

# The different styles of british invasion bands



One of the biggest moments in rock music history was when the Beatles arrived in the United States on February 7th, 1964. They landed in New York at Kennedy Airport and were greeted by thousands of screaming fans. This event opened the door for many other bands from England to come to America with the hope of finding success and fame. This sudden rush of British artists into American mainstream music is known as the British Invasion. The second major band from across the Atlantic was the Rolling Stones. They had a much different style than the Beatles and were basically polar opposites. There were many other bands after the Stones and the Beatles that enjoyed much of the same success. Two of the better known were the Who and the Kinks. These bands were in a totally different category and had a different style than the Stones and Beatles. The British Invasion though started with the Beatles, arguably the best rock band ever.

The Beatles consisted of four members. There was Paul McCartney who played bass guitar, wrote songs, and sang. John Lennon played rhythm guitar, wrote songs, and sang. George Harrison mainly played lead guitar, occasionally sang, and later, frequently played sitar. The last member was Ringo Starr, who played the drums and occasionally found his way onto vocals. Ringo was not the original drummer though, that position was held by Pete Best. The Beatles originally started out as the Quarrymen. They were founded as a skiffle band by John Lennon when he was only sixteen years old. After a while, they changed their name to the Silver Beatles. They then added a fifth member, Stuart Sutcliffe, on bass guitar and left for Hamburg, Germany to play hundreds of shows in a short period of time. Harrison, McCartney, and Lennon eventually were deported but then went on to play

over 300 shows at the famous Cavern Club in Liverpool, England changing their name to simply the Beatles. In 1961, Brian Epstein became their manager. He was a very good promoter which led to better gigs. Epstein convinced the Beatles to wear matching suits during shows which would become one of their signature trademarks. They were known as a very clean cut band with lyrics that were mainstream-friendly.

After the recording of Love Me Do, Pete Best was fired as drummer and replaced by Ringo Starr. One of their first big hits, I Want to Hold Your Hand, made its way to the United States and the Beatles became celebrities overnight. This led the British press to coin the term " Beatlemania". After their appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show on February 9th, 1964, the Beatles popularity grew even more in the United States. The Beatles' early style was influenced by many American rock and roll artists. They had Chuck Berry-like guitar riffs, hand claps derived from girl groups, duet singing like the Everly Brothers, and sounds like high pitched " oohs" from Little Richard. The Beatles' early songs consisted of love story-like lyrics where a boy meets a girl and they fall in love. Examples of these songs are, I Want to Hold Your Hand, I Saw Her Standing There, and Love Me Do.

As the years went on, the Beatles began touring less and spending more time in the studio refining their sound. They began to experiment with different recording techniques, such as playing guitar solos backwards. They became better musicians and pushed the art form. As their sound evolved, so did their lyrics. The group spent time studying eastern philosophy in India. After they returned from India, they began putting out songs like Tomorrow Never Knows and Norwegian Wood. In Tomorrow Never Knows, Lennon drew

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lyrics from books like “ The Psychedelic Experience” and the Tibetan Book of the Dead. The message of the song is to find the “ meaning of within” by relaxing and tuning out and just going with the flow. This song also included many new sounds for the Beatles. Some of these sounds were the sitar, guitar solos played backwards and distorting the vocals. Before this song, most of the Beatles’ songs consisted of simple guitar chords and a simple drum beat with pretty simple lyrics.

As the Beatles’ sound evolved, they got away from the clean cut group of the mid-1960s. Some of them grew beards and had long hair. They dressed in almost whatever they wanted. They no longer wore matching suits. They wore what some may consider hippie clothing. As the 1960s went on, the way they made records also changed. In 1967, they released the album “ Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band”. This is considered by many to be the first concept album. This was also the first album to have the lyrics to each song on the back cover. By the end of the 1960s, the Beatles had become increasingly psychedelic. Songs like I Am the Walrus, A Day in the Life, and Strawberry Fields Forever had a distinct psychedelic sound to them and the lyrics backed up the sound. In their later years, the Beatles had songs like Here Comes the Sun, Let it Be, and Yesterday which had a much softer feel to them. The Beatles would break up in 1970. Even though they only had a six year period in which their popularity was never matched, their sound and style was always evolving. They started out with fast paced, short, almost sing along songs, then went into psychedelia, and then into softer songs with a deep meaning. They will always be remembered as one

of the best bands of any kind as well as opening the door for other British bands like the Rolling Stones.

