

Country Western: “Texarkana Baby” – Eddy Arnold

YEAR	Recorded Jan. 6, 1947
ARTIST	Written by Fred Rose; made popular by Eddy Arnold; recorded by Eddy Arnold and his Tennessee Plow Boys and his Guitar
SYNOPSIS	A Southern man is smitten with a woman whose father is from Texas and whose mother is from Arkansas. He proposes to her despite his financial worries. His moral integrity is established by frequent references to her parents and “Lowdy Law.”
CULTURAL TIES/ANALYSIS	<p>“Texarkana Baby” uses Southern-style vocabulary and in doing so establishes the presence of a thriving Southern culture during this time period.</p> <p>Phrases that invoke images of this Southern culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lowdy Law” – stereotypical Southern-word-“slurring” • “like a good ol’ country star” • “sorghum syrup” – Sorghum was widely grown in the south and was a Southern breakfast staple on hot biscuits. Following WWII, however, sorghum syrup production in the south fell drastically with a declining source of farm labor. • “Texarkana” – a city in the Ark-La-Tex region, a socio-economic intersection of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas • “Blue ribbon cane” – sugar cane, a product of the south’s agricultural activities • Pronunciation of Arkansas as “ArkanSAW” • Repetition of “Lowdy Law” suggests significant religious ties <p>The song is simple in wording and in content, thus implying that the Southern lifestyle remained simple.</p>
NOTABLE FACTS	<p>*March 31, 1949: “Texarkana Baby” was the 1st 7-inch 45 rpm record released by RCA in the USA</p> <p>* #1 on the US Country Chart</p> <p>*#18 in the US</p>

Country Rockabilly: “Wake Up Little Susie” – The Everly Brothers

YEAR	1957
ARTIST	Performed by the Everly Brothers; written by Felice and Boudleaux Bryant
SYNOPSIS	The song is written from a high school boy to his girlfriend, Susie. They went on a date to a drive-in movie theater, fell asleep, and slept through her 10 o’clock curfew. When he wakes up at 4 AM, he hurriedly wakes up Susie and worries about what their parents and friends will think of their mistake.
CULTURAL TIES/ANALYSIS	<p>Multiple inferences can be made from this song:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Teenagers would go to drive-in movies; thus, entertainment was a prominent part of the teenage culture. (2) Parents imposed curfews. This suggests that the nuclear family remained strong and that children of the time were

	<p>taught to respect their parents.</p> <p>(3) Chastity was important for teenagers. The teenage boy frets about what his parents, his girlfriend’s parents, and his teenage friends will think about his “night out.”</p> <p>(4) Chastity was important to the people listening to the song. Boston radio stations pulled the song from the air, because they thought it suggested that the boy and the girl had engaged in coitus. Thus, the American culture was still firmly rooted in the ideal that songs ought to be pure.</p>
NOTABLE FACTS	<p>*#1 on the <i>Billboard</i> Pop chart</p> <p>*#1 on the Cash Box Best Selling Records Chart</p> <p>*Banned from Boston radio stations for suggestive lyrics</p> <p>*7 weeks atop the <i>Billboard</i> country chart</p> <p>*#2 on the UK Singles Chart</p> <p>*#318 on the <i>Rolling Stone</i> magazine’s “The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time”</p>

Folk: “The Hammer Song (If I Had a Hammer)” – The Weavers

YEAR	Written in 1949, Released in 1950
ARTIST	The Weavers, written by Lee Hays and Pete Seeger
SYNOPSIS	Using the hammer as a metaphor, the singers suggest that power should be used for love and as a remedy to injustice. The hammer is also reference to workers’ tools, and the song thus suggests the importance of equality and fair treatment for laborers.
CULTURAL TIES/ANALYSIS	Shortly after they debuted in 1948, they performed at outdoor concert in Peekskill, NY, where they were o Attacked with rocks and sticks, injured by broken glass of smashed car windows, and told to “go on back to Russia.” The song’s premier, however, provoked the most significant consequences; the <i>Daily Worker</i> , a paper published in NYC by Communist Party USA, printed a notice of the song’s debut, which occurred at a testimonial dinner for Communist Party leaders who were on trial for violating the Smith Act. This association with the Communist Party, an organization targeted by the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), placed The Weavers in a precarious position, and only 4 years later, US Communist-turned-FBI informant Harvey Matusow identified Pete Seeger and Lee Hays as Communist Party members. .” Officially blacklisted as a result of the HUAC hearing, the Weavers were banned from radio and television and dropped by their recording label. Although found guilty of contempt, Seeger’s conviction was reversed in 1962 when Matusow admitted to “perjury and conspiring with the U.S. attorneys to give false testimony.”
NOTABLE FACTS	*The Weavers’ version of the song was not commercially successful, but later versions were successful. Peter Paul, and Mary’s cover reached Top 10, and Trini Lopez’s cover in 1963 was #3 (<i>Billboard</i> chart).

