



TINA TURNER



CLYDE McPHATTER

Born November 15th, 1931
Durham, North Carolina
Died June 13th, 1972
Teaneck, New Jersey



Clyde McPhatter was among the first singers to rhapsodize about romance in gospel's emotionally charged style. It wasn't an easy step for McPhatter to make; after all, he was only eighteen, a minister's son born in North Carolina and raised in New Jersey, when vocal arranger and talent manager Billy Ward decided in 1950 that

McPhatter would be the perfect choice to front his latest concept, a vocal quartet called the Dominoes. At the time, quartets (which, despite the name, often contained more than four members) were popular on the gospel circuit. They also dominated the R&B field, the most popular being decorous ensembles like the Ink Spots and the Orioles. Ward wanted to combine the vocal flamboyance of gospel with the pop orientation of the R&B quartets. The result was rhythm and gospel, a sound that never really made it across the R&B chart to the mainstream audience of the time but reached everybody's ears years later in the form of Sixties soul.

As Charlie Gillett wrote in *The Sound of the City*, the Dominoes began working instinctively — and timidly. McPhatter said, "We were very frightened in the studio when we were recording. Billy Ward was teaching us the song, and he'd say, 'Sing it up,' and I said, 'Well, I don't feel it that way,' and he said, 'Try it your way.' I felt more relaxed if I wasn't confined to the melody. I would take liberties with it and he'd say, 'That's great. Do it that way.'"

McPhatter took the lead on the Dominoes' first single, "Do Something for Me," released on the Federal label in 1951; it reached Number Six on the R&B chart. He contributed memorable backing vocals to the group's first Number One smash, the ribald play-by-play come-on "Sixty Minute Man," featuring bass vocalist Bill Brown; McPhatter took over once again on the Dominoes' second Number One hit, "Have Mercy Baby," in which he brought himself to the brink of tears, a histrionic effect he repeated with great success on "The Bells." But McPhatter, who gained a reputation for wildly abandoned live performances, chafed under Ward's strict discipline; it didn't help matters either that later singles were being credited to "Billy Ward and the Dominoes." So, in 1953, McPhatter left, and Ahmet Ertegun, of Atlantic Records, immediately offered him his own group, with star billing. McPhatter's group was christened the Drifters, because, as Atlantic publicity dryly put it, "the members had done a lot of drifting from one group to another." The Drifters were instantly successful on the R&B chart. "Money Honey," which Elvis Presley later recorded, went to Number One, as did the salacious "Honey Love," written by McPhatter and Jerry Wexler.

In 1954, McPhatter was drafted. After being discharged from the army two years later, he returned to Atlantic as a solo act. (Like the Dominoes, the Drifters continued without McPhatter; they had hits through the early Sixties with new lineups and lead vocalists, including Ben E. King.) In 1958, McPhatter scored the biggest hit of his career, the million-selling single "A Lover's Question," but he left Atlantic the following year for MGM and, subsequently, Mercury, where he enjoyed two of his better-known later hits, "Lover Please" and "Little Bitty Pretty One." But McPhatter was ultimately destined to live on as a groundbreaker more than a hitmaker. His fervent voice and intense style would be reflected in artists for years to come, in Jackie Wilson, Smokey Robinson and every purveyor of gospel-inspired love songs who followed.

DOO-WOP

The Street-Corner Roots of Rock

BY PHILIP GROIA

THIS EVENING we honor the drag strips and low-riding alleys of Los Angeles, the housing projects and community centers of Washington, D.C., the churches, rehearsal halls and assembly lines of Detroit, the front stoops and street corners of New York. These were not the great concert halls and recording studios of America; nor were they the great amateur showcases where winners seemed to become recording stars overnight. They are the birthplaces of the Robins, the Marquees, the Miracles and the Dominoes – groups that sang a music now known as doo-wop. The reason we single out these particular groups is that some members of the Robins became the Coasters; the Marquees included the young Marvin Gaye; the Miracles were fronted by songwriter Smokey Robinson; and the Dominoes' lead singer was Clyde McPhatter, who was later replaced by Jackie Wilson.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the big bands gave way to simpler forms of popular music. One of these was the music of the vocal groups. These groups, usually composed of young men, began with little or no musical training and no instrumental accompaniment. They were equipped with talent and passion. But were vocal groups really singing “doo-wop”? Or were they improvising the forerunner of the “hook,” a catchy, easy-to-remember phrase designed to get the listener and record buyer hooked on a song or recording?

