

WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

AN INTRODUCTION
TO ROCK AND ITS HISTORY

SIXTH EDITION

John Covach

University of Rochester and the Eastman
School of Music

Andrew Flory

Carleton College



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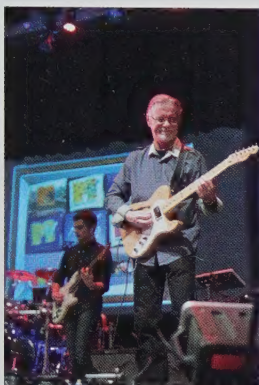
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digital.wwnorton.com/whatthatsound6**

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The Grateful Dead, "Dark Star" Original Single

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Beck, "Where It's At"

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Nickelback, "Photograph"

WHAT'S THAT SOURCE?

- Act of the Year: Frank Sinatra**, "Act of the Year: Frank Sinatra," *Metronome* (1946) 52
- Rock and Roll**, "R&B Big Beat In Pop Music: Teenagers Like 'Hot Rod' Tempo," Herm Schoenfeld, *Variety* (1955) 84
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- The Folk-Rock Revolution**, "Why Teens Switched to Folk Rock," Sylvie Reice, *Los Angeles Times* (1966) 201
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WHAT'S NEW IN THE SIXTH EDITION?

The structure and many features of the Sixth Edition will be familiar to users of previous editions. We have made some revisions and additions to the content in order to clarify historical content, expand coverage of areas that seemed to require it, and react to major changes in the music industry during the last decade. As time passes, the 1980s, the 1990s, and the first decade of the twenty-first century have come into clearer focus historically, and this is reflected in the text. The music since 2010 is still settling in, but we have made every attempt to capture a responsible survey—even if the subject is something of a moving target.

Among the additions in this new edition is an increased coverage of rock's impact outside the United States, with new additions on the role of Hispanic music and cultures in shaping rock, as well as on how Anglophone rock shaped Latin rock. While this new material adds to the revisions of the Fifth Edition, it would take another book at least as long as the current one to provide a comprehensive account of rock's history outside of the United States. We make no claims that this new material accomplishes this. It does, however, serve to remind students that there is more to the history of rock music than the particular way it unfolded within the United States. Rock has sounded a wide range of resonances around the globe since the mid-1950s, and these new passages throughout the text provide further examples of the ways in which this happened. We have also reinforced the contributions of women and the influence of country and western music in rock's history throughout the book.

Those who know the Fifth Edition will notice that a few new Listening Guides have been added throughout the book, providing a more balanced number of guides for each chapter. We have also provided additional new guides online, as well as including guides from previous editions of the book. Our goal is to provide instructors with the broadest and most varied collection of Listening Guides possible, and we hope this collection assists them as they use the book and supporting materials to design a course that best fits their individual pedagogical and scholarly emphases. In the Fifth Edition we added Listening Guides that focused on the topic of cover versions. Instructors were able to use these guides to compare the version of "Gloria" by Them with the one by Patti Smith, or the Supremes' version of "You Keep Me Hangin' On" with that of Vanilla Fudge, among others. Students could also use the guides to compare Percy Sledge's "When a Man Loves a Woman" with Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale" and note the influence of the former on the latter, or compare the original single version of the Grateful Dead's "Dark Star"

with the lengthy live version that has become one of the band's iconic tracks. The Sixth Edition adds Marvin's Gaye's "Let's Get It On" and Ed Sheeran's "Thinking Out Loud," creating an opportunity for a discussion of the many issues surrounding copyright litigation that have been especially prevalent in the past decade. This edition also includes several new in-text listening guides: "A Fine Romance" by Billie Holiday, Blondie's "One Way or Another," "We Got the Beat" by the Go-Gos, No Doubt's "Just a Girl," Carrie Underwood's "Before He Cheats," Taylor Swift's "exile," and "Holiday" by Vampire Weekend.

We have made a few changes in the What's That Source? readings from the Fifth Edition, a feature designed to provide experience in source readings for students, as well as to add more voices to the textbook material. Many of the What's That Source? additions reflect on the changing meaning and context of rock during different periods and from multiple vantage points. We hope that selections like "Teenagers Like 'Hot Rod' Tempo" (Chapter 2), "Rock & Roll Oldies Turning Gold" (Chapter 3), and "When Is It Rock and When Rock 'n' Roll" (Chapter 13) help students to better understand the changing reception of rock during the more than six decades of history covered in the book. In addition, the collection of brief essays by top pop scholars and writers from earlier print editions of the book remains an online resource, providing students with yet other voices in addition to those of the authors in the telling of rock's history.

When John first began writing *What's That Sound?* in the late 1990s, most instructors still taught from CDs and records and depended on print resources for biographical and historical information and data. This new edition marks the first one published at a time when many undergraduates who will use it were born after the first introduction of Napster (1999). File sharing has changed the world of music in such fundamental ways over the two decades since that it may be tough for students to imagine a world in which the only music you could hear was either on the radio, on television, on a record, tape, or CD, or live. Today's students have more music available to them than at any other time in civilization (that we know of, at least), and it is all accessible with a click or two on a phone, tablet, or other device, or even a voice instruction to a smart speaker. The recent resurgence of vinyl, though, seems to reflect an attempt to get back to something more authentic or even somewhat nostalgic. Analog, once the only option, has become a hip alternative to digital ease and convenience. Online reference sources such as Wikipedia have put facts about rock and pop music at students' fingertips. As useful as these technologies are, they also make it all the more important that we work hard to recover the conditions of pop and rock music as they were before the digital revolution. These conditions are now outside of the experience and memory of most college undergraduates. Indeed, one of the themes that runs throughout the book is the important role that technology has played in shaping the development of rock music. For many millennials, the challenge may be to imagine a world with far less access to music and information about both music and artists.

DIGITAL MEDIA

Total Access. Thanks to **Total Access**, students and teachers can take full advantage of all the book's superb online offerings—ebook, audio, video, and assessment content—in a flexible format that's easily integrated with campus learning systems.

Look for the unique registration code printed on a card in the book and register at digital.wwnorton.com/whatsthatound6.

Total Access is also available as a digital purchase and through Inclusive Access at participating institutions.

Licensed Song Selections. New to this edition, thanks to the gently relentless efforts of Tom Laskey at Sony Music Masterworks, is a carefully curated collection of songs across the history of rock. While some artists are impossible to license for a project of this scope, other contemporaries provide similar styles and sounds. Over forty streamed selections constitute this sampler, which is integrated in the ebook and also available as interactive listening guides (iLGs), programmed by John Husser (Virginia Tech, Emeritus).

InQuizitive. Authored by Alyssa Barna (University of Minnesota) are new chapter review activities powered by InQuizitive, Norton's award-winning, easy-to-use assessment platform that personalizes the learning experience for students, helping them to master—and retain—key learning objectives. InQuizitive can point out challenging concepts and report results to LMS gradebooks. These new activities include embedded audio to help students identify songs, performers, and stylistic traits.

Ebook. This edition continues Spotify integration, except for licensed songs included with Total Access. The ebook streams music off the page, offering students an immediate listening solution, accessible on laptops, tablets, and mobile devices. Additional songs referenced in each chapter are collected in separate Spotify playlists to round out the listening experience.

Playlists. Available from digital.wwnorton.com/whatsthatound6, **Playlists** provide links to the licensed collection; streaming services and forty-five author videos are also accessible from the Playlists. The videos help students learn what to listen for in a song and address overarching themes. Supplemental Listening Guide charts are also available from the Playlists.

Chapter Resources include *Backstage Pass* articles from a list of prominent rock historians, as well as chapter outlines.

FOR INSTRUCTORS

Norton Teaching Tools Website. Authored by Carey Campbell (Weber State University), this collection of teaching resources includes topics for discussion, lecture ideas, chapter outlines, video links for each chapter, and assignment suggestions based on student success pedagogies and transparency in learning and teaching.

