

**CHAPTER TWELVE: OUTSIDERS' MUSIC: PROGRESSIVE COUNTRY, REGGAE, PUNK,
FUNK, AND RAP, 1970s**

Chapter Outline

I. The Outlaws: Progressive Country Music

A. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, mainstream country music was dominated by:

1. the slick Nashville sound,
2. hardcore country (Merle Haggard), and
3. blends of country and pop promoted on AM radio.

B. A new generation of country artists was embracing music and attitudes that grew out of the 1960s counterculture; this movement was called progressive country.

1. Inspired by honky-tonk and rockabilly mix of Bakersfield country music, singer-songwriters (Bob Dylan), and country rock (Gram Parsons)
2. Progressive country performers wrote songs that were more intellectual and liberal in outlook than their contemporaries' songs.
3. Artists were more concerned with testing the limits of the country music tradition than with scoring hits.
4. The movement's key artists included

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- a) Willie Nelson,
- b) Kris Kristofferson,
- c) Tom T. Hall, and
- d) Townes Van Zandt.

5. These artists were not polished singers by conventional standards, but they wrote distinctive, individualist songs and had compelling voices.

6. They developed a cult following, and progressive country began to inch its way into the mainstream (usually in the form of cover versions).

- a) "Harper Valley PTA"

- (1) Original by Tom T. Hall

- (2) Cover version by Jeannie C. Riley; Number One pop and country (1968)

- b) "Help Me Make It through the Night"

- (1) Original by Kris Kristofferson

- (2) Cover version by Sammi Smith (1971)

C. Willie Nelson

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1. One of the most influential progressive country artists
2. Born in Texas in 1933
3. Developed a successful career as a professional songwriter in Nashville before moving back to Texas in 1971
 - a) Nelson's song "Crazy" had been a Top 10 country and pop hit for Patsy Cline in 1961.
 - b) He settled in Austin, where he fit in with the local music scene.
4. In summer 1971, he organized the first of a series of outdoor festivals that included country musicians as well as younger musicians experimenting with a blend of country and rock music.
5. Nelson bridged the gap between rock and country without losing touch with his honky-tonk roots.
6. Nelson's initial rise to national fame came in the mid-1970s through his association with a group of musicians collectively known as "the Outlaws."

D. "The Outlaws" and Waylon Jennings (1937–2002)

1. Waylon Jennings was the centerpiece of "the Outlaws."
2. Jennings began his career as a musician and disc jockey

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3. In 1958, he joined Buddy Holly's rock 'n' roll group, The Crickets.
4. In the early 1960s, he set up shop in a nightclub in Phoenix, where he developed a broad repertoire.
5. In 1965, he was signed with RCA Victor and relocated to Nashville.
 - a) RCA producer Chet Atkins tried to push Jennings toward the countrypolitan style, but he resisted and eventually won substantial leeway in his choice of material.
 - b) Jennings chose to remain close to the hub of the music industry in Nashville rather than return to Texas.
6. He cultivated his image as a rebel.
 - a) 1972 album *Ladies Love Outlaws*
 - (1) On the cover, he appeared in "bad guy" dress—black cowboy hat and six shooter.
 - (2) The outlaw image was turned into a commercial term by the music publicists in Nashville.
7. The Outlaws were never a cohesive performing group; the label "outlaw country" was largely a product of the recording industry to capitalize on the overlap of rock and country music.

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8. *Wanted: The Outlaws* (1976)

- a) A compilation album of Waylon Jennings's and Willie Nelson's early-1970s recordings
- b) Included a mix of material, from country music classics like "T for Texas" to a cover of the Elvis Presley song "Suspicious Minds" and the novelty song "Me and Paul"
- c) Huge success—Top 10 on *Billboard's* LP chart
- d) Became the first platinum country music LP
- e) Eventually sold over two million copies

9. *The Outlaws*

- a) Had a commercial dimension but still represented rebellion against conservatism in the country music establishment
- b) Found common ground in the past and future of country music
- c) Managed to briefly challenge country pop's hold on the charts in the mid-1970s
- d) Paved the way for alternative country artists such as k.d.lang, Dwight Yoakum, and Lyle Lovett

E. Townes Van Zandt (1944–97)

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1. Born in Fort Worth, Texas
2. Singer-songwriter who became a cult hero of the progressive country movement
3. He never placed a record on the country Top 40 charts, but his fifteen LPs became underground classics.
4. “Pancho and Lefty” from his 1972 LP *The Late Great Townes van Zandt*

a) Typical of his work

(1) Spare, unpolished vocal style

(2) Guitar accompaniment with more complex harmonies than in typical country music

(3) Fits within the European-derived ballad tradition

(4) Evokes an old Spanish tradition that took root in Mexico, the corrido—a typical ballad form with a series of four-line stanzas that tell a story about famous villains and heroes, historical events, or tragic romances

b) The four-line stanza serves as a framing device; singer seems to be addressing a character in the story:

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*Living on the road my friend
Was gonna keep you free and clean
Now you wear your skin like iron
Your breath's as hard as kerosene
You weren't your mama's only boy
But her favorite one it seems
She began to cry when you said goodbye
And sank into your dreams*

c) Third person voice of the typical ballad:

*Pancho was a bandit, boys
His horse was fast as polished steel
Wore his gun outside his pants
For all the honest world to feel
Pancho met his match you know
On the deserts down in Mexico
Nobody heard his dying words
That's the way it goes*

*All the federales say
They could have had him any day
They only let him hang around
Out of kindness I suppose*

*Lefty he can't sing the blues
All night long like he used to
The dust that Pancho bit down south
Ended up in Lefty's mouth
The day they laid poor Pancho low
Lefty split for Ohio
Where he got the bread to go
There ain't nobody knows*

*All the federales say
They could have had him any day
They only let him slip away
Out of kindness I suppose*

*The poets tell how Pancho fell
Lefty's livin' in a cheap hotel
The desert's quiet and Cleveland's cold
So the story ends we're told*

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*Pancho needs your prayers it's true,
But save a few for Lefty too
He just did what he had to do
Now he's growing old*

*A few gray federales say
They could have had him any day
They only let him go so wrong
Out of kindness I suppose*

5. Townes Van Zandt

- a) Died at age fifty-two
- b) His songs combine the straightforwardness of traditional country music with the poetic subtlety of singer-songwriters such as Bob Dylan.
- c) His music has inspired country and rock musicians from Lyle Lovett to Neil Young.

