

# AQA, OCR, Edexcel & Eduqas: a Jazz Primer, part 1

**Jonathan James** is a freelance music educator and teacher trainer who works with orchestras, concert venues and a variety of communities to explain classical and jazz music.

by Jonathan James

## INTRODUCTION

Jazz is an important area of study for A level across several of the boards. Like most musical styles, its evolution doesn't fall into a neat timeline. Instead, it is better thought of as a delta, where different stylistic streams merge and separate. This two-part resource gives a bird's-eye view of that delta for those new to the genre, and for those who want to present helpful through-lines for A level learners.

This first part traces jazz history from its 'raggedy' beginnings in the 1890s through to the gloss and sophistication of swing bands up until 1945. The second part picks up from the rise of bebop and ends with a survey of today's artists.

A Spotify playlist is also available for each resource, with benchmark recordings of the prescribed artists and ideas for wider listening.

In each part, a brief outline of the main stylistic developments will be given, together with their key musical features and the artists who exemplified them. This first resource relates to the following examined areas and artists:

AQA AoS5	OCR AoS3	Eduqas AoSD
Louis Armstrong Duke Ellington	Jelly Roll Morton James P Johnson Duke Ellington Bix Beiderbecke Count Basie	Ragtime Dixieland Early jazz Big band (including swing)

### Suggested further resources

- *The History of Jazz* by Frank Gioia (OUP): a modern classic.
- *Hear me talkin' to ya: The history of jazz by the men who made it* by Robert Shapiro (Dover): a fascinating oral history that helps students get into the thinking and vernacular of jazz.
- *Early Jazz: its roots and musical development* by Gunther Schuller (OUP): Schuller is a heavyweight among jazz historians, as well as being a composer and practitioner. His book was seminal in exploring the birth of the jazz age, and he goes on to explore swing and later periods in subsequent books.
- A great BBC documentary on swing, *The Swing Thing*, is available on YouTube.

## 'WHENCE COMES JASS?'

That was the quaint title of a seminal article in the *New York Sun*, written in 1917. Seminal, because it was the first to refer to the new music that was all the rage in the dance halls as 'jazz' (or 'jas', 'jass', even 'jascz').

The article was notable for departing from the usual derogatory tone at a time when 'jazz' was still a byword for loose morals and licentious behaviour. In it, the writer attempts to capture the essence of the fascinating new style:

**'Jazz is based on the savage musician's wonderful gift for progressive retarding and acceleration guided by his sense of swing.'**

Some believe 'jazz' may derive from the French 'jaser', to chat animatedly.

The language is obviously very much of its time, but it does pick up on three important aspects:

- Jazz has its roots in the music of African slaves.
- It involves an improvisatory freedom.
- It's driven by a strong sense of rhythm and pulse.

Not all of these are true all of the time. Ragtime involves little improvisation, for example, and the sense of pulse in the blues can sometimes be quite wayward. And although the roots of jazz are mainly in African music, the picture is more complex than that, as we're about to see.

### The musical melting pot of the 1850s

The first sounds of jazz are associated with African slaves as they struggled to preserve their culture on foreign shores: the holler in the cotton field; the twang of a broken guitar; the lamenting line of a spiritual; or the chorus of a gospel chant.

Other non-African ingredients need to be thrown into the melting pot, however, such as the white rural entertainment traditions of the time. Cakewalk dances from the minstrel shows, as well as parlour songs, often had a jaunty, 'oom-pah' style accompaniment not unlike that of the striding left hand in a rag.

#### CODED LYRICS

A lot of early blues lyrics are bawdy, but shrouded with enough double entendres and local patois to get beneath the radar. Similarly 'hollering' solos in a work song could also be used to pass coded messages between communities when communication had otherwise been barred.

Also popular in white society were sentimental ballads, many dating from the American Civil War. Their simple pentatonic melodies and verse-refrain structures can be seen as distant cousins to the song form and characteristics of the blues.

Much study has been made of how the hymns of the Celtic Protestant settlers, or the call-and-response style of the white revivalists, might have impacted on the early development of the blues as slaves attended their masters' church services. Revivalists also accompanied their singing with foot tapping and hand clapping, a staple ingredient of the gospel style. There may well be interesting parallels, but the performance practice differs fundamentally.

