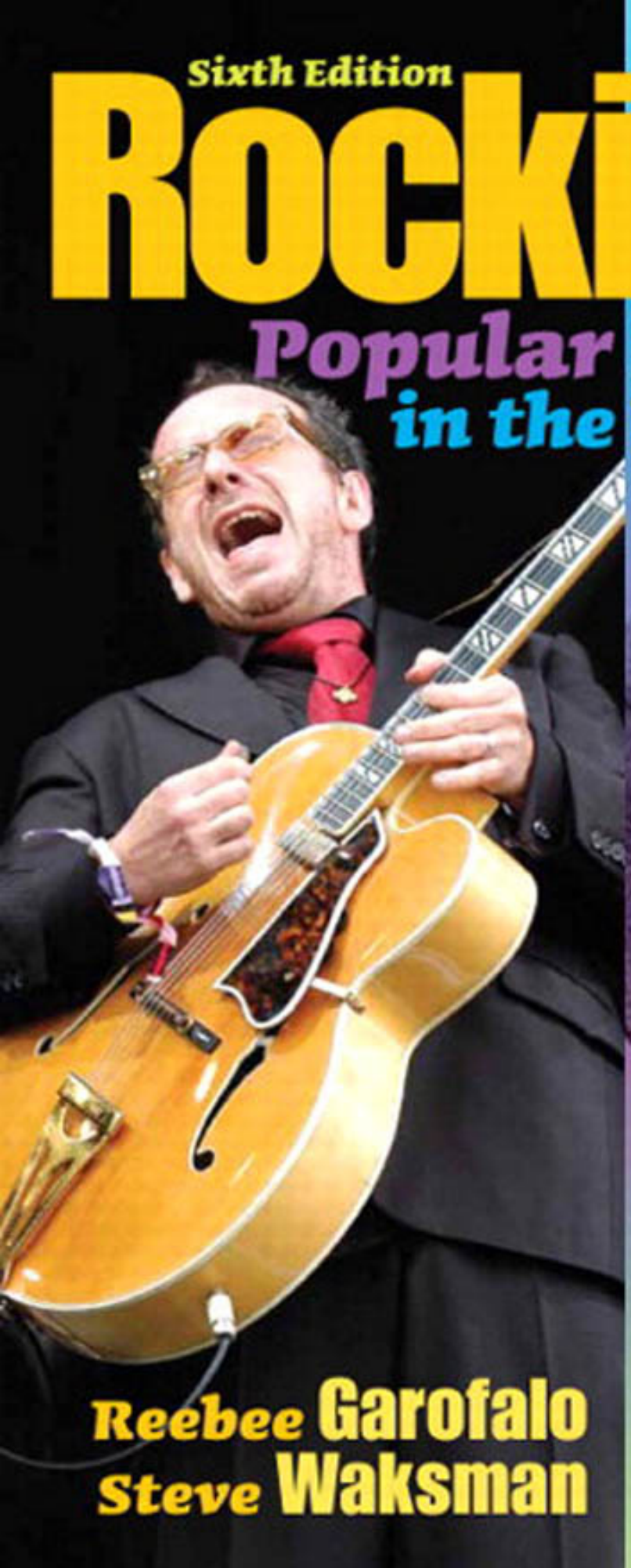
Sixth Edition

Rockin' Out

Popular Music in the U.S.A.



Reebee Garofalo
Steve Waksman

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SIXTH EDITION

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Popular Music in the U.S.A.

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University of Massachusetts Boston

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Preface

The most significant thing about the sixth edition of *Rockin' Out: Popular Music in the U.S.A.* is that I have brought on a co-author—Steve Waksman. Yes, that Steve Waksman; the one who wrote *Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience*, and the award-winning *This Ain't the Summer of Love: Conflict and Crossover in Heavy Metal and Punk.* Steve is an Associate Professor of Music and American Studies at Smith College, an outstanding and well-respected scholar, and a lifelong fan and player of popular music. It is extremely gratifying for me to have someone of Steve's caliber on board because he brings fresh eyes and ears to a history that continues to be discovered and reinterpreted. The book has been revised and updated throughout—reflecting the addition of Steve's formidable knowledge and communication skills—to create a richer, deeper, and more nuanced history that remains as accessible as it is informative. Once you start reading the new edition, I think you will agree.

As I have said in previous editions of *Rockin' Out*, popular music—playing it, listening to it, learning from it, teaching others what I know—has been one of the organizing principles of my life ever since I can remember. It still energizes me, provides the sound track for significant moments in my life, and helps me to navigate the world around me. In the society at large, discussions of its significance can be found everywhere, from family dinners and Saturday night parties to corporate boardrooms and congressional chambers. There has also been an increasing interest in popular music courses on college and university campuses. The fact that popular music has been a source of pleasure for millions of people all over the world is reason enough for listening to it. But popular music is also a social and political indicator that mirrors and influences the society in which we live. This is the reason for studying it. *Rockin' Out* offers one good way to do that.

