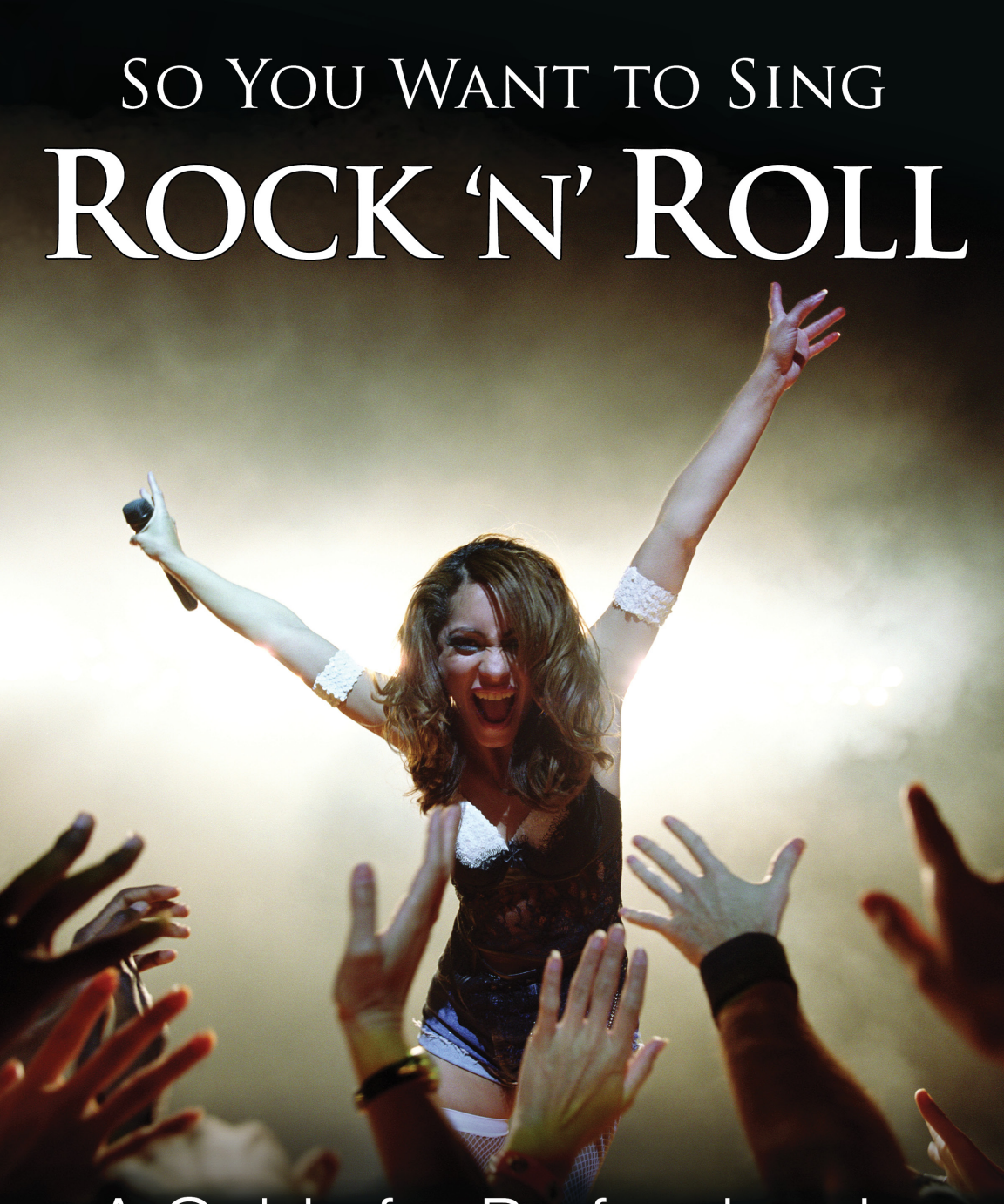
So You Want to Sing Rock 'n' Roll



A Guide for Professionals

Matthew Edwards

A project of the National Association of Teachers of Singing

So You Want to Sing Rock 'n' Roll

So You Want to Sing
A Guide for Professionals

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So You Want to Sing: A Guide for Professionals is a series of works devoted to providing a complete survey of what it means to sing within a particular genre. Each contribution functions as a touchstone work for not only professional singers, but students and teachers of singing. Titles in the series offer a common set of topics so readers can navigate easily the various genres addressed in each volume. This series is produced under the direction of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the leading professional organization devoted to the science and art of singing.

