As has been the custom in these parts for the past few years, a sure sign that the Indians' season is not far off (and yes, that is Rocco Scotti belting it out at old Municipal) comes in the annual suggestions for At-Bat Music for the individual Indians' players. The complete list of suggestions through the years can be accessed via last year's piece , when I was joined in my song suggestions by Anthony Castrovince (which had a certain angle that should have come as no surprise to anyone who has read AC), who later provided the actual list of songs that players used as a form of introduction .

Since this has the possibility to get away from me, I'm going to keep it with players that are assumed to be in either the Opening Day lineup/rotation/bullpen or whose omission from the Opening Day lineup/rotation/bullpen is caused only by injury, with the idea that they'll take the majority of PA at a particular position once healthy. Thus, as much as I'd like to include Cake's "Sick of You" for a particular former 1st Round Pick and perennial 4th OF with a proclivity for circuitous routes to balls in the outfield and as much as I'd like to use a song titled "Schism" for Dave Huff, which puts what is between him and the organization into some proper context, those are not included in the following suggestions.

Additionally, I'm not even going to pile on Jensen Lewis in the body of the piece by suggesting (while providing the YouTube link) that he should use Coldplay's "Viva La Vida" because the opening lines to the song ("I used to rule the world / Seas would rise when I gave the word / Now in the morning I sleep alone / Sweep the streets I used to own") lay out a pretty accurate

portrayal of Lewis' journey from 2007 and the last few months of 2008 – when he was the Indians' closer – to clearing waivers and starting the season in Columbus.

Instead, for the purposes of (relative) brevity, I'll simply go around the diamond (with the May 1st lineup, not the April 1st one), then into the assumed rotation and through the assumed bullpen…saving it all up for the big finish by "closing" it out strong.

So break out the pitch pipe and let the music fill the air…

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Carlos Santana – "Welcome to the Terrordome", Public Enemy

It is not lost on me that the Indians' backstop shares a name with one of the more famous guitarists of all time (remember, I call him "The Axe Man"), but I'll come clean and admit that I've been waiting for an absolute monster offensive prospect to emerge for the Indians to suggest this classic PE track. While the easy out is to suggest some clean guitar riff from the Tribe C's namesake, Santana should be striding to the plate with a tone-setting beat and with the ferocity of Chuck D, welcoming everyone to the Terrordome.

alt=""
swfobject.embedSWF('http://www.youtube.com/v/YME1QGGcmEg','avreloaded0','368','280','9.0.28','/plugins/content/avreloaded/expressinstall.swf',
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Matt LaPorta – "How Soon is Now", The Smiths

Matt MaTola turned 26 in January and, having played a total of 162 MLB games, simply has not yet shown that he is capable of the offensive production that was hoped for when he was the centerpiece of the CC deal 2 ½ years ago. While Morrissey never actually utters the words that serve as the title to The Smiths' most popular tune, it certainly serves as a quick way to ask the question on everyone's mind about MaTola. And if the title doesn't convey feeling well enough, how about this verse: "When you say it's going to happen "now" / well what exactly does that mean? / See I've already waited too long / and all my hope is gone".

For LaPorta, 2011 may represent a last chance at saving that hope…

alt=""
swfobject.embedSWF('http://www.youtube.com/v/_U5HpeA_WSo','avreloaded1','368','280','9.0.28','/plugins/content/avreloaded/expressinstall.swf',{autoplay:'0',color1:'0xFFFFFF',color2:'0x000000',rel:'0',egm:'0',border:'0',loop:'0'},{wmode:'window',bgcolor:'#FFFFFF',menu:'true'},{id:'p_avreloaded1',styleclass:'allvideos'});

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The OC – "Hold On", Wilson Phillips

And now, this year's winner of the "Ryan Garko Memorial Song" is…UNCLE ORLANDO! Bestowed annually upon the player who best personifies the "placeholder" status that Ryan Garko carried so well during his years as a Cleveland Indian, Cabrera has been selected to be accompanied by the harmonies of Wilson Phillips when striding to the plate. With Cord Phelps and Jason Kipnis perhaps joining the Indians at some point this year, the veteran (signed to a $1.3M deal that the Indians wouldn't have too much trouble eating) just has to live by that mantra to "hold on for one more day".

alt=""
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Asdrubal Cabrera – "Waiting for the Man", Velvet Underground

Some time ago, Kevin Goldstein of Baseball Prospectus asserted that if looking at Cabrera's numbers in 2009 "doesn't scream 'future star' to you, check your ears" and while Cabrera's 2010 became a completely lost season, the idea that the "future star" potential is still there for Cabrera is one of the more promising aspects of the 2011 season. That said, Cabrera has to show in 2011 that he can be "the Man" both offensively and defensively to re-establish himself as a "future star" and until he can show that, we'll keep "waiting".

