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# GIGWISE'S 22 BEST TRACKS OF 2022

## ON CONSTANT REPEAT ALL YEAR



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The year is wrapping up and the lists are rolling in. We've already offered up our ones to watch for next year, and our albums of the year list is still being argued over, so lets start with something simpler - our favourite songs.

It's important to never underestimate the power of a single. Able to launch a brand new artist out of obscurity and into fame, kicking off an album cycle or standing alone as a reminder of greatness in a quiet year for an act; these tracks held some serious power this year. With some being pulled from albums as a tricky decision knowing which track to pick out of a stellar bunch, and some standing alone as one gem amongst a semi-disappointing full LP - either way, these songs carried us through the year as constant repeats.

Here we go...

### 22. Foals - '2am'



Described by Foals front man, Yannis Philippakis as a postcard from the past and one of the poppiest songs that the band have ever written, '2am' was our first taste of the band's seventh album, *Life Is Yours*, ahead of its June release. Written about repetitive cycles of destructive behaviour, the upbeat track boasts irresistible rhythms, pulsating beats and a playful guitar hook. Bursting with the same energy that the indie rockers pour into their live sets, '2am' soundtracked this year's festival season. Without a doubt one of the best songs of 2022, the arena ready anthem is sure to join 'My Number' as an indie club night staple. - Laura Dean

### 21. Witch Fever - 'Blessed Be Thy'



Deeply imbued with the dirty guitar noise of hardcore punk, Witch Fever's 'Blessed Be Thy' is an anthem in the most unconventional sense of the word. The inevitably Biblical slant of the language makes the underlying message of rebellion and refusal to submit even more powerful and liberating; but even without the lyrics, the music alone -

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thundering, relentless, haunting in places – would be enough to encapsulate the mixture of anger and pride the song is meant to summon. One of the most intense, hard hitting singles of 2022, from a band that has already garnered a reputation for never pulling punches. - Chiara Strazzulla

## 20. Yungblud - 'The Funeral'

The Funeral

PreviewE

YUNGBLUD



We'll admit it, we're not usually fans of Yungblud. But similarly to everyone else, we found ourselves hooked on 'The Funeral'. Grabbing the best bits from Billy Idol, 80s pop and classic rock - 'The Funeral' is Yungblud's most effortless offering and also easily his most catchy. Putting the screaming away for a second, resisting the draw to wrap and pausing on the cliches, the central lyric of "I've been dancing at my funeral / waiting for you to arrive" immediately felt destined for huge stages and far bigger audiences. The intro to his self-titled album era that would see him taking inspo from The Cure, Oasis and a whole host of other big-league musical icons, it signalled a promising step for the polarising figure and will definitely have been a guilty pleasure for a lot of previous haters. - Lucy Harbron

## 19. Arctic Monkeys - 'There'd Better Be A Mirrorball'

There'd Better Be A Mirrorball

PreviewE

Arctic Monkeys



This year Arctic Monkeys returned with a brand-new album *The Car* lead single. 'There'd Better Be A Mirrorball' is my top pick for this year with its dramatic vintage theatre style opening and rich depth. Turner's slower vocal pace makes for a matured and cinematic experience from a band once famed for their erratic, high octane performance. It's jazz infused approach covers every corner of the room, transporting you to velvet curtains, flapper girls and espresso martinis. Helder's rhythmic drum sequences now integral to creating a smoother, more relaxing ambience that can be heard between distinctive piano keys and intriguing wavy guitar.

Lyrically '...Mirrorball' presents a comical self awareness from Turner with the line "*I know I promised this is what I wouldn't do, somehow giving it the old romantic fool*" perhaps referring to the music he made in his younger years as well as the criticism he's received since. For me this is a true education in evolution and caring enough to not care at all. - Faith Martin

## 18. Phoebe Bridgers - 'Sidelines'

Sidelines

PreviewE

Phoebe Bridgers



Fans of Phoebe Bridgers - or Pharbz, as some tend to put it - are used to Phoebe's devastatingly sad songs about heartbreak, loss and difficult family relationships. So when 'Sidelines' came out this year, a breathtakingly beautiful track about a partner giving her a purpose and "something to lose", it was a lovely breath of fresh air. However, it still remained true to Phoebe's roots by featuring her soft, angelic vocals and gentle instrumentals. The song finishes with the truly haunting lyric: "*and I used to think you could hear the ocean in a seashell...what a childish thing*", which perfectly illustrates Bridgers' impressive songwriting ability whether the subject is happy, sad or somewhere in between. - Lauren Cox

