

# Folk music

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



Section When one seeks to examine the core components of folk music, one of the main aspects of analysis which cannot be ignored is the setting and time in which the folk music was both penned and rose to a level of popularity. For purposes of such a level of analysis, this particular essay will analyze “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” performed by the Kingston Trio. As a means of understanding, this author will seek to answer the question of how this particular piece of music reflects the times in which it was written and performed, the definition of what specifically the artists were singing about, tempo, melody, and type of vocals employed. Through such a level of analysis, it is the hope of this author that the true meanings and intent with which this piece of music attempted to engage the audience of the given time will be understood.

Firstly, with regards to the time period in which this piece of music derived, one would be remiss not to note that the song rose to popularity during what many consider to be the very origin of what can be termed as the “hippy movement” (Lynn 34). As such, the hippy movement within the United States was born out of a rejection of many of the societal norms that have previously been exemplified within society. Moreover, the beginning of the Vietnam conflict had polarized many within American society with regards to the idea of further war and bloodshed after the first half of a century had been so dominated by some of the most severe bloodletting that had ever been witnessed by humanity (Sullivan 39). As a function of this, a great many songs of this era dealt with fundamental questions concerning the nature of humanity; i. e. peace, goodness, equality, kindness and other norms as means to undo the more negative attributes of hatred, aggression,

anger, and war.

What the artists are ultimately singing about concerns questions of where have the flowers gone; in other words, why has humanity ultimately chosen to turn away from the goodness and virtue that could otherwise solve so many of the problems that are faced on a daily basis within the context of our lives (Bond 8). Although not particularly a deep concept, such a question was appropriate for the times and for the society due to the fact that there seemed to be such a one-dimensional approach to issues relating to global affairs and international relations.

Moreover, the tone of the song exhibits simplistic yet powerful modulations that evoke a childlike wonder and inquiry which only helps to cement the previous questions and issues which have been raised above within the mind of the listener (Comarow & Silver 72). The tempo itself helps to engage the listener with a quality of dreamlike inquiry as well in that it is upbeat in tempo but not so upbeat that the listener cannot understand the depth and complexity of the questions asked for the issues raised. Finally, the type of vocals and melody strangely enough utilize a male chorus asking the questions of peace, love and unity that may otherwise be asked by the feminine voice. However, it is the belief of this author that this is done as a means of shedding light on who the true shareholders of the given situation were as it was the men that were ultimately asked to join, or be drafted, and sacrifice their lives for nebulous reasons in far off reaches of the globe. By asking the repeating question of “ when will they ever learn”, the singers evoke the rhetorical question concerning human nature and the lessons that seem to be so presently and perennially appear before decision makers

within the world (The Kingston Trio 1).

#### Works Cited

Bond, Lahri. " IN MEMORIAM." Dirty Linen: Folk & World Music Mar. 2009: 8+.

Academic Search Complete. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

Comarow, Avery, and Marc Silver. " Folkies Forever." U. S. News & World Report 134. 19 (2003): 72. Academic Search Complete. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

Linn, Edward. " EGGHEADS With A BIG BEAT." Saturday Evening Post 234. 50 (1961): 32-38. Academic Search Complete. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

Sullivan, Andrew. " You Say You Want A Revolution." Newsweek 158. 18 (2011): 38-44. Academic Search Complete. Web. 13 Feb. 2013.

The Kingston Trio. " The Kingston Trio - Where have all the flowers gone?" YouTube. N. p., 15 Jan. 2007. Web. 13 Feb. 2013. .