

Year 8 Be Dramatic: MUSIC

Performers BLUES: Lead Belly, Lemon Jefferson, Robert Johnson

Performers RAGTIME: Scott Joplin, Thomas Alva Edison, William Eckstein

BLUES

Created at the end of the 19th century, blues music is heavily influenced by African American history.

The original blues music evolved and grew into jazz from the 1920s.

African enslaved people brought their musical traditions with them when they were transported to work in the North American colonies.

African American music included spirituals (religious songs using vocal harmony) and work songs.

Enslaved people would sing work songs while working the plantations and religious spirituals in church.

Work songs were sung rhythmically in time with the task being done.

The early style of blues was known as country blues.

The majority of blues musicians had descendants from Africa

Blues music has had a huge influence on almost every popular musical style.

Many contemporary performers of styles as diverse as hip hop, grime and rhythm 'n' blues cite blues music and blues musicians as key informants for their work.

A blues piece consists of:

Melodies move within the blues scale - pentatonic – 5 notes.

The main performer often improvises over the blues scale

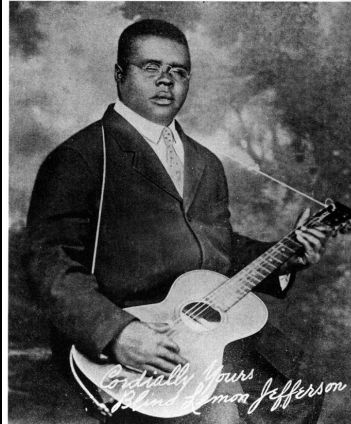
A walking bassline

The piece uses primary chords I, IV and V within the structure of 12 bars blues.

The instruments consist of: Piano, Guitar, Double Bass, Harmonica, Trumpet, Saxophone, Drum Kit.



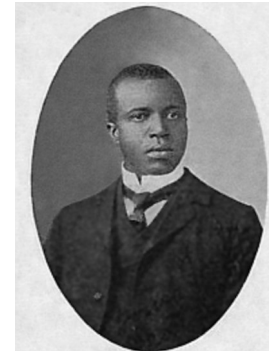
Lead Belly



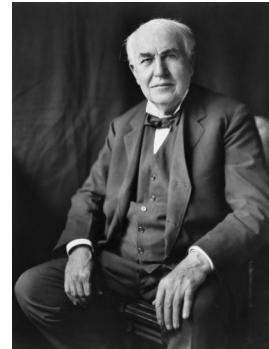
Blind Lemon Jefferson



Robert Johnson



Scott Joplin



Thomas Alva Edison



William 'Willie' Eckstein

RAG TIME

Ragtime developed as a popular musical style at the end of the 19th Century. It has its origins in the saloon bars and dance halls of African-American communities.

It was originally played on solo piano.

Ragtime music was written down, not improvised. Scott Joplin was the most famous ragtime composer.

Ragtime music was played at a time before music could be recorded. But specific music could be played back on an instrument called a pianola.

What are the musical elements found in ragtime piano music? It has a:

- Syncopated or somewhat “ragged” – sounding rhythm
- Melody that avoids metrical beats by emphasizing notes that follow or anticipate the beat
- Score that is often written in 3/4 time (though not always)
- Sense of lilt, forward motion, and swing
- Combination of Western and African cultures and musical influences

Influenced by African American banjo styles, the off-beat dance rhythms of the cakewalk, minstrel-show songs, and even certain elements of European music, ragtime piano music is definitely something you should consider learning.

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KEY VOCABULARY

Rhythm – A collection of beats

Syncopated – Rhythms that are off beat

Ostinato – A repeated pattern

Pulse – A steady beat within a piece

Accented – An emphasised beat

Upright Piano – A percussion instrument

Chord – More than one note played at the same time

Improvisation – When you make it up without preparation

Melody – The main tune within a piece

Bassline – The lowest part which accompanies the main piece

Swing – When the rhythm is long and short.

Ragged rhythm - The right hand plays a syncopated melody

Tempo – How fast or slow piece

Pitch – How high or low notes are



Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin KBE



SILENT MOVIE

The first commercial movie theatres showing projected pictures started to open in 1902 in the United States.

Sometimes either the theatre owner or somebody hired by him might stand behind the screen providing dialogue and sound effects.

Thomas Edison and his counterparts experimented with synchronized discs but they did not always synchronize properly.

The most obvious and low cost answer to creating a film sound track that would convey some of what was happening on the screen was to provide music.

Theatre owners sought out pianists of either gender to provide entertainment between reels and accompany the action during.

Many premieres and some of the higher-end theatres used orchestras of varying size with pre-composed scores written specifically for a certain film.

In an effort to provide versatility and variety, special mechanical pianos and organs were installed in theatres that threw in a variety of sound effects and timbres not available on the standard upright piano.

1910 – 1929 - American culture and society underwent a period of great change between 1910 and 1929 due to the popularity of the cinema, silent films, talkies and the impact of jazz music.

Scott Joplin (c. 1868 – April 1, 1917) was an African-American composer and pianist. Dubbed the "King of Ragtime."

Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin KBE (16 April 1889 – 25 December 1977) was an English comic actor, filmmaker, and composer who rose to fame in the era of silent film.