

# CHAPTER 1

## THE GENESIS OF ROCK AND ROLL

### INTRODUCTION

Rock and Roll arose from the convergence of many musical predecessors, including:

- **Black-American Blues** (Delta blues, Classic blues, Jump Blues, Electric blues), **Jazz** (Swing), **Rhythm & Blues**, and **Gospel**
- **Country & Western** music (especially “country-swing”)
- **Folk Music** (mostly influential in the 1960s)
- **Pop Music** (Tin Pan Alley to “crooning”<sup>1</sup> ballad singers of the 40s and 50s)
- **Anglo-Saxon church hymns**

This gradual process was also impacted early on by social issues such as American segregation and the northward migration of blacks in the 1920s and ‘30s, as well as technological developments such as the invention of the phonograph, radio and the electric microphone, amplifier, and guitar.

### ROCK and ROLL’S PREDECESSORS

#### I. Early Blues

Rock & Roll originated primarily from African-American musical traditions. From Africa, blacks brought a strong, expressive oral tradition of music used for work, storytelling, and entertainment. Traits commonly found in virtually all African-influenced music include

- highly-sophisticated rhythms
- improvisation (creating music “on-the-spot”)
- “call-and response” technique (the leader initiates a “call,” which is answered by a group “response”)

Despite the U.S. racial segregation laws that were in place until 1964, black music adopted various influences from White-southern traditions, such as the use of stringed instruments and the implementation of harmonic/formal structures from Protestant church music.<sup>2</sup> The earliest developments were made by black slaves who sang blues-like “call-and-response” **spirituals** to help ease their burden as they toiled in the hot cotton fields of the Southern U.S. during the early/mid-1800s. Out of necessity, these slaves—who were accustomed to dancing to the syncopated **polyrhythms**<sup>3</sup> of African drums—began clapping and slapping their bodies in multiple rhythms to simulate a drum-like accompaniment. These traditions, when fused with the I, IV, V harmonic patterns of white southern church music,<sup>4</sup> ultimately provided the backbone of **Jazz**, **Blues** and **Gospel**.

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<sup>1</sup> “Crooning” was a subdued, sentimental style of “pop” singing used by leading male big-band singers and solo artists of the 1930s, 40s and 50s who were amplified by microphones (Bing Crosby, Dean Martin, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> See discussion of “harmony” in “The Elements of Music” (see pp. 194-95).

<sup>3</sup> “Polyrhythm”: Several independent rhythmic patterns occurring simultaneously; “Syncopation”: a strong “off-the-beat” accent.

<sup>4</sup> See discussion of “blues patterns” in “The Elements of Music” (see p. 201).

**Rural Blues** (1910s & 20s):

Although the exact date cannot be established, it is widely believed that the first blues singer was Georgia-born **Gertrude "Ma" Rainey** (1886-1939). By the time she made her first recordings in 1923 she was already called "The Mother of the Blues." Her earthy style had tremendous impact on many subsequent blues singers—especially her protégé, **Bessie Smith** (see below).

**Delta Blues** (1920s & 30s):

The earliest documented blues style, often called the **Delta Blues**, arose in the Mississippi Delta region around 1910-20, as created by solo singer-guitarists such as **Charley Patton** (1887-1934), **Robert Johnson** (1911-38)<sup>5</sup>, **Leadbelly** (Huddie Ledbetter, 1885-1949) and **Sam "Lightnin' Hopkins** (1912-82).<sup>6</sup> Important style traits of the blues that emerged from its onset are **bent-note melodies** and **backbeat** rhythm (emphasizing beats "2" and "4", instead of "1" and "3" in a 4/4 meter).

<b>Selected Examples of DELTA BLUES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Charley Patton</b>: "Stone Pony Blues" (c1920s)</li> <li>• <b>Robert Johnson</b>: "Cross Road Blues" (c. late 1920s), "Sweet Home Chicago" (c late 1920s)</li> <li>• <b>Sam "Lightnin' Hopkins</b>: "Mojo Hand" and "Gambler's Blues" (both recorded in mid-1950s)</li> </ul>

**II. The Blues Move North**

During and shortly after World War I, many black Americans left the rural south in search of jobs in northern industrial centers—especially Chicago.<sup>7</sup> The blues came north with them, and in this new environment, it took on new guises.

