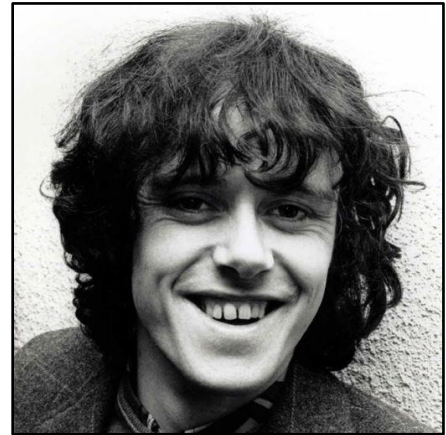


GLASGOW MUSICIANS

By Ken McNaughton

Glasgow has produced a lot of popular musicians, including Donovan, Lulu, Al Stewart, Gerry Rafferty, AC/DC, Colin Hay, Mark Knopfler and John Paul Young. Each has added iconic music to our culture; some have reminded me of my roots.

In January 1964, I sailed from Melbourne, Australia, to pursue postgraduate research at University College London. Beatlemania dominated popular music in England, but folk was also a force, as it had been back in Melbourne. With some Australian friends in London, I enjoyed watching the pop TV series *Ready, Steady, Go!* A group of us spent Christmas 1964 at a friend's house in Norfolk. In a pub on Christmas Eve, I was drawn away from the bar to the band, and breathlessly asked the leader, "What was that you just played?" Music changed for me in that moment when he said, "Hard Rains Are Gonna Fall, by Bob Dylan." Early in 1966, I joined a traveling commune, and we continued to enjoy watching *Ready Steady Go!*



Donovan

DONOVAN

Donovan Phillips Leitch was born on 10 May 1946 in Maryhill, Glasgow. Influenced by his family's love of folk music, he began playing guitar at 14. He enrolled in art school but soon decided to live out his beatnik aspirations by going on the road. He developed an eclectic and distinctive style that blended folk, jazz, pop, psychedelic rock and world music. Donovan reached fame in the United Kingdom in early 1965 with live performances on *Ready Steady Go!* He emerged with three UK hit singles—Catch the Wind, Colours, and Universal Soldier. In September 1966, Sunshine Superman topped America's *Billboard* Hot 100 for one week, and went to No. 2 in Britain, followed by Mellow Yellow at US No. 2 in December 1966, then 1968's Hurdy Gurdy Man in the top 5 in both countries.

Lulu

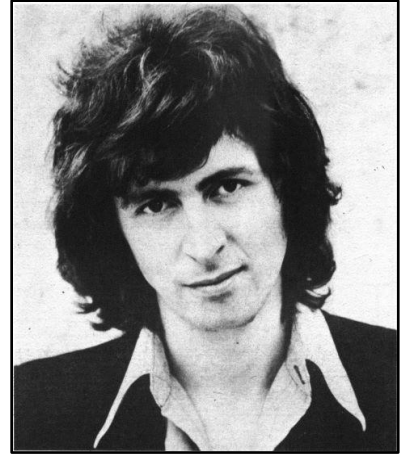
LULU

Marie McDonald McLaughlin Lawrie was born 3 November 1948 in Lennoxton, Stirlingshire, and grew up in Dennistoun, Glasgow. Aged 14, she received the stage name Lulu from her future manager Marion Massey. In 1964 she was signed to Decca Records. When she was only fifteen, her version of the Isley Brothers' song Shout peaked at No. 7 on the UK chart. Lulu's next charting single was Leave a Little Love, in 1965, which returned her to the UK Top Ten. Her next record, Try to Understand, made



the Top 40. Lulu made her acting debut in 1967 with *To Sir, with Love*, a British vehicle for Sidney Poitier. Lulu both acted in the film and sang the title song, with which she had a major hit in the US, reaching No. 1. *To Sir with Love* became the best-selling single of 1967 in the US, selling well in excess of one million copies; it was awarded a gold disc, and was ranked by *Billboard* magazine as No. 1 song of the year. We enjoyed watching Lulu on *Ready Steady Go!* I can still cry when I hear the song and think about this young girl thanking her teacher and saying goodbye.

