

# History of English-language Popular Music

## Histoire de la musique populaire anglophone

### Notes to MP3 examples on CD1 (-1955)

### Annotations aux enregistrements MP3 sur CD1

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## *Preliminary comments*

### *A provisional text*

These annotations are incomplete and provisional. They have been written in English to save valuable time. Over the next few years I hope to produce more detailed versions, including one in French for my students at the Université de Montréal.

A word of warning: this document probably contains many examples of dubious syntax and should not be emulated. The main priority with this text is at this stage to put important facts and ideas into some sort of written form as soon as possible. I regret the matter of good writing will have to be deferred to a later date.

### *Function*

These notes do not constitute a history of popular music in the English-speaking world. They are merely intended as background information to the obligatory listening repertoire included in the course *Histoire de la musique populaire anglophone* which I teach in the Faculté de musique at the Université de Montréal.

### *Restriction of subject area*

Any history of popular music should ideally cover no more and no less than that. However, this history of English-language popular music has a more restricted focus: it attempts initially to cover the origins of popular song and of dance music in the English-speaking world, and then to trace their development, in the twentieth century, as the most widely diffused forms of music in the world. Using the definition of popular music set out in other documents,<sup>1</sup> this history should really have included music, produced in the English-speaking world, for film, TV, computer games, etc. However, since such music constitutes the subject of another course al-

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1. See *Kojak - 50 Seconds of TV Music* (2000: 15-24) | <http://tagg.org/bookxtrax/kpmusdef.pdf> | and 'Popular Music Studies: a brief introduction', 3-5 | <http://tagg.org/teaching/PMusStudsIntro.ppt> |

together (Music and the moving image/Musique et images en mouvement) they are excluded from the materials covered here which, moreover, go no further than to 1980. Reasons for 1980 cut-off point are: [1] we have less hindsight allowing us to extract the main historical trends; [2] recent years constitute an ideal field of independent research for those whose personal development is likely to have been influenced by the popular music of their childhood and youth (i.e. students often have valuable personal experience of the music and its functions); [3] the repertoire is already vast and would swell to even more unwieldy proportions if the last twenty years of popular music history were included.

Another problem in circumscribing the vast subject area of English-language popular music relates to the vast numbers of people in the world who perform, or have performed, English-language popular music, whether their mother tongue be English or not. It is for this reason that such important 'local' genres as high-life and juju (West Africa), calypso and reggae-related styles (Caribbean), mbaqanga (South Africa), not to mention Australian pub rock and Canadian Country music, or European bands singing in English, are either absent from the listening repertoire discussed in these notes or included in a special section on CD4 (under compilation).<sup>2</sup> Of course, when such 'local' genres exert direct influence on the course of popular music in the world, as in the case of reggae, or when 'local' artists become globally popular or influential, as in the case of Abba (Sweden) or AC/DC (Australia), then those genres or artists are included in the listening repertoire of this history of English-language popular music.

In short, the listening repertoire annotated below is intended to cover the main tendencies in the development of English-language popular song and dance music which, since the late nineteenth century, accompanied: [1] radical developments in audio technology; [2] the growth of global media corporations; [3] the emergence of the USA, with its own variants of English as official language, as the dominant economic and military world power.

## *Three main points of origin*

As we shall see, English-language popular music history deals largely, though by no means entirely, with popular music in North America, particularly in the former British colonies that became the first United States of America. The early part of this history has three main points of origin corresponding to the emigrant cultures of the North American continent's three main sources of immigration: [1] The British Isles; [2] West Africa; [3] Central Europe. Why these three sources? What about the music of Native Americans or of French and Spanish colonists?

The first 'immigrants' to North America arrived across the Bering Straits from Siberia 15,000 to 20,000 years before Leif Eriksson reached Vinland (c. 1000), or Columbus mistook Hispaniola for India (1492), or John Cabot waxed lyrical about the abundance of fish off the coast of Labrador (1497), or Jacques Cartier was escorted up the Mont Royal by the Hochelaga (1536), or the Spanish settled in Florida (1562), the French in Acadia (1602) and, finally, the British in Virginia (Jamestown, 1607) and New England (1620). Given that Native Americans in those days obviously outnumbered colonists, surely the music of the latter would have been influenced by indigenous sounds?