alt=""
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Jason Donald – "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap", AC/DC

Did anyone else notice last year that Donald's uniform is perpetually dirty, either because he's diving around the infield when nobody's looking or simply pulling the old Little League trick (picking up some dirt and wiping it on your shirt to make it look like you've had an active game), and because of that, this anthem from the Australian rockers fits Donald. Oh, and he's getting paid the league minimum…you know, "dirt cheap".

alt=""
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Grady Sizemore – "Break on Through (To the Other Side)", The Doors

We've seen Grady, the erstwhile superstar, and Grady, the hobbled shell of his former self. Now as he stands at the edge of his final year of guaranteed money, with the future of his career in the balance as he recovers from microfracture surgery, it certainly would be nice if Grady could "break on through (to the other side)", even if it means a breakthrough into effectiveness, if not a glorious return to the AL's elite.

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The BLC – "Nightrain", Guns N' Roses

Sure, you could go with "Runnin' with the Devil" from Van Halen in…um, honor of Choo's agent of choice or "Train Kept a Rollin'" from Aersomith, but there is no better riff that I can think of to get across that SS Choo is "loaded like a freight train / flyin' like an aeroplane" carrying the Tribe offense for "one more time tonight".

alt=""
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Mike Brantley – “Rolling in the Deep”, Adele

The song begins with the soulful voice of Adele crying out that, “there’s a fire starting in my heart / reaching a fever pitch and it’s bring me out the dark” and for Brantley – who will turn 24 in mid-May and has yet to display that he projects as a legitimate everyday MLB player – let’s hope that Brantley’s about to come “out the dark” while he’s “rolling in the deep” recesses of the green grass at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario.

alt=""
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Travis Hafner – “The Good Life”, Weezer

Umm…cue the lyrics because we would take this guy – used to be known as Pronk –back:

And I don't wanna be an old man anymore
It's been a year or two since I was out on the floor
Shaking booty, making sweet love all the night
It's time I got back to the good life
It's time I got back, it's time I got back
And I don't even know how I got off the track
I wanna go back, yeah!

alt=""
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Fausto Carmona – "Tighten Up", The Black Keys

Look past the unbelievably thunderous drumming from Patrick Carney or the ripping riffs and haunting vocals from Dan Carney and even look past that this duo is from Akron when realizing how perfect this is for Fausto. Just check these lines – "When I was young and moving fast / nothing slowed me down, oh, slowed me down / Now I let the others pass / because I've come around, oh, come around cause I've found" – and hope that maybe Fausto has "found" himself again.

alt=""
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Justin Masterson – "Mudfootball", Jack Johnson

If there is a more laid-back, happy go-lucky player in MLB, I'd like to be introduced to him as every interview with Masterson involves a toothy smile, a "happy to be here" tone, and usually some intonation of how "blessed" he is to be where he is. Given his island roots (OK, he was just born in Jamaica and spent his formative years in Indiana and outside of Dayton), the musings of Jack Johnson over some guitar strums and some steel drums is a nice accompaniment for Masterson.

alt=""
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Carlos Carrasco – "Animal", Neon Trees

The chorus to this ditty goes "Oh oh, I want some more…oh oh, what are you waiting for" and while the song obviously is not meant to be sung to a just-24-year-old Venezuelan RHP, what Carrasco was able to accomplish at the end of 2010 certainly makes the chorus applicable to what most Tribe fans would like to see out of CarCar this year – basically more of that. As for what he's waiting for, let's just hope its Kyle Drabek to be in MLB for an extended period of time

as well so he can prove to the skeptics that he was the perennial top Phillies' prospect for a reason.

alt="" swfobject.embedSWF('http://www.youtube.com/v/gM7Hlg75Mlo','avreloaded11','368','280','9.0.28','/plugins/content/avreloaded/expressinstall.swf', {autoplay:'0',color1:'0xFFFFFF',color2:'0x000000',rel:'0',egm:'0',border:'0',loop:'0'},{wmode:'window',bgcolor:'#FFFFFF',menu:'true'},{id:'p_avreloaded11',styleclass:'allvideos'});

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Mitch Talbot – "Unleash the Fury", Tom Green

Holding over from last year's suggestions because I will not rest until this goes into heavy rotation at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario on the big screen, Tom Green intermittently strumming a guitar and screaming at Mitch to "Unleash the Fury" should be played on loop whenever Talbot takes the mound for the Tribe.

alt="" swfobject.embedSWF('http://www.youtube.com/v/LLMMx3MRi0s','avreloaded12','368','280','9.0.28','/plugins/content/avreloaded/expressinstall.swf', {autoplay:'0',color1:'0xFFFFFF',color2:'0x000000',rel:'0',egm:'0',border:'0',loop:'0'},{wmode:'window',bgcolor:'#FFFFFF',menu:'true'},{id:'p_avreloaded12',styleclass:'allvideos'});

