



The Music of the Jazz Age

Resource Guide

2025–2026

Barbers Hill High School - Mont Belvieu, TX

The Roaring Twenties



United States Academic Decathlon®

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Introduction

Jazz was a powerful force all through the Roaring Twenties, so it is not surprising that as early as 1922, the writer F. Scott Fitzgerald titled a short-story collection *Tales of the Jazz Age*. During the last years of World War I, jazz had begun to break away from its mostly Southern origins, thanks primarily to the rise of commercial recordings. As more listeners encountered and embraced the new style, jazz started to find its way into additional forms of entertainment, both in the United States and overseas. It also crossed the boundary between “popular” and “classical” music, with increasing numbers of art-music composers experimenting with various distinctive elements of the jazz approach.

Section II of this Resource Guide, called “The Increasing Reach of Jazz and Blues,” examines the blues and two of its primary substyles, country blues and classic blues, that developed at the start of the twentieth century. Musical elements from those styles then made their way into New Orleans jazz, and onward into Chicago jazz, as many players left Louisiana and resettled in Illinois. The sound of these approaches became nationally known through recordings from the era. These early records reflect the continuing development of jazz features; some pieces also foreshadow the characteristics of “swing,” the jazz substyle that would come to dominate the United States by the late 1930s.

During the 1920s, jazz elements were woven into various forms of mainstream entertainment, which is the focus of Section III: “Jazz on Stage, on the Air, and On-Screen.” Broadway shows by Black creative teams were the first to demonstrate the power of jazz-

tinged music, and white producers were quick to hire Black composers to piggyback on that success. White composers soon adopted jazz features within their own music for Broadway, and the significance of jazz was even used as a dramatic twist within a landmark musical theater production. Society orchestras using jazz elements in their dance numbers were soon heard nationally, thanks to radio broadcasts, while the very first “talkie” film featured jazz songs within its soundtrack.

Jazz also began to fascinate art-music composers of the 1920s, and several of their creations are the subject of Section IV: “Jazz in the Concert Hall.” Several different genres are featured—ballet, orchestral music, chamber music, and solo piano—while the composers include Americans as well as Europeans. Some of the pieces were received rapturously from the very start; others needed years before they were fully appreciated.

To help understand the musical features of the diverse compositions that we will be studying, Section I provides an overview of the specialized vocabulary and notation system used in Western music. It explains many of the ways that musical pitches are manipulated and combined, and it identifies a number of larger relationships and structures that can be crafted from these components. It is the constant challenge (and delight) of jazz to see how far—and in what directions—these foundational elements can be stretched.

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Throughout the resource guide, some terms have been boldfaced and underlined. These terms are included in the glossary at the end of the resource guide.

Section I

Basic Elements of Music Theory

SOUND AND MUSIC

Definitions

Music Is Sound Organized in Time

The broadest definition of music is “sound organized in time.” Many kinds of sounds—including noises and tones produced by any means, not only by musical instruments—can be used to create music, particularly in the modern era. All that is required is a time frame, sound waves, and a cognizant mind to perceive and interpret those sounds. Common but not required factors include a person (often called a composer) who first imagines the music, human or mechanical performers to generate the sounds, and a mechanical means of recording and reproducing them. Sometimes the composition and performance happen simultaneously (often as **improvisation**, but sometimes via electronic composition). Some degree of human intention and perception are necessary for music to exist, but defining this exactly continues to puzzle scientists and philosophers, who debate questions like whether birdsong can qualify as music, whether accidental sound can be music, or whether a phonograph playing in the forest is music if no one hears it.

Music of the Western World

It should be noted that many cultures have markedly different views of music; indeed in some cultures, music is so interconnected with ritual, language, dance, and other aspects of life that in some languages there is no separate word for “music.” At certain times in history, Western traditions have encountered and incorporated the music of non-Western cultures. The reverse process is also sometimes true. And, in recent decades, globalization has made the boundaries between Western and non-Western culture increasingly permeable. Nonetheless, the material in this guide will pertain to what is called the “music of the Western World”—the musical traditions that developed in Europe in the past two millennia and their cultural extensions in the Americas.

The Physics of Musical Sound

Sound Waves

In the abstract, sound is described as a wave of energy. As a wave, it has both amplitude and frequency. The amplitude affects the decibel level, or how loud or soft the tone is. The higher the amplitude of a sound wave, the louder it is. The frequency affects the **pitch**, which is the highness or lowness of the sound. The greater the frequency of a sound wave, the higher its pitch. When the frequency of a wave is between 20 and 20,000 cycles per second, the normal human ear hears it as a single, sustained tone. A pure sine wave at 440 Hz (cycles per second) sounds like an A above middle C. Orchestral musicians in the United States usually tune their instruments to “A-440,” meaning 440 Hz. Of course, not every sound has a regular frequency. When you drop a book on the floor, the sound quickly dies down and has no discernable pitch because the wave pattern is so irregular and short. Thus, there are two kinds of musical sounds: **pitched** and **non-pitched**. Percussion instruments provide most of the non-pitched sounds in music.

Instruments as Sound Sources

How is a musical sound wave produced? In the late nineteenth century, two ethnomusicologists (the modern term for scholars who study the music of other cultures, or who study multiple cultures comparatively), Curt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel, categorized instruments into four groups. Chordophones, such as violins, harps, and guitars, have one or more strings, which are plucked, bowed, or struck; the vibrating string creates the sound wave. Aerophones (brass and wind instruments such as the many varieties of horns and flutes) feature a vibrating column of air. Membranophones have a skin or other membrane stretched across some kind of frame. The membrane, but not the frame, vibrates when struck. With idiophones, the body of the instrument itself vibrates when struck. Some examples of idiophones are bells,

TABLE 1–1

FAMILY	NAME	SACHS/HORNBOSTEL CLASSIFICATION
Stringed instruments	Violin, viola, cello, double bass; <i>also</i> guitar and lute	Chordophones
Woodwinds	Piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon; <i>also</i> saxophone	Aerophones
Brass	Trumpet, trombone, French horn, tuba; <i>also</i> cornet, flugelhorn, baritone, bugle	Aerophones
Percussion	Timpani, bass drum, snare drum, tambourine	Membranophones
	Marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, tubular bells, gongs, cymbals, triangle, wood block	Idiophones
Keyboards	Piano, harpsichord, organ, celesta	Varies

The most common Western orchestral instruments.

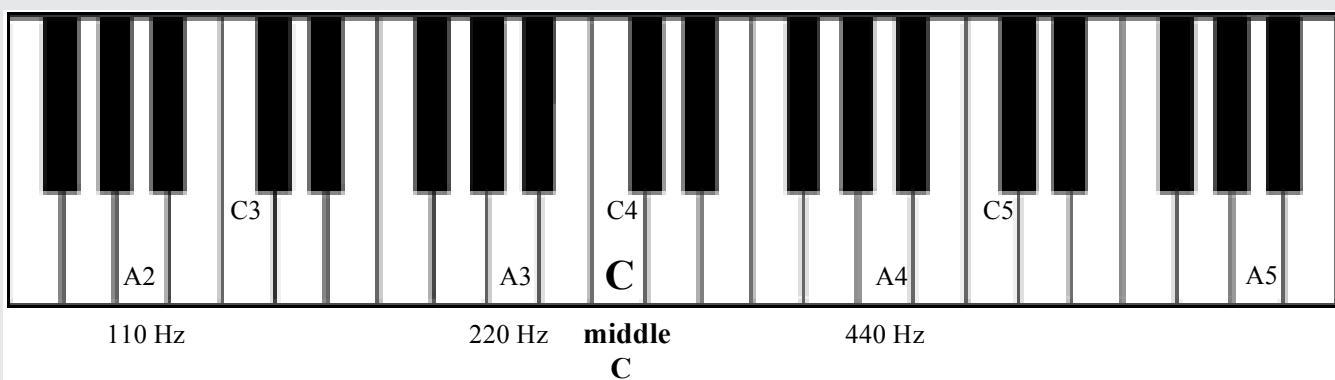


The theremin's inventor, Russian physicist Léon Theremin (1896–1993), with his instrument.

woodblocks, and xylophones. Cymbals (idiophones) play several crashes at the ends of phrases in “The Charleston” (Listening Example 5). A fifth category was added later: electrophones, which create sound waves using a mechanical device known as an oscillator and are dependent upon electricity.

Centuries before Sachs and Hornbostel, Western orchestral instruments were grouped into “families.” These categories are still used for Western instruments today. **Strings** or stringed instruments are usually bowed or plucked. (A violin is featured in Listening Example 13, while a double bass introduces the fugue subject in *La création du monde* [Listening Example 10].) **Brass instruments**, which are aerophones made of metal, are sounded by the performer’s buzzing lips, which make the column of air vibrate. (A cornet is prominent in “Lost Your Head Blues,” Listening Example 1, and in several other Listening Examples.) **Woodwind instruments** are also aerophones in which the column of air is moved by breath alone—as in the case of flutes, recorders, and related instruments—or by one or two vibrating reeds usually made from wood. A saxophone plays a solo during “The Charleston,” Listening Example 5. **Percussion instruments** include

FIGURE 1–1



Pitch on a keyboard. The diagram identifies middle C, A440, A220, A110, and the names of other Cs labeled with pitch names and octave numbers. Note that As always appear between the upper two of the three black keys on the keyboard.*

**Note that the octave number changes at C, not A.*

membranophones as well as idiophones, plus some chordophones that are struck rather than bowed or plucked, such as the piano. In some cases, **keyboard instruments** constitute a fifth category. A piano is the solo instrument in *Sicilienne*, Listening Example 14. Table 1–1 lists the most common members of each family of instruments.

The first electronic instruments began to appear in the first decades of the twentieth century. The **theremin** is one of the best known early electronic instruments and is still occasionally used today. When playing this instrument, the performer regulates frequency with one hand and amplitude with the other by disturbing the electrical fields that surround the protruding bars.

The next important step in electronic instruments came at the end of World War II. Enormous advances in electronics and radio technology had been made for wartime purposes, but after the war, many state-of-the-art studios were no longer needed for military purposes. Within a few years, scientists and composers began collaborating to make art with the new equipment. Electronically generated sounds and sounds produced by live instruments were recorded on tape, where they could be edited, manipulated, and mechanically recombined to form collages of sound that were “performed” via loudspeaker. This type of composition was first known as **musique concrète**; the term used is French due to the fact that the first practitioners were based in Paris. The basic techniques

of tape music (later followed by more purely electronic music produced on computers) are looping and splicing, both of which permit compositions that cannot be reproduced by a human performer. Rome, Paris, Cologne, and New York City all had famous postwar centers for electronic music.

PITCH, RHYTHM, AND HARMONY

A single, isolated musical sound has four properties: pitch, duration, volume, and timbre.

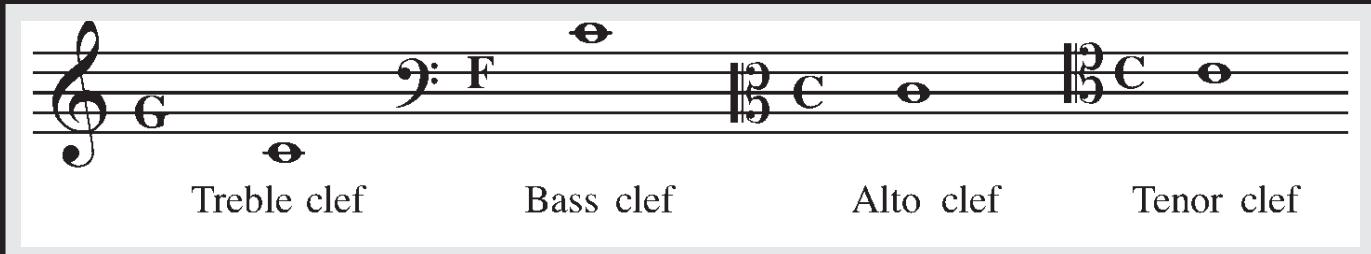
Pitch

Pitch, Frequency, and Octaves

Pitch is the highness or lowness of a sound. A Chihuahua has a higher-pitched bark than a St. Bernard; a kitten’s meow is higher-pitched than a tomcat’s yowl. A tuba is pitched lower than a piccolo. When musicians speak of “*a pitch*,” they are referring to a single tone whose highness or lowness does not change—that is, a sound that consists of a steadily oscillating sound wave, like A-440.

If you pluck the A string on a guitar (A-110), find the exact midpoint and press it firmly to the fret board, and then pluck the now-half-as-long string (either side), you will hear the next-higher A. This is because when you halve the length of the string, it naturally vibrates twice as fast (220 Hz), producing a pitch twice as high. The musical term for the distance (or **interval**) between A and the next higher or next lower A is called an **octave**.

FIGURE 1-2



The Three Main Clefs: G-clef, F-clef, and C-clef (with C-clef shown in its two most common positions). The bold-face letters on the staff lines show the pitch name indicated by each clef; the whole notes show where Middle C would appear in each clef.

Pitch on a Keyboard

A piano keyboard provides an excellent visual aid for understanding pitch and harmony. High-sounding pitches are to the right; low-sounding pitches are to the left. Therefore, moving from left to right is called moving “up” the keyboard, while moving from right to left is called moving “down.” Middle C is roughly equidistant from either end. The black keys are arranged in alternating groups of two and three. Middle C is located to the left of the group of two black keys closest to the middle of the keyboard.

Figure 1–1 identifies middle C, A 440, A 220, A 110, and the names of the other keys on the keyboard. Note that all the As appear between the upper two of the three black keys on the keyboard. The distance between any two adjacent keys on the keyboard is called a **half step**, or **semitone**, the smallest interval normally used in Western music. A **whole step** is the distance between every other key (regardless of color, black or white). Both half steps and whole steps are the basic intervals of any **scale** (a sequence of pitches in ascending or descending order) in Western music. The white keys are usually called the **natural** keys, spanning seven

FIGURE 1-3

The figure consists of two parts, each showing a grand staff (two staves joined at the top) over a piano keyboard. Vertical lines from below point to white notes, and lines from above point to black notes.

Top Diagram:

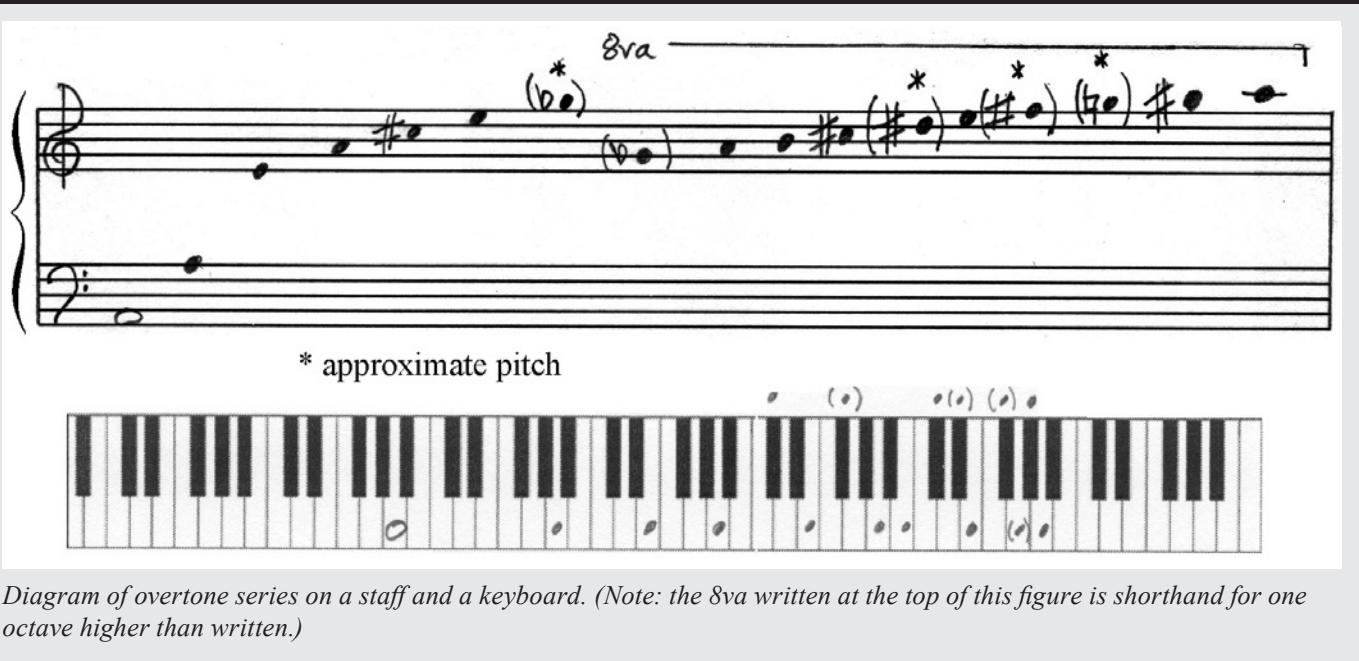
- Labels: "black notes" (pointing to the black keys), "white notes" (pointing to the white keys), "D2", "A110", "C3", "A220 = A3".
- Notes labeled: $F^{\sharp}2 = G2$, $D^{\sharp}3 = E3$.

Bottom Diagram:

- Labels: "C4", "E4", "A440", "C5".

Grand staff, with all sharps and flats. Vertical lines from below point to white notes, and lines from above point to black notes.

FIGURE 1-4



alphabetical letters, A through G. The symbol that represents a natural note is \natural . (If the natural sign is omitted, musicians still assume the pitch is natural, but sometimes the symbol is included for clarification.) The signs \sharp (**sharp**) and \flat (**flat**) indicate that a given pitch, such as A \sharp , has been raised or lowered, respectively, by a half step. So the next note to the right of A on the keyboard is A \sharp . But, you can also look at that same A \sharp key as being a lower neighbor of the key to its right—in other words, if you move a half step to the left from B \sharp , the same A \sharp key can also be called B \flat , since it is half a step (one key) below the B.

Pitch on a Staff

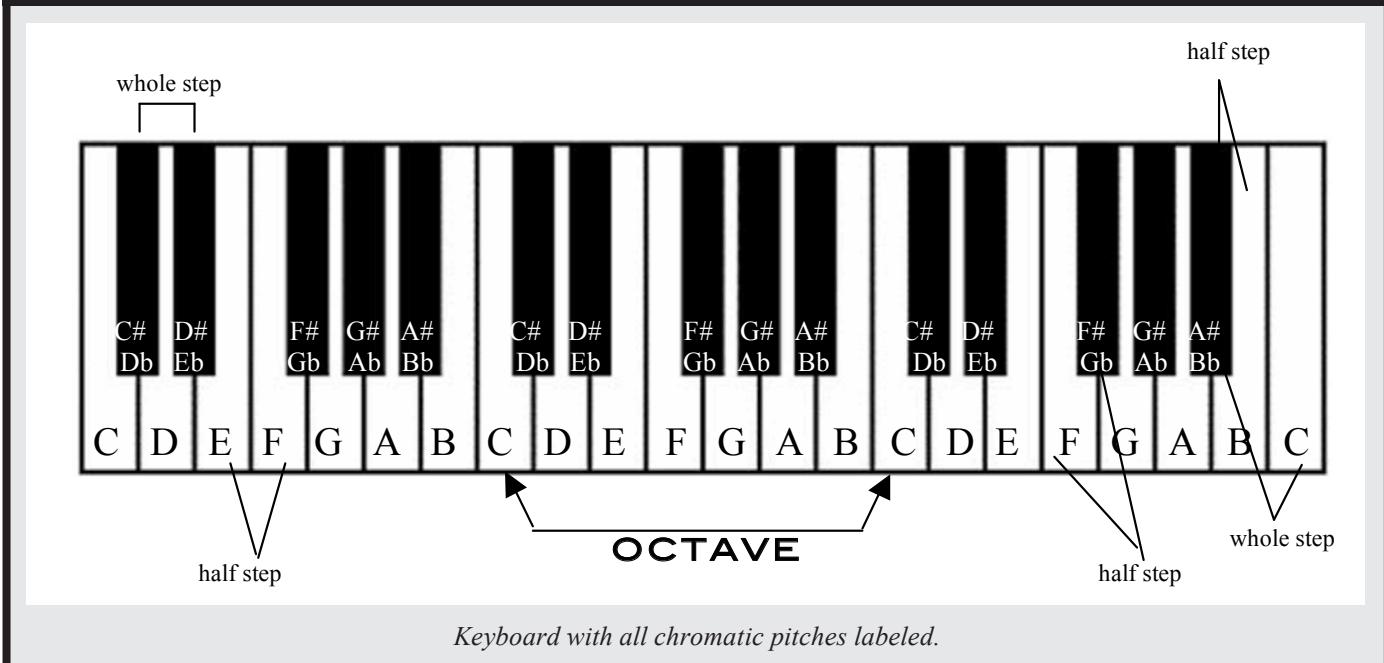
Music notation uses a five-line **staff** as a type of a ladder to indicate pitches. Each line or space on the staff is assigned to a letter of the musical alphabet—but the assignment can vary, depending on the **clef** symbol at the left-hand end of the staff. “Clef” comes from the French word “key,” and each clef symbol is the “key” for reading the lines and spaces of the staff. Each clef focuses on one line of the staff; musicians can then figure out the remaining lines and spaces based on that one reference point. There are three main clefs in use today: the **treble clef**, or “G-clef” [G], which indicates that the second line from the bottom of the staff is the pitch “G”; the **bass** (pronounced “base”) **clef**, or “F-clef” [F], which indicates that the fourth line from the bottom of the staff is the pitch “F”; and the **contratenor clef**, or “C-clef” [C], which is centered on a line that is read as “middle C.” The “C-clef” has different nicknames since it is a movable clef. (The F- and G- clefs *used* to move, but that practice has died out.) When the C-clef indicates that the pitch C should be placed on the middle line of the staff, we call it the **alto clef**. But, if the C-clef is centered on the fourth line from the bottom of the staff, it is called the **tenor clef**. Figure 1–2 presents each of the standard clefs (along with the location of the pitch that each clef emphasizes), and the pitch “middle C” is shown on the appropriate places on the staff, depending on the clef being used.

[G], which indicates that the fourth line from the bottom of the staff should be read as the pitch “F”; and the “C-clef” [C], which is centered on a line that is read as “middle C.” The “C-clef” has different nicknames since it is a movable clef. (The F- and G- clefs *used* to move, but that practice has died out.) When the C-clef indicates that the pitch C should be placed on the middle line of the staff, we call it the **alto clef**. But, if the C-clef is centered on the fourth line from the bottom of the staff, it is called the **tenor clef**. Figure 1–2 presents each of the standard clefs (along with the location of the pitch that each clef emphasizes), and the pitch “middle C” is shown on the appropriate places on the staff, depending on the clef being used.

Pitch on the Grand Staff

In piano music, two bracketed staves (the plural of “staff”) are used, known as the **grand staff**. In general, the left hand plays the music notated on the lower staff, usually containing a bass clef, and the right hand plays the notes written on the upper staff, which usually contains a treble clef. Figure 1–3 shows a grand staff with the pitches labeled that correspond to the white notes and black notes on the keyboard. (Notice, too, that the sharp or flat symbol *follows* the letter when we refer to pitches in prose—e.g., F \sharp , A \flat , etc.—but the symbol *precedes* the notehead when we write pitches on a staff.)

FIGURE 1-5



Keyboard with all chromatic pitches labeled.

Overtones and Partials

Very few pitches consist of a single, pure frequency. Rather, one frequency dominates, but many other frequencies are also present at very faint volume. For example, when the A string of a guitar is plucked, the strongest sound wave produced is 110 Hz. But many other waves can exist on the string at the same time. One is half the length of the string, another is one-third the length of the string, another is one-quarter the length of the string, and so on. The lowest A is called the **fundamental**. It is by far the loudest and strongest.

But it is “colored” by the faint presence of the higher pitches, which are called **partials**, or **overtones**. Figure 1-4 shows sixteen overtones, or partials, above an A fundamental.

Equal Temperament: Generating the Twelve Pitches by Dividing the Octave

In the world of pure sound waves and overtones, pitches follow mathematical patterns. But, in the Western tradition, after about 1750, a system of tuning called equal temperament became dominant. With

FIGURE 1-6

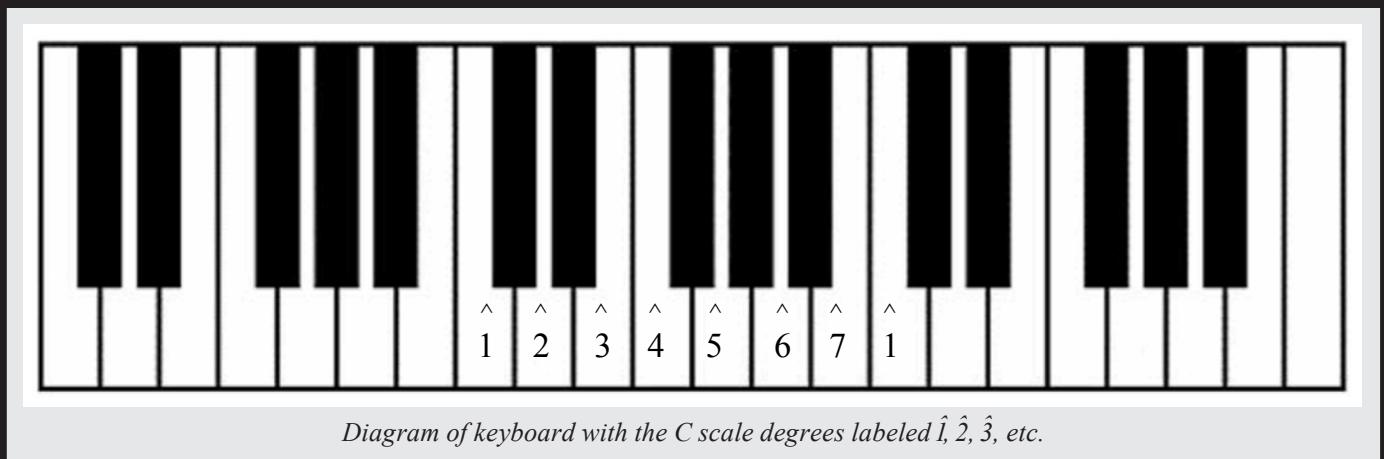


Diagram of keyboard with the C scale degrees labeled $\hat{1}, \hat{2}, \hat{3}$, etc.

TABLE 1–2

NUMBER OF HALF STEPS	NAME OF INTERVAL + (ABBREVIATION)	EXAMPLES, ASCENDING (FIRST PITCH IS LOWER)
1	Half step (^) or (m2)	C-D♭ E-F G♯-A
2	Whole step (M2)	C-D E-F♯ A♭-B♭
3	Minor third (m3)	C-E♭ A-C E♭-G♭
4	Major third (M3)	C-E E♭-G E-G♯ G♭-B♭
5	Perfect fourth (P4)	C-F F-B♭ E♭-A♭ G♯-C♯
6	Augmented fourth (aug4) or diminished fifth (d5) or tritone (TT)	C-F♯ (aug.4) C-G♭ (dim.5) B-F E-B♭ F-B
7	Perfect fifth (P5)	C-G E♭-B♭ B-F♯
8	Minor sixth (m6)	C-A♭ G-E♭ B-G D-B♭
9	Major sixth (M6)	C-A C♯-A♯ D-B
10	Minor seventh (m7)	C-B♭ G-F E♭-D♭
11	Major seventh (M7)	C-B G♭-F E-D♯
12	Octave (P8)	C-C E-E A♭-A♭

The most common intervals.

equal temperament tuning, the mathematical ratios are adjusted so that the octave is divided into twelve equal parts. Equal temperament is so common that it is now assumed; tuning systems are mentioned only if they differ from equal temperament, and this is very rare. The twelve different pitches in ascending order are called the **chromatic scale**. The distance (interval) between any two consecutive pitches in the chromatic scale is the half step or semitone. Figure 1–5 identifies each note name on the piano keyboard. *Sicilienne* (Listening Example 14) ends with a short rising and falling chromatic passage.

Each of the black keys derives its labeling from its neighboring white keys, and so each black key has two names. As noted earlier, sharp (#) means “raised” by a half step and flat (♭) means “lowered” by a half step. For instance, notice that E♭ and D♯ refer to the same black key. This means that they are identical in pitch; we call two different labels for the same piano key **enharmonic pitches**. (Note: In older tuning systems, an E♭ and a D♯ are *not* identical and differ slightly in the number of cycles per second.) Some of the white keys have additional names as well. For instance, one

half step to the right of the B key is another white key, C—but the enharmonic name for C is B♯. Similarly, an enharmonic name for the B key is C♭.

There are also symbols that indicate a pitch should be raised by two half steps, or a “double-sharp” (♯♯). The symbol for lowering a pitch by two half steps is called a double-flat (♭♭). Both of these symbols occur only rarely.

Scales: Leading Tone, Tonic, Dominant

In the Western tradition, most composers choose a set of seven pitches as the basis for a piece of music. When arranged in ascending order, the seven pitches are known as a **diatonic** scale, and the pitches fall into one of four different patterns (major and three varieties of minor). The C major scale is perhaps the most common scale; the piano keys needed for this scale are shown in Figure 1–6.

C (1) – D (2) – E (3) – F (4) – G (5) – A (6) – B (7) – C

When playing or writing down a scale, the first pitch is normally repeated at the top, as the last pitch. It would sound very unstable to stop at pitch number 7. The seventh scale degree is known as the **leading tone**.

FIGURE 1-7

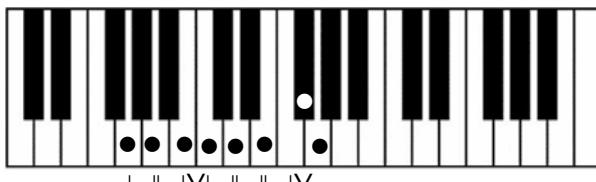
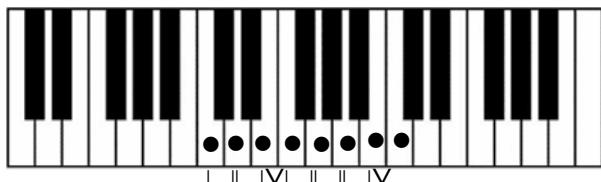


Diagram of keyboard with C scale, left, and G scale, right, with symbols beneath to indicate intervals.

because to Western ears it begs to resolve upward to the C above.

In the C major scale and the melodies that use it, C is the anchor, a point of repose and completion. Sometimes called the “resting tone” or “Do” (as in “Doe, a deer...” from [The Sound of Music](#)), it is most often known as the **tonic pitch**. In a C scale, C is the tonic pitch. In an A scale, A is the tonic pitch. In an A \flat scale, A \flat is the tonic pitch, and so on.

The fifth scale degree, called the **dominant pitch**, is nearly as important as the tonic. In non-technical terms, it functions like a second gravitational center that sets melodies in motion by pulling them away from the tonic. The dominant pitch may appear in a melody more often than the tonic pitch, though the tonic remains the final resting point. In the key of C, G is the dominant pitch, and B is the leading tone.

Intervals

The distance between any two pitches is called an interval. Remember that the smallest distance between any two adjacent keys on the piano is a half step (or semitone). Any larger distance between two piano keys can be measured by the number of half steps it spans; these distances are shown in the first column of Table 1-2. However, other terms for intervals are derived from the alphabetical letter names of the two pitches. For that reason, although the interval from C to E spans four half steps, it is called a “Major third” (M3) because of the three letter names between the lower and upper pitches (C to D to E). Table 1-2 gives the names for the most common intervals.

Any interval can be performed so it is harmonic (the two pitches occur simultaneously) or melodic, with the two pitches occurring in succession. Melodic intervals

are either ascending (the lower pitch occurs first) or descending.

A few intervals that exceed an octave are the major and minor ninth and the major and minor tenth. They can be thought of as an octave plus an m2 (spanning 13 half steps), M2 (14), m3 (15), and M3 (16 half steps).

Intervals of the Major Scale

A scale can be described as a succession of whole and half steps (or major seconds and minor seconds). Referring back to the C major scale on the keyboard, you can see that the distance between 1 and 2, in this case C to D, is a whole step, or M2. (The C#/D \flat key, which is skipped over, is the intermediate half step in between.) Pitch numbers 2 and 3 are also a whole step apart. (D to E \flat is one half step; E \flat to E makes two half steps, which added together make a single whole step.) Between pitch numbers 3 and 4, however, there is no intermediate piano key. The E and the F are only a half step, or an m2, apart. Figure 1-7 reproduces the C major scale on the piano keyboard, with the melodic intervals labeled. You can see that they follow a pattern of whole steps (marked with square brackets “ \sqcup ”) and half steps (marked by angled, or pointed, brackets “ \sqvee ”). Therefore, a major scale’s sequence of intervals consists of whole step–whole step–half step–whole step–whole step–whole step–half step (or $\sqcup\sqcup\sqvee\sqcup\sqcup\sqcup\sqvee$).

By using that same sequence of melodic intervals, you can create a major scale starting on *any* key of the piano. For instance, a G major scale proceeds up the keyboard looking very much like a C scale (all white notes), until you get to the seventh scale degree. By definition, if a scale is major, 6 to 7 must be a whole step, and 7 to 8 a half step apart. A whole step above 6 (E) is F \sharp . Why not call this note G \flat ? The

FIGURE 1–8

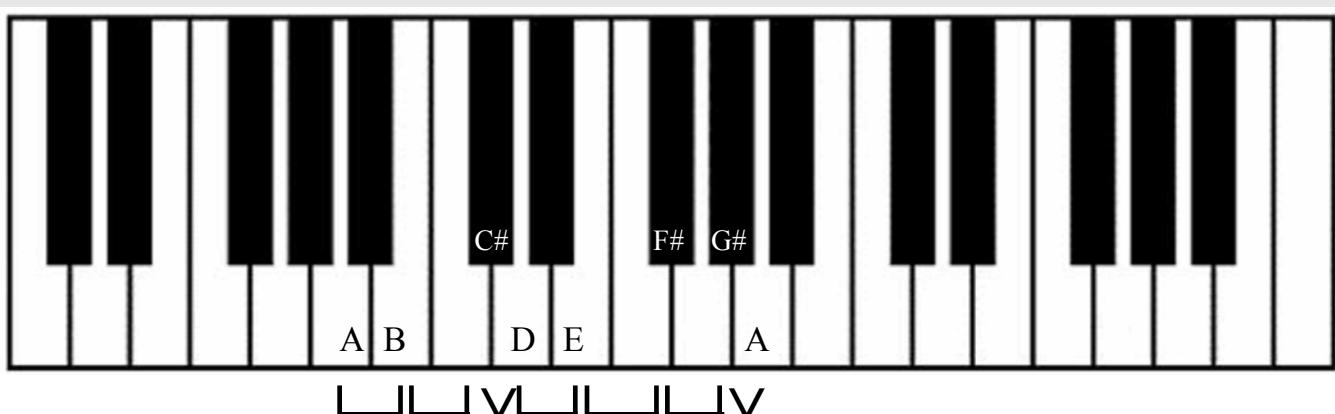


Diagram of an A major scale.

seven pitches of any major scale are properly spelled using seven *different* letters, so you would not want to have a G \flat and a G \sharp in the same scale. Also, an E to a G \flat would properly be called a diminished third, not a major second—and a major scale should consist only of major and minor seconds. (When a minor interval is made smaller, either by lowering the top note using an accidental, or by raising the bottom note using an accidental, the resultant interval is said to be “diminished.”) So, for example, E to G (3 half-steps) is a minor third. When you keep the same letter names but lower the G to G \flat , it is still a third, but it is no longer minor, since it consists of only two half-steps. It is now a diminished third. Compare the keyboard diagrams shown in Figure 1–7, and you will see the same sequence of intervals is preserved (— — — — — — —), even though one begins on G and the other begins on C.

Figure 1–8 shows an A major scale. The sequence of intervals, labeled below the diagram, is identical to the C and G major scales. The sequence of whole and half steps will be the same in every other major scale, regardless of the starting pitch.

Minor Scales and Blues Inflections

The next most common scale is the minor scale. There are three slightly different varieties: natural (or pure) minor, harmonic minor, and melodic minor. Figure 1–9 shows each of the three, beginning on A. (Like the major scale, each scale has its own pattern of whole and half steps.)

All minor scales feature a lowered third scale degree, meaning the interval from the tonic to the third pitch of the scale is a minor third, not a major third (the interval that occurs in the major scale). Note that the half steps of the natural minor scale are located between $\hat{2}$ and $\hat{3}$, and $\hat{5}$ and $\hat{6}$. The major scale’s upward pull from $\hat{7}$ to $\hat{8}$ is not present in the natural minor. Try playing the scale through. It can just as easily fall back down to $\hat{6}$, then $\hat{5}$, as it can rise to $\hat{8}$. In order to create that pull, many pieces of music use the harmonic minor mode, which is created by raising the seventh scale degree one half step (by adding a sharp or natural). Melodic minor, shown with intervals marked in Figure 1–9, is the final option. Both the sixth and seventh scale degrees are raised a half step as the scale ascends, and then they are restored to their normal “natural minor” pitches as the scale descends. The alterations here encourage a sense of upward motion to the higher tonic and a pull downward to the fifth scale degree.

Because C natural minor and E \flat major use the same seven pitches—just different tonics—they are called the **relative major and minor** to each other. (These relative scales are shown in Figure 1–10.) Their relationship is still **relative** even when the natural minor is altered to make the harmonic or melodic minor scales. In contrast, major and minor scales that begin and end on the same tonic pitch are called **parallel**. Relative major and minor scales are perceived as being more closely related to each other than parallel scales since they use the same collection of pitches.

FIGURE 1-9

The figure illustrates three minor scales: Natural Minor, Harmonic Minor, and Melodic Minor.

- NATURAL MINOR:** Shown on a piano keyboard and musical staff. The notes are: A, G, F, E, D, C, B. The scale degrees are indicated by V under each note.
- HARMONIC MINOR:** Shown on a piano keyboard and musical staff. The notes are: A, G, F, E, D, C, B. The notes B and C are sharp. The scale degrees are indicated by V under each note. An arrow points to the B note with the label "augmented second".
- MELODIC MINOR:** Shown on a piano keyboard and musical staff. The notes are: A, G, F, E, D, C, B, A. The notes B and C are sharp. The scale degrees are indicated by numbers with arrows: 5, 6, 7, 1, 7, 6, 5.

Minor scales: natural, harmonic, and melodic.

A scale with **blues inflections** combines elements of both major and minor scales. In a **blues scale**, scale degrees 3 and 7 can be either lowered, as in a minor scale, or normal as in a major scale, or somewhere in between, using a pitch “between the keys” of the piano.

Often the pitch is part of a small slide—for example, from $b3$ to 3. Less commonly, the 5th scale degree is lowered in a similar manner. Bessie Smith performs many blues inflections during “Lost Your Head Blues” (Listening Example 1).

$\hat{5}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{6}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{1}$ $\hat{7}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{6}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{1}$ $\hat{7}$ $\hat{6}$, $\hat{4}$ $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{1}$ $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$
Hap-py birth-day to you, hap-py birth-day to you! Hap-py birth-day, dear Susie, hap-py birth-day to you!

FIGURE 1-10

A diagram illustrating the C natural minor scale. At the top is a piano keyboard showing the notes C, D, E♭, F, G, A♭, B♭, and C. Below the keyboard is a musical staff with a common time signature. The notes are: C, D, E♭, F, G, A♭, B♭, C. The key signature has one sharp (F♯) and one flat (B♭).

A diagram illustrating the E♭ major scale. At the top is a piano keyboard showing the notes E♭, F, G, A♭, B♭, C, D, and E♭. Below the keyboard is a musical staff with a common time signature. The notes are: E♭, F, G, A♭, B♭, C, D, E♭. The key signature has two flats (B♭ and E♭).

Relative minor and major scales, both with three flattened pitches ($B\flat$, $E\flat$, and $A\flat$). C natural minor (left) and $E\flat$ major (right).

Melody Defined with an Example Using Scale Degrees

A **melody** is a series of successive pitches perceived by the ear to form a coherent whole. Only one pitch occurs at a time in a melody; if two pitches occur together, you have either **harmony** or **counterpoint**. Most melodies use the seven notes of a single scale. The song “Happy Birthday,” which is in the major mode, uses the scale degrees shown in the box at the bottom of the previous page.

It follows the same scale degrees whether you use the C major, F major, $E\flat$ major, A major, or any of the fifteen major scales. You can **transpose** the melody of “Happy Birthday” to *any* major key by beginning the same pattern of intervals on a different note, and it will remain the same melody.

Contour

All melodies have a **contour**, or profile. A **conjunct** melody moves smoothly, in stepwise motion, that is, in mostly half steps and whole steps. “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” is a familiar tune using conjunct motion. Apart from “merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,” all the intervals are whole steps and half steps. The descending melody during the opening verse of “Tea for Two” (Listening Example 6) is very conjunct. A **disjunct** melody, on the other hand, contains proportionally more leaps (intervals larger than a major second). For instance, the “A” melody of “Can’t Help

“Lovin’ Dat Man” (Listening Example 7) leaps upward and back down through several large intervals, so it is disjunct.

Another way to describe a melody’s contour is by direction. Melodies may ascend, descend, or move in a wavelike manner. “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” ascends to the first “merrily,” then mainly descends to the end. A very common contour for melodies is that of an arch, ascending at the beginning, reaching a climactic high point, and descending toward the end. Contour is normally described in general terms. Exact intervals and pitches are named when more precision is needed.

Range and Tessitura

Every instrument (including the human voice) has a range of possible pitches that it is capable of producing. In order to indicate exactly which A, B, or C♯, etc., is being played or discussed, each pitch is numbered from the bottom of the grand staff up: C1 through B1/C♭1, followed by C2 through B2/C♭2, and so on. A viola’s range (C3 to E6) is higher and slightly narrower than a cello’s (C2 to A5). The high, middle, and low parts of an instrument’s range are often called the high, middle, or low **register**. A melody with a high **tessitura** calls for more pitches in the performer’s high register than does a melody with a medium or low tessitura. This Italian term is applied most often to vocal music. A female singer who performs most comfortably in a high tessitura is called a **soprano**; a lower-register female

TABLE 1–3

BEATS PER MINUTE	ITALIAN TERM	MEANING (APPROX.)
200	<i>Presto</i>	very fast
120	<i>Allegro</i>	fast
108	<i>Moderato</i>	moderate
84	<i>Andante</i>	“at a walking tempo”
72	<i>Adagio</i>	slow
40	<i>Lento or Grave</i>	very slow

Common tempo markings.

singer is called an **alto**. For men, the higher register is called **tenor**, while a low-register male voice is a **bass** (pronounced “base”). Al Jolson was a tenor, as heard in “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo’ Bye)” (Listening Example 9).

Rhythm

Rhythm is the way music is organized in time.

Beat

Beat is the steady pulse that underlies most music. Sometimes the beat is audible, sometimes not, but it is present, like the silent or ticking second hand on a mechanical clock.

Tempo

The speed of the beat is called the **tempo**. Table 1–3 shows different tempos and their traditional Italian names. The Italian terms predate the invention of exact timekeeping, so they originally indicated mood or other expressive qualities as related to tempo. For example, *Allegro* means “cheerful” in Italian, and so the music should be executed in a fairly lively, or slightly “fast” manner. (*Allegro* music is not always

cheerful, however. The numbers at the left indicate the approximate number of beats per minute. Substantial variations exist in the beats-per-minute.