The Moonglows blow-noted their way through “Sincerely” with “who-we-who, whooit, whooit, whooit.” Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers began “I Promise to Remember” with “oodie-bop-a-cow, bop-a-cow.” The Crows introduced “Gee,” a landmark recording, with “doot-a-doot-a-doot.” The Cleftones intoned “yeah, diddle-little-little-lit” in “Little Girl of Mine.” The Chords’ “Sh-Boom” shook up the musical world with “hey, laddie, ding-dong, a-lang, a-lang, a-lang – sh-boom.” The Five Satins “shoo-doo-bee-dooed” through “In the Still of the Night.” In “Get a Job,” the Silhouettes sang “sha-na-na, sha-na-na,” never realizing they were inspiring a blockbuster parody group, Sha Na Na. The Five Keys took us to Chinatown with “Ling Ting Tong” (“tais-a-moke-um-boot-ah-yay”). The Cadillacs responded to “Speedo” with “bah-bah-jibb-a-dee.” The Flamingos came the closest to using the phrase “doo-wop.” They disguised it with split-second timing as they answered Nate Nelson’s “I Only Have Eyes for You” with a lightning-fast “doo-bop-shoo-bop.”

The street corner offered the singing group a symposium to show its talent. Songs were composed and exchanged on the street. There, the lead, bass and harmony singers were chosen, and groups battled to be the best. As friendships were made and broken, a fraternity of group members was formed. Some of the Solitaires sang with the Cadillacs. Members of the Cadillacs, the Flairs and the Valentines sang with the Coasters.

Gaining a reputation in the neighborhood and attracting the admiration of female fans were two important reasons groups were formed. Lyrics and routines were devised to attract girls, and guys who were considered entertainers were given a form of diplomatic immunity from street fighting



The "S" Royales



The Del Vikings



The Five Keys



Lee Andrews and the Hearts



The Ravens



The Willows



The Clovers



The Chantels



The Dominoes



The Turbans



The Harptones



The Channels



The Chords



The Velours



The Swallows



The Cadillacs



The Crows



The Platters



Dion and the Belmonds



The Dells



The Pastels



The Silhouettes



The Monotones



The Impalas

and gang wars. Perhaps this is why most of the doo-wop groups of the early Fifties were male.

Vocal competition often spread from the corners of one block to battles of the groups in other neighborhoods. "We used to go and visit groups in the 150th Street area," said Tony Middleton, lead singer of the Willows, from Harlem's West 115th Street. "The whole area was like one small neighborhood. Groups were, in a way, parts of families. Everybody would go and see the other groups perform. Even though it was six or eight miles away, we would visit one another. We would walk up there and walk back, just singing all the way. Never take the subway. If we did take the subway, it would be for the echo chamber."

Battles of the groups took place indoors at rent parties and red-light parties, where couples danced slowly and closely – hence the name *grind-'em-ups*. Reggie Walker, who sang "Bermuda Shorts" with the Delroys, talked about an indoor battle of groups:

"There was a big argument, so we decided to have it out. . . . We had five guys; they had five. We sang this song called 'Raindrops,' by the Inspirations, with Angel, who was really a man. He was fifteen or sixteen years old. He got down on his knees and started crying – 'Raindrops are fall-hall-in'. . . .' The song called for that. In those days crying was really in. He was really crying. He had tears in his eyes. That was it. We won and went on as the best group in the projects."

Establishing peer acceptance in the neighborhood was a mere prelude to the real symbols of success, a recording contract and an engagement on a live stage show. Nothing showed the glamour of the doo-wop group more than the stage show. Adoring fans were treated to the flashy clothes, the exciting choreography, the fancy cars and the endless string of similar names.

Before a group acquired recognition in the neighborhood, it had to have a name. And what names? First came the bird-group era, supposedly influenced by the cool of jazz saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker – the Ravens, Orioles, Swallows, Flamingos, Crows, Penguins, Meadowlarks, Cardinals, Wrens and Robins. In the mid-Fifties the high-stepping Cadillacs heralded the era of the car groups – the El Dorados, Impalas, Imperials, Bonneville, Lincolns, Belvederes, Montereys, Montclairs, Edsels, Fleetwoods, Corvairs and V-Eights. Groups were named after musical terms – the Five Keys, Five Notes, Chimes, Cellos, Metronomes, Monotones, Clefones, Harptones, Channels, Dubs, Blue Notes, Vocaleers and Vocaltones. Romance played a part with the Heartbeats, Heartbreakers, Lovenotes, Four Lovers and Valentines. If you wanted to give flowers, you sent Carnations, Clovers, Gladiolas and Marigolds. For those who made only a cosmetic appearance, there were the Avons and Revlons. Geography played a role – the Nutmegs came from New Haven, the Marylanders from Baltimore and the Detroit Spinners from the Motor City. If a group wanted a reputation for being smooth, it chose names like the Five Satins, Velvets, Velvetones, Velours and Smoothtones. And there was royalty too – the Regals, "5" Royales, Five Crowns, Kings, Teen Queens, Royaltones, Monarchs and Queens. After the commercial viability of the boy-soprano lead was discovered came the Schoolboys, Teenagers, Teenchords, Juniors, Cubs and, of course, Youngtones. Finally there had to be something mystical about singing on the street corner at night, as shown by names like the Starlighters, Twilighters, Midnighters, Moonglows and Moonlighters.

