

The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock

This Companion maps the world of pop and rock, pinpointing the most significant moments in its history and presenting the key issues involved in understanding popular culture's most vital art form. Expert writers chart the changing patterns in the production and consumption of popular music, tracking the emergence of a vast industry with a turnover of billions and following the rise of global stars from Elvis to Public Enemy, Nirvana to the Spice Girls. They trace the way new technologies – from the amplifier to the Internet – have changed the sounds and practices of pop and they analyse the way maverick entrepreneurs have given way to multimedia corporations. In particular they focus on the controversial issues concerning race and ethnicity, politics, gender and globalisation. But at the heart of this Companion is the music itself – rock, pop, black music, dance music, world music – its impact, its power and its pleasures.

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The Cambridge Companion to

POP AND ROCK

EDITED BY

Simon Frith

Will Straw and

John Street



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Introduction and chronology of pop and rock

The chronology of pop and rock which appears at the end of this introduction (see pages xi–xvii) might, at first glance, seem to detail the banal and the trivial, to mark out mundane moments in a period which saw two world wars, the assassination of presidents and civil rights leaders, coups and famines, the dropping of the atomic bomb and the discovery of the structure of DNA. In such a history, what place is there even for a few sad deaths (Brian Jones, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Ian Curtis and Kurt Cobain), let alone Gerry and the Pacemakers’ ‘How Do You Do It?’ or Hanson’s ‘MMMBop’? And yet, of course, those deaths and those songs do matter. They are part of an industry that in 1999 had a worldwide turnover of \$38 billion. The United States industry alone was worth \$15 billion. Across the globe some 3.8 billion CDs, cassettes and minidisks were sold. But these figures do not just describe a major industry, a source of revenue and of trade links, they also describe a source of meaning and pleasure. The songs and sounds being manufactured and bought have become part of the memories of people who use them to mark the passage of time; they have become the object of censors who fear for their effects and of propagandists who want to exploit those effects; they have helped to constitute national and ethnic and sexual identities; and they have been used to raise money and awareness of poverty and starvation, of oppression and environmental degradation. This book is about how this has happened (and about the arguments about how it happened). It traces the history of the musical forms that compose pop and rock; it looks at the industries, technologies and performers that gave them their particular character. It explores the ways in which musical pleasure was organised and enjoyed, and looks at the ways these pleasures linked to identities and locations across the world. And most importantly, this book documents the arguments and disputes that animate discussion of popular music: about the power of the industry that produces it, about the figures who have shaped it, about how and when it gives pleasure.

There was a time when pop and rock had no literature of its own, or what it had was neglected and patronised. These days the shelves are well stocked – with biographies and autobiographies, not just of rock stars, but even of rock journalists too. There is also a burgeoning academic market, serving the increasing number of university courses on popular music. And most recently, there have been the rock and pop guides, the most extensive collection of which are the *Rough Guides* – to world music, to

dance and techno, to rock and classical. From the people who gave you the *Rough Guide to Spain* and *Mexico* come books that point out the best sites for flamenco and salsa, for ambient house and garage. These guides exist as authoritative maps for the novice traveller, giving crucial tips on bargains and must-sees. This book is not a guide; it is a companion.

A companion is different. Where guides lead, companions accompany; where guides dictate, companions argue and share. This companion does not pretend to offer definitive accounts of the musical forms which it covers, rather it is presenting novel and provocative interpretations of those histories. It recognises that there is no settled history, no definitive canon. The contributors, all experts in their various fields, were briefed to survey their area and to review the ideas and arguments that mark the territory. They were not, however, asked to write dry, formal, cautious histories and surveys. They were asked to provoke, to raise questions about conventional wisdom and settled myths. Each chapter is meant to stimulate discussion, to feed back into the everyday arguments and responses which pop and rock themselves elicit.

The book is broken into three major sections. The first provides the context. Pop and rock were not the simple result of a youthful creative flowering. They were the result of shifts in demography, patterns of cultural production and developments in technology. The first three chapters, therefore, trace the emergence of the recording industry and the practices associated with it.

The words 'pop' and 'rock' do not refer to well-established traditions with clearly demarcated boundaries. From the beginning, there were strands and genres, each with their own histories and conditions of production. The second part of the book reflects upon some of those divergent forms. In particular, chapters are devoted to pop and rock, to rap and dance. These are, of course, not discrete forms, and each incorporates elements of the other. What is important, though, is to note the different ways in which musical forms are created and enjoyed, the way their histories coincide and diverge.

