

Music 107 – American Popular Music  
Fall 2006  
Dr. Robinson and Dr. Walton

### Lecture Notes - Week 10

#### Topics:

- **Popular music in the 1960s**
- **The “California sound”**
- **Country music in the 1960s: countrypolitan versus the Bakersfield sound**

**NOTE:** As always, make sure to carefully study the outlines for each week in addition to these lecture notes. This week’s material is quite varied: the outline covers significantly different material.

#### Popular music in the 1960s

The initial boom of rock and roll in the mid and late 1950s prompted the incredible growth of the music industry. By the end of the 50s, however, many the stars of early rock and roll were giving way in popularity to new commercial phenomena (Elvis Presley and a few others are the exceptions to this trend). One of the new elements that challenged rock and rolls popularity was the “teen idol.” In the mid 1950s, a number of young celebrity figures arose from a variety of different places. Some, like Annette Funicello, emerged from new youth markets (Funicello got her start on a new television program called the Mickey Mouse Club). Most of the teen idols had careers that included television, movies, radio, and, to varying degrees, musical performance. Teen idols in the late 1950s and early 60s included Funicello, Paul Anka, Ricky Nelson, Frankie Avalon, several others. The picture on the right features Funicello with Avalon in a publicity photo for their beach culture-oriented movies during the 1960s. These movies included *Beach Party* (1963), *Muscle Beach Party* (1964), *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1965), and several others. The intersection of this new youth market and music prompted many teenagers of the early 1960s to shift their focus away from the (now aging) earlier rock and roll figures. This teen idol culture would be challenged towards the end of the 1960s by several factors, including the Vietnam War and the countercultural movement of the late 60s, often called the “flower power” movement.

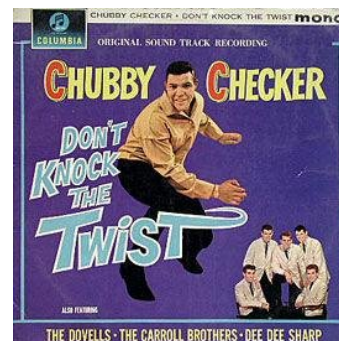


Despite this shifting terrain, rock and roll continued to develop and continued to hold the imagination of many young Americans. In 1960, for example, one of the most popular developments was the “twist,” both a type of dance and a song. Popularized by Chubby Checker (pictured on right; b. 1921 as Ernest Evans), “The Twist” is a song that demonstrates new trends

in rock and roll performance practice while instructing listeners on the details of doing the new dance. The song was originally recorded by rhythm and blues vocalist Hank Ballard. Listen to Checker's 1960 version of the song.

### [Chubby Checker – “The Twist”](#)

The following video example discusses the twist and the changing demographic of rock and roll audiences. As the 1960s unfolded, rock and roll attracted a variety of different audiences, all of whom impacted various new musical directions that would eventually emerge.



### [The twist and expanding rock and roll demographics](#)

During the 1960s rock and roll entered the American mainstream in new ways. In the 50s it was associated with African American culture and (a somewhat transgressive) emerging teen culture. In the 60s, however, it became the mainstream. One example of this is seen in the television program American Bandstand, a music-oriented show that featured live performances by popular musical groups and a cast of young dancers demonstrating the latest fashions and dance moves. The show first aired on a local Philadelphia station in 1952 and was hosted by Bob Horn. In 1957 the program moved to ABC; Horn was replaced by Dick Clark, a former radio dj that escaped prosecution during the payola scandal and whom became synonymous with American Bandstand. With Clark as the host, the program aired until 1989. The following video example illustrates the importance of American Bandstand in the mainstream-ization of rock and roll during the 1960s.



### [American Bandstand](#)

During the 1960s, songwriters, like Leiber and Stoller, continued to play an important roll in the development of rock and roll. Similar to Tin Pan Alley of an earlier generation, a new “capitol” of songwriting emerged in the 60s in New York, what many refer to now as the “Brill Building.” Under the auspices of Don Krishner’s publishing company, the Brill Building (pictured on the right) at 1650 Broadway in New York (originally at 1619 Broadway) was home to a virtual who’s who of songwriters during the 60s. Well-known songwriter at Brill included Leiber and Stoller, Carole King and Gerry Goffin, Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman, Paul Anka, Jim Croce, John Denver, and almost countless others. The following video example discusses the importance of the Brill Building to 1960s American popular music.



