Teaching guide: Area of Study 5 – Jazz

This resource is a teaching guide for Area of Study 5 (Jazz) for our A-level Music specification (7272).
Your students need to study each of the elements in this guide.

In the listening part of the exam, students will be tested on their recognition of musical elements heard in unfamiliar music from this Area of Study.

In the essay part of the exam, students will be required to answer **one** question, focusing on the work of **two** of the named artists.
Students will always be able to choose which artists to write about, but they will usually be expected to make detailed reference to at least two contrasting examples of their work. The 'Suggested Listening List' is exactly what it says; students and their teachers are encouraged to use the list as a starting point from which to build a small library of recordings which they know well and can recall and write about convincingly in the exam.

Familiarity with **all** the music styles of **all** the named artists is needed for the listening questions, but it is envisaged that detailed study of particular pieces could be limited to two or three artists in preparation for the essay section.

Components of Jazz

Melody

The melodic features employed by a Jazz performer form one of the most distinctive aspects of their individual style. One of the principal characteristics of Jazz is the absence of the exact definition of pitches and rhythms expected in the notation of 'classical' music. When Jazz performers play a melody from memory, or by reading the rudimentary shorthand notation provided by a 'lead-sheet', they are free to 'blend' pitch and rhythm to make their own interpretation unique and, of course, when improvising, the resulting melodic shapes may be very difficult to notate accurately. Transcription is the process of notating music just by listening to it; trying to make as accurate a written record of a particular solo line as possible. Many aspiring Jazz musicians have used this as a way of absorbing the style of soloists they admire in order to reinforce the knowledge they have through a purely aural memory.
It is a skill worth honing in order to appreciate the subtle differences between individual performers (as well as for its obvious benefits in aural training).

Some of the ways in which the pitch aspect of melody can be played with are listed below:

1. Glissando (gliss)

Literally, sliding from note to note, so that the pitch rises or falls in a completely

smooth line. The trombone, operated by slide, is obviously capable of a very effective glissando, as are fretless string instruments. On other wind instruments, a combination of embouchure and throat control, gradual uncovering of tone holes (clarinet, saxophone) or half-valving (trumpet) can overcome the fact that pitches are normally produced in discrete semitones. On keyboard instruments, a glissando is essentially a very rapid scale, usually executed using a sweeping gesture with the fingernail.
Many of the following features on this list are related to glissando.

2. Pitch-bend

Moving away from and then back to the original pitch of a note using a small scale glissando. Typically a pitch-bend will cover a small interval (anywhere between microtones and minor thirds)

3. Smear

A glissando up from an indeterminate pitch towards the pitch of the main note.

4. Spill/fall-off

A rapidly descending glissando away from the end of the main note towards an indeterminate lower pitch.

5. Rip

A rapid, violent upward glissando to the beginning of a note, most often associated with the trumpet; a speciality of Louis Armstrong.

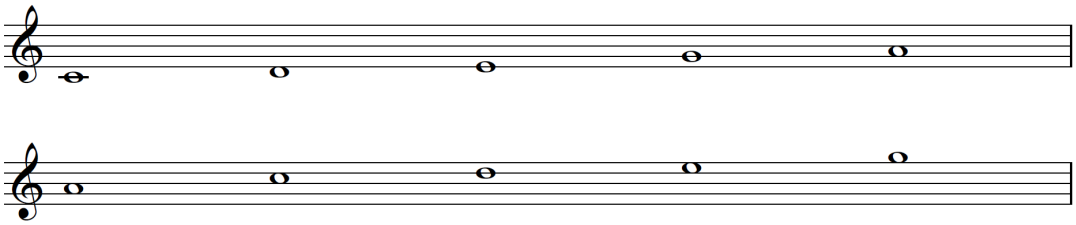
6. Harmony and Tonality

Jazz harmony has evolved rapidly over the course of a century or so. Its origins are in the blues and in the simple functional harmony of ragtime and other forms of light music popular in the early twentieth century. The harmony of the blues, in its simplest form, depends upon the interaction of chords I, IV and V (see Twelve Bar Blues below), though with IV often playing a more important role than V (in contradiction to most ‘classical’ harmony). As with developments in classical harmony, the drive to make music seem more expressive or colourful led Jazz musicians to create more complex and varied palettes of chords and progressions. This led gradually to experimentation with more dissonant harmony and rapijad and unusual chord changes in the 1940s and ‘50s. As with contemporary classical music in the later twentieth century, from here, two paths opened up; one led even further into complexity and dissonance, as seen in the Free Jazz movement, which embraced atonality; the other turned back towards a simpler aesthetic, in which a slower, calmer pace and clearer vocabulary based on the old modal scales was created. Artists in recent generations have been able to draw upon both these

trends and in some cases effect a new kind of synthesis.

7. Pentatonic scale

As the name suggests, this is a five-note scale, usually found in the form C D E G A ('major' form) or A C D E G ('minor' form). This scale is found in ancient societies all over the world, but its particular relevance to Jazz is that it was used in West Africa, from where millions of people were transported to the New World to work as slaves. The scale was originally used in music that is primarily melodic rather than harmonic in conception and it does not contain any of the semitones which help define tonality in the major/minor system.
Many of the distinctive features of Jazz melody and harmony come from the interaction of this tonally elusive scale, belonging to the Afro-American population, with the harmony of European hymns, marches and popular songs.
Pentatonic scales in 'major' and 'minor' form:

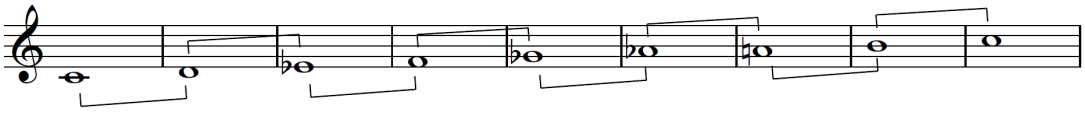


Blue notes and the blues scale

One theory for the origin of 'blue notes' is that a distinctive style of vocal music developed in the southern USA as the descendants of the black slave population sang improvised melodies using the 'minor' version of the pentatonic scale against harmony that was essentially major. The resulting mixture of different chromatic versions of the same scale degrees – major/minor 3rd and major/minor 7th – sounded particularly expressive and came to be associated with the genre of blues. Hence the flattened 3rd and flattened 7th came to be known as 'blue notes'. These may be flattened by a full semitone, or sometimes by smaller intervals ('microtones'), making them all the more expressive because not 'in tune' in the conventional sense. Jazz musicians used the flattened 5th a similar way. The combination of these phenomena into a scalic shape is known as a 'blues scale'.
A good example of this is seen in the 1925 hit 'St. Louis Blues' by Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith, 'St. Louis Blues' (1925):

