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[Template:Infobox musical artist](/wiki/Template:Infobox_musical_artist) **R.E.M.** was an American [rock](/wiki/Rock_music) band from [Athens, Georgia](/wiki/Athens,_Georgia), formed in 1980 by lead singer [Michael Stipe](/wiki/Michael_Stipe), lead guitarist [Peter Buck](/wiki/Peter_Buck), bassist/backing vocalist [Mike Mills](/wiki/Mike_Mills), and drummer [Bill Berry](/wiki/Bill_Berry). One of the first popular [alternative rock](/wiki/Alternative_rock) bands, R.E.M. were noted for Buck's ringing, [arpeggiated](/wiki/Arpeggio) guitar style, Stipe's particular vocal quality, and Mills' melodic basslines and backing vocals. R.E.M. released their first single, "[Radio Free Europe](/wiki/Radio_Free_Europe_(song))", in 1981 on the [independent record label](/wiki/Independent_record_label) [Hib-Tone](/wiki/Hib-Tone). The single was followed by the [*Chronic Town*](/wiki/Chronic_Town) [EP](/wiki/Extended_play) in 1982, the band's first release on [I.R.S. Records](/wiki/I.R.S._Records). In 1983, the group released its critically acclaimed debut album, [*Murmur*](/wiki/Murmur_(album)), and built its reputation over the next few years through subsequent releases, constant touring, and the support of [college radio](/wiki/Campus_radio). Following years of underground success, R.E.M. achieved a mainstream hit in 1987 with the single "[The One I Love](/wiki/The_One_I_Love_(R.E.M._song))". The group signed to [Warner Bros. Records](/wiki/Warner_Bros._Records) in 1988, and began to espouse political and environmental concerns while playing large arenas worldwide.

By the early 1990s, when alternative rock began to experience broad mainstream success, R.E.M. was viewed by subsequent acts such as [Nirvana](/wiki/Nirvana_(band)) and [Pavement](/wiki/Pavement_(band)) as a pioneer of the genre. The band then released its two most commercially successful albums, [*Out of Time*](/wiki/Out_of_Time_(album)) (1991) and [*Automatic for the People*](/wiki/Automatic_for_the_People) (1992), which veered from the band's established sound and catapulted it to international fame. R.E.M.'s 1994 release, [*Monster*](/wiki/Monster_(R.E.M._album)), was a return to a more rock-oriented sound, but still continued its run of success. The band began its first tour in six years to support the album; the tour was marred by medical emergencies suffered by the three band members.

In 1996, R.E.M. re-signed with Warner Bros. for a reported US$80 million, at the time the most expensive recording contract in history. Its 1996 release, [*New Adventures in Hi-Fi*](/wiki/New_Adventures_in_Hi-Fi), though critically acclaimed, fared worse commercially than expected. The following year, Bill Berry left the band, while Stipe, Buck, and Mills continued the group as a trio. Through some changes in musical style, the band continued its career into the next decade with mixed critical and commercial success, despite having sold more than 85 million records worldwide and becoming one of the [world's best-selling music artists of all time](/wiki/List_of_best-selling_music_artists).[[1]](#cite_note-1) In 2007, the band was inducted into the [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](/wiki/Rock_and_Roll_Hall_of_Fame), in their first year of eligibility. R.E.M. disbanded amicably in September 2011, announcing the split on its website.

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## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

### 1980–81: Formation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

In January 1980, Michael Stipe met Peter Buck in Wuxtry Records, the Athens record store where Buck worked. The pair discovered that they shared similar tastes in music, particularly in [punk rock](/wiki/Punk_rock) and [protopunk](/wiki/Protopunk) artists like [Patti Smith](/wiki/Patti_Smith), [Television](/wiki/Television_(band)), and [The Velvet Underground](/wiki/The_Velvet_Underground). Stipe said, "It turns out that I was buying all the records that [Buck] was saving for himself."[[2]](#cite_note-2) Stipe and Buck soon met fellow [University of Georgia](/wiki/University_of_Georgia) students Mike Mills and Bill Berry,[[3]](#cite_note-3) who had played music together since high school.[[4]](#cite_note-4) The quartet agreed to collaborate on several songs; Stipe later commented that "there was never any grand plan behind any of it".[[2]](#cite_note-2) Their still-unnamed band spent a few months rehearsing and played its first show on April 5, 1980, at a friend's birthday party held in a converted [Episcopal](/wiki/Episcopal_Church_in_the_United_States_of_America) church in Athens. After considering names like "Twisted Kites", "Cans of Piss", and "Negro Wives", the band settled on "R.E.M." (which stands for the stage of sleep called [rapid eye movement](/wiki/Rapid_eye_movement_sleep)), which Stipe selected at random from a dictionary.[[5]](#cite_note-5) [left|alt=Mitch Easter sitting at a mixing board next to two members of Dreams So Real|thumb|Record producer](/wiki/File:Mitch_michael_scott.jpg) [Mitch Easter](/wiki/Mitch_Easter) (*far left*) was important in defining the band's sound, producing all of their material until 1984 The band members eventually dropped out of school to focus on their developing group.[[6]](#cite_note-6) They found a manager in [Jefferson Holt](/wiki/Jefferson_Holt), a record store clerk who was so impressed by an R.E.M. performance in his hometown of [Chapel Hill, North Carolina](/wiki/Chapel_Hill,_North_Carolina), that he moved to Athens.[[7]](#cite_note-7) R.E.M.'s success was almost immediate in Athens and surrounding areas; the band drew progressively larger crowds for shows, which caused some resentment in the [Athens music scene](/wiki/Music_of_Athens,_Georgia).[[8]](#cite_note-8) Over the next year and a half, R.E.M. toured throughout the Southern United States. Touring was arduous because a touring circuit for alternative rock bands did not then exist. The group toured in an old blue van driven by Holt, and lived on a food allowance of $2 each per day.[[9]](#cite_note-9) During the summer of 1981, R.E.M. recorded its first single, "Radio Free Europe", at producer [Mitch Easter's](/wiki/Mitch_Easter) Drive-In Studios in [Winston-Salem, North Carolina](/wiki/Winston-Salem,_North_Carolina). The single was released on the local [independent record label](/wiki/Independent_record_label) [Hib-Tone](/wiki/Hib-Tone) with an initial pressing of one thousand copies, which quickly sold out.[[10]](#cite_note-10) Despite its limited pressing, the single garnered critical acclaim, and was listed as one of the ten best singles of the year by [*The New York Times*](/wiki/The_New_York_Times).[[11]](#cite_note-11)

