

**BLAIR SCHOOL OF MUSIC
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
OSHER CLASSES**

**MUSO 1300
RHYTHM & BLUES TORE DOWN
THE WALLS OF SEGREGATION**

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Course Description:

A study of how music, specifically Swing and Jazz from the 1930s and 40s, Rock & Roll and Rhythm & Blues in the 1950s and Soul Music in the 1960s impacted segregation and the Civil Rights Movement. This will include films, interviews, recordings and oral histories of artists and producers from these genres.

Learning Outcomes:

Through lectures, films, recordings, classroom discussions and research projects, the students will learn how these forms of Popular Music reflected and impacted American Society. In addition to recorded music, I plan to expose the students to rare films of live performances by artists from the Swing Era such as Count Basie, Benny Goodman and others. Moving into the 1950s and '60s I will show films of James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Sam Cooke, Ray Charles, Jackie Wilson, Otis Redding, etc., as well as the documentaries: "Standing In The Shadows Of Motown," "Atlantic Records," "Tom Dowd and the Language of Music," "Stax Records," "The TAMI Show" and so many others that tell this important story.

In every case of the people involved, it becomes clear that both whites and blacks worked together in a common cause: The Music. Race did not matter. I think it is so important for young people to understand, in film, lectures and otherwise, how turbulent the times were and, in spite of this, how people came together to create an art form that defied laws and social mores.

In addition, music fans will come to understand the immensity of the talent of these iconic artists, most of whom are in The Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame.

I will draw upon my 45+ year career in the Music Business as a studio musician, record producer and record company executive. As other references, I have a vast library of recordings, books and film and I will provide a reading list for the students.

*** 1 - John Hammond – From Spirituals To Swing.** In 1938 and 1939 John Hammond, one of the greatest record producers in the history of Popular Music, promoted two concerts at Carnegie Hall in New York. It was the first time African Americans were the headlining artists at this legendary venue. Among those appearing were The Count Basie Orchestra, The Golden Gate Quartet, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Big Bill Broonzy, Benny Goodman with Charlie Christian, Teddy Wilson, Lionel Hampton and many more. In 1999, I produced an award winning box set on these concerts and included in-depth research material and interviews, which I will incorporate into the lecture.

The Swing Era - In 1935, Benny Goodman invited the African American piano player, Teddy Wilson, to join his band. This was followed in 1936 by the addition of Lionel Hampton on vibes and, in 1939 the influential electric guitarist, Charlie Christian. The so called “color line” had been broken in music.

Films: “John Hammond: Producer”

*** 2 - Ray Charles and Sam Cooke** - Both of these iconic artists combined Gospel Music and Blues, helping to create Rhythm & Blues and crossing the music over to an ever widening audience of white and black teenagers.

Films: An interview with Ahmet Ertegun, founder of Atlantic Records; a rare 1963

*** 3 - The 1960s and the Civil Rights Movement: Soul Music Arrives** - The concentration of this class will be on a group of integrated musicians who created music in a segregated city: Memphis.

Films: “Stax Records: Respect Yourself” and “The Legacy of Otis Redding”

*** 4 - James Brown** – He was one of the most influential artists in the history of popular music. This will feature performance footage of Mr. Brown, including his concert on the night after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated.

Film: “The Night James Brown Saved Boston”

- **5 - Motown** - performance footage of The Supremes, The Temptations, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson & the Miracles plus an interview with Smokey. We will also see clips on an amazing artist from Detroit who was not on Motown: the legendary Jackie Wilson!

*** 6** - We will begin the last class with performance footage of the great AL Green from Memphis, as his recordings in the late 1960s and early ‘70s mark an end to Classic Soul Music.

We will review the artists, key figures and topics that were discussed during the semester.

