

# The Killers

## The Killers Mr Brightside

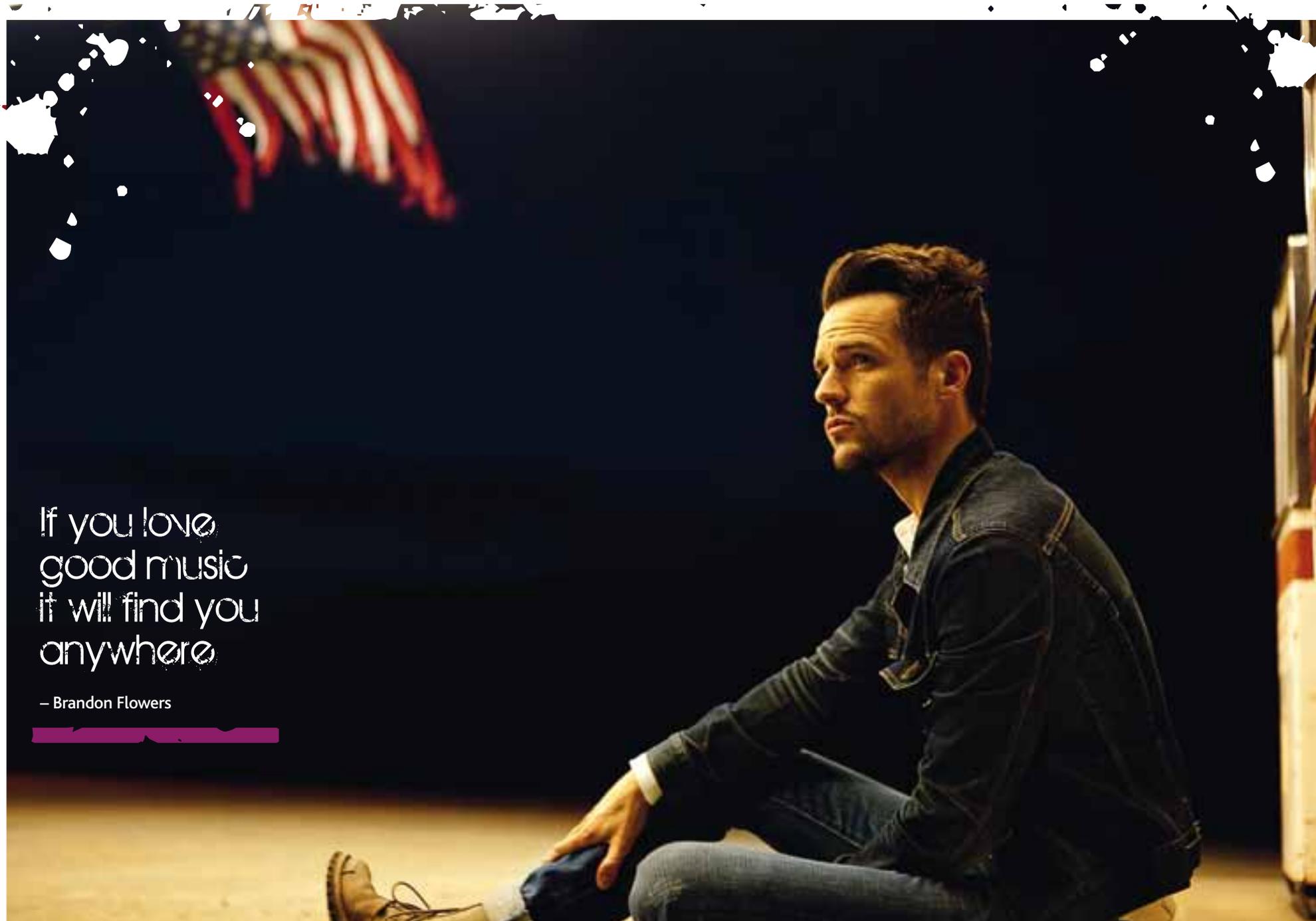
2004 • 3:43 • Flowers – Keuning –  
Stoermer – Vannucci



