

The music of the 1960s is considered by many to be timeless, a true form of art that other art forms cannot touch, with lyrics and messages that are deep and expressive. Today many sit down and continue to enjoy music from the likes of The Beatles, Creedence Clearwater Revival, and Jimi Hendrix. Many of these songs are used in commercials, movies, television and in many cases out of the context in which they were written.

The sixties were a time of change, grief, and unity. The roots of the change stem from into the history of the country, but this would begin coming to a head in the 1950s with the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>1</sup> America had adopted a policy that effectively gave it the right to police the world and fight communism during the Truman years with the Truman Doctrine.<sup>2</sup> Attention turned in the 1950s towards the tensions in Vietnam and the “domino theory” spread of communism across Southeast Asia.<sup>3</sup> Vietnam escalated after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963, resulting in an increase in the polarity of the nation.

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<sup>1</sup> An example of this can be seen in matters such as Supreme Court of the United States, “Brown v. Board of Education,” (1954) in William H. Chafe, Harvard Sitkoff and Beth Bailey, *A History of Our Time: Readings on Postwar America*, Eighth Edition (Oxford University Press: New York: 2012) pp. 96-99.

<sup>2</sup> The full document can be found in Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, “The Truman Doctrine,” (1947) in Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, Edward J. Blum and Jon Gjerde, *Major Problems in American History*, Volume II, Third Edition (Wadsworth: Boston: 2012) pp. 305-306.

<sup>3</sup> Mentions of the progression of the domino theory can be found in Chafe, William H. *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*. Seventh Edition. 2011. p247, 254.

President Eisenhower's administration introduced around 900 troops into Vietnam as advisors in the 1950s, but by 1963 Kennedy had introduced another 14,000.<sup>4</sup> Increases in troop presence in Vietnam came at a cost to the American people. While it was Johnson's escalation of the war,<sup>5</sup> and Nixon's continuation of the war that would lead to the outcry of the youth in the nation, tensions had begun to rise during the era of Kennedy. As numbers in Vietnam increased, so did the demand for soldiers which resulted in a draft. The draft in itself began to fracture families across the nation, further increasing the tensions felt by the people.

Examples of this can be found especially in music from later in the war, such as *I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die* by Country Joe and the Fish. The song injects blunt and graphic images into the lyrics along with portraying the draft in a negative light.

And it's one, two, three,  
What are we fighting for?  
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,  
Next stop is Vietnam;  
And it's five, six seven,  
Open up the pearly gates,  
Well there ain't no time to wonder why,

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<sup>4</sup> These statistics are pulled from Chafe; Sitkoff; Bailey, 2012. p134.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson introduced over 500,000 additional troops by the end of his administration. See Chafe; Sitkoff; Bailey, 2012. p134.

Whoopee! We're all gonne die.<sup>6</sup>

The song captures the feel of many soldiers who were reluctantly drafted. Many citizens along with soldiers serving overseas believed that those who were drafted were victims, set to be killed by the terror that was Vietnam.

It was not so much Kennedy's increase in troops that began tensions in America, but his domestic policies in reaction to the Civil Rights Movement of the previous decade.<sup>7</sup> The lines of race, sex, and religion seemed to fade, and with that came a sense of unity among the American youth. However, unity had begun to enter into mainstream culture earlier in the 1950s. Movements such as the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-Nuclear Movements had all progressed into forms that would evolve into what would be known as the New Left. The Port Huron Statement that was issued by the Students for a Democratic Society encouraged the youth of America to stand against inequality. It also called for the youth to protest and fight the use of the bomb, and warned of a coming military industrial complex.<sup>8</sup> This was the rise of the New Left.

The increase in soldiers being drafted for Vietnam after 1963 broke apart many American families, and caused a rift between the American citizens and the government. April 17, 1965 broke the mold for the anti-war movement as thousands of people

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<sup>6</sup> Lyrics from Country Joe and the Fish. *I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die*. Vanguard VRS 9266. 1967.

<sup>7</sup> Kennedy's initial reaction to the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and the roles he took during the 1960s can be found in Chafe, 2011. pp197-208.

