

THE HISTORY OF

'POP' is short for 'popular' and there has always been popular music. But until the 1950s there wasn't a style of music *just* for young people. That all changed when rock and roll began. Since then, hundreds of styles and stars have come and gone. Musical technology has changed a lot too. Here, we look at the highlights of rock and pop's forty-year history.

THE '50s

Rock and roll began in America. Some of its first big stars were black – for example Chuck Berry, Fats Domino and Little Richard. They brought traditional 'rhythm and blues' to a big new TV audience. Then, white singers began to copy

them. One of the first was Bill Haley. He and his band, The Comets, recorded an early rock and roll classic, 'Rock Around The Clock'. There were other white 'rockers', too, like Jerry Lee Lewis and Buddy Holly. But the most popular of them all was Elvis Aron Presley.

Elvis wasn't like the American singers of the '40s and early '50s. He wasn't neat, sweet and safe. He was rough, tough and dangerous. His music was dangerous, too. He called himself 'The King of Rock and Roll' and played an electric guitar. Teenagers all over the world fell in love with this new style. They bought millions of his records. Suddenly the younger generation didn't just have money, cars and televisions – they had a hero, too.



THE '60s

Pop exploded in the '60s. After Elvis, hundreds of new groups and singers appeared. In Britain, two groups quickly became more popular than all the others. One was the Rolling Stones. They played hard, aggressive rock and roll. The other group played a

mixture of rock and pop. They came from Liverpool and the newspapers called them 'The Fab Four'. Their real name was the Beatles.

Together, the Beatles and the Stones led a British 'invasion' of the American charts. Thanks to them, pop became Transatlantic.

But what about America itself during the '60s? What was happening there? Well, in Detroit, producer Berry Gordy started a new record label – Motown[®]. Stars on the Motown label included Diana Ross, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder and the Jackson Five (including the youngest of the Jackson brothers, Michael).

Singer/songwriters were also popular in America during the '60s. These were stars who mixed folk music with rock and pop styles. Bob Dylan was the most famous, but there were lots of others too – like Joan Baez, James Taylor and Simon and Garfunkel.

Finally, there was 'hippy' rock. This was the time of 'flower power' and protests against the Vietnam War[®]. It was also the time when rock festivals became important. The biggest, in 1969, was on a farm in New York State called 'Woodstock'.



VOCAB BOX

highlights – the most exciting or important parts

a classic – something which never goes out of fashion

'Fab' – short for 'fabulous'

charts – (here) the list of the most popular singles or albums

a record label – a record company (or part of a record company)

live – (here) not recorded in advance

ROCK AND POP

THE '70s

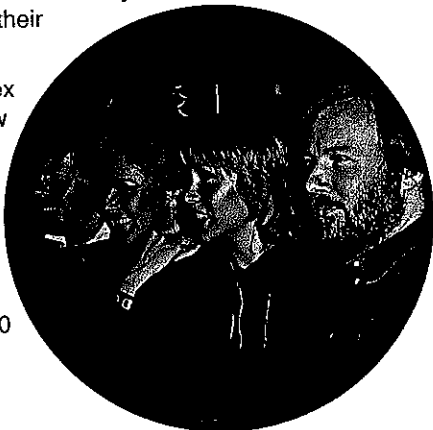
Two groups show the different sides of '70s pop – Abba and The Sex Pistols. Sweden's Abba worked with the latest technology. Their songs were popular with people from 8 to 80. They were rich. They made videos.

They were, in fact, superstar entertainers. And they weren't alone. There were a lot of other '70s superstars, too – Elton John, David Bowie, Rod Stewart, Queen. By the mid-'70s, music was a billion-dollar industry and artists like these controlled it.

But not everybody was happy with superstar pop. For many people it didn't take enough risks. Some of them decided to play a new, more dangerous kind of music – punk rock.

The punk revolution began in small clubs. One of them was the 'The 100 Club' in London's Oxford Street. That's where bands like The Sex Pistols used to appear in the late '70s. Everything about their clothes and music was different. They didn't look happy and rich. They looked poor and angry. They didn't smile – they spat. They weren't good musicians – many of them couldn't play their instruments at all.

Groups like The Sex Pistols brought new energy to music. Suddenly it belonged to the kids again. But not for long. Punk started as a revolution...by 1980 it was a fashion.



THE '80s

The most important musical event of the '80s was 'Live Aid'. The man who organised it was Bob Geldof. He started to raise money for the starving people of Ethiopia in 1984. First, there was the 'Band Aid' record – 'Do They

Know It's Christmas?'. Then he decided to organise a huge rock concert with many of the world's top stars. That dream came true on 13 July 1985. For 16 hours, 1.5 billion people watched the best of British and American music 'live' from London and Philadelphia (Live Aid's stars included Sting, Sade, U2, Bob Dylan, David Bowie, Madonna, Mick Jagger, Tina Turner, The Beach Boys and Paul McCartney). The concert raised over \$100 million. It showed that top musicians and their fans could 'change the world'.

Something else changed in the '80s, too – musical technology. In less than ten years, video, compact discs and computers all became important in the pop industry.

- Thanks to video, every single suddenly had its own three-minute film.
- Thanks to compact discs, the quality of recorded sound was better than ever.
- Thanks to computers' it was possible to play and record thousands of new sounds.^{RN3}



POP HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE THE DAYS OF ELVIS PRESLEY

In the '50s it was fun.
In the '60s it was an escape.
In the '70s it was big business.
In the '80s it became part of an international youth culture.
Now the question is...what will happen in the '90s?

Behind every picture....

'A photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask.'

(Susan Sontag)