

JAZZ MUSIC



Jazz is often considered America's first musical invention. The music grew out of African-American communities in the South in the late 1800s and the early 1900s after slavery was abolished and many freed slaves set out to look for work. Due to strict segregation laws in the South, they had trouble finding it in traditional places of employment, but most of those laws didn't apply to entertainment gigs. African-Americans began to be hired to perform music in vaudeville and variety shows, where an upbeat music called ragtime became popular. In New Orleans, this music was transformed into jazz. Since New Orleans is a port city, people from all over the world came by boat every day, and began bringing musical traditions from their home countries into New Orleans' nightclubs and entertainment venues. Those forms of music blended together to become a lively blend known as jazz.

"The Jazz Age" came about in the 1920s. The United States was changing – women had been given the right to vote, and Prohibition was passed. Wild jazz music became the perfect background music to the turbulent times. Young people of all backgrounds began to take an interest in the music, and the African-American musicians that wrote and played it became respected and popular performers. From there many branches of jazz evolved, and seeped into other styles of pop music. Composer George Gershwin caused an uproar in the 1920s when he combined strong elements of jazz music with classical music in his work *Rhapsody in Blue*, now a very famous piece of American concert music. Many songwriters followed suit, and jazz's influence reached almost every form of popular music after it. Its free-form style can be heard in almost every form of American pop music today.

WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the letters to form the word that completes the sentence.

1. The word "jazz" may have come from a slang word, *jasm*, which meant "_____ energy and vigor." RHPYTS
2. _____ music is considered to be one of the roots of jazz. ESLUB
3. African-American musicians playing in _____ shows helped spread jazz music throughout the northern and western United States. LEAUDEVLVN

