Chapter 24
The Popular Music of America and Its Influence
Before 1900

- first book printed in British North America, the Bay Psalm Book (1640), was a collection of metrical Psalm texts intended to be sung
- first group of American-born hymnodists (sometimes called the First New England School) included William Billings
- singing schools of New England in 1720s: where musicians would educate students on score reading and singing
Before 1900

• William Billings (1746-1800) was one of the first American-born composers to achieve international fame

• largely self-taught

• Chester became an unofficial anthem of the American Revolution

• Billings “Africa” hymn from The New-England Psalm-Singer
  
  - first printed without text; later text added by Isaac Watts when republished in The Singing Master’s Assistant (1778)
Before 1900

- Singing-school teachers eased learning process by inventing shape-note singing and replacing pitch staff reading with sol-fa syllables.
- “Sacred harp” style involves use of “lining out” by leader to cue congregation for next line of text creating a call and response texture.
- 1867, three northern abolitionists published *Slave Songs of the United States*, an important vehicle for preservation of African-American religious songs from antebellum era.
Ragtime and Blues

- **Ragtime**
  - grew out of largely unwritten tradition of African-American dance
  - flourished at end of 19th century and early decades of 20th century
  - duple meter and based on units of 8 or 16 measures
  - syncopation is prevalent
  - three or four different sections with their own themes and each running to 16 measures with connecting material between sections
Ragtime and Blues

- **Ragtime**
  - met with considerable resistance with complaints about syncopated rhythms and purportedly loose morals of those who played and listened to it
  - soon captured imagination of European artists: Debussy and Stravinsky
  - American composer or Ragtime: Scott Joplin
Ragtime and Blues

- Scott Joplin *Maple Leaf Rag*
  - typical rag
  - form: AA BB A CC DD
  - Joplin described how Ragtime was supposed to be performed (see Bonds p. 619)
Ragtime and Blues

- Debussy “Golliwog’s Cakewalk”
  - from *Children’s Corner Suite* (1908)
  - blends chromatic harmonies with rhythms of Ragtime
  - a cakewalk was a strutting dance used in Minstrel shows
  - Debussy uses the “Tristan Chord” in mm. 61-63
Ragtime and Blues

• Blues
  - text of a blues song is a lament: bemoaning poverty, social justice, fatigue, lost love
  - originated in southern U.S. among formerly enslaved African-Americans and their descendants
  - performers: “Blind Lemon” Jefferson, Blind Willie Johnson, Robert Johnson; accompanied themselves with acoustic guitar
Ragtime and Blues

• Blues
  - more urban style of blues was evolving
  - influence of vaudeville, tent tour circuits and songwriters who found in blues a new and fruitful style
  - performers: Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, William Christopher Handy (W.C. Handy)
Ragtime and Blues

• Blues
  - standard pattern known as 12-bar blues form consists of variations on repeated harmonic pattern of 12 measures in 4/4 time
  - each 12-measure unit is known as a chorus and is divided into three groups of four measures each
Ragtime and Blues

- W.C. Handy *St. Louis Blues*
  - uses the 12-bar blues pattern with a short introduction
  - see Bonds p. 622 for a chart on 12-bar blues
  - introductions normally set up the harmonies, tempo and general mood of the Blues pieces
  - this 1925 recording features Bessie Smith (vocals) and Louis Armstrong (trumpet or cornet)
Ragtime and Blues

- **Gershwin Prelude No. 2 (1926)**
  - from a 1926 collections of three preludes
  - Gershwin called this prelude a “blues lullaby” (Bonds p. 624)
  - homage to Chopin; compare with Chopin’s *Prelude in Am*, Op. 28, No. 1
Popular Song

- U.S. produced outstanding songwriters most of whom also worked in musical theater and film
- most prominent: Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Hoagy Carmichael, Richard Rodgers
Popular Song

- **Cole Porter *Night and Day***

  - this song shows many of the features common in 19th century songs:
    
    - tonal but chromatic
    - elegant and witty poetry
    - strong memorable melody

  - our recording features Ella Fitzgerald as vocalist
Popular Song

- Duke Ellington *Sophisticated Lady*
  - like Cole Porter, this song also shows features of 19th century songs
  - uses advanced harmony and melody to project the character as a worldly in life and love
Jazz to 1945

• Dixieland Jazz
  - characterized by trumpet with melodic lead, clarinet providing rapid counterpoint, trombone helping bass line, piano and drum set working together emphasizing strong beats in duple meter
  - steady succession of soloists each of whom improvised

• composer/performer: Louis Armstrong
Jazz to 1945

- **King Oliver Snake Rag**
  - recorded in 1923 featuring Lil Hardin (piano), Johnny Dodds (clarinet), Baby Dodds (drums), Louis Armstrong (cornet), Joe Oliver (cornet)
  - Dixieland Jazz style
Jazz to 1945

• Swing Era of 1930s and 1940s
  - dominated by sound of Big Bands: large ensembles of piano, drums, double bass, large complement of winds: saxophones and clarinets, groups of three or four trumpets and trombones
  - many bands featured a vocalist

• composers and performers: Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Benny Goodman
Jazz to 1945

