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Slinger, 2018

The Golden Decade 1954 - 1963

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Rock-and-Roll (r äk'n roll') n. first so used (1951) by Alan Freed, Cleveland disc jockey, taken from the song "My Baby Rocks Me with a Steady Roll". The use of rock, roll, rock and roll, etc., with reference to sexual intercourse, is traditional in blues, a form of popular music that evolved in the 1950's from rhythm and blues, characterized by the use of electric guitars, a strong rhythm with an accent on the offbeat, and youth-oriented lyrics. A form of popular music arising from and incorporating a variety of musical styles, especially rhythm and blues, country music, and gospel. Originating in the United States in the 1950s, it is characterized by electronically amplified instrumentation, a heavily accented beat, and relatively simple phrase structure

This web page attempts to explore the roots of rock in such a way as to illuminate the natural progression of musical styles. To often the study of rock begins with Bill Haley and His Comets and includes scant information about the blues and rhythm records that he, and others, used as a model. A musical genre does not simply appear, it gradually evolves to a point in time when some event-performance, publication, or recording allows listeners to perceive its unique qualities and apply a label. Wynonie Harris' 1947 recording of "Good Rocking Tonight" was one of many "rhythm records" made during the late 1940s, however when it was recorded by Elvis Presley in 1954 it seemed like a new and different approach. What made it seem new and different was its context. Without exploring the history of black popular music, country and western music, race relations, technical developments, and the music business one can be led easily to the conclusion that rock and roll was some new and different music which appeared suddenly.

This page begins with the African musical traits brought here beginning in 1619 and attempts to trace their fusion with the European music brought here by the colonists. The story of this musical interaction is also the story of American popular music and includes the plantation songs of Stephen Foster, the ragtime of Scott Joplin, the blues of Bessie Smith, the jazz of Count Basie, and the jump bands of Louis Jordan. The knowledge of the stream of American popular music allows one to understand that rock and roll was a natural result of the combined forces that effected the music.