

# Histoire de la musique populaire anglophone

## Annotations aux enregistrements MP3 sur CD2 (1955-1970)

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version1 (texte provisoire)

## Preliminary comments

### *A provisional text*

These annotations are incomplete and provisional. They have been written in English to save valuable time. More complete versions, including a French translation, will be written over the coming year(s). The style of the text that follows will probably contain many examples of dubious syntax and should not be emulated when students write essays. The main priority with this text is at this stage is 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.

### *Chronological framework*

Some recordings included on this CD are from the 1970s and ought theoretically to be included on CD3 (e.g. the Status Quo collage), while others that should be included on this CD (e.g. recordings by The Band) have been deferred to CD3. The Status Quo collage is included together with the Creedence tracks to correct the impression, which might otherwise be given, that the only reaction against the 'artificiality' of rock in the late 1960s was bubblegum pop. Recordings by The Band are on CD3 because they can be more characterisable in terms of 'Return to the roots', a 1970s rather than 1960s phenomenon, even though most of their recordings date from the late 1960s.

## Annotations

### *§11 - Pre-Beatles*

The emergence of The Beatles as major figures in English-language popular music in the early sixties is taken as a cut-off point in our historical view because the eclectic mix of previously existing styles characterising their output presents a clear departure from the conventional market segregation of the US music industry (e.g. 'hillbilly', 'race records').

### §11.1 *US rock 'n' roll*


This section contains recordings both dating from the pre-Beatles era and those produced in the USA after the start of the 'British invasion'. The latter category consists of recordings whose stylistic traits in general show little or no influence of music produced by British rock and pop bands in the first half of the 1960s: it is, so to speak, music which would have most likely sounded as it does whether or not The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, etc. has become popular on either side of the Atlantic (e.g. Motown, James Brown, early Beach Boys).


Please note the difference between *rock 'n' roll* and *rock and roll*. The former refers to the late 1950s style represented by artists like Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard and Elvis Presley. *Rock and roll*, on the other hand, is a much more general concept denoting mostly guitar-band-based tracks produced mainly between, roughly, 1964 and 1990. Sections 11-1 through 11-1-8 consist mainly of *rock 'n' roll*. Berry, Lewis, Presley and Little Richard, probably the best known representatives of 1950s US rock 'n' roll have each been given their own folder on CD2.

**Bill Haley and his Comets: *Rock Around The Clock*** (1955). This song was featured in the film *Blackboard Jungle* (also 1955) about a gang of delinquents in a New York school. The youngsters' disruptive anarchy is linked to this recording which became a #1 hit on both sides of the Atlantic. Haley, already in his forties at the time, and whose band had been previously been known as The Saddlemen and The Four Aces of Western Swing (cf. Bob Willis on CD1), was basically a Country artist (plenty of rim shots from the drummer; high-pitched, quite clear vocal timbre) who, like other proponents of western swing, included boogie elements (walking bass), sax inter-punctuations and one-note riff patterns similar to those of jump-band music (check CD1). Harmonic progression: standard 12-bar blues (I-I-I-IV-IV-I-I-V-IV-I-I). Note also snare used as episodic marker, not for consistent backbeat. *Lyrics*: | [www.billhaley.co.uk/lyrics.htm](http://www.billhaley.co.uk/lyrics.htm) | [031116].

**Gene Vincent: *Bebop A Lula*** (1957). Another 12-bar blues matrix involving acoustic bass, this time also clear usage of brushes, not sticks, and a shuffle (12/8, 'tripletised', 'swung') feel from drums; again, no backbeat emphasis on snare, just episodic markers. Direct reference in lyrics to teenagers ("She's the queen of all the teens"), dramatic breaks before change to IV, plenty of tape echo (probably derived from Elvis' *Heartbreak Hotel*, see below). Highly popular on both sides of the Atlantic. *Lyrics*: | [www.rockabillyhall.com/gvlyric.html#bebopalula](http://www.rockabillyhall.com/gvlyric.html#bebopalula) | [031116]

*Anecdote*: Vincent, who limped, was invited to appear on commercial British TV in 1957, dressed in black leather, was seen by producer Jack Good as a sort of teenage Richard III figure (Shakespeare). A specially steep set of stage steps was constructed to exaggerate Vincent's disability who nevertheless attempted to negotiate the gratuitous obstacle with dignity, at which point Jack Good was heard to yell "Limp, you bugger, limp!".

