



CHAPTER 20

Popular Music Since 1950

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Summarize the precursors of rock.
- Name important performers and groups of popular music in each decade.
- Recognize by listening example the various styles of popular music since the 1950s

Key Concepts: disco, folk rock, heavy metal, hip hop, jazz rock, Motown, punk rock, rock 'n' roll, soft rock, surf music

Where It's Playing

Rock 'n' roll was dance music for the radio. Its popularity depended on the radio to sell records, and later on video and television to sell CDs. But live music has also been an important part of popular culture. Early rock 'n' roll performers played live shows at county and state fairs or large ballrooms, often touring the country in bus caravans with popular recording stars. As rock became more popular in the 1960s, bands began to play stadium and arena concerts. The most famous outdoor live rock performance was the three-day "Woodstock Music and Art Fair" held in August 1969 near Woodstock, New York, at which thirty-two acts performed for over a half million people. This event, according to *Rolling Stone* magazine, changed the history of popular music. A documentary film made of the event won the Academy Award for best documentary feature in 1970. In 1965 at the height of what was called "Beatlemania," the Beatles played for over 55,000 people at Shea Stadium in New York. These events began the tradition of pop music stars touring the United States playing at large arenas and stadiums for tens of thousands of fans each night. Most often these tours were to promote the sale of albums and videos. Over time these shows became much more spectacular and now include fireworks, electronics, and complicated light shows, and they are often recorded for sales as albums themselves. Rock and other styles of popular music continue to play a wide range of venues including everything from small bars and dance clubs to football stadiums holding up to 100,000 people.

In any style of popular music the song lyrics and the message of the song is the most important thing to listen for. It is the text of a song that often first appeals to us. However, rock 'n' roll, rock, pop/rock, and so on, has always depended musically upon rhythm and a steady beat. Since this style was originally dance music the beat was as important as any other musical element in the song.

- As you listen to popular music, listen to how the beat is produced. Is it being played by a drum set, or an electronic device? Most popular songs are structured in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter with measures that repeat four beat units.
- Listen for which beats are the strongest within the four-beat units.
- Listen, too, for how the song is arranged, or presented. Are the backgrounds sung, as they were in the early days of rock, or are they played on a keyboard synthesizer imitating a larger band or orchestra? Is the melody harmonized or is it always one voice accompanied by the band?

- You can also listen for the form of the song. Most popular songs are in the song forms learned in Unit 4; ABA, AABA, or simply AB. Listen for the chorus and the verse of the song. Which is the more memorable to you?

Finally, consider what musical element makes the song appealing to you. Is it the memorable melody? The beat? The lyrics? Or, some other element that keeps your attention.

Roots of Rock 'n' Roll

What are the roots of rock 'n' roll music?

In the early 1950s the primary popular music market in the United States was adult and white. By the end of the decade the primary market share for popular music had shifted to teenagers of all races and classes, and remains so today. This shift in popular music was brought on by the development of rock 'n' roll. Sixty years after its inception, popular rock music dominates American culture.

Rock 'n' roll is the name given to popular music of the 1950s that was based in African-American rhythm and blues. In the early 1950s a disc jockey named Alan Freed, working first in Cleveland and then New York City, hosted a national radio show of a type of music he called rock 'n' roll. This show became so influential that the name stuck to the new style of American popular music.

Rock 'n' roll is rooted in rhythm and blues, a style of African-American-influenced music that itself was based on the earlier jazz form called the blues. Similar to jazz, rhythm and blues (R & B) was usually not notated and relied on simple improvisation on a set scheme of chord progressions. Many rhythm and blues songs were specific to, and performed by, a particular artist, and were rarely published. The rhythmic pulse of R & B was more driving than that of other popular music of the day and it featured accents on so-called “backbeats” (for example, beats 2 and 4 of a $\frac{4}{4}$ meter).

Country and western music, known at the time as “hillbilly music,” was also influential in rock's early years. This folk music style was most popular in Southern states and featured simple harmonies and lyrics that often had a religious theme. Hillbilly music was closely related to folk music of Britain, especially in its use of the ballad form. Ballads are usually songs relating current events or stories, and in the United States these songs related the American experience of the early 20th century.

Of course other popular music of the first half of the 20th century influenced rock 'n' roll as well. Swing music was the popular dance music of the 1940s and this tradition of dancing to popular music lived on in rock 'n' roll. For decades American songwriters, especially those of Tin Pan Alley, had written songs that, after years of popularity with the public, had become American standards. These works, when recorded, usually featured large orchestras or bands accompanying a solo singer who was the featured artist.

