

What if Elvis
had never been
born?

...what a difference that would have made...



"Without Elvis, none of us would have made it."

Buddy Holly

Fashion, attitudes, youth culture

Family, friends and beneficiaries



Cultural impact of Rock and Roll

Musical evolution

The Elvis "cash cow"

Artists, musical styles

“He was the firstest with the mostest.”

Roy Orbison

Cultural impact of Rock and Roll

Cultural Revolution: Rock and roll emerged in the 1950s as a rebellious form of music, challenging societal norms and cultural conventions of the time. Its energetic rhythms and lyrics often dealt with themes of freedom, individualism, and teenage rebellion, which resonated with a younger generation seeking to break away from the constraints of their parents' generation.

Youth Culture: Rock and roll became closely associated with youth culture, providing a voice for young people and shaping their identity. It created a sense of belonging and solidarity among teenagers, who found common ground through their shared love of the music.

Integration and Civil Rights: Rock and roll played a significant role in breaking down racial barriers in music and society. African American artists such as Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and Fats Domino helped popularise the genre among both black and white audiences, contributing to greater cultural integration and paving the way for the civil rights movement.

Fashion and Style: Rock and roll not only influenced music but also fashion and style. The flamboyant clothing and hairstyles of rock stars became iconic symbols of rebellion and self-expression. From leather jackets and blue jeans to psychedelic tie-dye and punk spikes, rock and roll fashion has left a lasting imprint on popular culture.

“He was the firstest with the mostest.”

Roy Orbison

Cultural impact of Rock and Roll

Political and Social Commentary: Many rock songs have served as platforms for political and social commentary, addressing issues such as war, poverty, inequality, and environmentalism. Artists like Bob Dylan, The Beatles, and Bruce Springsteen used their music to engage with pressing social issues and inspire activism among their fans.

Technological Innovation: Rock and roll has been a driving force behind technological innovation in the music industry. From the electric guitar to multitrack recording techniques, rock musicians and producers have constantly pushed the boundaries of technology to create new sounds and styles.

Globalisation: Rock and roll's popularity transcended national borders and contributed to the globalization of popular culture. It became a universal language that brought people together across geographical and cultural divides, fostering cross-cultural exchange and understanding.

Overall, rock and roll has had a profound impact on society, influencing not only music and entertainment but also politics, fashion, technology, and social attitudes. It continues to shape and evolve with each new generation, leaving an indelible mark on the fabric of society.

“He was the firstest with the mostest.”

Roy Orbison

Cultural impact of Rock and Roll

And they all gave credit to Elvis or understood his contribution to their success!

Bob Dylan: “When I first heard Elvis' voice, I just knew that I wasn't going to work for anybody; and nobody was going to be my boss...Hearing him for the first time was like busting out of jail.”

The Beatles: “Nothing really affected me until I heard Elvis. If there hadn't been an Elvis, there wouldn't have been The Beatles.” - *John Lennon*

“There was no one else for me when I was a kid. Elvis was the one. He was the man.” - *George Harrison*

Bruce Springsteen: “...it was like he came along and whispered some dream in everybody's ear, and somehow we all dreamed it.”

Chuck Berry: “Describe Elvis Presley? He was the greatest who ever was, is or ever will be.”

Little Richard: “I believe that if Elvis had been Black, he wouldn't have been as big as he was.”

Fats Domino: Fats Domino dead: Why the late musician was the reason Elvis Presley hated being called 'The King'

“He was the firstest with the mostest.”

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Cultural impact of Rock and Roll

Fashion designers whose work was influenced by the rock and roll era:
Pierre Cardin; Yves Saint Laurent; Mary Quant; Andre Courreges

Pierre Cardin



Pre 1950



1959



My great stroke of genius was ready-to-wear at a time when there was only haute couture. They told me it would not last two years. I charged on, believing in my idea. I was criticised, made fun of.

PIERRE CARDIN ON READY TO WEAR FASHION

1959: Expelled from the Chambre Syndicale

“He was the firstest with the mostest.”

