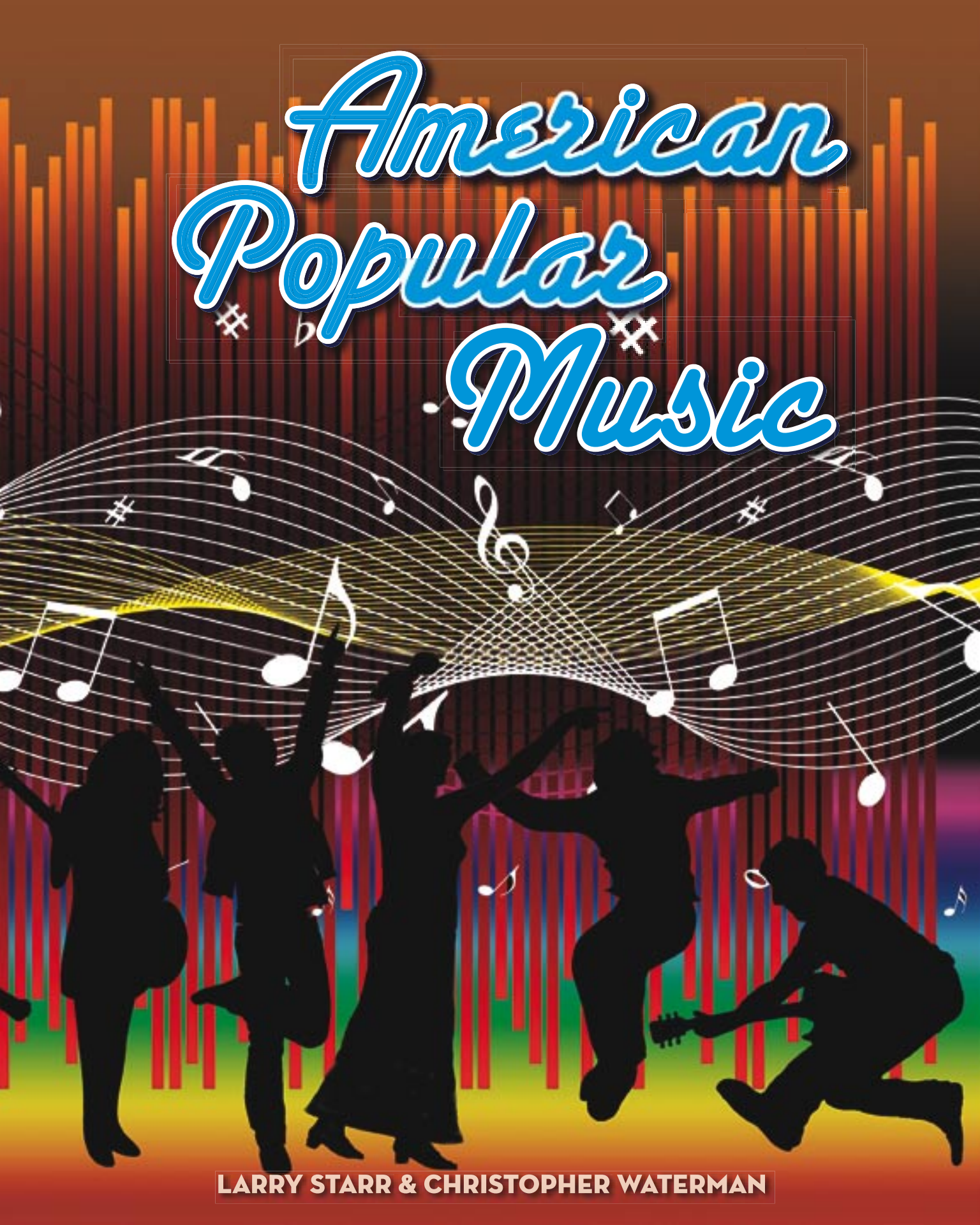
American Popular Music



LARRY STARR & CHRISTOPHER WATERMAN

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Clockwise from top: Bob Dylan and Joan Baez on the road; Diana Ross sings to thousands; Louis Armstrong and his trumpet; DJ Jazzy Jeff spins records; 'NSync in concert; Elvis Presley sings and acts.

American Popular Music

LARRY STARR & CHRISTOPHER WATERMAN

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Introduction

Popular music, like so much of American culture, reflects a kaleidoscope of contributions, a cross-fertilization of styles, and a blending of dreams. It could hardly be otherwise in this nation of immigrants. Arguably the United States is a perfect musical laboratory: take people from every corner of the globe, give them freedom to create. Distribute their effort: by sheet music, phonograph, radio — or, for the younger reader: by Blu-ray Disc, mp3, Internet stream.

And what results! European ballads recast with African polyrhythmic textures or blended with a Cuban-flavored **habanera** (boldfaced terms are defined in the glossary) or a more "refined" rumba. "Cold" bop. "Hot" jazz. "Acid" rock. "Gangsta" rap. We might speak less of a singular American popular music than of a constellation of mutually-enriching American popular "musics." Elvis Presley borrows from African-American blues, and black Motown stars recast "white" pop. Ask Khmer-American rapper Prach Ly, also known as "praCh," about American popular music and he'll speak of growing up with Snoop Dog, Dr. Dre, Run DMC, and Public Enemy on the radio and of cutting his first album in his parents' garage. Lacking a mixing board, Prach used a karaoke machine and sampled old Khmer Rouge propaganda speeches for his powerful musical condemnation of the Cambodian genocide.

We hope the pages that follow convey a sense of creative ferment, of artistic drive, and of how Americans, borrowing from diverse musical traditions, have made their own original contributions to humanity's truly universal language. The reader will encounter here crooners and rappers, folkies and rockers, the "King," a Prince, and the "Queen of Soul." Explained here is the latest in musical technology, from the solid-body electric guitar to the lossless compression digital file. And readers will learn about the people who make the music, truly American in their stunning diversity. Theirs are perhaps the most wonderful stories of all.

Musicians gather around the great Louis Armstrong, seated at the piano. Armstrong grew up in New Orleans in the early part of the 20th century and gave the world a lasting legacy — jazz.

Louis Armstrong in a 1931 photo

Consider the African-American child, born in 1901 and living in a poor New Orleans neighborhood. At the age of seven, with his mother and sister in poverty, he found work with a family of junk dealers — Russian Jewish immigrants nearly as poor as his own family. "They were always warm and kind to me," he later would write — indeed, as one scholar later put it, they "virtually adopted him." The boy would ride the junk wagon and blow a small tin horn to attract potential customers.

As he later wrote:

One day when I was on the wagon with Morris Karnovsky … we passed a pawn shop which had in its window — an old tarnished beat up "B" Flat cornet. It cost only $5. Morris advanced me $2 on my salary. Then I put aside 50 cents each week from my small pay — finally the cornet was paid in full. Boy, was I a happy kid.

That boy's name was Louis Armstrong. He would give the world jazz.

American popular music is the sound of countless Louis Armstrongs sharing the music in their souls. It spans a matchless range of human experience, from matters of the heart — Sinatra bemoaning a lost love "in the wee small hours of the morning" — to the political protest of Country Joe and the Fish performing the "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag." Some tunes propel

Clockwise from upper left: A couple whirls across the dance floor of Harlem's Savoy Ballroom, 1953; Dancers "Twist" at New York's Peppermint Lounge, 1961; Crooner Frank Sinatra, 1943; Singer-songwriter Rickie Lee Jones, 1999; Country Joe McDonald in the late 1990s.

couples to the dance floor, there to twist or jitterbug, hustle or tango. Songwriters depict their muses so vividly we can almost believe them real: the Beach Boys' Caroline perhaps, Chuck Berry's Maybellene, Bob Dylan's "Absolutely Sweet Marie," or Rickie Lee Jones's "Chuck E." And sometimes what resonates is not the girl in the song, but the one with whom you first heard it, a long time ago.

"Without music, life would be a mistake," the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote. Here you will meet many visionaries who would agree.

—Michael Jay Friedman

Streams of Tradition: THE SOURCES OF POPULAR MUSIC

Every aspect of popular music today regarded as American has sprung from imported traditions. These source traditions may be classified into three broad "streams": European-American music, African-American music, and Latin American music. Each of these is made up of many styles of music, and each has profoundly influenced the others.

The European-American Stream

Until the middle of the 19th century, American popular music was almost entirely European in character. The cultural and linguistic dominance of the English meant that their music established early on a kind of "mainstream" around which other styles circulated.

At the time of the American Revolution, professional composers of popular songs in England drew heavily upon **ballads**. Originally an oral tradition, ballads were circulated on large sheets of paper called broadsides. While some broadside ballads were drawn from folk tradition, many were urban in origin and concerned with current events. In most cases only the words were provided, with an indication of a traditional melody to which they were to be sung. Balladmongers hawking the broadsides sang them on the streets. Composers of broadside ballads often added a catchy **chorus**, a repeated melody with fixed text inserted between verses.

The pleasure garden was the most important source of public entertainment in England between 1650 and 1850. Large urban parks filled with tree-lined paths, the pleasure gardens provided an idyllic rural experience for an expanding urban audience. The pleasure gardens became one of the main venues for the dissemination of printed songs by professional composers. In the 1760s the first American pleasure gardens opened in Charleston, New York, and other cities.

The English ballad opera tradition was also popular in America during the early 19th century. Perhaps the best known is John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). The main characters in ballad operas were common people, rather than the kings and queens of imported operas; the songs were familiar in form and content; and the lyrics were all in English rather than Italian.

The English folk ballad tradition thrived in America. In the early 20th century folklorists were able to record dozens of versions of old English ballads in the United States. While today these songs are preserved mainly by folk music enthusiasts, the core of the tradition lives on in contemporary country and western music. The thin, nasalized tone known as the "high lonesome sound" continues today as a marker of southern white identity.

A sampling of musical diversity (clockwise from left): "Polka King" Frank Yankovic; Klezmer-rock band Golem; Zydeco and other (often accordion-driven) Cajun stylings have profoundly influenced many kinds of American popular music.

Irish, Scottish, and Italian songs also influenced early American popular music. Copies of Thomas Moore's multivolume collection of *Irish Melodies* were widely circulated in the United States, and Scottish songs such as "Auld Lang Syne" also enjoyed wide popularity. By the first decades of the 19th century, the Italian opera was also popular in the United States, and the *bel canto* style of operatic singing had a major effect on the development of popular singing.

Dance music was another important aspect of the European influence on American popular music. Until the late 19th century European-American dance was modeled on styles imported from England and the European continent. Country dances were popular. In the United States the country dance tradition developed into a plethora of urban and rural, elite and lower-class, black and white variants. It continues today in country and western line dances and in the contradances (folk dances performed in two lines with the partners facing each other) that form part of the modern folk music scene.

In addition to songs and dance music produced by professional composers, immigration brought a wide variety of European folk music to America. The mainstream of popular song and dance music was from early on surrounded by folk and popular styles brought by immigrants from other parts of Europe. The descendants of early

Clockwise from left: Rhythm and blues singer Whitney Houston has sold an estimated 54 million recordings; Bonnie Raitt is considered a master of the slide guitar; Bo Diddley helped pave the transition from blues to early rock 'n' roll ; Buddy Holly died in a plane crash at age 22, but has been described as "the single most influential creative force in early rock 'n' roll ."

French settlers in North America and the Caribbean maintained their own musical traditions. Millions of Irish and German immigrants came to the United States during the 19th century. Between 1880 and 1910 an additional 17 million immigrants entered the United States. These successive waves of migration contributed to the diversity of musical life. European-derived musical styles such as Cajun fiddling, Jewish *klezmer* music, and the Polish polka have each contributed to mainstream popular music while maintaining a solid base in particular ethnic communities.

The African-American Stream

Not all immigrants came willingly. Between one and two million Africans were forcibly brought to the United States between the 17th and 19th centuries. The areas of western and central Africa from which slaves were drawn were home to hundreds of distinct societies, languages, and musical traditions.

The genesis of African-American music in the United States involved two closely related processes. The first of these was syncretism, the selective blending of traditions derived from Africa and Europe. The second was the creation of institutions that became important centers of black musical life — the family, the church, the voluntary association, the school, and so on.

It is misleading to speak of "black music" as a homogeneous entity. African-American culture took different forms in Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, and the United States, shaped in each by the particular mix of African and European source traditions, and by local social conditions. In the United States, people from the Senegambia region of West Africa appear to have made up a large part of the slave population. The banjo, an African-American invention, was developed from stringed instruments common in Senegambia; and certain aspects of blues singing are derived from the griot (praise singer) traditions of the West African savannah.

Certain features of African music form the core of African-American music and, by extension, of American popular music as a whole. Call-and-response forms, in which a lead singer and chorus alternate, are a hallmark of African-American musical traditions. In much African music-making repetition is regarded as an aesthetic strength, and many forms are constructed of short phrases that recur in a regular cycle. These short phrases are combined in various ways to produce music of great power and complexity. In African-American music such repeated patterns are often called **riffs**.

The aesthetic interest of much African music lies in the interlocking of multiple repeating patterns to form dense **polyrhythmic** textures (textures in which many rhythms are going on at the same time). This technique is evident in African-American styles such as funk music, particularly the work of James Brown, and the instrumental accompaniments for contemporary rap recordings. One common West African rhythm pattern has generated many variants in the Americas, including the "hambone" riff (a syncopated boogie rhythm, at times produced by a rhythmic knee and chest slapping motion) popularized during the rock 'n' roll era by Bo Diddley, Johnny Otis, and Buddy Holly.

In contrast to the aesthetics of Western art music, in which a "clear" tone is the ideal, African singers and instrumentalists make use of a wide palette of **timbres**. Buzzing tones are created by attaching a rattling device to an instrument, and singers frequently use growling and humming effects, a technique that can also be heard in African-American genres such as blues, gospel, and jazz. In West African drumming traditions the lead drummer often plays the lowest-pitched drum in the group. This emphasis on low-pitched sounds may be a predecessor of the prominent role of the bass drum in Mississippi black fife-and-drum ensembles and of the "sonic boom bass" aesthetic in rap music.

The influence of African musical aesthetics and techniques on American popular music has been profound. Its history reveals both the creativity of black musicians and the persistence of racism in the music business and American society as a whole. In the early 20th century African-American ragtime and blues profoundly shaped the mainstream of American popular song. The "jazz age" of the 1920s and the "swing era" of the 1930s and 1940s involved the reworking of African-American dance music to appeal to a white middle-class audience.

Although country music is typically identified as a "white" style, some of its biggest stars have been black, and the styles of country musicians such as Jimmie Rodgers, Hank Williams, and Willie Nelson were strongly influenced by African-American music. One could cite many more examples of the influence of black music on the musical "mainstream" of America:

Left: Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton called himself the "Originator of Jazz," and some critics agree. Right: In a 50-year career, percussionist Tito Puente helped popularize mambo and other Latin jazz genres.

1950s rock 'n' roll was, in large part, rhythm & blues (**R&B**) music reworked for a predominantly white teen music market; the influence of 1960s soul music, rooted in black gospel and R&B, is heard in the vocal style of practically every pop singer, from Bonnie Raitt and Whitney Houston to Bruce Springsteen and Michael Jackson; the virtuoso guitar style of heavy metal owes a large debt to the urban blues of Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf; and rap music, based on African-derived musical and verbal traditions, continues to provide many white Americans with a vicarious experience of "listening in" on black urban culture.

We could say that, with every passing year, American popular music has moved closer to the core aesthetic values and techniques of African music. Yet this is misleading, for it directs attention away from the fact that African Americans are Americans, that the ancestors of black Americans arrived in the United States before the forebears of many white Americans. The complex history of interaction between European-American and African-American styles, musicians, and audiences demonstrates the absurdity of racism.

The Latin American Stream

As in the United States, musicians in Latin America developed a wide range of styles blending African music with the traditions of Europe. Caribbean, South American, and Mexican traditions have long influenced popular music in the United States.

The first Latin American style to have a major international impact was the Cuban habanera. The characteristic *habanera* rhythm (eight beat pattern divided 3–3–2) influenced late 19th-century ragtime music, and was an important part of what the great New Orleans pianist Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton called the "Latin tinge" in American jazz.

The next wave of Latin American influence on the music of the United States came from Argentina. The tango was influenced by the habanera, Italian and Spanish songs, and the songs of *gauchos* (cowboys). In the United States the ballroom version of the tango, a couple dance featuring close contact between partners and an insistent rhythm, was popularized around 1914 by dance stars Irene and Vernon Castle.

A subsequent Latin American musical influence was the rumba. The roots of the ballroom rumba style that became popular in the United States lie in 1920s Cuba. The rural *son* — a Cuban parallel of "country music" — moved to Havana, where it was played by professional dance bands. These musicians created a more exciting style by adding rhythms from the rumba, an urban street drumming style strongly rooted in African traditions.

A "refined" version of rumba was introduced to the world by Don Azpiazú and his Havana Casino Orchestra. Azpiazú's 1929 recording of "El Manicero" ("The Peanut Vendor") became a huge international hit. Within a few months of its release many dance orchestras in the United States had recorded their own versions of the song. The rumba reached a height of popularity in the United States during the 1930s and was succeeded by a series of Cuban-based ballroom dance fads, including the mambo (1940s) and *cha-cha-chá* (1950s).

Variants of Cuban-based music in the United States ranged from the exciting blend of modern jazz and rumba pioneered by Machito and Dizzy Gillespie in the 1940s to the tourist-oriented style performed by Desi Arnaz's orchestra on the *I Love Lucy* television show. The 1960s saw the emergence of *salsa*, a rumba-based style pioneered by Cuban and Puerto Rican migrants in New York City. The stars of salsa music include the great singer Celia Cruz and bandleader Tito Puente. In the 1980s Miami Sound Machine created a commercially successful blend of salsa and disco music, and "world beat" musicians such as Paul Simon and David Byrne began to experiment with traditional Afro-Cuban rhythms.

The Brazilian *samba* is another dance style strongly rooted in African music. The variant of samba that had the biggest influence in the United States was the *carioca*, a smooth style developed in Rio de Janeiro and boosted in the 1940s by Carmen Miranda, who appeared in a series of popular musical films. A cool, sophisticated style of Brazilian music called the *bossa nova* became popular in United States during the early 1960s, eventually spawning hit songs such as "The Girl from Ipanema" (1964).

Mexican music has long had a symbiotic relationship with styles north of the Rio Grande. At the end of the 19th century Mexican musicians visited the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and later toured throughout the United States. The two best-known Mexican-derived styles today are *conjunto acordeón* ("accordion band") music, played in northern Mexico and Texas; and *mariachi* ("marriage") music, performed by ensembles made up of guitars, violins, and trumpets. Country and western music has been influenced by Mexican styles since at least the 1930s. Mexican immigrants in California have also played an important role developing rock music. This continuing influence is exemplified by Ritchie Valens's 1959 hit "La Bamba," based on a folk tune from Veracruz; the mixture of salsa and guitar-based rock music developed in the late 1960s by guitarist Carlos Santana; recordings of traditional Mexican songs by Linda Ronstadt; and the hard-rocking style of the Los Angeles-based band Los Lobos.

Left: Part of the original poster advertising guitarist Carlos Santana's December 1968 "Live at the Fillmore" concert. Right: Santana successfully fuses rock, blues, jazz fusion, and salsa elements in his distinctive sound.

Popular Music: 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

Popular music both shaped and reflected American culture throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. This period saw the birth of minstrelsy, the first distinctively American form of popular culture, the rise of the modern music industry, and rapid audience expansion, not least because new technologies enabled the dissemination of music to a national audience. Some of the song and dance music styles that emerged would influence profoundly U.S. popular music throughout the 20th century.

The Minstrel Show

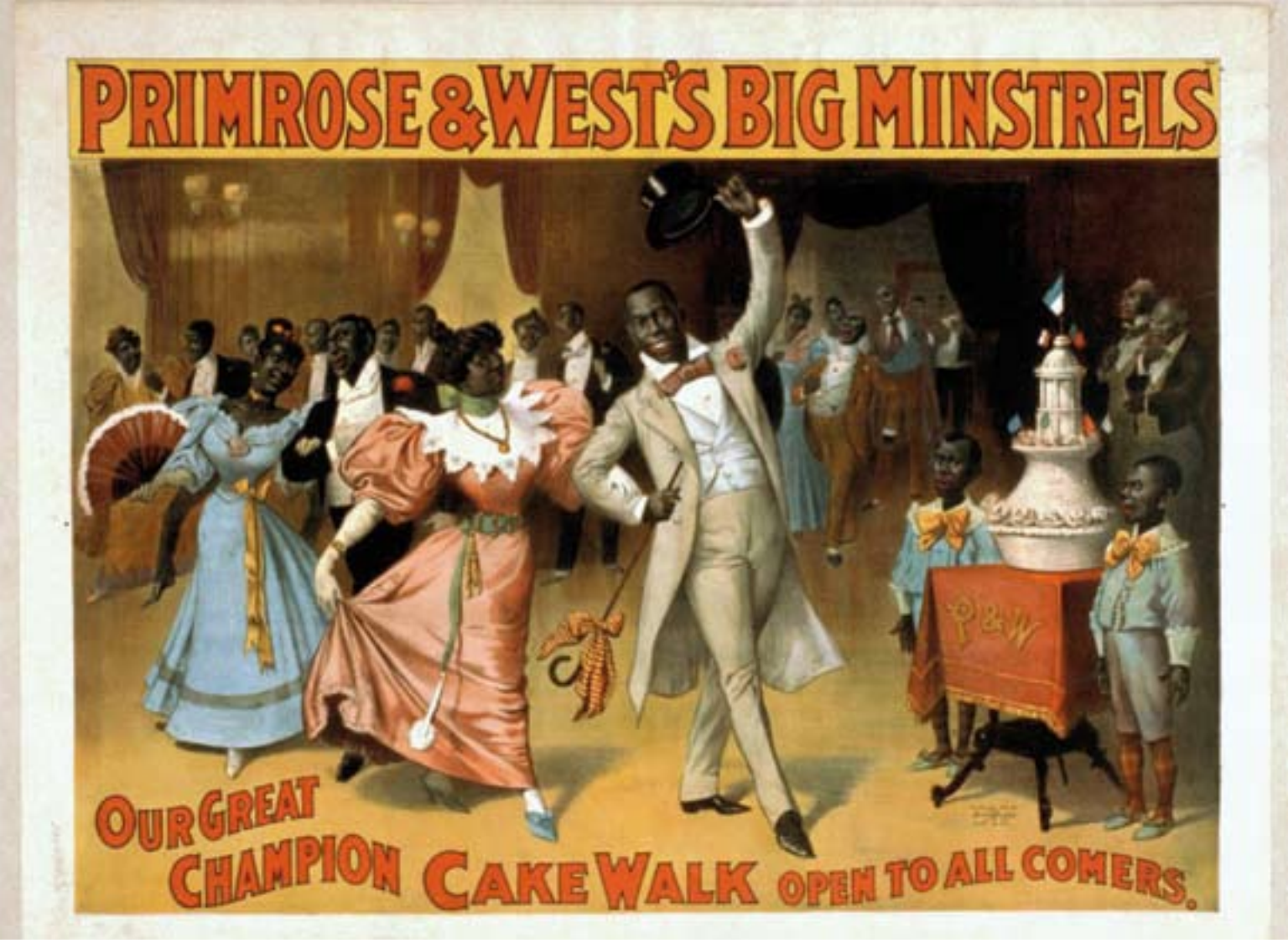
The minstrel show, the first form of musical and theatrical entertainment to be regarded by European audiences as distinctively American in character, featured mainly white performers who blackened their skin and carried out parodies of African-American music, dance, dress, and dialect. Today blackface minstrelsy is regarded with embarrassment or anger. Yet there is reason to believe that its common interpretation as an expression of racism oversimplifies the diverse meanings it represented. In any case, it would be difficult to understand American popular music without some knowledge of the minstrel show.

