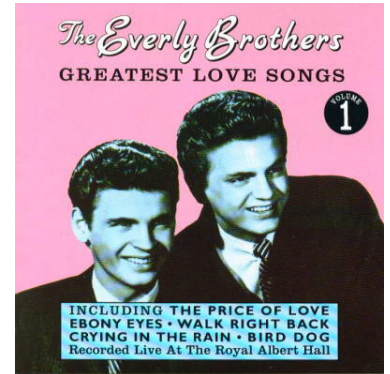


## Lyricaly challenged in Wilhelmshaven - Paul Levitt

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Trawling once again for untold recollections of PRS, I recalled how I wasn't any good at music, either at PRS in 1960 (the only three terms I spent there) or at any other school for that matter. I didn't mind singing so much, although a fellow choirboy who welcomed me to my first choir practice with the words, 'What,...Levitt,...he can't sing', didn't do a lot for my confidence at the time. Maybe he was right because to this day, a music sheet to me is like being confronted by a strange foreign language. But that didn't stop me from enjoying the hymns we sang at PRS on Sunday mornings. I'll come to that in a minute.

The Everleys Despite the best efforts of our music teacher, Mr. Evans, the only music I really understood in 1960 were the pop hits brought to us courtesy of BFN. Were no marks given for the subject at PRS, or was I so bad that I simply didn't get any mark, I ask myself. Anyway, at the risk of outraging the countless PRS Elvis fans of the day (hi Norm), my favourites were the Everly Brothers. Yes, I know that the emerging Cliff and all of the others were fab, but for me these two haunting voices were the tops. I think it was a combination of their original brand of music, lyrics I could understand, and their special blend of harmony. And just as Elvis was widening the generation gap, Don and Phil were filling it in. Ironically, as if to underline the passing of an era, they stopped performing together at around the time of PRS' closure.



On the subject of lyrics, the quality of audio equipment wasn't great in those days and I was not the only one who would struggle to guess what certain words were being sung by some recording artists. I remember my sister Judy and her friend Adrienne Murray trying to fathom out what word rhymed with "oetry" in the song, "Oetry in motion", one that even I had managed to work out! They used to borrow a much sought after record player from a kind hearted first former (hi DG) to play songs over and over again. Must have driven their ma-tron nuts!

Another musical PRS memory locked away for 44 years was a magical end-of-term performance by two fifth-form Drake boys, Charlie 'Chas' Arthur and Jimmy Mellor. We had just had our house prize giving and we juniors were all sat around in our pyjamas and dressing gowns like eager revelers at the last-night-at-the-proms. Up stepped these two brilliant young guitarists (all of 15, I should think) and they really set the stage alight. Neither was there any playbaking in those days! At 12 years of age, this was the first 'live performance' I had ever seen.

The next one was when the Everly Brothers came to Hull in the early sixties. The queue wound about three times around the ABC cinema. Now a teenager, I was finally about to see my definitive pop idols. The curtain drew back and the lonely figure of one of the brothers walked up to the microphone and sang the words, "I'm so lonely without Don," adapted from the first line from their hit song, 'No One Can Make My Sunshine Smile'. It turned out that only half of the famous duo had turned up to perform, the missing twin was apparently affected by the stress of a long tour. To be frank, listening to one half of a harmonizing duo wasn't half as exciting as the twanging of the two Drake boys' guitars had been.

Now back to the Sunday church services at PRS, when the boys and girls sat in their respective halves of the nave and let it rip to the music of hymns like, 'Welcome Day of The Lord'. At one point in this particular hymn, the boys and girls would each sing alternate verses and during our break from singing all eyes would stray over to the other side of the aisle, finally coming to rest on someone who we fancied. Mine inevitably came to rest on a pretty Drake classmate from my year, and we made our own brand of music in Churchill during the big picture one Saturday night. No doubt the real reason why I even include singing among the many pleasurable experiences I had at PRS!