So You Want to Sing Music Theater: A Guide for Professionals, by Karen S. Hall, 2013.

So You Want to Sing Rock 'n' Roll: A Guide for Professionals, by Matthew Edwards, 2014.

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Matthew Edwards

Allen Henderson
Executive Editor, NATS

A Project of the National Association of
Teachers of Singing

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To Jackie and Everett, this is “Your Song.”
Thank you for a wonderful life.

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FOREWORD

So You Want to Sing Rock 'n' Roll: A Guide for Professionals, the second of the So You Want to Sing series, is simply a marvel. Whether you are a skeptical (with good reason) beginning or experienced rock singer, a classical voice teacher, a coach, or something else, I can guarantee you will find yourself clinging to every word in this book. Why? That was my experience as series editor for the project while reading and editing Matt Edward's outstanding work. Whatever your goals or reasons for purchasing this book, you will become enlightened and educated about rock singing in ways you simply couldn't imagine. It's an exciting and fun ride!

I can't think of a better choice than Matt to write this book. His journey started in high school when he began singing in rock bands and participated in theater classes. Matt took a detour during college, where he studied and performed classical music when no other training options were available. During his college years, he came back to his rock roots. While studying classical singing, he continued to teach, as a graduate assistant, mostly music minors who were interested in singing contemporary commercial music (CCM), and there were many rock singers among them. He quickly realized the classical techniques he taught them for juries were not helping them and were not appropriate for the CCM music they wanted and were singing outside of lessons. At this point, he began experimenting with his own rock singing and helping his students learn singing techniques appropriate to contemporary genres. As a coach, he also quickly realized the impact that audio enhancement played in rock singing's final product.

Matt has worked with passion, drive, and dedication on this important project. His knowledge is impressive, and his writing clear and engaging with plenty of humor. While it may be difficult to teach how to sing in a book, Matt comes as close as possible to achieving just that.

I believe that in this important series we will make many important discoveries about how to teach singing in new ways. You will find a treasure trove of information waiting for you in Matt's book. I am extremely proud to have him as part of the project and feel very lucky to work with him. I learned a tremendous amount reading his work, and I predict you will too!

Karen Hall
Series Editor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.

—Thomas A. Edison

There are so many people to thank for all of the experiences that have led to the knowledge that informs my life's work. Mom, I cannot thank you enough for all of the music lessons, rides to rehearsals, meals on the go, and countless hours of noise-making that you endured. Dad, when I was twelve you told me that if I wanted to buy more music gear I needed to start mowing yards to pay for it. That was one of the best things you ever did for me. You taught me to work for what I wanted and that success in life does not come easy. To my brothers, Nathan and Steven, thanks for all the jam sessions and memories. To the best in-laws anyone could ask for, John and Noreen Zito, thank you for always being there and for all of your support. I want to thank my teachers Beverley Rinaldi, Kay Griffel, Gary Race, Paul Transue, and Peter Sicilian for sharing their knowledge and love of teaching with me. To Jeanie LoVetri, thank you for teaching me to teach and sharing your knowledge with me. You continue to be a source of inspiration to this day, and I am eternally grateful for all you have taught me. I'd also like to thank the following:

- My voice department colleagues at Shenandoah University: Kathryn Green, David Meyer, Karen Keating, Aimé Sposato,

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- To my students past and present—you have taught me more than you know, and I am honored to have worked with each and every one of you

To all of my friends who supported me and believed in my work when others questioned why we need to teach rock singers as rock singers, thank you. I particularly want to thank Mark Jones, Jan and Shannon DeAngelo, Chuck and Angie Bush, Adam and Airicia Holcomb, Mandy and Jerrad Holloway, Maria Aimionotis, and Christian Maire. Jonathan Flom, thank you for being my partner in crime in the music theater department at SU. If it were not for Jonathan and his vision for the program, my position at Shenandoah University would not exist. There is no one I would rather co-teach with and nowhere else I would rather be.

