

I Just called to say i love you

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

6 -7 7 7 6 -7 7 7

No New Year's Day to celebrate—

6 -7 7 7 -7

No choc'late covered

7 -8 8 -8 7 -7 -6

candy hearts to give away.

-6 7 -8 8-8 -6 7 -7 -7

No first of Spring, no song to sing.

-6 7 -8 -8 7 7 -8 8-8 7-7 6

In fact, here's just another ordinary day.

Verse 2

No April rain, No flowers bloom

No wedding Saturday within the month of June.

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But what it is, is something true
Made up of these three words I must say to you.

Chorus

7 7 -6 7 -7 6 -7 7

I just called to say I love you.

7 7 -6 7 -7 -6 6 -6 5

I just called to say how much I care.

7 7 -6 7 -7 6 -8 7

I just called to say I love you,

7 7 -6 6 -5 -4 5 -4 5 5-4 4

And I mean it from the bottom of my heart.

Verse 3

No summer's high, no warm July-

No harvest moon to light one tender August night.

No Autumn breeze; no falling leaves.

Not even time for birds to fly to Southern skies.

chorus


Verse 4

No Libra sun, no Halloween.

No giving thanks to all the Christmas joy you bring.

But what it is, through old and new

To fill you heart like no three words could ever do.

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chorus

Lyrics

Power of love

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

Rr 5 6 6 -5 5 6 6-> 6 6 6 7 -7 -6

| The whispers in the | morning | of lovers sleeping | tight,
|

-> -6 -6 -6 -7 7 6 5 6 -> 5 6 6 6 -5 5 -4


| are rolling by like | thunder now | as I look in your |
eyes. |

->-4 6 6 -5 5 -6 6 -> 6 6 6 7 -6 -6

| I hold on to your | body | and feel each move you | make. |

-> -6 -6 -6 -7 7 7 -6 -6 -7 7 7 6 7 -8 -8

| Your voice is warm and | tender, a love that | I could not

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for | sake. |


Chorus:

-> 6 7 -8 -9 8 7 -8 -9 8
| 'Cause I'm your la | dy (you're my lady) |
-> 6 7 -8 8 7 -7 -6 7 -8 8 7 -7 -6
| And you are my ma a n (I am your ma a n) |
-> 7 7 -8 8 -9 -6 -6 R -6 -6 7 -8 8 -9 8 -8
| Whenever you reach | for me | I'll do all that I | can. |

RR 6 6 -5 5 -6 6 -> 6 6 7 -7 -6
| Lost is how I'm | feeling, | lying in your | arms. |
-> -6 -6 -6 -6 -7 7 6 5 6 5 -5 6 6 -5 5 -4
| When the world outside's too | much to take | that all ends
when I'm with | you. |
Rr 5-5 6 6 6 5 -6 6 -> 6 7 7 -7 8 8 -8 7 -8 7 -6
| Even though there may be | times | it seems I'm far a | way
|
-> -6 -6 7 7 -8 8 7 6 -6 -7 7 7 6 7 -8 -8
| Never wonder where | I am 'cause I am | always by your |
side. |

Chorus ...

-> 6 6 9 8 -8 8 -8 8 -8 7 -> 7 7 7 -8 8 7 -7 7 -7 -6
| We're heading for | something, | somewhere I've never be |
en. |
-> 7 7 -8 8 -9 -9-9 -9 -9 -9 9 8 -8 -> 6 6 7 7 7 7

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| Sometimes I am frigh | tened but I'm ready to learn | of the
power of love. | |

R 7 7 -7 -7 7 -8 8 -8 8 -8 7 R 7 7 -7 -6 -6 6 -6 r

| The sound of your heart bea ting | made it clear sudden | ly
|

R 7 -7 -7 7 -8 8 -8 7 -> 7 7 -8 8 -8 ->

| the feeling that I | can't go on | is light years away. | |

Chorus ...

-> 6 6 9 8 -8 8 -8 8 -8 7 -> 7 7 7 -8 8 7 -7 7 -7 -6

| We're heading for | something, | somewhere I've never be |
en. |

-> 7 7 -8 8 -9 -9-9 -9 -9 -9 9 8 -8 -> 6 6 7 7 7 7

| Sometimes I am frigh | tened but I'm ready to learn | of the
power of love. | |

Instrumental:

->7 7 -8 8 -9 -9 -9 -9 -9 9 8 -8->6 6 7 7 7 7 ->


| | | |

->9 9 8 -8 8 -8 8 -8 8->9 8 -8 7 -6 7

| | | | |

-> 7 7 -8 8 -9 -9-9 -9 -9 -9 9 8 -8 -> 6 6 7 7 7 7

| Sometimes I am frigh| tened but I'm ready to learn | of the
power of love. | |

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you are looking for.

Lyrics

With These Hands

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

-5 -5 -5 5 -5 -6 6 6

With These Hands I will cling to you

-6 -6 -6 -6-6 b-6 -6 -8

I`m yours for-ever and a day

7 7 7 -7 7 8 -8 -8

With These Hands I will bring to you

-6 -6-6 -6 -6 7 -7 6


A tender love as warm as May

-5 -5 -5 5 -5 -6 6 6

With this heart I will sing to you

-6 -6-6 -6 -6 b-6 -6 -6 8

Long after stars have lost their glow and

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-9 -9 -9 8 -9 9 -9 -9

With These Hands I`ll provide for you

8 -9 9 -9 -9 8 9 -9 -9 8 9

Should there be a stormy sea I`ll turn the tide

-9 -9 8 -8 7 -5 8 -8 7 -5

for you and I`ll never no I`ll never

-6 6 -5~~~~

let you go~~~~

Lyrics

You And Me Are Gone

Key: G


Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

Jamie Cullum – You And Me Are Gone

Intro

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(-4) -4 -4' -4

-4' -4 -4 -4' -4

-4 4 4

(The -4' is actually a 4 but I think this sounds pretty good on the harmonica)

-2 -2 -2 -3" -3' -3" -2 -1 -1

Every time I see what's written on your mind

-2 -2 -2 -3" -3' 4 -4

I turn away and drop my guard

-2 -2 -2 -3" -3' -3" -2 -1 -1

Your high horse will be the leader of the blind

-2 -2 -2 -3" -3' 4 -4

Tender love and truth aside

4 4 4 4 -4' -5 -4 -3 -2 -3

I'm in possession of so many tones

-4 -3' -2 -1 -1

I loved it all my life

4 4 4 4 -4' -5 -4 -3 -2 -3

Feel the rhythm in your very bones


-4 -3 -2 -3 -4

I never sleep at night.

-5 -4 -3' 4 -4

You and me are gone

-5 -4 -3' 4 -4 4

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You and me are gone
-5 -4 -3' 4 -4
Winter's bitter song
-4 (4o) -4 4 -4
You and me are gone,
-4 4 (-3') -2 -2
gone away.


Truthfully I've got a modus operandi
I never seem to finish lovin'
You train your eye and force yourself to make a stand
When it dies a warmer stuffing
Lose yourself and on the edge of reason
Teenage ears so drown
Even I don't know what I am feeling
Lost you til I'm found.

You and me are gone
You and me are gone
Winter's bitter song
You and me are gone, gone away.

Yeah...

(Solo)

See the joyous pro's have left my tongue
For other warmer things,
Battle songs are written to be sung

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A million toxic lies.

(Here it transposes... too bad for the harmonica player :-p)

You and me are gone
You and me are gone
You and me are gone
You and me are gone
You and me are gone
You and me are gone

Lyrics


I Just Called To Say I Love You (Orig k)

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

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I JUST CALLED TO SAY I LOVE YOU

STEVIE WONDER

KEY Db/C SHARP

VERSE 1

6 -6 7 7 6 -6 7 7

No New Year's Day to cel-e-brate

6 -6 7 7 -6 7 -7 8

No choc-late cov-ered can-dy hearts

-7 7 -6 -6b

to give a-way

-6b 7 -7 -7

No first of spring

-5b 7 7 -6b

No song to sing

-6b 7 -7 -7 7 7 -7 8 -7 7 -6 6

In fact here's just an-oth-er or-di-nar-y day

VERSE 2

No April rain

No flowers bloom

No wedding Saturday within the month of June

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But what it is, is something true
Made up of these three words that
I must say to you

CHORUS

7 7 -6b 7 -6 6 -6 7

I just called to say I love you

7 7 -6b 7 -6 -6b 6 -6b 5

I just called to say how much I care

7 7 -6b 7 -6 6 -7 7

I just called to say I love you

7 7 -6b 6 -5b -4 5 -4 5 -4 4

And I mean it from the bot-tom of my heart

VERSE 3

No summer's high

No warm July

No harvest moon to light one tender August night


No autumn breeze No falling leaves

Not even time for birds to fly to southern skies

VERSE 4

No Libra sun

No Halloween

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No giving thanks to all the Christmas
joy you bring
But what it is, though old so new
To fill your heart like no three words
could ever do

REPEAT CHORUS

-6 -6b -6 7 -6 9
Of my heart, of my heart

ENJOY!!!


THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!

Lyrics

I Just Called To Say I Love You (chrom)

Key: G

Genre: General

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Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

I JUST CALLED TO SAY I LOVE YOU

By: Stevie Wonder

Key: Db, D, Eb

3* 4 4* 4* 3* 4 4* 4*

No New Year's Day to cel-e-brate

3* 4 4* 4* 4

No choc-olate cov-ered

4* -5* -6 -5* 4* 4 -3*

Can-dy hearts to give a-way

-3* -5 -5* -5* -5 -3* -5 -5 -3*

No first of spring, no song to sing

-3* -5 -5* -5* 5* 5*-5*

In fact here's just an-oth-er

-6 -5* 5* 4 3*

Or-di-nar-y day

3* 4 4* 4*

No A-pril rain

3* 4 4* 4*

No flow-ers bloom


3* 4 4* 4* 4 4*

No wed-ding Sat-ur-day

-5* -6 -5* 4* 4 -3*

With-in the month of June

-3* -5 -5* -5*-5

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But what it is

-3* -5 -5 -3*

Is some-thing true

-3* -5 -5* -5* 5* 5*

Made up of these three words

-5* -6 -5* 4* 4 4*

that I must say to you

4* 4* -3* 4* 4 3* 4 4*

I just called to say I love you

4* 4* -3* 4* 4 -3* 3* -3* -2

I just called to say how much I care

4* 4* -3* 4* 4 3* -5*-6 5*

I just called to say I love you

5* 5* -3* 3* -2* -1* -2 -1* -2-1*1* 1*

And I mean it from the bot-tom of my heart

No summers high No warm july

No harvest moon to light

one tender august night

No autumn breeze No falling leaves

No even time for birds


to fly to southern skies

No libra sun No halloween

No giving thanks to all the

Christmas joy you bring

But what it is

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Though old so new
To fill your heart like no
three words could ever do.


4* 4* -3* 4* 4 3* 4 4*
I just called to say I love you

Key: D

-5 -5 -4 -5 4* -4 -3 -4 -2*
I just called to say how much I care
-5 -5 -4 -5 4* -3 6 -6* -5
I just called to say I love you
-5 -5 -4 -3 3 2 -2* 2 -2* 2-1 -1
And I mean it from the bot-tom of my heart

Key: Eb

-5*-5* 5 -5* -5 -3* -5 -5*
I just called to say I love you
-5*-5* 5 -5* -5 4 -3* 4 3
I just called to say how much I care
-5*-5* 5 -5* -5 -3* -6 7 -5*
I just called to say I love you
-5*-5* 5 8 -7* 7* 7 -6 -5* -6 -5*
And I mean it from the bot-tom of my heart
-5*5* -5*
Of my heart
-6-5* -7* -1*

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Of my heart

Lyrics

I Just Called To Say I Love You

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

6 -7 7 7 6 -7 7 7

No New Year's Day to celebrate—

6 -7 7 7 -7

No choc'late covered

7 -8 8 -8 7 -7 -6

candy hearts to give away.

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-6 7 -8 8-8 -6 7 -7 -7

No first of Spring, no song to sing.

-6 7 -8 -8 7 7 -8 8-8 7-7 6

In fact, here's just another ordinary day.

Verse 2

No April rain, No flowers bloom

No wedding Saturday within the month of June.

But what it is, is something true

Made up of these three words I must say to you.

Chorus

7 7 -6 7 -7 6 -7 7

I just called to say I love you.

7 7 -6 7 -7 -6 6 -6 5

I just called to say how much I care.

7 7 -6 7 -7 6 -8 7

I just called to say I love you,

7 7 -6 6 -5 -4 5 -4 5 5-4 4

And I mean it from the bottom of my heart.

Verse 3

No summer's high, no warm July-

No harvest moon to light one tender August night.

No Autumn breeze; no falling leaves.

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Not even time for birds to fly to Southern skies.

chorus

Verse 4

No Libra sun, no Halloween.

No giving thanks to all the Christmas joy you bring.

But what it is, through old and new

To fill you heart like no three words could ever do.

chorus

Lyrics

Cindy Walker


Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

Cindy Walker (July 20, 1918 – March 23, 2006) was an American

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songwriter, as well as a country music singer and dancer. As a songwriter Walker was responsible for many popular and enduring songs recorded by many different artists.


She adopted a craftsman-like approach to her songwriting, often tailoring particular songs to specific recording artists. She produced a large body of songs that have been described as “direct, honest and unpretentious”. She had Top 10 hits spread over five decades.

Walker was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1997 and inducted into the Texas Heritage Songwriters Hall of Fame in March 2011.

Early life

Cindy Walker was born on July 20, 1918 on her grandparents' farm near Mart, Texas (near Mexia, east of Waco), the daughter of a cotton-broker. Her maternal-grandfather F.L. Eiland was a noted composer of hymns and her mother was a fine pianist. From childhood Cindy Walker was fond of poetry and wrote habitually.

Career


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Beginnings

As a teenager, inspired by newspaper accounts of the dust storms on the American prairies in the mid-1930s, Walker wrote the song, "Dusty Skies" (later recorded by Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. In 1936, her "Casa de Mañana" was performed by the Paul Whiteman Orchestra (as part of the Texas Centennial celebrations). By the end of the decade Cindy Walker was singing and dancing in Texas stage shows.

