

Let it Rock: the Mount Olympus of American Rock Bands, 1965-1995
Thursdays, February 16th – April 6th
7:00 – 9:00pm at Rhythmix Cultural Works
with Instructor Pete Elman

Course description: This is an eight-week course that will take a deep dive into the music and story of six of the greatest American rock and roll bands, groups that defined the genre. The rich history of rock and roll is full of brilliant songs and singers, but the *essence* of rock and roll has always been the rock and roll band—that small--usually four to seven piece—ensemble made up of young musicians who caught lightning in a bottle together, taking their blues, R&B, rockabilly, early rock, country, folk and even jazz influences and combining them to create music that is timeless and inspiring.

A band is like a family; there is friendship, rivalries, tragedy, triumph and intense love. This course will take a close look at six of the most iconic, artistic, and successful of those bands. In the first three weeks we will cover a trio of the most impactful American groups in rock and roll history. The fourth week we examine a band that was 4/5 Canadian, but made their musical mark in the US. Weeks five and six we cover a band that was originally British, but became a household word when they came to America, and we will devote the final two weeks to a beloved, late, legendary American rocker.

Each session will include:

- A thorough, fast-moving background lecture about each band, including; quotes, excerpts from books, and photographs of the bands and key people around them presented in a slide show format with accompanying biographical commentary.
- Selected music videos, live videos and film clips of the bands performing some of their most well-known and impactful songs.
- CD versions, both studio and live, of important recordings, with lyric analysis.
- A live music component, where the instructor will perform in class material from each band as well as demonstrate specific melodic themes, chord progressions, and arrangement and production aspects of selected recordings.

Week-by-Week Course Outline and Syllabus (eight weeks)

****suggested reading, viewing and listening, and in-class audio and video playlist***

Week One: The Doors: the original poetry of Jim Morrison and his musical mates begets psychedelic rock: There at the very beginning in LA, they forged their own

brand of psychedelic blues-based rock, led by their brilliant, mercurial and tragically short-lived supernova, poet and charismatic front man.

Reading:

The Doors, hardcover, by Ben Fong-Torres, 2006

Riders on the Storm, My Life with Jim Morrison and the Doors/John Densmore, 1991

Viewing:

When you're Strange: A Film about the Doors, 2010

"Mr. Mojo Risin': The Story of L.A. Woman" 2011

The Doors - Live in Europe 1968

The Doors, directed by Oliver Stone, starring Val Kilmer, 1991

Listening:

The Doors (1967) their debut album

Strange Days (1967)

Waiting for the Sun (1968)

The Soft Parade (1969)

Morrison Hotel (1970)

L.A. Woman (1971)

Audio and video playlist

Break on Through

Alabama Song (Whiskey Bar)

Light my Fire

People are Strange

Love me Two Times

Hello I Love You

Touch Me

Roadhouse Blues

Love Her Madly

Riders on the Storm

LA Woman

*

*

*

Week 2: The Allman Brothers Band: They invented Southern Rock, endured tragedy, and persevered. Led by their soulful blue-eyed soul singer Greg, they overcame the loss of older brother and guitar virtuoso Duane, and made lasting music. There was nobody like them, and there never will be.

Reading:

Please Be with Me: A Song for My Father, Duane Allman, by Galadrielle Allman 2014 (Berkeley resident)

My Cross to Bear by Greg Allman, 2013

Midnight Riders: The Story of the Allman Brothers Band, Scott Freeman 1996

Viewing:

Song of the South: Duane Allman and The Rise Of The Allman Brothers 2013

The Allman Brothers Band, After the Crash, 2016

All My Friends: Celebrating the Songs & Voice of Gregg Allman 2014

Listening:

The Allman Brothers Band 1969

Idlewild South 1970

At Fillmore East (live) 1971

Eat a Peach (part live) 1972

Brothers and Sisters 1973

1970-2005: 23 live albums

The Very Best of Gregg Allman 2011

Audio and video playlist

Trouble no more

Ain't My Cross to Bear

Whipping Post

Midnight Rider

Revival

Statesboro Blues

Leave My Blues at Home

Stormy Monday

Ain't Wastin' Time No More

Melissa

Ramblin' Man

Jessica

One Way Out

Blue Sky

Little Martha

*

*

*

Week 3: The Band: Four young Canadian musicians meet an Arkansas drummer; join the Hawks, back up Bob Dylan, and go on to create timeless Americana records. Led by guitarist/songwriter Jamie Robbie Robertson, they were the quintessential pros, both live and in the studio—never a wasted note.

Reading:

Testimony, a memoir by Robbie Robertson, 2016

This Wheel's on Fire: Levon Helm and the Story of The Band, by Levon Helm 2013

Viewing:

**The Last Waltz 1978, directed by Martin Scorsese*

Once We Were Brothers, directed by Daniel Roher, 2020

**(required because it is SO great!)*

Listening:

Music from Big Pink 1968

The Band 1969

Stage Fright 1970

Cahoots 1971

Rock of Ages 1972 (live double album)

Moondog Matinee 1973

The Basement Tapes 1975 (with Bob Dylan)

Audio and video playlist

Tears of Rage

In a Station

The Weight

Long Black Veil

Chest Fever

Lonesome Suzie

I Shall be Released

Across the Great Divide

Up on Cripple Creek

Unfaithful

Look out Cleveland

Mystery Train

Open the door Homer (with Dylan)

The Shape I'm In

It Makes No Difference
The Night they Drove old Dixie Down

*

*

*

Week 4: Creedence Clearwater Revival: From El Cerrito to the bayou, with heavy doses of hooks and soulful singing, John Fogerty and friends made their mark, despite being torn apart by greed and betrayal.