### [Brill Building](#)

Another element in rock and roll that became prevalent during the 1960s was the producer. “Producers” occupy an important roll in the popular music industry. They often coordinate recording sessions, “discover” new singers and musicians, match singers with songwriters and backing musicians, make important decisions during recording and mixing that have a dramatic affect on the sound of the recording, and often coordinate the marketing and publicity campaigns recordings and singers. One of the first really well-known and influential producers in rock music was Phil Spector (b. 1940). In fact, Spector belonged to the larger context of songwriters and other producers during the early 1960s. The following video example helps illustrate this context.

### 1960s producers and songwriters

Spector was perhaps the most influential of these producers. His approach to mixing records – setting the levels of the different instruments and vocalists in relation to each other and crafting the overall quality of the sound of a recording – almost instantly became an important point of reference for other producers. Spector’s approach was called the “wall of sound,” in which the recorded music had an intensely upfront and unified sound, as if the band and vocalists were all in the living room of the person listening to the recording. The “wall of sound” mixing approach had an incredible impact on other producers and musicians; it became the norm in the transforming world of rock and roll during the 60s. Spector founded Philles Records (a play on his first name) and Gold Star Studios in Los Angeles, where he was based. His connection to Los Angeles foreshadowed the upcoming role of LA as the capitol of rock music since the 1970s. Although he was based in LA, he continued to work closely with many of the songwriters of the Brill Building in New York. By the age of 24 Spector was a millionaire tycoon. On the heels of this success, he retired from steady producing and songwriting (his entry into the popular music industry) in 1966.



Like the trends occurring at the Brill Building, Spector’s producing in the early 1960s became associated with various girl groups (groups fronted by all-female vocal sections). Two of his earlier successes occurred with the Crystals (pictured on the right) and the Ronettes. The Crystals’ 1962 recording of “Uptown” and the Ronettes’ 1963 recording of “Be My Baby” both demonstrate the patented “wall of sound” mixing style of Spector. These examples are discussed on pages 238-239 of your book.



[The Crystals – “Uptown”](#)

[The Ronettes – “Be My Baby”](#)

The following video example includes footage of the Crystals and the Ronettes and demonstrates how Spector became more of “star” than many of his successful groups. This trend – the preeminence of the producer – has factored into various later developments in American popular music, including contemporary pop, rhythm and blues, rap, and country.

## Phil Spector

Although Spector had produced girl groups that featured African American vocalists (witnessed in the Crystals), the most prominent trends in black music and rock and roll during the early years of the 1960s were connected to Motown Records, today usually known as just “Motown.” Motown was the brainchild of producer Berry Gordy (pictured to the right and discussed on page 229 of your book). Gordy derived the name “Motown” from a creative re-articulation of “Motor City,” the nickname of Detroit that references its role as the automobile capitol of America. Originally incorporated in 1959 as Tamla Records (one of Gordy’s other record labels associated with Motown), Gordy used a house in Detroit as the headquarters of operation, acting as a recording studio, rehearsal space, label office, and more. He named this house “Hitsville.” Although Black Swan Records was the first black-owned record label in the US (back in the 1920s), Motown was the first black-owned record label of rock and roll and its later related styles.



Motown acted as an important point of entry into the music business for many African American artists. Some of the singers associated with Motown include Gaye, Mary Wells, Stevie Wonder, Martha Reeves, Vandellas, Junior Walker and the All Stars, the Four Tops, Gladys Knight and the Pips, the Jackson Five, a remarkable list of influential artists. The “house band” of Hitsville were known as the Funk Brothers. These musicians played on almost all of the recording made at Motown’s Detroit headquarters. They were featured in a 2002 documentary titled *Standing in the Shadow of Motown*. In 1971 Gordy moved Motown to Los Angeles, where it was eventually purchased by MCA (and then moved to New York). The following video gives an overview of Motown.

## Motown

Under Gordy’s watchful eye at Hitsville, Motown developed into a calculated sound and performance approach. This is evident in one of the early recording successes, the 1961 “Please Mr. Postman” by the Marvelettes (pictured on the right), which is discussed on page 240 of your book.



## The Marvelettes – “Please Mr. Postman”

Now listen to “My Girl” by the Temptations (1965) and “You Can’t Hurry Love” (1966) by the Supremes, two classics of Motown. These examples are part of your 2-CD set and are discussed on page 242 of your book.

