Andrea Carosso
Erasmus IP "The 1960s", Berlin, Sept. 2011
Rock n Roll Playlist, 1947-1970

Here is a basic playlist of songs from the pre-Rock n Roll, Rock n Roll and post Rock n Roll eras. This is meant as a REFERENCE for your music interests. YouTube.com is a great source for listening to these tunes.
A rationale CONNECTING MANY OF THESE SONGS can be found in an article not included in the course reader, which students may download at:
http://hotfile.com/dl/124033765/ff227e6/Stilwell_Robyn._Music_of_the_youth_revolution._Rock_through_the_1960s_(Cambridge_History_of_20th_cent._music).pdf.html -- (Genre indication is often vague and debatable, as we will discuss during the mini-module)

Year	Artist	Title	Label/Number	Billboard yearly ranking	Genre
1947	Arthur Crudup	That's alright mama		not ranked	R&B
1951	Johnnie Ray	Cry	OKeh 6840	1	Rock
1951	Howlin' Wolf	Moanin' at Midnight		not ranked	R&B
1951	Haley, Bill, and the Saddlemen	Rocket 88		not ranked	RnR
1952	Big Mama Thornton	Hound Dog	Peacock Records	not ranked	R&B
1953	Orioles	Crying in the Chapel	Jubilee 5122	80	doo-wop
1953	Bill Haley	Crazy, Man, Crazy	Essex 321	87	Rock
1954	Crew-Cuts, The	Sh-Boom	Mercury 70404	2	Rock
1954	Chords	Sh-Boom	Cat 104	29	motown
1954	Bill Haley & His Comets	Shake, Rattle, and Roll	Decca 29204	41	Rock
1954	Joe Turner	Shake, Rattle, and Roll	Atlantic 1026	186	R&B
1955	Bill Haley and His Comets	(We're Gonna) Rock Around The Clock	Decca 29124	3	Rock
1955	Fats Domino	Ain't It A Shame	Imperial 5348 A	75	Rock
1955	Elvis Presley	Blue Moon of Kentucky	Sun	not ranked	RnR
1955	Elvis Presley	Baby, Let's Play House	Sun	not ranked	RnR
1955	Elvis Presley	That's alright mama		not ranked	RnR
1956	Elvis Presley	Hound Dog	RCA Victor 47-6604	2	Rock
1956	Platters, The	The Great Pretender	Mercury 70753	15	doo-wop
1956	Little Richard	Long Tall Sally	Specialty 572 A	47	Rock
1957	Everly Brothers, The	Wake Up Little Susie	Cadence 1337	9	Rock
1958	Jerry Lee Lewis	Great Balls Of Fire	Sun 281	24	Rock
1958	Little Richard	Good Golly, Miss Molly	Specialty 624	100	Rock
1958	Sam Cooke	I'll Come Running Back To You	Specialty 619	146	R&B
1959	Platters, The	Smoke Gets In Your Eyes	Mercury 71383	8	doo-wop
1959	Sam Cooke	Everybody Likes To Cha Cha Cha	Keen 3-2018	204	R&B
1960	Mark Dinning	Teen Angel	MGM 12845	9	Rock
1960	Ray Charles	Georgia On My Mind	ABC-Paramount 45-10135	19	Rock
1960	Sam Cooke	Chain Gang	RCA Victor 47-7783	23	R&B
1961	Del Shannon	Runaway	Bigtop 45-3067	3	Rock
1961	Ray Charles	Hit The Road Jack	ABC-Paramount 45-10244	14	Rock
1961	Shirelles, The	Will You Love Me Tomorrow?	Scepter 1211	16	R&B
1961	Marvelettes, The	Please Mr. Postman	Tamla 54046	18	soul (motown)
1961	Ben E. King	Stand By Me	Atco 45-6194	44	Rock
1962	Ray Charles	I Can't Stop Loving You	ABC-Paramount 45-10330	1	Rock
1962	Chubby Checker	The Twist	Parkway 811	10	twist
1962	Dee Dee Sharp	Mashed Potato Time	Cameo 212	23	Rock
1962	Orlons, The	The Wah-Watusi	Cameo 218	25	Rock
1962	Everly Brothers, The	Crying In The Rain	Warner Bros. 5250	63	Rock

1962	Beach Boys, The	Surfin' Safari	Capitol 4777	131	Rock
1963	Chiffons, The	He's So Fine	Laurie 3152	2	Rock
1963	Peter, Paul & Mary	Blowin' In The Wind	Warner Bros. 5368	27	Folk
1963	Four Seasons, The	Candy Girl	Vee-Jay 539	43	Rock
1963	Martha & the Vandellas	Heat Wave	Gordy 7022	50	soul (motown)
1963	Drifters, The	Up On The Roof	Atlantic 45-2162	64	R&B
1963	Beatles, The	Baby It's You	Apple 58348	240	british_invasion
1963	Joan Baez	We Shall Overcome	Vanguard 35023	557	Folk
1964	Beatles, The	I Want To Hold Your Hand	Capitol 5112	1	british_invasion
1964	Beatles, The	Can't Buy Me Love	Capitol 5150	2	british_invasion
1964	Supremes, The	Baby Love	Motown 1066	4	soul (motown)
1964	Roy Orbison	Oh, Pretty Woman	Monument 45-851	5	Rock
1964	Animals, The	The House Of The Rising Sun	MGM 13264	6	british_invasion
1964	Martha & the Vandellas	Dancing In The Street	Gordy 7033	26	soul (motown)
1964	Zombies, The	She's Not There	Parrot 9695	30	british_invasion
1964	Drifters, The	Under The Boardwalk	Atlantic 45-2237	51	R&B
1965	Rolling Stones, The	(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction	London 9766	1	british_invasion
1965	Beatles, The	Yesterday	Capitol 5498	2	british_invasion
1965	Byrds, The	Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is A Season)	Columbia 43424	3	folk_rock
1965	Four Tops	I Can't Help Myself	Motown 1076	7	soul (motown)
1965	Righteous Brothers, The	You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'	Philles 124	8	blue-eyed soul
1965	Temptations, The	My Girl	Gordy 7038	17	soul (motown)
1965	Barry McGuire	Eve Of Destruction	Dunhill 4009	20	folk_rock
1965	Bob Dylan	Like A Rolling Stone	Columbia 43346	29	folk_rock
1965	James Brown	I Got You (I Feel Good)	King 6015	34	soul
1965	Beach Boys, The	California Girls	Capitol 5464	39	Rock
1965	Impressions, The	People Get Ready	ABC-Paramount 45-10622	151	Rock
1966	Monkees, The	I'm A Believer	Colgems 1002 A	1	Rock
1966	Mamas and The Papas, The	Monday, Monday	Dunhill 4026	5	Rock
1966	Lovin' Spoonful, The	Summer In The City	Kama Sutra 211	7	Rock
1966	Supremes, The	You Can't Hurry Love	Motown 1097	9	soul (motown)
1966	Four Tops	Reach Out I'll Be There	Motown 1098	11	soul (motown)
1966	Rolling Stones, The	Paint It, Black	London 901	12	british_invasion
1966	Simon and Garfunkel	The Sounds Of Silence	Columbia 43396	17	Rock
1966	Donovan	Sunshine Superman	Epic 5-10045	26	british_invasion
1966	Beach Boys, The	Barbara Ann	Capitol 5561	36	Rock
1966	Bob Dylan	Rainy Day Women #12 & 35	Columbia 43592	40	folk_rock
1966	Stevie Wonder	Uptight (Everything's Alright)	Tamla 54124	44	soul (motown)
1966	Wilson Pickett	Land Of 1000 Dances	Atlantic 2348	78	R&B
1967	Monkees, The	Daydream Believer	Colgems 66-1012	2	Rock
1967	Young Rascals	Groovin'	Atlantic 2401	6	blue-eyed_soul
1967	Doors, The	Light My Fire	Elektra 45615	8	Rock
1967	Turtles, The	Happy Together	White Whale 244	9	Rock
1967	Aretha Franklin	Respect	Atlantic 2403	11	R&B
1967	Gladys Knight and the Pips	I Heard It Through The Grapevine	Soul 35039	19	soul (motown)
1967	Sam and Dave	Soul Man	Stax 231	20	southern_soul (stax)

1967	Johnny Rivers	Baby I Need Your Lovin'	Imperial 66227	36	Rock
1967	Scott McKenzie	San Francisco (Be Sure To Wear Flowers In Your Hair)	Ode 7-103	40	Rock
1967	Smokey Robinson	I Second That Emotion	Tamla 54159	41	soul (motown)
1967	Procol Harum	A Whiter Shade Of Pale	Deram 7507	51	british_invasion
1967	Jefferson Airplane	Somebody To Love	RCA 9140	58	Rock
1967	Jefferson Airplane	White Rabbit	RCA 9248	81	Rock
1967	Beatles, The	Strawberry Fields Forever	Capitol 5810	86	british_invasion
1967	Hollies, The	Carrie Anne	Epic 10180	95	british_invasion
1968	Beatles, The	Hey Jude	Apple 2276 A	1	british_invasion
1968	Marvin Gaye	I Heard It Through The Grapevine	Tamla 54176	2	soul (motown)
1968	Rascals, The	People Got To Be Free	Atlantic 45-2537	5	blue-eyed_soul
1968	Otis Redding	(Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay	Volt 157	6	southern_soul (stax)
1968	Simon and Garfunkel	Mrs. Robinson	Columbia 44511	8	Rock
1968	Diana Ross and the Supremes	Love Child	Motown 1135	9	soul (motown)
1968	Doors, The	Hello, I Love You	Elektra 45635	11	Rock
1968	Steppenwolf	Born To Be Wild	Dunhill 4138 A	20	Rock
1968	Aretha Franklin	Chain Of Fools	Atlantic 2464	22	soul
1968	Crazy World Of Arthur Brown, The	Fire	Atlantic 2556	28	Rock
1968	Rolling Stones, The	Jumpin' Jack Flash	London 908	32	british_invasion
1968	Temptations, The	I Wish It Would Rain	Gordy 7068	40	soul (motown)
1968	Cream, The	Sunshine Of Your Love	Atco 6544 A	54	british_invasion
1969	5th Dimension, The	Aquarius/Let The Sunshine In	Soul City 772	1	Rock
1969	Rolling Stones, The	Honky Tonk Women	London 45-910	5	british_invasion
1969	Sly & the Family Stone	Everyday People	Epic 5-10407	6	R&B
1969	Elvis Presley	Suspicious Minds	RCA Victor 47-9764	16	Rock
1969	Creedence Clearwater Revival	Proud Mary	Fantasy 619	18	Rock
1969	Blood, Sweat & Tears	Spinning Wheel	Columbia 4-44871	19	Rock
1969	Zombies, The	Time Of The Season	Date 2-1628	36	british_invasion
1969	Three Dog Night	Easy To Be Hard	Dunhill 45-4203	45	Rock
1969	Guess Who, The	These Eyes	RCA 0102	67	soul_inspired
1969	Donovan	Atlantis	Epic 5-10434	76	british_invasion
1969	Bob Dylan	Lay Lady Lay	Columbia 4-44926	77	folk_rock
1970	Simon and Garfunkel	Bridge Over Troubled Water	Columbia 4-45079	1	Rock
1970	Jackson 5	I'll Be There	Motown 1171	2	soul (motown)
1970	George Harrison	My Sweet Lord	Apple 2995	5	Rock
1970	Diana Ross	Ain't No Mountain High Enough	Motown 1169	7	soul (motown)
1970	Guess Who, The	American Woman	RCA Victor 74-0325	8	Rock
1970	Smokey Robinson	The Tears Of A Clown	Tamla 54199	11	soul (motown)
1970	Creedence Clearwater Revival	Long As I Can See The Light	Fantasy 645	26	Rock
1970	Temptations, The	Ball Of Confusion (That's What The World Is Today)	Gordy 7099	30	soul (motown)
1970	Led Zeppelin	Whole Lotta Love	Atlantic 45-2690	47	rock
1970	Chicago	25 Or 6 To 4	Columbia 4-45194	51	Rock
1970	Band, The	Up On Cripple Creek	Capitol 2635	176	Rock

uct; Berry's sisters had absorbed their parents' lessons about possessions. Instead of simply leasing records to other labels, they started their own, making a deal for distribution with Chess that ensured them a bigger return on sales than record leasing could have given them—as well as giving their music an identity within the industry and with record buyers.

Ironically, Anna Records' biggest hit was written and produced not by Gwen or Billy Davis, but leased from Berry. The staying power of this one song, "Money (That's What I Want)," would rival that of anything to come in Motown's history. The strong, driving rhythm and blues dance tune with a cynical view of romance and finance was written by Berry with Janie Bradford, later a Motown secretary, and performed by a local singer named Barrett Strong. Money, or lack of same, was very much on Berry's mind: "I was broke until the time I wrote 'Money'; even though I had many hits, and there were other writers who had many hits, we just didn't have profits. And coming from a business family, my father and mother always talked about the bottom line, and simple things, and the bottom line is profit. You know, are you making money or not?"

That explains the lyric, one that inspired many memorable covers, including John Lennon's passionate version on *The Beatles' Second Album* in 1964 and the Flying Lizards' weird spoken-word cover in 1979. But Berry's memory reveals nothing about the assurance of Berry's production. With Raynoma and Berry providing the "That's what I want" chorus, Strong sings over a boogie-woogie piano riff, a funky bass-drum groove augmented by gospel tambourine. This tune, like Berry's Jackie Wilson material, would serve as a prototype for early Motown recordings.

"Money" was an artistic triumph, but for Berry it ended the 1950s on a rather bittersweet note. After years of indecision and unrest he had found a way to make a living as exciting as boxing at the Olympia and —physically, at least—much less painful. Yet where was the return on his investment? He had hits. He had a name. He had the respect of the local youngbloods looking to make music. He had gone from spectator to songwriter with amazing ease. It was Smokey Robinson who knew what had to be done, and after a particularly memorable drive in 1959, he sat Berry down, nineteen-year-old disciple advising thirty-year-old mentor, and made a suggestion.

Nelson George. Where did our love go? : the rise & fall of the Motown sound. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987

4·SHOP AROUND

1959 to 1962

Winter, 1959: Berry Gordy is at the wheel of his Cadillac with Smokey Robinson at his side. They are driving from Detroit to a Flint record pressing plant to pick up advance copies of Marv Johnson's "Come to Me." The radio is blasting and each man is commenting on the songs as they come on. It sounds like two professionals talking shop. Yet their businesslike chatter disguises concern.

Snow is falling. The road is slick and dotted with large patches of ice. People have died driving on roads like this in Michigan since old man Ford designed the Model T, and on this day it almost claims these two not-yet-illustrious music makers. Twice the car skids off the road, once barely missing the front end of an oncoming truck. All this for a few hundred copies of a record that they had made, but that now belonged to the United Artists record company in New York City. They might be able to sell those records—off the books—to a friendly local retailer for some much-needed quick cash, or give them to a local disc jockey in exchange for airplay. Somewhere down the line—if United Artists treated Berry and Smokey right—they might see some substantial royalties on sales and airplay. But it hadn't happened before, so there was no reason to be overly optimistic now.

Smokey was frustrated by their impotence in the record industry. It was clear to Smokey that the way to really make it was to stop leasing records to others and to begin marketing and merchandising their music themselves. In short, they needed to follow the lead of Gwen and Anna and start a full-fledged record company.

Berry finally came around to Smokey's point of view. His sister Esther would later say, "It was not his goal to head up a major entertainment complex with recordings, films, and all these sorts of things. He just wanted to be a successful songwriter." At the time Berry had told her, "If I ever get this house and get it paid for, I'll have it made [a reference to a house at 2648 West Grand Boulevard that Raynoma had found to make their base of operations]. I'll live upstairs, I'll have my offices down in the front part, and I'll have a studio out back where I can make demonstration records or masters to sell to record companies." To Esther, "All Motown is is the result of one thing leading to another and Berry Gordy saying, 'I'll do it myself' when he could not get something done to his liking. We had parents who always said, 'Your gift will make room for you. You make a better product and they will buy it.' "

That Berry was a reluctant industrialist is clear from an insightful (though self-serving) story Berry wrote in 1979 for *The New York Times:*

> I began working with a publisher in New York, but the moment came when he owed me $1,000 and was refusing to pay. I consulted a lawyer and insisted that he bring suit against the publisher.
>
> "Look," I was told, "if you sue him for $1,000, it will take you three years or so in court. You're going to pay me more than $1,000 and you're going to end up settling with him for probably $200—it doesn't make sense."
>
> "You mean that he owes $1,000 and I just can't collect it?" I asked.
>
> "That's exactly it," he said.
>
> "What would happen if I started a company for young writers?" I asked the lawyer. "For people in the same position I'm in."
>
> "You'd be undercapitalized," he said, "and it would never work."
>
> In retrospect, I guess that was it. I had just been told I couldn't do something, and I was determined to prove him wrong.

Aside from putting a down payment on the West Grand Boulevard building, Berry formed Jobete Music Publishing (named after his daughters: Joy, Betty, and Terry); the corporation Berry Gordy, Jr., Enterprises; Hitsville, USA; Motown Record Corporation (a contraction of Motortown), which would issue records under a variety of labels, including

Tamla (originally named Tammy, after the Debbie Reynolds film of that name); and International Talent Management, Inc. (ITM), to guide the careers of his signees.

In conjunction with these moves Berry established policies that set the tone for Motown's business style. Motown would be very strict about who had access to its books. Artists would only be allowed to review them two times a year and no industry regulatory group, such as the Recording Industry Association of America, the organization that awards gold and platinum albums, would be allowed to audit the company's books (a policy that didn't change until the late seventies, which is why none of Motown's hits of the sixties was ever certified gold).

Motown would also establish a policy of cross-collateralization of royalty accounts. So, for example, if an artist signed as a performer and a writer to Jobete, any cost incurred in preparing his records could be charged against songwriting royalties. Berry also made plans to pay his creative personnel a weekly salary—even when they weren't being productive—that would be charged against royalties should they suddenly have a hit. None of these practices was illegal and, for a new enterprise, they were quite cost-effective. But certainly no sharp talent manager would have agreed to all of them, since they placed the power in the management-artist relationships squarely in Motown's hands. Of course with Motown, through ITM, looking to manage all of its own acts, these policies would prove easy to enforce.

In the summer of 1959, the Miracles' "Way Over There" was the first record released on the Tamla label and, if that weren't historic enough, it was also Smokey's first solo production. Every previous Miracles release had been credited to Berry and Smokey, with the older man providing his protégé on-the-job training. This time, after coming off a road trip, Smokey was so sure that the song would be a hit he took the Miracles and a band into the studio himself. "Way" wasn't a national chart success, but by the end of its run it had sold 60,000 copies, most of it in the Midwest, a remarkable number for an unknown Detroit label.