The final section reflects the issues and arguments that mark current concern about popular music – the political, academic and theoretical (and there is no neat distinction to be drawn here either) debates that run through understandings of popular music. It begins with a topic that links all those in the book: the way we make sense of music, whether we understand it musicologically or sociologically, as sounds or social experience. Overlaying this fundamental question, and the way it is answered through the institutionalisation of academic knowledge, are the ways in which society's forms and interests are inscribed in music. This includes music's intimate connection with sexual and ethnic identity, with racism and

sexism, and with state and oppositional politics, and with the effects of globalisation.

Interleaved with these chapters are a series of profiles of pop stars. As with the rest of the companion, these do not pretend to be entries in a pop encyclopaedia. They too give a perspective on the figures who have contributed most to pop and rock. Those profiled are not necessarily the artists who have sold most records or survived longest, nor necessarily those who appear in those numerous lists of the one hundred greatest or whatever. They have been selected because of the stories they tell about the history and character of pop and rock. So Jimi Hendrix's career, for example, represents the links with jazz, just as Elvis Presley's represents those with country music. They have been chosen for their centrality, too, within musical genres – James Brown and funk, Abba and Eurodisco, Public Enemy and rap, Derrick May and techno; and for the part they played in introducing new ideas and practices: David Bowie and art, Bob Dylan and bohemia, Madonna and video. Again, they may not have been the first or the most commercially successful, but they form key figures in popular music's serpentine history.

The sections of this companion do not divide neatly between the historical and factual and the polemical and the argumentative, between those chapters that provide data and those that take sides. They all do both. Drawing on recent research into the past and present of popular music, they offer novel perspectives on an apparently familiar landscape. Throughout the companion particular themes appear and reappear: the way in which ideas of 'race' and the practice of racism are part of the music industry's organisation and the musical forms; the way changing technologies alter what is made and heard; and how the 'globalisation' of popular music's political economy is a core component of how it is experienced and used.

Accompanying and linked to these themes is also a sense of the music's power to move and to shock, to cause delight and despair. This companion aims both to reflect on these features of pop and rock, and to deepen our understanding of them: to help explain why the seemingly trite moments in the brief chronology that follows matter so much.

A brief chronology of pop and rock

- 1877 Thomas Edison demonstrates the first phonograph
- 1889 Louis Glass of Pacific Phonograph Company creates the first version of the juke box
- 1896 Emile Berliner patents the flat recording disc

- 1909 US Copyright Act is amended to establish the basis for royalty payments for recorded music, and not just live performance
- 1914 American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) is formed to enable songwriters to claim the income due under the amended Copyright Act
- 1920 The first news-and-music US radio station, Westinghouse's KDKA, begins broadcasting
- 1926 BBC is created as a public corporation; its Music Department is set up the following year
- 1939 Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) is formed as a competitor to ASCAP and to represent the blues and country music ignored by its rival
- 1947 Wynonie 'Blues' Harris records, according to some commentators, the first rock song 'Good Rockin' Tonight'; Roy Brown releases another version in 1948
- 1952 The deejay Alan Freed names his radio show 'Moondog's Rock'n'Roll Party'
- 1953 Bill Haley and the Comets' 'Crazy Man Crazy' is the first rock'n'roll record to make the *Billboard* charts
- 1954 Elvis Presley releases 'That's All Right Mama' in US; UK release is not until 1956
- 1955 Little Richard records 'Tutti Frutti'
Bill Haley and the Comets perform 'Rock Around the Clock' in the film *The Blackboard Jungle*
- 1956 Elvis Presley's 'Heartbreak Hotel' is No. 1 for eight weeks in US; reaches No. 2 in UK
Lonnie Donegan releases 'Rock Island Line' (No. 8 in UK; No. 6 in US)
Tommy Steele's 'Singing the Blues' is No. 1 in UK
- 1957 *American Bandstand* is broadcast nationally, reaching an audience of 20 million and providing a launchpad for many fifties teen idols
- 1958 Elvis Presley is drafted into the US Army
- 1959 Buddy Holly, Richie Valens and the Big Bopper are killed in an air crash
Cliff Richard and the Shadows are No. 1 with 'Living Doll'
Juke Box Jury begins on BBC TV: celebrities vote on whether a single will be a 'hit' or a 'miss'
- 1960 Congressional investigation into payola begins; it reveals 'pay for play' arrangements between record companies and broadcasters
- 1962 The Beatles release 'Love Me Do', and later their first LP, *Please Please Me*
Cliff Richard and the Shadows are No. 1 with 'Summer Holiday'