Al Stewart



AL STEWART

Our traveling commune moved all over Europe and America. In 1972 I married one of the girls in the group and developed a Communications Network with live and syndicated radio shows on thirty-five radio stations around the country. For my weekly telephone-talk show on WXLO-FM in New York City I selected four or five cartridges of popular music from the station's playlist. Two artists I liked were Al Stewart and Gerry Rafferty. At the time I didn't know they were both from Glasgow.

Al Stewart was born in Glasgow on 5 September 1945 and grew up in Wimborne Minster, Dorset, England. His song [Year of the Cat](#) was recorded at Abbey Road Studios in January 1976 and released in July. It reached No. 8 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in March 1977. In the 6-minute 40-second album version, over 4 minutes is spent on instrumentals, including a series of melodic solos on cello, violin, piano, acoustic guitar, distorted electric guitar, synthesizer and most notably saxophone. Stewart perhaps hoped lightning would strike twice when in 1978 his 6-minute 39-second single *Time Passages* appeared on an album with the same name, again produced by Alan Parsons. This spent ten weeks at No. 1 on the Easy Listening chart, but was not as successful as *Year of the Cat*. My telephone talk show was ninety minutes long, so when I selected a song to play in a break, I had to think carefully about losing six or seven minutes. There were shorter versions of such songs, but that seemed like cheating.

Gerry Rafferty

GERRY RAFFERTY

Gerry Rafferty was born on 6 April 1947, two years after Stewart, in Underwood Lane, Paisley. In the 1960s he played in a couple of different bands with a school friend, Joe Egan, who was born in Paisley in 1946. In 1969 Rafferty became the third member of an existing folk-pop group *The Humblebums*. When one of the others left, he continued for a couple of years with Billy Connolly, another Glaswegian, who went on to a very successful career as a comedian/singer. In 1972, Rafferty and Joe Egan formed *Stealers Wheel*. They had one giant hit, [Stuck in the Middle with You](#), before the duo broke up in 1975. In 1978 Rafferty recorded his second solo album, *City to City*, which included two signature hits, [Baker Street](#) and



Right Down the Line. The album version of Baker Street, at 6 minutes 11 seconds, included an iconic 8-bar saxophone riff played between verses by Raphael Ravenscroft. The song reached No. 1 in Australia and Canada, No. 2 in the US, and No. 3 in the UK. Right Down the Line spent four non-consecutive weeks on the Easy Listening chart in the US. These songs from two musicians out of Glasgow helped define the new soft rock of the Seventies that swept the world after the explosion of popular rock music that defined the Sixties.



Angus Young of AC/DC

AC/DC

In the 1950s, Angus Young lived in the Cranhill district of Glasgow with his parents, William and Margaret, and seven older siblings—Stephen, Margaret, John, Alexander, William, George and Malcolm. He took up the guitar at the age of five or six, receiving one lesson from Alexander, after which he was self-taught. Prompted by the worst winter on record in Scotland and TV advertisements offering assisted travel, the family flew from Scotland to Sydney, Australia, in June 1963; Angus's brother John had migrated to Australia separately. They moved into the Sydney suburb of Burwood (I grew up in the Melbourne suburb of Burwood). While at high school, Angus enjoyed art classes and practiced guitar in his bedroom after school.

Angus was 18 when he and Malcolm formed AC/DC in 1973, with Angus on lead guitar and Malcolm on rhythm guitar. The name AC/DC was suggested by their sister Margaret, who saw the letters AC/DC on the back of her sewing machine (for alternating current/direct current). Angus tried a number of stage costumes before settling on his signature schoolboy look at the suggestion of his sister. Sometime in 1974, veteran Melbourne promoter Michael Browning

booked the band to play at his club, the *Hard Rock*. Following the gig, they agreed to take him on as their new manager, with the co-operation of their older brother George, and Harry Vanda. Around this time, they also moved their base to Melbourne, where they frequently played at the *Hard Rock*.

