JAZZ
The Roots of Jazz
Section 9.1
The roots of jazz in and around New Orleans trace back to the late nineteenth century.

Spirituals, the blues, and New Orleans brass bands strongly influenced the early development of jazz.

The bands used classical instruments - such as trumpets, trombones, clarinets, saxophones, and drums - but in unique ways.
**What is Jazz?**

- **Jazz** is a musical form distinguished by its reliance on improvisation & rhythmic urgency.
- The skill of inventiveness of individual performers is a key to the music.
- Jazz soloists improvise (create spontaneously without preparation) melodies.
What is Jazz? (2)

➔ The rhythm of jazz is often **polyrhythmic**, contrasting two or more different rhythms.
➔ The crossing of rhythms and syncopation are what give the music its energy.
Among the distinctive traits of early jazz was the “stride” piano style of Eubie Blake, James P. Johnson, and Earl Hines. It was built on a steady timekeeping left-hand bass, with the right hand shifting accents and embellishing the tune. A good stride pianist could imitate the entire band.
Pianist and bandleader Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton was one of the great legends of the early jazz movement.

He perfected the New Orleans Dixieland jazz style that featured a unique blend of simultaneous improvisations.

His band, “Jelly Roll” Morton and His Red Hot Peppers, released the song “Black Bottom Stomp” in 1926.
“Black Bottom Stomp” - “Jelly Roll” Morton
Musicians headed north from New Orleans up the Mississippi, seeking work in Memphis and St. Louis.

The new sound of the Roaring Twenties (or Jazz Age) drew a wider audience, and welcomed non-African American musicians, including white cornetist Bix Beiderbecke.
The art of jazz usually involves embellishing the melody of an existing song.

Jazz favors the technique of short “riffs” or “licks” in a call-and-response format, derived from spirituals and work songs.
Characteristics of Dixieland Jazz

- Small bands with little duplication of instruments
- March-like feeling
- Reliance on duple meter
- “Front line” of aerophone instruments: trumpet, clarinet, trombone
- Chordophones included: mandolin, banjo
- Melody (lead line) stands out while the others are intentionally less obvious
Louis Armstrong (1901-71)  
A.K.A. “Satchmo”

→ Louis Armstrong, a giant of jazz, was a trumpet player from New Orleans.
→ He was a musical prodigy whose mastery influenced countless other musicians, setting a standard for solo jazz artistry.
→ Armstrong complemented his instrumental improvisations with scat singing, or *a form of vocal improvisation on nonsense syllables*.
→ Some of his hits include “Hello, Dolly” and “What a Wonderful World.”
“When The Saints Go Marching In” - Louis Armstrong
By the time it reached Chicago, jazz had evolved.

A new type of jazz emerged: Swing.

**Swing** is the special rhythmic character that jazz musicians add to the music.

Swing became a label for a playing style, as well as an era of jazz history (1935-45).
Fletcher Henderson (1897-1952)

→ Fletcher Henderson played an important role in the development of the swinging jazz band.
→ He was a bandleader, composer, and arranger.
→ Henderson enlarged the jazz band and established an instrumentation that became standard:
  ◆ Brass section: 3 trumpets & 2 trombones
  ◆ Reed section: 3-4 saxophones
  ◆ Rhythm section: drums, piano, guitar, and double bass
The Big Band Era
Section 9.2
The big band era produced some musical legends. One of these was clarinetist Benny Goodman. His nickname was “The King of Swing” and he had a successful big band, with Fletcher Henderson as his chief arranger.
The clarinet was eventually replaced as the reed instrument of choice for jazz.

Many sax soloists set new standards for tonal beauty, technical wizardry, and improvisational creativity.

One of these saxophonists was Lester Young, a member of Count Basie’s band.

“Count” Basie led a famous 9-piece band with a powerful rhythm section.
One of America’s most prominent big band innovators was Kennedy “Duke” Ellington.

He is credited with having written more music than any composer living or dead.

By combining his own creativity as composer, pianist, and bandleader with that of the players in his band, he achieved a new level of distinction.
Ellington’s melodies are often **chromatic**, incorporating tones from a musical scale consisting entirely of half steps.

One of Duke’s songs, *It Don’t Mean a Thing*, summarized the entire swing era.

In many ways, the song tells what swing is all about.
“Cotton Tail”

➔ *Cotton Tail* was a collaborative effort between Ellington and his arranger, Billy Strayhorn.
➔ The tune was a trendsetting piece.
➔ It was unique due to its use of chord changes in a new way.
Mary Lou Williams

→ Other than singing in swing bands, women found it difficult to gain acceptance as jazz musicians during the big band era.
→ One who did, thanks to her talent and artistry on the piano, was Mary Lou Williams.
→ Williams was also a composer and arranger, and her career spanned all the different eras of jazz.
→ She composed for the top swing orchestras, including Duke Ellington’s and Benny Goodman’s.
→ She wrote more than 350 compositions.
10 GREAT WOMEN IN JAZZ
The 1940s and Bebop

Section 9.3
Trumpeter John Birks “Dizzy” Gillespie and alto saxophonist Charlie “Yardbird” Parker led this new movement. They gave bop the sophistication of classical chamber music.
The 1940s and Bebop

➔ After World War II, interest in jazz intensified.
➔ Some younger jazz musicians wanted the freedom to create outside the confines of swing.
➔ They developed **bebop** (or “bop” for short): *a complex and sophisticated type of improvised jazz.*
➔ The music was for listening rather than dancing.
Characteristics of Bebop

➔ Chromatic melodies
➔ Harmonies & rhythms became more complex
➔ Constantly shifting accents, creating polyrhythms
➔ Rapid tempos
➔ Dazzling technical displays
➔ Seething soulfulness
Parker was one of the most creative and brilliant musicians in jazz history.

Many of his compositions, such as *Confirmation* and *Ornithology* are now jazz standards.

After playing in Kansas City nightclubs in his youth, he joined the Jay McShann swing band in 1938, and shortly after met Dizzy Gillespie.

Together, they invented bebop in the 1940s.

Parker died at age 35.
“Hot House” (1951) - Charlie Parker/Dizzy Gillespie
Cool Jazz, Fusion, and Beyond

Section 9.4
The 1950s was a time of diverse styles and rapid changes as jazz transformed itself once more. Bop was cast aside in favor of “progressive” or “cool” jazz, which used a simpler melody and rhythm. Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane led a wave of “hard bop.”
The Miles Davis Sextet was the leading jazz group of that time. They produced influential albums such as *Kind of Blue* (1959), which went platinum three times. Miles Davis perfected a style of trumpet playing that was restrained and moody.
More “new” jazz

➔ The “free jazz” of Ornette Coleman stretched expression far beyond traditional limits, making music that was atonal and more intellectualized than ever.

➔ Thelonious Monk was a jazz pianist, composer, and arranger of this time.

➔ Miles Davis remained a guiding force, creating fusion, or the combination of jazz and rock.

➔ Musicians such as Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, and Quincy Jones continue in this vein today, relying heavily on technology.