

# Springsteen's Hungry Heart

How do you remain a rock god for more than 40 years? You ride the Zeitgeist, play your politics, and don't apologize for the house in Beverly Hills. Bruce Springsteen, who releases his fifteenth studio album this week, may be a blue-collar troubadour, but he's also a savvy caretaker of his own image. **BY IRA BOUDWAY**

STUDENT OF ROCK

**SEPTEMBER 23, 1949**  
Born in Long Branch, New Jersey, to Doug and Adele Springsteen.

**1955**  
Enters school at St. Rose of Lima. **"I don't remember anything nice about it."**

**1964**  
Joins his first band, the Rogues. Over the next eight years, he will change his bands seven times: Castiles (Beatles style); Earth, Child, and Steel Mill (all Eric Clapton style); Dr. Zoom and the Sonic Boom, and the Bruce Springsteen Band (both Joe Cocker style); and the E Street Band.

**1968**  
Drops out of Ocean County Community College after fellow students petition for his dismissal on grounds of **"unacceptable weirdness."**

**SUMMER 1969**  
Exempted from the draft by failing army physical and purposefully flubbing the questionnaire. **"Even said I was a homo and all that."**

THE NEW DYLAN

**JANUARY 5, 1973**  
**Greetings From Asbury Park, N.J.**  
Sales: 2 million. The first in a **ten-album deal with Columbia Records** inked by A&R man John Hammond, who had signed **Bob Dylan**.

**SEPTEMBER 22, 1979**  
During a show at MSG, he spots an **ex-girlfriend** in press row, pulls her onstage and has her **thrown out of the building**.



**JUNE 2, 1978**  
**Darkness on the Edge of Town**  
Sales: 3 million.

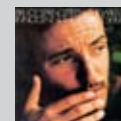


**AUGUST 25, 1975**  
**Born to Run**  
Sales: 6 million. Appears simultaneously on the covers of *Newsweek*—"the great white hope of rock and roll"—and *Time*—"a glorified gutter rat." *Rolling Stone* says the album "pays off on every bet ever placed on him."

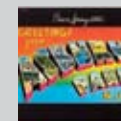
**APRIL 1974**  
Meets 26-year-old music writer **Jon Landau** before a show in Cambridge, Mass. Landau: **"I saw rock-and-roll's future and its name is Bruce Springsteen."** Landau helps produce *Born to Run* and manages Springsteen over the next seven albums.

BECOMING THE BOSS

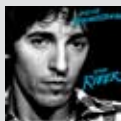
**SEPTEMBER 11, 1973**  
**The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle**  
Sales: 3 million. *Creem* magazine: "Either a flawed work of genius or else a work of flawed genius."



**JUNE 14, 1973**  
Opens for Chicago at Madison Square Garden. **Gets booed; says he never wants to play big venues again.**



**APRIL 17, 1980**  
The New Jersey General Assembly proposes that he be named **"New Jersey Pop Music Ambassador to America."** The proposal fails.



**OCTOBER 10, 1980**  
**The River**  
Sales: 5 million. The *New York Times*: "One can only listen to so many portentous piano and organ introductions, pregnant opening lines, and soul ballad chord progressions."

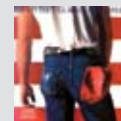
DARK INTERLUDE I



**SEPTEMBER 20, 1982**  
**Nebraska**  
Sales: 1 million. *Rolling Stone*: "A shock, a violent, acid-etched portrait of a wounded America."

THE MTV ICON

**JUNE 4, 1984**  
**Born in the U.S.A.**  
Sales: 15 million.



**SEPTEMBER 1984**  
George Will: "If all Americans ... made their products with as much energy and confidence as Bruce Springsteen and his merry band make music, there would be no need ... to be thinking about protectionism." Six days later, **Ronald Reagan praises him from the stump.**

**MAY 13, 1985**  
Weds **25-year-old Julianne Phillips**, star of TV movies *Summer Fantasy* and *His Mistress*. **Fans boo** when Bruce mentions Phillips.

## THE BOSS BY THE NUMBERS

- Total records sold **63.5 MILLION**
- All-time sales rank **14** (tied with Madonna)
- Platinum albums **17**
- Top-ten albums **13**
- No. 1 albums **7**
- Top-ten singles **12** ➤ No. 1 singles **0**
- Grammys **18** ➤ Oscars **1**
- Performances at the Meadowlands **54**
- ... at Madison Square Garden **37**
- ... at Giants Stadium **19**
- ... at the Stone Pony **76**
- *Rolling Stone* covers **14**
- Marriages **2** ➤ Children **3**
- Rank in 2006 *Forbes* Celebrity 100 **11** (\$55 MILLION)
- Current seven-album record deal **\$110 MILLION**
- Gross earnings from 2007-8 tour **\$204 MILLION**

**AUGUST 1988**  
Phillips files for divorce, after it's apparent Springsteen and bandmate Patti Scialfa have begun an affair. Later, to *Rolling Stone*: **"I didn't really know how to be a husband."**

**OCTOBER 1989**  
**Fires the E Street Band.**  
Bruce: "I wanted to get rid of the old expectations. People were coming to my shows expecting to hear *Born to Run* or stuff that I wrote fifteen or twenty years ago."

THE FALLEN IDOL

**OCTOBER 9, 1987**  
**Tunnel of Love**  
Sales: 3 million.



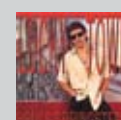
**NOVEMBER 10, 1986**  
**Live/1975-1985**  
Sales: 13 million (most ever for a box set). The *New York Times*: "The pop-record equivalent of an epic American novel."