The combination of hard-driving back-beat rhythms set in a repetitive harmonic scheme combined with ballad-like lyrics sung by a featured solo singer led to the creation of rock 'n' roll.

The 1950s

Rock 'n' roll developed in the 1950s as a unique art form appreciated mostly by teenagers. Throughout the 20th century in the United States each generation developed its own popular music, but none previously so divided the generations of parents and teenagers as did rock 'n' roll. As popular culture in the United States became more youth driven in the second half of the 20th century the music of teenagers began to dominate the musical marketplace.



PERFORMER PROFILE

Elvis Presley



Elvis Presley. © Copyright Bettmann/Corbis/AP Images.

America's first true superstar rock 'n' roll performer and teen idol was Elvis Presley (1935–1977). He made his first radio appearance live on the “Mississippi Slim” show in Tupelo, Mississippi, when he was twelve years old. He had been scheduled to perform during the previous week's show but backed out because of stage fright. His family was very poor and his classmates thought he was a loner. When he was just ten he entered a singing contest at the Mississippi-Alabama Fair and Dairy Show—he placed fifth. In high school he wasn't very successful. According to his own account he even failed music! In 1953 he walked into a small record company in Memphis called Sun Records and paid them \$4 to make a recording of him singing as a birthday present to his beloved mother. Jack Gould of *The New York Times* wrote, “He has no discernible singing ability. . . . His phrasing, if it can be called that, consists of the stereotyped variations that go with a beginner's aria in a bathtub. . . . His one specialty is an accented movement of the body.” Frank Sinatra said of him “His kind of music is deplorable, a rancid-smelling aphrodisiac . . . It fosters almost totally negative and destructive reactions in young people.” But, by the time Elvis Presley was nineteen he was one of the most popular singers in the United States and he would go on to influence popular culture more than any other single performer in the 20th century.

Over his career Presley had 149 hit records. Presley was born in the south and heard gospel music, R & B, and hillbilly music as a child. His early style was the epitome of the combination of hillbilly music and R & B. The early hits “Hound Dog,” “Don't Be Cruel,” “Love Me Tender,” “Jailhouse Rock,” “All Shook Up,” and others tore down the walls between these two styles and created a new style popular with both black and white audiences. Elvis's popularity as

a performer led him to the movies, and he made thirty-one films in his career, most featuring him performing a new hit song.

His popularity extended into the creation of market items. Teen fans could buy Elvis posters, socks, lunchboxes, lipstick; just about anything that could be imprinted with the Elvis image was. This early marketing scheme is still used today, often with the result that the artist makes more money from such items than from the music itself. The influence of Elvis's performing style, popularity, and music is hard to overstate. Following his popularity rock 'n' roll musicians of the late '50s and after became the most recognized and successful performers in all of music. Still referred to as "The King," Elvis was the personification of early rock 'n' roll.

The music of this chapter is readily available online. Listed here are Listening Suggestions. The songs recommended here accompany the information in the listening guides and serve as examples of the text material. In each song listen for what you think is the unique quality of the song or the artist(s) that contributed to the song's success.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.1

"HOUND DOG,"

Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, performed by Elvis Presley

What to Listen For

- Listen for the hard-driving rhythms of the backgrounds.
- Listen for the sensual quality of Presley's voice.

If You Liked That, Try This

"Blue Suede Shoes," by Carl Perkins

"Love Me Tender," Vera Matson

YouTube videos: search on keywords

Elvis Presley Live on Stage -Jailhouse Rock-

Remember to add to your personal playlist any of these samples that you like.

Bill Haley and the Comets

At the same time that Elvis Presley was beginning his career a country group called the Comets recorded what would become the standard-bearer song of early rock 'n' roll: "Rock Around the Clock." The Comets, led by lead singer Bill Haley, played both country and R & B. They released "Rock Around the Clock" as part of a movie called *Blackboard Jungle*, a film about teenage rebellion and violence. The lyrics and the driving rhythms spoke to the teens of the mid-1950s symbolizing freedom and rebellion from adults. This theme of rebellion was extremely important in the popular music of the late 1950s and 1960s. Artists such as Little Richard, the Big Bopper, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Buddy Holly were all influential in the beginning years of rock 'n' roll and most had roots in R & B.

