



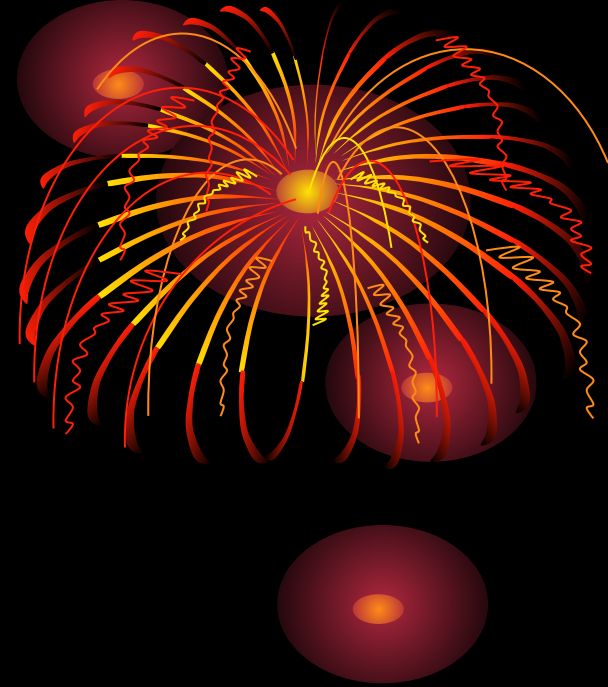
Rock N Roll: Origins and Cultural Movement

Dr. Alan Haffa

Please Silence Cell Phones

Rock N Roll as a Movement

- **Rebellion**
- **Freedom**
- **Hedonistic**
- **Sex**
- **Drugs**
- **Youth over Age**



Cultural Transformation



- **Popular culture pre-Rock: Idealized and romanticized view of love, society, family and America**
- **Movies, TV and music all presented this sugary view of the culture**

Baby Boomer Explosion



- **More young people**
- **More purchasing power**
- **Commercial culture responded**
- **Movies with the youthful outlaws, anti-heroes, rebels and loners**

Formative Movies



- **“City Across the River” with Tony Curtis sporting a Pompadour Ducktail hairstyle**
- **Hairstyle popularized by Elvis**
- **“The Wild One” with Marlon Brando**
- **“Rebel Without a Cause,” James Dean**

Religious Influence

- **Pentecostal Church: Elvis, Little Richard, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, James Brown; Sister Rosetta Tharpe**
- **Mixed race services**
- **Lively and spirited music that used drums, brass, pianos and even electric guitar.**
- **Gospel and Soul melodies and lyrics in early Rock songs**



Black Culture Influence

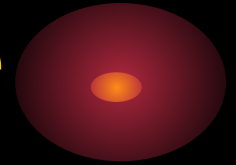


- **Black slang, clothing and music (jazz and blues) were counter cultural and seen as rebellious by white youth**
- **Black music in 40s and 50s transitioned to Rhythm and Blues, precursor for Rock**

Country Western and Folk Influences



- **Country: Hank Williams; Willie Nelson; Johnny Cash**
- **Folk: Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger; Peter Paul and Mary; Bob Dylan; Mommas & Poppas; Byrds; Buffalo Springfield—Crosby, Stills, Nash, Young; Simon & Garfunkle**

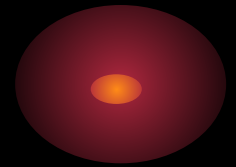


Radio Programs

- **Allen Freed, a disc jockey, popularized term Rock and Roll on his program in Cleveland**
- **“Father of Rock and Roll”**
- **Arranged live concerts with mixed race audiences**
- **1952, “Moondog Coronation Ball” at Cleveland Arena—first Rock and Roll concert; Payola controversy**
- **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmuOw_oaPJY**



Rock N Roll as Popular Music



- **Pop Music Defined:**
 - 1) **Make money**
 - 2) **Mass, commercial art**
 - 3) **Standard of taste is “average” not “refined”**
 - 4) **Short songs that can play on a 2-3 minute spot on radio and fit on a 45 record**
 - 5) **Catchy rhythm more important than content of ideas**

Rock and Roll



- **Gospel Origins of Rock** (“Rock my Soul,” “Rock Me Lord,” etc)
- **“Good Rockin’ Tonight”**
- **Roy Brown R & B version, 1947**
- **Wynonie Harris, 1948**
- **<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xo9auUfitVA>**
- **Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, James Brown, Stay Cats, Buddy Holly**



