Chapter 2
Hitsville: Writing a Hit Song

Making a living from composing music has never been easy. F. M. Scherer [124] has painstakingly made estimates of the income of the classical composers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mozart was not wealthy and wrote a voluminous amount of music. Scherer found, for the evidence available for 23 composers, that the top two accounted for 44% of the wealth of all of the composers in the group. Franz Schubert and Mozart died in debt. In fact, when compared with other art forms like painting or sculpture, composers earned far less. In the early 1700s, under the influence of the Lutheran religion, musicians attained a higher status and influence in Germany than elsewhere in the world at the time ([39], p. 133). By the late eighteenth century, they were able to attain a steady income from compositions and performances ([39], p. 138). Most well-known composers of the period distributed their work through sheet music which provided a considerable portion of their total income ([39], p. 140).

The economics of songwriting are quite interesting because they differ from that of most markets for goods and services. Songwriting is really a market for ideas—intellectual property. We are all familiar with tangible, physical goods whose supply is limited because real physical resources are required in their production. But what is required for songwriting? Certainly a basic language skill and musical ability, but beyond this, virtually anyone can potentially be a songwriter. Perhaps the most fundamental change in creating music that has occurred over the Rock and Roll Era is that no longer is there a specialization in composing music or writing lyrics. Evidence of this is that more artists "do it all" when it comes to creating music: compose the music, write lyrics, produce the recording, and so on. This also means that the number of artists credited with writing a particular song has also risen. Consider the case of Kelly Clarkson who won the first season of *American Idol* in 2002. Her debut album went double platinum and her second album went six times platinum. However, she was forced to cancel her original tour in support of her third album. Instead of large venues and a summer-long tour, she had a shortened fall tour. What was the problem? Her previous smash album *Breakaway* contained songs she co-wrote with experienced songwriters. Kelly decided that she wanted to write most of the songs on the album *My December*. Clark's decline in sales led Clive Davis, one of the most successful producers and promoters in the industry, to comment that

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singers shouldn't try to be songwriters. Davis' argument is that to be really good at something requires your full attention and effort. You can't be expected to be the best at two things. A lot of musicians are actors, but how many are in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame who also won Academy Awards? Cher is the only name that comes to mind.

In a blog, John Cougar Mellankamp [102] expressed the dilemma of the artist who tries to do everything:

> These days, some people suggest that it is up to the artist to create avenues to sell the music of his own creation. In today's environment, is it realistic to expect someone to be a songwriter, recording artist, record company and the P.T. Barnum, so to speak, of his own career? Of course not.

Has this change in the creation of music resulted in a decrease in productivity—more songwriters needed to create a number one hit? The implications of the decline of specialization is the focus of this chapter. This chapter reviews the history of songwriting in the USA from colonial times with a focus on the production process, i.e., the putting together of music and lyrics to create a song. The most important factors in this evolution are changes in technology and the structure of compensation for composers.

2.1 The Rise of the Popular Song in the USA

The earliest songs that are considered American popular music were all songs where words were added to existing melodies. If you could presume the tunes were well known, creating new words made the song accessible to a wider group. According to Isaac Goldberg, the first popular song in the American Colonies was the "Liberty Song" which was published in the *Boston Gazette* on July 18, 1768 ([68], p. 17). The words were written by John Dickinson of Delaware and inspired by the Massachusetts Legislature's effort to rescind the imposition of duties and taxes by England. Though the lyrics were original, the music was taken from a song written in England in 1759 ([68], p. 18). One of the oldest "American" songs still known today is "Yankee Doodle" [6]. This song was written by a British army surgeon Richard Shuckburgh in September 1755 at Fort Crailo, NY, set to the "Doodle-doo" song from "The Beggar's Opera" by John Gay composed in 1728. The song was sung by the British troops during the Revolutionary War with new lyrics to ridicule Colonial leaders such as John Hancock. The American militia began to play the song and added anti-British lyrics:

> Yankee Doodle is the tune,
> That we all delight in;
> It suits for feasts, it suits for fun,
> And just as well for fighting!

