ROCK AND ROLL

Its History and Stylistic Development

EIGHTH EDITION

Scott D. Lipscomb

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Eighth Edition

Scott D. Lipscomb
San Diego State University

Pearson

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Content Developer: *Jane Miller*
Content Development Manager: *Gabrielle White*
Art/Designer: *iEnergizer/Aptara®, Ltd.*
Digital Studio Course Producer: *Rich Barnes*
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Dedication

Dedicated with love to my wife, Jordana, the consummate potiche;
to my children Kevin, Sterling, and Aiden;
to my siblings, Steve, Shari, Clinton, and Julia;
and to my mom, Dixie Petrey.

Brief Contents

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About Revel and This Course

About This Course

The eighth edition of *Rock and Roll: Its History and Stylistic Development* introduces students to the various elements of music along with the history of rock music. Rock and roll is more than just a musical style, it is an influential social factor. While most rock history texts focus on the biographical factors of rock artists and bands, influential societal developments, and artist discographies and accomplishments, this course – while providing this same information in clear and accessible language – focuses on the *sound* of the music being discussed, working throughout each chapter to assist the reader in developing analytical listening skills and developing a comprehensive musical vocabulary, both of which can be applied to *any* style of music, including rock, jazz, classical, and world musics.

The approach taken is intended to fully engage the reader in an immersive musical experience, learning how to differentiate musical styles in an informed manner using appropriate terminology, allowing the highest level of understanding and listening enjoyment. Toward that end, this new edition of *Rock and Roll . . .* integrates numerous audio examples, created by the author, that are embedded in the text and links to official recordings and videos.

Content Highlights

The new edition has a great deal of contemporary material and exciting features to engage and inform readers:

- fully updated content to include recent events, recordings, and other changes since the publication of the 7th edition;
- Musical Close-Ups that delve deeply into particular musical elements, styles, or musicians have been integrated into the content of each chapter;
- animated audio-visual examples of most music notation images in the text have been added;
- a more complete inclusion of chart positions when referencing albums or singles;
- the glossary has been fully integrated into the text content so that hovering over a bold-faced term immediately reveals the definition of the glossary term;
- timelines are provided placing significant recordings, accomplishments, and other aspects of an artist's or group's career into a chronological, easily interpretable sequence of events; and
- journal questions, independent essay items and shared writing assignments, including recommended collaboration with peers, are integrated directly into the body of the text.

About the Author

Scott D. Lipscomb is currently Director of the School of Music and Dance at San Diego State University Dr. Lipscomb has been co-author of this text since the 3rd edition, along with his colleague Joe Stuessy. He played professionally in rock bands beginning in the late 1970s, culminating with his time with The Coupe, a Los Angeles-based rock band from 1982 to 1987, traveling and performing throughout North America. Scott played bass, keyboards, alto sax, and sang lead & background vocals. His primary areas of research interest include rock music history, understanding the role of sound and music in various forms of multimedia (especially motion pictures and video games), music perception, multimedia cognition, the impact of technology on the music learning experience, incorporation of music across the K-12 curriculum, and interactive instructional media development. He frequently presents results of his research at regional, national, and international conferences, and his work has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes. Dr. Lipscomb co-edited a volume entitled *The psychology of music in multimedia* (2013, Oxford University Press) and is Editor of the *Journal of Technology in Music Learning*. Dr. Lipscomb holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. in Systematic Musicology from the University of California, Los Angeles. He received his B.M. in Jazz Performance (with an emphasis in electric and acoustic basses) from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Acknowledgments

Many individuals played an important role in the preparation of this text. I am extremely fortunate to have benefited greatly over the years from the knowledge of my many students at the University of California, Los Angeles, The University of Texas at San Antonio, Northwestern University, the University of Minnesota, the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, and San Diego State University. I arrive on campus every day, well-prepared for the purpose of filling the fertile minds of students with the wonders of music, and yet they manage to teach me something new every day. Some of these students

have even entered into the realm of collaboration, contributing substantially to this publication, especially in the later chapters of the course. Sarah Williams, Jennifer Walshe, Michael Gaertner, and Kristin Bird were extremely helpful in providing an additional (i.e., younger) perspective regarding current groups, artists, and musical trends. In addition, I am fortunate—though some may quibble with this perspective!—to have had a teenager in my home for the past 21 years and a younger sister to fill the age gap between my children and me; to Aiden, Kevin, Sterling, and Shari, I once again express my appreciation for the many artists and musical examples you have shared with me throughout your lives. Without the input of these individuals representing two younger generations, the more recent evolutions evident in popular music would not have been covered with near the depth or level of insight that you will find here. I would also like to express my appreciation to Chelsea Valenzo-Duggan and Alissa Yatcko for their assistance with a variety of research- and library-related tasks for an earlier edition, many of which have been retained herein. Additionally, as many scholars working in the field of popular music have found, the research of Joel Whitburn and his published compilations of dates, lists, and statistics derived from the *Billboard* charts were indispensable to this work. His kind and unhesitating willingness to assist personally with requests was greatly appreciated, and his subscription-based Record Research Music Vault (http://www.musicarchivevault.com) was an oft-used resource throughout this revision process. It allowed immediate access to chart positions for recordings, both hit singles and albums. Likewise, the website for *Rolling Stone* magazine was a valuable resource. The website of the Recording Industry Association of America (http://www.riaa.com) was also useful for finding statistics related to music sales. Of course, very special thanks are due to the editors for this edition: Jane Miller, Bimbabati Sen, Gabrielle White, and Pearson Education for allowing me the opportunity to revise this eighth edition text, the sixth with which I have been involved and the first for which I am sole author.

Since the third edition of this text, I have had the privilege of revising and co-authoring along with my former colleague at The University of Texas San Antonio, Joe Stuessy, who was sole author of the first and second editions. The exemplary foundation he provided laid the groundwork for what was to become a labor of love – with all of the pleasure, excitement, and challenges that accompany any such creative relationship – since the mid-1990s. While much has changed since that time, there are sections of the text that remain almost unaltered since those early editions. Though Joe's name is no longer on the cover as an author, the spirit of the work that he contributed is strong and the content would be less informed without his valuable perspective. It is with great admiration, respect, and appreciation that I acknowledge Joe Stuessy's invaluable contributions to this work.

Most important, I want to acknowledge the essential role my family plays in every aspect of my life and the patience they have shown as I spent many late nights and weekends burning the midnight oil to complete this labor of love. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my dear wife and partner for life, Jordana, and our children; Sterling, Kevin, and Aiden. Without you all, I would have had neither the stamina nor the contemporary knowledge necessary to complete this task. I should also mention that substantial amounts of comfort were provided at just the rights times along the way by our cuddly Yorkies, Xena and Madison.

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Chapter 1
The Roots of Rock

Learning Objectives

1.1 Describe the elements of music

1.2 Relate instrumentation with the history of rock and roll

1.3 Explain the cultural influences in the music market in the early 1950s

1.4 Summarize how the Pop music market contributed to the formation of rock and roll

1.5 Compare how each of the subculture music markets contributed to the formation of rock and roll

As we prepare to engage together in this exploration of the exciting world of rock music, I hope that you are as excited to experience this adventure as I am to write about it. Throughout this material, I will cover artists and musical developments from the 1940s up to the present day. My approach to this content focuses more directly on musical sound than any other rock history text about which I am aware. While I will also provide details concerning artist biographies, important recordings and other contributions to the art form, socio-political developments across the eras, and other essential information, the primary focus remains on the sound; for example, during the 1960s what are the musical elements that distinguish the sound of Motown from soul music?

One purpose of the following pages is to introduce you to essential musical vocabulary and the concepts they describe. I will use these words consistently throughout each chapter, and they will serve as the basis for our exploration of specific examples provided in the Listening Guides and Musical Close-Ups. Most importantly, this vocabulary and the knowledge that you will gain through its application can be used to intelligently and impressively discuss any type of music from rock to jazz to classical. So, without further delay, let's dive in …

1.1: Musical Close-Up on the Elements of Music

OBJECTIVE: Describe the elements of music

To fully understand any musical style, one must be able to analyze the various elements of music as they exist within that particular style. In this first Musical Close-Up, we shall briefly describe these elements of music and introduce a musical vocabulary that will facilitate your comprehension. In subsequent Musical Close-Ups, we shall examine one or another of these elements in greater detail as it pertains to a given style or topic.

1.1.1: Rhythm

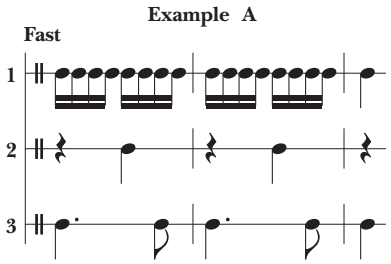
We begin with rhythm because it is fundamental to almost all music. In its most basic form, **rhythm** refers to the interrelationship between music and time. Music, even in its simplest form, exists in time. Whether we are speaking of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony or just one note, there is a beginning, a duration, and an ending. Although we often compare music and visual art, they are dissimilar in at least this one respect. When you look at a painting, your eyes see it all at once. Music is more like dance, plays, books, movies, and even baseball games. All these develop

Rhythmic Nature of Music

In music, the composer must determine the rhythmic nature of the composition.

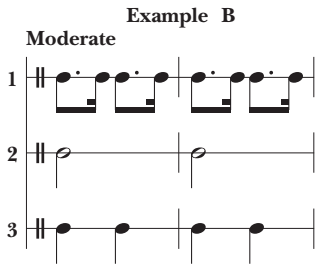
In the broadest sense, the composer must determine how long the piece will last. At a middle level, the composer can control the rhythmic flow of the piece. For example, the composition might have a slow-moving, rather uncomplicated opening, followed by a sudden flurry of activity; then it may build to a busy and fast climax, allowing the rhythmic tension to dissipate in the final section. At the most fine-grained level, the composer must determine the exact length of each note and how it relates to the length of the other notes sounding before, after, and simultaneously. All of this effort determines how the music exists in time—its rhythm.

Watch MUSIC EXAMPLE A



However, when we speak of rhythm, we usually mean the specific rhythmic patterns produced by the varying note durations (lengths). The two patterns shown, because the notes relate to each other differently in time, produce distinct rhythmic effects.

Watch MUSIC EXAMPLE B



Notice the labels "Fast" and "Moderate" in the figures. These words describe the musical **tempo** (how fast all of the notes are moving through time). In the musical patterns provided here, Example A, therefore, moves faster than Example B; the former proceeds at a tempo of 120 beats per minute, while the latter is at 90 beats per minute. Tempo is part of the total rhythmic aspect of a song.

Study Examples A and B closely and listen to them each several times. You will see that, at a given moment (within each beat), there are simultaneous occurrences of long notes, short notes, and sometimes silence. If possible, perform these rhythms in class (using hand claps, nonsense syllables, or numbers); even if it is possible to simply listen to examples in an interactive course like this one, actually performing the rhythms provides a much more meaningful, visceral experience of the rhythm. Each example has a very different effect as a result of the varying rhythms.

It is not so terribly important that you understand everything about the rhythmic patterns in Examples A and B. What is important is that you realize that the rhythmic element of a piece is made up of many notes, each with different lengths compared to the others. In most musical contexts, these must be conceived and performed rather exactly for the rhythmic part of the piece to make sense.

through time. We cannot listen to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, read *War and Peace,* or watch the seventh game of the World Series in an instant. We must allow each to unfold over its own appropriate period of time. Furthermore, each has an internal pace of activity, with moments of exciting action alternating with moments in which the level of activity subsides.

You participate personally in the rhythm of a piece when you tap your foot, clap to the beat, or dance. These reactions are natural and help explain why strongly rhythmic pieces have such appeal. Later in this course, I will review some of these comments about rhythm and show how they apply to early styles of rock and roll.

1.1.2: Melody

When a vibrating body (a guitar string, a piano string, or a saxophone reed) is set into motion fast enough, we begin to perceive a **pitch** (or **tone**). The faster the vibration, the higher the pitch we perceive. Thus, if a string vibrates 100 times per second, we hear a low pitch; if it vibrates 4,000 times per second, we hear a very high pitch. When we hear two or more pitches in succession, each with their own rhythmic duration, we begin to perceive a *melody* (or *tune*).

If you whistle or hum four to six notes (pitches) in succession, you will have created a short melody. Melodies are very important in music. Although we may physically feel the rhythm of the music, usually what we remember about a song is the melody (or tune)—and sometimes the words associated with that tune.

1.1.3: Harmony and Tonality

While *melody* is the combination of notes in succession, *harmony* is the combination of notes simultaneously. If a friend sings a certain note and you join in with a higher or lower note, you are harmonizing. When three or more notes are sounded simultaneously, we have a **chord**. If you

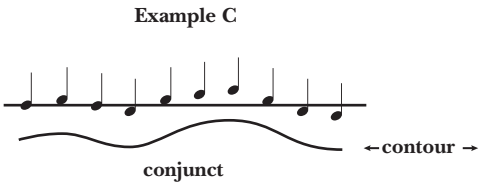
Terms Associated with Melody

When discussing melody, we shall encounter several new terms.

Range—The *range* of a melody describes the distance between the highest and the lowest notes of the sequence of pitches. Melodies that move from very low to very high notes have a wide range; those that move up or down very little have a narrow range.

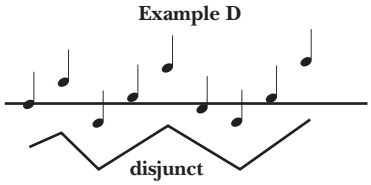
Conjunct—The terms conjunct and disjunct tell us whether a melody is moving gradually from its lower pitches to its higher pitches smoothly (*conjunct*) or if it is jumping from high to low in a more angular fashion (*disjunct*). Examples C and D in the animations below provide examples of a conjunct and a disjunct melody.

Watch MUSIC EXAMPLE C



Disjunct—Notice that the contours of these two melodies are very different. One moves up and down smoothly (conjunct); the other is jagged and angular (disjunct). Melodic contours can be considered similar to the contours of landscapes: softly rolling hills (like the Appalachian Mountains) versus angular mountain ranges (like the Rocky Mountains or the Himalayas).

Watch MUSIC EXAMPLE D

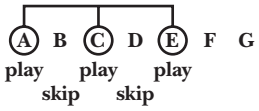


Motive—Sometimes melodies are repetitive. In a repetitive melody, a short melodic pattern (*motive*) might be repeated over and over. This is quite distinct from the kind of melody that seems to spin itself out continually, rarely repeating itself. Finally, we should note briefly that sometimes melodies are combined with other melodies simultaneously. This is an important idea and will be discussed further when we speak of musical texture.

place your entire forearm down on a piano keyboard, the resulting sound will be a chord—not a particularly pretty chord, but a chord nevertheless.

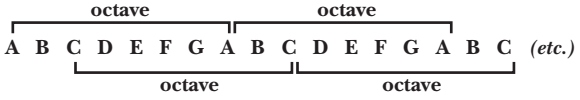
Over the centuries, musicians have developed a way of creating chords that sound a bit better than the one you and your forearm may have just created. The most basic traditional chord consists of the minimum number of notes—three—and is called a **triad** (note the appearance of the prefix "tri-," meaning three). But as you might guess, a traditional triad is not just any three notes. There is a system for creating a pleasant-sounding traditional triad. Within the Western musical tradition, musicians commonly work with seven pitches, named according to the first seven letters of the alphabet: *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, *F*, and *G*. There are also alterations to these notes, including sharps (slightly raised in pitch) and flats (slightly lowered in pitch), but we do not need to worry about them just yet. To create a traditional triad, one starts on any of the seven basic pitches, skips the next one, plays the third one, skips the fourth one, and plays the fifth one.

Watch MUSIC EXAMPLE E



Music Example E represents a triad consisting of the notes A, C, and E. We call it the A triad because A is its basic, or **root**, pitch. If one used C as the root of a triad, the three notes constituting the chord would be C, E, and G. The musical alphabet repeats up and down the pitch spectrum as follows:

Watch MUSIC EXAMPLE F

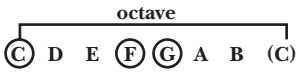


The distance from a given note to the next occurrence of that same note in the musical alphabet is called an *octave*.

Chords are extremely important in music. If all we had were melody and rhythm, music would sound rather empty. Harmony is used to accompany melodies and to fill out the sound of the music. Effective harmonic practice is not a simple matter. For now, be sure you understand the concept of the traditional triad. More complicated chord structures will be explained later in this course, as necessary.

Tonality

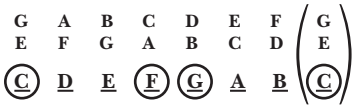
Closely related to harmony is the concept of tonality.



You have probably heard musicians or informed listeners speak of the **key** of B-flat or the key of E. For most traditional music, the words *key* and *tonality* are interchangeable. Perhaps the easiest key to understand is the key of C. When lined up starting on C, the seven notes of the musical alphabet result in the key of C. In the pitch spectrum presented in the last figure on the previous page, the lower brackets represent the pitches contained in the C major scale (the primary pitches in the key of C); these pitches are extracted and presented alone in the above figure.

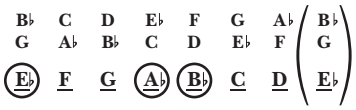
The note C is the beginning and ending note, so we call this entire key C. Also of great importance are the fourth and fifth notes of the key, F and G.

Watch MUSIC EXAMPLE G



Each note in the key of C can serve as the root of its own triad (represented as three vertical pitches in the figure above).

Watch MUSIC EXAMPLE H



Other keys have a different sequence of notes; for example, the key of E-flat has the members as shown above.

Do not worry about the flat symbols (♭) in this example; just understand that a different collection of notes creates a different key. Again, notice that the first, fourth, and fifth notes are the most important and that the name of the key comes from the name of he first and last notes, constituting an octave.

We will have more to say about keys and chords in another Musical Close-Up later in this chapter.

1.1.4: Timbre

Next, we must consider the exact quality of the sounds being produced. After all, pianos do not sound like clarinets, and clarinets do not sound like guitars. The difference in the sound quality of these instruments involves *timbre*—the tone quality of sound. Have you ever thought about how many different voices you recognize? Even if they were all speaking exactly the same words, you would probably recognize the voices of your parents, your siblings, quite a few close friends, several movie and television stars, and even some politicians. Each voice has a distinctive sound quality, or timbre (pronounced "TAM-burr").

Composers must decide whether a melody is to be played on a trumpet or saxophone and whether a chord is to be played by piano, banjo, or guitar. Should the bass be an acoustic string bass, a tuba, or an electric bass guitar? Decisions like these have a significant impact on how the final piece of music sounds. Elvis's "Hound Dog" would not be the same if it were played by a marching band, even if the melody, harmony, and rhythm were exactly the same. Certain timbres are associated with certain styles of music. Dixieland jazz sounds best when played by a small ensemble of trumpet, clarinet, trombone, tuba, banjo, and drums (possibly including a piano); most rock and roll is exemplified by one to three electric guitars, bass, and drums; swing bands need trumpets, saxophones, trombones, piano, bass, and drums.

Since the 1950s, the recording industry and rock and roll have added considerably to the world of timbre. For one thing, there is now a huge arsenal of electronic instruments to be considered. Some are basically acoustic instruments, the sounds of which are electronically amplified, like guitars. However, in many cases, the sound itself is electronically produced and modified; one of the most notable of these instruments is the synthesizer (to be discussed later in this chapter). Also, the contemporary recording studio can do much to change the timbre of the musical product. With today's technical resources for mixing, overdubbing, editing, and processing (including echo, flanging, pitch shifting ["auto tuning"], time stretching, etc.), the competent studio engineer can dramatically alter the sound of the basic raw material. This, too, is an aspect of timbre.

1.1.5: Texture

One of the factors that makes a given piece of music sound the way it does is its musical *texture*—the way the various musical lines function in relation to one another.

Types of Musical Textures

There are three basic possibilities: *monophony*, *homophony*, and *polyphony*.

Monophony—*Monophony* is the simplest musical texture. Monophonic texture exists when there is one, *and only one*, musical line. Thus, one singer, without any accompaniment, singing a solo line is an example of monophony. The essential point is not how many singers (or players) there are, but how many musical lines. Thus, 10 singers—if they are all singing exactly the same melodic line—would still create a monophonic texture.

