

## Glossary

**Blues** Basically a twelve-bar form wherein the 3rd, 5th, and 7th notes of the diatonic scale are flatted. Of African American origin, blues forms are both instrumental and vocal and are used in a nearly infinite variety of ways and musical compositions. The blues is the bedrock of jazz.

**Brass Band** New Orleans brass bands typically consisted of a trumpet, trombone, clarinet, and snare drum.

**Break** The break is usually a short, rapidly improvised solo by a player while the rest of the band is silent for a few notes or bars.

**Cadenza** An improvised, unaccompanied passage for soloist.

**Call-and-response** The alternation between a solo singer and a vocal group, an instrumentalist and an ensemble, or variations of the form.

**Coda** The concluding passage at the end of a composition; in jazz it is often played by a soloist.

**Harmony** The simultaneous sound of three or more notes.

**Improvisation** To create music spontaneously while performing.

**Jazz** An African American musical form based on improvisation utilizing such devices as blues forms, call-and-response, syncopation, and strong rhythmic elements.

**Melody** Pitch, or tones, in horizontal arrangement.

**Obligato** An ornamental, accompanying part of a composition that is very important and is not to be omitted.

**Overtone** An acoustical frequency heard faintly higher in frequency over the basic tone being played.

**Ragtime** An African American musical style originally written for piano characterized by syncopated melodies in the right hand with regular “oom-pah” bass patterns in the left hand.

**Rhythm** The movement of music in time; the pulse formed by the recurrence of strong and weak beats. Rhythm is the most important element in the immediate recognition of musical types, styles, and forms and the dominant element in jazz.

**Riff** A short melodic phrase repeated over changing harmonies.

**Scat singing** A style of singing wordless phrases and sounds instead of lyrics.

**Second Line** Persons who marched behind, or followed the brass bands on the return from funerals in New Orleans.

**Shake** A note played with a short, distinctive vibrato.

**Stop-time** Single, accented beats separated by brief silences.

**Strain** A musical theme within a composition.

**Syncopation** The rhythm resulting from accenting the second and fourth beats within a measure (called the “off beats”) instead of the normally stressed first and third beats.

**Triplet** Three notes played in the time usually occupied by two.

**Vibrato** A subtle, slight alternation of pitch: a “wavy” sound that is the opposite of “straight.”