## 17. Billie Eilish - 'TV'

TV

PreviewE

Billie Eilish



Gifting us only 2 songs this year, Billie Eilish chose quality over quantity. First performed live in Manchester on her world tour, 'TV' was originally written in sessions for her next album, but the immediacy of the lyricism and the way it tragically captured the moment we found ourselves in in mid-July - luckily she realised it needed to be heard. While so many of our top tracks of the year are through and through pop hits, providing a much

needed escape from the year we just lived through, 'TV' slams you back to reality. Lamenting a world where more people payed attention to 'movie stars on trial' while the American Supreme Court overturned Roe vs Wade, removing safe and legal access to abortions across the US and fueling the fire of a dangerous conversation worldwide, Billie sings it how it is in what is probably one of her saddest tracks yet.

Finished off with a chorus of a crowd singing around an arena, it's a haunting track that will forever represent a dark moment in history and will likely go on to be a defining track of the 21st century. - Lucy Harbron

## 16. Ethel Cain - 'Strangers'

Strangers  
PreviewE  
Ethel Cain



At first listen, 'Strangers', the closing chapter to Ethel Cain's stunning debut album *Preacher's Daughter*, is a transcendent break-up song and touching farewell. While its euphoric production certainly earns it membership in the Most Beautiful Songs of the Year club, this layered stunner is actually about the fictional Ethel Cain's murder and cannibalisation by the album's antagonist. "Am I making you feel sick?" takes on a new meaning with that revelation, and 'Strangers' is all the better for it. - Jessie Atkinson

## 15. Paramore - 'This Is Why'

This Is Why  
PreviewE  
Paramore



Anything Hayley Williams touches turns into pure gold. 'This Is Why' is very much an indie pop gem, dressed up fashionably in a grungy overcoat. After a long five year wait, it is the perfect follow up to the colourful *After Laughter*.

The bold punchiness of the guitar from Taylor York combined with the instant catchiness of the line "*this is why I don't leave the house*" means the chorus is guaranteed to be on a loop in your head all day... But, Hayley's vocals make the song impossible to hate and make it sound even better with every listen. - Charlotte Brennan

## 14. Quinnie - 'Touch Tank'

touch tank  
PreviewE  
quinnie



TikTok songs are tricky. Blowing up on the back of a 15 second clip, it's very rare that the full length track lives up to the hype. But 'Touch Tank' was an exception to the rule. With the lyric 'He's so pretty when he goes down on me' immediately going viral on the up, the remaining 3-minutes is indie-pop perfection, weaving storytelling with a slow build instrumental into a big blow up that was even better than the initial teaser suggested. An immediate statement of promise, it's no wonder that all eyes are firmly locked on Quinnie now, delivering one of the best singles of 2022 out of nowhere as a beautiful gift without any of the TikTok viral cliches or drawbacks - Lucy Harbron

## 13. Charli XCX - 'Yuck'

Yuck  
PreviewE  
Charli XCX



There's no song that exemplifies the feeling of getting the ick better than Charli XCX'S 'Yuck' from her fifth studio album *Crash*. The whole album is full of catchy numbers, but this one sticks out as pure pop excellence, with light-hearted and witty lyrics that detail how it feels to have a partner be a bit too clingy. It's a refreshing perspective that we rarely hear from pop songs, especially from female artists. My favourite lyric has to be "yuck, that boy's so mushy, sending me flowers, I'm just tryna get lucky" - showcasing the best of this unforgettable tongue-in-cheek anthem. - Lauren Cox

## 12. Rina Sawayama - 'This Hell'

This Hell  
 PreviewE  
 Rina Sawayama



Rina Sawayama has had one hell of a year but announcing her return with the pretty brilliant 'This Hell' was just absurd. From the guitar creeping into the Shania-esque "let's go girls!", it was very VERY obvious that Rina was making a big ol' statement upon her return. There's so many lil moments of pop brilliance sprinkled with queer magic in 3 minutes and 56 seconds (plus a chorus so big it'd be charged for an extra seat on planes) it's hard to believe that this was just a taster of what was coming with *Hold The Girl*.

