

GLOSSARY

(Numbers refer to lessons where term is highlighted.)

accent

To emphasize a beat or series of beats. (6, 7, 11, 14)

Afro-Cuban music

The blend of African and Western music that emerged in Cuba. (13, 15, 17)

Afro-Cuban groove

A repeated pattern of interlocking rhythms developed from African music in Cuba. (13, 17)

arrangement

The organization of a musical work for a given ensemble. The arrangement determines which instruments play when, what harmonies will be used, what groove, and where improvisation occurs. (9)

arranger

Someone who creates arrangements for musical ensembles. (9)

bar

The division of music into a consistent number of beats—also known as a measure. (4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12)

beat

The basic pulse of a piece of music; the unit by which musical time is measured. (1, 6, 13, 16)

bebop

A style of music developed by Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and others in the early 1940s which brought another sense of rhythm, harmony, and melody to jazz. Bebop is generally considered to be a more complex style of jazz. (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16)

big band

A style of orchestral jazz that first surfaced in the 1920s and blossomed during the “swing” era (1935–50) when it became the popular music of the day. Big bands feature three sections—brass, woodwind, and rhythm—and generally play carefully orchestrated arrangements. (7)

“big four”

The basic rhythm of New Orleans music, placing the accent on the 4th beat of every second measure. (1, 10)

blues

An African American music developed in the South during the mid-1800s. It is the foundation of most American popular music. (2, 4, 12, 14, 16)

bossa nova

Developed in the 1960s, this musical style combined elements of cool jazz with Brazilian music. It features complex harmonies, a steady, straight eighth-note groove, and sensual melodies. (15)

brass

A family of musical instruments made of brass or other metal that includes trumpets, trombones, tubas, and French horns. (7)

break

An established pause in the form of a tune during which an improvised phrase is usually played. (1, 2, 3, 10, 13)

bridge

The middle section of a standard American popular song which typically moves to a different key. (8, 14)

bugle

A valve-less horn similar to the trumpet, and normally used in the military. (3)

call and response

A musical conversation in which instrumentalists and/or vocalists answer one another. (1, 4, 5, 12, 16, 17)

chord

Three or more notes played at the same time, creating one sound. The harmonic structure of most songs is comprised of a progression of different chords. Soloists improvise on those progressions. (4, 12)

clave

Literally meaning “key.” The rhythmic key or pattern often prominent in a piece of African and/or Afro-Hispanic music. The clave is central to Latin jazz, as swing is central to jazz. (17)

collective improvisation

When more than one instrument improvises at the same time. Also known as polyphonic improvisation. (1)

composer

The creator of a music composition including the melody, rhythm, and harmonic structure. (8, 10)

composition

The musical idea created by a composer. (8, 9, 10, 14)

cool

A style of playing that emphasizes a relaxed demeanor. This approach became a style of jazz in the 1950s. (15)

cornet

A brass instrument very similar to the trumpet but possessing a darker sound. (3, 13)

counterpoint

More than one composed melody, played at the same time in the same song. (2, 7)

Creole

New Orleans natives who are descendants of African, French, and sometimes Spanish heritage. (2)

crescendo

To become increasingly louder. (7, 9, 10, 11)

cubop

The combination of Afro-Cuban music and bebop. (13)

decrescendo

To become increasingly softer. (8, 9)

diction

The pronunciation of words. (16)

dirge

A slow march played during a funeral procession. (1)

drag

To play behind the beat in a way that slows or weighs down the movement of music. (6)

dynamics

The loudness or softness of a piece of music. (9)

ensemble

A music group of more than two musicians. (2, 11, 12)

flatted fifth

A melodic interval that is one half of an octave from the note that precedes or follows it. A chord based on the flatted-fifth note of a scale. It is used in bebop. (12, 13)

form

The organizing element of a piece of music, including its harmonic structure. (5, 8)

frame

The form and harmonic structure of a piece of music. (8)

front line

The primary melody instruments in a New Orleans band: refers to the trumpet, the trombone, and the clarinet. (1, 10)

glissando

A sliding sound achieved by gliding the fingers over strings or by adjusting the embouchure and/or keys to move quickly from one note to another. (1)

groove

The interaction of rhythms to form a pattern. (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17)

hard bop

A style of music characterized by intense, driving rhythms and blues-based melodies with a bebop sensibility. (11)

harmonic

Pertaining to the harmony of a piece. (17)

harmonic structure

The pattern of chords for a song. (9)

harmony

The chords supporting the melody. (7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14)

head

The melody of a jazz piece. (14)

horn section

The musical families of saxophones, trumpets, and trombones collectively or in their individual families. (7)

hot

Fast, exciting, intense music. (15)

hymn

A style of music played and sung in church. (2)

improvisation

The collective or individual music created by making up new melodies to fit the structure of a song. (1, 2, 5, 13, 17)

improvise

Creating spontaneously as you go along, “making it up.” (1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 14, 16)

instrumentalist

A person who plays a musical instrument. (16)

interval

The distance between any two notes. (12, 14)

jam session

When musicians gather together to play music on an informal basis. (12)

key

The central group of notes around which a piece of music revolves. (8, 13)

lyrical

Music which possesses a poetic and super-melodic quality. (15)

lyrics

The words of a song. (3, 8, 16)

melodic

Pertaining to the melody. (2, 15, 17)

