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The Beatles

- JFK assassinated **Nov 22, 1963**
- Postwar Britain under the Marshall plan begins to discover American rock 'n' roll
 - Britain's first attempt at rock and roll: **skiffle**
 - * Very DIY
 - * Covers of old american blues, e.g. leadbelly
- The Beatles form
 - John Lennon in a skiffle group called the Quarrymen
 - John meets Paul McCartney after the performance, they bond over the fact that they are both unique in that they actually *write* their own songs, which was not common - they decide to form a band
 - George Harrison joins as guitarist
 - Early Beatles had a rocker/motorcycle gang image
 - They do a lot of live shows, in East Germany etc.
- The Beatles meet Brian Epstein
 - As manager, he changes their image to be clean and approachable - this is where the main image of the early Beatles comes from
 - Unable to get a record deal from any label in Britain even after trying for 6 months - this is the in-between years and few people see a future in guitar based music
- Beatles sign to EMI **1962**
 - Producer George Martin
 - * He had access to a lot of variety in production equipment - used to produce comedy shows
 - * Tells the Beatles to fire the drummer Pete Best - they do it instantly, probably because they didn't like him that much (especially John)
 - He didn't do drugs
 - He looked better than John
 - * Ringo joins as drummer - Martin is initially unsure and has him play tambourine instead on **Love Me Do (1962)**
- The Beatles record and release **Please Please Me (1963)**
 - Ringo finally playing on drums
 - AABA structure
 - Change in lyrical density for the B section, similar to Somewhere Over the Rainbow
 - Highest note appears at the end of the B section
- By the end of **1963**, the Beatles are massively popular
 - November 1963, they perform a show at the Royal Variety Performance and John disses the Queen
 - They get a big hit with 'loves you yeah yeah', and decide to go to America. EMI markets it with the phrase 'the Beatles are coming' (joke on the British are coming)
- Beatles arrive in America **1964**
 - Their first stop is the Ed Sullivan show, which gets **70M** viewers (over a third of the US population at the time)
 - Next stop is the Washington Coliseum

- * At the time, it was unusual to do a concert in a sports stadium; no one was that big
- * Decide to put the band in the middle of the stadium, turning 90° every once in a while to face different members of the audience
- * New equipment has to be invented to support these concerts, but they are massively successful. All of a sudden sports stadium owners realise they could be making a whole lot more money in off-season.
 - In 2 weeks, they sell 2 million albums and \$2.5M in merchandise
- The Beatles become the template for what is to follow, for example the **Mersey Beat** genre of British Blues
 - Gerry and the Pacemakers, The Searchers, and The Swinging Blue Jeans - they all play simple blues with a similar friendly look as the Beatles
- In 1965, they release their second film entitled 'Help', essentially a mockumentary of the touring life
- **Yesterday (1965)**
 - Uses a string quartet - a signifier of serious composers
 - More complex harmony and lyrics than their previous songs
 - George's idea for the arrangement - strings and guitar
- The Beatles meet Dylan
 - The Beatles revered Dylan
 - He introduces them to weed and not writing terrible lyrics
- Paul begins to write songs on his own: until now it was always Lennon and McCartney
- Beatles begin to move away from themes of idealized romance, and begin to experiment even with album art (e.g. Rubber Soul)
 - Rubber Soul - cover doesn't even have the band's name on it. The story behind the art is that they accidentally distorted a normal picture and just decided to go with it. The name of the album refers to soul music and how their songs sounded like a rubber imitation of it.
 - Album art becomes part of the art of the music and no longer just a marketing tool
- Beatles release the album Revolver (1966); on it is the song **Tomorrow Never Knows (1966)**
 - Composed by John, lyrics adapted from the Tibetan book of the dead
 - Influence of non-Western music can be heard in the usage of **drone**
 - Double tracked vocals (sung twice on the same track)
 - **Leslie cabinet** effect: they played back John's voice on a spinning cabinet, making it sound like he is singing through a fan
 - Paul has been experimenting with tape loops, which was an avant-garde technique at the time
 - * Literally tape two ends of a recording together and attach it to a machine that plays it
 - * Seagull sound is a sped up version of Paul laughing
 - * There are about 8 loops playing in the song, physically operated by different people
 - * Played the guitar loop backwards
- The Beatles become disillusioned with live performance
 - Philippines tour, they reject dinner with the dictatorial president, becomes a controversy and the Beatles are forced to turn over their concert profits to the government and are harassed by officials
 - John makes the 'Beatles are bigger than Jesus' comment and it causes a huge stir
 - Candlestick park, San Francisco 1966 is their last performance, after which they announce they will no longer perform live.

