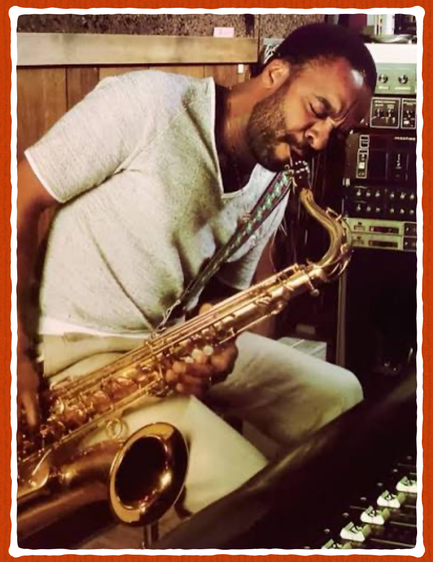
Jazz: America's Musical DNA



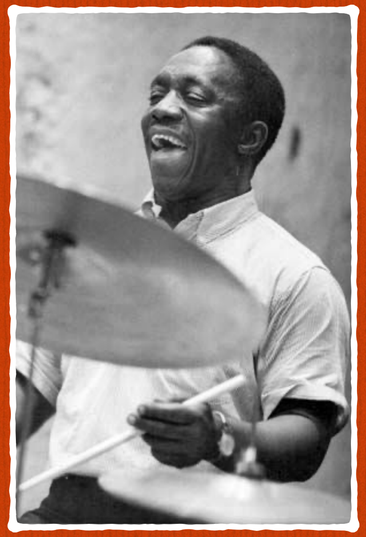














Three Parts

- Today's presentation will be broken into three equal sections encompassing the history and importance of jazz music in the US and beyond
  - The origins of jazz - Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the mixture of cultures in New Orleans
  - The political significance of jazz music - integration and protest, proliferation of American culture throughout the world
  - The influence of jazz on all popular music that followed it - funk, rock and roll, pop, country, and more

The Origins of Jazz



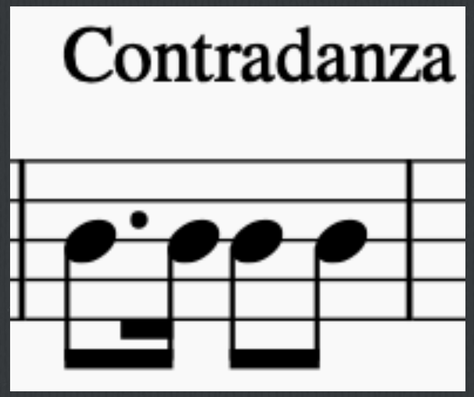


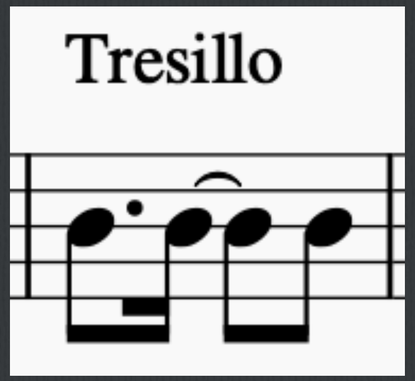


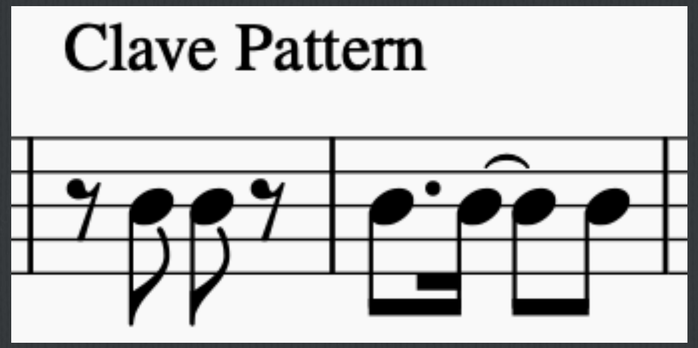
Why Did Jazz Develop In The US?

