

The History of Rock Music: 1970-1975

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Re-alignment 1970-74

(These are excerpts from my book ["A History of Rock and Dance Music"](#))

Into the mainstream

The re-alignment of rock music to the old values simply helped sustain the creative boom of the 1960s. A continuing revolution would have destabilized the (music) world. A "wise" restoration of traditional forms (such as blues, folk and country), instead, helped spread the new product and thus turn rock music into one of consumerism's most successful phenomena. The album, born as an "intellectual" alternative to the 45 RPM, simply became a more lucrative business for the recording companies that could charge a much higher price for a little higher investment. The early 1970s were, in many ways, another "dark age" for rock music, but this time the Establishment did not try to obliterate it: it absorbed it. Rock music became "mainstream" music. In 1971 the musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* by Andrew Lloyd Webber opened on Broadway, using arrangements, rhythms and melodies inspired by alternative rock. A concert for Bangladesh, attended by the stars of the counterculture such as Bob Dylan, became the most successful benefit event since the war, and began a tradition of rock stars acting like prominent political personalities. The popularity of rock music had no rivals. In 1973, the Watkins Glen festival (Allman Brothers, Grateful Dead, Band) was attended by a crowd of 500,000 people. Television stations were devoting more airtime to rock music than any other genre, adding new programs such as "The Midnight Special" (anchored by Wolfman Jack and Helen Reddy). Rock's defeat became rock's triumph.

Country-rock 1970-72

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Gram Parsons' great invention, country-rock, was briefly one of the USA's biggest fads.

Two acts played the role of liaison with San Francisco's acid-rock, [Commander Cody](#) (1), whose deranged bar-band was immortalized on **Lost In The Ozone**

(apr/jul 1971 - late 1971), and the [New Riders Of The Purple Sage](#) (1), who evolved from the oneiric style of **New Riders Of The Purple Sage** (dec 1970/jan 1971 - aug 1971) to the mock-heroic style of **The Adventures of Panama Red** (summer 1973 - sep 1973).

[Steve Stills](#) of the Buffalo Springfield and Chris Hillman of the Flying Burrito Bros formed a new band to record **Manassas** (feb 1972 - apr 1972), a veritable encyclopedia of USA music.

However, the leadership soon moved east, towards Nashville. The [Nitty Gritty Dirt Band](#) was one of the first country outfits to embrace rock and pop, for example on **Uncle Charlie And His Dog Teddy** (dec 1969/jan 1970 - feb 1970), featuring Jerry Jeff Walker (Paul Crosby)'s *Mr Bojangles* and Kenny Loggins' *House at Pooh Corner*, although they became famous with the live Nashville celebration of **Will The Circle Be Unbroken** (aug 1971 - oct 1972).

As the last vestiges of the hippy civilization were submerged by mandolins and banjos, the bands that originated from the Byrds and from the Buffalo Springfield became repetitive and predictable. The dynasty was continued by mediocre country-rockers such as [Poco](#) and [Kenny Loggins & Jim Messina](#), until the [Eagles](#) (2), a super-group of sorts, featuring songwriters Don Henley and Glenn Frey, originally inspired by Crosby Stills & Nash, gave country-rock a more personal and universal meaning, from the melancholy western vignettes of **Desperado** (jan 1973 - mar 1973) to the robust hard-rock of **Hotel California** (mar 1976 - oct 1976).

The effect on the conservative (sometimes fascist) Nashville culture was beneficial, though. A number of country singers began to behave like hippies, particularly in Texas. In 1976 the album **Wanted: The Outlaws** (a compilation released in jan 1976), featuring Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Tompall Glaser (a member of vocal trio Glaser Brothers) and Jessi Colter, gave them a name. It also became the first country album to be certified platinum. [Willie Nelson](#) (1) had already broken the laws of the "Nashville sound" on his existential concept **Yesterday's Wine** (may 1971 - sep 1971), **Shotgun Willie** (jan 1973 - may 1973) and **Phases & Stages** (oct 1973 - mar 1974), another concept album. His art peaked with the mystical Far-West parable **Red Headed Stranger** (? 1975 - may 1975), the country equivalent of the rock opera, while he continued to have melodic hits such as Fred Rose's *Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain* (1975), *On The Road Again* (1980) and *Always On My Mind* (1982).

[Waylon Jennings](#)' contribution to the Nashville revolution was mainly **Honky Tonk Heroes** (? 1973 - jul 1973), mostly written by Billy Joe Shaver. Shaver was also the author of *Georgia on a Fast Train* (1973) and *I'm Just an Old Chunk of Coal* (1980).

