

Music

THE SOUND AND THE UNSOUND

Introduction

“I don’t care how good of a home a child has been brought up in, and how it’s been taught to do right; if that child hasn’t accepted the experience of the New Birth, rock and roll music catches his attention just as quick as he hears it. Because in him, born in him by nature, is a carnal spirit. And the power of the Devil is so great today that it catches the spirit of that little one.”¹

Americans are addicted to music. It is an addiction that last year alone, cost us seven billion dollars² and helped make music the most prosperous industry on earth.

However, we are not without company. The whole world has tuned in with us to become a part of the greatest social phenomena in all of history: Rock’n’roll music.

Rock is now a generation old, and that in itself is nothing short of a miracle for something that was dismissed by the previous generation as being a flash-in-the-pan, in-one-ear-and-out-the-other, teenage craze. Even though we live in an era of blinding changes, rock has been able to assimilate, integrate and even mutate its way through nearly five decades to become something that is much more than music in the ear of the rock-believer. Resurrecting the deep-seated spiritual attributes of its ancient forbearers, rock has now achieved the elevated status of deification. In every sense, it has become a religion, complete with a full contingent of its own high priests and false prophets.

It sounds incredible, doesn’t it? But, have you ever stopped to ask yourself just what it is that makes rock different from other music? Why is it so powerful? What is its source, and where is it leading us? Unfortunately, most people never stop to analyze the multitude of sounds that bombard them daily, and that could prove to be fatal. Of course, it doesn’t happen overnight. The story goes that if you throw a live frog in a pan of boiling water, he will jump out so fast that he won’t even be scalded. But take the same frog and put him in a pan of lukewarm water, then

gradually bring the water to a boil. The frog will allow himself to be slowly cooked to death.

Could it be that we Christians are being slowly conditioned to accept the compelling, pervasive, permissive attitudes around us without our even knowing it? As Message believers, how vulnerable are we to these attitudes?

These are questions that must be answered today, and that is what this article is all about. Be warned: This is not going to be easy reading, and you cannot breeze through it quickly. But when you are finished you will know how to test the temperature of the water you are sitting in right now. I challenge you to check it out for yourself—before it's too late.

Origins

“One night I was standing with Brother Wood and Brother Sothmann, and I was looking up towards the skies. A great awe came over me, and I said, “Just look at all that great heavenly host, and everything is perfectly in harmony!””³

Harmony belongs to Jehovah, for in it He reveals both His nature (character) and relationship with His creation. As the Eternal One, He established the boundaries of a harmonious universe, joining the stars and the spheres in perfect concord with the voices of all heavenly beings. He blended the melodies of life and the rhythms of nature into an echoing chorus. Upon witnessing His handiwork, “... *the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.*” Job 38:7 His overture was being played; the Creator was worshipped by His creation, and worship brought God on the scene.

To praise God is the highest function that any creature can perform. Every living thing is enjoined to rejoice in God’s works, to make a joyful noise, sing, and perform music, which glorifies the Almighty. In eternity past, heavenly music was a duty of the anointed cherub, a being with expressed musical ability from the day of his creation (**Ezekiel 28:13.15**). He was perfect in all his ways, and possessed both beauty and wisdom, attributes which, by his own reasoning, made him equal to God. Thus, he desired to be worshipped equally with God -a false ambition that brought iniquity into God’s abode-and for this he was cast from Heaven’s holy mountain.

“The first battle that was ever fought began in Heaven when Michael and his Angels fought against Lucifer [Satan] and his angels. Sin did not originate on earth, it originated in Heaven, and then it was thrown down from Heaven -cast out of Heaven to the earth -and fell on human beings.”⁴

From his earthly refuge, this fallen angel designed a subtle yet clever plan to corrupt God’s paradise and establish his own kingdom in its place. He could not create, but he could pervert. “What God had created for Himself, Satan came to destroy. Then the battle began here on earth, and it began in us. And it’s been raging ever since.”⁵

With great skill Satan began to flaunt sensuality as a substitute for spirituality; he elevated knowledge above revelation; he equated holiness with physical beauty. Every ability he possessed he applied to one purpose and for one goal -the seduction of human souls. What were the tools of his trade? Melody and rhythm, for Satan was a gifted musician.

What The Bible Teaches Us About Music

“A human has to worship. You have to worship something. It’s just in you to worship.”⁶

The Bible tells us that the Lord finds pleasure in the praises of His people. There are over 500 specific references in the Bible to music and musical instruments⁷ - evidence that this is not a subject that God treats lightly. As a matter of fact, the lengthiest book in the Bible is a song book, and it is here that God demonstrates His concern for the kind of music that His children enjoy and perform by providing this example for us to follow: The Book of Psalms.

The collection of 150 poems that make up the Book of Psalms mirrors the ideals of religious piety and communion with God. They were written by David, Moses (Psalm 90), Solomon, Asaph (David’s choir leader), the sons of Korah (a family of official musicians), and others, for the express purpose of being set to music for worship. They even include musical notations to indicate when key changes are to be made. For example, the instruction *selah*, meaning “to modulate to the next key,” appears 71 times in the Book of Psalms and is not normally articulated when Scripture is being read aloud.

From the Hebrew language, *Psalms* translates as “Book of Praise.” This was the prayer book that our Lord Jesus used in the synagogue service, and it was His hymnbook at the Temple festival. He used it in His teaching, met temptation with it, sang the Hallel (Psalms 115-118) from it after the Last Supper, quoted from it as He hung on the cross, and died with it on His lips.⁸ The Book of Psalms remains the national hymnbook of Israel today.

Far from advocating a single style, Psalms range from the classical presentations, written for the temple musicians, to the simple but expressive ballads, which David composed while tending his sheep. In the Book of Psalms you will find rally songs, marching songs, victory songs, and teaching songs; there are songs of repentance, lamentation, petition, praise, renewal, and thanksgiving; there are songs for saints and songs for sinners.

The Book of Psalms has been called the door into the temple of praise and prayer, and in all ages and in more than a thousand languages, the church has found through the Psalter a means of access to God.

The Bible also shows us that man has long been aware of the effect of music upon our daily existence and its power to influence people both

physically and emotionally.

In I Samuel 16:14-23, Scriptures relate an example of how a man was made well -body, soul, and spirit - through the music of a young shepherd boy.

“And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed [physical], and was well [mental], and the evil spirit departed from him [spiritual].”

In II Kings 3:15 we learn that the prophet Elisha once used music to create an atmosphere so that he could “inquire of the Lord” for the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom.

“But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.”

As the tribes of Israel were set to war against their enemies, II Chronicles 20:21-22 tells us that they put a choir and musical instruments in front of the army.

“...he [Jehoshaphat] appointed singers unto the Lord, that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.

And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.”

In the New Testament Book of Acts, chapter 16, we find the account of two early Christian leaders, Paul and Silas, who were cast into prison for preaching the Gospel. They used the opportunity to minister, through song, and glorify God.

“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.”

Now, let’s review what we have just learned from these Biblical

passages: 1) In both the Old and the New Testament, music was vital to the life of the believer, both as an expression of joy and as an act of obedience unto God; 2) God has given us instruction (by way of examples) as to the kinds of music that He wants His people to have; 3) Far from being merely a neutral recreation, music has the power to influence us mentally, physically, and spiritually; 4) There are certain types of music which can make demons feel very uncomfortable; and 5) Music can create an atmosphere wherein God can work miracles.

