

Tom Petty: The Best of the British Invasion

In the mid-Sixties, the British had a more romantic view of rock & roll than the States did," says Tom Petty. "We didn't take it as seriously. The energy that came with the British Invasion was the difference – these guys brought the guitar to the fore. You weren't getting guitar off the Shirelles."

1. "I Want to Hold Your Hand" b/w "I Saw Her Standing There" The Beatles, 1963

The Beatles were superior to everything. This came on the radio, and overnight everything was different. If you weren't there, it's hard to believe. But everything changed instantly. In "I Want to Hold Your Hand," John and Paul are singing the lead vocal in unison. It almost makes another voice – just a sonic pleasure.

2. "You Really Got Me" The Kinks, 1964

I heard that song for the first time at a dance. The DJ played it really loud, and the whole room went still. Then everyone erupted in applause – for a record. That guitar break – I'd never heard anything that wild in my life.

3. "We've Gotta Get Out of This Place" The Animals, 1965

This made me want to run away from home. That bass riff is classic. These arrangements were tidy. Each instrument had a job to do.

4. "She's Not There" The Zombies, 1964

That piano break was over our heads at the time, but so right. Colin Blunstone's voice was a sound I had never heard. I thought if a zombie sang, that's how he would sound.

5. "When You Walk in the Room" The Searchers, 1964

I restrained myself from listing a bunch of their records. The 12-string guitar fascinated me, and they had great voices.

6. "I'm Alive" The Hollies, 1965

Those voices were incredible. They were the best singers, other than the Beatles, as far as singing harmony and knocking you dead.

7. "I'm a Man" The Yardbirds, 1965

That break, when they go into double-time, is downright psychedelic. And Jeff Beck is playing in unison with the harmonica. It's a short record – and they still have the rave-up at the end. They got it all in.

8. "Anyway You Want It" Dave Clark Five, 1964

They were badass. This song sounds like a runaway train,

with that sax honking down low. That was a big step, to blow the echo out that heavy. I'd go crazy every time I heard it.

9. "I Can't Explain" The Who, 1965

What was great about Pete Townshend's early stuff was you identified with what he was saying. And he's using a Rickenbacker 12-string in a way no one else did. The guitar break is almost *not* a guitar break – he's moving the tone switch back and forth.

10. "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" The Rolling Stones, 1965

They had so much attitude, it dripped off the plate. The riff and distortion grab you, and the lyric is so worldly. It's hard to talk about "Satisfaction" because everyone knows it so well. But it's a great moment in rock history. Just the phrase is worth a million bucks.



Adam Levine: The Police

The Maroon 5 singer got into the Police through his mom's record collection. "I love how they threw together reggae and rock & roll and punk rock," he says. "Their records sound like no one else."

1. "The Bed's Too Big Without You" 1979

The lyrics are so raw and desperate. That's one thing I've learned from Sting: being unafraid of vulnerability.

2. "Murder by Numbers" 1983

It's about pulling off a murder – I don't know another song so offbeat and odd but also so poppy and accessible.

3. "Can't Stand Losing You" 1978

You're like, "This is a reggae tune but it's a rock song but it's a pop song but . . . I don't know what this is!"

4. "King of Pain" 1983

Sting's lyrics are a cross between McCartney's earnestness and Zeppelin talking about kings and queens and skeletons.

5. "Next to You" 1978

Frantic, balls to the wall, totally punk rock and just crazy.

6. "So Lonely" 1978

It starts reggae, then blasts into a rock & roll chorus.

7. "Don't Stand So Close to Me" 1980

Sting was a teacher, but I'm pretty sure it wasn't autobiographical. Who knows, though?

8. "Man in a Suitcase" 1980

Being in a band, I can definitely identify with this idea.

9. "Message in a Bottle" 1979

One of the best riffs ever.

10. "Walking on the Moon" 1979

It's a romantic song from a time when being romantic wasn't particularly cool.