**Buddy Holly and the Crickets: *Peggy Sue*** (1957). Like Bill Haley, Buddy Holly initially seemed, with his nerdish glasses and befuddled appearance, an improbable candidate for rock stardom. However, Holly and The Crickets were in several senses trailblazers: [1] they wrote their own material and recorded locally (in Holly's case at Clovis, New Mexico, just across the state line from Lubbock, West Texas, Holly's home town); [2] they often played and sang, as on *Peggy Sue*, in 'straight eights' ( ?no triplets, no swing, no 12/8); [3] they were a guitar-based combo of 'buddies' who first made music for their own enjoyment and that of their peers; [4] their recordings featured traits associated with close-miking and channel sep-

aration: on this track the insistent  figures on toms, Holly’s sudden changes of vocal persona from ‘pleading little boy’ to ‘grown-up man’, etc. Also worth noting on this track: [1] no 12-bar blues harmonic matrix, but 8-bar phrases presenting I, IV and V in a different order, not to mention the (at the time) highly original aeolian shuttle (I-♭VI) in the bridge (A - ‘Peggy Sue, Peggy Sue’, F - ‘pretty, pretty’, A - ‘Peggy Sue’); [2] Holly’s characteristic ‘nervous-teenage-boy hiccuping’ technique, as if choked by an excess of emotion obstructing standard legato delivery (‘my Peggy Sue-oo-oo, oo, oo, oo-oo-oo, oo’.

Worth noting: several of Holly’s hits, all from the late fifties, were covered by The Beatles, e.g. *Words Of Love*, and were also much appreciated by The Stones.<sup>1</sup>


‘To English people Buddy Holly was an enormous inspiration. Therein lies the difference because he was a songwriter, which Elvis wasn’t. And he wrote very simple songs — sort of lesson one in songwriting. Great songs, which had simple changes and nice melodies’... (Mick Jagger, 1977: at |www.timeisonourside.com/STRockabilly.html| 031116).

**A** If you knew **D** Peggy Sue, **A** then you'd know why I feel blue  
 About **D** Peggy, 'bout Peggy **A** Sue **D** **A**  
 Oh, well, I **E** love you gal, yes, I **D** love you Peggy **A** Sue. **D** **A** **E**  
**A** Peggy Sue, Peggy Sue, **F** pretty, pretty, pretty, pretty, **A** Peggy Sue, (*chords as before*)  
 Oh, my Peggy, my Peggy Sue  
 Oh, well, I love you gal, and I need you, Peggy Sue .

**The Big Bopper: Chantilly Lace** (1958). Essentially a novelty number (bell, clothes and ponytail fetish), but a definite early rock ‘good-time’ ‘classic’, covered by The Damned, Dave Edmunds, The Rolling Stones. *Note*: walking bass (possibly electric?), damped rockabilly guitar, piano repeated simple chords in high register, slightly swung, drums definitely swung, no emphatic backbeats; a very early example of (slightly) *Yakety-Yak* (King Curtis, see below) sax style. Not 12-bar matrix: 8-bar periods on I-IV-V with breaks.

Note (2): The Big Bopper, Buddy Holly and Ricky Valens were all killed in the same plane crash over Iowa in 1959.

*Lyrics*: |www.keno.org/stones\_lyrics/Chantillylace.htm| [031116]

**Chubby Checker: Let’s Twist Again** (1961). By 1961, thanks to popularity of numerous recordings featured in §§11.1.1-11.1.9, straight eights ( here on hi-hat), electric bass, emphatic backbeats (here hand claps) had become the norm rather than the exception for up-tempo dance numbers. Note also rock-style sax and gospel-influenced, riffing backing vocals and (in verse) the ubiquitous I-vi-IV-V vamp of Brill Building hits c.1960 (see below). The twist, whose movements resemble those of a bather vigorously drying back and posterior with a large towel, is said to have originated in New York’s Peppermint Lounge club whose the resident band, Joey Dee and the Starlighters, had previously recorded *The Peppermint Twist*, a ‘swung’ instrumental number in similar tempo to this track and its immediate predecessor *The Twist* (also in straight eights with Checker as vocalist).

### 11.1.1 – Chuck Berry

Berry, born 1926, was pushing thirty when he started playing in a St Louis (Missouri) blues trio. His recording career started in 1955 when Muddy Waters (see CD1) brought Berry’s demo-tape *Ida Red* to the attention of Leonard Chess (of the important Chicago-based R&B label Chess). *Ida Red*, whose lyrics were an pane-

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1. The Rolling Stones are most frequently referred to as ‘The Stones’ in this text (and elsewhere, come to that!)

gyric to a car, was based on a Country record Berry had heard on the radio and re-recorded as *Maybelline* (for which DJ Alan Freed took unwarranted co-writing credit).

Berry may not have had many big hits, but his influence on the development of rock music cannot be underestimated. *Roll Over Beethoven* has been covered by The Beatles, Electric Light Orchestra, Mountain, Eric Clapton, Status Quo and others; *Johnny B Goode* by Judas Priest, Elvis Presley,<sup>2</sup> Gyllene Tider, Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, Peter Tosh, The Sex Pistols, Living Colour, Bill Haley, Buck Owens, The Ventures, Meat Loaf and The Beatles (pour ne pas parler du *Johnny fait bien* de Jo-El Sonnier); *Sweet Little Sixteen* by John Lennon, Silicon Teens, The Trashmen, Vince Taylor, The Hollies, Ten Years After, The Animals and The Beatles; *Memphis Tennessee* by Johnny Rivers, Elvis Presley, Buck Owens, Silicon Teens, Status Quo, John Cale and Lonnie Mack.