Roy Orbison

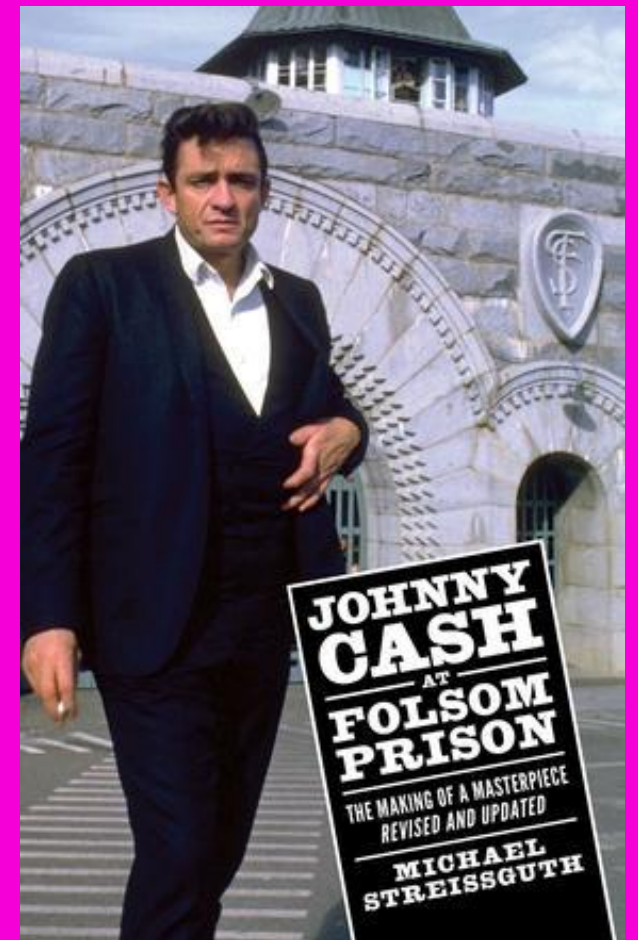
Cultural impact of Rock and Roll

Fashion designers whose association with Elvis affected others:

Lansky Brothers

Inspired by Elvis's rise to stardom, Lansky Brothers began incorporating elements of the burgeoning rock and roll aesthetic into their collections. This included sleeker, more form-fitting suits, flashy accessories, and statement pieces that reflected the youthful energy and rebellion associated with the rock and roll movement.

Lansky Brothers has outfitted several famous individuals with iconic outfits over the years. One notable example is the outfit worn by Johnny Cash during his historic performance at Folsom Prison in 1968. Johnny Cash, known as the "Man in Black," chose to wear a custom-made black suit from Lansky Brothers for his performance at Folsom Prison. This outfit became synonymous with Cash's rebellious persona and his advocacy for prison reform.



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Cultural impact of Rock and Roll

Youth Culture in the 1940s – 1960s

The term ‘teenager’ was not coined until the late 1950s. Youths did not spend their money on things that would distinguish themselves as a particular group like what can be seen in the 1950s and 1960s. There were no Mods and Rockers in 1940s but simply youths who wanted to have a good time. In fact, young people copied the styles of their parents because they did not see clothes as a way to express individuality as many young people do today. Instead they chose clothes that would make them look older because they wanted to move into adulthood as fast as they could rather than make the most of their youth while they could.

When the ‘teenager’ did appear in the 1950s it is apparent that this youth culture had decided to reject societal norms of respectability. Teenagers were to be a group that experimented and made noise because they did not neatly fit into childhood adulthood.



“He was the firstest with the mostest.”

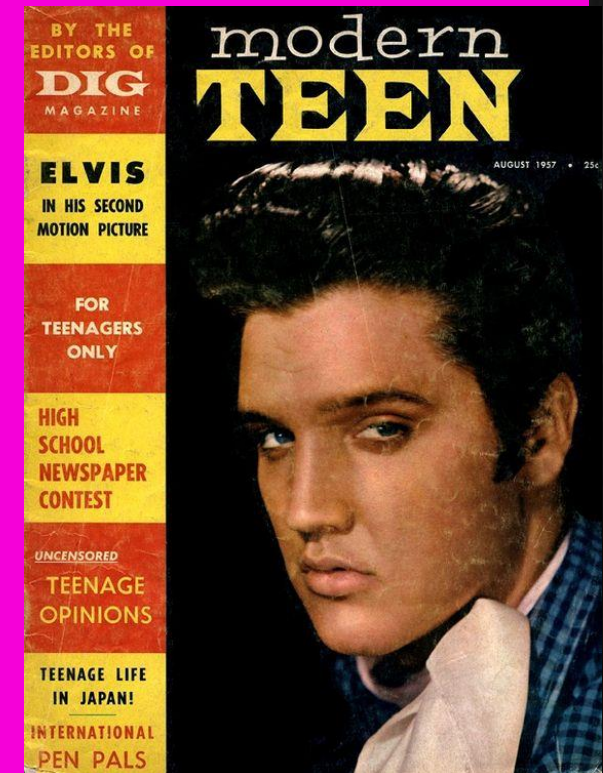
Roy Orbison

Cultural impact of Rock and Roll

Youth Culture in the 1940s – 1960s

- In the 1950s and 1960s, young Americans had more disposable income and enjoyed greater material comfort than their forebears, which allowed them to devote more time and money to leisure activities and the consumption of popular culture.
- **Rock and roll**, a new style of music which drew inspiration from African American blues music, embraced themes popular among teenagers, such as young love and rebellion against authority.
- In the 1950s, the relatively new technology of **television** began to compete with motion pictures as a major form of popular entertainment.

