

American Popular Music

Caldonia

Xavier Cugat



- “Brazil”- 1943
 - One of most recorded songs of all time
 - Repeated syncopated pattern = hook
 - European composition + Afro-Brazilian musical traditions
 - Carmen Miranda performance

I don't need you to write this

- *Americans know nothing about Latin music. They neither understand nor feel it. So they have to be given music more for the eyes than the ears. 80% visual, the rest aural. To succeed in America I gave the Americans a Latin music that had nothing authentic about it. Then I began to change the music and play more legitimately.*
 - *~Xavier Cugat*

End of Swing

- By end of 1946, many big bands broke up
- Mainstream taste shifts
- Music Business changes
 - ASCAP vs radio networks
 - Strike and withdrawal of rights to play members' music
 - BMI counterattack
 - AFM union strike

Technology in Post War Era

- WWII: 1939-1945
- Postwar Developments
 - Magnetic tape recording -> overdubbing
 - Rapid growth of FM radio
 - Television broadcast

Frank Sinatra

- Dominant pop singer of postwar era
- Big Band singer goes solo after recording ban
 - Became first teen idol
 - “Swoonatra” “The Voice”
 - Women screamed, cried, tore their hair
 - First documented example of modern pop hysteria
- “You Do Something to Me” – 1950
 - Swing influence
 - “played the microphone”



Nat "King" Cole

- Most popular and important black pop artist of postwar era
- Jazz pianist
- First black star to host national network TV show
- "Unforgettable" 1951



The Weavers

- First commercially successful urban folk group
 - **Pete Seeger**: singer, banjo, political activist
 - Union rallies, college campuses, coffee shops
 - Accused of being communists
- “Goodnight Irene” - 1950
 - Strophic form
 - Defines niche for folk in popular market



Mambo Craze

- Most popular form of Latin dance in U.S.
 - 1949-1955
 - Branch of Cuban tradition (Xavier Cugat)
 - Influence of rumba, son, danzón
 - Mambo ramps up energy on dance floor
 - Repetition in horns, C&R, solos

Perez Prado

- Perez Prado
 - Most influential in popularizing mambo in Latin Am. & U.S.
 - “King of Mambo”
- “Mambo No. 5” - 1949
 - Simplified Afro-Cuban rhythms
 - Rhythmic building blocks



Mambo Craze

- Rosemary Clooney
 - “Mambo Italiano”- 1954
 - Former big band singer
 - Latino/Italian stereotypes performed by Irish American
 - Core audience of Latin music: blacks, Jews and Italians



Rhythm and Blues

- Race and Hillbilly music name changes
- **Rhythm & Blues** and **Country & Western**
more dignified and up-to-date
 - Migration of Southerners to cities
 - FM radio
 - Indie labels

Louis Jordan

- Led band *Tympany Five*
 - Most successful & influential jump band
 - Saxophone, singer, comedian
 - White and black appeal
- “Choo Choo Ch’Boogie” - 1946
 - Boogie-woogie bass and simple riffs
 - Verse/chorus
- “Caldonia” - 1945



Ruth Brown

- Arguably top female R&B performer of early 1950s
- Helped Atlantic Records in R&B market
- Speech-like phrasing of blues singers



Mama He Treats...

Mama he treats your daughter mean
Mama he treats your daughter mean
Mama he treats your daughter mean
He's the meanest man I've ever seen

Mama he treats me badly
Makes me love him madly
Mama he takes my money
Makes me call him honey

Mama he can't be trusted
Makes me so disgusted
All of my friends say they don't understand
What's the matter with this man

I tell you Mama he treats your daughter mean
Mama he treats your daughter mean
Mama he treats your daughter mean
He's the meanest man I've ever seen

Mama this man is lazy
Almost drives me crazy
Mama he makes me squeeze him
Still my squeeze don't please him

Mama my heart is achin'
I believe it's breakin'
I've stood all that I can stand
What's the matter with this man?

I tell you Mama he treats your daughter mean
Mama he treats your daughter mean
Mama he treats your daughter mean
He's the meanest man I've ever seen

Ruth Brown

- “Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean” – 1953
 - Woman’s response to male posturing
 - Crossover success
 - Hoarse voice
 - Squeaks, moans at end of phrases



Country & Western

- Post war era: rapid spread of C&W
 - Grand Ole Opry
 - Record labels in Nashville & Southern CA
 - Capitol Records
 - By 1950: country music = $\frac{1}{3}$ of all U.S. record sales

Country & Western

- Patti Page
 - “Tennessee Waltz” - 1950
 - Influence of 19th ce. waltz tradition
 - Multi-track tape recording: Patti sings duet with herself
 - Mercury Records becomes major label



Bluegrass

- Bill Monroe
 - Blue Grass Boys joined Grand Ole Opry cast
 - Black musician/blues influence
 - Traditional Appalachian Mountain singing
 - Fiddle, mandolin, guitar, banjo, string bass
- "It's Mighty Dark to Travel"- 1947



Hank Williams

- Most significant country music figure during post war era
 - Wrote many songs
 - Hard-living, hard-loving rambler
 - Born into poverty
 - Fired from Grand Ole Opry
 - Alcohol and drug problem- died at 29 of heart attack
 - *"Your Cheatin' Heart"*
 - *"Cold Cold Heart"*
 - *"I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry"*

Hank Williams

- “I’m So Lonesome I Could Cry”-
1949
 - Timeless lament
 - Waltz-like rhythm
 - Strophic form
 - Country images in lyrics



Videos from class

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFyuOEovTOE>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCH_ngCTTbA
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnmbJruEkKw>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_XtPwR5faE