

THE EVOLUTION OF MUSIC IN AMERICA

Infographic by Julie Deacon

1920'S: THE JAZZ AGE



The 1920s was a decade dominated by jazz, blues, and traveling bands following World War I. The American economy was booming and music, similar to the overall consensus of the country, was optimistic and upbeat. A few of the most notable twenties artists were legends like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Bessie Smith.

1930'S: A DIVERSE SOUND

The music of the 1930s reflected many different facets of the country following the Great Depression. Genres like blues and country reflected hardships many citizens were facing, while other genres like swing and big band remained upbeat to rally the country. A few of the most notable artists were Bing Crosby, Rudy Vallee, and Cab Calloway.



1940'S: POST-WORLD WAR II



Much of the music in the 1940s reflected the pain of World War II while also trying to look towards a better future. Many artists put effort into entertaining troops and trying to keep an upbeat attitude. Jazz, swing, country, and bebop were the predominant genres. A few of the most notable artists during the decade were Frank Sinatra, Billie Holiday, Bing Crosby, and Ella Fitzgerald.

1950'S: THE BIRTH OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

The 1950s represented the beginning of many different genres: rock and roll, R&B, and traditional pop were on the rise. The decade itself was incredibly varied in its musicality and reflected many of the social changes America was undergoing. A few of the most notable artists during this decade were Elvis Presley, Nat King Cole, The Everley Brothers, and Chuck Berry.



1960'S: BEATLEMANIA



The genres of rock and roll and pop were further developed with the emergence of the best-selling and most popular band of all time, The Beatles. Psychedelic rock, pop, soul, country, and blues were also on the rise. A few of the most notable artists were The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Aretha Franklin, The Rolling Stones, James Brown, and Simon and Garfunkel.

1970'S: A NEW EMERGENCE

While the 1970s were also dominated by rock and roll, new genres of disco and dance music, funk, and soft rock emerged. A few of the most notable artists during this decade were Elton John, Carole King, Fleetwood Mac, Marvin Gaye, Paul Simon, Queen, Billy Joel, Joni Mitchell, The Jackson 5, The Who, and Diana Ross.



"MUSIC HAS THE ABILITY TO TAKE US TO OTHER PLACES AND MAKE US FORGET. NOTHING IS AS IMPORTANT AS THAT."

- ELTON JOHN

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1980S: PERFORMATIVE MUSIC

The 1980s put an emphasis on the visual and performing aspects of music in ways not seen before, shown in artists like Michael Jackson. Other notable artists during this decade were Dolly Parton, Bruce Springsteen, David Bowie, Garth Brooks, The Police, Phil Collins, and Whitney Houston.

1990S: A RANGE OF GENRES

The 1990s saw an incredible range in the genres present in popular music. On one hand, powerful female singers like Mariah Carey, Celine Dion, and Whitney Houston dominated. However, the genre of rap evolved greatly during this decade as well as hip-hop and bubblegum pop. Additionally, boy bands like the Backstreet Boys and N'Sync emerged and dominated.



2000S: EVOLUTION OF POP

The 2000s were defined by artists like Nirvana, Destiny's Child, Eminem, Madonna, Gwen Stefani, and Beyonce. Many of the same artists from the 90s remained popular, like Mariah Carey and Justin Timberlake. Pop music was evolving and splitting into many different sub-genres, many of which were explored in the following decade.



2010S: POP MUSIC DOMINATES

Within the dominating genre of pop music, genres such as rap, EDM, dubstep, and alternative have further emerged. This past decade has also shown a blend of many different genres of music in ways previously unseen. A few of the most notable artists from this past decade are Taylor Swift, Adele, Beyonce, Bruno Mars, Ed Sheeran, and Drake.



HOW WE LISTEN TO MUSIC

The ways that we listen to music have evolved just as much as the music we listen to. Records and radio began as the earliest forms of listening to music, but then came the development of CDs and, eventually, technology. Today, we have instant access to any music we want via streaming platforms. Regardless, while not as heavily used, the earliest forms of listening to music remain at our disposal.

THE POWER OF MUSIC

Over the course of history, music has been regarded as one of the most powerful and expressive artforms. I believe this is because not only can music resonate with us, it can expand our worldview. Music has certainly shaped and changed the way I look at the world around me and enhanced my way of living. I truly believe there is music out there for everyone if you look in the right places and that music has the power to move us, inspire us, and make us better people.

"MUSIC IS EVERYBODY'S POSSESSION: IT KEEPS UP HONEST, IT MOTIVATES US. THAT IS WHY I LOVE IT."
- JOHN LENNON