5. The British Invasion, 1964-1966
• A period where there is a surge of interest in UK bands in the US and elsewhere (including the UK)
  – Before this, there were almost no UK acts on US charts

• Many different musical styles fall under this category
  – Mersey Beat groups; London Electric Blues groups; soul, R&B, pop groups

• A commonality is that they are British groups with strong US influences, who sold that music back to Americans
  – One irony here is that British Invasion groups often played an unintentional role in damaging the career of the US artists and styles that had influenced them
    • Also helped some blues artists, contributed to an interest in US blues among white Americans
Lecture Outline

• The focus is on two British Invasion styles: Mersey Beat and London Electric Blues

• Skiffle → Mersey Beat → The Beatles

• Chicago (Electric) Blues → London Blues → The Rolling Stones
Skiffle

• Skiffle refers to a 20s/30s US dance music based on homemade or simple folk instruments (washtub bass, spoons, jugs)

• In the UK it had a more general meaning: a movement of young musicians playing fast, enthusiastic versions of US folk songs
  – US folk music transformed when UK musicians tried to perform it

• Many musicians who would become important UK rock figures in the 1960s began their careers in skiffle bands
  – The Beatles, Jimmy Page, Van Morrison, etc.

• Ex: Lonnie Donegan – “Rock Island Line” (1956)

• Very fast, hyper, loud
Mersey Beat aka Beat Music

• Pop music from Liverpool and NW England
  – named after Mersey River

• Beat groups influenced by blues, R&B, Brill Building pop and Soul

• Friendly, more cheerful image than the London blues groups

Video Ex: Remarkable Liverpool: The Mersey Sound

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8VvoVsk9ko
• Elements of the Beat sound include:
  – folk influence (from skiffle)
  – catchy melodies
  – concise pop song form
  – Doo Wop-style back up vocals
  – very jangly guitar sounds and an emphasis on cymbals in the drum kit (a bright sound overall)
  – simple lyrics with a typically pop romance theme, and yet at the same time a certain degree of toughness in the sound (volume, distortion)

Ex: The Beatles “Please Please Me” (1963)
The Beatles

- Formed in Liverpool as a skiffle band called The Quarry Men
- Early live experience and musical training, ‘60-62:
  - Red-light district in Hamburg, Germany
  - Cavern Club in Liverpool
- Brian Epstein, manager by late ‘61/early 62
  - He suggests the “Beatle haircuts” and matching suits
  - Got them better gigs, more money
  - And a recording session at Decca (who didn’t want to release it)
    - Released through EMI/Parlophone by George Martin
- Late 1962, first UK hit: “Love Me Do”
- First two albums had covers of US girl groups, Motown, Rock and roll
General Phases of the Beatles’ Career

Live Band
- Beatlemania period, 1962-66
  - Please, Please Me; With the Beatles; A Hard Day’s Night
- Stylistic eclecticism and Dylan-inspired seriousness, 1964-66
  - Beatles for Sale; Help!; Rubber Soul; Revolver

Studio Band
- Experimental music, 1967-68
  - Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band; Magical Mystery Tour
- Travel to India, 1968
  - The White Album
- Roots rock period, 1969
  - Abbey Road; Let It Be
Beatlemania: 1963-1966

• Huge success in UK in 1963, led to other domestic success stories
• Nothing in US yet – EMI’s US partner label (Capitol) turned them down!
• US breakthrough: Epstein books the Beatles to play the Ed Sullivan Show 3 times in February 1964
  – Capitol agreed to release “I Want to Hold Your Hand” in December 1963
    • Became a #1 hit before the TV appearance
    • TV: 73 million viewers!
    • Same show where Elvis debuted in mid 1950s

Video Ex: The Beatles – “I Want To Hold Your Hand”
  (Live on The Ed Sullivan Show, February 9, 1964)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jenWdylTtzs
• Ex: The Beatles – “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (1963)
• #1 UK, #1 US by early 1964
• AABA form, partial reprise at end
• Very US pop-influenced:
  – Chuck Berry-style guitars
  – Girl Group hand claps
  – Everly Brothers harmonies
  – High “ooohs” in the style of Little Richard
  – Blues-style guitar solo in bridge
A Hard Day’s Night

• July 1964: the Beatles’ first full-length film
  – Follows Rock and Roll films of mid-1950s
  – Emphasizes the gap between young
    Rock and Roll fans and the older generation
  – Chased by female fans
  – Blurred lines between reality (they play themselves), fiction, and marketing of the band
  – Not much plot; excellent promotional tool

Video Ex: A Hard Day’s Night Trailer
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWbiVqlSMgc
The Beatles as a Studio Band

• Concerts too loud – the band regularly couldn’t hear themselves play
• PR problems – “The Beatles are more important than Jesus”
• Last public concert in San Francisco, August 1966
  – The Beatles are now a studio-only band
• Up to that point, records were usually thought of as “records” of a live performance
• Helped establish the model of rock band as recording artist
• Leads to many studio experimentations
• Art rock, psychedelia, folk, children’s songs, Baroque pop
Baroque Pop

• A subgenre that emerges in the early-to-mid 1960s
• Rock and classical instrumentation/arrangements (string, wind, brass)

Ex: The Beatles – “Eleanor Rigby” (1966)

• BREAKS WITH POP CONVENTIONS BOTH MUSICALLY AND LYRICALLY
• MUSIC: STRING OCTET (4 VIOLINS, 2 VIOLAS, 2 CELLOS)
• LYRICS: A SONG ABOUT AN UNLAMENTED DEATH WAS NEW
• DETACHMENT (NO “YOU” OR “I”; ALL THIRD PERSON)
Baroque Pop: Harpsichord

- Peak 15th to 18th C. in Europe
- Used today to play music of this time

Video Ex: Harpsichord Demonstration
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzGdkh3Mpl0

- No dynamics
Harpsichord (Cont.)