Other examples of influential Berry songs are: *Around & Around* (covered by The Stones, The Grateful Dead, The Animals, The Swinging Blue Jeans and Led Zepelin), *Bye Bye Johnny* (covered by The Stones and Status Quo), *Let It Rock* (covered by The Rolling Stones, Motorhead, Dave Edmunds, The Grateful Dead, The Georgia Satellites and The Yardbirds), *Rock & Roll Music* (covered by The Beatles, Ebba Grön, The Manic Street Preachers, The Beach Boys, Mental As Anything and REO Speedwagon).

‘Chuck was my man. He was the one that made me say, I want to play guitar, Jesus Christ! And I’d listened to guitar players before that’...

(Keith Richards, 1992 <http://www.timeisonourside.com/STR&BRock.html> | 031103).

One of Berry’s main influences seems to have been the single-string solo technique of blues guitarist T-Bone Walker, another the clear diction and vocal timbre of Nat ‘King’ Cole, yet another the humorous up-tempo character of jump-band artists like Louis Jordan (CD1). However, there are also indications of Country influences in Berry’s quite ‘trebly’<sup>3</sup> guitar sound and predilection for the poetic celebration of the everyday (cf. previous paragraph and §07 on CD1).

Please read Berry biography: [www.theiceberg.com/artist/298/chuck\\_berry.html](http://www.theiceberg.com/artist/298/chuck_berry.html) [831116]

Ex. 1. Chuck Berry: guitar intro to *Johnny B Goode*<sup>4</sup>



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**Chuck Berry: *Roll Over Beethoven* (1956).** Ostensibly an uptempo 12-bar blues format, but... [1] emphatic backbeat (2 & 4 in 4/4) on snare; [2] humorous, cheeky, clearly enunciated lyrics; [3]  $\text{♪♪♪♪}$  which are not quite straight but definitely not swung. These lyrics and their accompaniment clearly epitomise the musical, aes-

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2. *Elvis in Person* (At the International Hotel, Las Vegas), RCA Victor53892-2 (1970)
  3. *Trebly* (adj.m of sound or timbre): emphasising treble, rather than mid- or bass-range, frequencies.
  4. Transcription by Justin Sandercoe, complete with guitar tab, at [www.justinguitar.com/SOLOS/Berry-JohnnyBGood.gif](http://www.justinguitar.com/SOLOS/Berry-JohnnyBGood.gif) [031116].

thetic and behavioural paradigm shift which (then) teenage baby-boomers were able to identify as their own. The tune starts with one of the slight variants on the same introductory 12-bar solos that Berry featured in *Johnny B Goode* (ex. 1, p.4.), *Let It Rock* and others.

I'm gonna write a little letter, gonna mail it to my local DJ.  
 It's a rocking rhythm record I want my jockey to play.  
 Roll over, Beethoven, I gotta hear it again today.  
 You know, my temperature's rising and the jukebox blows a fuse.  
 My heart's beating rhythm and my soul keeps on singing the blues.  
 Roll over, Beethoven, and tell Tchaikovsky the news.  
 I got the rocking pneumonia, I need a shot of rhythm and blues.  
 I think I'm rolling arthritis sitting down by the rhythm review.  
 Roll over, Beethoven, rocking in two by two.  
 Well, if you feel you like it, go get your lover, then reel and rock it.  
 Roll it over and move on up just a trifle further and reel and rock it, roll it over,  
 Roll over, Beethoven, rocking in two by two.  
 Well, early in the morning I'm a-giving you a warning,  
     don't you step on my blue suede shoes.  
 Hey diddle diddle, I am playing my fiddle, ain't got nothing to lose.  
 Roll over, Beethoven, and tell Tchaikovsky the news.  
 You know she wiggles like a glow worm, dance like a spinning top.  
 She got a crazy partner, oughta see 'em reel and rock.  
 Long as she got a dime the music will never stop.  
 Roll over, Beethoven (x3),  
 Roll over, Beethoven and dig these rhythm and blues.

**Chuck Berry: *Johnny B Goode*** (1958). Another up-tempo 12-bar blues matrix. (guitar intro, see ex. 1, p.4.), this time with partially autobiographical lyrics about the dream of becoming a rock star. *Note*: acoustic bass, not-quite-straight eights on guitar, backbeat hits (brushes, slightly swung), soured barrel-style piano with fast repeated triplets (high register) and glissandi (cf. Jerry Lee Lewis)

Way down in Louisiana close to New Orleans,  
 Way back up in the woods among the evergreens...  
 There stood a log cabin made of earth and wood,  
 Where lived a country boy name of Johnny B. Goode...  
 He never ever learned to read or write so well,  
 But he could play the guitar like ringing a bell.

