Scott Joplin's “Maple Leaf Rag” was published in 1899 and became immensely popular. Like most music at the time it was published in sheet music form; it became the first instrumental sheet music to sell over a million copies. It is typical of much ragtime music written around the turn of the century. A steady left-hand accompaniment keeps the march beat going throughout the piece while the right hand plays a lively, syncopated melody against this steady beat. The sections are repeated in the usual pattern: AA BB A CC DD. Each section is sixteen measures long. The slight changes between sections, the standard but slightly irregular repetition pattern, the contrast between the rock-steady left hand and the dancing right hand—all these make for a composition of great attractiveness and help to explain the enormous popularity of ragtime in the early years of the history of jazz. In this recording, we hear a piano roll made by Joplin himself in 1916.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CD TIME</th>
<th>LISTEN FOR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 0:00</td>
<td>Strong, steady chords in left hand; syncopated rhythm in right hand; short arpeggiated phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 0:21</td>
<td>Repeat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 0:42</td>
<td>Melody begins higher and moves down; <em>staccato</em> articulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 1:03</td>
<td>Repeat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 1:24</td>
<td>Opening section is played only once here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 1:45</td>
<td>Change of key to D♭ Major (IV); rhythmic change in right hand; left-hand leaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 2:06</td>
<td>Repeat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 2:28</td>
<td>Return to original key; strong final cadence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 2:48</td>
<td>Repeat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LISTENING GUIDE

Bessie Smith (1894–1937)
“Florida-Bound Blues”

Date of performance: 1925
Duration: 3:13

Bessie Smith often recorded with a small ensemble, but many of her performances feature piano and voice alone. Some of the great jazz pianists of the day recorded with Smith; and this recording features pianist Clarence Williams, who was also active as a songwriter, music publisher, and record producer.

“Florida-Bound Blues” is a standard 12-bar blues with words and music in an AAB pattern. Listen, though, for subtle changes in the words and melody between the first two lines of each stanza. In the first stanza, for example, “North” and “South” are sung as short notes in the first line but extended in the second line.

Among Smith’s many vocal trademarks found in this recording is the addition of a chromatic note before the last note of a line.

The bare-bones melody:

Bessie Smith’s version:

Sometimes she makes a quick slide, but sometimes she stretches out the added note.

Another common effect is a sudden pitch drop at the end of a line, producing a more intimate spoken sound. This device was a dependable way of creating a bond with an audience that was often doing plenty of talking on its own.

“Florida-Bound Blues” also shows the broad, world-weary tone that permeates her work and provides glimpses of her offhand sense of humor. Above all, this recording provides a clear picture of her masterful control of pitch, rhythm, and volume.
**New Orleans Jazz**

New Orleans jazz (sometimes known as Dixieland jazz) flourished in the city of New Orleans, especially in the red-light district called Storyville. Small bands played in the brothels and saloons, and a standard form of "combo" arose: a "front line" of trumpet, clarinet, and trombone, and a "rhythm section" of drums, banjo, piano, and bass. Every instrument in a Dixieland band has a specific function. The main melody is played by the trumpeter, while the clarinet weaves a high counter-melody around it. The trombone plays a simpler, lower tune. In the rhythm section, the drums keep the beat, the piano and banjo play chords, and the bass plays the bass line (usually pizzicato—plucked).

The sound of Dixieland jazz is of many lines interweaving in a complex but organized way. The effect is of collective improvisation but with every instrument having a carefully defined role. The most common musical forms are 12-bar blues and **32-bar AABA form** (the standard form of thousands of pop songs throughout the twentieth century).