Homophony—*Homophony* is a bit more complex. In a homophonic texture, one musical line predominates, but other lines are also present in a subservient role. One of the most common types of homophony is the melody-and-accompaniment texture. Here, one line is clearly the melody, and all other musical sounds serve as accompaniment. A folk singer accompanied by a guitar is an example of homophony. Perhaps you have heard church hymns in which the top line is the primary melodic line and the other three parts simply harmonize the melody. This is another type of homophony (chordal), but again, one line predominates and the other lines are subservient.

Polyphony—In *polyphony*, there are two or more independent lines of approximately equal importance. If you have ever sung a round like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," you have participated in a polyphonic texture. One singer begins the song, and then a second singer begins four beats later; if a third singer is available, he or she begins four beats after the second singer. Each singer is singing the tune rather independently, but each part is just as important as the others. This type of polyphony is called imitative polyphony because one part imitates the other parts. Another form of polyphony is called nonimitative polyphony, because—though the various parts are considered equally important—they do not imitate one another musically. The nonimitative form of polyphony is more common than imitative polyphony within popular music contexts. Music that is polyphonic can be a bit difficult to listen to at first because it sounds so busy. There are, after all, multiple melodic lines to try to hear, rather than just one.

To avoid potential confusion, allow me to differentiate further the examples of monophony from imitative polyphony provided above. You may have noticed that both described the use of the same melody, but—in the imitative polyphonic example—occurrences of these melodies began at different points in time. In order for a musical texture to be considered monophonic, all voices and instruments must perform the same exact melody beginning and ending *at the same time*.

Sometimes, we speak of texture as being thick or thin. In this sense, texture may be perceived as a continuum. Two singers singing a duet would be on one end of the continuum—a very thin texture. On the opposite end, we might find a song with several vocal melodic lines, a full orchestra with the high brass playing fanfare-like material, the strings playing scale passages, the woodwinds playing frilly ornaments, the low brass playing a powerful countermelody, and the percussion pounding a frenzied rhythm. Add a background chorus and some synthesizer chords, and we have a very thick texture.

Most popular music, including rock and roll, utilizes the melody-and-accompaniment texture, a type of homophony. On occasion, however, some musically creative minds have explored other textures; I will take special note of such cases as we encounter them throughout this course.

1.1.6: Loudness and Form

When a vibrating body (a string or drumhead) is displaced a little, it produces a relatively quiet sound; when it is displaced a lot, it produces a louder sound. If you barely touch a piano key, the hammer inside the instrument touches the string lightly and hardly moves it, producing a very soft sound. If you give the key a sharp whack, the hammer pops against the string, setting it into violent motion, and producing a louder sound. Technically, this is called the amplitude (amount of displacement) of a vibrating body. Usually, though, we call it **loudness** (or **volume**).

Most rock and roll is loud, but we will study some styles and songs that use a variety of loudness levels. As with any of the elements of music, the constant, unchanging use of a certain element leads to boredom. *Dynamics* is the term musicians use to describe the various fluctuations in loudness. The creative mind skillfully manipulates all of the available musical elements—including dynamics.

FORM *Form* is the organizational structure of a piece of music. It is the result of changes in some or all of the musical elements.

1.1.7: A Word about Words

Technically speaking, the words of a song (lyrics) are not an integral part of the music. Thus, although "Yesterday" by the Beatles certainly has words, there are many purely instrumental arrangements of this same song that are entirely recognizable, even though no lyrics are sung or spoken. Nevertheless, lyrics are intimately associated with the music of most popular songs.

The level of importance assigned to lyrics varies greatly from listener to listener. Many people say, "Oh, I don't really pay attention to the words; I just like the music (or the beat)." Yet, despite this claim, these individuals can often sing the words along with an instrumental arrangement or mouth the words as the song is being played on the radio. If the music suddenly stops, they continue singing the tune by themselves, words and all.

Too often, however, people think only of lyrics and forget about the music. For example, if asked to write a paper about the music of a 1960s folk singer or group, students often write all about the protest songs, the antiwar sentiments, the pleas for racial equality, the love songs, the symbolism, and so on. Often, little is said about the melodic lines, harmonies, forms, and other musical elements.

Lyrics constitute verbal expression, while music is a form of nonverbal expression. Frequently, we listen closely to songs with lyrics but find our minds wandering when listening to pure instrumental music. Perhaps this is because the average non-musician understands the verbal language of the lyrics but does not understand the nonverbal language of the instrumental sounds. Similarly, we can usually identify an artist or group by ear when one or more voices are singing words. But it is more difficult to identify correctly purely instrumental groups.

However, music, too, is a language. The trained musician has learned to communicate using that language. It is just as intelligible, and perhaps even more powerful, than verbal language. I hope this course will enhance your appreciation of, and ability to understand, some aspects of this nonverbal language.

One final word about words: Just as with the other aspects of rock and roll, the lyrics have undergone dramatic stylistic changes through the five decades of rock and roll history. At times, the lyrics have been the subject of derision and, at other times, the subject of heated controversy. This study will comment on the verbal aspects of rock as one part of the total picture, distinct from the music yet intimately associated with it.

An Example Illustrating Musical Form

Musical form is often considered one of the most difficult elements of music to identify. Because music flows in time and does not stop to wait for audience members to keep up, listeners must remain vigilant as they experience musical sound. This distinction is sometimes made by using the term *hearing* (passive listening, when sound simply washes over the listener) in contrast to *listening* (a proactive process of engaging with musical sound, allowing listeners to utilize listening skills at their disposal). At various times throughout this course, I will refer to the musical form of a given composition. This slide will provide you the tools necessary to begin to consider this important aspect of music listening. Through the use of a familiar analogy (the structure of a TV show), the following example will help you develop a basic understanding of musical form. As you read through later material, you will have many opportunities to apply this knowledge in a variety of musical contexts.

Think for a moment about one of your favorite television shows. Possibly, there is a short teaser, or introduction, that gives you a hint of what is to come and sets the scene. After a commercial, there is a series of scenes that set forth the primary and secondary characters and problems in that particular episode. Following another commercial, another series of scenes introduces more complications and conflicts. After another commercial, a series of scenes leads to a turning point of some kind that suggests that the end is in sight and all will be well. A final scene shows the happy participants basking in the glow of another successful escapade.

The series of scenes described, whether a television show or an episodic adventure viewed online, exists over a period of time (usually 30 to 60 minutes) and is organized into sections and subsections. The sections and subsections are delineated by changes, as characters appear and disappear, as complications arise and are resolved, and as settings change.

Musical compositions typically follow a similar organizational structure. Often, a song begins with an introduction; then, there is a section that introduces a main melody and the lyrical topic. This section may be repeated with new lyrics. Next, there may be a section with new music and new lyrics. Subsequent sections may repeat or vary earlier music with new or repeated lyrics.

Music Example I

Usually, there is an instrumental section near the middle of the piece and a fade-out section at the end. We can chart this organizational structure as shown above.

In this diagram, the repeating *A* section shows that the music is repeated; the single and double quotation marks indicate the presence of new or altered lyrics. What specifically signals that a section is ending and a new section is beginning?

The answer is simple: a change in one or more of the musical elements. From one section to the next, there may be a change in the rhythm, melody, key, texture, or lyrics. At any juncture in the musical form, there are a limited set of options: The musicians can (a) repeat previous material (*repetition*), (b) play new material (*contrast*), or (c) play something based on earlier material, but not an exact repetition (we call this last one *variation* or *development*). This may sound complicated, but you will be surprised how easy it is to perceive the changes from section to section once you begin to listen actively to musical sound as you proceed through this course.

REVIEW: THE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

Here is an opportunity to evaluate how familiar you are with some of the important musical terms introduced so far.

Statements
1. _____ refers to the interrelationship between music and time.
2. _____ is the term musicians use to describe the various fluctuations in loudness.
3. _____ is the combination of notes, simultaneously.
4. The _____ is the most basic traditional chord.
5. _____ is the tone quality of sound.
6. When three or more notes are sounded simultaneously it is called a _____.
7. The distance from a given note to its next occurrence in the musical alphabet is called an _____.
8. _____ is the term used when a melody is jumping from high to low.
9. _____ is the way the various musical lines function in relation to one another.
10. _____ is the simplest musical texture.
11. _____ is the term used when a melody is moving gradually from its lower pitches to its higher pitches.
12. _____ is the organizational structure of a piece of music.
13. The _____ of a melody describes the distance between the highest and the lowest notes of the melody.

Feedback: 1. Rhythm 2. Dynamics 3. Harmony 4. Triad 5. Timbre 6. Chord 7. Octave 8. Disjunct 9. Texture 10. Monophony 11. Conjunct 12. Form 13. Range

1.2: Musical Close-Up on Instrumentation in Rock and Roll

OBJECTIVE: Relate instrumentation with the history of rock and roll

When we think of rock and roll, we usually think of electric guitars, drums, and singers. These have, in fact, been the essential ingredients for a rock and roll band from the early 1950s to today. However, there have been changes in the nature of these instruments, and some styles have added other instruments to the rock and roll ensemble. In this section, we shall briefly survey the instrumentation of rock from 1955 to today and then take a closer look at some specific instruments.

1.2.1: Guitar

Guitars, the basic instruments of all rock and roll, come in two basic varieties: acoustic and electric. Some early rock and rollers (e.g., Elvis Presley) started with the acoustic guitar, but most quickly learned that the unamplified acoustic guitar was no match for the electric guitars, piano, saxophone, and drums of the evolving rock ensemble. Some guitarists stayed with their acoustic instruments, merely adding electronic amplification by attaching a

History of Instrumentation of Rock

Like the sound of rock music itself, the number and types of instruments used in recording rock tunes has evolved. This simulation will take you on a brief tour of the instruments used in rock recordings from the 1950s to the 1980s.

The 1950s—The typical 1950s rock and roll band consisted of four to six players. The usual instruments included drums, bass (acoustic), two electric guitars (one rhythm and one lead), piano (acoustic), and saxophone (alto or tenor, the former playing in a higher pitch range than the latter). Some bands, of course, varied from this basic ensemble. Thus, Bill Haley's Comets included a steel guitar instead of a piano, reflecting their country and western (C&W) background. Buddy Holly's Crickets used only drums, an acoustic bass, and two guitars. Elvis Presley's early Sun recordings consist of only two guitars and a bass. Jerry Lee Lewis's early hits also incorporate a trio: piano, guitar, and drums. Little Richard's recording sessions for his big hits on Specialty Records used various instrumental lineups but usually included piano, bass, drums, guitar, and several saxophones.

The 1960s—Rock music of the 1960s included a greater diversification in instrumentation. The Beatles' lineup of two guitars (lead and rhythm), electric bass, and drums was widely imitated. If any instrument was added to this basic foursome, it was usually piano (increasingly in its electronic form and with its various electronic spin-offs). The folk movement of the 1960s went back to basics, using acoustic guitar, harmonica, banjo, acoustic bass, and sometimes bongo drums. The Motown sound featured a vocal group plus full orchestral instrumentation, similar to many early **Pop** recordings. Finally, the jazz-rock trend near the end of the decade added a horn section, consisting of trumpet(s), woodwinds (saxes or flute), and trombone.

The 1970s and the 1980s—The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the expansion of electronic instruments. Every few months, a new electronic keyboard appeared that rendered its predecessors outdated. One family of such instruments, the *synthesizer*, can emulate a myriad of instrumental sounds, from guitar to flute to drums, as well as create original sounds not produced by traditional, acoustic musical instruments. Early synthesizers were controlled by a piano-like keyboard—something most musicians know—as a way for the player to signal the note to be played. So it was natural for the pianist—now called the "keyboard player" to represent expertise beyond the piano—to be the first in rock groups to embrace the instrument.

Other than this electronic expansion, the basic instrumentation of the 1960s was simply carried forward. The ensemble of three or four guitars (including bass) and drums remained basic to hard rock and heavy metal. Some black groups continued to use brass and woodwind instruments; disco utilized full orchestral instrumentation. In recent decades, the electronic explosion has continued with increasing use of guitar synthesizers, drum machines, and computer-interfaced keyboards.

Important Developments for the Electric Guitar

If there is one instrument that represents the world of rock and roll for many people, it is the electric guitar. Almost from its beginning, the electric guitar has been an essential element of the rock sound. This simulation will provide information about some of the most important developments to this central instrument, all of which opened new doors of possibility in the sounds available to rock guitarists.

In 1954, Leo Fender introduced the Stratocaster, a solid-body guitar that became the model for electric guitars in rock and roll for many years. The Gibson company, another leading guitar manufacturer since the early part of the 20th century, introduced a solid-body electric guitar in 1952, designed by and named for Les Paul, a renowned jazz and country guitarist and himself a pioneer in the development of the electric guitar.

Among important later developments is the wireless electric guitar system, which broadcasts its electric signal to an amplifier via a transmitter connected to the guitar, so that the performer is not attached directly to the amplifier by an umbilical-like cable. This has had important ramifications for onstage performance, allowing some of the more acrobatic acts to run, jump, roll, and cavort all over a huge and elaborate stage setting (or into the audience), without fear of entangling themselves in wires. There are many other important developments to consider. Over the years, there have been various experiments with the basic guitar sound of rock and roll. Some of these include the 12-string guitars (the most common type of guitar has 6 strings) and double-necked guitars (sometimes one neck has 6 strings, while the other has 12).

In the early 1950s, near the same time as the introduction of the Stratocaster described previously, Leo Fender introduced the solid-body electric bass guitar. Some early rock and roll bands continued to prefer the acoustic bass, but, by the end of the decade, most bass players had switched to the electric instrument. By the 1960s, the old stand-up bass was gone, except in some folk- or country-influenced bands (rockabilly). The electric bass was much more portable and provided powerful bass lines that could match the loudness level of the drums, electric guitars, and electric pianos.

Through the late 1970s and early 1980s, synthesizer technology—once the province of the keyboard player—became available to the guitarist. Although the guitarist appears to be playing a typical electric guitar, she or he is really sending a series of electrical impulses to a synthesizer that has the capability to translate the notes into the timbre of a flute, trumpet, or any other sound the synthesizer can produce.

contact microphone to capture the instrument's vibrations, a fairly common practice since the mid-1930s. However, except for the folk- or country-influenced rock performers, rock guitarists quickly adopted the true electric guitar (with pickups embedded in the guitar body) as the basic instrument.

Electric guitars incorporate electromagnetic pickup devices placed below the steel strings that send a signal through an amplifier and on to a loudspeaker. Various controls operated by the hands or feet can change loudness, tone, and equalization and can add special effects, such as reverberation, distortion, wah-wah, and phase shifting. Because electric guitars do not require the wooden sound chamber of the acoustic guitar, they may be made of metal or wood, have hollow or solid bodies, and take on a variety of shapes.

1.2.2: Voice

One of the most basic and essential instruments of all is the human voice. Although there are a number of purely instrumental rock hits, the vast majority contains vocals. When asked to name rock stars, we will almost invariably name singers (some, of course, may also be instrumentalists—usually guitarists or keyboard players).

Types of Early Rock Vocalists

A primary way in which variety could be found—even in early rock and roll—was the style of the vocalist(s). A wide range of styles were represented, revealing influence from a variety of musical styles, including Pop and rhythm and blues (R&B).

The Crooners—In the early 1950s, the ideal Pop singer was the crooner, who was at his or her best singing soft, slow love songs—so-called ballads. The **crooner** (most often male) had a pleasant voice quality in the traditional sense, singing perfectly in tune with a wide pitch range and excellent control of the voice. This ideal carried over into the softer side of rock with singers like Pat Boone, Paul Anka, Frankie Avalon, the Carpenters, and Barry Manilow.

The Shouters—On the opposite end of the continuum from the crooners were the **shouters** (or screamers). There is little precedence for this style in white music prior to rock and roll. However, R&B singers had developed a shouting style several decades before rock and roll. R&B stars like Joe Turner, Big Mama Thornton, Wynonie Harris, and Elmore James half sang, half shouted their songs. There was usually a harsh, raspy quality to the voice. The general melodic contour was followed, but exact melodic pitches were only approximated. This

shouting style carried over into the harder styles of rock and roll, best exemplified in the early days by Little Richard and later by Janis Joplin, James Brown, and a host of the hard rock and heavy metal bands of the 1970s, 1980s, and beyond.

The Mainstream Singers—In between the crooners and the shouters was a wide variety of vocal styles. Characterized by a harder and more powerful vocal quality than the crooners, these mainstream singers typically adhered to the correct melodic pitches but were prone to provide strong vocal accents, bend some pitches, and add various vocal embellishments to their rhythmically driving songs. This large middle ground between crooners and shouters is exemplified by such diverse singers as Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino, the Beach Boys, and a good many of the Motown singers of the 1960s and later.

A Drum Set

SOURCE: Drum Kit/Dorling Kindersley Limited

Of course, some of the more versatile performers can convincingly sing two or three styles. Using Presley as an example, consider these songs: "Hard-Headed Woman" (shouter), "Can't Help Falling in Love" (crooner); and "Heartbreak Hotel" (in-between). Although the terms *crooner* and *shouter* may prove useful in describing some singers, we should not force a label on a given voice, the most personal and unique of all musical instruments.

1.2.3: Drums

If rhythm is the heart of rock and roll, drums must be the central ingredient in the rock band. Except for a few very early rock recordings (influenced by their C&W background) and some folk music of the early 1960s, drums have been an integral part of the rock music scene.

The typical rock drum set (sometimes called trap set, or just traps) is played by one person and consists of a bass drum (played with a foot pedal), a snare drum, a combination of tom-toms, a ride cymbal, a pair of hi-hat cymbals, and a cowbell. The drummer may use a variety of striking implements, including hard sticks, soft mallets, and wire brushes.

The makeup of rock drum sets remained relatively consistent from these early days until the mid- to late 1970s. Evidence of this development can be seen even earlier in the music of adventurous, musically sophisticated groups like Emerson, Lake & Palmer, and Pink Floyd. From 1975 to 1985, several important innovations occurred. The traditional acoustic drum requires a hollow-sounding chamber to shape and color its sound (thus, the big bass drum and the narrower, smaller snare drum), but innovators realized that the sound of a drumhead being struck by a stick could be produced electronically, initiating the advent of compact, solid-body drums. For example, Simmons made an early electronic drum set in which the drumheads (or pads) have electronic pickups that sense how hard the pad is struck. Resulting pulses are then sent to a control unit that fires analog or digitally recorded sounds. Each drum was just a few inches deep, no longer needing to vary its physical dimensions to produce the desired sounds. With these systems, an entire drum set can be packed into a relatively small case and easily transported. Drummers like that.

What many drummers do not like is the development of electronic drum machines. Even in the earliest days of sound synthesis, the various drum sounds (snare, bass, cymbal, etc.) were among the easiest sounds to reproduce electronically. With the arrival of digital sampling (to be discussed in detail later in this text) and the computer-based digital audio workstation, the precision with which drum tracks can be created is truly astounding—even to the point of intentionally introducing "imperfections" (expressive deviations in time), so that the manually created drum part does not sound "mechanical." The user can program a steady bass drum beat and a variety of **subdivisions** on a snare drum, a tom-tom, and cymbals. Accents may be added using a cowbell or hand-clap sounds. Drum machines are easy to use and reproduce an impressively believable drum sound with absolute technical accuracy; most of the earliest could store about 100 patterns and 10 full-length songs in memory for instant recall. Using a more recent, computer-based system, the number of patterns that can be stored is limited only by the memory storage of your computer, resulting in a nearly limitless capacity.

1.2.4: Keyboards

In the beginning, there was the simple, upright piano with two or three pedals and 88 keys. Since rock's early days, however, a bewildering catalog of keyboards of every size,

shape, and description has appeared. About the time that the performer has invested in and mastered a shiny new keyboard, a newer and shinier one with additional capabilities is marketed that makes the former one seem old-fashioned and outdated. The purpose of the present section will not be to describe every modern keyboard technology that has emerged, but to discuss a few of the principal models from which the others are derived.

One of the problems pianists faced was that they were at the mercy of the instrument they found at the performance site; if the piano was not properly maintained, pedals would fail to work, some of the keys would not play, or the instrument would be out of tune. The electric piano, which was portable enough for the keyboard player to transport it from gig to gig, solved this. In the mid- to late 1960s, it gradually replaced the acoustic piano in most rock bands. At least the performer could be sure the piano was in tune, all its notes played, and it could be placed anywhere on stage.