Tempo can slow down (*ritardando*) or speed up (*accelerando*), and it can do either gradually (*poco a poco*) or suddenly (*subito*). When there is no steady tempo—which is the same as no discernable beat—music is said to be **unmetered**. If there *is* a perceived beat, but it speeds up and slows down for expressive effect, it is called **rubato**.

Meter: Duple, Triple, and Quadruple

All beats are of equal length, but not all beats are of equal importance. Normally, beats are grouped into **measures** (or more informally, bars), which are separated by **bar lines**. The first beat of any measure is usually the strongest, so it is customarily called the **downbeat** or strong beat.

Meter describes the pattern of emphasis superimposed on groups of beats. In general terms, meters are **double**, **triple**, **quadruple**, or **irregular** (also called

FIGURE 1–11

1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Are	you	sleep-	ing,	Are	you	sleep-	ing

Quadruple meter in “Are You Sleeping?”

FIGURE 1–12

Hap-py **1** 2 3 **1** 2 3 hap-py **1** 2 3 **1** 2 3
birth- day to you. birth- day to you! [Hap-py...]

“Happy Birthday”—four measures with words and beat numbers.

asymmetrical). Music with groups of two beats (alternating as STRONG-weak-STRONG-weak, etc.) is in duple meter, as you can hear in “Dippermouth Blues” (Listening Example 2). Triple meter has a three-beat pattern with a STRONG-weak-weak-STRONG-weak-weak (etc.) pulsation, illustrated in the rapid “Burlesque” from *Music for the Theatre* (Listening Example 12). Most common is quadruple meter, in which there are groups of four beats, with 1 being the strongest beat, 3 being the second strongest beat, and 2 and 4 being weak beats. However, it is often difficult to distinguish duple from quadruple by ear, so quadruple is sometimes treated as a “duple” meter by listeners (and the opposite is also true—duple meter is sometimes treated as quadruple meter). Figure 1–11 shows two measures from “Are You Sleeping?” with the quadruple beats numbered. Irregular (or asymmetrical) meters are other groupings that cannot be divided into steady pulsations of two, three, or four beats. The most common irregular meters are five-beat or seven-beat measures.

The song “Happy Birthday,” with its groupings of three beats, is in triple meter as is shown in Figure 1–12. The first word falls before the downbeat. This is called a **“pickup”** or **anacrusis** (pronounced “Anna-croo-sis”). Another illustration of triple meter occurs in “America (My country, ‘tis of thee);” this song begins *on* the downbeat.

Rhythmic Notation

A variety of symbols indicate how long a note should last. An oval note, called a **whole note**, is the longest symbol used today. A line called a **stem** can be added to that oval, and that oval-plus-stem symbol indicates a time value that is half as long as the whole note, or a **half note**. When the oval, or note head, is solid black (with a stem), that indicates a **quarter note**: a note that is half as long as a half note (and one-fourth the duration of a whole note). When a flag is added to the stem, the quarter note is halved in duration, so that is called an **eighth note**. Additional flags can be added,

each subdividing the value of the note by half again: **sixteenth notes**, **thirty-second notes**, and so forth. The relationships of the most common note symbols are shown in Figure 1–13. (Notice that multiple flagged notes have an alternate notation, called **beams**; these horizontal connecting lines are sometimes easier for a musician to read quickly, since it is customary to “beam” together a beat’s worth of notes.)

Another device used in rhythmic notation is the **dot**. A dot adds half the original value to a note—so a dot following a half note would represent a quarter note, and thus the total duration of a dotted half note should be a half note *plus* a quarter note. Also, notes of the same pitch can be connected with a curved line called a **tie**; it “ties” their values together, so that the note lasts as long as their combined values. “Tea for Two” (Listening Example 6) employs many repetitions of the same dotted rhythm.

The note value symbols in the top half of Figure 1–13 indicate how long musical *sounds* should last—but musicians can also be told how long *not* to make sound. These symbols for silence are called **rests**, and they follow a similar hierarchy as the note values; the lower half of Figure 1–13 illustrates the standard rest symbols (and their equivalent note symbols), and how each rest should be placed on a staff. (The placement is especially important for whole rests and half rests; they look identical otherwise.)

Time Signature

In music notation, the meter is indicated with a **time signature**, which usually consists of two numbers. The lower number indicates a durational value, with 2 meaning the half note, 4 the quarter note, 8 the eighth, and 16 the sixteenth note. (This is *not* a fraction! Note that there is no line between the two numbers.) The upper number indicates how many of those durational values (or their equivalents) will occur in one measure. Thus, if the time signature is $\frac{6}{8}$, the measure will

FIGURE 1-13

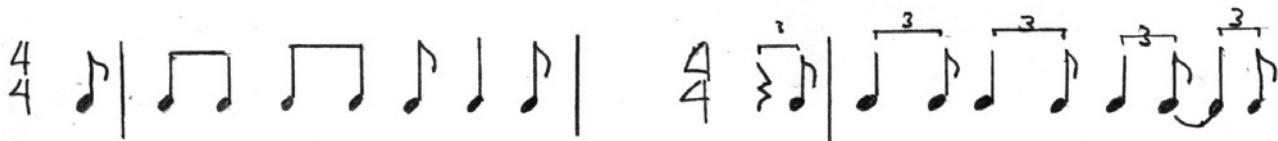
Note Names	Notation
Whole	
Half	
Quarter	
Eighth	
Sixteenth	
32nd	
whole-note rest	
sixteenth-note rest	
half-note rest	
32nd-note rest	
quarter-note rest	
64th-note rest	
eighth-note rest	

This example shows the correct placement of rests on a staff.



Symbols for Notes and Rests. The hierarchy of notes is illustrated by their alignment: 1 whole = 2 half notes = 4 quarter notes = 8 eighth notes = 16 sixteenth notes = 32 thirty-second notes (etc.). The same relationships are true for rests as well.

FIGURE 1-14



Swing example: Notated (left); performed (right).

contain the combined time value of six eighth notes. Two other symbols are often used to represent the time signature: a large capital C (called “**common time**”) is equivalent to $\frac{4}{4}$ time, and a vertical slash through the C (\cancel{C}) indicates that the time signature is $\frac{2}{2}$; this symbol is usually called “**cut-time**,” although its original name is “*alla breve*”; “The Charleston” (Listening Example 5) uses this time signature.

Simple and Compound Subdivision

Normally each beat is divided in half (1 & 2 & 3 & or 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &), which is referred to as **simple** subdivision. If the beat is subdivided into three equal parts, then the subdivision is **compound**. For example: $\frac{6}{8}$ meter can be counted **1 2 3 4 5 6**, **1 2 3 4 5 6**, or ONE-&-a TWO-&-a, ONE-&-a TWO-&-a; *Sicilienne* (Listening Example 14) illustrates compound subdivision, while “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo' Bye)” (Listening Example 9) is an example of simple subdivision. The rhythms used in **swing** music are notated as if they are in $\frac{4}{4}$ time, but played as if they are $\frac{12}{8}$, as shown in Figure 1-14. Figure 1-16 illustrates

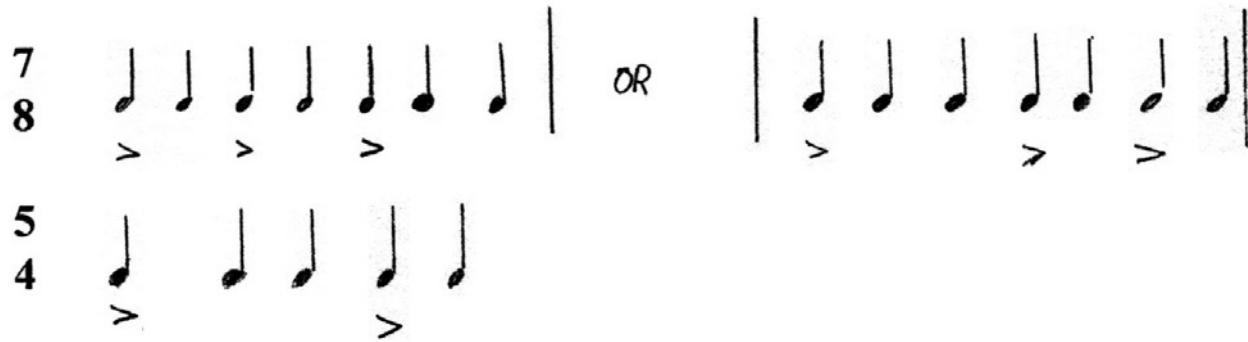
triplets on the second and third staves.

Mixed and Irregular Meter

Mixed meter and **irregular or asymmetrical meter** are variations on the grouping of beats. In mixed meter, measures that have different meters occur in rapid succession. Irregular meter features measures that have different meters alternating in an irregular pattern. Irregular meter may also mean there is a steady beat but it is grouped unpredictably or inconsistently. A measure of seven beats, for example, may go ONE-two-three ONE-two ONE-two, or ONE-two ONE-two ONE-two-three. (See Figure 1-15; the > symbol above or below a note head is called an “**accent**.” An accent indicates that the note is to receive a greater stress than the unaccented notes around it.)

When two or more meters are operating simultaneously, it is referred to as **polymeter**. “Hotter Than That” (Listening Example 3) contains a polymetric passage, between the voice and guitar.

FIGURE 1-15



Examples of asymmetrical (irregular) meters.

FIGURE 1-16



Two against three (top) and three against four (bottom) polyrhythms.

Syncopation

Rhythm is **syncopated** when accented or emphasized notes fall on weak beats or in between beats. The rhythms in "Happy Birthday" are regular and coincide with the beat, so it is not considered syncopated.

Most of this year's jazz selections use a great deal of syncopation, including "The Charleston" (Listening Example 5) and "Sweet Georgia Brown" (Listening Example 8).

Polyrhythm

Polyrhythm, also called **cross-rhythm**, occurs when two conflicting rhythmic patterns are present simultaneously. The most common, as shown in Figure 1-16, are two against three (the upper example) and three against four (the lower example). Note that the meter does not change. Polyrhythms are common in jazz, and Darius Milhaud mimics that characteristic during Tableau I of *La création du monde* (Listening Example 10).

Rhythm: Summary

The important distinction to keep in mind is that **rhythm** is a collection of varying durations, and it is always audible. **Beat** refers to a regular underlying pulse that is not always *audible* but is always *felt* or imagined, and **meter** is the grouping of beats and the associated patterns of strong and weak beats.

Harmony

Harmony occurs whenever two or more tones are sounding simultaneously.

Common-Practice Tonality

Common-practice tonality (also called **common-practice harmony**) is the system of organizing pitch and harmony that we find intuitive today in Western cultures. It developed in Europe beginning in the Middle Ages and was codified by about 1750. Since then, layers of complexity have been added, vigorous challenges have been made by various composers, and knowledge

FIGURE 1–17



Examples of triads: C-E-G, C-E \flat -G, A-C \sharp -E \sharp , B-D-F, B-D \sharp -F \sharp .

of non-Western music traditions has increased dramatically. Despite these changes, conventions of common-practice tonality govern nearly all of the music produced or consumed in the Western world.

Chords

A **chord** is three or more pitches sounding simultaneously. A book, or a forearm, pressed down on a piano keyboard creates a chord. However, the most common and useful chords do not employ immediately adjacent pitches.

◆ Triads

A **triad** is a three-note chord consisting of two intervals of a third. Triads come in four qualities: major, minor, diminished, and augmented. A **major triad** (abbreviated as “M”) has a major third interval between its lower two pitches and a minor third between the upper two pitches. A **minor triad** (m) has a minor third on the bottom and a major third above. Less common are the **diminished triad** (d) (two minor thirds) and the **augmented triad** (A) (two major thirds). Triads of various qualities are shown in FIGURE 1–17. The basic chords in any piece of music are the triads built above each note of the scale.

The **root** is the lowest of the three notes in a triad. The middle note is called the **third**, and the highest note is called the **fifth**. When the root is on the bottom, the chord is in **root position**. Root-position triads are shown as the first four chords of FIGURE 1–18.

◆ Inversions

Any pitch of a triad can be moved up or down any number of octaves. When the third of the triad is on the bottom, the chord is in **first**

inversion. When the fifth is on the bottom, it is in **second inversion**. When describing inverted chords, first inversion is indicated by a “six” following the chord symbol; second inversion is indicated by a six and a four aligned vertically, rather like a fraction with the line missing. First- and second-inversion triads are also illustrated in Figure 1–18.

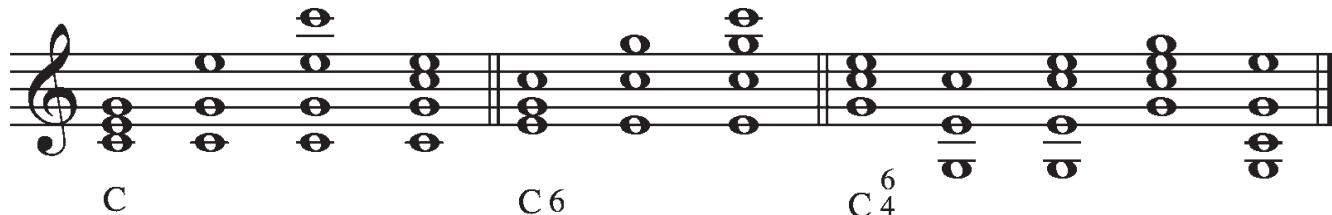
Any triad may be **inverted**. The bottom pitch determines the inversion; the other pitches may be in any order, and any of the triad’s three pitches may be duplicated in the same, or different, octaves without changing the chord’s classification as a triad.

Keys

In music theory, the **key** is the world of pitch relationships within which a piece or substantial section of music takes place. “Key” in music theory is not to be confused with the piano key that you press to produce a single pitch. In terms of harmony, the “key” of a piece of music is the set of seven notes, or scale, that has been selected for use in that piece. The gravitational center of a key is the tonic pitch, which in turn lends its name to the entire key. A piece of music whose tonic pitch is D is said to be in “the key of D;” similarly, an A major piece consists of the seven pitches of the key (or scale) of A. Whether the key is major or minor depends upon other scale degrees, namely $\hat{3}$, $\hat{6}$, and $\hat{7}$. Within a key, pitches and harmonies relate to one another in specific ways. Each chord has a different relationship to the tonic.

Unless otherwise specified, “the key of C” means “the key of C *major*.” (The other options in common-practice tonality are C natural minor, C harmonic minor, and C melodic minor.) Music in the key of C

FIGURE 1-18



Example: C triad plus its inversions, all three with different spacing:
CEG CGE CGEC CGCE // EGC ECG ECGC // etc.

major uses mainly the seven pitches of a C major scale, and their octave transpositions. If other pitches occur, they are called **chromatic pitches**—and are usually decorative or expressive, but not structural.

◆ Key Signatures

The **key signature** is a set of sharps or flats at the beginning of every staff that indicates the key of the music. The key signature signals which seven pitches make up the scale for that piece by indicating which pitches will be consistently raised or lowered. When an F♯ appears in the key signature at the beginning of the piece, that means all Fs in the entire composition are automatically raised, unless otherwise indicated (which would be done with a natural sign in front of the individual note). There are only two scales that need *only* an F♯: G major and E minor (which are relative scales to each other). A scale beginning on E needs only the second note (F) raised to have the order of whole and half steps common to all **natural minor** scales. A scale starting on G needs only the 7th degree (F) raised to fall into the **major scale** pattern of whole and half

steps. When music is notated, all three types of minor scales use the same key signature—the one for natural minor—and add **accidentals** to individual notes throughout the score for harmonic or melodic inflections.

The key signature is a convenience. See the E major scale in Figure 1-19, shown on the keyboard and in two versions on the staff. The first notated version uses an accidental in front of each affected pitch. The second notated version begins with a key signature of four sharps (F♯, C♯, G♯, and D♯), indicating that the performer needs to sharpen any F, C, G, or D pitches they encounter.

◆ Hierarchy of Keys: Circle of Fifths

Key signatures fall into a fascinating pattern. Remember, there are fifteen major scales. There are also fifteen minor scales. Each scale corresponds to a key of the same name. And, each major scale contains the *same pitches* as one of the natural minor keys. (Remember the example in Figure 1-10: C minor is the **relative minor** of E♭ major; E♭ is the **relative major** of C minor.) There are fifteen key signatures

FIGURE 1-19



E major scale on a keyboard (left); E major scale on a staff without key signature (center); E scale on a staff with key signature (right).

FIGURE 1–20

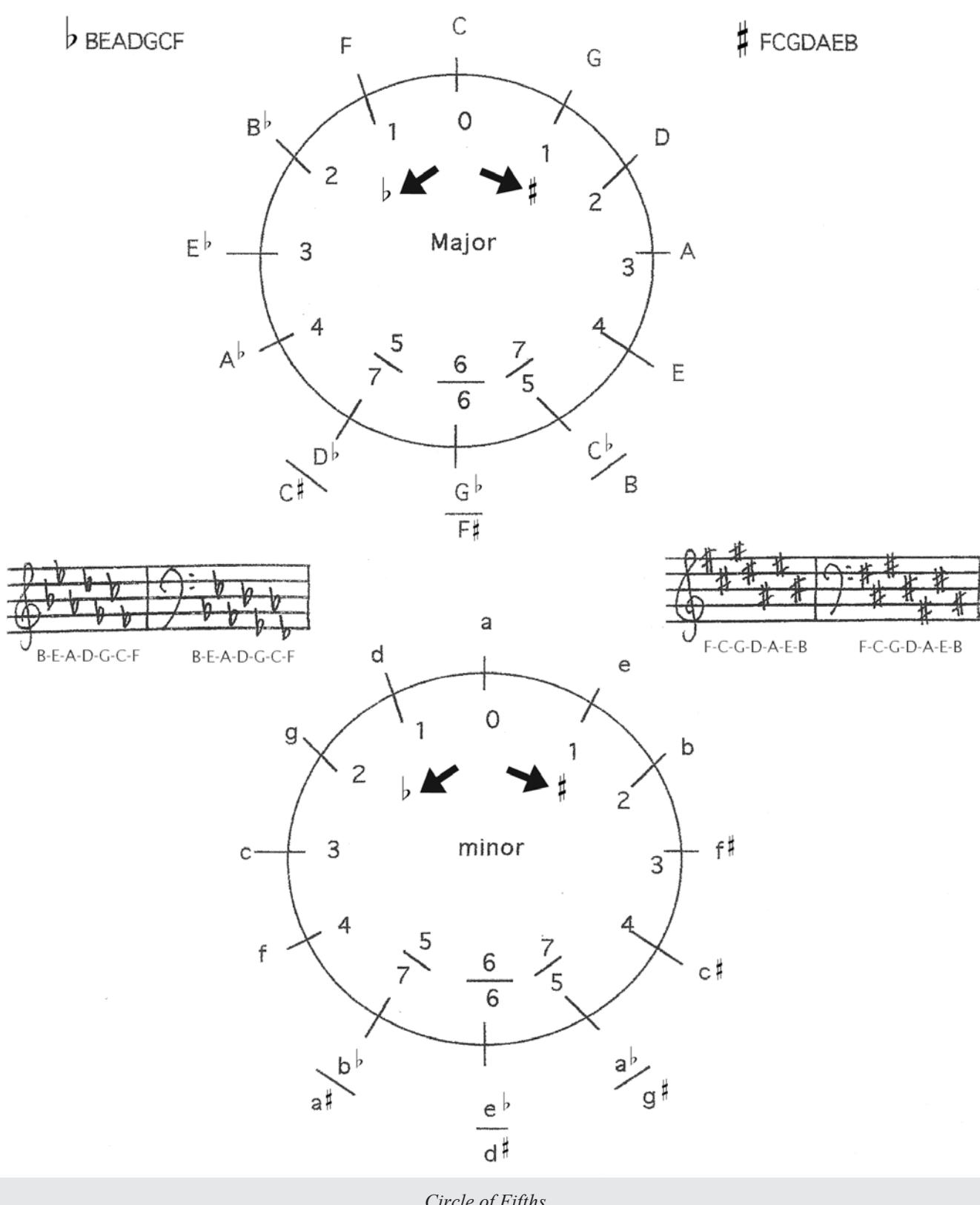
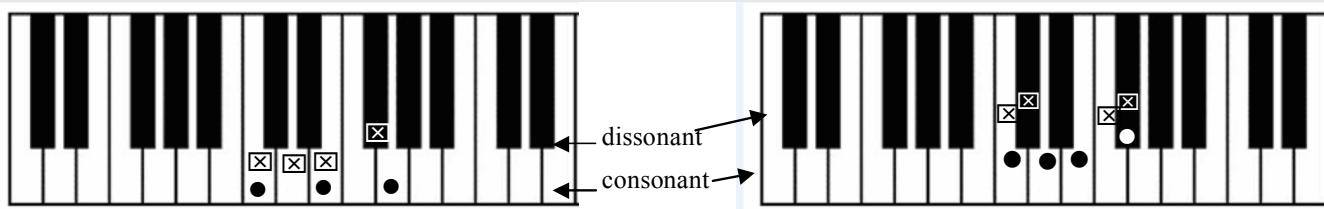


FIGURE 1-21



Examples of more dissonant chords (piano keys marked with “×”) and more consonant chords (piano keys marked with dots).

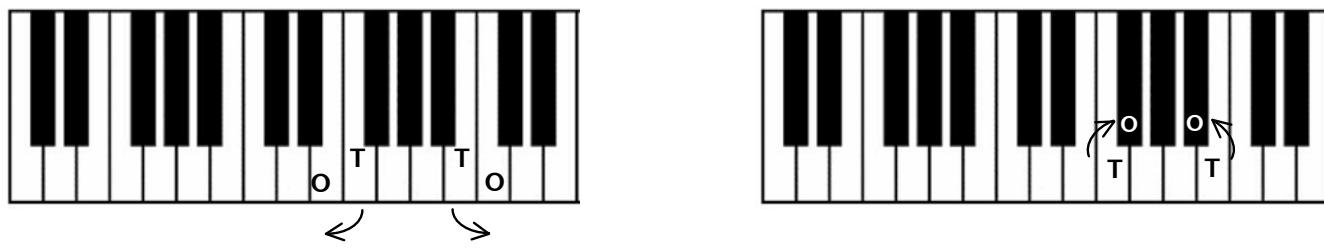
needed. Because the major and natural minor scales have to preserve a certain order of whole and half steps, there are only thirty possible keys.

Refer to the circle of fifths for major scales shown in the upper half of Figure 1–20 while locating each key’s tonic on the keyboard. C, the key at the top of the circle, has no sharps or flats in its key signature (all of its pitches are natural). The key of G is a perfect fifth higher, and it uses only one accidental, an F♯ (all the other pitches are natural). A perfect fifth is an interval of seven half steps subsumed within five letter names, e.g., C-G or B♭-F. The key of D is closely related to G; it is a perfect fifth higher, and it needs only one additional sharp—C♯. As you continue moving clockwise, each successive scale is a perfect fifth higher than the previous one, and another sharp is added each time, to a maximum of seven sharps. You will see that the scale with seven sharps is C♯ major—in effect, you have raised *every* pitch of the C major scale

by one half step. To go the other direction, e.g., counter-clockwise (toward scales that are each a perfect fifth lower than the previous one), you add flats one at a time, progressing from the key of C to F, B♭, E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, and C♭. The counterclockwise cycle overlaps the clockwise cycle at the bottom of the circle, where three pairs of scales dovetail with each other. The scale with five sharps, B, uses the same piano keys as the scale with seven flats, C♭ major. The scales with six sharps and six flats (F♯ major and G♭ major) also use precisely the same keys on the piano. Similarly, since C♯ and D♭ are enharmonic equivalents, their scales also overlap on the circle and on the piano. Both “Sweet Georgia Brown” (Listening Example 8) and *La création du monde* (Listening Example 10) feature passages with circle-of-fifths harmonic shifts.

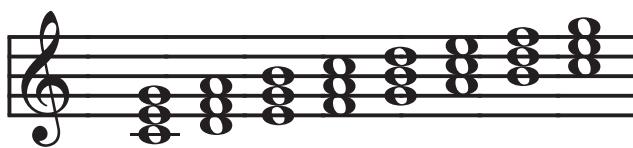
Musicians usually memorize the order of sharps and flats that occur in the key signatures: F♯-C♯-G♯-D♯-A♯-E♯-B♯ and B♭-E♭-A♭-D♭-

FIGURE 1-22



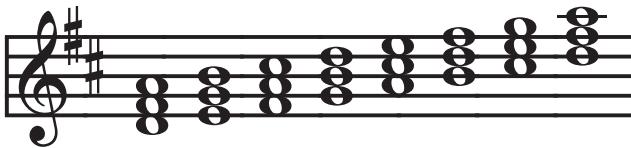
Two resolutions (shown as “O” notes) of the F-B tritone (shown as “T” notes).

FIGURE 1–23



C: I ii iii IV V vi vii° I

Diatonic triads.



D: I ii iii IV V vi vii° I

G♭-C♭-F♭. Notice that the letter names for the sharps reverse the order of the letter names for the flats—so if you memorize one list of accidentals, the other one is simply in backward order. Many people make up mnemonic phrases to help them remember at least one of the lists. One saying for the flats is “Big Eaters Always Demand Good Chinese Food.” You can have fun inventing your own phrases.

The lower diagram shown in Figure 1–20 presents the circle of fifths for minor scales. It uses exactly the same principles as the circle of fifths for major keys, except that the scale at the top (with no flats or sharps in the key signature) is A minor (the relative minor of C major).

Harmonic Progression

A **harmonic progression** is a series of chords or intervals that moves from tension (dissonance) toward resolution (consonance).

◆ Dissonance and Consonance

Dissonance is the quality of a pitch, interval, or chord that makes it seem “unstable” or tense. The more dissonant a sound, the more the listener longs to hear a “resolution.” The opposite of dissonance is consonance, the quality of a pitch, interval, or chord that makes it seem a suitable point of rest or resolution.

Dissonance is relative. The most consonant chords are ones that stress the lower partials on the **overtone series**. Few things will sound more consonant than an octave with a fifth added above the bass. A major triad, especially with the root doubled, is also extremely consonant. But other chords can sound dissonant *or* consonant depending upon what precedes them. A cluster of whole steps (say, C, D, E, F#, shown as “x” notes in the left-hand keyboard of Figure 1–21) sounds dissonant compared to a C-E-G triad (the black-dot chord in the left-hand keyboard). But that same cluster is more

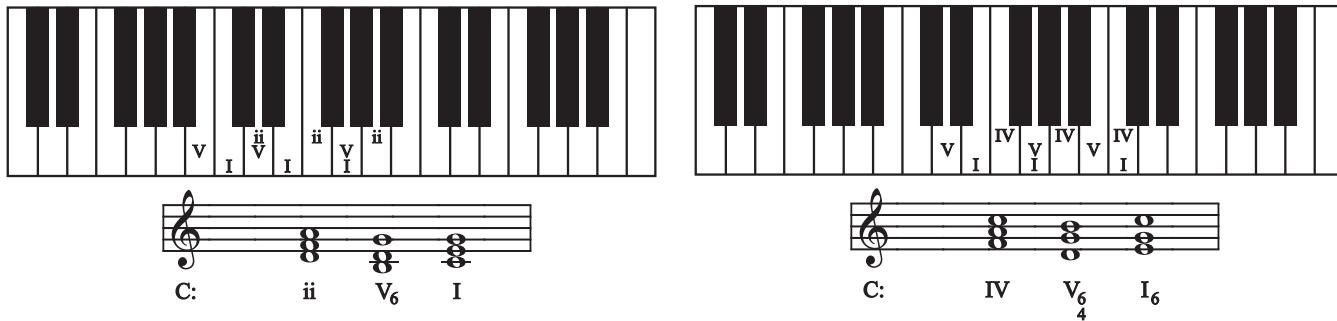
FIGURE 1–24

A diagram of a piano keyboard illustrating harmonic progressions. The left hand plays a sequence of chords: ii (D minor), V (G major), and I (C major). The right hand plays a sequence of chords: V (G major), IV (D major), and I (C major). The chords are represented by pairs of notes on adjacent keys.

ii-V-I and IV-V-I as simple triads in root position.

A diagram of a piano keyboard illustrating harmonic progressions. The left hand plays a sequence of chords: ii (D minor), V (G major), and I (C major). The right hand plays a sequence of chords: V (G major), IV (D major), and I (C major). The chords are represented by pairs of notes on adjacent keys.

FIGURE 1-25



The same pitches that were shown in Figure 1-24 are present in these chords, but the notes are rearranged (i.e., some of the chords are inverted).

consonant (the dots of the right-hand keyboard) than a chord composed of C, D \flat , F, G \flat (the “x” notes of the right-hand keyboard).

Ears accustomed to Western music expect dissonance to resolve. Tension is created as the listener waits for a tense interval or chord to come to resolution in something more restful. Dissonance and its resolution are central to harmonic progression. An example of this is the tritone. The tritone is an interval made up two notes that are three whole steps apart (e.g., C-F \sharp ; C-D, D-E, E-F \sharp), or six half steps. Tritones can also be called augmented fourths (when spelled with two note names a fourth apart, as in C-F \sharp) or a diminished fifth (when spelled enharmonically with two note names a fifth apart, as in C-G \flat). Play an F and B together on the piano (the “T” notes in Figure 1-22). The two most natural sounding resolutions are either G \flat and B \flat , or E and C, as shown by the “O” notes on the keyboard diagrams in Figure 1-22.

Try playing the tritone followed by its resolution a few times. Then try playing it backwards (the “O” notes before the “T” notes) to see if there is a way to make the tritone sound more restful than the other interval. It is difficult, if not impossible. Any chord that contains a tritone will sound more dissonant than a chord without one.

◆ Diatonic Triads

The term **diatonic** means “within the key.” A chord or melody is diatonic if no accidentals

are needed other than those already indicated in the key signature. The **quality** (major, minor, diminished, or augmented) of a diatonic triad depends upon which scale degree its root is on. If a melody or chord borrows notes from outside the key, then it is **chromatic**.

Chords within any given key are related to each other in a predetermined pattern that sounds perfectly intuitive to Western ears. The fascinating thing is that the pattern connecting diatonic chords is also based on the circle of fifths. But first, let’s take a closer look at the individual triads.

The **tonic triad** (also called the tonic chord or simply the tonic) is a diatonic triad built on the tonic pitch, $\hat{1}$. This is perceived as the most stable chord in a key. Nearly all pieces of music end on the tonic chord. In a major key, the tonic triad is always major.

The other major triads that occur naturally in a major key are on scale degrees $\hat{4}$ and $\hat{5}$. The diatonic triads on $\hat{2}$, $\hat{3}$, and $\hat{6}$ are minor (even though they are part of a major key). The triad built on the seventh scale degree (the leading tone) is unique, consisting of two minor thirds. This is a **diminished triad**, and it is highly unstable; intuitively the listener wants to hear it resolve to something more restful. The diagram in Figure 1-23 shows a C major scale (left) and a D major scale with a triad built on each scale degree. They are labeled with Roman numerals. The single diminished

FIGURE 1–26

Bass line: $\begin{matrix} \hat{2} & \hat{5} & \hat{1} \end{matrix}$

C: $\begin{matrix} \text{ii} & \text{V} & \text{I} \end{matrix}$

Bass line: $\begin{matrix} \hat{4} & \hat{5} & \hat{1} \end{matrix}$

C: $\begin{matrix} \text{IV} & \text{V} & \text{I} \end{matrix}$

Chord progressions with bass lines added.

triad is lower-case with a small superscripted circle added. Capitalized numerals indicate major triads, and lower-case numerals (with no superscripted circle) indicate minor triads.

◆ The Dominant Triad's Special Role

Aside from the tonic chord, the dominant chord (V) is the most important. It contains the leading tone ($\hat{7}$) and the fifth scale degree, both of which want to resolve to the tonic pitch.

Other harmonies, in turn, “pull” to the dominant: these are called **pre-dominant harmonies**. The triads built on the second and fourth scale degrees (ii—also called the **supertonic**, and IV, the **sub-dominant**) are the most common predominant harmonies.

A chain of triads, each pulling to the next, is called a **chord progression**. The most common chord progression is predominant-dominant-tonic. This can be ii-V-I or IV-V-I. In Figure 1–24, these are written as simple triads in root position.

More often, some of the chords are inverted to create what is called smoother **voice leading**. If you think of the three chords as three horizontal layers (the top note in each chord is one layer, the middle note in each chord is a second layer, and the lowest note in each chord creates a third layer), this means each layer is relatively conjunct and easy to sing. (This is due to the fact that when Western art music developed, the vast majority of music was written for the voice.) In Figure 1–25, note that the same pitches are present in each

chord, but the notes are rearranged (that is, the chords are inverted).

If one person sings the top note of each chord, and another sings the bottom notes, and a third person sings the middle pitches, no one person has to leap around excessively, making the progression easier to sing.

◆ Bass Lines

The **bass line** is the lowest “voice” in a series of chords. It provides the finishing touch, reinforcing the forward pull of the progression. Bass lines often, but not always, play the root of the harmony. Bass lines are usually notated in bass clef, as shown in Figure 1–26.

The most “final” sounding, strongest kind of bass line is one that descends a fifth. $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$ is the most common bass motion at strong **cadences** (pausing points), like those which occur at the end of pieces or significant sections of music. A $\hat{5}$ - $\hat{1}$ bass line supports a V-I harmonic progression. The most natural-sounding chord progressions within a key are a chain of descending fifths, such as moving counterclockwise through the circle of fifths. The example in Figure 1–27 shows how a simple descending fifths bass line supports a chain of harmonies that includes every diatonic triad in root position and ends on a cadence when the harmony moves from V to I and the melody (in the topmost notes) ends on $\hat{1}$.

FIGURE 1-27



A descending fifths bass line supports a chain of harmonies that includes every diatonic triad in root position and ends in a perfect authentic cadence.

FIGURE 1-28

The diagram shows a piano keyboard with a bracket above it labeled "tonic ↓ pitch". Below the keyboard is a musical staff in G major. The staff shows a dominant seventh chord (G-B-D-F) followed by a half note G. The staff is labeled with Roman numerals: F, D, B, G. Above the staff, scale degrees are labeled: 5, 7, 2, 4. Below the staff, intervals are labeled: m3, m3, M3, P5. A bracket labeled "Tritone" spans between the 7 and 4 scale degrees. The chord is labeled "m7". Below the staff, the Roman numerals V₇ and [I] are shown.

V₇ on staff and keyboard with scale degrees, pitches, and all intervals labeled.

The Dominant Seventh Chord

To intensify its pull to the tonic triad, the dominant triad is often turned into a **dominant seventh** chord, or V⁷ (see Figure 1–28). In the key of C, the dominant *triad* is G-B-D, but the dominant *seventh* chord adds a fourth pitch that is an interval of a minor seventh from the root of the chord: i.e., G-F. (No matter what the key, a dominant seventh chord always consists of scale degrees 5-7-2 and 4. In this C major example, the pitches are G-B-D-F.)

The dominant seventh chord contains a tritone between 7 and 4, and thus the chord holds a great deal of tension. As was true for the dominant triad, the urge for V-I and 5-1 harmonic resolution is powerful in a dominant seventh chord. Again, the leading tone (7) pulls strongly to 1. But the additional pitch, 4 (a seventh above the root), pulls just as strongly down a half step to 3.

The diminished triad built on 7 usually functions in the same way as a dominant harmony because unless it is chromatically altered, it contains the 7 - 4 tritone that pulls so strongly to the tonic.

Example: A Harmonized Melody

The song “Happy Birthday” can serve to illustrate the idea of harmonic progression. In

Figure 1–29, it is harmonized with diatonic triads and labeled with Roman numerals.

Other Diatonic Chords

As common-practice harmony developed beyond 1750, it became more complex. Triads remained the basis for the music, but composers began using additional pitches to embellish the triads. The most common embellishing notes are a sixth, seventh, and ninth above the root of the chord. Examples are given in Figure 1–30, using a C major triad in every case, but adding a sixth (A), a seventh (B), or a ninth (D) in turn. Two samples of each added pitch chord are given. The first is in “close position,” and the second, which contains the same pitches, is spread out (“open position”) as it would be more likely to appear in a piece of music. As long as the root is on the bottom, the chord is considered in root position; the upper notes can be mixed in any order. (Sometimes composers omit the fifth, making identification tricky.)

Aside from the dominant-seventh chord, other diatonic seventh chords can be used to create a more complex, sophisticated sound. They can be built on any scale step by adding an interval of a seventh above the root to any diatonic triad. The addition of the fourth pitch, particularly when it is diatonic, rarely changes the function of the original triad, but it does add richness or atmosphere to the music.

FIGURE 1-29

The figure consists of two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in common time (indicated by '2') and the bottom staff is in common time (indicated by '3'). The music is harmonized with Roman numerals indicating chords: I, V, V⁷, I in the top staff, and I, ii, V⁷, I in the bottom staff. The notation includes various note heads and stems, with some notes having dots or dashes indicating specific rhythmic values.

"Happy Birthday" harmonized.

Chromatic Harmonies and Modulation
Simple harmony is diatonic, and it uses mostly triads. Complex harmony uses more chromatic pitches, and four or more separate pitches may sound at the same time. Sometimes the added pitches are diatonic, but sometimes they are chromatic, adding “color.” A brief passage of chromaticism is heard in “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,” during the phrase “Buy me some peanuts”

Sometimes one or two pitches of the basic triad are altered, resulting in modal mixture. This normally happens between a major key and its parallel minor key. For instance, in a piece using the C major scale, a C minor triad or F minor triad might occasionally appear—using accidentals to indicate the E♭ in the former and the A♭ in the latter.

Unless they adhere strictly to the natural minor scale, minor keys are more chromatic than major ones. Most crucially, the natural minor scale has no leading tone. Unaltered, 7 is a whole step below 1, and it lacks the strong pull to the tonic. Without a raised 7, the dominant seventh chord is relatively weak because it

contains no tritone.

Another way that harmony can be made more complex is to **modulate** (that is, change keys) frequently. The simplest way to modulate is to use accidentals to create the dominant seventh chord of the new key and then resolve it to the new tonic. However, if the composer wants a smooth transition, it must be done gradually and at the right time. Getting from C major to F major is quite easy because they are closely related keys, adjacent on the circle of fifths. To modulate smoothly from B major to C, the harmonies would need to progress through every intervening key in the circle of fifths, so the two keys are said to be less closely related.

After a modulation, if the music remains in the new key for a significant amount of time, a double bar appears, and the new key signature is inserted. If the new key is temporary, the key signature does not need to change; instead, the composer uses accidentals to change any pitches that need to be altered.

Beyond Common Practice

Modulation and chromatic harmonies allowed composers to write music that strayed further and

FIGURE 1-30

The figure consists of three staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled '6th' and shows a C major triad (C-E-G) with an added note A (the 6th) on the G string. The middle staff is labeled '7th' and shows a C major triad with an added note B (the 7th) on the E string. The bottom staff is labeled '9th' and shows a C major triad with an added note D (the 9th) on the C string. Each staff has a bass clef and a key signature of C major (no sharps or flats). Below each staff are the words 'close' and 'open' indicating the voicing of the chords.

C major triads with added notes.

further from the “home base” tonic. Compositions could be longer and longer and more and more chromatic. Composers generally pursued these changes in order to be more expressive.

Throughout common practice, resolution of dissonance is the driving force behind harmony. In the nineteenth century, many Romantic composers sought out new ways to portray emotion and individuality in music. To many musicians and listeners, complex chromatic harmonies were better able to express the subtle variations of an individual’s feelings. Richly textured chords could effectively convey the power, intensity, and transcendence of emotions.

Another way of increasing complexity (and, composers believed, expressivity) was to delay the resolution to the tonic. Sometimes through deceptive harmonic turns and temporary modulations to ever-more-distant keys, it could take five or ten minutes for a dominant harmony to resolve to a tonic.

Around 1910, a composer named **Arnold Schoenberg** concluded that music had become so chromatic that the only possible next step forward was to “free” dissonance from the need to resolve to the tonic. Schoenberg called this the “emancipation of the dissonance.”¹ He urged composers to abandon the conventions of common-practice harmony that made one pitch lead to another. Lacking a fixed tonal center, this music soon became known as “atonal music.”

By 1925, Schoenberg developed a new system for determining pitch relationships. This system was

known as the “**twelve-tone method**.” Instead of a scale, each piece had a primary “tone row” consisting of all twelve chromatic pitches. Constructing this “tone row” was a crucial part of the composition process, for there was no pre-set pattern of intervals to follow as there was for a major or minor scale. Each composition would have its own row of twelve tones from which its melodies, motives, bass lines, and chords would be derived. Schoenberg’s protégés, Anton Webern and Alban Berg, used his methods extensively in the 1930s, but **twelve-tone techniques** (as they are now called) and other “serial” techniques (a term that reflects the serial ordering of the pitches in the row) caught on more widely only after World War II. Today, most composers consider Schoenberg’s approach to be one of many intriguing ways to organize pitches.

Other challenges to common-practice tonality were mounted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some composers sought to redefine “music.” Luigi Russolo generated and categorized “noises.” Claude Debussy, Igor Stravinsky, and other composers sometimes used familiar chords from the common-practice tradition without ever resolving them (**non-functional harmonies**), adopted **unusual scales** (including pentatonic, whole-tone, and octatonic), and sometimes wrote music in two different keys to be performed simultaneously (**polytonality**). Both *La création du monde* (Listening Example 10) and the “Blues” from Ravel’s Violin Sonata (Listening Example 13) feature polytonal passages. As the twentieth century progressed, an increasing number of experimental composers rejected the idea of forward

motion in music, preferring to create music that was meditative, static, or circular rather than linear.

OTHER ASPECTS OF MUSICAL SOUND

Texture, Counterpoint, Instrumentation, and More Timbre

Besides melody, rhythm, and harmony, a number of factors greatly affect how a performance sounds. Texture in music has a specific meaning. It describes the number of things that are going on at once in a piece of music. The four types of texture in Western music are **monophony**, **homophony**, **polyphony**, and **heterophony**. Monophonic music consists of a single, unaccompanied melodic line. Multiple instruments or voices may be presenting that melody, but they are all performing the same pitch at the same time—that is, they are playing the one melody in **unison**. (We generally use this term even if high-pitched and low-pitched instruments or singers are performing in different octaves.)

Homophonic texture has two different things going on at once: a melody and a harmonic accompaniment. The accompaniment differs from the melody, but plays a clearly subordinate role, as seen in Figure 1–29. During the “Blues” from Ravel’s Violin Sonata (Listening Example 13), the piano accompaniment is playing a series of steady quarter-note chords underneath the bluesy violin melody. Nearly all popular songs today employ homophonic texture; as listeners, we focus on the voice, but the voice is supported by background instruments. Sometimes the accompaniment lines move in the same rhythm as the melody itself, as the lower voices in a church hymn or chorale, but the notes of the accompanying voices fill out the chord pitches; they are not independent melodies.

