

1959 STILL ROCKIN'



TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

The
ROCK'N'ROLL
•ERA•

Digital Remaster

1959 STILL ROCKIN'

- 1 **La Bamba** Ritchie Valens
- 2 **Along Came Jones** The Coasters
- 3 **Hushabye** The Mystics
- 4 **(Til) I Kissed You** The Everly Brothers
- 5 **Dance with Me** The Drifters
- 6 **Smoke Gets in Your Eyes** The Platters
- 7 **C'mon Everybody** Eddie Cochran
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- 19 **Baby Talk** Jan and Dean
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Johnny and the Hurricanes®
- 21 **My Heart Is an Open Book**
Carl Dobkins Jr.
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The
ROCK'N'ROLL
ERA
1959
STILL ROCKIN'

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

2RNR-20
OPCD-2549

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1. La Bamba 2. Along Came Jones 3. Hushabye 4. ('Til) I Kissed You 5. Dance with Me 6. Smoke Gets in Your Eyes 7. C'mon Everybody 8. Forty Miles of Bad Road 9. You're So Fine 10. It's Late 11. I Only Have Eyes for You 12. Lonely Teardrops 13. Love Potion No. 9 14. Tallahassee Lassie 15. It Doesn't Matter Anymore 16. This Should Go On Forever 17. Mr. Blue 18. I'm Gonna Get Married 19. Baby Talk 20. Red River Rock 21. My Heart Is an Open Book 22. Since I Don't Have You

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1959: STILL ROCKIN'

How different rock history might have been if some of the most innovative rockers of the '50s had not died so young! In the years since the February 3, 1959, plane crash that took the lives of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper, it has been the loss of Holly that has reverberated loudest. Holly's three years of recording (1956-1958) confirmed his talents as a unique stylist and a gifted writer, and each decade has found major artists, from the Beatles to Fleetwood Mac, assimilating his pop rockabilly style and covering his songs.

Right before his death, Holly's career had changed in ways that suggested he was about to move in new musical directions. He had left his manager and producer, Norman Petty, as well as his band, the Crickets, and moved from Lubbock, Texas, to New York City to pursue a solo career. In late 1958, Holly began recording with King Curtis (the yackety-sax man on the Coasters' records) and experimented for the first time with orchestral arrangements. Symptomatic was **It Doesn't Matter Anymore**, written for Holly by Paul Anka and featuring strings played pizzicato.

If Ritchie Valens' death seemed less notable than Holly's, it was mostly because the 17-year-old Mexican-American had released only two singles at the time of his death. In retrospect, his recording of **La Bamba** alone clearly represented a small revolution as the first fusion of Latin music and American rock. *La Bamba* is his rock 'n' roll adaptation of a traditional Mexican wedding song. A 1987 Valens film biography of the same name was a surprise success, and the movie sound-track version of the title song performed by Los Lobos (a Mexican-American rock band from Los Angeles) went to the top of the charts.

As with Holly's and Valens' deaths, the loss of Eddie Cochran in a 1960 car crash in England deprived rock of

a multifaceted performer unafraid to experiment with studio techniques and various styles. Cochran followed his classic *Summertime Blues* with **C'mon Everybody**, an exuberant invitation to party at Eddie's house while his folks were away. This was another blend of humor and rebelliousness driven by Cochran's aggressive rhythm guitar and a throbbing bass line.

Ricky Nelson was the first rock 'n' roll star created by television, and given that medium's history of subverting popular music, television could have done worse. Ricky may not have been a raw, raving rockabilly artist such as Eddie Cochran, but he was a great rock 'n' roller, as is exemplified in one of his finest recordings, **It's Late**.

The rise of teen idols like Nelson was accompanied by a move toward softer ballads and portraits of young love as a state of hellish suffering (when unrequited) or heavenly bliss. This trend opened the door for such modest talents as Carl Dobkins Jr., who hit with **My Heart Is an Open Book**.

The softest sound of all belonged to the Fleetwoods, whose **Mr. Blue** re-created the quiet intimacy of the trio's smash debut, *Come Softly to Me*. The Mystics, an Italian-American quintet from Brooklyn, captured a similarly dreamy ambience in **Hushabye**, written by Mort Shuman and Doc Pomus. They had written *Teenager in Love* for the Mystics, but Laurie Records gave it to the more established Dion and the Belmonts, so Shuman and Pomus quickly penned *Hushabye* as a substitute.

