

Chapter 2

The Rise of Rock 'n' Roll

1. Rock 'n' roll
 - a. First used for commercial and generational purposes by Alan Freed
 - b. Both embraces and distances itself from African American culture
 - c. Appealed to a sense of generational identity
 - d. Pitched at young people
2. Cover versions and early rock 'n' roll
 - a. Cover: The practice of recording a song that has previously been recorded by another artist or group
 - b. With rock 'n' roll, typically involved a white artist covering a rhythm & blues song previously recorded by a black artist
 - c. Copyright held by the composer; arrangements and interpretations are not copyrightable
3. The rock 'n' roll business
 - a. Combined with vitality of American economy after World War II pushed the industry's profits to new levels
 - b. Lead to reemergence of smaller, independent record companies reflecting diverse popular music tastes
 - c. Competed with older styles of music
4. R&B records and their "covers"
 - a. "Shake, Rattle and Roll"
 - i. Originally recorded by Big Joe Turner
 1. #1 R&B, #22 Pop
 2. More sexually explicit lyrics
 3. Shuffle rhythm
 4. Emphasized saxophones
 - ii. Covered by Bill Haley and His Comets
 1. #7 pop; did not chart on R&B charts
 2. Less sexually explicit lyrics
 3. Western swing influences rhythms
 4. Emphasized electric guitar
 - b. "Sh-Boom"
 - i. Originally recorded by the Chords
 1. Often cited as the first rock 'n' roll record
 2. AABA love ballad
 3. A cappella introduction and scat singing
 4. Incorporates a saxophone
 - ii. Covered by the Crew Cuts

1. Scat singing intro and group singing in the middle
 2. Two “false” endings
 3. Use of the kettle drum (tympani)
 4. Crooning vocal style
- c. “Mystery Train”
- i. Originally recorded by Little Junior and the Blue Flames
 1. Twelve-bar blues form
 2. dark and evocative (pessimistic world view)
 3. typical rhythm & blues instrumentation
 - ii. Covered by Elvis Presley
 1. Twelve-bar blues form but irregular by comparison
 2. Faster tempo, more optimistic worldview
 3. Recorded with just bass and guitar
 4. Incorporates blue notes and “hiccupping” vocal effect
5. Bill Haley
- a. First big rock ‘n’ roll star
 - b. Began career as a western swing bandleader
 - c. Recorded “Rock Around the Clock” in 1955, the first #1 rock ‘n’ roll hit