

Songs for the Quarantine #4: Eyes Without A Face, Billy Idol

Good morning, Roll Over Easy, and welcome to the fourth Songs for the Quarantine. I'm @suldrew. Every week while we are under shelter-in-place, we'll bring you a song that's perfect for taking your mind off social distancing, that you can listen to while you walk in the park or work from home or check out those old cassettes you found in the garage.

With the latest health advice to wear masks more often - all the time when outside, if you believe many public health experts, and definitely when you're in an enclosed space like a store or bus - let's put on New Wave classic Eyes Without A Face by Billy Idol. Les yeux sans visage - that's how so many of us appear now. You'll see me and @beckastar that way in the line for Gus's Market, getting coffee at Flywheel, or walking down the Panhandle with the dogs, or heading to the Castro for a socially-distanced Hot Cookie. (Still open!)

[Eyes Without A Face](#). The [video](#) was all over MTV in 1983. Everyone had his album [Rebel Yell](#) in their Walkman, the tape deck of their car, or a boombox that they carried around the neighborhood. [Billy Idol](#) - formerly of London punk rock band [Generation X](#) - shot the video "over an exhausting three-day period on a set with fog machines, lighting, and fire sources" - it has that dark, brooding look that you'd expect to see some night at Cat Club, with Idol in a look that would fit right in on Folsom just outside.

At a moment of apocalypse, it's worth noting that Eyes Without A Face came out at a similarly dangerous moment to today. In November 1983, when Rebel Yell dropped, the Cold War was at its peak. Right at that moment, US nuclear forces were conducting a massive war game called [Able Archer 83](#), which caused panic in the Soviet Union as it appeared like a possible first strike - this after [an incident two months before](#) when one Soviet officer saved the world from almost certain nuclear war when he correctly said the incoming missiles on his screen were a false alarm. That same month, [The Day After](#) aired on national TV. Meanwhile, [the AIDS crisis](#) was continuing to worsen, with over 2000 deaths reported in the US by year's end.

It was a terrifying time, even more so in retrospect. But in the end we did avoid nuclear war, we developed effective treatments for AIDS (but not before far too many people lost their lives), and we'll survive coronavirus too, especially here in San Francisco where we're keeping our distance and wearing those masks.

So when the look in San Francisco is "[athleisure bank robbing cowboy walks the dog](#)" (thank you Mike Isaac) - we might not be "on the bus, on a psychedelic trip" just yet, but we're thinking about you, and you're out there, so - say your prayers? Or do whatever you need to get through the day, with hat, sunglasses, and mask, eyes without a face, but with all the human grace in the world.