1. The Late 1960s and Psychedelic Rock
Lecture Outline

• The 1960s Rock Revolution
• What is Psychedelia?
• What does it sound like?
• San Francisco
  – Jefferson Airplane, The Grateful Dead
• London
  – The Beatles
• Los Angeles
  – The Beach Boys
• Modern Psychedelic Rock
• Outdoor Festivals
The 1960s Rock Revolution

- Stylistic explosion
- Commercial dominance
- Social changes: blurring of boundaries
  - Race
  - Class
  - Geographic
- Global Influence
Psychedelia

• Haight-Ashbury neighbourhood of San Francisco, 1965-67
  – Another important scene developed a little later in London

• This scene becomes mainstream and hits a peak in the summer of 1967, aka “The Summer of Love”

• 1960s: poster art, comics, light shows
The Connection with Psychedelic Drugs

• 1950s: there is a growing interest in psychedelic drugs
  – Aldous Huxley’s “Doors of Perception” on his experiments with mescaline

• New ways of experiencing the world
  – Psychedelic drugs (esp. LSD and marijuana)

• Often mixed with philosophy and an interest in Eastern religions like Buddhism

• LSD seen as a drug that could open doors of higher perception, previously only available to mystics and visionaries like Buddhist monks
  – “Truth” through meditation vs. through drugs
• Dr. Timothy Leary
• Ken Kesey’s Acid Tests
• Merry Pranksters’ bus
• Tom Wolfe
Musical Features of Psychedelic Rock

• An interest in “Eastern” musical devices
  – Extended improvisation, drones, scales outside of the Western major/minor

• Experimentation with sound: finding new sounds or ways to make old sounds unfamiliar
  – Eastern instruments (sitar) and electronic instruments (Theremin)
  – Effects: Leslie speaker, fuzz, wah wah, tape loops, etc.

• Emphasis on long (often blues based) improvisations
  – Especially in the case of The Grateful Dead

• In general, surreal lyrics and lyrical references to childhood literature
The Sound of Psychedelic Rock

• Although drugs had been part of popular culture for a long time, psychedelic rock (aka “acid rock”) was the first style of music which actively sought to depict a particular drug experience, and/or to enhance it.

• Q: How might the following musical examples relate to the psychedelic drug experience?
Jefferson Airplane

Ex: Jefferson Airplane – “White Rabbit” (1967)

- Vaguely Spanish/Middle Eastern guitar riff
- Drums play a bolero-type rhythm
- *Alice in Wonderland* lyrical references
- “feed your head”
  - Psychedelic drugs reference
The Grateful Dead

- House band for Ken Kesey’s “acid tests” - $1 entrance fee, band, light shows, LSD included...

- Jam band: long, improvisational performances
  - Their first three albums featured short, radio-length songs, completely unlike their live performances

Ex: The Grateful Dead - “Dark Star” (1969)

- From their fourth (live) album (*Live/Dead*)
- What are some psychedelic features of this recording?
Janis Joplin

• Helped pave the way for women in rock

Video Ex: Big Brother and the Holding Company
– “Ball & Chain”
(live, Monterey Pop Festival 1967)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1zFnyEe3nE

• Vocal virtuosity
• Blues-oriented acid rock
Sly & The Family Stone

• Integrated collective, psychedelic elements

Ex: Sly & The Family Stone
   – “Thank You (Falettin Me Be Mice Elf Again)” (1969)

• Psychedelic funk
• One-chord song (static harmony)
• Riffs: bass, guitars, voice, horns
• Lyrics
• Bass: Larry Graham
Psychedelic Rock and Overlaps with “Art rock”

• Psychedelic and “art” elements difficult to distinguish, or were one and the same
  – Although not all “art rock” bands were psychedelic

• In general, “art rock” describes music that was trying to be more like classical music
  – It was music for listening rather than dancing
    • Psychedelic rock was often called “head music”
  – That is was experimenting, about finding new ideas
  – It was complex and difficult to compose and/or perform
  – That it deserved to be taken “seriously”
Psychedelic London

• The Beatles became interested in studio experimentation and in psychedelia at the same time (c. 1965-66)

• Because they were already extremely famous, they became important popularizers for both trends (art rock and psychedelic rock)

Ex: The Beatles – “Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds” (1967)

• Verses: dreamy, waltz time, psychedelic images (marmalade skies)
  – Musical acid trip

• From Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967)
  – See next slide
The Beatles – *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967)

1. Reverse Tape Effect/Tape loops
   – i.e. laughing seagull sound
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrzq7SbmhgE

2. Backwards guitar (1:08-1:25)
   – Sound fades in
     • guitar, piano, drums normally get quieter right after being struck
     • Other backwards sounds:
       Ex: Yes – “Roundabout” (1971)

3. Vocals through a Leslie speaker (1:26)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv2DC5vx_V8
Reverse Tape Effect

• **Back masking**
  – A deliberate process

• “Hidden messages” in recordings

Satanic message?