[Kris Kristofferson](#) wrote *Me And Bobby McGee* (1969), *Sunday Morning Coming Down* (1969), *Help Me Make It Through The Night* (1970), and *Silver Tongued Devil* (1971).

A member of Kristofferson's band, bassist and organist Billy Swan, penned the catchy rockabilly-tinged *I Can Help* (1974).

[Delbert McClinton](#) was a volcanic shouter and harmonica player who mixed soul, jump blues and honky-tonk, and penned *Shaky Ground* (1970), *Solid Gold Plated Fool* (1975) and *Two More Bottles Of Wine* (1978).

Yet another Texan, Jewish cowboy Richard "Kinky" Friedman, debuted an irreverent (often offensive) brand of country music, tinged with black humor, on **Sold American** (? 1973 - ? 1973).

David-Allan Coe, born in Ohio, was perhaps the real "outlaw" of this generation (he did jail for murder), a bluesy singer and a morbid persona who emerged with **The Mysterious Rhinestone Cowboy** (? 1974 - jun 1974), and succeeded in diverse styles such as the anthemic *Take This Job And Shove It* (1978) and the metaphysical *The Ride* (1983).

Another real outlaw (and also from Ohio) was Donald "Johnny Paycheck" Lytle, Nashville's honky-tonking bard of dark stories, such as in the 1966 triptych of *The Lovin' Machine*, Bobby Bare's *Motel Time Again*, *Jukebox Charlie*, before going through rehabilitation and becoming a star (*Don't Take Her She's All I Got*, 1971; David-Allan Coe's *Take This Job And Shove It*, 1978), despite renewed trouble with the justice.

Celtic revival 1971-74

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One of the great themes of the folk revival was the rediscovery and revitalization of the Celtic tradition. [Alan Stivell](#) (2) started the commercial phenomenon with **Renaissance De La Harpe Celtique** (? 1970 - ? 1971) and **Chemins De Terre/ From Celtic Roots** (? 1973 - ? 1973), and achieved his masterpiece with **Tir Na Nog/ Symphonie Celtique** (? 1979 - ? 1980). The [Chieftains](#) had begun in the early 1960s, but fame was bestowed on them by less authentic (and more creative) albums such as **Chieftains 4** (sep 1972/feb 1973 - ? 1973) and **Bonaparte's Retreat** (? 1976 - ? 1976). [Clannad](#) introduced electronics and world-music into Celtic music, starting with **Clannad 2** (? 1974 - ? 1975) and arriving at the lushly arranged and dreamy folk-pop music of **Fuaim** (? 1981 - mar 1982), which sparked the solo career of the group's youngest member, Enya.

Soul 1970-72

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At the turn of the decade, black artists such as [Marvin Gaye](#) (1), [Isaac Hayes](#) (1), [Curtis Mayfield](#) (1), [Stevie Wonder](#) (3) began producing artsy soul records that clearly violated the spirit of the genre. It was a way to "westernize" the most authentic African music. However, they coupled the sophisticated (and frequently orchestral) arrangements with erudite and sociopolitically-aware lyrics that rescued their songs from pop cliches.

Smokey Robinson's *The Tears Of A Clown* (1970), which fused vaudeville, classical music and soul music, is representative of the level of craftsmanship achieved by this generation of black artists. Marvin Gaye's album **What's Going On** (jun 1970/mar 1971 - may 1971), possibly the best black pop album of all times, crowned that era. The skills in composition, scoring and studio production led to lengthy orchestral pop-dance-soul tracks, such as Isaac Hayes' **Hot Buttered Soul** (jun 1969 - jul 1969) and *Shaft* (1971), Curtis Mayfield's *Superfly* (1972), and Stevie Wonder's concept albums **Music Of My Mind** (early 1972 - mar 1972), the first collection written, produced and played (mostly) by himself,

and recorded when he was only 22 but already a star, **Talking Book** (? 1972 - oct 1972), one of the most adventurous pop albums of the time in the use of electronic instruments, **Innervisions** (? 1973 - aug 1973), a social fresco of symphonic proportions, and the monumental and ambitious **Songs In The Key Of Life** (? 1975/? 1976 - sep 1976). Clearly, these were the prodromes of the music that would be called "disco-music", as Barry White's *Love's Theme* (1973) proved.

Roots-rock 1971-73

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[Hot Tuna](#) (1), formed by remnants of Jefferson Airplane (Jorma Kaukonen and Jack Casady), dispensed an unorthodox form of roots-rock, a more bluesy and lighter version of the Band, on effervescent albums such as **Burgers** (nov/dec 1971 - feb 1972).

