

JAZZ STYLE PERIODS

(source: An Outline History of American Jazz by Sharp, Snyder & Hischke, pub. Kendall/Hunt)

Early Jazz/New Orleans & Chicago Style Dixieland (1920-1930)

CHARACTERISTICS: Use of collective improvisation (polyphony). :*Front line* of trumpet (or cornet), clarinet, trombone. New Orleans style typically included banjo and tuba, later replaced by guitar and string bass in Chicago Style. Chicago Style also typically adds saxophone to the front line. Use of *flat four* in New Orleans Style, later replaced by lighter *two beat feel* in Chicago Style. Modern drum set emerges when New Orleans musicians begin to consolidate the drum section (bass, snare, cymbals) commonly found in early New Orleans brass bands.

IMPORTANT MUSICIANS: Louis Armstrong (cornet, trumpet), Bix Beiderbecke (cornet), Jelly Roll Morton (piano/composer), Sidney Bechet (soprano sax, clarinet), Earl "Fatha" Hines (piano)

Swing/Big Band Era (1930-1945)

CHARACTERISTICS: Most popular period in jazz history. Large ensembles, less improvisation, more emphasis on written arrangements. Emphasis on showmanship (band uniforms, theme songs, logos on stands, choreography, singers). Development of *sections* (saxes, trumpets, trombones, rhythm) based on the early model of the *front line* in New Orleans/Chicago Style Dixieland. Smoother *swing* feel (steady 4/4 time with emphasis on 2 & 4, walking bass, ride cymbal). Features of standard big band arrangements could include: *Tutti* (all horns playing a melodic line in harmony), *Soli* (one section featured playing a melodic line in harmony), *Shout Chorus* (climatic tutti section at the end of the arrangement), *Cross-section voicing* (a harmonized melodic line voiced using instruments from different sections within the band), *Riffs* (repeated short melodic and/or rhythmic pattern).

IMPORTANT MUSICIANS: Duke Ellington (piano/composer), Count Basie (piano/bandleader), Coleman Hawkins (tenor sax), Lester Young (tenor sax), Roy Eldridge (trumpet)

Bop (1945-1950)

CHARACTERISTICS: Small ensembles (trio, quartet, quintet). Focus on improvisation rather than on complex arrangements. Complex, angular melodies usually played in unison. Longer, irregular phrasing. Usually faster tempos than in swing. Emphasis on virtuosity, instrumental technique. Drummer is now more interactive (*dropping bombs*) with soloist. Use of *contrafacts* (original melody lines written over standard chord progressions). Increased harmonic complexities (alterations and substitutions of standard chord progressions).

IMPORTANT MUSICIANS: Charlie Parker (alto sax), Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet), Bud Powell (piano), Thelonious Monk (piano/composer), Max Roach (drums), Dexter Gordon (tenor sax), J.J. Johnson (trombone)

Cool (1950-1955)

CHARACTERISTICS: Calm, unhurried approach to improvisation. Thinner textures, softer dynamics, smoother melodic phrasing. Horn players tend to play with a lighter, less harsh tone quality with little vibrato (influence of Lester Young). Less intense *kicks/bombs* by drummers, increased use of *brushes*. More intricate arrangements, an emphasis on composition. New instrumental combinations (flute, cello, French horn, oboe, etc.). Renewed interest of collective improvisation. Less obvious blues influence.

IMPORTANT MUSICIANS: Miles Davis (trumpet), Dave Brubeck (piano/composer), Paul Desmond & Lee Konitz (alto sax), Gerry Mulligan (bari sax/composer), Modern Jazz Quartet, Stan Getz (tenor sax), Gil Evans (piano/composer)

Hard Bop (1955-1960)

CHARACTERISTICS: Raw, hard driving style with an emotional emphasis. Extensive use of the blues & gospel music. Emphasis on "groove" (*funky*), danceability and the "shuffle" rhythm. Latin elements and a "straight" eighth note feel used at times. Somewhat slower tempos and simpler melodies than in bop. Primarily black musicians from New York City, Detroit and Philadelphia.

IMPORTANT MUSICIANS: Art Blakey (drums) & The Jazz Messengers, Horace Silver (piano), Sonny Rollins (tenor sax), Clifford Brown (trumpet), Cannonball Adderley (alto sax), Charles Mingus (bass/composer), Benny Golson (tenor sax/composer) & The Jazztet, Miles Davis' (trumpet) "classic" quintet (1955-1959)

Free Jazz/Avant Garde (1960s)

CHARACTERISTICS: Open or free forms; tunes often complete improvisations. Lack of preset chord changes. Usually dense textures, high energy playing (*energy music*). Collective improvisation of a more dissonant, *atonal* nature. Oftentimes ensembles omit use of a piano or chord instrument. Experimental instruments & instrumentations. Use of unorthodox sounds (squeaks, screams, noise, etc.) and extended techniques (altissimo register, multiphonics, etc.). Interest in nonwestern musical concepts (world music) and 20th century classical composers such as John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen.

IMPORTANT MUSICIANS: Ornette Coleman (alto sax/composer), Cecil Taylor (piano/composer), Albert Ayler (tenor sax), Anthony Braxton (saxophones/composer)

Fusion/Jazz Rock (1970s)

CHARACTERISTICS: Extensive use of electronic instruments: electric piano (Fender Rhodes), synthesizers (multiple keyboards), electric bass (bass guitar), electric guitar, electronic modifications on acoustic instruments. Focus of attention on the rhythm section. More attention on studio recording technology and the process of recording. More emphasis on straight eight note feel (rock) than *swing*. Harmony often simple chord repetitions (*static harmony, vamps*). Bass lines often repetitive. Pieces range from simple melodies with vamps and open forms to complex through-composed, sectionalized compositions. Saxophones used more often than brass instruments.

IMPORTANT MUSICIANS: Miles Davis (trumpet/bandleader: *In A Silent Way*), Chick Corea (keyboards/leader: *Return to Forever*), Weather Report (group), John McLaughlin (guitar/leader: *Mahavishnu Orchestra*)

Eclecticism (1980s & 1990s)

CHARACTERISTICS: No single dominant stylistic trend has emerged in the 1980s or 1990s. Instead, a continuation of previous styles, crossovers, and new styles derived from various sources are common. Some notable trends within this eclecticism seem to be:

- 1) a further sophistication of electronic jazz through the use of computers
- 2) a resurgent neo-bop and neo-traditionalist movement (Neo-Classicism)
- 3) expanded instrumental & vocal techniques
- 4) a greater involvement of women
- 5) the growth of European and "world music" jazz styles.

IMPORTANT MUSICIANS: Pat Metheny Group (fusion band), Michael Brecker (tenor sax: also founding member of fusion group Steps Ahead), Wynton Marsalis (trumpet/composer: associated with Neo-Classic movement), Joe Lovano (tenor sax), Kenny Garrett (alto sax), Don Byron (clarinet/composer), Dave Douglas (trumpet/composer), Bobby McFerrin (voice), Steve Coleman (alto sax: associated with M-Base movement), Cassandra Wilson (voice: associated with M-Base movement), Dave Sanborn (alto sax), Chick Corea's Elektric Band (fusion band), John Scofield (guitar), Keith Jarrett Trio (piano/bass/drums acoustic jazz trio)