In 2002 a 21-year-old college dropout called Brandon Flowers had just been abandoned by his first band (a synth-pop outfit called Blush Response); he was a Vegas hotel porter and was suffering the acute sting of his first broken heart. “At an all-time low – right in the trenches” is how Flowers described it to Xfm in May 2010. After seeing Oasis play The Joint in Vegas in the April of 2002, Flowers decided that he wanted to be in a rock’n’roll band and so, via a press ad, he met up with Dave Keuning (influences cited as Oasis and The Cure). Weeks later Flowers was driving to work in his battered 1992 Geo Metro when he put on one of the home-recorded cassettes that Keuning had sent him. Out of the speakers rushed a bright pulse-quickening guitar riff and suddenly, with lyrics that he had been nurturing from his recent heartache, Flowers was singing along at the top of his voice. ‘Mr Brightside’ – and the next biggest band in the world – was born.

If you love  
good music  
it will find you  
anywhere

– Brandon Flowers

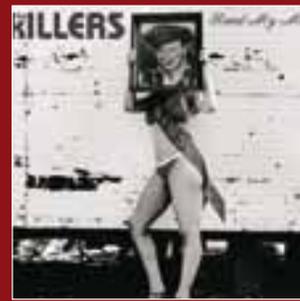
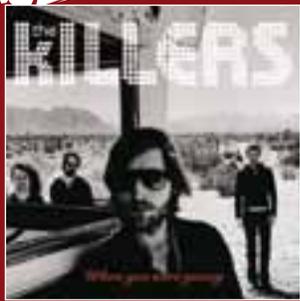


## The Killers *Jenny Was A Friend of Mine*

2004 • 4:04 • Flowers – Stoermer

'Jenny Was A Friend of Mine' became the opening track on The Killers' debut album *Hot Fuss*, and featured on a demo tape that also included an early version of 'Mr Brightside' and a song called 'On Top'. Most US record labels had passed on the band but a tape had been picked up by a UK music industry scout called Alex Gilbert who then passed it to his friend Ben

'Somebody Told Me' became the song that really broke The Killers in the UK – charting at number three on its re-release in January 2005. It was a huge cross-over success, achieving much pop radio airplay and it remains one of their great live moments. Frontman Brandon Flowers describes it as having a lot of sexual energy and the song that is most influenced by their hometown of Las Vegas. The Killers took their name from the imaginary band in the video for New Order's 2001 single 'Crystal'.



From Left: 'When You Were Young', 'Bones, Read My Mind'. Right: 'Smile Like You Mean It'

Durling. In August 2003 The Killers signed to Durling's UK indie label Lizard King. The band agreed a deal with Island Records in the US two months later. Although never a single, 'Jenny Was A Friend of Mine' received heavy airplay on Xfm.