Move to Los Angeles

In 1940, Walker, at the age of 22, accompanied her parents on a business trip to Los Angeles. As they were driving down Sunset Boulevard she asked her father to stop the car near the Bing Crosby Enterprises building. Walker later recalled: "I had decided that if I ever got to Hollywood, I was going to try to show Bing Crosby a song I had written for him called 'Lone Star Trail'". Her father said "You're crazy, girl", but nonetheless stopped the car.[5] Walker went inside the building to pitch her song and emerged shortly afterward to ask her mother to play the piano for her. Bing Crosby's brother Larry Crosby had agreed to listen to the song; Walker sang "Lone Star Trail" to him, accompanied by her mother. Larry Crosby was impressed and aware that his brother was looking for a new Western song to record. The next day Cindy played guitar and sang "Lone Star Trail" for Bing Crosby at Paramount Studios (where he was making a movie). Crosby

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arranged for her to record a demo with Dave Kapp of Decca Records, who was also impressed and offered her a recording contract. "Lone Star Trail" was recorded and became a top-ten hit for Bing Crosby.

Performances and recordings

Walker remained in Los Angeles for 13 years. In 1940 she appeared as a singer in the Gene Autry Western Ride, Tenderfoot, Ride. The Decca recording contract led to Walker recording several songs with Texas Jim Lewis and His Lone Star Cowboys, including "Seven Beers with the Wrong Man" in 1941, which was also filmed as an early "Soundie" (a precursor of music videos). In 1944 Walker recorded a song (not her own) which became a top ten hit, "When My Blue Moon Turns to Gold Again".

Focus on songwriting

Walker successfully pitched her songs to Bob Wills and began to regularly contribute compositions for recordings and the movies that Wills made in the 1940s. The collaboration was extremely fruitful: Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys eventually recorded over 50 of Cindy Walker's songs, including "Cherokee Maiden" (1941), "Dusty Skies" (1941), "Miss Molly" (1942), "Sugar Moon" (co-written with Bob Wills; 1947) and "Bubbles in My Beer" (1948). Bob Wills and his band performed Walker's first top-ten country hit, "You're From Texas"

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(1944).

Among her other 1940s hits were “Triflin’ Gal” (top-10 records for both Al Dexter and Walter Shrum, 1945);[9]:104, 314 “Warm Red Wine” (Ernest Tubb, 1949), :355 and “Take Me in Your Arms and Hold Me” (Eddy Arnold, 1950).[9]:30 Some sources have erroneously attributed Johnny Bond’s 1948 “Oklahoma Waltz” to her; probably they confused it with her own 1947 composition of that name, co-written with and recorded by Spade Cooley.

During the 1950s, Walker continued her success as a writer of popular songs. In 1952 Hank Snow had a hit with her “The Gold Rush is Over” and in 1955 Webb Pierce had success with “I Don’t Care”.

Another Walker song was “Blue Canadian Rockies” recorded by Gene Autry (which featured in Autry’s 1952 movie of the same name). The song was revived in 1968 by The Byrds on their influential country-rock album Sweetheart of the Rodeo. In 1955 Eddy Arnold pitched Walker the theme and the song-title for “You Don’t Know Me” when they met during a WSM deejay convention in Nashville. Walker then wrote the song based on Arnold’s idea. It has been described as “a beautifully symmetrical and poignant portrait of a love not to be”.


“You Don’t Know Me” has been recorded by numerous artists over the years, most successfully by Jerry Vale (1956); Lenny Welch (1960); Ray Charles (1962); and Elvis Presley (1967). “Anna

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Marie", was a hit for Jim Reeves in 1957 and the beginning of another productive artist-writer association which culminated in "This is It" (1965) and "Distant Drums" (a posthumous hit for Reeves).[1] "Distant Drums" remained at No.1 on the British charts for five weeks in 1966.

Reeves recorded many of Walker's compositions, she often wrote specifically for him and offered him the right of first refusal of her tracks. "Distant Drums" was originally recorded by Reeves as a demo, simply because he loved the song. Chet Atkins felt the time was not right for an international release. This demo, like many for Reeves, was unearthed upon his death and along with Atkins and Mary Reeves, Walker oversaw the production of the overdub which was to be released in 1966, and became a huge international hit.

In 1961 Eddy Arnold had a minor hit with Walker's "Jim, I Wore a Tie Today", a moving song about the death of a cowboy. Cindy Walker wrote the song "Dream Baby (How Long Must I Dream) ", which was recorded by Roy Orbison (who also recorded a version of "Distant Drums"). She originally had little confidence in "Dream Baby", but Orbison's recording was a hit in both the US and Britain in 1962, and was a hit again in 1971 for Glen Campbell and in 1983 for Lacy J. Dalton. In 1964 Fred Foster of Monument Records "tempted her back into the studio to record an album, Words and Music by Cindy Walker. Walker's song "In the Misty Moonlight" was a hit for both Jerry Wallace (1964) and Dean Martin (1967) as well as being recorded by Jim

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Reeves. "Heaven Says Hello" (recorded by Sonny James) and "You Are My Treasure" (Jack Greene) were hits in 1968, both written by Walker.

Honors, awards and tributes

In 1970 Walker became a charter member of the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. In 1981 Mickey Gilley's version of "You Don't Know Me" was a hit in the country charts. A year later Walker had her last major hit with Ricky Skaggs' reworking of "I Don't Care".

It has been estimated that more than 500 of Walker's songs have been recorded and that her songs made the Top 40 charts (country or pop) more than 400 times. In September 1997 Walker was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame (together another songwriter, Harlan Howard). During her acceptance speech, Walker recited some verse she had written for the occasion:

In the 1980s, my mother bought me a dress for a BMI affair and she said "when they put you in the Hall of Fame, that's the dress I want you to wear." And I said "Oh Mama, the Hall of Fame? Why that will never be." And the years went by, but my mother's words remained in my memory. And I know tonight she'd be happy, though she's gone now to her rest. But I think of all that she did for me, and tonight I'm wearing this dress.

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Her speech was followed by a standing ovation and Walker left the stage in tears after softly blowing a kiss. During the proceedings renowned songwriter (and fellow Hall of Fame inductee) Harlan Howard described Walker as “the greatest living songwriter of country music”.


In 1998, Walker was inducted into the Texas Country Music Hall of Fame. In 2002 the Country Music Television network honored the 40 Greatest Women in Country Music. The women were selected for their contribution to the genre by a survey of hundreds of American artists and music historians and Walker was ranked No. 32.

In March 2006, Willie Nelson released *You Don't Know Me: The Songs of Cindy Walker*, an album featuring 13 of Walker's well-known songs.

Personal life

In her personal life, Walker shunned the limelight. It was often reported that she never married, though in an interview with *The New York Times* shortly before her death, Walker stated she once had “a very short-lived marriage”. After her stint in Los Angeles she returned to Texas in 1954, living in Mexia in a modest three-bedroom house with her widowed mother, Oree.

Walker's custom was rise at dawn each day to write songs. She

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typed her lyrics on a pink-trimmed manual typewriter and Oree Walker helped work out melodies for her daughter's words. Each year Walker and her mother would operate from an apartment in Nashville for five months or so in order to market the songs. Oree Walker died in 1991. In a 2004 interview Walker stated: "I miss Mama every day".

Death

Walker died at age 87 near her home – at the Parkview Regional Hospital in Mexia, Texas, on March 23, 2006. She died nine days after Willie Nelson's tribute album was released. She had been ill for several weeks prior to her death. She was buried in the Mexia City Cemetery. Her family had a custom-designed sculpture created for her gravestone to honor the songwriter and her work. The memorial sculpture is a large pink-granite guitar (in her signature color).

Lyrics

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Elvis Presley

Key: G


Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

Elvis Aaron Presley (January 8, 1935 – August 16, 1977), also known simply as Elvis, was an American singer, musician and actor. He is regarded as one of the most significant cultural icons of the 20th century and is often referred to as the “King of Rock and Roll” or simply “the King”. His energized interpretations of songs and sexually provocative performance style, combined with a singularly potent mix of influences across color lines during a transformative era in race relations, led him to great success—and initial controversy.

Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, and relocated to Memphis, Tennessee, with his family when he was 13 years old. His music career began there in 1954, recording at Sun Records with producer Sam Phillips, who wanted to bring the sound of African-American music to a wider audience. Presley, on rhythm acoustic guitar, and accompanied by lead guitarist Scotty Moore and bassist Bill Black, was a pioneer of rockabilly, an uptempo, backbeat-driven fusion of country music and rhythm and blues. In 1955, drummer D. J. Fontana joined to complete

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the lineup of Presley's classic quartet and RCA Victor acquired his contract in a deal arranged by Colonel Tom Parker, who would manage him for more than two decades. Presley's first RCA single, "Heartbreak Hotel", was released in January 1956 and became a number-one hit in the United States. With a series of successful network television appearances and chart-topping records, he became the leading figure of the newly popular sound of rock and roll.

In November 1956, Presley made his film debut in *Love Me Tender*. Drafted into military service in 1958, Presley relaunched his recording career two years later with some of his most commercially successful work. He held few concerts, however, and guided by Parker, proceeded to devote much of the 1960s to making Hollywood films and soundtrack albums, most of them critically derided. In 1968, following a seven-year break from live performances, he returned to the stage in the acclaimed television comeback special *Elvis*, which led to an extended Las Vegas concert residency and a string of highly profitable tours. In 1973, Presley gave the first concert by a solo artist to be broadcast around the world, *Aloha from Hawaii*. Years of prescription drug abuse severely compromised his health, and he died suddenly in 1977 at his Graceland estate at the age of 42.

With his rise from poverty to significant fame, Presley's success seemed to epitomize the American Dream. He is the best-selling solo music artist of all time, and was

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commercially successful in many genres, including pop, country, R&B, adult contemporary, and gospel. He won three Grammy Awards, received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award at age 36, and has been inducted into multiple music halls of fame. Presley holds several records; the most RIAA certified gold and platinum albums, the most albums charted on the Billboard 200, and the most number-one albums by a solo artist on the UK Albums Chart and the most number-one singles by any act on the UK Singles Chart. In 2018, Presley was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.


Life and career

1935–1953: Early years

Childhood in Tupelo

Elvis Aaron Presley was born on January 8, 1935, in Tupelo, Mississippi to Vernon Elvis (April 10, 1916 – June 26, 1979) and Gladys Love (née Smith; April 25, 1912 – August 14, 1958) Presley in a two-room shotgun house that his father built for the occasion. Elvis's identical twin brother, Jesse Garon Presley, was delivered 35 minutes before him, stillborn. Presley became close to both parents and formed an especially close bond with his mother. The family attended an Assembly of God church, where he found his initial musical inspiration.


Presley's father, Vernon, was of German[8] or Scottish

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origin.[9] Through his mother, Presley was Scots-Irish, with some French Norman.[10] His mother, Gladys, and the rest of the family, apparently believed that her great-great-grandmother, Morning Dove White, was Cherokee; this was confirmed by Elvis's granddaughter Riley Keough in 2017. Elaine Dundy, in her biography, supports the belief – although one genealogy researcher has contested it on multiple grounds. Gladys was regarded by relatives and friends as the dominant member of the small family.

Vernon moved from one odd job to the next, evincing little ambition. The family often relied on help from neighbors and government food assistance. In 1938, they lost their home after Vernon was found guilty of altering a check written by his landowner and sometime-employer. He was jailed for eight months, while Gladys and Elvis moved in with relatives.

In September 1941, Presley entered first grade at East Tupelo Consolidated, where his teachers regarded him as “average”. He was encouraged to enter a singing contest after impressing his schoolteacher with a rendition of Red Foley's country song “Old Shep” during morning prayers. The contest, held at the Mississippi–Alabama Fair and Dairy Show on October 3, 1945, was his first public performance. The ten-year-old Presley was dressed as a cowboy; he stood on a chair to reach the microphone and sang “Old Shep”. He recalled placing fifth. A few months later, Presley received his first guitar for his birthday; he had hoped for something else—by different

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accounts, either a bicycle or a rifle. Over the following year, he received basic guitar lessons from two of his uncles and the new pastor at the family's church. Presley recalled, "I took the guitar, and I watched people, and I learned to play a little bit. But I would never sing in public. I was very shy about it."

In September 1946, Presley entered a new school, Milam, for sixth grade; he was regarded as a loner. The following year, he began bringing his guitar to school on a daily basis. He played and sang during lunchtime, and was often teased as a "trashy" kid who played hillbilly music. By then, the family was living in a largely black neighborhood. Presley was a devotee of Mississippi Slim's show on the Tupelo radio station WEL0. He was described as "crazy about music" by Slim's younger brother, who was one of Presley's classmates and often took him into the station. Slim supplemented Presley's guitar instruction by demonstrating chord techniques. When his protégé was twelve years old, Slim scheduled him for two on-air performances. Presley was overcome by stage fright the first time, but succeeded in performing the following week.


Teenage life in Memphis

In November 1948, the family moved to Memphis, Tennessee. After residing for nearly a year in rooming houses, they were granted a two-bedroom apartment in the public housing complex known as the Lauderdale Courts. Enrolled at L. C. Humes High School, Presley received only a C in music in eighth grade.

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When his music teacher told him that he had no aptitude for singing, he brought in his guitar the next day and sang a recent hit, “Keep Them Cold Icy Fingers Off Me”, to prove otherwise. A classmate later recalled that the teacher “agreed that Elvis was right when he said that she didn’t appreciate his kind of singing”. He was usually too shy to perform openly, and was occasionally bullied by classmates who viewed him as a “mama’s boy”. In 1950, he began practicing guitar regularly under the tutelage of Lee Denson, a neighbor two and a half years his senior. They and three other boys—including two future rockabilly pioneers, brothers Dorsey and Johnny Burnette—formed a loose musical collective that played frequently around the Courts. That September, he began working as an usher at Loew’s State Theater. Other jobs followed: Precision Tool, Loew’s again, and MARL Metal Products.

During his junior year, Presley began to stand out more among his classmates, largely because of his appearance: he grew his sideburns and styled his hair with rose oil and Vaseline. In his free time, he would head down to Beale Street, the heart of Memphis’s thriving blues scene, and gaze longingly at the wild, flashy clothes in the windows of Lansky Brothers. By his senior year, he was wearing those clothes. Overcoming his reticence about performing outside the Lauderdale Courts, he competed in Humes’ Annual “Minstrel” show in April 1953. Singing and playing guitar, he opened with “Till I Waltz Again with You”, a recent hit for Teresa Brewer. Presley recalled

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that the performance did much for his reputation: "I wasn't popular in school ... I failed music—only thing I ever failed. And then they entered me in this talent show ... when I came onstage I heard people kind of rumbling and whispering and so forth, 'cause nobody knew I even sang. It was amazing how popular I became in school after that."