This established a connection between war and popular music that would continue in US history. The "Star-Spangled Banner" which Francis Scott Key wrote as a poem during the War of 1812, was put to the familiar tune of a British drinking song of the Anacreonic Society, a drinking club based in a pub in the Strand, London [74].

The production process of popular music was thus established: the tune is created first, and then lyrics are written to fit the tune. As Goldberg notes, this was precisely the method of production used later in Tin Pan Alley—write the music, then the lyrics ([68], p. 19).

When did the first American tunes appear? Though the music of the northern states was dominated by religious music from England, the southern states imported their music under quite different arrangements: slavery. It is no exaggeration to say that the music we think of as "American" music had its origins in the melodies sung by slaves in the southern states. However, the story is not one of African–American songwriters given credit for their songs, rather, white composers took the tunes, wrote lyrics, and popularized the songs. The mode of performance of the original American music was the minstrel show. Though not the originator of minstrel shows, Stephan F. Foster is the most recognized American composer who wrote his tunes in the mid-nineteenth century for minstrel shows where whites, often in blackface, sang his songs. The list of songs he wrote would be familiar to most Americans today: "Swanee River," "De Camptown Races," "My Old Kentucky Home," among others. These songs were all written for minstrel shows. Though the state of Kentucky adopted "My Old Kentucky Home" as the state song, the lyrics were changed to omit what we would now view as lyrics offensive to African–Americans.

There was not much protection for songwriters in the nineteenth century in the USA, but it was not a totally *laissez faire* system. In Article I, Section 8 of the US Constitution copyright is given "To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries." The Copyright Act of 1790 focused on books, charts, and maps. At the time, the primary means of accessing music compositions was through sheet music.

In the period prior to recorded sound, a songwriter or songwriters composed the music, wrote the lyrics, and then split the royalties on sheet music sales with a music publisher. "Jobbers" or "pluggers" were employed by the music publishing companies to persuade singers to perform their songs. The possibility of recorded song, which began with the player piano, continued with the rise of the phonograph. Radio in the 1920s was also to play an important role, though it was reported in a *New York Times* article of May 29, 1908 that the music instrument producers argued at the time that the such technological advances as radio were a means to increase sheet music sales [139].

2.2 Tin Pan Alley

Though there was American music from colonial days, it is with the beginning of Tin Pan Alley in the 1890s that we see the rise of modern popular music as we know it in the USA today. Prior to recorded sound, people had musical instruments at home. The piano was quite popular, but there were other instruments such as guitars. Some towns even had bands composed of local citizens. The way composers profited from their songs was primarily through the sale of sheet music. The establishment of Tin Pan Alley in Manhattan was driven by the desire of songwriters to sell their output

Table 2.1 Top pop music songwriters, 1945

Writer	Titles	Specialization
Sammy Cahn	23	Lyrics
Johnny Mercer	21	Performer, lyrics
Jule Styne	19	Music
Oscar Hammerstein	11	Lyrics
Richard Rodgers	11	Music
Harold Arlen	11	Music
Jimmy Van Heusen	10	Music
Irving Berlin	9	Lyrics/music
Johnny Burke	9	Lyrics
Harry Warren	8	Music/lyrics
Moe Jaffe	7	Music/lyrics/bandleader
Sunny Skylar	6	Performer, composer, lyricist, publisher

Source: Whitburn 2002 [150]

to the public for profit. One of the popular music pioneers and Tin Pan Alley founders was Charles K. Harris who began his songwriting career by opening an office in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with the sign outside his door reading: "Songs written to order" ([68], p. 92). A lyricist added words to music created by a composer, and thus two individuals were involved in the writing of a song. Table 2.1 shows the top songwriters for 1945 who typically wrote for Broadway shows and were very much in the Tin Pan Alley mold. For the most part, they were songwriters who specialized in either writing lyrics or composing music and were not producers or performers. The only exception was Johnny Mercer who was both a performer and a songwriter while Sunny Skylar was a performer, composer, lyricist, and publisher.

