

# An Open Letter to Buddy Holly

Dear Buddy,

Gosh, it's been a long time since I've written, but twenty years later they finally made a movie about you, and I'm pretty excited about it. Maybe now the rest of the world will finally learn about the contributions that you made to rock and roll, and how you really started a lot of the music we now listen to. Elvis happened to live longer, but he picked up a few things from you; and Elvis didn't write his own songs, like you did. Or play his own lead guitar.

I've always admired your music, but I have even more respect for your determination and drive. I mean, how does a skinny, bespectacled kid from Lubbock, Texas, become a rock and roll star back when there wasn't even such a thing as rock and roll? You had to make people listen to your music, and your ideas. They didn't understand how a three, or four-piece group could make enough music because, after all, Sinatra and Bing had whole *orchestras!* Well, after you showed them that a combo could do the job, everyone else jumped on the bandwagon. Also, how did you write rock and roll when there was no rock and roll to listen to and get ideas from? It seems so much easier today. You just listen to the Beatles, Zepelin, or the Stones, and use that as an "influence" for your own sound. But you, Buddy, you didn't have this in Lubbock in 1956.

Whatever inspired you certainly did the job well, because your music lasted. Why there are still people recording your songs today, and some have turned into big hits again, almost twenty years later. That says a lot for your music because I don't know of very many artists who will have their records played twenty years from now. Will we be playing Aerosmith, or the Commodores, or Kiss, or Ted Nugent in 1998? I doubt it.

Yessir, you really were something. You let hundreds of young kids know that they didn't have to look like Elvis, be from New York, or have big money behind them to make it in rock and roll. All you had to do was play that guitar and write good music, and people would listen. Why, golly, if a kid with glasses from the Texas plains could write hit records, then just maybe some factory workers sons from Liverpool, England, could do the same! They might even name their group after "insects", too.

Thanks for showing us the way, Buddy. Thanks for giving us a music that everyone could have a chance with. Thanks for being the first, and giving the rest of us the idea that we just might be able to do it too.

Your tragic death really marked the end of "roots" rock and roll. Everything else has just been a copy, or variation, of the sounds that you and some other rock pioneers laid down. I guess Don McLean said it the best about your death. He called it "the day the music died".

See you in the next world. We've got a lot to talk about.

Respectfully,  
Kirby Warnock