**Elvis – just the right place at
the right time or did he start it all?**



“He was the firstest with the mostest.”

Roy Orbison

Cultural impact of Rock and Roll

Youth Culture in the 1940s – 1960s



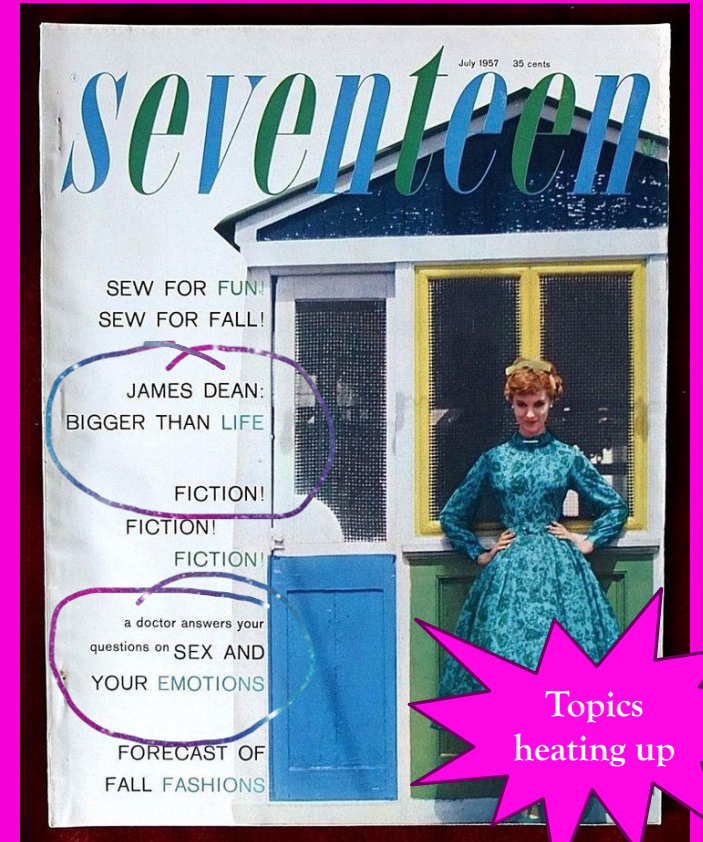
Nov 1950

Pretty bland topics for teenagers!



Oct 1956

Early days



July 1957

Topics heating up

Elvis – just the right place at the right time or did he start it all?

"We feel like we always knew who Elvis was. He was perfect. No matter what kind of music we sing - gospel, rock, country - we all copy Elvis."

- Pistol Annies

Musical Evolution

Rocking around the clock

In the late 1940s, some white country musicians began to experiment with the rhythms of the blues, a decades-old musical genre of rural southern black people. This experimentation led to the creation of a new musical form known as rockabilly; by the 1950s, rockabilly had developed into **rock and roll**.

Rock and roll music celebrated themes such as young love and freedom from the oppression of middle-class society. It quickly grew in favour among American teens during the 1950s, thanks largely to the efforts of disc jockey Alan Freed. Freed named and popularized rock and roll by playing it on the radio in Cleveland—where he also organized the first rock and roll concert—and later in New York.

The theme of rebellion against authority, present in many rock and roll songs, appealed to teens. In 1954, rock group Bill Haley and His Comets provided youth with an anthem for their rebellion with the song "Rock Around the Clock." The song, used in the 1955 movie *Blackboard Jungle* about a white teacher at a troubled inner-city high school, seemed to be calling for teens to declare their independence from adult control.

"We feel like we always knew who Elvis was. He was perfect. No matter what kind of music we sing - gospel, rock, country - we all copy Elvis."

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Musical Evolution

Rocking around the clock

Haley illustrated how white artists could take musical motifs from African American musicians and achieve mainstream success. Teen heartthrob **Elvis Presley** rose to stardom doing the same. Thus, besides encouraging a feeling of youthful rebellion, rock and roll also began to tear down color barriers in popular culture, as white youths sought out African American musicians such as Chuck Berry and Little Richard.