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2. The inverted commas delimiting *local* denote that I am painfully aware of the risks of Anglocentrism in this text and with this subject.

Despite some amicable contact between early European settlers and Native Americans, without whose help, for example, the Pilgrims of Plymouth (Massachusetts) would not have survived their first winter (1620),<sup>3</sup> it is very difficult to trace any substantial appropriation of Native American music in any widespread form of North American English-language popular music. Lack of acculturation on this front may be due to a number of factors about which we can do little more than speculate as follows.

Perhaps the tonal, timbral and temporal/rhythmic ideals, not to mention the social functions and cultural values, of much Native American music were so different from those of the new immigrant peoples as to render mixes and mutual borrowing virtually impossible? Perhaps groups of early colonists, like the Puritan exiles from England, constituted such closed communities that they would be on their guard against influences from cultures which did not embrace their own brand of theology and which were not even Christian? Or perhaps it's because the majority of African slaves deported to North America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had to work ten or more hours a day on land stolen from Native Americans with whom they rarely came into the kind of contact that might have fostered musical acculturation? Anyhow, it is unlikely that directly racist notions of 'savage Indians' lay behind the lack of acculturation between European and Native American musics because the music of African slaves, who were all too often treated worse than animals, clearly *did* cross-fertilise with the music of European immigrants to produce the most widely heard styles of music in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it is clear that 'the systematic annihilation of the buffalo hunted by the Plains Indians, encroachment on their lands, treaties not worth the paper they were written on' and the 'herding of Native Americans into reservations, deprived of both their livelihoods and their spiritual connection to their land' can, to put it mildly, hardly have encouraged mutual exchange between indigenous and invading cultures.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the apparent lack of cross-cultural influence between European and indigenous North American musical cultures, there are important ingredients in North America's musical melting pot other than the British, West African and Central European origins set out in the main part of these notes. We are referring here to French influences in Louisiana and to the considerable impact of Hispanic and Spanish-Caribbean music in the US south-west, as well as in New York, Miami and other large US cities.

French influences on North American English-language music come in two main phases: [1] French military band music and popular dances like the quadrille combine with Caribbean and African-American music in nineteenth-century New Orleans to lay the foundation of styles like ragtime and early jazz; [2] the British Empire's expulsion, in 1755, of Acadians from their homes and their eventual resettlement in Louisiana, leads to a mixture of French rural and African-American elements that develop into styles such as Cajun[kɛɪdʒʌn] ([A]cadien [kadʒC]) and Zydeco [zaidkɔv] ('s *haricots* [zariko]<sup>5</sup>) that gained some global exposure in the 1970s.

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3. The local Wampanoag Indians showed the Pilgrim Fathers how to grow maize. One year later the colony had plenty of corn and had established a trade based on furs and lumber.
  4. Quotes from *The Lonely Planet Guide to the USA* | [http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/north\\_america/usa/history.htm](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/north_america/usa/history.htm) | 040918.
  5. As pronounced in *les haricots* or *aux haricots* or *des haricots*, i.e. down-home 'beans music'.

Musical influences from Latin America are more consistent and pervasive than those from Francophone parts of the continent. The Spanish were the first Europeans to settle in North America (Florida, 1562) and, until the nineteenth century, Mexico stretched northwards, right across the continent from Texas to California. In 1819 Spain bargained away Florida and in 1835 Texas gained independence from Mexico. After winning the war with Mexico (1846-48), the USA annexed the whole of the whole of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

There is little doubt that music of Hispanic influence has remained strong in many areas of the USA that border with Mexico, for example in such styles as *norteño* and *tejano*. However, the first part of the history covered in these materials concerns the period 1600-1900 when such subsequently important states as California and Texas played little or no part in the formation of musical habits among the majority of the US population which, still in 1900, mainly lived along the eastern seaboard, in the southeast or in the mid-west. The most important Latin influences on North American popular music occur as a result of US expansion into and domination of Latin America in the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. These influences will be discussed later.