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Josh Tomlin – "Tuff Enuff", The Fabulous Thunderbirds

Long ago, a VHS tape called "Superstars" fused music and sports like never before and one of my favorite videos highlighted NBA players that were overlooked or undervalued because of

their size or what they COULDN'T do on a basketball court. Since it ran in stark comparison to, say, the 'Nique Wilkins video, the little guys' video (which included Mark Price) spoke to the scrappy point guard that I saw in the mirror everyday as a 6th grader. Like the group of players in that video, Tomlin is an undervalued, often overlooked commodity who has done everything that the Indians have asked of him and finds himself still fighting for his 6" in MLB…which is the width of the pitching rubber at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario, among other places.

alt=""
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Vinnie Pestano – "Running Down a Dream", Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers

Of course, "Woke Up This Morning" (The Sopranos opening theme song) is the easy one here given Vincent William Pestano's…um, heritage, but Pestano sprints in from the bullpen like he can't wait to grab the ball. We all remember the last Indian to do that (John Rocker…in case you don't remember) and how absurdly great his entrance to the field was, even if his pitching was memorable for all of the wrong reasons. For Pestano, the first guitar chord of the classic Tom Petty song should provide all the motivation for the 20th Round Draft Pick (hence the "dream" part) to get to the pitcher's mound.

alt=""
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Frank Herrmann – "Paid in Full", Eric B. & Rakim

A vastly underrated song from a largely forgotten duo from the late 80s/early 90s provides the walking music for Herrmann, who holds a degree in economics from Harvard and who once interned on Wall Street. While most of his Crimson classmates were off making hay in the world of high finance, there's no question that Herrmann spent many nights on buses in the minor leagues just (as Rakim asserts), "Thinkin' of a master plan / 'Cuz ain't nuthin' but sweat inside my hand / So I dig deep in my pocket, all my money is spent…Thinkin' how I could get some dead Presidents". With an MLB salary likely in his sights, finally Herrmann will get some "dead Presidents"…just not via the route that most Harvard econ majors come about them.

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Tony Sipp – "Voodoo Chile", Jimi Hendrix

Since Sipp hails from Pascagoula, Mississippi and while "Born on the Bayou" by CCR is probably the more obvious selection here, I'm thinking that the opening riff of Hendrix's "Voodoo Chile" is better served to set the mood for a late-inning reliever. Considering that Sipp's hometown is less than two hours from The Big Easy, I'll parlay that "Voodoo" from N'Awlins into a killer introduction for the Indians' burgeoning set-up man.

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Rafael Perez – "Sound of Silence", Simon and Garfunkel

To my knowledge, Perez has never given an interview to the assembled press corps and, while he may be more comfortable coming out of the bullpen to complete silence (or maybe the sound of crickets chirping), I'd prefer the soft singing of Paul and Art which, of course call to mind the classic Frank the Tank tranquilizer/fall in the pool scene from "Old School"
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alt=""
swfobject.embedSWF('http://www.youtube.com/v/9hUy9ePyo6Q','avreloaded17','368','280','9.0.28','/plugins/content/avreloaded/expressinstall.swf',{autoplay:'0',color1:'0xFFFFFF',color2:'0x000000',rel:'0',egm:'0',border:'0',loop:'0'},{wmode:'window',bgcolor:'#FFFFFF',menu:'true'},{id:'p_avreloaded17',styleclass:'allvideos'});

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Chris F. Perez – "Guerrilla Radio", Rage Against the Machine

As much as I like my suggestion last year of "Black Betty" to continue the comparison between Kenny F. Powers and Chris F. Perez, the Indians' closer NEEDS a song from the band that is so full of rage that it serves as the first word in the band's name. This particular cut from the anger that is Rage finishes out with a stream of screaming

"Lights Out, Guerrilla Radio…turn that $#!+ up!"

Yeah, that's an appropriate tone-setter for the onset of Pure Rage to start the 9th…

alt=""
swfobject.embedSWF('http://www.youtube.com/v/H0kJLW2EwMg','avreloaded18','368','280','9.0.28','/plugins/content/avreloaded/expressinstall.swf',{autoplay:'0',color1:'0xFFFFFF',color2:'0x000000',rel:'0',egm:'0',border:'0',loop:'0'},{wmode:'window',bgcolor:'#FFFFFF',menu:'true'},{id:'p_avreloaded18',styleclass:'allvideos'});

There you have it…

As always, sync up your iPods with the proper music listed so, if nothing else, you can make your own "walk-in" music for the players from the comfort of your home…or at least your mother's basement
.