This site also includes course cartridges for learning management systems, photographs and art from the text in JPG and PowerPoint formats, and premade practice quizzes.

Test Bank: Norton Testmaker. A test bank of over 1,000 questions, authored by Joe Gennaro (University of Central Florida), is newly available with Norton

Testmaker. Create and customize assignments in the cloud, export from Norton Testmaker as a Word file or Common Cartridge for your LMS. Listening questions with embedded audio are also new to this edition.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like most textbooks, the one you are about to read developed over the course of many years—in this case, over twenty years of teaching university-level courses in rock music. As a consequence of this prolonged period of gestation, we owe debts of gratitude to many more people than we can list here. Our apologies in advance to those we may have overlooked.

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John Covach
Rochester, New York

Andrew Flory
Northfield, Minnesota

September 2021

WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

SIXTH EDITION



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STUDYING ROCK

Rock music was born out of controversy, and its rebellious image has always appealed to fans. In the mid-1950s, many adults accustomed to the fatherly crooning of Bing Crosby and the suave, swinging delivery of Frank Sinatra were shocked by Elvis Presley's emphatic **blues**-influenced singing and suggestive dance moves. Teenagers, of course, loved him. Similarly, the Beatles' mop-top haircuts upset a lot of parents in the mid-1960s, while setting a fashion trend among youngsters. Rock continued to push the envelope in later years: artists such as Jim Morrison, Alice Cooper, and David Bowie challenged cultural values in the late '60s and early '70s, while Madonna and Prince did the same in the 1980s. Issues such as payola and obscene lyrics have even been the focus of federal government hearings. While only a small portion of rock has been the source of controversy or cultural struggle, nonconformity and misbehavior are central to the rock movement.

blues

Considering rock's frequent (and sometimes militant) opposition to the status quo, some people are surprised to learn that colleges and universities across the country have been offering courses in rock for many years. As music historians look back on the last century, it is obvious that popular music has played an enormous role in the recent development of the Western musical tradition, and rock music has been dominant among popular styles. Even music historians whose work focuses on other genres and decades must take into account the many and often far-flung effects rock has had on the world of music in general.

Despite the acknowledged importance of rock music, determining exactly what "rock" means is not easy. Some scholars use the term "rock and roll" to describe the first wave of rock from 1954 to 1959 (covered in Chapter 2). Other scholars describe music after 1964 as "rock." Using these two distinct terms preserves what many scholars and fans see as an important difference. This book will employ the term "rock" in a broad sense, however, using the term to designate popular music that is produced specifically for a youth audience. But even this more encompassing usage is still problematic and includes seeming contradictions. Is rock defined by race, or musical style, or specific musical elements, such as instrumentation or lyrical content? Can 1960s soul be considered rock? How about folk or rap? Is all pop also rock, and is all rock also pop? Moreover, how do we think about rock music after its musicians and audience have grown up? While it seems obvious that artists such as Elvis Presley, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, the Police, and U2 were central to the rock movement, artists like the Supremes, Madonna, and the Kingston Trio are harder to categorize.

Recorded in 1951 by Jackie Brenston and His Delta Cats, "Rocket '88" is considered by many to be the first rock and roll record. Though it was first released as a 78-rpm single, this is a photograph of a 1955 pressing—one of only a handful of "Rocket '88" 45s still in existence.

This book will not completely resolve these kinds of questions. Rather, it will tell a history of popular music that focuses on rock but includes many other styles. The chapters that follow consider rock in an inclusive manner, discussing artists as diverse as the Andrews Sisters, Bessie Smith, Bill Haley and His Comets, the Supremes, Santana, Parliament Funkadelic, Metallica, and Britney Spears. The main purpose of the book is to organize this repertoire—an enormous body of music that covers over sixty years of popular-music history—to make it easier to understand and appreciate. Today there is more popular music available to listeners than at any other time in the history of recorded music. The rock era included a vast amount of music, more than can be covered in a typical university course, which only scrapes the surface of rock music. In the chapters that follow, we organize the music into styles and eras to make the rock repertoire easier to understand and appreciate and to provide broad stylistic and historical perspectives.

ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER

Rock History in the Media. Studying rock is not new, and most fans will have had some exposure to background information on artists and their music. For those who have not studied rock as an academic subject, this historical information will probably have come from general interest publications, radio, television, the Internet, and even biographical movies. Magazines such as *Rolling Stone*, *Classic Rock*, and *Mojo* provide readers with useful information about rock musicians, their music, and aspects of the entertainment industry. Books targeted at the general reader—often written by journalists and music critics—are plentiful and varied. Over the years, networks such as VH1 and MTV have regularly offered profiles of artists and styles, frequently taking larger historical patterns into account. A steady stream of rock documentaries and biopics have been produced as well. The development of the classic-rock radio format in the early 1990s also encouraged a growing sense of rock's history, as did the time-tested oldies format that had already existed for some time—and as the expansion of rock broadcasting to the Internet and satellite radio is doing today. All these sources of information about the history of rock can be useful, and many have been employed in the writing of this textbook—a list of some of the best general sources follows this introduction, and references to more focused material are provided at the end of each chapter. Be aware, however, that a scholarly approach to rock will differ significantly from general-interest books or media accounts. In many cases, information found in the popular media is designed primarily for entertainment rather than educational or research purposes. Some of this information may be accurate, well researched, and balanced, but some of it is also skewed, gossipy, and unreliable. Remember that magazines and many broadcast stations generate revenue through the sale of advertising; the worst thing that can happen in such businesses is for people to put the magazine down, change the radio station, or turn off the TV. It is in the best interests of media outlets to deliver what they believe people want most, which can lead to a focus on the more sensational and titillating aspects of biography, rather than serious consideration of musicians and their music. This can be especially true of biopics.

This textbook will attempt to provide a balanced and fair account of the history of rock music. Many more artists and groups will enter the story than may typically



I know what I like: the fan mentality
 I know what I like: the fan mentality
 I know what I like: the fan mentality
 I know what I like: the fan mentality
 I know what I like: the fan mentality
 I know what I like: the fan mentality
 I know what I like: the fan mentality
 I know what I like: the fan mentality



appear in general-interest accounts. Some artists or groups were more important in their day than they have been since. Other artists have become more popular over time. There will be no attempts to convince you to like a style of music, to elevate one style over another, or to dismiss or otherwise discredit any artist or group. The following chapters will provide reliable information, historical context, and informed debate. We hope this book will elicit informed discussion of contested issues in rock, such as the relevance of popularity to historical importance, the role of gender, race, and ethnicity in rock's history, and the responsibility of music executives to share profits with musicians.

I Know What I Like: The Fan Mentality. Many fans of rock are passionate about the music they like. But what does it mean to be a fan? Fans of rock music listen frequently to the music of a particular artist, group, or style and gather interesting facts about both the artists and the music. As fans, there is absolutely nothing wrong with ignoring artists, groups, or styles that do not interest us. This is perfectly

natural. But as students of rock music, we cannot simply ignore music we do not like. We must strive to be balanced as we study rock's history and development, which often forces us to consider carefully music we probably wouldn't choose to listen to otherwise. If you were studying American history, it wouldn't be acceptable to study only those presidents who shared your political persuasion. An objective history of the last few decades of the twentieth century would consider John F. Kennedy *and* Richard M. Nixon, Ronald Reagan *and* Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton *and* George W. Bush. When it comes to studying music, you don't have to suspend your sense of judgment, but you do have to work to keep the fan mentality at bay.

