

Good Old Rock and Roll: Performing the 1950s in the 1970s

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Introduction

Although one might expect otherwise, Sha Na Na's performance at Woodstock had much in common with John Lennon's performance with The Plastic Ono Band at the Toronto Rock Revival. Both events took place in 1969, less than a month apart—Sha Na Na performed at Woodstock on August 18, while Lennon appeared in Toronto on September 13. Both groups were quite new at the time of their respective performances. Sha Na Na was formed in 1969. Their performance at Woodstock was only their seventh gig. Lennon had not played live in the 3 years before his Toronto appearance, and The Plastic Ono Band had never performed in public. Both groups focused their repertoire on rock and roll songs from the 1950s: Sha Na Na were captured for posterity in the documentary film *Woodstock* (1970) performing Danny and the Juniors' "At the Hop," while The Plastic Ono Band opened their set with Carl Perkins' "Blue Suede Shoes."

Despite these similarities, the two performances in question stand at opposite ends of a continuum that charts the relationships rock groups of the 1960s and 1970s assumed to the rock and roll of the 1950s. This continuum is not a timeline: it traces the development of a tendency in rock along an ideological axis rather than a chronological one. The poles of this continuum are the ideologically charged concepts of authenticity and inauthenticity central to rock music and rock culture (Auslander 65–81). Sha Na Na and Lennon, whom I have selected to represent the extreme positions on this continuum, were scarcely the only rock musicians of the late 1960s and 1970s to exploit the music of the 1950s.¹ Although a complete study of this renewed interest in rock and roll has yet to be undertaken, I shall limit my discussion here to musicians who not only played music styled on the rock and roll of the 1950s but also created performance personae that express their respective relationships to that earlier music. In addition to Sha Na Na and Lennon, I will look at The Mothers of Invention and Wood's Wizzard from this perspective and place

them along my proposed continuum. Although I recognize the importance of audiences and reception to any consideration of popular music, my approach here is unabashedly performer centered. I focus on the representations created by these artists and the means they used to create them. In the second half of the essay, I suggest that the poles of the continuum may be defined not only in terms of authenticity and inauthenticity but also in relation to two other critical dichotomies: auteurship versus stylistic pastiche and modernism versus postmodernism.

Part I

From about 1968 until at least 1974, there was a large-scale resurgence of interest in rock's prehistory in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Rock music per se—as distinct from rock and roll—had existed for only about 5 years by 1968, but it had developed very quickly. Consider the distance traveled from, say, The Beach Boys, circa 1962, to Jimi Hendrix, circa 1967.² As soon as rock music could be distinguished sufficiently from blues, rhythm and blues, and rock and roll to be considered a separate genre with its own development, rock culture became self-consciously historical and sought to recuperate earlier genres as precedents. As Naha has pointed out:

During the late 1960s, the children of psychedelia suddenly rediscovered the rock and roll antics of the fifties. These were called “roots.” Rock revival shows [such as the one the Plastic Ono Band played in Toronto], spotlighting the “rootsy” sounds of Chuck Berry, Dion, Little Richard, and Fats Domino (as well as dozens of their peer performers) made their way across the country, drawing both the old fans of the fifties...and young nostalgia buffs who enjoyed seeing where the Rolling Stones came from (424).

The renewed interest in 1950s music within the rock culture of the late 1960s predates, and may have helped spur, the 1950s revival that surfaced in American popular culture a few years later, exemplified by *Happy Days* (premiered 1974) on television, *Grease* (1972) on the Broadway stage, and *American Graffiti* (1973) in the movies.³ Although it often idealized and distorted the music and culture of the 1950s, the rock and roll revival that began in the late 1960s was nevertheless a genuine exploration of rock's history by its creators and fans. The generation of rock musicians who came to prominence in the 1960s and early 1970s began mostly as rock and roll musicians, learning their craft by emulating the sounds they heard

on rock and roll records, before contributing to the development of rock music. For them, the rock and roll revival entailed a return to their earliest musical experiences as both listeners and players.

Lennon, in particular, conveyed a strong sense that by playing rock and roll songs, he was digging down to the bedrock of his own artistic identity. On the recording of The Plastic Ono Band's set at Toronto, Lennon introduces the group by saying "We're just gonna do numbers that we know, you know, 'cause we've never played together before." The implication is that rock and roll songs like "Blue Suede Shoes," "Money," and "Dizzy Miss Lizzie" are so basic to the vocabulary of rock that any randomly assembled group of rock musicians should be able to play them without rehearsal. On his album *Rock 'n' Roll*, a collection of cover versions of well-known songs from the 1950s, recorded in 1973–1974 and released in 1975, Lennon reiterates this point in explicitly autobiographical terms by associating the songs with his own youth and formation as a musician. Among the many credits listed on the album's back cover is the statement: "Relived by: JL." The front cover reproduces a photograph of Lennon in Hamburg, Germany, taken when he was 22 years old. Lennon is seen leaning against the side of an arched entryway, looking at passers-by through hooded eyes. He is dressed in the uniform associated with the British working-class subculture of rockers: black leather jacket, black jeans, and leather boots. This photograph evokes the historical moment in the very early 1960s when many British groups, including The Beatles, found work as cover bands, churning out versions of rock and roll songs in the disreputable clubs on Hamburg's Reeperbahn.

Wiener, one of Lennon's biographers, describes the significance of the song selection on *Rock 'n' Roll* in detail:

The songs John decided to cover on *Rock 'n' Roll* were not just any old oldies. They represented his own personal musical history. John sang Buddy Holly's "Peggy Sue" on *Rock 'n' Roll*. The name "Beatles" had been inspired by Buddy Holly's Crickets and "That'll Be the Day" was the first song John learned to play on the guitar in 1957. He had sung many other Buddy Holly songs: "It's So Easy" as Johnny and the Moondogs in his first TV appearance in 1959, and "Words of Love," which the Beatles recorded in 1964 (268–9).

Wiener continues in this vein, explaining the specific associations of songs by Gene Vincent, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, and Larry Williams in

terms of Lennon's history before and with The Beatles. As if to hammer home the importance of these biographical associations, Lennon himself provides a disc jockey-like spoken introduction to "Just Because," the last song on the album. He waxes nostalgic, saying, "Ah, remember this?" and tries to recall how old he was when the song was first recorded.