Rock 'n' Roll Turns Soft

The incredible energy and drive of 1950s rock 'n' roll waned by the end of the decade. Several leading early rockers such as Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and the Big Bopper had untimely deaths. Others like Little Richard went into another field of work. Even Elvis quit performing at the end of the 1950s because he was drafted into the U.S. Army. The high-energy dance style of early rock 'n' roll was replaced by so-called "soft rock" which featured smoother orchestrations, larger accompaniments (sometimes full orchestras), a smoother and more lyrical singing style, and an emphasis on the personality and looks of the singer. This music was dominated by popular artists such as Pat Boone, Fabian, Bobby Darin, Paul Anka, and Frankie Avalon, whose music was featured on the first nationally aired television show of rock 'n' roll, called *American Bandstand*. This weekly show, hosted by Dick Clark, would for three decades, weekly present the latest hit song performed live by the original artist. In the beginning this show created the sensation of the teen idol—a young, handsome, polite, well-dressed, white man who sang sweet melodies about young love and who appealed to a young teenage girl audience. This style of popular music bore little resemblance to the rebellious, hard-driving dance music of rock 'n' roll. Audiences seemed not to notice the difference.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.2

"BEYOND THE SEA,"

Charles Trenet and Jack Lawrence, performed by Bobby Darin

What to Listen For

- Listen for the relaxed swinging style of the accompaniment and the smooth sound of Darin's voice.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Venus,” Ed Marshall and Peter DeAngelis, performed by Frankie Avalon
 “Tiger,” Ollie Jones, performed by Fabian

YouTube videos: search on keywords

Pat Boone-Aint That A Shame
 Bobby Darin-Splish Splash

Much of early rock 'n' roll featured a band of three or four players accompanying a lead singer. The instrumentalists often also sang backup vocals but were rarely mentioned as named performers. However, at the end of the 1950s three or four vocalists often combined to form a group that did not feature a lead singer. Most popular of these were the **doo-wop** groups. Doo-wop referred to the style of vocal accompaniment. Often these groups were vocal only—no instrumentalists. They sang in four-part harmony and created their own rhythm by using nonsense syllables sung by the bass singer. For example, the song “Sh-Boom” uses the syllables “ya-da-da, da-da-da” to create background rhythms. The music often featured a prominent voice bass singing a repetitive rhythm on these syllables with the melody sung in a very high male voice, called falsetto. Almost always males, these groups went by names like the Cadillacs, the T-Birds, the Coasters, the Platters, and the Flamingos. Girl groups like the Chantels, the Chiffons, and the Crystals were an outgrowth of the doo-wop style. Hit songs by girl groups, like “Tonight’s the Night,” “He’s So Fine,” “My Boyfriend’s Back,” and “Leader of the Pack” were the norm and focused on a teenage girl’s relationship with her boyfriend.

Doo-wop: A popular form of 1950s era music using vocal harmonies and nonsense syllables, usually unaccompanied.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.3

“THE LION SLEEPS TONIGHT,”

Solomon Linda and George David Weiss

What to Listen For

- Listen for the rich harmonies produced by the singers of these groups. Listen for the background vocals that are added to accompany the lead singer.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Unchained Melody,” Alex North and Hy Zaret, performed by the Platters

“I Only Have Eyes For You,” Harry Warren and Al Dubin, performed by the Flamingos

“Tonight’s the Night,” Luther Dixon and Shirley Owen, performed by the Shirelles

YouTube videos: search on keywords

Crystals da doo ron ron

Doo-Wop Megamix

Sha Na Na—Ramalama ding dong

Sha Na Na—Rock ‘n’ Roll is Here to Stay

Surf sound: Surf music was soft rock popular in the 1960s. The Beach Boys were the most popular surf band.

The 1960s

In the 1960s rock ‘n’ roll became an international phenomenon. American popular music and culture extended its influence across the Western world and to Asian cultures such as Japan, Korea, and China. In the United States the 1960s

marked a great social upheaval during which time the cultural distance between generations increased. A so-called “generation gap” referred to changing mores and attitudes on politics, sex, race, gender equality, and drugs. The popular music of the time reflected these diverse viewpoints and ideas.

Surf Music

The **surfsound** was also a part of soft rock of the first half of the 1960s. Surf music transported teenagers from all over America to the beaches of California and was popularized with the help of Hollywood movies and TV shows. Teen idols Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello starred in several surf movies of the 1960s each featuring songs of surf music.