II. "I Shot the Sheriff": The Rise of Reggae

A. Reggae

- 1. A potent mixture of Caribbean folk music and American R&B
- 2. The first style of the rock era to originate in the so-called Third World
- 3. Born in the shantytowns of Kingston, Jamaica

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4. Reggae first became popular in the United States in 1973, after the release of the Jamaican film *The Harder They Come* and its soundtrack album.
5. During the 1970s, Jamaican musicians such as Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff achieved a measure of commercial success in the United States.
6. American and British rock musicians—including Eric Clapton, Paul Simon, the Police, and Elvis Costello—found inspiration (and profit) in the style.

B. Roots of Reggae

1. The roots of reggae lie in the Jamaican equivalent of country music, a genre called mento.
2. Mento—a mixture of Jamaican folk songs, church hymns, sailor's shanties, and Cuban influences—arose in rural Jamaica during the late nineteenth century.
 - a) By World War II, mento had lost its popularity among the thousands of young Jamaicans who were migrating to the capital city of Kingston.
3. During the 1940s and early 1950s, swing bands from the United States became popular in the dance halls of Kingston.

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4. Starting in the 1950s, American R&B became popular among youth in Kingston.
5. During the 1960s, a succession of new popular genres emerged out of the intersection of Jamaican folk music and American R&B.

C. Ska

1. An onomatopoeic term derived from the style's typical sharp, offbeat accents
2. Combined elements of Jamaican folk music and American R&B
3. Ska music was usually played at fast tempos, with the bass playing a steady four-beat pattern and the piano, guitar, and drums emphasizing the backbeats.
4. The biggest star of Jamaican ska was Don Drummond, a trombonist and leader of a band called the Skatalites.
5. The Skatalites also worked as a studio band, backing many of the most popular singers of the time and exerting a substantial influence on the youth culture of Kingston

D. Rastafarian religious movement

1. Prominent theme in reggae music

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2. Rastafarianism was founded by Josiah Marcus Garvey (1887–1940)

a) Jamaican writer and political leader who inspired a “Back to Africa” repatriation movement among black Americans in the 1920s

b) Before leaving Jamaica for the United States in 1916, Garvey wrote, “Look to Africa for the crowning of a black king; he shall be the redeemer,” a phrase that was taken quite literally as prophecy by Garvey’s followers.

c) In 1930, when Haile Selassie (“Power of the Trinity”) was crowned king of Ethiopia, preachers in Kingston saw this as confirmation of Garvey’s prediction and proceeded to scrutinize the Old Testament in search of passages that supported the authenticity of Selassie’s divinity.

3. The Rastafarians’ reinterpretation of the Bible focused on passages that dealt with slavery, salvation, and the apocalyptic consequences that would eventually be visited upon the oppressors (collectively referred to as Babylon).

4. Rastafarianism became associated with a unique set of cultural practices:

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- a) Special terminology (for example, “I-and-I” is substituted for “we”)
 - b) The use of marijuana (“ganja”) as a sacramental herb
 - c) The wearing of a distinctive hairstyle called “dreadlocks”
5. The Rastafarian movement spread rapidly, through an extensive network of neighborhood churches and informal prayer meetings, where music and dance were used to “give praise and thanks” (satta amassanga) and to “chant down Babylon.”
6. In the mountainous interior of Jamaica, where communities of escaped slaves called maroons had been living since the nineteenth century, Rastafarian songs and chants were mixed with an African-derived style of drumming called burru, creating a heavier, slower sound.
- a) This style, in turn, fed back into urban popular music, resulting in an updated version of ska called rock steady (around 1966).
7. Rock steady
- a) Considerably slower in tempo than ska
 - b) Some of its leading exponents began to record songs with social and political content
8. Rude Boys

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- a) The main patrons of rock steady
- b) An informal and unruly Jamaican youth movement, halfway between the Black Panthers and urban street gangs in the United States; a social category that included anyone against “the system.”
- c) Rude Boys increasingly came into conflict with the Jamaican police, and media coverage of their exploits helped create the image of romantic outlaw heroes.
- d) *The Harder They Come* (1972)
 - (1) Film that initiated reggae music’s popularity in the United States
 - (2) Thinly disguised biography of a ghetto hero, Vincent Martin, a.k.a. Rhygin’, a Jamaican outlaw of the early 1960s
- e) Bob Marley’s song “I Shot the Sheriff” is about a young man who is persecuted by the local sheriff and then accused of murdering both the sheriff and his deputy in cold blood.
- f) Under the influence of Rastafarian religiosity and Rude Boy street politics, a new genre called reggae took shape in Kingston during the late 1960s.

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E. Reggae

1. The word “reggae” is derived from “raggay,” a Kingston slang term meaning “raggedy, everyday stuff.”
2. In musical terms, reggae was a further extension of the evolution from ska to rock steady.
3. In reggae music, the tempo was slowed down even further, creating wide spaces between notes, allowing the music to breathe and emphasizing the polyrhythmic heritage of Afro-Jamaican traditions.
4. Each instrument in a reggae band has its own carefully defined role.
5. The heart of reggae music consists of “riddims,” interlocking rhythmic patterns played by the guitar, bass, and drums.
6. The guitar often plays short, choppy chords on the second and fourth beats of each measure, giving the music a bouncy, up-and-down feeling.
7. The bass-drum combination is the irreducible core of a reggae band, sometimes called the “riddim pair.” (The most famous of these are the brothers Aston and Carlton Barrett, who played in Bob Marley’s band, and Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, who have appeared on hundreds of reggae recordings and on the LPs of rock artists such as Bob Dylan, Mick Jagger, and Peter Gabriel.)

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8. This musical mixture was further enlivened by the influence of contemporary black American popular music, particularly the soul recordings of James Brown and Aretha Franklin.

9. Political messages were central to reggae music—while ska musicians of the early 1960s, like their American R&B counterparts, sang mainly about love and heartbreak, the most popular reggae artists focused their attention on issues such as social injustice and racism.