In a **polyphonic** texture, however, two or more separate melodies unfold simultaneously. Each could stand alone, but the composer created them to relate to each other on a note-by-note basis while retaining their independence. There are two main types of polyphony: **counterpoint** and **imitative polyphony**. In counterpoint, the simultaneous melodies are usually in different registers. They are *different* melodies—each has its own pitches, contour, shape, and rhythm, but they follow the same beat. Most importantly, their pitches fit into the same harmonic progression. The

two (or more) melodies are carefully coordinated by the composer on a note-by-note basis. Any dissonances or non-harmonic tones must occur within a complicated and detailed set of parameters. If the “rules” are broken, the music will not sound right to experienced Western ears, and most performers will find the music especially difficult to play or sing. The rules are a bit like grammar rules; they were created to describe a complex process, but can also be used in a prescriptive way to create successful sentences.

Composing counterpoint is a bit like completing a difficult number puzzle, like Sudoku, or a diagramless crossword puzzle. Every choice affects many other choices. When complete, everything fits together in a complex but fulfilling system in which vertical and horizontal components mesh at every point of intersection.

Imitative polyphony, on the other hand, features only one melody, but it is played by multiple people at staggered intervals, such as the way that children are taught to sing “Are You Sleeping?”: each group sings the same tune, but starts slightly later in time than the previous group, so that polyphony (“many sounds”) results. Tableau I of *La création du monde* (Listening Example 10) presents a fugue, starting with the low-pitched double bass.

If two performers are producing variants of the same melody at the same time, but are not playing in precise unison—that is, each has its own slight differences—the texture is called **heterophony**. Heterophonic texture, sometimes called “collective improvisation,” is fairly rare in Western music, but was employed quite often in the earliest styles of jazz, as heard in “Dippermouth Blues” (Listening Example 2), “Hotter Than That” (Listening Example 3), and “The Charleston” (Listening Example 5).

Instrumentation, the instrument or combination of instruments used, is among the most noticeable features of a given piece of music. If the pitches of a melody fall within the range of an instrument, that instrument can play the melody. An electric guitar playing “Happy Birthday” sounds quite different from a piano playing it—even though it remains the same tune. If the same pitches were divided up and given to members of a symphony orchestra, a marching band, or a four-part choir, the effect would be drastically different each time. **Arranging** is the art of taking an existing

piece of music (melody, harmony, rhythm) and giving instructions as to what each individual performer should play. Two different **arrangements** of “Happy Birthday” for the same combination of instruments may sound very different, depending upon which instruments are given prominent, as opposed to secondary or background, roles.

Each instrument has a unique pattern of overtones. All the partials we have discussed are present to some degree, but they differ in their relative strength. With a clarinet, for instance, the first and third partials are very strong. Partials that produce other pitches are relatively very weak on the clarinet. As a result, the clarinet produces a sound wave that looks very similar to a pure sine wave, with little ambiguity in pitch. On the opposite end of the spectrum are church bells. Sometimes the overtones with bells are so strong that they seem to drown out the fundamental, and the listener may wonder what the “real” pitch is supposed to be. The **timbre** (pronounced “TAMber”) of a pitch is also affected by the thickness and density of the instrument’s material and the amount of resonance. The timbre (also called **tone color**) of an acoustic guitar is affected by the size and shape of its hollow wooden body, where the sound waves produced by the strings resonate and are amplified.

For much contemporary music, both popular and classical, the choice of instruments and the way they are combined play a central role in making each piece a unique work of art. Instrumentalists are frequently asked to modify their timbre by using a “**mute**,” which not only quiets the volume but alters the tone color. In the absence of common-practice harmony, many modern compositions use changes in timbre to mark changes in form. In popular music, many listeners can distinguish styles—rockabilly, Motown, bluegrass, disco, punk, or house—after hearing just a few seconds of music, due to the differences in characteristic combinations of instruments and timbres.

Dynamics, Articulation, Ornamentation
Dynamics, the loudness and softness of a sound, are useful to performers and composers for expressive purposes. Table 1–4 shows the common Italian terms for different dynamic levels and their abbreviations. The full name of the modern piano is “pianoforte” because, unlike its keyboard predecessors, it could play both quietly (*piano*) and loudly (*forte*) in response to changes in the pianist’s touch.

A gradual increase in dynamics is called a **crescendo** (pronounced “cre-SHEN-doe”), and a gradual decrease is called a **decrescendo** or **diminuendo**. In a score, either the abbreviations “*cresc.*” or “*dim.*” or a symbol shaped like an elongated V rotated ninety degrees clockwise (for *crescendo*) or counterclockwise (for *diminuendo*) indicates a gradual change in volume.

The dynamic level for even a single pitch can change multiple times if its duration is long enough. Imagine a consonant chord, such as the first syllable of the “A-men” at the end of a sacred piece of music, swelling from a soft to a loud dynamic level then *decrescendo*-ing back to a whisper: a very dramatic effect.

Another expressive factor affecting the sound of a piece is **articulation**. Articulation has to do with the mechanics of starting and ending a sound. **Staccato** indicates that the performer should shorten the duration of a note rather than letting it sound for its full value; this produces extra silence before the next note, often making the musical phrase sound crisper or choppier. **Legato** means multiple pitches are played in a smooth, connected but not overlapping manner. On a keyboard, one can produce staccato by poised the finger above a key and pecking down quickly, then quickly returning the finger to its original position. On wind instruments, players use their tongue to produce a distinct beginning for a given pitch. On a violin, the bow may be bounced from the string, or the finger used to pluck it (called **pizzicato**, performed at the opening of the “Blues” in Ravel’s Violin Sonata [Listening Example 13]); harp, lute, and guitar are string instruments that are plucked (or strummed), as is electric bass. Legato passages played on the piano involve leaving the finger (with the weight of the arm balanced on it) on the key until it is time for the next pitch, at which time the weight is transferred to another finger on the next key. An **accent** involves more sudden sound than a staccato, and, unlike staccato, silent space before the next pitch is not required. Various degrees of pressure, tonguing, and bow pressure all contribute to articulation. (Several articulations are depicted in Table 1–5.)

Ornamentation refers to localized embellishments, which are often not written down. A pop singer can swoop into a pitch, and a trumpet player can add a **trill** (a rapid oscillation between two adjacent notes) to the last pitch of a melody as a grand finale. Bessie Smith adds numerous ornaments to “Lost Your Head Blues”

(Listening Example 1).

FORM IN MUSIC

Form describes how music is organized on a larger time scale—how units are combined to make larger structures. Form is the architecture of music.

Perceiving Musical Form

Music takes place in time. By the time the final notes are heard, the sound waves from the beginning have long disappeared. To have a sense of the whole shape of a piece of music, a listener must *remember* what came before. Most people use some kind of visual representation of the music to think about its overall form, such as scores (music notation) and **diagrams**.

Memory and anticipation are the key components to the listening experience. A listener who *expects* a dissonant passage to resolve into a consonant one may encounter one of several results. The expectation may be *met*, it may be *thwarted*, or it may be *deferred*. As the listener hears a piece, he/she experiences an ebb and flow of tension and release. Tension and release, we know, lend shape to a chord progression or melody. Tension and release also operate on a larger scale, though the listener is often less conscious of it. The primary way that tension is created is through harmonic **dissonance**.

Besides dissonance, tension can be created in other ways, including increased dynamic level, increased tempo, or increased rhythmic activity using shorter durations. Some combination of all of these is needed to sustain tension and release throughout a long composition of more than a minute or two in length.

In the next section, we will describe the building blocks of musical form: motives, phrases, cadences, and themes. Then, we will examine how Western composers combine these to create larger forms using the principles of repetition, variation, development, and contrast.

Elements of Form

Motive

A **motive** (sometimes spelled “motif”) is the smallest unit of form. A motive is best defined as the smallest identifiable recurring musical idea. A motive has a distinctive melodic and rhythmic profile. In “Happy Birthday,” the first four notes (corresponding to the four syllables of text) could be called a motive. This motive has rhythmic traits (“happy” consists of a long duration followed by a shorter one, while

“birthday” consists of two durations of equal length, and “birth” falls on the downbeat, which gives that syllable rhythmic emphasis) and melodic traits (the two notes of “happy” occur on the same pitch; then on “birthday,” the melody rises a step and falls back to the first pitch). To describe the motive’s melodic contour, we would say it rises and falls. A melodic or rhythmic motive that is repeated many, many times in immediate succession is called an **ostinato** (from the Italian word for “obstinate”). “The Stampede” (Listening Example 4), “The Charleston” (Listening Example 5), and “Tea for Two” (Listening Example 6) all contain distinctive, repeated motives.

Phrase

A **phrase** is a cohesive musical thought. In “Happy Birthday,” the music for the first four words can be thought of as a short phrase. It has a beginning (the motive) and an end (“... you”), followed by a brief pause. The second time the words “Happy Birthday to you” are sung, they constitute a second short musical phrase, also followed by a brief pause. It begins with the same motive, but ends a little differently.

Phrases often come in related pairs. The first member of the pair is called the **antecedent** phrase, and the second is called the **consequent** phrase. As in the “Happy Birthday” example, the two phrases are very similar in length, rhythm, and melodic contour. The difference lies in the way each phrase ends. The first phrase ends somewhat inconclusively; this is something the listener can sense, feeling that something more is needed for closure. Musical terminology can describe this sense of inconclusiveness. The phrase’s rhythm does indeed come to a rest on a downbeat (“you”), but the harmony supporting the end of the phrase is a dominant harmony, and the melodic pitch is scale degree seven, the leading tone. To ears accustomed to Western music, both of these are particularly unstable. The consequent phrase provides the perfect solution. It begins with similar musical material, in what is called a “parallel structure.” In this case, it duplicates the entire rhythm and first four pitches of the antecedent phrase. The difference is that the consequent phrase comes to a more restful end. Merely by moving the last two pitches up one scale degree ($\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ rather than $\hat{1}-\hat{7}$), it is now possible for a tonic chord to support “you” this time.

Cadence

The term for a resting point in a piece of music is **cadence**. Not all cadences have the same amount of

TABLE 1–4

<i>ppp</i>	<i>pianississimo</i>	as quietly as possible
<i>pp</i>	<i>pianissimo</i>	very quietly
<i>p</i>	<i>piano</i>	quietly
<i>mp</i>	<i>mezzopiano</i>	somewhat quietly
<i>mf</i>	<i>mezzoforte</i>	somewhat loud
<i>f</i>	<i>forte</i>	loud
<i>ff</i>	<i>fortissimo</i>	very loud
<i>fff</i>	<i>fortississimo</i>	as loudly as possible

Dynamics chart.

strength or finality, and there are different names to indicate this. A **half cadence** rests on the dominant harmony, like the first short phrase of “Happy Birthday.” (See Figure 1–29.) A **full cadence**, also called an **authentic cadence**, uses the progression V-I, as the second short phrase of “Happy Birthday” does. Authentic cadences are broken down further by the degree of finality they convey. Other types of cadences also exist, but the important idea is that a cadence is a point of relative rest in music, roughly analogous to a comma, semicolon, or period in language. Cadences occur at the ends of most phrases, themes, larger sections, and entire pieces of music.

Theme

A **theme** is a set of phrases that make a complete melody, which plays a prominent role in a longer piece of music. For example, the entire song “Happy Birthday” could be used as the main theme for a twelve-minute composition called “Variations on a Birthday Tune, for Concert Band.”

Introduction and Coda

Many pieces of music begin with an **introduction**, which is music that precedes the first main theme of the piece. In *Rhapsody in Blue* (Listening Example 11), the clarinet plays a very distinctive introduction. It is particularly common in vocal music to have an instrumental introduction that precedes the singing, as is the case in “Tea for Two” (Listening Example 6), “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” (Listening Example 7), and “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo’ Bye)” (Listening

Example 9). Similarly, a great many pieces end with a **coda**, which means “tail” in Italian. (Many popular songs use the term “outro” instead.) A coda sounds conclusive, as if it is wrapping up the composition. When analyzing the form of a piece of music, introductions and codas are usually disregarded; they serve mainly as an outer “frame” for the central piece.

Common Forms

Musical **form** controls larger spans of time. Just as mystery novels, thirty-minute television sitcoms, and movie scripts tend to follow certain patterns, so does music. Balance, proportion, drama, climax, and denouement operate in musical form. Some music-specific vocabulary will help explain common forms.

Repetition, variation, and contrast are the most basic formal processes in music. The listener must remember what they have already heard in order to recognize any of these. Often, musical memory happens on a subconscious level. A phrase may simply sound “right”; a song heard for the first time may seem oddly familiar when the composer makes skillful use of repetition.

Repetition

Repetition means, literally, repeating musical material, using the identical pitches, rhythms, and harmonies, or at least a very close approximation. If a musical idea (usually two measures or less) is repeated at a different pitch level, it is called a **sequence**. Sequences occur in “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” (Listening Example 7) as well as in *Sicilienne* (Listening Example 14).

TABLE 1–5

symbol (applied to three quarter notes)					
term	staccato	legato	accented or marcato	slur	tenuto
description	short, separated	smoothly	sharply	connected	stressed without force
tonguing on a wind instrument	(tot tot tot)	(tah-tah-tah)	(TAH ta ta)	(tah-ah tot)	(taahh taaht taahh)

Common articulation symbols.

When describing musical form, complete sections of music can be labeled with capital letters. The music to a **strophic** song made up of a single, multi-phrased melody repeated four times with different words each time, would be diagrammed as follows: A A A A. “Lost Your Head Blues” (Listening Example 1) employs a strophic form above a repeating harmony.

Variation

The principle of variation is also central to music. Generally speaking, variation is repetition with enough alterations that the listener senses both continuity and contrast.

◆ Theme and Variations

Theme and variations is a common way of structuring a composition. Such a piece generally starts with a straightforward statement of the theme, and then follows it with a new section that repeats the theme but makes significant changes. The listener recognizes that the theme is recurring, but different harmonies, or a new accompaniment pattern, or a fancier rhythm, or a more complicated texture clearly delineate a new section. A variation may involve changes in any of the basic musical elements, but enough must remain unchanged that on some level it remains the same musical idea. A

variation is diagrammed by adding a “prime” mark to the same capital letter used for the theme. Most variations, therefore, could be diagrammed A A' A'' A''' etc.

◆ Twelve-Bar Blues

The **twelve-bar blues** is also a variation form. This twelve-measure chord progression is repeated, with variations in the melodic material, for several minutes or more. Usually in a moderate or relaxed tempo, with four beats to the measure, the blues progression can be played in any key, though C, B♭, and F are traditional favorites. Minor-key blues are possible but less common.

The basic shape, as shown in Figure 1–31, can be summarized as three phrases of four measures, each ending at the tonic. The first line lays out the tonic harmony—and the singer’s main lament. The second line starts with a harmonic attempt to escape the tonic, but is pulled back down, while the singer repeats his/her complaint. The third line begins with an even stronger effort to rise above the tonic, but it too sinks quickly back to the starting point. Harmonic alterations that embellish but do not change this three-line profile are common.²

FIGURE 1–31

Measure (bar):	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Poetry:	<i>a</i>				<i>a</i>				<i>b</i>			
Triads in C Maj:	C	C	C	C	F	F ^(b7)	C	C	G	G ⁽⁷⁾ or F ^(b7)	C	C
Chords:	I	I	I	I	IV	IV ^(b7)	I	I	V ⁽⁷⁾	V ⁽⁷⁾ or IV ^(b7)	I	I

Twelve-bar blues, basic progression.

“Lost Your Head Blues” (Listening Example 1) is a classic example of this pattern.

♦ Improvisation

Improvisation in soul, gospel, and jazz, especially the styles common before 1950, uses the principle of variation. Individual performers create spontaneous variations of a familiar melody while the other instruments play its harmonies in a steady tempo. In “Lost Your Head Blues” (Listening Example 1), the cornet improvises responses to Bessie Smith’s vocal phrases. In many jazz tunes, performers take turns as featured improvisers, as in “Hotter Than That” (Listening Example 3), “The Stampede” (Listening Example 4), and “The Charleston” (Listening Example 5).

Repetition and variation occur throughout music on more abstract and more localized levels. As a localized example, the second, consequent phrase of “Happy Birthday” varies the material of the antecedent phrase. Rhythmically, the song is quite repetitive: try speaking the rhythms on a neutral, un-pitched syllable, and you’ll find it impossible to distinguish the first, second, and fourth phrases. On a larger scale, you can think of every new birthday performance as a repetition. Sometimes a brave soul will attempt to add harmony, or vary the words or the tune. Everyone present usually realizes this is a variation on the familiar song, not a new composition out of left field. Whether taking place on a small scale or in the form of a lengthy piece, repetition and variation lend continuity to music. They prevent a piece of music from sounding like a string of unrelated events by providing musical coherence.

Contrast

Contrast is an important characteristic of many larger musical forms.

♦ Ternary and Rondo Forms

The simplest form using contrast is three-part or **ternary form**, also called **ABA form**, in which two sections of very similar music frame a contrasting middle section. Each of the three sections is self-contained; each normally ends with an authentic cadence. In classical music, ternary form is often used for the inner movement(s) of multi-movement works. Germaine Tailleferre uses a ternary form in *Sicilienne* (Listening Example 14). First movements more often use **sonata form** (discussed later) while last movements are usually in sonata or rondo form. **Rondo form** is also built from distinct sections, one of which keeps returning. Typical diagrams for rondo form include ABACABA or ABACA. “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” (Listening Example 7) is structured in rondo form. There are no hard-and-fast rules about length, proportions, or the nature of the contrast.

♦ 32-Bar Form

In mid-twentieth-century popular music, most songs contain a section of contrasting material. In “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” there are two eight-measure A sections that are contrasted with a second eight-measure B idea, with a return to the A melody, resulting in a **32-bar form**. (The A sections all begin with “Somewhere,” while the B section starts with “Someday I’ll wish upon a star.”) The A-A-B-A pattern is sometimes called “song form.”

◆ Verse-Chorus Form

In the early days of popular music, the most popular formal architecture was the **verse-chorus** (or **verse-refrain**) form. It consists of multiple verses, each with different words, and a repetitive chorus, or refrain. This form is often diagrammed as **a-B-a-B** (etc.), with the uppercase “B” indicating that both the melody and the words repeat. During the verses, it is only the melody that repeats. (An example of verse-chorus form appears in “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo' Bye)” [Listening Example 9].)

Development

◆ Fugue

Fugue is not actually a standard form, but a technique. However, the form of many classical pieces is determined by the way the composer uses fugal technique, rather than by any of the other forms described here. A fugue usually has a single theme, called a **fugue subject**, which the composer develops using the technique of **imitative counterpoint**. When there is a companion theme, it is called a **countersubject**. **Imitation**, the approximate repetition of a melodic idea at a different pitch level, is central to fugal technique. At the beginning of a fugue, the subject is usually heard alone, without accompaniment or harmony. A second line of music then enters, imitating the subject (usually a fourth lower or a fifth higher), and soon a third and sometimes a fourth line enter, also imitating the subject, until a thick polyphonic texture has been created. As the fugue continues, the subject may be inverted (turned upside down), reversed, elongated, fragmented, transposed, and overlapped with itself or with polyphonic countermelodies. Fugue techniques are much older than the major-minor tonal system, but even into the twenty-first century, composers have found them intriguing and flexible.

Milhaud incorporated a fugue within Tableau I of *La création du monde* (Listening Example 10).

◆ Sonata Form

Sonata form is a standard form that has been used for the first movements of many Western classical compositions, beginning around 1730. (See the discussion that follows

for a definition of **movement**.) Within a two-section structure, a sonata form has three main activities—exposition, development, and recapitulation—and a minimum of two main musical ideas, or melodies. The first section contains the **exposition**, which presents the first idea in the tonic key, modulates to a different key (usually the dominant key), and presents the second idea in the new key. These “ideas” can be easy to identify when they are themes made of antecedent and consequent phrases. But sometimes they are simply collections of motives or chords, in which case the key change is the best signal that Idea #2 is about to begin. The key change, or **transition**, is usually characterized by increased rhythmic activity, louder dynamics, turbulent or unstable harmonies, and new accidentals. Idea #2, in the new key, has an element of contrast. It may be gentler, lighter in texture, higher in range, or contain more—or less—motion than Idea #1. Idea #2 is most often in the dominant, or the key that takes the fifth degree of the opening key’s scale as the tonic. The exposition ends with a strong cadence in the new key. Traditionally, the exposition is repeated, in part to help establish the ideas in the listener’s memory.

The second section begins with the **development** portion of the sonata form, which is harmonically unstable and exploratory. Melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic material from the exposition reappears, sometimes fragmented and varied. Phrases of irregular length, sudden changes in dynamics and texture, chromatic alterations, unexpected chord progressions, and frequent modulations convey a sense of struggle. The development portion ends in a **half cadence** on the dominant chord of the original key. With the **recapitulation**, order is restored. Idea #1 returns, just as it was presented in the exposition. The transition and Idea #2 follow, in what is *almost* a literal repetition of the exposition. The big exception is that the transition does not modulate. When Idea #2 arrives, it is now played in the same key as Idea #1. Not only has order been restored, but the contrasting Idea #2, off in its own key at the beginning, has now been pulled into the key of Idea #1, the key that started the whole

movement. A concluding section in the original key brings the entire movement to a close.

In the Classical period, the development and recapitulation portions were played a second time through as well, but most performers today omit that repetition.

The first movements of countless symphonies, piano sonatas, string quartets, and other compositions are in sonata form. For that reason, sonata form was simply known as “first-movement form.” However, sonata forms can appear in other movements.

Very long works often consist of three or four shorter, distinct pieces called **movements**. The **sonata cycle** is the most prevalent multi-movement composition. The term “sonata cycle” is rarely used, but it is seen everywhere, particularly in longer instrumental works from about 1730 to 1950. Thousands of three-movement works titled “Sonata” exist for solo piano, for solo instrument unaccompanied or with keyboard, and for small groups of instruments. Three-movement sonata cycles usually follow a fast-slow-fast pattern of tempos. The first movement is usually a dramatic sonata form; the second slower and more lyrical, using ABA form; and the final movement lively, in either sonata form, rondo form, or a hybrid of the two. We will study the middle movement of Ravel’s Violin Sonata (Listening Example 13). In addition, most compositions titled “String Quartet” or “Symphony” from the same date range use a four-movement sonata cycle form. In the four-movement sonata cycle, which is favored by composers writing for string quartets or orchestras, a dance-like “minuet and trio” movement normally appears before the last movement.

WHICH IS THE REAL MUSIC? SCORES, RECORDINGS, AND PERFORMANCE

Music theory traditionally describes pieces of music as if they were fixed objects. However, it is important to remember that (most) music is performed by living people. Music notation is able to convey some things precisely—pitch relationships, rhythms, instrumentation, and to some degree phrasing, dynamics, and articulation. Yet it also has obvious limitations. We cannot know how smoothly people in the 1870s performed a “legato” phrase. Historians have found written comments suggesting that the

exact pitch for concert A may have varied as much as a minor third in either direction from today’s A440—which even today is not universally adopted. Recording technology has allowed us to preserve far more information than notation allows, but this too is limited in different ways. An entire subfield called “performance practice” exists to address the question, how did the music really sound? Perhaps critics like Christopher Small have it right when they propose that in addition to marveling at the intricate structure of Western music, we should also study the human activity he calls “Musicking.”³

SECTION I SUMMARY

Sound and Music

- ◆ Music is sound organized in time.

Pitch, Rhythm, Harmony

- ◆ Developed over centuries in the Western world, common-practice tonality is the widely accepted system for describing the relationships among pitches and harmonies.
- ◆ **Pitch** is the highness or lowness of a sound. It is the basic building block for melody and harmony. **Harmony** occurs when two or more pitches sound simultaneously.
- ◆ The **octave** occurs naturally in the overtone series. Western tradition divides it into twelve equal intervals called **half steps**.
- ◆ **Melody** is a coherent succession of pitches perceived as a whole, with a beginning, middle, and end.
- ◆ **Major and minor scales** are sets of seven different pitches arranged in a specific pattern of whole and half steps within a single octave.
- ◆ The **beat** is the steady, regular pulse underlying most music. **Tempo** is the speed of the beat.
- ◆ **Meter** groups beats into regular patterns of strong and weak beats.
- ◆ **Rhythm** is the series of durations of varying lengths that overlie the beat.
- ◆ Nearly all Western music is built upon the need for **dominant harmony** to resolve to the tonic, or resting tone.
- ◆ A **key** is a hierarchical set of harmonic and melodic pitch relationships organized around a tonic and using one of the thirty major and

minor scales.

- ◆ **Diatonic music** uses pitches from only a single scale; music is **chromatic** when it uses **accidentals** (sharps and flats) to add pitches from outside the key, or to change keys.
- ◆ The **triad** is the most basic type of chord. It consists of two stacked thirds.
- ◆ Some composers in the last 120 years have sought to expand and even overturn common-practice tonality.

Other Aspects

- ◆ **Texture, counterpoint, dynamics, articulation, and ornamentation** are important features that can distinguish otherwise similar musical sounds.

Form

- ◆ **Tension and release, memory and anticipation, and continuity and contrast** are fundamental to the listener's musical

experience.

- ◆ Motives, phrases, cadences, and themes are the smallest building blocks of **form**.
- ◆ Musical material may be repeated, varied, developed, or contrasted with different material to create longer forms; it can be framed by an **introduction** and/or a **coda**.
- ◆ Common forms include **strophic, theme and variations, twelve-bar blues, ternary (ABA), rondo, thirty-two-bar form, verse-chorus, fugue, and sonata form**.

Conclusion

- ◆ Music can be represented by diagrams, with notation, or on sound recordings, each of which has limitations.
- ◆ Because music is an art form that structures time rather than space, some people consider it an activity rather than a fixed object.

Section II

The Increasing Reach of Jazz and Blues

Before the birth of jazz, an earlier “homegrown” musical tradition had already arisen in the United States: the blues. It rose to international attention during the early twentieth century, and it left its imprint on many of the popular musical styles that followed—especially on jazz, which would grow to become an even bigger phenomenon.

SINGING THE BLUES

The word “blues” has many meanings: it is “the music of people, a style of music, a type of performance, a despondent state of mind, and a musical form.”¹⁴ The blues style owes much to the music of the enslaved Africans who were brought to the United States. African music often involves group singing, frequently in a call-and-response pattern: a solo leader presents a motif, and the chorus responds, either by echoing the motif or with a contrasting “answer.”

African singing often incorporates special vocal devices to embellish meaningful words or pitches. This embellishment technique is melismatic, meaning that one syllable of the poetry is set to multiple pitches in the melody. (An example of a melisma appears in the Christmas carol “[Angels We Have Heard on High](#).”) In the refrain, “Gloria in excelsis,” the syllable “Glo-” flexes its way over a long, descending series of notes. The multitude of notes paired with “Glo-” comprise the melisma.) Scholars believe that this aspect of the vocal music of many African cultures was influenced by the Muslim call to prayer and the embellished manner of reciting the Qur'an.⁵

Section I of this Resource Guide discussed the “blues scale,” which subtly modifies the third and seventh steps so that they are no longer “in tune” with conventional major or minor scales. These “blue notes” are a lingering reflection of the West African approach to pitches, and they make the resulting harmony seem ambivalent: are we in the major mode or the minor?



“Singing the blues” is a long-standing metaphor for expressing sadness.

Sometimes, when people refer to blues-singing, they simply mean that a singer uses these blues inflections.

All these African characteristics—call-and-response, melismas, blue notes—found their way into the various types of music that enslaved people began singing in the New World, especially in the style now called the blues. Over time, certain features of their blues songs became standardized. For instance, Section I of this Resource Guide discussed the twelve-bar blues form, showing its basic progression in Figure 1-31. Three “core” chords are used—the tonic (I), dominant (V), and subdominant (IV)—in a predictable twelve-measure pattern. Jazz musicians described each repetition of the pattern as a chorus, and the systematic use of this consistent harmonic foundation meant that blues performers could play together without needing sheet music to guide them. The



The old steam engine Poppa spoofs the lyrics of blues songs in the musical *Starlight Express*.

twelve-bar blues are set in duple (or quadruple) meter, but—importantly—they often use a flexible rhythmic approach that lengthens the first eighth note in a pair and shortens the second eighth note. This loose rhythm would soon have a direct influence on the “swing” rhythm associated with jazz.

In addition to the musical characteristics of the blues, blues singers also developed a typical approach to the style’s lyrics. During the twelve-measure pattern, a blues singer sings three phrases of poetry, with each phrase spanning four measures. The singer’s custom is to repeat the first line of text, usually with embellishments, before moving on to a new rhyming phrase; some scholars describe the third phrase as the “punch line.”⁶ The diagram of this poetic pattern is therefore **a a b**, and this convention was spoofed by composer Andrew Lloyd Webber (b. 1948) in his musical *Starlight Express* (1987). The character Poppa sings, in a song titled “[Poppa’s Blues](#)”:

Oh, the first line of a blues is always sung a second time.

I said the first line of a blues is always sung a second time.

So by the time you get to the third line, you’ve had time to think of a rhyme.

In his second verse, Poppa makes another valid point about blues poetry:

Oh, there ain’t no law that says third line got to be different at all.

I said there ain’t no law that says third line got to be different at all.

No, there ain’t no law that says third line got to be different at all.⁷

Like any good spoof, there is a great deal of truth in Lloyd Webber’s satire of blues poetry.

“Feeling blue” is certainly not a new phenomenon, and the color blue has been associated with melancholy for hundreds of years. In the sixteenth century, the term “blue devils” was a common synonym for depression.⁸ The primary purpose of the blues, therefore, is to help the performer get rid of those unhappy emotions; it is a form of catharsis to “sing the blues.” It takes no imagination to realize that the enslaved Africans had much to feel blue about in their new land, although it is not fully clear when blues-singing first developed since it began as an unwritten tradition.

Shades of Blues

The oldest format for blues-singing has been given several labels by historians to distinguish it from some of the other approaches that developed later. The nickname “country blues” reflects the rural origins of the first known type of blues-singing, dating back to the late nineteenth century or perhaps even earlier. In a country-blues song, the singer is usually male, and he often sings alone, perhaps accompanying himself with a guitar, accordion, or harmonica. His rhythm is usually quite free, and sometimes he does not pay strict attention to the usual twelve-bar pattern. He sings in informal situations—picnics, parties, roadhouses, brothels—and his payment is sometimes not cash but alcohol. Sometimes, he sings about love gone sour, but he also might choose more political topics, complaining about poverty or mistreatment by the government.⁹ Country blues directly influenced the protest songs that arose later in the twentieth century.

Many of the first blues singers lived in the Mississippi



Leadbelly (Huddie William Ledbetter) was one of the best-known singers of country blues.

Delta region, and their approaches were initially passed along by word-of-mouth. The country-blues style also goes by other names, such as “folk blues,” “Southern blues,” “Delta blues,” or “down-home blues.” Because of the improvised nature of country blues, we have to rely on recordings to gain a full sense of its approach, and the first records were made quite a few years after the style had taken shape. Among the earliest recorded singers were Blind Lemon Jefferson (1893–1929), whose songs were issued starting in 1926, and Huddie Ledbetter (c.1889–1949), better known as “Lead Belly,” whose first records date from 1933.¹⁰ Robert Johnson (1911–38) achieved quite a following, due in part to a mythology concerning a sudden improvement in his ability to play guitar after a six-month absence, causing some to question if he had sold his soul to the Devil. Johnson made his recordings in the mid-1930s, a little past the first wave of recorded country-blues singers.¹¹

A younger cousin to the country-blues style was the “classic blues” approach. The classic blues displayed more “big-city” characteristics, leading to the occasional designation as “urban blues,” “city blues,”

or “vaudeville blues.” The classic-blues style was more theatrical; customarily, the audience sat and listened, instead of mimicking the party atmosphere of most country-blues performances. Many of the vocalists were women, supported by fuller accompaniments of either a piano or sometimes a small ensemble of players, called a **combo**. Their poetry—like that of country-blues singers—was frequently autobiographical, but their lyrics focused more often on love and romantic relationships. Because of the customary participation of multiple performers, the rhythm was less free than in the country blues, and often the song was carefully planned. When sheet music started to appear for blues songs, it usually represented the classic-blues approach rather than the country blues.¹² W. C. Handy (1873–1958) was one of the earliest publishers of printed blues tunes, releasing his first sheet music in 1912.¹³

The Empress of the Blues

One of the greatest classic-blues singers was Bessie Smith (1894–1937). Posterity has dubbed her the “Empress of the Blues,” not only for her “cast-iron” voice, but also for the many, many classic-blues



Bessie Smith became known as the “Empress of the Blues.”

recordings she made. Smith was fully capable of filling a theater without amplification in the days before microphones. Her recordings affected many of the great mid-century jazz singers, including Ella Fitzgerald (1917–96) and Billie Holiday (1915–59). Mahalia Jackson (1911–72), a notable gospel singer, listened to Smith's songs as a child, and later said, "When I was a little girl, I felt she was having troubles like me. That's why it was such a comfort for the people of the South to hear her. She expressed something they couldn't put into words."¹⁴ The rock singer Janis Joplin (1943–70) later helped pay for a headstone for Smith's grave; it read, "The greatest blues singer in the world will never stop singing."¹⁵

In the 1970s, Columbia Records issued a five double-

album set of records devoted solely to Bessie Smith's performances—but fifty years previously, Smith had found it very tough to break into the recording industry. For three years in the early 1920s, she had been refused studio time. At last, a producer at Columbia Records decided to give her a chance in February 1923. Columbia was virtually bankrupt at the time, and the recording studio's attitude was, "What did we have to lose?" Smith's first recordings, "Down Hearted Blues" and "Gulf Coast Blues," were both tremendous successes. Her various records sold six million copies over the next six years, with sales of two million copies within the first ten months.¹⁶ Singlehandedly, Bessie Smith put Columbia back on solid financial footing.¹⁷

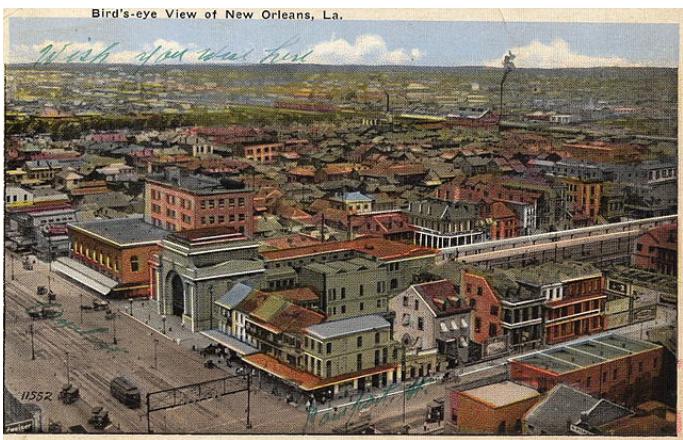
LISTENING COMPANION 1: “Lost Your Head Blues” (1926) – Bessie Smith

Bessie Smith had a knack for continuing to record new songs that attracted listeners, as she demonstrated on March 18, 1926, with “Lost Your Head Blues” (Listening Example 1), recorded three years after her first pair of hits. Apparently it had not been planned for the recording session, but the performers added the song when they discovered that they were one selection short.¹⁸ Because of the conventional twelve-bar blues structure, her accompanying musicians—Joe Smith (1902–37; he was not related to Bessie Smith) on cornet (a brass instrument very similar to a trumpet) and Fletcher Henderson (1897–1952) on piano—were able to lay out a steady supporting foundation in the key of E♭, while Bessie Smith improvised a melody on top of that backdrop. Bessie also used the conventional *a a b* pattern for her lyrics. It is a tribute to Joe Smith's excellent musicianship that he could react to each phrase of Bessie's improvised melody with an interlocking cornet motif, sometimes called a fill—a nice illustration of the “call-and-response” legacy of African singing.

Bessie Smith also had an innate sense of timing and phrasing, leading one enthusiast to argue that she “would have made a marvelous opera diva.”¹⁹ Moreover, the flexible nuances that later characterize gospel singing owe a clear debt to the classic-blues approach. Although Smith had no formal training in classical art music, her natural musicality appears in the frequent small ornaments that she adds to climactic words. Sometimes, she bends a note upward or downward. She also slides upward quickly through several pitches in a technique called a slide, more formally known as a glissando. However, these small artistic gestures underscore the limitations of sheet music to convey the nuances of the blues approach to purchasers. Recordings were needed to illustrate the blues' fluid, improvisatory style of singing and playing. Still, people learned the style's characteristics quickly, and the blues would be an essential ingredient in the broad spectrum of styles we now call “jazz.”

Listening Guide 1: “Lost Your Head Blues” (1926) – Bessie Smith

Timeline	Form	Rhyme Scheme	Text	Musical Features
0:00	Intro			
0:11	Chorus 1 (12-bar blues)	a	I was with you, baby, when you <u>didn't</u> have a dime	Piano and cornet establish the “swing” rhythm used throughout the song.
0:17				Opens with a blue-note slide up to “I”; another blue-note inflection on “did”
0:22		a	I was with you, baby, when you <u>didn't</u> have a dime	Cornet response (fill)
0:28				Inflections continue.
0:32		b	Now since you got plenty money, you have throw'd your good gal down.	Small “quiver” ornament on “down”
0:39				Cornet response
0:43	Chorus 2	a	Once <u>ain't</u> for always, <u>two ain't</u> for twice	Inflections continue.
0:50				Cornet response
0:54		a	Once <u>ain't</u> for always, <u>two ain't</u> for twice	Inflections continue.
1:01				Cornet response
1:05		b	When you get a good <u>gal</u> , you better treat her nice.	Melisma on “gal”
1:12				Cornet response
1:16	Chorus 3	a	When you were lonesome, I <u>tried</u> to treat you kind	Inflections continue.
1:23				Cornet response
1:27		a	When you were <u>lonesome</u> , I tried to treat you kind	Pitch bend on “lone-”
1:33				Cornet response
1:37		b	But since you got <u>money</u> , you <u>done</u> change your <u>mind</u> .	Inflections continue.
1:44				Cornet response
1:48	Chorus 4	a	I'm gonna leave, baby, ain't gonna <u>say</u> goodbye	Inflections continue.
1:56				Cornet response
1:59		a	I'm gonna leave, <u>baby</u> , ain't gonna say goodbye	Quick melisma on “baby”
2:06				Cornet response
2:10		b	But <u>I'll</u> write you and tell you the reason <u>why</u> .	Pitch bend on “I'll”; “quiver” ornament on “why”
2:17				Cornet response
2:21	Chorus 5	a	Days are <u>lonesome</u> , —	Long, high note emphasizes “Days.”
2:25				Quiet cornet murmur
2:27			— nights are <u>long</u>	“Nights” also held out; ornamentation on “long”
2:31				Quiet cornet murmur
2:32		a	Days are <u>lonesome</u> , —	Inflections continue.
2:36				Quiet cornet murmur
2:37			— nights are so long	Scoop up to “nights”; rhythmic freedom adds to expression.
2:41				Quiet cornet murmur
2:42		b	I'm a good ol' gal, but I just been treated wrong.	Small ornament on “wrong”
2:48				Cornet response



New Orleans's Canal Street—in the lower left of this early twentieth-century postcard—ran through the heart of the redlight district nicknamed “Storyville.”

JAZZ + BLUES

Although the blues grew to be a popular style worldwide, another American-born style—jazz—would prove to have an even greater impact in the first half of the twentieth century. However, the label “jazz” is somewhat like the term “classical music”: it is an extremely broad designation for a host of different substyles, and some of the later jazz formats often require considerable musical knowledge to be fully appreciated. However, the earliest approaches to jazz—“New Orleans jazz,” “Dixieland,” and “Chicago jazz”—are the styles that have been the most accessible to audiences, exceeded only by the later popularity of “swing,” a type of jazz that began to flourish not long before World War II.

The Cradle of Jazz

Jazz, like virtually all the popular styles of music in the early twentieth century, is the product of blended techniques of music-making, and its origins can be found in many places. However, the earliest hub of activity was centered in the city of New Orleans, which gave its name to the oldest style of music to be regarded as “jazz.” New Orleans hosted a particularly concentrated “red-light district,” where nearly all the city’s bars and brothels were situated. This tight proximity was the brainchild of a city alderman, Sidney Story, who had drafted legislation in 1897 that limited prostitution to one particular part of town, some eight blocks wide and eleven blocks long. When the housing code went into effect in 1898, it did not take long for the district to be nicknamed “Storyville.” In actuality, it was divided; there was a “black”

Storyville and a “white” Storyville, operating on different sides of Canal Street.²⁰

The houses of prostitution, now clustered closely together, had to compete vigorously for customers, and musical entertainment was seen as one enticement. Two main types of performers were employed: 1) solo pianists and 2) small combos. Usually drawing from many of the timbres found in marching bands, the typical combo might feature a cornet, trombone, and clarinet, accompanied by a piano (or banjo or guitar), a bass or tuba, and drums. Like the brothels themselves, the performers were in competition with each other, which spurred them to be increasingly inventive.

A Recipe for Jazz

Whether the music was played by one person or by a group, it was intended to please the customers—and this meant that it was almost always quick and lively. Early jazz pianists often used an older popular style, ragtime, as their foundation, but subjected it to faster tempos, swung rhythms, and increased improvisation. Piano players would also imitate the ambiguous blue notes heard in country and classic blues by playing dissonances. The combos did all the same things as the pianists, but the multiple instruments meant that more effects were possible: they employed call-and-response techniques, or they let players improvise simultaneously to create heterophony, one of the textures discussed in Section 1 of this Resource Guide. The multi-layered effect of this heterophony, which is sometimes called collective improvisation, resembles terraced percussion techniques that can be found in both Latin American and African traditions. This new music drew from many sources for inspiration—and this blend of techniques became known as “New Orleans jazz.”

