

# The Sound of Silence

**"The Sound of Silence"**, originally **"The Sounds of Silence"**, is a song by the American music duo Simon & Garfunkel. The song was written by Paul Simon over several months in 1963 and 1964. A studio audition led to the duo signing a record deal with Columbia Records, and the original acoustic version of the song was recorded in March 1964 at Columbia Studios in New York City and included on their debut album, *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.* Released on October 19, 1964,<sup>[2]</sup> the album was a commercial failure and led to the duo disbanding; Simon returned to England, and Art Garfunkel to his studies at Columbia University.

In 1965, the song began to attract airplay at radio stations in Boston and throughout Florida. The growing airplay led Tom Wilson, the song's producer, to remix the track, overdubbing electric instruments and drums. This remixed version was released as a single in September 1965. Simon & Garfunkel were not informed of the song's remix until after its release. The song hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 for the week ending January 1, 1966, leading the duo to reunite and hastily record their second album, which Columbia titled *Sounds of Silence* in an attempt to capitalize on the song's success. The remixed single version of the song was included on this follow-up album. Simon and Garfunkels version did not chart in the UK however a cover version by 'The Batchelors' reached number 3 in the UK charts in 1966.

It was featured in the 1967 film *The Graduate* and was included on the film's soundtrack album. It was additionally released on the *Mrs. Robinson EP* in 1968, along with three other songs from the film: "Mrs. Robinson", "April Come She Will" and "Scarborough Fair/Canticle". The song was a top-ten hit in multiple countries worldwide, among them Australia, Austria, West Germany, Japan and the Netherlands. Generally considered a classic folk rock song, the song was added to the National Recording Registry in the Library of Congress for being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically important" in 2012, along with the rest of the *Sounds of Silence* album. Originally titled "The Sounds of Silence" on the album *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.*, the song was included in later compilations, beginning with the 1972 compilation album *Simon and Garfunkel's Greatest Hits*.<sup>[3]</sup>

## "The Sound of Silence"



Side-A label of the 1965 U.S. vinyl single

### Single by Simon & Garfunkel

from the album *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.* and *Sounds of Silence*

<b>B-side</b>	"We've Got a Groovy Thing Goin'"
<b>Released</b>	September 12, 1965
<b>Recorded</b>	March 10, 1964
<b>Studio</b>	<u>Columbia Recording</u> , New York City
<b>Genre</b>	<u>Folk rock</u> <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Length</b>	3:05
<b>Label</b>	<u>Columbia</u>
<b>Songwriter(s)</b>	<u>Paul Simon</u>
<b>Producer(s)</b>	<u>Tom Wilson</u>

### Simon & Garfunkel singles chronology

"The Sound of Silence" (1965)	"Homeward Bound" (1966)
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### Audio

"The Sound of Silence" ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0o2pp\\_z](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0o2pp_z)

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Artwork for the original 1966 German vinyl single

# Background

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## Origin and original recording



Song composer Paul Simon, c. 1966

Simon and Garfunkel had become interested in folk music and the growing counterculture movement separately in the early 1960s. Having performed together previously under the name Tom and Jerry in the late 1950s, their partnership had since dissolved when they began attending college. In 1963, they regrouped and began performing Simon's original compositions locally in Queens. They billed themselves "Kane & Garr", after old recording pseudonyms, and signed up for Gerde's Folk City, a Greenwich Village club that hosted Monday night performances.<sup>[4]</sup> In September 1963, the duo performed three new songs, among them "The Sound of Silence", getting the attention of Columbia Records producer Tom Wilson, a young African-American jazz musician who was also helping to guide Bob Dylan's transition from folk to rock.<sup>[5][4][6]</sup> Simon convinced Wilson to let him and his partner have a studio audition; their performance of "The Sound of Silence" got the duo signed to