Ranking among the most original and humorous innovators of roots-rock, [Little Feat](#) (3) revisited blues, gospel, country, boogie, soul, funk, rhythm'n'blues and rock'n'roll on albums such as **Sailin' Shoes** (late 1971 - may 1972), **Dixie Chicken** (late 1972 - feb 1973) and **Feats Don't Fail Me Now** (early 1974 - sep 1974), and sabotaged them with bizarre instrumental parts.

The operation carried out by the [Doobie Brothers](#) (1) in the Bay Area was similar in spirit to the Creedence Clearwater Revival, because they, too, composed a soundtrack for the USA's blue-collar class without copying any of the pre-existing genres but rather coining a modern language (that the average USA citizen could immediately identify with) out of those archaic languages. They inherited the vocal harmonies of their Californian forebears, but then proceeded to drench them into an eclectic stew of soul, country, gospel, boogie, funk and jazz. But, ultimately, the secret of *Listen To The Music* (1972), *China Groove* (1973), *Black Water* (1974) and *Take Me In Your Arms* (1975) was an easy-going laid-back attitude.

The [J. Geils Band](#) (2) in Boston offered an ironic take on rhythm'n'blues (shouter Peter Wolf on vocals, Jerome "Jay" Geils on guitar, Seth Justman on organ, Dick "Magic Dick" Salwitz on harmonica), starting with the wild **Bloodshot** (feb 1973 - apr 1973) via the hard-rock of **Monkey Island** (apr 1977 - jun 1977) to the effervescent party-music of **Freeze Frame** (? 1981 - oct 1981).

Quite unique were the [Dixie Dregs](#) (1), from Georgia, led by virtuoso guitarist Steve Morse. They played a mixture of jazz-rock and southern-boogie that bridged the Allman Brothers Band and the Mahavishnu Orchestra, bluegrass and heavy metal, particularly on their second all-instrumental album **What If** (? 1977/early 1978 - mar 1978).

Progressive bluegrass 1971-75

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The "progressive bluegrass" movement (a brainchild of John Fahey) that blossomed during the first half of the 1970s represented an artistic alternative to country-rock. While country-rock was focusing on the conventions of the country ballad, a number of country-related musicians explored more

adventurous formats.

John Fahey's "primitivism" infected a naive soul such as [Leo Kottke](#) (3), a virtuoso guitarist whose **6 & 12 String Guitar** (? 1969 - dec 1969), **Greenhouse** (? 1972 - ? 1972) and **My Feet Are Smiling** (dec 1972 - mar 1973) contain breath-taking instrumental excursions into the childish imagination of an ordinary simpleton. His domestic and rural storytelling (with or without words) indulge in the speed and intricacy of ragtime and bluegrass but also the pity and tenderness of folk music.

Among fiercely independent, eccentric and isolated contributors to the canon of progressive folk music, two characters stand out. [John Hartford](#) (2) penned the southern vignettes of **Aereo-plain** (? 1971 - sep 1971) and **Mark Twang** (? 1976 - jun 1976), which are both caricatural and emphatic. [Norman Blake](#) (1) assembled an ensemble of masterful players to perform chamber music for bluegrass string band on **The Fields Of November** (? 1974 - ? 1974).

The best disciple of Holy Modal Rounders' acid-folk was [Michael Hurley](#) (2), a bizarre folk-singer who masterminded two demented masterpieces such as **Have Moicy** (jun 1975 - jan 1976) and **Long Journey** (? 1976 - ? 1976), both disfigured by his quavering growl and haphazard guitar picking, and his cohort [Jeffrey Frederick](#) (1), whose **Spiders In The Moonlight** (? 1976 - ? 1977) is no less heretical.

In 1976 [David Grisman](#) (3) coined "jazzgrass", a fusion of jazz and bluegrass. Grisman had experimented with jazz and country on Earth Opera's **The Great American Eagle Tragedy** (? 1969 - ? 1969), mostly arranged by Peter Rowan, and on the historical session of **Muleskinner** (mar/apr 1973 - may 1974), featuring both Rowan and Greene of Seatrain. **The David Grisman Quintet** (oct/dec 1976 - ? 1977), featuring guitarist Tony Rice, was the album that marked the birth of his "dawg music", a variant of bluegrass music minus the banjo plus a swinging rhythm. Jazz great Stephane Grappelli in person played on **Hot Dawg** (jul/oct 1978 - ? 1979) and Grisman perfected his line-up on **Quintet '80** (? 1980 - ? 1980): Darol Anger on violin, Mike Marshall on mandolin, Mark O'Connor on guitar, and Bob Wasserman on stand-up bass. Each of these musicians would continue Grisman's mission. [Mark O'Connor's Markology](#) (may/aug 1978 - ? 1978) and [Tony Rice's Acoustics](#) (jan 1979 - ? 1979) were the first albums to implement the master's vision.