The earliest performers of this new style were all Black, and they were largely self-taught musicians with little (or no) formal training. Classically trained musicians knew a good thing when they heard it, however, and the style was quickly imitated. Groups of white musicians emulated this energetic music, but since white players often had more expertise with “proper” playing techniques, this meant that sometimes they did not convey quite the same raw exuberance in their performances as their African-American counterparts. White musicians also often had a greater ability to read music, which meant



The Original Dixieland Jazz Band was the first group to record a jazz tune, "Livery Stable Blues."

that their performances sometimes incorporated less improvisation and more pre-planning. Although the differences are subtle, the sound of their music is slightly altered from that of the Black combos, so many jazz historians reserve the style label of “Dixieland” for the music of these white ensembles. It was a white group known as the Original Dixieland Jazz Band that made the first known “jazz” recording, “[Livery Stable Blues](#),” in 1917. African-American ensembles did not start to record for several more years.²¹

The End of Storyville

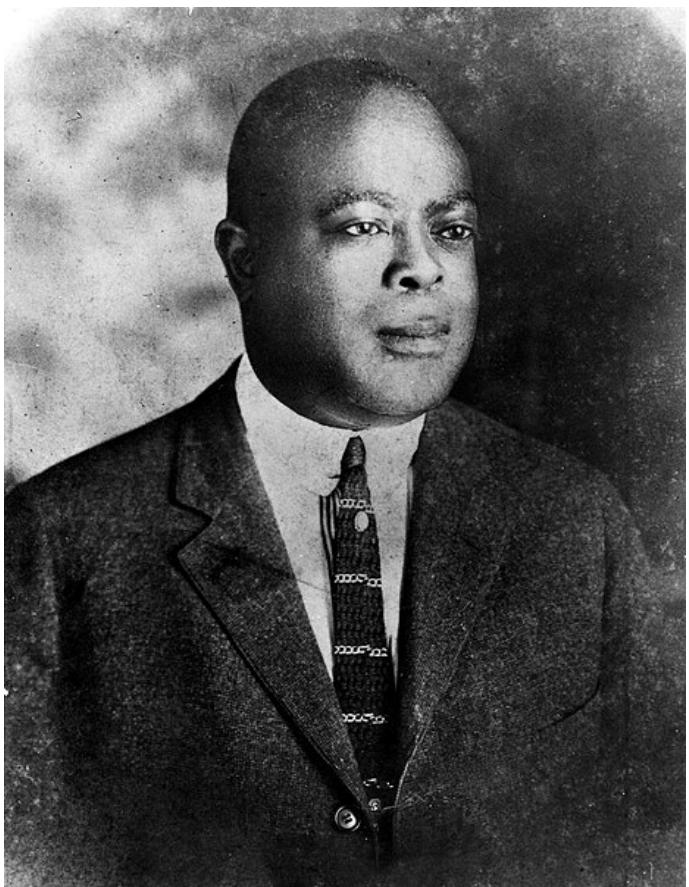
Much of the musical activity in Storyville came to an abrupt halt in 1917, the year that the United States entered World War I. Secretary of War Newton W. Baker demanded the district’s closure because he wanted no open prostitution to take place within five miles of an army training camp. His views reflected the influence of a morality campaign that had been mounted by the American Social Hygiene Organization. Secretary Baker said, “These boys are going to France. I want them adequately armed and clothed by their government; but I want them to have

an invisible armor to take with them . . . a moral and intellectual armor for their protection overseas.”²²

New Orleans was quick to comply. Although the closure of Storyville did not completely curtail all prostitution in New Orleans, it certainly eliminated the raucous zone of energy that had characterized the former red-light district. Without the employment provided by the brothels, the closure was financially devastating to a sizable number of musicians. Certainly, jazz was played elsewhere in New Orleans—in cafes, dance halls, and hotels—but the loss of Storyville was still profoundly felt.

Heading North

A great many of the unemployed musicians began to travel north to cities that were more welcoming, especially Chicago. They carried the conventions of New Orleans jazz with them, although the style continued to evolve—and sometimes rapidly. Therefore, when the first African-American jazz recordings were made in Chicago in the early 1920s, some of New Orleans jazz’s original features had



Joe "King" Oliver led the New Orleans Creole Jazz Band.

already been lost.

One of the first effects of the move north was increased sophistication: the players were growing more expert on their instruments, as audience (and their own) expectations increased. Musical literacy among the musicians was improving, which meant that more music was being arranged and notated before it was performed. In New Orleans jazz, heterophony was the predominant texture. Because the instrumentalists were not always very adept, **solo breaks**—in which one person was showcased—were brief and not too frequent. In Chicago, however, the solos grew longer, usually lasting for an entire chorus, and thus the amount of collective improvisation was much smaller.

Due to the various musical changes that came about as players moved from the South to the North, scholars call the resulting style “Chicago jazz.”

One of the musicians whose recordings seem to stand right on the cusp between the older New Orleans jazz and the newer Chicago jazz was Joe “King” Oliver (1881–1938). Oliver, a cornet player, had gotten his start in New Orleans, and eventually organized his own band, King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band. (“King” was a nickname assigned to the lead cornet player in many New Orleans combos.) In Chicago, most of Oliver’s fellow musicians were also former New Orleans residents, and several of them were featured in the recordings that Oliver started making in April 1923.²³

The recording process itself had numerous challenges. The Gennett studio was in Richmond, Indiana, which required a four-hour bus ride southeast of Chicago. It also required a return trip the same day, since in that era, no Richmond hotels would accommodate African Americans. Gennett’s long, narrow studio had walls filled with sawdust and covered by heavy draperies in an attempt to muffle the nearby train tracks. As a result, the studio consisted of “an oppressively hot, sound-dead room, wherein the rumblings of passing trains could be heard but musicians standing a few feet apart could barely hear each other.”²⁴ To collect the sound, two megaphone-shaped cardboard horns hung from the wall. Frustratingly, “a Gennett session always began with the near-hopeless search for a balanced sound... The performers had to move themselves about the room, standing in various groupings at various distances from the immobile sound-catchers, until test pressings yielded some[thing] tolerable... For the Creole Jazz Band, all of whom were new to studio work, the process was tiresome and confusing.”²⁵ Despite the difficulties, the band recorded lively performances that have been enjoyed for over a century.

LISTENING COMPANION 2: “Dippermouth Blues” (1923) – Joe “King” Oliver

Oliver's April 1923 recording of "[Dippermouth Blues](#)" (Listening Example 2) employed a typical New Orleans jazz-style combo. Oliver played cornet, as did Louis Armstrong (1901–71), whom Oliver had hired in July 1922. In fact, "Dippermouth" was a teasing reference to Armstrong, whose mouth was claimed to be "as big as a dipper." Similarly, Armstrong's better-known nickname also referenced his mouth: "Satchmo" was a corruption of "Satchel Mouth."²⁶ Although Oliver, as bandleader, played the solos during Choruses 6 and 7, Armstrong was allowed to play lead cornet during Chorus 5. Honoré Dutry (c. 1894–1935) played trombone, and Johnny Dodds (1892–1940) was the clarinetist. "Baby" Dodds (1898–1959), Johnny's younger brother Warren, played drums, but on this recording, he played woodblock since the primitive recording technology did not pick up the sound of drums very clearly). The banjo player (and briefly the vocalist) was Bill Johnson (1872–1972), and the pianist was Lillian Hardin (1898–1971)—soon to become Lillian (Lil) Hardin Armstrong, Louis' second wife. (A Chicago-jazz-style tune by Hardin Armstrong will be featured as Listening Example 3.)

An examination of Listening Guide 2 reveals the mixture of the newer Chicago approach and the older New Orleans style used in “Dippermouth Blues.” The “Chicago effect” can be heard in the cleanly executed introduction. As shown in Figure 2-1, the two cornets play a descending eighth-note pattern in harmony, repeating it two more times in a descending sequence. This rhythmic, homophonic precision required careful pre-planning, in contrast to the almost raucous improvised heterophony that starts in the first chorus.

FIGURE 2-1

A musical score for two cornets in C major, featuring a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a tempo of ca. 176 BPM. The score consists of four measures. The first measure shows a single note followed by a grace note. The second measure contains a sixteenth-note pattern. The third measure features eighth-note patterns. The fourth measure concludes with a single note. The score is set against a background of horizontal lines.

Similarly, the **stop-time** choruses could not happen spontaneously: during these sections, the group plays a short, staccato chord on each downbeat, and then Johnny Dodds plays the rest of the measure by himself. Moreover, the four choruses that feature an extended solo (Choruses 3, 4, 6, and 7) are all more characteristic of Chicago jazz than of New Orleans jazz. But, the energetic heterophony of Choruses 1, 2, 5, 8, and 9 gives us an inkling of what New Orleans jazz might have sounded like during its peak, and the consistent use of a twelve-bar blues structure for all the choruses is a reminder of jazz's hybrid origins.

The free-wheeling nature of the heterophony accounts for a short vocal insertion at the end of Chorus 8 by Bill Johnson. At that point, Baby Dodds was supposed to play a solo break on the woodblock, but he was a bit confused—whether from inexperience in a recording studio or perhaps a bit too much alcohol beforehand is not entirely clear. Johnson called out, “Oh, play that thing!” as a reminder to fill in the empty space. Dodds later reported, “The technician asked us if that was supposed to be there and we said no. However, he wanted to keep it anyway, and, ever since then, every outfit uses that same trick, all because I forgot my part.”²⁸

After Dodd's missed solo break, King Oliver's ensemble launches into a final chorus that represents the type

of “big finish” of most New Orleans-style pieces. There are multiple nicknames for this type of collective-improvisation ending; two of the most common are **sock-chorus** (as in “socking it to the listeners”) or **out-chorus** (since the tune is on its way out).²⁹ After the sock-chorus, the ensemble plays a short **tag** ending, again in pre-planned Chicago-style homophony. Tags became a common way to wrap up many jazz tunes of the era.

No matter what style predominates at any particular moment, swing rhythm is a jazz characteristic throughout “Dippermouth Blues.” Another sound that would become closely linked with many of jazz’s substyles is the **wah-wah mute**, which Oliver employs in Choruses 6 and 7. In the 1920s, this alteration to the cornet’s normal timbre was created by flexing the **rubber plunger** of a plumber’s helper in front of the bell of the cornet; the technique produces a tone that can sound remarkably “human” at times. (Anyone who has watched animated versions of the cartoon *Charlie Brown* has heard a trombonist using a wah-wah mute to create the “voices” of **talking adults**.)

Oliver’s flowing cornet solo in this piece became a celebrated icon of early jazz, and a host of later jazz musicians have studied and imitated the artistry he displayed during his two featured choruses.³⁰ In fact, the tune made a brief reappearance in Disney’s 2009 animated film *The Princess and the Frog*, when the (initially) menacing trumpet-playing alligator Louis appears, attracted when Prince Naveen starts to play the melody. The name “Louis,” of course, was a tribute to Louis Armstrong.

Listening Guide 2: “Dippermouth Blues” (1923) – Joe “King” Oliver

Timeline	Form	Structure	Performer(s)	Musical Features
:02	Intro	4 bars	Ensemble	Group: Homophony (composed); cornets play a sequence of descending pitches in harmony.
:07	Chorus 1	12-bar blues	Ensemble	Group: Collective improvisation (heterophony)
:23	Chorus 2	12-bar blues	Ensemble	Group: Collective improvisation
:39	Chorus 3	12-bar blues	Clarinet	Solo (Stop-time played by rest of ensemble.)
:55	Chorus 4	12-bar blues	Clarinet	Stop-time continues.
1:10	Chorus 5	12-bar blues	Ensemble	Group: Collective improvisation (Armstrong plays lead.)
1:25	Chorus 6	12-bar blues	Cornet	Solo: Famous solo by Oliver with wah-wah mute (blue notes added); remainder of group plays in background.
1:40	Chorus 7	12-bar blues	Cornet	Solo: Oliver stretches rhythm at times; group in background
1:56	Chorus 8	12-bar blues	Ensemble	Group: Collective improvisation (Cornet is prominent.)
2:09			Voice	Johnson’s shout of “Oh, play that thing!”
2:11	Chorus 9 “sock-chorus”	12-bar blues	Ensemble	Group: Louder collective improvisation; more prominent woodblock
2:27	Tag ending	2 bars	Ensemble	Group: Homophony (composed), but more complex than intro

JAZZ THRIVES IN CHICAGO

Only four years after King Oliver recorded “Dippermouth Blues,” a new leader in the jazz world emerged in Chicago—a transition that was driven, to a great extent, by Oliver’s pianist Lillian Hardin.

The Jazz Wonder Child

Lillian (Lil) Hardin had traveled a very different road to the “Dippermouth Blues” recording session than most members of the band. Besides being the sole woman of the group, Hardin stood apart from most of the others: she was *not* from New Orleans, and she had received considerable formal musical training. After getting a job playing piano at Jones’ Music Store in Chicago, where she demonstrated sheet music to customers, she had developed a reputation for “jazzing up” the pieces. These lively improvisations led to Hardin’s nickname as the “Jazz Wonder Child” (to her dignified mother’s horror).³¹

When King Oliver arrived in Chicago with his Creole Jazz Band, they were booked to play at a local restaurant. The restaurant also employed a singer, but the band had no pianist who could accompany her. After rejecting a handful of pianists who auditioned for them, the band agreed to give Hardin a chance. She recalled,

When I sat down to play I asked for the music and were they surprised! They politely told me they didn't have any music and furthermore never used any. I then asked what key would the first number be in. I must have been speaking another language because the leader said, "When you hear two knocks, just start playing."

It all seemed very strange to me, but I got all set, and when I heard those two knocks I hit the piano so loud and hard they all turned around to look at me. It only took a second for me to feel what they were playing and I was off. The New Orleans Creole Jazz Band hired me, and I never got back to the music store.³²

Although Hardin’s formal training was not initially a selling point, her ability to notate music was soon greatly appreciated by the band.³³ After Oliver added the young Louis Armstrong to the group as a second cornetist in 1922, Hardin was credited with improving



Lillian Hardin became the second of Louis Armstrong's four wives and had the greatest musical influence on him.

Image Source: Boris Carmi /Meitar Collection / National Library of Israel / The Pritzker Family National Photography Collection

Armstrong’s own ability to read and write music; she became his second wife in 1924. Perhaps even more significantly, she was aware that during performances, “Joe seldom featured Louis, knowing that Louis could show him up.”³⁴ In time, she influenced Armstrong to break away from Oliver. Soon, Armstrong had an offer to go to New York and be the first cornet player in the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra—the same Henderson who had accompanied Bessie Smith in “Lost Your Head Blues” (Listening Example 1). It was in New York that Armstrong first acquired a trumpet (instead of a cornet), and he also began building a reputation as a singer.³⁵

The Hot Five (Plus)

Another milestone in Armstrong’s career can be attributed to Lil Hardin Armstrong. During a visit to New York to see how Armstrong was faring, Hardin Armstrong became unhappy with her husband’s lack of billing in the orchestra’s advertising. Returning to Chicago, she persuaded the manager of the Dreamland Club to offer Armstrong \$75 a week as leader of a new band. She even insisted that the manager post a sign announcing “Louis Armstrong, the World’s Greatest Trumpet Player” (which embarrassed her husband when he saw it).³⁶ Armstrong returned to Chicago to take up the job in 1925, and soon after, Okeh Records



Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five. Left to right: Johnny St. Cyr, Kid Ory, Louis Armstrong, Johnny Dodds, and Lil Hardin Armstrong.

announced that they would pay \$50 per player for a recording session. Armstrong quickly assembled a group of five musicians that he designated “the Hot Five”—a quintet that posterity has called “the single most influential combo in the history of jazz.”³⁷ Still, as the trombonist “Kid” (Edward) Ory (1886–1973) recalled, “When we made [our first records] we didn’t have any expectation that they would be as successful as they became.”³⁸ In addition to Ory, Armstrong

hired his wife on piano, Johnny Dodds on clarinet, and Johnny St. Cyr (1890–1966) on banjo.

Even though the Hot Five did not normally perform together outside the recording studio, they (and various other players) continued to gather periodically at Okeh Records over the next four years to record additional singles. One of their numbers from early 1926, “[Heebie Jeebies](#),” was a particular hit. Ory reported, “That was the record where Louis forgot the lyrics and started scattin’. We had all we could do to keep from laughing. Of course, Louis said he forgot the words, but I don’t know if he intended it that way or not. It made the record, though.”³⁹ Ory’s reference to “scattin’,” or **scat singing**—an improvised technique in which the vocalist sings nonsense syllables, treating the voice in the manner of an instrument—was not new to jazz. It was also not the first time that scatting had been recorded (despite numerous later claims to the contrary), nor was it the first time that Armstrong had scatted during that particular song.⁴⁰ Still, the extreme popularity of the “Heebie Jeebies” recording almost certainly introduced the technique to many listeners.

Another successful recording session with the Hot Five took place in December 1927, when the quintet was joined by guitarist Lonnie Johnson (1899–1970).⁴¹ The six tunes that they recorded between December 9 and 13 all went on to become jazz classics, and biographer James Collier argues that one of them, “[Hotter Than That](#)” (Listening Example 3), “is one of the greatest jazz records ever cut.”⁴²

LISTENING COMPANION 3: “Hotter Than That” (1927) – Lillian Hardin Armstrong

Lil Hardin Armstrong’s piece “Hotter Than That,” recorded on December 13, 1927, demonstrates the ensemble’s full tilt into Chicago-jazz style, with its long string of solos framed by heterophonic passages and increasingly sophisticated musical techniques. Instead of using twelve-bar choruses like those of “Dippermouth Blues” (Listening Example 2), Hardin Armstrong adopted a thirty-two-bar form that was prevalent in popular music of the time. This structure is sometimes split into two sixteen-bar segments, as shown in the Listening Guide.⁴³

Even though “Hotter Than That,” like many other jazz compositions, did not use the twelve-bar blues as a foundation, these tunes often shared the same concept as blues songs: that an endless number of new pieces could be built on top of a preexisting set of harmonies. The series of chords that are the foundation of a particular song are often called its **changes**. For instance, George Gershwin (1898–1937) wrote the song “I Got Rhythm” for the Broadway show *Girl Crazy* (1930), and hundreds of subsequent tunes have borrowed the “Rhythm changes” as their harmonic basis. A piece titled “Tiger Rag” had been recorded in 1917 by the

Original Dixieland Jazz Band, and the most familiar section of its melody occurs at a point just over two minutes into their [recording](#). The chords, or changes, underneath that section of the melody had been used previously in earlier tunes, but most people now associate those changes with “Tiger Rag” since it became a very popular recording. Hardin Armstrong borrowed the “Tiger Rag” changes in “Hotter Than That.”⁴⁴

A feature of “Hotter Than That” that has fascinated theorists for almost a century is the surprising rhythmic complexity of the third chorus. While Armstrong is scatting above the guitar’s common-time accompaniment, he shifts into quarter-note triplets, and briefly seems to group those triplets into sets of three—as if he has shifted into $\frac{3}{2}$ meter against the guitar’s steady $\frac{4}{4}$ time. Figure 2-2 illustrates a possible transcription of these two metric layers. This polymetric terracing is complex, and it demonstrates the “playing with time” that would soon become a hallmark of sophisticated jazz musicians.

FIGURE 2-2

Polymetric passage within “Hotter Than That.”

There were other daring moments in “Hotter Than That,” too. At the end of the scat chorus, Armstrong and Johnson break away from the steady “danceable” tempo to tease each other in a call-and-response passage, filled with stretched blue notes that almost sound like a cat’s meowing. Hardin then fills in with a brief piano break that re-establishes the lively tempo, and Kid Ory’s trombone solo comprises the first half of Chorus 4. The full band takes over the second half of the chorus, returning to collective improvisation—but above this busy heterophony, Armstrong plays a remarkable series of eleven syncopated high “C” pitches.⁴⁵ Biographer Thomas Brothers says, “He sits on top of the texture like a king on his throne.”⁴⁶ It is no small wonder that this pathbreaking tune lent its name to a wide-ranging book about the era: Krin Gabbard’s *Hotter Than That: The Trumpet, Jazz, and American Culture* (2008).⁴⁷

Listening Guide 3: “Hotter Than That” (1927) – Lillian Hardin Armstrong

Timeline	Form	Structure	Performer(s)	Musical Features
0:00	Intro	8 bars	Full band	Group: Trumpet leads over heterophony.
0:10	Chorus 1 (32 bars)	14 bars	Louis Armstrong & Johnny St. Cyr	Solo: Trumpet with banjo accompaniment
0:25		2 bars	Armstrong	<i>Trumpet break</i>
0:28		14 bars	Armstrong & St. Cyr	<i>Trumpet with banjo accompaniment</i>
0:44		2 bars	Johnny Dodds	<i>Clarinet solo break</i>

0:46	Chorus 2	14 bars	Dodds & Lil Hardin	<i>Solo: Clarinet with piano accompaniment</i>
1:01		2 bars	Dodds	<i>Clarinet solo break</i>
1:03		14 bars	Dodds & Hardin	<i>Clarinet with piano accompaniment</i>
1:19		2 bars	Armstrong	<i>Scat (vocal) solo break</i>
1:22	Chorus 3	14 bars	Armstrong & Lonnie Johnson	<i>Solo: Scat with guitar accompaniment</i>
1:37		2 bars	Armstrong	<i>Scat solo break</i>
1:39		14 bars	Armstrong & Johnson	<i>Scat with guitar accompaniment; polymeter effect</i>
1:54		out of tempo	Armstrong & Johnson	<i>Scat & guitar duet in call-and-response</i>
2:14	Interlude	4 bars	Hardin	<i>Piano solo reestablishes tempo.</i>
2:18	Chorus 4	14 bars	Kid Ory	<i>Solo: Trombone with banjo & piano accompaniment</i>
2:33		2 bars	Armstrong	<i>Trumpet solo break</i>
2:35	“sock-chorus”	8 bars	Full band	<i>Group: Trumpet high Cs over heterophony</i>
2:44		4 bars	Full band	<i>Trumpet leads over stop-time.</i>
2:48		2 bars	Full band	<i>Trumpet leads over heterophony.</i>
2:50		2 bars	Johnson	<i>Solo: Guitar solo break</i>
2:52	Coda	4 bars	Armstrong & Johnson	<i>Trumpet & guitar in call-and-response</i>
2:56				<i>Guitar ends with a dominant 7th chord.</i>

JAZZ LOOKS AHEAD

Even as the combo-focused Chicago-jazz style flourished, other musicians began to apply some of the same techniques to larger ensembles, foreshadowing the “Swing Era” that would dominate the nation in the 1930s and 1940s. Higher performance expectations gradually raised the bar for players, and their increased technical ability and musical literacy meant that more and more pre-planning of jazz pieces took place. When more musicians could read music, it was feasible to control the participation of larger groups, giving rise to what became known as “big band jazz,” one of the many nicknames given to music of the Swing era. The three band leaders who were most influential in shaping various features of “pre-swing” music during the 1920s were “Duke” Ellington (1899–1974), “Count” Basie (1904–84), and Fletcher Henderson.

The Duke

Duke (Edward Kennedy) Ellington’s career in music began with a baseball bat: when he was accidentally hit on the head and required stitches, his mother decided it was time to do something safer—and thus he started piano lessons.⁴⁸ Ellington was an especially beloved bandleader, whose players often stayed with him for decades, and he ensured that they were among



“Duke” Ellington created extended forms and added interesting tone colors to pre-swing jazz.



"Count" Basie standardized the rhythm section and relied on riffs in his pre-swing jazz compositions.

the highest-paid musicians in the business.⁴⁹ He went on to become one of the best-known musicians of the twentieth century, composing approximately two thousand pieces of music. He also hired a very talented arranger and composer, Billy Strayhorn (1915–67), who helped establish the characteristic approach of the Ellington ensemble.⁵⁰

In the process of moving toward what would become the “swing” style, Ellington is credited with extending the form of his pieces, often by including a string of solos in the manner of Chicago jazz. This string of solos allowed him to showcase the virtuosity of individual players.⁵¹ Like art-music composers of the same era, Ellington was interested in new timbres, so his brass players often added various mutes to affect their tone color. Ellington frequently asked the clarinet to play in its lowest, mysterious-sounding register. He even added wordless voice to his arrangements, among them his 1927 recording of “[Creole Love Call](#).⁵²” Ellington was also a co-founder (with Juan Tizol) of “Latin jazz,” a substyle that added Latin American percussive techniques to the swing style.⁵²

The Count

As a talented pianist, Count (William) Basie was in high demand to accompany and direct many singers, dancers, and comedians in New York. He made an error in judgment in 1927 when he agreed to be the

accompanist for a touring group; after some time on the road, the ensemble fell apart, leaving him broke and stranded in Kansas City.⁵³ Making the best of things, he started to perform with local groups, and over the next decade, he played a significant role in crafting a “Kansas City” sound.⁵⁴ In particular, he helped to standardize the “model” rhythm section—the piano, string bass, drum set, and guitar that served as backup instruments for the full ensemble, sustaining the harmony and beat while soloists were featured.⁵⁵

Basie’s additional contributions to the developing style of swing included the “head arrangement,” in which a composition would be devised on the spot and played for the public. One of the strategies of head arrangements was to have the full band play riffs—ostinato-like repetitions of a motif—extensively instead of the interwoven multiple melodies of New Orleans-style heterophony.⁵⁶ More than the other “pre-swing” band leaders, Basie gave occasional prominence to the piano, letting it perform fluid right-hand melodies without having to maintain a left-hand accompaniment pattern.⁵⁷ Pianists had not always enjoyed this sort of liberty: when Lil Hardin had attempted to add embellishments



Fletcher Henderson increased the size of jazz ensembles and employed sectional writing as his contributions to pre-swing.



Fletcher Henderson's band employed numerous celebrated players, including Louis Armstrong in 1925.

during her years with King Oliver, she recalled that “Joe would turn around and look at me and say, ‘We have a clarinet in the band.’”⁵⁸

The Father of Big Band Jazz

Fletcher Henderson’s path to jazz was quite a bit different from that of most of his peers. He trained as a chemist, but while living in New York to work on his master’s degree at Columbia University, he got a job demonstrating songs for a music publisher, similar to Lil Hardin’s early employment. When the publisher launched Black Swan—the first Black-owned recording company—Henderson started assembling ensembles to accompany the singers, thereby unintentionally starting his career as a bandleader. He set himself apart from the thousands of typical dance bands in the nation when he brought Louis Armstrong from Chicago to play with his group at the Roseland Ballroom in New York; Armstrong inspired other members of the Henderson band to imitate his energy and style.⁵⁹

Like his contemporaries Ellington and Basie, Henderson helped to build the foundations of the swing style. In particular, he was one of the earliest

bandleaders who increased the size of the ensemble, thereby creating the “Big Band” that would eventually be a nickname for the later style. He also treated each section (woodwinds versus brass) as a harmonized unit, in a technique called **sectional writing** or **block voicing**. A crucial ally in developing this approach was his music arranger, Don Redman (1900–64). They often employed distinctive call-and-response exchanges between instrumental sections, and, like Count Basie, used riffs extensively.⁶⁰

Their music was challenging—a far cry from the mostly improvised New Orleans jazz—and thus, as Henderson’s wife Leora (1898–1958) noted, “It was considered an honor to get into that band. It had the hardest [music] in the business, and many a musician just couldn’t play those arrangements... [N]obody could beat our band.”⁶¹ The trumpeter Louis Metcalf (1905–81) recalled, “The sight of Fletcher Henderson’s men playing behind music stands brought on a learning-to-read-music kick in Harlem which hadn’t cared before for it. There were two years of real concentration. Everybody greeted you with ‘How’s studying?’”⁶²

LISTENING COMPANION 4: “The Stampede” (1926) – Fletcher Henderson

In her reminiscences, Leora Henderson cited a number of the fine players who had performed with Fletcher Henderson over the years: “Don Redman and Louis [Armstrong], Bobby Stark, Joe Smith, Coleman Hawkins, Buster Bailey, Benny Carter, John Kirby, Big [Charlie] Green.”⁶³ Several of those musicians are heard on “[The Stampede](#)” (Listening Example 4), which Henderson recorded on May 14, 1926. Bailey and Redman are on clarinet, Hawkins plays tenor saxophone, and Smith performs on cornet. (Louis Armstrong had returned to Chicago the year before.) In fact, Hawkins (1904–69) and Smith (1902–37) are each featured soloists during the second and third choruses, respectively.⁶⁴ (Leora also remembered the rage for blues singers at the time, and it was during that same year that Fletcher Henderson and Joe Smith had accompanied Bessie Smith in her recording of “Lost Your Head Blues” [Listening Example 1].⁶⁵)

“The Stampede” demonstrates another feature, called a **vamp**, that became increasingly common in subsequent jazz tunes. A vamp is a short, repeated motif that often acts as an interlude until the next chorus begins. Vamps appear twice in this piece, at the ends of the second and the third choruses. A vamp can also be repeated at will until the next performer is in position and ready to play or sing.

All the characteristic features of Henderson and Redman’s approach to early swing writing are audible in this performance of “The Stampede”: the distinctive riff that is passed from section to section during the introduction; the use of call-and-response between sections, rather than soloists; block voicing; and a larger eleven-piece ensemble, including four brass instruments, three woodwinds, and a four-piece rhythm section of piano, tuba, banjo, and drums.⁶⁶ In fact, scholar Martin Williams calls the piece “almost an archetype of the big band score.”⁶⁷ It is not surprising to learn that Duke Ellington said, “When I first formed a big band in New York, [Henderson’s] was the one I wanted mine to sound like.”⁶⁸

Listening Guide 4: “The Stampede” (1926) – Fletcher Henderson

Timeline	Form	Structure	Performer(s)	Musical Features
0:00	Intro	1 bar	Piano	<i>4-beat riff (Fletcher Henderson)</i>
0:01		1 bar	Woodwinds (WWs)	<i>Echo of 4-beat riff</i>
0:02		2 bars	Brass	<i>Echo of 4-beat riff + 1-bar extension</i>
0:04		4 bars	Trumpet solo, WWs, Rhythm Section (abbreviated as RS)	<i>Solo (Rex Stewart)</i>
0:08		1 bar	Piano	<i>4-beat riff</i>
0:09		1 bar	Woodwinds	<i>Echo of 4-beat riff</i>
0:10		2 bars	Brass	<i>Echo of 4-beat riff + 1-bar extension</i>
0:12		4 bars	Trumpet solo, WWs, RS	<i>Solo (Rex Stewart)</i>
0:16	Chorus 1	12 bars	Full Band	<i>Group: Call & response between sections</i>
0:29		4 bars	Full Band	<i>Block voicing during descent</i>
0:33		8 bars	Full Band	<i>Call & response between sections</i>
0:41		4 bars	Full Band	<i>Rising and falling pattern</i>
0:45		1 bar	Piano	<i>Downward cascading pattern</i>
0:46		1 bar	Full Band	<i>Homorhythmic response</i>
0:47		1 bar	Piano	<i>Downward cascading pattern</i>
0:48		1 bar	Full Band	<i>Homorhythmic response</i>

0:49	Chorus 2	14 bars	Tenor sax solo, Brass, RS	<i>Solo (Coleman Hawkins)</i>
1:04		2 bars	Tenor sax solo	<i>Solo break</i>
1:06		8 bars	Tenor sax solo, Brass, RS	<i>Solo</i>
1:15		4 bars	Full Band	<i>Rising and falling pattern</i>
1:19		4 bars	Tenor sax solo, Full Band	<i>Solo with band responses</i>
1:23	Vamp	2 bars	Woodwinds	<i>Descending sequential riff</i>
1:25		2 bars	Full Band	<i>Short response</i>
1:27	Chorus 3	14 bars	Cornet solo, WWs, RS	<i>Solo (Joe Smith)</i>
1:43		2 bars	Cornet solo	<i>Solo break</i>
1:45		14 bars	Cornet solo, WWs, RS	<i>Solo</i>
2:00	Vamp	2 bars	Piano	<i>Descending sequential riff</i>
2:02		2 bars	Brass, RS	<i>Block-chord response</i>
2:04	Chorus 4	8 bars	Woodwinds, RS	<i>Group: Block chords</i>
2:12		8 bars	Woodwinds, RS	<i>Two homorhythmic 4-bar phrases</i>
2:21		8 bars	Woodwinds, RS	<i>Block chords</i>
2:29		4 bars	Woodwinds, RS	<i>Oscillating eighth notes</i>
2:34		2 bars	Woodwinds, RS	<i>Block chords</i>
2:36		2 bars	Trumpet solo	<i>Solo break (Rex Stewart)</i>
2:38	Chorus 5	12 bars	Trumpet solo, RS	<i>Solo (Rex Stewart)</i>
2:51		4 bars	Full Band	<i>Group: Descending scale pattern</i>
2:55		14 bars	Full Band	<i>Call & response between sections</i>
3:10		2 bars	Band (no RS)	<i>Homorhythmic tag</i>

SECTION II SUMMARY

- ◆ The blues was an American style that developed before jazz and had an impact on the later style's musical approach.
- ◆ The blues are "the music of people, a style of music, a type of performance, a despondent state of mind, and a musical form."
- ◆ The legacy of African music may be heard in many of the blues' characteristics, such as **call-and-response** exchanges, **melismatic** text-setting, and **blue notes**.
- ◆ These characteristics were employed in conjunction with a standard series of chords, and each repetition of the twelve-bar-blues pattern is called a **chorus**.
- ◆ A lengthening of the first note's duration and shortening of the second in a pair of notes became known as **swing** rhythm, a nearly universal feature of jazz styles.
- ◆ The poetry for one chorus in a blues song

usually repeats the first line before concluding with a rhyming third line (**a a b**), although the first line is sometimes repeated three times in a row (**a a a**).

- ◆ A country blues song customarily features a male singer in informal social situations, playing guitar, harmonica, or accordion, improvising his text, and using great rhythmic freedom.
- ◆ A classic blues performance would most likely showcase a female singer accompanied by a piano or **combo** in a more theatrical venue. In Bessie Smith's recording of "Lost Your Head Blues" (Listening Example 1), the cornet plays a short **fill** in between each of her lines, creating a call-and-response dialogue. Smith embellishes her vocal performance with short **slides**, also known as **glissandos**.
- ◆ Smith's recordings restored the financial stability of Columbia Records, while W. C. Handy was one of the first to publish printed music in the classic blues style.

- ◆ The earliest styles now called jazz coalesced in the **Storyville** district of New Orleans at the start of the twentieth century. The oldest subtype, New Orleans jazz, used swing rhythms, band instrumentation, blues form, and Latin American and African layering, known as **collective improvisation** or heterophony. This texture is prevalent in the recording of “Dippermouth Blues” (Listening Example 2) by King Oliver and his Creole Jazz Band.
- ◆ The slightly more polished approach developed by groups of white musicians is now called Dixieland.
- ◆ The closure of Storyville in 1917 drove many musicians to Chicago, where jazz began to evolve into new sub-styles such as Chicago jazz.
- ◆ Individual players were given only brief **solo breaks** in the New Orleans style of jazz, but Chicago jazz began featuring talented players for full choruses. The recording “Dippermouth Blues” is a transitional piece, displaying both New Orleans and Chicago characteristics. Some of the Chicago jazz features are the rhythmically precise passages that are pre-planned, as well as the **stop-time** choruses, in which the full ensemble performs a brief note, then ceases playing while a soloist is showcased.
- ◆ The concluding chorus, often employing busy heterophony, has been nicknamed a **sock-chorus** or **out-chorus**; a short ending is often called a **tag**.
- ◆ King Oliver uses a **wah-wah mute** to give two of the choruses a distinctive timbre.
- ◆ Lillian (Lil) Hardin (the “Jazz Wonder Child”) joined King Oliver’s band as a pianist. She met and eventually married Louis Armstrong, helping him improve his musical skills and persuading him to break away to build an independent career.
- ◆ One of Louis Armstrong’s activities in Chicago was to lead a small combo in various jazz

recordings. His first quintet was called “The Hot Five,” and one of their hit records—“Heebie Jeebies”—featured Armstrong’s **scat singing**.

Lillian Hardin Armstrong’s “Hotter Than That” (Listening Example 3) was a Chicago jazz-style tune also recorded by the Hot Five. Instead of twelve-bar-blues choruses, it uses the thirty-two-bar structure more often found in popular songs of the era. Its harmonies were borrowed from the chord **changes** during a section of “Tiger Rag.”

While scatting during the recording, Armstrong created a polymetric effect; he then played an impressive series of high C pitches on the trumpet.

Even during the heyday of Chicago jazz, the antecedents of swing-style jazz were coming into focus. The three most influential band leaders in the pre-swing era were Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Fletcher Henderson.

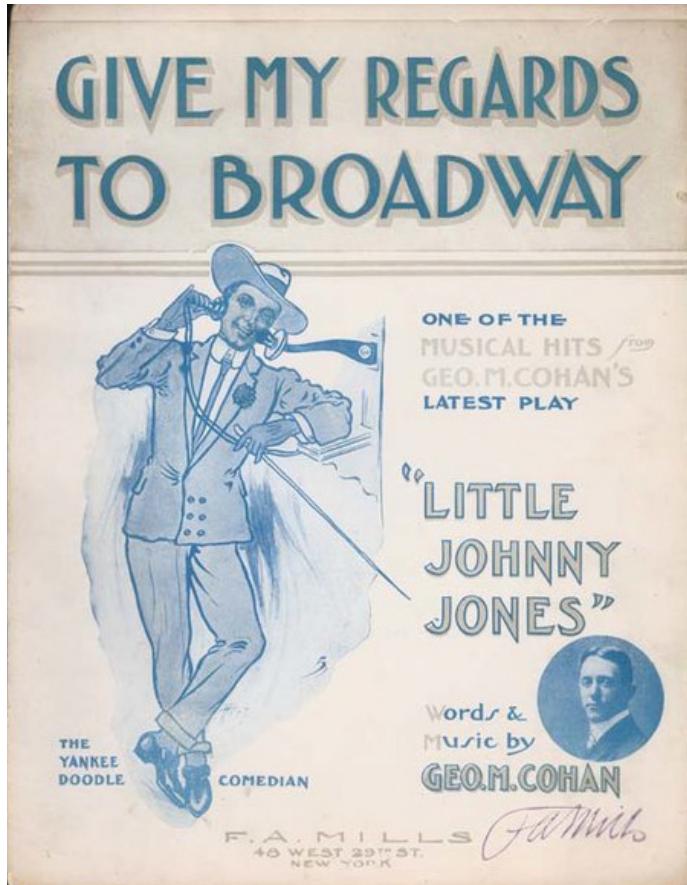
Ellington’s legacy in swing is seen in extended forms with a string of solos, interesting tone colors (sometimes achieved with **mutes**), and **wordless voice**. He also helped develop Latin jazz.

Basie standardized the **rhythm section** to consist of piano, bass, drums, and guitar. His band could perform head arrangements, using **riffs** to help hold their structure together. Basie’s pianistic approach took more freedom, rather than being limited to pounding the pulse of the piece.

Henderson, trained as a chemist, somewhat stumbled into band leadership, and he gradually increased the number of players in his ensemble. He and his longtime arranger Don Redman treated the families of instruments as groups; this technique is called **sectional writing** or **block voicing**. The sophisticated writing—as heard in “The Stampede” (Listening Example 4)—challenged many musicians to improve their literacy.

Section III

Jazz on Stage, on the Air, and On-Screen



The 1904 musical comedy Little Johnny Jones introduced the song “Give My Regards to Broadway” as a salute to the theater district.

JAZZ ON BROADWAY

In the 1904 musical comedy *Little Johnny Jones*, Johnny sings, “Give My Regards to Broadway,” since he longs to be a star in that famous New York theater district. Becoming a Broadway success is analogous to an athlete being selected to compete in the Olympics: it is a recognized triumph. In the early years of the twentieth century, Broadway audiences were offered various sorts of entertainments, especially operettas, revues, and musical comedies. The last of these portrayed snappy, contemporary stories and

featured lively music and dancing. Musical comedies often showcased the latest musical styles, while their chorus lines frequently performed dances that sparked national trends—and the creators of these shows came from increasingly diverse backgrounds.

Shuffle Along

In particular, *Shuffle Along* (1921) taught Broadway theater owners that shows created by Black artists could achieve mainstream success. The theatrical world uses the word book to mean both the overall plot and the spoken dialogue between the songs within a show, and the African-American comedy duo of Flournoy Miller (1885–1971) and Aubrey Lyles (1884–1932) created the book for *Shuffle Along* by expanding a sketch they used to perform on the vaudeville circuit.⁶⁹ Vaudeville had been the dominant form of entertainment in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century. It featured an endless array of touring performers who sang, danced, acted, performed magic tricks, manipulated ventriloquists’ dummies, and so forth. They moved through a network of affiliated vaudeville theaters, known as a circuit.⁷⁰

Vaudeville shows and early musical comedies often perpetuated some practices of blackface minstrelsy, which had been a widespread form of U.S. entertainment in much of the nineteenth century. Minstrel shows had caricatured Blacks, introducing characters such as Jim Crow and locations such as Dixieland. Although white performers created those stereotypes, Black entertainers often retained them in their own minstrel shows and vaudeville routines since they felt they had to accommodate audiences’ expectations.⁷¹ Echoes of those traditions made their way into many early musical comedies, including *Shuffle Along*.

Shuffle Along depicts a campaign for mayor in mythical Jimtown, somewhere in Dixieland, with the



*Photo of the cast and crew of *Shuffle Along* (1921). *Shuffle Along* proved that all-Black musical comedies could succeed on Broadway.*

virtuous Harry running against the unethical Steve (who is aided by a corrupt police chief). Their contest is set to songs by composer Eubie Blake (1887–1983) and lyricist Noble Sissle (1889–1975); like Miller and Lyles, the two men had been a former vaudeville team. Their jazzy music for *Shuffle Along* caught the ears of listeners (regardless of race) and helped the show achieve an impressive 504 performances, making it the eleventh-longest run of the entire decade.⁷² It also went on to tour for an additional two years. Unusually for the time, it featured an onstage romantic relationship between Black characters, and several of its songs remained popular for generations. In fact, Harry S. Truman used “I’m Just Wild About Harry” as his campaign song in his 1948 run for president.⁷³ Moreover, in 2016, a show about the creation of *Shuffle Along*—titled *Shuffle Along, Or The Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed*—premiered on Broadway, reusing a number of the older show’s hit songs.⁷⁴

Miller and Lyles’s *Shuffle Along* established what would soon be viewed as the standard expectations for a Black musical comedy; it certainly “became the model by which all black musicals were judged until well into the 1930s.”⁷⁵ Its strongest features were its dancing and singing, in both solo and chorus numbers—and “above all, there was jazz, jazz, jazz!”⁷⁶ One scholar suggests that the chorus-line dancers made “jazz rhythms visible,” noting that “new dances frequently made their initial bows on the stage and from there went into dance halls.”⁷⁷ Even though the orchestra for *Shuffle Along* included a violin, viola, cello, and oboe—“classical” instruments that were typically found in the orchestras of white shows of the day—it also hosted instruments such as the saxophone, trombone, and trumpet, allowing the group to reproduce the various popular jazz styles developing across the nation. Reportedly, the orchestral players did not use sheet music at all, but instead performed the entire score from memory, similar to the earliest



*Harry S. Truman used the hit song "I'm Just Wild About Harry" from *Shuffle Along* (1921) as the theme song for his 1948 presidential campaign.*

jazz ensembles.⁷⁸ Most importantly, *Shuffle Along* “proved that black shows were money makers.”⁷⁹

Runnin' Wild

Other Black entrepreneurs were quick to follow the successful lead of *Shuffle Along*—and so were white producers. In fact, in 1923, one of those producers—George White (1892–1968)—approached the book-writing team of Miller and Lyles, asking them to create another adventure in fictional Jimtown; the result was *Runnin' Wild*. As historian Eileen Southern warns, “The plot of the black musical generally was its weakest element,” and *Runnin' Wild* certainly met those low expectations.⁸⁰ The story portrays two deadbeats who decide to leave Jimtown without paying for their lodging, and they make their way to St. Paul, Minnesota. After experiencing a “real” winter, they hastily return to Jimtown, this time disguised as spiritualistic mediums.⁸¹ The title of the closing number made the musical style of the show explicit: “Jazz Your Troubles Away.”⁸² At 213 performances,

Runnin' Wild's run was less than half as long as that of *Shuffle Along*—but “its score included what came to be the defining song of America’s jazz age”: “The Charleston” (Listening Example 5).⁸³

Surprisingly, that exhilarating number, along with the rest of the score, was written by a newcomer to the theater. Instead of hiring Blake and Sissle (who had quarreled with Miller and Lyles), White had turned to a new pair of African-American writers: composer James P. Johnson (1891–1955) and lyricist Cecil Mack (the pen name of Richard Cecil McPherson, 1873–1944).⁸⁴ Johnson was a celebrated pianist in New York’s jazz world, but he had never before written a Broadway musical.⁸⁵ When the show opened, “The Charleston” was performed by actress Elizabeth Welsh at the end of the first act, in a scene that was set in a St. Paul cabaret.⁸⁶ As the show continued its run, Miller and Lyles gave “The Charleston” an even bigger role, letting it close both acts of *Runnin' Wild* and restaging



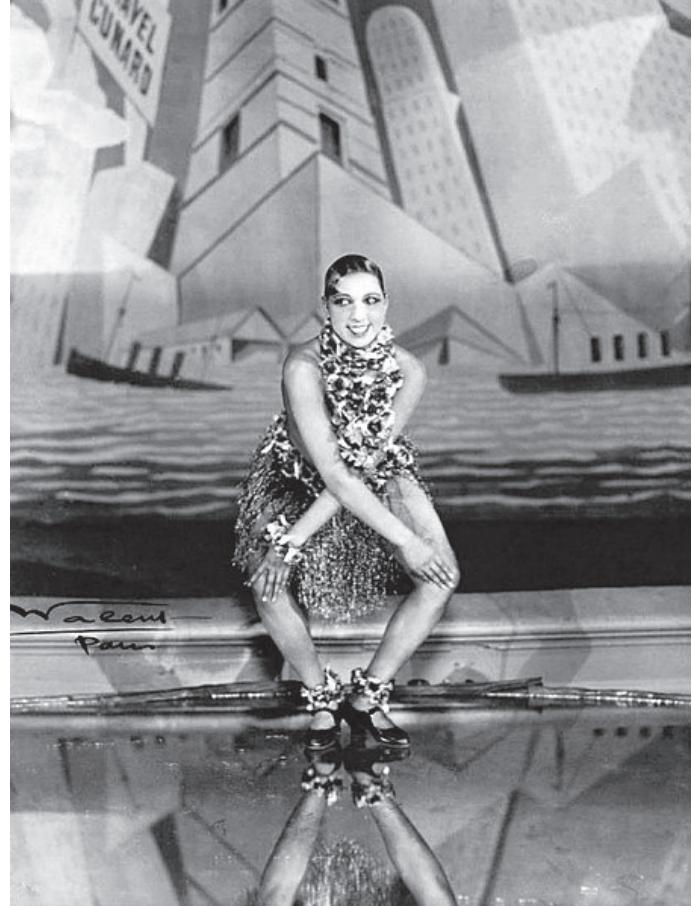
The team of Flounoy Miller and Aubrey Lyles was featured on the cover of a 1921 theatrical magazine.