### 1981–87: I.R.S. Records and cult success[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Listen](/wiki/Template:Listen) R.E.M. recorded the [*Chronic Town*](/wiki/Chronic_Town) EP with Mitch Easter in October 1981, and planned to release it on a new indie label named Dasht Hopes.[[12]](#cite_note-12) However, [I.R.S. Records](/wiki/I.R.S._Records) acquired a demo of the band's first recording session with Easter that had been circulating for months.[[13]](#cite_note-13) The band turned down the advances of major label [RCA Records](/wiki/RCA_Records) in favor of I.R.S., with whom it signed a contract in May 1982. I.R.S. released *Chronic Town* that August as its first American release.[[14]](#cite_note-14) A positive review of the EP by [*NME*](/wiki/NME) praised the songs' auras of mystery, and concluded, "R.E.M. ring true, and it's great to hear something as unforced and cunning as this."[[15]](#cite_note-15) I.R.S. first paired R.E.M. with producer [Stephen Hague](/wiki/Stephen_Hague) to record its debut album. Hague's emphasis on technical perfection left the band unsatisfied, and the band members asked the label to let them record with Easter.[[16]](#cite_note-16) I.R.S. agreed to a "tryout" session, allowing the band to return to [North Carolina](/wiki/North_Carolina) and record the song "Pilgrimage" with Easter and producing partner [Don Dixon](/wiki/Don_Dixon_(musician)). After hearing the track, I.R.S. permitted the group to record the album with Dixon and Easter.[[17]](#cite_note-17) Because of its bad experience with Hague, the band recorded the album via a process of negation, refusing to incorporate rock music clichés such as [guitar solos](/wiki/Guitar_solo) or then-popular [synthesizers](/wiki/Synthesizer), in order to give its music a timeless feel.[[18]](#cite_note-18) The completed album, [*Murmur*](/wiki/Murmur_(album)), was greeted with critical acclaim upon its release in 1983, with [*Rolling Stone*](/wiki/Rolling_Stone) listing the album as its record of the year.[[19]](#cite_note-19) The album reached number 36 on the [*Billboard*](/wiki/Billboard_(magazine)) album chart.[[20]](#cite_note-20) A re-recorded version of "Radio Free Europe" was the album's lead single and reached number 78 on the *Billboard* singles chart in 1983.[[21]](#cite_note-21) Despite the acclaim awarded the album, *Murmur* sold only about 200,000 copies, which I.R.S.'s Jay Boberg felt was below expectations.[[22]](#cite_note-22) R.E.M. made its first national television appearance on [*Late Night with David Letterman*](/wiki/Late_Night_with_David_Letterman) in October 1983,[[23]](#cite_note-23) during which the group performed a new, unnamed song.[[24]](#cite_note-24) The piece, eventually titled "[So. Central Rain (I'm Sorry)](/wiki/So._Central_Rain_(I'm_Sorry))", became the first single from the band's second album, [*Reckoning*](/wiki/Reckoning_(R.E.M._album)) (1984), which was also recorded with Easter and Dixon. The album met with critical acclaim; *NME*[Template:'s](/wiki/Template:') [Mat Snow](/wiki/Mat_Snow) wrote that *Reckoning* "confirms R.E.M. as one of the most beautifully exciting groups on the planet".[[25]](#cite_note-25) While *Reckoning* peaked at number 27 on the US album charts—an unusually high chart placing for a [college rock](/wiki/College_rock) band at the time—scant airplay and poor distribution overseas resulted in it charting no higher than number 91 in Britain.[[26]](#cite_note-26) [thumb|250px|alt=A black-and-white photograph of Michael Stipe and Peter Buck performing on stage with spotlights on them. Stipe is to the left singing into a microphone, wearing a three-piece suit, he has bleach-blond hair and is obscuring Mike Mills, whose bass guitar is visible from behind him. Peter Buck is playing guitar and wearing a button-up pattern shirt behind Stipe to the photograph's right with a sneer on his face.|Michael Stipe (left) and Peter Buck (right) on stage in](/wiki/File:R.E.M.,_Belgium,_1985.jpg) [Ghent](/wiki/Ghent), Belgium, during R.E.M.'s 1985 tour.The band's third album, [*Fables of the Reconstruction*](/wiki/Fables_of_the_Reconstruction) (1985), demonstrated a change in direction. Instead of Dixon and Easter, R.E.M. chose producer [Joe Boyd](/wiki/Joe_Boyd), who had worked with [Fairport Convention](/wiki/Fairport_Convention) and [Nick Drake](/wiki/Nick_Drake), to record the album in England. The band members found the sessions unexpectedly difficult, and were miserable due to the cold winter weather and what they considered to be poor food;[[27]](#cite_note-27) the situation brought the band to the verge of break-up.[[28]](#cite_note-28) The gloominess surrounding the sessions ended up providing the context for the album itself. Lyrically, Stipe began to create storylines in the mode of [Southern mythology](/wiki/Southern_Gothic), noting in a 1985 interview that he was inspired by "the whole idea of the old men sitting around the fire, passing on ... legends and fables to the grandchildren".[[29]](#cite_note-29) They toured in Canada in July and August 1985, and throughout Europe in October of that year, including in The Netherlands, England (one concert was held at the famous [Hammersmith Palais](/wiki/Hammersmith_Palais) in London), Ireland, Scotland, France, Switzerland, Belgium and [West Germany](/wiki/West_Germany).[[30]](#cite_note-30) On October 2, 1985, the group played a concert in [Bochum](/wiki/Bochum), West Germany, for the German TV show [*Rockpalast*](/wiki/Rockpalast). Stipe had bleached his hair blond during this time.[[31]](#cite_note-31)[[32]](#cite_note-32)[[33]](#cite_note-33)[[34]](#cite_note-34)[[35]](#cite_note-35) *Fables of the Reconstruction* performed poorly in Europe and its critical reception was mixed, with some critics regarding it as dreary and poorly recorded.[[36]](#cite_note-36) As with the previous records, the singles from *Fables of the Reconstruction* were mostly ignored by mainstream radio. Meanwhile, I.R.S. was becoming frustrated with the band's reluctance to achieve mainstream success.[[37]](#cite_note-37) For its fourth album, R.E.M. enlisted [John Mellencamp](/wiki/John_Mellencamp) producer [Don Gehman](/wiki/Don_Gehman). The result, [*Lifes Rich Pageant*](/wiki/Lifes_Rich_Pageant) (1986) featured Stipe's vocals closer to the forefront of the music. In a 1986 interview with the [*Chicago Tribune*](/wiki/Chicago_Tribune), Peter Buck related, "Michael is getting better at what he's doing, and he's getting more confident at it. And I think that shows up in the projection of his voice."[[38]](#cite_note-38) The album improved markedly upon the sales of *Fables of the Reconstruction* and eventually peaked at number 21 on the *Billboard* album chart. The single "[Fall on Me](/wiki/Fall_on_Me)" also picked up support on commercial radio.[[39]](#cite_note-39) The album was the band's first to be certified gold for selling 500,000 copies.[[40]](#cite_note-40) While American college radio remained R.E.M.'s core support, the band was beginning to chart hits on mainstream rock formats; however, the music still encountered resistance from [Top 40 radio](/wiki/Contemporary_hit_radio).[[41]](#cite_note-41) Following the success of *Lifes Rich Pageant*, I.R.S. issued [*Dead Letter Office*](/wiki/Dead_Letter_Office_(album)), a compilation of tracks recorded by the band during their album sessions, many of which had either been issued as [B-sides](/wiki/B-side) or left unreleased altogether. Shortly thereafter, I.R.S. compiled R.E.M.'s [music video](/wiki/Music_video) catalog (except "Wolves, Lower") as the band's first video release, [*Succumbs*](/wiki/Succumbs).

