

808 State - Named after the Roland TR-808 drum machine, the band was formed in Manchester, England in 1988. They are considered pioneers of the acid house scene.

ABBA - The name is an acronym of the first letters of the bands christian names (Agnetha, Benny, Bjorn and Anni-Frid). One of the best-selling music artists of all time, in 1978 they were Sweden's most profitable export, car maker Volvo was number two. ABBA have never officially split, but they have not recorded music or sung together for over 26 years. Their last performance was on the British TV programme The Late, Late Breakfast Show (live from Stockholm) on 11 December 1982.

A-ha - Formed in Oslo in 1982, the origin of the name A-ha comes from the title of an early song 'The Juicyfruit Song'. This name was chosen because the phrase means the same in a number of languages. The band has sold over 60 million albums and 15 million singles worldwide, and are still considered to be within the top 50 largest grossing bands in the world from music sales, tours and merchandising. 'Take On Me' is still considered to be one of the top music videos of all time together with Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'. In 1986, Michael Jackson was in the audience at their first US concert. Notable comments on the band's influence have been made by major artists such as Chris Martin (Coldplay), Adam Clayton (U2) and Graham Nash (Crosby, Stills & Nash).

AC/DC - This comes from the letters spotted by Angus Young on the back of his mother's sewing machine.

Ace of Base - The band's first studio was in a basement, hence they became masters (ace) of their basement (base). They are the third most successful Swedish band of all time, behind Abba and Roxette.

All Saints - Formed originally as a trio in 1993, the British/Canadian band were named after All Saints Road, London. They thought of 'Spice' as their original name but decided it wasn't good enough. They appear at No.12 in the worlds best-selling girl groups of all time (3rd in Britain, behind Spice Girls and Bananarama).

Aswad - They are a British reggae group and have been performing since the mid-1970's. Their name means 'Black' in Arabic, and they have released over 20 albums. The band has toured extensively, playing in locations such as Montego Bay, West Africa, Israel and Japan.

Bachman Turner Overdrive - Often referred to by the initials BTO, they are a Canadian rock group which featured predominantly in the 1970's. The band's name is derived from a combination of the band members' surnames and a trucker magazine. They were also featured in The Simpsons episode 'Saddlesore Galactica'. In 2012, writers of three comic strips in the British weekly science fiction anthology 2000AD used the names *Bachman*

,  
*Turner*  
and  
*Overdrive*

as the names of the three principal villains in a storyline starring Judge Dredd.

Backstreet Boys - American vocal harmony group named after Back Street Market, Orlando, Florida. They are the best-selling boy band of all time selling over 130 million records worldwide. On June 2, 1999, the Backstreet Boys embarked on the 'Into The Millennium Tour', which comprised 115 sold-out shows in 84 cities.

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Bay City Rollers - Often referred to as 'the tartan teen sensations from Edinburgh', the band randomly chose their name after sticking a pin in a map and it landing on Bay City, Michigan (which incidentally is the birthplace of 'Madonna'). Although best known for their hits 'Bye-Bye Baby' (a Four Seasons cover) and 'Shang-A-Lang', their first hit was 'Keep On Dancing' which reached No.9 in the UK charts in 1971. It was a cover of a 1965 hit by 'The Gentrys'.

Billy Joel - Born William Martin Joel to an English Mother and German father, he was raised in The Bronx. Before deciding to pursue music as a career, Joel boxed as a welterweight on the amateur circuit in the New York area. He Released his first hit song 'Piano Man' in 1973, and has sold over 150 million records worldwide. Joel battled depression for many years. In 1970, a career downturn and personal problems aggravated his condition. He left a suicide note and attempted to commit suicide by drinking furniture polish, saying later, 'I drank furniture polish. It looked tastier than bleach'. In November 2010, Joel opened a shop on Oyster Bay, Long Island to manufacture custom-made, retro-styled motorcycles and accessories.

