

JAZZ

Jazz is one of the greatest forms of music originating in the US. The names of its stars, who are mostly African Americans, are known around the world. Most people have heard of stars like Ella Fitzgerald, 'Count' Basie, 'Duke' Ellington and Louis Armstrong. Wynton Marsalis, who plays in the traditional style, is the best-known jazz musician today.

Jazz was begun in the South by African Americans. Many of its rhythms came from the work songs and spirituals (= religious songs) of black slaves. New Orleans street bands first made jazz popular. Early forms of jazz created at the beginning of the 20th century were ragtime and the blues. Ragtime musicians included the singer 'Jelly Roll' Morton and the composer and piano player Scott Joplin. Famous blues singers included Bessie Smith and later Billie Holiday. Dixieland developed from ragtime and the blues and made a feature of improvisation (= making up the music as it is being played), especially on the trumpet and saxophone. Dixieland stars included Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet.

In the 1920s many African Americans moved north, taking jazz with them, and Chicago and New York became centres for the music. This was the beginning of the big band era. In the 1930s swing music came into fashion and people danced to jazz. Radio and the new recording industry helped to make it even more popular. The big bands were led by Basie, Ellington, Woody Herman, Glenn Miller and 'the King of Swing', Benny Goodman. In the 1940s there were new styles such as bebop, developed by 'Dizzy' Gillespie, Charlie 'Bird' Parker and Thelonious Monk. Freer forms like progressive jazz developed in the 1950s with stars including Stan Getz and Dave Brubeck. Cool jazz followed in the 1960s, led by Getz and Miles Davis. More recent styles have included funky jazz, jazz-rock and hip-hop jazz. Many jazz clubs, like the Cotton Club, have now closed but others, like Preservation Hall in New Orleans, and Birdland in Manhattan, remain.

(from *Oxford Guide to British and American Culture*)

- **Complete the following sentences to obtain a summary of the text.**
 1. Jazz originated...
 2. Black Jazz stars are...
 3. Jazz was created in... by...
 4. Its rhythms came from...
 5. Jazz was first popular in...
 6. Ragtime and blue are ...
 7. Louis Armstrong is ...
 8. In the 1920s Jazz ...
 9. In the 1930s swing music...
 10. News styles of Jazz include...

DID YOU KNOW...?

Ragtime: a style of music developed by African Americans in the 1890s and played especially on the piano. It led to the development of traditional jazz. Ragtime is played with a strong rhythm which is 'ragged', e.g. not regular. Pieces of ragtime music are

often called rags. The most famous ragtime musicians were 'Jelly Roll' Morton and Scott Joplin.

The blues: a type of US jazz music with a slow, sad sound. African Americans created it in the southern states to express the sadness of their experience. The music developed into rhythm and blues and then rock and roll and soul.

Dixieland: a type of US jazz music played by a small band. It has a strong, happy rhythm, and the musicians also play individually during a song. Dixieland began in the South at the end of the 19th century and is still popular, especially in New Orleans. The best known Dixieland song is *When the Saints Go Marching In*.

Big band: a large band of musicians playing jazz and other forms of dance music. Big bands were especially popular in the 1940s and produced what was called the big band sound. The most famous were led by Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, 'Duke' Ellington, 'Count' Basie, and Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey.

WHAT IS POP?

In 1956, a young man from the south of the United States made a record called *Heartbreak Hotel*. The young man was Elvis Presley. Eight million people bought his record and it went straight to number one in the US charts. It was the first of many hits for Elvis and it was also one of the first modern pop records.

'Pop' is popular music: the music of the people. There has always been popular music, but pop was born around the time that Elvis began singing - more than forty years ago. Pop songs are about girls and boys, going out, dancing, having a good time, being in love and being out of love. Pop is for the young. It is about growing up and about not growing up. It is about feeling different. Pop tells you it is OK to feel the way you do. Pop can be happy or sad. It can be strange, it can be fun, it can be dangerous. For the people who work in the pop business, it is usually about making money. For most people, it is about having a good time. Pop is for now.

The sixties

Some people call the sixties a golden time for pop. Pop became a voice for millions of young people and it became big business. And many different kinds of pop came from the rock and roll of the fifties.

