

# Bruce Springsteen



Bruce Frederick Joseph Springsteen (born September 23, 1949) is an American musician and singer-songwriter. He is best known for his work with the E Street Band. Nicknamed "The Boss", Springsteen is widely known for his brand of poetic lyrics, Americana working class, sometimes political sentiments centered on his native New Jersey and his lengthy and energetic stage performances, with concerts from the 1970s to the present decade running up to an uninterrupted 250 minutes in length.

Springsteen's recordings have included both commercially accessible rock albums and more sombre folk-oriented works. His most successful studio albums, *Born in the U.S.A.* and *Born to Run*, showcase a talent

for finding grandeur in the struggles of daily American life; he has sold more than 64 million albums in the United States making him the fifteenth highest selling artist of all-time and more than 120 million albums worldwide. Springsteen has earned numerous awards for his work, including 20 Grammy Awards, two Golden Globes and an Academy Award as well as being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1999.

## Early life

Springsteen was born in Long Branch, New Jersey, and spent his childhood and high school years in Freehold Borough. He lived on South Street in Freehold Borough and attended Freehold Borough High School. His father, Douglas Frederick Springsteen, was of Dutch and Irish ancestry (his surname in Dutch means jumping stone) and worked as a bus driver, among other vocations, although he was mostly unemployed, and according to Springsteen's account, his mother was the main breadwinner. His mother, Adele Ann (née Zerilli), was a legal secretary and was of Italian ancestry. His maternal grandfather was born in Vico Equense, a town near Naples. He has two younger sisters, Virginia and Pamela. Pamela had a brief film career, but left acting to pursue still photography full-time; she took photos for his *Human Touch*, *Lucky Town* and *The Ghost of Tom Joad* albums.

Raised a Roman Catholic, Springsteen attended the St. Rose of Lima Catholic school in Freehold Borough, where he was at odds with the nuns and rejected the strictures imposed upon him, even though some of his later music reflects a Catholic ethos and included a few rock-influenced, traditional Irish-Catholic hymns. In a 2012 interview, he explained that it was his Catholic upbringing rather than political ideology that most influenced his music. He noted in the interview that his faith had given him a "very active spiritual life," although he joked that this "made it very difficult sexually." He added: "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic."

In ninth grade, he transferred to the public Freehold Regional High School, but did not fit in there either. Former teachers have said he was a "loner, who wanted nothing more than to play his guitar." He completed high school, but felt so uncomfortable that he skipped his own graduation ceremony. He briefly attended Ocean County College, but dropped out.

## Career

### 1964–1972: Early years

Springsteen had been inspired to take up music at the age of seven after seeing Elvis Presley on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1956. At 13, his mother bought him his first guitar for \$18; the next year, in 1964, he started playing for audiences, first at a trailer park on New Jersey Route 34 and then at a local Elks Lodge. In 1965, Springsteen's mother took out a loan to buy her 16-year-old son a \$60 Kent guitar, an act he subsequently memorialized in his song "The Wish".

In the same year, he went to the house of Tex and Marion Vinyard, who sponsored young bands in town. They helped him become the lead guitarist and subsequently the lead singer of *The Castiles*. *The Castiles* recorded two original songs at a public recording studio in Brick Township and played a variety of venues, including *Cafe Wha?* in Greenwich Village. Marion Vinyard said that she believed the young Springsteen when he promised he would make it big.

Called for induction when he was 18, Springsteen failed his physical examination and did not serve in Vietnam. In an interview in Rolling Stone magazine in 1984, he said, "When I got on the bus to go take my physical, I thought one thing: I ain't goin'." He had suffered a concussion in a motorcycle accident when he was 17, and this together with his "crazy" behavior at induction and not taking the tests, was enough to get him a 4F.

In the late 1960s, Springsteen performed briefly in a power trio known as Earth, playing in clubs in New Jersey. Springsteen acquired the nickname "The Boss" during this period as when he played club gigs with a band he took on the task of collecting the band's nightly pay and distributing it amongst his bandmates. Springsteen is not fond of this nickname, due to his dislike of bosses, but seems to have since given it a tacit acceptance. Previously he had the nickname "Doctor".

New Jersey beach towns such as Asbury Park inspired the themes of ordinary life in Bruce Springsteen's music.

From 1969 through early 1971, Springsteen performed with Steel Mill, which also featured Danny Federici, Vini Lopez, Vinnie Roslin and later Steve Van Zandt and Robbin Thompson. They went on to play the mid-Atlantic college circuit, and also briefly in California. In January 1970 well-known San Francisco Examiner music critic Philip Elwood gave Springsteen credibility in his glowing assessment of Steel Mill: "I have never been so overwhelmed by totally unknown talent." Elwood went on to praise their "cohesive musicality" and, in particular, singled out Springsteen as "a most impressive composer". During this time Springsteen also performed regularly at small clubs in Canton, Massachusetts; Richmond, Virginia; and Asbury Park and other points along the Jersey Shore, quickly gathering a cult following.

Other acts followed over the next two years, as Springsteen sought to shape a unique and genuine musical and lyrical style: Dr. Zoom & the Sonic Boom (early- to mid-1971), Sundance Blues Band (mid-1971), and The Bruce Springsteen Band (mid-1971 to mid-1972). With the addition of pianist David Sancious, the core of what would later become the E Street Band was formed, with occasional temporary additions such as horn sections, "The Zoomettes" (a group of female backing vocalists for "Dr. Zoom") and Southside Johnny Lyon on harmonica. Musical genres explored included blues, R&B, jazz, church music, early rock 'n' roll, and soul. His prolific songwriting ability, with "More words in some individual songs than other artists had in whole albums", as his future record label would describe it in early publicity campaigns, brought his skill to the attention of several people who were about to change his life: new managers Mike Appel and Jim Cretecos, and Columbia Records talent scout John Hammond, who, under Appel's pressure, auditioned Springsteen in May 1972.

Even after Springsteen gained international acclaim, his New Jersey roots showed through in his music, and he often praised "the great state of New Jersey" in his live shows. Drawing on his extensive local appeal, he routinely sold out consecutive nights in major New Jersey, Philadelphia and New York venues. He also made many surprise appearances at The Stone Pony and other shore nightclubs over the years, becoming the foremost exponent of the Jersey Shore sound.

## 1972–1974: Initial struggle for success

Springsteen signed a record deal with Columbia Records in 1972 with the help of John Hammond, who had signed Bob Dylan to the same label a decade earlier. Springsteen brought many of his New Jersey-based colleagues into the studio with him, thus forming the E Street Band (although it would not be

formally named as such for several more years). His debut album *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.*, released in January 1973, established him as a critical favorite though sales were slow.

Because of Springsteen's lyrical poeticism and folk rock–rooted music exemplified on tracks like "Blinded by the Light"[A] and "For You", as well as the Columbia and Hammond connections, critics initially compared Springsteen to Bob Dylan. "He sings with a freshness and urgency I haven't heard since I was rocked by 'Like a Rolling Stone'" wrote *Crawdaddy* magazine editor Peter Knobler in Springsteen's first interview/profile in March 1973. *Crawdaddy* discovered Springsteen in the rock press and was his earliest champion. (Springsteen and the E Street Band acknowledged by giving a private performance at the *Crawdaddy* 10th Anniversary Party in New York City in June 1976.) Music critic Lester Bangs wrote in *Creem* in 1975 that when Springsteen's first album was released "... many of us dismissed it: he wrote like Bob Dylan and Van Morrison, sang like Van Morrison and Robbie Robertson, and led a band that sounded like Van Morrison's". The track "Spirit in the Night" especially showed Morrison's influence, while "Lost in the Flood" was the first of many portraits of Vietnam veterans, and "Growin' Up", his first take on the recurring theme of adolescence.

