

# Johnny, Be Good Tonight

The 100 Greatest Songs of All Time

1<sup>st</sup> Edition

by  
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## **Preface**

When I was seventeen, I scribbled down the first edition of what would become this list. I had listened with great interest as my hometown classic rock station counted down their annual Memorial Day 500, only to hit my buzzer when I discovered that listeners had voted “Sweet Emotion” by Aerosmith number one. (Love the song, just not as number one. On any list.)

Actually, the entire list sucked: “Layla” was number 25 and “Stairway to Heaven” was number 18, and if I remember correctly, the top five was: “Carry On Wayward Son” (!), “La Grange,” “Black Dog,” “Another Brick in the Wall (Part 2),” and, yes, “Sweet Emotion.” I rolled my eyes and told myself, “I can do better than that,” and quickly wrote down 25 favorites.

By later in the summer, I had fleshed out the list to 100, and listened to them with my dad as we drove to and from the beach on my iPod equipped with the iTrip FM transmitter. By the fall, I had revised the list further, and by happy coincidence had signed up to take an elective class called Ragtime, Rap and the Rolling Stones. I showed the list to my teacher, whom I already knew fairly well, and I remember she was impressed by it.

(She also gave me a look of wide-eyed shock when I correctly identified Miles Davis' “Freddie Freeloader” when she played it for us on the first day of class. I certainly was no longer the same kid who had filled in “Limp Bizkit” as his favorite band in her sixth grade chorus class, though to be fair, I had only been listening to music for like three months at that point in my life.)

After another round of revisions, I sent the list to the editor of the school newspaper, who had expressed an interest in featuring it. That's the first public exposure my list ever received. (Good luck tracking that edition of it down.) By the spring, I had revised it some more, and I published it as a webpage on a site called Squidoo, which had just been profiled in the *New York Times* as a groundbreaking site that paid the makers of its pages royalties.

I never thought -- ever -- that anybody would look at it. At most, I thought my friends and family might look at it, but given the constant struggle it was to get them to listen to the “right” music, I didn't think I would really succeed at getting them to do that. Well, I was wrong. The number of unique visitors to that page numbers in the millions, and people still contact me on a regular basis to thank me for putting together that list.

As you'll read next in the introduction, I eventually grew dissatisfied with the list I posted on Squidoo over seven years ago now, and this is my latest take on it.

I have found that a surprising number of my readers ask me pretty frequently if I still work on this list, which I always find rather curious. (If you like the list so much, why would you want me to update/change it?) But it comes up more often than you'd think.

I have also been surprised by how many ask if I can offer the list in book form. I guess I have a different perspective on the list than everyone else, so I have always shrugged off the suggestion, thinking a book version would just be redundant, but now that I have put this book together, I'm very happy with it, and I hope you are, too. (By the way, check the back for the original list.)

## **Introduction**

I started tinkering with my list of the 100 greatest songs of all time when I was in high school, publishing it on the Internet as an 18-year-old who was readying himself for college. I knew a lot about music back then, to be sure -- especially for someone my age -- but by no means enough to produce anywhere close to a definitive list of the greatest songs of all time.

Shortly after I got to college I updated the list, expanding it to 200. (Actually, I left the original list up and simply created a new page.) I was still discovering a lot of new music back then and my taste and musical sensibilities hadn't solidified quite yet, so it made sense for me to do it at the time.

At the time I finished the 200 songs list, I wanted to keep going with it, expanding it to 300. Followers of my work -- if you can call it that -- will know that list never came to fruition, for a lot of reasons.

I became much more interested in the album format, since that's the pop music artist's truest form of expression. We live in an album age, though that will probably change sooner than we all think -- albums are expensive to make and are hard to sell in an era of free streaming. When someone releases new music, it's always in the form of an album.

(Seriously, standalone singles are incredibly rare now. Even if they do see the light of day, they'll be licensed to a soundtrack or something. You never see a situation like the Beatles in '68, where they said, "Hmm. *The White Album's* taking a while. Let's give them "Hey Jude.")

I got so into albums that a year ago [I made a list of my 100 favorite albums](#), which was fun and cool but I soon discovered after completing that list that most people don't listen to albums, and if they do, it's not really to appreciate art or anything, it's usually just a means of entertaining themselves for an hour.

I spent six months basically writing a book, leaving no stone unturned in giving each album on the list its own detailed entry. But even though albums are a lot more interesting and rewarding than individual songs are, most people don't seem to be willing to give them their due. That's just the way it is.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. To get back to why I didn't expand my greatest songs of all time list to 300, well, I got into playing the guitar when I was in college, and I was studying film back then too, so I watched a ton of movies, which took up a lot of time.

The "what are the greatest songs of all time" question became less and less interesting to me; it was kind of a "been there, done that" thing. For a couple of years when I was 17-18, the "greatest songs of all time" question felt very relevant to me. Ever since, it hasn't.

Every once in a while, I'll dig out the list -- meaning, I'll click on the "top 100" playlist on my iTunes -- and give it a look. Every year or two I probably do that. If I still basically agree with it, I don't mess with it. If I think it needs an update, I'll update it. That's basically how I approach list-making -- they're all works in progress.

This is only my second update to the list since I expanded it to 200. The first update to the list was in 2010, right as I was graduating college. It made sense at the time for me to do it. I was entering a new phase of my life then, and I wasn't happy with the original list, since my taste had changed and I had a better understanding of the pop narrative.

I thought, at the time, that that was going to be the last update. By this time, the list had gotten over a million views and was ranking at the top of the Google SERP for "greatest songs of all time" ahead of *Rolling Stone's* list, which I was proud of. Part of me just wanted to leave the original as is just for the hell of it.

But another part of me didn't like the list itself anymore and hated the little bits of commentary I had written for each song even more, since I had gotten a lot better at writing and wasn't happy with the idea that there was such sloppily written work bearing my name on the internet for the whole world to see.

So I updated the song order, deleted the commentary, and thought that would be the end of it. But some of my readers have complained to me that they liked the commentary. (Some liked the original list better than the 2010 version, as well.)

And in 2013, I suddenly found myself in a mood to start messing with the greatest songs of all time list. For one thing, I realized I had a new #1, and if there's a rule I have when it comes to updating a list, it's to not bother unless you have a different #1 pick.

Also, tremendous advances have been made in playlist interactivity, so I am pleased to announce that you may listen to this list as a Spotify playlist. I have made two separate playlists, one in descending order -- which will appear first, since the list descends -- and another in ascending order.

(Obviously, not all of the songs on the list are on Spotify -- the Beatles, Led Zeppelin and some other artists are still holding out on the streaming game -- so you won't be able to listen to them here, either. But 84 of them are.)

By the way, the commentary is back. I didn't think it was necessary to do it last time, but you guys let me know it was a crucial part of the first list and so I have responded. (I try to be a man of the people.) I have tried to keep each one to around 3-5 sentences each. Some are just one or two.

I'm also giving you guys a huge bonus: I'm recommending five additional songs per track on the list. (Yeah, 500 total.) These songs are related in some way in some way to the main selections -- whether by artist, genre and/or time period -- and hopefully will help flesh out my choices better as well as give you more ideas of what else is out there to listen to.

So yeah, this is a pretty huge jukebox of songs that you're getting. I've done the work to put all this together so this can serve as a resource for everyone.

I really think the music industry and consumers alike will start -- if they haven't already -- relying on "tastemakers" who will act as something of a bridge between the two camps. (And there will likely be money in it for them -- record companies will start marketing directly to the tastemakers who have amassed a substantial following.)

Right now the entire music industry is in disarray, despite the fact that demand for content is, as far as I can tell, as high as it has ever been and there are as many -- if not more -- artists trying to make it as musicians now. Yet it has become harder for musicians to make money *and* arguably even tougher for consumers to even find music they like (much less spend money on).

In recent years it has become necessary for tastemakers to "curate" the content; right now there are so many voices in the choir that many consumers now don't even *try* to find music they might like. ("Too many voices in the choir" = too much music being made + too many ways of finding it.) It's made for a disorienting and disappointing consumer experience, that's for sure.

My original Squidoo list in 2006 was my initial foray into the realm of tastemaking, though I didn't know it at the time. I think the role of tastemaker has always been one I have wanted to play; I have always resisted the title of "critic" whenever anyone has tried to bestow it upon me or has encouraged me to become one.

One, I'm not really qualified -- at least not to the extent that a critic *should* be, in my opinion -- and two, music critics tend to be smug, which I don't like.

At any rate, here we go. Let's curate some damn content.

– Eric



## #100

### The Verve – “Bitter Sweet Symphony” (1997)

GENRE: Britpop

LABEL: Hut

WRITTEN BY: Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Richard Ashcroft

PRODUCED BY: Martin "Youth" Glover, The Verve

The alternative revolution was an important one, and I wanted Britpop -- England's reaction to American grunge -- to be represented on the list. Hard to go wrong with “Bitter Sweet Symphony,” right?

Appears on: *Urban Hymns* (1997)

Recommended listening:

- The Stone Roses - "She Bangs the Drums" (1989)
- Suede [UK] / The London Suede [US] - "Animal Nitrate" (1993)
- Blur - "Girls & Boys" (1994)
- Oasis - "Live Forever" (1994)
- The Verve - "Sonnet" (1997)

## #99

### **Buffalo Springfield – “For What It's Worth” (1967)**

GENRE: Folk Rock

LABEL: Atco

WRITTEN BY: Stephen Stills

PRODUCED BY: N/A

Before Neil Young was on his own (and, briefly, in CSNY), he played in Buffalo Springfield with Stephen Stills. This protest song is their most lasting cut.

Recommended listening:

- Crosby, Stills & Nash - "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" (1969)
- Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young - "Ohio" (1970)
- Neil Young - "Heart of Gold" (1972)
- Neil Young - "Cortez the Killer" (1975)
- Neil Young & Crazy Horse - "My My, Hey Hey (Out of the Blue)" (1979)

## #98

### **James Taylor – “Fire and Rain” (1970)**

GENRE: Folk Rock

LABEL: Warner Bros.

WRITTEN BY: James Taylor

PRODUCED BY: Peter Asher

This song is so good it pretty much defines James Taylor, which isn't necessarily a good thing. Meanwhile, none other than Carole King plays the piano on the recording; she worked as a songwriter/session musician before hitting it big with her *Tapestry* album in '71.

Appears on: *Sweet Baby James* (1970)

Recommended listening:

- Joni Mitchell - "Both Sides, Now" (1969)
- Carole King - "I Feel the Earth Move" (1971)
- Carole King - "It's Too Late" (1971)
- Joni Mitchell - "All I Want" (1971)
- Tracy Chapman - "Fast Car" (1988)

## #97

### **Adele – “Rolling in the Deep” (2010)**

GENRE: Pop

LABEL: XL [UK] / Columbia [US]

WRITTEN BY: Adele, Paul Epworth

PRODUCED BY: Paul Epworth

Adele is already considered something of a generational figure to us Millennials, and I am confident that years from now both “Rolling in the Deep” and her diamond-selling album *21* will be considered once-in-a-generation phenomena, like Nirvana’s *Nevermind* and “Smells Like Teen Spirit” were for Generation X.

Appears on: *21* (2011)

Recommended listening:

- Adele - "Chasing Pavements" (2008)
- Adele - "Hometown Glory" (2008)
- Adele - "Lovesong" (2011)
- Adele - "Rumour Has It" (2011)
- Adele - "Someone Like You" (2011)

## #96

### **Bill Haley and His Comets – “(We're Gonna) Rock Around the Clock” (1954)**

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: Decca

WRITTEN BY: Max C. Freedman, James E. Myers

PRODUCED BY: Milt Gabler

There were three candidates for this, the birth-of-rock-and-roll slot: "Rock Around the Clock" and two Elvis Presley cuts from his Sun Records tenure, "That's All Right" and "Mystery Train." In the end I picked this one, since Elvis has other appearances later on the list and, relatively speaking, "That's All Right" and "Mystery Train" aren't as good as his later material, even if they -- especially "That's All Right" -- were crucial.

Recommended listening:

- Hank Williams - "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" (1949)
- Muddy Waters - "Rollin' Stone" (1950)
- Elvis Presley - "That's All Right" (1954)
- Elvis Presley - "Mystery Train" (1955)
- Johnny Cash - "I Walk the Line" (1956)

## #95

### **DJ Shadow – “Midnight in a Perfect World” (1996)**

GENRE: Trip-Hop

LABEL: Mo' Wax

WRITTEN BY: Josh Davis, Baraka, Pekka Pohjola

PRODUCED BY: DJ Shadow

*Endtroducing...*, the album on which “Midnight” appears, is considered a breakthrough in popular music, as it was created entirely from samples stitched together in a finely textured and complex 63-minute narrative. Most of its tracks are too unwieldy for such a list as this one, but “Midnight in a Perfect World” is a -- indeed, perhaps *the* -- glorious exception.

Appears on: *Endtroducing...* (1996)

Recommended listening:

- DJ Shadow - "Building Steam with a Grain of Salt" (1996)
- DJ Shadow - "Changeling" (1996)
- DJ Shadow - "Napalm Brain / Scatter Brain" (1996)
- DJ Shadow - "Stem / Long Stem" (1996)
- DJ Shadow - "What Does Your Soul Look Like (Part 1 - Blue Sky Revisit)" (1996)

## #94

### **Dire Straits - “Sultans of Swing” (1978)**

GENRE: Roots Rock

LABEL: Vertigo

WRITTEN BY: Mark Knopfler

PRODUCED BY: Muff Winwood

There were three songs on this list that I simply couldn't part with because they're just too good, and this is one of them. A lot of what appears on my list can probably be filed under “classic rock,” but only this one marries the slick fingerpicking of guitarist Mark Knopfler with the impeccable production of the Dire Straits.