Music And Religion Through The Ages

“As soon as they went out from the Presence of the Lord, they started building cities, they started making instruments, they started in science - making brass and iron, and they started playing music. Where did it come from? Who went out? Cain, the serpent’s seed. “⁹

Within man there exists an inherent impulse to worship. God even provisioned our physical beings with an instrument through which we can declare our devotion -the human voice. When we choose to vary the melody and rhythm of our vocal sounds, the result is music, and nothing characterizes the very essence of worship like the un-ornamented songs of man.

The Bible gives us very few written clues concerning the first music produced by man, but our oldest existent vocal traditions, such as that of the Jewish cantor, the Moslem muezzin calling the faithful to prayer, or even the chanting of the North American Indian, indicate that mankind’s first musical expressions were likely a part of his religious experience. As man’s musical skills developed, he began to fashion instruments from what he found in nature -bones, horns, willow bark, animal skin and gut-and he adapted these materials to suit his personal needs. Jubal, the great-great-great-great grandson of Cain, was “*the father of all such as handle the harp and organ,*”(instrumental music) Genesis 4:21, reflecting the love of beauty and the arts, which was his birthright.

In time, as men developed their artistic abilities, music began to take on many forms and serve many functions, both sacred and profane. From generation to generation, musical expression played such a vital part in cultural development that the religious morals and social values of a given community reflected in the quality of the music that they produced.

Most music produced by the people of the Bible never developed

beyond simple homogeneous songs and chants with basic accompaniment of harps, trumpets, and cymbals. Much of the Hebrew music was consecrated to the service of the Temple worship, but throughout the Scriptures there are numerous accounts of secular use also: songs of triumph after victory, songs at marriage celebrations and festivals, songs for shepherds and for kings.

In the great temples of ancient Egypt, the priests trained choirs in the singing of ritual music to pagan gods. Their songs were complemented by the clapping together of sticks and disks.

At the same time, in other parts of the world, more primitive societies evoked their deities in a wild abandon of religious fervour and emotional ecstasy, accompanied by the pounding of syncopated rhythms on a hollow log.

Music has always left behind evidence of its effect upon a given society. One can even trace the rise and fall of civilizations by making a parallel study of the types of music listened to during the corresponding era.¹⁰ Four hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Greek philosopher Plato said, “When modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the state change with them. Through foolishness they deceived themselves into thinking that there was no right or wrong in music, that it was to be judged good or bad by the pleasure it gave.”

At the time of Christ, both vocal and instrumental music were flourishing. Jesus and His followers participated in the traditional Jewish synagogue music, and undoubtedly this directly influenced early Christian songs. The ornamented cantonal melodies were adapted to the new teachings of Christ and absorbed into the fledgling Christian faith. It was common practice for a cantor to serve a synagogue on Friday evening and then place his skills at the disposal of the Christians on Sunday.¹¹

Did you know...?

The longest book in the Bible is Psalms, with 150 chapters and a total of 2,461 verses.

The longest chapter in the bible is Psalms 119, which has 176 verses. The shortest chapter in the bible is Psalms 117, which has only two verses and a total of 33 words.

Instrumental music played no part in the life of the early Christian church. Instruments had too many associations with the debauched life of Rome, and only the voice was considered to have the purity and nobility worthy of God’s ear.

Cantorial chant evolved gradually into a slow-moving, unison singing

called plainsong (later known as Gregorian chant), which dominated Christian worship for a thousand years. During the Middle Ages, there was an attempt by the church-world to gain widespread control of music by deeming certain chords to be un-harmonious and therefore blasphemous and unworthy to reflect the glory of God. The church denounced all music that was unsanctified by a sacred text.

In 1517, Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg (accusing the Roman Catholic church of corruption) and the Reformation was born. Luther, an accomplished musician, threw out much of the old church music and wrote new hymns, bringing the language of the people (rather than Latin) into use for sacred songs. He declared, “Nothing on earth is more powerful than noble music in making the sad joyful, the arrogant discreet, the despondent valiant; in charming the haughty to humility, and in mitigating envy and hatred.”

Luther believed that music in the church served as a resounding sermon,¹² and he is accredited with saying that he didn’t care who preached, as long as he wrote the song. By acknowledging the staying power of music in the worship experience, Luther single-handedly established congregational singing as an important part of the Christian church service. Elements of harmony, which had been reserved previously for highly trained musicians of the church, were now being mastered and sung by the common people. Music and religious worship became bonded into one, inseparable experience. It seemed that the fellowship of a common faith could be expressed through song far more effectively than through a formalized cannon, dogma, or ritual of the church.

In secular use, music was becoming a melting pot of sounds. The clash of

Did you know...?

There are 1,897 verses in the Bible dealing with separation from worldliness.

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

Ephesians 5:11

cultures, which had been launched by the Crusades in 1096, brought many different musical traditions together, and increasingly these new harmonies and rhythms found their way into the music of Europe. Near the end of the sixteenth century, new printing methods and a newly developed system of musical notation made possible the duplication of every kind of music and placed it on the open market. It was the dawning of a new day for

both the composer and the performer. Music was on its way to becoming a universal language.

With the passing of the centuries, there was also a darker, more sinister form of music finding expression and establishing its place within the musical brotherhood of mankind. This music involved a complex primitive theology embracing fetishes, totems, and magic. It was born in the sacrificial incantations to a river god, nurtured by the unimaginable horrors of slavery, and released upon the New World to wage war with the God of Christianity. It was called ‘voodoo,’ and its throbbing beat prophesied of the evil fruit it would yield.

By the early 1600s, the Western colonization of other lands was a growing concern. Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the New World and Africa were already well established, and an armada of ships operated by slave traders plied the waters from Western Europe to the coast of Africa. After picking up their human cargo, they would continue their voyage across the southern Atlantic to Brazil, Central America, the West Indies, and the New World. And wherever they were sent, the slaves took their music with them -an agonized inspiration that would become the cornerstone for virtually every American musical expression to follow.¹³

By the time the New World was being recognized as a blossoming mission field by the various progeny of Luther’s reformation movement, the rhythm and melody of Africa had already joined with the harmonies of European music, which the church had so carefully nurtured, and a powerful new musical form was born.

Spiritual Roots

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

Ephesians 5:19

For three centuries, a flood of humanity poured into the New World. The willing came from Europe; the unwilling came from Africa. They were master and slave, and nothing has ever exacted such a heavy price on the conscience of a nation as the institution of slavery in America. But from the agony and suffering of the black captives was generated a heroic faith that, over the years, was given a voice that would echo across the land for all generations to come. To the slaves they were known as ‘sorrow songs,’ or ‘anthems,’ but within white communities they came to be called

‘spirituals,’ and in them America found its truest, most original, and most influential musical expression.

In the plantation states of the south, newly arriving slaves were expected to learn English and to adopt the professed religion of their owners. But the emotional and mystical ways of heathen, tribal worship could never be replaced by the bone-dry traditions of European faith. And neither could the rhythms, chants, and tribal stomps of the African culture be confined by the structured singing of psalms and hymns. “The spirit will not descend without a song,” was a saying the slaves carried with them from the motherland, and it was in music that the brutalized Negro found a means of liberation.

The enslaved people found much within the Judeo-Christian tradition to identify with and anchor their hope: The Hebrews’ four centuries of bondage in Egypt; the Israelites’ captivity in Babylon; Daniel in the lions’ den; and Elijah’s journey to Heaven in a fiery chariot. They learned the hymns of their white masters then reworked them with the remnants of their African history to produce expressions of freedom through song that became the focus of both their spiritual and social life.

