

WHAT IS JAZZ?

THE BAD PLUS, as stated above, has “forced critics, fans and everyone in between to re-think their perceptions of **jazz**, rock, and music in general.” In this section, we will look at common definitions of jazz. Before you read this section, ask yourself, “what is jazz?” What sounds and artists come to mind? Then, listen to some Bad Plus samples available online. Would you call the music of the Bad Plus jazz? If you are confused, don’t worry, you are not alone!

KENNEDY CENTER JAZZ LESSON Jazz almost defies definition. There are many types and styles of jazz. As we get further and further away from the beginnings of jazz, many elements fuse together to add to the confusion. Jazz was more of a separate entity years ago, but now we have jazz-rock, latin jazz, acid jazz, fusion and many others.

The definition of jazz depends on to whom you talk. Jazz has been called “America’s Classical Music” and America’s only true art form. The dictionary has several definitions ranging from those with very strict confines, to those that are more inclusive and general in nature. However, most agree on several points:

1. It developed around the turn of the century.
2. It was created mainly by Afro-Americans.
3. It contains elements of European and Afro-American culture.

Source: www.kennedy-center.org/programs/jazz/ambassadors/Lesson1.html

THE ENTRY FOR JAZZ IN GROVE MUSIC

The next two articles attempt to answer the question "What is Jazz."

THE TERM "JAZZ" conveys different though related meanings: 1) a musical tradition rooted in performing conventions that were introduced and developed early in the 20th century by African Americans; 2) a set of attitudes and assumptions brought to music-making, chief among them the notion of performance as a fluid creative process involving improvisation; and 3) a style characterized by syncopation, melodic and harmonic elements derived from the blues, cyclical formal structures and a supple rhythmic approach to phrasing known as swing.

Writers have often portrayed the history of jazz as a narrative of progress. Their accounts show jazz evolving from a boisterous type of dance music into forms of increasing complexity, gradually rising in prestige to become an artistic tradition revered around the world. Certainly, attitudes towards the music have changed dramatically. In 1924 an editorial writer for *The New York Times* called jazz 'a return to the humming, hand-clapping, or tomtom beating of savages'; in 1987 the United States Congress passed a resolution designating jazz 'an outstanding model of individual expression' and 'a rare and valuable national American treasure'. In keeping with this general theme of progress, historians have emphasized innovation as a primary force driving jazz

forward, identifying new techniques, concepts and structures that presumably helped push the music to ever higher stages of development.

But tracing lines of evolution and innovation in jazz reveals only part of a story much broader in scope and more complex in structure. For if some musicians have sought to make a mark as adventurous innovators, many others have viewed themselves as stalwart bearers of tradition. If some have struggled as uncompromising creative artists whose work reaches only a small, select audience, others have flourished providing entertainment for the masses. And if jazz has undeniably accrued status and respect over the years, it has also consistently provoked controversy. The term itself has often carried negative associations, which is partly why Duke Ellington and other musicians spurned the label, and why Max Roach once told an interviewer, 'I resent the word unequivocally'.

Several factors account for the volatility of jazz as an object of study. First, its musical identity cannot be isolated or delimited. Although often used to designate a single musical idiom, 'jazz' (like the signifier 'classical') refers to an extended family of genres, with all members sharing at least some traits in common yet none capable of representing

the whole. Second, the varying functions of jazz have made it difficult to perceive as a unified entity. Jazz can be background sounds for social recreation, lively accompaniment for dancing or music that invites close listening and deep concentration – and the same performance might operate on these different levels simultaneously. Third, the subject of race has generated heated debate over jazz and shaped its reception. While jazz is a product of black American expressive culture, it has always been open to musical influences from other traditions and since the 1920s has been performed by musicians of varying backgrounds throughout the world. In different eras, for example, commercially successful white musicians such as the bandleader Paul Whiteman and the saxophonist Kenny G have been identified by large segments of the public as major exponents of jazz. Many others, however, view these two as standing outside the tradition altogether and consider jazz to be a form of 'black music' in which black Americans have been the leading innovators and most authoritative practitioners.

www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/45011

WHAT IS JAZZ? GOOD QUESTION...

BY JASON WEST

WHAT IS JAZZ? According Wynton Marsalis, jazz is music that swings. According to Pat Metheny, jazz is not the music of Kenny G. According to Webster's, jazz is characterized by propulsive syncopated rhythms, polyphonic ensemble playing, varying degrees of improvisation, and often deliberate distortions of pitch and timbre.

Certainly, the question is a highly subjective one. Ask 100 different people "What is jazz?" and you're likely to get 100 different answers. The debate becomes even more confusing given the fact that the history of jazz is relatively well documented.

It's no secret that jazz music started in the black ghettos of New Orleans at the end of the 19th century. In the 1920s jazz moved up river to Chicago and New York as African Americans migrated north in search of a better life. The 1930s saw the evolution of swing bands like those lead by Duke Ellington and Count Basie. At the same time great soloists emerged, virtuosos like Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young. In the 1940s bebop hit, personified in the music of Charlie Parker. The Mozart of

his day, Bird took all of the melodic and harmonic information available and crystallized it into bebop. But, even in 1955, at the time of Bird's death, most people could answer with confidence when asked, "What is jazz?"