R&B: “Trouble Blues” – Charles Brown Trio

YEAR	March 1949
ARTIST	Charles Brown (Trio)
SYNOPSIS	A man laments the loss of a love and reflects on how his actions may have influenced her decision to leave. He expresses his desire to be a better man but recognizes that his life is currently influenced by trouble and misery. Although the song is addressed to the women he loves, she is long gone; his reflection is for himself, alone.
CULTURAL TIES/ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *At this time, R&B was a genre dominated by African Americans. *These types of songs often captured the African American social pain and their pursuit for cultural happiness. *The phrases “I won’t be trouble no more” and “bye-bye, bye-bye darling” imply that the singer is tortured by the loss of his love; the prominent theme of love in music during this time period suggests that Americans, from a social standpoint, tirelessly pursued self-satisfaction, a pursuit that physically manifested in the consumer culture. *However, white teenagers of the 1940s demanded lighter, relaxed R&B, which Charles Brown delivered in this song with his simply structured lyrics and vocally driven production. *Like many R&B songs of the time, it featured an arrangement with prominent saxophone sounds.
NOTAYBLE FACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *This song followed the typical trend of rhythm and blues songs – it spoke of trouble and sadness. *Most successful single of the Trio’s career *#1 on the US R&B chart for 15 weeks (most successful R&B song of the year)

Movie or stage play themes “The Fountainhead (Original Soundtrack)” – Max Steiner & Warner Bros. Studio Orchestra

YEAR	1949
ARTIST	Max Steiner
SYNOPSIS	Steiner composes the lyrical backdrop to the tribulations and triumphs of the characters of Ayn Rand’s <i>The Fountainhead</i> adapted for the movie screen. With sound that is ripe with crescendos and decrescendos, Steiner captures the spectrum of human emotions. Tense, lingering notes build suspense while high notes evoke triumph and happiness.
CULTURAL TIES/ANALYSIS	Through delicate composition, Steiner established an innovative music score in which the songs were associated with certain characters and themes throughout the movie. In doing so, he composed a musical complement to the dialogue and action on the screen. The integration of music into the film was innovative at the time, and this demonstrates the growth America’s entertainment industry was experiencing; two potentially disparate entertainment disciplines, music and film, were developing an ever closer relationship. Although the movie received tepid reviews, critics showered Steiner with praise for his masterful score, claiming that he used music to establish emotional themes that connected to the characters and to the audience. This indicates that the American public, only several years past the end of WWII, was already deeply connecting

	with the entertainment arts. The interest that the American critics had in Steiner’s music as a medium for human emotion suggests that Americans longed for their own emotional release during tumultuous post-war years and that they searched for and found that in music.
NOTABLE FACTS	*The film, and subsequently the score, were deemed “openly fascist” by the <i>Daily Worker</i> , a Communist publication *Max Steiner was born in Vienna. He eventually moved to Hollywood. He composed the scores for <i>King Kong</i> , <i>The Charge of the Light Brigade</i> , <i>Gone with the Wind</i> , <i>Casablanca</i> , and <i>Now, Voyager</i> .

