

B

Song Title

Recording Act



Writer(s):

C

Date:

D

Charts:

- HT: --
- HP: --
- CB: --
- UK: --
- AC: --
- CW: --
- RB: --
- AR: --
- MR: --

Sales:

- US: --
- UK: --

Airplay:

How to Read This Book:

Each of the 100 songs in this book has a dedicated page. This area of the page features the DMDB review, which liberally references and quotes a myriad of music resources. Such comments are footnoted with letter codes and page numbers when relevant. These codes refer to sources which are listed in greater detail in the bibliography.

In addition to the DMDB review, each page includes the following:

- A **DMDB Rank:** The top left corner, with the record emblem, indicates the song's rank on the DMDB top 100 songs of the rock era chart.
- B **Song Title and Recording Act:** In the grey bar at the top of the page, the song title and the name of the recording act are listed. In the DMDB, there are songs with multiple appearances via recordings by different artists. This is more the case in the pre-rock era, but happened post-1950 as well. In such an event, only the highest ranking version of a song was eligible to make this list.
- C **Writer(s):** Directly beneath the record emblem is a long grey sidebar. Appearing at the top of that bar are the names of any writers, be they lyricists or composers, credited with the song.
- D **Date:** The date refers to the song's first appearance on any of the nine different charts referenced in this book. If the song did not chart, the date is either the album's release date or original recording date; both are noted as such. In some cases, especially on the British charts, songs may have been re-released and peaked at a higher position than their initial releases. In these cases, the highest chart position is noted, but the date still reflects the song's first chart appearance.





(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay

Otis Redding

**Writer(s):**

Steve Cropper/
Otis Redding

Date:

1/27/1968

Charts:

HT: 1⁴
HP: --
CB: 3
UK: 3
AC: --
CW: --
RB: 1³
AR: --
MR: --

Sales:

1.0 m

US: 1.0

UK: --

Airplay:

7.0 m

There's never been a better epitaph. Redding and six others died when his charter plane crashed into Lake Monona, near Madison, Wisconsin, on December 10, 1967. ^{WK} On November 22, he'd recorded "Dock of the Bay," adding overdubs two days before his death.

"Using road weariness as its metaphor," ^{MA-18} Redding wrote an ode to his journey from Georgia to stardom, protesting against the guilt of wasting time, arguing in favor of relaxing, doing nothing, and just "watching the tide roll in and out." ^{WI-128}

Fresh off the Monterey Pop Festival, Redding was playing the Fillmore in San Francisco while staying on a houseboat. Producer and guitarist Steve Cropper says this is where Otis "got the idea of the ship coming in...I took that and finished the lyrics. If you listen to the songs I wrote with Otis, most of the lyrics are about him... 'Dock of the Bay' was exactly that: 'I left my home in Georgia, headed for the Frisco Bay' was all about him going out to San Francisco to perform." ^{WK}

To add to the song's coastal vibe, Cropper added seaside noises. One aspect of the song that wasn't finished but was left alone was the now iconic whistling. Redding had hoped to add another verse, but after he died Cropper left the whistling in. ^{BBC}

Redding wasn't new to the pop charts, having hit the top 40 more than a half dozen times, but most of his success had come on the R&B charts. However, this song topped the pop and R&B charts and became the first posthumous #1 single. ^{BR1-238}

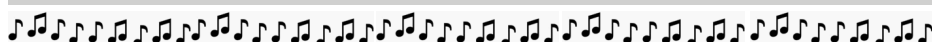


BBC Songs of the Century, BMI, Grammy Hall of Fame/R&B Song of the Year, Honor Roll of Hits (#1), Life, Mojo, MTV, NME, NPR, RIAA/NEA, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Rolling Stone, VH1



Billie Jean

Michael Jackson

**Writer(s):**

Michael Jackson

Date:

1/22/1983

Charts:HT: 1⁷

HP: --

CB: 1⁶UK: 1¹

AC: 9

CW: --

RB: 1⁹

AR: --

MR: --

Sales:

2.79 m

US: 2.0

UK: 0.5

Airplay:

1.0 m

With its “insanely catchy melody atop an insistent beat,” ^{BB100} “this fabulously funky slice of disco-pop” ^{BBC} is “the single that made Jackson the biggest star since Elvis.” ^{RS500} The *Thriller* album, from which this was the second single, became the best-selling album of all-time with a record-breaking seven top ten pop singles.