## §01 *The British connection*

Before tracing the origins of globally circulated forms of twentieth-century English-language popular song and dance music styles we need to establish some of the structural elements which most clearly distinguish those styles from other types of music. The first two examples both exhibit such distinctive traits; both are also representative of rock music, arguably the most widespread of all 20th-century genres relevant to our subject.<sup>6</sup>

### **AC/DC: *Shoot To Thrill* (*Back in Black*, 1980).**

*Intro*: motif a + feedback; motif a into **A** (16 bars), each 2-bar unit configured on guitar as 3+3+3+3+2 quavers spending over half the time on subdominant of root **A**: A ♪ D ♪ D ♪ D ♪ A ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

#### *Verse 1*

All you |A women who want a |man of the street but you don't |know which way you wanna |turn.  
Just keep a-|coming and put your |hand out to me 'cause I'm the |one who's gonna make you |burn.  
I'm |C gonna take you |down — |down, down, down; so |D don't you fool around.  
I'm gonna |E7 pull it, pull it, |pull the trigger

#### *Chorus A*

|A Shoot to thrill, |G play to kill; |D too many women with |too many pills, (I said)  
|A Shoot to thrill, |G play to kill; I got my |D gun at the ready, gonna |fire at will | A (Yeah)

#### *Verse 2*

I'm like evil, I get under your skin; Just like a bomb that's ready to blow  
'Cause I'm illegal, I got everything that all you women might need to know  
I'm gonna take you down - yeah, down, down, down; So don't you fool around  
I'm gonna pull it, pull it, pull the trigger

#### *Chorus B [as Chorus A, then:]*

'Cause I | A shoot to thrill, and I'm |G/b ready to kill; I | D can't get enough, I | can't get my fill  
I | A shoot to thrill, | G play to kill | D Yeah, pull the trigger — | E7 Pull it, pull it, pull it, pull the trigger

#### *Instrumental 1: D D D D C C D E*

#### *Chorus C [as chorus A again, then:]*

'Cause I | A shoot to thrill, and I'm |G/b ready to kill; I | D can't get enough, I | can't get my fill  
'Cause I A [*break*] shoot to | G thrill, play it a-| D -gain —

6. Examples 01.1.01 and 01.1.02, possibly the whole of section 01.1, ought really to precede all other examples as a separate section, since they include elements of West African as well as of British origin.

*Instrumental 2:* A G D D (x 4), then following words and interjections over A G D D

Yeah / Shoot you down / Yeah / I'm gonna get you to the bottom and shoot you / I'm gonna shoot you /  
Oh hoo yeah yeah yeah / I'm gonna shoot you down yeah yeah / I'm gonna get you down / Yeah yeah  
yeah yeah / Shoot you, shoot you, shoot you, shoot you down / Shoot you, shoot you, shoot you down  
Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, ooooooh / [lead guitar]

*Final cadence*

I'm gonna | D shoot to thrill (♩ ♩ ♩); Play to kill; Shoot to | A thrill; yeah, ooh yeah.

### ***Parenthesis: listening 'seriously' to rock***

With just the lyrics, some basic chord letters, a few bar lines and a few simplified rhythms stuck on the page, a track such as AC/DC's *Shoot To Thrill* does not seem to amount to much. In terms of conventional musicology and 'fine-art' aesthetics we would apparently be dealing with something thoroughly crude: five simple chords (**A C D E G**), organised mostly in four-bar periods, and lyrics expressing a puerile fixation on ejaculation. It hardly seems worth mentioning that this kind of objection is superficial and ignorant<sup>7</sup> but it may be wise to comment briefly on the song's 'randy schoolboy' lyrics before resuming the main thread of our narrative about the origins of musical elements such as those used in *Shoot To Thrill*.

