

## Rolling Stones Compilations

Once upon a time, it was possible to release a record in the UK that was essentially unavailable to the US market, and vice versa. It was common for Stones albums with the same name to have different track lists in their UK and US releases. This was thought, by record companies, to better appeal to regional tastes in music. This practice was followed for Rolling Stones compilation albums for a number of years.

You already own all the songs, why buy a compilation album? The answer is easy for some of us, “Sure, I own them, but not in this order.” If you find yourself in this group, you are hardcore. I am going to guess that there are very, very few Stones fans hardcore enough to own all 26 (or 27) official and unofficial compilations that have been released—not counting bootlegs.

### It Depends How You Count

Is *Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)* one compilation or two? It has the same name, it must be one. The US release was 221 days before the UK release, it has a different cover and a different track list. It must be two. Is *Flowers* a compilation or simply a US release?

Here, *Big Hits* counts as one official compilation and *Flowers* is a compilation. You are free to count them differently. If you do you will not get to twenty-six.

The most common compilations are the greatest hits or best of collections that bring smiles to the faces of existing fans and offer peripheral fans the opportunity to own some of a band’s best music. Occasionally, a band will offer a singles collection or perhaps a B-sides collection. Rarities are another collection that appeals to existing fans. Collections of radio sessions and elaborate box sets are other examples of compilations.

The one distinguishing characteristic of a compilation album is that such a collection of tracks was not originally intended for release together as a single work. *Hot Rocks 1964-1971* is the Rolling Stones top selling album of all time. Four of the top ten best-selling Stones albums are compilations, the other three are: *Forty Licks* (6), *Jump Back* (8), and *Big Hits (High*

*Tide and Green Grass)* (9).

What may be useful to know is that there were compilations the Stones supported but more which they did not. As of this writing there were twenty-six compilations of Stones music. Twelve did enjoy the official imprimatur of the Rolling Stones and fourteen that did not. The fourteen that do not enjoy the band’s support comprise Rolling Stones music that the Stones do not own. Twenty-seven compilation covers are shown below in chronological order. How many do you own? How many have you never seen before?

## Why Don’t The Stones Own All Their Music?

Dick Rowe was the Decca Records executive who said no to the Beatles. He was not going to repeat that mistake. George Harrison recommended he check out a band at the Crawdaddy Club in London. He did so on May 5, 1963 and within the week the Stones were signed to Decca.



Just a few days earlier Brian Jones had signed a contract between the band and Andrew Loog Oldham and Eric Easton making them the band's managers. Oldham and Easton negotiated a contract with Decca that was very favorable to themselves. Instead of having the Stones sign directly with Decca, Oldham and Easton set up a company, Impact Sound, that retained ownership of the Stones' master tapes and leased them to Decca. Decca distributed Stones music in the U.K, and London, its US affiliate, distributed the music in the U.S.

In 1965 Oldham hired Allen Klein as his business manager, to help him in his power struggle with Easton and to help him renegotiate the record deal with Decca. Klein succeeded in negotiations with Decca and London and the Stones were soon making more than the Beatles. Meanwhile, Klein was not doing badly for himself.

Oldham was forced to resign as Rolling Stones manager in 1967. Decca offered \$800,000 to Oldham if he sold his interests in the band, which included a treasure trove of master recordings. Oldham went to Klein in 1968 and offered the rights to the past and future catalog for \$750,000, as long as Klein paid up immediately. He said yes. Klein then settled with Easton shortly thereafter and was the owner of the Stones catalog through 1971, the end of the current Decca contract. In 1968 Klein also formed **Allen and Betty Klein and Company Industries (ABKCO)**, which owned the master recordings.

The Rolling Stones founded their own label, Rolling Stones Records, in 1970 after their contract with Decca Records expired. Their records were first distributed in the U.S. by Atlantic Records subsidiary Atco Records, then by Atlantic (1973) and finally by Columbia Records (1986). In the UK, EMI was the distributor until CBS Records took over. Rolling Stones Records was discontinued in 1992 when the band signed to Virgin Records.

The Rolling Stones, long since distrustful of Klein, parted ways with him when their contract ended on August 31, 1970. This began a decade of legal struggles between the Stones and Klein, during which Klein released nine compilation albums. ABKCO continued to control the rights to publish the Stones' music and it was Klein who made a fortune off the band's all-time best-selling compilation album, *Hot Rocks 1964–1971*. Klein claimed that some of the *Exile on Main Street* songs had been composed while the Stones were still under contract with ABKCO. ABKCO acquired ownership of the disputed songs and published another Rolling Stones compilation album, *More Hot*

*Rocks (Big Hits and Fazed Cookies)*. In 1974 negotiations over royalties led to a payment of \$375,000 to the Stones and ABKCO's release of yet another Rolling Stones compilation album, *Metamorphosis*. ABKCO, through Decca, would go on to release three more compilation albums and *Rock and Roll Circus*.

ABKCO's non-payment of royalties spurred a 1984 Jagger and Richards suit to break their publishing agreement with ABKCO. The judge encouraged the two sides to reach a settlement. About the same time, the introduction of compact discs in 1986 increased the profitability of the music industry and relations began to improve between the Stones and Klein. By the *Forty Licks* compilation, songs pre- and post-1971 appeared on the same release.

