2. 1970s Rock
Lecture Outline

- The 1970s in general
- Country Rock
- Southern Rock
- Blues Rock
- Roots Rock
- Soft Rock
- Progressive Rock
- Art Rock
- Glam
- Jazz Rock
- Disco
Rock in the 1970s

• Rock is Big Business
  – Radio formats
  – Record label consolidation
  – Large concerts, arena tours
  – New playback technology

• Like the 1960s, there are several new rock subgenres and continuations/transformations of older styles
  – Hard Rock, Heavy Metal and Punk will be covered in separate lectures
The 1970s saw the birth and rapid rise of funk, glam, disco, electro, ambient, new age, heavy metal, prog rock, punk, new wave, and hip-hop. Arguably, no radically new pop genre has emerged since then—all can be said to be subgenres of one of these. This was, of course, also the decade that featured much of the most banal and cliché-ridden rock ever, along with some of its most deafeningly experimental moments. Name any possible quality of rock music, from schlocky to heavy, from hard to soft, from clever to dumb, from ecstatic to depressing, and you’ll find unparalleled examples in the 1970s.
Country Rock

• A somewhat absurd title since country had been a part of rock since the beginning (i.e. rockabilly)
• But throughout the 1960s, country and rock had separate fan bases, industry homes, and ideologies
• There was still some overlap: Neil Young, the Grateful Dead
• c. 1969: the idea of country rock began to emerge as a distinct genre
• Sonically: Acoustic and electric instruments, close vocal harmonies, pop songwriting
  – Instruments like the pedal steel are an obvious country sound
The Band

- Originally worked as Ronnie Hawkins backing band in Toronto, 1960 – The Hawks
- 4 out of 5 members are Canadian (Levon Helm was from Arkansas)
- Robbie Robertson, Aboriginal Canadian guitar player
- A unique range of influences between them – Blues and R&B, country music, gospel, and classical
- Bob Dylan: electric tours in 1965-66
- The Band’s first solo record, 1968
The Band, circa 1968
Ex: The Band – "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" (1969)

• Invented tradition: Americana
  – Role of Canadian and British fantasy in creating it
• A generally “acoustic” kind of sound, even though many electric instruments were used
• Three lead singers, no one instrumentalist stands out above the rest

• Q: How does this relate to earlier 1960s styles?
• Is country rock a continuation, or a break, or both?
The Eagles

- The other major early country rock group
- From Los Angeles

Ex: The Eagles – “Take It Easy” (1972)
  - High harmonies like Beach Boys, Everly Brothers, Beatles
  - Polished sound, more pop friendly
  - Acoustic and electric instruments
  - Guitar that sounds like a steel guitar
  - Banjo
Neil Young

- Yorkville (Toronto), 1965; California 1966
- Buffalo Springfield
  - Folk rock group formed in 1966
  - 3/5 members Canadian
- Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young (CSNY)
- Solo: country rock album, *Harvest* (1972)

Ex: Neil Young – "Heart of Gold" (1972)

- What are the country rock elements?
Southern Rock

• Combines blues rock, R&B, psychedelic, country
• Double or triple lead guitars
• Long jams, virtuosity, improvisations
• Important bands: Allman Brothers, Lynyrd Skynyrd

• Describes bands from the Southern United States
• Also a marketing term to describe bands from the South by rock writers in the North and the West coast
  – Often uses stereotypes of white Southerners
    • Heavy drinking, guns, Confederate flags, pickup trucks
• Influence on The Sheepdogs
The Allman Brothers Band

• Long jam style, difficult to capture in the recording studio


Intro (11/8 meter)

• bars 1-2: two bar bass riff (centre), hi-hat enters in bar 2
• bars 3-4: guitar (L) with treble emphasis, snare drum
• bars 5-6: 2nd guitar (R) in medium register, more distorted
• bars 7-8: organ enters

Verse 1 (12/8 meter)

• Vocals: two 4-bar phrases, then two-bar set up to chorus (“sometimes I feel…”)

