

# Popular Music

1950s

## A Streetcar Named Desire, 1951

- ◆ Director: Elia Kazan
- ◆ Composer: Alex North
- ◆ Story set in New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz
- ◆ Jazz is frequent source music, but also used as underscoring
- ◆ Famous “Stella” scene with saxophone

## The 1950s

- ◆ Jazz – new styles are more disturbing
- ◆ New types
  - Country Western
  - Rock ‘n Roll
- ◆ Hollywood discovers financial rewards of using more popular music



## High Noon (1952)

- ◆ Composer: Tiomkin
- ◆ AFI Greatest Scores: No. 10
- ◆ Country Western ballad sung for credits
  - Created great sensation – a number 1 hit
  - Soon all films had to have a “hit” song
  - Ballad also used during film
- ◆ Most of the scoring is still traditional
  - Several leitmotifs derived from the tune
  - Also a motive for the clock (film in real time!)
- High Noon: Viewer Guide 15.1



## Rock 'n Roll

- ♦ Rock era begins with the movies
- ♦ "Rock Around the Clock" becomes a sensation after use in The Blackboard Jungle (1955)
  - Tune meant to depict juvenile delinquents
  - But made tune first no. 1 rock song
- ♦ Within a few years, numerous rock films created including Love Me Tender (1956) and Jailhouse Rock (1957) starring Elvis



30

25

## Singin' in the Rain

- ♦ AFI Greatest Films: No. 7
- ♦ Features Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor, and newcomer Debbie Reynolds
- ♦ Set in Hollywood's transition to sound
- ♦ Virtually all songs composed in 1920-30s
- ♦ Music composers
  - Nacio Herb Brown – songs
  - Lennie Hayton - underscoring