Sister Rosetta Tharpe



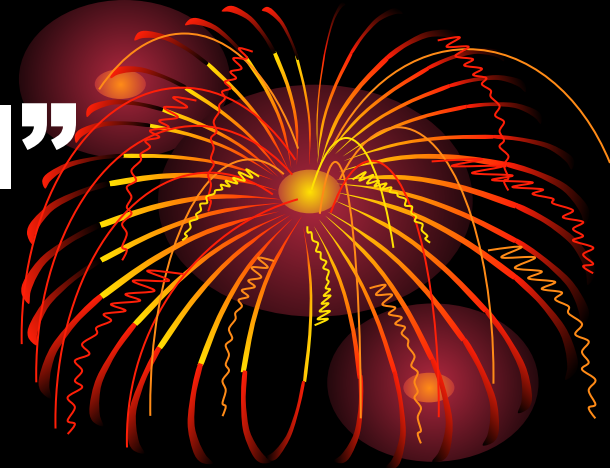
- **Grew up in Arkansas; Pentacostal Church**
- **“Rock is just sped up R&B”**
- **1938: “My Man and I” (My Lord and I):**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TICr6IWzCiM>
- **1943: “I Want a Tall Skinny Man.”**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woSDknWzhL8>

Sexuality, Censorship and Rock N' Roll



- **“Sixty Minute Man,”
The Dominoes**
- **1951: First R&B (#1)
song to make Pop
Top 40 (#17)**
- **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxY6JbWpiLw&list=RDyxY6JbWpiLw&start_radio=1**

First “Rock N’ Roll” Song?



- **“Rocket 88” 1951**
- **Jackie Brenston and the Delta Cats as singer; Ike Turner on piano**
- **<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcFIj8OuIEI>**

Reaction to Rock N Roll



- **The more adults and church groups criticized it, the more popular it became**
- **Critics: too sexual; too Black; too loud.**
- **1956: NYT reported that a church group wanted it banned; claiming it was a plot by Blacks to corrupt white youth.**

Bill Haley and His Comets



- **Country Cross-Over with “Rocket 88”:** Rockabilly; Slap-back bass
- **Revolutionary:** spit curl; plaid dinner jackets and energetic stage style
- **1954-5: “Rock around the Clock”**
- **Fast, upbeat rhythm for dancing**
- **<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5fsqYctXgM>**
- **“Crazy Man Crazy” on TV 1953:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MI2vUzUqeZY>

Chuck Berry



- **“Maybelline” 1955:
Racing and Romance**
- **<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RAfxiyMKAk>**
- **“Roll Over
Beethoven” 1956**
- **“School Days” 1957**
- **“Sweet Little
Sixteen” 1958**



Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode"



- **Trope: The Desire to Become a Rock and Roll Star**
- **Byrds' "So You Want to Be a Rock and Roll Star"**
- **Joe Walsh's "Life's Been Good"**
- **Autobiographical: St. Louis instead of Louisiana**
- **Original: "That little colored boy play" instead of "country boy"**
- **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ROwVrF0Ceg>**

Little Richard



- **Richard Wayne Perriman**
- **“Tutti Frutti” 1955**
- **“Long Tall Sally” 1956:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20fhmVmhL7s&list=RD20fhmVmhL7s&start_radio=1
- **“Lucille” 1957**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ydBkmgJi-g&t=10s>



Fats Domino and 1950s

1957 - JAMBOREE



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"JAMBOREE"

FATS DOMINO - BUDDY KNOX - CHARLIE GRACIE

Starring JERRY LEE LEWIS - JIMMY BOWEN - THE FOUR COINS

Screen Play by Leonard Koffman

Directed by Roy Ludwig

Produced by M. J. Rothenberg & Milton Sperling

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ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY PRESENTS A WARNER BROS. PICTURE

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- **59 Singles in R&B charts**
- **37 Songs in Top 40**
- **“Blueberry Hill” 1956**
- **“I’m Walkin’”**
- **<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqs5gkyH930>**
- **“Shake, Rattle, and Roll”**

Elvis Presley



- **Rockabilly**
- **Covered many songs by black artists**
- **Sexually provocative performance style**
- **1956 movie: Love me Tender**
- **1956; “Don’t Be Cruel” First song to reach top 40 on R&B, Pop and Country**
- **1957; “All Shook up”**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rQEbQJx5Bo>
- **Composed by Otis Blackwell #1 Billboard Hot 100; #1 R&B; Country;**

Jerry Lee Lewis

- **Rockabilly**
- **1957: “Great Balls of Fire”**
- **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elZbkfXRHZg>**
- **Scandal: marriage to 13 year old cousin**
- **Career stalled until transition to Country in 70s**



Buddy Holly



- **1955: opened for Elvis & Bill Haley and Comets**
- **Crickets and UK success**
- **1957, "That'll Be the Day"**
- **"Peggy Sue"**
- **<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQiIMuOKIzY>**
- **Ed Sullivan 1958**



Summary



- **Early Influences: R & B; Folk; Pop**
- **Response in 50s to Post-War Order and Conformity**
- **Central Instrument: Guitar**
- **Individualism, Freedom, and Rebellion**
- **Youth Culture**
- **Live Energetically; Sex; Distrust of Power and Money**