Appears on: *Dire Straits* (1978)

Recommended listening:

- Steely Dan - "Reelin' in the Years" (1972)
- Steely Dan - "Show Biz Kids" (1973)
- Steely Dan - "Rikki Don't Lose That Number" (1974)
- Dire Straits - "Southbound Again" (1978)
- Dire Straits - "Money for Nothing" (1985)

## #93

### **The Mamas and the Papas – “California Dreamin’” (1965)**

GENRE: Pop

LABEL: Dunhill

WRITTEN BY: John Phillips, Michelle Phillips

PRODUCED BY: Lou Adler

Any kid who has ever grown up on the east coast of the United States can relate to this one. Something that I didn't notice until a friend pointed it out (it's kind of hidden in plain sight): when the Mamas repeat each line during the verses, they're actually singing an entirely different melody; they don't harmonize with the Papas except sporadically during the chorus. It's what gives the song its driving momentum.

Appears on: *If You Can Believe Your Eyes and Ears* (1966)

Recommended listening:

- The Byrds - "I'll Feel a Whole Lot Better" (1965)
- The Byrds - "Mr. Tambourine Man" (1965)
- The Byrds - "Turn! Turn! Turn!" (1965)
- The Mamas and the Papas - "Monday, Monday" (1966)
- The Byrds - "Hickory Wind" (1968)



## #92

### **Eminem – “Lose Yourself” (2002)**

GENRE: Hip-Hop

LABEL: Shady

WRITTEN BY: Marshall Mathers, Luis Resto, Jeff Bass

PRODUCED BY: Eminem, Jeff Bass

I remember this one quite well. It caught fire instantly, topping the charts across the globe within weeks, and it’s still a blast to listen to even now. Abusive overplay has rendered “Lose Yourself” somewhat trite, to put it mildly, but I remain bullish on its greatness -- listening to it for the first time in a while always gets the adrenaline pumping all over again.

Appears on: *8 Mile* [Soundtrack] (2002)

Recommended listening:

- Dr. Dre feat. Snoop Doggy Dogg - "Nuthin' But a 'G' Thang" (1992)
- Snoop Doggy Dogg - "Gin and Juice" (1993)
- 2Pac feat. Dr. Dre - "California Love" (1995)
- Eminem - "Stan" (2000)
- OutKast - "Hey Ya!" (2003)

## #91

### **U2 - "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" (1987)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Island

WRITTEN BY: U2

PRODUCED BY: Brian Eno, Daniel Lanois

There isn't a single weak track -- or even a song that isn't pretty great -- on *The Joshua Tree*, so just picking one cut from it was tough. A good case can be made for any of the first three tracks, but personally, I have always been partial to this one.

Appears on: *The Joshua Tree* (1987)

Recommended listening:

- U2 - "I Will Follow" (1980)
- U2 - "Sunday Bloody Sunday" (1983)
- U2 - "Pride (In the Name of Love)" (1984)
- U2 - "Where the Streets Have No Name" (1987)
- U2 - "With Or Without You" (1987)

## #90

### The Who – “Baba O’Riley” (1971)

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Decca [US] / Polydor [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Pete Townshend

PRODUCED BY: The Who, Glyn Johns

This is another album slot. I used to have both “Baba O’Riley” and “Won’t Get Fooled Again” from *Who’s Next* on here, but I only had room for one, and “Won’t Get Fooled Again” got the boot.

Appears on: *Who's Next* (1971)

Recommended listening:

- The Who - "Behind Blue Eyes" (1971)
- The Who - "Won't Get Fooled Again" (1971)
- The Who - "Love, Reign O'er Me" (1973)
- The Who - "Who Are You?" (1978)
- The Who - "Eminence Front" (1981)

## #89

### **Radiohead – “Everything in Its Right Place” (2000)**

GENRE: Electronic

LABEL: Capitol [US] / Parlophone [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Radiohead

PRODUCED BY: Nigel Godrich, Radiohead

Radiohead is obviously very popular and highly acclaimed, so I felt like they should be represented. After surveying their catalog, I settled on “Everything in Its Right Place” from *Kid A*. It was never released as a single -- no singles were released from *Kid A*, actually -- but it showcases the band’s breakthrough in fully absorbing electronica into their alternative rock repertoire, in addition to being killer good.

Appears on: *Kid A* (2000)

Recommended listening:

- Radiohead - "Creep" (1993)
- Radiohead - "Fake Plastic Trees" (1995)
- Radiohead - "Paranoid Android" (1997)
- Radiohead - "Pyramid Song" (2001)
- Radiohead - "There There" (2003)

## #88

### **Tom Petty – “Free Fallin’” (1989)**

GENRE: Heartland Rock

LABEL: MCA

WRITTEN BY: Tom Petty, Jeff Lynne

PRODUCED BY: Jeff Lynne, Tom Petty, Mike Campbell

You’ve all heard the song countless times, I’m sure. It’s the best pure acoustic rock song of the past 25 years, plain and simple.

Appears on: *Full Moon Fever* (1989)

Recommended listening:

- Bob Seger - "Night Moves" (1976)
- Steve Miller Band - "Rock'n Me" (1976)
- Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers - "American Girl" (1976)
- Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers - "Refugee" (1979)
- Tom Petty - "Runnin' Down a Dream" (1989)

## #87

### **The Rolling Stones – “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” (1969)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: London [US] / Decca [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Mick Jagger, Keith Richards

PRODUCED BY: Jimmy Miller

John Lennon accused this song of being the Stones’ answer to “Hey Jude,” but regardless of whether or not that’s true, it’s pretty damn awesome. One of the definitive album closers, for sure, and one of the few times the Stones stretch a song past seven minutes.

Appears on: *Let It Bleed* (1969)

Recommended listening:

- The Rolling Stones - "Brown Sugar" (1971)
- The Rolling Stones - "Tumbling Dice" (1972)
- The Rolling Stones - "Miss You" (1978)
- The Rolling Stones - "Beast of Burden" (1978)
- The Rolling Stones - "Start Me Up" (1981)

## #86

### **Eric B. & Rakim – “Paid in Full” (1987)**

GENRE: Hip-Hop

LABEL: 4th & B'way

WRITTEN BY: Eric Barrier, Rakim Allah

PRODUCED BY: Eric B. & Rakim

Before Randy Moss enlightened the world to the phrase “straight cash, homie,” turntablist Eric B. and master of the mic Rakim cut this, the title track of their debut record. Featuring what would become hip-hop’s most distinctive loop as its beat and the inoffensive vocal stylings of rap’s greatest MC, this is a song everyone can enjoy.

Appears on: *Paid in Full* (1987)

Recommended listening:

- EPMD - "Strictly Business" (1988)
- Eric B. & Rakim - "Microphone Fiend" (1988)
- Slick Rick - "Children's Story" (1988)
- De La Soul - "Me Myself And I" (1989)
- A Tribe Called Quest - "Award Tour" (1993)

## #85

### **Fleetwood Mac – “Go Your Own Way” (1977)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Warner Bros.

WRITTEN BY: Lindsey Buckingham

PRODUCED BY: Fleetwood Mac, Richard Dashut, Ken Caillat

Anyone who has heard *Rumours* knows that record is loaded with great songs, but when it comes to choosing one for greatest songs lists, “Go Your Own Way” always gets picked because it has that kind of feel to it. It’s certainly not my favorite song on the album -- which is “Dreams,” incidentally -- or even the best -- which is probably “Gold Dust Woman” -- yet those songs just don’t fit on this list.

Appears on: *Rumours* (1977)

Recommended listening:

- Fleetwood Mac - "Rhiannon" (1975)
- Fleetwood Mac - "Dreams" (1977)
- Fleetwood Mac - "Gold Dust Woman" (1977)
- Fleetwood Mac - "Sara" (1979)
- Stevie Nicks - "Edge of Seventeen" (1981)



## #84

### **The Beach Boys – “California Girls” (1965)**

GENRE: Pop

LABEL: Capitol

WRITTEN BY: Brian Wilson, Mike Love

PRODUCED BY: Brian Wilson

Listen carefully to “California Girls” and you’ll hear the roots of what, sonically, would later populate their monumental album *Pet Sounds* the following year. Lyrically, it’s a little more in line with their pre-*Pet Sounds* work, which makes sense. But then again, “I wish they all could be California Girls” isn’t all *that* different from, “Wouldn’t it be nice if we were married,” now is it?

Appears on: *Summer Days (And Summer Nights!!)* (1965)

Recommended listening:

- Dick Dale - "Misirlou" (1962)
- The Beach Boys - "In My Room" (1963)
- The Beach Boys - "Surfin' U.S.A." (1963)
- The Beach Boys - "Don't Worry Baby" (1964)
- The Beach Boys - "I Get Around" (1964)

## #83

### **Guns N' Roses – “Sweet Child o' Mine” (1987)**

GENRE: Glam Metal

LABEL: Geffen

WRITTEN BY: Guns N' Roses

PRODUCED BY: Mike Clink

There aren't really any standout metal tracks from the '80s aside from this one, and *Appetite for Destruction*'s production -- which actually doesn't sound very '80s, relatively speaking -- kind of sounds the most like a grunge precursor, so its popularity makes sense in retrospect. Pop/hair metal was in, but GNR weren't cheesy, they were just plain nasty, and they didn't fit into that crowd... and yet the album sold 28 million copies anyway.

Appears on: *Appetite for Destruction* (1987)

Recommended listening:

- Iron Maiden - “Hallowed Be Thy Name” (1982)
- Metallica - "Fade to Black" (1984)
- Guns N' Roses – "Welcome to the Jungle" (1987)
- Guns N' Roses - "November Rain" (1991)
- Metallica - "Nothing Else Matters" (1991)

## #82

### **Little Richard – “Good Golly Miss Molly” (1958)**

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: Specialty

WRITTEN BY: John Marascalco, Robert "Bumps" Blackwell

PRODUCED BY: Robert "Bumps" Blackwell

I'm swapping in “Good Golly Miss Molly” for “Tutti Frutti,” which used to make the list but is more a song with great moments -- namely, the killer intro/outro -- than a great song. (I like “GGMM” more. Simple as that.) Early rock and roll doesn't get much better than this.

Appears on: *Little Richard* (1958)

Recommended listening:

- Little Richard - "Tutti Frutti" (1955)
- Carl Perkins - "Blue Suede Shoes" (1956)
- Little Richard - "Long Tall Sally" (1956)
- Jerry Lee Lewis - "Great Balls of Fire" (1957)
- Jerry Lee Lewis - "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" (1957)

## #81

### **David Bowie – “Heroes” (1977)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: RCA

WRITTEN BY: David Bowie, Brian Eno

PRODUCED BY: David Bowie, Tony Visconti

I only had room for one Bowie song -- he's more expressive in the album format -- so of course I picked "Heroes." I have a lot of favorite Bowie songs though; he's got an amazing body of work.

Appears on: *Heroes* (1977)

Recommended listening:

- David Bowie - "Space Oddity" (1969)
- David Bowie - "Changes" (1971)
- David Bowie - "Ziggy Stardust" (1972)
- David Bowie - "Rebel Rebel" (1974)
- Queen & David Bowie - "Under Pressure" (1981)

## #80

### **Creedence Clearwater Revival – “Proud Mary” (1969)**

GENRE: Roots Rock

LABEL: Fantasy

WRITTEN BY: John Fogerty

PRODUCED BY: John Fogerty

CCR has so many good ones, but “Proud Mary” is probably the most timeless of their many hits. “Fortunate Son” has more artistic merit, but “Proud Mary” has collected more cultural capital -- for one thing, it gets sung/butchered during the audition episodes of *American Idol* every year, for better or worse.

Appears on: *Bayou Country* (1969)

Recommended listening:

- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "Bad Moon Rising" (1969)
- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "Born on the Bayou" (1969)
- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "Down on the Corner" (1969)
- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "Green River" (1969)
- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "Lodi" (1969)

## #79

### **Run-D.M.C. – “Walk This Way” (1986)**

GENRE: Hip-Hop

LABEL: Profile

WRITTEN BY: Steven Tyler, Joe Perry

PRODUCED BY: Rick Rubin, Russell Simmons

I’m killing two birds with one stone here: this fills an early/pivotal hip-hop slot and an Aerosmith hole. (Yeah, I had to part with “Dream On.”) It’s a damn fun song to boot.

Appears on: *Raising Hell* (1986)

Recommended listening:

- Run-D.M.C. - "It's Like That" (1984)
- LL Cool J - "I Can't Live Without My Radio" (1985)
- Run-D.M.C. - "It's Tricky" (1986)
- Beastie Boys - "(You Gotta) Fight for Your Right (To Party)" (1986)
- Beastie Boys - "High Plains Drifter" (1989)

## #78

### **Jefferson Airplane – “White Rabbit” (1967)**

GENRE: Psychedelic Rock

LABEL: RCA Victor

WRITTEN BY: Grace Slick

PRODUCED BY: Rick Jarrard

I had a tough, tough time choosing between “White Rabbit” and “Somebody to Love,” which both appear on 1967’s *Surrealistic Pillow*. I’m trying to cover more ground this time genre-wise, so I have avoided “duplicate picks” wherever possible. I like “White Rabbit” more, personally, and feel that, of the two, it is the more representative of the psychedelic era.