*Chorus*: Go, Go, Go, Johnny, Go (x3); Johnny B Goode

He use to carry his guitar in a gunny sack  
 And sit beneath the trees by the railroad track.  
 Oh, the engineers used to see him sitting in the shade,  
 Playing to the rhythm that the drivers made.  
 People passing by would stop and say  
 Oh my that little country boy could play

*Chorus*

His mama told him someday he would be a man,  
 And he would be the leader of a big old band.  
 Many people coming from miles around  
 To hear him play his music when the sun go down  
 Maybe someday his name would be in lights  
 Saying Johnny B. Goode tonight.

*Chorus*

**Chuck Berry: *Sweet Little Sixteen*** (1958). No 12-bar structure here, even if just I, IV and V chords only. Note: [1] short guitar intro in straight parallel thirds; [2] the ‘rock boogie’ 5-6 5-6 pattern on Berry’s guitar (the **a-b-a** over **D**, the **d-e-d** on **G**, etc., latterly repeated in aeternam by Status Quo and other exponents of retro-rock), played here as a cross between swung and straight; [3] the emphatic back-beat (2 and 4 in 4/4, either on snare or as rim shot); [4] the episodic drum fills on toms, marking the end of one phrase and leading into the next one; [5] ‘out of tune’ piano with smudged thirds and sevenths, frenetic triplets and glissandi, cross rhythms (second half of solo); [6] lyrics entirely about teenagers and rock.

*Chorus 1:* They’re really rocking in **A** Boston, Pittsburgh, P.**D**A.  
 Deep in the heart of **A** Texas and round the Frisco **D** Bay  
 All over St. **G** Louis, way down in New Or**D**leans  
 All the cats wanna **A** dance with Sweet Little Six**D**teen.

*Verse 1:* Sweet Little 16, she’s just got to have  
 About a half a million framed autographs  
 Her wallet’s filled with pictures; she gets them one by one  
 Becomes so excited; won’t you look at her run, boy?

*Bridge:* “Oh mummy, **G**mummy, please may I **D**go?  
 It’s such a sight to **A**see; somebody steal the **D**show  
 Oh Daddy, **G**Daddy, I beg of **D**you  
 Whisper to **A**mummy it’s all right with **D**you.”

*Chorus 2:* ‘Cause they’ll be rocking on Bandstand, Philadelphia, P.A.,  
 Deep in the heart of Texas and round the Frisco Bay  
 All over St. Louis, way down in New Orleans  
 All the cats wanna dance with Sweet Little 16.

*Instrumental*

*Chorus 2*

*Verse 2:* Sweet Little 16, she’s got the grown-up blues  
 Tight dresses and lipstick, she’s sporting high-heeled shoes  
 Oh, but tomorrow morning she’ll have to change her trend  
 And be sweet 16 and back in class again.

*Chorus 1:* But they’ll be rocking in Boston, etc.

**Chuck Berry: *Memphis Tennessee*** (1959). This song only contains two chords (I and V, an irrelevant observation really, except to underline the fact that harmonic complexity is rarely a major determinant of aesthetic interest in rock music). The ‘everyday poetic’ situation here is that of the estranged young father denied access to his children. Berry’s non-blues parallel sixths on guitar are reminiscent of Country music, the tom rhythms of drum patterns heard in Louisiana.

Long **D** distance information, give me Memphis Tennessee  
 Help me find the party trying to get in touch with me  
 She **G** could not leave her number, but I know who placed the call  
 ‘Cause my **D** uncle took the message and he wrote it on the **G** wall.

Help me, information, get in touch with my Marie  
 She’s the only one who’d phone me here from Memphis Tennessee  
 Her home is on the south side, high up on a ridge  
 Just a half a mile from the Mississippi Bridge

Help me, information, more than that I cannot add  
 Only that I miss her and all the fun we had  
 But we were pulled apart because her mum did not agree  
 And tore apart our happy home in Memphis Tennessee  
 Last time I saw Marie she’s waving me good-bye

With hurry home drops on her cheek that trickled from her eye  
 Marie is only six years old, information please  
 Try to put me through to her in Memphis Tennessee

**Chuck Berry: *Route 66*** (1961). Written by Bobby Troup in 1946 (see version on CD1 by Bing Crosby and The Andrews), this song was a big hit for Nat ‘King’ Cole. Berry’s version, another car-driving lyric set to an extended 12-bar blues format with habanera-style backing rhythm (♩ ♩ ♩), is probably the template for covers by The Rolling Stones (this CD, §12.5, LP *12 × 5*), Depeche Mode, Them (Van Morrison in the 1960s), Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, and Bruce Springsteen. This track was issued after Berry’s release from jail but recorded before his incarceration, though the presence of (electric) bass guitar suggest 1959 or later...