Even though electric pianos often had shortened keyboards (usually only 64 notes, rather than the 88 found on most upright and grand pianos) and did not sound exactly like the acoustic piano, practicality triumphed, and the electric piano became the standard keyboard for rock and roll. Soon, there were variations on the basic electric piano. For example, the clavinet allowed the pianist to switch between two different timbres; RMI made an instrument that allowed a similar switch between a piano and a harpsichord sound.

This turn to electronics launched a revolution in rock and roll keyboards. New electronic keyboard instruments appeared that attempted to imitate a wider variety of instruments. An early example was the *Mellotron*, an instrument that used tapes of prerecorded tones by various instruments. The popular Mellotron 400 contained a rack of tapes with three tracks, each of which contained a recording of acoustic instruments: brass, strings, or flute. By selecting one of these three timbres and then pressing a key, the performer produced the recorded sound of a particular instrument playing a particular note. Although a number of groups experimented with the Mellotron, its sound became especially identified with the Moody Blues. (Perhaps the most famous Mellotron solo can be heard at the beginning of "Strawberry Fields Forever" by the Beatles, another group that used the instrument.)

SYNTHESIZERS At about the same time (late 1960s and early 1970s), smaller synthesizers were being developed that were portable enough to be transported and used in live performance. Basically, analog synthesizers do two things: they generate sounds by means of oscillators and they modify sounds by means of various devices (filters, envelope shapers, and ring modulators). With the synthesizer, the keyboard player could produce an entire range of sounds by mastering a complex set of knobs, buttons, slides, and patch cords. It required some retraining, but the result was worth the trouble. Later, digital synthesizers (like the Yamaha DX7, introduced in 1983) eliminated the buttons, knobs, and patch cords, allowing sounds to be created using a small liquid crystal display (or LCD) interface and a slider. A great advantage of this next generation of synthesizers was the ability to store *patches* (different instrument sounds) in memory for later recall; it was possible to use an external library to store hundreds (or even thousands) of unique sounds that could be easily recalled in performance.

As the synthesizer revolution advanced, newer, easier-to-use models poured into the marketplace. Some specialized in string sounds, whereas others allowed for a variety of preprogrammed sounds, each available at the touch of a button. Add-ons were developed, such as the *sequencer*, which allowed the user to set up a series of pitches, rhythms, timbres, and volumes that could be set into motion at the flip of a switch. The inevitable linkage between the computer and the synthesizer was clearly established with the development of *Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI)*, a protocol established in 1983 to standardize communication between computers and electronic keyboards.

Electronic organs, instruments that predate the beginnings of rock and roll, added still other sounds to the rock keyboard player's resources. Laurens Hammond introduced the electronic organ in 1939. As rock musicians discovered its sound in the 1960s (most notably the Hammond B-3 model), other companies (e.g., Farfisa and Vox) entered the market in competition with Hammond.

The keyboard player of the 1970s and 1980s was typically surrounded by four to six keyboards, each with a specialized role to play. The most elaborate electronic keyboardists (e.g., Keith Emerson and Rick Wakeman) confronted racks of instruments that resembled the cockpit of a 747. As these innovations continued into the 1990s and the new millennium, the number of keyboards necessary onstage was reduced substantially by the introduction of *soft synths*, software-based synthesizers that run as computer software, producing sounds in real time in response to MIDI messages sent from a connected keyboard controller.

1.2.5: Saxophone

There are five basic saxophones (saxes); from highest to lowest pitch range, they are soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass. Because the fingering among all of the saxes is similar, the typical saxophonist can play at least alto and tenor, and many can easily switch to any of the saxes. The saxophone (sax) became a favorite instrument in jazz of the 1930s and 1940s, crossing over into R&B as well. Black

bluesmen particularly favored the versatility and sensual sound of the tenor sax. Thus, it was natural that early rock and roll bands, which borrowed so much from R&B, often included a saxophone. Fats Domino's songs usually included not only a saxophone accompaniment, but frequently a sax solo at the instrumental break. Little Richard's bands included up to four saxophones. Even Bill Haley's Comets, in spite of their primarily C&W background, included a saxophone.

Since this early period, saxophones have alternately appeared and disappeared in various rock styles. The Motown sound of the 1960s utilized the saxophone, especially the baritone sax, which doubled bass lines and occasionally played solos. The jazz-rock sound of the late 1960s and early 1970s incorporated various saxophones, along with other brass and woodwind instruments. The sound of the soprano sax became particularly popular in the early 1970s, with groups such as Weather Report and Chuck Mangione's band. Throughout his career, David Bowie played saxophone on many of his recordings. Between the years 1975 to 1985, occasional specialty songs featured the sax, and many groups—such as Earth, Wind & Fire—continued to rely on its sound.

BECOME AN ACTIVE LISTENER: ROCK INSTRUMENTATION

Now it's time for you to apply some of the knowledge you have gained in this chapter. Listen to some of the listening examples described or peruse your favorite contemporary recordings. As you listen, use your developing listening skills to identify some of the instruments and other sounds discussed.

1. Find examples of these guitar sounds in songs that you like: reverb, wah-wah, and phase shifting.
2. Find examples of these vocal performance styles in songs that you like: shouter, crooner, and in-between.
3. Find examples of these drum sounds in songs that you like: bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, and drum machine.
4. Find examples of these keyboard instruments in songs that you like: piano, organ, and synthesizer.

1.3: The Early 1950s

OBJECTIVE: Explain the cultural influences in the music market in the early 1950s

Preceded and followed by turbulent decades, the 1950s seemed serene and comfortable. The late 1920s to mid-1930s were years of extreme financial pressure. The early 1940s were consumed by the most destructive war the world has ever known. From 1950 to 1952, the United States was involved in a so-called "police action" (war) in Korea. The decade following the 1950s was one of the most turbulent in our nation's history, a time of social and political unrest and another war (Vietnam).

1.3.1: The General Society

Certainly no decade is trouble-free. Even the 1950s witnessed several dramatic issues. Senator Joe McCarthy stirred up considerable controversy regarding the invasion of American society by communism. The Supreme Court issued a landmark decision in 1954 that declared the policy of "separate but equal" education for blacks and whites to be unconstitutional. A lingering fear of "the bomb" caused many people to build bomb shelters in their backyards and prompted schools to hold weekly air raid drills.

In general, despite these concerns, things were relatively good. General Dwight Eisenhower was inaugurated as president in 1953. The economy stabilized with little or no inflation. There was a feeling of well-being throughout the nation. After years of war and depression, American society was finally able to settle down and go on with the business of progress. Families looked forward to a stable and relatively predictable future. The traditional game plan was clear: Do well in school, go to college, marry, and raise a family somewhat more affluently than you were raised. This plan called for men to follow their careers and provide well for their families; women were to keep a stable and decent environment functioning at home. If one followed the game plan, personal happiness and professional success were believed to be the inevitable rewards.

Gradually, economic affluence sifted down to middle-class families that were now able to own a home, buy a new car, take a vacation, and purchase a newcomer to the entertainment scene: a television set. The fascination with television during this era was overwhelming. There were those who would watch a test pattern if nothing else was on! The programming was good, clean family entertainment: variety shows, family comedies, westerns, children's shows, news, cartoons, drama, sports, and music (e.g., *Your Hit Parade*).

The popular music of the early 1950s fit the pattern perfectly. Most of the nation was listening to a style of music we shall refer to as *Pop*. This style of music was a continuation of the popular styles of earlier decades. The lyrics typically dealt with innocent, boy-girl love; the lyrical and musical content was nonthreatening. Like society in general, Pop sought to be comfortable, pleasant, and righteous; excess was avoided. Musically, it seemed to express a society's desire to be left alone to enjoy the good life, unthreatened by the turmoil, controversy, and ugliness endured in previous decades.

1.3.2: Subcultures

Of course, we oversimplify when we speak of "society." Although we may use the term to represent the majority of average citizens, we must also recognize a number of subcultures that evidenced characteristics quite different from the norms of the idealized society in general. To begin our study of rock and roll, we must focus on two of these subcultures.

The black culture of the early 1950s was quite distinct from white, middle-class society. Racial segregation was the norm, especially in the South and the Southwest. It is hard for us to realize today that it was just over 50 years ago that blacks were required to sit in the last three or four rows of city buses. Public areas usually had separate drinking fountains and bathrooms for "colored" and "white." Blacks were routinely barred from many public accommodations, such as hotels and restaurants. Separate housing districts and schools continued to exist for blacks and whites long after the 1954 Supreme Court decision barring segregation in public schools.

With such strict segregation during the mid-twentieth century, it is not at all surprising that these segregated cultures would maintain their own distinct characteristics, including spoken dialect, dance, religion, dress, and music. Among the musical styles associated with the black culture were jazz (in a variety of substyles), gospel (a religiously oriented style), and rhythm and blues. **Rhythm and blues** (R&B), one of a variety of styles evolving from the blues during the early twentieth century, is of great importance in our story of the development of rock and roll.

Related to jazz, the spiritual and gospel styles, R&B evolved as a distinct style. Just as blacks and whites were segregated, so R&B existed separately from the Pop market. R&B had its own performers, record companies, and consumers. R&B records, often referred to as "race records" at the time, sold within their own distinct market. An R&B performer or record rarely crossed over into the national Pop market (similarly, Pop rarely infiltrated the R&B market).

A second subculture was identified with country and western (C&W) music. The poorer whites of the South developed a style of folk music often referred to as "hillbilly music." As time passed and the style spread, variations inevitably occurred (e.g., bluegrass and western swing). As with R&B, the C&W market was quite distinct from the larger Pop market. Appealing primarily to poorer rural whites in the South, Midwest, and Southwest, C&W maintained its own performers, record companies, and consumers. Pop songs rarely crossed over into the C&W market. However, a few C&W performers and songs managed to break into the national Pop scene (more about that later).

JOURNAL

The Convergence of Musical Styles

Based on the information that you have read in this chapter and on your prior knowledge of American society in the late 1940s and early 1950s, describe three ways that race, affluence, and other societal factors may have influenced the division of musical styles leading to the mid-50s into separate markets. Then, take a moment to reflect on the convergence that occurred with the popularity of Bill Haley and Elvis Presley. Do you believe that this convergence—along with rock music that followed during the next decade—had an impact on societal change that led to the civil rights movement of the 1960s? Why or why not?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

1.4: The Pop Music Market

OBJECTIVE: Summarize how the Pop music market contributed to the formation of rock and roll

Each of the three markets described in the previous section—Pop, R&B, and C&W—contributed in varying degrees to the formation of rock and roll. R&B was by far the heaviest musical contributor; C&W also made its contribution; Pop contributed the least but must not be overlooked. In the following sections, we will delve deeper into the specific contributions made by each of these musical styles, facilitating the emergence of rock and roll.

1.4.1: Tin Pan Alley

To appreciate the tremendous impact of rock and roll, one must first understand the nature of the popular music the nation listened to in the early 1950s. Pop was derived from the long Tin Pan Alley tradition, with influences from the swing period of the 1930s and early 1940s, Hollywood movie music, and Broadway show tunes. *Tin Pan Alley* is the name given to an area of New York City that became the center of popular music publishing from the late 1800s to the late 1950s. Tin Pan Alley songs were written primarily by white, professional songwriters. Although the style changed over the decades, certain general characteristics remained constant.

Typically, the lyrics were non-offensive, noncontroversial, and, most often, dealt with simple, romantic love. Usually, Tin Pan Alley songs had a very straight, uncomplicated rhythm, with four (or sometimes three) beats to each measure. The rhythm was kept in the

Table 1.1 Ten Representative Selections of Top 50 Songs (1950–1954)

Title	Artist	Date of Peak Popularity	Comments
"Goodnight Irene"	The Weavers	August to November 1950	slow, lush, romantic ballad
"Mona Lisa"	Nat "King" Cole	July to August 1950	slow, romantic ballad
"Music, Music, Music"	Teresa Brewer	March to April 1950	upbeat, cute
"Tennessee Waltz"	Patti Page	January to February 1951	moderate tempo; cover of a C&W hit
"Too Young"	Nat "King" Cole	June to July 1951	slow, romantic ballad
"Cry"	Johnnie Ray	January to March 1952	an early example of emotive performance style; about lost love
"Wheel of Fortune"	Kay Starr	March to May 1952	moderate to slow; ballad
"Doggie in the Window"	Patti Page	March to May 1953	upbeat; cutesy, novelty song
"Wanted"	Perry Como	April to May 1954	slow; lonely-for-love song
"Hey There"	Rosemary Clooney	September to October 1954	slow love song; Broadway show tune

background of the musical fabric. Melodies were very important; they were usually rather easy to remember, so almost anyone could sing or whistle the tunes after hearing them a few times. The melodies were pretty, in a traditional sense; they usually moved freely within one octave (sometimes a little more) and moved stepwise or with small leaps. The melodic **contours** were interesting, much like a gently undulating curve. The musical material was symmetrically organized into units of four or eight measures (called *phrases*). Tempos were usually moderate to slow; faster tunes were typically bouncy and cute, often with light or humorous lyrics. Usually, the songs were recorded by professional singers with pleasing, well-trained voices and were often accompanied by a full orchestra and small chorus of background voices.

This Tin Pan Alley tradition was still very much alive in the Pop songs of the early 1950s. Songs from Broadway shows and Hollywood movies conformed to the popular style and provided a wealth of material. Table 1.1 provides 10 representative examples of Top 50 songs from 1950 to 1954, with a brief description of each.

Notice that all but two of these songs are in a slow-to-moderate tempo, most are love-oriented, and several are pure **instrumentals**. Two of the songs deserve additional comment. Nat "King" Cole's "Too Young" is a rather rare example of an early 1950s Pop song that speaks directly to youth. Specifically, it commiserates with a person who is told that she or he is too young to really be in love. Johnnie Ray's "Cry" is unusual because of the vocal style, which, due to Ray's very emotive performance, foreshadows the shouting emotionality of some early rockers. Note also that only one of the artists, Nat "King" Cole, was black, though during this period there were a few other black Pop performers, including the Mills Brothers and the Ink Spots. It is also worthy of note that commercially successful Pop songs typically held their peak popularity for about two months. Usually, there was a period of rising popularity that lasted about four weeks and an equal period of declining popularity. Thus, a very popular hit song would exist on the charts for 16 to 20 weeks, sometimes as long as 25 weeks.

1.4.2: The Majors

Another facet of the early 1950s Pop market was its complete domination by a handful of large and powerful recording companies known as "the *majors*"—at the time, including RCA Victor, Columbia, Capitol, Mercury, and Decca. In 1954, of the 50 top-selling hit songs, 42 were produced by these five companies. Although the majors' biggest income came from Pop, they also produced classical, jazz, and some C&W recordings.

Nat "King" Cole, one of the successful artists with a major record label.

SOURCE: Eric Schwab/AFP/Getty Images

Role of the Majors in the Pop Music Market of the 1950s

The resources provided by a major record label greatly facilitated the success of signed artists. This simulation provides a detailed set of information about the many benefits these artists enjoyed.

These major companies held a large number of artists under contract. Their promotion and distribution systems were sophisticated and effective. Thus, when a new record was to be released, a nationwide promotional campaign was launched, and the product was distributed through a network of middlemen to retail outlets throughout the nation. Several of these major companies also produced phonographs (record players), were tied to radio and television networks and stations, and had subsidiary sheet music publishing operations. They truly seemed to have a stranglehold on the popular music industry.

The huge resources of these companies were used to create a very professional product. Professional composers and arrangers created the songs. The written arrangements were placed in the hands of professional, highly trained musicians. Typically, large musical forces were used, often including a full orchestra and small chorus. All of these musicians read their music; there was virtually no improvisation involved. The **lead singers** were most often also professionals; they read music and sang across a wide pitch range, with superb control and excellent voice quality.

The Pop market was national in its scope. Over a period of four to eight weeks, a song's popularity would peak in every regional market. Furthermore, it was not uncommon to have multiple versions of a hit song. Thus, if an artist on Columbia had commercial success with a particular song, the other majors would quickly produce a version of the same song, featuring one of their own artists.

Two final characteristics of considerable importance must be underscored. First, the Pop market was adult oriented. Although the 1950s were years of increasing affluence, the adults still controlled the money in the early years of the decade. The recording companies were controlled by adults, and the professional songwriters, performers, and consumers were adults. During this era, teens simply listened to and accepted their parents' music. There seemed to be no real alternative; in fact, most teens at the time saw nothing unusual about the situation.

Finally, the Pop market of the early 1950s was almost exclusively white. Again, the record company personnel, the songwriters, the performers, and the consumers were predominantly white. As with most aspects of the music industry, the basic reason had to do with the pocketbook. The adult whites were the primary consumers; thus, the recording industry aimed its product squarely at that market.

Neither the Pop consumer nor the recording industry could have anticipated that, within a few years, the music market would experience a total revolution—one that would reverse almost every one of the foregoing characteristics!

JOURNAL

Musical Elements in Pop Music

Choose three or four examples of Pop music discussed previously. Listen carefully to each song and, while the music is playing, write a description of the musical elements you can identify. Compare your responses across all of these songs. Are there some elements that are common to all? Are there other elements that are unique to a single recording? For much of the Pop music from this era, the general characteristics of the music remained relatively consistent. Why do you think that might have been the case?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

1.5: The Subculture Music Market

OBJECTIVE: Compare how each of the subculture music markets contributed to the formation of rock and roll

Each of the three markets associated with different subcultures in America can be identified by distinctive musical characteristics associated with the musical elements. For example, a typical Pop recording of the late 1940s or early 1950s consists of crooning vocals and a highly memorable melody (tune), serving as a precursor to rock ballads and soft rock. The lyrical focus is frequently on romantic love and the rhythms tend to be straight and uncomplicated, remaining largely in the background so that primary attention is focused on the melody and the words. Pop incorporated a vast array of instrumental resources (sometimes a full orchestra with a choir). From a business perspective, the major labels had mastered the distribution of recordings and artist promotion, so, once the music was recorded, they were able to capitalize on these networks to achieve maximum sales.

Like Pop, the focus of C&W was largely on the melodies and lyrics, though there were significant differences between these two styles as well. For example, C&W artists introduced the yodel, which was influential as a basis for the emotional "crack" in the voices of many later rock vocalists. Artists performing this style of music also introduced the fiddle and pedal steel, which, in addition to being a direct harbinger for rockabilly, influenced the slide guitar sound that emerged in southern rock of the 1970s. The rhythmic component of C&W music was, typically, very basic and its harmonies tended to be more basic than those of Pop, a simplicity that was adopted by much rock music that followed.

In contrast to the other two styles, the primary musical element, when considering R&B, was the driving rhythm that served as the foundation for most rock music to come. R&B artists often used a shouting, highly emotional vocal style that became a common feature of mainstream rock in the late 1950s. R&B performers were primarily black and worked with independent labels; regional success was achieved without the massive distribution channels available to the majors. Many R&B songs were based on the 12-bar blues, a musical form that can still be found in rock music today. Beyond the 12-bar blues, the musical form was often loose, allowing an element of freedom and improvisation in performance; this became highly important to soul music of the 1960s and beyond.

1.5.1: Country and Western

Unlike the huge Pop market, the C&W market had a relatively small and regionally well-defined audience. Although there were C&W radio stations, performers, and recording companies all over the nation, by the early 1950s, the South, Southwest, and Midwest had become the real centers of development for this style. The most influential C&W-oriented radio show was *The Grand Ole Opry*, broadcast from Nashville's WSM radio station. During the transition from the late 1940s into the early 1950s, "the *Opry*" attracted more and more C&W songwriters and performers to Nashville.

Led by the Acuff-Rose publishing house, publishers flooded to Nashville. The recording industry was not far behind. The C&W market had been served largely by small, independent record companies scattered throughout the South, Southwest, and Midwest. Each of these small companies (called *indies*; a shortened form of "independents") was a low-budget operation with a few artists under contract. Each specialized in a certain sound that it hoped would make its products recognizable and distinct. They usually produced singles, rather than albums, because that is what they and their consumers could afford. Unlike the major companies, the indies' distribution system was simple and unsophisticated—often just a guy in a pickup truck carrying a box of records from store to store. To promote a new record, they did not need to blanket the country as the majors did. They could hit a well-defined list of radio stations in a specific set of cities in a certain geographic region. The system worked well.