The majority of the slaves worked under the overseer’s lash, cultivating the cotton and rice that were the mainstay of southern industry. Often they were forbidden to speak to one another while working in the fields, but since their fieldwork required unified effort, they were allowed to utilize the African tradition of work songs to coordinate their activities. These creative leader-and-chorus rounds were sung with so much musical mastery that they defied notation. Often the song was fashioned by combining verses from the Bible with portions of hymns, sermons or prayers they had heard in church. But in the fields there was also every opportunity to invent new songs and tunes, drawing from their new-found faith in a Christian God who could not only break their bonds of sin and suffering, but offered Heaven as a homeland. Best of all, He wasn’t confined to a white church, nor did He negate the humanity of the black man. They heard a promise of freedom, and they made it the theme of their songs.

**God told Moses, o’Lord!
Go down into Egypt, o’Lord!
Tell ol’ Pharaoh, o’Lord!
Loose my people, o’Lord!**

In 1735 an English clergyman by the name of John Wesley sailed for

the New World to proselytize the heathen Indians in the colony of Georgia. After three years, he acknowledged his failure as a missionary and returned to London, determined to find the missing element in his spiritual walk. Then one day, as he listened to a reading of Martin Luther's preface to Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he felt that his "heart was strangely warmed," and a new dispensation of the church was ushered in.

Nowhere did they embrace the new tenets of a faith that was being

Did you know...?

Although he is often overshadowed
by his famous older brother,
Charles
Wesley is perhaps the greatest
hymn
Writer of all ages.

It has been said that the early
Methodists were taught and led as
much through Charles' hymns as
through John's sermons.

Charles Wesley wrote 8,989 hymns,
an average of 10 lines of verse
every day for 50 years!

called 'Methodism' more rapidly than they did in the colonies of the New World. Wesley's teaching of a Second Blessing (also termed Christian Perfection or Sanctification) was "the fuse that set off a keg of repressed religious ecstasy throughout America."¹⁴ Stoking the fires of the revival that came to be known as The Great Awakening was Methodist evangelist George Whitefield and other circuit-riding preachers who travelled endlessly throughout the colonies expounding the doctrine of absolute holiness and attainable perfection.

Their preaching style was bold and dramatic, which gave them limited access to the pulpits of the more traditional churches, so they resorted to preaching outdoors. Camp meetings (or bush meetings, as they were sometimes called) changed the structure of worship services for most rural churches in the young nation. 'Fire and damnation' preaching encouraged a new freedom of expression for the believers. They shouted, they prayed, they danced, and they sang like never before.

Once again, religious revival was accompanied by a stirring of the musical waters. Like Luther, Wesley was a songwriter and publisher. His first hymnal, *The Charleston Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, published in 1735, was the first hymnbook ever published in North America. Wesley's greatest concern was that singing should be both spiritual and have good musical quality. His instructions to the congregation included admonishments to "Sing All, Sing Lustily, Sing Modestly, Sing in Time

and above all, Sing Spiritually.”¹⁵ And it was in the unstructured style of the frontier camp meeting that spiritual singing came of age.

Long before blacks themselves were admitted to white society, they shared a lively, if somewhat uncomfortable, coexistence that was brought about through the cohesive forces of shared religion and music. Along with the increasing number of traditional hymns which were being penned by proficient songwriters such as Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts, Negro spirituals were becoming a major part of the huge revivals and camp meetings of the 1800s. Here the spirit and personality of the black world was not segregated from the white culture. Although white and black worshippers were normally kept separate, “their voices and music could mix, echoing from camp to camp, feeding a musical union whose product would sweep the world.”¹⁶ One observer at an early camp meeting wrote: “As the excitement increases, all order is forgotten, all unison of parts repudiated, each sings his own tune, each dances his own dance, as he leaps, shouts and exults with exceeding great joy.”

They had found something real, and it was a revelation inspired by a new understanding of Scriptural truth. And that, in turn, generated a new brotherhood of holiness and sanctified churches -forerunners of the twentieth century Pentecostal Revival that was to explode on Azusa Street in 1906.

But not every abused and humiliated black man found solace in Christianity. There was just too much magic in the ‘old ways’ that wasn’t compatible with the new-found faith, so the old faith endured, hidden until the late nineteenth century and the period of Reconstruction that followed the Civil War. Then, a new branch appeared on music’s family tree, and it was called ‘The Blues.’

Although it descended directly from the emotional fervour of the spirituals, the only thing the blues had in common with its spirit-pleasing parent was its ancient roots. Every type of carnal indulgence became the

Did you know...?

Psalms and early hymns were often “lined out” for congregational singing.

The clerk, or leader of the singing, would read or sing one line of the song, which would then be sung by the congregation.

Isaac Watts spurred congregations to sing as they do today, one line immediately after another. He wrote such classics as “When I survey the wondrous cross,” “Joy to the world,” “Jesus shall reign,” and 694 more.

theme of the blues singer: Crime, adultery, prostitution, gambling, alcohol, and imprisonment. Ties with the African elements of syncopation and rhythmic momentum were renewed, taught, and performed by both black men and white men who had listened and learned from this new musical voice. “It is here that the blend of cultures once again began to generate something permanent and prophetic, a rhythmic vitality and melodic gift that would eventually produce ragtime and jazz.”¹⁷

Coinciding with the beginnings of blues, ragtime, and jazz, religious music was also undergoing a metamorphosis. In 1875, songwriter Ira Sankey published a hymnbook entitled *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* and the term ‘gospel music’ was born. Sankey and his partner, the revivalist Dwight Lyman Moody, intended for their songs “to implant the gospel in the hearts of the people”¹⁸ by suppressing emotional outbursts and passionate singing.

But, while Sankey and Moody were able to influence their initial development, gospel songs soon developed a character of their own, and this time it was “a coolly calculated commercial endeavour designed to capitalize on the enormous appeal of the Negro spiritual stylings.”¹⁹

In 1921, a young blues and jazz piano player by the name of Thomas Dorsey attended the National Baptist Convention and was overwhelmed by the force of the music he heard being performed. For “Barrelhouse Tom,” it was the handwriting on the wall. He would write religious music, and he would call his songs ‘Gospel.’

Did you know...?

Because man is a rhythmic being, there is a direct relationship between music and muscular movement.

Larson, The Day Music Died

You can determine what a given style of music is by observing the motions that automatically go with that style of music.

You only have to play the song for a three-year-old and watch their motions to know if a song is wrong. You don’t have to train a child to know those motions.

They’re automatic.

Garlock, The Big Beat

Dorsey wrote over a thousand tunes, including “Peace In The Valley,” “Search Me Lord,” and “Precious Lord Take My Hand.” “It was music that not only reflected the preaching and testifying heard in black Baptist and Methodist churches as well as the growing number of ‘sanctified’ congregations across the country. It also made brilliant and liberal use of the melodies, harmonies, and rhythms of Dorsey’s

blues and jazz background.”²⁰

Touring the Midwest and South in the late 1920s, he performed his music and sold the sheet music for a few pennies apiece. But Dorsey’s voice lacked the conviction and excitement that was necessary for gospel singing, and he knew that if he was going to succeed he needed a new sales technique. He created the first female gospel quartet in history, and soon became a promoter of gospel performers as well as a publisher of black gospel music. He was well on his way to earning for himself the title “Father of Gospel Music.”