Successive editions of *Rockin' Out* have not only updated popular music history with new research into current trends, but they have also added features designed to make the text more user-friendly. The second edition of the book, for example, saw the addition of a song index, which made *Rockin' Out* more useful as a source book. That edition also included the conversion of a number of artist and song lists from the text into easy-to-understand tables that gave the reader a graphic sense of historical patterns and preserved the narrative for more important analytic points. The third edition included an accompanying compilation CD of songs selected to enhance the historical narrative. In the fourth edition, the CD was replaced by two iTunes playlists, constructed by Richard Kassel, that made nearly 200 songs from the book readily available for convenient download. The fourth edition also added a number of carefully selected listening guides to deepen the analysis of musical elements and further enhance the narrative. Angela Mariani-Smith deserves major credit, along with Chris Smith, for contributing the listening guides. The fifth edition was accompanied by a much more feature-rich website that include additional music tables and listening guides with direct links to musical selections, chapter outlines, and discussion questions, as well as pointers to regularly updated supplementary resources and other interactive features. And, now, for the sixth edition, co-author Steve Waksman adds a new and complementary voice that enhances the historical narrative significantly.

Naturally, a book of the scope of *Rockin' Out* does not fall from the sky. Although the names of the two authors grace the cover, *Rockin' Out* is a work that involves countless others. In addition to drawing on original research and a wealth of primary and secondary source material, *Rockin' Out* has been shaped by discussions over the years with Bill Adler, William Barlow, Marcus Breen, Iain Chambers, Jannette Dates, Kai Fikentscher, Murray Forman, Simon Frith, Donna Gaines, Andrew Goodwin, Herman Gray, Larry Grossberg, Charles Hamm, Dave Harker, Simon Jones, Steve Jones, Anahid Kassabian, Charlie Keil, George Lipsitz, Dick Lourie, Portia Maultsby, Susan McClary, Keith Negus, Deborah Pacini Hernandez, Richard Peterson, Tricia Rose, Danny Schechter, Larry Shore, Philip Tagg, Robert Walser, Peter Wicke, and many others too numerous to mention.

The late Dave Sanjek demonstrated over and over that he was one of the most knowledgeable and forthcoming researchers in the field. Having moved in his final years from his long-standing position of archivist at BMI to a well-deserved professorship of music at Salford University, Dave was often my first call for anything in the book that needed discussion. The late Rick Dutka still occupies a special place in my heart and mind as someone whose knowledge of and love for popular music were as boundless as his political energy and activist spirit.

Brad Martin worked as my research assistant for the first edition, contributing everything from footnote corrections to substantive commentary. In preparation for the second edition, Craig Morrison offered challenging comments and a detailed review of the entire first edition. Students from my History of Rock 'n' Roll class at Tufts University contributed to the research for the second edition, including Ana Garnecho and Christina Lembo (teen pop), Lisa Wichter (women), Elise Podell (MP3), Matthew Baron (r&b), Mark Scholnick (rap), Laura Horstmann and Zach Berge (turntablism), Allie Schwartz and Alison Clarke (swing), and Suzanne Szwarc (Latin pop). More recent conversations with Kai Fikentscher, Murray Forman, and Deborah Pacini Hernandez have helped me to better understand electronic dance music, contemporary hip hop, and Latin(o) popular music, respectively. Marcus Breen gave the final chapter for the third edition a useful critical read. I am indebted to Andrew Ryan, my research assistant from UMass Boston, for his research contributions to the fourth edition, particularly in the area of hip hop. Raquel Z. Rivera, Wayne Marshall, and Deborah Pacini Hernandez were invaluable in shaping my understanding of reggaeton.

As to my own previous work, echoes of *Rock 'n' Roll Is Here to Pay*, the book with which I was first identified, can certainly be detected in *Rockin' Out*. In this instance, I owe a major debt of gratitude to senior author Steve Chapple, whose pioneering contributions to popular music studies helped define the field and pushed me to formulate my own views. My chapter on the history of black popular music that appeared in *Split Image*, edited by Jannette Dates and William Barlow, informed the discussions of r&b, soul, and rap that appear in these pages. An earlier version of the discussion of popular music and the civil rights movement was published in *Radical America* and reprinted in my own *Rockin' the Boat*. More detailed versions of my research on mega-events have appeared in *Reimaging America*, edited by Mark O'Brien and Craig Little; *Technoculture*, edited by Constance Penley and Andrew Ross; and *Rockin' the Boat*. My research on censorship has been published in greater detail in the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*. It was originally funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, neither of which bear any responsibility for my opinions

on the subject. My research for the chapter on Internet music in *Policing Pop*, edited by Martin Cloonan and me, provided the basis for earlier discussions of peer-to-peer file-sharing networks. This work has been regularly revised and updated in *Rockin' Out*. A version of my post-9/11 research was published in *Music in the Post-9/11 World*, edited by Jonathan Ritter and J. Martin Daughtry.

The story of *Rockin' Out* has been an interesting one for me. I continue to be indebted to Susannah Brabant for bringing the original book proposal to the attention of Bill Barke, then at Allyn and Bacon, who published the first edition. Subsequent editions have been published by Prentice Hall. (Those corporate mergers I write about are not limited to the music industry.) Copyright was transferred to me for the fourth edition, and the editorial baton was passed to Richard Carlin, who came to Prentice Hall as a seasoned editor with a wealth of valuable experience, a congenial style, and a willingness to think outside the box, all of which have been most appreciated. For the fifth edition, Richard allowed me to hire Leslie Cohen as developmental editor, who helped me navigate the first major overhaul of *Rockin' Out* since it was first published in 1997. Her assistance in editing, reorganizing, and developing the book was invaluable in bringing the fifth edition to fruition, and her insight, astute analyses, and friendship have gone well beyond anything that could possibly have been specified in her scope of work.

