



# Just around Midnight: Rock and Roll and the Racial Imagination

By Jack Hamilton

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**Just around Midnight: Rock and Roll and the Racial Imagination** By Jack Hamilton

By the time Jimi Hendrix died in 1970, the idea of a black man playing lead guitar in a rock band seemed exotic. Yet a mere ten years earlier, Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley had stood among the most influential rock and roll performers. Why did rock and roll become “white”? *Just around Midnight* reveals the interplay of popular music and racial thought that was responsible for this shift within the music industry and in the minds of fans.

Rooted in rhythm-and-blues pioneered by black musicians, 1950s rock and roll was racially inclusive and attracted listeners and performers across the color line. In the 1960s, however, rock and roll gave way to rock: a new musical ideal regarded as more serious, more artistic?and the province of white musicians. Decoding the racial discourses that have distorted standard histories of rock music, Jack Hamilton underscores how ideas of “authenticity” have blinded us to rock’s inextricably interracial artistic enterprise.

According to the standard storyline, the authentic white musician was guided by an individual creative vision, whereas black musicians were deemed authentic only when they stayed true to black tradition. Serious rock became white because only white musicians could be original without being accused of betraying their race. Juxtaposing Sam Cooke and Bob Dylan, Aretha Franklin and Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones, and many others, Hamilton challenges the racial categories that oversimplified the sixties revolution and provides a deeper appreciation of the twists and turns that kept the music alive.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

From Little Richard and Chuck Berry to the Dominoes, Ike Turner, and Howlin' Wolf, rock and roll's founding figures were African American, yet 'rock' as we know and hear it now is coded white...In some of his sharpest passages, Hamilton shows how much rockism's whiteness depended on [the] confining ideas of blackness...He contributes a new and valuable piece to a larger and still contentious project: the struggle against the essentialization of racial and ethnic identity. (Colin Vanderburg *Los Angeles Review of Books* 2016-11-24)

Ambitious and rewarding... *Just around Midnight* seeks to tell the story of [black] erasure [from rock 'n' roll], and it does so quite compellingly by bringing together artists and songs that our implicitly segregationist narratives have encouraged us to keep apart. (Kevin J. H. Dettmar *Chronicle of Higher Education* 2016-10-20)

Extraordinary...Hamilton doesn't pretend to have all the answers in *Just around Midnight* but he asks all the right questions. It challenges so much of what we've taken for granted about rock and roll history that one reading won't do...Any future book that deals with the social and racial aspects of popular music in the 20th century will have to contend with *Just around Midnight*. The bar has been raised. (Adam Ellsworth *Arts Fuse* 2016-09-27)

Brilliant...[A] valuable engagement with the unheard narrative of race in rock and roll. (Emma Rees *Times Higher Education* 2016-09-22)

To the age-old cries that 'rock is dead,' Jack Hamilton's book says, 'Think again!' *Just around Midnight* considers the often-elided racial mythologies, cross-cultural intimacies, and racially-charged aesthetic obfuscations that haunt the foundations of American popular music culture. For anyone who remains easily seduced by the romance of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame canon-building, this book is a necessary read. (Daphne Brooks, Yale University)

This new listening to the black-and-white racial politics of rock in the 1960s is full of rich insights, provocative thinking, and persuasive writing. As the revolutions of critical race and ethnic studies continue to reveal new generations of critics born in their wake, revisitations of rock history like this one will be crucial to rethinking the musical past. (Josh Kun, University of Southern California)

As musically detailed as it is theoretically expansive, *Just around Midnight* reveals that popular music of the 1960s was defined by more vibrant interracial collaborations and more violent anti-black erasures than we could have imagined. This is a beautifully written and provocatively argued work of intellect, heart, and soul. (Emily Lordi, University of Massachusetts Amherst)

#### About the Author

Jack Hamilton is Assistant Professor of American Studies and Media Studies at the University of Virginia.

### Users Review

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**Barbara Stewart:**

The guide untitled Just around Midnight: Rock and Roll and the Racial Imagination is the guide that recommended to you to read. You can see the quality of the reserve content that will be shown to you. The language that creator use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The article author was did a lot of analysis when write the book, hence the information that they share for your requirements is absolutely accurate. You also could possibly get the e-book of Just around Midnight: Rock and Roll and the Racial Imagination from the publisher to make you a lot more enjoy free time.

**Staci Eager:**

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