

TODAY'S MUSIC EDUCATION RESOURCE

# MUSIC ALIVE!

1981 2021  
40  
YEARS

THE MUSIC OF  
AUSTRALIA

## LISTENING GUIDE

"Isn't She Lovely"  
by Stevie Wonder

## HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENTS

## MUSICAL MYTHBUSTERS

FACT OR FICTION:  
The Piano has 88 Keys

Just named to *Billboard's* "Top Artists of the 2010's"  
(he's No. 6), it's been an incredible decade for

# ED SHEERAN



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# MUSIC NOTES

NEW SOUNDS, NEW IDEAS



## Google App Let's You Create a "Blob Opera"

**U**NLEASH YOUR COMPOSITION skills using an interactive vocal quartet of blobs (yes, you read that right) with "Blob Opera," a new Google tool by their creative coder David Li, starring four animated blobs of color programmed to sing together. Each can be dragged up and down to make beautiful music. The soprano blob can take the melody and the others can support in harmony, for instance. There's even a multiplayer option that provides even more opportunities to perform songs you may recognize.

The voices of real-life opera singers were recorded for the experiment. But, tenor Christian Joel, bass Frederick Tong, mezzo-soprano Joanna Gamble and soprano Olivia Doutney aren't actually heard in the tool. It's the "artificial intelligence," or AI, in the app that synthesizes voices based on what it learned from the four singers, creating sounds based on *what it's heard*. "The experiment uses a neural network trained on the voices of a bass, tenor, soprano and mezzo-soprano to generate opera "singing" in real-time from simple movements on a user's device," a post on Google's blog reveals. ●



## Ranked: Who are the best vocalists of all time?

OVER TWO MILLION VOTES LATER, here are the top 10 vocalists of all time according to [ranker.com](http://ranker.com). What do you think? Check out the full list here: [bit.ly/ma4o5mn2](http://bit.ly/ma4o5mn2)

1. Freddie Mercury
2. Michael Jackson
3. Whitney Houston
4. Frank Sinatra
5. Aretha Franklin
6. Elvis Presley
7. Luciano Pavarotti
8. Adele
9. Celine Dion
10. Elton John

**SO CLOSE:** Stevie Wonder comes in at #11. *Music Alive!* features Wonder's "Isn't She Lovely" in this issue!



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Mike Miltimore

Founder, Riversong Guitars

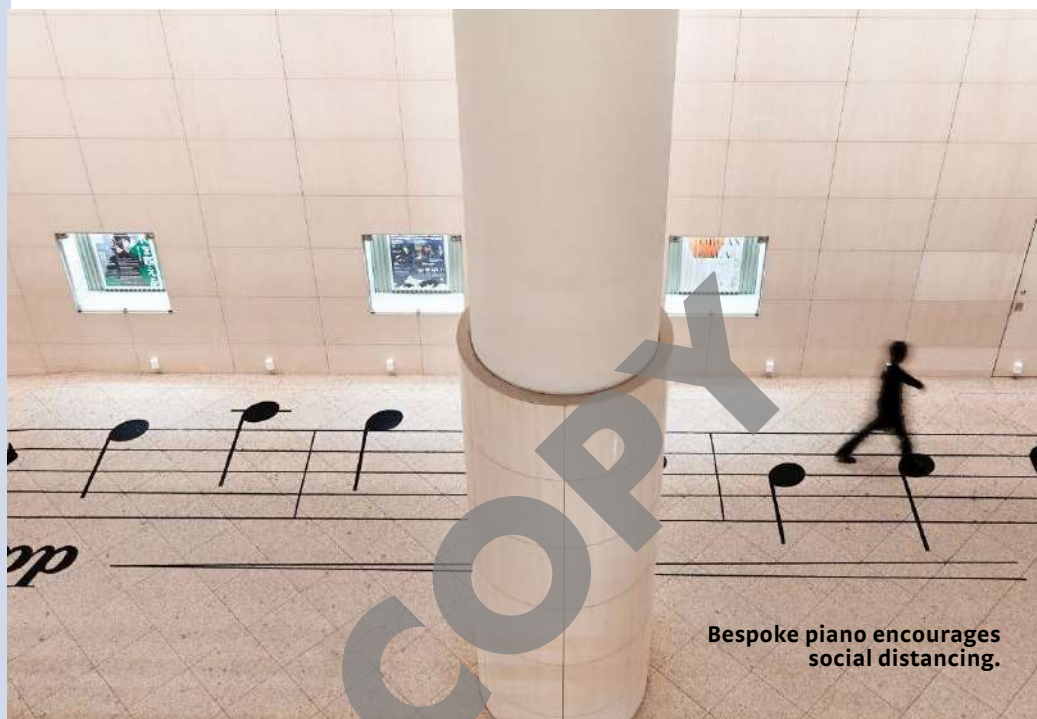
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**FACT OR FICTION:**

The Piano Has 88 Keys.



## Giant Floor Music Helps People Socially Distance

A "FLOOR SCORE" AT JAPAN'S YOKOHAMA MINATOMIRAI concert hall plays music as you walk on its socially distanced notes. Named "Social Harmony," its creators says that the giant interactive piano score helps to remind people to remain socially distanced during the time of Coronavirus.

Designer Eisuke Tachikawa's goal for the installation was to help people navigate through the pandemic in a fun, safe way. It's part of a larger project by Tachikawa and the website PANDAID which known as an infectious disease countermeasure website. The artist has also created posters about social distancing that have gone viral.

It plays French composer Erik Satie's Gymnopédie No. 1. Depending on how you step, the notes play different sounds, and changes in your direction alter the order of the notes. The rhythm also changes with your pace. ●

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## Radio Disney Off the Airwaves in 2021



**AMIDST DISNEY'S RESTRUCTURING** and reorganizing in the wake of Disney park closings due to the pandemic, and a bigger focus on Disney+ and TV, the company has announced that it will shut down the Radio Disney Network in early 2021. Radio Disney

Country, which launched in 2015 as a digital network, will also go off the air. Radio Disney launched in 1996 and was a primary station that was geared towards pre-teen and teen listeners. The platform provided young artists, like Miley Cyrus, Justin Bieber, Selena Gomez and Ariana Grande, their start as they received airplay on Radio Disney in their early career years. ●



## A Round of A Paws Please!

**A MUSICIAN DECIDED** to accompany his cat on guitar after he caught him playing his electric piano. Yes, that happened. When the musically gifted cat Barney started playing, his owner, guitarist Marsel Gilmanov created a duet by strumming smooth jazz chords to Barney's notes. As you might expect, the "paw-formance" has racked up over three million views! ●

Watch it here [bit.ly/ma405mn2](https://bit.ly/ma405mn2)