Appears on: *Surrealistic Pillow* (1967)

Recommended listening:

- The Byrds - "Eight Miles High" (1966)
- Jefferson Airplane - "Somebody to Love" (1967)
- Love - "Alone Again Or" (1967)
- Big Brother and the Holding Company - "Piece of My Heart" (1968)
- Janis Joplin - "Me and Bobby McGee" (1971)

## #77

### **Elvis Presley – “Suspicious Minds” (1969)**

GENRE: Blue-Eyed Soul

LABEL: RCA

WRITTEN BY: Mark James

PRODUCED BY: Chips Moman, Felton Jarvis

Elvis disappeared from the music scene in 1958 after he was drafted by the military -- with no war going on -- and stationed in Germany for two years. Upon his return to the States, he made a great living as a Hollywood hack for several years before reinventing himself as a blue-eyed (read: white) soul act. “Suspicious Minds,” featuring much more elaborate production techniques than Presley’s ‘50s work, shot to #1 upon its release in 1969.

Recommended listening:

- Elvis Presley - "Bossa Nova Baby" (1963)
- Dusty Springfield - "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me" (1968)
- Dusty Springfield - "Son of a Preacher Man" (1969)
- Elvis Presley - "In the Ghetto" (1969)
- Elvis Presley - "Burning Love" (1972)



## #76

### **The Velvet Underground – “I’m Waiting for the Man” (1967)**

GENRE: Garage Rock

LABEL: Verve

WRITTEN BY: Lou Reed

PRODUCED BY: Andy Warhol

It’s been a severe oversight on my part not to have included a song by the Velvet Underground on the list until now. “I’m Waiting for the Man” has that punkish, garage rock-ish rhythm and that crazy mystique about it that the entire *Velvet Underground & Nico* album has; in this case, Lou Reed, with 26 dollars in his hand, is literally waiting for a drug dealer to show up. What a strange place 1960s New York City must have been.

Appears on: *The Velvet Underground & Nico* (1967)

Recommended listening:

- The Velvet Underground - "Heroin" (1967)
- The Velvet Underground - "Venus in Furs" (1967)
- The Velvet Underground - "Oh! Sweet Nuthin'" (1970)
- The Velvet Underground - "Rock and Roll" (1970)
- The Velvet Underground - "Sweet Jane" (1970)

## #75

### **The Wailers – “Get Up, Stand Up” (1973)**

GENRE: Reggae

LABEL: Tuff Gong/Island

WRITTEN BY: Bob Marley, Peter Tosh

PRODUCED BY: Chris Blackwell, the Wailers

I used to have two different Bob Marley songs on the list: “No Woman, No Cry” and “Redemption Song.” The inclusion of “No Woman, No Cry” kind of bothered me since I have never particularly liked the studio version -- the live cut from *Live!* and the *Legend* compilation is superior -- and I wanted my Bob Marley pick to come from the early part of his career, so that meant curtains for “Redemption Song.” “Get Up, Stand Up” seemed like the most logical choice.

Appears on: *Burnin'* (1973)

Recommended listening:

- The Wailers - "Concrete Jungle" (1973)
- The Wailers - "I Shot the Sheriff" (1973)
- Bob Marley and the Wailers - "No Woman, No Cry" (1974)
- Bob Marley and the Wailers - "Exodus" (1977)
- Bob Marley and the Wailers - "Redemption Song" (1980)

## #74

### **Martha and the Vandellas – “Dancing in the Street” (1964)**

GENRE: Soul

LABEL: Gordy

WRITTEN BY: Marvin Gaye, William "Mickey" Stevenson, Ivy Jo Hunter

PRODUCED BY: William "Mickey" Stevenson

Vintage Motown. Seven years before Marvin Gaye did “What’s Going On,” he co-wrote -- and played drums on -- this party song that would later be cited as a key track in the American civil rights movement after protesters frequently played “Dancing in the Street” during demonstrations.

Appears on: *Dance Party* (1965)

Recommended Listening:

- Martha and the Vandellas - "(Love Is Like A) Heat Wave" (1963)
- Mary Wells - "My Guy" (1964)
- The Supremes - "Baby Love" (1964)
- Martha and the Vandellas - "Nowhere to Run" (1965)
- The Supremes - "Stop! In the Name of Love" (1965)

## #73

### **R.E.M. – “Losing My Religion” (1991)**

GENRE: Alternative Rock

LABEL: Warner Bros.

WRITTEN BY: R.E.M.

PRODUCED BY: Scott Litt, R.E.M.

R.E.M. was -- by far -- the greatest and most important alternative rock band; no other alternative artist's catalog even begins to compare to R.E.M.'s work from '83-'92. They *were* the alternative underground in the '80s, and jumped from indie label I.R.S. to major label Warner Bros. -- other alternative bands like Nirvana would later follow suit -- after the success of 1987's *Document*.

“Losing My Religion” was released in early 1991 and was a pop smash, hitting #4 on the Hot 100. The gushing success of “Smells Like Teen Spirit” would follow later that year, but there's no underestimating the importance of what “Losing My Religion,” and R.E.M. generally, did to prime the pump beforehand.

Appears on: *Out of Time* (1991)

Recommended listening:

- R.E.M. - "Radio Free Europe" (1983)
- R.E.M. - "Time After Time (Annelise)" (1984)
- R.E.M. - "The One I Love" (1987)
- R.E.M. - "Orange Crush" (1988)
- R.E.M. - "Man on the Moon" (1992)

## #72

### **Black Sabbath – “Paranoid” (1970)**

GENRE: Heavy Metal

LABEL: Vertigo

WRITTEN BY: Black Sabbath

PRODUCED BY: Rodger Bain

I didn't really have room for much metal on the list, so why not pick one from the beginning? Although the title track from Sabbath's second record isn't exactly the first heavy metal song, its influence is ridiculously self-evident: “Paranoid,” a hybrid of distorted metal and down-stroked punk, contains everything the grunge movement, a hybrid of distorted metal and down-stroked punk, ever needed.

Appears on: *Paranoid* (1970)

Recommended listening:

- Jeff Beck - "I Ain't Superstitious" (1968)
- MC5 - "Kick Out the Jams" (1969)
- Black Sabbath - "Iron Man" (1970)
- Black Sabbath - "N.I.B." (1970)
- Black Sabbath - "War Pigs" (1970)

## #71

### **Bo Diddley – “Bo Diddley” (1955)**

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: Checker

WRITTEN BY: Ellas McDaniel

PRODUCED BY: Leonard Chess, Phil Chess, Bo Diddley

Give “Bo Diddley” a spin and you’ll immediately recognize the rhythm; known simply as the Bo Diddley Beat, it has been copped repeatedly over the course of the last six decades by other artists, from the Who (1968's "Magic Bus") to U2 (1988's “Desire”) to George Michael (1987's “Faith”). Unfortunately for Bo Diddley's bank account, rhythms can't be copyrighted.

Recommended listening:

- Muddy Waters - "Hoochie Coochie Man" (1954)
- Bo Diddley - "I'm a Man" (1955)
- Muddy Waters - "Mannish Boy" (1955)
- Bo Diddley - "Who Do You Love?" (1956)
- Muddy Waters - "Got My Mojo Working" (1957)

## #70

### **The Beatles – “Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)” (1965)**

GENRE: Raga Rock

LABEL: Capitol [US] / Parlophone [UK]

WRITTEN BY: John Lennon, Paul McCartney

PRODUCED BY: George Martin

*Rubber Soul* ushered in the psychedelic era, and the most overtly otherworldly track is the sitar-laden “Norwegian Wood.” Even though they had just done “Yesterday” -- arguably the Beatles’ finest song -- for the *Help!* album/soundtrack, *Rubber Soul* was a giant creative leap forward for the Fab Four, and “Norwegian Wood” narrowly edges out “In My Life” and “Girl” as the standout track.

Appears on: *Rubber Soul* (1965)

Recommended listening:

- The Beatles - "Girl" (1965)
- The Beatles - "I'm Looking Through You" (1965)
- The Beatles - "If I Needed Someone" (1965)
- The Beatles - "In My Life" (1965)
- The Beatles - "What Goes On" (1965)

## #69

### **Dionne Warwick – “Walk on By” (1964)**

GENRE: Pop

LABEL: Scepter

WRITTEN BY: Burt Bacharach, Hal David

PRODUCED BY: Burt Bacharach, Hal David

Another treasure from the most exciting time in the history of pop music. The production isn't great -- hey, this was 1964 -- but "Walk on By" is nevertheless a slice of pop perfection. It has a really effortless quality to it.

Appears on: *Make Way for Dionne Warwick* (1964)

Recommended listening:

- Etta James - "At Last" (1960)
- Patsy Cline - "Crazy" (1961)
- Nancy Sinatra - "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" (1966)
- Percy Sledge - "When a Man Loves a Woman" (1966)
- Procol Harum - "A Whiter Shade of Pale" (1967)



## #68

### **Prince – “Sign 'O' the Times” (1987)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Paisley Park

WRITTEN BY: Prince

PRODUCED BY: Prince

“Purple Rain” used to routinely make this list, but this time around I had a hard time choosing between “Purple Rain” and “When Doves Cry.” ...So I picked “Sign 'O' the Times,” the title track from Prince’s 1987 double album that’s frequently cited as one of the best albums of the ‘80s. It’s an excellent song and was the album’s lead single and lead track, so I don’t think it’s too out of place here as the lone Prince representative.

Appears on: *Sign “O” the Times* (1987)

Recommended listening:

- Prince and The Revolution - "Little Red Corvette" (1982)
- Prince and The Revolution - "1999" (1982)
- Prince and The Revolution - "Purple Rain" (1984)
- Prince and The Revolution - "When Doves Cry" (1984)
- Prince and The Revolution - "Kiss" (1986)

## #67

### **Sly and the Family Stone – “Everyday People” (1968)**

GENRE: Psychedelic Soul

LABEL: Epic

WRITTEN BY: Sly Stone

PRODUCED BY: Sly Stone

Sly and the Family Stone have a ton of great ones, but this one has always been the standout to me; it’s probably the best example of a post-James Brown, ‘60s-funk-with-social-commentary song in popular music.

Appears on: *Stand!* (1969)

Recommended listening:

- Sly and the Family Stone - "Dance to the Music" (1968)
- Sly and the Family Stone - "I Want to Take You Higher" (1969)
- Sly and the Family Stone - "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)" (1969)
- Sly and the Family Stone - "You Can Make It If You Try" (1969)
- Sly and the Family Stone - "Family Affair" (1971)

## #66

### **The Doors – “Light My Fire” (1967)**

GENRE: Psychedelic Rock

LABEL: Elektra

WRITTEN BY: The Doors

PRODUCED BY: Paul A. Rothchild

It wasn't the first single by the Doors -- “Break on Through (To the Other Side)” has that honor -- but it nevertheless summarizes the band's early work and the psychedelic era more generally.

Appears on: *The Doors* (1967)

Recommended listening:

- The Doors - "Break on Through (To the Other Side)" (1967)
- The Doors - "The End" (1967)
- The Doors - "Hello, I Love You" (1968)
- The Doors - "Roadhouse Blues" (1970)
- The Doors - "Riders on the Storm" (1971)

## #65

### **The Bobby Fuller Four – “I Fought the Law” (1966)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Mustang

WRITTEN BY: Sonny Curtis

PRODUCED BY: Bob Keane

After Buddy Holly died in an infamous plane crash on what later would be called “the day the music died,” Sonny Curtis took his place in the Crickets, and one of the songs he had written was “I Fought the Law.” This Bobby Fuller Four cover is the best-known version, although the Clash would also record a version in 1979.

Appears on: *I Fought the Law* (1966)

Recommended listening:

- Eddie Cochran - "C'mon Everybody" (1958)
- Eddie Cochran - "Summertime Blues" (1958)
- Dion - "The Wanderer" (1961)
- The Troggs - "Wild Thing" (1966)
- The Clash - "I Fought the Law" (1979)

## #64

### **The Beatles – “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” (1968)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Apple

WRITTEN BY: George Harrison

PRODUCED BY: George Martin

John Lennon and Paul McCartney overshadowed George Harrison throughout the Beatles' run, restricting him to one song per side on just about every album. In the band's early days, Harrison simply wasn't as good (or prolific) at songwriting, but by the time *The White Album* and *Abbey Road* were recorded, there was no question that George was on equal footing with John and Paul as far as songwriting is concerned. “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” from *The White Album*, featuring Eric Clapton on lead guitar in the only guest appearance *ever* -- by any artist -- on a Beatles song, is Harrison's best track.

Appears on: *The Beatles* [The White Album] (1968)

Recommended listening:

- The Beatles - "Long, Long, Long" (1968)
- The Beatles - "Savoy Truffle" (1968)
- The Beatles - "Here Comes the Sun" (1969)
- The Beatles - "Something" (1969)
- George Harrison - "My Sweet Lord" (1970)

## #63

### The Kinks – “Waterloo Sunset” (1967)

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Pye [UK] / Reprise [US]

WRITTEN BY: Ray Davies

PRODUCED BY: Ray Davies

“You Really Got Me,” which used to make this list, is an undeniably great early rock & roll song, but since there are plenty of great early rock & roll songs on this list and I only have room for one Kinks cut, I’m going to switch my vote to the achingly beautiful “Waterloo Sunset.”