One new kind, from California, was the surfing sound of the Beach Boys: the most successful American group of the sixties. Brian Wilson wrote most of their songs (*God Only Knows*, *Sloop John B*, *Good Vibrations*). He was always trying to do new things with his music. In 1995, a British pop magazine asked a group of (*older!*) British pop music writers to name the best pop album of all time: their number one? -Brian Wilson's *Pet Sounds*.

In Detroit (Motown, the city of the motor car), there was the black soul music of Marvin Gaye and Otis Redding; here too, the record producer, Phil Spector, was building something he called the Wall of Sound with mainly black singers, like Ike and Tina Turner (*River Deep*, *Mountain High*) and girl groups like the Ronettes.

And there was also the completely different voice of Bob Dylan, who started as a folk singer, then changed to an electric guitar in 1966. He wrote some of the best songs in modern music like *All along the Watchtower, Mr. Tambourine Man and A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall*. Dylan showed that pop music can be exciting and serious.

The 1960s was a time when many young people believed that sex and drugs and rock music (the kind of music which came straight from the rock and roll and rhythm and blues of the fifties) would give love and peace to the world. They listened to the psychedelic music of groups like The Grateful Dead and of Jimi Hendrix, one of the great guitarists of rock. More than 300,000 people went to the Woodstock Festival in 1969 to listen to this kind of music. But this was the year that Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones died because of drugs. One year later, Hendrix also died from drugs. And a young man was killed while The Rolling Stones played at a concert in Altamont, California. It was the end of the dream.

Pop today - and tomorrow

Today, pop is for everyone. When Elvis made *Heartbreak Hotel* and *Jailhouse Rock*, pop did not have a past and pop was for the young. Forty years later, the grandfathers of pop - the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Elton John - are now the first old people to make pop music: and old people as well as young listen to it.

Today, pop is everywhere. It is in the street, in the big shops, at the airport. You can get pop twenty-four hours a day on your radio, from your Walkman, from the TV. MTV (Music Television) goes to more than 250 million homes in 60 countries, all watching pop videos of all kinds of music. But MTV has not made pop the same everywhere. MTV Asia is not the same as MTV in Latin America. Today, more than ever, you can choose your own kind of music from many different kinds.

Today pop is big business. People spend 35 billion dollars on records every year. Two in every three records in the world come from just five companies. These companies are very rich. They help the bands whose records they can sell, but not always the bands whose music is good. They can decide who will be a star.

Today you can get pop from your computer. You can buy a CD-ROM which gives you the words of 550 of Bob Dylan's songs; you can see him play and hear him sing - on your computer. On pop CD-ROMs, you can listen to the music and you can change it: make it faster or slower, happier or sadder, use the sounds of different musical instruments.

Today you can get pop through your computer on the Internet. You can read the latest news about some bands, ask for and pay for a new record, and get the music through the Internet into your computer.

And next time you go dancing, not just the music, but the pictures on the walls, moving in time with the music, could come from computers. The technoartist works at the side of the music DJ.

These are some of the new things in pop. But many things stay the same. Reading about pop is fine, but now, why don't you put on a record or go to a concert and listen to some of the great sounds of pop for yourself. Or pick up a guitar and make some.

(from *Forty Years of Pop*, Steve Flinders)

- ***Define these terms.***
hit
chart
DJ (disc jockeys)
psychedelic music

- ***Complete the following sentences.***
 1. Heartbreak hotel is Elvis's...
 2. Pop is about.....
 3. For people of pop business pop is about...
 4. The sixties was ...
 5. The Beach Boys was ...
 6. Bob Dylan was ...
 7. Jimi Hendrix is ...
 8. Hundreds of thousands of people attended ...
 9. Today pop is for...
 10. MTV goes...
 11. People spend...
 12. On pop CD-ROMs you can ...
 13. On the Internet you can...
 14. When you go dancing, not just the music...

Sources

Oxford Guide to British and American Culture, OUP 1999

Forty Years of Pop, Steve Flinders, OUP 1996

Background to the USA, Richard Musman, Macmillan Publishers, 1990