

**MUS 112 Introduction to Jazz, Sec. D01**

**Tues. Thurs**

**Marc Siegel, Instructor**

**Fall, 2007**

**12:30p.m. – 1:45p.m.**

**Room: W-060**

**Website: [www.MarcSiegelMusic.com](http://www.MarcSiegelMusic.com)**

**Course description:** This course introduces the origins and musical components of jazz and the contributions of its major artists. Emphasis is placed on the development of discriminating listening habits, as well as the investigation of the styles and structural forms of the jazz idiom. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate skills in basic listening and understanding the art of jazz.

**Course objectives:** see the “Goals for Learning” handout

**3 credit hours, 3 contact hours weekly**

**Required text:** Jazz an American Journey, w/CDs. Brian Harker. Prentice Hall Publishing. ISBN#: 0-13-167964-3

**Materials required:** One #2 pencil, paper for notes.

**Specific course requirements:** Students are required to participate in class.

**Tests and other assigned material:** see the “Grading Scheme” handout

**Course meeting schedule:**

- Week #1: Overview Syllabus and Course Requirements  
What is Jazz?
- Week #2: **Elements of Music** in the Appendix.  
Concepts such as rhythm, harmony, and tonality will be discussed.
- Week #3: **Elements of Music**  
Learn how to listen to jazz. Concepts such as song forms and performance routines, focusing on the **A-A-B-A** form and the **blues** form.
- Week #4: **Appreciating Jazz Improvisation**  
Begin: **Origins of Jazz**
- Week #5: **Origins of Jazz**  
**First Exam**
- Week #6: **Early Jazz**  
The “Original Dixieland Jass Band”, Jelly Roll Morton, (piano) and James P. Johnson (piano)
- Week #7: **Early Jazz**  
Louis Armstrong (trumpet), Sidney Bechet (clarinet and soprano sax), Earl Hines(piano), and Bix Beiderbeck (trumpet)  
Begin: **Swing**

- Week #8: **Swing**  
Coleman Hawkins (tenor saxophone), Roy Eldridge (trumpet), Art Tatum (piano), Django Reinhardt (guitar), Charlie Christian (guitar) and Benny Goodman (clarinet)
- Week #9: **Swing**  
Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington and William “Count” Basie including in our discussion important members of each band: Jimmy Blanton (bass), Lester Young (tenor saxophone), Freddie Green (guitar), Walter Page (bass), and Joe Jones (drums)
- Week #10: **Bop**  
Charlie Parker (alto saxophone), Dizzie Gillespie (trumpet), Thelonius Monk (piano), Bud Powell (piano), Stan Getz (tenor saxophone) and Dexter Gordon (tenor Saxophone)
- Week #11: **Bop and Cool Jazz**  
The *Birth of the Cool* album, Miles Davis (trumpet), John Lewis (piano) and the Modern Jazz Quartet, Lenny Tristano (piano), Lee Konitz (alto saxophone), Gerry Mulligan (baritone saxophone), Gil Evans (composer/arranger) and Dave Brubeck (piano)  
**Latin American influence in Jazz**  
Dizzy Gillespie’s Big Band  
**Bossa Nova**  
Antonio Carlos Jobim (composer), Stan Getz (tenor saxophone) and Charlie Byrd (guitar)
- Second Exam**
- Week #12: **Hard Bop**  
The Clifford Brown (trumpet), Miles Davis and Art Blakey (drums) Quartets, Horace Silver (piano), Cannonball Adderley (alto saxophone), and John Coltrane (tenor saxophone)
- Week #13: **Miles Davis and His Sidemen**  
The Classic Quintet, the *Kind of Blue* album, “Philly” Joe Jones (drums), John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Bill Evans (piano), Herbie Hancock (piano), Ron Carter (bass), Wayne Shorter (saxophones), and Tony Williams (drums)
- Week #14: **John Coltrane**  
The Classic Coltrane Quartet, Elvin Jones (drums), Jimmy Garrison (bass), and McCoy Tyner (piano)
- Week #15: **The Avant-Garde and Free Jazz**  
Ornette Coleman (saxophones), Charles Mingus (bass), and Cecil Taylor (piano)
- Week #16 **Jazz-Rock Fusion**  
Miles Davis, Weather Report, Jaco Pastorius (bass), Pat Metheny (guitar), Chick Corea (piano), John McLaughlin (guitar), Joe Zawinul (piano)  
**New Age, Smooth Jazz and Acid Jazz**  
**New Currents in Jazz**  
**Final Exam**

**Grading Scale:** A=92-100  
B=84-91  
C=76-83

D=68-75  
F= 0-67  
I= Incomplete

WP=Withdrawal Passing  
WF=Withdrawal Failing  
NC=No Credit

**Plagiarism statement:** Plagiarism is using as your own the words or ideas of another, whether written or oral. When you use material from a source, you must quote or paraphrase accurately and properly cite the information. Failure to do so is considered plagiarism. Examples of plagiarism include word-for-word copying without correctly indicating that you are quoting, inaccurate quoting and paraphrasing and incomplete or missing documentation. Purchasing a paper or copying someone else's work and submitting it as your own is also plagiarism. Any misrepresentation of the source in your writing or speaking would constitute a form of plagiarism.

Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism is not acceptable. The Humanities and Fine Arts Department adheres to the CFCC policy on cheating as stated in the Catalog and Student Handbook.