### 1987–90: Breakthrough[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[alt=Scott Litt smiling to the camera|thumb|](/wiki/File:ScottLitBioImage.jpg)[Scott Litt](/wiki/Scott_Litt) produced a string of R.E.M.'s breakthrough albums in the 1980s and 1990s. Don Gehman was unable to produce R.E.M.'s fifth album, so he suggested the group work with [Scott Litt](/wiki/Scott_Litt).[[42]](#cite_note-42) Litt would be the producer for the band's next five albums. [*Document*](/wiki/Document_(album)) (1987) featured some of Stipe's most openly political lyrics, particularly on "Welcome to the Occupation" and "Exhuming McCarthy", which were reactions to the [conservative](/wiki/Conservatism_in_the_United_States) political environment of the 1980s under American President [Ronald Reagan](/wiki/Ronald_Reagan).[[43]](#cite_note-43) [Jon Pareles](/wiki/Jon_Pareles) of [*The New York Times*](/wiki/The_New_York_Times) wrote in his review of the album, "[Template:'](/wiki/Template:')*Document*[Template:'](/wiki/Template:') is both confident and defiant; if R.E.M. is about to move from cult-band status to mass popularity, the album decrees that the band will get there on its own terms."[[44]](#cite_note-44) *Document* was R.E.M.'s breakthrough album, and the first single "[The One I Love](/wiki/The_One_I_Love_(R.E.M._song))" charted in the Top 20 in the US, UK, and Canada.[[20]](#cite_note-20) By January 1988, *Document* had become the group's first album to sell a million copies.[[45]](#cite_note-45) In light of the band's breakthrough, the December 1987 cover of *Rolling Stone* declared R.E.M. "America's Best Rock & Roll Band".[[46]](#cite_note-46) Frustrated that its records did not see satisfactory overseas distribution, R.E.M. left I.R.S. when its contract expired and signed with the major label [Warner Bros. Records](/wiki/Warner_Bros._Records).[[47]](#cite_note-47) Though other labels offered more money, R.E.M. ultimately signed with Warner Bros.—reportedly for an amount between $6 million and $12 million—due to the company's assurance of total creative freedom.[[48]](#cite_note-48) In the aftermath of the group's departure, I.R.S. released the 1988 "best of" compilation [*Eponymous*](/wiki/Eponymous_(album)) (assembled with input from the band members) to capitalize on assets the company still possessed.[[49]](#cite_note-49) The band's 1988 Warner Bros. debut, [*Green*](/wiki/Green_(R.E.M._album)), was recorded in [Nashville](/wiki/Nashville,_Tennessee), Tennessee, and showcased the group experimenting with its sound.[[50]](#cite_note-50) The record's tracks ranged from the upbeat first single "[Stand](/wiki/Stand_(R.E.M._song))" (a hit in the United States),[[51]](#cite_note-51) to more political material, like the rock-oriented "[Orange Crush](/wiki/Orange_Crush_(song))" and "World Leader Pretend", which address the [Vietnam War](/wiki/Vietnam_War) and the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War), respectively.[[52]](#cite_note-52) *Green* has gone on to sell four million copies worldwide.[[53]](#cite_note-53) The band supported the album with its biggest and most visually developed tour to date, featuring back-projections and [art films](/wiki/Art_film) playing on the stage.[[54]](#cite_note-54) After the *Green* tour, the band members unofficially decided to take the following year off, the first extended break in the band's career.[[55]](#cite_note-55) In 1990 Warner Bros. issued the music video compilation [*Pop Screen*](/wiki/Pop_Screen) to collect clips from the *Document* and *Green* albums, followed a few months later by the video album [*Tourfilm*](/wiki/Tourfilm) featuring live performances filmed during the Green World Tour.[[56]](#cite_note-56)

### 1990–94: Non-touring years and international success[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Listen](/wiki/Template:Listen) R.E.M. reconvened in mid-1990 to record its seventh album, [*Out of Time*](/wiki/Out_of_Time_(album)). In a departure from *Green*, the band members often wrote the music with non-traditional rock instrumentation including [mandolin](/wiki/Mandolin), [organ](/wiki/Organ_(music)), and [acoustic guitar](/wiki/Acoustic_guitar) instead of adding them as overdubs later in the creative process.[[57]](#cite_note-57) Released in March 1991, *Out of Time* was the band's first album to top both the US and UK charts.[[20]](#cite_note-20) The record eventually sold 4.2 million copies in the US alone,[[58]](#cite_note-58) and about 12 million copies worldwide by 1996.[[53]](#cite_note-53) The album's lead single "[Losing My Religion](/wiki/Losing_My_Religion)" was a worldwide hit that received heavy rotation on radio, as did the music video on [MTV](/wiki/MTV).[[59]](#cite_note-59) "Losing My Religion" was R.E.M.'s highest-charting single in the US, reaching number four on the *Billboard* charts.[[20]](#cite_note-20) "There've been very few life-changing events in our career because our career has been so gradual," Mills said years later. "If you want to talk about life changing, I think 'Losing My Religion' is the closest it gets".[[60]](#cite_note-60) The album's second single, "[Shiny Happy People](/wiki/Shiny_Happy_People)" (one of three songs on the record to feature vocals from [Kate Pierson](/wiki/Kate_Pierson) of fellow Athens band [The B-52's](/wiki/The_B-52's)), was also a major hit, reaching number 10 in the US and number six in the UK.[[20]](#cite_note-20) *Out of Time* garnered R.E.M. seven nominations at the [1992 Grammy Awards](/wiki/Grammy_Awards_of_1992), the most nominations of any artist that year. The band won three awards: one for [Best Alternative Music Album](/wiki/Grammy_Award_for_Best_Alternative_Music_Album) and two for "Losing My Religion", [Best Short Form Music Video](/wiki/Grammy_Award_for_Best_Short_Form_Music_Video) and [Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal](/wiki/Grammy_Award_for_Best_Pop_Performance_by_a_Duo_or_Group_with_Vocal).[[61]](#cite_note-61) R.E.M. did not tour to promote *Out of Time*; instead the group played a series of one-off shows, including an appearance taped for an episode of [*MTV Unplugged*](/wiki/MTV_Unplugged)[[62]](#cite_note-62) and released music videos for each song on the video album [*This Film Is On*](/wiki/This_Film_Is_On). The MTV Unplugged session of "Losing My Religion" was recorded with members of the [Atlanta Symphony Orchestra](/wiki/Atlanta_Symphony_Orchestra) in Madison, Georgia, at [Madison-Morgan Cultural Center](http://mmcc-arts.org).[[63]](#cite_note-63) After spending some months off, R.E.M. returned to the studio in 1991 to record its next album. Late in 1992, the band released [*Automatic for the People*](/wiki/Automatic_for_the_People). Though the group had intended to make a harder-rocking album after the softer textures of *Out of Time*,[[64]](#cite_note-64) the somber *Automatic for the People* "[seemed] to move at an even more agonized crawl", according to [*Melody Maker*](/wiki/Melody_Maker).[[65]](#cite_note-65) The album dealt with themes of loss and mourning inspired by "that sense of ... turning thirty", according to Buck.[[66]](#cite_note-66) Several songs featured [string](/wiki/String_instrument) [arrangements](/wiki/Arrangement) by former [Led Zeppelin](/wiki/Led_Zeppelin) bassist [John Paul Jones](/wiki/John_Paul_Jones_(musician)). Considered by a number of critics (as well as by Buck and Mills) to be the band's best album,[[67]](#cite_note-67) *Automatic for the People* reached numbers one and two on UK and US charts, respectively, and generated the American Top 40 hit singles "[Drive](/wiki/Drive_(R.E.M._song))", "[Man on the Moon](/wiki/Man_on_the_Moon_(song))", and "[Everybody Hurts](/wiki/Everybody_Hurts)".[[20]](#cite_note-20) The album would sell over fifteen million copies worldwide.[[53]](#cite_note-53) As with *Out of Time*, there was no tour in support of the album. The decision to forgo a tour, in conjunction with Stipe's physical appearance, generated rumors that the singer was dying or [HIV-positive](/wiki/HIV-positive), which were vehemently denied by the band.[[65]](#cite_note-65)

