

November 6, 2017: popular music

Introduction to pop song form: Jackson 5, "I Want You Back" (1969)

When I had you to myself, I didn't want you
around
Those pretty faces always make you stand out
in a crowd
But someone picked you from the bunch, one
glance is all it took
Now it's much too late for me to take a second
look

Oh baby, give me one more chance
(To show you that I love you)
Won't you please let me back in your heart
Oh darlin', I was blind to let you go
(Let you go, baby)
But now since I've seen you it is on
(I want you back)
Oh I do now
(I want you back)
Ooh ooh baby
(I want you back)
Yeah yeah yeah yeah
(I want you back)
Na na na na

Trying to live without your love is one long
sleepless night
Let me show you, girl, that I know wrong from
right
Every street you walk on, I leave tear stains on
the ground
Following the girl I didn't even want around
Let me tell ya now

Oh baby, all I need is one more chance
(To show you that I love you)
Won't you please let me back in your heart
Oh darlin', I was blind to let you go



(Let you go, baby)
But now since I've seen you it is on

All I want
All I need
All I want!
All I need!

Oh, just one more chance
To show you that I love you
Baby baby baby baby baby baby!
(I want you back)
Forget what happened then
(I want you back)
And let me live again!

Oh baby, I was blind to let you go
But now since I've seen you it is on
(I want you back)
Spare me of this cost
(I want you back)
Give me back what I lost!
Oh baby, I need one more chance, hah
I'd show you that I love you
Baby, oh! Baby, oh! Baby, oh!
I want you back!
I want you back!

Genre = style + function

(Some) questions to ask about music:

Who makes it?
Who listens to it?
Who pays for it?

What does it sound like? (What other music sounds similar to it? What music sounds different from it?)
What historical events make this music possible?
What purpose does the music serve?

Where is it made?
Where is it listened to?

When is it made?

Why is it made?
Why is it listened to?

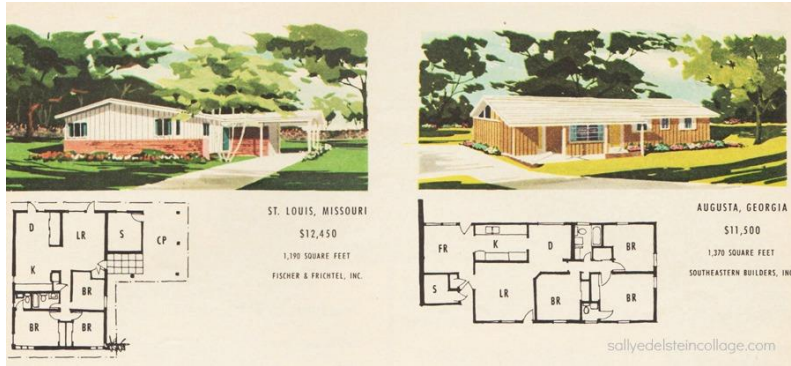
How is it made?
How is it listened to?
How is it paid for?
How does this piece relate to historical events?
How many people are involved in it

A survey of American popular music and US history

The way music sounds reflects the way people view themselves, their world, and their experiences. Each piece of music we listen to paints a picture of the world in which it was created.

World War II (1939-1945) – following the war, America thinks of itself in terms of being a world leader and military strength. Veterans returning home are encouraged to buy homes and earn college degrees (the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, also known as the "G.I. Bill"), and many people move from the cities to the suburbs to start families and fulfill the "American dream."



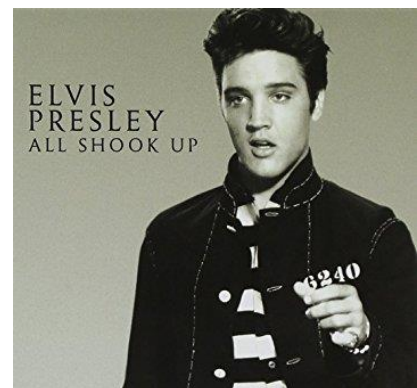


The generation of Americans born 1946-64 are referred to as “baby boomers”—there was a “boom” or explosion of babies following the war, and their lives were very different from their parents’. For middle class Americans, the 1950s were defined by a feeling of prosperity and confidence, and it’s often this (white) experience that Americans in 2017 allude to when they talk about “American values,” “American greatness,” and “real America.”

