Modern Music Unit

In this unit...

We will talk about:
1) Pop music
2) Hip Hop
3) Rock music
4) Country Music

How have they all evolved???

Music ‘Revolutionaries’ - artists that literally changed music

Elvis Presley
The Beatles
Michael Jackson
Metallica
Nirvana
Garth Brooks

Led Zeppelin
Jimi Hendrix
Bob Dylan
Chuck Berry
Sugarhill Gang

Evolution of Pop

Pop Music

Originated in the US and UK in the mid 1950’s.

Originally “Popular” music, it meant anything that was popular on the radio. “Pop” and “Rock” were synonymous in the beginning.

In the late 1960’s Pop music began to be differentiated from Rock n’ Roll.

In this unit, we will listen to music and watch videos that are important to the development of today’s Pop and Rock Music.

Pop Music - What is it?

Pop music encompasses a large amount of music, and often borrows elements from various genres of music including Urban, Dance, Rock, Latin and Country.

The most identifying factors are:
1) Short to medium length songs
2) Songs written in a basic format (verse/chorus structure)
3) Common use of repetition - repeated choruses, melodic tunes and hooks
Pop Music - Definitions

1) **Hook** is an easily identifiable melody that draws (or hooks) the listener into the song.

2) **Form** is a word we use to describe the structure of a piece of music. Just like the form of a circle differs from a square, songs can be put together with different pieces that the others to make it more unique.

3) **Genre** is a word we use to help categorize a song that has a particular sound, or how it is similar to other songs.

4) **Minimalism** is a style in which there is repetition of short melodic phrases that change gradually, producing a hypnotic effect.

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Pop Music - Genres

Here are just a few genres of music:

- Electronic Dance
- Musical Theater
- Jazz
- Rock
- Classical
- Blues
- Pop
- Heavy Metal
- Hip Hop
- Country
- Folk
- Rhythm and Blues
- Pop
- Dance
- Soul
- New Age
- Opera
- Dubstep
- House Music
- Grunge
- Trance
- Progressive Rock
- Indie Rock
- World Music
- Techno
- Gospel
- Ska

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Pop Music - It's Complicated...

Pop music is seen by many as just the songs that make the top charts. But the charts themselves contain songs from a variety of source genres, including Classical, Jazz, Rock and other novelty songs.

As a genre, Pop is seen to exist and develop separately from the charts, so the term "pop music" may be used to describe a specific genre, it's designed to appeal to a wide range of people and ages, and is geared more towards "singles" for the youth, whereas Rock is geared more towards "albums" for adults.

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How to Write a Hit Pop Song

Even though it didn't get it’s official start until the mid 1950’s, Pop Music as we know it is the result of the evolving music scene in America. It started out as Jazz, moved into Blues, and then found its way into Rock, and Pop.

A big part of American Music is the Beat, so it makes sense to track pop music by the advancement of the drum set.

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Pop Music - The Evolution...

While Bebop music was exploring the boundaries of jazz music, it didn't appeal to the average person who wanted to go out on a Friday night and dance to the music.

However, another style also evolved from the big band genre while retaining the dance feel -- Rhythm & Blues!
Pop Music - Rockabilly (1954)

It is a culmination of many different music genres that have evolved over many generations and one of the key elements of Pop and Rock'n'Roll is Rockabilly!

Pop Music - Early Rock (1954)

Bill Haley & His Comets recorded the iconic hit 'Rock Around the Clock' in 1954 and is one of the most important records in rock and roll history.

All of the elements combined became a totally unique and revolutionary new sound that had never been heard before!

Pop Music - The British Invasion (circa 1964)

The British Invasion occurred in 1964 when numerous British bands became popular in the U.S. -- all starting with The Beatles!

After appearing on the Ed Sullivan Show, the audience watching saw Ringo playing with matched grip and it quickly became the default grip for many drummers!

Pop Music’s Defining Groups

There are several groups throughout history that have had a major influence on how it is perceived. Including, these that started the Superstar movement...

