

## **The Swing Era 1935-45: New York City**

### **Swing Era**

- 1929 Stock Market Crash
- 1933 Prohibition Lifted
- 1935 “Swing Era”

### **1929 Stock Market Crash**

- Almost destroyed the record companies
- Recording sales dropped 100 million copies in 1929 to 4 million copies in 1933
- New technologies: jukebox and radio broadcasting, helped the music industry survived
- Jazz band and swing dance are forms of entertainment to get through the hard time

### **Benny Goodman (1909-1986) (King of Swing)**

- Grew up in slums in Chicago
- Played both classical and jazz clarinet
- Integrated band with Teddy Wilson on piano
- Commissioned classical composers to compose clarinet solo pieces:
  - Béla Bartok, Aaron Copland, Paul Hindemith, and Morton Gould
- 1933 – John Hammond became the manager
- 1934 – NBC Let’s Dance
  - 3 hours every Saturday peak hours
  - NBC budgeted for 8 new charts (arrangements) per week
- 1935 – Palomar Ballroom, LA – August 21 – marked as the birth of the “Swing Era”
- 1938 – Carnegie Hall, NY – January 16 – legendary concert hall for classical music
- 1934-38 – with Gene Krupa, an important drummer

### **Chick Webb (1905-39)/Ella Fitzgerald (1917-96)**

- 1935 – Ella Fitzgerald – featured singer
- Battle of the Bands
  - 1937 vs Benny Goodman Orchestra – Webb Won
  - 1937 vs Duke Ellington Orchestra – Webb Lost
  - 1938 vs Count Basie Orchestra – Webb Won
- 1939 – Chick Webb died; Ella took over the band
- 1942 – Disbanded

### **Tommy Dorsey Orchestra**

- 1935 – Tommy left Dorsey Brothers Orchestra and form his own band
- 1939 – Tommy hired Sy Oliver as the arranger
- 1939 – Buddy Rich joined because he liked Sy Oliver’s charts
- 1940 – Frank Sinatra “I’ll Never Smile Again” top of the Billboard chart for 12 weeks
- 1942 – Buddy Rich and Frank Sinatra left
- 1939-42 – with Buddy Rich, an important drummer

### **Artie Shaw (King of Clarinet)**

- 1935 – Artie Shaw formed the band and became a direct competitor to Benny Goodman (BG was the “King of Swing” and AS was the “King of Clarinet”)
- Broke down racial barrier just like BG
- 1938 – “begin the beguine”
- 1938 – hired Buddy Rich and Billie Holiday
- 1945 – disbanded
- 1970s – resurrected

### **Glenn Miller**

- Catchy melody:
  - 1939 “in the Mood”
  - 1939 “Moonlight Serenade”
  - 1940 “Pennsylvania 6-5000”
- 1942 – Army Air Force Band
- 1944 – Disappeared on Air Force plane flight UK to Paris, December 15 over the English canal

### **Duke Ellington (Middle Period)**

- While everybody consider jazz to be popular music, Ellington considered himself a serious composer, moved away from commercialism, and make art out of jazz
- Ellington focused more on longer form pieces with the development of phonograph
  - *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* (1937)
    - Important performance at the New Port Jazz Festival in 1956
    - Paul Gonsalves took 27 choruses of solo
  - *Black, Brown, and Beige* (1943)
- 1939 – Billy Strayhorn joined
  - Became important composer and Duke’s assistant
  - Sometimes it is hard to tell who actually, compose Duke or Strayhorn
- 1940-42 – Blanton-Webster Band
- 1942-44 – Recorded more Strayhorn’s charts
- Johnny Hodges (since the early period stayed till his death)
  - Ellington’s lead alto
  - Trademark of Ellington Orchestra’s sound

### **All Female Big Bands in the Swing Era**

- Melodears – 1934-39
  - The first all-female band to ever record
- Harlem Playgirls – 1935-40
  - Many members moved to play with the ISR
- International Sweethearts of Rhythm – 1939-49
  - 1946 most of the key players has already left
- Eddie Durham's All-Star Girl Orchestra – 1942-45
  - Many members had played in ISR