In September 1973 his second album *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* was released, again to critical acclaim but no commercial success. Springsteen's songs became grander in form and scope, with the E Street Band providing a less folky, more R&B vibe, and the lyrics often romanticized teenage street life. "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)" and "Incident on 57th Street" would become fan favorites, and the long, rousing "Rosalita (Come Out Tonight)" continues to rank among Springsteen's most beloved concert numbers.

In the May 22, 1974 issue of Boston's *The Real Paper* music critic Jon Landau wrote, after seeing a performance at the Harvard Square Theater, "I saw rock and roll's future, and its name is Bruce Springsteen. And on a night when I needed to feel young, he made me feel like I was hearing music for the very first time." Landau subsequently became Springsteen's manager and producer, helping to finish the epic new album *Born to Run*. Given an enormous budget in a last-ditch effort at a commercially viable record, Springsteen became bogged down in the recording process while striving for a "Wall of Sound" production. But, fed by the release of an early mix of "Born to Run" to progressive rock radio, anticipation built toward the album's release.

All in all the album took more than 14 months to record, with six months alone spent on the song "Born To Run". During this time Springsteen battled with anger and frustration over the album, saying he heard "sounds in [his] head" that he could not explain to the others in the studio. It was during these recording sessions that "Miami" Steve Van Zandt would stumble into the studio just in time to help Springsteen organize the horn section on "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out" (that and a "minor" chord change in the title track are the only written contributions to the album), and eventually led to his joining the E Street Band.[citation needed] Van Zandt had been a long-time friend of Springsteen, as well as a collaborator on earlier musical projects, and understood where he was coming from which helped him to translate some of the sounds Springsteen was hearing. Still, by the end of the grueling recording sessions Springsteen was not satisfied, and upon first hearing the finished album, threw the record into the alley and told Jon Landau he would rather just cut the album live at *The Bottom Line* (a place he often played).

## 1975–1983: Breakthrough

On August 13, 1975, Springsteen and the E Street Band began a five-night, 10-show stand at New York's Bottom Line club. The engagement attracted major media attention and was broadcast live on WNEW-FM. (Decades later, Rolling Stone magazine would name the stand as one of the 50 Moments That Changed Rock and Roll.) Oklahoma City rock radio station WKY, in association with Carson Attractions, staged an experimental promotional event that resulted in a sold out house at the (6000 seat) Civic Center Music Hall. With the release of *Born to Run* on August 25, 1975, Springsteen finally found success. The album peaked at No. 3 on the Billboard 200, and while reception at U.S. top 40 radio outlets for the album's two singles were not overwhelming ("*Born to Run*" reached a modest No. 23 on the Billboard charts, and "*Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out*" only hit #83), almost every track on the album received album-oriented rock airplay, especially "*Born to Run*", "*Thunder Road*", "*Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out*" and "*Jungleland*", all of which remain perennial favorites on many classic rock stations.

With its panoramic imagery, thundering production and desperate optimism, *Born to Run* is considered by some fans to be among the best rock and roll albums of all time and Springsteen's finest work. Springsteen appeared on the covers of both *Time* and *Newsweek* in the same week, on October 27 of that year. So great did the wave of publicity become that Springsteen eventually rebelled against it during his first venture overseas, tearing down promotional posters before a concert appearance in London.

A legal battle with former manager Mike Appel kept Springsteen out of the studio for nearly a year, during which time he kept the E Street Band together through extensive touring across the U.S. Despite the optimistic fervor with which he often performed, his new songs had taken a more somber tone than much of his previous work. Reaching settlement with Appel in 1977, Springsteen returned to the studio, and the subsequent sessions produced *Darkness on the Edge of Town* (1978). Musically, this album was a turning point in Springsteen's career. Gone were the raw, rapid-fire lyrics, outsized characters and long, multi-part musical compositions of the first three albums; now the songs were leaner and more carefully drawn and began to reflect Springsteen's growing intellectual and political awareness. The cross-country 1978 tour to promote the album would become legendary for the intensity and length of its shows.

Springsteen at Félix Houphouët-Boigny International Airport in Ivory Coast during Amnesty International's 1988 Human Rights Now! Tour.

By the late 1970s, Bruce Springsteen had earned a reputation in the pop world as a songwriter whose material could provide hits for other bands. Manfred Mann's Earth Band had achieved a U.S. No. 1 pop hit with a heavily rearranged version of Greetings' "*Blinded by the Light*" in early 1977. Patti Smith reached No. 13 with her take on Springsteen's unreleased "*Because the Night*" (with revised lyrics by Smith) in 1978, while The Pointer Sisters hit No. 2 in 1979 with Springsteen's also unreleased "*Fire*". Although not a critical success, long time friend Southside Johnny recorded "*The Fever*" in early 1976, "*Talk to Me*" in 1978, both contributions from Springsteen. The two of them along with Steve Van Zandt collaborated to produce "*Trapped Again*" in 1978.

In September 1979, Springsteen and the E Street Band joined the Musicians United for Safe Energy anti-nuclear power collective at Madison Square Garden for two nights, playing an abbreviated set while premiering two songs from his upcoming album. The subsequent *No Nukes* live album, as well as the following summer's *No Nukes* documentary film, represented the first official recordings and footage of Springsteen's fabled live act, as well as Springsteen's first tentative dip into political involvement.

Springsteen continued to consolidate his thematic focus on working-class life with the 20-song double album *The River* in 1980, which included an intentionally paradoxical range of material from good-time party rockers to emotionally intense ballads, and finally yielded his first hit Top Ten single as a performer, "Hungry Heart". Like the previous two albums, musical styles on *The River* were derived largely from rock music of the Fifties and Sixties, but with a more explicit pop-rock sound than earlier albums. This is apparent in the stylistic adoption of Eighties pop-rock hallmarks like the reverberating-tenor drums, very basic percussion/guitar and repetitive lyrics apparent in many of the tracks. The title song pointed to Springsteen's intellectual direction, while a couple of the lesser-known tracks presaged his musical direction. The album sold well, becoming his first topper on the Billboard Pop Albums chart, and a long tour in 1980 and 1981 followed, featuring Springsteen's first extended playing of Europe and ending with a series of multi-night arena stands in major cities in the U.S.

*The River* was followed in 1982 by the stark solo acoustic *Nebraska*. Recording sessions had been held to expand on a demo tape Springsteen had made at his home on a simple, low-tech four-track tape deck. However during the recording process Springsteen and producer Jon Landau realized the songs worked better as solo acoustic numbers than full band renditions and the original demo tape was released as the album. Although the recordings of the E Street Band were shelved, other songs from these sessions would later be released, including "Born in the U.S.A." and "Glory Days". According to the Marsh biographies, Springsteen was in a depressed state when he wrote this material, and the result is a brutal depiction of American life. While *Nebraska* did not sell as well as Springsteen's three previous albums, it garnered widespread critical praise (including being named "Album of the Year" by Rolling Stone magazine's critics) and influenced later significant works by other major artists, including U2's album *The Joshua Tree*. It helped inspire the musical genre known as lo-fi music, becoming a cult favorite among indie-rockers. Springsteen did not tour in conjunction with *Nebraska*'s release.

## 1984–1991: Commercial and popular phenomenon

Springsteen is probably best known for his album *Born in the U.S.A.* (1984), which sold 15 million copies in the U.S., 30 million worldwide, and became one of the best-selling albums of all time with seven singles hitting the Top 10. The title track was a bitter commentary on the treatment of Vietnam veterans, some of whom were Springsteen's friends and bandmates. The lyrics in the verses were entirely unambiguous when listened to, but the anthemic music and the title of the song made it hard for many, from politicians to the common person, to get the lyrics—except those in the chorus, which could be read many ways.

