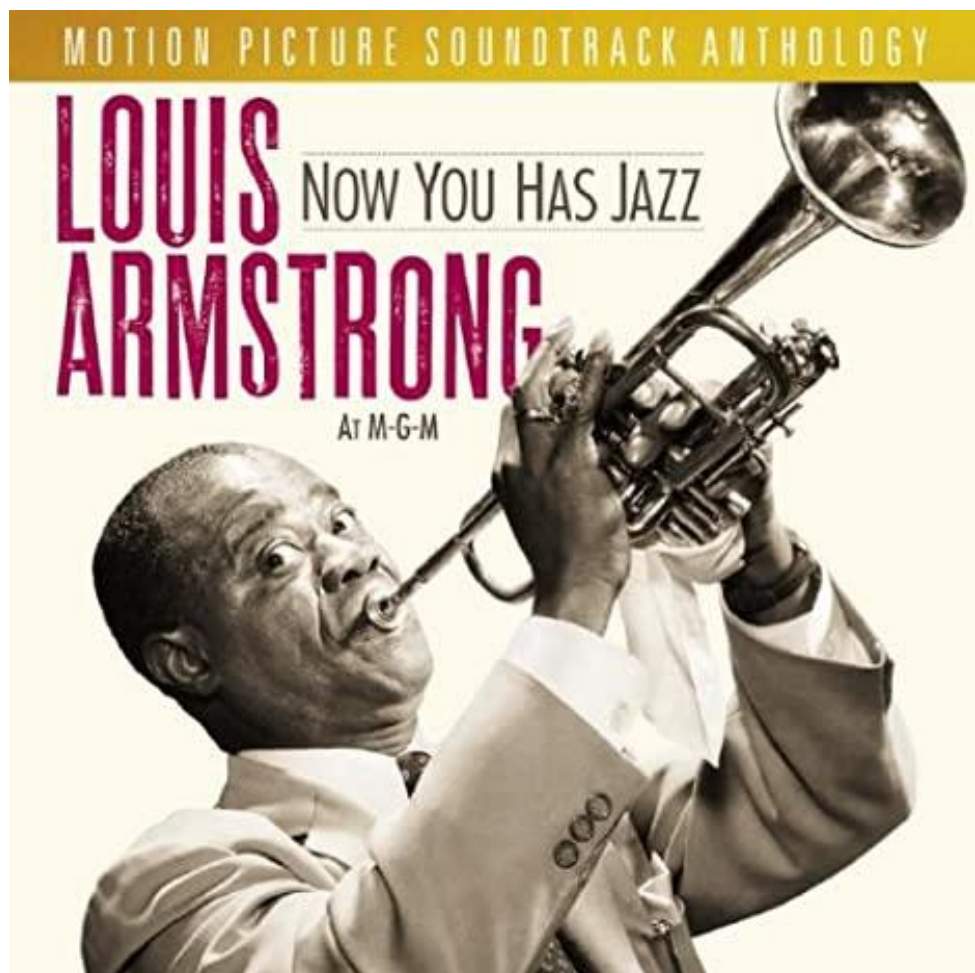


## WHAT IS JAZZ

Jazz is a kind of music in which improvisation is typically an important part. In most jazz performances, players play solos which they make up on the spot, which requires considerable skill. There is tremendous variety in jazz, but most jazz is very rhythmic, has a forward momentum called "swing," and uses "bent" or "blue" notes. You can often hear "call--and--response" patterns in jazz, in which one instrument, voice, or part of the band answers another. Jazz can express many different emotions, from pain to sheer joy. In jazz, you may hear the sounds of freedom-for the music has been a powerful voice for people suffering unfair treatment because of the color of the skin, or because they lived in a country run by a cruel dictator.



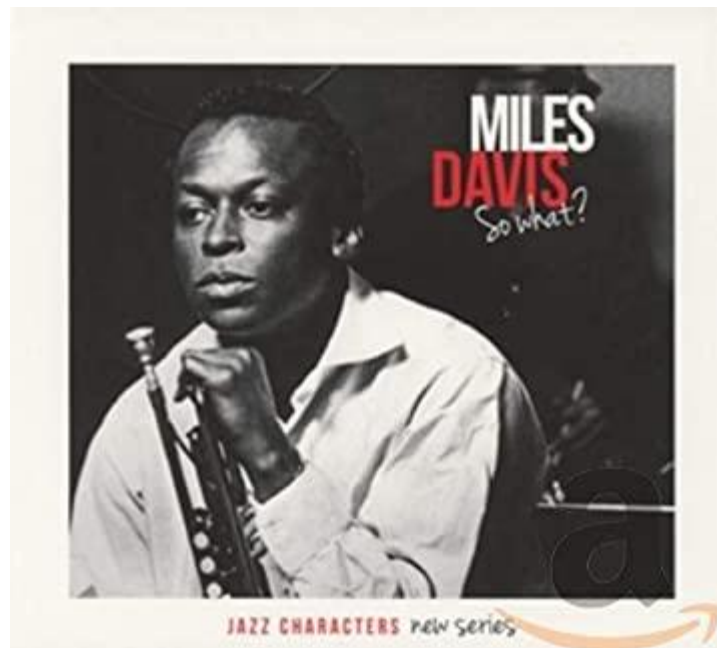
## THE NATURE OF JAZZ

Jazz musicians place a high value on finding their own sound and style, and that means, for example, that trumpeter Miles Davis sounds very different than trumpeter Louis Armstrong. Jazz musicians like to play their songs in their own distinct styles, and so you might listen to a dozen different jazz recordings of the same song, but each will sound different. The musicians' playing styles make each version different, and so do the improvised solos. Jazz is about making something familiar, a familiar song, into something fresh. And about making something shared--a tune that everyone knows--into something personal. Those are just some of the reasons that jazz is a great art form, and why some people consider it "America's classical music."