- ☐ Distinct mix of cultures that existed here in the 1800's was such that different elements of the music we now call jazz were present and intermingling in New Orleans
- ☐ Rhythms in jazz were indigineous to Sub-Saharan Africa, distilled in France and Spain, and further developed in Cuba and the Caribbean
- ☐ Jazz harmony comes from a mixture of European classical music and the music of enslaved people in the southern US
- ☐ Jazz melodic ideas come from a mixture of 1800's Black American music and European influences

Jazz Rhythm: Syncopation, Swing and New Orleans

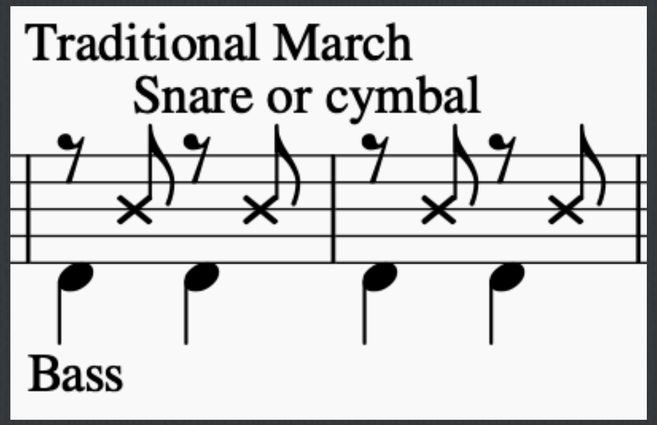


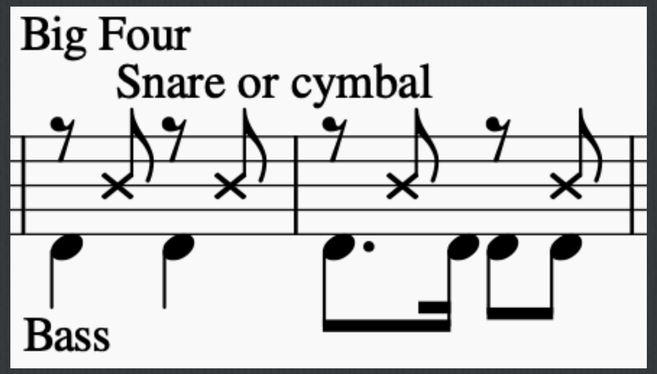




- Syncopation is when the emphasis is placed on a beat that is typically a weak beat
- Basic rhythmic patterns of NOLA music, and later, many other genres, are Tresillo and Clave
- Contradanza has cloudy origins, but was likely French or Spanish in origin
- Made its way to Cuba, became the tresillo through the influence of enslaved Africans
- Developed by Cubans into the clave pattern, which got to NOLA later

Jazz Rhythm Continued





- Tresillo/clave were combined with European influences in late 1800's NOLA due city's diversity
- European military bands played marches with on-the-beat bass drum patterns (top)
- Buddy Bolden is credited with the "big four" feel, adds contradanza to the European march
- This is a possible start to syncopation and swing in jazz

Second Line Parades

- [ ] 1800's musicians would play on daily ferries running from NOLA to Havana, where the tresillo/contradanza rhythms came from
- [ ] Enslaved people in NOLA spent Sundays in Congo Square, where they held ring shouts
- [ ] French and Spanish style military brass bands were a major presence in NOLA at this time
- [ ] These three cultures coalesce in the second line

Second Line Continued

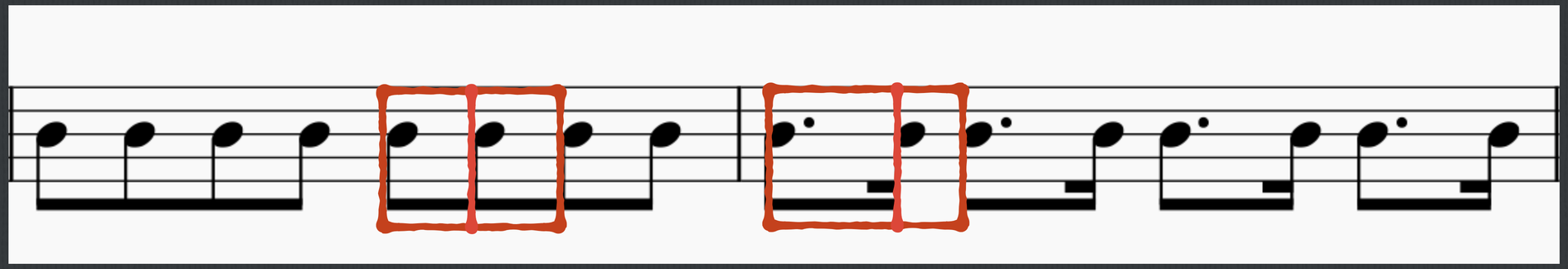
- Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs formed assist black residents with medical and burial costs, as white insurers refused to cover them
- This led to what is now known as a jazz funeral
  - Starts with a dirge, with brass and snare/bass drum
  - Once buried, the deceased has then been “cut loose” and a celebratory parade begins
- The parade is led by the brass (European) and followed by the drums playing tresillo rhythms (Cuba) and people dancing steps similar to those from Congo Square with the “big four” rhythms (Africa)
- Now, second line parades occur for all sorts of events - marriage, graduations, etc., as well as most Sundays in NOLA