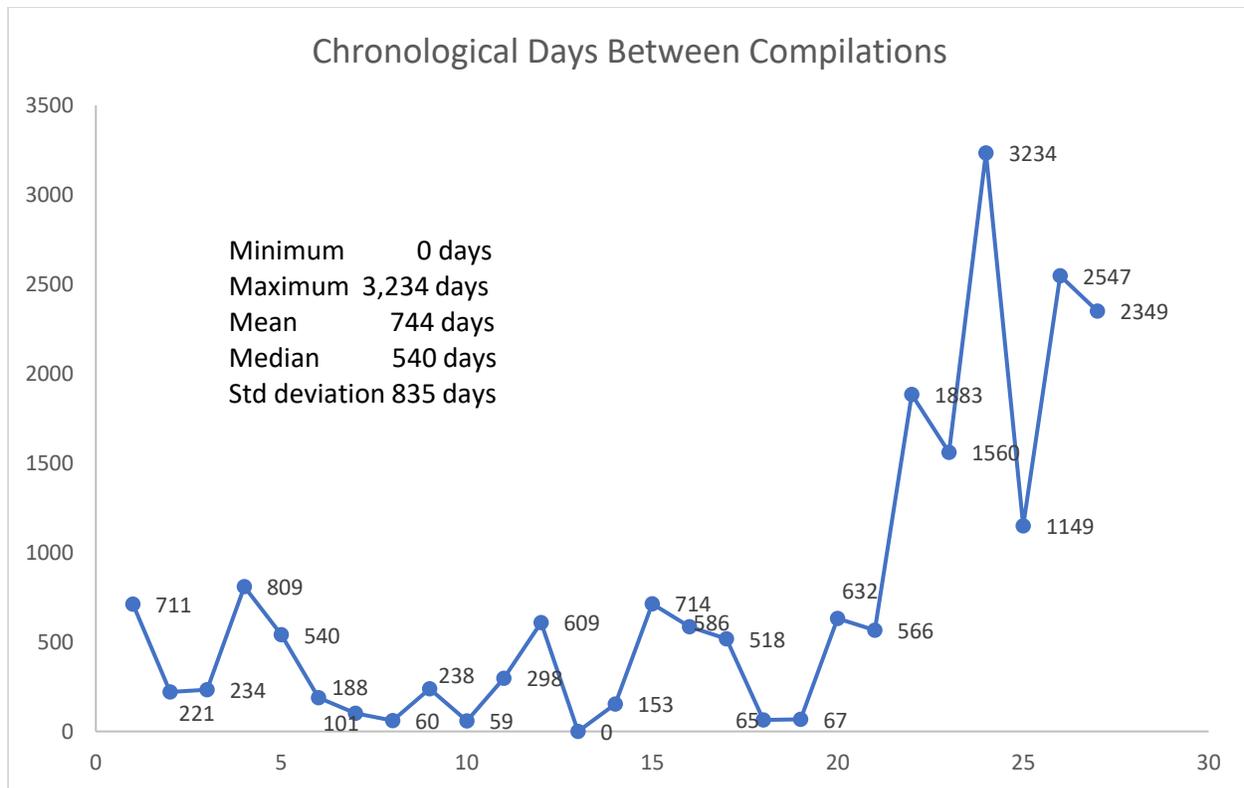
## The Compilations

Wikipedia was the source used for the list of compilations below. Twenty-seven albums are listed, but *Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)* is listed twice. Even though the album covers and track lists differ, this is usually counted as a single compilation for counting purposes.

Album Title	UK Release	US Release	Label
Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)		28-Mar-66	London Records
Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)	4-Nov-66		Decca Records
Flowers	26-Jun-67		London Records
Through The Past, Darkly (Big Hits Vol. 2)		12-Sep-69	Decca Records, London Records
Stone Age	6-Mar-71		Decca Records
Gimme Shelter	10-Sep-71		Decca Records
Hot Rocks 1964-1971	20-Dec-71	1-Jun-90	ABKCO Records, London Records
Milestones	18-Feb-72		Decca Records
Rock 'n' Rolling Stones	13-Oct-72		Decca Records
More Hot Rocks (Big Hits & Fazed Cookies)	11-Dec-72		ABKCO Records
No Stone Unturned	5-Oct-73		Decca Records
Metamorphosis		6-Jun-75	ABKCO Records
Made in the Shade	6-Jun-75	6-Jun-75	Rolling Stones Records
Rolled Gold: The Very Best of the Rolling Stones	6-Nov-75		Decca Records
Get Stoned (30 Greatest Hits)	20-Oct-77		Arcade
Time Waits for No One Anthology 1971-1977		29-May-79	Rolling Stones Records
Solid Rock	28-Oct-80		Decca Records
Slow Rollers	1-Jan-81		Decca Records
Sucking in the Seventies	9-Mar-81	9-Mar-81	Rolling Stones Records
Story of The Stones	1-Dec-82		K-tel
Rewind (1971-1984)	19-Jun-84	19-Jun-84	Rolling Stones Records
Singles Collection: The London Years	15-Aug-89	15-Aug-89	ABKCO Records
Jump Back: The Best of The Rolling Stones	22-Nov-93	24-Aug-04	Virgin Records
Forty Licks	30-Sep-02	30-Sep-02	Virgin, ABKCO, Decca Records
Rarities 1971-2003	22-Nov-05	22-Nov-05	Virgin Records
GRRR!	12-Nov-12	12-Nov-12	ABKCO Records, Universal Music
Honk	19-Apr-19	19-Apr-19	Promotone BV, Universal Music

## Time Between Compilations

The Rolling Stones first compilation album, *Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)*, was released in the US 711 days after their first studio album. The British release of an album by the same name was 221 days later. From 16 April 1964 (release of Rolling Stones first album) through 19 April 2019 (release of *Honk*) a new compilation album was, on average, released every 774 days. Half of all compilations were released in 540 days or less and half in 540 days or more.



The shortest time between compilations was zero days because both *Metamorphosis*, a Klein release, and *Made in the Shade*, a Stones release, were released June 6, 1975. The longest time between compilations was the 3,234 days between the November 22, 1993 *Jump Back: The Best of the Rolling Stones* and the September 30, 2002 *Forty Licks* album. Both were official Stones releases.

### Album Art

Album covers for officially sanctioned Rolling Stones compilations generally had album art that was influenced by the Rolling Stones.

- *Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)*
- *Flowers*
- *Through The Past, Darkly (Big Hits Vol. 2)*
- *Made in the Shade*
- *Sucking in the Seventies*
- *Rewind (1971-1984)*
- *Jump Back: The Best of The Rolling Stones*
- *Forty Licks*
- *Rarities 1971-2003*
- *GRRR!*
- *Honk*

Some of these have been documented in the iorr.org Album Art section. Hopefully, more of these will be documented in the future. The other album covers were created by staff members of the record companies and relatively little is known about how the titles or the album art were chosen. This paper simply attempts to array these album covers for interested fans, because relatively few of us knew there were so many compilations, much less were familiar with the covers of these albums.

In the pages that follow, you will find a reproduction of the front cover of each of these compilation albums along with a release date, label, the number of songs, and which number compilation this album is on the list of all compilations and the list of official compilations.

