



# Music Appreciation: The History of Rock

## Chapter 21: Punk and Alternative



# Punk Rock

- Developed in the mid-1970's but the roots appear much earlier.
- This was a reaction against the other styles of rock music, especially art rock, heavy metal and disco.
- Philosophy of punk rock was a rebellion against established social norms.

# Musically....

- Punk rock is an extension of the hard rock styles exemplified by groups like the Who, The Kinks, The Stones, Steppenwolf, etc.
- Punk is anarchic and against society, self-destructive, nihilistic, pessimistic and the attitudes generally present a bleak outlook on life.
- Lyrics are generally about frustration.



# Forerunners of Punk

- Artists like Chuck Berry, Phil Spector, the Kinks, the Who, Velvet Underground, MC5 and David Bowie all contributed something to the Punk movement.



# The Velvet Underground

- They highlighted the opposite of the flower power movement with songs about drug addiction, death and bizarre topics as well.
- Andy Warhol discovered them and helped to promote them.
- Group sound and image were shocking for the time with subjects including anti-establishment and anti-commercial topics.

# More Velvet Underground

- Traditional forms are ignored and there is some experimentation with distortion and feedback.
- The songs by VU painted every day, gritty pictures of life on the streets of a big city.
- Lyrics are negative, but the music is surprisingly upbeat.
- Hit song was *Waiting for the Man*



# Glitter/Glam Rock

- Very theatrical-oriented type of rock that appeared in the early 1970's.
- Called Glitter or Glam due to the outrageous costumes and makeup worn by the practitioners.
- Stage was often more important than the music.

# Make up started here....

- KISS bassist would spit fire into the air
- Alice Cooper would pretend to behead himself
- David Bowie's shows often included a flying saucer on stage.
- Many smoke pots, pyrotechnics....

# Alice Cooper

- Group was named after the spirit of a little girl from the 18<sup>th</sup> century contacted during a séance.
- Name is Vincent Furnier
- Heavy make up on stage started around 1969.
- Bloody stage shows, but he began to be surpassed by KISS and others.
- Several career resurrections over the years.
- Hit's include *I'm Eighteen*, *School's Out*, *Feed my Frankenstein*.



# David Bowie

- Started by playing saxophone in school and then became a commercial artist after high school.
- He changed his name from David Jones to David Bowie to avoid being confused with Monkees member Davy/David Jones.

# David Bowie

- In 1969, he combined his rock music with theater, mime and Buddhism and this started his androgynous/glam rock period.
- He created a persona for himself called *Ziggy Stardust*.
- Returned to his roots in the mid-1970's with his John Lennon co-authored song *Fame*.



# David Bowie

- Later returned to more experimentation and then hit it big in 1983 again with a very pop-oriented album called *Let's Dance*.
- Hit songs include *Let's Dance*, *China Girl* and *Modern Love*.



# The Ramones

- They adopted Ramone as their surrogate last name.
- Fast tempos, lyrics dealing with teenage angst and fears, and some songs becoming teenage anthems.
- Hit song was Blitzkrieg Bop in 1976.
- Many personnel changes, broke up in 1997.



# The Sex Pistols

- One of the best known punk groups
- Formed in London
- Set up the band image as tough, angry young men in ragged clothes and marketed the band as the antithesis of the glam rock, art rock and disco bands of the 1970's.

# Sex Pistols

- Lead singer was renamed Johnny Rotten
- Disgusted and enflamed the crowd by spitting on them, jumping on people from the stage, Rotten slashing himself with razor blades and broken beer bottles on stage and being general nuisances.

# Sex Pistols

- The band was provoked into saying the F-bomb on TV in 1977 and was dropped by EMI. John Ritchie joined the band and became Sid Vicious.
- The released *God Save the Queen* as a way of snubbing the Queen on her 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Major controversy in England.
- Sid Vicious moved in with his girlfriend, Nancy, whom he was later accused of killing and died of a drug overdose while awaiting trial for murder.

# The Dead Kennedys

- Very politically outspoken and remained so their entire career
- Released *Holiday in Cambodia* as an attack on rich-kid posers and people who pretended to be involved in global political issues. It also attacked American big business, particularly those who had interests in countries like Cambodia.

# The Clash

- Began as the warm up band for The Sex Pistols in 1976.
- Very politically conscious lyrics
- Straight rhythms, fast tempos, hard-edged sound, loud volumes, distortion.
- Identified themselves as angry young musicians, but the anger was directed at specific subjects.
- *Know Your Rights* was a big hit.

# The Police

- Connected with the punk movement through the Sex Pistols.
- *Roxanne* was the group's first hit single. Strong reggae backbeat contrasting with the standard rock beat of the chorus.
- Represents a darker side of a love song.
- Later albums became very successful and they toured the world in 1980-1981.



# The Police

- Their singles of the early 1980's brought them into much popularity.
- Hits include:
  - Ghosts in the Machine
  - Every Little Thing She Does is Magic,
  - Synchronicity
  - King of Pain
  - Every Breath You Take



# Alternative Styles

- New Wave sound came out in the late 70's and early 80's.
- Many more keyboards and synthesizers and pop oriented.
- As opposition to this, disenchanted with heavy metal, alienated by dance and techno, alienated by pop funk and rap.....alternative was born.



# Alternative groups style

- Bands reverted to simple guitar bands; lack of keyboards
- Tended to play simple chord progressions
- Guitar solos who kept relatively simple, not flashy.
- Rhythms were aggressive
- Lyrics were addressed to disenfranchised teens, the so-called Generation X.



# Grunge

- This was a reach-back to the raw-edged sounds of the 1960's.
- Groups like Primus, Soundgarden, Mudhoney and Alice in Chains.
- Pearl Jam and Nirvana stand out above many of them.

# Nirvana

- Formed in 1987 with Kurt Cobain, Krist Novoselic and Dave Grohl.
- Hit albums were Nevermind, In Utero, Incesticide and included the hits:
  - Lithium
  - Smells Like Teen Spirit
  - Heart-Shaped Box
  - Come As You Are



# Pearl Jam

- Epic album called Ten.

- Hits include:

- Jeremy- based upon true events.

- Why Go?

- Black

- Evenflow

Later hit albums include Vs. and Vitalogy.