The minstrel show emerged from working-class neighborhoods where interracial interaction was common. Early blackface performers were the first expression of a distinctively American popular culture, in which working-class white youth expressed their sense of marginalization through an identification with African-American cultural forms. This does not mean that minstrelsy was not a projection of white racism, but its meanings were neither fixed nor unambiguous.

Thomas Dartmouth Rice (1808-60), a white actor born into a poor family in New York City's Seventh Ward, demonstrated the potential popularity of minstrelsy with the song "Jim Crow" (1829), the first international American song hit. Rice sang this song in blackface while imitating a dance step called the "cakewalk," an Africanized version of the European quadrille.

Soon after Rice introduced "Jim Crow" to New York in 1832, there was a veritable explosion of blackface performance in venues ranging from theaters to saloons, the latter often patronized by a racially mixed audience. Black and mixed-race performers were on view in most of the local "dives" that featured minstrel performances. The musical and linguistic heritage of early minstrelsy was just as mixed as its audience and practitioners. The most likely inspiration for "Jim Crow" was not an African-American song but an Irish folk tune subsequently transformed into an English stage song.

"Daddy" Rice's Jim Crow character spoke and sang in a dialect based on white rural characters (such as the Kentucky rifleman Davy Crockett) and partly on the variety of black and Creole dialects heard by Rice as a youngster growing up by the



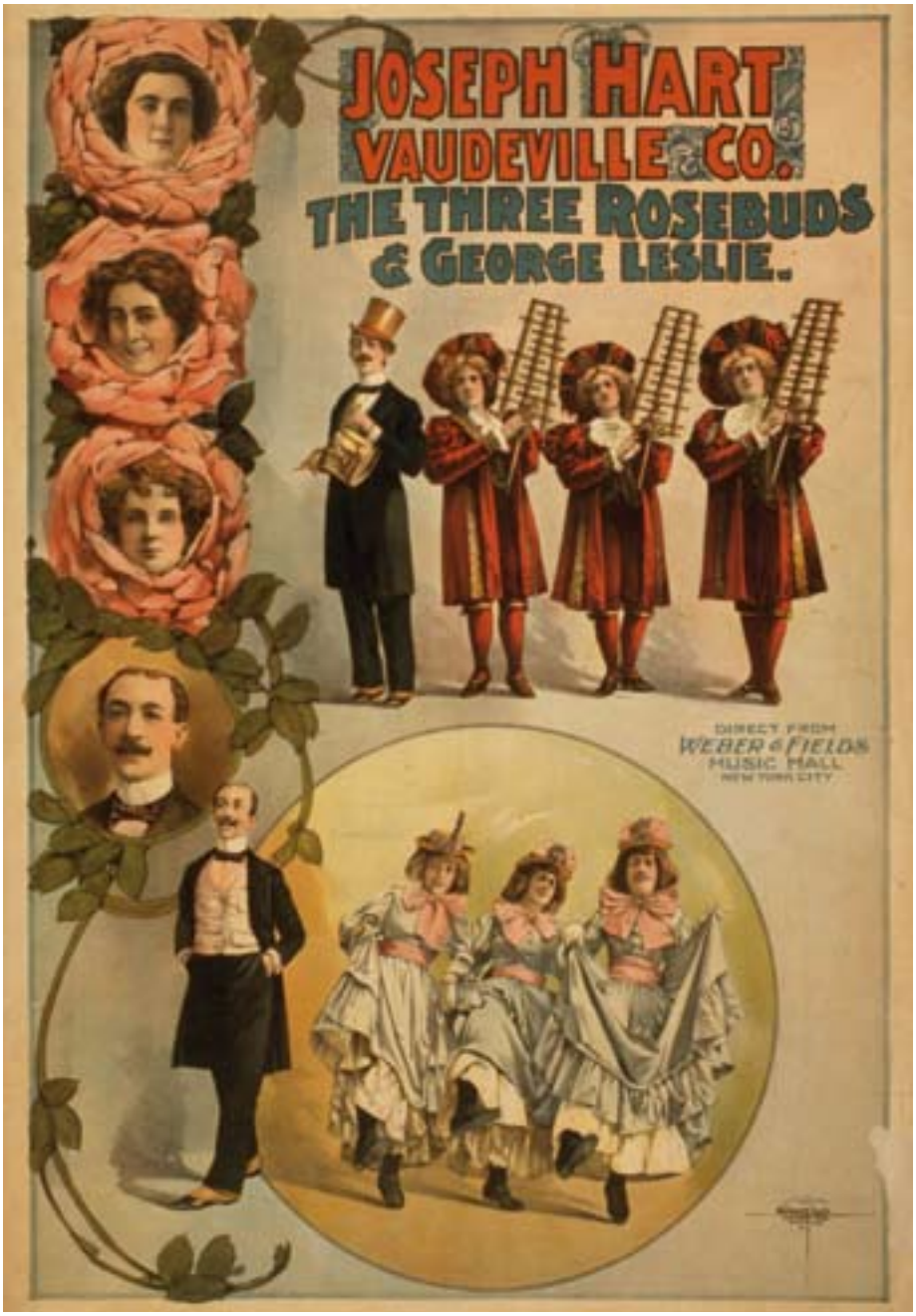
Minstrel shows featured white people wearing blackface, or even African Americans. They often depicted blacks in an unflattering light. By the turn of the 20th century, minstrelsy had largely died out, replaced by vaudeville.

Seventh Ward docks.

> *Come, listen all you gals and boys, I'se just from Tuckyhoe*
> *I'm goin to sing a little song, My name's Jim Crow*
> *Weel about and turn about and do jis so*
> *Eb'ry time I weel about I jump*
> *Jim Crow*

The Jim Crow character used this hybrid dialect — neither black nor white but something in between — to make fun of pretentious politicians and social elites, introducing a satirical subtext that Rice's high-class targets found threatening.

From the 1840s through the 1880s blackface became the predominant genre of popular culture in the United States. As the genre was transformed into the more formally organized "minstrel show," much of its original subversive quality was lost. The 19th-century minstrel show displayed many of the themes that will concern us throughout this survey. Minstrelsy arose during the 1830s as an expression of a predominantly white urban youth culture, which sought to express its independence by appropriating black style. As minstrelsy became a mass phenomenon in the decades just before and after the American Civil War, its form became routinized, and its portrayal of black characters more rigidly stereotyped. This basic pattern, in which a new genre of music arises within a marginalized community and then moves into the mainstream of mass popular culture, in the process losing much of its original rebellious energy, will be encountered many times in this book.



Clockwise from top left: Late 19th and early 20th century vaudeville shows combined a variety of acts, including classical and popular musical performers along with comedians, dancers, trained animals and other acts. The format declined in popularity with the rise of the motion picture; Scott Joplin, a leading composer of ragtime music; John Philip Sousa was the leading composer and conductor of American military marches; the "Elmira Cornet Band," Thirty-third Regiment, of the New York State Volunteers, July 1861.

Dance Music and Brass Bands

From the beginning, American popular music has been closely bound up with dance. The earliest examples of published dance music were modeled on styles popular in England. Until the early 20th century, social dancing among white Americans was dominated by offshoots of the country dance tradition and by dances such as the waltz, mazurka, schottische, and polka, performed by couples. The adoption of country dances by the urban elite was an aspect of a common romantic fascination with rural themes.

The typical setting for dancing among the upper classes was the ball, organized around pre-selected music played by an orchestra to accompany a specific sequence of dances, overseen by a dance master, who called out the movements. Ballroom dancing focused more on uniformity and restraint than improvisation or the expression of emotion. However, as the 19th century progressed, there was a shift away from formal dances toward an increased emphasis on couple dancing. By the end of the century, the waltz had become the ultimate symbol of sophistication and romance.

Throughout the 19th century there was a continual feedback between urban "high-class" and rural "low-class" dance styles. Urban professional musicians arranged folk dances for mass consumption, and some of the popular songs published by big New York City music companies were adopted into rural dance traditions. The diversity of American popular dance was reinforced by waves of immigrants from different parts of Europe. And the mass influence of African-American dance — which began in the 1830s with the cakewalk steps performed by white minstrels — intensified, becoming the dominant force in American popular dance during the first few decades of the 20th century.

From the Civil War through the 1910s, brass band concerts were one of the most important musical aspects of American life. Although military bands had been around since the birth of the United States, they spread rapidly during and after the Civil War (1861-65). While a number of these regimental bands continued to flourish after the war, many decommissioned musicians formed bands in their home communities. By 1889 there were over 10,000 brass bands in the United States.

The brass-band movement drew energy from the interaction of patriotism and popular culture, and from the growing force of Ameri-

"March King" John Philip Sousa, center, leads the United States Marine Corps band.

can nationalism. The lion's share of a band's repertoire consisted of patriotic marches. Brass bands are associated with national holidays, and their music holds a special significance for those who have served in the armed forces. Many bands also played arrangements of the popular sheet music hits of the day. This ability to move between patriotic music and the popular styles reinforced the brass band's role as a community institution.

The most popular bandleader from the 1890s through World War I was John Philip Sousa (1854-1932). Sousa conducted the U.S. Marine Band and later formed a "commercial" concert band. This band made two dozen hit phonograph recordings between 1895 and 1918. Sousa toured constantly, and the appearance of his band created a sensation that could only be surpassed by a presidential "whistlestop" tour. (These were named for the campaign tours of presidents and other political candidates — made by rail, they often included the "whistlestops," small stations the train normally would bypass unless signaled to stop.) Sousa was one of the first musicians to negotiate royalty payments with publishers, and an important advocate of copyright reform.

The Birth of Tin Pan Alley

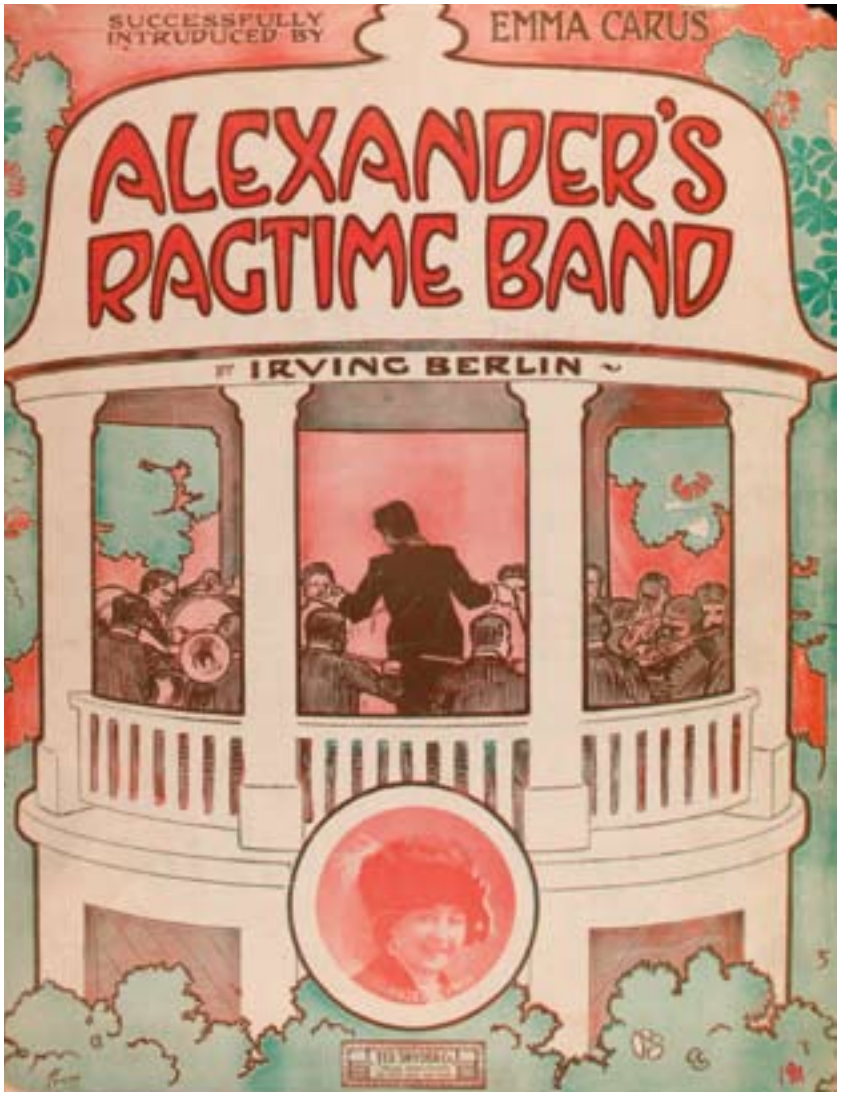
By the end of the 19th century, the American music publishing business had become centered in New York City. The established publishers, who had made their fortunes in classical music and genteel parlor songs, were, from around 1885 on, challenged by smaller companies specializing in the more exciting popular songs performed in dance halls, beer gardens, and theaters.

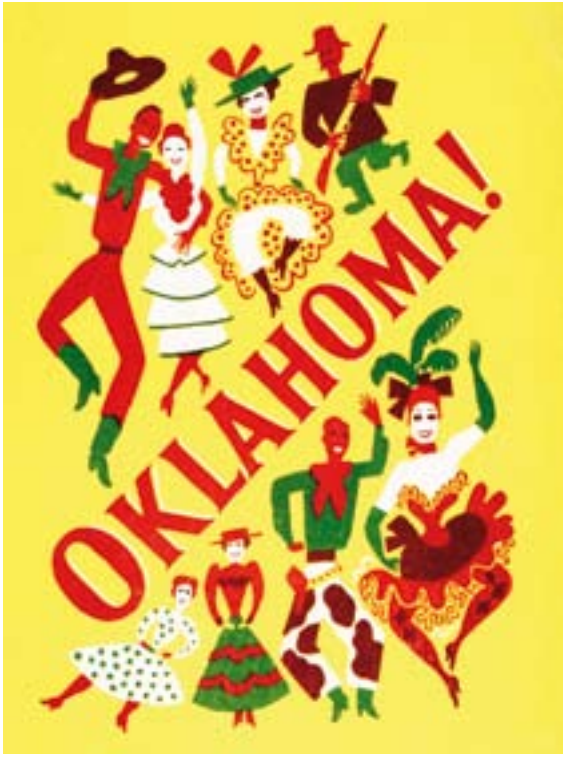
These new publishing firms — many of them founded by Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe — had offices along a stretch of Manhattan's 28th Street that became known as "Tin Pan Alley," a term that evoked the clanging sound of many pianos simultaneously playing songs in a variety of keys and tempos. The 1890s saw the rise of the modern American music business, an industry that aimed to provide "hits" for an expanding urban mass market. For the first time, a single song could sell more than a million copies.

By the turn of the century vaudeville, a popular theatrical form descended from music hall shows and minstrelsy, had become the most important medium for popularizing Tin Pan Alley songs. Vaudeville shows consisted of a series of performances — singers, acrobats, comedians, jugglers, dancers, animal acts, and so on. Every city had at least one vaudeville theater.

Tin Pan Alley songs dominated the American music industry for almost 70 years. The romantic parlor song remained popular, as did "Irish" and waltz songs. *Plantation songs*, descended from the minstrel song tradition, were also popular. One of the best-known and most successful composers of plantation songs was James A. Bland (1854-1911), the first commercially successful black songwriter. Bland wrote some 700 songs and became popular in Europe. In stylistic terms, Bland's songs are similar to those of his white contemporaries. Although Bland has been criticized by some later observers for pandering to white misconceptions about blacks and lionized by others for his supposed championing of "authentic" African-American music, the real situation is more complex. Bland, the product of a comfortable middle-class home, was determined to achieve the same level of economic success as his white contemporaries. Like many other black musicians who sought access to mass markets, he had to work through the imagery of blackness already established in mainstream popular music.

One of many sheet music publishing houses lining New York City's West 28th Street ("Tin Pan Alley") between 1885 and the mid-20th century. The street possibly acquired its nickname because some likened the clashing sound of many pianos playing different tunes to that of a child banging on a tin pan.





Cover art for the original program of "*Oklahoma*!," the seminal Broadway musical that marked the first collaboration between the composer Richard Rogers and lyricist/librettist Oscar Hammerstein II .

Top: Sheet music cover for "Alexander's Ragtime Band," (1911) the composer Irving Berlin's first big hit. Right: The artist Jay Campbell Phillips depicted, often stereotypically, southern African Americans, including the banjo strumming example depicted here.

A performance of George Gershwin's "American folk opera" *Porgy and Bess* (1935). An American classic, the work fuses jazz and blues elements into an operatic form.

The Ragtime Craze, 1896–1918

This same period saw the intensification of African-American musical influence, a trend best represented by **ragtime**. Ragtime emerged in the 1880s, its popularity peaking in the decade after the turn of the century. In some regards the ragtime craze was a descendant of minstrelsy, but the ragtime style also represented a more intimate engagement with African-American musical techniques and values, due to the increasing involvement of black songwriters and performers in the music industry.

The word "ragtime" derives from the African-American term "to rag," meaning to enliven a piece of music by shifting melodic accents onto the offbeats (a technique known as **syncopation**). This technique has the effect of intensifying the beat and creating rhythmic momentum. The basic patterns of ragtime music were transferred from the banjo, a stringed instrument developed by slave musicians from African prototypes. Ragtime was also influenced by Latin American rhythms such as the Cuban habanera and by marching band music. During the height of its popularity, from the late 1890s until the end of World War I, ragtime music was played by every imaginable type of ensemble: dance bands, brass bands, country string bands, symphony orchestras, banjo and mandolin ensembles, and, in the classic ragtime style, by solo pianists.

Irving Berlin entertaining Women's Army Corps members during the Second World War.

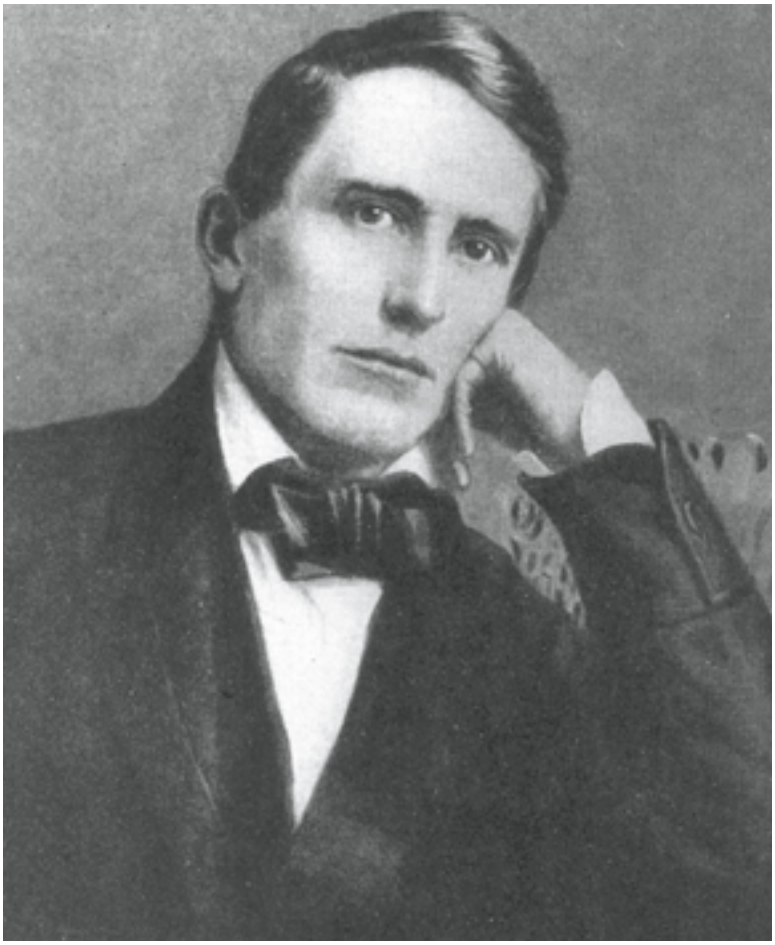
The growing market for ragtime songs at the turn of the century suggests a continuation of the white fascination with African-American music first evinced in minstrelsy. Tin Pan Alley composers simply added syncopated rhythms and ersatz black dialects to spice up bland popular tunes. The idea was to create songs novel enough to stimulate the audience's interest but not so radical that they required a great deal of work on the listener's part. Just as the songs performed by blackface minstrels were European in style, most popular ragtime songs were march-style songs with "irregular" rhythms added for effect.

Some young white Americans associated themselves with ragtime to rebel against the cultural conservatism of their parents and other authority figures, a pattern that became even more prominent during the jazz age of the 1920s and the rock 'n' roll era of the 1950s.

Ragtime is an interesting example of the complex crosscurrents of American musical history: rooted in the mastery of European musical forms by talented black musicians, the style circulated across boundaries of race, class, region, and generation and was put to different uses by various communities.

Stephen Foster

Stephen Collins Foster (1826-64) is the first important composer of American popular song and the first American to make his living as a full-time professional songwriter. His earliest musical experiences growing up on the western frontier near Pittsburgh were dominated by the sentimental song tradition, considered a mark of gentility by upwardly mobile Americans. Foster also incorporated into his work the various song styles popular in mid-century America: ballads, Italian light opera, Irish and German songs, and minstrel songs. Foster was a master at creating simple but compelling combinations of melody and text, later referred to as "hooks." His compositions were heard everywhere: in saloons, theaters, variety shows, and band concerts. His biggest hit, "Old Folks at Home," sold 100,000 sheet music copies in 1851. This is equal to a million-seller today. Some of Foster's songs became part of American oral tradition, passed from generation to generation.



Foster's success as a "hit maker" depended on the public's ability to read the arrangements of his songs published on sheet music and in songbooks. During this period, people often performed music in their homes. The piano remained a center of domestic music-making in the United States until the 1920s, when commercial radio was introduced.

Foster's life ended in obscurity and poverty at the age of 37. His first success, "Oh! Susanna," was sold to a music publisher for $100. The publisher made thousands of dollars from the worldwide hit, but no more money went to Foster. This was a typical situation, for the law covered the rights of music firms but not those of the composers of songs.

Popular Jazz and Swing: AMERICA'S ORIGINAL ART FORM

Jazz music was the anthem for the first well-defined American youth culture. Rebelling against the horrors of mechanized warfare and the straitlaced morality of the 19th century, millions of college-age Americans adopted jazz as a way to mark their difference from their parents' generation.

Admittedly, the ability of youth to indulge in the sorts of up-to-date pastimes portrayed in Hollywood films and novels such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* was strongly affected by their position in society — after all, not everyone could afford luxury automobiles, champagne, and top-flight dance orchestras. However, jazz's attraction as a symbol of sensuality, freedom, and fun does appear to have transcended the boundaries of region, ethnicity, and class, creating a precedent for phenomena such as the swing era, rhythm & blues, and rock 'n' roll .

Jazz, one of America's original art forms, emerged in New Orleans, Louisiana, around 1900. New Orleans's position as a gateway between the United States and the Caribbean, its socially stratified population, and its strong residues of colonial French culture, encouraged the formation of a hybrid musical culture unlike that in any other American city. Jazz emerged from the confluence of New Orleans's diverse musical traditions, including ragtime, marching bands, the rhythms used in Mardi Gras and funerary processions, French and Italian opera, Caribbean and Mexican music, Tin Pan Alley songs, and African-American song traditions, both sacred (the spirituals) and secular (the blues).