**DECEMBER 1985**  
James Wolcott in *Vanity Fair*: "Piety has begun to collect around Springsteen's curly head like mist around a mountaintop."

**APRIL 1990**  
Purchases a **\$14 million estate in Beverly Hills**. *Entertainment Weekly* cover: **"What Ever Happened to Bruce?"** Bruce: "I've made a lot of money and I bought a big house. And I love it."



**MARCH 31, 1992**  
**Human Touch and Lucky Town**  
Combined sales: 2 million. The *New Yorker*: "To release one mediocre album would have been bad enough, but to expect people to respond to two fairly uninspired works simultaneously takes a kind of chutzpah that is surprising in Bruce Springsteen."



**FEBRUARY 28, 1995**  
**Greatest Hits**  
Sales: 4 million. **Reunites with the E Street Band** to record three new songs.

**MAY 2002**  
The activist group Independence for New Jersey launches a drive to put Springsteen's name on the ballot as a **possible candidate for U.S. Senate**.

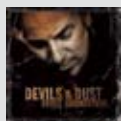


**JULY 30, 2002**  
**The Rising**  
Sales: 2 million. Slate: **"The Poet Laureate of 9/11."** *Time* puts Bruce on the cover again with the headline **"Reborn in the U.S.A."**

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2001**  
Opens the *America: A Tribute to Heroes* telethon for victims of 9/11 with a performance of "My City of Ruins."

**JUNE 2000**  
**Mayor Giuliani criticizes Springsteen** for his song "American Skin (41 Shots)," about the shooting of Amadou Diallo by four city cops.

**APRIL 26, 2005**  
**Devils & Dust**  
Sales: 500,000.



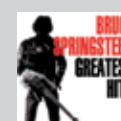
**APRIL 9, 1999**  
Opens the Reunion Tour with the E Street Band in Barcelona.

THE ELDER STATESMAN

**NOVEMBER 21, 1995**  
**The Ghost of Tom Joad**  
Sales: 500,000. *Rolling Stone*: "Among the bravest works that anyone has given us this decade."



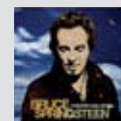
DARK INTERLUDE II



**OCTOBER 2, 2007**  
**Magic**  
Sales: 1 million. Pitchfork: "A surprisingly complex album that recalls *The River* in its heartfelt populism."



**JANUARY 18, 2009**  
Performs "The Rising" at Obama's inauguration concert at the Lincoln Memorial.



**JANUARY 27, 2009**  
**Working on a Dream**  
Will kick off this latest release by playing the halftime show at Super Bowl 43 this Sunday.

**INFLUENCES** ➤ **ELVIS PRESLEY** "Man, when I was 9, I couldn't imagine anyone not wanting to be Elvis Presley." ➤ **CHUCK BERRY** Springsteen and the E Street Band once played as Berry's backup, and Springsteen borrowed the song title "Downbound Train." ➤ **FLANNERY O'CONNOR** He began reading her work after watching *Wise Blood*, and later adopted the title from her story "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" for one of his songs. ➤ **JOHN STEINBECK** Springsteen's 1995 release *The Ghost of Tom Joad* refers to the *Grapes of Wrath*

character and his famous farewell. In 1996, he received the first John Steinbeck Award. ➤ **JOHN FORD** "It was fascinating to me how he would film the same scene—a dance scene or a confrontation—and make it different in every picture." ➤ **TERRENCE MALICK** Malick's 1973 film *Badlands*, a fictionalized account of a Nebraska murder spree, led Bruce to recount the same story in his song "Nebraska."

## THE LANGUAGE OF BRUCE

Springsteen has written 256 songs, totaling 63,263 words.

HIS TOP-TEN FAVORITES:

- NIGHT DOWN BABY** <sup>373</sup>
- MAN GIRL LIGHT DAY LOVE TOWN DREAM** <sup>317</sup>
- MAN GIRL LIGHT DAY LOVE TOWN DREAM** <sup>222</sup>
- MAN GIRL LIGHT DAY LOVE TOWN DREAM** <sup>207</sup>
- MAN GIRL LIGHT DAY LOVE TOWN DREAM** <sup>193</sup>
- MAN GIRL LIGHT DAY LOVE TOWN DREAM** <sup>188</sup>
- MAN GIRL LIGHT DAY LOVE TOWN DREAM** <sup>175</sup>
- MAN GIRL LIGHT DAY LOVE TOWN DREAM** <sup>169</sup>
- MAN GIRL LIGHT DAY LOVE TOWN DREAM** <sup>132</sup>

HIS WOMEN:

- MARY JANNEY** <sup>53</sup>
- KITTY ROSIE SANDY CANDY SHERRY FRANKIE JENNY WENDY CHERY** <sup>23</sup>
- KITTY ROSIE SANDY CANDY SHERRY FRANKIE JENNY WENDY CHERY** <sup>10</sup>
- KITTY ROSIE SANDY CANDY SHERRY FRANKIE JENNY WENDY CHERY** <sup>9</sup>
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HIS CARS:

- CADILLAC** <sup>20</sup>
- FORD** <sup>6</sup>
- BUICK CHEVY MERCEDES HARLEY DODGE** <sup>3</sup>
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- BUICK CHEVY MERCEDES HARLEY DODGE** <sup>2</sup>
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HIS HAUNTS:

- LAS VEGAS** <sup>10</sup>
- JERSEY** <sup>8</sup>
- SAIGON** <sup>5</sup>
- MEMPHIS SAN DIEGO NEW YORK PITTSBURGH** <sup>3</sup>
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