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# Sound Recording and Popular Music

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Taylor Swift has become such a music-industry phenomenon that the only artist in the world able to compete with her isn't even human: It's Elsa, the cartoon ice princess from Disney's *Frozen*, who sang the smash hit "Let It Go." Even with Elsa on her heels, Swift still had the No. 1 album in the United States in 2014, with her 3.66-million-selling *1989* edging out the 3.57 million copies sold of the *Frozen* soundtrack. No other artist was even close; the next-biggest release was Sam Smith's smash release *In the Lonely Hour*, which reached album sales of 1.2 million in 2014.<sup>1</sup>

Since her debut release of *Taylor Swift* in 2006, at the age of sixteen, Swift has become one of the best-selling singer-songwriters—not only of the past decade but of all time, transitioning from a country-based artist to a top pop-chart star. Her songs often tell personal stories and have gained a stronger feminist perspective over time, exemplified in such hits as "Love Story," "You Belong with Me," "Fifteen," "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together," "I Knew You Were Trouble," "Shake It Off," "Blank Space," and "Bad Blood."

Swift's career has blossomed in the midst of a changing music industry, and she has been a pioneer in terms of maintaining control of her own career. Her first mark of independence was when she signed in 2005 with a new independent music label in Nashville, Big Machine Records. Swift, along with label-mates Rascal Flatts and Tim McGraw, have propelled Big Machine to its current status as one of the most significant independent labels in the country. Even with her initial success, Swift has stuck with the independent label for five albums, never seeing the need to jump to a major label. (She has one more album to go under her current contract with Big Machine.)

Swift has also developed unique sponsorships for her album sales. For example, Target stores carried special editions of her last three recordings, adding extra promotion to her marketing efforts alongside her celebrity endorsement deals with Subway, Diet Coke, Papa Johns, Walgreens, Keds, Elizabeth Arden, and Cover Girl.

Yet ultimately Swift's success comes down to the connection with her fans. She is the only artist to sell more than one million copies of an album in its debut week *three* times in the past fifteen years (with *Speak Now* in 2010, *Red* in 2012, and *1989* in 2014). In the first week of *1989*'s release, its sales accounted for 22 percent of *all* album sales in the United States. Swift is such a dominant force in music today that *Bloomberg Businessweek* published a story with the headline "Taylor Swift *Is* the Music Industry."<sup>2</sup>

With that success comes a certain amount of power, and Swift has wielded it to advocate for fair compensation for artists. In 2014, she removed her music from the streaming site Spotify, becoming the

biggest among many artists dissatisfied with the company's low compensation for music creators. "I'm not willing to contribute my life's work to an experiment that I don't feel fairly compensates the writers, producers, artists, and creators of this music," she told Yahoo! "And I just don't agree with perpetuating the perception that music has no value and should be free."<sup>3</sup> Swift also wrote a column for the *Wall Street Journal* reinforcing her views on the industry.<sup>4</sup>

In 2015, Swift took on an even bigger music company: Apple. In a post to her Tumblr blog titled "To Apple, Love Taylor," Swift wrote, "I'm sure you are aware that Apple Music will be offering a free three-month trial to anyone who signs up for the service. I'm not sure you know that Apple Music will not be paying writers, producers, or artists for those three months. I find it to be shocking, disappointing, and completely unlike this historically progressive and generous company."<sup>5</sup>

Though Swift stood to miss out on plenty of revenue without payment for trial uses, she said she was speaking up for artists who didn't have the power to do so. "These are not the complaints of a spoiled, petulant child. These are the echoed sentiments of every artist, writer and producer in my social circles who are afraid to speak up publicly because we admire and respect Apple so much."<sup>6</sup> Although just in her mid-twenties, Swift is assured enough to take on the biggest company in music. And like the strong young woman in her song lyrics, she isn't willing to back down.


In less than one day, Apple capitulated and agreed to pay artists royalties for the three-month Apple Music trial period.

▲ **THE MEDIUM OF SOUND RECORDING** has had an immense impact on our culture. The music that helps shape our identities and comforts us during the transition from childhood to adulthood resonates throughout our lives, and it often stirs debate among parents and teenagers, teachers and students, and politicians and performers, many times leading to social change. Throughout its history, popular music has been banned by parents, school officials, and even governments under the guise of protecting young people from corrupting influences. As far back as the late eighteenth century, authorities in Europe, thinking that it was immoral for young people to dance close together, outlawed waltz music as “savagery.” Between the 1920s and the 1940s, jazz music was criticized for its unbridled and sometimes free-form sound and the unrestrained dance crazes (such as the Charleston and the jitterbug) it inspired. Rock and roll from the 1950s onward and hip-hop from the 1980s to today have also added their own chapters to the age-old musical battle between generations.

In this chapter, we will place the impact of popular music in context and:

- Investigate the origins of recording’s technological “hardware,” from Thomas Edison’s early phonograph to Emile Berliner’s invention of the flat disk record and the development of audiotape, compact discs, and MP3s
- Study radio’s early threat to sound recording and the subsequent alliance between the two media when television arrived in the 1950s
- Explore the impact of the Internet on music, including the effects of online piracy and how the industry is adapting to the new era of convergence with new models for distributing and promoting music, from downloads to streaming
- Examine the content and culture of the music industry, focusing on the predominant role of rock music and its extraordinary impact on mass media forms and a diverse array of cultures, both American and international
- Explore the economic and democratic issues facing the recording industry

As you consider these topics, think about your own relationship with popular music and sound recordings. Who was your first favorite group or singer? How old were you, and what was important to you about this music? How has the way you listen to music changed in the past five years? For more questions to help you think through the role of music in our lives, see “Questioning the Media” in the Chapter Review.

 Visit **LaunchPad** for **Media & Culture** and use **LearningCurve** to review concepts from this chapter.

## ***The Development of Sound Recording***

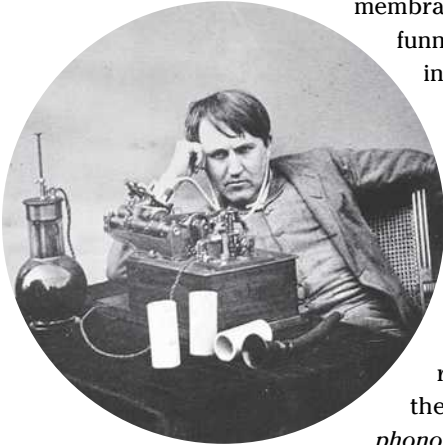
New mass media have often been defined in terms of the communication technologies that preceded them. For example, movies were initially called *motion pictures*, a term that derived from photography; radio was known as *wireless telegraphy*, referring to telegraphs; and television was often called *picture radio*. Likewise, sound recording instruments were initially described as talking machines and later as phonographs, indicating the existing innovations, the *telephone* and the *telegraph*. This early blending of technology foreshadowed our contemporary era, in which media as diverse as newspapers and movies converge on the Internet. Long before the Internet, however, the first major media convergence involved the relationship between the sound recording and radio industries.

## From Cylinders to Disks: Sound Recording Becomes a Mass Medium

In the 1850s, the French printer Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville conducted the first experiments with sound recording. Using a hog’s hair bristle as a needle, he tied one end to a thin membrane stretched over the narrow part of a funnel. When the inventor spoke into the funnel, the membrane vibrated and the free end of the bristle made grooves on a revolving cylinder coated with a thick liquid called *lamp black*. De Martinville noticed that different sounds made different trails in the lamp black, but he could not figure out how to play back the sound. However, his experiments did usher in the *development stage* of sound recording as a mass medium. In 2008, audio researchers using high-resolution scans of the recordings and a digital stylus were finally able to play back some of de Martinville’s recordings for the first time.<sup>7</sup>

In 1877, Thomas Edison had success playing back sound. He recorded his own voice by using a needle to press his voice’s sound waves onto tinfoil wrapped around a metal cylinder about the size of a cardboard toilet-paper roll. After recording his voice, Edison played it back by repositioning the needle to retrace the grooves in the foil. The machine that played these cylinders became known as the *phonograph*, derived from the Greek terms for “sound” and “writing.”

Thomas Edison was more than an inventor—he was also able to envision the practical uses of his inventions and ways to market them. Moving sound recording into its *entrepreneurial stage*, Edison patented his phonograph in 1878 as a kind of answering machine. He thought the phonograph would be used as a “telephone repeater” that would “provide invaluable records, instead of being the recipient of momentary and fleeting communication.”<sup>8</sup> Edison’s phonograph patent was specifically for a device that recorded and played back foil cylinders. Because of this limitation, in 1886 Chichester Bell (cousin of telephone inventor Alexander Graham Bell) and Charles Sumner Tainter were able to further sound recording by patenting an improvement on the phonograph. Their sound recording device,



### THOMAS EDISON

In addition to inventing the phonograph, Edison (1847–1931) ran an industrial research lab that is credited with inventing the motion picture camera, the first commercially successful lightbulb, and a system for distributing electricity.

© Bettmann/Corbis

### Sound Recording and Popular Music

#### de Martinville

The first experiments with sound are conducted in the 1850s using a hog’s hair bristle as a needle; de Martinville can record sound, but he can’t play it back (p. 116).

1850

#### Flat Disk

Berliner invents the flat disk in 1887 and develops the gramophone to play it. The disks are easily mass-produced, a labeling system is introduced, and sound recording becomes a mass medium (p. 117).

1890



#### Radio Threatens the Sound Recording Industry

By 1925, “free” music can be heard over the airwaves (p. 121).

1920

#### Audiotape

Developed in Germany in the early 1940s, audiotape enables multi-track recording. Taping technology comes to the United States after WWII (p. 118).

1940

#### Phonograph

In 1877, Edison figures out how to play back sound, thinking this invention would make a good answering machine (p. 116).



#### Victrols

Around 1910, music players enter living rooms as elaborate furniture centerpieces, replacing pianos as musical entertainment (p. 117).

Photo by Robert Johnson Estate/Hulton Archive/Getty Images (top); Popperfoto/Getty Images (bottom)

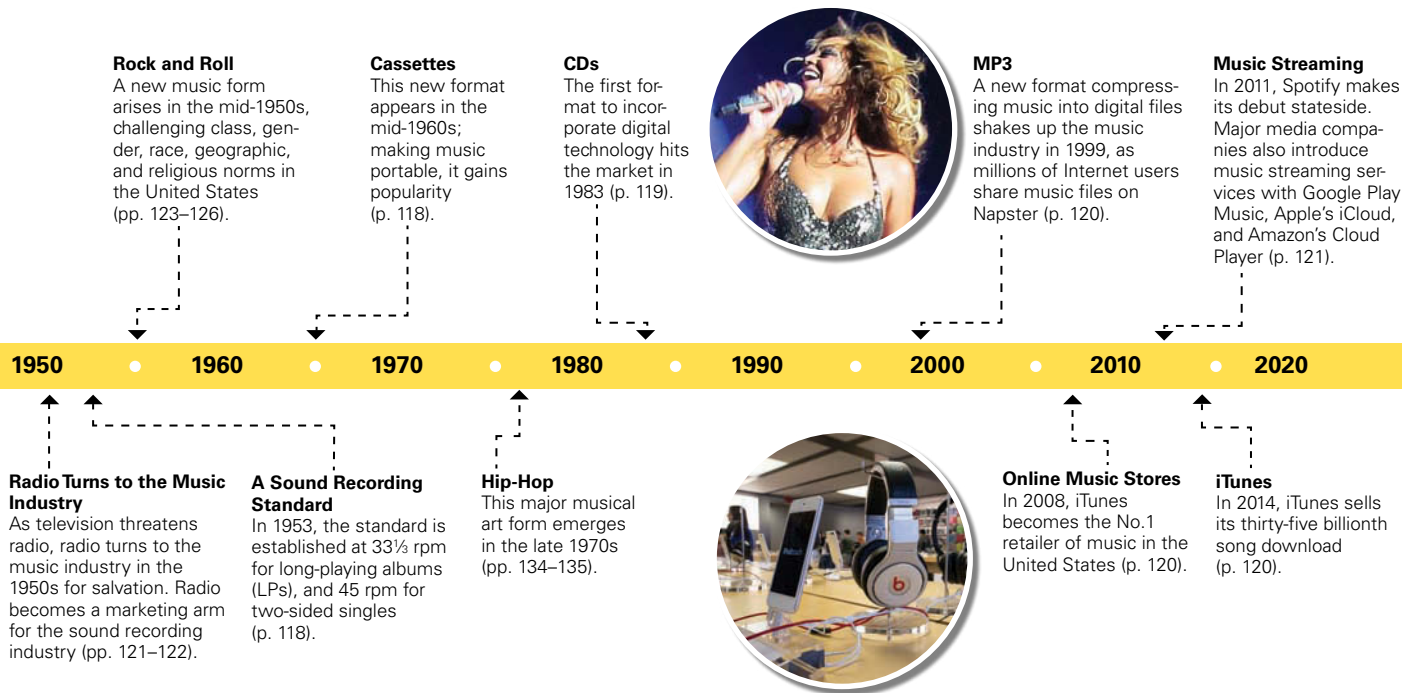


known as the *graphophone*, played back more durable wax cylinders.<sup>9</sup> Both Edison’s phonograph and Bell and Tainter’s graphophone had only marginal success as voice-recording office machines. Eventually, both sets of inventors began to produce cylinders with pre-recorded music, which proved to be more popular but difficult to mass-produce and not very durable for repeated plays.

Using ideas from Edison, Bell, and Tainter, Emile Berliner, a German engineer who had immigrated to America, developed a better machine that played round, flat disks, or records. Made of zinc and coated with beeswax, these records played on a turntable, which Berliner called a *gramophone* and patented in 1887. Berliner also developed a technique that enabled him to mass-produce his round records, bringing sound recording into its *mass medium stage*. Previously, using Edison’s cylinder, performers had to play or sing into the speaker for each separate recording. Berliner’s technique featured a master recording from which copies could be easily duplicated in mass quantities. In addition, Berliner’s records could be stamped with labels, allowing the music to be differentiated by title, performer, and songwriter. This led to the development of a “star system,” wherein fans could identify and choose their favorite artists across many records.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, record-playing phonographs were widely available for home use. In 1906, the Victor Talking Machine Company placed the hardware, or “guts,” of the record player inside a piece of furniture. These early record players, known as Victrolas, were mechanical and had to be primed with a crank handle. As more homes were wired for electricity, electric record players, first available in 1925, gradually replaced Victrolas, and the gramophone soon became an essential appliance in most American homes.