The song was widely misinterpreted as jingoistic, and in connection with the 1984 presidential campaign became the subject of considerable folklore. Springsteen also turned down several million dollars offered by the Chrysler Corporation to use the song in a car commercial. In later years, to eliminate the bombast and make the song's original meaning more explicitly clear, Springsteen performed the song accompanied only by acoustic guitar, thus returning to how the song was originally conceived. The original acoustic version of the song, recorded in 1982 during the *Nebraska* sessions appeared on the 1998 archival release *Tracks*. "Dancing in the Dark" was the biggest of seven hit singles from *Born in the U.S.A.*, peaking at No. 2 on the Billboard music charts. The music video for the song featured a young Courteney Cox dancing on stage with Springsteen, an appearance which helped kickstart the actress's career. The song "Cover Me" was written by Springsteen for Donna Summer, but his record company persuaded him to keep it for the new album. A big fan of Summer's work, Springsteen wrote another song for her, "Protection". Videos for the album were made by noted film directors Brian De Palma and John Sayles. Springsteen was

featured on the "We Are the World" song and album in 1985. His live single "Trapped" from that album received moderate airplay on U.S. Top 40 stations as well as reaching No. 1 on the Billboard Top Rock Tracks chart.

During the Born in the U.S.A. Tour, Springsteen met actress Julianne Phillips, whom he would marry in 1985.

Springsteen performing on the Tunnel of Love Express Tour at the Radrennbahn Weißensee in East Berlin on July 19, 1988.

The Born in the U.S.A. period represented the height of Springsteen's visibility in popular culture and the broadest audience demographic he would ever reach (aided by the release of Arthur Baker's dance mixes of three of the singles). *Live/1975–85*, a five-record box set (also on three cassettes or three CDs), was released near the end of 1986 and became the first box set to debut at No. 1 on the U.S. album charts. It is one of the most commercially successful live albums of all time, ultimately selling 13 million units in the U.S. *Live/1975–85* summed up Springsteen's career to that point and displayed some of the elements that made his shows so powerful to his fans: the switching from mournful dirges to party rockers and back; the communal sense of purpose between artist and audience; the long, intense spoken passages before songs, including those describing Springsteen's difficult relationship with his father; and the instrumental prowess of the E Street Band, such as in the long coda to "Racing in the Street". Despite its popularity, some fans and critics felt the album's song selection could have been better. Springsteen concerts are the subjects of frequent bootleg recording and trading among fans.

During the 1980s, several Springsteen fanzines were launched, including *Backstreets* magazine, which started in Seattle and continues today as a glossy publication, now in communication with Springsteen's management and official website.

After this commercial peak, Springsteen released the much more sedate and contemplative *Tunnel of Love* album (1987); a mature reflection on the many faces of love found, lost and squandered, which only selectively used the E Street Band. It presaged the breakup of his marriage to Julianne Phillips and described some of his unhappinesses in the relationship. Reflecting the challenges of love in "Brilliant Disguise", Springsteen sang:

" I heard somebody call your name from underneath our willow/I saw something tucked in shame underneath your pillow/ Well I've tried so hard baby, but I just can't see/ What a woman like you is doing with me. "

The subsequent *Tunnel of Love Express Tour* shook up fans with changes to the stage layout, favorites dropped from the set list, and horn-based arrangements. During the European leg in 1988, Springsteen's relationship with backup singer Patti Scialfa became public. Phillips and Springsteen filed for divorce in 1988.

On July 19, 1988 Springsteen held a concert in East Germany which attracted 300,000 spectators. Journalist Erik Kirschbaum has called the concert "the most important rock concert ever, anywhere," in his 2013 book *Rocking the Wall: Bruce Springsteen: The Berlin Concert That Changed the World*. It had been conceived by the Communist Party's youth arm in an attempt to placate the youth of East Germany, who were hungry for more freedom and the popular music of the West. However, it is Kirschbaum's

opinion that the success of the concert catalysed opposition to the regime in the DDR, and helped contribute to the fall of the Berlin Wall the following year.

Later in 1988, Springsteen headlined the worldwide Human Rights Now! tour for Amnesty International. In late 1989 he dissolved the E Street Band, and he and Scialfa relocated to California, marrying in 1991.

## 1992–1998: Artistic and commercial ups and downs and soundtrack work

In 1992, after risking fan accusations of "going Hollywood" by moving to Los Angeles (a radical move for someone so linked to the blue-collar life of the Jersey Shore) and working with session musicians, Springsteen released two albums at once. *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* were even more introspective than any of his previous work and displayed a newly revealed confidence. As opposed to his first two albums, which dreamed of happiness, and his next four, which showed him growing to fear it, at points during the *Lucky Town* album, Springsteen actually claims happiness for himself.

An electric band appearance on the acoustic MTV *Unplugged* television program (later released as *In Concert/MTV Plugged*) was poorly received and further cemented fan dissatisfaction. Springsteen seemed to realize this a few years hence when he spoke humorously of his late father during his Rock and Roll Hall of Fame acceptance speech:

" I've gotta thank him because – what would I conceivably have written about without him? I mean, you can imagine that if everything had gone great between us, we would have had disaster. I would have written just happy songs – and I tried it in the early '90s and it didn't work; the public didn't like it."

A multiple Grammy Award winner, Springsteen also won an Academy Award in 1994 for his song "Streets of Philadelphia", which appeared on the soundtrack to the film *Philadelphia*. The music video for the song shows Springsteen's actual vocal performance, recorded using a hidden microphone, to a prerecorded instrumental track. This technique was developed on the "Brilliant Disguise" video.

In 1995, after temporarily re-organizing the E Street Band for a few new songs recorded for his first Greatest Hits album (a recording session that was chronicled in the documentary *Blood Brothers*), he released his second (mostly) solo guitar album, *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, inspired by John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and by *Journey to Nowhere: The Saga of the New Underclass*, a book by Pulitzer Prize-winners author Dale Maharidge and photographer Michael Williamson. This was generally less well-received than the similar *Nebraska*, due to the minimal melody, twangy vocals, and political nature of most of the songs, although some praised it for giving voice to immigrants and others who rarely have one in American culture. The lengthy, worldwide, small-venue solo acoustic *Ghost of Tom Joad* Tour that followed successfully featured many of his older songs in drastically reshaped acoustic form, although Springsteen had to explicitly remind his audiences to be quiet and not to clap during the performances.

In April 1996, Springsteen gave a very forward-looking interview to *The Advocate* LGBT magazine's Judy Wieder, in which he spoke of the importance of fighting for gay marriage. "You get your license, you do all the social rituals. It's part of your place in society, and in some way part of society's acceptance of you." It seemed like a natural extension of the support that began with his 1994 Academy Award for "Streets of Philadelphia" which showed the saga of a dying gay man struggling with AIDS.

Following the tour, Springsteen moved back to New Jersey with his family. In 1998, Springsteen released the sprawling, four-disc box set of out-takes, *Tracks*. Subsequently, Springsteen would acknowledge that

the 1990s were a "lost period" for him: "I didn't do a lot of work. Some people would say I didn't do my best work."

## 1999–2007: Return to success

The scene outside the Giants Stadium parking lot for banner-marked, record-setting, 10-night stand of The Rising Tour during July 2003.

Springsteen was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1999 by Bono of U2, a favor he returned in 2005.

In 1999, Springsteen and the E Street Band officially came together again and went on the extensive Reunion Tour, lasting over a year. Highlights included a record sold-out, 15-show run at Continental Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, New Jersey and a ten-night, sold-out engagement at New York City's Madison Square Garden which ended the tour. The final two shows were recorded for an HBO Concert, with corresponding DVD and album releases as Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band: Live in New York City. A new song, "American Skin (41 Shots)", about the police shooting of Amadou Diallo which was played at these shows proved controversial.

