

**Songs of My  
Time**

**By**

**Colin Woodcroft**



## About the Author

Colin Woodcroft was born in country New South Wales in 1954. He now resides in Sydney's Sutherland Shire with his wife, Mali. He has three children. He has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease over nine years ago and this condition was the theme of his last book: *Living with Parkinson's disease*. Colin keeps himself busy with his writing, daily sessions to the gym and a love – hate relationship with the golf course.

The idea for this book, his third, was a natural progression from his travelling book, *Time Traveller* to another one of his passions, which is of music. He has always seen listening to music as an integral part of his daily life; hence this book chronicles one hundred songs that have impacted on his life in some way.

Colin is a new author with now three books, each with a different style to the last.



## **Songs of My Time**

Music is such an influence in our lives today and has been in the past and will be in the future. This I am quite sure of.

Music is part of our lives in so many ways. Many of us start the day with the alarm (clock radio) waking us up greeting us with the latest songs or reminding us of our favourite tunes from the past on Golden Oldies radio stations. And at the end of the day many say farewell with music helping them to drift off to sleep.

Throughout the day there are so many more opportunities for music to seep, creep or blast into our lives. Breakfast radio, guided by highly paid, some would say greatly overpaid disc jockeys help us get the new day underway with a menu of news, weather, ads, their opinions and music. Leaving the house and driving to work we are still engaged in music through the car radio or CD player. Or perhaps it is the ipod or iphone. Commuters taking public transport often wile away the travelling time plugged into their choice of equipment. Some workers have background music playing while many a building site has sounds wafting across the site. You go grocery shopping to Woolworths and there's muted music drifting across the air to keep the shopper calm and relaxed. Even when you ring a large company or business and you are invariably put on hold it's not unusual to pass the time away listening to Simply Red.

When we go out, again it's music, music, music! Pubs, clubs and bars have live music, juke boxes, local D.J.s or recorded music. Movies of course are full of a musical soundtrack with often a title song or two. Visiting friends for a party or barbecue will often include some music being played. One of the most regular times music is played is relaxation at home, when the individual or partner just sits back and enjoys listening to music.

Music has been part of my life from whenever I can remember. In the early days when I was young my main influences were the British popstars including the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. A little later it was the Rock groups that grabbed my attention such as Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin and then in the seventies disco dominated while the pub bands struggled hard. The next trend saw glam rock bands like T Rex, Kiss and Roxy Music. Then eighties and nineties music came along with a wide variety of bands such as Nirvana, U2, Pearl Jam, Joy Division. Music today has many influences across a wide variety of genres including R and B, Rappers, Indie, Alternate and pop rock.

Many songs have a special meaning to different people for many different reasons. They could have happy or sad references depending on the significance of the situations. Then some songs have a special place for the simple reason that you just like the song-it doesn't necessarily remind you of a certain time in your life.

There are many songs that I love and are permanently etched in my memory but some of them are not

necessarily included in this list as they don't stand out reminding me of a certain time or event of my life. Some are just great songs- and the number of great songs over the last fifty years is quite exhaustive. The songs I have included in this book are ones that help define a period or event in my life – some are great songs, some of my favourites while others are not really my treasured tunes but nevertheless made a significant contribution to my world of music.

Some of the songs were major hit records that probably had an effect on many people world-wide while some were successful mainly in Australia and some were songs that were buried away on albums and had limited exposure to the general populous. The order these songs appear in the book is completely random, there has been no effort made to rank these in any sort of order or category.

The songs that appear in this book have brought me some degree of happiness over the past fifty years for a variety of reasons and would not necessarily reflect anyone else's choice of songs.

As you read I am sure many songs will come flooding back to you with different memories and reasons for why you would include a song in your one hundred influential songs.

## **1 Incense and Peppermints (1967) – The Strawberry Alarm Clock**

This song made the grade for me mainly on the strength of the band name, The Strawberry Alarm Clock. As a kid growing up in the sixties the band name impressed me no end. While a few friends and I dreamed of being popstars, playing around with guitars we were trying to come up with a name as cool as this. One name I remember we used was The 1900 Trucking Company. Not only did the band name, The Strawberry Alarm Clock, impress, but so did the song title. While many of the songs around were boy meets girl types this was different. This was from psychedelic California! What the title of the song meant I'm not too sure but having that song title with that band name and a half decent tune they were nearly guaranteed of some success.

The song itself was quite catchy with an easy chorus and it actually made it to number one in the charts in America for one week. Incense and Peppermints was the band's high point- the few singles earlier released hadn't done much and they didn't have any more success after Incense. They just had a great name!

