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Jason T. Eastman and Terry F. Pettijohn, II

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Good Times and Endless Love: *Billboard* R&B/Hip Hop Songs of the Year Across Social and Economic Conditions

Jason T. Eastman and Terry F. Pettijohn II
Coastal Carolina University

Previous research shows songs on the *Billboard* charts and the artists who create them vary according to social and economic conditions. However, only country and pop charts have been analyzed thus far. In the current study, we assess the music and lyrics along with the sex and age of the artists who recorded 65 *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop songs of the year between 1946 and 2010. Mirroring both country and pop artists, after the introduction of MTV in 1981, audiences gravitated toward more mature and therefore more comforting artists when the economy is sour and social problems are more prevalent. However, unlike pop stars but like country artists, female R&B/Hip-Hop artists are more likely to place songs atop the *Billboard* charts in difficult social and economic times. Still, like songs atop the *Billboard* Pop charts (but unlike country *Billboard* hits), when social and economic times become difficult, R&B/Hip-Hop songs are less likely to have lyrics about leisure or fun, and they are more likely to be longer, slower, and therefore sadder sounding. We hypothesize trends in the R&B/Hip-Hop charts are closely aligned to the pop charts because “black music” is, and always has been, more influential on pop than the more folk-oriented country music.

Public Policy Relevance Statement

Investigation of *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop songs of the year between 1946 and 2010 revealed that musical preferences are influenced by social and economic conditions. When social and economic times become difficult, R&B/Hip-Hop songs are less likely to have lyrics about leisure or fun, and they are more likely to be longer, slower, and performed by female artists. Since the introduction of MTV in 1981, the top R&B/Hip-Hop artists in tough social and economic years are more likely to be older.

Keywords: music, economy, *Billboard* charts, R&B music, hip hop music

Perhaps the only certainty about a culture is that it has and will change. Documenting this change is undertaken by researchers from both the humanities and the social sciences alike. Furthermore, although culture is often thought

to evolve almost organically and independently, more and more evidence is mounting about the identifiable, even predicable, social and economic factors pushing the ebb and flow of cultural trends. For example, the trend of thinning female bodies in popular culture linked to women’s body image (see Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008, for a meta-analysis of research that has since been cited over 1,100 times) is not entirely linear; instead, it varies according to socioeconomic conditions and the target demographic of the media audience. *Playboy* Playmates of the Year tend to get thinner during times of social calm and economic prosperity (Barber, 1998a, 1998b; Pettijohn & Jungeberg, 2004; Webster, 2008). There is also racial and ethnic variation of the thinning trends as white women in pop-

Jason T. Eastman, Department of Sociology, Coastal Carolina University; Terry F. Pettijohn II, Department of Psychology, Coastal Carolina University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Terry F. Pettijohn II, Department of Psychology, Coastal Carolina University, P.O. Box 261954, Conway, SC 29528-6054 or to Jason T. Eastman, Department of Sociology, Coastal Carolina University, P.O. Box 261954, Conway, SC 29528-6054. E-mail: pettijohn@coastal.edu or jeastman@coastal.edu

ular culture slim, whereas black magazine models remain constant, perhaps even becoming heavier and more curvaceous in recent decades (Dawson-Andoh, Gray, Soto, & Parker, 2011; Thompson-Brenner, Boisseaub, & St. Paul, 2011).

Like the models of print and photography, actors and actresses, along with the movies and TV shows they perform in, also vary according to social and economic conditions. Although the looks of male actors are consistent across changing social and economic conditions (Pettijohn & Tesser, 2003), actresses have more mature facial features during good social and economic times (Pettijohn & Tesser, 1999). However, during threatening social and economic conditions, less attractive and younger male performers (McIntosh, Murray, Murray, & Manian, 2006) become popular as audiences also gravitate toward comedies (Pettijohn, 2003) and comedies with more slapstick humor (McIntosh, Murray, Murray, & Manian, 2003). Movies might show the opposite effects in threatening social and economic times than those shown by other media because, unlike other forms of popular culture, most blockbuster films are not targeted to particular demographics and are often used for escapism rather than complimenting emotive moods. Research on TV, which is generally more infused in daily life than movies while being promoted toward more general demographic markets, indirectly supports this notion, as during difficult social and economic times, more realistic shows like crime genres become more popular (McIntosh, Schwegler, & Terry-Murray, 2000; Reith, 1987, 1996). There has yet to be research on whether film and TV marketed toward unique racial or ethnic groups varies by socioeconomic times.