- The Rolling Stones begin a Sunday night residency at the Crawdaddy Club, Richmond
Bob Dylan releases his first album, *Bob Dylan*
Gerry and the Pacemakers' 'How Do You Do It?' is No. 1
The Beatles give their last performance at the Cavern Club in Liverpool
First press reports of 'Beatlemania' are published
- 1963 The Beatles release *With the Beatles*, and appear on *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* and at the *Royal Variety Show*
Ready Steady Go! begins broadcasting on Independent Television (ITV)
- 1964 The Beatles appear on the *Ed Sullivan Show*; their 'Love Me Do' and 'She Loves You' are No. 1 in the US; John Lennon publishes *In His Own Write*, a collection of his drawings and stories; the Beatles' first film, *A Hard Day's Night*, opens; The Beatles play New York's Shea Stadium (attendance: 55,600, a world record); they receive the MBE from the Queen
The Rolling Stones also appear on the *Ed Sullivan Show*
The pirate stations Radio London and Radio Caroline begin broadcasting
Country singer Jim Reeves dies in a plane crash; soon afterwards eight of his records are in the UK Top 20
The first edition of *Top of the Pops* is broadcast; it is still shown weekly
Robert Moog markets his synthesiser
- 1965 Otis Redding's *Otis Blue* album is released
Dylan is booed at the Newport Folk Festival and elsewhere for 'going electric'; he gets the same treatment when he tours the UK the following year
- 1966 The Cavern closes
UK singles rise *7d* to *7s 3d*
John Lennon says the Beatles are now more famous than Jesus
Pink Floyd take part in 'Spontaneous Underground' at the Marquee Club in London
The Beatles play their last ever tour concert at Candlestick Park, San Francisco
The Jimi Hendrix Experience play their first UK gig and release 'Hey Joe'
- 1967 'Giant Freakout All Night Rave' (featuring the Who, the Move and Pink Floyd) at the Roundhouse
'Giant Freakout' at Winterland, San Francisco (featuring Jefferson Airplane, Grateful Dead, Quicksilver Messenger Service)

- The Monkees* first shown on UK TV, a year after the group and the programme debut in the US
- The Rolling Stones appear on *Saturday Night at the London Palladium*; Mick Jagger and Keith Richards are sent to prison on drug offences (they are released on appeal)
- The Who tour the US for the first time
- Elvis Presley marries Priscilla Ann Beaulieu in Las Vegas
- The Beatles release *Sgt Pepper Lonely Hearts Club Band*; 'A Day in the Life' is banned by the BBC
- Brian Epstein, the Beatles' manager, dies
- Monterey International Pop Festival (starring, among others, the Mamas and Papas, Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, Ravi Shankar, Otis Redding, and Jimi Hendrix) is attended by 30,000 fans
- Rolling Stone* magazine is launched
- Cream release *Disraeli Gears*
- BBC's Radio 1 begins broadcasting, replacing the now illegal pirate stations
- Otis Redding dies in a plane crash
- The Beatles' television film *Magical Mystery Tour* is broadcast
- 1968 The Beatles visit India to learn about meditation
- First free Hyde Park Festival (featuring Pink Floyd and Jethro Tull)
- 1969 Led Zeppelin release their first album *Led Zeppelin*
- Paul McCartney marries Linda Eastman; John Lennon marries Yoko Ono and returns his MBE to Buckingham Palace
- The Who release their 'rock opera' *Tommy*
- Blind Faith, the first 'supergroup' (Eric Clapton, Ginger Baker, Stevie Winwood, Ric Grech), play Hyde Park
- Judy Garland dies
- The Rolling Stones perform in Hyde Park, following Brian Jones' death
- The Woodstock Festival attracts 400,000 fans
- The Hell's Angels attack and kill a member of the audience at the Altamont free festival, organised by the Rolling Stones
- 1970 Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin die
- The Beatles disband
- Soul Train* appears on US television; it is influential in reporting new dances, images and fashions to black America (the syndication rights are bought by CBS TV in 1973)
- 1971 The *Old Grey Whistle Test* starts on BBC2; bands perform live in a bare television studio