I'll Fly Away

Buddy Bolden's "Big Four" pattern in a NOLA standard/hymn tune

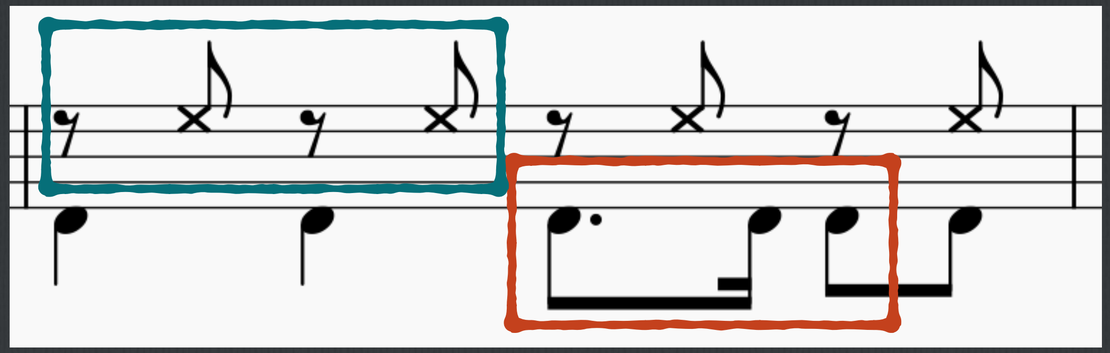


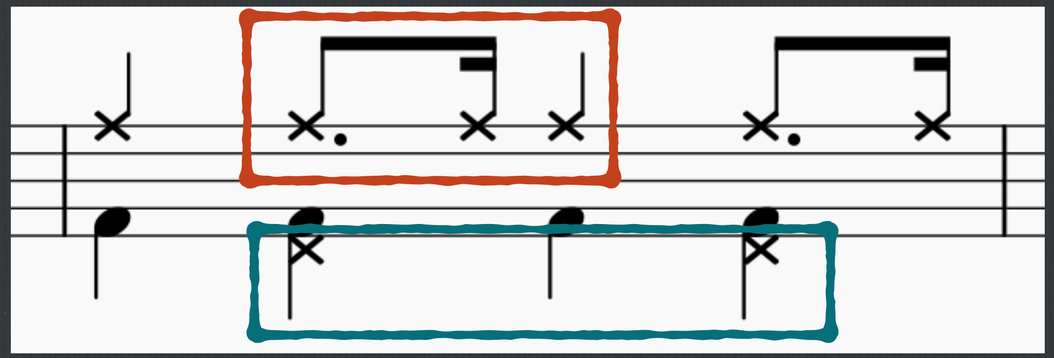
Jazz Rhythm: Swing Eighth Notes



- The main rhythmic feature of jazz is the swung eighth note
- This means that a beat is divided unevenly - the first stroke is long and the second is short