Diminished (octatonic) scale

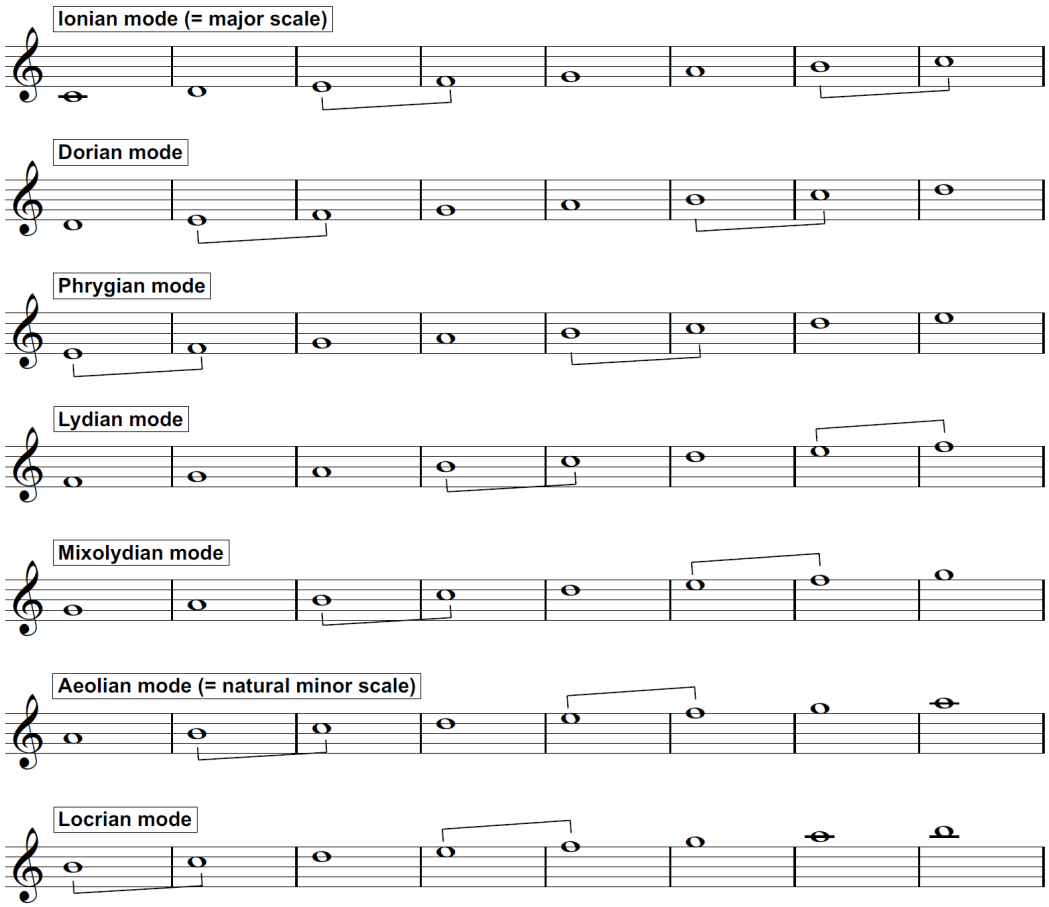
A scale based on connecting the four notes of a diminished 7th chord with another four scale steps (themselves forming another diminished 7th chord). The resulting pattern is symmetrical, with alternating steps of a semitone and a tone and has eight different pitches (hence, 'octatonic'). This scale is particularly suited to improvisation over diminished 7th harmony.
Octatonic scale on C, showing interval structure (steps bracketed below are tones; steps bracketed above are semitones):



Modal Jazz

Modal Jazz was developed by Miles Davis and his close associates in the late 1950s. It was a way of escaping from the increasingly complex and frenetic harmonic style of bebop by using improvisation on scale types (the modes) rather than on the chord changes of songs. The seven modes (see illustration) have been used and written about since ancient Greek times and were the principal method of categorising melody in the medieval period. Each of them corresponds to a 'white note' scale on a keyboard, thus they have the same notes as a C major scale, but because they each have different 'tonics', they have different patterns of tones and semitones. These patterns may be transposed to start on any note, thus it is possible to use, for example, a Lydian mode on C, which would consist of the notes C D E F# G A B.

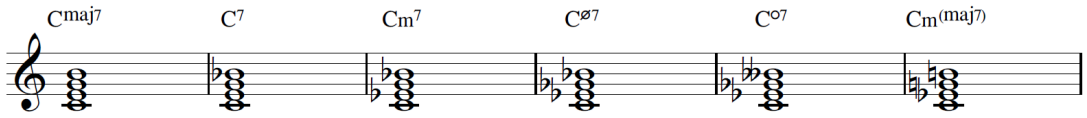
The seven principal modes, showing the position of semitones:



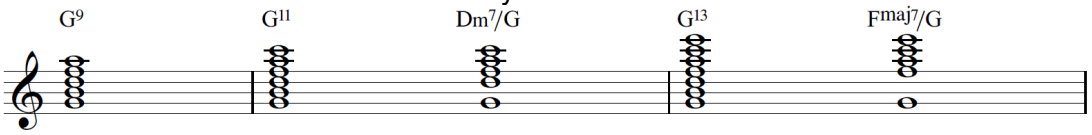
Modal Jazz often uses relatively static harmony, such as a pedal note, or a repeating two chord sequence. A good example of this is 'Miles Davies' 'So What' from '*Kind of Blue'* in 1959.

Chord extensions and additions

As in classical music, the addition of notes to a triad (or exchange of certain notes for others) was an important way of generating different a variety of different harmonic 'colours' without changing the function of the chord root. Sevenths are extremely common extensions of triads; for example, a twelve-bar blues progression using chords I, IV and V will often turn each of these chords into a 'dominant 7th' by placing a minor 7th above the major triad.
Various types of added 7th chords with their common notation. Left to right: major seventh, dominant 7th, minor 7th, half-diminished 7th, diminished 7th, minor triad with major 7th:

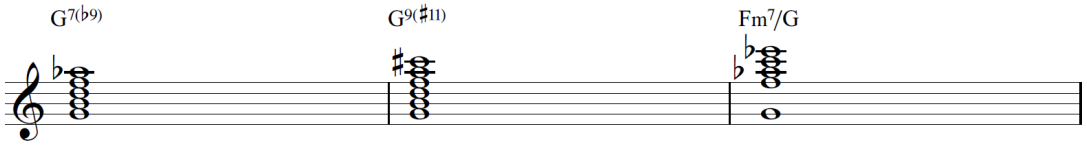


Further extensions of triads by placing additional thirds above the triad+7th are possible, creating progressively richer and more dissonant harmony; 9th, 11th and 13th chords are all commonly featured in Jazz from a relatively early period. These higher discords are most characteristically heard over a dominant function chord; the additional notes create a further sense of tension which needs resolution through a cadence. The example below shows dominant 9th, 11th and 13th chords in the key of C major (i.e. rooted on G). For the 11th and 13th, it is common not to present the whole chord, thus avoiding the clash of a minor ninth between the 3rd (B in this case) and the 11th (C). This can lead to alternative methods of notation shown here; the 'D minor 7th over a G' is effectively an incomplete G11 and likewise the incomplete G13 looks like 'F major 7th over G'. As long as the function is understood, Jazz musicians tend not to be over-fussy about notation.



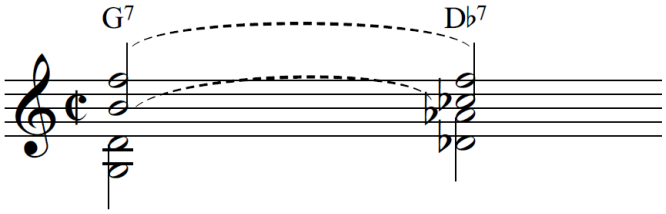
The chords are assumed to be diatonic unless an accidental (or a + or – symbol) is placed next to a particular figure.

Another common chord type is produced by substituting a 4th for a 3rd in a triad; this is known as a sus4 chord, implying a relationship with the idea of a suspension in classical music, although there is no need to prepare or resolve the sus4 chord.
Some common chromatic alterations. Left to right: a dominant 7th with flat 9th, a dominant 9th with sharp 11th, a dominant 7th with flat 9th and flat 13th.

