

# Gravity

By: John Mayer

“Gravity” is one of John Mayer’s most popular songs and played an important part in his career. He first composed the piece in 2005 and released it later in that year with his album *Try!* with the John Mayer Trio. It was one of two songs featured on this debut album that carried over into the release of *Continuum* later in 2006. This shows how much John Mayer and his fans loved this song. This piece was a middle composition in his life since he started producing album in about 1999 and is continuing to produce albums currently.

John Mayer wrote this song in the summer while he was in Los Angeles. He was in the shower and just sang, “Gravity...is working against me.” He felt this way because he thought that the whole world was working against him. He felt as if he could not screw up and had to get things done on somebody else’s time schedule always. He quotes that “being a musician is almost a side job to [his] full-time job of not screwing up.” The song is basically just a result of him being overwhelmed in his life and it just came to him because of his musical talent, which he used to write it.

“Gravity” was produced by John Mayer and Steve Jordan. It was recorded in 2006 and released as a single in 2007. The song actually occurred on three albums, including *Try!*, *Continuum*, and *Where the Light Is: John Mayer Live in Los Angeles*. The song is a rock song that has some blues to go along with it. It has John Mayer on the vocals and guitar, Pino Palladino playing the bass and singing backup vocals, Steve Jordan pounding the drums and other percussion instruments, Larry Goldings rocking the keyboards and on the *Continuum* album there is also the special background vocals provided by Alicia Keys at the end of the song.

The Billboard called the single "an easygoing, bluesy number, convincingly conjuring the spirit of his idol Buddy Guy." On February 22, 2007, "Gravity" entered Billboard's Hot 100 singles chart at #71; at that time, Mayer had two singles charting on the Hot 100. The other song was "Waiting on the World to Change". It also entered Billboard's Hot 100 Digital Songs Chart at #63. The song was so popular that it was #84 on *Rolling Stone*'s list of the 100 Greatest Guitar Songs Of All Time. An interesting story is that the family of astronaut Pilot Charles O. Hobaugh chose "Gravity" as the wake-up call for the astronauts aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour on August 11, 2007. The wake-up call became a tradition for NASA spaceflights since the days of Project Gemini.

When I first listened to “Gravity” I instantly loved it. It was a calming song that had a steady rhythm and catchy lyrics. It told the truth about how someone felt. I chose this song because I love it. It has a rich instrumental sound and relaxing tempo. The drums have a constant rhythm that keep beating throughout the song that just keeps the song on beat. The song is revolutionary in combing a rock feeling with a little bit of jazz and blues. The vocals and instruments combine perfectly for a great sounding song.

# Waiting on the World to Change

By: John Mayer

“Waiting on the World to Change” is a monumental song in John Mayer’s career as well. It was released from his 2006 album *Continuum*. This song went along perfectly with John’s previous music, yet was something new enough to keep listeners entertained. The major key tonality led to a happy feel to it while the text talks about something serious and meaningful.

The structure of “Waiting on the World to Change” is a very basic rock song structure. It contains a popular chord progression that is often found in blues, rock and soul songs. It also contains a little bit of an offbeat in the verses. The accent is not quite on the beat as it normally is. The people involved were obviously John Mayer on the vocals and guitar, Pino Palladino on the bass, and singing backup, Steve Jordan on the drums and percussion, Rick Peterson on the keyboards and also helping with the backup vocals, and the new addition of Roy Haygrove that used horns that is different from John Mayer’s other songs.

“Waiting on the World to Change” turned out to be a very popular song. On February 22, 2007, it peaked at #14 on the Billboard Hot 100 Singles Chart. It stayed on the charts for 41 weeks. The single also reached #1 on Billboard's Hot Adult Contemporary Tracks Chart, remaining on the chart for over a year. It is Mayer's most successful single both in sales and chart positions. To date, in the U.S., the single has sold over 2,000,000 in digital downloads, becoming the 103<sup>rd</sup> song to top the 2 million mark in paid downloads. It is Mayer's first song to reach that extraordinary height. It has been certified platinum by the RIAA, a distinction for downloads and sales in excess of one million. The song has found success internationally as well. It peaked at #17 on the Australian ARIA Digital Singles Chart. It also peaked at #36 on the New Zealand RIANZ Top 40 Singles Chart. It is popular all over the world. The song was so great that it even got John Mayer the Grammy award because of “Waiting on the World to Change” for *Best Male Pop Vocal Performance of the Year* in 2007.