Lennon thus performs his relationship to rock and roll as a relationship of authenticity grounded in a deep biographical connection to the music of the 1950s. As Weinstein points out, cover versions of older songs can serve to authenticate a performer by asserting "a relationship, through creative repetition, to an authentic source" (142). In this passage, Weinstein describes the practice of rock artists associated with the British Invasion of the mid-1960s, who often recorded American blues and rhythm and blues. The Beatles, themselves a British Invasion group, certainly participated in that practice. Lennon's case as a solo artist is complex because his performances of rock and roll songs at Toronto and on his 1975 album draw not only on the authenticity of the songs themselves and their original performers but also on his own history as a young rock and roll musician in the late 1950s. In a sense, the John Lennon of *Johnny and the Moondogs* becomes an "authentic source" for Lennon, the post-Beatles solo artist.⁴

If Lennon's performance of an authentic relationship to the rock and roll of the 1950s rooted in history and biography is at one end of my proposed continuum, Sha Na Na's performed relationship to the same music is at the opposite end. Whether or not rock and roll played a formative role in the lives of the members of Sha Na Na, the group do not assert such a connection through their performances.⁵ On the contrary, whereas Lennon presented himself as having lived and absorbed the music of the 1950s in the 1950s, the performers in Sha Na Na construct themselves as entities without biographies. Whereas Lennon presented his performances of rock and roll as artifacts of his own history, Sha Na Na perform rock and roll as history without claiming it as their own, personal history. We are meant to take the picture of the 22-year-old rocker on the cover of the *Rock 'N' Roll* album as a point of reference for understanding the older Lennon's relationship to rock and roll music. Sha Na Na advance no such claim about the greaser image they present.⁶ There is no implied biographical relationship, for instance, between the preening, spitting, obnoxious Bowser, the popular persona of Sha Na Na's bass singer, and Jon Bauman, the performer who portrayed him.

Although Lennon's rocker image and the greaser image portrayed by Sha Na Na are sartorially similar, there are significant differences

between their respective performances of these subcultural icons. By presenting himself as a rocker, Lennon aligned himself with a specific, historically class-based social experience of which rock and roll had been a part. As Cohen has shown, to be a rocker in early 1960s Britain was to adopt a particular social identity. Whereas the mods, another working-class youth subculture of the same period, were considered exciting and newsworthy, "The rockers were left out of the race: they were unfashionable and unglamorous just because they appeared to be more class bound" than the seemingly more upwardly mobile mods (Cohen 156). Insofar as Cohen suggests that the early British pop groups also represented upward mobility through "success stories of being discovered and making it" (152), Lennon's assertion of his rocker past was an act of symbolic downward mobility, as if he were undoing The Beatles' phenomenal rise to assert solidarity with his former working-class self.

Sha Na Na also enact personae based on subcultural identities with overtones of class and, in their case, race and ethnicity, but in a spirit very different from Lennon's. Although Sha Na Na play the music of such African-American rhythm and blues artists as the Coasters, and there was an African-American performer (Denny Greene) in the group's original line-up, their performances revolve primarily around two stylistic reference points: the rock and roll purveyed by white southerners such as Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis, and New York doo-wop as practiced largely by working-class Italian-American singers. Although several members of Sha Na Na typically wear gold lamé suits associated with Elvis onstage, their visual image otherwise does not correspond to that of the earlier performers they emulate. The other main costume Sha Na Na uses is a black leather jacket-jeans-and-T-shirt outfit comparable to British rocker attire but associated in the United States primarily with the greaser. (Sha Na Na emphasizes that association by referring to the "grease" they use to maintain 1950-style hairdos, which they comb continuously during their performances.) Neither the greaser outfit nor the gold lamé suit has any specific relationship to the doo-wop that makes up the largest part of Sha Na Na's repertoire, because doo-wop singers, both black and white, generally wore evening wear when performing. Unlike Lennon's rocker image, Sha Na Na's greaser look refers neither to the performance practices associated with the music they perform nor to the typical appearance of its audiences but, rather, to a stereotypical "Italian-Americanity" that has no basis in lived experience.⁷ Members of the group whose own names suggest a variety of ethnic heritages, including Irish and Jewish,

adopted such Italianate stage names as Tony Santini, Gino, and Ronzoni.⁸ Unlike Lennon, Sha Na Na never suggest that they chose these images because they correspond in some way to their own social or cultural identities. In a 1972 interview, group member Rich Joffe defined Sha Na Na's performance style by saying "We try to create a reality on stage but also to indicate that we're not in it really. It's definitely a theatrical thing" (qtd. in Turner). This conception of theatricality clearly flies in the face of the ideology of rock authenticity. Fundamentally, the difference between Lennon's performance of rock and roll and Sha Na Na's is the difference between *inhabiting an identity* and *playing a role*.

Whereas Lennon's representation of himself as a rocker is a recreation of his own past that locates him socially in a very specific way, Sha Na Na's representation of the 1950s is a simulation of that era that brings together a variety of historically appropriate styles of music and male performance images in combinations that have no direct historical referents. The rocker image also carries with it an implication of stratification and conflict within the British working class that regularly overflowed into physical violence between mods and rockers (Cohen 127–8). Sha Na Na's performances, too, referred to such subcultural conflict. In the 1970s, Sha Na Na were frequently introduced at concerts by an announcer declaiming "Greased and ready to kick ass—Sha Na Na!" as if to emphasize the violence implicit in the greaser image. Similarly, the group often taunted their audiences with such lines as "We gots just one thing to say to you fuckin' hippies and that is that rock 'n' roll is here to stay!" (Sha Na Na). This staged antagonism between the greasers on stage and the presumed "hippies" in the audience mimed real subcultural conflicts among such groups, down to the question of which one had a more genuine claim on rock and roll. The hippies in the audience, however, knew that they were not really going to get their asses kicked, in large part because Sha Na Na's theatrical performance of the greaser provided no reason to suppose that the people onstage really belonged to that subculture. Early in their career, Sha Na Na performed regularly at such countercultural venues as the Fillmore East, Woodstock, university campuses (the group originated at Columbia University), and, serendipitously, the 1972 charity concert Lennon organized at Madison Square Garden in New York City. It is quite clear that the audiences for these events understood that Sha Na Na's performance of the greaser was an affectionate parody of that image implying no real threat of subcultural conflict and no genuine antagonism toward the counterculture. Indeed, Sha Na Na eventually

asserted their sympathy for the cultural politics of the counterculture by adopting the slogan "Grease for Peace."

The Plastic Ono Band's performance in Toronto on a rock revival bill that also featured Chuck Berry, Little Richard (whose song "Dizzy Miss Lizzie" they performed), and other rock and roll giants suggested historical continuity. Lennon and the band—including guitarist Eric Clapton—implicitly positioned themselves as the heirs apparent to rock and roll, as rock musicians who remember the past, acknowledge their debt to it, and are able to carry the tradition into the present. In a way, Yoko Ono's wailing, avant-garde, very un-rock and roll-like piece "Don't Worry Kyoko" was the band's strongest statement of historical continuity, for the instrumental accompaniment to Ono's unconventional keening and ululating vocal was based on the opening chord sequence from the Everly Brothers' "Wake Up Little Susie." This gesture suggested that even Ono's highly experimental approach to music making was ultimately grounded in and continuous with the rock and roll tradition.

