

1957 STILL ROCKIN'



TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

The
ROCK'N'ROLL
ERA

Digital Remaster

1957 STILL ROCKIN'

- 1 **That'll Be the Day** The Crickets
- 2 **Diana** Paul Anka
- 3 **Black Slacks**
Joe Bennett and the Sparkletones
- 4 **Blue Monday** Fats Domino
- 5 **Raunchy** Bill Justis
- 6 **Be Bop Baby** Ricky Nelson
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- 8 **The Stroll** The Diamonds
- 9 **Buzz-Buzz-Buzz** The Hollywood Flames
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Jimmy Bowen with the Rhythm Orchids
- 11 **I'm Sorry** The Platters
- 12 **Rock & Roll Music** Chuck Berry

- 13 **Lotta Lovin'** Gene Vincent
- 14 **Jenny, Jenny** Little Richard
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Clarence "Frogman" Henry
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Clyde McPhatter

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COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

2RNR-17
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6 Be Bop Baby 7 Lucille 8 The Stroll 9 Buzz-Buzz-Buzz 10 I'm
Stickin' with You 11 I'm Sorry 12 Rock & Roll Music 13 Lotta Lovin'
14 Jenny, Jenny 15 Ain't Got No Home 16 Hula Love 17 Just
Because 18 Whispering Bells 19 Bony Moronie 20 Rockin'
Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu 21 Sittin' in the
Balcony 22 Without Love (There Is Nothing)

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Joe Bennett and the Sparkletones practice what they play, wearing a dressed-up variety of black slacks.

1957: STILL ROCKIN'

Throughout 1955, Elvis Presley blazed across the Deep South and the Southwest in a road-weary pink Cadillac, turning in the wildest performances of his career. Then billed as "the Hillbilly Cat," Presley was patenting a new style called rockabilly, which carried all the cathartic power one would expect from this potent mixture of white country music and black rhythm and blues. Country stars Ferlin Husky and Faron Young, who performed with Elvis, were openly jealous of the hysterical screams induced by a mere twitch from this crazy sideburned creature draped in pink and black. Once such aspiring country artists as Eddie Cochran, Roy Orbison and Buddy Holly saw him, they shifted gears from hillbilly to rockabilly almost overnight.

By 1957, the impact of Presley and his hot new style had become clear. Elvis was successful enough to spend \$100,000 on a two-story white-pillared limestone mansion named Graceland. Meanwhile, pouring out of the hills were hundreds of would-be rockabillys emulating Presley's smoldering hepcat style, as well as the infectious rhythms and passionate vocals of his music. However, only a handful of them — Buddy Holly, Gene Vincent, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and Eddie Cochran — were original enough to write their own chapters in rock 'n' roll history.

Buddy Holly met Elvis Presley several times in 1955, and even performed with him at a Pontiac dealership opening in his hometown of Lubbock, Texas. At the time Holly was part of a country duo, Buddy and Bob. Exposure to Elvis changed that. Within a year Holly had adopted the rockabilly sound and landed a contract with Decca. After several singles recorded in Nashville flopped, Holly took his band, the Crickets, to Norman Petty's small studio in Clovis, New Mexico, and recorded **That'll Be the Day**, their first hit. The title was taken from John

Wayne's cantankerous retort in the classic 1956 John Ford western, *The Searchers*.

Preceding the Crickets at Petty's studio was another bunch of West Texas rockabillys, the Rhythm Orchids. They released their first single on the small Triple-D label, using a different lead singer on each side. When Roulette Records signed the band in 1957, they issued the two sides separately, and both Buddy Knox's *Party Doll* and Jimmy Bowen's **I'm Stickin' with You** became hits. Although Knox took credit for penning his second biggest seller, **Hula Love**, it was actually based on a song called *My Hula Hula Love* by Percy Wenrich and Edward Madden, which dates from 1911.

Like Holly, Eddie Cochran began his career playing in a country duo, the Cochran Brothers. After appearing on the same bill with Elvis in Dallas in 1955, Cochran caught the rockabilly fever. His first hit, **Sittin' in the Balcony**, was a fairly lightweight ditty compared with the driving guitar rockers like *Summertime Blues* and *C'mon Everybody* he later wrote. Cochran's all-American good looks earned him a substantial role in the 1957 film *Untamed Youth*, starring the queen of teen exploitation flicks, Mamie Van Doren. This supposed expose of the working conditions of teen-age migrant workers found Cochran standing in a field cheerfully crooning, "You ain't gonna make a cotton picker out of me."