I am grateful for all of those who gave their time and energy to helping me with this publication along the way: Kathryn Green, Jeannette LoVetri, David Meyer, Warren Freeman, Edrie Means Weekly, and Jonathan Flom. I especially want to thank Christina Howell for her numerous hours of proofreading and editing.

Without the support of the Karen Hall, the series editor, this project would have never been achievable. Her tireless work throughout the process made it possible to bring this book together in six short months. Thank you to her, Allen Henderson, and Bennett Graff for all of their time and effort in bringing this publication to print.

Finally, I want to thank my incredible wife, Jacqlyn, and my son, Everett. Jackie, you have been with me since the very beginning of my career at the Cleveland Institute of Music. You are always there for me no matter what and you never let me give up. I am forever thankful. Everett, you are not even old enough yet to understand any of this. But I want you to know that your little smiles, laughs, and hugs make every day of my life better than the last.

INTRODUCTION

Beginnings are always messy.

—John Galsworthy

In July of 2013 while at the Voice Foundation Annual Symposium: Care of the Professional Voice, Allen Henderson, executive director of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), asked me if we could have lunch and talk. When he asked me if I would be interested in contributing to an NATS book series, I said sure. Little did I know that I would end up writing an entire book on rock 'n' roll.

The evolution of my career has been unique. When I was in high school I wanted to be a rock star and played in several bands. I also fell in love with acting and was an active part of the theater program at my high school. When it came time to decide my post-graduation plans, I was offered two options by my parents—move out or go to college. I chose the latter and attended the local university, Wright State, for music education, with the hopes of becoming a music teacher and performing in a band on the side. During my second week of school, I was approached by the director of the opera program and was asked to audition. Within a week I was cast as the speaker, second priest, and second man in armor in the *The Magic Flute*. The opera hook was set, and I dove in. I was soon cast in Dayton Opera's chorus and eventually transferred to the Cleveland Institute of Music, which had one of the finest operatic training programs of the time. My mentors there, Beverley Rinaldi and Gary Race, transformed me from a singer into an artist. Rinaldi also offered me my first opportunity to teach

in a university setting as her work-study teaching assistant, an opportunity for which I am eternally grateful.

After graduation, I performed with Lyric Opera Cleveland and Cincinnati Opera outreach before attending Louisiana State University on a graduate assistantship, which eventually became a teaching assistantship. It was while I was at LSU that I started teaching rock singers. The singers in my studio were all music minors and mainly interested in singing contemporary commercial music (CCM) repertoire, not classical music. I realized early on that the classical techniques I was teaching them for their juries were not enough to help them sing the musical styles they were performing outside of lessons. I began re-exploring my own rock voice, reading every article and book I could find, while experimenting with my students in their lessons. Soon, I was hired by LA-based Maple Jam Records as a vocal coach for The Terms, a band that was based in Baton Rouge. I started working with their backup singers and eventually joined the band in rehearsals alongside their Grammy Award–winning producer Greg Ladanyi. That experience changed my teaching. It was then that I realized how significantly the recording process influenced live performance demands and how audio enhancement technology played a part in producing the final product. I also began to realize how easily vocal training could take away the special vocal qualities that made each artist unique.

Even though teaching was my passion, I continued to pursue my operatic career while maintaining a private studio and only teaching pop/rock and music theater performers. I eventually moved to Binghamton, New York, to join Tri-Cities Opera (TCO) as a member of their resident artist program. While singing with TCO, I continued to teach private students, worked with regional recording studios and rock singers, and even ran a small semi-professional theater company for two years. When I saw an advertisement for the NATS intern program in 2009, I applied and was accepted to intern with Jeannette LoVetri.

Jeanie tied all of the pieces together for me and taught me how to get results using functional training. That experience along with attending the CCM Institute and earning certification in Levels I–III of Somatic Voicework permanently changed my teaching. A year later I found myself joining the faculty of Shenandoah University as the first tenure-track faculty member in the United States whose sole position was to teach music theater singers to sing pop/rock.