In November 2000, Springsteen filed legal action against Jeff Burgar which accused him of registering the domain bruce.springsteen.com (along with several other celebrity domains) in bad faith to funnel web users to his Celebrity 1000 portal site. Once the legal complaint was filed, Burgar pointed the domain to a Springsteen biography and message board. In February 2001, Springsteen lost his dispute with Burgar. A WIPO panel ruled 2 to 1 in favor of Burgar.

In 2002, Springsteen released his first studio effort with the full band in 18 years, *The Rising*, produced by Brendan O'Brien. The album, mostly a reflection on the September 11 attacks, was a critical and popular success. (Many of the songs were influenced by phone conversations Springsteen had with family members of victims of the attacks who in their obituaries had mentioned how his music touched their lives.) The title track gained airplay in several radio formats, and the record became Springsteen's best-selling album of new material in 15 years. Kicked off by an early-morning Asbury Park appearance on *The Today Show*, *The Rising Tour* commenced, barnstorming through a series of single-night arena stands in the U.S. and Europe to promote the album in 2002, then returning for large-scale, multiple-night stadium shows in 2003. While Springsteen had maintained a loyal hardcore fan base everywhere (and particularly in Europe), his general popularity had dipped over the years in some southern and midwestern regions of the U.S, because of his vocal endorsement of leftist, liberal politics. But it was still strong in Europe and along the U.S. coasts, and he played an unprecedented 10 nights in Giants Stadium in New Jersey, a ticket-selling feat to which no other musical act has come close.[35] During these shows Springsteen thanked those fans who were attending multiple shows and those who were coming from long distances or another country; the advent of robust Bruce-oriented online communities had made such practices more common. The *Rising Tour* came to a final conclusion with three nights in Shea Stadium, highlighted by renewed controversy over "American Skin" and a guest appearance by Bob Dylan.

During the early 2000s, Springsteen became a visible advocate for the revitalization of Asbury Park, and played an annual series of winter holiday concerts there to benefit various local businesses, organizations, and causes. These shows were explicitly intended for the devoted fans, featuring numbers such as the E Street Shuffle outtake "Thundercrack", a rollicking group-participation song that would mystify casual

Springsteen fans. He also frequently rehearses for tours in Asbury Park; some of his most devoted followers even go so far as to stand outside the building to hear what fragments they can of the upcoming shows. The song "My City of Ruins" was originally written about Asbury Park, in honor of the attempts to revitalize the city. Looking for an appropriate song for The Concert for New York City, he selected "My City of Ruins", which was immediately recognized as an emotional highlight of the concert, with its gospel themes and its heartfelt exhortations to "Rise up!" The song became associated with post-9/11 New York, and he chose it to close The Rising album and as an encore on the subsequent tour.

At the Grammy Awards of 2003, Springsteen performed The Clash's "London Calling" along with Elvis Costello, Dave Grohl, and E Street Band member Steven Van Zandt and No Doubt's bassist, Tony Kanal, in tribute to Joe Strummer; Springsteen and the Clash had once been considered multiple-album-dueling rivals at the time of the double The River and the triple Sandinista!. In 2004, Springsteen and the E Street Band participated in the Vote for Change tour, along with John Mellencamp, John Fogerty, the Dixie Chicks, Pearl Jam, R.E.M., Bright Eyes, the Dave Matthews Band, Jackson Browne, and other musicians. All concerts were to be held in swing states, to benefit the progressive political organization group America Coming Together and to encourage people to register and vote. A finale was held in Washington, D.C., bringing many of the artists together. Several days later, Springsteen held one more such concert in New Jersey, when polls showed that state surprisingly close. While in past years Springsteen had played benefits for causes in which he believed – against nuclear energy, for Vietnam veterans, Amnesty International, and the Christic Institute – he had always refrained from explicitly endorsing candidates for political office (indeed he had rejected the efforts of Walter Mondale to attract an endorsement during the 1984 Reagan "Born in the U.S.A." flap). This new stance led to criticism and praise from the expected partisan sources. Springsteen's "No Surrender" became the main campaign theme song for John Kerry's unsuccessful presidential campaign; in the last days of the campaign, he performed acoustic versions of the song and some of his other old songs at Kerry rallies.

Devils & Dust was released on April 26, 2005, and was recorded without the E Street Band. It is a low-key, mostly acoustic album, in the same vein as Nebraska and The Ghost of Tom Joad although with a little more instrumentation. Some of the material was written almost 10 years earlier during, or shortly after, the Ghost of Tom Joad Tour, a couple of them being performed then but never released. The title track concerns an ordinary soldier's feelings and fears during the Iraq War. Starbucks rejected a co-branding deal for the album, due in part to some sexually explicit content but also because of Springsteen's anti-corporate politics. The album entered the album charts at No. 1 in 10 countries (United States, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Ireland). Springsteen began the solo Devils & Dust Tour at the same time as the album's release, playing both small and large venues. Attendance was disappointing in a few regions, and everywhere (other than in Europe) tickets were easier to get than in the past. Unlike his mid-1990s solo tour, he performed on piano, electric piano, pump organ, autoharp, ukulele, banjo, electric guitar, and stomping board, as well as acoustic guitar and harmonica, adding variety to the solo sound. (Offstage synthesizer, guitar, and percussion were also used for some songs.)

In November 2005, Sirius Satellite Radio started a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week radio station on Channel 10 called E Street Radio. This channel featured commercial-free Bruce Springsteen music, including rare tracks, interviews, and daily concerts of Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band recorded throughout their career.

In April 2006, Springsteen released *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions*, an American roots music project focused around a big folk sound treatment of 15 songs popularized by the radical musical activism of Pete Seeger. It was recorded with a large ensemble of musicians including only Patti Scialfa, Soozie Tyrell, and The Miami Horns from past efforts. In contrast to previous albums, this was recorded in only three one-day sessions, and frequently one can hear Springsteen calling out key changes live as the band explores its way through the tracks. The Bruce Springsteen with The Seeger Sessions Band Tour began the same month, featuring the 18-strong ensemble of musicians dubbed The Seeger Sessions Band (and later shortened to The Sessions Band). Seeger Sessions material was heavily featured, as well as a handful of (usually drastically rearranged) Springsteen numbers. The tour proved very popular in Europe, selling out everywhere and receiving some excellent reviews, but newspapers reported that a number of U.S. shows suffered from sparse attendance. By the end of 2006, the Seeger Sessions tour toured Europe twice and toured America for only a short span. *Bruce Springsteen with The Sessions Band: Live in Dublin*, containing selections from three nights of November 2006 shows at The Point Theatre in Dublin, Ireland, was released the following June.

Springsteen's next album, titled *Magic*, was released on October 2, 2007. Recorded with the E Street Band, it featured 10 new Springsteen songs plus "Long Walk Home", performed once with the Sessions band, and a hidden track (the first included on a Springsteen studio release), "Terry's Song", a tribute to Springsteen's long-time assistant Terry Magovern, who died on July 30, 2007. The first single, "Radio Nowhere", was made available for a free download on August 28. On October 7, *Magic* debuted at No. 1 in Ireland and the UK. *Greatest Hits* reentered the Irish charts at No. 57, and *Live in Dublin* almost cracked the top 20 in Norway again. Sirius Satellite Radio also restarted E Street Radio on Channel 10 on September 27, 2007, in anticipation of *Magic*. Radio conglomerate Clear Channel Communications was alleged to have sent an edict to its classic rock stations to not play any songs from the new album, while continuing to play older Springsteen material. However, Clear Channel Adult Alternative (or "AAA") station KBCO did play tracks from the album, undermining the allegations of a corporate blackout.