By the mid-thirties, several styles of gospel music were being popularized on the church and revival concert circuit. One of the most enduring was the gospel quartet -four or five singers who established their identity through vocal stylizing (such as a featured bass or falsetto) or through dress (porter’s uniforms, white tuxedos, etc). There was also the ‘gospel chorus’ of all-female hand clappers, dressed in choir robes and backed by a thundering piano or organ. And soon the professional gospel artists, such as Mahalia Jackson and Rosetta Tharpe began to make a name for themselves.

By the beginning of World War II, the careful re-packaging of slave spirituals was complete. This new image of ‘gospel music’ had been sprinkled liberally with the glitter of Hollywood and parlayed into a powerful and wealthy musical empire.

The Music Of Laodicea

“...that first little dirty song that slipped out on the radio without being censored, that ‘roll ’em girlies, roll ’em down and show your pretty knees, that was the first slip-up right there.”²¹

The year was 1925. William Jennings Bryant and Clarence Darrow battled in a Tennessee courtroom over the issue of evolution; in Germany, an ex-prisoner by the name of Adolf Hitler published his memoirs which he titled *Mein Kampf*; a new dance craze called the Charleston kept arms and legs flying in 4/4 time; and across America, radio became a major source of family entertainment, ushering in what came to be known as the Golden Age of Broadcasting.

Undoubtedly, the most revolutionary advancement of the early 1900s was the recording of sound. Man had at last discovered for himself an earthly, if somewhat fragile, immortality, and the force of its influence transformed our world and dominated our lives. It was good: No longer

did we have to rely on memory or evoke imagination to recall the voice of a loved one, the performance of the musician, or the intonations of the orator. It was bad: It opened doors into darkened sanctums, and with our minds we walked through

Those doors and into places we would never have allowed our feet to take us.

Music now occupied the centre stage of the world, a feat unthought-of before the arrival of phonograph and radio. And its unique abilities to attract, entertain, teach, cajole, and influence its listeners was not overlooked by the smut-peddlers of the day.

**Listen girls, listen girls
I've a word for you,
Just because you're up to date
And do the things you do,
Don't let anyone tell you that you don't act nice,
You're as sweet as Grandma was
So take my advice.
Roll 'em girls, roll 'em
Go ahead and roll 'em
Roll' em down and show your pretty knees,
Roll 'em girls roll 'em, everybody roll 'em
Roll 'em high or low just as you please.
Don't let people tell you that it's shocking,
Paint your sweetie's picture on your stocking,
Laugh at Ma, laugh at Pa,
Give them all the ha! ha!
Roll 'em girlies, roll 'em, roll your own.**

Roll 'Em Girls

by Marr, Heath, and Fletcher

Copyright 1925, Joe Mords Music Company

Selfish, provocative, and defiant, “Roll 'em Girls” opened fire on old-time religion in a new, teasing way. Uncensored, it slipped its subtle message of immorality onto the airwaves and into the subconscious of an unwary public. A pathway had been cleared through the field of broadcasting for an army of musical goblins that was fast advancing on the horizon.

Gospel music continued to contribute its share to the musical stew. In 1929, the Graves Brothers recorded what they called “rockin’ and reelin’

spirituals” for Paramount Records -based loosely on the kind of congregational singing that was being heard in Holiness and Pentecostal churches throughout the South. In 1934 a live recording was made in a backwoods church that proclaimed:

“Oh, my Lord! Oh, my Lordy!

Well, well, well! I’ve gotta rock! You gotta rock!”²²

At the onset of the 40s, it was estimated that fully half of all Pentecostal Christians lived below the Mason-Dixon line, and most of that half were hillbillies -dirt-poor farmers and sharecroppers. In the North, member churches thrived principally in lower-class neighborhoods, and by 1945, four-fifths of the 500 black churches in Chicago were of the Pentecostal variety. Pianos and organs were beyond the financial reach of most of these ‘holy roller’ congregations, but with guitar, drums, and horns they supplied the rhythm for the dancing feet and swaying bodies that were now an integral part of the Pentecostal church service.

As they struggled for position on the ladder to stardom, it was inevitable that those musicians who had been raised in church would begin to combine that familiar gospel fervour with the worldly lyrics and vocal characteristics of the pop (popular) and country (hillbilly) music of the day. But, for the general population of the 1940s, music was still as much segregated between blacks and whites, as were all other aspects of social life. This newest

musical offering was simply too ‘racy’ for the mainstream music market. Outraged parents protested when radio DJs tried to introduce white youth to the ‘jungle beat’ of ‘race’ music.

In 1947 a new term was coined: “Teenager.” And what teenagers wanted to listen to was something that moved them. They wanted to clap, sing, and dance. They wanted to “Shake, Rattle, and Roll.” The alliance of youth, rebellion, and sexuality (albeit as old as time) was explosive. It didn’t take record producers long to realize that if they could just find a white man who could sing with the style, energy, and passion of a black

Did you know...?

The occult is rampant in the United States. It is estimated that at least 5,000 witches are said to practice in New York, and 10,000 in Los Angeles.

There are nearly half as many witches in the US as there are doctors or clergymen.

Peters, Why Knock Rock

singer, they could both satisfy the teenage lusts, soothe parental concerns, and take control of the music industry in one fell swoop.

At the same time, it was unmistakably clear that American music was once again experiencing birth pains. Blues, jazz, ragtime, boogie-woogie, pop, country -all the driving energy and carnality that a generation eager to put the war behind it could muster - had come to term. And the evidence suggested that this offspring would be the most noisy that music had ever produced -a noisy, rebellious, American brat to grab the attention of the entire world. Its name was Rock'n'roll

In 1954, a young truck driver named Elvis Presley recorded an old blues number titled "That's All Right Mama" at Sam Phillip's studio in Memphis, Tennessee, and by 1956 the phenomenon dubbed Presleymania had the entire music industry all shook up. They knew they had found their man.

"Pentecostalism was folded into the substance of Elvis's music, like eggs folded into pancake batter..."²³ but in the process, the eggshell that had separated inspiration from exploitation, wholesome from unwholesome, had been cracked. The very definition of music was being blurred, and willingly America listened, as all of hell broke loose.

Satan's Pentecost

*"Looking at uncensored programs; listening to Hollywood's dirty jokes; listening to old boogie-woogie music of the Devil that's hatched out from men of ill fame and vile conscience -the Devil's instruments, to inspire the works of the Devil."*²⁴

The American teenagers' love affair with Elvis Presley was uncontrollable and unstoppable. Most parents shuddered at the hip-grinding rebel who boldly inquired of their swooning daughters, "Are You Lonesome Tonight?" But when the cherubic-faced choirboy turned to the adults and sang gospel favourites like "His Hand In Mine," and "Peace In The Valley," (selections from an album which still holds the record for the most weeks at the number-one spot in the United Kingdom)²⁵ their perception of the "child corrupter" gradually began to change.

Undoubtedly, it was the trappings of Christianity that legitimized Elvis to the American public. The renegade-turned-respectable King of Rock'n'Roll was even able to reach the pinnacle of social acceptability -a command performance before the President of the United States, Richard

Nixon.

“What happened? What happened is that we just got used to Elvis. The young people of the fifties grew up with him, and the older folks, after living with him for a while, decided that he wasn’t so bad after all. Very rich and very famous, Elvis became a folk hero.”²⁶

The kind of success that Elvis enjoyed has a tendency to make a person appear to be worthy of such greatness, but Elvis had not changed. No matter how much the spirit cloaked itself in gospel, the flesh remained pure rock’n’roll. It is generally acknowledged that “rock’n’roll” is a long-standing black euphemism for sex, and with Elvis, “it was the aggressive, taunting sexual performance combined with the music which drove fans to hysteria.”²⁷

The religious Elvis was often quoted as saying, “God gave me a voice. If I turned against God I’d be ruined.”