Although it would be reasonable to suppose that Sha Na Na's appearance at Woodstock also represented historical continuity by reminding the audience there of rock's precedents, their performance has been interpreted, correctly I think, not as a sign of continuity between past and present—between rock and roll and rock—but as an anticipation of historical discontinuity between countercultural rock and what came after it. Stokes sees Sha Na Na's appearance at Woodstock and their subsequent popularity as marking the beginning of the end of the rock counterculture of the 1960s: "Their success was real, but...nonmusical. Theirs was, deliberately, a music of nonsignificance, a break from the moral and political freight that rock was bearing. Though it took nearly a decade for them to translate their live popularity to the real stardom that came when they began a syndicated TV show, they planted the seeds of rock's rejection at the site of its greatest triumph" (433). Stokes deftly marks the historical irony of Sha Na Na's presence at Woodstock, but it is important to recognize that his comment is itself a product of the ideology of countercultural rock. As Grossberg observes, rock ideology "draws an absolute distinction between rock and mere 'entertainment'..." (201)—clearly, Stokes positions Sha Na Na on the wrong side of that divide. The rock and roll music Sha Na Na performed could be seen as "nonmusical" and unserious and as morally and politically disengaged, only from the point of view of a rock culture that perceived itself as having moved beyond its predecessors in progressive directions. Similarly, Stokes's reference to

Sha Na Na's success on television serves to place the group outside the boundaries of legitimate rock. In the 1960s, television was seen as a central agent of the putatively repressive mainstream culture against which rock positioned itself. Although most successful rock groups appeared regularly on television variety shows, they were careful to distance themselves from the medium and to maintain that LPs and concert halls were their true venues. Serious association with television was the deathblow to any claim to being taken seriously within the counterculture, as the Monkees, a made-for-television group that aspired to rock authenticity, discovered (Auslander 87–8). By suggesting that Sha Na Na found their true medium in television, Stokes implies that they never really belonged in rock culture. (It is presumably this perception of Sha Na Na that has kept the group out of most histories of rock and rock reference books.)

Dister also sees Sha Na Na's appearance at Woodstock as a harbinger of crucial changes in popular music culture, though he presents the moment in more positive terms by describing its relationship to subsequent developments:

The tone [of post-rock music culture] was established at Woodstock with the unexpected appearance of Sha Na Na. Exhausted, rock returned to its origins while making fun of itself. At first parodic, this attitude became more serious with the Flamin' Groovies, who...established the connection between the popular music of the 1960s and the minimalism of the 1980s for legions of punk groups. The decadent New York Dolls provoked surprise in 1973. An archetypal garage band, like the later Ramones, they emphasized look and attitude without worrying too much about musical precision—a remarkable theatricalization of rock that others, such as Alice Cooper and David Bowie, exploited with much greater care and technique (111–2; my translation).

Dister sees Sha Na Na as anticipating two distinct, though related, trends in rock in the 1970s: glam and punk. Sha Na Na's emphasis on show bizzy performance techniques that were anathema to the counterculture (they were surely the only group at Woodstock to feature two members who performed solely as dancers!) anticipated glam rock, as did their construction of an obviously artificial—and, incidentally, somewhat homoerotic—image. Joffe, the member of Sha Na Na I quoted earlier, noted this similarity in 1972, citing Bowie and Alice Cooper as other performers who were “definitely back into the show biz thing” and arguing that Sha Na Na

were “just another facet of the modern rock scene” (qtd. in Turner). Sha Na Na’s artificial personae also foreshadowed the theatrical aspects of punk rock exemplified by The Ramones’ overtly synthetic group identity and adopted Italian-Americanistic surname and Johnny Rotten’s sneering actorly presence. (I am not proposing that Sha Na Na directly influenced glam or punk, only that they anticipated these developments in certain respects. But the fact that Sha Na Na were well known in New York and had performed in London in 1971 makes it possible that the early avatars of glam and punk took notice.) The elaborate staging and choreography of their concerts pointed additionally toward music video, as did their own success on television in the late 1970s. Although Stokes and Dister each insert Sha Na Na into a somewhat different historical narrative, both point to the aspects of Sha Na Na that made them crucially different from every other group at Woodstock, from Lennon, and from the values emphasized by rock ideology: the overtly theatrical and constructed nature of their performance personae and the related fact that they did not perform an authentic personal and historical connection to rock and roll.

Part II

The contrast between the poles of the axis of authenticity along which I am plotting rock musicians’ relationship to rock and roll is sharp. At one end are musicians like Lennon and The Plastic Ono Band and the many other rockers whose articulation of historical consciousness through the performance of rock and roll was grounded in an assertion of authentic, personal experience.⁹ At the other end are Sha Na Na and many performers of the 1970s, including glam rockers like Bowie and Bryan Ferry, whose performances of earlier music were mediated through theatrical and overtly inauthentic personae and made no claim to being grounded in the performers’ personal histories.¹⁰ In between these two poles, I place instances in which rock musicians of the 1960s and 1970s created alter egos specifically for the performance of 1950s-style music: The Mothers of Invention’s masquerade as Ruben and the Jets for a 1968 album is one example; the creation by the British group Roy Wood’s Wizzard of Eddy and the Falcons in 1973 is another.¹¹ (Even The Beach Boys renamed themselves Carl and the Passions for one album in 1972. Although the music on the recording has little to do with the 1950s, their creation of a fictional group with a 1950s-style name is significant here.)¹² These cases belong in the middle section of the continuum because they combine, to

different degrees, the defining features of the two extreme positions: the claim of authenticity based on biographical experience as a rock and roller and the construction of overtly fictional performance personae. By creating alter egos that refer to their own histories but are also fictional entities distinct from themselves, both Frank Zappa of The Mothers of Invention and Roy Wood performed their relationships to rock and roll as an ambivalent oscillation between identification and distancing.

Unlike Lennon and Sha Na Na, the Mothers did not perform well-known songs from the 1950s on *Cruising with Ruben and the Jets*; rather, they performed doo-wop-style songs and ballads written by Zappa himself—sometimes with Ray Collins. Ostensibly, the album was recorded by a group called Ruben and the Jets, though it is readily apparent that it is the work of The Mothers of Invention. The front cover of the album features a cartoon drawing of dog-like musicians. The guitar player's speech balloon reads: "Is this the Mothers of Invention recording under a different name in a last ditch attempt to get their cruddy music on the radio?" The fiction of Ruben and the Jets, though transparent, is fairly elaborate. The record jacket features a biographical account entitled "The Story of Ruben and the Jets." From this source, we learn that "Ruben Sano was 19 when he quit the group to work on his car," that the other central members of the group were named Natcho, Louie, Pana, and Chuy, and sundry other facts. The back cover features a sepia-toned photograph of Zappa, made to look as much as possible like a Chicano teenager of the 1950s. That Ruben and the Jets were ostensibly Mexican-American reflects Zappa's experiences growing up in southern California and his association of doo-wop with the local pachuco subculture. Many of Zappa's albums bear his oft-repeated credo, a 1921 quotation from the composer Edgard Varèse: "The present-day composer refuses to die!" On *Ruben and the Jets*, this credo appears as "The present-day Pachuco refuses to die!" and is attributed to Sano in 1955. The substitution of pachuco for composer clearly suggests that Zappa saw the Chicano subculture as a generative force in West Coast rock and roll. (Although the Chicano contribution to rock and roll would be more broadly recognized later on, Zappa's highly visible acknowledgment in the late 1960s was unique.)¹³

