

Gotta have style: From Punk to Reggae

In Chapter Five we introduce several new styles of music and look at some grooves and fills that work with each

Checklist

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to achieve the following:

- List some of the main characteristics of Punk music
- List some of the main characteristics of Rockabilly and Psychobilly music
- List some of the main characteristics of Ska, 2-Tone, Punk-Ska and Reggae music
- Play convincing Ska and Reggae grooves and fills

Use this page as an end-of-chapter test. When you've completed Chapter Five, come back to this page and see if you can complete the list above.

CHAPTER FIVE

Punk

History:

Punk music emerged in the 1970s as a reaction to the stale and tired rock music scene of the time. Young people were bored with the way the music industry worked and wanted more excitement and edginess than the stadium rock bands of the time could offer. They wanted to be a part of the music scene and not just observe it. This movement encouraged young people to pick up an instrument, get bands together and get out and play. This idea of a 'do it yourself' music scene shaped the way modern music works and paved the way for current young musicians. Punk became a way of life for a lot of people rather than just a music genre and fashion and art became a major part, which again is another influence on modern musical movements.

Sound:

Punk music was a rebellion against the music scene of the time, as well as society in general, so there was a lot of anger, attitude and energy within the music. Because a lot of the musicians had very little or no music training at all, the music was raw and mostly very simple. This made punk music very accessible to a lot of people and still thrives today in its original form as well as in lots of new music. Bands tend to be 3 - 5 piece with guitars, drums, bass and vocals. Songs are generally 2 - 4 minutes long with simple structures.

Sub genres:

Pop Punk - Ska Punk - 2 Tone - Oi - Psychobilly - Hardcore - Post-Punk

Recommended listening:

New York Dolls - Television - The Damned - The Clash - Sex Pistols - The Ramones - Blondie - Sham 69 - The Buzzcocks - X-Ray Spex - Peter and the Test Tube Babies - The Anti-Nowhere League - Green Day

Exercise: Play the following eight bar phrase along with the suggested tracks from your CD.

Note the 'DC' marking this stands for 'Da Capo' which means return to the beginning.

The musical notation consists of two staves. The first staff is labeled '1.2.3' and contains four bars of music. The second staff is labeled '4.' and contains four bars of music. Above the first four bars, there are four empty circles with an 'x' below them, indicating a snare hit. Above the last four bars, there are four empty circles with an 'x' below them, indicating a snare hit. The notation shows a simple drum pattern with snare hits on the first and third beats of each bar. The first four bars end with a double bar line and 'X 3', and the last four bars end with a double bar line and 'DC'.

Signing off and moving on

Play the above eight bar phrase with the following tracks

Gold: Track 18 - Hardcore punk - 240bpm

Silver: Track 17 - US punk - 210bpm

Bronze: Track 16 - Old school punk - 180bpm

Rockabilly & Psychobilly

History:

Rockabilly music emerged in America in the early 1950s and is one of the earliest forms of rock n' roll music. The name comes from the fusion of rock and hillbilly music (early country music was called hillbilly). Early rockabilly musicians performed lots of cover versions of country songs, sped up and played with more energy. Probably the first rockabilly single to be recorded was 'Rocket 88' by Bill Haley and the Saddlemen in 1951, but it wasn't until the mid 1950s though, that artists such as Carl Perkins and Elvis Presley broke the rockabilly sound into the mainstream. The genre is still popular today with artists such as Imelda May who fuses rockabilly with elements of jazz and blues music. Many other bands and artists continue with the rockabilly sound and embrace all elements of 1950s music, fashion and art. Tattoo art, drag cars and 50s style pin-ups are all closely linked to rockabilly music!

Sound:

Rockabilly music quite often has a swing feel to it and uses similar instruments to that of a rock or blues band. One major difference is the use of an upright double bass in place of a regular electric bass. This affects the look of the band on stage, but also changes the sound. A technique of slapping the double bass while playing creates a very distinct clicking sound and is very common in modern rockabilly. The fusion of rockabilly with punk music is called Psychobilly and tends to be a little louder, faster and more aggressive and has themes of science fiction and horror.

Sub genres:

Psychobilly - Punkabilly - Gothabilly - Hellbilly - Thrashabilly - Surfabilly

Recommended listening:

Rockabilly: Carl Perkins - Elvis Presley - Bill Haley - Wanda Jackson - The Maddox brothers and rose - Eddie Cochran - Buddy Holly - The Stray Cats - Shakin Stevens - Ghost Highway - Imelda May

Psychobilly: The Cramps - The Meteors - Tiger Army - Demented are Go - The Misfits - Nekromantics - The Horror Pops - Vince Ray and the Boneshakers - The Grit - Mad Sin

Exercise: Play the following four bar phrase along with suggested tracks from your CD.