Music of the 1950s: teenagers, love, and rock ‘n’ roll rebellion

Elvis Presley, “All Shook Up” (1957)

- Written by: Otis Blackwell (1931-2002), who wrote thousands of popular songs, including “Great Balls of Fire” and “Don’t Be Cruel.” He never met Presley in real life.
- Topped the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 for 8 weeks (April-June)



A

A well'a bless my soul
What'sa wrong with me?
I'm itchin' like a man in a fuzzy tree
My friends say I'm actin' wild as a bug
I'm in love
I'm all shook up
Mm mm mm, mm, yay, yay, yay

A

Well, my hands are shaky and my knees are weak
I can't seem to stand on my own two feet
Who do you think of when you have such luck?
I'm in love
I'm all shook up
Mm mm mm, mm, yay, yay, yay

B

Well, please don't ask me what'sa on my mind
I'm a little mixed up, but I'm feelin' fine
When I'm near that girl that I love best
My heart beats so it scares me to death!

A

Well she touched my hand what a chill I got
Her lips are like a volcano when it's hot
I'm proud to say that she's my buttercup
I'm in love
I'm all shook up
Mm mm mm, mm, yay, yay, yay

B

My tongue gets tied when I try to speak
My insides shake like a leaf on a tree
There's only one cure for this body of mine
That's to have that girl that I love so fine!

A

She touched my hand what a chill I got
Her lips are like a volcano that's hot
I'm proud to say that she's my buttercup
I'm in love
I'm all shook up
Mm mm mm, mm, yay, yay, yay
Mm mm mm, mm, yay, yay
I'm all shook up

Other cultural landmarks and major events of the 1950s:

- 1950 – Isaac Asimov publishes *I, Robot*
- 1951 – J.D. Salinger publishes *The Catcher in the Rye*; the TV show *I Love Lucy* first airs; Gian Carlo Menotti's opera written for television, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* is premiered at NBC Studios in New York City
- 1952 – Ralph Ellison publishes *Invisible Man*; John Steinbeck publishes *East of Eden*; the film *Singin' in the Rain* is released
- 1953 – First color television sets are sold; Ray Bradbury publishes *Fahrenheit 451*; the films *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Roman Holiday*, and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* are released
- 1954 – US detonates a hydrogen bomb in a test, which is 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II; US Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* strikes down racially-determined "separate but equal" approach to public services as unconstitutional; the first McDonald's opens; frozen TV dinners are first sold (by Swanson)
- 1955 – Disneyland opens in California; *The Mickey Mouse Club* first airs on television; the films *Rebel Without a Cause* and *Guys and Dolls* are released
- 1956 – "In God We Trust" is adopted as the national motto of the US; the musical film *The Wizard of Oz* is broadcast for the first time
- 1957 – Jack Kerouac publishes *On the Road*; Ayn Rand publishes *Atlas Shrugged*; Dr. Seuss publishes *The Cat in the Hat*
- 1958 – NASA is formed for the purpose of space exploration; first jetliner passenger flight from New York City to Miami; the films *Vertigo* and *South Pacific* are released
- 1959 – Alaska and Hawaii become states; the film *Ben-Hur* is released

The 1960s were marked by a growing disillusionment with the idea of unquestioning faith in American greatness or correctness, due to several factors:

- Assassinations of government and cultural leaders who had embodied a sense of hope and positive change: President John F. Kennedy (1963), Malcolm X (1965), Martin Luther King, Jr. (1968), Senator Robert F. Kennedy (1968)
- These assassinations also coincided with what became the end of the Civil Rights Movement (1930-68), which tried to ensure equal rights, services, and facilities for all Americans, regardless of race (water fountains, bus seats, schools, treatment by police, bank lending practices and mortgage availability).
- Rise in hippie culture and psychedelic drug use as a way to escape and fight back against the sense of oppression associated with people in power
- The Vietnam War (1955-75), a lengthy and misguided proxy war—the US was really at war with the Soviet Union over the spread of Communism, but instead of fighting directly, these countries fought in smaller countries to control influence, ideology, and government systems. Other Cold War (1945-91) conflicts with one or more sides supported by the US or the USSR included wars in Greece, Korea, Hungary, Egypt, Germany, Cuba, Cambodia, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan, as well as the reopening of US-China diplomatic and trade relations in the 1970s.
- Young Americans protested being drafted (forced into military service) for a war they didn't believe in, and this resulted in the Woodstock Music Festival (1969) and several violent conflicts between university students and the police.