**Classic Blues** (1920s & 30s):

The **Classic Blues** was a more refined style promoted in the late 1920s/early 1930s by **Bessie Smith** (1894-1937), who performed/recorded to the accompaniment of only a piano and solo trumpet (which offered "responses" and instrumental fills).<sup>8</sup>

<b>Selected Example of CLASSIC BLUES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bessie Smith</b> (1894-1937): "Down Hearted Blues (c 1920s)</li> </ul>

**Urban Blues** (1920s & 30s):

Soon after, a harder-edged blues with a more powerful instrumentation emerged, following concurrent trends in big-band Jazz. This style, called **Urban Blues**, was most

<sup>5</sup> Robert Johnson only recorded from 1936-38.

<sup>6</sup> Hopkins was an important link because he continued to perform and record up through the 1960s

<sup>7</sup> Chicago's Black population grew from 40,000 in 1910 to over 230,000 in 1930.

<sup>8</sup> This style paved the way for more commercially successful blues singers such as Billie Holiday and white blues "cover" artists such as Judy Garland.

often played by **ensembles** (groups of instruments) comprised of a **rhythm section** (guitar and/or piano, bass and drums), **solo instrument(s)** (piano, saxophone, trumpet, clarinet or some other wind instrument), and at times a full jazz band. This ensemble would back up the featured blues singer in a “call-and-response” dialogue, and play instrumental **choruses** between the singer’s verses.<sup>9</sup> The artists of the early **Urban Blues** were migrant singer-guitarists from the South, such as **Blind Lemon Jefferson** (1897-1929)<sup>10</sup>, “**Big**” **Bill Broonzy** (c1893-1958), and **T-Bone Walker** (1910-75).

### III. The Blues Intensify via Jazz and Technology Influences (1930s, 40s and 50s):

#### *Jazz-Swing Influences* (1930s & 40s):

As early as the 1930s, strong precursors of rock & roll can be found in highly-rhythmic **Swing-style Jazz**. In the early 1940s, jazz guitarist **Charlie Christian** (1916-42) pioneered the use of the electric guitar, while other jazz greats such as vibraphonist **Lionel Hampton** (b. 1909) began emphasizing heavy “riffs,”<sup>11</sup> which ultimately had a strong influence on electric guitar solo-playing in emerging blues and rock styles.

#### *Jump Blues and Rhythm and Blues* (1940s & 50s):

In the 1940s and 50s, a new “boogie-woogie”<sup>12</sup>, jazz-influenced style of **Jump Blues** became popular with both black and white listeners, as promoted by jazz/blues crossover “shouters” such as **Cab Calloway** (1907-94), **Louis Jordan** (1908-75), **Wynonie Harris** (1915-69), **Willie Mae “Big Mama” Thornton** (1911-85), **Ruth Brown** (b. 1928), and **Big Joe Turner** (1911-85). This style developed into **Rhythm and Blues** (R & B)—the most important precursor to Rock and Roll.

#### **Selected Examples of JUMP BLUES (early R & B)**

- **Louis Jordan**: “Caldonia” (1945)
- **Wynonie Harris**: “Good Rockin’ Tonight” (1948)
- **Big Mama Thornton**: “Hound Dog” (1952; original Leiber & Stoller version)
- **Ruth Brown**: “Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean” (1953)
- **Big Joe Turner**: “Shake, Rattle and Roll” (1954), “Bump Miss Suzi” (c 1954)

#### *Chicago “Electric” Blues* (late 1940s & 50s):

The invention and mass production of the electric guitar in the 1940s by Les Paul and Leo Fender<sup>13</sup> eventually gave rise to the **Electric Blues** style, as made famous by the second generation of Chicago-based artists: **Johnny Lee (“Sonny Boy No. 2”) Williamson** (actual name Rice Miller, 1899-1965), **Howlin’ Wolf** (Chester Burnett, 1910-78), **Muddy Waters** (McKinley Morganfield, 1915-83), **Willie Dixon** (primarily known as a songwriter, 1915-92), **Elmore James** (1918-63), **John Lee Hooker** (b. 1917), **Riley**

<sup>9</sup> See discussion of “Verse/Chorus” song-forms in “The Elements of Music” (see pp. 199-200).