The Ups and Downs of Chart Positions. This book will make frequent reference to chart positions. Almost everyone is familiar with charts that rank hit songs and albums by popularity for a given week, and the best-known American charts appear in *Billboard* magazine. Charts help us draw general conclusions about the popularity of a song or album at the time it was released. It can also be useful to compare how certain songs did on pop charts with the way they fared on rhythm and blues or country charts, or even on the British charts. More important for this book is that charts can help us avoid the fan mentality—in a sense, they keep us honest. Among scholars, charts are viewed with understandable suspicion because little is known about how they have been put together in the past, making them susceptible to manipulation. Clearly, charts are not precision instruments for measuring a song or an album's success or popularity, and they do not accurately reflect the popularity or influence of some songs or albums. A record can chart well and have little influence, or chart moderately well (or even poorly) and have a lot of influence. But in a broad sense, charts are still the best instruments we have available to judge listeners' changing tastes through rock's history, even if chart measurements are flawed. Ideally, we would have access to comprehensive radio playlists of various eras, or the actual number of records sold of any song or album. However, playlist data are not plentiful and record companies often manipulate sales numbers (a frequent complaint of artists and bands since the beginning of recording). The Record Industry Association of America (RIAA) does give Gold Awards for records sales of 500,000 units and Platinum Awards for sales of 1 million units (often referred to as gold and platinum records), which can be helpful in measuring the success of an album or single. The RIAA website (www.riaa.com) allows you to look up any hit record and track its award history. The popular Google Books search engine also provides access to an extensive collection of *Billboard* magazines, allowing us to consider aspects of advertising and industry news at a particular date. In recent years, digitization of music sales and the rise of streaming services has made tracking popularity somewhat easier.

The Four Themes. Each of the following chapters takes a three- to ten-year period of rock's history and organize the music along stylistic lines. Some chapters cover the same years from different angles. For example, the mid-1960s are covered in three chapters: Chapter 4, which is devoted to the British invasion; Chapter 5, which discusses the American response to it; and Chapter 6, which focuses on Black pop. Each chapter also raises a set of interpretive issues that provide insight into scholarly and critical debates about the music and its historical circumstances or aesthetic impact and value. In the discussion of psychedelia in Chapter 7, for instance, the differences between mainstream popular culture of the mid-1960s and the hippie subcultures in both London and San Francisco are highlighted; the questions that

arise in this discussion are representative of the issues that can surface whenever strong subcultures overlap. While interpretive angles change from chapter to chapter, four important themes are pursued throughout the book: social, political, and cultural issues; issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender; the development of the music business; and the development of technology.

Each of these themes plays an important role in the development of rock music as a musical style and a force in popular culture. The music business has changed dramatically since the early 1950s, as the rock element of the business has grown from small independent upstarts to some of the most successful and dominant corporations of the modern age. In the realm of technology, the rise of radio in the 1920s and the emergence of television after World War II are central factors in rock's explosion into mainstream American culture in the mid-1950s. Just as important is the development of cable television that facilitated the introduction of MTV in the early 1980s and the rise of file sharing and streaming after 2000. Issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender are also essential to understanding the origins of rock, the constant challenge of stereotypes in this music, and the ever-present struggle for authenticity in a form that blends down-home vernacular sensibilities with public adoration and extreme wealth. As the chapters unfold, you will be urged to examine how these themes fit into the story of rock's development. No style of music exists in a vacuum, and consideration of these broader perspectives will help us identify and appreciate the forces that have shaped the repertoire and the ways it has been interpreted, both by scholars in academia and by writers in the popular media.

Tracking the Popularity Arc. As we study rock's history and progress from the 1950s through the early 2000s and beyond, you may notice a pattern of styles and their popularity. In many cases, a specific style will appear within a relatively restricted geographic region and remain unknown to most fans of popular music. For instance, few rock fans were aware of the punk scene in New York during the mid-1970s, and bands such as Television, the Ramones, and Blondie played to small, local audiences. The American punk style, which would morph into new wave by the end of the decade, developed within this small subculture before breaking into the national spotlight in 1978. By the early 1980s, some artists formerly associated with punk embraced styles and commercial strategies of the rock mainstream, while the more die-hard, aggressive groups retreated back into the punk underground. The rise of punk from a small, regional underground scene to mainstream pop culture, and its subsequent retreat, follows a pattern that we might think of as a "popularity arc." Over and over, the stories of specific styles in rock music follow this template. Typically, histories of rock music account for the time each style spends in the pop limelight—the peak of the popularity arc—creating a chronology without examining a style's pre-mainstream roots or existence after the commercial boom years. In a sense, it is difficult to avoid such a historical account, and similar problems arise in histories of other musical styles (such as jazz and classical music). To keep the popularity arc in mind for any given style, ask yourself the following questions: How did this style arise? When did it peak in popularity? Does it still exist in a subculture somewhere? How are elements of this style incorporated into current mainstream pop?

This book will give you the information you need to answer the first two questions. But you will probably need to do your own research to answer the last two. You may be surprised to discover how many older rock styles are still thriving, often long after they have fallen out of the mainstream spotlight.

FIRST TIME IN MEMPHIS!
W.C. HANDY THEATRE
 2 DAYS ONLY - SAT. & SUN. APRIL 7-8
 ON STAGE! ----- IN PERSON



★ **JACKIE BRENSTON** ★
 THE TERRIFIC **“ROCKET ‘88”** SENSATION
 WITH **IKE TURNER** ★
“THE KING OF THE PIANO”
 AND
 ★—**“HIS KING OF RHYTHM”**—★
 JACKIE IS GONNA TEAR THE HOUSE DOWN

Jackie Brenston (foreground) is credited with writing “Rocket ‘88.” In this poster for a Memphis appearance, Brenston (with saxophone) is shown with Ike Turner (at the piano). Turner and His Kings of Rhythm band played with Brenston on the “Rocket ‘88” record.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN ROCK

Throughout this book, Listening Guides will direct your attention to individual songs that illustrate specific musical features of the styles discussed. While the circumstances surrounding a style, band, or song may be interesting, the way the music sounds is the element that attracts most listeners. The analysis of rock music can require a high level of specific music-analytical training. Books, articles, and doctoral dissertations demonstrate the many dimensions of rock’s musical structure. The Listening Guides in this book will help you identify the structural features of rock music, with a focus on musical form. In the broadest sense, musical form refers to the structure and organization of the sections in a song or piece. Rock generally uses a limited number of common formal types; once you are familiar with these types, you will notice that most songs fit relatively neatly into one form or another (with certain exceptions). Understanding formal structure will help you hear new things in the music itself and perceive similarities between musical styles that may otherwise seem very different. The basic formal types are introduced in this chapter, and short explanations of rhythm, instrumentation, and recording techniques are provided. Instrumentation, or the types of instruments used in a given recording, can drastically change the way a song sounds and allow for variation within a performance. A familiarity with basic techniques used to record rock music will also help us understand some of the important differences between studio recordings, which form the bulk of the repertoire discussed

in this book, and live rock performances. In addition to the sounds of rock, we will also consider the sights of rock, with a special introduction to viewing rock in its multiple contexts.

“Rocket ‘88.” Before delving into greater detail, it may be helpful to look closely at some of these features in a brief analysis of a classic track: Jackie Brenston and His Delta Cats’ 1951 single, “Rocket ‘88.” Recorded in Memphis and produced by Sam Phillips (Elvis Presley’s first producer), “Rocket ‘88” is considered by many to be the first rock and roll song. While it is legally credited to Brenston, he may have written only the lyrics and lifted the music from an earlier song called “Cadillac Boogie” (such “borrowings” are relatively common in early rock and roll). To show how the song is laid out, the book provides a **formal diagram** that breaks it into sections and lists them according to music timings. These timings simply give you an idea of where in the song a specific section begins and ends. Each section

formal diagram

is also marked by a snippet of lyrics or some other description to help you locate it. The formal diagram for “Rocket ‘88” is in the following Listening Guide. “Rocket ‘88” is in what we call **simple verse form**. It repeats a single section of music eight times and, as you will see in the diagram, each section is labeled either “**verse**” or “**instrumental verse**.” The only exception is verse 2, which slightly alters the structure found in all the other sections. Simple verse form is common in rock music, and we will see many instances of it in the chapters that follow.

