

It was the age of peace, love and happiness. It was the age of brightly-painted combi vans and hippies wearing bell-bottom pants or flowing skirts. It was the age of folk musicians peacefully protesting war alongside the acid rock bands who were not quite so peaceful. It was the age of a three day music festival called "Woodstock," that drew a crowd of thousands and changed the history of rock and roll music. It was the 1960s.

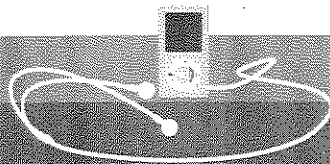
When 400,000 people converged on a dairy farm in rural New York for a three day festival of "love and music" in 1969, they had no idea that they were creating history. Many of the most popular musicians of the day came together to create what would become one of the most successful musical events in history.

Performers included the folk musicians Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young (CSNY) and Joan Baez as well as the acid rock or psychedelic rock groups such as Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Cream and The Who. Other performers from this era who were unable to attend but were very popular during this time include Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, The Doors and Led Zeppelin.

Experimentation played a major part in life during the Woodstock era. Social experiments such as communal and other alternative lifestyles adopted by the hippie movement were echoed in the music of the period. Musical experimentation made the music of this era unique and opened the door for the harder rock that became widely popular among youth of the 1970s. Jimi Hendrix closed the Woodstock festival with a very unusual version of the Star Spangled Banner. Although many people felt it was disrespectful to their country, it was a sign that nothing was off-limits. Even the Beatles experimented with their musical style during this time. *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* incorporated meter changes and vocal effects that were very different to their standard sound. In addition, people thought that the song title was a reference to LSD, an illegal drug that was unfortunately associated with the late 60s.

The psychedelic rock style was loud and heavy and included lots of long instrumental solos with very few lyrics. In contrast, folk music, including songs such as Bob Dylan's *Blowing in the Wind* represented the use of music to make political and social statements, particularly about civil rights and anti-war sentiments. Instead of loud guitars and harsh sounds, they opted for acoustic guitars and an emphasis lyrics and vocal harmonies. Interestingly enough, the two styles seemed to coexist fairly happily. It was definitely one of the more colorful eras of the 20th century - both socially and musically.

### Fast Facts



**Time Span:** late 1960s-early 1970s  
**Influences:** Folk, blues, country as well as  
**Primary Instruments:** Psychedelic Rock:  
 Electric guitars, bass, electric organ and drums.  
 Folk: acoustic guitars and vocal harmonies.  
**Major Artists:** Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan,  
 CSNY, Joan Baez (Folk) and Jefferson  
 Airplane, the Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix,  
 Janis Joplin, Cream, and the Who  
 (Psychedelic rock)

### Fun Fact



For an event that would eventually be dubbed as one of the most successful music festivals ever, Woodstock was a logistical nightmare. The venue had to be changed only a couple of weeks beforehand due to the protests of the locals; there were not enough toilets, the fencing was inadequate and eventually had to be removed (causing the event to be free of charge); and it rained for a lot of the time, creating one big mud-bath. However, peace and love prevailed and the fact that it did not erupt into a riot was quite remarkable.