The appeal of recorded music was limited at first because of sound quality. The original wax records were replaced by shellac discs, but these records were also very fragile and didn’t improve the sound quality much. By the 1930s, in part because of the advent of radio and in part because of the Great Depression, record and phonograph sales declined dramatically. However, in the early 1940s, shellac was needed for World War II munitions production, so the record industry turned to manufacturing polyvinyl plastic records instead. The vinyl



© Rick Davis/Splash News/Corbis (top); Richard B. Levine/Newscom (bottom)

recordings turned out to be more durable than shellac records and less noisy, paving the way for a renewed consumer desire to buy recorded music.

In 1948, CBS Records introduced the 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm (revolutions per minute) *long-playing record* (LP), with about twenty minutes of music on each side, creating a market for multisong albums and classical music. This was an improvement over the three to four minutes of music contained on the existing 78-rpm records. The next year, RCA developed a competing 45-rpm record that featured a quarter-size hole (best for jukeboxes) and invigorated the sales of songs heard on jukeboxes throughout the country. Unfortunately, the two new record standards were not technically compatible, meaning the two types of records could not be played on each other's machines. A five-year marketing battle ensued, similar to the Macintosh-versus-Windows conflict over computer-operating-system standards in the 1980s and 1990s or the battle between Blu-ray and HD DVD in the mid-2000s. In 1953, CBS and RCA compromised. The LP became the standard for long-playing albums, the 45 became the standard for singles, and record players were designed to accommodate 45s, LPs, and, for a while, 78s.

### From Phonographs to CDs: Analog Goes Digital

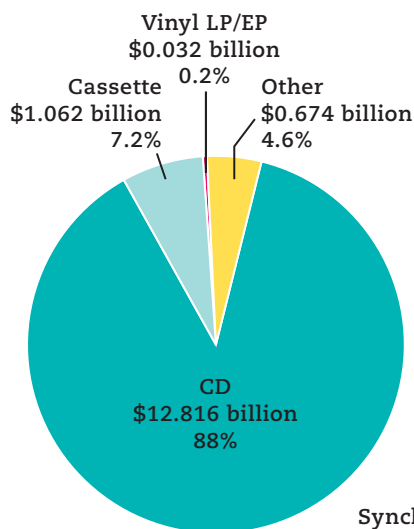
The inventions of the phonograph and the record were the key sound recording advancements until the advent of magnetic **audiotape** and tape players in the 1940s. Magnetic tape sound recording was first developed as early as 1929 and further refined in the 1930s, but it didn't catch on initially because the first machines were bulky reel-to-reel devices, the amount of tape required to make a recording was unwieldy, and the tape itself broke or became damaged easily. However, owing largely to improvements by German engineers who developed plastic magnetic tape during World War II, audiotape eventually found its place.

Audiotape's lightweight magnetized strands finally made possible sound editing and multiple-track mixing, in which instrumentals or vocals could be recorded at one location and later mixed onto a master recording in another studio. This led to a vast improvement in studio recordings and subsequent increases in sales, although the recordings continued to be sold primarily in vinyl format rather than on reel-to-reel tape. By the mid-1960s, engineers had placed miniaturized reel-to-reel audiotape inside small plastic *cassettes* and developed portable cassette players, permitting listeners to bring recorded music anywhere and creating a market for prerecorded cassettes. Audiotape also permitted "home dubbing": Consumers could copy their favorite records onto tape or record songs from the radio. The cassette format also gave rise to the Sony Walkman, a portable cassette player that foreshadowed the release of the iPod two decades later.

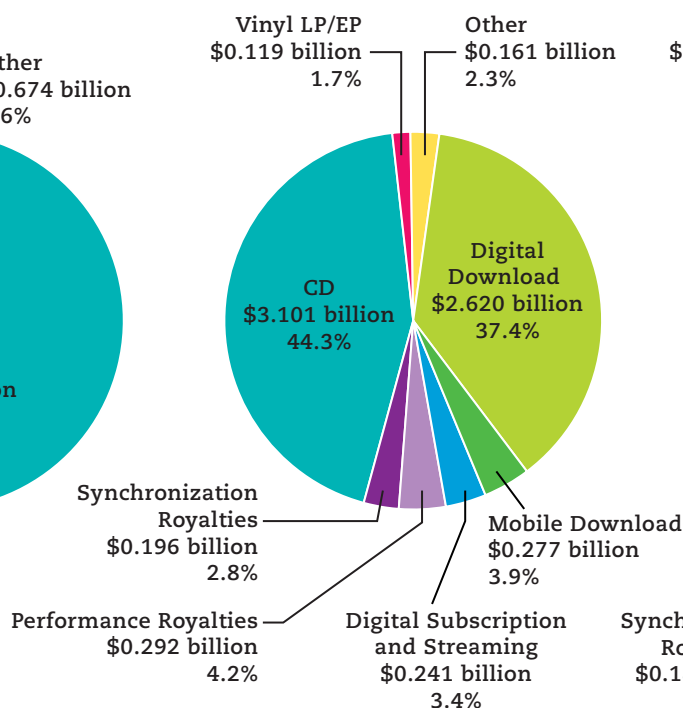
Some thought the portability, superior sound, and recording capabilities of audiotape would mean the demise of records. Although records had retained essentially the same format since the advent of vinyl, the popularity of records continued, in part due to the improved sound fidelity that came with stereophonic sound. Invented in 1931 by engineer Alan Blumlein but not put to commercial use until 1958, **stereo** permitted the recording of two separate channels, or tracks, of sound. Recording-studio engineers, using audiotape, could now record many instrumental or vocal tracks, which they "mixed down" to two stereo tracks. When played back through two loudspeakers, stereo creates a more natural sound distribution. By 1971, stereo sound had been advanced into *quadraphonic*, or four-track, sound, but that never caught on commercially.

The biggest recording advancement came in the 1970s, when electrical engineer Thomas Stockham made the first digital audio recordings on standard computer equipment. Although the digital recorder was invented in 1967, Stockham was the first to put it to practical use. In contrast to **analog recording**, which captures the fluctuations of sound waves and stores those signals in a record's grooves or a tape's continuous stream of magnetized particles, **digital recording** translates sound waves into binary on-off pulses and stores that information

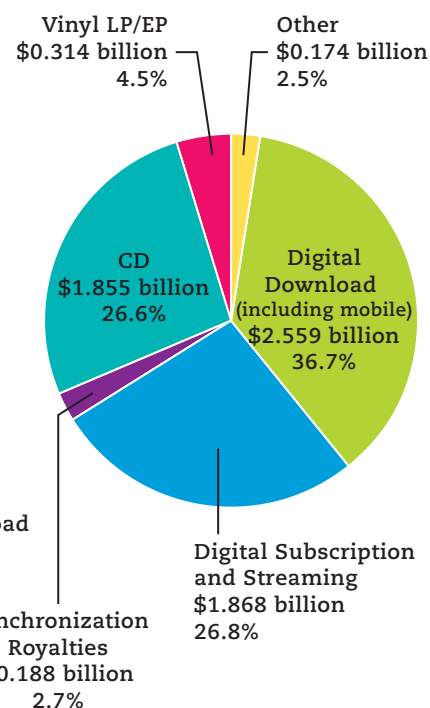
1999 Total Value: \$14.584 billion



2011 Total Value: \$7.007 billion



2014 Total Value: \$6.972 billion



as numerical code. When a digital recording is played back, a microprocessor translates those numerical codes back into sounds and sends them to loudspeakers. By the late 1970s, Sony and Philips were jointly working on a way to design a digitally recorded disc and player to take advantage of this new technology, which could be produced at a lower cost than either vinyl records or audiocassettes. As a result of their efforts, digitally recorded **compact discs (CDs)** hit the market in 1983.

By 1987, CD sales were double the amount of LP record album sales. By 2000, CDs rendered records and audiocassettes nearly obsolete, except for DJs and record enthusiasts who continued to play and collect vinyl LPs. In an effort to create new product lines and maintain consumer sales, the music industry promoted two advanced digital disc formats in the late 1990s, which it hoped would eventually replace standard CDs. However, the introduction of these formats was ill-timed for the industry, because the biggest development in music formatting was already on the horizon—the MP3.

## Convergence: Sound Recording in the Internet Age

Music, perhaps more so than any other mass medium, is bound up in the social fabric of our lives. Ever since the introduction of the tape recorder and the heyday of homemade mixtapes, music has been something that we have shared eagerly with friends.

It is not surprising, then, that the Internet, a mass medium that links individuals and communities together like no other medium, became a hub for sharing music. In fact, the reason college student Shawn Fanning said he developed the groundbreaking file-sharing site Napster in 1999 was “to build communities around different types of music.”<sup>10</sup> But this convergence with the Internet began to unravel the music industry in the 2000s. The changes in the music industry were set in motion about two decades ago, with the proliferation of Internet use and the development of a new digital file format.

FIGURE 4.1

### THE EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL SOUND RECORDING SALES (REVENUE IN BILLIONS)

Data from: Recording Industry Association of America, *Annual Year-End Statistics*. Figures are rounded.

Note: The year 1999 is the year Napster arrived, and the peak year of industry revenue. In 2011, digital product revenue surpassed physical product revenue for the first time. In 2014, digital download revenue dropped for the second year in a row as digital subscriptions and streaming gained in popularity. Synchronization royalties are those from music being licensed for use in television, movies, and advertisements.



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**Recording Music Today**

Composer Scott Dugdale discusses technological innovations in music recording.

**Discussion:** What surprised you the most about the way the video showed a song being produced, and why?

**BEATS BY DR. DRE**

headphones became the must-have status companion item for iPods, replacing the simple white iPod earbuds. Apple purchased Beats in 2014 for \$3 billion, obtaining a premium headphone brand for customers and a company (Beats Music) to help strengthen Apple's streaming music service.



Richard B. Levine/Newscom

**MP3s and File-Sharing**

The **MP3** file format, developed in 1992, enables digital recordings to be compressed into smaller, more manageable files. With the increasing popularity of the Internet in the mid-1990s, computer users began swapping MP3 music files online because they could be uploaded or downloaded in a fraction of the time it took to exchange noncompressed music files.

By 1999, the year Napster's infamous free file-sharing service brought the MP3 format to popular attention, music files were widely available on the Internet—some for sale, some legally available for free downloading, and many for trading in possible violation of copyright laws. Despite the higher quality of industry-manufactured CDs, music fans enjoyed the convenience of downloading and burning MP3 files to CD. Some listeners skipped CDs altogether, storing their music on hard drives and essentially using their computers as stereo systems. Losing countless music sales to illegal downloading, the music industry fought the proliferation of the MP3 format with an array of lawsuits (aimed at file-sharing companies and at individual downloaders), but the popularity of MP3s continued to increase.

In 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the music industry and against Napster, declaring free music file-swapping illegal and in violation of music copyrights held by recording labels and artists. It was relatively easy for the music industry to shut down Napster (which later relaunched as a legal service) because it required users to log into a centralized system. However, the music industry's elimination of file-sharing was not complete, as decentralized *peer-to-peer* (P2P) systems, such as Grokster, LimeWire, Morpheus, Kazaa, eDonkey, eMule, and BitTorrent, once again enabled online free music file-sharing.

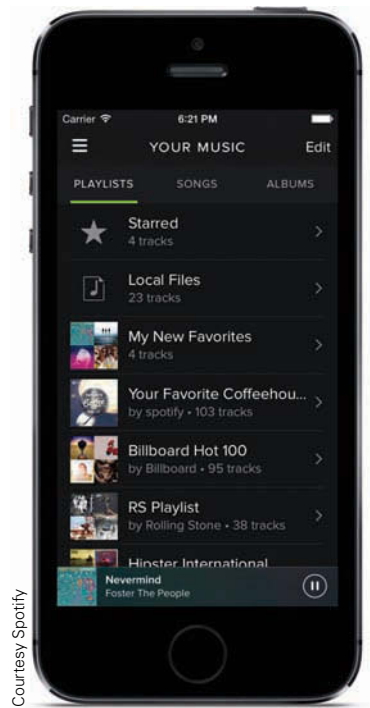
The recording industry fought back with thousands of lawsuits, many of them successful. In 2005, P2P service Grokster shut down after it was fined \$50 million by U.S. federal courts, and in upholding the lower court rulings, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that the music industry could pursue legal action against any P2P service that encouraged its users to illegally share music or other media. By 2010, eDonkey, Morpheus, and LimeWire had been shut down, while Kazaa settled a lawsuit with the music industry and became a legal service.<sup>11</sup> By 2011, several major Internet service providers, including AT&T, Cablevision, Comcast, Time Warner Cable, and Verizon, agreed to help the music industry identify customers who may be illegally downloading music and try to prevent them from doing so by sending them “copyright alert” warning letters, redirecting them to Web pages

about digital piracy, and ultimately slowing download speeds or closing their broadband accounts.

As it cracked down on digital theft, the music industry also realized that it would have to somehow adapt its business to the digital format and embraced services like iTunes (launched by Apple in 2003 to accompany the iPod), which has become the model for legal online distribution. In 2008, iTunes became the top music retailer in the United States, and by 2013, iTunes had sold more than twenty-five billion songs, hitting thirty-five billion in 2014. Ironically, iTunes' 2013 sales milestone came in the same year that global digital download sales fell for the first time.<sup>12</sup> What happened? It was the arrival of the next big digital format.

## The Next Big Thing: Streaming Music

If the history of recorded music tells us anything, it's that over time tastes change and formats change. The digital music era began in 1983 with the debut of the CD. Next was the digital download, made a commercially viable option by iTunes in 2003. Today, streaming music is quickly growing in popularity. In the language of the music industry, we are shifting from *ownership* of music to *access* to music.<sup>13</sup> The access model has been driven by the availability of streaming services such as the Sweden-based Spotify, which made its debut in the United States in 2011 and hit fifteen million worldwide paying subscribers in 2015. Other services include Rhapsody, Rdio, Deezer (outside of the United States), and Google Play Music; Amazon has also added a streaming music component to its Prime subscription accounts. With these services, listeners can pay a subscription fee (typically \$5 to \$10 per month), or in some cases sign up for an ad-supported free account, and instantly play millions of songs on demand via the Internet. One of the newest services is Beats Music, a subscription-only streaming service founded by music executive Jimmy Iovine and the renowned artist/producer Dr. Dre, the same team behind the trendy and pricey Beats by Dr. Dre headphones (some of which cost up to \$450). Just a few months after the Beats Music streaming service launched in early 2014, Apple purchased the company for \$3 billion. Apple gained a premium headphone brand to sell and a streaming service to complement its iTunes download business (though in the summer of 2015, Apple launched its own streaming service, Apple Music).<sup>14</sup> The streaming market also includes ad-supported streaming services that initially specialized in video, such as YouTube and Vevo, which have wide international use.



