

Ah, The 80's...

Fellow Tangenteers posted youtube.com videos recently sharing some of their favorite music – that made me think about a country artist from the 80's I used to enjoy named [Sylvia](#). She's come out with recent material, but my favorites of hers were from the early 80's. I was able to find a few of her songs and still enjoy her beautiful voice as an adult (however cheesily 80's some of the lyrics might be), but I'm still looking for the following songs by Sylvia:

So Complete, The Mill Song (Everybody's Got a Dream), Who's Kidding Who, Tonight I'm Gettin' Friendly With The Blues, Gone But Not Forgotten, and Jason.

I was able to find two Sylvia videos on youtube.com – dig the “super-cool” video and sound effects in Snapshot and the totally 80's bopping in “Nobody”. Does anyone else remember Sylvia? I was thinking Mary might even have a cassette tape I can borrow ☐

Snapshot – 1983:

Nobody – 1982:

More Than A Christmas Novelty

A few posts ago, I was pondering the popularity of the extremely cool acapella group [Straight No Chaser](#) and came across a website full of information, song samples, and discography. I also discovered that a new song-filled recording is about to drop. And quite remarkably this little group was organized on a college campus just to our west.

Check out this video that brings back great memories of performing with America's Finest Singing Machine! Just don't ask me if it is better performed by a chorus of 80 or a small ensemble... just a bit biased.

THAT Time Of Year!!

The list of Academy Country Music Award nominees was announced today! And while I'm not entirely in agreement with some of them, that still does not dampen my excitement for the actual awards show – now held in April, which is even earlier than its past May ceremonies. I'm going to wait to give my picks for winners until we get closer to the show – I need some more time to listen to the artists, their songs, and the buzz surrounding them on country radio. But I can say that I'm not a big fan of Lady Antebellum, a group who leads the pack in number of nominations. Uh, oh... perhaps country music is leaving me behind since I strongly prefer classic country and those modern artists who are seemingly fading into the background such as Alan Jackson, Garth Brooks, Martina McBride, Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, George Strait, Reba McEntire, Brooks and Dunn, and Rascal Flatts... I do like Carrie Underwood, but I'm not so crazy for Taylor Swift (cute name though!). All that being said, I still enjoy the annual extravaganza immensely; especially the live performances. I am especially excited that unlike the ACM awards autumn counterpart, the CMA awards which are held on Wednesday nights, the spring ACM awards show is held on Sunday evenings – which means that I don't have to ditch my youth group students, haha! Here's the list of nominees; we will find out who wins on April 18, 2010!

Entertainer of the Year:

• Kenny Chesney • Toby Keith • Brad Paisley • George Strait • Taylor Swift • Carrie Underwood • Keith Urban • Zac Brown Band

Top Male Vocalist:

• Kenny Chesney • Brad Paisley • Darius Rucker • George Strait • Keith Urban

Top Female Vocalist:

• Miranda Lambert • Reba McEntire • Taylor Swift • Carrie Underwood • Lee Ann Womack

Top Vocal Group:

• Lady Antebellum • Little Big Town • Randy Rogers Band • Rascal Flatts • Zac Brown Band

Top Vocal Duo:

• Brooks & Dunn • Joey + Rory • Montgomery Gentry • Steel Magnolia • Sugarland

Top New Solo Vocalist:

• Luke Bryan • Jamey Johnson • Chris Young

Top New Vocal Duo:

• Bomshel • Joey + Rory • Steel Magnolia

Top new Vocal Group:

• Eli Young Band • Gloriana • The Lost Trailers

Album of the Year:

• "American Saturday Night" – Brad Paisley • "Lady Antebellum" – Lady Antebellum • "Play On" – Carrie Underwood • "Revolution" – Miranda Lambert • "The Foundation" – Zac Brown Band

Single Record:

• "Need You Now" – Lady Antebellum • "People Are Crazy" – Billy Currington • "Red Light" – David Nail • "Toes" – Zac Brown Band • "White Liar" – Miranda Lambert