The New Orleans-born cornetist and singer Louis Armstrong is commonly credited with establishing certain core features of jazz — particularly its rhythmic drive or swing and its emphasis on solo instrumental virtuosity. Armstrong also profoundly influenced the development of mainstream popular singing during the 1920s and 1930s. Armstrong emerged as an influential musician on the local scene in the years following World War I, and subsequently migrated to Chicago to join the band of his mentor King (Joe) Oliver, playing on what are regarded by many critics as the first real jazz records.

In 1924 Armstrong joined Fletcher Henderson's band in New York City, pushing the band in the direction of a hotter, more improvisatory style that helped to create the synthesis of jazz and ballroom dance music that would later be called swing. By the 1930s Armstrong was the best–known black musician in the world, as a result of his recordings and film and radio appearances. Armstrong's approach was shaped by the aesthetics of early New Orleans jazz, in which the cornet or trumpet player usually held the re-

Clockwise from left: jazz stars have become national icons, even depicted on postage stamps; Members of the New Wave Jazz Band at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival; "America's classical music" is inextricably linked to the African American experience. Here a student works on a Dr. Martin Luther King Day mural.

sponsibility of stating the melody of the song being played. Throughout his career Armstrong often spoke of the importance of maintaining a balance between improvisation (or "routining," as he called it) and straightforward treatment of the melody. "Ain't no sense in playing a hundred notes if one will do," Armstrong is reported to have said on his 70th birthday.

Dance Music in the "Jazz Age"

Although jazz was initially regarded by the music industry as a passing fad, its impact on the popular music mainstream represented an important cultural shift. A new subculture emerged from the white upper and middle classes, symbolized by the "jazz babies" or "flappers" (emancipated young women with short skirts and bobbed hair) and "jazzbos" or "sheiks" (young men whose cool yet sensual comportment was modeled on the film star Rudolph Valentino). This movement involved a blend of elements from "high culture" — the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald, the paintings of Pablo Picasso, the plays of Eugene O'Neill — and from popular culture, particularly styles of music, dance, and speech modeled on black American prototypes. The idea of the jazz age was promoted by the mass media, especially by Hollywood.

Following on the heels of ragtime, the jazz craze represented the intensification of African-American influence on the musical tastes and buying habits of white Americans. While it did increase opportunities for some black musicians, the world of dance orchestras remained strictly segregated. African-American musicians appeared with increasing frequency in fancy downtown cabarets and hotel ballrooms (although they could enter these places only as employees, not customers). During the late 1920s white jazz fans began to frequent nightclubs in African-American neighborhoods. In New York's Harlem and the South Side of Chicago, these "black and tan" cabarets offered their predominantly white clientele an array of jazz music. Performing at Harlem's famous Cotton Club, the great jazz pianist and composer Duke Ellington developed a style that he called "jungle music," featuring dense textures and dark, growling timbres.

"The King of Jazz"

The most successful dance band of the 1920s was the Ambassador Orchestra, led by Paul Whiteman. Whiteman's role in the history of jazz is ambiguous. On the one hand, he promoted a watered-down, "safe" version of jazz to the public. On the other hand, Whiteman did make some important contributions, widening the market for jazz-based dance music (and paving the way for the Swing Era), hiring brilliant young jazz players and arrangers, and establishing a level of professionalism that was widely imitated by dance bands on both sides of the color line. He also defended jazz against its moral critics (whom he called "jazz-klanners") and carried on aspects of the brilliant African-American musician Jim Europe's vision of a symphonic version of jazz. (The 1924 debut of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* featured Whiteman's band.)

The Ambassador Orchestra, which comprised only 10 players in 1920, had expanded to 19 by the end of the decade (five brass instruments, five reed instruments, four violins, and a five-piece rhythm section). In 1927 Whiteman began to hire some of the leading white jazz musicians of the time, including the brilliant cornetist Bix Beiderbecke and the Dorsey brothers (Jimmy and Tommy), who would later achieve success as bandleaders in the Swing Era. At concerts and dances he used a small "band-within-a-band," made up of the best jazz musicians in his orchestra, to play "hot" music. Whiteman hired pioneering dance band arrangers — Ferde Grofé and Bill Challis — to craft his band's "book" (library of music), and he helped to promote jazz-influenced crooners such as Bing Crosby.

"The King of Swing"

Beginning in 1935, a new style of jazz-inspired music called "swing," initially developed in the late 1920s by black dance bands in New York, Chicago, and Kansas City, transformed American popular music. The word "swing" (like "jazz," "blues," and "rock 'n' roll ") derives from African-American English. First used as a verb for the fluid, "rocking" rhythmic momentum created by well-played music, the term was used by extension to refer to an emotional state characterized by a sense of freedom, vitality, and enjoyment. References to "swing" and "swinging" are common in the titles and lyrics of jazz records made during the 1920s and early 1930s.

Swing music provides us with a window onto the cultural values and social changes of the New Deal era. The basic ethos of swing music was one of unfettered enjoyment, "swinging," "having a ball." The au-

Clockwise from left: Jazz composer, pianist, and bandleader Duke Ellington; the band leader Paul Whiteman popularized a less improvised, more "respectable" form of jazz; trumpeter John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie pioneered bebop and Afro-Cuban jazz.

dience for swing spanned the social boundaries that separated ethnic groups, natives and immigrants, southerners and northerners, city dwellers and country folk, the working class, the expanding middle class, and progressive members of the educated elite.

For the swing era, the mythic "founding moment" occurred in the summer of 1935, when a dance band led by a young jazz clarinetist named Benny Goodman (1909–1986) embarked on a tour of California. Goodman was not only a skilled jazz improviser but also a strict disciplinarian, insisting that his musicians play their parts with

From left: The composer, lyricist, and pianist Eubie Blake (seated) performed his distinctive mix of ragtime, jazz, and popular music well into his nineties. Louis Armstrong said of cornetist Bix Beiderbecke (1903–1931): "Lots of cats tried to play like Bix; ain't none of them play like him yet." Frank Sinatra (left) and Bing Crosby, considered by many the two finest "crooners."

Left: Bandleader Guy Lombardo's (1902 – 1977) popular New Year's Eve telecasts became a national tradition. Right: The Dorsey brothers, Tommy, on trombone, left, and Jimmy, alto saxophone, right, each led influential bands. Their 1950s television show *Stage Show* helped introduce Elvis Presley to a national audience.

perfect precision. The Goodman band's appearances on the national Let's Dance radio broadcasts and its hot syncopated style built a sizable following.

In a seeming echo of the hype surrounding Paul Whiteman's public image, the press crowned Benny Goodman the "King of Swing." However, there are several big differences between the so-called kings of jazz and swing. While Whiteman remained a classical musician all his life, Goodman was in fact a fine (if often under-rated) improviser who studied jazz closely. While Whiteman's band played syncopated ballroom dance music in a style that borrowed its name from jazz, Goodman's really was a jazz band, performing music closely modeled on the innovations of African-American musicians, composers, and arrangers. And while Paul Whiteman's dance orchestras of the 1920s never included musicians of color, Goodman was the first prominent white bandleader to hire black players, beginning with the pianist Teddy Wilson in 1936 and followed by the brilliant young electric guitarist Charlie Christian, vibraphonist Lionel Hampton, and trumpeter Cootie Williams.

Although big bands relied heavily on arrangements of popular Tin Pan Alley songs, the blues—with its 12-bar structure, three-chord pattern, blue notes, and call-and-response patterns—also remained a mainstay of swing music. Of all the big bands, the one most closely associated with the blues tradition was led by the jazz pianist William "Count" Basie (1904–84). Basie, born in New Jersey, gained much of his early experience as a player and bandleader in Kansas City, Missouri. During the 1920s and early 1930s black dance bands in Kansas City had developed their own distinctive approach to playing hot dance music. Kansas City-style was more closely linked to the country blues tradition than the style of the New York bands, and it relied more heavily upon **riffs** (repeated patterns). One important influence on the rhythmic conception of the K.C. bands was the boogie-woogie blues piano tradition, in which the pianist typically plays a repeated pattern with his left hand, down in the low range of the piano, while improvising **polyrhythmic** patterns in his right hand.

Another prominent swing era band was the Duke Ellington Orchestra, led by Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1899–1974), widely regarded as one of the most important American musicians of the 20th century. Ellington was an experimenter. He devised unusual musical forms, combined instruments in unusual ways, and created complex, distinctive tone colors.

A third leading swing band was that of Glenn Miller (1904–1944). From 1939 until 1942 the Miller Orchestra was the most popular dance band in the world, breaking record sales and concert attendance records. Miller developed a peppy, clean-sounding style that appealed to small-town midwestern people as well as to the big-city, East and West Coast constituency that had previously sustained swing music. In terms of sheer popular success, the Miller band marked the apex of the swing era, racking up 23 Number-One recordings in a little under four years.

Neither jazz nor its far-reaching influence on American music and culture ended in the 1930s, however. Swing, also known as big band music, grew out of and was strongly influenced by jazz. Beyond swing, every succeeding generation of musicians has defined its own style of jazz, responding to and challenging the aural legacy that began in New Orleans. Bebop, cool jazz, fusion jazz, soul jazz, and acid jazz are just a few of the varieties that have grown from the original tree of sound.

Tin Pan Alley: CREATING "MUSIC STANDARDS"

During the 1920s and 1930s professional tunesmiths, working within a set of forms inherited from 19th-century popular music and influenced by the craze for ragtime and jazz music, wrote some of the period's most influential and commercially successful songs. These composers, many of them Jewish immigrants, found in music an industry comparatively free of the social prejudice that often blocked their advancement in other fields. Their efforts yielded many standards, songs that have remained in active circulation until this day.

The American "Musical Standard"

During the 1920s and 1930s, composers and lyricists fused earlier song structures to produce a verse-refrain form which, in the hands of more inventive composers, allowed for all sorts of interesting variations. While the verse came to be regarded as mere introduction, the refrain, the part that is usually considered "the song," typically comprised four sections of equal length, in the pattern **A B B A**.

- The A section presents the main melody, the basic pattern of the lyrics, and a set of chord changes to support them.
- The music of the A section is then repeated with new lyrics; often some slight melodic changes will be introduced, making this A, i.e., a variation of A.
- The B section, or "**bridge**," is then introduced. The bridge presents new material — a new melody, chord changes, and lyrics.
- Finally, the A melody and chord changes are repeated with new lyrics and sometimes with further melodic alterations or with an addition called a "tag," producing an A, a second variation of A.

Listeners familiar with this form might typically expect that an A section should at some point be followed by a contrasting section with different chords, words, and melody (the bridge), and that the performance would likely end with the A section heard again. Composers, singers, and **arrangers** — the individuals whose choice of key, tempo, instrumental accompaniment, and so on matched a given singer's vocal strengths to a particular song — became adept at fulfilling these expectations while introducing just enough unexpected variation to keep the listener's attention. The best Tin Pan Alley composers could work creatively within these structural limitations.

Tin Pan Alley songs did not, by and large, deal directly with the troubling issues of their times; popular songs and the musical plays and films in which they appeared instead typically aimed to help people escape the pressures of daily life. Both in lyrical content and performance style, the Tin Pan Alley song explored the ideal of romantic love. Unlike the old European ballads — in which the action of characters was often narrated from a vantage point outside the singer's own experience — the first-person lyrics characteristic of Tin Pan Alley songs (suggested in such song titles as "What'll I Do?,"

"Why Do I Love You?," "I Get A Kick Out of You," and "Somebody Loves Me") allowed the listener to identify his or her personal experience more directly with that of the singer. Tin Pan Alley songwriters by and large adopted a down-to-earth manner of speech, as in songs like "Jeepers Creepers, Where'd You Get Those Peepers?," that suggested that any working stiff could experience the bliss of romantic love or, through the "torch song," suffer the heartbreak of a romance gone sour.

The development of a singing style called crooning reinforced these links between popular music and personal experience. Listening to the early recordings of vaudeville performers such as Eddie Cantor or Al Jolson, whose exaggerated styles were developed for performances in large theaters, one feels that one is being "sung at" (sometimes even "shouted at"). A Bing Crosby or Fred Astaire recording, made after the introduction of the electric microphone in the mid-1920s, is an altogether different sort of musical experience, a private experience. The singer's silky, gentle, nuanced voice invites you to share the most intimate of confidences; it speaks to you alone. Sometimes, the listener imaginatively enters the voice of the singer, and a kind of psychological fusion occurs between two individuals who will never actually meet face to face.

Giants of Tin Pan Alley

Jewish immigrants, particularly from central and eastern Europe, played a central role in the early 20th-century music business, as composers, lyricists, performers, publishers, and promoters. In vaudeville and then throughout the entertainment industry, they often encountered less anti-Semitism than was present in other established businesses. As a result, many, but by no means all of the era's most successful songwriters were Jews.

Irving Berlin, born Israel, or Isadore Baline (1888-1989) arrived with his family on New York City's Lower East Side at the age of four, a refugee from the Russian pogroms. He was on the streets by age eight, selling newspapers, and at 14 he left home for good. He worked as a guide for a blind street musician, as a saloon pianist, and as a singing waiter.

The song that first brought Berlin mass acclaim was "Alexander's Ragtime Band," published in 1911. It sold 1.5 million copies almost immediately. Like other Tin Pan Alley composers, Berlin wrote songs for the Broadway stage and for the new medium of sound film (he wrote music for 18 films). An Irving Berlin song, "Blue Skies," was performed by Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer.* The 1942 film *Holiday Inn* introduced one of Berlin's most successful songs, "White Christmas," and music for the 1946 Broadway musical *Annie Get Your Gun*, composed by Berlin, probably included more hit songs

Left to right: Eddie Cantor was a favorite of Broadway, radio, and early television audiences. Originally a secretary, Ethel Merman (1908–1984), transitioned first to vaudeville then debuted on Broadway in the Gershwin brothers musical *Girl Crazy* (1930), which also marked the debut of Ginger Rogers.

Left: George Gershwin penned classical and jazz standards and, with his brother, the lyricist Ira Gershwin, many of the tunes that today comprise "The Great American Songbook." Right: Composer Richard Rodgers, seated, with lyricist partner Lorenz Hart. After Hart's death, Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II would create a second string of smash hit Broadway musicals, including the revolutionary *Oklahoma!*

Left: Eleanor Powell and Fred Astaire dance to "Begin the Beguine," a 1938 hit recorded by the clarinetist Artie Shaw and His Orchestra and written by Cole Porter, right, whose sophisticated rhythms and complex musical forms marked him as one of America's leading songwriters.

than any other show ("They Say It's Wonderful," "The Girl That I Marry," "Doin' What Comes Naturally," and "There's No Business Like Show Business," among others). Berlin was the most prolific and consistent of Tin Pan Alley composers, with an active songwriting career spanning almost 60 years.

The career and achievements of George Gershwin, born Jacob Gershowitz (1898-1937), the son of an immigrant leatherworker, are unique. At the time of his tragically early death at the age of 38 (from a brain tumor), he was already world famous, and to this day he remains probably the most widely known of American composers. Alone among his many distinguished Tin Pan Alley contemporaries, Gershwin sought and achieved success in the world of concert music ("Rhapsody in Blue," "An American in Paris") as well as popular music. Together with his brother the lyricist Ira Gershwin, George composed scores of Tin Pan Alley classics, including standards like "I Got Rhythm," "Fascinating Rhythm," and "Oh, Lady Be Good!"

Both Gershwin's popular songs and his "classical" works demonstrate a sophisticated incorporation of stylistic devices derived from African-American sources — such as syncopated rhythms and blue notes — that far surpasses the rather superficial use of such devices in most other white American music of the time. Gershwin's greatest composition, *Porgy and Bess* (1935), which he called an "American folk opera," represents his most thoroughgoing synthesis of European classical, mainstream popular, and African-American stylistic influences — a synthesis that remains his own but that also celebrates the wide diversity of American culture.

Cole Porter (1891-1964) was born into a wealthy Indiana family and studied classical music at Yale, Harvard, and the Schola Cantorum in Paris. His lasting contributions to the "American songbook" include "Night and Day," "I Get a Kick Out of You," and "I've Got You Under My Skin." Richard Rogers (1902-1979), who produced many of the period's finest songs in collaboration with lyricists Lorenz Hart (1895-1943) and Oscar Hammerstein II, was the college-educated son of a doctor and a pianist. Among his hits were "Isn't It Romantic" and "Blue Moon."

The songs written by these men and a few others represent an achievement in terms of both quality and quantity that appears extraordinary to this day. Many of their finest efforts fed the long-standing and mutually beneficial relationship between Tin Pan Alley and the nearby Broadway theaters, which enjoyed great success featuring musical revues and "Follies" which, with their sequences of diverse skits, songs, dances, and performers, were an obvious successor to vaudeville. Berlin, Porter, the Gershwin brothers, Rodgers and Hart, and other prominent songwriters of this period all wrote the scores to Broadway shows.

Popular song both reflected and helped to shape the profound changes in American society during the 1920s and 1930s: the intermixing of high and low cultures, the adoption of new technologies and expansion of corporate capitalism, the increasingly intimate interaction of white and black cultures during a period of virulent racism, and the emergence of a truly national popular culture. These songs no longer dominate popular taste as they used to. Nonetheless, they continue to be rediscovered by new generations of musicians and listeners. Tin Pan Alley and the singing style known as crooning were important (if often unrecognized) influences on rhythm & blues and rock 'n' roll during the 1950s and 1960s. Many Tin Pan Alley songs are still used by contemporary jazz musicians as a basis for improvising. Current pop stars still perform them — for example, Elvis Costello's recording of "My Funny Valentine" (composed by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart), Willie Nelson's version of "Blue Skies" (Irving Berlin), Bono's duet with Frank Sinatra on "I've Got You Under My Skin" (Cole Porter), and the Smashing Pumpkins' revival of "My Blue Heaven" in 1996. In the early 1990s the veteran crooner Tony Bennett appeared on MTV's *Unplugged* series, finding a new audience among fans of "alternative" music, who valued the combination of emotional intensity and sophistication in Bennett's style and in many of the old standard songs themselves.

Early Music of the American South: "RACE RECORDS" AND "HILLBILLY MUSIC"

The terms race and hillbilly were used by the American music industry from the early 1920s until the late 1940s to classify and advertise southern music. "Race records" were recordings of performances by African-American musicians produced mainly for sale to African-American listeners. "Hillbilly" or "old-time" music, on the other hand, was performed by, and mainly intended for sale to, southern whites. Although there were some exceptions, the music industry in general reflected patterns of segregation more widespread in American society. Paradoxically, these records were also one of the main means by which music flowed across the boundaries of race.

Although a clear distinction was drawn between race music and hillbilly music — each of which comprised dozens of specific styles — the two had a number of important features in common. Both bodies of music originated mainly in the American South and were rooted in long-standing folk music traditions. As they entered the mass marketplace, both blended these older rural musical styles with aspects of national popular culture, including the minstrel show, vaudeville, and the musical forms, poetic themes, and performance styles of Tin Pan Alley pop. Race music and hillbilly music both grew out of the music industry's efforts to develop alternative markets during a national decline in record sales and were disseminated across the country by new media — including electric recording, radio, and sound film — and by the process of urban migration, which affected the lives of millions of rural Americans during the 1920s and 1930s. And both bodies of music provided the basis for forms of popular music that emerged after World War II (rhythm & blues, country and western, and rock 'n' roll), extending their appeal across regional and, in the end, international boundaries.

Race Records

The music industry's discovery of black music (and southern music in general) can be traced to a set of recordings made in 1920, featuring the black vaudeville performer Mamie Smith (1883-1946). Perry Bradford, a successful black songwriter and music store owner, brought Smith to the attention of the Okeh Record Company. A record that featured Smith performing two of Bradford's songs was released in July 1920, and although Okeh made no special effort to promote it, sales were unexpect-

Blues singer Stavin' Chain on guitar, Lafayette, Louisiana, 1934. His name may refer to the chain encircling often black prisoners' ankles as they labored in deep South chain gangs.

Among the most popular blues vocalists of the 1920s and 1930s, Bessie Smith (1894–1937) influenced profoundly subsequent generations of jazz singers.

edly high. Smith reentered the studio two months later and recorded "Crazy Blues," backed with the song "It's Right Here for You (If You Don't Get It … 'Tain't No Fault of Mine)." Okeh advertised "Crazy Blues" in black communities and sold an astounding 75,000 copies within one month (at that time, 5,000 sales of a given recording allowed a record company to recoup its production costs, meaning that any further record sales were almost all profit). Mamie Smith's records were soon available at music stores, drugstores, furniture stores, and other outlets in northern and midwestern cities, and throughout the Deep South.

The promotional catchphrase "race music" was first applied by Ralph Peer (1892-1960), a Missouri-born talent scout for Okeh Records who had worked as an assistant on Mamie Smith's first recording sessions. Although it might sound derogatory today, the term "race" was used in a positive sense in urban African-American communities during the 1920s and was an early example of black nationalism; an individual who wanted to express pride in his heritage might refer to himself as "a race man." The term was soon picked up by other companies and was also widely used by the black press. The performances released on race records included a variety of musical styles — blues, jazz, gospel choirs, vocal quartets, string bands, and jug-and-washboard bands — as well as oral performances such as sermons, stories, and comic routines. Not all recordings featuring African-American artists were automatically classified as race records. For example, recordings by black dance orchestras or jazz bands with a substantial white audience were

listed in the mainstream pop record catalogs. A few records by African-American artists even found their way into the hillbilly catalogs.

The emergence of race records set a pattern that has been repeated many times in the history of American popular music, in which talented entrepreneurs, often connected with small, independent record labels, take the lead in exploring and promoting music outside the commercial mainstream.

The 1920s also saw the emergence of African-American-owned record companies. The first of these was Black Swan, founded in 1921 in New York by Harry Pace. In announcing the new company, Pace stated that it intended to meet "a legitimate and growing demand" among the 12 million people of African descent in the United States.

By 1927 a total of some 500 race records were being issued every year. Throughout the 1920s African Americans bought as many as 10 million blues and gospel recordings a year, almost one per person, an astonishingly high figure when compared with the mainstream record market, especially considering that many black people lived in poverty. Many young people in these communities thus grew up with the sound of a phonograph as part of their everyday experience. Migrants from rural communities who had relocated to urban centers returned periodically, bringing with them the latest hit records and creating a continual flow of musical styles and tastes between city and country.

It is clear that the music business did not create race music or its intended audience out of thin air. It would be more accurate to say that the basis for an African-American audience already existed and the companies, hungry for new markets, moved to exploit (and in some cases to shape) this sense of a distinctive black identity. This process in turn helped to create a truly national African-American musical culture — for the first time, people living in New York City, Gary (Indiana), Jackson (Mississippi), and Los Angeles could hear the same phonograph records at around the same time. It was during this period that the first generation of national black music stars emerged, including Bessie Smith, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Robert Johnson.

Early Country Music: Hillbilly Records

"Hillbilly music," later rechristened "country and western music" or simply "country music," developed mainly out of the folk songs, ballads, and dance music of immigrants from the British Isles. The first generation of hillbilly recording artists was also familiar with the sentimental songs of Tin Pan Alley, and this material became an important part of the country music repertoire, alongside the older Anglo-American ballads and square dance tunes.

