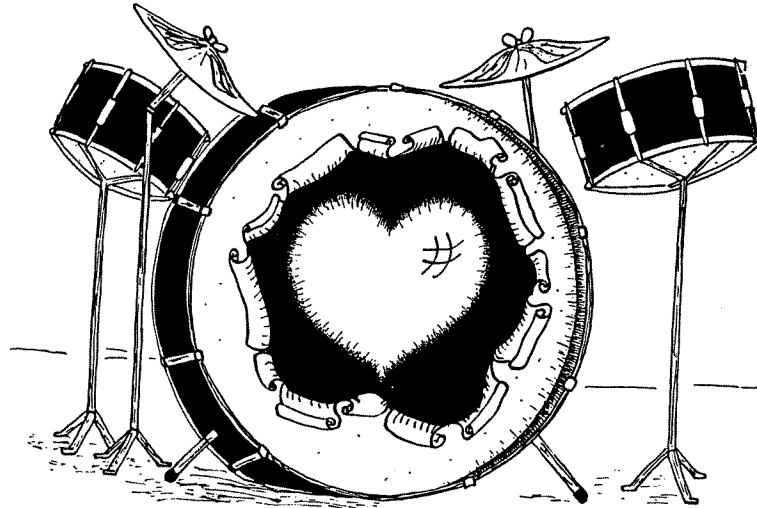


# ROOTS OF ROCK N' ROLL

*"The Heart of Rock n' Roll is the beat!"*  
*Huey Lewis*



**The early roots of Rock n' Roll can be traced back to Africa. Music with a hard driving rhythm played an important part in daily tribal life. Songs were used during work and for entertainment. Songs also kept a kind of vocal history instead of a history written in books. When slaves were taken to America in the 1600s, they brought their music with them. African music supplies the rhythm or beat, which eventually developed into Rock n' Roll.**

# THE BLUES

*"The Blues ain't nothin but an achin' broken heart's disease." Robert Johnson*

**Slavery ended in 1865 but newly freed African Americans continued to lead hard lives as share croppers. This newfound sense of isolation and hardship was the basis of the blues.**

**The first Blues singers wandered around the South with guitars singing about their lives and hardships. The musical form used in Blues was called Twelve Bar Blues. This style combined European structure with African rhythm and vocal techniques. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s African American musicians such as Robert Johnson sang the blues in roadhouses and juke joints.**

**Characteristics of Blues are:**

- 1) Slow and sad music**
- 2) Instruments are guitar (often with a slide), harmonica**
- 3) Lyrics are very simple and repetitive (Twelve Bar Blues)**

## TWELVE BAR BLUES

I woke up this morning, I fell right on my  
head,  
I woke up this morning, I fell right on my  
head,  
And I aint going back to school,  
Think I'll crawl back in bed.

The Twelve Bar Blues is a common chord progression or pattern found in many types of Rock n' Roll. The simple and repetitive nature of the Twelve Bar Blues makes it easy to play and sing.

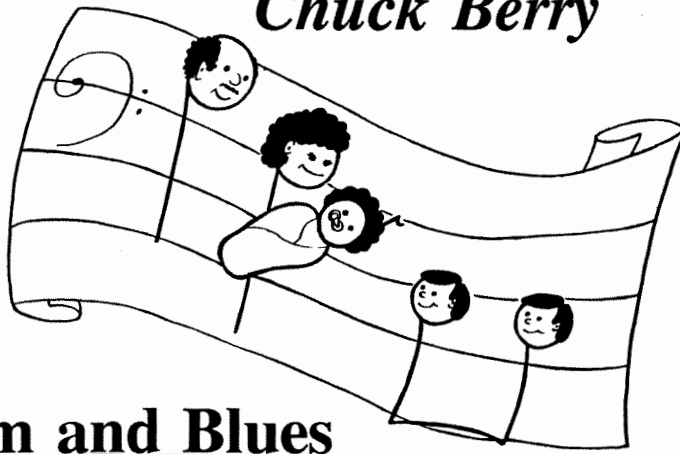
Lyrics Line one - makes a statement  
Line two - repeat of line one  
Lines three and four - draw a conclusion  
(Last word of line four rhymes with last word of line one)

Chords | CCCC | CCCC | CCCC | CCCC |  
| FFFF | FFFF | CCCC | CCCC |  
| G<sup>7</sup>G<sup>7</sup>G<sup>7</sup>G<sup>7</sup> | FFFF | CCCC | G<sup>7</sup>G<sup>7</sup>G<sup>7</sup>G<sup>7</sup> |

