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Working Title: The Day the Music Died

Deliverables:

The project will be created in Twine, a program used to create non-linear stories. Twine has been used to create many choose-your-own-adventure experiences but has also been used to create interesting interactive documentary experiences. Such an experience allows the reader to delve into topics that interest them more and feel satisfaction in uncovering information. Twine also allows multiple forms of media, such as text, images, video, and audio, to be easily integrated and then exported as a webpage. I believe that this would be the most appropriate form for this project as it is important when learning about music or performance to hear and see that music and those performances. I would be turning in a document containing the actual text used in the twine experience, to aid in grading, as well as a link to the webpage with the final product hosted either on Prism or GitHub.

Summary of Project:

In the wee hours of one cold February four young men, three tired musicians on the way to their next show and their 21 year old pilot, took off in a little plane in the middle of Iowa only to crash shortly into the flight. The untimely deaths of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and J. P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson would later become known as "The Day the Music Died" after being memorialized in "American Pie" by Don McLean. Buddy Holly was only 22 years old when he

died and yet he's still an incredibly important figure in music history. His career lasted less than 3 years and yet a decade after his death Decca was still releasing old recordings and compilation albums. This was the first time the music industry experienced the boom of sales after an artist's death. Now we are very familiar with this phenomenon. In fact, when Tom Petty died in October within a few days the sales of his music has increased by 6,781%. In this project I will be exploring the lives of the 3 musicians who died in that fateful plane-crash, what made them important and what their legacy on the music industry has been.

As mentioned, despite his short career Buddy Holly has been incredibly influential for many later artists, especially for many you Brits who saw him on tour in the UK and would later themselves be part of the British Invasion, like the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and the Hollies. He and his band, the Crickets, originated what would become the quintessential rock band. With his thick glasses and goofy smile Buddy Holly is the very image of the 1950s as we remember it now.

Ritchie Valens was only 17 when he died and yet his name and music are also very recognizable to modern audiences. "La Bamba" is a classic rock and roll song and despite his young age Valens is considered to have been very influential in the Chicano rock movement. Though little footage of him exists it's clear in all his recordings that he brought life and energy to the music, blending together Mexican styles of music with rock and roll.

The Big Bopper is far less well-known than Holly and Valens. He wrote a number of popular songs but only had one major hit, "Chantilly Lace". Some sources claim that he coined the term 'Music Video', that he was a visionary artist and businessman who predicted MTV. Several articles even mentioned that he created the first rock and roll video. Though he's still a bit of a

puzzle to put together the videos I have found of him playing “Chantilly Lace” and other songs show an incredible and wacky showman.

Twine will give me the tools to be able to tell this particular story, to follow the individual story of each artist to the point where their lives are indelibly tied together, and the widespread influence their music, and their deaths, have had since.

Bibliography:

Amburn, Ellis. Buddy Holly: a Biography. St. Martin's Griffin, 1996,

books.google.com/books?id=3EAGAwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Buddy+Holly:+A+Biography&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiU7NKPwJXZAhVBs1kKHURoB2oQ6AEIKTAA#v=onepage&q=Buddy%20Holly%3A%20A%20Biography&f=false. The Buddy Holly biography goes into depth about Holly's musical career. It also has an entire section about his legacy and continued influence on the music world. On top of that, there is a lot of information about Ritchie Valens and Big Bopper, not just their involvement in the plane crash.

“Buddy Holly - Peggy Sue Live.” Performance by Buddy Holly, and The Crickets, YouTube, Alphet Inc, 29 Mar. 2012, Buddy Holly - Peggy Sue Live. This particular video is my favorite Buddy Holly performance. It comes from a live performance on The Ed Sullivan show. It is an excellent example of Buddy Holly's rock and roll band format, but also of his performance style.

“Buddy Holly.” The Emergence of Rock and Roll: Music and the Rise of American Youth Culture, by Mitchell K. Hall, Routledge, 2014, pp. 23–24. As our class textbook, The Emergence of Rock and Roll serves as an easily trusted jumping off point in the research.

