American Popular Music

Be My Baby
Rise of the Producer

Producers control many elements of a song

- Book time in studio
- Hire backup singers/instrumentalists
- Engineering process
- Responsible for sound of finished record

- Bumps Blackwell – Little Richard
- Sam Phillips - Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis
- Leonard Chess - Chuck Berry
Girl Groups

- Popular in early 1960s
- White songwriters create hits for black girl groups
- Hits more associated with producers than singers
Phil Spector

Major producer of 1960s
- Leiber and Stoller apprentice
- Supervised every aspect of record’s sound
- Obsession with detail and involvement
- Quality > Quantity
  - Painstaking labor over studio production
Phil Spector

Created “Wall of Sound”
- Multiple instruments double each individual part in arrangement
- Use of echo
- “Teenage symphonies”
  - Thick texture
  - Use of strings
  - Use of “Wrecking Crew” in LA studio
The Ronettes

- Popular girl group of the 60s signed by Phil Spector

- “Be My Baby” – 1963
  - Wall of Sound
  - Simple song about romantic teen sentiment
  - Full orchestral string section
  - Background chorus
Brill Building

“Teen Pan Alley”

Located in New York
- Cubicles with pianos, tightly packed
- Turning out song after song for labels

- Carole King and Gerry Goffin
- Ellie Greenwich and Jeff Barry
- Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann
Brian Wilson

- Innovative producer, arranger and songwriter
- Mastermind of Beach Boys

**Multi-track Recording**: each part of performance recorded separately, mixing into complete performance

- One of most iconic American rock bands
The Beach Boys

- Most important and innovative bands of surf music

- “I Get Around” - 1964
  - Harmonically rich
  - “Fun in the sun” lyrics
  - Contrast with sophisticated sound and texture
  - Key changes
Berry Gordy

- Founder of Motown Records: “Hitsville USA”
  - 1959- Family loan of $800

- Black pop that could easily cross over

- Pyramid of Power
  - Gordy
  - Songwriters/Producers
  - House Musicians
  - Acts/singers
Berry Gordy
“Assembly line” concept of making cars

Maxine Powell
- Ran charm school for Motown
- Manicurist/cosmetologist created polished performers
- Speaking, posture, stage presence, grooming, etiquette, interview skills
  - “Dance with your knees, not with your buttocks. You’re not on the streets here.”
Maxine Powell
Songwriters/Producers

- Holland-Dozier-Holland
  - Songwriting team: Lamont Dozier, Brian and Eddie Holland

- Smokey Robinson
  - Front man of the Miracles
  - Prolific songwriter

- Worked under Berry’s “Quality Control”
  - Compete for privilege to work with artists
Motown Sound

- Lead vocal with backups

- Funk Brothers House band
  - Studio musicians largely unknown, but incredibly important for Motown’s success

- Predictable form
  - Easy entry into song
  - Memorable hook
The Supremes
The Supremes

Diana Ross, Florence Ballard and Mary Wilson

“Stop! In the Name of Love” - 1965
  - Holland Dozier Holland (HDH)
  - Classy, slick, smooth gestures
  - Product of Assembly Line
  - Easily crossed over
The Temptations

- One of most successful Motown vocal groups
- “My Girl” - 1965
  - Sweet, romantic sentiment
  - Hooks listener from beginning
  - Slick choreography
  - Polished image
The Jackson 5

Jackie, Marlon, Michael, Tito, Jermaine
British Invasion

“Phenomenon” in 1960s when British musical acts and cultural aspects became popular in the U.S.

The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, Cream, etc.

Spark a rock revolution
Rock Revolution

- Harmonic freedom
- Creative control
- Electric bass
- Melodic hook
- Multitrack recordings
The Beatles

- John Lennon - guitar, vocals
- George Harrison - guitar, vocals
- Paul McCartney - bass, vocals
- Ringo Starr - drums, occasional vocals

- Group name = collective identity
  - No single member is more important
The Beatles
Set the Scene

- 1963 - President John F. Kennedy assassinated
- 11 weeks before Beatles come to America
- Young people ready for change in Nat’l mood
- Beatles were uplifting, fun, exotic, unpredictable
Early Period

- “A Hard Day’s Night” – 1964
  - Dissonant opening guitar chord
  - Effective hook
  - Lennon/McCartney composition

- “I Want to Hold Your Hand” – 1964
  - Ed Sullivan Show
Beatlemania

- Brian Epstein
  - Manager, responsible for image

- George Martin
  - Producer, “The Fifth Beatle”
  - Experimented in studio

- Teen Idols- a recurring theme!
Middle Period

“Yesterday” - 1965
- Represents a musical departure
- Cuts across generational divides
- Isolated words demand attention
- String quartet
- Acoustic guitar, solo voice
British Invasion Continued

- JFK assassination (1963)
- Women’s Liberation Movement
- Vietnam War
- Psychedelic culture/drug use
- Civil Rights Movement
- Martin Luther King assassination (1968)
The Rolling Stones

- Cultivated “bad boy” image
  - Deliberate contrast to Beatles’ friendly public image

- “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction” (1965)
  - Jagger/Richards composition
  - Famous guitar “hook”
  - Exemplifies hard-rocking essence of Stones
  - Sexually charged, rough vocals, gritty sound