The Beach Boys were the group most associated with surf music. Their song lyrics often referred to the surfing lifestyle and California and featured high male vocals. The Beach Boys had over forty hit songs including “Surfin’ Safari,” “Surfer Girl,” “California Girls,” and “Fun, Fun, Fun.” Surf music used the same harmonies and progressions of rock ‘n’ roll. The high vocals and more relaxed rhythmic style distinguish it as a sub-style of soft rock.



The Beach Boys. Courtesy SuperStock/Alamy.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.4

“GOOD VIBRATIONS,”

Brian Wilson, performed by the Beach Boys

What to Listen For

- Listen for the high male vocal parts that are identified with surf music. Listen for the bright and twangy tone quality of the lead guitar parts.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Surfer Girl,” by Brian Wilson, performed by the Beach Boys

“Fun, Fun, Fun,” by Brian Wilson and Mike Love, performed by the Beach Boys

YouTube videos: search on keywords

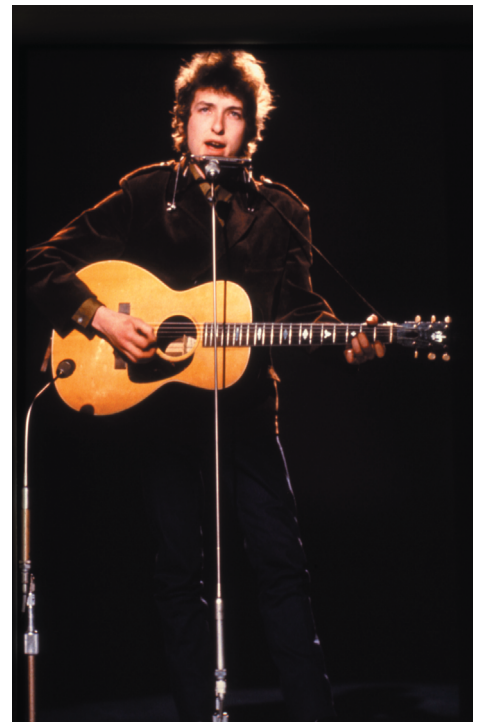
The Beach Boys—Surfin’ USA [Live]

Beach Boys—I Get Around

Rock Returns to Its Folk Roots to Change the World

Soft rock was aimed at a young audience. But, the rebellious teenagers of the late 1950s became the society-changing college students of the 1960s. The Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, a burgeoning illegal drug culture, and the beginnings of the women’s movement all influenced the music of the time. Musicians found that a return to folk music provided them with an acoustic style that lent itself to message and protest music. Performers like Bob Dylan, Buffalo Springfield, Peter, Paul & Mary, Joan Baez, Simon and Garfunkel, and the Mamas and the Papas all became very popular on college campuses as students began to tackle serious social issues and used music as a unifying force to do so. The antiwar movement of the Vietnam War era was closely tied to folk rock. Songs like “Blowin’ in the Wind,” “If I Had a Hammer,” “The Times They Are a’Changin’,” and “We Shall Overcome” became rallying cries to college-aged youth throughout America to rebel against the system and change the world for the better.

Bob Dylan. Courtesy Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy.



LISTENING GUIDE 20.5

“BLOWIN’ IN THE WIND,”

Bob Dylan, performed by Peter, Paul & Mary

What to Listen For

- Listen to the words of these songs, they carry the message of the song and are often metaphorical. Listen to the limited range of the melodies, they are designed to be easy to sing along with.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Mr. Tambourine Man,” Bob Dylan, performed by the Byrds

“A Hard Rain’s a-Gonna Fall,” Bob Dylan

“The Times They Are a’Changin’,” Bob Dylan, performed by Joan Baez

YouTube videos: search on keywords

Where Have all the Flowers Gone?

The British Invasion

In February 1964 American popular music was changed by four British citizens: John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr—the Beatles. Popular in England for several years, they appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on February 9, 1964, and played a concert at Carnegie Hall the same week. By the end of the month their song “I Want to Hold Your Hand” was the number one song on the pop charts. Lennon and McCartney’s songs were well-crafted, almost art music in complexity and quality. They used different chord progressions than the old predictable ones based on blues progressions, and their harmonies were more complex. Throughout the band’s career the Beatles used innovative recording techniques such as recording instruments at half speed and an octave lower to be played back twice as fast just in order to change the timbre of the instrument (for example, the piano part on “In My Life”), or purposefully using microphone feedback. The Beatles are credited with creating the first concept album (*Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*) in which the entire album is connected and creatively designed as a unit. The group also used non-Western instruments like the Indian sitar and instruments not traditionally associated with popular music like the string quartet or piccolo trumpet to create unique timbral effects.