In the tradition of John Fahey's avantgarde folk music, [Eugene Chadbourne](#) (2) was a free improviser whose roots were in rural white music but whose technique borrowed from jazz and extreme rock guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix and Jerry Garcia. Chadbourne added to the mix a surreal sense of humor and an appreciation of the USA avantgarde (Edgar Varese, Frank Zappa). Chadbourne was also unique for having been an avantgarde composer in the classical tradition, a jazz improviser, a folk musician and the member of a rock band (Shockabilly). Unfortunately, the prolific Chadbourne has produced too many mediocre albums, but at least **Solo Acoustic Guitar** (nov 1975 - dec 1975) and **Collected Symphonies** (? 1985 - ? 1985) rise above the average.

Nostalgia 1972-76

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Nostalgia is a recursive phenomenon in popular music. Every so many years, the clock is set back a few years, and the sounds that were just beginning to be forgotten are brought back, dressed in flashy new clothes.

The blues revival continued with [Roy Buchanan](#)'s stylized blues, particularly on his debut album, **Roy Buchanan** (jul 1972 - aug 1972), and [Bonnie Raitt](#) (1), an immensely talented bottleneck guitarist and raspy, husky contralto, arguably the greatest blues-woman since Janis Joplin, who matured with **Give It Up** (jun 1972 - sep 1972).

However, more original artists took the blues to places where it had never been.

Ry Cooder had pioneered the musical reconstruction of past eras. Others exploited that idea in several guises.

[NRBQ](#) (New Rhythm And Blues Quartet) rode the nostalgia movement without sacrificing a very personal, irreverent, eccentric approach to the pop, blues, jazz, and country traditions, best demonstrated on **Scraps** (jul 1970/dec 1971 - ? 1972).

[Manhattan Transfer](#), a USA institution of four-part close harmony since they scored with **Coming Out** (? 1976 - aug 1976), transformed from novelty act of the nostalgia movement to chamber performers with **Extensions** (? 1979 - oct 1979).

The eccentric and eclectic [Leon Redbone](#), armed with his baritone croon and yodel and his nostalgic orchestrations (heavy on the strings and horns), devoted his career to injecting new life into the blues, jazz, vaudeville, ragtime and folk traditions of the roaring 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, starting with **On The Track** (? 1975 - ? 1975).

The [Roches](#) (1) were a trio of female folksingers who made a career of simple tunes enhanced with old-fashioned vocal harmonies (in the tradition of barbershop quartets and doo-wop) on albums such as **Roches** (sep/nov 1978 - ? 1979).

The impeccable compositions of the [McGarrigle Sisters](#) (2), notably the ones on **Kate And Anna McGarrigle** (? 1975 - feb 1976) and **Dancer With Bruised Knees** (? 1976 - ? 1977), marked a return to the folk roots that had been forgotten during the post-hippy years.

In 1973 George Lucas' film **American Graffiti** (whose soundtrack was released in aug 1973) launched the nostalgic revival nation-wide, but this time the target was the music of the white middle-class of the 1950s and 1960s.

Power-pop 1972-73

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[Abba](#) were the reigning champions of pop during the 1970s. They began with effervescent vocal harmonies coupled with catchy upbeat refrains, notably *Waterloo* (1974) and *Fernando* (1976), but then proved to excel also in the discos, with *Dancing Queen* (1977), *Gimme Gimme Gimme* (1979) and the formidable *Lay All Your Love On Me* (1981), and finally ventured into the romantic melodrama with *Knowing Me Knowing You* (1977) and *Winner Takes*

It All (1980). *Supertrouper* (1981) returned them to their naive-pop glory, and, after Abba disbanded, their leaders and songwriters managed to top all of this with a superb exotic pastiche, Murray Head's *One Night In Bangkok* (1985).

Throughout the ages of hard-rock, progressive-rock, punk-rock and the new wave, [Alex Chilton](#) was the prophet of power-pop, of unadulterated melody, of four-part vocal harmonies, of jingle-jangle guitars, of hard-rock riffs, and of crystal-clear production. He had already pocketed a hit with the Box Tops, Wayne Carson Thompson's *The Letter* (1967), when he joined the [Big Star](#) (2). Their **Radio City** (? 1973 - jan 1974) is the quintessential power-pop album, on which the Beatles' vocal harmonies, the Byrds' jingle-jangle and the Who's power riffs become terms of the same equation. **Third**, recorded in late 1974 but released only four years later, was harder and bleaker. Chilton's retro` ideology eventually came to permeate the new wave and exerted a huge influence on Brit-pop of the 1990s.

