



John Phillips

Michelle Phillips

Denny Doherty

“Mama” Cass Elliot

# LIFE GAVE THEM MONDAYS

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Folk-rockers the Mamas and the Papas enjoyed a brief but productive time as a quartet in the late 1960s, releasing 17 singles and six Top-10 hits.

Their biggest — and their only No. 1 single, “Monday, Monday” — hit No. 1 on May 7, 1966: 60 years ago.

## “MONDAY MORNIN’ COULDN’T GUARANTEE THAT MONDAY EVENIN’ YOU WOULD STILL BE HERE WITH ME”

The folk-rock quartet the Mamas and the Papas released their first song in November 1965. “Go Where You Wanna Go” was given only limited release and failed to chart. The group pinned greater hopes for their second single, written by the group’s primary songwriter, John Phillips: “California Dreamin’.”

While the group waited for the release of that song, band member Denny Doherty began urging Phillips to come up with more material for future recording sessions. Phillips promised Doherty he’d come back the next day with “a song with universal appeal.”

Phillips came back with “Monday, Monday,” about a guy who says he dislikes Mondays because his girlfriend left him on that day. He said he wrote the song quickly, in about 20 minutes.

He wasn’t quite prepared for the reaction he received from his band mates. Cass Elliot and Phillips’ wife, Michelle Phillips, disliked the song

and called it “pretentious.”

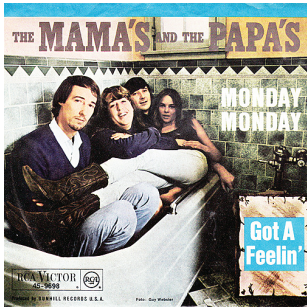
Doherty, who sang lead on the track, wasn’t quite as negative about the, but wasn’t exactly positive, either.

“Nobody likes Monday, so I thought it was just a song about the working man,” he said. “Nothing about it stood out to me. It was a dumb song about a day of the week.”

The Mamas and the Papas’ producer, Lou Adler, listened to the track and sided with John. The song was included on the group’s first album and was released as a single in March 1966.

“Monday, Monday” zoomed up the charts in just five weeks, landed at No. 1 in May of 1966 and spent three weeks there, blocking Bob Dylan from having what would have been his only No. 1 with “Rainy Day Women #12 & 35.”

The following March, “Monday, Monday” won a Grammy Award for best pop performance by a duo or group with vocal. In 2008, “Monday, Monday” was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.



## THE MAMAS AND THE PAPAS’ SINGLES CHART HISTORY

RELEASED	PEAK ON THE BILLBOARD HOT 100 SINGLES CHART
November 1965	<b>Go Where You Wanna Go</b> DID NOT CHART
Dec. 8, 1965	<b>California Dreamin’</b> #4
March 31, 1966	<b>Monday, Monday</b> #1
July 1966	<b>I Saw Her Again</b> #5
September 1966	<b>Look Through My Window</b> #24
Nov. 14, 1966	<b>Words of Love</b> #5
Nov. 14, 1966	#73 <b>Dancing in the Street</b>
February 1967	<b>Dedicated to the One I Love</b> #2
April 1967	<b>Creeque Alley</b> #5
August 1967	<b>Twelve Thirty</b> #20
October 1967	<b>Glad to be Unhappy</b> #26
November 1967	<b>Dancing Bear</b> #51
May 1968	<b>Safe in my Garden</b> #53
June 1968	<b>Dream a Little Dream of Me</b> #12
July 1968	#81 <b>For the Love of Ivy</b>
November 1968	#76 <b>Do You Wanna Dance</b>
January 1972	#81 <b>Step Out</b>

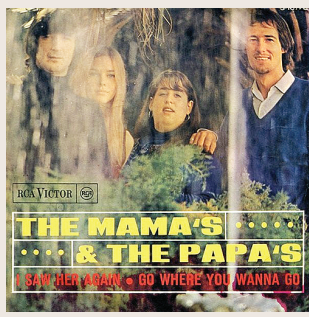
## THE MAMAS AND THE PAPAS’ OTHER TOP-10 HITS



### “California Dreamin’ ”

In the winter of 1963, John Phillips lived in New York with his new wife, Michelle, who was from California and missing the weather there. Her homesickness inspired John to write this song.

Michelle enjoyed visiting churches. A few days before, she and John had toured St. Patrick’s Cathedral, which inspired the second verse: “Stopped into a church ...” John had unpleasant memories of parochial school and disliked the verse but didn’t have an idea of what to replace it with.



### “I Saw Her Again”

John Phillips wrote this song about an affair his wife, and group member Michelle, had with another band member, Denny Doherty. The affair led to Michelle’s dismissal from the group. Michelle would rejoin the Mamas and the Papas two-and-a-half months later.

A recording engineer hit a button at the wrong time, giving a vocal bit a false start, going: “I saw her ... I saw her again.” Adler loved it and asked the engineer to leave it in the final track.



### “Words of Love”

Cass Elliot was the lead vocalist of this John Phillips composition in which she advised men that simply reciting “words of love, so soft and tender, won’t win a girl’s heart anymore.” Michelle Phillips contributed the cartoonishly high-pitched “No!”

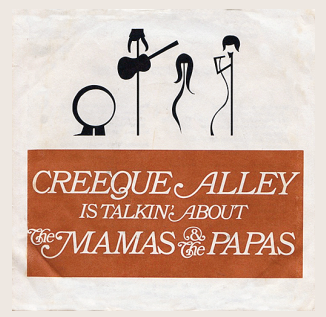
“Worn out phrases and longing gazes won’t get you where you want to go,” Cass sang. The words of the song’s two verses are nearly identical, and the chorus consisted of one phrase — “You oughta know by now” — repeated over and over.



### “Dedicated to the One I Love”

This was originally a 1957 release by a group called the Royals, and then covered that same year by the Shirelles. That version peaked at No. 83 on the Hot 100 but rose all the way to No. 3 when it was rereleased four years later.

Michelle Phillips sang her first lead vocal for the group in the first verse of the Mamas and the Papas’ version. That single hit No. 2 but was blocked from moving higher by “Happy Together” by the Turtles.



### “Creeque Alley”

John and Michelle Phillips wrote this song about the formation of the Mamas and the Papas in the Virgin Islands in 1965. Other musicians performing there at the time — John Sebastian, Roger McGuinn, Barry McGuire — are also name-checked.

Michelle said later she had been reluctant to sing the chorus — “and no one’s getting fat, except Mama Cass” — until Cass Elliot, who weighed more than 300 lbs., said she found the line hilarious. Elliot’s daughter later wrote Cass did, in fact, feel hurt by the fat joke.