Well if you ever plan to motor west,  
 Jack, take my way, that’s the highway that’s the best  
 Get your kicks on Route 66  
 Well it winds from Chicago to L.A., More than 2000 miles all the way  
 Get your kicks on Route 66  
 Well it goes from St. Louis, down to Missouri, Oklahoma City looks oh so pretty  
 You’ll see Amarillo and Gallup, New Mexico, Flagstaff, Arizona, don’t forget Winona,  
 Kingsman, Barstow, San Bernardino.  
 Would you get hip to this kind ’a tip, and go take that California trip?  
 Get your kicks on Route 66

**Chuck Berry: *Nadine*** (1964). This song was recorded after Berry’s release from prison: the bass guitar line is clear and detailed, the hi-hat quavers straight and regular, the drum fills typical of the day. The chords run: 8+4 bars on B♭, 2 × E♭, 1 × F, 1 × E♭, 2 × B♭, i.e. 14 consecutive bars of B♭ [I], an observation that is, once again, quite irrelevant. The subtlety of this miniature of everyday poetics lies elsewhere, to wit in: [1] the groove with its simple but effective bass anacruses, with its drum fills, its bar-blues piano pounding smudged thirds, the to-and-fro of its guitar riff, etc., all of which drive the action relentlessly forward; [2] Berry’s phrasing, timing and delivery (for example, ‘hey, conductor, you must – slow down’; [3] the quite desperate yelling of ‘Nadine!’, accompanied by the repeated wail of two saxes sliding up to 5 and b7 (f and a♭ over B♭; f and d♭ over E♭); [4] the self-distanced comedy of the lyrics, etc.

‘This is my favourite Chuck Berry recording’ (P. Tagg, November 2003).

I got on a city bus and found a vacant seat,  
 I thought I saw my future bride walking up the street,  
 I shouted to the driver hey conductor, you must slow down.  
 I think I see her please let me off this bus  
*Nadine!* Honey is that you? Oh, Nadine. honey, is that you?  
 [EITHER] Seems like every time I see you darling you got something else to do  
 [OR] Seems like every time I catch you you’re up to something new.  
 I saw her from the corner when she turned and doubled back  
 And started walking toward a coffee coloured cadillac  
 I was pushing through the crowd to get to where she’s at  
 And I was campaign shouting like a southern diplomat  
*Nadine!* etc.  
 Downtown searching for her, looking all around.  
 Saw her getting in a yellow cab heading up town.  
 I caught a loaded taxi, paid up everybody’s tab.  
 With a twenty dollar bill, told him ‘catch that yellow cab!’

*Nadine!* etc.

She moves around like a wave of summer breeze,  
Go, driver, go, go, catch her balmy breeze.  
Moving through the traffic like a mounted cavalier.  
Leaning out the taxi window trying to make her hear

*Nadine!* etc.

### 11.1.2 – *Elvis Presley*

Presley was no more and no less of a crossover phenomenon than Chuck Berry when it came to straddling the gaps between R&B, Country and the aesthetic preferences of white US teenagers in the late 1950s. Even though Berry wrote most of his own material while Elvis wrote none, Presley had one major advantage over Berry in 1950s USA: he was white. That meant that Elvis could become rock music's most famous commercial success and icon for US Caucasians, while Berry's status remained that of influential cult figure for devoted rock enthusiasts.

#### ***Potted biography, edited from [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com)***

Although not the first white man to sing rhythm & blues, Presley was probably the first white man to assertively fuse Country and blues music into the style known as rockabilly.<sup>5</sup> While rockabilly arrangements were the foundations of Presley's early recordings on the Sun label (cf. *That's All Right Mama*, *Blue Moon Of Kentucky* and *There's Good Rockin' Tonight*; see also §11.1.8), Presley could not have become a mainstream superstar without a much more varied palette that also incorporated ingredients from TPA pop, gospel and sentimental quasi-operatic ballads. His 1950s recordings contributed importantly to the establishment of a basic rock 'n' roll idiom. Just as importantly; his explosive and, at the time, overtly sexual stage presence set standards for the rock music's visual presentation.

To much of his audience, Elvis is still more icon than artist. Innumerable Hollywood movies (in the early sixties), increasingly caricatured records and mannerisms, and a personal life that became steadily more bizarre and sheltered from real-world concerns fed public fantasies of Elvis as mythical phenomenon. By the time of his death in 1977, he was much more a figure of tawdry US kitsch than of cultural innovation. Continued speculation about his remarkable career has sustained interest in his life, and supported a large tourist/entertainment industry, that may last indefinitely, even if the fascination is fuelled more by celebrity status than by any interest in his contribution to the development of popular music.