The promotion of the vocal group in the 1950s began with the disc jockey. Records were hyped over the airwaves. The groups themselves or their fan clubs submitted on-air dedications. Many radio stations broadcast jock-sponsored live stage shows, which usually featured a large orchestra and a dozen or so hot acts, about half of which were vocal groups. The disc jockey served as the MC. As he introduced the group, the male quartet or quintet would enter from stage right and left, running at full speed, as their teenage admirers shrieked deliriously. The groups would charge to two microphones, one for the lead and bass singers, the other for a huddle of harmony singers. The close-knit ambience of the street corner was re-created on stage. The groups with the flashiest routines and showmanship would fare best, since the noise from the audience was so deafening.

Groups increased the frenzy of the audience by attiring them-

selves splendidly: usually in white shoes and dark suits with a gaudy shirt and tie. Lee Andrews and the Hearts wore white gloves to accent the mood of "Tear Drops." The Heartbeats wore pink shirts with "Mister B" collars, named after jazz-pop crooner Billy Eckstine. The Teenagers wore white sweaters with a red T. The Turbans, famous for the Latin-rock "When You Dance," adorned their heads with a wrap reminiscent of sepy mercenaries.

Other groups, including the Five Keys, the Solitaires, the Four Fellows and Dion and the Belmonts, were too sophisticated for theatrical frivolity. They just stood in front of the mikes, dressed cool, acted cool and blew cool notes. There were agents and managers, however, who sought a different image for their groups. Many acts hired the Apollo Theatre dance team of Cholly Atkins and Honi Coles as choreographers. For a while it seemed that Coles and Atkins, who first choreographed the Regals and the Cadillacs in 1955, had tutored everyone who had a bullet on the Hot 100 or R&B charts.

The Cadillacs were the best dancing group of the doo-wop era. The group would run on stage, and the lead singer, Earl "Speedo" Carroll, would sashay to the mike. Trouser legs fluttering as his feet kept the beat, Carroll accentuated his mouthing into the microphone with gestures – both hands waved side to side accompanied the words "You give me no chance, a no chance, a no chance, no"; he raised his hand as he sang, "Dear Lord, hear my plea"; and a hand clutched against the chest meant his heart went "zoom." At significant moments, the bass, Bobby Phillips, would lean over to the lead singer's mike or would come strutting around the lead to bellow the bass part: "bow, doe, doe." The group responded with "ooh-oooh," and the lead answered, "It's not Marie, it's Gloria." Back at the harmony mike, the background singers would be scating, arms churning, fingers snapping, feet tapping, knees marching. At the instrumental bridge, the bass would break away to the lead singer, and the group, high-stepping, would fake to the left, about-face to the right, take three steps to the rear, dance to the left, dance to the right, fake right, about-face again and return, hands clapping, to the mike, while the audience roared its approval. The group never lost a step, never missed a note, never lost its breath – and all of this in Brooks Brothers vines. For the finale, the bass began with "bom-bom-bom," the lead chanted, "Well, they up and call me Speedo," and the group chattered, "bah-bah-jibb-a-dee." Then slowly, tantalizingly, they disappeared behind the curtains, off the stage, out of the theater and into the street to a waiting 1956 Cadillac El Dorado with *Cadillacs* emblazoned in script on its sides.

They don't sing and dance like that anymore. But many people cannot forget waiting in line for hours to buy a two-dollar ticket only to endure a dreadful film before screaming and hollering for the rest of the day. The stage show has etched indelible memories – Sonny Til of the Orioles canting his body to the right as women threw themselves at the stage; the Flamingos, dressed impeccably in green suits, extending and retracting their arms to the cadence of a love ballad, "I'll Be Home," led by "the voice of champagne," Nate Nelson; the Harptones dancing so fast you could hardly see their feet; the Valentines forming a human locomotive for "The Woo Woo Train"; little Frankie Lyman illuminating the stage with the effervescence of youth; the Chantels' angelic harmony turning the delirium into a religious service; the voice of the Crests' Johnny Maestro reverberating through the theater; tenor sax breaks that sounded fifty times louder than on record; the Del Vikings' air-force uniforms; Clyde McPhatter's powerful melisma; the lead singer who cried; the harmony sung so smoothly you could snatch it out of the air; and the youth who proclaimed that freedom is singing, dancing and being a star.