Bob Dylan - Originally named Robert Allen Zimmerman, he thought this name was too long, and was electing to call himself Robert Allan (until finding that there was already a saxophonist with this name). Being inspired by the writings of Dylan Thomas, he decided on the surname Dylan and chose the forename Bob because there were several 'Bobbies' in popular music at the time. Explaining his change of name in a 2004 interview, Dylan remarked: 'You're born, you know, the wrong names, wrong parents. I mean, that happens. You call yourself what you want to call yourself. This is the land of the free.'

Bon Jovi - Formed in 1983 they are an American rock band from Sayreville, New Jersey, consisting of Jon Bon Jovi (vocals/guitar), Richie Sambora (lead guitar), David Bryan (keyboards) and Tico Torres (drums). The band name is a re-spelling of the lead singer Jon Bon Jovi's real name John Francis Bongiovi (Jr). At 16, Bon Jovi met David Bryan and formed a band called Atlantic City Expressway. Still in his teens he then played in the band 'John Bongiovi and the Wild Ones', and by 1980 had formed another band 'The Rest'.

Boney M - The band's German producer Frank Farian named them after Boney, the hero of an Australian TV series. Famous for hits such as 'Rivers Of Babylon', 'Brown Girl In The Ring' 'Mary's Boy Child' and 'Rasputin', the group has sold more than 150 million albums and singles worldwide. Boney M was hugely popular in the Soviet Union in the 1970s, although the song 'Rasputin' was banned by the Soviet authorities during the group's concert in Moscow in December 1978.

Bush - The band was formed in London (1992) and was named after the district Shepherd's Bush in London. Dave Parsons (bassist) joined Bush shortly after leaving the band Transvision Vamp. They toured with Nickelback on their 'Here and Now' tour.

Crowded House - The pop/rock band was formed in Melbourne, Australia in 1985. The band's name alludes to the cramped quarters they were sharing whilst recording their album in L.A. They are referred to as '*The Crowdies*' by Australian fans. The track 'Chocolate Cake' is a humorous comment on American excesses that wasn't taken well by some US critics and sections of the American public. Perhaps unsurprisingly it failed to chart in the US. Bassist Nick Seymour, who is also an artist, designed or co-designed all of the band's album covers and interior artwork. He also designed some of the costumes worn by the group, notably those from the cover of the group's debut album *Crowded House*.

Cypress Hill - An American hip-hop group from California, named after a location where the first band members lived, Cypress Avenue, South Gate, Los Angeles. Selling over 18 million albums worldwide, they are one of the most well-known groups in West Coast rap and hip-hop in general. The sound and groove of their music is notable for its spooky sounds, together with bass-heavy rhythms and odd sample loops ('Insane in the Brain' is notable for having a pitched-altered horse neigh looped in its chorus).

David Bowie - David Robert Jones was born in Brixton, London in 1947. He changed his name to avoid confusion with Davy Jones of 'The Monkees'. The Bowie surname is a tribute to the Alamo hero Jim Bowie and his 'Bowie' knife. Bowie received a serious injury at school in 1962 when his friend George Underwood punched him in the left eye during a fight over a girl. Doctors feared he would become blind in that eye. After a series of operations during a four-month hospitalisation, his doctors determined that the damage could not be fully repaired and he was left with faulty depth perception and a permanently dilated pupil. The latter condition has misled some to believe that Bowie has different coloured eyes, when in reality both irises are the same blue colour. Despite their altercation, Underwood and Bowie remained good friends, and Underwood went on to create the artwork for Bowie's early albums. Throughout his career, he has sold an estimated 140 million albums.

Deacon Blue - Formed in Glasgow in 1985, Deacon Blue were one of the top-selling UK bands of the late 1980s and early 1990s. They took their name from the title of a song by Steely Dan (Deacon Blues). Ricky Ross, a former school teacher, was the group's frontman, penning the vast majority of Deacon Blue's songs. He married band member Lorraine McIntosh in 1990. Although the band split in 1994, they held a reunion gig in 1999, and the band continues to tour.

Depeche Mode - Derived from the name of a French fashion magazine, loosely translated meaning 'hurried' or 'fast' fashion.