In the first section, labeled “Instrumental Verse” in the diagram, note that the description “12 mm.” is given. This indicates that the section is twelve **measures** in length (“mm.” is commonly used to abbreviate measures in musical writing). You have probably heard musicians begin a song by counting out “one, two, three, four!” Musicians commonly count the **beats** in music in groups of four (though groups of two or three beats can also be found). This simply means that you count “one, two, three, four” and continue counting “one, two three, four” again rather than “five, six, seven, eight.” Each group of four beats is called a “measure” or **bar** of music—these terms are synonymous and used interchangeably. Note that each

simple verse form
verse
instrumental verse

measures

beats

bar

Listening Guide

Jackie Brenston and His Delta Cats, “Rocket ‘88” Chess 1458

Words and music by Jackie Brenston, produced by Sam Phillips. “Rocket ‘88” hit #1 on the *Billboard* “Best Selling Retail Rhythm and Blues” and “Most Played Juke Box Rhythm and Blues” charts in 1951.

FORM: Simple verse. Each verse is built on the 12-bar blues, with the exception of the second verse, which breaks off after 8 bars.

TIME SIGNATURE: 4/4.

INSTRUMENTATION: Piano, drums, saxophones, solo vocals, distorted electric guitar playing a repeated boogie-woogie pattern.

Timings	Section	Description
0:00–0:19	Instrumental verse	12 mm., piano featured.
0:19–0:38	Verse 1	12 mm., “You women have heard of jalopies . . .”
0:38–0:57	Instrumental verse	12 mm., saxophones featured.
0:57–1:09	Verse 2 (partial)	8 mm., “V-8 motor . . .”; breaks off early.
1:09–1:28	Instrumental verse	12 mm., sax solo.
1:28–1:47	Instrumental verse	12 mm., sax solo continues.
1:47–2:05	Instrumental verse	12 mm., sax solo continues.
2:05–2:23	Verse 3	12 mm., “Step in my rocket . . .”
2:23–2:46	Instrumental verse	12 mm., sax and guitar featured.

verse and instrumental verse (except one) in “Rocket ‘88” is twelve measures (bars) in length. You might count it like this:

mm.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
beats:	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234

Verse 2 is the exception and is only eight measures in length; it seems to break off early compared to the twelve-measure pattern shown above. This is likely a mistake, because you can hear the musicians scrambling a bit to come back together as a band. Verse 2 can be counted like this:

mm.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9??
beats:	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	???

Despite the irregularity of verse 2, if you count the measures and watch the music timings, you should be able to follow the diagram as the song plays. If you are having trouble keeping up, try pausing the music at the section boundaries given by the timings; this may help you hear the sections more clearly. When you have followed the form with the diagram, see if you can do so without the diagram. Once you begin hearing form in music, you may find that it can be difficult *not* to hear it!

In addition to form and rhythm in this song, it is also useful to listen for the instrumentation. This particular track uses drums, electric guitar, acoustic piano, two saxophones, and lead vocals. Try to listen to the song all the way through following only one of these instruments; don’t let your attention be drawn away by what’s happening in another part. Then, play the song again and see if you can follow a different instrument all the way through. Typically, our attention darts from part to part in a song, usually when something new comes in to grab our interest. While listening to “Rocket ‘88,” for instance, we may focus on the piano in the first instrumental verse, the vocals in verse 1, the saxes in the next section, and so on. You may be surprised at the difficulty of focusing on one part as you listen, but if you can train yourself to do this, you will hear things in the music that you’ve never noticed before.

TYPICAL FORMAL TYPES IN AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC

The analysis of musical form is a study of the way sections are structured in a piece of music and the way these sections combine to produce larger structures. Most musical styles work within the constraints of a small number of formal types, so formal analysis of a single work usually consists of noting its similarities to and differences from some formal design common to the style. Formal types and musical styles are often linked to one another. For our purposes, it will be useful to look at some common formal types that occur in rock music.

12-bar blues

The 12-Bar Blues and the Doo-Wop Progression. Perhaps the best place to begin the study of musical structure in rock is with the **12-bar blues**. This is a common structural pattern found in rhythm and blues, rock and roll, and many styles of jazz.

A Note on Rhythm and Meter

Generally, rhythm refers to the ways musical sounds are organized in time, and **beat** refers to a regular rhythmic pulse. Most of the music in this book will employ four-beat measures. Measures may also contain two or three beats, and these are counted “one two, one two” and “one two three, one two three,” respectively. It is even possible for a measure to contain five, six, seven, or more beats per measure. These ways of organizing rhythm and beats in music are called **meter**. A fuller consideration of a song’s meter takes into account not only how many beats are in each measure but also how each beat may be subdivided. A single beat can be divided into either two or three equal parts; in the first case you would evenly count, “one &, two &, three &, four &,” and in the second, “one & uh, two & uh, three & uh, four & uh.” When each beat is evenly divided into two parts, we call this **simple**, and when each beat is divided evenly into three parts, we call this **compound**. Meters are grouped by combining the number of beats per measure with the way each beat is divided, as shown in the following chart:

	Simple (2 parts)	Compound (3 parts)
Duple (2 beats)	duple simple (2/4)	duple compound (6/8)
Triple (3 beats)	triple simple (3/4)	triple compound (9/8)
Quadruple (4 beats)	quadruple simple (4/4)	quadruple compound (12/8)

When the meter employs two beats per measure, and each beat is evenly divided into two parts, we classify the meter as “duple simple,” and this can be seen in the chart. Notice that a time signature is given in parentheses next to each **meter classification**. In each case, the time signature given represents the most common one used to indicate this meter classification in written music. You may have noticed that sheet music almost always has a time signature provided at the beginning of the song or piece; this indicates what the meter classification of the rhythm will be in the song. Meter plays a crucial role in establishing the rhythmic “feel” of a song, though it is not the only element that influences this. In this book, most songs will be in quadruple time, with both simple and compound divisions in play. “Rocket ‘88,” for instance, is in quadruple compound time, which many musicians simply think of as a “**shuffle**” in four (4/4). We can also think of the **tempo** (the speed of the beat) as “fixed” or “flexible.” Almost any music that uses drums will be almost entirely fixed, meaning that the tempo will remain the same, with no obvious speeding up or slowing down. There are times when the tempo can become flexible, meaning that the music will speed up and slow down for expressive effect. “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” (Chapter 1) offers a clear example of flexible tempo throughout. Most of the songs we will consider in this book, however, will use fixed tempo and will employ flexible tempo only at a certain point for expressive emphasis (see Roy Orbison’s “Only the Lonely” in Chapter 3). Flexible tempo is common in classical music, where it serves as an important resource for interpretive expression.

A 12-bar blues is not a form, but rather a structure used to build a form. It consists of twelve groups of four-beat measures and is distinctive because of the way its measures fall into three groups of four. These groups can be seen in the measure length, phrasing, lyrics, and chord structure. Once this twelve-measure pattern is in place, an entire song will often repeat the structure several times, with new lyrics and instrumental solos added to make these repetitions fresh. The first four measures, which are called a **phrase**, often feature a lyric that is repeated in the next four measures, especially in traditional blues. The words of the final four measures often complete the thought begun in the repeated initial phrase. Think of this pattern as “question—question—answer” (although the lyrics don’t literally have to ask a question). The first line in each verse is repeated in the second phrase, with the third phrase completing the thought with a new line.

phrase

introduction

Listen again to “Rocket ‘88” and you will find that it uses a 12-bar blues structure to build each verse. After you have listened to the song two or three times, you should begin to hear the 12-bar blues structure clearly. Notice that eight of the nine phrases in the song are twelve measures long—the only exception is the fourth phrase, which does not complete the structure (the Listening Guide notes that this phrase “breaks off early”). The entire 12-bar blues structure appears in the **introduction**, for example, and begins a second time with the vocals. Phrase one begins with the lyrics, “heard of jalopies”; phrase two, “yes, it’s great”; and the third phrase, “ride in style.” You will notice that, although “Rocket ‘88” is constructed using the 12-bar blues, its lyrics do not follow the traditional question—question—answer pattern. For an example of a 12-bar blues that uses this lyrical structure, see Big Joe Turner’s “Shake, Rattle, and Roll,” which appears in Chapter 1. Other examples of 12-bar blues in the book are Chuck Berry’s “Johnny B. Goode” (Chapter 2) and Little Richard’s “Tutti Frutti” (Chapter 2).