This is not to say that the majors had no interest in C&W. Indeed, the majors produced a number of prominent C&W acts, often on subsidiary labels. First Decca and then Capitol, Columbia, and RCA established Nashville offices. The popularity of cowboy western movies in the 1930s and 1940s and cowboy television shows in the late 1940s and early 1950s had promoted a national market for the singing cowboy (Gene Autry, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, and Tex Ritter). Their success opened the national Pop market to the C&W style. As a result, a number of major artists were able to escape the smaller C&W market and become national stars (Eddy Arnold and Hank Snow).

Like the Pop market, the C&W market consisted of white adults. Not generally an affluent market, what money did exist in the subculture was controlled by the adults.

CHARACTERISTICS OF C&W MUSIC C&W music represented both similarities and dissimilarities in comparison to Pop.

Characteristics of C&W Music in the Early 1950s

C&W of the early 1950s had a very distinctive sound in comparison to Pop and R&B. This module will provide detailed information about some of these unique characteristics.

Melodies and Lyrics—As with Pop, C&W's melodies and lyrics were of prime importance. The lyrics were often love-oriented (usually tales of unrequited love or a jilted lover). The harmonies were usually simpler than those found in Pop. The form of the typical C&W song was similar to that of Tin Pan Alley songs. C&W rhythm was simple and straightforward and usually more prominent than was typical of Pop. There were, generally, three or four beats per measure, with de-emphasized subdivisions, thus creating a very simple, predictable sound. There was typically a lead singer, often with a vocal trio or quartet in the background. The musicians often performed their own original material, although there was also a repertoire of traditional songs handed down from earlier generations. Generally, the music was not notated; arrangements were worked out in rehearsal and, once set, were performed according to that plan. When instrumental solo breaks occurred, the solos stayed very close to the established melody, rather than wandering into intricate flights of fancy, as might have occurred in jazz.

Timbre—Perhaps the most recognizable characteristic of C&W music in the early 1950s was its timbre, much of which emanated from two specific sources: the vocalist and the steel guitar. C&W vocalists often sang with a rather nasal quality. Instead of carefully intoning each melodic pitch, they would often slide from note to note. A number of male C&W singers developed the ability to *yodel*—a vocal device in which the male singer cracks his voice intentionally, allowing it to move into a female range (called *falsetto*).

The steel guitar entered the C&W picture from a rather unlikely source: Hawaii. After Hawaii became a U.S. territory in 1900, the mainland was swept with a fascination for the exotic island culture. By the 1920s, the steel guitar's popularity was set. In 1931, the first electric Hawaiian steel

guitar was introduced. Later developments included placing the instrument on a stand, adding a double-neck feature, and adding pedals. Being a rather conservative culture, the C&W music market was slow to include some of these innovations, especially electronic amplification.

Instruments—By the early 1950s, the typical C&W band included a vocalist, a vocal backup group, electric pedal steel guitar, piano, violin, acoustic bass (sometimes called stand-up bass or string bass), and acoustic or electric guitars. This leaves one obvious omission: drums. Although there were a few nonconformists, most traditional C&W bands avoided drums until the mid-1950s. The rhythm was set by the bass player, who slapped the strings on the accented beats, and by the guitar and piano, which reinforced all the beats.

1.5.2: Rhythm and Blues

The last of the three main tributaries leading to rock and roll, R&B, is also by far the most important. So direct is the line from R&B to early rock and roll that one may listen to certain R&B tunes recorded between 1945 and 1955 and be convinced that one is hearing 1958 vintage rock and roll.

Unlike either the Pop or the C&W market, R&B's performers and consumers were black. The R&B market was served, almost exclusively, by small, independent record companies—indies—and there were many of them, most owned and administered by whites.

Like C&W, R&B had a limited but well-defined audience. The basic center of R&B's development was the South; however, as the black population spread throughout the Southwest, the Midwest, and into major metropolitan centers across the United States, R&B went along. Thus, although most R&B singers traced their roots back to New Orleans, the Mississippi Delta, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and Florida, by the 1930s and 1940s, many had relocated to other parts of the country. The small, R&B indies were located where there was talent and a market; Chicago, New York City, and Los Angeles became three leading centers for R&B recording. Many labels were formed in the late 1940s and went on to have considerable impact in the 1950s: notably, Atlantic (New York), Chess (Chicago), Specialty (Los Angeles), and Imperial (Los Angeles). The records produced by these and other indies for the R&B market served only their well-defined subpopulation of consumers. They rarely, if ever, expected sales in either the Pop or C&W markets, and, conversely, they expected no competition in their market from Pop or C&W records.

CHARACTERISTICS OF R&B MUSIC R&B paved the way for rock and roll, providing many of the signature musical characteristics that continued as part of the mainstream rock sound for decades to come.

Characteristics of R&B Music

Of the three primary markets preceding the emergence of rock and roll, R&B was by far the strongest influence on the mainstream rock style. Here you will learn about some of the characteristics that set R&B apart from Pop, C&W, and other musical styles of the period.

Musical Scheme—R&B was quite different from Pop and C&W. A large percentage of R&B songs were based on a set musical scheme known as the **12-bar blues**, introduced in the next Musical Close-Up. The music was rarely notated; as with C&W, it was usually worked out in rehearsal and then performed according to a loosely predetermined plan. Although it did not approach the melodic and harmonic complexity of jazz of the same period, R&B improvisation allowed for considerable freedom and spontaneous invention. Although some traditional songs were passed from generation to generation, most R&B songs were originals created by the performer. Many expressed personal sentiments related to love, jobs, hard knocks, and general philosophies of life.

Instruments—A typical R&B combo might consist of some or all of the following instruments: guitars (electric or acoustic or both), bass (acoustic), piano, drums, saxophone, and harmonica.

Melody—As its name implies, R&B was characterized by a hard-driving, prominent rhythm. The harmonies are those of the 12-bar blues: just three basic chords, with occasional variations. Although the words were important, the melody got minimal creative attention, generally seeming to be little more than a vehicle to carry the lyrics. In fact, there is great similarity among blues melodies, only partially because they usually conformed to the structure of the 12-bar blues and incorporated the notes of the blues scale.

Rhythm—The power of R&B resided in the strong, insistent rhythm, the personally expressive lyrics, and the vocal performance style (which was often of the shouting variety). Some outstanding R&B performers from earlier decades had a lasting impact on later versions of R&B and rock and roll in general. Listening to many of these stars, one can hear elements of 1950s rock and roll up to three decades preceding Elvis's release of "Heartbreak Hotel." For example, Memphis Slim's "All by Myself" hints at the later style of Fats Domino. In "Roll 'em Pete," by Joe Turner and Pete Johnson, one can hear the beginnings of the 1950s rock piano style and harbingers of "Bony Moronie" (Larry Williams, with a later version by John Lennon). In Elmore James's "Sunnyland," one hears hints of Chuck Berry's guitar style. And in Otis Spann's "Bloody Murder," there are fragments of bass lines that are exactly replicated in 1950s rock and roll. Although Pop and C&W played their respective roles in the creation of rock, it was R&B and its almost exclusively black performers that led most directly and forcefully into rock and roll.

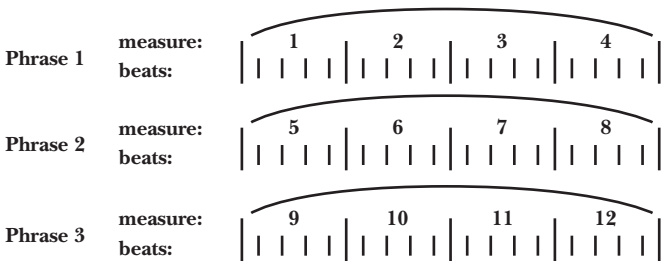
Table 1.2 Some Classic 12-Bar Blues

Title	Artist	Date of Peak Popularity	Comments
"Careless Love"	Lonnie Johnson	1900s to today	A classic traditional blues that has been recorded by hundreds of artists
"St. Louis Blues"	W. C. Handy, composer; Bessie Smith, performer	Recorded 1925	One of the most popular of the urban blues that helped establish the 12-bar format
"Blue Yodel #1 (T's for Texas)"	Jimmie Rodgers	Recorded 1927	Country blues standard that features Rodgers' famous "blue yodel"
"Hootchie Cootchie Man"	Muddy Waters	Recorded 1954	Classic (electric) urban blues from the Chicago blues master
"Crossroads"	Written by Robert Johnson; performed by Cream	Recorded 1968	One of the classic country blues that has become a rock standard

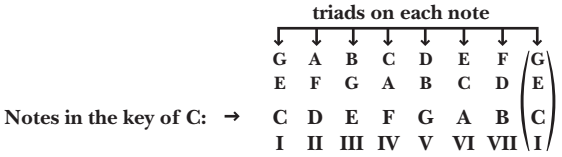
MUSICAL CLOSE-UP ON THE 12-BAR BLUES The term *blues* is used many different ways in music. Various types of songs—urban blues, rural blues, country blues, jump blues, talkin' blues, rhythm and blues—share an association with the more general blues style. Originally, at least in terms of musical form, the blues had a specific meaning. Much of the music of the early blues singers and R&B artists followed a similar musical scheme. Specifically, three or four common patterns evolved using 8-, 12-, or 16-measure forms, with a consistent use of three basic chords. Over the years, one of these forms came to be favored: the 12-bar blues (see Table 1.2).

By the late 1920s, when musicians referred to the blues progression, they meant this standard form. This form became the basis for most boogie-woogie jazz of the 1930s, a large percentage of R&B of the 1930s and 1940s, and much of the **upbeat** rock and roll of the 1950s. Although used less frequently, it still appeared occasionally in the rock of the 1960s and beyond. For any one musical formula to be so durable and frequently present, it must have had considerable appeal to performers and listeners alike. It is so essential that we must study it more closely.

The Basic Musical Scheme of 12-Bar Blues

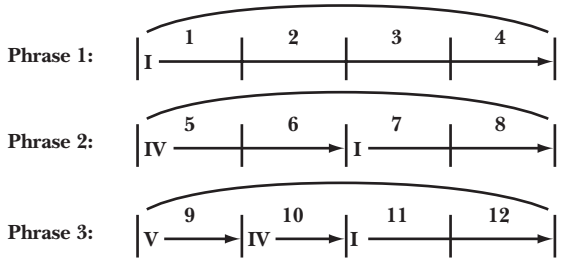


As any rock fan knows, music has beats. These are simply rhythmic pulses put into the music by the composer or performer and heard and felt by the listener. Musicians group these beats into units called *measures*, or *bars*. One blues chorus consists of 48 beats. Because the beats are usually grouped into measures of four beats each, there are 12 measures in a standard blues song; one time through this 12-bar progression is often referred to as a "chorus." A single blues chorus is comparable to a sentence in English. As with most sentences, our 12-bar "sentence" divides into smaller units called "phrases," a term common to both music and language. In the standard 12-bar blues, each phrase is four bars long. In music, we indicate phrases by large, curving lines over the measures, as shown in the example.

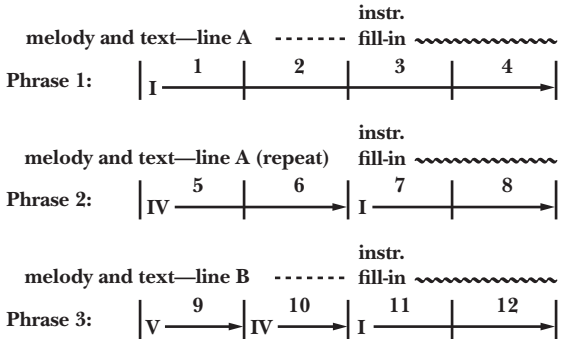


Recall that a key is like a family of seven different notes, each of which can serve as the foundation of its own triad (three-note chord). The triads in the key of C are shown in the example.

Listen and watch the animation for this music example by clicking the play button in the Revel course.

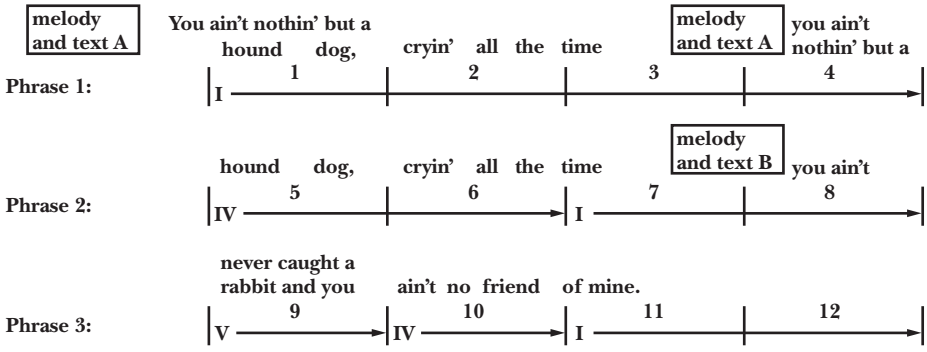


For ease of reference, we can represent these chords using Roman numerals. For the basic 12-bar blues, we can concern ourselves with only three of these chords: I, IV, and V. These three chords are distributed in the 12-bar blues form as shown in the musical phrases above.



Now let us add the melody and lyrics. The words used in a 12-bar blues are usually in the form of a couplet—that is, two lines that rhyme. At this point, you may perceive a potential problem. We have two rhyming lines of text, but three phrases of music. Something must give! The blues singer's solution is to repeat the first line of the couplet, thus creating an AAB scheme. The melody of the first phrase is also repeated for the second phrase, sometimes with a slight variation to accommodate the change in harmony (notice that the chords are not identical for the two phrases). The second line of the couplet is, therefore, delayed until the third phrase of the music; the melody carrying this second line of the couplet is usually different from the melody used in the first two phrases.

In the traditional 12-bar blues, each line of text consumes about half the musical phrase (about two measures). The last two measures of each phrase are filled in by the instrumentalists.



Now let us apply this scheme to an actual rock and roll record. Listen to Elvis Presley's version of "Hound Dog." Refer to the above musical example.

Elvis cheats a little by beginning each line of the text a little before the downbeat of the phrase, but, other than that, this song follows the basic 12-bar blues scheme nicely. You can actually count along by enunciating each beat ("1, 2, 3, 4"), keeping track of which measure you are in by counting the measure numbers on each downbeat: **1**-2-3-4, **2**-2-3-4, **3**-2-3-4, **4**-2-3-4, and so on. Listen several times until you really begin to feel the form; this requires repeated listening, as most listeners will not "get it" the first or second time through. During one listening, focus on the background singers. They are clearly singing the notes of the I, IV, and V chords, so this will help you hear the chord changes at the appropriate moments. As you proceed through this text, you will find that repeated listening is an absolutely essential technique you will need to utilize, since—even in the simplest, most basic styles of music—it is impossible to perceive every important aspect of a musical recording in a single pass. As the music becomes more complex, even more "listenings" may be required.

This basic 12-bar blues form has been used for thousands of songs for well over a century. Although there are many examples that follow our 12-bar blues scheme perfectly, there are many more that modify one or more aspects of this oft-used musical form. Some

performers have changed some of the chords; others have eliminated the instrumental accompaniment for a few measures, while still others have varied the melodic and textual schemes. There are almost as many variations of the blues form as there are songs and performers. Yet, the basic 12-bar blues comes through. It is a very resilient feature and one that remains a fundamental aspect of R&B and early rock and roll.

The serviceability of the 12-bar blues is truly remarkable. If no singer is present, instrumentalists can still improvise over a 12-bar blues. All any musician needs to say to another is "Let's do a blues in B-flat," and, after someone counts off four beats to set the tempo, off they go! The basic scheme is adaptable to any style of rock and roll, jazz, C&W, and, of course, R&B. There are even examples of classical uses of this basic scheme.

Just in case you think the previous paragraphs describe one of the briefest songs in history—only 12 measures long—understand that the 12-bar chorus is repeated any number of times. If it is a vocal blues, the text normally changes with each chorus. Some jazz recordings repeat the chorus 40 to 50 times. With each chorus, the instrumentalist who has the lead improvises on a new musical idea, thus providing variety and interest to what might otherwise be a rather boring and repetitive musical presentation.

This musical form has enjoyed continuing use throughout the history of rock and roll, including Led Zeppelin's "Lemon Song," Frank Zappa's "Directly From My Heart to You," and Prince's "Delirious."

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Listening for the 12-Bar Blues Form in Contemporary Music

Listen to several of the R&B examples provided in this chapter that are based on the 12-bar blues form so that you can familiarize yourself with the typical 12-measure form and the AAB–lyrical structure. Then, listen to a dozen of your current favorite recordings. Do any of them sound like they might also be based on the 12-bar blues or incorporate elements of that sound? Feel free to discuss this with some of your classmates to see whether, together, you can identify some contemporary examples. After completing this process, take time to write one or two paragraphs about the experience. Feel free to share both positive experiences as well as aspects that you found challenging. As you proceed through this text, you will learn to use your ears more analytically and effectively than most other listeners who simply continue to let the sound wash over them.

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

Summary: The Roots of Rock

You have now had the opportunity to learn about the three primary musical styles—along with artists representing each—that led to the emergence of rock and roll. The purpose of this next section is to review some of the most important knowledge you have gained so far.

Take Note: The Roots of Rock

- *How did key trends and subgroups in 1950s society influence the development of rock and roll?*—The economic prosperity and relative good times of the 1950s led popular music to focus on what was comfortable, pleasant, and appropriate; excess was avoided. Outside of white, middle-class America, however, there were distinct differences. Blacks were continuing their long struggle for civil rights; segregated from white society, they developed their own musical style: R&B. Another subculture was identified with C&W music, primarily the whites of the rural South.
- *What forces in popular music shaped the music that was heard before rock was popular?*—During the decades preceding the emergence of rock and roll, Tin Pan Alley had developed into the center of popular music creation. Songs were written by professional songwriters, with inoffensive and noncontroversial lyrics. Melodies were easy to remember and were designed to appeal to a mass audience. The music business was dominated by a handful of recording companies called the major labels, or "the majors." The goal was to create a very professional product that would be highly profitable.
- *What was the impact of C&W on popular music?*—C&W was a relatively small, regional style of music that appealed primarily to a southern, white audience. Like R&B, C&W was primarily recorded by indies (independent record companies) that catered to this market. C&W music reveals both similarities and dissimilarities in comparison to Pop. Like Pop, melodies and lyrics were of prime importance. However, the distinctive nasal vocal singing style and the use of the fiddle (essentially, a violin played in a different style) and steel guitar as accompaniment instruments set C&W music apart.
- *What were the primary instruments used by early rock pioneers?*—The typical 1950s rock and roll band consisted of four to six players. The usual instrumentation included drums, acoustic bass, two electric guitars (one

rhythm and one lead), acoustic piano, and saxophone (most often, either alto or tenor).

- *How was R&B different from C&W and Pop?*—Like C&W, R&B appealed to a specific audience; in this case, urban black listeners. However, unlike Pop and C&W, R&B songs generally followed a format known as the 12-bar blues and were characterized by a hard-driving, prominent rhythm designed for dancing. The power of R&B resided in the strong, insistent rhythm; the personally expressive lyrics; and the vocal performance style (often a shouting style).
- *What was the 12-bar blues, and why is this form important in the history of rock?*—The 12-bar blues form developed from traditional blues styles. As it became standardized, it consisted of a common set of three chords played across the 12 measures with lyrics for each stanza consisting of three phrases: the first phrase was repeated to form an "AAB" lyrical pattern. This musical form served as the basis for much R&B and early rock music.

SHARED WRITING

Learning to Express Your Musical Preference

Select one of the three musical styles leading to rock and roll (Pop, C&W, or R&B) that you like best and listen carefully to several of the musical examples presented to represent that style. Using the musical vocabulary you are beginning to develop, describe what it is that you like about this music. Be very specific; don't settle for vague statements, such as "I like the melody." Instead, focus on what it is specifically *about the melody* that you like, and describe it in as much detail as you are able. (This is difficult in the beginning, but, as with most things, becomes much easier and more natural with practice.)

