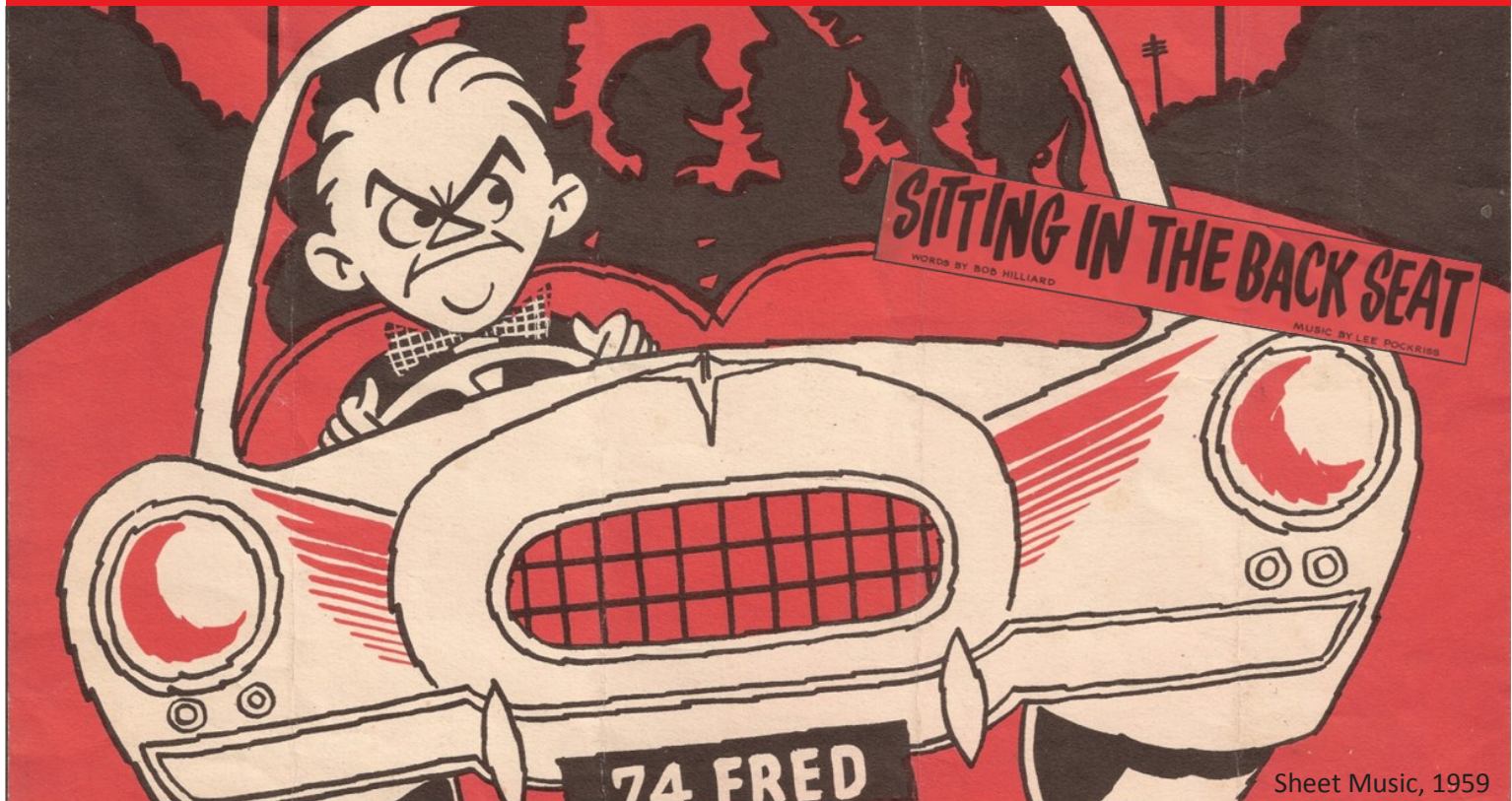


# The 1950s

## Music



Sheet Music, 1959

By the early 1950s British popular music was giving way to the influence of American music, sales of American records dominated. In 1953, the first year of the charts, major artists were Perry Como, Guy Mitchell and Frankie Laine. Some British wartime stars, like Vera Lynn, still charted into the mid 1950s.

The major change of the mid 1950s was the impact of American Rock and Roll. It reached British audiences when the Bill Haley and His Comets' hit 'Rock around the Clock' burst out from the 1955 film, Blackboard Jungle. The song topped the British charts in 1955 and 1956. Other Rock and Roll acts followed and Elvis Presley, Little Richard and Buddy Holly became major forces in the charts.

Early British imitations of Rock and Roll were often inferior to the American version. However, in 1958 Britain produced its first 'authentic' Rock and Roll star when Cliff Richard reached number 2 in the charts with 'Move It'. A relatively short-lived craze was Skiffle, a British take on American folk. Lonnie Donegan's 'Rock Island Line' spent eight months in the Top 20 in 1956.