One of Cochran's best friends, Gene Vincent, scored his last major hit in 1957 with **Lotta Lovin'** backed by the Blue Caps (they wore the same type of powder blue golf cap that President Eisenhower sported). The 1960 Cochran-Vincent tour of the United Kingdom proved to be a seminal event in England, as scores of budding rock 'n' rollers got their first real dose of live rockabilly. Among the afflicted were the Beatles, who adopted the greasy pompadour and black leather Vincent look prior to

their switch to mop tops and collarless Cardin suits.

Most rockabilly artists undoubtedly projected an aura of danger and eroticism that reinforced adults' worst fears regarding the music's relationship to sex, drugs and delinquency. Those parents who wouldn't let their daughters out the door with a Jerry Lee Lewis or a Gene Vincent might have considered instead Joe Bennett and the Sparkletones. Despite their penchant for **Black Slacks**, the band was composed of four devoutly religious young men, with Bennett himself leading South Carolina's Church Youth Movement. Parents undoubtedly approved of Ricky Nelson, known to TV audiences in the '50s as that kid from the *Ozzie and Harriet* show. It was on this show that Ricky made his singing debut with Fats Domino's *I'm Walkin'* in April of 1957. A few months later, **Be Bop Baby** proved that Ricky's success as a singer was no fluke.

While rockabilly is forever linked to Elvis Presley and Memphis, another classic rock 'n' roll style took root in New Orleans and reached fruition in the rolling piano-and-horns sound of Fats Domino. Like so many of Domino's hits, **Blue Monday** was arranged, produced and co-written by bandleader and trumpeter Dave Bartholomew. Another Crescent City pianist, Clarence Henry, earned a nickname (Frogman) and created a hit, **Ain't Got No Home**, by drawing on his unique vocal talents. "I started singing like a frog in high school," Henry recalled, "and I could sing like a girl and a chicken too."

Henry's partly croaked comic hit reflected a lighthearted side of New Orleans rock 'n' roll perfected by Huey "Piano" Smith and the Clowns. Smith got the title for his **Rockin' Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu** from a line in Chuck Berry's *Roll Over Beethoven* ("I got rockin' pneumonia sittin' down at a rhythm revue"). Many of the group's songs featured the vocals of Bobby Marchan, New Orleans' most famous female impersonator. Drag queens were often a part of early R & B shows



With two top-10 hits in 1957, the Crickets had plenty to chirp about (clockwise from top left): Buddy Holly, lead vocals and guitar; Jerry Allison, drums; Joe Mauldin, bass; Niki Sullivan, guitar.



and Little Richard, who was honest and brazen enough to pronounce himself "the Queen of Rock 'n' Roll," wrote Lucille about one such impersonator from his hometown of Macon, Georgia.

Thanks to his 1953 smash, *Lawdy Miss Clawdy*, New Orleans' Lloyd Price was a major R & B star until the army put his career on hold. Returning to civilian life, Price formed a new label, K.R.C., and released **Just Because**, which became a national hit after ABC Records purchased it. Meanwhile, his old label, Specialty, hired Larry Williams, Price's ex-valet and keyboard player, to cover the song.

Williams' version of *Just Because* flopped, but he quickly followed up with a number of hits modeled on the frantic style of his labelmate Little Richard. Williams answered his own *Short Fat Fannie* with **Bony Moronie** (both ladies were really offspring of Little Richard's *Long Tall Sally*). Although the hits ran dry in the '60s, Williams received substantial royalties from recordings of his *Dizzy Miss Lizzy*, *Bad Boy* and *Slow Down* made by the Beatles. Williams' career, which included involvement in prostitution and several arrests for drug trafficking, ended in 1978 when he was found dead at home from a gunshot wound to the head.

Most rockabilly stars were ex-country singers with a case of rockin' pneumonia, and many R & B stars were ex-gospel singers who traded in the church for the night-club. Clyde McPhatter's gospel training was apparent in his singing with the Dominoes and the Drifters. McPhatter began his solo career after his discharge from the army in 1956 and hit immediately with *Treasure of Love*, and **Without Love (There Is Nothing)**. The latter was exactly the kind of inspirational ballad that best showcased McPhatter's wailing, church-bred style.

Tony Williams, lead singer for the Platters, likewise possessed a highly dramatic vocal style (including a shattering falsetto) well suited to such operatic ballads as

I'm Sorry, written by the group's manager and arranger, Buck Ram. Ram had spent years arranging for Glenn Miller, Count Basie and Duke Ellington, and it was his elegant songs and arrangements that helped make the Platters the most sophisticated and successful black vocal group of the decade.

The era's most successful white vocal group was the Diamonds, a Canadian act that built a lengthy résumé of pop hits by covering such R & B hits as *Little Darlin'* and *Why Do Fools Fall in Love*. One of their biggest songs was **The Stroll**, a major dance craze in late 1957 thanks to appearances by Chuck Willis singing his strollable hit, *C. C. Rider*, on *American Bandstand*. When Dick Clark informed the Diamonds' manager that there was no specific stroll song, he commissioned one and *The Stroll* was born. In the dance, a line of boys and a line of girls face each other and the end couple strolls down the aisle between the lines. If rock 'n' roll was just a beat-heavy version of the blues, you might say the stroll was just a hip version of the Virginia reel.

