The Swing Era and Beyond

VOCABULARY TERMS

**orchestration**  The technique of setting instruments in various combinations.

**shake**  A jazz technique in which brass players shake their lips to produce a wide vibrato.

**bebop**  Complex jazz style developed in the 1940s. Also bop.

**bop**  See bebop.

**cool jazz**  A sub-style of bebop, characterized by a restrained, unemotional performance with lush harmonies, moderate volume levels and tempos, and a new lyricism; often associated with Miles Davis.

**West Coast jazz**  Jazz style developed in the 1950s, featuring small groups of mixed timbres playing contrapuntal improvisations; similar to cool jazz.

**Latin influence**  A jazz style influenced by Latin American music, which includes various dance rhythms and traditional percussion instruments.

**break**  Jazz term for a short improvised solo without accompaniment that "breaks" an ensemble passage or introduces an extended solo.

**riff**  In jazz, a short melodic ostinato over changing harmonies.

**third stream**  Jazz style that synthesizes characteristics and techniques of classical music and jazz; term coined by Gunther Schuller.

**avant-garde jazz**  A free-style jazz that developed in the 1960s; John Coltrane was a major proponent.

**fusion**  Style that combines jazz improvisation with amplified instruments of rock.

**neoclassical jazz**  A modern jazz style characterized by expanded tonalities, modal improvisations, and new forms; Wynton Marsalis is a proponent of this style.

**free jazz**  Modern jazz style developed in the 1960s by Ornette Coleman.

**new-age jazz**  A mellow, reflective jazz style exemplified by Paul Winter and his ensemble.
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RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

Compose a one-page report (handwritten) on five (5) out of the following (9) musicians:

Duke Ellington
Dizzy Gillespie
Charlie Parker
Miles Davis
Dave Brubeck
Wynton Marsalis
John Coltrane
Paul Winter
George Gershwin
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KEY POINTS

"What's swinging in words? If a guy makes you pat your foot and if you feel it down your back, you don't have to ask anybody if that's good music or not. You can always feel it."

—MILES DAVIS

The 1930s saw the advent of the **swing era** (or **big band era**) and the brilliantly composed jazz of Duke Ellington.

In the late 1940s, big band jazz gave way to smaller group styles, including **bebop**, **cool jazz**, and **West Coast jazz**.

Charlie Parker (alto saxophone) and Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet) led the bebop movement, and Miles Davis (trumpet) established the lyrical cool jazz style.

**Third stream jazz**, developed in the 1950s, combines elements of art music (instruments, forms, and tonal devices) and jazz to produce a new style.

Recent trends include **fusion**, **Neoclassical style**, **free jazz**, and **new-age jazz**. Interactive technology (including MIDI) has been influential in modern jazz performance as well.

Many art and popular music composers have been influenced by ragtime, blues, and jazz, including Stravinsky, Ravel, Copland, and George Gershwin.

Known for his Tin Pan Alley songs and musical theater productions, Gershwin also sought to unite jazz and classical music in his instrumental works, including **Rhapsody in Blue** and his **Three Piano Preludes**.
1. Early jazz gave way to the swing, or big band, era of the 1930s and 1940s
   Jazz provided new opportunities for black musicians

2. Duke Ellington (1899–1974) and the Big Band Era
   American composer, pianist, orchestrator, and big-band leader
   Advent of big band brought a need for arranged (written-down) music
   Ellington was a brilliant orchestrator
   His orchestral palette included a larger ensemble
   One of the Ellington Orchestra's most popular tunes was *Take the A Train*

3. Strayhorn: *Take the A Train* (Listening Guide)
   Written by composer/arranger Billy Strayhorn
   "A Train" is the subway line that runs to Harlem
   Form: A-A-B-A (Introduction and three choruses)
   Introduction features Ellington at the piano

4. Bebop and Later Jazz Styles
   Rebellion against big band results in bebop and cool jazz
   Bebop (also known as bop) mimics the trademark 2-note phrase of the style
   Leaders of the style included: Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet), Charlie Parker (saxophone), Bud Powell, and Thelonious Monk (both piano)
   Bebop includes the subtypes
   Cool jazz: Miles Davis
   West Coast jazz: Dave Brubeck Quartet, Gerry Mulligan Quartet
   hard bop, soul jazz
   Latin American bandleaders brought Latin dance music into the mainstream (rumba, mambo, chachacha)
5. Gillespie/Parker: *A Night in Tunisia* (Listening Guide)

