

Rock 'n' Roll: The First Crossovers

MUSC-21600: The Art of Rock Music

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Country Roots

- Bill Haley & His ~~Saddlemen~~ Comets
 - Rockabilly = “rock and roll” + “hillbilly” = country music with big beat and rollicking tempo of R&B
- “(We’re Gonna) Rock around the Clock” (1955)
 - Tight rhythm
 - walking bass, snare accent on beat 4 every two measures, syncopated guitar & sax riffs
 - Country elements
 - slap bass, guitar-oriented texture, first guitar break
 - R&B
 - 12-bar blues, big beat, electric guitar, saxes
 - Verse-chorus compressed into 12-bar blues (4+8)
 - First rock and roll song to reach Pop 1

Chuck Berry and the Record

- Gifted songwriter (lyrics and music), singer, guitarist
- Fluent in blues, R&B, and country styles
- Tailored music to teenagers
- “Maybellene” (Chuck Berry, 1955)
 - Raucous tempo and volume
 - Witty lyrics appealing to a youthful audience
 - Elements of R&B (12-bar blues chorus, blue notes, electric guitar, innuendo)
 - Elements of country (“Ida Red,” two-beat bass)
- The song (not sheet music) as record



Little Richard and the Performance

- Wild showman
- “Tutti Frutti” (Little Richard, 1955)
 - 12-bar blues
 - High-spirited vocals
 - Sexually charged lyrics
 - Conflict between even eighth-notes (piano) and New Orleans shuffle groove (rhythm section)
- “Long Tall Sally” (Little Richard, 1956)
 - New Orleans shuffle beat in piano
 - Elements of R&B (growling saxophone solos, sexually charged lyrics)
 - Adapted 12-bar blues to contrasting verse-chorus
 - Verse (phrase 1) in stop time; band accompanies chorus (phrases 2 and 3)

Fats Domino and Wanda Jackson

- Fats Domino's continuity through diversity
 - New Orleans shuffle groove
 - Boogie-woogie piano style
 - Jump band style
 - Tin Pan Alley forms and covers
- "Blueberry Hill" (Fats Domino, 1956)
- Wanda Jackson
 - Cultural barriers to women in rock 'n' roll
 - "I Gotta Know" (1956)