Presley, who received no formal music training and could not read music, studied and played by ear. He also frequented record stores that provided jukeboxes and listening booths to customers. He knew all of Hank Snow's songs, and he loved records by other country singers such as Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Ted Daffan, Jimmie Rodgers, Jimmie Davis, and Bob Wills.[38] The Southern gospel singer Jake Hess, one of his favorite performers, was a significant influence on his ballad-singing style. He was a regular audience member at the monthly All-Night Singings downtown, where many of the white gospel groups that performed reflected the influence of African-American spiritual music. He adored the music of black gospel singer Sister Rosetta Tharpe.[38] Like some of his peers, he may have attended blues venues—of necessity, in the segregated South, only on nights designated for exclusively white audiences. He certainly listened to the regional radio stations, such as WDIA-AM, that played "race records": spirituals, blues, and the modern, backbeat-heavy sound of rhythm and blues. Many of his future recordings were inspired by local African-American musicians such as Arthur Crudup and

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Rufus Thomas. B.B. King recalled that he had known Presley before he was popular when they both used to frequent Beale Street. By the time he graduated from high school in June 1953, Presley had already singled out music as his future.

1953–1956: First recordings

Sam Phillips and Sun Records

In August 1953, Presley checked into the offices of Sun Records. He aimed to pay for a few minutes of studio time to record a two-sided acetate disc: “My Happiness” and “That’s When Your Heartaches Begin”. He later claimed that he intended the record as a birthday gift for his mother, or that he was merely interested in what he “sounded like”, although there was a much cheaper, amateur record-making service at a nearby general store. Biographer Peter Guralnick argued that he chose Sun in the hope of being discovered. Asked by receptionist Marion Keisker what kind of singer he was, Presley responded, “I sing all kinds.” When she pressed him on who he sounded like, he repeatedly answered, “I don’t sound like nobody.” After he recorded, Sun boss Sam Phillips asked Keisker to note down the young man’s name, which she did along with her own commentary: “Good ballad singer. Hold.”

In January 1954, Presley cut a second acetate at Sun Records—“I’ll Never Stand in Your Way” and “It Wouldn’t Be the Same Without You”—but again nothing came of it. Not long

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after, he failed an audition for a local vocal quartet, the Songfellows. He explained to his father, "They told me I couldn't sing." Songfellow Jim Hamill later claimed that he was turned down because he did not demonstrate an ear for harmony at the time. In April, Presley began working for the Crown Electric company as a truck driver.[His friend Ronnie Smith, after playing a few local gigs with him, suggested he contact Eddie Bond, leader of Smith's professional band, which had an opening for a vocalist. Bond rejected him after a tryout, advising Presley to stick to truck driving "because you're never going to make it as a singer".

Phillips, meanwhile, was always on the lookout for someone who could bring to a broader audience the sound of the black musicians on whom Sun focused. As Keisker reported, "Over and over I remember Sam saying, 'If I could find a white man who had the Negro sound and the Negro feel, I could make a billion dollars.'" In June, he acquired a demo recording by Jimmy Sweeney of a ballad, "Without You", that he thought might suit the teenage singer. Presley came by the studio but was unable to do it justice. Despite this, Phillips asked Presley to sing as many numbers as he knew. He was sufficiently affected by what he heard to invite two local musicians, guitarist Winfield "Scotty" Moore and upright bass player Bill Black, to work something up with Presley for a recording session.

The session held the evening of July 5, proved entirely unfruitful until late in the night. As they were about to

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abort and go home, Presley took his guitar and launched into a 1946 blues number, Arthur Crudup's "That's All Right". Moore recalled, "All of a sudden, Elvis just started singing this song, jumping around and acting the fool, and then Bill picked up his bass, and he started acting the fool, too, and I started playing with them. Sam, I think, had the door to the control booth open ... he stuck his head out and said, 'What are you doing?' And we said, 'We don't know.' 'Well, back up,' he said, 'try to find a place to start, and do it again.'" Phillips quickly began taping; this was the sound he had been looking for. Three days later, popular Memphis DJ Dewey Phillips played "That's All Right" on his Red, Hot, and Blue show. Listeners began phoning in, eager to find out who the singer was. The interest was such that Phillips played the record repeatedly during the remaining two hours of his show. Interviewing Presley on-air, Phillips asked him what high school he attended to clarify his color for the many callers who had assumed that he was black. During the next few days, the trio recorded a bluegrass number, Bill Monroe's "Blue Moon of Kentucky", again in a distinctive style and employing a jury rigged echo effect that Sam Phillips dubbed "slapback". A single was pressed with "That's All Right" on the A-side and "Blue Moon of Kentucky" on the reverse.

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Early live performances and RCA Victor contract

The trio played publicly for the first time on July 17 at the Bon Air club—Presley still sporting his child-size guitar. At the end of the month, they appeared at the Overton Park Shell, with Slim Whitman headlining. A combination of his strong response to rhythm and nervousness at playing before a large crowd led Presley to shake his legs as he performed: his wide-cut pants emphasized his movements, causing young women in the audience to start screaming.[63] Moore recalled, “During the instrumental parts, he would back off from the mike and be playing and shaking, and the crowd would just go wild”. Black, a natural showman, whooped and rode his bass, hitting double licks that Presley would later remember as “really a wild sound, like a jungle drum or something”. Soon after, Moore and Black left their old band, the Starlite Wranglers, to play with Presley regularly, and DJ/promoter Bob Neal became the trio’s manager. From August through October, they played frequently at the Eagle’s Nest club and returned to Sun Studio for more recording sessions, and Presley quickly grew more confident on stage. According to Moore, “His movement was a natural thing, but he was also very conscious of what got a reaction. He’d do something one time and then he would expand on it real quick.” Presley made what would be his only appearance on Nashville’s Grand Ole Opry stage on October 2; after a polite audience response, Opry manager Jim Denny told Phillips that his singer was “not bad” but did not suit the program.


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Louisiana Hayride, radio commercial, and first television performances


In November 1954, Presley performed on Louisiana Hayride—the Opry’s chief, and more adventurous, rival. The Shreveport-based show was broadcast to 198 radio stations in 28 states. Presley had another attack of nerves during the first set, which drew a muted reaction. A more composed and energetic second set inspired an enthusiastic response. House drummer D. J. Fontana brought a new element, complementing Presley’s movements with accented beats that he had mastered playing in strip clubs. Soon after the show, the Hayride engaged Presley for a year’s worth of Saturday-night appearances. Trading in his old guitar for \$8 (and seeing it promptly dispatched to the garbage), he purchased a Martin instrument for \$175, and his trio began playing in new locales, including Houston, Texas and Texarkana, Arkansas.

Many fledgling performers, like Minnie Pearl, Johnny Horton, and Johnny Cash, sang the praises of Louisiana Hayride sponsor, The Southern Maid Donut Flour Company (Texas), including Elvis Presley, who developed a lifelong love of doughnuts. Presley made his singular product endorsement commercial for the doughnut company, which was never released, recording a radio jingle, “in exchange for a box of hot glazed doughnuts.”

Elvis made his first television appearance on the KSLA-TV

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television broadcast of Louisiana Hayride. Soon after, he failed an audition for Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts on the CBS television network. By early 1955, Presley's regular Hayride appearances, constant touring, and well-received record releases had made him a regional star, from Tennessee to West Texas. In January, Neal signed a formal management contract with Presley and brought him to the attention of Colonel Tom Parker, whom he considered the best promoter in the music business. Parker—who claimed to be from West Virginia (he was actually Dutch)—had acquired an honorary colonel's commission from country singer turned Louisiana governor Jimmie Davis. Having successfully managed top country star Eddy Arnold, Parker was working with the new number-one country singer, Hank Snow. Parker booked Presley on Snow's February tour. When the tour reached Odessa, Texas, a 19-year-old Roy Orbison saw Presley for the first time: "His energy was incredible, his instinct was just amazing. ... I just didn't know what to make of it. There was just no reference point in the culture to compare it." By August, Sun had released ten sides credited to "Elvis Presley, Scotty and Bill"; on the latest recordings, the trio were joined by a drummer. Some of the songs, like "That's All Right", were in what one Memphis journalist described as the "R&B idiom of negro field jazz"; others, like "Blue Moon of Kentucky", were "more in the country field", "but there was a curious blending of the two different musics in both". This blend of styles made it difficult for Presley's music to find radio airplay. According

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to Neal, many country-music disc jockeys would not play it because he sounded too much like a black artist and none of the rhythm-and-blues stations would touch him because “he sounded too much like a hillbilly.” The blend came to be known as rockabilly. At the time, Presley was variously billed as “The King of Western Bop”, “The Hillbilly Cat”, and “The Memphis Flash”.

Presley renewed Neal’s management contract in August 1955, simultaneously appointing Parker as his special adviser. The group maintained an extensive touring schedule throughout the second half of the year. Neal recalled, “It was almost frightening, the reaction that came to Elvis from the teenaged boys. So many of them, through some sort of jealousy, would practically hate him. There were occasions in some towns in Texas when we’d have to be sure to have a police guard because somebody’d always try to take a crack at him. They’d get a gang and try to waylay him or something.” The trio became a quartet when Hayride drummer Fontana joined as a full member. In mid-October, they played a few shows in support of Bill Haley, whose “Rock Around the Clock” track had been a number-one hit the previous year. Haley observed that Presley had a natural feel for rhythm, and advised him to sing fewer ballads.

At the Country Disc Jockey Convention in early November, Presley was voted the year’s most promising male artist. Several record companies had by now shown interest in signing


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him. After three major labels made offers of up to \$25,000, Parker and Phillips struck a deal with RCA Victor on November 21 to acquire Presley's Sun contract for an unprecedented \$40,000. Presley, at 20, was still a minor, so his father signed the contract.[86] Parker arranged with the owners of Hill & Range Publishing, Jean and Julian Aberbach, to create two entities, Elvis Presley Music and Gladys Music, to handle all the new material recorded by Presley. Songwriters were obliged to forgo one-third of their customary royalties in exchange for having him perform their compositions. By December, RCA had begun to heavily promote its new singer, and before month's end had reissued many of his Sun recordings.

1956–1958: Commercial breakout and controversy


First national TV appearances and debut album

On January 10, 1956, Presley made his first recordings for RCA in Nashville. Extending Presley's by-now customary backup of Moore, Black, Fontana, and Hayride pianist Floyd Cramer—who had been performing at live club dates with Presley—RCA enlisted guitarist Chet Atkins and three background singers, including Gordon Stoker of the popular Jordanares quartet, to fill in the sound.[94] The session produced the moody, unusual "Heartbreak Hotel", released as a single on January 27. Parker finally brought Presley to national television, booking him on

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CBS's Stage Show for six appearances over two months. The program, produced in New York, was hosted on alternate weeks by big band leaders and brothers Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey. After his first appearance, on January 28, Presley stayed in town to record at RCA's New York studio. The sessions yielded eight songs, including a cover of Carl Perkins' rockabilly anthem "Blue Suede Shoes". In February, Presley's "I Forgot to Remember to Forget", a Sun recording initially released the previous August, reached the top of the Billboard country chart. Neal's contract was terminated, and, on March 2, Parker became Presley's manager.

RCA released Presley's self-titled debut album on March 23. Joined by five previously unreleased Sun recordings, its seven recently recorded tracks were of a broad variety. There were two country songs and a bouncy pop tune. The others would centrally define the evolving sound of rock and roll: "Blue Suede Shoes"—"an improvement over Perkins' in almost every way", according to critic Robert Hilburn—and three R&B numbers that had been part of Presley's stage repertoire for some time, covers of Little Richard, Ray Charles, and The Drifters. As described by Hilburn, these "were the most revealing of all. Unlike many white artists ... who watered down the gritty edges of the original R&B versions of songs in the '50s, Presley reshaped them. He not only injected the tunes with his own vocal character but also made guitar, not piano, the lead instrument in all three cases." It became the first rock and

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roll album to top the Billboard chart, a position it held for 10 weeks. While Presley was not an innovative guitarist like Moore or contemporary African-American rockers Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry, cultural historian Gilbert B. Rodman argued that the album's cover image, "of Elvis having the time of his life on stage with a guitar in his hands played a crucial role in positioning the guitar ... as the instrument that best captured the style and spirit of this new music.


Milton Berle Show and "Hound Dog"

On April 3, Presley made the first of two appearances on NBC's Milton Berle Show. His performance, on the deck of the USS Hancock in San Diego, California, prompted cheers and screams from an audience of sailors and their dates. A few days later, a flight taking Presley and his band to Nashville for a recording session left all three badly shaken when an engine died and the plane almost went down over Arkansas. Twelve weeks after its original release, "Heartbreak Hotel" became Presley's first number-one pop hit. In late April, Presley began a two-week residency at the New Frontier Hotel and Casino on the Las Vegas Strip. The shows were poorly received by the conservative, middle-aged hotel guests—"like a jug of corn liquor at a champagne party", wrote a critic for Newsweek. Amid his Vegas tenure, Presley, who had serious acting ambitions, signed a seven-year contract with Paramount Pictures. He began a tour of the Midwest in mid-May, taking in 15 cities in as many days. He had attended several shows by

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Freddie Bell and the Bellboys in Vegas and was struck by their cover of "Hound Dog", a hit in 1953 for blues singer Big Mama Thornton by songwriters Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. It became the new closing number of his act. After a show in La Crosse, Wisconsin, an urgent message on the letterhead of the local Catholic diocese's newspaper was sent to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. It warned that "Presley is a definite danger to the security of the United States. ... [His] actions and motions were such as to rouse the sexual passions of teenaged youth. ... After the show, more than 1,000 teenagers tried to gang into Presley's room at the auditorium. ... Indications of the harm Presley did just in La Crosse were the two high school girls ... whose abdomen and thigh had Presley's autograph."


The second Milton Berle Show appearance came on June 5 at NBC's Hollywood studio, amid another hectic tour. Berle persuaded Presley to leave his guitar backstage, advising, "Let 'em see you, son." During the performance, Presley abruptly halted an uptempo rendition of "Hound Dog" with a wave of his arm and launched into a slow, grinding version accentuated with energetic, exaggerated body movements. Presley's gyrations created a storm of controversy. Television critics were outraged: Jack Gould of The New York Times wrote, "Mr. Presley has no discernible singing ability. ... His phrasing, if it can be called that, consists of the stereotyped variations that go with a beginner's aria in a bathtub. ... His one specialty is an accented movement of the

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body ... primarily identified with the repertoire of the blond bombshells of the burlesque runway." Ben Gross of the New York Daily News opined that popular music "has reached its lowest depths in the 'grunt and groin' antics of one Elvis Presley. ... Elvis, who rotates his pelvis ... gave an exhibition that was suggestive and vulgar, tinged with the kind of animalism that should be confined to dives and bordellos". Ed Sullivan, whose own variety show was the nation's most popular, declared him "unfit for family viewing". To Presley's displeasure, he soon found himself being referred to as "Elvis the Pelvis", which he called "one of the most childish expressions I ever heard, comin' from an adult."