Music of the 1960s: hippie culture, flower power, political protest, and California

Scott McKenzie, "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)" (1967)

- Written by John Phillips (1935-2001) a member of the group The Mamas & the Papas and sometimes referred to as "Papa John")
- Released to promote the 1967 Monterey International Pop Music Festival
- Charted at #4 in the US and #1 in the UK



A
If you're going to San Francisco
Be sure to wear some flowers in your hair
If you're going to San Francisco
You're gonna meet some gentle people there

People in motion
There's a whole generation
With a new explanation
People in motion
People in motion

A
For those who come to San Francisco
Summertime will be a love-in there
In the streets of San Francisco
Gentle people with flowers in their hair

A
For those who come to San Francisco
Be sure to wear some flowers in your hair
If you come to San Francisco
Summertime will be a love-in there

B
All across the nation
Such a strange vibration

If you come to San Francisco
Summertime will be a love-in there



Other major events and cultural landmarks of the 1960s:

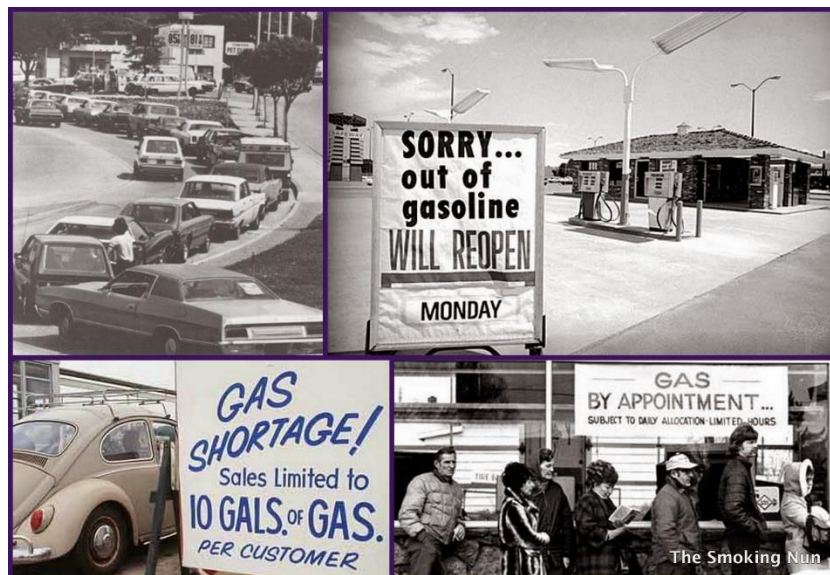
1960 – The US population has grown 18.5% since 1950 (the baby boom!) to 180M; the first US presidential debates are televised; the film *Psycho* is released; John Updike publishes *Rabbit, Run*; Harper Lee publishes *To Kill a Mockingbird*

1961 – Failed invasion of Cuba by US CIA (Bay of Pigs); Joseph Heller publishes *Catch-22*; the films *West Side Story* and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* are released

1962 – the first Spider-Man comic book is issued; the first Wal-Mart store is opened

- 1963 – Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his “I Have a Dream” speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. to an audience of 250,000; Maurice Sendak publishes *Where the Wild Things Are*
- 1964 – The film *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* is released
- 1965 – Watts race riots in Los Angeles; the film *The Sound of Music* is released
- 1966 – Bullet-proof vests are invented by Stephanie Louise Kwolek at Dupont; first episode of *Star Trek* airs; Truman Capote publishes *In Cold Blood*
- 1967 – The first Super Bowl is held; Summer of Love, where 100,000 young people traveled to San Francisco for the summer to celebrate hippie culture; the films *The Graduate* and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* are released
- 1968 – The films *Planet of the Apes* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* are released; Tom Wolfe publishes *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*
- 1969 – NASA’s Apollo space program successfully lands people on the moon; the Internet (then called ARPANET) is invented by the US Department of Defense; the children’s TV show *Sesame Street* first airs; Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. publishes *Slaughterhouse-Five*; Maya Angelou publishes *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

