

# The hot new iPod playlist: Music to give birth

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Music has always been an important part of Destiny Martin's life. So it made sense to bring her first child into the world with song. She even had the perfect one selected: the Beatles' "In My Life."

The mix CD she prepared for her delivery had a similar sampling of loving and peaceful music, from "Seasons of Love" from the Rent soundtrack to "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong.

So three years later, Martin, 29, still finds it funny that baby Jolie entered the world not to Paul McCartney but to Metallica.

Martin had put the song "Nothing Else Matters" on the CD as a nod to her metal-loving husband, and that's what happened to be playing when their daughter was born. Martin said she finds the song's message appropriate.

"Nothing else matters, that's the whole point," she said. "It never works out like you expect it."

Martin's efforts to usher her child into the world with music, down to having the song selected, are yet another way mothers are customizing their labor and delivery environment.

And hospitals are doing their part to accommodate the trend, from piping in music to providing CD players or allowing parents to bring iPod docks and laptops.

Childbirth experts say couples are increasingly making music a part of their births, and the emergence of MP3 players allow them to draw from a wide variety of songs and to even put together playlists for different stages of birth.

Tina Cassidy, author of "Birth: The Surprising History of How We Are Born," (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006) said it's natural for women to want music around them during labor.

"If you go way back into history, singing was always a part of giving birth," Cassidy said.

In cultures around the world, a birth was traditionally a social time for women, who would gather to offer their support to the mother, including singing hymns and other songs of encouragement, she said. Sometimes the mother would even sing along.

Today's moms are using music in a variety of ways in the delivery room, bringing everything from meditative tapes to help them

relax, to Salt-N-Pepa to help them, literally, "Push It."

Siobhan Mueller, 36, of Arlington, Va., made an iTunes playlist of her favorite mellow comfort songs for the birth of her first child, including a W Hotel CD that conjured memories of a great trip she and her husband had taken.

"I had heard that this whole 'child birth thing' was painful, so I knew that I wanted to be comfortable, and bring as many comfort items as possible," Mueller said.

And a comfortable mother can make for a healthier baby.

"The benefits are that (music) does, in a lot of patients, blunt the stress response, which actually can contribute to some problems during labor, such as decreased blood flow to the fetus," said Dr. Fred Schwartz, an Atlanta physician considered a pioneer in using music as medicine.

Schwartz is the producer

of Transitions, a series of CDs that use instrumental music, actual womb sounds and a soothing woman's voice to help infants sleep and women relax during childbirth.

"Music is extremely effective to decrease their discomfort," he said.

Hospitals allowing women to create their own birthing environment is a far cry from the days when women were expected to give birth alone, cut off from their husbands and at the mercy of male doctors, Cassidy said.

Certified nurse-midwife Susan Huser of the University of California-Los Angeles said she believes both hospitals and newly empowered parents are responding to advances in technology.

"I think the whole iPod and being able to mix your own CD has motivated the change," she said. "The whole change in technology to allow people's music to be portable has been

what's brought the change."

"In general, hospitals are recognizing that ... birth is a personal experience," she said.

The evolution of the labor and delivery experience is also due, in no small part, to women gaining more power over their lives overall, experts said.

"We're so used to controlling every aspect of our lives, and birth is the final frontier of that," Cassidy said. "We go into it with this feeling of control and of keeping the same level of control we have in our work life."

That need to be in control can get moms into trouble, however, especially if they think the birth will go precisely according to their plans. Trying to deliver to a certain song is a sweet idea but highly unlikely, experts said.

"You're cruising for a bruising if you're laying your expectations on everything going by the

numbers," said Scott Adler, managing editor of BabyCenter.com.

Cassidy was even more direct.

"At the end of the day, the best laid plans tend to go out the window—along with the iPod," she said.

But as Martin and others have learned, the music fates are not without a sense of humor.

Lua Hancock, 31, of Davie, Fla., was in the midst of having an emergency C-section with her first child when she decided to focus on the music coming from the anesthesiologist's radio to calm her nerves.

The song playing? "The First Cut is the Deepest" by Sheryl Crow.

"At the time I even saw the humor in it," Hancock said, still chuckling three years later.