## The Rocky Relationship between Records and Radio

Some streaming services, like Pandora, closely resemble commercial radio; the recording industry and radio have always been closely linked. Although they work almost in unison now, in the beginning they had a tumultuous relationship. Radio's very existence sparked the first battle. By 1915, the phonograph had become a popular form of entertainment. The recording industry sold thirty million records that year, and by the end of the decade, sales more than tripled each year. In 1924, though, record sales dropped to only half of what they had been the previous year. Why? Because radio had arrived as a competing mass medium, providing free entertainment over the airwaves, independent of the recording industry.

The battle heated up when, to the alarm of the recording industry, radio stations began broadcasting recorded music without compensating the music industry. The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), founded in 1914 to collect copyright fees for music publishers and writers, charged that radio was contributing to plummeting sales of records and sheet music. By 1925, ASCAP established music rights fees for radio, charging stations between \$250 and \$2,500 a week to play recorded music—and causing many stations to leave the air.

But other stations countered by establishing their own live, in-house orchestras, disseminating “free” music to listeners. This time, the recording industry could do nothing, as original radio music did not infringe on any copyrights. Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, record and phonograph sales continued to fall, although the recording industry got a small boost when Prohibition ended in 1933 and record-playing jukeboxes became the standard musical entertainment in neighborhood taverns.

The recording and radio industries only began to cooperate with each other after television became popular in the early 1950s. Television pilfered radio's variety shows, crime dramas, and comedy programs, and, along with those formats, much of its advertising revenue and audience. Seeking to reinvent itself, radio turned to the recording industry, and this time

**SPOTIFY** became popular in Europe before the streaming service made its U.S. debut in 2011. Now available in more than fifty-five countries, it has a vast catalog of music, with more than twenty million songs globally.

both industries greatly benefited from radio's new "hit songs" format. The alliance between the recording industry and radio was aided enormously by rock-and-roll music, which was just emerging in the 1950s. Rock created an enduring consumer youth market for sound recordings and provided much-needed new content for radio precisely when television made it seem like an obsolete medium.

After the digital turn, that mutually beneficial arrangement between the recording and radio industries began to fray. While Internet streaming radio stations were being required to pay royalties to music companies when they played their songs, radio stations still got to play music royalty-free over the air. In 2012, Clear Channel, the largest radio station chain in the United States and one of the largest music streaming companies, with more than 1,500 live stations on iHeartRadio, was the first company to strike a new deal with the recording industry and pay royalties for music played over the air. Clear Channel pledged to pay royalties to Big Machine Label Group—one of the country's largest independent labels—for broadcasting the songs of its artists (including Taylor Swift, Tim McGraw, and the Band Perry) in exchange for a limit on royalties it must pay for streaming those artists' music. With the agreement, Big Machine Label Group gained a new source of royalty income, and Clear Channel (which renamed itself iHeartMedia in 2014) crafted a more stable future for its growing digital streaming operations. Since the first deal, other radio groups have begun to forge agreements with Big Machine and other music labels, paying royalties for on-air play while getting reduced rates for streaming music.

## U.S. Popular Music and the Formation of Rock

Popular music, or **pop music**, is music that appeals either to a wide cross section of the public or to sizable subdivisions within the larger public based on age, region, or ethnic background (e.g., teenagers, southerners, and Mexican Americans). U.S. pop music today encompasses styles as diverse as blues, country, Tejano, salsa, jazz, rock, reggae, punk, hip-hop, and dance. The word *pop* has also been used to distinguish popular music from classical music, which is written primarily for ballet, opera, ensemble, or symphony. As various subcultures have intersected, U.S. popular music has developed organically, constantly creating new forms and reinvigorating older musical styles.

### The Rise of Pop Music

Although it is commonly assumed that pop music developed simultaneously with the phonograph and radio, it actually existed prior to these media. In the late nineteenth century, the sale of sheet music for piano and other instruments sprang from a section of Broadway in Manhattan known as Tin Pan Alley, a derisive term used to describe the sound of these quickly produced tunes, which supposedly resembled cheap pans clanging together. Tin Pan Alley's tradition of song publishing began in the late 1880s with such music as the marches of John Philip Sousa and the ragtime piano pieces of Scott Joplin. It continued through the first half of the twentieth century with the show tunes and vocal ballads of Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, and Cole Porter, and into the 1950s and 1960s with such rock-and-roll writing teams as Jerry Leiber–Mike Stoller and Carole King–Gerry Goffin.

At the turn of the twentieth century, with the newfound ability of song publishers to mass-produce sheet music for a growing middle class, popular songs moved from being a novelty



The Granger Collection

**SCOTT JOPLIN** (1868–1917) published more than fifty compositions during his life, including "Maple Leaf Rag"—arguably his most famous piece.



to being a major business enterprise. With the emergence of the phonograph, song publishers also discovered that recorded tunes boosted interest in and sales of sheet music. Thus, songwriting and Tin Pan Alley played a key role in transforming popular music into a mass medium.

As sheet music grew in popularity, **jazz** developed in New Orleans. An improvisational and mostly instrumental musical form, jazz absorbed and integrated a diverse body of musical styles, including African rhythms, blues, and gospel. Jazz influenced many bandleaders throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Groups led by Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Glenn Miller were among the most popular of the “swing” jazz bands, whose rhythmic music also dominated radio, recordings, and dance halls in their day.

The first pop vocalists of the twentieth century were products of the vaudeville circuit, which radio, movies, and the Depression would bring to an end in the 1930s. In the 1920s, Eddie Cantor, Belle Baker, Sophie Tucker, and Al Jolson were all extremely popular. By the 1930s, Rudy Vallée and Bing Crosby had established themselves as the first “crooners,” or singers of pop standards. Bing Crosby also popularized Irving Berlin’s “White Christmas,” one of the most covered songs in recording history. (A song recorded or performed by another artist is known as **cover music**.) Meanwhile, the Andrews Sisters’ boogie-woogie style helped them sell more than sixty million records in the late 1930s and 1940s. In one of the first mutually beneficial alliances between sound recording and radio, many early pop vocalists had their own network of regional radio programs, which vastly increased their exposure.

Frank Sinatra arrived in the 1940s, and his romantic ballads foreshadowed the teen love songs of rock and roll’s early years. Nicknamed “the Voice” early in his career, Sinatra, like Crosby, parlayed his music and radio exposure into movie stardom. Helped by radio, pop vocalists like Sinatra were among the first vocalists to become popular with a large national teen audience. Their record sales helped stabilize the industry, and in the early 1940s, Sinatra’s concerts caused the kind of audience riots that would later characterize rock-and-roll performances.

## Rock and Roll Is Here to Stay

The cultural storm called **rock and roll** hit in the mid-1950s. As with the term *jazz*, *rock and roll* was a blues slang term for “sex,” lending it instant controversy. Early rock and roll was considered the first “integrationist music,” merging the black sounds of rhythm and blues, gospel, and Robert Johnson’s screeching blues guitar with the white influences of country, folk, and pop vocals.<sup>15</sup> From a cultural perspective, only a few musical forms have ever sprung from such a diverse set of influences, and no new style of music has ever had such a widespread impact on so many different cultures as rock and roll. From an economic perspective, rock and roll was the first musical form to simultaneously transform the structure of sound recording and radio. Rock’s development set the stage for how music is produced, distributed, and performed today. Many social, cultural, economic, and political factors leading up to the 1950s contributed to the growth of rock and roll, including black migration, the growth of youth culture, and the beginnings of racial integration.

The migration of southern blacks to northern cities in search of better jobs during the first half of the twentieth century helped spread different popular music styles. In particular, **blues** music, the foundation of rock and roll, came to the North. Influenced by African American spirituals, ballads, and work songs

### ROBERT JOHNSON

(1911–1938), who ranks among the most influential and innovative American guitarists, played the Mississippi delta blues and was a major influence on early rock and rollers, especially the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton. His intense slide-guitar and finger-style playing also inspired generations of blues artists, including Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Bonnie Raitt, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. To get a sense of his style, visit the Internet Archive’s Robert Johnson collection: [www.archive.org/details/RobertJohnsonMp3AudioSongs](http://www.archive.org/details/RobertJohnsonMp3AudioSongs).

Photo by Robert Johnson Estate/Hulton Archive/Getty Images





Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

**BESSIE SMITH** (1895–1937) is considered the best female blues singer of the 1920s and 1930s. Mentored by the famous Ma Rainey, Smith had many hits, including “Down Hearted Blues” and “Gulf Coast Blues.” She also appeared in the 1929 film *St. Louis Blues*.

from the rural South, blues music was exemplified in the work of Robert Johnson, Ma Rainey, Son House, Bessie Smith, Charley Patton, and others. The introduction in the 1930s of the electric guitar—a major contribution to rock music—gave southern blues its urban style, popularized in the work of Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, B.B. King, and Buddy Guy.<sup>16</sup>

During this time, blues-based urban black music began to be marketed under the name **rhythm and blues**, or **R&B**. Featuring “huge rhythm units smashing away behind screaming blues singers,” R&B appealed to young listeners fascinated by the explicit (and forbidden) sexual lyrics in songs like “Annie Had a Baby,” “Sexy Ways,” and “Wild Wild Young Men.”<sup>17</sup> Although it was banned on some stations, by 1953 R&B continued to gain airtime. In those days, black and white musical forms were segregated: Trade magazines tracked R&B record sales on “race” charts, which were kept separate from white record sales tracked on “pop” charts.

Another reason for the growth of rock and roll can be found in the repressive and uneasy atmosphere of the 1950s. To cope with the threat of the atomic bomb, the Cold War, and communist witch-hunts, young people sought escape from the menacing world created by adults. Teens have always sought out music that has a beat—music they can dance to—from the waltz in eighteenth-century Europe to the Charleston in 1920s America. More recent musical forms like disco and hip-hop began as dance and party music before their growing popularity eventually energized both record sales and radio formats.

Perhaps the most significant factor in the growth of rock and roll was the beginning of the integration of white and black cultures. In addition to increased exposure of black literature, art, and music, several key historical events in the 1950s broke down the borders between black and white cultures. In 1948, President Truman signed an executive order integrating the armed forces, bringing young men from very different ethnic and economic backgrounds together at the time of the Korean War. Even more significant was the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954. With this ruling, “separate but equal” laws, which had kept white and black schools, hotels, restaurants, rest rooms, and drinking fountains segregated for decades, were declared unconstitutional. A cultural reflection of the times, rock and roll would burst forth from the midst of these social and political tensions.

## Rock Muddies the Waters

In the 1950s, legal integration accompanied a cultural shift, and the music industry’s race and pop charts blurred. White deejay Alan Freed had been playing black music for his young audiences in Cleveland and New York since the early 1950s, and such white performers as Johnnie Ray and Bill Haley had crossed over to the race charts to score R&B hits. Meanwhile, black artists like Chuck Berry were performing country songs, and for a time Ray Charles even played in an otherwise all-white country band. Although continuing the work of breaking down racial borders was one of rock and roll’s most important contributions, the genre also blurred other long-standing distinctions between high and low culture, masculinity and femininity, the country and the city, the North and the South, and the sacred and the secular.

### High and Low Culture

In 1956, Chuck Berry’s “Roll Over Beethoven” merged rock and roll, considered low culture by many, with high culture, thus forever blurring the traditional boundary between these cultural forms with lyrics like “You know my temperature’s risin’ / the jukebox is blowin’ a fuse . . . / Roll over Beethoven / and tell Tchaikovsky the news.” Although such early rock-and-roll lyrics seem tame by today’s standards, at the time they sounded like sacrilege. Rock and rollers also challenged music decorum and the rules governing how musicians should behave or

misbehave: Berry's "duck walk" across the stage, Elvis Presley's pegged pants and gyrating hips, and Bo Diddley's use of the guitar as a phallic symbol were an affront to the norms of well-behaved, culturally elite audiences.

The blurring of cultures works both ways. Since the advent of rock and roll, some musicians performing in traditionally high-culture genres such as classical have even adopted some of rock and roll's ideas in an effort to boost sales and popularity—for example, performing in casual dress or in untraditional venues, like bars and subway stations.

### Masculinity and Femininity

Rock and roll was also the first popular music genre to overtly confuse issues of sexual identity and orientation. Although early rock and roll largely attracted males as performers, the most fascinating feature of Elvis Presley, according to the Rolling Stones' Mick Jagger, was his androgynous appearance.<sup>18</sup> During this early period, though, the most sexually outrageous rock-and-roll performer was Little Richard (Penniman).

Wearing a pompadour hairdo and assaulting his Steinway piano, Little Richard was considered rock and roll's first drag queen, blurring the boundary between masculinity and femininity. Little Richard has said that given the reality of American racism, he blurred gender and sexuality lines because he feared the consequences of becoming a sex symbol for white girls: "I decided that my image should be crazy and way out so that adults would think I was harmless. I'd appear in one show dressed as the Queen of England and in the next as the pope."<sup>19</sup> Little Richard's playful blurring of gender identity and sexual orientation paved the way for performers like David Bowie, Elton John, Boy George, Annie Lennox, Prince, Grace Jones, Marilyn Manson, Lady Gaga, and Adam Lambert.

### The Country and the City

Rock and roll also blurred geographic borders between country and city, between the white country & western music of Nashville and the black urban rhythms of Memphis. Early white rockers such as Buddy Holly and Carl Perkins combined country or hillbilly music, southern gospel, and Mississippi delta blues to create a sound called **rockabilly**. At the same time, an urban R&B influence on early rock came from Fats Domino ("Blueberry Hill"), Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton ("Hound Dog"), and Big Joe Turner ("Shake, Rattle, and Roll"). Many of these songs, first popular on R&B labels, crossed over to the pop charts during the mid to late 1950s (although many were performed by more widely known white artists). Chuck Berry borrowed from white country & western music (an old country song called "Ida Red") and combined it with R&B to write "Maybellene." His first hit, the song was No. 1 on the R&B chart in July 1955 and crossed over to the pop charts the next month.