## Grading Scheme for Introduction to Jazz

This course is a perceptual learning experience. There is no way to measure more than a fraction of the new auditory skills you will acquire. Most of the following new recognition skills would ordinarily be acquired, almost as incidental learning. Anyone who seriously pursues the task of widening their appreciation of Jazz by doing the required listening, reading and by attending the lecture demonstrations in a course such as this or by self-study with the aid of musician friends will acquire these skills. Unfortunately, grades must be assigned because this is a credit course in college. Therefore, the syllabus, reserve materials in the library and guidelines set forth in class will help you gear some of your learning to quiz formats that will be used in the class. Dates are attached to the progression of listening skills goals and concepts to be learned so you need not be caught short when quizzes are administered. There will be a total of 5 quizzes, which may or may not be announced prior to administering. There will be 3 exams all of which are included in the syllabus. Examples of exam and quiz formats are on reserve in the library and will be discussed the first week.

Note: Try not to think *only* in terms of the material needed for quiz passing. This course is supposed to help you *enjoy* Jazz more. Quizzes and grading are only a small part of the experience.

### Course Requirements

A. Attend at least two live jazz concerts. A typewritten, thoroughly proofread, review that must be completed and handed in no later than a week after the concert attendance and two weeks prior to our last class meeting. To reiterate, this is a *course requirement*. This means that you must complete these two papers or you will fail the class. In addition to *whatever you feel is significant to say about your experience*, you must also list:

1. The instruments that were played,
2. The form of at least one piece you heard,
3. The performers,
4. The time,
5. Date,
6. Place,
7. Price of the event and
8. A *detailed account of your personal impressions of the music (what you liked and disliked about it and why)*
9. A ticket stub or program from the event, *stapled* neatly to your paper.

B. Take at least 4 of the 5 quizzes and all of the exams. Each quiz counts 3 points and each test counts 5 points for a total of 30 points. No make up tests will be given without a written excuse from the Chair of the Arts and Sciences Department.

Make up quizzes will proceed as follows:

- 1 class period late: -20 points from total
- 2 class periods late: -30 points from total
- 3 class periods late: -40 points from total

Grade calculation is as follows:

**Tests:**

- 90-100 = 5.0
- 80-89 = 4.5
- 70-79 = 4.0
- 60-69 = 3.5
- 50-59 = 3.0
- 40-49 = 2.5
- 30-39 = 2.0
- 20-29 = 1.5
- 10-19 = 1.0
- 0-9 = 0.5

**Quizzes:**

- 90-100 = 3.0
- 80-89 = 2.5
- 70-79 = 2.0
- 60-69 = 1.5
- 50-59 = 1.0
- 40-49 = 0.5

Final Grade computation, assuming on time completion of requirements:

- 26-30 = A
- 21-25 = B
- 16-20 = C
- 11-15 = D

C. Each student is allowed one extra credit assignment worth 3 points to be assigned on an individual basis. Extra credit assignments will not be allowed after three weeks prior to the last class meeting.

D. This class adheres to the state mandated attendance requirements stipulated in your student handbook. *In addition three late appearances to class will result in an absence being recorded on the subsequent tardy and every tardy thereafter will be counted as an absence.*

Keep track of all your assignment completions, quiz and exam grades. Use the form below and enter each grade as soon as it is completed. Then you will never need to ask me about your standing or your course grade.

Tests	Quizzes
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
Extra Credit:	4.
	5.
<b>Total:</b>	

**REMEMBER:**  
 You will not pass the class without the successful completion of the two concert attendance requirements

**Concert Attendance Paper Completion:**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_

## **An Additional Extra Credit Assignment**

Pick one historically significant jazz musician and write a review about this person. Include their historical importance and influence on the advancement of the art form. The paper must be typed and proofread and include three sources with one being a CD (or other audio source). Cite your sources in the "Works Cited" format at the end of your report. Make sure to credit direct quotes with quotation marks.

## **Some Concert Attendance Resources**

WHQR 91.3 Public Radio featuring the Cultural Calendar every week (WHQR.org)  
The Wilmington Star Newspaper  
The Beat Magazine  
Cape Fear Jazz Appreciation Society  
Thalian Hall  
Kenan Hall (UNCW)  
East Carolina School of Music  
This Week Magazine  
The Outrider

## **Goals for Learning**

### **Intro to Jazz**

By the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> week, be able to:

1. offer several different definitions of jazz;
2. identify jazz when you hear it and say how its sound qualifies for the jazz label.

By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week, be able to:

1. distinguish an improvisation based on the 12-bar blues format from one based on the 32-bar A-A-B-A format;
2. identify when the bridge occurs while you are listening to an improvisation based on a 32-bar A-A-B-A format;
3. identify a passage containing soloists "trading fours" or "trading eights" with the drummer;
4. identify a stop-time solo break when it occurs in a performance;
5. identify "double-time" feel when it occurs in a ballad performance.

By the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week, be able to:

1. identify the type of saxophone playing on a record, and be confident in differentiating the sounds and appearances of soprano, alto, tenor sax, and clarinet
2. notice when a chord changes within an accompaniment for an improvisation
3. differentiate the sound of a trumpet from a trombone from a saxophone
4. differentiate the sound of a muted trumpet from an unmuted trumpet.

By the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> week. be able to:

1. distinguish the sound and appearance of a ride cymbal from that of the high-hat
2. distinguish time keeping drumming from coloristic drumming
3. distinguish the sound of the snare drum from that of the tom-tom
4. distinguish the sounds made by drum sticks from those made by brushes
5. explain comping and the ride rhythms, and know when you are hearing them
6. explain the special musical skills possessed by the improviser
7. list the unwritten rules that help organize jam sessions
8. match each of the drummer's four limbs with its traditional function in the jazz drum set.

By the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> week. be able to:

1. know what instrument is played by:
  - a. Louis Armstrong
  - b. Dizzy Gillespie
  - c. Charlie Parker
  - d. Duke Ellington
  - e. Miles Davis
2. distinguish music with counterpoint from music without counterpoint
3. distinguish tone with vibrato from tone without vibrato
4. distinguish pitch bending ornaments from unornamented tones
5. list at least 5 reasons why Luis Armstrong is historically significant
6. list arranging concepts that Duke Ellington pioneered
7. identify growl-style trumpet playing with-in a recorded passage.