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# THE PARENTS OF JAZZ

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Blues and ragtime are the parents of modern jazz. They are an odd couple, with sharply contrasting features despite their joint heritage. Blues is the laid-back partner of the two, with looser rhythms, messier structures and more improvisation. Ragtime is chipper and urbane, with crisp rhythms and formal structures.

## The blues

The blues have their roots in the Mississippi Delta, in the work-songs of those labouring on the railroads and in the fields. Early blues were led by the voice, with minimal accompaniment on whatever instruments could be found – the broken, three-stringed guitar being the classic.

'The geography of the blues is both a route to a particular time and place as well as a roadmap to the human soul.' (Martin Scorsese)

**WC Handy** (1873-1958) was instrumental in capturing those first sounds and their chaotic form, and standardising them into the 12-bar structure that we take for granted today. The story goes that he was catching some sleep at a rail station and was woken up by strange strains of music:

**'A lean, loose-jointed Negro had commenced plunking a guitar beside me while I slept. His clothes were rags, his feet peeped out of his shoes. His face had on it some of the sadness of the ages. As he played, he pressed a knife on the strings of the guitar in a manner popularised by Hawaiian guitarists who used steel bars. The effect was unforgettable. His song too, struck me instantly. 'Goin' to where the Southern cross the dog.' The singer repeated the line three times, accompanying himself on the guitar with the weirdest music I had ever heard.'**

Handy, with his European training, took it on himself to discover more about the rural blues, to trace its oral history and ultimately create his own version. This lifelong endeavour led him to call himself the 'Father of the blues'. The claim is extravagant, but certainly through him the country blues found its way into the mainstream entertainment world, into the minstrel shows and black theatres of the day, and from there developed into the so-called 'city blues', a more structurally consistent version of its rural predecessor.

The 'urbanisation' of the blues was also facilitated by the abolition of slavery in 1865, and the mass movement north of black communities into the cities and towns in the Midwest and beyond. In the ghettos of these cities the soul of the blues remained strong, an expression mainly of suffering and protest.

### EARLY BLUES EXAMPLES

**Robert Johnson** (1911-1938) was one of the first blues singers to record themselves, setting up in a hotel room with just a guitar and microphone. Listen to how loose the structure is on his song 'Hellhound on my Trail'.

Count the beats in each of the lines. In the first stanza there are the usual three phrases, but each is a completely different length. That irregular pattern continues throughout. There's no predictability apart from in the harmonic progressions underneath.

'Black Snake Moan' by '**Blind Lemon' Jefferson** (a lot of early blues artists seemed to be blind to some degree) is another good example of this rhythmic freedom. It also contains some risqué lyrics that were so typical of the country blues.

**Ma Rainey** (1886-1939), the self-styled 'Mother of the blues', was the first female African American professional singer to record blues tracks. She learned her vocal craft in the Baptist church and in travelling black minstrel shows. By the time she was recording in the 1920s, the blues was a recognised, popular form. Her recording of 'Runaway Blues' is a great example of the AAB phrase structure and features a typical bottleneck guitar solo.

**Bessie Smith** (1894-1937), the 'Empress of the blues' and Ma Rainey's successor, sings with the same majestic breadth, but with a more sophisticated sound and focused vibrato. She takes Rainey's trademark moans and growls, and hones them into more artful bends and fall-offs. On the recording of W Handy's signature tune, the 'St Louis Blues', she is accompanied by a wheezing gospel organ and muted trumpet. Notice how delayed the entry of the main chorus is.

### Musical building blocks of the blues

Despite its erratic form, there are core elements to the blues style. The minor pentatonic is at the heart of the folk blues style, as it is of so many folk forms. This is then extended through adding another 'blue note' which bends into the 5th of the scale:

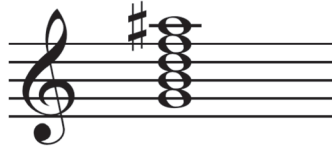


This is the most familiar form of blues scale, although there are also heptatonic and nonatonic versions, which will be used more in later, bebop and modal reworkings.

A lot of the vocal and instrumental 'licks' that are used as fills in blues accompaniment or as the basis of a solo are derived from three- and four-note cells taken from this scale.

Harmonically, the blues revels in a clash between major and minor modes, and it is that harmonic tension that is so fundamental to the intensity of the style. The dominant 7th is treated as a stable chord that doesn't need resolution, as it would in a classical context. As dominant 7ths are built on major triads, if you put a blues scale (the minor pentatonic) over the top, you are immediately going to create that clash between the major and minor 3rds.