F. The film *The Harder They Come* featured reggae songs by a number of the most popular Jamaican musicians.

1. The star of the film, and the vocalist on the title track of the soundtrack LP, was Jimmy Cliff (b. 1948).

2. Like Ivan, the outlaw character he portrayed in the film, Cliff was only a teenager when he left the rural Jamaican town of St. James for the city of Kingston.

3. Cliff arrived in Kingston in 1962 and made his first record within a year.

4. Working with the producer Leslie Kong, he recorded a series of Jamaican Top 10 hits during the mid-1960s.

5. While performing at the 1964 World's Fair in New York City, Cliff met Chris Blackwell of the English independent label Island Records, who

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convinced him to move to London. After working as a backup singer and scoring a few hits on the European charts, he returned to Jamaica in 1969 and recorded the song “Many Rivers to Cross,” which inspired the director Perry Henzel to offer him the lead role in *The Harder They Come*.

6. Although the film did not reach the mass audience commanded by many Hollywood movies, it did create a devoted audience for reggae music in the United States, particularly among young, college-educated adults, who were attracted by the rebellious spirit of the music and its associations with Rastafarianism and ganja smoking.

7. Jimmy Cliff's 1972 recording of “The Harder They Come” exemplifies the reggae style of the early 1970s:

- a) Moderate tempo
- b) Strong guitar chords on the second and fourth beats of each measure
- c) R&B-influenced singing
- d) Gritty lyrics about the individual's struggle against oppression:

*I keep on fighting for the things I want
Though I know that when you're dead you can't
But I'd rather be a free man in my grave
Than living as a puppet or a slave
So as sure as the sun will shine
I'm gonna get my share now what is mine
And then the harder they come, the harder they fall*

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One and all

G. Bob Marley (1945–81)

1. Leader of the Wailers; quickly surpassed Cliff in popularity
2. A national hero in his native Jamaica, Marley was reggae's most effective international ambassador.
3. His songs of determination, rebellion, and faith, rooted in the Rastafarian belief system, found a worldwide audience that reached from America to Japan and from Europe to Africa.
4. The son of a British naval officer who deserted his family when Marley was six years old, he migrated to Kingston from the rural parish of St. Ann at age fourteen.
5. His early career reflects the economic precariousness of the music industry in a Third World country.
6. After making a few singles for the Chinese-Jamaican producer Leslie Kong, Marley formed the Wailers in 1963 and signed with Coxsone Dodd's studios.
7. Following a long period with little financial success (including a year of factory work for Marley in Wilmington, Delaware), the Wailers signed

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with the producer Lee Perry, who added Aston and Carlton Barrett, a masterful bassist-and-drummer “riddim pair.”

8. In 1972, Chris Blackwell, who had launched Jimmy Cliff’s international career, signed Bob Marley and the Wailers to Island Records and advanced them the money to record at their independent Tuff Gong studio in Jamaica. Marley’s recognition abroad was boosted by the success of Eric Clapton’s cover of “I Shot the Sheriff,” from the Wailers’ second LP for Island Records.

9. The Wailers’ first major concert in the United States took place in 1974 in Boston, where for a year and a half, over a thousand young people a day had been viewing *The Harder They Come*.

10. Between 1975 and 1980, Marley recorded six gold LPs for Island Records, including *Rastaman Vibration*, which reached Number Eight on the *Billboard* LP charts in 1976.

11. Marley was wounded in a politically motivated assassination attempt in 1976 and died of cancer in 1981, at age thirty-six. His appeal and popularity, both in America and worldwide, have only grown in the years since his death: the 1984 LP compilation *Legend* has sold over eight million copies in the United States alone.

H. Popularization of reggae

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1. Jamaican music appeared on the American charts long before Bob Marley and the Wailers's increasing popularity in the mid-to-late 1970s.
2. In 1964, a ska-flavored recording by the Jamaican teenager Millie Small called "My Boy Lollipop" climbed all the way up to Number Two on *Billboard's* list of singles.
3. In 1968, Johnny Nash, an African American pop singer who established a recording studio in Jamaica, had a Top 5 hit with the reggae-influenced "Hold Me Tight."
4. In 1969, two reggae records by Jamaican artists became successes in the United States:
 - a) "Israelites" by Desmond Dekker and the Aces (Number Nine pop)
 - b) "Wonderful World, Beautiful People," by Jimmy Cliff
(Number Twenty-five pop)
5. The best-known cover version of any reggae number is Eric Clapton's million-selling recording of Bob Marley's "I Shot the Sheriff."
 - a) A Number One hit in 1974
 - b) Appears on Clapton's Number One album from the same year, *461 Ocean Boulevard*

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- c) Political song whose coded lyrics were lost on those not familiar with Jamaican politics
- d) In comparison with Bob Marley's recording of "I Shot the Sheriff," on the 1973 album *Burnin'*, Clapton's version sounds much less insistently rhythmic and intense.
- e) Clapton made an effective 1970s pop single out of Marley's "I Shot the Sheriff" by smoothing out its sound.

III. "Psycho Killer": 1970s Punk and New Wave

A. During the 1970s, the first "alternative" movements emerged within rock music.

B. By 1975, rock music, which had begun as a vital part of the 1960s counterculture, had become closely connected with the center of popular taste.

1. Many believed that rock's innovative potential had been squandered by pampered, pretentious rock stars and the major record companies that promoted them.
2. The golden age of punk rock—a "back to basics" rebellion against the perceived artifice and pretension of corporate rock music—lasted from around 1975 to 1978.

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3. Both the musical genre and the sensibility with which it was associated continue to exert a strong influence today on alternative rock musicians.

C. New wave music

1. Developed alongside punk rock, approached the critique of corporate rock in more self-consciously artistic and experimental terms.
2. The term “new wave” was soon picked up by record companies themselves, who began using it in the late 1970s to refer to pop-influenced performers such as Blondie.
3. Although the initial energy of the punk and new wave scene was largely expended by the start of the 1980s, young musicians inspired by the raw energy and minimalism of this movement went on to create distinctive regional music scenes in Los Angeles; Minneapolis; Seattle; Athens, Georgia; and elsewhere.

D. Punk music

1. Punk was as much a cultural style—an attitude defined by a rebellion against authority and a deliberate rejection of middle-class values—as it was a musical genre.
2. To many of its fans, punk rock represented a turn toward the authentic, risk-taking spirit of early rock 'n' roll and away from the pomposity and self-conscious artistry of album-oriented rock.

