

# American Pie (Don McLean, ca. 1971) (D)

American Pie by Don McLean (1971) (G @ 138)

Concerning the impact of Feb. 3, 1959, "the day the music died"

Capo 5 — 4/4 Time

## Intro (Note or chord) D ↓

D A Bm Em G  
A long, long time ago, I can still re-member,  
Bm A7 | A7sus4 A7 A7sus2 A7  
how that music used to make me smile.

D A Bm Em G  
And I knew if I had my chance that I could make those people dance  
Bm G A7 | A7sus2 A7 A7sus4 A7 A7sus2 A7  
And maybe they'd be happy for a while.

Bm ↓ Em ↓ Bm ↓ Em ↓  
But February made me shiver, with every paper I'd deliver.  
G D Em G A [ 4 3 2 1 ]  
Bad news on the doorstep, I couldn't take one more step.

D A Bm Em A  
I can't re-member if I cried, when I read about his widowed bride  
D A Bm G A7 D↓↑↓ G↓ D↓  
Something touched me deep inside the day the music died. So . . .

## Chorus

D G D A D G D A  
Bye, bye Miss A-merican Pie, drove my Chevy to the levee but the levee was dry.

D G D A  
Them good old boys were drinkin' whiskey and rye,  
Bm ↓ E7↓↑↓ Bm ↓ E7 ↓ Bm ↓ A7 | A7\*  
Singin' this'll be the day that I die. This'll be the day that I die. ↑ 1<sup>st</sup> Time Only  
D | D7

D Em G Em  
\_ Did you write the Book of Love and do you have faith in God above?  
Bm A7 | A7sus4 A7 A7sus2 A7

\_ If the Bible tells you so.

D A Bm Em G  
Now do you be-lieve in rock and roll? Can music save your mortal soul? and  
Bm E7 A7 | A7sus4 A7 A7sus2 A7  
\_ can you teach me how to dance real slow?

Bm ↓ A ↓ Bm ↓ A ↓ - A  
Well, I know that you're in love with him 'cause I saw you dancing in the gym.  
G D E7↓↑↓ E7sus2↓↑ E7 ↓  
You both kicked off your shoes.

G A7↓↑↓ A7sus4 ↓ A7 ↓  
Man, I dig those rhythm and blues.

D A Bm Em G  
I was a lonely teenage broncin' buck with a pink carnation and a pickup truck.

D A Bm G A7 D↓↑↑↑ G↓↑↑↑ D↓↑↑↑ A7↓↑↑↑  
But I knew I was out of luck the day the music died. I started singin' **Chorus**

**D** **Em** **G** **Em**  
 Now for ten years we've been on our own and moss grows fat on a rolling stone

**Bm** **A7** | **A7sus4** **A7** **A7sus2** **A7**  
 But \_\_\_ that's not how it used to be.

**D** **A** **Bm** **Em** **G**  
 When the jester sang for the king and queen in a coat he borrowed from James Dean and

**Bm** **E7** **A** | **A7↓↑↑↑** **A7sus2↓** **A7↓**  
 a voice that came from you and me.

**Bm** ↓ **A** ↓ **Bm** ↓ **A** ↓ - **A** ↓↑↓  
 Oh, and \_\_\_ while the king was looking down, the jester stole his thorny crown,

**G** **D** **E7↓↑** **E7sus2↓↑** **E7↓** **G** **A7↓↑↓** **A7sus4↓** **A7↓**  
 The courtroom was ad-journed, no verdict was re-turned.

**D** **A** **Bm** **Em** **G**  
 And while Lenin read a book on Marx, the quartet practiced in the park

**D** **A** **Bm** **G** **A7** **D↓↑↑↑** **G↓↑↑↑** **D↓↑↑↑** **A7↓↑↑↑**  
 And we sang dirges in the dark the day the music died. **We were singin'** **Chorus**

**D** **Em** **G** **Em**  
 Helter-skelter in a summer swelter, the birds flew off for the fallout shelter

**Bm** **A** | **A7**  
 \_\_\_ Eight miles high and falling fast,

**D** **A** **Bm** **Em** **G**  
 it landed foul on the grass, the players tried for a forward pass,

**Bm** **E7** **A** | **A7**  
 with the jester on the side-lines in a cast.

**Bm** ↓ **A** ↓ **Bm** ↓ **A** ↓ - **A**  
 Now the half time air was sweet perfume, while sergeants played a marching tune.

