

Throwback: Henry Mancini- What's Happening Theme Song



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What's Happening was the first African-American teen show to have Nielsen ratings after it debuted in 1976. Eric Monte, the show's creator, was one of the few African-American screenwriters in the business and based the show on his other creation *Cooley High*. The cast of Ernest Lee Thomas, Haywood Nelson, Fred "Rerun" Berry, Danielle Spencer, Shirley Hemphill and Mabel King played a group of friends with ordinary lives in Watts, California. Henry Mancini was a legendary film composer who had scored dozens of films and TV shows as well as recording over 90 albums as a leader. He became known for incorporating jazz into his work including the *Pink Panther* films and the *Peter Gunn* TV show. He created the theme song for *What's Happening* which showed his versatility because he was not known for using jazz and R&B. The show ended in 1979, but its sequel, *What's Happening Now* ran from 1985-88 and the storyline was a continuation of the previous show and it retained Mancini's original song.