Despite adults' dislike of the genre, or perhaps because of it, more than 68 percent of the music played on the radio in 1956 was rock and roll.

It's essential to recognise that music is shaped by a multitude of factors, including societal changes, technological advancements, and the creativity of artists. Without Elvis, these factors would have interacted differently, resulting in an alternative musical evolution that is challenging to precisely define due to its complexity and unpredictability.

"We feel like we always knew who Elvis was. He was perfect. No matter what kind of music we sing - gospel, rock, country - we all copy Elvis."

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Musical Evolution



These guys and gals
thought he started it
all!

Mick Jagger: "Elvis was a unique artist, an original in an area of imitators."

Elton John: "When I first heard Elvis Presley, a miracle of God, I felt just like all of his fans worldwide."

Johnny Cash: "Elvis was the greatest, and still is. I know Elvis is the greatest star of all time, much greater than me. He's a god in my eyes."

Buddy Holly: "Without Elvis, none of us could have made it."

Jerry Lee Lewis: "When I first heard Elvis, I knew that I wasn't going to work in no factory. I was going to make records."

Carl Perkins: "He changed everything. When Elvis hit, it was like a bomb went off. We suddenly heard everything that we ever wanted to hear."

Phil Everly: "Elvis was a huge influence on us. We admired him tremendously."

Don Everly: "Elvis was my idol. There wasn't a thing that Elvis did that I didn't try to emulate."

Bill Haley: "Elvis was a very, very great artist. I admire him immensely."

Gene Vincent: "I wasn't just a fan, I was a disciple. I saw him in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1956 and just knew that was the direction I wanted to go."

Ricky Nelson: "Elvis Presley's influence on everyone in music, from the way he looked to the way he sounded, is immeasurable."

Tom Jones: "Elvis was the man. When I heard 'Heartbreak Hotel,' I thought, this is it. This is what I want to do."

Stevie Wonder: "Elvis was a giant. No question about it. People like myself, Little Richard, and Chuck Berry, we all kind of followed him."

Billy Joel: "Elvis Presley is the most influential figure in the history of popular music. He's the reason why I'm a singer today."

Rod Stewart: "Elvis was the reason I got into music. I saw him on TV when I was a kid, and it was like a bolt of lightning. I knew that's what I wanted to do."

Dolly Parton: "Elvis was my first big idol. I loved everything about him—the way he sang, the way he moved. He was the king."

"We feel like we always knew who Elvis was. He was perfect. No matter what kind of music we sing - gospel, rock, country - we all copy Elvis."

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Musical Evolution

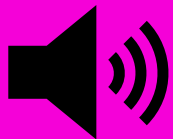
Rock and Roll affected styles

One example of an artist whose music style changed significantly before and after the rock and roll era is

Frank Sinatra.

Before Rock and Roll: In the pre-rock and roll era, particularly during the 1940s and early 1950s, Frank Sinatra was a prominent figure in the music industry. He was known for his smooth, crooning style, often associated with big band and traditional pop music. Sinatra's early career was marked by his affiliation with the big bands of the Swing Era, and he gained fame as a member of the Harry James and Tommy Dorsey orchestras. His romantic ballads and impeccable phrasing made him a favorite among audiences.

After Rock and Roll: With the rise of rock and roll in the mid-1950s, Sinatra's style underwent a transformation. He experimented with different musical styles, incorporating elements of swing, jazz, and even early rock and roll into his repertoire. During this period, Sinatra released albums like "Songs for Swingin' Lovers!" (1956) and "Come Fly with Me" (1958), which showcased his versatility and ability to adapt to changing musical trends.



Listen: *One for my baby (and one more for the road)* versus *That's life*

"We feel like we always knew who Elvis was. He was perfect. No matter what kind of music we sing - gospel, rock, country - we all copy Elvis."

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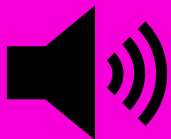
Musical Evolution

Rock and Roll affected styles

Another artist who experienced a significant transformation before and after the rock and roll era is **Ray Charles**.

Before Rock and Roll: In the early part of his career, particularly in the 1940s and early 1950s, Ray Charles was known for his contributions to rhythm and blues (R&B) and gospel music. He gained recognition for his soulful voice, impressive piano skills, and heartfelt performances.