Steve Allen Show and first Sullivan appearance

The Berle shows drew such high ratings that Presley was booked for a July 1 appearance on NBC's Steve Allen Show in New York. Allen, no fan of rock and roll, introduced a "new Elvis" in a white bow tie and black tails. Presley sang "Hound Dog" for less than a minute to a basset hound wearing a top hat and bow tie. As described by television historian Jake Austen, "Allen thought Presley was talentless and absurd ... [he] set things up so that Presley would show his contrition". Allen later wrote that he found Presley's "strange, gangly, country-boy charisma, his hard-to-define cuteness, and his charming eccentricity intriguing" and simply worked him into the customary "comedy fabric" of his program.[113] Just before the final rehearsal for the show, Presley told a reporter, "I'm

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holding down on this show. I don't want to do anything to make people dislike me. I think TV is important so I'm going to go along, but I won't be able to give the kind of show I do in a personal appearance." Presley would refer back to the Allen show as the most ridiculous performance of his career. Later that night, he appeared on Hy Gardner Calling, a popular local TV show. Pressed on whether he had learned anything from the criticism to which he was being subjected, Presley responded, "No, I haven't, I don't feel like I'm doing anything wrong. ... I don't see how any type of music would have any bad influence on people when it's only music. ... I mean, how would rock 'n' roll music make anyone rebel against their parents?"

The next day, Presley recorded "Hound Dog", along with "Any Way You Want Me" and "Don't Be Cruel". The Jordanaires sang harmony, as they had on The Steve Allen Show; they would work with Presley through the 1960s. A few days later, Presley made an outdoor concert appearance in Memphis, at which he announced, "You know, those people in New York are not gonna change me none. I'm gonna show you what the real Elvis is like tonight." [116] In August, a judge in Jacksonville, Florida, ordered Presley to tame his act. Throughout the following performance, he largely kept still, except for wiggling his little finger suggestively in mockery of the order. [117] The single pairing "Don't Be Cruel" with "Hound Dog" ruled the top of the charts for 11 weeks—a mark that would not be surpassed for 36 years. Recording sessions for Presley's second album

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took place in Hollywood during the first week of September. Leiber and Stoller, the writers of "Hound Dog", contributed "Love Me".

Allen's show with Presley had, for the first time, beaten CBS's Ed Sullivan Show in the ratings. Sullivan, despite his June pronouncement, booked Presley for three appearances for an unprecedented \$50,000. The first, on September 9, 1956, was seen by approximately 60 million viewers—a record 82.6 percent of the television audience. Actor Charles Laughton hosted the show, filling in while Sullivan was recovering from a car accident. Presley appeared in two segments that night from CBS Television City in Los Angeles. According to Elvis legend, Presley was shot only from the waist up. Watching clips of the Allen and Berle shows with his producer, Sullivan had opined that Presley "got some kind of device hanging down below the crotch of his pants—so when he moves his legs back and forth you can see the outline of his cock. ... I think it's a Coke bottle. ... We just can't have this on a Sunday night. This is a family show!" Sullivan publicly told TV Guide, "As for his gyrations, the whole thing can be controlled with camera shots." In fact, Presley was shown head-to-toe in the first and second shows. Though the camerawork was relatively discreet during his debut, with leg-concealing closeups when he danced, the studio audience reacted in customary style: screaming.[Presley's performance of his forthcoming single, the ballad "Love Me Tender", prompted a record-shattering


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million advance orders. More than any other single event, it was this first appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show that made Presley a national celebrity of barely preceded proportions.

Accompanying Presley's rise to fame, a cultural shift was taking place that he both helped inspire and came to symbolize. Igniting the "biggest pop craze since Glenn Miller and Frank Sinatra ... Presley brought rock'n'roll into the mainstream of popular culture", writes historian Marty Jezer. "As Presley set the artistic pace, other artists followed. ... Presley, more than anyone else, gave the young a belief in themselves as a distinct and somehow unified generation—the first in America ever to feel the power of an integrated youth culture."

Crazed crowds and film debut

The audience response at Presley's live shows became increasingly fevered. Moore recalled, "He'd start out, 'You ain't nothin' but a Hound Dog,' and they'd just go to pieces. They'd always react the same way. There'd be a riot every time." At the two concerts he performed in September at the Mississippi-Alabama Fair and Dairy Show, 50 National Guardsmen were added to the police security to ensure that the crowd would not cause a ruckus. Elvis, Presley's second album, was released in October and quickly rose to number one on the billboard. The album includes "Old Shep", which he sang at the

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talent show in 1945, and which now marked the first time he played piano on an RCA session. According to Guralnick, one can hear “in the halting chords and the somewhat stumbling rhythm both the unmistakable emotion and the equally unmistakable valuing of emotion over technique.” Assessing the musical and cultural impact of Presley’s recordings from “That’s All Right” through Elvis, rock critic Dave Marsh wrote that “these records, more than any others, contain the seeds of what rock & roll was, has been and most likely what it may foreseeably become.”

Presley returned to the Sullivan show at its main studio in New York, hosted this time by its namesake, on October 28. After the performance, crowds in Nashville and St. Louis burned him in effigy. His first motion picture, *Love Me Tender*, was released on November 21. Though he was not top-billed, the film’s original title—*The Reno Brothers*—was changed to capitalize on his latest number-one record: “Love Me Tender” had hit the top of the charts earlier that month. To further take advantage of Presley’s popularity, four musical numbers were added to what was originally a straight acting role. The film was panned by the critics but did very well at the box office. Presley would receive top billing on every subsequent film he made.

On December 4, Presley dropped into Sun Records where Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis were recording and had an impromptu jam session, along with Johnny Cash. Though Phillips

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no longer had the right to release any Presley material, he made sure that the session was captured on tape. The results, none officially released for 25 years, became known as the “Million Dollar Quartet” recordings. The year ended with a front-page story in The Wall Street Journal reporting that Presley merchandise had brought in \$22 million on top of his record sales, and Billboard’s declaration that he had placed more songs in the top 100 than any other artist since records were first charted.[134] In his first full year at RCA, one of the music industry’s largest companies, Presley had accounted for over 50 percent of the label’s singles sales.

Leiber and Stoller collaboration and draft notice

Presley made his third and final Ed Sullivan Show appearance on January 6, 1957—on this occasion indeed shot only down to the waist. Some commentators have claimed that Parker orchestrated an appearance of censorship to generate publicity. In any event, as critic Greil Marcus describes, Presley “did not tie himself down. Leaving behind the bland clothes he had worn on the first two shows, he stepped out in the outlandish costume of a pasha, if not a harem girl. From the make-up over his eyes, the hair falling in his face, the overwhelmingly sexual cast of his mouth, he was playing Rudolph Valentino in The Sheik, with all stops out.” To close, displaying his range and defying Sullivan’s wishes, Presley sang a gentle black spiritual, “Peace in the Valley”. At the end of the show, Sullivan declared Presley “a real decent,

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fine boy".[136] Two days later, the Memphis draft board announced that Presley would be classified 1-A and would probably be drafted sometime that year.


Each of the three Presley singles released in the first half of 1957 went to number one: "Too Much", "All Shook Up", and "(Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear". Already an international star, he was attracting fans even where his music was not officially released. Under the headline "Presley Records a Craze in Soviet", The New York Times reported that pressings of his music on discarded X-ray plates were commanding high prices in Leningrad. Between film shoots and recording sessions, Presley also found time to purchase an 18-room mansion eight miles (13 km) south of downtown Memphis for himself and his parents: Graceland. Loving You—the soundtrack to his second film, released in July—was Presley's third straight number-one album. The title track was written by Leiber and Stoller, who were then retained to write four of the six songs recorded at the sessions for Jailhouse Rock, Presley's next film. The songwriting team effectively produced the Jailhouse sessions and developed a close working relationship with Presley, who came to regard them as his "good-luck charm". "He was fast," said Leiber. "Any demo you gave him he knew by heart in ten minutes." The title track was yet another number-one hit, as was the Jailhouse Rock EP.

Presley undertook three brief tours during the year, continuing to generate a crazed audience response. A Detroit

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newspaper suggested that “the trouble with going to see Elvis Presley is that you’re liable to get killed.” Villanova students pelted him with eggs in Philadelphia,[143] and in Vancouver the crowd rioted after the end of the show, destroying the stage. Frank Sinatra, who had inspired the swooning of teenage girls in the 1940s, condemned the new musical phenomenon. In a magazine article, he decried rock and roll as “brutal, ugly, degenerate, vicious. ... It fosters almost totally negative and destructive reactions in young people. It smells phoney and false. It is sung, played and written, for the most part, by cretinous goons. ... This rancid-smelling aphrodisiac I deplore.” Asked for a response, Presley said, “I admire the man. He has a right to say what he wants to say. He is a great success and a fine actor, but I think he shouldn’t have said it. ... This is a trend, just the same as he faced when he started years ago.”


Leiber and Stoller were again in the studio for the recording of Elvis’ Christmas Album. Toward the end of the session, they wrote a song on the spot at Presley’s request: “Santa Claus Is Back in Town”, an innuendo-laden blues. The holiday release stretched Presley’s string of number-one albums to four and would become the best-selling Christmas album ever in the United States, with eventual sales of over 20 million worldwide. After the session, Moore and Black—drawing only modest weekly salaries, sharing in none of Presley’s massive financial success—resigned. Though they were brought back on a

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per diem basis a few weeks later, it was clear that they had not been part of Presley's inner circle for some time. On December 20, Presley received his draft notice. He was granted a deferment to finish the forthcoming *King Creole*, in which \$350,000 had already been invested by Paramount and producer Hal Wallis. A couple of weeks into the new year, "Don't", another Leiber and Stoller tune, became Presley's tenth number-one seller. It had been only 21 months since "Heartbreak Hotel" had brought him to the top for the first time. Recording sessions for the *King Creole* soundtrack were held in Hollywood in mid-January 1958. Leiber and Stoller provided three songs and were again on hand, but it would be the last time they and Presley worked closely together. As Stoller recalled, Presley's manager and entourage sought to wall him off: "He was removed. ... They kept him separate." A brief soundtrack session on February 11 marked another ending—it was the final occasion on which Black was to perform with Presley. He died in 1965.

1958–1960: Military service and mother's death


On March 24, 1958, Presley was drafted into the U.S. Army as a private at Fort Chaffee, near Fort Smith, Arkansas. His arrival was a major media event. Hundreds of people descended on Presley as he stepped from the bus; photographers then accompanied him into the fort. Presley announced that he was

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looking forward to his military stint, saying that he did not want to be treated any differently from anyone else: "The Army can do anything it wants with me."

Presley commenced basic training at Fort Hood, Texas. During a two-week leave in early June, he recorded five songs in Nashville. In early August, his mother was diagnosed with hepatitis, and her condition rapidly worsened. Presley was granted emergency leave to visit her and arrived in Memphis on August 12. Two days later, she died of heart failure at the age of 46. Presley was devastated and never the same; their relationship had remained extremely close—even into his adulthood, they would use baby talk with each other and Presley would address her with pet names.

After training, Presley joined the 3rd Armored Division in Friedberg, Germany, on October 1.[161] While on maneuvers, Presley was introduced to amphetamines by a sergeant. He became "practically evangelical about their benefits", not only for energy but for "strength" and weight loss as well, and many of his friends in the outfit joined him in indulging. The Army also introduced Presley to karate, which he studied seriously, training with Jürgen Seydel. It became a lifelong interest, which he later included in his live performances. Fellow soldiers have attested to Presley's wish to be seen as an able, ordinary soldier, despite his fame, and to his generosity. He donated his Army pay to charity, purchased TV sets for the base, and bought an extra set of fatigues for

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everyone in his outfit.

While in Friedberg, Presley met 14-year-old Priscilla Beaulieu. They would eventually marry after a seven-and-a-half-year courtship. In her autobiography, Priscilla said that Presley was concerned that his 24-month spell as a GI would ruin his career. In Special Services, he would have been able to give musical performances and remain in touch with the public, but Parker had convinced him that to gain popular respect, he should serve his country as a regular soldier. Media reports echoed Presley's concerns about his career, but RCA producer Steve Sholes and Freddy Bienstock of Hill and Range had carefully prepared for his two-year hiatus. Armed with a substantial amount of unreleased material, they kept up a regular stream of successful releases. Between his induction and discharge, Presley had ten top 40 hits, including "Wear My Ring Around Your Neck", the best-selling "Hard Headed Woman", and "One Night" in 1958, and "(Now and Then There's) A Fool Such as I" and the number-one "A Big Hunk o' Love" in 1959. RCA also generated four albums compiling old material during this period, most successfully Elvis' Golden Records (1958), which hit number three on the LP chart.

1960–1968: Focus on films


Elvis Is Back

Presley returned to the United States on March 2, 1960, and

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was honorably discharged three days later with the rank of sergeant. The train that carried him from New Jersey to Tennessee was mobbed all the way, and Presley was called upon to appear at scheduled stops to please his fans. On the night of March 20, he entered RCA's Nashville studio to cut tracks for a new album along with a single, "Stuck on You", which was rushed into release and swiftly became a number-one hit. Another Nashville session two weeks later yielded a pair of his best-selling singles, the ballads "It's Now or Never" and "Are You Lonesome Tonight?", along with the rest of *Elvis Is Back!* The album features several songs described by Greil Marcus as full of Chicago blues "menace, driven by Presley's own super-miked acoustic guitar, brilliant playing by Scotty Moore, and demonic sax work from Boots Randolph. Elvis' singing wasn't sexy, it was pornographic." As a whole, the record "conjured up the vision of a performer who could be all things", according to music historian John Robertson: "a flirtatious teenage idol with a heart of gold; a tempestuous, dangerous lover; a gutbucket blues singer; a sophisticated nightclub entertainer; raucous rocker". Released only days after recording was complete, it reached number two on the album chart.

Presley returned to television on May 12 as a guest on *The Frank Sinatra Timex Special*—ironic for both stars, given Sinatra's earlier excoriation of rock and roll. Also known as *Welcome Home Elvis*, the show had been taped in late March, the

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only time all year Presley performed in front of an audience. Parker secured an unheard-of \$125,000 fee for eight minutes of singing. The broadcast drew an enormous viewership.



