

old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics

old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics have become iconic in the realm of American folk and country music, capturing the hearts of listeners worldwide. This article delves into the full lyrics of the song "Wagon Wheel," famously performed by Old Crow Medicine Show, exploring the meaning behind the words and the cultural impact of the track. Additionally, the article covers the origins of the song, its lyrical themes, and how it has influenced both fans and other artists. Understanding the old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics offers insight into the narrative storytelling tradition in country music. The song's catchy chorus and memorable verses have made it a staple at concerts, sing-alongs, and music festivals. Below is a detailed table of contents to guide you through the exploration of this popular song.

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Background and Origins of "Wagon Wheel"

The song "Wagon Wheel" is widely recognized as one of Old Crow Medicine Show's most significant hits. However, its origins trace back to an unfinished chorus written by Bob Dylan during the 1973 sessions for his album "Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid." Years later, Ketch Secor, a member of Old Crow Medicine Show, completed the song by adding verses and refining the melody. This collaboration across generations has contributed to the song's distinctive blend of folk, country, and bluegrass influences.

The old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics reflect a journey theme, evoking images of travel, longing, and the American South. The band's energetic performance style helped propel the song to widespread acclaim, cementing its place in modern Americana music.

Bob Dylan's Contribution

Bob Dylan originally wrote the chorus and a rough melody for "Wagon Wheel" during a recording session but left the song incomplete. His fragment

consisted mainly of the lines:

- "Rock me mama like a wagon wheel"
- "Rock me mama any way you feel"

This partial work laid the foundation for Old Crow Medicine Show's full version.

Old Crow Medicine Show's Completion

Ketch Secor discovered Dylan's chorus on a bootleg recording and was inspired to expand it into a complete narrative. The band's version adds verses describing a traveler's journey from the Carolinas to Tennessee, blending storytelling with traditional American folk sounds.

Complete Old Crow Medicine Show Wagon Wheel Lyrics

The old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics tell a heartfelt story through vivid imagery and repetitive, catchy refrains. Below is the full set of lyrics that have resonated with audiences worldwide:

1. Headed down south to the land of the pines

And I'm thumbin' my way into North Carolina

Starin' up the road and pray to God I see headlights

2. I made it down the coast in seventeen hours

Pickin' me a bouquet of dogwood flowers

And I'm a-hopin' for Raleigh, I can see my baby tonight

3. **Chorus:**

So rock me mama like a wagon wheel

Rock me mama any way you feel

Hey mama rock me

Rock me mama like the wind and the rain

Rock me mama like a south-bound train

Hey mama rock me

4. Runnin' from the cold up in New England

I was born to be a fiddler in an old-time string band

My baby plays the guitar, I pick a banjo now

5. Oh, the North country winters keep a-gettin' me now

Lost my money playin' poker so I had to leave town

But I ain't a-turnin' back to livin' that old life no more

6. **Chorus:**

So rock me mama like a wagon wheel

Rock me mama any way you feel

Hey mama rock me

Rock me mama like the wind and the rain

Rock me mama like a south-bound train

Hey mama rock me

7. Walkin' to the south out of Roanoke

I caught a trucker out of Philly had a nice long toke

But he headed west from the Cumberland Gap

To Johnson City, Tennessee

8. And I gotta get a move on fit for the sun

I hear my baby callin' my name and I know that she's the only one

And if I died in Raleigh, at least I will die free

9. **Chorus:**

So rock me mama like a wagon wheel

Rock me mama any way you feel

Hey mama rock me

Rock me mama like the wind and the rain

Rock me mama like a south-bound train

Hey mama rock me

10. *Instrumental outro with chorus repeats*

Analysis of the Lyrics and Their Meaning

The old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics tell a story of travel, longing, and a search for home. The narrator is a wanderer making his way southward, guided by both hope and memory. The chorus's repeated request to "rock me mama like a wagon wheel" symbolizes a desire for comfort and stability amidst constant movement.