The 32-bar AABA form has four eight-measure sections:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 0:11 | Goodbye North, Hello South.  
It's so cold up here that the words freeze in your mouth. |
| 0:46 | I'm goin' to Florida where I can have my fun,  
I'm goin' to Florida, where I can have my fun,  
Where I can lay out in the green grass and look up at the sun. |
| 1:22 | Hey, hey redcap, help me with this load.  
Redcap porter, help me with this load (step aside).  
Oh, that steamboat, Mr. Captain, let me get on board. |
| 1:58 | I got a letter from my daddy, he bought me a sweet piece of land.  
I got a letter from my daddy, he bought me a small piece of ground.  
You can't blame me for leavin', Lord, I mean I'm Florida bound. |
| 2:35 | My papa told me, my mama told me too.  
My papa told me, my mama told me too:  
Don't let them bell-bottom britches make a fool outa you. |

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CHAPTER 12

LISTENING GUIDE

Louis Armstrong (1900–1971)  
“Hotter Than That”  
Date of performance: 1927  
Instruments: Trumpet, clarinet, trombone, piano, banjo, guitar  
Duration: 3:00

“Hotter Than That” is built around a 32-measure tune written by Lil Hardin. The 32-measure chord pattern is repeated several times, and the performers improvise all their melodic lines over this stable chord structure. The end of each 16-measure section is played as a break: everyone drops out except the soloist, who leads the song into the next half of the chorus or into the next chorus itself. The basic structure of the performance is shown here:

Intro: full ensemble (8 bars)  
Chorus 1: trumpet solo with rhythm section (32 bars)  
Chorus 2: clarinet solo with rhythm section (32 bars)  
Chorus 3: vocal with guitar (32 bars)  
New material: vocal and guitar duet (16 bars)  
Chorus 4: trombone solo with rhythm section (16 bars) full ensemble (16 bars)  
Coda: trumpet and guitar

In the third chorus, Armstrong sings instead of playing, scatting through the entire 32 bars. Pay special attention to the similarity between his trumpet playing and his singing: he uses the same clean attack, the same “shake” at the end of a long note, the same “rips” up to a high note, and the same arpeggiated style of melody. He also builds a string of 24 equal syncopated notes, intensifying the swing in the rhythm.

After the scat chorus, Armstrong and guitarist Lonnie Johnson play a call-and-response chorus, imitating each other’s notes, inflections, and rhythms. In this section, as in the whole song, every note drives the song forward, producing a work of great energy and unity.

CD TIME LISTEN FOR

Intro  
(36) 0:00 Full ensemble, New Orleans–style polyphony. Listen for the individual instruments.

Chorus 1  
(37) 0:08 Trumpet solo. Listen for Armstrong’s confident rhythm and occasional “bubbles.”  
0:24 Break: background drops out, Armstrong “rips” to a high note.  
0:26 Armstrong improvises on arpeggios. “Shake” on long notes.  
0:42 Break: clarinet jumps in on trumpet line, prepares for solo.
Swing

In the 1930s and early 1940s, the most popular jazz style was **swing**. The Swing Era takes its name from the fact that much of the music of the time was dance music. Because swing was usually played by large bands with as many as fifteen or twenty musicians, the Swing Era is also called the Big Band Era. This period also saw the growth of much solo playing, such as that of tenor saxophonists Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young, trumpeter Roy Eldridge, and pianists Fats Waller and Art Tatum.

The most important changes in the evolution from Dixieland jazz to the big bands were the larger number of performers, the use of saxophones in the band, and the use of written (composed or “arranged”) music. For the first time, jazz was mostly written out, rather than mostly improvised. Swing music became extraordinarily popular during these years, and huge ballrooms would
LISTENING GUIDE

The Charlie Parker Quartet

“Confirmation”

Date of performance: July 30, 1953

Personnel: Charlie Parker, alto saxophone; Al Haig, piano; Percy Heath, bass; Max Roach, drums.

Duration: 2:58

“Confirmation” is one of the most stunning of Parker’s many extraordinary performances. The studio tapes show that the piece was recorded straight through, with no splicing, no alternative takes, and no errors. It is important to remember that although the first few measures (the initial A of the AABA form) and the third group of eight measures (the B section) have been worked out beforehand, all the rest of what Parker plays is made up on the spot. All the running notes, the rhythmic figures, the cascades of musical gestures—all these are created in the very moment of performance. Not only that, but each time Parker plays the A section—every single time—he varies it considerably. It is hard to imagine that anyone could display such rich and instantaneous creativity.

