



ALL THAT JAZZ

A History of Jazz
Resource Guide



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ORIGINS OF JAZZ



The origins of jazz are multicultural and are not entirely “pure,” and perhaps reflect the hybrid nature of American culture more than any other art form. The genre has roots in the combination of Western and African music traditions, including spirituals, blues and ragtime, stemming ultimately from West Africa, western Sahel, and New England’s religious hymns and hillbilly music, as well as in European military band music.

According to Pulitzer Prize–winning African American composer and classical and jazz trumpet virtuoso Wynton Marsalis: ‘Jazz is something Negroes invented, and it said the most profound things...’

A number of regional styles contributed to the early development of jazz. Arguably the single most important was that of the New Orleans, Louisiana area, which was the first to be commonly given the name “jazz” (early on often spelled “jass”). The word jazz itself is rooted in American slang, probably of sexual origin, although various alternative derivations have been suggested.

EARLY JAZZ

In the mid 19th century, songs telling how the slaves were treated by their masters, were being sung - the blues. After the American Civil war, the blacks began moving north and took their music with them. From this background was born jazz, the first original art form born in the United States.

Early jazz influences found their first mainstream expression in the marching band and dance band music of the day, which was the standard form of popular concert music at the turn of century.

One of the earliest jazz styles during this period was the ragtime, music composed for solo piano with little to no improvisation. Whilst this form of music could not be considered 'pure' jazz, it paved the way for Black artists to earn good livings through the tips they received while playing ragtime in bars and vaudeville stages.

The other most recognized early jazz style was the Blues, which provided the basis of jazz music. It was the first music style to incorporate improvisation which is one of the most enduring features of Jazz. However the popularity of blues music into the mainstream of popular music did not occur until 1912, 13 years after the first ragtime song 'Maple Leaf Ragtime' was published.

AGE OF JAZZ



The rise of Jazz music became apparent in the late 19th century due to the invention of the phonograph record by Thomas Edison in 1874, which set the stage for jazz to capture the spotlight in American popular music by the 1920s.

The rise of radio in the 1920's moved Jazz music into the international spotlight, after the first commercial radio station in the U.S. began broadcasting in Pittsburgh in 1922. Radio stations proliferated at a remarkable rate and Jazz became associated with things modern, sophisticated, and decadent.

Some of the great jazz players who came out of the era of the big swing bands of the 1920s included, Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, Count Basie, Louis

Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, John Coltrane, and Winton Marsalis.

The 1930's and 1940's, a time of technological marvels, flappers, flashy automobiles, organized crime, bootleg whiskey, and bathtub gin, would come to be known as the Jazz Age.

During this time many forms of Jazz were developed such as Bebop which was led by such distinctive stylists as the saxophonist Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk as well as Big band, which became the popular provider of music for the era.

MODERN JAZZ



After the Jazz age of the 1930's and 1940's, the jazz community shrunk dramatically and split, with a mainly older audience retaining an interest in traditional and "straight-ahead" jazz styles, a small core of practitioners and fans interested in highly experimental modern jazz.

Jazz soon lost popularity in the 1960's due to the explosion of pop music, which became popular with the younger generations. However Jazz soon experienced a resurgence in popularity in the late 60's and early 70's thanks to the development of Vocal Jazz in the early 50's. Not only was this form of jazz important in revitalizing the jazz scene after losing mainstream popularity to pop music, it has also been credited with introducing jazz to many who might not otherwise have given jazz a chance; because there are words, i.e., lyrics, more people can relate to vocal jazz than instrumental jazz.

During the 1970's and 80's a small core of practitioners and fans began to form experimental jazz styles such as acid jazz which contains elements of 1970s disco, acid swing which combines 1940s style big-band sounds with faster, more aggressive rock-influenced drums and electric guitar, and nu jazz which combines elements of jazz and modern forms of electronic dance music.

The genre has had a pervasive influence on other musical styles worldwide. Even today, various jazz styles continue to evolve with various artists such as Miles Davis and the group Blood, Sweat and Tears, who have attempted to fuse rock and jazz together, as well as Leonard Bernstein who was one of the first to combine Jazz with classical music in the production West Side Story.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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