Chapter Overview:

Throughout the late 1970's to the 1980's the massive rise of technology, communications, computers, elevated business and materialism to new heights. Video games and screen televisions mimicked real life. With the advent of cable television and the VCR, America lost its "television identity" of the 1950's and 1960's: People no longer watched the same TV shows at the same time.

The Reagan administration and conservatism largely negated the liberalism of the 1960's. Personal looks were everything. 1980's plastic surgery and self-improvement transformed the 1970's "me generation" to the 1980's "greed generation."

In the late 1970's to Early 1980's the bottom fell out of the music market. The reasons were many: excessive rock fragmentation, disenchantment with disco and formula music, an aging baby-boom generation—many now "yuppies" (young urban professionals), a baby-bust generation tired of commercialism and materialistic exploitation.

To make matters worse, young kids spent a great deal of time and much, if not all, spare money for what seemed to be an infinite variety of video games. The industry turnaround finally came in 1982 with Michael Jackson's *Thriller* album. *Thriller* almost single-handedly revived the recording industry as young fans picked up a few additional pop albums on the way out of the music store.

The Evolution of a New Style

1. **A new musical style is born**

2. **The style is rejected by the status quo as "non-music"**

3. **The style is mocked through humor or parody**

4. **The style is popularized and commercialized**

5. **A "craze" of imitative, derivative groups follow**

6. **A rapid decline ensues after the craze**

6. **The style's most viable characteristics are absorbed by mainstream of pop music.**

7. **The style becomes the new status quo, only to be rejected by newer styles**

8. **Ultimately the style either falls into disuse or enters a period of refinement**

The Roots of Rap and Hip Hop

<u>The Last Poets</u> were rappers of the 1960's civil rights era. Their 1970 album laid the groundwork for Hip-Hop

Music of the Inner City: The 1980's

A growing awareness of inner city problems and lifestyle had an important impact on pop culture of the 1980's. Jamaican, ghetto and barrio influences became assimilated into pop music in a similar way that American blues was absorbed by pop culture during the 1950's.

Rap/Hip-Hop (1978-1990's)

Rap began with the toasting tradition: DJ's delivering vocal dialog over pre-recorded instrumental tracks by soul and funk performers such as James Brown and Rick James, and also disco. The toasting tradition, that of rhythmic storytelling, is not exclusive to rap; it is found in southern social get togethers and in reggae. Originating in the Bronx, N.Y., the first rappers such as DJ Kool Herc, mixed the best sections of two or more songs together to create a new, more energetic rendition. Originally listened to by black urban youths and trendy inner-city white teenagers, the style attained a multi-racial acceptance in the American mainstream by the mid 1980's.

Rap was only one of the several urban art forms developed in the late 1970's. Others include street dancing, freedom writing, new styles of language usage and clothing. The blanket term generally used to describe ghetto culture art forms of the late 1970's through 1980's was Hip-Hop.

The rap style makes extensive use of borrowed (sampled) material, microphone techniques, manual record manipulation (scratching), rhythm and rhyme word-play, and slang. The lyrics are usually straight forward and street-wise.

The Five Boroughs of New York City:
1: Manhattan
2: Brooklyn
3: Queens
4:The Bronx – birthplace of Hip-Hop
5: Staten Island

A pivotal moment in Hip-Hop

August 11, 1973
1520 Sedgwick Ave.
South Bronx

Kool Herc Dj'ed for his sister's
party in the community room
using two turntables,
a mixer, and two copies
of the same record.

Attendees included
Grandmaster Flash,
Afrika Bambaataa, and KRS-One

Kool Herc
Jamaican immigrant
to the Bronx

Kool Herc is widely regarded as hip-hop's founding father: He emphasized the "breaks" - extended bass/drum beats.
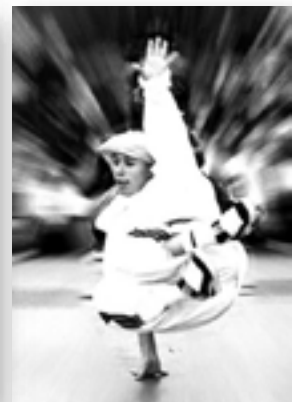He coined the term "b-boy".

The Four Traditional Elements of Hip-Hop

DJ's or spinners

MC's (Emcees)

Dancers

Graffiti, street art

DJ's

Grandmaster Flash was one the first **true performers**, doing **scratches with various body parts**, from his elbows to his feet.