"I'm due in May with my second child, and that song will definitely be on (my iPod mix)," she said. "That's my C-section song."

## Va. Tech shooting emphasizes need to shield viewers from disturbing reports

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK—Any time his 6-year-old son or 5-year-old daughter walks in on Jon Klein watching CNN, he quickly changes the channel.

The CNN U.S. president knows better than most the conflicting agendas of news organizations and parents during tragic, disturbing stories. Seung-Hui Cho's massacre of 32 people at Virginia Tech last week was a particularly vivid example.

Experts say, to not risk emotional damage, it is important to shield youngsters from prolonged exposure to news coverage of events like these.

The Virginia Tech story had two flash points. The first was on the day of the event, as the magnitude and sheer horror of the shootings unfolded on television. Just as the shock was receding, news organizations carried fearsome pictures and video of the killer that he had sent to NBC News on the day of his rampage.

"If you let your kids watch stuff like this, you're committing child abuse," said Mark McGuire, a pop culture columnist for the Albany Times Union.

He happened upon his upset 5-year-old daughter watching the news in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks despite instructions not to. She had turned on the TV and there it was. He changed his television set's settings so a children's channel automatically appears whenever the set is turned on.

Action-packed shots of people crying or screaming, wounded victims being rushed to ambulances or police moving into place with guns drawn are likely to be most upsetting to children up to age 6, said Joanne Cantor, a University of Wisconsin professor and author of "Mommy, I'm Scared: How TV and Movies Frighten Children and What We Can Do to Protect Them."

The repetitiveness of coverage adds to the distress. The most frequently seen image on TV while the Virginia Tech story broke was a cell phone video taken by a student outside of the academic building where most victims were killed. It did not show much—a parking lot, police officers—but captured the methodical gunfire.

"One of the problems is they show the same footage over and over and over again," Cantor said. "Little kids up to age 6 or 7, they think it's happening over and over again. It's one thing to tell the story. It's another thing to retell and retell it."

His daughter's innocent dinner table question shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks—why do they have to keep showing the planes going into the World Trade Center again and again?—led ABC News to a virtual ban of those images, said news chief David Westin. Executives there carefully consider each use of them; ABC has been a leader in sensitivity toward these issues.

Westin also does not have a 24-hour news network with space to fill, a big factor in the repetition.

Studies showed that the more time children watched news coverage in the aftermath of Sept. 11, the more likely they were to show anxiety, sleep disturbance and other signs of post-traumatic stress, Cantor said.

In the Virginia Tech case, children aged 7 to 12 can understand that people were killed in a place that's supposed to be safe and will wonder what that means for their own security.

Parents should not necessarily bring it up, but be ready to answer their children's questions simply, emphasizing how the youngsters have people who love them and are determined to keep them safe. It's a good time to give children extra attention and warmth.

"The most primal fear of all is a loss of attachment," said Donald Shifrin, a practicing Seattle pediatrician and chairman of the American Academy of Pediatrics communications committee.

Even if you have tried to keep children away from television coverage, recognize that they are likely to be much more aware than you think. They may have overheard conversations, seen the front page of a newspaper. If children see a parent hurriedly changing a channel or hiding a newspaper, it will make them that much more curious.

### FACT:

BET.com announces new research that ranks Charlotte as #1 Best City for African Americans

### FACT:

Charlotte ranked 39 out of 40 communities surveyed in the national Social Capital Study in levels of social and interracial trust

## Where is the disconnect?

The Charlotte Post

*People of Prominence*  
RACE MATTERS

May 31, 2007

6:30pm

\$75/person

Center Stage NODA

2315 North Davidson Street, Charlotte NC

### Panellists:

Harry Jones, Mecklenburg County

Ronnie Bryant, Charlotte Regional Partnership

Bridget-Anne Hampden, JHR & Associates, LLC

Bill Farmer, Time Warner Cable

Regina Smith, Arts & Science Council

Eric Watson, Food Lion

Brought to you in part by:



FOUNDATION FOR THE CAROLINAS

Phillip Morris USA



ARTS & SCIENCE COUNCIL  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg

For tickets or more info, visit [thecharlottepost.com](http://thecharlottepost.com)