Chorus

• “Tied to the whipping post” 3 times, then “good lord I feel like I’m dyin’” over stop-time bar
• Both guitars respond to/imitate the vocal lines

Transition based on Intro (11/8)

Guitar solo based on Verse pattern
Lynyrd Skynyrd

- More radio-friendly than the Allman Brothers Band
- More specific Southern imagery

• A current example of a Southern Rock group
  - Or least, a group that is very much influenced by Southern Rock

Ex: The Sheepdogs – “Southern Dreaming” (2011)
1970s Blues Rock Bands:

- The Guess Who
- Bachman-Turner Overdrive
- Santana
- ZZ Top

- These bands cover a range of blues-influenced rock styles, so in a way this section covers a broader range of material than some of the others that we’ve looked at.
The Guess Who

• First significant Canadian rock band
  – Peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s
• Origin of name “The Guess Who”

• Surface-level, standard anti-Americanism of the time
• First Canadian single to hit #1 in US and Canada

• In general, The Guess Who were perceived as being more on the pop end of the rock spectrum, rather than the countercultural/heavy end
• 1970: Guess Who are best-selling band in the world
Bachman-Turner Overdrive (BTO)

- Originally formed in 1970 as a country band
- 1972: renamed BTO; the band moved in a hard rock direction

Ex: Bachman-Turner Overdrive – "Takin' Care of Business" (1973)

- Elements of blues rock, British metal, and pop, with a blue-collar/working class image
  - This was a mix that would be very successful for many stadium rock bands into the 1980s
  - vs. prog rock aesthetic, for example
Santana

• Style: Latin Rock
• Psychedelic and blues elements
• “Latin Rock”
  – Some Spanish lyrics
  – Congas and other Latin percussion
• Long improvised jams like the Allman Brothers Band

Ex: Santana – “Oye Como Va” (1970)
ZZ Top

• Texas blues rock
• Tight radio songs like Lynyrd Skynyrd

Ex: ZZ Top – “La Grange” (1973)
• Based on John Lee Hooker’s “Boogie Chillen” (1948)
Roots Rock

• Emerged in the mid-60s as a response to complexity of art and psychedelic rock
• More about connections to country, blues and folk
• Beatles – *Let It Be* album
  – Back to basics following earlier studio experimentations
• Rolling Stones – *Beggar’s Banquet* and *Let It Bleed*
  – Return to blues roots
Creedence Clearwater Revival (CCR)

• Sound like (and often mistaken for) a Southern rock band
  – Songs about the Bayou, etc.
  – Southern themes align them with country rock
  – From San Francisco area

Ex: Creedence Clearwater Revival
  – “Proud Mary” (1969)
Soft Rock

• Easy listening, MOR (“Middle of the Road”) rock, lots of mainstream radio play in 70s

Ex: Fleetwood Mac – “Go Your Own Way” (1977)

• Blues band in late 60s; Progressive early 70s
• Mainstream rock by mid 70s
• *Rumours* (1977) one of top selling albums ever

https://www.riaa.com/gold-platinum/?tab_active=top_tallies&ttt=T1A#search_section
Soft Rock (cont.)

Ex: The Eagles – “Hotel California” (1976)

• Double lead guitar
• Reggae influenced
  – Offbeat guitar during verse
• 12 string acoustic and electric, plus other guitars (guitar city?)
• Lyrics: Hedonistic California lifestyle
Progressive Rock

• 1966-68: term applied to any experimental stuff (Cream, Beatles, Hendrix)
  – Although these bands wouldn’t be called “progressive rock” today
  – In the late 1960s, *progressive FM radio* referred to stations which played long album cuts (instead of short singles), and less obviously commercial material

• Early 70s, more specific meaning: classical, jazz and rock elements
• Beatles and psychedelic ambition both influences on the subgenre
• Psychedelic: fantasy and magic, long songs, sonic experimentation
• Roots in UK, white males
  – Black roots of rock mostly erased
General Features of Prog Rock Bands

• An attitude of superiority
  – What are the implications of calling yourself ‘progressive’?
  – Some rockers saw the whole concept of ‘art rock’ as an oxymoron (why?)