<sup>10</sup> Jefferson recorded for only the last three years of his life (1926-29, Paramount Records). He died either in his car or on the streets of Chicago during a snowstorm in 1929.

<sup>11</sup> Riff: a short, repetitive/reusable melodic pattern that becomes the basis for developing a solo improvisation.

<sup>12</sup> Boogie-woogie: a jazz style developed by black jazz pianists in the 1920s that is characterized by a double-time rhythm pattern (1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &) with strong off-beat accents.

<sup>13</sup> Les Paul (a famous jazz/big-band guitarist) pioneered the hand-made solid body guitar/electric pick-up concept, while Leo Fender was the first to successfully mass-produce these technologies.

“**Blues Boy**” (**B. B.**) **King** (born 1925), and **Bo Diddley** (Ellas McDaniel, b. 1928). This intensely expressive style of blues/R & B soon led the way to the emergence of Rock and Roll; in fact, many rock scholars believe that music of Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf from c1952-54 constitute the first examples of actual Rock and Roll.<sup>14</sup>

#### Selected Examples of “ELECTRIC” BLUES/R & B

##### *Chicago-50s style*

- **Muddy Waters**: “Rollin’ Stone” (1948), “I Got My Mojo Workin’” (c 1952)
- **Howlin’ Wolf**: “Spoonful” (1954), “Smokestack Lightnin’” (1954)
- **Bo Diddley**: “Bo Diddley” (1954), “I’m a Man” (1955)
- **B.B. King**: “Sweet Little Angel” (1956); “Sweet Sixteen” (c 1970s)

##### *Texas-80s style*

- **Stevie Ray Vaughn**: “Texas Flood” (1982)

#### IV. Technological/Social Changes that Increased Interest in R & B/Rock & Roll

In the late 1940s & 1950s, several new developments in recording/broadcasting technology fueled the rapid rise of R & B and served as a catalyst for emerging rock and roll styles:

- In 1948, “microgroove technology” (based on World War II audio research) gave rise to long-playing 33 1/3 RPM record albums (“LPs”) and 45 RPM “singles.”<sup>15</sup>
- Portable transistor radios and AM car radios were common by 1951. Rebel disc jockeys such as **Alan Freed** (1926-65)<sup>16</sup> began to promote R & B and emerging Rock & Roll to white audiences, despite segregation laws and racial backlash.
- In 1954, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (which struck down the “separate but equal” standard that sustained American segregation) allowed black music to be “legally” more acceptable to white teens.
- By the mid-1950s, black-and-white television had become an important vehicle for the promotion of popular music. (Elvis Presley made his first TV appearances in 1955.)
- The rising post-World War II economy in the U.S. gave teenagers increasingly more spending money—much of which they lavished on the latest records.

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<sup>14</sup> In subsequent decades, the Electric Blues tradition has been carried on by great singer-guitarists such as **Stevie Ray Vaughn** (1954-90), as exemplified by songs like “Texas Flood” (1982).

<sup>15</sup> LPs replaced the bulky 78 RPM albums that were the standard in the 1920s-40s. Although 78s were approximately the same size as an LP, 78s could only hold approximately 6 minutes of music per side, as compared to approximately 22 minutes per side on an LP. With the new microgroove technology (developed by Goldmark), a small 45 RPM single could hold as much as a 78 RPM disc (and with greater fidelity).

<sup>16</sup> Freed, who did syndicated Rock & Roll radio shows in Cleveland and eventually New York City, is widely credited with coining the term “rock and roll,” though “rocking and rolling” had long been a Black euphemism for dancing, partying, and sexual pleasures.