Chapter 8

British Invasion

8.1 The End of the Beatles

- Beatles release the single **Strawberry Fields Forever** (1967), their first single since their last performance at Candlestick park
- Beatles release the album Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band 1967
 - Example song **A Day In the Life** (1967)
 - * Assembled by 2 different partially completed songs written by Lennon and McCartney, an unusual choice
 - * Transition is **aleatory** which means 'chance' - they let the musicians do whatever, progressively getting louder then playing an E.
 - First *major* concept album (not the first)
 - * A concept album is an album with some common theme or story connecting the songs
 - * Originally the album was supposed to be all about childhood, though they ended up adding other songs to pad it out
 - First time that the lyrics were included on the cover of a rock album
 - Hippie Aesthetic
 - * Rock 'n' Roll - entertainment/hit focused music (e.g. Chuck Berry)
 - * Rock - focus on the musician as an artist, singles become albums, dancing becomes listening, etc.
- The end of the Beatles
 - Brian Epstein dies of overdose - beginning of the end for the Beatles
 - Epstein often considered the '5th Beatle', and was the only guy keeping Paul and John on good terms
 - Paul leaves the band in 1969

8.2 British Blues Revival

- Chess Records does a tour in the U.K. with Muddy Waters 1958
 - Why? R&B was becoming less popular in the in-between years in the USA but the UK was just discovering it
 - This tour becomes the major influence for a subculture of british blues artists: Fleetwood Mac, Cream, Clapton, Zeppelin, and the Rolling Stones
- Rolling Stones debut in 1962
 - Founder: **Brian Jones**, wants to make a band that just does old American blues covers.
 - Manager: **Andrew Long Oldham**
 - * Tells them to stop aping the Beatles
 - * Gives them their iconic image of ragged dress and mean attitudes
 - 1963 - they change into an intimidating image
 - Oldham pushes them to write their own songs to get more money (contrary to Jones' intention)

- * At one point, brings in Lennon and McCartney to finish writing a song for them, allowing Keith and Mick learn how to write songs
- **King Bee** (1964)
 - * Cover of a Slim Harpo song from '57
 - * Does an American accent, which is unusual for british bands at the time
- They tour in the US, not getting much success. They had not yet begun to write their own songs.
- Their first big original is **Satisfaction** (1965) which was written in Keith's sleep. The lyrics are about American advertising. It becomes their first #1 hit in the US.
- Brian Jones doesnt like the direction of the band, leaves in 1969 after a dispute. Dies in his pool after they leave for another US tour.
- Similarities Between and Rolling Stones
 - Managers created their image (RS Oldham, Beatles Epstein)
 - Opposite trajectories - Beatles for the middle class, RS was 'for the working-class'. But they came from opposite directions - Mick was fairly upper class while the Beatles were not
 - Product vs. Process
 - * Having a goal in mind when going into the studio vs. creating something as a byproduct of experimenting
 - * Beatles were product oriented, Rolling Stones process oriented.
 - * Improvisation = process

Chapter 9

Soul and Funk

- In the US, especially in Black communities, the tables begin to turn. Influenced by the civil rights movement there was a new vision that rejected R&B as the music of the past.
- Soul
 - Three main characteristics
 1. Gospel-Influence Vocals but not lyrical content (acrobatic, strong sense of rhythm)
 2. Rhythm of R&B
 3. Arrangements and lyrical styles of TPA (to restrain the themes of R&B)
 - Two centers: Motown (Detroit, a.k.a. *Hitsville*) and Stax (Memphis, a.k.a. *Soulsville*)