Film: “Freedom Songs”

SUGGESTED READING:

(These books are on hold in the Blair Library. Some are located in the Central Library)

Michael Bertrand, RACE, ROCK AND ELVIS

Rob Bowman, SOULSVILLE USA: THE STORY OF STAX RECORDS

Gary US Bonds and Stephen Cooper, THAT'S MY STORY

Geoff Brown, THE LIFE OF JAMES BROWN

Geoff Brown, OTIS REDDING: TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS

Jerry Butler, ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE: MEMOIRS OF A SOUL SURVIVOR

Doug Carter, THE BLACK ELVIS: JACKIE WILSON

Ray Charles and David Ritz, BROTHER RAY

Nadine Cohodas, SPINNING BLUES INTO GOLD: CHESS RECORDS

Rick Coleman, BLUE MONDAY: FATS DOMINO AND THE LOST DAWN OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

James Dickerson, MOJO TRIANGLE

Matt Dobkin, I NEVER LOVED A MAN THE WAY THAT I LOVE YOU:
ARETHA FRANKLIN, RESPECT AND THE MAKING OF A SOUL MUSIC
MASTERPIECE

Ross Firestone, SWING, SWING, SWING: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BENNY
GOODMAN

C. S. Fuqua, MUSIC FELL ON ALABAMA: MUSCLE SHOALS

Nelson George, WHERE DID OUR LOVE GO? THE RISE AND FALL OF THE
MOTOWN SOUND

Nelson George, THE DEATH OF RHYTHM AND BLUES

Nelson George, THE JAMES BROWN READER

Charlie Gillett, THE SOUND OF THE CITY: THE RISE OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

Charlie Gillett, MAKING TRACKS: THE HISTORY OF ATLANTIC RECORDS

Robert Gordon, RESPECT YOURSELF: STAX RECORDS AND THE SOUL
EXPLOSION

Robert Greenfield, THE LAST SULTAN: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF AHMET
ERTEGUN

Peter Guarlnick, DREAM BOOGIE: THE TRIUMPH OF SAM COOKE

Peter Guralnick, LAST TRAIN TO MEMPHIS: THE RISE OF ELVIS PRESLEY

Peter Guralnick, SWEET SOUL MUSIC: RHYTHM & BLUES AND THE SOUTHERN DREAM OF FREEDOM

John Hammond, JOHN HAMMOND ON THE RECORD

Greg Haynes, THE HEEY BABY DAYS OF BEACH MUSIC

Gerry Hirshey, NOWHERE TO RUN: THE STORY OF SOUL MUSIC

John Jackson, A HOUSE ON FIRE: THE RISE AND FALL OF PHILADELPHIA SOUL

John Jackson, BIG BEAT HEAT: ALAN FREED

Gladys Knight, BETWEEN EACH LINE OF PAIN AND GLORY

Preston Lauterbach, THE CHITLIN' CIRCUIT AND THE ROAD TO ROCK 'N' ROLL

Gene Lees, CATS OF ANY COLOR: JAZZ, BLACK AND WHITE

Darlene Love and Rob Hoerburger, MY NAME IS LOVE

George Lipsitz, MIDNIGHT AT THE BARRELHOUSE: THE JOHNNY OTIS STORY

Michael Lydon, RAY CHARLES: THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC

Gerald Posner, MOTOWN: MUSIC, MONEY, SEX AND POWER

Dunstan Prial, THE PRODUCER: JOHN HAMMOND

Mark Ribowsky, THE SUPREMES: A SAGA OF MOTOWN DREAMS, SUCCESS & BETRAYAL

RJ Smith, THE ONE: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF JAMES BROWN

James Sullivan, THE HARDEST WORKING MAN: HOW JAMES BROWN SAVED THE SOUL OF AMERICA

Brian Ward, JUST MY SOUL RESPONDING: RHYTHM AND BLUES, BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AND RACE RELATIONS

Charles White, THE LIFE AND TIMES OF LITTLE RICHARD

Daniel Wolff, YOU SEND ME: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SAM COOKE

Daniel Wolk, JAMES BROWN'S LIVE AT THE APOLLO (33 1/3)

MY STORY

It was 1964 and I was a young white kid growing up in Richmond, Virginia, the former Capital of The Confederate States of America. Despite the connotations that might be associated with the locale, I don't recall race riots or any real problem when our school began to integrate. I do have vivid memories, however, of the signs of segregation I had seen: restrooms marked "White" and "Colored," the same for drinking fountains and movie theaters.