By the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> week, be able to:

1. distinguish the sound of Coleman Hawkins from that of Charlie Parker
2. distinguish pre-bop jazz piano sound from bop piano sound
3. distinguish the sound of Louis Armstrong from that of Dizzy Gillespie
4. list at least three reasons for Charlie Parker's significance.

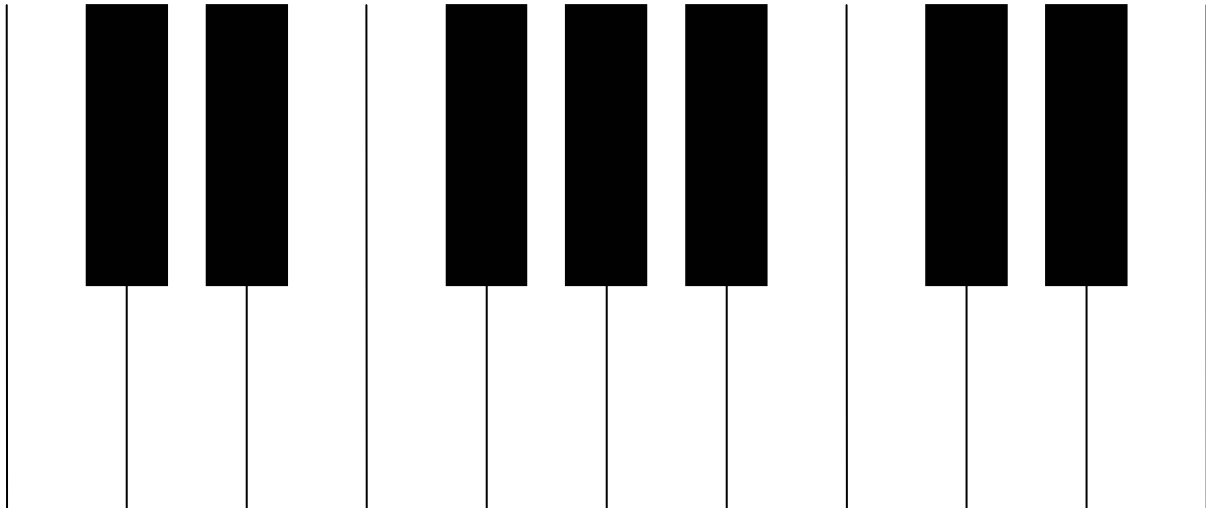
By the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> week, be able to:

1. differentiate the four roles of bass playing when you hear any single example or combination of them on a recording;
2. differentiate the sound of swing, bop. and free drumming;
3. list the historical contributions of Jimmy Blanton. Oscar Pettiford and Jaco Pastorius;
4. distinguish among the sounds of Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Lee Konitz and John Coltrane
5. indicate when John Coltrane is playing tenor and when he is playing soprano sax
6. differentiate the sound of John Coltrane from that of Cannonball Adderly on selections from the *Kind of Blue* album (such as "Flamenco Sketches" on the Jazz Classics CD)
7. discuss the various definitions of free jazz and its associated elements

8. know who Bill Evans is and why he is historically significant.

By the end of the semester, be able to do the entire above, plus:

1. tell why John Coltrane was important as a composer
2. list at least three players who currently show the influence of Coltrane
3. tell what Weather Report is and why it is historically significant
4. explain how misleading the term "jazz-rock" is
5. distinguish the sound of funk bass from the nonrepetitive-interactive style
6. list the ways that jazz-rock/jazz-funk differs from
  - a. hard bop
  - b. swing
  - c. rock
7. list at least four ways jazz differs from rock
8. explain similarities between African music and jazz-rock
9. distinguish improvised parts from prewritten parts.



## Terms for Study

1. beat
2. tempo
3. meter
4. measure or bar
5. rhythm
6. syncopation
7. legato
8. staccato
9. swing eighth note pattern (or “swing feel” as opposed to a “straight eight note feel”)
10. polyrhythm
11. diatonic scale (a.k.a.: the major scale)
12. chromatic scale
13. intervals
  - a. octave
14. tonality (or key)
15. blue notes: There are two types of “blue notes”. The first type of blue note *can not* be performed on a piano and is sometimes called a “bent pitch”. The second type of blue note *can* be performed on a piano. This group includes:
  - a. flat 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - b. flat 7<sup>th</sup>
  - c. flat 5<sup>th</sup>
16. chords
  - a. tonic chord (I)
  - b. dominant chord (V)
  - c. sub-dominant chord (IV)
17. chord progression
18. chord voicing
19. tune forms
  - a. the blues form
  - b. AABA (or 32 bar form)
  - c. modal form
20. bridge
21. turn-around
22. tag or coda

## DEFINING JAZZ

To have an accurate discussion on any topic one must first come as close as possible to a commonly agreed upon definition as a starting point toward further insight. Therefore to properly discuss jazz we must first define what jazz *is*. At this point it might be helpful to ask your self that very question: WHAT IS JAZZ? Sure enough there will be as many varied answers as there are people. There are so many different impressions as to what jazz *is* and literally thousands of types of music have been influenced by jazz. Therefore, we must cut away as much as possible to reveal what lies at the very core of this style of music. By doing so I hope to help us come up with a definition we can work with throughout the remainder of this book.

