

Mr. Tambourine Man

(The Byrds)

Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me
I'm not sleepy and there ain't no place I'm goin' to
Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me
In the jingle jangle morning, I'll come followin' you

Take me for a trip upon your magic swirlin' ship
All my senses have been stripped
And my hands can't feel to grip
And my toes too numb to step
Wait only for my boot heels to be wanderin'

I'm ready to go anywhere, I'm ready for to fade
Unto my own parade
Cast your dancing spell my way
I promise to go under it

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"Mr. Tambourine Man" is a song written, composed, and performed by Bob Dylan, who released his original version of it on his 1965 album *Bringing It All Back Home*. The Byrds also recorded a version of the song that they released in the same year as their first single on Columbia Records, reaching number 1 on both the Billboard Hot 100 chart and the UK Singles Chart, as well as being the title track of their debut album, *Mr. Tambourine Man*. The Byrds' recording of the song was influential in popularizing the musical subgenres of folk rock and jangle pop, leading many contemporary bands to mimic its fusion of jangly guitars and intellectual lyrics in the wake of the single's success.

The song has a bright, expansive melody and has become famous in particular for its surrealistic imagery, influenced by artists as diverse as French poet Arthur Rimbaud and Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini. The lyrics call on the title character to play a song and the narrator will follow. Interpretations of the lyrics have included a paean to drugs such as LSD, a call to the singer's muse, a reflection of the audience's demands on the singer, and religious interpretations. Dylan's song has four verses, of which The Byrds only used the second for their recording. Dylan's and The Byrds' versions have appeared on various lists ranking the greatest songs of all time, including an appearance by both on Rolling Stone's list of the 500 best songs ever. Both versions also received Grammy Hall of Fame Awards.

While there has been speculation that the song is about drugs such as LSD or marijuana, particularly with lines such as "take me on a trip upon your magic swirling ship" and "the smoke rings of my mind", Dylan has always denied the song is about drugs.

Dylan has cited the influence of Federico Fellini's movie *La Strada* on the song, while other commentators have found echoes of the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud. Author Howard Sounes has identified the lyrics "in the jingle jangle morning I'll come following you" as having been taken from a Lord Buckley recording. Bruce Langhorne, who performs guitar on the track, has been cited by Dylan as the inspiration for the tambourine man image in the song. Langhorne used to play a giant, four-inch-deep "tambourine" (actually a Turkish frame drum), and had brought the instrument to a previous Dylan recording session.

"Mr. Tambourine Man" was the debut single by the American band The Byrds and was released on April 12, 1965 by Columbia Records. The song was also the title track of the band's debut album, *Mr. Tambourine Man*, which was released on June 21, 1965. The Byrds' version is abridged and in a different key from Dylan's original.

The single's success initiated the folk rock boom of 1965 and 1966, many acts imitating the band's hybrid of rock beat, jangly guitar, and poetic or socially conscious lyrics. The single, the "first folk rock smash hit", gave rise to the very term "folk rock" in the U.S music press to describe the band's sound.

This hybrid had its antecedents in the American folk revival of the early 1960s, The Animals's rock-oriented recording of the folk song "The House of the Rising Sun," the folk-influences present in the songwriting of The Beatles, and the twelve-string guitar jangle of The Searchers and The Beatles's George Harrison. However, the success of The Byrds' debut created a template for folk rock that proved successful for many acts during the mid-1960s.