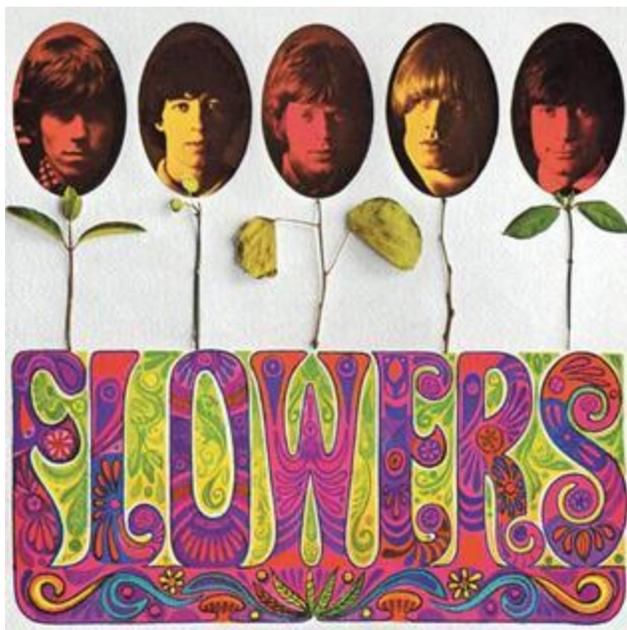
### The Covers



*Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)* is the first compilation album released by the Rolling Stones on London records March 28, 1966. Among its 12 songs there were nine in common with the UK version. Guy Webster is credited with the photograph used on this cover.



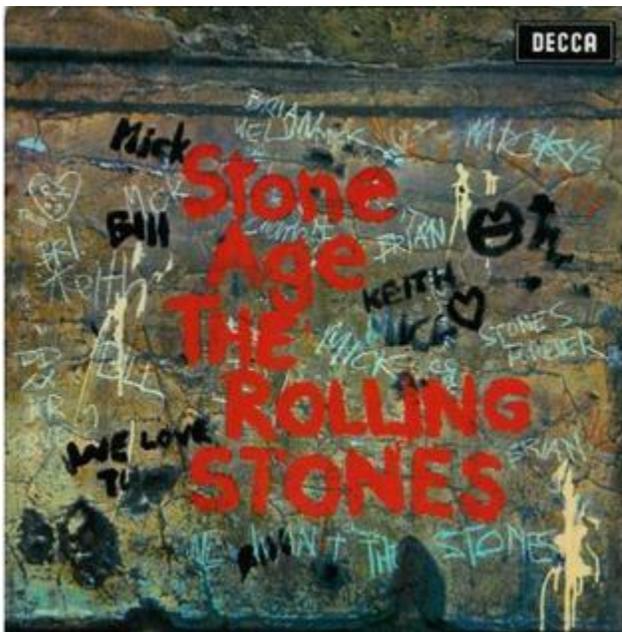
The UK version of the album was released 4 November 1966 by Decca Records. The album included 14 songs. The US and UK albums are treated as different versions of the same compilation and count as only one compilation in the running tally. Jerry Schatzberg took the fisheye lens-view photo used for the album cover in New York City.



26 June 1967 brought the release of *Flowers*, the Stones second compilation album. Among its 12 songs were three that had not been previously released. It was released in the US on the London label. Guy Webster is credited with the headshot photographs of the Stones.

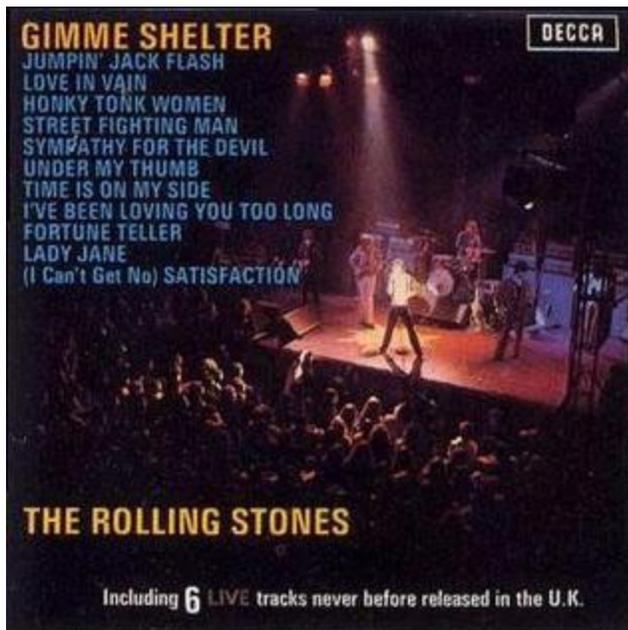


*Through the Past Darkly (Big Hits Vol. 2)* was the third compilation album released by the Stones. It was released by Decca Records in the UK and By London Records in the US on 12 September 1969. The UK Has 12 songs and nine in common with the US version, which contains 11 songs. This was the second British compilation. Ethan Russel is credited with the photographs used on the album.



*Stone Age* is a compilation of Rolling Stones songs released by Decca in the UK on 6 March 1971. The 12 songs had never been released on a studio album in the UK. The Stones strongly opposed the release of this album. They took out full-page ads in the Record Mirror and NME on 20 March 1971 in which they stated, "We didn't know this record was going to be released. It is, in our opinion, below the standard we try to keep up, both in choice of content and cover design.

The Stones had been locked in controversy with Decca over the cover for their *Beggars Banquet* album. Ironically, or perhaps maddeningly, this record label produced compilation emulated the rejected graffiti cover of *Beggars Banquet*. This was the fourth compilation album. The art is credited to the Decca Record Publicity Art Department.



The Stones fifth compilation album was *Gimme Shelter* released by Decca in the UK 16 August 1971. Its 12 songs comprised one side of previously released studio recordings from 1968 and 1969 and a second side of tracks previously released on the US live album *Got LIVE if You Want It!*. This was released a mere six months after the *Stone Age* compilation.

I speculate the cover photo was taken from The Rolling Stones concert of 23 September 1966 at Royal Albert Hall. It was filmed by Peter Whitehead and the cover may well be a still from his 8mm handheld footage of a concert that was preceded by a riot. Below,

find a poster for the Albert Hall Concert.





*Hot Rocks 1964–1971* is a compilation album by the Rolling Stones released by London Records (US) on December 20, 1971. This 22-song two-disc compilation is the best-selling release of the Stones career. It was the sixth compilation album.

