

## Jazz Glossary

**A cappella** - Singing with no instrumental accompaniment.

**Afro-Cuban jazz** - A style of jazz that incorporates percussion from Cuba, primarily *claves*, *quiro*, shakers, bongos, and most importantly, conga drums. Dizzy Gillespie and Tito Puente are examples of two bandleaders who played Afro-Cuban styles.

**Bebop** - A style of jazz that was often very virtuosic. Musicians played or sung fast, complex phrases using the full range of their instruments. It possibly gets the name bebop from the typical way that phrases end, “be-bop.”

**Brass bands** - Primarily from New Orleans, these groups play instruments that can be carried. Brass bands play in parades and jazz funerals and improvise as they march.

**Body percussion** - Playing sounds on the body such as claps, thumping the chest, patting thighs, or tapping two fingers in the palm of the hand.

**Call and response** - A musical conversation led by one singer or instrumentalist and with a response from another singer or instrumentalist. You can think of it as a musical question and answer.

**Cool jazz** – A style of jazz that typically used medium or slow tempos, instruments playing in the middle range, and the use of timbres and instruments associated with lighter sound qualities, for example, brushes on drums, mutes in the brass instruments, and instruments such as the vibraphone, flute, and guitar.

**“Dropping bombs”** – Drumming in which the drummer suddenly and unexpectedly hits a drum or cymbal very loudly.

**52<sup>nd</sup> Street** - An area in New York in the 1940s and ‘50s that was approximately two blocks long and featured a number of great jazz nightclubs.

**Groove** - A special “feel” that is locked into the rhythm instruments in a group, for example piano, bass, and drums. A groove has a good feel to it. Swing and Afro-Cuban styles of jazz are considered types of grooves.

**Jazz critic** - Someone who reviews jazz recordings or concerts and writes about them in newspapers, magazines, and books. Often critics influence people to buy or not buy recordings.

**Latin percussion** - Instruments frequently used in Afro-Cuban jazz such as bongos, conga, *claves*, *quiro*, maracas, or other shakers and *timbales*.

**Ostinato** - A repeated pattern.

**“Payin’ your dues”** - Playing or singing for free or little money, also playing boring or non-jazz related jobs that were done to make money only. Sometimes playing with a group that is not as good as you. It takes time to get well-known and to advance to the level where you no longer have to accept boring or low-paying jobs to make it big in the jazz world.

**Scat singing** - Improvising by making up nonsense words.

**Second line** - The people who follow the marching New Orleans Brass Bands. The second line often dances, sometimes with umbrellas.

**Shout chorus** – In a jazz band performance, a loud, spirited chorus in which the trumpets repeat a figure several times to build excitement.

**Stride piano** – The practice of jumping back and forth with the left hand on the piano to create a bass line and chords.

**Swing** - A buoyant feel coming primarily from the rhythm section. An emphasis on counts 2 and 4.

**Texture** - Musical texture can be thin (a single melody line or a single drum part), thick (two or more layered parts), or very thick (many different types of instruments layered on top of each other, such as the entire Duke Ellington band playing four or five different parts at the same time).

**Trading fours** – The practice of musicians trading off, every four measures, playing short improvised solos.

**Triplet swing feel** - Triplets with an accent on the last note of the three give a better swing feel than just focusing on accented 2 and 4. Use the rhythm doo-dle DAH.

**Vocalese** - Creating words to sing to improvisations recorded by instrumentalists.