

FAVORITE THINGS

Tuned in brokers in an Empire State of Mind

BY LINDA O'FLANAGAN

Our favorite things poll was a big hit this week. During the worst housing market in recent memory, we asked what song lifted your spirits in 2009. While the Jay Z, Alicia Keys smash *Empire State of Mind* was a winner, we got a real mixed bag of memories ...

The crew at **Century 21 NY Metro** got hooked on Jay Z and Alicia Keys.

"*Empire State of Mind* became the Yankees Championship song! Jay Z and Alicia Keys were at the parade and it was awesome," recalled **Bob Brooks**.

Lesley Steiner added, "I think half, if not all of New York's favorite song has got to be *Empire State of Mind* .. an instant classic. Energizing, electric and speaks to why we all love this city so much."

The more I know New York the more I think of it.

I like the sight and the sound and even the stink of it.

— COLE PORTER

Independent broker **Santhe Tsetsilas** voted for *If Today was Your Last Day* by Nickelback

"Not only is his voice amazing, but this song has a very important message for every one of us ... making you think twice about very important life decisions from the past, present and future."

Halstead's Sidney S. Whelan loved Beyonce's *Ego*. "It's brilliant," he said. "And have you seen the YouTube video of the baby watching it and doing the dance moves? It's a must-see."

Prudential Douglas Elliman's Victoria Shtainer is another Beyonce fan. Her favorite song of 2009 was *Single Ladies*. She said, "I love the lyrics, video and music. It is very uplifting. Beyonce was my neighbor and she is very humble and sweet."

Metal head **Gregory Olsen** at **A.C. Lawrence** said his favorite for the year was *In Ashes They Shall Reap* by Hatebreed.

He said, "Hatebreed is a great band for motivational lyrics as well as a great heavy and fast element that

gets the adrenaline flowing. Any time business or a sour broker gets me down, I can throw on this song and it makes me want to get back up and keep going."

The firm's **Cammy Cutler** chose *The One* by Mary J. Blige. "It was the perfect feel good, get my morning started song."

Over at **Barak Realty**, **Pulat Batirbaev** and **Anna Crowley** harkened back to the old days of Donna Summer and The Beatles.

Batirbaev said *I Will Survive* is his all-time favorite song. "No matter how difficult life can be, or down I can fall, I will survive and be a success."

Crowley picks herself up with *I've Just Seen a Face* by the Beatles. "It never fails to make me happy."

Citi Habitats' team also likes the old tunes.

Matthew Berkson picked *Where the Streets Have No Name* by U2. He said, "Truly, there is no other song I know of that just gets inside your soul and can make you forget about your troubles. And if you've seen it live, it's almost a religious experience."

Ira Schulte's is *As Time Goes By* sung by Sam (Dooley) Wilson in the movie *Casablanca* in 1942.

He said, "It was my favorite song back in 1975 when I was married and it still is (and yes I still am). If for any reason you don't know the song or the movie, rent it and become another fan."

Uchenna Onyia picked *Love Is Stronger Than Pride* by Sade. "This is my favorite song because we all have our ups and downs, but if we realize how cosmic and powerful the affect of love is, we are able to see the beauty of our existence and others in our life," said Onyia.

Upbeat **Allen Stern** said The Romantics *What I Like*



about you "is just groovy, man." "Phish *Divided Sky* is amazing," according to **Britt Romanello**. "There really are no words in it, but the instrumentals are just incredible. It's a song that just makes you happy."

Scotty Elyanow plays Miles Davis' *In a Silent Way* for "18 minutes of beauty that warms my soul."

Patti Avella lives for *Bell-Bottomed Blues* by Eric Clapton while **Kris Sylvester** loves Metallica's *Fade To Black*. He said, "I just love the slow guitar intro. I've been trying to play this on guitar forever."

If he could pick two, Sylvester said Prince's *Sometimes It Snows In April* would be it. "Lots of melancholy here. I would sing this to my daughter Zoe to put her to sleep when she was a baby."

Getting back to 2009. It seems Alicia Keys and Jay Z are the clear winners among our broker aficionados though.

According to **Greg Clark**, *Empire State of Mind* is "a classic with a Hip-Hop/R&B Twist," while **Stephanie Morrell** said, "I love New York City and listening to this song has me feeling great."

But we leave the last word to **Citi Habitats' Nicholas Richberg** who said, "The longer I live in New York and find people homes here, the more I relate to the Cole Porter song *I happen to like New York* ...

For your reading pleasure, here's a verse:
I happen to like New York, I happen to like this town.

*I like the city air, I like to drink of it,
The more I know New York the more I think of it.
I like the sight and the sound and even the stink of it.
I happen to like New York.*



Scotty Elyanow, Anna Crowley, Gregory Olsen and Pulat Batirbaev.