**G** **D** **E7↓↑** **E7sus2↓↑** **E7↓** **G** **A7↓↑↓** **A7sus4↓** **A7↓**  
 We all got up to dance, oh, but we never got the chance, . . . .

**D** **A** **Bm** **Em** **G**  
 'Cause the players tried to take the field, the marching band re-fused to yield.

**D** **A** **Bm** **G** **A7** **D↓↑↑↑** **G↓↑↑↑** **D↓↑↑↑** **A7↓↑↑↑**  
 Do you re-call what was revealed the day the music died? **We started singin'** **Chorus**

**D** **Em** **G** **Em**  
 Oh, and there we were all in one place, a generation lost in space

**Bm** **A** | **A7↓↑↑↑** **A7sus2↓** **A7↓**  
 With no time left to start a-gain.

**D** **A** **Bm** **Em** **G**  
 So come on Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack Flash sat on a candlestick

**Bm** **E7** **A** | **A7**  
 'cause fire is the devil's only friend.

**Bm** ↓ **A** ↓ **Bm** ↓ **A** ↓ **A** ↓ **A** ↓ - ↓↓  
 Oh and as I watched him on the stage, my hands were clenched in fists of rage.

**G** **D** **E7↓↑** **E7sus2↓↑** **E7↓** **G** **A7↓↑↓** **A7sus4↓** **A7↓**  
 No angel born in hell could break that Satan's spell.

**D** **A** **Bm** **Em** **G**  
 And as the flames climbed high in-to the night to light the sacri-ficial rite

**D** **A** **Bm** **G** **A7** **D↓↑↑↑** **G↓↑↑↑** **D↓↑↑↑** **A7↓↑↑↑**  
 I saw Satan laughing with delight the day the music died. **He was singin'** **Chorus**

**“Freely” (with limited strums)**

**D A Bm Em G**  
 \_ I met a girl who sang the blues and I asked her for some happy news,  
     **Bm A7 | A7↓↑ A7sus4↓ A7↓↑ A7sus2↓ A7↓**  
 But she just smiled and turned away.  
**D A Bm D Em D G**  
 I went down to the sacred store, where I heard the music years before,  
     **Bm G A7 | A7↓↑ A7sus4↓ A7↓↑ A7sus2↓ A7↓**  
 but the man there said the music wouldn't play.  
     **Bm ↓ Em ↓ Bm ↓ Em ↓**  
 And in the streets the children screamed, the lovers cried and the poets dreamed.  
     **G D Em G A - E5 B5 D5**  
 But not a word was spoken; the church bells all were broken.  
**D A Bm D G A7**  
 And the three men I ad-mire most, the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost,  
**D A Bm G Em A7 D↓↑↓ G↓ D↓ A7↓**  
 They caught the last train for the coast the day the mu - sic died. **And they were singin'**

**Chorus (Measured)**

**D G D A D G D A**  
 Bye, bye Miss A-merican Pie, drove my Chevy to the levee but the levee was dry.  
**D G D A**  
 Them good old boys were drinkin' whiskey and rye,  
**Bm ↓ E7 ↓ E7sus4 ↓ Bm ↓ A | A7**  
 Singin' this'll be the day that I die. This'll be the day that I die.

**Outro (Up Tempo)**

**A7 A7sus2 A7 A7sus2 D G D A**  
 They were sing - in' bye, bye Miss A-merican Pie.  
**D G D A**  
 Drove my Chevy to the levee but the levee was dry.  
**D G D A**  
 Them good old boys were drinking whiskey and rye, **(Ritard.)**  
**G↓ A7↓ D↓ G↓ D↓**  
 Singing this'll be the day that I die. **(Hold)**