<sup>8</sup> The statement can be found in its entirety in Students for a Democratic Society, "The Port Huron Statement," (1962) in William H. Chafe, Harvard Sitkoff and Beth Bailey, *A History of Our Time: Readings on Postwar America*, Eighth Edition (Oxford University Press: New York: 2012) pp. 66-70.

flooded the streets of Washington D.C. to protest the Vietnam War.<sup>9</sup> Headed by the Students for a Democratic Society, the protestors gathered under the idea that the war was immoral, and that the United States was disrupting the peacefulness of Vietnam's landscape.<sup>10</sup> The revolution in America had begun, and it had sparked a new civil war that was not to be fought with heavy artillery by both sides, but by protest and outrage.

While Johnson had increased the number of advisors by an arguably small number in 1964 (over 15,000 to just shy of 25,000<sup>11</sup>), overall American involvement in Vietnam had begun to increase. Johnson assured the public that he wouldn't "send American boys to do the fighting that Asian boys should do themselves." However, issues that would arise during the Gulf of Tonkin attacks in August of 1964 would quickly be used to invalidate this promise.<sup>12</sup>

As the number of soldiers in Vietnam grew, so did the casualty rate and the number of soldiers being taken away from their homes. Protests also began to include arguments against the draft, and expression of grief over the loss of life. The emotion and drive of the generation had led to various forms of art and music that expressed

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<sup>9</sup> A more elaborate description of the protest can be found in Chafe; Sitkoff; Bailey, 2012. p149.

<sup>10</sup> Described in an announcement made by the Students for a Democratic Society, "March on Washington: The War Must Be Stopped," (1965) in William H. Chafe, Harvard Sitkoff and Beth Bailey, *A History of Our Time: Readings on Postwar America*, Eighth Edition (Oxford University Press: New York: 2012) pp. 149-150.

<sup>11</sup> These numbers are from Chafe 2011, pp265-266.

<sup>12</sup> More on the relationship between Johnson's promises and the Gulf of Tonkin can be found in Chafe, 2011. pp268-269. More on the inconsistencies and a dissection of the Gulf of Tonkin Crisis can be found in Cherwitz, Richard A., "Masking Inconsistency: The Tonkin Gulf Crisis." *Communication Quarterly*. Volume 28, Issue 2. Spring 1980. pp27-37.

that same emotion and feeling. Music expressing the events happening at various protests and riots, and the threats that young people faced during said protests flooded the airwaves. Tracks such as Buffalo Springfield's "For What It's Worth" quickly became inherently related to images of Vietnam, particularly the anti-war rallies.<sup>13</sup>

There's battle lines being drawn.

Nobody's right if everybody's wrong.

Young people speakin' their minds.

A gettin' so much resistance from behind.<sup>14</sup>

The music from this era was reminiscent of the folk revival of the 1950s crossed with rock and roll, particularly in message and style. Lyrics were being written with passion, a purpose and a point. Artists such as Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and Simon and Garfunkel used music to promote their ideologies and outlook on the world.<sup>15</sup> Dylan went as far in some of his songs to hope for justice to prevail in the world, and for the president to change his stance on the Vietnam War:

Yes, how many ears must one man have,

Before he can hear people cry?

Yes, how many deaths will it take till he knows,

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<sup>13</sup> Contrary to how this piece has been used in popular culture it does not directly refer to the activities ongoing in Vietnam or the anti-war movement directly. The original purpose of this song however, was in response to the Sunset Strip Riots however, as per described in Einarson, John; Furay, Richie. *For What It's Worth: The Story of Buffalo Springfield*. 2004. pp124-127.

<sup>14</sup> Lyrics from The Buffalo Springfield. *For What It's Worth*. ATCO Records 45-6459. 1966.

<sup>15</sup> More in depth analysis on this can be found in Chafe, 2011. p313.

