

The Who, My Generation 1965

Why Don't You All F-Fade Away

On Oct 13th 1965, The Who recorded 'My Generation', at Pye studios, London. When released as a single it reached No.2 on the UK chart, held off the No.1 position by The Seekers 'The Carnival Is Over', (it should've been a No.1). Roger Daltrey would later say that he stuttered the lyrics to try to fit them to the music. The BBC in the UK initially refused to play the song because it did not want to offend people who stutter.

'My Generation' was named the 11th greatest song by Rolling Stone on their list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time and 13th on VH1's list of the 100 Greatest Songs of Rock & Roll. It's also part of The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll and is inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame for "historical, artistic and significant" value. High praise indeed. And it deserves it; the song is 3.19 of pure energy and attitude. When you hear 'My Generation' you hear the Who on their way to becoming one of the great British rock groups.

The stutter came about as he tried to fit the lyrics to the music, and Talmy decided it worked well enough to keep. The BBC initially refused to play "My Generation" because it did not want to offend people who stutter, but it reversed its decision after the song became more popular.

Why does the singer stutter in my generation? Various stories exist as to the reason for Roger Daltrey's distinctive vocal delivery. One is that the song began as a slow "talking" blues number without the stutter. Another reason is that it was suggested to Daltrey that he stutter to sound like a British mod on 'speed'.

The song went through various stages as they tried to perfect it. Written by a 20-year-old Pete Townshend, it began as a slow song with a blues feel, and at one point had hand claps and multiple key changes. The final product was at a much faster tempo than the song was conceived; it was the Who's manager Kit Lambert's idea to speed it up. Like all great songs from a group defining their sound and feel, all four members made valuable contributions.

Townshend who reportedly wrote the song on a train is said to have been inspired by the Queen Mother who is alleged to have had Townshend's 1935 Packard hearse towed off a street in Belgravia, London because she was offended by the sight of it during her daily drive through the neighbourhood.