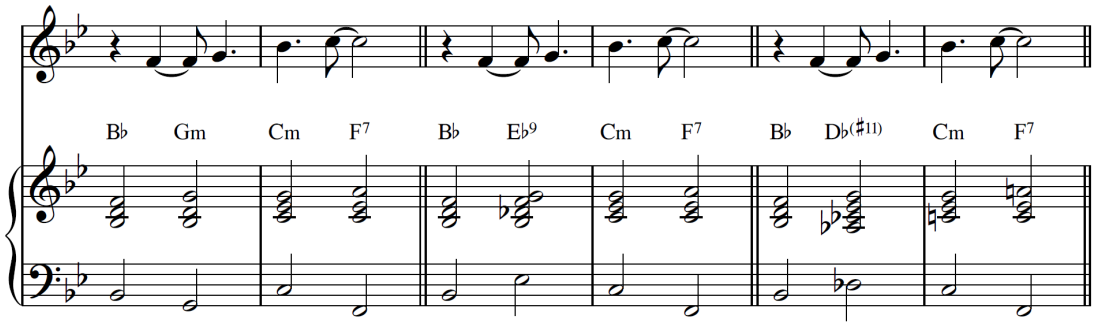


Chord substitution

The idea of substituting one chord for another in a progression is a simple one. The fact that two chords have several notes in common will mean that (a) they can both be used to harmonise the same particular section of melody and (b) that they can fulfill the same harmonic function within the progression (usually as a 'tonic' a 'dominant' or a 'pre-dominant' chord). The most straightforward examples of chord substitution take place where the original chord is replaced by one a third higher or lower (for example II can take the place of IV). A more sophisticated form comes from the re-interpretation of the 3rd and 7th in a dominant 7th chord; if these two notes are retained, but the root and 5th are replaced with the notes a tritone (augmented 4th/diminished 5th) away from them, we have an example of tritone substitution, in which the role of the dominant chord is played by the flattened supertonic.
Tritone substitution. D flat^7 can substitute for G^7 because it has the notes F and B (enharmonically changed to C flat) in common:



On the same basis, other chords can be subject to tritone substitution. In the example below (based on the first two bars of the Gershwin tune 'I Got Rhythm'), chord vi (G minor) is first substituted by IV^9 (E flat dominant 9th) and then by flattened III$^{\#11}$; in each case, the progression towards ii in the second bar is logical and the chords harmonise the G of the melody.



Structure

12-bar blues

The Blues is originally a vocal genre, appearing in many different improvised structures. One of the most common patterns is dictated by the lyrics, which are arranged in three lines in the form AAB. The repetition of the first line allowed the singer time to think of a rhyme to end the last line. Each of the three lines is four bars long, thus making a 12-bar overall structure. Blues singers would characteristically accompany themselves on the guitar, using a simple cyclic structure of chords I, IV and V. There are many variants of this, but the most basic is as follows:

Line 1	I	I	I	I
Line 2	IV	IV	I	I
Line 3	V	V	I	I

Common variants are to substitute IV in bar 2 and also in bar 10. Increasingly elaborate 'turnarounds' came to be used in the last two bars in order to prepare the return to the tonic at the start of the next chorus.
The 12-bar blues structure runs like a thread through most of Jazz history and also – in a speeded up and harmonically simple way – in popular music through 'Rhythm & Blues' and 'Rock & Roll'. Examples of its use in a variety of different stylistic contexts can be heard in the work of many of the artists named in the specification, for example:

- Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith 'St. Louis Blues' (1925). This song by W.C. Handy was published in 1914 and quickly became a Jazz standard. The song's opening and closing sections are in 12-bar blues form.
- Duke Ellington and his Orchestra 'The Mooche' (1928). This is an interesting work in its use of blues forms; after the opening two sections, there are episodes structured as 12-bar blues, first in the minor key (featuring solo clarinet) then in the major (featuring solo voice).
- Miles Davis 'All Blues' from the album 'Kind of Blue' (1959). Here, each bar of the 12-bar structure becomes two bars in a Jazz waltz feel and there are some typically sophisticated substitutions in the chord changes.

Chord changes

'Chord changes' or simply 'changes' is the term given to the complete chord sequence of a song upon which Jazz musicians may improvise. One of the most popular, because simple and adaptable, is the changes for Gershwin's song 'I Got Rhythm', often known as 'rhythm changes'.

Later Jazz musicians, especially from the bebop era, frequently built new melodies upon the chord changes of previous songs, a technique known as 'contrafact'. Examples include Charlie Parker's 'Ko-Ko', which is based upon the chord changes of Ray Noble's song 'Cherokee'.

Song form/standard form

Many Jazz performances are based upon improvisation over the structure of a popular melody. In many cases, these are songs made popular in Broadway musicals or Hollywood films. A common pattern is for a song to be structured in four 8-bar phrases (or four 16-bar phrases, depending on tempo), often in the pattern AABA (or slight variations upon this such as AA^1BA or $AABA^1$). Another much used pattern is ABAB.

Famous improvised Jazz performances (variants of the AABA form)	
Somebody Loves Me	George and Ira Gershwin (1924)
Ain't Misbehavin'	'Fats' Waller, Harry Brooks and Andy Razaf (1929)
I Got Rhythm	George and Ira Gershwin (1930)
Smoke Gets in Your Eyes	Jerome Kern and Otto Harbach (1933)
All The Things You Are	Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II (1939)
Come Sunday	Duke Ellington (1946)
Variants of the ABAB form	
Fascinating Rhythm	George and Ira Gershwin (1929)
With A Song in My Heart	Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart (1929)
East of the Sun (and West of the Moon)	Brooks Bowman (1934)
A Fine Romance	Jerome Kern and Dorothy Fields (1936)

Middle eight/bridge

The B section in an AABA standard form (see above).

Intro and outro

Introduction has often been abbreviated to 'intro' and the term 'outro' has been coined to suggest a symmetrical balance and relationship between opening and closing sections.

Head

At the start of a Jazz arrangement, the statement of the main melody, normally in unison, is known as the 'head'. This usually reappears at the end of a performance after several improvised choruses.

Chorus

A statement of the chord changes.

Fours

Towards the end of a series of solo improvisations, Jazz musicians in an ensemble may share out the improvised solo line in shorter units (most often four bars), rather than taking a whole chorus or set of choruses. This practice is known as 'trading fours'.

Break

A brief (usually unaccompanied) solo of 1-2 bars, occurring at a junction point in a Jazz performance, such as a phrase end or a turnaround. Breaks were normally improvised and sometimes spectacularly virtuosic (see the work of Louis Armstrong

and Charlie Parker in particular).

Sonority (timbre)

The instruments of Jazz

Key characteristics of the New Orleans Era
Influenced by the use of discarded military band instruments (New Orleans had a long tradition of marching bands, particularly from the Civil War period): • Clarinet • Cornet or trumpet • Trombone These instruments constitute the 'front line' of melodic soloists. The 'rhythm section' backing these could consist of any combination of the following: • Guitar (reflecting the historic Spanish presence in New Orleans) • Banjo (an instrument developed in the southern USA by the black population, modeled on West African stringed instruments) • Piano (tended to be instruments discarded by wealthier white population and used in bars ('honky-tonks', hence 'honky-tonk piano')) • String bass (sometimes substituted by bass saxophone or tuba) • Drum set
Key characteristics of the Swing Era
This period coincided with the rise of the Big Band, an ensemble in which sections of similar instruments were contrasted with each other: • Saxophones – Alto, Tenor and Baritone (players might double on clarinet) • Trumpets • Trombones • Rhythm section – piano, string bass, drum kit (later augmented with other percussion), guitar (usually electric from the mid-1930s in order to compete with the volume of the 'horn' sections; the banjo was discarded)
Key characteristics of the Bebop and Cool Jazz era
The Bebop movement was characterised by a return to small ensembles, usually focused around a rhythm section of piano, bass and drums. Trumpet and Alto and Tenor Saxophones were the most popular front line instruments, but the Vibraphone became a more common solo instrument. The 'Cool' Jazz movement could be seen as having an interest in sonorities; instruments such as baritone saxophone or bass clarinet appear in solos and the mellow tones of flutes and French horns can be heard in the work of the arranger Gil Evans, who worked with Miles Davis in the 1960s.
Key characteristics of the Modern Jazz era
Miles Davis made a conscious effort in the late1960s and 1970s to fuse elements of Jazz with rock music. A major part of this was to include electronic instruments and electric amplification for most instruments, in addition to applying studio effects such as echo. Electric guitars and keyboards became more common.

Features of Texture and Timbre

Growl/'talking trumpet'

In the swing era, some brass players developed a special playing effect sounding like a rough, 'dirty' rasping sound, either by vocalising into the instrument or by using fluttertongue. This 'growl' technique was intended to mimic the vocal style of some blues singers. Particular experts in creating this sound were Bubber Miley and Tricky Sam Nanton, both key members of the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Both of these players were able to create an extremely wide variety of timbre effects on their instruments through a mixture of growling and handling of mutes so that their solos sound uncannily like a human voice; hence the description 'talking trumpet'.