In addition to the musical changes the Beatles brought to rock music, they were also influential in other ways. The success of the Beatles helped make rock music

an international style. Bands copied the Beatles concept of each member of the group playing a distinct and regular role in performance. And, after the Beatles rock bands tried to create their own unique identity through a particular style of dress, a unique and identifiable sound quality, or by playing a specific type of song.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.6

“I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND,”

John Lennon and Paul McCartney, performed by the Beatles

What to Listen For

- Listen for the blend of the voices. Listen to the mix of the lead guitar, bass guitar, and drum set. This type of arrangement is more formal and closely designed than much rock music prior to the Beatles.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Can’t Buy Me Love,” Paul McCartney

“Eleanor Rigby,” McCartney, Lennon, Harrison, Starkey

“Hey Jude,” Paul McCartney

YouTube videos: search on keywords

Twist and Shout—The Beatles Cartoons

The Beatles—Help

The Rolling Stones

The other most significant group of the British Invasion was the Rolling Stones. The style of the Stones was purposefully opposite that of the Beatles in many ways. The Beatles were pop musicians, the Stones were rockers. The Beatles were supposedly clean-cut young men, the Stones were bad boys and cultivated that image. The music of the Rolling Stones for the most part is a harder-driving style than that of the Beatles and more influenced by R & B. The Stones’s style was influential to the heavy metal groups yet to come in the 1970s. The Rolling Stones became popular in the U.S. in 1965 when “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction” first appeared on the charts. The group still tours and is still popular today, perhaps the longest-running success in rock ’n’ roll.

Other influential English groups popular in the United States and part of the British Invasion included the Dave Clarke Five, the Searchers, Gerry and the Pacemakers, Herman’s Hermits, the Animals, the Who, and the Yardbirds.



The Rolling Stones, still performing on stage together after 50 years. Courtesy ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy.

The British Invasion bands were deeply influenced by R & B and as such provided a sort of return to rock's roots offering an alternative to the soft rock that had become the common fare in the first half of the 1960s.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.7

“(I CAN’T GET NO) SATISFACTION,”

Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, performed by the Rolling Stones

What to Listen For

- Listen for the inflection in the lead singer’s voice.
- Listen to the raspy tone quality of the lead guitar.
- Listen to the strength of the drum set beat—there is a stronger and more driving beat pattern than in earlier rock.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Brown Sugar,” Jagger and Richards

“Jumpin’ Jack Flash,” Jagger and Richards

YouTube videos: search on keywords

I Cant Get No (Satisfaction)—The Rolling Stones Original Clip

Motown

Another alternative to soft rock in the 1960s was the Motown Sound. Created by producer Berry Gordy and based in Detroit (Motor City) the Motown Sound was polished, highly produced with full orchestrations. The groups were also slick, polished, and well-dressed with choreographed dance routines to fit their songs. The music was dance music. Motown created the careers of Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Marvin Gaye, and Michael Jackson. Groups like the Supremes, the Temptations, and the Jackson Five produced hit after hit. Motown was the first commercial success of black performers with all popular music demographics. The studio had its own team of songwriters: Lamont Dozier, Eddie Holland, and Brian Holland who wrote most of Motown's hits from 1963 to 1967. The team, along with Gordy's skills in administration and publicity, created a formula that most of the artists and music adhered to. This formula created the Motown Sound.



The Supremes. Courtesy Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.8

“STOP! IN THE NAME OF LOVE,”

Lamont Dozier, Brian Holland, and Eddie Holland, performed by the Supremes

What to Listen For

- Listen for the interaction between the lead singer and the backup vocal lines.
- Listen to the highly produced and full orchestration sound of the accompaniment.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Shop Around,” Robinson/Gordy, performed by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles

“How Sweet It Is,” Holland/Dozier/Holland, performed by James Taylor, Marvin Gaye

YouTube videos: search on keywords

Smokey Robinson & The Miracles—Tracks Of My Tears

The 1970s

Acid rock: A form of rock from the 1970s that featured improvisation and hard driving lead guitar and drumset.

If nothing else, popular music in the 1970s was eclectic. Most of the styles mentioned in this chapter so far continued to be played to some degree in the '70s and new styles were added. One of the most influential to the development of popular music was called **acid rock**. Also known by such terms as progressive rock, hard rock, or San Francisco rock this music became the heavy metal music of the '70s, '80s, and '90s.