Social and Economic Influences on Music Trends

Although researchers analyze how socioeconomic conditions affect trends in all types of media, music especially is of interest to media scholars for several reasons (DeNora, 2000; Kotarba & Vannini, 2009). First, although audiences usually put forth conscious effort in consuming TV, movies, and magazines, music is ever-present in our lives while we go about our daily activities—including the consumption of media like TV and film that uses music to

heighten the meanings communicated visually. Second, similar to magazines marketed toward specific demographic groups (which show their own unique trends through time), the culture industry targets numerous genres toward particular groups that share a class, ethnicity, subculture, and so forth. Third, because of genres with demographic targets (which often have their own specific messages particular people do or do not relate to), music is much more influential than other media in the development of both an individual and a collective identity.

Like other media, music shows identifiable trends through time, as the society and culture it expresses changes. An early study conducted on the heels of the progressive 1960s and 1970s found post-World War II song lyrics to *Billboard* hits became less about love and relationships and more about the social and cultural issues of the times (Rothenbuhler & Dimmick, 1982). More recently, DeWall, Pond, Campbell, and Twenge (2011) find the lyrics of top *Billboard* songs of the year across pop, rock, country, and R&B/Hip-Hop genres are becoming increasingly antisocial, focusing more on the individual self than relationships with others. Musically, Schellenberg and von Scheve (2012) find that since 1965, *Billboard* Top 40 hits have become sadder sounding by getting longer and using slower tempos and minor keys. Popular music is becoming more homogenous and louder (Serrà, Corral, Bogueñá, Haro, & Arcos, 2012).

Often compelled by concerns that problematic musical messages adversely affect adolescent listeners, other researchers compare the *Billboard* charts to assess the lyrical themes that became more prevalent in recent decades—especially with the R&B/Hip Hop genre. Lyrics about alcohol and drugs in *Billboard* hits became more widespread in recent years (Christenson, Roberts, & Bjork, 2012), and, of all the genres examined, R&B/Hip-Hop songs show the steepest increases in lyrical references to substances (Herd, 2005, 2014). Hobbs and Galup's (2011) lyrical analysis finds that the reproductive themes in *Billboard* hits remained relatively constant across the pop and country charts, although lyrics about sex, love, relationships, and so forth increased within the R&B/Hip-Hop songs that rose to the top of the *Billboard* charts. Similarly, in a content analysis of the top 20 songs on the *Billboard* charts be-

tween 2009 and 2013, Flynn and colleagues (Flynn, Craig, Anderson, & Holody, 2016) found more body objectification in R&B/Hip-Hop than either country or pop music. Other research finds degrading sexual lyrics are especially prevalent on the *Billboard* rap charts (Primack, Gold, Schwarz, & Dalton, 2008), and overtly sexual lyrics are especially ubiquitous from nonwhite, male artists (Hall, West, & Hill, 2012). A replication of Hobb's and Gallup's study differentiated between themes of romance and lust in *Billboard* hits and found that lyrics about love have eroded, whereas themes of lust have increased—especially among the songs on the R&B/Hip-Hop charts that concurrently became more popular in the last 40 years (Madanik & Bartholomew, 2014).

