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Spirits In The Sky

By Chris Meehan

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From Elvis to Nick Drake, the music lives on.

Elvis Presley secured the number one, last week, in the historic 1000th compilation of the British charts, with A Fool Such As I ? 44 years since its original release. This is some achievement, but does his premature death have something to do with it? After all, a contemporary such as Jerry Lee Lewis, now well into pensionable age, doesn't look likely to make a comeback at the top of present-day, mainstream play lists.

What's at work here is that powerful emotion: nostalgia. Though Elvis was taken from us once the ravages of middle age were pretty much advanced, our collective memory of him remains frozen at an earlier, more flattering time. We all like to recall him as that vital, charismatic, leathered-up, turbo-charged macho of Jail House Rock. His early death has ensured his musical immortality and that he remains forever young in our hearts.

From Glenn Miller to Buddy Holly, an untimely death has endowed a certain mystique to the life and times of the performer, not to mention: bankability, qualities that endure from beyond the grave. Just take a look at the number of Glenn Miller compilations that are periodically released and the success that the musical 'Buddy' has had in recent times.

Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison left a vast, gaping void in the music landscape when they passed away, in the early 1970s.

However, their musical legacy has taken on cult status. The posthumous marketing of Hendrix material (from huge quantities of available, unreleased studio sessions and recordings of live concerts) exceeds that which he released in his lifetime ? and though much of it falls well below the sublime heights touched by: Are You Experienced, Axis: Bold As Love and Electric Leyland (recorded with his classic band, the Jimi Hendrix experience), it hasn't deterred the buying public from continuing to buy into the Hendrix legend.

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Jim Morrison (wayward rock-child, touched by the spirit of the Beat generation) with an exceptional talent for self-destruction, has been seen by many as a willing victim of rock and roll excess. His death in Paris in 1971, in his late 20s, and burial at Pere Lachaise cemetery (the resting place of the great and the good: from Edith Piaf to Oscar Wilde) have all added to the Morrison mythology, which has never lost its capacity to fascinate and sell records. Like Elvis, the image that survives is that of an arresting and unblemished youth, before excess took its toll.

Similarly, Marc Bolan's music, which is both powerful and durable in its own right (consider: Midnight, Buick Mackane and Children of the Revolution), has had its longevity enhanced by his tragic end, in a car crash, at the age of 30.

Think of Eva Cassidy and Nick Drake, whose gentle, lyrical, profound and poignant songs evoke the memories of

two unique creative talents. Cassidy has bequeathed a profound artistic legacy. Her songs cover themes of love, loss, transcendence and redemption and are drawn from diverse musical traditions. 'Eva by Heart' will ensure her spirit lives on.

Finally, Nick Drake's three albums (Five Leaves Left, Bryter Layter and Pink Moon), although acclaimed by critics and fellow musicians, failed to find a broad audience during his lifetime - which served to nourish his extreme clinical depression. However, the growth in his posthumous popularity has established him as a significant figure in contemporary British popular music. A number of today's musicians, including Badly Drawn Boy, Blur's Graham Coxon and REM guitarist Peter Buck, cite him as an important influence.

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This article was written by Chris Meehan who is the features editor at

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Chris Meehan is the features editor at www.Just-Jammin.com. As well as a freelance writer on many subjects

What Else Can I Ask For

By Kathryn Lim

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Spirits In The Sky

What else can I ask for?

I am so intoxicated in Her love

Everything I do has the vision of Her within

The moment I wake up, I feel her

When I am asleep, I feel Her

What else can I say besides mentioning about Her Blessings and Love?

What else can I do? What else can I say?

I often wondered how could the spirit of a bird be captured without killing it?

I searched for a direct experience for the answer

I yearn for someone who can truly be my sky

I realized who else could it be besides my Guru who is the supplier of unconditional love?

She has become my blue sky the moment our hearts joined

There's so much space for flying and at the same time the shelter of this blue bird from the scorching sun.

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