Until the late 1940s, the standard record, called a “78,” played at 78 revolutions per minute (rpm), and could hold only three to five minutes of music on each side. In 1948, Columbia Records introduced a revolutionary new format, a 12-inch “long play” album that played at a slower speed, 33-1/3 rpm, and could hold up to 30 minutes of music per side. The change had a significant impact on classical recordings: a single record could now hold an entire symphony, for example. The impact of LPs on popular music recordings was gradual. At first, record companies took advantage of the new format by simply adding more songs to a single album. But by the mid-1960s, Rock and Roll artists began to experiment with the new format by producing albums that required audiences to listen from start to finish to fully appreciate the work, much as one would listen to an entire symphony rather than a single movement. The Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds* (1966) and the Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) are considered among the first “concept albums,” in which all the tracks on an album center on a common theme or idea.

**Discuss:**
- *How did the introduction of the 33 1/3 LP influence the kinds of music artists could record?*
- *What kinds of experimentation would you predict this technological change might lead to?*
- *Think back to the Kinks’ album (1964) and the King Crimson album (1969) discussed earlier in this lesson. How did these albums utilize the LP format?*
The Rise of FM Radio

Until the late 1940s, most radio broadcasts in the United States were made using a technique called “amplitude modulation,” or AM. FM, or “frequency modulation” radio, did not become widely used until the late 1950s and early 1960s. AM radio emphasized a Top 40 format, in which stations repeatedly played the same songs that were most popular with their listeners, typically standard three-minute songs. Beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, an increasing number of FM stations began experimenting with playing longer tracks or even entire sides of an album. FM disc jockeys, some of whom had an unprecedented level of control over what they played, often played new works that listeners may not have heard before. The sound quality of FM radio was also typically better than that of AM radio, and listeners could hear nuances they might have missed on AM broadcasts.

Discuss:
- Before FM radio became popular, how might the format of AM radio have influenced the kinds of songs musicians recorded?
- How would you think the introduction of FM radio might have influenced recording artists?
- What is the connection between the rise of the LP and the rise of FM radio? How did the two reinforce each other?
New Musical Instruments

The Hammond organ was first manufactured in the 1930s as an inexpensive alternative to the pipe organs used in churches. In the 1960s, these instruments, which could produce a range of musical effects, became increasingly popular with mainstream recording artists. In the 1960s, Robert Moog invented a new synthesizer, through which an electronic keyboard could produce a vast array of sounds never before heard on musical recordings. These new instruments ushered in a wave of musical experimentation.

Discuss:
• How might the availability of these instruments have influenced artists during this period?
• What are some of the ways technological change can influence the arts?