



# **The Most Influential Rock Stars of the 1960s: The Lives of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison**

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures

\*Includes the rock stars' quotes about their lives and careers

\*Includes an introduction and bibliography for each one

In 1964, girls all across the United States filled venues, almost literally screamed their heads off, and fainted en masse. Almost from the second they played the first note, The Beatles would be hit with the resounding screams, which made it impossible for them to even hear themselves sing. When they made their American debut on The Ed Sullivan Show in early 1964, they were greeted by young fans who whipped themselves up into such a frenzy that some of them fainted. Beatlemania had struck North America, creating a musical and pop culture phenomenon unlike anything the world had ever seen. At the center of it all was John Lennon and Paul McCartney, the principal songwriting duo who were instrumental in creating the soundtrack of the 1960s, while producing some of the world's most timeless classics. Together with George Harrison and Ringo Starr, Lennon and McCartney propelled The Beatles to unprecedented heights, sparking Beatlemania on two sides of the Atlantic and experimenting with their sound in ways that revolutionized rock and inspired bands across various musical genres.

In the space of just a few years, Bob Dylan, born Robert Allen Zimmerman, rose from the obscurity of a small Minnesota town to a position of royalty atop the folk music landscape of the 1960s, with a universal esteem and status on a par with Elvis Presley and The Beatles. In the 1960s, "Blowin' in the Wind" and "The Times They Are A' Changing" "became anthems of the anti-war and civil rights movements," but long after the transition from the '50s to the late '60s and '70s was accomplished, the initially baffling young folk singer who appeared out of nowhere was awarded a special Pulitzer Prize for "his profound impact on popular music, and American culture, marked by lyrical compositions of extraordinary poetic power." Over the span of his career, he has received Grammy Awards, Golden Globes, Academy Award Oscars, and he has been inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame, the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, and the Songwriters Hall of Fame, not to mention the Pulitzer Prize and Presidential Medal of Freedom.

It is rare in the world of music for a general consensus to form over who was the best at anything. Many would call The Beatles the greatest rock band, but it's easy to find strongly opinionated dissenters. However, when it came to playing a guitar and laying the soundtrack for the psychedelic era, just about everyone agrees there was Jimi Hendrix (1942-1970) and then there was everyone else. Anyone arguing otherwise either never heard his music or saw him perform. In fact, Jimi Hendrix is one of the few musicians known primarily for his sound and what he could do with a guitar than for his discography.

Dubbed by many as the "First Lady" or "Queen" of Rock & Roll, Joplin both invented and installed the "rock mama paradigm" into the American rock consciousness, a patriarchal and fraternal industry that, much like the societal traits it protested, restricted women to a narrow and conservative criteria for entrance. With only a very few kindred spirits, such as Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane, "she pioneered a new range of expression for white women."

In the mid-1960s, an era on the cusp of change from the musical and social norms of the previous decade, the emergence of Jim Morrison, the charismatic poet/musician of The Doors, helped to transform the subgenre of rock n' roll as a stylistic flavor to the full-fledged institution of Rock Music. Morrison accomplished this transformation by avoiding membership in any of the known categories of modern rock music during the age of protest, but at the same time, he became the general symbol of anti-authoritarianism for his generation and the next.

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