• Duke Ellington
  - originally written in 1932
  - represents the Swing Era Jazz style of the 1930s and 1940s
  - Big Band sound
  - scat singing in this version
Jazz After 1945

- Jazz musicians began moving beyond established concepts of tonality, rhythm, form.
- Composers and performers: Charles Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell.
- Bebop feature fast tempos, irregular chordal progressions, complex harmonies, and asymmetrical, often jagged melodies.
Jazz After 1945

- Afro-Cuban jazz featured expanded percussion section and emphasized ostinato figures and complex polyrhythms
- Cool Jazz (Miles Davis) - vibrato in the winds held to minimum, avoided sentimentality and fullness characteristic of Big Band sound
- “Modal” jazz improvisation - scales or harmonic patterns became underpinning for improvisation, rather than existing songs or standard progressions
Jazz After 1945

• Miles Davis “Blue in Green”
  - represents the “Cool” jazz sound
  - from the album *Kind of Blue* (1959)
  - modal improvisation
Jazz After 1945

- Third-Stream: combined jazz and classical traits
- Jazz improvisation and harmony with instruments and voice-leading techniques more commonly associated with classical music
- Composers and performers: The Modern Jazz Quartet, Dave Brubeck, Bill Evans, Wynton Marsalis
Jazz After 1945

• Fusion Jazz: used textures rhythms, sonorities of rock and soul music

• use of such typical rock instruments as electric guitars and electric piano

• composers and performers: Miles Davis, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Weather Report
Jazz After 1945

- Free Jazz eliminated improvisations on a given theme, fixed meters, chord progressions, tonality, used collective improvisation

- using such typical rock instruments as electric guitars and electric piano

- composers and performers: Ornette Coleman, Eric Dolphy, Don Cherry, Freddie Hubbard, Charlie Haden
Country Music

• embraces a variety of styles and represents synthesis of many different musical traditions most unwritten

• most important of traditions are Anglo-American folk song, hymnody, traditional dance tunes

• musicians emphasized their rustic integrity and humble origins
Country Music

- one of the first big stars: Jimmie Rodgers
- recording from the 1930s was more ethnomusicological in purpose: John and Alan Lomax (field recordings)
Country Music

- Bluegrass is an acoustic string ensemble of banjo, guitar, fiddle, double bass
- Banjo is picked and vocals tend to be pitched in the upper end of the singer’s register, creating “high, lonesome sound”
- Composers and performers: Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs
Country Music

• Flatt and Scruggs *Foggy Mountain Breakdown*
  - bluegrass style
  - ensemble typically: banjo, guitar, fiddle, bass (double bass)
  - banjo is played finger style (rather than strummed)
  - virtuosic playing is common in bluegrass
Country Music

- new subgenres of country music include cowboy music, western swing, honky-tonk, rockabilly, country rock, outlaw, new country

- comparable genres emerged in other regions such as Texas (Tejano) and Louisiana (Cajun and Zydeco)

- Nashville, TN: became first major setting for country music business with its centrality as a songwriting and recording mecca
Folk Revival

- late 1950s and early 1960s, a number of musicians and their listening public gravitated toward a more natural sound untouched (or only minimally so) by electronic manipulation

- repertory was derived from or created in spirit of traditional songs cultivated by country musicians in previous decades

- sound rested on acoustic (not electric) guitars, limited use (or absence) of percussion, lyrical melody

- composers and performers: the Wavers; the Kingston Trio; Peter, Paul and Mary; Simon and Garfunkel; Pete Seeger; Bob Dylan; Joan Baez
Rhythm, Rock, and Rap

• boogie-woogie: piano based fusion of ragtime, blues, jazz

• boogie-woogie: featured walking bass lines in left-hand octaves or other ostinato figures while right hand played chords, melody
Rhythm, Rock, and Rap

- Vocal sound of rock and roll typically rejected refinement in favor of immediacy, pointedly, using words like “ain’t” and “nohow”

- Rock: melodic range limited, formal structure and rhythms repetitive, essential harmonies confined

- Composer/performer: Chuck Berry
Rhythm, Rock, and Rap

- Chuck Berry *Roll Over Beethoven*
  - typical of early Rock and Roll music
  - 12-bar blues form
Rhythm, Rock, and Rap

• after first few years of 1960s, rock began moving in many different directions: The Beatles, Beach Boys, Jimi Hendrix Experience, The Doors

• rock styles proliferated further in closing decades of 20th century: Heavy Metal, Disco, Techno, Grunge, Unplugged
Rhythm, Rock, and Rap

- Motown Records founded by Berry Gordy Jr. in 1960 in Detroit.
- Motown featured artists like The Temptations, Diana Ross and the Supremes.
- Motown sound was characterized by close vocal harmony, soaring melody, call and response, steady beat.
- Soul Music, with its roots in gospel and rhythm and blues, grew from early 1960s primarily in Memphis, TN by artists like Aretha Franklin.
Rhythm, Rock, and Rap

• Hip-Hop evolved out of Jamaican roots and began with words being shouted over a disc on a turntable being manipulated by a disc jockey.

• Rap derived in part from Jamaican practice of tasting and America “talking blues” - both of which concentrated on creating and performing texts spontaneously while music played.