# THE FIFTIES BIRTH OF ROCK N' ROLL

*"The Blues had a baby and they  
called it Rock n' Roll"*

*Chuck Berry*

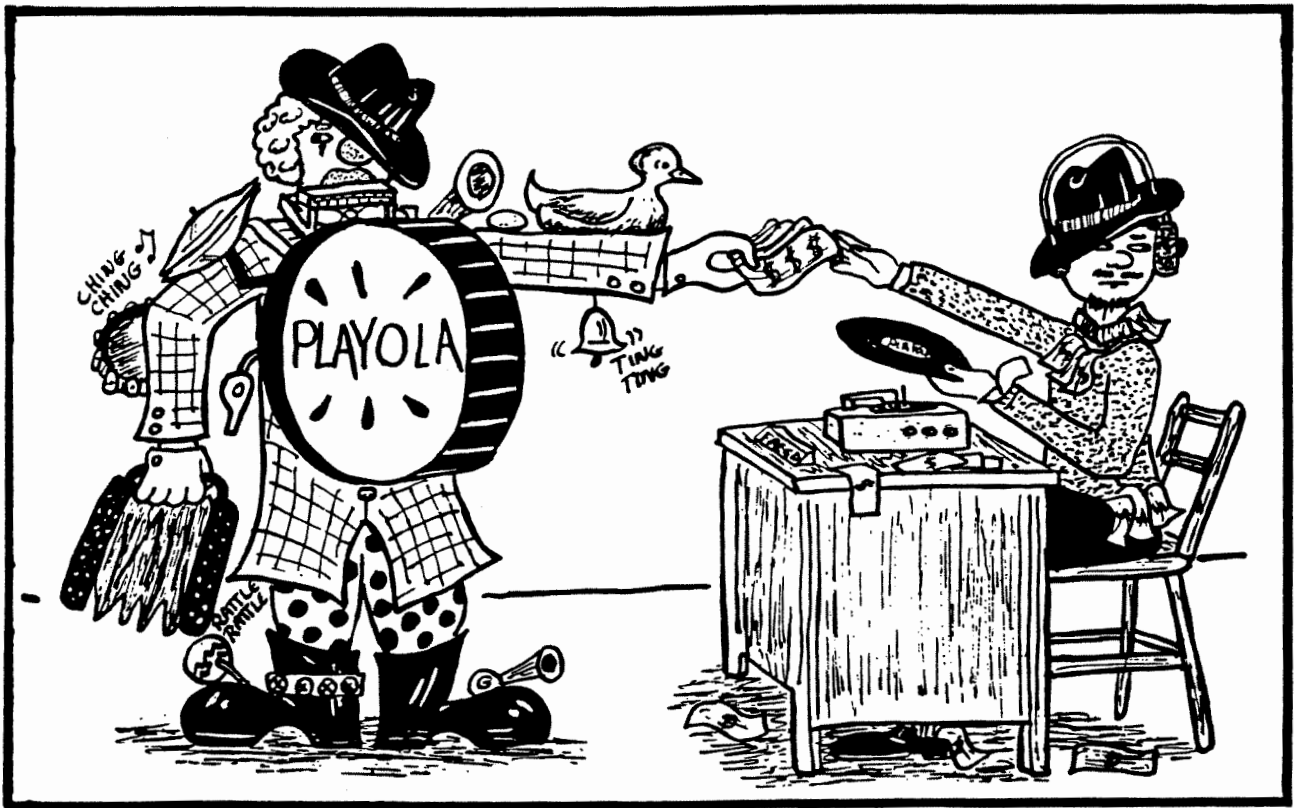


## Rhythm and Blues

**The fifties began with Rhythm and Blues which was music played by, and listened to by African Americans. Rhythm and Blues used the twelve bar blues chord progression but had an electric sound. It was also fast, cheerful and easy to dance to which made it different from the slow, sad blues. Fats Domino and Chuck Berry made Rhythm and Blues records but they were listened to mainly by African Americans. These records did not receive wide air-play until Buddy Holly and the Crickets started to make inroads into white listening audiences.**

## Alan Freed

In 1955, a white disc jockey named Alan Freed introduced Rhythm and Blues to the large white radio audience in Cincinnati. He changed the name from Rhythm and Blues to Rock n' Roll. Record sales boomed with young people and Bill Hailey's "Rock Around the Clock" was the first giant hit. Later, Freed was disgraced for taking bribes to play certain records on his radio show. This scandal which became known as Payola shook the recording industry and ruined Freed's disc-jockey career.



