



God Save The Kinks: A Biography

Rob Jovanovic

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The Kinks released their third single in August 1964. After a little-noticed debut and a follow-up that had failed to chart at all, Pye Records were threatening to annul the group's contract. But with its unforgettable distorted guitar riff, "You Really Got Me" went on to reach No.1. Followed by a string of hits, it marked the breakthrough of one of Britain's most innovative and influential bands, and a turning point in the fortunes of two brothers whose troubled story is as tumultuous and characterful as the music they produced: Ray and Dave Davies. Ray and Dave were born into a deeply musical working-class family in London's Muswell Hill, a city recovering from the bombs and privations of the Second World War. More than any other musicians of the Sixties, they crafted the soundtrack that made it swing again. In songs such as "Dedicated Follower of Fashion", "Sunny Afternoon" - which toppled The Beatles to become the hit of Summer 1966 - "Waterloo Sunset", "Days" and "Lola", they drew on music hall, folk and rhythm and blues to craft a peculiarly English pop idiom, inspiring generations of songwriters from David Bowie to Jarvis Cocker and Damon Albarn. Poked by sibling rivalry, furious on-stage violence, walkouts, overdoses, a career-throttling ban from the US, gross self-indulgence, and the band's curious rebirth as Eighties stadium rockers, the story laid bare in *God Save The Kinks* is one of the greatest in British pop history.

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