Appears on: *Something Else by the Kinks* (1967)

Recommended listening:

- The Animals - "The House of the Rising Sun" (1964)
- The Kinks - "All Day and All of the Night" (1964)
- The Kinks - "You Really Got Me" (1964)
- The Animals - "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" (1965)
- The Kinks - "Lola" (1970)

## #62

### Chuck Berry – “Maybellene” (1955)

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: Chess

WRITTEN BY: Chuck Berry

PRODUCED BY: Leonard Chess, Phil Chess

Every Chuck Berry song is more or less the same thing, but “Maybellene” towers above the rest -- aside from “Johnny B. Goode,” of course -- as one of the most stunning debut singles in rock & roll history; rock stars existed before Chuck Berry, but guitar gods did not. Indeed, “Maybellene” put flinging violent noise through electric guitar amps on the map.

Recommended listening:

- Chuck Berry - "Thirty Days" (1955)
- Chuck Berry - "Roll Over Beethoven" (1956)
- Chuck Berry - "Too Much Monkey Business" (1956)
- Chuck Berry - "Oh Baby Doll" (1957)
- Chuck Berry - "School Day" (1957)

## #61

### U2 – “One” (1991)

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Island

WRITTEN BY: U2

PRODUCED BY: Daniel Lanois, Brian Eno

U2 rose out of the post-punk muck to become superstars by the time they had reached their late twenties; with 1987's *The Joshua Tree*, they had gotten everything right. The 1988 black-and-white concert documentary/live album *Rattle and Hum*, however? Not so much.

The sessions for *Achtung Baby* were hostile as hell, and pulling “One,” a personal song about Bono’s relationship with his father, out of the hat was reportedly the only thing that kept U2 from parting ways. Rarely has a song so personal been so universally applicable; it perfectly encapsulates how the band members were feeling towards each other at the time, and was released as a benefit single, with all profits going to AIDS research.

Appears on: *Achtung Baby* (1991)

Recommended listening:

- U2 - "Even Better Than the Real Thing" (1991)
- U2 - "Mysterious Ways" (1991)
- U2 - "Beautiful Day" (2000)
- U2 - "Elevation" (2000)
- U2 - "Vertigo" (2004)



## #60

### Al Green – “Let's Stay Together” (1971)

GENRE: R&B

LABEL: Hi

WRITTEN BY: Al Green, Willie Mitchell, Al Jackson, Jr.

PRODUCED BY: Al Green, Willie Mitchell

Choosing one Al Green song is a tall order, since “Love and Happiness” and especially “Take Me to the River” are two of my favorites (and “Tired of Being Alone” is really good too), but “Let’s Stay Together” really is amazing and is Green’s best-known song.

Appears on: *Let's Stay Together* (1971)

Recommended listening:

- Al Green - "Tired of Being Alone" (1971)
- Bill Withers - "Ain't No Sunshine" (1971)
- Al Green - "Love and Happiness" (1972)
- Bill Withers - "Lean on Me" (1972)
- Al Green - "Take Me to the River" (1974)

## #59

### **The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “Hey Joe” (1966)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Reprise (US) / Polydor (UK)

WRITTEN BY: Billy Roberts

PRODUCED BY: Chas Chandler

“Purple Haze” was the first Hendrix single in the US, but his first single ever released was “Hey Joe” six months earlier in the UK, which he had emigrated to earlier because White America wasn’t receptive to a black guitarist. (Conveniently, I also happen to like “Hey Joe” a lot more than “Purple Haze.”)

Appears on: *Are You Experienced* [US] (1967)

Recommended listening:

- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Are You Experienced?" (1967)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Fire" (1967)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Foxey Lady" (1967)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Purple Haze" (1967)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "The Wind Cries Mary" (1967)

## #58

### **Howlin' Wolf – “Smokestack Lightnin’” (1956)**

GENRE: Blues

LABEL: Chess

WRITTEN BY: Chester Burnett

PRODUCED BY: Leonard Chess, Phil Chess, Willie Dixon

Another one of many, many important blues songs that finally got recorded once the rock & roll era was underway, “Smokestack Lightnin’” continues to serve as an important piece of the pop-music vocabulary.

Recommended listening:

- Robert Johnson - "Kind Hearted Woman Blues" (1937)
- Howlin' Wolf - "Spoonful" (1960)
- John Lee Hooker - "Boom Boom" (1961)
- B.B. King - "The Thrill Is Gone" (1969)
- Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble - "Pride and Joy" (1983)

## #57

### **Pink Floyd – “Comfortably Numb” (1979)**

GENRE: Progressive Rock

LABEL: Columbia (US) / Harvest (UK)

WRITTEN BY: David Gilmour, Roger Waters

PRODUCED BY: Bob Ezrin, David Gilmour, James Guthrie, Roger Waters

It’s easy to cast “Comfortably Numb” aside as “just another classic rock song,” but this track has the greatest guitar solo of all time, so it’s by definition anything but. Plus, this masterpiece has a painterly quality to it, with rich sonic detail.

Appears on: *The Wall* (1979)

Recommended listening:

- Pink Floyd - "Dogs" (1977)
- Pink Floyd - "Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2" (1979)
- Pink Floyd - "Hey You" (1979)
- Pink Floyd - "Mother" (1979)
- Pink Floyd - "Run Like Hell" (1979)

## #56

### **Massive Attack – “Unfinished Sympathy” (1991)**

GENRE: Trip-Hop

LABEL: Virgin

WRITTEN BY: Massive Attack, Jonathan Sharp, Shara Nelson

PRODUCED BY: Massive Attack, Jonny Dollar

Three narrative strands of the pop-music framework broke through to the public consciousness in the early '90s: alternative rock, hip-hop and electronica. Massive Attack's debut album *Blue Lines* didn't just introduce the world to the electronic sub-genre trip-hop, it put electronic music on the map more broadly, and “Unfinished Sympathy” was its biggest hit and best song.

Appears on: *Blue Lines* (1991)

Recommended listening:

- Massive Attack - "Be Thankful for What You've Got" (1991)
- Massive Attack - "Daydreaming" (1991)
- Massive Attack - "Safe from Harm" (1991)
- My Bloody Valentine - "Only Shallow" (1991)
- Massive Attack - "Teardrop" (1998)

## #55

### **Cream – “Sunshine of Your Love” (1967)**

GENRE: Psychedelic Rock

LABEL: Atco [US] / Polydor [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Jack Bruce, Pete Brown, Eric Clapton

PRODUCED BY: Felix Pappalardi

One of the most definitive guitar songs ever recorded; unforgettable lick, incredible solo, and a really weird drum pattern. The production's not very good, but that hardly matters.

Appears on: *Disraeli Gears* (1967)

Recommended listening:

- Cream - "I Feel Free" (1966)
- Cream - "SWLABR" (1967)
- Cream - "Tales of Brave Ulysses" (1967)
- Cream - "Crossroads" (1968)
- Cream - "White Room" (1968)

## #54

### The Clash – “London Calling” (1979)

GENRE: Punk

LABEL: Columbia [US] / CBS [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Joe Strummer, Mick Jones

PRODUCED BY: Guy Stevens

The album's a much better achievement than the song, but “London Calling” nevertheless represents -- on this list, at least, since I only have room for one *London Calling* song -- everything punk *can* be.

Appears on: *London Calling* (1979)

Recommended listening:

- The Clash - "Death or Glory" (1979)
- The Clash - "Lost in the Supermarket" (1979)
- The Clash - "Train in Vain" (1979)
- The Clash - "Rock the Casbah" (1982)
- The Clash - "Should I Stay or Should I Go" (1982)

## #53

### **Bruce Springsteen – “Thunder Road” (1975)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Columbia

WRITTEN BY: Bruce Springsteen

PRODUCED BY: Bruce Springsteen, Jon Landau

“Thunder Road,” shockingly, was never released as a single, which is doubly surprising considering a legal battle with manager Mike Appel would sideline Bruce until 1978’s *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. Alas, only two singles were released from *Born to Run*, the title track and “Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out.” Nevertheless, “Thunder Road” remains an incredible opener to one of rock’s great opuses, weaving together ‘50s and ‘60s rock & pop influences to create a feel that’s simultaneously old-timey and timeless.

Appears on: *Born to Run* (1975)

Recommended listening:

- Bruce Springsteen - "Blinded by the Light" (1973)
- Bruce Springsteen - "New York City Serenade" (1973)
- Bruce Springsteen - "Rosalita (Come Out Tonight)" (1973)
- Bruce Springsteen - "Backstreets" (1975)
- Bruce Springsteen - "Jungleland" (1975)



## #52

### **Michael Jackson – “Billie Jean” (1982)**

GENRE: Dance-Pop

LABEL: Epic

WRITTEN BY: Michael Jackson

PRODUCED BY: Michael Jackson, Quincy Jones

Pop, funk, dance -- whatever you want to call it, it works. *Thriller* did too, to the tune of over 50 million copies sold worldwide. Jackson worked with producer Quincy Jones to make music infectious as hell, and it's safe to say they succeeded.

Appears on: *Thriller* (1982)

Recommended listening:

- Michael Jackson - "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough" (1979)
- Michael Jackson - "Beat It" (1982)
- Michael Jackson - "Thriller" (1982)
- Michael Jackson - "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'" (1982)
- Michael Jackson - "Smooth Criminal" (1987)

## #51

### **Led Zeppelin – “Whole Lotta Love” (1969)**

GENRE: Hard Rock

LABEL: Atlantic

WRITTEN BY: Led Zeppelin, Willie Dixon

PRODUCED BY: Jimmy Page

I really wish more Zeppelin could have made the list, but unfortunately, “Whole Lotta Love” is going to have to stand in for a whole lotta songs -- “Heartbreaker,” “Ramble On,” “How Many More Times,” “Immigrant Song,” etc. -- on their first three albums.

Appears on: *Led Zeppelin II* (1969)

Recommended listening:

- Led Zeppelin - "Heartbreaker" (1969)
- Led Zeppelin - "How Many More Times" (1969)
- Led Zeppelin - "Ramble On" (1969)
- Led Zeppelin - "Immigrant Song" (1970)
- Led Zeppelin - "Since I've Been Loving You" (1970)

## #50

### **Big Joe Turner – “Shake, Rattle and Roll” (1954)**

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: Atlantic

WRITTEN BY: Charles E. Calhoun

PRODUCED BY: N/A

“Shake, Rattle and Roll” was released in April 1954 -- it’s the oldest song on the list -- but it’s still a blast to listen to nearly six full decades after its recording. Rock & roll novices need to incorporate this track into their repertoire. Now.

Recommended listening:

- The Dominoes - "Sixty Minute Man" (1951)
- Clyde McPhatter and The Drifters - "Money Honey" (1953)
- Fats Domino - "Ain't That a Shame" (1955)
- Johnny Cash - "Folsom Prison Blues" (1955)
- Fats Domino - "Blueberry Hill" (1956)

## #49

### **Public Enemy – “Fight the Power” (1989)**

GENRE: Hip-Hop

LABEL: Motown

WRITTEN BY: Carlton Ridenhour, Eric Sadler, Hank Boxley, Keith Boxley

PRODUCED BY: The Bomb Squad

Although “Fight the Power” closed out their third album, 1990’s *Fear of a Black Planet*, it appeared throughout Spike Lee’s groundbreaking film *Do the Right Thing* the year before. At any rate, although “Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos” remains my favorite PE tune, “Fight the Power” is clearly their finest song.

Appears on: *Do the Right Thing* [Soundtrack] (1989)

Recommended listening:

- Boogie Down Productions - "South Bronx" (1986)
- Public Enemy - "Bring the Noise" (1987)
- N.W.A - "Straight Outta Compton" (1988)
- Public Enemy - "Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos" (1988)
- LL Cool J - "Mama Said Knock You Out" (1990)

## #48

### **The Beatles – “A Day in the Life” (1967)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Capitol [US] / Parlophone [UK]

WRITTEN BY: John Lennon, Paul McCartney

PRODUCED BY: George Martin

A well-reasoned case can be made that “A Day in the Life” belongs in the #1 spot; it is, after all, the crown jewel of the greatest album of all time, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and on a related note, it’s hard to imagine any other song besting it on a serious greatest album closers list. But listen to “A Day in the Life” outside the context of Sgt. Pepper and you’ll surely notice that it’s not quite the same; the magic just isn’t there. Nevertheless, it remains a towering achievement.

Appears on: *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967)

Recommended listening:

- The Beatles - "Eleanor Rigby" (1966)
- The Beatles - "Here, There and Everywhere" (1966)
- The Beatles - "Tomorrow Never Knows" (1966)
- The Beatles - "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" (1967)
- The Beatles - "With a Little Help from My Friends" (1967)

## #47

### **The Kingsmen – “Louie Louie” (1963)**

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: Jerden/Wand

WRITTEN BY: Richard Berry

PRODUCED BY: Ken Chase, Jerry Dennon

I honestly don't know a single word of this song, and, clearly, neither does the singer. Nevertheless, this song is still tons of fun no matter how many times you have heard it and is another great early rock & roll track.

Appears on: *The Kingsmen in Person* (1963)

Recommended listening:

- Barrett Strong - "Money (That's What I Want)" (1959)
- Chubby Checker - "The Twist" (1960)
- The Beatles - "I Saw Her Standing There" (1963)
- The Beatles - "Twist and Shout" (1963)
- Johnny Cash - "Ring of Fire" (1963)

## #46

### **Jimmy Cliff – “The Harder They Come” (1972)**

GENRE: Reggae

LABEL: Island

WRITTEN BY: Jimmy Cliff

PRODUCED BY: Jimmy Cliff

Though Bob Marley would later fully embody reggae, the world was first introduced to reggae through the film *The Harder They Come*, which featured a dynamite lineup of songs by Jimmy Cliff and a handful of other artists on its soundtrack. Marley’s great albums would follow, beginning with *Catch a Fire* in ’73.

