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## The 15 Best Songs of 2014

30/12/2014



But these 15 songs are the ones that left an impression on me — that used, abused, or completely ignored 2014 trends to create a sound that was distinct as it was memorable. These are songs that felt different — in tone, rhythm, quality, and lyricism — from everything else created this year. Some of them made important comments on the world we live in, and some are just great, timeless songs.

These aren't the top selling or chart-performing songs of the year. These are just the 15 best songs of 2014:

### 1. "New Romantics" by Taylor Swift

"We're all bored/ We're all so tired of everything," [Swift](#) drowsily sings in the intro to "New Romantics," before cranking the volume all the way up, giving way to a dancing, jumping, screaming chorus. It's the guarded anger of "Blank Space," the sleepy anxiety of "Out of the Woods," and the pop-anthem '80s chorus she promised us, all mixed in one.

"New Romantics" isn't a single off of Swift's anthemic 1989. In fact, many fans who bought the album on iTunes don't even have the song. You could only find it hidden as a bonus track on the Target edition. This song is an intentionally buried gem, and it shows just how strategic a musician and businesswoman Swift really is.

"It's poker, he can't see it in my face/ But I'm about to play my Ace," Swift murmurs. The ace is

"New Romantics." It's a stronger, braver, more polished Swift than we've ever seen before, and it bodes well for her future.

## 2. "Close Your Eyes (and Count to Fuck)" by Run the Jewels

Run the Jewels' excellent second album, *Run the Jewels 2*, could not be more different from 1989. Indeed, it might be a better album overall. No one else in hip-hop created faster, smoother rhymes than Killer Mike and El-P, the two members of Run the Jewels. Unlike the other songs on the album that rely on a call-and-response lyrical structure, "Close Your Eyes (and Count to Fuck)" gives both Killer Mike and El-P room to extend their raps into incendiary critiques of the government and society.

## 3. "2 On" by Tinashe featuring Schoolboy Q

Tinashe's songs aren't backed by the electronic dance music that was so ubiquitous in 2014. As such, the throwback R&B jams of "2 On" felt like a breath of fresh air on an overcrowded dance floor. "Get faded, turn up with the big boys/ Live fast, die young that's my choice," Tinashe sings in her calm, buttery voice creating a song that could just as easily ramp up or wind down a great evening out.

## 4. "Sugah Daddy" by D'Angelo

[D'Angelo](#) dropped his first album in 14 years after most top lists of 2014 had been published. That's a shame because *Black Messiah* is full of incredible music. The bass is heavy and thick, the drums ricochet, and D'Angelo's voice is more mature — scratchier, heavier, and tougher — than it was in the past. "Sugah Daddy" is the height of 2014 soul.

## 5. "0 to 100/The Catch Up" by Drake

This song made me love Drake. Not only does "0 to 100/The Catch Up" feature some of Drake's best rapping, but he proves in this song that—for now at least—he can do whatever he wants and it will work. Here, he combines what could feel like two completely disconnected songs into a total hit.

## 6. "Digital Witness" by St. Vincent

With stretched out guitars and a beat that meld together to provide a funky, drifting quality, "Digital Witness" amply proves why Annie Clark has always been loved for her eccentric sound and ethereal voice. "Ooh. I want all of your mind," Clark swoons, as the song tackles both love and surveillance culture.

## 7. "Get On Your Knees" Nicki Minaj feat. Ariana Grande

Grande, America's beloved tiny-bodied, huge-voiced baby Mariah, gets down and dirty with the queen of rap on "Get On Your Knees." Somehow, it works.

## 8. "Octahate" by Ryn Weaver

I was completely unsurprised when Soundcloud told me this was my most-listened to song of

2014. On her debut EP, Ryn Weaver hit pop music gold with "Octahate." It's catchy. It's angry. It's great. Written by pop goddess Charli XCX, Weaver created the perfect blend of indie-electronica and mainstream pop.

#### **9. "Boom Clap" by Charli XCX**

"Boom Clap" was a potential candidate for 2014's Song of the Summer, thanks to its pulsing beats and seemingly effortless lyricism. With her two number-one hits this year, Charli XCX is quickly becoming one of the best pop songwriters in the game (see, literally, one above), and "Boom Clap" was the best song she performed this year.

#### **10. "Unfucktheworld" by Angel Olsen**

"I wanted nothing but for this to be the end/ for this to never be a tight and empty hands," Angel Olsen croons on "Unfucktheworld." At just two minutes long, it's one of the shortest songs on her album, and it sets the stage for the dreamy, dreary, lonely collection that was perfect for an often difficult year.

#### **11. "i" by Kendrick Lamar**

"i" was the only song Lamar released in 2014, and it's a self-affirming, dance-friendly jam. Yet "i" also features an Ernie Isley guitar solo and a political undercurrent, making it a deeper song than its groovy backing-beats.

#### **12. "Your Love is Killing Me" by Sharon Van Etten**

Sharon Van Etten creates a mammoth masterpiece in "Your Love is Killing Me." At six-and-a-half minutes long, the song is twice the length of most others on the list, but it never feels monotonous or clumsy. Instead, the creepy torch song becomes more and more captivating with each listen.

#### **13. "Move that Dope" by Future, Pharrell Williams, Pusha T, and Casino**

Future hadn't produced a relevant, ground-breaking song in arguably three years, and he was quickly falling into disappointing obscurity. "Move that Dope" brought him back. With a stacked featured artist cast, and a convoluted adaption of Salt-N-Pepa's "Push it," Future finally pushes it real good again.

#### **14. "Say You Love Me" by Jessie Ware**

Jessie Ware has better vocals than almost any female pop artist out there right now, and she's creating music that hovers perfectly between positivity and angst. "Say You Love Me" is a heart-wrenching, desperate song as warm as Ware's whispering vocals.

#### **15. "Two Weeks" by FKA Twigs**

[FKA Twigs](#) became a music critics' darling this year for her mesmerizing album *LP1*. "Two Weeks" is the closest Twigs comes to traditional pop music on the album, using a traditional verse-chorus-verse format, buoyed by the fact that the chorus is hella catchy.

Here's a playlist of every one of the 102 songs I almost picked as Best Song of 2014. Minus Taylor Swift's songs, [which do not appear on Spotify](#).

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