Producing sheet music required someone to score the song and then have it printed up. This was the function of music publishing companies. The songwriter could sell all rights to the song to the publishing company for a fixed fee or else the songwriter and the publishing company could make arrangements to share the revenue from selling the sheet music. These revenues were called royalties. Three of Foster's most popular songs, including "My Old Kentucky Home," were sold for $50 ([68], p. 45). Selling the song for a fixed price may not be a good economic decision in a world with an elaborate copyright protection scheme, but it probably makes some sense in the nineteenth century because of the costs involved in trying to collect further payments from anyone who might produce sheet music of his songs or perform them live. It is also likely that Foster sold his song for much less than what he could have earned if he had been able to collect royalties on his composition. The institutional structure of the music industry was undeveloped and there were clearly problems in the market for songwriting.

Though the split between songwriter and music publisher could potentially be whatever the two parties agreed to, a "rule of thumb" rate was to have a fifty–fifty

split of royalties and this rate became institutionalized [106]. Was this a *fair* split? If you were a new and unknown songwriter, 50% might be pretty good. However, if you had written a few hit songs, you could probably negotiate a better split. With the passage of the Copyright Act of 1909, composers could earn royalties from the sale of records in addition to the sale of sheet music.

Prior to the digital and Internet revolution, the focus on making it in rock and roll music was to earn royalties on the sale of recorded music. This royalty income largely replaced the royalty income from sheet music, which had been the main source of income. For most of the era of recorded music the compensation for those involved in music production was well established. Songwriters and music publishers received performance royalties—these are paid whenever a composition is performed in public and mechanical royalties went to artists and labels based on records sold—whether these were vinyl records, reel-to-reel tapes, cassette tapes, or compact disks (CDs).

In the typical contract, mechanical royalties were split among band members after the costs of recording and touring were deducted. Since each song used on an album must be licensed and performance royalties paid the music publishing company distributed the funds to the songwriter. Radio paid performance royalties to the song writer and publishing company but not to the artists and record companies. Performance royalties were also paid whenever the song was performed in public.

The process of producing a song for a record involved a division of labor. Songwriters wrote for singers and a producer was in charge of recording. Everyone had their assigned tasks and the reward structure was set in place. The royalty payment to the music company was intended to cover their costs in promoting the song and they employed song "pluggers" to perform this function. Songwriters were generally not singers. The singers came into the studio, performed the music under a billed-by-the-hour time constraint. Producers got a royalty cut on the records or a flat fee for operating the recording equipment.

The model for songwriting production in the 1950s and 1960s was, like the Tin Pan Alley model, one of songwriting teams—usually two or three people. For example, in the 1950s there was the songwriting team Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller, and in the 1960s there was John Lennon and Paul McCartney. Producers were occasionally also songwriters or owned music publishing companies, but more typical was the case of George Martin who was not given songwriting credits on The Beatles' songs, nor did he own The Beatles' music publishing company. However, as can be seen in Table 2.2, songwriters by 1965 were frequently also performers. The Beatles and Bob Dylan are prominent examples, though songwriting teams, such as Holland-Dozier-Holland (HDH) who wrote songs for The Supremes and others, were still important.

What introduced changes to this compensation structure was the cost of reproducing a recording fell—close to zero with the MP3 format—and also distribution costs fell with the expansion of the Internet globally. While the songwriters and publishing companies continued to flourish, the artists and labels saw their revenue decline dramatically with the rise of Napster and illegal downloading of MP3 files.