Appears on: *The Harder They Come* [Soundtrack] (1972)

Recommended listening:

- Jimmy Cliff - "Many Rivers to Cross" (1969)
- The Maytals - "Pressure Drop" (1970)
- Jimmy Cliff - "Sitting in Limbo" (1972)
- Jimmy Cliff - "You Can Get It If You Really Want" (1972)
- The Wailers - "Rasta Man Chant" (1973)

## #45

### **The Rolling Stones – “(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction” (1965)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: London [US] / Decca [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Mick Jagger, Keith Richards

PRODUCED BY: Andrew Loog Oldham

The reason why I always put “Satisfaction” so low on my list -- compared to other lists, at least, where it frequently cracks the top five -- is because the Stones would produce thoroughly superior work in just a few years. Nevertheless, this song was pretty monumental; it established the Rolling Stones as the band we now know and love after a few years of doing solid but relatively decent work.

Recommended listening:

- The Rolling Stones - "Get Off My Cloud" (1965)
- The Rolling Stones - "The Last Time" (1965)
- The Rolling Stones - "Under My Thumb" (1966)
- The Rolling Stones - "Ruby Tuesday" (1967)
- The Rolling Stones - "Jumpin' Jack Flash" (1968)



## #44

### **Stevie Wonder – “Superstition” (1972)**

GENRE: Funk

LABEL: Tamla

WRITTEN BY: Stevie Wonder

PRODUCED BY: Stevie Wonder

Stevie really had a great run during the early to mid ‘70s, crafting six magnificent albums in a row during a five-year period. Countless songs could be chosen for the Stevie Wonder slot, but for me “Superstition” and “Higher Ground” have always been the standout Stevie Wonder tracks. Alas, “Higher Ground,” we hardly knew ye.

Appears on: *Talking Book* (1972)

Recommended listening:

- Stevie Wonder - "You Are the Sunshine of My Life" (1972)
- Stevie Wonder - "Higher Ground" (1973)
- Stevie Wonder - "Living for the City" (1973)
- Stevie Wonder - "Black Man" (1976)
- Stevie Wonder - "Isn't She Lovely" (1976)

## #43

### **Elvis Presley – “Don't Be Cruel” (1956)**

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: RCA

WRITTEN BY: Otis Blackwell, Elvis Presley

PRODUCED BY: Steve Sholes, Elvis Presley

Even with its use of obviously primitive recording technology, “Don’t Be Cruel” has a springy step. It’s simply one of Elvis’ best tunes, and frankly it’s too hard to leave it off the list.

Recommended listening:

- Elvis Presley - "Blue Moon of Kentucky" (1954)
- Elvis Presley - "Baby, Let's Play House" (1955)
- Elvis Presley - "Blue Suede Shoes" (1956)
- Elvis Presley - "Love Me Tender" (1956)
- Elvis Presley - "All Shook Up" (1957)

## #42

### **The Beatles – “Strawberry Fields Forever” (1967)**

GENRE: Psychedelic Rock

LABELS: Capitol [US] / Parlophone [UK]

WRITTEN BY: John Lennon, Paul McCartney

PRODUCED BY: George Martin

The legacy of “Strawberry Fields Forever” has always been somewhat short-changed; it was originally intended for inclusion on *Sgt. Pepper* but was released beforehand as the double A-side to the “Penny Lane” single released in February 1967. (*Sgt. Pepper* wasn’t released until June 1.) Who knows how its placement on *Sgt. Pepper* would have affected things, but “Strawberry Fields” now stands proudly with “A Day in the Life” as one of the twin towers of the Beatles’ ’67 psychedelic peak.

Recommended listening:

- The Beatles - "All You Need Is Love" (1967)
- The Beatles - "I Am the Walrus" (1967)
- The Beatles - "Penny Lane" (1967)
- The Beatles - "Happiness Is a Warm Gun" (1968)
- The Beatles - "Revolution" (1968)

## #41

### **The Crickets – “That'll Be the Day” (1957)**

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: Brunswick

WRITTEN BY: Buddy Holly, Jerry Allison, Norman Petty

PRODUCED BY: Norman Petty

I love these old and rock & roll songs. It's an accident, really, that these songs still hold up after all these years. Unfortunately for rock & roll forefather (and Cricket) Buddy Holly, he didn't live long enough to see this phenomenon take place; as you may have heard, he died in a plane crash on February 3, 1959, at the tender age of 22.

Appears on: *The “Chirping” Crickets* (1957)

Recommended listening:

- Buddy Holly - "Everyday" (1957)
- The Crickets - "Not Fade Away" (1957)
- Buddy Holly - "Peggy Sue" (1957)
- Buddy Holly - "Rave On" (1958)
- Buddy Holly - "It Doesn't Matter Anymore" (1959)

## #40

### **The Beach Boys – “God Only Knows” (1966)**

GENRE: Baroque Pop

LABEL: Capitol

WRITTEN BY: Brian Wilson, Tony Asher

PRODUCED BY: Brian Wilson

There are a lot of great songs on *Pet Sounds* -- my favorite is “Caroline, No” -- but come on. You know “God Only Knows” has to be the official *Pet Sounds* representative on the list. Because it has the word “God” in the title -- it was the first single in American history that did -- and because it’s great.

Appears on: *Pet Sounds* (1966)

Recommended listening:

- The Beach Boys - "Caroline, No" (1966)
- The Beach Boys - "Don't Talk" (1966)
- The Beach Boys - "Sloop John B." (1966)
- The Beach Boys - "Wouldn't It Be Nice" (1966)
- The Beach Boys - "You Still Believe in Me" (1966)

## #39

### **The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “Voodoo Child (Slight Return)” (1968)**

GENRE: Psychedelic Rock

LABEL: Track/Polydor

WRITTEN BY: Jimi Hendrix

PRODUCED BY: Jimi Hendrix

Blistering doesn't even begin to describe Hendrix's guitar playing on “Voodoo Child,” which manages to thrill and enthrall every single listen. *Electric Ladyland* was also Hendrix's first foray into stereo -- yep, his first two albums were in mono, though each received a stereo release with an awful “fake stereo” mix, as well -- which adds considerably to the panoramic psychedelia.

Appears on: *Electric Ladyland* (1968)

Recommended listening:

- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Bold as Love" (1967)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "If 6 Was 9" (1967)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Little Wing" (1967)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Spanish Castle Magic" (1967)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "You Got Me Floatin'" (1967)

## #38

### **Creedence Clearwater Revival – “Fortunate Son” (1969)**

GENRE: Roots Rock

LABEL: Fantasy

WRITTEN BY: John Fogerty

PRODUCED BY: John Fogerty

Arguably the greatest of the Vietnam War protest songs to emerge from the 1960s American counter-culture movement, it's John Fogerty at his impeccable best.

Appears on: *Willy and the Poor Boys* (1969)

Recommended listening:

- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "Have You Ever Seen the Rain" (1970)
- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "Long as I Can See the Light" (1970)
- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "Run Through the Jungle" (1970)
- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "Travelin' Band" (1970)
- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "Up Around the Bend" (1970)

## #37

### **Simon and Garfunkel – “Bridge over Troubled Water” (1970)**

GENRE: Pop

LABEL: Columbia

WRITTEN BY: Paul Simon

PRODUCED BY: Roy Halee, Paul Simon, Art Garfunkel

This one’s a struggle for me; my favorite S&G song is (easily) “Scarborough Fair / Canticle,” and truth be told, I actually like “The Boxer” and “The Sound of Silence” more than “Bridge over Troubled Water,” which, let’s not kid ourselves, is an excellent song that deserves to make this list.

Appears on: *Bridge over Troubled Water* (1970)

Recommended listening:

- Simon & Garfunkel - "The Sound of Silence" (1965)
- Simon & Garfunkel - "Scarborough Fair / Canticle" (1966)
- Simon & Garfunkel - "America" (1968)
- Simon & Garfunkel - "Mrs. Robinson" (1968)
- Simon & Garfunkel - "The Boxer" (1970)



## #36

### **Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five – “The Message” (1982)**

GENRE: Old-School Rap

LABEL: Sugar Hill

WRITTEN BY: Ed "Duke Bootee" Fletcher, Grandmaster Melle Mel, Sylvia Robinson

PRODUCED BY: Ed Fletcher, Clifton "Jiggs" Chase, Sylvia Robinson

This old-school rap cut contains everything future rappers and DJs would later expand upon, with instantly memorable lyrics and a spacy synth hook. It took another couple of years for a hip-hop artist to assemble an entire album's worth of great material -- Run-D.M.C.'s self-titled debut ushered in the new school, you see -- but “The Message” was the first song to get hip-hop right. Every subsequent hip-hop song owes something to it in some way.

Appears on: *The Message* (1982)

Recommended listening:

- The Sugarhill Gang - "Rapper's Delight" (1979)
- Kurtis Blow - "The Breaks" (1980)
- Afrika Bambaataa & the Soulsonic Force - "Planet Rock" (1982)
- Herbie Hancock - "Rockit" (1983)
- Mantronix - "Bassline" (1985)

## #35

### **Sam Cooke – “A Change Is Gonna Come” (1964)**

GENRE: Soul

LABEL: RCA Victor

WRITTEN BY: Sam Cooke

PRODUCED BY: Hugo Peretti, Luigi Creatore

Sam Cooke might have the smoothest voice I have ever heard, which serves him well as far as “A Change Is Gonna Come” is concerned, since neither before nor since has a song about racism gone down so easy.

Appears on: *Ain't That Good News* (1964)

Recommended listening:

- Sam Cooke - "You Send Me" (1957)
- Sam Cooke - "Chain Gang" (1960)
- Sam Cooke - "Wonderful World" (1960)
- Sam Cooke - "Cupid" (1961)
- Sam Cooke - "Shake" (1965)

## #34

### **James Brown – “Papa's Got a Brand New Bag” (1965)**

GENRE: R&B

LABEL: King

WRITTEN BY: James Brown

PRODUCED BY: James Brown

Yet another case of me only allowing one slot for a great artist who is deserving of several.

“Papa” has always been my pick for Brown’s best, though of course the omnipresent “I Got You (I Feel Good)” is also up there. My personal favorite is (of course) “Get Up (I Feel Like Being A) Sex Machine.”

Appears on: *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag* (1965)

Recommended listening:

- James Brown - "Please Please Please" (1956)
- James Brown - "I Got You (I Feel Good)" (1965)
- James Brown - "It's a Man's Man's Man's World" (1966)
- James Brown - "Say It Loud - I'm Black and I'm Proud" (1968)
- James Brown - "Get Up (I Feel Like Being A) Sex Machine" (1970)

## #33

### **Ramones – “Blitzkrieg Bop” (1976)**

GENRE: Punk

LABEL: Sire/ABC

WRITTEN BY: Tommy Ramone, Dee Dee Ramone

PRODUCED BY: Craig Leon

The song that kick-started the punk revolution. By 1976, rock & roll had grown increasingly indulgent as corporate arena rock flew off the shelves and people packed the stadiums to watch ten-minute guitar solos. In one of the most seismic movements in the history of pop music, punk musicians across the US and UK started crawling into the clubs to make some noise... and people actually showed up to watch them do it.

Appears on: *Ramones* (1976)

Recommended listening:

- Sex Pistols - "Anarchy in the UK" (1976)
- The Clash - "White Riot" (1977)
- Ramones - "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker" (1977)
- Sex Pistols - "God Save the Queen" (1977)
- Ramones - "I Wanna Be Sedated" (1978)

## #32

### **Bob Dylan – “Blowin' in the Wind” (1963)**

GENRE: Folk

LABEL: Columbia

WRITTEN BY: Bob Dylan

PRODUCED BY: John H. Hammond

There are so many great Bob Dylan songs: folk songs, rock songs, early songs, newer songs, short songs, long songs, and everything in between. After taking all of the usual suspects under consideration, I decided “Blowin’ in the Wind” is the best representative for the non-“Like a Rolling Stone” slot. (In composing the list this time around, I was surprised to discover the list doesn’t lose all that much power when Dylan’s input is reduced to just two tracks.)

Appears on: *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1963)

Recommended listening:

- Bob Dylan - "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right" (1963)
- Bob Dylan - "Masters of War" (1963)
- Bob Dylan - "The Times They Are A-Changin'" (1964)
- Bob Dylan - "Subterranean Homesick Blues" (1965)
- Bob Dylan - "Mr. Tambourine Man" (1965)

## #31

### **Elvis Presley – “Jailhouse Rock” (1957)**

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: N/A

WRITTEN BY: Jerry Leiber, Mike Stoller

PRODUCED BY: Jerry Leiber, Mike Stoller

Before John Lennon and Paul McCartney’s Lennon-McCartney songwriting partnership became the dominant force of ‘60s popular music, there was Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller, who were a hit-making duo in rock & roll’s earliest days. Elvis made their song “Hound Dog” -- recorded numerous times by various artists as early as 1953 -- famous in 1956, and when Presley’s new movie *Jailhouse Rock* came out the following year, they had a track ready just for him.

Recommended listening:

- Elvis Presley - "Hound Dog" (1956)
- The Drifters - "There Goes My Baby" (1959)
- Ben E. King - "Spanish Harlem" (1961)
- Ben E. King - "Stand by Me" (1961)
- Donald Fagen - "Ruby Baby" (1982)

## #30

### Ray Charles – “What'd I Say” (1959)

GENRE: R&B

LABEL: Atlantic

WRITTEN BY: Ray Charles

PRODUCED BY: Jerry Wexler

Ray is another artist that got sort squeezed out except for this one slot. I love a lot of Ray's songs, but “What'd I Say” is easily the ideal candidate to represent his magnificent body of work.