SEX AND DRUGS AND ROCK AND ROLL is a phrase often used to connote what is imagined to be the illicit, illegal and exciting nature of a rock and roll lifestyle with no holds barred, permanent thrills and kicks, etc. Most people realise, in practical rather than theoretical terms, that the SEX AND DRUGS epithet works hyperbolically and metaphorically, not literally, to connote rock music's expressive qualities of physical and emotional abandon, self-celebration, uninhibited excitement, etc. However, a phrase like ABANDON AND EXCITEMENT AND ROCK AND ROLL not only sounds academic and abstract; it also misses the illicit and oppositional aspect of the early rock aesthetic which, by the time of AC/DC's *Back in Black* album (1980), had become a formula or caricature, definitely not to be taken at face value.<sup>8</sup> The undeniable fact that ten-year-olds and pensioners are able to derive just as much enjoyment and excitement as a testosterone teenage male from rock or funk music sporting sexually over-the-top lyrics also suggests that it is misleading to take the lyrics of *Shoot To Thrill* at all literally. Similarly, the fact that I have never taken cocaine, and that I have no intention of ever doing so, does not mean that I am incapable of experiencing the fascination, excitement and danger issued in both words and music of J J Cale's *Cocaine* (1977).

In short, most forms of popular music cannot be understood from their representation on a sheet of paper. To appreciate the music's expressive qualities and subtleties of structuration, it must be *heard* — loud in the case of rock and most other electrically amplified styles —, ideally also sung, yelled, hummed, played, strummed, beaten, tapped, danced or gesticulated along to. It should also be remembered that the complexities of most popular music do not reside in the 'horizontal' unfolding, development and recapitulation of ideas in different keys over

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7. If you find my objection to the 'fine-art' objection objectionable, let me draw your attention to some of the passages in which I explain why conventional music aesthetics are largely irrelevant to the study of popular music: [1] *Kojak - 50 Seconds of TV Music* (1979: 24-31 or 2000: 34-45); [2] *Analysing Popular Music* (1981) | <http://tagg.org/articles/xpdfs/pm2anal.pdf>; [3] *Musicology and the Semiotics of Popular Music* (1987) | <http://tagg.org/articles/xpdfs/semiotia.pdf>; [3]
  8. It is worth noting, in fact, according to Fia Persson (rock journalist at Stockholm's *Dagens Nyheter* in the 1980s), that AC/DC members drank nothing stronger than beer and that their wives accompanied them when on tour. Persson also told me that audiences at AC/DC's live shows were much less prone to violent behaviour than those at concerts of synth pop bands like Duran Duran. For problems with the petrification/canonisation of the rock aesthetic and the relation of these processes to consumerism, see Tagg & Clarida: *Ten Little Title Tunes* (2003: 66-78).

time (extensional aspects) but in the immediate ‘vertical’ combinations of sounds, rhythms, accentuations, timbres, tonal inflections, acoustic spaces, etc. (intensional aspects).<sup>9</sup> It should also be noted that these latter parameters of musical expression are largely unnotatable (Fr. *paramètres d’expression musicale intranscriptibles*).

### ***Back to the main theme***

What, then, are the distinctive structural traits of AC/DC’s *Shoot To Thrill* that can help us trace the historical origins of such music?