## V. The Rise and Importance of Independent Record Labels

In the late 1940s/1950s, the popular recording industry in the U.S. was tightly controlled by a handful of major record companies, most notably **RCA**, **Decca**, **Columbia** and **Capitol**. These companies were primarily interested in promoting Big-Band “crooners,” “middle-of-the-road” Swing and Pop music to generally conservative white listeners. In response to this, several small independent record companies gradually came upon the scene in an effort to promote black music. The three most important *independent* record companies of the 1950s were **Chess**, **Atlantic** and **Sun**.

- **Chess Records:** a Chicago-based label that began as Aristocrat Records, and then was changed to Chess Records in 1948 shortly after it was purchased by **Leonard and Phil Chess**. Featured Chess artists included **Muddy Waters**, **Howlin’ Wolf**, **Elmore James**, **Sonny Boy Williamson**, **Bo Diddley** and **Chuck Berry**.
- **Atlantic Records:** a New York-based label founded in 1947 by **Herb Abramson** and **Ahmet Ertegun** (the son of a Turkish Ambassador). In 1953, **Jerry Wexler** (former journalist with *Billboard* magazine) joined the company and became its head producer. In the mid-50s, **Nesuhi Ertegun** (Ahmet’s brother), and Wexler attracted an amazing array of jazz and R & B artists to Atlantic, including **Ruth Brown**, **Big Joe Turner**, **The Drifters**, **The Coasters**, **Ray Charles** and even white crossover artists such as **Bobby Darin**. Many of their hits were composed by the acclaimed songwriting team of **Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller**.<sup>17</sup>
- **Sun Records:** a small Memphis-based company founded by **Sam Phillips** (a former radio disc jockey). The company began in the early 1950s as the **Memphis Recording Service**, in which Phillips leased his recorded master discs to Chess and other independent labels for record-pressing and distribution. In this way, he launched the careers of **B. B. King**, **Howlin’ Wolf**, **Bobby ‘Blue Bland** and many other R & B artists. In 1952, Phillips established the **Sun** label. Two years later, he began recording country musicians, and this blend of country and R & B soon made Phillips the leading proponent of **Rockabilly** music. For a brief time, Sun Records simultaneously had **Elvis Presley**, **Carl Perkins**, **Jerry Lee Lewis** and **Johnny Cash** on its roster of artists.

Other notable independent record labels of the ‘50s were:

- **Modern Records** (Los Angeles): **B. B. King**
- **Specialty Records** (Los Angeles): **Little Richard**
- **Imperial Records** (LA—Lew Chudd, founder): **“Fats” Domino** (and Rick Nelson)
- **King Records** (Cincinnati—Syd Nathan, founder): **Wynonie Harris**

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<sup>17</sup> Atlantic continued to play a major role in the promotion of black music through the 60s Soul movement.

## VI. From R & B to Rock & Roll (1950s)

### **Blues- and R & B-based Rock and Roll** (mid-late 1950s):

In the early 1950s, many issues impeded the transfer of black R & B across to white audiences. Racial segregation in the U.S. was a sad fact of life in the 1940s and 50s, and music followed suit: Black musicians wrote and performed black music for black audiences, and white musicians wrote and performed (more conservatively) for white audiences. In the mid-50s, these barriers began to break down, largely because of the efforts of courageous black and white performers, disc jockeys and independent record producers who intentionally promoted their music across racial lines.

### **New Orleans R & B** (mid-late 1950s):

**Antoine “Fats” Domino** (born 1928), **Lloyd Price** (born 1933) and others pioneered the keyboard-and-horn driven sound of New Orleans R & B. Fats Domino’s smooth vocals and rolling piano style helped make him one of R & B’s most successful crossover artists, while Lloyd Price offered a more intense model that incorporated elements of the Gospel tradition. Both were influential on the emergence of Rock and Roll in the mid-late 1950s.

The most important New-Orleans R & B/Rock & Roll artist of the 50s, however, was the singer-pianist **Little Richard** (Richard Penniman, b. 1935). In his unique earthy and raucous style, Little Richard fused Rhythm & Blues (“shouter-style”), Gospel and Jump Blues into an early prototype of Rock and Roll. In 1957, at the height of his popularity, Little Richard shocked the music world by abandoning rock and roll to become a minister.