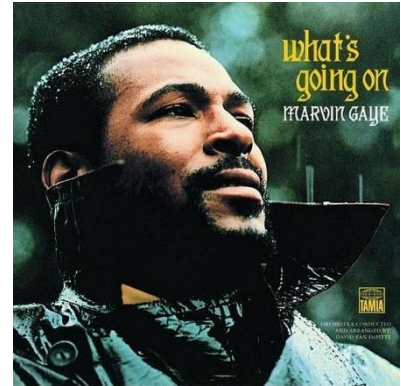
Americans’ belief in the strength of the nation further deteriorated in the 1970s due to the continued Vietnam War (which ended in failure in 1975 with the fall of Saigon), the impeachment and resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974, and economic insecurity. The Arab oil embargo in 1973 caused enormously long wait lines at gas stations—the car had been central to the American suburban identity since the 1950s and now it had become a huge burden.



Music of the 1970s, part 1: combining the sounds of popular music and protest

Marvin Gaye, "What's Going On?" (1971)

- Written by Gaye with Renaldo "Obie" Benson (1936-2005, a member of the group the Four Tops) and Al Cleveland (1930-96)
- Inspired by an incident of police brutality during anti-war protests in 1969 witnessed by Benson
- Lyrical content is a protest song, but the style is a love song
- Gaye had previously only recorded more popular music in the Motown style, and this marked his transition into more personal material; Gaye wondered how he could keep singing innocent love songs after seeing what had happened in the 1965 Watts riots
- Marijuana was a constant presence in the recording studio
- The president of the record company, Berry Gordy, worried that a protest song wouldn't be successful and called the song "the worst thing [he] ever heard in [his] life"
- Peaked at #2 on the Billboard Hot 100 and sold 2M copies



Verse

Mother, mother
There's too many of you crying
Brother, brother, brother
There's far too many of you dying
You know we've got to find a way
To bring some lovin' here today

Verse

Father, father
We don't need to escalate
You see, war is not the answer
For only love can conquer hate
You know we've got to find a way
To bring some lovin' here today

Chorus

Picket lines and picket signs
Don't punish me with brutality
Talk to me, so you can see
Oh, what's going on
What's going on
Ya, what's going on
Ah, what's going on

Bridge

In the meantime
Right on, baby
Right on
Right on

Verse

Mother, mother, everybody thinks we're wrong
Oh, but who are they to judge us
Simply because our hair is long
Oh, you know we've got to find a way
To bring some understanding here today
Oh

Chorus

Picket lines and picket signs
Don't punish me with brutality
Talk to me
So you can see
What's going on
Ya, what's going on
Tell me what's going on
I'll tell you what's going on - Uh
Right on baby
Right on baby

Music of the 1970s, part 2: disco, dancing, and empowerment of marginalized groups (minorities, women, gay groups)

Gloria Gaynor, "I Will Survive" (1978)

- Written by Freddie Perren (1943-2004; other hits: "I Want You Back," "Shake Your Groove Thing," "Boogie Fever") and Dino Fekaris (b. 1945)
- Reached #1 on the US Billboard Hot 100 and UK charts
- The song has become an anthem in the LGBTQ community and took on even more significance in the 1980s AIDS epidemic



Verse

At first I was afraid, I was petrified
Kept thinking I could never live without you by
my side
But then I spent so many nights thinking how
you did me wrong
And I grew strong
And I learned how to get along
And so you're back
From outer space
I just walked in to find you here with that sad
look upon your face
I should have changed that stupid lock, I should
have made you leave your key
If I'd known for just one second you'd be back
to bother me
Go on now, go, walk out the door
Just turn around now
'Cause you're not welcome anymore
Weren't you the one who tried to hurt me with
goodbye
Do you think I'd crumble
Did you think I'd lay down and die?