This clash can be represented by stacking up the iconic blues chord beyond the 7th to a sharp 9th, here written correctly as an A sharp over G7, but more easily thought of as a B flat against the B natural below.



### VARIANTS OF THE 12-BAR FORM

The 12-bar form in its basic circular format will no doubt already be familiar to A level learners:

A	I	IV	I	I
B	IV	IV	I	I
C	V	IV	I	I (V7)

Research project:  
find and play the 8-  
and 16-bar versions  
of the blues.

All of these chords can be voiced as dominant 7ths to give them that essential blues colouring. Students at this level should aim to be able to play both the blues scale and this basic 12-bar iteration in least six popular keys.

If activating the knowledge in a practical session, choose a nice, slow, rolling 12/8 groove to allow time for students to be imaginative with their solo notes rather than relying on well-worn licks. Sing the line first before playing.

This familiar chord progression can then be developed using the cycle of 5ths to pick up the harmonic pace to two changes per bar, with a classic 'turn-around' in the final bar:

A	I – I7	IV	I	V7 – I7
B	IV	IV – IVdim	I	III – VI
C	II	V	I	I – VI – II – V

There are, of course many variations on this. It's an excellent way of working through the cycle of 5ths in different keys. The standard overlay of the text onto this structure would be AAB, with the second line being an embellishment of the first:

- A:** I'm hollerin' 'bout my homework cos the sun is beatin' down outside
- A:** Yeah I'm hollerin' bout my homework 'cos the sun is beatin' down outside
- B:** Dunno how to do it and I guess that's why I'm singin' the blues...

If performing in a group with a singer, the instrumentalist should aim to fill out the gaps in the vocals, picking up on the mood and ornamentation of the singer. The big temptation is to play too much.

### When the blues met ragtime

As the country blues found its way into the clubs of the southern cities of Kansas and New Orleans (the Storyville district in particular), so it begun to be played by small instrumental combos, such as 'hot fives' (typically two clarinets, cornet, trombone and piano) who were also performing rags, cakewalks and other dances. It's here that the blues was given a make-over, as it was shifted up-tempo and met with the tighter rhythms and energy of 'hot jazz'.

**Joe 'King' Oliver** (1881-1938) formed his Creole Jazz Band in the early 1900s, and they quickly rose to be the most respected jazz band in the south. He moved north to Chicago to record in 1920s, and their take on the 'Dippermouth Blues' is a classic, not least for Oliver's much-imitated cornet solo and the very polished ensemble. It set a high benchmark for other bands to follow.

Oliver reportedly played seated in a chair leant against a wall with a derby hat tilted over his blinded eye to hide the scar. He also brought in the use of mutes, cups and bottles to 'jazz up' his cornet sound.

In the first 12 bars of 'Dippermouth Blues', everybody is in typical Dixieland-style polyphony. The second verse uses three-note stabs to accompany the clarinet careening around above. A typical series of solos follows, giving every member on the frontline a chance to shine.

One of Louis Armstrong's nicknames was 'Dipper' or 'Dippermouth'.

### THE NEW ORLEANS SET-UP



The King Oliver band's line-up was a standard one for early ragtime bands: piano, 'tailgate' trombone, drums, cornet, slide trumpet (a young Louis Armstrong), banjo and clarinet. Bands tended to average around eight players, adding an upright bass or some extra line instruments.

The 'tailgate' trombone got its name from the player having to trail on a tailgate when on a horse-drawn cart in a procession. There wasn't any room for the cumbersome slide on the main cart.

King Oliver's line-up was a development of the typical 'hot five' band, and followed the same principles for organising the material:

- The piano holds the bassline and harmony, normally in a stride pattern.
- The trombone both reinforces the bass and adds a countermelody to it.
- The banjo strums rhythmically on every crotchet.
- The cornet takes the tune, embellishing it.
- The clarinet plays an 'obligato' line above, threading around the tune.

The level of group improvisation was impressive, with each player needing to find their space within a busy texture. Solos were normally based on ornamenting around the root, 3rd, 5th and 7th of the chord, with passing diminished chord shapes. It wasn't until the late 1930s and 40s that soloists started improvising over the extended 9ths, 11ths and 13ths as the harmony beneath them expanded.

