

## The Killers

**WebQuest Description:** The Killers are an Alternative Rock band who formed in 2001 and have 4 albums

**Grade Level:** 6-8

**Curriculum:** Art / Music

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[www.tinyurl.com/about-killers](http://www.tinyurl.com/about-killers)

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### Introduction

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The Killers are an American rock band from Las Vegas, Nevada that was formed in 2001, by Brandon Flowers (lead vocals, keyboards) and Dave Keuning (guitar, backing vocals). Mark Stoermer (bass, backing vocals) and Ronnie Vannucci Jr. (drums, percussion) would complete the current lineup. The group's debut album, *Hot Fuss* (2004) brought the band mainstream success. The Killers' second album, *Sam's Town*, was released in 2006, and compilation album *Sawdust* containing B-sides, rarities, and unreleased material, was released in 2007. Their third studio album, *Day & Age*, produced by Stuart Price, was released in 2008.

### Tasks

Born on June 21, 1981 in Las Vegas, Brandon Richard Flowers is the youngest of six children. Having grown up in the small town of Nephi, Utah, his best chances of getting into music were the cassettes given to him by his older brother, Shane. However, during Brandon's junior year in high school, the Flowers family returned to Las Vegas. While playing in various keyboard bands as side hobbies (most notably the failed band *Blush Response*), Brandon worked as a bellhop at the Gold Coast and Caesar's Palace hotels. In 2002, abandoned by *Blush Response*, Brandon attended an Oasis concert and was inspired to dedicate his musical career to a full-fledged rock band. Later that year, he responded to a scouting ad submitted to a local Vegas newspaper by Dave Keuning and the two began writing songs almost immediately. Enter Mark Stoermer and Ronnie Vannucci, long-time admirers of Brandon and Dave's early efforts, who struck up a friendship with the aspiring rockers and completed the musical quartet that brought new-found glory home to Las Vegas: the Killers. The rest, as they say, is history...

Flowers married his longtime girlfriend Tana Mundkowsky on August 2, 2005 on the island of O'ahu in Hawaii. Brandon and his wife have three sons, Ammon (named after a Book of Mormon prophet), born July 14, 2007, Gunnar, born July 28, 2009, and Henry, born March 6, 2011. Flowers' mother, Jean Flowers, died on February 11, 2010, after a two-year battle with brain cancer. She was 64. Flowers is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Flowers supports the English major football club, Liverpool FC.

### Process

Keuning was born in Iowa City, Iowa and raised in nearby Pella, Iowa before leaving to Las Vegas. Dave Keuning started to play guitar just before entering Pella Community High School where he played in the jazz band under the direction of Dick Redman. He went to Community College in Iowa and dropped out of his music major there before moving to Las Vegas to find work. He found work at the Banana Republic store in The Venetian Hotel and casino. Dave has one son, Kyler Keuning who was born in 2005. Dave currently spends his time between his homes in San Diego and Las Vegas.

The band began when Keuning placed an ad in the *Las Vegas Weekly* which read: "Seeking musicians for all original band. Influences: Oasis, Smashing Pumpkins, Bowie, Radiohead." Shortly, Brandon Flowers answered the ad and the two began practicing and writing together only to be joined by the other two band members. Their first demos included the hit "Mr. Brightside" which Keuning wrote the guitar to before meeting Brandon Flowers.

Dave Keuning is quoted as saying, "To this day, Angus Young is my favorite guitarist," ... "He plays the guitar to the max, you know? But it's funny: that's just not me. My fingers just don't move like that. Consequently, my mind doesn't think like that when I'm playing with the Killers. I probably think more like the Edge; I think of sounds and moods more than I think of figures and patterns. And it seems to work for the Killers, so, you know, why mess with it?"

He is noted as a guitarist for playing anthemic and soaring solos in addition to sweetened and often percussive style playing frequently compared to contemporaries The Edge and Johnny Marr. Dave is also noted for his "unusual voicings" and "digit-distending, string-skipping" finger work on the guitar in similar fashion of Andy Summers of The Police.

### Evaluation

Mark Stoermer was born in Texas to an Australian father and an American mother, they moved to Las Vegas when Stoermer was

three years old. His father was a big band style musician. Stoermer graduated from Chaparral High School in 1995, where he played trumpet in the Jazz ensemble. His early musical influences included Hip-hop bands such as Public Enemy and N.W.A. and later rock bands such as Nirvana, The Beatles and Pink Floyd. Stoermer began playing lead guitar for a number of local bands including Habit Rouge and The Negative Ponies. It was while playing with The Negative Ponies that he met Dave Keuning and Brandon Flowers who were performing as an early incarnation of The Killers. He was a fan of the band's unique sound and was often present at the band's gigs. In September 2002 he was offered the opportunity to become the band's permanent bass player, he accepted and completed the band's line up along with Ronnie Vannucci Jr.. Before The Killers got signed, Stoermer worked as a medical courier. Stoermer also studied Philosophy at UNLV and took music classes while in the marching band there. Mark was featured on the cover of Bass Guitar Magazine in June 2009 and has been interviewed by other major bass guitar publications including Bass Player Magazine. Mark Stoermer mainly plays with a pick. He says "I love the punch and grit of a pick. . . I do a lot of unconscious palm muting. I love how you can instantly get that clunky tone with shorter notes. It's a great sound."

