

Copy for text panel

“All Shook Up: Philly Race Relations and the Music that Rocked the Nation”

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University of the Arts, 2014

Georgie Woods was one of the first radio disc jockeys to introduce Philadelphians to the sound of rhythm and blues with its new moniker of “rock ‘n’ roll.” Woods recognized the potential of the genre to appeal to a broad audience, and indeed, his radio show and record hops were wildly popular with black and white Philadelphia teenagers. In 1955, he wrote in his Philadelphia Tribune column, “Rock and Roll with Georgie Woods”:

Today, as never before, white teenagers are buying rhythm and blues tunes. Reason—the younger generation is away from the old idea that rhythm and blues music is strictly for Negroes. In this writer’s opinion, Rock and Roll music is the rhythm of America and there are many who will agree.

When Dick Clark took over American Bandstand in 1957, he didn’t know much about rock and roll, but he knew what his teenage audience wanted to dance to. He enlisted the help of Georgie Woods, whose rock and roll hits in Philadelphia became national hits when Clark played them on Bandstand. While Georgie Woods remained an influential figure in the Philadelphia music scene, it was Dick Clark - popular with a more conservative white audience - who “legitimized” rock and roll on a national level.

Draft of copy for text panels

“Do You Know Pippi Longstocking?”

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Do you know Pippi Longstocking?

When a red-haired, horse-lifting, freckle-faced nine-year-old girl jumped exuberantly from the pages of *Pippi Longstocking* in 1945, she quickly made her way into the hearts of children and adults throughout Sweden. Astrid Lindgren, Pippi’s creator, once said that she wrote for her own inner child, which perhaps speaks to Pippi’s success. She acts out a fantastical freedom that every child dreams of: following no one’s rule but her own, Pippi decides when to go to bed, how many cookies to bake, and whether or not to go to school. Pippi cheerfully and unapologetically shrugs off society’s conventions, which many people found liberating as Sweden emerged from the influence of authoritarian Germany toward the end of WWII. It wasn’t long before Pippi made her way around the world, captivating readers of all ages with her adventurous nature, generous spirit, and self-sure independence. Today the books about Pippi have been translated into over 60 languages, from Afrikaans to Yiddish.

Although Pippi is an international heroine with universal appeal, she also embodies values that are characteristically Swedish. Pippi has come to represent Sweden’s commitment to gender equality (although Astrid Lindgren did not create the character with a political agenda); her unwavering independence can be compared to Sweden’s steadfast support of the rights of the individual; and Pippi’s role as a champion of children’s rights is a reflection of how Sweden respects and protects its young people.

Pippi: The Free Citizen of the Welfare State

Pippi is quick to defend her friends from bullies, share her wealth (not everyone has a suitcase full of gold), and assert her independence with good humor. She came into being as Sweden developed into a welfare state in the years following WWII, and she shares many attributes with Sweden’s social democracy. Through progressive taxation, Sweden takes care of each individual’s

needs; in a sense, this levels the playing field and fosters a belief in the equal value of all people. This kind of institutional support allows the individual to be free from depending on family, the church, and employers - structures that, in Sweden, are often seen as confining.

The values of social democracy are evident even in pre-school, attended by 80% of Swedish children. The task of the pre-school, as outlined by the Ministry of Education and Science, is to imbue children with the belief in "individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, [and] solidarity with the weak and vulnerable." Although Pippi herself does not go to school, seeing no point in learning the "pluttification tables," she represents the kind of independent thinker and compassionate citizen nurtured by the Swedish educational system.

Label-writing exercise

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1. Voice: Informed but personal opinion

The Northern short-tailed shrew, common in northeastern North America, might be cute like a mouse and just as small, but a shrew is no trifle! It has a venomous bite, quite rare in mammals. The shrew is in fact a ferocious predator, and it will take on prey larger than itself. The shrew transmits the venom, stored in salivary glands, by biting with serrated teeth. Its victim, perhaps a mouse, will experience irregular respiration, paralysis, and convulsions.

2. Voice: Extensive knowledge and expertise

Spotted hyenas live in complex social groups called clans. The clan's success depends on each hyena's ability to cooperate and communicate with other clan members. This means that hyenas have a highly developed communication system. Their language consists of 14 different sounds including giggles, whoops, groans, lows and squitters. Hyenas "whoop" to greet each other, because each individual has a unique, identifying call.

3. Voice: The subject itself

I'm a three-toed sloth. I do everything really slowly. I eat slowly. I digest slowly. It takes me an entire day to climb down my tree, to use the bathroom at the bottom (fortunately I only need to go once a week). I move so slowly that algae grows on my water-absorbent hair. This gives me a lovely greenish tinge, which helps me to hide in the green rainforest canopy.