

13 x 30 minute documentary series



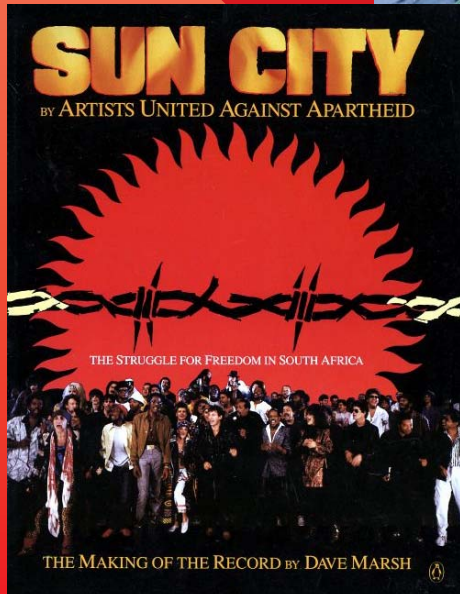
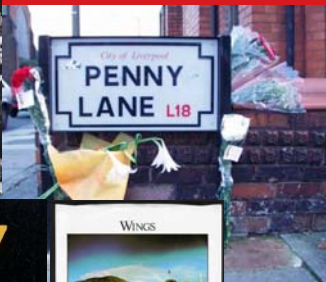
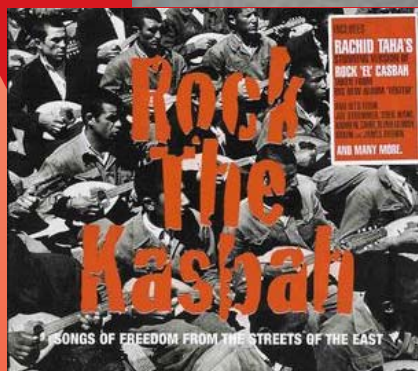
immortalised

ORDINARY PLACES, EXTRAORDINARY SONGS



Working class towns, suburban road junctions, holiday resorts, schools, nightclubs, third world slums ...

All around the world, rather unremarkable places have achieved international fame as the inspiration for a song. With their spots clearly carved into history, these places have become IMMORTALISED.



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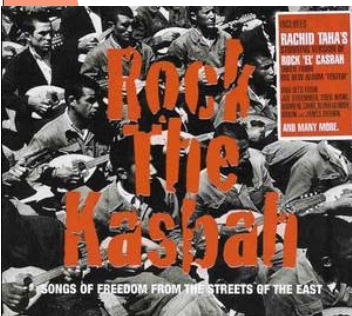
CIRCLING SHARK PRODUCTIONS



This series takes us on a global journey to some of the most fascinating and notorious places immortalised in song. Spanning a wide range of musical genres and eras, there is a virtually endless list of song titles from which to choose.

Every half-hour episode features three songs and reveals the fascinating stories behind their respective places – what they were like then, how that compares to now and most importantly, why these places struck such a powerful chord for the songwriter. Songs fall into one of three categories: personal journeys, political statements and reflections of the times. Each episode also features a section on “mythical places” – the sites that spark debate over where they really are or if indeed they even exist.

Personal Journeys are the songs that reflect a particular incident or time of life for the songwriter. “Trenchtown Rock” is Bob Marley’s tribute to the Jamaican slum where he spent his youth; Leonard Cohen’s “Chelsea Hotel #2” is a lament/love song that takes place in the well-known New York City residence for artists, musicians and writers; and John Lennon penned “Strawberry Fields Forever” about a Salvation Army Children’s Home with a beautiful garden where he loved to play as a child. Whether nostalgic, harrowing or amusing, these songs reflect the importance of a place to the songwriter personally.



Political Statements is the category of songs that expose an event or issue that impacts the lives of others, be it the residents of a small town or an entire nation’s population. The Clash’s “Rock the Kasbah” was inspired by a news report about Iranians who, under Ayotollah Khomeini’s rule, were flogged for owning disco albums. “Allentown” is Billy Joel’s response to the closure of factories and loss of jobs in a Pennsylvania town. “Sun City” was a 1985 collaboration of various artists boycotting South Africa’s premier holiday resort in the face of apartheid. These songs depict the places where an injustice is being done and the songwriter voices a desire for change.

Reflections on the Times are songs that comment on some aspect of society, life or culture as it relates to a particular place. Not politically motivated, these songs are more nostalgic in nature. “Route 66”, first made famous by Nat King Cole in 1946, reflects the changing landscape of the United States at a time when roadtrips for the purpose of pleasure was a new and exciting concept. Paul Simon’s “Graceland” ponders what Elvis Presley’s Memphis mansion has come to represent for generations of fans from around the world who make their pilgrimages to its door every year. This category can also encompass more historical tales, such as “Scarborough Fair” written in medieval times about a popular gathering of traders and entertainers that took place every August in the English coastal town of Scarborough.