- The Beatles
- Elvis Presley
- The Rolling Stones
- Michael Jackson
- Marvin Gaye

The Beatles - A Short History...

What made them popular?
1) Stage Presence
2) Excellent song writers
   a) Still modeling songs off of their ideas
3) Not afraid to experiment
4) Not just a 4 chord band

Elvis - Things most people don’t know...

What made him popular?
1) His appearance
2) His Voice - very unique at the time
3) His hip gyrations
4) His generosity
Michael Jackson - from back up singer to Superstar

What made him popular?
1) He knew how to make hits
2) Excellent Dancer
3) Great stage presence and appearance
4) His voice - lots of character

Modern Music Quiz #1

1) What are the identifying factors for Pop Music?
2) Define Hook
3) Define Form
4) Define Genre
5) Name 3 artists are responsible for changing the face of Pop and Rock music? (Could have many answers...)

What makes a song popular?

We are going to listen to a podcast of the science behind what makes a song popular. Take notes because there will be questions based upon it.


28 minutes.

What makes a song popular - Main Ideas (for notes)

1) Humans are “Pattern Seekers”
2) Mere Exposure Effect - liking something increases with familiarity
3) Repetition is in all music
4) Predictability - one section leads you to the next
5) Participation - based upon repetition (Hallelujah)

The psychology of pop music

The primary idea that makes music popular is... Repetition.

Repetition can come in a couple of forms - sometimes called a hook or a motive (theme) - it is a melody that is memorable due to a repeating rhythm or succession of notes.

MOTIVE - a theme - a memorable section of music that comes back and allows the listener to identify the repetition. Started originally by Beethoven.

The psychology of pop music

When your mind hears something it recognizes, there’s a small dopamine rush that happens in the brain as a “reward” for its recognition of a familiar topic that you predicted will happen again.

Hallelujah - repeated lyric. Repeated music.

What makes it so popular? Psychologists say that for Hallelujah, it is its ability to participate in it, because you can become a part of the music.
**The psychology of pop music**

The most popular tunes will have multiple forms of repetition involved in the form (structure) of the song.

- Rhythm in bass/treble
- Melodic repetition
- Lyrical repetition
- Verse repetition
- Chorus repetition

Too much repetition can result in a song being annoying (Wheels on the bus...).

**Rhythm in bass/treble**

**Melodic repetition**

**Lyrical repetition**

**Verse repetition**

**Chorus repetition**

**Too much repetition can result in a song being annoying** (Wheels on the bus...).

**The psychology of pop music**

Philip Glass - master composer of minimalism and ostinatos. Writes music that is mysterious, and wrote the film score for some movies that have thought provoking plots: like for the movie *The Illusionist*.

- **MINIMALISM** - music characterized by the repetition of very short phrases that change gradually, producing a hypnotic effect.
- **OSTINATO** - a repeating melodic, rhythmic or harmonic pattern. Can have more than just one.

**The psychology of pop music**

John Williams (Star Wars, Superman, Jurassic Park, Jaws...) is known for his ability to compose fantastic, memorable themes.

Simple repeating rhythms with changing chords, makes it simple for the listener to categorize and remember the melody.

In short, music becomes popular because of its ability to be remembered. Ever get a song stuck in your head? That simplistic idea is what producers and songwriters look for when publishing a song or album.

**The psychology of pop music**

Next, we will listen to the top 100 most memorable pop songs from the 1960's to today.

What do you notice?

**The psychology of film scores**

Next, we will listen to the top 39 most memorable film scores.

Some of the movies you will probably not recognize, but listen...

What do you notice?

**Pop Characteristics...**

1) Emphasis on the **BACKBEAT** - strong accent or emphasis on a normally unaccented beat.
   - a) What instrument usually accents the backbeat in a song?
2) Emphasis on the Bass - allows listener to feel the beat and the music
3) Minimalistic **CHORD PROGRESSION** - the succession of musical chords in a song:
   - a) **CHORD** - 3 or more notes sounding simultaneously
4) Minimalistic use of instruments
   - a) Use a musical “hook” a lot

**The psychology of film scores**

Next, we will listen to the top 100 most memorable pop songs from the 1960's to today.