Song:

• "Cowboy Casanova" – Carrie Underwood • "Need You Now" – Lady Antebellum • "People Are Crazy" – Billy Currington • "White Liar" – Miranda Lambert • "You Belong With Me" – Taylor Swift

Video:

• "Boots On" – Randy Houser • "Need You Now" – Lady Antebellum • "Welcome To The Future" – Brad Paisley • "White Liar" –

Miranda Lambert • “You Belong With Me” – Taylor Swift

Vocal Event:

- “Hillbilly Bone” – Blake Shelton featuring Trace Adkins •
 - “Honky Tonk Stomp” – Brooks & Dunn featuring Billy Gibbons •
 - “I Told You So” – Carrie Underwood featuring Randy Travis •
 - “I’m Alive” – Kenny Chesney with Dave Matthews •
 - “Seeing Stars” – Jack Ingram featuring Patty Griffin
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Not Only Good For Walks

On today’s beautiful, sunny, 40+ degree weather I did enjoy the company of my song filled ipod. However, I found an even better use for it. While cleaning the beauty shop, I had it plugged in and it made the time zoom by. Before I had finished, an hour had passed and it seemed like no time at all! The power of music... it is able to transport you to a “*long time ago in a galaxy far, far away*” or to “*Space: the final frontier.*” It can also take you to Neverland, Narnia, Krypton, Hogwarts, or Missitucky.

My ipod library is not limited only to film scores or Broadway shows. I do enjoy some popular music pas and present. For every selection from my vast collection of John Williams masterworks (from the 6 *Star Wars* movies (even the prequels), the four Indiana Jones movies (have 'em all), *Superman*, *Hook*, *E.T.*, etc) and James Bond scores there is some Jason Mraz (I think I’ve read about him [somewhere?](#)) with some Elvis, Beatles, Carrie Underwood, Mariah Carey, and Motown classics thrown in for good measure.

Of course when the (in my humble opinion) best recording of “This is the Moment” popped up... it was NOT the Hoff’s butchering, I had to sing along as I walked the sidewalk.

Yep... one of those. I get carried away but still focus on little things like cars at intersections. I did feel like the pied piper on a recent walk as three dogs began following me until I turned around and they went safely back to their home.

And, yes I did stop as I came upon a school bus which was on its way back from the morning kindergarten return trip ☐

My Favorite Music Comes From Sesame Street

I'm not really hip with pop culture these days. Sure, I read my share of celebrity gossip whenever it happens upon cnn.com, but I'm really out of it when it comes to the latest tv shows and music. I am such a nerd that I had to wikipedia 'Jersey Shore' because I got sick of reading all these headlines about it and not knowing what the heck they were talking about. Sounds like kind of a dumb show, by the way, not for me.

Because I listen to country music, mainstream music is usually of no interest to me. But I couldn't help but take notice when a snappy tune came out of the tv this morning – it was Sesame Street, and there was a musical guest. I know that Sesame Street has celebrity guest-stars all the time, so I chose what seemed to be the title of the song and did a search on youtube.com. The song is "I'm Yours", and it's sung by Jason Mraz. Even all my reading of celebrity gossip didn't help me here – I've never heard of Jason Mraz, but I have to say that I like his sound. But that shouldn't really come as a surprise that I've never heard of him – I don't think he's a regular in my pop culture circle that includes such characters as Dora, Miss Spider, Little Bear, or Wow Wow Wubbzy. My 18-month-old son and I couldn't help but bounce and groove to

this song; see if you feel the same. By the way, when Mr. Mraz performed this song on Sesame Street, the lyrics were changed to make the song be about playing outside, making it more kid-friendly. Cute.

There Comes a Time

When we heed a certain call

When the world must come together as one.

