

AQA A-Level Quick Revision Guide Jazz and Pop



Mr Davies

Jazz - 1900s-1920s

Dixieland / Trad Jazz/ Hot Jazz



Notable artists:

Louis Armstrong
Joe 'King' Oliver
Jelly Roll Morton

Instrumentation:

3 front line: trumpet, clarinet, and trombone

Rhythm section: Tuba, banjo and/or piano.

Double bass replaced tuba, guitar replaced banjo in late 20s

Drums/percussion used live, often omitted from recordings due to early recording limitations.



Musical features:

New Orleans counter point/collective improvisation-
trumpet usually took the lead, with clarinet and trombone
improvising around the melody.

Pieces often not notated, plenty of improvisation.

Strophic form: Head, solo(s), Head.

Usually 12 bar blues or 32 bar form.

Fairly simple diatonic or blues based harmony:

Dom7, secondary dominant and diminished chords.

Slow to medium tempos, usually felt in 2.

Historical context:

Prohibition 1920-1933, widely flouted, jazz often played in these establishments. 1920s saw economic boom in America and is often referred to as the Jazz age. 'Jim Crow' laws late C19th-1965 "separate but equal", racial segregation particularly prevalent in the south.

Jazz - 1930's-1945

The Swing Era / Big Bands

Notable artists:

Fletcher Henderson
Duke Ellington
Count Basie



Instrumentation:

4 distinct sections: trumpets, trombones, saxes/reeds and rhythm section.

Ellington's Band (15 players): 5 reeds (2 alto, 2 tenor, 1 baritone), 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, piano, guitar, upright bass, drums

Musical features:

Usually strophic form (AABA repeating):

Head; solos with backing; (shout chorus); head recapped.

Sections pitted against each other using jazz block harmony, style developed by Fletcher Henderson in late 20s.

Pulse felt in 4: walking bass lines, ride cymbal becomes prominent.

Improvised polyphony of Trad Jazz gave way sophisticated, fully notated arrangements-Ellington wrote over 1000!

Ellington master of 3 minute 78rpm record.

Harmony becomes more extended, use of 9ths, passing chords and tritone substitutions.

Historical context:

The exclusive white only Cotton Club in Harlem, Ellington was house band 1927-1931

Wall Street Crash 1929 led to worst depression this century lasting till 1939. Big bands offered a needed distraction to this as well as boosting morale during the war.

Jazz - 1945-1955

Bebop

Notable artists:

Charlie Parker
Dizzy Gillespie
Thelonious Monk

Instrumentation:

Quintets and quartets favoured: trumpet, alto or tenor sax, double bass, piano, drums



Musical features:

Fast tempos and rapid rates of harmonic change, extended harmony, chord alterations, tritone substitutions, cycle of 5ths. Pieces were usually only vehicles for improvisation!

Recomposition-pieces were often composed over well known chord progressions e.g. Charlie Parker composed '*Anthropology*' over '*I've got Rhythm*' changes.

Melodies were often angular and virtuosic, often in 32 bar AABA form, played in unison by front line.

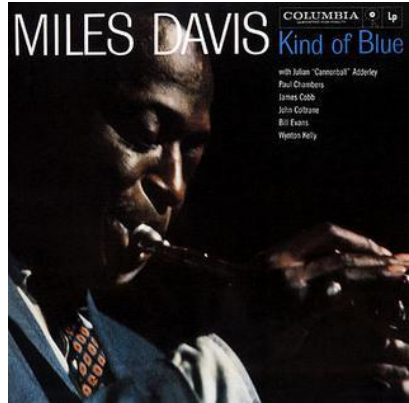
Historical context:

Post WWII many of the Big Bands, most were already struggling, dissolved. Smaller ensembles were more sustainable. Young ambitious musicians sought to reclaim jazz as an African American art form. They saw 'Swing' as an appropriation of Jazz by white musicians.

As a teenager, Parker had a cymbal thrown at his feet at a Kansas City Jam session for playing in the wrong key. He went away and learnt every Jazz standard in every key. He would go on to become one of the most important figures in Jazz and most technically proficient masters of the alto sax.

Jazz - Late 1950s-mid 60s

Cool Jazz / Modal Jazz



Notable artists:

Miles Davis
Chet Baker
John Coltrane

Instrumentation:

Miles Davis' landmark 1959 album 'Kind of Blue' used a sextet: trumpet, alto, tenor, piano, bass and drums. This allowed greater arranging possibilities.