## Elvis

Also in 1955, a man named Sam Perkins discovered Elvis. Elvis was a "white boy who sang Black music." Even though many parents claimed Rock n' Roll was an evil influence on youth, Elvis was an instant success, especially with teenagers. His good looks and gyrating hips vaulted Rock n' Roll into every household in America. Elvis had become the first Rock superstar with remakes of old rhythm and blues songs.



# FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF ROCK N' ROLL

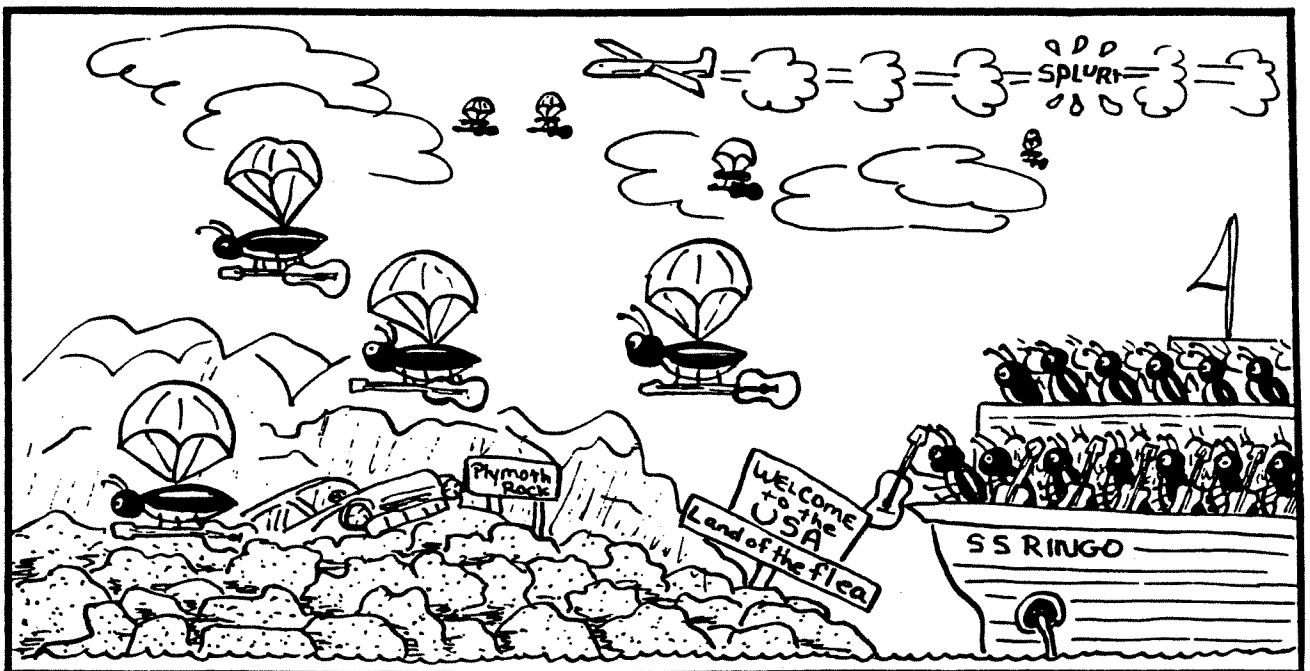
Five characteristics of Rock n' Roll are:

1. Easy to sing melodies
2. Amplification and use of electrical equipment
3. Loudness
4. Songs are about the cares and wants of young people
5. Rock songs have repeated words and music.