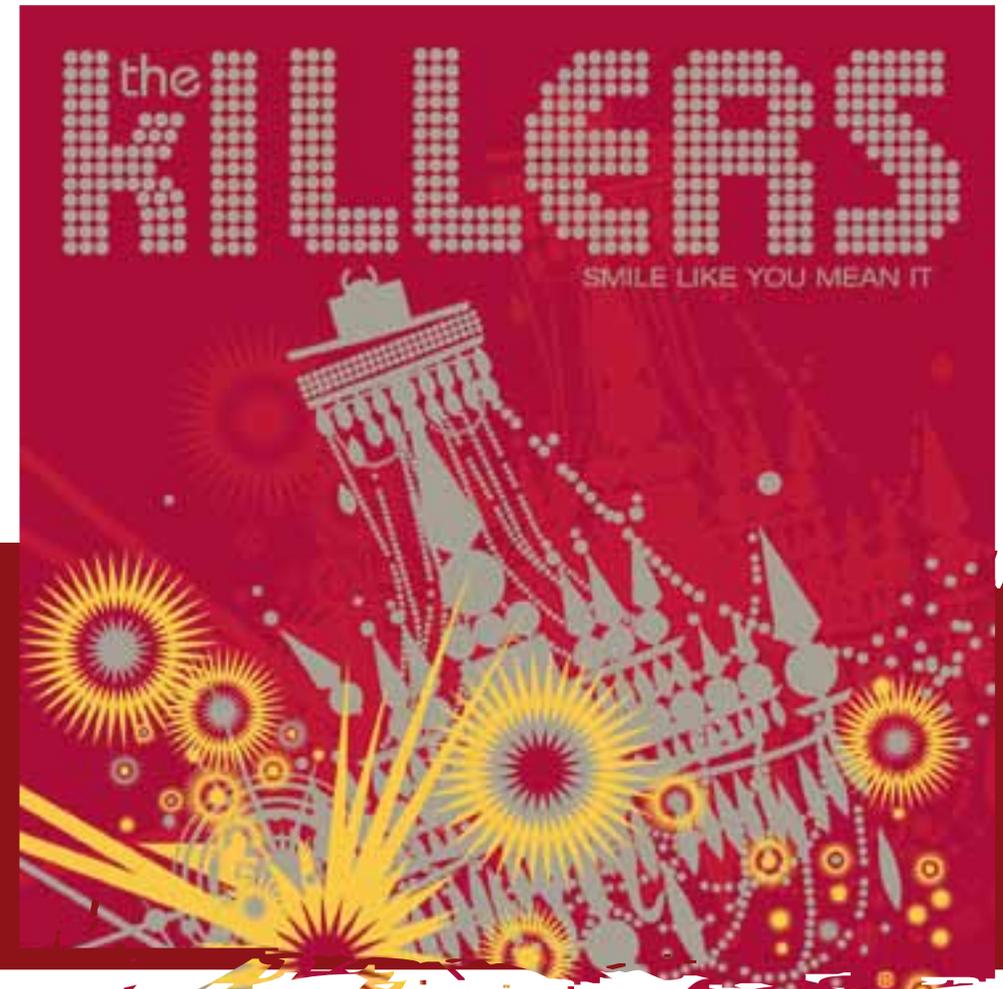
## The Killers *Somebody Told Me*

2004 • 3:17 • Flowers – Keuning  
– Stoermer – Vannucci

## The Killers *All These Things That I've Done*

2004 • 5:02 • Flowers – Keuning  
– Stoermer – Vannucci

On 2 July 2005 The Killers performed 'All These Things That I've Done' on stage at Hyde Park as part of Live 8, in front of an estimated global audience of over three billion. The song's opening lines took on a new poignancy: "When there's nowhere



else to run / Is there room for one more son / If you can hold on". The live crowd's response in Hyde Park was amazing while television viewers around the world gaped at this explosive new band, before humming the line "I got soul but I'm not a soldier" non-stop for the next few days.

## The Killers *Smile Like You Mean It*

2004 • 3:55 • Flowers – Stoermer

The fourth single from *Hot Fuss* and a number 11 hit in the UK in September 2004. 'Smile Like You Mean It' is typical of the album's inspired mix of 1980s synths, muscular indie-rock guitars and Flower's detached, almost weary, voice delivering lines about lost love: "And someone will drive her around / Down the same streets that I did."



# Kings of Leon

## Kings Of Leon *Molly's Chambers*

| 2003 • 2:15 • Followill – Followill – Angelo

"My Dad was a travelling preacher," began drummer Nathan Followill, when asked by Xfm about his three brothers' unlikely musical beginnings. "My mom played piano and sang, my dad played guitar, bass and sang. We spent a lot of time on the road with him, but every church we'd go to, I'd just sit and watch the drummer the whole time". While rock'n'roll was a strict no-go area – "they didn't want us to listen to it in case it was about drugs or sex", said Nathan – an uncle with a secret penchant for Chuck Berry opened the brothers' eyes to the wider musical world. 'Molly's Chambers', however, was the wider world's first taste of Kings Of Leon, the band of three brothers and cousin Matthew. As the lead track from the *Holy Roller Novocaine* EP, its taut southern groove blew a fresh hole in the music scene... a small, mouth-watering taster of what was to come.