Flash introduced the, **backspin technique**, **headphone mix** and **punch phrasing** (horn hits)

Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five wrote one of hip-hop's most heralded songs: **"The Message"**.

MC's

Originally MC's used rhythm and rhyme verse to transition between songs and/or to add political or social commentary or public announcements.

Break Dancing:

1974 – Precursor: Michael Jackson "Robot Dance"

Competition, "cutting" contest

Traditional dance moves:

Top Rock – Introduction
6 step – Floor/footwork
Freezes – Striking a pose
Power moves – Flashiest and most impressive moves

Aerosol Art (Graffiti)

Graffiti has come to mean unauthorized or unlawful decoration (defacing?) of public places using acrylic spray paint.

The practice of painting murals on subway cars and trains in New York evolved into an art form in the 1970's to 1980's. The practice declined after 1989 when New York transit officials began removing graffiti on a daily basis.

In 1977, Grand Wizzard Theodore, age 13, accidentally invents the scratch mix

Old School Rap – (1979-1984)
Few syllables per bar of music with relatively simple rhythms. Songs are often about partying or battling other MCs.

Examples: The Sugarhill Gang "Rappers Delight" (1980)

Notable exception Grandmaster Flash's social conscious song "The Message"

Afrika Bambaataa Aasim (1957-)
He founded Zulu Nation, encouraging black pride. His was a key player in the Electro-Funk style movement
He introduced different types of music and sounds to rap: e.g. Trans Europe Express by the German electro-pop band Kraftwerk.
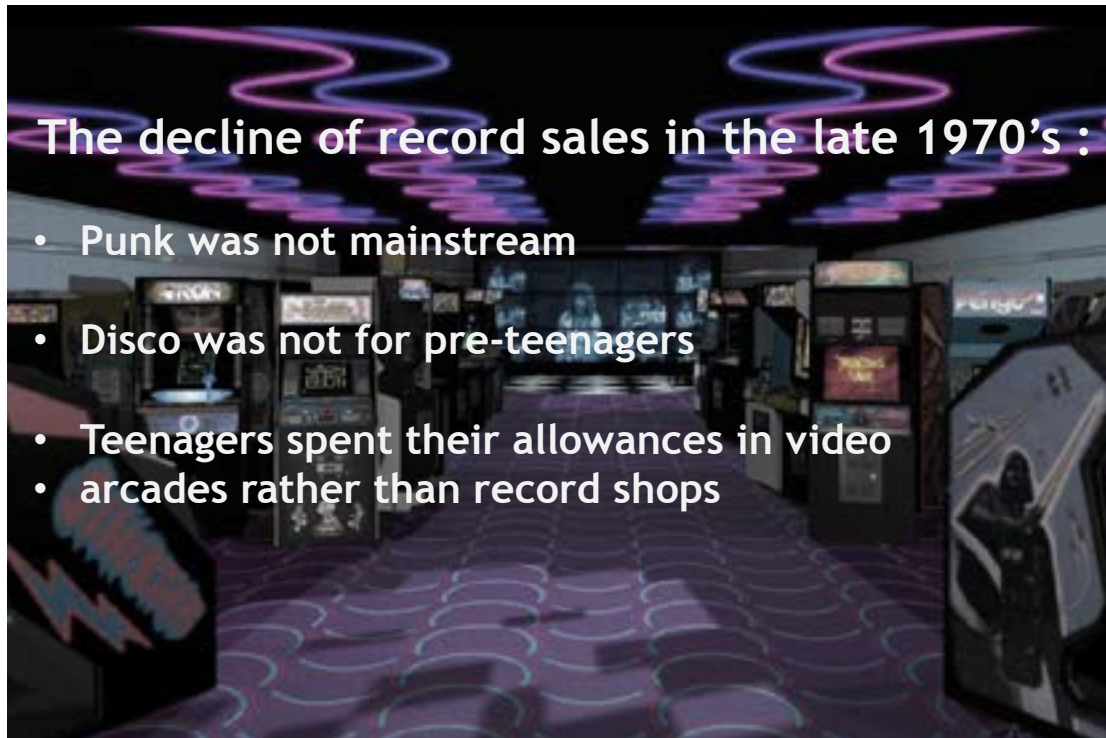
Golden Age Rap – (1986 to early 1994)
Run–DMC
Public Enemy
Beastie Boys
Boogie Down Productions
Eric B. & Rakim

- Musical diversity and experimentation.
- More sampling
- Emphasis on "flow" – how lyrics and beats interact

The decline of record sales in the late 1970's :

- Punk was not mainstream

- Disco was not for pre-teenagers

- Teenagers spent their allowances in video
- arcades rather than record shops

Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) (1981)
Yamaha DX7 keyboard (1983) –
first successful digital synthesizer

Electro-Pop (Robo-Rock) (1980's)

With the availability of synthesizers and drum machines in the early 1980's, non-musicians began to form their own bands. Because many of these performers lacked basic instrumental skills they were dependent on the technology; the machines were playing the musicians. Heavily synthesized and automated, the style shows an acceptance and dependence on technology.