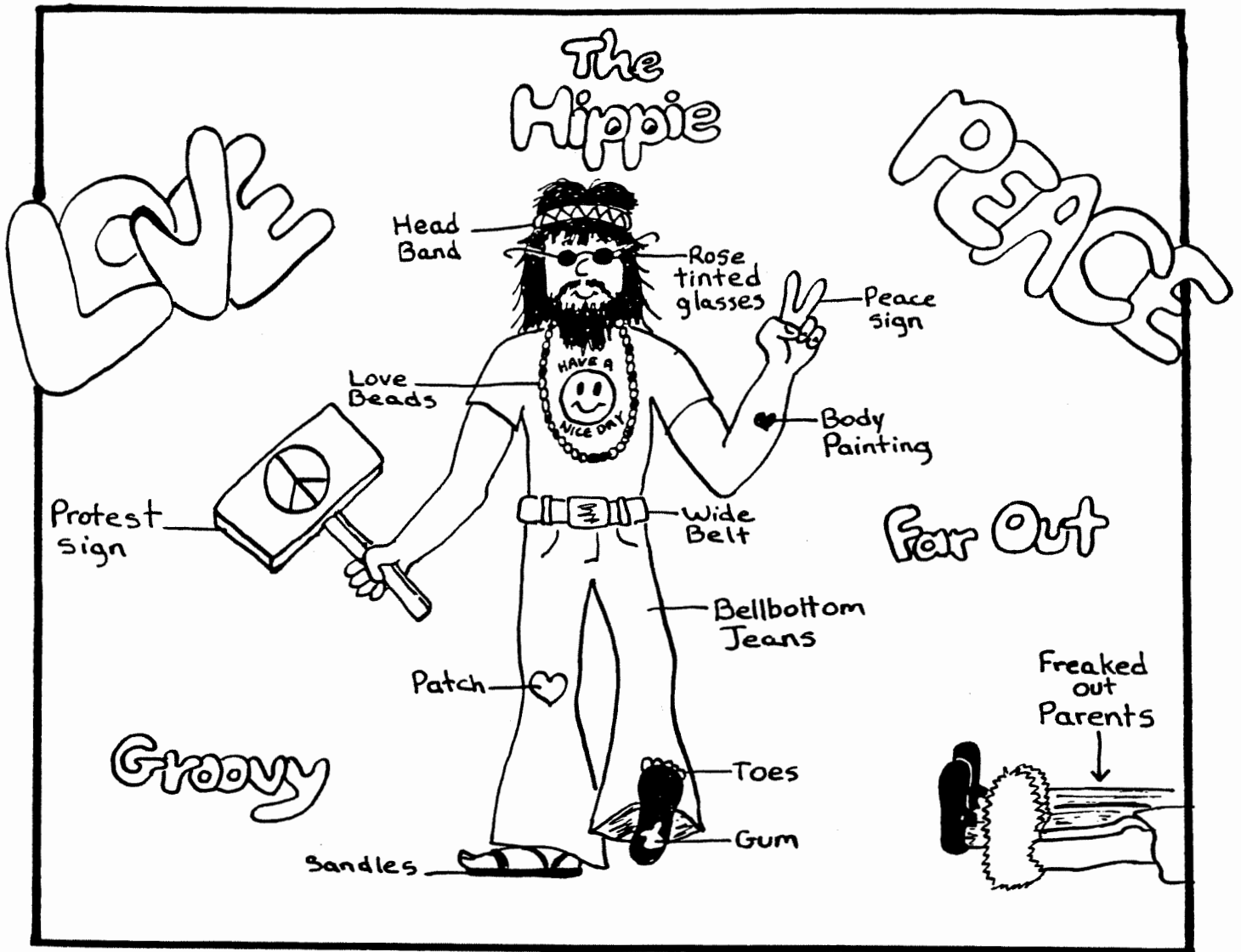


# THE BEATLES & THE ENGLISH INVASION

In the sixties, British rock groups such as the Beatles and The Rolling Stones began to re-make old rhythm and blues songs (cover versions) using more amplification. The Beatles became the first super group and had a very large impact on rock music. However, The Beatles had an even larger impact on young people and society in general. A fad towards long hair started a "rebellion" against the ways of the older generation. This idea of using music to express frustration with the ways of the older generation can still be seen today.







## Influences of The Beatles were:

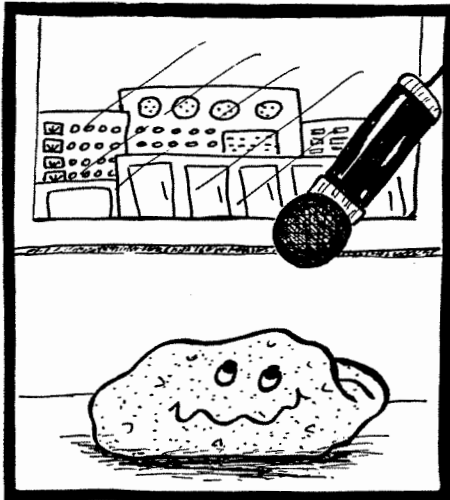
1. Use of studio for recording double tracking
2. Use of classical instruments in songs
3. Long hair, different clothes, (hippies)
4. One of the first groups to combine different styles of music - crossover music.