Interestingly, it was the race record market, established in the early 1920s, that led to the first country music recordings. The first commercially successful hillbilly record, featuring a north Georgia musician named Fiddlin' John Carson, was made by Okeh Records in 1923

Left: A concert marks the 75th anniversary of the 1927 "Bristol Sessions," when record producer Ralph Peer recorded Appalachian region "hillbilly music" artists, among them Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family. Right: The "Texas Troubadour" Ernest Dale Tubb helped launch the honky-tonk style of country music.

during a recording expedition to Atlanta. This field trip, led by Ralph Peer and a local record store owner named Polk Brockman, was actually aimed at locating new material for the race record market.

The new medium of radio was in fact crucial to the rapid growth of the hillbilly music market. In 1920 the first commercial radio station in the United States (KDKA in Pittsburgh) began broadcasting, and by 1922 there were more than 500 stations nationwide, including 89 in the South. Many farmers and working-class people who could not afford to buy new phonograph records were able to purchase a radio on a monthly installment plan and thereby gain access to a wide range of programming.

Most hillbilly musicians of the 1920s and 1930s did not start out as full-time professional musicians. The country music historian Bill C. Malone has noted that the majority worked as textile mill workers, coal miners, farmers, railroad men, cowboys, carpenters, wagoners, painters, common laborers, barbers, and even an occasional lawyer, doctor, or preacher. One important exception to this rule was Vernon Dalhart (1883-1948), a Texas-born former light-opera singer who recorded the first big country music hit. Dalhart's recording career, which had begun in 1916, had started to wane, and he talked the Victor Company into letting him record a hillbilly number, in an effort to cash in on the genre's growing popularity. In 1924 Dalhart recorded two songs: "Wreck of the Old 97," a ballad about a train crash in Virginia, and "The Prisoner's Song," a sentimental amalgam of preexisting song fragments best known for the line "If I had the wings of an angel, over these prison walls I would fly." This was the first big hillbilly hit, a million-seller that contributed to the success of the fledgling country music industry.

Two of the most popular acts of early country music were the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers. The Carter Family, born in the isolated foothills of the Clinch Mountains of Virginia, are regarded as one of the most important groups in the history of country music. The leader of the trio was A. P. "Doc" Carter (1891-1960), who collected and arranged the folk songs that formed the inspiration for much of the group's repertoire; he also sang bass. His wife, Sara (1899-1979), sang most of the lead vocal parts and played autoharp or guitar. Sister-in-law Maybelle (1909-78) sang harmony, played steel guitar and autoharp, and developed an influential guitar style, which involved playing the melody on the bass strings while brushing the upper strings on the off-beats for rhythm.

The Carter Family were not professional musicians when their recording career started in 1927 — as Sara put it when she was asked what they did after the Bristol session, "Why, we went home and planted the corn." The Carters' image, borne out in radio appearances and interviews, was one of quiet conservatism; their stage shows were simple and straightforward, and they generally avoided the vaudeville circuit and promotional tours.

If the Carter Family's public image and musical repertoire evoked the country church and the family fireside, Jimmie Rodgers (1897-1933) was the quintessential rambler, a footloose man who carried home in his heart but drank deeply of the changing world around him. He was the most versatile, progressive, and widely influential of all the early country recording artists. The ex-railroad brakeman from Meridian, Mississippi, celebrated the allure of the open road and chronicled the lives of men who forsook the benefits of a settled existence: ramblers, hobos, gamblers, convicts, cowboys, railway men, and feckless lovers. His influence can be seen in the public images of Hank Williams, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, and almost every contemporary male country music star.

Both race and hillbilly music represent a process of hybridization between southern folk music and Tin Pan Alley pop. The singers may stand at some distance from the rural origins evoked by their songs, yet are able to perform in a style respectful of those origins. Finally, many of the recordings are early examples of a phenomenon that will become more important as we move on through the history of American popular music: the crossover hit, that is, a record that moves from its origins in a local culture or marginal market to garner a larger and more diverse audience via the mass media.

Rhythm & Blues: FROM JUMP BLUES TO DOO-WOP

R&B, as the "rhythm and blues" genre came to be known, was a loose cluster of styles, rooted in southern folk traditions and shaped by the experience of returning military personnel and hundreds of thousands of black Americans who had migrated to urban centers such as New York, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles during and just after World War II.

The top R&B recordings of the late 1940s and early 1950s included swing-influenced "jump bands," Tin Pan Alley-style love songs performed by crooners, various styles of urban blues, and gospel-influenced vocal harmony groups. The reappearance of small independent record labels provided an outlet for performers who were ignored by major record companies. The development of portable tape recorders made record producers and studio owners out of entrepreneurs who could not previously have afforded the equipment necessary to produce master recordings. They visited nightclubs to find new talent, hustled copies of their records to local record store owners, and attempted to interest a major label in a particular recording or artist with crossover potential. By 1951 there were over 100 independent labels slugging it out for a piece of the R&B market.

Jump Blues

Jump blues, the first commercially successful category of rhythm & blues, flourished during and just after World War II. During the war, as shortages made it more difficult to maintain a lucrative touring schedule, the leaders of some big bands were forced to downsize. They formed smaller combos, generally made up of a rhythm section and horn players. These jump bands specialized in hard-swinging, boogie-woogie-based party music, spiced with humorous lyrics and wild stage performances.

The most successful and influential jump band was the Tympany Five, led by Louis Jordan, who began making recordings for Decca Records in 1939. Jordan was tremendously popular with black listeners and able to build an extensive white audience during and after the war.

Jordan's first big hit, "G.I. Jive," reached Number One on Billboard's "Harlem Hit Parade," as the R&B chart was labeled in the earlier 1940s, held the top spot on the pop music charts for two weeks, and sold over a million copies. From 1945 through 1948 Jordan, working with a white record producer named Milt Gabler, recorded a string of crossover hits, including "Caldonia," "Stone Cold Dead in the Market," and "Ain't Nobody Here but Us Chickens." The popularity of the Tympany Five was reinforced by a series of films featuring the band. These short musical features were rented to individual movie theaters and shown as a promotional device a few days before the

band was due to hit town. Jordan's films, like his records, were popular in white as well as black movie theaters, even in the Deep South. However, the fact that his music appealed to an interracial audience should not lead us to assume that Jordan's career was unaffected by racism.

As R&B artists like Jordan began to attract a more diverse audience, the separation between white and black fans was maintained in various ways. Sometimes white R&B fans sat in the balcony of a segregated theater or dance hall, watching the black dancers below in order to pick up the latest steps. At other times a rope was stretched across the middle of the dance floor to "maintain order." Then, as at other times, the circulation of popular music across racial boundaries did not necessarily signify an amelioration of racism in everyday life.

Saxophonist Louis Jordan, "The King of the Jukebox," enjoyed "cross-over" appeal from the R&B "race" charts to the largely white-dominated pop music scene of the 1940s. R&B, urban blues, and early rock 'n' roll artists, all built upon Jordan's work.

Blues Crooners

If jump bands represented the hot end of the R&B spectrum, the cool end was dominated by a blend of blues and pop singing sometimes called the blues crooner style. The roots of this urbane approach to the blues reached back to a series of race recordings (records made by and for African Americans, including especially those who had joined the "Great Migration" to northern cities but wished to enjoy the Southern-flavored African-American music they had grown up with) made in the late 1920s and 1930s by pianist Leroy Carr and guitarist Scrapper Blackwell. Carr developed a smooth, laid-back approach to blues singing that contrasted sharply with the rough-edged rural blues recordings of Charley Patton and Blind Lemon Jefferson, and he attracted a national black audience. The late 1930s jazz recordings of the King Cole Trio, with its instrumentation of piano, bass, and guitar, were a more immediate influence on postwar blues crooners, although Cole's later recordings took him well into the pop mainstream.

The most successful blues crooner of the late 1940s and early 1950s was a soft-spoken Texas-born pianist and singer named Charles Brown. Brown, who studied classical piano as a child, moved to Los Angeles in 1943 and joined Johnny Moore's Three Blazers, a small combo that played pop songs for all-white parties in Hollywood and a more blues-oriented repertoire in the black nightclubs along L.A.'s Central Avenue. His smooth, sensitive, somewhat forlorn vocal style attracted attention, and he began to develop a national reputation

with the release of "Drifting Blues." In 1948 Brown left to form his own quartet and had a Number One R&B hit the following year with "Trouble Blues." Over the next three years he recorded 10 Top 10 hits for Aladdin Records and became one of the most popular R&B singers nationwide. A handsome, dapper, gracious man, Brown projected an image of ease and sophistication. His repertoire — which included blues, pop songs, and semiclassical numbers such as the Warsaw Concerto — suggested a man in touch with his roots but not constrained by them. Brown was never able to break through to the pop charts — Columbia Records offered him a solo contract in 1947, but he turned it down out of loyalty to his bandmates. But he was rediscovered by a new generation of R&B fans in the 1980s and went on to develop a successful international touring career, culminating in a Grammy nomination.

Chicago Electric Blues

A very different urban blues tradition of the postwar era, Chicago electric blues, derived more directly from the Mississippi Delta tradition of Charley Patton and Robert Johnson. Chicago was the terminus of the Illinois Central railroad line, which ran up through the Midwest from the Mississippi Delta. Although Chicago's black neighborhoods were well established before World War II, they grew particularly rapidly during the 1940s, as millions of rural migrants came north in search of employment in the city's industrial plants, railroad shops, and slaughterhouses. The South Side's nightclubs were the center of a lively black music scene that rivaled New York's Harlem and L.A.'s Central Avenue. The musical taste of black Chicagoans, many of them recent migrants from the Deep South, tended toward rougher, grittier styles, closely linked to African-American folk traditions but also reflective of their new, urban orientation.

Chicago electric blues was a response to these demands. It could be argued that the rural blues tradition had almost completely died out as a commercial phenomenon by the time of World War II, as the urbanizing black audience sought out more cosmopolitan forms of entertainment. From this point of view, the mid-1930s recordings of Robert Johnson represent the final flowering of the Delta blues. However, the old Delta blues style didn't really die out; it emerged in a reinvigorated, electronically amplified form. The career of Muddy Waters (McKinley Morganfield) exemplifies these developments. Waters was "discovered" in the Mississippi Delta by the folk music scholars John and Alan Lomax, who recorded him in the late 1930s for the Library of Congress. In 1943 he moved to Chicago and found work in a paper mill, while continuing to work as a musician at nightclubs and parties. In response to the noisy crowds, and to the demand for dance music, Waters soon switched from the acoustic to the electric guitar (1944) and eventually expanded his group to include a second electric guitar, piano, bass, amplified harmonica, and drum set. During the late 1940s and early 1950s he was the most popular blues musician in Chicago, with a sizeable following among black listeners nationwide.

The leading artist of the 1950s Chicago blues scene, Muddy Waters influenced artists in genres ranging from rhythm-and-blues to country, from folk to jazz. The Rolling Stones reportedly took their name from Waters' 1948 "Rollin' Stone" recording.

Like many of the great Mississippi guitarists, Waters was a master of bottleneck slide guitar technique. He used his guitar to create a rock-steady, churning rhythm, interspersed with blues licks, which were counterpoised with his voice in a kind of musical conversation. The electric guitar, which could be used to create dense, buzzing tone colors (by using **distortion**) and long sustained notes that sounded like screaming or crying (by employing **feedback**), was the perfect tool for extending the Mississippi blues guitar tradition. Waters's singing style — rough, growling, moaning, and intensely emotional — was also rooted in the Delta blues. And the songs he sang were based on themes long central to the tradition: on the one hand, loneliness, frustration, and misfortune, and on the other, independence and sexual braggadocio.

Doo-Wop

Another important thread in the tapestry of postwar rhythm & blues was vocal harmony groups. (Although this tradition is today sometimes called "doo-wop," the earliest performers did not use this term.) During the postwar era, young singers trained in the black church began to record secular material. Many of these vocal groups were made up of secondary school kids from the black neighborhoods of cities such as New York and Washington, D.C., and interviews with the singers indicate that these groups served a number of functions: a means of musical expression, an alternative or adjunct to urban gangs, and a route to popularity. Few members of these groups initially saw singing as a way to make a living; this perception changed rapidly after the first vocal R&B groups achieved commercial success.

The vocal harmony group most responsible for moving away from the pop-oriented sound of the Mills Brothers and creating a new, harder-edged sound more closely linked to black gospel music, was the Dominoes, led by vocal coach Billy Ward, a strict disciplinarian and savvy entrepreneur. In 1950 Ward started rehearsing with a number of his most promising students and a 17-year old tenor singer named Clyde McPhatter, whom he hired away from a gospel group. The Dominoes' first big hit was "Sixty Minute Man." But it was the Dominoes' next big hit, "Have Mercy Baby," that pushed vocal-group R&B firmly in the direction of a harder-edged, more explicitly emotional sound. "Have Mercy Baby" was the first record to combine the 12-bar blues form and

Left to Right: The Flamingos, a popular 1950s doo-wop group. Billy Ward and the Dominoes, a top R&B group of that decade, launched the career of Jackie Wilson. Its hits included "Sixty Minute Man."

the driving beat of dance-oriented rhythm & blues with the intensely emotional flavor of black gospel singing. The song's commercial success was due to the passionate performance of Clyde McPhatter. McPhatter, the son of a Baptist preacher and a church organist, was like many other R&B musicians insofar as the black church played a major role in shaping his musical sensibility. While in formal terms "Have Mercy Baby" is a 12-bar blues, it is essentially a gospel performance dressed up in R&B clothing. With a few changes in the lyrics, McPhatter's performance would have been perfectly at home in a black Baptist church anywhere in America.

To be sure, this mixing of church music with popular music was controversial in some quarters, and McPhatter and later gospel-based R&B singers faced occasional opposition from some church leaders. But in retrospect the postwar confluence of the sacred and secular aspects of black music, and its commercial exploitation by the music business, seem inevitable. Although it did not appear on the pop music charts, "Have Mercy Baby" attracted an audience among many white teenagers, who were drawn by its rocking beat and emotional directness. In addition, the Dominoes were featured on some of the earliest rock 'n' roll tours, which typically attracted a racially mixed audience. Although McPhatter soon left the Dominoes to form a new group called the Drifters, the impact of his rendition of "Have Mercy Baby" was profound and lasting — the record is a direct predecessor of the soul music movement of the 1960s, and of the recordings of Ray Charles, James Brown, and Aretha Franklin.

Doo-wop quartet The Delroys.

Big Mama Thornton

The daughter of a Baptist minister, **Big Mama Thornton** began her career as a singer, drummer, harmonica player, and comic on the black vaudeville circuit. Her imposing physique and sometimes malevolent personality helped to ensure her survival in the rough-and-tumble world of con artists and gangsters.

In the early 1950s Thornton arrived in Los Angeles and began working with Johnny Otis, a Greek American who was a major force in the R&B scene. Looking for material for Big Mama to record, Otis consulted two white college kids who had been pestering him to use some of their songs. Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller composed a song that they felt suited her style: "Hound Dog." The combination of Leiber and Stoller's humorous country-tinged lyric, Johnny Otis's drumming, and Thornton's powerful, raspy singing produced one of the top-selling R&B records of 1953.

Most people today know "Hound Dog" through Elvis Presley's version of the song. If you are familiar only with Presley's version, the original recording may come as a revelation. From the very first phrase Thornton lays claim to the song. Her deep, commanding voice, reprimanding a ne'er-do-well lover, projects a stark image of female power rarely expressed in popular music of the 1950s. The lyrical bluntness is reinforced by the musical accompaniment, which includes a bluesy Delta-style electric guitar, a simple drum part played mainly on the tom-toms, and hand clapping. The tempo is relaxed, and the performance energetic but loose. The song's basic form is a 12-bar blues, but the band adds a few extra beats here and there in response to Thornton's phrasing, another feature that links this urban recording to the country blues. The final touch, with the all-male band howling and barking in response to Big Mama's commands, reinforces the record's humor and its informality.

James Brown and Aretha Franklin

Among many significant artists whose names became linked with "soul music" in the 1960s, James Brown and Aretha Franklin stand out as exceptionally popular performers with multidecade careers; in fact, they are the top two rhythm-blues artists of this entire time period. Both brought experience with gospel singing to bear upon their performance of secular material. They each developed an intense, flamboyant, gritty, and highly individual approach to the singing of pop music.

JAMES BROWN

If Ray Charles employed "soul" as an avenue of approach to diverse material, **James Brown** revealed different tendencies from the beginning. His first record, "Please, Please, Please" (1956), is indicative: while the song is in the format of a 1950s R&B ballad, Brown's vocal clings to repetitions of individual words so that sometimes the activity of an entire strophe will center around the syncopated, violently accented reiterations of a single syllable. The result is startling and hypnotic. Like a secular version of a transfixed preacher, Brown leaves traditional notions of grammar and meaning behind in an effort to convey a heightened emotional condition. Later, Brown would leave the structures of 1950s R&B far behind and abandon chord changes entirely in many pieces. By the later 1960s a characteristic Brown tune like "There Was a Time" offered music focused on the play of rhythm and timbre. While the singer does tell a story, the vocal melody is little more than informal reiterations of a small number of brief, formulaic pitch shapes; the harmony is completely static, with the instrumental parts reduced to repeating riffs or held chords. But this description does the song scant justice — when performed by Brown its effect is mesmerizing. Brown's fully developed version of soul is a music of exquisitely focused intensity, devoted to demonstrating that "less is more."

In the politically charged "Say It Loud — I'm Black and I'm Proud," which reached Number One on the R&B charts in 1968, Brown pares his vocal down to highly rhythmic speech. Although the term would not be in use for at least a decade, "Say It Loud — I'm Black and I'm Proud" is for all intents and purposes a "rap" number, a striking anticipation of important black music to come. In the wake of the urban folk movement of the early 1960s, in which white singers presented themselves as spokespeople for the political and social concerns of their generation, Brown led black musicians in assuming a comparable role for the black community. Soul musicians came to be seen as essential contributors to — and articulators of — African-American life and experience.

From the late 1960s through the disco music of the 1970s, from the beginnings of rap on through the flowering of hip-hop in the 1990s, no other single musician has proven to be as influential on the sound and style of black music as James Brown. His repetitive, riff-based instrumental style, which elevated rhythm far above harmony as the primary source of interest, provided the foundation on which most dance-oriented music of the period is based.

Brown's focus on rhythm and timbre demonstrates his strong conceptual links with African music styles. The minimizing or elimination of chord changes and the consequent de-emphasis of harmony makes Brown's music seem, both in conception and in actual sound, a lot less "Western" in orientation than a good deal of the African-American music that preceded it. On the one hand, this quality resonated with many aspects

James Brown

of African-American culture in the late 1960s and the 1970s, when there was a marked concern with the awareness of African "roots." On the other hand, one could argue that the acceptance and wide influence of the "non-Western" aspects of Brown's music provided a foundation for the recent explosion of interest in world music of many sorts.

ARETHA FRANKLIN

Like Ray Charles and James Brown, **Aretha Franklin** underwent a long period of "apprenticeship" before she achieved her breakthrough as a pop star in 1967. After a less than stellar career at Columbia Records, from 1960 to 1966, she went over to Atlantic Records, where Ahmet Ertegun and Jerry Wexler encouraged her to record strong material well suited to her spectacular voice and engaged stellar and empathetic musicians to back her up. The rest, as they say, is history. Beginning with "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)" in 1967, Franklin produced an extraordinary stream of hit records over a five-year period that included 13 million-sellers and 13 Top 10 pop hits. Although the later 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a decline in Franklin's status as a top hit maker, she was never absent from the charts, and the mid-1980s brought her a resurgence of popularity. As of 1994 Franklin was still a presence on the charts.

Franklin grew up with gospel music; her father was the pastor for a large Baptist congregation in Detroit. Franklin's first recordings were as a gospel singer, at the age of 14, and she occasionally returned to recording gospel music in the midst of her career as a pop singer — most spectacularly with the live album *Amazing Grace* (1972), which was recorded in a church. *Amazing Grace* introduced legions of pop music fans to the power of gospel music. The album was a Top 10 bestseller and the most successful album of Franklin's entire career; it sold over two million copies.

What is most important about Aretha Franklin is the overwhelming power and intensity of her vocal delivery. Into a pop culture that identified female singers with gentility, docility, and sentimentality, her voice blew huge gusts of fresh air. When she demanded "respect" or exhorted her audience to "think about what you're trying to do to me," the strength of her interpretations moved her songs beyond the traditional realm of personal relationships into the larger political and social spheres. Especially in the context of the late 1960s, with the civil rights and black power movements at their heights, and the movement for women's empowerment stirring, it was difficult not to hear large-scale ramifications in the records of this extraordinary African-American woman. Although Aretha Franklin did not become an overtly political figure, she made strong political and social statements through the character of her performances.

Franklin was not only a vocal interpreter on her records but also a major player in many aspects of their sound and production. She wrote or co-wrote a significant portion of her repertoire. Franklin is a powerful keyboard player; her piano is heard to great advantage on many of her recordings. And she also provided vocal arrangements, colored by the call and response of the gospel traditions in which she was raised.

Franklin symbolized female empowerment not only in the sound of her records but also in the process of making them. By the time she recorded a tune called "Sisters Are Doin' It for Themselves" in 1985, she was telling a story that had been true of her for a long time. In the 1960s female empowerment was something new and important in pop music. And neither its novelty nor its importance was lost on the rising generation of female singer-songwriters, such as Laura Nyro and Joni Mitchell, whose ascent to prominence began directly in the wake of Aretha Franklin's conquest of the pop charts.

Aretha Franklin

Jazz Gallery

During the swing era, jazz artists stood at the forefront of American popular music. In subsequent decades, genres from rock to country to hip-hop mostly supplanted jazz in this role. But jazz continued to influence other forms of American music, even as it branched out in new directions. Bee-bop, acid, fusion, and other styles appealed to smaller and more specialized — but equally enthusiastic — audiences. The photographs here portray a number of post-swing jazz giants, artists of unsurpassed creativity, sophistication, and talent.

Grammy-Award winning jazz singer Cassandra Wilson at the Avo Session in Basel, Switzerland, in 2006.

Pulitzer Prize winner Wynton Marsalis, a contemporary champion of "traditional" jazz.

"Hard bop" drummer Art Blakey played with many of his era's leading jazz stars, and founded the Jazz Messengers.

Saxophonist Ornette Coleman initiated the "free jazz" style, which abandoned fixed harmonic patterns to permit greater improvisation.