For Berry, the move into record manufacturing proved financially beneficial. In June 1960, Berry was making $133 per week from the music business, had paid $1,300 on a $4,800 red Cadillac, $3,000 on the 2648 West Grand's $23,000 mortgage, and had total assets of $32,600. Yet Berry, who filed this information in response to another child support request from Thelma, claimed liabilities of $32,500. So, according to him, his net worth in 1960 was only $100, an on-paper decrease of $5,000 from

1959. "I have tried to explain to my wife that my financial situation has been a matter of future prospects rather than present profits, but she refuses to believe me," was Berry's prescient comment to the court.

At around the same time that Berry was pleading that his best years were just ahead, he was making the record that would give Motown its first golden success. The song "Shop Around" was written by Smokey with Barrett Strong in mind. Smokey had dashed off the basic elements of this "mother-knows-best" story-song in just ten minutes. However, it wasn't until Berry heard it on piano and offered some suggestions that "Shop Around" took on the qualities of a classic.

"We were at the piano and [Berry] said, 'No, I think that we oughta do this with the chorus,' " Smokey recalled. "That part that says, 'Try to get yourself a bargain son/Don't be sold . . .' and I had some other chords there. He said, 'No, we oughta put *these* chords in there and then, at the end [when the lyric says], 'try the one who's gonna give you true lovin',' he said, 'we oughta break that in there, you know, so that can stand out.' " It was a brilliant choice, which highlighted the lyric's key message line. In addition, Berry suggested that Claudette—not Strong—sing it, even though Smokey had written the song for a man.

Two weeks after the record's initial release in the Detroit area Smokey was awakened by a phone call.

"Hey, man, what you doin'?" It was Berry.

"It's three o'clock in the morning. What do you think I'm doing? I'm asleep."

"I want you and Claudette to get up and come over here and I want you to call the other guys and tell them to come to the studio right now."

"Why, man?" Smokey asked.

"Because, man, I can't sleep. I haven't slept in three or four days. 'Shop Around' keeps going through my mind. You didn't cut it right. I gotta change the beat. . . . And then it's going to be number one."

This logic impressed Smokey.

"Well, okay, all right."

After waking Claudette he called the other Miracles, all of whom were less than enthused by Berry's timing.

But by four A.M. the Miracles, Berry, and a rhythm section had gathered at Hitsville. Berry hadn't been able to round up a pianist, so he played piano. The session ended in the late morning and the new version was on the market before the week was out.

The differences between the two versions are few but critical. On the original, drummer Benny Benjamin played with sticks and at a slightly

slower tempo. The new "Shop Around" featured Benjamin using brushes. On the second "Shop Around," Berry made Smokey sing lead, reviving the song's original mama's-boy angle. In addition, Smokey's light voice, with its air of plaintive yearning, had the adolescent quality Berry had been striving for when he had had Claudette record it.

In early 1961 "Shop Around" went to number one on the R&B chart and number two on the pop chart. That spring, before eight thousand people at the Michigan State Fairgrounds, Berry came onstage and handed the Miracles their first gold record. It was an emotional moment: Claudette, Berry, Smokey, and the other Miracles all hugged and cried and smiled, basking in this first moment of glory.

"Shop Around" signaled Motown's future, yet it was a series of blues releases on Motown, aimed at the same Detroit blues market that had once helped close Berry's 3-D Record Mart, that helped keep the young business afloat. Singing Sammy Ward, a gutsy shouter with much the same vocal timbre as the Reverend C. L. Franklin, cut several sides from 1960 to 1962, some with Sherri Taylor ("Oh! Lover," "That's Why I Love You so Much") and several solo singles, including the raw blues "Big Joe Moe." Mabel John, sister of popular R&B singer Little Willie John, possessed a strident soulful voice like her brother's, which on "Who Wouldn't Love a Man Like That" and "Looking for a Man" made an impression around the Motor City in 1961. During the 1950s, piano-playing bluesman Amos Milburn was notorious throughout black America for his "drinking" songs: "Bad Bad Whiskey," "Let Me Go Home, Whiskey," and the barstool standard "One Scotch, One Bourbon, One Beer." Milburn, a hard-drinking braggart who once sang, in "Roll Mr. Jelly," about raising a dead woman with his penis, cut a single and an album, *Return of the Blues Boss,* for Motown in 1962. By the end of the year, however, none of these singers was on Berry's roster, apparently having fulfilled their role in generating local cash, but with no future at a place where the emphasis was on youthful singers and songs.

Over the next three years, roughly 1960 through 1962, a community of administrators, musicians, and entertainers began coalescing inside 2648 West Grand Boulevard, motivated by family pride, marital ties, a sense of black unity, the chance to make music, and, of course, the desire to become rich and famous. This was a time of building, of adding pieces to the puzzle and giving unproven talent a shot. Berry literally was shopping around, not sure what would come of his label, but knowing that having it gave him at least a fighting chance against the forces that controlled his industry. One man couldn't beat the big boys at this game,

certainly not one black man from Detroit. He'd already proven that himself. "Shop Around" 's triumph showed him that Smokey was right; Berry had nothing to lose and only dreams to gain.

The family came first in Motown's evolving corporate culture. Esther's involvement in the music business had begun back in 1957, when she did secretarial work for Berry and set up tour itineraries for Marv Johnson and the Miracles. In 1959, while enjoying a well-paid patronage job provided by her husband, state legislator George Edwards, Esther volunteered time to Berry's young record company, and a year later she gave up her other business interests to assume a vice-presidency at Motown, where she was put in charge of developing the management company, International Talent Management, Inc. At the same time, Edwards, while serving in the legislature, became Motown's first comptroller. Loucye left her job with the Army reserves for a Motown vice-presidency and the job of organizing billing and collection. Her husband, Ron Wakefield, a sometime saxophonist who'd later tour with several Motown acts, joined as staff arranger in 1963. Berry's brother Robert, no longer recording as Robert Kayli, quit his job at the post office for on-the-job training as an engineer at Hitsville, for sixty-five cents an hour. Older brothers George and Fuller were deeply involved in operating Pops's construction and print shops, and yet Berry's enterprise would eventually pull both of them into what was quickly becoming the most important Gordy family enterprise. Pops, of course, was overjoyed by Berry's blossoming into a money-maker. To him Motown came to represent the fulfillment of the lessons he'd passed on to his children, and that his father had passed on to him. From the beginning he was a constant consultant to Berry, whispering words of encouragement, lecturing about the value of control and discipline in managing his business. The later Motown artists, who often saw Pops as a kindly figure with an uncanny resemblance to the Colonel Sanders of fried chicken fame, never knew just how profoundly his philosophy had affected their careers.

Gwen and Anna contributed, too, by marrying two important Motown musicians—literally bringing them into the Gordy family. Both Harvey Fuqua and Marvin Gaye had shopped around the industry before joining Motown, and the experience they brought was critical to the fledgling organization.

Fuqua, a large yet very gentle man, had started a vocal group called the Crazy Sounds as a teenager in Cleveland. Top local disc jockey Alan "Moondog" Freed had invited them over to the radio station after an impromptu telephone audition, and signed them to his Champagne Records in 1952 after changing their name to the Moonglows. After cutting a couple of sides for Champagne, they split from Freed and Cleveland, winding up in Chicago, where they signed to Chance Records, a label owned by black record man Ewart Abner. Unfortunately, after a couple of local Moonglow hits that failed to make money, Abner advised Fuqua and company that he wouldn't be able to pay them and suggested they walk around the corner to the offices of Chess Records. For about five hundred dollars, Chess bought out the group's Chance contract and the Moonglows were on their way.

With Fuqua providing the deep bass vocals, the Moonglows' first Chess single, "Sincerely," became an instant doo-wop classic in November 1954. In order to double their money they also recorded several sides as (pun surely intended) the Moonlighters, scoring in Chicago with "Shoo-doo-Bedoo," a takeoff on the Chords' seminal rock and roll single "Sh-Boom." At local gigs they'd appear first as the Moonlighters for one fee, change their suits, then come out again as the Moonglows for another. By 1955, however, this trick was no longer necessary; the Moonglows emerged as a premier vocal group, enjoying major national hits with "Most of All" (1955), "See Saw" (1956), and "Please Send Me Someone to Love" (1957).

In 1958, the thrill of stardom began wearing thin. Fuqua, a practical man, was disturbed to see everybody except the Moonglows profiting from their hard work. It was during Fuqua's period of disillusionment that four Washington, D.C., teens who called themselves the Marquees talked him into auditioning them in his hotel room. He was impressed by their ability to reproduce the Moonglows' sound, and he was especially impressed by the voice of a member named Marvin Gay. The Marquees had cut a few obscure singles (such as "Wyatt Earp," in 1957) for Columbia's "race" label Okeh, where Bo Diddley was one of their strongest supporters. And, unlike most groups of the time, the Marquees actually wrote some of their own material.

A few months later, the original Moonglows split up. Determined to keep the name alive, Fuqua returned to Washington, where he found the Marquees and brought them to Chicago. Leonard Chess, impressed by Fuqua's maturity and ambition, offered him a salaried job as a talent scout and a continuation of the Moonglows' recording contract. With his youngbloods in tow, Fuqua continued to record—this time as Harvey and the Moonglows—and in 1958 scored a massive hit with "Ten Commandments of Love."

With a steady job and the option of recording at his leisure, Fuqua

should have been happy. Instead, "I started feeling closed in. I was going to the office everyday at ten A.M. and I'd never worked like that before. So I told Leonard I couldn't handle the job. I wanted to be out and free. At the time he had a lease master deal with Billy Davis and Gwen Gordy over in Detroit—Anna Records—so he said, 'Why don't you go there and work in that operation, since you wanna be free. You can come in any time you want to, you can go on the road, you can produce when you feel like it.' It was an ideal situation and I'd be helping to build a new label, so I kept Marvin with me; I sent the other three guys home and went to Detroit."

It made sense. Fuqua had already established a working relationship with Davis, with whom he'd composed the Moonglows' "See Saw" and some other tunes. He knew Gwen through Davis, and had met Berry when he visited Chess's offices to peddle the Miracles' "Bad Girl." But the fact that Fuqua kept Marvin with him is testimony to his keen eye for talent and the growth of a friendship that, in some ways, paralleled that of Smokey and Berry.

Marvin was a tall, smooth-skinned charmer whose cool style was attractive to women. Yet he was insecure about himself, and had many conflicts with his overbearing father, a well-known Pentecostal minister. Reverend Gay was flamboyant and persuasive, yet many in the D.C. area found him a strangely disquieting figure. Along with the fury of his sermons, there was an androgynous, almost feline quality about him that caused whispers in the nation's capitol (it wasn't until 1984 that Reverend Gay's transvestism became generally known). His son, sensitive and clearly possessed of his father's charisma—along with his own special musical gifts (he sang and played piano and drums)—sought to establish an identity outside the church. He wanted to be an athlete, but his father stifled that urge when Marvin was young. By his teen years, Marvin had found a more insidious form of rebellion: singing "the devil's music." In Fuqua, Marvin found a strong, solidly masculine figure who respected and encouraged his talent. Together they'd sit for hours at the piano, Fuqua showing Marvin chords. His pupil took instruction well, but every now and then his rebel's spirit would flare when something conflicted with his views. Marvin's combination of sex appeal and spirituality, malleability and conviction, gave his voice a quiet electricity similar to that of Sam Cooke's, who had had a number-one pop single in late 1957 with "You Send Me" after a career as one of gospel music's biggest stars.

Strangely, Marvin, who by this time had added an *e* to his last name, never recorded for Anna Records. Yet he surely liked the label's namesake,

and she liked him. "Right away Anna snatched him," Fuqua told writer Aaron Fuchs. "Just snatched him immediately." When they met, she was seventeen years older than Marvin, but folks in Detroit thought she was a match for any man. Ambitious, haughty, shrewd, and adept at manipulating men, Anna introduced Marvin to Berry, who then used him as a pianist and drummer on his sessions. At night he appeared at nightclubs around Detroit, often accompanied by Fuqua.

In 1960, in the wake of "Money," Fuqua joined Anna Records and, like Marvin, was quickly sucked into the Gordys' extended family. For ten dollars a week he lived with Esther Gordy and her husband, George Edwards. He became fascinated by Esther's efforts to make Edwards a Michigan state legislator, and also by the Gordy family's remarkable togetherness.

Fuqua, in turn, attracted the attention of Berry for a practice that struck him as unusual. In the basement of Esther's home, Fuqua would rehearse hour after hour with the acts on Anna. Berry had never seen anyone spend so much time on the live presentation of an act. Yet here was Fuqua, a large yet graceful man, leading the Originals, a quartet featuring a postman named Freddie Gorman, and his favorites, the Spinners, a group with a real flair for showmanship, through carefully choreographed steps. Berry's curiosity hadn't yet led him to reach out to Fuqua; their conversations were usually limited to "Hi, how ya doing?" despite their recording activities. Berry had to have noticed, however, that Fuqua and sister Gwen were getting mighty friendly. Davis, often on the road promoting Anna Records' releases, was becoming the odd man out. It was then that Berry started asking Fuqua if he could maybe help some of his acts.

But Fuqua was too busy. He cut some sides with fiery R&B singer and close friend Etta James for Chess, and toured with her a bit. Whenever he was on the road, he visited local radio deejays with the latest Anna records, using his reputation as a Moonglow to stimulate airplay. In Detroit he split his time between recording, rehearsing his groups, and hanging out with Gwen Gordy. Davis decided, quite predictably, that it was time to leave the company. With the backing of Chess, he started Check-Mate Records, which lasted a few years before Davis gave up recordmaking for a spot at New York's McCann-Erickson advertising agency, where he works to this day writing jingles.

With Davis's departure, Anna Records died. In its place Fuqua started his own Tri-Phi and Harvey labels in 1961. In that same year Harvey Fuqua married Gwen, with Marvin serving as his best man;

Harvey returned the favor when Marvin married Anna. For better or worse, both men were now Gordys—even if it was the ladies who had changed their last names.

Fuqua was quite adept at ferreting out young talent; in his first three years in Detroit he recorded Johnny Bristol and Lamont Anthony (aka Dozier) at Anna, and Shorty Long, Junior Walker, and the Spinners at Tri-Phi and Harvey; all would be artists of some importance during the next two decades. But, unfortunately, Fuqua was again showing the inability to deal with the nuances of the record business that had led him to quit Chess. Through his network of radio contacts Fuqua could get his songs on the air, but he could never get enough records into stores around the country to capitalize on this radio exposure.

Fuqua's problems were the problems of every small independent record operation of the era, and they serve as a survey course in the difficulties that Motown would overcome through superior organization. Fuqua, for example, would have a hot record in Philadelphia, sell a lot of copies, yet have little luck in receiving the bulk of his money from his local distributor. Meanwhile, bills from the record-pressing plant arrived in a steady stream. Delinquency in paying the plant meant that the next release would only be pressed following cash payment upfront, causing cash-flow problems. That Harvey Fuqua was a black dealing with whites didn't help either. The same industry that allowed Chicago's Leonard and Phil Chess's operation to flourish while, around the corner, Ewart Abner floundered, was now squeezing Fuqua.

It got so bad that Fuqua almost began to fear success. One Harvey release sold 400,000 nationally. He should have been ecstatic. Instead, he found himself with a huge pressing bill that required immediate payment to keep the product flow going. Distributors paid for sales in thirty- and sixty-day cycles that too often stretched to ninety. Distributors were in total control when dealing with small undercapitalized labels, since they controlled the means of distribution and there was really no way to monitor them systematically. The "indie" labels needed the pressers and distributors more than they were needed by them. Moreover, the large labels (Columbia, Decca, Mercury) were handled by many of these distributors as well, and their stars and money gave their records priority.

Fuqua just couldn't make the numbers add up. So when his brother-in-law asked him to join Motown and be in charge of record promotion, dealing with radio stations and polishing his acts' onstage presentations, Fuqua was in no position to turn it down. Bringing the Spinners and Johnny Bristol with him, he came aboard.

While Gordys, old and new, were Motown's first inner circle, Berry brought in a group of Detroit music industry veterans to form the next layer of management. Some of them would later supersede Berry's family in the Motown structure. These were men Berry had met around the city who, like him, were hungry for a chance at big money but hadn't figured out how to get it. Before becoming director of artists and repertoire, or "A&R," William "Mickey" Stevenson had been trying unsuccessfully to get members of Detroit's black bourgeoisie to invest in a Motown-like operation. After cutting R&B and gospel music since the mid-1950s, Stevenson—a show-biz kid whose mother Kitty was a singer—felt it was time for a strong black label. He approached black doctors, lawyers, and businessmen to back him, but they weren't interested in entering what they saw as the hustling, unsavory world of black show business, feeling that the field wasn't respectable or safe enough for them to invest in. Stevenson had little interest in developing a licensing arrangement with any white-owned indie labels; he didn't trust them. He'd watched Berry's rise since his days with Jackie Wilson and had admired his drive and confidence. Moreover, Berry was a black man whose family watched his back. Stevenson had found that, despite all the talk about blacks getting their civil rights down South, it was rare to see blacks—outside the church—giving of themselves in organized effort. Berry knew about Stevenson's ambitions and commitment to black advancement, qualities he accurately perceived would make him a loyal, diligent employee.

Stevenson's position meant that he supervised all musicians, producers, and writers. He assigned producers to acts (subject to Berry's approval), made sure songs were written on time, and produced acts when deadlines had to be met or he couldn't find anyone to take the assignment. But in the early days his most important duty was building Motown's stable of studio musicians.

Like Berry, Stevenson preferred jazz musicians for his sessions, believing that they were both more technically assured and more creative than their blues-based counterparts. The leader of Motown's first road band was Choker Campbell, a pianist and former leader of Count Basie–style big bands at summer resorts. A burly jazz pianist, Joe Hunter, headed the studio band. Dave Hamilton, who would make a vital and largely unknown contribution to Motown music, played the unlikely combination of guitar and vibes. Bassist James Jamerson and drummer Benny Benjamin, both regulars at Detroit's several popular after-hours spots, had worked with Berry on and off since the early Miracles records; in the early sixties, they were just beginning to realize how well they worked together.

Stevenson helped Berry inaugurate a jazz label called Jazz Workshop, and, using it as an inducement, Stevenson got several players under dual contracts as recording artists *and* staff musicians. For Motown, it ensured a reliable, skilled group of players who were always on call. For the musicians, many of whom were bebop fanciers from the fertile East Coast jazz scene, Jazz Workshop held the promise that they would be able to record the music they really loved. So they tolerated playing Motown's "Mickey Mouse music" for session fees of $5, $7, and $10 a single (the union minimum was $52.50) for the often-illusory opportunity to record jazz.