And yet, as Gary Herman points out in *Rock’n’Roll Babylon*, “He also recognized the Devil’s part in his success, saying that ‘my voice is ordinary; if I stand still while I’m singing, I’m a dead man’”²⁸

Other rock’n’roll performers took their cue from him. Pat Boone, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, and a multitude more (many of them raised in Pentecostal churches) propagated the vulgarity that Elvis preached with the Judas-like deception born of religious delusion. And what it produced was a decade of spiritual schizophrenics, flip-flopping between the pulpit and the stage.

For nearly a decade, rock’n’roll and Jesus were being weighed on the scale of financial profit, and in 1964 the results were made known. Jesus lost.

In April of 1964, a double-edged musical blitzkrieg from Great Britain invaded our shores. American rock’n’roll had been chewed, swallowed, and vomited back at us under a new name: Rock. It was like rock’n’roll, but this new sound paid no lip service to anything resembling Western religious tradition. Instead, it came drenched in drugs and Eastern mysticism, and the deceptive seduction of rock’n’roll had to give way to the total, unconditional surrender which rock demanded.

The first wave, and perhaps the most influential of these invaders, was the four, cheeky, mop-heads with Limey accents that called themselves The Beatles. And along with their sassy new sound, they brought a new look. Perversion came out of the closet and became fashionable as millions rushed to adopt the long haired look of these musical messiahs - a look that appropriately expressed their cynical response to all authority and tradition. Seemingly overnight, a mocking sort of nihilism became the

trendy substitute for religion among the spoiled, confused, flower children the 60s had produced.

The Beatles' music offered gleefully shaking heads and infectious wit rather than sex as bait. On the surface, at least, it appeared to be clever and even humorous. Few adults were aware of the content of the music, and most teenagers perceived the Beatles' message only at subliminal levels.²⁹ In retrospect, media experts agree that the main contribution that the Beatles made to western society laid not so much in their music for music's sake, but in music for the sake of the message it carried. And what was the message? Psychedelic drugs.

The Beatles certainly didn't invent marijuana. Its use could be traced back to the shamanistic rituals of the American Indians and the whirling dervishes of ninth-century Persia. What they did was to culturally legitimize its use for the general population of the world. Marijuana expanded the limits of both the imagination and sensory perception, challenging the user to re-create the sounds and visions that "spun and fizzed and cascaded through the frontal lobes of their brain."³⁰ LSD went even further; it eliminated all barriers between real and unreal, it was "the ground zero of chemically induced revelation."³¹ Spirituality was a trip, and LSD was the sacrament of the new faith.

"Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue about that, I'm right and will be proved right. We [The Beatles] are more popular than Jesus Christ right now. I don't know which will go first, rock 'n' roll or Christianity."

John Lennon, lead singer for the Beatles; March 4, 1966.³²

Did you know...?

Even deaf mutes respond to musical sounds and can distinguish several musical instruments by the nature of their vibrations.

Shrill sounds in sufficient volume can congeal proteins in a liquid media. When an egg is placed in front of a speaker at some of the louder rock concerts, it becomes a hard-boiled snack.

The second wave of the British invasion washed ashore in 1966, and when the tide receded, gone were music's days of veiled sexual innuendo and carefully phrased allegories. The rock generation had arrived, and it was "time to tell it like it is -let it all hang out." Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones did just that, and in the process he created a role model for rock stars that

would endure for 25 years.

A performance by the Rolling Stones has always been a macabre mixture of sexual debauchery, sadistic violence, Satanism and drugs. Most revealing is the fact that the violence that has become an intrinsic part of every concert is no accident, but a natural result of the music and the way it is played.

In his book *The Music of Man*, noted musician and historian, Yehudi Menuhin describes a Stones concert as follows: "I heard what sounded to me like a premonition of hell... Of notes, pitches, musical design, I could distinguish little... Under such overpowering circumstances, I understood how deliberately the whole madness is engineered. It aims to numb all aware senses, to leave no choice but to surrender and participate ... The Rolling Stones are trying desperately to generate and liberate emotion, but as they know little of those disciplines and structures through which emotions are transformed into art, they can only generate hysteria. Their music is more like the elimination of structure, dissolving everything back to crude clay."³³

Eager to give credit where credit was due, in December of 1968 the Stones released a record titled "Sympathy For The Devil" -a descent into the feverish world of voodoo devils, hallucinogenic images, and pounding rhythms. It was not music. It was cacophony -a screaming banshee bent on inciting death and destruction. During one memorable performance, as lead singer, Mick Jagger, pranced on stage in his Lucifer-in-the-flesh persona, suddenly the drug-crazed mob erupted into a killing rage. Within minutes, five people were dead, including one man that had been stabbed and beaten with chains while Jagger watched from the stage, just a few feet away. It was as if "...the Rolling Stones had OD'd [overdosed] on a massive dose of their own medicine."³⁴

Satan had boldly shown his face and made his demands, and, like lemmings, the rock performers complied. They were victims of their own greedy lifestyles. Spurred on by a lust for more fame, power, and wealth, they openly declared their allegiance to the Devil in the music they performed. And where they led, young people followed. Innocent, curious, naive teenagers stopped to listen, and Lucifer did the rest.³⁵

In 1971, musicologist Frank Garlock, a professor at Bob Jones University, wrote: "All one needs to do is to make a trip to the places where rock'n'roll has its roots (Africa, South America, and India) and observe the ceremonies which often go along with this kind of music -voodoo rituals, sex orgies, human sacrifice, and devil worship -to know the direction in which we as a nation are headed."³⁶

How right he was! By the mid 70s the music charts made it perfectly clear that, in America, Satanism was selling very well indeed.

Raising Cain

“... they call in the spirit by the rhythm of the music.”³⁷

Evil is contagious, and the wave of demonic spirits which The Beatles and The Rolling Stones unleashed in the 60s had become a unstoppable flood by the 70s. But that was nothing compared to the whirling maelstrom of the 80s as rock expanded its repertoire even further into the realms of grotesque darkness.

Satan, who recognized the vulnerability of a human being’s auditory senses, equipped his disciples of chaos and disorder well. Through the use of the latest space age technology, amplification became the essence of rock’s roar. The electric guitars, keyboards, and drums that were a part of every performer’s arsenal, gave musicians the ability to duplicate the hazy confusion and distorted visions that accompanied their psychedelic drug trips, while at the same time suffocating the senses of the listener with a heavy, steady, throbbing, mind-deadening, ear-popping beat.

Satan has now sent his troops into all the major fields of cultural entertainment.³⁸ The fact is that unless you are deaf and blind, it is virtually guaranteed that rock music has, in some manner, affected your view of the world. We may not be willing to admit it, but each of us is manipulated

Did you know...?

According to a recent University of Minnesota study, listening to music is the primary way troubled teens say they cope with problems.

A poll of 2,000 students in grades 7 through 12 showed that 68% of them regarded entertainers, such as rock musicians, as heroes.

The Christian Herald, March 1987

daily by the persuasive techniques of the advertising media -through radio, television, films, billboards, magazines, newspapers, product packaging, etc. And advertisers routinely utilize the popularity of rock stars and rock music in the promotion of products and services.

