

From the Archive #4: Under the Influence of Rhythm

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Abstract

In an article from the New York Times' 1956 coverage of the impact of Blackboard Jungle on British teenagers, who reportedly slashed seats, threw lightbulbs and lit cigarettes, set off fireworks, and otherwise danced uncontrollably along with Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" (the song which opened the film): According to The Manchester Guardian, "'One [...]

Keywords

Music (Subfield), Archival, Listening, Music, Rock Canon, Sound Studies



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In an article from the *New York Times*' 1956 coverage of the impact of *Blackboard Jungle* on British teenagers, who reportedly slashed seats, threw lightbulbs and lit cigarettes, set off fireworks, and otherwise danced



uncontrollably along with Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" (the song which opened the film):

According to *The Manchester Guardian*, "One cannot help suspecting a certain amount of auto-intoxication, the dancers going to meet the rhythm halfway. It does not move them (or move them so powerfully) unless they go there with intent to be moved."

If one was arrested for smashing windows or obstructing traffic, it would be no excuse to plead he was under the influence of rhythm."

So, although Miami Sound Machine once famously warned us all that "the rhythm is gonna get you," apparently, it will only get those of us who already want to get got. Something to remember when you are trying to explain yourself on a hungover Sunday morning.

JSA

