

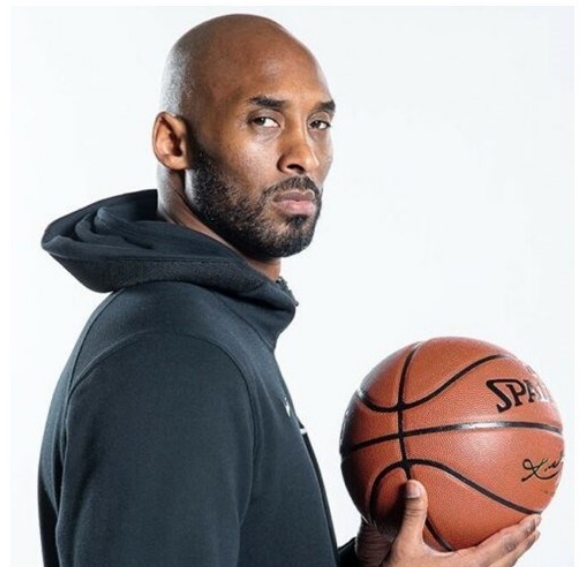


FACT:



**Kobe Bryant
loved music
and played
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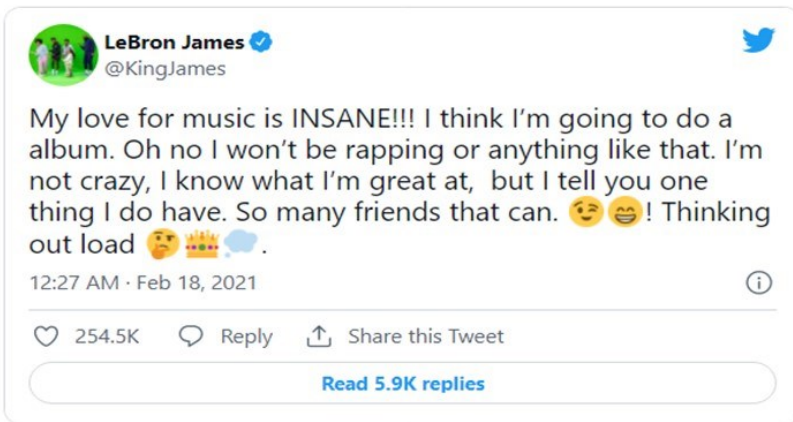
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Eric Mantel'.



FACT:



**LeBron James
Loves MUSIC and
the GUITAR!**



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Eric Mantel

10 sports stars you didn't know were also musicians

16 July 2024, 15:28 | Updated: 17 July 2024, 11:32



10 sports stars you didn't know were also musicians. Picture: Getty/Alamy

By Rosie Pentreath
[@rosiepentreath](#)

1. Leah Williamson, footballer

England footballer and captain for the Euro 2022 finals Leah Williamson is a **pianist** off the pitch. She taught herself to play the keyboard by ear, and even taught herself to read music, before swapping the offside rule for the rules of harmony, and performing as a soloist at the grand piano with a full orchestra, something that was documented on the *Out of Office* TV show.

