



THE 'SWINGING SIXTIES' AND LIVING IN THE SEVENTIES

The 1960s and 1970s were still very much the domain of the baby boomer generation, as the prosperous post-World War II period continued to generate the conditions for youth culture to thrive. Popular culture of the early 1960s was not significantly different to the late 1950s, although the increase of surf culture and influence of jazz music was having some impact. Apart from the influence of new music, films and television programs, the young people of this era were starting to grow up and develop their own views about the world. Cold War tensions and the threat of atomic weapons, the growing awareness of social inequity for women and minority groups, the prevalence of young people going on to tertiary education before entering the workforce, and increased leisure time, all contributed to the development of a generation that began to question authority and the world created for them by their parents.



SOURCE 4.4.1 The Beatles wave to a crowd of around 20000 fans from a hotel balcony during their Australian tour, Melbourne, June 1964.

MUSIC IN THE SIXTIES

MERSEY BEAT

Rock music had become **sanitised** for a mass audience by the early 1960s, with musicians carefully chosen and groomed to perform songs written for them on television programs such as *Bandstand*. US influence was still very strong but, in 1963, an English 'skiffle' group called the Beatles had their first hit in the United States, 'From Me to You', signalling the beginning of British bands having an influence on popular culture during this period. It was not long before 'Beatlemania' swept Australia as well with their songs dominating the music charts. A subsequent tour in 1964 led to wild scenes of screaming and fainting girls desperate to get a glimpse of the performers. The cheeky English boys dressed in matching suits and sported floppy mop-top hairstyles. The sexually suggestive 'bad boys' of the Rolling Stones were the next big group to come out of Britain. Australian groups such as The Easybeats and Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs created music in a similar style to these British bands and enjoyed considerable success.

FROM SURFING TO HIPPIES

Surf culture had its own brand of music, of which Californian group the Beach Boys are the most famous example. It is not surprising that with an existing surf culture in Australia, home-grown surf artists such as the

Atlantics topped the charts in 1963 with their instrumental song 'Bombora'. Fifteen-year-old schoolgirl Patricia 'Little Pattie' Amphlett made it to number two in the music charts in 1964 with her song 'He's My Blond Headed Stompie Wompie Real Gone Surfer Boy'. The music sounded innocent enough, but the panel vans decked out with mattresses that many 'surfer boys' drove worried many parents of young girls.

Folk music became very popular during the 1960s, with performers such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and the group Peter, Paul and Mary writing songs that seemed to reject mainstream popular culture and attempted to deliver a message to their audience. The Seekers were an Australian band of this genre that became very popular worldwide.

Such music gave rise to the **hippie movement**, which originated during the 1960s and 1970s on college campuses in the United States and became particularly prominent in the US city of San Francisco. Hippies sought an alternative lifestyle that became associated with experimental drugs, freedom of sexual expression, exploration of eastern religions such as Buddhism, and protest against, among other things, nuclear weapons and the Vietnam War. The premiere of the musical 'Hair' in Sydney in 1969, a theatre production that was set within the hippie movement, shocked audiences (particularly because of its nude scene) and signalled the arrival of the hippie movement in Australia.

Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'...
Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is rapidly agin'
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'

SOURCE 4.4.2 From 'The Times They Are A-Changin'', lyrics by Bob Dylan, released in 1964

SOURCE 4.4.3 The Seekers on Westminster Bridge in London, around 1966. Held at the National Library of Australia

Q Would parents of the 1960s be worried about their children listening to the music of the Seekers if they used this image as a guide? Why or why not?



TELEVISION IN THE SIXTIES

By 1965, approximately nine out of ten Australian families owned a television. The connection of a coaxial cable between Sydney and Melbourne in 1963 allowed effective networking to occur. By the end of the decade, Australia was connected to the international satellite system. Programs could be broadcast live across the country and Australians received the latest news and events from overseas, such as the moon landing in 1969.

There were three commercial stations—Channels 7, 9 and 0 (later to become 10)—and the government-owned Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC). However, Australian television was still dominated by US programming on the commercial networks, with a government report in 1963 finding that 97 per cent of drama serials were imported from the United States. The ABC screened mostly British-produced programming, such as *Coronation Street* (1960–), and Australians were beginning to demand more Australian content. The power of television to influence the nature of Australian culture and the sense of Australian identity could no longer be ignored.

Australian programs for teenagers, such as *Bandstand* and *Six O'Clock Rock*, were popular, as were children's programs such as *Mr. Squiggle* (1959–99), *Play School* (1966–) and *Here's Humphrey* (1965–2008). The ABC began its current affairs series *Four Corners* (1961–), and the success of the distinctly Australian *Homicide* (1964–77), *The Mavis Bramston Show* (1964–68) and *In Melbourne Tonight* (featuring Graham Kennedy and Bert Newton) indicated that Australians were prepared to embrace their unique culture. The production of *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo* (1966–70) ready for export in colour in 1968, before Australia even had colour television, signalled that Australians were preparing to launch Australian culture onto the world.



SOURCE 4.4.4 Skippy of *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo* (1966–70) and his companion Sonny