Once you have completed this individual assignment, review three to five of the responses to this assignment submitted by fellow students. Did you provide a greater or lesser level of detail in your response? Did you utilize a sufficient amount of your musical vocabulary to communicate in a way that clearly and accurately describes the musical sound? What, if anything, would you change about your initial response after reviewing these responses by other students?

▶ A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post

0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 2
The Emergence of Rock and Roll

Learning Objectives

2.1 Explain the factors that led to the emergence of rock and roll

2.2 Evaluate the impact of Elvis Presley in the early development of rock and roll

2.3 Distinguish between the three basic trends of rock and roll

2.4 Identify the rhythmic elements in early rock

With the exciting emergence of rock and roll in the mid-1950s resulting from the convergence of the Pop, country and western (C&W), and rhythm and blues (R&B) markets that preceded it, it is now time to take a close look at some of the earliest and most influential developments during this period. We will review the impact of changes in the music industry (e.g., major labels vs. independent labels, and crossovers vs. covers) as well as some of the most important artists who proved to be essential leaders, propelling this new form of popular music forward and initiating a musical revolution few could have imagined.

2.1: A New Giant on the Musical Scene

OBJECTIVE: Explain the factors that led to the emergence of rock and roll

Pop, C&W, and R&B coexisted in the early 1950s as three separate and distinct markets, as if separated by tall brick walls. In a short, three-year period (roughly 1954 to 1956), those walls came tumbling down. What emerged from the ruins was a new giant on the musical scene: rock and roll.

2.1.1: Crossovers and Cover Versions

In order to develop a full understanding of this period during which rock and roll emerged, we must comprehend the related phenomena of **crossovers**.

Alternate Paths to Musical Popularity

While there are numerous examples of hit songs that were intended for a specific audience and succeeded in just the manner anticipated, there are also alternative—and relatively unexpected—paths to a similar level of success. Two possible paths are described in this section.

Crossovers—*Crossovers* were records that originated in one market but succeeded in another. Although there had been a few crossover hits before the 1950s, they became more frequent in the early 1950s and, most often, were R&B songs reaching the lower end of the Pop chart. Among the early crossover hits were "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" (Lloyd Price), "Gee" (the Crows), and "Earth Angel" (the Penguins). "Cryin' in the Chapel" (the Orioles) is a particularly good example because in July 1953, while holding the top position in the R&B market, it also climbed to number 11 on the Pop chart, thus narrowly missing the Top 10.

Covers—Observing the new interest in crossover R&B, the major companies moved quickly to produce their own popularized versions of R&B originals. These were called *cover versions*, or *covers*; that is, a subsequent version of an original song, almost always recorded by a different artist and often by another record company. Of course, multiple versions of hits were common within the Pop market long before the 1950s. Much has been written about white artists covering the songs of black musicians, but in reality, the practice worked both ways. For example, Doris Day's

Pop hit "Secret Love" was covered by the Moonglows, and "Cryin' in the Chapel" was originally a C&W ballad before being covered by the Orioles, who in turn were covered by artists creating at least five additional versions. What was new about the cover versions of 1954 was that the major companies were covering R&B originals. These Pop covers usually equaled or exceeded the sales of the original hits, and they sometimes appeared on the charts simultaneously. For example, the Penguins' "Earth Angel" reached number 8 on the R&B chart but was surpassed by the Crewcuts' version, which reached number 3 on the much more lucrative Pop chart. Sometimes, both the original version and the Pop cover version coexisted on the Pop chart; a good example is "Ain't That a Shame"—original version by Fats Domino, cover version by Pat Boone. Some of the professional composers for the Pop market also created their own originals in a style similar to the new R&B cover sound. Thus, Eddie Fisher, a Pop singer, sang "Dungaree Doll," and Kay Starr recorded "Rock and Roll Waltz," both of which contained musical elements that were similar to the R&B style but were songs created specifically for these artists by highly trained, professional composers.

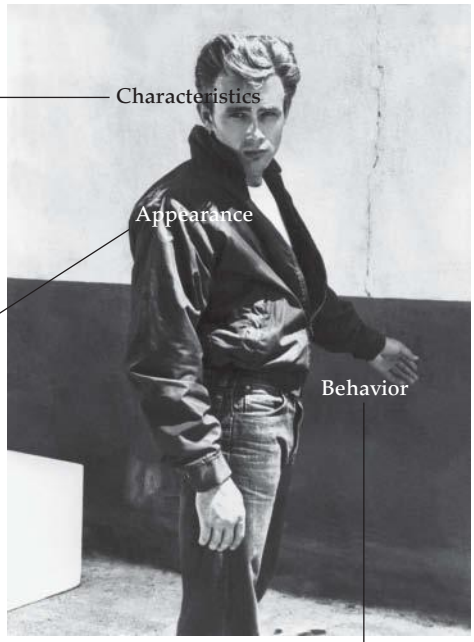
2.1.2: Youth Culture

To say that 1954 and 1955 were years of turmoil and confusion in the Pop music industry would be a considerable understatement. The crossover sales, the R&B cover versions, and the Pop "sound-alikes" reflected an important new phenomenon: the emergence of a distinct youth culture.

Previously, the entertainment industry had been primarily the province of adults, who were the primary customers for entertainment; in the mid- and late 1950s, some of that money gradually flowed down into the pockets of the youth. Movies appeared that were aimed at a teenage audience; for example, *Rebel Without a Cause* (starring James Dean) and *Blackboard Jungle* (starring Sidney Poitier and Glenn Ford). If, as psychologists tell us, youth is naturally a time of rebellion, the typical 1955 young person had a problem: What to rebel against? In *Rebel Without a Cause,* Dean portrayed an angry teenager who has no real targets for his rebellious feelings. In *Blackboard Jungle,* the teenagers strike out at whatever is around: parents, the educational system (teachers), and each other.

Rebellious Teenager

Would you identify the person in this photo as a rebellious teenager?



An image began to form of the rebellious teenager: sullen, brooding, and rebelling against his environment, often with little justification.

The model was the so-called juvenile delinquent—black leather jacket, shirt open, collar upturned, hair slicked back into a ducktail, long sideburns, spit curl in front, and a permanent sneer.

A "tough guy" and a "swinging chick"—cool, but ready to lash out at any moment.

SOURCE: AF archive/Alamy Stock Photo

Was Haley an Ideal Early Rock and Roll Icon?

As an early innovator, Bill Haley was a critically important part of the initial period of rock and roll.

Haley admired R&B music. Even when playing typical C&W jobs, he and his band would slip in the occasional R&B song in a C&W style to avoid offending his patrons. After changing his group's name to the Comets, Haley made a serious attempt to achieve national attention with his unique combination of R&B and C&W. In 1952, he released "Crazy, Man, Crazy," followed in 1954 by "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" (a cover of an original R&B hit by Joe Turner). But rock history was made that same year when Haley released his version of an R&B hit, "Rock Around the Clock" (originally recorded by Sonny Dae). Only mildly successful upon its initial release, its association with the popular movie *Blackboard Jungle* took it to the top of the Pop chart in 1955.

With the huge success of "Rock Around the Clock," the walls between Pop, C&W, and R&B began to crumble. Here was a white C&W band singing their version of an R&B song and seeing that song move up the Pop chart until it peaked at number 1 in July 1955. The song held that position for two months, and, according to *Cash Box* magazine, became the top-selling record in 1955. Even though Haley's "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" (1954) eventually sold over one million copies and was among the Top 5 for nearly five months, it was "Rock Around the Clock" that had the most dramatic impact on the nation's consciousness. Haley followed with "Dim, Dim the Lights" (1955), which crossed over to appear on the R&B chart, a particularly unusual phenomenon because so-called white records rarely appeared on the R&B chart.

Bill Haley and the Comets performing in London in 1957.

SOURCE: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

In that crucial year of 1955, Haley and his Comets seemed to represent the raucous new style called rock and roll. His popularity continued into 1956 (and beyond) with his movie *Rock Around the Clock* (an early prototype of the teen-rock film genre that remained popular throughout the twentieth century) and several more hits, including "See You Later, Alligator," "Corrine, Corrina," and "Green Door." But Haley simply was not the right individual to personify the continuing development of the new youth-oriented rock and roll. Haley was nearly 40 years old, with a rather round, innocent baby face and a receding hairline (in spite of his 1950s-style spit curl in front). His C&W background was all too evident.

A new figure was needed to be the front man for rock and roll: someone younger, someone who could project a combination of raw power and slightly menacing rebellion. As often happens, the right person appeared in the right place at the right time.

No longer were youth content to await the passage of time until they were admitted to adult society. They coalesced into a society of their own and increasingly identified with their own movies, role models, dress code, slang, hairstyles, behavior, and, of course, music.

What music? That question was answered best by the movie *Blackboard Jungle*, which featured in its opening credits a Bill Haley song called "Rock Around the Clock." This song firmly connected the new youth culture with rock and roll, and, as a result, Bill Haley came to symbolize the emergence of this new musical sound.

2.1.3: Bill Haley and the Comets

Bill Haley was born in Detroit in 1927, and his musical career swept across the three music markets (Pop, C&W, R&B), thus encapsulating the musical integration that occurred within rock and roll as a **genre** in the mid-1950s. Haley's primary early identification was with C&W. His band originally was called the Saddlemen, and it consisted of the usual C&W instrumentation (including steel guitar), adding a drum set and saxophone from the R&B tradition.

JOURNAL

Iconic Rock and Roll Performer

Now that you have learned more about Bill Haley, who is another artist from this same period who you would consider an iconic rock and roll performer? What specific characteristics, musical elements, and/or successes lead you to this conclusion?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

2.2: Elvis Presley

OBJECTIVE: Evaluate the impact of Elvis Presley in the early development of rock and roll

Elvis Presley was a unique, central figure in the early development of rock and roll. He popularized the new style, disseminating it throughout society in a way few could have accomplished. It is probably not too great an overstatement

to suggest that without Presley, rock might well have proven to be the musical fad its detractors claimed it to be, falling into the same category as the hula hoop and the Davy Crockett raccoon skin cap—like many sensations of American culture that consume our attention and then disappear into the realm of nostalgia.

2.2.1: Presley's Life and Career

Elvis Aron Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, in 1935. During a period when the United States was a racially segregated nation (especially in the Deep South), it is hard to imagine how black and white cultures could have ever mixed. But in southern white society, those at the very bottom of the socioeconomic scale were labeled "poor white trash" and were considered to have a status equivalent to blacks. This was more than simply an abstract social stratification; it was a reality. The poorest whites lived "on the other side of the tracks" in many southern towns, often alongside blacks.

As a result, Elvis was in a position to absorb a wide variety of musical influences, including R&B, white and black gospel, C&W, bluegrass, western swing, and Pop. From the radio that brought the young Elvis both Pop music and various forms of C&W, and from his living circumstances that brought him the R&B and gospel sounds, the musical Elvis became, in effect, racially integrated.

The Presley family's economic fortunes did not improve significantly after their move to Memphis in 1948. They lived in a federally funded housing project, and Elvis attended a high school with a population drawn from predominantly lower-income neighborhoods. Naturally surrounded by white musical influences (Pop and C&W), Elvis sought out the black musical sounds with which he had become familiar in Tupelo, reportedly hanging out around the Beale Street area, a hotbed for black music.

Elvis's high school years seem to have passed rather unremarkably. He was merely an average student; he was not a member of the popular "in crowd." He just seemed different. Elvis crossed the lines of racial identity. He wore loud and outrageous clothes. He liked and sang black music. He dressed like a *hood*, wearing black leather jackets, open shirts, and upturned collars. He wore long sideburns, with his hair greased back into a ducktail. Thus, his image was not that of the typical mid-1950s, white, middle-class teenager, but a combination of black and lower-class white. His one point of popularity during high school was his singing. His peers enjoyed his musical performances, such as the one at the 1952 school variety show.

Shortly after his graduation in 1953, Presley went to a small local recording company called the Memphis Recording Service to make a record as a gift for his mother. Sam Phillips, its owner, was not present at this first recording session, but his secretary, Marion Keisker, was. She brought Presley's unique musical style to Phillips's attention when he returned.

PRESLEY'S FIRST RECORDING CONTRACT Phillips had recorded a number of black artists in the R&B style. He also enjoyed some success in the C&W market. Phillips is said to have believed that if he could find a white artist who could perform black music with true authenticity, he could make a billion dollars (Hopkins 1971, 56). When he heard Presley's tapes, he knew he had his man. Presley signed a contract with Phillips's label Sun Records in July 1954.

Elvis released five singles on the Sun label between mid-1954 and the end of 1955. The first Sun release underscores the biracial nature of rock and roll's roots and its soon-to-be most famous practitioner. On one side of the single was "That's All Right (Mama)," an R&B song by Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup. On the flip side was "Blue Moon of Kentucky," a C&W standard by Bill Monroe. Backed by Scotty Moore (guitar) and Bill Black (bass), Presley's first record became a regional hit, and he eventually sold about 20,000 copies of this original release. Providing further evidence of the segregation in American society at the time, some white radio stations refused to play Elvis's early releases because they assumed he was of mixed race.

By the time of his fifth and final Sun release ("Mystery Train" and "I Forgot to Remember to Forget"), Presley had become an important figure in the C&W world and was named the number 1 "up and coming" C&W artist in a 1955 *Billboard* disc jockey poll. Over this same year and a half, his reputation also spread by means of personal appearances, primarily in the South and Southwest, the prime market for C&W music, and on the country-oriented *Louisiana Hayride* radio show.

However, Elvis was not the typical C&W act. His vocal and musical styles were heavily influenced by R&B and black gospel. His appearance was a mixture of black fashion and the teenage rebel look. His performance style included sexually suggestive body movements. Traditional C&W performers just did not do that. Whenever a *package show* (a show including a roster of artists) included Elvis, promoters noticed that the audience included more and more teenagers, especially females, who screamed and cried for Elvis. The other artists and their adult fans became increasingly irritated with this new phenomenon. They did not realize that they were witnessing the beginnings of a major musical, social, and economic revolution.

PRESLEY'S FIRST NATIONAL HIT Near the end of 1955 and the beginning of 1956, two related events occurred that would set Presley up to have a national impact on the

course of rock and roll. First, "Colonel" Tom Parker took over the personal management of Presley from his former manager. Parker was a shrewd industry insider who had previously built the successful careers of country singers Eddy Arnold and Hank Snow. In his first major move, he negotiated Presley's release from Sun Records, signing him with the industry giant RCA Victor. In retrospect, RCA's purchase of Elvis Presley for a total of $40,000 stands as one of the best business deals since the Louisiana Purchase, when land was purchased for about three cents an acre.

With the release of "Heartbreak Hotel" in 1956, Presley was off and running (as was rock and roll) with his first national hit (released by RCA Victor), selling more than one million copies in a matter of months. A subsequent release in July, "Hound Dog"/"Don't Be Cruel," sold over three million copies in one year. Sales orders for "Love Me Tender" exceeded one million before its release in August. In 1956, Presley's record sales surpassed the 10 million mark. Such figures were mind-boggling for the mid-1950s.

Another amazing phenomenon was that both sides of a Presley single often achieved popularity. Unlike most audio CDs, a vinyl record has two sides, so music is almost always recorded on both. Normally, the primary release (referred to as the *A-side)* is promoted for chart sales; the backup (or *B-side)* is, essentially, a bonus track to fill the second side of the vinyl record but not expected to attain significant popularity. In the case of Elvis's releases during this period, however, what was typical proved untrue. For example, "Hound Dog" and "Don't Be Cruel" (two sides of the same single) both reached number 1 on the Pop chart; "Don't" and "I Beg of You" both reached the Top 10, as did "One Night"/"I Got Stung" and "A Fool Such As I"/"I Need Your Love Tonight."

Throughout this period, Presley continued to cover C&W and R&B songs, thus continuing the biracial musicality that brought him to national prominence. Among his R&B covers were "Hound Dog" (Big Mama Thornton), "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" (Joe Turner), "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" (Lloyd Price), "Cryin' in the Chapel" (the Orioles), and a host of Little Richard's songs (including "Tutti Frutti," "Long Tall Sally," "Rip It Up," and "Ready Teddy"). There were also C&W covers (his most famous was "Blue Suede Shoes" by Carl Perkins) and even Pop covers (e.g., "Blue Moon" by Richard Rodgers, 1934). Elvis also had a number of crossover hits. "Heartbreak Hotel" reached number 1 on both Pop and C&W charts and number 3 on the R&B chart. "Don't Be Cruel," "Hound Dog," "Teddy Bear," "Jailhouse Rock," and "All Shook Up" hit number 1 on all three charts. "Love Me Tender" reached number 1 on the Pop, number 3 on the C&W, and number 4 on the R&B chart. Even as late as 1960, "Are You Lonesome Tonight?" appeared on all three charts.

PRESLEY'S INDUCTION INTO THE ARMY In 1958, Presley was inducted into the army. Two life-altering events occurred during Elvis's military service. First, his mother died during his first year of service. The effect on Elvis was profound, as he was deeply devoted to his mother. Second, in Germany, he met Priscilla Beaulieu, the teenage daughter of an army officer and the woman he would eventually marry.

On his return from Germany in 1960, Elvis's career resumed with a movie called *G.I. Blues*. It exploited his return and, of course, his identification as a soldier. This was not Elvis's first film. Beginning with *Love Me Tender* in 1956, Elvis made some 33 films over the next 16 years. Most were teen-rock exploitation films of little dramatic merit, although Elvis longed for more substantial dramatic roles.

Elvis Presley in *Love Me Tender*.

SOURCE: C20TH FOX/Ronald Grant Archive/Alamy Stock Photo

As rock and roll moved on to newer styles in the 1960s, the frequency and impact of Elvis's hits declined. He began to pull back from live performances in the early 1960s and from about 1962 to 1968 was rarely seen in person. He did produce several fine gospel albums during these years (*His Hand in Mine* [1960] and *How Great Thou Art* [1967]). He surrounded himself with a group of loyal good old boys known as the **Memphis Mafia** and retreated to his Memphis home, Graceland.

PRESLEY'S PERSONAL LIFE

Family, Health, and Career

In addition to his phenomenal artistic success, Elvis's personal circumstances and other factors also played significant roles in his life, both personal and professional.

Married Life—In 1967, Elvis married Priscilla Beaulieu; nine months later, a daughter (Lisa Marie) was born.

With a television special in December 1968 (aptly named the "Comeback Special"), Elvis returned to live performances. He retained a tremendous appeal, especially to audiences in the 30-year-old-plus age group (his original fans). Colonel Parker successfully marketed him in Las Vegas and on tour to major cities as well as at minor sites that rarely had the opportunity to host live concerts by big-name acts. A high point of Elvis's career came in 1973 with another television special, "Aloha from Hawaii," the first television show to be transmitted internationally by satellite; the audience was estimated to be one billion viewers.

Health Problems—However, Elvis's personal problems became more pressing in the 1970s. He developed a weight problem that detracted from his image as a rock sex symbol. When off the road, his weight would balloon to well over 200 pounds. Facing the beginning of a tour, he would go on a crash diet program, complete with pills, and lose 20–30 pounds in a matter of weeks. Following the tour, the weight returned. This extreme, up-and-down weight pattern and an increasing reliance on drugs wreaked havoc with his mental and physical health. His divorce from Priscilla in October 1973 and the associated loss of Lisa Marie's presence were devastating setbacks. His personal life and health continued to deteriorate throughout the 1970s. He died of heart-related problems in Memphis on August 16, 1977, at 42 years of age.

After his death, Elvis's recording of "My Way," a song written by Paul Anka and popularized by Frank Sinatra, was released and reached the Top 40. Since then, millions of Presley albums (some old, some elaborately repackaged) have been sold. Numerous books have been written about his life, and Graceland has become a major tourist attraction.

2.2.2: The Importance of Presley

Although rock's early influences are still hotly debated, many consider Elvis Presley to be the "King of Rock and Roll."

What Made Elvis Presley the King of Rock and Roll?

This status was earned as a result of the following:

He personified rock and roll.—Rock and roll developed as a biracial music, and Presley's musical style—more than anyone else's at the time—genuinely reflected those biracial influences. Perhaps the only other white artist to approach Presley's biracial style was Jerry Lee Lewis, but Lewis's short-lived career as a rock and roll artist [more about that later in this course] did not hold a candle to Presley's.

