

The Devil In American Culture

The Devil appears frequently as a character in works of literature and popular culture. The musical interval of an augmented fourth was called the Devil's Chord and was banned by the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. The Devil is featured as a character in many musical representations from the Middle Ages to modern times. Hildegard of Bingen's 11th-century *Ordo Virtutum* features him, as do several baroque oratorios by composers such as Carissimi and Alessandro Scarlatti. During the 19th century, Gounod's *Faust*, in which the Devil goes by the name Mephistopheles, was a staple of opera houses around the world.

Highly virtuosic violin music was sometimes associated with the Devil. Tartini's Devil's Trill sonata and Paganini's Devil's Laughter caprice are examples. The theme is taken up by Stravinsky in the "Devil's Dance" from *The Soldier's Tale*. Other pieces that refer to the Devil are Franz Liszt's "Mephisto Walzer" and Joseph Hellmsberger II's "Teufelstanz", as well as Haydn's lost opera "Der krumme Teufel".

How about popular music? Jazz was often called the Devil's music by its critics in the 1920s. The Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil" (1968) features Mick Jagger speaking as the Devil. "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" (1979) by the Charlie Daniels Band was the first modern popular song to feature a battle between the Devil and a musician. The theme of battling the Devil has been revisited several times in other songs. "N.I.B." by Black Sabbath is a song about "the devil falling in love and totally changing becoming a good person." (Geezer Butler, 1992 documentary *The Black Sabbath Story: Volume One*) The song's chorus references Lucifer specifically: ".Look into my eyes, you will see who I am; My name is Lucifer, please take my hand." "Lucifer" is the name of a song by U.S. rapper Jay-Z from his 2003 album, *The Black Album*. The Moonspell song "Dreamless (Lilith and Lucifer)" is about a romantic relationship between Lucifer and the demoness Lilith. The Swedish death metal band Kaamos has an album called *Lucifer Rising*. There is also an album of the same name by doom metal band Candlemass.

When Satan is depicted in movies and television, he is often represented as a red-skinned man with horns or pointed ears on his head, hooves or bird-legs, a forked tail (or one with a stinger), and a pitchfork. When trying to blend in or deceive somebody, he is often represented as an ordinary human being, and sometimes only his voice is heard. The list of resulting movies and films is too long to cite here!

The BBC Radio 4 comedy show *Old Harry's Game* features Andy Hamilton in the leading role as Satan; in the first episode of Series Six, Satan states that he's gone by many names over the centuries including Beelzebub, Mephistopheles, Old Nick, Old Harry and Simon Cowell (one of his Satanic guises).

What about Literature? Here are just a few of the latest: Richard Kadrey's *Sandman Slim* (2009) and the sequel *Kill the Dead* (2010), Joe Hill's *Horns* (2010), Aiden Truss's *Gape* (2013), Kat Daemon's "Taming Darkness" (2014), Clive Barker's *The Scarlet Gospels* (2015).

Comics? In DC and Vertigo comics, the Devil is represented by Lucifer Morningstar. In some Marvel Comics publications, a "Lucifer" has been mentioned as being a hell lord with the same "fallen from Heaven" back story. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devil_in_popular_culture]