Appears on: *What'd I Say* (1959)

Recommended listening:

- Ray Charles - "I've Got a Woman" (1954)
- Ray Charles - "Georgia on My Mind" (1960)
- Ray Charles - "Hit the Road, Jack" (1961)
- Ray Charles - "I Can't Stop Loving You" (1962)
- John Mayall - "What'd I Say" (1966)

## #29

### **The Beatles – “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (1963)**

GENRE: British Invasion

LABEL: Parlophone

WRITTEN BY: John Lennon, Paul McCartney

PRODUCED BY: George Martin

If there is a song that encapsulates Beatlemania, this is certainly it. “I Want to Hold Your Hand” didn’t appear on *Please Please Me* or *With the Beatles*, but it did, however, appear as the first track on the US-only *Meet the Beatles*, which is now out of print, since the UK versions have become standard in the digital era. Now it can be only found on compilations like *I* and *Past Masters, Vol. 1*.

Recommended listening:

- The Beatles - "Love Me Do" (1962)
- The Beatles - "Please Please Me" (1963)
- The Beatles - "She Loves You" (1963)
- The Beatles - "Can't Buy Me Love" (1964)
- The Beatles - "A Hard Day's Night" (1964)



## #28

### **Otis Redding – “(Sittin’ On) The Dock of the Bay” (1968)**

GENRE: R&B

LABEL: Volt

WRITTEN BY: Steve Cropper, Otis Redding

PRODUCED BY: Steve Cropper

How great is this song? “(Sittin’ On) The Dock of the Bay” is one of those songs where the pieces fit together perfectly, plain and simple. (Semantics issue: shouldn’t “pier” be used instead of “dock”? That’s always sort of nagged me, as someone who comes from a Navy family.)

Appears on: *The Dock of the Bay* (1968)

Recommended listening:

- Otis Redding - "I've Been Loving You Too Long (To Stop Now)" (1965)
- Wilson Pickett - "In the Midnight Hour" (1965)
- Otis Redding - "Try a Little Tenderness" (1966)
- Wilson Pickett - "Mustang Sally" (1966)
- Otis Redding - "Tramp" (1967)

## #27

### **Marvin Gaye – “I Heard It Through the Grapevine” (1968)**

GENRE: Soul

LABEL: Tamla

WRITTEN BY: Norman Whitfield, Barrett Strong

PRODUCED BY: Norman Whitfield

I actually still haven't bothered to listen to the original Gladys Knight version -- Gaye's cover is so perfect and iconic that I don't want to spoil that. Creedence Clearwater Revival's 11-minute version is pretty epic though.

Appears on: *I Heard It Through the Grapevine!* (1968)

Recommended listening:

- Marvin Gaye - "Can I Get a Witness" (1963)
- Marvin Gaye - "Ain't That Peculiar" (1965)
- Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell - "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" (1967)
- Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell - "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing" (1968)
- Creedence Clearwater Revival - "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" (1970)

## #26

### **The Righteous Brothers – “You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'” (1964)**

GENRE: Pop

LABEL: Philles

WRITTEN BY: Phil Spector, Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil

PRODUCED BY: Phil Spector

Vintage Phil Spector. The Wall of Sound producer worked with a lot of acts throughout the '50s and '60s mono era, and this is my pick as the finest track from the male artists he worked with. (Keep reading to see where the top female artist places.)

Appears on: *You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'* (1965)

Recommended listening:

- The Everly Brothers - "Bye Bye Love" (1957)
- The Everly Brothers - "All I Have to Do Is Dream" (1958)
- The Everly Brothers - "Cathy's Clown" (1960)
- The Righteous Brothers - "Unchained Melody" (1965)
- Ike & Tina Turner - "River Deep - Mountain High" (1966)

## #25

### **Eagles – “Hotel California” (1976)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Asylum

WRITTEN BY: Don Felder, Glenn Frey, Don Henley

PRODUCED BY: Bill Szymczyk

So much has been written and debated about this damn song, which is now firmly embedded in the fibers of American culture, that I hate to really add to the heap. Maybe at some point I'll write my own take on it where I break the whole thing down line by line, but for now, I'll say this: regardless of what you may think of it, “Hotel California” remains, close to four decades after its release, one of rock's grandest epics and a twisted commentary on the rapidly increasing Hollywoodification/corporatization of the music industry during the late '70s.

Appears on: *Hotel California* (1976)

Recommended listening:

- Jackson Browne - "Doctor My Eyes" (1972)
- Eagles - "Desperado" (1973)
- Eagles - "One of These Nights" (1975)
- Eagles - "Life in the Fast Lane" (1976)
- Jackson Browne - "Running on Empty" (1977)

## #24

### **Smokey Robinson and the Miracles – “The Tracks of My Tears” (1965)**

GENRE: Soul

LABEL: Tamla

WRITTEN BY: William "Smokey" Robinson, Jr.; Warren Moore; Marvin Tarplin

PRODUCED BY: Smokey Robinson

Easily one of the best songs to emerge from Motown's mid-'60s hit factory. And Smokey Robinson's voice is impossibly high.

Appears on: *Going to a Go-Go* (1965)

Recommended listening:

- The Temptations - "My Girl" (1964)
- The Impressions - "People Get Ready" (1965)
- The Temptations - "Ain't Too Proud to Beg" (1966)
- Smokey Robinson & the Miracles - "The Tears of a Clown" (1967)
- The Temptations - "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone" (1972)

## #23

### The Ronettes – “Be My Baby” (1963)

GENRE: Pop

LABEL: Philles

WRITTEN BY: Phil Spector, Jeff Barry, Ellie Greenwich

PRODUCED BY: Phil Spector

With apologies to the Righteous Brothers’ “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’,” *this* is the greatest pop song from the Phil Spector era. It’s simple as hell, and I’m not sure it could have survived in a post-British Invasion music landscape -- it has that slightly stiff feeling frequently found in music produced from 1959-1963 -- and I’m not sure the song could work without Spector’s mono Wall. Yet it’s absolutely infectious, and is perhaps the earliest example of pure pop.

Appears on: *Presenting the Fabulous Ronettes Featuring Veronica* (1964)

Recommended listening:

- The Coasters - "Yakety Yak" (1958)
- The Crystals - "Da Doo Ron Ron" (1963)
- The Crystals - "Then He Kissed Me" (1963)
- The Drifters - "Under the Boardwalk" (1964)
- The Ronettes - "Walking in the Rain" (1964)

## #22

### Nirvana – “Smells Like Teen Spirit” (1991)

GENRE: Grunge

LABEL: DGC

WRITTEN BY: Kurt Cobain, Dave Grohl, Krist Novoselic

PRODUCED BY: Butch Vig

You'd have to go all the way back to Elvis Presley's "That's All Right" -- the song that, before there was such a thing as rock and roll in the public consciousness, was deemed too black for white people and too white for black people -- to find a song that changed the course of popular music like "Teen Spirit" did. Music enjoyed its most fruitful decade since the '60s as the Generation X rebellion brought a sea change in what was popular throughout the '90s, as alternative rock, hip-hop and electronic music all enjoyed broader mainstream success.

Appears on: *Nevermind* (1991)

Recommended listening:

- Alice in Chains - "Man in the Box" (1990)
- Nirvana - "Come As You Are" (1991)
- Pearl Jam - "Black" (1991)
- Pearl Jam - "Jeremy" (1991)
- Soundgarden - "Jesus Christ Pose" (1991)

## #21

### **The Rolling Stones – “Sympathy for the Devil” (1968)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: London [US] / Decca [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Mick Jagger, Keith Richards

PRODUCED BY: Jimmy Miller

When you listen to “Sympathy for the Devil,” about the only appropriate response you can reasonably give is to tip your cap and tell the Rolling Stones, “You guys are really good at what you do.”

Appears on: *Beggars Banquet* (1968)

Recommended listening:

- The Rolling Stones - "Street Fighting Man" (1968)
- The Rolling Stones - "Midnight Rambler" (1969)
- The Rolling Stones - "Moonlight Mile" (1971)
- The Rolling Stones - "Shattered" (1978)
- The Rolling Stones - "Slave" (1981)



## #20

### **Pink Floyd – “Wish You Were Here” (1975)**

GENRE: Acoustic Rock

LABEL: Columbia [US] / Harvest [UK]

WRITTEN BY: David Gilmour, Roger Waters

PRODUCED BY: Pink Floyd

Not the most influential song on the list, but I refuse to let go of this song's high ranking -- it's too damn good.

Appears on: *Wish You Were Here* (1975)

Recommended listening:

- Pink Floyd - "Echoes" (1971)
- Pink Floyd - "Money" (1973)
- Pink Floyd - "Time" (1973)
- Pink Floyd - "Have a Cigar" (1975)
- Pink Floyd - "Welcome to the Machine" (1975)

## #19

### **Bruce Springsteen – “Born to Run” (1975)**

GENRE: Heartland Rock

LABEL: Columbia

WRITTEN BY: Bruce Springsteen

PRODUCED BY: Bruce Springsteen, Mike Appel

Bruce’s first two albums were commercial duds, and “Born to Run” -- as well as the album -- was his bid to break out of Asbury Park, his small town coastal New Jersey home, and settle into the national spotlight. Needless to say, it worked.

Appears on: *Born to Run* (1975)

Recommended listening:

- Bruce Springsteen - "She's the One" (1975)
- Bruce Springsteen - "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out" (1975)
- Bruce Springsteen - "Something in the Night" (1978)
- Bruce Springsteen - "Drive All Night" (1980)
- Bruce Springsteen - "Born in the U.S.A." (1984)

## #18

### **The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “All Along the Watchtower” (1968)**

GENRE: Psychedelic Rock

LABEL: Reprise

WRITTEN BY: Bob Dylan

PRODUCED BY: Jimi Hendrix

How Hendrix managed to ever envision this extraordinarily explosive cover when he heard Bob Dylan’s acoustic original has boggled my mind for years now. This is truly the master at the top of his game here.

Appears on: *Electric Ladyland* (1968)

Recommended listening:

- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Burning of the Midnight Lamp" (1968)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Crosstown Traffic" (1968)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "1983... (A Merman I Should Turn to Be)" (1968)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Rainy Day, Dream Away" (1968)
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience - "Still Raining, Still Dreaming" (1968)

## #17

### **Queen – “Bohemian Rhapsody” (1975)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Elektra [US] / Parlophone [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Freddie Mercury

PRODUCED BY: Roy Thomas Baker, Queen

Structurally, “Bohemian Rhapsody” is certainly one of the more interesting songs in the pop music canon. This six-minute, hard rock pseudo-opera is also ridiculously fun, no matter how many times you have heard it.

Appears on: *A Night at the Opera* (1975)

Recommended listening:

- Queen - "Killer Queen" (1974)
- Queen - "Somebody to Love" (1976)
- Queen - "We Are the Champions" (1977)
- Queen - "We Will Rock You" (1977)
- Queen - "Another One Bites the Dust" (1980)

## #16

### **The Band – “The Weight” (1968)**

GENRE: Folk Rock

LABEL: Capitol

WRITTEN BY: Robbie Robertson

PRODUCED BY: John Simon

A great example of how effortless pop used to be. It’s difficult to pinpoint exactly which part of America this music stems from; considering the Band’s members are mostly Canadian, this actually isn’t surprising. As it stands, “The Weight” is a magnificent summation of the best of what American music had to offer to our neighbors to the north.

Appears on: *Music from Big Pink* (1968)

Recommended listening:

- The Band - "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" (1969)
- Neil Young - "Don't Let It Bring You Down" (1970)
- Neil Young - "Southern Man" (1970)
- Neil Young - "The Needle and the Damage Done" (1972)
- Neil Young - "Old Man" (1972)

## #15

### The Beatles – “Hey Jude” (1968)

GENRE: Pop

LABEL: Apple

WRITTEN BY: John Lennon, Paul McCartney

PRODUCED BY: George Martin

“Hey Jude” has the power to stop you in your tracks with that majestic coda/fade-out, which, by the way, is longer than the main body of the song. Still, “Hey Jude” remains bittersweet. It’s really the last time the band was in any kind of sync -- *The White Album* and *Abbey Road*, while excellent, were more like collections of separate solo visions.

Recommended listening:

- The Beatles - "Blackbird" (1968)
- The Beatles - "Helter Skelter" (1968)
- The Beatles - "Get Back" (1969)
- The Beatles - "Oh! Darling" (1969)
- The Beatles - "The Long and Winding Road" (1970)

## #14

### **The Who – “My Generation” (1965)**

GENRE: British Invasion

LABEL: Decca [US] / Brunswick [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Pete Townshend

PRODUCED BY: Shel Talmy

Still an exhilarating listen after all these years. The Who have finer songs and more accomplished work, but nothing in their catalog compares to this bomb of a song.

Appears on: *My Generation* [UK] (1965) / *The Who Sings My Generation* [US] (1965)

Recommended listening:

- The Who - "I Can't Explain" (1965)
- The Who - "I Can See for Miles" (1967)
- The Who - "Magic Bus" (1968)
- The Who - "Pinball Wizard" (1969)
- The Who - "The Seeker" (1970)

## #13

### **Derek and the Dominos – “Layla” (1970)**

GENRE: Blues Rock

LABEL: Atco [US] / Polydor [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Eric Clapton, Jim Gordon

PRODUCED BY: Tom Dowd, Derek and the Dominos

The fact that it's basically two songs hurts it more than it helps it, as far as this ranking stuff goes. I love it to death, but it's very unlikely it will ever reclaim the top spot on my list. Truly magnificent stuff though.

