

Rock and Roll and the 1980s

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Origins of Rock and Roll

- ▶ 1950s: Influence of Gospel, Folk and Rhythm and Blues
- ▶ Introduction of new instruments—especially the electric guitar
- ▶ Crossover performers
- ▶ Mixed race audiences
- ▶ Rebellion against strict social norms
- ▶ Celebration of Freedom, Sexuality, and Youth

1960s and 1970s

- ▶ British Invasion
- ▶ Girl Bands
- ▶ Big festivals
- ▶ Reaction to social events such as Vietnam War, Women's Rights, and Civil Rights.
- ▶ Experimentation with drugs and Psychedelic Rock.

Influences on the 1980s

- ▶ 1980s Rock is a continuation of themes and styles of earlier decades with adaptations and innovations
- ▶ John Lennon shot to death in 1980 as a symbol of both continuity and break with past
- ▶ Electronic digital music and synthesizers become more prevalent
- ▶ Ronald Reagan and Cold War: 1980s generation less political
- ▶ MTV (1981) and mass commercialization of Rock
- ▶ Music Videos replace the album cover for visual marketing
- ▶ Expanded number of female performers
- ▶ Glam Metal, Hair Metal or Big Hair Bands—another continuation of 70s

Key Genres of 80s

- ▶ **Rap/Hip Hop:** Grandmaster Flash; Run DMC, LL Cool J
- ▶ **R&B Pop:** Michael Jackson; Stevie Wonder; Prince; Lionel Richie; Whitney Houston
- ▶ **Pop:** Madonna; Bryan Adams; Huey Lewis; Phil Collins; Billy Joel
- ▶ **New Wave:** Talking Heads; Duran Duran; The Police; Blondie; Go Go's; Eurythmics
- ▶ **Syntho-Pop:** Devo; The Human League
- ▶ **Mainstream Rock:** Pat Benatar; Bruce Springsteen; Tom Petty; Journey; Rush; REO Speedwagon; Foreigner
- ▶ **Heavy Metal:** Van Halen; Iron Maiden; Judas Priest; AC/DC ; Def Leppard
- ▶ **Glam Metal:** Motley Crue; Guns N Roses
- ▶ **Alternative:** R.E.M.; Violent Femmes; Red Hot Chili Peppers
- ▶ **Punk:** The Dead Kennedys; The Clash; Ramones; The Misfits

Alan's Top Ten Rock Songs from 80s

- ▶ Criteria
- ▶ Still popular today.
- ▶ They influenced other bands in some way.
- ▶ They pioneered something new and different.
- ▶ How many hits they had and how big.
- ▶ Most of their hits in the 80s
- ▶

Michael Jackson

- ▶ Master of stage performance and dancing and huge on MTV
- ▶ Started with Jackson Five in 70s but really emerged as a solo artist
- ▶ Personal issues
- ▶ Top performer in terms of Top Ten Hits
- ▶ “Beat It” on 1982, “Thriller” album.
- ▶ #1 on Billboard and 25 weeks on charts in 1983
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRdxUFDoQe0>

Journey: Don't Stop Believing

- ▶ Reached Billboard #8 in 1981
- ▶ Journey songs were often the “Prom” song of the year
- ▶ Don't Stop Believing is the #1 Digital Downloaded song from 20th century
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcjzHMhBtf0>

Pat Benatar

- ▶ Female Rocker—thank you Janis Joplin
- ▶ Had been an opera singer
- ▶ Sexy female rocker; sings about love but with hard rock attitude rather than softer, romantic pop attitude
- ▶ My attempt to see her in 1982; Finally saw her in Monterey 2015
- ▶ 4 top 10 hits and 17 top 40
- ▶ ‘Hit Me With Your Best Shot’ #9 in 1980
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JRgHol94Xc>

Madonna: Like A Virgin

- ▶ Madonna made it ok for female Pop performers to be overtly sexual
- ▶ All the sexy pop performers like Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera are descended from her legacy
- ▶ Broke taboos
- ▶ Queen of MTV
- ▶ 12 #1 hits and 38 top ten
- ▶ “Like A Virgin” #1 in 1984
- ▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s__rX_WL100

Van Halen: Jump

- ▶ Discovered by Kiss guitarist, Gene Simmons in 1977; Pasadena based band
- ▶ 1 #1; 3 top ten; 23 top 40
- ▶ Heavy Metal; energetic live shows
- ▶ Eddie Van Halen married Valerie Bertinelli, a child star on One Day At A Time
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuKDBPw8wQA>

Queen: We Are The Champions

- ▶ 70s-80s Group
- ▶ Their songs were popular at proms and also football games in the 80s—We Are The Champions and Another One Bites (#1 in 1978) The Dust (#1 in 1980)
- ▶ Freddie Mercury—greatest male voice of the era
- ▶ Creative arrangements that were truly unique
- ▶ Movie
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXw8CRapg7k>

Prince

- ▶ 5 #1 hits; 19 top 10; 47 top 40
- ▶ Minneapolis, MN
- ▶ R&B Pop/Rock
- ▶ Amazing stage performer—in the tradition of Little Richard as a guitarist and singer and dancer
- ▶ “Purple Rain” #1 in 1984: Movie of same name in 1984
- ▶ Prince explained: "When there's blood in the sky - red and blue = purple... purple rain pertains to the end of the world and being with the one you love and letting your faith/god guide you through the purple rain."
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3LHatq2u4k>

Bruce Springsteen: *My Hometown*

- ▶ New Jersey band that emerged in 1970s but continued through 80s and into 90s
- ▶ 12 Top ten hits and 26 top 40
- ▶ *My Hometown*, 1986, #6
- ▶ Captures the decline of small town America in the 80s: “Main Streets white washed windows and vacant stores; seems like there ain’t nobody wats to come down here no more. They’re closing down the textile mill across the railroad tracks. Foreman says these jobs are going, boy, and they ain’t coming back...to Your Home Town, to Your Own Town.”
- ▶ Generational Gap
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77gKSp8WoRg>

Fleetwood Mac:

- ▶ 1 #1; 9 top 10 and 25 top 40 hits
- ▶ Mix of rock, country (note the acoustic guitar) and electro (keyboards)
- ▶ Wonderful anthem songs with Stevie Nicks as lead singer; went on to have a strong solo career in the 80s
- ▶ Rhiannon, my favorite Fleetwood Mac song, but from 1977
- ▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_04Ygcgh8w

Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers

- ▶ As a boy he met Elvis Presley—uncles were working on film with him
- ▶ Knew he wanted to be a rock star when he saw the Beatles on Ed Sullivan
- ▶ Rolling Stones influenced him
- ▶ Don Felder, guitarist for Eagles, was his guitar teacher
- ▶ After a decades long career leading The Heartbreakers, he joined a star band in late 80s called The Travelling Wilburys: George Harrison, Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison, Tom Petty and Jeff Lynne.
- ▶ “Stop Dragging My Heart Around” with Stevie Nicks, #3 in 1984
- ▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_04Ygcgh8w

Summary

- ▶ Rock and Roll continued many of the genres and motifs of earlier generations
- ▶ Evolved a Pop version of Rock that some see as a degrading of Rock but expanded the appeal
- ▶ Devolved into many sub-genres
- ▶ Less focus on social issues of earlier Rock generations and more on escapism and juvenile sexual defiance
- ▶ But the roles and opportunities for women expanded
- ▶ Influence of Black and British performers continued
- ▶ Hard to judge this music as it is still close to us but Bruce Springsteen (Rock), Michael Jackson (Pop-Rock) and Prince (R&B Rock) are all likely to have influence for decades