The short section on Buddy Holly talks about the plane crash itself and names the others who died in it. More importantly, the section gives a good overview of Buddy Holly's importance in Rock and Roll history.

Dick Clark's American Bandstand. Performance by Jiles Perry Richardson , 1958,

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4b-by5e4saI&ab_channel=norton771. There are actually quite a few videos of the Big Bopper performing but this was the only one I could find with any kind of context surrounding it. He went on American Bandstand to perform his hit "Chantilly Lace" and the performance was a perfect example of how the Big Bopper used props and engaged with his songs. This is also the recording that some claim to be the first music video.

“Don McLean Performs American Pie Live at BBC in 1972 - Newsnight Archives.”

Performance by Don McLean, *YouTube*, Alphabet Inc, 13 Feb. 2015,

www.youtube.com/watch?v=RciM7P9K3FA&ab_channel=BBCNewsnight. Part of the reason that the actual plane crash is so famous is Don McLean's 1971 folk rock song "American Pie". "American Pie" was a number one song in the US, and a cover by Madonna also hit number one in 2000, and was immortalized in a Weird Al parody, so it is safe to say that the song itself is an important piece of popular culture. Don McLean was 14 when the crash happened and the haunting lyrics of his song capture how many people felt in the aftermath. For this reason I plan on using pieces of the song in the project.

“Found: Very First, Or At Least Very Early, Music Video.” *NPR*, NPR, 27 Nov. 2011,

www.npr.org/2011/11/27/142821481/found-very-first-or-at-least-very-early-music-video. This short story is an audio clip from NPR with transcripts. It explains a bit about

who the Big Bopper was but specifically talks about claims that he was a music video pioneer. There are a number of recordings of him messing around with props singing his songs online. A company that sells old music videos makes the claim that the Big Bopper's video of Chantilly Lace counts as the first music video.

“J.P. 'The Big Bopper' Richardson - Internet Accuracy Project.” *J.P. 'The Big Bopper'*

Richardson - Internet, [www.accuracyproject.org/cbe-](http://www.accuracyproject.org/cbe-Richardson,J.P.TheBigBopper.html)

[Richardson,J.P.TheBigBopper.html](http://www.accuracyproject.org/cbe-Richardson,J.P.TheBigBopper.html). Most information about the Big Bopper tends to focus on the plane crash and his tour with Buddy Holly and Richie Valens, but what information can be found about his own career and music is very interesting. This article gives some biographical information about Bopper and also provides some book sources that will also be helpful in finding more information about him.

“Ritchie Valens - La Bamba (Live).” Performance by Ritchie Valens, *YouTube*, Alphabet Inc, 30 Mar. 2011, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=hto-](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hto-UMuYkwk&ab_channel=TheMusicBoxOfTalents)

[UMuYkwk&ab_channel=TheMusicBoxOfTalents](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hto-UMuYkwk&ab_channel=TheMusicBoxOfTalents). Unfortunately, it is rather difficult to find any live recordings of Ritchie Valens since his career lasted less than a year, but this particular video features an audio recording of a live performance at the beginning and end. La Bamba is Valens most iconic song, but the reaction of the crowd to his performance is also something important that can be gleaned from this clip. If the deafening screams are anything to go by, he was a popular performer.

Suddath, Claire. “The Day the Music Died.” *TIME*, 3 Feb. 2009,

content.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1876542,00.html. This article tells the story of the tragic deaths of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and the Big Bopper. It talks a bit about each musicians' backstory and about the "Winter Dance Party" tour that they were all on,

but mostly goes into detail about the incident of the crash itself and the immediate aftermath. Of particular interest, it talks about the "commercial allure of untimely deaths" in the music industry which was discovered when Buddy Holly's record sales jumped up following the crash.

Wilkman, Jon, director. *Chicano Rock! The Sounds of East Los Angeles*. PBS, 10 Feb. 2009, fod.infobase.com/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=44113. Ritchie Valens had the shortest career of all 3 performers. His importance comes from not just having an iconic song in "La Bamba" but for being an important figure in Chicano Rock. This PBS documentary talks specifically about Chicano Rock and features a section about Ritchie Valens.