

Beatles and rolling stones

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



The Sixties had been defined by the events of the decade namely the Space Program, the war in Vietnam, the movement against it and the youth counterculture behind the movement also collectively categorized under sex, drugs and rock & roll. Of all the musical bands that emerged during the sixties, the Beatles was the most dominant. They became the precursors of the British invasion of America.

Quickly following on their heels was the Rolling Stones. David Leaf, in his book about the Beach Boys, remarked that the decade called The Sixties actually started only in 1964 when the Beatles arrived in America.

It ended, however, in 1969 during the Rolling Stones free concert in Altamont, California when an African-American man was killed by a member of Hell's Angels as Mick Jagger sang "Under my Thumb" (cited in Curtis, 111-112). American music still held sway over popular music even in Britain. Most bands were playing cover music or renditions of existing American songs. The Beatles were no different. However, what set them apart was that they were also writing their own songs. This was highly unusual at that time.

In the United States, this was not an entirely new thing as Bob Dylan had already begun to introduce the power of the lyrics, but it was the Beatles that made rock and roll accessible to the masses and made it popular yet still retain its sense of anti-establishment that appealed to the youth. Their music exuded a sense of fun. Their instinct in releasing the catchy song I Want to Hold Your Hand as their debut record to the American market proved to be correct. The Americans were still reeling from the depression wrought by the assassination of the President John F.

Kennedy and the song brought back the smiles. Their song's melody had a way of attaching itself to your psyche. While you may forget what the rest of the lyrics are, the chorus simply stays. They used this same formula with their follow up single She Loves You and one can simply not sing yeah, yeah, yeah in their head. This effect came to be known as " Beatlemania. " Their film A Hard Day's Night is now often referred to as the very first music video. The mania is evident from the statistics. In February 1964, " I Want To Hold Your Hand" became the first Beatles record to top the U.

S. singles charts. In the same month, the group's appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show on CBS attracted the largest ever television audience of more than 73 million or 60 per cent of all U. S. viewers. By the end of March, they held the top five positions in the singles charts (and also had six of the top ten singles in Canada). Their first coast-to-coast U. S. tour, in August and September, saw them " perform before more people than any other artists in the history of American pop music--including Elvis Presley" (Rayl and Gunther 3).

The Wall Street Journal estimated that by the end of the year Americans would spend more than \$50 million on sales of Beatle-related merchandise (McCabe and Schonfeld 66) (cited in Inglis, 93). The John Lennon-Paul McCartney collaboration proved to be unbeatable. One made up for what the other lacked. Their producer, George Martin, likewise had a hand in the reinvention of the pop rock sound with creative approaches to recording. They were among the first to incorporate various sounds such as

' Classical' musicians onto 'pop' records, (in one case, a whole orchestra), and incorporated studio accidents such as feedback, twisted tapes, and

random lyrics into their songs to create a new kind of music which put a premium on creativity...The Beatles set a standard of excellence in the writing and recording of British popular music which legions of pop idols have been striving to emulate ever since. They made pop music artistically respectable (Karwowski, 281). The Rolling Stones broke into the music scene with the help of Beatlemania and their first manager, Andrew Loog Oldham.

Their music influence was primarily the blues especially that of Muddy Waters whom they honored with their choice of band name but Oldham saw them instead as the antithesis to the Beatles. They were going to sell music and sex. Oldham saw that that a need for an alternative sound was forthcoming and he needed to position his band just right. Still maintaining that they were a blues outfit, Mick Jagger was said to have made a remark in 1962, " I hope they don't think we're a rock and roll outfit" (Curtis, 209).

Today, they have emerged as the world's greatest rock and roll band. Ironically, the Rolling Stones first hit recording was a composition by Lennon and McCartney, I Wanna be Your Man which was released as a single on November 1, 1963 while it was made a part of an album by the Beatles which was released on November 23, 1963. Regardless, the style was markedly different. The Beatles played what the British called Beat Music, and the Rolling Stones were blues-based. As the Beatles were spreading Beatlemania in America, the Rolling Stones were going to number one in England.

