History of Jazz
America's Classical Music

Sub-Elements of Rhythm
✓ Tempo - the speed of the music
✓ Beat - rhythmic patterns are divided into beats that are 'felt' usually in groups of two or four
✓ Measure or Bar - grouping of beats usually in groups of two or four; stress often on one and three, release on two and four
✓ Syncopation - the process of stressing weak beats rather than strong beats; complex syncopation involves stressing portions within the beat
✓ Swing - next to improvisation, most distinctive characteristic of jazz music; dividing the beat unequally into two parts

The Elements of Music
✓ Melody - the tune
✓ Harmony - the accompaniment; movement of chords (chords are two or more tones sounded at one time)
✓ Rhythm - pattern of notes

Lecture One:
The Roots of Jazz
Roots of Jazz

THE BLUES
- Field Hollers: sung by solitary workers in the fields
- Work Songs: sung by group of workers with a tool of labor to provide rhythmic accent
- Religious Songs: hopeful look after slavery for salvation

Blues Form
A - A - B; derived from Baptist hymns
- A: statement of problem, feeling or situation
- B: repeat of above, occasional alteration
- B: resolution or moral response to A statement

Blues and Jazz
- Basis for IMPROVISATION
  - IMPROVISATION: the art of simultaneously composing and performing music
- Standard REPERTOIRE of songs
- Introduced BLUES notes
- Instrumentalists use vocal INFLATION
- Provided jazz with SOUL

Blues and Jazz
- Blues has maintained a separate identity and development from jazz
- Jazz musicians must be able to play the blues; blues musicians are not required to play jazz.
Roots of Jazz

Ragtime

- Generally NOT considered a style of jazz since it lacks improvisation
- However, its musical lines can be heard in early jazz recordings
- Composed for the piano, the home entertainment center of the 1870s

Scott Joplin
The most important and influential ragtime composer
Born in US County, Texas
His pieces with their highly syncopated rhythms influenced early jazz playing

Ragtime

The term 'ragtime' traced to three primary sources:

1. Dance: popular 19th century exaggerated Black dance style with high leg kicks, wide arm motions and limber torso twists
2. Melody: Paraphrasing early jazz musicians used to remate and alter existing tunes
3. Rhythm: the music felt "ragged" with left hand playing 2-beat march-like patterns against the right hand playing 3-note syncopated melodic patterns

Ragtime and Jazz

- Early jazz groups had NON-BLUES REPERTOIRE that became basis of IMPROVISATION
- Borrowed ragtime MELODIC PHRASING ideas
- Emulated the STRICT patterns in RHYTHM SECTION
- Borrowed multiple simultaneous melodies, or COUNTERPOINT, in arranging for jazz bands
Roots of Jazz
NEW ORLEANS and BRASS BANDS

New Orleans
- Social, economic and political focal point of the South after the Civil War
- All roads and railroads converged on the city; ships from around the world found the city a prosperous and vibrant port
- People of all cultures blending into one dynamic Southern metropolis

New Orleans
- Had a social-ethnic caste system:
  - Free whites including Creoles (those of mixed heritage)
  - Free blacks
  - Slaves
- Free blacks “enjoyed” some privileges not found in the rest of the South even before the Civil War:
  - Land ownership
  - Slave ownership

New Orleans
- Creoles and blacks formed a tight-knit society:
  - Had their own social clubs, businesses and professional organizations
  - Attended French schools and spoke French instead of English
  - Classical music training available led to formation of Negro Philharmonic Society
  - Center of this activity was east of Canal Street in the French Quarter
New Orleans

In 1897, city alderman Sidney Story proposed a licensed brothel district, colloquially named "Storyville"
- 38 city blocks containing well over 200 brothels
- Main thoroughfare was Bourbon Street
- Two sections: White Storyville and Black or "Back O'Town"
- "Back O'Town" became the center of jazz activity
- Storyville known today as "Cradle of Jazz"

Brass Bands of Storyville

New Orleans funeral parades
- Solemn procession to funeral site
- Up-tempo marches and rags returning to town

Marching bands joined with ragtime piano players and blues singers at night in Storyville district
- Horn players learned entangled nuances of ragtime and the soulful aspects of the blues
- Ragtime pianists learned art of improvisation from blues

Brass Bands in Storyville

Most Storyville musicians were:
- classically trained
- of Creole heritage
- forced out of the French Quarter once it became an elite address by the city elders

Next Lecture:
Cities of Early Jazz:
New Orleans & Chicago
Sources


