

Tahoe AL's Songwriter Showcase Concerts and Open Mic

The only performance venue on the South shore dedicated to presenting original music

by dedicated artists living in the Lake Tahoe region, live entertainment

with the songs of our place and time in an intimate setting.

Bach was the greatest musician of his day, and perhaps of all time. He was a songwriter and lyricist, a multi-instrumentalist genius, his greatest achievements perhaps the "art of the fugue." People still listen to Bach and others from that time, but not many people are writing fugues today, and no one has surpassed Bach on that account. All of Bach recordings were made with quill pen and ink on paper, in an age before the printing press, and that is how they are performed to this day with printed music. Many long form works, lasting hours are in the repertoire. The music was as long as it needed to be, generally for religious purposes.

For all of known human history prior to the 20th century music had to be produced in the moment to be heard; it was intangible. Some primitive cultures have no word for "audience," as all music was participatory. Tribal drums, chanting and singing, improvised instruments that evolved through history like the digiridoo, music and rituals often lasting many hours. The drums and chanting would induce trance and altered states in the shamans and participants, the community.

Sound recording tech has only been around for about 100 years. The first sound recordings were engraved with a vibrating stylus on a rotating wax cylinder, and then later transferred to vinyl disks. The advent of the "three-minute song" may well be due to the original wax cylinders not being able to record more than three minutes of music. That was the medium of the day and the three-minute song (TMS) was aptly suited to the radio transmission wirelessly through the air to reach the masses, as supported by advertising revenues and the wireless broadcasting industry serving media outlets with radio, and later TV as a format to present music. The tech of the day was tubes, not transistors, and wooden consoles with decent speakers for listening in many cases, so there was a warmth and tone due to production of continuous audio signals versus discrete, quantized digital signals through transistors and computer chips of the present age. The tech giants then were not so much interested in music as selling ads, and a tiny speaker in a TV console was suitable for that, so that's what the masses got, along with transistor radios for portability. Better speakers were available even then, but it presaged the current music-listening device, the cell phone, with its tiny speaker (headphone listeners excepted) and available power. Under the influence of the tech giants, the musical experience has been dumbed down for the benefits of portability and by tiny speakers designed primarily to convey spoken words.

With the advertising model, free radio and TV broadcasts, music was monetized through the recording and distribution system for vinyl records, using the airwaves for promotion and touring to support record sales. It supported a vast industry of non-musicians, through the distribution system, which some

say was largely controlled by mobsters, organized criminals. Studios evolved and the TMS format mostly didn't (certain genres excepted).

Musicians have always struggled to gain support. Through the rapid evolution in the 20th century musicians struggled against a music industry largely designed to exploit their creative talents for the benefit of others, often to the detriment of the musical creator. Most people, myself included, didn't get involved in music because of a desire for involvement in the business of the music industry, becoming a salesman for music and managing all the moving parts of touring, performing, recording, etc. Thus the music industry evolved to allow artists to focus on their music, with managers, promoters, agents, etc.

Early recordings were monophonic, single mic. The early Dylan recordings were mono, voice and guitar. Still, they have a power. Dylan emerged from the Greenwich Village NYC scene, folk music sung in coffee houses, war protest songs, and the like, and spawned the phenomenon of the *singer-songwriter*; much of the music prior to the 1960s was written by professionals and performed by other professionals. The singer-songwriter was a new animal, and the big studios nurtured their "stars" and songwriter-bands, and got behind them to promote those who emerged in any given time – and promoted them to their success, for the enrichment of all--including the listener.

Recording techniques moved to stereo from four-track recordings (plus bounces) to create more complex compositions, generally using audio magnetic tape. Beatles and Beach Boys are examples of the new sounds, and the new sounds, which evolved from jazz and blues in the U.S., and the former was transferred back "across the pond" to make a big splash with the new sounds. The Beatles began with cover songs and then evolved into singer-songwriters, McCartney and Lennon, it is said. I am not convinced that the songs were not composed and written with them, and a songwriting team of considerable prowess. I would need to see more evidence that they actually wrote their songs given that they were recorded and promoted by EMI, and its connections to intelligence and psy-ops on the unsuspecting people (the Beatles were a project to enhance goodwill by Americans toward the British following WWII, as others have written on extensively). Nothing is as it seems.

The Greenwich Village music scene was subsequently transferred to Los Angeles, with many significant artists making the move, and the big studios and big record sales of the hi-fi days of FM came to be, with its long-song formats and many great artists. However, many of these were involved with and promoted by U.S. intelligence, so it was always a select few who were nurtured and pushed into the limelight. This was the time of my youth and musical evolution, following the super-groups of the 1960s and 1970s. Record sales were peaking, along with concerts at low prices. People were turned on by music. The Wrecking Crew was cranking out hits in LA and recording advanced to 32-tracks of audio and more, so the musical experience was very rich, and hi-fi stereos with big speakers were rather common, as were car audio systems of hi-fi quality. Vinyl still ruled, with 8-track and cassette tapes. . . . to be continued.