Why then, less than half a century later, can't we agree on a working definition? Part of the reason is because jazz has always been and remains today a living art form, ever changing and ever growing. Subsequently, after Bird took bebop to its logical conclusion, musicians like Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman invented new forms like modal playing and "free" jazz. In the 1960s musicians began incorporating R&B, rock and new electric instruments into their jazz. John Coltrane gave us "sheets of sound." The Modern Jazz Quartet mixed jazz and classical music. Everything exploded and suddenly jazz was all over the place.

In their effort to market these musical voyages, major record companies have added to the mystification, bombarding us with labels to ponder: Contemporary jazz, mainstream jazz, smooth jazz, alternative jazz, avant-garde jazz, Latin jazz, fusion, etc. At present, it seems that there are

almost as many names for jazz as there are jazz groups. Still puzzled? Me too.

But not to be worried. Once again, each one of us is left with our own purely subjective views on jazz. My guess is that, if asked, even musicians - the men and women who are currently dedicating their life to creating this music - would likely disagree on the meaning of jazz.

So perhaps a better question is: What do you like? From Jelly Roll Morton to Lee Morgan, from James P. Johnson to John Zorn, the answer is out there, preserved on record for our learning and listening pleasure. Yes, experiencing all the different styles of jazz is a daunting task, but the rewards are great; and the more you listen, the more you'll find similarities within the styles. What's more, jazz elements can be heard outside of its own genre - in rock, R&B, Latin music, African music - the list is endless.

Yet, one thing is sure: Jazz remains America's only original living art form. Today, its influence envelops the globe. It's expressive. It's enriching. Call it what you like - jazz is here to stay.

www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=15802

ELEMENTS OF JAZZ

- 1 IMPROVISATION
 - 2 RHYTHM AND GENERAL SWING FEEL
 - 3 SOUNDS AND INSTRUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH JAZZ
 - 4 HARMONY
 - 5 FORM
-

1 IMPROVISATION - perhaps jazz's most essential ingredient

A) Improvisation is spontaneous composition, that is, each musician "makes up" what he/she is playing as he/she is playing it (easier said than done).

B) Jazz improvisation is very similar to regular conversation (see Jazz Improvisation/ Conversation analogy sheet).

C) In order to improvise, a musician needs to:

- 1) be able to technically play his/her instrument well
- 2) have an understanding of music theory (the way notes and chords go together)
- 3) have the ability to play by ear (i.e., the ability to play the music one "hears" in his/her head without reading music) As jazz is usually a combination of partly planned (i.e., written) and partly spontaneous (i.e., improvised) music, most jazz musicians have the ability to read music and play by ear.
- 4) have a musical vocabulary covering a wide variety of styles (i.e., be familiar with various styles of jazz, as well as blues, rock, pop, classical, etc.)

2 RHYTHM

A) Basic definition:

- 1) according to the American Heritage Dictionary, rhythm is a regular pattern formed by a series of notes of differing duration and stress

- 2) that part of the music which concerns how long or short each note is played
- 3) the beat of the music
- 4) that part of the music that makes the listener want to tap his/her foot
- 5) the "feel" of a tune (song); a tune's "groove" (i.e., rock, funk, swing, salsa, etc.)

B) Jazz rhythms can range from simple to extremely complex; however, underlying even the most complex rhythms performed by each individual musician in a jazz group is an underlying pulse (the beat), that which makes the listener able to tap his/her foot with the music. While most jazz utilizes a steady pulse (beat), certain styles of jazz are played "freely" with no steady beat.

C) Tempo: the speed of the pulse (beat)

- 1) the speed at which the listener (or the player) taps his/her foot is the tempo of that particular version of a tune
- 2) tempos in jazz range from very slow (ballads) to extremely fast (tunes that are "burning")

D) Syncopation

- 1) the accenting of beats that are normally not accented
- 2) stressing the notes that are on the up beat (i.e., when one's foot is in the air - or up position - when tapping normally with the beat of the music)

E) Swing

- 1) a difficult-to-define rhythmic concept
- 2) for the musician, the definition of swing, among other complexities, is a manner of playing a steady stream of notes in a long-short-long-short pattern
- 3) for the listener (as well as the player), swing refers to the music's buoyancy, rhythmic lilt, liveliness, and cohesiveness
- 4) if a jazz performance has constant tempo (not slowing down or speeding up), rhythmically cohesive group playing, syncopation, and an upbeat feeling, it's swinging

F) Through listening to jazz recordings (as well as live jazz), practice, and performance, jazz musicians internalize the rhythmic element so completely that it is as natural for them as breathing.

G) The often subtle and varied use of a multitude of simple and complex rhythms, all interwoven extemporaneously into one cohesive sound, is, perhaps more than any other element, what makes jazz, jazz.

3 SOUNDS AND INSTRUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH JAZZ

A) Jazz musicians play their instruments utilizing the complete gamut of tone colors (tonal quality) that their instruments will allow.

