

**MUSI10219 Rock Music: From Roots to Retro
Lecture Notes**

Lecture 1: Roots of Rock: American Styles.....Pg. 2

Lecture 2: The Beatles, Bob Dylan, and the mid-1960s Emergence of Rock.....Pg. 5

Lecture 3: Rock Music and Gender.....Pg. 10

Lecture 4: Rock Music on Film and Glam.....Pg. 15

Lecture 5: Rock, Race, and Blues Rock..... Pg. 18

Lecture 6: Australian Rock and Rock Fusions: The Birth of Oz Rock.....Pg. 20

Lecture 7: Progressive Rock.....Pg. 22

Lecture 8: Heavy Metal.....Pg. 28

Lecture 9: Punk, Post-Punk, and Grunge.....Pg. 31

Lecture 10: Music and Politics..... Pg. 36

Lecture 11: Australian Rock Music..... Pg. 39

Lecture 1—Roots of Rock: American Styles

- 1950s, social change and changes to popular music and the mass media
 - Late 1940s big bands increasingly became economically unviable. Variety of other styles competed on the pop music charts (country, romantic ballads, Latin and novelty songs)
 - New generation of teenagers did not have a music that they could identify with. Discourse of change and disenchantment of youth picked up in literature and cinema—*The Wild One* (1953) with Marlon Brando. *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955), critical to the dissemination of Rock and Roll and association with rebellion and youth culture. Bill Haley's *Rock Around the Clock*.
 - Crossover of chart categories—pop, country and R&B. From late 1955 Billboard published its Top 100, which gave greater importance to record sales as marker of popularity
 - Record sales – large growth during 1940s. Appeal to a new teen market – the adult market was geared toward the LP or Long-Playing Album
 - Proliferation of radio stations. Throughout the 1950s, DJs had a greater degree of control over what they played, Top 40 format of just playing what is on the charts only became dominant in the 1960s (due in part to scandals associated with Payola – in which record companies paid DJs to play their recordings on air). In 1950s still space for independent record labels and producers, who had an impact of the evolution of different styles of music, and in particular Rock and Roll.
 - TV integral to the promotion of new artists and their nation dissemination.
 - Film continued to be an important medium, but it was increasingly involved at a later phase – consolidation of the stardom of performers
 - Late 40s and the 50s coincide with the expanded reach and presence of the US in Western Europe (and to some extent Australia) – consolidated and expanded the market for the US entertainment and music industries and helped shape the dynamic of pop music in the second half of the century. Also an element of propaganda (in opposition to socialist bloc to the 1980s).
 - Questioning of racial segregation, and the rise of the Civil Rights Movement also played into the politics surrounding the rise of rock and roll (more so in some musical styles of 1960s/70s).
- The rise of rock and roll in the 1950s
 - Term “rock and roll” used in lyrics since the 1920s (and at time denoted slang for sex); increasingly associated with a style of R&B
 - Rock and roll had a very mixed pedigree. Predominantly indebted to up-tempo blues styles developed by black artists from the 1930s and to the “Boogie-woogie pianists, and those small blues combos of the thirties that

- evolved into the jump blues bands of the 1940s". Formal/vocal elements of blues evident in much early rock and roll
- Upbeat repertoires of swing bands crucial to development of rock and roll, and the dance styles. Adapted to reduced ensembles (often little more than the rhythm section of the Big Bands).
 - Influence of country and Western music (and its associated guitar and vocal styles, and rhythms). By early 1950s many country and Western performers who incorporated R&B elements – Rockabilly
 - Still debate about what constitutes the first rock and roll song – however, the term seems to have been consolidated by 1954/1955 in relation to the broad exposure gained by Bill Haley
- Examples of some early rock and roll styles:
- Little Richard, *Lucille*, 1957
 - Little Richard's shouting style sets the stage for the vocal dynamics of rock and roll
 - Clear swing origins of combination evident. Includes improvising tradition of jazz – sax solo (later guitar breaks). Movement of improvising saxophonist – white musicians did not move till rock and roll (model for the later movements of guitarists). Piano style and form indebted to blues
 - While Little Richards did manage to cross over into other chart categories and be known to white audiences, his music was often better known by white artists covering his songs
 - Chuck Berry, *Johnny B. Goode*, 1958
 - Guitar riffs/movements, vocalist/guitarist, charismatic personality, blues influence
 - Other guitar innovators include Bo Diddley – Rhythm, *Bo Diddley* (1955)
 - Buddy Holly/Jerry Allison/Norman Petty, *Peggy Sue* – Buddy Holly and the Crickets (1957)
 - Introduces the classic format of rock band – lead and rhythm guitar, bass and drum kit
- Elvis Presley and rock and roll
- Elvis managed to successfully cross pop, country, and R&B charts in part because he was a white performer whose geographical location, upbringing and interests had managed to assimilate Gospel, country and R&B styles. Also attentive to mainstream popular musical culture
 - Elvis's career was created by record producers – unlike most of his antecedents. Sam Phillips (Sun Records) in Memphis had been keen to find a white musician with an affinity for R&B who could rework some of the repertory for an audience. Phillips thought that Elvis had potential and

organised his backing musicians, while trying to garner a new sound from the covers he did of black R&B and white country musicians' material. *That's all right Mama* (1954)—already suggests Elvis's mature vocal style (includes large melodic/dynamic range, use of types of vibrato and an intimate delivery).

- Popularity of Elvis's interpretation of rock and roll numbers such as *Hound Dog* and *Blue Suede Shoes*—and his physical gestures developed into a stage act
- Colonel Parker, his manager from 1955 – new routes of national exposure. Signed with a major record company, RCA, and appeared on networked TV shows
- *Hound Dog*, originally a twelve-bar blues number, with its lyrics modified, was given an upbeat tempo and a complete remake by Elvis – scandal in 1956.
- Also sang ballads like *Love Me Tender*, and more hybrid works like the *Heartbreak Hotel* (a narrative song based on an 8-bar blues progression)
- Elvis saw himself as an all-around entertainer (in the mould of Frank Sinatra) – and looked beyond the rock and roll and the recording medium. From 1956 he began a highly active career as a film actor to late 1960s (and his films fed into loop with his merchandising and recordings).
- “Passing fad?” Rock and roll in the late 1950s and early 1960s
 - Many commentators had speculated that rock and roll was just another passing fad, and to many it seemed as though they had been correct by the late 1950s
 - Because of touring artists, and multinational record and film companies, rock and roll had a great impact on musicians in the UK, Western Europe, and Australia (Johnny O’Keefe and Col Joye), who helped consolidate and perpetuate its legacy (the British invasion of the US in the mid 1960s)
 - When Elvis returned from military service, he consciously moved away from his rock and roll beginnings, focusing his career on the movies and releasing albums. He expanded his range: gospel music, evolving country/R&B/pop crossovers, as well as folk/novelty songs such as *It’s Now or Never* (1960, a version of the Neapolitan song *O sole mio*).
- Other styles related to rock and roll in the early 1960s:
 - The Platters – different styles of RnR in the 1950s (black vocal crossover group)
 - Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons – Doo-wop (*Jersey Boys*)
 - Twist (early 1960s) – Cubby Checker
 - Surfing Bands/guitar instrumentals – Dick Dale and his Del-Tones, *Misirlou* (1962)
 - Girl groups – The Ronettes, *Be My Baby* (1963) – Phil Spector (Wall of sound)