Although rock lyrics in the 1950s may not have been especially provocative or overtly political, soaring record sales and the crossover appeal of the music itself represented an enormous threat to long-standing racial and class boundaries. In 1956, the secretary of the North Alabama White Citizens Council bluntly spelled out the racism and white fear concerning the new blending of urban-black and rural-white culture: "Rock and roll is a means of pulling the white man down to the level of the Negro. It is part of a plot to undermine the morals of the youth of our nation."<sup>20</sup> These days, distinctions between traditionally rural music and urban music continue to blur, with older hybrids such as country rock (think of the Eagles) and newer forms like alternative country—performed by artists like Ryan Adams, Steve Earle, the Avett Brothers, and Kings of Leon.



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#### ROCK-AND-ROLL PIONEER

A major influence on early rock and roll, Chuck Berry, born in 1926, scored major hits between 1955 and 1958, writing "Maybellene," "Roll Over Beethoven," "School Day," "Sweet Little Sixteen," and "Johnny B. Goode." At the time, he was criticized by some black artists for sounding white, and his popularity among white teenagers was bemoaned by conservative critics. Today, young guitar players routinely imitate his style.





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#### KATY PERRY

Many of today's biggest pop music stars show off not just catchy radio-ready singles but also eye-grabbing fashion, memorable music videos, and multimillion-dollar live shows. Perry's 2014 Prismatic World Tour featured a spectacular concert production with at least seven different "acts" and costume and set changes.

### The North and the South

Not only did rock and roll muddy the urban and rural terrain, but it also combined northern and southern influences. In fact, with so much blues, R&B, and rock and roll rising from the South in the 1950s, this region regained some of its cultural flavor, which (along with a sizable portion of the population) had migrated to the North after the Civil War and during the early twentieth century. Meanwhile, musicians and audiences in the North had absorbed blues music as their own, eliminating the understanding of blues as a specifically southern style. Like the many white teens today who are fascinated by hip-hop, musicians such as Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, and Buddy Holly—all from the rural South—were fascinated with and influenced by the black urban styles they had heard on the radio or seen in nightclubs. These artists in turn brought southern culture to northern listeners.

But the key to record sales and the spread of rock and roll, according to famed record producer Sam Phillips of Sun Records, was to find a white man who sounded black. Phillips found that man in Elvis Presley. Commenting on Presley's cultural importance, one critic wrote: "White rockabilies like Elvis took poor white southern mannerisms of speech and behavior deeper into mainstream culture than they had ever been taken."<sup>21</sup>

### The Sacred and the Secular

Although many mainstream adults in the 1950s complained that rock and roll's sexuality and questioning of moral norms constituted an offense against God, in fact many early rock figures had close ties to religion. Jerry Lee Lewis attended a Bible institute in Texas

(although he was eventually thrown out); Ray Charles converted an old gospel tune he had first heard in church as a youth into "I Got a Woman," one of his signature songs; and many other artists transformed gospel songs into rock and roll.

Still, many people did not appreciate the blurring of boundaries between the sacred and the secular. In the late 1950s, public outrage over rock and roll was so great that even Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis, both sons of southern preachers, became convinced that they were playing the "devil's music." By 1959, Little Richard had left rock and roll to become a minister. Lewis had to be coerced into recording "Great Balls of Fire," a song by Otis Blackwell that turned an apocalyptic biblical phrase into a sexually charged teen love song that was banned by many radio stations but nevertheless climbed to No. 2 on the pop charts in 1957. The boundaries between sacred and secular music have continued to blur in the years since, with some churches using rock and roll to appeal to youth, and some Christian-themed rock groups recording music as seemingly incongruous as heavy metal.

### Battles in Rock and Roll

The blurring of racial lines and the breakdown of other conventional boundaries meant that performers and producers were forced to play a tricky game to get rock and roll accepted by the masses. Two prominent white disc jockeys used different methods. Cleveland deejay Alan Freed, credited with popularizing the term *rock and roll*, played original R&B recordings from the race charts and black versions of early rock and roll on his program. In contrast, Philadelphia deejay Dick Clark believed that making black music acceptable to white audiences required cover versions by white artists. By the mid-1950s, rock and roll was gaining



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acceptance with the masses, but rock-and-roll artists and promoters still faced further obstacles: Black artists found that their music was often undermined by white cover versions; the payola scandals portrayed rock and roll as a corrupt industry; and fears of rock and roll as a contributing factor in juvenile delinquency resulted in censorship.

### White Cover Music Undermines Black Artists

By the mid-1960s, black and white artists routinely recorded and performed one another's original tunes. For example, established black R&B artist Otis Redding covered the Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction" and Jimi Hendrix covered Bob Dylan's "All along the Watchtower," while just about every white rock-and-roll band, including the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, established its career by covering R&B classics.

Although today we take such rerecordings for granted, in the 1950s the covering of black artists' songs by white musicians was almost always an attempt to capitalize on popular songs from the R&B "race" charts by transforming them into hits on the white pop charts. Often, not only would white producers give cowriting credit to white performers for the tunes they merely covered, but the producers would also buy the rights to potential hits from black songwriters, who seldom saw a penny in royalties or received songwriting credit.

During this period, black R&B artists, working for small record labels, saw many of their popular songs covered by white artists working for major labels. These cover records, boosted by better marketing and ties to white deejays, usually outsold the original black versions. For instance, the 1954 R&B song "Sh-Boom," by the Chords on Atlantic's Cat label, was immediately covered by a white group, the Crew Cuts, for the major Mercury label. Record sales declined for the Chords, although jukebox and R&B radio play remained strong for the original version. By 1955, R&B hits regularly crossed over to the pop charts, but inevitably the cover music versions were more successful. Pat Boone's cover of Fats Domino's "Ain't That a Shame" went to No. 1 and stayed on the Top 40 pop chart for twenty weeks, whereas Domino's original made it only to No. 10. Boone's record sales at the time were second only to Elvis Presley's, and Boone found this success through releasing dozens of covers. Slowly, however, the cover situation changed. After watching Boone outsell his song "Tutti Frutti" in 1956, Little Richard wrote "Long Tall Sally," which included lyrics written and delivered in such a way that he believed Boone

### ELVIS PRESLEY AND HIS LEGACY

Elvis Presley remains the most popular solo artist of all time. From 1956 to 1962, he recorded seventeen No. 1 hits, from "Heartbreak Hotel" to "Good Luck Charm." According to Little Richard, Presley's main legacy was that he opened doors for many young performers and made black music popular in mainstream America. Presley's influence continues to be felt today in the music of artists such as Bruno Mars.

would not be able to adequately replicate them. “Long Tall Sally” went to No. 6 for Little Richard and charted for twelve weeks; Boone’s version got to No. 8 and stayed there for nine weeks.

Overt racism lingered in the music business well into the 1960s. A turning point, however, came in 1962, the last year that Pat Boone, then aged twenty-eight, ever had a Top 40 rock-and-roll hit. That year, Ray Charles covered “I Can’t Stop Loving You,” a 1958 country song by the Grand Ole Opry’s Don Gibson. This marked the first time that a black artist, covering a white artist’s song, had notched a No. 1 pop hit. With Charles’s cover, the rock-and-roll merger between gospel and R&B, on one hand, and white country and pop, on the other, was complete. In fact, the relative acceptance of black crossover music provided a more favorable cultural context for the political activism that spurred important Civil Rights legislation in the mid-1960s.

### **Payola Scandals Tarnish Rock and Roll**

The payola scandals of the 1950s were another cloud over rock-and-roll music and its artists. In the music industry, *payola* is the practice of record promoters paying deejays or radio programmers to play particular songs. As recorded rock and roll became central to commercial radio’s success in the 1950s and the demand for airplay grew enormous, independent promoters hired by record labels used payola to pressure deejays into playing songs by the artists they represented.

Although payola was considered a form of bribery, no laws prohibited its practice. However, following closely on the heels of television’s quiz-show scandals (see Chapter 6), congressional hearings on radio payola began in December 1959. The hearings were partly a response to generally fraudulent business practices, but they were also an opportunity to blame deejays and radio for rock and roll’s supposedly negative impact on teens by portraying rock and roll (and its radio advocates) as a corrupt industry.

The payola scandals threatened, ended, or damaged the careers of a number of rock-and-roll deejays and undermined rock and roll’s credibility for a number of years. When Chicago deejay Phil Lind broadcast secretly taped discussions in which a representative of a small independent record label acknowledged that it had paid \$22,000 to ensure that a record would get airplay, he received calls threatening his life and was given police protection. At the hearings in 1960, Alan Freed admitted to participating in payola, although he said he did not believe there was anything illegal about such deals, and his career soon ended. Dick Clark, then an influential deejay and the host of TV’s *American Bandstand*, would not admit to participating in payola. But the hearings committee chastised Clark and alleged that some of his complicated business deals were ethically questionable, a censure that hung over him for years. Congress eventually added a law concerning payola to the Federal Communications Act, prescribing a \$10,000 fine and/or a year in jail for each violation (see Chapter 5).

### **Fears of Corruption Lead to Censorship**

Since rock and roll’s inception, one of the uphill battles the genre faced was the perception that it was a cause of juvenile delinquency, which was statistically on the rise in the 1950s. Looking for an easy culprit rather than considering contributing factors such as neglect, the rising consumer culture, or the growing youth population, many assigned blame to rock and roll. The view that rock and roll corrupted youth was widely accepted by social authorities, and rock-and-roll music was often censored, eventually even by the industry itself.

By late 1959, many key figures in rock and roll had been tamed. Jerry Lee Lewis was exiled from the industry, labeled southern “white trash” for marrying his thirteen-year-old third cousin; Elvis Presley, having already been censored on television, was drafted into the army; Chuck Berry was run out of Mississippi and eventually jailed for gun possession and transporting a minor across state lines; and Little Richard felt forced to tone down his image and left rock and roll to sing gospel music. A tragic accident led to the final taming of rock and roll’s first front line. In February 1959, Buddy Holly (“Peggy Sue”), Ritchie Valens (“La Bamba”), and



the Big Bopper (“Chantilly Lace”) all died in an Iowa plane crash—a tragedy mourned in Don McLean’s 1971 hit “American Pie” as “the day the music died.”

Although rock and roll did not die in the late 1950s, the U.S. recording industry decided that it needed a makeover. To protect the enormous profits the new music had been generating, record companies began to discipline some of rock and roll’s rebellious impulses. In the early 1960s, the industry introduced a new generation of clean-cut white singers, like Frankie Avalon, Connie Francis, Ricky Nelson, Lesley Gore, and Fabian. Rock and roll’s explosive violations of racial, class, and other boundaries were transformed into simpler generation-gap problems, and the music developed a milder reputation.

## ***A Changing Industry: Reformations in Popular Music***

As the 1960s began, rock and roll was tamer and “safer,” as reflected in the surf and road music of the Beach Boys and Jan & Dean, but it was also beginning to branch out. For instance, the success of all-female groups, such as the Shangri-Las (“Leader of the Pack”) and the Angels (“My Boyfriend’s Back”), challenged the male-dominated world of early rock and roll. In the 1960s and the following decades, rock-and-roll music and other popular styles went through cultural reformations that significantly changed the industry, including the international appeal of the “British invasion”; the development of soul and Motown; the political impact of folk-rock; the experimentalism of psychedelic music; the rejection of music’s mainstream by punk, grunge, and alternative rock movements; the reassertion of black urban style in hip-hop; and the transformation of music distribution, which resulted in an unprecedented market growth of music from independent labels.

### **The British Are Coming!**

The global trade of pop music is evident in the exchanges and melding of rhythms, beats, vocal styles, and musical instruments across cultures. The origin of this global impact can be traced to England in the late 1950s, when the young Rolling Stones listened to the blues of Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters, and the young Beatles tried to imitate Chuck Berry and Little Richard.

Until 1964, rock-and-roll recordings had traveled on a one-way ticket to Europe. Even though American artists regularly reached the top of the charts overseas, no British performers had yet appeared on any Top 10 pop lists in the States. This changed almost overnight. In 1964, the Beatles invaded America with their mop haircuts and pop reinterpretations of American blues and rock and roll. Within the next few years, British bands as diverse as the Kinks, the Rolling Stones, the Zombies, the Animals, Herman’s Hermits, the Who, the Yardbirds, Them, and the Troggs had hit the American Top 40 charts.

With the British invasion, “rock and roll” unofficially became “rock,” sending popular music and the industry in two directions. On the one hand, the Rolling Stones would influence generations of musicians emphasizing gritty, chord-driven, high-volume rock, including bands in the glam rock, hard rock, punk, heavy metal, and grunge genres. On the other hand, the Beatles would influence countless artists interested in a more accessible, melodic, and softer sound, in genres such as pop-rock, power-pop, new wave, and alternative rock. In the end, the British invasion verified what Chuck Berry and Little Richard had already demonstrated—that rock-and-roll performers could write and produce popular songs as well as Tin Pan Alley had. The success of British groups helped change an industry arrangement in which most pop music was produced by songwriting teams hired by major labels and matched with selected performers. Even more



Popperfoto/Getty Images



Michael Putland/Getty Images

### BRITISH ROCK GROUPS

Ed Sullivan, who booked the Beatles several times on his TV variety show in 1964, helped promote their early success. Sullivan, though, reacted differently to the Rolling Stones, who were perceived as the “bad boys” of rock and roll in contrast to the “good” Beatles. The Stones performed black-influenced music without “whitening” the sound and exuded a palpable aura of sexuality, particularly frontman Mick Jagger. Although the Stones appeared on his program as early as 1964 and returned on several occasions, Sullivan remained wary and forced them to change the lyrics of “Let’s Spend the Night Together” to “Let’s Spend Some Time Together” for a 1967 broadcast.

important, the British invasion showed the recording industry how older American musical forms, especially blues and R&B, could be repackaged as rock and exported around the world.