Chorus

Oh no, not I, I will survive
Oh, as long as I know how to love, I know I'll
stay alive
I've got all my life to live
And I've got all my love to give and I'll survive
I will survive, hey, hey

Verse

It took all the strength I had not to fall apart
Kept trying hard to mend the pieces of my
broken heart

And I spent oh-so many nights just feeling sorry
for myself
I used to cry
But now I hold my head up high and you see me
Somebody new
I'm not that chained-up little person and still in
love with you
And so you felt like dropping in and just expect
me to be free
Well, now I'm saving all my lovin' for someone
who's loving me
Go on now, go, walk out the door
Just turn around now
'Cause you're not welcome anymore
Weren't you the one who tried to break me
with goodbye
Do you think I'd crumble
Did you think I'd lay down and die?

Chorus

Oh no, not I, I will survive
Oh, as long as I know how to love, I know I'll
stay alive
I've got all my life to live
And I've got all my love to give and I'll survive
I will survive

[Bridge]

Oh

Go on now, go, walk out the door
Just turn around now
'Cause you're not welcome anymore
Weren't you the one who tried to break me
with goodbye
Do you think I'd crumble

Did you think I'd lay down and die?

Oh no, not I, I will survive

Oh, as long as I know how to love, I know I'll
stay alive

I've got all my life to live

And I've got all my love to give and I'll survive

I will survive

I will survive

Other major events and cultural landmarks of the 1970s:

1970 – The film *Patton* is released

1971 – The voting age in the US is lowered from 21 to 18;
Intel releases the first microprocessor; the films *A
Clockwork Orange* and *Dirty Harry* are released

1972 – Watergate scandal; TV show *M*A*S*H* first airs; the
film *The Godfather* is released

1973 – Oil crisis begins; the film *The Exorcist* is released

1974 – President Richard Nixon resigns because of the
Watergate scandal; Stephen King publishes *Carrie*;
the film *Blazing Saddles* is released

1975 – Microsoft is established; the television show *Saturday
Night Live* first airs; the film *Jaws* is released

1976 – Apple Computer Company is established; Alex Haley publishes *Roots*; Richard Dawkins
publishes *The Selfish Gene*; the films *Taxi Driver* and *Rocky* are released

1977 – The films *Star Wars* and *Saturday Night Fever* are released

1978 – The films *Superman* and *Grease* are released

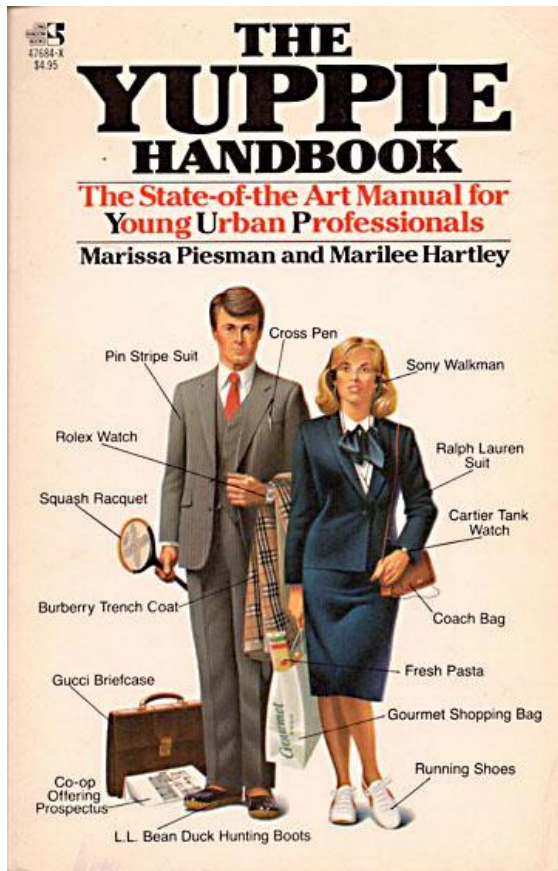
1979 – Michael Jackson releases his first solo album, *Off the Wall*; Iran hostage crisis begins
(lasts until 1981); the films *Alien* and *Apocalypse Now* are released



The 1980s are shaped by the children of baby boomers (Americans born 1945-64). The 1980s aesthetics often has a slick, industrial, and neon quality: music often involves synthesizers and fashion favors bright and loud colors. The dominant affluent group of young (usually white) Americans are referred to as “yuppies.” Much of the political and economic narrative is focused on a banking crisis (The Great Recession, 1981-82), the destruction of cities through drug use (especially crack cocaine beginning in 1984), and the beginning of the AIDS epidemic.