Columbia.<sup>[7]</sup>

The song's origin and basis are unclear, with some thinking that the song commented on the Assassination of John F. Kennedy, as the song was recorded three months after the assassination, though Simon & Garfunkel had performed the song live as Kane & Garr two months before the assassination.<sup>[8]</sup> Simon wrote "The Sound of Silence" when he was 21 years old,<sup>[9][10]</sup> with Simon explaining that the song was written in his bathroom, where he turned off the lights to better concentrate.<sup>[11]</sup> "The main thing about playing the guitar, though, was that I was able to sit by myself and play and dream. And I was always happy doing that. I used to go off in the bathroom, because the bathroom had tiles, so it was a slight echo chamber. I'd turn on the faucet so that water would run (I like that sound, it's very soothing to me) and I'd play. In the dark. 'Hello darkness, my old friend / I've come to talk with you again.'"<sup>[12]</sup> According to Garfunkel, the song was first developed in November, but Simon took three months to perfect the lyrics, which he claims were entirely written on February 19, 1964.<sup>[13]</sup> Garfunkel, introducing the song at a live performance (with Simon) in Harlem, June 1966, summed up the song's meaning as "the inability of people to communicate with each other, not particularly intentionally but especially emotionally, so what you see around you are people unable to love each other."<sup>[11]</sup> In a recent memoir by Sandy Greenberg, as reviewed in *People* magazine in December 2020, the song reflected the strong bond he had with his college buddy and best friend, Garfunkel, who adopted the special epithet 'Darkness' so as to empathise with Greenberg's sudden-onset blindness while in college.<sup>[14]</sup>

To promote the release of their debut album, *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.*, the duo performed again at Folk City, as well as two shows at the Gaslight Café, which went over poorly. Dave Van Ronk, a folk singer, was at the performances, and noted that several in the audience regarded their music as a joke.<sup>[15]</sup> "'Sounds of Silence' actually became a running joke: for a while there, it was only necessary to start singing 'Hello darkness, my old friend ... ' and everybody would crack up."<sup>[16]</sup> *Wednesday Morning, 3 AM* sold only 3,000 copies upon its October release, and its dismal sales led Simon to move to London, England.<sup>[17]</sup> While there, he recorded a solo album, *The Paul Simon Songbook* (1965), which features a rendition of the song, titled "The Sounds of Silence".<sup>[18]</sup>

The original recording of the song is in D# minor, using the chords D#m, C#, B and F#. Simon plays a guitar with a capo on the sixth fret, using the shapes for Am, G, F and C chords. He provides the lower vocals for harmony while Garfunkel sings the melody.<sup>[19]</sup> The vocal span goes from C#3 to F#4 in the song.<sup>[20]</sup>

## Remix

*Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.* had been a commercial failure before producer Tom Wilson was alerted that radio stations had begun to play "The Sound of Silence" in spring 1965. A late-night disc jockey at WBZ in Boston began to spin "The Sound of Silence" overnight, where it found a college demographic.<sup>[21]</sup> Students at Harvard and Tufts University responded well, and the song made its way down the East Coast pretty much "overnight", "all the way to Cocoa Beach, Florida, where it caught the students coming down for spring break."<sup>[21]</sup> A promotional executive for Columbia went to give away free albums of new artists, and beach-goers were interested only in the artists behind "The Sound of Silence". He phoned the home office in New York, alerting them of its appeal.<sup>[22]</sup> An alternate version of the story states that Wilson attended Columbia's July 1965 convention in Miami, where the head of the local sales branch raved about the song's airplay.<sup>[23]</sup>



The song's heavy airplay in Cocoa Beach, Florida, alerted Columbia to release the single.

Folk rock was beginning to make waves on pop radio, with songs like the Byrds' "Mr. Tambourine Man" charting high.<sup>[24]</sup> Wilson listened to the song several times, considering it too soft for a wide release.<sup>[21]</sup> Wilson had strong feeling about editing the song with explicit rock overtones.<sup>[25]</sup> As stated by Geoffrey Himes, "If Columbia Records producer Tom Wilson hadn't taken the initiative, without the singers' knowledge, to dub a rock rhythm section over their folk rendition, the song never would have become a cultural touchstone—a generation's shorthand for alienation".<sup>[26]</sup> Wilson had also experimented the previous December with overdubbing an electric band over acoustic tracks by Bob Dylan; these recordings were never officially released, as Dylan and Wilson opted to record new tracks with a live band for what would become the album Bringing It All Back Home.