Stage performances were often self-conscious and aloof. The lyrics were usually pessimistic and self-absorbed as in their punk counterparts, or over-materialistic.

MTV (1981)

When MTV started in 1981, it began a movement that permanently changed the way rock was marketed and perceived. The emphasis was on style and color, image rather than substance. A full range of video techniques such as quick cuts, montage, computer animation, and mood characterizations put the visuals on an equal par, or ahead of, the music. MTV had an effect not only on the rock recording industry but on pop marketing in general. Advertising was produced to capture the "MTV feel".

MTV's over-reliance on visual packaging was often criticized. Performers had to adapt their live performances as audiences began to expect performers to be able to recreate their MTV image on stage. Spontaneity, always a hallmark of rock music, was affected by performers striving for MTV video perfection. In an attempt to modify MTV's plastic image, the early 1990's found millions of viewers watching "unplugged" concerts with an emphasis on live music performed before a small audience.

What made music videos possible?

Inexpensive and easy-to-use video recording equipment

The rise of Cable Television

Need for video content
Chroma Key
(green screen digital compositing)

Chroma Key
(green screen digital compositing)

What was so new about Music Videos?

- **Fast-cut video editing**

- **The rise of the independent storyline**

- **Videos become the establish medium for promoting artists**

- **Huge budgets for megastars
  (1/2 Million dollars to produce the 14 minute Thriller video)**

- **The rise of Music Video directors; Michel Gondry, Spike Jonze, Chris Cunningham, Jonathan Glazer, Anton Corbijn, and Stéphane Sednaoui**

What was the downside Music Videos?

Music itself became less important than the video as a whole

Imagination was stifled by a visual storyline

Music became more "canned" and predicable

Artists felt compelled to do a music video for purely financial or business reasons, rather than artistic reasons

Mainstream Pop (Early '80's)

Due in part to the fragmentation and decentralization of rock in the late 1970's, sales levels of pop music declined. This slump came to an end with the release of Michael Jackson's *Thriller* album (1982). The worldwide success of this mainstream album motivated major record companies to compete in the pop field.

Michael Jackson (1958-2009)

One of the biggest stars in the history of pop music, Michael Jackson reached his peak success with the *Thriller* Album (1982), the highest grossing album of all time.

Singer/songwriter/producer Jackson signed a 20 year contract with SONY reportedly worth 1 billion dollars. Single hits include "Billy Jean", "Beat It", "Bad", "Man in the Mirror". Most significant albums are Thriller, Bad, and Dangerous.

Why the <u>Thriller</u> Album mattered:

Huge sales at a time of a declining pop market (<u>Thriller</u> sold over 100 million copies, Jackson received $2.00 per album)

The rise of mainstream pop reinvigorated the music industry; fans bought similar pop albums by Madonna and Prince

The songs were marketed as singles; a movement away from album oriented rock

The songs were all danceable

Michael Jackson was one of the first black artists to be featured on MTV

Madonna (1958-   )

Madonna is one of the most internationally recognizable female rock star of all time. Her accomplishments include eleven Billboard number one records from 1985-1995. As a testament to her drawing power, she signed a 3-year 70 million dollar contract with Time-Warner in 1991.

Some of her major hits include "Like A Virgin" (1985), "Material Girl" (1985), "Crazy For You" (1985), "Like A Prayer" (1989), and "Vogue" (1990)

Prince (1958-2016)

Frequently underrated because of his quirky and often inconsistent output, singer/songwriter/music and film producer Prince was one of the most eclectic performers of the 1980's. A multi-instrumentalist (he sang and played all 27 instruments on his first album)

Prince is equally at home with guitar, keyboards, bass and drums. In the early 1990's, Prince's continual attempt to redefine his image and his excessive sexual posturing obscured the true worth of his musical ability.