Working under Stevenson as assistant A&R director was Clarence Paul, a long-time comrade with whom he had once recorded duets. Stevenson also had an ambitious secretary named Martha Reeves. Unlike many inside Motown, Reeves had considerable musical training—she had sung religious music at her father's Methodist church and classical music at Northeastern High. In addition, she brought her previous industry experience. With friends Annette Sterling, Rosalind Ashford, and Gloria Williams, she had recorded for Davis's Check-Mate label and had sung background vocals for a number of local singers. All of this made her invaluable to Stevenson. "She would be the one to get the information across," he told Aaron Fuchs. "We had a lot of artists and a lot of records going out. I had the sales department on my back. The executive department on my back. I got artists on one end. The musicians on another. Everybody was constantly coming in and screaming they wanted things. I had to have people around me who knew what was happening, so I didn't have to break down every word. Martha was right in there."

He knew that Martha's diligence wasn't without purpose. She wanted to record again. But Stevenson's attitude was that "she was there to make a living. She'd work little gigs on the weekends on her own, but she was a secretary to me and I liked it that way because she knew the business." Martha hung in there, smiling and waiting for her chance.

For Motown's first and arguably most important white executive, just joining the company was a thrill. "I remember when [Barney Ales] got this job with Motown," recalls CBS vice-president LeBaron Taylor, who was then a deejay at WCHB and a prominent figure on Detroit's music scene in the 1960s. "He was the most excited guy in the world. He said, 'Man, I'm making more money than I've ever made in my life.' He was making a hundred twenty-five dollars a week and they gave him a Cadillac."

Ales entered the record business in 1955, working around Detroit as

a representative for Capitol Records, moving on for a year to the then-new Warner Bros. Records before becoming a partner in a local distributorship. In all of these jobs Barney acted as liaison between record labels, radio stations, and distributors in the Midwest, learning all aspects of the business. A tall man with an abrasive streetwise style, Barney Ales was not very different in attitude from Berry, something they discovered when they would meet and talk shop at local radio stations and recording studios. Both loved to compete and gamble, each claiming an edge over the other; Barney once bragged that Berry owed him ten thousand candy bars for losing at Ping-Pong, while Berry said that out of every one hundred contests he and Barney engaged in, Barney won three. They were kindred spirits.

So it wasn't surprising when Barney became an unpaid advisor to Berry and sister Loucye in the billing department in 1959. She knew bookkeeping, but was unfamiliar with the many distributors with whom Motown was suddenly doing business.

They had become such good friends, however, that when Berry offered him a job in 1960, Barney was reluctant to accept it, feeling that they might be too close. When Berry insisted, Barney finally, and happily, accepted. Berry hired Barney as vice-president in charge of distribution, believing his friend's skin color and general competence could convert racist distributors. When some suspected that Ales really owned Motown, he and Berry took it in stride. After all, it was probably good for the business.

Ales and Stevenson were selected for their roles at Motown with definite calculation, but many of the most important folks there "fell into" their jobs. Eddie Holland, for example, started out trying to be Jackie Wilson and briefly succeeded. His "Jamie," written and produced by Berry, was a slick uptempo song on which Berry recycled the writing style he'd perfected on Wilson's hits, while Holland mimicked Wilson's trademark vocal licks. Berry even hired members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra to achieve the upscale R&B sound of Wilson's New York recordings. It marked the first time Motown interacted with classically trained musicians, and it wasn't without cross-cultural conflict.

Berry remembers fighting with the Detroit Symphony players "because sometimes when I asked them to play a particular riff, they were insulted, because they said the music wasn't right, and you couldn't do this or that. They'd say, 'But you just can't play this chord against that chord,' and I'd say 'Well, it sounds right and I don't care about the rules, because I don't know what they are.' Many of them would play it anyway,

and mostly would all enjoy it. After we'd hear it back, they'd shake their heads in amazement. And when they heard it played back on the air and it was a hit . . . I mean, I would get calls from these guys and they would say, 'Hey, you were right. Anytime you need us for a session . . .' "

"Jamie" should have been the break this handsome, articulate, debonair young man needed to grab at stardom. Unfortunately, though, for all his pluses, Eddie Holland was shackled with one unavoidable minus: he didn't like to perform. In the studio he was fine, whether he was cutting demos of Berry's songs or making his own records, but out on the road promoting "Jamie" Eddie was dull and clearly frightened.

After one rough experience before the Apollo Theater's notoriously demanding audience, Eddie decided that his musical future was in the studio. He would cut a few singles over the next ten years, but never again would he perform on stage. Eddie would evolve into a behind-the-scenes power, shunning publicity with a passionate secretiveness, even at the height of his success. What now mattered to Eddie was money. "I saw my brother was making money and that I was looking at my recording bill and I was like forty thousand dollars in debt and my brother has got a royalty check because he wrote the songs," Eddie remembers. "I just said, 'I need to start writing songs.' "

Eddie asked his brother Brian if he needed a partner. It wouldn't have seemed so. For the last three years Brian Holland had been part of a loose production team that, depending on the record, included Stevenson, Robert Bateman, Freddie Gorman, and Lamont Dozier. Unlike his older brother, Brian had gotten involved in songwriting and producing early in his career. He met Berry through Eddie backstage at the Graystone Ballroom when he was just sixteen. Brian had sung with some local groups, but under Berry's guidance began putting melodies to lyrics. In contrast to the talkative Eddie, Brian had a quiet understated manner that made it easy for him to collaborate with others. As a teen, in 1959, he would be impressed by the way New York producers Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller arranged strings on the Drifters' "There Goes My Baby," perhaps the first R&B record to make use of classical instrumentation, suggesting to Brian a sophisticated R&B sound he'd one day like to pursue. Brian had, in fact, been fascinated with the instrumentation of classical music since watching a Ford Motor Company–sponsored concert as a child. "I was so terribly impressed with all the violins and the melodies that they were playing; it just stuck in my mind because I had never heard that kind of big orchestra [before]," he told Portia Maultsby.

A series of records with the Marvelettes established Brian's credentials. Led by the guileless, unschooled voice of Gladys Horton, this girlish quartet came to Motown after winning a talent show at a high school in the working-class Detroit suburb of Inkster and being awarded a Motown audition. They would become Motown's first successful female vocal group, scoring with "Please Mr. Postman" in 1961. That record, produced by Brianbert (Brian and staff member Robert Bateman) and co-written by Marvelette Georgeanna Dobbins, was in the cooing juvenile girl-group style made popular by the songwriting combines in New York's Brill Building. As with many girl-group songs, the lyric highlighted a girl's yearning for a lost boyfriend, while drummer Marvin Gaye's choppy, popping beat made for great house-party boogying. By late 1962 the Marvelettes were Motown's most consistent hitmakers, with "Twistin' Postman," "Playboy," "Beechwood 4-5789" b/w "Someday, Someway," and "Strange I Know," all reaching the R&B top fifteen.

To ensure the loyalty of this obviously talented young songwriter, Berry raised Brian's royalty rate to a regal one-half cent a song per record sold and bought him a new Cadillac. As with Smokey, Berry cultivated a close relationship with Brian, one the tunesmith later described as "quasi-father-and-son."

Brian and Bateman seemed to be growing into a solid team when Bateman made a move he must surely have regretted later. Emboldened by the Marvelettes' sales, he left for New York and a shot at the big money New York represented.

Freddie Gorman started concentrating more on the Originals than on writing, since he was really more interested in being onstage than in the studio. Suddenly Brian was down to one partner, Lamont Dozier, a taciturn young singer-turned-writer who had turned down an opportunity to work for Berry just a few years earlier. While still a member of his vocal group, the Romeos, he'd visited Hitsville's basement studio and, unimpressed, left to cut some sides for Anna after a brief stay in New York. Once back in Detroit, he followed Bateman's advice and began collaborating with Brian and Eddie. In 1962 the production team of Holland-Dozier-Holland, or H-D-H, as they came to be called, was just coming together.

One of the company's strengths during this period was its accessibility to the black community. Just like Sykes Hernia Control Service, Your Fair Lady Boutique and Wig Room, and Phelps's Funeral Parlor—other businesses on the same side of the street as Hitsville—anybody could walk right on up and into the building. Berry's business was very much the neighborhood record company, and singers, dancers, and musicians of all

kinds wandered through its front door. A weekly talent audition had to be scheduled to accommodate the traffic.

Four young chicks from the Brewster-Douglas housing projects called the Primettes, friends of a young male vocal group signed to Motown called the Primes, had been coming by almost every day after school and had finally talked Berry into recording them—though, in 1962, they were still more company mascots than anything else. Berry must have identified with those who wouldn't take no for an answer: he hired a quietly persistent kid named Norman Whitfield after he, too, haunted Hitsville. On several occasions before Whitfield joined Motown, Berry had been forced to order him from the control room. The kid was always staring at something.

"I played tennis and Norman would come out to the Northwestern school tennis courts and just stand there and look," recalls then WCHB deejay LeBaron Taylor. "It got so all the players knew him. 'There's Norman,' we'd say. He'd stand there for hours. Watching. And he never did participate. . . . He just observed everything."

Tall, slender, and reserved, young Norman was as observant around Motown's studios as he was at the tennis courts. Squatting on the steps leading down to Motown's basement studio, "Norman would sit there for a year, man," recalls pianist Earl Van Dyke. "He watched everybody."

When not studying tennis or the session men, Whitfield was paid fifteen dollars a week to listen to records and run what Berry called the quality control department, a term he borrowed from the auto industry, which at Motown "consisted of being totally honest about what [records] you were listening to," as Whitfield told *Black Music* in 1976. "You couldn't be influenced by who the producer was. After you'd awarded the demos a score, they went to the monthly meeting where the creative people would attend, and Berry would bring in some kids from outside, too. Releases were decided by majority rule."

Whitfield wanted very badly to produce for Motown. At eighteen, he'd already written and produced local hits for the little Thelma Records label, including "Answer Me" by future Temptation Richard Street, then leader of the Distants, and "I've Gotten Over You," recorded by the Synetics. Whitfield, though, stayed cool about his ambitions.

While growing up in Harlem, where he'd developed into a top-notch pool player, Whitfield had learned that patience and the ability to size up a situation before acting were valuable assets. Norman's family had ended up in Detroit after his father's car broke down in the Motor City on the way back to New York from an aunt's funeral in California. Sometime

around his fifteenth birthday, Whitfield became interested in music. To sustain himself and avoid Detroit's auto factories until he could get a break, Whitfield had shot pool, engaging in marathon contests for cash and the challenge of competition. He knew that Motown was the game to be playing in Detroit and for now he was glad he'd worked his way in.

Like Martha Reeves, Whitfield contributed to the company while waiting for his break, hoping to gain the attention of the boss. Quality control had to be doing a good job in 1962; it was Motown's first full year of consistent national sales, the result of a series of now-classic records. Berry wrote and produced "Do You Love Me?" for the Contours, a state-of-the-art dance record, one that capitalized on the twist beat that had made Chubby Checker a national star. A wild sextet that had problems staying in pitch, the Contours had only been signed by Berry as a favor to Jackie Wilson—his cousin Hubert Johnson was a member. "Do You" was a dancer's delight, highlighted by a clever vocal arrangement and a funny lyric that mentioned all the era's hippest dances—the twist (what else?), the mashed potato, the jerk, and the hully gully. It was disposable pop music of the highest quality, going number one R&B and number three pop.

Equally commercial but somewhat more substantial, were three Smokey Robinson–penned vehicles for a chubby female vocalist named Mary Wells in 1962: "The One Who Really Loves You," "You Beat Me to the Punch" (which went to number one R&B), and "Two Lovers" (number one R&B), bouncy mid-tempo songs marked by Smokey's increasingly clever lyrics, which made this nineteen-year-old singer Motown's first significant female star. She'd come to Motown's office just a year before with a tune called "Bye Bye Baby," hoping Berry would take it to Jackie Wilson. Instead, after hearing her a cappella rendition, Berry talked her into cutting the song herself. The session for "Baby" was a real test of Wells's voice, as Berry, unsure perhaps of what he wanted vocally, pushed her through twenty-two straight takes, giving her voice the uncomplimentary sandpapery sound heard on the final version.

Luckily for Wells, Smokey was sensitive enough to know that her malleable voice sounded best soft and soothing. Under Smokey's guidance she sang sweetly, coolly, straightforwardly, sticking close to the melody line and the demonstration guide vocal Smokey prepared for each song. As a result, Wells—in contrast to the deluge of adolescent-sounding girl-group records flooding the market in 1962—sang "Punch" and "Two Lovers" with the flavor of a knowing, worldly veteran of love. Together Wells and Smokey had created Motown's first great producer-singer mar-

riage, a pairing that set high standards for the company's music. Berry had taken a chance on Wells, and it had worked.

To some inside Motown in 1962, the label's least likely hitmaker was Berry's brother-in-law Marvin Gaye, who many felt had already blown his shot at stardom just the year before. After Gaye had played sessions and toured as the Miracles' drummer, Berry let him cut *The Soulful Mood of Marvin Gaye,* a collection of MOR (middle-of-the-road) standards (e.g., "Mr. Sandman") done with a bit of jazz flavor. On it, Gaye and Motown made a conscious effort, the first of several, to reach the chic "supper club" audience by marketing an MOR album. It failed miserably. Berry was a bottom-line man and some felt that failure—especially at a time when so many other eager young singers were hanging around Hitsville—would put Marvin back behind his drum kit.

Then in July 1962, Stevenson and Berry's brother George got an idea for a dance record using Marvin. He wasn't enthusiastic about singing hardcore R&B, but Anna Gordy was used to being pampered, and Marvin's pretty face wouldn't pay the bills. Nor would a drummer's salary. With Marvin's songwriting aid, and the Vandellas on backing vocals, "Stubborn Kind of Fellow" was cut late in the month. "You could hear the man screaming on that tune, you could tell he was hungry," says Dave Hamilton, who played guitar on "Stubborn." "If you listen to that song you'll say, 'Hey, man, he was trying to make it because he was on his last leg.' "

Despite the fact that "Stubborn" cracked the R&B top ten, Marvin's future at Motown was in no way assured. He was already getting a reputation for being moody and difficult. It wasn't until December that he cut anything else with hit potential. "Hitch Hike," a thumping boogie tune that again called for a rougher style than Gaye enjoyed, was produced by Stevenson and Clarence Paul. Twenty years later, "Stubborn" 's thumping groove wears better than "Hitch Hike" 's, yet this second hit was clearly more important to his career, proving that Gaye wasn't a one-hit wonder. It proved, also, that the intangible "thing" some heard in Gaye's performance of "Stubborn" was no fluke. The man had sex appeal.

With these—plus the Miracles' sexy "You've Really Got a Hold On Me"—bolstering Motown, Berry and staff prepared in the winter of 1962 for their most ambitious undertaking to date: launching the Motor Town Revue. The idea of putting most of the Motown roster on the road came out of a series of conversations between Berry, Esther, and another member of the International Talent Management, Inc., office, Thomas

Prior to a television taping, Berry Gordy gives instructions—as he did before any major appearance of Motown acts—to (left to right) Four Tops "Obie" Benson, Lawrence Payton, Levi Stubbs, and "Duke" Fakir. *(Don Paulsen)*

Before they were Supremes these Detroit ladies were known as the Primettes, the sister group to the Primes (aka the Temptations). Barbara Martin (left) would drop out to start a family, but Diane (not yet Diana) Ross (top), Mary Wilson (center), and group founder Florence Ballard (right) stayed in show business. *(Michael Ochs Archives)*

Harvey Fuqua. *(Michael Ochs Archives)*

Junior Walker in the center of his All-Stars: (left to right) organist Vic Thomas, drummer James Graves, and guitarist Willie Woods. *(Michael Ochs Archives)*

"Beans" Bowles. Bowles, a saxophonist and arranger by trade, had been in the Twenty Grand's house band since the early fifties, befriending George Gordy and his sisters at the nightclub. Through them, Bowles began playing sessions for Berry, impressing everyone with his head for business and his ideas on how to enhance live performance. Tall, lanky, and relaxed in action and speech, he wouldn't have seemed the logical person to work with the peppery Esther Gordy Edwards. Yet they'd clicked together at ITM, and the Motor Town Revue was their baby.

Touring revues had been a staple of rock and roll since musician-entrepreneur Johnny Otis had organized the first package in 1950. Subsequently, everyone from deejays, such as Alan Freed and Dick Clark, to stars, such as James Brown and Little Richard, organized shows with as many as ten acts on a bill, each performing one or two songs. Motown saw several benefits to packaging its roster revue style: it was a great promotion for the company, it gave the young Motown performers a chance to learn from and support each other in the frightening world of live performance, and, perhaps most profoundly, it meant immediate cash flow into Motown's bank accounts. Revenues from the concerts were seen as a means to offset slow payment from record distributors. In the company's early days, box office receipts often paid the weekly payroll back in Detroit.

Bowles saw the tours as the start of a series of Motown revues, each featuring a different musical style. There would be a jazz tour, a gospel tour, and eventually a tour mixing acts from each style. Some acts would be paired off later and tour together independently, so there would always be one or more pieces of the pyramid on the road. Eventually—though without jazz or gospel—this plan would be implemented, making Motown the first record label in history to tap directly into the income generated by its entire artist roster and to invest, in many cases at a loss, in building its artists' marketability via touring. It wasn't until the late sixties that record company investment in tours, known as "tour support," became an industry norm.

Following a November 2, 1962, date at the Boston Arena, the Motown special would hit nineteen cities in twenty-three days. The heart of the tour was made up of fifteen dates in the deep South, starting in North Carolina on November 5. The zigzag itinerary took them south to Georgia, to Alabama, back to Georgia, back to Alabama, over to Mississippi, up to North and South Carolina, down to Florida, up to Georgia, and finally back for two shows in Florida. (Though the parents of almost all of the Motown performers had come from the South, for many of the

performers the tour offered them their first real exposure to the world their parents had escaped.) After taking Thanksgiving holiday off, the tour made a stop in Memphis on December 1, before starting an important engagement in New York from December 7 to December 16 at the "chitlin circuits' " crown jewel, Harlem's Apollo Theater.