Acid rock featured improvisation, especially from the lead guitar player and drummer, who, at least in concert settings, often launched into extended and free-form solos causing a song to last much longer than the traditional three minutes of a pop tune. Lead singers often used a harsh style of delivery and the bands played at very high volume levels. The image of the players themselves changed, with band members often performing in ragged clothing with long hair and projecting drug-related, occult, or even satanic images.

The advent of FM radio in the early 1970s allowed for a new mode of delivery of this music. FM stations were not allowed by the Federal Communications Commission to duplicate AM radio style programming. FM stations, first in San Francisco and then across the nation, began a new format featuring longer cuts from albums and entire albums. This format came to be known as AOR (album-oriented-rock). Acid rock appealed most to the “hippie” movement, those whose aim was to drop out of society and live in a communal way.

One of the first bands of this type was Jefferson Airplane, based in San Francisco. Its lead singer, Grace Slick, became the first real female rock star. Groups like the Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin's band, the Doors, Iron Butterfly, and Steppenwolf all were important acid rock bands.

Jazz rock: A form of pop music from the 1970s that mixed aspects of rock and jazz.

Expanding the diversity of the rock music in the '70s was the so-called **jazz rock**. This style included well-trained musicians who had roots and abilities in both the jazz and rock worlds. These bands usually had an extended membership including not just drums and guitars but also electronic keyboards, saxophones, and brass. The most important jazz rock bands of the 1970s were Chicago; Blood, Sweat and Tears; and Chase. The music of these bands was highly polished and arranged, yet still featured improvised instrumental solos. Hits by these groups such as “Make Me Smile,” “25 or 6 to 4,” “Spinning Wheel,” and “Get It On” helped a generation rediscover jazz.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.9

“25 OR 6 TO 4,”

Robert Lamm, performed by Chicago

What to Listen For

- Listen for the brass instrument accompanimental lines and solos.

If You Liked That, Try This

“You’ve Made Me So Very Happy,” Holloway/Holloway/Wilson/Gordy, performed by Blood, Sweat and Tears
 “Open Up Wide,” Chase
 “What is Hip,” Castillo/Kupka/Garibaldi, performed by Tower of Power

Soft rock also continued in the 1970s. Groups and soloists such as the Carpenters, Barry Manilow, Neil Diamond, and Olivia Newton-John were very popular with a large segment of the population. Their styles continued the melodic, highly produced sounds of the soft rock of the 1960s.

Singer-songwriters were also important rock performers in the 1970s. Elton John, Carole King, James Taylor, and Billy Joel all produced a number of hits that they wrote and performed. These singers often accompanied themselves on acoustic instruments such as unamplified guitar or piano. Each of these artists wrote songs for other groups or singers and were as well-respected as songwriters as they were singers.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.10

“PIANO MAN,”

Billy Joel

What to Listen For

- Listen to the song imagining only piano or guitar accompaniment. These songs were written to be performed by one musician who accompanies himself.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Fire and Rain,” James Taylor
 “Daniel,” Elton John

Despite the fact that rock music helped break down the color barrier in the 1950s there still remained into the 1970s a style of “black rock.” Groups like Sly and the Family Stone, the Commodores, Earth, Wind & Fire, and artists like Stevie Wonder and Gladys Knight produced music that, while popular with white

audiences, was primarily aimed at the African-American audience. Most groups of this type continued with updated dance choreography and had horn sections as backups in addition to drums, keyboards, and guitars.

In the mid-1970s a new dance craze called “disco” dominated soft rock. Donna Summer, the Queen of Disco, and the Bee Gees were the most popular performers of this style. It, like soft rock, was highly produced and featured a repetitive beat behind usually lyrical and memorable melodies.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.11

“LAST DANCE,”

Paul Jabara, performed by Donna Summer

What to Listen For

- Listen for the steady and consistent beat.
- Listen for the size of ensemble that accompanies these songs.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Stayin’ Alive,” Bee Gees

YouTube videos: search on keywords

BARRY MANILOW—COPACABANA



Disco queen Donna Summer. Courtesy Associated Press.

Country music also became part of mainstream popular music in the 1970s and drew many influences from rock. Crossover artists like Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, and the Eagles were able to successfully appeal to audiences of both pop/rock and country music. These crossover artists set the stage for the hugely successful country/pop artists of the 1990s like Garth Brooks and Shania Twain.