## PHRASE OF THE MONTH

# Rhythm and Blues (R&B):

A combination of blues and jazz that was developed in the United States by Black musicians; an important precursor to rock 'n' roll

## Who Owns the Copyright to "Ratatouille: The Musical"?

**IN MORE POSITIVE DISNEY NEWS**, TikTok users have been collaborating to create a musical based on Disney/Pixar's *Ratatouille* using hashtag #ratatouillemusical. But who does it belong to? The phenomenon began when schoolteacher Emily Jacobson wrote a song about Remy, the primary character rat who loves gourmet food and dreams of becoming a chef. She posted the song on TikTok, and soon after, composer Daniel Mertzlufft added an entire musical score, turning it into a production-worthy piece. Garnering interest from thousands of users, the "musical" began to take shape: they wrote songs, created choreography, did makeup, added puppets, set design; you name it. The result is a viral sensation. Even Disney has picked up the enthusiasm, posting their own rap about Remy. But how can this get to the stage and can the thousands of contributors somehow profit from their work?

All TikTok users agree to the platform's terms of service. Under the terms, users waive their "moral rights," meaning anyone who uses their work does not need to cite them as the creator. So, while it seems that contributors don't have creator rights, TikTok does! And, TikTok can allow others to use its content "in any format or on any platform." This means that TikTok could theoretically grant Disney permission to use the show and charge for it. For now, though, "Ratatouille: The Musical" simply lives as a fun project that has brought thousands of people together. ●

## RATATOUILLE

THE MUSICAL







# The MUSIC of AUSTRALIA

**Influenced by both Western music and the music of its Indigenous people, Australia's music scene has come into its own**





Pictured (left to right) Olivia Newton-John, Keith Urban, AC/DC, and an Aboriginal Australian playing the digereedo

# AUSTRALIA

By Stacey Swanson

Prior to European settlement, Australia's Aboriginal people developed a range of unique musical instruments which have been used in traditional ceremonies for more than 40,000 years. Although only approximately three percent of Australia's population, the first Australians belong to more than four hundred distinct tribal groups and speak over two hundred languages.

Traditional Aboriginal Australian music, like that of Polynesia, was focused on storytelling. Aboriginal Australian groups shared certain songs called *clan songs* that were unique to their societies and a way to identify different

cultures. Music was generally part of an entire performance such as a rite of passage or funeral that included singing, the playing of instruments and dancing. One common percussion instrument was the *clapstick*, two decorated pieces of wood that were hit against each other to create a steady beat. Singers may be accompanied by the droning rhythmic patterns of the *didjeridu* (did-jehr-ee-DOO), a long, tubular wind instrument usually made from eucalyptus wood.





# THE MUSIC OF AUSTRALIA

## Australian Traditional, Bush, Folk, and Country Music

Some of the earliest non-Indigenous music of Australia had its roots in Celtic (Irish) folk music that told of hardships experienced by the first European settlers. Songs like “Bound for Botany Bay” described conditions during the harsh overseas travel of the late 1700’s when British convicts were deported from their homeland and sent to Australian colonies designated for criminals. Those early songs were also brought by waves of ordinary migrants of different backgrounds, but initially they were sung by British, Irish, Scottish and Welsh offenders who were sent to Australia as a part of their jail sentence.

Over time, this folk music from Europe mixed with Indigenous music, creating a unique style known as *bush music*. “Waltzing Matilda” by Banjo Paterson is Australia’s best known bush ballad and is often referred to as the unofficial anthem of Australia. For much of its history, Australia’s bush music was passed from generation to generation in the oral tradition and wasn’t published until the 1890’s. One of the most recognized musicians of the traditional bush ballad style is Slim Dusty.

Australia’s own country music grew from the bush ballads giving it a unique quality as compared to the other modern music styles of Australia. Most other rock and pop styles were deeply influenced by Western music. This Australian country has lyrics with themes important to Australia – bush ranging, isolation, loneliness, endurance; songs about floods, drought, and farm activities such as sheep shearing, are common. This music features guitars, banjo, fiddle and harmonica and has a distinctive sound. Australian country music eventually evolved and was influenced by rock ‘n’ roll forms, as they were introduced by Western acts. John Williamson is one of the early mainstream country artists and regarded as an iconic Australian entertainer. “Old



Johnny O'Keefe

Man Emu” was the first of many popular songs employing Australian slang and Reg Lindsay was one of the first Australians to perform it at the Grand Ole Opry in 1974. In the same year, Australian country crossover artist Olivia Newton-John, received the Country Music Association’s “Top Female Vocalist” amidst American protest, by those who didn’t consider her to be an authentic country artist because she was Australian.

## How Did Australian Popular Music Infuse with Other Styles?

As was the case with other countries, Australian pop, jazz, and rock styles were ultimately influenced by British and American artists. Australian rock and pop music had its origins in the 1950’s and 1960’s when American-born entrepreneur Lee Gordon launched the career of Johnny O’Keefe, the first Australian rock star, who rose to fame by imitating Americans like Elvis Presley and Little Richard. O’Keefe and other “first wave” bands were popular until about 1961. Australian rock evolved again in the 1960’s with the “British Invasion.” After The Beatles toured in Australia,

many local groups mirrored their new upbeat style, but by 1970, most of the groups imitating the British acts hadn’t evolved as was the case in the UK and U.S. As a result, they became less popular, and most disappeared.

Jazz took hold and found an Australian audience early on, and the quintessential American art form had a lasting impact. Ragtime was brought to Australia around 1890, when traveling orchestras introduced improvisation and percussion breaks. By the 1920’s, the invention of the phonograph further spread American jazz. Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when American rock and pop groups were influenced by rockabilly and country music, Australian rockers were fusing their music with jazz. That said, mainstream modern jazz and Dixieland acts are still popular in Australia, with the most



## ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: SLIM DUSTY

SLIM DUSTY (1927–2003) is known as the “King of Australian Country Music” and helped to popularize the bush ballad. With a career spanning six decades, Dusty remains Australia’s most successful and prolific performer. He’s had more Gold and Platinum albums than any other Australian artist. Dusty recorded and released his one-hundredth album in the year 2000 and was given the honor of singing *Waltzing Matilda* in the closing ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.





Troy Cassar-Daley

prolific being reeds player Don Burrows, trumpeter James Morrison, and the pioneer of traditional jazz in Australia, Graeme Bell.