B) Unlike classical players who usually strive for a clear, “pure” tone, jazz players strive for a tone that is generally more “vocal” in nature, i.e., jazz musicians will bend pitches, “growl,” “whine,” play “raunchy,” “dark,” “light,” “airy,” “raspy,” “bluesy,” “throaty,” “nasally” (anything the human voice can do to express emotion and then some) in addition to playing clearly.

C) Today, jazz can be (and is) played on virtually any instrument, including the human voice; the most common instruments associated with jazz (in order of basic precedence) are:

1. saxophone
2. trumpet
3. piano, bass, and drums (known as the rhythm section)
4. guitar
5. clarinet
6. trombone
7. flute

D) Each instrument has its own general tone color (e.g., a saxophone sounds different from a trumpet, guitar, flute, piano, etc.) and each musician has his/her own particular sound on that instrument.

- 1) although, say, a saxophone still sounds like a saxophone no matter who’s playing it, most jazz musicians and aficionados can distinguish one saxophonist from another by his/her tone alone
 - a. in the same way, we can distinguish one human voice from another
 - b. even if we hear someone speak whom we haven’t talked to in months, we usually can distinguish who it is even after just one “hello” on the phone: that’s how distinctive one particular voice can be; that’s how distinctive one saxophonist’s sound can be
- 2) a jazz musician’s particular sound is part of his/her signature, part of what distinguishes him/her from another
- 3) what attracts the listener is not just what a particular jazz musician plays (i.e., how he/she improvises), it’s also the way he/she plays (i.e., his/her particular sound)

4 HARMONY

- A)** Two or more notes played at the same time constitutes harmony; also known as a chord (also known as a “change” among jazz musicians).
- B)** Jazz chords are usually four to seven notes played simultaneously.
- C)** Each chord and each chord voicing (the way the notes are arranged) depicts a different emotion, e.g., happy, sad, angry, hopeful, etc. (most can’t be labeled as the emotion they convey is beyond wording and different for every listener; “music is in the ears of the beholder”)
- D)** A series of chords (known as a chord progression or simply the “changes”) accompanies the composed melodies of and improvisation-on tunes (songs)

1) although there are some chord progressions that are used over and over for several different tunes, most tunes have their own distinctive chord progression

2) jazz musicians (primarily pianists and guitarists since they are the ones who play chords) have the autonomy to voice chords (put the notes in a particular order from bottom to top) the way they want, add notes to chords, and substitute other chords for the original ones, all in order to make the music “hipper,” i.e., more up to date, better sounding, more “happening,” and more personal

E) Comping

1) definition: the rhythmically syncopated playing of chords

2) pianists and guitarists comp the chords

3) the term comping comes from two words: to accompany and to compliment; that is precisely what pianists and guitarists do: they accompany and compliment the soloists. Guitarists and pianists, when it is their turn, improvise solos as well; when soloing, pianists usually comp chords with their left hand, accompanying their own right hand solos.

5 FORM

- A)** Most jazz tunes utilize a recurring chord progression that serves as the structure of the tune; the way in which the sections of the progression are grouped determines the form of the tune.
- B)** Form can be considered a tune’s “musical blueprint,” allowing each musician (and educated listener) to keep his/her place in the structure.
- C)** Each different section of a chord progression is assigned a different letter.

1) for example: if a tune is 24 measures long and is divided into three eight-measure sections with the first two sections containing a set of identical chords and the last section containing a set of different chords, the form is AAB

2) for example: if a tune is 32 measures long and is divided into four eight-measure sections with the first two sections containing a set of identical chords, third section a different set of chords, and the last section the same as the first, the form is AABA .

D) In a jazz performance, the form of a tune, i.e., all the chords of the tune in a predetermined sequence (such as AAB, AABA, ABAC, etc.) will be repeated over and over; each time through is called a chorus.

E) For each chorus, something different happens; the most common sequence is:

1) first chorus: the melody instruments (e.g., the horns) play the head, that is, the composed melody of the song. Sometimes, not often, the head will be repeated for the second chorus; this is usually up to the players involved.

2) middle choruses (undetermined number): each musician in turn improvises a solo using the form as his/her guide, knowing the chord progression of each section (the chords provide the impetus for what notes can be played by the improviser); each soloist can improvise for as many choruses as he/she desires

3) last chorus: the head again (called the "out" head as the musicians are taking the tune "out," that is, ending the tune)

F) Often before the first chorus (the head), there is an introduction; often after the last chorus (the out head), there is an ending.

G) The most common forms found in jazz include AABA, ABAC, 16-Bar Tune, and 12-Bar Blues.

H) Who does what during each chorus is called the arrangement.

1) arrangements can be determined prior to the performance and are often written

2) Generally speaking, the larger the ensemble, the more written notes (melodies, harmony parts, background accompaniment parts, etc.), the less room for improvisation.

a. arrangements are written and published for jazz bands of all sizes and levels from elementary school to professional

b. most are written for the standard "big band" instrumentation of five saxes, four trumpets, four trombones, and four "rhythm," i.e., piano, bass, guitar, 13 and drums (incidentally, most high school jazz bands utilize this instrumentation); more to come on big band music in lesson #4 when discussing the swing era

3) arrangements can be determined by a brief "talk over" prior to a performance or even on the spur of the moment (this is called a head arrangement)

a. usually occurs in the small group (quintet or smaller) setting

b. when occurring at an informal jam session, who does what when is directed by common practice intuition, and visual cues (e.g., head nods, looks, etc.)