That too many people have died?<sup>16</sup>

Lyndon Johnson had vowed that freedom would be the victor in Vietnam, but at what cost to the American people? Many felt that Johnson was hell bent on winning the war at any cost necessary;

We fight because we must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny. And only in such a world will our own freedom be works of peace. This kind of world will never be built by bombs or bullets. Yet the infirmities of man are such that force must often precede reason, and the waste of war, the works of peace. We wish that this were not so. But we must deal with the world as it is, if it is ever to be as we wish.<sup>17</sup>

But despite Johnson's vision of peace by war, tensions and anger towards the Vietnam War continued to rise. The war was seen as a disaster: a national tragedy in America, and a foreign nightmare overseas. Johnson elaborated that the United States was there to keep a promise to the South Vietnamese, strengthen world order, and that if America did not engage in Vietnam, the conflict would move on to another country.

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<sup>16</sup> Lyrics from Dylan, Bob. *Blowin' in the Wind*. Columbia 4-42856. 1963.

<sup>17</sup> In an address to students at Johns Hopkins University by Lyndon B. Johnson, "Peace Without Conquest," (1965)" (1965) in William H. Chafe, Harvard Sitkoff and Beth Bailey, *A History of Our Time: Readings on Postwar America*, Eighth Edition (Oxford University Press: New York: 2012) pp. 137-140.

By 1966, rock and folk music had begun to invade politics in America and fly the banner of anti-war and equal rights. Artists like Arlo Guthrie, The Beatles, and Bob Dylan were rising fast in the country. John Lennon had even gone as far as to publicly denounce the Vietnam War, against the wishes of his manager.<sup>18</sup> Lennon would eventually become one of the biggest anti-war protestors, to the point where he was constantly under threat of deportation and subjugated to consistent FBI investigation.<sup>19</sup>

1966 would prove to be the beginning of the political career of Lennon, particularly when protests began against the Beatles after Lennon claimed that they were bigger than Jesus. Lennon began his shift away from the Beatles and moved towards becoming one of the most prolific anti-war musicians of the era. After Lennon's remark, the Beatles began to be grouped in with artists such as the Rolling Stones. They were no longer without error.<sup>20</sup>

The Rolling Stones had been and continued to be identified as a symbol of American counterculture, particularly with their long hair and different sound. They were known for taking shots at mainstream commercialism, especially in their 1965 hit "Satisfaction."<sup>21</sup> In 1968, *The New Left Review* felt that the more aggressive approach of the Rolling Stones was justifiable and welcome despite its attack on the docile sound of

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<sup>18</sup> Wiener, Jon. *Come Together: John Lennon in His Time*. Introduction. 1991. p17.

<sup>19</sup> Wiener, 1991. p231.

<sup>20</sup> Wiener, 1991. pp11-12.

<sup>21</sup> This was described in a dissection of the song and an interview conducted by the BBC. "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction." *Sold On Song*. 2008.

their counterparts; the Beatles.<sup>22</sup> The Rolling Stones, however, were attempting to bridge a gap between rock and the slower soulful blues sound.

In 1967, as the war continued to generate steam and the tensions of the civil rights movement began to wane, Louis Armstrong released his single *What a Wonderful World*. Coming in three years after the Civil Rights Act passed, and four years after the Vietnam War had commenced, Armstrong attempted to paint a brighter future through song;

I hear babies cryin', I watch them grow.

They'll learn much more than I'll ever know.

And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.<sup>23</sup>

It is believed Armstrong describes positive changes on the horizon, in his description of babies growing up to know more than he would. The descriptions that Armstrong provides are visions of a world without the borders of racial tension beyond the war.<sup>24</sup> The song was also an example of how mainstream music began to adopt certain elements that were similar to music from the counterculture.

Protests of the sixties and seventies were not exclusively limited simply to anti-war movements, but also incorporated the many protests for equality. The Civil Rights Act of

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<sup>22</sup> Wiener, 1991. pp54-55.

<sup>23</sup> Lyrics from Armstrong, Louis. *What a Wonderful World*. EMI Germany C 062-90 410. 1967.

<sup>24</sup> An in depth look at this interpretation can be found in an article published by the BB. "How Political is What a Wonderful World?" *Smashed Hits*. December 10, 2011. A more in depth look at the song is also available by Doyle, Jack. "What a Wonderful World – Louis Armstrong: 1967-1968." *PopHistoryDig.com*. November 7, 2012.