Black promoter Henry Wynne of Supersonic Attractions was instrumental in setting up the tour, taking a chance on booking the entire package at a time when only four Motown–Tamla acts (Mary Wells, the Miracles, the Marvelettes, and Marv Johnson, now signed to Motown) could be considered drawing cards. The Contours attracted some patrons because of "Do You Love Me?" But at that time, Marvin Gaye, the Supremes (the new name for those company mascots, the Primettes), the Vandellas, and Singing Sammy Ward couldn't draw flies. Why should a promoter take—and, worse yet, *pay* for—the whole revue, when he'd make more money with just the top Motown acts, mixing them with groups from other labels?

Esther was a persuasive saleswoman and, as often was her technique with promoters and business contacts in the early days, she kept Wynne on the phone for hours, until he bought the whole tour, *and* at a price considerably higher than he originally intended. Part of her pitch was that this was a chance for him to grow with Motown; his Supersonic Attractions and Motown, two black companies, needed to be working together. Reluctantly, Wynne gave in.

To ensure that all money made by Motown acts was controlled by ITM, Esther Gordy Edwards and Beans Bowles set up a system whereby all monies were sent directly back to Detroit. In a mid-sixties interview, the Supremes once commented that they were making $10 a week on the road. "They were lying," is Bowles's reaction. "At that time they were given a ten-dollar check to buy stockings and toothpaste and stuff," while the rest of their income, say $290—already less management fees—was sent to a bank account in Detroit after each appearance. "We worked that kind of stuff out so they couldn't spend all the money on the road," he says. "They would see all those little do-dads and waste their money. When we got back to the office they would draw on it or they could get advances on money on the road by signing a check. I kept all the checkbooks and I'd write the check and they'd sign it. Plus, remember, they're all children." Aside from the artist, Berry, Esther, or Bowles could sign checks. Looking back, Bowles notes, "That's one thing about Motown—[they] did not take any money. Not like that."

It was a historic tour, but despite Bowles's efforts as road manager it was not the best organized. Forty-five people, including singers, musicians, chaperones for the girl groups, stage hands, and other administrative personnel, squeezed into one bus and five cars for the trek. (Berry stayed in Detroit to supervise the recording of new tracks and to keep an eye on things.)

Bandleader Choker Campbell remembers how nervous most of the performers were, "not knowing what the road was like. They had never been out there before." So the musicians, men in their twenties and thirties, "had to keep things anchored." The musicians' experience was helpful, but sometimes they tried to teach the youngsters, especially the teenage girls, a little too much. On occasion, chaperones found female members of the entourage smoking marijuana or sipping whiskey with these "experienced" men. Rules governing the conduct of female performers were as strict as possible. Fraternizing between the musicians and talent was soon discouraged, a policy that would become institutionalized at Motown. The musicians eventually took to calling the front of the bus, where the performers and management sat, "Broadway," and the back of the bus, where they congregated, "Harlem." The musicians weren't going to be treated like kids. If no drinking was allowed on the bus, they'd sneak a taste out of their hip-pocket flask. If marijuana wasn't allowed, they'd just blow the smoke out the window.

Some of the performers probably could have used the occasional joint, since their nervousness often betrayed them. Bowles will never forget the night that Georgeanna Dobbins of the Marvelettes "walked on [stage] chewing gum, looking like, 'God dog, look at all these people,' . . . Like [she] was doing a church or high school benefit." That lack of professionalism was sometimes reflected in the show's sequencing; Mary Wells, despite having good material, sometimes came off as dull when she followed the Contours' frantic performances. Even at her most animated, Wells basically swayed from side to side. Watching from the wings, Bowles remembers thinking, "These acts definitely need some grooming."

The tour didn't only have problems on stage. In 1962, the wave of boycotts, sit-ins, and freedom marches that had started with the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 were rocking the South's social foundations. Black and white college students from the North—called Freedom Riders—flocked south in buses and cars not unlike those carrying the Motown crew. Those Michigan license plates stuck out on Southern highways. For the youngsters from Motown it was a shock to be denied food and a place

to eat, to be called "nigger," and watched with hate-filled eyes. The more worldly musicians—veterans of many Southern tours—kept their pistols handy.

It was a hectic time for Bowles. Acting as road manager, he collected the money (as much as fifteen thousand dollars a night), watched out for the performers, critiqued the shows, battled to keep on schedule, and traveled a day early to each city to monitor ticket sales and hotel availability. Then, on Thanksgiving Day, 1962, tragedy struck. Bowles was being driven by Ed McFarland, Jr., a driver hired for the tour, to Miami in a white station wagon. It was early morning, the sun just under the horizon, and it was raining. A long truck filled with oranges suddenly loomed ahead of them. McFarland turned the wheel. Bowles doesn't remember what happened next.

When he regained consciousness, he was covered with blood and jammed sideways in the car, its shell collapsed around him like a plaster mold. He could speak, but he couldn't move.

McFarland had been killed instantly.

For forty-five minutes Bowles lay trapped in the car. It was a personal tragedy for Bowles, and almost a financial one for Motown. In Bowles's pocket was approximately $12,000; another few thousand were in his brief case. First on the scene was a state patrolman. "When I got hurt, I told him to look in my pocket and get the money," recalls Bowles. "He asked me if I could reach the briefcase and I pulled it up. . . . I was told by one reporter down there that he was the only honest cop in five hundred miles." Motown got its money back, but the tour was in disarray.

With Bowles laid up in a Florida hospital, Esther flew down to supervise the revue. Musicians had to be paid, hotel rooms confirmed, and entertainers calmed. Esther was nervous, but by all accounts handled the pressure well. The first Motor Town Revue had been a memorable experience, to say the least. Everyone was glad to be back in Detroit that Christmas.

The week before Christmas 1962 a young staff writer at the *Detroit Free Press* named Ken Barnard left the paper's building at 321 West Lafayette and drove up to the mid-Detroit area, looking for 2648 West Grand Boulevard. It wasn't hard to find. How many of the modest two-story houses on that tree-lined street had HITSVILLE, USA etched across the living room window?

The result of Barnard's visit was the first major piece in the local media about Berry's growing operation. The headline was HE SELLS HARD 'N' SOFT ROCK. The subhead read "Berry Gordy—Detroit's Record King."

In the accompanying picture Berry is sporting a head of shiny, wavy "processed" hair, with a part on the left side. His left eye, slightly more closed than his right, bears testament to his boxing career; there are signs of scar tissue on his eyebrow. The story notes that Berry, just turned thirty-three, had enjoyed two million-sellers ("Shop Around," "Please Mr. Postman") and several other records that had sold over a half-million each. "I wasn't a good pianist, but I knew some chords," he said about his musical training. About Detroit performers, he claimed, "The talent here is terrific and was largely untapped when we came along. And the personalities of the performers here seem to be basically warmer than in many other cities."

There were a couple of curious comments in the piece. Barnard writes: "[Berry] mainly records blues, gospel, and jazz numbers and is working into polka." And Berry's remarks about the future direction of music are quite ambiguous: "Taste is turning a little bit toward softer music. The hard 'rock' record is changing subtly. But it seems after a period of buying 'soft' records a loud record will go big. Basically, its a cycle type of thing."

Berry praises his "department heads and all the other people in the corporation" for making Motown successful. Yet, of all his staff, only Smokey Robinson is mentioned by name. Summing up Motown's strengths as it enters 1963, Berry says, "Our rise could have been faster if we had hedged on some verbal contracts or cut corners, but we stuck with integrity, and it's paying off. We've got respect in the business and people trust us. . . . We try to help artists personally with their investment programs so that they don't wind up broke. We are very much concerned with the artist's welfare."

The tone of the story was upbeat and optimistic, and it wouldn't have surprised the average *Detroit Free Press* reader that Motown would continue to grow. But if they'd had any idea of how big Motown would get, or of what it would take to get there, they'd never have finished breakfast.

established rock & roll as, at least a temporary, fact of life for companies like RCA-Victor, Decca, and Columbia.

The major record companies and the Tin Pan Alley publishing houses did, eventually, recover from the shock of rock & roll's emergence. RCA-Victor found that it could buy, and by its own standards very cheaply, the contract of Elvis Presley, and sign people like Sam Cooke. Publishing houses found rock & roll fans who could also write songs, in the persons of Neil Sedaka, Carole King, and others.

Whether factors like the incorporation of Presley into RCA-Victor and Hollywood, the death of Buddy Holly, the 'Payola scandal', and similar events 'killed' rock & roll as a creative force, is a question which will never receive a definitive answer. More research may well produce better answers than are now available, by answering some of the outstanding questions.

It is possible, for instance, that rock & roll, like forms before and since, exhausted the possibilities of, its evolution, at least in the climate of the fifties. Alternatively, it may have been the case that the rock music which emerged in the sixties, together with soul music, were exactly where the dominant strains of rock & roll were leading. Some scholars of the genre would cite the Presley recordings from around 1958 and the work of people like Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson, and James Brown, as evidence for this view.

Certainly, the later work, in what can be seen as rock & roll idiom, by the Band, T. Rex, Elvis Costello, and others, benefited from the musical and temporal distance between them and the 'classic' period of rock & roll music.

David Hatch and Stephen Millward. From blues to rock : an analytical history of pop music. Manchester, UK ; Wolfeboro, NH, USA: Manchester University Press, 1987

Chapter 4

Across the great divide

Just as it is a matter of some debate as to when rock & roll began, so the precise moment of its death is equally contentious. Most observers would, however, seem to settle for the late 1950s. Peter Guralnick (1971) sums up the general feeling neatly: 'When the treacle period of the late fifties and early sixties engulfed us we recited the familiar litany, by now grown stale from repetition: Elvis in the Army, Buddy Holly dead, Little Richard in the ministry, Jerry Lee Lewis in disgrace and Chuck Berry in jail' (p. 16).

With the Beatles not due to emerge until 1963, the consequence of this kind of thinking is that the late fifties/early sixties have come to be regarded as a fallow period, an unfortunate interval between rock & roll and rock. The issue is further obscured by the predominance in popular music during those years of bland white singers whose 'boy-next-door' good looks and carefully-tailored image proved to be as widely acceptable as their trite, Tin Pan Alley material.

The problem with this kind of assumption is that subsequent developments such as soul and rock must then be seen to have appeared instantaneously, as in a miracle. There is, furthermore, an implicit denial of the experimental nature of much of the music from that period. Rhythm & blues musicians had always been inclined to take a pragmatic approach to whatever material came their way, resulting frequently in innovation. Between 1959 and 1963 this tradition continued in the work of both established performers and younger singers and musicians who had grown up with the music of the fifties and who were now initiating careers in their own right. Similarly, the music of certain rock & roll stars was developing and changing with, in some cases, important consequences for what was to happen later. Above all, to deny the worth of these years is to

disregard a genuine fusion of black and white music on a level of intimacy not encountered since the early 1950s or, arguably, the mid-1920s.

Much of the music of this period cannot be categorised as rock & roll, soul, or rock, though elements of all three are present. It is more instructive to consider what progress was being made within pop music as a whole, however, than to become preoccupied with what had ceased to exist. It is easy to sympathise with Peter Guralnick's reaction as a contemporary teenager ('What we did at the age of fifteen was to retreat into the past. The past year or two', *ibid.*, p. 20), but – admittedly with the advantage of hindsight – it is now possible to view the years 1959–63 in a new light, that is as a period of transition.

Solomon Burke was not the first black singer to make use of a white musical idiom. We have already seen, in Chapter 3, how Chuck Berry's 'Maybellene' bore a closer resemblance to rockabilly than to rhythm & blues. As early as 1951, Wynonie Harris had had an R. & B. hit with Hank Penny's 'Bloodshot Eyes'. Yet when he recorded the country ballad 'Just Out Of Reach' in December 1960, Burke achieved an almost seamless blend of black and white. Where Harris had obscured the origins of a song by making it entirely his own in arrangement and delivery and Berry's treatment was not followed up by other rock & roll singers, Burke's recording proved to be the first in a pattern which was to have important implications for soul music and, it will be argued, for early rock. 'Just Out Of Reach' (recorded for Atlantic at the suggestion of Paul Ackerman of *Billboard* magazine and at the request of Jerry Wexler) has many of the characteristics prevalent in the country music of the time. It opens with, and continues to feature, a somewhat unctuous white vocal group; it is set at a lilting tempo; and its lyrics tell the familiar tale of a suitor pining for an unattainable, idealised lover. Burke, a former gospel singer, sounds entirely comfortable, his almost exaggeratedly clear vocal articulation seeming to indicate respect for the idiom rather than unfamiliarity.

Other contemporary recordings by Burke display similar features. 'I'm Hanging Up My Heart For You' (1962) and 'Yes I Do' (1964) include a piano accompaniment which recalls the work of the Nashville session musician, Floyd Cramer. 'Goodbye Baby' (1963) is another country-style song, but this time the general content is more marked, with the presence of a black vocal group and Burke's uninhibited lead. He also continued to record gospel-flavoured

rhythm & blues numbers such as 'Everybody Needs Somebody To Love' (1964) – covered subsequently by the Rolling Stones – in which the chorus breaks into applause at Burke's vocal intensity, thus recalling the fervour of the black church. But it was the country/gospel blend, featuring the authoritative black vocal over a prominent, if relaxed, rhythm section and – above all – the distinctive *lilt*, which prefigured soul so clearly.

Although 'Just Out Of Reach' sold a million copies, it was the experiments with country music of the more established Ray Charles which attracted widespread attention. Charles must have posed record store managers with some terrible categorisation problems during the 1950s. An accomplished jazz pianist and alto saxophonist, an early Atlantic album, *The Great Ray Charles* (1956), consists of instrumentals only. He came to prominence, however, in the West Coast R. & B. scene, clearly influenced by Nat 'King' Cole and Charles Brown. On the other hand, few would deny his claims to rock & roll credibility through such recordings as 'I've Got A Woman' in 1954 (covered by Elvis Presley) and 'Hallelujah I Love Her So' (1955). The truth was that he was equally adept at all black music idioms, a fact reinforced by the pronounced gospel character in his vocal style. (This versatility was not quite as rare as has sometimes been maintained. The parallel examples of Dinah Washington and Big Joe Turner can be cited, although in both cases, changes were of musical environment rather than conscious policy.) Given Charles's eclecticism, therefore, it should have come as no surprise when he chose to tackle country music on his move from Atlantic to ABC-Paramount in 1959. In fact, he had begun the process just before he changed companies with the release of Hank Snow's 'I'm Movin' On', but rather like case of Wynonie Harris's 'Bloodshot Eyes' cited above, Charles's treatment was such to render the original unrecognisable.

Although he had two early R. & B. hits with ABC-Paramount – 'Sticks And Stones' (1960) and 'Hit The Road Jack' (1961) – it was with his renditions of pure contemporary country material, arranged and orchestrated in appropriate manner with choir and strings, that Charles found unprecedented popular success. 'I Can't Stop Loving You' was number one on the *Billboard* chart for five weeks in the summer of 1962, while 'You Are My Sunshine'/'Your Cheating Heart' (also 1962) and 'Take These Chains From My Heart' (1963) were Top Ten successes. The reasons for the popularity of these records are numerous: Charles was already an established artist with

R. & B. fans – he was now acceptable to country music followers and large numbers of the white adult record-buyers, some of whom may have remembered him from his jazz days, but many of whom would have been reassured by his 'genius' title and were thus happy to welcome him to the popular music fold.

Critical opinion has not been quite as well-disposed. Charlie Gillett has written that 'From 1962, Ray Charles degenerated, a musical decline matching that of Elvis Presley' (p. 203), a statement with which few of Charles's 1950s fans would disagree. However, it is hard to imagine that the significance of his success would have been lost on young black singers and would-be recording stars. Not only had Charles augmented the profile of the black artist in the white-administered entertainment world, but by recording the previously alien country music he had created a climate where virtually any blend might be possible.

Sam Cooke was already an established gospel star by 1956. It was in the year that he began to record some secular material, including the subsequent hit 'I'll Come Running To You' (Specialty). That he was self-conscious about breaking with gospel music is illustrated by the fact that he used the pseudonym Dale Cook for his first secular release, 'Lovable'. However, there was no hint of any discomfort in his handling of these songs, or for that matter any other material he recorded for Keen and ultimately RCA.

Admittedly, he possessed a beautiful voice, but that alone would not have carried him through the frequently trite songs he had to perform. What is remarkable is that he invested Tin Pan Alley tunes with a dignity they scarcely deserved and even managed to incorporate vocal improvisations so familiar from his days with the Soul Stirrers. Naturally he excelled on strong rhythm & blues material such as 'Bring It On Home To Me' (1962) and 'Little Red Rooster' (1963), but he also handled novelty items like 'Everybody Likes To Cha Cha Cha' (1959) without any difficulty. Additionally, he recorded superior versions of standards from the popular ('Summertime', 1957) and country ('Tennessee Waltz', 1964) fields.

Cooke produced an almost unbroken sequence of hits from 1957 to 1964, the year of his death; there were three posthumous hit records in late 1964 and 1965. (The 'B' side of one these, 'Shake', was the prophetic 'A Change Is Gonna Come' which will be discussed in its political context in Chapter 5.) His music is proof of the feeling in the late fifties/early sixties that anything *was* possible, for he absorbed without effort the complete range of contemporary pop. Neither was there the suggestion that he might be merely dabbling: material of contrasting origin was recorded within the same time-period, and in any case was unified by Cooke's graceful vocal style, itself an influence on many subsequent soul artists. As the anonymous author of the section on Cooke in *The Encyclopedia Of Rock Volume Two* (1967) has it: 'He stands at the head of the entire sweet soul ballad tradition . . . he demonstrated that an R & B artist could still retain a vital relationship with the black audience while surviving in the teenage pop market and in a Las Vegas night-club context as a performer of standards' (p. 103).

A variety of male and female singers and vocal groups around the USA were adapting quickly to the changes brought about by such pioneers as Burke, Charles, and Cooke, blending the gospel/R. & B. tradition which had infiltrated rock & roll so thoroughly with previously alien musical forms and studio arrangements. One thinks not only of established stars such as the Drifters (in particular, 'There Goes My Baby' from 1959) and Fats Domino (whose remarkable 'Natural Born Lover' of 1960 incorporated dazzling blues piano-playing, lush tenor saxophone, and strings), but also of a generation of young newcomers. In 1964, for example, Irma Thomas imbued 'Time Is On My Side' with a gospel feel not normally associated with her nor with her New Orleans origins. The Impressions, from Chicago, turned the potential encumbrance of an orchestra into a positive asset, enhancing the lilting tempos of many hits, culminating in 'People Get Ready' (1965), which used the traditional gospel metaphor of the train as a means of deliverance from (in this case) political and social oppression. But it is in the work of Arthur Alexander that we may find an unprecedented mixture of styles and relentless experimentation.

