

THE PULSE

The Listener of Energy

“I listen to feel the physical energy and pulse of music.”

LEVEL 3 OF 3

Mastery

The outer edges of rhythmic expression in music — extreme meters, polyrhythm and traditions rarely heard anywhere else. 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 Pulse**, the Listener of Energy.

“I listen to feel the physical energy and pulse of music.”

CHARACTER

The Pulse experiences music with the body. They respond to tempo, dynamics, attack and the physical presence of low frequencies. Music should live, drive and keep a clear pulse — what counts is timing, groove and the joy of rhythm.

OUR HYPOTHESIS

Research on groove shows that rhythm can engage the systems responsible for movement and reward — hence the irresistible urge to tap your foot. We hypothesize that in Pulse listeners this bodily-rhythmic channel is the main gateway of music into consciousness.

IN THE MARKET

Entire brands have built their identity on serving this profile — from legends of high-efficiency speakers to amplifiers with an iron grip on the bass. On the forums, the Pulse is the voice demanding “impact you can feel in your chest” and calling overly polite systems “sterile.”

PREFERENCES

Systems with lightning dynamics and generous power reserves. Sound like a live concert: drive, bass speed, uncompromising energy.

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 — MASTERY

These fourteen tracks reach the outer edges of rhythmic expression in music — extreme meters, polyrhythm, and traditions rarely heard anywhere else, closing out the full 50-track Pulse calibrator library.

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 ear, your body's response, and your element.

01 Clapping Music

Steve Reich, Russell Hartenberger

MINIMALISM / PHASE-SHIFTING RHYTHM · STUDIO · 1972

Many performer versions exist on Spotify — the piece is a repertoire work, not tied to one recording. This one is fine.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Two performers clap the identical twelve-beat pattern in unison — then one performer shifts one beat "out of phase" every few bars, so the same rhythm collides against itself in ever-changing combinations, until it eventually realigns. Reich developed this phase technique partly from studying West African drumming, including the Ewe Agbekor tradition (track #39's cousin) — a direct historical thread from Level 1's James Brown groove to this piece's mathematics.

YOUR TEST Try clapping the base pattern yourself. Then imagine shifting your claps just slightly earlier each time — notice how quickly a simple, familiar rhythm becomes disorienting once it's offset from itself.

WHAT THIS TESTS Perceiving rhythm as a structure independent of any instrument — pure relationship and timing, stripped down to two pairs of hands.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/0TXzQQmt7Md7Qpr6Bftfcl

02 Iag Bari

Fanfare Ciocărlia

BALKAN BRASS · STUDIO · 2001

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR A twelve-piece Romanian Roma brass band plays at speeds often exceeding 200 beats per minute, with clarinet, saxophone, and trumpet trading rapid, staccato solo lines over a relentless tuba-and-drum foundation.

YOUR TEST Try to tap the underlying pulse with one finger while just listening to the solo lines above it. Does the soloist's rhythm ever seem to pull away from your tapped pulse, only to snap back in sync?

WHAT THIS TESTS Distinguishing a rock-steady foundational pulse from wildly virtuosic rhythmic decoration layered on top — hearing the "floor" and the "fireworks" as two separate rhythmic jobs happening at once.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/46UYJKUeIR8TDRfPWl5k9p

03 Donno Drummers I (Yeji)

Nonesuch Explorer Series

WEST AFRICAN TALKING-DRUM ENSEMBLE (GHANA) · FIELD RECORDING · 1979 (RERELEASED 2005)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Donno (talking drums) are played with a pitch-bending technique that lets drummers imitate the rising and falling tones of spoken language — the drums are, quite literally, "talking" to each other in overlapping rhythmic conversation.

YOUR TEST Try to imagine the drums as two people having a conversation rather than playing music. Can you hear moments that feel like a "question" and a "response"?

WHAT THIS TESTS Hearing rhythm and language as the same underlying phenomenon — a foundational West African concept that quietly underlies much of the polyrhythmic material earlier in this library (funk, Afrobeat, second line, and more all trace back to this well).



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/6ym6C02WeFypmIcYbWPGRt

04 La Danse Du Bonheur (with John McLaughlin)

Shakti

KONNAKOL / INDO-JAZZ FUSION · STUDIO · 1976

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR The piece opens with rapid-fire konnakol — the South Indian practice of vocalizing complex rhythmic syllables ("ta-ka-di-mi") at high speed — before the full jazz-fusion ensemble enters, English guitarist John McLaughlin included.

YOUR TEST Try to repeat even a short burst of the opening vocal rhythm syllables after hearing them once. How much of the speed and precision can you actually reproduce?