The Rolling Stones were founded in 1962 by guitarist Brian Jones. The Stones were the polar opposite of the Beatles. Where the Beatles were clean cut and wore matching suits, the Stones were the perennial bad boys. They openly smoked and drank and made no attempt to present themselves in a clean cut manner. " Indeed, the Stones would come to epitomize the darker, bluesier and more boldly sexual side of rock and roll in a kind of ongoing counterpoint with the Beatles' sunnier, more pop-oriented vistas" (Rockhall). The Stones would stand the test of time better than any other band in history. Unlike many other popular bands, the Stones never broke up. The style of their music has changed with the times though. Their origins were in electric blues and British blues rock. They dabbled in all kinds of music from traditional rock to disco. " Throughout five decades of shifting tastes in popular music, the Stones have kept rolling, adapting to the latest styles without straying from their roots as a lean, sinuous rock and roll band with roots in electric blues and Chuck Berry-style rock and roll" (Rockhall). Unlike the Beatles who had mainstream-friendly lyrics, the Stones had a harder edge and more suggestive lyrics. With songs like (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction, which had a rough and fuzzy sounding guitar chord and somewhat suggestive lyrics, the Stones would create a reputation for themselves as impolite thus helping them to become a favorite with the rebellious youth. This was completely opposite of the Beatles whose music was accepted by the masses. The Stones received much criticism for their bad boy style and suggestive lyrics yet proved to be one of the best rock and

roll bands of all time and along with the Beatles kept the door open for more British bands.

British Invasion bands, when roughly broken up, fall into three sub-divisions. These sub-divisions are Beatles-like bands, Stones-like bands, and other bands that are in between the Beatles and the Stones. Some Beatles-like bands are Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Dave Clark Five, and the Searchers. Gerry and the Pacemakers were just about the closest thing you could get to the Beatles. They were on the same record label, had the same producer, and had the same sound. " It sounds just like the Beatles, and for a few years, Gerry and the Pacemakers' evolution paralleled the Fab Four. In fact, for a time, the Pacemakers were the number-one challenger to the Beatles' supremacy" (Invasion GP).

Gerry and the Pacemakers were formed by Gerry Marsden in 1959 under the name the Mars-Bars. They were the second band that Brian Epstein signed, the first being the Beatles. They were signed to EMI's Columbia label in 1963 and George Martin, who also produced for the Beatles, was their producer. Their first big hit was How Do You Do It?. George Martin originally wanted the Beatles to record the song but the Beatles preferred to record the songs that they had written. " The Beatles recorded the Mitch Murray song but rejected it as their first single, preferring to debut with their own songs. Martin gave the song to Marsden, whose version topped the British singles chart" (Invasion GP). At one point, the band even worked the same touring circuit through Liverpool and Hamburg as the Beatles. Gerry and the Pacemakers enjoyed success over different outlets, just as the Beatles did. " Like the Beatles, Gerry & the Pacemakers got to star in their own film, Ferry Cross the <https://assignbuster.com/the-different-styles-of-british-invasion-bands/>

Mersey, although this wasn't nearly as successful as A Hard Day's Night" (Classic GP). Gerry and the Pacemakers broke up in 1966. Gerry Marsden later would begin a solo career and then got the band back together in 1974. Since then, Gerry and the Pacemakers have been performing on and off around the world.

The Dave Clark Five was another band that had similarities to the Beatles. Just like the Beatles, the Dave Clark Five started out as a skiffle band. They were originally from London and were created by drummer Dave Clark. The Dave Clark Five had an unusual stage setup. " Though the band carried his name, Clark was the drummer - not the lead singer. At concerts, his drums would be set at the front of the stage, with his bandmates alongside and behind him" (Invasion DC5). The Dave Clark Five were also diverse in their instrumentation. Band members played keyboards, saxophone, and the harmonica. In 1964, the Dave Clark Five were the Beatles' main competition. The Dave Clark Five would prove to be formidable foes but the Beatles would eventually get the best of the rivalry. The Dave Clark Five had 17 top 40 hits from 1964 to 1967. Just like the Beatles, the Dave Clark Five had a clean cut image and their lyrics were mainstream-friendly. Also like the Beatles, they starred in a movie that stemmed from a popular song. Their movie was called Catch Us If You Can though not nearly as popular as the Beatles' movies.

Dave Clark was one of the greatest business minds in music history. " During their prime, he employed the other band members and paid for all of their recording sessions becoming sole owner of the band's recording rights. He gained creative control over the band's output, including final say over what

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songs would be released as singles” (Invasion DC5). Unlike the Beatles, the Dave Clark Five never went away from the style that gave them success. They kept their catchy pop style until they broke up in 1970. The band never got back together, but they were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2008.