### 1994–97: Return to touring and continued success[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Listen](/wiki/Template:Listen) After the band released two slow-paced albums in a row, R.E.M.'s 1994 album [*Monster*](/wiki/Monster_(R.E.M._album)) was, as Buck said, "a 'rock' record, with the rock in quotation marks." In contrast to the sound of its predecessors, the music of *Monster* consisted of distorted guitar tones, minimal overdubs, and touches of 1970s [glam rock](/wiki/Glam_rock).[[68]](#cite_note-68) Like *Out of Time*, *Monster* topped the charts in both the US and UK.[[20]](#cite_note-20) The record sold about nine million copies worldwide.[[53]](#cite_note-53) The singles "[What's the Frequency, Kenneth?](/wiki/What's_the_Frequency,_Kenneth?)" and "[Bang and Blame](/wiki/Bang_and_Blame)" were the band's last American Top 40 hits, although all the singles from *Monster* reached the Top 30 on the British charts.[[20]](#cite_note-20) Warner Bros. assembled the music videos from the album as well as those from *Automatic for the People* for release as [*Parallel*](/wiki/Parallel_(video)) in 1995.[[69]](#cite_note-69) In January 1995, R.E.M. set out on its first tour in six years. The tour was a huge commercial success, but the period was difficult for the group.[[70]](#cite_note-70) On March 1, Berry collapsed on stage during a performance in [Lausanne, Switzerland](/wiki/Lausanne,_Switzerland), having suffered a [brain aneurysm](/wiki/Brain_aneurysm). He had surgery immediately and recovered fully within a month. Berry's aneurysm was only the beginning of a series of health problems that plagued the Monster Tour. Mills had to undergo abdominal surgery to remove an intestinal adhesion in July; a month later, Stipe had to have an emergency surgery to repair a [hernia](/wiki/Hernia).[[71]](#cite_note-71) Despite all the problems, the group had recorded the bulk of a new album while on the road. The band brought along eight-track recorders to capture its shows, and used the recordings as the base elements for the album.[[72]](#cite_note-72) The final three performances of the tour were filmed and released in home video form as [*Road Movie*](/wiki/Road_Movie_(video)).[[73]](#cite_note-73) R.E.M. re-signed with Warner Bros. Records in 1996 for a reported $80 million (a figure the band constantly asserted originated with the media), rumored to be the largest recording contract in history at that point.[[74]](#cite_note-74) The group's 1996 album [*New Adventures in Hi-Fi*](/wiki/New_Adventures_in_Hi-Fi) debuted at number two in the US and number one in the UK.[[20]](#cite_note-20) The five million copies of the album sold were a reversal of the group's commercial fortunes of the previous five years.[[75]](#cite_note-75) [*Time*](/wiki/Time_magazine) writer Christopher John Farley argued that the lesser sales of the album were due to the declining commercial power of alternative rock as a whole.[[76]](#cite_note-76) That same year, R.E.M. parted ways with manager Jefferson Holt, allegedly due to [sexual harassment](/wiki/Sexual_harassment) charges levied against him by a member of the band's home office in Athens.[[77]](#cite_note-77) The group's lawyer [Bertis Downs](/wiki/Bertis_Downs) assumed managerial duties.[[78]](#cite_note-78)

### 1997–2000: Berry's departure and ''Up''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[alt=Bill Berry behind a drum kit|left|thumb|After drummer](/wiki/File:Billberry.jpg) [Bill Berry](/wiki/Bill_Berry) quit in 1997, R.E.M. continued as a trio. In April 1997, the band convened at Buck's [Kauai](/wiki/Kauai) vacation home to record demos of material intended for the next album. The band sought to reinvent its sound and intended to incorporate drum loops and percussion experiments.[[79]](#cite_note-79) Just as the sessions were due to begin in October, Berry decided, after months of contemplation and discussions with Downs and Mills, to tell the rest of the band that he was quitting.[[80]](#cite_note-80) Berry told his band mates that he would not quit if they would break up as a result, so Stipe, Buck, and Mills agreed to carry on as a three-piece with his blessing.[[81]](#cite_note-81) Berry publicly announced his departure three weeks later in October 1997. Berry told the press, "I'm just not as enthusiastic as I have been in the past about doing this anymore . . . I have the best job in the world. But I'm kind of ready to sit back and reflect and maybe not be a pop star anymore."[[79]](#cite_note-79) Stipe admitted that the band would be different without a major contributor: "For me, Mike, and Peter, as R.E.M., are we still R.E.M.? I guess a three-legged dog is still a dog. It just has to learn to run differently."[[81]](#cite_note-81) The band cancelled its scheduled recording sessions as a result of Berry's departure. "Without Bill it was different, confusing", Mills later said. "We didn't know exactly what to do. We couldn't rehearse without a drummer."[[82]](#cite_note-82) The remaining members of R.E.M. resumed work on the album in February 1998 at Toast Studios in San Francisco.[[83]](#cite_note-83) The band ended its decade-long collaboration with Scott Litt and hired [Pat McCarthy](/wiki/Patrick_McCarthy_(record_producer)) to produce the record. [Nigel Godrich](/wiki/Nigel_Godrich) was taken on as assistant producer, and drafted in [Screaming Trees](/wiki/Screaming_Trees) member [Barrett Martin](/wiki/Barrett_Martin) and [Beck's](/wiki/Beck) touring drummer [Joey Waronker](/wiki/Joey_Waronker). The recording process was plagued with tension, and the group came close to disbanding. Bertis Downs called an emergency meeting where the band members sorted out their problems and agreed to continue as a group.[[84]](#cite_note-84) Led off by the single "[Daysleeper](/wiki/Daysleeper)", [*Up*](/wiki/Up_(R.E.M._album)) (1998) debuted in the top ten in the US and UK. However, the album was a relative failure, selling 900,000 copies in the US by mid-1999 and eventually selling just over two million copies worldwide.[[58]](#cite_note-58) While R.E.M.'s American sales were declining, the group's commercial base was shifting to the UK, where more R.E.M. records were sold per capita than any other country and the band's singles regularly entered the Top 20.[[85]](#cite_note-85) A year after *Up*[Template:'s](/wiki/Template:') release, R.E.M. wrote the instrumental score to the [Andy Kaufman](/wiki/Andy_Kaufman) [biographical film](/wiki/Biographical_film) [*Man on the Moon*](/wiki/Man_on_the_Moon_(film)), a first for the group. The film took its title from the *Automatic for the People* song of the same name.[[86]](#cite_note-86) The song "The Great Beyond" was released as a single from the [*Man on the Moon*](/wiki/Man_on_the_Moon_(soundtrack)) soundtrack album. "The Great Beyond" only reached number 57 on the American pop charts, but was the band's highest-charting single ever in the UK, reaching number three in 2000.[[20]](#cite_note-20)