BRIEF HISTORY OF JAZZ + STYLES OF JAZZ

OUTLINE

Jazz Heritage/The Roots of Jazz

AFRICAN ROOTS

CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN MUSIC

EUROPEAN INFLUENCES

NEW ORLEANS/THE BIRTHPLACE

GEOGRAPHIC FACTS

DEMOGRAPHIC

CREOLES

CREOLES OF COLOR

SLAVES/FREED SLAVES

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The Blues

ORIGIN

FORM

COUNTRY BLUES

URBAN/CITY BLUES

Early Jazz

PIANO STYLES

RAGTIME

HARLEM STRIDE PIANO

NEW ORLEANS DIXIELAND

CHICAGO DIXIELAND

SWING

BEBOP

Beyond Bebop

COOL

AVANT-GARDE/FREE JAZZ

FUSION

JAZZ HERITAGE + THE ROOTS OF JAZZ

Jazz is a music that grew from roots that stretched from Africa to Europe to America. Each contributed its own individual cultural and musical traditions that came together in many different places, but was centered in the city of New Orleans. This lesson will examine those individual cultures and their contributions to this music we call Jazz.

AFRICAN ROOTS African culture and life is centered around the tribe or village. They identified with that particular tribe and participated in all of its functions. It was and is definitely, to use a 1998 word, interactive. Everyone participated in some way. This was very true with the musical activities of the tribe. No one sat back and just listened. African music was very functional and tied to everyday events in the village. They did not build concert halls, but rather, gathered wherever music was needed. There are songs for every type of occasion from births to deaths, from marriages to clearing a path to chopping down a tree. Music serves as a kind of social glue that binds people together. Although there were what we might call “professional” musicians that did travel from village to village, they were an *addition* to the musical life of the village. The participatory nature of the African culture can be seen today in Black churches and Pentecostal churches throughout the United States.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN MUSIC

1. It involves the body. Clapping, swaying to the beat, pounding a stick on the ground, dancing, etc. are all examples of how people participated. And remember everyone joined in, not just the musicians.

2. Everyone sang. This is also another manifestation of using the body.

3. Although there are many different types of African instruments, chordophones, idiophones, aerophones, to name just a few, the predominant instrument was the drum. Drums came in all sizes and shapes. Made from gourds, hollowed out logs, an animal skin stretched across the opening, they were the foundation of African music. At the heart of African music is rhythm, and it is this aspect of the music that we find in jazz. Not exact African rhythms, but the *emphasis* on rhythm. African drummers created polyrhythms and cross rhythms that gave the music its driving force. To demonstrate this establish a beat, then divide the class in half and have one half clap twice to one beat and the other half, three times to one beat. This is a very “tame” polyrhythm. Two against three. It is the presence of very complicated polyrhythms that gives African music its sometimes seemingly unorganized sound. Nothing could be further from the truth. Each drum had a very set rhythm that when heard by itself was very clear, but when added to many other drums with their *own* set rhythms, produced a very complex musical tapestry.

4. The musical scale that is found in most African music is the pentatonic scale. (On a piano play C D E G A) This is a five note (pent) scale that is also found in the music of Japan, Scotland, Mexico, Peru, and many more.

5. There is something in a lot of African music that we identify by the name: call and response. This practice involves a leader singing or chanting a melody and the rest of the group responding in a prescribed way. This can be found in Jazz and in a slightly different fashion in many churches.

6. The vocal characteristics of African music included all types of voices, all kinds of vocal manipulation, raspy tone, buzzes in the voice, falsetto and bending tones. In other words there was no attempt at finding and producing a pure vocal sound. People expressed themselves vocally with whatever came out. This characteristic can be heard in almost every blues singer you can name.

EUROPEAN INFLUENCES The main influence that we can attribute to Europe lies in the area of instrumentation and harmony. The effect of this will be seen much clearer a bit later. Harmonically, the diatonic scale which is prevalent in Western music was an expansion of the pentatonic scale found in African music. The classical/Western concept and practice of chords and chord progressions was also a major area of influence. In the area of instrumentation, the instruments that we would consider to be symphonic in nature, trumpets, trombones, clarinets, etc. would eventually find their way into the hands of individuals who did not necessarily have the classical/European background.

NEW ORLEANS/THE BIRTHPLACE

GEOGRAPHIC FACTS - New Orleans seems tailor-made for the birthplace of jazz due to many factors, one of which was where it was situated. New Orleans lies at the end of the Mississippi River which provided a ready-made highway for not only people to come to New Orleans, but for jazz to be exported from the city. The Mississippi River touched many states including several slave states which factored into the diverse population. New Orleans was a bustling seaport, a center of commerce that was a gateway to the Caribbean. These geographic facts certainly had a tremendous influence on all aspects of New Orleans life as we will soon learn.

