

## Recitation D

### **The Story of Rock**

Rock music is popular in the United States and is loved by people all over the world. But what are the origins of rock music? Where did it come from?

Popular music in the United States developed from two sets of influences. The first was the traditional music of Africans who were brought to America as slaves to work on the plantations. They were not allowed to use their traditional musical instruments, so they adapted their African music and created rhythmical work songs. Later, when those slaves became Christians, they developed gospel music based on African musical patterns. The second great influence on American popular music was European. Immigrants to the United States brought their own folk music and musical instruments with them across the Atlantic.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, these two great musical traditions came together as jazz and other popular musical styles. Later, the black work songs of the rural South spread to the northern cities, and developed into rhythm and blues. This was the beginning of “rock ’n’ roll.” Rock ’n’ roll became popular with American teenagers in the 1950s. Today we associate rock music equally with black and white musicians, but the earlier form of rock ’n’ roll was popularized by white singers such as Elvis Presley. These musicians took the rhythm and blues songs, which had been originally performed by black musicians such as Chuck Berry. The great blues singer Muddy Waters once said, “Rhythm and blues had a baby, and they called it “rock ’n’ roll.”

Many musicians have now developed rock music further by mixing together various other popular musical styles including reggae and rap. Above all, African American music provides the basis of popular music even today.

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