For the sixth edition, the editorial baton was passed twice more, first to Roth Wilkofsky and his assistant Chris Fegan, then to Ashley Dodge, with Project Manager Reena Dalal ably coordinating the day-to-day tasks of production, and Liz Kincaid and Ben Ferrini shepherding us through the wonderful new world of text and photo permissions, respectively.

As for me, I finally retired after thirty-three years at the College of Public and Community Service (CPCS) at UMass Boston, and underwent a successful heart valve repair six months later. Neither event has slowed me down; I am as active and busy as ever. To keep my sanity, I play drums and sing in two bands. The Blue Suede Boppers, a fifties rock 'n' roll band, has been delivering hot sounds from the Cold War for some 25 years now. In 2007, I joined a New Orleans–style marching band called the Second Line Social Aid and Pleasure Society (SLSAPS) Brass Band. SLSAPS is an activist street band, devoted to inclusion, community building, and social justice. How cool is that? Every year, we host the HONK! Festival (check it out at honkfest.org).

Then there is my family. Deborah Pacini Hernandez is not just my partner for life but also a colleague whose knowledge of popular music has added immeasurably to my own. Since the beginning of our relationship, she has offered perspective, insight, and criticism that have been incredibly valuable, and love and emotional support I can't imagine living without. The family that I inherited from her, which includes daughter Radha and son Tai, continues to be a source of great joy and incredibly eclectic musical tastes. The fact that I still have my brother Gary and his family in my life eases the loss of our father in 1999 and our mother in 2004. Between those losses I was blessed with a granddaughter, Radha's daughter Soleil. Now ten years old, she continues to fill me with a sense of wonderment in the present and hope for the future.

Reebee Garofalo
February 2013

It is a pleasure and an honor to have joined Reebee Garofalo as the co-author of *Rockin' Out*—although needless to say, it has also been a lot of work. Textbooks on rock and popular music have proliferated in the years since the first edition of this book was published in 1997, but to my mind, *Rockin' Out* remains the best such work available, especially for those seeking to take a social and historical approach to the music and its evolution. Although it is written as a textbook, *Rockin' Out* has also always been meant to stand as a serious work of scholarship in its own right, and it is one of the few classroom texts to successfully earn such distinction. For me, then, the task at hand has been to update an already excellent piece of work in a way that preserves the high standard set by my co-author.

Reebee and I represent two different generations of scholarship on rock and popular music. When he published his first book on the subject in 1977—*Rock 'n' Roll Is Here to Pay*, co-written with Steve Chapple—there was hardly such a thing as rock scholarship. Along with Charles Hamm, Richard Peterson, Simon Frith, Dick Hebdige, and others who participated in the formation of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, Reebee showed that scholarship on popular music was not a contradiction in terms but a necessary supplement to the work of nonacademic writers on the subject (much of which, of course, is of great value in its own right). By the time I reached graduate school in 1990, I had the benefit of consulting more than a decade's worth of work by these figures.

What do I bring to this new edition of *Rockin' Out*? I would like to say that as the junior partner I bring a wealth of knowledge about recent and contemporary popular music that isn't held by my colleague, but that is not really the case—for a retired professor, Reebee keeps up on contemporary trends surprisingly well. However, I do bring a distinctive sensibility to bear upon this subject matter. Although *Rockin' Out* has been revised several times, its foundation was laid in the 1990s when it was originally written. There was much room to bring the material in the book into more direct conversation with the past decade of popular music scholarship, and that is principally what I have sought to do.

Of course, popular music itself never stands still, and so the final chapters of the book have been revised more substantially than other parts. Although the general structure of the book retains the chronological shape it has always had, Chapters 11 and12 are now organized as much by theme as by time frame. Readers will find that Chapter 11 focuses primarily upon key stylistic developments in popular music from the 1990s to the present, while Chapter 12 puts more emphasis on changes in technology and in the organization of the music business during the same stretch of time. The distinction is not a hard-and-fast one—Chapter 12 devotes considerable space to the growth of electronic dance music, and also to the ways in which the events of September 11, 2001, affected popular music. Still, we felt that a new structure was necessary to do justice to some of the fundamental changes in the way that music is being bought, sold, and listened to in the twenty-first century.

If it is not already clear, I would like to thank Reebee for inviting me to become his co-author. He has been incredibly supportive and generous, given that in many instances I have been rewriting or cutting words of his that have stood intact for more than fifteen years. He and his wife Deborah Pacini Hernandez are the nicest and coolest people to ever have earned the status of academic power couple (and the fact that they will probably hate the fact that I call them such is just more testament to their coolness).

Reebee has already named all the essential personnel at Pearson, but his thanks are worth repeating. Roth Wilkofsky and Christopher Fegan helped to get this new edition moving and to bring me into the fold. Ashley Dodge and Reena Dalal have offered crucial support in bringing this edition of the book to fruition. Ben Ferrini and Liz Kincaid provided essential advice and assistance in navigating the new world of permissions. And Angela Mariani-Smith provided us with some great new listening guides for the book under a very tight deadline.

