

I DON'T LIKE MONDAYS

THE BOOMTOWN RATS

APPEARS IN
ROCK & POP
2018

⚡ Released: 1979 ⚡ Album: *The Fine Art of Surfacing* ⚡ Label: Ensign, Columbia

ABOUT THE SONG

'I Don't Like Mondays' by The Boomtown Rats was the sixth biggest British hit of 1979 and the band's second No. 1 single. It was written by lead singer Bob Geldof after reading about the Cleveland Elementary School shooting which took place on January 29, 1979.

16-year-old Brenda Spencer's attack injured eight children and killed two adults. In the hours after the incident, Spencer barricaded herself in her home, and during this time she told a reporter on the telephone that she had carried out the shooting because she didn't like Mondays.

Spencer's response caught Geldof's attention and after reading about it he quickly came up with the line 'Silicon chip inside her head had switched to overload'. He went on to pen a pop song to try to capture the senselessness of the act and Spencer's reason for doing it. It was first performed by the band less than a month later.

'IT WAS SUCH A SENSELESS ACT. IT WAS THE PERFECT SENSELESS ACT AND THIS WAS THE PERFECT SENSELESS REASON FOR DOING IT. SO PERHAPS I WROTE THE PERFECT SENSELESS SONG TO ILLUSTRATE IT. IT WASN'T AN ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT TRAGEDY.'

BOB GELDOF, SMASH HITS (1979)

Despite reaching No. 1 in the UK and winning several awards, including one for its lyrics, the song didn't perform well in the USA. For some years San Diego radio stations refrained from playing it out of respect for local sensitivities, and although played by some album-oriented radio stations, the song only made it to No. 73 in the US charts.

“
AND HE CAN SEE NO REASON
'CAUSE THERE ARE NO REASONS
WHAT REASON
DO YOU NEED TO BE SURE
TELL ME WHY
I DON'T LIKE MONDAYS
”

RECORDING AND PRODUCTION

Recorded at Trident Studios in London, 'I Don't Like Mondays' was originally intended as a B-side. It was released as the first single from the album *The Fine Art of Surfacing*, and apart from Geldof, the only members of the band to feature on the recording were pianist Johnnie Fingers and drummer Simon Crowe. The strings heard in the song were arranged by Irish musician and songwriter Fiachra Trench.

AWARDS

- ⚡ **Single of the Year**
British Rock and Pop Awards 1979
- ⚡ **Best Pop Song**
Ivor Novello Awards 1980
- ⚡ **Outstanding British Lyric**
Ivor Novello Awards 1980



COMPOSITION

'I Don't Like Mondays' is laced with baroque piano flourishes, and the glissandos in the opening of the song help grab listeners attention and set a dramatic tone. The decorative and pretty piano part later in the song help further express the lyrics, and the song narrative ends with a dramatic final chord on the piano. The call-and-response style chorus is based on the title lyric 'I Don't Like Mondays', with the question 'tell me why' being asked and answered. Although they tell the story of the 1979 San Diego school incident, the lyrics of the chorus have made the song an ongoing popular choice for radio play on Monday mornings, with the real meaning behind the song being transferred to a lamentation about the start of the working week.

THE VIDEO

The video for 'I Don't Like Mondays' was directed by David Mallet, a British director noted for his innovative work on some of the most popular music videos of the 1970s and 80s, including David Bowie's 'Ashes to Ashes' (1980). The video reflects the lyrical content of the song, with school children posing the question 'tell me why'. Mallet said he was surprised by the video's effect on the public as 'England hadn't really seen videos like that before'.



THE ALBUM

The Fine Art of Surfacing was The Boomtown Rats' third album. It peaked at No. 7 in the UK Albums Chart in 1979 and two other songs from the album were released as singles: 'Diamond Smiles' and 'Someone's Looking at You'. The album, which displayed a range of styles, was a departure from the punk influences of their 1978 album *A Tonic For The Troops*, which featured 'Rat Trap', the band's first UK No. 1 hit. Bob Geldof had spent time in America in the lead up to the album's release and, subsequently, American culture is a recurring theme and the topic of many of the songs, including 'Nothing Happened Today'.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

The Boomtown Rats is an Irish rock band, with the original line-up led by vocalist Bob Geldof and made up of Garry Roberts (lead guitar), Johnnie Fingers (keyboard), Pete Briquette (bass), Gerry Cott (rhythm guitar) and Simon Crowe (drums). While The Boomtown Rats were popular in Ireland and the UK, they struggled to break the USA with Geldof partly blaming the lyrical content of their songs. The band split up in 1986 but reformed in 2013 without Fingers or Cott. Geldof said 'We were an amazing band and I just feel it's the right time to re-Rat, to go back to Boomtown for a visit'.

'THEY SEEM TO THINK THAT SOMEHOW IT'S A LITTLE TOO MUCH TROUBLE YOU KNOW, TO MAKE PEOPLE THINK DURING THE DAY.'
BOB GELDOF ON THE MERV GRIFFIN SHOW (1981), ABOUT THE LACK OF AM RADIO PLAY IN THE USA

MORE TO EXPLORE

Songs: 'I Don't Like Mondays', The Boomtown Rats (1979), 'Ashes to Ashes', David Bowie (1980), 'Diamond Smiles', The Boomtown Rats (1979), 'Someone's Looking at You', The Boomtown Rats (1979), 'Nothing Happened Today', The Boomtown Rats (1979), 'Rat Trap', The Boomtown Rats (1978). **Artists & collaborators:** Fiachra Trench, David Mallet. **Trinity Rock & Pop syllabus:** Keyboards, Grade 4.

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