1964 had brought the country one step forward towards equality, but there were still many blurred racial, sexual, and ethnic lines. The Students for a Democratic Society along with various other organizations, including some Christian evangelical groups resonated with one another in the protests. The intolerance in southern states, along with continued racism coupled with ongoing military action in Asia were typically intertwined with the anti-war protests and fueled counterculture in America.<sup>25</sup>

The same year as Louis Armstrong's "Wonderful World" was released, folk singer Arlo Guthrie released "Alice's Restaurant." The twenty-five minute song's satire about the American military draft, is setup by various forms of stories leading to the final point.

They got a building down New York City, it's called Whitehall Street, where you walk in, you get injected, inspected, detected, infected, neglected and selected. [...] And I went up there, I said, "Shrink, I want to kill. [...] I wanna see blood and gore and guts and veins in my teeth. Eat dead burnt bodies."<sup>26</sup>

The satirical approach that Guthrie portrays is of a draft board in New York. Guthrie used satire to describe the oddity of the procedures of the draft itself. Guthrie goes on in the song to indicate that he "may not be moral enough to join the army." The line is

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<sup>25</sup> A more elaborate detail on the connection between anti-war rallies and equal rights rallies can be found in Swartz, David R. "The new Left and Evangelical Radicalism." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*. Volume 3, Issue 2. September 2009. pp51-79.

<sup>26</sup> Lines from one of the sequences in Guthrie, Arlo. *Alice's Restaurant*. Reprise Records RS-6267. 1967.

said tongue in cheek, poking fun that one had to have a certain set of moral standards to join an army that would be sent to kill innocent civilians.

I mean I'm sittin' here on the Group W bench 'cause you want to know if I'm moral enough join the army, burn women, kids, houses and villages after bein' a litterbug.<sup>27</sup>

Guthrie expresses his outrage over the practice of the draft board eventually towards the end of the song, by poking fun at the song in general. He says that if anyone should ever find themselves in a similar situation they should sing a bar of the song and walk out, hopefully being deemed as unfit or too insane to join the army. It was seen as a way to flunk the physical and avoid being drafted. The song itself was revealed to be a simple staple to the overall point of the track itself, and the track in its entirety is simply a story made up and presented by Guthrie. He muses that "the army may think it's a movement", and goes on to call it the "Alice's Restaurant Anti-Massacre Movement", resonating with the bloodshed in Vietnam.

Despite the anti-war outcry the war continued, and in January of 1968 the North Vietnamese had launched an attack called the Tet Offensive that killed thousands of innocent civilians and U.S. Armed Forces. The twenty-four hour attack impacted five

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<sup>27</sup> A line from the near end of the song *Alice's Restaurant* by Arlo Guthrie.

major cities and seized control of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.<sup>28</sup> By summer in the United States, multiple institutions were also under siege by citizens. Troop totals had now increased to 550,000, and protestors young and old were taking matters at home into their own hands.<sup>29</sup>

By this time, the New Left had centered its focus on popular music groups as a center for generating political clout. The Beatles were considered by some to be a more conformist group, one that did not step far out of the boundaries of what was socially acceptable. But Lennon himself was anything but a conformer,<sup>30</sup> and later that summer released "Revolution" with the Beatles;

We all want to change your head,  
you tell me it's the institution, well,  
you know, you better free you mind instead.  
But if you go carrying pictures of Chairman Mao,  
you ain't going to make it with anyone anyhow.<sup>31</sup>

The same album was accompanied by other tracks such as "Back in the U.S.S.R." where the group sings apparently thankful to return to the Soviet Union and the Baltic States. The Beatles had started their own self-proclaimed brand of "western communism",

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<sup>28</sup> The Tet Offensive is outlined in Chafe, William H. *The Rise and Fall of the American Century: The United States from 1890-2009*. 2009. p209.

<sup>29</sup> Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Cold War: A New History*. 2007. pp144-145.

<sup>30</sup> Wiener, 1991. p78.

