

**This interview with
KENNY LOGGINS
was conducted by the Library of Congress
on May 12, 2021**



Library of Congress: How were you first approached about doing the theme for the film “Footloose”?

Kenny Loggins: It goes back to about a year before the film came out. Dean Pitchford was a lyricist and collaborator that I worked with a lot and he asked me to read his screenplay, a screenplay he wrote, because he wanted to establish himself as a writer for film as well as a writer of music.

And, then, for it, we did “Footloose” as well as “I’m Free.” So, it was, basically, a favor. That’s not unusual, living in LA, to have someone come to you with a screenplay—the cab driver who drops you off has a screenplay to give to you. So, one thing lead to another.

LOC: Did you and Mr. Pitchford work on both parts of the song together or did one do the lyrics and one the music?

KL: I had the melodies already started and I showed him what I had and we built out from that. I don’t know if he added to the melody or not...I know we wrote the lyrics together. We wrote “Footloose” in, basically, one night. I think for “I’m Free” we took two nights for.

It was pretty easy to write. In our imagination, [the song] “Footloose” was to be used in the barroom scene when the kids go out of town and that’s what they dance to. Then we saw the opening credits and the movie started and there’s the taping feet--we both enjoyed seeing that! And we were laughing and were like, “Oh, shit! This is a slam dunk!”

LOC: Why do you think that the song (and the film, for that matter) caught on and connected to audiences so much at that time?

KL: I think MTV had a lot do with it. MTV was just coming up then and this infused movies into music and music into movies. The film is basically a musical—which no one ever does anymore—and rock was not being used much in movies then.

Then the Kevin Bacon dance clip, dancing to the song, was released to MTV and it was perfect and great synergy. It cemented the movie and the music—one infuses the other. You can't hear the song today and not see that scene in your head.

LOC: You've written often over the years for feature films—"Footloose," of course, but I'm also thinking of "Caddyshack." Is there a different approach to writing for a film than for, say, an album?

KL: Yes, when I'm writing for an album, I'm much more introspective. I'm thinking about what I can write that can emotionally connect with whoever is listening, whereas when I'm writing for a film, I'm more about dropping into the character and, for that film, thinking about what enhances the emotion of a particular scene and the overall impact of the movie.

As a songwriter—or any writer, really, as a novelist-- it's really you, you can only come from your own experiences but then you have to try to be that character. Like, for "Caddyshack," I was writing for the character of Danny, the caddy, and his [original, temporary] opening song was Dylan's ["Gotta Serve Somebody"]. So, I thought, "He's a rebel." So from that clue, I wrote "*I'm alright/Nobody worry 'bout me.*" He's not "all right" yet, but by the end of the movie, he is.

You know, I loved soundtrack albums when I was a kid, my brother had a lot of them--

LOC: Did you have a favorite?

KL: Composer Miklos Rozsa. My favorite work of his was "King of Kings," the movie he wrote back in the sixties. Amazing! Each character had his own theme. I was only 10 years old but it caught my imagination. It was kind of early to be steeped in such things but making music for movies became a childhood dream.

A lot of people now ask me why doesn't music in movies have the impact that it once did. I think part of it was the novelty of it at that time--music was being written *for* the movie, now it's not. Now [films] have a music director and they have a list of young, cool acts that they want to put in the film but the music isn't written *for* that movie or the emotion.

LOC: Backing up a bit, when you first saw the "Footloose" screenplay, what did you think of it?

KL: I thought it was good, but I didn't think it was going to be iconic. But I didn't get the deeper meaning at that time, I didn't know it was going to be more than a dance movie.

The film is about personal freedom. It speaks to that freedom, to the young, to that "rebel without a cause" and teens against the system which, you know, goes back to Elvis. The film—and the song—speaks to that element, the willingness to take anything on. It's a universal theme.