## Motor City Music: Detroit Gives America Soul

Ironically, the British invasion, which drew much of its inspiration from black influences, drew many white listeners away from a new generation of black performers. Gradually, however, throughout the 1960s, black singers like James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, Ike and Tina Turner, and Wilson Pickett found large and diverse audiences. Transforming the rhythms and melodies of older R&B, pop, and early rock and roll into what became labeled as **soul**, they countered the British invaders with powerful vocal performances. Mixing gospel and blues with emotion and lyrics drawn from the American black experience, soul contrasted sharply with the emphasis on loud, fast instrumentals and lighter lyrical concerns that characterized much of rock music.<sup>22</sup>

The most prominent independent label that nourished soul and black popular music was Motown, started in 1959 by former Detroit autoworker and songwriter Berry Gordy with a \$700 investment and named after Detroit’s “Motor City” nickname. Beginning with Smokey Robinson and the Miracles’ “Shop Around,” Motown enjoyed a long string of hit records that rivaled the pop success of British bands throughout the decade. Motown’s many successful artists included the Temptations (“My Girl”), Mary Wells (“My Guy”), the Four Tops (“I Can’t Help Myself”), Martha and the Vandellas (“Heat Wave”), Marvin Gaye (“I Heard It through the Grapevine”), and, in the early 1970s, the Jackson 5 (“ABC”). But the label’s most successful group was the Supremes, featuring Diana Ross, which scored twelve No. 1 singles between 1964 and 1969 (“Where Did Our Love Go,” “Stop! In the Name of Love”). The Motown groups had a more stylized, softer sound than the grittier southern soul (later known as funk) of Brown and Pickett.

## Folk and Psychedelic Music Reflect the Times

Popular music has always been a product of its time, so the social upheavals of the Civil Rights movement, the women’s movement, the environmental movement, and the Vietnam War naturally brought social concerns into the music of the 1960s and early 1970s. By the late 1960s, the



CBS/Landov

### THE SUPREMES

One of the most successful groups in rock-and-roll history, the Supremes started out as the Primettes in Detroit in 1959. They signed with Motown's Tamla label in 1960 and changed their name in 1961. Between 1964 and 1969, they recorded twelve No. 1 hits, including "Where Did Our Love Go," "Baby Love," "Come See about Me," "Stop! In the Name of Love," "I Hear a Symphony," "You Can't Hurry Love," and "Someday We'll Be Together." Lead singer Diana Ross (*center*) left the group in 1969 for a solo career. The group was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988.

Beatles had transformed themselves from a relatively lightweight pop band to one that spoke for the social and political concerns of their generation, and many other groups followed the same trajectory. (To explore how the times and personal taste influence music choices, see "Media Literacy and the Critical Process: Music Preferences across Generations" on page 132.)

### Folk Inspires Protest

The musical genre that most clearly responded to the political happenings of the time was folk music, which had long been the sound of social activism. In its broadest sense, **folk music** in any culture refers to songs performed by untrained musicians and passed down mainly through oral traditions, from the banjo and fiddle tunes of Appalachia to the accordion-led zydeco of Louisiana and the folk-blues of the legendary Lead Belly (Huddie Ledbetter). During the 1930s, folk was defined by the music of Woody Guthrie ("This Land Is Your Land"), who not only brought folk to the city but also was extremely active in social reforms. Groups such as the Weavers, featuring labor activist and songwriter Pete Seeger, carried on Guthrie's legacy and inspired a new generation of singer-songwriters, including Joan Baez; Arlo Guthrie; Peter, Paul, and Mary; Phil Ochs; and—perhaps the most influential—Bob Dylan. Dylan's career as a folk artist began with acoustic performances in New York's Greenwich Village in 1961, and his notoriety was spurred by his measured nonchalance and unique nasal voice. Significantly influenced by the blues, Dylan identified folk as "finger pointin'" music that addressed current social circumstances. At a key moment in popular music's history, Dylan walked onstage at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival fronting a full electric rock band. He was booed and cursed by traditional "folkies," who saw amplified music as a sellout to the commercial recording industry. However, Dylan's change inspired the formation of **folk-rock** artists like the Byrds, who had a No. 1 hit with a cover of Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man," and led millions to protest during the turbulent 1960s.

### Rock Turns Psychedelic

Alcohol and drugs have long been associated with the private lives of blues, jazz, country, and rock musicians. These links, however, became much more public in the late 1960s and



## Media Literacy and the Critical Process

**1 DESCRIPTION.** Arrange to interview four to eight friends or relatives of different ages about their musical tastes and influences. Devise questions about what music they listen to and have listened to at different stages of their lives. What music do they buy or collect? What's the first album (or single) they acquired? What's the latest album? What stories or vivid memories do they relate to particular songs or artists? Collect demographic and consumer information: age, gender, occupation, educational background, place of birth, and current place of residence.

**2 ANALYSIS.** Chart and organize your results. Do you recognize any patterns emerging from the data or stories? What kinds of music did your interview subjects listen to when they were younger? What kinds of music do they listen to now? What formed/influenced their musical interests? If their musical interests changed, what happened? (If they stopped listening to music, note that and find out why.) Do they have any associations between music and their everyday lives? Are

### Music Preferences across Generations

We make judgments about music all the time. Older generations don't like some of the music younger people prefer, and young people often dismiss some of the music of previous generations. Even among our peers, we have different tastes in music and often reject certain kinds of music that have become too popular or that don't conform to our own preferences. The following exercise aims to understand musical tastes beyond our own individual choices. Be sure to include yourself in this project.

these music associations and lifetime interactions with songs and artists important to them?

**3 INTERPRETATION.** Based on what you have discovered and the patterns you have charted, determine what the patterns mean. Does age, gender, geographic location, or education matter in musical tastes? Over time, are the changes in musical tastes and buying habits significant? Why or why not? What kind of music is most important to your subjects? Finally, and most important, why do you think their music preferences developed as they did?

**4 EVALUATION.** Determine how your interview subjects came to like particular kinds of music. What constitutes "good" and "bad" music for

them? Did their ideas change over time? How? Are they open- or closed-minded about music? How do they form judgments about music? What criteria did your interview subjects offer for making judgments about music? Do you think their criteria are a valid way to judge music?

**5 ENGAGEMENT.** To expand on your findings, consider the connections of music across generations, geography, and genres. Take a musical artist you like and input the name at [www.music-map.com](http://www.music-map.com). Use the output of related artists to discover new bands. Input favorite artists of the people you interviewed in Step 1, and share the results with them. Expand your musical tastes.

early 1970s, when authorities busted members of the Rolling Stones and the Beatles. With the increasing role of drugs in youth culture and the availability of LSD (not illegal until the mid-1960s), more and more rock musicians experimented with and sang about drugs in what were frequently labeled rock's psychedelic years. Many groups and performers of the *psychedelic* era (named for the mind-altering effects of LSD and other drugs), like Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and the Holding Company (featuring Janis Joplin), the Jimi Hendrix Experience, the Doors, and the Grateful Dead (as well as established artists like the Beatles and the Stones), believed that artistic expression could be enhanced through mind-altering drugs. The 1960s drug explorations coincided with the free-speech movement, in which many artists and followers saw experimenting with drugs as a form of personal expression and a response to the failure of traditional institutions to deal with social and political problems such as racism and America's involvement in the Vietnam War. But after a surge of optimism that culminated in the historic Woodstock concert in August 1969, the psychedelic movement was quickly overshadowed. In 1969, a similar concert at the Altamont racetrack in California started in chaos and ended in tragedy when one of the Hell's Angels hired as a bodyguard for the show murdered

a concertgoer. Around the same time, the shocking multiple murders committed by the Charles Manson “family” cast a negative light on hippies, drug use, and psychedelic culture. Then, in quick succession, a number of the psychedelic movement’s greatest stars died from drug overdoses, including Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and Jim Morrison of the Doors.

## Punk, Grunge, and Alternative Respond to Mainstream Rock

By the 1970s, rock music was increasingly viewed as just another part of mainstream consumer culture. With major music acts earning huge profits, rock soon became another product line for manufacturers and retailers to promote, package, and sell—primarily to middle-class white male teens. According to critic Ken Tucker, this situation gave rise to “faceless rock—crisply recorded, eminently catchy”—featuring anonymous hits by bands with “no established individual personalities outside their own large but essentially discrete audiences” of young white males.<sup>23</sup> Some rock musicians like Bruce Springsteen and Elton John; glam artists like David Bowie, Lou Reed, and Iggy Pop; and soul artists like Curtis Mayfield and Marvin Gaye continued to explore the social possibilities of rock or at least keep its legacy of outrageousness alive. But they had, for the most part, been replaced by “faceless” supergroups, like REO Speedwagon, Styx, Boston, and Kansas. By the late 1970s, rock could only seem to define itself by saying what it wasn’t; “Disco Sucks” became a standard rock slogan against the popular dance music of the era.

### Punk Revives Rock’s Rebelliousness

**Punk rock** rose in the late 1970s to challenge the orthodoxy and commercialism of the record business. By this time, the glory days of rock’s competitive independent labels had ended, and rock music was controlled by just a half-dozen major companies. By avoiding rock’s consumer popularity, punk attempted to return to the basics of rock and roll: simple chord structures, catchy melodies, and politically or socially challenging lyrics. The premise was “do it yourself”: Any teenager with a few weeks of guitar practice could learn the sound and make music that was both more democratic and more provocative than commercial rock.

The punk movement took root in the small dive bar CBGB in New York City around bands such as the Ramones, Blondie, and the Talking Heads. (The roots of punk essentially lay in four pre-punk groups from the late 1960s and early 1970s—the Velvet Underground, the Stooges, the New York Dolls, and the MC5—none of which experienced commercial success in their day.) Punk quickly spread to England, where a soaring unemployment rate and growing class inequality ensured the success of socially critical rock. Groups like the Sex Pistols, the Clash, the Buzzcocks, and Siouxsie and the Banshees sprang up and even scored Top 40 hits on the U.K. charts.

Punk was not a commercial success in the United States, where (not surprisingly) it was shunned by radio. However, punk’s contributions continue to be felt. Punk broke down the “boys’ club” mentality of rock, launching unapologetic and unadorned frontwomen like Patti Smith, Joan Jett, Debbie Harry, and Chrissie Hynde, and it introduced all-women bands (writing and performing their own music) like the Go-Go’s into the mainstream. It also reopened the door to rock experimentation at a time when the industry had turned music into a purely commercial enterprise. The influence of experimental, or post-punk, music is still felt today in alternative and indie bands such as the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Speedy Ortiz, and Parquet Courts.



Andrew DelLory

### BOB DYLAN

Born Robert Allen Zimmerman in Minnesota, Bob Dylan took his stage name from Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. He led a folk music movement in the early 1960s with engaging, socially provocative lyrics. He was also an astute media critic, as is evident in the seminal documentary *Don’t Look Back* (1967).



Paul R. Giunta/Getty Images

#### SLEATER-KINNEY

All-female bands like Sleater-Kinney continue to take on the boys'-club mentality of rock and roll. The band formed in 1994 in Washington state and gained critical acclaim for its feminist take on punk rock. The band took an extended hiatus beginning in 2006 but returned in 2015 with a new album and tour.

### Grunge and Alternative Reinterpret Rock

Taking the spirit of punk and updating it, the **grunge** scene represented a significant development in rock in the 1990s. Getting its name from its often-messy guitar sound and the anti-fashion torn jeans and flannel shirt appearance of its musicians and fans, grunge's lineage can be traced back to 1980s bands like Sonic Youth, the Minutemen, and Hüsker Dü. In 1992, after years of limited commercial success, the younger cousin of punk finally broke into the American mainstream with the success of Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" on the album *Nevermind*. Led by enigmatic singer Kurt Cobain—who committed suicide in 1994—Nirvana produced songs that one critic described as "stunning, concise bursts of melody and rage that occasionally spilled over into haunting, folk-styled

acoustic ballad."<sup>24</sup> Nirvana opened the floodgates to bands such as Green Day, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, the Breeders, Hole, and Nine Inch Nails.

In some critical circles, both punk and grunge are considered subcategories or fringe movements of **alternative rock**. This vague label describes many types of experimental rock music that offered a departure from the theatrics and staged extravaganzas of 1970s glam rock, which showcased such performers as David Bowie and Kiss. Appealing chiefly to college students and twentysomethings, alternative rock has traditionally opposed the sounds of Top 40 and commercial FM radio. In the 1980s and 1990s, U2 and R.E.M. emerged as successful groups often associated with alternative rock. A key dilemma for successful alternative performers, however, is that their popularity results in commercial success, ironically a situation that their music often criticizes. While alternative rock music has more variety than ever, it is also not producing new mega-groups like Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and Green Day. Still, alternative groups like Arctic Monkeys, Vampire Weekend, and Deafheaven have launched successful recording careers the old-school way, but with a twist: starting out on independent labels, playing small concerts, and growing popular quickly with alternative music audiences through the immediate buzz of the Internet.

### Hip-Hop Redraws Musical Lines

With the growing segregation of radio formats and the dominance of mainstream rock by white male performers, the place of black artists in the rock world diminished from the late 1970s onward. By the 1980s, few popular black successors to Chuck Berry or Jimi Hendrix had emerged in rock, though Prince and Lenny Kravitz were exceptions. These trends, combined with the rise of "safe" dance disco by white bands (the Bee Gees), black artists (Donna Summer), and integrated groups (the Village People), created a space for a new sound to emerge: **hip-hop**, a term for the urban culture that includes *rapping*, *cutting* (or *sampling*) by deejays, breakdancing, street clothing, poetry slams, and graffiti art.

In the same way that punk opposed commercial rock, hip-hop music stood in direct opposition to the polished, professional, and often less political world of soul. Its combination of social politics, swagger, and confrontational lyrics carried forward long-standing traditions in blues, R&B, soul, and rock and roll. Like punk and early rock and roll, hip-hop was driven by a democratic, nonprofessional spirit and was cheap to produce, requiring only a few mikes, speakers, amps, turntables, and vinyl records. Deejays, like the pioneering Jamaican émigré



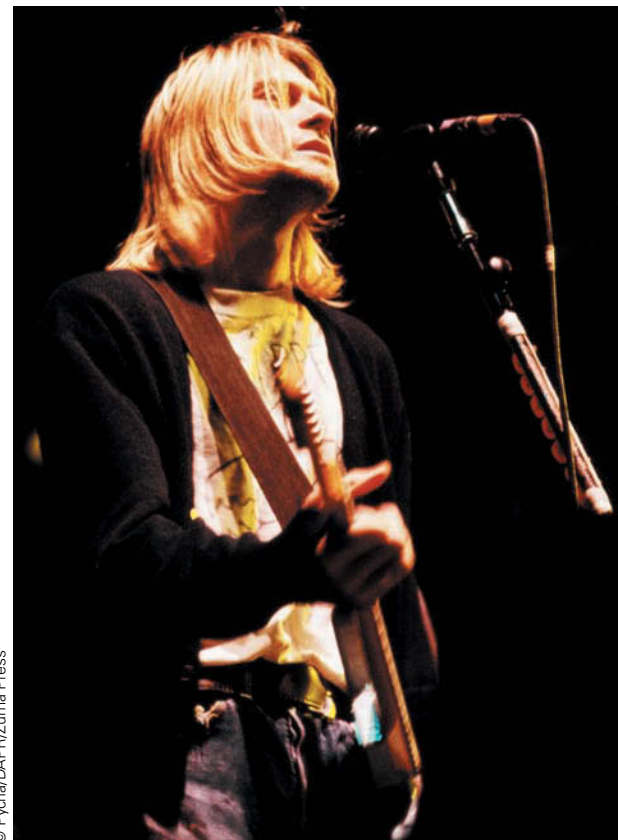
Clive Campbell (a.k.a. DJ Kool Herc), emerged first in New York, scratching and re-cueing old reggae, disco, soul, and rock albums. These deejays, or MCs (masters of ceremony), used humor, boasts, and “trash talking” to entertain and keep the peace at parties.