### 2000–07: ''Reveal'' and ''Around the Sun''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[thumb|alt=R.E.M. performing onstage, with Michael Stipe singing, Peter Buck playing guitar, and Scott McCaughey playing keyboards|R.E.M. on tour in 2008, with long-time collaborator](/wiki/File:R.E.M._(25).JPG) [Scott McCaughey](/wiki/Scott_McCaughey) R.E.M. recorded the majority of its twelfth album [*Reveal*](/wiki/Reveal_(R.E.M._album)) (2001) in Canada and Ireland from May to October 2000.[[87]](#cite_note-87) *Reveal* shared the "lugubrious pace" of *Up*,[[88]](#cite_note-88) and featured drumming by Joey Waronker, as well as contributions by [Scott McCaughey](/wiki/Scott_McCaughey) (a co-founder of the band [The Minus 5](/wiki/The_Minus_5) with Buck) and [Posies](/wiki/The_Posies) founder [Ken Stringfellow](/wiki/Ken_Stringfellow). Global sales of the album were over four million, but in the United States *Reveal* sold about the same number of copies as *Up*.[[89]](#cite_note-89) The album was led by the single "[Imitation of Life](/wiki/Imitation_of_Life_(song))", which reached number six in the UK.[[90]](#cite_note-90) Writing for *Rock's Backpages*, The Rev. Al Friston described the album as "loaded with golden loveliness at every twist and turn", in comparison to the group's "essentially unconvincing work on *New Adventures in Hi-Fi* and *Up*."[[91]](#cite_note-91) Similarly, [Rob Sheffield](/wiki/Rob_Sheffield) of [*Rolling Stone*](/wiki/Rolling_Stone) called *Reveal* "a spiritual renewal rooted in a musical one" and praised its "ceaselessly astonishing beauty."[[92]](#cite_note-92) In 2003, Warner Bros. released the compilation album and DVD [*In Time: The Best of R.E.M. 1988–2003*](/wiki/In_Time:_The_Best_of_R.E.M._1988–2003) and [*In View: The Best of R.E.M. 1988–2003*](/wiki/In_View:_The_Best_of_R.E.M._1988–2003), which featured two new songs, "[Bad Day](/wiki/Bad_Day_(R.E.M._song))" and "[Animal](/wiki/Animal_(R.E.M._song))". At a 2003 concert in [Raleigh, North Carolina](/wiki/Raleigh,_North_Carolina), Berry made a surprise appearance, performing backing vocals on "Radio Free Europe". He then sat behind the drum kit for a performance of the early R.E.M. song "Permanent Vacation", marking his first performance with the band since his retirement.[[93]](#cite_note-93) R.E.M. released [*Around the Sun*](/wiki/Around_the_Sun) in 2004. During production of the album in 2002, Stipe said, "[The album] sounds like it's taking off from the last couple of records into unchartered R.E.M. territory. Kind of primitive and howling".[[94]](#cite_note-94) After the album's release, Mills said, "I think, honestly, it turned out a little slower than we intended for it to, just in terms of the overall speed of songs."[[95]](#cite_note-95) *Around the Sun* received a mixed critical reception, and peaked at number 13 on the *Billboard* charts.[[96]](#cite_note-96) The first single from the album, "[Leaving New York](/wiki/Leaving_New_York)", was a Top 5 hit in the UK.[[97]](#cite_note-97) For the record and subsequent tour, the band hired a new full-time touring drummer, [Bill Rieflin](/wiki/Bill_Rieflin), who had previously been a member of several [industrial music](/wiki/Industrial_music) acts such as [Ministry](/wiki/Ministry_(band)) and [Pigface](/wiki/Pigface).[[98]](#cite_note-98) The video album [*Perfect Square*](/wiki/Perfect_Square) was released that same year.

[left|upright|alt=Mike Mills plays bass guitar and sings into a microphone while wearing a Nudie suit|thumb|Bassist Mike Mills performing in concert in 2008](/wiki/File:Mike_Mills_Manchester_-_2008.jpg) [EMI](/wiki/EMI) released a compilation album covering R.E.M.'s work during its tenure on I.R.S. in 2006 called [*And I Feel Fine... The Best of the I.R.S. Years 1982–1987*](/wiki/And_I_Feel_Fine..._The_Best_of_the_I.R.S._Years_1982–1987) along with the video album [*When the Light Is Mine: The Best of the I.R.S. Years 1982–1987*](/wiki/When_the_Light_Is_Mine:_The_Best_of_the_I.R.S._Years_1982–1987)—the label had previously released the compilations [*The Best of R.E.M.*](/wiki/The_Best_of_R.E.M.) (1991), [*R.E.M.: Singles Collected*](/wiki/R.E.M.:_Singles_Collected) (1994), and [*R.E.M.: In the Attic – Alternative Recordings 1985–1989*](/wiki/R.E.M.:_In_the_Attic –_Alternative_Recordings_1985–1989) (1997). That same month, all four original band members performed during the ceremony for their induction into the [Georgia Music Hall of Fame](/wiki/Georgia_Music_Hall_of_Fame).<ref name=USAToday06>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> While rehearsing for the ceremony, the band recorded a cover of [John Lennon's](/wiki/John_Lennon) "[#9 Dream](/wiki/Number_9_Dream)" for [*Instant Karma: The Amnesty International Campaign to Save Darfur*](/wiki/Instant_Karma:_The_Amnesty_International_Campaign_to_Save_Darfur), a tribute album benefiting [Amnesty International](/wiki/Amnesty_International).[[99]](#cite_note-99) The song—released as a single for the album and the campaign—featured Bill Berry's first studio recording with the band since his departure almost a decade earlier.[[100]](#cite_note-100) In October 2006, R.E.M. was nominated for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in its first year of eligibility.[[101]](#cite_note-101) The band was one of five nominees accepted into the Hall that year, and the induction ceremony took place in March 2007 at New York's [Waldorf-Astoria Hotel](/wiki/Waldorf-Astoria_Hotel). The group—which was inducted by Pearl Jam lead singer [Eddie Vedder](/wiki/Eddie_Vedder)—performed three songs with Bill Berry; "[Gardening at Night](/wiki/Gardening_at_Night)," "[Man on the Moon](/wiki/Man_on_the_Moon_(song))" and "[Begin the Begin](/wiki/Begin_the_Begin)" as well as a cover of "[I Wanna Be Your Dog](/wiki/I_Wanna_Be_Your_Dog)." [[102]](#cite_note-102)