AC/DC released their debut album, *High Voltage*, exclusively in Australia on 17 February 1975. Over the next three years AC/DC cemented themselves as a popular hard rock act, especially in Australia. All their albums until this point were produced by their brother George, in partnership with Harry Vanda. The first time Bon Scott saw AC/DC was in August 1974 at the Pooraka Hotel in Adelaide. The band didn't have a singer that night; they had just sacked Dave Evans. Like the Youngs, Bon was Scottish, so there was an instant bond. Scott replaced Evans as lead singer on 24 October 1974. The core of AC/DC had coalesced, with Malcolm driving the hard rock machine, Angus as charismatic lead guitarist, and Bon Scott as screeching lead vocalist. Live performances were electrifying. In 2003, AC/DC was inducted into the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame*, and the following year they were ranked No. 72 on *Rolling Stone* magazine's list of the 100 greatest artists of all time. VH1 ranked them No. 23 on their list of the 100 greatest artists of all time, and No. 4 in their list of 100 greatest artists of hard rock.

Colin Hay (sunburned, except for eye protection)

COLIN HAY

Colin James Hay was born 29 June 1953 to parents James and Isabela Hay in Kilwinning, 21 miles (34 km) south of Glasgow. In 1967, at the age of 14, the Hays emigrated to Melbourne, Australia. After playing as an acoustic duo with Ron Strykert 1978-79, Hay formed Men at Work, with Hay on lead vocals and guitar, Strykert playing bass guitar, and Jerry Speiser on drums. They were soon joined by Greg Ham on flute, saxophone and keyboards, and John Rees on bass guitar, with Strykert switching back to lead guitar. This line-up achieved national and international success during the early to mid-1980s, best known for breakthrough hits such as [Down Under](#) and [Who Can It Be Now?](#)



In January 1983 they were the first Australian artists to have a simultaneous No. 1 album and No. 1 single on the US *Billboard* charts—*Business as Usual* and *Down Under* respectively. With the same works they achieved the distinction of a simultaneous No. 1 album and No. 1 single on the Australian, New Zealand and UK charts. Their second album, *Cargo*, was No. 1 in Australia, No. 2 in New Zealand, No. 3 in the US and No. 8 in the UK. They won the Grammy Award for Best New Artist in 1983, and have sold over 30 million albums worldwide.

MARK KNOPFLER

Mark Freuder Knopfler was born 12 August 1949 in Glasgow to an English mother and a Hungarian-Jewish father. The Knopflers lived in the Glasgow area when Mark's younger brother David was born on 27 December 1952, but moved to Knopfler's mother's hometown of Blyth,

near Newcastle, in North East England when he was seven years old. Originally inspired by his uncle Kingsley's harmonica and boogie-woogie piano playing, Mark soon became familiar with many different styles of music. During the 1960s, he formed and joined several bands. In 1968, he made the acquaintance of Steve Phillips, from whose record collection and guitar style Knopfler acquired a good knowledge of early blues artists. The two formed a duo called The Duolian String Pickers, which performed in local folk and acoustic blues venues. In 1973, he moved to London and joined a band based in High Wycombe called Brewers Droop.

Mark Knopfler



By the mid-1970s Knopfler devoted much of his musical energies to his group the Café Racers. His brother David moved to London, where he shared a flat with John Illsley, a guitarist who changed over to playing bass guitar. In April 1977 Mark moved in with David and John. The three began playing music together, and soon Mark invited John to join the Café Racers. Dire Straits' first demos were recorded in three sessions in 1977, with David Knopfler as rhythm guitarist, John Illsley as bass guitarist, and Pick Withers as drummer. On 27 July 1977 they recorded the demo tapes of five songs, including [Sultans of Swing](#). On its initial release, the album Dire Straits received little fanfare in the UK, but when Sultans of Swing was released as a single, it became a chart hit in the Netherlands and album sales took off—first across Europe, and then in the US and Canada, and finally the UK. Described by *Classic Rock* as a virtuoso, Knopfler is a fingerstyle guitarist, and was ranked 27th on *Rolling Stone's* list of 100 greatest guitarists of all time. As of 2009, he and Dire Straits had sold more than 120 million records. A four-time Grammy Award winner, he was inducted into the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame* as a member of Dire Straits in 2018.

