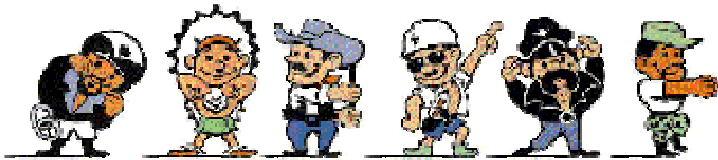


Fun Facts

The Village People and the YMCA Song

(more than you ever wanted to know)

The Village People, one of the most successful disco groups from the late 1970s, was created in 1977 by French record producer and composer, Jacques Morali. The group was named after New York's gay district in Greenwich Village. It is believed that the group was designed to attract gay audiences while parodying some of the stereotypes found in the gay community. As everyone knows by now, the group was made up of "macho men," including a cop, a construction worker, a cowboy, a biker, a Native American and a soldier.



- The group rode the disco wave in the late 1970s with several big hits, including the YMCA song, which was released in 1978 and reached number two on the pop charts. The song has remained a favorite for more than 20 years and was recently remixed for the millennium. The YMCA song remains a staple for all kind of events, including weddings, bar mitzvahs and baseball games.
- Originally considered an anthem for the gay community, the song has long been popular with people from all walks of life. It's become the most frequently performed song at sporting events in the U.S. The Village People themselves think of it as a song for everyone to enjoy and dance to using the well-known arm movements that spell out the letters Y-M-C-A. In 1999, Ray Simpson, the group's original lead singer, said that he saw "children and housewives and everyone enjoying that song. We don't want to exclude anybody . . . we want to include everybody." If you haven't danced to the song yourself, you probably know someone who has, that's how popular the song is and how widely it's played.
- The Village People got back together in the 1990s and are performing in venues around the world. Their 20th anniversary tour took them to Madison Square Garden and Radio City Music Hall in New York City. In 1999, they visited the London Central YMCA and signed a guitar that's shaped like the YMCA triangle. Other signers of the guitar? Phil Collins, BB King, and Elton John—pretty good company for a disco group.

Some people still believe that YMCA of the USA sued the Village People on January 13, 1979, because the song violated trademark. This just isn't true, but the rumor still gets play in radio station trivia contests and is floating around the Internet. BMI (the American performing rights organization that represents more than 250,000 songwriters, composers, and music publishers) holds the licensing rights to the song.