

Take Note Online Jazz Workshops – Series 2

Episode 1: Jazz Fundamentals

Spotify Playlist

Check out some songs from the Spotify playlist to get an idea of some different styles of jazz:

Blues – I'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man (Muddy Waters)

Jazz blues – Au Privave (Charlie Parker)

Trad jazz – West End Blues (Louis Armstrong)

Swing – Take the A Train (Duke Ellington)

Bebop – Ornithology (Charlie Parker)

Cool – Venus De Milo (Miles Davis)

Hard Bop – My Move Your Groove (Hank Mobley)

Blues

The blues is the foundation of a lot of different styles of music, particularly jazz. It is many things – a feeling, a genre, a form, a language.

From the website 'All About Jazz':

"The blues has deep roots in American history, particularly African-American history. The blues originated on Southern plantations in the 19th Century. Its inventors were slaves, ex-slaves and the descendants of slaves—African-American sharecroppers who sang as they toiled in the cotton and vegetable fields. It's generally accepted that the music evolved from African spirituals, African chants, work songs, field hollers, rural fife and drum music, revivalist hymns, and country dance music."

Swing

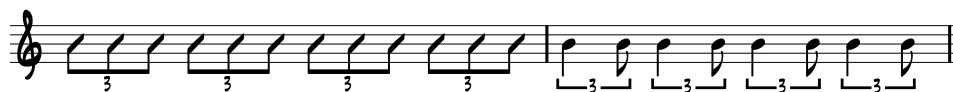
Swing is a type of rhythm that has strong forward motion. Its origins derive from the rich cultural melting pot of New Orleans, where African, Caribbean and European influences amalgamated into an early form of the music we call jazz. The swing rhythm emphasizes beats 2 and 4 and has a natural "lilt" to it. In an ensemble setting, you can hear this swing rhythm particularly in the drummer's ride cymbal.

Improvisation

Improvisation is a musical conversation. An improviser expresses their ideas and feelings through musical statements, questions and answers. Improvisations can be thought of as telling a story, using the themes of the composition as a point of reference.

Practice Ideas:

- Put your metronome on beats 2 + 4 and try counting along. This is tricky the first few times you try it, but you get used to it!
- Try playing some scales or a melody you know really well, with the metronome on beats 2 + 4. It will make you swing! Try it as crotchets and then 'swung' quavers. If you want your quavers to swing, you can think of the first quaver as being long, and the second quaver as short.
- You can notate 'swung quavers' as a triplet if you want to visualize it with notation:



Check out some more about the history of Blues, Swing and Jazz music here:

[All About Jazz - A Brief History of the Blues](#)

[Britannica - History of Swing Music](#)

[National Museum of American History – What is Jazz?](#)

[The Conversation – The History of Jazz](#)