

# British invasion essay



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The British Music Invasion was one of the most influential time periods for the development and maturation of a new variation of rock and roll. This innovating movement was initially inspired by some of America's greatest rock and blues musicians including: Buddy Holly, Little Richard, Elvis Presley, Eddie Cochran, Chuck Berry, and so on.

The establishment of the British music scene absorbed and completely reconfigured the traditional instruments, established music forms, and the same overused lyrics that once belonged to rock and roll. Two different schools with two different sounds categorize this great time of influence, now known as the British Invasion. Even though both schools were yielded from the same "musical soil," Great Britain's internal struggle between economic and social classes had a fundamental role in forming each school's distinguishable style.

The British Invasion was the product of Great Britain's attempt to," [break] free from the overt imitation of musical references and with the incorporation of direct influences from African American blues and R&B musicians, [Great Britain unknowingly] laid the foundations for the development of a uniquely British rock & roll sound" (Perone). Essentially, the American music scene provided a pattern that led to the synthesis of two very distinctive music styles that were influentially different yet generated from the same music source.

The complexity of each school's sound allocated a generous amount of variation from the same musical sources. Among the first of the two schools, Liverpool manufactured a sound comparable to skiffle and really laid the

framework for deeper music interpretation. Originally, the term skiffle referred to the sound created by the poorer African-American musicians of the American South who resorted to raw materials and handmade instruments that produced a more homegrown, earthy sound (Harry).

Especially at this point in time, Great Britain was still experiencing the aftermath of World War II, “ the practical matters [such as] social prejudice, economic disparity, and psychological distress in the post WW-II era were vital motivators for British Invasion bands” (Perone). The depressed state of the country clearly defined and divided social classes. Much like the originators of skiffle had to deal with racism, the working-class British musicians endured class discrimination first hand.

These similarities helped form a kinship or appreciation for American blues music that without question influenced the working-class nature of early rock and roll. The Liverpool sound embodies a direct imitation of “ American rockabilly structures, instruments, and vocal styles [and incorporates] a more thorough integration and modification of skiffle-based styles (Perone). ” The complex combination of this softer, more refined rock helped pave the way for the second school of the British Invasion.

Among the Liverpool bands, the Beatles were one of the most influential bands that pioneered new variations of rock and roll that catapulted them to the frontlines of the British Invasion. The Beatles sophisticated sound developed the precedents for a variation of rock and roll that pushed the boundaries of traditional style and established new norms that enticed bands to try and replicate their sound. The Beatle’s song “ I Want To Hold Your

Hand” characterizes this school best because it was the Beatle’s first number one hit in America, which then triggered “ Beatlemania,” the jumping-off point for the British Invasion (Stuessy, 85).

The Beatles creativity inspired an enriched style of rock and roll that was also exemplified through bands like Gerry and The Pace Makers who reached number 4 with their song “ Don’t Let The Sun Catch You Crying”. Moreover, the band, The Searchers, who sang “ Love Potion NO. Nine”, and “ Needles and Pins” demonstrated their Beatle-inspired, softer style of music that held the same standard of sophistication. Subsequently, the London school responded to Liverpool’s revolutionary rock sound with its own modification of rock and roll generated from influential, American rhythm and blues bands with a more basic, raw demeanor.

The newer London school was accompanied by a newer sound that is most often described as a combination of jazz and R&B-oriented mainstream rock. With the debut of the Liverpool British Invasion bands, newer bands from London had more creative freedom and were challenged by overcoming the previous British bands’ successes. As the styles of each school developed, the variation between the two groups also widened. The second-wave of British Invasion bands personified a harder, more aggressive sounding rock and placed a heavy emphasis on rebellious behavior.

With the intention of creating more blues-based rock and roll, this second school deconstructed the stylistic complexities that they once sought after. It is important to note that the Beatle’s strong American following made it difficult for bands to compete within the same realm of music (Stuessy, 125).

The Beatle's limitless innovation seemed impossible to surpass, ultimately inspiring the creation of a counter-image that highlighted alternate aspects of rock and roll and promoted louder, more antisocial variations of rock. Without a doubt, The Rolling Stones were key players in the British Invasion's blues-based rock style.

Although The Stones initially tried to imitate the Beatle's style, they found their success when they embraced their contrasting characteristics. With songs like " Satisfaction" and " Sympathy For The Devil," the Rolling Stone's simplistic and repetitive style combined with their nonchalant attitudes created an appeal for listeners who desired something simpler than the complex styles of The Beatles. Along with the Stones, bands like The Yardbirds, who sang " For Your Love" created sounds of hard rock that was considered " before their time.

The Yardbirds are especially significant to the British Invasion because their use of improvisational instrumental solos were quickly embraced by their predecessors (Stuessy, 127). Yet another significant band within the British Invasion would have to be Deep Purple. The band's largest hit " Smoke On The Water" helped the harder side of rock and roll transition into a style of heavy metal. The bands' adaptations to traditional rock and roll created a diverging path from Liverpool's initial musical influence.

The British Invasion was an essential time period where new concepts and variations within rock and roll resonated throughout America. The movement's two schools, Liverpool and London, were each responsible for unique contributions to the progression of rock and roll and the

transformation of pop culture trends. While Liverpool found parallels with America's Southern Skiffle sound, the London school generated a new variation from rhythm and blues. Collectively, the British Invasion redefined the parameters of rock and roll and reintroduced Americans to traditional music templates, largely distinguishable by their distinctive new sounds.