G.I. Blues, the soundtrack to Presley's first film since his return, was a number-one album in October. His first LP of sacred material, His Hand in Mine, followed two months later. It reached number 13 on the U.S. pop chart and number 3 in the UK, remarkable figures for a gospel album. In February 1961, Presley performed two shows for a benefit event in Memphis, on behalf of 24 local charities. During a luncheon preceding the event, RCA presented him with a plaque certifying worldwide sales of over 75 million records.[181] A 12-hour Nashville session in mid-March yielded nearly all of Presley's next studio album, Something for Everybody. As described by John

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Robertson, it exemplifies the Nashville sound, the restrained, cosmopolitan style that would define country music in the 1960s. Presaging much of what was to come from Presley himself over the next half-decade, the album is largely “a pleasant, unthreatening pastiche of the music that had once been Elvis’ birthright”. It would be his sixt

h number-one LP. Another benefit concert, raising money for a Pearl Harbor memorial, was staged on March 25, in Hawaii. It was to be Presley’s last public performance for seven years.

Lost in Hollywood

Parker had by now pushed Presley into a heavy film making schedule, focused on formulaic, modestly budgeted musical comedies. Presley, at first, insisted on pursuing higher roles, but when two films in a more dramatic vein—*Flaming Star* (1960) and *Wild in the Country* (1961)—were less commercially successful, he reverted to the formula. Among the 27 films he made during the 1960s, there were a few further exceptions. His films were almost universally panned; critic Andrew Caine dismissed them as a “pantheon of bad taste”. Nonetheless, they were virtually all profitable. Hal Wallis, who produced nine of them, declared, “A Presley picture is the only sure thing in Hollywood.”[

Of Presley’s films in the 1960s, 15 were accompanied by soundtrack albums and another 5 by soundtrack EPs. The films’ rapid production and release schedules—he frequently starred

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in three a year—affected his music. According to Jerry Leiber, the soundtrack formula was already evident before Presley left for the Army: “three ballads, one medium-tempo [number], one up-tempo, and one break blues boogie”. As the decade wore on, the quality of the soundtrack songs grew “progressively worse”. [189] Julie Parrish, who appeared in *Paradise, Hawaiian Style* (1966), says that he disliked many of the songs chosen for his films. The *Jordanaires*’ Gordon Stoker describes how Presley would retreat from the studio microphone: “The material was so bad that he felt like he couldn’t sing it.” Most of the film albums featured a song or two from respected writers such as the team of Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman. But by and large, according to biographer Jerry Hopkins, the numbers seemed to be “written on order by men who never really understood Elvis or rock and roll”. Regardless of the songs’ quality, it has been argued that Presley generally sang them well, with commitment. Critic Dave Marsh heard the opposite: “Presley isn’t trying, probably the wisest course in the face of material like ‘No Room to Rumba in a Sports Car’ and ‘Rock-A-Hula Baby’.”

In the first half of the decade, three of Presley’s soundtrack albums were ranked number one on the pop charts, and a few of his most popular songs came from his films, such as “Can’t Help Falling in Love” (1961) and “Return to Sender” (1962). (“Viva Las Vegas”, the title track to the 1964 film, was a minor hit as a B-side, and became truly popular only later.)

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But, as with artistic merit, the commercial returns steadily diminished. During a five-year span—1964 through 1968—Presley had only one top-ten hit: “Crying in the Chapel” (1965), a gospel number recorded back in 1960. As for non-film albums, between the June 1962 release of *Pot Luck* and the November 1968 release of the soundtrack to the television special that signaled his comeback, only one LP of new material by Presley was issued: the gospel album *How Great Thou Art* (1967). It won him his first Grammy Award, for Best Sacred Performance. As Marsh described, Presley was “arguably the greatest white gospel singer of his time [and] really the last rock & roll artist to make gospel as vital a component of his musical personality as his secular songs”.

Shortly before Christmas 1966, more than seven years since they first met, Presley proposed to Priscilla Beaulieu. They were married on May 1, 1967, in a brief ceremony in their suite at the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas. The flow of formulaic films and assembly-line soundtracks rolled on. It was not until October 1967, when the *Clambake* soundtrack LP registered record low sales for a new Presley album, that RCA executives recognized a problem. “By then, of course, the damage had been done”, as historians Connie Kirchberg and Marc Hendrickx put it. “Elvis was viewed as a joke by serious music lovers and a has-been to all but his most loyal fans.

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1968–1973: Comeback

Elvis: the '68 Comeback Special

Presley's only child, Lisa Marie, was born on February 1, 1968, during a period when he had grown deeply unhappy with his career. Of the eight Presley singles released between January 1967 and May 1968, only two charted in the top 40, and none higher than number 28. His forthcoming soundtrack album, *Speedway*, would rank at number 82 on the Billboard chart. Parker had already shifted his plans to television, where Presley had not appeared since the Sinatra Timex show in 1960. He maneuvered a deal with NBC that committed the network to both finance a theatrical feature and broadcast a Christmas special.

Recorded in late June in Burbank, California, the special, simply called *Elvis*, aired on December 3, 1968. Later known as the '68 Comeback Special, the show featured lavishly staged studio productions as well as songs performed with a band in front of a small audience—Presley's first live performances since 1961. The live segments saw Presley dressed in tight black leather, singing and playing guitar in an uninhibited style reminiscent of his early rock and roll days. Director and co-producer Steve Binder had worked hard to produce a show that was far from the hour of Christmas songs Parker had originally planned. The show, NBC's highest-rated that season, captured 42 percent of the total viewing audience. Jon Landau

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of Eye magazine remarked, "There is something magical about watching a man who has lost himself find his way back home. He sang with the kind of power people no longer expect of rock 'n' roll singers. He moved his body with a lack of pretension and effort that must have made Jim Morrison green with envy." Dave Marsh calls the performance one of "emotional grandeur and historical resonance".

By January 1969, the single "If I Can Dream", written for the special, reached number 12. The soundtrack album rose into the top ten. According to friend Jerry Schilling, the special reminded Presley of what "he had not been able to do for years, being able to choose the people; being able to choose what songs and not being told what had to be on the soundtrack. ... He was out of prison, man." Binder said of Presley's reaction, "I played Elvis the 60-minute show, and he told me in the screening room, 'Steve, it's the greatest thing I've ever done in my life. I give you my word I will never sing a song I don't believe in.'"


From Elvis in Memphis and the International

Buoyed by the experience of the Comeback Special, Presley engaged in a prolific series of recording sessions at American Sound Studio, which led to the acclaimed *From Elvis in Memphis*. Released in June 1969, it was his first secular, non-soundtrack album from a dedicated period in the studio in eight years. As described by Dave Marsh, it is "a masterpiece

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in which Presley immediately catches up with pop music trends that had seemed to pass him by during the movie years. He sings country songs, soul songs and rockers with real conviction, a stunning achievement." The album featured the hit single "In the Ghetto", issued in April, which reached number three on the pop chart—Presley's first non-gospel top ten hit since "Bossa Nova Baby" in 1963. Further hit singles were culled from the American Sound sessions: "Suspicious Minds", "Don't Cry Daddy", and "Kentucky Rain".[208]

Presley was keen to resume regular live performing. Following the success of the Comeback Special, offers came in from around the world. The London Palladium offered Parker \$28,000 for a one-week engagement. He responded, "That's fine for me, now how much can you get for Elvis?" In May, the brand new International Hotel in Las Vegas, boasting the largest showroom in the city, announced that it had booked Presley. He was scheduled to perform 57 shows over four weeks beginning July 31. Moore, Fontana, and the Jordanares declined to participate, afraid of losing the lucrative session work they had in Nashville. Presley assembled new, top-notch accompaniment, led by guitarist James Burton and including two gospel groups, The Imperials and Sweet Inspirations. Costume designer Bill Belew, responsible for the intense leather styling of the Comeback Special, created a new stage look for Presley, inspired by Presley's passion for karate. Nonetheless, he was nervous: his only previous Las Vegas

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engagement, in 1956, had been dismal. Parker, who intended to make Presley's return the show business event of the year, oversaw a major promotional push. For his part, hotel owner Kirk Kerkorian arranged to send his own plane to New York to fly in rock journalists for the debut performance.[

Presley took to the stage without introduction. The audience of 2,200, including many celebrities, gave him a standing ovation before he sang a note and another after his performance. A third followed his encore, "Can't Help Falling in Love" (a song that would be his closing number for much of the 1970s).[At a press conference after the show, when a journalist referred to him as "The King", Presley gestured toward Fats Domino, who was taking in the scene. "No," Presley said, "that's the real king of rock and roll." The next day, Parker's negotiations with the hotel resulted in a five-year contract for Presley to play each February and August, at an annual salary of \$1 million. Newsweek commented, "There are several unbelievable things about Elvis, but the most incredible is his staying power in a world where meteoric careers fade like shooting stars." Rolling Stone called Presley "supernatural, his own resurrection." In November, Presley's final non-concert film, *Change of Habit*, opened. The double album *From Memphis to Vegas/From Vegas to Memphis* came out the same month; the first LP consisted of live performances from the *International*, the second of more cuts from the *American Sound* sessions. "Suspicious Minds" reached


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the top of the charts—Presley's first U.S. pop number-one in over seven years, and his last.

Cassandra Peterson, later television's Elvira, met Presley during this period in Las Vegas, where she was working as a showgirl. She recalled of their encounter, "He was so anti-drug when I met him. I mentioned to him that I smoked marijuana, and he was just appalled. He said, 'Don't ever do that again.'" Presley was not only deeply opposed to recreational drugs, he also rarely drank. Several of his family members had been alcoholics, a fate he intended to avoid.


Back on tour and meeting Nixon

Presley returned to the International early in 1970 for the first of the year's two-month-long engagements, performing two shows a night. Recordings from these shows were issued on the album *On Stage*. In late February, Presley performed six attendance-record-breaking shows at the Houston Astrodome. In April, the single "The Wonder of You" was issued—a number one hit in the UK, it topped the U.S. adult contemporary chart, as well. MGM filmed rehearsal and concert footage at the International during August for the documentary *Elvis: That's the Way It Is*. Presley was performing in a jumpsuit, which would become a trademark of his live act. During this engagement, he was threatened with murder unless \$50,000 was paid. Presley had been the target of many threats since the

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1950s, often without his knowledge. The FBI took the threat seriously and security was stepped up for the next two shows. Presley went onstage with a Derringer in his right boot and a .45 pistol in his waistband, but the concerts succeeded without any incidents.

The album, *That's the Way It Is*, produced to accompany the documentary and featuring both studio and live recordings, marked a stylistic shift. As music historian John Robertson noted, "The authority of Presley's singing helped disguise the fact that the album stepped decisively away from the American-roots inspiration of the Memphis sessions towards a more middle-of-the-road sound. With country put on the back burner, and soul and R&B left in Memphis, what was left was very classy, very clean white pop—perfect for the Las Vegas crowd, but a definite retrograde step for Elvis." After the end of his International engagement on September 7, Presley embarked on a week-long concert tour, largely of the South, his first since 1958. Another week-long tour, of the West Coast, followed in November.


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On December 21, 1970, Presley engineered a meeting with President Richard Nixon at the White House, where he expressed his patriotism and explained how he believed he could reach out to the hippies to help combat the drug culture he and the president abhorred. He asked

Nixon for a Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs badge, to add to similar items he had begun collecting and to signify official sanction of his patriotic efforts. Nixon, who apparently found the encounter awkward, expressed a belief that Presley could send a positive message to young people and that it was, therefore, important that he “retain his credibility”. Presley told Nixon that The Beatles, whose songs he regularly performed in concert during the era, exemplified what he saw as a trend of anti-Americanism. Presley and his friends previously had a four-hour get-together with The Beatles at his home in Bel Air, California in August 1965. On hearing reports of the meeting, Paul McCartney later said that he “felt a bit betrayed. ... The great joke was that we were taking [illegal] drugs, and look what happened to him”, a reference to Presley’s early death, linked to prescription drug abuse.


The U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce named Presley one of its

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annual Ten Most Outstanding Young Men of the Nation on January 16, 1971. Not long after, the City of Memphis named the stretch of Highway 51 South on which Graceland is located "Elvis Presley Boulevard". The same year, Presley became the first rock and roll singer to be awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award (then known as the Bing Crosby Award) by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, the Grammy Award organization. Three new, non-film Presley studio albums were released in 1971, as many as had come out over the previous eight years. Best received by critics was Elvis Country, a concept record that focused on genre standards. The biggest seller was Elvis Sings the Wonderful World of Christmas, "the truest statement of all", according to Greil Marcus. "In the midst of ten painfully genteel Christmas songs, every one sung with appalling sincerity and humility, one could find Elvis tom-catting his way through six blazing minutes of 'Merry Christmas Baby,' a raunchy old Charles Brown blues. ... If [Presley's] sin was his lifelessness, it was his sinfulness that brought him to life".

Marriage breakdown and *Aloha from Hawaii*

MGM again filmed Presley in April 1972, this time for Elvis on Tour, which went on to win the Golden Globe Award for Best Documentary Film that year. His gospel album He Touched Me, released that month, would earn him his second competitive Grammy Award, for Best Inspirational Performance. A 14-date tour commenced with an unprecedented four consecutive sold-out

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shows at New York's Madison Square Garden. The evening concert on July 10 was recorded and issued in an LP form a week later. Elvis: As Recorded at Madison Square Garden became one of Presley's biggest-selling albums. After the tour, the single "Burning Love" was released—Presley's last top ten hit on the U.S. pop chart. "The most exciting single Elvis has made since 'All Shook Up'," wrote rock critic Robert Christgau. "Who else could make 'It's coming closer, the flames are now licking my body' sound like an a*signation with James Brown's backup band?"

High-collared white jumpsuit resplendent with red, blue, and gold eagle motif in sequins


Presley came up with his outfit's eagle motif, as "something that would say 'America' to the world".

Presley and his wife, meanwhile, had become increasingly distant, barely cohabiting. In 1971, an affair he had with Joyce Bova resulted—unbeknownst to him—in her pregnancy and an abortion. He often raised the possibility of her moving into Graceland, saying that he was likely to leave Priscilla. The Presleys separated on February 23, 1972, after Priscilla disclosed her relationship with Mike Stone, a karate instructor Presley had recommended to her. Priscilla related that when she told him, Presley "grabbed ... and forcefully made love to" her, declaring, "This is how a real man makes love to his woman." She later stated in an interview that she regretted her choice of words in describing the incident, and

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said it had been an overstatement. Five months later, Presley's new girlfriend, Linda Thompson, a songwriter and one-time Memphis beauty queen, moved in with him. Presley and his wife filed for divorce on August 18. According to Joe Moscheo of the Imperials, the failure of Presley's marriage "was a blow from which he never recovered." At a rare press conference that June, a reporter had asked Presley whether he was satisfied with his image. Presley replied, "Well, the image is one thing and the human being another ... it's very hard to live up to an image."

