

The Music Business and Technology in the Sixties

Transistor Radios



The first commercial transistor radio, the Regency TR-1 from Texas Instruments, became available in 1954. It cost \$49.95 (the equivalent of about \$400 today).

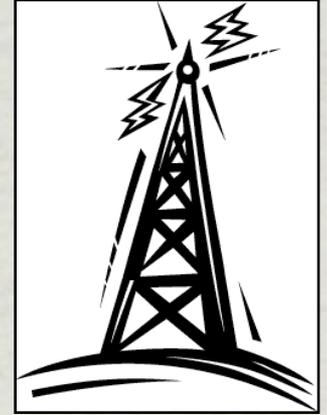
Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo released the Sony TR-55 in 1955. Its “pocketable” TR-63, released in 1957 was popular in the U.S. In 1958 the company changed its name to Sony and released the TR-610, which was the first transistor radio to sell 500,000 units.

Sales of transistor radios dramatically expanded in the 1960s as cheap imports from Hong Kong lowered prices below \$20 and even under \$10.

Although they have declined in popularity with the rise of portable digital audio players, with an estimated 7 billion in existence today, transistor radios remain the most popular communications device.

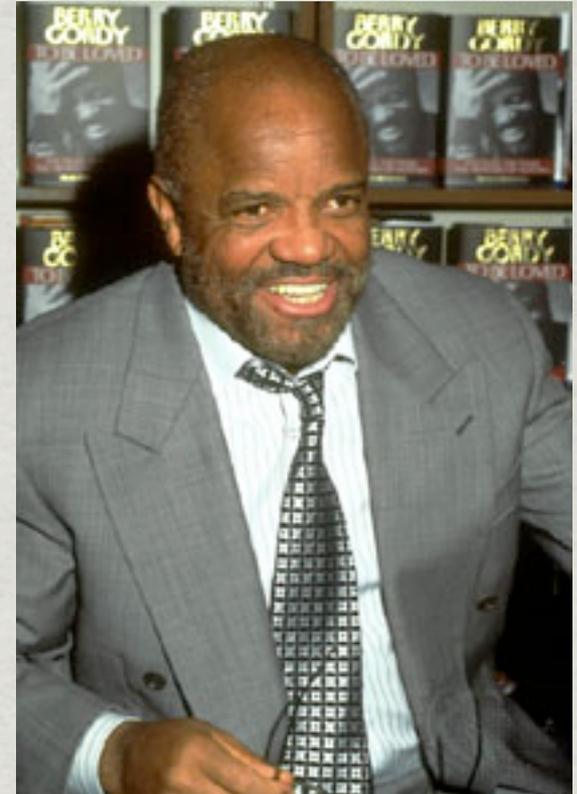
FM Radio

- * 1965: Bob Dylan's 6-minute long "Like A Rolling Stone" went to # 2 on the Billboard chart.
- * 1966: FCC ruled that co-owned AM/FM stations had to play distinct programming on each band.
- * July 30, 1966: first FM rock station WOR-FM in New York City with Murray the K as DJ.
- * FM radio became a popular medium for alternative music and new formats developed:
 - * Freeform in which DJ had complete control within FCC regulations. The first freeform station was KPFA with John Leonard's "Nightsounds" program. The longest running freeform station is WFMU-FM in New Jersey.
 - * Eclectic in which DJ has considerable freedom within a much expanded playlist that includes album cuts. A popular example was WNEW-FM in New York City.
- * 1978 FM listeners finally outnumbered AM listeners.



Motown

- * Popular music was “segregated” through the 1950s. “Race” records were marketed specifically to African-Americans. White artists recorded cover versions of rhythm and blues hits for white audiences.
- * Radio stations such as WDIA in Memphis, the first American radio station programmed by African-Americans, helped break down this musical segregation by exposing young white people to black artists.
- * This musical segregation was also undercut by white performers like Elvis Presley whose music echoed its rhythm and blues influences.
- * In 1959 Berry Gordy started Tamla Records which became Motown Records. The recent film *Dream Girls* was based on Gordy.
- * During the 1960s Motown developed a distinctive sound that included prominent tambourines and electric bass lines, as well as call and response singing styles.



BERRY GORDY

During the 1960s, “soul” music became broadly popular. Motown produced 110 top ten hits during the decade and nine # 1 hits, including Mary Wells’ “My Guy” (1964); Marvin Gaye’s “I Heard It Through the Grapevine” (1965); The Temptations’ “My Girl” (1965); and the Jackson Five’s “I Want You Back” (1969).



Mary Wells



Marvin Gaye



The Temptations



The Jackson Five

faces



The Faces: Rod Stewart, Ron Wood, Ronnie Lane, Ian McLagen, and Kenny Jones

“Around the Pynth” (1970)

Stereo

The first commercial stereo record was released by Audio Fidelity (U.S.) in 1958. It featured the Dukes of Dixieland on one side and railroad sounds on the other.

WEFM in Chicago and WGFM in Schenectady started broadcasting in stereo in 1961.

During the 1960s most albums were released in stereophonic and monaural version.