

THE ARCHITECT

The Listener of Structure

“I listen to understand how the music is built.”

LEVEL 1 OF 3

Foundations

Structure audible at first listen — a gentle on-ramp even for a novice ear. 14 calibrator tracks.

14 tracks · English edition · verified July 2026

The Map of Your Perception

SoundDNA archetypes are not personality types. They describe four distinct modes of processing sound — ways attention and the brain filter the very same music, bringing different layers of it to the foreground. What is “noise” to one listener is “energy” to another, and “structure” to a third. No one is wrong — everyone hears their own layer of the truth. This document is your guide to one of the four: **The Architect**, the listener of structure.

“I listen to understand how the music is built.”

CHARACTER

The Architect experiences music through logic, precision and insight into detail. They track source separation, microdynamics and production quality. To them, sound is three-dimensional architecture where every element has its place — and the greatest pleasure hides in a nuance nobody else noticed.

OUR HYPOTHESIS

The psychology of attention describes analytical listening — a mode in which the brain prioritizes decoding patterns and structure. We hypothesize that in Architects this mode dominates permanently, not just on demand.

IN THE MARKET

Studio monitors — the tools engineers use to control every detail of a recording — are designed almost exclusively for this way of listening. On the forums, the Architect is the one who catches a mastering flaw or a background hiss nobody else knew was there.

PREFERENCES

Systems with maximum resolution, linearity and control. Sound like a precision microscope: the truth about the recording, unembellished.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

- 1 Know your profile first.** This library reads very differently once you know which element you listen with — take the free test at soundDNA.org before you start.
- 2 Pick a calibrator.** Every track below is described the same way: what to listen for, a concrete mini-test, and what the result says about you.
- 3 Listen with a task.** Listening with a specific question teaches more than a hundred passive plays. This is training — results arrive fast and stay with you.

ABOUT THIS LEVEL — FOUNDATIONS

Structure is audible “at first listen” — a gentle on-ramp even for a novice ear. These fourteen tracks build your baseline vocabulary before Level 2 (Development) introduces denser arrangements and irregular structures, and Level 3 (Mastery) reaches the outer edges of structural complexity in music.

14 Tracks That Are Tools

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR — what is perceptually distinctive in this recording, and where to find it. **YOUR TEST** — one concrete listening task. **WHAT THIS TESTS** — what the result says about your system (room? gear? recording?) and about your element.

01

Aja

Steely Dan

JAZZ ROCK / YACHT ROCK · STUDIO · 1977

Not to be confused with live radio-broadcast recordings under the same title — use the studio album version.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Nearly 40 session musicians pass through this track without ever sounding crowded — listen especially to the long instrumental section after the vocal, built around Steve Gadd's drum break and Wayne Shorter's saxophone solo.

YOUR TEST Count the distinct “sections” the song passes through after the vocal ends (drum break → sax solo → return to theme). Can you hear the exact moment each one starts?

WHAT THIS TESTS Your system's — and your ear's — ability to track structural transitions across a long-form arrangement, and to keep overdubbed layers separate rather than letting them blur into one mass.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/51AIqs0TqA4TI552nerCqa

02 Rosanna

TOTO

AOR / SOFT ROCK · STUDIO · 1982

Spotify also lists a “Live” version from a 2014 concert album — do not use that one.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Jeff Porcaro's famous “half-time shuffle” drum pattern, a synthesizer solo section, an overdubbed piano solo, and a horn arrangement with multiple overdubbed saxophone and trombone parts.

YOUR TEST Try to isolate the drum pattern alone for eight bars. Then count how many distinct solo instruments appear across the whole track.

WHAT THIS TESTS Separation of heavily overdubbed solo layers, and your ability to lock onto one specific rhythmic pattern without losing it in the mix.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/7zTycmFE0gOCdQzOkbA49B

03 Get Lucky (feat. Pharrell Williams and Nile Rodgers)

Daft Punk

DISCO / FUNK / ELECTRONIC · STUDIO · 2013

Use the album version, not the “Radio Edit” — the extended instrumental outro is essential.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR The extended instrumental coda in the last two minutes, where the vocal drops out and the bassline, rhythm guitar, and vocoder line become fully exposed.

YOUR TEST In the outro, follow the bassline and the guitar as two separate lines — can you track each independently, without your attention sliding to the other?

WHAT THIS TESTS Separation of interlocking rhythmic parts in a minimal, groove-based arrangement — subtler than a dense mix, because there's nowhere for the parts to hide.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/69kOkLUCkxIZYexlgSG8rq

04 The Model

Kraftwerk

SYNTH-POP / ELECTROPOP · STUDIO · 1978 (2009 REMASTER)

Use the “2009 Remaster” version specifically — the original German-language “Das Model” is a different vocal take.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR A minimal arrangement built from only a handful of synthesizer layers — bassline, lead melody, arpeggio — with almost nothing else in the mix.

YOUR TEST During a verse, count how many distinct synthesizer layers are playing at the same time.

WHAT THIS TESTS Basic separation ability in a stripped-down electronic arrangement — a good foundational exercise precisely because there's so little to separate.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/3kZskxMub7EBlwAiYGyh9q

05 Chameleon

Herbie Hancock

JAZZ-FUNK · STUDIO · 1973

Use the full 15:44 Head Hunters album track; focus on the first 4 minutes for this exercise.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR The arrangement builds one layer at a time — the iconic ARP Odyssey synth bassline enters first, then clavinet rhythm, then drums, then horns join gradually.

YOUR TEST In the first 4 minutes, try to name the order in which each instrument enters.