Charlie Parker’s alto saxophone is accompanied by piano, bass, and drums. These serve to create a harmonic foundation and keep a consistent beat, against which Parker’s ingenuity, flexibility, and expressive flights can shine. Toward the end of the piece, each of the other players gets a few measures to improvise on his own: first the pianist, then the bass player, and then the drummer. Parker wraps everything up with everyone playing together again.

The form of the piece is the favorite one of the bebop era: AABA. Just to remind you, each section of this form lasts for 8 measures. So each statement or chorus of the whole form lasts for 32 measures. There are three whole choruses with Parker, then the piano plays the A section twice (16 measures), the bass player has 8 measures, the drummer has 8, and then Parker returns to play B and A once more (the final 16 measures). To keep your place, keep counting measures (1, 2, 3, 4; 2, 2, 3, 4; etc.) all the way through (it’s easier if you focus on the bass, which plays on the beat all the way through).

CD TIME LISTEN FOR

Introduction

65 (48) 0:00 | There is a brief 4-measure introduction by the piano.

Chorus 1

66 (49) 0:05 | The tune is a typical bebop composition: angular, irregular, and offbeat. Yet Parker makes it sound melodic as well as deeply rhythmic. The rhythm section is rock-solid, though the drummer manages to be splashy and interesting at the same time. Although the chorus altogether contains three statements of the A section, Parker makes it sound different each time. The B section (0:25–0:34) is not as highly differentiated in this piece as it is in some bebop compositions, though its harmonies are different.

Chorus 2

67 (50) 0:44 | Parker really starts to fly on this chorus (hence his nickname, “Bird”). He also plays in the lower register of the saxophone to give variety to his solo.
The third chorus is unified by rapid, descending chromatic phrases, which in turn are balanced by arch-shaped arpeggios. A triplet turn is a common motive, and Parker plays right across the “seams” of the AABA form to make long, compelling musical statements of his own.

Piano Solo (AA)

69 (52) 2:00  Al Haig takes 16 measures for his improvisation, which is quite musical for a normal human being, but which sounds pretty flat after listening to Charlie Parker!

Bass Solo (B)

2:16  Percy Heath gets to play some different rhythms for 8 measures with hints of the tune.

Drum Solo (A)

2:28  Amazingly, Max Roach manages to suggest the melody on his 8 measures. (Try humming it along with him.)

Final Half-Chorus (BA)

70 (53) 2:35  Parker repeats the B and A sections as a final half-chorus, playing with intensity but closer to the original melody. Percy Heath (who was said to be overwhelmed by Parker’s playing on this recording date) gets in the last word!

Cool Jazz

Cool jazz was really a subcategory of bop. It continued to use small combos, and the rhythmic and harmonic styles were similar. Cool-jazz pieces also were based on popular tunes or blues patterns. The departures from bop can be noted immediately in the overall sound of the groups and in the improvised solos. The playing is more subdued and less frenetic. Pieces tend to be longer, and they feature a larger variety of instruments, including the baritone saxophone, with its deep, full sound, and even some classical instruments, such as the French horn and the cello, which are characteristically mellow in sound.

Some groups specializing in cool jazz became quite popular in the 1950s. Miles Davis formed a group with nine instruments; the George Shearing Quintet used piano, guitar, vibraphone, bass, and drums; and perhaps the most popular group of all (certainly one of the longest lasting) was the Modern Jazz Quartet, which featured Milt Jackson on vibraphone. The vibraphone (an instrument like a xylophone, with metal bars and an electrically enhanced, sustained, fluctuating tone) is the perfect instrument for projecting the “coolth” of cool jazz.

