

The New Criterion

Features

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Twenty years ago today

by [Mark Steyn](#)

On rock music's oppressive rule over society.

We are all rockers now. *National Review* publishes its own chart of the Fifty Greatest Conservative Rock Songs, notwithstanding that most of the honorees are horrified to find themselves on such a hit parade. The *National Review* countdown of the All-Time Hot 100 Conservative Gangsta Rap Tracks can't be far away. Even right-wingers want to get with the beat and no-one wants to look like the wallflower who can't get a chick to dance with him. To argue against rock and roll is now as quaintly irrelevant as arguing for the divine right of kings. It was twenty years ago today, sang the Beatles forty years ago today, that Sergeant Pepper taught the band to play. Well, it was twenty years ago today—1987—that Professor Bloom taught us the band had nothing to say.

I don't really like the expression "popular culture." It's just "culture" now: there is no other. &ldq ...

Mark Steyn's most recent book is *America Alone: The End of the World As We Know It* (Regnery). His writing on politics, arts and culture can be read around the world. Mark is Senior North American Columnist of Britain's Telegraph Group, and appears in The Daily Telegraph, the United Kingdom's biggest-selling broadsheet daily, and The Sunday Telegraph; he is also North American Editor and Film Critic of The Spectator, the oldest continuously-published magazine in the English language. In Canada, he can be read in The National Post, the country's new national newspaper. In the United States, Mark is theatre critic of The New Criterion and a columnist for The Chicago Sun-Times. His latest book, *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight*, was published to critical acclaim in London and to somewhat sniffier reviews in New York.

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