Twenty-five years ago, a group of the best-known pop, country, and r&b artists gathered at a recording studio following the American Music Awards to record a song that would raise money to help the millions of needy people in Africa. Singers like Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie, Bruce Springsteen, Ray Charles, Kenny Rogers, Harry Belafonte, Willie Nelson, and stars like Dan Aykroyd in all 43 superstars from numerous genres were part of U.S.A for Africa.

Recently, a large group of today's artists and some who have been around for a bit, gathered at the same recording studio to record an updated version of ["We are the World"](#) (including a hip-hop bit) to benefit the relief efforts of the devastation caused by the Haitian earthquakes. I don't see many repeaters aside from Janet, Tito, and Randy Jackson. Janet will be performing the solo parts recorded by her late brother. Today's pop stars like Miley Cyrus, the Jonas Brothers, Celine Dion, and Rob Thomas joined with Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett, Harry Connick, Jr., Josh Groban plus Faith Evans, Gladys Knight and Vince Vaughn? An astonishing 78 artists on one recording... the ego in the studio must have been great. Hopefully not only will the recording be successful artistically but also help the relief effort in Haiti.

For those of you too young to remember the original or for those of us who have not seen the once (now twice) in a lifetime gathering here it is. The new version is set to be

released during the Olympics on NBC.

No Five Mile Jaunts Today

Call it my resolution for the year if you want but it seems that I have been walking a bit lately. Last week being my vacation, I walked a lot. Monday on the zoo excursion I'm sure was good for my daily walk (like to get in a mile or two a day). This Monday was my longest one yet. The weather was still nice so I grabbed my ipod and headed north along 49 and turned down a country road, walked to the next road going west and eventually walked a good country block heading up River Street back into town (that was a good 4 miles). I then continued walking through town in a roundabout way to eventually end up at the post office. Then back home. I must have gone at least 5 miles.

Tuesday was another story entirely. This time, I headed south on 49 and got about a mile out of town when I decided that it was just crazy cold. I then turned around and stopped by my oldest brother's house to go in and warm up a bit before going home.

The long walks really are helped with my ipod mix. I have it on shuffle so that when an album that I really like comes on, I will switch it to play straight through. Before you know it, an hour and a half has passed. Particularly good when I downloaded one of my favorites that I had on cassette (there it is again) back in the day. You know one that you play continuously, rewind, fast forward, and then get it caught and eaten and there you go, no more tape. Oh, the recording: the 20th Anniversary Recording of the London version of Jesus Christ Superstar. Paul Nicholas as Jesus, Claire Moore as Mary Magdalene, and Keith Burns as Judas Iscariot. My favorite piece has to be "Could We Start Again, Please?" Upon hearing the song, it quickly became a favorite... maybe that's

why the cassette got eaten. Of course, another highlight is "Herod's Song." The entire recording is good for at least an hour and a half hike.

Hopefully, the temperature outside improves from the 19 degrees of today quickly so I can take another long walk instead of the walk to and from work.

One More Reason To Love The Wrath

Years ago, I came across a cassette tape of the *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* soundtrack. I loved it until I realized that it contained maybe a sampling of the entire score at best. A few weeks ago, I learned that a remastered edition with the entire score with all the musical cues had recently become available. I had to get it and I got it in the mail last Friday. EVERYTHING FROM THE MOVIE IS ON IT! Including the take of the first time that a character other than James Tiberius Kirk delivered the immortal "Space... the final frontier" soliloquy. If you know who it was don't ruin it for those who are not in the know.

Following the disaster that was the overblown, overbudget, snooze fest that is *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, Paramount Pictures demanded a totally new picture that would compete with *Star Wars* and hopefully win over a few of its diehard fans. This even included a desire to scrap the music from the previous film (although many of the themes would later be used in subsequent films and television series including the Main Title and Klingon themes). Ingenuer James Horner was eventually chosen to compose *TWOK*.

There is not one bit of music in the score that does not stir.