There is also, of course, that absolutely iconic Strictly performance which blew up over Twitter and TikTok. This Hell really is one of the finest tracks of the year laced with nitroglycerine to really give it a big ol' BOOM when it kicks in. - Josh Williams

## 11. Fontaines D.C - 'I Love You'

I Love You  
 PreviewE  
 Fontaines D.C.



Critically acclaimed post-punk band Fontaines D.C. returned with one of the best tracks of the year and their career. The five-minute magnum opus 'I Love You' - written in under an hour and recorded in a jam session - covers the Irish political crisis, young male suicide, and the housing crisis. The track builds slowly and manages to create tension the way a thriller would, ending in a climax of anger that will leave you utterly breathless. A politically charged epic that proves that Fontaines D.C. are one of the most honest, opinionated, and vital bands we have today. - Brett Herlingshaw

## 10. Confidence Man - 'Holiday'

Holiday  
 PreviewE  
 Confidence Man



If 'Holiday' wasn't the best song of 2022, it definitely was the most fun and addictive! Confidence Man were amongst the most talked about performers at this year's Glastonbury Festival, bossing their Friday Park Stage set with an infectious eccentricity and energy. Soon a new legion of fans were to discover the Aussie dance-pop band's second album *Tilt* and lead single 'Holiday' captured the imagination with its euphoric sun kissed sound and repetitive hook ("*I getaway everyday / My holiday / I'm getting paid*"). Like it says on the tin, gorgeous dancefloor summer vibes are written all over this banger! - Matthew McLister

## 9. Yeah Yeah Yeahs + Perfume Genius - 'Spitting Off the Edge of the World'

Spitting Off the Edge of the World  
 PreviewE  
 Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Perfume Genius



Karen O and her pals returned with the epic 'Spitting Off The Edge Of The World' (a title that befits the scale of the song), with O gloriously intoning that, 'Silver lines whisper to me, wounded arms must carry the load', while instructing "cowards" to "bow your heads." Perfume Genius' presence on backing vocals is largely superfluous, as this is The O Show from start to finish.

Yet the title itself is a rallying call of glistening defiance and hope, and also the most appropriately named track of the year as O surveys all she sees and thinks little of it. Majestically insolent. - Richard Bowes

## 8. Taylor Swift - 'Anti-Hero'

*Midnights* was gifted to us in a fully-fledged, perfect package, yet from the second Taylor Swift joins in with that signature Antonoff beat, you knew 'Anti-Hero' would be an instant classic with all the markings of a global hit. Yet, for such divine melodies, the lyrics have sombre foundations that unravel themselves in an emotional manner that

we haven't seen from her before, defying anyone who says a pop hit can't house poetic lyrics. On an album that houses so many great tracks with 'Mastermind' and 'Would've, Should've, Could've' also being strong list contenders, it's clear that this era will forever be defined by the line "*It's me, hi, I'm the problem, it's me*"; a candid articulation that will no doubt be matched by 80,000 fans each night. She is the woman of our time, and this is another shimmering peak along her path. - Rishi Shah

## 7. Let's Eat Grandma - 'Happy New Year'

Happy New Year

PreviewE

Let's Eat Grandma



Let's Eat Grandma wasted no time when they launched into 2022 with a track on day 3. Dropping 'Happy New Year' with no warning as we were just coming out of the post-christmas, post-NYE haze; the song slammed open the door to a year they would dominate. A song that sounded just as good in July or September despite being somewhat festive, it's one to play loud, grab your friends and jump along to at a festival. Immediately taking its place as the high energy opener for their live sets, 'Happy New Year' is a LEG song through and through, with vocals bounced between Rosa and Jenny like a game of ping pong, an instrumental that seems to balance a million and one things going on without sounding overdone, and a through-thread of silliness that makes it oh so addicting. With other album tracks like 'Watching You Go' and 'Sunday' being strong contenders for this list, we thought we'd stick with the start of it all. - Lucy Harbron

## 6. MUNA - 'Anything But Me'

Anything But Me

PreviewE

MUNA



MUNA's 'Anything But Me' perfectly encapsulates the feeling of letting go of a relationship that ultimately wasn't working out, when there is still a mutual love there for each other. It's one of those dreamy pop songs - with a hint of Kacey Musgraves-style country - that'll be stuck in your head all day, with the main premise of the song being "you can call me if there's anything you need...anything but me". It also features one of their best opening lines: "you're gonna say that I'm on a high horse, I think that my horse is regular-sized", making this breakup tune unapologetically MUNA. - Lauren Cox