Although Zappa often evoked the 1950s in his compositions, he frequently seemed to be parodying doo-wop and sometimes made disparaging comments about rock and roll's musical simplicity and its romantic sentimentality. Zappa also used his interest in rock and roll as a

way of asserting his own musical catholicity and sophistication: In the liner notes to *Freak Out!* (1966), the Mothers' first album, Zappa provides a long list of influences that includes composers ranging from Ravel to Mauricio Kagel, progressive jazz figures like Eric Dolphy and Cecil Taylor, a number of blues musicians, and radio disc jockeys famous for having helped publicize rhythm and blues, such as Hunter Hancock and Wolfman Jack. Zappa thus represented 1950's music as the guilty pleasure of an otherwise highly refined musical sensibility. Zappa nevertheless seems to have been genuinely fond of doo-wop, saying in 1974: "It's always been my contention that the music that was happening during the Fifties has been one of the finest things that ever happened to American music, and I loved it" (qtd. in Rense). He asserted both his enthusiasm for doo-wop and his understanding of its significance to the Mexican-American community at several points in his career. One of Zappa's early efforts was the song "Memories of El Monte," which he wrote and produced for The Penguins, a West Coast doo-wop group from the 1950s that reunited in 1963. The song celebrates the West Coast rhythm and blues scene of the 1950s, with particular reference to the El Monte Legion Hall, a legendary venue for vocal groups frequented by a largely Mexican-American audience (Hoskyns 34). In 1969, Zappa signed The Persuasions, an a capella doo-wop group, to his Straight Records imprint, giving the group their first record deal. A few years after recording *Ruben and the Jets*, Zappa worked with singer Guevara to create a group called Ruben and the Jets that was different from The Mothers of Invention. Zappa produced an album for the group, appropriately entitled *Ruben and the Jets—For Real!* (1973). The album contains songs in 1950s styles, including one written by Zappa and others by group members, alongside versions of such oldies as "Dedicated to the One I Love" and "Almost Grown." The group, made up largely of Chicano musicians, opened for The Mothers of Invention on several occasions and performed at "what you might call the chicano version of Woodstock at San Diego State in 1973" (Guevara 122). Their work also appears on some recorded anthologies of Chicano rock and is considered an important step in the evolution of the Mexican-American rock scene in Los Angeles.

Even though *Cruising with Ruben and the Jets* showcases a fictional group, it refers, like Lennon's *Rock 'n' Roll* album, to Zappa's and the Mothers' actual history. Whereas the songs on *Rock 'n' Roll* evoke Lennon's youth as a member of cover bands, the songs on *Ruben and the Jets* refer to Zappa having started his career as a songwriter, producer, and

performer in the last moments of the doo-wop era. Several of the songs on the album were first recorded by Zappa in 1963—some were eventually released on *Frank Zappa: The Lost Episodes* (1996)—and may have been written before that. The Mothers of Invention evolved from a bar band called The Soul Giants that became The Mothers after Zappa joined as a guitarist in 1964. The Soul Giants, and an earlier group Zappa was in called The Blackouts, were to Zappa's history what Johnny and the Moon-dogs were to Lennon's. The earliest line-up of The Mothers of Invention was ethnically diverse, including an Italian-American (Zappa), a Mexican-American (Roy Estrada), a Jewish-American (Elliot Ingber), and a Native American (Jimmy Carl Black), among others. Although only one member was of Mexican heritage, the obviously non-WASP ethnicity of the group and its career as a bar band made The Mothers stand out on the Los Angeles music scene of the mid-1960s and caused them to be identified with the Chicano subculture. As one observer put it: "The Mothers were considered weird. They were almost like *pachuco* guys, a low-rider greaser band, rather than Sunset Strip types" (qtd. in Hoskyns 109–10). The Soul Giants and the early Mothers of Invention were Ruben and the Jets, at least in the sense that they were perceived as outsiders and, therefore, as not "white." And because, in the southern California of the early 1960s, not white meant Mexican, the group was seen as pachuco-like.

If Ruben and the Jets thus represent the Mothers' immediate past at the time of the album, they also metaphorically represent the group's future. In his liner notes, Zappa imagines the Mothers/Jets as "just a bunch of old men with rock & roll clothes on sitting around the studio, mumbling about the good old days." This image suggests imaginatively how a 1950s group such as Ruben and the Jets might have felt in 1968, but it also anticipates how the Mothers might feel a decade or more after their own heyday. Zappa expresses a sense of historical continuity similar to Lennon's by suggesting that rock musicians have a desire to perform rock and roll and identify with older musicians. But Zappa's version of historical continuity has a melancholic undertone, in that he seems to be warning the rock musicians of the 1960s that they are merely the golden oldies of the near future. Whereas Lennon posits historical continuity in terms of the persistence of rock and roll in rock, Zappa's version of historical continuity rests on the inevitability of obsolescence. In this view, to dismiss the artists of the past as old hat is merely to anticipate one's own eventual dismissal.

Zappa's liner notes express an ambivalence that is congruent with his decision both to embrace the 1950s by performing doo-wop and to keep the era at a distance by attributing his own album of 1950s-style music to a fictional group. He describes *Ruben and the Jets* as "an album of greasy love songs & cretin simplicity," but goes on to say, "We made it because we really like this kind of music." The way the Mothers perform the music on the album is in keeping with their acknowledged fondness for an outmoded and seemingly unsophisticated style: They exaggerate the characteristics of doo-wop enough to constitute parody but do not rob the music of its genre-based appeal. The biography of the fictional group includes a comparative assessment of the music of the 1950s and 1960s:

All the guys in the band hope that you are sick & tired like they are of all this crazy far out music some of the bands of today are playing. They hope you are so sick & tired of it that you are ready for their real sharp style of music. They are good socially acceptable young men who only want to sing about their girl friends. They want everybody to start dancing close back together again like 1955 because they know that people need to love & also want to hold on to each other.

As this text hints, part of Zappa's ambivalence toward doo-wop may stem from a suspicion that although the Mothers liked doo-wop, the earlier practitioners of that style would not appreciate the Mothers' other, more "crazy far out music"—leading one to wonder whether the Everly Brothers appreciated Ono's musical style. The link that Zappa implies in his liner notes between singing only about romance and "cretin simplicity" suggests that Zappa sees rock and roll as unserious by comparison with the rock of the 1960s. But Zappa's proposition in the band biography that the function of doo-wop is to promote love suggests, in turn, that Zappa's embrace of rock ideology is as ambivalent as his relationship to doo-wop. Zappa implies a parallel between the 1950s ethos of romance and the 1960s proclamation that "All You Need Is Love" and thus suggests that the counterculture may not have been that different at heart from the supposedly conformist teen culture of the 1950s, against which the counterculture defined itself.¹⁴ Because Zappa was famous throughout his life for mocking the very counterculture that embraced his music and persona, it may be that he was implying that the 1960s ethos of free love was just as simplistic as the 1950s ethos of romance.

I place the *Ruben and the Jets* album in the midsection of my continuum of performed authenticity because it possesses qualities that

align it in different ways with each pole. Whereas both the cultural identity attributed to Ruben and the Jets and the music they perform have important biographical connections to Zappa and the Mothers, the fictionality and ethnic stereotyping of Ruben and the Jets align them with the simulationist Sha Na Na. Like Lennon's *Rock 'n' Roll*, Zappa's album of 1950s-style music is rooted in his own authentic, biographically grounded relationship to the earlier music. Lennon reflects on his own past as a member of rock and roll cover bands by performing famous rock and roll songs. Zappa revisits his own history as a writer and producer of 1950s-style music in the early 1960s. But the Mothers' invention of a fictional group to perform 1950s music suggests an unwillingness to fully embrace the earlier era and a concomitant desire to keep it at a certain distance. Lennon, who straightforwardly celebrates rock and roll, does not share Zappa's ambivalence toward the 1950s but claims to relive the era nostalgically and uncritically.