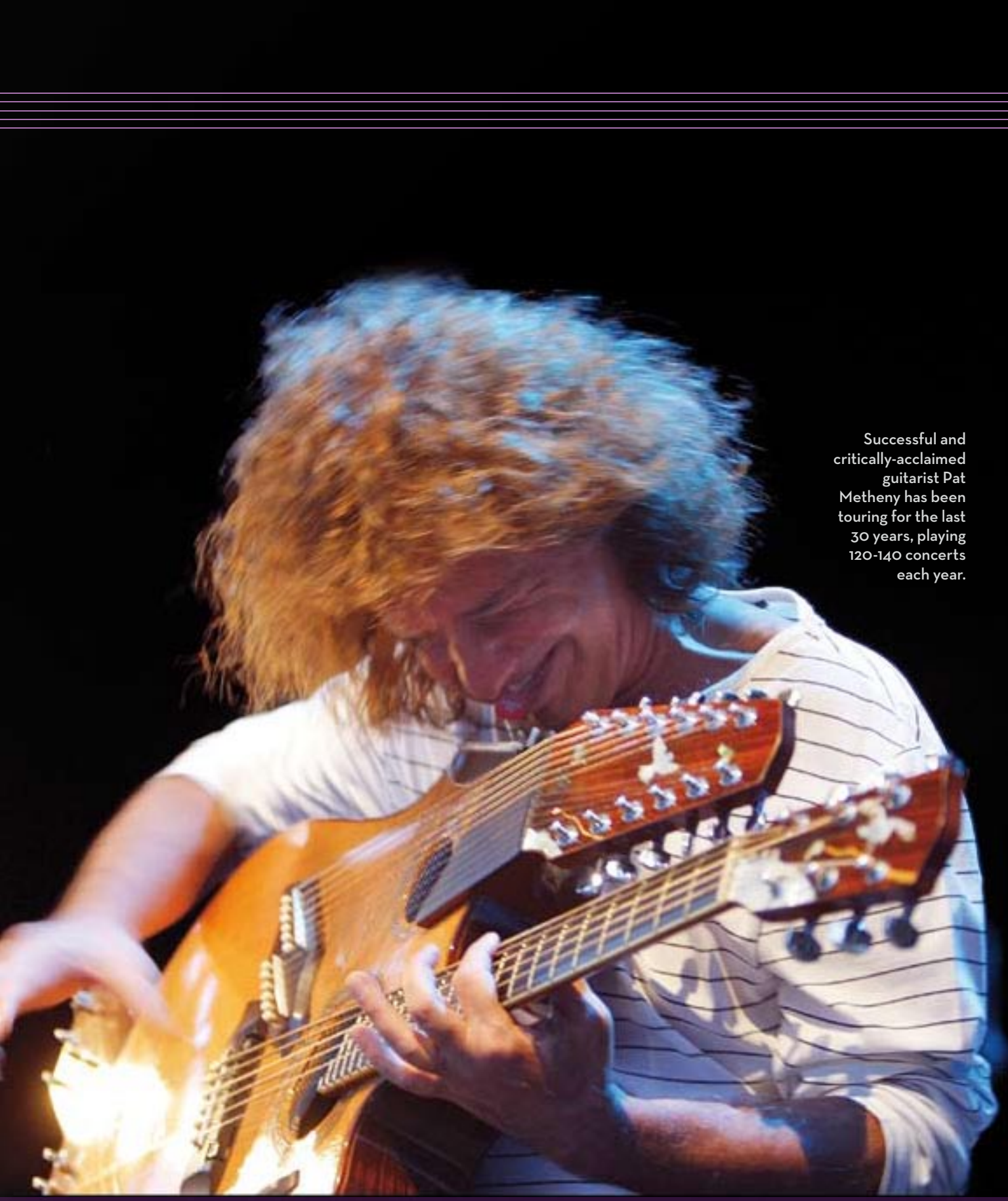
Thelonious Monk, one of the most inventive pianists of any musical genre, helped usher in the bebop revolution in the 1940s.

A protégé of Miles Davis, pianist Herbie Hancock led a number of seminal jazz-rock fusion groups.

Known as "Bird," Charlie Parker was the principal genius stimulating the chromatically and rhythmically complex bebop style.

"First Lady of Song" Ella Fitzgerald was the most popular female jazz singer in the United States for more than half a century.

The supremely creative John Coltrane explored the limits of bop and free jazz improvisation.



Successful and critically-acclaimed guitarist Pat Metheny has been touring for the last 30 years, playing 120-140 concerts each year.

Clockwise from above: Trumpeter Miles Davis stood at the forefront of multiple jazz revolutions, from 1950s "cool jazz" to 1970s jazz-rock-funk fusion. Trumpeter-vocalist Chet Baker battled drug addiction, but his distinctively sad tone was unduplicated. Stan Getz pioneered the West Coast "cool jazz" style and later introduced U.S. audiences to the Brazilian-inflected Bossa Nova.

Lester "Prez" Young was famous for performing with jazz greats Billie Holiday and Count Basie and for playing his tenor saxophone at an angle.

Country Music: SONGS OF TRADITION AND CHANGE

Country music has always been about the relationship between the countryside and the city, home and migration, the past and the present. This is not surprising if we consider the main audience for this music during the 1920s: rural people whose way of life was being radically transformed by the mechanization of agriculture and changes in the American economy, and migrants who left home to find jobs and establish new lives in the city.

"You wouldn't read my letter if I wrote you
You asked me not to call you on the phone
But there's something I'm wanting to tell you
So I wrote it in the words of this song ..."

Honky-Tonk singer Hank Thompson, "The Wild Side of Life"

Early country music records provide us with a stereoscopic image of tradition in a period of rapid change: on the one hand, ballads and love songs, images of the good old days, family, hearth and home; and on the other, tales of broken love, distance from loved ones, and restless movement from town to town.

Country and western music mushroomed in popularity after World War II. Although the South remained a lucrative area for touring performers, the wartime migration of millions of white southerners meant that huge and enthusiastic audiences for country and western music had also been established in the cities and towns of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and California. The postwar era saw the rapid spread of country music programming on radio, and by 1949 over 650 radio stations were making live broadcasts of country performers. In 1950 — when Capitol Records became the first major company to set up its country music operation in Nashville, Tennessee — it was estimated that country music accounted for fully one-third of all record sales nationwide.

In some ways, the range of country music styles during the postwar era resembles contemporaneous developments in rhythm & blues. There were country crooners, who specialized in a smooth, pop-oriented style; bluegrass musicians, who focused on the adaptation of traditional southern music in a package suitable to the times; and honky-tonk musicians, who performed in a hard-edged, electronically amplified style, and wrote songs about the trials and tribulations of migrants to the city and about gender roles and male/female relationships during a period of intense social change.

While some musicians sought to move country music onto the mainstream pop charts, others reached back into the musical traditions of the American South, refurbishing old styles to fit new circumstances.

While this "neotraditionalist" impulse took many forms, the most influential was probably the rise of bluegrass music, a style rooted in the venerable southern string band tradition. The pioneer of bluegrass music was Bill Monroe (1911-97), born in Kentucky. Monroe started playing music at a young age and was influenced by his uncle (a country fiddler) and by a black musician and railroad worker named Arnold Schulz, whose influence can be seen in the distinctive bluesy quality of Monroe's music; the interaction between white and black styles has long been an important aspect of country music. In 1935 Bill formed a duet with his brother, Charlie. The Monroe Brothers played throughout the southeastern United States, creating a sensation with their vocal harmonies and virtuoso fiddle and guitar playing. In 1938 Bill started his own group, the Blue Grass Boys, and the following year joined the cast of the *Grand Ole Opry* (a hugely popular country music radio program. Its regular "member" artists were widely acknowledged as the genre's elite. Since 1974 it has been broadcast from the *Grand Ole Opry* House, a 4,400 seat venue outside Nashville, Tennessee).

A third major direction in postwar country and western music is represented by honky-tonk — sometimes called "hard country" — a style that conveyed the sound and ethos of the roadside bar or juke joint. During the Great Depression the oil fields of Texas and Oklahoma provided a lucrative (and rare) source of steady, well-paid work, attracting thousands of men from the American Southwest and farther afield. When Prohibition was repealed in 1933, the formerly illegal drinking establishments frequented by these men multiplied and became a major source of employment for country and western musicians. These honky-tonks, as the people who frequented them called them, provided relief, in the form of drinking and dancing, from the daily pressures of work on the oilfields. By the postwar period thousands of these rowdy nightspots were sprinkled across the American Southwest and beyond.

Singer, songwriter, mandolin player Bill Monroe was the founder of bluegrass country music.

Country and western music was crucial to the profitability of honky-tonks. Many of them featured colorfully glowing jukeboxes, the mechanical record players that had grown rapidly in popularity during and after World War II. In adjusting to the honky-tonk milieu, country musicians made a number of changes in their performance practice. First, many of the old-time songs about family and the church seemed out of place in the new setting. Musicians began to compose songs about aspects of life directly relevant to many of their listeners: family instability, the unpredictability of male-female relationships, the attractions and dangers of alcohol, and the importance of enjoying the present. When the rural past was referred to, it was usually through a veil of nostalgia and longing. Honky-tonk vocal styles were often directly emotional, making use of "cracks" in the voice and stylistic features from black music, such as melisma and blue notes. Country musicians adapted traditional instruments and playing techniques to the rowdy atmosphere of the juke joint. The typical instrumentation of a honky-tonk band included a fiddle, a steel guitar, a "takeoff" (lead) guitar, a string bass, and a piano. The guitars were electronically amplified, and the musicians played with a percussive, insistent beat (sometimes called "sock rhythm") well suited to dancing.

When today's musicians talk about playing "good old country music," they are most often referring to the postwar honky-tonk style rather than to the rural folk music of the South. Honky-tonk stars such as Ernest Tubb, Hank Williams, Lefty Frizzell, Hank Snow, George Jones, and Webb Pierce dominated the country and western charts during the early and mid-1950s. Although their fortunes declined after the emergence of rock 'n' roll , honky-tonk music remains the heart and soul of modern country music.

In the 1960s, many of the younger country artists at this time, while not directly embracing the rockabilly styles of Elvis Presley or Buddy Holly, wanted to update the sound of their honky-tonk roots. They opted for a newly sophisticated approach to the vocal presentation and instrumental arrangement of country music, a highly influential approach that came to be known as "countrypolitan," a fusion of "country" and "cosmopolitan." Nashville was at the center of this development, and the style was also often called the "Nashville sound."

Patsy Cline (1932-63) began her career as a hit maker in 1957 with her recording of "Walkin' After Midnight," which was successful on both the country and the pop charts. Her two big hits of 1961, "I Fall to Pieces" and "Crazy," reflected a particular kind of sensibility: they were ballads of broad appeal, in no sense "teen" records, performed by Cline in a manner that, while sophisticated in phrasing and articulation, had sufficient hints of rural and bluesy inflections to show where her roots lay. The crooning background voices gave these records a pop sheen, while the high-register piano remained evocative of the honky-tonk origins of this type of music. Cline continued to be a significant presence on both country and pop charts until her premature death in a plane crash in early 1963.

The records made by rock'n'roller Elvis Presley from 1960 on (after he returned from a tour of duty in the army) reflected an increasingly

Roy Acuff, the "King of Country Music," with the Smokey Mountain Boys in 1943 at Nashville, Tennessee's famous Grand Ole Opry.

Top left: Pasty Cline is said to be the most popular female country singer in recording history. Her song "Crazy" is still heard on jukeboxes throughout the U.S.
Top right: Jim Reeves' popularity transcended national boundaries.

Bottom left: Hank Snow is credited with launching Elvis Presley's career at the Grand Old Opry in 1954.
Bottom right: Charley Pride is one of the Top 20 best-selling country artists of all-time.

eclectic set of influences, but the Nashville sound is especially prominent among them. Good illustrations of this would be his 1961 hit "Can't Help Falling in Love" and his 1965 recording of "Crying in the Chapel," originally a country hit in 1953.

It might seem surprising that the Nashville sound's influence extended into rhythm & blues in the early 1960s, but given the constant interchanges between white and black musicians throughout the history of American popular music, this really shouldn't strike us as unexpected. Two hits by Solomon Burke, "Just Out of Reach (Of My Two Open Arms)" and "Cry to Me," sound for all the world like country records performed by a black vocalist, and a large number of similar-sounding records were made in the wake of their success, by Burke and by other artists associated with rhythm & blues. By the later 1960s the career of Charley Pride — an African American who set out to appeal principally to the country audience — was in full swing; by 1983 Pride had racked up an astonishing 29 Number-One country hits, thus illustrating once again how colorblind music and its audiences really can be some of the time. Notable in more recent years were a 1994 album entitled *Rhythm Country and Blues*, which paired R&B and country audiences for duets, and Burke's 2006 album, entitled simply *Nashville* — the U.S. city most associated with country music.

During the 1970s, country music became a huge business, reaching out to young and middle-class listeners while at the same time reinforcing its traditional southern and white working-class audience base. In 1974 the *Grand Ole Opry* moved from the run-down Nashville theater where it had been broadcasting since 1941 into a multimillion-dollar facility, complete with a 110-acre theme park called "Opryland." The generally conservative mood of the country — reflected in Richard Nixon's landslide victory over George McGovern in the 1972 presidential election — reinforced country's popularity among the American middle class.

Since that time, country music has continued to grow in popularity and influence. It remains both a significant cultural force and a large, profitable industry. The traditional approach represented by the Nashville sound continues to produce dozens of hits and artists yearly, and for many Americans the Nashville sound is country music. At the same, a range of styles that are usually lumped together, for marketing purposes, as "alt country" (alternative) provide a rich variety of sounds and approaches to music-making while maintaining their ties to the country tradition.

Piano player Floyd Cramer's signature style has been described as a "a lonesome, cowboy sound."

Hank Williams

Hank Williams (1923-53) was the most significant country music figure to emerge during the post-World War II period. In the course of his brief career, Williams wrote and sang many songs that were enormously popular with country audiences; between 1947 and 1953 he amassed 36 Top 10 records on the country charts, including "Lovesick Blues," "Cold, Cold Heart," "Jambalaya (on the Bayou)," and "Your Cheatin' Heart." All of these hits — along with many other Williams songs — have remained country favorites and are established genre "standards." In addition, his songs were successfully covered by contemporary mainstream pop artists, thus demonstrating the wide-ranging appeal of the new country material.

Hank Williams reinvigorated for the postwar country audience the enduring myth of the hard-living, hard-loving rambler. Williams's life tracked that image so closely that one might believe — erroneously — that promoters had custom-designed a suitable biography: born into crushing poverty in Alabama, this son of a sharecropper learned to make his way at an early age by performing on the street, learning from a black street singer named Rufe "Tee-Tot" Payne. By the time he was 16, Williams had his own local radio show; shortly thereafter he formed a band and began touring throughout Alabama. Enormous success came by the time Williams was in his mid-20s, but it did not come without problems. By 1952 he was divorced, had been fired from the Grand Ole Opry (for numerous failures to appear), and was seriously dependent on alcohol and painkilling drugs. He was dead on New Year's Day 1953 at 29, having suffered a heart attack in the back of his car en route to a performance.

Williams affirmed the importance of religious traditions in country music by recording some gospel material. However, the fact that he recorded his sacred tunes under a pseudonym, rather than under his own name, ties him more closely to the practices of black secular singers than to those of most white artists.

Rock 'n' roll : A GENERATION'S IDENTITY

The rise of rock 'n' roll in the mid-1950s transformed the landscape of American popular music, further cementing the popularity of southern-derived styles ultimately derived from the blues and country music, and transforming the teenager into both a marketing concept and a cultural icon. Rock 'n' roll records were played for dances at inner-city, primarily black, public schools, for parties at predominantly white suburban private schools, and for socials in rural settings catering to young people. If you were young in the 1950s in the United Statess, no matter where you lived, no matter what your race or class, rock 'n' roll was your music.

The advent of rock 'n' roll music in the mid-1950s brought enormous changes to American popular music, changes whose impact is still being felt. Styles that had remained on the margins of pop music began to infiltrate and eventually dominate the center. Rhythm & blues and country music recordings were no longer directed to specialized and regionalized markets; they began to be heard on mainstream pop radio, and many could be purchased in music stores nationwide.

The emergence of rock 'n' roll was an event of great cultural significance. But several issues demand our attention: first, rock 'n' roll was neither a "new," nor indeed even a single musical style ; second, the rock 'n' roll era does not mark the first time that music was written specifically to appeal to young people; third, rock 'n' roll was certainly not the first American music to fuse black and white popular styles.

The new audience was dominated by the so-called baby boom generation born immediately following World War II. It was a much younger target group than ever before, a large audience that shared specific characteristics of group cultural identity. These were kids growing up in the 1950s, a period of relative economic stability and prosperity marked by a return to socially and politically conservative ways. This was also the first generation to grow up with television; this new mass medium proved a force of incalculable influence.

The term "rock 'n' roll " was first used for commercial and generational purposes by disc jockey Alan Freed. In the early 1950s Freed discovered that increasing numbers of young white kids were listening to and requesting the rhythm & blues records he played on his nighttime program in Cleveland — records he began to call "rock 'n' roll ." Freed

New York disc jockey Alan Freed coined the phrase "Rock 'n' Roll."

promoted concert tours featuring black artists, playing to a young, racially mixed audience, and promoted them as "rock 'n' roll revues." The term "rock 'n' roll " itself was derived from the many references to "rockin'" and "rollin'" found in rhythm & blues songs and on race records.

The purchase of rock 'n' roll records by kids in the 1950s proved a way of asserting their generational identity through rebellion against adult standards and restrictions. Thus the experience of growing up with rock 'n' roll music became a defining characteristic of the baby boom generation. So it is not surprising that the music catered to this age group, which by the late 1950s had its own distinctive culture and its associated rituals: school and vacation (represented in songs such as "School Day" and "Summertime Blues"), fashions ("Black Denim Trousers and Motorcycle Boots" and "Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polkadot Bikini"), social dancing ("At the Hop" and "Save the Last Dance for Me"), and courtship ("Teen-Age Crush," "Puppy Love," "A Teenager in Love," and "Poor Little Fool"). Some rock 'n' roll songs — for example, "Roll Over Beethoven" and "Rock'n'Roll Is Here to Stay" — announced themselves as emblems of a new aesthetic and cultural order, dominated by the tastes and aspirations of youth.

Rhythm & Blues

Three prominent African Americans represent the rhythm & blues-based side of rock 'n' roll . Chuck Berry was a songwriter/performer who addressed his songs to teenage America (white and black) in the 1950s; Little Richard cultivated a deliberately outrageous performance style that appealed on the basis of its strangeness, novelty, and sexual ambiguity; and Fats Domino's work embodied the continuity of rhythm & blues with rock 'n' roll . Domino was the earliest of the three to become an established performer, but all three crossed over to mainstream success within the first few months following the massive success of the white rocker Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock."

The biggest rock 'n' roll star to come from the country side of the music world was Elvis Presley. In 1955, RCA Victor, a major label, set about trying to turn the "hillbilly cat" into a mainstream performer without compromising the strength of his appeal to teenagers. They succeeded beyond anyone's expectations. Although Presley's television performances were denounced by authorities as vulgar, the shows

Left : Chuck Berry broke racial barriers with tunes such as "Johnny B. Goode" and "Maybellene." Center: Little Richard is known for his piano stylings and exuberant vocals in "Tutti Frutti," "Good Golly, Miss Molly," and other classics. Right: Fats Domino's hits include "Blueberry Hill" and "Ain't That a Shame."

were attended by hordes of screaming young fans and admired on the screen by millions. And Presley's records racked up astronomical sales from 1956 on into the early 1960s, establishing him as the biggest-selling solo artist of rock 'n' roll , and then as the biggest-selling solo recording artist of any period and style—a title he still holds at the beginning of the 21st century!

Presley's extraordinary popularity established rock 'n' roll as an unprecedented mass-market phenomenon. His reputation as a performer and recording artist endured up to his death in 1977 at the age of 42 — and continues beyond the grave. Presley made fine records at many points throughout his career, but his principal importance rests upon his achievements during the early years of rock 'n' roll . In 1956 Presley cut a handful of records that changed the musical world for himself and for those around him, and the unbridled exuberance of his live performances during that era became the model for every kid who wanted to move mountains by strumming a guitar, shaking his hips, and lifting his voice.

According to Rolling Stone Magazine, Wanda Jackson was "the first to bring a woman's intuition" to rock 'n' roll.

Rock 'n' roll Women

The 1950s was an inauspicious time to be seen as a rebellious and empowered young woman. The rebellious, empowered young men of early rock 'n' roll proved controversial enough, and most teenagers were happy admiring them from a safe distance. The pioneering female rocker Wanda Jackson, for instance, recorded a number of classic singles and enjoyed the encouragement and mentoring of Elvis Presley himself — but none of her records became hits. The post-World War II ideal of domestic femininity proved to be powerful and provoked no widespread challenges until the 1960s.

By 1960 America was at last ready to embrace a young female recording artist with a feisty public image, and the teenage Brenda Lee, who became known as "Little Miss Dynamite," was there to fill the bill with engaging rock 'n' roll songs like "Sweet Nothin's" and "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree." Lee also recorded a large proportion of slow, sentimental love songs.

The 1960s: Rock 'n' roll 's Second Generation

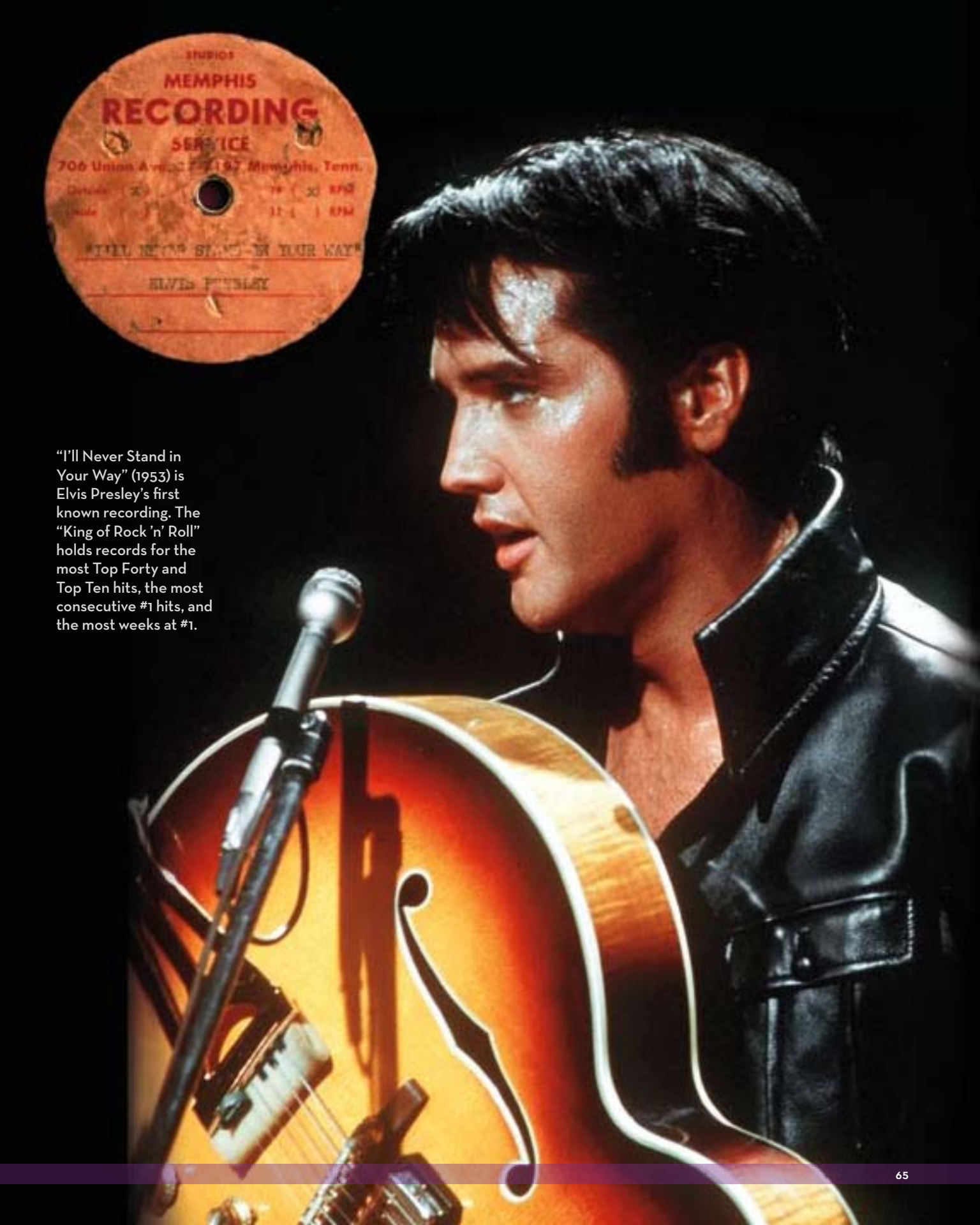
Few eras in American history have been as controversial as the 1960s, a period marked by the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Popular music played an incontestable role in defining the character and spirit of the 1960s. The baby boom generation played a vital role in the political and cultural events of this period, and the boomers were a generation identified with rock 'n' roll .