### 2007–11: ''Accelerate'', ''Collapse into Now'', and breakup[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

Work on the group's fourteenth album commenced in early 2007. The band recorded with producer [Jacknife Lee](/wiki/Jacknife_Lee) in Vancouver and Dublin, where it played five nights in the [Olympia Theatre](/wiki/Olympia_Theatre,_Dublin) between June 30 and July 5 as part of a "working rehearsal".[[103]](#cite_note-103) [*R.E.M. Live*](/wiki/R.E.M._Live), the band's first live album (featuring songs from a 2005 Dublin show), was released in October 2007.[[104]](#cite_note-104) The group followed this with the 2009 live album [*Live at The Olympia*](/wiki/Live_at_the_Olympia_(R.E.M._album)), which features performances from its 2007 residency. R.E.M. released [*Accelerate*](/wiki/Accelerate_(R.E.M._album)) in early 2008. The album debuted at number two on the *Billboard* charts,[[105]](#cite_note-105) and became the band's eighth album to top the British album charts.[[106]](#cite_note-106) *Rolling Stone* reviewer [David Fricke](/wiki/David_Fricke) considered *Accelerate* an improvement over the band's previous post-Berry albums, calling it "one of the best records R.E.M. have ever made."[[107]](#cite_note-107) [alt=A black-and-white photo of the members of R.E.M. embracing and smiling onstage|thumb|R.E.M. on their final tour in 2008](/wiki/File:REM.jpg) In 2010, R.E.M. released the video album [*R.E.M. Live from Austin, TX*](/wiki/R.E.M._Live_from_Austin,_TX)—a concert recorded for [*Austin City Limits*](/wiki/Austin_City_Limits) in 2008. The group recorded its fifteenth album, [*Collapse into Now*](/wiki/Collapse_into_Now) (2011), with Jacknife Lee in locales including Berlin, Nashville, and New Orleans. For the album, the band aimed for a more expansive sound than the intentionally short and speedy approach implemented on [*Accelerate*](/wiki/Accelerate_(R.E.M._album)).[[108]](#cite_note-108) The album debuted at number five on the *Billboard* 200, becoming the group's tenth album to reach the top ten of the chart.[[109]](#cite_note-109) This release fulfilled R.E.M.'s contractual obligations to Warner Bros., and the band began recording material without a contract a few months later with the possible intention of self-releasing the work.[[110]](#cite_note-110) On September 21, 2011, R.E.M. announced via its website that it was "calling it a day as a band". Stipe said that he hoped fans realized it "wasn't an easy decision": "All things must end, and we wanted to do it right, to do it our way."[[111]](#cite_note-111) Long-time associate and former Warner Bros. Senior Vice President of Emerging Technology Ethan Kaplan has speculated that shake-ups at the record label influenced the group's decision to disband.[[112]](#cite_note-112) The group discussed breaking up for several years, but was encouraged to continue after the lackluster critical and commercial performance of *Around the Sun*; according to Mills, "We needed to prove, not only to our fans and critics but to ourselves, that we could still make great records."[[113]](#cite_note-113) The band members finished their collaboration by assembling the compilation album [*Part Lies, Part Heart, Part Truth, Part Garbage 1982–2011*](/wiki/Part_Lies,_Part_Heart,_Part_Truth,_Part_Garbage_1982–2011), which was released in November 2011. The album is the first to collect songs from R.E.M.'s I.R.S. and Warner Bros. tenures, as well as three songs from the group's final studio recordings from post-*Collapse into Now* sessions.[[114]](#cite_note-114) In November, Mills and Stipe did a brief span of promotional appearances in British media, ruling out the option of the group ever reuniting.[[115]](#cite_note-115) In 2014, [*Unplugged: The Complete 1991 and 2001 Sessions*](/wiki/Unplugged:_The_Complete_1991_and_2001_Sessions) was released for [Record Store Day](/wiki/Record_Store_Day).[[116]](#cite_note-116) [Digital download](/wiki/Music_download) collections of [I.R.S.](/wiki/Complete_Rarities:_I.R.S._1982–1987) and [Warner Bros.](/wiki/Complete_Rarities:_Warner_Bros._1988–2011) rarities followed. Later in the year, the band compiled the video album box set [*REMTV*](/wiki/REMTV), which collected their two *Unplugged* performances along with several other documentaries and live shows, while their record label released the box set [*7IN—83–88*](/wiki/7IN—83–88), made up of [7"](/wiki/7%22) vinyl singles.[[117]](#cite_note-117) In December 2015, the band members agreed to a distribution deal with [Concord Bicycle Music](/wiki/Concord_Bicycle_Music) to re-release their Warner Bros. albums.[[118]](#cite_note-118)

## Musical style[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Listen](/wiki/Template:Listen)

In a 1988 interview, Peter Buck described typical R.E.M. songs as, "Minor key, mid-tempo, enigmatic, semi-folk-rock-balladish things. That's what everyone thinks and to a certain degree, that's true."[[119]](#cite_note-119) All songwriting is credited to the entire band, even though individual members are sometimes responsible for writing the majority of a particular song.[[120]](#cite_note-120) Each member is given an equal vote in the songwriting process; however, Buck has conceded that Stipe, as the band's lyricist, can rarely be persuaded to follow an idea he does not favor.[[65]](#cite_note-65) Among the original line-up, there were divisions of labor in the songwriting process: Stipe would write lyrics and devise melodies, Buck would edge the band in new musical directions, and Mills and Berry would fine-tune the compositions due to their greater musical experience.[[121]](#cite_note-121) Michael Stipe sings in what R.E.M. biographer David Buckley described as "wailing, keening, arching vocal figures".[[122]](#cite_note-122) Stipe often harmonizes with Mills in songs; in the chorus for "Stand", Mills and Stipe alternate singing lyrics, creating a dialogue.[[123]](#cite_note-123) Early articles about the band focused on Stipe's singing style (described as "mumbling" by [*The Washington Post*](/wiki/The_Washington_Post)), which often rendered his lyrics indecipherable.[[124]](#cite_note-124) [*Creem*](/wiki/Creem) writer John Morthland wrote in his review of *Murmur*, "I still have no idea what these songs are about, because neither me nor anyone else I know has ever been able to discern R.E.M.'s lyrics."[[125]](#cite_note-125) Stipe commented in 1984, "It's just the way I sing. If I tried to control it, it would be pretty false."[[126]](#cite_note-126) Producer Joe Boyd convinced Stipe to begin singing more clearly during the recording of *Fables of the Reconstruction*.[[127]](#cite_note-127) Stipe later called chorus lyrics of "[Sitting Still](/wiki/Sitting_Still)" from R.E.M. debut album, *Murmur*, "nonsense", saying in a 1994 online chat, "You all know there aren't words, *per se*, to a lot of the early stuff. I can't even remember them." In truth, Stipe carefully crafted the lyrics to many early R.E.M. songs.[[128]](#cite_note-128) Stipe explained in 1984 that when he started writing lyrics they were like "simple pictures", but after a year he grew tired of the approach and "started experimenting with lyrics that didn't make exact linear sense, and it's just gone from there."[[126]](#cite_note-126) In the mid-1980s, as Stipe's pronunciation while singing became clearer, the band decided that its lyrics should convey ideas on a more literal level.[[129]](#cite_note-129) Mills explained, "After you've made three records and you've written several songs and they've gotten better and better lyrically the next step would be to have somebody question you and say, are you saying anything? And Michael had the confidence at that point to say yes . . ."[[130]](#cite_note-130) Songs like "Cuyahoga" and "Fall on Me" on *Lifes Rich Pageant* dealt with such concerns as pollution.[[131]](#cite_note-131) Stipe incorporated more politically oriented concerns into his lyrics on *Document* and *Green*. "Our political activism and the content of the songs was just a reaction to where we were, and what we were surrounded by, which was just abject horror," Stipe said later. "In 1987 and '88 there was nothing to do but be active."[[132]](#cite_note-132) Stipe has since explored other lyrical topics. *Automatic for the People* dealt with "mortality and dying. Pretty turgid stuff", according to Stipe,[[133]](#cite_note-133) while *Monster* critiqued love and mass culture.[[132]](#cite_note-132) [alt=Peter Buck playing guitar and smiling|thumb|left|Peter Buck's guitar-playing style has defined R.E.M.'s sound](/wiki/File:Peter_Buck_Manchester_-_2008.jpg) Peter Buck's style of playing guitar has been singled out by many as the most distinctive aspect of R.E.M.'s music. During the 1980s, Buck's "economical, arpeggiated, poetic" style reminded British music journalists of 1960s American [folk rock](/wiki/Folk_rock) band [The Byrds](/wiki/The_Byrds).[[134]](#cite_note-134) Buck has stated "[Byrds guitarist] [Roger McGuinn](/wiki/Roger_McGuinn) was a big influence on me as a guitar player",[[135]](#cite_note-135) but said it was Byrds-influenced bands, including [Big Star](/wiki/Big_Star_(band)) and [The Soft Boys](/wiki/The_Soft_Boys), that inspired him more.[[136]](#cite_note-136) Comparisons were also made with the guitar playing of [Johnny Marr](/wiki/Johnny_Marr) of alternative rock contemporaries [The Smiths](/wiki/The_Smiths). While Buck professed being a fan of the group, he admitted he initially criticized the band simply because he was tired of fans asking him if he was influenced by Marr,[[120]](#cite_note-120) whose band had in fact made their debut after R.E.M.[[136]](#cite_note-136) Buck generally eschews guitar solos; he explained in 2002, "I know that when guitarists rip into this hot solo, people go nuts, but I don't write songs that suit that, and I am not interested in that. I can do it if I have to, but I don't like it."[[137]](#cite_note-137) Mike Mills' melodic approach to bass playing is inspired by [Paul McCartney](/wiki/Paul_McCartney) of [The Beatles](/wiki/The_Beatles) and [Chris Squire](/wiki/Chris_Squire) of [Yes](/wiki/Yes_(band)); Mills has said, "I always played a melodic bass, like a piano bass in some ways . . . I never wanted to play the traditional locked into the kick drum, root note bass work."[[138]](#cite_note-138) Mills has more musical training than his band mates, which he has said "made it easier to turn abstract musical ideas into reality."[[135]](#cite_note-135)