The iconic cover photo of silhouettes within silhouettes is by photographer Ron Raffaelli. Rolling Stone was kinder to the cover than the album in their December 20, 1971 review, which said, “So when we look past the magnificent cover depicting the Stones in their numerous roles as ragtag rougues of Merrie Olde, Tangierian travellers, fashion plates, etc., what do we find? “ The rear

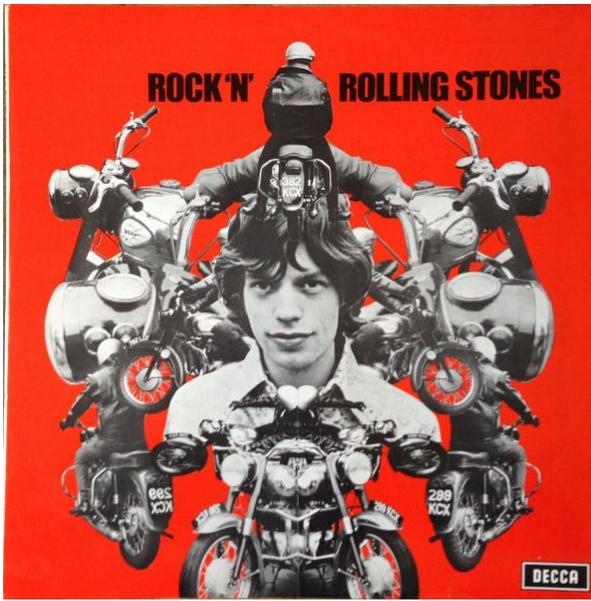
cover and interior shots are attributed to Michael Joseph, some from the Swarkstone Hall photoshoot for *Beggars Banquet*.



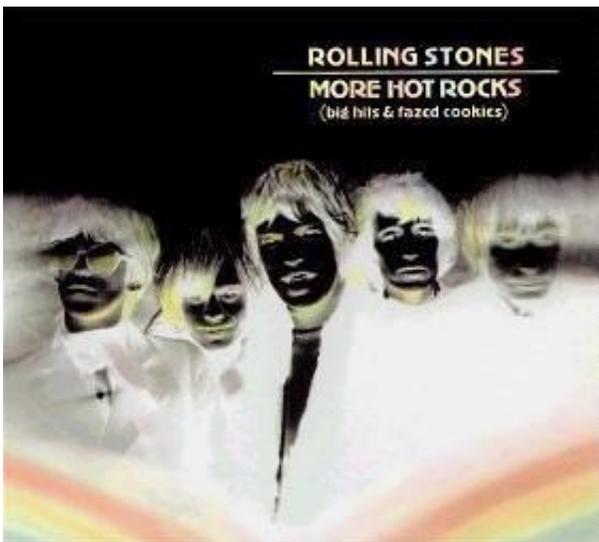
*Milestones* is the seventh compilation of Rolling Stones songs. It was released by Decca Records (UK) on February 18, 1972. It was released by Decca without the consent, support, or input from the Stones and includes 12 songs.

The Stones lost all rights to releases of their own music created before 1971 as a result of their early contract. The rights to that music are held jointly by ABKCO and Decca Records. Both of these labels would continue to release Stones compilation albums over several decades without input from or support from the band. Cover credit is unknown, likely an Omega man file photo

used by Decca.



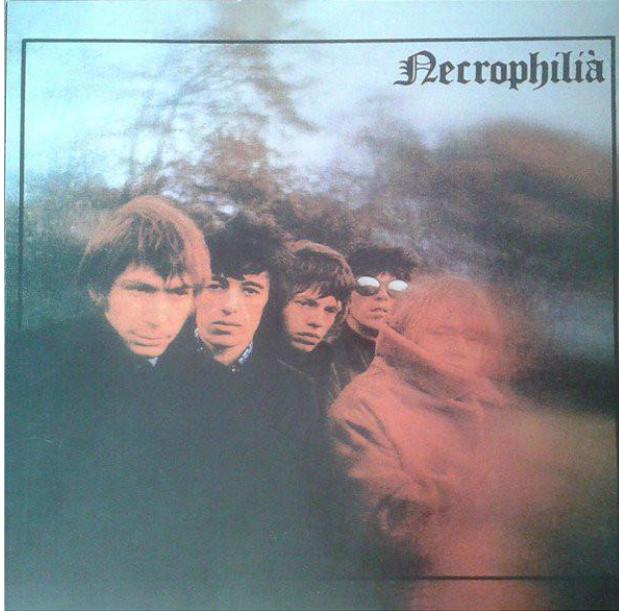
*Rock 'N' Rolling Stones* is a 12-song compilation released by Decca (UK) on 13 October 1972. This was the eighth Rolling Stones compilation and the second compilation released by Decca after the end of their 1971 contract with the Stones. It had a bit of a Chuck Berry Theme with five covers and several other songs Berry could have easily done. Cover credit is unknown, that is probably for the best. Who would want this in their portfolio.



*More Hot Rocks (Big Hits and Fazed Cookies)* was compilation number nine, released by London Records (US) December 11, 1972. This was a two-disc 25-song follow-up to the Stones most successful record ever.

Andrew Loog Oldham got involved with this project which was originally to include unreleased/discarded material. The original title was to have been *Necrophilia*, the Oldham project got reworked into the record seen at left. Gered Mankowitz is credited with album photography.

Wikipedia offers this on the liner notes by the imitable Andrew Loog Oldham: "way back when / the sleepy owls of the [brill building](#) / [brillcreamed](#) and braincreamed that melody was coming back / and lo it had / it flew past their windows yesterday / as [Paulie](#), a [bebeatled](#) ballade / [Lennon's](#) advocate for the [Kalin Twins](#) (who is the other [jaggered](#) half?) / seen so far away / and today will never come to the [Judas Iscariots](#) / who mock the hands that feed them / from here within / [December's Children](#) and the [Aftermath](#) of the war of the parking lots / stay away from new caddies, they're faulty / stick with our original [edsel](#) / the 17 + 8 / 8 from the brown cookie bag baked yesteryear and preserved and never before sold in your local deli / that remained (excuse me Mr [Gershwin](#), I need another [dime](#)) standards of yesterday and now / [good times](#), [bad times](#) to you all and [have you seen your mother baby, balling in the alley](#)"



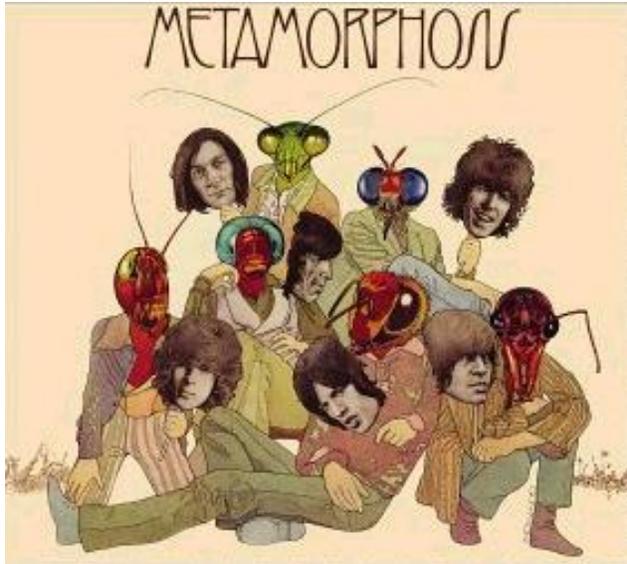
*Necrophilia* is the compilation that wasn't. Gered Mankowitz was the photographer.