## Australia Gains its Musical Independence

After a century of various international influences, non-Indigenous Australian music came into its own in the 1980's and '90s. That's when Australian country music saw a resurgence with recordings like "Hey True Blue" by John Williamson. Australian country music was popular with Aboriginal Australians and the careers of Indigenous performers including Dougie Young, Jimmy Little and Troy Cassar-Daley took off. Artists like Gurrumul Yunupingu and Yothu Yindi played Indigenous instruments as well as traditional musical instruments. Elements of traditional folk and Australian country can still hear in today's Australian rock, heavy metal and alternative music.

Australian rock and pop also became more defined in the 1980's. Artist rocker Nick Cave said that before the 1980's, "Australia still needed America or England to tell them what was good." In the decades that followed, Australia produced a wide variety of rock and popular music acts that many in the U.S., UK, Canada as well as in other music markets around the

### EXTRA CREDIT



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Ryka Ali Plays  
Aboriginal  
Eucalyptus  
Didgeridoo  
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ma405aus1](http://bit.ly/ma405aus1)



Watch  
"Together"  
by Sia from  
the motion  
picture *Music*  
[bit.ly/  
ma405aus2](http://bit.ly/ma405aus2)



Watch  
Troy Cassar-  
Daley's  
"Freedom  
Ride"  
[bit.ly/  
ma405aus3](http://bit.ly/ma405aus3)

world didn't even know were Australian. Groups like AC/DC, INXS, Savage Garden, and The Seekers found enduring international success, making Australia an equal partner in launching rock and pop careers. Groups like Men at Work would go on to be hugely successful around the world in the 1980s with their song "Down Under" hitting No. 1 in Australia, Europe, the UK, Canada and the United States. Kylie Minogue released "The Loco-Motion" in the late 1980's which became the biggest selling single of the decade in Australia and quickly catapulted her to worldwide stardom. The 1990's saw success for Midnight Oil, even though commercial radio resisted playing what they considered to be progressive music. Nevertheless, Midnight Oil's anthem "Beds are Burning," a protest song promoting Aboriginal rights, became an international success.

## Australia Today

In the late 90's Aussie Keith Urban brought his Australian country music to Nashville

and became one of the top recording and performing artists in the world. In more recent years, alternative pop music, as well as electronic dance music, have become successful Australian exports and popular at home. The line where rock music ends and other styles begin is merging in Australia.

Australian musicians today perform across all genres and styles and have achieved international recognition with their unique approach. In 2014, Sia broke through as a solo recording artist when her sixth studio album *1000 Forms of Fear* debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* 200 and generated the top-ten single "Chandelier." Today, the Australian music scene is as vibrant and international as any on the planet. 🎵



Sia

### HEAR THE MUSIC visit [musicalive.com](http://musicalive.com)

Listen to what Australia  
has to offer:

**"Down Under"**  
by Men at Work

**"For Those About  
to Rock  
(We Salute You)"**  
by AC/DC

**"The Locomotion"**  
by Kylie Minogue

**"Together"**  
by Sia



To celebrate **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**, *Music Alive!* spotlights the central role Black artists played in the development of American popular music.

# HISTORIC

# TEACH

B.B. King

## What is Black History Month?

Black History Month is the annual celebration of the achievements made by African Americans in the United States. The story of Black History Month begins in 1915, half a century after the 13th Amendment abolished slavery. It was started by historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African American figures of his day. In 1975, President Ford issued “A Message on the Observance of Black History Week” urging all Americans to “recognize the important contribution made to our nation’s life and culture by black citizens.” In 1976 this commemoration of black history in the United States was expanded to Black History Month.

It’s impossible to discuss the achievements of African Americans in the 20th century without citing the music of Black artists. And, more than their music’s role in stirring, supporting and championing social justice, the music of Black artists changed modern music itself. Over the decades, Jazz, “swing,” R&B, reggae, “doo-wop,” pop and hip-hop have influenced and expanded the scope of popular music and has changed the way we live, here in the U.S. and around the world. Many Black musicians broke through barriers, to create and

develop those genres and styles, in the process becoming leaders in all aspects of the arts. Here then are some brief profiles of groundbreaking Black artists of the modern era, followed by a listing of others.

### Ella Fitzgerald (1917-1996)

Called “The First Lady of Song,” Ella Fitzgerald’s improvisational style, particularly her scat singing ability, had an impact spanning six decades. She performed with some of the greatest jazz musicians of all time, including Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie and helped popularize the bebop style of jazz. She also gave the genre some of its most influential records of the 1940’s. Fitzgerald was noted for her purity of tone, impeccable diction, phrasing, timing, intonation, and a “horn-like” improvisational ability. Her awards include the GRAMMY Lifetime Achievement Award, The Kennedy Center Medal of Honor Award, and the Presi-





dential Medal of Freedom. In 1990, she received an honorary Doctor of Music from Harvard University.



### **Miles Davis (1926-1991)**

Miles Davis is considered one of the most influential jazz musicians of the 20th century. His 1959 *Kind of Blue* album has been certified quadruple platinum by

the R.I.A.A. for selling four its million copies, making it

man Brothers, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Robert Cray. King performed well into his seventies, sometimes doing 300 shows per year. B.B. King carried the flag for blues music throughout his entire career.

### **Sister Rosetta Tharpe (1915-1973)**

Sister Rosetta Tharpe was popular in the 1930's and



# IEVEMENTS

the most successful jazz album of all time. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Davis was skilled at playing multiple instruments, including the trumpet, flugelhorn, piano/organ, and synthesizer. Davis was also at the forefront of several types of jazz, including bebop, cool jazz, hard bop, modal jazz, and jazz fusion. His improvisational style – particularly in the recording studio where spontaneous sessions were often recorded in very few takes – places him among the most highly respected musicians of all time – of any genre.

### **B.B. King (1925-2015)**

Born Riley B. King in Mississippi, B.B. King is viewed by many as one of the greatest guitarists ever (he ranks #6 on *Rolling Stone* magazine's list of all-time guitar greats). With a career that dates back to the 1940's, King was also one of the most influential blues guitarists of all time, inspiring such acts as Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Carlos Santana, the All-

1940's as the first recording star of gospel music, and among the first gospel musicians to crossover into R&B and rock & roll. She influenced early rock & roll musicians including Little Richard, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, and Jerry Lee Lewis.

"Down by the Riverside" highlights her pioneering electric guitar playing, which is widely cited as an influence for countless rock & roll musicians. Her originality played a pivotal role in the conception of rock & roll as a genre of music and earned her the honorific "the Godmother of rock & roll."