Three important trends emerged in the early 1960s. A new kind of social dancing, inspired by "The Twist," gave rock 'n' roll music a distinctive set of movements and social customs. Members of the first generation to grow up with rock 'n' roll began to assume positions of shaping power in the music industry. And new stylistic possibilities for rock 'n' roll began to emerge out of California, spearheaded by the Beach Boys.

Brian Wilson formed the Beach Boys in Hawthorne, California, in 1961. The band was achieving national chart hits within a year. Wilson was the first self-conscious second-generation rock 'n' roll er. He explicitly acknowledged his reliance on, and reverence for, his predecessors in the rock 'n' roll field, by covering and quoting from their records. At the same time, he carved out distinctive new ground, by deliberately moving the lyrics and the music of his own songs beyond the territory carved out by his predecessors, into novel areas that were of particular meaning to him, to his time, and to his place in America.

If we were to conceptualize a defining model for the career of a self-sustaining, trend-setting rock group of the 1960s, it would look something like this:

- Start out by demonstrating a mastery of the basic early rock 'n' roll ballad and uptempo styles;
- Create original material based on, and extending, those styles;



"I'll Never Stand in Your Way" (1953) is Elvis Presley's first known recording. The "King of Rock 'n' Roll" holds records for the most Top Forty and Top Ten hits, the most consecutive #1 hits, and the most weeks at #1.

Left: Founding Beach Boys (l. to r.) Mike Love, Al Jardine, Brian Wilson, Dennis Wilson and Carl Wilson became known for their close vocal harmonies. Right: Berry Gordy founded Motown Records. With his unmatched ability to discern popular taste, he launched the careers of many popular music giants.

- Eventually branch out totally beyond the traditional forms, sounds, and lyric content of rock 'n' roll to create something truly different and unique.

The reference point that most people would use for constructing a model like this would probably be the Beatles. But the group that first established this model, and did so with outstanding success, was the Beach Boys. The Beach Boys were in fact a clear, and stated, model for the Beatles, especially during the remarkably productive and innovative years (for both groups) of 1965-67.

Motown

The music of the 1960s includes a remarkable spectrum of styles and influences. In Detroit, Berry Gordy Jr. was creating his own songwriting/producing/marketing organization. Motown was named after the "Motor town," Detroit, the automobile production capital of America. It came to be one of the most stunning African-American business success stories. The intensity and duration of Motown's commercial success reflected the distinctive dual thrust of Gordy's vision.

First, he was determined to keep all of the creative and financial aspects of the business under African-American control. This worked because Gordy had an uncanny ability to surround himself with first-rate musical talent in all aspects of the record-making process, and to maintain the loyalty of his musicians for substantial periods of time. It also worked because Gordy had a shrewd head for business as well as for music, and this leads us to the second element of his visionary plan. Motown's music was not directed primarily at black audiences. Gordy sought to make an African-American pop music addressed to the widest possible listening public.

It is almost as if Gordy launched his enterprise as a kind of counteroffensive against the expropriation of African-American music and the exploitation of African-American musicians that had been as much a part of the early history of rock 'n' roll as it had been of other periods in the development of American popular music. And the unique genius of Gordy was the ability to create a black music aimed right at the commercial mainstream that never evoked the feeling, or provoked the charge, of having sold out. With few exceptions, Motown recordings avoided direct evocations of earlier rhythm & blues forms and styles; 12-bar blues patterns are strikingly rare, as are the typical devices of doo-wop or anything suggestive of the 1950s sounds of Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, or Little Richard. Yet a generalized

blues or gospel manner remained a defining characteristic of Motown's performers; sometimes it could be very subtle, as is often the case with William "Smokey" Robinson, and sometimes much more overt, as is the case with Martha Reeves. This proved sufficient to give a definite African-American slant to the pop-structured, pop-flavored songs that were characteristic of Motown.

Ray Charles and Soul Music

Even as Berry Gordy's Motown recordings defined one stream of 1960s popular music, another hugely talented artist was defining the path that would lead to the "soul" music that appeared later that decade. Ray Charles was a constant presence on the rhythm & blues charts during the 1950s, but major crossover success eluded him until 1959. Charles was never interested in being typecast as a rock 'n' roll er, and he never consciously addressed his recordings to the teen market. As soon as he established himself as a mass-market artist with the blues-based and gospel-drenched "What'd I Say," in 1959, he sought new worlds to conquer; his next record was a highly individual cover of Hank Snow's 1950 hit "I'm Movin' On," one of the biggest country records of all time. Within a year, Charles had achieved his first Number One pop hit with his version of the old Tin Pan Alley standard "Georgia on My Mind."

Charles was not the first artist to assay many different genres of American popular music, and he was only one of many to achieve crossover success. What is it then that made his career so distinctive, that made him such a universally admired pop musician — by audiences, critics, and other musicians — that the appellation "genius" has clung to his name for decades?

Ray Charles was a Grammy-winning singer who blended gospel and blues in heartfelt ballads like "Georgia On My Mind."

Part of it is the astounding range of talents Charles cultivated. He was a fine song-writer, having written many of his early rhythm & blues hits, including classics of the genre like "I've Got a Woman" and "Hallelujah I Love Her So." He was a highly skilled arranger, as well as an exceptionally fine keyboard player who was fluent in jazz as well as mainstream pop idioms. And above all he was an outstanding vocalist, with a timbre so distinctive as to be instantly recognizable and an expressive intensity that, once heard, is difficult to forget. But this still is not the whole story. Charles's most characteristic recordings are not only distinguished, individual statements but also unique and encompassing statements about American popular music style.

Although the term "soul music" would not enter the common vocabulary until the later 1960s, it is clearly soul music that Ray Charles was pioneering in his gospel-blues synthesis of the 1950s. He is now widely acknowledged as the first important soul artist, and his work proved an incalculable influence on James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Curtis Mayfield, Otis Redding, Sly Stone, and innumerable others. When Charles went on to record Tin Pan Alley and country material in the 1960s, far from leaving his soul stylings behind, he brought them along to help him forge new, wider-ranging, and arguably even braver combinations of styles.

The Counterculture and Psychedelic Rock

The explosive entrance of folk rock into the wide arena of American popular culture coincided with the development of increasingly innovative approaches to rock 'n' roll itself. This was a period of increasing political restlessness and ferment in the United States. The youth audience for pop culture was directly implicated in the politics of the Vietnam War, as all young American men between the ages of 18 and 26 were eligible to be drafted into the armed forces. In addition, a significant number of young people were involved with the many organizations, demonstrations, and legal initiatives that characterized the civil rights movement.

During the late 1960s an "alternative" rock music scene established itself in San Francisco. The city had long been a center for artistic communities and subcultures, including the "beat" literary movement of the 1950s, a lively urban folk music scene, and a highly visible and vocal gay community. "Psychedelic rock" encompassed a variety of styles and musical influences, including folk rock, blues, "hard rock," Latin music, and Indian classical music. In geographical terms, San Francisco's psychedelic music scene was focused on the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, center of the hippie movement.

Jefferson Airplane was the first nationally successful band to emerge out of the San Francisco psychedelic scene. Along with the Quicksilver Messenger Service and the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane was one of the original triumvirate of San Francisco "acid rock" bands, playing at the Matrix Club (center of the San Francisco alternative nightclub scene), larger concert venues such as the Avalon Ballroom and Fillmore, and at communal outdoor events such as happenings and be-ins. The Airplane's 1967 LP *Surrealistic Pillow* sold over one million copies. The biggest celebrity in the group was vocalist Grace Slick (b. 1939), who was the most important female musician on the San Francisco scene.

Grace Slick's only serious competition as queen of the San Francisco rock scene came from Janis Joplin (1943-70), the most successful white blues singer of the 1960s. Joplin came to San Francisco in the mid-1960s and joined a band called Big Brother and the Holding Company. Their appearance at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967 led to a contract with Columbia Records, eager to cash in on RCA's success with Jefferson Airplane, and on the growing national audience for acid rock. Big Brother's 1968 album *Cheap Thrill* reached Number One on the pop charts. Joplin's full-tilt singing style and directness of expression were inspired by blues singers such as Bessie Smith and by the R&B recordings of Big Mama Thornton.

Left: The Jefferson Airplane in 1966. Right: Janis Joplin.

Jimi Hendrix, the Guitar Hero

The 1960s saw the rise of a new generation of electric guitarists who functioned as cultural heroes for their young fans. Their achievements were built on the shoulders of previous generations of electric guitar virtuosos — Les Paul, whose innovative tinkering with electronic technology inspired a new generation of amplifier tweakers; T-Bone Walker, who introduced the electric guitar to R&B music in the late 1940s; urban blues musicians such as Muddy Waters and B. B. King, whose raw sound and emotional directness inspired rock guitarists; and early masters of rock 'n' roll guitar, including Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly. Beginning in the mid-1960s, the new guitarists — including Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, Jeff Beck, and the Beatles' George Harrison — took these influences and pushed them farther than ever before in terms of technique, sheer volume, and improvisational brilliance.

Jimi Hendrix was the most original, inventive, and influential guitarist of the rock era, and the most prominent African-American rock musician of the late 1960s. His early experience as a guitarist was gained touring with rhythm & blues bands. In 1966 he moved to London, where he joined up with two English musicians, bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell, forming a band called the Jimi Hendrix Experience. The Experience was first seen in America in 1967 at the Monterey Pop Festival, where Hendrix stunned the audience with his flamboyant performance style. This sort of guitar-focused showmanship, soon to become commonplace at rock concerts, was not unrelated to the wild stage antics of some rhythm & blues performers.

Guitarist Jim Hendrix fused elements of rock, soul, blues, and jazz.

Rock 'n' roll Will Never Die?

During the 1970s, the music industry created a number of rock genres, designed to appeal to the widest possible demographic and promoted on Top 40 radio and television. Musicians as diverse as Led Zeppelin; Stevie Wonder; Elton John; Carole King; Pink Floyd; Paul Simon; Neil Diamond; Crosby, Stills, and Nash; the Rolling Stones; Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention; and Santana were promoted by record companies under the general heading of rock music. By the mid-1980s, the rocker Bruce Springsteen found a large audience. Springsteen's songs reflected his working-class origins and sympathies, relating the stories of still young but aging men and women with dead end jobs (or no jobs at all), who were looking for romance and excitement in the face of repeated disappointments. Springsteen performed with his E Street Band, and their music was characterized by a strong, roots-rock sound that emphasized Springsteen's connections to 1950s and 1960s music. The band even included a saxophone — virtually an anachronism in the pop music of this period — to mark the link with the rhythm & blues and rock 'n' roll of earlier eras.

Purists insist that rock music is past its prime. The times have changed, and so has the spirit of the times. Many others insist just as fervently that rock continues alive and healthy today, and many will agree that it is hard to argue with their evidence. The profusion of forms and genres that can be called, in one way or another, rock music, is astounding. One Web site lists 32 varieties of rock music. Punk, thrash, metal, grunge, country rock, and glam rock, to name just a few, have all developed out of the rock 'n' roll tradition that began in the 1950s. They continue to be played and heard and, just as significantly, to provide the stimulus for new forms and styles of popular music in America and around the world.

Bob Dylan

Beginning in the early 1950s a genre of popular music called "urban folk" began to appear on the pop charts. Artists like the Weavers and their leader Pete Seeger, and, a few years later, the Kingston Trio, and Peter, Paul, and Mary mated political protest themes and an urban intellectual sensibility to a musical style inspired by rural folk music. Urban folk continued to flourish during the early days of rock 'n' roll and into the 1960s. But by 1967 electric instruments and drums had joined Peter, Paul, and Mary's acoustic guitars, and the well-known folk group was in the pop Top 10 singing "I Dig Rock'n'Roll Music"! The individual responsible for this shift was the man who had written their biggest acoustic hit, "Blowin' in the Wind." He was also the man who, virtually single-handedly, dragged urban folk music into the modern era of rock. His name was **Bob Dylan**.

Dylan (born Robert Zimmerman) first established himself as an acoustic singer-songwriter in New York City's urban folk scene. The early 1960s was a period of explosive growth for acoustic urban folk music. The baby boomers were reaching college age, demonstrating increasing cultural and

Bob Dylan playing the harmonica and acoustic guitar in 1963. In 2006, he was still touring and performing.

political interests and awareness, and they represented an expanding audience for traditionally based folk music and for newly composed "broadsides" on the issues of the day (such as the Cold War with the Soviet Union, the testing and stockpiling of nuclear arms, and racial bigotry).

Dylan's contemporaries included gifted performers such as Joan Baez and Judy Collins, and talented songwriters such as Tom Paxton and Phil Ochs. But Dylan stood out early for the remarkable quality of his original songs, which reflected a strong gift for poetic imagery and metaphor and a searing intensity of feeling, sometimes moderated by a quirky sense of irony, and for his rough-hewn performance style, combining aggressive vocal, guitar, and harmonica and demonstrating affinities to rural models in blues and earlier country music.

In addition to writing impressive topical songs like "Blowin' in the Wind," Dylan distinguished himself as a composer of more intimate but highly original songs about human relationships. The year 1965 was pivotal in Dylan's career; he moved from being the most distinctive songwriter among American urban folk artists to being an epochal influence on the entirety of American popular culture.

Early in 1965 Dylan released his fifth album, *Bringing It All Back Home*, in which acoustic numbers shared space with songs using electric guitar and drums. The album featured several songs that carried Dylan's flair for intense and unusual poetic imagery into the realm of the surreal. One such song, "Mr. Tambourine Man," was covered by the fledgling California rock group the Byrds; their version of "Mr. Tambourine Man" soared to Number One in June 1965, thus becoming the first landmark folk-rock hit. The lesson was not lost on Dylan, who returned to the recording studio early in the summer with a rock band to cut his own breakthrough single, "Like a Rolling Stone." This six-minute, epic pop single certified that a sea change was taking place in American popular culture.

By the mid-1960s changes within rock 'n' roll were in the wind. But Dylan's electric style and other manifestations of folk rock had the effect of an enormous injection of growth hormones into the pop music scene. Suddenly, it was all right for rock 'n' roll to be as "adult" as its baby boomer audience was now becoming, and rock 'n' roll abruptly grew up into rock. Pop records on serious subjects, with political and poetical lyrics, sprang up everywhere; before long, this impulse carried over into the making of ambitious concept albums. The later 1960s flowered into a period of intense and remarkable innovation and creativity in pop music.

Despite the popularity of "Like a Rolling Stone" and a few singles that followed, Dylan never really established himself as primarily a "singles artist." Rather, he was the first important representative of another pop phenomenon: the rock musician whose career was sustained essentially by albums. Although his influence was at its peak in the 1960s, Dylan has continued to be a widely admired and closely followed artist into the new century. Never content to be pigeonholed or to fall into a predictable role as elder statesman for any movement or musical style, Dylan has over the course of his career produced a distinctive, heterogeneous, and erratic output of albums that represent a singular testament to the spirit of pop music invention. Among these albums may be found examples of country rock (*Nashville Skyline*, 1969), what would later be termed Christian rock (*Slow Train Coming*, 1979), and even latter-day forays back into traditional acoustic folk material (*Good as I Been to You*, 1992)—along with many examples of the folk-rock approach that initially sealed his place in the pantheon of American music. *No Direction Home* (2005), an Emmy-award documentary directed by Martin Scorsese, chronicles the evolution of Dylan's career, one that remains productive, with Dylan still touring and recording tirelessly, and challenging his audiences to guess what his next move might be.

Music: THE BUSINESS

To understand the history of American popular music, we need to learn about the workings of the music business. The production of popular music typically involves the work of many individuals performing different roles.

The music business shapes both the production of popular music and the means by which it is transmitted to the consumer. From the 19th century until the 1920s, sheet music was the principal means of disseminating popular songs to a mass audience. This process typically involved a complex network of people and institutions: the composer and lyricist who wrote a song; the publishing company that bought the rights to it; song pluggers, who promoted the song in stores and convinced big stars to incorporate it into their acts; the stars themselves, who often worked in shows that toured along a circuit of theaters controlled by yet other organizations; and so on, right down to the consumer, who bought the sheet music and performed it at home.

The rise of radio, recording, and movies as the primary means for popularizing music added many layers of complexity to this process. Today hundreds of people will have a hand in producing the music you listen to. In mainstream pop music, the **composer** and **lyricist** are still important; the songs they write are reworked to complement a particular performer's strengths by an **arranger**, who decides which instruments to use to accompany them, what key the song should be in, how many times it should be repeated, and a host of other details. The **A&R** (artists and repertoire) personnel of a record company seek out talent, often visiting nightclubs and rehearsals to hear new groups. The **producer** of a record plays several roles: convincing the board of directors of a record company to back a particular project, shaping the development of new "talent," and often intervening directly in the recording process. Engineers work in the studio, making hundreds of important decisions about the balance between voice and instruments, the use of effects such as echo and **reverb**, and other factors that shape the overall "sound" of a record. The publicity department plans the advertising campaign, and the public relations department handles interactions with the press.

The emergence of rock 'n' roll in the 1950s illustrates how this model adapted to changes in technology, popular taste, and the emergence of an increasingly influential youth culture. The overall vitality of the American economy after World War II helped push the entertainment industry's profits to new levels. Sales of record players and radios expanded significantly after the war.

Total annual record sales in the United States rose from $191 million in 1951 to $514 million in 1959. This expansion was accompanied by a gradual diversification of mainstream popular taste, and by the reemergence of independent record companies, whose predecessors had been wiped out 20 years before by the Great Depression. Most of these smaller companies — established by entrepreneurs in New York and Los Angeles, and in secondary centers such as Chicago, Cincinnati, Nashville, Memphis, and New Orleans — specialized in rhythm & blues and country and western recordings, which had begun to attract a national mass audience. This process was viewed with a mixture of interest and alarm by the directors of the "majors" (large record companies such as RCA Victor, Capitol, Mercury, Columbia, MGM, and Decca), which still specialized mainly in the music of Tin Pan Alley, performed by crooners. A few of the majors — for example, Decca, which had already made millions from the sale of R&B and country records — did manage to produce some early rock 'n' roll hits. Other large record companies took a couple of years to react to the emergence of rock 'n' roll . RCA Victor, for example, scored a Number One hit in 1956 with Kay Starr's rendition of "Rock and Roll Waltz" (a song that described a teenager watching her parents try to dance to the new music, accompanied by music more akin to a ballroom waltz than to rock 'n' roll). But RCA also signed the **rockabilly** singer Elvis Presley and set to work transforming him into a Hollywood matinee idol and rock 'n' roll 's first bonafide superstar.

The sales charts published in industry periodicals like *Billboard* and *Cashbox* during the 1950s chronicle changes in popular taste, the role of the indies in channeling previously marginal types of music into the pop mainstream, and the emergence of a new teenage market. The charts also reveal a complex pattern of competition among musical styles. As an example, let's have a look at the *Billboard* charts for July 9, 1955, when Bill Haley and the Comets' "Rock around the Clock" became the first rock 'n' roll hit to reach the Number One position on the "Best Sellers in Stores" chart. This event is cited by rock historians as a revolutionary event, the beginning of a new era in American popular culture. However, two very different recordings, reminiscent of earlier styles of popular music, held the Number One positions on the jukebox and radio airplay charts on July 9 — the Latin American ballroom dance hit "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White," by Perez Prado and His Orchestra, and "Learning the Blues," performed by the former big-band crooner Frank Sinatra with the accompaniment of Nelson Riddle and His Orchestra. And lest we assume that this contrast in styles represented a titanic struggle between small and large record companies, it should be noted that all three of the records were released by majors (Decca, RCA Victor, and Capitol, respectively).

The record that pushed "Rock Around the Clock" out of the Number One position two months later was "The Yellow Rose of Texas" (a 19th-century minstrel song), performed in a deliberately old-fashioned singalong style by the Mitch Miller Singers. Miller was the powerful director of the **A&R** (artists and repertoire) department at Columbia Records, and in that role had helped to establish the careers of pop crooners such as Doris Day, Tony Bennett, and Frankie Laine. He was also an arch-enemy of rock 'n' roll music and of its increasing influence on AM radio programming, which he derided as being geared to "the eight- to 14-year-olds, to the pre-shave crowd that make up 12 percent of the country's population and zero percent of its buying power." It is not hard to understand Miller's anger over the domination of radio by Top 40 playlists — predetermined lists of records by a limited number of artists, often backed up by bribes from record company officials to radio station personnel. One could see the free-form FM broadcasts of the late 1960s and the rise of alternative stations in the 1980s and 1990s — where disc jockeys were free to play eclectic and often challenging music —as similar reactions against the playlist concept. But his refusal to recognize the teenage market was nothing if not short-sighted. A 1958 survey of the purchasing patterns of the 19 million teenagers in the United States showed that they spent a total of nine billion dollars a year and strongly influenced their parents' choices of everything from toothpaste and canned food to automobiles and phonographs. And, of course, they bought millions and millions of records.

Production and Promotion of Popular Music

Before music hits the stores and airwaves, business agents, video producers, graphic artists, copy editors, record stores, stage hands,

truck drivers, T-shirt companies, and the companies that produce musical hardware — often owned by the same corporations that produce the recordings — play vital roles in the production and promotion of popular music today. It is hard to know where to draw the boundaries of an industry that has extended itself into so many aspects of commerce and culture.

In addition, many of the roles described above have become intermingled in complex ways. A person like Quincy Jones, for example, is a performer, a song-writer, an arranger, a producer (who makes lots of engineering decisions), and a record label executive. And the wider availability of digital recording equipment means that some performers may also act as their own arranger, producer, and engineer (Stevie Wonder and Prince are good examples of this kind of collapsing of roles).

Theodor Adorno, a German philosopher who wrote in the 1940s and 1950s, powerfully criticized the effects of capitalism and industrialization on popular music. He suggested that the music industry promotes the illusion that we are all highly independent individuals defined by our personal tastes — "I'm a country music fan," "You're a metalhead." In fact, Adorno argued, the industry manipulates the notion of personal taste to sucker us into buying its products. Emotional identification with the wealthy superstars portrayed on television and in film — the "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" syndrome — is, in Adorno's view, a poor substitute for the humane and ethical social relations that typify healthy communities.

In some ways Adorno was right: Americans are probably less individualistic than they like to think, and it is often true that record companies con us into buying the latest thing on the basis of tiny differences in musical style, rather like the little design changes that mark off different kinds of automobiles or mp3 players or tennis shoes. And it is true that the private experience of listening over headphones — like the experience of driving alone in an automobile with the windows rolled up — can isolate people from one another.

But there's more to it than that. Just ask anyone who's worked in the music business and developed an ulcer trying to predict what the next trend will be. Compared to other industries that produce consumer products, the music business is quite unpredictable. Today, only about one out of eight recordings makes a profit. One platinum record — something like Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, Madonna's *Like a Virgin*, Nirvana's *Nevermind*, or Dr. Dre's *The Chronic* — must compensate for literally hundreds of unprofitable records made by unknown musicians or faded stars. As record company executives seek to guarantee their profits by producing variations on "the same old thing," they also nervously eye the margins to spot and take advantage of the latest trends.