Motown’s success represented a new direction in rock and roll, a direction that many would eventually call “soul” (a topic we’ll look into more detail next week). Important here is the fact that Gordy’s success with Motown was the result of a crafty plan to connect new trends in

African American music with the larger American mainstream. The following video example illustrates various dimensions of this concept.

### [Motown's success](#)

Although Motown represented a trend in popular music that centered African American culture and performers, there were other directions occurring that were quite different. For example, the teen idol culture that produced the teen beach culture of the 1960s was, for the most part, directly connected to a vision of mainstream American culture that was overwhelmingly white. Although their music was indebted to earlier black music practices, the Beach Boys, led in large part by the artistic vision of Brian Wilson (b. 1942; pictured on the right), capitalized on this beach-oriented image of American teen culture.



The Beach Boys (pictured on page 245 of your book) were formed in 1961 in the Los Angeles area. As your book argues, the group demonstrates many of the key elements of a “trend-setting rock group of the 1960s” (again, see page 245). Largely influenced by Phil Spector, Wilson’s artistic vision for the Beach Boys featured innovative approaches to sound. Wilson was a key performer, producer, and songwriter in the group. The quintessential Beach Boys sound is heard on their 1963 classic “Surfin’ USA,” which is discussed on page 246 of your book.

### [Beach Boys – “Surfin’ USA”](#)

Notice the remarkable sound of the vocal harmonies. This is one of the defining characteristics of the Beach Boys in the 1960s. Now listen to “Good Vibrations” from 1966, which is part of your 2-CD set and discussed on pages 261-263. As your book mentions, “Good Vibrations” uses an unorthodox formal structure, again one of the unique contributions of Wilson’s artistic vision. The following video clip surveys a variety of perspectives on the Beach Boys.

### [Beach Boys](#)

Wilson’s producing and composing led to a number of remarkable projects (most recently his 2004 release of *Smile*). In the 1960s, the crowning achievement was an album called *Pet Sounds* (1966). Using a variety of “overdubbing” and other studio techniques, *Pet Sounds* captures a broad spectrum of sounds unheard of in rock music prior to its release. Many scholars have drawn connections between *Pet Sounds* and the Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, an extremely influential album that we’ll focus on next week. Here is the title track from *Pet Sounds*.

### [Beach Boys – “Pet Sounds”](#)



## The “California sound”

This week we have seen several connections to Los Angeles (Phil Spector and the Beach Boys). Much was happening in the “Golden State” that would have a dramatic impact on the development of rock music. Centered in Hollywood, the rock music industry was beginning to develop. New cultural movements were also developing that would have an impact on the development of future popular music. The San Francisco Bay Area, and San Francisco in particular, has a long history of counter-cultural movements, of social formations that strike a dissident pose against mainstream American culture. One might argue that the Barbary Coast of the late 1800s was a beginning to this, followed by others including the Beatniks of the 1950s and, by the mid and late 60s, the “flower power” generation, what some people call “hippies.” The hippies – a late babyboomer social formation that came of age in the mid and late 1960s – questioned societal norms about sexuality, drug use, relationships, and the US’s involvement in the Vietnam War, among other things. For more information on the Vietnam War, [click here](#). The following video example surveys San Francisco music and hippy scene of the late 1960s.

### [San Francisco scene](#)

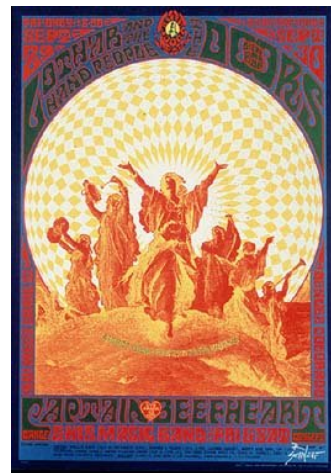
By the late 1960s, the Bay Area was known for its large counter-cultural community, for its large population of hippies. Primarily centered in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco and around Telegraph Hill in Berkeley, many members of the counterculture sought to create an alternative living environment that reflected their shifting utopian values. This prompted things like the Summer of Love in 1967. Many were also involved with Vietnam War protests, like the “Human Be-In” of 1967 and various demonstrations on the campus of UC Berkeley. These anti-war demonstrations were connected to larger national protests that were occurring on many university campuses across the country. This was a tumultuous time in US history.

