

1958 STILL ROCKIN'

GO '58 WILDCATS



TIME  
LIFE  
MUSIC

The  
**ROCK'N'ROLL**  
ERA

Digital Remaster

**1958 STILL ROCKIN'**

- 1 **High School Confidential**  
Jerry Lee Lewis
- 2 **Willie and the Hand Jive**  
The Johnny Otis Show
- 3 **Twilight Time** The Platters
- 4 **What Am I Living For** Chuck Willis
- 5 **Lollipop** The Chordettes
- 6 **One Summer Night** The Danleers
- 7 **Come On, Let's Go** Ritchie Valens
- 8 **Whole Lotta Loving** Fats Domino
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- 15 **I Wonder Why** Dion and the Belmonts
- 16 **The Walk** Jimmy McCracklin
- 17 **For Your Precious Love**  
Jerry Butler and the Impressions
- 18 **Carol** Chuck Berry
- 19 **Rock and Roll Is Here to Stay**  
Danny and the Juniors
- 20 **Rumble** Link Wray and His Ray Men
- 21 **Jennie Lee** Jan and Arnie
- 22 **Talk to Me, Talk to Me** Little Willie John

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*The*  
**ROCK'N'ROLL**

•ERA•

**1958**  
**STILL ROCKIN'**

COMPACT  
**disc**  
DIGITAL AUDIO

2RNR-21  
OPCD-2550

**TIME**  
**LIFE**  
MUSIC

- 1 High School Confidential 2 Willie and the Hand Jive 3 Twilight Time  
4 What Am I Living For 5 Lollipop 6 One Summer Night 7 Come On,  
Let's Go 8 Whole Lotta Loving 9 We Belong Together 10 Maybe Baby  
11 Ten Commandments of Love 12 Rave On 13 Western Movies  
14 You Cheated 15 I Wonder Why 16 The Walk 17 For Your  
Precious Love 18 Carol 19 Rock and Roll Is Here to Stay  
20 Rumble 21 Jennie Lee 22 Talk to Me, Talk to Me

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*"The Killer," Jerry Lee Lewis*



## 1958: STILL ROCKIN'

On May 22, 1958, Jerry Lee Lewis arrived at London's Heathrow Airport ready to begin the most important tour of his career. In the last year, the pumping piano man from Ferriday, Louisiana, had racked up three top-10 hits and established himself as perhaps rock 'n' roll's most incendiary performer. With Elvis in the army, no doubt Jerry Lee felt the time was ripe to snatch the King's crown. No sooner was Lewis off the plane than the British reporters wanted to know about his young traveling companion. Lewis turned to the petite teen-age girl next to him and announced, "This is my wife, Myra," thus igniting a scandal that would leave his career in a shambles for 10 years.

Lewis' tour of England quickly disintegrated when it came to light that Myra Gale Lewis was only 13, that she was Lewis' third wife and that he had married her five months before his second divorce became final. The sanctimonious British press crucified Lewis, forcing cancellation of his five-week tour after just three performances. As Lewis fled back to the States, the headline in London's *Daily Herald* howled: BABY-SNATCHER QUITS.

His record company, Sun, immediately took out a full-page ad in *Billboard* to explain the unfortunate turn of events, but the music industry, already sensitive about rock 'n' roll's image, withdrew its support. Dick Clark, who had once championed Lewis, now refused to have him on *American Bandstand*, but later admitted: "In a very cowardly act I decided to hold off further bookings of Jerry Lee on the show, for which I've been sorry ever since." Deprived of radio play, television appearances and major concert dates, Lewis' career nose-dived and his new single, the propulsive **High School Confidential**, stalled at No. 21.

Lewis wasn't the only rocker to suffer on the charts

at a time when teenagers were increasingly obsessed with industry-generated teen idols and fads. The Hula-Hoop craze—an estimated 30 million were sold in 1958—was one example (Frankie Avalon was another). Buddy Holly and the Crickets turned out two of their finest singles, the playful **Maybe Baby** and **Rave On**, but neither was a smash here despite making the top 10 in England. Perhaps Holly's most exciting performance, *Rave On* (the phrase came from *Let's Get It Dixerified* by Carl Perkins) opens with the singer transforming the word "well" into a stuttering six-syllable invitation to rock.

Although **Come On, Let's Go** by Ritchie Valens stands as one of the most scintillating record debuts in rock history, the single didn't even crack the top 40. His girlfriend, Donna Ludwig (the subject of Valens' hit ballad, *Donna*) thought that Ritchie was kidding when he told her he had cut a record. She later recalled, "One day I was driving down the street in San Fernando with a carload of my girlfriends and all of a sudden, this song comes on the radio and there it was: Ritchie as big as life! I just about died!"

