

# 1968: A Global Perspective

<http://www.1968conf.org>

Mason Hickman <masonsmailbox@mail.utexas.edu>  
The University of Texas at Austin

## **GDR Rock Music: A Conscious Effort**

For rock music in the GDR, the late 1960's represented a climax for the development of a unique GDR style. The proximity of the Federal Republic and the availability of the competing consciousness industry over the neighboring airwaves undermined the legitimacy of the party's resistance to Western popular music. In trying to regulate its 'sound spaces' and the communities that inhabited them, the GDR unavoidably impacted audiences' listening consciousness in very specific ways. In this essay, I argue against Olaf Leitner's suggestion that a specific GDR style never existed by considering the legislation surrounding rock music's production and consumption that reveal musical and extra musical manifestations of a unique GDR style. The economic legislation governing recording and performance practices affected how listeners evaluated success and popularity. The regulations confining the production of musical texts as a communicative dimension sensitized the listening consciousness of audiences, whereby lyrics began to play an increasingly important role. Indeed, a specific GDR style lies not only within the music and encoded texts, but also outside the music, between artist and audience, and within the consciousness of the listener, as it provided the soundtrack for this volatile time.