Elvis had unprecedented public appeal.—Elvis's multifaceted personality and musical versatility gave him an appeal beyond that of the typical rock and roll star. He was many things to many people: sexy, rebellious, God-fearing, patriotic, and respectful. Whether your musical tastes ran toward shouting rock and roll, softer rock, romantic ballads, hymns, gospel, country, patriotic anthems, social commentary, escapism, or tearjerkers, you could find an Elvis song to your liking. How could one person meet so many contradictory demands and still succeed? The music industry would love to know. It tried to create Elvis clones, but such attempts just did not work. He was truly unique.

Elvis was an overwhelming commercial success.—By the time of his death, at least 500 million copies of Presley records had been sold. It is estimated that over one billion Presley records have been sold worldwide (Guinness World Records), a number that will continue to grow. Over 150 albums and singles have been certified gold, platinum, or multiplatinum. "Heartbreak Hotel" returned to number 1 on the *Billboard* Hot Singles Sales chart in January 2006!

2.2.3: Elvis's Legacy

Elvis was a truly versatile performer who had a multifaceted appeal. Presley's critics argue that he began as a true rock and roller but disintegrated into a bland, somewhat pathetic Pop star, making no contributions to rock music after about 1960.

However, what is sometimes portrayed as a weakness may, in fact, be a strength. Presley assimilated the influence of many genres into his own musical style. Sometimes, his style was more of a unique mix; other times, he followed an existing style. As stated previously even his early hits included a shouting rock and roll song ("Hound Dog"), a sultry song ("Don't Be Cruel"), and a romantic Pop ballad ("Love Me Tender"). In spite of the movies and soundtracks of the 1960s, Elvis's original musical roots were still alive in him, as evidenced by his "Comeback Special" (NBC, 1968). Rejoined by members of his original group, and clad in black leather, he gave a powerful demonstration that rock and roll, raw and basic, was still alive and well within the King. His versatility and multifaceted appeal is what made him the most influential and successful proponent of rock and roll of his time. Had Presley stayed within a narrow style of so-called "real rock and roll," the new musical style might well have remained a musical subculture, like C&W, R&B, and gospel. Instead, largely because of Elvis's pivotal impact, rock and roll moved out of an identity as teen music to become the primary popular musical style of the second half of the twentieth century.

KEY EVENTS IN PRESLEY'S LIFE

In order to gain a better understanding of the trajectory of the life of an artist, it is important to know some of the most important dates associated with her or his personal and professional accomplishments, so that one can better understand the context of these events.

Time Stamp Date/Year	Time Stamp Content (Narrative)
1935	Elvis Aron Presley is born in Tupelo, Mississippi.
1948	Elvis moves with his family from Mississippi to Memphis, Tennessee.
1953	As a gift for his mother, Elvis makes his first recording at the Memphis Recording Service, a company owned by Sam Phillips.
1954	Elvis signs his first recording contract with Sun Records.
1955	Elvis is voted the number 1 "up and coming" C&W artist in a *Billboard* disc jockey poll.
Late 1955 and early 1956	Colonel Tom Parker becomes Elvis's personal manager and, after securing a release from Sun Records, signs him to a lucrative record contract with RCA Victor.
1956	Elvis stars in his first film, *Love Me Tender*.
1958	Elvis is inducted into the army.
1968	Elvis performs his "Comeback Special" after six years of relative seclusion beginning in 1962.
1973	A highlight of Elvis's later career, the "Aloha from Hawaii" television special, is transmitted internationally by satellite with an audience of one billion viewers!
August 16, 1977	Elvis died of heart-related problems, only 42 years old.

2.3: Three Basic Trends Emerge

OBJECTIVE: Distinguish between the three basic trends of rock and roll

As rock and roll developed in the 1950s, it began to break into different streams, or subgenres. Drawing on varied influences from Pop, C&W, and R&B, rock styles developed that emphasized one or more different aspects of these sources. Rock began to subdivide into three major streams: mainstream rock, rockabilly, and soft rock.

2.3.1: Mainstream Rock

As stated previously, of three primary ancestors (Pop, C&W, and R&B), R&B provided the heaviest influence on early rock and roll. In fact, some argue that rock and roll is essentially a newer, updated continuation of R&B, with other styles merely being offshoots of this main line of development.

Musical Characteristics Shared by R&B and Early Rock and Roll

Mainstream styles of 1950s rock and roll show a definite lineage back to R&B.

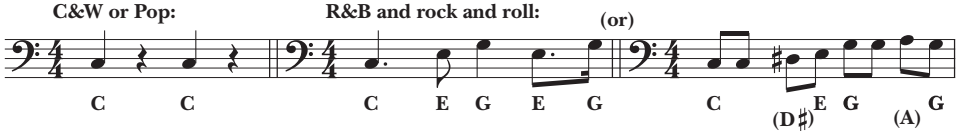
Reliance on the 12-Bar Blues Form—First, there was a heavy reliance on the 12-bar blues form. Many of the upbeat (fast), hard-driving 1950s rock songs were based on the 12-bar blues. Some were pure (adhering closely to all the aspects of the 12-bar blues pattern), whereas others modified one or more of the pattern's characteristics. For example, "Jailhouse Rock" expands to a 16-bar blues by extending the first 4-measure phrase of the traditional 12-bar blues to 8 measures; several songs change the traditional lyric pattern, and a few move to a middle section not related to blues. But all use the basic 12-bar blues as a point of departure.

Vocal Performance Style—Another characteristic of R&B evident in hard-driving 1950s rock and roll songs is the vocal performance style. Just as there had been R&B shouters, there were rock and roll shouters. Perhaps the best example is Little Richard. There is a distinct difference in voice production when one changes from a pure tone to a shout. Try speaking your name loudly. Then really yell it. Feel the difference? The shout has a harder sound, usually with an unavoidable raspiness. Presley approaches the shouting style in "Jailhouse Rock," "Hard Headed Woman," and "Hound Dog." Not all rock singers shouted their songs; singers such as Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis simply belted them without shouting. And not all R&B singers were shouters. Some belted out a song with a strong, hard vocal style that stopped short of shouting.

Absence of Notation—Like R&B, most of 1950s mainstream rock was not notated. The lyrics, melody, and chords for one chorus might be sketched out for the performers, but, from there, the total arrangement was worked out without notation. Also, the instrumentation of the typical rock and roll band was similar to that of the old R&B band: guitar(s), piano, drums, and saxophone.

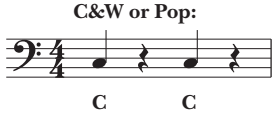
Another important characteristic of 1950s rock that was derived from earlier R&B was the bass line. R&B bass lines were more melodic than Pop and C&W ones. The purpose of most bass lines is to provide the bottom note of the harmony (the root). In much C&W and Pop, the required bass note (usually the root or the fifth tone of the chord) was played on each beat or every other beat. In R&B, however, there was typically a more active bass line, similar to the bass lines of boogie-woogie. Thus, the bass would provide not only the root of the chord but also devise a short melodic pattern from the notes of the chord (an *arpeggio*), sometimes with a few added pitches.

Bass Line—Many patterns were devised, adding to the overall rhythmic activity of the song. Listen to the bass part of some 1940s R&B (e.g., Otis Spann's "Bloody Murder") in the following slides and you can hear the predecessors of the bass lines of much 1950s rock.

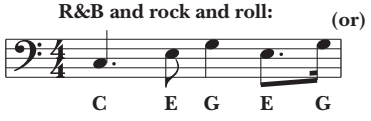


Music Example A

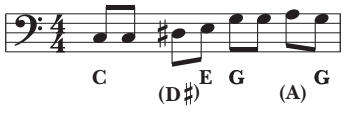
Bass Line #1—Click or tap the play button in the Revel course to watch a very simple bass line that was common to C&W and Pop. The repetitive nature of such a bass line serves to reinforce the root tone of each chord, providing a solid foundation upon which the sound of the other instruments can build.



Bass Line #2—Click or tap the play button in the Revel course to watch an interesting bass line with increased interest that might be found in R&B or rock. This more active bass line provides variety and a greater sense of energy, including other chord tones in addition to the root pitch.



Bass Line #3—Click or tap the play button in the Revel course to watch another active bass line that appears in some examples of R&B and rock. In addition to including chord tones beyond the root pitch, this one includes a chromatic note – outside the key (D#) – and an upper neighbor tone pattern (G-A-G) near the end of the measure.



Rhythmic Aspects—Finally, the rhythmic aspect of R&B carried over to the harder styles of early rock and roll. Unlike C&W and Pop, rhythm was one of the most prominent elements of R&B. The drummer did not just provide a quiet rhythmic structure or play a simple beat; he was an integral part of the music, equal to the other members of the band. The beats were heavy and strong, and they were also emphasized in the piano and guitar parts. In 1950s mainstream rock, the beat became faster, and the emphasis on the second and fourth beats (the *backbeat*) became stronger, often reinforced by handclaps.

Hard Vocal Style Songs

Elvis Presley
"Hound Dog"
"Hard Headed Woman"
"I Got Stung"
"Jailhouse Rock"
"(Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear"

Little Richard
"Lucille"
"Tutti Frutti"
"Long Tall Sally"
"Good Golly Miss Molly"
"Jenny, Jenny"

Chuck Berry
"School Days"
"Johnny B. Goode"

Bill Haley
"Rock Around the Clock"
"Shake, Rattle, and Roll"

Fats Domino
"Ain't That a Shame"

Buddy Holly
"Oh Boy"

Jerry Lee Lewis
"Whole Lot of Shakin' Going On"

Ray Charles
"What'd I Say"

Danny and the Juniors
"At the Hop"

2.3.2: Rockabilly

Although most of the leading performers of early mainstream rock were black, there were a few white mainstream rockers. This was particularly true when the white performer had grown up with a heavy dose of R&B (e.g., Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis). These white performers, usually southern, most often had a C&W background. Their combination of C&W characteristics and R&B-oriented mainstream rock became known as *rockabilly*. Generally, the effect was to lighten the hard-driving, more basic mainstream style. To some, rockabilly made rock more acceptable; to others, it seemed to dilute a "purer" style.

Bill Haley

SOURCE: David Hickes/Alamy Stock Photo

C&W, R&B, and Pop charts in 1956. Other companies quickly jumped on the rockabilly bandwagon: with Bill Haley already on its roster, Decca added Buddy Holly and the Johnny Burnette Trio, Capitol signed Gene Vincent ("Be-Bop-a-Lula"), Chess released "Susie Q" by Dale Hawkins, and Liberty countered with "Summertime Blues" by Eddie Cochran, a Presley look-alike.

Everly Brothers (Phil and Don)—One of the most influential rockabilly acts of the period was the Everly Brothers. Their parents were C&W musicians; the boys toured with them and appeared on their radio show. This experience allowed the brothers to absorb strong C&W influences, while evolving their own rockabilly sound. With Presley as a model, they created their own personal mixture of C&W and R&B, becoming immensely popular. Between 1957 and 1960, the Everly Brothers placed 11 hits in the Top 10, including four number 1 songs. Their "All I Have to Do Is Dream" (1958) was the only song by someone other than Presley to reach the number 1 position on the Pop, R&B, and C&W charts.

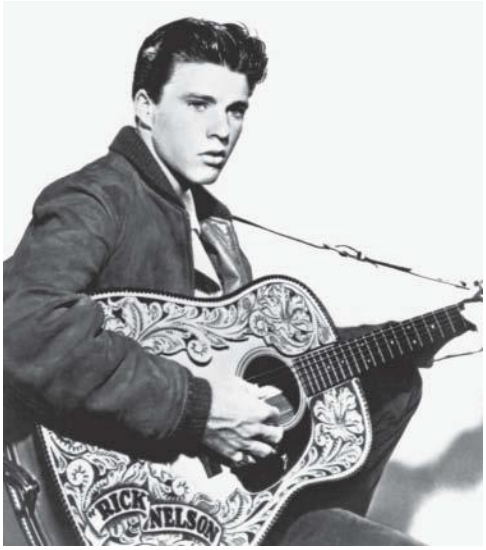
Early and Eminent Contributors to Rockabilly

As a primary form of early rock and roll, rockabilly holds a unique position due to its close association with C&W, from which many of its musical elements are derived.

Bill Haley and Sam Phillips—Bill Haley laid the foundation for rockabilly along with rock and roll when he took R&B material and infused it with a C&W sound. Nonetheless, the real center for the early development of rockabilly style was Sam Phillips's Sun Studios in Memphis. Presley's success encouraged many other southern white musicians to make the trek to Memphis in the hope of finding success with the new rockabilly sound. From approximately 1955 to 1959, Sun released recordings by Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, and a host of less significant artists. Perkins's 1955 national hit "Blue Suede Shoes" became a Top 10 hit on the

Phil (left) and Don Everly, c. 1958.

SOURCE: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo



Ricky Nelson, c. 1959.

SOURCE: Interfoto/Alamy Stock Photo

Ricky Nelson—One of the few non-southerners to be associated with rockabilly was Ricky Nelson. He and his brother appeared on the hit television show *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, in which their parents starred. Nelson developed a softer, Pop-oriented style of rockabilly and had a series of hits beginning in 1957 and continuing through 1972. The TV show provided a showcase for many of his hits and was an early use of this powerful medium to influence a teen, record-buying audience. Between 1957 and 1960, he placed 11 songs in the Top 10. Tragically, Nelson died in a plane crash in 1986.

MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ROCKABILLY The musical style of rockabilly is difficult to distinguish using precise terms. Rockabilly singers stopped short of the shouting style (sometimes emulating a crooning style in slower songs). They usually sang clearly and cleanly on pitch; the lyrics were enunciated distinctly. The instrumentation was close to that of the mainstream style, except there was less emphasis on saxophone, and acoustic guitars were used more often than electric guitars. Drums, not part of the traditional C&W sound, were added, reflecting the R&B influence. While electric bass was used by later rockabilly groups, the earliest groups used acoustic bass, upon which the bassist can slap the neck of the instrument between notes to add a percussive, often syncopated, rhythm.

Although some rockabilly songs are based, at least in part, on the 12-bar blues, most follow the 8-bar or 16-bar forms typical of C&W and Tin Pan Alley Pop songs. In some cases, the rockabilly rhythm approached the intensity of mainstream rock. More often, however, the beat was lighter, with less of the hard-driving, heavy beat of the R&B-influenced mainstream. Even so, to help identify rockabilly as a rock style, a clear and consistent backbeat on the second and fourth beats was often present. The boogie-oriented bass lines of mainstream rock were less frequent in rockabilly, except for the harder-driving examples.

Rockabilly provided a more acceptable alternative for those who were drawn to the new rock and roll style but were not quite ready to accept the mainstream sound. It offered the excitement and appeal of rock, without the raucous, less-refined musical style evident in much of the mainstream (and without its racial associations, which some found objectionable).

2.3.3: Soft Rock

From the beginning, there has been a vital market for a softer style of rock that combines elements of rock and Pop music. Many rock purists deny that soft rock is a legitimate style of rock. They see it as the illegitimate offspring of an unholy alliance between Pop and rock, dismissing it with such derisive phrases as schlock rock or schmaltz. These purists typically dismiss this style with a condescending sniff or an incredulous "You call that rock?!" In spite of this reaction, two facts are incontrovertible: (1) Much soft rock contains clearly identifiable elements of rock, and (2) this style has retained a broad and consistent appeal (market) from the beginning of rock to the present day.

From the beginning, rock music was dance music. Whether at the high school prom or the Friday "sock hop" in the school gym, teens liked to dance to their new music. But dancing for four hours to "Tutti Frutti" and other mainstream rock tunes would be monotonous, nerve-wracking, and physically exhausting. Teens in the 1950s liked to slow dance (or close dance). With sociosexual mores being far more conservative than they later became, slow dancing was a vital part of the developing romantic relationship. In those days, holding hands and long embraces were considered socially acceptable by most, if done under the guise of dancing. Many a relationship developed during the slow tunes played as the dance evening moved into its final hours.

Soft rock of the 1950s developed two rather distinct styles: (1) white soft rock developed by Elvis, Pat Boone, and the good-looking teen idols modeled after them and (2) black soft rock developed by the numerous vocal groups referred to now (but not at that time) as **doo-wop** groups. As with so many of the developments of rock, Elvis Presley established a model for the white soft rock style. From the beginning of his RCA output, Elvis recorded soft, slow ballads, such as "I Want You, I Need You, I Love You," "Love Me Tender," "Don't," "Loving You," and "Anyway You Want Me" (all released between 1956 and 1958). The softer Pop side of Elvis continued, and even increased, during the remainder of his career. Some of these songs are pure Pop, bearing no real relationship to rock; others, however, contain clearly identifiable elements of rock.

PAT BOONE Perhaps no one better exemplifies the softer, Pop-rock style of the 1950s than Pat Boone. He was a young, handsome, and talented singer whose clean-cut appearance, performance style, and lifestyle provided an alternative to the more "menacing" styles of rock. Boone's career began with his commercially successful covers of R&B and mainstream rock originals, notably "Ain't That a Shame" (Fats Domino) and "Tutti Frutti" and "Long Tall Sally" (Little Richard). Beyond the covers, Boone also recorded the original popular versions of some upbeat songs ("Why Baby Why" and "Wonderful Time Up There"), as well as some slow- to moderate-tempo songs ("Sugar Moon," "April Love," and "Love Letters in the Sand"). Many rock historians do not categorize Boone as a rock and roll singer; after all, he did not fit the desired image of the rebellious, countercultural rock star. However, if one listens objectively to

Pat Boone, c. 1959.

SOURCE: AF archive/Alamy Stock Photo

Other Performers of Soft Rock

Soft rock is a lighter style of rock and roll with a particularly close association with Pop music and Tin Pan Alley, from which many of its musical elements are derived.

If Elvis could include soft rock and pure Pop ballads in his repertoire, others could legitimately specialize in this field. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a large number of such performers achieved significance. Most were similar to Pat Boone and the softer side of Elvis: attractive, young, talented, and rather wholesome. This list of performers would include Paul Anka, Frankie Avalon, Bobby Rydell, Bobby Vee, Bobby Darin, Tommy Sands, and their female counterparts, Connie Francis and Brenda Lee (although the latter tended toward a soft form of rockabilly).

For the predecessors of black soft rock, we must look further back than Elvis Presley, into the 1940s and early 1950s, to groups such as the Mills Brothers and the Ink Spots. Black vocal ensembles of three to six singers were increasingly popular in the early 1950s. They usually included a particularly talented lead singer and a backup vocal ensemble that provided **close harmony**. To add rhythmic activity, the backup vocalists often sang rhythmic patterns using nonsense syllables. Although some were very simple ("doo-wah" and "doo-wop"), some became quite complex. Their acts were tightly choreographed so that the singers turned sideways, pivoted, kicked one foot, and tugged their shirt cuffs with coordinated precision. Groups such as the Ravens, the Orioles, and the Crows developed this style in the early 1950s. Landmark recordings that were representative include "Cryin' in the Chapel" (Orioles, 1953) and "Gee" (Crows, 1954).

In 1954, the Chords released "Sh-Boom," which reached number 9 on the Pop chart and number 2 on the R&B chart; a cover version by the Crew Cuts reached the number 1 position on the Pop chart and held that position for nine weeks. Further covers of "Sh-Boom" were recorded by Billy Williams, Sy Oliver, and country artist Bobby Williamson. The song also cracked the Top 20 in England. The popularity of the doo-wop sound was established. Also in 1954, the Penguins released "Earth Angel," which rose to number 8 nationally (number 1 on the R&B chart). The cover version by the Crew Cuts also achieved a number 8 ranking. By 1955, the floodgates were opened, and the "bird groups" (e.g., Crows, Falcons, Penguins, and Flamingos), "car groups" (e.g., Imperials, Impalas, El Dorados, Fleetwoods, and Edsels), and other doo-wop groups poured into the market. Most of these groups were "one-hit wonders," achieving one or two successful hits before disappearing. Few rock styles boast such a long list of one- or two-hit artists.