Roman numerals
chordskey
scale

The following chart illustrates some of the structural properties of 12-bar blues. Notice that **Roman numerals** occur under each measure number. This shows the **chords** that are typically played in those measures. Chords are combinations of notes played together—think of somebody strumming chords on a guitar or banging them out on the piano. Chords in any **key** can be organized by the **scale** for that key, and the Roman numerals show which note of the scale the chord is based on. If we are in C, for instance, the scale goes C – D – E – F – G – A – B – C. The I chord is a C chord, the IV is an F chord, and the V is a G chord, since the notes C, F, and G are the first, fourth, and fifth notes of the scale. Why would musicians bother with arcane Roman numerals when they could just write C, F, and G? The reason is more pragmatic than you might think: this pattern can occur in twelve distinct keys, and the specific labels C, F, and G cover only one of these, while the Roman numerals generalize across all twelve. If a musician knows the Roman numerals, she can play the pattern in any key as easily as in C.

bars:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
chords:	I	(IV)	I	I	IV	IV	I	I	V	(IV)	I	(V)
	1st phrase			2nd phrase				3rd phrase				
	(question)			(question)				(answer)				

doo-wop
progression

bridge

Another musical structure that appears in a lot of rock music is the **doo-wop progression**. Though it can occur in many styles of pop, this chord progression is most often associated with the doo-wop of the 1950s. Moreover, like the 12-bar blues, the doo-wop progression can form the underlying structure for many of the forms that we discuss later. Using our Roman numerals, we can characterize the doo-wop progression as a series of four chords: I – vi – IV – V. In the key of C, this progression would go C – A minor – F – G. This familiar chord progression can be heard in 1950s tracks such as the Five Satins’ “In the Still of the Night” and the Del Vikings’ “Come Go with Me.” The following chart illustrates the doo-wop progression as it appears in the first vocal phrase of the Chords’ “Sh-Boom” (labeled “verse 1” in the Listening Guide). Note that there is a new chord every two beats, forming a harmonic pattern (or “progression”) that repeats through the entire song, except for the short section labeled “**bridge**.” Note as well that “Sh-Boom” employs

Listening Guide

The Chords, “Sh-Boom” Cat 104

Words and music by Jimmy Keyes, Carl Feaster, Claude Feaster, Floyd “Buddy” McRae, and Ricky Edwards. Reached #5 on the *Billboard* rhythm and blues “Most Played in Juke Boxes” chart in 1954. (This recording dropped quickly off the charts after a cover version was released by the Crew Cuts.)

FORM: Simple verse with several **interludes** and a bridge. The form is based on AABA form, with verses 1 and 2 constituting the first two A sections, followed by the bridge (B), and finally verse 3 (A).

TIME SIGNATURE: 12/8.

INSTRUMENTATION: Electric guitar, bass, piano, drums, saxophone, solo vocals, and lead vocals.

0:00–0:07	Prelude , 4 mm.	“Life could be a dream . . .”
0:07–0:21	Verse 1 , 8 mm.	“Life could be a dream . . .”; solo vocal with background harmonies.
0:21–0:29	Interlude (partial) , 4 mm.	Nonsense syllables; “De dong e ding dong . . .”
0:29–0:43	Verse 2 , 8 mm.	“Life could be a dream”; beginning of verse punctuated by vocal harmony.
0:43–0:57	Bridge , 8 mm.	“Every time I look at you . . .”; performed by bass vocalist.
0:57–1:11	Verse 3 , 8 mm.	“Life could be a dream”; performed as harmony throughout (note the high range of the tenor vocalist).
1:11–1:25	Interlude (full) , 8 mm.	Nonsense syllables followed by entrance of saxophone.
1:25–1:39	Instrumental verse , 8 mm.	Saxophone solo.
1:39–1:53	Instrumental verse , 8 mm.	Saxophone solo.
1:53–2:07	Verse 4 , 8 mm.	Repeat of verse 3.
2:07–2:23	Interlude , 8 mm.	Repeat of full interlude.

a common variant of the doo-wop progression, I – vi – ii – V. Like the 12-bar blues, it is not difficult to hear the repeating doo-wop progression that forms the basis for the song’s musical content.

beats:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
chords:	I		vi		ii		V	

Life could be a dream . . .

if I could **take** you up in
paradise . . .

Listening Guide

Elvis Presley, "Heartbreak Hotel" RCA 47-6420

Words and music by Mae Boren, Tommy Durden, and Elvis Presley, produced by Steve Sholes. Reached #1 on the *Billboard* "Top 100" chart, #1 on all three *Billboard* country and western charts (sales, jukebox, and radio), and #3 on the *Billboard* rhythm and blues "Most Played in Juke Boxes" chart in 1956.

FORM: Simple verse. Each verse is built on a modified version of the 12-bar blues. The structure is identical to the usual structure up through the first 6 bars, after which the remaining 2 measures abbreviate the typical pattern to result in 8 bars overall.

TIME SIGNATURE: 12/8 (shuffle in four).

INSTRUMENTATION: Electric guitar, piano, acoustic bass, drums, and lead vocals.

0:00–0:21	Verse 1 , 8 mm.	"Well, since my baby left me . . ."
0:21–0:41	Verse 2 , 8 mm.	"Oh, though it's always crowded . . ."
0:41–1:01	Verse 3 , 8 mm.	"Now, the bellhop's tears . . ."
1:01–1:21	Verse 4 , 8 mm.	"Well, if your baby leaves you . . ."
1:21–1:42	Instrumental verse , 8 mm.	Guitar solo for first 4 mm., then piano solo.
1:42–2:05	Verse 5 , 9 mm.	"Oh, though it's always crowded . . ."

Simple Verse Form. Repetitive structures like the 12-bar blues and the doo-wop progression often combine to form larger structural patterns. As these patterns repeat, we may think of them differently depending on what aspects are repeated. A verse is defined as a section with repeating music and nonrepeating lyrics. A form that employs only verses is called a simple verse form. Look back at the Listening Guide for "Rocket '88" and you will see that it is in simple verse form. Elvis Presley's 1956 recording of "Heartbreak Hotel" provides another clear example of simple verse form: each 8-bar verse is based on the same chord progression, which is actually an abbreviated version of the 12-bar blues (though it is not a 12-bar blues). As you listen to "Heartbreak Hotel," notice how the song consists of repetitions of the same music with different words for each verse (and one instrumental verse).

AABA form **AABA Form.** The song form most associated with mainstream pop before the birth of rock and roll is **AABA form**. This is one of the most common formal patterns in Tin Pan Alley songs and usually occurs in a 32-bar scheme that combines four 8-bar phrases. We use the designation AABA to show that the first two 8-bar phrases are very similar, the third 8-bar phrase is contrasting, and the last 8-bar phrase is similar to the first two.

A	A	B	A
8 mm.	8 mm.	8 mm.	8 mm.