Swing Eighth Notes Continued



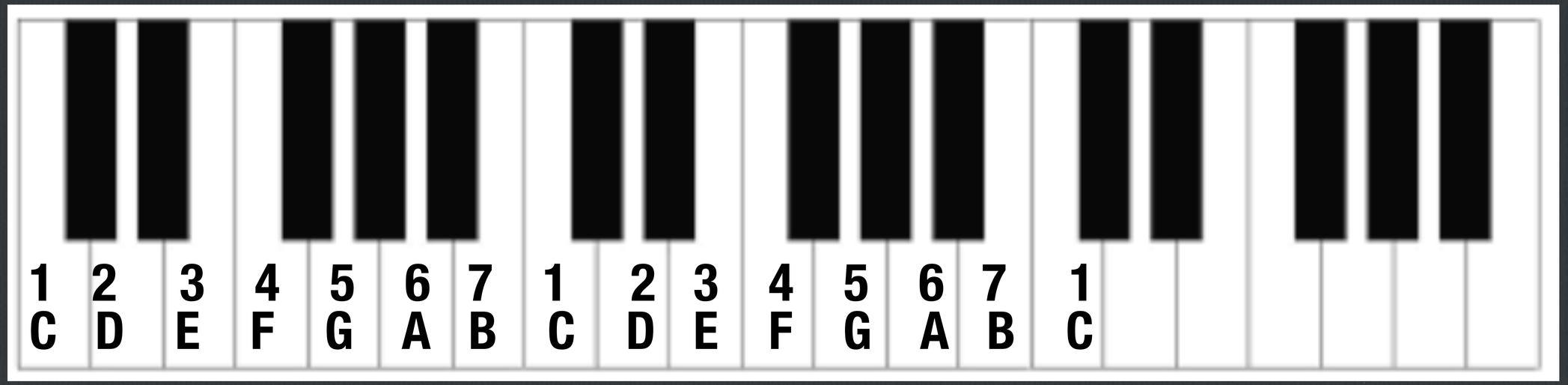


- The big four bass drum pattern is what led to swing eighth notes
- The extra sixteenth note rhythm from big four (red, top) was put into the swing groove ride cymbal (red, bottom)
- The big four marching snare drum (blue, top) was translated into the swing groove hi hat foot pedal (blue, bottom)

Sack O' Woe

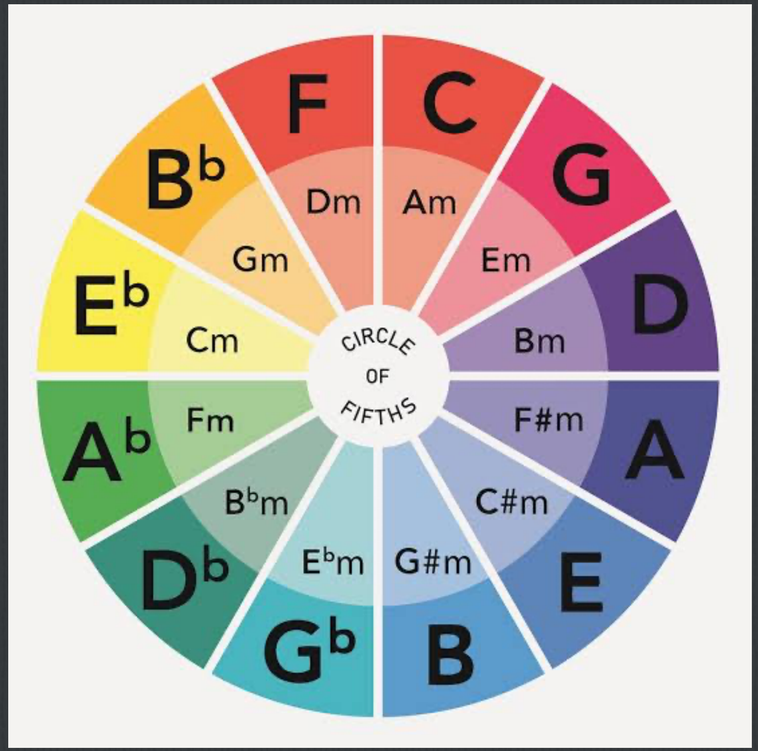
Cannonball Adderley standard with both straight eighth and swing eighth sections

Jazz Harmony: European Music, the Circle of Fifths, and Chord Progressions



- ☐ Jazz is all about chords, which come from the major scale found in European music
- ☐ The major scale has eight notes (ex. key of C has C D E F G A B and C)
- ☐ You can build a chord on each scale note, named after its numerical position in the scale
- ☐ In the example above, C is the one chord, D is two chord, E is the three, and so on