It was not long, however, that at the suggestion of Oldham, the Rolling Stones were writing their own songs and were able to establish their credentials with 'Satisfaction' and 'Jumping Jack Flash'. As the Beatles

<https://assignbuster.com/beatles-rolling-stones/>

evolved to become studio recording artists, the Rolling Stones were live acts performing in marathon tours singing their own songs as well as covers of other people's songs. According to Curtis, "' Satisfaction' is the first anthem of the sixties. This song defined the mid-sixties just as ' Blowin' in the Wind' defined the early sixties, and ' Light My Fire' defined the late sixties" (212).

The Rolling Stones music added with Mick's onstage performance which exuded overt sexuality, Keith's rock solid guitar riff and Brian who could play any instrument given to him, they were a challenge to the establishment. It was their offstage behavior that sealed their reputation and appeal to the more radical proponents of the youth counterculture though they reject responsibility. As it was, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards had the ignominious record of being the first rock stars to be arrested on drug charges (Curtis 208-209).

Dave Aguilar of the Watchband had a better explanation of the appeal of the rock bands especially over the women, " I'm convinced that just before practice sessions, 60s rock bands secreted pheromones detectable from outer space by the underage female species of Homo Erectus" (cited in Kauppila, 2005). By 1967, the war in Vietnam was intensifying and the hippie population was increasing. They were beads and flowers, smoked marijuana and " dropped acid. " The counterculture was clamoring for hard rock. In response, psychedelic music was produced.

This was music that one cannot sing along or dance to. " It was loud and electronically distorted, and often laced with mystic messages" (McWilliams & Miller, 70-71). Both the Beatles and the Rolling Stones profited from the popularity of this new sound. The Rolling Stones went head on with the

Beatles with the release of 'Their Satanic Majesties Request' which was a pun on the British passport which contained the phrase Her Britannic Majesty Requests. It was a concept album that was an obvious response to the Beatles Sgt.

Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club concept album. While the Beatles album was immensely successful, the Rolling Stones' Majesties was a watershed in their career. The album was criticized for lacking "the irony and the gutsy, hard-driving rock that the Stones do well" while the Beatles was praised in using "ambience noise to create the fiction of a performance setting. The contrast between their styles was evident as well, "As opposed to the Beatles' cheerfulness in a music hall, the Stones offer decadence in a cabaret" (Curtis, 214-215).

The music of the Beatles had transcended boundaries between classes and age groups more because of the beat and without regard to the veiled and dual messages contained in the lyrics, while the music of the Rolling Stones were more associated to the cultural subversion of the youth of the Sixties. Their style was more confrontational and more sensory-related and was thus used as a barrier against the rules of the adults. A criticism against them was that they represented the darker side of the age of love and freedom. Simon Frith pointed out that rock would eventually lead to violence because

...rock can't just be consumed, but must be responded to like any other form of art-its tensions and contradictions engaged and reinterpreted into the listeners' experience. Such engagement is intellectual and moral, the results are enriching and can be disturbing... The rock audience is not seen as a passive mass, consuming records like cornflakes but as an active community

<https://assignbuster.com/beatles-rolling-stones/>

making music into a symbol of solidarity and an inspiration for action (Whiteley, 87). With songs entitled ' Jumpin' Jack Flash', ' Brown Sugar,' ' Midnight Rambler' and ' Sympathy for the Devi', Frith was definitely referring to music of the Rolling Stones.

Mick countered with a comment of his own. I don't understand the connection between music and violence. I just know that I get very aroused by music, but that it doesn't arouse me violently. I never went to a rock 'n' roll show and wanted to smash windows or beat anybody up afterwards. I feel more sexual than actually physically violent (cited in Whiteley, 88). The incident at the Altamont concert in 1969 was unfortunate. While the violence was clearly motivated by deep-seated bigotry, it was attributed to rock music due to association by context.