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3. Punk was riven though with contradictions.
 - a) If punk was explicitly against traditional commercial fashion, it was also a fashion system in its own right (e.g., torn blue jeans, ripped stockings, outfits patched with ragged bits of contrasting materials).
 - b) If some punk musicians framed their challenge to established authority in terms of progressive social values, others flirted with fascist imagery, attaching Nazi swastikas to their clothing and associating with the racist “skinhead” movement.
4. Punk was a stripped-down and often purposefully “nonmusical” version of rock music; it was a return to the wildness of early rock 'n' roll stars like Jerry Lee Lewis and Little Richard, but with lyrics that emphasized the ironic or dark dimensions of human existence—drug addiction, despair, suicide, lust, and violence.

E. Punk rock and its more commercial cousin, new wave, took shape in New York City during the mid-1970s.

1. One of the predecessors of punk rock was an American musical institution called the “garage bands.”

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2. The rough-and-ready, do-it-yourself attitude of the garage bands—something akin to a rock 'n' roll-based folk music movement—paved the way for punk rock.

3. A few of these local groups went on to enjoy some commercial success:

a) Los Angeles-based Standells, whose “Dirty Water” was a Number Eleven pop hit in 1966

b) ? and the Mysterians, from the industrial town of Flint, Michigan, who took “96 Tears” to the top of the charts in the same year

c) Kingsmen, from Portland, Oregon, best known for their cover version of the 1950s R&B song “Louie, Louie” (Number Two pop in 1963)

F. Three groups, none of them very successful in commercial terms, are frequently cited as ancestors of 1970s punk music, and of later genres such as new wave, hardcore, industrial, and alternative rock:

1. The Velvet Underground

2. The Stooges

3. The New York Dolls

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G. The Velvet Underground

1. New York group promoted by the pop art superstar Andy Warhol, who painted the famous cartoon-like image of a banana on the cover of their first LP.
2. Their music was rough-edged and chaotic, extremely loud, and deliberately anticommercial, and the lyrics of their songs focused on topics such as sexual deviancy, drug addiction, violence, and social alienation.
3. The leaders of the Velvet Underground were singer and guitarist Lou Reed—who had worked previously as a pop songwriter in a Brill Building-style “music factory”—and John Cale, a viola player active in the avant-garde art music scene in New York, who introduced experimental musical elements into the mix, including electronic noise and recorded industrial sounds.

H. The Stooges

1. Formed in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1967
2. The working-class, motorcycle-riding, leather-jacketed ancestors of punk rock
3. The lead singer of the Stooges, Iggy Stooze (a.k.a. Iggy Pop, James Osterburg), was famous for his outrageous stage performances, which

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included flinging himself into the crowd, cutting himself with beer bottles,
and rubbing himself with raw meat.

4. The Stooges' eponymous first album (1969), produced by the Velvet Underground's John Cale, created a devoted, if small, national audience for the their demented garage-band sound.

5. A good example of the sensibility that underlay much of the Stooges' work is the song "1969."

a) Evokes a world light-years distant from the utopianism of the hippie movement and the Woodstock festival, held that same summer:

*Well it's 1969 OK all across the USA
It's another year for me and you
Another year with nothing to do
Last year I was 21 I didn't have a lot of fun
And now I'm gonna be 22 I say oh my and a boo-hoo
Another year with nothing to do
It's 1969, 1969, 1969, 1969, 1969, baby*

I. The New York Dolls

1. Exerted a major influence on the musical and visual style of the punk rock movement

2. Formed in New York City in 1971

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3. Dressed in fishnet stockings, bright red lipstick, cellophane tutus, ostrich feathers, and army boots, the all-male Dolls were an American response to the English glam rock movement, typified by the reigning master of rock gender bending, David Bowie.
4. Their professional career began inauspiciously—at a Christmas party in a seedy welfare hotel in Manhattan—but by late 1972, they had built a small and devoted following.
5. Although the New York Dolls soon succumbed to drug and alcohol abuse, they did establish certain core features of punk antifashion and helped create a new underground rock music scene in New York City.

J. CBGB & OMFUG (Country, Bluegrass, Blues & Other Music for Urban Gourmandizers)

1. Converted folk music club located in the run-down Bowery area of Manhattan
2. The home of New York's burgeoning punk movement
3. The first rock musician to perform regularly at CBGBs was Patti Smith (b. 1946).
 - a) New York-based poet, journalist, and singer who had been experimenting with combining the spoken word and rock accompaniment

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- b) In 1975, Smith began a stint at CBGBs, establishing a beachhead for punk and new wave bands, and signed a contract with Arista, a new label headed by Clive Davis, the former head of Columbia Records.
 - c) Her critically acclaimed album *Horses* reached Number Forty-seven on the *Billboard* charts in 1976.
4. Other influential groups who played at CBGBs during the mid-1970s included
- a) Television, whose lengthy instrumental improvisations were inspired by the Velvet Underground and avant-garde jazz saxophonist Albert Ayler, and
 - b) Blondie.

K. The Ramones

1. The first bonafide punk rock band
2. Formed in 1974 in New York City
3. The Ramones' high-speed, energetic, and extremely loud sound influenced English punk groups such as the Sex Pistols and the Clash and also became a blueprint for 1980s L.A. hardcore bands.

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4. Although they projected a street-tough image, all of the band's members were from middle-class families in the New York City borough of Queens.
5. The band—not a family enterprise, despite their stage names—consisted of Jeffrey Hyman (a.k.a. Joey Ramone) on vocals, John Cummings (Johnny Ramone) on guitar, Douglas Colvin (Dee Dee Ramone) on bass, and Tom Erdelyi (Tommy Ramone) on drums.
6. The band's first manager, Danny Fields, had previously worked with the Stooges and Lou Reed and thus had a good sense of the Ramones' potential audience.
7. The Ramones began playing regularly at CBGBs in 1975.
8. By the end of the year, they had secured a recording contract with Sire Records, an independent label that signed a number of early punk groups.
9. Their eponymous debut album was recorded in 1976 for just over six thousand dollars, an incredibly small amount of money in an era of expensive and time-consuming studio sessions.
10. The album gained some critical attention and managed to reach Number 111 on the *Billboard* album charts.
11. Later that year, the Ramones staged a British Invasion in reverse. Their concerts in English cities, where their records had already created an

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underground sensation, were attended by future members of almost every important British punk band, including the Sex Pistols, the Clash, and the Damned.