#### **Selected Examples of ‘50s New Orleans R & B—Rock & Roll**

- **Fats Domino:** “Ain’t That a Shame” (1955), “Blue Monday” (1957), “Blueberry Hill” (1957)
- **Lloyd Price:** “Stagger Lee” (1959)
- **Little Richard:** “Tutti Frutti” (1956), “Ready Teddy” (1957), “Lucille” (1957)

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### **White “Covers” of R & B**

Because of racial segregation, many white listeners got their first taste of black R & B through watered-down “**cover**” versions of black songs as sung by white artists. The most successful of these 50s “cover” artists was **Pat Boone** (b. 1934), who was also a pop “crooner,” teen-idol film star, and eventually a well-known Christian singer.<sup>18</sup> As strange as these “cover” versions may seem to us in retrospect, they played an essential part in the development of rock and roll by serving as a transitional buffer between black and white traditions at this critical juncture in rock history. On the other hand, the downside of the

<sup>18</sup> From 1955-84, Pat Boone was the fifth best-selling rock/pop artist (behind Elvis Presley, The Beatles, Stevie Wonder, and The Rolling Stones). As Greg Shaw describes in *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock'n'Roll*, Boone “began as a safe alternative to Elvis, and is still a safe alternative to just about everything.” In 1997, however, Boone shocked his conservative followers by appearing as a presenter at the Grammy Awards in black leather, chains, and pierced ears. His subsequent album was entitled *In a Metal Mood: No More Mr. Nice Guy*.

“cover” tradition was that the original artist would rarely receive any royalty for their efforts, even if the record company made an enormous profit off the “covered” song.<sup>19</sup>

**Selected Examples of “Cover” Versions of R & B Songs**

- **Pat Boone:** “Ain’t That a Shame” (1956), “Tutti Frutti” (1957)

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## VII. Country & Western Influences on Emerging Rock & Roll

### **Country Swing** (late 1920s-50s)

In the 1920s, Southern U.S. folk (“Hillbilly”) music began to adopt the **backbeat** rhythm and bent-note melodic style of the blues, creating **Country Swing**. This style is best represented by the **Delmore Brothers**, **Jimmie Rodgers** (1897-1933), **Bob Wills** (1905-75). In the late 40s/early 50s, the progressive country-swing “boogie” style of **Hank Williams Sr.** (1923-53) provided a direct transition to **Rockabilly** in the mid-late 50s.

**Selected Example of 50s Country-Swing**

- **Hank Williams, Sr.:** “Hey, Good Lookin’” (1952)

### **Rockabilly** (mid-late 1950s)

Rockabilly (considered by many to be the first true Rock & Roll genre) was strongly rooted in both country-swing and R & B, but with a faster tempo (beat speed). The “Country” side of the balance is more clearly evident in the music of **Johnny Cash** (b. 1932), **Bill Haley** (1925-81) and **His Comets**, **Carl Perkins** (1932-98), **Buddy Holly** (1936-59) and **the Crickets**, **The Everly Brothers** (Don and Phil Everly), **Rick Nelson**<sup>20</sup> (1940-85), and **Roy Orbison** (1936-88; strong “pop” roots also). The Blues/R & B side of the balance is more clearly evident in the music of **Elvis Presley** (1935-77), **Gene Vincent** (1935-71), **Eddie Cochran** (1938-60) and **Jerry Lee Lewis** (b. 1935).

A few of these rockabilly artists were able to draw the interest of a major record company;

- **Decca:** Bill Haley and Buddy Holly
- **Capitol:** Gene Vincent—his big hit was “Be-Bop-a-Lula” (1956)

however, most were originally discovered and promoted by small, yet highly influential independent record companies:

- **Sun:** Presley—Cash—Lewis—Perkins (“The Million Dollar Quartet”) and Orbison
- **Cadence:** The Everly Brothers
- **Imperial:** Rick Nelson
- **Liberty:** Eddie Cochran

<sup>19</sup> One tragic example of this abuse befell blues legend Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup. While under contract with RCA from 1941-56, Crudup recorded 80 “sides,” many of which were also recorded by major white artists who gave him no royalty. After a two-year battle, Crudup reached an apparent settlement with RCA for \$60,000, but they reneged on verbal agreement because a lawsuit would cost them less money.