Wizzard's *Introducing Eddy and the Falcons* has much in common with the Mothers' *Cruising with Ruben and the Jets*. Both are albums of neo-1950s music written by rock musicians associated with the 1960s and 1970s and attributed to a meta-fictional group. The album cover for *Eddy and the Falcons* is designed as the surface of a red and white checked tablecloth covering a table in a cheap dinner. Laid on the table are an ornate business card, an ID bracelet, a greasy comb, and a number of photographs. The business card indicates that Eddy and the Falcons are a group native to Birmingham, UK, where they are available to play at social functions, dances, and weddings. (Roy Wood, the creator and leader of Wizzard, is from Birmingham. In the early 1960s, he played there with a local group, Mike Sheridan and the Nightriders, perhaps the prototype for Eddy and the Falcons. In the mid-1960s, he was a founding member of The Move, one of the most nationally successful groups to emerge from the Birmingham music scene. He later helped found The Electric Light Orchestra as an offshoot of The Move.) The opening moments of the recording are a dialogue in which two fans see Eddy in the street and marvel at how good he looks. This moment is followed by the sounds of a live performance and thunderous applause greeting the introduction of Eddy and the Falcons, perhaps indicating that the entire episode is set in the 1950s, during Eddy and the Falcons' presumed peak of popularity—as the album title, which suggests a group's first recording, implies. On the other hand, it may be set in the revivalist moment of the 1970s and suggest that Eddy is a superannuated rock and roller still around during the rock era.

The ID bracelet next to the card has “Wizzard” engraved on it, revealing the true identity of the group that made the album—though this identity is itself problematic, an issue I take up later. The gatefold photographs recount a narrative in which Eddy and the Falcons, dressed as teddy boys and rockers, enter the diner. A conflict develops and the members of the group assault one of their own number. Although the movie posters on the wall of the diner—for *The Buccaneer* (1958) and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955)—and the group’s attire suggest a 1950’s setting, the members of Eddy and the Falcons have the long hair and beards of 1960s rock musicians. The idea of rock musicians revisiting the rock and roll past and its attendant subcultural identities is thus put into play once again.

Although *Introducing Eddy and the Falcons* is in many ways a northern English counterpart to the southern Californian *Cruising with Ruben and the Jets*, it is sufficiently different to necessitate a separate analysis and its own position on my proposed continuum. To make the discriminations necessary to explain how Eddy and the Falcons differ from Ruben and the Jets, I contrast them in terms of rock auteurship. As Straw indicates, the rock criticism of the 1970s emphasized “The importance of performer biography and personal vision...[and] explicitly adopted many of the concerns of auteurist film criticism” (11). (My own approach here echoes this trend, as I have identified the work of rock groups for the most part as reflecting the respective personal visions of particular individuals.) The premise of auteurist rock criticism was articulated by the American critic Jon Landau, who said, “the criterion of art in rock is the capacity of the musician to create a personal, almost private, universe and to express it fully” (qtd. in Frith 53). As Frith has wisely suggested, rock auteurship is not limited to any one function in the music production process. A rock auteur “may be writer, singer, instrumentalist, band, record producer, or even engineer” (53). Brian Wilson, the writer, arranger, instrumentalist, singer, and producer responsible for the most acclaimed Beach Boys records, is certainly considered a rock auteur. Nonperforming producers whose recordings have notable stylistic signatures, such as Phil Spector, are also labeled as rock auteurs. Arguably, even singers like Joe Cocker and Janis Joplin, who mostly interpret other people’s songs but articulate them through very distinctive and identifiable vocal styles, could be ranked among rock auteurs.

Rock auteurship and rock authenticity are closely related concepts. Auteurship can be said to be a necessary condition for authenticity in the

sense that rock music, to be considered authentic, must be perceived as the work of an identifiable auteur. Spector, for example, produced records by the girl group The Crystals using two different sets of singers. The Crystals, at least as a recording entity, therefore cannot be an authentic group by the standards of rock ideology, but a measure of authenticity can be recuperated by designating Spector as the auteur of those recordings, by suggesting, in other words, that The Crystals' records give the listener access to Spector's personal vision, if not the singers' or songwriters'. If the concept of auteurship is mapped onto the continuum of authenticity I have extrapolated from rock artists' relationships to rock and roll music, the poles of the continuum correspond directly to auteur status. At one extreme, a figure such as Lennon has impeccable credentials in both areas—his music is considered highly authentic and expressive of his personal universe. At the opposite extreme, Sha Na Na can claim neither authenticity nor auteurship. As purveyors of borrowed music, styles, and performance personae unmoored by autobiographical reference, there is no sense in which their performances are expressive of an individualized vision.

The concept of auteurship can help us to make finer grained distinctions among the groups positioned between the continuum's two poles. Although the fictional group Ruben and the Jets is clearly anchored in Zappa's own biography and musical history, Zappa situates himself and the Mothers at one remove from a direct engagement with rock and roll in a way that Lennon, for instance, does not. Zappa thus places the authenticity of his performances of rock and roll music somewhat into question—though not to the degree that Sha Na Na's authenticity is in question. If the relationship of Ruben and the Jets to authenticity is ambivalent, Zappa's auteur status is unambiguous. Zappa is widely regarded as one of rock's most ambitious and sophisticated composers, as well as one of its greatest iconoclasts, and his entire recorded output—including records made with various editions of The Mothers of Invention, with Captain Beefheart, with symphony orchestras or jazz musicians, and under his own name—are all seen as expressing a single, albeit complex, sensibility. *Cruising with Ruben and the Jets* is readily assimilable to Zappa's auteurship. His decision to make a doo-wop album at the height of the psychedelic era can easily be seen as an example of his characteristic refusal to conform to the expectations of rock culture. The simple fact that four of the songs on *Ruben and the Jets* had already appeared—performed quite differently—on *Freak Out!* indicates the

degree of continuity between Ruben and the Jets and the Mothers' oeuvre. *Freak Out!* also includes other songs in a doo-wop style, including "Go Cry on Somebody Else's Shoulder," which Zappa describes in the liner notes to that album as "very greasy," the same adjective he later applied to Ruben and the Jets. From the start, then, The Mothers of Invention staked out doo-wop—treated as parody—as part of their stylistic territory. Ruben and the Jets represent that part of Zappa's vision, spun off from the group's primary identity but with the Mothers clearly standing behind them. (Sha Na Na can be understood as Ruben and the Jets without the Mothers—an inauthentic group that cannot be recuperated as authentic by reference to auteurship.) Despite Zappa's ambivalent relationship to rock and roll, the fact that *Ruben and the Jets* can be readily seen as a product of his auteurship trumps the group's fictionality and positions the album in the middle of the continuum but toward the pole of authenticity.