**Ex: Led Zeppelin – “Stairway to Heaven” (1971) :30**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXpEtF4i1oI

Poking fun:

**Ex: Weird Al Yankovic – “I Remember Larry”**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=39&v=PNL1lYc3A7k
Ex. The Rolling Stones – “Paint It, Black” (1966)

• Brian Jones on **sitar** (see next slide)
• Note scale sound
• Lyrics change throughout, so no chorus
  – Chord patterns/melodies are repeated so it sounds like a verse-chorus form
Sitar

• Indian classical instrument
• In its current form, 18\textsuperscript{th} c. or earlier
• 18-21 strings; 6-7 played, the rest are sympathetic (drone) strings

Video Ex: Ravi Shankar, Sitar
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmOlh1lqWzc
Cream

• Deemed rock’s first “supergroup”
  – When they formed, all three were well-known musicians in their own right

• Power trio

• Disraeli Gears cover (on right)

Ex: Cream – “Tales of Brave Ulysses” (1967)
The Jimi Hendrix Experience

- In ranking of “best guitarists” Jimi is always ranked #1
  - Influence across genres
- American guitarist, moved to London, September 1966
- Managed by Chas Chandler
  (bassist with the Animals)

Ex: The Jimi Hendrix Experience
- “Purple Haze” (1967)
- Psychedelic blues
Jimi Hendrix

• More than anyone else, he defined rock-based improvisation
• New sonic possibilities for the guitar (and within pop generally)

Ex: The Jimi Hendrix Experience

– “Voodoo Child (Slight Return)”
(1968)

• New guitar sounds
• Virtuosity
The Los Angeles Psychedelic Scene

• The Beatles are usually portrayed as the most important rock experimentalists in the mid-1960s, but they had some competition
• Perhaps their biggest (friendly) rivals were The Beach Boys
• Brian Wilson (the leader of The Beach Boys):
  – Increasingly interested in studio experiments in the mid-1960s
Ex: The Beach Boys – “Good Vibrations” (1966)

• Took at least five months to record
• Unusual sounds/instrument combinations:
  – 6 Vocalists
  – Drums, Bass (Fuzz bass), Guitar, Organ
  – Percussion (Timpani, Tambourine, Maracas, sleigh bells)
  – Upright bass, Cello
  – Clarinet, Piccolo, Harmonica
  – Harpsichord
  – Electro-Theremin

• Tape splice: collage recording technique
  – 90 hours of tape

• “Pocket Symphony”
“Good Vibrations” (1966): Sectional Form

Song Structure: ABABCDB’E

Verse (Bass countermelody)
  Chorus (hook is repeated 3 times in a new key)
Verse
  Chorus
    Bridge 1 (1:41)
      Bridge 2 (2:12) 5 part harmony
    Chorus (reverse order of chord progression)
Outro (Coda)
The Doors

- Blues and psychedelic rock
- Dark side of psychedelia
- 1965-1971
- Organ

Ex: The Doors – “Light My Fire” (1967)

- Sex, drugs, death
- One of two #1 singles
  - Many covers
Modern Psychedelic Rock

Tame Impala

• Australian Kevin Parker plays all the parts on record
• Has a band to tour

Ex: Tame Impala
  – “Apocalypse Dreams” (2012)
Outdoor Music Festivals

• Large outdoor festivals are now common everywhere, but really started in the late 1960s

Monterey International Pop Festival

• June 1967, Monterey, California
• Bands from San Francisco, LA and London
• The Jimi Hendrix Experience’s introduction to a US audience

Video Ex: Monterey Pop Official Trailer

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNrygTqx0FA
Woodstock

- August 1969, upstate New York
- At least 400,000-500,000 people attended
  - Most for free
- Folk, psychedelic, hard rock, R&B
- Cultural legacy


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEaMka89dM4
Jimi Hendrix at Woodstock

• Jimi Hendrix, 8:30am Monday: small crowd

Video Ex: Jimi Hendrix – “Star Spangled Banner”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mwlymq0iTsw
Altamont

• December 1969, racetrack near San Francisco
• Symbolic end of the hippie/“Summer of Love” era
• Hell’s Angels provided security
  – They were connected with hippie counterculture in strange ways; often attended acid tests
• An Angels member killed a fan, caught on film

Video Ex: *Gimme Shelter* Documentary Trailer (1970)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W57q8F84HW0