Reading:

Fortunate Son: My Life, My Music by John Fogerty 2016

Bad Moon Rising: The Unauthorized History of Creedence Clearwater Revival, by Hank Bordowitz 2007

Viewing:

Inside: Creedence Clearwater Revival 2005

John Fogerty; My 50-year trip, available with PBS KQED passport (\$60/year)

Listening:

Creedence Clearwater Revival 1968

Bayou Country 1969

Green River 1969

Willy and the Poor Boys 1969

Cosmos factory 1970

Centerfield (John Fogerty solo album) 1985

Audio and video playlist

Wrote a song for Everyone

Suzie Q.

Born on the Bayou

Proud Mary

Green River

Bad Moon Rising

Lodi

Fortunate Son

Down on the corner

Long as I can see the Light

Lookin' Out My Back Door

Who will Stop the Rain
Have you ever Seen the Rain
Travelin' Band
Someday never Comes
Centerfield (John Fogerty solo)

* * *

Week 5: Fleetwood Mac, Part One: England, 1967-74: Up from the blues-rock pubs of 1960's London, the struggle to make it as pop stars in their native land; great records, critical acclaim, a revolving door of guitarists---and no hits.

Reading:

Fleetwood Mac: The Authorized History by Samuel Graham (1978)
Fleetwood: My Life and Adventures in Fleetwood Mac by Mick Fleetwood and Stephen Davis (1990);
Play On: Now, Then and Fleetwood Mac by Mick Fleetwood/Anthony Bozza (2014)
Making Rumours: The Inside Story of the Classic Fleetwood Mac Album by Ken Caillat and Steve Stiefel (2012)

Viewing:

Fleetwood Mac: Don't Stop 2009
Fleetwood Mac: Unbroken Chain 2004
Fleetwood Mac - The Story of Fleetwood Mac 2009

Listening:

Fleetwood Mac (with Peter Green) 1968
Kiln House 1970
Fuure Games 1971
Bare Trees 1972
Fleetwood Mac 1975 (also known as *The White Album*)
Rumours 1977
Tusk 1979

Audio and video playlist

Oh well
Black magic woman
Dust my broom

Station man
Jewel-eyed Judy
Woman of 1000 Years
Morning rain
Sands of Time
Lay it All Down
Show Me a Smile
Sunny Side of Heaven
Spare Me a Little of Your Love
Sentimental Lady

*

*

*

Week 6: Fleetwood Mac, Part Two: America, 1975-95: Northern Californians Lindsay Buckingham and Stevie Nicks answer an ad, rejuvenate the band, and achieve remarkable success. Next stop--superstardom.

Audio and video playlist

Monday Morning
Rhiannon
Over My Head
Say You Love Me
Landslide
Second Hand News
Go Your Own Way
Dreams
Don't Stop
You Make Loving Fun
Songbird
Silver Springs
(Stevie Nicks solo)
Gypsy
Leather and Lace (duet with Don Henley)

*

*

*

Week 7: Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Part One, 1976-83: Bursting out of the youth center dances of Florida and taking the rock world by storm, one great record after another, Tom Petty and his bandmates exemplified, as much as any American rock and roll band, what a dedicated selfless group of friends with a shared interest can achieve—success, fame and fortune, without compromise.

Reading:

Petty Unabridged, by Warren Zanes, 2016

Tom Petty; A rock and roll life, by Nick Thomas, 2018

Conversations with Tom Petty, Paul Zollo 2020

Viewing:

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers: Runnin' Down a Dream, 2007, directed by Peter Bogdanovich

Tom Petty: Somewhere You Feel Free 2021—to be released this fall on streaming

Listening:

With the Heartbreakers

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers (1976)

You're Gonna Get It! (1978)

Damn the Torpedoes (1979)

Hard Promises (1981)

Long After Dark (1982)

Southern Accents (1985)

Into the Great Wide Open (1991)

With the Traveling Wilburys

Traveling Wilburys Vol. 1 (1988)

Traveling Wilburys Vol. 3 (1990)

Solo

Full Moon Fever (1989)

Wildflowers (1994)

Audio and video playlist

Breakdown

American Girl

I Need to Know

Listen to her Heart

Stop Draggin' My Heart Around, duet with Stevie Nicks

Refugee

Here Comes My Girl

Even the Losers
Don't do me like that
The Waiting
A Woman in Love
You Got Lucky

*

*

*

Week 8: Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Part Two, 1985-98: the modest and beloved elder statesman keeps the flame burning and the legacy of honest rock and roll alive, always true and beholden to his loyal fans.

Audio and video playlist

Don't Come Around Here No more
Learning to Fly
Into the Great Wide Open
(Tom Petty solo)
Free Fallin'
I Won't Back Down
Mary Jane's Last Dance
Runnin' Down a Dream
A Face in the Crowd
You Wreck me
You Don't Know How it Feels
Wildflowers