Table 2.2 Top pop music songwriters, 1965

Writer	Titles	Comments
Eddie Holland	13	Writing team HDH
Lamont Dozier	11	Writing team HDH
Brian Holland	11	Writing team HDH
Smokey Robinson	13	Performer
Warren Moore	9	Songwriting team
Bob Dylan	9	Performer
John Lennon	10	Writing Team L/M, performer
Paul McCartney	10	Writing Team L/M, performer
Roger Miller	7	Performer
Sonny Bono	7	Performer
Curtis Mayfield	12	Performer
Wes Farrell	8	Lyrics/music
Tony Hatch	7	Lyrics/music

Source: Whitburn 2006b [152]

2.3 Songwriters in the Digital Age

How have songwriters adapted in the Digital Age? Increasingly artists are vertically integrated firms, i.e., they are involved at every stage of music production from songwriting to producing to distributing. For those who think of popular songwriting teams such as Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, or John Lennon and Paul McCartney, it may seem puzzling to learn that in recent years the average number of co-writers for a popular song has increased significantly beyond two (see Fig. 2.1). As an example, Mariah Carey's *Billboard* top single of 2005 "We Belong Together" lists ten co-writers. Why does it now take ten people to achieve a number one song when it took one or two people in the past? This would appear to be a decline in productivity of songwriters. A corollary of this change is that increasingly songwriters do not specialize in songwriting but are also frequently performers and producers (see Table 2.1). In the case of "We Belong Together," the large number of songwriters is a result of both the use of sampling or interpolating (use of parts of previously recorded songs) and giving the producer songwriting credits.

Consider the Top 10 songwriters for 2005 in Table 2.3. Songwriters today can be compared with songwriters in the Tin Pan Alley era (Table 2.1), who, as noted, were mostly specialized in writing either lyrics or music and with the singer/songwriters of the 1960s (Table 2.2). Whereas previously the producer's income typically depended upon physical sales of records, today it depends upon the performance royalties of the copyrighted songs. This is important because songwriters have always received performance income, but producers have not. Primarily rap and hip-hop artists have brought about this change due to the digital revolution and music genre innovation (Fig. 2.1).

Is the use of nine co-writers by Mariah Carey evidence of a decline in the productivity of songwriters since it takes more songwriters to create a number one hit today than in the past? After all, it only took two people to write "I Want to Hold

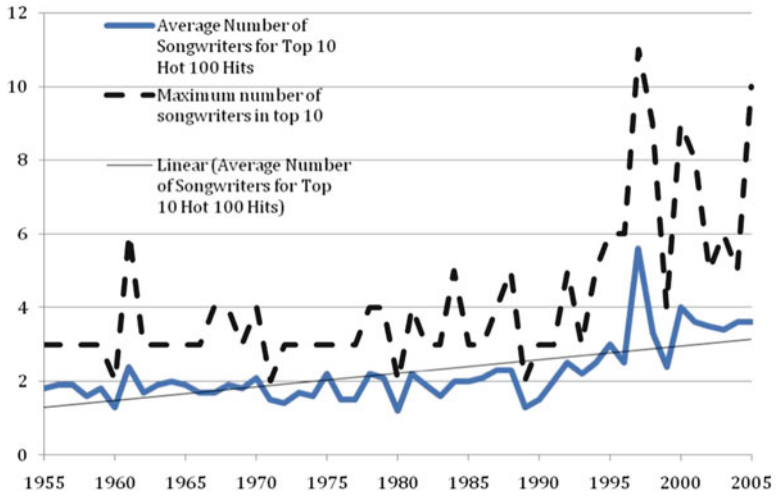


Fig. 2.1 Average number of songwriters for top 10 hot 100 hits, 1955–2005. *Source*: Whitburn 2006a [151]

Table 2.3 Top songwriters on the *Billboard* hot 100, 2005

Songwriter	Number of titles	Performer	Producer
Curtis J. Jackson, Jr. (50 Cent)	13	X	
Jermaine Dupri	8	X	X
Christopher Bridges (Ludacris)	6	X	
Scott Storch	7		X
Kanye West	9	X	X
Johnta Austin	5		X
Sean Garrett	6	X	X
Andre Young (Dr. Dre)	7	X	X
Mike Elizondo	6	X	X
Mark Batson	5		X
Mariah Carey	4	X	X
Jonathan H. "Lil Jon" Smith	6	X	X

