Sixties Rock and Soul

We now return to mainstream music, mainly from the second classic period of rock (1965 to 1969).

1. We will begin with two early Beatles songs, the recording of “I Want to Hold Your Hand” from 1964, and video of “Help” from 1965. This is clearly pop music – why?

2. Although “I Want to Hold Your Hand” is not a very sophisticated tune, it does differentiate itself from the (frequently awful) music of that period by making effective use of dissonance that momentarily toys with tonality before being resolved. At what points in the recording does this occur?

3. Bob Dylan started his career in New York City singing folk music.
   - Watch the YouTube video of a 1963 performance of “Blowin’ in the Wind” from his folk period.
   - How would you describe this music? Type(s) of instruments? Lyrics? Style? Sound?

4. Listen to the 1966 studio recording of Bob Dylan’s “Like A Rolling Stone” from his breakthrough album, *Highway 61 Revisited*, and watch the YouTube video of a live performance from the same year.
   - Compare the 1963 and 1966 video performances. How has Dylan’s music changed over the three year period? How do you think folk music aficionados reacted to Dylan’s new music?
   - Compare the lyrics of “Like a Rolling Stone” with those of “I Want to Hold Your Hand.” What is Dylan bringing to rock that the Beatles (and other similar groups) lacked at the time?
   - Compare the performances in the videos of “Help” and “Like a Rolling Stone.” Which do you think is more conventional for the time? Which is more closely related to the music of today? Why?
   - As an aside for sixties/seventies rock fans, the backing group in the video performance of “Like a Rolling Stone” is a band called “The Hawks,” who a few years later achieved fame and fortune as “The Band.”

   - Palmer describes a meeting between Dylan and the Beatles in August of 1964. Along with widening their tastes in recreational drugs, what effects did this meeting have on their respective music?
   - How did Dylan’s music change in 1965? What two-word phrase is used to describe his new direction in music? How is this change illustrated by your comparison of the videos of “Blowin’ in the Wind” and “Like a Rolling Stone”?
   - How does Palmer describe Dylan’s 1965-1966 world tour with the Hawks?
   - What did the Beatles and Dylan abandon after 1966?
   - What does Palmer say about how “having the recording studio as their stage” helped the Beatles and Dylan create a new kind of rock and roll?
   • The Rolling Stones were another British group, but a very different one than the Beatles. Compare “Satisfaction” with “I Want to Hold Your Hand.” How is “Satisfaction” different in sound? In subject matter? In attitude? In image?
   • How did their manager, Andrew Loog Oldham, sell the group? How did this image contrast with the public image of the Beatles?
   • Compare the guitar sound in the opening of the recording of “Satisfaction” with that in “Rocket 88” (the latter from the Early Rock section). How are they similar? What is the well-known story behind Keith Richard’s writing this guitar riff?

   • The Temptations were a Motown group. Where was the Motown studio located?
   • How does this article describe the Motown sound? What were its components? How does “The Way You Do the Things You Do,” by the Temptations have the Motown sound?
   • Looking at the video, how would you describe the Motown performance style of the Temptations?

8. Listen to the recording of “Louie, Louie,” an early garage rock classic, and read the Wikipedia article on garage rock.
   • What were the characteristics of garage rock music mentioned in your reading? Does “Louie, Louie” share all of these characteristics?
   • We speak of “garage rock” now. Was this term used during the sixties when the music was being made?
   • When did garage rock peak?
   • What two Detroit groups kept the music alive in the 1970s and served as a model for punk rock?

9. Listen to the recording of “Good Vibrations” and watch the YouTube video of “Little Deuce Coupe” by the Beach Boys
   • “Little Deuce Coupe” is early Beach Boys. “Good Vibrations” is from their “mature” phase. How did their music change? Lyrics? Sophistication? Influences from experimental music?
   • Are the Beach Boys closer in style and sound to the Beatles, the Stones, or Dylan?

11. Read “The Synthesis” and “San Francisco and the Hippies.” Then listen to the recording and watch the YouTube video of Jefferson Airplane’s “White Rabbit.”
   • Although at first listen this song might appear to be about Alice in Wonderland, what is the real subject of Jefferson Airplane’s “White Rabbit”?
   • Why is San Francisco music sometimes called “psychedelic”?
   • San Francisco bands were influenced by avant-garde composers such as Stockhausen, who spent some time there in the mid-sixties. In this course we are following four general trends (Simplicity, Decomposition of Musical Structure, Electronic Music, Noise as Music, Pastiche) that characterize most, if not all, of the ways that the avant-garde music has influenced popular music. Which of these trends is evident in “White Rabbit”?
13. Watch the YouTube video of “Wild Thing” from the Jimi Hendrix Experience’s breakthrough appearance at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967.

- “Wild Thing” is a quintessential garage rock song by the Troggs. This was a shocking and yet spectacular performance because of what Hendrix did in the last two minutes or so. What does Hendrix do to his guitar?
- The cameraman films the reaction of a few audience members at the end of the performance. Describe how they look.

14. About two years later, Hendrix closes the Woodstock Music Festival with another classic performance. He ends with a medley of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “Purple Haze.” Listen to this recording.

- Hendrix was a master guitar player who “redefined the boundaries of the instrument by harnessing the distortions produced by feedback, electronic effects, and extreme volume to produce a new realm of sound.” Where do you hear this in the Woodstock performance?
- Although Hendrix was not an avant-garde musician he, like the San Francisco musicians, was in tune with the avant-garde. Which of the trends (Simplicity, Decomposition of Musical Structure, Electronic Music, Noise as Music, Pastiche) are evident in his performance of “The Star Spangled Banner” and “Purple Haze.”?
- Hendrix’s music is not jazz, but portions of “The Star Spangled Banner” can bring Coltrane’s performances, such as in the 1966 version of “My Favorite Things” to mind. How is this?
- Woodstock took place during the Vietnam War. What kind of musical irony does Hendrix build into his performance of the Star Spangled Banner? (What kind of war-related noises do you hear?)

15. And finally, listen to the recording of Otis Redding’s performance of “Respect” from the Monterey Pop Festival. Watch the YouTube video of two songs, “Shake” and “Respect,” from this same festival.

- Redding recorded at the Stax Studio in Memphis. “Respect” is a good example of the Southern Soul recordings coming from this studio. Contrast Redding’s music and performance style with that of the Temptations, who recorded at about the same time.
- Just like “White Rabbit,” the lyrics of “Respect” can be interpreted in more than one way. The U. S. went through several political upheavals in the sixties, one being the Vietnam War mentioned above. What was another of these upheavals to which the lyrics of “Respect” can be related?

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1 Yes, I know the Troggs are from England. I don’t care. “Wild Thing” is as garage rock as you can get!