# STYLES OF ROCK MUSIC

1. **California Rock** - Surfer music of 60s  
- High pitched voices  
- Beach Boys, Jan & Dean



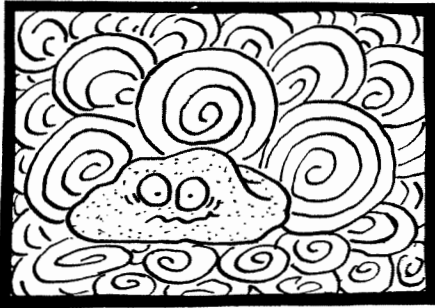
2. **Studio Rock**
- Music made entirely in a studio so it can not be reproduced live
  - Many unique sounds can be made
  - Extensive use of electronic instruments
  - Double Tracking (overdubbing) is used a great deal
  - Made popular by the Beatles



3. **Hard Rock**
- Rock of the 70s
  - Forerunner of heavy metal
  - Very loud and harsh sounding
  - Kiss, Jimmy Hendrix, BTO, The Who

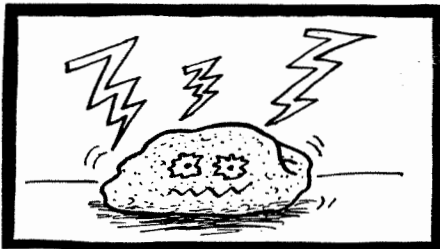


## 4. Acid Rock



- Music inspired by drugs
- Very psychedelic sound with strange words
- Many groups of the sixties experimented with words and music
- Jefferson Airplane
- Jimmy Hendrix

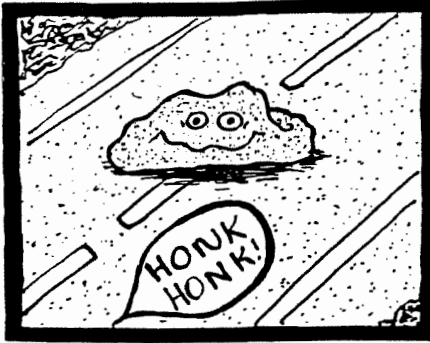
## 5. Heavy Metal



- Influenced strongly by Jimmy Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Kiss
- Loud, fast music with a great deal of amplification
- Use of synthesized sounds
- Use of improvisation in solos (strong classical influence)
- Music is often designed to create controversy with very aggressive lyrics

**Trivia:** The first mention of the term "Heavy Metal" is in a song by Steppenwolf "Born to be Wild" - 1973.

## 6. Top Forty



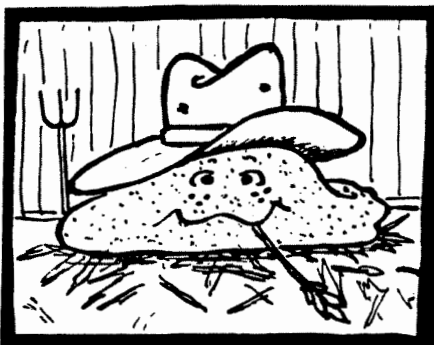
- Music aimed at large listening audiences
- Played on AM radio stations
- The week's forty most popular songs are repeated over and over
- Often called "middle of the road" music

## 7. Underground Rock



- Music for smaller listening audiences
- Played more often on FM stations
- Songs are often longer and less well known
- Called "alternative" music

## 8. Country Rock



- A blend of modern country music and rock and roll
- Songs are often remakes (covers) of old rock standbys
- Alan Jackson's cover of "Summertime Blues" is an example

## THE END OF RADIO???

In the 50's 60's and 70's, young people would listen to the latest rock n'roll songs on the radio. Today, more and more young people hear (and see) the latest music on TV, or the internet. This switch has caused radio stations all over North America to change their format from current music aimed at young people to classic rock n' roll aimed at their parents. Because there are more people aged 30 to 50 (baby-boomers) who still listen to radio, radio stations are ignoring today's youth (called generation X) and targeting today's the huge baby-boomer audience. The latest, newest music has moved from the radio to the television or the internet.