James P. Johnson was a Broadway novice when he composed the music for *Runnin' Wild* (1923).

it for performance by the entire company.⁸⁷

According to a description by a newspaper reviewer who saw the new full-company staging, Miller and Lyles “had the major part of the chorus supplement the band by beating out the time with hand-clapping and foot-patting. The effect was electrical. Such a



Josephine Baker performs “The Charleston,” part of the dance craze sparked by the hit song in *Runnin’ Wild* (1923).

demonstration of beating out complex rhythms had never before been seen on a stage in New York.”⁸⁸ Not only did the “flying kicks, shimmying shoulders, and . . . syncopation” captivate Broadway audiences, but “The Charleston” also “became an international craze in its own right, and surely the single most characteristic dance of the 1920s.”⁸⁹

LISTENING COMPANION 5: *Runnin’ Wild*, “The Charleston” (1923) – James P. Johnson

Although the “The Charleston” does have lyrics, they are seldom sung in recordings of the song. Instead, its rhythm and its harmonic twists are the aspects that set it apart. A popular-music influence is evident in the conventional thirty-two-bar structure that consists of four phrases: A–B–A’–C. This pattern is nicknamed **show-tune form** because of its prevalence in Broadway songs in the 1910s and early 1920s.⁹⁰ However, James P. Johnson breaks convention in a surprising way: he uses a short, syncopated riff as the basis for fifteen of the thirty-two bars.

Johnson’s jazzy riff pattern is made up of just two notes: a downbeat note and a note that anticipates the second beat (in cut-time), as shown in Figure 3-1.

FIGURE 3-1



The “Charleston rhythm.”

In its first appearance in the song (in the **A** phrase), Johnson uses the syncopated “Charleston rhythm” in a rising chromatic sequence (**F–F♯–G**), thus setting it apart harmonically from the majority of popular songs. The same rhythm is heard in the second half of **A**, but with upward leaps of varying intervals between the first and second pitches. The **B** phrase also begins with a rising sequence, but its second half (measures 13 through 16) is fully independent of the Charleston rhythm. Still, those bars reveal a connection to jazz by starting with a syncopated eighth rest of silence on the downbeat of every measure. After a paraphrased return of the **A** melody, the **C** phrase surprises listeners (and dancers) by alternating measures of the Charleston rhythm with syncopated downbeat silences—but these silences are a quarter-rest long, rather than an eighth rest.

In the 1923 [recording](#) of “The Charleston” made by Arthur Gibbs and his Gang (used for Listening Example 5), the relationship of this theater tune to jazz numbers of the day is particularly clear. Techniques such as stop-time, heterophony, and muted trumpet are employed, and a string of soloists is featured after the opening chorus, including a very early recording of a saxophone. Theater historian Gerald Bordman describes “The Charleston” as the dance “that ultimately expressed and symbolized the whole gaudy era about to explode. . . . It liberated the whole jazz movement [and] typified the black-inspired, high-stepping of the era. It was gawky, zesty, and, obviously, irresistible.”⁹¹ It has held its grip on many dancers for more than a century, with [Charleston dance contests](#) being held clear up to the present day. Scott E. Brown makes a persuasive case when he describes “The Charleston” as “the theme song of the roaring twenties.”⁹²

Listening Guide 5: *Runnin’ Wild, “The Charleston” (1923)* – James P. Johnson

Timeline	Form	Phrases	Structure	Musical Features
0:00	Intro		4 bars	<i>Trumpet is prominent in rising melody.</i>
0:05			1 bar	<i>Stop time with cymbal crash on off-beats</i>
0:07			1 bar	<i>Descending minor scale</i>
0:08	Verse		16 bars	<i>Trumpet leads above heterophony.</i>

0:29	Chorus 1	A	7 bars	<i>Clarinet leads above “Charleston” rhythm.</i>
0:38			1 bar	<i>Solo break (muted trumpet)</i>
0:40		B	4 bars	<i>Clarinet leads above “Charleston” rhythm.</i>
0:45			4 bars	<i>Heterophony</i>
0:50		A	7 bars	<i>Trumpet leads above “Charleston” rhythm.</i>
0:59			1 bar	<i>Solo break (muted trumpet with clarinet glissando)</i>
1:00		C	7 bars	<i>Trumpet leads above “Charleston” rhythm.</i>
1:08			1 bar	<i>Solo break (woodwind section)</i>
1:10	Chorus 2	A, B, A	24 bars	<i>Trumpet leads; banjo more prominent in heterophony</i>
1:42		C	6 bars	<i>Trumpet continues to lead.</i>
1:50			2 bars	<i>Solo break (woodwind section)</i>
1:53	Chorus 3	A	3 bars	<i>Saxophone leads; arranged accompaniment</i>
1:57			1 bar	<i>Solo break (saxophone)</i>
1:58			3 bars	<i>Saxophone leads; arranged accompaniment</i>
2:02			1 bar	<i>Solo break (saxophone)</i>
2:03		B	6 bars	<i>Saxophone leads; arranged accompaniment</i>
2:11			2 bars	<i>Solo break (saxophone)</i>
2:13		A	3 bars	<i>Saxophone leads; arranged accompaniment</i>
2:17			1 bar	<i>Solo break (saxophone)</i>
2:18			3 bars	<i>Saxophone leads; arranged accompaniment</i>
2:23			1 bar	<i>Solo break (saxophone)</i>
2:24		C	3 bars	<i>Saxophone leads; arranged accompaniment</i>
2:27			1 bar	<i>Solo break (saxophone)</i>
2:29			2 bars	<i>Saxophone leads; arranged accompaniment</i>
2:31			2 bars	<i>Solo break (piano)</i>
2:34	Chorus 4 (partial)	A, B	4 bars	<i>Stop time (clarinet fills)</i>
2:39			10 bars	<i>Heterophony resumes.</i>
2:52			2 bars	<i>Solo break (woodwind section)</i>
2:54	Coda		2 bars	<i>Band plays descending scale in block chords.</i>
2:57			no tempo	<i>Sustained dominant 7th chord, then cymbal crash</i>

BROADWAY TURNS THE TABLES

Before the premiere of *Runnin’ Wild*, Flournoy Miller could not understand why George White kept saying he did not like “The Charleston.” Multiple times, White brought visitors to rehearsals of the show and disparaged the dance, clearly trying to get Miller and Lyles to cut the number. Only later did Miller learn the truth: White wanted to premiere the dance in one of his revues (featuring white performers), the *George White Scandals*.⁹³ White already saw the potential in the piece; moreover, he was alert to the fact that Broadway was primed and ready for a full array of

these new jazz-styled tunes.

Although white producers initially relied on the expertise of Black musicians for jazz numbers in their shows, white composers began developing greater fluency with jazz characteristics. As the 1920s progressed, Broadway’s musicals were as up-to-date as the producers could make them—and perhaps the greatest musical-comedy triumph of the decade was *No, No, Nanette* (1925).

Saying Yes to No, No, *Nanette*

Most Broadway shows are based on a **property**, drawing their plots from a previous story, novel,



Harry Frazee was the producer of *No, No, Nanette* (1925); he also owned the Boston Red Sox.

play, or, in more recent years, a movie. *Shuffle Along*, for instance, had been based on Miller and Lyles's old vaudeville skit. In the case of *No, No, Nanette*, the property was two-fold: after May Edgington published her novel *Oh James!* in 1914, Frank Mandel (1884–1958) and Emil Nyitray (1882–1922) adapted it as a play titled *My Lady Friends*, which premiered in 1919.⁹⁴ Producer Harry Frazee (1881–1929) felt that the novel and play offered good potential for a musical—but who would compose the music? One of his neighbors, a young composer named Vincent Youmans (1898–1946), was begging to work on the project, but Frazee was not very impressed with Youmans's previous Broadway work. Frazee changed his mind, however, when Youmans's mother offered to back the show herself although sources disagree as to whether her investment was \$9,000 or \$10,000. Youmans, in turn, gave his mother half of his future royalties.⁹⁵



"*Tea for Two*" was to become the biggest hit in *No, No, Nanette* (1925).

Quite a few people were involved with bringing *No, No, Nanette* to the stage. One of the playwrights for the 1919 play version, Frank Mandel, partnered with another Broadway veteran, Otto Harbach (1873–1963), to create the book for the musical comedy. Harbach started to write lyrics for the songs as well, but he agreed to bring on Irving Caesar (1895–1996) as a second lyricist because Caesar already had a good working relationship with Youmans.⁹⁶

Even with so much expertise, it took quite a while for *No, No, Nanette* to find its footing. Like most shows aspiring to reach Broadway, *No, No, Nanette* went on a **"tryout" tour** through various cities before attempting a New York premiere. Critics were lukewarm in the first two stops, and Frazee began to panic. He took over as director himself, and he told Youmans and Caesar that some new songs were needed immediately.⁹⁷ The two men decided to use a song they had created just a few weeks earlier—a danceable little number called "Tea for Two" (Listening Example 6). Caesar had been taking a nap when an excited Youmans woke him up, saying he'd just written a great tune and needed words for it. Caesar's sleepy memory of the melody was that it went "Dee—da-dee—da-dee—da-dee . . . da-dee—da-dum—da-dee—da-dum."

To satisfy his impatient writing partner, Caesar came

up with what he thought was a “dummy lyric”—a nonsense poem that had the right rhyme scheme and poetic rhythm to fit the tune. Youmans, however, felt that the “dummy” was perfect, and refused to let Caesar change a word; “Tea for Two” was inserted into *No, No, Nanette* exactly as it stood.⁹⁸ For many listeners to come, “the almost idiotic simplicity of the ‘Tea for Two’ lyric is what makes the song soar. All the optimism and light-heartedness of the twenties are captured in that song.”⁹⁹

Jazzomania

“Tea for Two” and “I Want to Be Happy” were two of the songs that Youmans and Caesar added to the struggling show, and by the time *No, No, Nanette* reached Chicago, it was clear that Frazee had a hit on his hands. In fact, after the shaky start to the tryout tour, he decided it would be best to capitalize on the show’s current success in Chicago, so *No, No, Nanette* remained there for nearly a year. The musical’s hit songs spread across the nation and even overseas; they were played unceasingly in other stage productions, on recordings, on the radio, and also by the orchestras that entertained diners in major restaurants.¹⁰⁰ The first recording of “Tea for Two” featured solely a jazz orchestra, and it reached Number 5 on the *Billboard* charts in January 1925, remaining there for five weeks.¹⁰¹ That same month, Marion Harris’s vocal version climbed to Number 1—and stayed at Number 1 for eleven weeks.¹⁰² In fact, when *No, No, Nanette* at last reached Broadway in September 1925, New York critics acted as if they were tired of it. The *New York Daily News* opened its review rather pointedly: “Boston saw it. Philadelphia saw it. Chicago saw it. London saw it, and Guatemala, Medicine Bend and the Canary [I]slands have probably seen it as well,” while the writer for the *Daily News* estimated that he was hearing the music “for the 1,876,934th time last night.”¹⁰³

The New York reviewers’ rather weary attitude was not universal, however. In London, the dance numbers in *No, No, Nanette* had a jazz flavor that was almost shockingly new to British audiences. One critic wrote:

Saxophone players (in the limelight) worked with the energy of a savage religious festival, and when there was any chance that you might mislay the melody it was emphasised by the brass with mutes. A little of a muted trombone or trumpet is good for certain effects, but a whole melody played as if the



The Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich was one of the first classical artists to be inspired by “Tea for Two.”

*instruments were melodious steam saws cuts into my brain and produces a mild nerve storm. The music of “No, No, Nanette” and the frenzied dancing on the stage are the epitome of modern jazzomania.*¹⁰⁴

With those references to saxophones, muted brass, and energetic tempos for dancing, the writer could almost have been describing the jazz tunes presented in Section II of this Guide!

Other Composers Take Notice

Historian Kurt Gändl designates *No, No, Nanette* as “the quintessential American 1920s musical on the world’s stages.”¹⁰⁵ Yet, Youmans’s Broadway career was far too short; he had to retire after only thirteen years in the business because of increasing health issues stemming from tuberculosis.¹⁰⁶ Still, he must have been proud of a legacy that included “Tea for Two.” It was unquestionably his greatest hit, and although its jazzy nature may have dumbfounded British listeners, it

quickly caught the ears of other musicians, both in the classical world as well as in the jazz sphere.

Some of the earliest classical adaptations of “Tea for Two” took place in the Soviet Union, where the tune was known as “Tahiti Trot.” It was woven into a 1926 operetta by Boris Fomin (1900–48), and even more famously a year later, Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–75) made an [orchestral arrangement](#)—from memory—in forty minutes. He undertook the task because of a wager with his teacher, Nikolai Malko (1883–1961), who did not think Shostakovich could complete the assignment in under an hour.¹⁰⁷ Malko was something of a champion for the tune in a Soviet regime that did not care for American jazz; he later recalled, “Jazz music was regarded very negatively in Russia in those days. I did not agree with this philosophy and referred to [“Tea for Two”] as an example of music that was not

bad.”¹⁰⁸ Admirers were found in other countries, too; the Frenchman Maurice Ravel (composer of Listening Example 13) found the harmonies of the song to be “quite Ravelian.”¹⁰⁹

Jazz artists also regarded Youmans’s “Tea for Two” as a fruitful basis for further exploration. The jazz piano virtuoso Art Tatum (1909–56) performed it [numerous times](#) during the 1930s, and his 1939 recording of the tune was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1986.¹¹⁰ When Tatum’s version was first released, it reached Number 18 on the 1939 *Billboard* chart.¹¹¹ In 1952, Thelonious Monk (1917–82) released a version of “Tea for Two,” retitled as “[Skippy](#),” employing the bebop style of jazz that had recently developed. One of the highlights of the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival was singer [Anita O’Day](#)’s rendition of the tune.

LISTENING COMPANION 6: *No, No, Nanette*, “Tea For Two” (1925) – Vincent Youmans

Historian Andrew Lamb notes that for many listeners, “Tea for Two” epitomizes “the spirit of the decade.”¹¹² This description resembles many of the comments made about “The Charleston” (Listening Example 5), and, interestingly, the songs share several characteristics. They both use the A-B-A-C show-tune form for their choruses, and even more significantly, they both employ a tiny rhythmic cell many, many times so that it forms an ostinato. In the case of “Tea for Two,” the simple long-short-long-short rhythm—heard six times in A—is created by a series of dotted quarter notes followed by eighth notes, as illustrated in Figure 3-2.

FIGURE 3-2

The figure shows two staves of musical notation in G clef, 4/4 time, and A major (indicated by three sharps). The top staff starts with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then repeats this pattern six times. The bottom staff begins at measure 5 with a similar pattern: a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then continues with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, and then a single eighth note. This pattern is labeled "Ostinato rhythm in 'Tea for Two.'".

That repetitive pattern is highly suitable for a style of tap dance called “[soft-shoe](#).” The song’s lyrics employ a catchy rhyme scheme that puts a lot of emphasis on alternating *oo* and *ee* rhymes:¹¹³

Picture you upon my knee, just tea for two and two for tea;

Just me for you and you for me alone.

The original theatrical song was a duet, so [Marion Harris](#)'s 1925 solo recording (used for Listening Example 6) modifies some of the show's poetry.

The **B** phrase introduces a new, slightly busier repetitive pattern, also heard six times within eight bars (see Figure 3-3).

FIGURE 3-3



Second ostinato rhythm in “Tea for Two.”

The **C** phrase retains the **A** rhythm, but it works its way downward stepwise through a descending sequence.

Youmans's primary novelty in "Tea for Two" is the uncommon harmonic shift that occurs in the **B** phrase. The numerous natural signs (\natural) seen throughout Figure 3-3 are an indication that the key has changed to C major. Normally, in the key of A-flat major (the song's predominant key), chords built on its mediant (C) would be minor (C-Eb-G), but Youmans raises the Eb to E \natural , thus producing a C major chord (C-E-G). By using this unexpected major harmony, Youmans created a **chromatic mediant**, giving the peppy song a special zest—and probably explaining the lasting appeal of the piece to classical and jazz musicians alike.



Marion Harris recorded a vocal version of “Tea for Two” that held the Number 1 spot on the Billboard charts for eleven weeks.

Listening Guide 6: No, No, Nanette, “Tea for Two” (1925) – Vincent Youmans

Timeline	Form	Phrases	Text	Musical Features
0:00	Introduction	4 bars	[instrumental]	Foreshadows a phrase of Chorus; ends with ritardando
0:09	Verse	(16 bars)	I'm discontented with homes that are rented So I have invented my own. Darling, this place is a lovers' oasis Where life's weary chase is unknown. Far from the cry of the city, Where flowers pretty caress the streams. Cozy to hide in, to live side by side in; Don't let it abide in my dreams.	Flowing lines; freedom in tempo
0:44				Ritardando
0:46	Chorus	a	Picture me upon your knee, Just tea for two, and two for tea, Just me for you, and you for me alone.	Soft-shoe rhythm ostinato
1:03		b	Nobody near us to see us or hear us, No friends or relations on weekend vacations. We won't have it known, dear, That we own a telephone, dear.	Shift to chromatic mediant (III); new rhythm increases animation.
1:19		a	Day will break and I'll awake And start to bake a sugar cake For you to take for all the boys to see.	Return to tonic key
1:36		c	We will raise a family, A boy for you, a girl for me. Oh, can't you see how happy we would be.	
1:50				Ritardando
1:55		a		Violins lead.
2:11		b		Chromatic mediant; increased animation
2:26	Chorus	a	Day will break and I'll awake And start to bake a sugar cake For you to take for all the boys to see.	Repetition of 1:19
2:42		c	We will raise a family, A boy for you, a girl for me. Oh, can't you see how happy	
2:54			we would be.	Ritardando with vocal slide on final “be”



Jerome Kern was an advocate for integrating music within the storyline of a show.

JAZZ AS SUBTEXT

Broadway's musical comedies and revues were quick to absorb jazz styles into their songs and dances, but the long-standing genre of operetta tended to stick with its hallmark features: glorifying the trained voice; far-fetched, light-hearted, and romantic stories; and a preponderance of waltz melodies that could be marketed to dance orchestras.

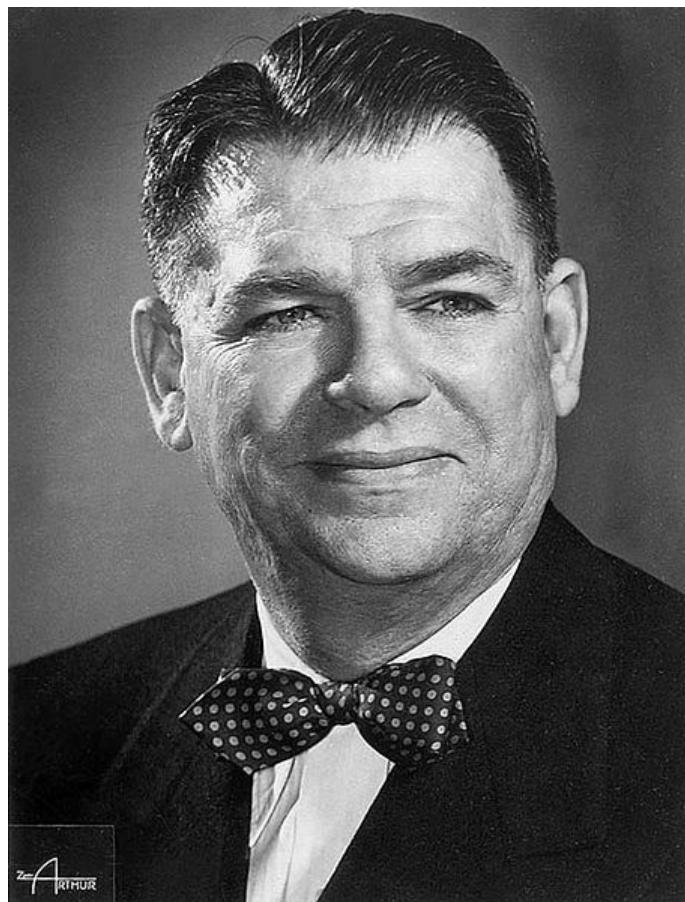
During the 1920s, a hybrid approach that blended the best features of musical comedies and of operettas began to appear on the Broadway stage. The songs within these new shows offered a wide array of musical styles, and they generally expected a significant amount of musical training from the performers to do the compositions justice. The shows could be funny, but their stories often were more compelling and multi-dimensional than many of the thin plots of musical comedies. The songs themselves were integrated into the storylines: it made sense for the characters to sing *those* words at those particular moments. In most musical comedies of the 1920s, many songs had been irrelevant interruptions to the plot, inserted simply to give characters an opportunity to sing and dance.

Making Musicals Meaningful

As early as 1915, the composer Jerome Kern (1885–1945) had already begun integrating songs into his musical comedies. He explained:

It is my opinion that the musical numbers should carry the action of the play and should be representative of the personalities of the characters who sing them. Songs must be suited to the action and the mood of the play.¹¹⁴

Kern had seen too many shows in which the songs made absolutely no sense within the story, and he felt that the practice should stop. Kern's views about song integration were shared by the lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II (1895–1960). In fact, when Hammerstein co-wrote *Rose-Marie* (1924), he inserted a note into the program: "The musical numbers of this play are such an integral part of the action that we do not think we should list them as separate episodes."¹¹⁵



Photograph of Oscar Hammerstein II. The team of Richard Rodgers and Hammerstein was famous for musicals such as The Sound of Music (1959), but Hammerstein had worked with Jerome Kern earlier in his career to create Show Boat (1927).



Edna Ferber wrote the novel that served as the property for the musical *Show Boat* (1927).

The theater world is fortunate that these two creators formed a partnership since the result of their first collaboration, *Show Boat* (1927), is often viewed as the “flagship” of a new blended genre: musical theater.¹¹⁶ Musical theater shows—often called simply “musicals”—intermixed aspects of older musical comedies and operettas, but put new emphasis on coherent storylines and on music that helped to convey those stories.

Unusually for the era, *Show Boat* used a dramatic 1926 novel by Edna Ferber as its property. Many friends of Kern and Hammerstein tried to talk them out of the choice, pointing out the serious novel’s drawbacks as “entertainment”: it featured two unhappy relationships, it depicted the downtrodden situation of African Americans, and it even addressed the uncomfortable issue of interracial marriage, which was still illegal in many parts of the South. None of these topics seemed to be suitable for Broadway audiences who were accustomed to frivolous musical comedies. Even

Ferber, the novel’s author, was horrified, fearing that her story would be made trivial; she was envisioning the kind of mindless entertainments that Broadway had previously offered.¹¹⁷

Kern’s music helped to win Ferber over. After Kern swore to her that their show would maintain the highest musical and dramatic standards, she reluctantly gave Kern and Hammerstein permission to adapt her novel. Ferber later described the incident that convinced her that she had made the right decision:

*Jerome Kern appeared in my apartment late one afternoon with a strange look of quiet exultation in his eyes. He sat down at the piano . . . and sang “Ol’ Man River.” The music mounted, mounted, and I give you my word my hair stood on end, the tears came to my eyes, I breathed like a heroine in a melodrama. This was great music. This was music that would outlast Jerome Kern’s day and mine.*¹¹⁸

The breadth of musical styles within *Show Boat* also help to depict the story’s movement through time, since the tunes range from “old-fashioned” numbers characteristic of the nineteenth century to “modern” jazz pieces of the 1920s.¹¹⁹ The story concerns a floating theater, the Cotton Blossom, that sails from



Paul Robeson sang “Ol’ Man River” in the first movie version of *Show Boat*.



The song “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” plays a role in the drama of Show Boat (1927).

town to town along the Mississippi. The owner of the boat, Cap’n Andy, employs Julie and her husband Steve as the stars of his shows. Despite the fact that Julie is married, a worker on the boat, Pete, has been trying to woo her with gifts, but she turns him down. While they are docked in Natchez, Mississippi, Pete gets his revenge by revealing to the local sheriff that Julie is half-Black, making her marriage to Steve illegal in that state. Rather than cause trouble, Julie and Steve leave the show boat. The remainder of the story focuses on the troubled relationship between Cap’n Andy’s daughter Magnolia and Gaylord, whose gambling addiction eventually destroys their marriage and forces Magnolia into supporting herself and her child as a musical entertainer.

Music as Identifier

A particularly impressive illustration of the power of musical style is presented by “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” (Listening Example 7). The song’s melody is first heard as background underscoring—without words—when Pete notices that Queenie (the show

boat’s Black cook) is wearing a brooch that he had given to Julie. Pete is angry since he realizes that Julie is rejecting his advances and is giving away his gifts to her. At this point, the audience has no idea of the tune’s significance, but it is starting to be subtly linked in our ears with Julie.¹²⁰

We first hear some of the song’s words a little bit later, when Magnolia excitedly announces that she is in love with the handsome young Gaylord (whom she has just met). Julie warns that he might not be reliable, and Magnolia declares that she will simply stop loving him if that’s the case.¹²¹ Julie tells her that it’s not that easy to turn off one’s feelings and sings a bit of “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” to prove her point. Queenie overhears and is startled to hear Julie sing *that* melody, since it’s a Black song—a tune that white people don’t normally



Helen Morgan played the role of Julie in the stage show and first film version of Show Boat.

sing. Julie is clearly uncomfortable to be questioned about it, giving us our first hint of the secret about her racial background. Still, when Queenie asks Julie if she knows the whole song, Julie declares that of course she does. After she sings the first choruses, other Black members of the cast take over various verses.

Two scenes later, the sheriff publicly announces the information he has received from Pete—that Julie has a white father and an African-American mother—and we at last understand how it is that Julie has grown up knowing “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man.”

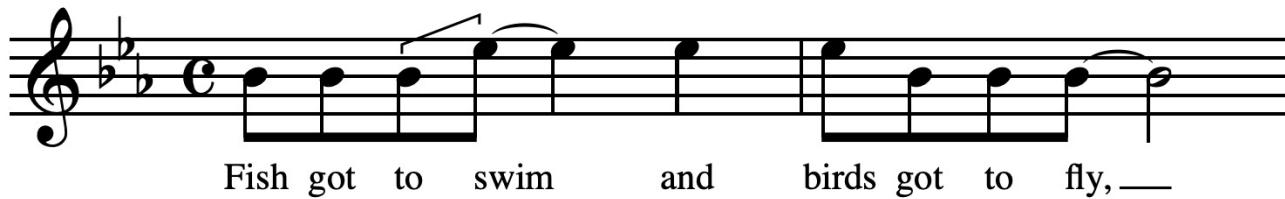
LISTENING COMPANION 7: *Show Boat*, “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” (1927) – Jerome Kern

The bluesy style of music in “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” was carefully chosen to reflect Julie’s Black ancestry. In fact, in the earliest published score of *Show Boat*, the song is labeled “Tempo di Blues.”¹²² However, Kern did not use the twelve-bar blues harmonic structure. The only real blues element is the presence of blue notes that waver between the conventional and flattened scale tones. These syllables are underlined in the Listening Guide.

Since there is no “cast recording” of the 1927 production of *Show Boat*, our Listening Example features a 1928 studio recording by [Helen Morgan](#), who had played the role of Julie in the stage musical. In her recording, the song is structured as a five-part rondo form of A-B-A-C-A, preceded by a vocal introduction. However, during the rondo refrains (A), Kern and Hammerstein set the poetry in three phrases, perhaps giving a nod to the three-line lyrics of most blues songs. They used the spelling “dat” for “that,” capturing the pronunciation of “th-” often used in the dialect known as African American Vernacular English.¹²³ In Morgan’s commercial recording, however, she generally returns to the standard English pronunciation of “th-,” perhaps because she did not feel that she was acting a role in the recording studio.

Music also plays a different, unifying role in the drama. Unsurprisingly, for a musical focused on people whose lives are connected to a show boat, the river is a constant and essential presence. Kern assigned a musical motif to the river itself: an upward leap of a perfect fourth. The first phrase of the A refrain in “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” refers to the fish that swim in the river, so that segment of the melody employs the river’s motif, as shown under the bracket in Figure 3-4.

FIGURE 3-4



“River” motif in “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man.”

Kern also makes a subtle point about “power” by embedding the river’s motif within this particular song: the river is powerful, and so is love. As historian Geoffrey Block explains, “Kern uses this perfect fourth to connect the force of the natural world with the central human theme of the work embodied in ‘Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man’: a woman in love is destined to love her man forever, even when he abandons her.”¹²⁴

These sorts of subtextual messages are much deeper and more thoughtful than the typical musical comedies of the day. Moreover, the often-uncomfortable subject matter of “marriages destroyed by private demons (compulsive gambling) and public ills (institutional racism)” was far removed from what most listeners would previously have considered to be entertainment.¹²⁵ However, *Show Boat*, with its 572-performance run, demonstrated that audiences were ready for this increased realism—that a musical *could* be “taken seriously as theater.”¹²⁶

Listening Guide 7: *Show Boat*, “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” (1927) – Jerome Kern

Timeline	Form	Phrase	Text	Musical and Textual Features
0:00	Inst'l Intro			<i>Plaintive orchestral opening; minor mode</i>
0:14	Vocal Intro		Let me lay on my back In a forty-dollar hack No more gin, no more rum For the misery's done come.	<i>Text differs from theatrical version; “hack” is a horse-drawn cab; ends with woodwind response</i>
0:42	A	a	Fish got to swim and birds got to fly, I got to love one man till I die, Can’t help <u>lovin’ dat man</u> of mine.	<i>Refrain begins with leaps of a fourth; second musical subphrase moves downward in a sequence; third subphrase has blue notes (<u>underlined</u>); offbeat banjo accompaniment</i>
		a	Tell me he’s lazy, tell me he’s slow, Tell me I’m crazy, oh, maybe I know, Can’t help <u>lovin’ dat man</u> of mine.	<i>Repetition of a melody.</i>
1:11	Inter-lude			<i>Instruments foreshadow b melody; many blue notes</i>
1:34	B	b	Oh listen, <u>sisters</u> , I love my <u>Mister</u> man, and I can’t tell you why There ain’t no reason Why I should love <u>that</u> man It must be something <u>that</u> the <u>angels</u> done planned.	<i>First episode has more conjunct melody with chromatic pitches to emulate blue notes.</i>
1:57	A	a	Fish got to swim and birds got to fly, I got to love one man till I die, Can’t help <u>lovin’ dat man</u> of mine.	<i>Return to refrain’s a melody</i>
2:13		a	Tell me he’s lazy, tell me he’s slow, Tell me I’m crazy, oh, maybe I know, Can’t help <u>lovin’ dat man</u> of mine.	<i>Repetition of a melody.</i>
2:29	C	c	When he goes <u>away</u> , dat’s a rainy <u>day</u> And when he comes back dat day is fine, De sun will shine.	<i>Second episode features phrases that use repeated notes ending with large upward disjunct leaps.</i>
2:44	A'	a	He can come home as late as can be Home widout him, ain’t no home to me Can’t help <u>lovin’ dat man</u> of mine.	<i>Refrain: return to single repetition of a melody</i>
2:57	Coda			<i>Short orchestra tag</i>



Remick's music store on "Tin Pan Alley" employed both Vincent Youmans and George Gershwin as song-pluggers.

JAZZ ON THE RADIO

The "Alley"

By the late nineteenth century, a number of commercial music publishers had opened up shops on 28th Street in New York. There was a great deal of rivalry between them, and most firms hired **song-pluggers** to help sell the sheet music they were printing. The businesses all had pianos in their front offices so that prospective purchasers could try out sheet music before buying it, but song pluggers would often illustrate the music for customers who were not skilled pianists. Broadway lore says that a visiting journalist felt that the racket from all the neighboring businesses was deafening; he remarked that the pianos sounded like a bunch of tin pans being clanged together—and thus the area was nicknamed **Tin Pan Alley**.¹²⁷

The "Tin Pan Alley" label was soon applied to the *type* of popular music published there (and in other U.S. cities) as well. Several of the composers featured in this Resource Guide "pounded the piano" as song pluggers, including Lillian Hardin Armstrong (Listening Example 3), Fletcher Henderson (Listening



Artist McClelland Barclay depicted a vocalist performing in his painting *The Nightclub Singer*.

Example 4), James P. Johnson (Listening Example 5), Vincent Youmans (Listening Example 6), Jerome Kern (Listening Example 7), and George Gershwin (Listening Example 11). By the 1920s, many of the firms were beginning to disperse to other parts of town, but the Tin Pan Alley label persisted for decades as a description for popular music.

While working as song demonstrators, song-pluggers reached one customer at a time, but other strategies for selling music began to develop. Many song-pluggers cultivated relationships with star performers, persuading them to add new songs to their nightclub show appearances, vaudeville skits, Broadway musicals, or revues.¹²⁸ Many singers recorded the songs, and the publisher would then include a photograph of the performer on the printed sheet music, again in an effort to promote sales.

Early on, a performer would be given a free copy of the song as persuasion to sing it; soon, additional incentives included free drinks, gifts, and even cash. As commercial radio began to develop after World War I—and as airtime grew more precious—song-pluggers targeted the conductors of orchestras with weekly radio broadcasts, persuading them to perform new pieces "on the air."¹²⁹

Broadcaster Ben Bernie

One of the targets for song-pluggers was Ben Bernie (born "Bernard Anzlevitz," 1891–1943), a bandleader who was nicknamed "The Old Maestro." Raised in a family of twelve, he knew acute poverty as a child; near the end of his life, he remarked, "We were so poor that I still look upon fruit as a luxury."¹³⁰ He



This photograph of bandleader Ben Bernie was taken a few years after he recorded “Sweet Georgia Brown” with his Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra.

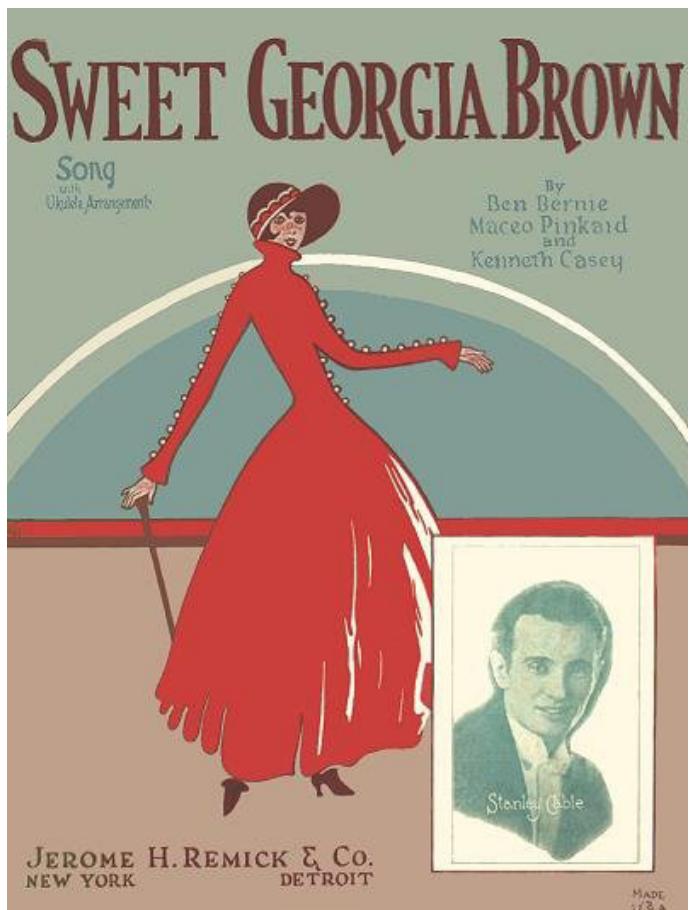
started as a violin performer in vaudeville, but was inspired to undertake a conducting career after hearing the jazz-orchestra ensemble led by Paul Whiteman (1890–1967), the director who would be the impetus for George Gershwin to compose *Rhapsody in Blue* (Listening Example 11). When the Hotel Roosevelt in New York was completed, Bernie’s ensemble was the first orchestra hired to perform in the hotel ballroom, which was open to the public. Although it was meant to be only a short engagement for Bernie, the crowds who danced at the hotel were so enthusiastic that the Hotel Roosevelt hired Bernie’s group exclusively; they played there from 1923 to 1929.¹³¹

Bernie was a fine violinist, but it was his speaking voice that was perhaps his greatest asset when the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) network was looking for an orchestra to feature on its first broadcast. It also helped that Bernie’s group had already been one of the earliest jazz bands to perform in regional radio programming. Bernie and the Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra connected to NBC’s first nationwide broadcast on November 15, 1926, via remote pickup.¹³² The success of the NBC debut, and Bernie’s “easy-going, witty microphone manner,” led to coast-to-coast fame.¹³³ Bernie and the Hotel

Roosevelt Orchestra performed numerous popular works in their programs, but Bernie was always on the hunt for new pieces.

The origins of one such piece, “Sweet Georgia Brown,” are a bit unclear. A popular legend is that the song was named for a real young woman whose father, Dr. George Thaddeus Brown, was a longtime member of the Georgia State Legislature. Although it is likely true that she was named for her father’s home state, it is not confirmed that the General Assembly “adopted” her and awarded her “open-floor” status after her birth in 1911. There is also a claim that Dr. Brown met Bernie while in New York as a medical student and described his daughter to the bandleader, who was then inspired to write lyrics about her. While it is true that Dr. Brown completed some of his medical training in New York, that education took place in the late nineteenth century—decades before his daughter was born, and while Bernie was not yet ten years old.¹³⁴

It is certain that Ben Bernie and a thirteen-member



The sheet music for “Sweet Georgia Brown” credits Ben Bernie as an author (although he may not have been); it also shows the photo of a singer who recorded the song.



The Harlem Globetrotters—a fun-loving exhibition basketball team—have used a whistled version of “Sweet Georgia Brown” as their theme song since 1952.

Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra recorded the Tin Pan Alley tune “Sweet Georgia Brown” on March 19, 1925.¹³⁵ It is also clear that the song was composed by Maceo Pinkard (1897–1962), a multi-talented African-American composer from West Virginia who initially built his career in the Midwest working as a theatrical agent. Pinkard then moved to New York in 1920, where he expanded his range of activities. He wrote the book for one of the *Shuffle Along* sequels (*Liza*, in 1922); arranged music for various jazz bands; and ran his own publishing house. Most of all, though, he wrote songs.¹³⁶

Two additional people are credited on the sheet music for “Sweet Georgia Brown”: Kenneth Casey (1899–1965) and Ben Bernie himself. It is not clear how Casey became the lyricist for Pinkard; he was best known as a child actor, and his reputation as a songwriter rests solely on “Sweet Georgia Brown.”¹³⁷

Bernie’s connection to the song is equally uncertain; he is sometimes listed as a composer, but other sources describe him as a lyricist. One pair of lines has long been attributed to him (“Georgia named her, Georgia claimed her”), due to his supposed encounter with Dr. Brown. Still, composer Charles Bowen points out that many of the other lyrics would hardly be an appropriate way for Dr. Brown to have described his fourteen-year-old daughter (“Fellers she can’t get are fellers she ain’t met”). Instead, Bowen argues that since Bernie was doing so much to popularize the number with his performances and recording of the song, “Pinkard cut Bernie in for a share of the tune’s royalties by giving him a co-writer credit.”¹³⁸ The Tin Pan Alley historian David Jasen agrees, saying that Bernie, “for plugging purposes, cut himself in on the song as co-composer, although he did no writing.”¹³⁹

Whatever its true authorship, “Sweet Georgia Brown” was a mind-boggling success. [Ben Bernie’s 1925 recording](#) (the performance used in Listening Guide 8) reached Number 1 on the *Billboard* chart and held that position for five weeks straight; it remained on the pop charts in various positions for thirteen weeks in all.¹⁴⁰ Two other recordings, by other performers, also made it to Number 5 and Number 6 on the charts that same year. Hundreds of recordings have followed, and Pinkard’s biographer Jeffrey Green notes that it “became one of the most frequently recorded tunes in jazz.”¹⁴¹ One of the most famous recordings was made in 1949 by Brother Bones and His Shadows. In their version, the chorus is whistled, and the exhibition basketball team the [Harlem Globetrotters](#) have used that recording as their theme song since 1952.¹⁴²

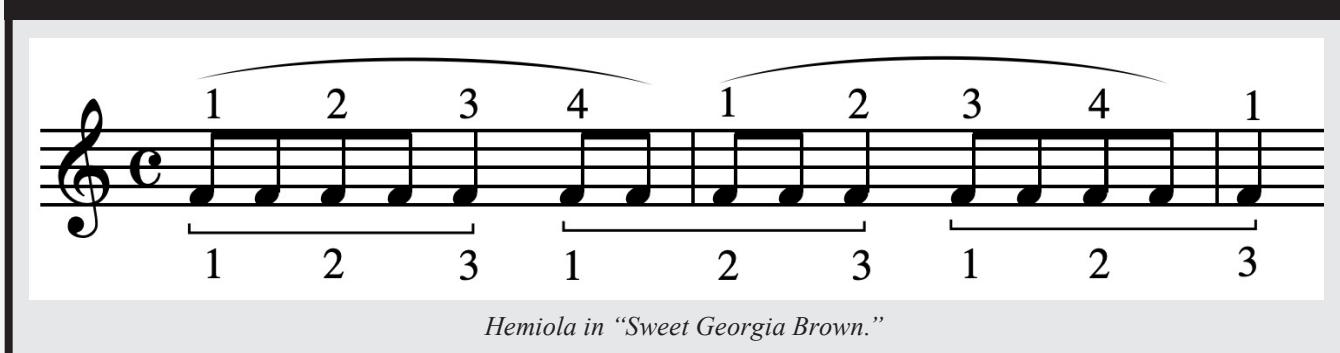
LISTENING COMPANION 8: “Sweet Georgia Brown” (1925) – Ben Bernie and Maceo Pinkard

There are many features in “Sweet Georgia Brown” that resemble elements of the other tunes in this resource guide. It employs a thirty-two-bar chorus that is split into two sixteen-bar halves, similar to “Hotter Than That” (Listening Example 3). Since each half of the chorus starts with similar material (A) but then moves to a different ending (B or C), the overall chorus is structured as an A-B-A-C show-tune form, similar to “Tea for Two” (Listening Example 6). The fourth of those phrases, C, even references the Charleston rhythm (Listening Example 5), and thus Brunswick Records advertised the Bernie recording as “A Charleston-swing song.”¹⁴³ The piece alternates New Orleans-style heterophonic passages with pre-planned, Chicago-style homophony. The trumpets use mutes, as heard in “Dippermouth Blues” (Listening Example 2). Several instruments are featured in extended solos, in the manner of various listening examples.