The [Raspeberries](#), who debuted in 1972, were also highly derivative of the Beatles and the Beach Boys.

In terms of records sold, the biggest sensation of the early 1970s was the Osmonds, a quintet of (white) Mormon children that competed with the (black) Jackson Five, starting with *One Bad Apple* (1971).

Reggae 1967-76

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The word "reggae" was coined around 1960 in Jamaica to identify a "ragged" style of dance music, that still had its roots in New Orleans rhythm'n'blues. However, reggae soon acquired the lament-like style of chanting and emphasized the syncopated beat. It also made explicit the relationship with the underworld of the "Rastafarians" (adepts of a millenary African faith, revived Marcus Garvey who advocated a mass emigration back to Africa), both in the lyrics and in the appropriation of the African nyah-bingi drumming style (a style that mimics the heartbeat with its pattern of "thump-thump, pause, thump-thump"). Compared with rock music, reggae music basically inverted the role of bass and guitar: the former was the lead, the latter beat the typical hiccupping pattern. The paradox of reggae, of course, is that this music "unique to Jamaica" is actually not Jamaican at all, having its foundations in the USA and Africa.

An independent label, Island, distributed Jamaican records in the UK throughout the 1960s, but reggae became popular in the UK only when Prince Buster's *Al Capone* (1967) started a brief "dance craze". Jamaican music was very much a ghetto phenomenon, associated with gang-style violence, but Jimmy Cliff's *Wonderful World Beautiful People* (1969) wed reggae with the "peace and love" philosophy of the hippies, an association that would not die away. In the USA, Neil Diamond's *Red Red Wine* (1967) was the first reggae hit by a pop musician. Shortly afterwards, Johnny Nash's *Hold Me Tight* (1968) propelled reggae onto the charts. *Do The Reggay* (1968) by Toots (Hibbert) & The Maytals was the record that gave the music its name. Fredrick Toots Hibbert's vocal style was actually closer to gospel, as proven by subsequent hits (*54-46*, 1967; *Monkey Man*, 1969; *Pressure Drop*, 1970).

A little noticed event would have far-reaching consequences: in 1967, the

Jamaican disc-jockey Rudolph "Ruddy" Redwood had begun recording instrumental versions of reggae hits. The success of his dance club was entirely due to that idea. Duke Reid, who was now the owner of the Trojan label, was the first one to capitalize on the idea: he began releasing singles with two sides: the original song and, on the back, the instrumental remix. This phenomenon elevated the status of dozens of recording engineers.

Reggae music was mainly popularized by [Bob Marley](#) (1), first as the co-leader of the Wailers, the band that promoted the image of the urban guerrilla with *Rude Boy* (1966) and that cut the first album of reggae music, **Best Of The Wailers** (may 1970 - aug 1971); and later as the political and religious (rasta) guru of the movement, a stance that would transform him into a star, particularly after his conversion to pop-soul melody with ballads such as *Stir It Up* (1972), *I Shot The Sheriff* (1973) and *No Woman No Cry* (1974).

Among the reggae vocal groups, the Abyssinians' *Satta Massa Gana* (1971) were representative of the mood of the era.

In 1972 reggae became a staple of western radio stations thanks to the film **The Harder They Come** (whose soundtrack, that collects 12 reggaes recorded from 1967 to 1972, was released jul 1972) and to Johnny Nash's *I Can See Clearly Now* (1972).

Dub

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More and more studio engineers were re-mixing B-sides of reggae 45 RPM singles, dropping out the vocals and emphasizing the instrumental texture of the song. The purpose was to allow disc-jockeys to "toast" over the record. Engineers became more and more skilled at refining the instrumental textures, especially when they began to employ sophisticated studio devices. Eventually, "dub" became an art on its own. The first dub singles appeared in 1971, but the man generally credited with "inventing" the genre is Osbourne Ruddock, better known as [King Tubby](#) (2), a recording engineer who in 1970 had accidentally discovered the appeal of stripping a song of its vocal track, and who engineered the first dub record, Carl Patterson's *Psalm Of Dub* (1971). When he got together with producer Lee "Scratch" Perry, **Blackboard Jungle** (? 1972 - spring 1973) was born: the first stereo "dub" album. It was a Copernican revolution: the engineer and the producer had become more important than the composer. It also marked the terminal point of the "slowing down" of Jamaican music, a process that had led from ska to reggae to rock steady. Compared with the original, dub was like a slow-motion version. A collaboration with melodica player Augustus Pablo, aka Horace Swaby, led to another seminal work, **King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown** (? 1972/? 1975 - ? 1975).