He also aims to make the bass a "half percussion instrument and half melodic instrument". Stoermer feels that "You can add to a song's melodic side without taking away from the vocals. That's my favorite kind of bass playing." His signature bass sound, featured in songs including "Jenny Was a Friend of Mine", "Somebody Told Me", "Move Away", "Forget About What I Said", and "Joy Ride" has influenced many other bands and even a genre of music in bass-driven New Wave/Synth Rock.

[edit] Influences Mark Stoermer cites influences such as Noel Redding of the Jimi Hendrix Experience, John Entwistle of The Who, and Paul McCartney. He also lists as influences The Cure, U2, and New Order.

Category and Score					Score
				Total Score	

## Conclusion

Vannucci was born to an American couple with Italian and German ancestry. He began drumming at an early age and continued to perform from age 6 on. He was a part of his junior high school's jazz ensemble and later attended both Clark and Western High School. He would later finish his B. A. with a focus on percussion at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas on May 14, 2011 while The Killers were on hiatus. Vannucci played in various popular local bands in Las Vegas including Attaboy Skip (which also included Branden Campbell), Expert on October (which also included Taylor Milne and Ted Sablay). He also studied percussion at UNLV. Vannucci was working as a photographer at Chapel of the Flowers, a wedding chapel on the Las Vegas Strip when he joined Dave Keuning and Brandon Flowers who had recently begun performing as The Killers, he had met the pair while playing drums for Romance Fantasy. They would practice at Vannucci's garage, and then in the UNLV band room after hours in 2002 and 2003. He is married to Lisa Vannucci with whom he lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, and Park City, Utah. The Vannuccis were married May 2, 2003. Vannucci mainly plays with his kit set up using a jazz technique with a high stool and hitched-up snare stand. He attributes this to his 6'1" frame, a former teacher who whipped him, and the examples of great drummers including Mitch Mitchell and many jazz performers. He is known for crashing his hi-hats, skillful sixteenth notes, and a fluid playing style. Drummer Magazine labels them a "few distinctive hallmarks [that] help characterize Ronnie's style". Vannucci and his fellow band mate, bassist Mark Stoermer, have what they consider a rewarding relationship musically. Of Stoermer, Vannucci has said, "He almost intuitively knows what I am going to play and his parts are so rhythmic its a joy to dance around him I really enjoy thinking up parts with him. . . it works very well for us." Influences Vannucci cites influences such as jazz legend Papa Jo Jones, Mitch Mitchell of The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Keith Moon of The Who, and John Bonham of Led Zeppelin. He also lists as influences The Cure, U2, Depeche Mode and more modern drummers including Charley Drayton, Steve Jordan, and Ahmir Thompson.

## Teacher Page

The Killers are performing at the orlando calling at the citrus bowl with a bunch of other bands. they play November 12 2011

### Standards

### Credits

### Other

### Credits

Created by Jack Garraty Sources are from Wiclopedia and imdb Photos from google images and bing images

### Albums

Hot Fuss1.

"Jenny Was a Friend of Mine" &nbsp;  
Flowers, Stoermer  
4:04

2.  
"Mr. Brightside" &nbsp;  
Flowers, Keuning  
3:42

3.  
"Smile Like You Mean It" &nbsp;  
Flowers, Stoermer  
3:54

4.  
"Somebody Told Me" &nbsp;  
Flowers, Keuning, Stoermer, Vannucci  
3:17

5.  
"All These Things That I've Done" &nbsp;  
Flowers  
5:01

6.  
"Andy, You're a Star" &nbsp;  
Flowers  
3:14

7.  
"On Top" &nbsp;  
Flowers, Keuning, Stoermer, Vannucci  
4:18

8.  
"Change Your Mind" &nbsp;  
Flowers, Keuning  
3:11

9.  
"Believe Me Natalie" &nbsp;  
Flowers, Vannucci  
5:05

10.  
"Midnight Show" &nbsp;  
Flowers, Stoermer  
4:02

11.  
"Everything Will Be Alright

#### Sam's Town

No.  
Title  
Writer(s)  
Length

1.  
"Sam's Town" &nbsp;  
Flowers  
4:06

2.  
"Enterlude" &nbsp;  
Flowers  
0:49

3.  
"When You Were Young" &nbsp;  
Flowers, Keuning, Stoermer, Vannucci

3:40

4.