In southern Louisiana a ballad style later dubbed "swamp pop" developed, and the genre's mournful romanticism proved perfectly in tune with the late-night yearnings of love-struck adolescents all across America. Typical were Rod Bernard's **This Should Go On Forever**, Cookie and the Cupcakes' *Matilda* and Phil

Duane Eddy, king of the twangy guitar

The Drifters



Phillips' *Sea of Love*. In order to appear on *American Bandstand*, Bernard was forced to re-record his hit to alter a possibly offending lyric. "If it's a *sin* to really love you" became "if it's *wrong* to really love you."

It was Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* that helped launch the career of Fred Picariello, an 18-year-old truckdriver from Revere, Massachusetts. With the help of his mother, Picariello wrote and recorded **Tallahassee Lassie**, which ended up in the hands of Frank Slay and Bob Crewe, both producers for Swan Records. They remixed the tape, added a booming bass drum and issued the song on Swan, changing Picariello's stage name from Freddy Carmen to Freddy Cannon. Clark, who owned a third interest in Swan, pushed the song hard on *Bandstand*, thus ensuring its success.

The novelty craze of the late '50s helped launch the career of Jan and Dean, two wisecracking Los Angeles teenagers who recorded **Baby Talk** in Jan Berry's garage. Rock 'n' roll's reigning court jesters, however, remained the Coasters, who cracked the top 10 for the second of three times in 1959 with Leiber and Stoller's **Along Came Jones**. Named after a 1945 Gary Cooper Western, the song hilariously portrayed the frustrations of a viewer unable to escape the clichéd Western movies filling every channel on his TV. Another Leiber and Stoller comic creation, **Love Potion No. 9**, was intended for the Coasters but ended up with the Clovers, a Washington, D.C., vocal group.

Leiber and Stoller were not only brilliant songwriters but also innovative producers who created an R&B landmark with their string-laden production of the Drifters' *There Goes My Baby*. Their follow-up, **Dance with Me**, introduced the Latin rhythms that would become a Drifters trademark. The song was credited to Elmo Glick and Lewis Lebish, tongue-in-cheek pseudonyms for Leiber and Stoller.

The Platters





Though *There Goes My Baby* is often singled out as the first vocal-group hit to employ strings, it was actually preceded by **Since I Don't Have You**, recorded by the Skyliners, a white doo-wop quintet from Pittsburgh. This song wedded Jimmy Beaumont's soaring vocal and backup street-corner harmonies to a gorgeous orchestral arrangement, resulting in one of the most beloved doo-wop ballads of all time.

The increasing sophistication of vocal-group music was apparent in the **Flamingos' I Only Have Eyes for You** and the **Platters' Smoke Gets in Your Eyes**, both elegant performances of hoary pop standards. Producer George Goldner brought a shimmering, echoic quality to the **Flamingos'** hit, granting it an enchanting, otherworldly atmosphere.

The use of a standard was also obvious in Johnny and the Hurricanes' sax-driven instrumental **Red River Rock**. In this case, the strategy was particularly calculated, since the plundering of such public-domain songs as *Red River Valley* allowed the band's managers to assume song-writing credits. More than matching Johnny Paris' sax attack was Steve Douglas, the horn man trading solos with Duane Eddy on **Forty Miles of Bad Road**. The rebel yells were provided by the Sharps, a black vocal group that later emerged as the Rivingtons of *Papa-Oom-Mow-Mow* fame.

In 1959, one of the greatest performers in rock history, Jackie Wilson, scored his first big hit with **Lonely Teardrops**, co-authored by Berry Gordy Jr. (soon to be head of Motown Records). Wilson's stage show incorporated a dazzling array of knee drops, shimmies and splits; an emotionally extravagant vocal display that was part gospel and part opera; and, at times, life-risking plunges into the arms of his frenzied female fans.

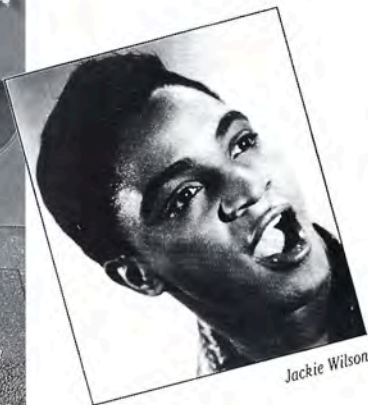
Despite the flamboyance of Jackie Wilson, there was no doubt that by 1959 rock had become a tamer affair,



Freddy Cannon

more comfortable with the pop mainstream. In truth, rock had become so successful it now *was* the pop mainstream. Symbolic of the passing of the Tin Pan Alley era was the demise of *Your Hit Parade*, the long-running weekly TV program that presented the nation's top hits as sung by a cast of regulars (including Snooky Lanson, Giselle MacKenzie, Johnny Desmond and Dorothy Collins). The show reflected the older pop sensibility, in which the song mattered more than any specific recorded performance. Rock 'n' roll changed all that. Who, after all, wanted to hear Johnny Desmond sing *Along Came Jones*?