Rainford Hugh Perry, better known as [Lee "Scratch" Perry](#) (3), who had nursed the Wailers, pretty much set the reference standard for generations to come with **Double Seven** (? ? - ? 1974), the first reggae album that overdubbed synthesizers, **Revolution Dub** (? 1969/? 1975 - nov 1975) and **Super Ape** (? 1976 - aug 1976), one of the genre's masterpieces.

Melodica virtuoso [Augustus Pablo](#) (2) penned the instrumental albums **This Is Augustus Pablo** (? 1973 - ? 1973) and **East of the River Nile** (? 1977 - ?

1977), two of the most atmospheric works of the genre.

Talk-over

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"Rapping" originated from the complementary tradition of the "talk-over". The disc-jockeys of the sound systems used to accompany the dance tracks with impromptu melodic and spoken-word vocals, often simply to add enthusiasm to the dance. This eventually became an art in itself. U-Roy (Edward Beckford) was possibly the first great talk-over artist, the man who turned dub into a highly-effective vehicle for agit-prop messages (*Dynamic Fashion Way*, 1969; *Runaway Girl*, 1976; *Wake the Town, Wear You to the Ball*). Other pioneers of rapping were Dennis "Alcapone" Smith, with **Forever Version** (? 1971 - ? 1971), Prince Jazzbo and I Roy. Big Youth (Manley Buchanan) upped the ante with his wild sociopolitical raps (*S-90 Skank*, 1972; *The Killer*, 1973; *House Of Dread Locks*, 1975; *Every Nigger Is A Star*, 1976), most effectively on **Dreadlocks Dread** (? 1975 - ? 1975). Originally, the technique of these "toasters" consisted in remixing other people's songs, removing the original vocals, emphasizing the rhythmic base, and overdubbing their own rhyming stories on the resulting track.

The golden age of Reggae

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As reggae became a world attraction, styles multiplied and inbred with the USA genres.

[Burning Spear](#) (1), the project of Rastafarian visionary Winston Rodney, unleashed the supercharged **Marcus Garvey** (? 1975 - dec 1975), perhaps the highest artistic achievements of reggae music.

Joseph Hill's vocal trio Culture were equally passionate, and the title-track from **Two Sevens Clash** (? 1976 - ? 1977) became the anthem of the rasta-punks and coined "rockers reggae".

Ijahman Levi (Trevor Sutherland) was perhaps the most spiritual vocalist of his generation. His songs were religious hymns (*Jah Heavy Lord*, 1975; *I'm A Levi*, 1978; *Are We A Warrior*, 1978).

Ex-Wailers [Peter Tosh](#), or Winston Hubert McIntosh, crossed over into rock territory with **Legalize It** (may 1976 - ? 1976).

Other popular classics include Junior Marvin's *Police And Thieves* (1976) and Gregory Isaacs' *Love Is Overdue* (1974).

Salsa 1973-78

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In 1973 the "son" of Cuba, a dance that borrowed the African rhythm "rumba", was renamed "salsa" for a television special (by Izzy Sanabria of Fania Records, the equivalent of Motown for Latin music). In Puerto Rico salsa is also known as "guaguanco", a term that originally referred to a kind of rumba dance. Larry

Harlow's orchestra rediscovered the fusion of charanga violins and conjunto trumpets (with the addition of electric instruments) on his milestone recording **Salsa** (nov 1973 - mar 1974) with vocalist Junior Gonzalez. The 1976 concert "Salsa" organized in New York by the label Fania launched the fad nation-wide. In the 1970s, the main centers for salsa were New York, Miami, and Colombia.

[Ruben Blades](#), who had become Willie Colon's main composer after *El Cazangero* (1975), contaminated salsa with rock'n'roll and political issues on **Siembra** (jun 1978 - oct 1978), that contains *Pedro Navaja* and became the best-selling salsa album of all times.

In Venezuela, Angel Canales coined a jazzy trombone-driven kind of salsa on **Angel Canales And Sabor** (? 1975 - ? 1975), while Cuban-born Roberto Torres was the defender of the tradition, and in New York veterans of Eddie Palmieri's orchestra formed Libre to play a more aggressive and jazzy kind of salsa, documented on **Con Salsa Con Ritmo** (? 1974 - ? 1976).

The "voice" of salsa was Hector Lavoe', Colon's vocalist, whose best album was **Comedia** (oct 1977 - nov 1977), featuring the anthemic *El Cantante*, written by Blades and arranged by Colon.