The Springsteen and E Street Band *Magic* Tour began at the Hartford Civic Center with the album's release and continued through North America and Europe. Springsteen and the band performed live on NBC's *Today Show* in advance of the opener.

It was announced on November 21, 2007, that longtime friend and founding E Street Band member, Danny Federici would be taking a leave of absence from the *Magic* Tour to pursue treatment for melanoma. Charles Giordano would fill-in as Federici's replacement. Springsteen stated: "Danny is one of the pillars of our sound and has played beside me as a great friend for more than 40 years. We all eagerly await his healthy and speedy return." [this quote needs a citation]

## 2008–2011: Deaths of Danny Federici and Clarence Clemons

Springsteen at a rally for the presidential candidate Barack Obama

Cleveland, Ohio on November 2, 2008

Federici would make his return to the stage on March 20, 2008, when he appeared for portions of a Springsteen and E Street Band performance at Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. Less than one month later, on April 17, 2008, Federici died at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, having suffered for three years with melanoma.

Springsteen supported Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, announcing his endorsement in April 2008 and going on to appear at several Obama rallies as well as performing several solo acoustic performances in support of Obama's campaign throughout 2008, culminating with a November 2 rally where he debuted "Working on a Dream" in a duet with Scialfa. *Working on a Dream* was an optimistic album compared to many of his other albums. The album was about Obama and his rise to the stand. At an Ohio rally, Springsteen discussed the importance of "truth, transparency and integrity in government, the right of every American to have a job, a living wage, to be educated in a decent school, and a life filled with the dignity of work, the promise and the sanctity of home...But today those freedoms have been damaged and curtailed by eight years of a thoughtless, reckless and morally adrift administration."

Following Obama's electoral victory on November 4, Springsteen's song "The Rising" was the first song played over the loudspeakers after Obama's victory speech in Chicago's Grant Park. Springsteen was the musical opener for the Obama Inaugural Celebration on January 18, 2009, which was attended by over 400,000 people. He performed "The Rising" with an all-female choir. Later he performed Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" with Pete Seeger.

On June 18, 2008, Springsteen appeared live from Europe at the Tim Russert tribute at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., to play one of Russert's favorite songs, "Thunder Road". Springsteen dedicated the song to Russert, who was "one of Springsteen's biggest fans."

On January 11, 2009, Springsteen won the Golden Globe Award for Best Song for "The Wrestler", from the Mickey Rourke film by the same name. After receiving a heartfelt letter from Rourke, Springsteen supplied the song for the film for free.

Springsteen performed at the halftime show at Super Bowl XLIII on February 1, 2009,[54] agreeing to do it after many previous offers. A few days before the game, Springsteen gave a rare press conference, where he promised a "twelve-minute party." His 12:45 set, with the E Street Band and the Miami Horns, included abbreviated renditions of "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out", "Born to Run", "Working on a Dream", and "Glory Days", the latter complete with football references. The set of appearances and promotional activities led Springsteen to say, "This has probably been the busiest month of my life."

Springsteen's *Working on a Dream* album, dedicated in memory of Danny Federici, was released in late January 2009[56] and the supporting *Working on a Dream* Tour ran from April 2009 until November 2009. The tour featured few songs from the new album, with instead set lists dominated by classics and selections reflecting the ongoing late-2000s recession. The tour also featured Springsteen playing songs requested by audience members holding up signs as on the final stages of the Magic Tour. Drummer Max Weinberg was replaced for some shows by his 18-year-old son Jay Weinberg, so that the former could serve his role as bandleader on *The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien*. During this tour, Springsteen and the band made their first real foray in the world of music festivals, headlining nights at the Pinkpop Festival in the Netherlands, Festival des Vieilles Charrues in France, the Bonnaroo Music Festival in the United

States and the Glastonbury Festival in the UK[60] and Hard Rock Calling in the UK. Several shows on the tour featured full album presentations of *Born to Run*, *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, or *Born in the U.S.A.* The band performed a stretch of five final shows at Giants Stadium, opening with a new song highlighting the historic stadium, and his Jersey roots, named "Wrecking Ball". The tour ended as scheduled in Buffalo, NY in November 2009 amid speculation that it was the last performance ever by the E Street Band, but during the show Springsteen said it was goodbye "for a little while." A DVD from the Working on a Dream Tour entitled *London Calling: Live in Hyde Park* was released in 2010.

In addition to his own touring, Springsteen made a number of appearances at tribute and benefit concerts during 2009, including The Clearwater Concert (a celebration of Pete Seeger's 90th birthday), the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 25th anniversary benefit concert, and a benefit for the advocacy group Autism Speaks at Carnegie Hall.[66] On January 22, 2010, he joined many well-known artists to perform on *Hope for Haiti Now: A Global Benefit for Earthquake Relief*, organized by George Clooney to raise money to help the victims of the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

In 2009, Springsteen performed in *The People Speak*, a documentary feature film that uses dramatic and musical performances of the letters, diaries, and speeches of everyday Americans, based on historian Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*.

Springsteen was among the recipients of the Kennedy Center Honors, an annual award to figures from the world of arts for their contribution to American culture, in December 2009. President Obama gave a speech in which he talked about how Springsteen has incorporated the life of regular Americans in his expansive palette of songs and how his concerts are beyond the typical rock-and-roll concerts, how, apart from being high-energy concerts, they are "communions". He ended the remark "while I am the president, he is The Boss". Tributes were paid by several well-known celebrities including Jon Stewart (who described Springsteen's "unprecedented combination of lyrical eloquence, musical mastery and sheer unbridled, unadulterated joy"). A musical tribute featured John Mellencamp, Ben Harper, and Jennifer Nettles, Melissa Etheridge, Eddie Vedder, and Sting.

The 2000s ended with Springsteen being named one of eight Artists of the Decade by Rolling Stone magazine and with Springsteen's tours ranking him fourth among artists in total concert grosses for the decade. His 2010 tour included venues in the UK and Ireland.

In September 2010, a documentary about the making of his 1978 album *Darkness on The Edge of Town* was premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. The film, *The Promise: The Making of Darkness on the Edge of Town*, was included in a box set reissue of the album, entitled *The Promise: The Darkness on the Edge of Town Story*, released in November 2010. Also airing on HBO, the documentary explored Springsteen's making of the acclaimed album, and his role in the production and development of the tracks.

Springsteen has finished his next studio album with Ron Aniello, who also co-produced the 2007 album *Play It As It Lays*, by Springsteen's wife, Patti Scialfa. Ron Aniello also produced "Children's Song" early in 2011, a duet with Springsteen and Scialfa, which was done for a charity project.

Clarence Clemons, the E Street Band's saxophonist and founding member, died on June 18, 2011, of complications from a stroke. "Clarence lived a wonderful life," Springsteen said in a statement. "He carried

within him a love of people that made them love him. He created a wondrous and extended family. He loved the saxophone, loved our fans and gave everything he had every night he stepped on stage."

## 2012–present: Wrecking Ball and High Hopes

Springsteen performing with drummer Max Weinberg behind him, on the Magic Tour stop at Veterans Memorial Arena, Jacksonville, Florida, August 15, 2008.