“Born to a poor Mississippi family in the heart of Depression, Elvis had moved to Memphis by his teens, where he absorbed the vibrant melting pot of Southern popular music in the form of blues, country, bluegrass, and gospel. After graduating from high school, he became a truck driver, rarely if ever singing in public. Some 1953 and 1954 demos, recorded at the emerging Sun label in Memphis primarily for Elvis' own pleasure, helped stir interest on the part of Sun owner Sam Phillips. In mid-1954, Phillips, looking for a white singer with a black feel, teamed Presley with guitarist Scotty Moore and bassist Bill Black. Almost by accident, apparently, the trio hit upon a version of an Arthur Crudup blues tune, *That's All Right Mama*, that became Elvis' first single.”

“Elvis's five Sun singles pioneered the blend of R&B and C&W that would characterise rockabilly music. For quite a few scholars, they remain... Elvis's best singles... Claiming that Elvis made blues acceptable for the white market is not the whole picture; the singles usually teamed blues covers with country and pop ones, all made into rock &

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5. *Rockabilly* is a composite word combining the *rock* of *rock 'n' roll* with the *billy* of *hillbilly* (the old, derogatory term for Country music).



roll (at this point a term that barely existed) with the pulsing beat, slap-back echo, and Elvis' frenetic vocals. *That's All Right Mama*, *Blue Moon of Kentucky*, *Good Rockin' Tonight* and *Mystery Train* are often treated as early rock classics."

"The singles sold well in the Memphis area immediately, and by 1955 were starting to sell well to country audiences throughout the South. Presley, Moore, and Black hit the road with a stage show that grew ever wilder and more provocative, Elvis' swivelling hips causing enormous controversy [in the USA]. The move to all-out rock was hastened by the addition of drums. The last Sun single... hit number one on the national [US] country charts in late 1955. Presley was obviously a performer with superstar potential, attracting the interest of bigger labels and Colonel Tom Parker, who became Elvis' manager. In need of capital to expand the Sun label, Sam Phillips sold Presley's contract to RCA in late 1955 for 35,000 dollars; a bargain, when viewed in hindsight, but an astronomical sum at the time"...

... "For many, the whole of his subsequent work for RCA, encompassing over 20 years, was a steady letdown, never recapturing the... energy that was harnessed so effectively on the handful of Sun singles. Elvis, however, was not a purist... [He just wanted] to be successful. To do that, his material needed more of a pop feel; in any case, he'd never exactly been one to disparage the mainstream, naming Dean Martin as one of his chief heroes... At RCA, his rockabilly was leavened with enough pop flavour to make all of the charts, not just the country ones."

"At the beginning, at least, the results were hardly any tamer than the Sun sessions. *Heartbreak Hotel*, his first single, rose to number one and, aided by some national television appearances, helped make Elvis an instant superstar... [T]he double-sided monster *Hound Dog/Don't Be Cruel* was one of the biggest-selling singles the industry had ever experienced... Albums and EPs were also chart-toppers, not just in the US, but throughout the world. The 1956 RCA recordings, while a bit more sophisticated in production,... are still rated among the most influential recordings of early rock & roll."

"Elvis's (and Colonel Parker's) aspirations were too big to be limited to records and live appearances. By late 1956, his first Hollywood movie, *Love Me Tender*, had been released; other screen vehicles would follow in the next few years, [including] *Jailhouse Rock*. The hits continued unabated, several of them benefiting from the efforts of ... songwriter Otis Blackwell, as well as the emerging team of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. The Jordanaires added both pop and gospel elements with their... backup vocals."

... "The Dean Martin influence began rearing its head in... sentimental ballads such as *Loving You*... [A]lthough Moore and Black continued to back Elvis on his early RCA recordings, within a few years the musicians had gone their own ways."

"Presley's recording and movie careers were interrupted by his induction into the Army in early 1958. There was enough material in the can to flood the charts throughout his two-year absence (during which he largely served in Germany). When he re-entered civilian life in 1960, his popularity... was at just as high a level as when he left."

[After discharge from the army, Elvis's output] "was not just becoming more sedate, but was starting to either repeat itself, or opt for operatic ballads that didn't have a whole lot to do with rock. Elvis' rebellious, wild image had been tamed to a large degree as well, as he and Parker began designing a career built around Hollywood films"...

... "The Beatles, all big Elvis fans, displaced Presley as the biggest rock act in the world in 1964. What's more, they did so by writing their own material and playing their own instruments; something Elvis had never been capable of.... They, and the British and US groups the Beatles influenced, were not shy about expressing their opinions, experimenting musically, and taking the reins of their artistic direction into their own hands. The net effect was to make Elvis Presley, still churning out movies in Hollywood as psychedelia and soul music became the rage, seem irrelevant"...

