Doo-Wop Music Encyclopedia Article

Doo-Wop Music

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Doo-Wop Music

"Doo-wop" is a form of close-harmony singing, based in rhythm-and-blues. The style became popular in the 1950s, originating among African-American vocal groups in urban centers. One of the most common rhythm phrases used by 1950s groups in performance and on their recordings, "doo-wop" came to name the musical style. To sing in the doo-wop style, phonetic or nonsense words are used as rhythmic parts in harmonic arrangements. Usually this is done by a trio or quartet of vocalists, over which a soloist sings a melody. The melody is expressed through understandable words, often accented by the nonsense words of the vocal accompaniment. By the end of the 1960s, doo-wop groups were losing popularity. Yet rock 'n' roll musicians would often use doo-wop for their background vocal arrangements, and in this way the style continued to develop beyond the 1950s and to exert its influence on popular music.

Further Reading:

Gribin, Dr. Anthony J., and Dr. Matthew M. Schiff. *Doo-wop: The Forgotten Third of Rock 'n' Roll.* Iola, Wisconsin, Krause Publications, 1992.

Pruter, Robert. *Doowop: The Chicago Scene.* Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1996.