Key themes within the song include:

- **Journey and Movement:** The lyrics describe traveling through various regions, highlighting the American South's cultural landscape.
- **Longing and Love:** The narrator expresses a deep yearning to reunite with a loved one, which motivates his journey.
- **Freedom and Escape:** References to leaving behind hardships and seeking a new life underscore the song's emotional core.

The song's structure, with its simple verses and memorable chorus, makes it accessible and easy to sing along, contributing to its widespread appeal.

Symbolism in the Chorus

The phrase "rock me mama like a wagon wheel" uses metaphorical language to evoke the gentle motion of a wagon wheel rolling down the road. This imagery conveys both physical movement and emotional reassurance, suggesting that the narrator seeks a soothing presence amid the uncertainties of travel and life.

Regional References

The lyrics mention specific locations such as North Carolina, Raleigh, Roanoke, and Johnson City, Tennessee. These references ground the song in real places and highlight the journey through the Appalachian region, an area known for its rich musical heritage. This regional specificity enhances the authenticity and relatability of the story told through the old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics.

Cultural Impact and Popularity

Since its release, the old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics have become emblematic of modern Americana music and have influenced numerous artists and listeners alike. The song's infectious melody and heartfelt lyrics have made it a staple at music festivals, bars, and gatherings across the United States and beyond.

Old Crow Medicine Show's version of "Wagon Wheel" helped revive interest in traditional folk and bluegrass music, blending contemporary sensibilities with classic storytelling techniques. This rejuvenation has paved the way for other artists in the genre to gain mainstream attention.

Cover Versions and Adaptations

Many artists have covered "Wagon Wheel," further cementing its place in popular culture. Notably, Darius Rucker's country rendition reached the top of the charts, introducing the song to a broader audience. These covers often maintain the core old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics while adding unique stylistic elements.

Use in Media and Events

The song is frequently featured in films, television shows, and commercials, underscoring themes of Americana, travel, and heartfelt emotion. Its sing-along quality makes it a favorite choice for community events and celebrations, where the old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics serve as a unifying anthem.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Song

Understanding the context and nuances of the old crow medicine show wagon wheel lyrics often prompts common inquiries. Below are several frequently asked questions with informative answers.

1. Who originally wrote "Wagon Wheel"?

The chorus was written by Bob Dylan, and the full song was completed by Ketch Secor of Old Crow Medicine Show.

2. What is the meaning behind "rock me mama like a wagon wheel"?

It is a metaphor for seeking comfort and reassurance while traveling through life's uncertainties.

3. Why has "Wagon Wheel" become so popular?

Its catchy melody, relatable story, and blend of traditional and modern musical styles have made it widely appealing.

4. Are there any notable cover versions?

Yes, Darius Rucker's version is one of the most well-known covers and brought the song to mainstream country audiences.

5. What genres does "Wagon Wheel" belong to?

It is primarily classified as Americana, folk, bluegrass, and country music.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the meaning behind the lyrics of Old Crow Medicine Show's 'Wagon Wheel'?

'Wagon Wheel' tells the story of a man traveling south to see a woman he loves, capturing themes of longing, travel, and hope. The lyrics evoke a sense of Americana and the journey home.

Who originally wrote the lyrics to 'Wagon Wheel' performed by Old Crow Medicine Show?

The chorus and melody of 'Wagon Wheel' were originally sketched by Bob Dylan, and Old Crow Medicine Show's Ketch Secor completed the song by adding verses and arranging it into its current form.

What are some popular lines from Old Crow Medicine Show's 'Wagon Wheel' lyrics?

Popular lines include 'Rock me mama like a wagon wheel, rock me mama any way you feel' and 'So rock me mama like the wind and the rain, rock me mama like a south-bound train.'

How do the lyrics of 'Wagon Wheel' reflect traditional American folk themes?

The lyrics reflect themes of travel, love, and resilience, common in American folk music, using imagery like the wagon wheel and references to the southern United States.

Are there any notable differences between Bob Dylan's original 'Wagon Wheel' lyrics and Old Crow Medicine Show's version?

