

## CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s

### Chapter Outline

#### I. American Pop and the British Invasion, the 1960s

A. The decade of the 1960s was one of the most disruptive, controversial, and violent eras in American history.

1. Civil rights movement
2. Vietnam War
3. Assassinations of John F. Kennedy and the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.
4. Popular music played an important role in defining the character and spirit of this decade.
5. The baby boom generation played a vital role in the major political and cultural events of this period. They were identified by their own popular music, rock 'n' roll.
6. Rock 'n' roll developed into “rock.”
  - a) Outlet for expression of the political and cultural hopes and fears of a generation coming to terms with politics, racial issues, and the Vietnam War

#### II. The Early 1960s: Dance Music and “Teenage Symphonies”

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

A. Three important trends emerged in the early 1960s:

1. A new kind of social dancing developed, inspired by “The Twist” and other dance-oriented records.
2. Members of the first generation to grow up with rock ’n’ roll were beginning to assume influential positions in the music industry as writers and producers.
3. The Tin Pan Alley system was reinvented for the new music and new audiences.
  - a) Brill Building in New York
  - b) Gold Star Studios in Los Angeles
  - c) Motown, headquartered in Detroit

B. New stylistic possibilities for rock ’n’ roll emerged out of California, led by the Beach Boys and Brian Wilson, who established a model for many to follow by being an innovative performer, writer, and producer.

C. “The Twist”

1. “The Twist” began as the B-side of a 1959 single by the veteran R&B group Hank Ballard and the Midnighters.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

2. “The Twist” was a teen-oriented rock ’n’ roll song using a twelve-bar blues structure that featured a simple, hip-swiveling dance step.
3. Ballard’s indie label, King, did not promote the song, and instead promoted the A-side of the single, “Teardrops on Your Letter,” which peaked at Number Eighty-nine on *Billboard*’s “Hot 100” chart.

D. Chubby Checker (b. Ernest Evans, 1941)

1. Evans, a former poultry plucker, signed to Philadelphia-based Parkway records in 1958.
2. His cover of “The Twist” in 1960 reached Number One on the charts.
3. The song and the dance step were promoted on Dick Clark’s nationally broadcast television program *American Bandstand*.
4. It was the perfect venue for promoting a new dance record, and a new dance, to the broad rock ’n’ roll audience.
5. Even more than the song, the dance captured the imagination of young people who saw it on *American Bandstand*.
6. The twist was essentially an individual, noncontact dance without any real steps.
7. Soon, adults of all ages were doing the twist, and the popularity of this free-form dancing brought rock ’n’ roll music to a broader audience.

## CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s

8. The free-form dances that have accompanied, and in some cases inspired, much American popular music from the 1960s to the present originated in the twist.

### III. The Producer as Artist: Phil Spector and Berry Gordy

#### A. Phil Spector (b. 1940)

1. “The first tycoon of teen”
2. During the 1960s, Spector did more than anyone to establish the role of the record producer as creative artist.
3. At age seventeen, he had a Number One record as a member of the vocal group the Teddy Bears, whose hit song “To Know Him Is to Love Him” he composed and produced.
4. In 1960, Spector became an assistant to Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller; with them, he co-produced “Stand by Me” by Ben E. King (1961).
5. By the early 1960s, Spector had established himself as a songwriting producer, working behind the scenes of rock ’n’ roll rather than in its spotlight.
6. At age twenty-one, he was in charge of his own independent label, Philles Records. He supervised every aspect of his records’ sound.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

7. The characteristic Philles sound was both remarkably dense yet also clear. It became known as the “wall of sound.”
  - a) Multiple instruments doubling each part of the arrangement
  - b) Huge amount of echo, known as reverberation or “reverb”
  - c) Carefully controlled balance so that the vocals were pushed clearly to the front
  
8. The thick texture and presence of strings on these records led them to be called “teenage symphonies.”
  
9. Listening: “Be My Baby”
  - a) Composed by Phil Spector, Ellie Greenwich, and Jeff Barry
  - b) Performed by the Ronettes
  - c) Number Two, 1963
  - d) This was one of the biggest hits among the many produced by Spector. It is an excellent illustration of Spector’s “wall of sound.”
    - (1) Full orchestral string section
    - (2) Pianos
    - (3) Full array of rhythm instruments
    - (4) Background chorus

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

e) Simple but effective verse-chorus form

f) Drum pattern opens the song—an effective hook

10. Spector recorded at Gold Star Studios in Los Angeles with a group of studio musicians known as the “wrecking crew.”

11. Spector preferred the sound of female vocal groups and spearheaded the rise in popularity of the “girl group” phenomenon of the early 1960s.

12. He retired from steady writing and production work in 1966. By age twenty-five, Spector’s star was on the wane, and he became a troubled recluse.