Analyst Thomas Hischak notes that “‘Sweet Georgia Brown’ (1925) is an early jazz classic that also foreshadows the swing sound to come along a decade later.”¹⁴⁴ The riff-focused melodies, in the manner of Count Basie and Fletcher Henderson, are one pre-swing characteristic. The sectional writing for the saxophones in Chorus 2 also resembles Henderson’s approach in “The Stampede” (Listening Example 4).

Even though “Sweet Georgia Brown” shares characteristics with many other tunes of its day, the song also has its special qualities that make it distinctive. One catchy moment in the introduction was an innovation of Bernie’s interpretation of the song: although the meter is in the typical danceable common-time, the Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra performs a **hemiola** passage that emphasizes every third beat, as if the time signature had shifted to $\frac{3}{4}$ time. Figure 3-5 illustrates the hemiola effect: the numbers above the staff represent the customary beats in the indicated $\frac{4}{4}$ meter. Underneath the staff, the brackets and numbers show how the repetitive pattern—four eighth notes and a quarter note—seems to produce a contrasting triple-meter pulse.

FIGURE 3-5



Another novel aspect of “Sweet Georgia Brown” is the fact that the four phrases of the show-tune chorus each modulate to a key that is a perfect fifth lower than the preceding phrase. If you turn to the circle of fifths shown in Figure 1-20 in Section I of this resource guide, you can trace the changing keys by moving counterclockwise around the circle. For instance, if you start with E major, the next key to the left would be A major, followed by D major, and then by G major. This “circle-of-fifths” motion is delightfully unsettling and presents a stimulating challenge to jazz musicians when improvising. Although “Sweet Georgia Brown” is “bright and bouncy music,” it can be difficult to sing accurately—yet, as Hischak notes, “the song has been whistled and hummed by the person on the street for decades.”¹⁴⁵

Listening Guide 8: “Sweet Georgia Brown” (1925) – Ben Bernie and Maceo Pinkard

Timeline	Form	Phrases	Sub-phrases	Structure	Musical Features
0:00	Intro			4 bars	<i>Homorhythmic ascending pattern</i>
0:04				2 bars	<i>Hemiola rhythm</i>
0:07				2 bars	<i>Homorhythmic scalar ascent</i>

0:09	Chorus 1	A	a	4 bars	<i>Trumpet leads (launching circle-of-fifths motion).</i>
0:13				4 bars	<i>Key shifts a perfect fifth lower; riff on first phrase</i>
0:18			b	4 bars	<i>Key shifts a perfect fifth lower; riff on first phrase</i>
0:22				4 bars	<i>Key shifts a perfect fifth lower; then moves back to tonic</i>
0:26		A'	a	4 bars	<i>Tonic key; repetition of first phrase with vamp in woodwinds</i>
0:31				4 bars	<i>Key shifts a perfect fifth lower; riff on first phrase</i>
0:35			c	4 bars	<i>Return to tonic; "Charleston" rhythm</i>
0:40				4 bars	<i>Riff on first phrase</i>
0:44	Chorus 2	A	a, b	15 bars	<i>Saxes in harmony</i>
1:00				1 bar	<i>Muted trumpet starts adding responses.</i>
1:02		A'	a	8 bars	<i>Saxes in harmony with muted trumpet fills</i>
1:10			c	4 bars	<i>Muted trumpet leads in "Charleston" rhythm.</i>
1:15				4 bars	<i>Saxes in harmony</i>
1:19	Chorus 3	A	a, b	6 bars	<i>Muted trumpets play contrasting melody over same chords.</i>
1:26				2 bars	<i>"Neigh"-like responses in woodwinds</i>
1:28		A'	a	8 bars	<i>Muted trumpets resume lead.</i>
1:37	Interlude			4 bars	<i>Descent, then ascent</i>
1:41	Chorus 4	A	a, b	15 bars	<i>Modulation to new key; muted trumpet with woodwind fills</i>
1:57				1 bar	<i>Solo break (woodwind section)</i>
1:59			a	8 bars	<i>Muted trumpets with woodwind fills</i>
2:08			c	4 bars	<i>Busy clarinet countermelody during "Charleston" rhythm</i>
2:12				4 bars	<i>Muted trumpet lead</i>
2:16	Interlude			2 bars	<i>Tag-like, ending with cymbal crash</i>
2:19	Chorus 5	A	a, b	16 bars	<i>Saxophone solo with rhythm section</i>
2:36		A'	a	8 bars	<i>Saxophone solo with heterophony</i>
2:44			c	4 bars	<i>Saxophone countermelody during "Charleston" rhythm</i>
2:49				4 bars	<i>Trumpet leads in final phrase.</i>
2:53	Coda			2 bars	<i>Extension of final phrase; cymbal at end</i>

JAZZ IN THE MOVIES

The first public demonstrations in 1895 of “moving pictures” were exciting, but the cameras that had filmed them were capable of capturing images only; they had no mechanism for recording sounds. Therefore, when the films were screened for the public, live music was performed to accompany these silent movies. Initially, the purpose of the music was simply practical: it hid the sound of noisy projectors.¹⁴⁶ In fact, one early filmmaker referred to his noisy cast-iron camera-projector as both a “coffee grinder” and “machine gun,” due to the racket it made.¹⁴⁷ As theater owners started to screen films on a regular basis, the

musicians in their theaters began choosing preexisting popular and classical music to suit the moods of the onscreen scenes and stories. A 1918 reviewer who commented about the caliber of the various New York theater orchestras mentioned the number of classical composers he heard represented in the performances—Strauss, Saint-Saëns, Liszt, Chopin, Grieg, Beethoven, Wagner—and noted that one theater had “a library of over 8000 numbers to select from.”¹⁴⁸ The actual compositions performed for each film, however, could vary wildly from theater to theater. The music you heard accompanying a movie in New York, for example, could be completely different from music you heard in Chicago for the exact same film.



Warner Brothers used their Vitaphone equipment to create *Don Juan* (1926) the year before *The Jazz Singer* (1927), but it had music only—no spoken dialogue.

Music for “Silent” Movies

Bit by bit, however, some directors started asking composers to create custom scores to complement specific movies. A custom score—also called an original score—consisted of music that was *newly* written to suit the scenes of a particular film. Still, filmmakers could not ensure that local theater orchestras had the necessary skills to play custom scores, and some small theaters did not have an orchestra at all, relying instead on just a solo pianist or organist. In the mid-1920s, therefore, filmmakers began to develop the first efforts at presenting *recorded* music that was synchronized to a specific film—thus enabling viewers in different theaters to see *and* hear identical versions of that moving picture.¹⁴⁹

For a while, there were two competing methods of

synchronizing music and film. One was a “sound-on-film” technology that converted musical sound waves into visual images that were imbedded in a narrow track along the edge of the film footage.¹⁵⁰ However, a rival system was also devised, called “sound-on-disk.” In this technology, a single motor would operate both a projector as well as a turntable holding a disk that corresponded in length to a reel of film. This system offered a richer, fuller resonance than the sound-on-film approach. The most prominent studio to develop “sound-on-disk” films was Warner Brothers, using a device they called the Vitaphone.¹⁵¹ Despite the ability of these new technologies to record sound, the feature films themselves were still regarded as being “silent,” meaning that the characters still did not speak. The sounds that were recorded were solely music. It was not until 1927 that this limitation was broken—by accident.



Al Jolson's life story provided the premise for *The Jazz Singer* (1927), and in that movie, he became the first actor to speak in a "talking" film.

Breaking the "Sound" Barrier

A decade earlier, in 1917, a young Samson Raphaelson (1894–1983) saw a live performance featuring the actor Al Jolson (1886–1950), and he was mesmerized by the intensity of Jolson's singing. Raphaelson was reminded of the emotional power of Jewish cantors in synagogues—and, indeed, Jolson's father had wanted his son to *be* a cantor, and he was disappointed when Jolson chose "show business." Raphaelson wrote a short story ("The Day of Atonement") and then a play (*The Jazz Singer*), both loosely based on Jolson's life.¹⁵²

The play enjoyed a surprisingly successful run on Broadway, which attracted the attention of Warner Brothers. The studio had decided that a film with "synchronized" popular songs would be a good vehicle to promote their Vitaphone sound-on-disk machine. Since Raphaelson's play *The Jazz Singer* showcased a man who sang repeatedly, that storyline would be a plausible basis for the film's script.¹⁵³ "Jazz" was about to go "mainstream" in American entertainment.

The contract with Jolson called for him to sing six songs in the film that would be recorded with the synchronization equipment; a list was provided in the contract although it stipulated that mutually acceptable substitutes could be performed instead.¹⁵⁴ One substitution was "[Toot, Toot, Tootsie! \(Goo' Bye\)](#)" (Listening Example 9). Jolson had been singing the piece since 1922, when he had interpolated it into the largely forgettable musical comedy *Bombo* (1921). It became one of his most popular songs, along with "April Showers" and "California, Here I Come," both of which he had also interpolated into *Bombo*.¹⁵⁵

In the storyline of *The Jazz Singer*, Al Jolson's character (Jack Robin) is persuaded to sing some songs to entertain diners in a restaurant. The filmmakers' plan was for Jolson to perform "Dirty Hands, Dirty Face," followed by "Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo' Bye)"—and his singing in both of these songs would be recorded "live" during the visual filming. To Warner Brothers' surprise, Jolson improvised a few

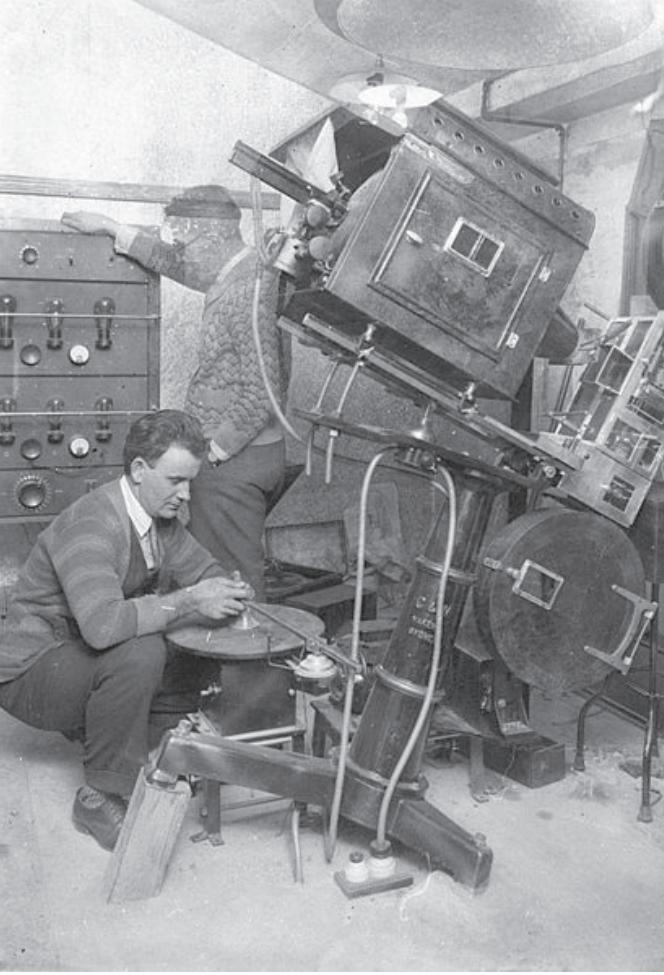
TOOT, TOOT, TOOTSIE
(GOO' BYE!)

HERB WILCOX'S ORCHESTRA LOS ANGELES CAL.

Words and Music by
Gus Kahn
Ernie Erdman
and
Dan Russo

LEO FEIST & CO. NEW YORK

Al Jolson and others had already popularized "Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo' Bye)" when he added it to *The Jazz Singer* (1927).



Technicians set up the projector and turntable (that would play the synchronized sound disk) for the Australian screening of *The Jazz Singer* (1927).

spoken words between the two jazz songs—and the studio decided to retain [his spontaneous lines](#): “Wait a minute! Wait a minute! You ain’t heard nothin’ yet.”¹⁵⁶ With this short interjection in 1927 of ad-libbed words that were not in the script, the first “talkie” feature film made its debut, and Hollywood never looked back. *The Jazz Singer* went on to earn three million dollars, setting a record for a low-budget film, and exposing an even wider swath of the American public to the still-new phenomenon of jazz.¹⁵⁷

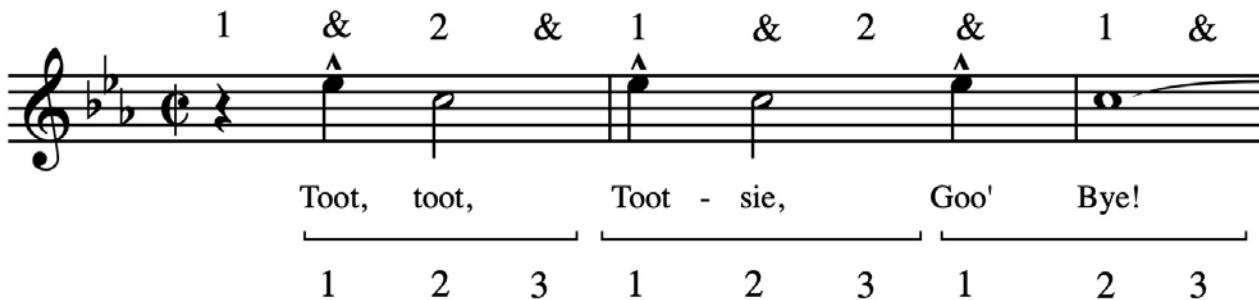
LISTENING COMPANION 9: *The Jazz Singer*, “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo’ Bye)” – Gus Kahn, Ernie Erdman, and Dan Russo

The presence of the word “jazz” in the title of America’s first “talking picture”—*The Jazz Singer*—illustrates how far the style had already come from its initially negative associations with the red-light-district. The soundtrack within *The Jazz Singer* is a typical mixture of popular features and jazz characteristics. For instance, the form of “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo’ Bye)” is verse-chorus, a very common Tin-Pan-Alley structure. The subtitle of the published sheet music, however, labels it as “A Cute Fox Trot Song.”¹⁵⁸ The **foxtrot** was a social dance in $\frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{2}{4}$ time, and thousands of pieces were able to suit its rather simple [dance movements](#). The composers Gus Kahn (1886–1941), Ernie Erdman (1879–1946), and Dan Russo (1885–1956) were clearly marketing the song to the widest possible audience.

In the 1922 commercial recording by Jolson—used as Listening Example 9—he adds numerous embellishments that are drawn from the jazz tradition. The accompanying ensemble busies itself with heterophony in several portions of the tune, and the trombone interjects several glissandos during the introduction, interlude, and coda. Similar to the introduction of “Sweet Georgia Brown” (Listening Example

8), the composers created a hemiola of a triple-meter effect against the notated cut-time. They drew attention to this hemiola by using this rhythmic device for the title phrase within the repetitive chorus. Figure 3-6 shows the quarter-note/half-note groups (counted 1-2-3-1-2-3) that contradict the meter (counted 1-&-2-&-1-&-2-&).

FIGURE 3-6



Hemiola rhythm in chorus of “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo’ Bye).”

Jolson fills his performance with other types of syncopated rhythms, especially in the second chorus. In fact, he repeats “bye” almost in the manner of scat-singing. He also bends a few pitches, similar to Bessie Smith’s technique in “Lost Your Head Blues” (Listening Example 1). Still, the steady pulse remains quite danceable, and it is no wonder that “this song has become associated with the age and image of the flapper during the Roaring Twenties.”¹⁵⁹

Listening Guide 9: *The Jazz Singer, “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo’ Bye)” (1922/1927)* – Gus Kahn, Ernie Erdman, and Dan Russo

Timeline	Form	Text	Musical and Textual Features
0:00	Introduction		<i>Treble instruments play syncopated melody from Chorus; heterophony in background ensemble; prominent trombone glissandos</i>
0:09	Verse	Yesterday I heard a lover sigh Goodbye, oh me oh my, Seven times he got aboard his train And seven times he hurried back To kiss his love again and tell her:	<i>Heterophony continues in background.</i>
0:26	Chorus	“Toot, Toot, Tootsie goo’ bye! Toot, Toot, Tootsie, don’t cry, That little choo-choo train that takes me Away from you, no words can tell how sad it makes me, Kiss me, kiss me, Tootsie, and then,	<i>Syncopated melody creates hemiola effect; heterophony continues.</i>
0:46		<u>Oh</u> baby, do it over again, Watch for the mail, I’ll never fail And if you don’t get a letter, then you know I’m in jail. Tut, Tut, Tut, Tut, Tootsie, don’t <u>cry</u> , Toot Toot Tootsie, goo’ bye.”	<i>Slide on “Oh” and “cry”; increasing chromaticism</i>

1:08	Inter-lude		Material from Introduction returns.
1:16	Verse	When somebody says goodbye to me, Oh I'm sad as I can be, Not so with this loving Romeo, He seems to take a lot of pleasure Saying goodbye to his treasure:	Heterophony continues in background.
1:33	Chorus	"Toot, Toot, Tootsie goo' bye bye bye bye bye bye bye! Toot, Toot, Tootsie, don't cry, That little choo-choo, that little train that takes, that takes me Away from you, no, no words can tell how sad it makes me Kiss me, kiss me, Tootsie, and then, oh, ho ho, do it over again, And though I yearn, New things to learn I'll keep playing solitaire until I return Tut, Tut, Tut, Tut, Tootsie, don't cry, don't cry, don't cry, Toot Toot Tootsie, goo' bye."	Jolson makes a few text changes and adds numerous vocal embellishments (bends and slides).
2:15	Coda		Material from Introduction returns.
2:21	Tag		Rhythmic unison

SECTION III SUMMARY

- ◆ “Broadway” is a nickname for the New York theater district, and it featured operettas, revues, and musical comedies at the turn of the twentieth century
- ◆ *Shuffle Along*—a Black-created musical comedy—achieved significant success on Broadway in 1921. Its **book** was written by Flournoy Miller and Aubrey Lyles, who based the story on a sketch they had previously performed on the **vaudeville** circuit. They expanded the storyline for the musical comedy, and the show included vigorous jazz-style songs and dances. Some of its numbers were sung for decades afterward, and one was used as a presidential campaign song.
- ◆ A show about the making of *Shuffle Along* premiered in 2016; the fictional location of *Shuffle Along*’s story, “Jimtown,” was reused in several later Black musical comedies.
- ◆ The white entrepreneur George White produced one of the sequels, *Runnin’ Wild*, in 1923. He hired Miller and Lyles to create the book, but a new team composed the songs: James P. Johnson and Cecil Mack.
- ◆ One of their songs, “The Charleston” (Listening Example 5), launched an international dance craze that persists to this

day.

- ◆ It is structured in **show-tune form (A-B-A-C)**, and the **A** sections showcase the syncopated “Charleston rhythm” riff.
- ◆ Other jazz features in “The Charleston” include stop-time, heterophony, and muted trumpet passages; the saxophone also is prominent.
- ◆ White composers soon learned how to incorporate similar features into their songs, as demonstrated in *No, No, Nanette* (1925). Its two-fold **property** consisted of an earlier novel and play. Vincent Youmans was hired as composer for the musical comedy after his mother provided significant financial backing for the show.
- ◆ *No, No, Nanette* went on a very extended **tryout tour** and encountered some problems, so Youmans and his lyricist Irving Caesar hurriedly inserted some additional songs, including “Tea for Two” (Listening Example 6).
- ◆ Caesar created a **dummy lyric** for “Tea for Two” shortly after Youmans had composed the tune—but that temporary poetry was made permanent. The jazzy nature of the song (and show) still caught some audiences by surprise; a British reviewer called the enthusiastic response “jazzomania.”

- ◆ Soviet composers also adapted the melody (known to them initially as “Tahiti Trot”), and jazz musicians have used it as the basis for new interpretations for several decades.
- ◆ “Tea for Two”—with choruses in **A-B-A-C** show-tune form—employs the same rhythmic ostinato in the **A** and **C** phrases, and a different ostinato for the **B** section. The **B** section also shifts to a **chromatic mediant** harmony.
- ◆ Features from operettas and musical comedies merged to form the new genre of musical theater, which offered compelling stories and effective songs that were **integrated** into the plot.
- ◆ An early masterpiece of musical theater, *Show Boat* (1927) used music to help convey the time period of each scene. “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” (Listening Example 7) is also used to foreshadow the character Julie’s identity: its use of jazz characteristics reveals the fact that Julie is mixed-race, with a Black mother who had most likely taught her that jazzy song.
- ◆ Helen Morgan’s recording of “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” is structured as a five-part rondo form (**A-B-A-C-A**), and the refrain (**A**) opens with an upward fourth, a motif that the composer Jerome Kern links with the Mississippi River. The motif’s subtext is that both the river and love are powerful forces.
- ◆ The music publishers clustered on 28th Street in New York let customers play sheet music before purchasing it, and a journalist felt that all the noisy pianos made the street sound like a racket of banging tin pans. The area began to be called **Tin Pan Alley**—a nickname that was soon applied to the type of popular music they were publishing.
- ◆ Many of the firms hired **song-pluggers** to help promote the music to customers. Song-pluggers also got professional singers to perform songs in public situations or to record the numbers, allowing even more potential buyers to hear the music.
- ◆ Radio broadcasts were another way to promote music to future customers, and Ben Bernie’s Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra was the ensemble that helped NBC radio to launch its first broadcast.
- ◆ One of the pieces performed and recorded by Bernie’s ensemble was the Tin Pan Alley tune “Sweet Georgia Brown” (Listening Example 8). Bernie is listed as a composer, but it is unclear how much (if anything) he actually contributed to the number. The primary composer was Maceo Pinkard, while the lyrics (not heard in the Bernie recording) were by Ken Casey.
- ◆ “Sweet Georgia Brown” achieved impressive success on the *Billboard* charts, not only with Bernie’s recording but with other performances as well. A 1949 version serves as the Harlem Globetrotters’ theme song.
- ◆ Bernie’s recording of “Sweet Georgia Brown” contains numerous jazz features: heterophony, muted trumpets, extended solos, riffs, and sectional writing. However, it also features a tricky **hemiola** rhythm in its introduction and a sequence of circle-of-fifths key changes in the four phrases of its **A-B-A-C** show-tune form.
- ◆ Adding sound to silent films was a technological challenge in the 1920s, but directors wanted all audiences to be able to hear the **custom (original) scores** that were starting to be written for certain movies.
- ◆ The Warner Brothers studio developed the Vitaphone technology, in which an audio disk played simultaneously while a projector screened the film. Initially, the audio disks contained only music—but Al Jolson revolutionized the film industry by unexpectedly speaking in between the recording of two songs for *The Jazz Singer* (1927). His spontaneous spoken dialogue was retained, turning *The Jazz Singer* into the first “talkie” feature film.
- ◆ The song that followed Jolson’s spoken comments was “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo’ Bye)” (Listening Example 9). The song was five years old when the film was made since Jolson had premiered it in 1922 by interpolating it into the musical comedy *Bombo*.
- ◆ The composers of “Toot, Toot, Tootsie!”—Gus Kahn, Ernie Erdman, and Dan Russo—

designated the number as a “cute” **foxtrot**, indicating it was in the steady duple meter customary for that social dance.

♦ Jolson’s 1922 recording of the verse-chorus

song includes heterophony, trombone glissandos, several pitch bends, and some scat-like interjections. It also has a hemiola effect in the first phrase of each chorus.

Section IV

Jazz in the Concert Hall



Lt. James Reese Europe and the “Hellfighters” band introduced numerous French listeners to jazz.

Although the red-light origins of jazz prejudiced some people against the style—sometimes for decades—its energetic appeal won over many other listeners immediately. It was not long before various classical composers found ways to interweave the new style of jazz with art music, both in the United States and overseas. Arguably, the opposite was also true: jazz composers experimented with classical techniques. Deborah Mawer describes the two processes as “jazzing the classics” and “classicizing jazz.”¹⁶⁰

France was especially receptive to the exciting sounds coming from across the Atlantic. French composers had shown interest in “foreign” music for quite some time; for example, Claude Debussy (1862–1918) incorporated Javanese elements into his compositions after hearing a gamelan orchestra perform at the 1889 Universal Exposition.¹⁶¹ In the decade before the Roaring Twenties—during World War I—many French listeners had first heard the sounds of ragtime, blues, and jazz by means of the lively performances of the 369th Infantry Regiment Band, nicknamed the “Hellfighters.” This all-Black ensemble had been

organized by Lt. James Reese Europe (1880–1919), who led a notable orchestra in New York. He served as musical director for Vernon and Irene Castle, the society dancers credited with being the first to popularize the foxtrot.¹⁶²

Regrettably, U.S. segregation laws prevented the Hellfighters from serving in combat alongside white American soldiers, so in 1917, the regiment was offered the chance to transfer to the French Army as American reinforcements.¹⁶³ Thus, Lt. Europe became the first African-American officer to lead his troops into combat during World War I.¹⁶⁴ The Hellfighters band entertained widely in France, and their “jazzy” interpretations were all the rage among their French audiences.¹⁶⁵

JAZZ AT THE BALLET

Looking back at the “Jazz Age” some sixty years later, Aaron Copland (1900–90) remarked:

*It may be difficult to imagine today that the very idea of jazz in a concert hall was [provocative] in the twenties, but it seems that any piece based on jazz was assured of a mild succès de scandale [a success derived from its notoriety or scandalous nature].*¹⁶⁶

Copland probably had in mind one of the earliest prominent interweavings of jazz into a classical genre: *La création du monde* (The Creation of the World), a 1923 ballet by the young French composer Darius Milhaud (1892–1974).

Le globe trotter

Milhaud (pronounced “Mee-yo”) loved to travel.¹⁶⁷ In fact, late in his life he composed a suite for piano titled *Le globe trotter*. The First World War was responsible for his first major journey. Milhaud was still a student at the Paris Conservatory when war



The well-traveled Darius Milhaud was a member of Les Six.

broke out, but he could not enlist for medical reasons. At first, his contribution to the war effort was to assist Belgian refugees, but after receiving word that one of his closest childhood friends had died in combat, he began working in the foreign ministry's propaganda department. Another friend, Paul Claudel (1868–1965), was a poet and a diplomat. When Claudel was posted to Brazil as the French ambassador in 1917, Claudel invited Milhaud to travel with him as the “attaché in charge of propaganda.”¹⁶⁸

A year later, Claudel was sent from Brazil to Washington, D.C., and Milhaud also accompanied him to the United States—but in his memoirs, Milhaud did not mention any of the popular music he would have encountered in 1918.¹⁶⁹ Milhaud did discuss his delight in hearing an American jazz orchestra in London in 1920, exclaiming, “The new music was extremely subtle in its use of timbre . . . The constant use of syncopation in the melody was of such contrapuntal freedom that it gave the impression of unregulated

improvisation.”¹⁷⁰

In addition to hearing the American group in London, Milhaud—after his return to France in 1919—had been a frequent visitor to a club in Paris that specialized in “American Tin Pan Alley, blues, and dance tunes.”¹⁷¹ He also renewed his friendship with five other young French composers who had met during their years at the Paris Conservatory: Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Francis Poulenc, and Germaine Tailleferre (composer of Listening Example 14). Although their compositional approaches differed from each other, a French journalist had dubbed them “Les Six” (the Six) in 1920 because they shared an impulse to write music that was not derived from the German tradition but instead was open to inspiration “from everyday life; . . . machines; . . . the music hall, the circus and the jazz band; and its principal qualities were to be dryness, brevity and



Paul Claudel was the French ambassador who took Darius Milhaud to the United States in 1918.



The majority of Les Six were included in a 1922 painting (Durey is absent).

straightforwardness.”¹⁷²

In 1922, an American who had studied piano with Debussy offered to arrange a performance tour for Milhaud in the United States, and Milhaud was quick to accept.¹⁷³ While in the U.S., he startled American reporters by discussing his serious interest in the Black jazz music he was hearing; they were more accustomed to art-music composers ignoring popular styles completely. Biographers are also fairly certain that Milhaud saw *Shuffle Along* during his visit. Moreover, he acquired some Black Swan recordings to take home with him—products of the same Black-owned company that had given Fletcher Henderson (Listening Example 4) his start as a bandleader.¹⁷⁴



The Ballets Suédois was an innovative dance company that worked with members of Les Six on several occasions.

Creating a World

With Milhaud’s return to France, the time seemed right for a jazz ballet. An influential and inventive ballet company, the Ballets Suédois (the Swedish Ballet), commissioned a score from Milhaud, and he and his collaborators decided to use an African creation myth as the foundation of their story.¹⁷⁵ The scenario, or storyline, of *La création du monde* divided the ballet into six sections that consisted of an overture (labeled “Prélude) and five tableaux (“tableau” in French means “scene”):

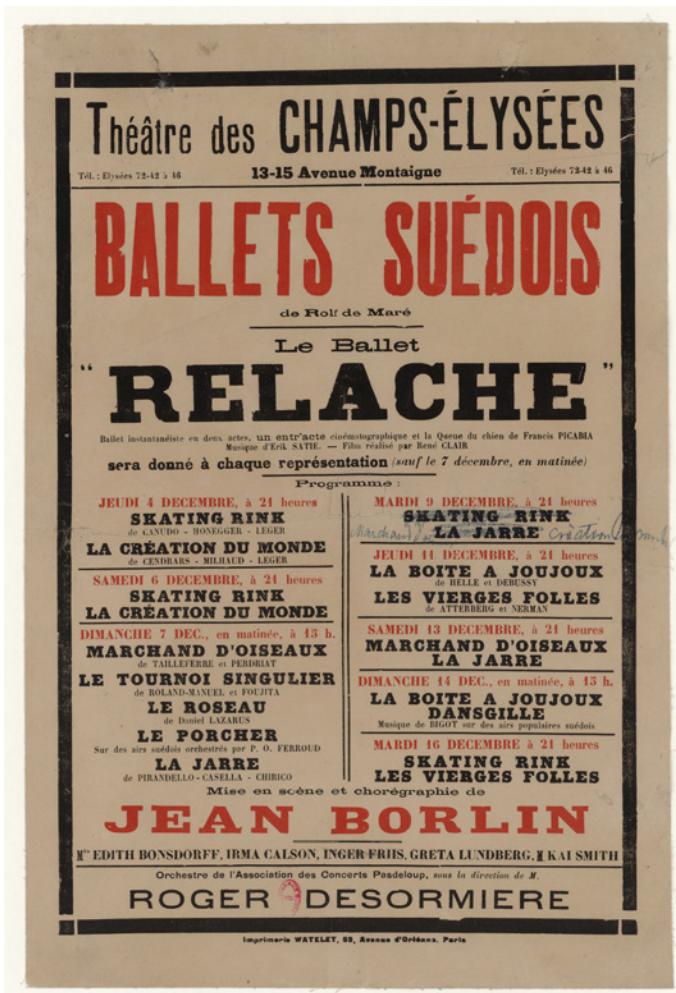
Overture (Prélude)

- I. The Chaos Before Creation
- II. The slowly lifting darkness, the creation of trees, plants, insects, birds, and beasts
- III. Dance of Created Beings—Man and woman created
- IV. The desire of man and woman
- V. The Man and Woman Kiss—Coda¹⁷⁶

The Overture and Tableau I comprise Listening Example 10.

Various modern French artists contributed their expertise to the costumes and sets, and the dancers wore masks and animal costumes to depict the developing creatures of the earth. Three large “gods of creation” wore enormous, cubist costumes that were several meters tall.¹⁷⁷ They were very difficult to dance in because they were so heavy and inflexible.¹⁷⁸

La création du monde premiered in Paris on October 25, 1923, and three years later, in 1926, Milhaud extracted music from the ballet score and made a concert-suite version for piano and string quartet. Both



Milhaud's *La création du monde* was the second item advertised in the left column in this 1924 poster for the Ballets Suédois.

the suite and the full ballet have been published.¹⁷⁹

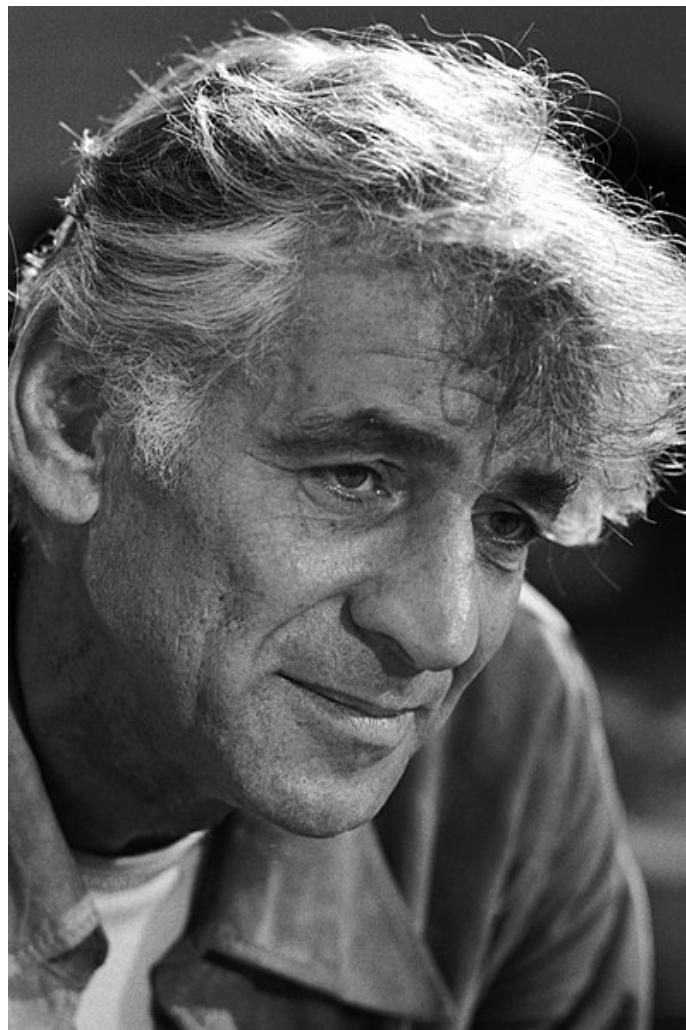
The initial reaction to the full ballet was mixed.¹⁸⁰ In his autobiography, Milhaud wrote,

*The critics decreed that my music was not serious and was better suited to dance-halls and to restaurants than to the concert-stage. Ten years later, these same critics were discoursing on the philosophy of jazz, and demonstrating learnedly that *La Création* was my finest work.*¹⁸¹

Almost thirty years after the premiere, the conductor and composer Leonard Bernstein (1918–90)—who conducted the recording used for Listening Example 10—took that reassessment even further. After

discussing the jazz-tinged compositions of several early-twentieth-century composers, he wrote:

*Out of all this has come one real masterpiece, one full-length, fully developed jazz work that had such character and originality that even today it sounds as fresh as it did when it was written in 1923. It is a ballet called *The Creation of the World*, by the brilliant French composer Darius Milhaud. I take the liberty of calling this work a masterpiece because it has the one real requisite of a masterpiece—durability. Among all those experiments with jazz that Europe flirted with in this period, only *The Creation of the World* emerges complete, not as a flirtation but as a real love affair with jazz.*¹⁸²



Leonard Bernstein was a strong advocate for Milhaud's *La création du monde*.

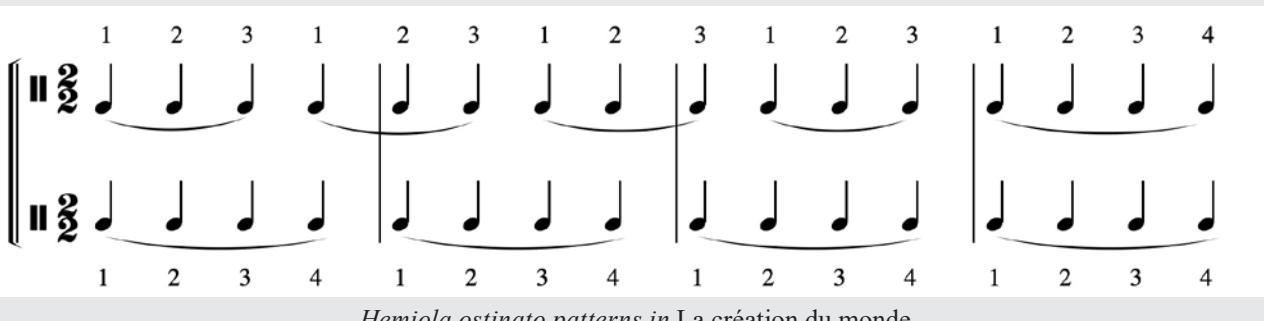
LISTENING COMPANION 10: *La création du monde*, Overture and Tableau I (1922–23) – Darius Milhaud

Milhaud would probably have agreed with Bernstein's description of his work as a "love affair." He said, "At last [...] I had the opportunity I had been waiting for to use those elements of jazz to which I had devoted so much study."¹⁸³ One of Milhaud's initial steps was to choose the instruments for his ensemble, and he pointed to his New York visit as his chief influence, saying, "I adopted the same orchestra as used in Harlem, [with] seventeen solo musicians."¹⁸⁴ He also credited a musical comedy—the *Shuffle Along* sequel titled *Liza* (1922)—as the direct inspiration for his instrumentation. (*Liza* was the musical comedy for which "Sweet Georgia Brown" composer Maceo Pinkard—see Listening Example 8—had written the book).¹⁸⁵

During the Overture, classical and jazz characteristics are intermixed. The alto saxophone's melody floats serenely over quiet pulsations in the background. Soon, though, the trumpets interject periodically with a short, riff-like and syncopated second theme, and the trombone plays occasional glissandos. One of the features that is more associated with art music of the era is Milhaud's use of polytonality, or, more specifically, bitonality. During the opening, the saxophone, the right hand of the piano, violins, and cello all play in the key of D minor. Simultaneously, the piano's left hand, the string bass, and the timpani play in the key of D Major. However, this uncommon harmonic layering can also be seen as a way to create the ambiguous blue notes of jazz that blur the distinction between major and minor keys.

The first scene, or Tableau I, is another vigorous mixture of art music and jazz traits. The introduction presents several instruments performing ostinato patterns. These layers have a heterophonic effect; moreover, they work against the meter in a hemiola fashion by grouping their pulses into groups of 3+3+3+3+4 (instead of 4+4+4+4) as shown in the contrasting layers of Figure 4-1. This total of sixteen pulses corresponds to four bars of the score. (Although the score itself is notated in $\frac{2}{4}$, most performers put emphasis on the quarter-note pulses in every bar rather than on the two half notes.)

FIGURE 4-1



The first tableau is divided into three large-scale sections (A–B–C), and in addition to the ostinati, Milhaud also incorporates a fugue in the first section (A). A fugue is a less-common structure in the twentieth century; it was described in Section I of this Guide. The string bass launches the fugue subject, filled with neighboring tones and syncopation, as shown in Figure 4-2. The first instrument to imitate the subject is the trombone, followed by the saxophone, and then the trumpet. After playing the subject, each instrument moves on to play a countersubject (while the subsequent instrument is performing the subject).

FIGURE 4-2



Fugue subject in La création du monde.

Although the imitative counterpoint of a fugue is inherently complicated, Milhaud adds some additional complexity. Not only are all these featured instruments associated with jazz, but they also all intermix notes from major and minor parallel scales to create the effect of blues harmony, such as the adjacent F♯ and F♮ in the third measure of Figure 4-2. Moreover, the fugue subject is five measures long (again, see Figure 4-2), which creates a polyrhythmic tension against the four-measure patterns of the ostinato. The successive entrances of the subject also move through a series of circle-of-fifths key changes (E–A–D)—the same harmonic motion that “Sweet Georgia Brown” (Listening Example 8) would employ two years later.

The first tableau’s second section, **B**, is signaled by a prominent woodblock. This section again features bitonal layering. Figure 4-3 displays the piano part, with its right hand (the treble clef) in D major and its bass-clef left hand in C major. Simultaneously, Milhaud produces a new polymetric section by juxtaposing a six-pulse ostinato (in the right hand) against an ostinato of four pulses (in the left hand). These conflicting pulse groupings are shown by the brackets in Figure 4-3.

FIGURE 4-3



Bitonality and polymeter in La création du monde.

In the **B** section, the entrances again proceed through the circle of fifths, but this time they move in a clockwise direction (F–C–G–D). The end of the **B** section is indicated by some increasingly audible trombone glissandos.