Millions of young people today wake up every morning to rock music. They drive to it, study to it, play to it, eat to it, and go to sleep to it. Studies show that between the 7th and

12th grades, the average teenager will listen to and watch 11,000 hours of rock music and rock videos -more than twice the time they will spend in class!³⁹ And all the while, today's rock musicians continue to raise Cain in performances that are often openly occult and increasingly bizarre.

Rock's addicts are being virtually controlled by music, from the way they dress to the way they view and understand everyday issues of life. *The National Review* magazine has declared: "Rock's sheer pervasiveness makes it the most profound values-shaper in existence today."⁴⁰ How? For the purpose of our study, we'll need to take an even closer look at the many guises of today's rock music.

HARD ROCK vs SOFT ROCK - First of all, not all rock music is the same. It is important to keep in mind that through the years there have been dozens of rock-relatives added to each branch of the Rock family tree, far too many to name. However, There are two dominant genres under which we can identify and categorize each new offshoot.

Since the rock battle began nearly 40 years ago, Satan's main assault force has been a double-headed changeling that operates under the twin identities of Hard Rock and Soft Rock. If the sick displays of psychotic behaviour that make up a large part of the Hard Rock scene are not your style, then welcome to the world of Soft Rock, where themes of universal love (lust), peace, and the brotherhood of mankind colour the lyrics, along with cleverly-worded references to the excitement of doing drugs.

Soft Rock (alias Pop Rock, alias Contemporary Rock) is the offspring of The Beatles' music, and much of the blame for what is now known as the Sexual Revolution can be placed directly to their account. And the older rock gets, the lower society's standards sink. In the three decades that have passed since The Beatles arrived on the scene with their seducing message of drugs and immorality, our world has seen an alarming increase in sexual crimes, abortions on a massive scale, epidemics of sexually transmitted diseases (including the plague of AIDS), along with rampant drug addiction and all the depravity that goes with it. Many of today's most popular entertainers, such as George Michael, Carly Simon, Prince, Madonna, Dino, Whitney Houston, Michael Jackson, and Barry Manilow are Soft Rockers. Soft Rock has become the 'elevator music' of the 90s, and, like it or not, we are being bombarded with it on every hand.

Hard Rock was introduced into music's family tree by the first, and still reigning, kings of satanic rock, The Rolling Stones. By flaunting behaviour that the Scriptures plainly identify as being demonic possession (and yet today is dismissed as mere artistic showmanship), rock bands are

being catapulted overnight into the coveted spotlight of mega-stardom. Performers and songwriters candidly confess to receiving the inspiration for much of their music at seances, saying, "What we do is what we're about. If it comes out demonic, that's what we are."⁴¹ The bands will often choose a name to spell out its motive and intention: Styx (in Greek mythology, one of the rivers of Hades); Iron Maiden (a hideous, medieval torture device); W.A.S.P. (short for "We Are Sexual Perverts"); KISS, (meaning "Kings In Satan's Service"); Twisted Sister; Judas Priest; The Grateful Dead, and Black Sabbath are but a few out of many hundreds.⁴²

In today's rock message, absolutely nothing is forbidden -sex, drugs, witchcraft, murder, suicide, spiritualism, Satan worship, homosexuality, sado-masochism, sodomy. It is a monster that has adopted the nickname Heavy Metal - once a literary synonym for torture, but now it is used as an umbrella term for a legion of snarling ghouls, including the newest blasphemies of Shock Rock, Satan Rock, and Armageddon Rock. Rock's voice has never been louder or more evil, and it is not just for listening any more. It is for watching too. With the advent of video and MTV, the intensity of rock's assault has been multiplied, and today, partaking of the hard rock experience is like stepping into the middle of an epileptic seizure. It is beyond human control.

Did you know...?

Our ears can detect sounds vibrating at less than 20 beats per second, continuing upward past 20,000 per second - roughly, from the lowest note on a pipe organ to the highest note produced by a violin.

The nerves of the ear (auditory nerves) are more widely distributed and have more extensive connections than those of any other human sense. Consequently, what we hear affects our entire body.

IDENTIFYING ROCK -All music uses rhythm. For instance, a waltz rhythm is $\frac{3}{4}$ time, and goes like this: ONE two three ONE two three. For a stirring march written in $\frac{2}{4}$ time, you would count: ONE two ONE two. The conventional way to count $\frac{4}{4}$ time is as follows: ONE two THREE four ONE two THREE four.

Technically speaking, the rhythm of rock is $\frac{4}{4}$. But all the normal conventions and principles of sound music have been laid aside, and here the accent is placed on the offbeat: one TWO three FOUR one TWO three FOUR. In addition, there is usually a highly accented "back beat" coming between the regular beats creating what is known as "syncopation." In his

book, *The Day Music Died*, author and former rock performer Bob Larson writes, “Syncopated rhythms evoke the most sensuous response from the human body, particularly when they are electronically accentuated.”⁴³

Rock music is written (and performed) to be felt, as well as heard, and one essential instrument for this type of music is the electric bass guitar. Its super-amplified low frequency vibrations give rock that gut-level intensity that preys on sensory perceptions. The tempo can be fast or slow, but if the beat is rock, the fundamental response will be erotic.

A second key to identifying rock music is repetition - words, choruses, instrumental parts or chord patterns that are repeatedly played or sung throughout the song. As any educator will tell you, repetition is one of the most effective teaching tools that can be employed. And when you consider the neurotic, profane, and suggestive words that are being fed into the brains of even very young children, it’s “no wonder people are going crazy. That’s enough to drive a human being crazy.”⁴⁴

A third important characteristic of rock can be its volume. As if the over-amplified, buzz saw screams of guitars, and the wild, incoherent vocals of the performers were not loud enough already, rock performers and fans enjoy their music best when it is cranked up to 100-plus decibels of sound (approaching the threshold of pain, where the body becomes completely disoriented). Such an intense, steady pounding can quickly cause the mind to lose touch with reality and even induce various stages of trances. The psychological principle being applied here is this: The louder the music, the more vulnerable the listener becomes to the lyrics being sung.

The last aspect of rock that we are going to review is the fact that it can have all the characteristics we have already mentioned (heavy beat, repetition, extreme amplification), or , it can have none of them! That is because rock has long ceased to be any one thing, and has denominated into a multitude of sects and schisms, each reflecting its own version of the aesthetic principle that masterminded its creation. And every new revelation that the prophets of rock can produce will echo a resounding “Amen” in the ear of a true rock-believer somewhere. No matter what musical principle that is applied to make it happen, the spirit will find a witness.