The "corrupting" influence of rock 'n' roll made some radio stations worry about offending parents, and a number of stations banned Link Wray's menacing guitar instrumental, **Rumble**. Wray composed the song at a show in Fredericksburg, Virginia, after he was asked to play something appropriate for the popular dance the stroll. Though Archie Bleyer hated it, he released the instrumental on his Cadence label because his daughter loved it (she named it after a scene in *West Side Story*). *Rumble's* thick power chords and distorted guitar tone, which Wray created by punching holes in his amplifier's speaker, have led some to call it the first heavy-metal record.

Like so many dances, the stroll was popularized on

*American Bandstand*, then America's top-rated daytime television show. In fact, some of *Bandstand's* regular couples, such as Justine Carrelli and Bob Clayton, and Arlene Sullivan and Kenny Rossi, became stars in their own right, receiving hundreds of fan letters each week. The stroll elevated Chuck Willis to pop stardom briefly as "King of the Stroll," largely because several of his hits possessed the lazy tempo needed for the dance. Unfortunately, Willis died shortly after his eerily titled **What Am I Living For** came out in 1958. Another veteran blues singer, Jimmy McCracklin, also penetrated the pop market with a finger-snapping dance record, **The Walk**, which broke big on *Bandstand*.

Johnny Otis, often called "the Godfather of Rhythm and Blues," crossed over to the pop charts for the first time in 1958 with the Bo Diddley-style **Willie and the Hand Jive**. During the '40s and '50s, Otis (a Greek-American) was a major force in the fertile Los Angeles R & B scene, serving as a talent scout, nightclub owner (of the legendary Barrel House in Watts), musician, DJ, songwriter (*So Fine* and *Every Beat of My Heart*, among others) and bandleader. Otis led the most successful touring revue of the era, the Johnny Otis Rhythm and Blues Caravan, and helped launch the careers of Esther Phillips, Etta James, the Midnighters and Little Willie John. John's **Talk to Me, Talk to Me**, like his earlier pop hit, *Fever*, revealed his talent as an impassioned balladeer. John, who influenced a generation of soul singers, including James Brown, stabbed a man to death in a bar brawl in 1966 and was sent to prison, where he died of a heart attack in 1968.

All types of vocal-group music charted in 1958, stretching from the smooth elegance of the Platters to the comic buffoonery of the Olympics. Buck Ram, producer and manager of the Platters, co-authored **Twilight Time** in 1944 with members of the instrumental combo the Three Suns, who turned it into a hit. To take advan-



Danny and the Juniors



*The Olympics*

tage of the growing number of rock television shows, Mercury Records began distributing short films of the Platters and the Diamonds singing their latest songs, a promotional strategy that would change the music business in the '80s, as MTV and other video shows rose to prominence. Another Mercury vocal group, the Danleers, scored their only hit with **One Summer Night**, a song revived every summer by oldies DJs.

**Western Movies** by the Olympics was clearly indebted to the rock 'n' roll lampoons Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller devised for the Coasters. The Olympics made notable recordings well into the '60s, creating a dance craze with *Hully Gully*, reinforcing teen-age appetites with *Peanut Butter* (billed as the Marathons) and cutting the original *Good Lovin'* a year before the Young Rascals took it to No. 1. Another doo-wop comedy, Jan and Arnie's **Jennie Lee**, was inspired by the bump-and-grind routine of stripper Jennie Lee, who artfully billed herself "the Bazoom Girl." After Arnie Ginsburg joined the navy in 1959, Jan Berry formed an even more profitable partnership with Dean Torrence as Jan and Dean.

Two of the year's best doo-wop ballads came from the Moonglows and the Impressions. Jerry Butler and Curtis Mayfield teamed up with a Chicago trio called the Roosters to form the Impressions in 1957. Their first single, the gospel-rooted **For Your Precious Love**, featured the mournfully intense lead vocals of Butler. The Moonglows originated in Cleveland in 1952, where they were discovered and named by pioneering DJ Alan Freed. It was the original group with Harvey Fuqua singing lead that recorded **Ten Commandments of Love** shortly before disbanding in 1958. Fuqua then enlisted the Marquees (Marvin Gaye's first group) from Washington, D.C., and formed a new Moonglows. In 1960, Fuqua and Gaye moved to Detroit and began careers at Motown Records, each marrying a sister of Motown head Berry Gordy Jr.

Part of the mid-'50s rock 'n' roll explosion involved

white acts successfully covering R & B hits. A notable reversal occurred in 1958 when a black vocal group, the Shields, was thrown together by Los Angeles producer George Motola to cover **You Cheated**, first recorded by a white quartet from Texas called the Slades. By this time, plenty of white doo-wop groups were emerging, most notably Dion and the Belmonts from the Bronx. Their first hit, **I Wonder Why**, had the kind of intricate street-corner arrangement absent from later songs, which cast Dion in the teen-idol mold.