Springsteen's 17th studio album, *Wrecking Ball*, was released on March 6, 2012. On January 13, 2012, *Hollywood Reporter* released an article describing the sound of the new album. According to the article, the album is Springsteen at his angriest yet, forcefully addressing topics such as economic injustice. The article describes the album musically as being very rock-and-roll with unexpected textures, loops, electronic percussion and a variety of influences. The album consists of eleven tracks plus two bonus tracks. Three songs previously only available as live versions, "Wrecking Ball", "Land of Hope and Dreams," and "American Land," appear on the album. The album's first single, "We Take Care of Our Own", was released on January 19, 2012. *Wrecking Ball* became Springsteen's tenth No. 1 album in the United States tying him with Elvis Presley for third most No. 1 albums of all-time. Only The Beatles (19) and Jay-Z (12) have more No. 1 albums. *Wrecking Ball* knocked out Adele's Grammy-winning album, *21* after 23 nonconsecutive weeks at #1.

Following the release of the album, the Springsteen and the E Street Band announced plans for the *Wrecking Ball* Tour which would begin on March 18, 2012, in Atlanta. As tickets for the first U.S. dates went on sale, many fans were unable to obtain tickets, much like for the 2009 *Working on a Dream* Tour, allegedly due to a heavy volume of ticket scalpers. Shows sold out within minutes and many tickets appeared, at much higher prices, on resale websites such as StubHub less than an hour after the onsale time. Ticketmaster said web traffic was 2.5 times the highest level of the past year during the online sales and suggested that scalpers played a big role. He later joined the judging panel of *Must Be the Music*, alongside Kanye West, Justin Timberlake and Heather Vesey

On July 31, 2012, in Helsinki, Finland, Springsteen performed his longest concert ever at 4 hours and 6 minutes and 33 songs. Not included in this total time is the thirty-minute, five-song, solo acoustical set he did about two hours prior to the beginning of the show.

Springsteen performed at the Little Kids Rock 2012 Right to Rock Benefit in NYC, honoring Steven Van Zandt as Big Man of the Year. Both Springsteen and Van Zandt played in the E Street Band and continue to play while showing their support for Little Kids Rock.

Springsteen was honored with the 2013 MusiCares Person of the Year award in recognition of his creative accomplishments as well as his charitable work and philanthropic activities. A ceremony was held on February 8, 2013, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California, two days before the Grammy Awards.

Despite saying he would sit this election out, Springsteen campaigned for President Barack Obama's re-election in Ohio, Iowa, Virginia, Pittsburgh and Wisconsin where he briefly spoke to the audience and performed a short acoustic set which included a newly written song for the events titled, "Forward". President Barack Obama also used "We Take Care of Our Own" as one of his top campaign songs and it was played during many of his campaign stops including right after his victory speech on election night. Use of the song helped boost sales of the song by 409%.

On October 29, 2012, the New Jersey area was badly hit hard by Hurricane Sandy, one of the biggest storms on record to hit the east coast and which also caused extensive damage to areas Springsteen grew up in including Asbury Park. Two days following the storm on October 31, 2012, an emotional Springsteen dedicated his performance at the Blue Cross Arena in Rochester, NY, to those affected by the storm and those helping to recover. Springsteen and the E Street Band performed "Land of Hope and Dreams" at a one-hour televised telethon called Hurricane Sandy: Coming Together on November 2, 2012, which aired on NBC and at the same time many other channels. Springsteen also joined Billy Joel, Steven Tyler and Jimmy Fallon for a performance of "Under the Boardwalk". All money was donated to the American Red Cross. Springsteen and the E Street Band, along with many top names in the music industry, performed at Madison Square Garden on December 12, 2012, for 12-12-12: The Concert for Sandy Relief. The concert was a benefit for the victims of Hurricane Sandy and will help provide assistance to the millions of people throughout the tri-state area who have been affected by the hurricane. The concert was broadcast worldwide on various channels including HBO, Showtime and AMC.

At year's end, the Wrecking Ball Tour was named Top Draw for having the top attendance out of any tour by the Billboard Touring Awards. The tour finished second to Roger Waters, who had the top grossing tour of 2012. Springsteen finished second only to Madonna as the top money maker of 2012 with \$33.44 million. Madonna made a little over \$1 million more than Springsteen for the year. The Wrecking Ball album along with the single "We Take Care of Our Own", were nominated for three Grammy Awards including Best Rock Performance and Best Rock Song for "We Take Care of Our Own" and Best Rock Album. Rolling Stone named Wrecking Ball the number one album of 2012 on their Top 50 albums of 2012 list.

In March 2013 and for the first time since re-uniting with Springsteen in 1999, Steven Van Zandt was forced to miss the Australian leg of the band's tour due to acting commitments on his television show Lillyhammer. Van Zandt was replaced by guitarist Tom Morello for the leg. Van Zandt said that during his absence from the tour the band along with Morello recorded new music during their downtime. Van Zandt indicated that he did not know what would become of the songs recorded and that Springsteen was always cutting things, always writing things and always recording. He literally always has an album in his pocket. He usually has two of them.

Following the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings, Springsteen contacted Boston punk band, Dropkick Murphys asking if there was anything he could do to help. Through iTunes and released in May 2013, the Dropkick Murphys along with Springsteen re-recorded a version of their song "Rose Tattoo" which will be released on a three song EP titled Rose Tattoo: For Boston Charity EP with all money from downloads going to the victims of the tragic events.

A month later, longtime friend, actor James Gandolfini died from a heart attack. The following evening, Springsteen dedicated a full album performance of Born to Run to his fallen friend. Van Zandt, who co-starred with Gandolfini on the hit television series, The Sopranos, said of his passing "I have lost a brother and a best friend. The world has lost one of the greatest actors of all time."<sup>[93]</sup><sup>[94]</sup>

In late July 2013, director Baillie Walsh's documentary, Springsteen & I was released simultaneously via a worldwide cinema broadcast in over 50 countries and in over 2000 movie theaters.

The Wrecking Ball Tour, which came to an end in September 2013, was one of Springsteen's most successful tours ever. The tour featured 133 performances in 26 countries, the most ever countries for a Springsteen tour ever and an estimated 3.5 million tickets were sold. A week after announcing the end of

the Wrecking Ball Tour, Springsteen announced a 2014 tour that would include dates in Australia and New Zealand.[95] With new shows announced, rumors spread about the tour and if more dates would be added or a new album would be released, possibly featuring music recorded in Australia earlier in 2013 with Tom Morello. An Australian promoter further fueled speculation by announcing to the press that Morello would join the band for the tour.

Springsteen, along with friend and mentor Pete Seeger, as well as Herbie Hancock, Sally Field and Robert De Niro, were among a total of 198 class of 2013 inductees into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The induction ceremony was held at the Academy's headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts in October 2013. A month later Springsteen appeared as one of the many performers at the 7th annual "Stand Up For Heroes" benefit concert in New York City on November 6, 2013, at Madison Square Garden. The annual show helped raise funds for injured service members.

Springsteen released a heartfelt letter in October 2013 through his website thanking fans of all ages for their support throughout the Wrecking Ball World Tour. A highlight video of the tour was also released featuring a brand new studio recording of the Suicide song, "Dream Baby Dream" which was produced by Ron Aniello.

Springsteen will release his eighteenth studio album, High Hopes, on January 14, 2014. The first single and music video was a newly recorded version of "High Hopes" which was previously recorded by Springsteen in 1995. Both the single and video were released on November 25, 2013. Rolling Stone was the first to review the song, giving it 4 stars out of 5. The album will be a first for Springsteen where all of the songs on the album are either cover songs, newly recorded outtakes from previous records or newly recorded versions of songs previously released. The current E Street Band touring lineup along with deceased E Street Band members Clarence Clemons and Danny Federici will appear on the album along with guitarist Tom Morello.

Springsteen's manager Jon Landau said that there were no plans to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Born in the USA during the 2014 tour and no box set was in the works. However, there are ongoing plans for The River box set and that they were currently remastering Greetings From Asbury Park, N.J. and The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle for a forthcoming release.