### **Mahalia Jackson (1911-1972)**

Mahalia Jackson is one of the most influential gospel singers in the world, earning the title "The Queen of Gospel." She recorded 30 albums during her career, a dozen of them certified "Gold." In 1950, Jackson became the first gospel singer to perform at Carnegie Hall. She was hailed by critics as the "world's greatest gospel singer," and the "Angel of Peace" in



Mahalia Jackson



Paris. Her friendship with Martin Luther King Jr. made her an icon of the Civil Rights Movement. At the March on Washington in 1963, Jackson sang “How I Got Over” in front of 250,000 people and “I Been ‘Buked and I Been Scorned” prior to King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech. The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences created the “Gospel Music or Other Religious Recordings” category for Jackson, making her the first gospel music artist to win a GRAMMY Award. A mentor to Aretha Franklin, she devoted much of her time and energy helping others, establishing the Mahalia Jackson Scholarship Foundation, and receiving a Silver Dove Award for her international efforts for peace.



## **Jimi Hendrix** **(1942-1970)**

Jimi Hendrix is regarded as one of the greatest guitarists in history. In fact, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, into which he was inducted in 1992, considers him the greatest instrumentalist in the history of rock music. *Rolling Stone* magazine ranks him as the greatest guitarist of all time and

the sixth greatest musician of all time. His significance to rock & roll as a black guitarist is legendary. He reclaimed a genre originated by Chuck Berry and created a style that no one before him had. Hendrix tested the limits of the electric guitar, inventing new styles and techniques. He pioneered the use of electric guitar effects, such as wah-wah and distortion, transforming the sound of rock as we know it.



## **Ray Charles** **(1930-2004)**

Ray Charles is arguably the creator of soul music and a pioneer of rock & roll. He was a soul, gospel, country, R&B and rock artist, making him one of the most versatile artists in the popular music of his era. He was

one of the first inductees to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. He went from childhood poverty to becoming one of the first African Americans to land a lucrative recording contract with a major record label and he retained control of his own master recordings. His early days with Atlantic Records were important in the development of soul music. He was one of the few black artists to enjoy major crossover success during the pre-Motown era of the late 50’s and early 60’s. “Georgia on my Mind” by Charles is the state song of Georgia.

## **James Brown** **(1933-2006)**

James Brown is known as the “Godfather of Soul,” the founder of funk and the grandfather of rap. He was an innovative dancer, a renowned singer, an innovator, an activist, and a bandleader. Introduced on stage as “Mr.

Dynamite,” Brown charted on the *Billboard* Hot 100 (except for Elvis on the pop charts) and Soul/R&B charts more than any other artist. He recorded more hits than any other R&B artist and earned 44 gold records. He recorded over 70 studio albums, 14 live albums and four dozen compilation albums. He would sometimes release four or five albums in one year and was regarded as “the hardest working man in show business.”



## **Aretha Franklin** **(1942-2018)**

While conquering soul music in the late 1960’s and early 70’s, Aretha also had a major impact on rock, pop, blues, and jazz. Hers was the voice of Black America at an especially important time in African American history. It was a voice rooted in gospel and honed through years of belting out classics like Otis Redding’s “Respect.” Franklin led an illustrious career with 20 #1 R&B chart singles and 73 *Billboard* Hot 100 chart





hits. Aretha became the first woman to place 100 songs on the *Billboard* R&B charts when her rendition of Adele's "Rolling In The Deep" was listed, giving her a chart span of 54 years. In 1998, she famously agreed to stand-in for Luciano Pavarotti (with only 22 minutes no-

tice) and sing the opera aria "Nessun Dorma" on that year's nationally televised GRAMMY Awards show. The performance received international acclaim and proved that Aretha was one of the most versatile and vocally gifted singers of any generation. 🎵

## OTHER ICONS

**BILLIE HOLIDAY** - Called "Lady Day," Holiday's unique phrasing and timing influenced many, if not most singers who came after her.

**LITTLE RICHARD** - His emotive vocalizations and rhythmic music helped form popular music genres like soul, funk and rock & roll. His seven-decade career influenced the lyrical boundaries of rock and reconfigured the shape of popular music for generations to come.

**SCOTT JOPLIN** - Joplin is the "King of Ragtime." One of his compositions, the "Maple Leaf Rag," is the genre's most famous and popular hit.

**DIANA ROSS** - A member of The Supremes before she went solo, Ross and her "girl group" bridged the gap between the pop of the 1950's and the R&B of Motown and opened doors for a next generation of R&B acts.

**JACKIE WILSON** - A tenor with a four-octave range, Wilson was a prominent figure in the transition from 60's rhythm and blues to the soul of the 70's.

**OTIS REDDING** - One of the greatest singers in the history of American popular music and a seminal artist in soul music and rhythm and blues.

**SAM COOKE** - commonly known as the King of Soul for his distinctive vocals, he crossed over from R&B to pop music, attracting a

multi-cultural audience and enfranchising the mainstream.

**ORNETTE COLEMAN** - Jazz saxophonist, violinist, trumpeter, and composer known as a principal founder of the free jazz genre.

**CHARLIE PARKER** - Jazz saxophonist who invented bebop.

**THELONIOUS MONK** - One of the founders of modern jazz and among the greatest jazz pianists and musicians to have ever lived.

**JOHN COLTRANE** - One of the most significant saxophonists in music history, pioneering the use of modes in jazz.

**BOB MARLEY** - The Jamaican singer/songwriter brought reggae and Caribbean culture to the world.

**NAT KING COLE** - A crooner, Cole is also one of the first African Americans to host a national television variety program, the "The Nat King Cole Show."

**NINA SIMONE** - This powerhouse singer infused the Civil Rights movement's mission statement into her music and became a go-to figure for political activism during her time.

**CHUCK BERRY** - pioneered rock & roll music, plain and simple. He mixed blues lyrics with his trademark guitar licks and set them to rock rhythms, in the process fueling the rock of the late 1950s and early 1960's.

**MA RAINEY** - Known as the "Mother of the Blues," she's also one of the first professional African American blues singers and one of the earliest of a generation of blues singers to ever record music.

**MARVIN GAYE** - A true pioneer of the Motown sound, his four-octave range and versatility made him a leader in several musical genres.

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG** - With massive hits like "Star Dust," "La Via En Rose," "What a Wonderful World," and "When The Saints Go Marching In," Armstrong became one of the most influential musicians in jazz history.

**FATS WALLER** - His pioneering work is credited as the foundation for modern jazz.

**DIZZY GILLESPIE** - Jazz trumpeter and composer who was the co-founder of bebop, along with Charlie Parker.

**THE TEMPTATIONS** - A staple act for Motown Records during the 1960's and 1970's. Their choreography, harmonies and fashion helped pave the way for modern R&B and soul music.

**ETTA JAMES** - James sang blues, R&B, soul, rock and roll, jazz and gospel, and moved many with her incredible voice. Two of her biggest hits were "I'd Rather Go Blind" and "At Last."