Gone are groups of young men armed with a bottle of wine, urban cool and four-part harmony to compete for the attention of young women. The warm glow of stardom at a big stage show has faded. Mostly because of changing musical tastes and recording technology, the cultural phenomenon of street-corner doo-wop no longer exists. We may never again see four or five young men or women harmonizing under a lamp post, or hear the first tenor hit his high note at the end of a romantic ballad, or see a group fade off stage in perfect unison, but the music and feeling that grew out of their efforts shall live in many people's hearts forever.



Annette's scrapbook: with (left to right) Dick Dale, Bobby Rydell and Frankie Avalon



The songwriting team of Holland-Dozier-Holland



Gary "U.S." Bonds

The Shangri-Las



Wilson Pickett

Gerry Goffin, Ellie Greenwich, Jeff Barry, Cynthia Weil, Barry Mann, Neil Sedaka and Howard Greenfield, to name only some of the best) and producers (Bob Crewe, Shadow Morton, Feldman, Goldstein and Gottelher, Leiber and Stoller, Bert Berns) turned out hundreds of hits, many of which have become standards, and also fueled the girl-group explosion, which avoided the artificiality of its male counterpart, the teen idols, and produced some music now rightly regarded as classic. An indigenous rock scene emerged for the first time in Los Angeles, with a full complement of producers, managers, studio musicians, indie labels and even "teenage millionaires," like Phil Spector, who, more than anyone, defined the role of the producer as a creative force in rock and roll. Surf music came out of this era, as did instrumental bands and the very *idea* of the rock and roll band, as opposed to solo singers or vocal groups. This was happening all over America and, for some curious reason, in a British port called Liverpool . . . and we all know what *that* led to!

The city of New Orleans, source of so many musical advances, had played a leading role in the first wave of rock and roll. As early as 1948, many people, including Fats Domino, Roy Brown and Professor Longhair, were playing a kind of rock and roll. Many more were to follow, as the Crescent City became known for its good-time boogie-woogie sound. Then, around 1960, a new cycle began. Allen Toussaint, a prolific writer-performer-producer, worked with such singers as Irma Thomas, Lee Dorsey, Chris Kenner and Ernie K-Doe to create a steady flow of hits for recently created local labels like Joe Banashak's Minit and Instant. In 1961, arranger Harold Battiste and New Orleans's top session players started their own label, A.F.O., in an attempt to keep for the musicians some of the vast profits their hits were earning for other record companies. They charted with Barbara George's "I Know," but the rebellion was crushed by the big New York labels. Battiste and some of his best players countered by departing for other cities, chiefly Los Angeles, where they would have a critical role to play.

Almost immediately after Battiste's arrival in Los Angeles, which roughly coincided with the arrival of drummer Earl Palmer and saxophonists Alvin Tyler and Lee Allen, the studios of Hollywood got busier. At the same time indie labels began proliferating, and a rising generation of songwriters, producers and young session musicians got their first experience and, often, hits. Out of Phil Spector's studio band and the New Orleans contingent came a burst of activity that soon put Los Angeles on the map as a recording center.

In Detroit, another studio scene was taking shape at Motown. The sound that built America's most successful black-owned company – and launched the careers of Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, the Supremes, the Four Tops, the Temptations and so many others – was a controlled studio product in which the artists were often interchangeable, while the "feel" remained consistent.

Meanwhile, all over the country, soul was emerging. Following Sam Cooke's lead, others – including James Brown, Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett, Ray Charles, Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions, Jerry Butler and Jackie Wilson – were refining the possibilities of R&B ballads, often utilizing strings (first tried on the Drifters' 1959 hit "There Goes My Baby"). These innovations would influence the course of black music for at least the next twenty years.

The revolutionary developments so far discussed took place within the framework of the record business. But at the same time, another movement was afoot, one that would lead to the rock-band explosion of the Sixties. With the disappearance of the great rock and roll stars on the touring circuit, there was a healthy audience for local and regional bands, particularly outside the big cities. All across the Midwest, the Pacific Northwest and the Southwest, thousands of bands were forming and playing at schools and dances, some of them becoming regional stars with audiences extending over several states.