On December 16, 2013, The E Street Band were named 2014 inductees to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. They will be given a special Award for Musical Excellence.

On December 28, 2013, High Hopes was accidentally released a few weeks in advance for purchase through individual MP3 downloads on Amazon.com's mobile application. Amazon.com quickly removed the files however by mid-day the album had leaked throughout the internet. It remains unclear how the album made its way for purchase through the application and it is very rare for a major retailer to leak a product prior to its release date.

Late Night with Jimmy Fallon dedicated the entire show on January 14, 2014 to Springsteen and the new album, which was released that day. Springsteen and Fallon, who were dressed as Springsteen from the Born in the U.S.A. era, performed a parody song to the theme of "Born to Run" titled "Gov. Christie Traffic Jam" which made fun of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's current political problems. The E Street Band (minus Steven Van Zandt who was filming his television show, Lillyhammer) along with Tom Morello joined

Springsteen throughout the show for performances of three new songs and Springsteen was also interviewed.

On January 15, 2014, it was announced that Springsteen would start making professional recordings of all of his live shows available following each performance on his upcoming tour as a USB wristband which will be made available online or at shows. Due to the high cost (\$40 + shipping fees) and only allowed one show per of wristband, fan response has been mostly negative even with online petitions forming urging Springsteen to re-evaluate the process.

High Hopes became Springsteen's eleventh #1 selling album placing him third all-time for the most #1 albums trailing only Jay-Z (17) and The Beatles (19).

## Musical style

Bruce Springsteen (second from right) was among the five recipients of the 2009 Kennedy Center Honors

Bruce Springsteen draws on many musical influences from the reservoir of traditional American popular music, folk, blues and country. From the beginning, rock and roll has been a dominant influence and Springsteen's musical and lyrical evocations, as well as public tributes, of artists such as Dylan, Presley, Roy Orbison, Gary "U.S." Bonds, and many others helped to rekindle interest in their music. Springsteen's other preferred musical style is American folk, evident on his debut album, *Greetings from Asbury Park, New Jersey*, and more strongly on *Nebraska* and *The Ghost of Tom Joad*. Springsteen songs such as "This Hard Land" demonstrate the lyrical and musical influence of Woody Guthrie.

Elements of Latin American music, jazz, soul, and funk influences can be heard on Springsteen's second album, *The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle*; the song "New York City Serenade" is even reminiscent of the music of George Gershwin. These two records prominently featured pianist David Sancious, who left the band shortly into the recording of Springsteen's third album, *Born To Run*. This album, however, also emphasized the piano, the responsibility now of Roy Bittan.

Subsequently in his career, Springsteen focused more on the rock elements of his music. He initially compressed the sound and developed *Darkness on the Edge of Town* just as straightforward as concise musical idiom, for the simple riffs, hard rock guitar solos and clearly recognizable song structures are dominant. He also drew upon a few influences from punk rock on the album, as can be heard on the heavy rhythm following the bridge solo on 'Candy's Room'.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> His music has been categorized as heartland rock, a style typified by Springsteen, John Fogerty, Tom Petty, Bob Seger, and John Mellencamp. This music has a lyrical reference to the U.S. everyday and the music is kept rather simple and straightforward. This development culminated with Springsteen's hit album *Born in the U.S.A.*, the title song of which has a constantly repeating, fanfare-like keyboard riff and a pounding drum beat. These sounds fit with Springsteen's voice: it cries to the listener the unsentimental story of a disenchanting angry figure. Even songs that can be argued to be album tracks proved to be singles that enjoyed some chart success, such as "My Hometown" and "I'm on Fire", in which the drum line is formed from subtle hi-hat and rim-clicks-shock (shock at the edge of the snare drum) accompanied by synthesizer and Springsteen's soft guitar line. The album, along with some previous records such as "Cadillac Ranch" showed clear rockabilly influences as is evident from his guitar solos, in-fills and vocal styles on these. Another clear influence of early rock n roll on Springsteen's music is evident on the song "Light of Day".

In recent years, Springsteen has changed his music further.[citation needed] There are more folk elements up to the gospel to be heard. His last solo album, *Devils and Dust*, drew rave reviews not only for Springsteen's complex songwriting, but also for his expressive and sensitive singing.

On the album *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions* Springsteen performed folk classics with a folk band, rather than his usual E Street Band. On his ensuing tour he also interpreted some of his own rock songs in a folk style.[citation needed]

The 2007 album *Magic* was a reflection on the old stadium rock attitude and with its lush arrangements was almost designed to be performed at large stadiums, which also succeeded on the corresponding tour.[citation needed]

His 2012 album, *Wrecking Ball*, incorporated a variety of styles including rock, gospel, folk, punk and even sampling and loops.

## Lyrical themes

"I spent most of my life as a musician measuring the distance between the American dream and American reality."

—Bruce Springsteen

Often described as cinematographic in their scope, Springsteen's lyrics frequently explore highly personal themes such as individual commitment, dissatisfaction and dismay with life in a context of everyday situations.

It has been recognized that there was a shift in his lyrical approach starting with the album *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, in which he focused on the emotional struggles of working class life.

## Personal life

Springsteen family greets Obama family on stage at rally in Cleveland, Ohio on November 2, 2008.

In the early 1980s, Springsteen met Patti Scialfa at The Stone Pony, a bar in New Jersey where local musicians perform on a regular basis. On that particular evening she was performing alongside one of Springsteen's pals, Bobby Bandiera, with whom she had written "At Least We Got Shoes" for Southside Johnny. Springsteen liked her voice and after the performance, introduced himself to her. Soon after that, they started hanging out together and became friends.

Early in 1984 Springsteen asked Scialfa to join the E Street Band for the upcoming *Born in the U.S.A.* Tour. According to the book *Bruce Springsteen on Tour 1969–2005* by Dave Marsh, it looked like Springsteen and Scialfa were on the brink of becoming a couple through the first leg of the tour. But before that could happen, Barry Bell introduced Julianne Phillips to Springsteen and on May 13, 1985, they got married. The two were opposites in background, had a 11-year age difference and his traveling took its toll on their relationship. In 1987, Springsteen wrote his next album, *Tunnel of Love*, on which many of the songs described his unhappiness in the relationship with Phillips.

In 1988 the *Tunnel of Love Express Tour* began and Springsteen convinced Scialfa to join the tour again. She was reluctant at first, since she wanted to start recording her first solo album, but after Springsteen told her that the tour would be short, she agreed to postpone her own solo record. Phillips and

Springsteen separated in the spring of 1988, but it wasn't made known to the press. Springsteen and Scialfa fell in love with each other during the Tunnel of Love Express Tour and started living together soon after his separation from Phillips. On August 30, 1988, Julianne filed for divorce. The Springsteen/Phillips divorce was finalized on March 1, 1989. Springsteen received press criticism for the hastiness in which he and Scialfa took up their relationship. In a 1995 interview with *The Advocate*, Springsteen told Judy Wieder about the negative publicity the couple subsequently received. "It's a strange society that assumes it has the right to tell people whom they should love and whom they shouldn't. But the truth is, I basically ignored the entire thing as much as I could. I said, 'Well, all I know is, this feels real, and maybe I have got a mess going here in some fashion, but that's life.'" He also told Wieder that, "I went through a divorce, and it was really difficult and painful and I was very frightened about getting married again. So part of me said, 'Hey, what does it matter?' But it does matter. It's very different than just living together. First of all, stepping up publicly—which is what you do: You get your license, you do all the social rituals—is a part of your place in society and in some way part of society's acceptance of you ... Patti and I both found that it did mean something."

