

1960



TIME  
LIFE  
MUSIC

*The*  
**ROCK'N'ROLL**  
•ERA•

Digital Remaster

*© Norman*

1960

1. **Save the Last Dance for Me** The Drifters
2. **Finger Poppin' Time**  
Hank Ballard and the Midnighters
3. **Walk—Don't Run** The Ventures
4. **Last Date** Floyd Cramer
5. **He Will Break Your Heart** Jerry Butler
6. **A Thousand Stars**  
Kathy Young and the Innocents
7. **Only the Lonely** Roy Orbison
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21. **Let the Little Girl Dance** Billy Bland
22. **Image of a Girl** The Safaris

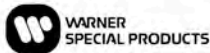
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2RNR-11  
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COMPACT  
**disc**  
DIGITAL AUDIO

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*Little Miss Dynamite, Brenda Lee*

Thanks to the payola scandals of 1959 and 1960, the future of rock 'n' roll suddenly looked shaky. Although payola—the clandestine payment of money or gifts to disc jockeys and others in return for radio air play or commercial exposure—was widespread in the music publishing and recording industries, the FTC, FCC and House of Representatives focused mostly on rock 'n' roll radio stations and DJs. In fact, the target of their investigations was as much the music itself as corrupt business practices; many sided with New York Congressman Emmanuel Celler, who blamed payola for “the popularity of this cacophonous music called rock 'n' roll.”

The idea that rock's success depended on illegal business activities was ludicrous. Yet these governmental investigations did shake up the music industry. A number of DJs resigned or were fired, including Alan Freed, who first lost his radio show on WABC and his television show on WNEW, then, in 1960, was indicted on commercial bribery charges. By the time of the House's payola hearings in early 1960, ABC had pressured Dick Clark into divesting himself of his holdings in 33 music-related firms in order to avoid further conflict of interest.

The dark cloud hovering over the business side also seemed to cast a shadow on the music. Some fans were turning to jazz, folk or pop music, since much of rock 'n' roll's original vitality now seemed buried in a landslide of bogus teen idols and mushy balladry. Bobby Darin's *Mack the Knife*, Bobby Rydell's *Volare* and Jackie Wilson's *Night* suggested that some stars were also turning toward mainstream pop entertainment. Elvis Presley's return from the army was no more promising: The King appeared on a Frank Sinatra TV special singing *Witchcraft* and made it to No. 1 on the charts with the operatic *It's Now or Never*.

Following in Presley's footsteps was Conway Twitty,

who also began his career by singing rockabilly before he achieved success with ballads like **Lonely Blue Boy**. Twitty's hit was a reworded version of *Danny*, which Presley had recorded for the sound track of the motion picture *King Creole* but never released. Twitty also began a short-lived movie career in 1960, appearing in such drive-in fodder as *College Confidential* and *Sex Kittens Go to College*, two films that at least afforded him the chance to work with the physically dramatic Mamie Van Doren.

If the melodramatic crooning of Presley and Twitty also appealed to adult listeners, most of the big hits of 1960 were aimed straight at the hearts of teenagers. There was a strong sense of innocent bedroom longing in soft ballads like the Safaris' **Image of a Girl**, Rosie and the Originals' **Angel Baby** and Kathy Young and the Innocents' **A Thousand Stars**. Young first met the Innocents, a male vocal trio, when the group was promoting their hit *Honest I Do* on Wink Martindale's TV show.

With a family full of classical pianists, Neil Sedaka seemed an unlikely candidate for a teen-age pop singer and songwriter. But even while pursuing serious musical interests at the Juilliard School in the late '50s, Sedaka had formed a rock vocal group (the original Tokens), written a hit for Connie Francis (*Stupid Cupid*) and begun a solo recording career. **Calendar Girl** was just one of the early-'60s hits for Sedaka, who virtually disappeared from the charts in 1963 only to come roaring back in the mid-'70s with two No. 1 songs, *Laughter in the Rain* and *Bad Blood*.