Rock & Roll: “Johnny B. Goode” – Chuck Berry

YEAR	January 1958
ARTIST	Written and performed by Chuck Berry
SYNOPSIS	A poor Louisiana country boy named Johnny B. Goode could not read or write very well, but he was a skilled guitarist. People were impressed by his guitar playing skills, and his mother told him that he would someday become a successful guitarist in a band, popular among many.
CULTURAL TIES/ANALYSIS	<p>This song is semi-autobiographical, but its content was modified to gain market appeal. The lyric “little colored boy” was changed to “little country boy,” an alteration that Berry, himself, saw necessary in a time when black people still suffered the frequent horror of lynching in the Deep South during President Eisenhower’s second term in office. This change carries two main implications.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Racial tension still dominated American culture such that to appeal to the mass American market, the topic of race was to be avoided in the public entertainment sector. (2) Although African Americans like Chuck Berry could gain success, their ability to accept their skin color as a factor of their identity was severely limited. In this song, Berry had to alter a phrase of self-identification just to appeal to the white listeners. <p>On a more positive note, Berry’s enthusiastic tone embodies the American spirit of personal growth potential. Moreover, it emphasizes the ability of music to serve as a factor of personal and social growth, beyond its benefit as entertainment.</p>
NOTABLE FACTS	*15 weeks on the US charts *#8 on the <i>Billboard</i> Hot 100 *#2 on <i>Billboard</i> magazine’s Hot R&B Sides

Cutting Edge Funk: “Hound Dog” – Elvis Presley

YEAR	July 1956
-------------	-----------

ARTIST	Performed by Elvis Presley, but initially performed by Willie Mae “Big Mama” Thorton in 1952; Written by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller
SYNOPSIS	<p>There are various possible interpretations, but presented here are two prominent ideas:</p> <p>(1) A man is dissatisfied with his lover, whom he views as a groveling, weak mess. He recognizes that he made a mistake in believing her to be “high-classed” and sees now that she is trashy and not worth his time. The reference to “hound dog” establishes the idea that his lover is subservient and pitiful.</p> <p>(2) When “hound dog” is taken to mean a promiscuous man, this song adopts a radically different interpretation. In this case, a man is upset with his (ex)-friend, whom he realizes is a pathetic player. When he says that “you ain’t never caught a rabbit,” he is suggesting that his ex-friend is unsuccessful with the ladies. He is essentially shunning this groveling, low-class man.</p>
CULTURAL TIES/ANALYSIS	<p>Labelled “an emblem of the rock’n’roll revolution,” Elvis Presley’s version of “Hound Dog” marked a transformative time in America’s entertainment culture. With performances on <i>The Steve Allen Show</i>, <i>The Milton Berle show</i>, and <i>The Ed Sullivan Show</i>, Elvis shocked over 60 million American viewers with his gyrating-hip performance and his potentially sexual lyrics. Although his song skyrocketed to the top of the charts with the help of fans who looked to Elvis as a symbol for America’s newfound rebellious youth, conservatives such as the Catholic Church and Democratic congressman Emanuel Celler reproached Elvis’s “animal gyrations” as a violation of class and taste. American teenagers, swept up in the tide of America’s consumer culture, grasped at Elvis’s up-beat tempos and his fusion of R&B with a modern pop-rock beat. A white Southerner with a soulful singing style was a new twist to America’s music scene.</p>
NOTABLE FACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Elvis’s version is ranked #19 on <i>Rolling Stone</i> magazine’s list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time (2004) *One of the best-selling singles of all time *At the same time, it was #1 on the US pop, country, and R&B charts (1965) *Remained at the top of the pop chart for 11 weeks *In 1957, Frank Sinatra made clear his opinion of “Hound Dog” – he thought it an inferior piece of music. *Sold over 4 million copies in the US during first release. *The original recording was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame

Ballads: “The Very Thought of You” – Nat King Cole

YEAR	1958 (released in November)
ARTIST	Nat King Cole
SYNOPSIS	A man longs for his lover and expresses his utter infatuation. His love makes him forgetful and he sees her in everything beautiful in the world, such as flowers and stars. When he is near her, time seems to slow down with his overwhelming desire to see her.

