

That's Jazz: Exploring Pulse and Rhythm

In this unit, we will be learning all about jazz. There are many different styles of jazz music including big band and swing, bebop, and ragtime, to name a few.

Jazz first originated in the African-American communities of New Orleans in the American state of Louisiana.

The earliest jazz bands included four or five different instruments:



The flag of the United States of America, the birthplace of jazz.



Piano - this would have the main melodies as well as providing some chordal accompaniment.



Banjo – this instrument played the part that the electric guitar would later play, providing a rhythmic accompaniment as well as occasional melodies.



Tuba or Double Bass – these would provide a walking (moving) bass line.



Drum Kit - When the first jazz musicians gathered together to play, they decided that they needed some percussion instruments to keep the beat. Instead of having four or five people playing one drum or cymbal each, these were grouped together and turned into the first drum kits. Before jazz, drum kits did not exist.

Our Listening



The Entertainer
by Scott Joplin



Oh When the Saints
Go Marching In by
Louis Armstrong



It Don't Mean a
Thing by Ella
Fitzgerald and
Duke Ellington



In the Mood by
the Glenn Miller
Orchestra



Comparing Feeling Good by Nina
Simone with the version by MUSE



Later Jazz Instruments

As jazz progressed and evolved, instruments were swapped out and replaced by others. These included:



Trumpet



Trombone



Clarinet



Saxophone



Vibraphone



Electric Guitar



Vocals

Scat Singing



Louis Armstrong popularised a style of singing called **scat singing** where you improvised singing nonsense words to rhythms, similar to the way a trumpet or trombone would improvise. **Improvising** is making up something (music) on the spot. Louis Armstrong did this both with his trumpet and with his scat singing.

Pulse and Rhythm



Pulse is the heartbeat of the music.



Rhythm is when long and short notes are joined together.

The Characteristics of Jazz



Solos – often these can be challenging and show off great playing.



Improvisation – both from soloists and other musicians.



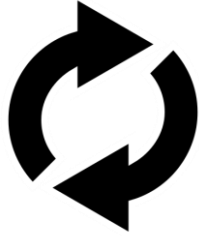
Syncopation – this is when emphasis is placed on unusual beats to give a dancing or swinging feel.



Call and Response – this is when someone sings or plays something and it repeated back by others.

Cyclic Patterns

Cyclic patterns are **short, repeated patterns** which can be heard in music. A good example of music to hear a cyclic pattern in is through listening to drum music from Africa. As jazz evolved from African drumming, this fits well with what we are learning.



Texture



A **thick** texture is when **lots** of people are playing.



A **thin** texture is when only a **few** people are playing.

Dynamics



'f' Loud



'p' Quiet

Musical Notes - Duration



Crotchet = 1 beat



Crotchet rest = 1 beat of silence



Minim = 2 beats



Semibreve = 4 beats



1 quaver = $\frac{1}{2}$ beat
2 quavers = 1 full beat



Quaver rest = $\frac{1}{2}$ beat of silence



1 semiquaver = $\frac{1}{4}$ beat
4 semiquavers = 1 full beat

Layering

Layering is when you add sections of playing one on top of the other like building a musical tower or block of flats. 'Please Please Me' has a melody and two other layers of vocals - two harmony parts. Layering vocals like this creates a thicker texture, changes the sound colour and makes the music sound more interesting.