<sup>31</sup> Lyrics from The Beatles. *Revolution*. Apple Records SWBO 101. 1968.

releasing the albums on their own and gaining autonomy on their own as artists.<sup>32</sup>

Whether or not this increased their chances of signatures of their music was a matter of question.

Lennon continued to be the most politically outspoken of the group, particularly when it came to the rallies. Lennon began to be considered particularly suspicious by the FBI by late 1968 at the onset of the Nixon administration.<sup>33</sup> The Beatles continued to release albums and songs that were particularly geared to subtly protesting the war, and supporting peace and unity for all people. This style continued despite the Rolling Stones who continued to be a favorite of the New Left due to their more aggressive and blunt lyrics.

Despite the darkness in Southeast Asia, the people of the United States would shine in 1969 when music drove one of the largest rallies and the largest festivals in history – The Woodstock Music and Art Fair. But 1969 was not defined exclusively by Woodstock, but changes in political figures also led to new arguments in the streets. The key change in the air was the transition from Johnson to Nixon. Nixon's administration would inspire the most active portion of the anti-war movement and would come under fire by figures such as John Lennon and David Peel.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Wiener, 1991. p73.

<sup>33</sup> Details of the reports on Lennon within the FBI can be found in Wiener, Jon. *Gimme Some Truth: The John Lennon FBI Files*. 2000.

<sup>34</sup> Peel would be mistaken for Lennon by then Director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover during Nixon's re-election. More information on this can be found in Wiener, 1991. 251.

The planning for Woodstock began well before the event itself happened. The event took place on August 15, 1969 and ran through the morning of August 18 with thirty-two performers. Additional music fairs that summer had pulled an attendance of twenty-two performers. Joni Mitchell described the song in the “anthem” by the same name;

By the time we got to Woodstock,

We were half a million strong.

And everywhere there was song and celebration.<sup>35</sup>

The festival gathered over 400,000 people, over twice the amount originally anticipated.<sup>36</sup> The figure was also many times higher than what the planners of the event told the township it would be.<sup>37</sup> The town of White Lake, New York would continue to raise problems for planners, ultimately forcing them to move the location to Max Yasgur’s Farm.<sup>38</sup>

And I dreamed I saw the bombers

Riding shotgun in the sky,

And they were turning into butterflies.

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<sup>35</sup> Lyrics from Mitchell, Joni. “Woodstock.” *Ladies Of The Canyon*. Reprise Records RS6376. 1970.

<sup>36</sup> More on the initial interaction with planners, performers, and the public can be found in Makower, Joel. *Woodstock: The Oral History*. 2009. pp185-190. A parallel review on Woodstock and its Fortieth Anniversary can be found in Isserman, Maurice. “3 Days of Peace and Music, 40 Years of Memory.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Volume 55, Issue 43. August 10, 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Perlstein, Rick. *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America*. April 2009. p401.

<sup>38</sup> More information on the exchange between city and festival planners can be found in Makower, 2009. pp113-124.

Above our nation.<sup>39</sup>

The message of Woodstock was clear: the war must be stopped, peace must ensue, and the people must be free. However, despite the bright image that is typically painted of Woodstock, there were darker sides of the event. By no means was Woodstock the first rock music festival, but it was the one that became associated with the era.

However, not all bands who were asked to play Woodstock came, and those that did were not necessarily entirely level headed. Others abused their status as performers in order to pull strings of event planners to gain something for themselves. Janis Joplin for example, flew in her lover on a helicopter to take shots of heroin and for sex.<sup>40</sup> Drug use and promiscuity does not seem to be uncommon during these events, and especially during the era.

The sixties were abundant in the use of psychedelic drugs such as LSD that were used to help enhance the musical experience.<sup>41</sup> Many people of the older generation tended to look down upon such activity and did not associate with the younger generation because of this. Such associations would also lead many protestors to be

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<sup>39</sup> Lyrics from Mitchell, Joni. "Woodstock." *Ladies Of the Canyon*. Reprise Records RS 6376. 1970.

<sup>40</sup> More information on this, as well as Janis' reasoning for playing at Woodstock can be found in Echols, Alice. *Scars of Sweet Paradise: The Life and Times of Janis Joplin*. 1999. pp262-265.