Appears on: *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs* (1970)

Recommended listening:

- Derek and the Dominos - "Bell Bottom Blues" (1970)
- Derek and the Dominos - "Have You Ever Loved a Woman" (1970)
- Derek and the Dominos - "Tell the Truth" (1970)
- Eric Clapton - "I Shot the Sheriff" (1974)
- Eric Clapton - "Tears in Heaven" (1992)



## **#12**

### **Aretha Franklin – “Respect” (1965)**

GENRE: Soul

LABEL: Atlantic

WRITTEN BY: Otis Redding

PRODUCED BY: Jerry Wexler

By now I’m sure you have heard the story: “Respect” was originally recorded by a man (Otis Redding), then re-recorded by a woman (Aretha). It was pretty much the signature song of the women’s lib movement. Go Aretha.

Appears on: *I Never Loved a Man the Way I Loved You* (1967)

Recommended listening:

- Aretha Franklin - "Chain of Fools" (1967)
- Aretha Franklin - "Do Right Woman - Do Right Man" (1967)
- Aretha Franklin - "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)" (1967)
- Aretha Franklin - "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" (1967)
- Aretha Franklin - "Think" (1968)

## **#11**

### **Roy Orbison – “Oh, Pretty Woman” (1964)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Monument

WRITTEN BY: Roy Orbison, Bill Dees

PRODUCED BY: Fred Foster

Still one of the definitive guitar licks five decades later. Oh, and Roy Orbison’s voice is amazing.

Recommended listening:

- Link Wray - "Rumble" (1958)
- Roy Orbison - "Only the Lonely" (1960)
- Roy Orbison - "Crying" (1961)
- Booker T. & the MGs - "Green Onions" (1962)
- Roy Orbison - "In Dreams" (1963)

## **#10**

### **The Beach Boys – “Good Vibrations” (1966)**

GENRE: Psychedelic Pop

LABEL: Capitol

WRITTEN BY: Brian Wilson, Mike Love

PRODUCED BY: Brian Wilson

The Beach Boys followed up their *Pet Sounds* masterwork with “Good Vibrations,” their greatest song. Brian Wilson slaved over this track for months, reportedly using over 90 hours of tape and eventually pasting the song’s (noticeable) fragments together. Brian's tenure as the genius of American pop music was painfully short -- mental illness and group tensions sidelined him shortly after "Good Vibrations" was completed -- but he did resurrect the abandoned *Smile* LP -- the follow-up to *Pet Sounds* -- in 2004 to great acclaim.

Appears on: *Smiley Smile* (1967)

Recommended listening:

- The Beach Boys - "Heroes and Villains" (1967)
- The Beach Boys - "Surf's Up" (1971)
- Brian Wilson - "Roll Plymouth Rock" (2004)
- Brian Wilson - "Cabin Essence" (2004)
- Brian Wilson - "Surf's Up" (2004)

## #9

### **Marvin Gaye – “What's Going On” (1971)**

GENRE: Soul

LABEL: Tamla

WRITTEN BY: Al Cleveland, Renaldo Benson, Marvin Gaye

PRODUCED BY: Marvin Gaye

How many songs can claim they changed how an entire industry did their business? Motown's outdated single factory was history after the public ate up “What's Going On” and label prez Berry Gordy demanded an album's worth of material from Gaye.

Appears on: *What's Going On* (1971)

Recommended listening:

- Marvin Gaye - "Inner City Blues (Make Me Wanna Holler)" (1971)
- Marvin Gaye - "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)" (1971)
- Marvin Gaye - "Right On" (1971)
- Marvin Gaye - "Let's Get It On" (1973)
- Marvin Gaye - "Sexual Healing" (1982)

## #8

### **The Beatles – “Let It Be” (1970)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Apple

WRITTEN BY: John Lennon, Paul McCartney

PRODUCED BY: George Martin

It came at the end of the Beatles' run, but thankfully, McCartney saved one of his best, magical, and most touching songs for last.

Recommended listening:

- Paul McCartney - "Maybe I'm Amazed" (1970)
- Paul & Linda McCartney - "Too Many People" (1971)
- Paul McCartney & Wings - "Band on the Run" (1973)
- Paul McCartney & Wings - "Jet" (1973)
- Paul McCartney & Wings - "Live and Let Die" (1973)

## #7

### **The Rolling Stones – “Gimme Shelter” (1969)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: London [US] / Decca [UK]

WRITTEN BY: Mick Jagger, Keith Richards

PRODUCED BY: Jimmy Miller

Only the Stones can make such dark, apocalyptic content so fun and exciting. This song is seriously too good.

Appears on: *Let It Bleed* (1969)

Recommended listening:

- The Rolling Stones - "Honky Tonk Women" (1969)
- The Rolling Stones - "Sway" (1971)
- The Rolling Stones - "Wild Horses" (1971)
- The Rolling Stones - "Rocks Off" (1972)
- The Rolling Stones - "Ventilator Blues" (1972)

## #6

### **Elvis Presley – “Heartbreak Hotel” (1956)**

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: RCA Victor

WRITTEN BY: Mae Boren Axton, Thomas Durden, Elvis Presley

PRODUCED BY: Steve Sholes

Easily the most awesome Elvis tune; it’s his best rocker and his most heartfelt song, which is a rather wicked combo, for sure.

Recommended listening:

- Elvis Presley - "I Love You Because" (1954)
- Elvis Presley - "You're a Heartbreaker" (1954)
- Elvis Presley - "I Forgot to Remember to Forget" (1955)
- Elvis Presley - "I'm Left, You're Right, She's Gone" (1955)
- Elvis Presley - "I Want You, I Need You, I Love You" (1956)

## #5

### **Led Zeppelin – “Stairway to Heaven” (1971)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Atlantic

WRITTEN BY: Jimmy Page, Robert Plant

PRODUCED BY: Jimmy Page

Zeppelin’s subsequent epics would be a tad overblown (“Kashmir”) or a bit flat (“Achilles Last Stand”), but “Stairway” is when all of the pieces fell into place during their magical peak.

Appears on: *Led Zeppelin IV* (1971)

Recommended listening:

- Led Zeppelin - "Black Dog" (1971)
- Led Zeppelin - "When the Levee Breaks" (1971)
- Led Zeppelin - "No Quarter" (1973)
- Led Zeppelin - "In My Time of Dying" (1975)
- Led Zeppelin - "Kashmir" (1975)



## #4

### **John Lennon – “Imagine” (1971)**

GENRE: Rock

LABEL: Apple

WRITTEN BY: John Lennon

PRODUCED BY: John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Phil Spector

“Imagine” perfectly captures the twilight of Silent generation dominance, with a simple yet elegant ode to the passing ideals of the ‘60s as power shifted to the rising Baby Boomers.

Appears on: *Imagine* (1971)

Recommended listening:

- John Lennon - "God" (1970)
- John Lennon - "Instant Karma! (We All Shine On)" (1970)
- John Lennon - "Mother" (1970)
- John Lennon - "Well Well Well" (1970)
- John Lennon - "How Do You Sleep?" (1971)

## #3

### **Bob Dylan – “Like a Rolling Stone” (1965)**

GENRE: Folk Rock

LABEL: Columbia

WRITTEN BY: Bob Dylan

PRODUCED BY: Tom Wilson

Both the *Highway 61 Revisited* album and this, its lead track/single, brought heady folk lyricism and full-blown rock instrumentation together for the first time; it's the birth of modern rock & roll as we know it.

Appears on: *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965)

Recommended listening:

- Bob Dylan - "Visions of Johanna" (1966)
- Bob Dylan - "All Along the Watchtower" (1967)
- Bob Dylan - "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" (1973)
- Bob Dylan - "Idiot Wind" (1975)
- Bob Dylan - "Hurricane" (1976)

## #2

### **The Beatles – “Yesterday” (1965)**

GENRE: British Invasion

LABEL: Capitol [US] / Parlophone [UK]

WRITTEN BY: John Lennon, Paul McCartney

PRODUCED BY: George Martin

"Yesterday" has been covered more than 2,000 times for a reason: it's simple, effective and without flaws. With "Yesterday," the Beatles' early rock & roll juvenilia matured at last; the song is the all-important bridge between those relatively simplistic early days and the sheer genius of the Beatles' output in the back half of the '60s.

Appears on: *Help!* (1965)

Recommended listening:

- The Beatles - "Eight Days a Week" (1964)
- The Beatles - "Day Tripper" (1965)
- The Beatles - "Help!" (1965)
- The Beatles - "Ticket to Ride" (1965)
- The Beatles - "We Can Work It Out" (1965)

# # 1

## **Chuck Berry – “Johnny B. Goode” (1958)**

GENRE: Rock & Roll

LABEL: Chess

WRITTEN BY: Chuck Berry

PRODUCED BY: Little "Bongo" Kraus

Of all of the songs made in the pop music era, none carries more weight than this one -- it completely embodies everything rock & roll is, was and ever can be.

Recommended listening:

- Chuck Berry - "Rock and Roll Music" (1957)
- Chuck Berry - "Around and Around" (1958)
- Chuck Berry - "Carol" (1958)
- Chuck Berry - "Reelin' and Rockin'" (1958)
- Chuck Berry - "Sweet Little Sixteen" (1958)

## **2006 Version**

Just about all of these can be heard on any classic rock station, although some choice alternative rock cuts are thrown in, as well. This is actually the first time I have looked at this version in years. Though many of the usual suspects comprise the top ten, the list falls apart pretty quickly after that.

1. Derek and the Dominos – “Layla” (1970)
2. Led Zeppelin – “Stairway to Heaven” (1971)
3. The Beatles – “Let It Be” (1970)
4. Eagles – “Hotel California” (1976)
5. Bob Dylan – “Like a Rolling Stone” (1965)
6. The Rolling Stones – “Gimme Shelter” (1969)
7. Bruce Springsteen – “Born to Run” (1975)
8. The Beatles – “Hey Jude” (1968)
9. John Lennon – “Imagine” (1971)
10. Pink Floyd – “Wish You Were Here” (1975)
11. The Who – “Eminence Front” (1982)
12. U2 – “One” (1991)
13. Lynyrd Skynyrd – “Free Bird” (1973)
14. Creedence Clearwater Revival – “Proud Mary” (1969)
15. Guns N' Roses – “November Rain” (1991)
16. The Doors – “The End” (1967)
17. Marvin Gaye – “What's Going On” (1971)
18. Led Zeppelin – “Kashmir” (1975)
19. Michael Jackson – “Billie Jean” (1982)
20. The Rolling Stones – “(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction” (1965)
21. U2 – “I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For” (1987)
22. The Police – “Every Breath You Take” (1983)
23. Don Henley – “The End of the Innocence” (1989)
24. Pearl Jam – “Black” (1991)
25. Dire Straits – “Sultans of Swing” (1978)
26. Eagles – “One of These Nights” (1975)

27. The Beatles – “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” (1968)
28. The Who – “Won't Get Fooled Again” (1971)
29. The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “All Along the Watchtower” (1968)
30. The Beatles – “Yesterday” (1965)
31. The Doors – “Light My Fire” (1967)
32. Queen – “Bohemian Rhapsody” (1975)
33. Chuck Berry – “Johnny B. Goode” (1958)
34. Jackson Browne – “Running on Empty” (1977)
35. U2 – “With or Without You” (1987)
36. Eagles – “I Can't Tell You Why” (1979)
37. Tom Petty – “Free Fallin'” (1989)
38. The Beatles – “A Day in the Life” (1967)
39. Prince and The Revolution – “Purple Rain” (1984)
40. The Doors – “Touch Me” (1969)
41. Don Henley – “Sunset Grill” (1984)
42. Creedence Clearwater Revival – “Have You Ever Seen the Rain” (1971)
43. Pink Floyd – “Comfortably Numb” (1979)
44. The Beatles – “In My Life” (1965)
45. Cream – “White Room” (1968)
46. Marvin Gaye – “I Heard It Through the Grapevine” (1968)
47. Aerosmith – “Dream On” (1973)
48. Stevie Wonder – “Superstition” (1972)
49. Cream – “Sunshine of Your Love” (1967)
50. The Who – “Love, Reign O'er Me” (1973)
51. Eagles – “Desperado” (1973)
52. Soundgarden – “Jesus Christ Pose” (1991)
53. Steely Dan – “Aja” (1977)
54. Fleetwood Mac – “Go Your Own Way” (1977)
55. The Clash – “London Calling” (1979)
56. Metallica – “Nothing Else Matters” (1991)
57. James Brown – “I Got You (I Feel Good)” (1965)
58. Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five – “The Message” (1982)
59. Bruce Springsteen – “Thunder Road” (1975)
60. The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “Voodoo Child (Slight Return)” (1968)

61. Stevie Wonder – “Higher Ground” (1973)
62. The Who – “Baba O'Riley” (1971)
63. The Beatles – “Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)” (1965)
64. Eagles – “The Last Resort” (1976)
65. Pink Floyd – “Shine On You Crazy Diamond” (1975)
66. Guns N' Roses – “Sweet Child o' Mine” (1987)
67. Bruce Springsteen – “Dancing in the Dark” (1984)
68. The Rolling Stones – “You Can't Always Get What You Want” (1969)
69. Elton John – “Bennie and the Jets” (1973)
70. Deep Purple – “Smoke on the Water” (1972)
71. U2 – “New Year's Day” (1983)
72. The Band – “The Weight” (1968)
73. Bob Marley – “No Woman, No Cry” (1974)
74. Nirvana – “Smells Like Teen Spirit” (1991)
75. Queen & David Bowie – “Under Pressure” (1981)
76. Eagles – “Take It Easy” (1972)
77. R.E.M. – “Losing My Religion” (1991)
78. Elvis Presley – “Jailhouse Rock” (1957)
79. Eric Clapton – “Tears in Heaven” (1992)
80. Elton John – “Rocket Man” (1972)
81. Peter Frampton – “Do You Feel Like We Do” (1976)
82. James Taylor – “Fire and Rain” (1970)
83. 2Pac feat. Dr. Dre – “California Love” (1995)
84. Bob Dylan – “Hurricane” (1976)
85. Ray Charles – “What'd I Say” (1959)
86. Neil Young – “Heart of Gold” (1972)
87. The Beatles – “The Long and Winding Road” (1970)
88. Creedence Clearwater Revival – “Fortunate Son” (1969)
89. The Temptations – “Papa Was a Rollin' Stone” (1972)
90. Yes – “Roundabout” (1971)
91. Red Hot Chili Peppers – “Under the Bridge” (1991)
92. George Harrison – “My Sweet Lord” (1970)
93. The Wailers – “Get Up, Stand Up” (1973)
94. Bob Dylan – “Knockin' on Heaven's Door” (1973)

95. Pearl Jam – “Jeremy” (1991)
96. The Rolling Stones – “Sympathy for the Devil” (1968)
97. AC/DC – “Back in Black” (1980)
98. The Allman Brothers Band – “Whipping Post” (1969)
99. Bruce Springsteen – “Born in the U.S.A.” (1984)
100. Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young – “Ohio” (1970)



## **2010 Version**

Whereas the 2006 edition captured my viewpoint as I was leaving high school, this version of the list was published as I left college. A lot more pre-classic-rock-era songs were added into the mix, which alienated many who enjoyed my more populist-oriented original list. I still kind of like this list, but I obviously feel now that revisions needed to be made to it.

