

Rock

In this essay, I'm going to introduce to the reader a topic not touched a lot because of its complexity and its avoidance by conservative adults. This topic is, of course, Rock Music. During one week, I looked for information in the library and at my house, and from the information I gathered and my own knowledge about the topic, I'm going to lead the reader to a better understanding of Rock n' Roll. I chose to do Rock music because I can identify myself with it. Rock music

is very complex. In fact "It's stylistic scope is too broad to be encompassed by any single definition" ("Rock Music", Groliers, p.1). The

nearest definition suggests a kind of music that represents and speaks for the teenage society. This music is characterized by using a heavy beat. In this essay, I'm going to divide Rock music into four sections: Rock of the 50's, of the 60's, of the 70's and of the 80's. Within these sections I'm also going to discuss several sub-topics such as famous composers and groups, and characteristics of the music.

The first section of this essay is Rock n' Roll of the 1950's, when Rock n' Roll was born. It emerged from rhythm and blues, a music similar to jazz played by blacks. This kind of music started to attract white teenagers. Disc jockey Alan Freed was the one who introduced this music and later gave it the name of Rock n' Roll. Record companies distributed records played by whites but composed by blacks.

Whites were frustrated because there weren't any white artists and they didn't want the blacks to be the stars until Bill Haley appeared with his "Rock Around the Clock". In this decade, Elvis Presley introduced a music that was sexual suggestive and outraged dull adults. In time he changed the style of the music by adopting a country and western style and became a national hero. By the end of this decade and the start of the next, Rock n' Roll started to decline because it was formula ridden and it was too sentimental. Teenage audiences transferred their allegiance to Folk music.

In 1963 the renewal of Rock n' Roll came when The Beatles started to play. The Beatles, for some the best rock group ever, were from Liverpool, England. Through the 60's, The Beatles dominated the record industries and with their dominant instrumentation, which included: electric leads, rhythm, and bass guitar, drums and sometimes an electric organ, changed the name of Rock n' Roll to just Rock. During the

1960's many other styles of music arose from Rock like, Motown, Soul music, Jazz-rock, Folk-rock and others.

Folk-Rock the most appreciated of these derivations and was first suggested by Bob Dylan. This kind of music brought to folk music a hard beat and amplification; and to Rock, a new poetic style. California was one of the major centers of rock activity and experimentation during the decade. First it was characterized for its surfing music, a very joyful music that reflected the fun people had while surfing. The Beach Boys were the ones who introduced this kind of music.

At the end of the century this happy kind of music changed to a more rebellious style that was designated the name of "hippie music". Groups that played this music were Country Joe and The Mamas

and

The Papas. Along with this hippie ideas popularity of hallucinogenic drugs produced a psychedelic style of music called Acid Rock. By the end of the 60's the distinctions between Rock n' Roll and Rock were evident.

The early instruments- saxophone, piano, amplified guitar, and drums- had been changed to electric guitar and bass, amplified drums and other electronic devices. Not only did the instruments change but so did the ideas behind the music. For example, "to the lyrics of teenage love and adolescent concerns were added social commentary, glorification of drugs and free-association poetry" ("Rock Music", Groliers, p.1). Groups like The Beach Boys, Crew Cuts and The Everly Brothers were replaced by more imaginative, non-descriptive names groups like The Who, Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and Holding Company. The Who, the most famous of these groups, were originally from England and were reknowned because of their bizarre stage performances, they would destroy their instruments after their performance finished. The Who was one of the first rock groups.

In the 70's, the common barriers of rock broke into more divisions, like hard rock and mellow rock. Hard Rock was extremely loud and electronically amplified and Mellow Rock was softer and with acoustic instruments. In 1972, in Jamaica, a new style of music was created called Reggae. Reggae is a mixture of rock, soul, calypso and Latin music. The king of Reggae was Bob Marley. Other styles more in rocks borders, since Reggae was more latin than rock, were created in the middle of this century, like: bubble gum rock, a funny playful music directed to the youngest fans, Punk Rock, "a loud, hard rock style derived from acid rock and marked by its extremes of costume and staging" ("Rock Music", Encarta, p.1), and Heavy Metal, which continued the approach to Acid Rock but with a simpler musical dimension but relying upon the power of repetitiveness, loud volume, and electronic distortion.

One famous group of Heavy Metal was Led Zeppelin, a British group that was formed in 1968 by Jimmy Page (lead guitar), Robert Plant (lead singer), John Paul Jones (pianist and bassist) and John Bonham (drummer). Most music of this decade was intended to be listened to, but not to be danced. But this intention wasn't kept by Disco music that arose in 1977 and was especially for dancing. One great group of Disco music were the Bee Gees. Disco music was described by rock fans as mechanical, commercial and unlyrical (which is true). At the end of this decade, rock, again became a dominant cultural force.

The last but not least section of this essay is rock of the 80's. At the start of this last decade, rock groups became more production oriented, mainly because of the sudden explosion of videos. This new sensation was a good way to sell music to the people. Heavy metal bands were greatly pushed by videos, but most helped were the popular performers like Michael Jackson, Prince and Boy George. The influence of British bands of punk, disco, reggae and pop-rock was still

big in the U.S. Rock scene. At the same time, there of nostalgia to return to the older pre rock music, like rhythm and blues, which was suggested by played by Elvis Costello. By the middle of the 80's, almost every country had begun to support indigenous music, and at the end of this "a vigorous talk-song style called rap became extremely popular among urban black teenagers" ("Rock Music", Encarta, p.1.).

Rock music taught me to appreciate things in a different way. I've learned this since rock is not an exact science, it can change. In fact Rock music helps me relax (I would have been able to finish writing this essay with rock music). After writing this essay I have learned the origins of rock and the branches of it, but that wasn't my intention. I wrote this essay to express myself with it because I feel I can show myself with rock music. I think rock has become social phenomenal.

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