DEMOGRAPHIC - New Orleans is truly a unique city. Having been under the flags of Spain and France before it became a part of the USA, there were many, many different ethnic groups that were a part of the city's makeup. Each of these groups contributed to the overall culture of the city.

CREOLES - Again, there are several definitions of the word "creole". For our purposes Creoles were people of French or Spanish ancestry who were born in the New World. They were highly educated, provided the best for their children, including music lessons and supported the musical and cultural activities of this bustling city.

CREOLES OF COLOR - One custom that was French in origin allowed the men to keep mistresses. Many chose light skinned women of mixed blood that were plentiful in the South. This produced a kind of lower class of "black" creoles. In fact in Louisiana there was a very explicit way of categorizing "black" creoles based on the amount of Negro blood that one had. For instance, 50% white, 50% black was a mulatto.

The black creoles, because they resulted from the union of Creoles and light skinned women, originally were accepted into white society and had the same rights and privileges. Around 1894, the Louisiana Legislature passed a law that said that *anyone* with African blood was considered a Negro. The ultimate result of this law was that the "black" creoles were pushed out of white society and eventually became fused with the black culture. This fact more than any other provided the impetus for the new music we call jazz.

SLAVES/FREED SLAVES - As we all know, slaves were uprooted from their homeland and brought to this country with literally nothing but the clothes on their backs. However, within themselves they brought their culture including their musical practices and heritage. (Remember the African roots of the vocal tradition and the emphasis on rhythm.) New Orleans was a haven for escaped slaves and freed slaves. They met on Sundays in a place called Congo Square. There they were allowed to dance, sing, play drums and generally participate in their African culture. Of course, many people came and just watched.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES This is where it all comes together. New Orleans at the turn of the century was a beehive of musical activity. Symphony orchestras, opera companies, musicales, brass bands and a myriad of other musical ensembles. There was also a tremendous party atmosphere that continues to this very day. This atmosphere provided a tremendous amount of work for musicians, especially in the red light district of New Orleans called Storyville. The presence of several brass bands and the fact that many Army bands were de-activated in New Orleans provided many cheap musical

instruments that found their way into the hands of blacks who previously had no access to them.

The Creoles and “black” Creoles (before they lost their status) were the trained musicians. They were the orchestra players, they gave their children music lessons. They were in the mainstream of musical activity. The blacks (slaves) on the other hand were not a part of this but had their own traditions that, at least for now, were largely vocal. Except for Sunday at Congo Square drums were not allowed because the white masters associated drums with rebellion.

When the “black” creoles began to come into contact with the black slave culture there was a coming together of two separate and distinct musical styles and cultures. This amalgamation of styles over time had a direct influence on how the music was played. The African field holler, the call and response, the rhythmic emphasis, the highly interactive nature all found their way into Jazz. The next few lessons will examine in detail several different styles of jazz and you will be able to see how these events affected the music and how it is still affecting it today.

THE BLUES

The first thing to understand about the blues is that it is as much *how* as *what* you play or sing. The second thing is that the blues will be here long after we all are gone. It is one of the most venerable forms of music that we have, There have literally been thousands of blues that have been written and recorded, and many more that have simply been played. When musicians get together, especially if they have not performed together, one of the first things they will do is play a blues.

ORIGIN No one really knows where the blues came from. There are some that say it was from the work song, some from the field holler, some from the ring shout. It is in general agreement that the blues as such, did not come from Africa but was developed in this country. It began as a purely unaccompanied vocal solo. Early accompaniments were played primarily on a banjo or guitar and were very primitive. (A good example is Robert Johnson.) As the blues developed a standard pattern of lyrics and a basic chord progression began to take shape.

FORM The most standard form of the blues is 12 measures long. There are 8 bar blues and 16 bar blues but most are 12 bars long. Each chorus (one complete playing) is divided into 3 phrases of four bars each. The most basic blues uses only 3 different chords that provide the basis for endless variations over which soloists play melodies. The *lyrics* of the blues also follow a standard practice. The first two lines are the same and the third is different. One theory on the evolution of the lyrics is that during the repeat of the first line, the singer could be making up the third line. This is also connected to the call and response that we talked about earlier. It should be pointed out here that many, many blues lyrics had a double meaning that, more often than not, had something to do with sex.. Because the lyrics rarely took up the entire four measures, an instrumentalist usually completed the phrase. This instrumental completion is called a *fill*.

In the blues we see one of the greatest manifestations of African musical practices or characteristics. This is vocal tone and includes the bending of notes so prevalent in African music. It is the bending of notes that gives the blues its flavor. It is like playing or singing in the

cracks of the notes on a piano keyboard. Remember our diatonic scale that Western music uses all the time? Well in order to simulate blues tonalities within this scale we have to alter several of the notes. These are called the “blue notes”. Books have been written on the origin, deliniation, use, etc. of these notes but for us it is enough to know that the “blue notes” in a diatonic scale are made by lowering/flattening the 3rd, 5th and 7th degree of that scale In the case of the C scale it would be E-flat, G-flat, and B-flat. These are “approximations” of the “blues” tonality but the only way to approach it given the scale we have to work with. The blues is a major style of music today and has been incorporated into many other styles including rhythm and blues, and rock and roll.