On June 15, 1965, following sessions for Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone," Wilson retained guitarist Al Gorgoni and drummer Bobby Gregg from the Dylan sessions, adding guitarist Vinnie Bell and bassist Bob Bushnell.<sup>[27]</sup> The tempo on the original recording was uneven, making it difficult for the musicians to keep the song in time.<sup>[24]</sup> Engineer Roy Halee employed a heavy echo on the remix, which was a common trait of the Byrds' hits.<sup>[24]</sup> The single was first serviced to college FM rock stations, and a commercial single release followed on September 13, 1965.<sup>[23]</sup> The lack of consultation with Simon and Garfunkel on Wilson's remix was because, although still contracted to Columbia Records at the time, the musical duo at that time was no longer a "working entity".<sup>[24][28]</sup> It was not uncommon at the time for producers to add instruments or vocals to previously existing recordings and re-release them as new entities.

In the fall of 1965, Simon was in Denmark, performing at small clubs, and picked up a copy of Billboard, as he had routinely done for several years.<sup>[23]</sup> Upon seeing "The Sound of Silence" in the Billboard Hot 100, he bought a copy of Cashbox and saw the same thing. Several days later, Garfunkel excitedly called Simon to inform him of the single's growing success.<sup>[23]</sup> A copy of the 7-inch single arrived in the mail the next day, and according to friend Al Stewart, "Paul was *horrified* when he first heard it ... [when the] rhythm section slowed down at one point so that Paul and Artie's voices could catch up."<sup>[25]</sup> Garfunkel was far less concerned about the remix, feeling conditioned to the process of trying to create a hit single: "It's interesting, I suppose it might do something, It might sell," he told Wilson.<sup>[29]</sup>

## Lyrics

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The lyrics of the song are written in five stanzas of seven lines each. Each stanza begins with a couplet describing the setting of the scene, followed by a couplet driving the action forward and another couplet expressing the climactic thought of the verse, and closes with a one-line refrain related to the eponymous lyrics "the sound of silence". This structure is supported by a melodic contour, where the first and second lines are paired with the arpeggio A-C-E-D and a repeat a step lower, respectively. The arpeggio is then stretched to become C-E-G-A-G and repeated twice in the second couplet. For the last three lines, the contour then leaps from C to the higher A, rises to the higher C, and then falls back to the A before singing the stretched arpeggio in reverse and finally retreating to the lower A.<sup>[19]</sup> The progress of the lyrics through its five stanzas places the singer into an incrementally increasing tension with an increasingly ambiguous "sound of silence". The irony of using the word "sound" to describe silence in the title lyrics suggests a paradoxical symbolism being used by the singer, which the lyrics of the fourth stanza eventually identifies as "silence like a cancer grows". The "sound of silence" is symbolically taken also to denote the cultural alienation associated with much of the 1960s.<sup>[26]</sup> In the counterculture movements of the 1960s, the phrase "sound of silence" can be compared to other more commonly used turns of phrase such as "turning a deaf ear" often associated with the detachment experienced with impersonal large governments.

The first stanza presents the singer as taking some relative solace in the peacefulness he associates with "darkness" which is submerged "within" the ambiguous sound of silence.<sup>[30]</sup> The second stanza has the effect of breaking into the silence with "the flash of a neon light" which leaves the singer "touched" by the enduring ambiguity of the sound of silence. In the third stanza, a "naked light" emerges as a vision of 10,000 people all caught within their own solitude and alienation without any one of them being able to "disturb" the recurring sound of silence.