Alexander has been ignored by critics, and one can only speculate on the reasons for this. His voice certainly lacked the purity of Sam Cooke and the authority of Ray Charles; his chart success was also minimal. Furthermore, his music is impossible to categorise. Yet the recordings he made for Dot between 1960 and 1964 had clear implications both for the development of soul and for the birth of rock.

To start with, Alexander was backed by white musicians David Briggs (piano), Norbert Putnam (bass), and Jerry Carrigan (drums). This established a tradition both at Fame Studios, Muscle Shoals,

Alabama – where most of Alexander's early recordings were made – and at Stax, in Memphis. This apparently simple fact was of extreme importance. It was not just that the musicians were white and from the South (thus guaranteeing a background in country music). They were also new to session work and thus not 'schooled' to reproduce an idiom, yet their understanding of the discipline of rhythm & blues is clearly evident. The result is a combination of energy and restraint and this, added to the prominence given to the rhythm section in the arrangements, defined the epithet 'tight' – so frequently applied to the musicianship of 1960s soul records. Furthermore, it helps to challenge the common assumption that soul was by definition a 'black' music. Briggs Putnam, and Carrigan (all of whom moved on to successful careers as Nashville session men) were succeeded at Fame by white players such as Tommy Cogbill, Roger Hawkins, Jimmy Johnson, and David Hood who variously appeared on hit records by Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, and Percy Sledge. At Stax, white musicians 'Duck' Dunn (bass) and Steve Cropper (guitar) were present on numerous soul recordings by artists such as Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, and Eddie Floyd, as well as Wilson Pickett before his move to Muscle Shoals. They also constituted one half of the racially-integrated working band, Booker T and the MGs. Cropper was also a soul music composer, a counterpart to the white Dan Penn at Muscle Shoals; additionally, both Fame and Stax were owned by white entrepreneurs: Rick Hall and Jim Stewart respectively.

As to Alexander himself, he made a rather unconventional start to his songwriting career. Bill Millar, in his sleeve-note to the collection of Alexander's early recordings (*A Shot Of Rhythm And Soul*, Ace, 1982), relates how 'She Wanna Rock', composed by Alexander and Henry Lee Bennett, was recorded in Nashville by the country singer Arnie Derksen in April 1959. It was shortly after this that Alexander began to make his own records, beginning with 'Sally Sue Brown' (1960) which, although it resembles a blues in melody and vocal delivery as well as in its piano accompaniment, possesses a loping rhythmic gait more akin to a medium-tempo country piece. In subsequent recordings, a country music influence was almost always present, usually, however, as just one element in an otherwise eclectic mixture.

'You Better Move On' (1961) is one of Alexander's best-known compositions, largely due to the fact that it was recorded three years later by the Rolling Stones. It is set, as were at least four other

Alexander songs of the period, to a shuffle beat punctuated by clipped guitar chords redolent of Ben E. King's contemporary hit 'Stand By Me'. Yet the melodrama of King's record is replaced by a feeling of melancholy on Alexander's, a typically country music characteristic, emphasised by the nature of the piano backing. Similar remarks apply to 'Anna' (1962) which in addition includes strings and a white vocal chorus. It is interesting to compare Alexander's recordings with the Beatles' version made a few months later for their first album *Please Please Me* (1963). Taken at a slightly slower pace and featuring John Lennon's relatively uninhibited vocals, the Beatles' rendering seems to reintroduce the more characteristically 'black' elements avoided by Alexander. Further correspondence between the work of Alexander and that of the Beatles may be seen in the former's recordings of 'Where Have You Been' (1962) and 'You Don't Care' (1965), neither of which was covered by the British group, yet show a resemblance to early compositions by Lennon and McCartney.

'You Don't Care' has Alexander venturing into country music vocal mannerisms to a greater extent than he had done previously, even when tackling straight country material such as 'I Wonder Where You Are Tonight' (1963) or the Gene Autry-Fred Rose-Ray Whiteley composition 'I Hang My Head And Cry' (1962). Yet there is interest to be found in the contrast between these two recordings. Whereas the former amounts to a conventional country rendition, the latter, while set at a typically cantering pace, includes not only a blues-influenced piano accompaniment but a riffing horn section encountered more usually in rhythm & blues and which became widespread in soul music.

Alexander continued to experiment, even when he did not incorporate the country influence into his music. His version of Charles Brown's 1950 hit 'Black Night', for example, made in 1964, is arranged and delivered in the manner of Tommy Tucker's 'Hi-Heel Sneakers', issued on Checker in the same year; it also contrives to include Chicago-style harmonica. 'A Shot Of Rhythm And Blues' (1961), though recalling both R. & B. and rock & roll in its sentiments and exuberance, places the emphasis firmly on the on-beat: it re-emerged as a common item in the repertoires of numerous British 'beat' groups of the early 1960s.

The fact that Arthur Alexander mixed apparently disparate musical elements so relentlessly may have contributed to his lack of large-scale popular acceptance. Unlike Sam Cooke, who synthesised contrasting

forms into a homogeneous style, or Ray Charles, whose deliberate assimilation of country music established him as a celebrity in the popular music field, Alexander may also be seen as commercially rather naïve. Yet the environment in which he worked and the results he produced constitute soul music to a degree only equalled by his influence upon early rock performers. Solomon Burke, on the other hand, stayed closer to his blend of gospel and country music, a fact which eased his transition to success as an early soul star. The work of all of these artists can be regarded as soul music before that label came to be applied. As such, it predates the 'black music' ideology associated with soul, the accuracy of which has already been shown to be questionable: these issues will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

If the period 1959–63 was seen only as a time when black and white musical traditions were converging to produce soul, this would be sufficient to destroy the assumption that these years represent a fallow period for pop music. There were, however, contemporary developments in the work of white artists which had clear implications for the music we recognise as rock.

During the early 1960s the majority of white pop singers had no commercial reason to turn to black musical styles for their material or inspiration. Indeed it made rather good sense not to. For one thing, chart success tended to be proportional to musical banality and innocuous romanticism. For another, there was a ready-made source of appropriate songs in the output of numerous young popular music writers, many of whom would be on hand to participate in the arrangements, production or marketing of the material. It would be overstating the case, however, to apply this judgement to all the white performers of the day. Dion and the Belmonts, for example, brought to some of their work together the characteristically black vocal group sound of the 1950s. Even when Dion went on to pursue a solo career he retained some contact with rhythm & blues, most notably in 'Ruby Baby' (1963) and 'The Wanderer' (1961), the opening of which suggests an affinity with urban blues.

In addition, the music of certain established white rock & roll stars was developing. Jerry Lee Lewis had recorded rhythm & blues material earlier in his career, but it was a direct result of his 1961 hit version of Ray Charles's 'What'd I Say' that he made a series of R. & B. covers for Sun in June 1962 which were subsequently included on the album *Rockin' Rhythm And Blues*. However, Lewis chose not to

repeat the experiment, and began to concentrate instead on country music.

In the meantime Elvis Presley had returned from his stint in the US Army to record the album *Elvis Is Back* (1960). By this stage Presley's voice had acquired a deeper, harder quality than is to be found on his earlier records: it was yet to display what Escott and Hawkins describe as a 'plummy vibrato'. While the album contains a number of lightweight, overtly commercial items such as 'Make Me Know It' and 'Soldier Boy', it is Presley's handling of the blues/R. & B. material that is of most importance. Firstly, there are versions of Clyde McPhatter and the Drifters' 1954 R. & B. hit 'Such A Night' (a very close rendition) and Little Willie John's 'Fever' of 1956 (although Presley's version bears a greater resemblance of Peggy Lee's 1958 cover). He also tackles two songs from the blues end of the R. & B. spectrum – 'Like A Baby' and 'It Feels So Right' – in an idiomatic fashion, the presence of tenor saxophone on the former lending a further authenticity.

But it is in Presley's rendition of Lowell Fulson's 'Reconsider Baby' that we can observe an unprecedently close relationship to Chicago blues by a white singer. Most notable in Presley's authentic vocal inflection and timing, allowing for a power of expression not even possessed by the original recording (compare his version of Junior Parker's 'Mystery Train' discussed earlier). The accompaniment, by white studio musicians, is similarly faithful to the black tradition and includes an extended tenor saxophone solo; aural evidence suggests that Presley himself plays acoustic rhythm guitar, the simple but effective blues riff resembling as it does his playing in the television special of 1968. One can only speculate as to the results that would have been produced had Presley recorded at this time at Chess Studios in Chicago.

The significance of these sessions (which also yielded 'Mess Of Blues', the 'B' side of the 1960 hit 'It's Now Or Never') is that they initiated the white blues style so crucial in the development of rock. We might characterise this as the use of the urban blues stock to produce pop music with the rhythmic emphasis on the on-beat. Fundamental, too, was to be the introduction of the blues guitar sound, the importation of which into Britain should be credited to another white rock & roll star, Eddie Cochran.

In 1960, Cochran embarked on an extensive British tour and it was during this period that he recorded 'Milkcow Blues'. What made his

version different from others within this song family (see Chapter 1) was that it made use of the archetypal Chicago blues guitar riff, an even without precedent in white pop music. Furthermore, we know that Cochran provided tuition, before his death in April 1960, to at least one British guitarist, Joe Brown. Brown has related, in a television tribute to the American (1983), how Cochran demonstrated to him the techniques of playing on the bass strings and of 'bending' a string, both of which feature prominently in the urban blues guitar style. Brown also states that these methods were unknown in Britain at the time, a fact which enhanced Brown's own career in session work. We may be confident that, given Cochran's widespread exposure during his visit both on stage and on television, that Brown was not the only British musician to take note of Cochran's technique. Previous knowledge of American guitar styles would have inevitably have been based on jazz or the loose approximation of rock & roll purveyed by local tutors such as Bert Weedon: there is no aural evidence to the contrary.

British musicians certainly had some catching-up to do. Prior to 1960, very little had been produced in the way of worthwhile imitations of American pop music. Singers and musicians with no previous grounding in the idiom had been rushed into the studio by impresarios anxious to capitalise on the increasing popularity of rock & roll. There was a suspicion that certain singers were selected more for their physical resemblance to white American stars than for their vocal abilities. Any creditable treatment of US music was confined to the field of jazz, where musicians such as Ken Colyer, Humphrey Lyttelton, and Chris Barber approached their source material with scholarship and respect. Yet these musicians had been working on their styles for over ten years by 1960: American traditional jazz can fairly be said to have been assimilated into a British environment at that stage. While the innovations of Presley and Cochran can be seen to have contributed to the birth of rock, its further development lay in the hands of the generation of British musicians who had been studying and playing rock & roll during their formative years and who were now ready to put their experience to good use.

John Lennon was infatuated with rock & roll as a teenager. He became particularly obsessed by Elvis Presley: his Aunt Mimi recalled, in an interview quoted by Philip Norman (1981), 'I never got a minute's peace. It was Elvis Presley, Elvis Presley, Elvis Presley. In

the end I said, "Elvis Presley's all very well, John, but I don't want him for breakfast, dinner *and* tea." ' (p. 21). His interest in the music never really left him. His first studio album after the demise of the Beatles, *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*, included three items with a heavy back-beat ('Remember', 'Well, Well Well', and 'I Found Out') and featured throughout pronounced echo on the vocal track, a device which was to become a distinctive characteristic of his solo work. In 1975, Lennon released *Rock 'N' Roll* which consisted in the main of the 1950s material of such artists as Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and Fats Domino.

Paul McCartney was accepted as a member of the Quarry Men (the earliest incarnation of the Beatles) only because he knew the chords to Eddie Cochran's 'Twenty Flight Rock'. Although his music no longer bears any resemblance to rock & roll, his affection for the music is still apparent. On the BBC Radio Programme 'Desert Island Discs', broadcast in the early 1980s, McCartney chose five rock & roll records in his allocation of eight selections.

It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that the Beatles concentrated on rock & roll material during their residencies in Hamburg, which commenced in the summer of 1960. Included in their repertoire were such items as Carl Perkins's 'Honey Don't' and Chuck Berry's 'Too Much Monkey Business' as well as latter day Presley hits such as 'Love Me Tender'. Yet at their first recording sessions for Parlophone, in September 1962 and February 1963, which yielded their first two hit singles and the whole of their first album (*Please Please Me*), the emphasis was upon contemporary rhythm & blues and the compositions of Lennon and McCartney. This formula was repeated for their second album, *With The Beatles*. In fact, the only incontestably rock & roll song appeared on that second LP release, namely Chuck Berry's 'Roll Over Beethoven'.

It could be argued that by that stage the rock & roll of the 1950s was no longer a commercial proposition, and that the Beatles chose instead to turn their attention to what might be regarded as 'underground' music as yet unfamiliar to most British record-buyers. However, the Beatles' apprenticeship in rock & roll informed their work on the early albums in certain crucial respects.

Most notably, the singing of McCartney and, in particular, Lennon, brought a rock & roll character to both their own originals and the R. & B. material they took on. Lennon, for example, did not attempt to copy the vocal styles of Smokey Robinson and Barrett

Strong in the versions of, respectively, 'You Really Gotta Hold On Me' and 'Money'. His own methods were already developed by then, namely the rasping delivery and uninhibited approach of his mentors. In this way, Lennon and McCartney were free to handle what was largely obscure material in any case in an essentially personal fashion. This process was complemented by the fact that the Beatles tended to slow down the tempos of the original recordings for greater effect, examples of which include their treatment of Arthur Alexander's 'Anna' and the Shirelles' 'Baby It's You'.

Similarly, their instrumental work, while perhaps lacking the fluency and timing of the American product, compensates by supplying an attack and intensity clearly derived from prolonged exposure to rock & roll. In this respect, their version of 'Money' can almost be said to prefigure the 'heavy rock' methods of several years later.

The result of such processes was a music which sounded distinctive *and* authentic. On hearing 'Love Me Do' for the first time, many listeners assumed that it was the work of a black group or, at the very least, that it was American in origin. Of course Lennon and McCartney also discovered that they had the ability to compose commerically successful pop tunes, a fact which has tended to obscure their efforts in other directions. Their involvement with rock & roll cannot be said to have influenced these songs, with the possible exception of such early efforts as 'I Saw Her Standing There'. While it is true that an R. & B. influence is apparent in certain originals, for example, 'All I've Go To Do', 'Little Child', and 'Not A Second Time', these compositions can hardly be counted as being among their most popular. Yet at least the overtly commercial material the Beatles produced *was* their own: antipathy to Tin Pan Alley is illustrated by the fact that they withstood pressure to record 'How Do You Do It' (composed by the professional writer Mitch Murray) at their first session. The song was subsequently a number one hit in Britain for Gerry and the Pacemakers.

Rock & roll songs such as 'Long Tall Sally' and 'Honey Don't' continued to appear occasionally on Beatles releases and in their stage-act, culminating in their version of Larry Williams's 'Dizzy Miss Lizzy' on the *Help!* album of 1965. This, and 'Act Naturally' from the same LP, were to be the last items not to be composed by members of the band until the 39-second fragment of the Liverpool folk-song, 'Maggie Mae', appeared on the Beatles' final album release

Let It Be. In December 1965, they issued the LP *Rubber Soul*, and the transition to wholly original material was completed. This now bore little relation to their early recordings. The songs were more personal in content, making use of lyrical conceits and instrumental arrangements, the nature of which was entirely individual. (George Harrison was reportedly outraged at the Hollies' cover version of his 'If I Needed Someone'.) The subject matter of many of the compositions was certainly striking and completely foreign to the British pop music of the period, especially in the songs on which Lennon seemed to be the dominant influence, for example 'Nowhere Man', 'Norwegian Wood', and 'In My Life'. Furthermore, the Beatles were beginning to discover the possibilities opened up by four-track recording – principally the way in which sound could be 'layered' over a period of time to create something aurally distinctive.

Links with American rhythm & blues and rock & roll were now severed. The Beatles had established a tradition of British pop music, a development totally without precedent. Other artists, most notably The Who, now concerned themselves with reflecting their own environment, rather than borrowing images and inspiration from elsewhere. It should be reiterated, however, that this state of affairs was not created in a vacuum. The Beatles' assimilation of rock & roll into their music was crucial in providing for the conditions under which further development could take place. Additionally, their work heralded a new competence among British musicians, a vital factor in the formation of rock. The relationship between American and British music was destined to continue, resulting in further important changes during the mid-1960s.

While the Beatles stopped playing rock & roll in 1965, the Rolling Stones never started. Though often considered peers in the forefront of the growth of British pop music of the 1960s, the background, experience, and methods of the two bands were quite dissimilar. To start with, there was an important age difference between their leading members. John Lennon, for example, was almost four years older than Mick Jagger and over three years older than Keith Richard. Paul McCartney (born in 1942) was senior to Jagger by two years. Although these variations would seem insignificant in other contexts, they were vital in the degree to which rock & roll, with a duration of prominence in Britain scarcely spanning five years, could be understood and absorbed. In 1956, for example, the year in which

Elvis Presley had hits on both sides of the Atlantic with 'Heartbreak Hotel' and 'Hound Dog', Lennon was sixteen years of age, Jagger twelve.

Their comparative lack of involvement with rock & roll was not a matter of concern for the Stones, however. In a much-quoted interview with *Jazz News* conducted prior to their debut at the Marquee on 21 July 1962 Jagger stated, 'I hope they don't think we're a rock 'n' roll outfit.' One imagines that the Beatles, who were yet to make their first recordings for Parlophone, would have expressed no such fears about that response to their music. On the contrary, the Beatles had existed as a unit for some seven years by then, with rock & roll constituting the staple element in their repertoire. The Stones, in contrast, were in the recording studios within a year of that first club appearance.

The question must therefore be posed: what *did* the Rolling Stones regard themselves as? It could hardly have been as a jazz band, although the group's drummer, Charlie Watts, had previously worked in a traditional jazz context. More likely it would have been as an outfit comparable with Blues Incorporated, with whom Jagger had occasionally sung and for whom the Stones were substituting at the Marquee gig.

The mainstays of Blues Incorporated, Alexis Korner and Cyril Davies, had been playing blues and R. & B. material for many years by that point, a fact that was almost entirely unknown in Britain, and even in London itself until they formed the band in 1961 and a club, in Ealing, at which to feature their music more regularly than they were able to do at the Marquee. Korner and Davies had both begun as traditional jazz musicians but – possibly as a result of the influence of the jazz musician, Chris Barber – had become interested in blues during the early 1950s, leading to their formation of the London Blues and Barrelhouse Club in 1955. Barber himself was instrumental in bringing to Britain blues performers such as Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Otis Spann, and Muddy Waters during the 1950s, a fact which may unwittingly have compounded the critical view that blues was to be regarded as an adjunct of jazz.