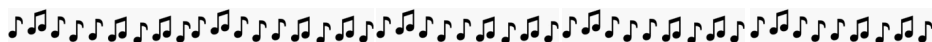
Michael sings of a supposedly real life situation in which a woman claimed that he was the father of *one* of her twin sons. In his *Moonwalker* autobiography, though, Michael described the situation more as the “kind of thing has happened to some of my brothers.” ^{KL-289} On the surface, the song may have been about a paternity suit, but it hinted at something more – the struggle of a major musical star being a target for the public.

Regardless of its inspiration, the song’s game-changing quality is in what it inspired. The video for “Billie Jean” was revolutionary for breaking the dominance on MTV of videos by predominantly white artists. The head of CBS, Jackson’s label, threatened that there would be no more CBS acts on MTV if they refused to show the video. ^{TB-208} MTV caved.

Not only did “Billie Jean” show how important visual presentation had become in the early ‘80s via its video, but with Michael’s eye-popping live performance of the song on the U.S. TV special *Motown 25: Yesterday, Today and Forever*, He debuted his iconic moonwalk dance for an audience in excess of 47 million; ^{TB-208} it launched him as the King of Pop.

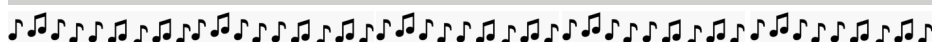


Billboard – All Time Hot 100, *Blender* (#1), *Grammy* – R&B Song of the Year, *Guinness*, *Honor Roll of Hits*, *MTV*, *The Observer*, *Q Magazine*, *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame*, *Rolling Stone*, *VH1*



I Want to Hold Your Hand

The Beatles

**Writer(s):**John Lennon/
Paul McCartney**Date:**

12/5/1963

Charts:

HT: 1⁷
 HP: --
 CB: 1⁸
 UK: 1⁵
 AC: --
 CW: --
 RB: --
 AR: --
 MR: --

Sales:

12.0 m

US: 4.0

UK: 1.75

Airplay:

3.0 m

This was the biggest hit of 1964 ^{WC-89} and the Beatles' first of twenty #1's on the Billboard Hot 100, a still untouched record. ^{BB100} It was also the opening shot for the British Invasion. ^{AMG} Previously, only two British artists had topped the U.S. charts – Acker Bilk with “Stranger on the Shore” and the Tornados with “Telstar.” ^{LW-121} However, during 1964 and 1965, the Brits occupied a whopping 52 weeks at the American chart pinnacle. ^{LW-121}

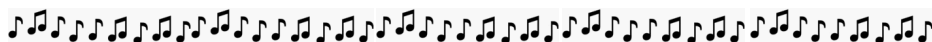
The Beatles were not, however, an overnight success. They'd been huge in the U.K. for more than a year, but manager Brian Epstein couldn't get Capitol Records (EMI's American company) interested because, as one label executive said, “we don't think the Beatles will do anything in this market.” ^{BRI-143}

Paul McCartney remembers the group telling Epstein, “We're not going to America till we've got a #1 record.” ^{RS500} When the Beatles touched down in New York for their first U.S. visit, “I Want to Hold Your Hand” was the number one song in America. ^{BB100} On February 9, 1964, the Beatles performed for an estimated 73 million people on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Beatlemania was born.

The tame sexuality of the title phrase was mocked by some critics ^{AMG} and certainly the goal was to “make maximum impact rather than last as a transcendent song,” ^{LW-121} but the delivery of the song hinted that the Beatles had more on their minds than hand holding. ^{KL-96} What they may not have intended, but achieved nonetheless, was world dominance and a permanent impact on music as “Hand” became “one of the most important songs in rock history.” ^{AMG}



Billboard – Song of the Year/ All Time Hot 100, Cashbox, DMDB Song of the Year, Grammy Hall of Fame, Honor Roll of Hits, Mojo, MTV, NME, RIAA/NEA, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Rolling Stone, VH1



Stairway to Heaven

Led Zeppelin

**Writer(s):**Jimmy Page/
Robert Plant**Date:**

11/27/1971*

* date for album
release**Charts:**

HT: --
 HP: --
 CB: --
 UK: 37*
 AC: --
 CW: --
 RB: --
 AR: --
 MR: --

* 2007 digital re-
lease**Sales:**

1.2 m *

US: --

UK: --

* sheet music

Airplay:

3.0 m

"Dazed and Confused" was the centerpiece of Led Zeppelin's early live performances ^{SJ-53} but when they tired of it, the group set about creating another anthem. Little did they know that they would birth the song against which "all epic anthems must measure themselves." ^{RS500} "Stairway" consistently tops classic rock radio best-of lists and with over three million spins, no song has received more airplay in the history of FM radio. ^{KN} It has also sold over a million copies of sheet music, averaging 15,000 a year. ^{WK}

For all its accomplishments, "Heaven" was never released as a single. Its only chart appearance came in 2007 when it hit #37 on the UK charts, prompted by downloads of the song in conjunction with the release of the Led Zeppelin

Mothership compilation. ^{WK} Atlantic Records certainly pushed for a single, but the band refused to edit the song down from its eight-minute running time. ^{WK}

The song kicks off with "an acoustic intro that sounds positively Elizabethan."

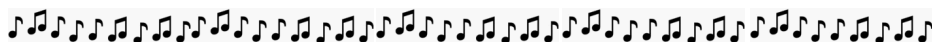
^{RS500} Robert Plant then vocally leads the listener through a "quasi-medieval story" ^{CR-517} "full of allusions that go nowhere," ^{CR-517} although he says it is

"about a woman who gets everything she wants without reciprocating." ^{CR-517} It doesn't matter much what the song is about when it's "couched in such a stately tune and performance." ^{CR-517} Besides, "the song's enigma is part of its charm." ^{CR-517}

Guitarist Jimmy Page says the song "crystallized the essence of the band...Every musician wants to do something of lasting quality, something which will hold up for a long time, and I guess we did it with 'Stairway.'" ^{RS500}

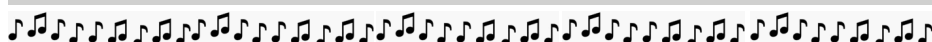


BBC Songs of the Century, Classic Rock Magazine (#1), Grammy Hall of Fame, Honor Roll of Hits, Life, RIAA/NEA, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, VH1



Crazy

Patsy Cline



Writer(s):
Willie Nelson

Date:
10/21/1961

Charts:
HT: 9
HP: --
CB: 13
UK: 14*
AC: 2
CW: 2
RB: --
AR: --
MR: --

* didn't chart in the UK until 1990

Sales:
--

US: --
UK: --

Airplay:
2.0 m

Before Willie Nelson became one of country music's top singers, he broke into the industry as a songwriter. After Faron Young took Nelson's "Hello Walls" to the top of the country charts, seemingly everyone in town wanted a Willie song. Patsy Cline was looking for a follow-up to "I Fall to Pieces" which had potential to cross over to the pop charts. ^{CL-157} She loved "Funny How Time Slips Away", but Billy Walker, whose relationship with Nelson went back to their Texas days, ^{CL-157} got to it first.

Cline was furious, but Willie and Billy thought her voice was perfect for another song Walker had demoed. ^{CL-157} When told the song title was "Crazy," she shot back, "It sure is." ^{RS500} She was looking for the up-tempo fare she was more accustomed to singing. A slow-torch song was not what she had in mind. ^{NPR}

Cline's producer, Owen Bradley, was convinced of the song's potential, believing it to be well suited to "her vocal talents and expressive style." ^{NPR} "With a lush arrangement and understated backing vocals" ^{RS500} alongside the "slow-burn sex appeal" ^{RS500} she infused in the lyrics, she made the song her own. It was "a perfect vehicle to showcase [her] poignant, heartbreaking voice and superb musicianship." ^{NRR}

However, it became more than just her signature tune and what Willie Nelson called "the favorite of anything I ever wrote." ^{CL-158} As the top jukebox single of all time ^{NPR} and her only top ten pop hit, "Crazy" launched a new sound in country music called "countrypolitan" ^{RS500} which gained popularity in the wake of rock and roll's explosive success. ^{NRR} Sadly, Cline herself wouldn't be around to see where country music was headed; she died in a plane crash in March 1963.



BBC Songs of the Century, CMT, Grammy Hall of Fame, National Recording Registry, NPR, Traditional Country Hall of Fame, VH1