West Coast Hardcore Punk Bands

Dead Kennedys (1980)

Punk bands like singer Jello Biafra's band, the Dead Kennedy's, kept hard-core punk alive on the west coast after the initial punk scene had started to diminish. Possibly the best punk band America ever produced, the Dead Kennedy's were politically ultra-left wing (Biafra ran for mayor of San Francisco), and made a cohesive, moral punk statement.

Albums include In God We Trust, Inc, Frankenchrist, Bedtime for Democracy, and Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death.

Metal Evolves:

1. One of the longest surviving rock styles

2. First truly International Rock Style:
   Japan, Germany, Australia, Brazil

3. Metal splits into sub-styles; speed metal, thrash metal, death metal, metalcore

The Thrash Metal 'Big 4'

Metallica (1981 -)

Slayer (1981 -)

Anthrax (1981 -)

Megadeth (1983 -)

Three approaches to music:
Folk Music, Art Music, Pop Music

Folk Music

An *oral* tradition; not formally learned.

Musically primitive

Participatory; the "process" more is important than
   "final product"

Directly reflects the human condition

Functional music; tells a story, is part of a ritual,
   or dance music

Musical training and virtuosity not usually important

Art Music

Strives for perfection and refinement

Extends existing art forms

Strives for preservation and self-perpetuation

Emphasis on technique

Select, initiated audience

Usually non-functional music (art for art's sake)

Popular Music
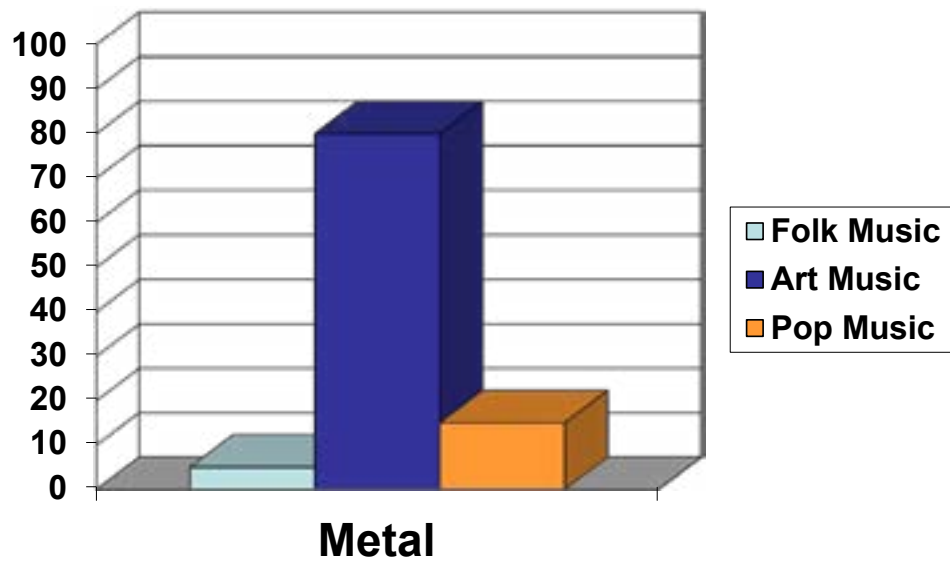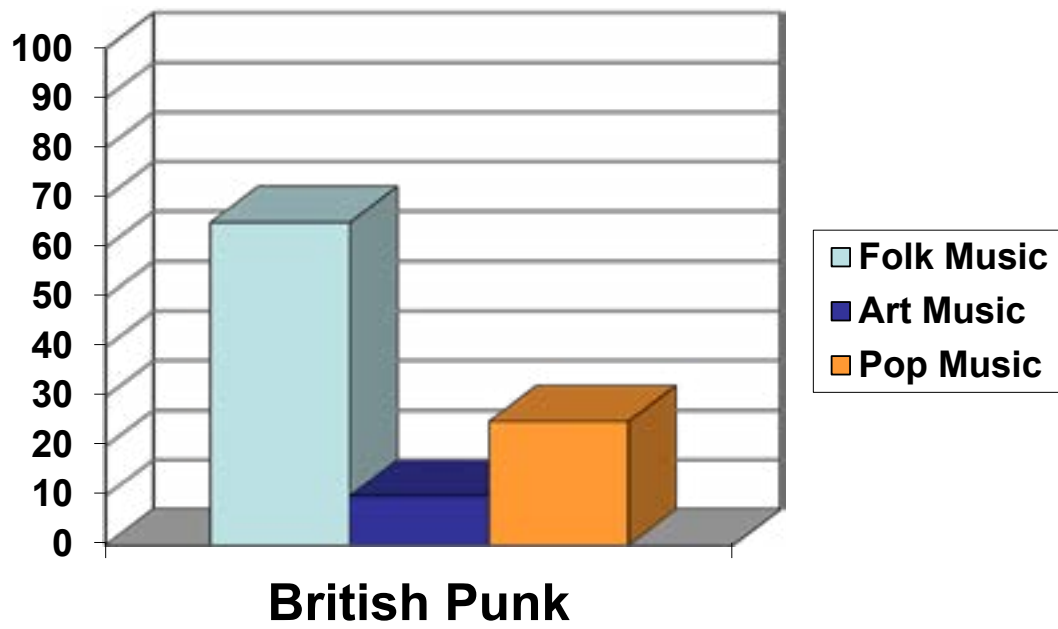
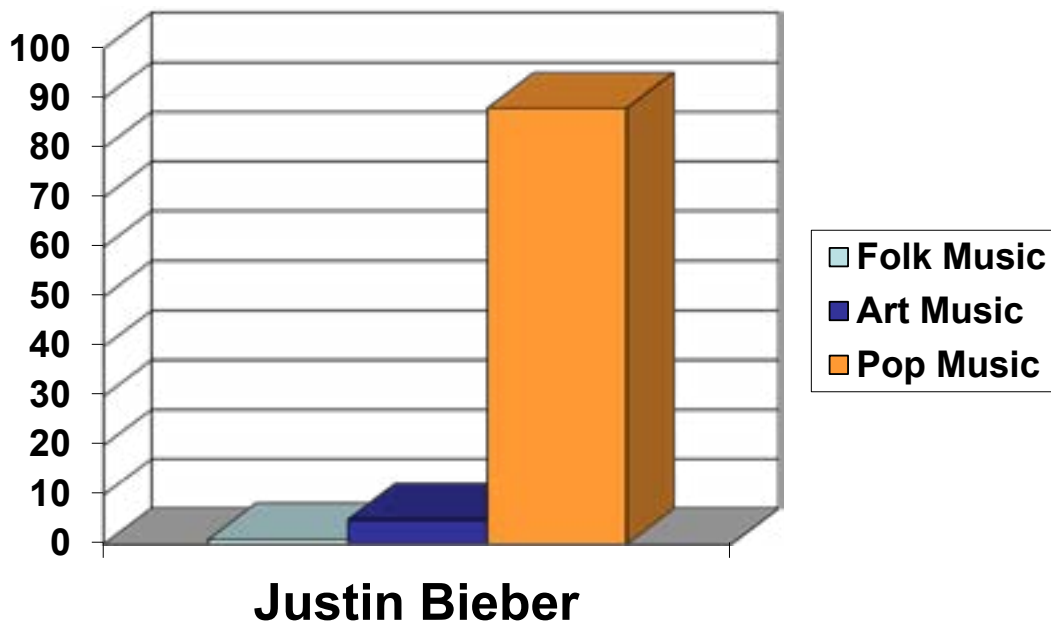High entertainment quotient

