

Right: thirty-year-old Cyndi Lauper in 1984. Opposite page: Lauper's 1983 studio album "She's So Unusual" that featured the hit track *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*.



TUNE INTO ENGLISH

Cyndi Lauper's *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*

La cantautrice newyorkese ha saputo trasformare una canzone dalle sfumature volgari in un inno femminista con uno dei ritmi più ballabili del pop recente.

Although US singer Cyndi Lauper's 1983 hit *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun* sounds like a feminist anthem¹, it began life as a man singing about how lucky he was to know so many fun-loving² girls! Musician Robert Hazard wrote the track³ in 1979. He recorded a demo⁴, but when Lauper's producer heard it, he decided it would be perfect for her to cover⁵ as a debut solo single. Hazard adapted the song, and Lauper declared it would bring women together⁶ and be a "sustaining⁷ message that we are powerful human beings." She said she wanted a reggae rhythm for the song, and to use "the wonderful new styles from England from groups like The Clash." The

cover became her signature song and was extremely successful worldwide.

The song's video is a playful⁸ romp⁹ that celebrates female camaraderie. It featured Italian-American wrestler¹⁰ Lou Albano as the singer's father and Lauper's real-life mother. The singer told MTV she used normal people rather than models in the video so that "when any woman saw it, she would see herself represented." It won the 1984 MTV award for best video. Lyrically, the song is entirely in the present simple, giving immediacy to the message. The title and hook¹¹, however, are misleading¹². Although the use of the adverb 'just' excludes everything else, there are undoubtedly many other things that girls might want to do! ☺



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18

LOWER INTERMEDIATE B1

GLOSSARY

- 1 **anthem**: inno
- 2 **fun-loving**: amante del divertimento
- 3 **track**: pista
- 4 **demo**: dimostrazione
- 5 **to cover**: fare una cover (versione)
- 6 **to bring together**: unire
- 7 **sustaining**: di sostegno
- 8 **playful**: giocoso, scherzoso
- 9 **romp**: commedia spassosa
- 10 **wrestler**: lottatore
- 11 **hook**: gancio, motivo
- 12 **misleading**: ingannevole
- 13 **to flow**: fluire
- 14 **to yell**: strillare

mornin'/workin': songs often leave out the final 'g' to make them flow¹³ better.

Momma: what a child calls their mother, also Mama/Mommy/Morn/Mummy/Mum.

gonna/wanna: 'going to' and 'want to' are often shortened¹³ in songs and spoken English to make them flow more naturally.

walk in the sun: this is a metaphor for being free. The original line from a male perspective was "All my girls are going to walk in the sun." Cyndi Lauper wanted a songwriting credit for changing this line, but was refused.

SCAN & WATCH



Scan this QR code with your smartphone or tablet and listen to the official song on YouTube while reading the lyrics.

I come home, in the **mornin'** light

My mother says "**When you gonna** live your life right?"

Oh **Momma** dear, we're not **the fortunate ones**

And girls, they **wanna** have fun

Oh girls just wanna have fun

The phone rings in the middle of the night

My father **yells**¹⁴ "What you gonna do with your life?"

Oh Daddy dear, you know you're still number one

But girls, they wanna have fun

Oh girls just wanna have

That's all they really want

Some fun

When the workin' day is done

Oh girls, they wanna have fun

Oh girls just wanna have fun (girls, they want)

(Wanna have fun, girls)

(Wanna have)

Some boys take a beautiful girl

And hide her away from the rest **o'** the world

I wanna be the one to **walk in the sun**

Oh girls, they wanna have fun

Oh girls just wanna have

That's all they really want

Is some fun

When the workin' day is done

Oh girls, they wanna have fun

Oh girls just wanna have fun (girls, they want)

(Wanna have fun, girls)

(Wanna have)

[repeat chorus]

When you gonna/ What you gonna: spoken English (especially American English) often leaves out the form of the verb 'to be' ('are' in this case) in a 'going to (do)' construction.

fortunate ones: this means they do not have a lot of money so they should enjoy themselves when they can.

o': a spoken or sung abbreviation of 'of'.

Fergal Kavanagh runs the website www.tuneintoenglish.com, the web's largest free resource for learning English through pop music.

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