— Joe Sasfy



Paul Anka

DISCOGRAPHY

*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

1. **That'll Be the Day** (2:14) The Crickets • *Music and lyrics by Jerry Allison, Buddy Holly and Norman Petty. Original issue: Brunswick 55009. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 3**
2. **Diana** (2:24) Paul Anka • *Music and lyrics by Paul Anka. Original issue: ABC-Paramount 9831. Courtesy of Paul Anka. No. 2**
3. **Black Slacks** (2:01) Joe Bennett and the Sparkletones • *Music and lyrics by Joe Bennett and Jimmy Denton. Original issue: ABC-Paramount 9837. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 17**
4. **Blue Monday** (2:14) Fats Domino • *Music and lyrics by Antoine Domino and Dave Bartholomew. Original issue: Imperial 5417. Courtesy of EMI America Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 9**
5. **Raunchy** (2:21) Bill Justis • *Music by Bill Justis and Sidney Manker. Original issue: Phillips 3519. Courtesy of Shelby Singleton Enterprises, Inc. No. 3**
6. **Be Bop Baby** (2:00) Ricky Nelson • *Music and lyrics by Pearl Lundhurst. Original issue: Imperial 5463. Courtesy of EMI Records Group/EMI Records, Under License From EMI-Capitol Music Entertainment Properties No. 3**
7. **Lucille** (2:25) Little Richard • *Music and lyrics by Richard Penniman and Albert Collins. Original issue: Specialty 598. Courtesy of Specialty Records, Inc. No. 27**
8. **The Stroll** (2:27) The Diamonds • *Music and lyrics by Clyde Otis and Nancy Lee. Original issue: Mercury 71243. Produced under license from PolyGram Special Projects, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 5**
9. **Buzz-Buzz-Buzz** (2:14) The Hollywood Flames • *Music and lyrics by John Gray and Robert Byrd. Original issue: Ebb 119. Courtesy of Specialty Records, Inc. No. 11**
10. **I'm Stickin' with You** (2:02) Jimmy Bowen with the Rhythm Orchids • *Music and lyrics by Jimmy Bowen, Donny Lanier, Dae Aildred and Buddy Knox. Original issue: Roulette 4001. Produced under license from Roulette Records, a Division of ABZ Music Corp. No. 14**
11. **I'm Sorry** (2:52) The Platters • *Music and lyrics by Buck Ram, Peter Tinturin and William White. Original issue: Mercury 71032. Produced under license from PolyGram Special Projects, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 19**
12. **Rock & Roll Music** (2:29) Chuck Berry • *Music and lyrics by Chuck Berry. Original Issue: Chess 1671. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 8**
13. **Lotta Lovin'** (2:09) Gene Vincent • *Music and lyrics by Bernice Bedwell. Original issue: Capitol 3763. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 14**
14. **Jenny, Jenny** (2:00) Little Richard • *Music and lyrics by Ena-tris Johnson and Richard Penniman. Original issue: Specialty 506. Courtesy of Specialty Records, Inc. No. 14**
15. **Ain't Got No Home** (2:18) Clarence "Frogman" Henry • *Music and lyrics by Clarence Henry. Original issue: Argo 5259. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 30**
16. **Hula Love** (2:19) Buddy Knox • *Music and lyrics by Percy Wenrich and Edward Madden. Original issue: Roulette 4018. Produced under license from Roulette Records, a Division of ABZ Music Corp. No. 12**
17. **Just Because** (2:42) Lloyd Price • *Music and lyrics by Lloyd Price. Original issue: ABC-Paramount 9792. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 29**
18. **Whispering Bells** (2:27) The Dell-Vikings • *Music and lyrics by Clarence Quick. Original issue: Dot 15592. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 9**
19. **Bony Moronie** (3:05) Larry Williams • *Music and lyrics by Larry Williams. Original issue: Specialty 615. Courtesy of Specialty Records, Inc. No. 18**
20. **Rockin' Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu** (2:18) Huey "Piano" Smith and the Clowns • *Music and lyrics by Huey Smith. Original issue: Ace 530. Courtesy of Janus Records, No. 52**
21. **Sittin' in the Balcony** (1:59) Eddie Cochran • *Music and lyrics by John D. Loudermilk. Original issue: Liberty 55056. Courtesy of EMI America Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 18**
22. **Without Love (There Is Nothing)** (2:57) Clyde McPhatter • *Music and lyrics by Danny Small. Original issue: Atlantic 1117. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 38**

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