1. John Lennon – “Imagine” (1971)
2. Led Zeppelin – “Stairway to Heaven” (1971)
3. Chuck Berry – “Johnny B. Goode” (1958)
4. Derek and the Dominos – “Layla” (1970)
5. Bob Dylan – “Like a Rolling Stone” (1965)
6. The Beatles – “Let It Be” (1970)
7. Marvin Gaye – “What's Going On” (1971)
8. Eagles – “Hotel California” (1976)
9. U2 – “One” (1991)
10. The Beatles – “Hey Jude” (1968)
11. Roy Orbison – “Oh, Pretty Woman” (1964)
12. Bruce Springsteen – “Born to Run” (1975)
13. The Rolling Stones – “Gimme Shelter” (1969)
14. The Beatles – “Yesterday” (1965)
15. Elvis Presley – “Heartbreak Hotel” (1956)
16. Pink Floyd – “Wish You Were Here” (1975)
17. The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “All Along the Watchtower” (1968)
18. The Beach Boys – “Good Vibrations” (1966)
19. Bob Marley and the Wailers – “No Woman, No Cry” (1974)
20. Ray Charles – “What'd I Say” (1959)
21. The Crickets – “That'll Be the Day” (1957)
22. The Who – “My Generation” (1965)
23. The Ronettes – “Be My Baby” (1963)
24. Marvin Gaye – “I Heard It Through the Grapevine” (1968)
25. Pink Floyd – “Comfortably Numb” (1979)
26. The Rolling Stones – “Sympathy for the Devil” (1968)

27. Cream – “Sunshine of Your Love” (1967)
28. The Beatles – “In My Life” (1965)
29. Elvis Presley – “Hound Dog” (1956)
30. Nirvana – “Smells Like Teen Spirit” (1991)
31. The Kinks – “You Really Got Me” (1964)
32. The Miracles – “The Tracks of My Tears” (1965)
33. James Brown – “Papa's Got a Brand New Bag” (1965)
34. Queen – “Bohemian Rhapsody” (1975)
35. The Who – “Won't Get Fooled Again” (1971)
36. Bo Diddley – “Bo Diddley” (1955)
37. Otis Redding – “(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay” (1968)
38. Lynyrd Skynyrd – “Free Bird” (1973)
39. U2 – “I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For” (1987)
40. Martha and the Vandellas – “Dancing in the Streets” (1964)
41. Pearl Jam – “Black” (1991)
42. The Beatles – “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” (1968)
43. The Band – “The Weight” (1968)
44. The Beach Boys – “God Only Knows” (1966)
45. The Doors – “Light My Fire” (1967)
46. Creedence Clearwater Revival – “Proud Mary” (1969)
47. Led Zeppelin – “Kashmir” (1975)
48. The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “Voodoo Child (Slight Return)” (1968)
49. Bob Dylan – “The Times They Are A-Changin' (1964)
50. Chuck Berry – “Maybellene” (1955)
51. The Rolling Stones – “(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction” (1965)
52. Michael Jackson – “Billie Jean” (1982)
53. Little Richard – “Tutti Frutti” (1956)
54. Bruce Springsteen – “Thunder Road” (1975)
55. Bob Dylan – “Blowin' in the Wind” (1963)
56. Prince and The New Power Generation – “Purple Rain” (1984)
57. The Beatles – “A Day in the Life” (1967)
58. Jefferson Airplane – “Somebody to Love” (1967)
59. Big Joe Turner – “Shake, Rattle and Roll” (1954)
60. Dire Straits – “Sultans of Swing” (1978)

61. The Clash – “London Calling” (1979)
62. The Kingsmen – “Louie Louie” (1963)
63. Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five – “The Message” (1982)
64. John Lee Hooker – “Boom Boom” (1963)
65. Simon and Garfunkel – “Bridge over Troubled Water” (1970)
66. U2 – “With or Without You” (1987)
67. The Doors – “The End” (1967)
68. Stevie Wonder – “Superstition” (1972)
69. Black Sabbath – “Paranoid” (1970)
70. Bob Marley & the Wailers – “Redemption Song” (1980)
71. Tom Petty – “Free Fallin’” (1989)
72. Aretha Franklin – “Respect” (1967)
73. Aerosmith – “Dream On” (1973)
74. Elvis Presley – “Jailhouse Rock” (1957)
75. The Beatles – “Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)” (1965)
76. Howlin' Wolf – “Smokestack Lightnin’” (1956)
77. James Brown – “I Got You (I Feel Good)” (1965)
78. Glen Hansard & Markéta Irglová – “Falling Slowly” (2006)
79. The Dominoes – “Sixty Minute Man” (1951)
80. Sly & the Family Stone – “Everyday People” (1968)
81. The Who – “Baba O'Riley” (1971)
82. Fleetwood Mac – “Go Your Own Way” (1977)
83. Cream – “White Room” (1968)
84. James Taylor – “Fire and Rain” (1970)
85. Simon and Garfunkel – “The Boxer” (1970)
86. R.E.M. – “Losing My Religion” (1991)
87. The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “Purple Haze” (1967)
88. Stevie Wonder – “Higher Ground” (1973)
89. Al Green – “Let's Stay Together” (1971)
90. The Mamas and the Papas – “California Dreamin’” (1965)
91. Jefferson Airplane – “White Rabbit” (1967)
92. The Rolling Stones – “You Can't Always Get What You Want” (1969)
93. Creedence Clearwater Revival – “Fortunate Son” (1969)
94. Buffalo Springfield – “For What It's Worth” (1967)

95. Led Zeppelin – “Whole Lotta Love” (1969)
96. The Byrds – “Mr. Tambourine Man” (1965)
97. The Animals – “House of the Rising Sun” (1964)
98. Bill Withers – “Ain't No Sunshine” (1971)
99. The Bobby Fuller Four – “I Fought the Law” (1966)
100. David Bowie – “Heroes” (1977)

## **2013 Version**

And that brings us to the current version of the list. I hope you have enjoyed looking at how the list has evolved over the years.

1. Chuck Berry – “Johnny B. Goode” (1958)
2. The Beatles – “Yesterday” (1965)
3. Bob Dylan – “Like a Rolling Stone” (1965)
4. John Lennon – “Imagine” (1971)
5. Led Zeppelin – “Stairway to Heaven” (1971)
6. Elvis Presley – “Heartbreak Hotel” (1956)
7. The Rolling Stones – “Gimme Shelter” (1969)
8. The Beatles – “Let It Be” (1970)
9. Marvin Gaye – “What's Going On” (1971)
10. The Beach Boys – “Good Vibrations” (1966)
11. Roy Orbison – “Oh, Pretty Woman” (1964)
12. Aretha Franklin – “Respect” (1967)
13. Derek and the Dominos – “Layla” (1970)
14. The Who – “My Generation” (1965)
15. The Beatles – “Hey Jude” (1968)
16. The Band – “The Weight” (1968)
17. Queen – “Bohemian Rhapsody” (1975)
18. The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “All Along the Watchtower” (1968)
19. Bruce Springsteen – “Born to Run” (1975)
20. Pink Floyd – “Wish You Were Here” (1975)
21. The Rolling Stones – “Sympathy for the Devil” (1968)
22. Nirvana – “Smells Like Teen Spirit” (1991)
23. The Ronettes – “Be My Baby” (1963)
24. The Miracles – “The Tracks of My Tears” (1965)
25. Eagles – “Hotel California” (1976)
26. The Righteous Brothers – “You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'” (1964)
27. Marvin Gaye – “I Heard It Through the Grapevine” (1968)

28. Otis Redding – “(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay” (1968)
29. The Beatles – “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (1963)
30. Ray Charles – “What'd I Say” (1959)
31. Elvis Presley – “Jailhouse Rock” (1957)
32. Bob Dylan – “Blowin' in the Wind” (1963)
33. Ramones – “Blitzkrieg Bop” (1976)
34. James Brown – “Papa's Got a Brand New Bag” (1965)
35. Sam Cooke – “A Change Is Gonna Come” (1964)
36. Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five – “The Message” (1982)
37. Simon and Garfunkel – “Bridge over Troubled Water” (1970)
38. Creedence Clearwater Revival – “Fortunate Son” (1969)
39. The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “Voodoo Child (Slight Return)” (1968)
40. The Beach Boys – “God Only Knows” (1966)
41. The Crickets – “That'll Be the Day” (1957)
42. The Beatles – “Strawberry Fields Forever” (1967)
43. Elvis Presley – “Don't Be Cruel” (1956)
44. Stevie Wonder – “Superstition” (1972)
45. The Rolling Stones – “(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction” (1965)
46. Jimmy Cliff – “The Harder They Come” (1972)
47. The Kingsmen – “Louie Louie” (1963)
48. The Beatles – “A Day in the Life” (1967)
49. Public Enemy – “Fight the Power” (1989)
50. Big Joe Turner – “Shake, Rattle and Roll” (1954)
51. Led Zeppelin – “Whole Lotta Love” (1969)
52. Michael Jackson – “Billie Jean” (1982)
53. Bruce Springsteen – “Thunder Road” (1975)
54. The Clash – “London Calling” (1979)
55. Cream – “Sunshine of Your Love” (1967)
56. Massive Attack – “Unfinished Sympathy” (1991)
57. Pink Floyd – “Comfortably Numb” (1979)
58. Howlin' Wolf – “Smokestack Lightnin'” (1956)
59. The Jimi Hendrix Experience – “Hey Joe” (1966)
60. Al Green – “Let's Stay Together” (1971)
61. U2 – “One” (1991)

62. Chuck Berry – “Maybellene” (1955)
63. The Kinks – “Waterloo Sunset” (1967)
64. The Beatles – “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” (1968)
65. The Bobby Fuller Four – “I Fought the Law” (1966)
66. The Doors – “Light My Fire” (1967)
67. Sly and the Family Stone – “Everyday People” (1968)
68. Prince – “Sign 'O' the Times” (1987)
69. Dionne Warwick – “Walk on By” (1964)
70. The Beatles – “Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)” (1965)
71. Bo Diddley – “Bo Diddley” (1955)
72. Black Sabbath – “Paranoid” (1970)
73. R.E.M. – “Losing My Religion” (1991)
74. Martha and the Vandellas – “Dancing in the Streets” (1964)
75. The Wailers – “Get Up, Stand Up” (1973)
76. The Velvet Underground – “I’m Waiting for the Man” (1967)
77. Elvis Presley – “Suspicious Minds” (1969)
78. Jefferson Airplane – “White Rabbit” (1967)
79. Run-D.M.C. – “Walk This Way” (1986)
80. Creedence Clearwater Revival – “Proud Mary” (1969)
81. David Bowie – “Heroes” (1977)
82. Little Richard – “Good Golly Miss Molly” (1958)
83. Guns N' Roses – “Sweet Child o' Mine” (1987)
84. The Beach Boys – “California Girls” (1965)
85. Fleetwood Mac – “Go Your Own Way” (1977)
86. Eric B. & Rakim – “Paid in Full” (1987)
87. The Rolling Stones – “You Can't Always Get What You Want” (1969)
88. Tom Petty – “Free Fallin'” (1989)
89. Radiohead – “Everything in Its Right Place” (2000)
90. The Who – “Baba O'Riley” (1971)
91. U2 – “I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For” (1987)
92. Eminem – “Lose Yourself” (2002)
93. The Mamas and the Papas – “California Dreamin'” (1965)
94. Dire Straits – “Sultans of Swing” (1978)
95. DJ Shadow – “Midnight in a Perfect World” (1996)

96. Bill Haley and His Comets – “(We're Gonna) Rock Around the Clock” (1954)
97. Adele – “Rolling in the Deep” (2010)
98. James Taylor – “Fire and Rain” (1970)
99. Buffalo Springfield – “For What It's Worth” (1967)
100. The Verve – “Bitter Sweet Symphony” (1997)