The relationship between the "majors" — large record companies with lots of capital and power — and the "indies" — small independent labels operating in marginal markets — has been an important factor in the development of American popular music. In most cases, the majors have played a conservative role, seeking to ensure profits by producing predictable (some would say "bland") music for a large middle-class audience. The **indies**, run by entrepreneurs, have often had to be more daring, searching out new talent, creating specialized niches, and feeding new styles into the musical mainstream. It is mostly these small labels that initially popularized blues, country music, rhythm & blues, rock 'n' roll , funk, soul music, reggae, punk rock, rap, grunge, worldbeat, and other "alternative" styles. In some cases, indie labels have grown large and powerful; one example of this is Atlantic Records, which began as a small **R&B** label in the late 1940s and grew into a multi-million-dollar corporation.

Today, the relationship between indies and majors has been extended over the globe — five corporations (only one of them actually based in the United States) now control at least 75 percent of the world's legal trade in commercially recorded music. Each of these transnational corporations has bought up many smaller labels, using them as incubators for new talent, a system reminiscent of the relationship between major and minor league baseball teams.

This consolidation will not likely be the end of the story. With the rise of the mp3 and other digital formats — developments discussed in chapter 10 — and of Internet and personal digital device distribution models, the music business will continue to evolve. One constant will remain: listeners will continue to seek out and enjoy their favorite tunes.

Bill Haley and "Rock Around the Clock"

Bill Haley would seem an unlikely candidate for the first big rock 'n' roll star, but in the early 1950s this leader of obscure western swing groups was seeking a style that would capture the enthusiasm of the growing audience of young listeners and dancers. He dropped his cowboy image, changed the name of his accompanying group to the Comets, and in 1953 wrote and recorded a song, "Crazy, Man, Crazy," that offered a reasonable emulation of dance-oriented black rhythm & blues music. The record rose as high as Number 12 on the pop charts.

Bill Haley and the Comets recorded cover versions of rhythm & blues hits in the mid-1950s, notably "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" and "See You Later, Alligator." But they attained their unique status in pop music history when "Rock Around the Clock" became, in 1955, the first rock 'n' roll record to be a Number One pop hit. It stayed in the top spot for eight consecutive weeks during the summer of 1955 and eventually sold over 22 million copies worldwide.

"Rock Around the Clock" was actually recorded in 1954 and was not a big hit when first released. But the record was prominently featured in the opening credits of the 1955 movie *Blackboard Jungle* and quickly achieved massive popularity. Bill Haley's claim to have "invented" rock 'n' roll deserves as little credibility as Paul Whiteman's claim a generation earlier to be the "King of Jazz." But Haley proved to be an important popularizer of previously marginalized musical sounds and ideas, and he paved the way for the widespread acceptance of more creative artists.

"Rock Around the Clock" demonstrated the unprecedented success that a white group with a country background could achieve playing a 12-bar blues song driven by the sounds of electric guitar, bass, and drums. It proved a portent of the enormous changes that were about to overtake American popular music and opened the floodgates for artists like Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, and Buddy Holly. "Rock Around the Clock" also helped prepare a receptive mass audience for the sounds of rhythm & blues, and for black artists building on the rhythm & blues tradition. While the song was still at the top of the pop chart in 1955, Chuck Berry's trailblazing "Maybellene" made its appearance on the same chart, and before long was itself in the Top 10.

Music Technology: INNOVATIONS AND CONTROVERSIES

From the heyday of printed sheet music in the 19th century through the rise of the phonograph record, network radio, and sound film in the 1920s, up to the present era of digital recording, computerized sampling, and Internet-based radio, technology has shaped popular music and has helped disseminate it to more and more people.

Although we tend to associate the word "technology" with novelty and change, older technologies often take on important value as tokens of an earlier time. Old forms of musical hardware and software — music boxes, player pianos, phonographs, sheet music, 78s, 45s, and LPs — become the basis for subcultures made up of avid collectors. In some cases, older music technologies are regarded as superior to the new. Some contemporary musicians make a point of using analog rather than digital recording technology. Musicians who prefer analog recording say that it is "warmer," "richer-sounding," and "more human."

Sometimes the rejection of electronic technology functions as an emblem of "authenticity," as, for example, in MTV's *Unplugged* series, where rockers like Eric Clapton demonstrate their "real" musical ability by playing on acoustic instruments. However, there are also many examples of technologies being used in ways that encourage active involvement, including the manipulation of multiple record turntables by hip-hop **DJs** and the increasing popularity of *karaoke* singalong machines and computer software in American nightclubs and homes.

Digital Technology and Popular Music

During the 1980s, new technologies — including digital tape recorders, compact discs, synthesizers, samplers, and sequencers — became central to popular music. These devices were the fruit of a long history of interactions between the electronics and music industries and between individual inventors and musicians.

Analog recording transforms the energy of sound waves into physical imprints or into electronic waveforms that follow the shape of the sound waves themselves. Digital recording, on the other hand, samples the sound waves and breaks them down into a stream of numbers. A device called an "analog-to-digital converter" does the conversion. To play back the music, the stream of numbers is converted back to an analog wave by a "digital-to-analog converter" (DAC). The analog wave produced by the DAC is amplified and fed to speakers to produce the sound.

Synthesizers that allow musicians to create musical sounds began to appear on rock records during the early 1970s, but their history begins earlier. One important predecessor of the synthesizer was the theremin,

a sound generator that used electronic oscillators to produce sound.

Another important stage in the interaction between scientific invention and musical technology was the Hammond organ, introduced in 1935. The sound of the Hammond B-3 organ was common on jazz, R&B, and rock records. The player could alter the timbre of the organ through control devices called "tone bars," and a variety of rhythm patterns and percussive effects were added later.

The 1980s saw the introduction of the first completely digital synthesizers capable of playing dozens of "voices" at the same time. The MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) specification, introduced in 1983, allowed synthesizers built by different manufacturers to be connected with and communicate with one another. Digital samplers were capable of storing both prerecorded and synthesized sounds. Digital sequencers record musical data rather than sound and allow the creation of repeated sound sequences (loops), the manipulation of rhythmic grooves, and the transmission of recorded data from one program or device to another. Drum machines rely on "drum pads" that can be struck and activated by the performer.

Digital technology has given musicians the ability to create complex 128-voice textures, to create sophisticated synthesized sounds that exist nowhere in nature, and to sample and manipulate any sound source, creating sound loops that can be controlled with great precision. With compact, highly portable, and increasingly affordable music equipment and software, a recording studio can be set up anywhere. As the individual musician gains more and more control over the production of a complete musical recording, distinctions between the composer, the performer, and the producer sometimes melt down entirely.

At each stage in the development of popular music, new technologies have opened up creative possibilities for musicians, creating a wider range of choices for consumers. We are accustomed to thinking of technology as an agent of change. In some cases, however, the new digital technologies have allowed musicians to excavate the musical past. The techno musician Moby did precisely this on his bestselling 1999 album *Play*, when he sampled segments of performances by Georgia Sea Islands singer Bessie Jones, among others.

In the 21st century, technology continues to affect how popular music is made, recorded, reproduced, marketed to, and enjoyed by listeners. A new standard for digital music making was introduced in 1992 with the Alesis ADAT. The core of the ADAT system was an eight-track digital synthesizer/recorder that could expand to 128 tracks by adding additional units. This meant that a consumer could set up a basic

Left: Musician Nick Haworth and the alternative rock band "La Rocca" record their debut album at the Napster live studio, Aug. 2, 2006, in Los Angeles.
Right: Napster promotional stickers.

home studio at relatively small expense, while professionals could use the same technology to build highly sophisticated digital sound facilities.

The 1990s also saw the introduction of music software programs such as Pro-Tools, running on personal computers. This software allowed recording engineers and musicians to gain more control over every parameter of musical sound, including not only pitch and tempo but also the quality of a singer's voice or an instrumentalist's timbre. One complaint voiced against ProTools and similar software by some musicians is that it allows the correction of musical errors, including the substitution of individual notes and phrases and the alteration of a musician's sonic identity. From this perspective, "imperfection" is a necessary part of music as a form of human expression.

The once controversial peer-to-peer file trading service Napster spurred debate about copyright infringement. Napster is now back in business as a legal, pay-per-song music-download site.

The Internet

It can be argued that the most profound transformations in popular music have been catalyzed by the Internet. In musical terms, the most influential new medium associated with the Internet is MP3, which allows sound files to be compressed to as little as one-12th of their original size. Let's assume that you would like to download a four-minute track of music from a Web site featuring original music. In its uncompressed, digitally encoded form, this track would require 40 megabytes of data. With MP3 compression, this file can be squeezed down to only four megabytes, while still retaining the sound quality of a CD.

Consumers listening to music or a podcast on an Apple Video iPod pose a challenge to traditional broadcasters.

The introduction of MP3 technology spurred a series of bitter struggles between entertainment corporations and small-scale entrepreneurs, echoing past conflicts between major and indie record labels, though on an even larger scale. In 1997 a firm called MP3.com was founded by Michael Robertson, who started by making 3,000 songs available for free downloading over the Internet. By the year 2000 MP3.com had become by far the most successful music site on the World Wide Web, with over 10 million registered members. As with digital sampling, this new way of disseminating musical materials raised a host of thorny legal problems, centered on the issue of copyright. While MP3 files are not inherently illegal, the practice of digitally reproducing music from a copyrighted compact disc and giving it away for free without the artist's or record company's permission arguably is illegal.

Personal Listening Devices

The development of new personal listening devices came hand-in-hand with the rise of file-sharing on the Internet. In 2001 Apple Computer introduced the iPod player, which could store up to 1,000 CD-quality songs on its internal hard drive. The iPod and other MP3 players have come to dominate the market for portable listening devices because they provide the listener with the ability to build a unique library of music. The ability of the iPod to "shuffle" music has not only exerted an influence on personal listening habits but also provided a metaphor for the contemporary state of consumer culture.

Studies of the intimate relationship between the iPod and its users suggest that for many listeners the device functions as an aural prosthetic, an extension of the ears and musical mind and a point of connection to wider circuits for the circulation of digital information. Through these portable devices, consumers of popular music are connected to a global entertainment matrix that includes home computers, the Internet, music download services, and new services that are beginning to supplant the traditional functions of broadcasting. The rise of "podcasting" — a method of online audio distribution in which digital sound files are uploaded to a Web site, and listeners can automatically load files onto a portable player as become available — has some cultural observers forecasting the demise of radio.

Controversies

There is no way to provide the final word on the rapidly shifting landscape of music technology. The fact that digital technology allows the content of a recording to be liberated from its physical medium creates controversy. Earlier recording technologies involve a process of "translation" from one medium to another: analog recording, for example, translates sound waves in the air into physical impressions on the surface of a disc or arrangements of iron oxide molecules on a magnetic tape. But digital recording involves the translation of musical sound into pure information, encoded in streams of ones and zeros. This means that music can be transmitted, reproduced, and manipulated in a "virtual" form, free of the constraints of any particular technology. This development has raised questions that will no doubt shape the course of American popular music for years to come: What does it mean when a consumer licenses the right to use the contents of an album, rather than buying a single copy of it in a store? How can copyright be enforced — indeed, what is the meaning of the term "copyright" — when thousands of consumers can download the same piece of music simultaneously over the Internet? How will the transformation of music into pure information affect musicians and consumers? If "Video Killed the Radio Star" — to cite the first song promoted on MTV — will the Internet kill the CD store? What will the music industry of tomorrow look like?

The Electric Guitar

It is impossible to conjure up a mental image of Chuck Berry without an electric guitar in his hands. One of rock 'n' roll 's most significant effects on popular music was its elevation of the electric guitar to a position of centrality. The development of the electric guitar is a good example of the complex relationship between technological developments and changing musical styles. Up through the end of World War II, the guitar was found mainly in popular music that originated in the South, and in various "exotic" genres (Hawaiian and Latin American guitar records were quite popular in the 1920s and 1930s). Because of its low volume, the acoustic guitar was difficult to use in large dance bands. In 1931 the Electro String Instrument Company introduced the first electric guitars. By the mid-1930s the Gibson Company had introduced a hollow-body guitar with a new type of pickup — a magnetic plate or coil which, attached to the body of the guitar, converts the physical vibrations of its strings into patterns of electric energy.

The solid-body electric guitar was developed after World War II and first used in rhythm & blues, blues, and country bands. The first commercially produced solid-body electric guitar was the Fender Broadcaster (soon renamed the Telecaster). Released in 1948, it featured two electronic pickups, knobs to control volume and tone, and a switch that allowed the two pickups to be used singly or together, allowing the player to create a palette of different sounds. In 1954 Fender released the Stratocaster, the first guitar

Left: Sampling the wares at the Guitar Center store in Los Angeles. Right: Pop star Madonna playing electric guitar on her "Drowned World Tour" in Berlin, 2001.

Clockwise from upper left: Bruce Springsteen and Chuck Berry at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio, 1995. Country and pop star Willie Nelson has recorded hundreds of top-selling singles in his 50-year long career. Electric guitar inventor Les Paul plays B.B. King's blues guitar "Lucille" at a 2003 jam session.

with three pickups, and the first with a "whammy bar" or "vibrato bar," a metal rod attached to the guitar's bridge that allowed the player to bend pitches with his right as well as his left hand. Fender's most successful competitor, the Gibson Company, released a solid-body guitar in 1952, christening it the Les Paul in honor of the guitarist who helped to popularize the new instrument.

Why are electric guitars such objects of fascination for musicians and fans alike? Like any influential technology, the guitar's impact is complex. To begin with, the instrument came into the popular mainstream with a somewhat dubious reputation — medieval Europeans had associated stringed instruments with the Devil — and the guitar also was associated with the music of marginalized regions. Many mainstream press put-downs of young 1950s rock 'n' roll ers ridiculed the guitar, suggesting that it was an instrument that anyone could play. But the electric guitar became a symbol of the energetic diversity elbowing its way into the mainstream of American popular music. This feeling of excess and invasion was reinforced by the development of portable tube amplifiers, which provided a dense, sizzling, and very loud sound, augmented by special effects devices such as wah-wah pedals and "fuzz boxes." Over time, the guitar has acquired an aura of danger and excitement.

Hip-Hop: THE "RAPPER'S DELIGHT"

Of all genres of popular music, none has spurred more vigorous public debate than rap music. Rap has been characterized as a vital link in the centuries-old chain of cultural and musical connections between Africa and the Americas; as the authentic voice of an oppressed urban underclass; and as a form that exploits long-standing stereotypes of black people. In fact, each of these perspectives tells us something about the history and significance of rap music.

Rap draws on African musical and verbal traditions. Its deep continuities with African-American music include an emphasis on rhythmic momentum and creativity; a preference for complex tone colors and dense textures; a keen appreciation of improvisational skill (in words and music); and an incorporative, innovative approach to musical technologies.

Much rap music does constitute a cultural response to historic oppression and racism, a system for communication among black communities throughout the United States ("black America's CNN," as rapper Chuck D once put it), and a source of insight into the values, perceptions, and conditions of people living in America's beleaguered urban communities. And finally, although rap music's origins and inspirations flow from black culture, the genre's audience has become decidedly multiracial, multicultural, and transnational. As rap has been transformed from a local phenomenon located in a few neighborhoods in New York City, to a multimillion-dollar industry and a global cultural phenomenon, it has grown ever more complex and multifaceted.

Rap initially emerged during the 1970s as one part of a cultural complex called hip-hop. Hip-hop culture, forged by African-American and Caribbean-American youth in New York City, included distinctive styles of visual art (graffiti), dance (an acrobatic solo style called breakdancing and an energetic couple dance called the freak), music, dress, and speech. Hip-hop was at first a local phenomenon, centered in certain neighborhoods in the Bronx, the most economically disadvantaged area of New York City.

The young adults who pioneered hip-hop styles such as breakdancing and rap music at nightclubs, block parties, and in city parks often belonged to informal social groups called "crews" or "posses," each associated with a particular neighborhood or block. It is important to understand that hip-hop culture began as an expression of local identities. Even today's multiplatinum rap recordings, marketed worldwide, are filled with inside references to particular neighborhoods, features of the urban landscape, and social groups and networks.

If hip-hop music was a rejection of mainstream dance music by young black and Puerto Rican listeners, it was also profoundly shaped by the techniques of disco **DJs**. The first hip-hop celebrities — Kool

DJ Kool speaks at a 2006 news conference to launch "Hip-Hop Won't Stop: The Beat, The Rhymes, The Life," at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Herc (Clive Campbell), Grandmaster Flash (Joseph Saddler), and Afrika Bambaataa (Kevin Donovan) — were DJs who began their careers in the mid-1970s, spinning records at neighborhood block parties, gym dances, and dance clubs, and in public spaces such as community centers and parks. These three young men — and dozens of lesser-known DJs scattered throughout the Bronx, Harlem, and other areas of New York City and New Jersey — developed their personal styles within a grid of fierce competition for celebrity and neighborhood pride.

The disco DJ's technique of "mixing" between two turntables to create smooth transitions between records was first adapted to the hip-hop aesthetic by Kool Herc, who had migrated from Kingston, Jamaica, to New York City at the age of 12. Herc noticed that the young dancers in his audiences responded most energetically during the so-called breaks on funk and salsa records, brief sections where the melody was stripped away to feature the rhythm section. Herc responded by isolating the breaks of certain popular records — such as James Brown's "Get on the Good Foot" — and mixing them into the middle of other dance records. These rhythmic sound collages came to be known as "breakbeat" music, a term subsequently transferred to "breakdancing," acrobatic solo performances improvised by the young "B-boys" who attended hip-hop dances.

Another innovation helped to shape the sound and sensibility of early hip-hop: the transformation of the turntable from a medium for playing back recorded sound into a playable musical instrument. Sometime in the mid-1970s Kool Herc began to put two copies of the same record on his turntables. Switching back and forth between the turntables, Herc found that he could "backspin" one disc (i.e., turn it backward, or counterclockwise, with his hand) while the other continued to play over the loudspeakers. This allowed him to repeat a given break over and over, by switching back and forth between the two discs and backspinning to the beginning of the break. This technique

Right and Far Right: Future DJs practice "scratching," the art of manipulating a turntable needle along an LP record.

Grandmaster Flash, center rear, and the Furious Five after being inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame during ceremonies in New York, 2007.

Afrika Bambaataa at a 2006 news conference describing a Smithsonian Institution project that will trace hip-hop from its origins in the 1970s to its status today.

Hip-hop artist Paco of Waterloo, Iowa, shows off some of his break dancing moves to high school students.

was refined by Grandmaster Flash, who adopted the mixing techniques of disco DJs, particularly their use of headphones to synchronize the tempos of recordings and to create smooth transitions from one dance groove to the next. Using headphones, Flash could more precisely pinpoint the beginning of a break by listening to the sound of the disc being turned backward on the turntable. Flash spent many hours practicing this technique and gained local fame for his ability to "punch in" brief, machine gun–like segments of sound.

A new technique called "scratching" was developed by Flash's young protégé, Theodore, who broke away and formed his own hip-hop crew at the tender age of 13. In 1978 Theodore debuted a new technique that quickly spread through the community of DJs. While practicing backspinning in his room, Theodore began to pay closer attention to the sounds created in his headphones as he turned the disc counterclockwise. He soon discovered that this technique yielded scratchy, percussive sound effects, which could be punched in to the dance groove. At first Theodore wasn't sure how people would react:

The Third Avenue Ballroom was packed, and I figured I might as well give it a try. So, I put on two copies of [James Brown's] "Sex Machine" and started scratching up one. The crowd loved it… they went wild.

The distinctive sound of scratching became an important part of the sonic palette of hip-hop music — even in the 1990s, after digital **sampling** had largely displaced turntables as a means of creating the musical textures and grooves on rap records, producers frequently used these sounds as a way of signaling a connection to the "old school" origins of hip-hop.

Although all DJs used microphones to make announcements, Kool Herc was also one of the first DJs to recite rhyming phrases over the "breakbeats" produced on his turntables. Some of Herc's "raps" were based on a tradition of verbal performance called "toasting," a form of poetic storytelling with roots in the trickster tales of West Africa. The trickster — a sly character whose main goal in life is to defy authority and upset the normal order of things — became a common figure in the storytelling traditions of black slaves in the United States, where he took on additional significance as a symbol of cultural survival and covert resistance. After the Civil War the figure of the trickster was in part supplanted by more aggressive male figures, the focus of long, semi-improvised poetic stories called "toasts." The toasting tradition frequently focused on "bad men," hard, merciless bandits and spurned lovers who vanquished their enemies, sometimes by virtue of their wits, but more often through physical violence.

Although the toasting tradition had largely disappeared from black communities by the 1970s, it took root in prisons, where black inmates found that the old narrative form suited their life experiences and present circumstances. One of the main sources for the rhymes composed by early hip-hop DJs in the Bronx was the album *Hustler's Convention* (1973) by Jala Uridin, leader of a group of militant ex-convicts known as the Last Poets. *Hustler's Convention* was a compelling portrait of "the life" — the urban underworld of gamblers, pimps, and hustlers — through prison toasts with titles like "Sentenced to the Chair." The record, featuring musical accompaniment by an all-star lineup of funk, soul, and jazz musicians, became enormously popular in the Bronx and inspired Kool Herc and other DJs to compose their own rhymes. Soon DJs were recruiting members of their posses to serve as verbal performers, or "MCs" (an abbreviation of the term "master of ceremonies"). MCs played an important role in controlling crowd behavior at the increasingly large dances where DJs performed and soon became more important celebrities than the DJs themselves. If DJs are the predecessors of today's rap producers — responsible for shaping musical texture and groove — MCs are the ancestors of contemporary rappers.

Until 1979 hip-hop music remained primarily a local phenomenon. The first indication of the genre's broader commercial potential was the 12-inch dance single "Rapper's Delight," recorded by the Sugarhill Gang, a crew based in Harlem. This record, which popularized the use of the term "rapper" as an equivalent for MC, established Sugar Hill Records — a black-owned independent label based in New Jersey — as the predominant institutional force in rap music during the early 1980s. The recording recycled the rhythm section track from Chic's "Good Times," played in the studio by session musicians usually hired by Sugar Hill to back R&B singers. The three rappers — Michael "Wonder Mike" Wright, Guy "Master Gee" O'Brien, and Henry "Big Bank

Hank" Jackson — recited a rapid-fire succession of rhymes, typical of the performances of MCs at hip-hop dances.

Well it's on-n-on-n-on-on-n-on
The beat don't stop until the break of dawn
I said M-A-S, T-E-R, a G with a double E
I said I go by the unforgettable name
Of the man they call the Master Gee
Well, my name is known all over the world
By all the foxy ladies and the pretty girls
I'm goin' down in history
As the baddest rapper there could ever be.

The text of "Rapper's Delight" alternates the braggadocio of the three MCs with descriptions of dance movements, exhortations to the audience, and humorous stories and references. One particularly memorable segment describes the consternation of a guest who is served rotting food by his friend's mother, seeks a polite way to refuse it, and finally escapes by crashing through the apartment door. The record reached Number Four on the R&B chart and Number 36 on the pop chart and introduced hip-hop to millions of people throughout the United States and abroad. The unexpected success of "Rapper's Delight" ushered in a series of million-selling 12-inch singles by New York rappers, including Kurtis Blow's "The Breaks," "Planet Rock," by Afrika Bambaataa and the Soul Sonic Force, and "The Message," by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five.