These new social ideas had an impact on music making in the Bay Area. A local rock music scene developed that mixed earlier rock and roll, country music styles, and various developments of urban protest music with the psychedelic counter-culture ideas, producing a music that was imaginative, often highly improvisatory (with long solo sections), and different from most of the commercially successful recordings being produced by people like Phil Spector. Although many of the people associated with the San Francisco scene of the late 1960s first developed elsewhere and were transplants to the Bay Area, they nevertheless became intimately associated with the music and counter-culture of the 60s and had a tremendous impact on the development of popular music in the US. A few of those involved with this scene included the Warlocks (the first version of the Grateful Dead), Big Brother and the Holding Company, Janis Joplin, Carlos Santana, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Country Joe and Big Fish, Jefferson Airplane, and many others.

A major element within this scene was the development of “psychedelic” culture, which evidenced the influence of certain drugs including LSD, marijuana, and “magic” mushrooms. The term “psychedelic” was coined in the earliest years of the development of LSD; it was adopted by the 60s counter-culture to primarily reference the visual dimensions of psychotropic intoxication caused by certain drugs, especially LSD. In the years before (and perhaps after) LSD was criminalized by being made illegal, many people in the Bay Area and elsewhere

experimented with its use. Large scale events took place revolved around LSD, like the “Trips Festival” held at the Longshoreman’s Hall in San Francisco in 1966 or Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters’ “electric kool-aid acid test,” a 1964 cross-country life-as-art excursion bus trip that has become a legend in 60s counter-culture lore.

The musical energy in the Bay Area was harnessed by Bill Graham (1931-1991), a concert promoter that got his start working with the San Francisco Mime Troupe in 1965 (a politically activist theater organization that still exists today). Beginning in 65, Graham started organizing concerts of the new psychedelic rock music being developed by local bands. He started putting on big multi-group shows at the Avalon Ballroom and the Fillmore Auditorium (the latter, simply known as the “Fillmore” became the mainstay venue). Graham employed local artists connected to the psychedelic movement to create remarkably vivid and artful concert posters (see example on right). Graham produced numerous concerts and festivals throughout the 60s, 70s, and later; his “Bill Graham presents” production company still is in business today, even though it has become much more mainstream.



One of the early bands from the 60s San Francisco scene was Jefferson Airplane (they would later change their name to Jefferson Starship). Their 1966 classic “White Rabbit” is full of psychedelic references.

### [Jefferson Airplane – “White Rabbit”](#)

The following video example catches Jefferson Airplane in concert.

### [Jefferson Airplane](#)

Another group that was part of the scene was Quicksilver Messenger Service (pictured on the right). Like many of the groups in San Francisco, they were known for their extended songs that relied on extensive improvisation. Songs performed live would sometimes last 30 minutes and would explore a wide spectrum of sounds. Like the poster art given above, these extended improvisation would provide a point of reference for the “psychedelic” in music. Although the follow example doesn’t include extensive improvisation, it is nevertheless a key example from QMS.



### [Quicksilver Messenger Service – “Dino’s Song” \(1968\)](#)

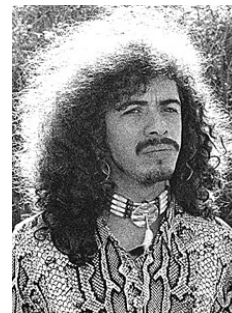
Perhaps the most well-known band to emerge from the San Francisco scene was the Grateful Dead. The “Dead” as many people refer to them spawned a huge following that attended their concerts throughout the 70s, 80, and 90s. Many people would follow them around, attending concerts across the US. The Dead first began as the Warlocks, a country style group based in Palo



Alto. After relocating to San Francisco and discovering that another band was named the Warlocks, they changed their name to the Grateful Dead. This incredibly influential band became a mainstay in the San Francisco scene. The following example from 1969 became one of their signature songs.

### Grateful Dead – “Truckin’”

Although the 60s counter-culture is generally perceived racially as white, the San Francisco music scene was quite diverse. Many Graham-produced concerts and festivals featured African American jazz artists, performing sets in between the new psychedelic bands. One of the musical figures that emerged during this period in San Francisco was Carlos Santana. The guitarist extraordinaire is still extremely popular today; when he emerged in the 60s in San Francisco, he was one of the few Latino bandleaders in the scene. In his younger years, he was closely allied with the counter-cultural ideals, and perhaps singularly important for representing a kind of ethnic and racial “other” within that scene. His photo to the right demonstrates this. One of his well-known songs from the late 60s/early 70s is “Oye Como Va.” The song was written by Tito Puente, a salsa timbales player that did the original in an Afro-Cuban jazz mambo style. Santana’s version highlights his electric guitar playing, incorporates many of the original Afro-Cuban grooves, and stands as a kind of hybrid example from the 60s San Francisco scene.