## Kings Of Leon *Red Morning Light*

| 2003 • 3:03  
| Petraglia – Followill – Followill

Naysayers still balked at the "new Strokes" tag, poking fun at the band's drainpipe jeans and their heroically hirsute appearance, but 'Red Morning Light' towered over such petty criticism. Here was one of the most unique voices in music, resplendent in a three-minute romp of gritty guitars, a lackadaisical

Southern drawl and a brutally honest production. "When I was 16 I couldn't have told you the difference between a Rolling Stones song and a Led Zeppelin song because that world didn't exist to us", said drummer Nathan Followill to Xfm, but 'Red Morning Light' seemed to distil 40 years of rock'n'roll's essence into one bite-sized chunk. It was, as we suspected, love at first sight and the romance has barely wavered since.

## Kings Of Leon *California Waiting*

| 2003 • 3:29 • Followill – Followill – Angelo

'California Waiting' was a pivotal moment in the band's live set where, with tiny amplifiers, zero production trickery and the minimum of fuss, Kings Of Leon tore up the world's venues with a frightening chemistry and dazzling conviction. With its soaring chorus, the song was the soundtrack to the penny dropping; in Camden's tiny Electric Ballroom, Kate Moss, Stella McCartney and Sadie Frost swayed elegantly at the side of the stage. "We don't really keep up with [our success] that much", singer Caleb Followill told Xfm in 2003. "The way we can tell is by the shows – it's always been pretty crazy over here but now it's starting to show in random, weird places."

## Kings of Leon *Wasted Time*

| 2003 • 2:45  
| Followill – Followill – Petraglia



It's a real love of each other and love of what we do, and it's a flame. There's times when it feels like it's nearly been blown out, but it's there.

– Bono

# U2

## U2 New Year's Day

1983 • 5:36

Clayton – Evans – Hewson – Mullen

Out of the chrysalis of an introverted post-punk band, born from the spark of 1976, came the *big* sound of a band looking outward and prepared to take on the world. 'New Year's Day' was U2's first UK Top 10 hit, released in January 1983. A song about the Polish Solidarity movement of the day, it set a tone of political commentary as the first single off the *War* album. The video was shot in Sweden and temperatures got so low that at one point four local girls were recruited to body-double for the band during some of the horse-riding sequences.

## U2 Sunday Bloody Sunday

1983 • 4:38

Clayton – Evans – Hewson – Mullen

The opening track on *War* and by far U2's most politically charged – and misinterpreted – song. In the midst of the sectarian violence of the early 1980s, a Dublin band writing very specifically about the 1972 killings in Ulster was always going to be a brave move. "This is not a rebel song" as Bono, the self-proclaimed

"aggressive pacifist", famously said. This frustration was born out of a gross misreading of the song, especially within the ranks of American IRA sympathisers caught up in the myth of "the struggle". 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' is far from a call to arms ("I won't heed the battle call / it puts my back up / puts my back up against the wall"); it's a desperate plea for compassion on both sides of a very painful divide.

## U2 Pride (In The Name Of Love)

1984 • 3:49

Clayton – Evans – Hewson – Mullen

Stepping up yet another gear in a string of emotionally direct, heart-on-sleeve anthems, this homage to Martin Luther King was another benchmark release – the first U2 single to crack the US Top 40 (at number 33) and the UK Top five (at number three). It remains one of the band's most enduringly popular songs and has rarely been absent from a U2 set list since its live debut in Christchurch, New Zealand, in August 1984. Notably, though, it had to be dropped from the band's Live Aid set at Wembley Stadium in July 1985 after a version of their album track 'Bad' overran to 14 minutes due to Bono jumping off stage to dance with a girl in the crowd.