The popularity of teen-age themes made teen-age stars particularly attractive, and the most successful of these was Brenda Lee. The diminutive Lee was only 11 when she signed with Decca Records in 1957. Decca

played up Lee's schoolgirl image, dressing her in cute dresses and occasionally falsifying her age. **Sweet Nothin's** capitalized on this, while her later hits proved that despite her age and stature she could sing with the emotional authority of an adult.

Two trends that flourished in the late '50s—novelties and instrumentals—were still running strong in 1960. The year introduced the most enduring and influential instrumental group in rock, the Ventures. Guitarists Bob Bogle and Don Wilson were working construction jobs in Seattle when they decided to improve their fortunes by recording **Walk—Don't Run**, which they had learned from a Chet Atkins album. Initially released by Wilson's mother on her own Blue Horizon label, it was picked up by Dolton Records and went to No. 2 nationally.

The year's top novelty song was **Alley-Oop**, recorded by Gary Paxton, who was also half of the duo Skip and Flip (*It Was I and Cherry Pie*). Because Paxton was under contract to another label, he fabricated the group name Hollywood Argyles. Based on the popular comic strip character, *Alley-Oop* features Sandy Nelson, normally a flashy drummer, banging on a bottle and letting loose with an occasional jungle cry.

New Orleanian Joe Jones, who later managed the Dixie Cups, scored big with the humorous **You Talk Too Much**. Jones originally recorded the song for Roulette Records, but the company didn't issue it. Ironically, after he cut *You Talk Too Much* for the small Ric label and it became a regional hit, Roulette bought the rights to the Ric version. Jones's follow-up, *California Sun*, was a modest success for him and a smash for the Rivieras in 1964.

Although doo-wop groups were still plentiful (especially on the East Coast), the most successful vocal group, the Drifters, prospered by combining street-corner harmony with more sophisticated production approaches. The group achieved its only No. 1 hit, with lead vocalist



*The Safaris*



Ben E. King, in **Save the Last Dance for Me**. Like such later Drifters hits as *This Magic Moment* and *I Count the Tears*, the song was a Doc Pomus-Mort Shuman composition that made use of a light Latin rhythm and strings.

The year's other chart-topping vocal-group record was **Stay** by Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs. Four years earlier, Williams had sung lead with the Gladiolas on the original version of *Little Darlin'*, made nationally famous by the Diamonds. One of the shortest hits in rock history at slightly over a minute and a half, *Stay* entered the charts twice later: in 1964 for the 4 Seasons and in 1978 for Jackson Browne.

Undoubtedly, part of *Stay's* appeal lies in its shrieking falsetto passages, a vocal gimmick that helped Jimmy Jones land two of 1960's biggest songs, **Handy Man** and **Good Timin'**. During the '50s, Jones had recorded with a number of New York City vocal groups including the Sparks of Rhythm, who first released *Handy Man*. Like *Stay*, the song yielded two subsequent hit renditions: one by Del Shannon in 1964 and the other by James Taylor in 1977.

The most important event in rock 'n' roll in 1960 was a record and a dance called *The Twist*. Originally an R & B hit for Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, *The Twist* went to the top of the charts thanks to Ernest Evans, an ex-chicken plucker from Philadelphia who changed his name to Chubby Checker. With the help of continual exposure on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*, the twist became a huge dance sensation, helping Ballard and the Midnighters score two big hits the same year, **Finger Poppin' Time** and **Let's Go, Let's Go, Let's Go**.

Both of Ballard's up-tempo rockers were designed as dance records, as was Gary "U.S." Bonds's first top-10 song, **New Orleans**. Producer Frank Guida discovered Bonds singing in a Norfolk, Virginia, vocal group, the

Turks, under his real name—Gary Anderson. It wasn't until *New Orleans* was released that Anderson realized Guida had renamed him "U.S." Bonds.

*The Twist* and the tidal wave of dance records that followed it did shake rock 'n' roll from its doldrums. During the next few years, the music would revitalize itself with dance crazes, surf and girl-group records, Motown and soul music. At the 1960 Democratic convention, presidential nominee John F. Kennedy declared, "The world is changing; the old era is dying; the old ways will not do." Neither would the old sounds.