JOHN PAUL YOUNG

Young was born John Inglis Young in Bridgeton, Glasgow, Scotland, to James and Agnes Young. Together with his parents, two sisters and a brother, Young emigrated to Australia, arriving in Sydney on Australia Day, 26 January 1962, when he was aged 11. His first involvement in music began in late 1967 when he formed a band, Elm Tree, with schoolmates.

In February 1975, Young released Yesterday's Hero, a song about the fleeting nature of pop stardom. The single shot into the national charts in April and gave Young his first top ten hit, reaching No. 8 on the Australian singles chart. The single sold strongly in the US, where it reached No. 44 on the *Cash Box* Top 100 in February 1976. Late in 1977, European markets began playing Standing in the Rain, the B-Side for the song Keep on Smilin.' The song became a top 10 hit in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, selling over 400,000 copies. Young's next single, Love Is in the Air, became a worldwide hit during 1978, peaking at No. 3 on the Australian charts in May, No. 7 in the *Billboard* Hot 100, and No. 5 in the UK singles chart.

STRICTLY BALLROOM

During its successful run at the Wharf Theater in Sydney, Baz Luhrman's play *Strictly Ballroom* was seen by Ted Albert, managing director of the record label Albert Productions, which scored a string of hits in the 1970s and 1980s with acts including John Paul Young and AC/DC. Albert immediately saw the potential to develop the play into a film, using the musical resources available to him through his publishing and recording enterprises. On 11 November 1990, Albert died suddenly from a heart attack, but his widow Popsy decided it should go to completion in honor of her husband, so she took over as executive producer. The film was accepted for the 1992 Cannes Film Festival. *Strictly Ballroom* had its first public screening at midnight in the *Un Certain Regard* program and proved to be an instant hit—the cast and crew received a fifteen-minute standing ovation, which was repeated the following night; it became one of the major hits of the festival, winning the *Prix De Jeunesse* and triggering a bidding war among international distributors.

John Paul Young

It was a major success at the 1993 BAFTA awards, gaining eight nominations and winning three awards for Best Costume Design, Best Original Film Score, and Best Production Design. Other accolades included a 1994 Golden Globe nomination for Best Picture, Newcomer of the Year at the 1993 London Critics Circle Film Awards, the People's Choice award at the 1992 Toronto International Film Festival and Most Popular Film at the 1992 Vancouver International Film Festival. Among the songs featured on the soundtrack are new versions of *Love is in the Air* and *Standing in The Rain* by John Paul Young, and a cover version of his song *Yesterday's Hero*, sung by Ignatius Jones.



In the movie, Scott Hastings, the frustrated son of a family of ballroom dancers, has been training since the age of six. His mother Shirley teaches ballroom dancing, and his father Doug meekly handles maintenance chores at the dance studio, while secretly watching old footage of his bygone dance competitions, as well as Scott's, in a back room. Scott struggles to establish his personal style of dance to win the Pan-Pacific Grand Prix Dancing Championship, but his innovative and flashy crowd-pleasing steps are not considered strictly ballroom, and as such are denounced by Australian Dancing Federation.

Scott is approached by Fran, an overlooked beginner dancer at the studio, and eventually agrees to partner with her, intrigued by her willingness to dance his way. He follows Fran home, where her overprotective Spanish father, Rico, discovers and challenges him. To appease Rico, Scott proposes a *Paso Doble* for the assembled company. Rico and Fran's grandmother Ya Ya demonstrate the proper technique, and offer to teach the couple, who spend the next week training with Fran's family. In the next dance round, Scott and Fran make their dramatic entrance and begin dancing a *Paso Doble* routine, immediately riveting the audience. Doug and the audience clap along, and Scott and Fran's spirited dancing brings down the house. Doug asks Shirley to dance with him and the whole audience joins them on the floor.