Mutes

A mute is a device used to alter the timbre of a musical instrument, usually producing a quieter, more subdued sound. On bowed string instruments, mutes usually take the form of a small clamp placed on the bridge to reduce vibration. In brass instruments, they take the form of a tube placed inside the bell, a cap placed over the bell or a combination of these. Often, muting effects can be produced simply with the hand over the bell.

Harmon or 'Wah-wah' mute

The Harmon mute (first developed in the late 19th century) is a hollow metal mute which fits into the bell of the instrument (usually trumpet) and is held in place with a cork collar. At the outer end of the mute is a cup-like fitting on a stem or plunger, which can be pushed in or pulled out of the bell, offering a further degree of control over the sound. The cork collar directs all the air through the mute, producing potentially a very quiet, distant sound with the plunger pushed in.
The 'wah-wah' effect can be produced by manipulating the plunger to produce the quasi-vocal effect described in the section above. Miles Davis made use of the Harmon mute without its stem/plunger extremely popular from the mid-1950s. His distinctive, withdrawn, almost bleak sound owes much to the Harmon mute and was widely copied.

Ghosted notes

A 'ghosted' note is one that is barely audible, sometimes implied rather than actually present. Again, the deliberately reticent Miles Davis sound provides many examples (listen to his solos on the album 'Kind of Blue').

Slap bass

If the strings on the double bass are stretched in an exaggerated fashion when playing pizzicato, then when released, they rebound off the fingerboard, creating a clicking or slapping sound. This style of playing was particularly popular in the New Orleans era.

Rim shot

This is produced by striking the metal rim (or a combination of rim and skin) of a snare drum. A similar sound can be produced by laying one drumstick across the rim and striking it with the other stick. The sound can vary from an alarming imitation of a pistol shot to a more subtle click or tap, forming part of the richer palette of sounds available to drummers from the bop period onwards.

Heterophonic texture

A heterophonic texture is produced when there are simultaneous different versions of the same melody being played. It is a feature of spontaneously improvised music in which different ornamentation or rhythm is used by different players in interpreting the common melody.

A cappella

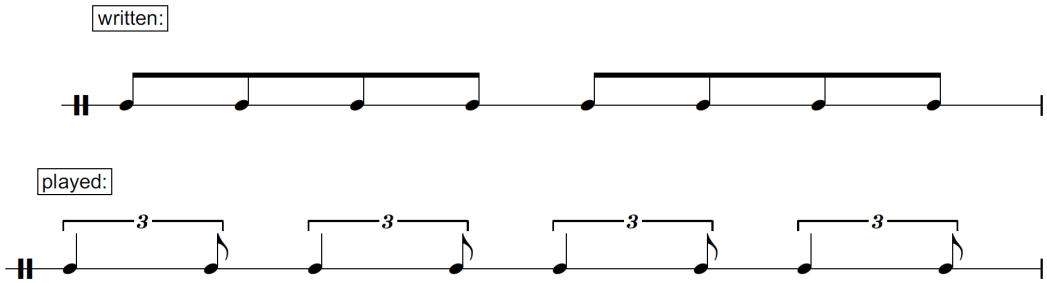
Vocal music without instrumental accompaniment.

Tempo, meter and rhythm

Perhaps the single most important contribution to the ‘feel’ of Jazz is the treatment of rhythm. Most Jazz performances derive excitement from the tension between the maintenance of a steady tempo and regular beat (usually in the bass) and the rhythmic freedom and complexity of an improvised solo.

Swing

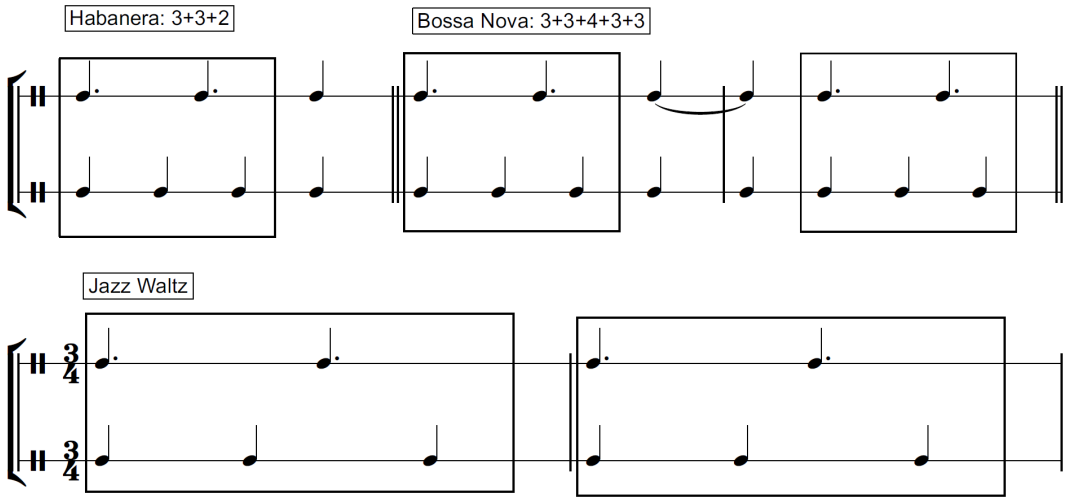
Jazz musicians argue about what this means! They do generally agree that it refers to the quality of rhythmic spontaneity and freedom that characterizes great Jazz.
One of the simplest ways in which this is manifested is in the performance of what would traditionally be notated as a string of equal quavers.
Performed in a ‘swing’ style, the first of each pair is lengthened and the second correspondingly shortened, producing something like a triplet rhythm. This may also be combined with a slight emphasis on the shorter note.



Cross-rhythms

A cross-rhythm is created by a feeling of two or more conflicting pulses, the simplest being three against two. The Latin rhythm patterns of Habanera and Bossa Nova make use of a gentle sense of cross-rhythm through unequal subdivisions of a 4/4 bar (8 quavers) and 2 bars (16 quavers) respectively. Jazz waltz patterns also frequently suggest a feeling of 6/8 time against the 3/4 through the use of syncopation.

Some common examples of cross-rhythmic patterns. The boxes in the examples each highlight a 3 against 2 cross-rhythm:



One of the most extended early exploitations of cross-rhythm comes from Louis Armstrong's extraordinary vocal scatting solo in 'Hotter than That' (1927).

Push and drag

Playing slightly ahead of the beat ('pushing') or slightly behind it ('dragging') are recognized rhythmic techniques in Jazz. The expressive effect of the push will be to create a strong sense of excitement, whereas drag will tend to create a laid-back feeling.

Double time

Double time refers to a passage which abruptly moves into a rhythmic style in which the notes are half the duration of what they were in the previous section. This is not just a doubling of tempo, because the speed of the chord changes will remain constant, but the sudden change of gear produces a dramatic effect; one of the most dramatic examples is Charlie Parker's famous Alto Saxophone break in 'Night in Tunisia'.

Stop time

Stop time is an effect of rhythm and texture designed to create a contrast by suspending the regular pattern of rhythmic accompaniment. This is achieved by the whole ensemble or just the rhythm section playing in rhythmic unison, usually with a simple short riff. This can act as the background for a solo. An extended example can be heard half-way through Louis Armstrong's 'Struttin' with some Barbecue' (1927), where the piano and banjo simply play crotchets on beats two and four while Armstrong takes a cornet solo. At the end of the same track, there is a contrasting example, with the three front line instruments playing in chordal unison while the rhythm section drops out.

Ametrical rhythm (literally, with no metre)

In some 'Free Jazz' of the 1960s and beyond, there is an attempt to completely break away from conventional structures. Doing away with the sense of metre (the regularity of pulse) can be a liberating, but also disorientating experience. The introduction to Miles Davis's 'So What' (1959) almost strays into ametrical territory with its freedom and changes of pace, but there is always some contact with a basic beat. In his later albums '*In a Silent Way'* (1969) and '*Bitches Brew'* (1970), however, there are passages which really do seem to float free of any beat (e.g. 'It's About That Time' from '*In a Silent Way'*.)

