

GARAGE SOUL

The Garage rock genre is often associated with bands like the Kingsmen, The Trashmen, Paul Revere and The Raiders and The Sonics.

This is raw, raunchy and wild rock'n'roll that began in the USA and Canada in the early 60s, before the invasion of the British beat- and R&B-groups headed by The Beatles, Stones, Animals, Kinks and Yardbirds.

This era ended when rock music turned psychedelic towards the end of the 60s, (and the album format knocked out the 45).

Garage rock has had many revivals since then, the latest one starting in the 90s when Sweden's The Hives and a string of Detroit-based groups spearheaded by the White Stripes began making noise.

Most of the original garage bands did covers of black Rhythm & Blues artists from the 50- and the 60's. The songs were uptempo and one of the main influences was the late great Bo Diddley (who passed June 2 this year), who spiced his characteristic Latin American-Caribbean jungle – mambo beat with the sound of maracas, an ingredient many of the 60's garage rockers exchanged for the use of tambourines.

Rock'n'roll icon and Detroit native Iggy Pop is an illustration of Bo Diddley's importance as a prime mover for both garage rock and later on, punk. Diddley was extremely important for

Iggy, who recorded Bo Diddley's "Mona" with his band the Iguanas in 1966, the year that is regarded as the peak year of early garage rock with American bands imitating the way the Stones, the Pretty Things and the Yardbirds played R&B.

Garage music's inspirations include Bo Diddley's foot-loose call and response refrains and intense vocals in an R&B tradition of uptempo screamers and shouters, originating in Little Richard's "Good Golly Miss Molly", continued by Larry Williams' "Dizzy Miss Lizzie", James Brown's "Good Good Lovin'", The Isley Brothers' "Shout", Barry Strong's "Money", The Contours' "Do You Love Me", Nathaniel Mayers' "Village Of Love", Nat Kendrick & The Swans' "Mashed Potatoes", Bobby Bland's "Turn On Your Lovelight", Otis Reddings' "Shout Bamalama", Wilson Pickett's "Land Of Thousands Dances" and most of his 60's-recordings. The only white one in this group would have to be Lonnie Mack, who with his gospel trained voice and Magnatone-fired tremolo-guitar defined soul à la garage. The guitar rather than horns or keyboards is the instrument that echoes the garage soul-singer in call-response fashion, and this is the reason why black gospel from the early 60's is an all important garage soul influence.

Check out the Staple Singers with Pop Staples on magical tremolo guitar. Many of their 60's recordings can be called original garage soul, with a melodic foundation in the 50's rock and roll, but with a vocal technique and call and response pattern from gospel music. The Stones took their cues for "The Last Time" from The Staples.

Today's garage rockers borrow from soul veterans like Andre Williams and Nathaniel Mayer, and have even recorded albums with these artists on record labels like Sympathy For The Record Industry, In The Red, Fat Possum and Alive.

The music of the different garage and retro bands on these labels can be loosely classified as garage soul, depending on the kind of musical sources and cover songs that inform their music.

The Detroit-scene has always been hotbed of black music, ever since John Lee Hooker recorded "Boogie Chillun" there in 1948 and up through the heyday of Fortune and Tamla Motown. Meanwhile white kids learnt from, like the aforementioned Iggy Pop. Another is one of the first blueeyed soul artists, Mitch Ryder, who with his band The Detroit Wheels reached the Billboard Hot 100, in 1966, with an explosive, melodic and guitar driven soul sound, that can be called early white garage soul.

Today Detroit's The Dirtbombs could be said to carry on an aggressive blend of punk and soul music, whereas The Detroit Cobras are today's leading garage soul-band, specialising in a classy repertoire of obscure covers from the 50s and 60s. With vocalist Rachel Nagy and guitarist Mary Ramirez in front, they represent a style that combines classic 60's girl group image from the Shangri La's with influences from tough and raw R&B and Soul in the style of The Five Royales, Irma Thomas and early Ike and Tina Turner.

Ready to join these ranks are Norwegian R&Bveterans Good Time Charlie who go for a lot of raunch and soul in their 25th year as a band. Inventive as ever they serve up a heady mixture on this aptly titled Mojo Energy-album – straight from the garage!

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