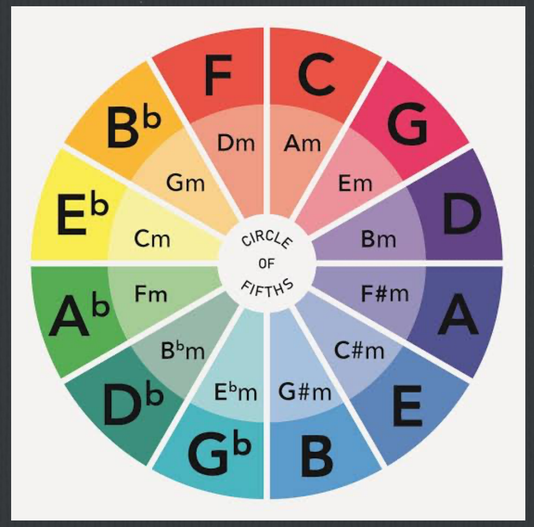
Harmony Continued

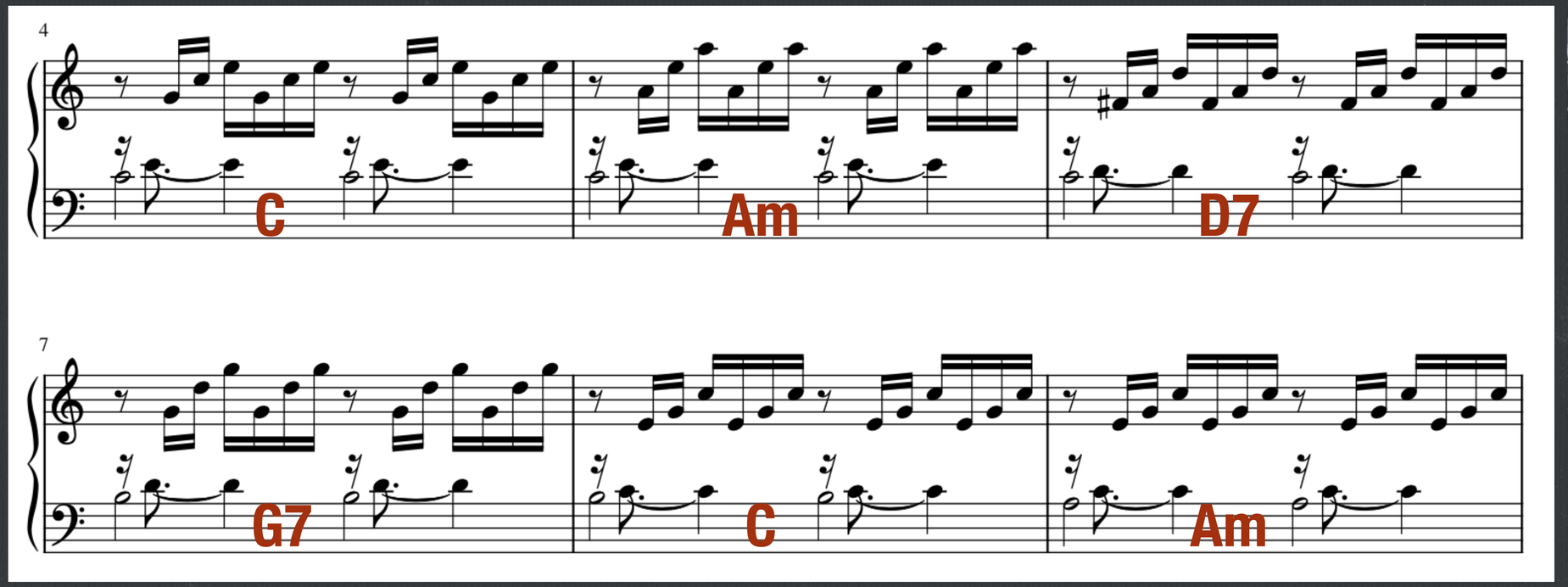


- In European music, most chord progressions follow the circle of fifths
- In the circle, we pick our home base chord and call it the I chord
- From there, we can go to any other chord in the circle and work our way counterclockwise back around to I
- Famous examples include Mozart's Piano Sonata in C and Bach's Prelude in C major

Example: Bach Prelude

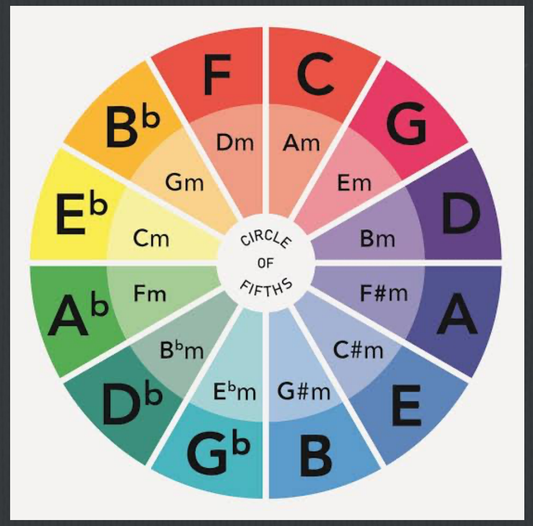
C is home base, and our home base note can take us anywhere in the circle
Here, we go to A

