recordings while in Grand Rapids, including this song. I had difficulty choosing which of her songs to put into this playlist, as there were several fun options I wanted to share.

12. *All the People Said Amen* – Matt Maher – *All the People Said Amen*

We used this as a theme song of sorts for DYMO Camp this year. Fun, meaningful, and everyone can sing along. | Video at youtube.com/watch?v=SnOA3HN_4EY

13. *God's Not Dead (Like a Lion)* – Newsboys – *God's Not Dead*

My friend Nevin invited me out to see the movie God's Not Dead this summer, which was worth seeing. The life issues depicted were a bit too much to be condensed into a movie—just like anything else interesting that gets made into a movie. This song was used during DYMO Camp as well. | Video at youtube.com/watch?v=S_OTz-lpDjw

14. *Keep Making Me* – Sidewalk Prophets – *Ultimate Worship*

I was introduced to this song by Wild Bill at DYMO Camp this year. Good tune. | Video at youtube.com/watch?v=AwYv6yMuPaA

15. *Autumn Falls* – Liz Christian – *Beginnings*

Elizabeth recorded a CD! I met Liz at DYMO Camp when she was a student, and she was part of the Camp staff again this year. It's great to see friends do great things.

16. *Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)* – Hillsong United – *Zion*

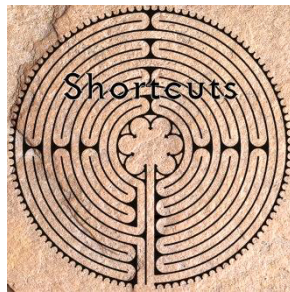
I became aware of this song in the spring, at first when my friend Kinga brought it to my attention, and then I kept hearing it in other places as time went along, including at DYMO Camp. | A great acoustic video is at youtube.com/watch?v=DGRz2BJQRXU

17. *Meditation on Oración de los Fieles* – Peter Kolar – *Variations*

Peter performed a concert at St. Mary Church last autumn. Good memories, good tunes. This piece is a meditation on one of his songs we use at St. Mary's.

18. *Lux Aurumque* – Eric Whitacre – *Light and Gold*

When Roberta and I saw the vocal group Chanticleer perform in Grand Rapids, they sang an Eric Whitacre song and I made a note of it. Before I got around to looking up more Eric Whitacre music, someone (I don't remember whom) shared a link to one of his Virtual Choir videos, triggering my interest anew. This piece in particular I can only describe as sublime. | Video at youtube.com/watch?v=D7o7BrlbaDs



1. *Beezlebub* – Beats Antique, featuring Les Claypool – *A Thousand Faces-Act 1*

Sometimes a song is a guilty pleasure. Les Claypool is best known from his work with Primus, which was known for crazy claymation-style videos. | Video at vimeo.com/76737456 | Visit beatsantique.bandcamp.com

2. *Runaway* – Black Object – *Black Object*

Another energetic little jam from Position Music, discovered while surfing semi-aimlessly.

3. *Shakedown Street Remix* – The Floozies – *2012 Remixes*

My second-favorite Floozies piece at this time. | Interesting combo of studio track and live video at youtube.com/watch?v=cGH87yyw04w

4. *Tacky* – Weird Al Yankovic – *Mandatory Fun*

Clap along, now! | Video at vevo.ly/ip1fff

5. *Adios* – Natalia Clavier, featuring the Echocentrics – *Lumen*

Disclaimer: I'd be lying if I said I understood all of the lyrics at this time. Nevertheless, it's a great little song. From the 2014 NPR Austin 100 list... the NPR website states: "Every year, more than 2,000 acts swarm to SXSW [conference and music festival, see sxsw.com] — and every year, NPR Music painstakingly handpicks 100 of the music festival's best discoveries for a downloadable six-hour sampler. We call it The Austin 100, and it's virtually guaranteed to contain something you'll love that you didn't know existed." Off-the-beaten-path music. | Video at youtube.com/watch?v=jl4SZJ_nG-c

6. *The Curse* – Agnes Obel – *Aventine*

Another piece harvested from the NPR Austin 100 list, quite different in style. The video is also beautiful, but doesn't shed much light on the rather opaque lyrics. | Video at vimeo.com/72638025

7. *Clarified* – Fretboard Surfer –

My cousin Mike is rather talented. You can look him up as Fretboard Surfer on soundcloud.com.