Ex: The Beatles – “Fixing A Hole” (1967)
Ex: The Rolling Stones – “Play With Fire” (1965)
Ex: The Yardbirds – “For Your Love” (1965)

• Other uses (Harpsichord sound on electronic keyboard)
The Beatles’ Rooftop Concert

• Final public appearance
• Compare with early US TV appearances

Video Ex: The Beatles

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCtzkaL2t_Y
The Beatles Open the Door for Other British Invasion acts

- Good marketing term for British guitar-based rock groups of this time, but there is also a wide range in sounds

Ex: The Kinks – “You Really Got Me” (1964)

- Guitar riff is the dominant rhythm
- One-chord approach
  - Riff repeats at higher pitches
- Non-standard chord progression
Chicago Blues

- Another main influence on British Invasion groups was the style of electric blues being recorded in Chicago in the 1940s and 1950s at labels like Chess and to a lesser extent, Vee-Jay

Ex: Muddy Waters – “(I’m Your) Hoochie Coochie Man” (1954)

- Amplification changes sound of harmonica and voice, not just guitar
  - Distorted, loud
- Riff, Four-on-the-floor drumming
- Mystical, voodoo, sexual potency lyrics
- Macho, self-assertive personas and attitude
The London Blues Scene

• In the early 60s, this evolved out of an interest in US blues, and also as a reaction against the pop-styled music coming out of Liverpool at the same time

• Many British blues fans were purists and elitists
  – They studied the music and had large record collections of rare records
  – Preferred performances that were as close as possible to the US style
  – A general anti-pop attitude

• However, whenever an artist tries to imitate someone else’s style, they almost always end of transforming it in some way

• Eric Clapton is an example of this...
Eric Clapton

• Part of the London blues scene from the early 1960s
• Member of The Yardbirds, but left the group when they recorded more pop-oriented material.
• 1965-66: John Mayall’s Bluesbreakers
• First rock “guitar hero”? 
Ex: John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers – “All Your Love” (1966)

• How is Clapton’s guitar different from what we’ve heard so far, both in terms of the sound, and the role it plays in the song?
  • Distortion, sustain
  • Jim Marshall’s amp design

• At the point, “the instrument” is both the guitar and the amplifier rather than just the guitar.
Blues Rock Sound

• Simplicity and repetition; riff-based

• Core instrumentation: electric guitar(s), electric bass, drums, vocals
  – Other instruments: piano, organ, horns, percussion

• Blues-based harmonic structures (i.e. 3-chord, 12-bar blues form)

• London Blues compared to Merseybeat:
  – A generally aggressive sound
  – Rougher vocals
  – More prominent and distorted guitar
  – Stronger beat
Blues and Blues Rock

Ex: The Rolling Stones – “Little Red Rooster” (1964)
• Songwriting credit given by Stones

Ex: Muddy Waters – “You Need Love” (1962)
• 1985 settlement

• Blues in the 1960s: US to UK to US
The Rolling Stones

• Started as blues cover band in July 1962
• First single was a Chuck Berry cover: “Come On”
• Big in UK by late 1963
• Late 1964: Success in the US
• Perhaps delayed because of their bad-boy image (compare w. the Beatles)
  – Long hair, scruffy, not matching suits, more rebellious looking
  – Didn’t hide their drug use or sexual activity
  – Generally shocking for the older generation

Video Ex: The Rolling Stones – “Around And Around” (TAMI Show 1964)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUbWAzQszNY
Original Songwriting

• Before the mid-1960s, it wasn’t considered particularly important for rock musicians to write their own material
• By the mid-1960s, rock musicians needed to do this in order to be taken seriously
• The Rolling Stones and The Beatles were leaders in this trend, although in both cases the motives were as much economic as anything else
• Becomes a big part of rock ideology and authenticity
• Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham locks Jagger and Richards in a kitchen
Ex: The Rolling Stones – “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction” (1965)

• Development of the “rock” sound
  – Listen to the rhythm, timbres, form, lyrics
  – Describe the mood or purpose/message of these lyrics. How does that relate to the newly-emerging rock image and attitude?

• “Fuzz tone” guitar
• This is one of the earliest examples of a guitar effect
  – And this song is one of the earliest examples of fuzz on a widely distributed record

• Hotel room origins of riff
• #1 US and UK
• Instruments enter one at a time
British Invasion Summary

• Beginning of a domestic pop music market in the UK
  – British charts no longer completely dominated by US groups
  – Same kind of thing happens in Canada in the late 1960s/early 1970s due to Canadian Content regulations

• Opens the door for UK groups in US and the world
  – Prominent influence ever since

• “Rock” becomes associated with white Brits, as opposed to earlier associations with black Americans (and juvenile delinquency)
  – Rock is now on the path to acceptance as “art”

• Started a new phase of interest in the American blues with a white audience