

We have seen *Stranger Things*

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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Even though there is a myriad of albums, time periods and artists we can look back on and recognise their influence from then to now - we are currently seeing the ways in which popular TV shows have the ability to make seemingly forgotten music an essential part of our modern culture.



'80s nostalgia is at the heart of the mega-popular Netflix sci-fi/horror series *Stranger Things*. Music is obviously an integral part of creating the feeling of nostalgia - even if you had never personally experienced it before - but the latest season has taken it beyond simple story crafting.

Some spoilers ahead, if you have not seen it yet.

We waited three years for season four of *Stranger Things*, and it did not disappoint. Although, from my point of view, *Stranger Things* is not doing anything particularly new in terms of narrative and science fiction storytelling, it has brought entire generations together through sentimentality.

If you grew up in the '80s, it may draw directly from nostalgia - but for us who were not present during this time, the characters, their way of life and the love they have for each other are key to the attachment to a time we never knew.

About the music

I can muse for a while about the narrative excellence of *Stranger Things*, but we're really here to talk about the music.

There are two scenes in particular that I would like to draw attention to. The first is when we see Max Mayfield under the curse of the main villain of season four - Vecna - as she is about to get quite literally torn apart by him.

Thankfully, her friends figure out that there is a way to save her from the trance that Vecna puts his victims in - by playing her favourite song.

And this song was *Running Up That Hill* by Kate Bush.

Following the month of season four's release, Bush accumulated \$2.3m in streaming royalties. And because she owns the copyright of her music, she is likely to get the bulk of that money.

However, Kate Bush did not only find herself with an incredible new income stream, but the song was her first Top 10 hit - 37 years after its release.

The second scene is where the newly introduced character Eddie Munson takes it upon himself to use Metallica's *Master of Puppets* as a distraction technique in the Upside Down.

If I can be frank, when Eddie started shredding this in an alternate dimension - I quite literally screamed a little.

And I am sure that was the reaction of most already-Metallica fans. However, the song experienced a similar resurgence to Bush's *Running Up That Hill*.

“ Currently losing my mind over [@Metallica](#) duetting with Eddie Munson on *Master of Puppets*!
[pic.twitter.com/CKyhaLVRiB](#)— Netflix (@netflix) [July 8, 2022](#) ”

According to *Rolling Stone*, Metallica was blown away by *Stranger Things* use of the song and uploaded a video of themselves performing the metal classic alongside footage of the show.

Travelling in time

Beyond the newfound success in a different century that these artists have found, the cultural uprising of music that *Stranger Things* has caused speaks to the true power of music.

And I would like to credit this to the way they used the songs in the show.

Both *Running Up That Hill* and *Master of Puppets* were used in tense scenes that demanded the attention of the viewer. Music is usually used to set up a scene, or as a backdrop, but *Stranger Things* recognised the way it can shape a story. Those scenes wouldn't be the same without the music.

We all know soundtracks. The *Game of Thrones* theme song, the *Lord of the Rings* theme, the *Friends* intro - all of them are integral parts of popular culture. The shows and movies don't exist without them, truly.

But in *Stranger Things*, the narrative wouldn't be the same without preexisting songs. It's expert insight into how music can make the story that much more climactic and sentimental. The songs are intimately tied to the characters and what they are experiencing.

It's a recognition that the remarkable creation that came from musicians before us can still affect us in a commanding way today.

Stranger Things still has one more season coming, and I am excited to see how they continue the use of these songs. We are ready to be launched into a time that's not ours, but feels like it is, again.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

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