I was able to do the initial work toward this sixth edition of *Rockin' Out* during a sabbatical provided by my home institution, Smith College. Although like all institutions of higher learning Smith has been rethinking its priorities in recent years, it remains a liberal arts college that supports faculty research in important ways, and for that I am grateful. I am also grateful to have colleagues like Peter Bloom, Floyd Cheung, Rick Millington, Kevin Rozario, Margaret Sarkissian, Richard Sherr, Ruth Solie (now retired), and Michael Thurston, who help me to bridge the worlds of music and American studies in which I dwell.

During the writing of this book I married the love of my life, Holly Mott, after nearly nine years of unwedded happiness. The happiness remains, but now fortified with that extra measure of trust and confidence that marriage can bring. And as an added benefit I can now officially call her daughter, Devon Kelley-Mott, my stepdaughter, without feeling like I'm stretching the truth. At home or in the car we do not always agree on the preferred playlist—I lean toward heavy guitars and wailing horns; they gravitate more toward acoustic instruments and strong female vocals. But we make our own, strange harmony, and it works.

Steve Waksman
February 2013

New to This Edition

- **New co-author** - Steve Waksman, professor at Smith College and heavily published rock scholar has been brought on as co-author for the 6th edition.
- **Listening Guides** - New listening guides have been added to the final chapters of the new edition, enhancing discussion of key artists like Lady Gaga and influential genres such as electronic dance music.
- **New Material** - Addition of engaging and informative new material – especially in punk, rap and metal, as well as the current scene and the future of music – without adding length or losing the thread of earlier editions.
- **Updated sources** - Story narrative and sources updated and enhanced throughout. A deeper analysis with characteristically accessible prose.
- **Comprehensible** - Final chapters significantly reorganized to present a more readable arc of history.
- **MySearchLab** - MySearchLab can be packaged with this new edition. MySearchLab with Pearson eText contains a collection of tools and resources that can help students in any course. It is designed with one single purpose — to improve the academic success of all higher education students, one student at a time.

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Introduction: Definitions, Themes, and Issues

In our view, popular music cannot be fully understood simply as a stand-alone musical text and then measured against some abstract aesthetic notion of quality. Although it is important to explore the specificities of the music itself, it is equally important to recognize that the text is as much a product of its social and political context as any individual's creativity or talent. Because the economics of popularity matters, we attach a certain amount of importance to sales data. *Rockin' Out: Popular Music in the U.S.A.* is peppered with popularity chart listings and references to "gold" and "platinum" records (the sale of 500,000 and 1 million album units, respectively). At the same time, we are aware that commercially successful artists and records may or may not be the most influential or culturally important. Qualitative indicators such as historical accounts, musical analyses, critical reviews, and audience reactions must also play a role in the analysis.

Because the enslavement and oppression of African Americans and resulting cultural interactions have had such a profound effect on the development of our popular music, our inclination is to view popular music first through the lens of race and racism. Accordingly, *Rockin' Out* begins with a discussion of nineteenth-century blackface minstrelsy and its controversial appropriation of African American culture for the primary benefit of a largely European American market. In minstrelsy, we see the development of a troubling, yet defining, aspect of the early popular music business that carried forward well into the twentieth century, wherein white audiences and performers fashioned alternate identities for themselves out of African American styles, while giving black artists little credit for their creations. There are also important patterns based on other crucial demographic variables, such as age, gender, and ethnicity. Technological advances and the political economy of the industry have had a great impact in shaping the development of popular music. Finally, popular music invariably develops in relation to the prevailing political climate in a given era. These, then, are the themes that run throughout this book.

While this book covers well over one hundred years of popular music history, its primary focus begins in the second half of the twentieth century. The pivotal moment in this history was the emergence of rock 'n' roll in the 1950s, as the transition from Tin Pan Alley pop to rock 'n' roll revealed important social and cultural shifts in U.S. society. If the music of Tin Pan Alley was lighthearted and urbane, the rock 'n' roll of the 1950s was heavy-handed and urban. While Tin Pan Alley appealed to middle-class sensibilities, rock 'n' roll was decidedly working class in its orientation. Whereas Tin Pan Alley made no particular age distinctions among its listeners, rock 'n' roll was targeted at youth. Tin Pan Alley was identified with sheet music in the same way that rock 'n' roll was associated with records, and this difference signified the beginning of an inextricable connection between popular music and advanced recording technology. Finally, the music of Tin Pan Alley evolved according to a European American paradigm of music making, even when it incorporated other cultural influences. In contrast, rock 'n' roll turned dramatically toward a more unruly, hybrid mix of African American and white Southern conventions. In short, the rock 'n' roll that emerged in the 1950s combined all the elements that would define the broad parameters of popular music in the United States for at least the next forty years.

