



The Bakersfield Sound: How a Generation of Displaced Okies Revolutionized American Music

Robert E. Price

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The aesthetic known as the Bakersfield Sound transformed country music, its hard edge a stark contrast to Nashville's stringed orchestras. It turned displaced Okies like Buck Owens and Merle Haggard into household names, and in the process created a widely felt influence on style, instrumentation, and attitude in American music.

Even so, a half century after its emergence, the Bakersfield Sound's significance is underappreciated except among hardcore fans and music historians. Few recognize how this California country music not only countered a Nashville hit-seeking machine that had gone adrift but also portended a cultural shift that touched mainstream America. In this study, author Robert E. Price traces its roots from the depths of the Great Depression and World War II through the heyday of Owens, Haggard, and Hee Haw, and into the twenty-first century.

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