There are two basic blues styles that we will examine: *country blues* and *city blues*. There are many other names for blues styles but a basic understanding of these two will provide a solid foundation for further investigation.

COUNTRY BLUES *Accompaniment:* Very sparse, usually a guitar.

Lyrics: Usually dealt with the hardships of life.

Vocal Style: Expressive but very undeveloped

Rhythm: Very free, no set patterns.

Location: Work camps, rural areas.

Singers: Usually men.

It is easy to see how all the musical characteristics fit the other social and cultural aspects of the music. The same holds true for the Urban blues.

URBAN/CITY BLUES *Accompaniment:*

Piano or instruments.

Lyrics: More sophisticated, problems of the heart, love, etc.

Vocal Style: More refined.

Rhythm: 12 bar structure, more controlled.

Location: Vaudeville, concert/club settings.

Singers: Usually women:

Please remember that we are speaking in generalities for the most part and you can find examples of the exact opposite if you look long enough. This fact applies to any style of music that you want to name. There are many, many fine blues singers, both past and present but I might suggest Robert Johnson for Country Blues and Bessie Smith for City Blues. Enjoy!!!

EARLY JAZZ

PIANO STYLES RAGTIME - Ragtime is a style of music that was played by many different types of groups but is known primarily as a piano style and it is in the area of piano that the style has survived. It is a highly syncopated style of music that was centered in Sedalia, Mo. It is considered by many to be outside the realm of jazz because, in large part, the music was written down and not improvised. Much of the music, was published and was responsible for the sale of many pianos due to the fact that the piano was the center of family entertainment at the turn of the century. Anyone could purchase the "sheet music" and learn to play their favorite rags.

Characteristics:

1. More written than improvised.
2. Usually played on a piano.
3. Highly syncopated.
4. The form of classic ragtime follows the form of a standard march wherein there are equal, repeated strains of 16 measures.
5. The rhythm of ragtime is 2/4 .

Perhaps the greatest known composer of rags was Scott Joplin. He composed hundreds of rags including "Maple Leaf Rag" and "The Entertainer". The movie "The Sting" used his music as a background score and led to a revival of sorts. His music is readily available on CD. Another very famous ragtime player and composer was Jelly Roll Morton. In addition to his solo piano playing he had a wonderful group called the "Red Hot Peppers" not to be confused with the more current Red Hot CHILI Peppers

HARLEM STRIDE PIANO Harlem stride piano or simply stride, was the first jazz style to develop somewhere other than in the South. Its "inventor", James P. Johnson was born in New Jersey and the music had its greatest success in uptown New York City: Harlem. The "stride" in the title came from the practice of playing the bass note and chords in the left hand by "striding" over the keyboard to accomplish this. It was played at "rent parties" where the tenant threw a party to raise the next month's rent. These parties would go on all night long until enough money was raised. There were often more than one piano player since the music never stopped. This led to a lot of "cutting" contests where each player would try to outdo the preceding player. It also provided a good setting for a lot of experimentation.

Characteristics:

1. It was an extension of ragtime.
2. Stride players applied the style to any tune they wanted to play.
3. Unlike ragtime, stride was more improvised than written.
4. Stride was generally played at much faster tempi than ragtime, which demanded a higher level of technique and execution.

Generally considered to be the most exciting stride player was Thomas "Fats" Waller. From 1935 to 1943 he was one of the hottest entertainment properties in the country and had careers enough for 3 men. Only Louis Armstrong was more popular. Fortunately his legacy is immense: over 500 records as a soloist, accompanist and small group member. An examination of the man and the music is well advised.

NEW ORLEANS DIXIELAND The party atmosphere of New Orleans provided many opportunities for musicians to play. In addition many dixieland bands played for funerals in a very unique way. Going to the cemetery the music was slow and dirge-like, while after the burial the music was joyous .

The makeup of the New Orleans dixieland bands was fairly standard and arrived at due to the playing circumstances. Since they played outdoors a great deal and had to march, all the instruments had to be portable. The *standard instrumentation* is : trumpet(or cornet), clarinet, trombone, banjo, drums and tuba(Sousaphone). All of these could be played while walking and they all had a specific part to play. Not a written part as such but a particular function. The cornet(trumpet) played the melody, the clarinet played a melody (countermelody)

above the trumpet, the trombone was responsible for the low harmony parts, the banjo provided the chords, the tuba the bass notes and the drums, the beat. They all improvised together in a fashion called *collective improvisation*. The cornet, clarinet and trombone were known as the front line. The rhythm of NO Dixieland was a steady 4/4 with every beat receiving the same amount of accent. Solos as such were not that prevalent and it would not be until Chicago Dixieland that this was to change.