<sup>20</sup> Ricky Nelson first came to fame with his real family on their 50s TV show, *Ozzie and Harriet*.

### Selected Examples of 50s/early 60s Rockabilly

- **Bill Haley and His Comets:** “Shake, Rattle and Roll” (1954), “Rock Around the Clock” (1955)
- **Elvis Presley:** “Heartbreak Hotel” (1956), “Money, Honey” (1956), “Hound Dog” (1956), “Jailhouse Rock” (1956), “Blue Moon of Kentucky” (1957)
- **Johnny Cash:** “Folsom Prison Blues” (1956)
- **Carl Perkins:** “Blue Suede Shoes” (1956)
- **Buddy Holly and the Crickets:** “That’ll Be the Day” (1957), “Oh, Boy” (1957), “Peggy Sue” (1957)
- **Jerry Lee Lewis:** “Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On” (1957), “Great Balls of Fire” (1957)
- **The Everly Brothers:** “Bye, Bye Love” (1957); “Cathy’s Clown” (c1958)
- **Eddie Cochran:** “Summertime Blues” (1959)
- **Roy Orbison:** “Only the Lonely” (1960); “Pretty Woman” (1964)
- **Ricky Nelson:** “Hello Mary Lou, Goodbye Heart” (1961)

Two other important Black innovators of the 50s—**Hank Ballard** and **Chuck Berry** were influenced to a large degree by Country & Western elements. In the mid-50s, **Hank Ballard** promoted a sexier side of early R & B that he partially attributes to the music of Country & Western balladeer/movie cowboy, **Gene Autry** (b. 1907). **Chuck Berry** (b. 1926)—one of the most important pioneers of early rock and roll—merged guitar influences from T-Bone Walker and Muddy Waters with a vocal style derived from Country & Western music. Berry is lauded as one of rock’s legendary guitarists and also as one of its finest lyricists. In 1959, at his height of popularity, Berry was sentenced to two years in jail for transporting a 14-year-old girl (an alleged prostitute) across state lines for immoral purposes.<sup>21</sup>

### Selected Examples Country & Western-influenced R & B

- **Hank Ballard and The Midnighters:** “Work With Me Annie” (1954)
- **Chuck Berry:** “Maybellene” (1955), “Roll Over Beethoven” (c1957), “Sweet Little Sixteen” (1958), “Rock and Roll Music” (1958)

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## VIII. Responses to the Rising Popularity of R & B/Rock & Roll

### *Racist Backlash, Boycotts, and “Watered-Down” Commercialization*

In the late 1940s, R & B was labeled “Race Music” when being advertised and distributed to white buyers. By the early 1950s, it began to be called “Rhythm & Blues.” As this music became more widely disseminated in the 50s, many parents, teachers, lawmakers, clergy and the conservative media came to view R & B and emerging Rock & Roll styles as a blight on society. They joined forces with the major record companies

<sup>21</sup> By the time Berry re-emerged on the rock and roll scene in the early 1960s, he could not find a place in the U.S. market that had begun to promote a much more conservative “pop”/teen idol style (see Chapter 2).



and their pop/ crooner artists and songwriters in an attempt to hold back the rising tide of Rock music through boycotts and pressure on rebel disc jockeys and distributors. Racial slurs, censorship, physical violence against black artists began to occur. Black artists including **The Drifters**, **5 Royales**, **Hank Ballard**, **Ray Charles**, and **Jimmy Witherspoon** were censored. At the height of the madness, the beloved 50s Black pop/crooner **Nat “King” Cole** was viciously attacked on stage in April 1956 by members of the White Citizens’ Council of Birmingham, Alabama.