Source: Whitburn 2006b [152]

Your Hand," the number one song of 1964 for The Beatles. A decline in productivity would be the explanation if no innovations had occurred since 1964. However, the increase in the number of co-writers on songs is driven by the innovation of sampling and impacted by the current structure of compensation in the music industry (mechanical royalties are declining while performance royalties are rising due to ringtones and so on).

In the Tin Pan Alley music production model, there was specialization in songwriting. Sammy Cahn, the top songwriter of 1945, wrote the lyrics to 23 top songs. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein together wrote 11 charting songs in the same year. In 1965, the songwriting team of HDH charted 11 hits together. None of these individuals were performing artists. Each specialized in writing lyrics or composing music. By 2005, the top songwriter Curtis L. Jackson, Jr. (50 Cent) wrote 13 charting songs, and he was also a performer. Eight of the nine remaining in the top ten were also producers and their average number of hit songs was six. The remaining artist who was not a producer was Ludacris, and he wrote six chartings songs as well.

Though economists since Adam Smith have thought that specialization and division of labor creates the greatest output, it appears that today performing artists can be songwriters and producers and be as successful as earlier songwriters in terms of charting hits. One change noted by Galenson [61] is that whereas the Tin Pan Alley songwriters wrote their best songs when they were in their thirties and forties, songwriters in the early rock period wrote their best songs when they were in their twenties, and this still appears true today.

2.4 Cover Songs

The emphasis early on in the recording industry was to focus on the "hit" record. In 1900, the top ten songs included two versions each by different artists of four songs. From Tin Pan Alley days to the early days of rock and roll, it was quite common for other artists to cover a hit song. Thus, Johnny Mercer might have a hit song and then Bing Crosby, Tommy Dorsey, or Judy Garland and others would cover it. The industry was dominated by "cover songs"—different versions of a song someone else had already recorded. It was obviously in the interest of the composer and the music publishing companies to sell as many records as possible, and this meant having as many artists and labels record and sell the song as possible. In the period from the beginning of recorded sound until the Rock and Roll Era in the 1950s, this is typically how the recording industry operated. The motivation for releasing cover versions through the first half of the twentieth century was clearly for more record companies and artists to earn income from a song that had been demonstrated to have popular appeal.

Does covering a song imply that it is better than other songs? Probably, if there are many cover versions. For example, in 1900, the number one song was "When You Were Sweet Sixteen" recorded by George J. Gaskin, a popular Irish tenor, on the Columbia label. It was on the charts for 10 weeks and peaked in November and remained number one for 8 weeks. This was a cover version because Jere Mahoney had released his version on Edison Records earlier in the year and it went to number one in April and remained number one for 5 weeks. The number two song of 1900, "Ma Tiger Lily" by Arthur Collins on Berliner Records was also a cover version of Jere Mahoney's version. Collins' version hit number one in September and remained number one for 6 weeks, while Mahoney's version on Edison had been number one

for 5 weeks in July. The number three song, "A Bird in a Gilded Cage" by Steve Porter on Columbia was number one in June for 6 weeks and then covered by Harry MacDonough on Edison Records whose version peaked at number two in October for 3 weeks. Though this pattern of established artists doing cover versions continued throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, it became less likely that cover versions of number one songs would also be number one. However, in 1947 "Peg O" My Heart' was a number one song for both The Harmonicats and Buddy Clark. In the same year, "Open the Door, Richard" was a number one for The Three Flames and Count Basie [149].