Despite its many similarities to *Cruising with Ruben and the Jets*, Wizzard's *Introducing Eddy and the Falcons* is a somewhat different case. Wood, the leader of Wizzard, is a figure not entirely dissimilar to Zappa, in that he is a remarkably talented multi-instrumentalist and songwriter with a satirical bent, a keen ear for the particulars of musical styles, and an ability to play in a variety of musical idioms, ranging from rock and roll to free jazz. But the construction of Eddy and the Falcons is different from that of Ruben and the Jets in several significant ways. For one thing, Wood does not create a discursive context for the fictional group—there is no biography or information about Eddy and the Falcons, only the artifacts depicted on the record cover. Wood does not provide direct links between Eddy and the Falcons and his own early career in the way that both Lennon and Zappa do. In addition, the music on the recording covers a variety of styles, from rock and roll to rockabilly to teen ballads to an evocation of Spector's "Wall of Sound" production style. The variety of styles is not significant in itself—Lennon, too, covers a variety of early rock and roll styles on his album. What is important, however, is that whereas Lennon is the key presence in his renditions of the songs—it is crucial to the aura of authenticity that we be continuously conscious of the fact that it is *John Lennon* singing this material—Wood disappears into the material itself. Wood's voice—perhaps a rock musician's most identifiable trait—is very different on each track. Wood alters the range, timbre, and accent of his voice—all of the various accents he uses are American—in keeping with the conventions of each musical genre he emulates. He shapes his voice to the particular style of each song, rather

than interpreting the songs in a manner that stamps them with his personality as a performer.¹⁵

Whereas Zappa's doo-wop songs are faithful to that style but not directly reminiscent of other songs, Wood's songs are frequently pastiches that sound very similar to other, well-known songs. "Everyday I Wonder," for example, borrows the well-known organ riff from Del Shannon's "Runaway" and bears a strong resemblance to the earlier song—the famous organ solo from Shannon's recording reappears in an arrangement for double reeds. Similarly, "Come Back Karen" strongly resembles Neil Sedaka's "Oh Carol." Wood's use of pastiche has the curious effect of robbing Eddy and the Falcons of authenticity, even though their music accurately reflects styles of the 1950s and early 1960s. The fact that the Falcons' songs clearly borrow from other songs makes them referential in a way that Zappa's doo-wop songs are not. Because Wood's songs sound like other songs but are not those other songs, they seem inauthentic even in comparison with Sha Na Na's repertoire, which does consist, after all, of real 1950s music.

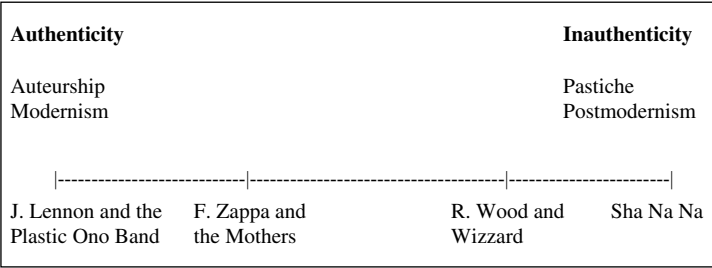
Wood's use of pastiche and his chameleon-like disappearance into the sonic environments of his songs present interesting problems for assessing Wood's auteurship. The existence of a recorded compilation entitled *Roy Wood: The Definite Album* that includes material from his work with The Move, The Electric Light Orchestra, Wizzard, and under his own name suggests that there are continuities in his work since the mid-1960s that might qualify him as an auteur. Indeed there are: the eccentric use of such orchestral instruments as the cello and the bassoon in a rock context characterizes much of Wood's work since at least 1966, for example. But one of the central traits that unifies Wood's work is precisely the referentiality of his songs, his use of pastiche. One of The Move's UK hits, "Blackberry Way" (1969), for instance, clearly derives from The Beatles' "Penny Lane." Another example of pastiche in Wood's oeuvre is "1st Movement" from the first Electric Light Orchestra album, *No Answer* (1972), which strongly resembles an earlier popular example of classical/pop fusion, Mason Williams' "Classical Gas" (1968). On Wood's hit single "Forever" (1973), his singing, musical arrangement, and recording technique alternate between a style similar to that of The Beach Boys and another that mimics Sedaka's teen ballads. Although Wood is certainly a rock auteur, the "personal, almost private universe" his work expresses seems not to consist of elements that provide access to his biography, experiences, emotions, vision, or psyche. Rather, his private universe

would seem to be largely made up of stylistic elements derived from the history of rock and pop music. Paradoxically, what makes Wood distinctive as a creator of rock music is his recombinant approach to composition, the way he makes his own work by cannibalizing existing songs and styles. He is an auteur whose signature is his very lack of signature or his appropriation of the signatures of others.

I indicated earlier that the ID bracelet bearing the name Wizzard depicted on the cover of *Introducing Eddy and the Falcons* reveals the true authorship of the album and exposes Eddy and the Falcons as a fictional guise assumed by another group. But whereas The Mothers of Invention provide a grounding identity for Ruben and the Jets, Wizzard does not perform the same function for Eddy and the Falcons. This is because Wizzard, like Eddy and the Falcons, is itself a group of questionable authenticity. After disbanding The Move and leaving The Electric Light Orchestra, Wood created Wizzard—also called, significantly, Roy Wood's Wizzard—in 1972 as a vehicle for his musical concerns. The group qua group has no specific identity beyond that—although the names of its other members are known, they are of little importance. Wood wrote all of Wizzard's songs, produced their recordings, provided their lead vocals, and played most of the instruments on the recordings, using the group primarily as a way of performing the same material in live settings. Behind Eddy and the Falcons, then, is another cipher, Wizzard. Behind Wizzard is Wood, an enigmatic figure whose elusive presence seems designed to maneuver around the ideologies of authenticity and auteurship so important to rock, without allowing himself to be pinned down. An assessment of all factors related to authenticity and auteurship thus suggests that Eddy and the Falcons' position on the continuum should be in the middle ground but toward the pole of inauthenticity.

Part III

My identification of the pole of inauthenticity with such practices as simulation and pastiche suggests that rock artists whose work lies close to that pole have an affinity with what is often called postmodernism. At a coarse analytical level, the terms modernism and postmodernism seem to map efficiently onto the others I have used here, with authenticity, auteurship, and modernism at one pole of the continuum and inauthenticity, pastiche, and postmodernism at the other. Although the various relationships among these critical terms and the musicians I have discussed here



could be represented by a more complex graphical metaphor, the linear model of a continuum provides a clear rendering.

I would hardly be the first analyst of rock to suggest that the emphasis on authenticity and auteurship in the rock counterculture of the 1960s constitutes a modernist outlook. Both Grossberg and Straw suggest that the diminished importance of authenticity and auteurship in the rock culture of the 1980s indicates a major historical shift to postmodernism. In general, I find this to be the most productive way of thinking about postmodernism in rock. Any attempt to identify postmodernist tendencies solely by looking at the textual features of rock music seems unlikely to produce satisfactory results because there simply are not consistent criteria one can apply (Goodwin 82–5). To focus on authenticity and auteurship is to focus not just on what music is performed and how it is performed but centrally on the ways in which musicians perform their relationships to the music—their identities as musicians—and the degree to which those performances conform to ideologically determined expectations. These performances of musical identity are manifest not only in compositions and sound recordings but also in the kinds of texts and images I have discussed here: record covers, liner notes, incidental sounds on recordings, all objects not usually subjected to close analysis by historians and critics of rock.