## U2 The Unforgettable Fire

1984 • 4:56

Clayton – Evans – Hewson – Mullen

Working with Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois for the first time, *The Unforgettable Fire* album marks the point when U2's sound

went widescreen. This sweeping and epic production is captured most brilliantly on the title track, which is said to be inspired by the band's visit to an art exhibition by survivors of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The album's potent mix of confident and impassioned songs with expansive and atmospheric production made it U2's pivotal record and the one that would set the stage for the next chapter in the band's incredible career.

## U2 With Or Without You

1987 • 4:56  
Clayton – Evans – Hewson – Mullen

It's hard to fully appreciate the impact that U2 had on the world in 1987. Their fifth studio album, *The Joshua Tree*, had them placed on virtually every radio station, TV channel and magazine cover on the planet. They even beat Mikhail Gorbachev to the front cover of *Time* magazine in April that year. The sound that kicked off this 25-million-selling album was the understated simplicity of 'With Or Without You'. The song builds through a deceptively uncomplicated arrangement to a climax of virtuoso vocals by Bono, leaving the listener in no doubt that here was a band meeting the highest of expectations. It became their first US number one.

## U2 I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For

1987 • 4:37  
Clayton – Evans – Hewson – Mullen

Like much of *The Joshua Tree*, 'I Still Haven't

Found What I'm Looking For' delves into U2's obsession with American music – in this case, the spiritual imagery and soaring vocal melodies of gospel. The song was later re-recorded with a full gospel choir for the *Rattle and Hum* album. The lyrics are said to be about the conflict between Bono's roles as a touring musician and a domesticated man. The video showed the band walking around downtown Las Vegas and reportedly did wonders for tourism to the city that year, as well as improving its image among fellow musicians.