In the fourth stanza, the singer proclaims in a declarative voice that "silence like a cancer grows", though his words "like silent raindrops fell" without ever being heard against the by now cancerous sound of silence. The fifth stanza appears to culminate with the urgency raised by the declarative voice in the fourth stanza through the apparent triumph of a false "neon god". The false neon god is only challenged when a "sign flashed out its warning" that only the words of the indigent written on "subway walls and tenement halls" could still "whisper" their truth against the recurring and ambiguous form of "the sound of silence".<sup>[6]</sup> The song has no lyrical bridge or change of key, and was written without any lyrical intro or outro to start or end the song.

## Personnel

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- Paul Simon – acoustic guitar, vocals
- Art Garfunkel – vocals
- Barry Kornfeld – acoustic guitar
- Bill Lee – double bass

### (electric overdubs) personnel

- Al Gorgoni, Vinnie Bell – guitar
- Joe Mack (also known as Joe Macho) – bass guitar<sup>[5]</sup>
- Bobby Gregg – drums

## Charts performance

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### Charts history

"The Sound of Silence" first broke in Boston, where it became one of the top-selling singles in early November 1965;<sup>[23][31]</sup> it spread to Miami and Washington, D.C. two weeks later, reaching number one in Boston and debuting on the *Billboard* Hot 100.<sup>[32]</sup>

Throughout the month of January 1966 "The Sound of Silence" had a one-on-one battle with the Beatles' "We Can Work It Out" for the No. 1 spot on the *Billboard* Hot 100. The former was No. 1 for the weeks of January 1 and 22 and No. 2 for the intervening two weeks. The latter held the top spot for the weeks of January 8, 15, and 29, and was No. 2 for the two weeks that "The Sound of Silence" was No. 1. Overall, "The Sound of Silence" spent 14 weeks on the *Billboard* chart.<sup>[33]</sup>

In the wake of the song's success, Simon promptly returned to the United States to record a new Simon & Garfunkel album at Columbia's request. He later described his experiences learning the song went to No. 1, a story he repeated in numerous interviews:<sup>[34]</sup>

I had come back to New York, and I was staying in my old room at my parents' house. Artie was living at his parents' house, too. I remember Artie and I were sitting there in my car one night, parked on a street in Queens, and the announcer [on the radio] said,

"Number one, Simon & Garfunkel." And Artie said to me, "That Simon & Garfunkel, they must be having a great time." Because there we were on a street corner [in my car in] Queens, smoking a joint. We didn't know what to do with ourselves.<sup>[35]</sup>

For his part, Garfunkel had a different memory of the song's success:

We were in L.A. Our manager called us at the hotel we were staying at. We were both in the same room. We must have bunked in the same room in those days. I picked up the phone. He said, 'Well, congratulations. Next week you will go from five to one in *Billboard*.' It was fun. I remember pulling open the curtains and letting the brilliant sun come into this very red room, and then ordering room service. That was good.<sup>[34][36]</sup>

## Weekly charts

Chart (1965–68)	Peak position
Australian (Kent Music Report)	3
Austrian <u>Singles Chart</u>	3
<u>Belgian</u> Singles Chart (Flanders) <sup>[37]</sup>	11
Canada <u>RPM</u> <sup>[38]</sup>	4
West German <u>Media Control Charts</u>	9
Japan (Oricon) <sup>[39]</sup>	1
Netherlands <u>Singles Chart</u>	10
New Zealand ( <i>Listener</i> ) <sup>[40]</sup>	2
South Africa (Springbok Radio) <sup>[41]</sup>	1
Spanish <u>Singles Chart</u> <sup>[42]</sup>	17
<u>Swiss</u> Singles Chart <sup>[43]</sup>	94
US <i>Billboard</i> Hot 100 <sup>[44]</sup>	1
US <i>Cash Box</i> Top 100 <sup>[45]</sup>	1
Zimbabwe Singles Chart <sup>[46]</sup>	3

Chart (2016)	Peak position
US Hot Rock & Alternative Songs ( <i>Billboard</i> ) <sup>[47]</sup>	6