The Main Theme combines Alexander Courage's fanfare from the television series with a heroic march for Admiral Kirk plus a breathtaking nautical theme for the *Enterprise*, herself.

Captain Spock is given a mystical tune on the panflute that really invokes a sense of wonder into the character. A menacing piece led by the French Horn adds even more villainy to my favorite *Trek* villain. (Where was I in 1982? Ok... so I was 9. Or better yet, where was I in 1963 when the character of Khan Noonien Singh was created? I was -10 years old.)

"The Battle in the Mutara Nebula" is an 8 minute 7 second masterpiece of space battle excitement.

I have been asked at which point I would introduce novices to the world of *Star Trek*. I always point to my introduction.

Although the plot is a sequel to a then twenty year old episode, my favorite theme of the friendship between two heroes is what draws me to it time and again: "You are my commanding officer; you are also my friend. I have been and forever shall be yours." So says Captain Spock as he relinquishes command of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* once again to Admiral James Tiberius Kirk after a little training cruise runs into a wee bit o' trouble. I could sit and watch this movie once a day, every day. Twice on my days off.

Country Music Award Time!!!

It's time for the CMAs, and I'm making just a quick little post to share my guesses – we'll see how I do at the end of the night. I know, I know I whined and cried about missing the show this year, but my family came down with H1N1 and we're under a self-imposed quarantine. I think the kids need to get to bed early – for their health, of course ☹ – and I get to watch the show live after all! Believe me, I would so much rather be at youth group tonight, despite all my whining, I swear! This is an awful sickness, and I would so much rather not have anyone in my family have to have it... but I don't want to dwell on that now – we've been living this illness since Friday night, so it's time to break from that now a little bit – CMA time!!!!

My picks – I'll try to update throughout the night to see how I did. **Correct in green, wrong in red.**

TOTAL: 4/11

Entertainer of the Year:

Taylor Swift, winner

Kenny Chesney

Female Vocalist:

Taylor Swift, winner

Carrie Underwood

Male Vocalist:

Brad Paisley

Vocal Duo:

Sugarland, winner

Brooks and Dunn

Vocal Group:

Lady Antebellum, winner

Rascal Flatts

New Artist:

Darius Rucker, winner

Jake Owen

Album:

Taylor Swift's Fearless

Single:

I Run To You – Lady Antebellum

Song:

In Color – Jamey Johnson, winner

I Told You So – Randy Travis

Event:

Start a Band

I Told You So

Music Video:

Taylor Swift

NOTES: Awesome show so far – great performances, and I love the hosting duo of Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood. Their little duets are entertaining, funny, and even pleasant music to listen to! I especially appreciate the ditty about the swine flu – priceless, and it really hits home right now! Carrie Underwood has an **amazing** voice! Thank you American Idol for gifting her to country music!

I love the infusion of the classic country: Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys and especially the Zac Brown Band's rendition of Devil Went Down to Georgia (on speed!) was EXCELLENT!!

Brooks and Dunn's final CMA performance (retiring) with ZZ Top is a highlight!

Still enjoying the show, but what the heck happened to the

awesome hosting duo of Paisley and Underwood? Seems like they haven't been onstage together for a while. And when they do reappear together, let's can the jokes about Brad checking out Carrie's looks behind the back of his wife, [Kimberly Williams-Paisley](#) – there's just been too many of those jokes, and they're stale.

What could be better than Martina McBride singing When Country Wasn't Cool with Charlie McCoy on harmonica as a tribute to Barbara Mandrell to welcome her into the Country Music Hall of Fame?!? That was GREAT! That reminds me of an addition I must make to a fellow tangents.org blog about my favorite Christmas special – The Mandrell Sisters Christmas!

Oh man... the show started out the best CMA awards show EVER! But then it slowly went downhill... until the final award – Taylor Swift?!? You've got to be kidding. She is very talented and has done a wonder for attracting teen and tween girls to the country music genre, but... What about the rest of us?!? Let's face it, she did have a heck of a time hitting some of those high notes... Well, I'm not going to act like Kanye West. Taylor Swift deserves her time in the spotlight, even if it did ruin the entire flow of the CMAs...