The 1980s

By the 1980s two or three generations of Americans had grown up with their own version of rock music. Rock had become the dominant genre of music in the United States and its diverse styles made it easy for many different ages and types of people to enjoy. During the 1980s rock music continued to diversify in style. As with previous decades, other styles continued to flourish, including soft rock and jazz rock. Solo artists like Elton John and Billy Joel remained popular.

By the end of the 1970s acid rock had become hard rock or **heavy metal** as it would be called in the 1980s. Heavy metal, like acid rock, featured hard-driving rhythms, high volumes, and improvisatory guitar and drum solos. Heavy metal bands like Black Sabbath, KISS, Alice Cooper, and Metallica created on-stage personas and stage shows that were as important as the music itself. Heavy metal rock shows featured bands in black leather, ripped clothing, and makeup as well as dry-ice fog, pyrotechnics, animal abuse, and occult symbols. The music was thought by critics to not contribute to the development of rock. But to millions of rebellious teenagers it expressed their frustrations in ways that they could not act on themselves.

Heavy metal: A type of pop music that featured hard-driving rhythms, high volume, and improvisation similar to acid rock.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.12

“SCHOOL’S OUT,”

Glen Buxton, Michael Bruce, Dennis Dunaway, and Neal Smith, performed by Alice Cooper

What to Listen For

- Listen to the tone quality of the lead singer’s voice.
- Listen for the improvised lead guitar solos and the tone quality of the electric guitar.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Evil Woman,” Wagner/Wiegand/Wiegand, performed by Black Sabbath

“Hit the Lights,” Hetfield/Ulrich, performed by Metallica

YouTube videos: search on keywords

Enter Sandman—Metallica

Alice Cooper—School's Out (From “Live at Montreux”)

ZZ Top—Legs (From “Live In Texas”)

Punk: A type of rock that features small instrumentations, simple harmonic structures, and lyrics that shock.

Punk was the first new style of rock in the 1980s and, like other styles before, it came from England. Punk rock performers, like their heavy metal counterparts, wore clothing and sang lyrics intended to shock the establishment. Lyrics were often violent or offensive and the music was harmonically simple and played at loud volumes with repetitive rhythms. The most successful of the punk rock groups included the Ramones, the Sex Pistols, and the Clash.

The Superstar

Two superstar performers emerged in the 1980s that influenced most of the popular music industry: Madonna and Michael Jackson. Both were solo artists who not only toured with spectacular stage shows but also produced music videos.

The music video and the advent of MTV changed the manner in which popular music was accessed and performed. The most successful performers had to be able to act and dance as well as sing in order to produce a marketable music video. While Madonna may be best known for her stage shows, Michael Jackson's music



Michael Jackson in “Thriller.” Courtesy Photos 12/Alamy.

videos set the standard for the industry. His “Beat It” and “Billie Jean” music videos from the album *Thriller* were actually mini-films in terms of production quality. Both Madonna and Jackson had a string of number one hits and were thought of more as performers than musicians. Their abilities to dance and create characters for songs match, or exceed their vocal abilities. Their popularity as musicians relies heavily on their entire production and publicity package.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.13

“BEAT IT,”

Michael Jackson

What to Listen For

- Listen for the tone quality of the singers’ voices.
- Listen to the accompanimental parts, which were designed to be effective in music videos or large stadium concerts.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Thriller,” Michael Jackson

“Like a Virgin,” Steinberg/Kelly, performed by Madonna

YouTube videos: search on keywords

Michael Jackson—Thriller

Hip Hop/Rap

No new style of popular music since the beginnings of rock ’n’ roll has so confused and infuriated parents as rap. Hip hop culture developed as an urban style in the late 1970s, went mainstream in the mid-1980s, and became culturally influential in the 1990s. Rap is a sort-of patter speech, usually with rhymed lyrics set over a minimalistic beat pattern. Technological developments have made it possible for a rap band to not have any “real” instrument players in it. Instead, turntables, tape loops, drum machines, and programmable electronic keyboards produce the backgrounds to the rap artist’s patter lyrics. Lyrics, especially in early rap music, were often intentionally violent and controversial. Some rap lyrics have celebrated murder, violence against women, and the use of drugs. Early rap groups included Run-DMC, Public Enemy, and Ice Cube.