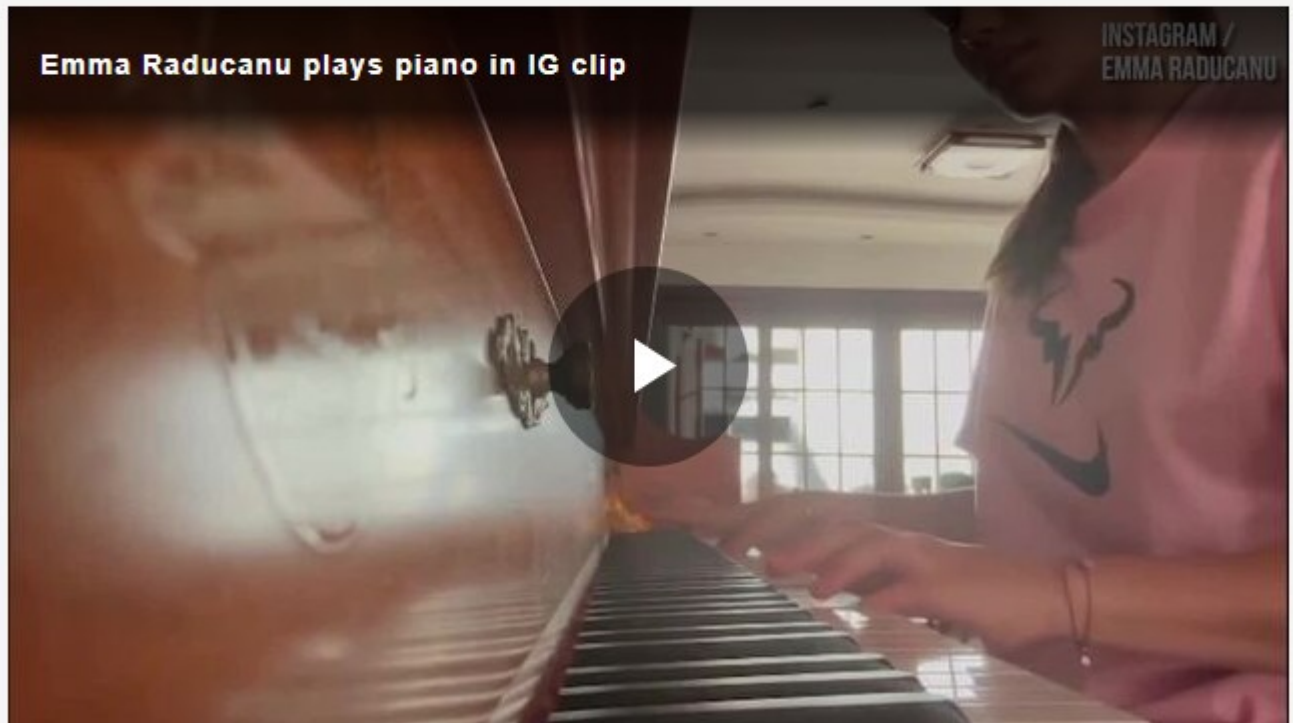


Leah Williamson in the UEFA Women's EURO 2025 qualifying match. Picture: Getty

2. Emma Raducanu, tennis player

British tennis player Emma Raducanu plays the piano in her spare time. She has taken to social media in the past to post videos of her progress practising the instrument, including when she was recovering after injury-preventing operations in May 2023.

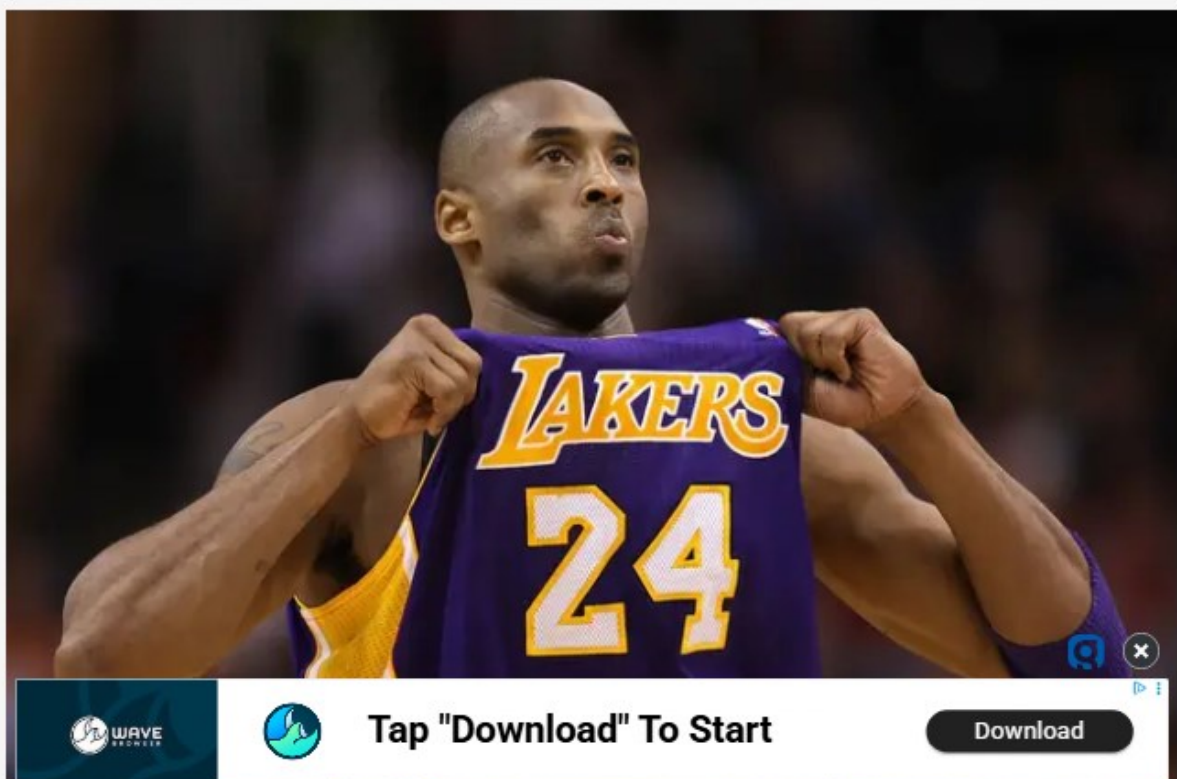
Read more: [Emma Raducanu shares videos of her practising piano at home](#)