After Rock and Roll: With the emergence of rock and roll in the mid-1950s, Ray Charles blended R&B, blues, and gospel with rock and roll, creating a style that came to be known as soul music. His innovative approach to music led to the development of a new genre that resonated with audiences across various backgrounds.



Listen: *Baby let me hold your hand* versus *I've got a woman*

"We feel like we always knew who Elvis was. He was perfect. No matter what kind of music we sing - gospel, rock, country - we all copy Elvis."

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Musical Evolution

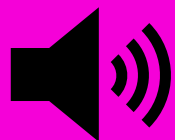
Rock and Roll affected styles

Another artist who experienced a notable transformation before and after the rock and roll era is **Bob Dylan**.

Before Rock and Roll: In the early 1960s, before the full impact of rock and roll, Bob Dylan emerged as a folk singer-songwriter. He was associated with the Greenwich Village folk scene and gained acclaim for his socially conscious and protest songs. Albums like "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan" (1963) featured acoustic folk music with powerful lyrics that resonated with the folk movement of the time.

After Rock and Roll: Dylan's transformation became evident in the mid-1960s when he shifted towards electric rock music, a move that initially surprised and even polarised his folk-oriented audience. His album "Bringing It All Back Home" (1965) marked this transition, featuring a mix of acoustic and electric tracks. Subsequent albums like "Highway 61 Revisited" (1965) and "Blonde on Blonde" (1966) solidified his position in the rock genre.

This shift represented a broader cultural movement from folk to rock during the mid-1960s. Dylan's exploration of electric instrumentation and more complex song structures contributed significantly to the evolving landscape of rock music. His work during this period is often considered groundbreaking and influential in shaping the direction of rock music in the late 1960s and beyond.



Listen: *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall* versus *Rainy Day Women*

**“There are too many people that depend on me.
I'm too obligated. I'm in too far to get out.”**

Elvis Presley

The Elvis “cash cow”

It's challenging to determine an exact monetary value for what Elvis Presley was worth to his friends and family, as his impact on their lives extended far beyond financial considerations. However, we can consider some ways in which Elvis's success and generosity benefited those close to him:

- Financial Support:** Elvis provided financial support to many members of his family, including his parents, Vernon and Gladys Presley, as well as his wife, Priscilla, and daughter, Lisa Marie. He also helped out friends who were in need, providing loans, gifts, and employment opportunities.
- Career Opportunities:** Many of Elvis's friends and associates, such as members of the "Memphis Mafia" and members of his backing band, benefited from employment opportunities and career advancements through their association with him. They worked as bodyguards, assistants, musicians, and other roles within Elvis's inner circle.
- Lifestyle Benefits:** Being part of Elvis's inner circle often meant enjoying a lavish lifestyle, including access to luxurious homes, cars, and travel experiences. Elvis was known for his generosity in sharing his wealth with those closest to him, providing for their needs and desires.
- Professional Advancement:** Some individuals who worked closely with Elvis, such as his manager Colonel Tom Parker and his record producers, benefited professionally from their association with him. They gained recognition, prestige, and financial success through their roles in shaping Elvis's career.
- Legacy and Reputation:** The association with Elvis Presley has provided lasting benefits to many of his friends and family members in terms of their own personal reputations and legacies. Being connected to such an iconic figure in the music industry has opened doors and provided opportunities for recognition and respect.

**“There are too many people that depend on me.
I'm too obligated. I'm in too far to get out.”**

Elvis Presley

The Elvis “cash cow”

The exact financial impact of Elvis Presley's music on his main songwriters and publishers is difficult to quantify with precision, as it would depend on various factors such as contractual agreements, royalty rates, sales figures, and the duration of their collaborations. However, it's clear that Elvis's music contributed significantly to the financial success of his main songwriters and publishers. Here are a few points to consider:

Royalties: Songwriters typically earn royalties based on the performance and usage of their songs. As Elvis Presley's recordings were immensely popular and received extensive airplay, his main songwriters likely earned substantial royalties from their compositions recorded by Presley.

Publishing Rights: Music publishers, such as Hill and Range Songs, owned the publishing rights to many of Elvis Presley's songs. This means they would have received income from the exploitation of these songs in various forms, including mechanical royalties from record sales, performance royalties from radio airplay and live performances, and synchronization royalties from the use of the songs in films, television shows, and commercials.

Mechanical Royalties: Songwriters and publishers receive mechanical royalties from the sale of physical copies and digital downloads of recordings featuring their songs. Given the immense popularity of Elvis Presley's records, his main songwriters and publishers likely earned significant income from mechanical royalties.