As is the case with most trends in popular culture, ongoing changes in *Billboard* music are not entirely linear as social and economic conditions influence what songs are popular at a given time. Most of this research comes from Pettijohn and colleagues who published numerous studies analyzing how trends in the *Billboard* songs of the year vary predictably by their General Hard Times Measure (GHTM), a standardized indicator capturing both economic and social difficulties during a given calendar year in the United States. For example, a lyrical analysis reveals when the GHTM indicates difficult social and economic times, *Billboard* pop songs of the year from 1955 to 2000 use more words and focus more on social groups and the future (Pettijohn & Sacco, 2009a). Furthermore, listeners judged these top 49 *Billboard* songs popular during threatening years as more meaningful and comforting than the tunes rising to the top of the charts when the GHTM indicated good social and economic times (Pettijohn & Sacco, 2009b). Quantitative musical analysis on the 52 *Billboard* Pop songs of the year from 1955 to 2008 finds that when the GHTM indicates difficult social and economic times, songs have fewer beats per minute and are in less familiar key signatures (Pettijohn, Eastman, & Richard, 2012). However, analysis of 63 *Billboard* Country songs of the year reveals the exact opposite trend, as these songs become slower and sadder sounding when the GHTM indicates good social and economic conditions (Eastman & Pettijohn, 2015) perhaps because, unlike pop music that is targeted at a middle-class audience, country music is consumed

mostly by rural, working-class Whites. There also are differences in the artists across these two *Billboard* charts as women have more success on the pop charts during good economic times, whereas the country charts have more women reach the top during difficult social and economic times (Dowd, Liddle, & Blyler, 2005; Eastman & Pettijohn, 2015). However, across both pop and country music, more mature artists have more success on the *Billboard* charts during difficult social and economic times (Eastman & Pettijohn, 2015; Pettijohn, Glass, Bordin, & Eastman, 2014; Pettijohn & Sacco, 2009b).

Although there is a growing research corpus on trends in popular music, many questions still remain, especially about genres other than pop and country. For instance, although there is research on the lyrical trends and growing popularity of R&B/Hip-Hop, there has yet to be a study on how social and economic conditions influence this genre and this genre's artists. Some scholars working from the production of culture perspectives find minority artists, including black artists who tend to record the majority of the R&B/Hip Hop songs, are more successful in less concentrated and less marginalizing production markets that tend to coincide with strong economies (Dowd & Blyler, 2002). A lyrical analysis framed by this production-based perspective finds that *Billboard* rap artists emphasize their "authenticity," which includes more frequent mentions of sex and substances, when production markets become concentrated and dominated by major labels (Lena, 2006). But how do R&B/Hip-Hop songs and artists themselves relate to social and economic conditions? Do R&B/Hip-Hop songs and artists mirror the trends in pop music, or, as a subgenre like country, do these songs have unique relationships to the social and economic conditions?

The purpose of this research is to analyze how the most popular *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop artists and songs change according to social and economic conditions, both musically and lyrically. The Harvard culture scholar Orlando Patterson notes "blacks have a disproportionate impact on the nation's culture (Patterson & Foss, 2015, p. 1)," thus we hypothesize that R&B/Hip-Hop songs and artists will show the same relationship with social and economic conditions as pop music. In other words, be-

cause pop music has been and still is so strongly influenced by black culture, we predict pop music and artists will mirror the same relationships with social and economic indicators as R&B/Hip-Hop. Specifically, we hypothesize that like pop music, R&B/Hip-Hop songs will be less upbeat and longer during difficult social and economic times. In terms of the two prominent themes of R&B/Hip-Hop, we hypothesize that songs about leisure (drinking, drugs, dancing, etc.) will be less prevalent during difficult socioeconomic times than songs with reproductive themes (love, lust, attraction, etc.). We also hypothesize that during difficult social and economic times, more mature and therefore comforting performers will be more successful, including women and older performers.