WHAT THIS TESTS Direct, humbling contact with a rhythmic tradition (konnakol) whose vocabulary is built specifically to train the ear and voice for extreme rhythmic precision — the "hardest" possible calibration exercise in this entire 50-track collection.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/70A5jUG7ey2a0QDhF2qBUb

05 Mimoun Marhaba

Mahmoud Guinia, Floating Points

GNAWA TRANCE MUSIC (MOROCCO) · STUDIO · 2015

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Metal castanets called qraqeb click in a relentless, hypnotic pattern beneath the deep, buzzing tone of the guembri (a three-stringed bass lute) — Gnawa music is designed to induce a trance state over the course of an all-night ceremony.

YOUR TEST Try to notice how your attention drifts in and out of focus on the rhythm over the course of the track. Does the repetition make the pattern feel more or less present the longer you listen?

WHAT THIS TESTS Recognizing how sustained, unchanging rhythmic repetition can alter a listener's state of attention — a direct, physiological version of the hypnotic effect first introduced by NEU!'s motorik beat back in Level 1.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/081xz39Sb6MRxeX7fQSRdy

06 Toumast Tinha

Tinariwen

TUAREG DESERT BLUES (MALI) · STUDIO · 2014

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Electric guitars, played with a loping, hypnotic fingerpicked pattern, replace the traditional lutes of Tuareg music while retaining its rolling, camel-gait rhythmic feel — a desert nomadic tradition translated onto rock instrumentation.

YOUR TEST Try to identify the physical "gait" the guitar rhythm suggests — is it closer to walking, riding, or something else entirely?

WHAT THIS TESTS Perceiving rhythm as encoded physical movement — recognizing when a musical pulse is modeling an actual body motion from the culture it comes from, rather than an abstract beat.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/3911Bzzv8FHgbitJzXFjxh

07 Look

Venetian Snares

BREAKCORE · STUDIO (SAMPLED/PROGRAMMED) · 2001

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Chopped and re-sequenced breakbeats — including descendants of the very Amen break from Level 2's track #15 — are cut into fragments and reassembled at extreme speed and complexity, pushing the "broken beat" aesthetic to a genuinely disorienting extreme.

YOUR TEST Try to find any repeating pattern at all. Does the track ever settle into something predictable, or does it keep refusing to resolve?

WHAT THIS TESTS Your tolerance and perceptual limit for rhythmic chaos — testing whether "pulse" can survive being deliberately, aggressively fragmented past the point where a listener can track it.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/1WxcgM7p2fQjblIqxQlag4

08 A Love Supreme Part I: Acknowledgement

John Coltrane Quartet

MODAL JAZZ / SPIRITUAL JAZZ · STUDIO · 1965

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Drummer Elvin Jones plays with a famously loose, rolling, polyrhythmic feel — rather than marking beats cleanly, he creates a constant, churning wash of rhythmic activity that never quite locks into a single obvious pulse, while still somehow driving the music forward with tremendous power.

YOUR TEST Try to tap along with what you think is "the beat." How confident are you in your tapping compared to earlier, more straightforward tracks in this collection?

WHAT THIS TESTS Perceiving forward-driving energy that comes from rhythmic ambiguity rather than clarity — one of the most advanced possible tests in this library, since it asks you to feel momentum in a groove that deliberately resists being pinned down.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/7dHbhD9YXvd9Xi8BXhaP8Y

09 Cafo

Animals As Leaders

POLYMETRIC PROGRESSIVE METAL · STUDIO · 2009

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Guitar riffs are built in one meter while the drums maintain a different one simultaneously — two independent time signatures running in parallel, periodically realigning before drifting apart again.

YOUR TEST Try to count along with the guitar riff, then separately try counting along with just the drums. Do your two counts stay in sync, or do they pull apart?

WHAT THIS TESTS Directly experiencing polymeter (as opposed to polyrhythm) — two simultaneous, independent metric grids, a more extreme relative of the guitar interlocking you heard in King Sunny Adé (Level 2, track #29).



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/1ZfnGTUnha3QHj3KFmub0W

10 Ossaim (Festa de Xangô)

Ilê Axé Opô Aganjú

CANDOMBLÉ (AFRO-BRAZILIAN RITUAL MUSIC) · FIELD RECORDING · 1985–1988 (RELEASED 2026)

Part of a 2026 archival compilation drawn from field recordings made at Ilê Axé Opô Aganjú, a Candomblé terreiro in Bahia, between 1985 and 1988.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Atabaque drums, played by hand in complex, syncopated patterns specific to the orixá (deity) being honored, drive a ceremony recorded live inside an actual Candomblé terreiro (ritual house) in Bahia — this is unstaged, functioning ritual music, not a studio performance.