Another Beatles-like British Invasion band was the Searchers. Like the Dave Clark Five and the Beatles, the Searchers started as a skiffle group. Like the Beatles and Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Searchers were from Liverpool. The Searchers were founded in 1957 by guitarist John McNally. They got their name from the John Wayne film *The Searchers*. The Searchers played at the Cavern Club like the Beatles as well as many other different venues. “ Like the Beatles, the Searchers traveled to Hamburg in 1962 and performed at the Star-Club in the St. Pauli district” (Invasion S). Their first big hit came in 1963 with Sugar and Spice. They also recorded a Leiber and Stoller written song in 1964 called Love Potion Number Nine. This would turn out to be their biggest hit in the United States. Just like the Beatles, the Searchers wore matching suits and had clean lyrics. Unlike the Beatles, they had many band members leave the group. They had nine different combinations of members from 1957 to the present day. They still tour and are still somewhat popular in the UK. Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Dave Clark Five, and the Searchers were all successful bands from the British Invasion and all competed with the Beatles. Even though the Beatles would eventually become one of the greatest rock bands ever, they were on the same level as the other bands like them at some point. The Beatles even toured in Hamburg with these



bands. These three Beatles-like bands will forever be remembered in the UK as very successful bands.

The Rolling Stones-like bands are bands that have been influenced by rhythm and blues, electric blues, and older rock and roll. Some of these British bands include the Animals, the Yardbirds, and the Troggs. The Animals were led by lead singer Eric Burdon. They were originally known as the Kansas City Five while they were still based in Newcastle. The Yardbirds' manager moved them to London in 1964 and their success skyrocketed from there. In 1964, they released the song they are most known for, The House of the Rising Sun, and the song became a number one hit. " With the release of " House of the Rising Sun" in mid-1964, they became the first British group after the Beatles to chart a number one single in America" (Classic A). They had lyrics that were more on the folk side of rock, but their sound was on the blues side of rock. Eric Burdon's voice is similar to Mick Jagger's raspy and rough voice. The Animals used a similar guitar sound as the Stones also. The way they dressed was also very similar to the Stones. They didn't wear matching suits or matching outfits, but at the same time they weren't as rebellious as the Stones concerning their dress. Their hair length was more like the Beatles than the Stones. The Animals were on the lighter side of the bad boys of British blues rock.

The band broke up in 1966 after two members of the band left and after they changed their record label. Burdon got some members back together in time for the Summer of Love in 1968 and their sound shifted to more of a psychedelic nature. This only lasted until the end of the year when Burdon left the group. " After breaking up the Animals in December, 1968, Burdon

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entered the Seventies as frontman for a black funk group from the streets of Los Angeles known as War” (Classic A). Burdon still performs today. The bassist Chas Chandler was the one who discovered Jimi Hendrix and helped form the Jimi Hendrix Experience.

The Yardbirds were another band that had similarities to the Rolling Stones. The Yardbirds are known for having three of the greatest guitarists in history in the same band. “ Imagine having three of the world’s greatest guitar players in the same band. Only the Yardbirds can make that claim to fame, although all three — Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page — didn’t all play together at the same time” (Invasion YB). Just like the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds were influenced by rhythm and blues and electric blues. Eric Clapton was an original member of the group but left after they changed their style of music from blues based rock to pop. They wore similar clothes to what the Stones were wearing and they even got their start at the same club the Stones left when they became a big group. “ Clapton was a member of the original R&B group, which succeeded the Rolling Stones as house band at Richmond’s Crawdaddy Club” (Invasion YB). Eric Clapton was replaced by another great guitarist, Jeff Beck.

After Beck joined the group, the Yardbirds had their most success. They went back to a more bluesy sound with one of their best songs, Heart Full of Soul. After two more successful songs, the bassist Paul Samwell-Smith left the group. He was replaced by Jimmy Page who was originally Clapton’s choice to replace himself. After Page joined the group, the number of mainstream hits they put out declined but they had a very good reputation in the rock world and toured with the Rolling Stones. Beck was fired in 1966 after

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missing too many performances and the band then went towards a more psychedelic sound. The band broke up in 1968 because of disagreement in the musical direction of the group. “ Band members split on their musical direction: Relf and McCarty wanted a softer sound, while Page pushed for a return to guitar-based hard rock and blues. The Yardbirds played their final concert together in July 1968” (Invasion YB). After the split, Page, now the leader of the band, added Robert Plant as the lead singer. With the additions of Plant and later John Bonham and John Paul Jones, the Yardbirds would go on to become Led Zeppelin, one of the best bands of all time.

