

truly want to support the bands. But if someone stole the song from the artist before it was ever created, that was much worse. The potential for profit was gone. One single can make or break a band's career. And I'm not even talking about one hit wonders. Even perennial chart toppers need an initial spark to kick-start a career. Would Nirvana have been as big as they were without "Smells Like Teen Spirit" to start the phenomenon?

I knew I'd never get caught, but is it right for a lover of music to undermine the creation, arguably the most important part of the process? I recognize the irony in the fact that I had no problem eliminating Nelson from existence, but had a real moral dilemma over potentially denying Huey Lewis credit for "The Power of Love" under similar circumstances. Am I really that bad of a person? I suppose everything's relative.

The plan wasn't foolproof. Lyrics and melody are a big part of the equation, but the actual performance is equally important—perhaps even more so. There are hours upon hours of bad covers (and even bad originals) to prove that point. Attempting this was almost as much experimental as it was necessary. I thought I was into something good combining my father's skill, personality, and charm with my future knowledge and critical ear. We were three for three so far...

Weighing the pros and cons, I eventually settled on a reasonable compromise in my head. I'd only teach my Dad one song per artist, and it wouldn't be their biggest hit. When all was said and all was done, I'd steer him away from a musical career, leaving my meddling as an undocumented footnote in the college of musical knowledge.

We followed the same writing process as before. This time I backed off a little after providing lyrics and any notable intros or solos to see what Dad could do on his own, only jumping in with hints of the original if his interpretation lacked a can't miss hook or seemed to go too far astray. The end results were what good covers should be: distant cousins once removed rather than blatant carbon copies of the source. We spent about an hour on each song, hammering out a workable set in just two sessions.

The setlist we came up with:

We Can Work It Out (our 'known' cover)
Won One (Roommate)
Whatever (Oasis)
Piece of Sky (The Wonder Stuff)

Lounge Act (Nirvana)
Only (Anthrax)
Nowhere Fast (Carter USM)
Captain Jack (Billy Joel)
O Lonely Soul, It's a Hard Road (Mary's Danish)
Martyr (The Mr. T Experience)

He was a big hit again. Nelson's Mom officially dumped Nelson's Dad and my dad became her absolute ultimate shortly after this show. Most amazing to me was how Dad could not only learn but truly master nine new songs in less than a week. My mission was accomplished and I was ecstatic, which is probably why I caved when Dad asked for a fresh setlist. Since steering him away from a musical career already seemed far-fetched, I decided to at least humor him for now. I abandoned all of the rules regarding artist rights this time around and went for the jugular with a barrage of hits from the future.

The new additions to his repertoire:

Sunshine (Jonathan Edwards)
Cats in the Cradle (Harry Chapin)
Alive (Pearl Jam)
I Want A New Drug (Huey Lewis & The News)
Summer of '69 (Bryan Adams)
Missing You (John Waite)
Start Choppin' (Dinosaur Jr)
Your Wildest Dreams (The Moody Blues)
White Wedding (Billy Idol)
Straight Up (Paula Abdul)
Baby One More Time (Britney Spears)
Debonair (Afghan Whigs)

I admit I was living dangerously on some of the choices by deviating from the relative safety of music from the distant future. Some of the songs were only a couple years from release and could very well have already been written and performed by now, but I was feeling invincible based on our past successes. If anything came of it there could be trouble, but since this was a local show at a no-name venue it was unlikely to be an issue. If Dad went on to record an album (which was quickly moving from remote