At first, most of the songs these bands played were instrumentals, along with covers of rock standards by Holly, Berry and others. For millions of teenagers with no other exposure to rock's potential for raw exuberance, these bands kept the flame burning.

And out of them came the grass-roots garage-band movement, which grew to such strength in the later Sixties.

It takes some stretch of the imagination (or the memory) to envision a time when rock bands were virtually unheard of, but the late Fifties was such a time. Gene Vincent had his Bluecaps, the Crickets were carrying on without Buddy, and a few others could be mentioned, but that merely underlines the predominance of solo singers and vocal groups. Sometimes local bands would be hired to back up touring singers, but the rest of the time they worked on their own material and occasionally cracked the charts with an instrumental composition.

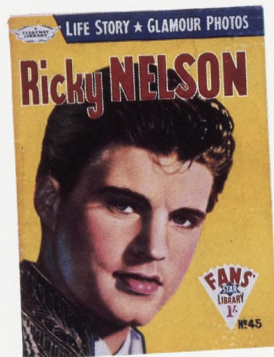
Just as the London-based British record industry remained unaware for years of the revolution stirring in Liverpool, American music in this period often continued to be dominated by the teen sound of New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. But we now know how decisive those years were in setting the stage for the legions of bands to come. The instrumental hits of 1959 and 1960 brought to light bands like Johnny and the Hurricanes (Ohio), the Fireballs (New Mexico) and the Wailers (Washington), but these were only the iceberg tip of the regional music scenes that surfaced between 1961 and 1963 with the creation of surf music (chiefly by Dick Dale and the Beach Boys), followed over the next couple of years by frat rock, then early garage-punk music, typified by the Kingsmen's "Louie Louie," the Trashmen's "Surfing Bird" and the Rivas's "California Sun." Out of bands like these, in turn, came the musicians who created the classic music of the middle and late Sixties.

The growth that took place in these years provided an infrastructure without which the tumultuous events of 1964 and onward could not have occurred. A major illustration can be found in Los Angeles, which before 1961 was more or less a sleepy little outpost of the teeming New York industry. The quality of the music for which L.A. became known in the Sixties could not have been achieved without the experience of a legion of gifted young producers and songwriters who had worked with local bands, primarily surf bands, in the formative early Sixties. The best known of these songwriters and producers are Gary Usher, Richard Podolor, Gary Paxton, Lou Adler, Jack Nitzsche, Bruce Johnston, Nick Venet, David Gates, P.F. Sloan and Steve Barri, Terry Melcher and, of course, Brian Wilson, but behind them were scores of active figures who kept the studios and indie labels of Hollywood jumping.

The girl-group phenomenon, previously cited as giving an outlet to New York's brilliant new songwriters, also offered many budding producers a chance to cut their teeth on elaborate and experimental studio techniques. Furthermore, Phil Spector's relocation to Los Angeles from New York in 1961 spurred the growth of what was to become the world's leading studio scene, with legions of first-rate musicians available to turn anyone's teen dreams into chartable hits. Out of Spector's handpicked studio band came the players and the inspiration behind innumerable success stories, from Sonny and Cher's string of hits to the Byrds (whose early records were largely played by Spector alumni). The same scene produced folk-rock, America's first serious riposte to the British Invasion.

The linkages become more convoluted and fascinating as they are explored, but I believe the point has been made. Although the years immediately following 1958 may seem a period of musical doldrums, compared with the all-out mania that came before and was soon to follow, the fact remains that without the retrenchment and gradual development of diverse approaches that took place in these interim years, rock and roll might never have returned with the strength it did.

It's commonly said that the Beatles merely updated the music of Chuck Berry, the Everly Brothers and Buddy Holly, but this is far from the truth. The Beatles, and every other British band of note, drew just as heavily (if not more heavily) from the girl groups, the Brill Building tunesmiths and now-obscure contemporary soul artists. The British may have been twenty years ahead of us in acknowledging the importance of the American music of the early Sixties, but those who love music must no longer fail to recognize the significance of these few short years, this breathing space in which nearly everything that has happened since was formulated.