The music industry initially saw hip-hop as a novelty, despite the enormous success of the Sugarhill Gang’s “Rapper’s Delight” in 1979 (which sampled the bass beat of a disco hit from the same year, Chic’s “Good Times”). Then, in 1982, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five released “The Message” and forever infused hip-hop with a political take on ghetto life, a tradition continued by artists like Public Enemy and Ice-T. By 1985, hip-hop had exploded as a popular genre with the commercial successes of groups like Run-DMC, the Fat Boys, and LL Cool J. That year, Run-DMC’s album *Raising Hell* became a major crossover hit, the first No. 1 hip-hop album on the popular charts (thanks in part to a collaboration with Aerosmith on a rap version of the group’s 1976 hit “Walk This Way”). But because most major labels and many black radio stations rejected the rawness of hip-hop, the music spawned hundreds of new independent labels. Although initially dominated by male performers, hip-hop was open to women, and some—Salt-N-Pepa and Queen Latifah among them—quickly became major players. Soon, white groups like the Beastie Boys, Limp Bizkit, and Kid Rock were combining hip-hop and punk rock in a commercially successful way, while Eminem found enormous success emulating black rap artists.

On the one hand, the conversational style of rap makes it a forum in which performers can debate issues of gender, class, sexuality, violence, and drugs. On the other hand, hip-hop, like punk, has often drawn criticism for lyrics that degrade women, espouse homophobia, and applaud violence. Although hip-hop encompasses many different styles, including various Latin and Asian offshoots, its most controversial subgenre is probably **gangster rap**, which, in seeking to tell the truth about gang violence in American culture, has been accused of creating violence. Gangster rap drew national attention in 1996 with the shooting death of Tupac Shakur, who lived the violent life he rapped about on albums like *Thug Life*. Then, in 1997, Notorious B.I.G. (Christopher Wallace, a.k.a. Biggie Smalls), whose followers were prominent suspects in Shakur’s death, was shot to death in Hollywood. The result was a change in the hip-hop industry. Most prominently, Sean “Diddy” Combs led Bad Boy Entertainment (former home of Notorious B.I.G.) away from gangster rap to a more danceable hip-hop that combined singing and rapping with musical elements of rock and soul. Today, hip-hop’s stars include artists such as YG, who emulates the gangster genre, and artists like will.i.am, Lupe Fiasco, Talib Kweli, and M.I.A., who bring an old-school social consciousness to their performances.

## The Reemergence of Pop

After waves of punk, grunge, alternative, and hip-hop; the decline of Top 40 radio; and the demise of MTV’s *Total Request Live* countdown show, it seemed as though pop music and the era of big pop stars was waning. But pop music has endured and even flourished in recent years, especially with the advent of iTunes. The era of digital downloads has again made the single (as opposed to the album) the dominant unit of music, with digital single download sales more than ten times as popular as digital album download sales. The dominance of singles has aided the reemergence of pop, since songs with catchy hooks generate the most digital sales. By 2014, iTunes offered more than twenty-eight million songs, and the top artists were leading



© Pycha/DAPR/Zuma Press

**NIRVANA’S** lead singer, Kurt Cobain, is pictured here during his brief career in the early 1990s. The release of Nirvana’s *Nevermind* in September 1991 bumped Michael Jackson’s *Dangerous* from the top of the charts and signaled a new direction in popular music. Other grunge bands soon followed Nirvana onto the charts, including Pearl Jam, Alice in Chains, Stone Temple Pilots, and Soundgarden.



Jeff Kravitz/FilmMagic for Bonnaroo Arts and Music Festival/Getty Images

**KENDRICK LAMAR** gained a large Internet following early in his career and released one of his albums exclusively through iTunes in 2011. His major-label debut followed in 2012, along with a number of guest spots on songs by high-profile artists. His 2015 album, *To Pimp a Butterfly*, was one of the most acclaimed releases of the year, and he gained further visibility by appearing on a remix of Taylor Swift's hit single "Bad Blood."

pop acts such as Katy Perry, Lana Del Rey, Rihanna, Jason Derulo, and Luke Bryan. Similarly, streaming services such as Spotify, Rdio, and Deezer, each offering more than twenty million tracks, have also greatly expanded accessibility to music. The digital formats in music have resulted in a leap in viability and market share for independent labels and have changed the cultural landscape of the music industry in the twenty-first century.

## The Business of Sound Recording

For many in the recording industry, the relationship between music's business and artistic elements is an uneasy one. The lyrics of hip-hop or alternative rock, for example, often question the commercial value of popular music. Both genres are built on the assumption that musical integrity requires a complete separation between business and art. But, in fact, the line between commercial success and artistic expression is hazier than simply arguing that the business side is driven by commercialism and the artistic side is free of commercial concerns. The truth, in most cases, is that the business needs artists who are provocative, original, and appealing to the public, and the artists need the expertise of the industry's marketers, promoters, and producers to hone their sound and reach the public. And both sides stand to make a lot of money from the relationship. But such factors as the enormity of the major labels and



© Rick Davis/Splash News/Corbis

**ITUNES** shifted the music business toward a singles-based model. While artists still release full albums, it's also possible to produce a massive iTunes hit, like Carly Rae Jepsen's "Call Me Maybe," before an album is even available (Jepsen's full album sold modestly upon its later release). But some artists can still sell full-album packages: Beyoncé's self-titled album (including a series of music videos to accompany the music) was released exclusively to iTunes for its first few weeks and promptly broke sales records for the site.

the complexities of making, selling, and profiting from music in an industry still adapting to the digital turn affect the economies of sound recording (see “Tracking Technology: The Song Machine: The Hitmakers behind Rihanna” on page 138).

## Music Labels Influence the Industry

After several years of steady growth, revenues for the recording industry experienced significant losses beginning in 2000 as file-sharing began to undercut CD sales. In 2014, U.S. music sales were about \$7 billion, down from a peak of \$14.5 billion in 1999, but relatively stable since 2010 (file-sharing peaked in 2005, having since declined). The U.S. market accounts for about one-third of global sales, followed by Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Canada. Despite the losses, the U.S. and global music business still constitutes a powerful **oligopoly**: a business situation in which a few firms control most of an industry’s production and distribution resources. This global reach gives these firms enormous influence over what types of music gain worldwide distribution and popular acceptance.

### Fewer Major Labels and Falling Market Share

From the 1950s through the 1980s, the music industry, though powerful, consisted of a large number of competing major labels, along with numerous independent labels. Over time, the major labels began swallowing up the independents and then buying one another. By 1998, only six major labels remained—Universal, Warner, Sony, BMG, EMI, and Polygram. That year, Universal acquired Polygram; and in 2003, BMG and Sony merged. (BMG left the partnership in 2008.) By 2012, Universal gained regulatory approval to purchase EMI’s recorded music division, and then only three major music corporations remained: Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, and Warner Music Group. Together, these companies control about 65 percent of the recording industry market in the United States (see Figure 4.2). Although their revenue has eroded over the past decade, the major music corporations still wield great power, with a number of music stars under contract and enormous back catalogs of recordings that continue to sell. Despite the oligopoly in the music industry, the biggest change has been the rise in market share for independent music labels.

### The Indies Grow with Digital Music

The rise of rock and roll in the 1950s and early 1960s showcased a rich diversity of independent labels—including Sun, Stax, Chess, and Motown—all vying for a share of the new music. That tradition lives on today. In contrast to the three global players, some five thousand large and small independent production houses—or **indies**—record less commercially viable music, or music they hope will become commercially viable. Often struggling enterprises, indies require only a handful of people to operate them. For years, indies accounted for 10 to 15 percent of all music releases. But with the advent of downloads and streaming, the enormous diversity of independent-label music became much more accessible, and the market share of indies more than doubled in size. Indies often still depend on wholesale distributors to promote and sell their music, or enter into deals with one of the three majors to gain wider distribution for their artists (in the same way that independent filmmakers use major studios for film distribution). Independent labels have produced some of the best-selling artists of recent years; examples include Big Machine Records (Taylor Swift, Rascal Flatts), Dualtone Records (the Lumineers), XL Recordings

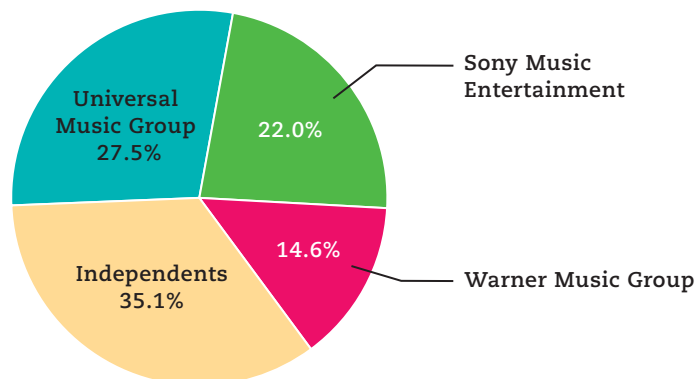


FIGURE 4.2  
U.S. MARKET SHARE OF  
THE MAJOR LABELS IN  
THE RECORDING INDUSTRY,  
2014

Data from: Nielsen SoundScan,  
2014. Figures are rounded.



# TRACKING TECHNOLOGY

## The Song Machine: The Hitmakers behind Rihanna

by John Seabrook

**O**n a mild Monday afternoon in mid-January, Ester Dean, a songwriter and vocalist, arrived at Roc the Mic Studios in Manhattan for the first of five days of songwriting sessions. Her engineer, Aubry Delaine, whom she calls Big Juice, accompanied her. Tor Hermansen and Mikkel Eriksen, the team of Norwegian writer-producers professionally known as Stargate, were waiting there for Dean.

Most of the songs played on Top Forty radio are collaborations between producers like Stargate and “top line” writers like Ester Dean. The producers compose the chord progressions, program the beats, and arrange the “synths,” or computer-made instrumental sounds; the top-liners come up with primary melodies, lyrics, and the all-important hooks, the ear-friendly musical phrases that lock you into the song. “It’s not enough to have one hook anymore,” Jay Brown, the president of Roc Nation, and Dean’s manager, told me recently. “You’ve got to have a hook in the intro, a hook in the pre-chorus, a hook in the chorus, and a hook in the bridge.” The reason, he explained, is that “people on average give a song seven seconds on the radio before they change the channel, and you got to hook them.”

Today’s Top Forty is almost always machine-made: lush sonic landscapes of beats, loops, and synths in which all the sounds have square edges and shiny surfaces, the voices are Auto-Tuned for pitch, and there are no mistakes. The music sounds sort of like this: *thump thooka whompa whomp pish pish pish thumpaty wompah pah pah pah*. The people who create the songs are



Kevin Winter/Getty Images

often in different places. The artists, who spend much of the year touring, don’t have time to come into the studio; they generally record new material in between shows, in mobile recording studios and hotel rooms, working with demos that producers and top-line writers make for them to use as a kind of vocal stencil pattern.

As was the case in the pre-rock era, when Phil Spector-produced girl groups led the hit parade, many of the leading artists of the post-rock era are women. Rarely a month goes by without a new song from Lady Gaga, Katy Perry, Beyoncé, Kelly Clarkson, Ke\$ha, Rihanna, Nicki Minaj, or Pink near the top of the charts. But the artist who best embodies the music and the style of the new Top Forty is Rihanna, the Barbados-born pop singer. At twenty-four [in 2012], she is the queen of urban pop, and the

consummate artist of the digital age, in which quantity is more important than quality and personality trumps song craft. She releases an album a year, often recording a new one while she is on an eighty-city world tour promoting the last one. To keep her supplied with material, her label, Def Jam, and her manager, Jay Brown, periodically convene “writer camps”—weeklong conclaves, generally held in Los Angeles, where dozens of top producers and writers from around the world are brought in to brainstorm on songs. After an album comes out, she may release remixes, like her recent ill-advised collaborations with Chris Brown, to give singles a boost. She has sold more digital singles than any other artist—a hundred and twenty million.

Rihanna is often described as a “manufactured” pop star, because she doesn’t write her songs, but neither did Sinatra or Elvis. She embodies a song in the way an actor inhabits a role—and no one expects the actor to write the script. In the rock era, when the album was the standard unit of recorded music, listeners had ten or eleven songs to get to know the artist, but in the singles-oriented business of today the artist has only three or four minutes to put her personality across. The song must drip with attitude and swagger, or “swag,” and nobody delivers that better than Rihanna, even if a good deal of the swag originates with Ester Dean. ▲

*Source: Excerpted from John Seabrook, “The Song Machine: The Hitmakers behind Rihanna,” New Yorker, March 26, 2012, [www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/03/26/120326fa\\_fact\\_seabrook](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/03/26/120326fa_fact_seabrook).*

(Adele, Vampire Weekend), and Cash Money Records (Drake, Nicki Minaj). (See “Alternative Voices” on page 143.)

## Making, Selling, and Profiting from Music

Like most mass media, the music business is divided into several areas, each working in a different capacity. In the music industry, those areas are making the music (signing, developing, and recording the artist), selling the music (selling, distributing, advertising, and promoting the music), and dividing the profits. All these areas are essential to the industry but have always shared in the conflict between business concerns and artistic concerns.

### Making the Music

Labels are driven by **A&R (artist & repertoire) agents**, the talent scouts of the music business, who discover, develop, and sometimes manage artists. A&R executives scan online music sites and listen to demonstration tapes, or *demos*, from new artists and decide whom to sign and which songs to record. A&R executives naturally look for artists they think will sell, and they are often forced to avoid artists with limited commercial possibilities or to tailor artists to make them viable for the recording studio.