3. Kobe Bryant, basketballer

While he was rising as a star Lakers player, the late American professional basketball player Kobe Bryant was also a signed music artist. In the 1999 Sony Records took him on with a studio album deal, and he was also making music collaborations with 50 Cent, Nas and Broady Boy for 'Thug poet', fellow basketballer Shaq O'Neal – who himself had a record deal – on '3X's Dope', and American model Tyra Banks for K.O.B.E. Bryant sadly died in January 2020 in a helicopter crash.

Read more: [Alicia Keys plays 'Moonlight' Sonata in tribute to Kobe Bryant](#)



Basketballer Kobe Bryant was a signed music artist. Picture: Getty

4. Nathan Aké, footballer

On the pitch, Dutch footballer **Nathan Aké** is praised for his versatility, diligence, professionalism, ability to pass across long distances and having a gifted technique. Off the pitch, it's all about musical pitches. 88 pitches to be precise. During Covid lockdown, Aké learnt the piano and has been passionate about the instrument ever since. In 2024, the star player started and funded an initiative to provide pianos to underprivileged schools in Manchester to inspire young people with music. Absolute player of the match, in our opinion.

Read more: [Manchester City footballer Nathan Aké is donating pianos to local schools](#)



5. Lewis Hamilton, racing driver

Mercedes Formula One star Lewis Hamilton may hold records for the most wins, pole positions, and podium finishes of any driver, but he also holds a guitar plectrum like a pro. An accomplished musician, Hamilton learnt the guitar from the age of 13, can play the piano, and has made music in the background of his racing career. He features on Christina Aguilera's 2018 song 'Pipe', under the pseudonym XNDA, a choice **he made** "to have the music come out under a different name so that you could hear the music first and later know it was me."

Read more: [F1's Lewis Hamilton impresses Lang Lang by playing Adele tune on piano](#)



6. Charles Leclerc, racing driver

Like fellow Formula One racing car driver, Lewis Hamilton, Charles Leclerc sometimes swaps burning rubber for tinkling the ivories. He recently spoke **exclusively to us** here Classic FM about finding a love for composition and piano-playing, explaining that it helps him slow things down off the track. “My life has always been about speed since I was four and I started racing,” he said. “The best way I found to slow down and disconnect from the racing world was music.” He has released an EP of piano music called *Dreamers* in 2024.

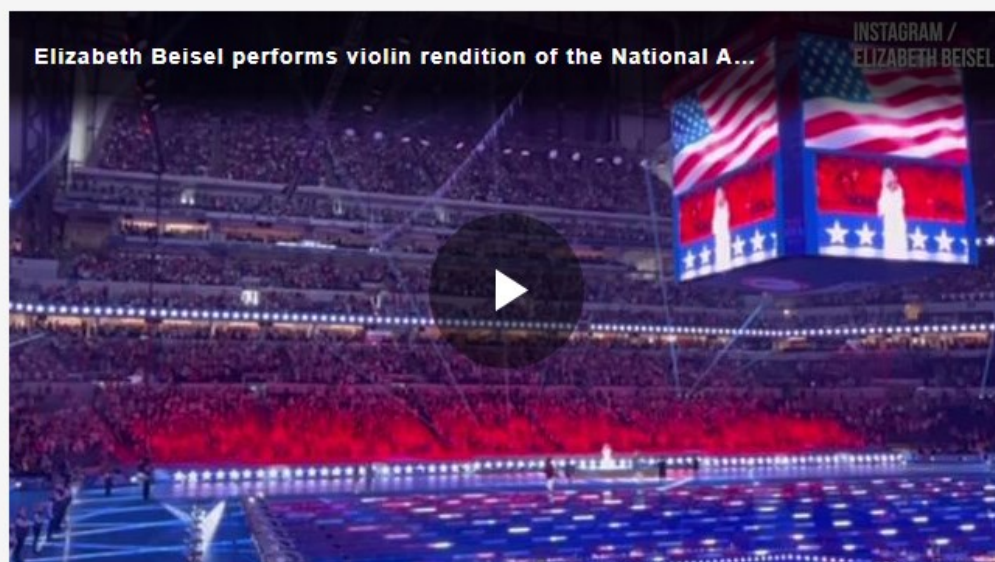
Read more: [F1 driver Charles Leclerc is a self-taught pianist who now composes his own music](#)