Introduction to the named artists

Louis Armstrong

Louis Armstrong (1901–1971) has been described by some writers as the most important American musician of the twentieth century. He was a trumpeter and vocalist who, particularly through performances and recordings made in the period c.1925–1935, transformed what people understood Jazz to be. Through his virtuosity and his creative imagination, he changed the focus of Jazz from the collective, polyphonic improvisation of the New Orleans style to a series of solos, based on ever more inventive interpretations of the chord changes of popular songs.
He was born in extreme poverty and social deprivation in a ghetto area of New Orleans. Playing the cornet, given to him in a children's home, gave him a focus and an opportunity to escape from the bleak prospects he might otherwise have faced. He had the good fortune to be noticed by the renowned cornet player and band leader Joe 'King' Oliver (1885–1938), who took him under his wing. Through Oliver's patronage, and his own precocious skill, he found many performance opportunities in the developing Jazz world of New Orleans, playing in small bands in clubs and dance halls and then on paddle steamers on the river Mississippi. Oliver left New Orleans for Chicago in 1918 and Armstrong stepped into his shoes in New Orleans, playing with Kid Ory's band.

In 1922, Oliver invited Armstrong to join him in Chicago to play second cornet in his 'Creole Jazz Band'. There had been a general migration northward up the Mississippi river by black workers seeking better paid industrial work and less socially repressive conditions. They brought the new sound of Jazz so that Chicago in the 1920s became a centre of musical innovation, where Jazz reached an increasingly diverse audience. Armstrong was at the heart of this; he met and was admired by many musicians, including the songwriter Hoagy Carmichael and the trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke, both white. His unusual role as second cornet in Oliver's band encouraged him to create counter-melodies to the main melody and thus helped his improvisational imagination develop even further. He was becoming known for his seemingly superhuman control of the high register of the instrument. Eventually, he grew too big for Oliver's band and struck out on his own as a bandleader and soloist, encouraged by his new wife Lil Hardin, an important pianist and composer, originally also in Oliver's band.

In 1924, at his wife's prompting, he left Chicago briefly for New York, to play as a Jazz specialist in the dance band led by Fletcher Henderson. Here, Armstrong's gift for the rhythmic and harmonic freedom of the new 'hot' style of Jazz was tremendously influential; his solo style was copied by other musicians in the band, such as the saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, and sowed the seeds of the eventual rise of big band swing.

On his return to Chicago, Armstrong began the series of recordings with groups entitled the 'Hot Five' and 'Hot Seven' which were to transform the sound of Jazz. The recordings began with a group modeled closely on the classic New Orleans line-up of cornet, clarinet, trombone, banjo and piano, drums and tuba (or various sub-groups of these) and with a repertoire and style that sought to recreate the style of his home town. However, even in this setting, Armstrong's solos seem light-years ahead of his peers in terms of technique and sophistication.

The later recordings – with different personnel, including the pianist Earl Hines – are in a league of their own; 'West End Blues' from 1928 is often cited as Armstrong's masterpiece, but it owes a lot to the perfectly judged contributions of the other musicians.

From 1929, Armstrong returned to New York. More permanently this time – and this marked the beginning of a gradual change in his artistic outlook. He took part in a Fats Waller revue, 'Hot Chocolates', in which he not only played trumpet, but stole the show by singing 'Ain't Misbehavin'. He had already featured as a vocalist on some of the 'Hot Five/Seven' recordings – allegedly inventing 'scat' singing when he was unable to remember lyrics – and his warm, gravelly voice was as distinctive as his trumpet sound. From this point on, he was less exclusively a pure Jazz artist and more of an all-round popular entertainer. He acquired a number of affectionate nicknames, including 'Satchmo' (short for 'Satchel Mouth') and 'Pops'. Although he continued to give fine performances in the 1930s fronting his own band, he began to develop lip problems and relied more on his voice and briefer, less complex trumpet solos. His engaging and positive personality enabled him to break through several racial barriers; he was the first black person to present a radio programme (1937), the first Jazz musician to appear on the cover of Time magazine (1949) and he received special billing for his appearance in the film 'High Society' (1959) alongside such stars as Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra. In the 1940s there was period of renewed interest in music of the 1920s (the so-called 'trad' revival) and Armstrong was able to benefit from this, forming a group of his peers, including Hines, known as the 'All Stars'.

In the later part of his life, he was an internationally recognised figure, served as a goodwill ambassador for the US government and even had a number 1 pop hit with 'Hello Dolly', which pushed the Beatles off the top spot in 1964.

Suggestions for listening and compositional tasks

Listen to a 12-bar blues recorded by Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five, for example:

- Gut Bucket Blues (1925)
- Lonesome Blues (1926)
- Gully Low Blues (1927)
- West End Blues (1928)

Try to follow the 12-bar structure as you listen

- make a plan of how many choruses there are
- note the main features of instrumentation and texture (whether they are tutti or solo; who takes the lead; how it is accompanied)

Listen carefully and repeatedly to one of Armstrong's trumpet solos

- listen out for the following typical features of his playing and note down **where** they are heard (you could either annotate a lead sheet or simply record the time point in minutes and seconds)
- swung quavers
- terminal vibrato (an exaggerated vibrato after a note starts)
- disrupting the normal placing of an accent, for example using push or drag
- chromatic triplets
- rip up to a high note
- starting a phrase on a dissonant high note and then descending.

Try to transcribe (write down in musical notation) a phrase from the solo.

Compose a trumpet solo of your own to go over the following 12-bar blues pattern (adapted from ‘West End Blues’). Extend it by repeating the chord changes.

Bb	Bb	Bb	Bb^7
Eb	Eb min add6	Bb	Bb
F^7	Eb^7	Bb G^7	C^7 F^7

Duke Ellington

Edward Kennedy Ellington (1899–1974) was the most significant composer in the history of Jazz. For most of his career, he was pianist in, and leader of; one of the most successful and widely recognised big bands in the world. He managed to sustain a presence in the Jazz world for decades, from the 1920s to his death, despite the decline in fashion for big band swing in the post-war era.

Ellington was born in Washington D.C. into a relatively well-off family. His father worked as a butler. The impeccable good manners which his parents instilled in the young Ellington earned him the nickname 'Duke' among his peers. Throughout his life, he was filled with a sense of pride and dignity in his Afro-American heritage and took much inspiration from it in his composition. He was encouraged to learn the piano from an early age by his parents, but it was only from his mid-teens that he began to really take this seriously and improvise compositions of his own. He took formal lessons in harmony, but also fell under the spell of Jazz, in particular the 'stride' piano style of players such as James P. Johnson. In his youth, he worked as a sign-painter with music as a sideline, but his entrepreneurial spirit led him to form a band with his friends and acquaintances in Washington, playing for dance parties in both black and white society. His ability to recruit and retain outstanding Jazz musicians, moulding talented soloists into a distinctive ensemble greater than the sum of its parts, was the key to Ellington's longevity as a bandleader.

In 1923, Ellington moved to New York to further his career and the following year, he became leader of 'The Washingtonians'. At first, this was a 7-piece ensemble, including Ellington's old friend Sonny Greer on drums and the talented trumpeter 'Bubber' Miley. These two musicians were particularly influential in helping Ellington develop what became known as the 'Jungle Sound'; an exotic blend of Jazz with unusual additional percussion and many growl and wah-wah effects from the brass. The culmination of this period, and a springboard to national fame; came in 1927, when Elllington's band was engaged as the resident ensemble at the fashionable 'Cotton Club' in Harlem. Ellington had to provide a constant stream of music - both arrangements and original compositions - to accompany the lavish mixture of dance, song, burlesque, vaudeville and comedy that made up the club's entertainment. The ensemble, now styled the 'Cotton Club Orchestra', expanded to eleven members.

