Introduction to Rock Music

The Rise of Rhythm and Blues
The Great War
World War II

How did the beginning of World War II and what was happening in American society help the music and recording industry?
Understanding Intellectual Property

- Copyright Act of 1909
  - Managed by the US Library of Congress
  - Material that is copyrighted is the intellectual property of the creator until 75 years AFTER the creator's death

- Communications Act of 1934
  - Any original material broadcast to the public is still the property of the creator. The creator or copyright owner must be compensated for the dissemination or use of their material in a public setting.

- ASCAP & BMI
Big Bands to Solo Singers

- Radio as a “live” versus “canned” art form.

- As previous musical forms developed, the swing era emerged with the prospect of keeping radio a live art. The main emphasis was on instrumental music for the purpose of dance with the vocalists being extremely limited. However, many would gain popularity to begin solo careers.
Famous Solo Singers

- Bing Crosby: “Swingin’ on a Star”
- Ella Fitzgerald: “A Tisket, A Tasket”
- Nat King Cole
- Peggy Lee

While the rise of the solo singer career gave way to both white and black artists, male and female, the era was dominated by White Italian American men.

Perry Cuomo, Dean Martin, Tony Bennett

And then...Ol’ Blue Eyes: Frank Sinatra

“Sultan of Swoon”

Italian American
First “Pop” Vocalist
Against racial and religious intolerance
Controversy of “Mafia” ties (and even communist links)
Changed the idea of big bands backed up by vocalists to vocalists backed up by the bands.
Solo Singers to the Reclaiming of Specialty Music

► After WWII, the big-band/swing era was dealt a death blow with the encouragement of our society for women and minorities to “go back to the way things were.” The result was the end of an era.

► With the end of the war, more specialty music became widely available due to the increased availability of vinylite, the material used to make records.

  ▪ Also a change in terminology:
    ► “Race” music became Rhythm & Blues
    ► “Hillybilly” becomes country or country-western
      ▪ Hank Williams: Hey Good Lookin
The Rise of R & B

- Promoted predominantly by Independent Labels for the African American market.

- R & B came to the forefront for working-class African American families.
  - Produced first for the black community
    - Eventually record labels would encourage black and white artists to record each other’s material to appeal to a larger audience—both as R&B and as C&W. This was mostly for reasons of profit.
  - Huge Rhythms and Vocals
    - “…the louder the instrumental accompaniment and the more harshly screamed the singing, the more expressive the music was.”
  - Suggestive Content
  - Louis Jordan and the Tympani Five
  - Ruth Brown: “Mama He Treats Your Daughter Mean”
    - Atlantic Records: The house that Ruth built (not Yankee Stadium and Babe Ruth!)
  - Aided by technology
    - Jukeboxes, Independent Deejays
Technology Brings Music Even More the Forefront of Postwar Society

- Magnetic Tape (Magnetophone)
  - Developed in the 1800’s but perfected by the Nazi’s.
  - More durable, more portable, and less expensive
  - 3M

- Transistor
  - performed the function of a vacuum tube, but could be made smaller and required less power.
  - Brought about development of the portable radio

- High Fidelity
  - Development of the 33rpm (LP) record (and a competition between companies that would also yield the 45rpm record).
    Played longer due to more grooves per inch. Held more material.

  - It is important to note that thanks to these inventions, records surpassed sheet music as a the primary source of revenue in 1952.
Television and FM Radio

Television’s development headed the suppression of FM (Frequency Modulation) radio, even though FM greatly enhanced the sound quality of radio. Early technology advocated for AM (Amplitude Modulation).
Deejays take to the Air

- **Alan Freed**
  - Father of Rock ‘n’ Roll
  - 1955: The Year R & B Took Over Pop Field.

- What was the effect of Deejays such as Alan Freed on the music industry and eventual “eruption” of Rock ‘n’ Roll? What did this do, or how did this change American Society forever?
HOMEWORK REMINDER!

• No Class this Thursday, April 8th.
• Read Chapter 4 for next Tuesday, April 13th.
• Be sure to run your term paper topic by me. All must be approved by the 15th.