Run-DMC. Courtesy Everett Collection Inc/Alamy.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.14

“WALK THIS WAY,”*Steven Tyler and Joe Perry, performed by Run-DMC***What to Listen For**

- Listen for the rhyming of the lyrics.
- Listen for the patter speech-like quality of the melody.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Don’t Believe the Hype,” Ridenour/Shocklee/Sadler/Drayton, performed by Public Enemy

YouTube videos: search on keywords

Ice Cube—Gangsta Rap Made Me Do It (Official Video)

**PERFORMANCE PRACTICE***Instruments in the Bands****What instruments are used in rock bands?***

Rock ’n’ roll bands of the ’50s and early ’60s were just three players: a drummer, a bass player, and a guitarist with one or two of the members doubling as singers. This simple orchestration focused attention on the two most important aspects of rock ’n’ roll—the beat and the song lyrics. As early rock ’n’ roll and soft pop music of the late 1950s merged, the bands increased in size, usually adding a keyboard player and/or another guitar, both of whom also sang. The addition of the keyboard player would become important decades later as electronics entered popular music. This also allowed the lead singer of the group to not play an instrument, and this became common in the 1970s. By the late 1960s electronics and amplification had become important to many rock bands’ sound. Most groups were still small, usually under six performers, but their sound was greatly amplified—enough so that it could fill football stadiums. For almost three decades loud volume was one of the characteristics of rock.

A few groups in the 1960s like Tower of Power, Chase, and Chicago used horn sections to create a fuller instrumentation. These ensembles also represented the beginning of the fusion movement between popular music and jazz. Today's rock bands often include three guitars, keyboard, drum set player, extra percussion players, electronics, and sometimes wind players and back up singers, usually all accompanying a lead singer. These larger bands create a much richer tone quality than their 1950s predecessors. And, the larger instrumentation makes them capable of playing a wider range of musical styles. It also masks the tone quality of their lead singers and makes their group sound somewhat indistinguishable from other bands. In early rock listeners could recognize a band by its sound; today bands are known mostly for their lead singer's voice or simply by the songs they record. Listen again to Listening Guides 20.1, 20.9, and 20.12. Note the difference in the instrumentation of the bands and how they use sounds to create their songs. Report your opinions to the textbook Dashboard.

The 1990s and Beyond

Rap continues to be one of the dominant popular styles today. During the 1990s it split into two styles: “gangsta rap” characterized by angry and violent lyrics with practically no melody, and “pop/rap” featuring songs about unity that were more melodic in nature. M. C. Hammer’s album “Please Hammer Don’t Hurt ’Em” was anti-drug, anti-violence; it reached number one in 1990. Women rappers became increasingly popular during the ’90s, including Queen Latifah. As rap became more popular white rap artists emerged such as Vanilla Ice, the Beastie Boys, and Eminem. The sounds and fashion of rap have transcended racial boundaries and become part of the mainstream of American youth culture.

Divas

Soft rock and techno/rock continued into the 1990s led by female solo artists such as Whitney Houston, Celine Dion, Britney Spears, Mariah Carey, and Beyoncé. This style of popular music is reminiscent of soft pop of the 1950s with its large and lush orchestral accompaniments, its soaring melodies with lyrics focusing on love, and its relative rhythmic simplicity. Most of these divas are not only musicians, they are also known as dancers and active in films and fashion.



Whitney Houston. Courtesy Associated Press.

LISTENING GUIDE 20.15

“ONE MOMENT IN TIME,”

Albert Hammond and John Bettis, performed by Whitney Houston

What to Listen For

- Listen for the range and power of the soprano’s voice.
- Listen for the complexity of the accompaniment.

If You Liked That, Try This

“Vision of Love,” Carey/Margulies, performed by Mariah Carey

“The Power of Love,” Jennifer Rush, performed by Celine Dion

YouTube videos: search on keywords

Britney Spears—. . . Baby One More Time

We lack the historical distance to state what styles of music or performers will be most influential after the early 1990s. It seems that as the American public continues to diversify so will its popular music. Rock ’n’ roll began only sixty years ago yet its influence on American culture has been significant to a degree perhaps unmatched by any art form in our history. Today, our music and musicians influence not just the music we hear but also our fashion and our attitudes. Any music with such power transcends the level of popular music and becomes an art form.

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- ✓ **Build Your Own Playlist:** The works studied in the chapter Listening Guides serve as examples of different styles of pop music from different eras. Now, build your own playlist from those works listed in each IF YOU LIKED THAT, TRY THIS list or from other works you find. Share your playlist with others by posting it to your class discussion board or Dashboard.
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KEY TERMS

Acid rock
Doo-wop

Heavy metal
Jazz rock

Punk
Surf sound