- The Canadian government implements 'Canadian Content' regulations, which require that radio station playlists contained specified minimum amounts of Canadian music. The Junos, Canada's answer to the Grammy Awards, are named after Pierre Juneau, the civil servant responsible for these regulations
- 1973 Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* enters US charts. It stays there (in the 'Top Pop Catalog' charts) for well over 1,000 weeks
- 1975 Bruce Springsteen releases *Born to Run*
- 1976 Sex Pistols release 'Anarchy in the UK'; after swearing on television, the band are dropped by their record company EMI and banned from many UK venues
- 1977 Elvis Presley dies, aged 42
Kraftwerk release *Trans Europe Express*, a record that influences hip hop and dance culture
- 1979 Eleven fans die at Who concert in Cincinnati, Ohio
- 1980 John Lennon is shot dead in New York
- 1981 MTV is launched
Abba's last No. 1: 'Super Trooper'
The Specials' 'Ghost Town' is No. 1; during the summer, there are a number of urban riots
- 1982 Michael Jackson's *Thriller* is released (it goes on to sell 45 million copies)
- 1983 The first CDs go on sale
The arrival of video is acknowledged with the first American Video Awards
The Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) becomes available; it enables synthesisers to be connected to each other, and signals new technical possibilities for music making
Culture Club are No. 1 with 'Karma Chameleon'
- 1984 Frankie Goes to Hollywood's 'Relax' is No. 1 and banned by the BBC
George Michael's first solo single 'Careless Whisper' (No. 1)
Band Aid release 'Do They Know It's Christmas?'
Marvin Gaye dies, shot by his father
- 1985 Live Aid raises £50 million
Wham! are the first Western group to play in China
Bruce Springsteen releases *Born in the USA* (which sells 15 million copies in US)
Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) gives evidence to Senate committee on the explicit sexual and violent content of records
Record companies introduce 'Parental Advisory' labelling on records as a way of appeasing PMRC complaints

- 1986 Paul Simon releases his *Graceland* album; a row erupts over whether it breaches cultural sanctions imposed on apartheid South Africa
Madonna's *True Blue* enters the UK album chart at No. 1, the first US artist to do this
Bob Geldof receives honorary Knighthood for his work for Live Aid
- 1987 MTV is launched in Europe; MTV globally now reaches 79 countries and 281.7 million households
M/A/R/R/S have a No. 1 with 'Pump Up the Volume', marking the rise of music made with deejay skills and sampler technology
Rhythim is Rhythim (Derrick May) releases 'Strings of Life', a key moment in the emergence of Detroit Techno
- 1988 Kylie Minogue has No. 1 with 'I Should Be So Lucky'
While still serving a life sentence in South Africa, Nelson Mandela is honoured with a seventieth birthday concert at Wembley; the performers include Whitney Houston and Peter Gabriel
CDs now outsell vinyl records
Dance culture's 'Summer of Love' begins in UK
- 1989 Public Enemy release *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*
- 1991 Bryan Adams' 'Everything I do (I do it for you)' is No. 1 for sixteen weeks in UK, and is No. 1 in seventeen other countries
Nirvana's 'Smells like Teen Spirit' is the most played video on MTV Europe
- 1992 Garth Brooks' *Ropin' the Wind* is the first Country album to top the US pop charts
CDs now outsell cassettes
- 1993 Snoop Doggy Dogg's *Dogstyle* is the first debut album to enter *Billboard* charts at No. 1
- 1994 Kurt Cobain commits suicide
M People release *Bizarre Fruit*; it becomes (and remains) the biggest selling dance album
Julio Iglesias' *Julio* is released and sells 200 million copies worldwide
British government introduces Criminal Justice and Public Order Act which is intended to curb illegal raves (and music that uses 'repetitive beats')
- 1996 Shania Twain releases *The Woman in Me*, which becomes the biggest selling country album by a female artist (11 million copies in US)
Spice Girls' 'Wannabe' is No. 1 in twenty-two countries

- 1997 MP3 is introduced: it is a computer digital file format that enables audio files to be reduced greatly in size; it allows music to be transmitted over the Internet
Oasis's album *Be Here Now* sells 345,000 on day of release
Prodigy's *Fat of the Land* is No. 1 in twenty countries
Garth Brooks has twelve songs in *Billboard* Country Top 75
- 1998 Madonna wins a record six MTV Music Video awards
B*Witched become first female group to have their debut single enter the UK chart at No. 1 ('C'est la vie')
Elton John's elegy for Princess Diana, 'Candle in the Wind', sells 1.5 million copies in its first week; US advance orders are 7.8 million
- 1999 Napster software is introduced; it greatly increases access to music on the internet
US charts dominated by rap metal acts: Limp Bizkit, Rage Against the Machine, and by Santana
- 2000 Napster is sued by Metallica for breach of copyright
Record companies establish copyright deals with Internet music providers
- 2001 Hear'Say, a group assembled through a UK televised documentary series (*Popstars*), become the first band to top the UK album and singles charts simultaneously with their debut releases