The Troggs were another band that had a similar sound and style to the Rolling Stones. The Troggs formed in 1964 and didn't enjoy much success until 1966 when they released the song they are best known for, Wild Thing. That hit reached number two on the charts in the UK and number one in the US. They also had two other hit songs in 1966 that both peaked at number two in the UK. The lead singer, Reg Presely, was similar to Mick Jagger in that he used his voice in many different ways, such as growling. The Troggs also had suggestive lyrics just like the Stones, but their clothing style was more like the Animals. The Troggs are also considered to be one of the original punk rock bands. “ Decades from now, when musicologists trace the origins of punk rock music, they'll find a path leading directly to the British invasion band the Troggs” (Invasion T). The Troggs broke up in 1969 and then got back together and are still performing today. The Rolling Stones are one of the greatest bands in rock history and have influenced many bands throughout the years. The Animals, the Yardbirds, and the Troggs are just a few in a long line of bands that have a little bit of the Rolling Stones in them.

There are also bands from the British Invasion that fall in between the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Representing this middle ground are bands like the Who and the Kinks. The Who had a complicated beginning which included many different styles of music in their early years. Pete Townshend and John Entwistle started out playing in a Dixieland band. They would then move to different instruments and a different band called the Detours. The Detours were a skiffle group led by singer Roger Daltry. In 1964 the band added drummer Keith Moon and changed their name to the Who.

Later that year, they tried yet another new sound after becoming managed by Pete Meaden. " Before long, Meaden changed their name to the High Numbers, dressed them in flashy Mod outfits and had the group recording his songs. When the record bombed, the band left Meaden and changed their name back to The Who" (Invasion TW). Because of all the changes in their style of music and everything else the band was going through, Townshend became more and more frustrated. " It was around this time that Townshend created the trademark that would always be associated with The Who when he smashed his first guitar, in frustration, at a London nightspot" (Invasion TW). The Who were also part of one of the original concept albums in rock. Pete Townshend's first attempt at a concept album produced the album " Tommy". The album told the story about a deaf, dumb, and blind kid who played pinball. " It took nine weeks in late 1968 and early 1969 for the Who to record the 90-minute long album, which became the first successful so-called rock opera" (Invasion TW). The Who were one of the greatest live bands ever. This is where they are similar to the Rolling Stones. Their lyrics, however, were not as suggestive as the Stones' lyrics. Roger Daltry had a

voice that almost sounded like the harmony of the Beatles. The way they dressed was unlike the Stones or the Beatles. They wore wild outfits and were very outlandish on stage. After Keith Moon was found dead in his apartment in 1978, the Who were never the same. They had a farewell tour in 1982 and that signaled the end of their run, although they have had reunion shows.

The Kinks were another band that fell in between the styles of the Beatles and the Stones. The Kinks began as a three-member band playing skiffle. In 1963, they became increasingly interested in American rhythm and blues. They then found a drummer and became the Kinks. Their first single was a cover of Little Richard's Long Tall Sally. They didn't chart a single until their most famous song, You Really Got Me, in 1964. Their original sound was much like that of the Rolling Stones. Their songs were very energetic and had a fuzzy guitar sound. The lyrics they used were more like the Beatles in that they were not suggestive and often told a boy meets girl story. In 1966, the Kinks took on a different style of music as the energy in their songs decreased. " Over the next few years, the energy in Davies' music came down a notch and many of the Kinks' songs featured a more traditional and nostalgic British influence" (Invasion K). After 1967, the Kinks turned their attention to trying to make concept albums. These albums didn't receive many sales even though they were not given bad reviews. The Kinks sometimes wore matching suits, always dressing more like the Beatles than the Rolling Stones. The Kinks wouldn't break up until 1984 when their drummer left. This marked the end for the Kinks.

The British Invasion started with the arrival of the Beatles at Kennedy Airport in New York in 1964. There were many bands that followed in the footsteps of the Beatles seeking similar receptions. Some of the more successful of these bands were Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Dave Clark Five, and the Searchers. On the heels of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones went a different way finding themselves on the darker side of the British Invasion bands. Some bands that were influenced by the Stones were the Animals, the Yardbirds, and the Troggs. The Who and the Kinks were two bands that didn't fit the mold left by either the Beatles or the Rolling Stones. Just because they didn't follow in the footsteps of the Beatles and the Stones didn't mean that they couldn't be successful. Both bands enjoyed success into the 80s and lasted longer than many other popular bands of the time. The British Invasion gave the rock world some of the greatest music and bands the world would ever see.