A typical recording session is a complex process that involves the artist, the producer, the session engineer, and audio technicians. In charge of the overall recording process, the producer handles most nontechnical elements of the session, including reserving studio space, hiring session musicians (if necessary), and making final decisions about the sound of the recording. The session engineer oversees the technical aspects of the recording session, everything from choosing recording equipment to managing the audio technicians. Most popular records are recorded part by part. Using separate microphones, the vocalists, guitarists, drummers, and other musical sections are digitally recorded onto separate audio tracks, which are edited and remixed during postproduction and ultimately mixed down to a two-track stereo master copy for reproduction to CD or online digital distribution.

### Selling the Music

Selling and distributing music is a tricky part of the business. For years, the primary sales outlets for music were direct-retail record stores (independents or chains) and general retail outlets like Walmart, Best Buy, and Target. Such direct retailers could specialize in music, carefully monitoring new releases and keeping large, varied inventories. But as digital sales climbed, CD sales fell, forcing direct-retail record stores out of business and leaving general retail outlets to offer considerably less variety, stocking only top-selling CDs.

As recently as 2011, physical recordings (CDs and some vinyl) accounted for about 50 percent of U.S. music sales. But CD sales continue to decline and now constitute about 35 percent of the market. In some other Top 10 global music markets, such as Japan and Germany, CDs are still the top format, and the cultural shift from physical recordings to digital formats is just beginning.

Conversely, digital sales—which include digital downloads (like iTunes and Amazon), subscription streaming services (like Rhapsody and the paid version of Spotify), free streaming



Gary Wolstenholme/RedFems/Getty Images

**INDIE LABELS** are able to take chances on artists like Titus Andronicus, an ambitious punk band from New Jersey recently signed to Merge Records, an independent label based in North Carolina. The band released a double-album rock opera in 2015.

services (like the ad-supported Spotify, Rdio, YouTube, and Vevo), streaming radio services (like Pandora and iHeartRadio), ringtones, and synchronization fees (payments for use of music in media like film, TV, and advertising)—have grown to capture almost two-thirds of the U.S. market and 39 percent of the global market.<sup>25</sup> About 40 percent of all music recordings purchased in the United States are downloads, and iTunes is the leading retailer of downloads.

Subscription and streaming services have been a big growth area in the United States and now account for about 21 percent of U.S. music industry revenues. The difference between a streaming music service (e.g., Spotify) and streaming radio (e.g., Pandora) is that streaming services enable listeners to stream specific songs, whereas streaming radio services allow listeners to select only a genre or style of music.

The international recording industry is a major proponent of music streaming services because they are a new revenue source. Although **online piracy**—unauthorized online file-sharing—still exists, the advent of advertising-supported music streaming services has satisfied consumer demand for free music and weakened interest in illegal file swapping. There are now about 450 licensed online music services worldwide.<sup>26</sup> Spotify, one of the leading services, has more than twenty million licensed songs to stream globally, with over twenty thousand songs added every day. Spotify carries so many songs that 20 percent of them have never been played.<sup>27</sup> Another service, Forgotify, creates playlists composed of these neglected songs.

### Dividing the Profits

The digital upheaval in the music industry has shaken up the once-predictable sale of music through CDs. Now there are multiple digital venues for selling music and an equally high number of methods for dividing the profits. Although the digital download and streaming market has now surpassed physical sales, for the sake of example, we will first look at the various costs and profits from a typical CD that retails at \$17.98.

The wholesale price for that CD is about \$12.50, leaving the remainder as retail profit. Discount retailers like Walmart and Best Buy sell closer to the wholesale price to lure customers to buy other things (even if they make less profit on the CD itself). The wholesale price represents the actual cost of producing and promoting the recording, plus the recording label's profits. The record company reaps the highest revenue (close to \$9.74 on a typical CD) but, along with the artist, bears the bulk of the expenses: manufacturing costs, packaging and CD design, advertising and promotion, and artists' royalties (see Figure 4.3 on page 141). The physical product of the CD itself costs less than a quarter to manufacture.

New artists usually negotiate a royalty rate of between 8 and 12 percent on the retail price of a CD, while more established performers might negotiate for 15 percent or higher. An artist who has negotiated a typical 11 percent royalty rate would earn about \$1.93 per CD whose suggested retail price is \$17.98. So a CD that “goes gold”—that is, sells 500,000 units—would net the artist around \$965,000. But out of this amount, artists must repay the record company the money they have been advanced (from \$100,000 to \$500,000). And after band members, managers, and attorneys are paid with the remaining money, it's quite possible that an artist will end up with almost nothing—even after a certified gold CD. The financial risk is much lower for the songwriter/publisher, who makes a standard mechanical royalty rate of about 9.1 cents per song, or \$0.91 for a ten-song CD, without having to bear any production or promotional costs.

The profits are divided somewhat differently in digital download sales. A \$1.29 iTunes download generates about \$0.40 for Apple (it gets 30 percent of every song sale) and a standard \$0.09 mechanical royalty for the song publisher and writer, leaving about \$0.60 for the record company. Artists at a typical royalty rate of about 15 percent would get \$0.20 from the song download. With no CD printing and packaging costs, record companies can retain more of the revenue on download sales. Digital music sales also sometimes involve lucrative side deals: Jay-Z's 2013 album *Magna Carta Holy Grail* was packaged as a freebie with his Samsung



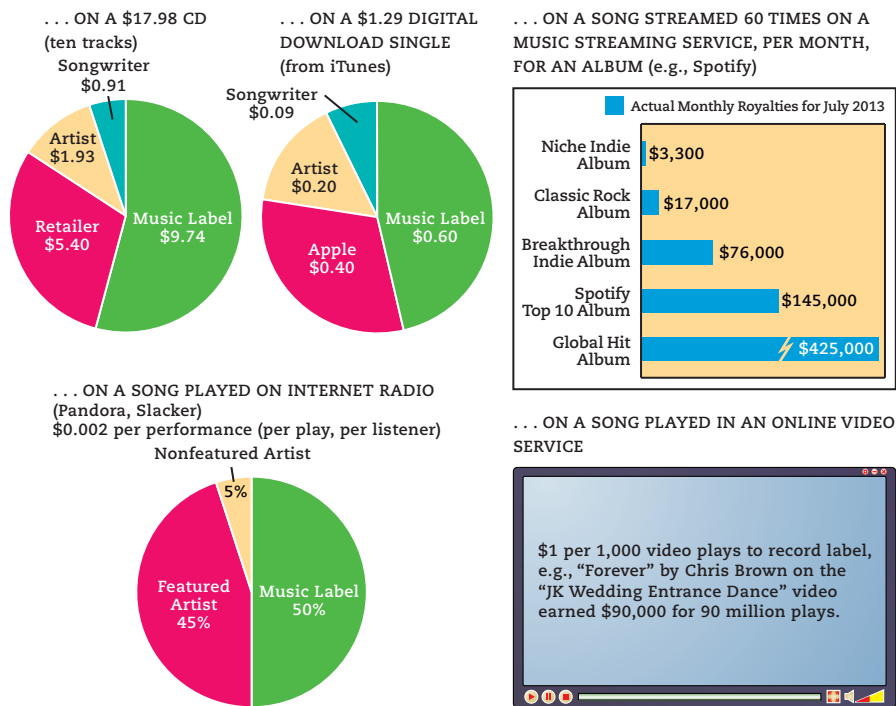


FIGURE 4.3  
**WHERE THE MONEY GOES**

Data from: Steve Knopper, "The New Economics of the Music Industry," *Rolling Stone*, October 25, 2011, [www.rollingstone.com/music/news/the-new-economics-of-the-music-industry-20111025](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/the-new-economics-of-the-music-industry-20111025); and Spotify, "Spotify Explained," accessed June 7, 2014, [www.spotifyartists.com/spotify-explained/](http://www.spotifyartists.com/spotify-explained/).

app, which meant Samsung "bought" over a million copies of it in advance, surpassing the album's first-week sales of 528,000 (the Samsung deal was not counted as part of the album's official sales).

Another venue for digital music is streaming services like Spotify, Rdio, and Beats Music. Some leading artists initially held back their new releases from such services due to concerns that streaming would eat into their digital download and CD sales and that the compensation from streaming services wasn't sufficient. One of the leading services, Spotify, reports that on average, each stream is worth about \$0.007.<sup>28</sup> Depending on the popularity of the song, that could add up to a little or a lot of money. For example, Spotify reports that similar to Apple's iTunes, it pays out about 70 percent of its revenue to music rights holders (divided between the label, performers, and songwriters) and retains about 30 percent for itself. Spotify provided examples of what typical payouts might be for a range of albums in a single month (see Figure 4.3). For contrast, contemporary cellist Zoë Keating, an independent recording artist, reported that she earned just \$808 in the first half of 2013 from 201,412 Spotify streams of two of her older recordings distributed by CD Baby.<sup>29</sup>

Songs played on Internet radio, like Pandora, Slacker, or iHeartRadio, have yet another formula for determining royalties. In 2000, the nonprofit group SoundExchange was established to collect royalties for Internet radio. (The significant difference between Internet radio and subscription streaming services is that on Internet radio, listeners can't select specific songs to play. Instead, Internet stations have "theme" stations.) SoundExchange charges fees of \$0.002 per play, per listener. Large Internet radio stations can pay up to 25 percent of their gross revenue (less for smaller Internet radio stations, and a small flat fee for streaming nonprofit stations). About 50 percent of the fees go to the music label, 45 percent go to the featured artists, and 5 percent go to nonfeatured artists.

Finally, video services like YouTube and Vevo have become sites to generate advertising revenue through music videos, which can attract tens of millions of views (see "Case Study: Psy and the Meaning of 'Gangnam Style'" on page 142). For example, Beyoncé's 2014 video for "Drunk in Love" drew more than 166 million views in just five months. Even popular amateur

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### Alternative Strategies for Music Marketing

This video explores the strategies independent artists and marketers now employ to reach audiences.

**Discussion:** Even with the ability to bypass major record companies, many of the most popular artists still sign with those companies. Why do you think that is?

# CASE STUDY

## Psy and the Meaning of “Gangnam Style”

by Michael Park

South Korean musician Psy (aka Park Jae-Sang) became a pop-cultural sensation in the fall of 2012 with his viral Internet meme “Gangnam Style.” The video has now generated over two and a half billion views, making it the most popular YouTube video ever. Within a few months of the video’s release, Psy was making appearances on national talk shows, such as *The Today Show*, *Ellen*, and *Chelsea Lately*, and even an appearance on *Saturday Night Live*. Never before had a Korean pop (“K-pop”) artist reached such epic crossover success, despite dozens of musical acts from Korea and Asia making the attempt.

Although Psy’s crossover appeal is largely unprecedented, his overwhelming popularity has many Koreans both gratified and puzzled.<sup>1</sup> The K-pop music industry is primarily made up of young and attractive singers who often flaunt their sexuality. Psy, however, is a comedic performer who is significantly older (mid-30s), portly, and without the leading-man looks that have come to dominate the K-pop scene. Without question, the “Gangnam Style” music video is visually seductive, with its colorful setups,

its catchy melody, and Psy’s signature horse dance. As a seasoned comedic performer, Psy offers wacky juxtapositions, and the video has been the subject of exhaustive parody by mainstream and user-generated media. Unbeknownst to most viewers, the video and the song’s lyrics offer a subversive message: Psy’s scathing critique of materialism and conspicuous superficiality run amok in Korea’s trendiest district—“Gangnam” (“south of the river” in Korean).

On one hand, it is possible to conclude that Psy’s crossover success represents greater social acceptance of Asian men who have historically been absent or marginalized in mainstream media representations. However, Psy and his physicality in the video also evoke one of the stereotyped roles that mainstream media has situated Asian men in: the emasculated and clownish Asian male. The celebratory reception of Psy’s “Gangnam Style” indicates that in order for Asian males to find popular appeal in the audiovisual realm, they too must negotiate with a “codified visual hierarchy” where consumers will only accept caricatured images of Asian men.

for the audience. Ellen fails to properly introduce Psy, and the audience and viewers learn nothing about him, nor are the song’s lyrics or subversive message inquired about. On *Saturday Night Live*, Psy’s comical horse dance and minstrelsy are further exploited in a sketch featuring host Seth MacFarlane. The point is clear: the comical dance moves and wacky visuals are consumed as silly entertainment and comic relief. Psy never speaks a word except for “Oppa Gangnam Style.” Like his debut on *Ellen*, Psy stands as a recognizable prop, eager to entertain with his comical physicality. On *Chelsea Lately*, Psy makes an appearance in a bit that has him galloping his signature horse dance while performing menial office tasks, such as stomping on cardboard boxes, dusting office portraits, and stapling papers. Throughout the skit, he never speaks; he never even blurts out “Gangnam Style” while performing his dance.

Psy’s “crossover success” into America’s mainstream cultural imaginary, coupled with the absence of prototypical male K-pop artists (e.g., Rain, Se7en, or Big Bang), who display high fashion and flaunt hyper-sexuality, bolsters the assertion that a codified visual hierarchy operates in the audiovisual space as well. While Psy’s popular appeal and celebrated reception in the American cultural imaginary are unprecedented, his image and physicality are tightly aligned with popular constructions of Asian men that define Asian masculinity as synonymous with emasculation and comic relief. ▲

Source: Adapted from Michael Park, “Psy-zing Up the Mainstreaming of ‘Gangnam Style’: Embracing Asian Masculinity as Neo-minstrelsy?” an award-winning paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference, Montreal, Canada, August 2014.



Ozan Kose/AFP/Getty Images

On *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, it becomes clear that Psy’s value as a guest is centered on his comical dance; he is relegated to an object of humor who elicits laughs with his minstrel performance. Psy teaches Britney Spears and Ellen his horse dance before performing the song



Tim Mossefelder/Getty Images

## HAIM

Though fewer rock bands have found enormous success following the digital turn, this band of sisters, influenced by 1970s and 1980s acts, has built a large mainstream following. Even bigger bands, though, can sometimes make more money licensing their songs to ads or other media than from record sales. Haim's song "The Wire," for example, has been used in multiple TV shows.