The new sound of salsa owed to people like ubiquitous Puerto Rican trumpeter Luis "Perico" Ortiz and producer Louie Ramirez, whose album **A Different Shade Of Black** (? 1976 - ? 1976) is credited with crossing over to pop music.

Other notable salsa hits of the 1970s were: Jose "Cheo" Feliciano's *El Raton* (1964), the first big hit of salsa when revived in 1974, Celia Cruz's *Quimbara* (1974), Eddie Palmieri's *Vamonos Pal Monte* (1976), *Lloraras* (1975), by Venezuelan combo Dimension Latina, featuring vocalist Oscar D'Leon, who later formed Salsa Mayor. However, salsa was becoming a very vague term, as New York's group Tipica 73 proved on albums such as **La Candela** (? 1975 - ? 1975), which is really a mixture of Latin dance rhythms.

New York's singer Henry Fiol used a traditional Cuban conjunto, Saoco, to sing the urban songs of **Siempre Sere Guajiro** (? 1975 - ? 1976).

In the 1970s, a new dance was added to the Latin recipe: the Dominican Republic's merengue, yet another by-product of the Cuban habanera. The origins of the meringue actually go back centuries (it was already mentioned in writings of 1875), and the style can be said to have existed since at least the 1930s, and popularized by Angel Vilorio in the 1950s. Wilfrido Vargas, whose *El Barbarazo* (1978) was considered a watershed event, Johnny Ventura, Cuco Valoy, Jossie Esteban, July Mateo and Francisco Ulloa were among the trend-setters of the 1980s.

During the 1960s, Trinidad coined a mixture of calypso and soul ("soul-calypso") that during the 1970s targeted the discos. It was pioneered by Garfield "Lord Shorty" Blackman's *Soul Calypso Music* (1973), Winston "Mighty Shadow" Bailey' *Bass Man* (1974), Cecil "Maestro" Hume's *Savage* (1976), and Aldwyn "Lord Kitchener" Roberts' *Sugar Bum Bum* (1978), the first world-wide hit of soca. Winston "Mighty Shadow" Bailey's **If I Coulda I Woulda I Shoulda** (? 1979 - ? 1979) and Austin "Blue Boy" Lyons's **Soca In The Shaolin Temple** (? 1980 - ? 1981) solidified the genre's appeal to disco-goers.

Calypso itself was torn between the revolutionary pressure coming from David

Rudder, whose **The Hammer** (? 1986 ? 1986) was influenced by pop and soul, and the conservative attitude of Leroy "Black Stalin" Calliste, whose **Caribbean Man** (? 1979 - ? 1979) harked back to the classics.

Colombia's Grupo Niche, led by guiro player Jairo Varela, played big-band multi-vocal salsa on **Querer Es Poder** (? 1981 - ? 1981).

Afro-rock 1970-76

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In the 1960s the soul and rock music of the USA spread in Ghana, and in 1971 the "Soul to Soul" festival helped bridge the worlds of USA black popular music and of Ghana's highlife, thus returning the supremacy to guitar-based bands: Nana Kwame Ampadu's African Brothers International Band, that cut *Ebi Tie Ye* (1967), Okukuseku, Noble Kings, Ashanti Brothers, Nana Ampadu, City Boys, Hi-Life International. In Nigeria, the most influential highlife bands included: Rex Lawson's Mayors Dance Band, Celestine Ukwu's Philosophers National, Osita Osadere's Soundmakers International, Oriental Brothers International Band, Orlando Owoh's Omimah Band, Oliver Akanite de Coque's Expo '76 Ogene Super Sounds. The fad of Afro-rock started with a group from Ghana based in London, Osibisa, formed by Teddy Osei that struck gold with *Music for Gong Gong* (1970) and *Sunshine Day* (1976). Highlife was then quickly corrupted by rock, reggae and hip-hop. Notable albums of the 1970s included **Party Time With CeeKay** (? 1973 - ? 1973) by Charles Kofi Mann and **The Kusum Beat** (? 1976 - ? 1976) by Alfred Benjamin Crentsil's Sweet Talks. In Nigeria, Nico Mbarga's *Sweet Mother* (1976) was a turning point in the fusion of highlife and makossa. In the 1980s Ghanaian acts George Darko and the Lumba Brothers (Charles "Daddy Lumba" Fosu and Nana "Lover Boy" Acheampong) who had emigrated to Germany launched a brief local fad, "burgher highlife".

Nigeria, the most populous country of the African continent, was soon at the vanguard of world-music.