These matters, however, did not concern the young audiences at the Marquee and Ealing clubs. They regarded traditional jazz as old-fashioned and the commercial American Pop of the period as too tame; blues and R. & B. represented a radical and exciting alternative. The Stones profited from this state of affairs and it was not long before

their potential as a business proposition was recognised by the management team of Andrew Oldham and Eric Easton.

Possibly in order to enhance their commercial prospects, the Rolling Stones drew on a relatively wide range of black music styles on their early recordings. On the whole, however, they chose material by artists whose talents had scarcely been recognised, especially in Britain. Contrary to belief, Chuck Berry's records had not made much of an impact in Britain during the 1950s; his biggest British hit prior to the 1970s was 'No Particular Place To Go' in 1964, *after* the Stones had enjoyed success with his 'Come On', their first single release. A large number of record-buyers became aware of the existence of Jimmy Reed and Slim Harpo only because of the inclusion of their songs ('Honest I Do' and 'I'm A King Bee' respectively) on the Stones' first album *The Rolling Stones* (1964). Likewise, there were adaptations of the contemporary rhythm & blues material of Marvin Gaye ('Can I Get A Witness') and Irma Thomas ('Time Is On My Side').

One might occasionally be critical of the Rolling Stones' methods. They take Muddy Waters's 'I Just Want To Make Love To You', for example, at an impossibly fast pace, thus emasculating the strength and threatening undertone of the slow and relentless original rendition. Tempo acceleration, presumably to create an exciting effect, was to become a common error among British bands covering black American material; in this case it may have been a result of sheer lack of experience: compare, for instance, the Beatles' treatment of 'Anna' and 'Baby It's You' discussed above. Yet on other occasions, the Stones' treatment of their source material displays an original and perceptive approach. By handling Buddy Holly's 'Not Fade Away' in Bo Diddley's characteristic style, they effectively drew attention to Holly's debt to Diddley. (Holly had admitted this influence both verbally and musically, as indicated by his recordings of 'Bo Diddley' and related original compositions such as 'Peggy Sue'.) The Stones also completely transformed the Staple Singers' original for 'The Last Time' (1965), converting it into a near-rock & roll rendition through the pronounced emphasis on the off-beat.

The compositions of Jagger and Richard were undistinguished and few in number at this stage. What was important was that they made use of strong material from the black tradition, and brought what was previously largely unfamiliar to a new generation of record-buyers and, by implication, would-be performers who set up their own

groups based on the Stones' example. They also epitomised the new-found competence and confidence among British instrumentalists. Their version of the Valentinos' 'It's All Over Now' (1964) is arguably of at least equal quality to the original in terms of the instrumental accompaniment. Jagger's singing, too, compares favourably here with Bobby Womack's: it was only when tackling the more demanding Chicago blues material such as Muddy Waters's 'I Just Want To Make Love To You' or 'I Can't Be Satisfied' (from *The Rolling Stones No. 2*) (1964) that he came to grief.

The Stones' desire for authenticity was paralleled in the work of the Animals, who came to similar prominence during 1964. The Animals were greatly assisted by the accomplished piano-playing of Alan Price, a definite advantage when reproducing blues and R. & B. It was this, together with a general concern for accuracy, which gave the Animals' early recordings their authentic sound. Their first single 'Baby Let Me Take You Home' (1964) was the latest example of a song family which had it roots in the New Orleans tradition. We may be sure that the Animals were conscious of Bob Dylan's version, 'Baby Let Me Follow You Down', contained on his first album, *Bob Dylan* (1962). After all, the song they chose for their second single, 'The House Of The Rising Sun' (also 1964), appears on the same Dylan LP. Yet there had been earlier readings by Professor Longhair (as 'Baby Let Me Hold Your Hand' in 1957) and Snooks Eaglin (as 'Mama Don't You Tear My Clothes' in 1958). The Animals' version does not resemble Dylan's and this fact, together with the knowledge that their singer, Eric Burdon, possessed an enormous collection of blues and R. & B. records, suggests at least an awareness of the song's New Orleans provenance as evidenced by the Longhair and Eaglin recordings. Similarly, 'House Of The Rising Sun', though adapted by Dylan, is a song of indeterminate origin, encountered in the repertoires of black folk performers such as Josh White.

Such considerations are reflected by the manner in which the Animals approached their work. While Price's abilities as a boogie pianist were their best asset, Burdon's voice, though occasionally strained and hoarse, often displayed an unselfconscious aggression. Their guitarist, Hilton Valentine, was seldom called upon to produce solos of any length or intensity, but still fulfilled his role with a technique which was more than adequate. Their version of Chuck Berry's 'How You've Changed' (1964) is a good example of their talents – it is a convincing reworking of a song otherwise ignored by

British bands, and while Burdon's vocal does not attempt to recreate Berry's wry approach, the group's performance as a whole would have done justice to an aggregation of Chicago session-men.

In 1963 Muddy Waters made his third visit to Britain. He had experienced difficulties on his previous two trips, initially because local audiences were unprepared for his amplified sound, and subsequently because he had reverted to the country blues in his effort to please them: there were now complaints from those expecting him to play Chicago-style. This in itself illustrates the change in approach that had taken place between 1958 and 1962: there was now an awareness of blues as a music quite separate from jazz, and this, together with fact that young musicians were beginning to turn to urban blues for their inspiration, improved the standing of such artists as Waters among the music's new audiences. The 1963 visit was part of an American Folk Blues Festival package which also included post-war stylists such as John Lee Hooker, Otis Spann, and Sonny Boy Williamson. Williamson, who stayed on in Europe after the AFBF tour was over, made a particularly favourable impression. Both he and Waters came to be celebrated by audiences *and* musicians, who were quick to acknowledge their influence, conferring upon them an honorary membership of the British pop elite. Musical forerunners of rock, these Chicago bluesmen now also amounted to rock stars. This arrangement worked to mutual benefit. Not only did the Americans achieve greater commercial success (Muddy Waters often admitted how sales of his records increased as a direct result of his acceptance in this country) but they also extended the appreciation of the blues beyond its previous narrow confines.

Yet the lure of chart success was still strong among many British bands. Largely through the efforts of the Beatles and the other Mersey groups, 1964 became a year of plenty for local acts, both at home and in the USA, where between February and October twenty British singles sold over a million copies. The Yardbirds, who had accompanied Sonny Boy Williamson on several occasions at his appearances around the country, experienced the dilemma of whether to continue to play their rhythm and blues style rock, which was not proving to be commercially successful, or whether to record material with a greater potential for reaching the chart. They chose the latter course of action with the result that 'For Your Love' (1965) made number two in Britain and number six in the USA. Disillusioned by

this decision, their lead guitarist, Eric Clapton, left the group and joined John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

Clapton's career with the Yardbirds, Mayall, and shortly afterwards with Cream epitomises the transition from R. & B. rock to blues-rock to rock. An awareness of Chicago blues, fostered – as we have seen – by visits to Britain by the originators and the recording of their compositions by groups such as the Rolling Stones, led inevitably to the discovery of the music's source, the blues of the Mississippi Delta. Closely linked to this investigation was the yearning to sound as authentic as possible and to reject compromise in favour of credibility. Concomitant with the acquisition of the technique necessary to handle such demanding music (or, in some cases, as a result of the frustration at not being able to do so) came the realisation of the powerful effect – essentially in the hands of a guitarist – that this might have upon an audience. Clapton himself stated, in an interview published in *Melody Maker* on 15 October 1966 (and quoted by John Pidgeon in *Eric Clapton*, 1976, p. 65), 'My whole musical attitude has changed. I listen to the same sounds but with a different ear. I'm no longer trying to play anything but like a white man.' We might regard this statement as a definition of rock music philosophy.

Mayall and Clapton released only one album together, but it was an influential one. *Blues Breakers* (1966) contained items from what was by now a familiar origin – Little Walter, Ray Charles, and so on – but, significantly, included two songs one step removed from the more widely-known material being attempted by contemporary British outfits. These were 'All Your Love' by Otis Rush (an artist then obscure to many in this country, but whose Chicago blues retained a strong affinity with its Mississippi roots) and 'Ramblin' On My Mind' by the Delta bluesman, Robert Johnson – an early (if not the first) attempt by a British band at music from this source. While the latter, Clapton's debut as a vocalist on record, was a routine copy, 'All Your Love' contained a Clapton solo, which, though superficially similar to the work of the Chicago blues stylists, exaggerated and distorted their phrasing and tone. Clapton's playing on two originals, 'Double Crossing Time' and 'Have You Heard' was, if anything, even more remarkable, and created the impression that he was making use of all the knowledge and energy he possessed to produce as intense an effect as possible. Whether or not Clapton's growing legion of followers would have experienced as much, or more, satisfaction by listening to

the work of such contemporary Chicago blues guitarists as Buddy Guy is not known. The point was that Clapton was young, talented, available, and, as the graffiti on walls all over London had it, 'God'.

These two tendencies – that is, to delve deeper in the search for source material and to place more emphasis upon instrumental prowess – were developed still further with the formation of Cream, which comprised Clapton, drummer Ginger Baker, and Jack Bruce on bass guitar, harmonica, and vocals. Their first album, *Fresh Cream*, released by Reaction late in 1966, lacked any attempt to recreate Chuck Berry and Jimmy Reed hits. Included instead were 'Rollin' And Tumblin' ' (from the extensive blues song family also comprising 'Minglewood Blues' – see Chapter 1), 'Spoonful' (credited to Willie Dixon, but seeming to have its provenance in Charley Patton's 'A Spoonful Blues' of 1929), 'I'm So Glad' and 'Four Until Late', both originating from 1930s recordings by the Delta blues artists Skip James and Robert Johnson respectively. With the exception of the latter item, this material was arranged to accommodate the band-members' individual abilities as instrumentalists, as were their own compositions. In live performance this was taken to further extremes, the songs acting merely as a framework for extended improvisations in the manner more commonly found in contemporary jazz.

Cream's music was quickly labelled 'progressive', a somewhat ironic description given that much of their source material was at least thirty years old, and that their methods were equally well-established. Paradoxically, there was also something of a controversy as to whether the work of Mayall, Cream, and those who followed them could be regarded as blues. The editorial staff of the influential magazine *Blues Unlimited* (based in Bexhill, Sussex) felt that it could not. Retrospective evidence – together with Clapton's statement of intent quoted above – shows that they were right: this was rock.

As if to prove the point, Cream's next album, *Disraeli Gears* (released in November 1967) was dominated by their own compositions, and the mood was more akin to psychedelia than to Chicago or the Mississippi Delta, the single exception being 'Outside Woman Blues' written by Blind Joe Reynolds. Yet on stage Cream continued to use blues material as a basis for improvisation and in particular for lengthy guitar solos by Clapton. This tension was resolved by the issue of *Wheels Of Fire* (1968) which comprised one studio and one live album. The combination proved commercially

irresistible: the set reached number one on both the British and American album charts. In October, however, the band broke up, making their last appearance at London's Albert Hall on the 26th.

By that stage, Cream had exerted two crucial influences upon the development of rock. Firstly, they had brought into popular currency hardcore Delta and Chicago blues material. This not only contrasted with the rock & roll and rhythm & blues source employed by the Beatles, Rolling Stones and others; it also inspired curiosity as to the music's origins, leading to an enhanced knowledge of the history of the blues. Many British blues authorities first discovered the music in such a manner though some subsequently rejected Cream's work, purging it from their collections and claiming they had been familiar with the form all along. In the United States, Cream's success represented the second wave of reimportation into that country of its own music. From a musical point of view Cream consolidated the assimilation of black American styles into British pop, a continuity best illustrated by the prevalence of the characteristic blues on-beat rhythmic emphasis in the resultant rock music form.

Secondly, the success of Cream brought about a preoccupation with instrumental skill as an end in itself. Hordes of young musicians looked up to the band with reverence and sought to emulate their technical proficiency. Although it was the guitar solo which became ubiquitous in rock, drummers were also permitted full rein; even bass-players, hitherto obscure and unloved, became celebrities in their own right. The implications of such a situation for the development of rock will be discussed later on in this chapter and in Chapter 7.

As many observers have remarked, Led Zeppelin were ideally placed to fill the vacuum created by the demise of Cream. While they initially made use of a similar source, their approach was, if anything, more uninhibited than that of their predecessors, at times displaying a vocal and instrumental frenzy which won them many admirers. Their first album (*Led Zeppelin*, 1968) included the Willie Dixon compositions 'You Shook Me' and 'I Can't Quit You Babe' (originally recorded by Otis Rush), yet the principal influence on their treatment would seem to be the singing of Jack Bruce and the guitar-playing of Eric Clapton, rather than any Chicago provenance. With the band's second LP release (*Led Zeppelin II*, 1969), links with the blues were formally severed, even though 'Whole Lotta Love' appears to be based on the Muddy Waters recording 'You Need Love', and Robert

Johnson is not credited for the lyrical idea of 'The Lemon Song'. There was, in fact, little need to refer to the blues any more: rock music could sustain itself quite easily through its own standards of songwriting and musicianship, a fact reinforced by the enormous commercial success of Led Zeppelin, especially in the United States. Of their first seven LP releases, five reached number one on the American album chart.

It is perhaps not surprising that the reworking of blues material by white American performers of the early 1960s remained faithful to its source. Musicians such as Mike Bloomfield and Paul Butterfield not only lived in close proximity to the originators but accompanied them in live appearances in front of black audiences. It was therefore essential that they kept their music conventional. In fact, when Butterfield made his first album, *The Paul Butterfield Blues Band* (1965), he employed black musicians Jerome Arnold and Billy Davenport on bass and drums respectively. Tracks such as the band's version of Little Walter's 'Off The Wall' illustrate the resultant authenticity. Although Bloomfield and Butterfield achieved a degree of success, it scarcely equated with that of their British counterparts. This was no doubt because they were *too* concerned with the accurate reproduction of an idiom which lacked universal acceptance in the first place; even the fact that they possessed the distinct commercial advantage of being young and white was insufficient to make them stars.

It is clear that a measure of geographical and environmental separation was necessary in order for blues to exert an influence upon the development of rock music and provide the basis of its widespread popularity. There were no constraints on British musicians to respect the blues tradition and it is arguable that such a lack of inhibition contributed crucially to their success. In America, it was the bands of the West Coast who used the blues most profitably during the mid-1960s, rather than the musicians from Chicago or the South.

Both the Doors and Jefferson Airplane, the first two California bands of the period to rise to national prominence, recorded blues material on their early albums. Jim Morrison invested Howlin' Wolf's 'Back Door Man' (*The Doors*, 1967) with characteristic menace, and returned to the source four years later (*LA Woman*) with a similar rendition of 'Crawling King Snake', a song credited to John Lee Hooker but related to the 1941 Big Joe Williams recording of the same

name. Jefferson Airplane included 'Me And My Chauffeur' (a song normally attributed to Memphis Minnie, but part of a wider song family which includes 'Good Morning Little Schoolgirl') on their second album, *Surrealistic Pillow* (1967). Though originally from Texas, Janis Joplin moved to the West Coast early in her career. She often acknowledged her debt to the blues, both in interview and, implicitly, in her singing style: one of her most celebrated recordings was her version of Big Mama Thornton's 'Ball And Chain' (*Cheap Thrills*, 1968). The Grateful Dead began as a jug band and subsequently incorporated R. & B., country, soul, and blues into their performances. Their 1967 recording, 'New, New Minglewood Blues' is of particular interest, being an example of the large song family referred to in Chapter 1 and elsewhere – a fact reflected by the Dead's sardonic title. Captain Beefheart possessed the advantages of both sounding like a black singer and being able to compose what amounted to original blues material. Though following tradition in the use of harmonica and slide guitar, Beefheart evolved an idiosyncratic method of syncopation which seems to enhance the impression of authenticity rather than detract from it. A good example is 'Gimme Dat Harp Boy' from the album *Strictly Personal* (1968).

Large-scale popular acceptance was slow to arrive for the majority of these artists, especially in Britain, where the native product was all-pervasive. One California-based band who did break through were Canned Heat – their first two singles, 'On The Road Again' and 'Going Up The Country' (both 1968) were hits in the United States *and* in Britain. Certain features distingished Canned Heat from contemporary bands operating in a superficially similar area. To start with, they were students of the blues for some time before they arrived in the recording studio. Both Bob Hite and Al Wilson owned comprehensive collections of blues records from all periods of the music's history. Secondly, they concentrated initially on country blues as their source. 'On The Road Again' is, furthermore, anything but a routine copy of a single earlier rendition. Wilson's vocal seems most closely to resemble that found on the Mississippi Sheiks' 'Stop And Listen Blues' of 1930, although there is also a close correspondence with Willie Lofton's 'Dark Road Blues' (1935) and Mississippi Mudder's 'Going Back Home' (1934). To add to the complexity, there are clear links with Tommy Johnson's 'Big Road Blues' of 1928, itself related to 'Dark Road' (1951) by Floyd Jones,

whom Canned Heat credit as a composer of 'On The Road Again'; Jones did record a song of that name with connections to the Canned Heat version, though in *Rock File 3* (p. 160) Gillett and Frith give the source as the Memphis Jug Band!

This apparent tangle not only illustrates how the origins of common stock country blues songs are often impossible to discover. It also demonstrates that Canned Heat, through their obvious awareness of at least two earlier renditions, were *themselves* participants in the history of the song's development.

The popularity of 'On The Road Again', not surprisingly, did not tempt Canned Heat away from the country blues, although they continued to use conventional rock instrumentation. 'Going Up The Country' was a version of Henry Thomas's 'Bull Doze Blues' (1928), while their predilection for Delta material was reflected in such recordings as Charley Patton's 'Pony Blues' of 1929 (from the album *Living The Blues*, (1969). There was a slight shift of emphasis in 1970, when the band had a hit with Wilbert Harrison's 'Let's Work Together', possibly accelerated by the death of Al Wilson in September of that year. Canned Heat went on to record with John Lee Hooker (*Hooker 'n' Heat*, 1971), but that stage popular interest in the blues was beginning to wane.

The West Coast was the natural centre for the incorporation of the blues into the emerging white rock genre. It had few cultural ties with the traditions of either the South or North. Black people were permitted to exist in comparative freedom, a state of emancipation most had hoped for in their migration earlier in the century from the southern states to the northern cities. That this had frequently led to disappointment resulted in the preoccupation with California as the preferred destination, exemplified by the sentiments of the protagonist in Chuck Berry's 'Promised Land'. It was therefore inevitable that black and white cultures would integrate – just as they had done in 1940s West Coast R. & B. (which developed in the Los Angeles lounges and supper-clubs owned and patronised by Whites) and in 1950s West Coast Jazz (when young white musicians worked on the principles of bebop, a style initiated in New York by their black contemporaries).