1. ELECTRIC AMPLIFICATION. This aspect will be discussed later in connection with electromagnetic recording, the electric guitar and bass, guitar distortion and feedback, the rock drumkit, etc.
2. MODERATO TO ALLEGRO 2/4 OR 4/4, REGULAR 2-, 4- OR 8-BAR PERIODS WITH CONSTANT, REGULAR TEMPO. Characteristic of many European popular march and dance styles, such as the allemande, gavotte, bourée, quadrille, reel and polka.
3. SURFACE RATE IN REGULAR QUAVERS (♩ ♩), not swung as in jazz or early R&B (♩̇ ♩̇, conventionally notated ♩ ♩). The ‘straight eights’ are more likely to be of European than African origin: see later discussion of African origins (CD1) and Chuck Berry (CD2).
4. QUASI-PARLANDO PASSAGES at the start and in the final cadenza. Such markers of start and (imminent) end are common in many types of music, including Northern Indian raga music and European solo-instrument concerti.
5. RAUCOUS, LOUD MALE YELLING IN A HIGH REGISTER. AC/DC vocalists Bon Scott and Brian Johnson (the latter on this recording), as well as Led Zeppelin’s Robert Plant, (all Caucasian) were noted for using an uncommonly high tessitura. However, it is likely that male rock shouting is influenced by the vocal style of African-American blues shouters and their followers (see under Jimmy Rushing and Jump Bands on this CD).
6. MELODIC STATEMENTS CONTAINING PITCHES OTHER THAN THOSE OF THE EUROPEAN TEMPERED TWELVE-SEMITONE OCTAVE. Thirds, fifths and sevenths are sometimes articulated as ‘neutral’ (between minor/diminished and major/perfect) or are ‘bent’ (i.e. articulated as mini-portamenti spanning no more than a whole tone).
7. RECURRENT ADDITIVE SUBDIVISIONS OF UNDERLYING GROUPS OF EIGHT OR SIXTEEN SURFACE-RATE NOTES. The most common such additive rhythm in English-language popular music is 8 as 3+3+2 (e.g. ♩ ♩ ♩). In this track, AC/DC guitarist Angus Young mostly uses a 3+3+3+3+2+2 pattern to cover two bars of 4/4 — ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ — while drummer Phil Rudd maintains the underlying 4/4 metre, except during some pick-ups (run-ins/anacrusis) to usher in a new period. This simultaneous occurrence of two articulations of the same underlying 8-beat unit creates a quasi-birhythmic effect (ex. 1).

Ex. 1 AC/DC: *Shoot To Thrill* – quasi birhythm

Of course, the 3+3+2 configuration of 8/8 (=4/4) is a distinguishing trait of Afro-Caribbean dances like the rumba or mambo: it turns up in New Orleans R&B

9. See Andrew Chester: *For a Rock Aesthetic and Second Thoughts on a Rock Aesthetic* (1970) | <http://tagg.org/others/chester.html> |.

accompaniment (see Fats Domino and Professor Longhair on this CD) and was used by Leonard Bernstein in ‘America’ (*West Side Story*, 1957) to indicate instant Puertoricanism. However, this does not mean, as we shall see later, that the quasi-birhythm of rock has exclusively African origins

8. PLAGALITY. By PLAGAL, as in ‘plagal cadence’ (‘Amen’, IV-I), is meant here a tonal idiom in which the perfect fourth is more prominent than the perfect fifth, where notes and harmonies on the flat (‘subdominant’) side of the tonic are more dominant than those on the sharp (‘dominant’) side. In such tonal idioms, conventional concepts of Central European music theory such as ‘perfect cadence’, ‘authentic cadence’ (V-I), ‘dominant’ and ‘subdominant’ are not so much misleading as inaccurate, not to mention ethnocentric. For example, in the AC/DC track, the final cadenza (as in most rock performances that ‘milk’ the flourish of finality) does not occur, as in Euroclassical works, on a six-four chord followed by a V-I cadence, but over a drawn-out IV before a short, final tonic. It is also worth noting that AC/DC guitarist Angus Young gives extra rhythmic and harmonic boost to the **A** (I), **D** (IV) and **G** (♭VII) chords in this piece by ornamenting each one of them plagally; for example, while bass player Cliff Williams emphasises the tonic **A**, Young articulates the chord’s 3+3+3+3+4 configuration with a **D** chord on each of the four groups of three quavers (♩ ♩ ♩ ) to ‘resolve’ on to **A** for only the last two beats of the eight-beat pattern. Young treats both **D** and **G** in a similar way (as **G**→**D** and **C**→**G** respectively). Such plagal ornamentation is common in Gospel keyboard playing as well as in rock guitar accompaniment from the late sixties onward (e.g. Free’s *All Right Now*, CD3). Plagal patterns are also a trademark of Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards, for example in *Honky Tonk Women* (1968) and *Brown Sugar* (1971) (both on CD2) or in *Start Me Up* (1981).<sup>10</sup>
9. MODAL HARMONY relates to plagality and is a salient feature of the AC/DC track. Explanations of modality and modal harmony in popular music are accessible online and will not be presented here.<sup>11</sup> However, it is clear that the tune mainly uses chords on the ‘flat’ (♭) side of the tonic, its first departure being to ♭III (**C**), the other most common chord root positions being ♭VII (**G**) and IV (**D**). Even the V chord (**E**), used only just before the chorus, contains the minor tenth **g♯** (**E+9**) and contradicts standard ‘dominant’ practice which always involves a clear leading note (major seventh/major third over V) to the tonic (octave). The song’s modal harmony is dorian, containing major triads (in fact power fifths with the fifth partial present in the guitar overdrive) on ♭III, IV and ♭VII (see footnote 11 for reference to explanations).
10. MODAL MELODY: MINOR PENTATONIC. Presenting the root notes of the tune’s five chords in ascending pitch order (**A C D E G**) produces the standard anhemitonic minor pentatonic scale 1-♭3-4-5-♭7 (**a c d e g**) which, in descending order – (8) ♭7 5 4 ♭3 1 – traces the basic pitch pattern of innumerable blues phrases. Indeed, 1 ♭3 4 5 ♭7 are the five main relative pitches of the AC/DC tune’s lead vocals.