7. Elizabeth Beisel, swimmer

American Olympic swimmer Elizabeth Beisel is dedicated to music, and to playing the violin. “Music has truly changed my life,” the Olympic medallist **has said**. Espousing the importance of balance in life, she gives music the credit for helping her be the athlete and person she is today. “And for that I need to thank all my music educators, my teachers, my parents, every single person that had something to do with my music,” she says. She recently played to a crowd of 25,000 people at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Read more: [Olympic swimmer plays US national anthem on violin, thrilling 25,000-strong audience](#)



8. Katie Ledecky

Another American swimmer swapping water waves for soundwaves is Katie Ledecky, the Olympic gold-medallist who's also a pianist. Having learnt from the age of 8, she demonstrated her piano playing chops in 2018 when she duetted with fellow swimmer Beisel (see above) during USA Swimming's Golden Goggle Awards in New York. The pair played The Beatles' 'Let It Be'.



Katie Ledecky, Olympic champion, is also a pianist. Picture: Getty

9. Pelé, footballer

In 1977, Brazilian footballer Pelé joined forces with Brazilian composer and arranger Sérgio Mendes to produce an album to soundtrack a documentary about his life. Debuting on the album as a singer-songwriter, Pelé sings on 'Meu Mundo É uma Bola (My World Is a Ball)' and 'Cidade Grande (Big City)' on the soundtrack. Regarded as the greatest football player of all time, Pelé was among the most successful and popular sports figures of the 20th century, and in 1999 was named Athlete of the Century by the International Olympic Committee.



Brazilian football legend Pelé was also a singer-songwriter. Picture: Getty

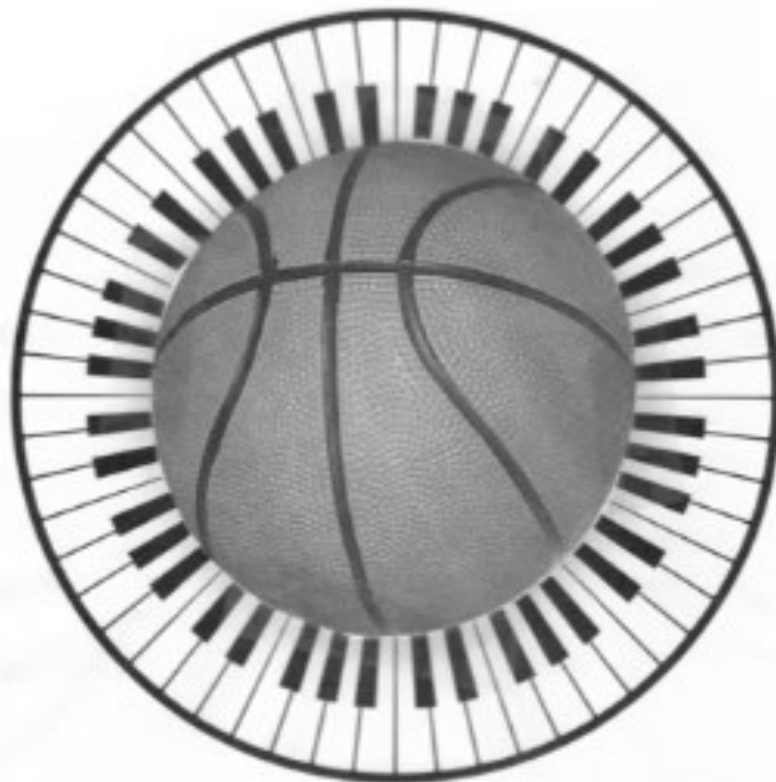
10. Chelcee Grimes, footballer

Chelcee Grimes has played football for Liverpool, Fulham, Tottenham Hotspur and other women's teams. She's also an established singer-songwriter, and as well as releasing her own singles, she's written songs for Kylie Minogue, Olly Murs, Dua Lipa and many other artists and bands. Chelcee, who was playing for Liverpool from the age of 10, **once told the** *Liverpool Echo*, "I'd score a goal and run back to the half way line singing. But then if I went to the studio and missed training they'd bench me for the next game, so I had to make a decision between the two." She really has balanced the two.



Footballer Chelcee Grimes has written songs for Kylie Minogue and Dua Lipa. Picture: Getty

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