Method

Like most scholars who conducted studies on musical trends through time, we rely on the *Billboard* magazine to identify the most popular song recorded by a black performer or marketed toward a black audience at a given point. Although the current *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop chart underwent numerous name changes since *Billboard* first started identifying Songs of the Year and Artistic “Race Records” in 1945, the trade magazine identified an annual top “black” song since the end of World War II under a variety of genre labels (Harrison & Arthur, 2011, p. 312). The only exception was in 1964 when *Billboard* did not identify a “black song” of the year. We used the song that spent the longest time at the number one weekly spot throughout the year for this study. We collected digital versions of the 65 *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop songs of the year (1946–2010) in mp3 format for analysis (see the Appendix for a listing of songs and artists).

We developed two quantitative measures of songs’ moods. We noted the length in seconds using information from the audio files, and a professional musician calculated the beats per minute (BPM) using a click counter and a stopwatch. Sadder songs tend to have lower BPM and be longer (Balkwill & Thompson, 1999; Kellaris & Kent, 1992), enabling us to assess if our hypothesis that R&B/Hip-Hop songs will be similar to pop songs that get slower and longer during difficult social and economic hard times (Pettijohn et al., 2012) is correct or if this genre mirrors country songs and becomes happier

sounding during hard socioeconomic times (Eastman & Pettijohn, 2015). As reported in Table 1, on average, *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop songs of the year had an average of 109.52 BPM and lasted 222.88 seconds.

Previous researchers also show lyrics vary according to social and economic conditions (Eastman & Pettijohn, 2015; Pettijohn & Sacco, 2009a). Four songs in the current study were instrumentals and were thus eliminated from lyrical analysis (*Long Gone* [1948], *Hucklebuck* [1949], *Honky Tonk* [1956], and *Soul Twist* [1962]). Initially, lyrics were assessed using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) program that tallies the presence of words in different categories and then reports those tallies as percentages of the entire text. However, it was quickly discovered the nonstandard English used in many R&B/Hip-Hop songs created validity issues for this program. Thus, instead of relying on the software itself, we developed two overlapping, mutually exclusive dummy variables to indicate the presence or absence of thematic trends noted in previous research conducted with Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count on increased messages about drinking and drugs, along with a shift in songs from love to lust in R&B/Hip-Hop songs. In all, 82% of songs focused primarily on reproductive themes of love, lust, sex, heartbreak, longing, and so forth, and they were coded 1 for *reproduction*. For example, the songs *Sixty-Minute Man*, *Respect*, and the number one songs between 2004 and 2007 (*If I Ain’t Got You*, *Let Me Love You*, *Be Without You*, and *Lost Without You*) are all about sexual or romantic relationships and were thus coded 1 on the reproduction variable. Another 15% of songs were coded 1 for *leisure* because their predominant theme was socializ-

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables

Variable	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Male	65	0.732	0.41
Age	64	28.65	6.17
BPM	65	109.52	27.50
Length	65	222.88	56.80
Reproduction lyrics	61	0.82	0.39
Leisure lyrics	61	0.15	0.36

Note. *N* = 65 years. Descriptive statistics for Reproduction lyrics and Leisure lyrics did not include four instrumental songs.

ing and using substances. For example, *Pink Champagne* and *Stagger Lee* are about drinking; *Jailhouse Rock*, *Good Times*, *Disco Lady*, and *In Da Club* are all about dancing, and thus all these songs were coded 1 for *leisure*. With the exception of two “protest songs,” James Brown’s *I’m Black And I’m Proud* (1968) and the Isley Brothers’ *Fight the Power* (1975), this coding scheme captured the primary albeit abstract message of every *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop song of the year. We hypothesize that in good social and economic times, lyrics will be more about leisure as audiences enjoy the positive environment, whereas in difficult times, reproduction themes will be predominant as audiences relate to lyrical themes about seeking support and companionship from others.

