

Source 4 Fans scream for Ringo, one of the 'Fab Four', at Sydney airport in 1964.



were known) were greeted by around 2000 screaming fans. They would make 15 appearances at venues around the country, but nowhere would they receive a reception like they did in Adelaide. Large crowds of screaming teenage fans had been expected; what wasn't expected was the

Source 5 John Bywaters was an Adelaide-based musician when the Beatles toured in 1964. In this excerpt with reporter Mike Sexton, he explains how he gained popularity in the post-Beatlemania hype with the Twilights.

MIKE SEXTON: But after the Beatles left and the screaming died down, the beat went on. Local musicians inspired by the visit were asking the question — if it could happen to four lads from Liverpool, then why not them?

JOHN BYWATERS, MUSICIAN: We then became sort of vacuums, or like a sponge if you like, sucking in all this new material that the Beatles started to produce and we sort of had a bit of reflected glory from them as they became popular.

MIKE SEXTON: John Bywaters played in a Beatles cover band called the Twilights which was fronted by a British migrant named Glenn Shorrock. Soon they started writing their own songs and found themselves in the charts alongside their idols.

JOHN BYWATERS: I think it's back to the migrant thing where these hip kids came from mainly England and the north of England. I think, you know, they were already into the influence of that sort of music and they came here and they made Adelaide a very vibey scene with the clubs and such like.

turnout estimated at between 250 000–350 000 people — more than a quarter of the city's population.

After they left Australia, the Beatles were more popular than ever, holding the top six spots on the top 40. Taking advantage of the Fab Four's popularity, numerous Australian bands sprung up with a Beatles-like sound, including the Twilights (see **Source 5**), Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs, Ray Browne and the Whispers, and the Easybeats, who had an international smash with 'Friday on my mind' (1966).

Australian rock'n'roll would increase in popularity throughout the 1970s and 1980s, while it developed its own distinctive sound, thanks to bands as diverse as Sherbet, The Skyhooks and Cold Chisel. This rise in popularity was due, in part, to the continuing influence of TV music shows, particularly the ABC's *Countdown*, which ran from 1974 to 1987. Hosted by respected musical personality Ian 'Molly' Meldrum, this enormously popular show promoted Australian musical acts to a local audience.

Australian rock goes worldwide

Since the mid 1950s, Australian artists had occasionally managed to break into the US and UK charts, but the nation's musicians could not be said to have had a major impact on the international rock'n'roll scene. By the 1970s, that was about to change.

In 1975, the Easybeats' Harry Vanda and George Young produced the first album from Young's brothers Angus and Malcolm. Fronted by Bon Scott (who was replaced by

Brian Johnson in 1980), AC/DC would become mainstays on ABC's *Countdown*, endearing them to Australian audiences before they embarked upon their international career. After signing with Atlantic Records, AC/DC gained a succession of international hits, becoming one of the world's most popular and enduring rock bands over the following decades. By 2010, they had sold more than 200 million albums worldwide. Along with other popular Australian bands, AC/DC would help to redefine the rock'n'roll genre and would pave the way for contemporary Australian rock'n'roll acts.

Source 6 The name AC/DC refers to alternating current/direct current, a reference to the band's electrifying onstage performances. This photograph was taken at a performance in Hollywood in 1977.



disc jockey also known as a DJ, a disc jockey announces and plays music on the radio

Activities



Student workbook
5.4

EXPLANATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 1 What music styles were major influences on early rock'n'roll?
- 2 The arrival of British groups in the United States is commonly referred to as an invasion. Who do you think felt most threatened by their arrival? Who stood to gain from it?
- 3 Identify one Australian band that influenced the international rock'n'roll scene.

ANALYSIS AND USE OF SOURCES

- 4 **Source 1** depicts a performance by one of the biggest rock 'n' roll artists of all time, Elvis Presley. Based on body language and dress, what can you tell about Elvis at this point in his career? Why do you think he was so popular?
- 5 **Source 2** describes Australian teenagers' response to *Blackboard Jungle*. According to this quote, what was it about the soundtrack that made it so popular?
- 6 **Source 3** is a still taken from *Six O'clock Rock*, one of the most popular television shows of the 1950s in Australia. If the show was revived today, what would it have to look like to appeal to a teenage audience?
- 7 Based upon **Source 4**, who do you think the Beatles were trying to appeal to? What makes you say this?
- 8 Based upon **Source 5** as well as other information in this spread, do you think that the Beatles' 1964 tour promoted or stifled creativity in the Australian rock'n'roll scene? Use evidence to support your opinion.
- 9 **Source 6** depicts a performance from one of Australia's most successful rock'n'roll bands, AC/DC, who are well-known for staging exhilarating and theatrical performances. What similarities and differences do you see between AC/DC and the earlier rock acts depicted in this spread?

PERSPECTIVES AND INTERPRETATIONS

- 10 Why were Australian audiences and musicians so open to influence from American musicians in the late 1950s and early 1960s? How did this change after the Beatlemania tour of 1964?

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH

- 11 Using the internet, find a video of an Australian group that was directly influenced by the Beatles and compare it to a video of an Australian rock group of the 1970s such as AC/DC. In a table, create two columns and compare the bands using the following prompts as a basis:
 - a How many group members are there?
 - b What are they singing about?
 - c What do their costumes and hair suggest about the sort of 'characters' they're playing?
 - d What type of teenager might they have appealed to, and why?
- 12 Find someone who lived in Australia at the time of the Beatlemania tour. Ask them what they remember about this period, including any details of the tour and their response to it at the time. Write a brief summary of what they have told you and share it with the class.