In January 1973, Presley performed two benefit concerts for the Kui Lee Cancer Fund in connection with a groundbreaking TV special, Aloha from Hawaii, which would be the first concert by a solo artist to be aired globally. The first show served as a practice run and backup should technical problems affect the live broadcast two days later. On January 14, Aloha from Hawaii aired live via satellite to prime-time audiences in Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as to U.S. servicemen based across Southeast Asia. In Japan, where it capped a nationwide Elvis Presley Week, it smashed viewing records. The next night, it was simulcast to 28 European countries, and in April an extended version finally aired in the U.S., where it won a 57 percent share of the TV audience.[248] Over time, Parker's claim that it was seen by one billion or more people would be broadly accepted, but that figure appeared to have been sheer

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invention. Presley's stage costume became the most recognized example of the elaborate concert garb with which his latter-day persona became closely associated. As described by Bobbie Ann Mason, "At the end of the show, when he spreads out his American Eagle cape, with the full stretched wings of the eagle studded on the back, he becomes a god figure." [254] The accompanying double album, released in February, went to number one and eventually sold over 5 million copies in the United States. It proved to be Presley's last U.S. number-one pop album during his lifetime.

At a midnight show the same month, four men rushed onto the stage in an apparent attack. Security men came to Presley's defense, and he ejected one invader from the stage himself. Following the show, he became obsessed with the idea that the men had been sent by Mike Stone to kill him. Though they were shown to have been only overexuberant fans, he raged, "There's too much pain in me ... Stone [must] die." His outbursts continued with such intensity that a physician was unable to calm him, despite administering large doses of medication. After another two full days of raging, Red West, his friend and bodyguard, felt compelled to get a price for a contract killing and was relieved when Presley decided, "Aw hell, let's just leave it for now. Maybe it's a bit heavy."


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1973–1977: Health deterioration and death

Medical crises and last studio sessions

Presley's divorce was finalized on October 9, 1973. By then, his health was in major and serious decline. Twice during the year, he overdosed on barbiturates, spending three days in a coma in his hotel suite after the first incident. Towards the end of 1973, he was hospitalized, semi-comatose from the effects of a pethidine addiction. According to his primary care physician, Dr. George C. Nichopoulos, Presley "felt that by getting drugs from a doctor, he wasn't the common everyday junkie getting something off the street". Since his comeback, he had staged more live shows with each passing year, and 1973 saw 168 concerts, his busiest schedule ever. Despite his failing health, in 1974, he undertook another intensive touring schedule.


Presley's condition declined precipitously in September. Keyboardist Tony Brown remembered Presley's arrival at a University of Maryland concert: "He fell out of the limousine, to his knees. People jumped to help, and he pushed them away like, 'Don't help me.' He walked on stage and held onto the mic for the first thirty minutes like it was a post. Everybody's looking at each other like, 'Is the tour gonna happen?'" Guitarist John Wilkinson recalled, "He was all gut. He was slurring. He was so f*cked up. ... It was obvious he was drugged. It was obvious there was something terribly wrong

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with his body. It was so bad the words to the songs were barely intelligible. ... I remember crying. He could barely get through the introductions." Wilkinson recounted that a few nights later in Detroit, "I watched him in his dressing room, just draped over a chair, unable to move. So often I thought, 'Boss, why don't you just cancel this tour and take a year off ...?' I mentioned something once in a guarded moment. He patted me on the back and said, 'It'll be all right. Don't you worry about it.'" Presley continued to play to sellout crowds. Cultural critic Marjorie Garber wrote that he was now widely seen as a garish pop crooner: "In effect, he had become Liberace. Even his fans were now middle-aged matrons and blue-haired grandmothers."

On July 13, 1976, Vernon Presley—who had become deeply involved in his son's financial affairs—fired "Memphis Mafia" bodyguards Red West (Presley's friend since the 1950s), Sonny West, and David Hebler, citing the need to "cut back on expenses". Presley was in Palm Springs at the time, and some suggested that he was too cowardly to face the three himself. Another associate of Presley's, John O'Grady, argued that the bodyguards were dropped because their rough treatment of fans had prompted too many lawsuits.[268] However, Presley's stepbrother, David Stanley, claimed that the bodyguards were fired because they were becoming more outspoken about Presley's drug dependency.

RCA, which had enjoyed a steady stream of product from Presley

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for over a decade, grew anxious as his interest in spending time in the studio waned. After a December 1973 session that produced 18 songs, enough for almost two albums, he did not enter the studio in 1974. Parker sold RCA yet another concert record, *Elvis Recorded Live on Stage in Memphis*. Recorded on March 20, it included a version of “How Great Thou Art” that would win Presley his third and final competitive Grammy Award. (All three of his competitive Grammy wins—out of 14 total nominations—were for gospel recordings.) Presley returned to the studio in Hollywood in March 1975, but Parker’s attempts to arrange another session toward the end of the year were unsuccessful. In 1976, RCA sent a mobile studio to Graceland that made possible two full-scale recording sessions at Presley’s home. Even in that comfortable context, the recording process became a struggle for him.

Despite concerns from his label and manager, between July 1973 and October 1976 Presley recorded virtually the entire contents of six albums. Though he was no longer a major presence on the pop charts, five of those albums entered the top five of the country chart, and three went to number one: *Promised Land* (1975), *From Elvis Presley Boulevard, Memphis, Tennessee* (1976), and *Moody Blue* (1977).[278] Similarly, his singles in this era did not prove to be major pop hits, but Presley remained a significant force in the country and adult contemporary markets. Eight studio singles from this period released during his lifetime were top ten hits on one or both

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charts, four in 1974 alone. "My Boy" was a number-one adult contemporary hit in 1975, and "Moody Blue" topped the country chart and reached the second spot on the adult contemporary chart in 1976. Perhaps his most critically acclaimed recording of the era came that year, with what Greil Marcus described as his "apocalyptic attack" on the soul classic "Hurt". "If he felt the way he sounded", Dave Marsh wrote of Presley's performance, "the wonder isn't that he had only a year left to live but that he managed to survive that long."

Final months and death

Presley and Linda Thompson split in November 1976, and he took up with a new girlfriend, Ginger Alden.[282] He proposed to Alden and gave her an engagement ring two months later, though several of his friends later claimed that he had no serious intention of marrying again. Journalist Tony Scherman wrote that by early 1977, "Presley had become a grotesque caricature of his sleek, energetic former self. Hugely overweight, his mind dulled by the pharmacopia he daily ingested, he was barely able to pull himself through his abbreviated concerts." [284] In Alexandria, Louisiana, he was on stage for less than an hour, and "was impossible to understand". [On March 31, Presley failed to perform in Baton Rouge, unable to get out of his hotel bed; a total of four shows had to be canceled and rescheduled. Despite the accelerating deterioration of his health, he stuck to most touring commitments. According to Guralnick, fans "were becoming

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increasingly voluble about their disappointment, but it all seemed to go right past Presley, whose world was now confined almost entirely to his room and his spiritualism books." A cousin, Billy Smith, recalled how Presley would sit in his room and chat for hours, sometimes recounting favorite Monty Python sketches and his own past escapades, but more often gripped by paranoid obsessions that reminded Smith of Howard Hughes.

"Way Down", Presley's last single issued during his career, was released on June 6. That month, CBS filmed two concerts for a TV special, *Elvis in Concert*, to be aired in October. In the first, shot in Omaha on June 19, Presley's voice, Guralnick writes, "is almost unrecognizable, a small, childlike instrument in which he talks more than sings most of the songs, casts about uncertainly for the melody in others, and is virtually unable to articulate or project". Two days later, in Rapid City, South Dakota, "he looked healthier, seemed to have lost a little weight, and sounded better, too", though, by the conclusion of the performance, his face was "framed in a helmet of blue-black hair from which sweat sheets down over pale, swollen cheeks". His final concert was held in Indianapolis at Market Square Arena, on June 26.


he book *Elvis: What Happened?*, co-written by the three bodyguards fired the previous year, was published on August 1. It was the first exposé to detail Presley's years of drug misuse. He was devastated by the book and tried unsuccessfully

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to halt its release by offering money to the publishers. By this point, he suffered from multiple ailments: glaucoma, high blood pressure, liver damage, and an enlarged colon, each magnified—and possibly caused—by drug abuse.

On the evening of Tuesday, August 16, 1977, Presley was scheduled to fly out of Memphis to begin another tour. That afternoon, Ginger Alden discovered him in an unresponsive state on a bathroom floor. According to her eyewitness account, “Elvis looked as if his entire body had completely frozen in a seated position while using the commode and then had fallen forward, in that fixed position, directly in front of it. ... It was clear that, from the time whatever hit him to the moment he had landed on the floor, Elvis hadn’t moved.” Attempts to revive him failed, and his death was officially pronounced the next day at 3:30 p.m. at the Baptist Memorial Hospital.


President Jimmy Carter issued a statement that credited Presley with having “permanently changed the face of American popular culture”. Thousands of people gathered outside Graceland to view the open casket. One of Presley’s cousins, Billy Mann, accepted \$18,000 to secretly photograph the corpse; the picture appeared on the cover of the National Enquirer’s biggest-selling issue ever. Alden struck a \$105,000 deal with the Enquirer for her story, but settled for less when she broke her exclusivity agreement. Presley left her nothing in his will.

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Presley's funeral was held at Graceland on Thursday, August 18. Outside the gates, a car plowed into a group of fans, killing two women and critically injuring a third. About 80,000 people lined the processional route to Forest Hill Cemetery, where Presley was buried next to his mother. Within a few weeks, "Way Down" topped the country and UK pop charts. Following an attempt to steal Presley's body in late August, the remains of both Presley and his mother were reburied in Graceland's Meditation Garden on October 2.

Cause of death


While an autopsy, undertaken the same day Presley died, was still in progress, Memphis medical examiner Dr. Jerry Francisco announced that the immediate cause of death was cardiac arrest. Asked if drugs were involved, he declared that "drugs played no role in Presley's death".^[30] In fact, "drug use was heavily implicated" in Presley's death, writes Guralnick. The pathologists conducting the autopsy thought it possible, for instance, that he had suffered "anaphylactic shock brought on by the codeine pills he had gotten from his dentist, to which he was known to have had a mild allergy". A pair of lab reports filed two months later strongly suggested that polypharmacy was the primary cause of death; one reported "fourteen drugs in Elvis' system, ten in significant quantity". In 1979, forensic pathologist Cyril Wecht conducted a review of the reports and concluded that a combination of

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central nervous system depressants had resulted in Presley's accidental death.[301] Forensic historian and pathologist Michael Baden viewed the situation as complicated: "Elvis had had an enlarged heart for a long time. That, together with his drug habit, caused his death. But he was difficult to diagnose; it was a judgment call."

The competence and ethics of two of the centrally involved medical professionals were seriously questioned. Dr. Francisco had offered a cause of death before the autopsy was complete; claimed the underlying ailment was cardiac arrhythmia, a condition that can be determined only in someone who is still alive; and denied drugs played any part in Presley's death before the toxicology results were known. Allegations of a cover-up were widespread.[303] While a 1981 trial of Presley's main physician, Dr. George Nichopoulos, exonerated him of criminal liability for his death, the facts were startling: "In the first eight months of 1977 alone, he had [prescribed] more than 10,000 doses of sedatives, amphetamines, and narcotics: all in Elvis' name." His license was suspended for three months. It was permanently revoked in the 1990s after the Tennessee Medical Board brought new charges of over-prescription.

In 1994, the Presley autopsy report was reopened. Dr. Joseph Davis, who had conducted thousands of autopsies as Miami-Dade County coroner, declared at its completion, "There is nothing in any of the data that supports a death from drugs. In fact,

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everything points to a sudden, violent heart attack.” More recent research has revealed that Dr. Francisco did not speak for the entire pathology team. Other staff “could say nothing with confidence until they got the results back from the laboratories, if then. That would be a matter of weeks.” One of the examiners, Dr. E. Eric Muirhead “could not believe his ears. Francisco had not only presumed to speak for the hospital’s team of pathologists, he had announced a conclusion that they had not reached. ... Early on, a meticulous dissection of the body ... confirmed [that] Elvis was chronically ill with diabetes, glaucoma, and constipation. As they proceeded, the doctors saw evidence that his body had been wracked over a span of years by a large and constant stream of drugs. They had also studied his hospital records, which included two admissions for drug detoxification and methadone treatments.” Writer Frank Coffey thought Elvis’s death was due to “a phenomenon called the Valsalva maneuver (essentially straining on the toilet leading to heart stoppage—plausible because Elvis suffered constipation, a common reaction to drug use)”. In similar terms, Dr. Dan Warlick, who was present at the autopsy, “believes Presley’s chronic constipation—the result of years of prescription drug abuse and high-fat, high-cholesterol gorging—brought on what’s known as Valsalva’s maneuver. Put simply, the strain of attempting to defecate compressed the singer’s abdominal aorta, shutting down his heart.”

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However, in 2013, Dr. Forest Tennant, who had testified as a defense witness in Nichopoulos' trial, described his own analysis of Presley's available medical records. He concluded that Presley's "drug abuse had led to falls, head trauma, and overdoses that damaged his brain", and that his death was due in part to a toxic reaction to codeine—exacerbated by an undetected liver enzyme defect—which can cause sudden cardiac arrhythmia. DNA analysis in 2014 of a hair sample purported to be Presley's found evidence of genetic variants that can lead to glaucoma, migraines, and obesity; a crucial variant associated with the heart-muscle disease hypertrophic cardiomyopathy was also identified.

Later developments

Between 1977 and 1981, six of Presley's posthumously released singles were top-ten country hits.

Graceland was opened to the public in 1982. Attracting over half a million visitors annually, it became the second most-visited home in the United States, after the White House.[310] It was declared a National Historic Landmark in 2006.

Presley has been inducted into five music halls of fame: the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (1986), the Country Music Hall of Fame (1998), the Gospel Music Hall of Fame (2001), the Rockabilly Hall of Fame (2007), and the Memphis Music Hall of Fame (2012). In 1984, he received the W. C. Handy Award from

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the Blues Foundation and the Academy of Country Music's first Golden Hat Award. In 1987, he received the American Music Awards' Award of Merit.