Musical features:

Cool Jazz rejected the rapid tempos and rapid rate of harmonic change found in bebop. It favoured static chords, use of pedals and exploration of musical modes and scales. It explored *quartile harmony* using consecutive 4ths for an 'open' impressionistic sound.

The static harmony forced musicians to be more melodic. Composition could be sketch like, 'Flamenco sketches' on *Kind of Blue* for example simply uses 5 modes/scales as a basis for the composition.

Historical context:

Civil rights movement 1954-1968. 1954 segregation in schools ruled 'unconstitutional'.

Bands started to become more racially integrated, Davis used white pianist Bill Evans on *Kind of Blue*.

Jazz - 1965-Present

Jazz Fusion

Notable artists:

Herbie Hancock
Chick Corea
Pat Metheny
Mike Stern



Instrumentation:

Embraced electric instruments from electric guitar, electric bass, synthesisers and new electric keyboards such as the fender rhodes and clavinet. Acoustic instruments were amplified and drums could be played more loudly in a more Rock like manner.

Musical features:

Jazz fusion is a very broad umbrella term. In the mid 60s it drew heavily on funk and soul music. 'Grooves' became a central element of the music echoing the Psychedelic movement happening in Rock. Jazz Fusion featured static harmony and usually used straight or swung semi-quavers. This Jazz fusion would incorporate the vocabulary of jazz chords, particularly minor 7ths and 9ths.

From the mid 70s to present, jazz fusion has sought influences from Latin, African, Indian, Classical, Rock, Progressive Rock and Hip-Hop amongst others.

Historical context:

1963 John F Kennedy Assassinated. Successor Lyndon B. Johnson escalates War in Vietnam. The pivotal Tet offensive in 1968 sees heavy losses divides nation on support for the war. Johnson steps down. In 1969 Nixon begins to withdraw troops. Counter culture Hippy movement mid-1960s-1970. Black Power Movement circa 1965-1975.

Jazz - 1959-Present

'Third Stream'

Notable artists:

Gunther Schuller
John Lewis
Gil Evans
Tim Garland-UK
Gwilym Simcock-UK



Gunther Schuller brings together his 'marriage' of classical and jazz, conducting in the 1970s.

Instrumentation:

Uses popular instruments from jazz (e.g. Saxophones) and classical (e.g. French Horns and violins). Favoured extended ensembles.

Musical features:

In 1957, composer Schuller claimed there was a 'Third Stream' located halfway between Classical and Jazz. Schuller stated Third Stream was not "Jazz with strings", neither was it Jazz played on Classical instruments or classical music played by Jazz players. Improvisation is seen as a vital part of Third stream music.

Composers have continued to blur distinctions between classical and Jazz, notably British musicians Tim Garland and Gwilym Simcock. Both these artists have extensive classical training as well as exceptional aptitude for Jazz.

Historical context:

The Civil Rights movement 1954-1968 prompted greater collaboration between artists of all cultures. The spread of popularity and academic study of Jazz in Europe has been particularly fruitful to this movement over the last 20 years.

Pop – 1960-1968

Soul



Notable artists:

Aretha Franklin
Marvin Gaye
Otis Reading



Motown Studio

Instrumentation:

Rhythm section: *Electric bass, piano, electric guitar, drums and percussion-particularly tambourine and congas/bongos.*
Horns, backing singers, sometimes strings.

Musical features:

Soul was a culmination of rhythm and blues, Gospel and Jazz. Soul would often have a driving 4/4 beat, bolstered by tambourine often playing semiquavers. Bass lines would often be lyrical with strong use of 'hooks' by the rest of the ensemble. The lead vocals would often be impassioned, supported by well crafted backing vocal and horn section parts. Strings would sometime feature.

Historical context:

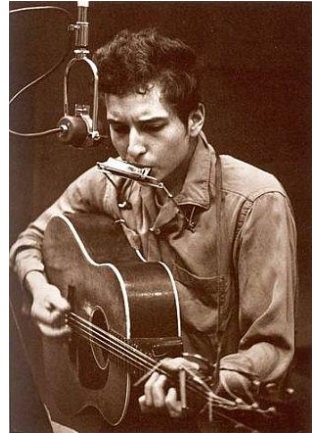
Soul music dominated the charts in US the 60s. The African American owned Motown record Label (Berry Gordy), who took a production line approach to music would be behind many of the hits. The music would provide the back drop to the Civil Rights movement 1954-1968.

Pop (*Counterculture*) – 1960s

Folk Revival

Notable artists:

Woodie Guthrie
Joni Mitchell
Bob Dylan
Joan Baez



Instrumentation:

Traditional folk instruments were used: Voice, acoustic guitar, harmonica, Appalachian dulcimer.

