

Free essay about music: thinking about music and social change

[Transportation](#), [Airlines](#)



" Where Were You (When The World Stopped Turning)"

Where were you when the world stopped turning on that September day?
Were you in the yard with your wife and children? Or working on some stage
in L. A.? Did you stand there in shock at the sight of that black smokeRisin'
against that blue sky? Did you shout out in anger, in fear for your neighbor?
Or did you just sit down and cry? Did you weep for the children who lost their
dear loved ones? And pray for the ones who don't know? Did you rejoice for
the people who walked from the rubble? And sob for the ones left below? Did
you burst out with pride for the red, white and blue? And the heroes who
died just doing' what they do? Did you look up to heaven for some kind of
answer? And look at yourself and what really matters?[Chorus:]I'm just a
singer of simple songsI'm not a real political manI watch CNN but I'm not
sure I can tellYou the difference in Iraq and IranBut I know Jesus and I talk to
GodAnd I remember this from when I was youngFaith, hope and love are
some good things He gave usAnd the greatest is loveWhere were you when
the world stopped turning on that September day? Were you teaching a class
full of innocent children? Or driving down some cold interstate? Did you feel
guilty 'cause you're a survivor? In a crowded room did you feel alone? Did
you call up your mother and tell her you loved her? Did you dust off that
Bible at home? Did you open your eyes, hope it never happened? Close your
eyes and not go to sleep? Did you notice the sunset the first time in ages? Or
speak to some stranger on the street? Did you lay down at night and think of
tomorrow? Or go out and buy you a gun? Did you turn off that violent old
movie you're watchin'? And turn on " I Love Lucy" reruns? Did you go to a
church and hold hands with some strangers? Did you stand in line and give

your own blood? Did you just stay home and cling tight to your family? Thank God you had somebody to love?[Chorus x2]And the greatest is love. And the greatest is love. Where were you when the world stopped turning on that September day?

'Where were you (when the world stopped turning)' is a country song, written and recorded by an American country song artist, Alan Jackson, and was released in November 2001. Jackson wrote the song on a Sunday, two months after the wake of the September 11th attacks, as a way of reaching out to the society and offering hope. Alan Jackson had tried to write a song that would reach to the victims and the Americans in general without sounding patriotic; he just needed a song that would convey his emotions and thoughts concerning the attacks. On 11th September 2001, four coordinated bombs by the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda went off both in New York and the Washington DC metropolitan area. The attack left 2977 victims and 2996 deaths, among them 55 military people who were at the Pentagon (Roman, 2001).

When he first wrote the lyrics of the song in October, on a Sunday morning, he had woken up earlier on with the melody and the lines in his head and he recorded them; he completed the lyrics later in the day. After this, he sang it to his wife and his producer to get the approval of both parties, since he felt the song was not good enough for recording or releasing for that matter.

With the approval of his wife Denise and that of his producer Keith Stegall, Alan recorded his song by the end of that week. He later on played it to a group of executives at his record label, and they were moved by it; they just looked at each other, and said nothing. The song was distributed and soon

became his greatest hit songs and even topped the charts for weeks (McGhie, 2002).

The song brought a sense of hope and healing to the victims of the terror attacks that day; the survivors, their families, and every person in America. Four planes had been hijacked on that day, and were used to execute the attacks. Five of the hijackers flew the American Airlines Flight 11 that had left Logan Airport en route Los Angeles, into the North Tower of the World Trade Center, five others flew the United Airlines Flight 175 which had left Logan Airport en route Los Angeles into the South Rower of the World Trade Center. The American Airlines Flight 77, which had left Dulles International Airport in Virginia en route Los Angeles, was flown into the pentagon, and finally, United Airlines Flight 93, en route San Francisco from Newark International Airport crashed in Shanks Ville, Pennsylvania, when a passenger tried to subdue one of the four hijackers.

A lot of protesting ensued thereafter, with a number of bombings and harassment of the Muslim and the Asian community. Celebrities held charities to help the victims, rescue workers and police form other states in America took leave and left for New York to help with the rescue missions and blood donation mission started all over United States for weeks after the attack. All the terrorists involved in the hijacking died in the crash, but other perpetrators were not arrested. The international world joined arms together, swearing to increase the fight against terrorism.

'Where were you' acts as a reminder to the Americans on what happened on that fateful morning. The lyrics bring emotions to the listeners about the events of the day, and what happened afterwards, engaging them in more

than the rhythm of the song. When he performed the song to some of the victims and survivors, they were touched, and even in concerts, people cry when the song is sung. His closing lines on what matters is love, faith and hope, brought a sense of peace, forgiveness and breaks sadness of the event. It helps Americans remember the spirit of togetherness and love for each other, and most of all, being peaceful. Americans have become closer as a nation and learnt to look out for each other. Terrorism has reduced, and more hope towards a better and safer USA has been created (High Beam Research, 2001).

References

High Beam Research (2001). September 11 attack on the United States.

International Journal

on World Peace. Professors World Peace Academy. 2001. Retrieved March 19, 2014

McGhie, G. (2002). Responding to Terror: Gerald McGhie Reflects on the Impact of the 11

September Attacks on International Relations. New Zealand International Review.

Retrieved March 19, 2014 from <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-84052530.html>

Roman, A. (September 11, 2001). As It Happened - The South Tower Attack.

Retrieved from

.