In the 1950s, the musician who pushed the outer boundaries of jazz was the trumpeter Miles Davis. Davis was influential on many fronts. He formed small, highly creative bebop ensembles; he recorded whole albums in front of big bands in a concerto-like format (Sketches of Spain, Porgy and Bess); and he got together a sextet that made the most popular jazz album of all time: the dreamy, introspective Kind of Blue (1959). (See Listening Guide on p. 418.)
In his success, his clothes, his attitude, and his spare, understated music, he became the emblem of personal cool.

Davis’s principal sideman during these years was the tenor saxophonist John Coltrane. Coltrane was the opposite of Davis in his playing: he played streams of notes where Davis played very few. They made a perfect combination. Coltrane formed his own band in the 1960s and became one of the most intense and expressive players of his time.
non-Western instruments, such as sitars, gongs, and bamboo flutes.

Free jazz in its purest form was controversial and less widely accepted than other jazz styles. It could be difficult to listen to and was often raucous and dissonant. Totally free collective improvisation must necessarily have many moments of complete chaos. (Coleman’s *Free Jazz* has two bands improvising simultaneously with no predetermined key, rhythm, or chord progression.)

At the end of the 1950s, the move away from preset chord progressions led to the development in the 1960s and 1970s of what is known as free jazz. This style depended both on original compositions and on creative improvisation. The most influential musician of this period was Ornette Coleman, alto saxophonist, trumpeter, violinist, and composer. Several pieces have been named for him, and an album of his, made in 1960 and entitled *Free Jazz*, gave its name to the whole period. Free jazz is abstract and can be dense and difficult to follow. Besides abandoning preset chord progressions, it often dispenses with regular rhythmic patterns and melody lines as well. Drumming is energetic, full of color and activity, without a steady and constant pattern of beats. Melodic improvisations are full of extremes: very high notes, squawks and squeals, long-held tones, fragmented phrases, and sudden silences. Many free-jazz groups have experimented with the music of other countries. Idioms borrowed from Turkish, African, and Indian music appear in many free-jazz compositions, and some groups have made use of non-Western instruments, such as sitars, gongs, and bamboo flutes.

Free jazz in its purest form was controversial and less widely accepted than other jazz styles. It could be difficult to listen to and was often raucous and dissonant. Totally free collective improvisation must necessarily have many moments of complete chaos. 

(Coleman’s *Free Jazz* has two bands improvising simultaneously with no predetermined key, rhythm, or chord progression.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:45</td>
<td>Trumpet overlaps into piano solo. One ten-measure chorus. Beautiful chords.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:27</td>
<td>Lovely tenor saxophone solo. One chorus. Coltrane plays with a slight edge on his soft and breathy tone. Quiet accompaniment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:10</td>
<td>Piano again. This chorus is taken in “double-time” (the measures go by twice as fast). Bass and drums appropriately more active.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>Back to slow tempo. Trumpet solo. Again Davis plays two choruses. Expressive and touching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:56</td>
<td>Final piano solo. Bass and then drums drop out. At 5:07 bass comes back in, but bowing this time. Tempo slows.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Jazz singer Betty Carter performing in Carnegie Hall.
In addition to the highly eclectic mixture of up-to-date jazz styles available today, a new movement has manifested itself, which might be called a “return to the past.” This important movement treats jazz as a great musical repertory, as important in its way as written, “serious” classical music.

The history of jazz is an elusive one, being concerned with compositions that are fleeting, invented in the heat of the moment. We are fortunate that some of the great improvisations of the past have been captured on recordings and even (by some determined individuals) in notation. The most recent movement in jazz has attempted to “capture” great jazz styles of past eras in clean, modern performances, enhanced by the new virtuoso instrumental techniques of young performers.

The prime exponent of this approach has been Wynton Marsalis, a superb classical trumpeter, a fine jazz improviser, and a musician with a great respect for the past. His clean, sophisticated, modern technique, allied with his reverence for the jazz greats of earlier eras, has made him the most popular jazz artist in modern times. In 1997, Marsalis became the first jazz musician ever to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize, and he has since become the controversial spokesman and leader of Jazz at Lincoln Center. Although he has managed to create greater awareness of the jazz tradition, many feel that he has stifled creativity and stunted the growth of new styles.