In addition to an analysis of songs themselves, we also developed demographic indicators of the predominantly black artists who placed songs atop the annual *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop charts to see if the characteristics of musicians and singers also vary according to social and economic conditions (Eastman & Pettijohn, 2015; Pettijohn et al., 2014; Pettijohn & Sacco, 2009b). We created a variable *male* to indicate the proportion of singers that were men, coding male solo artists or entirely male group as 1, the male/female duets as .5, and all female groups or solo female artists as 0. Almost three quarters (73.2%) of the artists in the sample are male. We hypothesize that because female artists are more comforting than male artists, women will have more success on the *Billboard* charts in difficult socioeconomic times. With the exception of the groups *Chic* and *Next* who lack readily available information on their background, biographies were used to calculate the lead singer’s or singers’ age when their song reached the top of the annual *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop charts. The average age for all artists in the sample when their song reached the top of the annual charts is 28.65. We predict that older and therefore more comforting R&B/Hip-Hop artists will have more success in difficult social and economic times because audiences gravitate toward mature figures, consistent with the Environmental Security Hypothesis (Pettijohn & Tesser, 1999).

The social and economic conditions under which R&B/Hip-Hop music is created and consumed was assessed with the GHTM. The GHTM is a standardized measure of social and

economic well-being that combines the unemployment rate, death rate, birthrate, marriage rate, divorce rate, suicide rate, and homicide rate along with changes in disposable personal income and the consumer price index within a given year. Although these different measures of social and economic well-being are calculated at different times and at different intervals within the year, limiting the song population to the very top of the annual charts ensures close alignment of our standardized indicator of socioeconomic hard times to the most popular song during a given year. More difficult times are indicated by higher numbers, whereas times of calm and prosperity are noted with smaller values (Pettijohn & Jungeberg, 2004; Pettijohn & Sacco, 2009a, 2009b; Pettijohn & Tesser, 1999).

Results and Discussion

We calculated Pearson correlation coefficients with one-tailed tests of significance between the GHTM and all the dependent variables that capture different aspects of *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop songs of the year and the artists who recorded them. Results are summarized in Table 2. The *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop songs of the year mirror songs atop the magazine’s pop charts by getting slower and longer when social and economic times become more difficult. There is a negative correlation between the GHTM and songs’ BPM, $r(65) = -.45, p < .001$, or songs get slower in tempo as social and economic conditions deteriorate. There is a positive correlation between the GHTM and songs’ length in seconds, $r(65) = .612, p < .001$, as songs get shorter in better social and economic times. Both slower tempo and increased length make for sadder sounding songs. As hypothesized, R&B/Hip-Hop songs become slower and sadder sounding when social and economic times are difficult. As past research has shown (Schellenberg & von Scheve, 2012) that shorter songs often have higher BPM and longer songs have lower BPM, we also found that BPM and song length were significantly negatively correlated ($r = -.423$; Table 2). Therefore, we conducted a partial correlation between these variables controlling for the GHTM. The partial correlation was not statistically significant, suggesting each variable offers a unique contribution to understanding how BPM and song

Table 2
Correlation Matrix of Dependent Variables and the General Hard Times Measure (GHTM)

Variable	GHTM	Male	Age	BPM	Length	Reproduction lyrics	Leisure lyrics
GHTM	1	-.222	.071	-.452**	.612**	.284*	-.305**
Male	-.222*	1	.057	.1	-.309**	-.204	.16
Age	.071	.057	1	.065	.072	-.318**	.286*
BPM	-.452**	.1	.065	1	-.432**	-.433**	.381**
Length	.612**	-.309**	.072	-.432**	1	.185	-.144
Reproduction lyrics	.284*	-.204	-.318**	-.433**	.185	1	-.887**
Leisure lyrics	-.305**	.16	.286*	.381**	-.144	-.887**	1

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed), ** correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed).

length are influenced by social and economic conditions across time.