My career path involved so many twists and turns because, at the time I entered the field, there was no formal degree path to prepare me for what I wanted to do. Fortunately, today there are two graduate programs in the United States offering CCM voice pedagogy degrees, but those are hardly enough to train all of the singers who are interested in pursuing a career in CCM voice pedagogy. Allen's conversation with me at the Voice Foundation was an exciting moment because it meant that NATS was taking a significant step toward forwarding the acceptance of CCM styles and CCM voice pedagogy within the profession. I am honored and delighted to contribute to this project. I hope you enjoy reading this book as much as I have enjoyed writing it, and I hope we have a chance to meet in the future. Those of us who are working in these fields are pioneering the way forward, and it is only through our collected efforts that we will be able to continue the progress that has been made thus far.

All the vocal exercises in chapter 4 can also be viewed at http://www.SoYouWanttoSing.org.

CHAPTER ONE

STILL LIKE THAT OLD TIME ROCK 'N' ROLL

A History Lesson

> If you don't know history, then you don't know anything. You are a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree.
>
> —Michael Crichton

The history of rock 'n' roll is complex, with many factors influencing its development. Innovations overlap each other and there are conflicting claims of who did what first. Scholars continue to investigate the history of every type of music, including rock 'n' roll, and attempt to uncover every nuance and detail of artist, song, and genre. Because there are several wonderful books on rock history already in print, this chapter will provide only brief overviews of some of the most important historical events that laid the groundwork for rock 'n' roll as well as highlight artists who made significant contributions to the development of rock.

Before There Was Rock

From Africa to America

The roots of the rock 'n' roll tree dig deeply into African[1] soil. Natives of Africa used percussion instruments daily for communication, ceremonial activities, and entertainment. Early European explorers of the African continent shared stories about the extensive drumming they observed during their travels and compared the communicative abilities of the African drums to the rhythmic tapping of the telegraph. Western tribes primarily used percussive instruments while eastern tribes also used string instruments, including

zithers and harps. Perhaps the most relevant detail for our purposes is that all instruments there, including the voice, function primarily as rhythm maker—a stark contrast to European traditions where voices function almost exclusively as melody makers (Bane, 1982).

Another important feature of African musical traditions is the absence of written musical notation. In the Western classical tradition of Europe, one person (the composer) writes the music and other people (the musicians) perform the music. In order for everyone to do what the composer expected, the musicians had to have those musical ideas written down. Even before the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, monks kept steady employment and their fingers ink-stained copying music for performers (Grout & Palisca, 1996). In Africa, music transferred from person to person through direct participation in the creative process (Bane, 1982). Audiences for Western classical music in Europe experienced music by attending a church service, court performance, or public performance, and while they may have either talked among themselves or sat quietly, they did not participate in the music making (Weber, 1997). By contrast, music making in Africa was a communal event experienced through direct participation of everyone in attendance as a way to share mutual experiences, reflect on the struggles of everyday life, and worship the gods. Those without drums to play would stamp their feet, use rhythm sticks they made out of bones, use bells, or clap their hands (Bane, 1982; Jones, 2005c).

In the early days of the American colonies, settlers attempted to recreate the musical traditions of their European homelands. Colonial songs contained European conventions and never developed into anything uniquely American beyond the subjects of the texts (Crawford, 2001). However, with the arrival of slaves from Africa, new musical traditions became available to performers, and the combination of these European harmonic traditions and rhythmic elements from Africa led directly to what we know now as rock 'n' roll. Slavery, the Great Awakening, congregational singing, honky-tonks, African American popular music, U.S. population shifts, the GI Bill, the Brits, and Elvis Presley all paved the way for modern rock 'n' roll.

Slavery and Music on the Plantation

Slave owners soon discovered that the drums used in the slaves' music were not solely for music making; they were also being used as communication devices. The rhythmic patterns of the drums had no connection to the

English language, but they did mimic elements of African languages that only the slaves could understand. When the slave owners realized that the drums were being used for communication, they quickly banned them to prevent rebellion (Bane, 1982).