Oh, and judging by my total guesses correct, it's obvious how much I'm allowed to listen to country music radio these days... For me, it's mostly KidsSongs and videos from the library (lately Shelley Duvall's Fairy Tale Theater) in the car. Whatever – no one could have seen that Taylor Swift Entertainer of the Year coming no matter what you spend your day listening to. I don't care if she IS the youngest CMA nominee for Entertainer of the Year ever – in my opinion, she should have had a lot more ground to cover before she won an award like that! The show started out great, but I have to say, I am left disappointed, and not only by my terrible score
□

The Drama...

I'm going on my third month as a youth group leader, and while I always enjoy myself at church on Wednesday nights, in recent weeks I've also felt a strange kind of dread. I couldn't put my finger on it until last night. There was a huge drama in our small group of 7th grade girls involving a friendship between two of the girls. The situation made for a lot of tension and was also a huge distraction from our lesson. After group, I mentioned this to the other 7th grade girls leader and the youth pastor, and neither seemed surprised, especially given the dramatic nature of a specific girl in my group – their words, not mine. I came home around 9 pm last night with 4 of my own little kids to put to bed while feeling entirely emotionally drained. I realized that even though I enjoy being a youth group leader for the most part, that strange sense of dread that I feel in the beginning of the week has to do with bracing myself for the weekly Wednesday night drama. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that the other 7th grade girls leader's attitude has greatly improved since the beginning of the year. Also, a few weeks ago, two students were transferred into my group because their friends were in my group – so now I have the entire clique in my group, and I get to oversee and facilitate all of their various factions. Wonderful. I have a theory that the other leader was very discouraged and emotionally drained by these girls and their drama by the end of last year, and so when I showed up, I was given the clique and their dramatics for my group. Ah, the joys of being the newbie. I'm happy to help, and I'm glad the other leader seems much happier, but I really need to find a way to encourage these girls to shift their priorities a little bit.

Complicating the matter is the fact that we meet in the youth pastor's office, so it's really hard to supervise everyone at once, especially when there is drama. I have girls wanting to poke through his drawers, lie under his computer desk, read his post-it notes and memos, and to sit on his desk. I'm starting to feel more like a babysitter than a small group leader, and the girls in my group are turning 13; it's not like they're little kids (which is what I'm dealing with all day and at night AFTER youth group).

Don't get me wrong; I do enjoy it; I'm just really frustrated right now. I really like the fact that it's something I get to do with my husband (the small group part is only about 40 minutes. For the rest of the two hours, we get to do things together), and I like hanging out with the other leaders and the girls when they're not acting crazy. I'm just saying that those times are getting few and far between. I need to find a way to focus the kids and also to get our group back to concentrating on the weekly lessons. We can still have fun while we do that, but step #1 will probably be to get us out of the pastor's office – I don't even know where to start if not there.

When I signed up for this gig, I failed to realize that aside from the long-shot of the Chicago Cubs making the World Series, my two favorite yearly live televised events – the Country Music Awards and the Academy of Country Music Awards – air on Wednesday nights. I cannot express how much I enjoy watching these shows, and it's kind of like an athletic event – it's not really the same to watch them after the fact. One year, I even did a live blog while watching one of these awards shows, and it was hectic, but a lot of fun. Tempted as I am to call in sick to youth group next week, I could not look seven 7th graders in the eyes and tell them that I missed our group to stay home and watch the Country Music Awards, especially after the major drama that was this week. So next week, I will actually be avoiding cnn.com and the media from

late Wednesday night until whenever I will get a chance to watch the recorded CMAs – which might not be until the weekend!!! Yes, I'm pouting, but I'm going to put my best face forward and just do it. But I reserve the right to complain about it all I want on my blog!!!!