—Joe Sasfy



*Floyd Cramer*



## DISCOGRAPHY

\*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

- 1. Save the Last Dance for Me** The Drifters • *Music and lyrics by Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman, Atlantic 2071. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 1\**
- 2. Finger Poppin' Time** Hank Ballard and the Midnighters • *Music and lyrics by Hank Ballard. King 5341. Courtesy of Gusto Records. No. 7\**
- 3. Walk—Don't Run** The Ventures • *Music by Johnny Smith. Dolton 25. Courtesy of EMI America Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 2\**
- 4. Last Date** Floyd Cramer • *Music by Floyd Cramer. RCA Victor 7775. Courtesy of BMG Music/The RCA Records Label, under license from BMG Direct Marketing, Inc. No. 2\**
- 5. He Will Break Your Heart** Jerry Butler • *Music and lyrics by Jerry Butler, Calvan Carter and Curtis Mayfield. Vee-Jay 354. Courtesy of Vee-Jay Records. No. 7\**
- 6. A Thousand Stars** Kathy Young and the Innocents • *Music and lyrics by Eugene Pearson. Intiligo 108. Courtesy of Sid Tal madge. No. 3\**
- 7. Only the Lonely** Roy Orbison • *Music and lyrics by Roy Orbison and Joe Melson. Monument 421. Courtesy of Monument Record Corp. No. 2\**
- 8. Good Timin'** Jimmy Jones • *Music and lyrics by Clint Ballard Jr. and Fred Tobias. Cab 9067. Good Timin' by Jimmy Jones produced under license from PolyGram Special Projects, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 3\**
- 9. Sweet Nothin'** Brenda Lee • *Music and lyrics by Ronnie Self. Decca 30967. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 4\**
- 10. Walking to New Orleans** Fats Domino • *Music and lyrics by Antoine Domino, Dave Bartholomew and Robert Guidry. Imperial 5675. Courtesy of EMI America Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 6\**
- 11. Alley-Oop** The Hollywood Argyles • *Music and lyrics by Dallas Frazier. Late 5905. Courtesy of Dominion Entertainment Inc. No. 1\**
- 12. Handy Man** Jimmy Jones • *Music and lyrics by Otis Blackwell and Jimmy Jones. Cub 9049. Handy Man by Jimmy Jones produced under license from PolyGram Special Projects, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 2\**
- 13. Lonely Blue Boy** Conway Twitty • *Music and lyrics by Ben Weisman and Fred Wise. MGM 12857. Lonely Blue Boy by Conway Twitty produced under license from PolyGram Special Projects, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 6\**
- 14. Angel Baby** Rosie and the Originals • *Music and lyrics by Rose Hanlin. Highland 1011. Courtesy of Sid Talmadge. No. 5\**
- 15. Cathy's Clown** The Everly Brothers • *Music and lyrics by Don and Phil Everly. Warner Bros. 5151. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 1\**
- 16. Let's Go, Let's Go, Let's Go** Hank Ballard and the Midnighters • *Music and lyrics by Hank Ballard. King 5400. Courtesy of Gusto Records. No. 6\**
- 17. Calendar Girl** Neil Sedaka • *Music by Neil Sedaka and Howard Greenfield. RCA 7829. Courtesy of RCA/Ariola International. No. 4\**
- 18. Stay** Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs • *Music and lyrics by Maurice Williams. Herald 552. Courtesy of Arista Records, Inc. No. 1\**
- 19. New Orleans** Gary "U.S." Bonds • *Music and lyrics by Frank Guida and Joseph Royster. Legrand 1003. Courtesy of Legrand Records International. No. 6\**
- 20. You Talk Too Much** Joe Jones • *Music and lyrics by Joe Jones and Reginald Hall. Roulette 4304. Courtesy of Roulette Records, Inc. No. 3\**
- 21. Let the Little Girl Dance** Billy Bland • *Music and lyrics by Carl Spencer and Henry Glover. Old Town 1076. Courtesy of Old Town Record Corp. No. 7\**
- 22. Image of a Girl** The Safaris • *Music by Richard Clasky, lyrics by Marvin Rosenberg. Eldo 101. Courtesy of Janus Records. No. 6\**

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