Rhythm making was such an essential feature of African music that, even without the drums, slaves found ways to be rhythmic. Without instruments, they resorted to physical actions to create beats and made vocal choices that added rhythm to the music. An acceptable musical outlet for the slaves, religious songs became subject to this rhythmic treatment. Plantation owners felt an obligation to "save the souls" of their slaves. While at church, slaves participated by singing along with the hymns, and, since their masters insisted they only sing songs in the fields that the masters could understand, they sang hymns from the church and added melodic and rhythmic embellishments derived from their own traditions. Songs performed in that manner became known as spirituals. Spirituals eventually developed into new styles, such as gospel and the secular storytelling form we call the blues (Bane, 1982; Crawford, 2001).

Music in the Church

Many of the original settlers of the United States were Puritans who immigrated, seeking religious freedom. The Puritan religion was part of the Christian faith and had its roots in the Anglican church (Bane, 1982; Jones, 2005d). Early settlers came to believe that Puritan rules regarding daily life had limited relevance to life in America, and they began to question some of their beliefs. When Evangelist George Whitefield came to the United States from England in 1739, he stirred up the populace by preaching a new message of hellfire and brimstone. With a message and style of delivery unfamiliar to most Americans, Whitefield fascinated parishioners accustomed to hearing monotonous Puritan ministers preaching long, boring sermons (Jones, 2005b). In order to accommodate the attendees of these traveling worship services, organizers erected large tents, and the events became known as "tent revivals." Tent revivals frequently turned into spirit-filled spectacles. They provided the perfect venue for whites to take on some of the traditions they had observed in Southern blacks,[2] specifically their song traditions and body movements (Bane, 1982; Crawford, 2001; Jones, 2005b). This movement of evangelical worship led America into what is called the First Great Awakening.

During the First Great Awakening, worshipers found a new desire for religious freedom with less control from church hierarchies. Leaders of the movement declared that all church members had both the right and responsibility to participate in worship services and church leadership (Jones, 2005a). Because of parishioners' newfound responsibility, congregational singing became increasingly important. Services featured church songs from Europe, as well as any other type of music to which parishioners could add religious texts. By the late 1700s, publishers were eager to publish the extremely popular and highly lucrative church songbooks. Church leaders, eager to help parishioners learn to sing the new music, developed the shape-note system. These same leaders developed singing schools to help teach the art of singing in four-part harmony (Bane, 1982; Crawford, 2001; Seeger, 1957).

Easily memorized and singable, revival songs provided a release from daily stresses and cares of the common man. However, it wasn't long before leaders in the church began taking steps to remove what they perceived as "primitive music" from the revival churches. From the Civil War forward, music was codified and handed over to church choirs where it could be controlled and contained by those in power (Bane, 1982). When church music making was taken from the masses and handed to the elite, the masses began to seek out other music-making opportunities, which led to the growth of popular music.

The Blues, Hillbilly, and Country Music

The blues grew out of gospel music, which has its roots in the field songs of Southern slaves. To reduce the monotony of fieldwork, slaves sang songs in a call and response pattern where a large group of singers repeated the lyrics and melody sung by the leader (Szatmary, 1996). This call and response pattern formed the basis of the twelve-bar blues. Lyrically, the twelve-bar blues begin with a four-measure phrase that is repeated in the second four measures and then concluded with new lyrics over the final four measures. Harmonically, the first four measures sustain a I chord, measures five and six introduce the IV chord, measures seven and eight return to the I, and measures nine and ten set up the final cadence with a V chord, which resolves to I in measures eleven and twelve (Everett, 2009).[3]

To qualify as a honky-tonk, a whiskey bar in the South had to offer live music and alcohol and cater to a working-class clientele. The owners

of the honky-tonks had one goal in mind when offering live music—to keep people dancing and drinking. To make money working in the honky-tonks, a traveling musician had no choice but to play songs those audiences liked. This meant that blues musicians had to learn hillbilly songs and hillbilly singers had to learn the blues. Musicians also had to learn popular songs of the day, often written by European-trained composers, which they then embellished with their own stylizations. Because recordings were not readily available, these songs were transferred in the oral tradition, with each new performer adding new variations. Whites learned from blacks and blacks learned from whites, and when the styles intermingled, they informed each other. Eventually the combination of the two led to new genres, such as rockabilly (Bane, 1982).