So far, the story has been about African American musicians, but as the New Orleans style gained currency, so white musicians also tried their hand at it. The most celebrated example of this trend is the **Original Dixieland Jazz Band** or 'ODJB', set up by the impresario and cornet player Nick La Rocca in 1917. The group was known through its early recordings for its exuberant style and skiffle band effects (eg halfway through 'Livery Stable Blues' of 1917). Some found their sound too mannered and lacking in originality, but they were still a revered band of the time. La Rocca liked to be known as the 'founder of jazz' because of his seminal early recordings. It helped sales, despite being a preposterous claim.

# RAGTIME

In Storyville at the turn of last century, the warehouses, riverboats and vaudeville clubs were alive with 'raggedy' music as honky-tonk pianos and 'hot fives' knocked out one dance tune after another. Like its blues counterpart, ragtime was initially seen as an unrespectable music. Eubie Blake, an early ragtime pianist, describes getting caught by his mother when he should have been practising the classics:

**'I'm in there ragging hell out of *Träumerei* [by Schumann] on the organ when my mother came in and laid down the law: "Tag that ragtime outa my house!"'**

Yet for all its reputation, ragtime is a polite-sounding style when performed on solo piano, with a metronomic pulse and simple structures. The sections in a rag relate proportionally to each other, and rhythm is straight, not swung, the left hand tick-tocking regularly away. This is music you could boil an egg to.

'Ragging' was the name for a lively clog dance among African slave communities.

• **Scott Joplin** (1868-1917) said that 'it's never right to play ragtime fast', and some early recordings can even sound staid compared to the breakneck speed we're now used to. Listening to his own piano-roll of his breakthrough piece, 'Maple Leaf Rag' (1899), you can hear how steady and measured it is. He recorded this just one month before his death.

The playful syncopation and memorable tunes appealed to a wide audience, including polite society. Ragtime was the first black music to achieve widespread popular and commercial distribution. Scott Joplin's publication of *Original Rags* in 1899 played a big part in this acceptance, bringing the style out of the clubs and into people's living rooms (which were often equipped with either an upright or a square piano).

## Key features of a piano rag

- Strict, steady 2/4 pulse held by a stride pattern in the left hand (see below).
- 'Raggedy', syncopated right-hand melody: angular shapes, often in semiquavers against quavers in the bass.
- Clear, symmetrical phrases, with an eight-bar antecedent-consequent pattern prevalent.
- Functional harmony stressing chords I, IV, V and relative minor.
- Recognisable, predictable structures, eg ABCB (NB the opening A section often doesn't return).
- Each section made up of two (or more) ideas, related by key: eg AA-BB-A (just once this time)-CC-DD.
- One of these sections (normally CC in the example above) would be cast as a 'trio', in a more reflective mood and mostly in the subdominant or relative minor.

Here's an example from Joplin's 'The Entertainer' (1902) of a stride pattern in the left hand with the typical syncopated melody. Notice the use of octaves to reinforce the melody and the chromatic passing notes, all recurring features of a rag:



Joplin came from a very musical family. His father was an ex-slave who played violin, his mother sang and played the banjo, and his brothers played the guitar. His dream was to take the ragtime genre and other jazz dances (eg the Buckstep Prance and the Slow Drag) and elevate them into works that enjoyed the same status as European forms. He even attempted a jazz opera, *Treemonisha* in 1907, which, much to his disappointment, did not survive more than a few performances. It has since been revived.

## CLASSICAL RAGTIME

Classical composers have been fascinated by rags and have incorporated elements of ragtime style in their composition. Charles Ives composed 13 rags, Debussy includes a rag-style cakewalk in his *Children's Corner* suite, and Stravinsky dissects the style in his *Ragtime* for 11 instruments. Other rag enthusiasts include Satie, Milhaud, Honegger and Hindemith.

### Swinging the Rag: the next evolutionary step

Early ragtime stands out in jazz as being essentially a non-improvisatory form. Joplin was keen that everybody observe his notated score faithfully. Inevitably though, the inventive New Orleans spirit would take over. **Ferdinand 'Jelly Roll' Morton (1885-1941)** played a key role in loosening up the style, bringing in elements of swing and embellishing the melody.

## THE 'JELLY ROLL' TOUCH

Compare the two recordings of the 'Maple Leaf Rag' on the Spotify playlist, one by Joplin and the other by Morton. You can immediately hear how Morton swings the rhythm and extemporises on the melody so that it's hardly recognisable. All that remains is Joplin's phrasing and harmonic structure underneath, with the stride pattern in the left hand.