## 2 Hey Brother (2013) – Avicii

This song will always have fond memories for me as I sang 'my version' of this song to my daughter, Rachel on her 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday. Playing to an attentive group of friends I did my usual 21<sup>st</sup> speech, which has become somewhat of a tradition and then at the end of the speech I announced that I had a song to sing to Rachel. While the skill level was questionable (although I didn't think it was too bad), the dedication and effort I put in was undeniably first class. It was a great surprise to Rachel, and by the attentiveness of her guests, a surprise to them as well. Was this the start of my singing career? As the saying goes: 'don't give up your day job!' I changed the words of the original to suit my purpose.

The original words were:

*Hey brother, there's an endless road to re-discover  
Hey sister know the water's sweet but blood is thicker  
Oh, if the sky comes falling down for you  
There's nothing in this world I wouldn't do for you*

My words after I changed a few parts:

*Hey Rachel, there's an endless road to re-discover  
Hey daughter, know the water's sweet but vodka's sweeter  
Oh if the sky comes falling down for you  
More drinks are surely what you shouldn't do.*

This was a lot of fun doing this song and it was a great ice-breaker for the party. It was definitely worth doing.

### **3 That's the Way I Like it/ Shake, Shake,Shake (1975) – KC and the Sunshine Band**

These songs were smack dab in the middle of the disco era of the 1970's. Dozens of these 'disco' bands sprang to life as we were shaking our booties, doing the Bump, getting down tonight and doing the Hustle. Wherever we went on a Friday or Saturday night in the city we were all disco dancing. For me it was a period of time where we hung out in clubs in Kings Cross with the high waisted pants, platform shoes and dress shirts with the top two buttons undone. It was a great time for dancing as you could join your friends on the dance floor and pretty well end up dancing with anyone.

The moves were fairly basic and 'Doing the Bump' was a great dance to meet girls. You just had to move into the girl's space, raise your arms and let your hips do the talking. If you got a positive response you simply kept shaking your booty with your new partner or if it was negative you simply turned away and kept shaking with your friends and waited for another opportunity. There was no need for the risky 'do you want to dance?' routine.

I used to hang out with a group of guys from Indonesia who were right into the disco scene (where I think I was a bit of an imposter waiting for the next dance craze) and they would have the trendiest clothes. The girls I was living with were 'Indo' crazy and I was swept along in the wave. It was a good wave to be on for a while too!

#### **4 Let Me Entertain You (1998) – Robbie Williams**

This is the classic live anthem that is made for opening a large outdoor concert. I remember seeing Robbie Williams perform this live in a huge concert in London and he just had so much energy. It is just a great song to hear live or on video. The whole song is based on entertaining the listener with up tempo screaming guitars, rapid, frenetic drum beats and booming, electrifying sax to finish the song. The song hits top gears right from the word go and then never lets up until the song finishes. It is the typical concert song that the crowd sings the chorus. It is a song that you want to increase the volume and really let Robbie entertain you. It delivers like Freddy Mercury and Queen, or Springsteen's 'Born in the USA' or the Stones or The Who doing 'Won't Get fooled Again'. It has all the ingredients of a big, booming song that would get everybody up and dancing around. It is so infectious as Robbie Williams really plays to his audience. It is beautifully titled as it gives the listener five minutes of pure pop/rock entertainment where everyone on stage is performing with total energy. Turn it up loud and let yourself be totally immersed in the Robbie Williams extravaganza!

## **5 Stairway to Heaven (1971) – Led Zeppelin**

Stairway to Heaven was on Led Zeppelin's fourth album, which was untitled but became known as Led Zeppelin IV. This song is often referred to as one of the greatest rock songs of all time. It was an amazing song for the time as it was eight minutes long and it built up gradually. Led Zep were one of the great rock bands of the time, so to come up with this song was a departure from their heavier songs such as Black Dog, Whole Lotta Love and Dazed and Confused. The song begins as a slow acoustic folk song with recorders and gradually builds up to a crescendo of screaming rock.

This was a favourite of mine and I would make efforts to learn all the lyrics, although I wasn't too sure of what the song was really about. Phrases such as 'there's a bustle in your hedgerow, don't be alarmed now. It's just a spring clean for the May queen...' made this an intriguing song from one of the world's best heavy rockers. Because of the length of the song when it was released it didn't receive much airplay on the radio. Over the years, as it became recognised for such a great song, it was played more on the radio. Without a doubt this song has become known for being one of the greatest rock songs written. It features the supreme guitar playing of Jimmy Page and the haunting vocals of Robert Plant.