<sup>41</sup> This is mentioned in brief in Kitts, Thomas M. "Documenting, Creating, and Interpreting Moments of Definition: Monterey Pop, Woodstock, and Gimme Shelter." *Journal of Popular Culture*. Issue 42. August 2009. pp717-718.

prosecuted on charges of drug use, possession, or intent to sell. This was the primary offense that the FBI publicly issued against John Lennon.<sup>42</sup>

Later in 1969 came the release of another ode to the Vietnam War by Creedence Clearwater Revival called *Fortunate Son*.

Some folks inherit star spangled eyes,

Ooh, they send you down to war, Lord,

And when you ask them, "How much should we give?"

Ooh, they only answer "More! More! More!"<sup>43</sup>

The song was a staple of the counterculture era, and almost entirely captured how the war was viewed by the American counterculture. The idea of the lyrics was to paint a picture where certain patriotic upper class individuals were sending those in the lower class to their deaths. The death toll continued to increase, and there were no caps in place to stop the rise in soldiers being sent into the war.<sup>44</sup>

By the 1970s, record labels were capitalizing on the counter culture music that was taking a firm grip on the nation. In spite of this, artists continued to sing words of peace, and the people continued to unite under the banner of peace. The idea that Louis Armstrong had brought to the music industry with "What A Wonderful World" and

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<sup>42</sup> Wiener, 1991. p231.

<sup>43</sup> Creedence Clearwater Revival. *Fortunate Son*. Fantasy Records FANT-634. 1969.

<sup>44</sup> Chafe, 2011. p286.

his painting of a utopia gained support by this time. John Lennon had particularly come on board with this mindset with his song "Imagine."

Imagine there's no countries, it isn't hard to do,

Nothing to kill or die for...<sup>45</sup>

Lennon had painted a picture not dissimilar to what Armstrong had described, a world where there were no boundaries, no wars, no discrimination. Lennon goes one step further in his song that Armstrong does not however;

Imagine all the people living life in peace

You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one

I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will be as one<sup>46</sup>

Lennon seemed to be hopefully creating an image that people would strive for and identify with. Despite Lennon's blunt description of a utopia and disassembling of borders such as religion and countries, it was largely misunderstood and considered unintelligible. However, the song itself was not so much meant to be bullish in its criticisms of the world in 1971, as it was in holding onto the utopian ideals that were described.<sup>47</sup>

Other songs such as Three Dog Night's "Joy to the World" preached over unity in the world, along with the traditional staple of anti-war sentiment;

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<sup>45</sup> Lyrics from Lennon, John. *Imagine*. Apple Records. 8XW 3379. 1971.

<sup>46</sup> Lyrics from the refrain of Lennon, John. *Imagine*. Apple Records. 8XW 3379. 1971.

<sup>47</sup> Wiener, 1991. pp160-162.

If I were the king of the world, tell you what I'd do:

I'd throw away the cars and the bars and the war,

And make sweet love to you.<sup>48</sup>

Music was not simply reserved for the anti-war protestors, but it was also used to spread the ideals of those who sought peace and unity in the Hippy Movement.

A single noticeable detail of music in the 1970s is the change from focusing on the war fighting songs like "Fortunate Son", or "The Vietnam Song", to music that painted a hopeful future. But simply because the tone in music changed did not mean that the war itself had gotten brighter. In fact, some protestors at home had grown a little darker. Some even went as far as to harass soldiers that were coming home.<sup>49</sup>

Why would people who wanted the soldiers to return home harass them?

Perhaps it was because the New Left counter culture movement of the sixties allowed for people to freely oppose government, big business, and feel better about themselves. On the other hand, it could also have been the hatred that people held in their hearts for the same people who carried out such horrendous acts as My Lai.<sup>50</sup> A more likely cause is that these events were not widespread, and the stories of these incidents were spread by media outlets urged to support the war.

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<sup>48</sup> Lyrics from Three Dog Night. *Joy to the World*. ABC/Dunhill Records 45-D-4272. 1971.

<sup>49</sup> This is mentioned in the memoirs of Van Devanter, Lynda. *Home Before Morning: The Story of an Army Nurse in Vietnam*. 2001. pp210-211.