Among the songs in later Listening Guides that employ the standard 32-bar AABA form are “Over the Rainbow,” “All or Nothing at All,” “I’m Sittin’ on Top of the World,” “Hey Good Lookin’,” and “Blueberry Hill.” As it turns out, most AABA songs would be too short if the song did not repeat some or all of the 32-bar pattern. (In “I’m Sittin’ on Top of the World” and “Hey Good Lookin’,” the entire AABA form returns, but in “Over the Rainbow,” “All or Nothing at All,” and “Blueberry Hill,” only part of the AABA structure is repeated.) When the entire AABA form is repeated, it is a **full reprise**, and when only part of the AABA form returns, a **partial reprise**. While the 32-bar AABA is common, this form can also be modified to include sections that exceed eight measures. Jerry Lee Lewis’s recording of “Great Balls of Fire” provides a good example of this from the rock and roll repertoire. The A sections are eight measures long, but each presentation of the bridge uses twelve measures of music. This extended bridge structure produces a complete AABA pattern of thirty-six measures, not the usual thirty-two. Note that “Great Balls of Fire” employs a full reprise of this 36-bar pattern to form the second half of the song.

full reprise
partial reprise

Simple Verse-Chorus. A **chorus** is a section that repeats with the same music and lyrics intact in each presentation. (Remember that verses use the same music with

chorus
stop-time

Listening Guide

Jerry Lee Lewis, “Great Balls of Fire” Sun 281

Words and music by Otis Blackwell and Jack Hammer, produced by Sam Phillips. Reached #2 on the *Billboard* “Top 100” chart, #1 on the country and western “Best Sellers in Stores” chart, and #3 on both the “R&B Best Sellers in Stores” and “Most Played R&B by Jockeys” charts in 1958.

FORM: AABA, with full reprise. Note how the bridge section extends to 12 bars (rather than 8) by repeating chord hits. A similar technique will be seen in the Beatles’ “I Want to Hold Your Hand” in Chapter 4.

TIME SIGNATURE: 4/4.

INSTRUMENTATION: Piano, drums, acoustic bass, and lead vocals.

0:00–0:13	A-Verse , 8 mm.	Vocals delivered in stop-time , “You shake my nerves . . .”
0:13–0:25	A-Verse , 8 mm.	Full band in, “I laughed at love . . .”
0:25–0:43	B-Bridge , 12 mm.	“Kiss me baby . . .”
0:43–0:55	A-Verse , 8 mm.	“I chew my nails down . . .”
0:55–1:06	A-Instrumental verse , 8 mm.	Raucous piano solo.
1:06–1:18	A-Instrumental verse , 8 mm.	
1:18–1:37	B-Bridge , 12 mm.	“Kiss me baby . . .”
1:37–1:49	A-Verse , 8 mm.	“I chew my nails . . .”

Listening Guide



The Carter Family, “Can the Circle Be Unbroken” Columbia 37669

Words and music by A. P. Carter, recorded in 1935. Released before the era of country charts in the United States. (There were no *Billboard* country charts until 1944.)

FORM: Simple verse-chorus.

TIME SIGNATURE: 2/4, with dropped beats.

INSTRUMENTATION: Acoustic guitar, two female and one male voice, with one female voice taking the lead during verses and choruses sung in three-part harmony.

0:00–0:06	Introduction , 3 mm.	Guitar accompaniment.
0:06–0:26	Verse 1 , 16 mm. (only one beat in m. 12)	Solo vocal, “I was standin’ . . .”
0:26–0:44	Chorus , 16 mm. (only one beat in mm. 4 and 12)	Choral vocal, “Can the circle . . .”
0:44–1:04	Instrumental verse , 16 mm. (no dropped beats)	Guitar solo by Maybelle Carter employing the “Carter scratch” technique of playing melody on low strings and chords on high strings.
1:04–1:23	Verse 2 , 16 mm.	As before, “I told the undertaker . . .”
1:23–1:41	Chorus , 16 mm.	As before, “Can the circle . . .”
1:41–2:00	Verse 3 , 16 mm.	As before, “I followed close behind her . . .”
2:00–2:18	Chorus , 16 mm.	As before, “Can the circle . . .”
2:18–2:28	Instrumental verse (partial), 8 mm.	Guitar solo.
2:28–2:47	Verse 4 , 16 mm.	“Went back home, Lord . . .”
2:47–3:04	Chorus , 16 mm.	“Can the circle . . .”

simple verse-chorus

different words.) When a single musical pattern is used as the basis for both verses and choruses in a song, the resulting form is called **simple verse-chorus**. Note that the melody portion of a song may change from verse to chorus, while the chords underneath stay the same. Hence, the biggest difference between a simple verse and a simple verse-chorus is the presence of a repeating set of lyrics to form a chorus section. Consider “Can the Circle Be Unbroken” as recorded by the Carter Family. The verses and choruses in this song are built on the same 16-bar progression. While the verse and chorus may seem different on the first listen, repeated listenings

reveal that the verse and chorus use the same melody and chord progression, with only slight changes made between sections. Listen to this track and see if you can hear the similarity.

In order to count the measures in “Can the Circle Be Unbroken,” you will need to keep two things in mind. First, rather than the four-beats-per-measure rhythmic pattern we encountered in the 12-bar blues, this song uses a two-beats-per-measure pattern. You thus need to count “one-two, one-two,” and so on. A second aspect of this song involves irregular counting of measures. When you try to count measures during the verses of this song, the twelfth bar contains only one beat, while in the choruses the fourth and twelfth measures contain only one beat. Musicians often refer to this as “dropping a beat,” meaning that in each instance the second beat is dropped. The only instance of this 16-bar pattern not to drop these beats is the first instrumental verse on the guitar. In this verse, the group “corrects” the dropped beats from the sung verses and choruses by playing sixteen full measures of two beats.

Contrasting Verse-Chorus. Unlike the simple verse-chorus form, in which the verse and chorus sections share the same musical material, the **contrasting verse-chorus** form has verses and choruses that employ different music. Forms like contrasting verse-chorus may also include a bridge, or a section that provides a contrasting, nonrepeating section of music and lyrics and returns to a verse or chorus. A rock and roll example of contrasting verse-chorus with a bridge is Buddy Holly’s “That’ll Be the Day.” As you listen to this track, notice the differences between the 8-bar verse and chorus sections, in addition to the instrumental bridge formed out of a 12-bar blues pattern.

**contrasting
verse-chorus**

Verse, Chorus, or Bridge? In analyzing the form of a song, one can sometimes wonder whether a section should be labeled a verse, chorus, or bridge. While there are certain technical features one could use to aid in this decision, perhaps the easiest way to decide is to assess the section’s **rhetorical priority**. If a section is the main focus of a song, that section has high rhetorical priority, and it is probably the section you think of first when you think of the song. If a section functions mostly in a subordinate manner, often introducing contrast only to make the return of the more important section sound fresh again, it has low rhetorical priority. Chorus sections almost always have high rhetorical priority, while bridge sections almost always have low rhetorical priority. In simple verse-chorus and contrasting verse-chorus forms, the chorus has higher rhetorical priority than the verse. In AABA form, the verses have higher rhetorical priority than the bridge. In simple verse form, there is only one section, so rhetorical priority is less of a concern (though sung verses have higher rhetorical priority than instrumental verses, which are often inserted simply to introduce contrast).

rhetorical priority

The chart on the next page summarizes the four common formal types found in rock music. While we will encounter more complicated formal designs later in this book, these four will apply to a large majority of the songs we study. Listening for form in rock music helps us gain a deeper understanding of how music is structured. It provides fans and students of this music with a glimpse of how musicians, songwriters, producers, and arrangers organize these songs. In many ways, understanding form helps us hear the larger patterns in the music and gives us a sense of the “bigger picture.”

Listening Guide

The Crickets, "That'll Be the Day" Brunswick 55009

Words and music by Buddy Holly, Jerry Allison, and Norman Petty, produced by Norman Petty. Reached #1 on the *Billboard* pop "Best Sellers in Stores" chart and #2 on the *Billboard* "R&B Best Sellers in Stores" chart in 1957.

