

Nazi Music Regulations

banning music “too jewish & gloomy”
as well as “negroid excesses in rhythm”...

but just as blacks made advances
the corporations pushed for
the divisive notion of youth culture
to help crush the musical miscegenation
of mid-century America
(white kids can “act more black”
in their teens, but by their 30s
we’ll rope them back in with light rock)

Do you think it was an accident
that the AM radio dial went from music to talk
not long after the corporations bought it?
that music became less melodic *and* less rhythmic?
Ask just about anybody who loves music
who was alive during that period
and most will tell you—
regardless of the *kind* of music they like
that *America was much more musical then*

And I know they’re not lying
but the media puts up a wall
between their truth and their grandkids
and I stood as a brick in that wall
trying to be a hole
through which they embrace
and not the middleman
trying to coopt them in a racist system
in *fusion and its con* (Baraka)
and in such schlock as “Ebony And Ivory”
which almost as many whites hated as blacks did
and some kind of job-stealing Rachel Dolemite.

Yet once I listen to what the black stations
were playing in the 50s, 60s & even 70s
that wasn’t being played on the white stations
alongside of what the black stations were playing
that *was* being played on the whiter stations....
it’s hard not to see
the history of English speaking pop music
as the history of whites
misinterpreting the lessons R&B was teaching them

you get to play the corrupt
on the casting couch

or clueless, manager
you get to play the horse
I mean Solomon Burke
asking Jerry Wexler
to “unleash some funds”
so that the profits from their soul super group
could bring franchise businesses,
jobs and scholarships
to communities in peril
of abandonment and extinction
that was their fan base.

In the next scene we see Wexler
snap into action in response to the Soul Clan’s demands
and sign Led Zeppelin, Yes, and CSN&Y
jumping the shark ship
away from the R&B that made him
to the kind of album covers that open up
so white folks can roll joints in
and we’re told Otis has died.

Then Frank tells me how much he loved Joe Cocker
& I hear the shock and awe of bombast
& I remember Cos joked that Ray Charles
couldn’t get paid as much since Joe started doing it
but the more tragic joke was
that Cocker wasn’t really doing it
and Belushi could parody him
and that freed him to do Blues Butlers
minstrelsy trying to be ironic and self-conscious
to turn people to the source more than Joe did.

Ackroyd makes millions selling his
serious blues pedagogy. It worked for my ex,
but Cocker was arena, more Hollywood than TV
larger than life, proto Eddie Vedder.
yeah, I can still dig “Cry Me A River”
but his “With A Little Help From My Friends”
ain’t got nothing on Aretha’s “Eleanor Rigby”
a portal into gospel whites understand
even less than the blues
but hey she’s got Dwayne Allman
early Dwayne of course
reined in, too collective
gotta get away, move over and let me dance

not knowing you’re being used to drip
with the elitist political purpose

of 70s excess, like a supernova boom
wrecking ball for community school store
as Star Wars seems quaint and primitive today
& so I began to understand
in my visceral soul and bones
white dilution
as the deeper crime than steal
one and the same, one and the same.

So yes Ray did it better than Joe
& David Ruffin & Eddie Kendricks did it better
than Mick Jagger or The Rare Earth
(& the less said about James Taylor, the better)

& this was a door backward into something
like before 1619, black to the future
while I searched for original versions
of "Time Is On My Side" and "Have Mercy, Baby"
Made in America, dammit!
(of course Trump plays the Stones;
so much for "make America great again")

and it's understandable some feel lied to
when the desegregated schools
they fought & died for
taught history from an exclusively white perspective

and it's an interesting coincidence
that horns fell out of fashion
as the wealth gap increased,
that horns went down (or out)
as Reaganomics rose
(and General Electric was more in than ever).

Chris Stroffolino