<sup>50</sup> The My Lai Massacre took place in March of 1968 and resulted in the death of between 300 and 600 unarmed civilian casualties in Vietnam. Many of those victims were women and children. More information on My Lai can be found in Russel, Kent A. "My Lai Massacre: The Need for an International Investigation." *California Law Review*. May 1970. Volume 58, Issue 3. pp703-729.

Protests continued to overrun institutions around the country at the local, state and federal levels. Within those protests, groups such as the SDS continued to operate, including at Kent State University in Ohio. However, the tolerance of the American government was beginning to wear thin towards protesters. On May 4, 1970, armed national guardsmen opened fire on students protesting the Cambodia airstrikes at the university. A total of four people died, and nine other were injured. As a result, many other schools were shut down in protest via a student strike.<sup>51</sup> The world seemed to be coming apart while people rallied for unity.

In spite of Nixon's escalation of the war by adding an invasion of Cambodia and Laos in 1970, he was the president that would eventually close the book on the war before being pushed out of office over Watergate. By 1972, the FBI had eased its grip on anti-war protestors including John Lennon, as there was no longer a threat to Nixon's presidency.<sup>52</sup> At the end of the war, only the anti-war rallies had stopped, however, other protests continued well into the 1980s and early 1990s.

Today we casually listen to the songs from this era, and earlier in a sense of enjoyment and pleasure. However, we often forget that these songs and artists had a vision, and a point. Music from the sixties and seventies is identifiable by the consumer

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<sup>51</sup> More information on the Kent State University Massacre can be found in Broadhurst, Christopher J. "The Student Reaction at North Carolina State University to the Kent State University Shootings, May 1970." *North Carolina Historical Review*. Volume 87, Issue 3. July 2010. pp283-309. Additional details are available in Lindquist, David. "May 4, 1970: How U.S. History Textbooks Portray the Kent State Shootings." *Ohio Social Studies Review*. Volume 47, Issue 1. 2011. pp41-48.

<sup>52</sup> Wiener, 1991. pp256-257.

in many cases based on the age of the listener. Many songs are used for simple advertising, and others are used for movie soundtracks. Sometimes they are relevant,<sup>53</sup> but most times they are taken entirely out of context.

Songs such as Three Dog Night's "Joy to the World" are subjected to constant misuse and context abuse, particularly the opening line of the song. Many people today focus on this particular line of the song and assume the rest of the song is entirely bright in background, when in fact it is a song full of hope denouncing war.

Others such as Arlo Guthrie's "Alice's Restaurant" are rarely listened to in their appropriate context, many times being aired or played on Thanksgiving holidays on radio airwaves. The main reason for this seems to be that there are two mentions of Thanksgiving dinner in the song. Many listeners do not fully acknowledge what the song is actually conveying however, and understand that it is actually a song that was written to help people cope with the draft.

There were many music festivals and protest rallies that occurred during the Vietnam War, and there were countless songs made by a staggering amount of artists. Most of them flew their flags, and sang their songs under the banner of peace, unity, and anti-war. Others marched to the beat of anti-commercialism and protesting capitalistic agendas. Music has never fully grasped the relevancy that it did in the 1960s and 1970s again, save for a few isolated occurrences after the September 11, 2001

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<sup>53</sup> The Forest Gump Soundtrack is a key example of relevant music being selected for various scenes, however the uses may not necessarily be entirely accurate or in the context in which the artist wrote.

terrorist attacks. Just as the nation seemed to be on two ends of the political spectrum in the sixties, it seems to be returning to that state again today.

Music drove the ideologies of the New Left, and inspired the young to rise above the rest and fight against the government and what was deemed as normal. While the armed men and women were serving overseas, citizens back home were fighting their own battle. In some cases they won, but in many others they lost. The souls of these musicians have been eternalized in their music, and it is the only symbol and hope that one day those battles they lost might be won. The music these artists composed, wrote, and performed directly fueled the minds of the counterculture in America. From the beginning to the end of Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, and into the 1970s, music was the primary form of political communication to America's youth.

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