

Jazz Critical Listening Assignment:

Read the accompanying PDF on Jazz Listening 101. Listen to a minimum of 3 minutes per example and write a 4 sentence paragraph for 2 of the weekly examples. Things to include in your paragraph; the instruments being played, the style, intensity, interplay between musicians, improvisation, how it makes you feel and anything else that you find interesting or unique about the recording. Listen with headphones if possible for the most immersive experience. All audio links are up to date and current as of 4/2/2020. If a link is expired or deleted, search you tube for the song title and artist.

Week 1-

Dixie Jazz band One step
Potato Head Blues
What a Wonderful World
Hello Dolly
A Bundle of Blues

Week 2-

Duke Ellingtons 70th Birthday
Sing, Sing, Sing
In the Mood
Four Brothers
Swingin' the Blues

Week 3-

Count Basie Live in Europe 1981
A Tisket, A Tasket
They Cant Take That Away From Me
Come Fly with Me
Hot House

Week 4-

The Last Bebop Session
Birth of Cool
Monks Dream
Getz/Gilberto-Girl From Ipanema
This Could Be the Start of Something Big

Week 5-

Take Five
Ah Um
Be-Bop

Week 6-

John Coletrane Quartet
Expression
Senior Mouse

Week 7-

Heavy Weather
Matinee Idol

Madeski, Martin and Wood LIVE

Week 8- Your Selections

Title: _____

Artist: _____

LINK: _____

Title: _____

Artist: _____

LINK: _____

Title: _____

Artist: _____

LINK: _____

Jazz Listening 101

A Primer For Students Of Exemplary Songs Of the Genre

by Dr. David Fodor

FIRST JAZZ RECORDING:

1917 Original Dixieland Band – “Dixie Jazz Band One-Step”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mW7rldvqN1w>

This is where it all began almost exactly a century ago, with a small ensemble from New Orleans. This style can still be experienced live at Preservation Hall in NOLA. It was mostly full ensemble playing – not soloistic work.

FIRST JAZZ SUPERSTAR:

*1927 Louis Armstrong – Early: “Potato Head Blues”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1FDD1S46Oo>

Louis brings the concept of soloist to the Dixieland sound. Although Louis never changed his approach to playing music, he remained an enduring presence even into his final years: “What a Wonderful World”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWzrABouyeE>

featured in movies and hitting the top of the Billboard charts: “Hello Dolly”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmfeKUNDDYs>

Other influential artists to explore on your own: Jellyroll Morton, Art Tatum, Earl Hines, Django Reinhardt, and Fats Waller.

PREMIERE COMPOSER OF AMERICA’S MUSIC:

*1933 – Duke Ellington – “A Bundle of Blues”.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_GTfl8Hhc8

Ellington created jazz compositions and developed orchestras filled with great soloists from the mid-1920’s until his death in 1974. Here is a video from the latter years: Duke Ellington 70th Birthday Concert in Paris.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS1jm8ANLSY&list=RDSS1jm8ANLSY&start_radio=1

BIG BAND ERA:

Benny Goodman – Best remembered as the band that brought jazz into the classical realm by being the first jazz group to perform in Carnegie Hall. He popularized the clarinet as a jazz instrument in the Swing Era, and his drummer, Gene Krupa, immortalized the tom-tom solo in “Sing, Sing, Sing”.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mJ4dpNal_k

Glen Miller – The epitome of the original big band era sound. “In the Mood”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJE-onnw2gM>

Woody Herman – After 1945, the big band era gave way to Bebop, but the Woody Herman band exemplified the best of both genres: “Four Brothers”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQ-6P4zLbvY>

He incorporated the “hip, new” up-tempo and intricate solo work of the Bebop scene in a big band setting.

*Count Basie – My personal favorite of the big bands, Basie re-defined the role of the rhythm section in a big band – piano, guitar, bass, and drum set. Whereas the Ellington Band was a large group of soloists that played together, the Basie Band focused on playing tightly together and made room for great solos. Like Ellington, the Basie band spanned many decades and influenced the music significantly. 1941 – “Swingin’ the Blues”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYLbrZako7E>

Here’s a full video of the band from later in his career: Count Basie Live in Europe, Paris, 1981.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2Dj0cll8UM>

This clip shows off the highly refined rhythm section style at the beginning!