## HEAR THE MUSIC

visit [musicalive.com](http://musicalive.com)

### "Respect"

by Aretha Franklin

### "Georgia on My Mind"

by Ray Charles

### "The Thrill is Gone"

by B.B. King

### "Take the 'A' Train"

by Ella Fitzgerald

## LEARN MORE



Watch Mahalia Jackson at the March on Washington in 1963  
[bit.ly/ma405bhm1](http://bit.ly/ma405bhm1)



Watch Jimmy Hendrix play the electric guitar: Purple Haze Live at the Atlanta Pop Festival  
[bit.ly/ma405bhm2](http://bit.ly/ma405bhm2)



Watch Aretha Franklin perform "Nessun Dorma" live at the GRAMMY Awards  
[bit.ly/ma405bhm3](http://bit.ly/ma405bhm3)



He's achieved international stardom for his solo work, as well as for his famous collaborations, and closes out the decade being named #6 on *Billboard's* "Top Artists of the 2010's"

# Ed Sheeran's INCREDIBLE DECADE

By Stacey Swanson

**E**D SHEERAN was born on February 17, 1991 in Halifax, West Yorkshire, a town four hours to the north of London, in the United Kingdom. His earliest memories include listening to the music of Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan, and Elton John, and as a child, his father took him to the live concerts of Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, and Paul McCartney further inspiring his musical creativity. Sheeran cites Clapton as the reason for his learning to play the guitar. He declares The Beatles, Nizlopi and Eminem as his biggest musical influences, and with his learning to rap Eminem's lyrics as helping him overcome his stutter. Sheeran also includes Taylor Swift as one of his influences, suggesting in 2015 that their respec-

tive successes have spurred each other on.

Sheeran began playing guitar at an early age, showing promise as a music student. When he was 11, he met singer/songwriter Damien Rice backstage at one of Rice's shows, and the young musician was duly inspired. As the story goes, Rice told Sheeran to write his own music, and Sheeran set out the next day to do just that.

Sheeran knew that he wanted a career in music at an early age. As a young teen, he was recording his own CDs and released his first EP, *The Orange Room*, as an independent artist. At 17, Sheeran convinced his parents to let him leave school and move to London. With a backpack, a guitar, and no gigs, he headed to the city to pursue his dream. As he established new relationships in the music community, he often





slept at the homes of friends as he did not have a dedicated place to live.

Once in London, Sheeran quickly released two albums: a self-titled record in 2006 and *Want Some?* in 2007. He also began opening for well-known acts in England like Nizlopi. Though he had enrolled in college, in 2009, Sheeran gave up his studies at the Academy of Contemporary Music and started to play over 300 live shows a year.

There weren't many artists leveraging the potential of social media channels at the time, but Ed Sheeran quickly spotted (and leveraged) their potential. He was posting his videos online when one of them was noticed by rapper Example, who subsequently invited him on tour. The tour grew

his online fan base even more and further inspired Sheeran to write new songs.

### **An Incredible Decade**

Sheeran's big break came in 2010 when he decided to move to Los Angeles. He marketed his music without the help of friends or industry contacts, playing open mic nights all over the city. Eventually, he was noticed by Jamie Foxx. The actor recognized Sheeran's talent, so much so that he invited him on to his Sirius Satellite Radio show. He also allowed Sheeran to stay at his Hollywood house for six weeks and use his recording studio and cementing Sheeran's start in the music business.

Soon after, Sheeran released another EP, his last as an independent artist. Unpromoted, the record



reached No. 2 on the iTunes chart, and he signed with Atlantic Records that same month. In 2011, his *No. 5 Collaborations Project* went to No. 2 on the iTunes list. While with Atlantic, Sheeran and producer Jake Gosling, recorded his major-label debut album called *+*. Its first single, “The A Team,” debuted on the charts at number three. The album was hugely successful, selling more than a million copies in the U.K. Sheeran’s success soon spread to Australia, Europe, Canada, and then across the United States. He received a boost in the U.S. by opening for Snow Patrol in 2012, and Taylor Swift in 2013. His next album, *x*, debuted at No. 1 in the United States and the United Kingdom. “Thinking Out Loud” won 2016 GRAMMY awards for Song of the Year and Best Pop Solo Performance. He also had the opportunity to collaborate with one of his idols, Eric Clapton, with each taking a turn singing on the other’s album and performing on stage together.

Sheeran took a hiatus to work on his third studio album, *÷*. When released, the album broke a Spotify record with 56.7 million first-day album streams in just 24 hours. He made U.K. chart history when 9 of the top 10 songs on the U.K. Singles chart were from *÷*. In addition, all sixteen songs on the album made Top 20 appearances on the same chart. His success also earned him a prestigious spot on *TIME* Magazine’s “100 Most Influential People” list with his entry written by Taylor Swift. In late 2017, Sheeran delivered “Perfect Duet,” sung with Beyoncé. The original version hit No. 1 on the *Billboard* Pop Songs and Adult Pop Songs charts. Later that month, Sheeran added to his GRAMMY haul by winning Best Pop Solo Performance for “Shape of You” and Best Pop Vocal Album for *÷*. He also teamed up with opera tenor Andrea Bocelli to create “Perfect Symphony” to critical acclaim.

In 2019, he paired with Justin Bieber for the single “I Don’t Care.” It was the first of a series of duets that Sheeran collected for his *No. 6 Collaborations Project* album. “I Don’t Care” broke a new single-day streaming record for Spotify. He then followed with the releases of “Cross Me,” with Chance the Rapper and PnB Rock,

and “Beautiful People,” featuring Khalid. *No. 6* ultimately produced eight singles, earning Sheeran a GRAMMY for Best Pop Vocal Album.

## Giving Back

In 2017, Sheeran was made a member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for his services to music and charity. Sheeran’s philanthropy is as impressive as his musicality. The artist frequently gives away his clothes to charity shops around Suffolk, England. In 2014, Sheeran, along with other British and Irish pop acts, joined the charity supergroup *Band Aid 30*, recording “Do They Know It’s Christmas?” and raising money for the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. He has supported *No Cold Homes* and *Stand Up to Cancer* fundraising campaigns. In 2019, his music foundation, Ed Sheeran Suffolk Music Foundation, helped artists under 18 with grants to pursue music. In 2020, Sheeran donated £170,000 to his former school Thomas Mills High School and donated over £1 million to local charities in Suffolk amid the coronavirus pandemic. He also serves free meals to students during the pandemic at his restaurant, Bertie Blossoms.