ROCK AND ROLL MAGAZINES

A Vanishing Legacy

BY ALAN BETROCK

IN THESE DAYS of concert films, rock videos, library archives, photographers' files and tape-recorded interviews, the recent history of rock and roll is well documented and well preserved. But in the early days of rock, before the music was thought to be of lasting value, and before media coverage and technological progress combined to satiate the needs of even the most die-hard rock fans, rock and roll magazines were one of the few places where we could read about the performers we all heard on the radio and on records. Even though many of these publications sold hundreds of thousands of copies, today most have been lost, destroyed or forgotten. Many copies were cut up, as teenagers pasted the photos of their favorite stars on their notebooks or bedroom walls or in their scrapbooks. Others were thrown out when trends or personalities changed or when teenagers "grew out" of their rock and roll phase. Most of the rest were used for scrap paper or simply discarded as the years went by. Libraries rarely, if ever, saved rock and roll magazines, and none of them were microfilmed. So today we find ourselves in the situation of trying to reconstruct the music's history by attempting to build collections of these lost treasures by any means possible.

To some this means combing flea markets and finding magazines one at a time, dogeared and faded, sometimes with pages cut out, covers detached or quirky comments scrawled over the stars' photos. Others scour secondhand bookstores or magazine stores hoping to find a pile in better shape, albeit at higher prices. Still more pore over mail-order lists or collector-oriented publications for the honor of bidding on magazines that recently have begun to change hands at twenty-five dollars, fifty dollars or even more per copy. And yes, some still dream of finding that elusive warehouse where the precious booty may have lain untouched for some thirty years now – that mint run of *Dig*, *Rock 'n Roll Stars* or *Rhythm and Blues* – all waiting for you at fifty cents per copy. But for most, this latter prospect remains just a dream – mercurial, evasive and heart-rending. Most storehouses are long gone, and those still remaining are more likely to have 40,000 copies of

ELVIS PAT BILL
PRESLEY BOONE HALEY
Rock 'n' Roll Battlers

BILL HALEY
PAT BOONE
ELVIS PRESLEY

PRESLEY full page color portrait!

AMERICA'S FINEST TEENAGE MAGAZINE
HEP CATS Feb 25c
LEARN HOW TO TALK WITH THE **HIPSTER'S DICTIONARY** WORDS & PHRASES USED BY TODAY'S HIPSTERS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
SAL MINEO HE'S A REAL HIP DOD
JANE MORGAN A BOB FATHOMING KITTEN
TEEN TALK LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

MEET THE NEW WITH THE **HIPSTER'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

THE 4 PREPS A TEENAGE QUARTET THAT'S GOING PLACES

COMPLETE STORY ON **RICK NELSON** THE NAZUK'S FASTEST RISING NEW RECORDING STAR

HOW CHILDREN SHOULD RAISE THEIR PARENTS

JOIN A FAN CLUB FROM THE COMPLETE LISTING OF **FAN CLUBS**

Exclusive Photos - Intimate Secrets
FULL PAGES OF PICTURES SUITABLE FOR FRAMING

DIG January 1957 25c

FOR TEENAGERS ONLY
• GENE VINCENT
• COOL HOT ROD
• SO YOU WANT TO BE A MODEL?
• INTERNATIONAL PEN PALS

SCENES FROM PRESLEY'S FIRST MOVIE!

WHO'S COOL?
The Cat That Wears Levi's, Peppers or Ivy League?

ROCK AND ROLL ROUNDUP
Twenty Five Cents February, 1957

PAT BOONE
ALAN FREED
FATS DOMINO
JOE TURNER
BO DIDDLEY
BIG AL SEARS

AN OPEN LETTER TO **ELVIS PRESLEY**

LATEST SONG HITS
RHYTHM AND BLUES JUNE 25c
The ROCK & ROLL Beat

BABY YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES
LADY LUCK
TEEN ANGEL
WILD ONE
TOO POOPED TO POP
THIS MAGIC MOMENT
WHAT IN THE WORLD'S COME OVER YOU
CHATTANOOGIE SHOES SHINE BOY
STEP BY STEP
COUNTRY BOY
LET IT ROCK
ABOUT THIS THING CALLED LOVE
PARADISE
HANDY MAN

THAT BO DIDDLEY MAN MAKES THE SCENE WITH A LOVE EVER SO KEEN
ADAM WADE, THE SPOTLIGHT GUEST, GOES ON TO PASS THE RHYTHM TEST
A TALENT TRIBUTE TO TIMMIE ROGERS AND HIS FRANTIC ANTICS

AMERICA'S FINEST TEENAGE MAGAZINE
COOL & HEP CATS December 25c
NOW! COOL & HEP CATS COMBINED INTO ONE
DEDICATED TO THE REAL COOL EVERYBODY A GROUP OF TOP HIPSTERS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
OPEN LETTER TO OUR **ELVIS**
PEREZ PRADO
THE TEENS TALK
PAUL ANTHONY
NATALIE TRUNDY
NUMBER 1 TORERA
HALLOWEEN FUN PARTY PLANS
NEW FACES CONTEST

Exclusive Photos - Intimate Secrets
FULL PAGES OF PICTURES SUITABLE FOR FRAMING

'TEEN SEPTEMBER 1957 25c

Have a ball - **TEENAGE SAFARI** for the gals

Greatest prep **FOOTBALL MACHINE** in the U.S.