Jazz is unique because of its insistence that performers create their parts as they play them. This is called *improvisation*. Here is how I like to define improvisation: To spontaneously create. Can you think of anything that you do that is improvisational? Spontaneous creation gives the listener a unique feeling that is strongly associated with the performance of jazz. It is the feeling that *you-the audience* are a part of the musical moment. *You-the listener* are made aware of a shared moment in time, celebrated through music, never to be repeated again. It is as if you in your role as an appreciator are given extra human powers to go inside the performers mind and follow their musical imagination and their musical thought processes the instant they occur.

Hearing improvisation and separating it from pre-written music is typically uncomplicated because improvised parts usually sound less organized. Another clue to help spot improvised parts is the routine musicians follow (called forms). Typically musicians will perform the melody "straight" the first time throughout the form, then the improvisations will start and each musician will be given a turn at improvising over the same form. The way the chords progress through the form helps guide the soloist's improvisations. These concepts will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Jazz is also unique because of its use of an interesting and repeating rhythmic pattern. This is commonly referred to as *swing* by musicians. Musicians will also call it *swing feeling*. Before we get overly sophisticated and define exactly what *swing feeling* is, let us describe it as *the rhythmic lilt associated with jazz performances*. Swing (or swing feeling) is that rhythmic aspect that makes you want to tap your foot or dance (it invites some physical response in the listener). It is important to note that any music can swing, not just jazz.

We have narrowed our definition to exclude all music that is not improvised and all music that does not incorporate a swing rhythmic feel. That should help us move toward a more specific definition, but (and it is a big "but") the only problem is there are many types of music that are both improvised and that use rhythms that invite a physical response (a.k.a. swing feeling). We must become even more exclusive by stating that jazz not only utilizes improvisation but improvisation is central to the music, it is what we call a defining characteristic of the music. That should help eliminate a lot of other types of music. Finally, by

defining swing in the Fundamental Terms Chapter we will help exclude even more varieties of music that do not fit into our working definition of jazz.

## ***IS JAZZ POPULAR MUSIC?***

If our standard for calling jazz popular music is based on the numbers of people who consider themselves jazz fans then we would have to consider jazz as unpopular. For the most part jazz requires a cultivated taste and a broader knowledge of the art of music. However, it is not necessary to be steeped in musical knowledge to appreciate jazz. What matters most is whether or not you like what you hear.

If our standard is CD sales and radio airplay then jazz we would again have to be considered unpopular. Jazz only accounts for 3% of both CD sales and radio airplay in the United States.

Jazz has been around for almost a century, it is considered one of America's most significant cultural exports and it is still gaining adherents in the form of new young musicians and new listeners every day. Yet jazz is unpopular when compared to the mainstream of our societies' musical tastes. Why is jazz unpopular? One reason is traditionally the average listener does not require a lot from their music. By using folk music and pop music as examples of the tastes of the average listener we notice an over all preference for simplicity over complexity. In folk/pop music the melody carries most of the musical interest. This type of melody is called a tune, therefore it would not be an over generalization to say that most folk/pop music is *tuneful*. Whereas a lot of jazz is also tuneful there tends to be more of a desire towards complexity especially in improvisation.

## ***JAZZ AS FUNCTIONAL MUSIC***

Functional music is typically considered popular music. Functional music is music used for a purpose. Some examples of functional music are music used to keep the beat for dancing, or music to set the mood in a movie, or music used in commercials, or music used to help facilitate relaxation. Can you think of other types of functional music? Although jazz has been used in these settings it is best appreciated and understood by focused attention on its subtleties or we can say that jazz is best appreciated as a type of *Art Music*.

## ***JAZZ AS ART MUSIC***

Although some jazz can fit in the category of popular music. Examples of popular jazz would be the Big Band Music of the 1930's and 1940's and the New Orleans Style Jazz of the 1920's. Jazz is best understood for its intellectual and artistic merit. Therefore jazz warrants the label of art music. Art music is music that has an aesthetic goal. Most art music requires more from the listener than what is required from the listener in pop/folk music. The proposition is that the appreciator must cultivate a deeper understanding of the mechanics of music and become more actively involved in the listening process to better appreciate jazz. Like all great art, jazz requires effort from the appreciator to garner its benefits.

In this chapter we have created a working definition of jazz that includes both improvisation and swing feeling. We have come to a closer understanding of jazz focusing on the popularity that the music enjoys in our culture. In the next chapter we will define some of the basic musical terms that will help deepen our understanding of the art of jazz.

Important terms:

Improvisation	Functional Music
Swing	Pop music
Tune	Art Music

## ***FUNDAMENTAL MUSIC TERMINOLOGY***

Members of any profession use a language stuffed with specific terms that help foster communication with other members of the same profession. It also holds true that musicians use a lexicon specific to the musical profession. To help our appreciation of music it is vitally important to learn a few of the basic terms and concepts that musicians use.

This part of the course is a *perceptual* learning experience. As we learn these terms and concepts we will foster the *active listening process*. There will be many demonstrations during the lectures and you will be asked to participate in a few. You might think that the student sitting next to you is seemingly better at quickly hearing these concepts. Do not be discouraged, this person might have more of a musical background than you have been given. Stay the course and know that anyone who seriously pursues the task of widening their appreciation of jazz by doing the required listening, reading and by attending the lecture demonstrations in a course such as this or by self-study with the aid of musician friends will acquire these skills.

The first section of this chapter will focus on terms having to do with the organization of sounds and silences over time. The word that is used by musicians to relate to this concept is rhythm.

## RHYTHMIC TERMS

Music is an art that occurs in time. When you begin listening to a piece of music by the time it is over you are older (albeit, not much older - but still, you are older). How do we as humans measure time? The answer is by using a clock and the clock is a useful form of measurement because it offers a steady reoccurring pulse (the second hand). Musicians also measure time by a reoccurring pulse that is treated *flexibly*. Musicians call it a *beat*. A beat is the basic unit of pulse in music. The concept of *flexibility* is established by how musicians will vary the rates of speed at which beats can pass from one piece of music to the next. Beats can pass very rapidly or very slowly or anywhere in between.