Mythical Places are those we visit in a quest to determine where they really are or indeed, if they are even real. We investigate the differing theories that have presented themselves over the years and meet the people who passionately defend them. Where is “Blueberry Hill”? Is there really an “Echo Beach”? Is “The House of the Rising Sun” a brothel, a women’s prison, a coke dealer’s house, or an insane asylum? We explore the most likely options and create our own hypothesis.



Story Elements

Stories range in content, era and style, but all contain certain key elements. A music historian, with a broad range of knowledge and endearing storytelling abilities, sets up each story for the audience. He/she briefly outlines the background of the song, its composer and performer. For example, “Nutbush City Limits was a hit for Tina Turner back in 1973. Not only is Nutbush a real town in the state of Tennessee, but it’s also the birthplace and hometown of the legendary rocker. Turner wrote the largely autobiographical song while still married to husband Ike. It tells of her rise from humble origins to superstardom.” The sequence is short and fast-paced. Shot in a generic setting from a variety of angles, it has a stylised look and utilises a succession of quick cuts.

Animated maps show us where the locations are, and the tour begins! We seek out and explore the physical places of the songs, assisted throughout the journey by a tour guide of sorts. Wherever possible, the actual songwriter accompanies us and revisits not just the location, but also the emotion attached to the site, which ultimately inspired the song. In cases where the songwriter has passed away or is unavailable, we track down a family member or friend, a person featured in the song, a performer of a cover version, or someone who knew both the songwriter and the place at the time of writing.

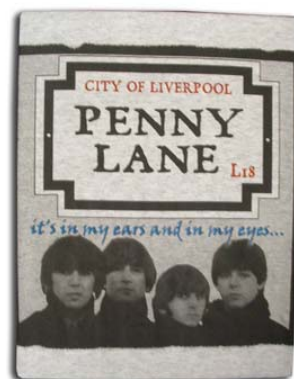
We paint a picture of what the place was like “then”. Songs inspired by a public event or well-known place incorporate archival footage and newspaper clippings, while songs that are more personal in nature rely largely on first person accounts and old photographs. We track down people who knew the place prior to the song’s release and hear first hand what the place was really like.

We compare the place of yesterday with what stands there today. In some cases, they may have changed dramatically; in others, perhaps not at all. What we ultimately seek to find out is how much of the change is attributable to the song. Penny Lane has become a veritable tourist mecca for Beatles fans, but does anyone know where the B-52s Love Shack is?

We find the most compelling individuals and discover what they have to say about the places. Some may be characters from the song – like Alice Brock from the Arlo Guthrie song “Alice’s Restaurant” – who offer insight into the events of the song, their involvement and reaction to the release and success of the song. Others are people who have come to know the place intimately since the song – the mayor of the town, the owner of the property, an employee in the venue – to discover what impact the song has had on the community. We also talk to avid fans on pilgrimage to the site, to discover their reasons for making the journey and what it is about the song that resonates so deeply for them.

Every story includes some obscure and amusing pieces of trivia related to the song, its writer and/or the place. These appear as stylised captions within the story:

“The original Chattanooga Choo-Choo was the train from Cincinnati, but the song talks about leaving Pennsylvania Station in New York.”



“Penny Lane street signs were the constant targets of tourist theft, so city officials eventually gave up and began painting the street name on the sides of buildings.”



With a wealth of songs to choose from, every episode offers an unusual and compelling mix of musical styles, eras and destinations right around the world.



The series tells the fascinating stories behind the artists and their songs, using the clever link of a place through which to do so. Entertaining and factual, *Immortalised* takes us on a worldwide adventure to the places we’ve all heard about in song and explores the real reasons they are indeed immortalised.

Song Options

Personal Journeys

Chelsea Hotel #2, Leonard Cohen
Trenchtown Rock, Bob Marley
One Tree Hill, U2
Penny Lane, The Beatles
Route 66, Nat King Cole
Solsbury Hill, Peter Gabriel
Alice's Restaurant, Arlo Guthrie
Marrakesh Express, Crosby, Still & Nash
Folsom Prison Blues, Johnny Cash
Mull of Kintyre, Wings
Nutmeg City Limits, Tina Turner
Strawberry Fields Forever, The Beatles
Electric Avenue, Eddie Grant
Crying in the Chapel, Elvis Presley

Political Statements

Rock the Kasbah, The Clash
Allentown, Billy Joel
Galveston, Glen Campbell
Sun City, Artists United Against Apartheid
Burn On
Guns of Brixton, The Clash

Reflections on the Times

Swanee River
Chattanooga Choo Choo, Glenn Miller
Scarborough Fair
On the Road to Mandalay, Frank Sinatra
Last Train to Clarksville, The Monkees

Mythical Songs

House of the Rising Sun, various
Copacabana, Barry Manilow
Love Shack, B-52s
Maggie's Farm, Bob Dylan
Mansion in Branson
Echo Beach, Martha & the Muffins
Dock of the Bay, Otis Redding
Blueberry Hill, Fats Domino
Copperhead Road, Steve Earle
Positively 4th Street, Bob Dylan
Sunset Grill, Don Henley

