**Born to be Wild: The Golden Age of American Rock**

***Episode 1: Riders on the Storm***

During the era of flower power, Vietnam and LSD, bands such as the Doors, Jefferson Airplane and MC5 not only sang about the revolution, they were the revolution. This episode explores the artists that made the soundtrack to the peace and love generation. The culmination of this era was when half a million people descended on a field in the small hamlet of Woodstock. At that moment rock music seemed a beacon of hope for those who believed in the ideals of equality and freedom. But instead of inspiring a new generation of artists to lead the revolution through political songs, the festival proved to be a watershed moment for rock music's reactionary era. The marketing men lined up ready to sign and keen to turn this music from protest into profit.

***Episode 2: School's Out***

This second part tells the story of the 1970s, when rock stars became multi-millionaires and the music they made was the soundtrack for middle America.

After the rage and protest of the previous decade, rock music of the early 70s was gentle and sweet - the songs of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and the Doobie Brothers. Although the USA was riven by political disasters - the end of the Vietnam War, Watergate and the gasoline crisis - rock music seldom commented on them, although Alice Cooper's Nixon satire *Elected* was a rare exception. But in the middle of the decade new voices started to emerge, such as Bruce Springsteen's songs of working class glory or Tom Petty's tight, 1960s-inspired sound.

The massive success of stadium shows exemplified how big American rock had become and, in 1976 and 1977, the genre soared with a string of multi-platinum albums by Fleetwood Mac, Boston, the Eagles and Meat Loaf. Unlike in the UK, American punk barely diverted the rock gods, but disco did make an impact. Rock became smoother and more saccharine and in the corporate offices of record labels the drive was for ever larger profits.

With interviews with many of the decade's leading rock musicians, the program also features studio and concert footage including Alice Cooper, Bruce Springsteen and the Eagles.

***Episode 3: Welcome to the Jungle***

The final part explores the 1980s and the eventual demise of the golden era of American rock.

The beginning of the decade saw the meteoric rise of MTV which completely changed the landscape of rock music. From Los Angeles, a new rock scene emerged of party-anthem pop-metal, tailor-made for the visual medium of TV. Bands like Van Halen, Motley Crue and Poison sported heavy make-up, flashy clothes and huge hair while singing songs of sex, partying, drinking and drugs.

The other side of American mainstream rock attempted to tackle the social and political issues of the time. John Mellencamp, Tom Petty and Bruce Springsteen all produced a stadium rock that appealed to the nation's blue-collar workers. Their music filled arenas, but was anybody really listening to the message?

As the decade moved on, MTV exposure directly translated to commercial profit and soon the hugely popular pop-metal - dubbed Hair Metal by its critics - was saturating the market. Power ballads, big choruses and even bigger hair were the order of the day, with the highly marketable Bon Jovi leading the pack. Guns N' Roses saw themselves as the antithesis to what they considered fake rebellion, soft-rock drivel. But, as we discover, even they became neutralized by the commercialization of the rock industry.

The documentary ends in the early 90s with the emergence of Nirvana and grunge, which wiped away the narcissistic, sexist and pompous music form American rock had grown into. However, it was ultimately another genre of pop music that really replaced the golden age of rock, producing the big personalities the rock scene could no longer provide.