WHO WRITES THE SONGS? -As we have just learned, it is the beat of rock music that pulls the emotional trigger of its listeners, but, undoubtedly, it takes lyrics to produce the gun. The battle for men’s souls is being fought in the mind, so let’s take a look at some of the ideas that young people are being fed daily by the disciples of rock:

At the beginning of the song, there is the sound of little children shouting, “I don’t want to go to that place!” Then the singer begins to howl his deadly sermon:

**“I’m the Lord of the wasteland
I gather darkness to please me
And I command you to kneel before the
God of thunder, and of rock and roll.
The spell you’re under
Will slowly rob you of your virgin soul...”**

GOD OF THUNDER
from the album “Destroyer” by KISS⁴⁵

Fairly straightforward, wouldn’t you say? Rock groups today don’t mince words when it comes to paying homage to the Devil and spelling out his evil intent. Many of Hard Rock’s offerings are more incantation than song. A 1982 album, “The Number Of The Beast,” by the Heavy Metal group, Iron Maiden, contains such sentimental ditties as “Children Of The Damned,” “Hallowed Be Thy Name,” and “Run To The Hills.” Fellow rockers, Black Sabbath, sing such distinctly inspired songs as “Nativity In Black”:

**Now I have you with me, under my power
Our love grows stronger with every hour
Look at my eyes and you’ll see who I am
My name is Lucifer, please take my hand.”⁴⁶**

There are sure to be those who, right now, are saying, “I’m not a devil worshipper. I don’t listen to the words; I just like the music.” Unfortunately, to such a statement there can only be one response: You are still guilty-by association. In a sermon entitled “Why Are We Not A Denomination?” the prophet, William Branham, accurately describes the situation: “If you hang around with somebody that is a thief, you’ll soon be a thief yourself. My old Kentucky mammy used to say, ‘If you lay down with a dog that has fleas, you’ll get up with fleas, too.’ You’re known by your company.”⁴⁷

Are you wondering whether Soft Rock should be included in that warning? The answer is “Yes,” because that particular flea infestation is far, far nastier (and more sneaky) than most people suspect. Let’s take a look.

**Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us, above us only sky...
Imagine all the people
Living for today.
Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace...
You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one.
Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for grief or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world...**

IMAGINE by John Lennon

“Imagine” was written nearly 20 years ago, but the philosophy, which it applauds, remains as a central theme of today’s Soft Rock. It is termed Humanism, and it doesn’t sound really bad, does it? After all, we would all like to see an end to wars and strife, and a reign of universal peace and prosperity. But let’s face it, man’s idea of peace is just not the same as God’s idea of peace. The humanistic hypothesis of “unity through diversity” is an exercise in self-deception. Unequal yoking is sin. And how can there be peace without the Prince of Peace?

Humanism - the belief that man, rather than God, is the sum and measure of all things -is one of the founding tenets of a faith called New Age. New Age (also called Age of Aquarius) is not a passing fad, and the only thing ‘new ’about it is the vocabulary. The movement itself is older than Hinduism and Buddhism; it is older than the oracles of ancient Greece and Egypt; it is as old as the serpent in the Garden of Eden, who beguiled Eve with the words “...and ye shall be as gods.”

In some way, New Age has touched you, too. You’ve heard its philosophers, viewed its art, read its literature - probably without knowing

them as New Age. You may even have participated in its therapies and shared in its rituals. But you have most certainly listened to its music.

Since John Lennon (the Beatle who once enjoyed the title of priest/king of the Aquarian Age)⁴⁸ wrote the song “Imagine,” New Age music has broadened to include everything from reggae to contemporary rock, and is most often played on those radio stations denoted ‘easy listening.’ However, record companies do not take lyrics into consideration when they classify a type of music, so the only styles which you will find labeled ‘New Age’ in the record stores are the increasingly popular ‘meditative’ and ‘ambient’ music. Often performed on sitars or other Eastern instruments, critics call it the ‘audio valium’ of the 90s, largely because it claims to transport souls into a kind of cosmic cohesiveness.⁴⁹

Topping the list of popular artists who champion such lyrical humanism are those who have joined together to preach the gospel of rock-in-the-service-of-mankind. Through fund-raising extravaganzas like “We Are The World” and Live Aid, the New Age dogma of “All is One, One is All” is being legitimized and assimilated deeper and deeper everyday into the general culture. For Christians, this may be the most deceptive and dangerous hybrid that rock has ever produced. The music is entralling; the lyrics are intriguing, but guess who writes the songs?

**I've been alive forever
I wrote the very first song
I put the words and the melodies together
I am music, and I write the songs.
I write the songs that make the whole world sing
I write the songs of love and special things,
I write the songs that make the young girls cry
I write the songs, I write the songs.
My hold lies deep within you
And I've got my own place in your soul,
Now when I look out through your eyes
I'm young again, even though I'm very old.
Oh my music makes you dance
And gets your spirit to take a chance
Some rock and roll so you can move,
Music fills your heart
Well there's a real fine place to start
It's from me, it's for you, it's from you, it's for me
It's a worldwide symphony,**

I am music, and I write the songs.

I WRITE THE SONGS
written by Bruce Johnson and
performed by Barry Manilow

ROCK'S KISSING COUSINS - Just in case you're thinking, "Thank God I'm a country boy (or girl)," there's something you need to know. The land of country music is no longer a place where the deer and the antelope play and the skies are not cloudy all day. Some of the most obscene, sex-ridden lyrics heard today are being sung in the key of N -which stands for Nashville.

For those who grew up on country music and mistakenly believe that the good ol' boy hasn't changed much through the years, it's time to take another listen. As Al Menconi writes in his book *Today's Music: A Window To Your Child's Soul*, "If you take away the booze, the fights, the adultery, and the self-pity from country music, there would be nothing left to sing about except your mama and my pickup truck!"⁵⁰

Of course, there is one strategy commonly practiced by artists of the Nashville sound that many staunch Christians consider to be very noble, and that is the singing of a well-known hymn as the closing number in a country music program. This particular form of hypocrisy was born on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry, and for more than 60 years country musicians from Roy Acuff to Barbara Mandrell have been using spiritual songs as a form of musical mouthwash to soothe the taste buds after several courses of filth have been served and consumed. In reality, such pseudo-spiritual placebos have nothing to do with Christianity.

The latest offering to be laid on rock's altar is a form of chanting known as Rap. There is no melody line (so technically it cannot be considered music), but the monotonous beat that accompanies the spoken verse offers a straightforward lesson in rhythm -Rock.

Rap began on the streets in lets-see-who's-the-baddest bragging contests among black teenagers. Consequently, it should come as no surprise to hear rappers today contend that in order to really rap, what you need is a boastin' attitude. Once again, such selfish egotism and downright arrogance bears no resemblance to any Christian ethic.

Although many of today's popular rappers proudly take a verbal stand against drugs, they invariably glorify gangs, crime, and violence (including sexual brutality) in their performances and recordings. All in all, Rap is Heavy Metal in disguise.

Forms Of Godliness

“An then He said, ‘Here comes the church of America now, to be previewed.’... I almost fainted.”⁵¹

Religion (and its multitude of accoutrements) has always been a big business. That is legitimate and acceptable, because it is through the ‘business’ of religion that churches are built, Bibles and other materials are printed, pastors and missionaries are supported, and a host of other worthy endeavours are maintained. But when, in the practice of religion, Divine guidance is by-passed, then Christian orthodoxy and devotion are left totally vulnerable to the manipulations of corporate profiteers. Subsequently, being spiritual and being led of the Holy Spirit cannot always be looked upon synonymously. “God moves by His Spirit, not by the amount of money or talent in the Church.”⁵²

Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) is an industry, and, as in all industry, its motivation is subject to the bottom line -\$\$\$\$. With millions of dollars at stake in this highly competitive market, the majority of performers and recording companies do not hesitate to pattern themselves after their more-popular secular music counterparts, including rock artists such as those previously mentioned. As a result, the inherent Heavy Metal message of rebellion, and the Soft Rock smoke screen of New Age love have been so cleverly incorporated into the substance of Christian music that it now represents 90% of the tapes and disks being offered today at your favourite local Christian bookstore.

Most pro-rockers who write on the subject of Christian music use the same line as Steve Lawhead does in his book, *Rock Of This Age*: “Rock communicates to the rock generation. It has the ability to reach a population that has grown up with it.”⁵³ But the question then becomes, “Reach them with what?” A perusal of the reviews that Christian

artists and groups have been given in the pages of various CCM magazines may shed some light on the subject:

MICHAEL SMITH

“Smith, with synthesizers blaring, drums blazing, and guitars screeching, sent a young crowd into a frenzy from beginning to end.”