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10. Rolling Stones Records RSR108, 1981.

11. See [1] *Modality and other short articles for EPMOW* (2000), pp. 5-7 | <http://tagg.org/articles/xpdfs/epmowartics2000.pdf>; [2] ‘Non-classical harmony’, particularly ‘Tertial modal harmony’ in *Tagg’s Harmony Handout* (2000), pp. 13-17 | <http://tagg.org/articles/xpdfs/harmonyhandout.pdf>.

**Lynyrd Skynyrd: Sweet Home Alabama (1973)**

Intro. [D ♭ C ♭ | G ♭ ] x 4

Verse 1. | D Big C wheels, keep on | G turning | D Carry me C home to see my | G kin.  
| D Singing C songs about the | G Southland | D I miss Ala-|C-bama once again and I think it's a | G sin

Instr. [D C | G ] x2

Verse 2 (chords as verse 1)

Well, Well I heard Mr Young<sup>12</sup> sing about her ('Southern Man'). Well, I heard old Neil put her down.  
Well, I hope Neil Young will remember a Southern man don't need him around anyhow.

Chorus 1 | D Sweet C home Ala-| G -bama | D Where the C skies are so | G blue  
| D Sweet C home Ala-| G -bama | D Lord, I'm C coming home to | G you. F ♭ C ♭ |

Instr. [D C | G G ] x2

Verse 3 (chords as verse 1)

| D In Birming-|C-ham they love the |G governor F ♭ (boo) C ♭ (boo)<sup>13</sup> | D We all C did what we could | G do  
| D Now, Water-|C-gate does not |G bother me | D Does your C conscience bother |G you? Tell the truth.

Chorus 2 | D Sweet C home Ala-| G -bama | D Where the C skies are so | G blue  
| D Sweet C home Ala-| G -bama | D Lord, I'm C coming home to | G you.

Guitar solo: [D C | G ] x8 Instr. [D C | G ] x2

Verse 4 (chords as Verse 1)

Now Muscle Shoals has got the Swampers,<sup>14</sup> and they've been known to pick a song or two (yes, they do!). / Lord, they get me off so much / They pick me up when I'm feeling blue, now how about you?

Chorus 3 (as Chorus 1)

Chorus 4 | D Sweet C home Ala-| G -bama – [spoken: Home, sweet home, baby]  
| D Where the C skies are so | G blue [spoken: And the governor's true]  
| D Sweet C home Ala-| G -bama, Lordy!<sup>15</sup> | D Lord, I'm C coming home to | G you.  
+ [spoken over start of piano solo: Yeah, Montgomery's<sup>16</sup> got the answer]

Piano solo over | D C | G | and early fade-out



George Wallace:  
segregationist  
governor of  
Alabama

This song has even fewer chords than the AC/DC track but, once again, that is no more relevant to a critique of rock music than dismissing a late Beethoven quartet for its paucity of timbral variation and its monometricity. And again ('once again') the lyrics cannot be entirely taken at face value.<sup>17</sup>