Accessible and easily understood

Appeals to the broadest audience

Eclectic, derivative style

Commercialized and based on established formulas

Music industry driven and commoditized

British Punk

Metal

Justin Bieber

Chart legend:
- Folk Music
- Art Music
- Pop Music

U2 (Ireland, 1979)

Members: Bono, vocals; The Edge, guitar; Adam Clayton, bass; Larry Mullen, drums

One of the most successful and acclaimed bands of the 1980's, U2 redefined the stripped-down post punk instrumentation with eloquence and grandeur. Heroic vocals, near perfect guitar playing, attention to detail, and a great variety of musical textures set this band apart from its contemporaries. Their most significant albums include *Boy, War, Unforgettable Fire, The Joshua Tree and Achtung Baby.*
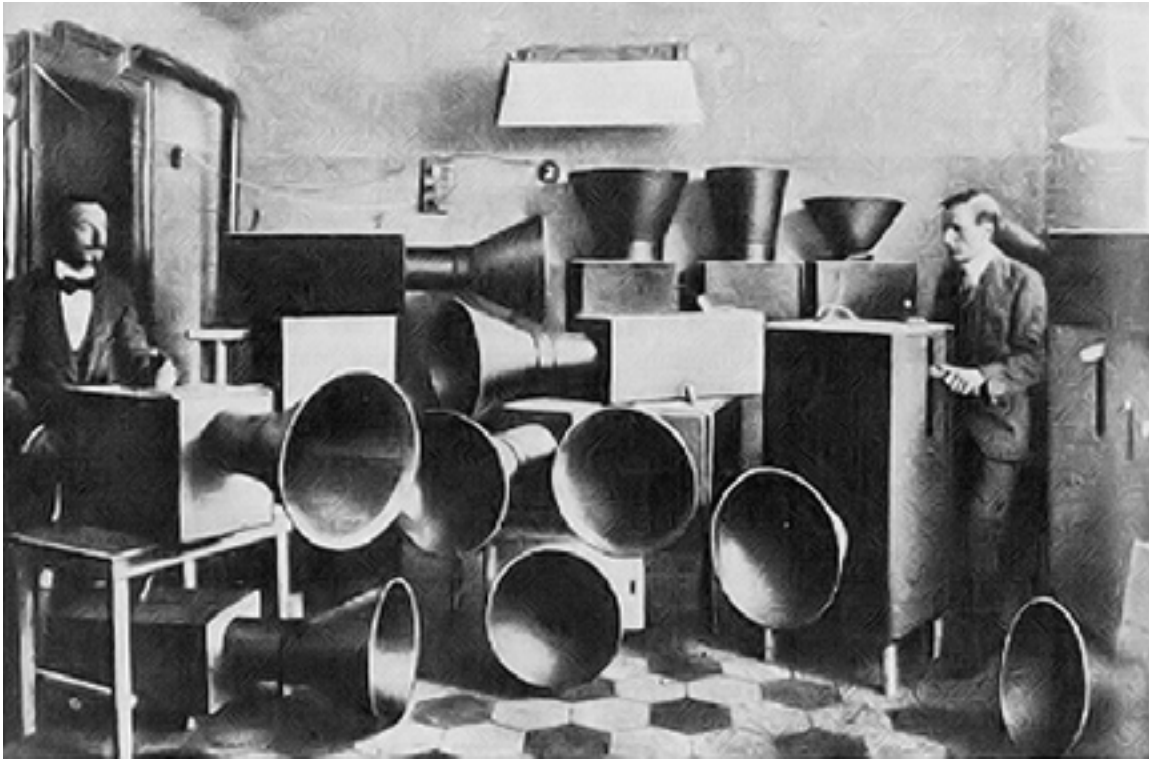
The Art of Noises (L'arte dei Rumori) 1913,
becomes the Futurist manifesto
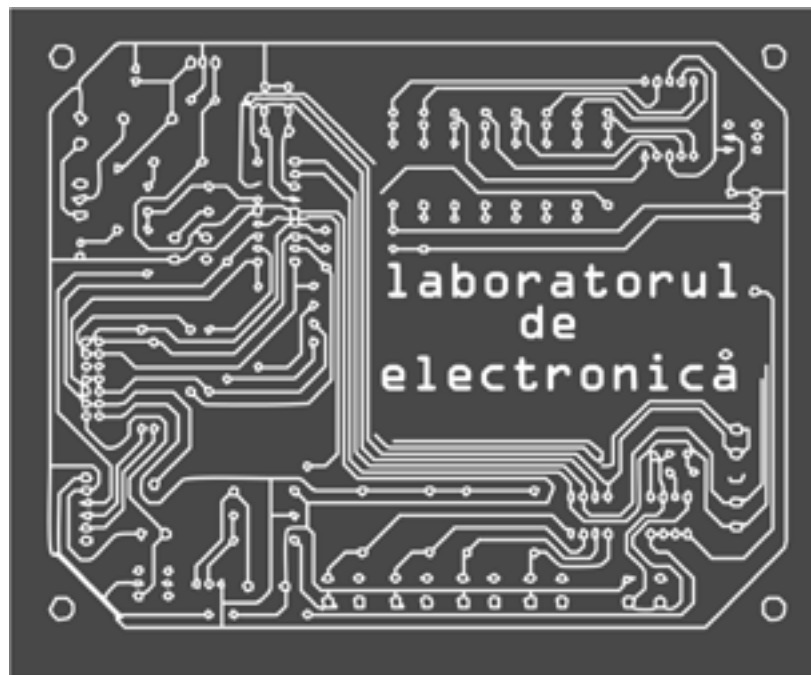
Electronic Dance Music (EDM) and Raves

West Coast Rap

**In 1991 Dr. Dre and Suge Knight started
Death Row Records. Notable performers included
Dr. Dre, Tupac Shakur, and Snoop Dogg**