

**The Lively Arts
Fall Semester 2009**

Topic Guide

Topic #4

September 30, 2009

Periods and Styles of Jazz

Professor Jeffrey W. Holmes

I. The Blues

- A. What is “the blues” form?
- B. Why is this form so important to jazz musicians?

II. Early Jazz

- A. Ragtime
 - 1. Earliest form of jazz.
 - 2. Combined musical elements and techniques and presented them in a style unique to this country.
- B. New Orleans Style
 - 1. In many ways similar to ragtime; includes many similar musical elements
 - 2. Small ensembles consisting of trumpet or cornet, clarinet, trombone, and some combination of banjo, piano, tuba, and drums.
 - 3. Also called “Dixieland”, however this term is offensive to many Black Americans because of associations with slavery, lynching and segregation.
 - 4. The major representative of this style is Louis Armstrong. Even though his career spanned many styles, his trumpet playing always incorporated some elements of New Orleans Style.

III. Swing Era

- A. Duke Ellington
 - 1. A great representative of this era as a composer, bandleader, and as a portrayer of the social climates of this period. He was a true musical painter.
- B. Fletcher Henderson
 - 1. Was the first to develop the “big band” idea by adding to the 5 or 6 member jazz band two saxophones, a trumpet and a trombone – thereby creating **sections** of these instruments instead of solo instruments only.
- C. Count Basie
 - 1. His swing orchestra was always “blues based”, with emphasis on the feel of the music rather than on the complexity.
- D. Benny Goodman helped popularize the swing form throughout America.

IV. Modern Jazz

- A. Bebop
 - 1. Alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, and drummer Max Roach were bebop innovators. Many musicians observe strong relationships between bebop and the contrapuntal writing of J.S. Bach. Many new melodies and improvisations from the bebop period were

played over the forms and harmonic patterns of already composed popular tunes. The 32 measure “AABA” form and in particular the harmonies of Gershwin’s “I Got Rhythm” were prominently utilized.

2. Lenny Tristano and George Shearing played with a refined style of bop—often called “cool”, which has been compared to the music of composers Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel.
3. Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Charles Mingus and others in the 60’s were the first to push beyond the boundaries of standardized jazz vocabulary. Since that time, there have been many new developments in jazz performance and composition, but they are too numerous to list here.
4. Miles Davis was an important artist who influenced and moved jazz in new directions, and whose music fit in all three subheadings of modern jazz listed above.

Reminders:

- Quiz #3 in lecture, October 7, 2009. Material covered:
 - Lecture #1: John Montanari: Music in your World
 - Music Elements OWL
 - Classical Music OWL