

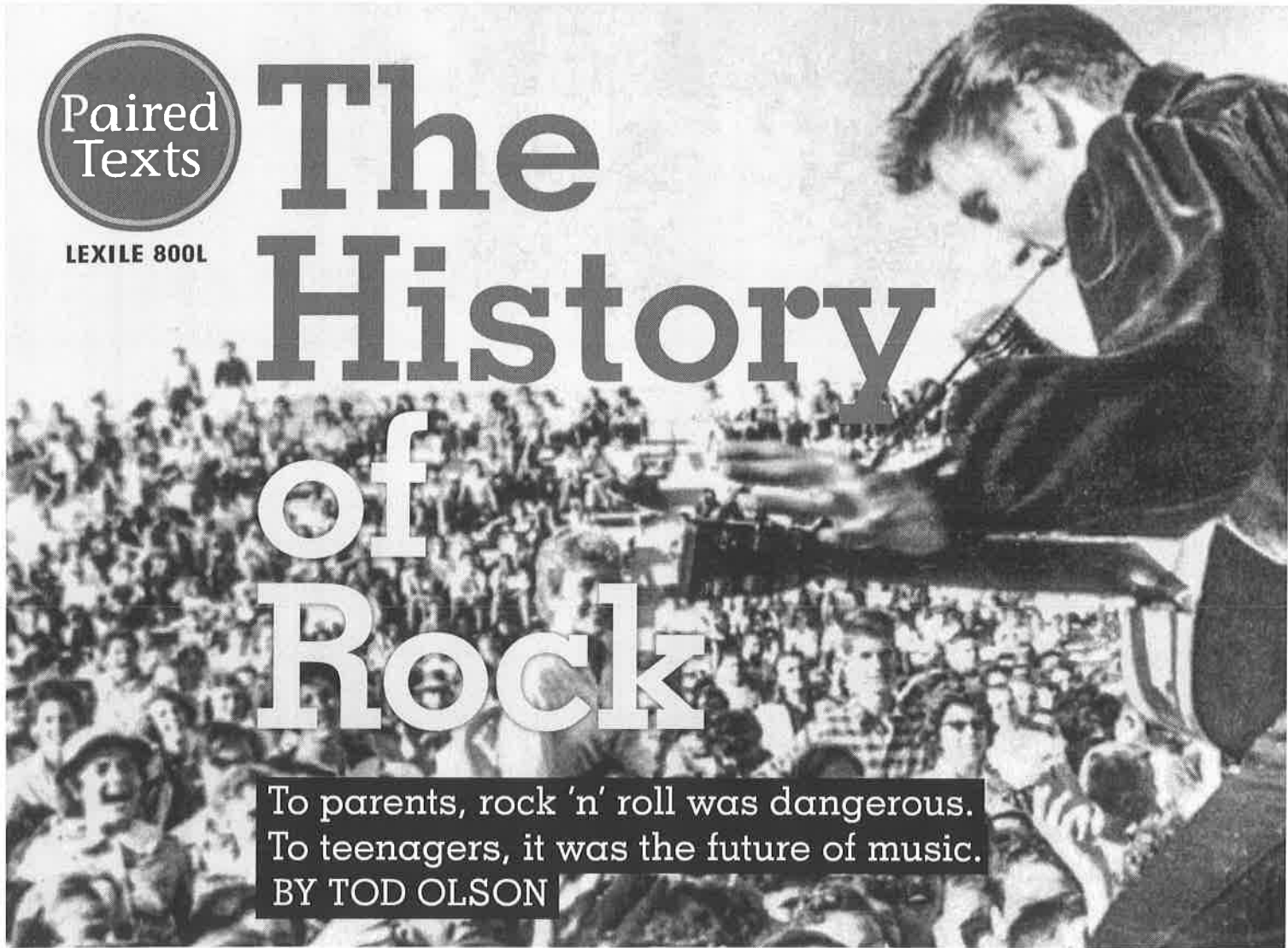


Paired Texts

LEXILE 800L

The History of Rock

To parents, rock 'n' roll was dangerous. To teenagers, it was the future of music.
BY TOD OLSON



The year was 1955. Most adults had just discovered rock 'n' roll—and they were horrified.

A movie called *Blackboard Jungle* came out that March. In the movie, teenagers take over a city high school: Gang members fight with knives, and

VOCABULARY

influence: a person or thing that affects someone in an important way

segregated: separated based on race

generation: a group of people born and living at about the same time

culture: habits, art, and traditions shared by people in a place and time

sophisticated: very complicated

students throw baseballs at teachers.

The teens' music is the first thing the movie audience hears. It starts with a drum beat. Then comes the song "Rock Around the Clock." There's a screaming saxophone and a fast-paced guitar solo—and it's all played at top volume.