YOUR TEST Try to notice the difference in how this recording "feels" compared to every studio recording earlier in this library. What specifically tells you this wasn't made for an audience?

WHAT THIS TESTS Distinguishing performed rhythm (made to be listened to) from functional rhythm (made to do something — here, to call forth a spiritual presence) — a crucial distinction for a serious listener of rhythmic traditions.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/21mGE7kJFPeg3JR1Q3t7pg

11 Kurdzhaliyska Rachenitza

Ivo Papazov

BULGARIAN WEDDING MUSIC (RACHENITSA) · STUDIO · 2007

Many other Bulgarian wedding-music recordings exist under similar titles — use this specific recording, credited to "Ivo Papazov," from the Best Of compilation.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Papazov's clarinet leads a rachenitsa — Bulgaria's national dance rhythm, built from an asymmetric 7-beat cycle grouped as 2+2+3 rather than a Western-style even meter — played at a virtuosic tempo that treats the irregular meter as pure celebration, not difficulty.

YOUR TEST Try counting the cycle as "1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3" on repeat, matching the accent pattern. Once you feel it, try to keep counting as the tempo pushes forward — where does your count first slip?

WHAT THIS TESTS Perceiving additive rhythm — meter built from combinations of 2s and 3s rather than the West's default even subdivisions — one of the clearest, most physically felt examples of this technique in traditional music anywhere in the world.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/3Cg8lJufM7JOwNdfPsDuHB

12 Hyderomastgroningem

Ruins

ZEUHL / AVANT-PROG (JAPAN) · STUDIO · 1995

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR A two-person drum-and-bass duo (no guitar) plays extremely fast, constantly shifting time signatures with operatic, invented-language vocals — drummer Tatsuya Yoshida writes out every part in full musical notation despite the music's apparently chaotic energy.

YOUR TEST Try to notice that despite the extreme complexity, both musicians are locked perfectly together at every moment. Does the music feel chaotic, or tightly controlled once you focus on how precisely the two players match each other?

WHAT THIS TESTS Distinguishing true rhythmic complexity (disciplined, notated, and perfectly synchronized) from mere rhythmic noise — the same distinction tested by Venetian Snares (#43), but here achieved by two human musicians in real time rather than through studio editing.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/2DQjCUjV5Dkte9b2LDEsRe

13 Kora Bali

Toumani Diabaté, Ballaké Sissoko

KORA / MANDE MUSIC (MALI) · STUDIO (SINGLE LIVE TAKE) · 1999

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Two kora players — a 21-string West African harp-lute — interlock their parts in real time, each playing an independent, cascading pattern that only makes complete sense in combination with the other, recorded live in a single take in a marble hallway in Bamako.

YOUR TEST Try to follow just one kora's part through the piece, then switch your attention entirely to the other. Can you keep them separate, or do they keep pulling your ear back and forth between them?

WHAT THIS TESTS Perceiving two independent, interlocking melodic-rhythmic lines of genuinely equal complexity and importance — the string-instrument equivalent of the drum interlocking you first heard in Level 1's James Brown groove, now at a far higher level of intricacy.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/5Lsj6YTrXVQXqLIbc3azcw

14 Channel One Suite

Buddy Rich Big Band

BIG BAND SWING (VIRTUOSO CAPSTONE) · STUDIO/LIVE · MULTIPLE RECORDINGS, THIS VERSION 2017 RELEASE

Many live and studio versions of this piece exist across Buddy Rich's catalog spanning 1968–1986 — this is one clean, well-attributed version.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR Widely regarded as one of the greatest drum performances ever recorded, this piece builds to an extended solo where Buddy Rich demonstrates every technique this entire 50-track library has explored — swing feel (Level 2's Duke Ellington), extreme speed (Level 1's Ramones), polyrhythmic independence between limbs (Level 3's Elvin Jones), and controlled chaos (Level 3's Ruins) — inside a single sustained drum solo.

YOUR TEST As a closing exercise for the whole Pulse library, try to name at least three distinct rhythmic techniques from earlier tracks in this collection that you can hear echoed somewhere in this solo.

WHAT THIS TESTS A genuine capstone: recognizing that virtuoso rhythmic performance draws on the full vocabulary this library has built, track by track — pocket, speed, polyrhythm, odd meter, hypnotic repetition, and controlled complexity, all in service of one musician's command of pulse itself.



LISTEN

open.spotify.com/track/2PacZK1zLINwF4kvYfWtsO

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