Musicians refer to the rate of speed at which beats pass as *tempo*. Typically there would not be more than one tempo per piece of music.

The grouping of beats into repeating patterns of stressed beats and unstressed beats is called *meter*. Typically, meter consists of small groupings of either two beats, three beats or four beats. In the examples that follow we will use a quarter note as a visual representation of one beat.

The first example is of beats grouped in two, with the stressed beat being the first of the grouping (as indicated by the sideways V's) when performed this creates a type of meter called *duple* by musicians. It is also known as *march meter*. This is counted as follows with the emphasis on the "ONE". ONE – two, ONE – two, ONE – two etc...

### Example 1:



Notice that groupings of meter are visually separated by the use of *bar lines*. In our example the bar lines are the vertical lines between the note heads.

Here is an example of beats grouped into three. This is commonly referred to as *triple meter* by musicians. It is also known as *waltz meter*. Waltz or triple meter is counted as follows: ONE – two – three, ONE – two – three etc...

### Example 2:



The last example is really just twice the duple example. It is known as *quadruple meter*. This can also correctly be referred to as *march meter*. Quadruple or

march meter is counted as follows: ONE – two – three – four, ONE – two – three – four, ONE – two – three – four, etc...

**Example 3:**



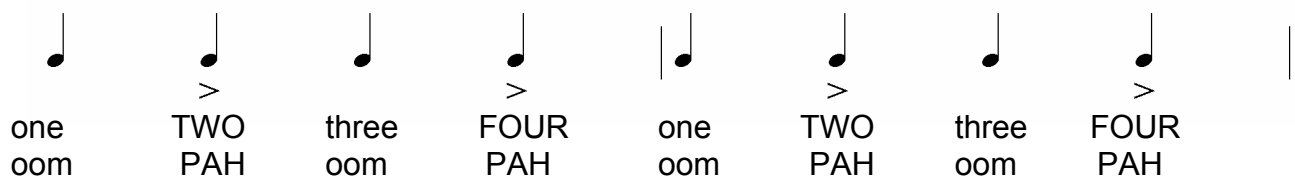
In music from the European continent sometimes called “classical music” the typical pattern of emphasis in *march meter* is on beats one and three. Counted as ONE – two – THREE – four, ONE – two – THREE – four etc...

**Example 4:**



Jazz evolved from the music that was popular in America at the turn of the twentieth century. The ensemble of choice for playing the popular hits of the day was the Brass Band. The Brass Band had a decidedly different approach to the accent pattern in march meter. When they performed the emphasis landed on beats two and four. The Brass Band had an oom – PAH oom – PAH, pattern (with beats one and three being the “oom” and beats two and four being the “PAH”).

**Example 5:**



This pattern is interpolated into jazz and is still the metric pattern used today; therefore it is another defining characteristic of the rhythmic life of jazz.

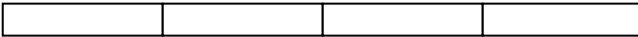
The concept of *syncopation* often adds spice and excitement to music. Unexpected rhythmic stress is the best and most succinct way to describe syncopation. When we hear rhythmic accents in unexpected places it adds an element of surprise and interest to the expected reoccurring patterns set up by meter. Here is an interesting musical fact: much of the music created by primitive cultures is abounding with syncopations.

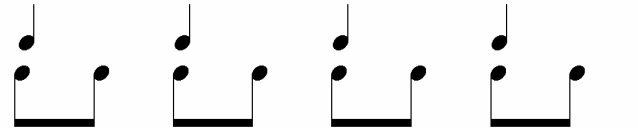
Here is a good place to introduce another interesting concept called *polyrhythm*. Polyrhythm is more than one distinctly different rhythm performed at the same time. Jazz is by definition a polyrhythmic music. Each player creates his or her own unique rhythm that darts around, links up with, and again weaves in and out

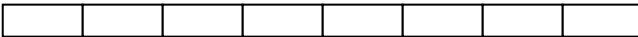
of the unique rhythms produced by the other members of the band. Both syncopation and polyrhythm are important types of rhythmic devices used frequently in jazz.

Another very important rhythmic concept that is also a defining characteristic of jazz is the *swing eighth note pattern*. We use the eighth note because it is the most common representation of a division of a beat. In our examples above each beat is represented by a single quarter note, if we were to divide our beats equally in half we would use the eighth note symbol seen below.

**Example 6:**

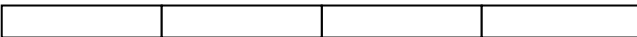
Duration of the Quarter note: 

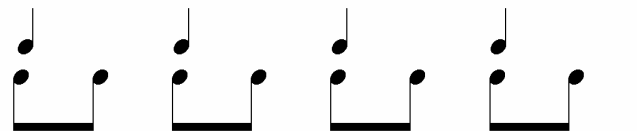
Quarter note: 

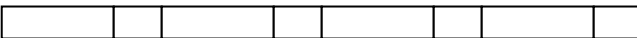
Duration of the Eighth note: 

This is where we begin to unlock the deeper and more specific definition of the concept of swing feeling introduced earlier. First we need to know that jazz was begun as dance music. It would not be incorrect to say jazz was created by requests made by dancers. What we begin to hear as we focus on the rhythms produced in jazz is a lilt. This lilt is achieved by a simple rhythmic device where the first part of the eighth note is lengthened and the last part is shortened. This is not a strict interpretation of the eighth note pattern as a classical player would perform it, but rather it is a long – short, long – short etc... pattern more freely interpreted by the jazz musician. Here is the swing eighth note pattern:

**Example 7:**

Quarter note pattern: 

Quarter note: 

Swing eighth note pattern: 

Now remember this is a *performed interpretation* and not every jazz musician is going to divide the beat exactly as shown above. However, the swing eighth note pattern is the most common way a jazz musician divides the beat as seen throughout the history of jazz. This pattern creates much of rhythmic lilt associated with jazz, therefore it is considered a defining characteristic of jazz.