*No Stone Unturned* is the tenth compilation album. It was released by Decca (UK) on 5 October 1973 with 12 songs. The music was mostly B-sides and Sad Day was released as a single. Neither the album nor the single enjoyed the support of the Stones. Notice the female hand on Keith's back and again, holding the binoculars, that hand is Keith's. David Bailey was the photographer who shot the record sleeve for the single "Jumping Jack Flash." Photos from that shoot were used for this album.







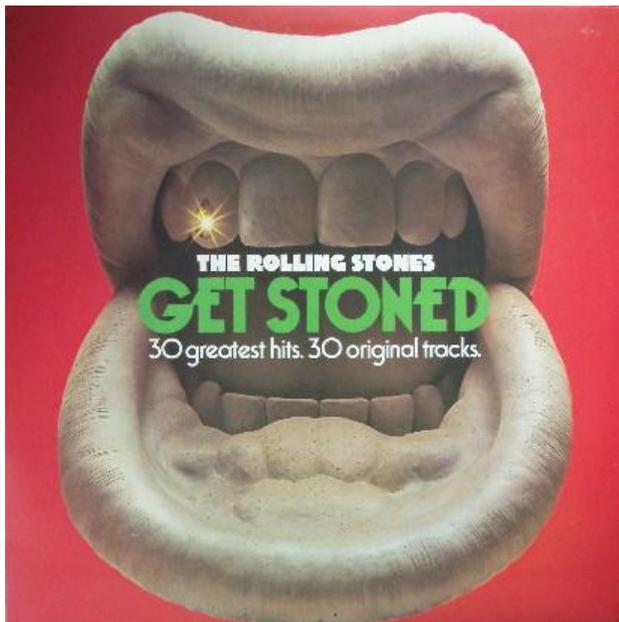
On June 6, 1975 *Metamorphosis* was released by ABKCO (US) as the eleventh Stones compilation. Its 16 songs are outtakes and alternate versions of other songs, recorded from 1964 to 1970. Linda Guymon is generally recognized as the cover artist. This cover has six Stones.



*Made in the Shade*, released June 6, 1975 was the first official Stones compilation released with their blessing since *Through the Past Darkly* in 1969 and the fourth official compilation overall. It was also their first compilation with Atlantic Records. The 10 songs on this album comprise the twelfth Stones compilation. Christian Piper is credited with the painting of a photograph that adorns this cover.



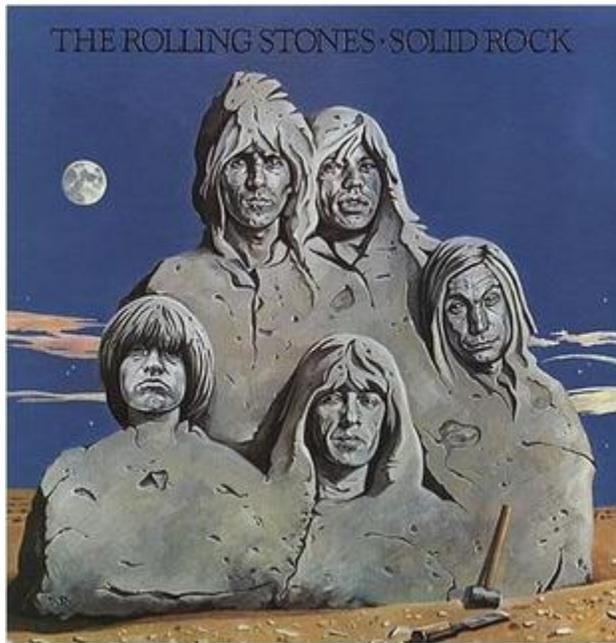
*Rolled Gold The Very Best of the Rolling Stones* was the thirteenth compilation released on 15 November 1975. This was another unapproved Decca (UK) release, that consisted of two discs and 28 songs. Bill Picknell is credited with sleeve design. Dave Johnson and Laurie Richards were responsible for the typography and Roy Carr added extensive liner notes. This cover has six Stones.



*Get Stoned (30 Greatest Hits)* was released Oct 20, 1977 by the Arcade (UK) label. Arcade is a label that specializes in compilations. This four-disc 30-song compilation was number fourteen in The Rolling Stones canon.

Arcade Records was a British record company that specialized compilation albums. It relied heavily on promotion through TV and radio ads. Oldham produced this compilation, so I speculate without evidence he may have had some involvement in the cover design, which goes uncredited.





On October 10, 1980 Decca issued its first compilation in five years. *Solid Rock* is compilation sixteen and it contains 15 songs available on many records. The cover was designed by David Dragon.

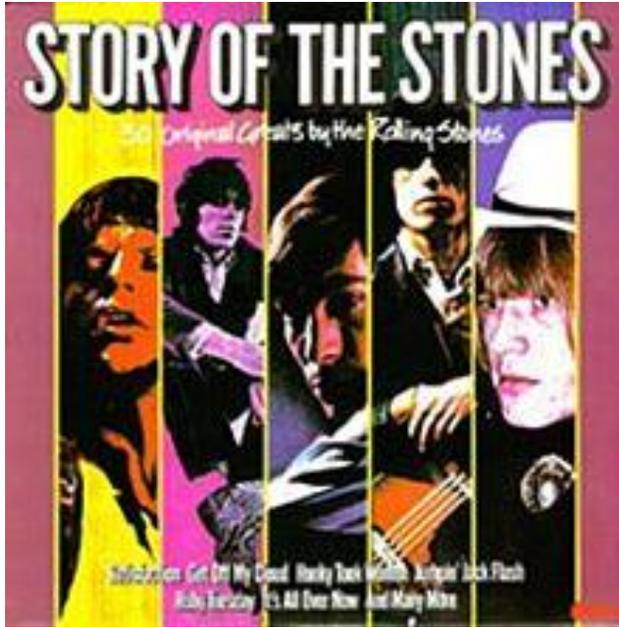




Decca (UK) was back at it January 1, 1981 when they released *Slow Rollers*, a compilation album of 14 ballads in follow-up to the Solid Rock compilation of [rock and roll](#) numbers a year earlier. This included the first international release of the Italian version of "As Tears Go By," ("Con le mie lacrime"). This was the last Decca compilation of Rolling Stones recordings and the seventeenth overall. The photo was shot by Gered Mankowitz. Decca got some mileage out of his early work.