"Bling (Confession of a King)" &nbsp;    
Flowers, Stoermer

4:08

5.

"For Reasons Unknown" &nbsp;    
Flowers

3:32

6.

"Read My Mind" &nbsp;    
Flowers, Keuning, Stoermer

4:06

7.

"Uncle Jonny" &nbsp;    
Flowers, Keuning, Stoermer

4:25

8.

"Bones" &nbsp;    
Flowers, Stoermer, Vannucci

3:47

9.

"My List" &nbsp;    
Flowers

4:08

10.

"This River Is Wild" &nbsp;    
Flowers, Stoermer

4:38

11.

"Why Do I Keep Counting?" &nbsp;    
Flowers

4:24

12.

"Exitlude" &nbsp;    
sawdust

"Tranquilize" (Flowers)

"Shadowplay" (Curtis/Sumner/Hook/Morris)

"All the Pretty Faces" (Flowers/Keuning/Stoermer)

"Leave the Bourbon on the Shelf" (Flowers)

"Sweet Talk" (Flowers/Keuning/Stoermer/Vannucci)

"Under the Gun" (Flowers/Keuning)

"Where the White Boys Dance" (Flowers)

"Show You How" (Flowers)

"Move Away" (Flowers/Keuning/Stoermer)

"Glamorous Indie Rock and Roll" (Flowers/Keuning/Stoermer/Vannucci)

"Who Let You Go?" (Flowers/Keuning/Stoermer/Vannucci)

"The Ballad of Michael Valentine" (Flowers/Keuning)

"Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town" (Tillis)

"Daddy's Eyes" (Flowers)

"Sam's Town (Abbey Road Version)" (Flowers)

"Romeo and Juliet" (Knopfler)

"Change Your Mind (U.K. bonus track)" (Flowers/Keuning)

"Mr. Brightside (Jacques Lu Cont's Thin White Duke Remix)" (Flowers/Keuning)

No.

Day & Age

Length

1.



Rock music in the 21st century has been subject to an unprecedented emotional arms race of Cold War proportions. Displaced from its traditional role of party music by dance and hip-hop, rock has focused more than ever on introspection, aiming for resonant feelings rather than escapist fun. Hence, pop-punk has given way to emo, hard rock acts dust off the power ballad to get airplay, and groups like Coldplay and Green Day fill stadiums with soul-searching anthems. It's only natural that the emotional ante would be rapidly rising, until it reaches the climax of triggering arena-rock's nuclear option: The Boss.

The Killers would seem unlikely participants in the battle to protect The Great American Rock Song, having drawn more comparisons to Duran Duran than Bob Seger on their awkwardly-titled debut *Hot Fuss*. But for all the band's synth-pop dressings, their greatest success, both artistically and commercially, was with "Mr. Brightside", a woe-is-me epic that skillfully deployed the group's flimsy new-wave organ to shift the song into a second gear of cinematic sorrow. No dummies, the Killers choose to stay on the horse that got them to the A-list with *Sam's Town*, spending an entire album looking to build on that track's unabashed glory and so drafting as their muse someone who knows a bit about glory, one Bruce Springsteen.

#### Sawdust

They can be taught! What separates the Killers from contemporaries such as the Bravery and Panic! at the Disco-- and what will ensure an audience when those bands have fully fossilized-- is that the Vegas quartet can learn and adapt. While they evolved out of the Strokes' 1970s guitar strut and a flyover approximation of that band's New York-centric sense of style, the Killers have since managed to move up the evolutionary ladder, developing actual tools and displaying the capacity for reason. *Sam's Town*, their second rung, predicted opposable thumbs and verbal language in the band's future. The band used Springsteen to poke out even more drama from new wave, cross-breeding two very different species-- the Boss' concentrated working-class rock with effete British new wave. Surprise: It sometimes worked.

On their way forward, the Killers offer a glance backward with *Sawdust*, a hodgepodge of everything they've tried in the past as well as a few things they'll no doubt try again in the future. With its vague title and ludicrous artwork, this catch-all gathers outtakes, B-sides, covers, Jacques Lu Cont's Thin White Duke remix of "Mr. Brightside", and a dorky hidden track that reveals their debt to Stone Temple Pilots. What the Killers haven't learned is how to dial it back: These songs, just like the albums they were recorded for, are busy with sounds and effects, as if they are aiming to deploy every studio knob or realize all of their harebrained ideas at once.

Opener "Tranquilize" sounds weighted with stuff-- the typical drum-bass-guitar, of course, but also more guitars, synths both ominous and light, a children's choir, Lou Reed-- all in service to trite lyrics and bombastic melodies. Likewise, their cover of Joy Division's "Shadowplay" shoots for epic, losing the minimalist menace of the original in a maelstrom of garishly climactic instrumentation.

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