The final section (**C**) of Tableau I employs less polyphony than the preceding two segments, but it does return to earlier melodies. It expands the riff-like second theme from the Overture, but this time the harmony

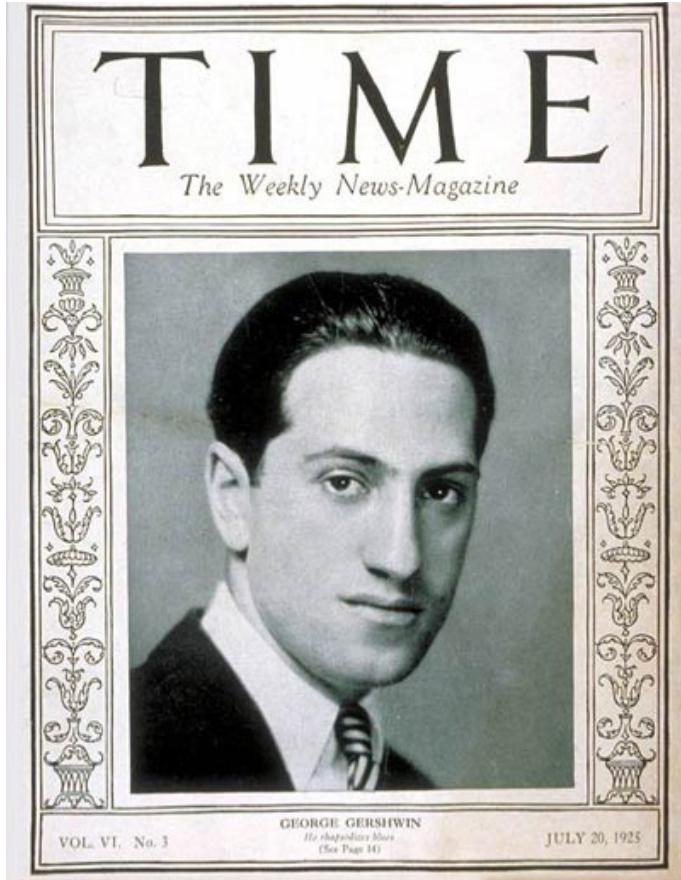
makes use of an ancient church mode, the **Phrygian mode**, that had been in use in the Middle Ages (approximately 800–1400) before the common-practice harmony of today was adopted. A Phrygian scale can be generated by playing the white keys of a piano from E to E, which produces a whole- and half-step pattern of **H–W–W–W–H–W–W**. In Milhaud's case, he starts the Phrygian pattern on the pitch “C.” The half step between the first and second notes is particularly distinctive, and it is first heard in the piano's right hand, moving from C to Db.

This third section also brings back the fugue subject (with polytonal layers of D major against C major). It also adds more instruments plus a *crescendo* to produce an increasingly busy heterophonic texture. However, a sudden *pianissimo* and a downward scale in the high woodwinds announce the imminent arrival of Tableau II (and the end of Listening Guide 10).

Listening Guide 10: *La création du monde*, Overture and Tableau I (1922–23) – Darius Milhaud

Timeline	Form	Musical Features
0:03	Overture	“Floating” Theme 1 (saxophone) above oscillating parallel thirds; polytonality of D major and D minor; <i>modéré tempo</i> (<i>moderato</i>)
0:22		“Ostinato” Theme 2 (trumpets—eighth notes in parallel thirds)
0:27		Theme 1 (saxophone)
0:42		Theme 2, extended (trumpets)
0:48		Theme 1 (saxophone)
0:54		Theme 2, extended even further (trumpets)
1:02		<i>Ritardando</i>
1:08		<i>Moderato tempo</i> resumes; Theme 1 (saxophone), now in A minor
1:20		Occasional glissandos in trombone
1:29		<i>Crescendo</i>
1:42		Theme 2 rhythm in timpani; return to D major/D minor polytonality
1:48		Descending half-notes scale; <i>diminuendo & ritardando</i>
2:02		Theme 2, paraphrased (clarinets); F minor
2:27		Fanfare motif in trumpets & trombones
2:44		Theme 1 (saxophone); Theme 2 (flute, piano, cello); now in F minor/D major
2:52		<i>Ritardando</i>
2:56		<i>Moderato tempo</i> resumes; now in E-flat major (moving to D minor)
3:05	Tableau I A	Theme 2 motif (piano left hand, cello, string bass); D minor/D major
3:36		<i>Ritardando</i> , ending with fermata
3:58		Four-measure polyrhythmic ostinato patterns with hemiola rhythm
4:01		Fugue subject (5 measures) in string bass; D blues (mixes minor and major modes)
4:10		Fugue subject in trombone (E blues); countersubject in string bass
4:18		Fugue subject in saxophone (A blues); countersubject in trombone
4:26		Fugue subject in trumpet (D blues over C major); countersubject in saxophone

4:35	B	Prominent woodblock; Theme 2 paraphrase from Overture; polymetric effect; C major against D major
4:42		Hemiola note groupings
4:44		Fugue subject in clarinet (F blues)—launching circle-of-fifths motion
4:50		Fugue subject in clarinet (C blues)
4:56		Fugue subject in clarinet (G blues)
5:02		Fugue subject in clarinet (D blues)
5:09		Trombone glissandos
5:13	C	Theme 2 paraphrase (bassoon, horn, piano right hand); in C Phrygian mode
5:19		Fugue subject in violins (D blues over C major); increasing heterophony & volume
5:28		Subito pianissimo and descending line, leading to next Tableau
5:33	Tableau II	[not in Listening Guide]
--	Tableau III	
--	Tableau IV	
--	Tableau V	



George Gershwin was featured on the cover of Time magazine in 1925, the year after *Rhapsody in Blue* premiered.

JAZZ AT CARNEGIE HALL

When it comes to the merger of classical music with jazz, most people regard the foremost example to be George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924; Listening Example 11). His blend of jazz elements, blue notes, and a classical orchestra led to a work that did much to "legitimize" jazz in the view of numerous listeners.

The Jazz Stepping Stone

As a teenager, Gershwin attended an aunt's wedding and was thrilled by the music that the dance orchestra was playing; he discovered that it had been composed by Jerome Kern.¹⁸⁶ Immediately, he wanted to be able to write music like Kern's, so he found work (at age fifteen) as a song-plugger for the Tin Pan Alley publisher Remick, the same firm that employed Vincent Youmans (Listening Example 6), allowing Gershwin to become very familiar with the latest tunes. Gradually, he was given opportunities to compose for Broadway, including revues produced by George White, the entrepreneur behind *Runnin' Wild* and "The Charleston" (Listening Example 5).¹⁸⁷ The popularity of Al Jolson's 1920 recording of Gershwin's Tin Pan Alley song "Swanee" was a huge boost to Gershwin's reputation—but it paled in comparison with the triumphant debut of *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Rhapsody in Blue was the brainchild of the popular bandleader Paul Whiteman, who envisioned “An Experiment in Modern Music”: a concert that would demonstrate the evolution of American popular music, moving from the “primitive” to the “sophisticated.”¹⁸⁸ No one remembers much of the other repertory performed on February 12, 1924, at the Aeolian Hall in New York, but there are few people, even today, who fail to recognize the dramatic opening clarinet glissando from *Rhapsody in Blue* (see Figure 4-4).¹⁸⁹

That glissando—in which the clarinetist “bends” the pitch through an upward scale that spans two and a half octaves—seems very distinctive to us today, but it was a fairly common novelty effect in African-American orchestras of the time. In fact, Whiteman’s clarinetist, Ross Gorman (1890–1953), added the jazzy effect simply as a joke during a tiring rehearsal. Gershwin loved the addition and wanted it exaggerated so there would be “as much of a ‘wail’ as possible” on the upper notes; the glissando—nicknamed “the icebreaker”—thus became a permanent part of the composition.¹⁹⁰

Interestingly, Whiteman’s ambition was not to add



Bandleader Paul Whiteman had the idea for the work that became *Rhapsody in Blue*.



Clarinetist Ross Gorman improvised the exaggerated glissando that now opens *Rhapsody in Blue*.

jazz elements to concert music, as we might have thought. Instead, it was the other way around: Whiteman wanted to make art music more accessible to fans of popular music. He hoped to “provide a stepping stone which will make it very simple for the masses to understand and therefore enjoy symphony and opera.”¹⁹¹ In this sense, therefore, *Rhapsody in Blue* is an example of what Deborah Mawer called “classicizing jazz.”¹⁹²



Rhapsody in Blue was performed in the United States's most famous concert venue, Carnegie Hall.

FIGURE 4-4

Molto moderato (d=80) 17
2nd Piano Orchestra (Clar.)
GEORGE GERSHWIN
Glissando in Rhapsody in Blue.

Regardless of Whiteman's intent, he ended up pleasing nearly everyone. One prominent music critic, Deems Taylor, felt that Gershwin's piece provided "a link between the jazz camp and the intellectuals."¹⁹³ (Admittedly, some art-music critics were initially less than sold on the piece.¹⁹⁴) Whiteman repeated the program twice, with some modifications to the other repertory, and an April 21 performance took place at New York's most prestigious concert-music venue: Carnegie Hall (pronounced "car-NEG-ee"). Whiteman also took the program on a national tour, where it consistently sold out.¹⁹⁵ Clearly, *Rhapsody in Blue* was a hit from the start.

After Carnegie Hall

When Gershwin first pulled together his ideas for *Rhapsody in Blue* in anticipation of the Aeolian Hall concert, his initial format was a two-piano work. He delivered that score to Whiteman's orchestrator Ferde Grofé (1892–1972), who arranged the piece for twenty-three players: the core members of Whiteman's jazz band plus some added strings, and, of course, piano. In the expanded score, Grofé did not always bother notating the entire piano part, since Gershwin would



The version of *Rhapsody in Blue* that is most popular today owes a great deal to orchestrator Ferde Grofé.

be playing it; in fact, after one such gap, Grofé simply commented, “Wait for nod.”¹⁹⁶ Grofé’s **orchestration** was used for the additional Whiteman performances in Carnegie Hall and on tour.

About a decade later, during the mid-1930s, Gershwin performed the *Rhapsody* several times with concert orchestras, raising the question: who orchestrated that symphonic version? In 1942, five years after Gershwin’s untimely death, Grofé published the orchestration most often in use today (and heard in Listening Example 11)—was it the same one used in the 1930s?¹⁹⁷ Or is there a “lost” Gershwin orchestration?¹⁹⁸ In any event, with the creation of the now-customary version for **solo piano plus orchestra**, *Rhapsody in Blue* had been indisputably transformed into a piano **concerto**.

The conventional highlight in a concerto is its

cadenza, during which the orchestra stops playing and lets the soloist perform inventively without accompaniment. However, the cadenza in *Rhapsody in Blue* is not improvised; it was notated in full by Gershwin. Many jazz musicians today do not regard *Rhapsody in Blue* as genuine jazz since it contains no improvisation at all. Still, that criticism can be leveled at nearly all the classical/jazz hybrids presented in this section of the resource guide. Moreover, the jazzy harmonies and the syncopated rhythms in *Rhapsody in Blue* pull it away from being a purely classical work. In any event, it remains an extremely popular composition more than a century after its creation. Commentator Orrin Howard, writing for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, said, “Beginning with that incomparable, flamboyant clarinet solo, *Rhapsody* is irresistible still, with its syncopated rhythmic vibrancy, its abandoned, impudent flair that tells more about the Roaring Twenties than could a thousand words.”¹⁹⁹

LISTENING COMPANION 11: *Rhapsody In Blue* (Excerpt) (1924/1942) – George Gershwin

Although *Rhapsody in Blue* consists of a single, continuous movement, with numerous distinct sections, it is possible to group those sections into a pattern that resembles the “sonata cycle” that was introduced in Section I of this resource guide. This pattern—proposed by David Schiff—is shown in Figure 4-5:

FIGURE 4-5

“Sonata-Cycle” sections	Rehearsal Numbers	Measure Numbers
I. Molto moderato	1–8	1–90
II. Scherzo	9–27	91–302
III. Andante moderato	28–32	303–382
IV. Finale (with a Coda)	33–end (Coda at one measure after 40)	383–end (Coda at ms. 505)

*Sonata-cycle groupings for Rhapsody in Blue.*²⁰⁰

Schiff also assigned nicknames to five of Gershwin’s melodies, as displayed in Figure 4-6:

FIGURE 4-6

The figure consists of five musical staves, each representing a different theme from Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. The themes are labeled below each staff:

- "Ritornello theme"**: The first staff is in B-flat major (key signature of one flat) and shows a syncopated melody.
- "Train theme"**: The second staff is in C major (no sharps or flats) and depicts a rhythmic pattern reminiscent of train wheels.
- "Stride theme"**: The third staff is in C major and features eighth-note patterns with slurs, characteristic of stride piano.
- "Shuffle theme"**: The fourth staff is in C major and shows a rhythmic pattern typical of shuffle blues.
- "Love theme"**: The fifth staff is in E major (no sharps or flats) and presents a lyrical, melodic line.

Each staff concludes with the word "etc." indicating the continuation of the theme. The music is written in common time.

Gershwin's melodies for *Rhapsody in Blue*.²⁰¹

The designation “**ritornello**” is Italian for “returning material,” and—as seen in Guide 11—the syncopated tune both opens the piece and launches the coda. It also recurs several more times along the way. However, it has its own jazzy aspect—as you can see in the ritornello’s key signature (in Figure 4-6), it begins in the key of B \flat major. However, in that same melodic excerpt, the ritornello’s first small grace note is lowered to A \flat , and the tune also uses G \flat and D \flat . Gershwin has imitated the blues scale with these flattened pitches.

Schiff uses the “Train” label in Figure 4-6 because Gershwin recalled that he had a flash of inspiration for the *Rhapsody* while riding a train, and Schiff regards the second melody of Figure 4-6 as the most likely candidate.²⁰² Schiff derived the “Stride” and “Shuffle” labels from popular musical/dance styles of the day, while the “Love Theme” resembles the sweeping melody that Tchaikovsky wrote for the doomed lovers in his overture-fantasy *Romeo and Juliet* (1869). [You can hear just Tchaikovsky’s love theme [here](#).]

Besides these full-fledged melodies, Gershwin also employs a short “Tag” (see Figure 4-7) that may be derived from the first three notes of his popular song “[The Man I Love](#)” (1924). The D♭ in that excerpt is another example of a blue note.

FIGURE 4-7



Similar to the Ritornello, this Tag motif also appears throughout the piece, primarily serving as a tool for transitions.

There are many jazz features in *Rhapsody in Blue*, fully living up to the implications of its title’s last word. Still, there are also aspects that support the classical nature of the word “Rhapsody.” Besides the piano concerto genre itself, Gershwin asks the piano to play **arpeggios** at various points, especially when the orchestra is performing a primary melody. In an **arpeggio**, the notes of a chord are sounded in succession rather than simultaneously; it is a technique that is very idiomatic to a piano and can be a very rich and lovely addition to a passage. (When a chord’s pitches are all sounded simultaneously, musicians call the result a **block chord**.)

Gershwin’s achievement in crafting this piano concerto should not be underestimated; in a single evening, he managed to sweep away his previous reputation as “merely” a Tin Pan Alley composer. He also demonstrated that art music could absorb many different elements from popular styles without losing its integrity, nor would the walls of America’s concert halls collapse when these pieces with mixed styles were performed.

Listening Guide 11: *Rhapsody in Blue* (Excerpt) (1924/1942) – George Gershwin

Timeline	Form	Musical Features
0:00	I <i>Molto moderato</i>	Trill and glissando (“Icebreaker”) in solo clarinet
0:07		“Ritornello” theme (clarinet) with accompaniment
0:19		Winds play syncopated responses in thirds.
0:22		“Tag” with trills in clarinet (“The Man I Love”)
0:25		Repetitions of “Tag” with trills
0:40		Various winds play “Stride” theme.
0:52		Trill and glissando in clarinet
0:55		“Ritornello” theme (trumpet with wah-wah mute)

1:04		<i>Piano's first entrance, playing "Tag" motif</i>
1:14		<i>"Ritornello" theme in full orchestra, fortissimo</i>
1:28		<i>First piano cadenza, alternating "Ritornello" and "Tag"</i>
2:16		<i>"Ritornello" theme in solo piano</i>
2:26		<i>Brief orchestral accompaniment ("Tag")</i>
2:32		<i>Solo piano ("Ritornello")</i>
2:39		<i>Brief orchestral accompaniment ("Tag")</i>
2:45		<i>Second piano cadenza, alternating "Ritornello" and "Tag"</i>
3:07		<i>"Tag" motif in solo piano, crescendo</i>
3:33		<i>Block chords in solo piano</i>
3:44		<i>"Ritornello" theme in full orchestra, fortissimo</i>
3:59		<i>Rising pattern played by orchestra & piano in call-and-response</i>
4:06		<i>"Ritornello" theme in low-pitched instruments, forte</i>
4:16	II "Scherzo"	<i>"Train" theme in orchestra; piano plays descending arpeggios.</i>
4:37		<i>Sustained chord in orchestra; piano plays ascending arpeggios.</i>
4:40		<i>"Stride" theme (clarinet) over sustained chord</i>
4:43		<i>Sustained chord in orchestra; piano plays ascending arpeggios.</i>
4:46		<i>"Stride" theme (clarinet) over sustained chord</i>
4:55		<i>"Stride" theme variant in full orchestra (fortissimo)</i>
5:00	(Scherzo continues)	<i>Orchestra continues, followed by piano.</i>
--		<i>"Shuffle" theme</i>
--		<i>"Stride" theme</i>
--		<i>Trio: "Ritornello" theme</i>
--		<i>"Shuffle" theme</i>
--		<i>"Stride" theme</i>
--		<i>"Train" theme – fragment</i>
--	III Andante moderato	<i>"Love" theme</i>
--		
--	IV Finale	<i>Piano vamp</i>
--		<i>"Tag"</i>
--		<i>"Love" Theme</i>
--		<i>"Tag"</i>
--		<i>"Stride" theme</i>
--	Codetta	<i>"Ritornello" theme and Tag</i>

JAZZ FOR SMALL ORCHESTRAS

Even though the United States had been the cradle of jazz, some U.S.-born art-music composers actually had to travel overseas in order to be persuaded of the style's potential. This was the case for Aaron Copland, who went to Paris in 1921, while in his early twenties, to study with several eminent teachers of piano, conducting, and composition.²⁰³ By far, the most

important of his instructors was Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979), but it took some time for him to seek her out as a teacher. He later acknowledged his chauvinism, recalling:

No one to my knowledge had ever before thought of studying composition with a woman. The idea was absurd on the face of



Aaron Copland explored the potential of jazz while studying music in France.

it. Everyone knows that the world has never produced a first-rate woman composer, so it follows that no woman could possibly hope to teach composition. Moreover, how would it sound to the folks back home?²⁰⁴

He soon realized the errors in his thinking, and they became lifelong friends; he especially valued “her sensitivity to clarity, elegance and formal continuity . . . and her confidence in her young American students.”²⁰⁵ While she expanded his awareness of music from the distant past as well as the cutting-edge works of composers such as Stravinsky, she also encouraged him to explore popular music and jazz.²⁰⁶

Copland’s planned period of study stretched from one year to two, and then to three; by 1924, he had built up a significant portfolio of compositions under Boulanger’s supervision.²⁰⁷ Boulanger also arranged for his new Organ Symphony (in essence, an organ concerto) to be performed in 1925 by both the New York Symphony Orchestra (led by Walter Damrosch) and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The latter

performance was conducted by Serge Koussevitzky (1874–1951), a man who would prove to be a valuable acquaintance, and Copland took to calling him “The Maestro” (“the master” in Italian).²⁰⁸ Despite being a showcase for organ, Copland’s composition also reflected the popular music that he had been absorbing during his years in France; its scherzo movement was particularly jazzy.²⁰⁹

Patrons Pave the Way

The path to success for art-music composers is often much longer than for those writing in the popular realm, and Copland could not have made much progress if it had not been for the generosity of various benefactors. His first significant support was a \$1,000 grant in 1925 from Alma Wertheim (1887–1953). He recalled, “I don’t know how, without that, I would have managed in the year that followed while I was composing *Music for the Theatre*.²¹⁰ Despite living as simply as he could, however, “it did not take long for Mrs. Wertheim’s gift to disappear.”²¹¹

As Copland’s funds were running low, he heard that the Guggenheim Foundation was planning to give a



Photographed in 1925, Nadia Boulanger had been Aaron Copland’s composition teacher for several years.



Conductor Serge Koussevitzky ("The Maestro") facilitated Aaron Copland's career several times.

prize for music for the first time in 1925, "just when I needed it most," he wryly commented.²¹² Boulanger, Damrosch, and Koussevitzky were among those who sent letters of recommendation on his behalf, but Copland believed that Boulanger was primarily responsible for his winning the very first award, a fairly handsome amount of \$2,500; he was also successful in getting the award renewed for a second year in 1926.²¹³

In late 1924, not long after his return to the United States, Copland had been invited to present some of his recent compositions at a concert of the League of Composers. The performance went well, and since this organization promoted new music, they commissioned Copland to write a piece for chamber orchestra. Meanwhile, New York was also host to a rival organization called the International Composers' Guild (ICG). When the League of Composers heard that the ICG had arranged to have the celebrated



Star Studio was just one of several cabins used by artists staying at the MacDowell Colony.

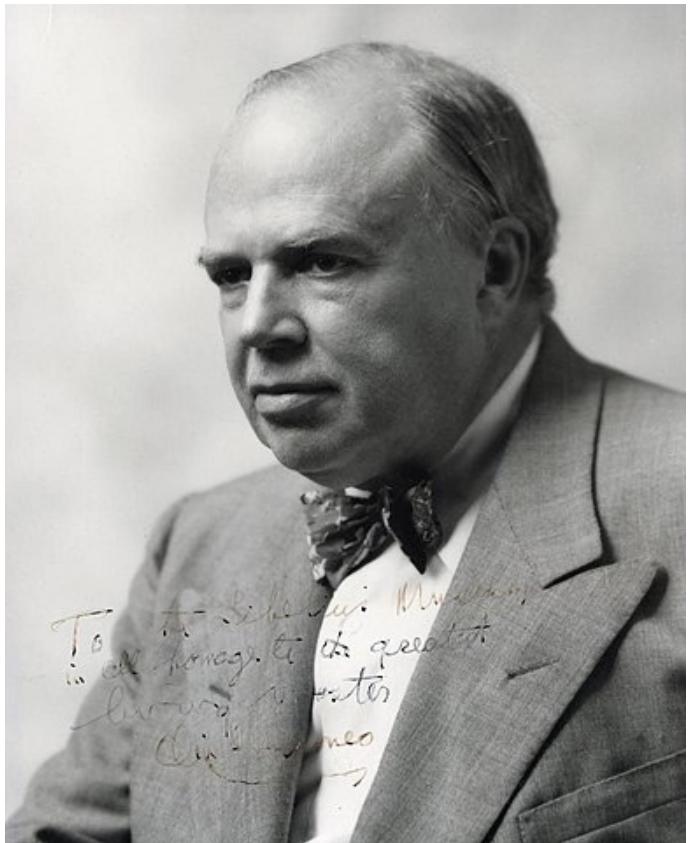
Leopold Stokowski conduct two of the upcoming ICG concerts, the League of Composers decided to pursue Koussevitzky to be *their* conductor at a concert. Knowing that Koussevitzky already had performed the Organ Symphony by Copland, and that he admired the young composer's work, they asked Koussevitzky if he would conduct a performance of the still-unwritten commission. Koussevitzky eagerly agreed.²¹⁴

From the Colony and the Clouds

With a concert looming, Copland needed to concentrate to get the piece composed. A friend told him about the [MacDowell Colony](#) (renamed simply as "MacDowell" in 2020) in Peterborough, New Hampshire—a summer retreat for artists to devote themselves without interruption to their creative projects.²¹⁵ Copland found the environment very stimulating and made steady progress; he also made a number of good friends with other people holding fellowships at MacDowell. Still, when the summer of 1925 came to an end, the commission was not yet finished, so another patron stepped up. Copland's former piano teacher, Clarence Adler, owned some property on Lake Placid, and Adler had a shack built especially for Copland that he named "The Clouds." Copland moved in for the month of September, and Adler described the composer at work:

I have listened (at a distance, of course) to Copland in the throes of composition, and it is something to hear! He bangs and hammers at the piano, at the same time singing in shrill, dissonant tones.²¹⁶

By the end of the month, the new work was done. Koussevitzky was very pleased with the score, and he



Olin Downes was the critic for The New York Times who initially condemned *Music for the Theatre* (but later came to admire it greatly).

decided to premiere it in Boston ahead of its scheduled performance in New York on behalf of the League of Composers.²¹⁷

When Copland first started working on the commission, he called it “Incidental Music for an Imaginary Drama.”²¹⁸ By the time of its premiere in Boston on November 20, 1925, it had become *Music for the Theatre* (Listening Example 12). Despite its title, it was tied to no specific play; it just had what Copland described as “a certain theatrical atmosphere.”²¹⁹ He divided it into five movements:

- I. Prologue
- II. Dance

- III. Interlude
- IV. Burlesque
- V. Epilogue

Copland explained his ambitions for the piece: “I was anxious to write a work that would immediately be recognized as American in character. . . . I had experimented a little with the rhythms of popular music in several earlier compositions, but now I wanted frankly to adopt the jazz idiom and see what I could do with it in a symphonic way.”²²⁰

After the premiere, the Boston critics were cautiously complimentary. Warren Storey Smith wrote, “*Music for the Theatre* is a sort of super jazz. . . . The conductor exploded a tonal bombshell that left in its wake a mingling of surprise, perplexity, indignation, and enthusiasm,” while Philip Hale called Copland “a young composer of indisputable talent . . . with a great gift of imagination.”²²¹

However, after the League of Composers concert eight days later, the critics in New York were far more unsympathetic. In fact, the influential *The New York Times* reviewer Olin Downes said flatly, “We do not care if a long time elapses before we listen again to *Music for the Theatre*”—yet, when Downes did hear the piece again, seven years afterward, his attitude changed completely:

*In 1925 when first heard, this music impressed the writer as ultra modern to the point of affectation. Today he feels that this is music of genuine inspiration and feeling, music composed and not merely invented, that it has a personal color, fancy and, in the best moments, emotion—the work of a young composer finding himself, with something real and not merely derivative to say.*²²²

As has often been true in the history of art music, some pieces just need time to grow on their audience.

LISTENING COMPANION 12: *Music for the Theatre*, Mvt. IV: “Burlesque” (1925) – Aaron Copland

All of the movements in *Music for the Theatre* are associated with aspects of jazz in various ways, and one of Copland's new friends from MacDowell felt the fourth movement, “Burlesque,” resembled the old-time jazz in the brothels within New Orleans's red-light district.²²³ While discussing “Burlesque,” Copland explained that it “emphasizes another characteristic of the twenties—the love of grotesquerie achieved by a liberal use of harmonic dissonance. It was partly inspired by the popular comedienne Fanny Brice.²²⁴ Brice was an actress famous for her brash satire of the status quo; she often sang her songs with a Yiddish accent to exaggerate their incongruities. The musical *Funny Girl* (1964) was inspired by her life story.²²⁵

Various aspects of “Burlesque” support the awkwardness implied by Copland's “grotesque” description. The tempo changes abruptly several times, along with the dynamics, leaving listeners off-balance. The energy shifts from busy, syncopated passages to heavy, ponderous “thuds” in the low-pitched instruments, rather like the staggering of elephants. The disjunct fourth theme in “Burlesque” (see Figure 4-8) showcases a muted trumpet, which is common in jazz, in a “Solo grotesco” (“grotesque solo”), and it sounds like a sing-song blues melody.²²⁶

“Burlesque” features a rondo-like alternation between a refrain and several contrasting episodes. The refrain (**A**) is comprised of three components: a tiny Theme 1 in an *Allegro vivo* (“fast, lively”) tempo, the ponderous thuds, and a syncopated Theme 2 that acts as a response when Theme 1 repeats several times in a row. The first episode, **B**, turns to Theme 3, which—like Theme 2—is highly syncopated, and has the same rhythm as Theme 2 in its first two bars. It is soon joined by the woodblock and a rising accompaniment motif in the trombone and low strings. After a return of **A**, the trumpet introduces fragments of the bluesy Theme 4 in the **C** episode before launching into the full “solo grotesco.” Both episodes and the refrain make additional reappearances during the speedy course of the movement. When the **C** episode returns, played by the full ensemble at a *fortissimo* dynamic level, Copland is emulating what jazz musicians would call a shout chorus.

There is a great deal in “Burlesque” that evokes the classical world, but the syncopated rhythms, occasional blue notes, and many of the tone colors reflect the new popular approaches that were beginning to dominate the commercial world in the U.S. The rhythms in particular were unfamiliar to many classical musicians. Copland recalled that in the days leading up to the Boston premiere, “the challenging jazz rhythms caused the Maestro [Koussevitzky] even more trouble than the *Organ Symphony*.²²⁷ Still, there are few people who would mistake “Burlesque”—or the rest of *Music for the Theatre*—as genuine jazz music. For many



Comedienne Fanny Brice was a brash entertainer, inspiring Copland to write the “Burlesque” movement in *Music for the Theatre*.

FIGURE 4-8

The musical score consists of four staves, each representing a different theme. The first staff, labeled "Theme 1", begins with a forte dynamic (ff) and features a series of eighth-note chords. The second staff, labeled "Theme 2", begins with a dynamic f and shows a more rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff, labeled "Theme 3", begins with a dynamic mf and contains a continuous eighth-note line. The fourth staff, labeled "Theme 4", begins with a dynamic mf and features a more complex eighth-note pattern. All themes are in 3/8 time.

Themes in “Burlesque.”

listeners, though, “the jazzy style of *Music for the Theatre* captures the spirit of cosmopolitan modernism in the 1920s. . . [It] seems an unqualified defense of the new, the modern, the progressive in musical and social terms.”²²⁸

Listening Guide 12: *Music for the Theatre*, Mvt. IV: “Burlesque” (1925) – Aaron Copland

Timeline	Form	Musical Features
0:00	A	<i>Theme 1 in majority of ensemble; fortissimo; “Allegro vivo” tempo</i>
0:02		<i>Slower tempo; heavy pulsation in lowest instruments</i>
0:11		<i>Return to first tempo; Theme 1 in woodwinds</i>
0:18	A'	<i>Theme 1 in muted trumpet</i>
0:19		<i>Theme 2 in violins</i>
0:25		<i>Theme 1 in muted trumpet</i>
0:26		<i>Theme 2 in violins</i>
0:35	B	<i>Theme 3 in oboe and piano</i>
0:40		<i>Woodblock punctuation</i>
0:44		<i>Trombone and low strings play rising three-note scales.</i>
0:49	A'	<i>Theme 1 in muted trumpet</i>
0:51		<i>Theme 2 in violins</i>
1:03	A	<i>Theme 1 in majority of ensemble; fortissimo</i>
1:04		<i>Drop in tempo; heavy pulsation in lowest instruments</i>

1:10	C	<i>Muted trumpet foreshadows snippets of Theme 4 (marked “Solo grotesco”).</i>
1:22		<i>Full Theme 4 (muted trumpet)</i>
1:30		<i>Blue note in melody</i>
1:52	A'	<i>Return to first tempo; Theme 1 in woodwinds, then muted trumpet</i>
1:58		<i>Theme 2 in violins</i>
2:08	B	<i>Theme 3 in oboe and piano</i>
2:17		<i>Trombones play countermelody.</i>
2:20	Transition	<i>Trombone and low strings play rising three-note scales.</i>
2:24		<i>Ritardando</i>
2:29	C'	<i>“Shout” Chorus on Theme 4 (fortissimo); homorhythmic winds; piano playing chords on the beat; intermittent chords in strings & percussion</i>
2:37		<i>Blue note</i>
2:49		<i>Strings & percussion join with piano rhythm.</i>
3:01	A	<i>Theme 1 in majority of ensemble; fortissimo</i>
3:02		<i>Heavy pulsation in lowest instruments</i>
3:09		<i>Theme 1 in majority of ensemble; marked “fff”</i>



Maurice Ravel always took an interest in his clothes; he is shown on the far left while a student at the Paris Conservatory.

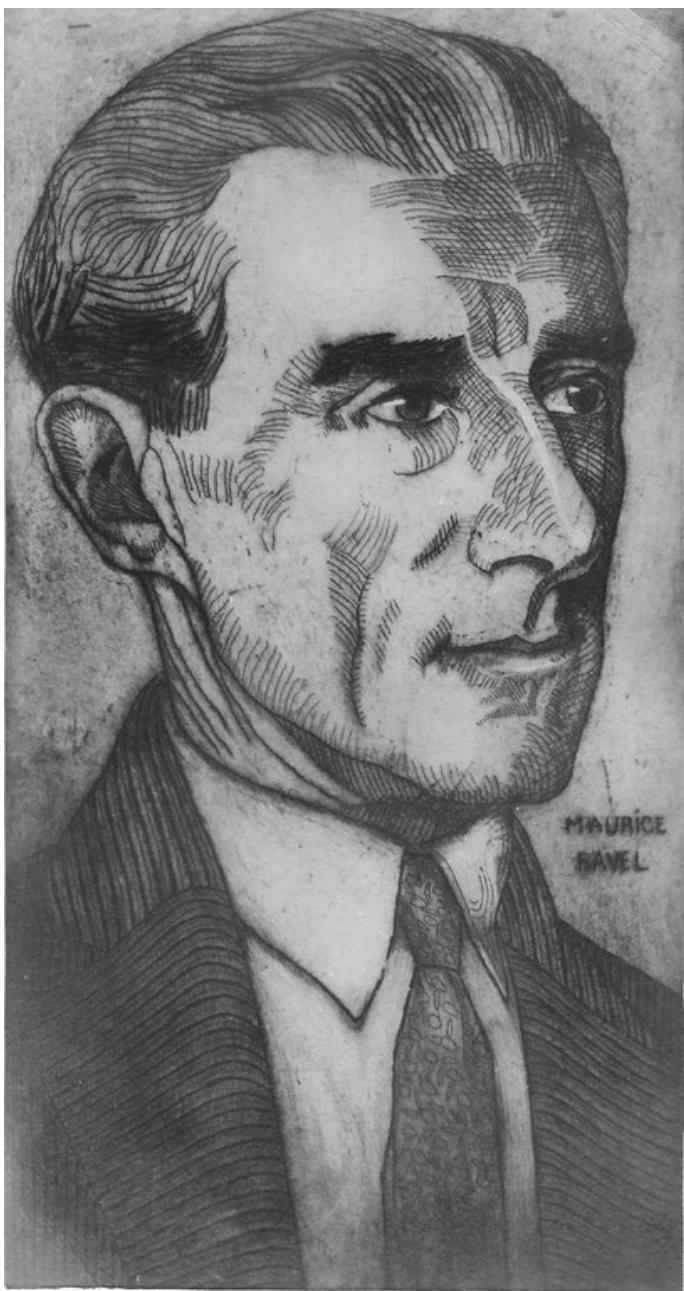
Bringing Jazz Back Home

In the case of Maurice Ravel (1875–1937), the motivation to finish his jazz-tinged Violin Sonata was an upcoming 1928 concert tour through the United States and Canada. Although he was almost twenty years older than Milhaud and other members of *Les Six*, Ravel had been very much in sympathy with their progressive views regarding the value of popular music. In his youth, Ravel had also found it hard to conform to established conventions; during one composition competition, he was eliminated in the first round for including a major seventh in the final chord of his entry rather than ending with a simple triad. For reference, a seventh chord can be heard at the end of “Hotter Than That” (Listening Example 3); jazz musicians frequently use this harmony at the ends of pieces to this day.²²⁹

JAZZ FOR CHAMBER MUSICIANS

Just as France had led the way in the mixing of jazz elements within orchestral music—as heard in Milhaud’s *La création du monde* (Listening Example 10)—some of the earliest chamber or solo works to feature aspects of the new American style also were written by French composers. In both of the remaining listening examples, however, the composers had additional reasons to adopt this blended approach.

Similar to the conflict between the League of Composers and the International Composers’ Guild in New York, Paris had its rival organizations as well. After Ravel had struggled with the conservative attitudes of the Société Nationale (National Society), he helped to found the Société Musicale Indépendante (Independent Musical Society) in 1910.²³⁰ The new society helped to promote the music of *Les Six*, Aaron Copland, and other innovative musicians. As was true for many French composers, however, World War I proved to be an enormous constraint on Ravel’s



A portrait of Maurice Ravel was made in 1928, the year of his first American tour.

creativity, especially after he started driving a military transport vehicle in increasingly dangerous situations. Although he survived the experience, the death of his mother in 1917 shook him profoundly, and he suffered from poor health for the rest of his life. As the 1920s got underway, he still struggled to compose, and progress was slow.²³¹

Despite the decrease in Ravel's output after World War I, this period included some of his finest works, and public esteem for his achievements grew. He was offered (but declined) the Legion of Honor award



Maurice Ravel is seated next to violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, who gave him technical help with his Violin Sonata (pianist Ricardo Viñes is standing).

from the French government. Still, when French authorities became aware of a possible U.S. tour, they were eager to promote Ravel as an ambassador to represent "French achievement."²³² Various details for the trip were negotiated over a two-month period in 1927; by the end, Ravel had been promised a guaranteed minimum fee of \$10,000 and a steady supply of Caporal cigarettes.²³³ As someone who had always cared deeply about his wardrobe, Ravel also had a great deal of packing to do; he traveled with twenty pairs of pajamas and fifty shirts in various pastel colors(!)²³⁴ He set sail at the end of the year and celebrated New Year's Eve on board the ship.²³⁵ He reached New York on January 4, 1928.²³⁶

Before departure, Ravel finished the Violin Sonata, which he had been sketching off and on since 1923.²³⁷ It was actually his second sonata for violin and piano since he had written for that instrumental combination while still a student, but the [earlier work](#) had never been published (and would not be until 1975).²³⁸ The



During his American tour in 1928, Maurice Ravel met Paul Whiteman and heard his jazz orchestra play.

newer sonata would be his last completed chamber work. During the 1920s, he had been given technical advice concerning the violin numerous times by the virtuosa Hélène Jourdan-Morhange (1888–1961), so Ravel dedicated the sonata to her. Sadly, she had developed crippling arthritis in her hands by the time the piece was completed and thus could not premiere it. Instead, the first performance was given by another celebrated violinist, George Enescu (1881–1955), with Ravel playing the piano himself.²³⁹ It is comprised of three movements: 1) Allegretto; 2) Blues (Listening Example 13); and 3) Perpetuum Mobile.

The grueling four-month American tour took Ravel through some twenty-five cities in the United States and Canada—and it was an enormous success. One

performance in Carnegie Hall, four days after Ravel's arrival in the U.S., featured an all-Ravel program performed by the Boston Symphony and conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. As Ravel entered the hall to take his seat, the entire audience rose to give him a standing ovation. Ravel, startled, said to his companion, "You know, this doesn't happen to me in Paris."²⁴⁰ While in New York, Ravel also appears to have visited a club in Harlem; a newspaper interviewer reported that Ravel had wanted to hear "Gershwin's renditions of 'Tea for Two', *Rhapsody in Blue*, '[My Blue Heaven](#)', and other jazz tunes."²⁴¹

A month after his arrival, Ravel's tour took him to California. He met the actor Douglas Fairbanks Sr. on February 7, and he visited the MGM film studio the next day. That evening, Ravel met with the Los Angeles chapter of the Pro Musica Society, one of the agencies sponsoring his American tour. During the course of his lecture-recital for the Pro Musica Society listeners, he performed the Violin Sonata, and the tour



Douglas Fairbanks Sr., was a star in swashbuckling silent films such as *The Three Musketeers* (1921) before the era of "talkies" began, and he met with Maurice Ravel during the latter's American tour in 1928.

notes indicate that the audience demanded an encore of the “Blues” movement.²⁴² (“Encore” means “again” in French, and it is sometimes shouted by an audience that wants to have a particular piece repeated.)

Ever since its premiere, the “Blues” movement has consistently grabbed the most attention from listeners and reviewers alike.²⁴³

LISTENING COMPANION 13: Violin Sonata [No. 2], Mvt. II: “Blues” (1927) – Maurice Ravel

While writing an autobiographical sketch in 1928, Ravel described his ambitions for the Violin Sonata. He explained that within the piece, he wanted to demonstrate independent part-writing, arguing that the violin and piano “are in my opinion essentially incompatible. Far from balancing their contrasts, the Sonata reveals their incompatibility.”²⁴⁴ Although Ravel is technically correct—the instruments *are* very different from each other—many commentators have suggested that this observation is somewhat “old news.” As Section I of this Resource Guide discussed, the sound production for a piano differs significantly from that of the chordophones or aerophones that often partner with it. Violinist Susan Baer writes, “One might argue that the piano really does not blend well with [*any*] of the instruments with which it has been paired in the sonata literature.”²⁴⁵

Still, taking Ravel’s goal at face value—that he wanted to keep the instruments separated and distinct—it has also been suggested that Ravel took the idea one step further in much of the sonata, particularly by treating each of the two *hands* of the piano as separate entities. As a result, sections of the Violin Sonata are arguably a type of trio rather than just a duo.²⁴⁶

Ravel starts to assemble the three-part layering, bit by bit, during the introduction to the “Blues.” The violin begins the movement alone, launching a steady series of *pizzicato* block chords, one per beat, in the key of G major. (See the chords in the top staff in Figure 4-9.) The plucked violin mimics the strumming sounds of a guitar or piano (or perhaps even a ukulele!²⁴⁷), and thus the country blues style comes to mind since that

FIGURE 4-9

The musical score for Figure 4-9 shows two staves. The top staff is for the Violin, which starts with a dynamic of *pizz.* and a tempo of **(Moderato)**. The violin plays a series of block chords, one per beat, in G major. The bottom staff is for the Piano, which starts with a dynamic of *p.* The piano provides harmonic support with sustained notes and some rhythmic patterns. A brace groups the two piano staves. The score is labeled "Three-part layering in ‘Blues.’"

approach used simple accompaniments most of the time. The regularly occurring chords have an ostinato effect, but Ravel interrupts the steadiness several times by shifting to new harmonies and sudden dynamic contrasts. The introductory chords do not conform to the traditional twelve-bar-blues pattern, yet they do emphasize the same three primary harmonies of the twelve-bar-blues: I, IV, and V. It is possible, therefore, to feel the shadow of the standard blues pattern, despite Ravel's liberties.²⁴⁸

After six measures of these steady pulses, the piano's left hand introduces a perfect fifth interval that sustains for eight counts and then repeats (as shown in the bottom staff in Figure 4-9), perhaps resembling a trombone or a string bass in a rhythm section.²⁴⁹ Although this prolonged perfect fifth is even simpler than the violin's pulsations, its first appearance makes it very clear that Ravel is *not* a blues musician but rather a modern-era art-music composer. The two sustained pitches are Ab and Eb—neither of which appear in the violin's G major tonality. In fact, the piano is in a different key altogether; it is set in Ab major, with a key signature of four flats, in contrast to the violin's key signature of a single sharp. Like his countryman Milhaud (Listening Example 10), Ravel is exploring the use of polytonality during "Blues."

The third layer of Ravel's texture makes its first appearance in measure 8 (the middle staff's second bar as shown in Figure 4-9). This is a short, bluesy riff (in the piano's right hand) that opens with an upper-neighbor motion, C–D–C. It reminds theorist Mark DeVoto of the opening of the fugue in Tableau I from Milhaud's *La création du monde* (Listening Example 10); see the first measure of Figure 4-2 for comparison.²⁵⁰

After the riff is repeated, Ravel abruptly shifts the time-keeping pulses from the violin to the right hand of the piano; he continues the sustained whole notes in the left hand. The violin changes key, unifying with the piano in Ab major. Now using the bow instead of *pizzicato*, the violinist is told to play "nostalgico" (with nostalgia), perhaps again evoking the blues singing style of earlier in the century. The carefully notated melody is filled with slides and bends that are reminiscent of Bessie Smith's flexibility in "Lost Your Head Blues" (Listening Example 1). Although the image of a blues singer is very clear, some analysts also hear references to the tone of a clarinet or a saxophone.²⁵¹

Like Copland in "Burlesque" (Listening Example 12), Ravel proceeds through a rondo-like structure in "Blues." The "nostalgico" A refrain is interrupted by the first episode (B), featuring busier ostinato patterns in the piano and a correspondingly simpler violin melody. When A returns, a more animated ragtime-style accompaniment supports the violin melody. The C episode puts the violin back in the accompanying role of steady *pizzicato* pulses, while the piano plays its own bluesy melody. The violin takes over the tune to lead into the D episode. During D, the piano performs crisp ostinatos that seem to be based on the short upper-neighbor riff introduced in measure 8, while the violin plays a rhythmically independent bluesy line. When the C episode returns—again giving the lead to the piano—the violin plays short pairs of sixteenth notes in a very banjo-like accompaniment. These banjo motifs persist for quite a while, continuing to sound even as the A refrain tries to re-enter. At last, the violin's "nostalgico" A tune regains the spotlight, this time engaging in a call-and-response with the piano until the piano plays the upper-neighbor riff one more time. At that point, the piano arpeggiates through an Ab major chord while the violin performs a forceful glissando up to a Gb—ending the piece with a very jazz-like seventh chord.