It was a time when anyone who paid attention to the news was aware that something very important was happening in the United States. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had given his "I Have A Dream" speech less the year before. Freedom Riders were being killed in Mississippi, church bombings in Birmingham, marches and beatings in Selma.

Then something happened that changed my life. I turned 15 and got my "learner's permit" to drive. Now I had a car with a radio and, almost immediately, I discovered WANT.

WANT was a locally owned, small wattage radio station in Richmond that only broadcast during the daylight hours. The music captured my heart and imagination in an instant. It was Rhythm & Blues and Soul Music. The disc jockeys, who were black, became my friends over the airwaves. Among them: "Mrs. Miles' Pride and Joy: Her little boy, Ben" (Miles); another who called himself "Top Jock" and a young man, who I later learned was white, named Alan Leeds. Alan went on to become James Brown's tour manager.

These disc jockeys began to expose my friends and me to Otis Redding, Sam Cooke, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Motown and so much more.

Because of this, I started to attend concerts at The Mosque Auditorium or black nightclubs in Richmond with artists such as Sam Cooke, James Brown, Jackie Wilson, Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett and many others. The first concert I attended starred the legendary Sam Cooke and exposed me to the very real world of segregation. A *rope* was actually put up in the auditorium to separate the black audience from the white audience members. It didn't matter. Sam Cooke brought the house and the rope down. By the end of the show, everybody was up and dancing! I was always in the minority but I never felt threatened or out of place. We were all there for the music.

About this time, my dad did something very much out of context with our financial means. Much to my mother's dismay, he bought a Mercury Monterey convertible and it had a great AM radio! One night my friends and I were driving with the top down when someone dialed in a radio station we had never heard. A gravel voiced disc jockey, who we were sure was an African American, shouted out, "This is John R. 'Down In Dixie' on WLAC, NASH-ville, Tennessee!"

It was a life changing moment.

John R. played the greatest R & B we had ever heard. And he "talked trash," a very street-wise, hip, black vernacular. We kept listening into the night and John R. was followed by another, equally charismatic disc jockey: "This is Hoss Allen, but you can call me The Hossman, 'cause everybody else does. And baby, I'm DOWN for Royal Crown!" (Royal Crown, his sponsor, was a hair pomade popular with African Americans)

The jocks on WLAC played "Deep Soul" music and advertised for Ernie's Record Mart, Randy's Record Shop and baby chicks, hair pomade...anything and everything.

More importantly, these disc jockeys, along with Allen Freed, Art Laboe and others (who, we later discovered, were all white) exposed an untold number of white teenagers to black music and legendary artists.

Soul Music certainly was the catalyst that caused some of my friends to join with me in forming a band when we were 15 years old. Within a few years we had a horn section and were playing Rhythm & Blues and Soul Music, today called "Beach Music" throughout Virginia and the Carolinas. While in high school and college we "backed" African American artists such as Jackie Wilson, The Impressions, Percy Sledge, The Drifters, Gary "US" Bonds, Aaron Neville, The Showmen, Ernie K-Doe, Clifford Curry and others. During the turbulent 1960s we either played behind or on shows with practically every legendary black performer from this amazing period. From Ray Charles and Otis Redding to James Brown and the Motown artists, we saw them all. Although it is hard to believe now, we played with performers who, in many cases, could not stay in the same motels with us or eat in the same restaurants.

As I later learned from Hoss Allen and John R. at WLAC their belief and support for black music was not without consequence. The Ku Klux Klan would burn crosses on the yards of radio stations and threaten sponsors. The African American artists who were touring had it even harder. Yet these pioneers held to what they believed in and, subsequently, influenced an entire generation of white kids like me. It is my belief that these artists, disc jockeys, producers and record companies created an environment that helped change the hearts and minds of white America with regard to integration and the Civil Rights Movement. As Andrew Young, former UN Ambassador and co-worker with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said: "In a way you could say this music was more successful than the courts in bringing people together."

It also led me on a lifelong journey in which I have worked as a studio musician, producer and record company executive. I was able to meet and, in some cases, work with most of these legendary artists.

