

WEEKEND *LOVE SONGS*

COLUMN

Lend Me Your Ears: My favorite love song

For Valentine’s Day, a tribute to “I’m Not in Love” by 10cc, a love song that doesn’t want to be a love song.

// BY CIELO GAZARD



ILLUSTRATION BY LUCAS CASTILLO-WEST

My favorite love song is not a love song. “I’m Not in Love” by 10cc has been my most listened-to song on Spotify for the better part of

my head when no other song can. I’ve never been in love, but saying this is my favorite song to my mother was the closest I felt to admitting I had a crush on someone. “Don’t tell your friends about the two of us,” as the lyrics say.

This song is a masterpiece in multitrack recording. The members of 10cc took three weeks to record the vocals, singing “ahh” 16 times for each note of the chromatic scale. Forty-eight voices for each note of the scale, totaling to 256 individual vocal overdubs. The tapes were nearly translucent by the time the band finished recording the track.

When I listen to the dizzying and dazzling instrumentation, I feel like I’m traveling alone at night. Every note of the piano played by lead singer Eric Stewart shimmers like a guiding star in the dark night. And then, after I sit alone with the droning “ahhs” for a few minutes, a soft voice on the left-side of the mix — the band’s secretary — says those immortal words, “Big boys don’t cry.” I played this song once on a night shift playlist and lost my aux privileges as a result. People were puzzled, bewildered by those repeated lines that were soon drowned out by the overdubbed band choir.

The song was inspired by Stewart’s wife asking why he stopped saying “I love you” to her. Despite his lyrics claiming he keeps her picture on the

wall, but only to hide some “nasty stain that’s lying there,” Stewart and his wife are still together to this day. I think he was being a little facetious when he said “I’m not in love, so don’t forget it” in response to her grumbles.

“I’m Not in Love” is a song about refusal to commit to love. It’s a love song that doesn’t want to be one. It wants to be more than just another song that repeats “I love you” to the point of boredom.

“I’m Not in Love” is of its time. It was released in May 1975, and sounds like it. There’s nothing wrong with a song being a time capsule. As long as it pulls on my heartstrings, I think it’s worthy of obsession. It’s only six minutes long but feels much longer. It’s a whole journey through this man’s psyche and his refusal to say those three little words.

“I’m Not in Love” is the reason why I have this column. Last spring, I took a seminar entitled “Writing About Music” with professor Adam Sexton. For our last meeting, we all participated in “critical karaoke,” an idea professor Sexton lifted from his colleague Daphne Brooks, where we presented on a song of our choice for the length of said song. “I’m Not in Love” was my song. I made sure that I packed enough of the song’s lyrics in my essay to line up perfectly with when they are sung in the song. Much of what I said in class is what I’m saying here. If you stop me in the street, I’ll say the same thing.

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REVIEW

Bad Bunny’s truly unforgettable dance

// BY ESMERALDA VASQUEZ-FERNANDEZ

I have been waiting to see Bad Bunny — Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio — headline the Super Bowl ever since he made a guest appearance in 2020. This year, that dream was realized. So allow me to join the chorus of voices praising the halftime show: the entire performance was meticulously thought out and perfectly executed. The political undertones communicated through creative visuals and set design displayed the intentionality Bad Bunny has carried throughout his career. And the intention is clear: to unite people with love.

While many people wanted to hear him discuss immigration enforcement like he did at the Grammy’s a week before, I saw resistance clearly through the symbolism and metaphors used on stage. The opening scene of the sugar cane fields showcased the physical strength of immigrants and the country’s dependence on them, and later, the light posts brought attention to Puerto Rico’s ongoing energy crisis. He didn’t have to say “ICE out” to make his message clear.

Food stands, nail techs, construction workers and the group of older men playing dominoes all represented Latino culture. As expected, Bad Bunny included women in his performance in a way that showed female empowerment and autonomy, especially during his song, “Yo Perreo Sola.” Karol G and Cardi B foregrounded female excellence.

The visuals in the performance were top-tier. I did not expect to see people in green bush costumes or for Bad Bunny to drop into a staged Puerto Rican casita. And, not to sound overdramatic, but I screamed when I heard the words of “Gasolina” by Daddy Yankee segway into “Eoo,” which Spotify told me was my most listened to song in 2025. I anticipated Daddy Yankee or Don Omar, the kings of reggaeton, to appear on screen, but Ricky Martin was just as exciting. Many people forget how Ricky Martin, a Puerto Rican singer, changed Latin pop music forever. He is also vocal about his journey as a gay Latino artist.

I won’t lie. I was very confused when I saw Lady Gaga take the stage, but who better to join Bad Bunny than an artist who has been pushing acceptance of all communities in America her entire musical career? But I am still trying to understand how “Die With a Smile” plays into the show. It feels like its own act. Personally, I would have loved to see Cardi B and Bad Bunny sing “I like it Like That,” or to see El Alfa perform, but Lady

Gaga gave a great performance, too.

Bad Bunny’s range in music has always been notable, and when the orchestra strummed the strings of “Monaco” — a distinct tonal shift — I was almost moved to tears. While the orchestra strummed, Bad Bunny credited his successes to his self confidence. While performing, he pointed into the camera to convey that the audience, too, should always believe in themselves. It felt like he was telling me directly to never give up, no matter how difficult it can feel to push forward.

Bad Bunny’s performance speaks to the moment in which he delivered it. The political and social divide was so strong that an unofficial second halftime show was streaming simultaneously via Turning Point USA. With notably fewer viewers, it featured Lee Brice saying he wants to “kiss” his “fish.” Not sure how the fish feels about that, but back to the real show.

Hearing “Mi Baile Inolvidable” was very bittersweet. If you have never dedicated “Mi Baile Inolvidable” to someone before, I do not

expect you to understand the slight flinch I get when I hear it. Then again, I plan on playing this song at my own wedding, just like the lucky couple, Eleisa “Elli” Aparico and Thomas “Tommy” Wolter, who got married live — yes, that wedding was real. I agree with Benito, that “mientras uno está vivo, uno debe amar lo más que pueda.” While one is alive, we should love the most we can. But my advice is to let this song be your song and not tie it to someone else. “Never stop loving.” I second that.

The Latino community historically has used music and dance to push through trauma and hardship. Benito was a force of joyous radicalism and advocacy on stage.

For many years, the halftime show has been an opportunity for artists to make a statement on American culture.

Kendrick Lamar, in many ways, paved the way for Bad Bunny’s performance when he stated, “the revolution is about to be televised. You picked the right time but the wrong guy” back in 2025.

Bad Bunny syphoned the entire Americas at the end of his performance by stating “God Bless America” and immediately listing most of the the countries in the Americas, even Canada. He put the “united” in the United States.

Benito finished by hugging the immigrants, children of immigrants, people of color, LGBTQ+ community and the many marginalized communities that make up the United States. What we witnessed Sunday was not just another American halftime superbowl performance, it was an act of love. It truly was “un baile inolvidable,” an unforgettable dance.

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ILLUSTRATION BY SEBASTIAN WOODS