While music producers considered rhythm and blues to be the music of low-income black Americans and hillbilly and country western the music for low-income whites (Covach, 2009), the lines between the styles are indistinct. In the simplest terms, hillbilly and blues songs employed only a solo guitar, whereas country music added other melody-making instruments, such as violin, and other chord-producing instruments, such as mandolin and banjo to the mix. Because the styles flourished alongside each other in the South, the boundaries were often difficult to define, but what really separated the styles from each other was race. The United States was deeply segregated in the early twentieth century, and record executives reflected this separation in music marketing. Therefore, even though the styles became more and more similar because of the "cross-pollination" of the performers, sales categories distinguished white artists under the term "country western" and black artists under the term "rhythm and blues" (Garofalo, 2005).

African American Popular Music

Even though music producers marketed the different styles separately, white audiences continued to find black music fascinating. When possible, they watched slaves gathering to sing and dance in "ring shouts" after a long day's work (Crawford, 2001) and attended commercially produced minstrel shows. Segregation made attending some live performances problematic for white audiences, but the publishing of these tunes in the form of sheet music allowed white audiences to enjoy them at home. Ragtime came into popularity in the 1890s when publishers began printing sheet music versions of songs that had gained popularity on the vaudeville circuit. By

1910, nearly every Southern city with a large black population had its own vaudeville theater whose purpose was to entertain the black population with popular songs of the day. These theaters served as the breeding ground for ragtime and, eventually, the "popular blues," a Europeanized version of a rural music style that had been evolving in the South.[4] By 1912, there was an explosion of blues sheet music on the market, fueled in large part by W. C. Handy's music publishing company in Memphis, Tennessee (Abbott & Seroff, 1996; Crawford, 2001).

Perhaps one of the most important developments in the commercialization of the blues occurred on February 14, 1920. The white vaudeville shouter Sophie Tucker had scheduled a recording session that day but had to cancel at the last minute. Perry Bradford, a black songwriter/producer who was eager to record his song "Crazy Blues," convinced record executives at OKeh Records to let him record the song with African American singer Mamie Smith (Garofalo, 2005). This album, pressed and distributed for commercial sale, surprised everyone by selling 75,000 copies within the first month. Record labels suddenly began scurrying to find other blues artists to record in order to take advantage of the public's interest in the music (Ward, Stokes, & Tucker, 1986).

In the 1910s and the 1920s, more than 1.3 million blacks left the South to seek employment in the Northern industrial cities (Higgs, 1976). The great migration brought not only the people but also their musical culture to the North. As Southern blues musicians moved into the cities, they began gigging in local bars and clubs. The artists formed combos and followed in the steps of jazz musicians, adding drums, bass guitar, and the newly invented electric guitar to their music. Electrically amplified instruments increased the overall volume levels of the stage, so singers began to electronically amplify their voices using microphones (Covach, 2009). Recording studios opened in many of the major cities, providing opportunities for musicians to make their music available to larger audiences. Sun Records in Memphis, Chess Records in Chicago, King Records in Cincinnati, and Atlantic Records in New York all became successful by recording blues artists (Covach, 2009). These records, originally called "race" records and pressed primarily for a black audience, soon became reclassified when industry executives discovered that whites were buying the records as well. "Rhythm and blues," a less offensive title than "race" records, had the added benefit of attracting even more white customers (Covach, 2009).

Icons You Need to Know

Robert Johnson was one of the first blues musicians to record his own music. Songs such as "Sweet Home Chicago," "Crossroads," and "Stop Breaking Down" influenced bands, such as Cream, the Rolling Stones, and Buddy Guy. Johnson recorded twenty-nine tracks from 1936 to 1937 before dying at the young age of twenty-seven from strychnine poisoning. Johnson sang in the traditional blues style, accompanied only by guitar. This set his music apart from the commercialized European-blues style heard on the vaudeville stage and printed in sheet music (George-Warren & Romanowski, 2001).

Enter Elvis Presley

Elvis Aaron Presley, born January 8, 1935, in Tupelo, Mississippi, changed rock 'n' roll forever. Presley's mother, a sewing-machine operator, and his father, a truck driver, regularly attended an Assembly of God church where young Presley regularly heard traditional Southern gospel singing. When Presley was three, his father was arrested for passing bad checks and was sentenced to eight months in prison. After he was released, the family fell on hard times and spent the rest of Presley's childhood trying to stay above the poverty line.