12. In 1977, the Ramones scored a U.K. Top 40 hit with the song "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker" (Number Eighty-one U.S.), which announced that the center of the rock 'n' roll universe had shifted from the beaches of southern California to the lower east side of Manhattan:

*Well the kids are all hopped up and ready to go
They're ready to go now
They've got their surfboards
And they're going to the discotheque au go go
But she just couldn't stay
She had to break away
Well New York City really has it all
Oh yeah, oh yeah.
Sheena is a punk rocker, Sheena is a punk rocker, Sheena is a punk rocker
now.*

13. The Ramones' music reflected their origins as a garage band made up of neighborhood friends.

14. These songs had catchy, pop-inspired melodies, were played at extremely fast tempos, and generally lasted no more than two and a half minutes.

15. The band's raw, hard-edged sound was anchored by a steady barrage of notes, played on drums, bass, and guitar. Johnny Ramone rarely, if ever, took a guitar solo. The song "I Wanna Be Sedated," from the band's fourth album, *Road to Ruin* (1978), is a good example of the Ramones'

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style, and of their mordant—one is tempted to say twisted—sense of humor:

*Twenty-twenty-twenty-four hours to go, I wanna be sedated
Nothin' to do and nowhere to go-o-o, I wanna be sedated
Just put me in a wheelchair, get me to the show
Hurry hurry hurry, before I gotta go
I can't control my fingers, I can't control my toes
Oh no no no no no
Ba-ba-bamp-ba ba-ba-ba-bamp-ba, I wanna be sedated
Ba-ba-bamp-ba ba-ba-ba-bamp-ba, I wanna be sedated*

16. The song text's images of drug-induced insanity (and its putative antidote, drug-induced paralysis) are juxtaposed with a catchy pop melody and Beach Boys-like chorus, a combination that affirms Joey Ramone's early description of the band's style as "sick bubblegum music."

L. The Talking Heads

1. Represented the more self-consciously artistic and exploratory side of the alternative rock scene of the mid-1970s
2. Formed in 1974 by David Byrne (born in Scotland in 1952), Chris Frantz, and Tina Weymouth, who met as art students at the Rhode Island School of Design
3. They first appeared at CBGBs in 1975 as the opening act for the Ramones, though they attracted a somewhat different audience, made up of college students, artists, and music critics.

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4. In 1976, they were signed to a recording contract by Sire Records.
 - a) Their first album, *Talking Heads: 77*, achieved critical acclaim.
 - b) Broke into the Top 100 on the *Billboard* album charts
5. The band's style reflected their interest in an aesthetic called minimalism, which emphasizes the use of combinations of a limited number of basic elements—colors, shapes, sounds, or words.
6. The Talking Heads' instrumental arrangements
 - a) Fused this approach with the interlocking, riff-based rhythms pioneered by African American popular musicians, particularly James Brown
7. The Talking Heads' songs
 - a) Generally quite simple structurally
 - b) Strong pop hooks and contrasting sections marked off by carefully arranged changes in instrumental texture
8. The Talking Heads were vastly different from the other CBGBs bands. They dressed in slacks, sweaters, and vests, projecting the image of cerebral, nerdy college students.

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9. Just as the punk rockers' antifashion became a new kind of fashion, so David Byrne's studied awkwardness established a new kind of cool, one still much in evidence on college campuses today.

M. Listening: "Psycho Killer"

1. Music and lyrics by David Byrne, Chris Frantz, Tina Weymouth
2. Performed by the Talking Heads; recorded in 1977
3. The center of attention on most Talking Heads recordings was David Byrne's trembling, high-pitched voice and his eclectic songwriting.
4. Byrne often delivered his lyrics in a nervous, almost schizophrenic stream-of-consciousness voice, like overheard fragments from a psychiatrist's office.
5. "Psycho Killer" was inspired by Norman Bates, the schizophrenic murderer in Alfred Hitchcock's film *Psycho*.
6. Although it now seems like an ironic commentary on mass media portrayals of "the serial killer," this song had a darker, more immediate resonance when it was released in 1977, during the Son of Sam killing spree, in which a deranged man shot thirteen people in New York City.

N. Analysis: "Psycho Killer"

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1. The recording opens with Tina Weymouth's electric bass, playing a simple riff reminiscent of mid-1970s funk or disco music
2. Joined by two guitars, playing crisply articulated, interlocking chord patterns
3. David Byrne's voice enters in the thirteenth bar, enunciating the lyrics in a half-spoken, half-sung style, over a simple melody that uses only a few pitches and stays mainly on the tonic note.
4. The first verse (A1) gives us a glimpse into the psychosis of the narrator:

*I can't seem to face up to the facts
I'm tense and nervous and I can't relax
I can't sleep 'cause my bed's on fire
Don't touch me I'm a real live wire*

5. This verse is followed by two statements of the chorus (B), which references the title of the song, dips abruptly and somewhat schizophrenically into a second language (French), and ends with a stuttered warning to the listener:

*Psycho Killer, Qu'est-ce que c'est [What is it?]
Fa fa fa fa fa fa fa fa fa better
Run run run run run run run away*

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6. The chorus blends into a four-bar vocal interlude, with Byrne's voice leaping up an octave and emitting a distressed "Ay yai yai yai," and a two-bar instrumental section that reestablishes the basic groove.

7. In the second verse (A2), Byrne shifts from singing to speech, becoming more agitated as he expresses his anger at people who talk a lot, despite having nothing to say, and at his own inability to communicate with others:

*You start a conversation, you can't even finish it.
You're talking a lot, but you're not saying anything.
When I have nothing to say, my lips are sealed.
Say something once, why say it again?*

The chorus (B) is heard two more times, followed by the interlude, and then by a new section (C), in which Byrne struggles to confess his crime in an awkward, strangled variant of French:

*Ce que j'ai fais, ce soir-la [The things I did on that night]
Ce qu'elle a dit, ce soir-la [The things she said on that night]
Réalisant mon espoir [Achieving my hope]
Je me lance vers la gloire . . . Okay [I hurl myself toward glory . . . Okay]*

Eventually, Byrne switches back into English, focusing obsessively on a single pitch and revealing more of his character's motivation for committing an unspecified, though presumably horrific, act:

*We are vain and we are blind
I hate people when they're not polite*

8. After final repetitions of the "Psycho Killer" chorus (B) and interlude, the band moves into a concluding twenty-four-bar instrumental section (or coda), in which the basic groove is elaborated with distorted textures, wavering pitches on the guitars, strange vocal sounds from Byrne, and the

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panning of one guitar back and forth from the left to the right speaker, like the unanchored movement of a madman's thoughts.

