

Introduction to Popular Music

Brainstorm – ‘What is meant by the term Popular Music?’

Popular music is the name given to all genres of music that are NOT classical in style, that are accessible to the general public and are disseminated by one or more of the mass media.

Different genres of popular music:

Hip-hop	R ‘n’ B	Rock ‘n’ Roll
Jazz	Blues	Heavy Metal
Indie	Emo	Ska
House	Garage	Grunge
Punk	Gospel	Country & Western
Folk	Rap	Reggae
Dance	Disco	Funk
Rave	Britpop	Drum ‘n’ Bass
Jungle	Soul	Motown
Salsa	Musicals	Bhangra

N.B. This is only a small selection and many other genres exist.

Origins of Popular Music:

Black Music —————> Blues Gospel Jazz

White Music —————> Folk Country & Western Entertainment music

Blues Music

Blues is a vocal and instrumental form of music based on the use of the blue notes. It emerged in African-American communities of the United States from spirituals, work songs, field hollers, shouts and chants, and rhymed English and Scots-Irish narrative ballads. The use of blue notes and the prominence of call-and-response patterns in the music and lyrics are indicative of African influence. The blues influenced later American and Western popular music, as it became the roots of jazz, bluegrass, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, heavy metal, hip-hop, and other popular music forms.

- Originally performed by one singer usually accompanied by a guitar, banjo or piano.
- Raw sounding music, full of emotion.
- Rhythms were varied – **Swing rhythms** were popular
- It is built up from the **Blues Scale** – C D Eb F G A Bb C.
- The **12-bar Blues Structure** is mainly used consisting of a repeated pattern in 4/4 time:

I	I	I	I
IV	IV	I	I
V	IV	I	I

Listening: Robert Johnson – Crossroad

1. List instruments

2. Describe the vocal line/melody
3. Describe the accompaniment

Blues became a more urban form called **City Blues** as it moved to the cities such as New Orleans, where it influenced the development of Jazz. By the 1920's blues singers were accompanied by bands made up of clarinets, trumpets, a piano and a double bass. Usually the double bass played a continuously moving bass line which is known as a **Walking Bass**.

Blues singers, as well as performers on non-keyboard instruments would often **pitch-bend** notes, a technique where you slide between notes as they

Jazz Music

Jazz is an original American musical art form which originated around the beginning of the 20th century in African American communities in the Southern United States out of a confluence of African and European music traditions. The use of blue notes, call-and-response, improvisation, polyrhythms, syncopation and the swung note of ragtime are characteristics traceable back to jazz's West African pedigree. During its early development, jazz also incorporated music from New England's religious hymns and from 19th and 20th century American popular music based on European music traditions.

Jazz has, from its early 20th century inception, spawned a variety of subgenres, from New Orleans Dixieland dating from the early 1910s, big band-style swing from the 1930s and 1940s, bebop from the mid-1940s, a variety of Latin-jazz fusions such as Afro-Cuban and Brazilian jazz from the 1950s and 1960s, jazz-rock fusion from the 1970s and later developments such as acid jazz.

- New Orleans was the home of traditional Jazz.
- Much of the music played or sung was **improvised** over the 12-bar blues structure.
- The songs were based on marching rhythms while the tempo was varied.
- A popular musical feature of the vocalist was **Scat singing** which is a vocal improvisation with nonsense words and syllables or without words at all.

Listening: Ella Fitzgerald – One Note Samba

1. List instruments
2. Describe the vocal line/melody
3. Describe the accompaniment

Fill in Listening Sheet on Blues and Jazz Music

Homework:

1. Research a Jazz musician and write a biography of their career and influence on Jazz music.
2. Listen to a song performed by your chosen musician and comment on the music.