In response to this negative campaign, the independent labels (“indies”) became much more aggressive and creative, even to the point of selling records out of the trunks of cars to thousands of eager teens. Eventually, the “majors” realized the tremendous potential crossover market for R & B, so they began promoting white “covers” of R & B, which quickly began to undermine the power of the “indies.” Slowly, the majors began to draw leading artists away from the smaller labels; however, for a time both **Sun Records** and **Atlantic Records** successfully withstood the pressure.<sup>22</sup>

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### ***Presley Mania***

In 1955, **RCA** bought the rights to **Elvis Presley** from Sun Records for \$35,000. With some clever maneuvering by Presley’s manager—“Colonel” Tom Parker, Elvis made a series of appearances on nationally-broadcast TV variety shows hosted by Tommy & Jimmy Dorsey, Ed Sullivan, Milton Berle, and Steve Allen.<sup>23</sup> Presley became a smash success, but also created considerable controversy. With juvenile delinquency on the rise—promoted by the release of such films as *Rebel Without a Cause* (starring the young Marlon Brando) and *Blackboard Jungle* (featuring Haley’s “Rock Around the Clock”)—concerned parents, civil authorities, church leaders and conservative disc jockeys began to boycott Presley’s concerts and speak out against his apparent negative influence on teens. In response, Elvis toned down his wild stage manner,<sup>24</sup> and he began to add love ballads and Gospel songs to his repertory—all of which made him more appealing to general audiences.

Presley’s rapid rise to stardom began to result in severe personal problems that ultimately led Elvis to split with two members of his original back-up group—Scotty Moore and Bill Black. The following year, Presley was drafted into the U.S. Army to serve in Germany from 1958-60. After his discharge and return to U.S., Presley focused most of his creative energy on feature Hollywood films (he made 31, including *GI Blues*, *Love Me Tender*, *Blue Hawaii*, *Viva! Las Vegas*). Tired of his overly-publicized personal life, Elvis went into seclusion from 1962-68. In 1968, he made a well-received TV comeback, followed by a new career in Las Vegas. In 1973, his “Aloha from Hawaii” TV special (the first international satellite broadcast) was seen by one billion viewers. Finally, after years of personal problems and drug addiction, Elvis died of heart-related complications on August

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<sup>22</sup> Sun Records survived mostly from the good fortune of discovering Elvis Presley—although he was sold to RCA in 1956. Atlantic Records’ success at this time rested largely on the crossover popularity of Ray Charles in the late 50s/early 60s.

<sup>23</sup> During Elvis’ appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on September 9, 1956, Sullivan demanded that Elvis be filmed only from the waist up—so his gyrating hips would not raise the ire of conservative viewers.

<sup>24</sup> For example, Presley appeared on the *Steve Allen Show* in a tuxedo singing “Hound Dog” to a real dog.

16, 1977—at age 42. Presley’s huge success in disseminating Rockabilly marked the high point of the evolutionary process that gave birth to the Rock & Roll movement.<sup>25</sup>

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## FEATURED SONGS FOR CHAPTER 1

[w] = Audio and/or lyrics available on the class website

[Time-Life Video] = Time-Life History of Rock and Roll Series

### EARLY BLUES (Delta Blues/Classic Blues):

- CHARLIE PATTON: “Stone Pony Blues” [w] (c1920)—Delta Blues
- ROBERT JOHNSON: “Cross Road Blues” [w] (late 1920s; Time-Life DVD 1a)—Delta Blues
- BESSIE SMITH: “Down Hearted Blues” [w] (c1920s)—“Classic” Blues
- SAM “LIGHTNIN’ HOPKINS: “Mojo Hand” (recorded in late ‘50s; Time-Life DVD 3a), “Gambler’s Blues” [w] (recorded in mid-1950s)

### JUMP BLUES (R & B)

- LOUIS JORDAN: “Caldonia” (1945; Time-Life DVD 1a)
- WYNONIE HARRIS: “Good Rockin’ Tonight” [w] (1948)
- WILLIE MAE “BIG MAMA” THORNTON: “Hound Dog” [w] (1952—original version)
- RUTH BROWN: “Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean” [w] (1953; Time-Life DVD 1a)
- BIG JOE TURNER: “Shake, Rattle and Roll” (1954; Time-Life DVD 1a), “Bump Miss Suzi” [w] (c1954)