—Joe Sasyf



Jackie Wilson

DISCOGRAPHY

*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

1. **La Bamba** (2:05) Ritchie Valens • *Music and lyrics by Ritchie Valens. Del-Fi 4110. Courtesy of Rhino Records, Inc./Del-Fi Records, Inc. No. 22**
2. **Along Came Jones** (2:49) The Coasters • *Music and lyrics by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. Atco 6141. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 9**
3. **Hushabye** (2:30) The Mystics • *Music and lyrics by Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman. Laurie 3028. Released by arrangement with 3C Records. No. 20**
4. **(Til) I Kissed You** (2:23) The Everly Brothers • *Music and lyrics by Don Everly. Cadence 1369. Courtesy Of Barnaby Records, Inc., By Arrangement With Celebrity Licensing Inc. No. 4**
5. **Dance with Me** (2:21) The Drifters • *Music and lyrics by Jerry Leiber, Mike Stoller, Ira Nahan and George Treadwell. Atlantic 2040. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 15**
6. **Smoke Gets in Your Eyes** (2:39) The Platters • *Music by Jerome Kern, lyrics by Otto Harbach. Mercury 71383. Produced under license from PolyGram Special Projects, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 1**
7. **C'mon Everybody** (1:53) Eddie Cochran • *Music and lyrics by Eddie Cochran and Jerry Capehart. Liberty 55766. Courtesy of EMI-Manhattan Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 35**
8. **Forty Miles of Bad Road** (2:10) Duane Eddy • *Music by Duane Eddy and Al Casey. Jamie 1126. Courtesy of Jamie Record Co. No. 9**
9. **You're So Fine** (2:20) The Falcons • *Music and lyrics by Lance Finney, Bob West and Willie Schofield. Unart 2013. Courtesy of EMI-Manhattan Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 17**
10. **It's Late** (1:47) Ricky Nelson • *Music and lyrics by Dorsey Burnette. Imperial 5565. Courtesy Of EMI Records Group/EMI Records, Under License From EMI-Capitol Music Entertainment Properties. No. 9**
11. **I Only Have Eyes for You** (3:15) The Flamingos • *Music by Harry Warren, lyrics by Al Dubin. End 1046. Produced under license from Roulette Records, a Division of ABZ Music Corp. No. 11**
12. **Lonely Teardrops** (2:41) Jackie Wilson • *Music and lyrics by Berry Gordy Jr., Gwen Gordy and Tyan Carl. Brunswick 55105. Courtesy of Brunswick, under license from CBS Special Products, a Service of CBS Records, a Division of CBS, Inc. No. 7**
13. **Love Potion No. 9** (2:00) The Clovers • *Music and lyrics by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. United Artists 180. Courtesy of EMI-Manhattan Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 23**
14. **Tallahassee Lassie** (2:30) Freddy Cannon • *Music and lyrics by Frank C. Slay Jr., Bob Crewe and Frederick Picariello. Swan 4631. Courtesy of Freddy Cannon. No. 6**
15. **It Doesn't Matter Anymore** (2:01) Buddy Holly • *Music and lyrics by Paul Anka. Coral 62074. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 13**
16. **This Should Go On Forever** (2:38) Rod Bernard • *Music and lyrics by J. D. Miller and Bernard Jolivet. Argo 5327. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 20**
17. **Mr. Blue** (2:18) The Fleetwoods • *Music and lyrics by Dewayne Blackwell. Dolton 5. Courtesy of EMI-Manhattan Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 1**
18. **I'm Gonna Get Married** (2:18) Lloyd Price • *Music and lyrics by Harold Logan and Lloyd Price. ABC-Paramount 10032. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 3**
19. **Baby Talk** (2:17) Jan and Dean • *Music and lyrics by Melvin H. Schwartz. Dore 522. Courtesy of Dominion Entertainment, Inc. No. 10**
20. **Red River Rock** (2:09) Johnny and the Hurricanes • *Music by Tom King, Johnny Paris and Fred Mendelson. Warwick 509. Courtesy of Johnny Paris dba Johnny and the Hurricanes. No. 5**
21. **My Heart Is an Open Book** (2:20) Carl Dobkins Jr. • *Music by Lee Pockriss, lyrics by Hal David. Decca 30803. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 3**
22. **Since I Don't Have You** (2:36) The Skyliners • *Music by Joseph Rock and Lennie Martin, lyrics by James Beaumont, Janet Vogel, Joseph Verscharen, Walter Lester and John Taylor. Administered by Southern Music. Calico 103. Courtesy of Original Sound Entertainment. No. 12**

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