Performance Royalties: Songwriters and publishers also earn performance royalties when their songs are performed publicly, such as on the radio, in live concerts, or in other public venues. Elvis Presley's recordings received extensive airplay and continue to be performed live by artists and tribute acts, contributing to ongoing performance royalties for his main songwriters and publishers.

“There are too many people that depend on me. I'm too obligated. I'm in too far to get out.”

Elvis Presley

The Elvis “cash cow”

Just a few songs written about Elvis (which earned people money) that come to mind ...

1. "Elvis Presley Blues" by Gillian Welch
2. "Walking in Memphis" by Marc Cohn
3. "King's Call" by Phil Lynott
4. "Elvis Has Left the Building" by Frank Zappa
5. "Graceland" by Paul Simon
6. "Calling Elvis" by Dire Straits
7. "Waiting for Elvis" by Rusty Golden
8. "Elvis and Me" by Jimmy Webb
9. "The King is Gone" by Ronnie McDowell
10. "Way Down" by Elvis Presley
11. "Letter to Elvis" by Paul Simon
12. "Elvis Ain't Dead" by Scouting for Girls
13. "Graceland Too" by Phoebe Bridgers
14. "Elvis Presley Blvd." by Billy Joel
15. "Elvis Presley Blues" by Jimmy Buffett
16. "The Night Elvis Died" by Boxcar Willie
17. "Elvis on Velvet" by Stray Cats
18. "Elvis is Everywhere" by Mojo Nixon
19. "Elvis Presley and America" by U2
20. "Elvis Presley and the Space Aliens" by Jesse Winchester

1. "Elvis Has Just Left the Building" by Frank Turner
2. "Elvis Presley for President" by The O'Jays
3. "Elvis and Johnny" by Bash & Pop
4. "The King is Gone" by Ronnie McDowell
5. "Elvis Died Today" by Mojo Nixon
6. "Elvis at the Wheel" by Was (Not Was)
7. "Elvis and Andy" by Confederate Railroad
8. "Elvis is Dead" by Living Colour
9. "Elvis is Everywhere" by Mojo Nixon
10. "Elvis in My Pocket" by Black Lips
11. "Elvis is Dead" by Living Colour
12. "The Ghost of Elvis" by The Pogues
13. "Elvis, I Was Wrong" by Sleeper
14. "Song for Elvis" by Mark Knopfler
15. "The King" by Grand Funk Railroad
16. "Elvis" by Sister Hazel
17. "The Night Elvis Died" by Young Flowers
18. "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)" by Alan Jackson
19. "Elvis and Marilyn" by Deacon Blue

1. "Sweet Elvis" by The Doobie Brothers
2. "Calling Elvis" by Dire Straits
3. "The King is Gone" by Ronnie McDowell
4. "Elvis" by Pat Green
5. "Elvis (I Remember)" by Stiff Little Fingers
6. "Remembering Elvis" by Mac Davis
7. "King of the World" by First Aid Kit
8. "Elvis on Velvet" by Stray Cats
9. "I Met Elvis at a Jewish Deli" by Chris Loggins
10. "Elvis Died for You" by Little Jimmy Dickens
11. "The Day Elvis Died" by Boxcar Willie
12. "Elvis' Watching" by The Weather Prophets
13. "Elvis is Dead" by Toy Dolls
14. "Elvis' TV Set" by Grizzly Bear
15. "Elvis is Dead" by Jonathon Brandmeier
16. "Remembering Elvis" by Merle Haggard
17. "Remembering Elvis" by Tanya Tucker
18. "Remembering Elvis" by Kris Kristofferson

1. "Thank You, Elvis" by Johnny Cash
2. "Thank You, Elvis" by Waylon Jennings
3. "Thank You, Elvis" by Conway Twitty
4. "Thank You, Elvis" by Charlie Rich
5. "Thank You, Elvis" by Bill Haley & His Comets
6. "Elvis Presley Boulevard" by Billy Joel
7. "Elvis is Back and David's Gone" by Jonathon Brandmeier
8. "Elvis, It's Time to Pray" by The O'Kanes
9. "Goodbye, Elvis" by Dale Watson
10. "Goodbye, Elvis" by Rosalie Allen
11. "Elvis Presley" by The Mekons
12. "Elvis and Me" by Bob Dylan
13. "Elvis and Me" by Jimmy Buffett
14. "Elvis and Me" by Lisa Marie Presley
15. "Thank You, Elvis" by Waylon Jennings
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No Elvis,
no songs,
no money ...