8. *Drawn onward* – Jack Trammell – *Drawn onward*

Jack Trammell has a lot of interesting pieces at positionmusic.com. Not hard to imagine some kind of extended film trailer with this one.

9. *Radioactive* – Pentatonix, featuring Lindsey Stirling – *Radioactive*

Keep in mind that Pentatonix is an *a capella* group, so the percussion and bass you hear are a couple of dudes without instruments. For this track, the beat-box man also played cello to compliment collaborator Lindsey Stirling's violin. Nice touch. Pentatonix barely escaped my compilation in 2013, but I've been listening to their music a lot more this year. Crazy talent at multiple levels. | Video at vimeo.com/62761205

10. *The Beginning* – Blue Stahli – *The Devil (Chapter 02)*

Okay, this is another piece I discovered on positionmusic.com. Blue Stahli is a Detroit, Michigan-based electronic rock project that was created by multi-instrumentalist Bret Autrey. Apparently, Blue Stahli has appeared in a number of movie trailers, shows, and games. Very smooth production from this act.

11. *I'm Not in Heaven* – Amanda Vernon – *Acoustic Collection*

Amazing voice, even in a live setting, as you hear here.

12. *Lord, I Need You* – Matt Maher – *All the People Said Amen*

Another prayerful piece that was brought to my attention by the fellow staff of DYMO Camp. | For a different feel, check out the live video at youtube.com/watch?v=9eX5BeXkNZU

13. *Tesoros Ocultos/Treasures Out of Darkness* – Peter Kolar – *Variations*

Alan Revering wrote this great song based on Isaiah 45:3-8. I enjoyed Peter's piano stylings for this piece.

14. *The Russian Messenger* – Rodrigo y Gabriela – *9 Dead Alive*

I suggest that you just go and listen to everything Rodrigo y Gabriela have done. | Video at youtube.com/watch?v=0dN91dhERgA

15. *Telemiscommunications* – Imogen Heap and deadmau5 – *Telemiscommunications (Remixes)*

Although part of Imogen Heap's album that was released later in 2014, this track was released separately more than a year earlier. Whenever I've heard Imogen Heap on the radio or online, her voice and approach has caught my attention. | Video at vimeo.com/62004102

16. *Woodstock* – Heather Maloney & Darlingside – *Woodstock EP*

I've always enjoyed this Joni Mitchell tune, especially Eva Cassidy's rendition. Here's another fresh take worth listening to. | Video at youtube.com/watch?v=lyotn-3qycM

17. *Mountaintop* – Foreign Fields – *Anywhere But Where I Am*

The airy, moody atmosphere of this song suits a part of my personality. I was introduced to this song through the aurgasm.us blog. | Live version video at youtube.com/watch?v=pO8nWsspGh0

18. *Bioshock Main Theme* – Garry Schyman – *Bioshock*

Music from a retro-nostalgia-horror-mystery-steampunk-adventure video game. This track captures a tickle of the sadness and despair of the underwater city ruined by human nature and greed.

19. *Nox Aurumque* – Eric Whitacre – *Light and Gold*

EW: "I wanted to echo some of the musical material in *Lux Aurumque*, while at the same time filling it with themes from *Paradise Lost*. I asked Charles Anthony Silvestri to write me an original poem in Latin, & as usual, he knocked it out of the park." | Video at youtube.com/watch?v=MI_SdYb2HXo

Special thanks to: Mark V., Grey, Tom & Marcia, Dr. Demento, Mom, Wild Bill, Nevin, Kinga, npr.org, pandora.com, soundcloud.com, aurgasm.us, bandcamp.com, positionmusic.com, youtube.com, vevo.com, amazon.com, vimeo.com, and—of course—the artists who make the music and videos.