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12. On his 1972 compilation album *Journey through the Past* (Reprise K64015), Neil Young, Canadian rock singer-songwriter, included two of his earlier songs, *Alabama* and *Southern Man*, which were strongly critical of racism in the US South. Lynyrd Skynyrd's *Sweet Home Alabama* is therefore partly a response to the Neil Young songs but it is difficult to interpret its lyrics as entirely racist, partly because the words 'In Birmingham we love the governor' (see footnote 13) are commented with a double 'boo!' in the backing vocals highlighted by the intrusive onbeat F and C chords, partly because Young and Lynyrd Skynyrd expressed mutual admiration for each other and even recorded together. (For more details, including lyrics to the Neil Young songs, details of the rock opera *Ronnie and Neil* (Ronnie van Zandt of Lynyrd Skynyrd) visit | <http://www.thrasher-swheat.org/jammin/lynyrd.htm> |.) My personal take on the issue is that Lynyrd Skynyrd were irresponsibly flippant in the *Sweet Home Alabama* lyrics (as, indeed, the line 'Watergate does not bother me' suggests). I think they may have been thoughtlessly flogging an old-time Southern white populist horse that certainly appealed to a few white-supremacy nutters but which merely meant to tell Johnny Northerner 'We all did what we could do', whether that be true or not, and to attend to problems in his own back yard before attacking injustices in the South.
  13. George Wallace (d. 1998), segregationist governor of Alabama in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
  14. During the 1960s and 1970s there was a famous studio at Muscle Shoals (Alabama). Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones, who recorded there, dubbed its studio musicians The Swampers in accordance with the small town's surrounding terrain.
  15. 'Lordy!' (for 'Lord') is an exclamation often used by inhabitants of the US South.
  16. Montgomery: state capital of Alabama.
  17. See footnotes 12 and 13.



Ex. 2.



Even though *Sweet Home Alabama* spends twice as much time on G as on D, every musician I have asked thinks the tune is in D and that the repeated sequence **D C G G** should be thought of as I  $\flat$ VII IV in D, not as V IV I in G. The identification of D, not G, as keynote is not due to its initial position in the

sequence but to the way in which it is prepared by several anacruses, especially the pentatonic cross-rhythm shown as example 2 and the accentuated **F** and **C** chords (♩ ♩) in choruses 1 and 3. The harmonic idiom is therefore modal again, this time mixolydian (with the exception of the intrusive **F**). The mixolydian turnaround I- $\flat$ VII-IV is very common in rock music.<sup>18</sup>

Major pentatonic melody.

The Scotch snap.

Rag piano and anticipated downbeats.

In 1800 the US population had reached 5.3 million, 80% of whom had British Isles

Amazing Grace. Lyrics by John Newton (1725-1807).

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace that fear relieved.

How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come

'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds and drives away his fear.

Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free?

No, there's a cross for everyone and there's a cross for me.

When we've been here ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,

We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

Aged eighteen, John Newton was press-ganged into the Royal Navy. Having deserted, he was traded on to a slave ship 'where he lived as close to a slave's life as was possible for a white male of his era. Despite coming to the understanding of a slave's dire situation, he still became the captain of his own slave ship. Ultimately, he came to fully realize the inhumanity of his actions and left his life as a slave ship captain to become ordained as a priest for the Church of England in 1764'... 'He wrote *Amazing Grace* sometime between 1760 and 1770 in Olney' (Buckinghamshire). <http://www.clandavidsonusa.com/amazinggrace.htm>, 060919.

18. e.g. at end of *Hey Jude* (Beatles, 1969) as well as in: *Midnight Rambler* (Rolling Stones, 1969), *Fortunate Son* (Credence Clearwater Revival, 1970); *If I Were A Carpenter* (Four Tops, 1968); *Soul Finger* (Bar Kays, 1967); *Twentieth Century Man* (Kinks, 1971). For references to explanation of modal harmony, see footnote 11, p.7.