

A little bit about Ska music

Quote:

Ska is dance music, first and foremost. Ska was a Jamaican dance music that swept out of Jamaica in the early 1960s to shake the butts of working- and middle-class Jamaicans before going on, via the West Indian immigrant connection, to the UK, and then on to the world.

Quote:

Musically, Ska is a fusion of Jamaican mento rhythm with R&B, with the drum coming in on the 2nd and 4th beats, and the guitar emphasizing the up of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th beats. The drum therefore is carrying the blues and swing beats of the American music, and the guitar expressing the mento sound.

Ska is about 40 years old, developed in Jamaica as dance music in the Early 60's.

Ska is a what you got when you took African American R&B with traditional Jamaican Music. This was mostly Jazz and Mento but also was influenced by calipso and yaya.

The word Ska came from a traditional Jamaican greeting Love Skavoovie. The Ska is what they called the dance people did to this music.

3 waves of Ska

There are three waves of Ska. The first wave came about when the first ska bands appeared in Jamaica.

1st - The Skatalites, Baba Brooks, Ernest Ranglin, Jackie Mittoo, and Bobby Ellis, and vocalists like Laurel Aitken, Prince Buster, Derrick Morgan and Desmond Dekker. This is Traditional ska, with no elements of punk. If all you have ever listened to is Reel Big Fish and Less than Jake, you may not even recognize these bands as ska if you heard them.

The Dance - Some of you may know the dance that is done now. I will describe that later on. The First wave dance, as far as I can tell is very different. Keeping your self planted on the ground you only lift your heels on the up beat. When you lift your left heel, you bring your right shoulder forward and inward towards your chest. Then you decide what you want to do with your arms.

2nd - The Specials, The (English) Beat, Madness, The Selecter, Bad Manners, Apollinaires, Swinging Cats, Higsons, and The Papers.

What was changed - Two Tone, this is where Two Tone came from. The Label 2 Tone Records was responsible for this revival and second wave. This is where Punk, Pop and Rock were minced with Ska and Ska Punk bands first came about. Also it is centered in England, not Jamaica.

The Dance - Im even less sure about this than i was in the first wave. My best guess is it is about halfway between 3rd wave and 1st wave ska. Probably more movement and maybe some moshing by now.

3rd - The Toasters, Operation Ivy, The Boilers, Second Step, Heavy Manners, Urban Blight, Reel Big Fish, Catch 22, The Pietasters, Sublime, No Doubt, The Planet Smashers, Slapstick, Skanking Pickle ect.

What was Changed - America got its hands on Ska. The third wave is centered primarily on the West and East coast of America. Also it saw the typical American idea that Record Exects know better than bands what they should release. So band were signed up by Record companies and forced to quickly put out bad records. (see No Doubt)

The Dance - Now this is a dance i know.

Ok first, there is no set dance though some people seem to think it is. At Mustad Plug the other day i saw a bunch of White Kids skanking... each dancing the same exact way. It looked very sad. Dancing is a form of expression doing what you think you should be doing rather than what you feel you should be doing is inherently wrong. So here is a guideline.

Start with one foot raised off the ground. The drum beat comes in and the guitar goes on the second and fourth beats (typically). What you do is on the first beat drop your foot and bring the other foot up. Do that for a bit.

Now add the shuffle. On the off beat you should be raising your feet and on the on beat you should be brining them down. First the left foot then the right. Now, on the off beat... sort of hop the foot that is supposed to be on the ground back a little. It should remain on the ground though.

That should take care of the feet. The arms are much simpler. When you lift your right foot, push your right shoulder forward adn punch your right arm out. When you lift your left leg push out your left shoulder and punch out your left arm.

If you can follow those instructions (They may be a bit complex... sorry) then you can now skank. Add turns and funky arm movements at your discesion.

People Who Like Ska

Rude Boys - The original term came from "The street-cool toughs of Kingston, Jamaica, dressed nattily in the latest and hep-est threads were known as rude boys and they ruled the Kingstown dance halls. " It was later taken during the second wave and applied to anyone who loved ska.

Scooters - Because of their dress, Rude Boys (Suit and Polo Shirt) got along well with Mods. Mods liked scooters (Motorized ones). So Scooters have been a part of the ska
Ska

scene since the second wave. But not so much in America.

Other Info

Ska was the predecessor for Reggae.