9.1 Motown

- 1959, founder Berry Gordy
- The name comes from the nickname of Detroit - motor city - as it used to be a hub for industry
- Gordy worked in the automotive plants and envisioned a music label that operated in the same way as an assembly line
 - New in African-American music
 - Had been done before but not all in one building
- Songwriters
 - Holland/Dozier/Holland
 - Smokey Robinson
- Maxine Powell
 - Teacher at a 'finishing school' that taught the performers how to behave
 - Wanted his artists to be able to perform in any place
- Cholly Atkins
 - Performed the choreography, giving Motown a signature 'look'
- The Funk Brothers: the house band
 - Loose collection of musicians who gave Motown its signature sound
- Highly uniform product - the only difference between songs would be the singer
- Example: Smokey Robinson and the Miracles **You'd Better Shop Around** (1960)
 - Performance: restrained, polished presentation
 - Lyrical content: shifted towards idealized romance
 - Lip synced, no band behind them
- Example: The Supremes **Stop in the Name of Love** (1965)
 - Illustrates the sound of Motown
 - Beat and lyrics are very clear: made for dancing *and* listening
 - Diverse instrumentation (organ, vibraphone)
 - Not the typical gospel vocals, smoother/breathy voice
 - Clarity of sound (*not* the wall of sound)
 - Quality control

- * Motown regularly met to ensure their songs were similar quality to current top hits, hence **hitsville**

9.2 Stax Records

- Founded by Jim Stewart and Estell Axton (siblings) in 1959
- House band was Booker T and the M.G.s (**Green Onions** (1962)). They weren't invisible like Motown's band
- Collective decision making vs. Motown where Gordy always had the final decision
- Never used multi-track recording (outright refused it)
- More focused on energy than accuracy in recording
- Otis Redding joins in 1965
 - Example: **Try a Little Tenderness** (1966)
 - * Cover of a TPA song
 - * Hit for Bing Crosby
 - * Very much Gospel influenced vocals
 - * Solid R&B beat
 - * No elaborate arrangement
 - * Interacting with the band (not separated like motown)
 - * Band: Bar-Ks
 - * No elaborate choreography
 - * Not looking at the cameras (motown would always)
 - Tragically dies in plane crash 1967
- Sam & Dave
 - Example: **Soul Man** (1967)
 - * Straightforward arrangement
 - * Strong Gospel vocals
 - * Interactions with the band, even in recording
 - * Mistake: brass forgot to play a note in verse 1 - Stax doesn't care since the energy is still good (**Soulsville**)
 - Soul becomes a metaphor for black culture
 - Still an optimistic sound - by 1967 this will take a turn

9.3 FAME

- Florence, Alabama Music Enterprise
- 1966 - Atlantic begins working with them by sending them artists to record
- House band: The Swampers
- They sign **Aretha Franklin**
 - Example: **Respect** (1967)
 - * More militant sound
 - * Written by Otis Redding, originally about a relationship
 - * Becomes a protest song during the '65-'67 detroit riots

9.4 Funk

- In the wake of the 1968 MLK assassination, there was push to re-africanize culture
- James Brown decides to invent Funk
 - He's been a star since the mid-late 50s
 - First hit was **Please Please Please** (1956), which was one of the first hits with soul characteristics
 - Live album Live at the Apollo (1956) is considered to be the first album that reached 1M sales by an african american artist
 - Papas got a Brand New Bag (1965) is a crossover hit for him
 - Example: **I Feel Good** (1965)

- * Stax-like recording
- Funk is based on 12-bar blues, with a typical composition of 2 12-bar blues separated by an AABA bridge made to appeal to white audiences.
- Cold Sweat (1967) introduces funk which Brown develops by reading a bit about African music traditions
- Example: **Get Up** (1970)
 - * Not many chord changes - no longer important
 - * No clear melody
 - * Deprivileging harmony/melody in favor of rhythm
 - * Privilege to rhythm and its articulation
 - Tied to the re-africanization idea
 - Interlocking groove based on African drum circles
 - Brown mostly got it correct - there's a lead drummer but mostly an egalitarian group
 - * Instrumentation is still pop, but played in a percussive manner
 - * Cyclical structure (vs. linear AABA or 12 bar blues)
 - * **'The One'** - the first down beat has to be very clear
 - * Another example of riff-based composition
- Funk, beats, and loops lead to hip-hop

Chapter 10

Folk and Psychedelic Rock

Chapter 11

Hard Rock and Metal

Chapter 12

Punk, Disco, and Hip-Hop