Springsteen and Scialfa initially lived in New Jersey and for a short while in New York, before deciding to move to Los Angeles where they decided to start a family. On July 25, 1990, Scialfa gave birth to the couple's first child, Evan James Springsteen. On June 8, 1991, Springsteen and Scialfa married at their Los Angeles home in a very private ceremony, only attended by family and close friends. Their second child, Jessica Rae Springsteen, was born on December 30, 1991; and their third child, Samuel Ryan Springsteen, was born on January 5, 1994.

When the children reached school-going age in the early 1990s, Springsteen and Scialfa moved back to New Jersey specifically to raise a family in a non-paparazzi environment. The grounds of his New Jersey home include a large swimming pool. The family owns and lives on a horse farm in Colts Neck, New Jersey. They also own homes in Wellington, Florida, a wealthy horse community near West Palm Beach, Los Angeles and Rumson, New Jersey.

Their eldest son, Evan, graduated from Boston College. He writes and performs his own songs and won the 2012 Singer/Songwriter Competition held during the Boston College's Arts Festival. Their daughter Jessica is a nationally ranked champion equestrian, and attends Duke University. Their youngest son, Sam, is a firefighter.

It has been reported that the press conference regarding the 2009 Super Bowl XLIII half-time show was Springsteen's first press conference for more than 25 years. However, he has appeared in a few radio interviews, most notably on NPR and BBC.[citation needed] 60 Minutes aired his last extensive interview on TV before his tour to support his album, *Magic*.

Springsteen is also an activist for gay rights and has spoken out many times as a strong supporter of gay marriage. In 2009, he posted the following statement on his website: "I've long believed in and have always spoken out for the rights of same sex couples and fully agree with Governor Corzine when he writes that 'The marriage-equality issue should be recognized for what it truly is—a civil rights issue that must be approved to assure that every citizen is treated equally under the law.'" In 2012, he lent his support to an ad campaign for gay marriage called "The Four 2012". Springsteen noted in the ad, "I couldn't agree more with that statement and urge those who support equal treatment for our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters to let their voices be heard now."

## Bands

Springsteen playing at the Stadium of Light, Sunderland, UK, June 21, 2012

Bruce Springsteen has been a member of, or has been backed by, several bands during his career, most notably The E Street Band.

Prior to signing his first record deal in 1972, Springsteen was a member of several bands including Steel Mill. In October 1972 he formed a new band for the recording of his debut album *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.*, which became known as The E Street Band, although the name was not officially introduced until September 1974. The E Street Band performed on all of Springsteen's recorded works from his debut until 1982's *Nebraska*, a solo album on which Springsteen himself played all the instruments. The full band returned for the next album *Born in the USA*, but there then followed a period from 1988 to 1999 in which albums were recorded with session musicians. The E Street Band were briefly reunited in 1995 for new contributions to the *Greatest Hits* compilation, and on a more permanent basis from 1999, since which time they have recorded four albums together (*The Rising*, *Magic*, *Working on a Dream* and *Wrecking Ball*) and performed a number of high profile tours.

The 2005 album *Devils & Dust* was largely a solo recording, with some contribution from session musicians and the 2006 folk rock *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions* album was recorded and toured with another band, known as The Sessions Band.

Earlier Bands: The Castiles, Earth, Child, Steel Mill, Sundance Blues Band, Dr Zoom and the Sonic Boom, Bruce Springsteen Band.

## Discography

*Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.* (1973)

*The Wild, the Innocent & the E Street Shuffle* (1973)

*Born to Run* (1975)

*Darkness on the Edge of Town* (1978)

*The River* (1980)

*Nebraska* (1982)

*Born in the U.S.A.* (1984)

*Tunnel of Love* (1987)

*Human Touch* (1992)

*Lucky Town* (1992)

*The Ghost of Tom Joad* (1995)

*The Rising* (2002)

*Devils & Dust* (2005)

We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions (2006)

Magic (2007)

Working on a Dream (2009)

Wrecking Ball (2012)

High Hopes (2014)

## Awards, recognition and rankings

### Grammy Awards

Springsteen has won 20 Grammy Awards, as follows (years shown are the year the award was given for, not the year in which the ceremony was held):

Best Rock Vocal Performance, Male, 1984, "Dancing in the Dark"

Best Rock Vocal Performance, Male, 1987, "Tunnel of Love"

Song of the Year, 1994, "Streets of Philadelphia"

Best Rock Song, 1994, "Streets of Philadelphia"

Best Rock Vocal Performance, Solo, 1994, "Streets of Philadelphia"

Best Song Written Specifically for a Motion Picture or Television, 1994, "Streets of Philadelphia"

Best Contemporary Folk Album, 1996, The Ghost of Tom Joad

Best Rock Album, 2002, The Rising

Best Rock Song, 2002, "The Rising"

Best Male Rock Vocal Performance, 2002, "The Rising"

Best Rock Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal, 2003, "Disorder in the House" (with Warren Zevon)

Best Solo Rock Vocal Performance, 2004, "Code of Silence"

Best Solo Rock Vocal Performance, 2005, "Devils & Dust"

Best Traditional Folk Album, 2006, The Seeger Sessions: We Shall Overcome

Best Long Form Music Video, 2006, Wings For Wheels: The Making Of Born to Run

Best Solo Rock Vocal Performance, 2007, "Radio Nowhere"

Best Rock Song, 2007, "Radio Nowhere"

Best Rock Instrumental Performance, 2007, "Once Upon a Time in the West"

Best Rock Song, 2008, "Girls in Their Summer Clothes"

Best Solo Rock Vocal Performance, 2009, "Working on a Dream"

In addition to these twenty Grammy Award wins, Bruce Springsteen was honored as MusiCares Person of the Year on February 8, 2013.

## Golden Globe Awards

Golden Globe Award for Best Original Song for "Streets of Philadelphia" in 1994.

Golden Globe Award for Best Original Song for "The Wrestler" in 2009.

## Academy Awards

Academy Award for Best Original Song, 1994, "Streets of Philadelphia" from Philadelphia.

## Other recognition

October 27, 1975: Bruce Springsteen appears simultaneously on the covers of Newsweek and Time

Polar Music Prize in 1997

Inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, 1999

Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band: Live in New York City won two Emmy Awards in 2001

Inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame, 1999

Inducted into the New Jersey Hall of Fame, 2007

"Born to Run" named "The unofficial youth anthem of New Jersey" by the New Jersey state legislature; something Springsteen always found to be ironic, considering that the song "is about leaving New Jersey"

The minor planet 23990, discovered September 4, 1999, by I. P. Griffin at Auckland, New Zealand, was officially named in his honor.

Ranked No. 23 on Rolling Stone magazine's 2004 list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time

Ranked No. 36 on Rolling Stone magazine's 2004 list of the 100 Greatest Singers of All Time

Made Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People of the Year 2008 list

Won Critic's Choice Award for Best Song with "The Wrestler" in 2009

Performed at the Super Bowl XLIII half time show

Kennedy Center Honors, 2009

Rolling Stone magazine also ranked 8 out of 16 Springsteen's studio albums in their 500 Greatest Albums of All Time list.

Rolling Stone ranked "Born to Run" and "Thunder Road" in its 500 Greatest Songs Of All Time list, in 21st and 86th, respectively.

Forbes ranked him 6th in The Celebrity 100 in 2009

John Steinbeck Award, 1996

Devils & Dust Tour named Top Small Venue Tour of 2005 by Billboard Touring Awards

Magic Tour named Top Tour and Top Draw of 2008 by Billboard Touring Awards

Wrecking Ball Tour named Top Draw for most attendance for a tour at the 2012 Billboard Touring Awards

Named 2013 MusiCares Person of the Year

Wrecking Ball named best album of 2012 by Rolling Stone on their Top 50 Albums of 2012 list

2013 inductee to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

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