The exercise is written in 4/4 time. The first two bars have a steady eighth-note bass line. The second and fourth beats of each bar contain triplet eighth notes. The last two bars feature a triplet eighth-note pattern on the first and second beats, followed by a quarter note on the third beat and a quarter note on the fourth beat. The notation includes a drumstick icon, a 4/4 time signature, and various note values and rests.

Signing off and moving on

Play the above four bar phrase with the following tracks

Gold: Track 6 - Psychobilly shuffle - 140bpm

Silver: Track 31 - Rockabilly swing - 107bpm

Bronze: Track 3 - Rockabilly shuffle - 80bpm

Ska

History:

Ska is a form of music that originated in Jamaica in the 1950s and was a fusion of Jamaican folk music, Calypso music and American rhythm and blues. As it grew in popularity, it went on to spread worldwide and mix with other cultures and styles of music to create some very interesting variations. In Jamaica in the 1960s, Ska music slowed down and evolved into another genre called Rocksteady and then fairly soon after that evolved into Reggae. In the UK, Ska music was embraced by the skinhead movement and gained massive popularity. It later became known as 2 Tone music and then more recently Ska punk.

Sound:

Ska music typically revolves around a walking bass line with accented guitar rhythms on the off beat. The drums follow these rhythms by playing off beat hi-hat or ride patterns. The bass drums, sometimes with cross stick or snare drum are played on counts 2 and 4. The music has quite a lively feel to it, quite often with a swing feel and is great to dance to. Instruments can include guitar, bass, drums, percussion, vocals, trumpet, saxophone, piano and trombone.

Sub genres:

Rocksteady - 2 Tone - Ska pop - Ska punk

Recommended listening:

Skatalites - Prince Buster - Derrick Morgan - Eric 'Monty' Morris - Byron Lee & the Dragonaires

2-Tone & Ska-Punk

History:

In the UK, ska music took on a whole new lease of life within the mod and skinhead movements. In the 1970s and 80s, the skinhead movement was infiltrated by a nazi element that wanted to be associated with violence and racial hatred. The skinheads that wanted nothing to do with this idea, developed ska to reflect their acceptance of other races where both black and white individuals could enjoy the same music. This was referred to as 2-tone and incorporated elements of punk music which only increased it's popularity and pushed it into the mainstream. From that time, ska, 2-tone and the more extreme ska-punk have continued to endure and gain in popularity.

Sound:

Although 2-tone and ska-punk music uses a lot of the same elements of original ska music, it is quite often a lot faster and more aggressive than original ska, with the use of raw sounding electric guitars. Lyrics in early 2-tone had references to politics and racial tension, whereas more modern ska-punk has many different topics with a lot of artists creating very uplifting and fun music.

Recommended listening:

The Specials - Bad Manners - The Beat - Judge Dread - The Selector - Less Than Jake - Operation Ivy
- The Mighty Mighty Boss Tones - Rancid - Reel Big Fish - Sponge

Signing off and moving on

Listen to some examples of Ska and 2-Tone music to get a feel for this style

Ska grooves

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

1 3 ah 2 3 ah 3 3 ah 4 3 ah

1 ah 2 3 ah 3 ah 4 3 ah

1 ah 2 ah 3 ah 4 ah

Signing off and moving on

Play each groove along with suitable backing tracks

Gold: Play groove 5 with track 21 - Swung Ska - 140bpm

Silver: Play groove 3 or 4 with track 21 - Swung Ska - 140bpm

Bronze: Play groove 1 or 2 with backing track 20 - 2-Tone - 130bpm

Reggae

History:

In the 1960s, Ska music slowed down and evolved briefly into Rocksteady before it became known as Reggae. Reggae was originally linked with the Jamaican Rastafari movement, which was a spiritual movement dating back to the 1930s that worshipped Haile Sallassi, an Ethiopian Emperor from that time. They rejected materialism, greed and corruption and called the place of this evil 'Babylon'. Instead they looked to return to the birthplace of humanity, a promised land called 'Zion'. References to this can be found in a lot of early Reggae music.

Sound:

Reggae music is always in 4/4 time signature and has similar characteristics to Ska with the bass guitar being one of the most important elements, providing simple 2 or 4 bar rhythms. The drums play similar beats to that of Ska, and are known as one drop, stepper and rocker beats. The snare drum is commonly tuned quite high to achieve a timbale-esque sound and drum fills don't necessarily roll into the beginning of the next phrase with a bass drum and crash on beat one. Guitars (and sometimes piano) follow the off beat feel by playing strong off beat rhythms called the Skank, and there is quite often a prominent use of horns. Although the vocal style is not too different to that of other styles such as pop or rock, certain elements are said to have been a precursor to rap music.