Morton saw himself as one of the prophets of the new jazz age, playing and composing in a way that consciously brought together aspects of blues, ragtime and the quadrilles of marching band music. He learnt his trade in New Orleans before moving north to Chicago in the 1920s. A self-proclaimed 'inventor of jazz' (the third person to use such a title in this resource alone!), Morton was a larger-than-life character whose works quickly became core standards in the repertoire.

'Wolverine Blues' and 'Black Bottom Stomp' are two of his best-known standards. 'Wolverine Blues' was originally recorded by the New Orleans Rhythm Kings (with Morton on the piano) and later by Morton in his own version for solo piano. 'Black Bottom Stomp' was recorded by his later band, the Red Hot Peppers, and is a more accomplished arrangement, with frequent stop-time (off-beat 'hits' in the band after sudden rests) and solo breaks. Both are up-tempo rags that bring in some of the flourishes of the boogie-woogie style.

**James P Johnson** (1895-1955) was another important figure in bringing together early ragtime and swing. Like Scott Joplin, he had a classical training and entertained lofty ambitions to create large-scale jazz works. His four-movement *Harlem Symphony* shows how elaborate his compositions and arrangements would become. However, he was essentially known as one of the best stride pianists of his day, and his 'You've got to be modernistic' shows how dexterous his playing was. His pupils included Fats Waller, and he inspired a new generation of jazz pianists.



'Satchmo' is short for 'satchelmouth', an affectionate reference to Louis' generously proportioned mouth. He liked it as a nickname.

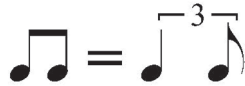
## SWING

Once the New Orleans sound had reached New York in 1915, jazz had become mainstream. After the First World War, it was the dominant popular music style in dance halls and on the turntable. Its development accelerated as promoters, artists and bandleaders enjoyed the new boom, trying to outdo each other in technique and artistry. One such artist and promoter was **Louis 'Satchmo' Armstrong** (1901-1971).

Armstrong's rise from his tough childhood to being one of the most influential figureheads in the history of jazz is the stuff of legend (and perfect for a short research project). He was mentored by none other than Joe 'King' Oliver when he joined his Creole Jazz band on 'slide trumpet' (a sort of mini-trombone) in 1918. After moving to New York, he was picked up by bandleader Fletcher Henderson, where he played alongside the virtuosic clarinetist Sidney Bechet, before moving on to Bennie Moten's Kansas City Band (that would later evolve into Count Basie's orchestra).

### SWUNG RHYTHM

By the 1920s, the 'swung' feel of the 12/8 blues had crossed into the 'straight' world of ragtime. Jazz from here on was rarely played in straight rhythms, even when notated as such. So, two quavers would be interpreted in a swung, long-short triplet pattern:



Armstrong's own band, the Hot Five, was the one of the most sought-after small combos of the 1920s. Recordings reflect how confident and melodic Armstrong's own solos were, such as the flowing opening salvo to 'Cornet Chop Suey'. The release of 'Heebie Jeebies' in 1926 also stands out for Armstrong's break into scat singing (at 1:50), the first recorded example of vocables of this kind. It gets more athletic on 'Hotter Than That' (1927). Ella Fitzgerald would later take this art to a completely new level, imitating all the different members of the band.

'West End Blues' also is a good showcase of Armstrong's understated abilities as an improviser, this time back on the trumpet. Earl 'Fatha' Hines' solo on the piano (at 2:00) sets the tone with unusually florid single-line decorations, then Armstrong leans in with an eloquent, fluid 12-bar phrase in a sweet high register. It shows exquisite control and taste.

Alongside Earl Hines and Fats Waller, **Leon Bix Beiderbecke** (1903-1931) was a groundbreaking pianist and cornet player, less so for his technique and more for his unorthodox curiosity in contemporary classical music, such as the impressionists, Stravinsky and Holst. 'In a Mist' is fascinating for its quartal, chromatic harmonies and whole-tone thinking, all gleaned from listening to Debussy's piano music. Bix may not have had the 'chops' (fast-fingered flashiness) of his contemporaries, but his unorthodox approach to harmony, including altering the 5th of the chord and regularly extending up to 13ths, left a lasting imprint. This carried through to his cornet playing where, aside from having a lovely mellow quality, Bix often chose subtly chromatic lines and favoured passing through the 6th and 9th. His cornet solo on 'Singin' the blues' (at 1:03') shows off this lyrical style.

