

Harlem Renaissance Music

Jazz

Jazz is an American musical art form which originated at the beginning of the 20th century in African American communities in the Southern United States from a confluence of African and European music traditions. In Harlem in the time of the Renaissance, Big Band Jazz was the most popular style. Leaders of this movement included Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, and Ella Fitzgerald.

Duke Ellington's signature songs included "Take the A Train" and "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)". Dizzy Gillespie's hits were "A Night in Tunisia" and "52nd Street Theme". Ella Fitzgerald was well known for classics such as "Mack the Knife".

Swing

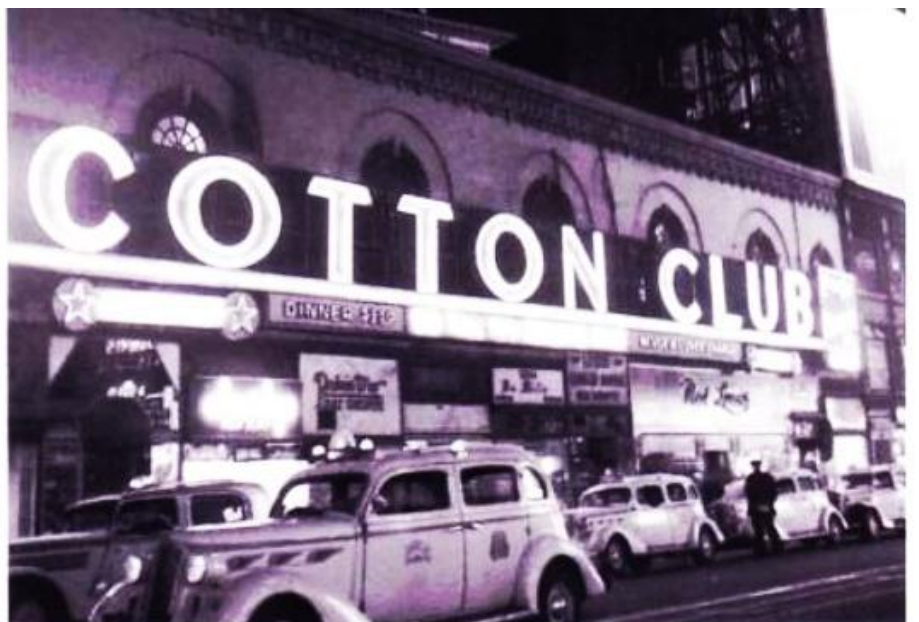
Swing music developed in the early 1930s from an earlier ragtime style. Swing uses a strong rhythm section that includes brass instruments, including trumpets and trombones, woodwinds including saxophones and clarinets or stringed instruments including violin and guitar.

One of the earliest swing band leaders was Jelly Roll Morton. Later swing band leaders became very famous in the 1930's-1940's. African-Americans such as Count Basie and Cab Calloway were headliners at the Cotton Club and Savoy as well as appearing on radio and later television.

Blues

Blues is a vocal and instrumental form of music based on the use of the blue notes-- notes sung or played at a slightly lower pitch than that of the major scale for expressive purposes. It emerged as a form of self-expression in African-American communities of the United States from spirituals, work songs, and rhymed simple narrative ballads.

One of the earliest Blues musicians was Robert Johnson who played and recorded across the South. In the clubs in Harlem, Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey were the two most popular and well-known Blues singers. Another, Lucille Bogan, was infamous for her raunchy songs of drinking and prostitution.



JAZZ

WHAT

Jazz is an American musical art form which originated at the beginning of the 20th century in African American communities in the Southern United States from a confluence of African and European music traditions. The style is defined as the use of improvisation, many rhythms, and swinging notes.

Jazz spawned a variety of subgenres, from New Orleans Dixieland dating from the early 1910s, big band-style swing from the 1930s and 1940s, bebop from the mid-1940s, a variety of Latin jazz fusions such as Afro-Cuban and Brazilian jazz from the 1950s and 1960s, jazz-rock fusion from the 1970s and late 1980s developments such as acid jazz, which blended jazz influences into funk and hip-hop.

WHO

In Harlem in the time of the Renaissance, Big Band Jazz was the most popular style. Leaders of this movement included Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, and Ella Fitzgerald.

EXAMPLES

Duke Ellington's signature songs included "Take the A Train" and "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)". Dizzy Gillespie's hits were "A Night in Tunisia" and "52nd Street Theme". Ella Fitzgerald was well known for classics such as "Mack the Knife" and "Stompin' at the Savoy".



SWING / JIVE

WHAT

Swing music, also known as swing jazz, is a form of jazz music that developed in the early 1930s from an earlier ragtime style. Swing uses a strong rhythm section that includes brass instruments, including trumpets and trombones, woodwinds including saxophones and clarinets or stringed instruments including violin and guitar. It usually has medium to fast tempos and a swing time rhythm. Swing bands usually featured soloists who would improvise a new melody over the arrangement.

WHO

One of the earliest swing band leaders was Jelly Roll Morton. Later swing band leaders became very famous in the 1930's-1940's. African-Americans such as Count Basie and Cab Calloway were headliners at the Cotton Club and Savoy as well as appearing on radio and later television. White band leaders included Bennie Goodman, Louis Prima, and Tommy Dorsey.

EXAMPLES

Cab Calloway's most famous song was "Minnie the Moocher". Basie's theme song was "One O'clock Jump". Other classics include "Sing, Sing, Sing" by Louis Prima and "In the Mood" by Glen Miller.



BLUES

WHAT

Blues is a vocal and instrumental form of music based on the use of the blue notes-- notes sung or played at a slightly lower pitch than that of the major scale for expressive purposes. When sung, the singer will repeat 2 lines, then end with a 3rd. It emerged as a form of self-expression in African-American communities of the United States from spirituals, work songs, and rhymed simple narrative ballads. The blues influenced later American and Western popular music, as it became the roots of jazz, rhythm and blues, bluegrass and rock and roll.

WHO

One of the earliest Blues musicians was Robert Johnson who played and recorded across the South. In the clubs in Harlem, Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey were the two most popular and well-known Blues singers. Another, Lucille Bogan, was infamous for her raunchy songs of drinking and prostitution.

EXAMPLES

Ma Rainey's most famous song, "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" later became the title of an August Wilson play. Bessie Smith's famous songs include "St. Louis Blues", "Trouble So Hard", and "Need a Little Sugar in My Bowl". Other classic blues songs of the time include "Sweet Home Chicago", and "Kind-Hearted Woman Blues".