WHAT THIS TESTS Your ability to follow a gradual structural build — hearing an arrangement being assembled in real time rather than arriving fully formed.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/4Ce66JznW8QbeyTdSzdGwR

06 15 Step

Radiohead

ALTERNATIVE ROCK / ART ROCK · STUDIO · 2007

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR The song is built on a 5/4 time signature — an “odd” rhythm cycle — layered with handclap-like electronic percussion, guitar, and bass.

YOUR TEST Try counting the beat as a steady “1-2-3-4.” Notice where it starts to feel wrong — that’s the extra beat of the 5/4 cycle revealing itself.

WHAT THIS TESTS Structural/rhythmic perception of irregular meter — whether you can feel that something is “off” even without naming why.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/4oXg7xT4ksBxHTx8PcmSXw

07 Hyperballad

Björk

ART POP / FOLKTRONICA · STUDIO · 1995

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR A pulsing electronic beat running underneath a much more elastic, orchestral vocal line — two layers that don’t always move in lockstep.

YOUR TEST Notice the moments where the beat and the vocal melody feel perfectly aligned, versus moments where the vocal seems to float free of the pulse.

WHAT THIS TESTS Separation of a mechanical rhythmic foundation from an organic melodic layer moving independently above it.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/4Lu4GIRrYoCfudLz6iyqkW

08 Lingus

Snarky Puppy

JAZZ FUSION · LIVE · 2014

Given the length, focus on the first 3 minutes — the ensemble groove is fully established by then.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR A large ensemble — horns, keys, bass, drums, strings — where every player has a distinct, audible role within the groove.

YOUR TEST In the first 3 minutes, count how many distinct instruments you can pick out playing simultaneously.

WHAT THIS TESTS Separation ability at the opposite extreme from track #4 (Kraftwerk) — a dense, large-ensemble arrangement instead of a minimal one.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/68d6ZfyMUYURol2y15Ta2Y

09 Back Pocket

Vulfpeck

FUNK · STUDIO (LIVE-IN-ROOM) · 2015

Spotify also lists live versions from 2019 and 2025 — use the original 2015 studio version.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR A minimalist funk arrangement — bass, drums, keys, guitar — where precision and restraint matter more than density; every note is deliberate.

YOUR TEST Isolate just the bassline through one verse. Notice how sparse it is, yet how tightly it locks with the drums.

WHAT THIS TESTS Perception of rhythmic precision and interlock in a minimal arrangement — the mirror image of the Snarky Puppy exercise above.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/0tLwe28zupkUQMpoXIDgX2

10

Teardrop

Massive Attack

TRIP HOP · STUDIO · 1998

Use the original 1998 album version, featuring Elizabeth Fraser, for a consistent reference point.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR A looping harpsichord figure and a heartbeat-like kick drum form a mechanical, repeating foundation — against which Elizabeth Fraser's multi-tracked vocal harmonies move far more freely.

YOUR TEST Focus on the drum pattern alone for 30 seconds — notice how metronomic it is. Then focus on the vocal phrasing — notice how much more “human” and irregular it is by comparison.

WHAT THIS TESTS Separation of a mechanical/looped structural element from a live, expressive vocal performance layered on top of it.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/5rbDPiZ7AkN4LCJpypJ0JJ

11

So What

Miles Davis

MODAL JAZZ · STUDIO · 1959

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR A clear formal structure (AABA) built on just two chords, with soloists entering one at a time in a fixed order: trumpet, tenor sax, alto sax, piano.

YOUR TEST Try to catch the exact moment each new soloist takes over from the previous one.

WHAT THIS TESTS Formal/structural listening — tracking sections in a piece that is improvised in content but strictly structured in form.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/195PCdTb9A1iicUzBmSPwg

12

Graceland

Paul Simon

WORLD BEAT / FOLK ROCK · STUDIO · 1986

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Bakithi Kumalo's fretless bass line is almost a second lead vocal — melodically busy and constantly moving — interlocking with guitar, pedal steel, and layered background vocals.

YOUR TEST Try to follow the bassline alone through one full verse, ignoring the lead vocal.

WHAT THIS TESTS Separation of a highly active, melodically independent bass part from the vocal melody it supports.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/4m2ImmoGtCRZ7H4VCA2k7F

13

September

Earth, Wind & Fire

DISCO / FUNK / R&B · STUDIO · 1978

Released as a standalone single, never on a studio album — avoid the “sped up + slowed” version listed separately.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR A dense horn section arrangement, a distinctive guitar riff, layered background vocals, and busy percussion detail — all fit into a track under 4 minutes.

YOUR TEST In the chorus, count the distinct horn “hits” or phrases you can hear.

WHAT THIS TESTS Separation of a busy horn arrangement within a dense, uptempo mix — a good stress test for resolving detail at speed.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/6IWkdrBY2O0vfQdfEKGUdF

14 Glassworks: I. Opening

Philip Glass

MINIMALISM / CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL · STUDIO · 1982

Use specifically the original Philip Glass Ensemble version — many solo-piano covers of the same piece exist under similar titles.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR A single arpeggio pattern repeats throughout the piece, but shifts almost imperceptibly several times — a note added, a harmony subtly altered.

YOUR TEST Try to catch the exact moment the pattern changes — it will happen more than once. Mentally mark when you first notice a difference from the opening bars.

WHAT THIS TESTS The purest structure test in this set — sensitivity to fine variation within repetition, with no other musical element to lean on.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/5JID3m6s8j7nbpz3ywFcwU

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