Into the Twentieth Century: Popular Music and Mass Culture

In its association with sheet music, Tin Pan Alley can be seen as a descendant of a popular culture that dates back to the invention of the printing press in fifteenth-century Europe.[1] More broadly, Tin Pan Alley marked the growth of a new system of mass production in the realm of popular music. Song publishers promoted their products through intensive publicity, plugging songs to performing artists whose rendition on stage could stoke the desire among consumers to purchase the sheet music for their own domestic enjoyment.[2]

When the music of Tin Pan Alley emerged, popular music had only recently been distinguished from both folk music and folk culture on the one hand, and classical or art music and high culture on the other. These distinctions evolved from our inheritance that came with European colonization, but only came into modern usage over the course of the nineteenth century.[3] Historically, folk culture has been associated with the poor and those lacking formal education. It was a collective and participatory culture, shared by a particular community of people. The music arising from it was comparatively simple in form and structure, performed by nonprofessionals, and passed along, usually anonymously, in oral tradition. Its production and consumption were noncommercial. At the other end of the European cultural spectrum was high culture, which was associated with the ruling classes—the feudal aristocracy, the capitalist bourgeoisie. Its music was more complicated in form and structure and was composed by paid professionals who were commissioned through a system of patronage. Because this music was notated (written down), it required a certain literacy and training for its performance. High culture thus imposed a separation between artists and consumers that was unknown in folk culture. What was a community in folk culture was an audience in high culture. As the official culture of court and church, high culture was considered to be superior to folk culture.

Popular culture insinuated itself between folk culture and high culture as a third cultural category, a hybrid that was distinguishable from both but borrowed freely from each as needed. Tin Pan Alley provides an excellent example of these contradictory tendencies. In attempting to cater exclusively to popular (albeit narrow mainstream) tastes, Tin Pan Alley writers consciously sought to construct an alternative to the cultural dominance of European art music. In the process, these writers incorporated influences from a wide range of sources, including a number of African American genres. At the same time, however, they often took their cues from classical music and high culture. For example, the 1941 melody of "Tonight We Love," a popular song by Ray Austin and Bobby Worth, was lifted almost note for note from the first movement of Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1.* In leaning heavily on upper-middle-class themes and images—dining at the Ritz, performing in black tie and tails—Tin Pan Alley writers further (and perhaps unwittingly) allied themselves with the high culture they sought to displace. High culture advocates did not always welcome this alliance, however, and as the products of Tin Pan Alley became more ubiquitous, they were often condemned as noise, a corruption of more refined musical sensibilities.[4]

The invention of new mass communication technologies—records, radio, film, and eventually television—inserted yet another distinction into the cultural lexicon, namely, the concept of *mass culture.* The new term indicated cultural dissemination on a scale that increased by orders of magnitude. The question of scale had important implications for qualitative judgments about mass culture. Prior to its advent, it was possible to consider popular culture as historically continuous with folk culture, either slowly replacing folk cultures as the next stage of development following the Industrial Revolution or coexisting with rural or industrial folk cultures in the modern era. With the introduction of mass media, however, the idea of a continuing historical progression came to an abrupt halt. In the eyes of most observers, the emergence of mass culture was accompanied by a subtle but important shift in orientation from a culture *of* the people to a culture *for* the masses. In this deceptively simple change, there was a profound transformation of meaning. Mass culture was not seen as the lived culture of an identifiable group of people. Instead, it was a commodified culture produced by a centralized, corporate culture industry for privatized, passive consumption by an alienated, undifferentiated mass.[5] Thus, although the terms *mass culture* and *popular culture* are often used interchangeably today, most observers tended to distinguish between the two in language that was pejorative and/or politically charged until well into the 1960s. In 1959, for example, Oscar Handlin, among others, argued forcefully against "the misconception that the 'mass culture' of the present is but an extension of the popular culture of the past."[6] Indeed, as late as 1965, Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel maintained that "the typical 'art' of the mass media today is not a continuity from, but a *corruption of,* popular art."[7]

Rock 'n' roll, of course, could be numbered among the victims of this largely false distinction. As an unabashedly commercial product clearly intended for mass consumption, most critics dismissed the music as inferior and unworthy of serious consideration. To avoid the mass culture stigma, critics and historians in the 1960s who became invested in the cultural importance of rock as the mature form of rock 'n' roll tended to characterize the music as something other than what it was. Historian Carl Belz, for example, argued that "rock is a part of the long tradition of folk art in the United States and throughout the world."[8]As the music took

a turn toward greater sophistication, this characterization underwent further change. Discussions of Bob Dylan's lyrics as poetry and the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* as art reflected an attempt by some to "elevate" rock from folk music to art, thereby allying it with high culture. At the time, these efforts to categorize rock represented genuine attempts to understand the place of popular music in the hierarchy of cultural practices. Ultimately, however, there was no getting around the fact that rock was both a popular music and a mass cultural form. In 1981, music sociologist Simon Frith, among others, dismissed both earlier positions of rock as folk and rock as art. "Rock is a commercially made mass music," he asserted, "and this must be the starting point for its celebration as well as its dismissal."[9] More recently, the philosopher Bernard Gendron provocatively claimed that rock's domination has been cultural as well as economic, and that it has not become high art so much as made the values of high culture less relevant. Rock won the culture war by establishing a new system of value in which "high" and "low" no longer mattered as they did before.[10]

Rock 'n' Roll: The Birth of a New Era

The straightforward commercialism and mass appeal of rock 'n' roll did not set it apart from other popular music. What made rock 'n' roll different was its urban orientation, focus on youth culture, appeal to working-class sensibilities, and relationship to technology and African American musical influences and performance styles. As Charlie Gillett argued in his classic study *The Sound of the City*, rock 'n' roll was the first popular genre to incorporate the relentless pulse and sheer volume of urban life into the music itself. In his words, "Rock and Roll was perhaps the first form of popular culture to celebrate without reservation characteristics of city life that had been among the most criticized."[11] Here Gillett was referring to urban sounds that were perceived as "brutal and oppressive." In this world of droning machines, post–World War II adolescents "staked out their freedom . . . inspired and reassured by the rock and roll beat."[12]