Notable exceptions to the one-hit syndrome were the Platters and the Coasters. The Platters, consisting of four men and one woman, released a formidable string of hits, including the first doo-wop song to achieve number 1 status on the Pop chart, "The Great Pretender." Other Platters' hits include "Only You," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," "My Prayer" (a cover of an earlier hit by the Ink Spots), "Twilight Time," and "The Magic Touch." In a very different way, the Coasters also defied the one-hit syndrome. Their hits included "Yakety Yak," "Charlie Brown," "Searchin'," Poison Ivy," and "Along Came Jones." Whereas the Platters sang songs of romantic love in beautiful harmony, with the talented solo voice of Tony Williams soaring over the top, the Coasters took a humorous approach to teen life with a less-polished sound and an emphasis on the spoken bass part (e.g., "Why's everybody always pickin' on me?" from "Charlie Brown").

The Platters

SOURCE: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

some of his performances (e.g., a national television performance of "Tutti Frutti"), one must admit that he did sing rock and roll. The vocal style is not as hard and raucous as Little Richard's, of course, but all the same, basic rock elements are present.

It is also true that many of Boone's recordings are in a pure Pop ballad style, derived from the Tin Pan Alley and Hollywood traditions, containing no pretense of rock. Boone has been criticized on the grounds that, through his cover versions, he capitalized on the original work of many black R&B artists. However, his recordings brought many of these songs to national prominence when, given the society and marketplace of the 1950s, they otherwise would likely have languished in obscurity.

JOURNAL

Describing Musical Preference

After reading about the three trends of early rock and roll (mainstream rock, rockabilly, and soft rock) and listening to representative examples, which of these trends do you like the best? Use your growing musical vocabulary to describe precisely the musical elements that factor positively into your decision.

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

2.4: Musical Close-Up of Rhythmic Elements in Early Rock and Roll

OBJECTIVE: Identify the rhythmic elements in early rock

Rhythm is perhaps the most basic of all of the musical elements because all sound must have a beginning, a duration, and an end—in other words, musical sound has a temporal existence. Rhythm constitutes the way in which musical sound is ordered in time.

Music psychologists believe that human beings respond naturally to the beat or rhythmic aspect of music because our own body is, in fact, a complex system of periodic vibrations and *beats* (pulses). Perhaps this is why, when we hear a strongly rhythmic piece of jazz or rock, we cannot resist tapping our feet, clapping our hands, moving our bodies, or dancing.

Although all musical styles have a rhythmic component, in some styles, the rhythm is more strongly perceived than in others. For example, in Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun,* the beat is very slow and is purposely de-emphasized. The music seems to float through time. In contrast, in Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog," the beat and rhythm are much more prominent.

Basic Observations about Rhythm

There are four basic observations to make about the rhythm in almost any piece of music. The terms defined here—**tempo**, **meter**, **backbeat**, and **subdivision**—will be extremely useful in discussions of various rock songs and styles.

How fast is the beat? The musical term for the speed of the beat is *tempo*. Elvis's "Hard Headed Woman" has a fast tempo; "Return to Sender" has a moderate tempo; "Love Me Tender" has a slow tempo. The number of beats per minute (bpm) can be measured with a device called a **metronome**. The below table shows some of Elvis's songs and their tempos.

How are the beats organized? As we saw in our discussion of the 12-bar blues, Pop musicians usually organize beats into groups of four. The technical term for this organizational grouping of beats is *meter*. Thus, quadruple meter is the organization of beats into groups of four; triple meter is the organization of beats into groups of three; duple meter is groups of two; quintuple meter, five; and so on. The vast majority of rock and roll is in quadruple meter; special note of exceptions will be made as they are referenced throughout this course. Recall from earlier that each grouping of beats is called a *measure* or bar. So if we speak of eight bars of quadruple meter, we are referring to a total of 32 beats, organized into eight groups (measures) of four (beats), or 8 × 4 = 32.

Elvis's Songs and Their Tempos

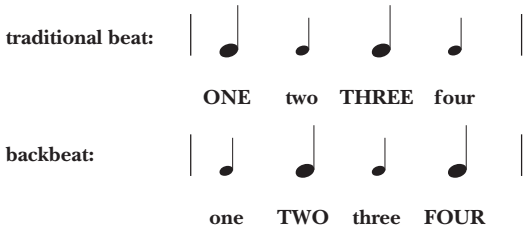
Song Title	Metronome Tempo
"Hard Headed Woman"	fast 195 bpm
"Long Tally Sally"	fast 192 bpm
"I Got Stung"	fast 190 bpm
"Hound Dog"	fast 180 bpm
"Don't Be Cruel"	moderately fast 172 bpm
"Jailhouse Rock"	moderately fast 162 bpm
"Return to Sender"	moderately 132 bpm
"Are You Lonesome Tonight?"	slow 75 bpm
"Love Me Tender"	slow 72 bpm

How strong are the beats? Most people can feel the beat in a rock piece and can synchronize with that beat by tapping their feet, snapping their fingers, or clapping their hands.

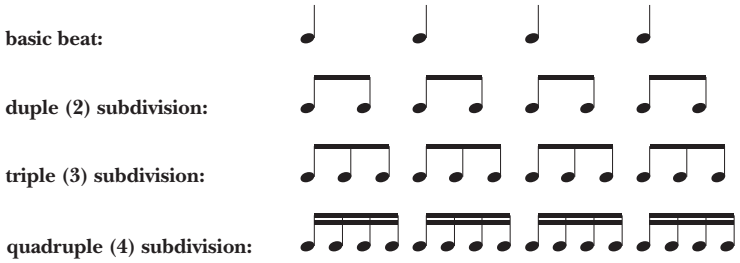
All the beats in a measure are not equally strong. Traditionally, the first beat (the downbeat) has been the strongest beat; the next strongest is the third beat; the second and fourth beats are typically relatively weak. However, many rock songs emphasize beats two and four, just the opposite of the traditional approach. When this occurs, the music is said to have a strong backbeat.

To develop an ability to distinguish the backbeat, listen carefully for the strong hits of the drummer on the snare drum, which occur with a high degree of predictability in most mainstream rock songs. Music psychologists have suggested that the intense rhythmic appeal of rock may be partially due to the backbeat, creating an implicit sense of tension because the *accent* (i.e., emphasis) is placed intentionally on what are more traditionally weak beats.

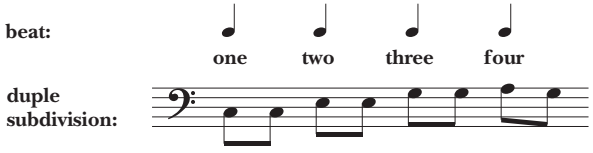
Some rock emphasizes all four beats equally. For example, listen to the opening section of Chicago's "Saturday in the Park." The piano's introductory measures emphasize all four beats equally; however, when the drummer enters, he **accents**, or emphasizes, beats two and four. Or listen to the Beatles' "Why Don't We Do It in the Road?"; again, the piano part emphasizes all four beats equally, but the drum part clearly accents beats two and four.



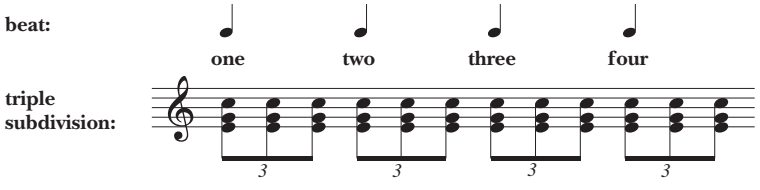
How are the beats subdivided? Rhythm would be a pretty simple matter if it consisted only of beats, but the real rhythmic interest (and resulting complexity) of most music is determined by what happens inside, or between, the beats. Each beat is usually subdivided into smaller parts. For our purposes, we shall concentrate on the **subdivision** of the beat into two, three, or four parts, though the reader should remain aware that there are even more complex possibilities:



Example of Duple Subdivision Faster rock and roll of the 1950s used a duple subdivision of the beat; the bass line of Elvis's "Jailhouse Rock" has a very clear duple subdivision of the beat.



Example of Triple Subdivision Slower, softer songs were more likely to have a triple subdivision of the beat (e.g., the Platters' "The Great Pretender" or the Flamingos' "I Only Have Eyes for You"). In these songs, notice especially the piano's repeating chords, clearly delineating the three subdivisions per beat:



Practice Yourself An interesting combination of the backbeat and a duple subdivision is found in some 1950s (and later) rock songs. Try the following exercise to make your own rock beat:

Listen to "Sweet Nothings" by Brenda Lee or "Short Shorts" by the Royal Teens for examples of this combination.

Throughout the text, I will frequently refer to the rhythmic characteristics of various rock styles and certain rock pieces, referring to the tempo, the meter, the backbeat, or the subdivision pattern. The purpose of this brief introduction to rhythm in rock music is to provide a basis for understanding these later comments.

BECOME AN ACTIVE LISTENER

The ability to apply the concepts you are learning in this course to novel listening examples is a critical component of this course. These sections provide opportunities for you to practice your developing skills.

Find examples of these musical elements in the music that you enjoy:

1. fast, moderate, and slow tempos
2. a backbeat
3. subdivisions of the beat: duple, triple, and a combination of the backbeat and a duple subdivision

Review your responses below.

Summary: The Emergence of Rock and Roll

The period between 1954 and 1956 proved to be seminal to the evolution of rock and roll; in fact, this was the period of its emergence, when three previously distinct musical markets (Pop, C&W, and R&B) merged into one. The blurring of these musical boundaries was evident in the appearance of covers and crossovers. Early rock and roll eventually settled into three primary trends: mainstream rock, rockabilly, and soft rock. It is not difficult to determine connections to the three distinct musical styles that preceded rock and roll (Pop, C&W, and R&B, respectively), although record sales reflected a buying public that listened to music that crossed these lines. It is time now to turn to some of the trend-setting artists, following Bill Haley and Elvis Presley, who rose to the top during the early years of rock and roll.

Take Note

The following module reviews and summarizes some of the important content covered in this chapter.

- *What is the difference between a crossover and a cover?*—Crossovers were records that originated in one market but succeeded in another. In the early 1950s, crossover hits were achieved by some R&B artists whose music placed on the mainstream Pop chart. On the other hand, a cover is a subsequent version of a previously released song, typically recorded by another artist. Generally, during this period, white artists covered R&B hits, and their versions often performed better on the Pop chart.
- *How did Bill Haley play a key role in launching rock music?*—Bill Haley's cover of "Rock Around the Clock" was featured under the opening and closing credits of *Blackboard Jungle*, a movie that focused on teenage themes. Thanks to the film's popularity, the song was a smash hit, and Haley became a symbol of the new musical style. However, when fans saw Haley—he was nearly 40 years old at the time—they yearned for someone younger and more attractive to represent *their* music.
- *What was unique about Elvis Presley's life and career?*—Elvis Presley was a unique, central figure in the early development of rock and roll. He popularized the new style, disseminating it throughout society in a way few could have accomplished. It is probably not an overstatement to suggest that, without Presley, rock might well have proven to be the musical fad its detractors claimed it to be. Elvis's early life in Tupelo and Memphis provided a unique opportunity to absorb a

variety of musical influences, including R&B, gospel, C&W, and Pop; all of those influences can be heard in his early hits.

- *What three basic trends in rock music emerged during the late 1950s in the wake of Elvis's success?*—As rock and roll developed in the 1950s, it began to break into different streams (or subgenres): mainstream rock, rockabilly, and soft rock. Mainstream rock revealed the strongest influence of R&B, emphasizing the 12-bar blues structure and a harder—sometimes shouting—vocal performance style. Rockabilly combined C&W and R&B influences and was performed by acts like the Everly Brothers and Ricky Nelson. Soft rock combined elements of rock with Pop music and was exemplified in the performance style of Pat Boone.
- *What is distinctive about rhythm in early rock and roll?*—Although all musical styles have a rhythmic element, in some styles, the rhythm is more prominent than in others. For example, in Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog," the beat and rhythm are right up front. Rock songs vary in tempo (from very fast to very slow), in meter (how the beats are organized), in their degree of emphasis on the backbeat, and in how the main beat is subdivided. These basic rhythmic characteristics help define the rock sound and differentiate its various subgenres.

SHARED WRITING

Discuss Specific Musical Elements

Now that you are aware of the three musical styles that led to rock and roll (Pop, C&W, or R&B) and have read about the early styles of rock described in this chapter (mainstream rock, rockabilly, and soft rock), can you connect any of the pre-rock styles with these early rock subgenres? Using the musical vocabulary you are beginning to develop, what specific musical elements are consistent between similar styles, and which vary significantly between those that are quite different?

Once you have completed this individual assignment, review three to five of the responses to this assignment submitted by fellow students. Were you able to provide a greater level of detail in your response? Did you utilize a sufficient amount of your musical vocabulary to communicate in a way that clearly and accurately describes the musical sound? What, if anything, would you change about your initial response after reviewing these responses by other students?

▶ A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post

0 characters | 140 minimum

Chapter 3
1950s Style Rock and Roll

Learning Objectives

3.1 Outline the influences of the five style-setters of rock and roll in the 1950s

3.2 Summarize other influences on rock and roll in the 1950s

3.3 Explain how the emergence of rock and roll affected the music industry

3.4 Analyze the musical elements of soft rock

As rock and roll came into its own—standing on its own (proverbial) "two feet"—a number of significant artists emerged as trendsetters for the music of the era, and for much of that yet to come. Even during this early period, there was a variety of substyles already apparent, setting the stage for what would become a dizzying array of subgenres by the 1970s. The music industry (i.e., rock music as "business") played a significant role in this process, just as signing with RCA Victor had been critical to the success of Elvis Presley. With this chapter, we step into the early world of rock and roll, a set of musical styles that provided the foundation for the vast majority of future rock artists, right up to the present day.

3.1: Five Style-Setters of the 1950s

OBJECTIVE: Outline the influences of the five style-setters of rock and roll in the 1950s

In addition to Elvis Presley, there were five other pivotal figures in 1950s rock: Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, and Buddy Holly. Quite different in many ways, each of these musicians broke new ground stylistically, although they were still heavily influenced by their predecessors. Together, they mark a critical era in rock's history; their musical techniques, vocal stylings, and sheer showmanship have significantly impacted the evolution of the genre.

3.1.1: Little Richard

The purest prototype of hard, mainstream rock was Little Richard. Elvis's multifaceted musical style included not only mainstream rock but also rockabilly and soft rock. Little Richard, in contrast, was, in one, self-contained package, the embodiment of the type of mainstream rock that led to the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Alice Cooper, James Brown, David Bowie, and Prince, among others.

Little Richard

SOURCE: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

Little Richard's Life and Career

Little Richard, one of the primary mainstream rock artists of the mid- to late 1950s, effectively integrated the foundations of R&B into his rock and roll style. His flamboyance and unique appearance added significantly to his distinctive manner of performance.

Life and Influence—Although accounts of his birthdate vary, his mother reported it as December 5, 1932. Born Richard Wayne Penniman in Macon, Georgia, he was the third of 12 children. His father worked in the construction industry and "handled" moonshine (White 1984, 3). Although a simple but sincere belief in God was a part of the Penniman household, Richard was a troublemaker. This basic conflict between hell-raising and piety infused Richard's life, career, and music. In his biography of Little Richard, Charles White notes that Richard "twice discarded super-stardom for the church, typifying the conflict between sacred and secular music which is built into the black culture" (1984, xiii). Little Richard knew that his church and his family would strongly disapprove if they learned of his sexual preference. In fact, he believed this was a primary reason that his father kicked him out of the house at such an early age. After leaving home at the age of 14, he mastered a variety of musical styles, including Pop, gospel, and R&B; his experiences ran from working in a traveling medicine show to black blues bands.

Musical Career—After his father was shot and killed outside of a local tavern, Richard became the main breadwinner for the family. He continued to play and sing throughout the South and even released several gospel-oriented R&B recordings. Returning to Georgia, Richard started a new band and began listening to the music of Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, and Lloyd Price. At Price's suggestion, he sent an audition tape to Specialty Records in Los Angeles, and, after many months of effort, received a recording contract.

Specialty Records was a moderately successful gospel and R&B label. Its biggest success had been Lloyd Price's "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" in 1952. Owner Art Rupe wanted "a big band sound expressed in a churchy way," or, as Specialty's producer Robert "Bumps" Blackwell put it, "a gospel singer who could sing the blues" (White 1984, 44, 46). Blackwell had been involved in the early careers of Ray Charles and Quincy Jones and was hired to supervise Little Richard's first Specialty session in New Orleans. In 1955, after taping four rather uninspired songs by a somewhat intimidated Little Richard, the group broke for lunch. Richard went to a piano and launched into an energetic version of an off-color song called "Tutti Frutti." Blackwell knew it was what he wanted. He quickly got the local songwriter Dorothy La Bostrie to clean up the lyrics; they returned to the studio and, in 15 minutes, had recorded what was to become a rock and roll classic.

Musical Style—The chorus of "Tutti Frutti" is a 12-bar blues, as are the verses, but the latter included a modification in the third phrase with instrumental accents separated by silence over which the vocal continued to lead smoothly to the chorus. Added to Richard's pounding **boogie**-style piano are guitar, bass, tenor sax, baritone sax, and drums. Richard's shouting style and falsetto "woos" set the style for many artists to follow. The lyrics of the chorus provide a classic example of 1950s nonsense. "Tutti Frutti" is the model for most of Little Richard's hits: "Long Tall Sally," "Slippin' and Slidin'," "Rip It Up," "Ready Teddy," "The Girl Can't Help It," "Jenny, Jenny," and "Good Golly Miss Molly." Although "Tutti Frutti" sold about 500,000 copies and appealed to both black and white teens, for some, Little Richard's style was a bit too raucous and noisy. In spite of its importance in the history of rock, "Tutti Frutti" rose only to number 21 on the Pop chart, although it attained the number 2 position on the R&B chart. It was quickly covered by both Elvis Presley and Pat Boone, as was "Long Tall Sally." Richard's recording of "Rip It Up" (with "Ready Teddy" as the B-side) reached number 27 (number 1 on the R&B chart), and both were covered by Presley. Buddy Holly also recorded a cover version of "Rip It Up." Although some teens preferred the cover versions, it is not true that the Presley, Holly, or Boone recordings overshadowed Little Richard's. In fact, only two of these covers reached the Top 40 (Boone's versions of "Tutti Frutti" and "Long Tall Sally").

Little Richard's performance style was frenetic. He sang, shouted, danced, gyrated, and sweated profusely. He became the symbol for wild, unrestrained rock and roll. The parallel between his performance style and his long-held ambition to be a preacher, exhorting his congregation into frenzied expressions of praise and self-confession, reminds us of the ironic link between the southern black religious experience and the Little Richard style of rock and roll. It is reported that participants in his post-concert orgies sometimes awakened to Richard giving sincere readings of the Bible. This dichotomy ruptured in 1957 when he renounced his show business career and turned to religion.

Personal Life—In fact, Richard gave Bible college a try and even married a young Washington, D.C. secretary named Ernestine Campbell. But neither the marriage nor the religious education lasted. In 1962, he launched his comeback with a tour of England, where he met the members of two aspiring British rock groups: the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Mick Jagger used words such as "amazing," "hypnotic," and "powerful" to describe Little Richard's performances. As a result of the performance style described above, he even compared Richard to an evangelist preaching to his flock.

By the late 1960s, Richard had slipped into self-parody. His stage act featured outrageous costumes, homosexual hype, and endless renditions of his old hits. Through the early 1970s, he attempted to make a comeback, but his growing dependence on drugs and alcohol dashed any hopes of a renewed career. As a result of several personal tragedies, he once again abandoned his wild lifestyle, and during the last half of the 1970s he again turned to religion. He even described the lyrics of some rock and punk groups as being demonic and contagious.

Perhaps Little Richard was not the king of rock and roll he claimed to be, but he was one of the most influential figures in rock history. He was dynamic, egotistical, controversial, and utterly original. Although his influence would last as long as there was rock and roll, his own personal musical style—at one time considered highly innovative—was now perceived as dated. Still, as he recalled his friends Elvis, Buddy Holly, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Sam Cooke, and so many others, he has outlasted them all, remaining a living legend long after these artists departed.

Key Events in Little Richard's Life

In order to gain a better understanding of the trajectory of the life of an artist, it is important to know some of the most important dates associated with their personal and professional accomplishments, so that one can better understand the context of these events.