13. He has periodically resurfaced to work on special projects that attract his interest, including the Beatles’ last album, *Let It Be* (1970).

14. Spector has a notorious dark side—a fiery temper and an obsession with guns. He reputedly pulled a gun on Stevie Wonder during a recording session.

15. In February 2003, Spector was arrested on suspicion of murder when forty-year-old actress and nightclub hostess Lana Clarkson was found shot to death in his mansion. Spector claims the death was a suicide.

**B. The Brill Building: Rock ’n’ roll’s Tin Pan Alley**

1. Located at 1619 Broadway in New York City, which once housed Tin Pan Alley publishers

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

2. During the 1960s, became home to a new wave of pop-rock songwriting teams
3. Rock 'n' roll's vertical Tin Pan Alley
  - a) Revived songwriting techniques of Tin Pan Alley
  - b) Small offices with pianos
  - c) Turned out over 300 recorded songs (200 chart hits)
4. The successful songwriting teams were often working with a number of artists, producers, and labels and consequently could hope to have several hits on the charts simultaneously.
5. Singer-songwriters and songwriting teams:
  - a) Barry Mann and Cynthia Weill
  - b) Carole King and Gerry Goffin
  - c) Neil Sedaka and Howard Greenfield

**C. Berry Gordy Jr. and Motown**

1. Berry Gordy (b. 1929) was an expert songwriter and producer who created pop music based on blues and gospel. His music was designed to appeal to the widest possible listening public.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

2. Motown Records

- a) Named after the “Motor town” or “Motor city” of Detroit, the automobile production capital of America
- b) Founded in 1960 by Berry Gordy
- c) Became the first black-owned and -controlled indie record company to rise to “major label” status
- d) Gordy started the company in a converted house on West Grand Blvd. A sign hung over the doorway of the house read “HITSVILLE, U.S.A.”

3. Gordy developed an image for his company:

- a) Soul music based on the doo-wop vocal group tradition
- b) Slick, cosmopolitan sound; “appealing to the ear”
- c) Carefully constructed musical arrangements overseen by Gordy

4. In-house songwriting and production teams to give Motown records a sense of consistency

- a) The house band, called the Funk Brothers, was used to back up and inspire the vocalists. The band members were among the most important contributors to the Motown sound:

(1) Bass player James Jamerson

(2) Drummer Benny Benjamin

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

(3) Keyboardist Earl Van Dyke

5. Gordy’s keen business sense and meticulous productions resulted in Motown recordings being embraced by black and white teenage audiences.

a) Gordy specifically chose and developed his artists to be charismatic and sophisticated live performers.

(1) Characteristic modes of dress

(2) Distinctive stage choreography

b) Artists had to maintain a strict code of conduct both on and off the stage.

c) Motown was a magnet for many talented individuals, such as Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Mary Wells, the Jackson Five (which included eleven-year-old Michael), and Diana Ross, to name a few.

D. Listening: “My Girl”

1. Composed and produced by Smokey Robinson and Ronald White
2. Performed by the Temptations (Number One, 1965)

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

3. Moderate-tempo love ballad; sweetly conventional romantic song in verse-chorus form
4. The recording is remarkable because of the engaging performance by the Temptations and the spectacular Motown production.
  - a) A cumulative layering of sounds gives a sense of steadily increasing passion and intensity to the song:
    - (1) Repeated solo bass motive establishes beat.
    - (2) Lead guitar enters with a memorable melodic figure.
    - (3) Drums and lead voice enter, followed by subtle background vocals.
    - (4) By the time the first chorus is reached, brass are present in the accompaniment.
    - (5) Orchestral strings are added to the accompaniment.
    - (6) The second verse brings new brass fanfares in response to the lead vocalist’s calls.
    - (7) There is an instrumental interlude dominated by strings before the third verse.
    - (8) A dramatic upward key change takes place right before the concluding verse and chorus.
5. William “Smokey” Robinson (b. 1940) was a gifted songwriter and lead singer in the gospel tradition. He was known for his ethereal high-pitched tenor voice.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

6. During the 1960s, as vice president of Motown, he was Berry Gordy’s right-hand man, discovering new talent, writing songs, and producing.