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melody

A tune; a succession of notes that form a complete musical statement. It is the primary statement of a piece of music. (1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16)

meter

The number of beats per measure. (15)

mother clave

African rhythm from which Latin clave rhythms later evolved. (17)

mute

A device added to a musical instrument to dampen or quiet the tone, often changing the quality of sound. (7, 9, 15)

notes

The individual tones that are the alphabet of musical sounds. (13)

offbeat

The unemphasized beat between two counts of music. (6, 14)

orchestrate

To arrange music in a form that facilitates various instruments playing together. (10)

ostinato

A musical phrase that is repeated over and over, generally in the bass. (7)

percussion

A family of instruments often played by striking with hands, sticks, or mallets. (17)

phrasing

The way of singing or playing a given musical instrument. (13, 16)

pitch

The sound of a single note in relationship to an established series of notes. (8)

polyphonic improvisation

See collective improvisation.

polyphony

Two or more melodies played at the same time. (2, 12)

ragtime

One of the earliest styles of jazz appearing just after the beginning of the 1900s. Often played on piano, it combined European classical technique and syncopated rhythms which "ragged" the time. (2)

register

Where the notes of an instrument sound (high, medium, or low). (1, 3, 8, 9, 10)

reharmonization

A technique of adding or substituting chords to the original harmonic structure of a piece of music. (12)

rhumba clave

A popular Latin rhythm combining sections of two beats and three beats with an offbeat accent. (17)

rhythm

The organized motion of sounds and rests; patterned repetition of a beat or accent. (1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17)

rhythm section

The instruments that provide the rhythmic and harmonic structure in a piece of music; usually the drums, bass, and piano. (1, 4, 7, 17)

riff

A short, repeated musical phrase used as a background for a soloist or to add drama to a musical climax. (1, 7, 10)

ritard

To slow down, usually as part of the ending. (8)

rush

To hurry the timing of the notes played. (6)

scale

An ascending or descending progression of notes specifically related to each other. (4, 8)

scat singing

A vocal technique that uses nonsense syllables to improvise on a melody, often to help the singer sound like an instrumentalist. (3, 13, 16)

score

A map created by the composer, dictating the notes to be played by each instrument. (8)

second line

A group of people who followed behind New Orleans jazz bands, dancing and parading down the street, inspiring the musicians. (1)

section

A subdivision of a musical composition. Section may also refer to a group of instruments in the same family that are a part of a band or orchestra; examples would be the rhythm section or the woodwind section. (4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17)

shout chorus

The loud, climactic chorus of a piece of music, played or sung with spirited riffs and sometimes improvised embellishments. A carry-over from field songs and gospel hymns. (10)

shuffle rhythm

The basis of the blues and early jazz. The feeling of swing is based on the shuffle rhythm. (4, 6)

slur

To play two different notes in succession without breaks or accents. (5)

solo

When one musician improvises, usually within the structure of an existing song. (1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14)

son clave

A popular Latin rhythm combining sections of two beats and three beats. (17)

stride piano

A style of playing piano in which the left hand covers wide distances, playing bass harmony and rhythm at the same time, while the right hand plays melodies and intricate improvisations. (10)

swing

The basic rhythmic attitude of jazz, sustained by the rhythm section that propels the music forward and is a defining characteristic of jazz. It is also a style of jazz that first appeared during the 1930s and features big bands playing complex arrangements, usually for dancing. (3, 6, 7, 13, 16, 17)

syncopation

A rhythmic accent on an unexpected beat. (2, 6, 10, 12, 14)

trade fours

A technique of improvising in which musicians take turns improvising for four measures each. (4, 8, 11)

tempo

The speed at which a piece of music is played. (2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15)

texture

The atmosphere created by the combined sounds of musical instruments and harmonic voicings. (9)

thematic unity

The composer's consistent reference to some aspect of the theme throughout the composition. (14)

theme

The central message or melody of a composition, usually a musical phrase or idea. (1, 8, 14)

time signature

The symbol that looks like a fraction at the beginning of a written composition, describing the number of beats per measure and the rhythmic value of each note. (15)

transition

The music that a composer writes to create seamless movement from one section to another. (8)

triad

A three-note chord, usually the root, third, and fifth of a scale all played together. (12)

trill

An embellishment made by playing two notes, one after the other, over and over again, very rapidly. (5)

twelve-bar form

A musical composition whose form is based on twelve measures. The blues is the most common example. (12)

unison

When all instruments are playing the same notes at the same time. (7)

vibrato

A slight, yet often rapid, fluctuation of pitch used to enrich or dramatize the sound. (5, 10, 15, 16)

vocalese

The creation of a song by writing lyrics to the melody of a pre-recorded instrumental improvisation. (16)

vocalist

A singer. (16)

woodwinds

The family of musical instruments including saxophones, clarinets, flutes, oboes, and bassoons. (7)