“With sweeping strobes lighting the stage and crowd areas, Smith took the stage with some twirling dance steps that sent the crowd into rocking frenzy.”

AMY GRANT

“Lyrically, the only difference between Amy Grant’s love songs and, say, those of Olivia Newton-John, is that often Grant’s pronouns come with capital letters...”

“It is important to understand that some lyrics are implicitly Christian while others are explicitly Christian... You trust the Jesus in them -even if they are singing about life and love, like in “Baby, Baby” [Grant’s hit song that recently topped both the Christian and secular music charts].”

STRYPER

“And rock they do. Their ninety-minute stage show includes all the outward trappings of secular metal -the sass, style, and bombastic bone-jarring sonic barrage of such secular acts as Motley Crue, Ratt, Iron Maiden, or Judas Priest...”

LOVE LIFE

“I... was very impressed with the band’s original, blues-based commercial material. The band showed its [musical] ability with a couple of acoustic-oriented songs and even a cover [re-recording] of the Beatles’ hit, ‘A Hard Day’s Night.’”

KIM HILL

“It’s really encouraging to see someone who loves to sing in non-Christian venues, avoiding the ‘Christianese’ in so much of [today’s] Christian music.”

The purpose of sacred music is to turn a person’s heart and mind towards God. Notwithstanding that CCM is (naively, perhaps) dedicated to that end, the fact remains that sincerity is not a test of Christianity. God’s work must be done God’s way!

Remember, Satan is an imitator, and his game is to counterfeit every move of God. But he is powerless unless he has an instrument (person) to work through, so he recruits his volunteer army from every race, creed, and walk of life -even from the ranks of unmindful Christians.

And that is why we can see in the performances of contemporary Christian musicians today echoes of the Judas-like deception that ushered in the Age of Rock’n’roll in the first place. But no matter how much they try to make it fit the sacred mold, it will never feed the soul of a truly born-again Believer. As Jesus testified in John 3:6, “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I*

said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

When we can't tell the difference between sacred music and worldly music, when the songs that are being sung in the sanctuary of the church could just as effectively be sung to one's lover, then it's time to stop and ask ourselves a very important question: "Who is really being worshipped here?"

God's Way

“Do you realize that there are really only two powers in all the universe? All of our differences between nations and differences between each other and all the rest of the little minor things are connected with one or the other of those powers. And those powers are God's power and Satan's power -the power of life and the power of death. Satan's power is only a perversion of God's power. Death is only a perversion of life; a lie is only the truth mis-told; adultery is a righteous act misused. Everything Satan has is something that was perverted, but it's a power.”⁵⁴

Man's first approach to God through specific conduct and ritual was in the substitutional offerings of Cain and Abel. Cain sought to breach the gap between the known and the unknown worlds and to petition the spiritual realm through beauty and the physical senses. Abel offered a blood sacrifice as atonement for his sins. God accepted one, and rejected the other, for only one was made by revelation, and the other was a carnal (perverted) impersonation.

Since God is, by very definition, unchangeable, we can, on the basis of both His character and His past performance, have complete confidence in what He will do in the future. Although man continues to make offerings based on aesthetic principles, the precepts of God can never change. "Years ago we used to find the people in deep sincerity and worship. And today, it has become a big glamour of Hollywood, just some kind of trained music. Women are up on the platform with their clothes tight enough that their skin is on the outside, almost, and dancing around the platform. There is no sincerity, making it just an outright ridiculous shame, while professing Christianity. I wonder if our offerings haven't become a kind of stench in His nostrils again?"⁵⁵

Does that mean that as believers, we should restrict the music we hear and perform to only the old, classic hymns in order to avoid the negative message of unsound music? Absolutely not. One style of music will never please everyone, however there are objective principles that are based on

truth and not on taste by which we can judge what we listen to: Rhythm, lyrics, and lifestyles.

In the jungle regions of the world there is a form of communication that is called 'talking drums,' and by beating out certain rhythms, messages are sent back and forth between the villages. The music which Satan has perverted for his own use performs that same role in our society, as " ... they call in the spirit by the rhythm of the music."⁵⁶ You must learn to identify the rhythm of rock, so that before you pick up the telephone, you know whose number you will be dialing!

-Listen carefully to what the lyrics are saying. Are there unscriptural doctrines being taught? Is immorality being subtly endorsed? Is the message one of holiness, or is New Age love and peace being promoted? "*Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.*" Proverbs 19:27

In Matthew 12:34, Jesus said, "*... for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*" Music (augmented speech) is an extension of the personality and the beliefs of the composer and the performer. Today, we must choose carefully who will minister to us in song. Do you recall the passages you read earlier from I Samuel, describing how David played music and the evil spirits that tormented Saul departed? Think about it. Saul was King of Israel, and you can be sure there were many, many skilled musicians in his court. Why did he need David? Because "*the Lord was with David.*" David's music bore witness of the Lord's presence in his life, and it disturbed the evil spirits so much that they left Saul!

If evil spirits can be exorcised through a musical performance by a Godly person, then isn't it reasonable to conclude that evil spirits can be summoned through the music of an ungodly person? Make sure that your favourite artist isn't bringing uninvited guests into your home, your car, or your church.

Never before in the history of mankind has the whole world tuned-in to a single form of communication as it has with today's rock music. And over and over again, rock has proven itself to be the enemy of Christ, and one of the most effective instruments by which the Devil gains control over the lives of people and drags them into spiritual wickedness.⁵⁷ "And the spirit [of rock'n'roll] is not only in America. It has spread itself out over the world, to bring them [all people] to the battle of Armageddon."⁵⁸

There are two sides in this battle. There is no neutral ground. Which side are you on?

Is It Time To Change Your Tune?

“Let me go into a person’s house, and let me see what kind of music they listen to; let me see what kind of books they read and what kind of songs they sing and what kind of pictures they have in their house. I can just about tell you what the nature of that person is.”⁵⁹

We live in a vibrating universe. Each individual voice and instrument produces tones, which vibrate at an established frequency. As these frequencies reach our ears, they cause our eardrums to vibrate in the same pattern as the source of the sound, thus allowing us to identify it. This acoustical principle is referred to as *sympathetic vibration* - the ability of one body to cause another body to vibrate in sympathy with it.⁶⁰

We can apply the principle of sympathetic vibration to our musical natures as well. In order for music to ‘speak’ to us, it must respond sympathetically to something that is within our being. It must vibrate to the same frequency as our emotions. In other words, a person responds to the music to which he is attuned, and conversely, the kind of music he produces reveals what he is.

So, let’s get personal. What does your music say about you? Does the water around you feel a little warmer now than it did at the beginning of this article? If so, then maybe its time for you to change your tune.

Did you know that the Bible makes more references to a ‘new song’ than it does to a ‘new man,’ ‘new heavens,’ ‘new earth,’ or ‘new creature?’⁶¹ And that means new in kind, not just in sequence. A new song can only be sung by those who have been redeemed through the Blood of Jesus Christ.

In the past, the Devil may have tried to trick you into believing that music is neither moral or immoral. He may even have mislead you into thinking that the Message of Christ can be preached effectively through rock music. Don’t yield to Satan’s deceptions any longer. May your testimony be like that of the Psalmist David:

“And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.”

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