## Legacy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[alt=Pavement members standing before a brick wall posing in a black-and-white photo|thumb|](/wiki/File:Pavement,_the_band,_in_Tokyo.jpg)[Pavement](/wiki/Pavement_(band)) is one of several alternative rock bands to cite R.E.M. as an influence; the band even wrote the song "The Unseen Power of the Picket Fence" about R.E.M. R.E.M. was pivotal in the creation and development of the alternative rock genre. [AllMusic](/wiki/AllMusic) stated, "R.E.M. mark the point when [post-punk](/wiki/Post-punk) turned into alternative rock."[[6]](#cite_note-6) In the early 1980s, the musical style of R.E.M. stood in contrast to the post-punk and [new wave](/wiki/New_wave_music) genres that had preceded it. Music journalist [Simon Reynolds](/wiki/Simon_Reynolds) noted that the post-punk movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s "had taken whole swaths of music off the menu", particularly that of the 1960s, and that "After postpunk's demystification and New Pop's schematics, it felt liberating to listen to music rooted in mystical awe and blissed-out surrender." Reynolds declared R.E.M., a band that recalled the music of the 1960s with its "plangent guitar chimes and folk-styled vocals" and who "wistfully and abstractly conjured visions and new frontiers for America", one of "the two most important alt-rock bands of the day."[[139]](#cite_note-139) With the release of *Murmur*, R.E.M. had the most impact musically and commercially of the developing alternative genre's early groups, leaving in its wake a number of [jangle pop](/wiki/Jangle_pop) followers.[[140]](#cite_note-140) R.E.M.'s early breakthrough success served as an inspiration for other alternative bands. [*Spin*](/wiki/Spin_(magazine)) referred to the "R.E.M. model"—career decisions that R.E.M. made which set guidelines for other underground artists to follow in their own careers. *Spin's* Charles Aaron wrote that by 1985, "They'd shown how far an underground, punk-inspired rock band could go within the industry without whoring out its artistic integrity in any obvious way. They'd figured out how to buy in, not sellout-in other words, they'd achieved the American Bohemian Dream."[[141]](#cite_note-141) [Steve Wynn](/wiki/Steve_Wynn_(songwriter)) of [Dream Syndicate](/wiki/Dream_Syndicate) said, "They invented a whole new ballgame for all of the other bands to follow whether it was [Sonic Youth](/wiki/Sonic_Youth) or the [Replacements](/wiki/The_Replacements_(band)) or [Nirvana](/wiki/Nirvana_(band)) or [Butthole Surfers](/wiki/Butthole_Surfers). R.E.M. staked the claim. Musically, the bands did different things, but R.E.M. was first to show us you can be big and still be cool."[[142]](#cite_note-142) Biographer David Buckley stated that between 1991 and 1994, a period that saw the band sell an estimated 30 million albums, R.E.M. "asserted themselves as rivals to [U2](/wiki/U2) for the title of biggest rock band in the world."[[143]](#cite_note-143) Over the course of its career, the band has sold over 85 million records worldwide.[[144]](#cite_note-144) Later alternative bands such as Nirvana, [Pavement](/wiki/Pavement_(band)), [Radiohead](/wiki/Radiohead), [Coldplay](/wiki/Coldplay), [Pearl Jam](/wiki/Pearl_Jam) and [Live](/wiki/Live_(band)), have drawn inspiration from R.E.M.'s music. "When I was 15 years old in Richmond, Virginia, they were a *very* important part of my life," Pavement's [Bob Nastanovich](/wiki/Bob_Nastanovich) said, "as they were for all the members of our band." Pavement devoted the song "Unseen Power of the Picket Fence" from the [*No Alternative*](/wiki/No_Alternative) compilation (1993) to discussing *Chronic Town* and *Reckoning*.[[145]](#cite_note-145) [Kurt Cobain](/wiki/Kurt_Cobain) of Nirvana was a vocal fan of R.E.M., and had plans to collaborate on a musical project with Stipe before his death in April 1994.[[146]](#cite_note-146) Cobain told *Rolling Stone* in an interview earlier that year, "I don’t know how that band does what they do. God, they’re the greatest. They’ve dealt with their success like saints, and they keep delivering great music."[[147]](#cite_note-147)

