

Blues and Jazz

Creating an American Artform

Delta Blues



- ? African-Americans in the 1800s sang about the pains of slavery, usually without any instruments.
- ? The first blues music was created along the Mississippi Delta. This style is called Delta Blues and sometimes Country Blues.
- ? Blues music travelled up the Mississippi river and became popular in big cities like Kansas City, Chicago, and Memphis.

Ragtime

- ? Piano players in the 1890s played the piano in a new exciting way to get people moving.
- ? To do this, they purposely played “between the beats” or during the backbeat. This type of rhythm is called syncopation.
- ? Scott Joplin is one of the most famous ragtime composers of all time.



Putting it All Together - Dixieland

- ? Musicians played “classical” instruments (like the trumpet, clarinet, and tuba) to “blues” ideas (blue notes, 12-bar blues) with “ragtime” rhythms (syncopation).
- ? This music first came out of New Orleans but travelled up the Mississippi River just like Blues Music.
- ? Louis Armstrong is the most famous Dixieland musician.



Everyone Loves Jazz!

From Dixieland to Swing

? The 1920s are called the Jazz Age. It was a rebellious time when many traditions about music, dancing, and drinking were challenged. It ended with the Great Depression in 1929.



? Swing music was really easy to dance to and became the most popular music in America during the 1930s and early 1940s.



The Swing Era



? Swing bands usually featured a soloist. This was usually the band leader and the person audiences came to see

- ? Benny Goodman
- ? Count Basie



? In the 1940s, many bandleaders were singers. These bands were called “Big Bands”

- ? Frank Sinatra
- ? Ella Fitzgerald
- ? Billie Holiday



Just make something up . . .

- ? Improvisation is perhaps the most important characteristic of Jazz. A song could never be played the same way twice.
 - ? In Classical Music, all the notes are written down.
 - ? In Jazz Music, the players make up the notes as they go along.
- ? This meant the “players” were more important, not the composers.





Turning Jazz into “Art”

- ? Charlie Parker and other Jazz musicians did not like Swing and Big Band music because there was no improvisation and they thought it sounded “cheesy”. They created Bebop as a form of music too fast and too unpredictable for dancing.
- ? Audiences, instead, watched the musicians play, and admired their creativity.
- ? Jazz was no longer entertainment. It now art.

What Else Can We Do?

- ? As Jazz evolved into America's Art Music, musicians explored as many different musical ideas as they could.
- ? Some musicians played music without a melody.
- ? Some musicians made music with dissonance.
- ? Some musicians randomized their musical ideas and explored the results.



Impact of Jazz Music

- ? Blues and Jazz music still inspire music today.
 - ? Many popular styles of music, such as Rock and Roll, R&B, Funk, or Hip Hop, are direct descendants of Blues and Jazz music.
- ? Outside of music, Jazz has changed America . . .
 - ? African-Americans were first recognized for their musical abilities as Blues and Jazz musicians.
 - ? Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Ella Fitzgerald are among the first celebrated African-Americans.
 - ? Women challenged traditions through dance and as bandleaders.
 - ? Women gained suffrage (voting rights) in 1920.