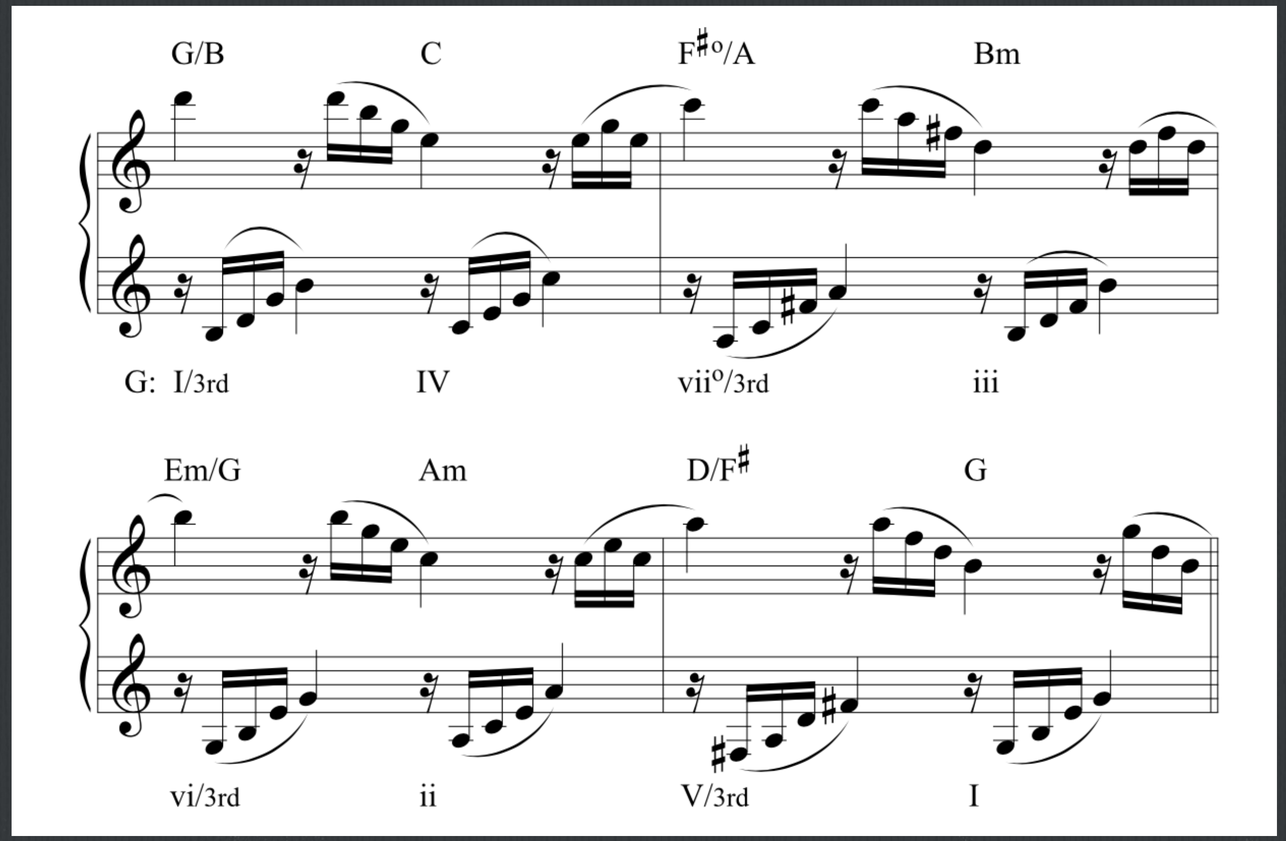




Example: Mozart Sonata

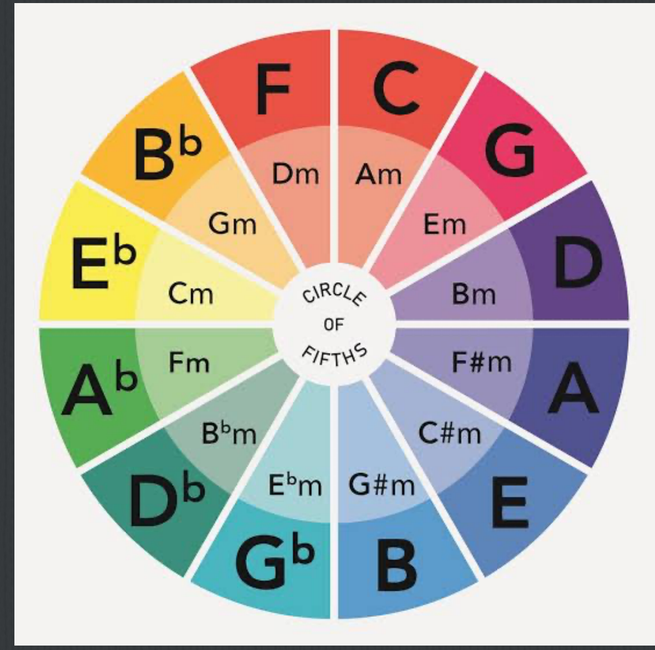
In this one, G is our home base, and Mozart uses some common chord substitutions





