

# RHYTHM & BLUES: The Evolution and Significance of the Musical Genre

-Created by Alexis Masino-

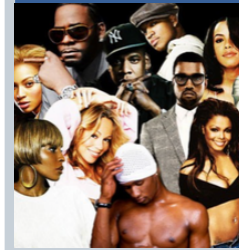
## Origins

Rhythm and Blues music originated in the 1940s. The music was originally titled "race music" and was primarily played by African Americans. During the development of "R&B music", there was a rapid period of urbanization, causing a growing interest in African American communities for places of social interaction in cities such as Chicago and Atlanta (Puryear). This led to the establishment of "honky tonk clubs" that progressed the innovation of R&B music.



## Impact on Society

R&B music has allowed African American individuals a platform to express their. In the beginning of R&B Music, the genre was specifically targeted towards African Americans. Black individuals were given the chance to share their experience about their culture, and the struggles they face in America. Today, the genre has reached individuals of all races, ages and backgrounds - influencing a through their heartfelt lyrics and melodies. People have become inspired and touched by R&B Music all over the world., gaining a better understanding and respect for different groups of individuals.



## Characteristics

The name Rhythm and Blues music was created from the music's notable characteristics. In the 40's and 50's, the rhythm of the music was created from the genre's "typical dependence" on having four beat measures, and the term blues came from the heartfelt lyrics being expressed (Nero).

Originally, music was primarily played by piano and a variety of string instruments. Due to technological advances, the genre has included more electronic and machine made sounds in present day music (Henry). Currently, R&B music today has a slower and more relaxing pace, incorporating influences from both pop and hip hop music.



## Influential Artists

Artists that have paved the way for R&B music include Etta James, Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, James Brown, Patti Labelle, Sam Cooke, TLC and Mariah Carey. These artists have gained a following across the world.

Throughout the years, these artists have been recognized for their musical efforts, being rewarded with musical achievements such as Grammys.

More contemporary artists today include Usher, Chris Brown, Khalid, Frank Ocean, and Beyoncé.



## Evolution

In the 40's and 50's, R&B music was defined with having a large jazz, gospel and soul undertone.

During the 60's and 70's, R&B music adapted more, getting the titled "Rock N Soul", creating a sound based off the Rock movement with a soulful touch.

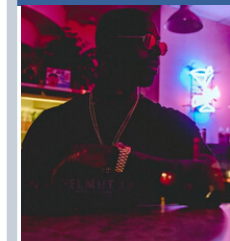
The Disco era in the 80's led to R&B music having more of a disco, pop and dance feel. (Garland)

In the 90's to present day, R&B reached an even larger audience. In this period, R&B music incorporates more of a hip hop influence and pop influence



## R&B Today

R&B Music has become one of the most popular forms of. In America, It is the fourth most popular musical genre consumed in the U.S. with over 10.8% of the country listening to the genre in 2018 (Watson). Currently on the Billboard Top 100, over half the songs listed are categorized as R&B. The genre is constantly evolving and changing its style through various artists putting their own spin on the genre.



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