### NEW ORLEANS R & B

- FATS DOMINO: “Ain’t That a Shame” [w] (1955), “Blue Monday” [w] (1957; Time-Life Video 1), “Blueberry Hill” [w] (1957)
- LLOYD PRICE: “Stagger Lee” [w] (1959)

### CHICAGO ELECTRIC R & B

- HOWLIN’ WOLF: “Smokestack Lightnin’” [w] (1954), “Spoonful” (1954)
- BO DIDDLEY: “Bo Diddley” [w] (1955; Time-Life DVD 1a), “I’m a Man” [w] (1955)
- MUDDY WATERS: “I Just Wanna Make Love to You” (1954), “I Got My Mojo Workin’” [w] (1956; Time-Life DVD 1a)
- B.B. KING: “Sweet Little Angel” [w] (1956)
- JOHN LEE HOOKER: “Motor City is Burning” [w] (as recorded in mid-1960s)

### TEXAS ELECTRIC BLUES OF THE 80s

- STEVIE RAY VAUGHN: “Texas Flood” [w] (1982; Time-Life DVD 4a)

### 50s COUNTRY & WESTERN

- HANK WILLIAMS, SR.: “Hey, Good Lookin’” [w] (1952; Time-Life DVD 1a)
- JOHNNY CASH: “Folsom Prison Blues” [w] (1956)

<sup>25</sup> Elvis Presley was the best-selling rock artist from 1955-84 (directly ahead of The Beatles, Stevie Wonder, The Rolling Stones, Pat Boone and Elton John).

### **50s COUNTRY-INFLUENCED R & B—EARLY ROCK & ROLL**

- HANK BALLARD AND THE MIDNIGHTERS: “Work With Me Annie” [w] (1954)
- CHUCK BERRY: “Maybelline” [w] (1955; Time-Life DVD 1a), “Roll Over Beethoven” [w] (c1957; Time-Life DVD 1b), “Sweet Little Sixteen” [w] (1958), “Rock and Roll Music” (1958—Theme song for Time-Life Rock Video Series)

### **EARLY BLUES-BASED ROCK & ROLL**

- LITTLE RICHARD: “Ready Teddy” (c1957; Time-Life DVD 1a), “Tutti Frutti” (1956; Time-Life DVD 1a), “Lucille” (1957; Time-Life DVD 1b)
- PAT BOONE (covers): “Tutti Frutti” (1957; Time-Life DVD 1a), “Ain’t That a Shame” [w] (1958)

### **50s COMMERCIAL POP**

- PATTI PAGE: “How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?” [w] (1953; Time-Life DVD 1b)

### **ROCKABILLY**

- BILL HALEY & HIS COMETS: “Shake, Rattle and Roll” (1954), “Rock Around the Clock” [w] (1955; Time-Life DVD 1a)
- ELVIS PRESLEY: “Heartbreak Hotel” [w] (1956; Time-Life DVD 1a), “Hound Dog” [w] (1956; Time-Life DVD 1b), “Blue Moon of Kentucky” [w] (1957; Time-Life DVD 4a), “Money, Honey” [w] (1956; Time-Life DVD 1a), “Jailhouse Rock” [w] (1956)
- CARL PERKINS: “Blue Suede Shoes” [w] (1956; Time-Life DVD 1b)
- JERRY LEE LEWIS: “Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On” (1957; Time-Life DVD 1b), “Great Balls of Fire” [w] (1957)
- BUDDY HOLLY AND THE CRICKETS: “That’ll Be The Day” [w] (1957; Time-Life DVD 1a), “Oh, Boy” [w] (1957; Time-Life DVD 1b), “Peggy Sue” (1957)
- EVERLY BROTHERS: “Bye, Bye Love” [w] (1957; Time-Life DVD 1b)
- RICKY NELSON: “Hello, Mary Lou, Goodbye Heart” [w] (1961; Time-Life DVD 4a)
- ROY ORBISON: “Pretty Woman” [w] (1964; Time-Life DVD 1b)

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