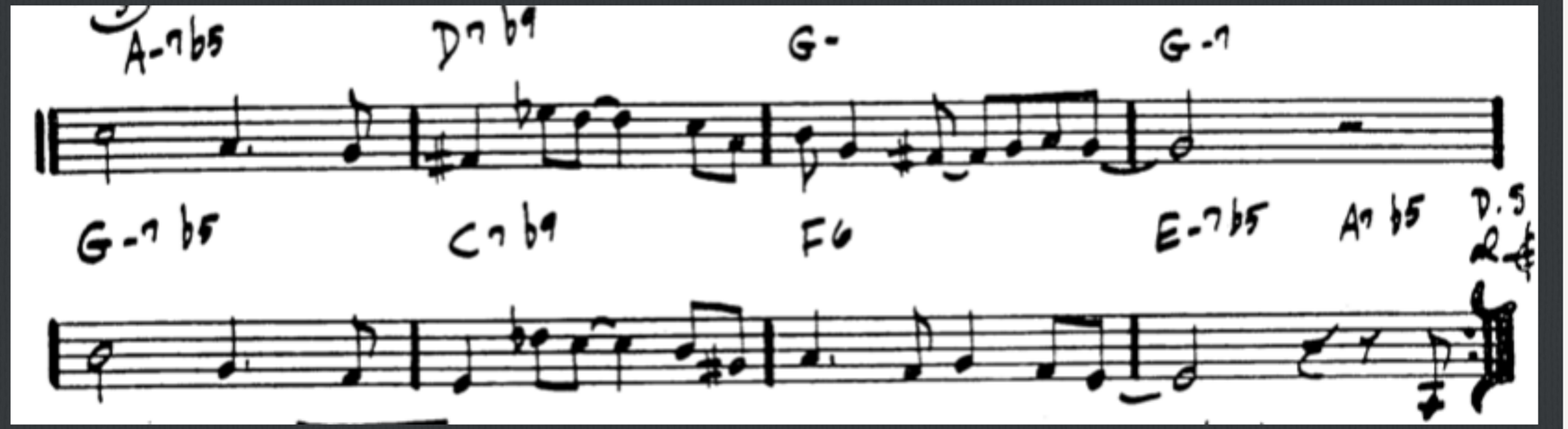
Progressions continued

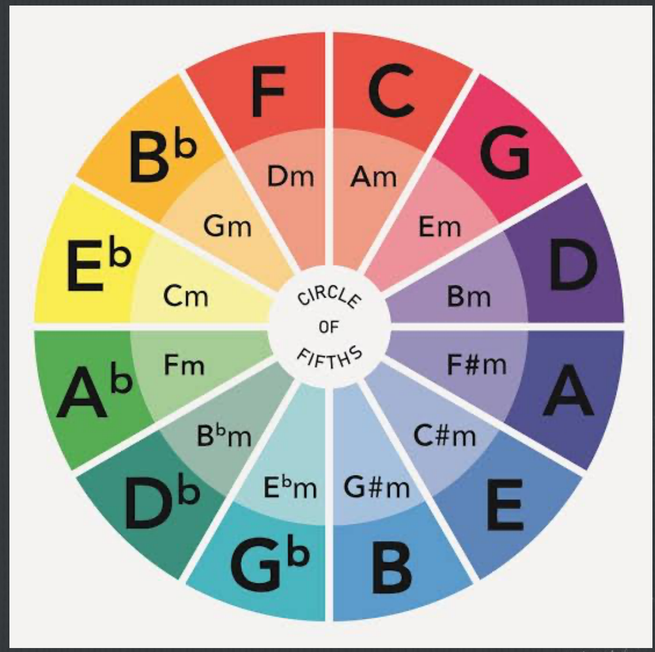
- Jazz harmony also does this, but achieves its own unique sound with lots of substitutions and additions to the chords that we'll talk about later
- The most important progression in jazz is the ii-V-I. That progression is found in the circle of fifths by going two stops away from your home chord



Eample: A Night In Tunisia

- In this part of A Night In Tunisia, our home base is F. In the last measure (E-7b5 to A7b5), we are transitioning to a part of the song where D is home.