## Year-end charts

Chart (1966)	Position
South Africa <sup>[52]</sup>	10
US <i>Billboard</i> Hot 100 <sup>[53]</sup>	54
US <i>Cash Box</i> Top 100 <sup>[54]</sup>	2

Chart (2016)	Position
US Hot Rock Songs ( <i>Billboard</i> ) <sup>[55]</sup>	100

## Paul Simon solo version

Chart (1974)	Peak position
Canada <i>RPM</i> Adult Contemporary <sup>[48]</sup>	42
Canada <i>RPM</i> Top Singles <sup>[49]</sup>	84
US <i>Billboard</i> Easy Listening <sup>[50]</sup>	50
US <i>Cash Box</i> Top 100 <sup>[51]</sup>	97

## Certifications

Region	Certification	Certified units/sales
Canada (Music Canada) <sup>[56]</sup>	Gold	75,000 <sup>^</sup>
Denmark (IFPI Danmark) <sup>[57]</sup>	Gold	45,000 <sup>‡</sup>
Italy (FIMI) <sup>[58]</sup>	Platinum	50,000 <sup>‡</sup>
United Kingdom (BPI) <sup>[59]</sup>	Gold	400,000 <sup>‡</sup>
United States (RIAA) <sup>[60]</sup>	Gold	1,000,000 <sup>^</sup>

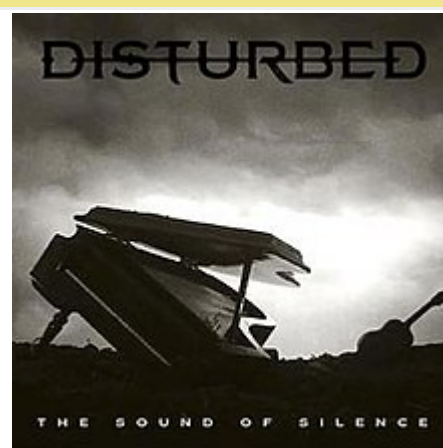
<sup>^</sup> Shipments figures based on certification alone.  
<sup>‡</sup> Sales+streaming figures based on certification alone.

## Cover by Disturbed

50 years after its original release, a cover version of "The Sound of Silence" was released by American heavy metal band Disturbed on December 7, 2015.<sup>[61][62]</sup> A music video was also released.<sup>[63]</sup> Their cover hit number one on the *Billboard* Hard Rock Digital Songs<sup>[64]</sup> and Mainstream Rock charts,<sup>[65]</sup> and is their highest-charting song on the Hot 100,<sup>[66]</sup> peaking at number 42. It is also their highest-charting single in Australia, peaking at number four. David Draiman sings it in the key of F#m. The chord progression is F#m, E, D, A. The first two verses are almost an octave lower than the original and jumped up an octave for the last three verses.<sup>[67]</sup> His vocal span goes from E2 to A4 in scientific pitch notation.<sup>[68]</sup>

In April 2016, Paul Simon endorsed the cover.<sup>[69]</sup> Additionally, on April 1, Simon sent Draiman an email praising Disturbed's performance of the rendition on American talk show *Conan*. Simon wrote, "Really powerful performance on *Conan* the other day. First time I'd seen you do it live. Nice. Thanks." Draiman responded, "Mr. Simon, I am honored beyond words. We only hoped to pay homage and honor to the brilliance of one of the greatest songwriters of all time. Your compliment means the world to me/us and we are eternally grateful."<sup>[70]</sup> As of September 2017, the single had

### "The Sound of Silence"



#### Single by Disturbed

from the album *Immortalized*

<b>Released</b>	December 7, 2015
<b>Recorded</b>	2015
<b>Studio</b>	The Hideout Recording Studio Las Vegas, Nevada

sold over 1.5 million digital downloads<sup>[71]</sup> and had been streamed over 54 million times, estimated Nielsen Music.<sup>[72]</sup> The music video has over 700 million views on YouTube, while the live performance on *Conan* has over 120 million, making it the most watched YouTube video from the show.