*Sucking in the Seventies* is the fifth official compilation album by The Rolling Stones it was released 14 April 1981. Its ten songs were from *It's Only Rock 'n Roll* (1974), *Black and Blue* (1976), *Some Girls* (1978) and *Emotional Rescue* (1980) recording sessions. It is the eighteenth compilation of Stones recordings. I was unable to learn anything about the cover artist.



The Irish arm of the mail order company K-tel produced the nineteenth compilation. *Story of The Stones* was released December 1, 1982 in the UK. in 1982. The two disc 30-song release covered Stones recording through 1969. Acrobat Design is credited with this cover with “Story of the Stones” sleeve notes by John Tobler.



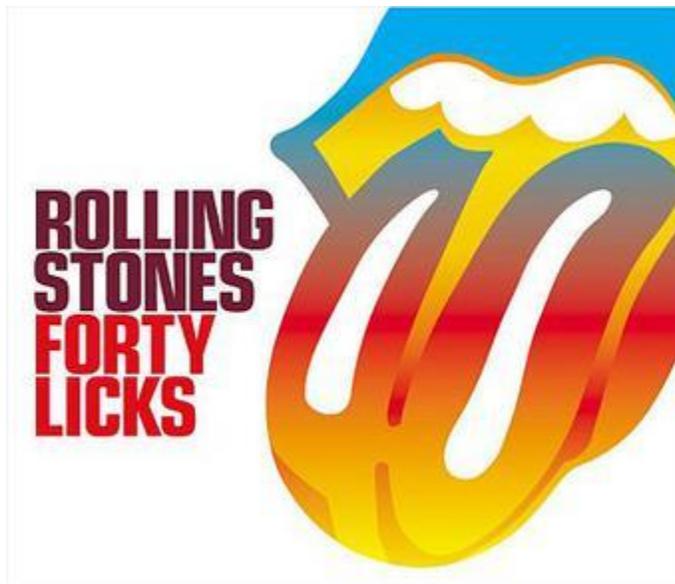
*Rewind (1971–1984)* was the twentieth compilation and the sixth official compilation. Released 2 July 1984 it was only three years since the previous official compilation. It marked the end of the band's alliance with Warner Music in North America and EMI in all other territories, both of whom distributed Rolling Stones Records. It was the second Stones album to include a lyric sheet. *Some Girls* was the first.

For the first time since *Through the Past, Darkly (Big Hits Vol. 2)*, the UK (12 tracks) and US (11 tracks) editions of *Rewind (1971–1984)* had different track listings (nine in common) to reflect the tastes of the two territories. *Rewind* was the first official

release of a Stones album in the new CD format in the US.

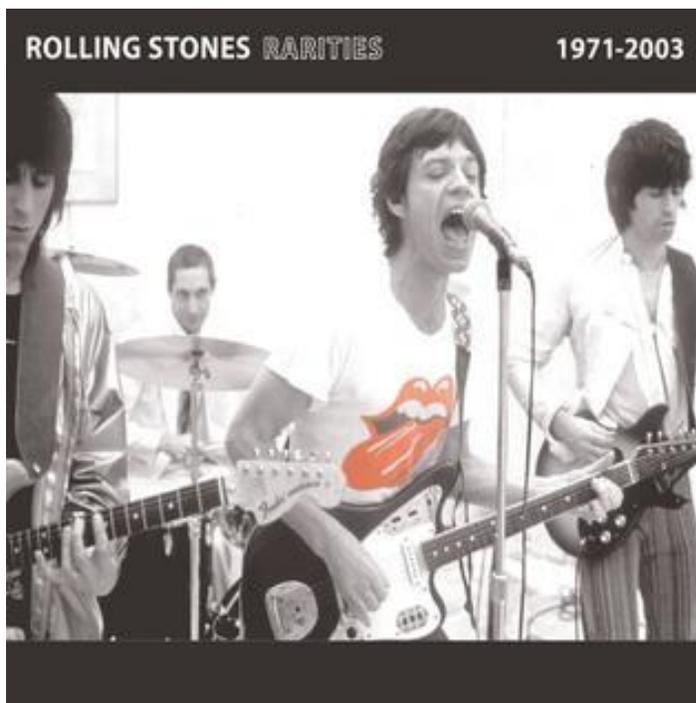
Marlene Cohen is credited with the cover concept. Photography for the cover was by Ken Regan. The *Rewind* video was painted by Paul Walton. Paint Box artwork was by Ada Whitney.





*Forty Licks* is a three LP compilation of 40 songs released by The Rolling Stones. It was released 30 September 2002 by a devil's compromise among Virgin, ABKCO, and Decca Records. The 40 licks covered 40 years and it was the first compilation that combined music from the Stones formative [Decca/London](#) (now licensed by [ABKCO Records](#)), with their post-Decca material, distributed at the time by [Virgin/EMI](#). Four new songs are included. This was the ninth official compilation and number twenty-three overall. Tom Hingston Studio produced the album cover art. David Wild wrote

the narrative for the booklet that included numerous archival photographs.



On 21 November 2002, Virgin released a 16-song 2LP compilation called *Rarities 1971–2003*. This tenth official compilation was unique in that the coffee chain Starbucks aided distribution in North America. As its name suggests it features rare and obscure material that included several B-sides. Not found on other albums.

Track 3, "Wild Horses" (live), from the successful album [Stripped](#), and Tracks 6 and 15, which are taken from the 1981 compilation [Sucking in the Seventies](#), might not be considered rarities because they appeared on previously released albums. It was the twenty-fourth compilation.

The cover image is a

“photoshopped” version of a 1978 Michael Putland photograph from the music video for “Respectable”. It shows the four current members of the band. Bill Wyman was removed from the original photo seen in the *Forty Licks* booklet seen below. Harsh!



GRRR! was either a 50-song 5 LP or an 80 track official release by the Stones (no. 11) to commemorate the band's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was released 9 November 2012 in Europe and three days later for the rest of the world. ABKCO distributed the album. It featured two new songs and was the twenty-fifth Stones compilation album. Walton Ford created the album art.