Presley received his first guitar around the age of eleven and began teaching himself to play. The family moved to Memphis in 1948 when he was almost thirteen years old, a move that had a major impact on his musical future. It was in Memphis that Presley first heard blues musicians and their records. Not only could young Elvis listen to blues records on WDIA, a black radio station in Memphis, but he could also take trips to downtown Memphis and stroll up and down Beale Street to meet the musicians in person.

Presley graduated from high school in 1953 and immediately went to work in a tool factory before driving trucks like his father. In the summer of 1953, Presley went to the Memphis Recording Service, a subsidiary of Sun Records that allowed anyone to make a recording for a fee, and laid down his first two songs. Sam Phillips, the owner of Sun Records, had noticed the increasing popularity of R&B music among white teenagers but also knew that parents were not fond of their children listening to race records. Phillips and his fellow executives knew they had a problem. How could they make a profit on a musical style that had such negative connotations? Phillips is cited as frequently having said, "If I could find a white man with the Negro sound and the Negro

feel, I could make a billion dollars." When Phillips heard Presley recording in his studio, he recognized the chance of a lifetime (Ward et al., 1986).

Phillips put two country musicians in the studio with Presley, playing rhythm guitar and slap bass, to record three songs, including "That's All Right," a blues tune originally recorded by Arthur Crudup. A local DJ named Dewey Phillips started spinning the album two days later, and Presley quickly began to attract national attention. By 1956, RCA Records cut a deal to buy Presley's contract from Sun Records. RCA put their significant resources behind him, and on January 28, 1956, they arranged his national television debut on the Dorsey Brothers' Stage Show. Because television connected the person with the music, producers knew that Elvis's face (being both white and handsome) would bring in record sales. By 1957 Presley was everywhere. He was on TV, on the radio, and in the movies (George-Warren & Romanowski, 2001). He was the first performer to combine music, image, and attitude (Morrow, 2009). Elvis Presley was the world's first rock star.

How Big Business Changed the Future of American Music

Audio Recordings

Thomas Edison invented the cylindrical recorder in 1877 (Jenkins, 2001), and for the first time ever humans could capture sound and replay it in their homes. By the end of the nineteenth century, several entrepreneurs had established businesses dedicated to the burgeoning audio recording industry. By 1925, electronic amplification set the stage for a monumental change in the way that Americans experienced music. Early recordings mainly consisted of instrumental dance music, operatic works, and symphonic works. Two significant recording events in the nineteen-teens changed the face of the audio recording industry. In 1917, the Victor Recording Company recorded the Original Dixie Land Band, and in 1920 OKeh Records recorded the song "Crazy Blues" sung by Mamie Smith. These records sparked an interest in two black music styles that were to have an important impact on rock 'n' roll: jazz and the blues (Crawford, 2001).

Radio

By the end of the 1920s, radio had worked its way into millions of American households. This fascinating invention allowed performers to

enter listeners' homes and form an intimate bond with them. Radio also allowed audiences to listen to music without having to purchase it. During the Great Depression, radio became an important marketing tool for performers since most Americans had little to no discretionary income and would only spend money to purchase music by familiar artists. The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (known as ASCAP) collected royalties from radio stations for its clientele of mainstream popular and classical artists. When the organization was unable to settle a dispute with broadcasters during the 1940s, ASCAP's artists were taken off the air, which meant that broadcasters had to seek out non-ASCAP artists to keep broadcasting music. Keeping their business model alive meant turning to country, folk, and rhythm and blues music (Mooney, 1968; Regal, 2005).

Alan Freed

A discussion about radio and rock 'n' roll would not be complete without mentioning Alan Freed. Freed was a radio disc jockey in Cleveland, Ohio, at a station whose broadcasts covered northeastern Ohio while also reaching north into Ontario and east into western New York and western Pennsylvania (Fong-Torres, 2001). In 1951, Freed heard from a local record store owner that white teenagers had been buying a lot of race records. Freed returned to his radio station and played a few of the best sellers on the air, which were an immediate hit (Garofalo, 2005). His listening audience quickly began to expand, and the popularity of his "Moondog Show" increased. Freed knew that parents would be quite upset if they found out their children were listening to race records over the air, so he decided to start calling the music "rock 'n' roll." Since the term was colorblind; the audience was left to decide if the artists were black or white (Regal, 2005). Rock 'n' roll was poised to take over.