### Santana – “Oye Como Va” (1970)

While all of these developments were taking place in the Bay Area, new trends were beginning to occur in Los Angeles as well. Spector’s producing and the Beach Boys’ success represented a kind of mainstream version of the Los Angeles music industry. During the 60s, LA began to assume its position as the center of the popular music industry. Combined with LA’s expansive, spread out, geography, the influence of the music industry tended to make LA seem less likely to produce something with the degree of newness that was occurring in the San Francisco scene. However, this wasn’t true. Several groups emerged in the 60s in LA that adopted a counter-culture stance and pioneered new approaches in the music. Some of these groups included the Byrds, the Mamas and the Papas, and Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention, to name only a few. While the San Francisco scene tended to focus on extended improvisations, long songs, and live performance, the LA scene tended to focus recordings and on shorter “radio friendly” songs that relied on crafty verse-chorus constructions.

The Byrds were one of the LA-based bands that sought to bridge the gap between urban protest/folk music and new trends in rock. One popular example of the Byrds was their remake of Bob Dylan’s “Mr. Tambourine Man,” a hugely successful 1965 hit for the group. We will discuss Dylan’s importance next week. Listen to the Byrds’ version of the song – you’ll probably recognize it!



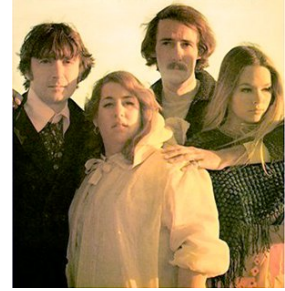
### The Byrds – “Mr. Tambourine Man”



Another incredibly popular group from LA was the Mamas and the Papas. Like the Byrds, they too combined elements of folk music with new trends in rock. This singer-driven group produced a number of popular songs during their brief career together (1965-1968). One of their most well-known songs is “California Dreamin’” from 1965, a kind of anthem for the California counter-culture of the 60. Notice the unique sounds produced by the four vocalists.

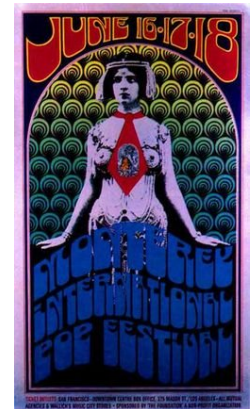
### Mamas and the Papas – “California Dreamin’”

Frank Zappa’s Mothers of Invention was another, decidedly more quirky, group that emerged in LA in the 1960s. Indeed, Zappa has become one of the foremost iconoclasts in creative rock music. While adopting some degree of the 60s counter-culture attitude, Zappa was for the most part coming from a completely different direction. Zappa’s music continually works to confound easy definition; his music is hard to pin down stylistically, in terms of influence, and in terms of what other musical developments it is connected to. His unique and quirky, usually comedic, approach can be heard on his debut album from 1966 called *Freak Out!* The following example is the first cut from the album.



### Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention – “Hungry Freaks, Daddy”

Prior to 1967, the San Francisco and LA rock music scenes of the 60s were for the most part distinct and separate music cultures with little contact. But that changed with the Monterey Pop Festival which was held at the Monterey fairgrounds on June 16-18, 1967. Two years before the infamous Woodstock festival, the Monterey Pop Festival set the stage for massive large-scale music festivals of the future. Its location in central California acted as a perfect middle ground between the San Francisco and LA counter-culture music scenes. And although a few international acts were presented (like Jimi Hendrix, the Who, and Hugh Masakela), the festival was for the most part a feature for Californian bands. Organized by Lou Adler (a Los Angeles record executive) and John Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas, the festival was a huge success: there were over 200,000 attendees, the Monterey police praised the festival-goers for the friendliness and orderliness, and the music represented important new directions in rock music that owed in large part to new social and artistic ideas spawned in California. The festival led to a kind of unification of the California rock music scene of the late 60s. More Bay Area bands began to record with LA-based record labels and more LA bands started to appear at Bay Area venues like the Fillmore. For more information on the Monterey Pop Festival, [click here](#).



The following video example illustrates various dimensions of the festival and shows Janis Joplin, a fiery Texas-transplant to San Francisco, in performance. Joplin was one of the key figures in the San Francisco scene.

