

The Golden Age of Rock 'n' Roll

Week 5, March 19, 2018

1956 (part 2): Elvis, Fats, Little Richard

Assignment:

“The Story of Blue Suede Shoes”

<http://www.rebeatmag.com/carl-perkins-elvis-blue-suede-shoes-story/>

Rolling Stone: “The Rope: The Forgotten History of Segregated Rock & Roll Concerts”

<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/rocks-early-segregated-days-the-forgotten-history-w509481>

Little Richard profile with rare photos:

<http://www.history-of-rock.com/richard.htm>

Listen to:

Church Bells May Ring, The Willows, 1956 (#62 Pop, #12 R&B)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tL11eDAWMeA>

[optional] Compare: The Diamonds, 1956 (#14 Pop)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdBN-hOmtVE>

Fever, Little Willie John, 1956 (#1 R&B)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i93-hlwULUk>

[optional] Compare: Peggy Lee, 1956

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kjy2sZ8yBGQ>

Be-Bop-A-Lula, Gene Vincent, 1956

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4_5593-skQ

Oh What a Night, The Dells, 1956

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1ozQT8yQXA>

I Walk the Line, Johnny Cash, 1956 (#1 Country; #19 Pop)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lq0fUa0vW_E

There is a key change between each of the five verses, and Cash hums the new root note before singing each verse. The final verse, a reprise of the first, is sung a full octave lower than the first verse.

My Blue Heaven, Fats Domino, 1956

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CS75X7perbI>

Sold over 5 million copies in 1928 as recorded by Gene Austin.

Money Honey, Elvis Presley, 1956

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-4KROtI1yM>

Compare: The Drifters (McPhatter) (1953)

<https://youtu.be/N8oNHMNCSjQ>

Roll Over Beethoven, Chuck Berry, 1956

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zD80CostTV0>

The Magic Touch, The Platters, 1956

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVX6f3OZ35o>

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Some notes (to be discussed in class):

FATS DOMINO

-Born in New Orleans. Original language was Creole.

-In his career sold more than 65 million records.

- First solo hit was The Fat Man in 1950.
- 35 records in the Billboard Top 40.
- Had 5 million-selling records before 1955.
- 11 Top 10 hits between 1955-1960.
- First breakthrough to Pop charts was 'Ain't That a Shame" in 1955
- Recorded for Imperial Records (Lew Chud {Chudnofsky}) from 1949 till 1962.
- Used instrumentation more similar to R&B which was typical of New Orleans sound.
- Was a relatively colorless performer, did not fit the notion of a rebellious rule breaker.

Wrote : -Ain't That a Shame

- I Want to Walk You Home
- I'm Gonna Be a Wheel Someday
- I'm In Love Again
- I'm Walkin'
- My Girl Josephine
- Whole Lotta Lovin'

-Collaborated on many of these with Dave Bartholomew.

DAVE BARTHOLOMEW

-trumpet player, bandleader, A&R man, songwriter, producer whose career began in the 1940's

-His band frequently backed Domino, and employed him as a piano player with his band when recording other acts.

-key figure in the transition from [jump blues](#) and swing to R&B and as "one of the Crescent City's greatest musicians and a true pioneer in the rock and roll revolution."^[2]

In the mid-1950s they (Bartholomew and Domino) wrote more than forty [hits](#) for [Imperial Records](#), including two songs that reached number one on the [Billboard R&B chart](#), "Goin' Home" and "[Ain't That a Shame](#)".^[3]

Bartholomew's other hit songs as a composer include "[I Hear You Knocking](#)", "[Blue Monday](#)", "[I'm Walkin'](#)", "[My Ding-A-Ling](#)", and "[One Night](#)". He is a member of the [Songwriters Hall of Fame](#), the [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](#)

LITTLE RICHARD

Born in Macon, GA in 1932 to a deeply church based large family.

Little Richard's initial musical influences were gospel performers such as [Brother Joe May](#), [Sister Rosetta Tharpe](#), [Mahalia Jackson](#) and [Marion Williams](#).

Little Richard learned how to play boogie-woogie piano from teenage musician [Esquerita](#) around this time,

Thrown out of his house by his father due to his sexuality, Richard began playing the chitlin' circuit with various travelling acts, often featured singing in drag.

Recorded (with unimpressive results) by both RCA and Peacock Records in the early 1950's.