Researchers previously established that lyrics to R&B/Hip-Hop songs became more explicit in their mentions of sex and mind-altering substances in recent years (Flynn et al., 2016; Herd, 2005, 2014; Hobbs & Gallup, 2011; Primack et al., 2008). We hypothesized within these trends that popular R&B/Hip-Hop songs would more likely be about sex and other reproductive themes during difficult social and economic times, as people look to others for support. Similarly, we predicted that during good social and economic times, songs would be more about leisure or having fun with dancing, drugs, drinking, and so forth. As hypothesized, there is a positive relationship between the GHTM and reproduction lyrics, $r(61) = .28, p = .013$, or in difficult social and economic times songs are more likely to be about relationships with others. Also, as predicted, there is a negative relationship with the GHTM and leisure lyrics, $r(61) = -.31, p = .008$, or *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop songs of the year are more likely to be about good times during good socioeconomic times.

Previous studies also uncovered how more comforting artists are successful during difficult social and economic times. As hypothesized, there is a negative correlation between the GHTM and the presence of male artists on the charts, $r(65) = -.222, p = .038$, as comforting female performers are successful during challenging social and economic conditions and as audiences seek out soothing and consoling figures in media. Although we hypothesized that because audiences often gravitate toward more mature performers during difficult social and economic times, there is no statistically signifi-

cant relationship between the GHTM and *Billboard* artists' age $r(63) = .071, p = .29$. However, in analyzing just the songs reaching the top of the annual *Billboard* charts after the introduction of MTV in 1981 (when the visual characteristics of artists become much more important to their success), a marginally significant weak relationship emerges, $r(29) = .288, p = .06$, as more mature artists are somewhat more successful in difficult social and economic times.

Conclusion

The U.S. culture changes rapidly, including transformations within the media of popular culture. Researchers document these changes, and some study ongoing trends, whereas others find that indicators of social and economic conditions relate to the ebbs and flows of these unfolding trends. Generally, researchers uncovered that with the exceptions of movies and country music that get happier when times get hard because audiences use them to escape reality, audiences gravitate toward more somber and more meaningful media with comforting performers during difficult social and economic times.

Popular music comes in many genres that are often embraced by unique social and demographic groups, some of which show unique trends to the social and economic environment. This study explores how R&B/Hip-Hop, a genre that continues to grow in popularity overall, relates to socioeconomic conditions. After the introduction of MTV, the age of the artists who produced *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop songs of the year weakly correlated to social and economic hard times, as audiences are likely grav-

itate to mature and therefore more comforting artists when the economy is sour and social problems are more prevalent. Perhaps because they are more comforting to audiences than male artists, female R&B/Hip-Hop artists are more likely to reach the top of the charts during difficult social and economic times. *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop songs of the year are longer and also have fewer BPM, both of which are more somber and sadder sounding, when social and economic times become difficult, as audiences seek out songs that match the collective mood of the country. Lyrically, the *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop song that reaches the top of the charts in a given year is less likely to be about leisure (dancing, drinking, using drugs, etc.) and more likely to include reproductive themes (love, lust, dating, etc.) during difficult social and economic times, perhaps because audiences relate to themes about partnership and support from others when socioeconomic conditions become challenging. Thus, although R&B/Hip-Hop remains mostly “black music,” it mirrors the relationships with the social and economic context researchers uncover with the popular music listened to mostly by white audiences. Of course, given the immense influence black artists historically had and still have on popular culture in the United States, it would likely be more accurate to note that pop music mirrors the ways “black music” adapts to changing socioeconomic conditions.

Future studies could further uncover the ways musical trends relate to social and economic conditions. There has yet to be an examination of the ways *Billboard* Latin, Rock, Dance/Electronic or Christian/Gospel songs of the year relate to socioeconomic conditions. For each of these genres along with pop and R&B/Hip-Hop, a more expansive sample of top songs or an assessment of the *Billboard* weekly charts would allow for a more nuanced statistical analysis, perhaps one that could isolate the social or economic factors along with the unique properties of songs and artists. *Billboard* also identifies artists of the year in addition to songs of the year, and a study on these chart-toppers might better assess how artist popularity relates to social and economic conditions independently of their song or album popularity. Also, although the *Billboard* charts are the most widely accepted indicator of music popularity, other indicators such as the Grammy awards could be

used to identify popular songs and artists of a given year. In fact, the Music TV Awards, Country Music TV Awards, or the Black Entertainment TV Awards might provide insight into the ways in which music is increasingly merging with video in our modern world. Future research should continue to explore the relation of music popularity to cultural influences and variations.