FORM: Contrasting verse-chorus with instrumental bridge section built on the 12-bar blues structure, which is not used in either the verse or chorus sections.

TIME SIGNATURE: 12/8 (shuffle in 4).

INSTRUMENTATION: Electric guitar, acoustic bass, drums, lead and backup vocals.

0:00–0:04	Introduction , 2 mm.	Solo guitar featured.
0:04–0:19	Chorus , 8 mm.	"Well, that'll be the day . . ."
0:19–0:34	Verse , 8 mm.	"Well, you give me . . ."
0:34–0:49	Chorus , 8 mm.	"Well, that'll be the day . . ."
0:49–1:12	Instrumental bridge , 12 mm.	Guitar solo over 12-bar blues.
1:12–1:27	Chorus , 8 mm.	"Well, that'll be the day . . ."
1:27–1:42	Verse , 8 mm.	"Well, when Cupid shot . . ."
1:42–1:57	Chorus , 8 mm.	"Well, that'll be the day . . ."
1:57–2:14	Ending , 8 mm.	Based closely on chorus, "That'll be the day . . ."

Four Common Formal Types

Simple verse	All verses based on same music, no chorus. Sung verses have priority.
Simple verse-chorus	Verses and choruses based on same music. Choruses have priority.
Contrasting verse-chorus	Verses and choruses based on different music. Choruses have priority.
AABA	Verses and bridge based on different music; can employ full or partial reprise. Verses have priority.

12-bar blues or the doo-wop progression may occur as the basis for any of the sections in these forms. Simple verse, simple verse-chorus, and contrasting verse-chorus forms may also employ a bridge.

Listening Guide



Billie Holiday and Her Orchestra, "A Fine Romance"

Vocalion 3333

Words by Dorothy Fields, music by Jerome Kern. This song appeared in *Swing Time*, a 1936 film starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Astaire's version of the song went to #1 that year, though Holiday's version was also a hit, rising to #9. In a time when multiple versions of a song could be hits, a version by Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians rose to #13, while a version by Henry King also rose as high as #13.

FORM: ABAC, with both full and partial reprises. After an 8-bar introduction, the first 8-bar A-verse section is followed by a contrasting 8-bar continuation. The A-verse section is then repeated but followed by an 8-bar conclusion that contrasts with both the A-verse and the continuation. The basic ABAC form is thus 32 bars in length. The A and C sections then feature instrumental solos and constitute a partial reprise before the entire ABAC structure returns with vocals for a full reprise to conclude the performance.

TIME SIGNATURE: 12/8, with four beats per measure, with each beat divided into three equal parts.

INSTRUMENTATION: Solo vocalist with a small jazz combo including string bass, drums, piano, clarinet, and trumpet.

0:00–0:15	Introduction , 8 mm.	Based on C section, featuring trumpet playing melody, followed by clarinet.
0:15–0:30	A-Verse , 8 mm.	Vocal enters, note piano fills in background. "A fine romance . . ."
0:30–0:46	B-Continuation , 8 mm.	Vocal continues, note melodic interjections by trumpet and clarinet. "We should be . . ."
0:46–1:01	A-Verse , 8 mm.	As before, first phrase returns. "A fine romance . . ."
1:01–1:16	C-Conclusion , 8 mm.	Fresh contrast but draws on B, bring 32-bar section to a close. "I might as well . . ."
1:16–1:32	A-Verse , 8 mm.	Instrumental, clarinet solo as other instruments support and focus remains on soloist, note jazz feel.
1:32–1:48	C-Conclusion , 8 mm.	Instrumental, trumpet solo as other instruments support.
1:48–2:03	A-Verse , 8 mm.	Vocal returns, "A fine romance . . ."
2:03–2:19	B-Continuation , 8 mm.	Much as before, "You're calmer than . . ."
2:19–2:34	A-Verse , 8 mm.	Much as before, "A fine romance . . ."
2:34–2:49	C-Conclusion , 8 mm.	Much as before but with an ending made more conclusive. "I've never mused . . ."

ABAC form

ABAC Form. There is a second formal design that, like AABA form, commonly occurs in American popular music before the rise of rock. The basic model for an **ABAC form** employs four 8-bar phrases like the one for AABA, totaling to 32 bars overall.

A	B	A	C
8 mm.	8 mm.	8 mm.	8 mm.



Billie Holiday is shown here performing with her band in the early 1940s. Though thought of today as a jazz singer with a distinctive vocal style that influenced later singers, Holiday also enjoyed an impressive series of hits on the pop charts, especially in the mid to late 1930s. The list includes “These Foolish Things” (p5, 1936), “The Way You Look Tonight” (p3, 1936), “Who Loves You?” (p4, 1936), “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love” (p5, 1936), “Pennies from Heaven” (p3, 1937), “I’ve Got My Love to Keep Me Warm” (pp4, 1937), and “I’m Gonna Lock My Heart” (p2, 1938).

rhythm section**tempo**

section is to establish a solid foundation for singers, instrumental soloists, and other members of the group that focus on melody. At the heart of the rhythm section is the drummer, whose role is to establish not only the **tempo** and meter but also the “feel” of each song. Most rock drummers employ a set consisting of a snare drum (which sits on a stand between the drummer’s legs), a bass drum (played by the right foot), and a high-hat (two cymbals that can be clamped together using a stand controlled by a foot pedal). Most drummers also use medium-sized drums called tom-toms. Tom-toms that are mounted on the bass drum are called ride toms; those that stand on the floor are called floor toms. A drummer may also use several

The song “A Fine Romance” provides a typical instance of this form. The first 8-bar A section is labeled as a verse, while the B section, labeled “continuation,” introduces contrasting music. The song then repeats the A-verse before concluding with the C section, marked “Conclusion.” In this case, the C section introduces more contrasting material, though in some cases this section may simply rework the music from the B section. As common as the ABAC form was in music of the first half of the twentieth century, it is rare in rock music, though Johnnie Ray’s “Cry” (Chapter 1) provides an example. It is also worth noting that AABA and ABAC forms from the pre-1955 era often feature an opening section that introduces the topic of the song; “Over the Rainbow” and “A Fine Romance” both have such opening sections, though they are often omitted in performance and recording.

WHO’S PLAYING WHAT: INSTRUMENTATION IN ROCK

Beat It: Drums and Percussion. The musical instruments used in rock music, and especially the ways these instruments are combined, are central to the myriad musical styles discussed in this book. While most rock fans can tell the difference between an electric guitar and a keyboard, or a drum set and a saxophone, far fewer listeners understand exactly how these instruments typically work together in songs. Instruments in rock frequently have specific roles within the music. The task of the **rhythm**



Carl Palmer's extensive drum set is seen here from above. Note that he is playing on the high-hat cymbals, with the snare drum between his legs. Two ride toms (with clear heads) are adjacent to the snare and two floor toms (also with clear heads) are to Palmer's right. He is using two bass drums, striking these with the pedals using his right and left foot. Note the array of cymbals used, as well as the wood blocks (black) to Palmer's left.

cymbals, most often a larger ride cymbal and a smaller crash cymbal. The rhythmic patterns drummers play work something like the gears of a clock, with some gears moving quickly and others moving more slowly. The high-hat or ride cymbal is often used for the fastest notes, played in a regular stream. The bass and snare drums are generally played at slower intervals, and often seem to be in dialogue with one another. A typical drumbeat is shown here; the numbers across the top show how the rhythm would be counted, while the x's show which drums (or high-hat) are used on which beats:

Count:	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&		1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&	
High-hat	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Snare			x				x					x				x		
Bass	x			x	x					x			x	x				

The drum set can be enhanced by the addition of other percussion instruments, such as tambourine, cowbell, conga drums, or even hand claps. Most drummers will use one pattern for verses and another for bridges or choruses, and also break the pattern to play “drum fills” that help lead the music from section to section.

