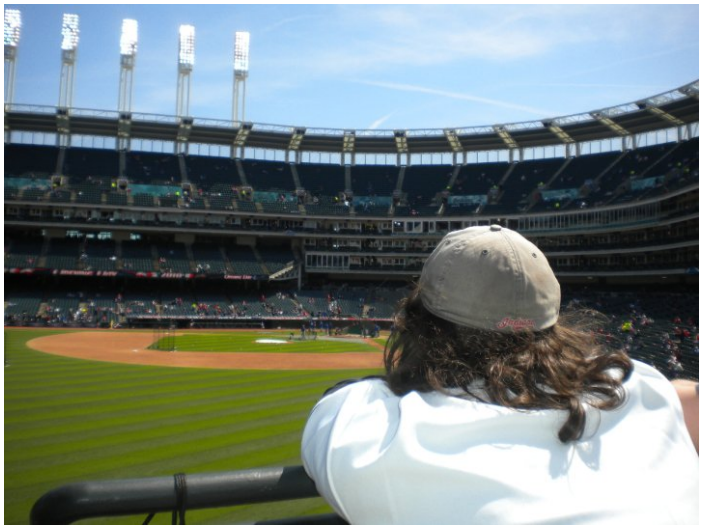

Baseball and music are, and will forever be, intertwined. Every baseball fan knows the words to “Centerfield” by John Fogerty by heart. Ballparks at every level play some form of “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” during the seventh inning stretch. Nearly every player has a “walk-up song” that plays on their way from the on-deck circle to the plate, their stroll from the bullpen to the mound, or while they’re completing their warm-up tosses before the game.

Songs referencing baseball or songs that make listeners think about baseball are all over the place. Bruce Springsteen’s “Glory Days” references a friend who was a big baseball player back in high school. Eddie Vedder, the lead singer of Pearl Jam, penned a song about being a Cubs fan called “All the Way”. Of course there’s “Tessie” by Dropkick Murphys, an anthem at Red Sox games. Kenny Rogers wrote a song called “The Greatest” about a young boy fantasizing about being the greatest baseball player of all-time. Bob Dylan wrote a song about Catfish Hunter called “Catfish”. And, we all know Terry Cashman’s “Talkin’ Baseball”, which led to an Indians spin-off that you may remember:

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How many songs have you taken a liking to or found a soft spot in your heart for because one of your favorite players used it as walk-up music or because it was in the pre-game highlights video shown on the Jumbotron? Songs can get stuck in our heads for all kinds of reasons. Baseball moments are included. I’ll always attach Matchbox Twenty’s “How Far We’ve Come” to

a pre-game Jumbotron video that showed Indians players in their minor league jerseys and how they came up through the system. I can't listen to "Conquest" by The White Stripes without thinking of Rafael Betancourt. Some of my earlier baseball recollections are of Manny Ramirez walking to the plate to "Mo Money Mo Problems" by Notorious B.I.G.

Since so many of my View from the Porch columns have been full of numbers and information, I thought it'd be a good time to write about something a little more whimsical. We all know songs about baseball, but do we know about the Indians who have made music? Unfortunately, as far as I know, our Carlos Santana doesn't play the guitar, but there have been some guitarists to play in Cleveland. In fact, some of the Indians that are musicians have been pretty diverse in their tastes and abilities.

In 2005, Major League Baseball and Good Sports released an audio CD called "Oh Say Can You Sing?". Of the 11 tracks on the disc, the Indians were well represented. Perhaps the most awesome representation of the bunch is from Omar Vizquel.

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That's Vizquel's cover of "Broadway" by the Goo Goo Dolls. Vizquel was a jack of all trades for the Tribe, along with being a Gold Glove shortstop and noted lothario – and I mean that with utmost respect. Vizquel dabbled in all forms of art, including painting , during his Indians career.

How could anybody forget Tribe Jam?

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That's a live performance in 2001 by Michael Stanley and the Resonators, with some help from Omar Vizquel on tambourine, who also played drums that night. Other Indians that were part of Tribe Jam were Jim Thome, Russell Branyan, Dave Burba, Bob Wickman, and Marty Cordova. Here's a Scene Magazine article about the 2001 event.

For some more recent history, the most well-known former Indian musician would probably be Ben Broussard. Broussard retired from baseball in 2009 to focus on his music career. In 2005, Broussard released a self-titled album on the Lazy Bones recording label. The song from that album with the highest hit count on Youtube is called "Hitting The Ground".

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One of Broussard's more popular songs from that album is called "Again".

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He released a second album in 2009 called "Renovated". His music is available for purchase at his official website http://www.benbroussard.com

The night of Broussard's album release party for his self-titled debut album at the House of Blues in Downtown Cleveland was made even sweeter by hitting a walk-off two-run homer in the bottom of the 10th on August 19, 2005.

On the aforementioned “Oh Say Can You Sing?” album, Broussard did a cover of U2’s “With or Without You”, which I, unfortunately, could not find audio of.

Another Indians appearance on the “Oh Say Can You Sing?” album was from Covelli “Coco” Crisp. Crisp added his lyrical stylings with his original track “We Got That Thing” (don’t ask about the image):

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“I sacrifice bunts like burnt offerings.” Hey, it’s actually not that bad.

The rest of the former Indians to appear on the “Oh Say Can You Sing?” album are Sean Casey, who did the lyrics for a cover of “How Do You Like Me Now” by Toby Keith and Matt Ginter played banjo on a song called “Dooley” by The Dillards. Casey was with the Reds at the time. He played just six games for the Indians after growing up in their minor league system. He was traded in 1998 for Dave Burba. As for Ginter, he made four appearances with the Indians in 2008.

Two former Indians pitchers have gone on to have two successful rock bands. First, the one you’re probably familiar with, not because you’ve heard the music, but because it has been referenced more recently. Scott Radinsky, who pitched for the Indians in 2001 and was most recently the Indians bullpen coach and then pitching coach, is the frontman of the band Pulley. Pulley has released five studio albums and two EPs.

They have actually been quite successful. This October, they are playing a concert in Brazil with well-known bands MxPx, Less Than Jake, and Reel Big Fish. In April, they’ll be playing a rock fest in Belgium with bands like Rise Against, Bad Religion, and Killswitch Engage.

This song, titled A Bad Reputation, off the band's 2004 CD "Matters", has over 140,000 hits on Youtube:

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"Which Way To Go", a cover of a song by Big Boys, is from their most recent EP, titled "The Long and Short of It", released in 2011.

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The band will celebrate their 20th anniversary as a group in 2014.

Former Indians pitcher Jack McDowell is the frontman for his band Stickfigure. Unfortunately, I couldn't find any of their stuff on Youtube, mostly because there's a reggae band with the same name and not much for McDowell's band. There's one poor quality video on their website and three albums available for purchase.

Von Hayes gets a mention in this article, not for his music prowess, but because there's a rock band in the New Jersey/Delaware area named after the former Indian. A collection of songs from the Von Hayes band can still be found at their MySpace page (yes, this is the first time I've been to MySpace in at least eight years).

The "Oh Say Can You Sing?" album can be purchased at Amazon .

Of course, the sweet sounds of Tom Hamilton calling a walk-off home run are the best Indians-related music to my ears. Courtesy of one of my favorite Facebook pages, “Tom Hamilton has the Best Home Run Call in all of Baseball”, here are plenty of videos to get you fired up for the 2013 season. It may not be music, but damnit, it sounds pretty good.