Gillett's conflation of adolescence and rock 'n' roll highlights the fact that the emergence of the music as a genre coincided with the beginnings of youth culture as a phenomenon. Due to the convergence of a number of social forces in the 1950s, including postwar affluence and a demographic shift in the population toward youth, teenagers became an identifiable consumer group and one that possessed an ample amount of disposable income. The music industry learned, albeit not without considerable resistance, that targeting the musical tastes of this generation could be quite lucrative. As Simon Frith noted:

> *The young had always had idols—film stars, sportsmen, singers like Frank Sinatra and Johnny Ray; the novelty of rock 'n' roll was that its performers were the same age as their audience, came from similar backgrounds, had similar interests; and the rise of rock 'n' roll meant a generation gap. . . . Rock 'n' roll records and radio shows were aimed exclusively at the young, . . . and by the end of the 1950s most pop records were being bought by the young.*[13]

Following the eruption of rock 'n' roll, the music industry identified young people as the primary audience for popular music. The change took hold gradually; throughout the later years of the 1950s rock 'n' roll jockeyed for position on the sales charts with pop that was

produced to suit adult tastes. Only with the rise of the Beatles did the tastes of young listeners truly come to dominate the wider pop landscape, but the groundwork for this shift was laid by the events of the preceding decade.[14]

If rock 'n' roll was different from other forms of popular music in its unique relationship to youth, its connection to technology also set it apart. The electric guitar, for example, had been around for some two decades by the time of rock 'n' roll's emergence in the 1950s. However, rock 'n' roll coincided with decisive changes in the manner in which the electric guitar was played and the kinds of sounds that it was used to create. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, an electric guitar aesthetic was developing in which players capitalized on the creative use of amplified sound. In blues, players like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf sideman Willie Johnson turned their low-wattage amplifiers as high as they could go and generated the first stirrings of distortion that would come to define the electric guitar's sound in rock. In mainstream pop, the guitarist and inventor Les Paul used a key innovation, the solid body electric guitar, to achieve a level of tonal purity that made the instrument sound dramatically different from its acoustic counterpart, especially when filtered through the range of effects Paul created through his equally innovative use of multiple track recording techniques. Following from these efforts, early rock 'n' roll guitarists such as Chuck Berry and Scotty Moore combined the coarse, distorted tone pioneered by African American blues guitarists with a level of dexterity and melodic invention that owed no small debt to jazz, and gave rock 'n' roll a distinctly modern edge.[15]

Sound recording was another area in which rock 'n' roll performers and producers took full advantage of available technology. Initially, recording was thought of as a documentary process that sought only to preserve the quality of a live performance. Thus, while the success of popular music—even the music of Tin Pan Alley—depended to a large extent on mass communication technologies, these technologies were used in the dissemination of the music rather than its creation. A major breakthrough to a new sensibility concerning sound recording came with the advent of multiple track recording, heard to best advantage in the wave of successful records created by Les Paul starting with his 1947 release "Lover." Layering eight tracks of his own guitar work, one upon the next, by connecting two disc recording lathes together in his Southern California workshop, Paul demonstrated that a record could be something much different than a direct representation of a performance.[16] It could produce sounds that were physically impossible to create through more conventional means. With multiple tracks at their disposal, recording artists could let their audio imaginations run wild as never before.

Following the example set by Paul and others, rock 'n' roll incorporated the capabilities of advanced recording technology into the creative process itself. Rock 'n' roll records consciously used the technical features of echo, editing, overdubbing, and multitracking to alter the reality of the performance. "Technical processes," as musicologist Peter Wicke has said, "became musical opportunities."[17] Thus, the emergence of rock 'n' roll was characterized by a progressively more intimate relationship with the technologies used in its production and dissemination. This relationship continued as rock ventured toward art in the 1960s. Phil Spector became perhaps the first record producer to be understood as an artist in his own right, apart from the musicians that he recorded. Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys and the members of the Beatles, working with producer George Martin, created popular recordings of unprecedented sonic complexity, culminating in the 1967 release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, an album so dependent on

studio technology that it couldn't be performed live. Disco furthered popular music's immersion in technological wizardry, becoming almost completely a product of the studio; rap has pushed the envelope even more, first by using dual turntables as musical instruments, and then by using samplers, sequencers, and programmable drum machines as essential tools of the trade. To the extent that these creative uses of technology have been accepted as artistically valid, they have pushed the very definition of popular music beyond a traditional European conception of music as a pattern of *notes* toward a conception of music as organized *sound*.