I think that one of the reasons that it became so popular is because of the message that it brings with the catchy tune. It talks about politics, a topic that Mayer hadn’t really dealt with before. Regarding this choice, he said that "You cannot avoid war in life, you cannot avoid the fear of terrorism, you cannot avoid those things now, they are a part of everyday demeanor. So in that sense it's become more of an acceptable thing to comment on because it's just so much of a white elephant." The song centers on the lack of action that leaders have taken during current world conditions. However, the song also included hope for the future, saying that the current generation can change the way the world works, hence the title “Waiting on the World to Change”.

This is one of my favorite songs on the album. Like I said before, the beat and tone of the song gives off a party, celebrating feeling that makes someone want to get up and dance and sing. The lyrics are meaningful and while I he is singing about the problems in the world, the main focus is how we can fix it. I like how it is a little bit different from his other songs. It does not include so much blues, but more of a gospel-like feel to it, which makes it interesting.

## Born and Raised

By: John Mayer

“Born and Raised” is a song that is a little bit different from what John Mayer’s fans are used to hearing. The album *Born and Raised* was released in May of 2012 and the song was included in that album. Mayer said that he began to move towards new “musical ideals” during his previous tour. This album marks the return of John Mayer after a two-year break from the public eye due to the surgical removal of a granuloma near his vocal cords. Born and Raised marks another change in Mayer's musical style, having his music sound more like folk and Americana that are influenced by Bob Dylan, Neil Young, David Crosby and Graham Nash.

The song starts out with an acoustic guitar, followed by a harmonica. This gives the song the folk/country felling that John Mayer wanted. This is extremely different from his normal music, which normally sounds more like jazz or blues. The instrumentation includes John Mayer on vocals, guitars, and the harmonica, Sean Hurley playing the bass, Aaron Sterling on the drums and percussion, and Chuck Leavell on the keyboards. Even the band is a little bit different from what John Mayer had previously had and makes the music have that different feel to it. There were also the featured artists of Greg Leisz on the Lap Steel, and vocal appearances by David Crosby and Graham Nash.

*Born and Raised* is John Mayer's third number one album on the Billboard 200 in the United States, selling 219,000 units in its first week. The following week, it was again placed at the top spot, being Mayer's first album to spend more than a week in the top spot on the chart. In Canada, the album debuted at number one, selling 17,800 copies. This is John's first number one album in Canada. The album also entered the UK album charts at number four. On September 12, 2012 Born and Raised was certified Gold by the RIAA, selling 500.000 copies. The album was listed at #17 on Rolling Stone's list of the top 50 albums of 2012, saying "It's a shot at redemption that's as on target as anything he's done."

Something interesting about this album is that it might be the last of John Mayer’s in an unexpected early finish for the popular artist. In September 2011, Mayer was forced to cancel a small run of live dates upon the discovery of a throat granuloma. In spring 2012, he was scheduled to tour North America, but was forced to cancel the tour after being informed by doctors that his throat granuloma had returned. He has said that he is to undergo surgery again, but that he has "no choice but to take an indefinite break from live performing."

He also put a track on the album called “Born and Raised (Reprise)”. It is the same song with a little twist. It just has a little bit more of a folk feeling to it. There is more harmonica used in it and instead of the Lap Steel being played, the pedal steel is used. It was interesting that this song was re-themed in order to give it a different kind of sound to it.

I really like “Born and Raised” and especially the direction that John Mayer tried to take. It was interesting to hear him take a completely new perspective on his music and succeed with it as well.