

Country Music - History And Development Drummers Guide Part Two

This hybrid style was popularized by Country artists such as Carl Perkins and Johnny Cash, as well as Rock and Rollers such as Jerry Lee Lewis, and, of course, Elvis Presley. However, the louder, more raucous Rock sound tended to overwhelm the Country elements in Rockabilly, and today most Country enthusiasts insist that Rockabilly is a variety of Rock n' Roll rather than Country. Country went "pop" in the late 1950s with the "Nashville Sound" (which was dominant in Country for decades and, arguably, still is). This was essentially an attempt to reach a mass audience by taking the "twang" out of Country.

The distinguishing features of this variety of Country are a very smooth, heavily produced sound, background strings, and vocal choirs. Early examples of this sound are the recordings of Chet Atkins and the more over produced songs of Patsy Cline. As a reaction against the pop Nashville Sound, and greatly influenced by the Country shuffles of Ray Price and his drummer Buddy Harman, the Bakersfield Sound arose in the early 1960s. The distinguishing feature of the Bakersfield Sound was that the "twang" returned there were no strings and no vocal choirs. In contrast to earlier Hank Williams style Country, there was more emphasis on the electric guitar (with a tone owing much to Surf music), and drumming styles included standard Western Swing and Country Shuffle grooves.

The primary modern exponent of the Bakersfield Sound is Dwight Yoakam, who, however, covers a much wider range of styles than Buck Owens. Another reaction against the Nashville Sound was the "Outlaw Movement" of the 1970s. Outlaw music used the sounds of both Hank Williams style Country and the Bakersfield Sound, differing from them primarily in its lyrical content, which was on the dark side, emphasizing heavy drinking, barroom brawls, and infidelity. Its exponents include Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, and David Allan Coe. Predictably, the Outlaw Movement still remains excluded from traditional Country music circles. However, during Outlaw's early years, drums were finally allowed on stage at The Grand Ole Opry when the organization moved to "Opryland" in 1973.

Shortly afterward the Opry appointed Buddy Harman as its first regular drummer, while Harman continued to appear on countless Country music hits, including "Ring of Fire" (Johnny Cash), "Bye Bye Love" (Everly Brothers), "Stand by Your Man" (Tammy Wynette) and even the Rock n' Roll classic "Pretty Woman" (Roy Orbison). Another notable trend in the early 1970s was the emergence of Country Rock. On the Rock side, performers included pioneers such as The Byrds, Gram Parsons, The Flying Burrito Brothers, Marshall Tucker, and, most prominently, The Eagles. On the Country side, the musicians included Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, and Hank Williams, Jr. The distinguishing features of the genre are its use of Country harmonies and melodies, both Rock and Country instruments, and Rock drumming grooves.

In the 1980s, still another reaction against the Nashville Sound arose with the New Traditionalists, led by Dwight Yoakam and Steve Earle. These artists returned to the stripped down sounds of early Country, the Bakersfield Sound, and, to a limited extent, Bluegrass. A drummer in the Country genre is responsible for a simple and steady beat. Although it appears deceptively easy, Country music boasts some of the best musicians ever to pick up an instrument, drums included.

About the Author

By Eric Starg. For any Country [Drum Solo](#) out there Eric recommends [Ludwig Drum Sets](#) and [Ludwig Snare Drums](#). Eric is an active member of Drum Solo Artist where he is answering drum related questions, and helping drummers with tips and advices.

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