

A Parents' Guide to Their Teens

The fact that a performer has become a "household name" doesn't mean that everyone in the household recognizes it. Here's help for

How many millions of parents have ever puzzled over that *noise* blasting out of their kids' stereo sets? Yet if a parent asks about the sounds, he's liable to get an answer like "Black Sabbath" or "Three Dog Night," names that mean as much to him as "Perry Como" or "Peggy Lee" do to his 12-year-old child.

Faced with a gaggle of strange names, it's no wonder that parents don't bother to understand what's happening. But here's what 42-year-old Bo Diddley, one of the founding fathers of rock 'n' roll, says: "If you want to know the truth, mammas and daddys are missing something—part of their kids' lives."

Rock 'n' roll embraces anything from loud, rhythmic sounds to soft, lyrical melodies that even parents may catch themselves whistling. To eliminate some of the confusion, I have compiled a guide to the sounds and artists that have dominated popularity charts over the past year. Not all performers appeal to all teens, so I have listed the average audience age range each act attracts. Even though several do have some listeners over 30, I've used 21 as the cutoff point. After that, kids aren't supposed to be kids any more.

A Hip-Pocket Guide to Who's Popular Among Kids

Artists	Number of People	Age Group Reached
Grand Funk Railroad	3	11-15
David Cassidy		8-14
Black Sabbath	4	12-16
Rod Stewart		13-21
Three Dog Night	7	12-16
Jackson Five	5	8-21
Carole King		15-21
Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young	4	14-21
Cat Stevens		13-21
Emerson, Lake & Palmer	3	13-21

POP ROCK

"No one is so fierce as an 11-year-old in love...."

Pop rock focuses on the joy of adolescence rather than the pain. As a rule, these performers sing other people's songs rather than writing their own. Little girls suffering from advanced puppy love sigh and moan over stars who are oh-so-adorable. The girls find it easy to relate to idols as tiny as they are. No one is so fierce as an 11-year-old in love, but no one is so fickle, either. Particularly in this category, Tuesday's star is Wednesday's golden oldie.



David Cassidy (audience ages 8-14)

What mother of a 10-year-old girl doesn't know who David Cassidy is! Practically overnight their daughters graduate from Barbie Doll to David the doll, whose small size and delicate features give him a look of almost indeterminate sex. At 21, adorable David plays a 16-year-old on "The Partridge Family" TV series, and he looks so close to his fans' age group that they consider him a peer. His diminutive size makes him the perfect heart-throb for preteens, who cannot yet cope with real sexuality.

Both with "The Partridge Family" and on his own, David records soft, pleasant songs. The beat is there, but it's buried under innocuous melodies and marshmallow words. The subteen set appreciates this smooth, slick sound. Ask little girls why they love David and they'll sigh, "He's nice." He's boyfriend, brother and best friend rolled into one tidy package.



Jackson Five (audience ages 8-21)

The pride of Gary, Ind., the Jackson Five have something for everybody. Michael, 13, Marlon, 14, Jermaine, 16, Tito, 17, and Jackie, 20, are irresistibly handsome. Bursting with personality, this Motown bunch produces catchy, easy-to-listen-to music that calls for a toe-tapping, hand-clapping response. Lead singer Michael, wailing in his high, plaintive voice, stirs girls to scream just like Elvis' fans did in the 50s. Furthermore, the Jack-

son Five have mastered showmanship so well that to adults it's like seeing five Sammy Davises in action at one time.

Black teen-agers especially idolize the Jackson Five because the band represents what they'd like to be. Flamboyant in appearance, each member of the group wears his own wildly patterned outfit that complements all the others. Despite the glamor, the Jackson Five still come off as just plain folk, and kids can think of them as their friends—even when they see their cartoon series on Saturday morning TV.



Three Dog Night (audience ages 12-16)

When Three Dog Night sing and play "Joy to the World," everyone believes they mean it. This American group interprets other people's songs in a straightforward, easily accessible manner. They rock and roll without any fancy convolutions of notes. The singing of the three lead vocalists, Danny Hutton, Chuck Negron and Cory Wells, comes across loud and clear without getting lost in a tangle of overampli-

fied instruments. Three Dog Night produce a happy kind of rock that makes kids cheer delightedly.

Real professionals, the band doesn't indulge in tuning up or hemming and hawing between numbers. They go right through their show building the momentum to unite the fans in excitement. A good-looking bunch with stylishly shaggy hair, Three Dog Night's singers move their bodies naturally with the beat without indulging in excessive body histrionics.

VOCAL ROCK

They "write their own songs about the joys and sorrows of love and life."

Older teens search for expressions of their very special feelings. The current vocalists, most of whom write their own songs, sing about the joys and sorrows of love and life. Sensitive, sometimes sentimental in mood, the lyric is what matters. The singers themselves come across as down-to-earth people because they look and act like their audiences.



Carole King (audience ages 15-21)

Very rarely do women reach the heights of popularity in rock, but Carole King's "Tapestry" album was one of the hottest records of the past year. Undoubtedly Carole's initial impact resulted from her association as pianist with 1970's hero, James Taylor. The surprise guest appearance James made with Carole during her first Carnegie Hall concert was a seal of approval for the easily influenced kids.

Ten years ago, just out of high school in Brooklyn, Carole, with her then-husband Gerry Goffin, was composing hit songs like the Shirelles' "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow." Recently she's begun writing lyrics as well as music and has come up with numbers like "You've Got a Friend," which has become an instant standard. Kids respond to the simple but precise way she gets to the heart of emotions and relationships. Carole sings with such sincerity that it doesn't matter that her voice has a slightly nasal edge. Kids appreciate honesty, and Carole's whole approach says that here is someone who is telling it like it is.