The Portable Radio

Another important technological development occurred around the same time that rock 'n' roll was gaining airplay. In 1954, Texas Instruments introduced the first mass-produced portable transistor radio. In 1957, Sony introduced its own version with a more attractive case, leather carrying strap, and an earphone, all of which made it marketable to a wider demographic. Portable radios made it possible for teenagers to listen to music anywhere they went. It also meant that they could listen to any type of music they wanted to without their parents hearing it (Regal, 2005).

The "Whitening" of Rock 'n' Roll

Rock has always stood in the middle of a struggle between the roots of the music and the corporations interested in taking it over to make a profit. Some of the earliest and best-known record labels, such as Chess and Sun, were independent businesses that catered to local audiences and tastes. But once corporations took over, their desire to "clean up" rock music is readily apparent.

Pat Boone is a prime example of how the music industry used its power in an attempt to limit the integration of blacks into American popular culture. With corporate backing, Boone became famous by reworking songs by black artists for a primarily white middle-class audience. Boone not only rewrote the lyrics to make the songs more "vanilla" (Szatmary, 1996) but also created performances of the music that were musically cleaner and more "square." He became an acceptable alternative to artists, such as Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Chuck Berry, whom parents perceived as hyper-sexualized. Clearly successful, Boone landed thirty-eight top-forty hits, supplanting the original artists in the spotlight as well as in the record store. Since copyright laws were not the same as they are today, performers such as Boone, who reworked the songs of black artists, were not obligated to share profits with the original songwriters. As a result, many of the original songwriters never achieved the financial success their songs brought to other artists and had to either support themselves with day jobs or tour constantly in order to stay financially above water (Ward et al., 1986).

Television

When it arrived in the 1940s, television supplanted radio as the dominant force in music broadcasting. By 1953, American households owned twenty-seven million television sets (Szatmary, 1996), and programs such as the *Ed Sullivan Show* and Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* broadcast live performances throughout the United States featuring bands performing for screaming throngs of teenage fans (Ward et al., 1986). Image began to matter at least as much as sound when video cameras zoomed in to give viewers an up-close look at the band members. Soon it became clear that while musicians may come to national prominence on the radio, television was how they would rocket to stardom (Fong-Torres, 2001).

The Growth of Consumerism

The economic boost from World War II created another important shift in American culture that contributed to the explosion of rock 'n' roll

and other popular music forms. The gross national product of the United States grew from $91.1 billion in 1939 to $300 billion in 1950. In the process, the economy created seventeen million new jobs. Americans suddenly found themselves with income above and beyond the threshold needed to sustain daily life. They bought appliances, clothes, cars, and music. Their children earned allowances, and many spent their extra money on entertainment. As more Americans began to purchase music, advertisers who had previously controlled the musical standards through their sponsorship began to lose control of public taste (Girard & Miller, 2008). The recording industry and radio broadcasters found themselves with no choice but to meet consumer demands.

The GI Bill and Population Growth on College Campuses

Over eight million veterans returning from World War II took advantage of the GI Bill and attended college. These young adults were not only learning together but also having fun together sharing cultures, beliefs, and music. The unbridled growth of their demographic established their position as a prominent economic force in the evolution of American culture. College students outside of parental control could listen to whatever music they liked. They could dance, drink, experiment with drugs, and have relations with members of the opposite sex. It was a much different higher-education demographic from what had existed before World War II, when only children of the upper middle class and wealthy elite could afford to attend college (Mann, 2001).

Population Trends

The large shift in population from rural to urban living strongly influenced musical tastes. In 1880, the urban population of the United States was a modest 16 percent of the total population. By 1960, that number had swelled to 70 percent. The overall percentages of whites and blacks in urban settings were nearly equal in 1960 with 70 percent and 73 percent, respectively (Carter et al., 2006). In contrast to rural areas where there were greater distances between dwellings, population density in the nation's urban centers led to a greater likelihood of close contact with members of other races. As whites and blacks walked across town, they heard each other's music wafting from apartments and music clubs. As whites got to know their new neighbors, they began to sympathize with the struggles