## U2 Where The Streets Have No Name

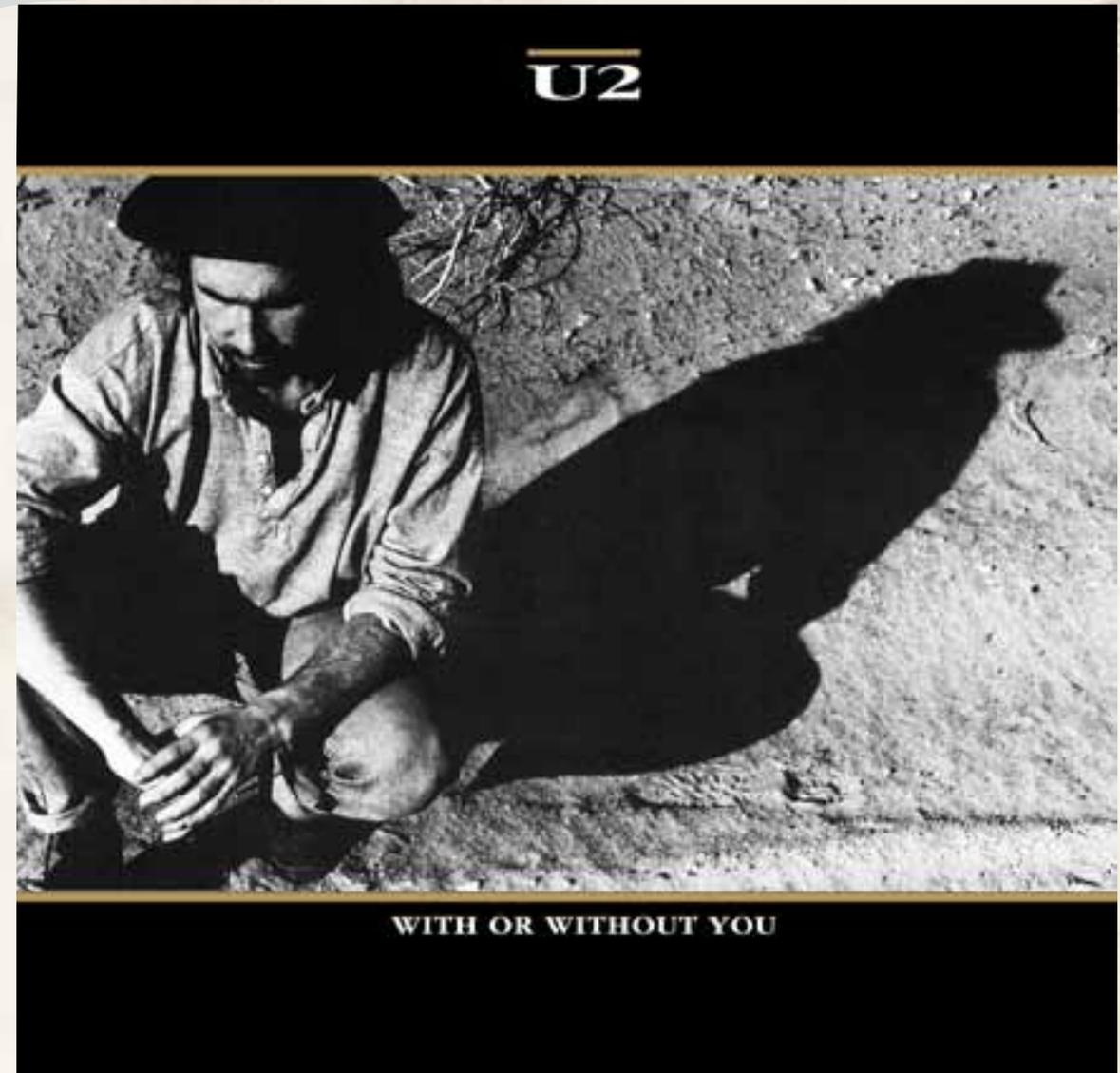
1987 • 5:38  
Clayton – Evans – Hewson – Mullen

The opening track on *The Joshua Tree* was notoriously one of the hardest songs on the album to record. Brian Eno estimates that at least half of the album sessions were spent on getting a final version of 'Where The Streets Have No Name'; to the point that he was about to delete the tape but was stopped at the last minute by the studio engineer. Famous for its spine-tingling intro, it is still *the* moment at most U2 live shows.

## U2 All I Want Is You

1989 • 6:30  
Clayton – Evans – Hewson – Mullen

U2 closed the decade with the fourth and final single from *Rattle and Hum*, a rich and darkly haunting love song. The album documented U2's journey through American music. In true U2 style, it was



"It's about how I feel in U2 at times - exposed" – Bono on 'With Or Without You'

Stein's tribute to the New York club scene, the track has a classic disco bassline, while namechecking super-DJ Grandmaster Flash ("Flash is fast, Flash is cool") and graffiti artist extraordinaire Fab 5 Freddy. Most notably, the song winds up with Harry attempting to rap – although it's not very good and mostly gibbers on about "The man from Mars" eating "cars and bars", it brought the art to its biggest audience yet.

MO'G

## The Bluetones *Slight Return*

1996 • 3:23

Chesters – Devlin – Morriss – Morriss

Arriving a little too late to seem as fashionable as some of their Britpop compatriots, Hounslow's Bluetones are still going strong, though they have never quite matched the impact of this, their singalong debut. It took two attempts to put 'Slight Return' on the musical map – released originally as a double A-side in 1995 together with 'The Fountainhead', it was re-issued the following year, when it reached number two in the UK charts. A traditional male four-piece, guitar and bass jangle sunnily as singer Mark Morriss, one of two brothers in the band, announces that "all this will fade away" and that he's "coming home". The simplicity of the lyrics belie comparisons with the more complex Stone Roses, but it's a song that perfectly captures the sound of 1990s Britain. Though the song was kept off the top of the charts by Babylon Zoo's electronically futuristic 'Spaceman', British music had rediscovered the primacy of the guitar.