Nigerian saxophonist, pianist and vocalist [Fela Anikulapo Kuti](#) (4) coined a new style of music (Afro-beat) by combining James Brown's funk music, highlife and jazz. In 1966 he joined the Highlife Jazz Band. In 1968, after visiting the USA and being influenced by the "black power" movement, he also added sociopolitical lyrics. Persecuted by the Nigerian government, he became the voice of the oppressed. At his best, Kuti concocts lengthy improvised jams of bebop saxophone lines, Frank Zappa-esque horn fanfares, call-and-response vocals, and wild polyrhythms led by Tony Allen's spectacular drumming. His recordings include: **London Scene** (? 1970 - ? 1970), still very derivative of James Brown, **Gentleman** (? 1973 - ? 1973), one of his most popular albums, **Zombie** (? 1976 - ? 1977), **Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense** (? 1986 - ? 1986), **Overtake Don Overtake Overtake** (jun 1989 - ? 1990).

Nigeria (particularly the Yoruba region) is also the homeland of juju music, the African equivalent of USA's folk-rock: tribal polyrhythm wed to electric guitars. In the 1920s juju music was born (like the blues) as a music of the rural poor, but in 1958 Isaiah Kehinde Dairo began to transform it into an urban phenomenon, and in 1960 he introduced accordion into the ensemble.

[Ebenezer Obey](#) (1) further modernized juju by drawing on highlife, and his

lengthy jams (underpinning a spiritual longing) turned it into an exercise in trance, for example on **Mo Tun Gbe De** (? 1973 - ? 1973).

On the surface, the intricate dance suites of Nigerian juju vocalist and guitarist "[King Sunny Ade](#)" (1) simply wed African percussion, call-and-response singing and western-style arrangements of guitars and synthesizers. But, often, the roles of guitarists and percussionists were swapped, as the latter drove the melody and the former drove the rhythm. The production emphasized the techniques of Jamaican dub, and sonic details often harked back to other ethnic traditions, such as the twang of country music. Ade's stylistic mixture reached maturity on **Juju Music** (? 1982 - jun 1982).

Later, juju fused with other styles (both African and western) in the work of Dele Abiodun, who came of age with **Beginning Of A New Era** (? 1981 - ? 1981), and Segun Adewale's Superstars International, that reached their best synthesis on **Endurance** (? 1982 - ? 1982).

The Yoruba region's "fuji" music is closely related to Islam, although its origins are purely African. It is performed by ensembles of vocalists and percussionists. During the 1970s, the style was popularized by Sikiru "Barrister" Ayinde, Ayinya Kollington and child prodigy Salawa Abeni.

In the meantime, Cameroon's saxophonist [Manu Dibango](#) (1), who became famous thanks to the proto-disco groove of *Soul Makossa* (1972), fused African rhythms and melodies with reggae, notably on **Gone Clear** (? 1979 - ? 1980), and funk, notably on **Waka Juju** (? 1981 - ? 1982).

Dibango started a vogue for makossa (basically, highlife with a steady rhythm), that from Cameroon spread to nearby countries. In Ivory Coast, singer-songwriter Tou-Kone Daouda fused soukous and makossa on **Mon Cour Balance**, later reworked as **Le Sentimental '83** (? 1978 - ? 1978). Pierre Akendengue's **Nandipo** (? 1974 - ? 1974) combined western and African instruments and confronted sociopolitical issues.

Joseph Shabalala's [Ladysmith Black Mambazo](#) was a South African vocal group that specializes in the a-cappella harmonies called "mbube" (and its more refined version "isicathamiya") that originated in the golden mines of South Africa. The early albums, such as **Ukusindiswa** (may 1976 - ? 1977) and **Umthombo Wamanzi** (may 1982 - jun 1982), focused on call-and-response structures.

Possibly the greatest of the South-African groaners (sarcastic singers in a croaking/growling/roaring register), [Simon "Mahlathini" Nkabinde](#) (1) created an exuberant brand of mbaqanga music on albums such as **Phezulu Eghudeni**, also known as **Putting on the Light** (? - ? 1975), backed by female singers the Mahotella Queens (heirs to the "smodern" tradition, which was a sort of Tamla soul adapted to Zulu's polyphonic choirs) and boasting the rock instrumental arrangements of producer, saxophonist and pennywhistle player West Nkosi (leader of the Makgona Tsohle Band with Marks Mankwane on guitar).

White singer-songwriter Johnny Clegg collaborated with South African black musician Sipho Mchunu to form Juluka, whose **Scatterlings** (? 1982 - ? 1982) was South Africa's version of folk-rock, and then formed Savuka to craft the more cosmopolitan mix of **Third World Child** (? 1986 - ? 1986).

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