In 1955, a year which is a transition year to the Rock and Roll Era, three different versions of "The Ballad of David Crockett" made the *Billboard* charts. It was a number one hit for Bill Hayes for 5 weeks beginning in March, a number five hit for "Tennessee" Ernie Ford for 4 weeks beginning in May, and also a number five for 4 weeks beginning in May for Fess Parker, who played Davy Crockett in the Disney television show.

Though covering popular songs resulted in a very profitable industry, especially for songwriters and music publishing companies, it also meant that fewer new songs were introduced. The industry could be characterized as one that valued a steady income stream to songwriters and publishers and there was less innovation in popular music. Given the introduction of the lower cost recording studio in the post-World War II period, it could have been just an opportunity for independent record companies to do cheaper cover versions of the major recording companies' hits. What upset this structure was the rise of rock and roll, especially beginning with Elvis Presley and others in 1956. Presley was clearly the first artist to be different and innovative enough so that no one covered his songs in the same year. Presley's first charting song was "Heartbreak Hotel" in 1956.

Rock and roll was heavily influenced by the black artists in the rhythm and blues genre and one of Presley's best known songs "Hound Dog" was a cover of Big Mama Thornton's original version. Though few would give him the credit, Pat Boone played an important role in the rock and roll revolution. Boone's first charting song was "Two Hearts," a song that went to number eight on the R&B charts for The Charms in 1955. On May 14, 1955, Fats Domino debuted "Ain't that a Shame" on the R&B charts, and it went to number one and stayed on the charts for 26 weeks. On July 9, 1955, Pat Boone released his version of "Ain't that a Shame," and it became his first number one song and remained on the charts for 20 weeks. Boone's releases from 1955 to 1958 were mostly covers, many of them of songs originally by black artists, but he also covered Glenn Miller and Frank Sinatra, among others. Boone's career was one characterized as almost always doing cover songs—some going back to the early part of the twentieth century. In 1997, Boone released his first album in many years, and it contained covers of heavy metal songs. Pat Boone was not a songwriter, he was a singer.

Though some accused Boone and his record company, Dot, of "ripping off" black artists, in fact what Boone's cover versions did was bring black artists recognition to teenagers, and especially white teenagers. Thus the function of cover songs in the early years of rock and roll were to expand the opportunities for the original artists and ultimately helped artists like Little Richard achieve great success on the charts.

2.5 The Beatles Change the Cover Song Game

Boone and Presley were by no means the only artists in the Rock and Roll Era to use cover songs. Though The Beatles were unusual in the early 1960s in writing most of their songs, they too did cover versions when they recorded their first albums. The Beatles covered not only black artists, but also early singer/songwriters such as Buddy Holly. However, something different happens when it came to covers of The Beatles' songs. The Beatles' "Hey Jude" was covered more times than any other *Billboard* number one song from 1946 to 2008. It has been covered 58 times, while Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge over Troubled Waters" has been covered 42 times. The number three most covered was The Beatles song "I Want to Hold Your Hand," which was the number one *Billboard* song for 1964, was covered 24 times that year and at least 16 more times since then. Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel" has been covered 29 times and ranks fourth.

This is reminiscent of what happened in the Tin Pan Alley days, but what is different beginning with The Beatles is that there are many more cover versions, but few of them make the charts. Only two cover versions of "Hey Jude" made the charts at number 23 (Wilson Pickett) and number 119 by Paul Mauriat, both in the year following the release of The Beatles' original in 1968. Only one cover version of "I Want to Hold Your Hand" charted and that was the Boston Pops Orchestra with Arthur Fielder conducting and peaking at number 55. There is no doubt that this splurge of cover versions of The Beatles was an attempt to appropriate profits for other artists and labels, as it also enriched Lennon/McCartney and their publishing company.

The Beatles represent the start of a new approach to music—one where artists and labels would take greater risk in order to try to replicate the phenomenal success of The Beatles. This is why 1964 is such a landmark year. Henceforth, instead of focusing on stability of income and familiarity with tunes, the emphasis would be on finding something new, and that often meant finding a new artist.