This gave Ellington an even greater palette of sound to work with and the 'Jungle Sound' produced its first international hit 'Creole Love Call' (1927). The regular weekly radio broadcasts from the Cotton Club gave Ellington even greater exposure across the nation.

The Cotton Club residency lasted four years and Ellington began to establish a reputation as a composer. In the early 1930s, he was able to build upon this, taking his now 15-piece 'Duke Ellington Orchestra' on tour in the US and in Europe (where he received serious attention from music critics) and releasing several enduring hits, such as 'Mood Indigo' (1930), 'It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)' (1932) and 'Sophisticated Lady' (1933). He became interested in writing longer works, with more symphonic or suite-like structures and also in creating vehicles to showcase some of his star soloists - such as alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges and trumpeter Cootie Williams.

This distinguished him from the more commercially motivated, dance-focused big bands of the emerging 'swing' era. It was a measure of Ellington's success that from

1943, he was able to stage an annual concert of his music at Carnegie Hall in New York, the traditional home of classical symphonic music. By this time, the Ellington Orchestra's theme tune was 'Take the A Train', composed by Billy Strayhorn, who had become Ellington's close associate as composer/arranger and de facto assistant musical director since 1939.

Various factors in the later 1940s and '50s combined against the viability and popularity of big bands; the direction of the economy towards the war effort, the drafting of young musicians into the armed forces, the musicians' strike and recording ban of 1942-44, and the development of bebop as a new musical force all made large ensembles seem unwieldy and outdated. Despite this, Ellington managed to continue composing, touring and performing, but in the early 1950s, several of his longest-standing band members left and by 1955 he no longer had a recording contract (for the first time in about three decades). A dramatic reversal of fortune occurred in 1956 at the Newport Jazz Festival, where a marathon performance of the linked pieces 'Diminuendo in Blue' and 'Crescendo in Blue' was a sensational crowd-pleaser and won Ellington many new fans. From this point on, the band's prospects revived; Ellington attracted some of his old stalwarts back as well as new players and embarked on several collaborations with Jazz greats of his own and the younger generation.

He and Strayhorn co-wrote the music for the film 'Anatomy of a Murder' (1959) as well as other films and his interest in longer forms continued with the Shakespearean suite 'Such Sweet Thunder' (1957), among other compositions. In the last decade of his life, Ellington turned his attention to religious music, composing various 'Sacred Concerts', which brought Jazz into the realms of liturgical music.

Suggestions for listening and compositional tasks

Listen to the recording of 'Cotton Tail' made in 1940; it's an excellent example of the Ellington Orchestra at its height. Ellington wrote it in part as a vehicle for his tenor saxophonist Ben Webster, but the recording also shows off the incredible collective sense of swing of the whole band.

'Cotton Tail' is based on the same chord changes as the Gershwin song 'I Got Rhythm'.

Sing along with 'I Got Rhythm' as you listen to 'Cotton Tail' so that you get used to its AABA structure (but watch out, as the final 'A section' in the first chorus only has four bars, not eight!). There are six choruses.

- The B section (or 'middle eight') stands out because of its sequential harmonic structure
- What familiar harmonic sequence does it use?
- Ellington makes the B sections stand out through changes of texture
- Explain how he does this in the second and third choruses. The first chorus has been done as an example for you:

A sections	Unison melody in trumpet and sax with some chordal interjections from lower instruments
B section	Saxophones in pairs of chords, answered by solo muted trumpet with growl tone

In the final A section of the fourth chorus, you can hear a piano solo from Duke Ellington himself.

Which of the following styles can be heard in his left-hand accompaniment?

- Block chords
- Boogie-woogie
- Stride
- Which words best describe the style of his right-hand melody?
- Consonant or Dissonant
- Lyrical or Percussive
- Detached or Sustained

In the sixth and final chorus, the brass play what is known as a 'shout chorus', in which they repeat a short chordal riff loudly in a high register.
Which two notes of the scale does the highest trumpet part play in this riff?
Compose your own melody to go over the chord changes of 'I Got Rhythm.' (Or pick another familiar Jazz 'standard'.)

Charlie Parker

The alto saxophonist Charlie Parker (1920–1955), also known as 'Bird' or 'Yardbird', was, after Louis Armstrong, the most important innovator in solo improvisation, creating a new style in the 1940s which came to be known as 'Bebop'.

Parker was born in Kansas City, Kansas, but grew up in the more famous city with the same name in the state of Missouri. Kansas City, Missouri was a great centre for Jazz in the 1920s and '30s, particularly the raw, energetic style of Kansas City swing as exemplified by the Count Basie band. Parker began learning alto saxophone at eleven. He practiced with obsessive intensity and was playing in bands in the city in his teens. At 15 he dropped out of school and by 18 he was playing in a touring band. By this time, he was addicted to opiates; he had become hooked on morphine in hospital while recovering from a bad car accident. The obsessive and addictive sides of his personality were closely entwined, and his repeated and prolonged abuse of alcohol and heroin eventually cost him his career, his relationships and his life.

Although he was having reasonable success as a jobbing musician, Parker felt frustrated by the limitations of working in a blues-based big band. He had a considerable, restless intelligence and throughout his short life was interested in exploring new ideas, not just in music.

In 1939 he moved to New York, where he heard the phenomenal solo pianist Art Tatum and met the trumpeter who became his closest friend and musical associate, John Birks 'Dizzy' Gillespie. Parker and Gillespie first met playing together in Earl Hines' band. They both moved to the more forward-looking ensemble led by Billy Eckstine in 1944. Perhaps more importantly, the two musicians were regularly to be heard improvising after hours in jam sessions at places such as Minton's Playhouse, together with pianist Thelonious Monk, guitarist Charlie Christian and drummer Kenny Clarke. Here, Parker was able to explore with like-minded young musicians, the issue that had been obsessing him for some time; how to create a new language of musical improvisation, that left behind the clichés of commercial swing music. He had begun to realise, through improvising on simple Jazz standards such as Ray

Noble's song 'Cherokee', that one could – through alteration and substitution of straightforward chord structures – allow any chromatic note to fulfil a melodic function that had a logic of its own, yet which was far removed from the original melody.

The style that arose in the crucible of early 1940s New York jam sessions came to be known as 'bebop' from the scat vocalisation of its characteristically abrupt cadences As well as total chromatic freedom of melody, its other characteristics were deliberately designed to make it difficult to be copied by 'square' swing musicians; extremely fast tempi, rapid and complex chord changes, irregular phrase lengths and accentuation. These, coupled with a more hard-edged, less vibrato-laden sound made this music sound very new, and for traditionalists, very strange. Parker, with his phenomenal technical facility and lightning-quick intellect, was able to create dazzling improvised solos which stitched together long strings of pre-learned sequences of notes (which have come to be known as 'melodic formulae'). Analysis of Parker's solos has revealed that about a hundred of these formulae formed his vocabulary, which, together with myriad quotations from other scraps of melody (Jazz, classical, folk), could be woven into the chord changes of simple blues and pop song structures. Dizzy Gillespie was perhaps the only player who could match his inventiveness; the two men collaborated on several compositions and often created new tunes based on the chord changes of older 'standards'.

The new music remained in something of a niche for some time, partly because of its nature, but also because of the national ban on recording (1942–44) during its early evolution.

However, from 1945, Parker and Gillespie gained more exposure through important concerts, radio broadcasts and recordings and embarked on a trip to California. Unfortunately, this was not successful and provoked a crisis; Parker cashed in his return flight ticket in order to buy drugs and was eventually hopsitalised, following a mental breakdown. In 1947, Parker was able to return to New York and for a brief period, did his best work in the context of a quintet, which featured drummer Max Roach and the young trumpeter Miles Davis. He built a large and devoted following of young musicians and also developed his own interest in contemporary classical music (he admired the work of Bartok and Stravinsky). The crossover album 'Charlie Parker with Strings' (1949) demonstrates his interest in taking Jazz in directions it had not explored before.