**E. Listening: “You Can’t Hurry Love”**

1. Composed by Holland-Dozier-Holland
2. Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier
3. Performed by the Supremes (Number One, 1966)
4. A cleverly written, innovatively structured Motown pop song, both catchy and sophisticated
  - a) The opening A section is very short, half the length of the next B and C sections. It is unclear whether the A section functions as an introduction or a short verse.
  - b) The basic chord progressions of the A and B sections are virtually identical.
  - c) The C section brings a striking chord and melody change.
  - d) The B and C sections alternate, creating an unorthodox verse-chorus situation in which the chorus lyrics are not exactly the same.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

- e) The A section (played twice through) returns unexpectedly with a vengeance.
  - f) There is an ambiguous section based on chords from the A and B sections.
  - g) Finally, the voice enters with the B section and fades to an ending.
5. The formal structure of the song reflects the meaning. “You Can’t Hurry Love” is about the importance of waiting. The song keeps us guessing, waiting for clarification on the functional relationship between the sections.
6. During Motown’s heyday in the mid-1960s, Gordy’s music empire included eight record labels, a management service, and a publishing company.
7. From 1964 to 1967, Motown had fourteen Number One pop singles, twenty Number One R&B singles, forty-six additional Top 15 pop singles, and seventy-five additional Top 15 R&B singles. In 1966, seventy-five percent of Motown’s releases made the charts.
8. In 1971, Gordy moved the Motown headquarters to Los Angeles.
9. In July 1988, Gordy sold Motown Records to MCA and Boston Ventures for \$61 million.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

10. Boston Ventures later bought out MCA’s interest and sold Motown Records to the Dutch-based PolyGram conglomerate for \$325 million in 1993.

11. In late 1994, Warner Books published Gordy’s self-serving biography, *To Be Loved*.

12. Gordy was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990.

**IV. Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys**

A. Formed in 1961 by Brian Wilson, his two brothers, a cousin, and a friend in Hawthorne, California

1. Brian Wilson was the guiding spirit of the band during the group’s first decade.

2. The defining model of the Beach Boys:

a) Demonstrate a mastery of early rock ’n’ roll.

b) Create original material based on and extending those styles.

c) Branch out beyond the forms, sounds, and lyrics of traditional rock ’n’ roll to create something truly unique.

B. The songs of the Beach Boys enshrined Wilson’s somewhat mythical version of California in the consciousness of young Americans.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

1. “Surfin’ Safari,” “Surfer Girl,” “The Warmth of the Sun,” “California Girls”
2. Wilson’s vision was inclusive even though it remained place specific.

C. Brian Wilson’s journey from imitation, through emulation, to innovation

1. The Beach Boys’ first Top 10 hit, the famous “Surfin’ USA” (Number Three, 1963), simply borrows the music of Chuck Berry’s 1958 hit “Sweet Little Sixteen” with new words.
2. The Beach Boys’ next hit, “Surfer Girl” (Number Seven, 1963), reinvigorated the sound and spirit of the doo-wop ballad by infusing it with California beach imagery.
3. “Fun, Fun, Fun,” the group’s first hit of 1964, evoked Chuck Berry again, in an initially overt but ultimately more subtle way. The solo guitar introduction cops its twelve-bar blues licks directly from Berry’s “Roll Over Beethoven” and “Johnny B. Goode.”
4. By mid-1964, Wilson had moved past obvious emulation into a period of aggressive experimentation with his inherited styles and forms. “I Get Around,” the Beach Boys’ first Number One record, turns the up-tempo rock ’n’ roll anthem into a thoroughly individual kind of expression.

V. Other “Surf Music”

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

A. The popular duo Jan (Berry) and Dean (Torrence) worked with Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys on a number of projects.

1. Wilson, in fact, co-wrote Jan and Dean’s biggest hit, “Surf City” (Number One, 1963).

B. The guitar style of Southern California surf music is based on the sound created by Dick Dale (b. 1937) of the Del-Tones.

1. Solid-body guitar
2. High-wattage Fender amplifier
3. Lots of reverb to achieve the “wet” sound
4. One of Dick Dale’s characteristic techniques, the rapid, descending tremolo, was borrowed by the Chantays to open their recording of “Pipeline.”
5. Sustained national recognition eluded Dick Dale in the 1960s, but it finally became his in the 1990s, when his recording of “Misirlou,” from 1962, was used as opening music for the hit film *Pulp Fiction*.

C. The Ventures

1. The most successful instrumental group associated with surf rock
2. A Seattle-based ensemble

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

3. Adopted aspects of the style after it became popular in California.
4. The Ventures hit Number Four with “Hawaii Five-0”
  - a) Theme song of the hit 1960s TV show
  - b) Featured on *American Bandstand*

**VI. The Beatles and the British Invasion**

**A. The Beatles**

1. If greatness is measured in commercial success and popularity, the Beatles were the greatest popular musicians of the twentieth century.
2. They started out as a performing band modeled on Buddy Holly’s group, the Crickets.
3. The Beatles achieved a stable lineup by 1962, consisting of:
  - a) John Lennon and George Harrison (lead and rhythm guitars and vocals),
  - b) Paul McCartney (bass and vocals), and
  - c) Ringo Starr (drums and occasional vocals).
4. During their extended apprenticeship period, the Beatles played at clubs in their hometown of Liverpool and elsewhere.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

5. In Hamburg, Germany, they performed an imitative repertoire that centered on covers of songs by the American rock 'n' roll artists they most admired.