9. The last sound we hear is the squeal of feedback from one of the microphones, fading into silence.

10. The characteristics projected in "Psycho Killer"—tongue-tied, nervous, emotionally distant, and obsessively intellectual—provided David Byrne with a durable stage persona similar to David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust.

11. Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, the Talking Heads recorded a series of critically acclaimed albums, most of which reached *Billboard's* Top 40 and achieved either gold or platinum status.

12. The Talking Heads' commercial success was linked to the accessibility of their music, which mixed in influences from R&B and funk music, and from West African music, with its complexly interlocking but catchy polyrhythmic patterns.

13. David Byrne went on to become a major figure in the world beat movement of the 1980s and 1990s, introducing American audiences to recording artists from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean.

IV. "Tear the Roof off the Sucker": Funk Music

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A. Funk music—and its commercial offspring, disco—brought the focus on dancing back into the pop mainstream.

1. Most album-oriented rock music was aimed at a predominantly white male audience and was designed for listening rather than dancing.
2. Funk music represented another back-to-basics impetus, the impulse to dance.

B. The term “funky”

1. Probably derived from the (central African) BaKongo term “funke,” meaning “healthy sweat”
2. It was already in wide use by New Orleans jazz musicians during the first decade of the twentieth century.
3. Today, “funky” carries the same ambivalent meaning that it did a century ago—strong body odors and a quality of earthiness and authenticity, quintessentially expressed in music.
4. If the concept of soul symbolized the spiritual, uplifting side of black consciousness, then funk was its profane and decidedly down-to-earth counterpart.

C. By the early 1970s, the term “funk” was being used as a label for a genre of popular music characterized by

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1. strong, dance-oriented rhythms,
2. Catchy melodies,
3. call-and-response exchanges between voices and instruments, and
4. heavy reliance on repeated, rhythmically interlocking patterns.

D. Most funk bands consisted of a rhythm section (guitar, keyboards, electric bass, and drums) and a horn section, which effectively functioned as part of the rhythm section and occasionally supplied jazz-influenced solos.

E. Although funk music initially targeted the predominantly urban black audience for soul music, funk groups such as Kool and the Gang, Ohio Players, and Chic were able to score Number One pop hits during the 1970s.

F. Funk represented a vigorous reassertion of African American musical values in the face of soft soul's dominance of the R&B/pop crossover market, and it paved the way for the more commercialized sounds of disco music in the mid-1970s.

G. James Brown was one of the prime inspirations for funk musicians.

1. During the early 1970s, Brown continued to score successes with dance-oriented hits.
2. Brown's ranking on the pop charts declined gradually throughout this period, however, owing in large part to competition from a new generation

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of musicians who played variations on the basic style he had established the decade before.

3. This approach—the core of funk music—centered on
 - a) the creation of a strong rhythmic momentum or groove,
 - b) the electric bass and bass drum often playing on all four main beats of the measure,
 - c) the snare drum and other instruments playing equally strongly on the second and fourth beats (the backbeats), and
 - d) interlocking ostinato patterns distributed among other instruments.

H. Sly and the Family Stone

1. An interracial “psychedelic soul” band whose recordings bridged the gap between rock music and soul music.
2. Sly Stone (Sylvester Stewart)
 - a) Born in Dallas in 1944, moved to San Francisco with his family in the 1950s.
 - b) Began his musical career at age four as a gospel singer, went on to study trumpet, music theory, and composition in college, and

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later worked as a disc jockey at both R&B and rock-oriented radio stations in the San Francisco Bay Area

c) Formed his first band (the Stoners) in 1966 and gradually developed a style that reflected his own diverse musical experience (jazz, soul music, San Francisco psychedelia, folk rock)

d) The Family Stone's national popularity was boosted by their fiery performance at the Woodstock Festival in 1969, which appeared in the film and soundtrack album *Woodstock*.

e) Between 1968 and 1971, Sly and the Family Stone recorded a series of albums and singles that reached the top of both the pop and soul charts.

(1) "Dance to the Music" (Number Eight pop and Number Nine R&B in 1968)

(2) "Everyday People"/"Sing a Simple Song" (Number One pop and R&B in 1969)

(3) "Thank You (Falletinme Be Mice Elf Again)"/"Everybody is a Star" (Number One pop and R&B in 1970)

(4) "Family Affair" (Number One pop and R&B in 1971)

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3. The sound of the Family Stone was anchored by the electric bass of Larry Graham and by an approach to arranging that made the whole band, including the horn section, into a collective rhythm section.

I. By 1973, funk music had burst onto the pop music scene.

1. Crossover gold records were played constantly on AM radio and in nightclubs and discotheques.

a) Kool and the Gang's "Jungle Boogie" and "Hollywood Swinging"

b) The Ohio Players' "Fire" and "Love Rollercoaster"

c) The multimillion-selling "Play That Funky Music" by the white band Wild Cherry

2. These bands kept the spirit and style of James Brown and Sly Stone alive, albeit in a commercialized and decidedly nonpolitical manner.

J. George Clinton

1. The apotheosis of 1970s funk music was a loose aggregate of around forty musicians (variously called Parliament or Funkadelic), led by George Clinton (a.k.a. Dr. Funkenstein).