At the suggestion of [Lloyd Price](#), Little Richard sent a two-song [demo](#) to Price's label, Art Rupe's Specialty Records, in February 1955

-Tutti Frutti (1955) and Long Tall Sally (1956) both sold one million copies. Little Richard had nine hits in the US in 1956 and five in Britain, with recordings such as "[Slippin' and Slidin'](#)", "[Rip It Up](#)", "[Ready Teddy](#)", "[The Girl Can't Help It](#)" and "[Lucille](#)". Many of Little Richard's earlier hits inspired [covers](#) by the likes of [Pat Boone](#), [Elvis Presley](#) and [Bill Haley](#). In October 1957, Little Richard embarked on a package tour in Australia with [Gene Vincent](#) and [Eddie Cochran](#). During the middle of the tour, he shocked the public by announcing his decision to follow a life in the [ministry](#).^[59] Little Richard later explained that during a flight from Melbourne to Sydney that he had seen the plane's red hot engines and felt angels were holding it up.^[60] During the Sydney performance, Little Richard saw a bright red fireball flying across the sky above him and was deeply shaken.^[60] He took the event, later revealed as the launching of the first [artificial Earth satellite Sputnik 1](#), as a sign from God to repent from performing secular music and his wild lifestyle and enter the ministry.^[59] Returning to the states ten days early, Little Richard later learned that his original return flight had crashed into the Pacific Ocean solidifying his belief he was doing as God wanted.^[61] After a performance at the [Apollo Theater](#) and a recording session with Specialty later that month, Little Richard enrolled at [Oakwood College](#) in [Huntsville, Alabama](#), to study theology. For some years Richard confined himself to Gospel recordings.

In 1962, concert promoter [Don Arden](#) persuaded Little Richard to tour Europe after telling him his records were still selling well there. Arden booked him as the headline artist, with [Sam Cooke](#) second on the bill.^[72] Little Richard, thinking it was a gospel tour, performed gospel material at the first show and received a tepid response (Cooke did not open that show, as he was delayed in arriving). After Cooke opened the second show, with vigorous applause from the crowd, Little Richard and his organist [Billy Preston](#) warmed up in darkness before launching into "Long Tall Sally", resulting in hysterical responses.

[AllMusic](#) writer Richie Unterberger stated that Little Richard "merged the fire of gospel with New Orleans R&B, pounding the piano and wailing

with gleeful abandon", and that while "other R&B greats of the early 1950s had been moving in a similar direction, none of them matched the sheer electricity of Richard's vocals.

-Little Richard influenced generations of performers across musical genres.

-Brian Epstein, the manager of the Beatles, asked Little Richard to allow his newly recorded band to open for Little Richard on some tour dates,

-James Brown and Otis Redding both idolized Little Richard. Redding started his professional career with Little Richard's band, The Upsetters.^[180]

-Ike Turner claimed most of Tina Turner's early vocal delivery was based on Little Richard,

- Bob Dylan first performed covers of Little Richard's songs on piano in high school with his rock and roll group

-Jimi Hendrix was influenced in appearance (clothing and hairstyle/ mustache) and sound by Little Richard. He was quoted in 1966 saying, "I want to do with my guitar what Little Richard does with his voice.

-Others influenced by Little Richard early on in their lives included Bob Seger and John Fogerty. Michael Jackson admitted that Little Richard had been a huge influence Mick Jagger and Keith Richards were also profoundly influenced by Little Richard, with Jagger citing him as his first induction to R&B music and referring to him as "the originator and my first idol"

-R&B pioneer Johnny Otis stated that "Little Richard is twice as valid artistically and important historically as Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones put together."

-With his high speed deliveries, ecstatic trills, and the overjoyed force of personality in his singing, he was crucial in upping the voltage from high-powered R&B into the similar, yet different, guise of rock and roll.

-Combining elements of boogie, gospel, and blues, Little Richard introduced several of rock music's most characteristic musical features, including its loud volume and vocal style emphasizing power, and its distinctive beat and rhythm. **He departed from boogie-woogie's shuffle rhythm and introduced a new distinctive rock beat, where the beat division is even at all tempos.**

- Tutti Frutti
- Ready Teddy
- Rip It Up
- Long Tall Sally
- Jenny, Jenny
- Lucille
- Slippin' and Slidin'

Johnny Otis

-musician, composer, bandleader, talent scout, producer
-born Ioannis Alexandres Veliotes; December 28, 1921- singer, musician, composer, arranger, bandleader, talent scout, disc jockey, record producer, television show host, artist, author, journalist, minister, and impresario

-Discovered Little Esther Phillips, Etta James, Big Mama Thornton, Johnny Ace, Jackie Wilson, Little Willie John, Hank Ballard, and The Robins (who eventually changed their name to The Coasters)

-known as the original "King of Rock and Roll"^[1] and the "Godfather of Rhythm and Blues"

-Chose to live his professional and personal life as a member of the African-American community. He wrote, "As a kid I decided that if our society dictated that one had to be black or white, I would be black."^[8]

-Fun Fact: Johnny's brother, Nick Veliotes was the American Ambassador to both Jordan and Egypt.

-Fun Fact: Johnny released a filthy album on Columbia in 1969 listed as being the work of "Snatch and the Poontangs".