**Elvis Presley: *That's All Right, Mama*** (Sun Records, 1956). This track covers the original by Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup who, it should be pointed out, was so poor

that he had to live in a packing case under the elevated railway in Chicago and who was cheated out of most of the royalties that were rightfully his.<sup>6</sup>

Three musicians appear on this recording: Elvis Presley (vocals and rhythm guitar), Scotty Moore (el. gtr), Bill Black (bass). *Note*: acoustic guitar strum, clean, ‘trebly’ el. guitar sound, walking bass (sometimes slapped<sup>7</sup>), change of vocal delivery between head register quasi-falsetto and energetic mid register, between slurred and clear enunciation. The latter traits become idiosyncratic for Presley, while the former can be considered typical for rockabilly.

Well, that’s all right, mama, That’s all right for you  
 That’s all right mama, just any way you do  
 Well, that’s all right, that’s all right., That’s all right now mama, any way you do.  
 Mama she done told me, Papa done told me too  
 “Son, that gal your fooling with, She ain’t no good for you”  
 But, that’s all right, that’s all right. That’s all right now mama, any way you do  
 I’m leaving town, baby, I’m leaving town for sure  
 Well, then you won’t be bothered with me hanging ’round your door  
 Well, that’s all right, that’s all right, That’s all right now mama, any way you do

**Elvis Presley: *Blue Moon Of Kentucky*** (Sun Records, 1956). This track covers the Bill Monroe original which is a slowish waltz performed by the Bluegrass Boys on mandolin, fiddle, banjo, etc. with Monroe providing characteristic nasal high notes and snapped yodels (cf. Roane County, CD1 §07)

Lyrics at [www.lyricsfreak.com/e/elvis-presley/48325.html](http://www.lyricsfreak.com/e/elvis-presley/48325.html)

**Elvis Presley: *Heartbreak Hotel*** (RCA, 1956).

Words and music by Mae B. Axton, Tommy Durden, and Elvis Presley  
 Well, since my baby left me, I found a new place to dwell.  
 It’s down at the end of lonely street at Heartbreak Hotel.  
 You make me so lonely baby, I get so lonely, I get so lonely I could die.  
 And although it’s always crowded, you still can find some room.  
 Where broken hearted lovers can cry away their gloom.  
 You make me so lonely baby, I get so lonely, I get so lonely I could die.  
 Well, the Bell hop’s tears keep flowing, and the desk clerk’s dressed in black.  
 Well they been so long on lonely street They ain’t ever gonna look back.  
 You make me so lonely baby, I get so lonely, I get so lonely I could die.  
 Hey now, if your baby leaves you, and you got a tale to tell.  
 Just take a walk down lonely street to Heartbreak Hotel.

Recorded 560110, 1956, RCA studios, Nashville. Scotty Moore, Chet Atkins (gtr); Bill Black (bs); D.J. Fontana (dr.); Floyd Cramer (pf).

**Elvis Presley: *Hound Dog*** (RCA, 1956).

Words & music by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller  
 You ain’t nothing but a hound dog crying all the time.  
 You ain’t nothing but a hound dog crying all the time.  
 Well, you ain’t never caught a rabbit and you ain’t no friend of mine.  
 When they said you was high classed, well, that was just a lie.  
 When they said you was high classed, well, that was just a lie.  
 You ain’t never caught a rabbit and you ain’t no friend of mine.

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6. Crudup biography at <http://shs.ee.msstate.edu/mswm/MSWritersAndMusicians/musicians/Crudup.html>  
 7. *Slap bass* ≈ *Bartók pizzicato* (for European art-music buffs).

Rec. 560702, 1956, RCA, New York. Scotty Moore (gtr), Bill Black (bs), D.J. Fontana (dr), Shorty Long (pf); Jordanaires: -Gordon Stoker, Neal Matthews, Hoyt Hawkins, Hugh Jarrett.

**Elvis Presley: *Don't Be Cruel*** (RCA, 1956).

**Elvis Presley: *Blue Suede Shoes*** (RCA, 1956).

Words and music by Carl Perkins

Well, it's one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, now go, cat, go.

But don't you step on my blue suede shoes.

You can do anything but lay off of my blue suede shoes.

Well, you can knock me down, step in my face, slander my name all over the place.

Do anything that you want to do, but uh-uh, honey, lay off of my shoes

Don't you step on my blue suede shoes.

You can do anything but lay off of my blue suede shoes.

Burn my house, steal my car, drink my liquor from my old fruit jar,

Do anything that you want to do, but uh-uh, honey, lay off of my shoes

Don't you step on my blue suede shoes.

You can do anything but lay off of my blue suede shoes.

560130, RCA, NYC. D.J. Fontana (dr); Presley and Scotty Moore (gtr); Bill Black (bs); Shorty Long (pf)

**Elvis Presley: *Teddy Bear*** (RCA, 1957).

**Elvis Presley: *Jailhouse Rock*** (RCA, 1957).

Words and music by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller

The warden threw a party in the county jail.