## Campaigning and activism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[alt=Michael Stipe looking to the left of the camera, holding a bag and digital media player|thumb|Michael Stipe has used his celebrity status to support political and humanitarian causes; he is seen here at the 2007](/wiki/File:Michael_Stipe_by_David_Shankbone.jpg) [Tribeca Film Festival](/wiki/Tribeca_Film_Festival), which was created to renew that neighborhood of New York City after the [September 11, 2001 attacks](/wiki/September_11,_2001_attacks). Throughout R.E.M.'s career, its members sought to highlight social and political issues. According to the [*Los Angeles Times*](/wiki/Los_Angeles_Times), R.E.M. was considered to be one of the United States' "most liberal and politically correct rock groups."[[148]](#cite_note-148) The band's members were "on the same page" politically, sharing a [liberal](/wiki/Modern_liberalism_in_the_United_States) and [progressive](/wiki/Progressivism) outlook.[[149]](#cite_note-149) Mills admitted that there was occasionally dissension between band members on what causes they might support, but acknowledged "Out of respect for the people who disagree, those discussions tend to stay in-house, just because we'd rather not let people know where the divisions lie, so people can't exploit them for their own purposes." An example is that in 1990 Buck noted that Stipe was involved with [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals](/wiki/People_for_the_Ethical_Treatment_of_Animals), but the rest of the band were not.[[150]](#cite_note-150) R.E.M. helped raise funds for environmental, feminist and human rights causes, and were involved in campaigns to encourage [voter registration](/wiki/Voter_registration). During the *Green* tour, Stipe took time during sets to inform the audience about a variety of pressing socio-political issues.[[151]](#cite_note-151) Through the late 1980s and 1990s, the band (particularly Stipe) increasingly used its media coverage on national television to mention a variety of causes it felt were important. One example is when the band attended the [1991 MTV Video Music Awards](/wiki/1991_MTV_Video_Music_Awards), during which Stipe wore a half-dozen white shirts emblazoned with slogans including "rainforest", "love knows no colors", and "handgun control now".[[152]](#cite_note-152) R.E.M. helped raise awareness of [Aung San Suu Kyi](/wiki/Aung_San_Suu_Kyi) and [human rights violations in Burma](/wiki/Human_rights_in_Myanmar), when they worked with the [Freedom Campaign](/wiki/Freedom_Campaign) and the [US Campaign for Burma](/wiki/US_Campaign_for_Burma).[[153]](#cite_note-153) Stipe himself ran ads for the 1988 supporting [Democratic](/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)) presidential candidate and [Massachusetts](/wiki/Massachusetts) governor [Michael Dukakis](/wiki/Michael_Dukakis) over then-Vice President [George H. W. Bush](/wiki/George_H._W._Bush).[[154]](#cite_note-154) In 2004, the band participated in the [Vote for Change](/wiki/Vote_for_Change) tour that sought to mobilize American voters to support Democratic presidential candidate [John Kerry](/wiki/John_Kerry).[[155]](#cite_note-155) R.E.M.'s political stance, particularly coming from a wealthy rock band under contract to a label owned by a multinational corporation, received criticism from former [*Q*](/wiki/Q_magazine) editor [Paul Du Noyer](/wiki/Paul_Du_Noyer), who criticized the band's "celebrity liberalism", saying, "It's an entirely pain-free form of rebellion that they're adopting. There's no risk involved in it whatsoever, but quite a bit of shoring up of customer loyalty."[[156]](#cite_note-156) From the late 1980s, R.E.M. was involved in the local politics of its hometown of Athens, Georgia.[[157]](#cite_note-157) Buck explained to [*Sounds*](/wiki/Sounds_(magazine)) in 1987, "Michael always says think local and act local—we have been doing a lot of stuff in our town to try and make it a better place."[[158]](#cite_note-158) The band often donated funds to local charities and to help renovate and preserve historic buildings in the town.[[159]](#cite_note-159) R.E.M.'s political clout was credited with the narrow election of Athens mayor Gwen O'Looney twice in the 1990s.[[160]](#cite_note-160)

## Members[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

* [Bill Berry](/wiki/Bill_Berry) – drums, percussion, backing vocals (1980–1997; guest performances in 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008)
* [Peter Buck](/wiki/Peter_Buck) – guitar, mandolin, banjo (1980–2011)
* [Mike Mills](/wiki/Mike_Mills) – bass guitar, backing vocals, piano, keyboards (1980–2011)
* [Michael Stipe](/wiki/Michael_Stipe) – lead vocals (1980–2011)

Additional musicians

* [Buren Fowler](/wiki/Buren_Fowler) – guitar (1984–1985)
* [Peter Holsapple](/wiki/Peter_Holsapple) – guitar, keyboard, piano (1989–1991)
* [Scott McCaughey](/wiki/Scott_McCaughey) – guitar, bass, keyboards, synthesizers, piano, vocals (1994–2011)
* [Nathan December](/wiki/Nathan_December) – guitar (1995)
* [Ken Stringfellow](/wiki/Ken_Stringfellow) – bass, guitar, keyboards, synthesizers, piano, vocals (1998–2007)
* [Joey Waronker](/wiki/Joey_Waronker) – drums (1998–2002)
* [Barrett Martin](/wiki/Barrett_Martin) – drums (2001)
* [Bill Rieflin](/wiki/Bill_Rieflin) – drums (2003–2011)

## Discography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Studio albums

* [*Murmur*](/wiki/Murmur_(album)) (1983)
* [*Reckoning*](/wiki/Reckoning_(R.E.M._album)) (1984)
* [*Fables of the Reconstruction*](/wiki/Fables_of_the_Reconstruction) (1985)
* [*Lifes Rich Pageant*](/wiki/Lifes_Rich_Pageant) (1986)
* [*Document*](/wiki/Document_(album)) (1987)
* [*Green*](/wiki/Green_(R.E.M._album)) (1988)
* [*Out of Time*](/wiki/Out_of_Time_(album)) (1991)
* [*Automatic for the People*](/wiki/Automatic_for_the_People) (1992)
* [*Monster*](/wiki/Monster_(R.E.M._album)) (1994)
* [*New Adventures in Hi-Fi*](/wiki/New_Adventures_in_Hi-Fi) (1996)
* [*Up*](/wiki/Up_(R.E.M._album)) (1998)
* [*Reveal*](/wiki/Reveal_(R.E.M._album)) (2001)
* [*Around the Sun*](/wiki/Around_the_Sun) (2004)
* [*Accelerate*](/wiki/Accelerate_(R.E.M._album)) (2008)
* [*Collapse into Now*](/wiki/Collapse_into_Now) (2011)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [List of alternative rock musicians](/wiki/List_of_alternative_rock_musicians)
* [Timeline of alternative rock](/wiki/Timeline_of_alternative_rock)

[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [Template:Official website](/wiki/Template:Official_website)
* [R.E.M. Discography](http://www.allmusic.com/artist/rem-mn0000325459) at [AllMusic](/wiki/AllMusic)
* [R.E.M. Discography](http://www.discogs.com/artist/74500-REM) at [Discogs](/wiki/Discogs)
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Template:IMDb name](/wiki/Template:IMDb_name)

[Template:R.E.M.](/wiki/Template:R.E.M.) [Template:The Baseball Project](/wiki/Template:The_Baseball_Project) [Template:Tuatara](/wiki/Template:Tuatara) [Template:The Minus 5](/wiki/Template:The_Minus_5) [Template:Tired Pony](/wiki/Template:Tired_Pony) [Template:2007 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](/wiki/Template:2007_Rock_and_Roll_Hall_of_Fame) [Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control) [Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates) [Template:Featured article](/wiki/Template:Featured_article)

[Category:R.E.M.](/wiki/Category:R.E.M.) [Category:1980 establishments in Georgia (U.S. state)](/wiki/Category:1980_establishments_in_Georgia_(U.S._state)) [Category:2011 disestablishments in Georgia (U.S. state)](/wiki/Category:2011_disestablishments_in_Georgia_(U.S._state)) [Category:Alternative rock groups from Georgia (U.S. state)](/wiki/Category:Alternative_rock_groups_from_Georgia_(U.S._state)) [Category:Brit Award winners](/wiki/Category:Brit_Award_winners) [Category:Grammy Award winners](/wiki/Category:Grammy_Award_winners) [Category:I.R.S. Records artists](/wiki/Category:I.R.S._Records_artists) [Category:Jangle pop groups](/wiki/Category:Jangle_pop_groups) [Category:Musical groups disestablished in 2011](/wiki/Category:Musical_groups_disestablished_in_2011) [Category:Musical groups established in 1980](/wiki/Category:Musical_groups_established_in_1980) [Category:Musical groups from Athens, Georgia](/wiki/Category:Musical_groups_from_Athens,_Georgia) [Category:Musical quartets](/wiki/Category:Musical_quartets) [Category:Musical trios](/wiki/Category:Musical_trios) [Category:New West Records artists](/wiki/Category:New_West_Records_artists) [Category:Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees](/wiki/Category:Rock_and_Roll_Hall_of_Fame_inductees) [Category:Rock music groups from Georgia (U.S. state)](/wiki/Category:Rock_music_groups_from_Georgia_(U.S._state)) [Category:Warner Bros. Records artists](/wiki/Category:Warner_Bros._Records_artists) [Category:Concord Bicycle Music artists](/wiki/Category:Concord_Bicycle_Music_artists)