The Low Down: Electric Bass. The bass player's job is to “lock in” with the drummer rhythmically, and to provide the important bass notes to the chord progressions played by the guitar and/or keyboards. Within the rhythm section, the bassist is a kind of bridge between the rhythmic and harmonic (or chord-based) dimensions of the music. Often the bass player will create her part around the rhythmic pattern played on the bass drum, stressing those notes rhythmically while filling in other notes to provide an interesting bass line. Much early rock music used the acoustic upright bass,



Parliament Funkadelic's Bootsy Collins playing the electric bass in concert. The electric bass plays a prominent part in rock and is central to funk music.

which could be amplified; but by the early 1960s, the more easily amplified electric bass guitar was the preferred instrument for most popular music except jazz and country. The bass (both acoustic and electric) usually has four strings that match the bottom four strings of the guitar. The distance between the tuning of guitar and bass strings is what musicians call an **octave**, a lower or higher version of the same note. If you sing the pattern Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Ti-Do, the two “Do” notes are an octave apart, and represent the distance between the typical tuning of strings on a bass and a guitar.

Harmony in Motion: Rhythm Guitar and Keyboards.

While the bass usually provides the foundation for a song's harmony within the rhythm section, the rhythm guitar fleshes out the harmonic dimension by playing full chords. Rhythm guitar can be played on either acoustic or electric guitar. The electric guitar produces little sound on its own, but can reach high volume levels when connected to an amplifier. In 1950s rockabilly (Elvis Presley's “That's All Right [Mama],” for example), the acoustic rhythm guitar often replaces the drum set and provides the rhythmic propulsion that drives the song forward. More often, though, the rhythm guitar part complements the bass and drum parts, and these three instruments work together to establish the harmonic and rhythmic basis for the song. The rhythm guitarist also has to be careful to fit his part in with the bass and drums. Sometimes if the bass locks in with the bass drum, the rhythm guitar

octave

will lock in with the snare, emphasizing the snare part while filling in the remaining space between beats. Sometimes the piano, organ, or synthesizer is used along with, or even in place of, the rhythm guitar. If keyboards or organs are used with rhythm guitar, they may play the same rhythmic figure as the guitar or simply sustain chords while the guitar plays its more rhythmic part. However the parts are organized, rhythm guitar and keyboard players have to be careful not to conflict musically.

In the Spotlight: Lead Singers and Backup Vocals. With the rhythmic and harmonic dimensions of the piece firmly secured by the rhythm section, the singer focuses on the melodic dimension of the music. Singers are sometimes very free with the rhythmic placement of their melody notes, which translates into a lively dialectical tension with the tightly structured grid of the rhythm section. The singer's job is to create melodic interest and deliver the lyrics in a convincing manner—one that does not seem contrived or unnatural in comparison with normal speech. Many listeners attend as closely to the lyrics as to the melody that projects them, so a vocal performer has to be sure that the words come across effectively. Many solo vocalists are also accompanied by background vocals. A singer may have no backup vocals



Keyboard instruments most common in rock music are piano, organ, synthesizer, and digital piano. Keyboardist Rick Wakeman from the progressive rock group Yes, who uses synthesizers, organ, and electric piano in this photo, was known for his large battery of instruments.

(Elvis Presley's "That's All Right [Mama]"), or the singer's melody will be accompanied by harmony vocals that follow the melody (the Beach Boys' "Surfer Girl") or support and echo some part of it (the Beatles' "Twist and Shout"). Like the rhythm section parts described earlier, the vocals are usually coordinated (with one another and with the rhythm section) to avoid conflict between parts.

Steppin' Up: Instrumental Solos. In order to create contrast in arrangements, an instrumental solo is often introduced somewhere past the midpoint in a song. This might be a saxophone solo (the Coasters' "Yakety Yak"), a guitar solo (Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze"), or a piano solo (Jerry Lee Lewis's "Great Balls of Fire"). Sometimes an arrangement can feature several solos, as in Yes's "Roundabout." In all of these cases, the instrumental soloist is the central focus of the music for the duration of the solo, taking the place usually reserved for the singer. The job of the rhythm section remains the same as it was during the other sections of the song: to support the soloist. The instrumental solo often makes the return of the vocals sound fresh, since there is usually no singing during the solo. In this regard, the solo is itself subordinate to the sung sections of the track (although with some bands—like Santana—this relationship can be reversed).

Horns and Strings: Sweetening the Sound. Some arrangements use horns or strings to add the finishing touches to a track. Horn sections often consist of a combination of trumpets, trombones, and saxophones used to give a tune a little more "punch." This approach is evident in much of the soul music recorded in Memphis and Muscle Shoals (Chapter 6). Strings can make an arrangement sound bigger and more elegant. Strings are often saved until late in the arrangement and are employed to give the end of the track a convincing lift. An arranger has to be careful that the horns or strings added to "sweeten" a track stay out of the way of the rhythm section and singers, creating a backdrop that enhances the song without drawing too much attention to itself.

coda

riff

How It All Fits Together: “Smoke on the Water.” Now that we have discussed the instruments used in rock music and outlined their respective roles, we will explore an example to observe how instrumentation works. Deep Purple’s “Smoke on the Water” is a prime example of how rock music from the mid-1960s (and beyond) is organized in terms of instrumentation. The track follows the contrasting verse-chorus formal pattern: after a lengthy introduction there are four verse-chorus pairs (the third of which is instrumental), with a **coda** rounding the tune off. It is easy to hear each instrument during the introduction, since the band brings them in almost one at a time. The song begins with the electric guitar alone, playing a four-measure blues-inflected **riff** that is then repeated. Notice the guitar’s distorted tone, which is a result of overdriving the amplifier; this tone is used extensively in rock. The third time through the guitar riff, the drums enter (0:17); first the high-hat alone, and on the fourth time through, the snare drum as well. Notice that the guitar is also doubled by the organ here, although the effect is subtle because the organ is also distorted and sounds like a second guitar. With the fifth occurrence of the guitar riff (0:34), the bass guitar is added, and the sixth time through (0:43), the bass is doubled by the bass drum. As the vocals enter for the first verse (0:51), notice that the drummer is primarily playing the high-hat, bass drum, and snare, using crashes on the cymbal and bass drum to mark the beginning and end of vocal phrases. The guitar and bass are playing almost the same part, while the organ takes the “rhythm guitar” role, playing the chords off the drums and bass. As the chorus begins (1:25), note that the organ becomes more sustained, as do the guitar and bass, while more crashes and drum fills and a second vocal harmony are added. The verses and choruses that follow are mostly the same as the first pair, although the verse and chorus during the guitar solo are different (2:58). The bass moves in faster notes during the solo, while the drum part emphasizes the snare on the faster notes rather than the high-hat. The arrival of the chorus during the solo is particularly dynamic (3:30), as is the return to the guitar riff in the passage before the beginning of the last verse (3:40).

Listening to this example analytically helps us focus our attention on the separate elements that make up “Smoke on the Water.” Most listeners never really attend to the ways the musical parts in a track work together; they may notice only individual parts when one stands out in some way, and then only for a moment. As we continue our study of rock music, try to listen more carefully to each song’s instrumentation to hear how the musicians are working together to make the music sound the way it does. As mentioned earlier, it sometimes helps to follow a single part all the way through a tune, listening to the bass only, for example, then playing the song again and focusing only on the drums. While rock music sometimes gives the impression of musical simplicity, there are often layers of complexity waiting to be discovered. The tapestry of musical texture often does not draw attention to itself; a good rhythm section helps the listener focus on the vocals or solos, making the background instrumentation relatively transparent.

IN THE STUDIO: THE ROLE OF RECORDING TECHNIQUES IN ROCK MUSIC

Because of the importance of recordings to the history of rock music, some scholars argue that the rock repertoire is not simply a collection of songs, but a collection of *specific recordings* of songs. There is, for instance, only one recording of *Sgt. Pepper’s*