**Fats Domino in The ‘50s and ‘60s**

Rock and Roll is said to have risen from the Rhythm-and-Blues (R&B) style, which is widely credited to the artist known as Fats Domino. Domino was a african-american Rhythm and Blues singer and song writer, and later embraced the Rock and Roll genre. His first hit single released in late 1949 called “The Fat Man”, written by Domino and his producer, was widely credited as being the first Rock and Roll single. During the ‘50s Domino would continue to release many R&B/Rock and Roll songs that gained mainstream popularity, and would have a huge effect on the Rock and Roll genre.

In 1949 Fats Domino had been performing in clubs and got discovered by Dave Bartholomew, who would later become Dominos producer. Domino would eventually sign with a new and upcoming record company called Imperial Records. Imperial Records had a different way of paying out their artists than what was common for black artists in the ‘50s, they would pay royalties instead of one time fees to the artists. The practice of paying out fees over royalties was ripe with abuse, with artists having their creations used by others with no payout.

Dominos signing with Imperial Records would mark the first step in his path to mainstream success. At Imperial Records, Domino and his producer Dave Bartholomew would write Dominos first mainstream hit, “The Fat Man”, which would sell one million copies by 1951. The song was based on an earlier ‘40s song called “Junker Blues”. This success catapulted Domino into the mainstream and the song would be named by many historians as the first in the Rock and Roll genre.

Five years after the release of “The Fat Man”, Domino would go on to release his next mainstream hit, “Ain’t That a Shame”, written again by Domino and producer Bartholomew. The song would be included in Domino’s first album “Rock and Rollin' with Fats Domino”. This release would marks Dominos embrace of the new Rock and Roll genre. The song would explode in popularity after a white artist named Pat Boone made a cover of it. After the cover Dominos “Ain’t That a Shame” would quickly go on to reach the number ten spot on Billboard R&B, a chart which ranks new R&B releases. Dominos next big was a Rock and Roll version of the 1940s song “Blueberry Hill”. The song would top Billboard R&B for eleven straight weeks. “Blueberry Hill” was Dominos biggest hit to date, selling over five mllion copies and later having a version recorded by the likes of Elvis and Led Zepplin.

Even with Dominos mainstream popularity with both black and white audiences, he still had to use segregated facilities. This is because back in the 1950s Jim Crow laws were still in effect propagating segregation. Fats Domino however would fight against this segregation by integrating his black and white audiences, in fact, Domino’s concerts were notorious for this reason. For example, at a 1956 concert that was being held in Virginia that was originally segregated with black folks on the dance floor and white folks on the balcony of the venue, began integrating with eachother on the dance floor. This happened when the white folks wanted to come down from the balcony and dance on the dance floor.

During Dominos time performing in the ‘50s, multiple riots broke out. One example is at a concert of his in 1956 located in North Carolina, a riot occurred. This happened because a fight broke out in the crowd and to stop this the police used tear gas. This caused the crowd to stampede out of the venue to escape the gas. According to Rock Coleman, Domino’s biographer, the riots were partially due to integration, but mostly due to presence of alcohol at the shows. And since integration was still novel, the alcohol enhanced the unrulyness of the crowds.

Eventually Domino would leave Imperial Records in 1963 to join ABC-Paramount Records without his former producer Bartholomew. After leaving Imperial Records Dominos music was less popular. This is credited to the rise of folk music and pop from the british invasion, causing Rock and Roll to be much less popular than it was back in the ‘50s.