CULTURAL TIES/ANALYSIS	<p>“The Very Thought of You” was written in 1934 by Ray Noble and performed throughout the subsequent decades by various pop and jazz artists, including Doris Day, Frank Sinatra, Nat “King” Cole, Billie Holiday, and Elvis Costello. The enduring popularity of this song and its ability to cross the boundary of pop and jazz. Despite the growth of the consumer culture and the budding interest in rock, pop, and performance-based music, the simple and thoughtful lyrics and the gentle melody appealed to chaste conservatives and romantic youth. The song was featured in both lyrical and instrumental form in various movies, including <i>Young Man with a Horn</i> and <i>Casablanca</i>, thus demonstrating that the song’s ideals of love and commitment retained their importance in American culture despite the growing concept of “rebelliousness” among the nation’s youth. Nat King Cole, himself, represented significant changes in America’s culture during this time period. His commercial success as an African American jazz singer and his status as the first African American host of a national television variety show (<i>The Nat King Cole Show</i>) provided evidence of America’s willingness to accept racial equality in the entertainment scene and of the function of entertainment as a path to success.</p>
NOTABLE FACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Nat King Cole was a jazz pianist who dabbled in the genres of vocal jazz, swing, and traditional pop. *“The Very thought of You” was recorded as R&B and as rock ‘n’ roll by different artists. *The song lasted 7 weeks in the <i>Billboard</i> Hot 100 in 1963 (when recorded by Ricky Nelson). *1963: #11 on <i>Billboard’s</i> Easy Listening Chart

Rock and Roll Novelty: “Splish Splash” – Bobby Darin

YEAR	May 1958
ARTIST	Performed by Bobby Darin; written by Bobby Darin and DJ Murray the K
SYNOPSIS	A man gets out of the bathtub, wraps a towel around his waist, and exits his bathroom, only to find a party “goin’ on.” He proceeds to partake in the festivities, without mention of whether or not he dresses himself.
CULTURAL TIES/ANALYSIS	Although a light hearted beat and a bouncing rhythm appealed to the pop-orientated music sector, this song was banned from conservative radio stations because the singer does not say if he puts his clothes on. Despite the public’s interest in catchy lyrics, some people of the music scene still clung to the tradition of chastity – they were not ready to permit the full metamorphosis of America’s entertainment-orientated, rebellious youth.
NOTABLE FACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The song was written, in part, due to the fact that Murray bet Darin that he would not be able to write a song that began with “Splish Splash, I was takin’ a bath.” *#3 on the US pop singles chart *Recording included tenor sax, guitar, bass, and drums. *In the 1990s, Elmo sung this song for one of his records to encourage young children to take baths.

Progressive Jazz: “So What” - Miles Davis (composition)

YEAR	1959 (released in August)
ARTIST	Miles Davis, composer
SYNOPSIS	This song has no lyrics but still takes listeners on an auditory journey. With a smooth drum beat and calm-yet-catchy musical phrases from the trumpet and the saxophone. The song’s melodic beginning branches into an enticing riff. The harmonic simplicity showcases the clean drum and trumpet notes and allows room for improvisation within the solo. The crisp notes retain their bluesy qualities but are lively and dance-able.
CULTURAL TIES/ANALYSIS	This song is a prime example of the modal jazz trend of the late 1950s. This jazz music used musical notes and not chord progressions as the basis of the harmony. However, it was uncommon for jazz music of the time to retain the flexibility necessary for improvisation, but the innovative nature of this piece is to be expected from Davis, one of the most influential musicians of this time period. The casual, almost fragile tone of his music was simultaneously classic and new-age; trumpet riffs hinted at rock influence, while the compelling drum beat retained the characteristic “cool” jazz effect. When Davis performed this song for an episode of <i>Roy Herridge Theater</i> titled <i>The Sounds of Miles Davis</i> , it was the first recorded public performance of jazz music. Thus, jazz music continued to twist through the music scene despite more radical rock ‘n’ roll influences. Most notably, the song placed considerable emphasis on a single solo portion, whereas many jazz songs of the time focused equally on the different musicians. The simple structure of the piece, with its moody notes and casual rhythms, counterbalanced the pop influences of the time and suggested a calmer undercurrent to the American music culture. Simultaneously, “So What” spoke of the sultry influences of the time and demonstrated an innovative ability to capture the American sentiment without clichéd love lyrics. Musicians of both rock and classical genres have cited this song (and the album on which it appeared) as a major musical influence.
NOTABLE FACTS	<p>*Music reviewers became less enchanted by Davis’s song each time he played it; they said he became emotionally detached and that the song thus lost its emotional appeal.</p> <p>**“So What” belonged on Davis’s studio album <i>Kind of Blue</i>, which was Davis’s best-selling jazz record. It was also the best-selling jazz record of all time.</p> <p>*In 2003, it was ranked as #12 on the <i>Rolling Stone</i> magazine’s list of 500 greatest albums of all time.</p> <p>*Ornette Coleman’s entrance into the jazz scene in 1958 reduced the widespread public impact of this song and record.</p>