The tradition of socially engaged rap received its strongest new impetus from the New York-based group Public Enemy. Founded in 1982, Public Enemy was organized around a core set of members who met as college students, drawn together by their interest in hiphop culture and political activism. The standard hip-hop configuration of two MCs — Chuck D (a.k.a. Carlton Ridenhour, b. 1960) and Flavor Flav (William Drayton, b. 1959) — plus a DJ — Terminator X (Norman Lee Rogers, b. 1966) — was augmented by a "Minister of Information" (Professor Griff, a.k.a. Richard Griffin) and by the Security of the First World (S1W), a cohort of dancers who dressed in paramilitary uniforms, carried Uzi submachine guns, and performed martial arts–inspired choreography.

The release of Public Enemy's second album in 1988 — *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* — was a breakthrough event for rap music. The album fused the trenchant social and political analyses of Chuck D — delivered in a deep, authoritative voice — with the streetwise interjections of his sidekick Flavor Flav, who wore comical glasses and an oversized clock around his neck. Their complex verbal interplay was situated within a dense, multilayered sonic web created by the group's production team, the Bomb Squad (Hank Shocklee, Keith Shocklee, and Eric "Vietnam" Sadler). Tracks like "Countdown to Armageddon" (an apocalyptic opening instrumental track, taped at a live concert in London), "Don't Believe the Hype" (a critique of white-dominated mass media), and "Party for Your Right to Fight" (a parody of the Beastie Boys' hit "Fight for Your Right (to Party)," from the previous year) turned the technology of digital sampling to new artistic purposes and insisted in effect that rap music continue to engage with the real-life conditions of urban black communities.

During the 1990s, a number of important rap artists achieved mainstream success, among them M.C. Hammer (Stanley Kirk Burrell, b. 1962), whose *Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em*, held the Number One position for 21 weeks and sold over 10 million copies, becoming the bestselling rap album of all time, and the white rapper Vanilla Ice (Robert Van Winkle, b. 1968). Regional hip-hop dialects emerged, notably in southern California, where a smoother, more laid-back style of rapping gained traction.

Today, rap music and hip-hop culture continue to influence and inspire musicians and audiences around the world.

Prince

One of the first things that strikes one about **Prince** (born Prince Rogers Nelson, 1958) is his productivity. Between 1982 and 1992 he placed nine albums in the Top 10. During the same decade he placed 26 singles in the Top 40. Over the course of his career, he has sold almost 40 million recordings. More importantly, he is one of the most talented musicians ever to achieve mass commercial success.

Prince's recorded output reflects a wide range of inspirations, from funk and guitar-based rock 'n' roll to urban folk music, new wave, and psychedelic rock. He has from the beginning sought to exert equally tight control over his music and the business of creating and distributing that music. Prince owns his own studio and produces his own recordings; plays most of the instruments on his albums; and struggled to wrest control of his music from Warner Brothers. By the late 1990s he was releasing music exclusively on his own label, through his Web site, and via his direct-selling telephone hotline.

Descriptions of Prince's personality in the popular press present a series of opposed images: he is portrayed as a flower child and as a dictator; a male chauvinist who can form close personal relationships only with women; an intensely private person and a shrewd self-promoter; a satyr and a steadfastly pious man.

Prince's British biographer Barney Hoskyns christened Prince "the Imp of the Perverse," referring to his apparent delight in confounding the expectations of his audience. As a celebrity, Prince occupies a middle ground between the hermitlike reclusiveness of Michael Jackson and the exuberant exhibitionism of Madonna. Throughout his career, Prince has granted few press interviews yet has managed to keep himself in the limelight. The best example of his skill at manipulating the boundary between the public and the private is the film and soundtrack album *Purple Rain* (1984), which established him as a pop superstar. The album sold more than 13 million copies. The plot and characters of *Purple Rain* draw heavily on Prince's life. The film concludes on an upbeat note as the Kid adopts one of his father's compositions, incorporating a rhythm track created by members of his band, The Revolution, and creates the song "Purple Rain."

It is not easy to draw boundaries between the fictional character, the celebrity persona, and the private individual. A major source of the film's attraction for Prince's fans lay in the idea that this was a tantalizing opportunity to catch a glimpse of the "man behind the curtain." If *Purple Rain* is a film with confessional aspects, it is also a product of the sophisticated marketing strategies applied by entertainment corporations during the 1980s.

"The Message"

Performed by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, "**The Message**" (1982) established an influential trend in rap: social realism. "The Message" is a grim portrait of life in New York City's South Bronx section. On top of the stark, cold electronic groove Grandmaster Flash intones the rap's **hook**:

It's like a jungle sometimes, makes me
wonder how I keep from goin' under

The sudden sound of glass shattering introduces a rhythmically complex and carefully articulated performance that alternates the smooth, slyly humorous style of Grandmaster Flash with the edgy, frustrated tone of MC Melle Mel:

Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge
I'm tryin' not to lose my head
Ah huh huh huh huh

The two MCs time their performances with great precision, compressing and stretching the spaces between words, and creating polyrhythms against the steady musical pulse. The lyric alternates between the humorous wordplay typical of hip-hop MC performances and images of desperation. The relationship between the grim reality of ghetto life and the tough-minded humor that is its antidote is summed up by Melle Mel's humorless quasi-laugh: "Ah huh huh huh huh."The second half of "The Message" paints a chilling picture of the life of a child born into poverty in the South Bronx, followed by the sound of the Furious Five meeting on a street corner. A police car screeches up and officers emerge, barking orders at the young black men. "What are you, a gang?" one of the policemen shouts. "Nah, man, we're with Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five." Flash enters from one side to defend his friends: "Officer, officer, what's the problem?" "You're the problem," the cop shouts back, "get in the car!" We hear the car driving away with the Furious Five in custody, arrested evidently for the crime of assembling on a street corner, and the track "fades to black."

A whole stream of rap music can be traced from this gritty record, ranging from the political raps of KRS-One and Public Enemy to the "gangsta" style of Los Angeles MCs like N.W.A., Snoop Doggy Dogg, and 2Pac Shakur. As the first gritty description of life in the nation's urban ghettos of the 1980s to achieve wide commercial circulation, "The Message" established canons of realness and street credibility still vitally important to rap musicians and audiences.

Grandmaster Flash performs in New York in 2007.

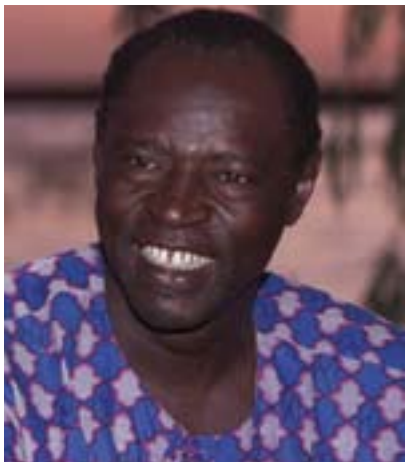
World Music Collaborations: CROSSING CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

During the 1980s the boundary between mainstream and marginal music became ever fuzzier, and pressures to expand the global market for American popular music and create new alternative genres and audiences within the American market grew ever stronger. One result of these processes was the emergence of a category called world music. The term was adopted in the late 1980s by independent record label owners and concert promoters, entering the marketplace as a replacement for longer-standing categories such as "traditional music," "international music," and "ethnic music."

What, then, is world music? In a strictly musical sense, it is a pseudo-genre, taking into its sweep styles as diverse as African urban pop (juju), Pakistani dance club music (bhangara), Australian Aboriginal rock music (the band Yothu Yindi), and even the Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir, whose 1987 release *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares* (The Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices) reached Number 165 on the Billboard album chart in 1988. Bestselling albums on Billboard's world music chart have featured the Celtic group Clannad, Spanish flamenco music, Tibetan Buddhist chant, and diverse collaborations between American and English rock stars and musicians from Africa, Latin America, and South Asia.

By the 1990s collaborations between American and foreign musicians had become more common, spurred on the one hand by folk and alternative music fans' search for a broader range of musical experiences, and on the other by the globalization of the music industry. Two interesting examples of this sort of transnational collaboration are the album *Talking Timbuktu*, which won the Grammy Award for Best World Music Recording in 1994, and a sampler album inspired by the film *Dead Man Walking*, which reached Number 61 on the album charts in 1996.

Talking Timbuktu was produced by the singer and guitarist Ry Cooder, whose career as a session musician and bandleader had already encompassed a wide array of styles, including blues, reggae, Tex-Mex music, urban folk song, Hawaiian guitar music, Dixieland jazz, and gospel music. The sound and sensibility of *Talking Timbuktu* are derived from the music of Ali Farka Touré, a guitarist and traditional praise singer (griot) from the West African nation of Mali.



Ali Farka Toure was born in Mali and is known as the most important interpreter of "African blues."

Encountering a track like "Diaraby," an American listener is likely to be struck by the music's close affinities with the blues. This is no accident. To begin with, the blues styles of Mississippi, Texas, and other southern states were strongly influenced by the traditions of African slaves, many of whom came precisely from the Sahel region of West Africa, homeland of Ali Farka Touré's people, the Bambara. The high-pitched, almost wailing sound of Touré's singing; the percussive guitar patterns; and the use of song as a medium for social and personal commentary — all of these features represent an evolution of centuries-old links between the West African griot tradition and the blues created by black musicians in America's Deep South. It turns out that Touré's style was directly influenced by American blues musicians such as John Lee Hooker, whose records he discovered after his career was established in Africa.

Clockwise from left: Pakistani Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan was considered a leading performer of Sufi devotional music. Indian students perform the Qawwali, the devotional music of the Sufis. The late blues musician, Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown plays the fiddle at the Newport Folk Festival in Rhode Island in 1996.

Talking Timbuktu features contributions by the blues guitarist and fiddler Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and various prominent session musicians. The result hews close to its African roots, with the American musicians playing in support of Touré. The lyric of the song is itself reminiscent of the bittersweet emotion of some American blues:

What is wrong my love? It is you I love
Your mother has told you not to marry me, because I have nothing. But I love you.
Your friends have told you not to marry me, because I have nothing. But I love you.
Your father has told you not to marry me, because I have nothing. But I love you.
What is wrong my love? It is you I love.
Do not be angry, do not cry, do not be sad because of love.

Right: Hugh Masekela, from South Africa, performs during the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival in 2004. Far right: Ry Cooder, an American guitarist, singer, and composer, performs in Madison Square Garden in New York in 2005.

From the mid-1950s until his death in 2003, legendary singer Johnny Cash wrote, produced, and sang an array of country, patriotic, and religious songs.

The sound and sensibility of "Diaraby" provide additional evidence of the deep links between African and American music. This is not music functioning as a universal language, but a conversation between two dialects of a complexly unified Afro-Atlantic musical language.

The track "The Face of Love" is a different sort of collaboration, featuring the lead singer for the Seattle-based alternative rock band Pearl Jam, Eddie Vedder, and the great Pakistani musician Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, and produced by Ry Cooder. Khan was a leading performer of *qawwali*, a genre of mystical singing practiced by Sufi Muslims in Pakistan and India. *Qawwali* singing is accompanied by a double-headed drum called the *dholak* and a portable keyboard instrument called the harmonium, which creates a continuous drone under the singing. In traditional settings the lead singer alternates stanzas of traditional poetic texts with spectacular and elaborate melodic improvisations, in an attempt to spiritually arouse his listeners and move them into emotional proximity with the Divine.

Pearl Jam lead singer and guitarist Eddie Vedder performs in Mexico City in 2003.

During the 1990s Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan became the first *qawwali* artist to command a large international following, owing to his performances at the annual WOMAD festivals curated by the rock star Peter Gabriel. Khan began to experiment with nontraditional instruments and to work with musicians outside the *qawwali* tradition, leading some critics to charge that the music had moved away from its spiritual roots. "All these albums are experiments," Khan told the interviewer Ken Hunt in 1993. "There are some people who do not understand at all but just like my voice. I add new lyrics and modern instruments to attract the audience. This has been very successful."

The 1996 film *Dead Man Walking* — the story of a nun's attempt to redeem the soul of a convicted murderer on the verge of execution—was the first to foreground Khan's contributions. Many reviews of *Dead Man Walking* stressed the contribution of Khan's voice to the haunting, mystical, and spiritual atmosphere of the film. The song "The Face of Love" is based on a simple melody, sung first by Khan with lyrics in the Urdu language, and then with English lyrics by Pearl Jam's lead singer Eddie Vedder:

Jeena kaisa Pyar bina [What is life without love] —
Is Duniya Mein Aaye ho to [Now that you have come to this world] *(2x)*
*Ek Duje se pyar karo [*Love each other, one another]
Look in the eyes of the face of love
Look in her eyes, for there is peace
No, nothing dies within pure light
Only one hour of this pure love
To last a life of 30 years
Only one hour, so calm and dark

This is not an example of music's functioning as a universal language, for most members of the film's American audience neither understood the words that Khan sang nor possessed any knowledge of the centuries-long history of Sufi mystical traditions. Nonetheless, it could be argued that this is a case where the well-meaning effort of artists to reach across cultural and musical boundaries does produce something like an aesthetic communion, a common purpose embodied in musical texture and poetry.

Khan's appearance on the soundtrack of *Dead Man Walking* led to his being signed by the indie label American Recordings, managed by Rick Rubin, formerly the mastermind behind the rappers Run-D.M.C. and the Beastie Boys. The American music industry's market positioning of world music as yet another variant of alternative music is indicated by that label's roster of artists, which included not only Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan but also the "death metal" band Slayer, the rap artist Sir MixA-Lot, and the country music icon Johnny Cash.

Glossary

a cappella Vocal singing that involves no instrumental accompaniment.

A&R Abbreviation for "artists and repertoire." This is the department of a record company whose responsibility it is to discover and cultivate new musical talent, and to find material for the artists to perform — naturally, with an eye toward commercial potential. As many artists today write and record their own material, the latter function of A&R has atrophied to some extent.

arranger A person who adapts (or arranges) the melody and chords of a song to exploit the capabilities and instrumental resources of a particular musical ensemble. For example, a simple pop tune originally written for voice and piano may be arranged for a jazz "big band" with many horns and a rhythm section.

ballad A type of song consisting usually of verses set to a repeating melody (see strophic form) in which a story, often romantic, historic, or tragic, is sung in narrative fashion.

blue notes Expressive notes or scalar inflections found primarily in blues and jazz music. The blue notes derive from African musical practice; although they do not correspond exactly to the Western system of major and minor scales, it is helpful to imagine them as "flatter" or "lower" versions of the scale degrees to which they are related, and thus one speaks of "blue" thirds, fifths, and sevenths (see Chapter 5).

blues A genre of music originating principally from the field hollers and work songs of rural blacks in the southern United States during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Themes treated by blues lyrics included the oppressive conditions suffered by African Americans; love gone wrong; alienation; misery; and the supernatural. The lyrics are often obscured by a coded, metaphorical language. The music of the blues is rich in Africanisms and earthy rhythms. Originally an acoustic music, the blues moved to the urban North in the mid-twentieth century, becoming electrified in the process (see Chapters 5 and 7).

bridge A passage consisting of new, contrasting material that serves as a link between repeated sections of melodic material. A bridge is sometimes called a release (see discussion of Tin Pan Alley song form in Chapter 4).

cadence A melodic or harmonic event that signals the end of a musical line or section, or of the piece as a whole.

chord The simultaneous sounding of different pitches.

chorus A repeating section within a song consisting of a fixed melody and lyric that is repeated exactly each time that it occurs, typically following one or more verses.

coda The "tail end" of a musical composition, typically a brief passage after the last complete section that serves to bring the piece to its conclusion.

composer A person who creates a piece of music. Although the term may be, and often is, used to describe the creators of popular songs, it is more commonly applied to those who create more extended, formally notated works of music.

counterculture A subculture existing in opposition to and espousing values contrary to that of the dominant culture. The term is most often used to describe the values and lifestyle of some young people during the late 1960s and early 1970s (see Chapter 10).

counterpoint The sounding of two independent melodic lines or voices against one another.

dialect A regional speech variant; one may allude to regional musical "dialects" to describe stylistic variants of the same basic musical genre, as with Mississippi Delta blues or East Texas blues.

dissonance A harsh or grating sound. (The perception of dissonance is culturally conditioned. For example, the smaller intervals employed in certain Asian and Middle Eastern musics may sound "out of tune" and dissonant to Western ears; within their original context, however, they are regarded as perfectly consonant.)

distortion A buzzing, crunchy, or "fuzzy" tone color originally achieved by overdriving the vacuum tubes of a guitar amplifier. This effect can be simulated today by solid state and digital sound processors. Distortion is often heard in a hard rock or heavy metal context.

DJ Disc jockey (deejay); one who plays recordings (as on a radio program).

feedback Technically, an out-of-control sound oscillation that occurs when the output of a loudspeaker finds its way back into a microphone or electric instrument pickup and is reamplified, creating a sound loop that grows in intensity and continues until deliberately broken. Although feedback can be difficult to manage, it becomes a powerful expressive device in the hands of certain blues and rock musicians, most notably the guitarist Jimi Hendrix. Feedback can be recognized as a "screaming" or "crying" sound.

groove Term originally employed by jazz, rhythm & blues, and funk musicians to describe the channeled flow of swinging, "funky," or "phat" rhythms.

habanera a slow, tango-like Cuban musical style, elements of which were integrated into jazz by New Orleans-based musicians including Jelly Roll Morton.

hook A "catchy" or otherwise memorable musical phrase or pattern.

lyricist A person who supplies a poetic text (lyrics) to a piece of vocal music; not necessarily the composer.

major refers to one of the two scale systems central to Western music (see minor); a major scale is arranged in the following order of whole- and half-step intervals: 1-1-½-1-1-1-½. (This pattern is easy to see if one begins at the pitch C on the piano keyboard and plays the next seven white notes in succession, which yields the C major scale: CDEFGABC.) A song is said to be in a major tonality or key if it uses melodies and chords that are constructed from the major scale. Of course, a song may (and frequently does) "borrow" notes and chords from outside a particular major scale, and it may "modulate" or shift from key to key within the course of the song.

melisma One syllable of text spread out over many musical tones.

minor Refers to one of the two scale systems central to Western music (see major); a minor scale is arranged in the following order of whole- and half-step intervals: 1-½-1-1-½-1-1. (This pattern represents the so-called natural minor scale, often found in blues and blues-based popular music; it is easy to see if one begins at the pitch A on the piano keyboard and plays the next seven white notes in succession, which yields the A minor scale: ABCDEFGA. The two other minor scales in common usage — the melodic minor and harmonic minor scales — have ascending and descending forms that differ somewhat from the natural minor scale.) A song is said to be in a minor tonality or key if it uses melodies and chords that are constructed from the minor scale. Of course, a song may (and frequently does) "borrow" notes and chords from outside a particular minor scale, and it may "modulate" or shift from key to key within the course of the song. In comparison to the major scale, the minor scale is often described as having a "sad" or "melancholy" sound.

MP3 A variant of the MPEG compression system, which allows sound files to be compressed to as little as one-twelfth of their original size.

payola The illegal and historically widespread practice of offering money or other inducements to a radio station or deejay in order to ensure the prominent airplay of a particular recording.

polyrhythm The simultaneous sounding of rhythms in two or more contrasting meters, such as three against two, or five against four. Polyrhythms are found in abundance in African and Asian musics and their derivatives.

producer A person engaged either by a recording artist or, more often, a record company, who directs and assists the recording process. The producer's duties may include securing the services of session musicians; deciding on arrangements; making technical decisions; motivating the artist creatively; helping to realize the artistic vision in a commercially viable way; and not unimportantly, ensuring that the project comes in under budget. A good producer often develops a distinctive signature sound, and successful producers are always in great demand. They are often rewarded handsomely for their efforts, garnering a substantial share of a recording's earnings, in addition to a commission.

R&B Rhythm & blues. An African American musical genre emerging after World War II. It consisted of a loose cluster of styles derived from black musical traditions, characterized by energetic and hard-swinging rhythms. At first performed exclusively by black musicians and aimed at black audiences, R&B came to replace the older category of "race records" (see Chapter 7).

ragtime A musical genre of African American origin, later exploited to great advantage by white performers, that emerged in the 1880s and became quite popular

at the turn of the century. Ragtime is characterized by melodic accents that fall on "off" or weak beats; it is highly syncopated. Scott Joplin is the recognized master of this genre, having composed numerous rags for the piano (see Chapter 2).

refrain In the verse-refrain song, the refrain is the "main part" of the song, usually constructed in AABA or ABAC form (see discussion of Tin Pan Alley song form in Chapter 4).

release See bridge.

reverb Short for "reverberation"—a prolongation of a sound by virtue of an ambient acoustical space created by hard, reflective surfaces. The sound bounces off these surfaces and recombines with the original sound, slightly delayed (reverb is measured in terms of seconds and fractions of seconds). Reverberation can occur naturally or be simulated either electronically or by digital sound processors.

riff A simple, repeating melodic idea or pattern that generates rhythmic momentum; typically played by the horns or the piano in a jazz ensemble, or by an electric guitar in a rock 'n' roll context.

rockabilly A vigorous form of country and western music ("hillbilly" music) informed by the rhythms of black R&B and electric blues. It is exemplified by such artists as Carl Perkins and the young Elvis Presley.

rumba a ballroom dance of Afro-Cuban origin with a basic pattern featuring two quick sidesteps and one slow forward step per bar, and the syncopated, 4/4 time musical style associated with this dance.

sampling A digital recording process wherein a sound source is recorded or "sampled" with a microphone, converted into a stream of binary numbers that represent the profile of the sound, quantized, and stored in computer memory. The digitized sound sample may then be retrieved in any number of ways, including "virtual recording studio" programs for the computer, or by activating the sound from an electronic keyboard or drum machine.

scat singing A technique that involves the use of nonsense syllables as a vehicle for wordless vocal improvisation. It is most often found in a jazz context.

slap-back A distinctive short reverberation with few repetitions, often heard in the recordings of rockabilly artists, such as the Sun Records recordings of Elvis Presley.

soli (plural of **solo**) Band textures achieved by having a small group of players within the band play certain passages of music together. Soli playing contrasts with tutti sections, wherein the entire ensemble plays (see the discussion of swing bands in Chapter 3).

strophes Poetic stanzas; often, a pair of stanzas of alternating form that constitute the structure of a poem. These could become the verse and chorus of a strophic song.

strophic A song form that employs the same music for each poetic unit in the lyrics.

syncopation Rhythmic patterns in which the stresses occur on what are ordinarily weak beats, thus displacing or suspending the sense of metric regularity.

tempo Literally, "time" (from Italian). The rate at which a musical composition proceeds, regulated by the speed of the beat or pulse to which it is performed.

timbre The "tone color" or characteristic sound of an instrument or voice, determined by its frequency and overtone components. Timbre is the aspect of sound that allows us, for example, to differentiate between the sound of a violin and a flute when both instruments are playing the same pitch.

tonic Refers to the central or "home" pitch, or chord, of a musical piece — or sometimes of just a section of the piece.

tremolo The rapid reiteration of a single pitch to create a vibrating sound texture. This effect can be produced by acoustic instruments or by electronic means.

tutti Literally, "together" (from Italian). A passage in a musical piece wherein all the instruments of the ensemble (band or orchestra) are playing simultaneously.

verse In general usage, this term refers to a group of lines of poetic text, often rhyming, that usually exhibit regularly recurring metrical patterns. In the verse-refrain song, the verse refers to an introductory section that precedes the main body of the song, the refrain (see discussion of Tin Pan Alley song form in Chapter 4).

vibrato An expressive musical technique that involves minute wavering or fluctuation of a pitch.

waltz A dance in triple meter with a strong emphasis on the downbeat of each bar.

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