The years from 1951 to 1955 show a sad and steady decline. Parker's alcohol and heroin addictions continued to dog him; stories circulated about his inability to sustain focus in recording sessions, the narcotics squad revoked his cabaret license, which meant that he was barred from playing in nightclubs, and he could even be found busking in unlikely venues just to make enough money to feed his addiction. The death of his young daughter from cystic fibrosis in 1954 was a further blow to his mental health.

He attempted suicide twice. Eventually, he died of a combination of health problems, whilst staying in the Manhattan apartment of an aristocratic Jazz-loving friend. Although his career was tragically brief, Parker's legacy was enormous; performers on virtually all instruments in the generation that followed took inspiration from his work.

Suggestions for listening and compositional tasks

Listen to ‘Cool Blues’, recorded by Parker in Hollywood in 1947 with a rhythm section featuring Erroll Garner on piano.

Make a list of similarities and differences between this interpretation of a 12-bar blues and those of Louis Armstrong that you studied. Consider:

- Tempo
- Rhythm
- Structure
- Instrumentation
- Melodic shapes
- Use of the rhythm section

Listen to ‘Moose the Mooche’ (1946), which is another original Parker melody based on the chord changes of ‘I Got Rhythm’. The melody has a jerky angularity typical of bebop.

Try to notate the rhythm of the opening melody; start by working out how many notes are in each little sub-phrase.

Listen to the song ‘Star Eyes’ in two Charlie Parker versions:

- The recording with the Charlie Parker Quintet (featuring Miles Davis) from 1951 (on Verve ‘The Genius of Charlie Parker #8 – Swedish Schnapps)
- The 1950 quartet recording with Buddy Rich on drums (on Verve ‘The Genius of Charlie Parker #7 (Jazz Perrenial)

One of the ways in which pioneering bebop musicians imposed their individuality on old material was through composition or arrangement of an introduction.

Compare the introductions used in these two versions; one seems relaxed and tinged with a Latin feel, the other is tight and nervous. How is this achieved?

Make two arrangements of the first chorus of a Jazz standard in contrasting styles; give each one a short introduction that immediately sets up the mood and feel.

Miles Davis

The trumpeter and bandleader Miles Davis (1926–1991) was the most continuously creative shaper of new styles of Jazz in the period from Charlie Parker’s death to the 1970s. He had an individual, immediately recognisable sound and a strength of vision which attracted the best musicians from several successive generations to work with him.

Davis was born into an affluent family in the East St. Louis area; his father was a dentist and his mother a music teacher. He was first given a trumpet at the age of nine and gradually acquired a strong technique, at the heart of which was a concern for a pure sound with no vibrato. This aspect of his style stayed with him throughout his career.

His interest in the theoretical side of music grew, as did his technical competence and confidence, so that by the age of fifteen, he was occasionally playing professionally and leading a band. A crucial event in his youth occurred in 1944, when the Billy Eckstine band played concerts in St. Louis. Hearing Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker play live, convinced Davis that he must go to New York to absorb as much as he could from proximity to these new Jazz stars. He enrolled in the Institute of Musical Art (forerunner of the Julliard School), but only completed one year of studies, as his interest in Jazz led him to focus most of his time on the nightclub scene. He soon found his way into the Parker circle and from 1945–1948 played with several small groups including Parker's (where he replaced Gillespie), and bands, such as Billy Eckstine's.

Davis played a leading part from 1948 in the development of a new style and medium for Jazz; 'Cool'. In collaboration with the arranger Gil Evans and the baritone sax player Gerry Mulligan, he established a nonet, including the mellow sounds of French horn and tuba as well as more 'normal' Jazz instruments. The style would be a deliberate antithesis to bebop by being in relaxed tempi, with an emphasis on smooth melodic lines and blended, delicate timbres, often in quasi-choral block harmony. Several tracks were recorded in 1949–50 with some released as singles. Eventually, the full album was released in 1957 under the title 'Birth of the Cool'. Although the 'cool' or 'West coast' style was well recognised by then (see the work of Mulligan and Chet Baker), typically, Miles Davis had moved on to new ideas. However, the partnership with Gil Evans was one which was fruitfully pursued later. Davis was not a flashy virtuoso and could not quite rival the technical facility of Gillespie; instead, he focused on purity of sound – occasionally verging on fragility – and melodic and rhythmic subtlety. This was matched well by Evans' interest in impressionistic nuances of harmony and texture.

The early 1950s were a difficult period for Davis; he had become addicted to heroin, sometimes struggled to get regular work and was on the verge of criminality. However, he managed to kick the habit and by the mid-50s was recording again, with the first of his famous quintets, which included pianist Red Garland, bassist Paul Chambers, drummer 'Philly' Joe Jones and saxophonist John Coltrane. A series of great albums recorded in 1956–57 and released over the next five years cemented their reputation. It was around this time that Davis adopted the stemless Harmon mute as a regular part of his sound; the tonal narrowing that this device produced suited his desire for an introspective, restrained sound and made a great foil for the aggressive and elaborate 'sheets of sound' of Coltrane. Davis is often credited at this time with being among the formative influences on another new style 'Hard Bop', a development of bebop which aimed for a simpler, earthier, blues and gospel oriented harmonic style with slower tempi and a more pronounced role for drums. The compilation album 'Walkin'' (1957) is significant here.

Davis's next great stylistic step came with his investigation of modes and ostinatos as a basis for improvisation in place of the chord changes of popular songs. The album 'Milestones' (1958) featured this new development; Davis's established quintet was joined here by hard bop alto player Julian 'Cannonball' Adderley. However, the real landmark recording – and a record whose sales far outnumber any other Jazz album – was 'Kind of Blue' (1959). An important new collaborator on this album was white pianist Bill Evans, who shared Davis's interest in subtle innovation. Much of the album was improvised on the spot, based on very limited notes from Davis.

The late 1950s and '60s saw further collaborations with Gil Evans in which Davis's haunting solo trumpet or flugelhorn was backed by quasi-orchestral arrangements involving a mix of Jazz and classical players; these included such ground-breaking albums as 'Porgy and Bess' (1959) and 'Sketches of Spain' (1960). The latter included reworkings of classical pieces, most famously, the middle movement of Rodrigo's 'Concierto de Aranjuez'.

As the 1960s progressed, Davis, notoriously demanding and restless, gradually evolved a new quintet with Herbie Hancock on piano, Ron Carter on bass, Tony Williams on drums and, eventually, Wayne Shorter on saxophone. This group is well represented on the album 'E.S.P.' (1965); here, the freedom and textural subtlety of modal Jazz is combined with some blisteringly fast playing and exploration of very high registers by Davis.

Interesting as the work of Davis's quintet was in this period, he never went quite as far as his one-time collaborator John Coltrane, or others like Ornette Coleman, into 'free Jazz'. However, he could not be accused of standing still; in the late 1960s and '70s, he inaugurated yet another stylistic revolution – perhaps his most radical yet – the incorporation of electric instruments and amplification in what has been characterised as a 'Jazz-Rock' fusion. His collaborators in this fusion included keyboard players Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett and Joe Zawinul, electric guitarist John McLaughlin and percussionist Jack DeJohnette, among others. He experimented with various sizes of groups, including multiple keyboard instruments and unusual instruments such as bass clarinet. His long-time producer Teo Macero worked with him in producing tracks that were the result of much mixing and editing together of long, freely improvised takes. The outstanding example of this genre is perhaps the widely selling double album 'Bitches Brew' (1970). The venture into the world of rock brought Davis a considerably bigger young audience, but displeased many 'pure Jazz' fans. Increasingly prone to ill-health and exhausted by touring, he was forced to retire between 1975 and 1980. This was another critical point in his personal life, from which he eventually emerged, embarking on further collaborations with contemporary rock, pop and hip-hop artists and receiving an increasing number of awards in recognition of his extraordinary career.

Suggestions for listening and compositional tasks

Listen to the introductory openings of these two tracks from Miles Davis' modal phase:

- 'Miles' from 'Milestones' (1958), first 15 seconds
- 'All Blues' from 'Kind of Blue' (1959), first 20 seconds

Make a list of the similarities and differences can you hear between them.
Listen to the evocative track 'Saeta' from the album 'Sketches of Spain' (1960). A saeta is a form of Spanish religious solo vocal music, sung during a procession and full of passionate expressive decoration.