A Junkie XL remix of Presley's "A Little Less Conversation" (credited as "Elvis Vs JXL") was used in a Nike advertising campaign during the 2002 FIFA World Cup. It topped the charts in over 20 countries and was included in a compilation of Presley's number-one hits, *ELVIS*, which was also an international success. The album returned Presley to the Billboard summit for the first time in almost three decades.


In 2003, a remix of "Rubberneckin'", a 1969 recording of Presley's, topped the U.S. sales chart, as did a 50th-anniversary re-release of "That's All Right" the following year. The latter was an outright hit in Britain, debuting at number three on the pop chart; it also made the top ten in Canada. In 2005, another three reissued singles, "Jailhouse Rock", "One Night"/"I Got Stung", and "It's Now or Never", went to number one in the United Kingdom. They were part of a campaign that saw the re-release of all 18 of Presley's previous chart-topping UK singles. The first, "All Shook Up", came with a collectors' box that made it ineligible to chart again; each of the other 17 reissues hit the British top five.

In 2005, Forbes named Presley the top-earning deceased celebrity for the fifth straight year, with a gross income of \$45 million. He was placed second in 2006, returned to the top

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spot the next two years, and ranked fourth in 2009. The following year, he was ranked second, with his highest annual income ever—\$60 million—spurred by the celebration of his 75th birthday and the launch of Cirque du Soleil's Viva Elvis show in Las Vegas. In November 2010, Viva Elvis: The Album was released, setting his voice to newly recorded instrumental tracks. As of mid-2011, there were an estimated 15,000 licensed Presley products, and he was again the second-highest-earning deceased celebrity. Six years later, he ranked fourth with earnings of \$35 million, up \$8 million from 2016 due in part to the opening of a new entertainment complex, Elvis Presley's Memphis, and hotel, The Guest House at Graceland.

For much of his adult life, Presley, with his rise from poverty to riches and massive fame, had seemed to epitomize the American Dream. In his final years and even more so after his death, and the revelations about its circumstances, he became a symbol of excess and gluttony. Increasing attention, for instance, was paid to his appetite for the rich, heavy Southern cooking of his upbringing, foods such as chicken-fried steak and biscuits and gravy. In particular, his love of calorie-laden fried peanut butter, banana, and (sometimes) bacon sandwiches, now known as "Elvis sandwiches", came to stand for this aspect of his persona. But the Elvis sandwich represents more than just unhealthy overindulgence—as media and culture scholar Robert Thompson describes, the

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unsophisticated treat also signifies Presley's enduring all-American appeal: "He wasn't only the king, he was one of us."

Since 1977, there have been numerous alleged sightings of Presley. A long-standing conspiracy theory among some fans is that he faked his death. Adherents cite alleged discrepancies in the death certificate, reports of a wax dummy in his original coffin, and accounts of Presley planning a diversion so he could retire in peace. An unusually large number of fans have domestic shrines devoted to Presley and journey to sites with which he is connected, however faintly. Every August 16, the anniversary of his death, thousands of people gather outside Graceland and celebrate his memory with a candlelight ritual. "With Elvis, it is not just his music that has survived death", writes Ted Harrison. "He himself has been raised, like a medieval saint, to a figure of cultic status. It is as if he has been canonized by acclamation."

Artistry

Influences

Presley's earliest musical influence came from gospel. His mother recalled that from the age of two, at the Assembly of God church in Tupelo attended by the family, "he would slide down off my lap, run into the aisle and scramble up to the platform. There he would stand looking at the choir and trying

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to sing with them.” In Memphis, Presley frequently attended all-night gospel singings at the Ellis Auditorium, where groups such as the Statesmen Quartet led the music in a style that, Guralnick suggests, sowed the seeds of Presley’s future stage act:

The Statesmen were an electric combination ... featuring some of the most thrillingly emotive singing and daringly unconventional showmanship in the entertainment world ... dressed in suits that might have come out of the window of Lansky’s. ... Bass singer Jim Wetherington, known universally as the Big Chief, maintained a steady bottom, ceaselessly jiggling first his left leg, then his right, with the material of the pants leg ballooning out and shimmering. “He went about as far as you could go in gospel music,” said Jake Hess. “The women would jump up, just like they do for the pop shows.” Preachers frequently objected to the lewd movements ... but audiences reacted with screams and swoons.

As a teenager, Presley’s musical interests were wide-ranging, and he was deeply informed about both white and African-American musical idioms. Though he never had any formal training, he had a remarkable memory, and his musical knowledge was already considerable by the time he made his first professional recordings aged 19 in 1954. When Jerry

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Leiber and Mike Stoller met him two years later, they were astonished at his encyclopedic understanding of the blues, and, as Stoller put it, "He certainly knew a lot more than we did about country music and gospel music." At a press conference the following year, he proudly declared, "I know practically every religious song that's ever been written."

Musicianship


Presley received his first guitar when he was 11 years old. He learned to play and sing; he gained no formal musical training but had an innate natural talent and could easily pick up music. Presley played guitar, bass, and piano. While he couldn't read or write music and had no formal lessons, he was a natural musician and played everything by ear. Presley often played an instrument on his recordings and produced his own music. Presley played rhythm acoustic guitar on most of his Sun recordings and his 1950s RCA albums. He played electric bass guitar on "(You're So Square) Baby I Don't Care" after his bassist Bill Black had trouble with the instrument.[348] Presley played the bass line including the intro. Presley played piano on songs such as "Old Shep" and "First in Line" from his 1956 album Elvis.[349] He is credited with playing piano on later albums such as From Elvis in Memphis and Moody Blue, and on "Unchained Melody" which was one of the last songs that he recorded.[350] Presley played lead guitar on one of his successful singles called "One Night". Presley also

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played guitar on one of his successful singles called “Are You Lonesome Tonight”. In the 68 Comeback Special, Elvis took over on lead electric guitar, the first time he had ever been seen with the instrument in public, playing it on songs such as “Baby What You Want Me to Do” and “Lawdy Miss Clawdy”. Elvis played the back of his guitar on some of his hits such as “All Shook Up”, “Don’t Be Cruel”, and “(Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear”, providing percussion by slapping the instrument to create a beat. The album *Elvis is Back!* features Presley playing a lot of acoustic guitar on songs such as “I Will Be Home Again” and “Like a Baby”.

Musical styles and genres

Presley was a central figure in the development of rockabilly, according to music historians. “Rockabilly crystallized into a recognizable style in 1954 with Elvis Presley’s first release, on the Sun label”, writes Craig Morrison. Paul Friedlander describes the defining elements of rockabilly, which he similarly characterizes as “essentially ... an Elvis Presley construction”: “the raw, emotive, and slurred vocal style and emphasis on rhythmic feeling [of] the blues with the string band and strummed rhythm guitar [of] country”. In “That’s All Right”, the Presley trio’s first record, Scotty Moore’s guitar solo, “a combination of Merle Travis–style country finger-picking, double-stop slides from acoustic boogie, and blues-based bent-note, single-string work, is a microcosm of this

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fusion.” While Katherine Charlton likewise calls Presley “rockabilly’s originator”, Carl Perkins has explicitly stated that “[Sam] Phillips, Elvis, and I didn’t create rockabilly” and, according to Michael Campbell, “Bill Haley recorded the first big rockabilly hit.” In Moore’s view, too, “It had been there for quite a while, really. Carl Perkins was doing basically the same sort of thing up around Jackson, and I know for a fact Jerry Lee Lewis had been playing that kind of music ever since he was ten years old.”

At RCA, Presley’s rock and roll sound grew distinct from rockabilly with group chorus vocals, more heavily amplified electric guitars and a tougher, more intense manner. While he was known for taking songs from various sources and giving them a rockabilly/rock and roll treatment, he also recorded songs in other genres from early in his career, from the pop standard “Blue Moon” at Sun to the country ballad “How’s the World Treating You?” on his second LP to the blues of “Santa Claus Is Back in Town”. In 1957, his first gospel record was released, the four-song EP *Peace in the Valley*. Certified as a million-seller, it became the top-selling gospel EP in recording history. Presley would record gospel periodically for the rest of his life.

After his return from military service in 1960, Presley continued to perform rock and roll, but the characteristic style was substantially toned down. His first post-Army single, the number-one hit “Stuck on You”, is typical of this

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shift. RCA publicity materials referred to its “mild rock beat”; discographer Ernst Jorgensen calls it “upbeat pop”. The number five “She’s Not You” (1962) “integrates the Jordanaires so completely, it’s practically doo-wop”. The modern blues/R&B sound captured with success on *Elvis Is Back!* was essentially abandoned for six years until such 1966–67 recordings as “Down in the Alley” and “Hi-Heel Sneakers”. Presley’s output during most of the 1960s emphasized pop music, often in the form of ballads such as “Are You Lonesome Tonight?”, a number-one in 1960. “It’s Now or Never”, which also topped the chart that year, was a classically influenced variation of pop based on the Neapolitan “‘O sole mio” and concluding with a “full-voiced operatic cadence”. These were both dramatic numbers, but most of what Presley recorded for his many film soundtracks was in a much lighter vein.

While Presley performed several of his classic ballads for the ‘68 Comeback Special, the sound of the show was dominated by aggressive rock and roll. He would record few new straight-ahead rock and roll songs thereafter; as he explained, they were “hard to find”. A significant exception was “Burning Love”, his last major hit on the pop charts. Like his work of the 1950s, Presley’s subsequent recordings reworked pop and country songs, but in markedly different permutations. His stylistic range now began to embrace a more contemporary rock sound as well as soul and funk. Much of Elvis in Memphis, as well as “Suspicious Minds”, cut at the same sessions,

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reflected his new rock and soul fusion. In the mid-1970s, many of his singles found a home on country radio, the field where he first became a star.

Vocal style and range

The developmental arc of Presley's singing voice, as described by critic Dave Marsh, goes from "high and thrilled in the early days, [to] lower and perplexed in the final months." Marsh credits Presley with the introduction of the "vocal stutter" on 1955's "Baby Let's Play House". When on "Don't Be Cruel", Presley "slides into a 'mmmmm' that marks the transition between the first two verses," he shows "how masterful his relaxed style really is." Marsh describes the vocal performance on "Can't Help Falling in Love" as one of "gentle insistence and delicacy of phrasing", with the line "'Shall I stay' pronounced as if the words are fragile as crystal".


Jorgensen calls the 1966 recording of "How Great Thou Art" "an extraordinary fulfillment of his vocal ambitions", as Presley "crafted for himself an ad-hoc arrangement in which he took every part of the four-part vocal, from [the] bass intro to the soaring heights of the song's operatic climax", becoming "a kind of one-man quartet". Guralnick finds "Stand By Me" from the same gospel sessions "a beautifully articulated, almost nakedly yearning performance," but, by contrast, feels that Presley reaches beyond his powers on "Where No One Stands

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Alone", resorting "to a kind of inelegant bellowing to push out a sound" that Jake Hess of the Statesmen Quartet had in his command. Hess himself thought that while others might have voices the equal of Presley's, "he had that certain something that everyone searches for all during their lifetime." Guralnick attempts to pinpoint that something: "The warmth of his voice, his controlled use of both vibrato technique and natural falsetto range, the subtlety and deeply felt conviction of his singing were all qualities recognizably belonging to his talent but just as recognizably not to be achieved without sustained dedication and effort."

Marsh praises his 1968 reading of "U.S. Male", "bearing down on the hard guy lyrics, not sending them up or overplaying them but tossing them around with that astonishingly tough yet gentle assurance that he brought to his Sun records." The performance on "In the Ghetto" is, according to Jorgensen, "devoid of any of his characteristic vocal tricks or mannerisms", instead relying on the exceptional "clarity and sensitivity of his voice". Guralnick describes the song's delivery as of "almost translucent eloquence ... so quietly confident in its simplicity". On "Suspicious Minds", Guralnick hears essentially the same "remarkable mixture of tenderness and poise", but supplemented with "an expressive quality somewhere between stoicism (at suspected infidelity) and anguish (over impending loss)".

Music critic Henry Pleasants observes that "Presley has been

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described variously as a baritone and a tenor. An extraordinary compass ... and a very wide range of vocal color have something to do with this divergence of opinion." He identifies Presley as a high baritone, calculating his range as two octaves and a third, "from the baritone low G to the tenor high B, with an upward extension in falsetto to at least a D-flat. Presley's best octave is in the middle, D-flat to D-flat, granting an extra full step up or down." In Pleasants' view, his voice was "variable and unpredictable" at the bottom, "often brilliant" at the top, with the capacity for "full-voiced high Gs and As that an opera baritone might envy". Scholar Lindsay Waters, who figures Presley's range as two-and-a-quarter octaves, emphasizes that "his voice had an emotional range from tender whispers to sighs down to shouts, grunts, grumbles, and sheer gruffness that could move the listener from calmness and surrender, to fear. His voice can not be measured in octaves, but in decibels; even that misses the problem of how to measure delicate whispers that are hardly audible at all." Presley was always "able to duplicate the open, hoarse, ecstatic, screaming, shouting, wailing, reckless sound of the black rhythm-and-blues and gospel singers", writes Pleasants, and also demonstrated a remarkable ability to assimilate many other vocal styles.

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Lyrics

Blue Velvet

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

6 -7 7 8 -7

She wore blue velvet.

-6-7 7 8 -8 -7 -6 6

Bluer than velvet was the night.

-5 6 -6 -8-6


Softer than satin

-5 -4 6 6 -7 -8

was the light from the stars.

6 -7 7 8 -7

She wore blue velvet.

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-6 -7 7 8 -8 -7 -6 6

Bluer than velvet were her eyes,

-5 6 -6 -8 -6 -5 -4 6

Warmer than May her tender sighs.

6 -7 -8

Love was ours.

8 8 8 -8 7 -88-8

Ours a love I held tightly,

-8 -8 -8 7 5 6

feeling the rapture grow,

8 8 8 -8 7 -88-8

Like a flame burning brightly,

-8 -7 -8 -7 7 -6 7 6

but then she left, gone was the glow

-7 7 8 -7 -6 -7 7 8


Of blue velvet, precious and warm

-8 -7-6-7 6 -7 -8

a memory through the years.

7 -8 8 7 -5 -5 -5 -8

And I still can see blue velvet

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-8 -7 7

through my tears.

-7 -6 6

Memory sounds good, too.

Lyrics

For The Good Times (chrom)

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner


By: Kris Kristofferson

Key: F

-2 3 -3 -33 -3* -3 3 -2 -3

Don't look so sad, I know it's o-ver.