Yet the Californian rock bands were also influenced by the enormous success that British performers were experiencing by the assimilation into their music of black styles. Throughout the United States, in fact, audiences were being reintroduced to the origins of

their native pop music, and the significance of this was not lost on established white artists, the most eminent of which was Bob Dylan.

Peter Guralnick (1971) has related how, disillusioned with what he perceived as the decline of rock & roll in the late 1950s/early 1960s, he turned to the blues, which he came upon through folk music (pp. 21—2). Though Bob Dylan had been interested in the blues before he benefited from the resurgence of interest in folk, it is not difficult to see how he began to operate in the context suggested by Guralnick. Like John Lennon (of whom he was a close contemporary), Dylan had been a rock & roll enthusiast during his teenage years, being especially attracted to the music of Little Richard and Chuck Berry; he also played in a rock & roll band when at high school at Hibbing, Minnesota. Quite why Dylan did not continue in this vein is a matter of speculation. Wilfred Mellers (1984) states that 'his opting out of college after six months was not merely a negative rejection of the American Way of Life but also a positive return to an older, more basic American culture' (p. 112). It may also have been that he found his talents unsuited to rock & roll, or that he anticipated its demise as a means of individual expression.

Whatever the case, his affinity with the blues is clearly demonstrated by the content and delivery of his first album, *Bob Dylan* (1962). At least five tracks have their origin in the work of blues artists, most dating back to the 1920s/1930s. 'In My Time Of Dyin' ' is based on Blind Willie Johnson's 'Jesus Make Up My Dyin' Bed' (1927) and also related to 'Jesus Is A Dying Bed-Maker' by Charley Patton (1929). 'Fixin' To Die' was composed and recorded (in 1940) by the Delta blues singer Bukka White, while 'See That My Grave Is Kept Clean' originates from Blind Lemon Jefferson who first recorded it in 1927. 'Highway 51' is credited to Curtis Jones whose version was made in 1938, though the song resembles certain compositions by Big Joe Williams; in any event, Dylan's rendition makes use of the basic blues riff. The song also contributes to the general impression created by the album of travel, loneliness, and disorientation (Highway 51 runs from New Orleans via Memphis to the shores of Lake Superior, Dylan's own birthplace), a central concern in both black and white traditions (see Introduction). 'You're No Good' was written by R. & B. singer Jesse Fuller, while the New Orleans origins of 'Baby, Let Me Follow You Down' have been discussed earlier in this chapter.

It would have been remarkable enough that a while singer of twenty years of age was recording such material as early as 1961 (the album was made at two sessions in November of that year). Yet what was equally notable was that Dylan's vocal delivery showed such a close relationship with that of the blues singers whose work he was reproducing. His flat, clipped technique at times amounts to talking rather than singing, in a manner redolent of Jefferson, White, and Patton. He actually includes a 'talking blues' ('Talkin' New York'), a form commonly thought of as originating with Woody Guthrie (from whom Dylan no doubt derived it) but corresponding clearly with black vocal mannerisms, as illustrated by Bukka White's recording of 'The Panama Limited' (1930). The influence that Dylan's singing style was to have upon subsequent rock vocalists has already been referred to (see Chapter 1, pp. 39–40).

On *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1963) blues material is still present, but subject to rearrangement. Thus we find 'Corinna, Corinna' transformed to great effect, almost as if Dylan had written the song himself. According to Mellers (p. 128), 'Down The Highway' 'pays homage' to Big Joe Williams, though the song would seem to originate with Charlie Pickett's version of 1937; in any case, Dylan reshapes it in his own way. Also included is the talking blues, 'Talkin' World War III'. Although national acceptance was some way away (of Dylan's first four LP releases, only *The Times They Are A-Changin'* reached the Top Twenty on the American album chart: *Bob Dylan* did not feature at all), demands were now being made by the newly reconstituted folk lobby based in New York's Greenwich Village.

Dylan has often indicated his antipathy for this group of custodians – indeed, he satirised their purist tendencies in 'Talkin' New York'. Yet we might assume that he was gratified to gain recognition in some circles, and he was certainly not slow to realise the commercial possibilities of his suddenly fashionable protest songs. Though initially composed of enthusiasts dedicated to preserving what they regarded as the American Folk Tradition, the Greenwich Village circle seized on the anthem-like character of Dylan's anti-war compositions with alacrity. For a time they wielded considerable influence which was not confined to the United States; in Britain during the early 1960s there was a considerable growth in scope and in number within the folk-club network. It is not surprising, therefore, that Dylan was accused of abdicating his responsibilities when he

appeared at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival backed by the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, and subsequently toured Britain accompanied by a former rock & roll outfit, The Band.

Dylan had been observing the progress of the successful British groups with some interest. Anthony Scaduto (1972) quotes him as recalling

> We were driving through Colorado . . . we had the radio on and eight of the Top Ten songs were Beatles songs. . . . They were doing things nobody was doing. Their chords were outrageous, just outrageous, and their harmonies made it all valid. . . . Everybody else thought they were for the teenyboppers, that they were gonna pass right away. But it was obvious to me that they had staying power. I knew they were pointing the direction music had to go . . . in my head, the Beatles were *it*. (p. 175)

We may surmise that such a belief, together with the influence that members of The Band had upon him, caused Dylan to reinvestigate his roots and those of the emerging rock music.

With *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965), Dylan's deliberations came to fruition. The very title of the album indicates a fresh attitude, a fact reinforced by the appearance on the front of the sleeve of LPs by the Impressions and Robert Johnson. Of the seven items on side one, four are distinguished by the pronounced off-beat characteristics of rock & roll. In addition, 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' has strong thematic connections with Chuck Berry's 'Too Much Monkey Business' (Chess, 1956), and 'Outlaw Blues' follows the twelve-bar blues structure. Dylan is clearly comfortable with the material and his frequently gleeful vocal delivery is complemented by a suitably energetic band accompaniment.

Side Two is more sombre in mood, and confirms that Dylan was not yet quite ready to renounce his accomplishments of the early 1960s. This tension between old and new approaches is resolved on the succeeding albums *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965) and *Blonde On Blonde* (1966). The latter album, in particular, represents a resolution of all previous conflicts and draws together all musical and lyrical strands to create an original and distinctive work, ensuring Dylan's pre-eminence in contemporary rock music. Unfortunately, he rather lost momentum as a result of a motorcycle accident in August 1966, and failed to recapture it for *John Wesley Harding* (1968); he then, as many rock & roll stars had done before him, turned to country music with the release of the 1969 album *Nashville Skyline*.

The group that had influenced Dylan and accompanied him so

effectively, The Band, began to make their own records in 1968. In their previous incarnation as the Hawks, they had spent much of their time backing the white rock & roll singer, Ronnie Hawkins, commencing in the late 1950s. Hawkins specialised in the blacker strains of rock & roll, and the Hawks themselves were blues enthusiasts, but at this time, North American audiences were not yet ready to accept their efforts – hardcore rock & roll was out of fashion and the reawakening of interest in the blues, stemming to a great degree from the second phase of the British 'invasion', had not begun.

The Band, therefore, were willing participants in the reinvestigation being undertaken by such an established artist as Dylan. That they themselves began to re-examine and re-evaluate both musical and cultural traditions now seems a natural extension of this process. As Greil Marcus (1977) has written:

> Against a cult of youth they felt for a continuity of generations; against the instant America of the sixties they looked for the traditions that made new things not only possible, but valuable; against a flight from the roots they set a sense of place. Against the pop scene, all flux and novelty, they set themselves: a band with years behind it, and meant to last. (p. 50)

Just as it had taken musicians from an alien environment and culture – specifically, Britain and the American West Coat – to make the most of the possibilities offered by blues and R. & B., so it took The Band (all Canadians, with the exception of Levon Helm, who was from Arkansas) to produce the first popular celebration of White Southern culture. Their first two albums, *Music From Big Pink* (1968) and *The Band* (1969) represent the values and traditions of the South in a personal yet non-pejorative way. Thus the mistress-hired hand relationship described in 'The Weight' is taken for granted and is extended in 'The Unfaithful Servant' where the prevailing emotion is of regret rather than recrimination. There is, too, an empathy with the fundamental concerns of rural existence, essentially work ('King Harvest') and leisure ('Up On Cripple Creek'). While *Music From Big Pink* operates in general in a non-specific environment (what Marcus describes as 'the timeless and mythical American town'), *The Band* reveals an attention to detail which further authenticates the subject matter. This is predicted by the opening track, 'Across The Great Divide', and reaches fulfilment in 'The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down' where the personal implications for the protagonist of the defeat of the Confederate army are presented in characteriscally sympathetic fashion, the thorough knowledge of historical events

allowing for the possibility of factual accuracy and thereby impartiality on the listener's behalf.

Although they were all individually versatile musicians and incorporated a wide variety of native forms and styles into their work, The Band rejected the prevailing fashion of overt instrumental virtuosity and fused their musical influences into a uniform yet distinctive sound. Lengthy guitar solos were dispensed with and ostentatious drumming displays were replaced by a precise yet full percussive base. The piano, so important in the conventions of blues, country music, and rock & roll, was reintroduced; the use of a horn section was sparing and appropriate. In short, The Band's sound mirrored their investigation of the Southern white rural tradition.

Established rock stars such as George Harrison and Eric Clapton were quick to draw attention to The Band's virtues, and in time their influence began to permeate a rock scene which was rapidly becoming stagnant. Ths process was accelerated by the commercial success of Creedence Clearwater Revival, the only contemporary outfit operating in a similar area to The Band. Though less specific in their references, Creedence also dealt with typically Southern traditional themes and concerns, in particular the role of the river as both a means of transportation and as a location for settlement – examples include 'Proud Mary'/'Born On The Bayou' and 'Green River' (both 1969). Like The Band, Creedence approached their subject matter from an external viewpoint (they were from San Francisco), such a separation again enhancing the effect. They also avoided instrumental excess and remained faithful to the basic format of two guitars, bass, and drums. This return to fundamentals was reflected in their predisposition to rock & roll, often employing its back-beat rhythmic emphasis, most notably in 'Bad Moon Rising' (1969).

The music of Creedence Clearwater Revival and in particular that of The Band can be seen, in retrospect, to have anticipated what came to be known as the 'New Wave' of the late 1970s. By returning to the traditions established and developed decades earlier they were able to preserve continuity while creating the conditions under which change might take place.

The belief that mainstream rock was degenerating into inert and artistically unprofitable areas had spread to Britain, resulting in a revival of musical activity in pubs and small clubs. Bands such as Dire Straits, Dr Feelgood, and Eddie and the Hot Rods flourished in this environment during the mid-1970s. *The NME Book Of Rock 2* (1977)

noted this turn of events, and in an attempt to anticipate new trends, included a section on Punk Rock (p. 405). It explained that the term should now encompass 'U.S. acts like Bruce Springsteen, Patti Smith and particularly, Nils Lofgren'. Though we may now fault the terminology, there was undoubted prescience in the choice of this particular trio: Springsteen wrote for Smith and later included Lofgren in his backing band. He had also begun the process of reworking the music of his youth, the American pop of the late 1950s and early 1960s. It would not be long before it was once again agreeable to be called a rock & roll singer.

Greil Marcus, Like a Rolling Stone: Bob Dylan
at the crossroads, PublicAffairs, New York 2006

CHAPTER NINE

Democracy in America

This may be the truest setting for "Like a Rolling Stone"—a country imagined forty years ago, and as recognizable today as it was then.

U.S. Highway 61 runs from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border, just above Grand Portage, Minnesota. In Dylan's high school days in Hibbing it was a magic road; he and his friends would cut twenty miles east for a straight shot down U.S. 53 to Duluth, where he was born, and there they'd pick up 61 and head for St. Paul and Minneapolis, looking for scenes;* in 1959 and 1960, when Dylan attended

* In Minnesota the driving age was fifteen; Dylan made his first recordings at Terline Music, an instrument and sheet music store, in St. Paul on Christmas Eve, 1956. Included were fragments of Little Richard's "Ready Teddy," Sonny Knight's "Confidential" (a song Dylan took up again in 1967 with the Hawks,

the University of Minnesota, the highway took him to his haunts. In the Cities Dylan discovered folk music, the old country music and the old blues—and discovered that in song and story there was no more protean line drawn in the nation than the line drawn by Highway 61. History had been made on that highway in times past, and history would be made there in times to come.

Bessie Smith, the Queen of the Blues, died on Highway 61 in 1937, near Clarksdale, Mississippi, where Muddy Waters grew up and where, in the 1910s and '20s, Charley Patton, Son House, and others made the Delta blues; some have pretended to know that Robert Johnson's 1936 "Cross Road Blues" was set right there, where Highway 49 crosses Highway 61. Elvis Presley grew up on Highway 61, in the Lauderdale Courts public housing in Memphis; not far away, the road went past the Lorraine Motel, where Martin Luther

---

[*continued*] as part of the Basement Tapes recordings, and was still performing on stage twenty-five years after that), Carl Perkins's "Boppin' the Blues," Lloyd Price's "Lawdy Miss Clawdy," the Five Satins' "In the Still of the Nite," Shirley and Lee's "Let the Good Times Roll," and the Penguins' "Earth Angel." Dylan accompanied himself on piano; friends Howard Rutman and Larry Keegan also sang. Left a paraplegic after accidents in his teens and twenties, Keegan, in his wheelchair, joined Dylan onstage in Merrillville, Indiana, in 1981, for an encore of Chuck Berry's "No Money Down" (Dylan played saxophone), and in 1999 sang at Jesse Ventura's inauguration as governor of Minnesota. Keegan died in 2001 of a heart attack, at fifty-nine; he had always kept the aluminum disc that resulted from the 1956 session, and after his death relatives listed it on eBay, supposedly with a $150,000 floor, though no bid close to that was forthcoming. "Awful," says one sympathetic listener who heard the songs.

King was shot in 1968. "Highway 61, go right past my baby's door," goes the blues that has been passed from hand to hand since the highway took its name. "I walked Highway 61, 'til I gave out at my knees," sang John Wesdon in 1993. The highway doesn't give out; from Hibbing, it would have seemed to go to the ends of the earth, carrying the oldest strains of American music along with businessmen and escaped cons, vacationers and joy-riders blasting the radio—carrying runaway slaves north, before the long highway had a single name, and, not so much more than a century later, carrying Freedom Riders south. Highway 61 embodies an America as mythical and real as the America made up in Paris out of old blues and jazz records by the South American expatriates in Julio Cortázar's 1963 novel *Hopscotch*—a novel which, like a highway, you can enter wherever you choose, and go backward or forward any time you like.

Most people who bought Bob Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited* in 1965 had probably never heard of the road the album was named for; today the record is as much a part of the lore of the highway as anything else. The album cover, as with *Bringing It All Back Home* a photograph by Daniel Kramer, pictured two people ready for a journey: Dylan, sitting on a sidewalk in a gaudy pink, blue, and purple shirt open over a Triumph Motorcycles T-shirt and holding a pair of sunglasses in his right hand; and a second man, standing behind Dylan, visible only from the waist down, in jeans and a horizontally striped orange and white T-shirt, his right thumb hooked into his

pants pocket with a camera hanging from his clutched fingers, and the viewer's eye directed straight at his crotch. I remember a college friend bringing the album home as a present for his younger brother; his mother took one look at the thing and threw it out of the house.

The journey described on the album took in the country. When you hear "Like a Rolling Stone" as a single, the story it tells takes place wherever you happen to hear it; on *Highway 61 Revisited*, it was a flight from New York City. One step across the city line, with "Tombstone Blues," you were in Tombstone, Arizona, without Wyatt Earp—or Levittown, or Kansas City, any town or suburb in the nation, where people talked about money and school, losing their virginity and the war in Vietnam, dreamed about sex and the west, about Belle Starr and Ma Rainey, and the president damned them all. Cutting hard around the turn of the song as it ended, Bloomfield led the charge out of town; then the road took over, and while anything could happen on it, there was nothing happening outside of it. The road was a reverie, movement on this highway as peaceful, as slow-rocking as a cradle in "It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry," a timeless blues with a timeless, commonplace verse at its center, a woman at the end, Dylan singing the song of an unworried man and the band blowing behind him like a breeze—

> Don't the moon look good, mama
> Shinin' through the trees?

—and the road was a crackup, the singer shouting out the window as he sped past the carnage in "From a Buick 6." The band is trying to get out of there as fast as he is, taking the turns too fast, as if there is such a thing as too fast when you can't get the blood out of your mind, when, as Dylan sang, in words that were suddenly about anything—films of what Allied forces found in Nazi extermination camps in 1945, as seen by American school children in the late 1940s and early '50s, as the historian Robert Cantwell has suggested, or news footage, just beginning to appear on American television, of dead Vietnamese and U.S. Army body bags, as anyone could have thought, or just the wreck on the highway—you "need a steam shovel, mama, to keep away the dead."

In "Ballad of a Thin Man," the travelers have circled back to New York. In a back room in a bar you're better off not knowing too much about, someone who thought he belonged anywhere is finding out what nowhere means. The piano rolling the tune into place is so ominous it's one step short of a cartoon starring Snidely Whiplash; then Snidely Whiplash is Peter Lorre in *M*. On the highway, there is a strange place every ten miles, somewhere where nobody knows you and nobody cares, and no one is cool; in New York City, the singer is a hipster, snapping his fingers, and as he does a whole cast of grotesques appears to point and taunt, to see if the mark can escape from the locked room. Then the album turns over, into "Queen Jane Approximately," and the singer rides the wheels of the music on his back,

swimming in his own sound, as he reaches for a woman who, like the girl in the song that started the tale, seemingly a long, long time ago, has nowhere to go. It was one of many mid-to-late sixties songs on the soundtrack of Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Dreamers*, his 2004 movie about three young people making their own world out of sex, movies, and parental allowances in a Paris apartment, as, outside their windows, the near-revolution of May 1968 took place in the streets. There was Jimi Hendrix, the Doors, the Grateful Dead. "It's not fair, to put them up against something from that album," a friend said. Then "Highway 61 Revisited," with Dylan squeezing a police-car siren in what is probably his most perfectly written song, sung as the ultimate tall tale. You find out that not only can anything happen on Highway 61—a father murdering his son, a mother sleeping with one of hers, the Gross National Product dumped as landfill or World War III staged as a stock car race, in other words Bessie Smith killed in a car crash, Gladys Presley walking a teenage Elvis to school, or Martin Luther King lying dead on a balcony—it already has. As the song plays, the band chasing a rockabilly rabbit, the singer snarling with glee, the road goes in every direction at once, and then it is one of the tornadoes that sweeps down from Fargo to Minneapolis, picking up cars and dropping them off the map. In "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues," the singer turns up in Juárez, Mexico, and all he wants is out. He's seen the country east and west, north and south, most importantly backward and forward. "I'm

going back to New York City," he says, understanding that the joke he tried to tell the country is on him. "I do believe I've had enough." But there is one more song.