What do you notice?
The problem with Pop...

A scientific report that examined over 464,000 recordings of popular music recorded between 1955 and 2010 found the progression of pop music to be:

1) less variety in pitch progressions
2) growing average loudness levels
3) less diverse instrumentation and recording techniques
4) and less timbral variety

All of which declined after reaching a peak in the 1960s.

**Timbre** - the unique sound of instruments or voices, making them recognizable. This term also applies to Genres and their unique sound.

Modern Music Quiz #2

1) Repetition is the key factor when writing a memorable song, but is it always the same item for each song that makes each song popular? Why?
2) What is the Mere Exposure Effect and how does it work?
3) What is a Chord Progression?
4) What is a Backbeat and how is it used?
5) What aspects of Pop music have been declining since the 1960’s?

Hip Hop - currently the most popular genre

**Hip Hop** - Developed in the 1970’s by inner city African Americans combining stylized rhythmic music, and a rhythmic and rhyming chant.

Developed as a result of 4 stylized elements:

1) MC’ing/Rapping
2) DJ’ing/Scratching
3) Break-Dancing
4) Graffiti-Writing

Fresh Prince of Bel-Aire (Hip Hop hit mainstream)

As Hip Hop became popular, Will Smith capitalized on it with a hit tv series, and then a very successful music and acting career.

Pachelbel’s Canon in D - The Original Pop Song...
Other elements can include:

1) Sampling beats and/or bass lines from previously recorded music
2) Using synthesized beats of bass lines
3) Rhythmic Beat-boxing

Hip Hop has become synonymous with “Rapping”, even though rapping is not a required component of Hip Hop.

Hip Hop

DJ’s played extended versions of songs at block parties but did not get actively recorded for radio until 1979 because of its lack of acceptance outside ghetto neighborhoods.

Due to the predominance of the poverty of those involved in the block parties, Hip Hop had a slow birth, and slow acceptance rate.

Scratching and beat-matching became a sought after skill for DJ’s.

**BEAT-MATCHING:** is when a DJ pitch-shifts, or time-stretches a track in order for it to be the same speed as the previous track.

Rapper’s Delight

Sugarhill Gang’s song “Rapper’s Delight” is regarded as the first hip hop record to introduce Hip Hop to the mainstream music listeners.

I’m sure it will make you smile, but knowing the history and preserving that history is very important to many in the music industry today.

Ranked #2 on VH1’s Greatest Hip Hop Songs.

New School Hip Hop (roughly ’84 - ’93)

Run DMC, LL Cool J (Ladies Love Cool James), Public Enemy, Beastie Boys, to name a few of the most popular artists in this time period.

Hip Hop began to be more refined and popularity reached new highs.

LL Cool J hit from 1990

Mama Said Knock You Out

Beastie Boys

Arguably their most famous song:

*Intergalactic*

Incidentally, the music at the beginning is from the Romantic Period, and is called *Night on Bald Mountain*.

Gangsta Rap - subgenre of Hip Hop

Hip Hop music is rapidly evolving, seeking to become more legitimate and less “fun/funny.”

N.W.A., Ice-T, and Ice Cube (and others) are founders of this subgenre of Hip Hop.

The lyrics of *Gangsta Rap* focus on the impoverished conditions of living within much of our larger cities’ ghettos, and upon the violence that rocks the lives of those that live there.

Major artists continued to follow in the founders' footsteps include Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Notorious B.I.G., and Lil’ Kim.
**Snoop Dogg - Gin and Juice (1993)**

Reached #8 on Billboard's Hot 100.  
Nominated for Grammy for Best Rap Solo Performance.  
Still covered today by a lot of aspiring rappers.