• Aiming for the prestige normally given to classical music

• Very long songs (sometimes full album songs), often in sectional form

• Many changes of texture, key, tempo, and time signature
  – A generally unpredictable formal approach
  – Asymmetrical time signatures – not danceable

• An emphasis on instrumental virtuosity

• Keyboards as the main instrument

• Lyrics: philosophy, politics, big questions, i.e. generally not love songs
King Crimson

• Debut album: *In the Court of the Crimson King* (1969)
  – Helped set the template for what progressive rock would be
• Blend of dissonance (20th C avant-garde classical), modern jazz
  and 19th C. classical elements
• Ex: King Crimson
  – Aggressive vocals
  – Virtuosic middle section with odd rhythms
  – Stop time parts
Emerson, Lake & Palmer

• Progressive rock (like heavy metal) tended to be largely ignored by the press and commercial radio. Although both genres were very successful in the early 1970s, this was largely through word of mouth and touring.

Ex: Emerson, Lake, and Palmer

– “Karn Evil No. 9 – 1st Impression, Part 2” (1973)

• Sectional, lots of layers, fantasy lyrics

• Emphasis on synthesizer and organ

• Radical time changes: tempo and time; textural changes too

• Relates to classical “suite” – pieces that could stand alone, but played together
  – Started in rock with Side 2 of The Beatles’ album Abbey Road
Pink Floyd

- *Dark Side of the Moon* (1973)
  - Ex: Pink Floyd – “Money” (1973)
  - Tape loop of sound effects
    - *musique concrète*
  - 12 bar blues patterning AAB
    - A: bass riff in 7/4
    - B: 7/2
    - Guitar solo in 4/4
      - Becomes the contrasting time signature
Moog Synthesizers

Video Ex: 50th Anniversary of the Moog Modular Synthesizer

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7TJyPAtiQ
Synthesizers

Ex: Ohio Players – “Funky Worm” (1972) (:45)
Yes

• Some albums have no space between songs, functioning as one long song
• Lyrics: spirituality,
  Eastern religious concepts (psychedelic)

Ex: Yes – “Roundabout” (1971)

• Longer, complex form
  – But still recognizable pop form sections
• Synth, mellotron, organ, electric & acoustic guitars
• Classical features:
  reusing melodic material in new ways
Rush

- Canadian power trio
- Virtuosity, concept albums
- Changing styles: metal to prog to metal/prog

Video Ex: Rush

- "Tom Sawyer" music video (1981)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNrI4MSTXBU
- Continually cited as an influence by many progressive rock and metal artists globally
- Largely ignored or put down by radio and by mainstream critics
“Art Rock”

• Related to progressive rock in terms of:
  – Ambition
  – Experimentation
  – large scale song structures
  – an emphasis on virtuosity

• Even more emphasis on theatricality and avant-garde visuals
Pink Floyd

• *The Wall* (1979), double album
• Concept album (“Rock Opera”)
• Concept tour/spectacle

Ex: Pink Floyd

  – “Comfortably Numb” (1979)

• Spoken sections
• Vocals: Verses: Waters
  Chorus: Gilmour
The Who

• *Who’s Next* (1971)
  – The album that “turned the synthesizer into a great rock rhythm instrument,” Dave Marsh

**Ex: The Who**

  – “Won’t Get Fooled Again” (1971)

• ARP synthesizer
  – Keeps steady rhythm for the band to play along with
Queen

• Freddie Mercury (vocals), challenges gay stereotypes
  – Even though he never declared his sexual orientation
  – Died of AIDS in 1991, raised big awareness

Video Ex: Queen – “Bohemian Rhapsody” (1975)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJ9rUzIMcZQ

• Sectional form, like a classical suite
  – Acapella introduction
  – Rock ballad
  – Guitar solo
  – Operatic section
  – Hard rock
  – Second ballad section
Frank Zappa

