

# Ska keeps on skankin' through the years

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During the late 1950's, a new style of music started to form in Jamaica. At that time, Jamaica was still copying the musical styles of America, and a select few around the small country realized that something different and exciting was needed. When musicians such as Duke Reid, Prince Buster, and Cluet Johnson started to emphasize the afterbeat instead of the downbeat on the guitar, the change happened, and ska music was born.

There have been three "waves" of ska. The first occurred in Jamaica. From around 1959 to the summer of 1964, ska was all the rage in Jamaica, and it became that country's first indigenous music form. The carefree horns and lyrics provided Jamaicans with a happy beat to dance to. Die-hard followers of ska were, and still are, known as "Rude Boys" or "Rudies." The Rudies in Jamaica lived outside of the law, and were often connected with scowflaws and the underworld. Many of them also owned guns, which added to their "outlaw" image. Jamaican citizens were scared, and the nation's two political parties started to employ armed enforcers. Public opinion soon turned against Rude Boys and their guns, so a law was passed allowing Rudies to turn in their guns without fear of prosecution.

When the ska movement peaked in the hot summer of 1964, interest in Rude Boys died, the ska beat was slowed, and rocksteady was formed. Rocksteady became the predecessor to reggae, which makes ska the grandfather of reggae.

The first wave of ska ended in 1968.

During the next decade, interest in ska music waned, with the faster beats of early ska being replaced by the slower, more mellow, sounds of reggae.

In the late 1970's, ska was reborn, but this time in England. *The Clash* (a popular English reggae-punk band) brought back the original Rudie ideals. Another band, *The Coventry Automatics* chose to use ska instead of reggae in their songs, and the second wave of ska had begun.

*The Coventry Automatics* eventually changed their name to *The Specials*, and started the 2-Tone



Orange County band "The Supertones," decked out in suits and sunglasses, are just one of many up-and-coming ska acts becoming popular around the country.

record label in 1979. The 2-Tone symbol of black and white checkers stood for racial integration, and at a time of racial tension in England, the bands on the label sought unity between people, no matter what color.

Some of the bands on the 2-Tone label included *Madness*, *The English Beat*, *The Selecter*, and of course, *The Specials*. These bands played a variety of ska that incorporated punk, reggae, rocksteady, jazz, pop, and rock. Although focused mainly in England, ska became extremely popular again during this period, and started to make lots of money. But what happened next was unforeseeable.

In 1985, despite being a very reputable label, 2-Tone fell apart, due partly to the fact that Jerry Dammers, member of *The Specials* and owner of 2-Tone, owed money to Chrysalis records.

After this period, ska lost popularity again, and the happy, danceable music faded from people's minds once more.

In spite of this fact, a few bands managed to stick it out through the hard times, and this was a major factor in the beginnings of the third wave of ska.

*The Toasters*, *Bim Skala Bim*, and *Fishbone* were all bands that continued the musical tradi-

tion of ska by fusing the ska beat with rock and pop. By the late 1980's, even more ska bands started popping up, including *Hepcat*, *Operation Ivy*, and the now famous *Mighty Mighty Bosstones*. These and other bands combined many different musical styles with ska, which made for a very diverse and fun listening experience.

Many other ska bands have also greatly influenced the third wave. From the "Looney Tunes" lyrics of *Skankin Pickle* to the instrumental sounds of *Let's Go Bowling*, ska is one of the most diverse musical styles around.

Ska has become mainstream. It seems that people are tired of the negativity in much of today's music, and are looking for something more fun and upbeat to listen to. A live ska show cannot be matched. With the power of *The Mighty Mighty Bosstones* to the on-stage antics of *The Aquabats*, ska is fun to watch and to dance to, which is a lot more than can be said for many "alternative" live acts.

Ska is more popular now than it ever has been before. With bands such as *Reel Big Fish*, *Save Ferris*, and *Buck-O-Nine* receiving hourly play on the radio, ska is bound to grow in leaps and bounds. But no matter how trendy ska might get, its intentions are still the same: To get people to have fun and dance!

## The Japanese Gardens: Portland's peaceful getaway

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Portland's own Japanese Garden is one of the most impressive gardens to visit in the area. This peaceful hideaway is situated next to Washington Park Zoo. Although the garden is only a little more than thirty years old, it seems as if it must have always been there. Most gardens that compare are not in this country, and are hundreds of years old.

Although seemingly the most serene place on earth, putting the garden together wasn't quite so tranquil. It took hundreds of dedicated people much time to complete the garden. Nurseries, civic gardeners, corporations, businesses, and political leaders in both America and Japan all came together to make the garden a blend of Japanese tradition and Oregon style. From the start, the Japanese Garden Society was environmentally conscious in a time when this was not a major concern for most Oregonians. Even

the stones in the section known as the Natural Gardens were recycled from the old Civic Auditorium. Many of the plants and trees were either donated or relocated from soon-to-be parking lots, or other construction sites.

All views and aspects of the grounds seem to radiate spiritual knowledge and mental well being. Every thing in the garden appears harmonious. As the path heads down through the Natural Garden every thing becomes quiet and serene. Everything seems perfect exactly where it is. Sounds of waterfalls glide along the gradual slope of the land. As the bottom of the path gets closer, so does the next gradual slope of the land. This path takes us to the next section, the Sand and Stone Garden.

Sand gardens are much different than ordinary landscapes. They are made up of sand, which has lines, and patterns gracefully surrounding large and small stones scattered about. The designer (Takuma Tono) didn't forget to include a statue of Buddha

when constructing the garden.

The Strolling Pond Garden is probably the most breathtaking part of the whole garden. The large pond is complete with giant koi fish. The reflection in the water makes the whole place seem even larger. Zigzag Bridge is a perfect example of Japanese tradition; it was built in its zigzag pattern to keep demons from following visitors. The Japanese believe demons can only travel in a straight line.

Although visitors are not allowed inside the Ceremonial Teahouse, visitors can still gaze in the window and imagine a ceremony actually taking place. The pavilion is a better place to see inside a Japanese style building. It is located in the Flat Garden, which is ornamented with many statues and poetry rocks.

The Japanese Gardens are a perfect place to get away from the chaos of everyday life. The gardens are open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day of the week.