

“Summer of ‘69”

LANGUAGE LEVEL
ADVANCED

Track **10**

Speaker:
Chuck Rolando
(Standard
American accent)



Glossary

- 1 **items** - articoli.
- 2 **bled** - sanguinavano.
- 3 **quit** - se ne andò.
- 4 **drummers** - percussionisti.
- 5 **carpets** - moquette.
- 6 **bride** - sposa.
- 7 **recalls** - ricorda.
- 8 **porch** - veranda (tipica delle case americane).
- 9 **line** - verso.
- 10 **acknowledges** - registra, riconosce.
- 11 **sleeve notes** - note di copertina.
- 12 **innuendo** - allusione.
- 13 **wondering what went wrong** - chiedendosi cosa è andato storto.

(To appreciate this article fully we suggest you type “Summer of ‘69 lyrics” into an Internet search engine, and refer to them as you read.)

“Summer of ‘69,” which was written in 1984, takes a nostalgic look at the joys of youth. Bryan Adams, who was born in November 1959, was only 9 in the summer of ‘69, but the song’s co-author, Jim Vallance, was a few years older. Vallance remembers: “I was thinking about that amazing summer when I turned 17. We originally planned on calling the song ‘Best Days Of My Life.’”

A *six string* is a guitar, which the singer bought *at the five and dime*, a shop which sold items¹ priced 5 or 10 cents, and then played “*til my fingers bled*”². The second verse recalls his first band, which soon fell apart (“*Jimmy quit*”³ and *Jody got married*”). Jim Wesley was in fact

one of Bryan Adams’ drummers⁴ in his early years, but left to sell carpets⁵, while Jody Perpik was, and still is, Adams’ sound engineer. He got married around the time this song was written, and appears in the song’s video with his new bride⁶.

The fourth verse recalls⁷ days in a boring job, and evenings at the drive-in, an outdoor cinema popular in the 1960s where viewers watched from their cars. This was where the singer met his girlfriend, and pictures her on her mother’s porch⁸, an image Jim Vallance remembers as a reference to a line⁹ from Bruce

Questo pezzo rock di Bryan Adams è passato alla storia. E’ un ricordo nostalgico delle gioie della gioventù, anche se nell’estate del ‘69 lui aveva solo 9 anni.

Springsteen’s “Thunder Road.” He also acknowledges¹⁰ the Beatles’ influence on the line “*When you held my hand.*” There is some controversy surrounding the real meaning behind the song, and the next verse recalls nothing to do (“*killing time*”) and the need to relax (“*unwind*”).

In the sleeve notes¹¹ for his 2005 Anthology, Bryan Adams claimed the song has nothing to do with 1969, saying it was a “double entendre,” but Jim Vallance disagrees: “At no time do I recall discussing sexual innuendo¹² with Bryan.” The use of the apostrophe in the

title’s number should confirm the song is about the year.

The song concludes in the present with the singer and his teenage girlfriend no longer together. He looks at “*everything that’s come and gone*” and occasionally plays his old guitar, wondering “*what*

went wrong”¹³.

“Summer of ‘69” was a huge hit in 1984, but surprisingly was not a number one: it reached number five in the U.S.A. charts and just number 42 in the U.K.

This recording features 15 seconds from “The Summer of ‘69,” which was written by Bryan Adams and Jim Vallance (1984).



English Through Music...

Fergal Kavanagh, the author of this article, runs the website www.tuneintoenglish.com. The Students’ Area features activities for learning English through pop music.