"Desolation Row," Al Kooper wrote in 1998, was on Eighth Avenue in New York City, "an area infested with whore houses, sleazy bars, and porno-supermarkets totally beyond renovation or redemption." At the time it was the kind of place where you were told to walk down the middle of the street if you were stuck there at night, because you were better off with the drivers who didn't see you than with the people on the sidewalks who did. But even more than "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues," the eleven-minute song has a south-of-the-border feeling, and not just because the work by the Nashville session guitarist Charlie McCoy, brought in by Bob Johnston, reaches back to Marty Robbins's 1959 cowboy ballad "El Paso." In the U.S.A. Mexico is a place you run to.

You are walking down the middle of Eighth Avenue, trying not to look at the neon lights above the street and the unlit doorways on either side of it. As it is on Eighth Avenue, culture in "Desolation Row" is the scrapheap of Western civilization, decay at best and betrayal at worst, and by now, at the end of Highway 61, you can find culture anywhere, in a beauty parlor, in a police station, on a bed, in a doctor's office, at a carnival, on the *Titanic* as it sinks. Dylan follows his characters through the song as if he is the detective and they are the suspects; what he learns is that almost no one keeps what she has, and that almost everyone sells his

birthright for a mess of pottage. The song, Dylan once said, was his "America the Beautiful," and he sings the song deadpan, which is part of why it is so funny; the scrapheap gives off a sickening but intoxicating smell of missed chances, folly, error, narcissism, sin. Everything seems worthless. In the theater, you're laughing, but when the show is over, as the Russian philosopher Vasily Rozanov once wrote, you turn around to get your coat out of the coatroom and go home: "No more coats and no more home." "Desolation Row" seems merely to give the scrapheap a name—except that in Dylan's guided tour of the place, with Cinderella making a home in Desolation Row, Casanova punished for visiting it, Ophelia not being allowed in, it becomes plain that the scrapheap is also a utopia. It's a nowhere described again, in more ordinary language, as a chronicle of more ordinary events, in "Visions of Johanna," a song from *Blonde on Blonde*, from the late spring of 1966, though under the title "Seems Like a Freeze-Out" Dylan was already performing it on stage in the fall of 1965, just after *Highway 61 Revisited* was released.

Here Desolation Row could very easily be an apartment on Eighth Avenue, somewhere well above the street, with the singer looking out the window. The song makes a dank room where a draft just blows balls of dust across the floor. In the corners some people are having sex; others are shooting up or nodding out. It's a bohemian paradise, a place of withdrawal, isolation, and gloom. It's fourth-hand Poe, third-hand Baudelaire, passed down by the countless people who've

bought into the fable of the artist who cannot be understood, the visionary whom society must exile for its own protection—must exile within itself, so that his or her humiliation is complete and final, but that's the danger. That's the one card left to the artist, and with that card the artist can change the game. As Dylan does on *Highway 61 Revisited*, from one end of the highway to the other, stopping at every spot that looks like it might have the best cheeseburger on the strip or for that matter the worst, the artist will return society's vitriol with mockery and scorn of his or her own. The difference is that while society speaks only in shibboleths and clichés, the artist invents a new language. When society's language has been forgotten, people will still be trying to learn the artist's language, to speak as strangely, with such indecipherable power. That's the idea.

The dank room where this magic is made is its own cliché, of course, but there's nowhere else the singer in "Desolation Row," or anyone else in the song who's allowed in and allowed to remain, would rather be. All of them, the Good Samaritan, Casanova, Einstein back when he used to play the electric violin, Cinderella—well, actually that's it, along with the singer those are the only people named who've left traces in the place, and Casanova's gone—stick their heads out the window, eyeballing those few they might judge worthy of joining them, laughing down at the crowds on the street, at all those who don't know enough to beg to be let in. They watch the horrors taking place in the building across the

street, where the Phantom of the Opera is about to serve a meal of human flesh, but it's nothing they haven't seen before; why do you think they're here and not there? The voice in "Desolation Row" and "Visions of Johanna" is partly Jack Kerouac's voice, in his narration for Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie's 1959 life-among-the-beatniks movie *Pull My Daisy*. "Look at all those cars out there," he says. "Nothing there but a million screaming ninety-year-old men being run over by gasoline trucks. So throw a match on it." From Kerouac you can go back more than half a century, and hundreds of years from there, and find yourself in the same room. In the Belgian painter James Ensor's 1885 *Scandalized Masks*, a man sits at a desk, a bottle before him, hat on his head and a pig-snout mask on his face. A woman stands in a doorway, holding a staff, a pointed hat on her head, black glasses over her eyes. Her nose is huge and bulbous, her chin sticks out like a growth; you can't tell if she's wearing a mask or if you're looking at her face. Yes, it's Brussels, they're just going to Mardi Gras—but at the same time, in this sadistically prosaic scene, you know something unspeakable is going to happen as soon as the two leave the chamber. You know the carnival they're going to is not in the public streets but on Desolation Row, that place where the old heretics, the witches, the ancestors of the bohemians of the modern world, perform their ceremonies.

That is where "Desolation Row" almost leaves you. And then, eight and a half minutes into the song, with nine verses

finished and one to go, Dylan and McCoy begin to hammer at each other with their guitars, and after more than a minute—with Dylan running a searing harmonica solo over the guitar playing, taking the song away from its form as a nonsensical folk ballad, as a "Froggy Went A-Courtin'" with its mice and ants and cats and snakes now dressed up by the MGM costume department—Dylan snaps the song into its last verse with three harsh, percussive bangs on his acoustic guitar, and the circle is complete. In this moment the song opens back into the sound of "Like a Rolling Stone," all threat, all promise, all demand. Once again it is time to get out of this suffocating room and onto Highway 61. Because all across *Highway 61 Revisited*, "Like a Rolling Stone" has hung in the air, like a cloud in the desert, beckoning. The song has taken you out into the country, so that you might see it for what it is, but also so that, caught up in the momentum of "Like a Rolling Stone," the thrill of its explosion, you might realize that the territory you have covered is also the country as it was. "Like a Rolling Stone" promises a new country; now all you have to do is find it. The engine is running; the tank is full.

Andrew Kopkind

WOODSTOCK NATION

I looked at my watch, I looked at
my wrist,
I punched myself in the face
with my fist;
I took my potatoes down to be
mashed—and made on over to that
million dollar bash.

—DYLAN

The Woodstock Music and Art Fair wasn't held in Woodstock; the music was secondarily important and the art was for the most part unproduced; and it was as much of a fair as the French Revolution or the San Francisco earthquake. What went down on Max Yasgur's farm in the low Catskills last weekend defied categories and conventional perceptions. Some monstrous and marvelous metaphor had come alive, revealing itself only in terms of its contradictions: paradise and concentration camp, sharing and profiteering, sky and mud, love and death. The urges of the ten years' generation roamed the woods and pastures, and who could tell whether it was rough beast or speckled bird slouching towards its Day-Glo manger to be born?

The road from the Hudson River west to White Lake runs through hills like green knishes, soft inside with good earth, and crusty with rock and wood on top. What works of man remain are rural expressions of an Other East Village, where the Mothers were little old ladies with sheitls, not hip radicals with guns. There's Esther Manor and Siegel's Motor Court and Elfenbaum's Grocery: no crash communes or head shops. Along that route, a long march of freaks in microbuses, shit-cars and bikes—or on thumb and foot—passed like movie extras in front of a process screen. On the roadside, holiday-makers from the Bronx looked

up from their pinochle games and afghan-knitting and knew that the season of the witch had come.

"Beatniks out to make it rich": Woodstock was, first of all, an environment created by a couple of hip entrepreneurs to consolidate the cultural revolution and (in order?) extract the money of its troops. Michael Lang, a twenty-five-year-old former heavy dealer from Bensonhurst dreamed it up; he then organized the large inheritance of John Roberts, twenty-six, for a financial base, and brought in several more operatives and financiers. Lang does not distinguish between hip culture and hip capital; he vowed to make a million before he was twenty-five, beat his deadline by two years, and didn't stop. With his Village/Durango clothes, a white Porsche and a gleaming BSA, he looks, acts and *is* hip; his interest in capital accumulation is an extension of every hippie's desire to rip off a bunch of stuff from the A&P. It's a gas.

The place-name "Woodstock" was meant only to evoke cultural-revolutionary images of Dylan, whose home base is in that Hudson River village. Woodstock is where the Band hangs out and the culture heroes congregate; it's where Mick Jagger (they say) once ate an acid-infused Baby Ruth right inside the crotch of a famous groupie. A legend like that is good for ticket sales, but the festival was always meant to be held in Wallkill, forty miles away.

By early summer, Woodstock looked to be the super rock festival of all time, and promoters of a dozen other summertime festivals were feverishly hyping up their own projects to catch the overflow of publicity and enthusiasm: Rock music (al fresco or recorded) is still one of the easiest ways to make money off the new culture, along with boutique clothes and jewelry, posters, drugs and trip-equipment, *Esquire* magazine, Zig-Zag papers and Sara Lee cakes. But the Woodstock hype worried the burghers of Wallkill, and the law implemented their fears by kicking the bash out of town. Other communities, however, were either less uptight or more greedy; six hard offers for sites came to the promoters the day Wallkill gave them the boot. With less than a month to get ready, Woodstock Ventures, Inc., chose the 600-acre Yasgur farm (with some other parcels thrown in) at White Lake, N.Y.

Locals there were divided on the idea, and Yasgur was attacked by some neighbors for renting (for a reported $50,000) to Woodstock. But in the end, the profit motive drove the deal home. One townsman wrote to the Monticello newspaper: "It's none of their business how Max uses his land. If they are so worried about Max making a few dollars from his land they should try to take advantage of this chance to make a few dollars themselves. They can rent camping space or even sell water or lemonade." Against fears of hippie horrors, businessmen set promises of rich rewards: "Some of these people are short-sighted and don't understand what these children are doing," one said. "The results will bring an economic boost to the County, without it costing the taxpayer a cent."

The vanguard of freaks started coming a week or more before opening day, and by Wednesday they were moving steadily down Route 17-B, like a busy day on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The early-comers were mostly hard-core, permanent dropouts: Their hair or their manner or their rap indicated that they had long ago dug into their communes or radical politics or simply into oppositional life-styles. In the cool and clear night they played music and danced, and sat around fires toasting joints and smoking hashish on a pinpoint. No busts, pigs or hassle; everything cool, together, outasight.

By the end of the next day, Thursday, the ambience had changed from splendor in the grass to explosive urban sprawl. Light and low fences erected to channel the crowds without actually seeming to oppress them were toppled or ignored; cars and trucks bounced over the meadows; tents sprung up between stone outcroppings and cow plop. Construction went on through the night, and already the Johnny-on-the-Spot latrines were smelly and out of toilet paper, the food supply was spotty, and long lines were forming at the water tank. And on Friday morning, when the population explosion was upon us all, a sense of siege took hold: Difficult as it was to get in, it would be almost impossible to leave for days.

From the beginning, the managers of the festival were faced with the practical problem of control. Berkeley and Chicago and

Zap, N.D., were the functional models for youth mobs rampaging at the slightest provocation—or no provocation at all. The promoters interviewed eight hundred off-duty New York City policemen for a security guard (Sample question: "What would you do if a kid walked up and blew marijuana smoke in your face?" Incorrect answer: "Bust him." Correct answer: "Inhale deeply and smile."), chose three hundred or so, and fitted them with mod uniforms. But at the last minute they were withdrawn under pressure from the Police Department, and the managers had to hire camp counselors, phys ed teachers and stray straights from the surrounding area.

The guards had no license to use force or arrest people; they merely were to be "present," in their red Day-Glo shirts emblazoned with the peace symbol, and could direct traffic and help out in emergencies if need be. The real work of keeping order, if not law, was to be done by members of the Hog Farm commune, who had been brought from New Mexico, along with people from other hippie retreats, in a chartered airplane (at $16,000) and psychedelic buses from Kennedy Airport.

Beneath the practical problem of maintaining order was the principal contradiction of the festival: how to stimulate the energies of the new culture and profit thereby, and at the same time control them. In a way, the Woodstock venture was a test of the ability of avant-garde capitalism at once to profit from and control the insurgencies which its system spawns. "Black capitalism," the media industry, educational technology, and Third World economic development are other models, but more diffuse. Here it was in one field during one weekend: The microcosmic system would "fail" if Woodstock Ventures lost its shirt, or if the control mechanisms broke down.

The promoters must have sensed the responsibility they carried. They tried every aspect of cooptation theory. SDS, Newsreel and underground newspapers were handed thousands of dollars to participate in the festival, and they were given a choice spot for a "Movement City"; the idea was that they would give hip legitimacy to the weekend and channel their activities "within the system." (They bought the idea.) Real cops were specifically

barred from the camp grounds, and the word went out that there would be no busts for ordinary tripping, although big dealers were discouraged. There would be free food, water, camping facilities—and, in the end, free music, when attempts at crowd-channeling failed. But the Hog Farmers were the critical element. Hip beyond any doubt, they spread the love/groove ethic throughout the farm, breaking up incipient actions against "the system" with cool, low-key hippie talk about making love not war, the mystical integrity of earth, and the importance of doing your own thing, preferably alone. On the other hand—actually, on the same hand—they were the only good organizers in camp. They ran the free food operation (oats, rice and bulgar), helped acid-freaks through bad trips without Thorazine, and (with Abbie Hoffman) ran the medical system when that became necessary.

The several dozen Movement organizers at the festival had nothing to do. After Friday night's rain there was a theory that revolt was brewing on a mass scale, but the SDS people found themselves unable to organize around the issue of inclement weather. People were objectively trapped; and in that partial aspect, the Yasgur farm was a concentration camp—or a hippie reservation—but almost everyone was stoned and happy. Then the rain stopped, the music blared, food and water arrived, and everyone shared what he had. Dope became plentiful and entirely legitimate; in a soft cool forest, where craftsmen had set up their portable headshops, dealers sat on tree stumps selling their wares: "acid, mesc, psilocybin, hash . . ." No one among the half-million could not have turned on if he wanted to; joints were passed from blanket to blanket, lumps of hashish materialized like manna, and there was Blue Cheer, Sunshine acid and pink mescaline to spare.

Seen from any edge or angle, the army strung out against the hillside sloping up from the stage created scenes almost unimaginable in commonplace terms. No day's demonstration or political action had brought these troops together; no congress or cultural event before produced such urgent need for in-gathering and self-inspection. The ambiguities and contradictions of the imposed

environment were worrisome; but to miss the exhilaration of a generation's arrival at its own campsite was to define the world in only one dimension.

Although the outside press saw only masses, inside the differentiation was more impressive. Maybe half the crowd was weekend-hip, out from Long Island for a quick dip in the compelling sea of freaks. The other half had longer been immersed. It was composed of tribes dedicated to whatever gods now seem effective and whatever myths produce the energy needed to survive: Meher Baba, Mother Earth, street-fighting man, Janis Joplin, Atlantis, Jimi Hendrix, Che.

The hillside was their home. Early Saturday morning, after the long night of rain—from Ravi Shankar through Joan Baez—they still had not abandoned the turf. Twenty or forty thousand people (exactitude lost its meaning: it was that sight, not the knowledge of the numbers that was so staggering) sat stonily silent on the muddy ground, staring at a stage where no one played: petrified playgoers in the marble stands at Epidaurus, thousands of years after the chorus had left for the last time.

No one in this country in this century had ever seen a "society" so free of repression. Everyone swam nude in the lake, balling was easier than getting breakfast, and the "pigs" just smiled and passed out the oats. For people who had never glimpsed the intense communitarian closeness of a militant struggle—People's Park or Paris in the month of May or Cuba—Woodstock must always be their model of how good we will all feel after the revolution.

So it was an illusion and it wasn't. For all but the hard core, the ball and the balling is over; the hassles begin again at Monticello. The repression-free weekend was provided by promoters as a way to increase their take, and it will not be repeated unless future profits are guaranteed (it's almost certain now that Woodstock Ventures lost its wad). The media nonsense about death and O.D.s has already enraged the guardians of the old culture. The system didn't change; it just accommodated the freaks for the weekend.

What is not illusionary is the reality of a new culture of

opposition. It grows out of the disintegration of the old forms, the vinyl and aerosol institutions that carry all the inane and destructive values of privatism, competition, commercialism, profitability and elitism. The new culture has yet to produce its own institutions on a mass scale; it controls none of the resources to do so. For the moment, it must be content—or discontent—to feed the swinging sectors of the old system with new ideas, with rock and dope and love and openness. Then it all comes back, from Columbia Records or Hollywood or Bloomingdale's in perverted and degraded forms. But something will survive, because there's no drug on earth to dispel the nausea. It's not a "youth thing" now but a generational event; chronological age is only the current phase. Mass politics, it's clear, can't yet be organized around the nausea; political radicals have to see the cultural revolution as a sea in which they can swim, like black militants in "black culture." But the urges are roaming, and when the dope freaks and nude swimmers and loveniks and ecological cultists and music groovers find out that they have to fight for love, all fucking hell will break loose.

J. Oliphant

BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD:

A Round

Schools (taught) augment: Berkeley vs. Bob Jones → (Give to the college of your choice). Schools (thought) sustain: Hamilton vs. Burr → (If your heart's not in America, get your ass out) → the FBI *is* J. Edgar . . . born in Wash. D.C. 1895 → has he left yet? → a Darwinian prototype hung upside down. Or, to go on: Hegel; eye for an eye → turn thy cheek → love thy enemy* →. To still other fronts (same revolution), cruising with Ruben and the Jets is a Newtonian dodo bird.

THE RADISH AS A WEED

Rock as Drama (Pop): you + I → us
or
"Love Me Do" + "Ask Me Why" + "Please Please Me" & "Thank You Girl" + "I Call Your Name" + "You've Really Got a Hold On Me" + "I Want to Hold Your Hand" + "Till There Was You" + "I Wanna Be Your Man" + "I'm Happy Just to Dance With You" & "I'm a Loser" + "I'll Be Back" + "Baby's in Black" + "I'll Follow the Sun" + "You Like Me Too Much" + "I Don't Want to Spoil the Party" & "I Never Needed Anybody's Help

* See *Buffalo Springfield Again*