CHICAGO DIXIELAND When Storyville was closed many musicians migrated to many other parts of the country. In Chicago the music began to change in several ways. The instrumentation was slightly different because no longer was a lot of the playing done outdoors. Therefore all the instruments didn't need to be portable. The piano replaced the banjo, the string bass replaced the tuba, a saxophone was added and collective improvisation fell by the wayside. There was also a drastic change in the rhythm from flat four 4/4 to 2/4. This in part, was due to the fact that by adding a piano player who played in the ragtime style of 2/4 the other members of the group were exposed to this new rhythmic feeling which was not as stiff. The other major change was in the improvisation. Collective improvisation was out and the individual soloist was in. As you will see, one man, Louis "Pops" Armstrong was largely responsible for this change.

SWING There has never been a more popular style of jazz than swing, and today there is a tremendous resurgence of interest in this style. Today just as in the 40's, it is centered around dancing. The Swing Era has also been dubbed the BigBand Era. It was during this time that literally hundreds of bands were playing

for thousands of dancers in every city, town and hamlet. The "name" bands had very individual sounds that could be heard on the radio every night into the wee small hours of the morning. Their leaders became as famous as movie stars and had fiercely loyal followers.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Larger groups. Sections of instruments. Saxes, trumpets, trombones and rhythm.
2. Use of written arrangements with less space for improvisation.
3. No collective improvisation due to the number of players.
4. Most bands usually had a featured vocalist. (Frank Sinatra)
5. Each "name" band had an identifying feature.
6. The total package was important: dress, music stands, risers, backup vocal group, etc.

There were two very distinct "classifications" of big bands. White and black. Each one had different characteristics and styles of playing. The white bands, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, Glenn Miller received the bulk of the publicity, air time and movie footage. These bands were made up of very accomplished players who were excellent readers. The emphasis was on the ensemble rather than on the individual soloist. These bands had a national reputation and toured extensively. One of the most important people in these organizations was the arranger.

He was the person responsible for the sound of the band by how he would arrange the music for the individual players. Of course he had to satisfy the leader of the band who may or may not have given him guidelines to work within. With a band of good readers the arranger could experiment with various

techniques and provide a steady stream of new music. This was an important factor in maintaining a band's popularity.

The black bands came from a different background that was largely more rural than urban. These bands, Count Basie, Andy Kirk, Benny Moten, etc. began as territorial bands. Bands that played and stayed in one certain locale. Oklahoma City, Dallas, Kansas City, which at that time were much more rural than today, were centers for territorial bands. The musicians in these bands were not good readers if they could read at all. They did not have the benefit of teachers, concert halls and the like. They were much more connected to the black vocal tradition of the blues and gospel music. The music of these bands was based largely on the blues and "riffs" and were also known as "riff" bands. (A riff is a short melodic statement that began life as a background for players waiting their turn in jam sessions and would be played just to keep their "chops" fresh and harkens back to the call and response pattern found in African music.) The black territorial bands put a greater emphasis on swinging and soloing than their white counterparts. There were however, several black bands that were quite polished and in a different category than the territorial bands. The bands of Fletcher Henderson and Jimmie Lunceford are two such bands.

One of the seeming paradoxes of the big band era was the fact that a number of really excellent soloists emerged from it. Coleman Hawkins, Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton, Roy Eldridge, Gene Krupa, Benny Carter and Johnny Hodges to mention a few. The big band set-up of written arrangements and less solo space would seem to indicate the opposite.

The importance of radio to the swing era cannot be over-emphasized. It was through nightly broadcasts that the bands would develop an audience so that on their tours their concerts and dances would be jam packed. It was not an uncommon sight for a dance hall in the middle of nowhere to have 4 or 5 thousand people in it on a Saturday night to dance to one of the "name" bands.

BEBOP Bebop was the first style to be classified as "modern" jazz. Like other styles it did not suddenly burst on the scene but developed gradually from the swing era. It was not as popular as swing and at the time caused great disagreement among fans and players alike. In the study of jazz, styles that follow one another are often the exact opposite of the preceding style. Such is the case with bebop.

Bebop differed from swing in many ways that fall under the broad categories of performance practices and aspects of style.

The following fall under performance practices.

1. The preferred size and instrumentation of the bebop group was the small combo and not the big band.
2. The clarinet and rhythm guitar did not make the transition to bebop and were rarely seen or heard.
3. Bebop tempos were much faster which led to a greater display of technical virtuosity on the part of the players.
4. Where the big bands had elaborate arrangements, the bebop quintet usually played the heads (melody) in unison.
5. Where the big bands were for dancing and catered to the dancers, bebop was almost strictly for listening and had none of the trappings of the big band.

In the area of stylistic changes there were many.

1. Bebop melodies were extremely complicated, full of notes that seemed to leap wildly and were unsingable.
2. Harmonies were also much more intense and varied than in the swing era.
3. Improvising took on a new importance and led to very long solos.
4. The general feeling of bebop was frantic to say the least.
5. The rhythm section became more responsive to the soloists and was not concerned with keeping time for a bunch of dancers. They supported the soloist and freely used accents called "bombs."