6. Listening: “Please Please Me” (1962)

- a) Written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney; performed by the Beatles
- b) Excellent example of the Beatles’ early songwriting and performing
- c) Straightforward up-tempo love song in a typical AABA form
- d) Clever internal rhymes: “complainin’” is rhymed with “rain in [my heart]” at the beginning of the B section.
- e) The A sections have their own distinctive form: a-a-b-c.
  - (1) The *a* phrases have a descending melodic motion.
  - (2) The *b* phrase text simply repeats the words “come on, come on,” which builds intensity.
  - (3) The *c* phrase is the melodic high point of the section.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

7. Listening: “A Hard Day’s Night” (1964)

- a) Written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney; performed by the Beatles
- b) Number One in 1964
- c) Title song of the Beatles’ first movie
- d) Begins with dissonant guitar chord—effective hook
- e) Overall form is AABA
- f) The A section is twelve bars long, has three four-bar phrases, and uses blue notes that do not follow the typical blues harmonic structure.
- g) The song uses more than the three traditional chords (I, IV, and V), and the chord changes do not always happen in the expected places.

8. Listening: “Yesterday” (1965)

- a) Written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney; performed by the Beatles
- b) Romantic ballad with strong roots in the Tin Pan Alley popular song tradition
- c) Form: AABABA—a variation of the Tin Pan Alley thirty-two-bar AABA form
- d) Opening A section:  
*Yesterday/ All my troubles... /Now it looks... /Oh, I believe...*

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

e) Instrumentation: acoustic guitar and strings

9. Listening: “Eleanor Rigby”

a) Written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney; performed by the Beatles (1966)

b) Instrumentation: string quartet—violins, viola, cello

c) The text describes two lonely people whose lives have been exercises in futility.

d) The harmony emphasizes the feeling of loneliness by alternating between two chords without reaching a goal.

e) The melody does not lead anywhere; there is no sense of melodic development.

f) Form: alternation of a verse and chorus

B. Other bands from the British Invasion

1. The other British Invasion acts that made a long-term impact in America started as the Beatles did: with firm roots in American R&B and rock 'n' roll.

2. On the whole, the Rolling Stones, the Animals, the Who, the Kinks, and Eric Clapton all remained closer to these roots during their careers than the Beatles did.

3. The Rolling Stones

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

- a) Of all the British Invasion acts other than the Beatles, the Rolling Stones have had the greatest cumulative influence in America.
- b) The Rolling Stones excelled in presenting covers and original songs of an intense, gritty, and often dark character.
- c) They cultivated an image as “bad boys,” in deliberate contrast to the friendly public image projected by the Beatles.
- d) “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction”
  - (1) Perhaps their most famous record
  - (2) Number One in 1965
  - (3) Composed by band members Mick Jagger and Keith Richards
  - (4) Memorable buzzing guitar “hook”
  - (5) Unrelenting beat
  - (6) Unabashedly self-oriented and ultimately sexual lyrics
  - (7) The song perfectly exemplifies the distinctive low-down, hard-rocking essence of both the Rolling Stones themselves and their music.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

VII. America’s Response to the British Invasion

A. The Beach Boys

1. Brian Wilson, inspired by the Beatles’ album *Rubber Soul* (1965), produced what is arguably rock’s first concept album, *Pet Sounds*
  - a) Released in mid-1966
  - b) A modest seller, compared with some other Beach Boys albums
  - c) Had an enormous impact on musicians who heard it
  - d) Paul McCartney affirmed that *Pet Sounds* was the single greatest influence on the Beatles’ landmark 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*.
2. Wilson furthered his experimentation with the late-1966 single “Good Vibrations,” which reached Number One on the charts and has remained probably the Beach Boys’ most famous song.
3. By this time, Wilson was also at work on an album to be called *Smile*.
  - a) Eagerly anticipated for many months, *Smile* was abandoned in 1967.
  - b) Wilson returned to and completed *Smile* in 2004.

**CHAPTER NINE: “GOOD VIBRATIONS”: AMERICAN POP AND THE BRITISH INVASION, 1960s**

**B. Listening: “Good Vibrations”**

1. Virtually every aspect of the record is unusual, from the vocal arrangement to the instrumentation, from the chordal vocabulary to the overall form.
2. Form:
  - a) No name for it
  - b) Unique but effective
  - c) Begins with a standard ABAB pattern
  - d) Instead of returning to A, moves on to a third idea, C, and then to D; never returns to the original A idea
3. Wilson uses a rich sound palette to communicate the sensuous experience that is the essential subject matter of “Good Vibrations.”
4. “Good Vibrations” boasts memorable melodic hooks and a wide and colorful palette of chords.
5. This recording was extremely costly to produce, in terms of both time and money.
6. It is a milestone in the developing history of rock production, as well as a landmark hit record of the 1960s.