Beginning with early rock 'n' roll, advanced technologies were married to musical elements that in themselves separated the music from earlier forms of mainstream popular music along lines of class and race. The prominence of rhythm, immoderate volume, slurred notes, grainy vocals, aggressive attack, and vernacular speech that characterized rock 'n' roll tended to place the music outside the reach of middle-class culture and beyond the purview of conventional musicological investigation, which historically derived its main categories of investigation from the "notated" tradition of European art music. Within the parameters valued by official tastemakers—melody, harmony, structure—rock 'n' roll was found wanting. However, as Richard Middleton has pointed out:

> *The formulaic processes operate within parameters relatively highly valued by traditional musicology: harmony, melodic shape, basic rhythm pattern. Variant processes, on the other hand, often take place in parameters little valued by traditional musicology (and much harder to notate): slight pitch inflection or rhythmic variation, timbre and timbre changes, accent, and attack.*[18]

The subtlety and sophistication of rock 'n' roll, then, were to be found in features of the music that were outside the frame of reference of the cultural elite.

Analyses of structure, melody, and chord progressions, of course, are not without value. They can offer important insights into the differences existing between popular music and other forms of music, as well as differences among popular genres themselves. Rock 'n' roll and Tin Pan Alley pop, for example, can be distinguished in these terms. However, a surface analysis of these elements alone cannot adequately capture the disjuncture that characterized the transition between the two. To get to this level of analysis, it is necessary to examine the full range of cultural practices and performance styles that comprised these respective musical eras. The ascendancy of Tin Pan Alley coincided with the emergence of a number of African American genres and subgenres, including ragtime, blues, boogie woogie, and jazz. There was considerable crossover between these styles in musical terms: Tin Pan Alley writers drew on the syncopated rhythms of ragtime and jazz, and African American musicians commonly drew upon the harmonic changes of Tin Pan Alley.

Despite the routine character of these exchanges, Tin Pan Alley appropriations were, by and large, superficial adaptations—what musicologist Charles Hamm has called "a touch of exotic seasoning"[19]—that were incorporated into an aesthetic framework defined by the European tradition. This, of course, was reassuring to some. It preserved the centrality of Western civilization and kept upstart African American artists in check. Conservative culture critic H. F. Mooney, for example, considered it fortunate that the influence of African American music was "limited by compromises with middle class conventions" and delighted in the fact that it was "'polished' . . . so as to conform to the standards of European rendition."[20] Revealing his

bias further, Mooney noted, "The highest compliment most of the public could pay to big-band jazz between 1928 and 1950 was 'symphonic' or 'advanced.'"[21]

Rock 'n' roll, however, turned this situation on its head. By all accounts, the eruption of rock 'n' roll entailed a profound shift in cultural values on the part of mainstream youth, a shift away from European American sensibilities and toward African American ones. The most important feature of this shift was an increased emphasis on rhythm. In the words of Christopher Small, "Rhythm is to the African musician what harmony is to the European—the central organizing principle of the art."[22] Although in the slave cultures of the Americas, this African tradition was complicated by considerable pressure to adopt European ways of music making (indeed the history of African American music is fraught with this tension), rock 'n' roll is clearly descended from the tradition of organizing musical elements around a recurring rhythmic structure. In its early years, rock 'n' roll was often referred to as the Big Beat. With the ascent of rock 'n' roll, this "central organizing principle" came to define mainstream popular music in a way that it never had before.

The orientation toward an African American aesthetic also affected musical elements such as structure, chord patterns, and scales, as well as the more subtle features mentioned earlier. As music historian Iain Chambers has written, from the vantage point of European classical harmony, the twelve-bar, three-chord format of the blues is highly limited, as is the pentatonic or "blues" scale, which employs only five notes as compared with the seven that are conventional to European scale patterns. Yet African American blues singers used these limitations to their advantage, extending notes into unexpected pitch areas that sound "foreign" to ears trained in Western harmony, and adding "slides, slurs, bent, 'dirty' and uncertain notes in the voice, guitar, saxophone and bass" that attested to "the clash between a legitimised white European-derived tradition and a barely recognised Afro-American one."[23] While there had been an awareness of African American influences among white jazz musicians and Tin Pan Alley composers, rock 'n' roll pushed performers toward the wholesale adoption of an African American orientation. According to Peter Wicke, white rock 'n' roll artists like Elvis Presley and Bill Haley no longer merely adapted African American musical practices to their own aesthetic ideas, as Tin Pan Alley composers had done. Instead, they sought to reproduce the most characteristic features of African American music on its own terms.[24]

If rock 'n' roll tipped the cultural balance toward an African American aesthetic, it was also a music defined by its hybridity. Indeed, what rock critic Greil Marcus has termed "racial confusion" may be a more appropriate way to characterize the affect of rock 'n' roll on race relations and perceptions than a clear orientation toward "black" or "white" values.[25] While Elvis Presley clearly drew on African American performance styles, he adopted the instrumentation of country music and was also driven by pop tendencies that were entirely consistent with Tin Pan Alley values. Still, his sound was "black" enough that when he appeared on Memphis radio to promote his first record, D. J. Dewey Phillips made sure to have Presley mention where he went to high school so that knowing listeners would correctly perceive his whiteness. Chuck Berry self-consciously drew upon the "hillbilly" styles then current in his native St. Louis to develop an appeal that cut across racial lines. His first single, "Maybellene," stirred such confusion due to its country trappings that he was hired by a Southern club to perform, only to be denied entry to the same club upon showing up because they had mistakenly assumed him to

be white based on the sound of his record.[26] Berry and Sam Cooke, as well as many doo-wop groups, enunciated clearly enough to pass muster with the harshest diction teacher. Indeed, doo-wop harmonies and vocal styles defy any attempt to analyze rock 'n' roll solely in terms of race as they exemplify the ways in which European and African American musical elements can freely intermingle to the point where they become all but inextricable from one another.