Adults had never heard anything like rock 'n' roll, and many of them considered the music a bad **influence**. It transformed decent kids into criminals, they claimed—and it was spreading like a disease.

But it made no difference what the adults thought: Before long, rock 'n' roll was here to stay.

We're Gonna Rock

Rock 'n' roll—or something similar—had actually existed for a while. It was called rhythm

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; VELVIS PREVELEY; DAVID REDFERN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES (WAT'S DOMINO); GODFREY EVERETT COLLECTION (BLACKBOARD JUNGLE)

Name: _____

VIDEO

GO TO
WEB VIEW



For school... the...
"BLACKBOARD JUNGLE"

READY TO ROLL Fats Domino (left) was one of the first rock 'n' roll artists. The movie *Blackboard Jungle* helped make rock music popular across the country.

STAR POWER

Elvis Presley plays to screaming fans in his hometown in Mississippi.

and blues, or R&B for short, and it was played by black musicians. R&B evolved from blues music and from the gospel music of Southern churches.

But this music wasn't intended for Sunday morning worship. R&B musicians played electric guitars—loudly. The drums carried a heavy beat, and the songs gave listeners the urge to dance.

Initially, record companies didn't think white listeners were interested in R&B. At the time, many regions of the country were **segregated**. Black kids and white kids attended separate schools and couldn't go to the same concerts. Racism was a problem across the country.

But in the early 1950s, radio stations started playing more R&B. Most of the shows came on late at night. The disc jockeys sounded cool and had nicknames like Hound Dog and Jumpin' George.

Teenagers everywhere discovered the new sound. They stayed up late to listen to R&B artists like Fats Domino and Wynonie Harris, using earphones so their parents couldn't hear.

Before long, white kids were traveling to black neighborhoods to buy records. Then white musicians got in on the act, recording their own versions of R&B songs. Sometimes they added a country-western feel. And rock 'n' roll was born.

Rebel Music

Many adults—white and black—found the new music baffling. Some even made attempts to stop it. Concerts were canceled in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. The city of Atlanta banned dancing in public.

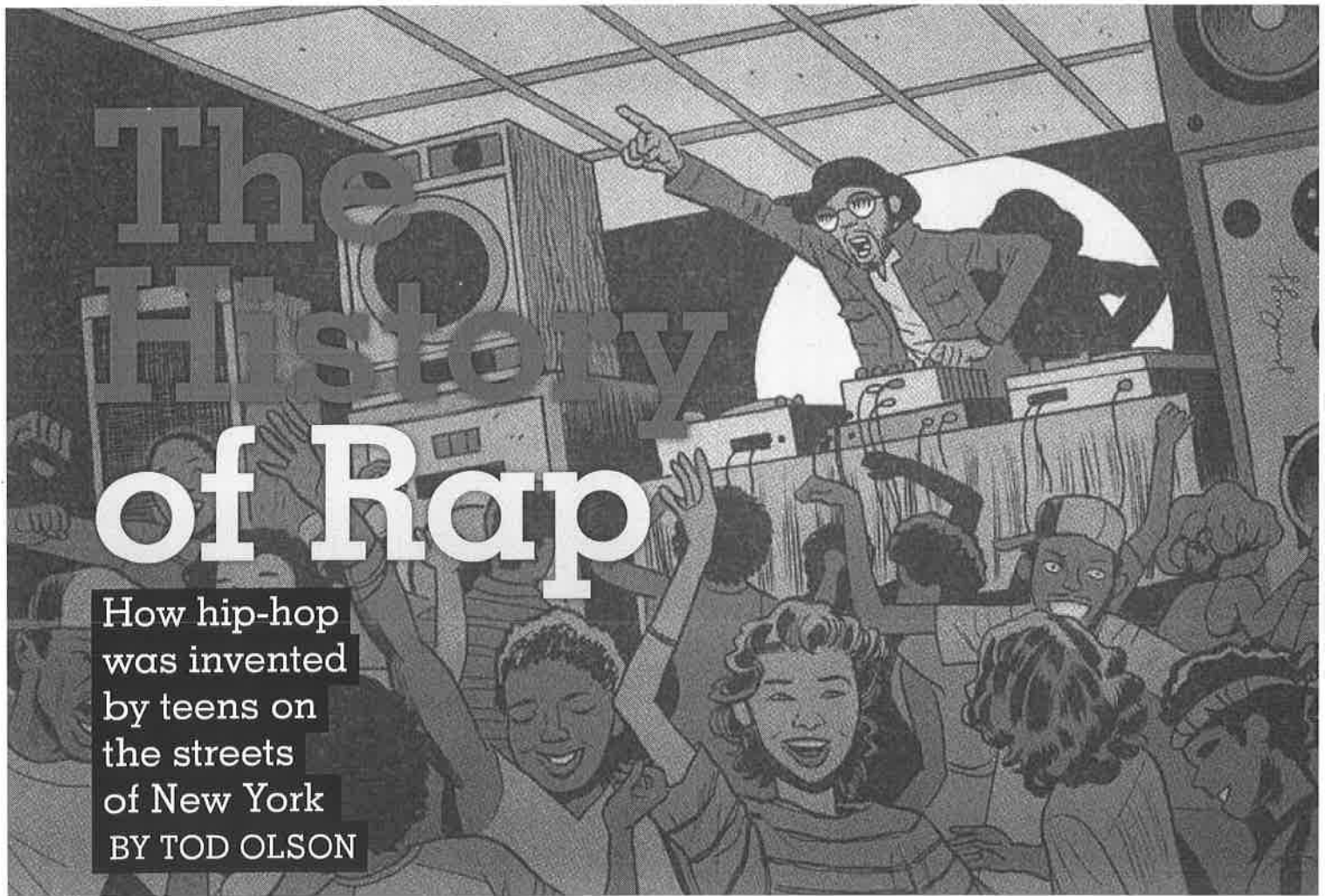
The most alarming performer of all seemed to be Elvis Presley. He was the biggest rock star of the time. He wore tight leather pants and shook his hips when he danced.