Charlie Parker ("Bird") on saxophone, Miles Davis on trumpet

Improvisation is key to this work

Introduction is marked by an ostinato in the bass

Tune is presented in Chorus 1 (A-A-B-A) form

Three improvised choruses follow

Coda (same ostinato as Intro) closes the work

6. George Gershwin and the Merger of Classical and Jazz Styles

European and American composers were drawn to ragtime, blues, and jazz

Debussy, Stravinsky, Ravel, Copland

George Gershwin (1898–1937) mastered the fusion of jazz and classical styles

Accomplished pianist and songwriter

Tin Pan Alley pianist

Musical theater productions: *Girl Crazy, Porgy and Bess*

Great success in vocal works, often collaborated with brother, Ira

Instrumental works were also popular

*Rhapsody in Blue, Concerto in F, An American in Paris*


Loose ternary form

Syncopations, use of blue note

Highly rhythmic and jazzy style
**The Swing Era and Beyond**

**LISTENING GUIDE**

**Stayhorn: Take the A Train, by the Duke Ellington Orchestra**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE OF WORK:</th>
<th>Recorded February 15, 1941</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FORM:</td>
<td>32-bar song form (A-A-B-A, each 8-bar phrases), in 3 choruses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIUM:</td>
<td>Jazz big band (trumpets, trombones, saxophones, piano, guitar, bass, drums); soloists: Duke Ellington (piano), Ray Nance (trumpet).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPO:</td>
<td>Moderate; 4/4 meter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT TO LISTEN FOR:</td>
<td>Big Band Sound, with reed, brass, &amp; rhythm sections. Call-and-response exchanges between the instruments. Syncopated rhythmic character of the themes. Special jazz effects (bent notes, shakes, glissando) by solo trumpet. Closing “fades out,” playing main theme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gillespie/Parker: A Night in Tunisia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE OF WORK:</th>
<th>Recorded 1946</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERFORMERS:</td>
<td>Charlie Parker Septet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charlie Parker, alto saxophone</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miles Davis, trumpet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lucky Thompson, tenor saxophone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dodo Mamarosa, piano</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arv Garrison, guitar</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vic McMillian, bass</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roy Porter, drums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORM:</td>
<td>32-bar song form (AABA), in 3 choruses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPO:</td>
<td>Moderate; 4/4 meter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT TO LISTEN FOR:</td>
<td>Short motivic ideas (riffs) that are repeated; underlying bass ostinato. Soloistic style (often featuring a single player) Statement of tune, played by muted trumpet (Miles Davis) and alto saxophone (Charlie Parker) Frenetic improvisational style of Charlie Parker in chorus 2. Choruses 2 and 3: solo improvisations on trumpet, tenor saxophone, and guitar, with short melodic ideas alternating between lyrical lines. Recap of tune, and final ostinato.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gershwin: Piano Prelude No. 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE OF WORK:</th>
<th>Published 1927 (in set of Three Preludes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FORM:</td>
<td>Loose ternary (ABA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPO:</td>
<td>Allegro ben ritmato e deciso (Fast, rhythmic, and decisive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT TO LISTEN FOR:</td>
<td>Energetic, syncopated first theme, with expressive blue note. Highly rhythmic and accented accompaniment. Overall 3-part structure (ABA) Sweeping high-range lines build to climax in last section.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Describe the melody in the B section of Gershwin’s Piano Prelude No. 1.
2. Describe the opening theme of Gershwin’s Piano Prelude No. 1.
3. Define “break.”
4. Describe the character of the trademark style of bebop.
5. Define “third stream jazz.”
6. What song was the signature tune for Duke Ellington’s band?
7. What is the outline for the structure 32-bar song form?
8. Gershwin’s Piano Prelude No. 1 is in what form?
9. What is Miles Davis’ primary instrument on A Night in Tunisia?
10. Define “fusion.”
11. In what Gershwin stage work can the song Summertime be found?
12. What styles of musical influence can be found in Gershwin’s music?
13. Describe the characteristics of Take the A Train by Duke Ellington.
14. With what music can Miles Davis be most associated?
15. Name at least three “classical” composers that have integrated jazz and ragtime into their compositions.
16. Define “riff.”
17. With what music can Duke Ellington be most associated?
18. Describe Gershwin’s use of blue notes in his Piano Prelude No. 1.
19. In what style is most of Gershwin’s compositions.
20. Describe Big Band jazz.
21. With What music can Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker be most associated?

Study all vocabulary terms.
Study listening guides.
Study about “Latin influence” on American jazz.