His compositions are often focused on the history of black people in America. One of Marsalis’s works, “Harriet Tubman,” is named after the runaway slave who helped hundreds of other slaves escape before the end of the Civil War in 1865.

Marsalis describes his piece “Harriet Tubman”:

Harriet Tubman makes homage to a woman who acted as a personal agent against the slavery that so severely limited the spiritual potential of our nation and was detrimental to the fulfillment of our democracy. She and the Underground Railroad represent the same thing that the blues does, that optimism at the core of the human will which motivates us to heroic action and tells us: NO MATTER HOW BAD, everything is going to be all right.
This blues begins in the bass with a motif that speaks of the late-night mystery. Its muted bell-like quality uses bass harmonics for an allusion to the African thumb piano [mbira]. The drums come in with another meter to enhance the African underpinnings. Siren horns and a bass vamp signal the beginning of a journey on the Underground Railway, then the sound of the blues and the wash of swing identify this as a uniquely American expression. The piece ends as it begins, in the bass, reminding us that even though the journey has ended, there is still much more to do. . . .

The underlying structure of this piece is the traditional harmonic pattern of 12-bar blues, although Marsalis adds a flexible lilt by having the bars contain six beats instead of the traditional four. Within these six beats, different groupings—3+3+3, 2+2+2, 2+4—are all explored.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CD</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>LISTEN FOR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[55]</td>
<td>0:00</td>
<td>Introduction: Light, percussive use of harmonics and a syncopated rhythmic pattern on the bass suggest the use of the mbira. (See p. 20 in Chapter 1.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:11</td>
<td>Short rhythmic pattern on percussion; then short scalar pattern on piano.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:31</td>
<td>Entrance of sustained trumpet and saxophone. This section presents all the basic ideas of the piece: rhythmic polyphony and melodic material including sustained notes that lead to faster or more jagged melodies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:22</td>
<td>Arrival at sustained notes, with pause in underlying rhythm, establishes the end of the section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[56]</td>
<td>1:34</td>
<td>Marsalis (trumpet) takes the solo on the first chorus. Starts with leaps to a high note, which serves as an anchoring point for the improvisation. More conventional accompaniment, with a regular walking bass and light cymbal strokes giving a regular pulse; harmonies filled out by the piano; free melodic exploration followed by return to the same high note (2:08).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:18</td>
<td>Faster melodic fragments and scales lead to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:42</td>
<td>Arrival of full ascending arpeggios reaching the original high note, rich chords in piano; reaching beyond that high note triggers a melodic outburst of jagged contour. Return to high note, then descent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:20</td>
<td>Tenor saxophone—picks up arpeggio figure last stated by trumpet, moves to fast-moving, short, three-note ideas. Emphasis on quick flourishes, rapid sequences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:25</td>
<td>Regular ascending notes, but slightly off the beat as emphasized by steady piano, then elaborated with virtuosic flourishes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[58]</td>
<td>5:01</td>
<td>The piano takes its solo, still providing accompaniment with the left hand. Solo begins with short melodic fragments, then moves to a wide-sweeping longer line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:16</td>
<td>Back to short, nervous gestures that work in a narrow range, then cascade down to a lower range.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:33</td>
<td>Short gestures are repeated insistently in right hand, while harmonies move around them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:51</td>
<td>Repeated series of three notes with octave leap; the piano continues to alternate between very restricted gestures and freer ones.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[59]</td>
<td>6:42</td>
<td>Return of initial theme (sustained notes in trumpet and sax), and emphasis on off-the-beat rhythms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:14</td>
<td>Trumpet and sax decrescendo with held notes, bass returns to its original pattern of harmonics; fade out.</td>
<td></td>
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