

Course Content - Birth of Rock n' Roll

Intro to the Birth of Rock 'n' Roll

- Between the late 1940's and the early 1950's music on the radio was extremely popular.
- Alan Freed, was a radio personality in Cleveland, Ohio and he was the first person to use the phrase "Rock and Roll".
- This new music grew over a period of time when young musicians began combining pop, country and western, and rhythm and blues.
- One of the really cool things about rock and roll music was that it brought people together from all kinds of different backgrounds. Rock and roll was more than just a new musical genre... it was a whole new culture!
- In 1957, there was a new TV show called American Bandstand. On American bandstand, you could watch exciting new dance moves and see some new bands and singers that were making their mark on rock and roll. American Bandstand was a very popular TV show and came on every week for 37 years! That's a lot of rock and roll!
- There were a lot of fun dances that went with Rock n Roll – the Mashed Potato, the Twist and the Hand Jive are some that we saw in the lesson.

Instruments of Rock and Roll

- **Piano and electric keyboards:** In the early 1950's, rock and roll often used the piano or keyboard as the lead instrument. You can hear pianos and organs all over Rock n' Roll records.
- **Electric guitar:** By the late 1950s, electric guitars became the lead instrument. In fact, the single most important instrument of Rock n' Roll is without question, the electric guitar. In the late 1940's, a radio repairman named Leo Fender got together with an electronics repairman named Doc Kaufman. Their goal was to create an affordable electric guitar. They worked hard and by the early 1950's they finally made a great sounding solid-body electric guitar, that didn't cost a ton of money.
- **Drums and or percussion:** Drum sets were still the backbone of Rock n' Roll music for sure. Almost any rock song relied heavily on drums. After all, it's pretty hard to dance without a beat!
- **Electric bass:** Electric bass was becoming common in rock music as well. The bass needed to keep up with rock n roll drums, and Electric bass had the volume to make it happen!
- **Voice:** A really important instrument that you might not even think of as an instrument, is the voice! The voice and lyrics were a huge part of rock and roll.

Birth of Rock n' Roll Styles: The deepest roots of rock and roll are found in the rhythm and blues, but there were many other influences from jazz, gospel, country and folk music as well. Some of the styles included: Rockabilly, Doo Wop, Blues, Folk, Garage Rock

Music in Life Lesson:

The Music in Life lesson is a moment to engage in active listening. The Music in Life lesson song for this course is "Ob La Di, Ob La Da" by The Beatles. Students are invited to think about how the music makes them feel, think and move. Music is an individual experience; active listening encourages students to choose their own musical path.

Highlighted 50's Rock n' Roll artists: Bill Haley and the Comets, Jerry Lee Lewis, The Chantels, Ritchie Valens, Little Richard, Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry and Elvis.

Highlighted 60's Rock n' Roll artists: The Byrds, The Beach Boys, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane, Herman's Hermits, The Rolling Stones, The Beatles.