Piano, some 'softer' keyboard instruments and hand percussion were also sometimes used.

The solo performer was popular during this movement.

Musical features:

Simple chords and musical structures, open tunings, small ensembles/solo performers.

Lyrics were often political/protest songs or reflected on environmental issues. This aligned with the Hippie movement of the time which was specifically opposed to the Vietnam War.

Historical context:

Folk is a musical style that stretches back hundreds of years and is best described as 'music of the people'. Folk revival music refers to folk music of the 1960s when by the mid 60s, artists such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell were famous artists of this counterculture movement.

Pop - 1968-1970s

Funk

Notable artists:

James Brown
Stevie Wonder
Earth, Wind and Fire



Instrumentation:

Similar to soul, but funk began to explore the new electronic keyboard instruments of the 1970s including the Clavinet famed by Stevie wonder. Strings and backing vocals were less prevalent.

Musical features:

James Brown, and early exponent of the Funk movement, developed the signature syncopated semiquaver groove emphasising the down beat. The drums and electric bass were brought to the fore ground. Static harmony was often used, incorporating many of the extended chords used in Jazz from #9ths, minor 7ths, 11ths etc.

Historical context:

Black Power Movement circa 1965-1975.

The 1970s also saw an explosion of the disco scene, starting as an underground movement in New York where oppressed or marginalised groups including Latinos, Blacks, homosexuals etc. could go to party.

Pop – Mid 70s to early 1980s

Disco

Notable artists:

Chic-(Nile Rodgers)
Bee Gees



Instrumentation:

Drums, electric bass, synthesisers, 'clean' electric guitars and sometimes horn and lush string sections. Drum machines began to replace drummers from the early 80s.

Musical features:

The four-to-the-floor bass drum pattern (bass drum on all 4 crotchets) often followed by an upbeat open hi-hat was a key feature of the style. This made it easy to dance to in the burgeoning nightclubs of the 70s and 80s. Disco productions would be slick and often lush in sound. New synthesisers were explored. Lyrics were often light and usually about dancing!

Historical context:

The 1970s also saw an explosion of the disco scene, starting as an underground movement in New York where oppressed or marginalised groups including Latinos, Blacks, homosexuals etc. could go to party.

Disco soon lost popularity in the early 80s, as did Swing music of the 1930s, as disco was seen as a 'white' over commercialisation of what began as an underground movement. However, the popularity of Disco has endured. Nile Rodgers of Chic has continued to collaborate with contemporary artists including Daft Punk adding his characteristic guitar sound and technique to records including 'Up all night to get lucky'.

Pop – 1962-present

Rock

Notable artists:

Beatles
Rolling Stones
Jimi Hendrix
Led Zepplin



Instrumentation:

Electric guitar, electric bass, drums, vocals occasionally keys/piano
Bands would usually consist of 4-5 players, but the power trio was also popular with bands such as Cream and Jimi Hendrix.

Musical features:

Rock music followed Rock 'n' Roll of the 1950s made famous by artists such as Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley. With the advent of powerful guitar amplification, the electric guitar would become central to the rock idiom. Guitarists began experimenting with distortion and feedback. With bigger, louder guitar sounds, some groups even did away with the second guitarist to form power trios!

Rock music would often feature guitar riffs and use the now well recognised 4/4 *straight* rock beat. Structures would be fairly simple, use fairly simple diatonic or blues based harmony. Lyrics were often about love and relationships and could be misogynistic. Vocals would often be sung loudly and on occasions shouted. Performances usually chose energy over finesse.

Historical context:

Britain was to have a huge influence on Rock. By the mid 60s, British bands the Beatles, the Kinks and the Rolling Stones were so popular in America, it became known as the British Invasion. The contraceptive pill was introduced in the early 60s. This gave women unprecedented control over their fertility. Never before had sexual activity been so divorced from reproduction. This certainly changed attitudes towards relationships and promiscuity. This was reflected in the music.

Pop – 1980s-Present

Alternative Rock

Notable artists:

Jimi Hendrix-Psychedelic Rock
Pink Floyd-Psychedelic/progressive
Nirvana-Alternative
Muse-alternative



Instrumentation:

Instrumentation was similar to rock music, but artists began experimenting using the studio as a tool and incorporating unusual sounds, samples and synthesisers. The Beatles began doing this by the late 60s, followed by Pink Floyd in the 1970s before the Alternative genre was recognised in the 1980s.



Musical features:

Alternative Rock is a very broad umbrella term but is largely used to describe rock bands that rejected commercialism and mainstream culture. Ironically many bands such as Nirvana and Muse did find considerable commercial success!