### Monterey and Joplin

And here is a classic Monterey performance by the Mamas and the Papas doing “California Dreamin’,” representing the LA contingent at the festival.

### [Mamas and the Papas at Monterey](#)

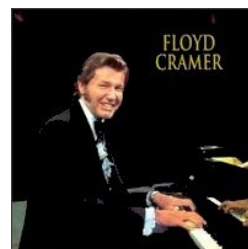
## **Country music in the 1960s: countrypolitan versus the Bakersfield sound**

While rock music in California during the 60s represented various types of liberalizing processes in music and culture, trends occurring in Nashville’s country music scene seem to have been the opposite. The 1960s witnessed the full scale emergence of the “Nashville sound.” Some people refer to the 60s Nashville music as “countrypolitan,” a name that fuses “country” with “metropolitan.” This name reflects trends in country music that featured slick jazz and pop style arranging for strings and horns and overall production methods. One of the well-known vocalists during this period was Patsy Cline (1932-1963; pictured to the right and discussed on page 266 of your book). One of her most popular songs during the period was “Crazy” (1967), which features slick background vocal arranging, piano playing, and overall production quality.



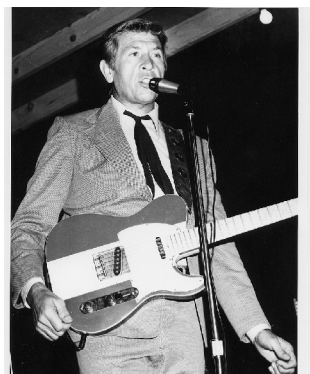
### [Patsy Cline – “Crazy”](#)

Two other “countrypolitan” figures include the pianist Floyd Cramer (1933-1997; pictured on the right) and Wilma Burgess (1939-2003). Cramer’s virtuosic piano style owed in large part to earlier honky tonk styles; however, presented as a feature soloist in Nashville recording starting in 1960, his music stands for a kind of instrumental country refinement. His 1960 “Last Date” is a great example of this period in his career. Like Patsy Cline and several Nashville female singers of the 1960s, Wilma Burgess’ music also stands for a kind of modern country refinement. Her 1966 “Misty Blue” is an excellent example of the “countrypolitan” sound of Nashville in the 60s.



### [Floyd Cramer – “Last Date”](#) [Wilma Burgess – “Misty Blue”](#)

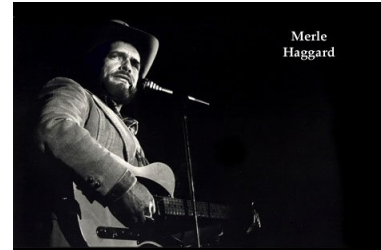
While these developments were taking place in Nashville, a new trend was emerging in Bakersfield, California that would provide an alternative to the sophisticated countrypolitan sound. Today referred to as the “Bakersfield sound,” a community of country musicians emerged in the 60s in Bakersfield that sought to recenter the rebel “outlaw” image prevalent in earlier “cowboy” country music. This updated version of the cowboy sound would provide the bases for “outlaw” country in the 1970s. One of the early proponents of the Bakersfield sound was Buck Owens (1929-2006; pictured to the right), who led a group called the Buckaroos. His 1963 “Act Naturally” is a



good representation of the more raw sound of Bakersfield country music.

### [Buck Owens – “Act Naturally”](#)

Perhaps the most well-known figure associated with the Bakersfield sound is Merle Haggard (b. 1937), who led a group called the Strangers. Haggard’s life experiences certainly give credit to the “outlaw” image. His 1969 “Okie From Muskogee” is a classic from his early period. Haggard is discussed on pages 310-311 of your book.



### [Merle Haggard – “Okie From Muskogee”](#)

## **Next week**

Next week we will focus on urban protest and folk music, the “British Invasion” (including the Beatles), and soul music.

## **Exercises**

These questions will help you to start thinking about the issues raised in this week’s lecture notes. Although these questions might appear, in some form, on the quizzes or exams, you do not need to turn in your answers.

- 1) Who is Phil Spector and what was his role in popular music during the 1960s?
- 2) What is Motown? Who are some of the artists associated with Motown?
- 3) Explain the significance of the Beach Boys.
- 4) Describe the rock music scene(s) in California during the 1960s. How did they intersect with new social movements?
- 5) What is “countrypolitan” and the “Bakersfield sound”?