But how do you replicate the success of The Beatles? One could argue that John, Paul, George and Ringo as Beatle phenomena had some characteristics of a "Black Swan Event"—a huge unexpected band with an enormous impact but one that has not really been explained to date. No one in any era can compare to the artistic and commercial accomplishments of The Beatles. It resulted in an even greater emphasis on the hit song and consequently led to recording companies investing more in finding new superstars.

Though popular artists continue to do cover versions, the fact that in general they did not do better than the original indicates that with the arrival of The Beatles the focus shifts from the uniqueness of the songs to the uniqueness of the artist. There are, of course, exceptions such as Whitney Houston's 1992 version of "I Will Always Love You" which went to number one. Dolly Parton's original was released in 1974 but did not make the top 100 and charted again in 1982 at number 53. Houston's version was featured in a movie and Houston was at the peak of her popularity on the pop charts in the early 1990s. But covers can also

involve innovation. An example would be Jimi Hendrix's version of Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower."

2.6 Cover Songs in the Digital Age: Sampling and Interpolating

Covering songs by other artists has a long tradition in the music industry and it continues to the present, but with interesting innovations. I discovered an interesting example of this innovation while perusing the *Billboard* Hot 100 one week in the spring of 2010. I came upon a song that intrigued me because of the list of co-writers for the song. The title of the song was "Lemonade" and the artist was Gucci Mane, a rap artist whose real name was Radric Davis. I didn't know much about him, except that he was currently in jail. Listed as co-writers of the song were S. Crawford, his producer and two other names that someone who learned to play the guitar in the mid-1960s would likely recognize: J. H. Kaylan and M. Volman. The latter two co-writers were none other than Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman who were the lead singers for The Turtles in the 1960s and who later joined Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention under the pseudonyms of Flo and Eddie. The Turtles doing rap music? How could this be? It turns out that Mane had taken the melody from a Flo and Eddie song written in the 1970s, "Keep it Warm" and used it for his chorus. What was even more amusing were the lyrics to the Flo and Eddie song. Where Mane sang "Lemon in the shade with my feet up," Flo and Eddie's lyrics were "Money in the bank to keep us warm." The first verse of the Flo and Eddie song was about the need to write songs that would generate royalties over time. It looks like they succeeded.

The use of sampling or interpolating is quite common in current songwriting in all genres, though it originated with rap music. What does this say about contemporary songwriting? Is Mane less of a songwriter because he "ripped off" Flo and Eddie? Or is his use of an obscure song a creative innovation in songwriting? The fact is, Mane had a charting song and Flo and Eddie earned royalties. Is very unlikely that anyone would be unhappy with this situation. Of course, had Mane not given credit to Flo and Eddie, it would be quite a different story.

Contemporary popular music has always used an element of older musical styles, regardless of the time period. In the early days of Tin Pan Alley, popular songs were sung by different artists. The innovation was in the interpretation of the song given by different artists. Many of the early rock and roll songs were new versions of older rhythm and blues songs. Though The Beatles were undoubtedly the most unique songwriters, even Lennon and McCartney were influenced by earlier styles and the fact that their producer, George Martin, was able to bring to their recordings his experience with recording other genres of music. If one listens to "For the Benefit of Mr. Kite" or "When I'm Sixty-four" from *Sgt. Pepper's* the influence of earlier musical styles can be clearly heard. Lennon's "In My Life" is distinctive for its use of the harpsichord, an instrument that would have been found in music written by Mozart.

Innovation is about creating something new from something old. Not only is this found in songwriting, but this is in fact a defining characteristic of musical eras. The future always builds on the past. It was true in Bing Crosby's era in the early twentieth century, and it is true today for the Black Eyed Peas or any other group in popular music. It definitely does not mean that the music of Gucci Mane in and of itself is any less "real" music than that of Frank Sinatra. Innovation in music style will be explored further in the next chapter.



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