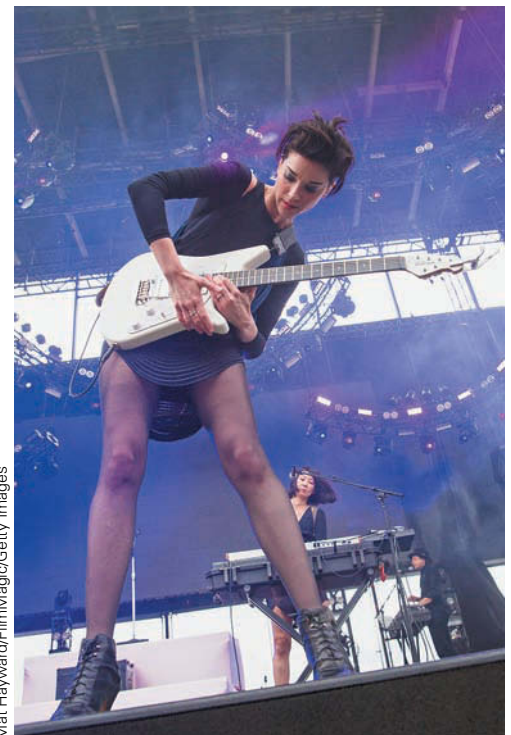
videos that use copyrighted music can create substantial revenue for music labels and artists. The 2009 amateur video "JK Wedding Entrance Dance" (reprised in a wedding scene in TV's *The Office*) has about 90 million views. Instead of asking YouTube to remove the wedding video for its unauthorized use of Chris Brown's song "Forever," Sony licensed the video to stay on YouTube. At the rate of \$1 per thousand video plays, it ultimately generated about \$90,000 in ad revenue.

There aren't standard formulas for sharing ad revenue from music videos, but there is movement in that direction. In 2012, Universal Music Group and the National Music Publishers' Association agreed that music publishers would be paid 15 percent of advertising revenues generated by music videos licensed for use on YouTube and Vevo.

## Alternative Voices

A vast network of independent (indie) labels, distributors, stores, publications, and Internet sites devoted to music outside of the major label system has existed since the early days of rock and roll. The indie industry nonetheless continues to thrive, providing music fans access to all styles of music, including some of the world's most respected artists.

Independent labels have become even more viable by using the Internet as a low-cost distribution and promotional outlet for downloads, streaming, and merchandise sales, as well as for fan discussion groups, regular e-mail updates of tour schedules, and promotion of new releases. Consequently, bands that in previous years would have signed to a major label have found another path to success in the independent music industry, with labels like Merge Records (Arcade Fire, She & Him, the Mountain Goats), Matador (Yo La Tengo, Sonic Youth, Pavement), 4AD (the National, Bon Iver), and Epitaph (Bad Religion, Alkaline Trio, Frank Turner). Unlike artists on major labels who need to sell 500,000 copies



Mat Hayward/FilmMagic/Getty Images

**ST. VINCENT**, the stage name of singer, songwriter, and guitarist Annie Clark, released three albums on indie labels like Beggars Banquet and 4AD before she put out her critically beloved self-titled fourth album through a division of Universal in 2014.



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**Streaming Music Videos**

On LaunchPad for *Media & Culture*, watch a clip of recent music videos from Katy Perry.

**Discussion:** Music videos get less TV exposure than they did in their heyday, but they can still be a crucial part of major artists' careers. How do these videos help sell Perry's music?

or more in order to recoup expenses and make a profit, indie artists “can turn a profit after selling roughly 25,000 copies of an album.”<sup>30</sup> Some musical artists also self-publish CDs and sell them at concerts or use popular online services like CD Baby, the largest online distributor of independent music, where artists can earn \$6 to \$12 per CD. One of the challenges of being an independent, unsigned artist is figuring out how to sell one's music on iTunes, Amazon, Spotify, YouTube, and other digital music services. TuneCore, founded in 2006, is one of many companies (including CD Baby) that have emerged to fulfill that need. For less than \$100, the company will distribute recordings to online music services and then collect royalties for the artist (charging an additional 10 percent for recovered royalty fees).

Some established rock acts, like Nine Inch Nails and Amanda Palmer, are taking another approach to their business model, shunning major labels and independents and using the Internet to directly reach their fans. By selling music online at their own Web sites or selling CDs at live concerts, music acts generally do better, cutting out the retailer and keeping more of the revenue themselves. Artists and bands can also build online communities around their Web sites, listing shows, news, tours, photos, and downloadable songs. Social networking sites are another place for fans and music artists to connect. MySpace was one of the first dominant sites, but Facebook eventually eclipsed it as the go-to site for music lovers. In addition, social music media sites like the Hype Machine and SoundCloud; music streaming sites like Blip.fm, Rhapsody, Grooveshark, and DatPiff; Internet radio stations like Pandora, Slacker, and 8tracks; and video sites like YouTube and Vevo are becoming increasingly popular places for fans to sample and discover new music.

## ***Sound Recording, Free Expression, and Democracy***

From sound recording's earliest stages as a mass medium, when the music industry began stamping out flat records, to the breakthrough of MP3s and Internet-based music services, fans have been sharing music and pushing culture in unpredictable directions. Sound recordings allowed for the formation of rock and roll, a genre drawing from such a diverse range of musical styles that its impact on culture is unprecedented: Low culture challenged high-brow propriety, black culture spilled into white, southern culture infused the North, masculine and feminine stereotypes broke down, rural and urban styles came together, and artists mixed the sacred and the profane. Attempts to tame music were met by new affronts, including the British invasion, the growth of soul, and the political force of folk and psychedelic music. The gradual mainstreaming of rock led to the establishment of other culture-shaking genres, including punk, grunge, alternative, and hip-hop.

The battle over rock's controversial aspects speaks to the heart of democratic expression. Nevertheless, rock and other popular recordings—like other art forms—also have a history of reproducing old stereotypes: limiting women's access as performers, fostering racist or homophobic attitudes, and celebrating violence and misogyny.

Popular musical forms that test cultural boundaries face a dilemma: how to uphold a legacy of free expression while resisting giant companies bent on consolidating independents and maximizing profits. Since the 1950s, forms of rock music have been breaking boundaries, then becoming commercial, then reemerging as rebellious, and then repeating the pattern. The congressional payola hearings of 1959 and the Senate hearings of the mid-1980s triggered by Tipper Gore's Parents Music Resource Center (which led to music advisory labels) are just two

# DIGITAL JOB OUTLOOK

## Media Professionals Speak about Jobs in the Music Industry

**Ariel Hyatt, Founder, Ariel  
Publicity and Cyber PR  
(firms that have worked with  
over one thousand musicians  
and bands of all genres)**

If you love a specific band or artist, look up whom they work with and put those companies on your list because nothing is more thrilling and satisfying than working for your *favorite* artists and bands (I still get a thrill out of that, and I've been working in the music industry for fourteen years).

**Morna Cook, Head of Human  
Resources, Universal Music UK**

Any music-related experience is valuable, whether you've volunteered at a festival, done work experience for a small label, or worked on a blog or Web site on your own time. It's always good to see work experience on candidates' CVs. Volunteering to work not only shows that you are dedicated and proactive but will also mean you have a better understanding of how things work in a practical sense. This will give you the edge over candidates who have purely theoretical knowledge.

**John Kellogg, Assistant  
Chair of Music Business/  
Management Department,  
Berklee College of Music**

I think the growth area is in management. [Managers] can coordinate all the various activities of creative talents and maximize those careers. It used to be [that] record companies were the central place where that happened. . . . That's completely different now.

**Lauren Drell, Branded Content Editor, *Mashable***

If you're applying for a tech position, and the Spotify team likes what they see on your résumé, you'll be contacted for a phone or Skype interview with an engineer. Then you'll have a half day of on-site interviews (three hour-long meetings with engineers, and lunch with an engineer). Depending on the position, you may have to complete a coding challenge at home before arriving on-site. If you're applying to work on the business side, you can expect one or two phone interviews and two or three hours of on-site interviews. The ideal candidate [according to Alexandra Cohen, Technical Director at Spotify]: "We are looking for motivated, passionate people who want to accept the mission of helping people find the right music for every moment."

**Lady Gaga**

Stop taking  
selfies, because  
that won't  
make you a  
star.

of the many attempts to rein in popular music, whereas the infamous antics of performers from Elvis Presley onward, the blunt lyrics of artists from rock and roll and rap, and the independent paths of the many garage bands and cult bands of the early rock-and-roll era through the present are among those actions that pushed popular music's boundaries.

Still, this dynamic between popular music's clever innovations and capitalism's voracious appetite is crucial to sound recording's constant innovation and mass appeal. Ironically, successful commerce requires periodic infusions of the diverse sounds that come from ethnic communities, backyard garages, dance parties, and neighborhood clubs. No matter how it is produced and distributed, popular music endures because it speaks to both individual and universal themes, from a teenager's first romantic adventure to a nation's outrage over social injustice. Music often reflects the personal or political anxieties of a society. It also breaks down artificial or hurtful barriers better than many government programs do. Despite its tribulations, music at its best continues to champion a democratic spirit. Writer and free-speech advocate Nat Hentoff addressed this issue in the 1970s when he wrote, "Popular music always speaks, among other things, of dreams—which change with the times."<sup>31</sup> The recording industry continues to capitalize on and spread those dreams globally, but in each generation, musicians and their fans keep imagining new ones. ▶

# CHAPTER REVIEW

## COMMON THREADS

**One of the Common Threads discussed in Chapter 1 is the developmental stages of mass media. But as new audio and sound recording technologies evolve, do they drive the kind of music we hear?**

In the recent history of the music industry, it would seem as if technology has been the driving force behind the kind of music we hear. Case in point: The advent of the MP3 file as a new format in 1999 led to a new emphasis on single songs as the primary unit of music sales. The Recording Industry Association of America reports that there were more than 1.3 billion downloads of digital singles in 2013. In that year, digital singles outsold physical CD albums more than 7 to 1. In the past decade, we have come to live in a music business dominated by digital singles.

What have we gained by this transition? Thankfully, there are fewer CD jewel boxes (which always shattered with the greatest of ease). And there is no requirement to buy the lackluster “filler” songs that often come with the price of an album, when all we want are the two or three hit songs. But what have we lost culturally in the transition away from albums?

First, there is no physical album art for digital singles (although department stores now sell frames to turn vintage 12-inch album covers into art). And second, we have lost the concept of an album as a thematic collection of music and a medium that provides a much broader canvas to a talented musical artist. Consider this: How would the Beatles’ *The White Album* have been created in a business dominated by singles? A look at *Rolling Stone* magazine’s 500 Greatest Albums and *Time* magazine’s All-Time 100 Albums indicates the apex of album creativity in earlier decades,

with selections such as Jimi Hendrix’s *Are You Experienced* (1967), the Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), David Bowie’s *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust* (1972), Public Enemy’s *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (1988), and Radiohead’s *OK Computer* (1997). Has the movement away from albums changed possibilities for musical artists? That is, if an artist wants to be commercially successful, is there more pressure to generate just hit singles instead of larger bodies of work that constitute an album? Have the styles of artists like Kesha, Nicki Minaj, OneRepublic, and Lil Wayne been shaped by the predominance of the single?

Still, there is a clear case against technological determinism—the idea that technological innovations determine the direction of the culture. Back in the 1950s, the vinyl album caught on despite its newness—and despite the popularity of the 45-rpm single format, which competed with it at the same time. When the MP3 single format emerged in the late 1990s, the music industry had just rolled out two formats of advanced album discs that were technological improvements on the CD. Neither caught on. Of course, music fans may have been lured both by the ease of acquiring music digitally via the Internet and by the price—usually free (but illegal).

So, if it isn’t technological determinism, why doesn’t a strong digital album market coexist with the digital singles of today? Can you think of any albums of the past few years that merit being listed among the greatest albums of all time?

## KEY TERMS

**The definitions for the terms listed below can be found in the glossary at the end of the book. The page numbers listed with the terms indicate where the term is highlighted in the chapter.**

audiotape, 118	rock and roll, 123	alternative rock, 134
stereo, 118	blues, 123	hip-hop, 134
analog recording, 118	rhythm and blues (R&B), 124	gangster rap, 135
digital recording, 118	rockabilly, 125	oligopoly, 137
compact discs (CDs), 119	soul, 130	indies, 137
MP3, 120	folk music, 131	A&R (artist & repertoire)
pop music, 122	folk-rock, 131	agents, 139
jazz, 123	punk rock, 133	online piracy, 140
cover music, 123	grunge, 134	



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## REVIEW QUESTIONS

### *The Development of Sound Recording*

1. The technological configuration of a particular medium sometimes elevates it to mass market status. Why did Emile Berliner's flat disk replace the wax cylinder, and why did this reconfiguration of records matter in the history of the mass media? Can you think of other mass media examples in which the size and shape of the technology have made a difference?
2. How did sound recording survive the advent of radio?
3. How did the music industry attempt to curb illegal downloading and file-sharing?

### *U.S. Popular Music and the Formation of Rock*

4. How did rock and roll significantly influence two mass media industries?
5. Although many rock-and-roll lyrics from the 1950s are tame by today's standards, this new musical development represented a threat to many parents and adults at that time. Why?
6. What moral and cultural boundaries were blurred by rock and roll in the 1950s?
7. Why did cover music figure so prominently in the development of rock and roll and the record industry in the 1950s?

## QUESTIONING THE MEDIA

1. If you ran a noncommercial campus radio station, what kind of music would you play, and why?
2. Think about the role of the 1960s drug culture in rock's history. How are drugs and alcohol treated in contemporary and alternative forms of rock and hip-hop today?
3. Is it healthy for, or detrimental to, the music business that so much of the recording industry is controlled by just a few large international companies? Explain.

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LearningCurve, available on LaunchPad for *Media & Culture*, uses gamelike quizzing to help you master the concepts you need to learn from this chapter.

### *A Changing Industry: Reformations in Popular Music*

8. Explain the British invasion. What was its impact on the recording industry?
9. What were the major influences of folk music on the recording industry?
10. Why did hip-hop and punk rock emerge as significant musical forms in the late 1970s and 1980s? What do their developments have in common, and how are they different?
11. Why does pop music continue to remain powerful today?

### *The Business of Sound Recording*

12. What companies control the bulk of worldwide music production and distribution?
13. Why have independent labels grown to have a significantly larger market share in the 2010s?
14. Which major parties receive profits when a digital download, music stream, or physical CD is sold?
15. How is a mechanical royalty different from a performance royalty?

### *Sound Recording, Free Expression, and Democracy*

16. Why is it ironic that so many forms of alternative music become commercially successful?

4. Do you think the Internet as a technology helps or hurts musical artists? Why do so many contemporary musical performers differ in their opinions about the Internet?
5. How has the Internet changed your musical tastes? Has it exposed you to more global music? Do you listen to a wider range of music because of the Internet?