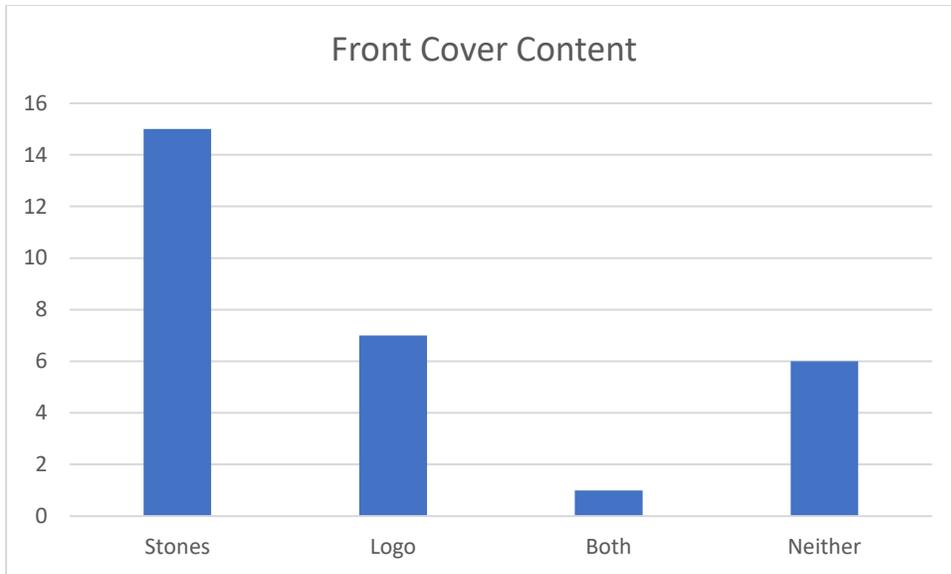


The twenty-sixth compilation was Honk, released 19 April 2019 by Promotone BV and Universal Music. This 4 LP set, the twelfth official compilation by the Stones, features tracks from each of their studio albums since 1971. It includes all 18 tracks from the 1993 compilation *Jump Back*. The standard edition includes 36 tracks and the deluxe edition adds 10 bonus tracks of recent live recordings. Tobias Hall of Debut Art created the art for this cover.

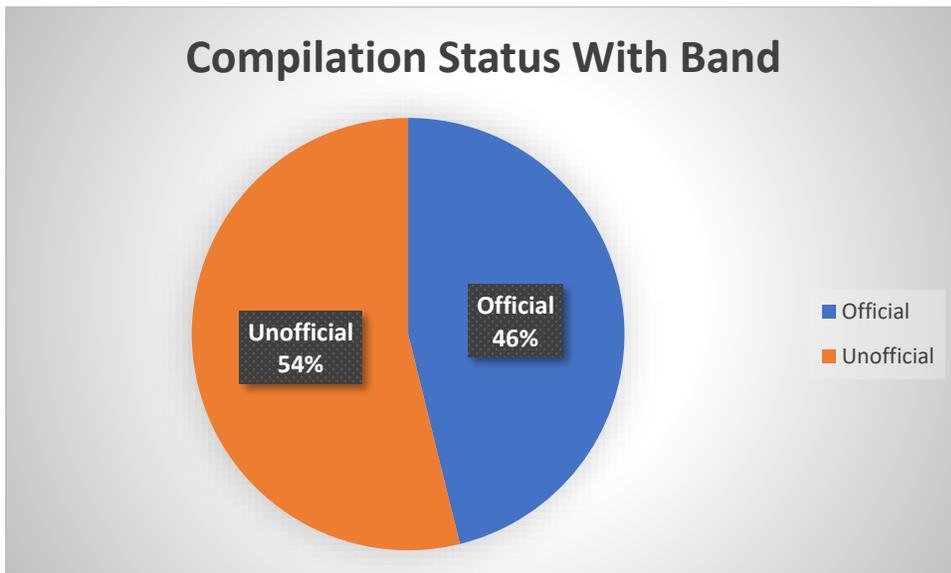
### Trends

Apparently for no other good reason than the database used to generate these simple graphics count both versions of *High Tide* these statistics are based on 27 compilations unlike the above which followed the convention of counting *High Tide* as a single album.

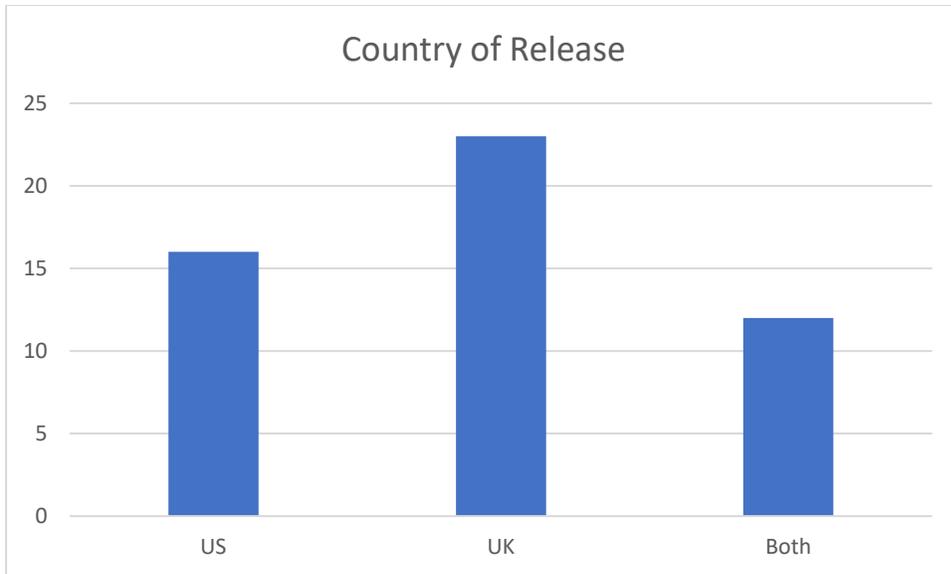
The Stones themselves were the most common feature of 15 compilations. Some version of the logo appears on seven albums. Six covers have neither the band nor the logo on the front and only one compilation has both. Rarities has both, sorta. It shows four Rolling Stones on the cover and officially that is how many Stones there were when the album was released. But Bill Wyman appeared on the actual phot and was removed from the album cover. So, if you like, feel free to insist that no compilation has both the band and the logo on it.