## At the Close of the Decade...

All of his hard work, as a collaborator and soloist, has paid off. Sheeran was named by *Billboard* as the sixth “Top Artist of the 2010’s,” ranking higher than international icons Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande, and Beyoncé. In the 2010’s, Sheeran recorded 39 *Billboard* Hot 100 charting songs and charted for a combined 333 weeks, meaning Sheeran’s music was on the charts for 64% of the time during an entire decade. Sheeran and his work have influenced various recording artists, including Shawn

Mendes, Louis Tomlinson and Camila Cabello. Spotify named him the second most streamed artist of the decade. In December 2020, after being on hiatus after having his first child with spouse Cherry Seaborn in August, he released the surprise single, “Afterglow,” a song written in 2019 during his break, and it immediately hit the *Hot 100* chart. 🎧

### LEARN MORE

To watch Ed perform with Andrea Bocelli  
Go to  
**[bit.ly/ma405sheeran1](https://bit.ly/ma405sheeran1)**

To listen to his “Perfect Duet” with Beyoncé  
Go to  
**[bit.ly/ma405sheeran2](https://bit.ly/ma405sheeran2)**

# "Perfect"

Written and performed by Ed Sheeran

**"PERFECT"** is an old-fashioned love ballad dedicated to Sheeran's then-fiancée, now wife, Cherry Seaborn. It is the fourth single from his 2017 album *Divide*. The song reached No. 1 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 songs chart. Not wanting to be a "one hit wonder," his motivation was to write a song that was better than his hit "Thinking Out Loud." With the success of "Perfect," he accomplished his goal.

"Perfect" is a great example of musical minimalism. Sheeran makes a lot out of a little by using the same chords in the verse and chorus. The slow (63 beats per minute) triple

meter is reminiscent of doo-wop ballads of the 1950's and 60's. The song's structure is made of a pentatonic melody and simple chords, the first three of the verse and chorus sections all containing the tonic of A-flat. It is not until the last chord of every phrase that we hear the phrase NOT resolving to the tonic, or home key, but the dominant key of D-flat instead. The same happens in the bridge as the D-flat chord ends each section and the remaining chords are the same. This is a rare case where every phrase ends with a dominant chord and not the home key. . 🎧

## Verse 1

Ifounda love for\_\_\_ me\_\_\_ Darling just dive right in\_\_\_ and follow my lead. Ifounda  
girl, beau - ti - ful and sweet. Oh, I nev - er knew you were that some - one wai - ting for  
me. 'Cause we were just kids when we fell in love not knowing what it was I will not give you up this  
ti\_\_\_ me. Darling just kiss me slow, your heart is all I own, and in your eyes you're hol - ding  
mine. Ba - by I'm

## Chorus

\_\_\_ dan - cing in the dark, with you between my arms. Bare - foot on the grass\_\_\_ list - ening to\_\_\_ our  
favor - ite song. When you said you looked a mess, I whis - pered un - der - neath my  
breath, you heard it, darling you look per - fect to - night. Ifounda

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# SONG OF THE MONTH: "PERFECT" BY ED SHEERAN

## Verse 2

wo - man, stronger than a - ny one. She shares my dreams I hope that some-day I'll share her  
 ho - me I found a love \_\_\_\_\_ to carry more than just my se - crets to car-ry  
 love to carry chil\_dren of our own \_\_\_\_\_ We are still kids but we're so in love fighting a -  
 gainst all odds I know we'll be al - right this ti - me. Darling just hold my hand, be my girl I'll  
 be your man, I see my fu - ture in your eyes \_\_\_\_\_ Ba - by

## Chorus 2

I'm dan-cing in the dark \_\_\_\_\_ with you between my arms. Bare-foot on the grass \_\_\_\_\_ lis-tening to our  
 favorite song when I saw you in that dress looking so beau - ti-ful I don't de - serve this, darling  
 you look per - fect to - night. Ba - by

## Chorus 2

I'm dan-cing in the dark \_\_\_\_\_ with you between my arms. Bare-foot on the grass \_\_\_\_\_ lis-tening to our  
 fav-orite song I have faith in what I see Now I know I have met an an - gel in per - son and  
 she looks per - fect I don't de - serve this, you look per - fect to - night.

# COOL CAREERS



## Mike Miltimore

### Founder, Riversong Guitars

**MUSIC HAS ALWAYS RUN** in Mike Miltimore's family. With an early and deep understanding of musical instruments, he eventually embarked on a journey to make his own guitars.

#### When did you know that you wanted to build guitars?

I knew that I loved taking things apart and putting things back together as young as eight years old. I worked in my family's music store, Lee's Music in Arcadia, CA. My dad and I would take apart (old guitars) and create new and improved instruments with their parts.

#### What kinds of guitars did you build at first?

The very first guitars that I built were electric guitars. We hired local painters to paint images on the front of them. We spent many years developing and creating guitars designed for stage performance.

#### What did you notice about guitar construction that could use improvement?

In the early years, I noticed that the guitars we were repairing had repeated issues with certain parts of the instrument, like strings buzzing. Guitars failed because there was too much pressure and tension on the body. I thought there had to be a better construction method to avoid these issues. I decided to relieve all that tension on the guitar body. We spent six years and failed

in a hundred attempts, but when once we got it, we patented it. Today, Riversong uses our patented method of construction on all of our acoustic guitars, even in our most affordable models. The result is a great sounding guitar that is free from tension.

#### What prompted you to create Riversong Guitars?

The inspiration to build acoustic guitars began when I watched the Jack Black movie "The Pick of Destiny" with a valued employee and friend. Once we were inspired, there was no stopping us. We bought the cheapest equipment we could and built our first acoustic within a week. We built every part of the guitar instead of buying parts. I can buy a guitar bridge anywhere for a dollar, but I built my own because I can control the quality and improve it over time. Our company constantly rethinks everything, asking "Is there a better way?" And it turns out there is.

#### What is the process like when creating prototype guitars?

The first thing that I do is look at the issue I am trying to solve, and then decide if my experiment is valid. I will draw out my solution on graphing paper or make a 3D model of what I am working on. Then, I visualize how I would build it out. Once I've gone through drawings and decided "yeah, that might work," I start building. When experimenting, the guitar is not pretty or refined. Once you have a proof of concept, you go back and simplify for commercial production. A good piece of advice a mentor gave me is, "Reduce all variables until you no longer can. Now you have the simplest form of your invention."

#### What qualities should someone look for when selecting their first guitar?

A guitar should be easy to play and not hurt your fingers. The "action," or height of the strings, should be low and comfortable. There should be no buzz anywhere up and down the neck. You should also have the option to adjust your string height, as humidity and moisture change frequently, affecting your instrument. Purchase instruments from a local music store that can help set up your guitar. Lastly, buy something that appeals to you. It should inspire you to play!