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(Appendix follows)

Appendix

Billboard R&B Songs of the Year and Artist, 1946–2010

Year	Song title	Artist
1946	Hey! Ba-Ba-Re-Bop	Lionel Hampton
1947	Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens	Louis Jordan
1948	Long Gone ^a	Sonny Thompson
1949	Hucklebuck ^a	Paul Williams
1950	Pink Champagne	Joe Liggins
1951	Sixty Minute Man	The Dominoes
1952	Lawdy Miss Clawdy	Lloyd Price
1953	(Mama) He Treats Your Daughter Mean	Ruth Brown
1954	Work With Me, Annie	Midnighters
1955	Pledging My Love	Johnny Ace
1956	Honky Tonk ^a	Bill Doggett
1957	Jailhouse Rock	Elvis Presley
1958	What Am I Loving For	Chuck Willis
1959	Stagger Lee	Lloyd Price
1960	Kiddio	Brook Benton
1961	Tossin' and Turnin'	Bobby Lewis
1962	Soul Twist ^a	King Curtis
1963	Part Time Love	Little Johnny Taylor
1964	Where Did Our Love Go	The Supremes
1965	I Can't Help Myself	Four Tops
1966	Hold On! I'm Comin'	Sam/Dave
1967	Respect	Aretha Franklin
1968	Say It Loud - I'm Black And I'm Proud	James Brown
1969	What Does It Take To Win Your Love	Jr. Walker/The All Stars
1970	I'll Be There	Jackson 5
1971	Mr. Big Stuff	Jean Knight
1972	Let's Stay Together	Al Green
1973	Let's Get It On	Marvin Gaye
1974	Feel Like Making Love	Roberta Flack
1975	Fight The Power Pt. 1	Isley Brothers
1976	Disco Lady	Johnnie Taylor
1977	Float On	Floater
1978	Serpentine Fire	Earth/Wind/Fire
1979	Good Times	Chic
1980	Let's Get Serious	Jermaine Jackson
1981	Endless Love	Diana Ross/Lionel Richie
1982	That Girl	Stevie Wonder
1983	Sexual Healing	Marvin Gaye
1984	When Doves Cry	Prince & The Revolution
1985	Rock Me Tonight	Freddie Jackson
1986	On My Own	Patti LaBelle/Michael McDonald
1987	Stop To Love	Luther Vandross
1988	I Want Her	Keith Sweat
1989	Superwoman	Karyn White
1990	Hold On	En Vogue
1991	Written All Over Your Face	Rude Boys
1992	Come and Talk to Me	Jodeci
1993	I Will Always Love You	Whitney Houston
1994	Bump N' Grind	R. Kelly

(Appendix continues)

Appendix (*continued*)

Year	Song title	Artist
1995	Creep	TLC
1996	You're Makin' Me High/Let It Flow	Toni Braxton
1997	In My Bed	Dru Hill
1998	Too Close	Next
1999	Fortunate	Maxwell
2000	Let's Get Married	Jagged Edge
2001	Fiesta	R. Kelly/Jay-Z
2002	Foolish	Ashanti
2003	In Da Club	50 Cent
2004	If I Ain't Got You	Alicia Keys
2005	Let Me Love You	Mario
2006	Be Without You	Mary J. Blige
2007	Lost Without You	Robin Thicke
2008	Like You'll Never See Me Again	Alicia Keys
2009	Blame It	Jamie Foxx Featuring T-Pain
2010	Un-Thinkable (I'm Ready)	Alicia Keys

^a Instrumental.

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