<b>Genre</b>	Orchestral pop
<b>Length</b>	4:08
<b>Label</b>	Reprise
<b>Songwriter(s)</b>	Paul Simon
<b>Producer(s)</b>	Kevin Churko

## Accolades

Region	Year	Publication	Accolade	Rank
United States	2015	<i>Loudwire</i>	20 Best Rock Songs of 2016 <sup>[73]</sup>	1
			10 Best Rock Videos of 2016 <sup>[74]</sup>	2

<b>Disturbed singles chronology</b>		
"The Light" (2015)	"The Sound of Silence" (2015)	"Open Your Eyes" (2016)

<b>Music video</b>
"The Sound of Silence" ( <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9Dg-g7t2l4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9Dg-g7t2l4</a> ) on YouTube

## Weekly charts

Chart (2016)	Peak position
Australia (ARIA) <sup>[75]</sup>	4
Austria (Ö3 Austria Top 40) <sup>[76]</sup>	1
Belgium (Ultratop 50 Flanders) <sup>[77]</sup>	23
Canada (Canadian Hot 100) <sup>[78]</sup>	40
Czech Republic (Rádio – Top 100) <sup>[79]</sup>	45
France (SNEP) <sup>[80]</sup>	191
Germany (Official German Charts) <sup>[81]</sup>	2
Germany (Airplay Chart) <sup>[82]</sup>	28
Hungary (Single Top 40) <sup>[83]</sup>	36
Ireland (IRMA) <sup>[84]</sup>	57
New Zealand (Recorded Music NZ) <sup>[85]</sup>	32
Portugal (AFP) <sup>[86]</sup>	44
Portugal Digital Songs ( <i>Billboard</i> ) <sup>[87]</sup>	1
Scotland (OCC) <sup>[88]</sup>	8

## Year-end charts

Chart (2016)	Position
Australia (ARIA) <sup>[99]</sup>	44
Austria (Ö3 Austria Top 40) <sup>[100]</sup>	3
Germany (Official German Charts) <sup>[101]</sup>	14
Sweden (Sverigetopplistan) <sup>[102]</sup>	100
US Hot Rock Songs ( <i>Billboard</i> ) <sup>[103]</sup>	9

## Decade-end charts

Chart (2010–2019)	Position
Germany (Official German Charts) <sup>[104]</sup>	50
US Hot Rock Songs ( <i>Billboard</i> ) <sup>[105]</sup>	49

## Certifications



Chart (2016)	Peak position	Region	Certification	Certified units/sales
Slovenia (SloTop50) <sup>[89]</sup>	22	Australia (ARIA) <sup>[106]</sup>	2× Platinum	140,000‡
Sweden (Sverigetopplistan) <sup>[90]</sup>	45	Austria (IFPI Austria) <sup>[107]</sup>	Platinum	30,000‡
Switzerland (Schweizer Hitparade) <sup>[91]</sup>	12	Canada (Music Canada) <sup>[108]</sup>	4× Platinum	320,000‡
UK Singles (OCC) <sup>[92]</sup>	29	Denmark (IFPI Danmark) <sup>[109]</sup>	Platinum	90,000‡
US <i>Billboard</i> Hot 100 <sup>[93]</sup>	42	Germany (BVMI) <sup>[110]</sup>	3× Gold	600,000‡
US Hot Rock & Alternative Songs ( <i>Billboard</i> ) <sup>[94]</sup>	3	Italy (FIMI) <sup>[111]</sup>	Gold	25,000‡
US Rock Airplay ( <i>Billboard</i> ) <sup>[95]</sup>	8	New Zealand (RMNZ) <sup>[112]</sup>	Gold	7,500*
US Alternative Airplay ( <i>Billboard</i> ) <sup>[96]</sup>	22	Norway (IFPI Norway) <sup>[113]</sup>	2× Platinum	120,000‡
US Mainstream Rock ( <i>Billboard</i> ) <sup>[97]</sup>	1	Poland (ZPAV) <sup>[114]</sup>	Platinum	50,000‡
US Hard Rock Digital Songs ( <i>Billboard</i> ) <sup>[64]</sup>	1	Switzerland (IFPI Switzerland) <sup>[115]</sup>	Gold	15,000‡
		United Kingdom (BPI) <sup>[116]</sup>	Platinum	600,000‡
		United States (RIAA) <sup>[117]</sup>	3× Platinum	1,502,000 <sup>[71]</sup>
Chart (2019)	Peak position	* Sales figures based on certification alone. ‡ Sales+streaming figures based on certification alone.		
Poland (Polish Airplay Top 100) <sup>[98]</sup>	67			