The story I have told here could be seen as the prehistory of the shift to postmodernism in the 1980s identified by Straw and Grossberg. In Grossberg’s view, there have always been practices within rock that contest the ideology of authenticity (205), and it has been part of my project here to suggest an approach to writing the history of rock that places those practices alongside the ideologically dominant ones rather than suppressing them, which is what usually happens. As I noted earlier, Sha Na Na is commonly omitted from the history of rock—Stokes and Dister are very rare exceptions. Figures such as Zappa and Wood are often

seen as ingenious tricksters and iconoclasts whose work has interest but is finally marginal to the central concerns of rock culture. Through my admittedly artificial conceptual device of a continuum on which to place the performances of a variety of musicians, I am suggesting that we may better understand what is at stake in the enactment of rock's ideology of authenticity by looking at the full range of artistic practices around it, perhaps especially at those complex cases I have placed in the middle range of the continuum.

Despite the postmodernist leanings suggested by the simulationist practices I have identified here, especially in the work of Sha Na Na and Wood, there is one important way in which all the artists I have discussed may be best described as modernists or even traditionalists. The context in which I have examined their work has to do specifically with how they perform their identities in relation to the history of rock and the development of historical consciousness within rock culture. Grossberg refers to the counter-ideological tendency in rock as "authentic inauthenticity," which "says that authenticity itself is a construction, an image, which is no better or worse than any other. Authenticity is, in fact, no more authentic than any other self-consciously created identity. This logic foregrounds an ironic nihilism which refuses to valorize any single image, identity, action or value as somehow intrinsically better than any other" (206).

Whether or not this characterization is an accurate description of some popular music in the 1980s, it provides only a partial description of the performances I have discussed here. It would certainly be fair to say that Sha Na Na, Zappa, and Wood all foreground, to varying degrees, the idea that rock authenticity is a construct no more authentic, in an absolute sense, than any other constructed identity. But none of the artists I have discussed here implies that all images and identities are of equal value. As artificial and parodic as Sha Na Na's performance personae are, the music they perform credibly has historical importance in the context of rock culture, and that is one reason they perform it. The same is true for Zappa's doo-wop and the many styles performed by Wizzard. Because each of these groups performs musical styles that are historically meaningful in rock culture, albeit through the mediation of fictional entities, I will reverse Grossberg's formulation to describe their stance as one of inauthentic authenticity: the music itself finally retains the authenticity of historical reference regardless of the self-conscious and sometimes parodic fictions framing its performance.

Lennon, Sha Na Na, and Wizzard all can be legitimately accused of homogenizing a wide variety of disparate musical styles with different historical and cultural origins for the sake of performing a uniform conception of “the fifties.” As Smethurst suggests, however, such homogenization was an historically accurate reflection “of the experience of early rock ‘n’ roll audiences who listened to radio stations and attended package shows in which a wide range of musical styles and genres were presented by a racially, ethnically, and regionally diverse group of performers.” The approach to history of the 1950s revivalists did not constitute the “bad” postmodern historicism Jameson describes as an “indiscriminate appetite for dead styles and fashion” (286) because they did not abstract the styles from their historical significance to rock culture, especially in the context of the renewed interest in rock and roll that began in the late 1960s. While Zappa, Sha Na Na, and Wizzard all ironically distance themselves from the music they perform—again, to varying degrees—through the creation of artificial personae, their choices of “dead” musical styles to perform and pastiche are hardly indiscriminate: all are clearly significant to rock’s sense of its own history.

All musical styles and performed identities are not equal in this context, and it is not coincidental that certain signs reappear across all of the work I have discussed. These are the signs of affiliation to various working-class subcultures (greasers, rockers, teddy boys, and pachucos) and to music scenes (northern England, southern California, New York, Hamburg—and, implicitly, Liverpool) considered to have played important roles in the evolution of rock from rock and roll. It is worth noting that all the groups I have discussed contextualize their performances of rock and roll sociogeographically. The cover of Lennon’s *Rock ‘n’ Roll* both represents him as belonging to a specific British youth subculture and refers to the frequency with which British bands of the early 1960s worked in Germany. As I have discussed, *Ruben and the Jets* constructs The Mothers of Invention as the pachuco group they were taken to be in mid-1960s Los Angeles. Eddy and the Falcons are identified specifically as a local phenomenon belonging to the working-class milieu of the UK’s industrial north. Even Sha Na Na were frequently introduced with the phrase “from the streets of New York.” This association of rock and roll with specific cities, class identities, ethnicities, and music scenes is open to several interpretations. In part, it may be that the groups and individuals who made these recordings retained a sentimental attachment to their origins. Their emphasis on specific geographies may also reflect nostalgia

for a popular music industry that once operated on the scale of a local cottage industry but had swelled to the proportions of a multinational corporate enterprise by the late 1960s. By that time, the likelihood of seeing Eddy on the streets of the hometown he shares with his fans had diminished considerably.

Olson discusses the connection between the concept of belonging to a particular, localized music scene and authenticity. He argues that “Place-based scenes produce places where one can presumably live an ‘authentic’ relation to rock in one’s daily life” (282).¹⁶ This comment suggests that there is a connection between geography and biography in the relationship of rock musicians to authenticity. To one extent or another, Lennon, Zappa, and Wood all assert their respective biographical relationships to rock and roll in terms of particular geographies, music scenes, and ethnic, class, and subcultural identities. Even Sha Na Na evokes such identities, albeit without asserting a biographical connection to them. If insisting that some identities are more worth performing than others is a modernist gesture, then the various degrees of acceptance and contestation of rock’s ideology of authenticity I have identified in the music of the rock and roll revival period are firmly inscribed within modernism.¹⁷

Notes

1. A few random reference points: Cat Mother and the All-Night Newsboys, then based in Greenwich Village, had a minor hit in 1969 with “Good Old Rock ’n’ Roll,” a medley of songs from the 1950s from which I have taken my title. In the early 1970s, T. Rex and other British glam rockers derived a new genre of pop music from a fresh engagement with the sounds of the 1950s and sometimes covered rock and roll songs from that era. Even Steeleye Span, a British group whose repertoire consists almost entirely of traditional and folk music performed on rock instruments, recorded an a capella version of Buddy Holly’s “Rave On” in 1971 and renditions of the Teddy Bears’ “To Know Him is to Love Him” (featuring Bowie on saxophone) and the Four Seasons’ “Rag Doll” in 1974 and 1978, respectively.

2. I use the word rock to denote a kind of popular music played mostly by white musicians that emerged around 1963, as opposed to rock and roll, many of whose earliest performers were African-American and which belongs to the 1950s. For a more detailed discussion, see Auslander (66–7).