The main innovators of the new music were "Dizzy" Gillespie, trumpet; Charlie "Bird" Parker, Alto Sax; Thelonius Monk, piano; Bud Powell, piano; Charlie Christian, Guitar; Kenny Clarke on drums. Bebop began to crystallize in the 40's at a place in New York City called Minton's Playhouse. It was at after hours jam sessions at Minton's that these players experimented with the new music. There was also a dark side that involved the heavy use of drugs by many of the players. This resulted in a lot of bad press, especially when its greatest practitioner, Charlie Parker, died at the age of 34 from a lifetime of drug use.

Bebop is still a viable style and can be heard on many CDs and in live performance. It is a special kind of jazz that not everyone can play because of the high demands on creativity and execution. We say it generally separates the men from the boys and the sheep from the goats. There are several excellent videos and books on each of the "inventors" and I would highly recommend that you check them out.

BEYOND BEBOP

This lesson will briefly identify the characteristics of several styles that came after bebop. All of them are quite significant and should be studied in depth for a more comprehensive understanding of each.

COOL Cool was somewhat of a reaction against Bop and using our yardstick of the following style being the opposite of the preceding one we find this to be quite true in every category. Cool is the least well defined jazz style. It was an attitude as well that called for keeping emotions in check and being "cool". It is sometimes referred to as "West Coast jazz. This due mainly to the fact that many players were situated on the West Coast but it was played everywhere. There were a lot of white musicians involved in the movement which was the opposite of the Bebop movement. However there were players of both ethnic backgrounds that were important to this style. One of these was Miles Davis. One of the most important figures in the history of jazz. He was the leader on some recording sessions that became known as the "Birth of the Cool" sessions. The album by the same name is one of the classic jazz albums of all time.

CHARACTERISTICS - As the name might indicate all musical ingredients were now cool, reserved, controlled, etc.

INSTRUMENTATION -The Cool movement featured larger groups like nonets (9), octets (8), septets (7), etc. The actual instrumentation included instruments that were not common to jazz, like flute, French horn, flugelhorn and tuba.

TEXTURE/TIMBRE: Not only were the instruments of a "softer" nature, but how they and the other normal instru-

ments were played was different. Players tended to play softer, in the middle range of the horn with less vibrato and VERY controlled. The emphasis was on a light and buoyant sound. Drummers used brushes instead of sticks in keeping with the "cool" attitude. The music was more arranged and had a polished, smooth sound.

Tempo: Tempos were generally slower and more relaxed.

Solos: Solos were more melodic, easier to understand and follow.

Some of the major players were Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker, Bud Shank, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Lester Young, Lennie Tristano and Lee Konitz. Many of whom had come from the big bands of Count Basie, Stan Kenton and Woody Herman.

AVANT- GARDE/FREE JAZZ Possibly one of the least popular styles in the history of jazz is this one. Experimental, dissonant, abrasive, are all adjectives for the avant-garde style. In this style there is a conscious attempt to push the envelope of all the musical elements. Many of the groups did not use a piano in order to free them from normal harmonic progressions. Individual instruments were played in a fashion unlike anything that had gone before. Squeeks, squawks, multi-phonics (playing two notes at a time), altissimo playing (the extreme high register), rhythmic freedom, harsh tone quality, all can be found in the avant-garde. One of the most influential players is saxophonist Ornette Coleman. His album "Free Jazz" is where the movement got its name. Another important player is pianist Cecil Taylor. His style of playing concentrated on obtaining textures rather than recognizable melodies.

Another player who is a major hallmark in the history is tenor saxophonist John Coltrane. One of his style periods was avant-garde and he pushed the tenor saxophone to new extremes. He was a very charismatic person who had an influence on many, many players. He also was an innovator in the style of playing called modal jazz. This was a different approach to playing that featured a much slower harmonic rhythm (fewer chords) that allowed the soloist to concentrate on melodic invention. (This style was before the avant-garde)

FUSION This term covers a wide range of styles including jazz-rock, funk, pop-fusion, avant-garde fusion, etc. Again one of the innovators in this style was Miles Davis. His album "Bitches Brew" is another pivotal album in the history of jazz. Not only was it a fusion of rock and jazz but one of the first albums to use electric instruments (electric bass, Fender-Rhodes piano, electric guitar) instead of acoustic instruments. In some cases two or more pianos or basses were used at the same time. There were several players on "Bitches Brew" that went on to long and distinguished careers, among them pianists Chick Corea and Joe Zawinul, guitarist John McLaughlin and tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter. There are some general characteristics that distinguish funk and rock from jazz.

1. Fewer chord changes.
2. More repetition of both chords and melodic phrases.
3. Chords are less complex.
4. Drums play simpler, repetitive patterns.
5. Much less improvisation.

There are many, many important players and groups in the various fusion styles. Some of them are Chick Corea's *Return to Forever* and *The Electric Band*, Weather

Report, *The Mahavishnu Orchestra*, Herbie Hancock and *the Headhunters*. Some of the more current groups include *Pat Metheny*, the *Yellowjackets* and *Spyro-Gyra*. There are an increasing number of groups that play a tremendous range of music thereby making it difficult to put them in any one category. There are certainly enough varieties out to satisfy the most discriminating of fans.

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