Bob Dylan's original was an unfinished fragment with only the chorus, while Old Crow Medicine Show added verses that tell a complete story, expanding the song into the full narrative known today.

Why has 'Wagon Wheel' by Old Crow Medicine Show become such a popular sing-along song?

'Wagon Wheel' features a catchy, repetitive chorus and relatable storytelling, making it easy and enjoyable for audiences to sing along, especially in social and live music settings.

Can you explain the significance of the 'rock me mama' line in the 'Wagon Wheel' lyrics?

The 'rock me mama' line is a metaphor for seeking comfort and movement, symbolizing both the physical motion of travel and emotional support during the journey.

How have the lyrics of 'Wagon Wheel' influenced modern country and folk music?

'Wagon Wheel' has helped popularize a blend of traditional folk storytelling with modern country sounds, inspiring many artists to embrace nostalgic themes and simple, catchy melodies.

Additional Resources

1. Wagon Wheel: The Story Behind the Song

This book delves into the origins and evolution of the beloved song "Wagon Wheel," tracing its roots from Bob Dylan's original lyrics to Old Crow Medicine Show's popular rendition. It explores the songwriting process, cultural impact, and the song's journey through American folk and country music. Readers gain insight into how a simple tune became an anthem for road trips and heartfelt storytelling.

2. Old Crow Medicine Show: The Rise of a Modern Folk Band

This biography chronicles the formation and rise of Old Crow Medicine Show, highlighting their influences, musical style, and dedication to preserving traditional American folk music. The book includes interviews, anecdotes, and a look at the band's discography, including the making of "Wagon Wheel." Fans will appreciate the behind-the-scenes perspective on the band's creative process.

3. *Lyrics and Legends: The Stories Behind Country's Greatest Hits*

Focusing on iconic country songs, this book examines the narratives and meanings behind famous lyrics, including "Wagon Wheel." It offers context about the artists, songwriters, and historical moments that shaped these tracks. The book is perfect for music lovers interested in the storytelling aspect of country music.

4. *American Folk Revival: Music, Culture, and Community*

This comprehensive study explores the American folk music revival of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, with Old Crow Medicine Show as a key example. It discusses how traditional songs like "Wagon Wheel" have been reinterpreted for modern audiences. The book also addresses the cultural significance of folk music in American identity.

5. *Highway Songs: Soundtracks for the Open Road*

Dedicated to songs inspired by travel and the open road, this book features "Wagon Wheel" as a quintessential road trip anthem. It analyzes lyrics that evoke feelings of movement, freedom, and longing. Readers will find playlists, artist profiles, and stories about the role of travel in songwriting.

6. *The Art of Songwriting: Crafting Timeless Lyrics*

This guide offers techniques and insights into songwriting, using "Wagon Wheel" as a case study for effective lyric writing. It explores rhyme schemes, storytelling, and melody integration. Aspiring songwriters can learn how to create songs that resonate emotionally and stand the test of time.

7. *Country Roads and Memories: Music of the American South*

Examining the musical heritage of the American South, this book highlights how songs like "Wagon Wheel" reflect regional culture and history. It covers genres such as bluegrass, country, and folk, emphasizing their interconnectedness. The book also discusses how musicians draw from traditional themes to create new works.

8. *From Dylan to Old Crow: The Evolution of a Classic Tune*

This focused analysis traces the transformation of "Wagon Wheel" from Bob Dylan's unfinished sketch to Old Crow Medicine Show's hit version. It includes musical breakdowns, lyrical comparisons, and commentary on how collaboration can breathe new life into a song. The book is ideal for music historians and fans alike.

9. *Strings and Stories: Instruments of American Folk Music*

Highlighting the instruments commonly used by Old Crow Medicine Show, this book explores the role of banjo, fiddle, guitar, and mandolin in creating the sound of "Wagon Wheel." It provides historical context for these instruments and their influence on American folk music. Musicians and enthusiasts will appreciate the detailed explanations and illustrations.

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