Time Stamp Date/Year	Time Stamp Content [Narrative]
December 5, 1932	Richard Wayne Penniman is born in Macon, GA
1947	Left home at the age of 14
1955	Recorded "Tutti Frutti" for Specialty Records
1957	Renounced rock and roll, turning to religion
1962	Launched a comeback tour of England

Fats Domino

SOURCE: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

3.1.2: Fats Domino

Antoine "Fats" Domino (born on February 26, 1928, in New Orleans) represents an interesting contrast to Little Richard. Certainly, there were similarities: both were southern black artists who played piano and sang, both came from the R&B tradition, and both became very popular rock and roll stars of the 1950s. Beyond that, they were more different than alike.

Fats Domino's Life and Career

While Fats was considered one of the leading mainstream rock artists at the time, in recent decades, the acknowledgment of his high level of influence has been overshadowed by some of the other style-setters discussed in this chapter. There is no doubt that his accomplishments are as influential, if not more so, than other mainstream artists from this era who remain more familiar to contemporary audiences.

Life and Musical Career—Fats came from a musical family. He quit school at 14 to go to work as a factory worker by day and a club musician by night. Among his musical jobs, he played with a prominent New Orleans band headed by Dave Bartholomew. Bartholomew, a local representative for Imperial Records, arranged for a recording session that produced Fats's first hit, "The Fat Man," released in 1950.

By 1955, Fats had placed 12 hits in the Top 10 of the R&B chart, including a number 1 hit, "Goin' Home" (1952). Fats kept his R&B style as he was transformed into a rock and roll star of the mid- and late 1950s. This influence is obvious in "The Fat Man," where his use of the falsetto voice is particularly interesting. Unlike Little Richard's occasional falsetto "woos," Fats actually sings an entire 16-bar solo with falsetto "wah-wahs," approximating the sound of a harmonica solo. The form of "The Fat Man" is that of an **8-bar blues** (a modification of the traditional 12-bar blues). Fats preferred the 8-bar form even in his rock and roll songs. The instrumentation of "The Fat Man" is similar to the R&B-oriented rock band of the 1950s: saxes, guitar, bass, drums, and piano played in a boogie-woogie style that is less flamboyant and more refined than Little Richard's recordings.

Hits on the Pop Chart—Fats's first hit to cross over to the Pop chart was "Ain't That a Shame." Released in 1955, it became number 1 on the R&B chart and rose to number 10 on the Pop chart. A cover version by Pat Boone reached number 1 on the Pop chart in September 1955. "Ain't That a Shame" is a 12-bar blues, typical of R&B-oriented rock hits of the 1950s, but an exception to Fats's usual 8-bar blues. Subsequent Domino releases continued to do well on the R&B chart, and he placed more and more hits on the Pop chart. The Domino sound was essentially unchanged in "I'm in Love Again" (1956), "Blueberry Hill" (1956), "Blue Monday" (1956), "I'm Walkin'" (1957), "Whole Lotta Loving" (1958), and "I Want to Walk You Home" (1959).

Not all 1950s rock hits were newly composed. With hits rising and falling faster than ever before, there was a tremendous demand for material. A common practice was to resurrect old Pop favorites from previous decades and recast them in the

new rock style, usually by adding a rock bass line and a familiar rock beat. Fats Domino was particularly successful at this. "Blueberry Hill," for example, had been popularized back in the 1940s by jazz big bands made up of white musicians, and "My Blue Heaven" (1956) dates back to 1927. These Tin Pan Alley songs conform to the 32-bar Pop song form, consisting of four 8-bar phrases.

Later Career—Near the end of the 1950s, performers and record companies alike assumed that rock and roll would not last. Fearing that performers would be narrowly typed as rock and roll performers only, some tried to establish themselves more as "legitimate" Pop artists, capable of continued appeal after the rock fad had run its course. Elvis Presley's success in a variety of styles seemed to confirm this strategy.

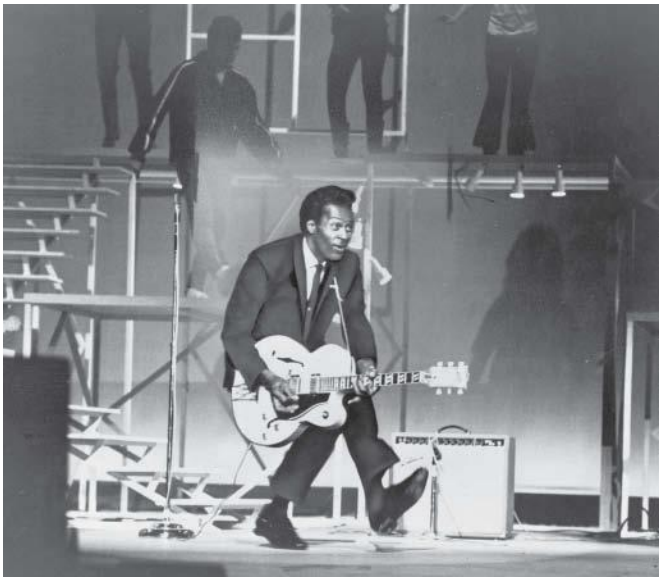
By 1960, the typical mainstream rock and roll style was indeed beginning to fade. Fats's hits were becoming less frequent. The sound of "Walkin' to New Orleans," released in 1960, was Pop oriented. Strings were added, the old boogie-woogie rock piano disappeared, and there were no rocking saxophone solos. "Walkin' to New Orleans" proved to be Fats's last Top 10 hit. Except for a minor hit in 1968 (the Beatles' "Lady Madonna"), Fats's career after the early 1960s revolved around nostalgia tours and Las Vegas appearances.

Musical Style—Fats Domino's style was less flamboyant, hysterical, and threatening than the pounding, raucous style of Little Richard. Fats seemed more refined and controlled. He actually sat on a piano bench, playing and singing his repertoire without the histrionics of Little Richard or Jerry Lee Lewis. As we survey 1950s rock from the vantage point of history, Fats's music seems uncomplicated and enjoyable and his lifestyle rather free from controversy and trauma. He remains a lovable reminder of less troubled times.

Key Events in Fats Domino's Life

In this timeline, you will find some of the most important dates associated with Fats Domino's personal and professional accomplishments.

Time Stamp Date/Year	Time Stamp Content [Narrative]
February 26, 1928	Antoine Domino is born in New Orleans, LA
1942	Quit school and began playing in nightclubs
1950	"The Fat Man," Domino's first hit, was released
1952	"Goin' Home" hits number 1 on the R&B chart
1955	"Ain't That a Shame" is released and proves to be Fats's first crossover hit
1960	Like many rock artists, Fats began to change his sound toward a more Pop-oriented style
During the 1960s	Fats's career consisted of nostalgia tours and appearances in Las Vegas



Chuck Berry performing his infamous "duck walk."

SOURCE: Everett Collection

3.1.3: Chuck Berry

Electric guitar has become the central instrumental ingredient in rock and roll. Of the "big six" of 1950s rock, it is surely Chuck Berry who had the greatest influence on rock guitar styles, until the appearance of Jimi Hendrix a decade later.

Charles Edward Anderson Berry was born in St. Louis in 1926. He sang in the Baptist church choir and learned to play guitar while in high school. His roots were squarely in the black R&B tradition, although he was not from the South, as were Little Richard and Fats Domino. After spending three years in reform school for attempted robbery, he worked for a time in local R&B clubs and in the General Motors plant to support his wife and two children.

Key Events in Chuck Berry's Life

In the timeline below, you will find some of the most important dates associated with Chuck Berry's personal and professional accomplishments.

Time Stamp Date/Year	Time Stamp Content [Narrative]
October 18, 1926	Charles Edward Anderson Berry was born in St. Louis, MO
1955	"Maybelline" hit the charts, eventually rising to number 5 on the R&B chart
1956	"Roll Over Beethoven" is released
1959	Berry is arrested for violating the Mann Act
1972	At the age of 46, "My Ding-a-Ling" is Berry's only number 1 single on the Pop chart

Chuck Berry's Life and Career

As one of the most innovative early rock guitarists, Chuck Berry inspired generations of future musicians. In fact, there are very few rock guitarists who fail to give Berry primary credit for inspiring them and for providing a foundational rock guitar technique upon which they could build.

Musical Career—While playing at the local Cosmopolitan Club, the Chuck Berry Trio was heard by famed bluesman Muddy Waters, who suggested that the group audition for Chess Records, an independent company in Chicago. Chess and its subsidiary, Checker, had recorded some of the biggest names in R&B, including Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, as well as some newer rock and roll artists (Bo Diddley, Dale Hawkins, the Moonglows, and the Flamingos). Chess was also well-connected to influential disc jockey Alan Freed, who was proactively promoting R&B music and black rock performers.

Berry's group auditioned with a song named "Ida Red," actually a C&W song made popular by Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys. Leonard Chess renamed the song, modified the lyrics, and issued Berry's recording as "Maybelline." In return for the consideration of being listed as coauthor, Alan Freed agreed to promote the record. By subsequent Chuck Berry standards, "Maybelline" is rather basic and unimpressive, both from musical and technical production perspectives. Nevertheless, with Freed's help, it hit the charts in 1955, eventually rising to number 5 (number 1 on the R&B chart).

After several intervening hits, Berry made the Pop chart again with "Roll Over Beethoven" (1956). "Too Much Monkey Business" and "Brown-Eyed Handsome Man" achieved R&B success in 1957, before "School Days," "Rock and Roll Music," "Sweet Little Sixteen," and "Johnny B. Goode" all landed in the Top 10 in 1957 and 1958. In late 1959, Berry was arrested for violation of the Mann Act, a law that made it illegal to take an underage woman across state lines for "immoral purposes." Berry's troubles began in El Paso, TX when he picked up a 14-year-old girl who had worked as a waitress and prostitute. She joined his tour, traveling through New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Missouri with him. When the tour ended, Chuck put the girl to work as a hatcheck girl in his club in St. Louis. However, she proved unreliable, and Berry fired her. She subsequently filed a complaint with the police. Berry was convicted in a 1960 trial, but the conviction was overturned on appeal. A second trial resulted in a three-year sentence and a fine. He was eventually released in 1964 (White 1984, 42–44).

After his release, Berry managed several hits, including "No Particular Place to Go" (number 10 in 1964). Remarkably, he had his only number 1 Pop chart hit in 1972 ("My Ding-a-Ling") at the age of 46. Over four decades later, as he approached his 90th birthday, Chuck Berry recorded his first album in 38 years (*Chuck*, 2017). Unfortunately, the artist died of natural causes before its release.

Musical Style—Like Domino, Berry sang with a vocal style contrasting Little Richard's shouting style, and his enunciation is generally clearer than most blues-oriented R&B singers. Berry's friend Johnny Johnson adds an effective piano style to many Berry recordings; for examples, listen carefully to "Sweet Little Sixteen," "Almost Grown," "Johnny B. Goode," "Back in the U.S.A.," "Rock and Roll Music," and "Reelin' and Rockin'." Berry's lyrics speak to the newly emerging teen society and the everyday concerns of their lives: cars, girls, school, rock music, and specific problems associated with growing up. Frequently, the songs develop a story or idea ("School Days" and "Johnny B. Goode"); generally, Berry's lyrics are far superior to the "walk-talk" and "arms-charms" clichés and nonsense syllables of many 1950s rock songs. Listen to "School Days" for a particularly good example of this characteristic.

But Berry's biggest contribution to the evolution of popular music was setting the model for the rock and roll guitar style. For him, the guitar was a frontline instrument, often equal in importance to the lead vocal. Notice the alternation of voice and guitar in the chorus of "Johnny B. Goode," and also in "School Days" and "No Particular Place To Go." The *statement-and-answer* technique in which the guitar mimics the just-completed vocal line is related to the 2-bar or 4-bar **trade-offs** found in jazz. It is as if Berry and his guitar are performing a duet, a musical conversation back-and-forth.

Several of Berry's guitar introductions became famous and were widely imitated. Compare the intros to "Back in the U.S.A.," "Roll Over Beethoven," and "Johnny B. Goode." The double-note playing in his solos and the alternating chords of his rhythmic accompaniments (similar to some rock piano styles) set models that were followed for years to come.

Most of Berry's rock hits were in the standard 12-bar blues form. His stage act was not as frenetic as Little Richard's, but it was more animated than Fats Domino's. Although he was the oldest of the major rock stars of the 1950s, he developed his famous **duck walk**, a physically demanding feat. Berry would bend his knees low and lope across the stage while playing the guitar. Unlike some other 1950s rock stars, Berry never modified his style to appeal to a broader Pop audience. Throughout his career, he retained the style that made him one of the biggest stars in the history of rock and roll.

3.1.4: Jerry Lee Lewis

Jerry Lee Lewis is essentially the white counterpart to Little Richard. Jerry Lee was born on September 9, 1935, like Richard, into a rather poor family in a small southern town (Ferriday, Louisiana) with a dominant mother and a largely absent father. Both Jerry Lee and Little Richard endured an ongoing internal battle between their religious faith and their hell-raising rock and roll lifestyles. Like Little Richard, Jerry Lee's career as a rock and roll hit-maker ended prematurely.

Jerry Lee Lewis

SOURCE: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

Million Dollar Quartet (L to R): Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, and Johnny Cash.

SOURCE: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

Jerry Lee Lewis's Life and Career

While reading about an artist's background and musical style can be highly informative, it is hardly a substitute for listening to the actual music. Similarly, while recordings are the ultimate goal of many rock artists or groups, the learning experience and authenticity of information provided are augmented greatly by hearing artists describe this work in their own words and, when performances are available, by watching videos of them.

Musical Style—Musically, there were also many similarities between Lewis and Richard. Both were pianists and were heavily influenced by gospel music and black R&B. Young Jerry Lee attended evangelist meetings conducted by musician-preacher Brother Janway, whose piano style included a pounding bass line and simple right-hand melodies (Lewis 1982, 15). But Jerry Lee was also captivated by R&B musicians, including B. B. King and Muddy Waters, who played at Haney's Big House in Ferriday (Lewis 1982, 15). In their mature rock and roll style, both Lewis and Richard played 12-bar blues with pounding, boogie-derived bass lines and improvised right-hand figures, including **glissandi**, repeating chords, and boogie patterns. They were best when performing hard-rocking, fast songs; their performance styles were flamboyant, including lots of physical movement while playing at the keyboard.

Personal Life—Jerry Lee's marital escapades (which would finally have a major, negative impact on his career) began in 1951, when he married a preacher's daughter. She was 17 and in the 11th grade; Jerry was 16 and in the 8th grade (he had been repeatedly held back in the 7th grade). To assuage her parents' objections, Jerry enrolled in the Southwestern Bible Institute (Waxahachie, Texas) with the goal of becoming a preacher. In a matter of months, his young wife filed for divorce, and Jerry Lee was invited to leave the institute. Meanwhile, having found a new love in a high school junior, Jerry remarried before the divorce was finalized. His second marriage was a rough one and deteriorated within several years.

Musical Career—In 1956, Jay Brown (Jerry's older cousin and bass player) persuaded Jerry to come to his home in Memphis and visit Sam Phillips's Sun Records. Jerry Lee had tried Sun Records once before but had left with a "don't call us, we'll call you" assessment. This time, things turned out better. Jerry Lee recorded "Crazy Arms" and several other country songs. Phillips was impressed and signed Jerry Lee to a contract. Late in 1956, Sun released "Crazy Arms," and it became a mild success. Also while visiting Jay, Jerry met Myra Gail, Jay's 12-year-old daughter. Something more than a family relationship developed, and by December 1957, the two were husband and wife.

Sun Records saw Jerry as another rockabilly star, but Jerry had other ideas. A pounding mainstream rock and roll song called "Whole Lot of Shakin' Going On" had been particularly successful on his most recent tour. Jerry's recording of the song, a cover version of a composition released two years earlier by the Commodores (not the later group associated with Lionel Richie), became a smash hit in 1957, reaching the top position on both the C&W and R&B charts and number 3 on the Pop chart.

In late 1957, Sun Records released "Great Balls of Fire," written by Jack Hammer and Otis Blackwell. The B-side of this release was Hank Williams's country tune "You Win Again." Aided by an appearance on Steve Allen's television variety show, Jerry Lee reached the number 2 spot on the Pop chart with "Great Balls of Fire" (number 3 on the R&B and number 1 on the C&W chart). Blackwell also wrote Jerry Lee's third major hit, "Breathless," released in February 1958, shortly after Jerry's marriage to Myra. His last major hit was "High School Confidential," the title song from an MGM movie in which the Jerry Lee Lewis Trio made a cameo appearance.

"Whole Lot of Shakin' Going On" and "Great Balls of Fire" had been Top 10 hits in England, inspiring Jerry Lee to embark on his first overseas tour there, where his arrival was enthusiastically anticipated. Against advice, he took his new 13-year-old bride (and cousin) along. No sooner had the entourage disembarked than an inquisitive reporter discovered Jerry Lee's child bride. The British were outraged. Some tour dates were canceled; others were played to half-empty halls and to jeering, taunting audiences.

Staggered by the British reaction, Jerry Lee expected more tolerance on his return to the United States, but "High School Confidential" quickly dropped from the charts, and many concerts were canceled. Jerry Lee's days as a rock and roll star were over. Repeated "comeback" attempts failed; he returned to the C&W sound from whence he had come. Between 1961 and 1975, he placed over 20 songs on the country charts, including 11 in the Top 5.

Post Rock and Roll Life—Post rock and roll life has not been kind to Jerry Lee. His marriage to Myra ended in divorce in 1970 (Jerry has had several more marriages since then). Two of his sons died tragically, as did two of his wives. There have been problems with alcohol, drugs, tax evasion, shootings, fistfights, automobile accidents, arrests, extramarital affairs, and debilitating physical illness. Not yet ready to give up, in 2010, Lewis released *Mean Old Man* (2010), featuring Keith Richards (guitar on "Sweet Virginia"), Mick Jagger (duet on "Dead Flowers"), and Eric Clapton ("You Can Have Her"). To prove he was still capable, he released *Rock & Roll Time* (2014), again including Keith Richards as a guest artist, along with Neil Young, Robbie Robertson, and Ronnie Wood.

Jerry Lee Lewis, in his brief moment of stardom, had a disproportionate impact on rock and roll. His unique blend of C&W and R&B, and his piano style, vocal style, and lifestyle, influenced many of his contemporaries and many who would follow. Although he longed to be known as the "king of rock and roll," he must settle for his lifelong nickname: "Killer."

Key Events in Jerry Lee Lewis's Life

In the timeline below, you will find some of the most important dates associated with Jerry Lee Lewis's personal and professional accomplishments.

Time Stamp Date/Year	Time Stamp Content [Narrative]
September 9, 1935	Lewis was born in Ferriday, LA
1951	At the age of 16 and in the 8th grade, he married a preacher's daughter
1956	His second attempt recording at Sun Records proved successful with the release of "Crazy Arms"
1957	Married his pre-teen cousin, Myra Gail; "Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On" becomes a smash hit, followed by "Great Balls of Fire"
1958	Lewis's marriage to his now-13-year-old wife outrages the British public and effectively ended the most commercially successful period of his career
2014	Released Rock & Roll Time, his most recent album

3.1.5: Buddy Holly

Charles Hardin (Buddy) Holley did not fit the mold of the other early rock and rollers discussed in this chapter. Born in Lubbock, Texas, in 1936, his musical foundation was almost exclusively C&W. Black R&B and gospel were not significant factors in western Texas, so Buddy grew up without the biracial musical influences that characterized Elvis's and Jerry Lee's backgrounds.

Buddy Holly

SOURCE: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

Key Events in Buddy Holly's Life

In the timeline below, you will find some of the most important dates associated with Buddy Holly's personal and professional accomplishments.

Time Stamp Date/Year	Time Stamp Content [Narrative]
September 7, 1936	Holly is born in Lubbock, TX
1956	Holly and his country-style band signed with Decca Records, making some recordings including an early version of "That'll Be the Day"
1957	Records with his new band (the Crickets), and their energized version of "That'll Be the Day" goes to number 1
1958	Holly splits from the Crickets and his manager, Norman Petty, and initiates a solo tour
February 2, 1959	Performs his last concert, in Clear Lake, IA, before dying in a plane crash early the next morning