-2 3 -3 -3 3 3 -3* -3 3

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But life goes on, and this old world

1 -2 3 -3* -3

will keep on turn-ing.

-2 3 -3 -3* -2 -3*

Let's just be glad we had

-5 -5 4 -2 -2 3 -3* -3

some time to spend to-geth-er.

3 -3 -3* -3* -3*

There's no need to watch

-3 -3 3 -1 -2 -2 2

the bridg-es that we're burn-ing.

-2 3 -3 -3 -3 -3* -3 3

Lay your head up-on my pil-low.

3 -3 4 4 4 4 -5 4 4 -3* -3

Hold your warm and ten-der bod-y close to mine.

-3 -3* 4 4 4 4 -5 5

Hear the whis-per of the rain-drops,

5 -5 4 -3* -3* -3 4 -3*

Blow-in' soft a-cross the win-dow,

1 -3* -3* -3* -3 -3* 3 -2 2 -22-12

And make be-lieve you love me one more time,


2 3 3 -2

For the good times.

I'll get along-; you'll find another,

And I'll be here if you should find you ever need me.

Don't say a word about tomorrow or forever,

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There'll be time enough for sadness when you leave me.

Lay your head upon my pillow.

Hold your warm and tender body close to mine.

Hear the whisper of the raindrops,

Blowin' soft against the window,

And make believe you love me one more time,

For the good times.

Lyrics

For the Good Times

Key: G

Genre: General


Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

4 -4 5 5 -4 -5 5 -4 4 5

Don't look so sad-, I know it's over.

4 -4 5 5 -4 -4 -5 5 -4 3 4 -4 -5 5

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But life goes on, and this old world will keep on turning.

4 -4 5 -5 4 -5 -6 -6 6 4 4 -4 -5 5

Let's just be glad we had some time to spend together.

-4 5 -5 -5 -5 5 5 -4 -3" 4 4 -3

There's no need to watch the bridges that we're burning.

4 -4 5 5 5 -5 5 -4

Lay your head upon my pillow.

-4 5 6 6 6 6 -6 6 6 -5 5

Hold your warm and tender body close to mine.

5 -5 6 6 6 6 -6 6

Hear the whisper of the raindrops,

6 -6 6 -5 -5 5 6 -5

Blowin' soft against the window,

3 -5 -5 -5 5 -5 -4 4 -3 4 -3 -3"-3

And make believe you love me one more time—,

-3 -4 -4 4

For the good times.

4 -4 5 5 -4 -5 5 -4 4 5

I'll get along-; you'll find another,

4 -4 5 5 -4 -4 -5 5 -4 3 4 -4 -5 5


And I'll be here if you should find you ever need me.

4 -4 5 -5 4 -5 -6 -6 6 4 -4 -5 5

Don't say a word about tomorrow or forever,

-4 5 -5 -5 -5 5 5 -4 -3" 4 4 -3

There'll be time enough for sadness when you leave me.

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4 -4 5 5 5 -5 5 -4

Lay your head upon my pillow.

-4 5 6 6 6 6 -6 6 6 -5 5

Hold your warm and tender body close to mine.

5 -5 6 6 6 6 -6 6

Hear the whisper of the raindrops,

6 -6 6 -5 -5 5 6 -5

Blowin' soft against the window,

3 -5 -5 -5 5 -5 -4 4 -3 4 -3 -3"-3

And make believe you love me one more time—,

-3 -4 -4 4

For the good times.


Lyrics

Mi Casa, Su Casa

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

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Skill: Beginner
(BOY)

6 5 5 6 5 5

Mi ca-sa, su ca-sa

7 7 -6 -6 -6b

My house is your house

-6 -6 7 -7 -6 -6b -6b 6

Wel-come to my ha-ci-en-da!

6 5 5 6 5 5

Mi ca-sa, su ca-sa

7 7 -6 -6 -6b

My home is your home

-6 -6 7 -7 -6 -6b -6b 6

Ill give you love warm and ten-der

4 7 -6 7 -7 7

My house is noth-ing more


-6b 6 -5b 6 -6b 6

Than win-dows and a door

-5b 6 -6 -6b 6 -5b 5 -5b -6b

And a roof that will keep out the rain!

4 7 -6 7 -7 7

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The day you say you're mine

-6b 6 -5b 6 -6b 6

My hum-ble house will shine

-6b -6b -6b -6b -6 7 -7

Just like a cas-tle in Spain!

6 5 5 6 5 5

Mi ca-sa, su ca-sa

7 7 -6 -6 -6b

My house is your house

-6 -6 7 -7 -6 -6b -6b 6

Lets plan the fu-ture to-geth-er!

6 5 5 6 5

Tell me, oh tell me

5 7 7 -6 -6 -6b

That your heart is my heart


-6 -6 7 -7 7 -6 -7 7

And I will love you for-ev-er!

(GIRL)


Mi ca-sa, su ca-sa

My house is your house

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Darling, it's our hacienda
Mi casa, su casa,
My home is your home
Filled with a love, warm and tender
Our house is nothing more
Than windows and a door
And a roof that will keep out the rain
As long as you are mine
Our house will always shine
Just like a castle in Spain
Mi casa, su casa
My house is our house
We'll plan the future together
Your dream is my dream
And heaven be willing
Our love will live on forever

Lyrics

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Rock The Boat

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any


Skill: Beginner

By Wally Holmes

Hues Corporation

Key: Eb

-7* 8 -9* 9 -9* 9
So I'd like to know where,
-9* -9* 9 11 -9
you got the no-tion
-7* 8 -9* 9 -10 9
Said I'd like to know where,
-9* -9* 9 11 -9
you got the no-tion
9 -9* -9* -9*
To rock the boat,
9 -9* 9 9 9 -9*
don't rock the boat ba-by
-9* -9* -9*
Rock the boat,
9 -9* 9 -9* 11 11

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don't tip the boat ov-er

-9* -9* -9*

Rock the boat,

9 -9* 9 9 9 -9*

don't rock the boat ba-by

11* 11* 11* 11 -10 11-10*

Rock the boat

7 -7* 8 7 -7* -7* 7 -6 7 5

Ev-er since our voy-age of love be-gan

-9* -9* -9 -9 8

Your touch has thrilled me

8 -7* -7* 7 -7* 8

like the rush of the wind

-9 -9 -9 8 8 -7*

And your arms have held me

-7* 7 7 -7* 7 -6

safe from a roll-ing sea

-3* 7 -7* 7 -6 7 -7* 7

There's al-ways been a qui-et place

-3* 7 -6 -6 -6 -6

to har-bor you and me


-7* -7* -7* -7*-7* -8 -8 -8 8 -8

Our love is like a ship on the o-cean

9 -9* -10 -9* 9 -9*-10-9* 9 -9*

We've been sail-ing with a car-go full of,

11 11 11 -10 -9*

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love and de-vo-tion

-7* 8 -9* 9 -9* 9

So I'd like to know where,

-9* -9* 9 11 -9

you got the no-tion

-7* 8 -9* 9 -10 9

Said I'd like to know where,

-9* -9* 9 11 -9

you got the no-tion

9 -9* -9* -9*

To rock the boat,

9 -9* 9 9 9 -9*

don't rock the boat ba-by

-9* -9* -9*

Rock the boat,

9 -9* 9 -9* 11 11

don't tip the boat ov-er

-9* -9* -9* 9 -9* 9 9 9 -9*

Rock the boat, don't rock the boat ba-by

11* 11* 11* 11-10 11

Rock the boat


Up to now we sailed through every storm

And I've always had your tender lips to keep me warm

Oh I need to have the strength that flows from you

don't let me drift away my dear, when love can see me through

Our love is like a ship

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Lyrics

The Way You Look Tonight

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

6 4 -4 5 -5 5 -4

Someday, when I'm awfully low.

5 -5 6 -5 5

When the world is cold.

-5 6 -6 6 -5 6 -6 -7 7 4

I will feel a glow, just thinking of you.

-4 5 6 -5 5 -4 4


And the way you look, tonight.

6 6 6 5 4 -4 5 -5 5 -4

Yes you're lovely, with your smile so warm.

5 -5 6 -5 5

And your cheeks so soft.

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-5 6 -6 6 -5 6 -6 -7 7 4

There is nothing for me but to love you.

-4 5 6 -5 5 -4 4

And the way you look, tonight.

6 6 6 6 6 -6 -5 5

With each word, your tenderness grows.

-4 5 4 -4 5 -6

Tearing my fear apart.

6 6 6 6 6 -6 -5 5

And that laugh, that wrinkles your nose.

-4 -4 5 4 -4 5-6 6

It touches my foolish, heart.

6 4 -4 5 -5 5 -4

Lovely, never ever change.

5 -5 6 -5 5


Keep that breathless charm.

-5 6 -6 6 -5 6 -6 -7 7 4

Won't you please arrange it cause I love you

-4 5 6 -5 5 -4 4

And the way you look, tonight.

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Lyrics

MacArthur Park

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

5 5 5 5 -5 5 -4 4 5

Spring was never waiting for us girl

5 -5 5 -4 4 -4 -4 -4 -4 4 -3 b-3

It ran one step ahead as we followed in the dance

b-3 5 5 5 5 -5 5 -4 4 5

Between the parted pages and were pressed

5 -5 5 -4 4 -4-4 -4 -4 -4 -4 4


in love`s hot fevered iron like a striped pair

-3 b-3

of pants

CHORUS

3 -3 -3 -3 -3 4 -3 b-3 3 -3

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MacArthur`s Park is melting in the dark

-3 -3 4 -3 b-3 3 -4 5 -5

All the sweet green icing flowing down

5 5 5 5 -5 5 -4 4 5

Some-one left the cake out in the rain

5 b6 6 6 6 b6 -6 6

I don`t think that I can take it

5 -5 6 6 6 b6 -6 6

`Cause it took so long to bake it

5 -5 6 6 6 6 -6 6 -6-7 7 -8

And I`ll never have that recipe again Oh No

I recall a yellow cotton dress

Foaming like a wave on the ground around your knees

The birds like tender babies in your hands

and the old man playing chequers by the trees

PLAY CHORUS

5 5 5 5 5-4 4 -4 5

There will be another song for me

-4 4 -4 5 4

For I will sing it


-4 -4 -4 -4-4 4 -3 4 -4

There will be another dream for me


4 -3 4 -4 3 3 4

Some-one will bring it

5 6 -6 -6 -6 -6 -6 -6

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I will drink the wine while it`s warm
-6 -6-6 -6 -6 -6 -5 6-5 5 -5 6
and never let you catch me looking at the sun
5 -5-5 -5 -5 -5 5-4 -4 5 -5
And after all the loves of my life
5 5 5 5 5-4 4 4 -4 5 -5 5 -4
After all the loves of my life you`ll still be
4 -4
the one
4 -4 5 5 5 -4 4 -4 5 -4 4 -4
I will take my life into my hands and I will
5-4 4 4-4
use it
-4 -4 -4 -4 -4 4 -3 4 -4 4 -3 4
I will win the worship in their eyes and I will
-4 3 3 4
lose it
5 6 -6 -6 -6 -6 -6 -6 -6
I will have the things that I desire
-6 -6 -7 -6 6 -5 6 -5 5 -5 6
And my passion flows like rivers to the sky
5 -5-5 -5 -5 -5 -4 5 -5
And after all the loves of my life
-5 5 5 5 5 5 4 -4 5
Oh after all the loves of my life
-5 5 -4 -4 4 -4
I`ll be thinking of you

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-4 -4 4 -3 5~~~~~

And wondering why~~~~~

Lyrics

I just called to say

Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

I just called

6 -7 7 7 6 -7 7 7


No New Year's Day to celebrate—

6 -7 7 7 -7

No choc'late covered

7 -8 8 -8 7 -7 -6

candy hearts to give away.

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-6 7 -8 8-8 -6 7 -7 -7

No first of Spring, no song to sing.

-6 7 -8 -8 7 7 -8 8-8 7-7 6

In fact, here's just another ordinary day.

Verse 2

No April rain, No flowers bloom

No wedding Saturday within the month of June.

But what it is, is something true

Made up of these three words I must say to you.

Chorus

7 7 -6 7 -7 6 -7 7

I just called to say I love you.

7 7 -6 7 -7 -6 6 -6 5

I just called to say how much I care.

7 7 -6 7 -7 6 -8 7

I just called to say I love you,

7 7 -6 6 -5 -4 5 -4 5 5-4 4

And I mean it from the bottom of my heart.


Verse 3

No summer's high, no warm July-

No harvest moon to light one tender August night.

No Autumn breeze; no falling leaves.

Not even time for birds to fly to Southern skies.

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chorus

Verse 4

No Libra sun, no Halloween.

No giving thanths to all the Christmas joy you bring.

But what it is, through old and new

To fill you heart like no three words could ever do.

Chorus

Lyrics

Early One Morning


Key: G

Genre: General

Harp Type: Any

Skill: Beginner

This is an English Traditional. It played in the series 'buffy the

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vampire slayer', which is where I heard it first.
Well, I tabbed this from what I remember of the song (as
played in
buffy the vampire slayer). Different versions do differ quite
a
bit...

4 4 4 4 5 6 6 -6 -5 -4 4 -3 -4 3

Early one morning just as the sun was rising

3 4 4 4 4 5 6 6 -6 -5 -4 -3 4

I heard a young maid sing in the valley below

-4 5 -5 5 4 4

Oh don't deceive me

-4 5 -5 6 5 4

Oh never leave me

4 5 6 7 -7 -6 6 -5 5 -4 4

How could you use a poor maiden so

(Repeat the above for the remaining verses)

Remember the vows that you made to me truly

Remember how tenderly you nestled close to me


Gay is the garland, fresh are the roses

I've culled from the garden to bind over thee.

Here I now wander alone as I wonder

Why did you leave me to sigh and complain

I ask of the roses, why should I be forsaken,

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Why must I here in sorrow remain?


Through yonder grove, by the spring that is running
There you and I have so merrily played,
Kissing and courting and gently sporting
Oh, my innocent heart you've betrayed

How could you slight so a pretty girl who loves you
A pretty girl who loves you so dearly and warm?
Though love's folly is surely but a fancy,
Still it should prove to me sweeter than your scorn.

Soon you will meet with another pretty maiden
Some pretty maiden, you'll court her for a while;
Thus ever ranging, turning and changing
Always seeking for a girl that is new.

Thus sang the maiden, her sorrows bewailing
Thus sang the poor maid in the valley below
"Oh don't deceive me, Oh never leave me,
How could you use, a poor maiden so?"

Lyrics

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