To review when a musician strictly performs the division of the beat, as shown above, the eighth note is exactly half the duration of the quarter note. However,

we are talking about jazz here and jazz is about self expression and the freedom associated with improvisation in music, so jazz musicians do not take kindly to the concept of exactness. Jazz musicians interpret the division of the beat into this “swinging” pattern.

Any group of musicians could exhibit some or all of the characteristics needed to create a swing feel; a constant tempo, a cohesive group sound, a rhythmic lilt and spirit. However, jazz swing feeling is different in that it contains all of the aforementioned *attributes plus the prevalence of syncopated rhythms, swing-eighth note sequences, and the frequent presence of polyrhythms.*

## THE ORGANIZATION OF SOUND IN MUSIC

Music is the organization of sounds and silences over time. Rhythm is one of the key forces at play in the organization of music. Another very important element is sound itself, or as musicians call it - *pitch*. Pitch is the perceived highness or lowness of a sound.

### WHAT IS SOUND?

For something to create a sound it has to vibrate. It has to be struck, plucked, bowed or agitated in some fashion. These vibrations (called “frequency” by scientists, musicians use the term “pitch”) then emanate from their source in waves, moving outward like ripples in a pond. These moving molecular waves in the air are vibrating at the same speed and can be calibrated by a scientific instrument. Scientists would say that the frequency of a sound vibrates so many times per second. Musicians give it a letter name. For example a sound vibrating 440 times per second is called the pitch “A” by musicians. When these waves hit our ears our eardrums sympathetically vibrate at the same frequency. Finally, our brain tells us what it is and we recognize it as a sound. To create art musicians must *structure* this naturally occurring phenomenon of sound.

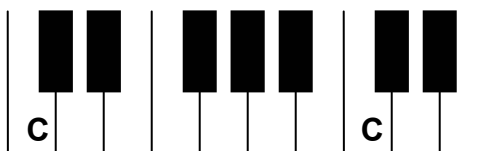
The distance from one pitch to another is called an *interval*. The interval of an *octave* (or eight steps) is considered a large interval and it is a naturally reoccurring phenomenon in nature. Here is an example. Remember the pitch “A” vibrates 440 times per second. If you double the pitches’ frequency it would be vibrating twice as fast at 880 times per second creating a pitch that sounds twice as high in register. Conversely, if you halve it, the vibrations would slow to 220 times per second, and the pitch would sound twice as low in register. The intervals in the above examples are called octaves by musicians and to avoid confusion they are given the same letter name. They are all referred to as the pitch “A”. To review, an octave is an interval of the eighth, where a doubling of the frequency occurs and the sound seems to repeats itself at a higher or lower level.

**Example 8:**

### OCTAVES



The octaves from “A” to “A” as seen on a musical staff.



The octave from “C” to “C” as seen on a cross-section of the keyboard.

As you can see the octave is a large interval. Notice the space between each note in the above examples. When musicians divide the octave into smaller steps they create scales. Scales also help our structuring of music as we will explore next.

## ***TONALITY***

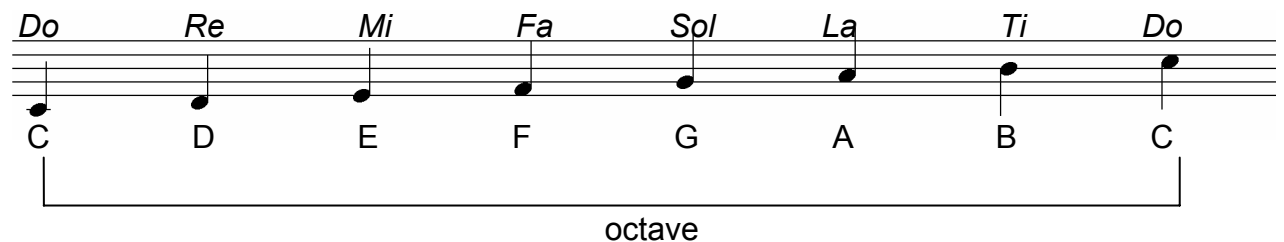
Another structuring element used by musicians is to make one sound/pitch more important than all the others. This is like creating a “chain of command” but with sounds/pitches. The musical term for this is *tonality*. Tonality is the centrality of one pitch or the feeling that a song must end on a particular note or chord. Another way of expressing the same concept is to use the word “Key”. Key/tonality is a very important structural force in music.

### ***THE DIATONIC SCALE***

One of the ways tonality is created is by the use of *diatonic scale*. A scale is a stepwise progression. (The word scale comes from the Latin root “scala” meaning ladder). More specifically it is the aural expectations associated with the performance of the diatonic scale that creates the feeling of tonality. We all have heard the *Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, Do* song from the Sound of Music. That song is based on the diatonic scale. The diatonic scale is a very specific type of stepwise progression that creates a central pitch, a pitch that all other pitches “pull” toward.

#### **Example 9:**

The Diatonic Scale as seen on the music staff



#### **Example 10:**

The Diatonic Scale as seen on the keyboard



To review, the diatonic scale is the most standard way of dividing the octave. *Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, Do*. It is a stepwise progression of intervals that creates a central pitch, a pitch that all others “pull” toward.