#### What do you like most about what you do and what is the most difficult aspect of your job?

I like that building guitars requires learning different disciplines. I am always learning, which inspires me to create new things and overcome challenges. I can channel my interests wherever I want. For example, I was interested in using carbon fiber in my guitars. I met someone who builds carbon fiber car parts, and now I am using some of that technology in my guitars. The most difficult part of my job is office and administrative work, which you really need to pay attention to when running a business. I recommend you find somebody that excels with that and have them as part of your team.

#### What advice do you have for anyone interested in building or making instruments?

There are no rules! Be shameless about what you are doing and always be observant of the world around you. It is not all about money or market share, but about the passion and desire to do something and make change. 🎸

Listen to Mike's  
TED Talk  
How to Fail,  
Innovating in a  
Traditional Space  
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# LISTENING GUIDE

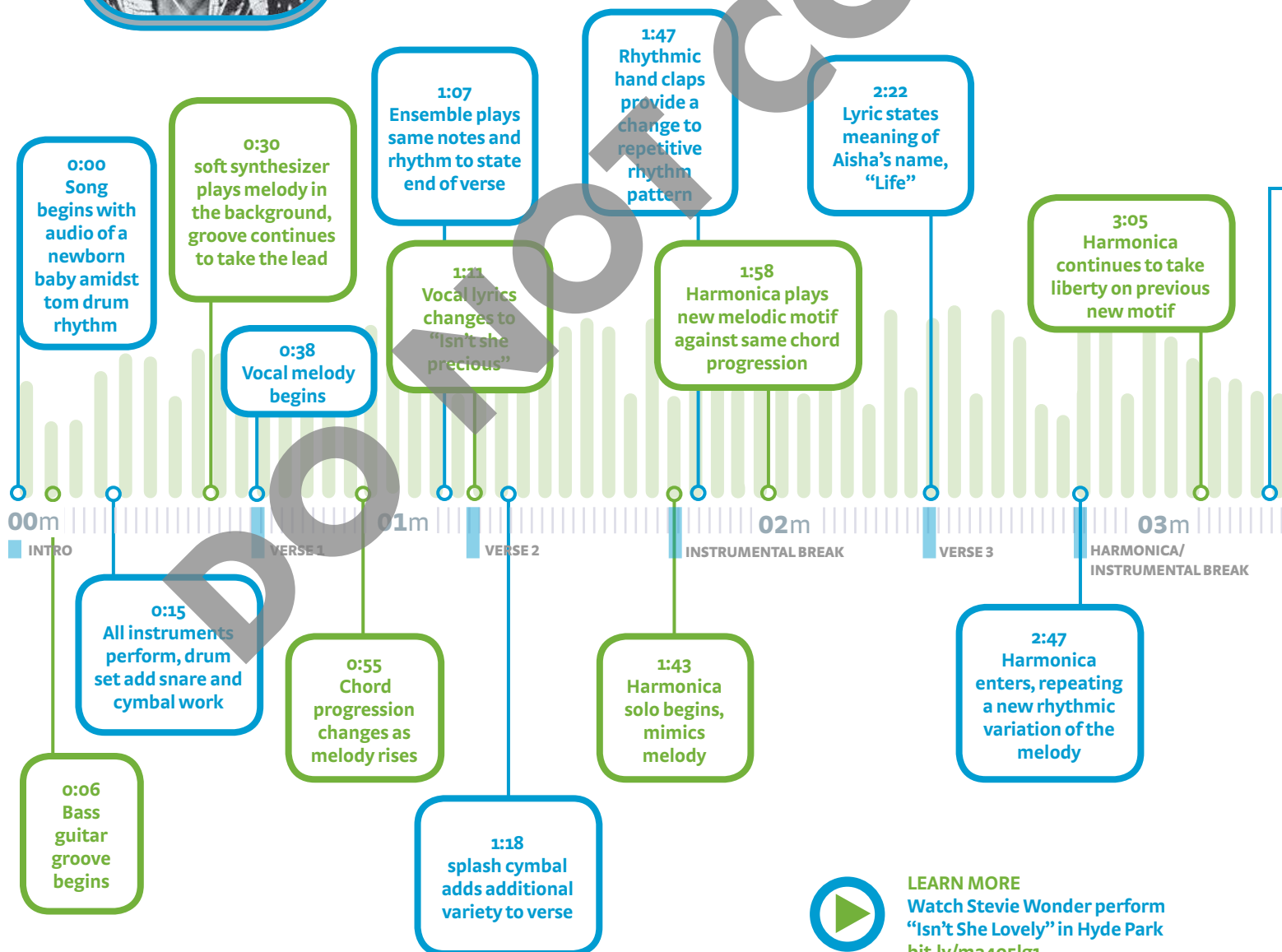
An appreciation of influential popular music and the elements that define a song in real time.



Stevie Wonder's

## "Isn't She Lovely"

His masterpiece album features a song about his baby daughter, complete with the sounds of her bath.



**LEARN MORE**  
Watch Stevie Wonder perform  
"Isn't She Lovely" in Hyde Park  
[bit.ly/ma405lg1](http://bit.ly/ma405lg1)



**STEVLAND HARDAWAY JUDKINS** (who now uses a family last name “Morris” as his legal name), is better known by his professional name, **Stevie Wonder**. He is one of the most successful and well-known artists in history. He’s also earned 25 GRAMMY Awards, the most of any male solo artist.