In 1957, Elvis performed on a popular TV show. The station refused to show him from the waist down because of his dance moves.

But there was no hiding rock 'n' roll from its fans. Teenagers had chosen their music.

It was made specifically for their **generation**. They knew their parents hated rock 'n' roll—and that only made them like it more. •

Turn to
read about
the history
of rap music!



The History of Rap

How hip-hop was invented by teens on the streets of New York
BY TOD OLSON

It was a hot night in August 1973. Sedgwick Avenue in the Bronx—a part of New York City—was rocking.

Clive Campbell had his father's huge sound system set up. His sister Cindy needed new clothes for school, so they were throwing a party at their apartment building to make money.

Guys paid an admission fee of 50 cents, and girls got in for 25 cents. Clive played funk music with a heavy beat, and people packed the dance floor.

The party was a success—but no one could have predicted that it would also spark a musical revolution. Pretty soon everyone knew Clive by his nickname: DJ Kool Herc. He had just thrown the first hip-hop party ever.

Dancing in the Streets

In 1973, the Bronx was a difficult and dangerous place to live. Work was scarce, especially in black

and Hispanic neighborhoods. Sixty percent of young people were unemployed. According to police, more than 100 gangs ruled the streets.

Still, young people were determined to have fun. Herc and other DJs threw more parties—many outdoors—and Herc discovered a new way to play records. He noticed that dancers loved the section of a song called the break.

During a break, all instruments stop playing except the drums. Herc located the break section on two records and switched back and forth between them—and the dancers went wild. Herc knew that he was onto something.

Hip-Hop Nation

Over the next few years, hip-hop **culture** took shape in the black and Hispanic neighborhoods of New York City. The dancers started competing with each other during the breaks. They became known

ART BY JIM RUGG



RAP MUSIC SPREADS ACROSS THE NATION

In 1979, the Sugar Hill Gang (left) sold millions of copies of their song "Rapper's Delight." Soon, hip-hop was everywhere. Kids across the country started listening to rappers like Run-DMC (right).

as "b-boys," short for break boys. Soon, "b-girls" joined in too. Herc describes them as "the kings and queens of the party."

But the break dancers were soon replaced by new royalty: the MCs, or masters of ceremony. MCs worked the microphone while their DJs played records. MCs rhymed to the beat, and over time their rhymes became increasingly long and **sophisticated**. They were the first rappers.

Finally, in 1979, a band called the Sugar Hill Gang recorded "Rapper's Delight." The song was nothing new to teens in New York City, but the rest of America was introduced to rap for the first time.

The record sold millions of copies.

Before long, hip-hop was everywhere. Kids across the country started listening to rappers like Run-DMC. And in the 1990s, rap became one of the most popular types of music in the U.S.

Hip-hop started in a run-down section of New York City. Over the past 45 years, it has spread throughout the world.

According to DJ Kool Herc, rap music has a remarkable power: It has helped unite young people of all races and backgrounds. "They all have something in common that they love," he explains. •

Action Activity

Compare and Contrast

GO FURTHER!
FIND MORE ACTIVITIES

How are rock and rap alike in some ways and different in others?

WHAT TO DO: Complete the sentences below using examples from the texts.

1. One way rock music and rap music are alike is _____

(Hint: What group of people were the biggest fans for each type of music?)

2. One way rock music and rap music are different is _____

(Hint: How long has each type of music been around?)