3. Although *American Graffiti* takes place in 1962, its cultural setting strongly evokes the 1950s.

4. I am omitting Lennon's participation in The Beatles as a point of reference here because the performance of The Plastic Ono Band at Toronto apparently cemented Lennon's desire to leave the group. For Lennon himself, the performance of rock and roll there and on his *Rock 'n' Roll* album seems to have had to do with returning to his pre-Beatles self to establish a musical identity apart from the group.

5. I refer to Sha Na Na in the present tense because the group is still active, at least as of this writing. See their website at <http://www.shanana.com>.

6. Examples cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary* suggest that in the UK, "rocker" and "greaser" can be used interchangeably to designate the same working-class subculture. In the US, however, the term "greaser" most often has specific ethnic, as well as class, implications. It seems to have originated around the middle of the nineteenth century in California, where it was used as a highly derogatory slang epithet to describe a person of Mexican or Spanish heritage. On the east coast of the United States, the term was applied to Italian and Puerto Rican immigrants. By the mid-1960s in California, the term lost some of its ethnic specificity when it was applied to motorcycle enthusiasts: in subcultural terms, greasers (bikers) were distinguished from surfers. A few years later, during the rock and roll revival period under consideration here, the term "greaser" was used in the US to evoke an image that combined the biker reference with Italian-American identity: Henry Winkler's character on *Happy Days*, Arthur (The Fonz) Fonzarelli, exemplifies this image. This is the version of the greaser image taken up by Sha Na Na, a version that evokes an ethnic stereotype in more benign terms than its exclusively derogatory application to Mexican-Americans on the West Coast. For a very complete account of the etymology and usage of "greaser" and related terms in both the U.S. and UK, see Altz.

7. I refer here to Barthes's 1964 semiotic analysis of a French advertisement that he sees as evoking "Italianicity," an identity "based on a familiarity with certain tourist stereotypes" rather than direct cultural experience (17).

8. Continuing this tradition of stage names, Screamin' Scott Simon, Sha Na Na's long-time stand-in for Jerry Lee Lewis, also performs in Los Angeles as Eddie "Hong Kong" Tailor with a blues trio called Eddie "Hong Kong" Tailor and the Prom Kings. This latter group is a synthesis of two important backward-looking musical simulations of the 1970s: Sha Na Na meets the Blues Brothers. See <http://www.eddiehongkongtailor.com>.

9. The Band, for example, whose history includes stints as the Canadian backing band for rockabilly Ronnie Hawkins, then for Bob Dylan when he "went electric" in the mid-1960s, recorded *Moondog Matinee* in 1973, an album consisting of covers of rock and roll, soul, rhythm and blues, and doo-wop numbers.

10. Bowie and Ferry each released an album of cover versions of earlier songs in 1973—Bowie's *Pin Ups* and Ferry's *These Foolish Things*. On these albums, Bowie and Ferry recorded music by other groups from the 1960s in styles that stress the artifice of rock musicians' performance personae.

11. The Ur-text for these instances, of course, is The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), which is framed by the conceit that The Beatles are a brass band of that name. Neither the brass band image nor the music on *Sgt. Pepper* evokes the 1950s, but the premise of one group's pretending to be another originates with that enormously influential album.

12. It is interesting that there was a wholesale return to 1950s-style names during the 1970s and 1980s, typically by postpunk and New Wave groups. Elvis Costello and the Attractions, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Katrina and the Waves, and Martha and the Muffins are but a few examples.

13. For a useful, brief historical overview of the development of Chicano rock from the 1940s until the 1980s, including the genesis of the pachuco, see Guevara. (The author, Ruben Guevara, was, at one time, the lead singer for the "real" Ruben and the Jets.) Chicano groups that had national hits in the 1960s but were not generally acknowledged to be of Mexican heritage include ? and the Mysterians, Cannibal and The Headhunters, The Premiers, and The Midnitters.

14. A live recording on The Mothers of Invention's album *Burnt Weeny Sandwich* (1969), apparently made in the United Kingdom, includes the sounds of police officers disciplining the audience. A heckler in the audience shouts unintelligibly, presumably in reference to the presence of the uniformed officers. Zappa is heard to respond: "Everyone in this room is wearing a uniform and don't kid yourself."

15. Much the same point can be made about Wood's earlier solo album *Boulders* (1973). In the context of rock ideology, the solo album is considered an opportunity for a musician primarily identified as a member of a particular group to present a truly authentic, personal expression not possible in the group context (solo performers cannot make solo albums!). *Boulders* has the earmarks of a very personal project. Wood wrote all the songs and played all the instruments on the recording. Although it partakes of a few musical gestures one might consider experimental—such as using a bucket of water as an instrument and playing the instrumental solos of a hard rocking tune on cello and bassoon—the album is musically conventional and very accessible. But it gives no access to a consistently defined identity one could call Roy Wood. As on *Eddy and the Falcons*, the songs are stylistically very different from one another and Wood sings in different accents, employs different parts of his range, and alters his

voice electronically. While the trappings of the solo album encourage the listener to perceive *Boulders* as Wood's personal expression—it certainly provides ample testimony to his skills as a multi-instrumentalist and musical conceptualist—the recording itself produces Wood as more of an absence than a presence.

16. Olson argues that identification with a particular place-based scene has replaced identification with a particular musical genre as a measure of authenticity, now that popular music audiences no longer seem concerned with distinctions among styles of music. I would suggest that his argument, in its general form, is valid as well for earlier popular music cultures in which stylistic and genre distinctions did matter. Commitment to a particular style of music can be consistent with commitment to a local scene.

17. Another case in point is that of Todd Rundgren's album *Faithful* (1976), the second side of which consists of Rundgren's near-perfect recreations of famous recordings by The Beatles, Hendrix, Bob Dylan, The Beach Boys, and others. On a later recording, *Deface the Music* (1980), Rundgren and his group, Utopia, perform a whole album of songs written in various styles associated with The Beatles. The album as a whole traces The Beatles' stylistic development chronologically. In both instances, Rundgren makes a number of gestures that can be seen as postmodernist. The blankness of the motivation behind making recordings whose purpose is to sound like other recordings is one, as is the way those recordings throw into question the authenticity of Rundgren's own songs on the first side of *Faithful*. Where are we to locate his artistic identity—in his overt stylistic appropriations or his supposedly "original" songs, which inevitably also reflect other people's musical ideas? Rundgren also voids his own identity and that of his group, Utopia, by indiscriminately labeling some records as his own solo albums and others as the group's, even though all are made by the same personnel and there is no apparent reason why the recreations of 1960s music on *Faithful* should be identified with Rundgren and The Beatles pastiches on *Deface the Music* should be identified as the work of Utopia. On the other hand, Rundgren's approach to the history of rock is stolidly modernist. All of the songs on the first side of *Faithful* were originally released in 1967. Rundgren's remaking them in 1976, Year One of the punk revolution, reads in retrospect as an homage to the rock predecessors being trashed by punk. In this context, the word "faithful" comes to stand for Rundgren's ongoing fidelity to the rock counterculture. It is not at all insignificant that the works and styles he chooses to recreate on both the albums I have mentioned belong to historically important rock artists. To recreate the style of Hendrix or The Beatles has very different implications within rock culture from recreating the style of Pat Boone.

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