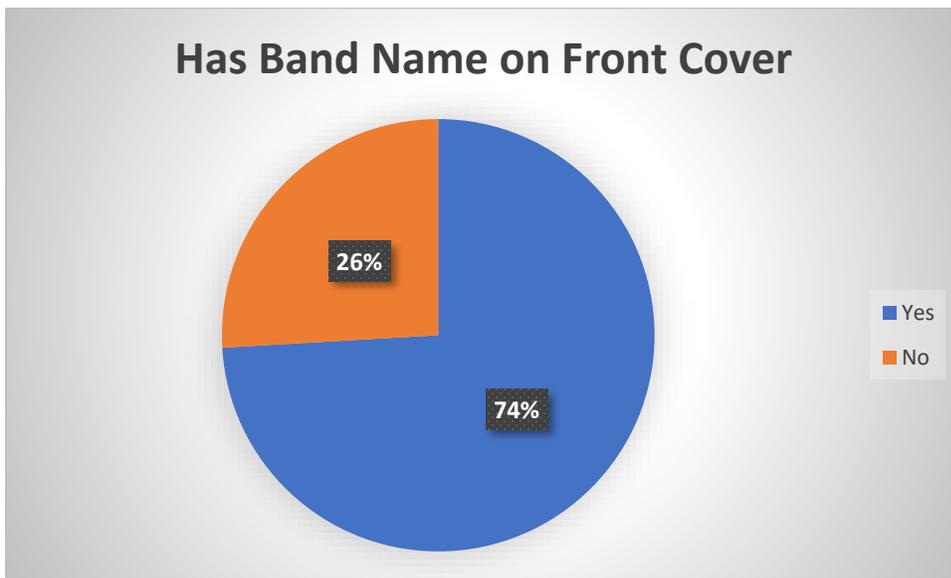
Twelve of the 26 compilations (counting High Tide as one) were official, the other 14 were not official band-sanctioned albums.



Sixteen compilation albums were released in the US and 23 were released in the UK. Twelve were released in both countries.



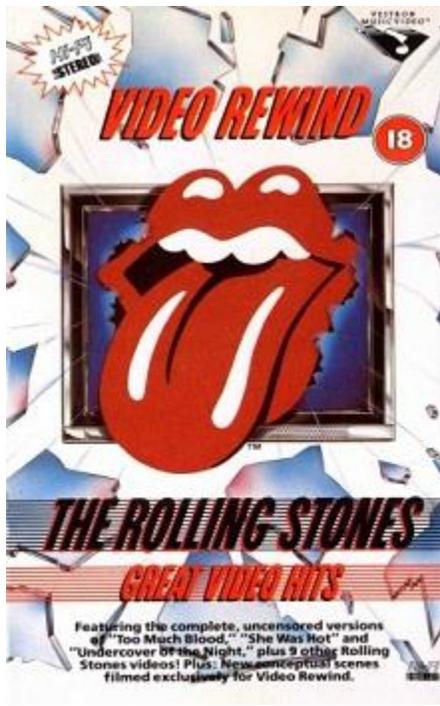
Twenty albums show the words “Rolling Stones” on the front cover and seven do not.



Wikipedia and Discogs will tell you what songs were on each album. Bootleg recordings expand the compilations collection almost infinitely.

#### **An Exception**

Video Rewind, The Rolling Stones Great Video Hits, issued in 1984, may warrant some mention, but certainly now for its album art. As the name describes, this is a compilation of video clips. They were recorded between 1972–1984. The rear of the VHS version touts the compilation as “A collector’s edition of sex, blood, and rock ‘n roll from the world’s most outrageous band.”



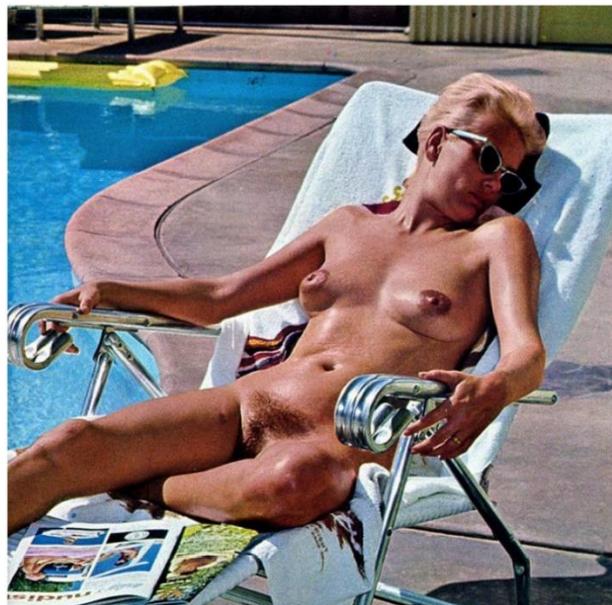
What is unique about this compilation is that director Julien Temple developed a framing story to introduce the videos.

Bill Wyman conceived and developed this compilation. It begins with Wyman dressed as a museum guard walking through the [British Museum](#). He finds a closed storage room, which he accesses with his [American Express Gold Card](#). He wanders the rock memorabilia in the room then sits at a computer and plays the first video. After this first video, he goes to an exhibit in the room, pulls a cloth off it to reveal Mick Jagger in [suspended animation](#). Wyman wakes Jagger and they go wander through the exhibit playing videos on a microwave, an old TV and Wyman's computer. The story ends when real museum guards crash through the exhibit's locked door. They carry Wyman off leaving Jagger still in the exhibit glass. The image fades and we find Jagger waking Wyman backstage because it is time to go on. Parts of the video are available on Youtube. You can also find Laserdisc, Beta, VHS< DVD and other versions at Discogs.

## The Artists

The artists for these album covers spanned the range from anonymous to world famous. Many of the early albums were shot by people who are now recognized as the grandmasters of rock royalty photography. Shooting the Stones gave the careers of each of these people a big boost.

June 6, 1975 was a good day for compilation album covers. My two favorites appeared that day. Linda Guymon, who presumably created the insect Stones remains a mystery woman. In 1978 an album called *Steve Allen Presents Linda Guymon* was released. The album is described



as easy listening. It was released around the time of *Metamorphosis* and if Linda was multi-talented, it may be the same person. I have found nothing about her in my searches.

German-born Christian Piper, now deceased, created the art for *Made in the Shade*. He also worked on *Tattoo You*. His painting for the *Made in the Shade* cover is an imaginative modification of a nude photograph of Joyce Long.

*Rock 'N' Rolling Stones* and *Get Stoned (30 Greatest Hits)* have to be the worst cover art to adorn a Stones album and they would be contenders for worst art ever.

### **Last Word**

In an age where anyone can create their own compilations of any artists and any length, it feels a little antiquated to speak about compilations. In their day, they were a great way to add to your record collection. 'One hit wonders' is a term reserved for bands that managed to have only one song achieve hit status. Their numbers are legion. There were even more LPs that were one hit wonders; records with only one song worth listening to. These were the artists made for compilations. We will all have different ideas about who those groups were. The important thing is that compilations gave us access to some of the best music of our lives.

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