- How does Gil Evans' orchestration give a sense of a procession?
- How does Miles Davis' solo create the sense of a vocal saeta?
- What playing effects does Davis use in this solo?
- Write down the scale Davis uses to improvise on
- Do you think this music is still 'Jazz', or is it something else?

Listen to ‘E.S.P.’, the title track from the album of 1965, made by Davis’ ‘second great quintet’.

- The opening head melody begins by making use of one interval repeated in different rhythms; what is the interval?
- The saxophone solo which follows (from c. 29 seconds in) makes frequent use of what type of scale near the start?

Using ‘So What’ from ‘Kind of Blue’ as a model, compose a melodic riff and short (2–4) chord sequence using the Lydian mode.

Pat Metheny

The American electric guitarist and composer Pat Metheny (b.1954) belongs to a generation that was able to take Jazz for granted as part of their cultural heritage and for whom Miles Davis’s fusion of Jazz with rock seems a logical step in synthesis rather than a controversial experiment. He cites as important influences on his musicianship the Jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery, the Beatles and free-Jazz saxophonist Ornette Coleman.

Metheny was born and raised in Missouri. There was music in his family, but he did not take up the guitar until the age of twelve. In awe of Wes Montgomery, he specialised in Jazz and was soon noticed by talent scouts and journalists. In the early 1970s, at a remarkably young age, he was engaged to teach electric guitar at the University of Miami. Not long after this, he moved north to take up a teaching post at Berklee College of Music in Boston, America’s most significant contemporary music institution. Here, he came under the wing of Gary Burton, a great Jazz virtuoso on vibraphone and a pioneer of various kinds of Jazz fusion; Burton’s interest in Latin American music (he played with Stan Getz and João Gilberto during the late 1960s Bossa-Nova craze) and in classical and country music provided Metheny with an example of the range of influences that could constantly refresh the language of Jazz.

From the mid-1970s, Metheny began playing and touring with groups that he put together, often including Jaco Pastorius, his friend from Miami, who pioneered the use of the fretless electric bass guitar. In 1976, aged 21, he released his debut album ‘Bright Size Life’, which featured his own compositions plus a cover of two Ornette Coleman numbers run together. Most of Metheny’s subsequent recordings were with the ‘Pat Metheny Group’, starting with an eponymously titled album in 1978. The group was a quartet at this stage, but Metheny and his keyboard player Lyle Mays played both acoustic and electric instruments, creating a wide range of textures. The style of the album, featuring melodic clarity, rhythmically intricate solos and lightly dancing percussion over slow-moving, warm harmony with a richly-textured mix of synthesized and acoustic sounds, became a fruitful area for Metheny to explore. The group’s next album ‘American Garage’ (1979) built on this Jazz-rock style and proved extremely popular, not only reaching no.1 in the Jazz album charts, but also – unusually for a Jazz record – achieving a place in the pop album charts.

In 1982, their album ‘Offramp’ achieved similar success and was also notable for its inclusion of vocals and Brazilian percussion and for Metheny’s use of a guitar synthesizer, signs of his interest in stylistic and technical innovation. This record won a Grammy award – the first of an extraordinary number that Metheny has received.

Suggestions for listening and compositional tasks

Listen to '*Phase Dance'* from 'Pat Metheny Group' (1978) (the first of the group's albums). This is a good example of mature Jazz-rock fusion, based on a straightforward 4/4 groove in straight, rather than swung quaver rhythm, with a slow-moving harmonic rhythm.

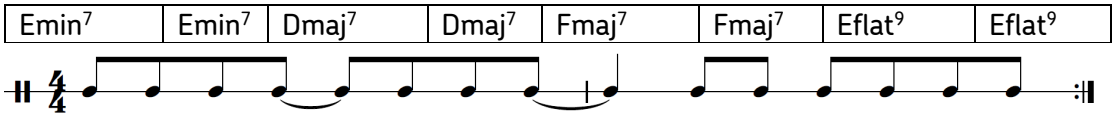
- There is a 2-bar syncopated rhythmic ostinato beginning in guitars; try to play and notate this rhythm
- The harmony (like much of Miles Davis' modal work) changes quite slowly (every 4 bars). In the intro and at the start of the main melody, it simply alternates between two chords. The first is b minor 7th; what is the second?

Listen to '*Au Lait'* from the group's third album 'Offramp' (1982). This track aims for a feeling of dark sophistication. Within the first minute of the track, how is this feeling achieved through the handling of:

- Harmony?
- Rhythm?
- Texture and studio effects?

Record the following repeating chromatic chord sequence and rhythmic riff and then improvise a solo above them.

Try notating your solo:



Gwilym Simcock

Born in 1981, the British pianist and composer Gwilym Simcock is an example of how contemporary musicians can forge a style of their own that resists straightforward categorisation into genres of 'Jazz', 'classical' or anything else!

Simcock was educated at home for the first few years of his life and remembers the formative influence of his church organist father improvising at the keyboard. He began his musical studies as a French horn player as well as a pianist and in the 1990s studied at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester. Here, encouraged by faculty members such as pianist Les Chisnall and bassist Steve Berry, he began to realise that Jazz and composition offered him the creative opportunities he desired and the next step in his academic career was to enroll on the Jazz piano course at the Royal Academy of Music. In 2006, the BBC selected him to be one of their 'New Generation Artists', the first Jazz musician to be chosen, and he later received a BBC commission for a new Piano Concerto, performed at the Proms in 2008.

One of the heroes of Simcock's youth was the pianist and composer Chick Corea, who had a long career stretching back to the early days of Jazz-rock fusion and was also interested in contemporary classical composition. Corea has personally endorsed Simcock's achievements and was able to further his career by selecting

him for a widely broadcast concert and recording in Germany in 2007. Simcock's collaborations have been many and varied in the worlds of Jazz and classical music.

He made his debut recording as leader with the album '*Perception*' in 2007, has appeared as part of British Jazz trio 'Acoustic Triangle' with bassist Malcolm Crees and saxophonist Tim Garland, and has subsequently formed the Jazz super-group 'The Impossible Gentlemen'. It is a measure of his success that many of these collaborations are with performers from an older, well-established generation; in 2016–17 he toured with Pat Metheny, another of his heroes, who described him as 'simply one of the best piano players I have heard in a long, long time.'

Suggestions for listening and compositional tasks

One of the ways in which modern Jazz has incorporated ideas from contemporary 'classical' music is through the handling of rhythm. Unusual time signatures, changing metres and polyrhythm can all be found in the work of recent Jazz artists and Gwilym Simcock is no exception.

Listen to two tracks from his debut album '*Perception*' (2007):

- Track 1 'A Typical Affair' (an original composition)
- Track 9 'The Way You Look Tonight' (a cover of a well-known standard by Jerome Kern and Dorothy Fields)

Listen to the opening section of 'A Typical Affair', which is based on a bass riff. Try to work out:

- How many beats there are in the bass riff (it becomes a little easier as it goes on!)
- How the drum kit part works with – or against – this riff
- Listen to the end of 'A Typical Affair' (from about 6:40), which acts like a long coda based on a version of the opening bass riff
- How many beats are in the bass riff now?
- What is going on in terms of tempo?
- Listen to earlier versions of 'The Way You Look Tonight'; some celebrated versions are by;
- Fred Astaire in the film '*Swing Time*' (1936) – the timeless original!
- Frank Sinatra, in a swing version (1964)
- Tony Bennett, as a ballad (1958)
- Michael Bublé, in a laid-back 'lounge-Jazz' feel (2003)

Now listen to Simcock's radically different version and analyse the role of the following elements in creating the feel:

- Rhythm and metre;
- Texture and use of instruments.

Compose a short riff-based composition in an unusual time signature such as 5/4 or 7/8, or one which shifts frequently between time signatures.