JH

# Blur

Blur

## *She's So High*

1990 • 3:50 • Albarn – Blur

Blur's debut single was one of the very first songs ever written in the inebriated haze of early meetings between Damon Albarn, Graham Coxon, Dave Rowntree and Alex James. Playing it live, under the band's original name of Seymour, 'She's So High' was one of the songs that helped bring the industry attention that would eventually secure deals with Food Records and MCA publishing. There was another song from those early sessions that almost became Blur's debut single – 'I Know' was a cynical and self-conscious attempt to ape the "baggy" sound of the day that was emanating with great success from Manchester bands like The Happy Mondays and The Stone Roses. For this very reason, 'I Know' was favoured by many of the bosses at Blur's record label and publisher. Thankfully, the band won this early battle and wistful anthem 'She's So High' set the tone for what would become one of the greatest British song catalogues of all time.



## Blur *There's No Other Way* 1991 • 3:14 • Albarn – Blur

Given the battle over whether to release 'I Know' (see above), it was ironic that Blur's first proper chart success was as close as they got to being part of the Madchester "baggy" sound, with their top 10 UK hit 'There's No Other Way'. It's got one of Graham Coxon's most infectious guitar licks underpinned by a rhythm section urging the listener to shuffle their way to the indie disco dance floor. Damon Albarn described 'There's No Other Way' at the time to Food label boss, Andy Ross, as "a B-side for sure". Luckily, the label got their way this time.

## The Damned *Eloise*

1986 • 5:08 • Ryan

Prolific punk 1980s band The Damned released their cover of Paul Ryan's track 'Eloise' in 1986, after it was originally recorded by his twin brother Barry in 1968. The group formed in the 70s and had supported various bands, including the Sex Pistols and T-Rex, but it wasn't until later that they rose to fame with album *Phantasmagoria* in 1985 – their first with major label MCA. It achieved great commercial success and raised the bar for the group's breakthrough potential – so much so that when 'Eloise' was released six months later, it shot to number three in the UK singles chart, helped by MCA's cunning ruse of releasing it on two different 12-inches.

## The Damned *New Rose*

1976 • 2:44 • James

Single 'New Rose' was taken from the band's debut album, *Damned, Damned, Damned*, and has since been frozen in time as the first punk single to be released in the UK. It was also the first single issued on Stiff Records, recorded on a simple eight-track deck and produced by the man known as Nick "Cruel To be Kind" Lowe. A glance through The Damned's discography is highly recommended, not only to understand the challenges that this troubled band have managed to overcome through the years, but also for their album and single sleeve – the essential trip down memory lane for punk and gothic fans everywhere.

BdP

Left to right: Dan Le Sac and Scroobius Pip.  
Far right: Dans le Sac vs Scroobius Pip, 'Angles'



## Dan Le Sac vs Scroobius Pip *Thou Shalt Always Kill!*

2007 • 5:19 • Scroobius Pip – Dan Le Sac

Not many songs combine smile-inducing wit, social commentary and common sense-sermonising with a singalong non-chorus and electronic wig-out, but then this is not many songs. Using the Ten Commandments as a blueprint, Scroobius Pip skewers pretension, prejudice and snobbery in calling on listeners to think for themselves while Dan Le Sac cooks up a storm of hypnotic electro. Defying categorisation, the duo created a song that caught people's imagination – and got them chanting "just a band". 'Thou Shalt Always Kill' actually qualifies more than just artistically for inclusion within this book: it was on Xfm's X-Posure in January 2007, mere days after being recorded, that the single got its first ever airplay. Excitement around it has led some media to claim otherwise but only one copy was sent out before the furore, to just one radio station. Not 'just a station' then.

JK