The only female harmony group to prosper in the

second half of the '50s was the Chordettes, who at least achieved a bouncy novelty appeal in **Lollipop**. With harmless ditties like this succeeding, it's hard to believe that critics still blamed rock 'n' roll for the imminent decline of Western civilization. Most ludicrous of all was the Esso Research Center's warning that rock 'n' roll rhythms made motorists unconsciously pump the gas pedal, thus wasting fuel. Obviously, it wasn't until the early '70s that rock had achieved sufficient popularity to cause America's first gasoline crisis.

—Joe Sasty



*The Chordettes*



## DISCOGRAPHY

\*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

**1. High School Confidential** (2:27) Jerry Lee Lewis • Music and lyrics by Ron Hargrave. Sun 296. Courtesy of Sun Records. No. 21\*

**2. Willie and the Hand Jive** (2:32) The Johnny Otis Show • Music and lyrics by Johnny Otis. Capitol 3966. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 9\*

**3. Twilight Time** (2:47) The Platters • Music by Morry Nevins and Al Nevins, lyrics by Buck Ram. Mercury 71289. Produced under license from PolyGram Special Projects, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 1\*

**4. What Am I Living For** (2:24) Chuck Willis • Music and lyrics by Fred Jay and Art Harris. Atlantic 1179. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 15\*

**5. Lollipop** (2:06) The Chordettes • Music and lyrics by Beverly Ross and Julius Dixon. Cadence 1345. Courtesy of Barnaby Records, Inc. No. 2\*

**6. One Summer Night** (2:12) The Danleers • Music and lyrics by Danny Webb. Mercury 71322. Produced under license from PolyGram Special Projects, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 16\*

**7. Come On, Let's Go** (1:50) Ritchie Valens • Music and lyrics by Ritchie Valens. Del-Fi 4106. Courtesy of Rhino Records, Inc. No. 42\*

**8. Whole Lotta Loving** (2:02) Fats Domino • Music and lyrics by Antoine Domino and Dave Bartholomew. Imperial 5553. Courtesy of EMI-Manhattan Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 6\*

**9. We Belong Together** (2:42) Robert and Johnny • Music and lyrics by Robert Carr, Johnny Mitchell and Hy Weiss. Old Town 1047. Courtesy of Old Town Record Corp. No. 33\*

**10. Maybe Baby** (1:59) The Crickets • Music and lyrics by Buddy Holly and Norman Petty. Brunswick 55053. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 17\*

**11. Ten Commandments of Love** (2:43) Harvey and the Moonglows • Music and lyrics by Marshall Paul. Chess 1705. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 22\*

**12. Rave On** (1:46) Buddy Holly • Music and lyrics by Sunny West, Bill Tilghman and Norman Petty. Coral 61985. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 37\*

**13. Western Movies** (2:00) The Olympics • Music by Fred Smith, lyrics by Cliff Goldsmith. Demon 1508. Courtesy of Janus Records, Inc. No. 8\*

**14. You Cheated** (2:20) The Shields • Music and lyrics by Don Burch. Dot 15805. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 15\*

**15. I Wonder Why** (2:19) Dion and the Belmonts • Music by Melvin Anderson, lyrics by Ricardo Weeks. Laurie 3013. Released by arrangement with 3C Records, Inc. No. 22\*

**16. The Walk** (2:44) Jimmy McCracklin • Music and lyrics by Jimmy McCracklin. Checker 885. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 7\*

**17. For Your Precious Love** (2:41) Jerry Butler and the Impressions • Music and lyrics by Arthur Brooks, Richard Brooks and Jerry Butler. Falcon 1013. Courtesy of Vee Jay Records. No. 11\*

**18. Carol** (2:21) Chuck Berry • Music and lyrics by Chuck Berry. Chess 1700. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 18\*

**19. Rock and Roll Is Here to Stay** (2:28) Danny and the Juniors • Music and lyrics by David White. ABC 9888. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 19\*

**20. Rumble** (2:23) Link Wray and His Ray Men • Music by Link Wray. Cadence 1347. Courtesy of Barnaby Records, Inc. No. 16\*

**21. Jennie Lee** (2:00) Jan and Arnie • Music and lyrics by Jan Berry and Arnie Ginsburg. Arwin 108. Courtesy of EMI-Manhattan Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 8\*

**22. Talk to Me, Talk to Me** (2:39) Little Willie John • Music and lyrics by Joe Seneca. King 5108. ©1979 Gusto Records, Inc. Courtesy of G.M.L., Inc. No. 20\*

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