**Southern Rap, Neo-Soul**

Other subgenres of Hip Hop began to emerge as many styles began to branch out from artists wanting to experiment and make a name for themselves.

**Neo-Soul** is a fusion of R&B, Funk and Jazz, and began to branch out in the mid-90's, with artists like Lauryn Hill.

Arguably her biggest hit:  
*Ex-Factor* (1998)

What other artists fit into this genre?

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**Nu Metal**

Other genres began to tap into the success of Hip Hop artists by incorporating aspects into their own music.

**Nu Metal** - a fusion of Rock and Hip Hop often incorporating rap and funky beats.

Korn, Limp Bizkit, 311, Kid Rock, Linkin Park are bands that saw success with this particular combination of genres.

**Nu-Metal example: 311 - “Down”**

Combination of rapping and singing, with a hip hop style beat and repetitious guitar chords.

Any artists today have this sound?

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**Kid Rock - Bawitdaba**

Immensely popular and very heavy. Incorporates rap, a rock beat and heavy guitar.

**Alternative Hip Hop**

**Alternative Hip Hop** refers to a group of artists that tend not to conform to any of the traditional forms of rap, but draw heavily on funk, rock, jazz, soul, reggae and even folk.

Began to gain importance because of the declining growth of Gangsta Rap (declining because of its negative connotations), and considering lots of artist success with crossovers.

Outkast, Kanye West, Arrested Development are some of the artists associated with Alternative Hip Hop.
Outkast - Hey Ya (2003)

A commercial success, reaching the top five of most of the charts it entered, and reaching number one in Australia, Canada, Norway, Sweden, and the United States. Named 20th most successful song of the 2000’s decade.

Modern Music Quiz #3

1) How did Hip Hop get its start?
2) What branch of Hip Hop suffered a decline in popularity due to society wanting to clean up the airwaves?
3) What are the 4 stylized elements of Hip Hop?
4) What is Nu Metal?
5) What is considered the first HIT of Hip Hop, and why?

Country-Western Music

Now just called “Country” - Originated in the Southern United States in the early 1920’s

Country Music has roots in Folk Music, Blues, Appalachian and Western Music.

It was originally called “Hillbilly” music, but by the 1940’s “Country” included “Western” music and Country Western Music became more the more popular term.

Country Music

Played by “Working Class” Americans that blended many styles into one:

1) Irish and Celtic tunes
2) English ballads
3) Cowboy Songs
4) And other varied European musical traditions

Country Music Instruments

Started as mostly String Instruments:

1) Banjos
2) Guitar
3) Stand-up Bass
4) Fiddle (Violin)

Also included other household items as instruments:

1) Wash tubs
2) Washboards
3) Jugs
**Country Music - Music Characteristics**

*Country Swing* - Has a jazzy swing feel. The older version was mostly has 3 beats per measure. Newer versions incorporate 2 or 4 beats per measure.

*Ballads* - Songs that tell stories

*Folk* - Simple songs with good melodies (John Denver)

*Outlaw Country* - Country blend of rock and folk rhythms, with introspective lyrics.

**Country Music - Generations**

First Generation (1920's) was typically simple music and folk songs

Second Generation (1930's-40's) introduced Western Swing, Hillbilly Boogie, Bluegrass and Honky Tonk.

Third Generation (1950's-60's) it moved to Rockabilly, Countrypolitan, Country-Soul and Bakersfield Sound.


Congress has recognized Bristol, Tennessee as the Birthplace of Country Music, based upon the Bristol Recording Sessions of 1927.

**Country Music - 1st Generation (1920’s)**

Simple Folk Songs - mostly Ballads which are songs that told stories.

*Fiddlin’ John Carson* - *The Grave of Little Mary Phagan* (1925)

**Country Music - 2nd Generation (30’s-40’s)**

Western Swing, Hillbilly Boogie, Bluegrass, Honky Tonk.