Dexy's Midnight Runners - Derived from the name of the amphetamine 'Dexedrine', a stimulant often used recreationally to enable long periods of focus / activity.

Duran Duran - Named after the character Dr. Durand-Durand from the science-fiction film 'Barbarella.'

Elton John - Originally named Reginald Dwight, he derived his stage name from the two British musicians Elton Dean and Long John Baldry.

Elvis Costello - Originally named Declan McManus, he derived the stage name from a combination of his grandmother's maiden name and Elvis Presley.

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EMF - An acronym of Epsom Mad Funkers.

Engelbert Humperdinck - Born Arnold George Dorsey. Originally performed as Gerry Dorsey but latterly changed his name to that of the German 'Hansel and Gretel' composer.

Eric Clapton - He was born to an unwed mother. To shield him from the shame, Eric grew up believing that his grandparents were his parents and his mother was his sister.

Eurythmics - This is a respelling of a classical dance and music technique called 'Eurhythmic'.

Everything But The Girl - Named after the slogan on the facade of a shop (Turner's Furniture Store) in Hull, England.

Fleetwood Mac - Record sales exceed 140 million worldwide, and they are ranked No.22 on VH1's 100 Greatest Artists Of Rock & Roll. They derived the name from the surnames of the rhythm section of the band Mick Fleetwood and John McVie. On a US tour in 1971, Guitarist Jeremy Spencer left his hotel to visit a book shop and did not return. He was eventually tracked down and found to have joined the religious group Children of God, and declared that he no longer wanted to be part of the group.

Foo Fighters - A terminology used by WWII fighter pilots to describe the strange flying fireballs they sometimes saw.

Green Day - A slang term referring to a day spent smoking marijuana.

Guns 'n' Roses - This originates from the names of the co-founders of the band Axl Rose and Tracii Guns.

Hall & Oates - In 1984, Hall & Oates surpassed the Everly Brothers as the most successful duo in rock history, having earned 19 gold and platinum awards.

Heaven 17 - A fictional band name mentioned in the record store within the Anthony Burgess novel 'A Clockwork Orange.'

Herman's Hermits - The band commented on lead vocalist Peter Noone's resemblance to the character 'Sherman' in 'Peabody's Improbable History' (a cartoon in the 'Rocky and Bullwinkle' show), however the bassist Karl Green misheard the name as 'Herman', and it stuck ever since.

Iggy Pop - Real name 'James Osterberg'. The stage name derives from his first band name 'Iggy And The Iguanas.'

Jamiroquai - Jay chose this name, 'jam' relating to a favourite style of music and the remainder of the name referring to his empathy toward the Indian Iroquois tribe.

John Denver - Originally named Henry John Deutschendorf Jnr., he used the surname Denver as a tribute to the city he loved.

Keane - Originally named 'Cherry Keane', after an older lady the boys knew when they were younger. 'Cherry' was eventually removed from the name to just become 'Keane'.

Kool & The Gang - The 'Kool' in the name refers to vocalist/bassist Robert 'Kool' Bell. The band started its career as a pure jazz outfit called the 'Jazziacs'.

Level 42 - Named after the supercomputer's response to the ultimate answer to life, the universe and everything, in 'Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy'. The response after 7.5 years calculation was...42.

Linkin Park - Named after Lincoln Park in Santa Monica. The band name was changed as the domain name lincolnpark.com was already taken and they couldn't afford to purchase it at the time.

Lionel Richie - Born Lionel Brockman Richie (Jr). Richie was a star tennis player during high school, and during his music career has enjoyed a remarkable run of 13 consecutive top ten hits, including five number ones.

Little River Band - Named after Little River, Victoria, Australia.

Lynyrd Skynyrd - The band "Lynyrd Skynyrd" took their name from their Physical Education teacher, Leonard Skinner. Skinner had given some of the band members a hard time in school because of their long hair.

M People - Short for Mike's People (referring to the band's founder member Mike Pickering).

Pink Floyd - When they played in front of a large lake at the Crystal Palace Bowl in London in 1970, they played so loud that a number of fish were killed. They allegedly received a bill for the

damage.