## CHORDS

Chords fall in the category of *harmony*. A harmony is two or more pitches performed at the same time. A chord is a specific type of harmony built with *three* (or more) pitches that usually supports the melody and helps create the feeling of tension (*dissonance*) or relaxation (*consonance*) in music. In tonal music (that is - music based on the concept of tonality), chords help reinforce the “pull” towards a central pitch. In this example we see the relationship between melody and harmony on the grand staff. Notice that melody is horizontal and harmony is vertical.

### Example 13:

Melody (linear) ← →

Piano

Harmony (vertical)

A shorthand way that the same information can be conveyed is through *chord symbols*. This is the common practice in jazz. Sometimes called a “*lead chart*” or shortened to just a “*chart*”. Here is the first phrase of the same melody from above, now using chord symbols to indicate to the musician the chords to perform.

### Example 14:

G Gm7 C7

## THE PROBLEM OF PRE-WRITTEN MUSIC IN AN IMPROVISED CONTEXT

If improvisation is central to our definition of jazz and improvisation is defined as spontaneous creation then we have a problem. The conundrum is this. If a musician is reading pre-written music (the chart) how can it involve improvisation? Is not the very concept of written music antithetical to the concept of improvisation? Well, the answer is yes – and no. First we must realize that even to the classical performer pre-written music is at its best only a diagram. It is a visual aid used for conveying information to the *realizer* - the musician who creates the sounds on their instrument. In the classical repertoire, the musician who *realizes* the music of a famous composer is not given the freedom to improvise but, they are free to *interpret* the music within the historical scope of the particular piece. Although the jazz musician must oftentimes read the same written music, they are even more liberal with their interpretations. In jazz, for the

most part the melody is performed close enough to the original that the listener could easily recognize it, but the exact placement of pitches, durations, inflection, embellishment and articulation choices are up to the performer. In jazz every aspect of pre-written music is treated with more elasticity, because of the elevated importance placed on individual expression through improvisation. Once the pre-written melody is stated in an interpretative individualistic way the practice of creating wholly new melodies through improvisation begins and continues through chorus after chorus until the main melody is restated and the tune closed off.

## ***CHORDS/HARMONY AND MUSIC THEORY***

Harmony deals with sounds in music that support the melody. A harmony can be any sound that has a supporting role; however a chord is a specific type of harmony with three or more notes performed at the same time. In jazz most chords have at least four notes and many use even more. When you see a piece of written music the chords/harmonies are vertical while the melody is horizontal (see ex. 13). Chords also help indicate to the improviser what notes to choose for their improvisation.

How chords are constructed and how they interrelate is in the area of study called *music theory*. The knowledge of musical theory is of great importance to the jazz improviser. Fostering a deep understanding of chord construction (music theory) tells the improviser what notes sound good (consonant) with each specific chord. You could say that this knowledge sets up a “pecking order” of pitch choices, where some pitches are going to sound better than others when performed in conjunction with a chord.

For example we know that there are 12 notes from one octave to the other (also known as the chromatic scale as seen in ex. 11), and the jazz improviser is free to choose any of those notes for their improvisation over any chord. If the notes of the chromatic scale are chosen liberally the music could sound very dissonant. Music theory helps structure the improvisers’ art; it provides a way in which musicians can choose specific notes that provide the most consonance in relationship to the chord.

Although the improviser is free to choose any note from the chromatic scale with the in depth knowledge of music theory they now know which notes provide the most consonance and conversely which notes provide the most dissonance. In example 14 we see the indications to perform the chords C-F-C-C and G7 in order. Expert knowledge of chord construction and music theory tells the musician that the most consonant pitches in the C chord are C-E-G-B that the most consonant pitches in the F chord are F-A-C-E etc... Even though the musician is free to use all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale for their improvisation over any given chord this knowledge reduces the sum of consonant pitch choices to four.

## Concepts and Terms for Jazz Listening

1. Listening Techniques 1-4:
  - a. Listen in a relaxed manner (until you are able to hum some of it)
  - b. Pick out the sound of the bass
  - c. Focus on the drums (esp. the cymbals on beats 2 and 4)
  - d. Notice the harmony (the chords and the chord changes)
2. Some common ways to focus your attention during a performance:
  - a. Listen to the improvised lines as unique tunes in themselves.
  - b. Separate the individual sounds into layers, all moving forward in time. notice the interplay between the lines.
  - c. Hum the original tune to yourself while listening to the improvisations.
  - d. Try listening to every note in a soloist's performance.
3. Know what to expect with a tunes formal construction:
  - a. The Blues Chorus
  - b. A-A-B-A
  - c. Trading fours, and Trading Eights
  - d. Absence of a steady tempo
  - e. Double-timing
  - f. Half-timing
  - g. Stop-timing
4. Four common ways to begin a tune:
  - a. play the final four or eight bars
  - b. play a common four or eight bar chord progression with an improvised melody
  - c. use a common or famous introduction the whole group knows
  - d. the rhythm section performs a "vamp" over and over until the melody comes in
5. Seven common ways to end a tune:
  - a. immediately
  - b. slow down (called a "ritard") and hold the last chord
  - c. rest or sustain the last chord while the soloist takes a "cadenza" (an improvisation leading to the final chord)
  - d. repeat the final four measures of the tune
  - e. use a well known ending
  - f. let the rhythm section play a vamp
  - g. let the rhythm section play a common chord progression
6. Know the skills possessed by the jazz improviser:
  - a. an effortless, conversational command of the instrument
  - b. expert in chord construction and chord progression (music theory)
  - c. a well trained ear for pitch and rhythm
  - d. a remarkably good memory for sounds and standard tunes
  - e. a keen ability to recognize chord progressions
7. A jazz musician's ability to read and write music is essential:
  - a. the ability to pre-read and practice a tune prior to performance is common
  - b. the ability to "sight read" or read the music and perform it immediately
  - c. the ability to make up a tune and write it down for other musicians to perform

- d. the ability to listen to somebody else's music and write it down note for note (called transcribing) is a key way improvisers learn to solo
8. Know the primary instrument roles for:
- a. the Bass
  - b. the Piano
  - c. the Drums
  - d. the Soloist

## Cultures That Influenced the Beginnings of Jazz

### West-African musical contributions:

The two most important contributions from the Western African culture, in order of importance, are; rhythm and improvisation.