2. Clinton (b. 1940), an ex-R&B vocal group leader and songwriter

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3. Enlisting some former members of James Brown's band (bassist William "Bootsy" Collins and saxophone players Maceo Parker and Fred Wesley), he developed a mixture of compelling polyrhythms, psychedelic guitar solos, jazz-influenced horn arrangements, and R&B vocal harmonies.
4. Recording for the independent record company Casablanca (also a major player in the field of disco music), Parliament/Funkadelic placed five LPs in the *Billboard* Top 40 between 1976 and 1978, two of which went platinum.
5. The band's reputation was based largely on their spectacular concert shows, with wild costumes and elaborate sets, and their innovative concept albums.
6. George Clinton played with racial and musical stereotypes, reconfiguring black popular music as a positive moral force.
7. On his albums, Clinton wove mythological narratives of a primordial conflict between the "Cro-Nasal Sapiens" (who "slicked their hair and lost all sense of the groove") and the "Thumpasorus People," who buried the secret of funk in the Egyptian pyramids and left Earth for the Chocolate Milky Way, under the wise leadership of "Dr. Funkenstein."
8. Parliament concerts featured a cast of characters such as "Star Child" (a.k.a. "Sir Lollipop Man"), the cosmic defender of funk, and "Sir Nose

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D'VoidOfFunk," a spoof of commercialized, soulless, rhythmically challenged pop music and its fans.

9. Clinton's blend of social criticism, wacky humor, and psychedelic imagination is perhaps best captured in his revolutionary manifesto for the funk movement, "Free Your Mind, and Your Ass Will Follow."

K. "Give Up the Funk (Tear the Roof off the Sucker)," from the million-selling LP *Mothership Connection*, was Parliament's biggest crossover single (Number Five R&B, Number Fifteen pop in 1976).

1. It exemplifies the band's approach to ensemble style, known to fans as "P-Funk":

- a) Heavy, syncopated electric bass lines
- b) Interlocking rhythms underlain by a strong pulse on each beat of each measure
- c) Long, multisectioned arrangements featuring call-and-response patterns between the horn sections and keyboard synthesizer
- d) R&B-styled vocal harmonies
- e) Verbal mottoes designed to be chanted by fans (*We want the funk, give up the funk; We need the funk, we gotta have the funk*).

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2. Arranged by Clinton, bass player Bootsy Collins, and keyboardist Bernie Worrell
3. Clinton and other former Parliament/Funkadelic musicians continued to tour and record throughout the 1980s, but public and critical disdain for 1970s popular culture had a negative impact on the band's fortunes.
4. During the early 1990s, the rise of funk-inspired rap (e.g., Dr. Dre) and rock music (e.g., Red Hot Chili Peppers) established the status of George Clinton and his colleagues as one of the most important—and most frequently sampled—forces in the recent history of black music.
5. Clinton has been discovered by a new generation of listeners and is still performing; he appeared at the 1999 reincarnation of the Woodstock festival.

V. “Rapper’s Delight”: The Origins of Hip-Hop

A. Rap music

1. Has spurred more vigorous popular debate than any other genre of popular music
2. Is based on principles derived ultimately from African musical and verbal traditions
 - a) An emphasis on rhythmic momentum and creativity

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- b) A preference for complex tone colors and dense textures
 - c) A keen appreciation of improvisational skill
 - d) An incorporative, innovative approach to musical technologies
3. Much rap music constitutes a cultural response to oppression and racism, a system for communication among black communities throughout the United States, and a source of insight into the values, perceptions, and conditions of people living in America's beleaguered urban communities.
4. Although rap music's origins and inspirations flow from black culture, the genre's audience has become decidedly multiracial, multicultural, and transnational.
- B. Rap emerged during the 1970s as one part of a cultural complex called hip-hop.
- 1. Hip-hop culture was forged by African American and Caribbean American youth in New York City.
 - 2. It included distinctive styles of visual art (graffiti), dance (an acrobatic solo style called break dancing and an energetic couple dance called the freak), music, dress, and speech.

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3. Hip-hop was at first a local phenomenon, centered in certain neighborhoods in the Bronx, the most economically devastated area of New York City.

C. Hip-hop music

1. A rejection of mainstream dance music on the part of black and Puerto Rican listeners

2. Profoundly shaped by the techniques of disco DJs

3. The first celebrities of hip-hop music were DJs who began their careers in the mid-1970s, spinning records at neighborhood block parties, gym dances, and dance clubs, and in public spaces such as community centers and parks.

a) Kool Herc (Clive Campbell, b. 1955 in Jamaica)

b) Grandmaster Flash (Joseph Saddler, b. 1958 in Barbados)

c) Afrika Bambaataa (Kevin Donovan, b. 1960 in the Bronx)

4. These three young men—and dozens of lesser-known DJs scattered throughout the Bronx, Harlem, and other areas of New York City and New Jersey—developed their personal styles within a grid of fierce competition for celebrity and neighborhood pride.

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5. The disco DJ's technique of "mixing" between two turntables to create smooth transitions between records was first adapted to the hip-hop aesthetic by Kool Herc.

D. Kool Herc had migrated from Kingston, Jamaica, to New York City at age twelve.

1. Herc noticed that his audiences responded energetically to the so-called breaks on funk and salsa records, where the melody was stripped away to feature the rhythm section.

2. Herc isolated the breaks of certain popular records—such as James Brown's "Get on the Good Foot"—and mixed them into the middle of other dance records.

3. These rhythmic sound collages came to be known as "breakbeat" music, a term subsequently transferred to "break dancing," acrobatic solo performances improvised by the young "B-boys" who attended hip-hop dances.

4. Sometime in the mid-1970s, Kool Herc began to put two copies of the same record on his turntables.

a) Switching back and forth between the turntables, Herc found that he could "backspin" one disc (i.e., turn it backward, or

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counterclockwise, with his hand) while the other continued to play over the loudspeakers.

5. This allowed him to repeat a given break over and over, by switching back and forth between the two discs and backspinning to the beginning of the break.

6. This technique was refined by Grandmaster Flash, who adopted the mixing techniques of disco DJs.

E. Grandmaster Flash

1. Using headphones, Flash could more precisely pinpoint the beginning of a break by listening to the sound of the disc being turned backward on the turntable.

2. Flash spent many hours practicing this technique and gained local fame for his ability to “punch in” brief, machine gun–like segments of sound.

3. A new technique called “scratching” was developed by Flash’s young protégé, Theodore, who broke away and formed his own hip-hop crew at age thirteen.

4. In 1978, Theodore debuted a new technique that quickly spread through the community of DJs.

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5. While practicing backspinning in his room, Theodore began to pay closer attention to the sounds created in his headphones as he turned the disc counterclockwise.