Like Joplin and Johnson, Bix too aspired to grander forms and talked about writing a jazz symphony. Unfortunately, he couldn't write music, and so those dreams came to nothing. He is mainly remembered both for his harmonic inventiveness and for the fact he was one of the first white musicians to win the respect of the black jazz community.

Over the course of late 1920s and early 1930s, the busy lines of the Dixieland style were left behind as a cleaner 'Chicago-style' jazz began to dominate the scene. In the bands, the chirpy banjo was replaced with a guitar, the double bass became a must-have in the rhythm section (releasing the trombone into different role), and the horn section swelled. By the 1930s, dance bands regularly had three trumpets, three trombones, four reed instruments and the usual backline.

As the bands grew, so did the need to organise the material more formally for them. The New Orleans spirit of collective improvisation was replaced by charts, clever arrangements and a spick-and-span, tight sound. Smudge an entry and you may not get rebooked! Composer-arrangers such as Paul Whiteman, Fletcher Henderson, Don Redman and Duke Ellington stepped into the limelight.

The big band era is also defined by its leading front men and women, the 'crooners' that helped soothe the pain of the Great Depression with their balladeering. Al Jolson was one of the biggest of those early stars, and his upbeat style was perfect for the first ever 'talkie' musical, *The Jazz Singer* (1927).

Meanwhile there was a concern that big band jazz was going sterile as bands trotted the same numbers night after night in the big city hotels. The raw edge of 'hot' combos had been smoothed over and the music parceled up as a commodity. Perhaps Duke Ellington's early hit, 'It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing', was a comment on that.

Edward Kenney '**Duke**' **Ellington** (1899-1974) started off leading a Dixieland band but soon felt drawn to a less hectic style, writing slow ballads with surprising contours and exotic harmonies. 'A Sophisticated Lady' (1935) is a good early example of the signature Ellington sound, with a close-voiced sax quartet in exalted harmonies. Each chord is a treat. The Duke provides a sparkling piano transition to a tenor sax solo, accompanied by an impressively hushed band. The bass is sparse throughout, and Ellington comments on the piano only very occasionally. It's a masterclass in allowing space.

Duke Ellington's avuncular manner and courteous leadership won him a lot of friends. He was disciplined, critical but also sympathetic. He enjoyed collaborating closely with other songwriters and arrangers such as Don Redman and Billy Strayhorn, and encouraged a whole new generation of players.

As more and more musicians turned to jazz and sought training, mainly through being mentored on the job, so the technical demand in big bands from 1935 to 1945 increased. Ellington's 'Ko-ko' from 1940 testifies to that, using a deceptively simple 12-bar blues structure and call-and-response effects. There are no solos, just constantly interesting textures and punchy rhythms. The playing demonstrates the crisp attack and brilliant ensemble that was now expected in that period. Swing had hit its stride.

The year 1940 is seen as a watershed for Ellington, as he returned to the RCA Victor studio no fewer than 11 times to record. One of the criticisms of Ellington's plush 'orchestra' at the time was that it lacked the vigour of individual soloists that set other bands alight. So, in 'Cotton Tail' (part of the 1940 recording legacy), Ellington recruited Ben Webster, a trailblazing tenor sax player from the Kansas City band. It was an astute choice. Webster's gruff and full-throated solo added something new and vital to the sound.

Another leading light on the saxophone was **Lester Young** who played with the **Count Basie** band in Kansas City. Basie's band was arguably lighter on its feet than Ellington's, favouring up-tempo numbers where the Duke tended towards slower ballads. Lester 'Prez' Young takes the first solo on Basie's 'Taxi War-Dance' (1939) against stabs from the other horns and a boogie bass line given by Basie. On both this and 'Lester leaps in' (also 1939), he shows the sort of agility and some of the harmonic daring that was to characterise the thinking of the next generation of bebop artists.

And that daring new step is where we will pick up from in the next resource.

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## SUMMARY

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This overview has been an attempt to put some shape on the sprawl that is early jazz history, from its early roots in minstrel shows and vaudeville to blues and ragtime, through to the peak of swing in 1945. The route so far has inevitably left out many of the interesting sub-styles along the way and has focused necessarily on those artists that are highlighted in the various A level specifications. It does reflect, however, how joyously diverse and creative those first 90 years or so of jazz were, as well as laying down the foundations for the bebop generation to follow – or to rebel against, as we shall see.