Being such a wide term, it is hard to describe the style. However, alternative bands have always sought to go against the grain and seek new sounds, timbres and issues not usually sought in Rock music or the mainstream. Many of the hall marks of rock, such as heavy guitars and drums, remain prevalent in alternative rock.

Historical context:

Alternative Rock can be traced through LSD inspired late Beatles and Hendrix Psychedelic records. Pink Floyd continued musical experimentation throughout the 70s as well as progressive rock gaining popularity with Yes and Genesis in the same decade. Nirvana then broke the mould in the 90s effectively ending Glam Metal/Hair Metal of the 80s.

Pop – 1980s-Present

Contemporary R & B

Notable artists:

Michael Jackson
R Kelly
Whitney Houston
Beyoncé
Alicia Keys



Instrumentation:

Drum machines, synthesisers, samplers, computer programming, piano, bass, horns, backing vocals, melismatic lead vocals, auto tuned vocal effects.

Musical features:

Contemporary R&B (also known as simply **R&B**), is a music genre that originated in African American communities. It combines elements of pop, rhythm and blues, soul, funk, hip hop, gospel and electronic dance music. In the early 80s to mid 90s R&B was more influenced by Jazz and featured slick, lush production and vocal arrangements-*The Body Guard* sound track featuring Whitney Houston sold 40million copies.

During the 90s, R&B was more influenced by Hip-hop and Dance style beats. It became was more dependant upon drum machines, samples and computers. Productions became sparser with the programmed and sampled drums becoming more prominent. Melismas continued to be a big feature of the vocal style.

Historical context:

The 1980s for African American was marred by the crack cocaine epidemic. This highly addictive drug was catastrophic on communities and also saw a surge in street violence doubling the homicide rate amongst young black Americans. This influenced the evolution of Hardcore Hip-Hop and Gangsta Rap. 1992 also saw some of the worst riots in LA after the acquittal of 4 police offers for using excessive force on African American Rodney King. 2009-2017 Obama become America's first African American president.

Pop – 1980s-Present

Electronic Dance Music

Notable artists:

Kraftwerk
David Guetta
Daft Punk



Instrumentation:

Drum machines, synthesisers, samples/samplers, computer programming,

Musical features:

House music was the first electronic dance music to emerge from America in the mid-80s. It was similar to disco with the 4/4 four-to-the-floor kick drum and up beat open Hi hat, but the sounds were now all synthesised. It was slightly faster, much more repetitive and had a more aggressive sound than disco. House music was designed to be danced to at nightclubs, festivals and raves.

Electronic Dance Music (EDM), or simply Dance Music, now covers scores of subgenres including Trance, Drum and Bass, Techno and Grime to name a few. Although these styles differ greatly and have their own signature grooves, they all share the use of synthesised sounds usually created/programmed by computer. Most are created in bedroom studios! There is usually the use of heavy, repetitive layered beats, percussion, heavy sub-bass and the use of *break downs* and *build ups*. Harmony is often repetitive, simple and mainly diatonic.

Historical context:

In the late 80s and early 90s with the emergence of Raving, Dance music gained mainstream popularity in Europe. This was also accompanied by increased use of recreational drugs, particularly ecstasy. By 2000, Dance music had gained mainstream popularity in the US and continues to be globally popular today.

Revision Tasks

It is important you revise in a way you will find beneficial to you.

However, you may wish to use the following tasks to help:

- Write down all 12 Artists you have studied. Write 12-20 points on each artist e.g. approach to harmony, structure etc. You may wish to use MR DT SMITH for this:
Melody, Rhythm, Dynamics, Texture, Structure, Metre, Instrumentation, Tonality, Harmony
- YouTube any piece by any of the 12 artists. Transcribe a short section of the melody or perhaps a prevailing rhythm of the piece.
- YouTube any piece by any of the 12 artists you have studied. Complete a MR DT SMITH for the piece you have selected. You may wish to think about a likely 10-mark question for this piece and write an appropriate answer e.g. 'This piece is about a journey through...How has the composer recreated this through the music?'. Remember, this will be a piece you *not* have studied!
- Compare 2 of the artists you have studied, either two from Jazz or two from Pop. Although your 30-mark question in your exam will be framed, e.g. 'Thinking about two of the artists you have studied, discuss their different approaches to orchestration, harmony and rhythm', you can take an open approach for revision purposes. Use your notes to help, then green pen your response. You should be getting at least 40 points with the aid of notes. Don't repeat yourself and don't dwell on historical facts unless relevant. Use concrete musical examples.