THE SINGERS:

Thanks to the big bands, many singers got their careers going by being featured with the bands. Ella Fitzgerald – was among the best, and her career spanned the longest of the great female singers. Here she is early on: “A Tisket, A Tasket”;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bgFkeDLpSI>

Here she is singing with Louis Armstrong – a huge influence on her style: “They Can’t Take That Away From Me”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rqwiLTkskg&list=PLOJVQth184YGs5oRaRAFJwXqAuVwBN4XY>

Frank Sinatra – One of the best male jazz singers. Here he is with the Basie Band in Las Vegas in 1966 – the height of the Rat Pack: “Come Fly with Me”.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BK-FL-JxLio&list=PLNhd15AQwL21LKz5OGTBnq707dRYn_7oz

If you like vocalists, also be sure to check out Sarah Vaughan, Billy Holiday, Mel Torme, and – of course – Tony Bennett.

SMALL GROUPS:

*Charlie Parker/Dizzy Gillespie – The patron saints of the style. Here is a 1952 video of “Hot House” with both of them playing: “Hot House”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJYO6_t4d08

*Miles Davis – No jazz musician re-invented himself more than Miles. First a product of the Bebop movement: “The Last Bebop Session”,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7-P5WzoeEs>

he redefined small group jazz in the “Cool” style: Birth of the Cool,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WjU4eXYWg4&list=PLED9CF5CAEE7AD60A>

and continued to infuse current musical trends until his last album: Miles Davis Do Bop.

Thelonius Monk – 1963: Monk’s Dream.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iQFf2_z0qE

Quirky, angular, and inspired piano playing and writing.

Stan Getz – Best known for bringing the Bossa Nova style into the jazz realm, making Joao Gilberto, Antonio Carlos Jobim, and others a household name in the 60’s: Getz/Gilberto.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckmcdcQ2mEg>

JJ Johnson & Kai Winding – Gotta throw in some trombone heros: “This Could be the Start of Something Big”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dayk0txtYlg>

Dave Brubeck – His quartet of the 60's introduced odd-meter to the jazz world, proving that 5 and 7 beat measures could swing, too. Here's "Take Five".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHdU5sHigYQ>

Charles Mingus – Way ahead of his time compositionally, Mingus and his groups continued to stretch what was possible in jazz expression. Here is perhaps his most popular album, Ah Um.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NxXHi-qpoE>

*John Coltrane – His journey from Bebop to the final recordings merit your full attention – in chronological order. It is a lesson in the development of the entire small group jazz vocabulary from its inception to its zenith. For starters, try these three – early, middle, and late – as examples of what I mean: 1. "Be-Bop" also includes vibist Milt Jackson: "Be-Bop";

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnwbl78kGJs>

2. Video of quartet in mid-60's: John Coltrane Quartet in Jazz Casual;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry3_wiiH4Pc

3. Coltrane's final album: Expression.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JDHvAm-od0>

THE "MODERN" ERA:

Although various incarnations of the musical styles above continue to be created, the absorption of new music styles and advent of electronics ushered in new kinds of jazz. Here are a few examples that I believe will stand the test of time:

Chick Corea/Gary Burton (1972) – From Crystal Silence: "Senor Mouse".

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4ERYIVdq_M

Weather Report (1977) – The ever-popular album Heavy Weather.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Fm10whccto&list=PL9A71561B09931B35

Yellowjackets (1981) – Listen to "Matinee Idol" from Yellowjacket.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5ju89nFGKA&list=PLDJuSedpNCEMsT-uNkl3NQoDnc_mFptkV

Medeski, Martin, and Wood (1996) – Here is a live video from Austin, Texas. Quite a contrast from the very first jazz recording in 1917!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YThprbDsbWM>

YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN FROM HERE:

Enjoy exploring this always-morphing improvisational American original music called jazz! Other contemporary musicians to check out: John Scofield – Guitar, Brad Meldau – Piano, Kurt Rosenwinkel – Guitar, Chris Potter – Sax, Esperanza Spaulding – Bass, Matt Wilson – Drums,

Marsalis' family – Ellis, Wynton, Bradford, Jason, and Delfayo, Dee Dee Bridgewater and Kurt Elling – singers.

Dr. David Fodor is the Coordinator of the Jazz Education Network Young Composer Showcase, and a forty-year veteran music educator and performer. He retired from public education in 2013 to pursue new musical opportunities performing in several big bands, conducting the Wilmette Community Band, and presenting music clinics and workshops throughout the Midwest.