• Extreme experimentation, jazz-fusion, comedy, parody, sometimes cartoonish vocals... but very skillful
• Carefully written out arrangements that often sound improvised, even amateurish

Ex: Frank Zappa – “I’m the Slime” (1973)

Google: Frank Zappa album covers
Glam Rock

• Big live productions with costumes, makeup, props, lights, special effects
• As rock shows moved from theatres to arenas and stadiums, theatrical productions became the norm
• Some glam rock performers portrayed characters/ personas on stage:
  – David Bowie and Alice Cooper
• This kind of theatrical rock may have started in the UK, early 1970s
• Androgynous clothing
• Sci-fi
David Bowie

Ex: David Bowie – “Starman” (1972)

• Varied texture:
  – panned 12 string guitar, synth, strings
• Lyrics: alien communicates with a rock fan through radio and TV
  – Is the Alien rock, or Bowie, or both?
  – Themes of youth subculture, rebellion
  – US slang
Alice Cooper

- Hard rock and Glam
- Challenging sexual identity norms
- Nightmarish performances
  - Cooper often hanged, beheaded or executed in some way at the end of the show
  - Large spiders, straightjackets

Video Ex: Alice Cooper – “Feed My Frankenstein” video (1991)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NO2cHJmDkBg

- Wayne’s World (1992): plays with expectations
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5FT3IGXtAk
Jazz Rock

• Usually refers to rock music with jazz elements or approaches
  – Still primarily a rock music in terms of fans, genre categorization, radio, etc.

• Key elements of jazz that are used in jazz rock:
  – improvisation, virtuosity, solos

• Jazz fusion is jazz with rock elements, but mainly categorized as jazz
  – Often uses distorted electric guitars
Return to Forever

• Hugely influential in several areas of jazz in the 1950s and 1960s
• Some jazz fans hate this music, preferring a more “pure” jazz
  – This is a sell out to pop styles, they may say

Ex: Return to Forever
  – “Theme to the Mothership” (1973)
Blood, Sweat & Tears

- Jazz Rock, mainly through use of horns
  - Horns not new in R&B or pop, but quite central to this band
- Canadian singer /leader
  David Clayton-Thomas from 2\textsuperscript{nd} album forward

Ex: Blood Sweat & Tears – “You’ve Made Me So Very Happy” (1968)
Van Morrison

- A variety of styles, including rock, pop, folk, jazz, etc.
- Jazz influences, sounds, instrumentation

Ex: Van Morrison – “Moondance” (1970)
Disco

• Origins of name

• Started in Europe, synthesized dance tracks
  – Importance of producers like Giorgio Moroder
  – Vocalists relatively interchangeable

Ex: Donna Summer
  – “I Feel Love” (1977)

• All-synthesized sounds
Rock
• White, male, heteronormative
• Ideologies of seriousness and social significance
• Virtuosity and/or star performer
• Live performances by bands

Disco
• Black/Hispanic, Female, Gay
• Openly hedonistic and mostly apolitical
• Mostly anonymous DJs, producers and singers
• DJs playing and mixing records
The Disco Sound

- Inspired by Funk, Afro-Cuban/Latin, Soul

Ex: The Village People – “YMCA” (1978)

- Funk: syncopated bass lines, synthesizers, repetitive harmony (minimal contrast)
- Afro-Cuban/Latin: percussion, chants
- Sweet Soul: production values, especially strings and vocal style
- Four-on-the-floor drumming (Disco beat)
**Saturday Night Fever** (1977)

- Peak of disco, 1977, film and soundtrack
- Disco radio stations
- Non-disco acts incorporate disco elements in their music

**Ex: The Bee Gees – “Stayin’ Alive” (1977)**

- More simplified pop version of disco
- Simpler form and rhythm
- Distinct vocal sound functions as pop hook
The Disco Backlash

- Mostly from rock fans with “Disco Sucks” shirts
- Peak of this backlash was on July 12, 1979: “Disco Demolition Night”

**Video:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1CP1751wJA

- Why so intense a reaction?
  - Reasons are related to the social and aesthetic differences between rock and disco