6. He soon discovered that this technique yielded scratchy, percussive sound effects, which could be punched in to the dance groove.

7. The distinctive sound of scratching became an important part of the sonic palette of hip-hop music—even in the 1990s, after digital sampling had largely displaced turntables as a means of creating the musical textures and grooves on rap records, producers frequently used these sounds as a way of signaling a connection to the “old school” origins of hip-hop.

F. Although all DJs used microphones to make announcements, Kool Herc was also one of the first DJs to recite rhyming phrases over the “breakbeats” produced on his turntables.

G. Some of Herc’s “raps” were based on a tradition of verbal performance called “toasting,” a form of poetic storytelling with roots in the trickster tales of West Africa.

1. Although the toasting tradition had largely disappeared from black communities by the 1970s, it took root in prisons, where black inmates found that the old narrative form suited their life experiences and present circumstances.

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2. One of the main sources of the rhymes composed by early hip-hop DJs in the Bronx was the album *Hustler's Convention* (1973) by Jala Uridin, leader of a group of militant ex-convicts known as the Last Poets.
3. *Hustler's Convention* was a compelling portrait of “the life”— the urban underworld of gamblers, pimps, and hustlers—comprising prison toasts with titles like “Four Bitches Is What I Got” and “Sentenced to the Chair.”
4. The record, featuring musical accompaniment by an all-star lineup of funk, soul, and jazz musicians, became enormously popular in the Bronx and inspired Kool Herc and other DJs to compose their own rhymes.
5. Soon, DJs were recruiting members of their posses to serve as verbal performers, or “MCs” (an abbreviation of the term “master of ceremonies”).
6. MCs played an important role in controlling crowd behavior at the increasingly large dances where DJs performed and soon became more important celebrities than the DJs themselves.
7. If DJs are the predecessors of today's rap producers—responsible for shaping musical texture and groove—MCs are the ancestors of contemporary rappers.

H. Until 1979, hip-hop music remained a primarily local phenomenon.

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1. "Rapper's Delight"
 - a) The first indication of the genre's broader commercial potential
 - b) Twelve-inch dance single
 - c) Recorded by the Sugarhill Gang, a crew based in Harlem
2. This record, which popularized the use of the term "rapper" as an equivalent for "MC," established Sugar Hill Records—a black-owned independent label based in New Jersey—as the predominant institutional force in rap music during the early 1980s.
3. The recording recycled the rhythm section track from Chic's "Good Times," played in the studio by session musicians usually hired by Sugar Hill to back R&B singers.
4. The three rappers—Michael "Wonder Mike" Wright, Guy "Master Gee" O'Brien, and Henry "Big Bank Hank" Jackson—recited a rapid-fire succession of rhymes, typical of the performances of MCs at hip-hop dances:

*Well it's on-n-on-n-on-n-on-n-on
The beat don't stop until the break of dawn
I said M-A-S, T-E-R, a G with a double E
I said I go by the unforgettable name
Of the man they call the Master Gee
Well, my name is known all over the world
By all the foxy ladies and the pretty girls
I'm goin' down in history
As the baddest rapper there could ever be*

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5. The record reached Number Four on the R&B charts and Number Thirty-six on the pop charts and introduced hip-hop to millions of people throughout the United States and abroad.

I. The unexpected success of "Rapper's Delight" ushered in a series of million-selling twelve-inch singles by New York rappers:

1. Kurtis Blow's "The Breaks" (Number Four R&B, Number Eighty-seven pop in 1980)
2. "Planet Rock" by Afrika Bambaataa and the Soul Sonic Force (Number Four R&B, Number Forty-eight pop in 1982)
3. "The Message" by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five (Number Four R&B, Number Sixty-two pop in 1982)

J. "The Message" established a new (and, in the end, profoundly influential) trend in rap music: social realism.

1. "The Message" is a grim, almost cinematic portrait of life in the South Bronx.
2. The rap on the first half of the recording was co-written by Sylvia Robinson, a former R&B singer and co-owner of Sugar Hill Records, and Duke Bootee, a sometime member of the Furious Five.

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3. Resident Sugar Hill percussionist Ed Fletcher composed the musical track, using a Roland 808 digital drum machine and keyboard synthesizer, embellished with various studio effects.

4. On top of the stark, cold electronic groove, Grandmaster Flash intones the rap's grim opening hook:

*It's like a jungle sometimes, makes me
wonder how I keep from goin' under*

5. The sudden sound of glass shattering (produced on the drum machine) introduces a rhythmically complex and carefully articulated performance that alternates the smooth, slyly humorous style of Grandmaster Flash with the edgy, frustrated tone of MC Melle Mel:

*Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge
I'm tryin' not to lose my head
Ah huh huh huh huh*

6. The two MCs—Melle Mel in particular—time their performances with great precision, speeding up and slowing down, compressing and stretching the spaces between words, and creating polyrhythms against the steady musical pulse.

7. The lyrics alternate between the humorous wordplay typical of hip-hop MC performances and various images of desperation—threatening bill

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collectors, a homeless woman “living in a bag,” violent encounters in Central Park, a young child alienated by deteriorating public schools.

8. The relationship between the grim reality of ghetto life and the tough-minded humor that is its essential antidote is summed up by Melle Mel’s humorless quasi-laugh: “Ah huh huh huh huh.”

9. The second half of “The Message,” written and performed by Melle Mel, paints an even more chilling picture, an account of the life and death of a child born into poverty in the South Bronx:

*A child is born with no state of mind
Blind unto the ways of Mankind
God is smiling on you, but he’s frowning too
Because only God knows what you’ll go through . . .
You’ll admire all the number-book takers,
Thugs, pimps and pushers, and the big money makers
Driving big cars, spendin’ 20s and 10s
And you want to grow up to be just like them, huh-huh . . .*

*Now you’re unemployed, all null and void
Walkin’ round like you’re Pretty Boy Floyd
Turned stick-up kid, but look what you done did
Got sent up for a eight year bid [prison term] . . .
It was plain to see that your life was lost
You was cold and your body swung back and forth
But now your eyes sing the sad, sad song
Of how you lived so fast and died so young.*

10. A whole stream within the subsequent history of rap music can be traced from this gritty record.

11. “The Message” helped establish canons of realness and street credibility that are still vital to rap musicians and audiences.