Listening Guide 13: Violin Sonata [No. 2], Mvt. II: “Blues” (1927) – Maurice Ravel

Timeline	Form	Musical Features
0:00	Intro	<i>Steady pulses in violin (in G major); banjo- or guitar-like</i>
0:14		<i>Piano adds sustained A-flats/E-flats (creating polytonality).</i>
0:18		<i>Right-hand plays first appearance of upper-neighbor riff.</i>
0:23	A	<i>Steady pulses in piano (in G major)</i>
0:26		<i>Theme 1 in violin (marked “nostalgico”); occasional slides between pitches</i>
1:01		<i>Theme 1 in violin</i>
1:19	B	<i>New ostinato patterns in piano with changing pitches</i>
1:26		<i>Theme 2 in violin</i>
1:53	A	<i>Theme 1 in violin with busier ragtime-style piano accompaniment</i>
2:12	C	<i>Steady pizzicato accompaniment in violin</i>
2:14		<i>Theme 3 in piano right-hand; occasional hemiola patterns</i>
2:40	D	<i>More complex ostinato patterns in piano</i>
2:45		<i>Theme 4 in violin</i>
2:50		<i>Blue note in melody (E-natural against E-sharp in accompaniment)</i>
3:14	C	<i>Theme 3 in piano left-hand; right hand plays glissandos; banjo-like accompaniment in violin</i>
3:21	A+C	<i>Theme 1 briefly added in piano right-hand</i>
3:41	A+C	<i>Theme 1 in violin (octave higher than first appearance); Theme 3 in piano right-hand</i>
4:03	C	<i>Theme 3 in piano; banjo chords in violin</i>
4:34	A	<i>Theme 1 in unaccompanied violin; call-and-response with piano right-hand</i>
4:48		<i>Piano plays final upper-neighbor riff, followed by arpeggio; glissando in violin to a seventh chord</i>

JAZZ FOR THE CONCERT PIANIST

Ravel's interest in foreign music made him sympathetic to the views of *Les Six*, the group of six younger French musicians who sought to change the status quo in France. Among them was Milhaud, the composer of *La création du monde* (Listening Example 10), but Milhaud was not the only member of the group to apply jazz stylings to classical genres. His female colleague Germaine Tailleferre (1892–1983) also incorporated aspects of the imported style into her *Sicilienne* (1928) for piano (Listening Example 14).

Overcoming Obstacles

When it came to a career as a classical musician, the deck seemed stacked against Tailleferre (pronounced

“Ty-fair”). One challenge came shortly after her birth, when a cholera epidemic swept through her town; she contracted the disease but fortunately survived. Another challenge originated long before her birth, when her mother, Marie-Désirée Taillefesse, fell in love with the son of a notary. Marie-Désirée's father, however, had met a man named Arthur Taillefesse on a train, and wanted his daughter to be able to have the same last name *after* her marriage as she had *before* she was wed. So, he hid the correspondence from the notary's son and maneuvered his daughter into marrying Arthur.²⁵² (Since “fesse” means “bottom” or “buttocks,” the family changed the second syllable to “ferre” at some point.) Understandably, the marriage was never happy, and the fierce quarreling between Arthur and Marie-Désirée meant that Tailleferre’s “entire youth was spent in the ‘midst of arguments and tears.’”²⁵³



Germaine Tailleferre was the sole female member of the group of French composers known as Les Six.

Tailleferre's early musical talent led to another quarrel. Marie-Désirée, recognizing her daughter's aptitude, brought her to the Paris Conservatory in 1904, where she was accepted as a student at the age of twelve. However, like many people of his generation and social class, Arthur felt it was inappropriate for Tailleferre to pursue a career in music since that would put her in the public eye—and he told the family that it was equivalent to letting his daughter become a streetwalker (a prostitute). He refused his permission, but that did not stop his wife from coming up with a plan. Each day, Tailleferre went to a local convent—and as soon as Arthur had gone to work, the nuns escorted Tailleferre over to the Conservatory.²⁵⁴

Tailleferre's primary piano teacher at the Conservatory was Eva Sautureau-Meyer, and under her guidance—and thanks to Tailleferre's own remarkable powers of memorization—Tailleferre became a prize winner multiple times.²⁵⁵ When a newspaper published a report about one of her first-prize medals, Arthur actually paraded the article proudly. Yet, although this exposure

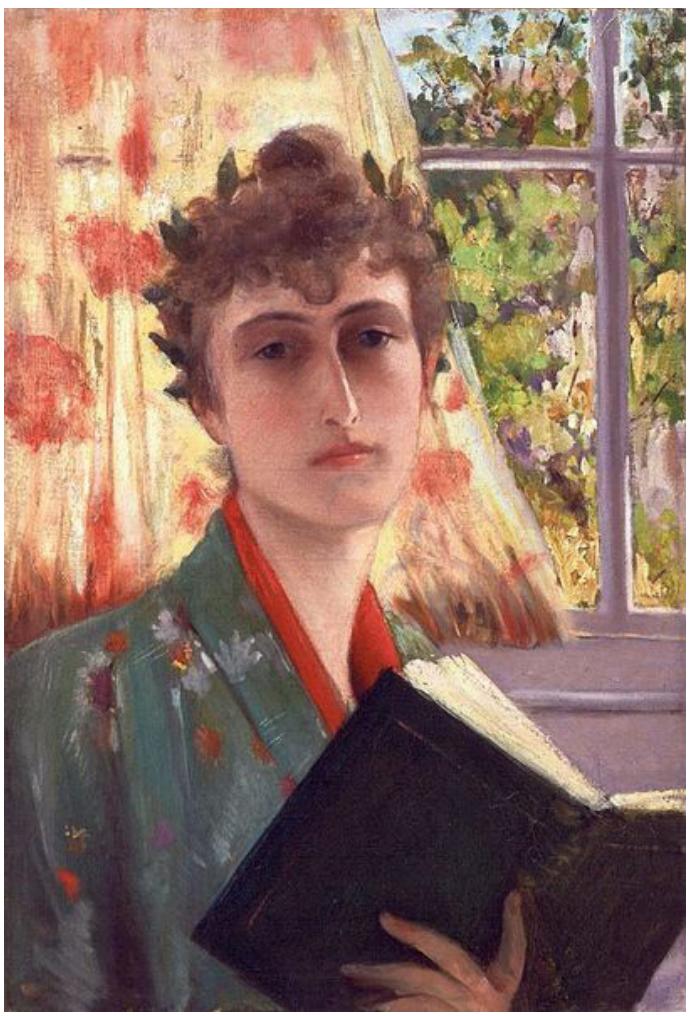


To avoid her husband's ire, Germaine Tailleferre's mother arranged for nuns at a convent to sneak her daughter into her classes at the Paris Conservatory.

meant that Tailleferre no longer needed to keep her Conservatory attendance secret, her father still refused to give her any financial help. As a result, Tailleferre became a music tutor to pay for her studies.²⁵⁶ She met three future members of *Les Six*—Milhaud (Listening Example 10), Honegger, and Auric—in a counterpoint class in which she took the top prize, and she also won the first prize in her harmony class. Despite her commitment to her studies, she also found time to get a pilot's license as a balloonist, and it says something about her capabilities that her counterpoint teacher agreed to go with her on her maiden voyage.²⁵⁷

The onset of World War I was another challenge. Initially, Conservatory classes were significantly cut back, but Tailleferre continued to attend a composition course with three other remaining students. One of them was Milhaud, who urged her to keep composing, even after classes were canceled completely in 1917, and he left to go to Brazil with Paul Claudel. Tailleferre took Milhaud's recommendation seriously—especially since she had made an unhappy discovery about herself: she suffered dreadfully from stage fright. She had inadvertently played an entire Bach fugue in the wrong key when she was nervous about the director of the Conservatory being on her jury panel, so it was becoming clear that a career as a concert pianist was not a promising choice.²⁵⁸ Moreover, Milhaud's encouragement was evidence that disparaging opinions of women composers—such as Copland's initial reaction to Boulanger—were not universal.

While the Conservatory was closed, Tailleferre and



The sewing-machine heiress Winnaretta Singer, who painted her self-portrait before becoming the Princesse Édmond de Polignac, was an important patron for Germaine Tailleferre.

members of her family left war-torn Paris for safer territory. Arthur was not among them; he had died in 1914, which Tailleferre called “a relief” in her memoirs.²⁵⁹ While waiting for the end of the war, an encounter during 1917 was especially fruitful: Tailleferre had the chance to perform one of her compositions for Erik Satie (1866–1925), a prominent force in innovative French music. He christened her his “musical daughter,” and she left the concert feeling that her path as a composer “was set forever.”²⁶⁰ At some point around this time, she also made the acquaintance of the Princesse Édmond de Polignac (1865–1943), who had been born Winnaretta Singer. (Her father had founded the Singer Sewing Machine Company in the United States.) During the winter of 1920, the Princesse let Tailleferre stay in a property she owned in the Basque region of southwestern France; Tailleferre finished composing her [first violin](#)

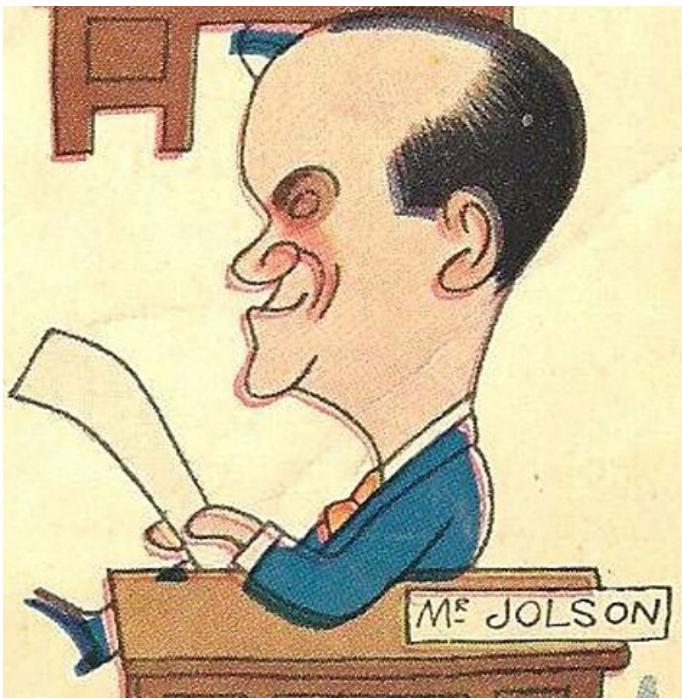
[sonata](#) in that peaceful refuge.²⁶¹

The Princesse also set a series of events in motion that would ultimately lead to the composition of Tailleferre’s piano piece *Sicilienne*. In 1921, *Les Six* worked jointly on a ballet for the Ballets Suédois, although Durey pulled out of the project four days before the premiere. Tailleferre hurriedly composed ballet music to replace his missing contribution. The Ballets Suédois—who would later commission Milhaud’s *La création du monde* (Listening Example 10)—must have appreciated Tailleferre’s heroic effort since they commissioned her alone to write a ballet the following year, 1922.²⁶² The Princesse Édmond de Polignac admired the archaic quality of Tailleferre’s ballet, which reminded her of a favorite Baroque composer, Domenico Scarlatti. She immediately commissioned Tailleferre to write a [piano concerto](#).²⁶³

After Tailleferre finished the concerto, a patron helped arrange for it to be performed in several U.S. cities in



Ralph Barton, dedicatee of *Sicilienne*, was photographed in 1926, the year of his marriage to Germaine Tailleferre.



Al Jolson (singer of “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! [Goo’ Bye]”) was one of the many celebrities depicted in caricatures by Ralph Barton, Germaine Tailleferre’s first husband.

the spring of 1925.²⁶⁴ Tailleferre and her concerto were well received, so she returned to New York several times over the next year to pursue further musical opportunities. She attended an evening party in late November 1926 at the New York home of Blanche Knopf (married to the publisher Alfred Knopf), and a fellow guest was Ralph Barton (1891–1931).²⁶⁵ Barton—a thrice-married caricaturist whose artwork had appeared in *The New Yorker* magazine and other publications—insisted on driving Tailleferre back to her hotel after the party. During the journey, he asked, “Would you like to marry me tomorrow?” Although Tailleferre thought at first that he was joking, she said “yes” the next day when he repeated the proposal; their wedding took place a week later.²⁶⁶ The couple divided much of their time between the U.S. and France over the next several years; during one Manhattan party, she and George Gershwin performed the two-piano version of his *Rhapsody in Blue* (Listening Example 11). After moving back to France, Tailleferre composed *Sicilienne* in December 1928, giving it the dedication “à Ralph.”²⁶⁷ Sadly, though, their marriage ended bizarrely and unhappily the following year.²⁶⁸

LISTENING COMPANION 14: *Sicilienne* (1928) – Germaine Tailleferre

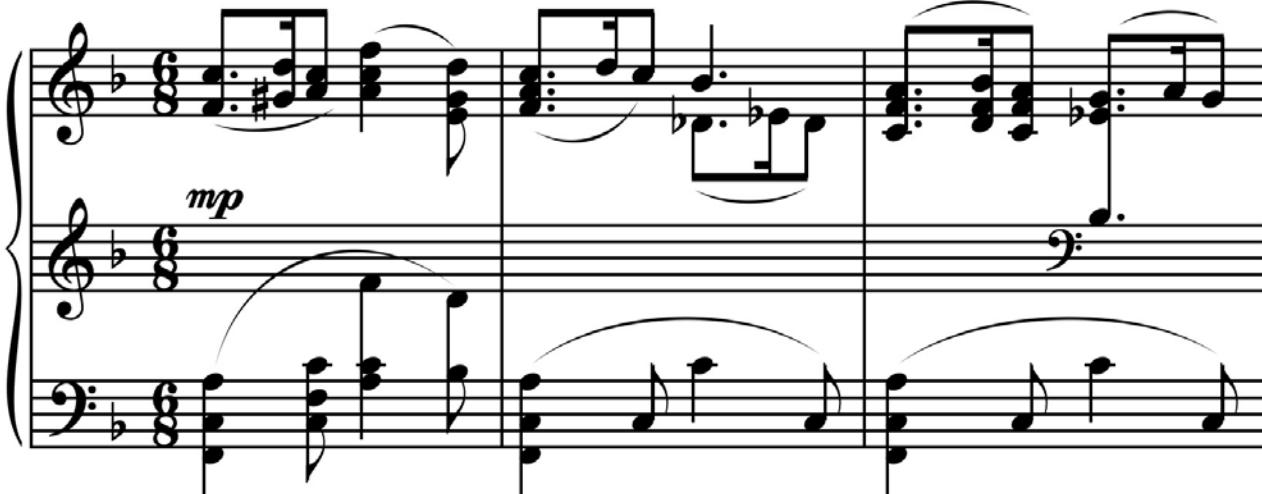
Tailleferre’s title of *Sicilienne* is the French translation of the Italian word “siciliano.” Historically, the word meant merely “in the Sicilian style,” and it came into use when Baroque composers thought that they were imitating the folk music of Sicily. Although there does not seem to be an authentic Sicilian folk song or dance tradition that Baroque musicians used as a basis, they soon developed a handful of standard musical characteristics for their “siciliano” pieces, and those traits were carried on into the twentieth century.²⁶⁹ Therefore, Tailleferre used a gentle compound-duple meter for *Sicilienne*, with her main theme being largely conjunct.

It is likely, after studying thirteen preceding listening examples that all employ blues and jazz harmonies, that the unconventional chords in *Sicilienne* may seem fairly tame. This tolerance for harmonies outside of common-practice chords underscores how much listeners’ ears had adapted to the new jazz-tinged harmonic language during the 1920s. But, as seen in Figure 4-10, Tailleferre moves away from common-practice harmony as quickly as the fourth beat of the piece. After three pulses in a sing-song F major, Tailleferre introduces a D_b and an E_b in the second half of measure 2, borrowing from the parallel minor to generate the blue-note effect of these mixed modes. The E_b, or flattened “seven” of the scale, returns on beat 6 (the second half of measure 3), reiterating that typical blue note.

The second phrase of *Sicilienne* continues to add jazz colors to the harmony. It flattens the mediant of F major, turning the normal A_# into A_b. The lowered third is common in blues harmony, and the rest of the piece continues with similar twists and turns. It is possible that Tailleferre was simply reacting to the popularity of imported American jazz, in the same way that her French colleagues were attracted to the new style. However, it is rare to find jazz harmonies in Tailleferre’s other compositions, and analysts have suggested that Tailleferre

FIGURE 4-10

Mouvt. de Sicilienne



employed these bluesy chords as a tribute to the birthplace of her American husband.²⁷⁰

Within the ternary form of *Sicilienne*, Tailleferre uses other techniques that evoke the jazz world as well as the classical. She emphasizes the end of the first A section with an accented, *forte polychord* of an E major triad underneath a B_b major triad. The climactic passage in the B section is a long string of sixteenth-note triplets, harmonized primarily as parallel sixths—but just before the triplets start, a brief, jazzy hemiola passage breaks up the compound-duple regularity by creating a sense of triple meter. A ninth chord (A–C–E–G–B_b) announces the return of A, while another polychord—with roots of C and B_b—signals the start of the brief coda.

Despite the brevity of *Sicilienne*—the shortest of the listening examples—Tailleferre presents some challenges to pianists. The triplet sixteenths resemble a cadenza, and they certainly require quite a bit of expertise. Also, pianists may have already noticed in Figure 4-10 that Tailleferre notates the work on *three* staves rather than the conventional two.

In 2022, nearly a century after *Sicilienne* was composed, a reviewer commented, “For too long, Tailleferre’s work has been cruelly neglected.”²⁷¹ The increasing numbers of commercial recordings within the past decade of *Sicilienne* and other pieces by Tailleferre are evidence that the long-standing lack of attention to her music is being remedied at last.

Listening Guide 14: Sicilienne (1928) – Germaine Tailleferre

Timeline	Form	Structure	Musical Features
0:00	A	4 bars	<i>Theme 1 in sing-song compound-duple meter ("Siciliana" style); numerous jazz inflections</i>
0:08		4 bars	<i>Second phrase reharmonizes opening; use of A-flat (flattened mediant)</i>
0:15		4 bars	<i>Third phrase (higher register)</i>
0:24		4 bars	<i>Fourth phrase; oscillating neighbor notes added</i>
0:31		2 bars	<i>Oscillating fifths in left hand</i>
0:35		2 bars	<i>Simplified texture</i>
0:37		3 bars	<i>Melody in left hand</i>
0:43			<i>Block polychord (E major against B-flat major)</i>
0:44	B	8 bars	<i>Busier melody with groups of sixteenth notes</i>
0:59		3 bars	<i>Repetition of first phrase followed by rising sequence</i>
1:05		4 bars	<i>Harmonic shift</i>
1:12		1 bar	<i>Hemiola measure (8th notes in pairs rather than groups of three); melody climbs.</i>
1:15		4 bars	<i>Cadenza-like passage of cascading triplet sixteenth notes</i>
1:22		4 bars	<i>Theme 1 in foreign key</i>
1:28			<i>Ninth chord</i>
1:29	A	16 bars	<i>Repetition of first four phrases; additional blue notes</i>
2:00	Coda	3.5 bars	<i>Chromatic rise and fall in left hand</i>
2:07		.5 bar	<i>Block polychord (C against B-flat7)</i>
2:08		4 bars	<i>Theme 1 in left hand followed by three block chords; F-sharp to F-natural "blues" shifts in right hand</i>

SECTION IV SUMMARY

- ◆ During the 1920s, jazz found interested listeners among classical composers, while some jazz composers experimented with classical techniques.
- ◆ During World War I, groups such as the 369th Infantry Regiment band—the “Hellfighters”—had helped to introduce the French to the sound of jazz.
- ◆ The Frenchman Darius Milhaud encountered jazz in the U.S., England, and at home in France. He and other members of *Les Six* all relished the sound of this new style.
- ◆ Milhaud wove various features of jazz into his score for the ballet *La création du monde* (1923), performed by the Ballets Suédois.
- ◆ Critics were initially on the fence about Milhaud’s ballet but eventually came to applaud it as a masterpiece.
- ◆ The **scenario** of *La création du monde* depicts an African creation myth, and the Overture and Tableau (Scene) I comprise Listening Example 10.
- ◆ Milhaud mimicked the instrumentation of American jazz orchestras for his ballet ensemble. The saxophone timbre is prominent while other instruments play riffs and glissandos.
- ◆ Sections of the score employ polytonality, in part as an art-music technique and in part as a way to create blue notes. Hemiola occurs in various sections as well.

- ◆ Tableau I showcases a jazz fugue, again mixing jazz and classical elements. Subsequent entrances of the fugue subject, played by “jazzy” instruments, move through the circle of fifths. Polymeter is also created by ostinato patterns of different lengths.
- ◆ In one section of the Tableau, Milhaud uses the ancient **Phrygian** mode with its pattern of H-W-W-W-H-W-W.
- ◆ George Gershwin was not the first composer to blend jazz and classical elements, but his *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924; Listening Example 11) is arguably the most famous example of this mixture.
- ◆ He worked as a song-plugger and wrote for various Broadway shows. Al Jolson’s recording of Gershwin’s song “Swanee” was a big boost to the composer’s career.
- ◆ The idea for *Rhapsody in Blue* came from Paul Whiteman, a jazz band leader. He wanted to help jazz listeners appreciate classical music. Its opening clarinet glissando—“the icebreaker”—is widely recognized to this day.
- ◆ Gershwin initially drafted a two-piano version of the *Rhapsody* that Ferde Grofé **orchestrated** for the Whiteman band. One of the earliest performances took place in Carnegie Hall. Grofé later published an orchestral version that turned the piece into a full-fledged piano **concerto**.
- ◆ Like most concertos, there are **cadenzas** that feature the piano on its own, but they were pre-planned by Gershwin rather than improvised. The pianist performs **arpeggios** that break up the pitches of a chord as well as **block chords**, in which the chord tones are all played simultaneously.
- ◆ Some scholars, including the analyst David Schiff, group the overall *Rhapsody in Blue* into subsections that resemble a sonata cycle.
- ◆ Schiff also assigned nicknames to several recurring melodies in the *Rhapsody*; the “Ritornello,” “Stride,” and “Tag” themes all appear within Listening Example 11. The “Tag” may be based on a phrase from one of Gershwin’s songs, “The Man I Love.”
- ◆ The *Rhapsody* also contains jazzy syncopations and blue notes.
- ◆ The American composer Aaron Copland wrote his first jazz-tinged classical compositions overseas, under the guidance of Nadia Boulanger (although he had been initially hesitant about having a woman as a composition teacher).
- ◆ Boulanger helped get Copland’s Organ Symphony played in the U.S., including a performance conducted by Serge Koussevitzky, whom Copland called “the Maestro.”
- ◆ Koussevitzky welcomed the chance to work with Copland again, so he agreed to conduct *Music for the Theatre* (1925), which had been commissioned by the League of Composers.
- ◆ While enjoying financial support from a private patron and the Guggenheim Foundation’s first music award, Copland wrote most of *Music for the Theatre* at the MacDowell Colony and finished it in “The Clouds,” a shack built for him by his former piano teacher. The five-movement work was well received in its Boston premiere but encountered harsh criticism when played at the League of Composers concert in New York. Still, critics eventually ate their words, just as they had with Milhaud’s *La création du monde*.
- ◆ Movement IV “Burlesque” (Listening Example 12) reminded some listeners of New Orleans jazz, while Copland said he had the comedienne Fanny Brice in mind.
- ◆ During “Burlesque,” rapid shifts between tempos, dynamics, and instruments keep audiences on their toes. The trumpet plays a bluesy “solo grotesco” in the third episode of the rondo form, and the full group mimics a jazz band’s **shout chorus**.
- ◆ Maurice Ravel, an older French composer who shared *Les Six*’s appreciation for American popular music, co-founded the Société Musicale Indépendante. The Société helped to promote the music of *Les Six*, Aaron Copland, and other innovative musicians.
- ◆ Ravel worked on a violin sonata (technically, his second) during much of the 1920s, assisted by violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange. He

- completed it in 1927 when a tour of the United States and Canada was being planned.
- ◆ The American tour went very well, and the “Blues” movement of the Violin Sonata (Listening Example 13) was **encored** during a California lecture-recital.
 - ◆ In the sonata, Ravel wanted to explore the contrasts between the piano and violin, and he often treated each instrument independently. At times, he also treated each of the two hands of the pianist as independent layers, so that the piece contains passages where the two instruments create three layers of sound.
 - ◆ Ravel seems to have had the country blues style in mind in much of the piece; the violin and the piano take turns playing a steady, strum-like accompaniment. Yet, the layers operate in different keys at times, reflecting the art-music interest in polytonality.
 - ◆ After the introduction, the right-hand of the piano introduces a short riff with an opening neighbor tone, and then the violin plays a bluesy “nostalgico” melody that acts as a refrain in the rondo-like form.
 - ◆ A peer of Milhaud in *Les Six* was Germaine Tailleferre, the only woman of the group. She overcame numerous challenges to pursue a career in music.
 - ◆ Like Copland, Tailleferre benefited from artistic patrons, and like Milhaud, an early ballet score helped Tailleferre to get her career underway.
 - ◆ The premiere of Tailleferre’s piano concerto took her to the United States in 1925, and a subsequent visit in 1926 led to her first marriage. Tailleferre dedicated her piano piece *Sicilienne* (1928; Listening Example 14) to her husband; she may have added jazz elements to it as a tribute to his American birthplace.
 - ◆ Like other works in “siciliano” style, Tailleferre’s *Sicilienne* has a relaxed, conjunct melody in compound-duple meter. However, it uses quite a bit of jazz harmony as well. Like her French countrymen, Tailleferre mixes modes in the piece, often producing the effect of blue notes.
 - ◆ **Polychords** and ninth chords help to distinguish the sections within *Sicilienne*’s ternary form, and the music is complex enough to require three staves in its notation.

Conclusion

A jazz musician might argue that the nickname for the “Jazz Age” is not very precise. After all, jazz continued to be created and performed throughout the rest of the twentieth century and onward to the present day; its “age” has not ended. But, for millions of listeners, the “Roaring Twenties” represented the decade of “jazzomania” after commercial recordings began revealing what had been going on in the southern United States in the preceding decades. The sounds brought to national (and international) audiences via sheet music, scratchy recordings, theaters, the radio, the concert hall, and the movies made the “Jazz Age” an exciting time of discovery.

The earliest styles of jazz pulled together features from many musical ancestors, especially the blues. Section II of this Guide used “Lost Your Head Blues” to illustrate a number of blues elements that were passed along to early jazz, especially African-derived techniques such as call-and-response, blue notes, swing rhythm, and flexible, melismatic singing. Early jazz performers, who congregated in New Orleans, added heterophony and brief solos to ensemble performances. Subsequent generations of jazz musicians moved elsewhere, adding new features such as longer improvised solos, pre-planned stop-time and other rhythmic effects, expanded numbers of players, and new tone colors in the ensembles. These aspects led to Chicago jazz and pre-swing pieces.

Even for people who did not listen to recordings of the many new jazz approaches, elements of the various jazz styles came to them via the popular entertainment offered on Broadway and elsewhere. As discussed in Section III, Black musical comedies enjoyed significant

financial success, spurring white musical comedies to employ similar musical elements in their songs and dances. Jazz stylings even played an essential dramatic role in the musical theater production *Show Boat*, conveying a message about a character’s background that she had kept hidden. Tin Pan Alley publishers soon jumped on the bandwagon, getting song-pluggers to promote their jazzy sheet music. Of course, New Yorkers who attended Broadway shows were only a small percentage of the American population. For the rest of the nation, the growing tide of jazz effects was made audible via radio broadcasts and then—near the end of the decade—via movies that began to feature this new musical sensation.

Of course, there were many listeners who routinely avoided Broadway and other types of “popular” music—but they still experienced increasing numbers of jazz-influenced classical works in the concert hall. Section IV chronicled five compositions crafted by art-music composers. Some of these works originated in France—which was perhaps the foreign nation that was quickest to embrace the new popular music coming from the United States—while others were written by U.S. citizens. In all the listening examples, there is harmonic ambiguity between major and minor created by “blue notes,” but each piece varies in what other blues or jazz elements it employs. The public reaction to the works varied considerably; listeners adored *Rhapsody in Blue* from the start, while some compositions were held in disdain for a decade or more. Still, the way that jazz had increasingly permeated nearly all types of music during the 1920s was remarkable, making the decade’s “Jazz Age” designation not only appropriate but perhaps inevitable.

Timeline

19th century –	The style of singing called “blues” develops in the United States.
late 19th century –	Music publishers start to congregate on 28 th Street in New York, soon to be christened “Tin Pan Alley.”
1889 –	Claude Debussy hears a gamelan orchestra and is inspired to incorporate Javanese elements into his music.
1895 –	“Moving pictures” are publicly demonstrated for the first time.
1898 –	“Storyville” is established in New Orleans, pushing red-light activities into one district.
1904 –	The musical comedy <i>Little Johnny Jones</i> introduces the song “Give My Regards to Broadway.” Germaine Tailleferre begins classes at the Paris Conservatory (without her father knowing).
early 20th century –	The style of New Orleans jazz starts to develop.
1910 –	Maurice Ravel co-founds the Société Musicale Indépendante.
1914 –	May Edgington publishes the novel <i>Oh James!</i> , which will be part of the property for <i>No, No, Nanette</i> .
1917 –	The Original Dixieland Jazz Band makes the first “jazz” recording, “Livery Stable Blues.” The same group records “Tiger Rag” later that year. Storyville is closed, so many jazz musicians leave New Orleans for other cities. Samson Raphaelson sees Al Jolson perform, eventually inspiring him to write the play <i>The Jazz Singer</i> . Lt. James Reese Europe leads the Hellfighters band in jazzy performances in France during their wartime military service. Darius Milhaud travels to Brazil with the French ambassador since the Paris Conservatory has canceled classes. Erik Satie admires a work by Germaine Tailleferre, making her determined to pursue a career as a composer.
late 1910s –	The style of Chicago jazz starts to develop.
1919 –	The play <i>My Lady Friends</i> premieres, which will be part of the property for <i>No, No, Nanette</i> . Darius Milhaud listens to American-style jazz and popular music in a club in Paris.
1920 –	Darius Milhaud hears an American jazz band in London. He and five French colleagues are nicknamed <i>Les Six</i> . Al Jolson records George Gershwin’s song “Swanee,” and it becomes a national hit. Germaine Tailleferre works on her first violin sonata while staying at an estate owned by the Princesse Édmond de Polignac.
1921 –	The musical comedy <i>Shuffle Along</i> —created by a team of Black artists—becomes a Broadway success. The musical comedy <i>Bombo</i> opens, starring Al Jolson. Aaron Copland travels to Paris to study and eventually connects with Nadia Boulanger for instruction. <i>Les Six</i> work jointly (mostly) on a ballet for the Ballets Suédois.

1922 –	Joe “King” Oliver hires Louis Armstrong. Al Jolson records the foxtrot song “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! (Goo’ Bye)” and interpolates it into <i>Bombo</i> . Milhaud takes a concert tour in the U.S. and encounters more American jazz. The <i>Shuffle Along</i> sequel <i>Liza</i> premieres. Germaine Tailleferre writes a ballet for the Ballets Suédois, which leads to a commission for a piano concerto from the Princesse Édmond de Polignac.
1923 –	In February, Bessie Smith records for Columbia Records for the first time and turns the company’s financial status around. Joe “King” Oliver starts making records in April, including “Dippermouth Blues,” which mixes New Orleans and Chicago styles. The <i>Shuffle Along</i> spin-off musical comedy <i>Runnin’ Wild</i> premieres; its song “The Charleston” sparks a national dance craze. Ben Bernie starts leading an orchestra at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York. Milhaud’s ballet <i>La création du monde</i> premieres in Paris on October 25.
1924 –	Louis Armstrong and Lillian Hardin get married. The show <i>Rose-Marie</i> features “integrated” songs. George Gershwin’s <i>Rhapsody in Blue</i> premieres in Aeolian Hall on February 12 and is repeated in Carnegie Hall on April 21. Aaron Copland presents some compositions for the League of Composers and is commissioned to write a new work.
1925 –	Louis Armstrong starts making recordings with the Hot Five. A January recording of “Tea for Two” from the musical comedy <i>No, No, Nanette</i> stays at No. 1 for eleven weeks; the show premieres on Broadway in September. On March 19, Ben Bernie and the Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra record “Sweet Georgia Brown,” which stays at Number 1 for five weeks. Germaine Tailleferre’s piano concerto is performed in several U.S. cities. Aaron Copland’s Organ Symphony is performed in New York and Boston. He is supported by grants from a private patron and the first music award from the Guggenheim Foundation. He completes <i>Music for the Theatre</i> at the MacDowell Colony and at his piano teacher’s shack “The Clouds.” Serge Koussevitzky premieres <i>Music for the Theatre</i> in Boston on November 20 and repeats it in New York on November 28. Olin Downes publishes a scathing review of <i>Music for the Theatre</i> in <i>The New York Times</i> .
1926 –	On March 18, Bessie Smith records the blues song “Lost Your Head Blues” with Joe Smith and Fletcher Henderson. The Hot Five recording of “Heebie Jeebies”—with Louis Armstrong scat-singing—becomes a hit. Fletcher Henderson demonstrates early swing characteristics in “The Stampede,” recorded on May 14. Edna Ferber publishes the novel <i>Show Boat</i> . On November 15, Ben Bernie and the Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra participate in NBC’s first national radio broadcast. Aaron Copland’s Guggenheim Award is renewed. Germaine Tailleferre meets and marries Ralph Barton.
1927 –	The Hot Five (plus guitarist Lonnie Johnson) record the Chicago-style tune “Hotter Than That” on December 13. Duke Ellington records “Creole Love Call,” which includes wordless voice as an unusual tone color. Dmitri Shostakovich makes an orchestral arrangement of “Tea for Two” in under an hour. <i>Show Boat</i> demonstrates the power of the still-new musical theater genre, while its song “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” contributes to subtext within the plot. Al Jolson unexpectedly interjects some spoken dialogue while filming <i>The Jazz Singer</i> (during the scene that included his planned performance of “Toot, Toot, Tootsie! [Goo’ Bye]”), thus creating the first “talkie” film. Maurice Ravel completes his Violin Sonata (No. 2) in preparation for an American tour.
1928 –	Maurice Ravel tours the United States and Canada for four months. On February 8, the “Blues” movement of his Violin Sonata is encored during a lecture-recital. Germaine Tailleferre composes <i>Sicilienne</i> , dedicating it to her American husband.
1932 –	Olin Downes drastically revises his opinion of Aaron Copland’s <i>Music for the Theatre</i> .
late 1930s –	Swing starts to dominate as the most popular musical style in the United States.

1939 –	Pianist Art Tatum records “Tea for Two.”
1942 –	Ferde Grofé publishes a version of <i>Rhapsody in Blue</i> for piano with full orchestra.
1948 –	Harry S. Truman uses a song from <i>Shuffle Along</i> in his presidential campaign.
1949 –	Brother Bones and His Shadows record “Sweet Georgia Brown” with a whistled refrain.
1952 –	The Harlem Globetrotters select the Brother Bones and His Shadows’ recording of “Sweet Georgia Brown” as their theme song.
1964 –	The musical <i>Funny Girl</i> —based on the life of Fanny Brice, who had inspired the “Burlesque” movement in Aaron Copland’s <i>Music for the Theatre</i> —premieres.
1970s –	Columbia Records reissues Bessie Smith’s recordings.
1975 –	Maurice Ravel’s earliest Violin Sonata (No. 1) is published for the first time.
1986 –	Art Tatum’s recording of “Tea for Two” is inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.
1987 –	Andrew Lloyd Webber spoofs blues poetry in his musical <i>Starlight Express</i> .
2009 –	Disney’s animated film <i>The Princess and the Frog</i> quotes “Dippermouth Blues.”
2016 –	<i>Shuffle Along, Or The Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed</i> (a show about the creation of <i>Shuffle Along</i>) premieres on Broadway.

Glossary

arpeggio – a chord whose individual pitches are played in succession rather than simultaneously, in the manner that one would strum a guitar or harp

block chord – a chord whose individual pitches are played simultaneously rather than in succession

block voicing – a jazz arranging technique in which instruments that belong to the same family are assigned similar music to play (so that trumpets are grouped together, or saxophones, or trombones, etc.); also called *sectional writing*

blue note – a pitch that is deliberately sung “out of tune”; it is a device commonly used by jazz and blues musicians, especially on steps 3 and 7 of the scale

book – a term for the spoken dialogue as well as the overall plot in musical theater

cadenza – an unaccompanied passage during a concerto where the orchestra has ceased to play, and the solo instrumentalist shows off virtuosity, often through improvisation

call-and-response – a performance technique in which a soloist or small group presents a short motif that is answered (with similar or contrasting material) by another musician or a larger group

changes – the harmonic progression that underlies a particular piece of popular music

chorus – (1) in jazz, this term describes one complete statement of the main melody or strain (or of the chords that support that melody); (2) the sections of a song that have recurring words (as in “verse-chorus” form); (3) a group of singers

chromatic mediant – an altered version of the mediant or submediant triad, achieved either by reversing the customary mode of that triad (e.g., turning a minor iii triad into a major III) or by building a triad on the chromatic neighbor to the mediant or submediant rather than the normal diatonic scale degrees (e.g., building a triad on E♭ rather than E♯ when in the key of C major)

collective improvisation – a type of heterophonic texture in which multiple musicians simultaneously create variants of a shared melody

combo – a small ensemble of jazz or blues musicians

concerto – a genre that features a solo instrument supported by a concert orchestra; a cadenza is the usual highlight of this genre

custom score (original score) – music written to enhance a specific film

dummy lyric – a temporary poem that fits a melody with the proper rhythm and rhyme scheme

encore (“again” in French) – the repetition of a piece because of sustained applause and shouts for it to be performed “again” (the word is used both as a noun and as a verb)

fill – a term for a short musical response to a melodic phrase

foxtrot – a popular social dance of the early twentieth century that is performed to music in common time or duple meter

glissando – a rapid, sweeping glide up or down through adjacent pitches; sometimes called a *slide*

hemiola – the sensation of temporarily shifting from

an established duple meter to the feeling of triple meter or vice versa

integrated – a designation for a show whose songs are specifically suited for the situation in which they are sung or for the character who sings them

melismatic text-setting – a type of singing in which multiple notes correspond to a single syllable of poetry

mute – a device that quiets or alters an instrument's sound in some way (see *wah-wah mute*)

orchestration – the process of allocating the pitches of a score's melodies and harmonies to particular instruments

original score – see *custom score*

out-chorus – see *sock-chorus*

Phrygian mode – an ancient scale pattern with intervals proceeding through a H–W–W–W–H–W–W pattern

polychord – a chord containing two distinct diatonic harmonies simultaneously

property – a source on which a stage show's plot is based, such as a novel, play, or movie

rhythm section – the backup musicians providing the rhythmic and harmonic foundation for a jazz tune, usually consisting of a piano, string bass, drum set, and guitar

riff – a short motif (melodic, harmonic, or even just a chord progression) that is repeated numerous times

ritornello – material that recurs multiple times in a piece or movement

scat singing – a jazz vocal technique in which the performer sings short, often bouncy nonsense syllables

scenario – the storyline for a ballet

sectional writing – see *block voicing*

shout chorus – a loud passage in a jazz piece, usually featuring the full ensemble playing in the same rhythm simultaneously with the brass

predominating; it usually occurs near the end of the piece to build excitement.

show-tune form – a thirty-two-bar structure comprised of four eight-bar phrases, with a melodic scheme of A B A' C.

slide – see *glissando*

sock-chorus (out-chorus) – a loud, energetic final chorus, often in heterophonic texture, used as the finale of a jazz piece

solo break – a passage in a jazz piece in which the majority of performers stop playing in order to feature one soloist

song-plugger – a person who promotes sheet music for a publishing company

stop-time – a jazz playing technique in which an ensemble plays a single note together on the first beat of a bar and then stops playing until the next measure; it is a special effect sometimes used to accompany a soloist.

Storyville – a red-light district in New Orleans at the beginning of the twentieth century that is viewed as the launchpad for the earliest development of jazz

swing – (1) a rhythmic device particularly prevalent in jazz; it creates a compound-meter effect by lengthening the first eighth note in a pair and subtracting that time from the second note; (2) the style of big-band jazz of the 1930s and 40s

tag – a short extension at the end of a chorus

Tin Pan Alley – (1) the music publishing district in New York, centered on 28th Street at the start of the twentieth century; (2) the type of popular music issued by these publishers from the 1880s to the 1950s

tryout tour – the presentation of a show in other cities to test it in front of audiences before premiering it in New York (in front of Broadway newspaper critics)

vamp – a short motif that is repeated in between sections of a piece; sometimes, it is used as a "filler" until a featured performer is ready to

proceed.

vaudeville – a stage presentation consisting of many short, unconnected performances by a large array of entertainers demonstrating a wide variety of skills, many unrelated to music

wah-wah mute – a jazz timbre achieved by waving the rubber plunger of a plumber's helper over

the bell of a trumpet, cornet, or trombone; it produces a sound that can resemble a distorted human voice.

wordless voice – a tone color created by a voice singing sustained vowel sounds or humming without text (sometimes called “instrumentalized voice”)

Notes

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<https://youtu.be/uIPa9T8iYZA> (“Lost Your Head Blues”)
<https://youtu.be/uMGlfdSws2s> (“Toot, Toot, Tootsie! [Goo’ Bye]”)
<https://youtu.be/VGvuUOtHGkk> (*Rhapsody in Blue*, jazz-band version)
<https://youtu.be/VpjLwYTLJAW> (excerpt from *The Princess and the Frog*)
<https://youtu.be/W4gtM43o0o0> (“The Charleston”)
<https://youtu.be/wPGzsFPYd1c> (“Poppa’s Blues”)
<https://youtu.be/X4LlIP8Mqag> (“The Stampede”)
<https://youtu.be/xDLvbnoGA6M> (“Sweet Georgia Brown” and the Harlem Globetrotters)
<https://youtu.be/YrWriL-hDNM> (“Tahiti Trot,” Shostakovich)
<https://youtu.be/yOX3qInQWoU?t=123> (“Tiger Rag”)
<https://youtu.be/Zq9voebacJY> (Tailleferre—Piano Concerto)
<https://youtu.be/zQN0nBc95B0> (*Music for the Theatre*, “Burlesque”)