## THE GROWTH OF JAZZ

Jazz developed in the United States in the very early part of the 20th century. New Orleans, near the mouth of the Mississippi River, played a key role in this development. The city's population was more diverse than anywhere else in the South, and people of African, French, Caribbean, Italian, German, Mexican, and American Indian, as well as English, descent interacted with one another. African-American musical traditions mixed with others and gradually jazz emerged from a blend of ragtime, marches, blues, and other kinds of music. At first jazz was mostly for dancing. (In later years, people would sit and listen to it.) After the first recordings of jazz were made in 1917, the music spread widely and developed rapidly. The evolution of jazz was led by a series of brilliant musicians such as **Louis Armstrong**, **Duke Ellington**, **Charlie Parker**, and **Miles Davis**. Jazz developed a series of different styles including traditional jazz, swing, bebop, cool jazz, and jazz/rock. At the same time, jazz spread from the United States to many parts of the world, and today jazz musicians--and jazz festivals--can be found in dozens of nations. Jazz is one of the United States' greatest exports to the world.



## JAZZ APPRECIATION MONTH

Jazz Appreciation Month (fondly known as "JAM") was created right here at the museum in 2001 to recognize and celebrate the extraordinary heritage and history of jazz for the entire month of April.

JAM is intended to stimulate and encourage people of all ages to participate in jazz - to study the music, attend concerts, listen to jazz on radio and recordings, read books about jazz, and more.





## WHEN WAS JAZZ BORN?

**Jazz** is a music genre that originated in the African-American communities of New Orleans, Louisiana, United States, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with its roots in blues and ragtime. Since the **1920s Jazz Age**, it has been recognized as a major form of musical expression in traditional and popular music, linked by the common bonds of African-American and European-American musical parentage. Jazz is characterized by swing and blue notes, complex chords, call and response vocals, polyrhythms and improvisation. Jazz has roots in West African cultural and musical expression, and in African-American music traditions.

As jazz spread around the world, it drew on national, regional, and local musical cultures, which gave rise to different styles. New Orleans jazz began in the early **1910s**, combining earlier brass-band marches, French quadrilles, biguine, ragtime and blues with collective polyphonic improvisation.

In the **1930s**, heavily arranged dance-oriented swing big bands, Kansas City jazz, a hard-swinging, bluesy, improvisational style and Gypsy jazz (a style that emphasized musette waltzes) were the prominent styles.

Bebop emerged in the **1940s**, shifting jazz from danceable popular music toward a more challenging "musician's music" which was played at faster tempos and used more chord-based improvisation. Cool jazz developed near the end of the 1940s, introducing calmer, smoother sounds and long, linear melodic lines.

The mid-**1950s** saw the emergence of hard bop, which introduced influences from rhythm and blues, gospel, and blues, especially in the saxophone and piano playing.



Modal jazz developed in the late 1950s, using the mode, or musical scale, as the basis of musical structure and improvisation, as did free jazz, which explored playing without regular meter, beat and formal structures.

Jazz-rock fusion appeared in the late **1960s** and early **1970s**, combining jazz improvisation with rock music's rhythms, electric instruments, and highly amplified stage sound.

In the early **1980s**, a commercial form of jazz fusion called smooth jazz became successful, garnering significant radio airplay. Other styles and genres abound in the **2000s**, such as Latin and Afro-Cuban jazz.

## ROLES OF WOMEN

Female jazz performers and composers have contributed to jazz throughout its history. Although **Betty Carter, Ella Fitzgerald, Adelaide Hall, Billie Holiday, Abbey Lincoln, Anita O'Day, Dinah Washington, and Ethel Waters** were recognized for their vocal talent, less familiar were bandleaders, composers, and instrumentalists such as pianist Lil Hardin Armstrong, trumpeter Valaida Snow, and songwriters Irene Higginbotham and Dorothy Fields.



Women began playing instruments in jazz in the early 1920s, drawing particular recognition on piano. When male jazz musicians were drafted during World War II, many all-female bands replaced them. The International Sweethearts of Rhythm, which was founded in 1937, was a popular band that became the first all-female integrated band in the U.S. and the first to travel with the USO, touring Europe in 1945. Women were members of the big bands of Woody Herman and Gerald Wilson.



Beginning in the 1950s, many women jazz instrumentalists were prominent, some sustaining long careers. Some of the most distinctive improvisers, composers, and bandleaders in jazz have been women.

## HOW WAS JAZZ CREATED?

The most likely explanation is some New Orleans cats took the music they heard at home, in church and in barrooms, put it all together, and created a new sound. A wild, jubilant music. A music that makes you feel free and easy. Makes you feel alive. Makes you want to get up and dance. And dance we did and always will to the birth of American music.

Some of the earliest forms of the genre are referred to as Dixieland. Traditional New Orleans jazz usually includes a cornet, trumpet, and trombone.