

Sunshine of Your Love

Written by bluesever

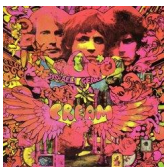
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Sunshine of Your Love

One of the defining qualities of heavy metal is guitar riffs: short, memorable, repeating phrases played on a distorted guitar as a foundation for a song. ***Sunshine of your Love*** was one of the first hit songs to be built around a guitar riff rather than a chord sequence — although in this case, the riff was originally written on the bass, and the two instrument shadow each for much of the song.

Sunshine of Your Love

Here's a classic song that's interesting because it's been such an influence on generations of guitar players. It's "Sunshine of Your Love" by Cream, a song from the band's second album, *Disraeli Gears* in 1967, and released as a single the following year.



Cream - Disraeli Gears

Cream was one of the first nonorganically created rock supergroups of the 1960s. Music

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business entrepreneur Robert Stigwood contracted
and drummer

Eric Clapton, bassist **Jack Bruce**

Ginger Baker

to play as a group, for a term of two years, with an option for a third. Each member had already achieved a degree of fame in their native UK — Clapton with The Yardbirds and John Mayall's Bluesbreakers; Bruce and Baker had played together in the Graham Bond Organisation; and Bruce had played briefly with Clapton in the Bluesbreakers and with Manfred Mann. Individually and collectively, they were part of a movement that was reinventing and reinvigorating American blues, electrifying it, fusing it with rock and shipping it back to the U.S., where it wound up making white British rockers far more money than it ever made for Robert Johnson.



Cream

According to Clapton biographer Michael Schumacher, after being inspired by a Jimi Hendrix concert in London, Bruce went home and quickly composed the basso ostinato melody, but then struggled to find words that fit. After a frustrating all-night brainstorming session with his frequent collaborator, poet-lyricist Pete Brown, Bruce suddenly got a flash. He grabbed his upright bass, went to the window, and played as he sang, *"It's getting near dawn..."*. Clapton later wrote the song's refrain which also yielded the song's title.



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Jack Bruce

"Sunshine of Your Love" is basically a 12 bar blues song, but it's quite unusual in that it's in 8/8 time rather than the usual 4/4. The distinctive bass riff is an 8 beat riff (in other words, it needs 8 beats to complete), and the song is built around it. As with most 12 bar blues songs, the first 8 bars (sometimes it's 10) make up the verse and the last 4 (or 2 in some songs) basically make up what amounts to a chorus, although we look at the full 12 bars as just a verse. The song form looks like this: Intro (4 bars), Verse, Interlude (2 bars), Verse, Solo (over a Verse), Verse, 2 bar Chorus repeat, Outro. The song begins with the guitar and bass for the first two bars, then is joined by the drums for the next two. Unlike a common pop song, it doesn't feature a signature hook since the bass/guitar riff line is a hook in itself. The interlude is just 2 bars of the verse, and also does not feature a true hook or melody on top of the song's foundation elements. The end of the final verse features an additional two bars with the vocals of bassist Jack Bruce and guitarist Eric Clapton answering each other.



Pete Brown, poet-lyricist

"Sunshine" prefigures the development of metal in two other ways (besides the guitar riff): the stop-start instrumentation during the chorus (*"I've been waiting so long"*), and the dramatic stripping down of complexity. While the blues influence is still very apparent, nothing about the song suggests the jazz background of two thirds of the band. The drum part was based on African tribal rhythms, and unusually emphasises beats 1 and 3 rather than 2 and 4, and the lock-step guitar and bass yield a wide-open texture. Even the vocal melody largely tracks the guitar/bass riff.

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"Sunshine of Your Love" is a song by the English rock band The Animals, released in 1967 as the lead single from their second album, *The Animals' Second Album*. It was written by Eric Burdon and Chris Egan.

The song was the first of a series of hits for the band, and it became their most successful single, reaching number one in the UK and number two in the US. It was also the first of a series of songs that would become part of the band's live repertoire.

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