Keith Haring, *Pop Shop Quad I* (1982)



Music in the 1980s: middle class economic anxiety and urban life

The Bangles, "Manic Monday" (1986)

- Written by Prince (1958-2016)
- Peaked at #2 in the US
- The band formed in Los Angeles in 1981 and is still touring



Verse 1

Six o'clock already
I was just in the middle of a dream
I was kissin' Valentino
By a crystal blue Italian stream
But I can't be late
'Cause then I guess I just won't get paid
These are the days
When you wish your bed was already made

Chorus

It's just another manic Monday
I wish it was Sunday

'Cause that's
my fun day
My I don't have to run day
It's just another manic Monday

Verse 2

Have to catch an early train
Got to be to work by nine
And if I had an air-o-plane
I still couldn't make it on time
'Cause it takes me so long
Just to figure out what I'm gonna wear
Blame it on the train

But the boss is already there

Chorus

It's just another manic Monday

I wish it was Sunday

'Cause that's my fun day

My I don't have to run day

It's just another manic Monday

Bridge

All of the nights

Why did my lover have to pick last night

To get down

Doesn't it matter

That I have to feed the both of us

Employment's down

He tells me in his bedroom voice

C'mon honey, let's go make some noise

Time it goes so fast

When you're having fun

Chorus

It's just another manic Monday

I wish it was Sunday

'Cause that's my fun day

My I don't have to run day

It's just another manic Monday

Other major events and cultural landmarks of the 1980s:

1980 – John Lennon is shot and dies; the US boycotts the Olympic games in Moscow; the film *9 to 5* is released

1981 – The cable network MTV is launched; scientists identify the virus that causes AIDS

1982 – CD players are first sold in Japan; Michael Jackson releases the album *Thriller*; Maya Angelou publishes *The Color Purple*

1983 – The film *Trading Places* is released

1984 – The Soviet Union boycotts the Olympic games in Los Angeles; Michael Jackson releases the album *Bad*; bell hooks publishes *Feminist Theory*; William Gibson publishes *Neuromancer*; the film *The Terminator* is released; the TV show *The Cosby Show* first airs

1985 – The film *The Breakfast Club* is released; Margaret Atwood publishes *The Handmaid's Tale*

1986 – The films *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and *Top Gun* are released; Art Spiegelman publishes *Maus*

1987 – The film *Rambo* is released; Toni Morrison publishes *Beloved*

1988 – Donald Trump publishes *The Art of the Deal*; the TV show *The Wonder Years* first airs; the film *Coming to America* is released

1989 – The Berlin Wall is torn down, marking the end of the Cold War

Homework for November 8:

Choose one song from the list below to write about for next class—all of the songs listed below are available on YouTube. Answer the following questions about your chosen song:

- 1) How is it structured? (e.g., AABA, pop song form, strophic, or something else) Why do you think the creator(s) chose to use this structure?
- 2) How does the song you've chosen paint a different picture of America than the song we listened to in class from the same decade?
- 3) What additional questions do you have about this piece of music, its time period, or the artist(s) who made it?

For this assignment, do not do any research—don't read anyone else's interpretation of the music. Instead, use your ears and answer the questions according to what you think: what do you hear and how do you interpret those sounds?

Johnny Cash, "I Walk the Line" (1956)
Jerry Lee Lewis, "Great Balls of Fire" (1957)

Bob Dylan or Peter, Paul, and Mary, "Blowin' in the Wind" (1962)
Lesley Gore, "It's My Party" (1963)
Simon & Garfunkel, "The Sound of Silence" (1964)
The Supremes, "Baby Love" (1964)
Beach Boys, "Good Vibrations" (1966)

Chicago, "Saturday in the Park" (1972)
Hall & Oates, "Rich Girl" (1976)
The Village People, "Y.M.C.A." (1978)
The Ramones, "I Wanna Be Sedated" (1978)

Cyndi Lauper, "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" (1983)
Bruce Springsteen, "Born in the U.S.A." (1984)
Billy Joel, "We Didn't Start the Fire" (1989)