Your 1957 **TOP POP SINGERS** by 'TEEN Poll

Back to school **MISS FASHION** Latest styles

A Million Fans Shout **"ROCK, RICKY, ROCK!"**

ROCK 'N ROLL Jamboree PAUL 1956 - 12 CENTS

Picture-stories on:
ELVIS PRESLEY
ALAN FREED
FATS DOMINO
BILL HALEY
AND THE COMETS

BO DIDDLEY
GENE VINCENT
PAT BOONE
LA VERN BAKER
RUTH BROWN
THE TEEN AGERS
THE CADILLACS
THE CLEFTONES
THE CLOVERS
AND OTHERS

ROCK 'N ROLL STARS 25c

THE REAL ELVIS PRESLEY STORY

BILL HALEY and his COMETS - CLYDE McPHATTER
PAT BOONE - FRANKIE LYMON and the TEENAGERS
LONNIE DONEGAN - THE PLATTERS - RUTH BROWN
FATS DOMINO - LA VERN BAKER - LITTLE RICHARD
LITTLE WILLIE JOHNS - JOE TURNER - and others

National Geographic than anything else. Despite the odds, the search goes on.

What keeps fans searching, and why do collectors subject themselves to endless travels that usually lead to a dead end? Well, in the pages of early rock and roll magazines lies the history of the music as it happened. We can see who got coverage and why. We can gaze at early photographs printed nowhere else. We can read the first interviews and profiles of the performers, learn about their early years, hear anecdotes about their recording sessions and so much more. What did they wear, how did they get their first hits, where did they play, what were their influences, and how did they see themselves as this new music swirled and raged around them? These magazines take you back in time, and with the benefit of hindsight, you can try to separate fact from legend and attempt to construct an accurate picture of how things happened and why the performers were important. True, we have the records, but these publications give us so much more. They help place the music in a historical context that makes it that much more enjoyable.

As there were literally dozens of titles published between 1955 and 1960, what follows is a brief overview of the twenty or so that I feel are the most important today. This is based on their historical value, their content, their collectibility today and their impact at the time.

The field is basically divided into two distinct categories. First we have the one-shots, magazines that were published only once, on a particular performer or theme. One-shots have been around for a long time, and publishers rush them out to capitalize on a performer or subject that reaches massive popularity but may not be around in six months. If it happens that the subject is still popular in six months, nothing is lost, because you can always put out a somewhat-updated second one-shot. In the field of pop there were one-shots on Tommy Sands, Ricky Nelson, Fabian and Frankie Avalon, Edd "Kookie" Byrnes, Dick Clark, *American Bandstand* and the twist. There were three one-shots on Pat Boone, four on James Dean and several on Harry Belafonte and the calypso boom.

But the clear-cut champion of the one-shot was Elvis Presley, who had thirteen different magazines devoted exclusively to him, most of which sold between 500,000 and 1 million copies each — quite amazing sales when you think of all the other books, magazines and merchandise related to the Elvis phenomenon. The one-shots had such titles as *Elvis Answers Back*, *The Amazing Elvis Presley*, *Elvis Presley Speaks*, *Elvis Presley in Hollywood*, *Elvis in the Army*, *Elvis: His Loves and Marriage* and *Elvis Presley: Hero or Heel?* They are filled with little-known facts about Elvis, photos of Elvis in concert and on television, candid shots and articles that often have an interesting editorial slant. Other notable one-shots include *Rock 'n' Roll Battlers* (1956), mainly devoted to Elvis, Bill Haley and Pat Boone, and *Rock 'n' Roll Rivals* (1957), featuring the weird mix of Elvis, Tab Hunter, Pat Boone and Tommy Sands. In the fall of 1956 came *Rock 'n' Roll Jamboree*, one of the first integrated rock publications. A great magazine, it featured profiles of Alan Freed, LaVern Baker, Clyde McPhatter, Carl Perkins, Bo Diddley and many others. *Rock 'n' Roll Stars* began as a one-shot but was so successful that it ultimately had three issues, roughly one each in 1956, 1957 and 1958. Like *Rock 'n' Roll Jamboree*, it was integrated; along with the usual array of big names, it had features on some often-overlooked performers, like Frankie Lyman, Ruth Brown, Screamin' Jay Hawkins, the Cadillacs, Andre Williams and Ivory Joe Hunter. In 1957 came *Rock 'n' Roll Yearbook*, which is notable for its coverage of regional stars and lesser-known performers. Also in 1957 came a square-bound soft-cover mass-market book-magazine called *Who's Who in Rock 'n' Roll*, which is the most complete publication devoted to early rock. There are pictures and bios of more than 200 performers, including the stars, the one-hit wonders and the also-rans. It's a veritable encyclopedia of its era and is a must for fans and collectors.