The Dahomy Tribe, ravaged by the slave trade, was the main contributor. The Dahomy Tribe used music as communication, during ceremonies, as entertainment, for storytelling and for work. Music was an *integral* part of this society.

West-African instrumental categories include:

- A.** membranaphones: any instrument utilizing stretched animal skin (drums)
- B.** idiophones: anything that was used as a percussive instrument
- C.** aerophones: wind instruments (elephant/rhinoceros hollowed tusks etc...)
- D.** chordophones: stringed instruments using animal hair or gut (an example is the Halam the ancestor of Banjo)

West-African musical characteristics include:

- A.** call and response (in jazz called trading fours)
  - B.** ostinatos: short, repetitive melodic or rhythmic patterns (in jazz called a riff)
  - C.** an awareness of the sounds produced by their percussion instruments (this does not originate in Africa but comes via the Caribbean; an example are the steel drums)
  - D.** a preponderance of complex rhythms (syncopations, polyrhythms etc...)
- \*ethnomusicological evidence asserts that the more primitive a culture, the more complex its rhythms\*

*West African Countries include: Senegal, Ghana, Cote D'Azur (The Ivory Coast), Sierra Leone, Liberia, Mauritania, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Mali, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Guinea, Angola*



The *beganna*

An African instrument, is a descendant of the ancient Greek lyre. It is made of wood, with a leather-covered soundbox. The *beganna* is played only by the aristocracy and priests of Ethiopia and nearby countries. The lyre, like the harp, is a plucked instrument, but its shape is distinctly different.

Some West African instruments include: The Timbale, The Xylophone, The Lyre, The Halam, The Oud, The jangar, and the waza trumpet to name only a few.

**The musical contributions of Africans enslaved by Americans:** (historic past or pre-1865):

Music made by the slaves, separated into two main categories:

**A. Secular music** (not associated with the church):

1. field hollers: A non-functional tune, used to let out emotion. The field hollers developed into a form of communication used in the Underground Railroad. Completely improvised, used pentatonic scales, major modes with blue notes, many *bends*, *roughenings*, *squalls* (improvisations on tone quality)
2. Work songs: functional music (kept a steady tempo for work). Usually had one leader. Used call and response, ostinatos and had form. Sung in chain gangs.
3. The cry of street vendor: developed later (post 1865) but employed characteristics of each. Used to sell produce/products.
4. When these unaccompanied vocal styles began to be accompanied by harmonic instruments such as the banjo and the guitar this created the Blues

**B. Sacred music:**

1. spirituals: hymns set to music. Used call and response, meter and form.
2. gospels: songs using scripture as a basis. Used meter and form.
3. Sermons: used for scriptural edification. Black preachers borrowed a practice used in Britain to overcome the problem of illiteracy in the congregation by speaking 2 or 3 lines that were then repeated back by the congregation in a technique known as "lining out". Used call and response, improvisation, harmony and melody (homophonic texture) but had no set form.

Initially, all this music was vocal, with very little accompaniment from any kind of instruments. However, the availability of cheap military instruments after demobilization following the Civil War allowed many more poor people to play instruments. The increasing range of instrumentation meant that African-American music grew increasingly sophisticated and by the turn of the century it was ready to give birth to a new form of music, called Ragtime. The story of jazz still had yet to begin.

**Spasm Bands** were popular street bands in urban areas around the turn of the century. Spasm bands were small groups performing on street corners playing popular songs of the day on homemade instruments. A guitar, mandolin or ukulele provided the chords, a washboard, tambourine, or boom-bam- a broom handle studded with rattling metal bottle tops-provided the rhythm.

### **Western European musical influences:**

- A. a tempered and tuned system of pitches divided into twelve equal half steps.
- B. the tonal system of harmony based on set intervallic relationships and aural expectations derived from these relationships.
- C. a highly developed melodic style.
- D. a strong concept of form.
- E. the mastery and study of European instruments.
- F. a well founded and evolving intellectual procedure for dissecting the processes which created their music (music theory).

## **Louis Armstrong**

**1901-1971**

### **Armstrong's historic contributions include:**

**A. Solo improvisation.** He was the first great jazz soloist. His intelligently developed and musically effective solos eclipsed the notion of group improvisation.

**B. Rhythmic Refinements:**

1. Abandoned the stiffness of ragtime.
2. Employed swing 8ths better than any musician of his time.
3. Used "rhythmic displacement" or the syncopation of selected phrases. (Placing them slightly behind the beat.)

**C.** He was a great **musical architect**. He simplified his music, polishing each phrase to perfection, while keeping his strength for the knockout punch.

**D.** He played with a **superb sense of drama**. The pacing was always carefully calculated, allowing the solo to build to the climax.

**E.** He **created new melodies** in his improvisations not relying on the tunes original melody for ideas. (This later becomes the most popular approach to soloing.)

**F.** He was a **virtuoso trumpet player**. He peeled off top Cs as easily as breathing (unheard of previously) and pulled out technical *tours de force* which never degenerated into notes for their own sake.

**G.** He **extended the vocabulary** for the Jazz soloist.

**H.** He **influenced popular singers** with his vocal styles.

**I.** And for good measure he **invented the "scat singing" style** when he dropped his music during a recording session.