

*A short biography of Mick Jagger from <http://www.sing365.com>.*

The celebrated singer of the Rolling Stones, Mick Jagger - born Michael Philip Jagger on 26 July 1943 in Dartford, Kent, England - has become less a pop star than a media icon. Initially a shy, middle-class student at the London School of Economics, his love of blues, distinctive vocal style and charismatic stage persona marked him out as an original. The image of Jagger has arguably been as crucial to the ultimate long-term success of the Rolling Stones as the quality of their songwriting and music. The antithesis of the pretty-boy lead vocalists of the era, Jagger's demeanour, rubber lips and scarecrow body were initially greeted with bemusement by the pop magazines of the time. What Jagger did was to reinforce those apparent pop star deficiencies and, with remarkable effect, transform them into commodities. The lascivious stage presence was emphasized to such a degree that Jagger became both an appealing and strikingly odd-looking pop star. His self-reconstruction even extended as far as completely altering his accent.

Jagger's capacity to outrage the elder members of the community in the 60s was perfected in his highly energetic dervish-like stage persona, anti-authoritarian stance and unromantic songwriting. In songs such as "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction", "Get Off Of My Cloud" and "19th Nervous Breakdown", Jagger was irreverent about sex, women, religion and even life itself. He was, undoubtedly, one of rock's most underrated and nihilistic lyricists. The force of his negative catechism was, of course, complemented by the musical contribution of Keith Richards, the architect behind the Rolling Stones' most memorable melodies. Jagger was also assisted by the quality of his players, especially Bill Wyman, Charlie Watts, Brian Jones and, later, Mick Taylor. From the mid-60s onwards the rebellion implicit in Jagger's lyrics was reflected in increasingly bizarre real life situations. From urinating against an East London garage wall to drug sessions and short-term imprisonment, Jagger came to embody the changing social values and bohemian recklessness that characterized the rock culture of the 60s. It must also be said that he performed a similar role in the 70s when his broken marriage, jet-set romances and millionaire seclusion in exotic climes typified the complacency of the musical elite of the period.

The barometer of his time, Jagger yet resisted the temptation to branch out from the Rolling Stones into too many uncharted areas. An appearance in the movie *Ned Kelly* revealed that he was unable to come up with a convincing Australian/Irish accent. The experiment was not repeated. Jagger was even less concerned about expressing himself in a literary form, unlike others of his generation. The most articulate of the Rolling Stones has frankly admitted that he could not even remember sufficient details of his life to pen a ghosted biography.

That peculiar combination of indolence and disinterest may have kept the Rolling Stones together as a performing unit, for Jagger studiously avoided customary rock star solo outings for virtually 25 years. When he finally succumbed to the temptation in the late 80s, the results were insubstantial. Apart from a small handful of tracks, most notably the driving "Just Another Night", the albums "She's The Boss" and "Primitive Cool" proved disappointing. Jagger's third solo album, 1993's "Wandering Spirit", left his critics once again unmoved.

Jagger once stated that he would retire before middle age for fear that the Rolling Stones might become an anachronistic parody of themselves. These days such fears appear to have been banished as the band are still recording and undertake regular high-grossing US and European stadium tours. Away from the band the new millennium saw a blitz of Jagger-related stories, including his high profile separation from Jerry Hall, his production debut on the movie "Enigma", and a credible new solo album, "Goddess In The Doorway".