A music video was later made, with a mature John Paul Young singing [Love is in the Air](#), against a backdrop of clips from Strictly Ballroom and some fantasy sequences. The syncopated rhythm is bound to get you dancing, the romantic lyrics may move you, and the campy clips might have you running to watch the movie. The song was written by George Young, brother of Angus and Malcolm Young, and Harry Vanda. It plays at 122 beats per minute, a typical 1970s disco rhythm.

VIDEOS

I never saw any of these acts live, but there are some outstanding videos of the big hits. There are links in the text, and four of my favorites are highlighted here. The songs were released in 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1983, and so have lasted well for forty years.

Al Stewart's [Year of the Cat](#) was recorded at Abbey Road Studios, London, in January 1976 by engineer Alan Parsons. It is a whimsical love song, with a rollicking straight-ahead relaxed rhythm, perfect for dancing. The video was recorded on a BBC TV music program *called Old Grey Whistle Stop*, which aired between 1971 and 1988; this live performance was probably recorded soon after the song was released. Peter Wood opens on piano with the melody he kept playing at rehearsals, until Al Stewart was so haunted, he had to find lyrics. The result is rock poetry, inspired from various sources. The young men of the band, with their long hair and flared trousers, are comfortably united, happy to be singing their big hit. Parsons also suggested the sax solo, which works so well.

Gerry Rafferty's [Baker Street](#) (1978) is set in Baker Street, London, but it could be about Everyman, on any street. The poetry is accompanied by keyboards, bass, bongos, guitar and a passionate sax riff. Here are sample lines:

*Winding your way down on Baker Street
Light in your head and dead on your feet
Well, another crazy day*

*This city desert makes you feel so cold
It's got so many people, but it's got no soul*

*Another year and then you'd be happy
Just one more year and then you'd be happy
But you're cryin', you're cryin' now*

*He's got this dream about buying some land
He's gonna give up the booze and the one-night stands
And then he'll settle down
In some quiet little town
And forget about ev'rything*

*But you know he'll always keep movin'
You know he's never gonna stop movin'
'Cause he's rollin', he's the rolling stone*

*When you wake up, it's a new mornin'
The sun is shinin', it's a new mornin'
You're goin', you're goin' home.*

Colin Hay fronted Men at Work for their big hit [Down Under](#) (1983). This is great rock comedy, based on some Australian myths and truths, and the video matches perfectly, as members of the band adopt various roles in comic situations. It took a Glaswegian, working with his Australian bandmates, to skewer the local population in such a hilarious manner, and to make the Vegemite sandwich world famous. At the time of writing, the prior two videos had registered 13 million and 17 million views respectively; Down Under ran away with 296 million.

Mark Knopfler led Dire Straits to worldwide success with [Sultans of Swing](#) (1977, 168 million views). The camera concentrates on Knopfler, with his unassuming looks, lightning finger work, and crisp phrasing. He tells the story of a night at a bar, and a band, which could be his own. Sample lines:

*You get a shiver in the dark
It's a raining in the park but meantime-
South of the river you stop and you hold everything
A band is blowing Dixie, double four time
You feel alright when you hear the music ring*

*Well now you step inside but you don't see too many faces
Coming in out of the rain they hear the jazz go down*

*You check out guitar George, he knows all the chords
Mind, it's strictly rhythm he doesn't want to make it cry or sing*

*And Harry doesn't mind, if he doesn't, make the scene
He's got a daytime job, he's doing alright
He can play the Honky Tonk like anything
Savin' it up, for Friday night*

*Then a crowd a young boys they're a foolin' around in the corner
Drunk and dressed in their best brown baggies and their platform soles
They don't give a damn about any trumpet playin' band
It ain't what they call Rock and Roll*

*And then the man he steps right up to the microphone
And says at last just as the time bell rings
"Goodnight, now it's time to go home"
Then he makes it fast with one more thing
"We are the Sultans
We are the Sultans of Swing."*

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