The prison band was there and they began to wail.

The band was jumping and the joint began to swing.

You should've heard those knocked out jailbirds sing.

*Let's rock, everybody, let's rock.*

*Everybody in the whole cell block was dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock.*

Spider Murphy played the tenor saxophone,

Little Joe was blowing on the slide trombone.

The drummer boy from Illinois went crash, boom, bang,

the whole rhythm section was the Purple Gang. *Let's rock etc..*

Number forty-seven said to number three: "You're the cutest jailbird I ever did see.

I sure would be delighted with your company,

come on and do the Jailhouse Rock with me." *Let's rock etc.*

The sad sack was a sitting on a block of stone way over in the corner weeping all alone.

The warden said, "Hey, buddy, don't you be no square.

If you can't find a partner use a wooden chair." *Let's rock etc.*

Shifty Henry said to Bugs, "For Heaven's sake,

no one's looking, now's our chance to make a break"

Bugsy turned to Shifty and he said, "Nix nix,

I wanna stick around a while and get my kicks." *Let's rock etc.*

570430 for MGM film, Radio Recorders, Hollywood. Scotty Moore & Elvis Presley (gtr), Bill Black: (bs), D.J. Fontana (dr), Dudley Brooks (pf), The Jordanaires.

**Elvis Presley: *Don't Be Cruel*** (RCA, 1957).

**Elvis Presley: *There's Good Rockin' Tonight*** (Sun, 1954).

Lyrics at [www.elvismobile.com/lyrics/goodrockin.html](http://www.elvismobile.com/lyrics/goodrockin.html)

**Elvis Presley: *It's Now Or Never*** (RCA, 1960).

**Elvis Presley: *Are You Lonesome Tonight?*** (RCA, 1961)

Words and music by Roy Turk and Lou Handman

Are you lonesome tonight, do you miss me tonight? Are you sorry we drifted apart?  
Does your memory stray to a brighter sunny day  
When I kissed you and called you sweetheart?

Do the chairs in your parlor seem empty and bare?  
Do you gaze at your doorstep and picture me there?  
Is your heart filled with pain, shall I come back again?  
Tell me dear, are you lonesome tonight?

I wonder if you're lonesome tonight. You know someone said that the world's a stage  
and each must play a part. Fate had me playing in love you as my sweet heart. Act one  
was when we met, I loved you at first glance. You read your line so cleverly and never  
missed a cue

Then came act two, you seemed to change and you acted strange And why I'll never  
know.

Honey, you lied when you said you loved me

And I had no cause to doubt you.

But I'd rather go on hearing your lies

Than go on living without you.

Now the stage is bare and I'm standing there With emptiness all around  
And if you won't come back to me Then make them bring the curtain down.  
Is your heart filled with pain, shall I come back again?  
Tell me dear, are you lonesome tonight?

600404, RCA, Nashville. Scotty Moore, Hank Garland, Elvis (gtr); Bob Moore (bs); Buddy Har-  
man (dr); Floyd Cramer (pf); Boots Randolph (sax); The Jordanaires.

### **Elvis Presley: *In The Ghetto* (RCA, 1969).**

Words and music by Scott Davis

As the snow flies on a cold and gray Chicago morning a poor little baby child is born in  
the ghetto.

And his mama cries, 'cause if there's one thing that she don't need it's another hungry  
mouth to feed in the ghetto.

People, don't you understand the child needs a helping hand or he'll grow to be an an-  
gry young man some day

Take a look at you and me, are we too blind to see, do we simply turn our heads  
and look the other way

Well the world turns and a hungry little boy with a runny nose plays in the street as  
the cold wind blows in the ghetto

And his hunger burns so he starts to roam the streets at night and he learns how to  
steal and he learns how to fight In the ghetto

Then one night in desperation a young man breaks away

He buys a gun, steals a car, tries to run, but he don't get far

And his mama cries as a crowd gathers 'round an angry young man face down on the  
street with a gun in his hand in the ghetto

As her young man dies, on a cold and gray Chicago morning, another little baby child  
is born in the ghetto

690121 American Studios, Memphis. Reggie Young (gtr), Tommy Cogbill (bs), Mike Leach (bs),  
Gene Chrisman (dr). Bobby Wood (pf), Bobby Emmons (org), John Hughey (stlgtr); Mary  
Greene, Donna Thatcher, Susan Pilkington, Mary Holladay (backing vocals).

### **11.1.3 – *The Everly Brothers***

**The Everly Brothers: *Wake Up Little Susie* (1957).**

**The Everly Brothers: *Bird Dog* (1958).**

**The Everly Brothers: *Cathy’s Clown* (1959).**

**11.1.4 – Antoine ‘Fats’ Domino**