Sub genres:

Dub - Roots - Rockers - Lovers rock - Reggae Fusion - Ragamuffin - Dancehall

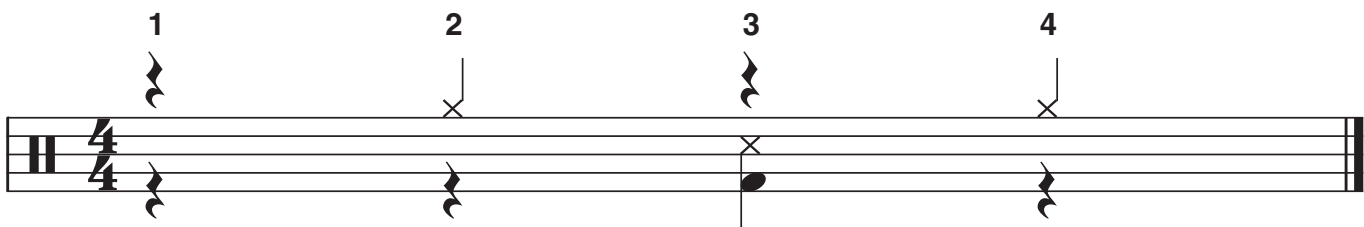
Recommended listening:

Bob Marley and the wailers - Desmond Dekker - Bunny Wailer - Ken Boothe - Black Uhuru - UB40 - Aswad - Burning Spear - Maxi Priest - Carroll Thompson - Millie Small

Reggae One Drop Grooves

Reggae grooves are similar to those of Ska, but with slower feel songs, they are written and counted with a half time feel. This means that instead of off beat hi-hats, there are just hi-hats on counts 2 and 4, and instead of bass drum and cross stick on counts 2 and 4, they only fall once within a bar on count 3. This is called the one drop because of the one bass drum beat in the bar.

To understand this more, look at the first groove below.



Signing off and moving on

Listen to some examples of Reggae music to get a feel for this style

Reggae One Drop variations - Straight feel

Here are some variations of the one drop groove. Each example has a more constant hi-hat pattern, but uses an accent on counts 2 and 4 to retain the off beat feel.

Examples 1, 2 and 3 have cross sticks in different places and example 4 has a different hi-hat pattern, which when played with the accent pattern and rest of the groove can be quite challenging to get the correct feel.

1 2 3 4

1 2 3 4

1 2 3 4 +

1 2 + 3 4 +

Signing off and moving on

Play each groove along with the following backing tracks

Gold: Track 24 - Up-beat Reggae - 160bpm

Silver: Track 23 - Rasta Reggae - 140bpm

Bronze: Track 22 - Reggae ballad - 120bpm

Reggae One Drop Variations - Swung feel

Here are some more variations, but this time with a triplet/shuffle feel. It is worth noting that Reggae music is a very organic form of music and shouldn't be played too rigidly. Quite often, you should play with a feel that sits somewhere between straight and swung. This may seem tough, but if you relax and follow the music it should happen ok!

1 2 3 4 ah

1 2 3 ah 4

1 2 ah 3 4 ah

1 ah 2 3 ah 4

Signing off and moving on

Play each groove along with the following backing tracks

Gold: Track 27 - Swung up-beat Reggae - 160bpm

Silver: Track 26 - Swung rasta Reggae - 140bpm

Bronze: Track 25 - Swung Reggae ballad - 120bpm

Reggae Stepper beats

Here are some examples of stepper beats (sometimes called 'four drop beats because of the 4 bass drum beats in the bar). These beats are based around a similar idea to the four to the floor grooves from the previous book. In fact, it is believed that the idea of stepper beats came from early disco four to the floor grooves and have a similar driving and dance feel to them.

Note: The examples below all have a straight feel, but stepper beats also work well with a shuffle feel.

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

1 + 2 + 3 + a 4 +

1 + a 2 + 3 e + 4 +

Signing off and moving on

Play each groove along with the following backing tracks

Gold: Track 24 - Up-beat Reggae - 160bpm

Silver: Track 23 - Rasta Reggae - 140bpm

Bronze: Track 22 - Reggae ballad - 120bpm

Reggae fills

Here are a few fill ideas to get you moving away and back to the reggae grooves covered. Play slowly in 4 bar phrase or 8 bar phrases (7 bars of groove and then the fill) and get used to the feeling of not coming back into your groove with a bass drum and a crash after the fill.

1 + 2 + 3 4

1 2 + 3 + 4

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

1 + 2 + 3 4 +

This marking is used when you are to play straight eighth notes with a shuffle feel. Play all of the above fills with a straight and a shuffle feel.

Signing off and moving on

Play each fill with a groove of your choice, in four bar phrases with suitable backing tracks
Play with both a straight and a swung feel

- Gold:** Track 24/27 - Up-beat Reggae - 160bpm
- Silver:** Track 23/26 - Rasta Reggae - 140bpm
- Bronze:** Track 22/25 - Reggae ballad - 120bpm