The second major category of early rock magazines is the continuing publications. Of these, the seminal magazine has to be *Rhythm and Blues*, a Charlton publication that first appeared in 1952. Predating the rock and roll explosion by several years, it was unmatched in tracing rock's R&B roots, with profiles, stories and

pictures of performers, mainly black, whose work was not widely covered in the mass media. The magazine covered jazz, blues, R&B, jump, vocal groups and more. The 1950s issues of *Rhythm and Blues* were erratically distributed and are very difficult to find today. In 1955, Charlton brought us a short-lived title, *Ebony Song Parade*, which dealt primarily with some of the more middle-of-the-road black performers of the era. Charlton also published *Hit Parader* and *Song Hits*, both already established magazines that covered whatever was popular at any given moment. In 1956 the company began to issue *Rock 'n' Roll Songs*, which focused mainly on performers that the publishers felt fit the rock and roll tag. Besides the usual profiles, stories and pictures, all Charlton titles featured song lyrics to popular (and some lesser-known) songs of the era.

Late in 1955 came *Dig*, the first publication that saw rock and roll as part of a new teenage culture. The magazine tried to be truly trend setting, covering clothes, hair styles, movies and music. *Dig* was lively and irreverent, and copies are essential to any study of teen culture and fads of the Fifties. In 1957, the publishers of *Dig*, which seems to have been tailored primarily for teen boys, began another magazine, *Modern Teen*, geared more toward girls. *Modern Teen* was less exciting than *Dig*, and as time went on it devoted more and more space to the teen idols. The only real competitors to *Dig* were *Hep Cats* and *Cool*, both started in 1957. They were issued somewhat erratically but were streetwise, hip and very informative. They certainly lived up to their titles, as they were indeed cool and for hep cats only. In 1958 the two merged as *Cool & Hep Cats*, which became, by the early Sixties, rather tame and run-of-the-mill. But the first two years, before and after the merger, are close to unbeatable.

Movie Teen Illustrated, one of the most valuable magazines of the era, also began publication in 1957. Its early issues concentrated mainly on James Dean and Elvis Presley. The magazine featured mostly one-of-a-kind photos, many of which were artful and poignant. The stories were a bit more serious and knowledgeable than most. *Rock and Roll Roundup* only published four issues (between January and July of 1957), but it offered in-depth stories and interviews, as well as interesting photos, often in color, a rarity for the early rock and roll magazines. It also had features on black artists, and its demise was a significant loss to the field. The same company gave us *Teenage Rock and Roll Review*, the first issue of which came out in October of 1956. This publication was pretty good, but as time went on the editors seemed to try to show how safe and clean-cut rock and roll was. The title was later changed to *Teenage Review* and finally just to *Teenage*, but by that time (late 1957), the magazine's squeaky-clean outlook made it pretty forgettable.

The other two magazines of the era worth mentioning are *'Teen* and *16*. *'Teen* began in 1957 as a pretty hip magazine, but it became filled with rather boring fiction and clean, fluffy features on such subjects as fashion and dating. Still, the early issues are worth tracking down. Debuting in May of 1957, *16* was the final significant publication of the era. Early issues were devoted heavily to James Dean and Elvis Presley. In the first two years, the magazine was published erratically and the editorial focus changed often. But in the late Fifties, the magazine latched onto the coming teen-idol boom and rode that wave to its crest, becoming one of the few publications that had the power to make (and sometimes break) stars. While most Fifties mags were gone by 1960, *16* was able to go with each changing trend, from early rock and roll to the British Invasion and beyond. Although over the years it became rather lightweight, being geared primarily to young girls, it was certainly important and trend setting, and its early issues are packed with good photos and information.

I've outlined only the most significant of the magazines that came and went in rock's early days. They are invaluable artifacts of Fifties music and culture. As we honor tonight's inductees, we shouldn't forget the importance of these publications. They too had to fight their way to the top, often in the face of heavy opposition, and many battled to preserve rock's energy and integrity and to spread the word about performers and their music. They deserve a mention in tonight's celebration of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.