## 5. Florence + The Machine - 'King'

King

PreviewE

Florence + The Machine



Florence Welch and co made their long-awaited return this year with fifth album *Dance Fever*, kicking off the campaign with 'King'. A building and bubbling track dipped in the dark arts and laced with hypnotic, gasping vocals before culminating in a huge, cathartic release. 'King' deconstructs the ideology of womanhood decided by society. Tearing down norms and constructing her own journey, Welch gives us a glimpse into her identity and psyche like never before. She reminds us that whatever the world will push upon us is none of our concern, we get on with the show, we defy expectations and we create magic. - David Roskin

## 4. Kendrick Lamar - 'We Cry Together'

We Cry Together

PreviewE

Kendrick Lamar, Taylour Paige



Although it wasn't the Kendrick track we were rushing to stick on repeat initially, 'We Cry Together' was immediately striking and impactful. Beginning with a gorgeous Florence + The Machine sample and the line "*this is what the world sounds like*," Kendrick and guest star Taylour Paige soon launch into a jarring and heavily expletive argument, playing the role of a couple having an ugly screaming match. For five and a half minutes the pair sling insults back and forth, before the penny drops that Kendrick is commenting on not just toxic domestic relationships but also wider gender divides too, using his signature flow to weave you through bigger, trickier topics. Best experienced alongside the accompanying short film, shot in a single take, it welcomed in a whole new era of artistry for Kendrick followed up by a jaw dropping Glastonbury show and a

full year spent straying more towards performance artist than classic rapper. - Karl Blakesley

### 3. Beyonce - 'CUFF IT / ENERGY / BREAK MY SOUL'

Yes, this is a list of the best songs of the year. Yes, this technically counts as 3 separate songs. No, I don't care. Renaissance is arguably one of the best albums of the year and one of the contributing factors towards this is the way tracks seamlessly blend into one another. The best example is heard in 'CUFF IT' 'ENERGY' and 'BREAK MY SOUL' which takes the listener on a journey from disco all the way through to hard house. So perfectly crafted together, it feels as though it should be treated as one piece and so we will. It is peak musical excellence, the heart of the record, innovative in its ambition and absolutely has to be on this list. So at 3, we're putting 3 songs; deal with it. - Dale Maplethorpe

### 2. The 1975 - 'Part Of The Band'

Part Of The Band

PreviewE

The 1975



When The 1975 dropped 'Part Of The Band', opinions were swiftly divided in that way that only they manage to do. Launching into action with unsettling Warren Ellis lead strings and immediately talking about ejaculations, it's maybe the most Matty Healy song to ever exist. As wordy as ever with lines like "I know some Vaccinista tote bag chic baristas / Sitting east on their communista keisters", there was a clear difference here though. Immediately causing a chuckle, 'Part Of The Band' is a smart song that doesn't take itself too seriously. Taking jabs at themselves, balancing a unique and complex instrumental with lyrics that sway between the silly and the outright sentimental.

Only the first taste of what would be a 10/10 album for us, 'Part Of The Band' contains some of their finest lines in the band's tightest package. Bringing something adventurous to the mainstream, it's a feat that very few bands could pull off quite as stylishly. - Lucy Harbron

### 1. Mitski - 'Love Me More'

More so than any other track of the year, Mitski burst into the year with an immediate anthem thanks to 'Love Me More'. After her surprise return with 'Working For The Knife' in the final quarter of 2021, the Laurel Hell era shot into multicolour with a classic Mitski love song on overdrive. Leaning heavily into synth sounds and 80s pop influences, she gifted us her work at its brightest and best with a song that's endured through all 12 months of the year. Still a banger, still on repeat and still offering up new intriguing lyrics to suddenly discover on a random replay, 'Love Me More' perfectly encapsulates Mitski's year as she boldly returned to live performance, confused Harry Styles fans, and weaved topics of masturbation, race, love, loss, capitalism and death into one stellar album. With 'Love Me More' leading the way as undoubtedly the strongest and catchiest tracks, it's been a constant replay literally all year long, released in January and sounding just as good now. - Lucy Harbron

**Listen to all our picks in one handy playlist:**

Gigwise's 22 Best Tracks Of 2022

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PreviewE

1. 1

**Love Me More**

Mitski

3:32

2. 2

**Part Of The Band**

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