Since the advent of rock 'n' roll, there has been a continuing debate regarding the relative proportions of African American and European American influences in popular music. It was considered a mark of distinction by some critics that many of the San Francisco groups of the late 1960s did not sound like they were emulating African American performance styles, even though some of the leading white artists of the decade—such as the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, and Janis Joplin—were explicitly indebted to black influences. In the 1970s, progressive rock made its musical statement by looking to classical European influences. Heavy metal and punk also appeared to distance themselves from overt references to rock's African American base, although punks in the U.K. did link themselves with Afro-Caribbean music in ways that had both artistic and political overtones. "Black" and "white" pop styles became polarized in the 1970s to the extent that the black funk/rock band Funkadelic saw fit to title one of its songs, "Who Says a Funk Band Can't Play Rock?" In the United States, even disco was marked by the tension between funk and soft soul influences on the one hand, and Eurodisco on the other. Popular music has been re-Africanized in rap and hip-hop culture, which has concentrated primarily on heavy beats and spoken word rhymes, eschewing melody almost completely. Yet rap's sample-based aesthetic also incorporates a diverse and eclectic range of sources and so provides a complex, multifaceted model of fashioning racial identities through musical means.

Marketing and the Politics of Race, Language, and Gender

If rock 'n' roll represented the movement of African American culture further into the mainstream of popular tastes, it did not automatically follow that African Americans would be the main beneficiaries of this transformation. The way in which music unfolds as a social practice does not necessarily determine the way in which it reaches the ears of its audience. By the time a creative urge has been handled by the culture industry, all the biases of class, race, and gender have been brought to bear. Although rock 'n' roll proceeded from an aesthetic impulse that viewed cultural borrowing as both natural and desirable, it developed in a commercial context where the ordinary process of cultural borrowing can become theft, and artists can be categorized incorrectly or excluded from the marketplace altogether for reasons that have little to do with talent or musical style.

The marketing categories of the music industry have often classified performers as much by race as by musical style. Blackface minstrelsy set a pattern as early as the 1840s whereby "black music" would be shown to have great commercial value, but African American performers had little to do with its public performance and so received almost no financial reward for its success. Only in the 1890s did significant numbers of African Americans enter the ranks of professional performance. Even then, they were expected to personify roles that had been first carved out by white performers in blackface, and music associated with African

Americans—which included ragtime as well as more standard Tin Pan Alley fare—circulated under the general, derogatory heading of "coon songs."

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the continued rise in the numbers of black performing artists coincided with the growth of recording as an increasingly dominant sector of the commercial music industry. Few African American artists recorded during the first two decades of the new century,[27] but 1920 marked something of a watershed, when the success of Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues" demonstrated the potential of records made by black artists for black listeners. Subsequently, the music industry of the 1920s organized popular music into three categories: "race" (African American popular music); "hillbilly" (white working-class rural styles); and "popular" (mainstream pop of the type produced by Tin Pan Alley).[28] Initially, *Billboard*, the leading music industry trade magazine, published popularity charts for only that music classified as "popular" by the industry. However, when *Your Hit Parade*, a radio program based on (and shaped by) listener preferences, became one of the most popular programs in the country in 1935, it became apparent that the commercial interests of the industry were not being served by only one chart. Thus, by the end of the decade, *Billboard* had inaugurated a popularity chart for hillbilly music and in 1942 added a chart titled "The Harlem Hit Parade." Three years later, the magazine changed this title to "Race Music."

Each marketing category was presumed to be a distinct musical style with its own audience. "The assumed mainstream pop audience," according to David Brackett, "was northern, urban, middle or upper class, and also white. The charts for the marginal musics also assumed an audience—African American for race and r&b [rhythm and blues], rural southern white for hillbilly, folk, and country and western (as these charts were variously designated during the 1940s)."[29] Dividing "black" and "white" styles into different sectors of the market, the recording industry repressed an existing tradition of cross-racial exchange that had characterized the realm of vernacular music making, especially in the American South. Indeed, some have argued that the recording industry intensified the segregation of music along racial lines.[30] Not until the social and cultural changes brought about by World War II did the barriers between marketing categories become a bit more porous. As the categories "race" and "hillbilly" began to come to the attention of the mainstream audience, these styles were said to cross over.

The term *crossover* refers to that process whereby an artist or a recording from a secondary or specialty marketing category, such as country and western (c&w) or rhythm and blues (r&b), achieves hit status in the mainstream market. Although recently the term has been used simply to indicate multiple chart listings in any direction, historically it connoted movement from a marginal category to the mainstream. In writing of the golden years of r&b, music historian Arnold Shaw has noted:

> *The crossover concept was inherent in R&B from the start. In fact, acceptance by the pop market of an R&B disk (Cecil Gant's "I Wonder") generated the first mushrooming of R&B record companies. While these labels produced disks basically for ghetto consumption, they always hoped that the larger white market might be receptive.*[31]

The greater acceptance of African Americans in the mainstream market after World War II not only prompted some changes in music charting practices but also put the industry on the horns of a racial dilemma that has been the subject of heated debate ever since.