Johnny Barfield - *Boogie Woogie* (1939)

**Country Music - 3rd Generation (50’s-60’s)**

Rockabilly, Countrypolitan, Country-Soul, Bakersfield Sound

Johnny Cash - *Folsom Prison Blues*

Johnny Cash is a Music Revolutionary...why?
Bluegrass influence on Pop Culture...

Beverly Hillbillies
Theme - increased
Bluegrass popularity
in early 1970's

Flatt & Scruggs

Country Music - 4th Generation (70’s-80’s)

Outlaw Country, Country
Pop, Country Rock, Neo
Country, Truck Driving
Country, and
Traditionalist.

Charlie Daniels - Devil
Went Down to Georgia
(1979)

Country Music - 5th Generation (90’s)

Female Artist Success, Revival of
Line Dancing, and Alt-Country/
Americana began.

Garth Brooks - Thunder Rolls (1990)
- Incorporated a Rock-like feel
to his music

Garth Brooks is a Music
Revolutionary… why?

Country Influence on other Genres...

All That Remains
Cover of Thunder Rolls

Country Influence with other Genres...

Hurt by Nine Inch Nails
Johnny Cash
Eric Whitacre

Modern Music Quiz #4

1) Describe 2nd Generation Country.
2) How did Country Music evolve from 3rd Generation to 4th Generation?
3) Based upon what we went over, why do you think Johnny Cash and Garth
Brooks among those that are considered Music Revolutionaries?
4) What is Outlaw Country?
5) Describe characteristics of Country Swing?
Rock n’ Roll

Teenagers needing to get out and do something - namely DANCE - changed everything. Swing music from the 20’s gave way eventually to Rock n’ Roll.

Disc Jockey Alan Freed is credited with coining the term “Rock n’ Roll” to describe the uptempo black R&B records he played in his 1951 Cleveland radio show.

He noticed a lot of white teenagers purchasing black R&B albums at a local record store, and at the suggestion of the store owner, began to play some of that music on his late-night show “Moondog Rock n’ Roll Party”.

He was the first white DJ to play R&B records.

Early Rock n’ Roll bands

Piano or Saxophone were the typical lead instruments.

In mid to late 1950’s, the guitar took over, and as the videos we watched in the Pop portion of the unit stated, the music had a dance beat, with an accented backbeat, provided by the snare drum on counts 2 & 4.

Classic rock bands typically had 2 guitars (1 lead, 1 rhythm), a stand up bass or a bass guitar, and a drum kit.

Rockabilly

Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, and Jerry Lee Lewis all played a style of music that derived from more Country roots.

Early Elvis was very much in the Rockabilly Style. Similar to Fulsom Prison Blues by Johnny Cash.

Today, we classify Elvis in the Rock genre, while Johnny Cash is classified as Country.

Rockabilly

Johnny Cash, although considered one of the stars of Country Music, was classified as Rockabilly.

Traditional Country music had a more understated beat.

Rockabilly is a combination of Country style combined with Rhythm and Blues.
Doo Wop

One of the most popular forms of 1950’s Rhythm and Blues, emphasized multi-part vocal harmony with meaningless background vocals.

One of the most popular Doo Wop songs is called “Blue Moon” by the Marcels, in which you can hear the nonsense words in the background.

British Invasion

The Beatles, the Dave Clark Five, the Animals, the Kinks, Herman’s Hermits, and the Rolling Stones were among the most popular bands in the United States that hailed from the United Kingdom.

United Kingdom artists tried and failed to replicate American Rock and Roll. It wasn’t until bands like the Beatles began to combine various British and American styles that they began to have success.

Beatlemania

October of 1963, American newspapers began to report of a group called the Beatles that was having huge success in England. Due to the assassination of JFK, Walter Cronkite put off playing a clip of the Beatles on the news until Dec 10, asking “why can’t we have music like that in America?”

Shortly after, in February of 1964, Ed Sullivan had the Beatles on his show as guests.

Classic Rock (Hard Rock or Album Rock)

Started in the mid 1960’s and moved into the early - mid 80’s.