## Legacy

Paul Simon released a solo acoustic version of "The Sound of Silence" in the spring of 1974. His version reached No. 84 in Canada<sup>[49]</sup> and No. 97 on the US *Cash Box* chart.<sup>[45]</sup> It was also a minor Adult Contemporary hit (US No. 50, Canada No. 42).<sup>[50][48]</sup>

In 1999, BMI named "The Sound of Silence" as the 18th most-performed song of the 20th century.<sup>[118]</sup> In 2004, it was ranked No. 156 on *Rolling Stone*'s list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time, one of the duo's three songs on the list. The song is now considered "the quintessential folk rock release".<sup>[119]</sup> On March 21, 2013, the song was added to the National Recording Registry in the Library of Congress for long-term preservation along with the rest of the *Sounds of Silence* album.<sup>[120]</sup>

On September 27, 2016, the Disturbed version of "The Sound of Silence" was released as downloadable content for the video game *Rock Band 4*. The Disturbed version was used in the episode "Ian Garvey" of *The Blacklist* in November 2017.<sup>[121]</sup> A live version of "The Sound of Silence" with guest Myles Kennedy is included on *Live at Red Rocks* and *Evolution* (Deluxe Edition). The AMC show *Into the Badlands* features Disturbed's version of "The Sound of Silence" in episode 13 of season 3 ("Black Lotus, White Rose") in April 2019.

The *a cappella* group Pentatonix recorded a cover of the song, released as a single in 2019. The video amassed more than 50 million views in a year. By the end of 2021, the YouTube video has had almost 114 million views.<sup>[122]</sup>

## In popular culture

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### Film and television

When director Mike Nichols and Sam O'Steen were editing the 1967 film *The Graduate*, they initially timed some scenes to this song, intending to substitute original music for the scenes. However, they eventually concluded that an adequate substitute could not be found and decided to purchase the rights for the song for the soundtrack. This was an unusual decision, as the song had charted more than a year earlier, and recycling established music for film was not commonly done at the time.<sup>[123]</sup>

With the practice of using well-known songs for films becoming more commonplace, "The Sound of Silence" has since been used for other films, including *Kingpin* (1996), *Old School* (2003), *Bobby* (2006), *Watchmen* (2009), *Trolls* (2016), and *A Twelve Year Night* (2018). In the German TV movie *Ein Drilling kommt selten allein* the song was sung by grandparents to calm down crying triplets.

The song was used during the fourth season of the television series *Arrested Development* in 2013 as a running gag alluding to characters' (primarily GOB's) inner reflections. It was also used as part of the soundtrack of episode 4 of *The Vietnam War*, the 2017 documentary series by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick. The fifth season of "The Blacklist" television series used the Disturbed cover version in episode 8 as part of its soundtrack.

### Other allusions and parodies

The Canadian band Rush alluded to the song lyrics in the last lines of their 1980 song "The Spirit of Radio".<sup>[124]</sup>

The song was parodied by faith-based comedian Tim Hawkins (as "Sounds of Starbucks") on October 16, 2018.<sup>[125]</sup>

On August 10, 2021, The Holderness Family released a parody version about wanting the children out of the house for school following the lockdowns and school closings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>[126]</sup>

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## External links

- Paul Simon - The Sound of Silence (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7Fj9WLSisE>) on YouTube
- Simon and Garfunkel - The Sound of Silence (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fWyzwo1xg0>) on YouTube

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