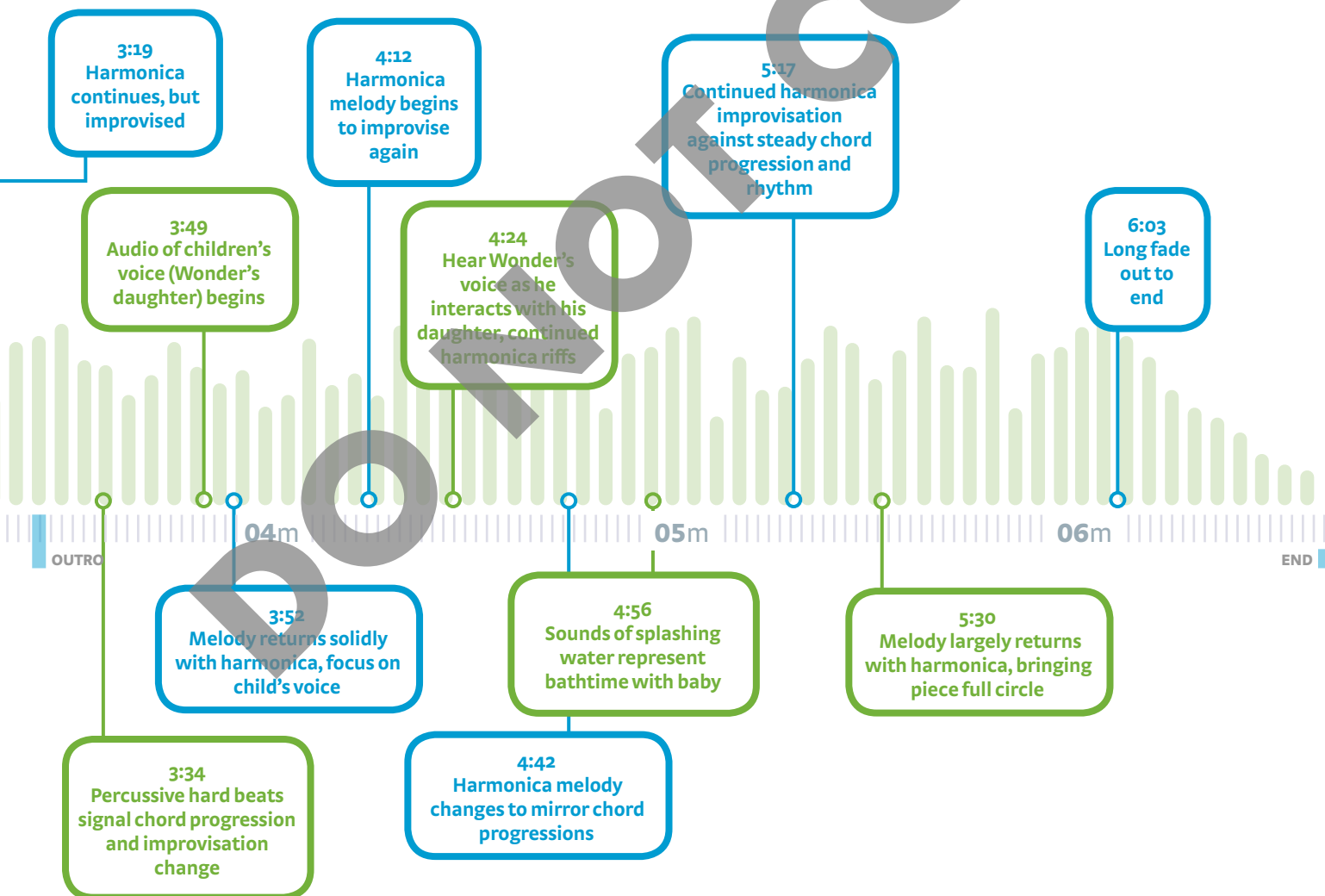
“Isn’t She Lovely” is included on Wonder’s 1976 album *Songs in the Key of Life*, and was written, sung and produced by Wonder, who played all of the instruments on the recording except for one keyboard part. The lyrics celebrate the birth of his daughter, Aisha Morris, and the sounds of a crying newborn and Aisha as a toddler are included on the track.

“Isn’t She Lovely” is an R&B standard that fuses jazz and pop elements. The song’s verses are sung over a

simple chord progression, and its driving tempo and rhythm express Wonder’s joyfulness at becoming a father.

The composition is made up of many layers giving it a rich complexity, and features Wonder’s improvised harmonica part that runs for much of the song. Approximately halfway throughout the six-plus minute piece, the vocal is replaced by the harmonica playing the main melody.

The song is recorded in the key of E major and its melody is built on the pentatonic scale, a simple but powerful and effective five note construction used extensively in popular music. Sticking to the scale keeps the song catchy and grounded, which is especially important since the song takes a while to get to its tonic, or “resolution” note. Scales are named after their tonics. 🎵



**EXTRA CREDIT** Watch *Twins the New Trend Review* Stevie Wonder's "Isn't She Lovely" [bit.ly/ma405lgz](https://bit.ly/ma405lgz)



## MYTHBUSTERS



We select a common belief about music and tell if it's fact or fiction.

## The Piano Has 88 Keys

**A standard piano has 88 keys: 52 white and 36 black. But who decided this number would be the norm, and why?**

### HOW IT BEGAN

Before the piano was invented, composers wrote music for the harpsichord, which has just 60 keys. This meant that music composed for the instrument had to be limited to a five-octave range. That all changed around the year 1700, when Bartolomeo Cristofori, a musical instrument technician from Padua, Italy, created a new keyboard instrument, in which the strings were struck by hammers instead of plucked like the harpsichord. Cristofori was employed by the Medici court in 1688 to look after and maintain their musical instruments. The new instrument, called an 'arpicimbalo' (an instrument resembling a harpsichord) invented by Cristofori, had a brand-new hammer and damper mechanism, two keyboards and a range of four octaves, which is only 49 keys.

After the invention, composers started writing more and more music for the piano. But the instrument's four-octave range was limiting. Piano makers designed new pianos with more keys, so composers like Haydn and Mozart could write more interesting material with a wider range. As classical music evolved, people wanted more options, and a piano became the answer to playing two-handed. By the time Romantic composers like Chopin and Liszt were writing music in the mid-1800s, pianos had up to seven octaves. If you go to a classical music concert today, you will see pianists use the full range of their pianos, across all seven octaves, to great effect.

### STEINWAY STANDARDIZES THE PIANO

Steinway, one of the most respected piano manufacturers in the world (and one of the first) made the first 88-key piano back in the 1880s. Other manufacturers followed suit, and Steinway's model has been the standard ever since. An 88-key piano has seven octaves plus three lower notes (B, B flat and A) below the bottom C. It has 52 white



keys and 36 black keys, and each octave consists of seven white keys and five black keys.

Today's composers mostly write piano music that fits within the range of an 88-key piano. Most piano makers also accept this as the limit because anything outside is considered too high or low for the human ear. There are a few exceptions, however. Stuart and Sons set a world record in 2018 when they created a nine-octave piano, with 108 keys. Bösendorfer sells 97-key pianos even today, whose nine extra keys are all black so the pianist can tell them apart from the other 88 keys. The extra keys, though rarely used, add harmonic resonance that contributes to the rich, overall sound of the instrument.

### DO YOU NEED TO LEARN ON AN 88-KEY PIANO?

This is one of the questions that many ask when they start out. The answer is definitely "no". A smaller keyboard is fine for learning the basics. If you buy a digital piano, it is not uncommon to find models available in different sizes. Electronic keyboards have even more varieties. You can find 88-key, 76-key, 61-key, 49-key, and even 25-key models without having to do too much searching. This is mainly for the purpose of keeping things portable. When the time comes to transition to a larger model, the feeling of playing a 61 or 76-key model will be the same. You will just have more range to the left and right. 🎹

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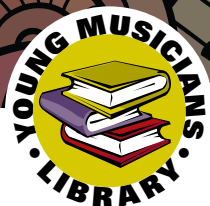
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