Classic Rock radio programmers researched and played “tried and proven” hits that were instantly recognizable by their listeners.

The Beatles’ Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band album was revolutionary and experimental. Some of the concepts they used in making the album are still being used today.

Classic Rock is characterized by a harder, distorted guitar sound combined with short memorable guitar licks (hooks) that audiences loved, with an ever present heavy backbeat.

Classic Rock

Artists like Chuck Berry, Little Richard, James Brown and Shy Stone are primitive members and founders of this style of music, while bands like Led Zeppelin, the Hours, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Lynyrd Skynyrd, ZZ Top, Rush, Cream and others are the massive headliners of this genre.

Classic Rock

Led Zeppelin are one of Rock music’s revolutionaries, and changed the industry forever. Trying countless record producers in the UK, they were finally told by one company that they would “…go over like a lead zeppelin.”

The band decided to take this negative term and make it their name.

Used in Thor: Ragnarok.
**Classic Rock**

Stevie Ray Vaughan - this blues artist is also considered part of Classic Rock because of his heavy guitar sound, driving beats, and unique voice.

**Classic Rock to Progressive Rock**

RUSH - a Canadian power trio now considered a Progressive Rock artist, released its first album in 1974, with a sound very much modeled after Led Zeppelin.

When their drummer, John Rutsey, had health problems, he quit the band. Rush hired a new drummer, Neil Peart, (widely considered one of the greatest drummers of all time). The trio stayed together for over 40 years finally retiring in 2016. They influenced many, many of today's musicians, including Dave Grohl of the Foo Fighters. Paul Rudd (*Ant-Man*) is also a personal friend of RUSH, and attended many of their concerts across the country.

**Glam Rock (hair bands/arena rock)**

Bands like Queen, David Bowie, Alice Cooper and Bon Jovi were big time artists in the Glam Rock era.

Started in the 1970's, it didn't really become popular until the 1980's.

Tended to have vocal harmonies, and very high lead singers that could “wail”, taking cues from the prior success of Led Zeppelin.

**Queen - Bohemian Rhapsody**

Possibly their most famous song.

Covers include artists such as Pentatonix and Kanye West.

One of the most famous movies that used this song is Mike Myers' classic film *Wayne's World*.

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Bon Jovi

Wanted: Dead or Alive is one of Bon Jovi's Greatest Hits, and has one of the most recognizable guitar licks in Rock, using a 12-String Guitar.
Typical of Glam Rock, you can see the big hair that also earned the alternate title of “Hair Band”.

Heavy Metal

There are now many kinds of Metal music in the genre, but the form was made popular by bands like Metallica, and Megadeth.
A very heavily distorted guitar, low bass, and heavy bass drum rhythms set apart this genre from other Rock genres.
Bands like Alice in Chains, Godsmack, System of a Down are still popular today.

Metallica - Enter Sandman

Still considered one of the scariest music videos along with Michael Jackson’s Thriller.

Progressive Rock (Prog Rock)

Some rock musicians abandoned the traditional forms of rock in favor of instrumental techniques taken from Jazz, Folk and Classical.
Bands often branched off of Glam Rock ideas, these artists' techniques often showed off the players' abilities on their instruments.
These players approached music as an “art” to be made in the studio more for listening, rather than music created for dancing.
Artists: Rush, Dream Theater, Avenged Sevenfold, Dillinger Escape Plan

Dream Theater (In the Name of God)

An instrumental by the group Dream Theater that shows off the band's prowess on all of their instruments. They began in the Glam Rock era, in the mid to late 1980’s. They got progressively heavier (like Metallica) and are one of the superstars of Prog Rock.

Modern Music Quiz #5

1) Describe Rockabilly, and name two artists.
2) How did the term Rock n’ Roll get coined?
3) Which genre of Rock focused on multiple vocal harmonies with nonsense syllables?
4) Which genre of Rock focused on technical proficiency on their instruments?
5) What is Glam Rock, and how did it get its name?