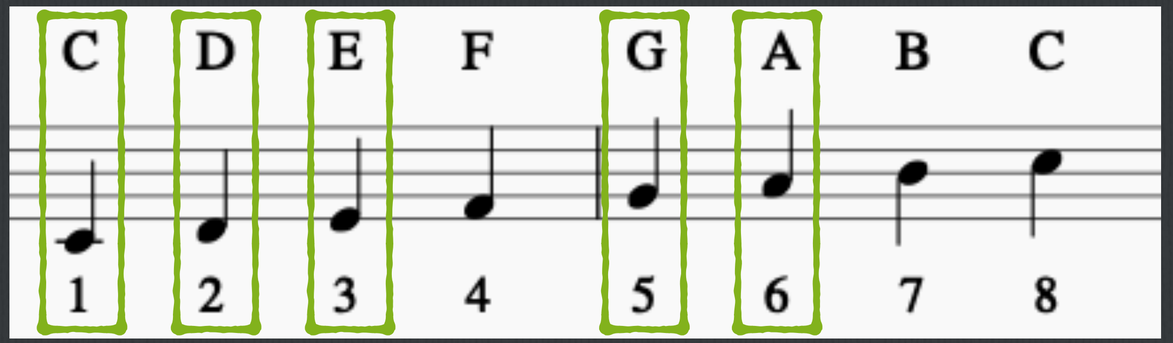




Take The A Train

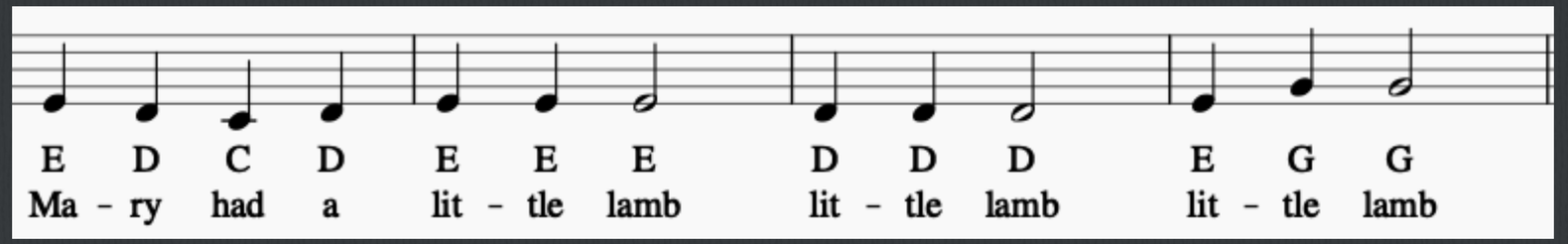
Duke Ellington/Billy Strayhorn standard with European style harmonies

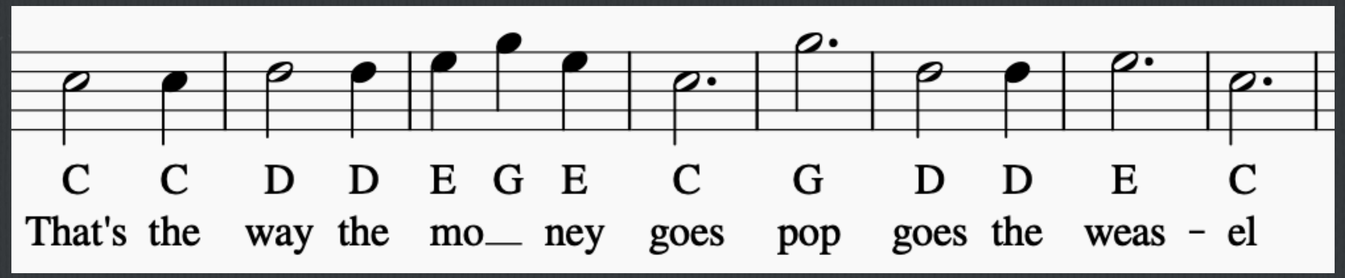
Jazz Melody: Pentatonic Scales

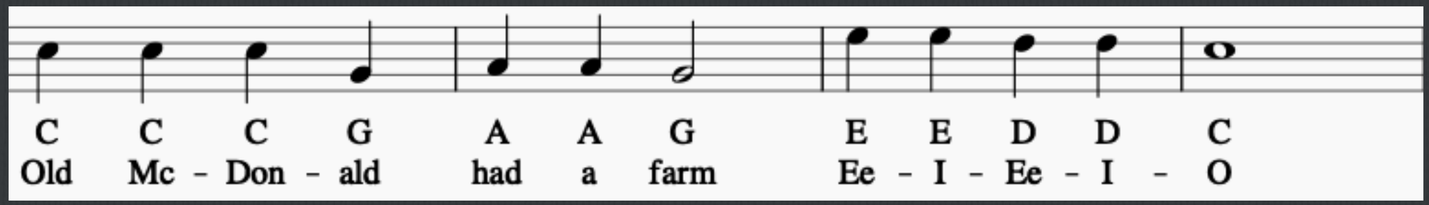


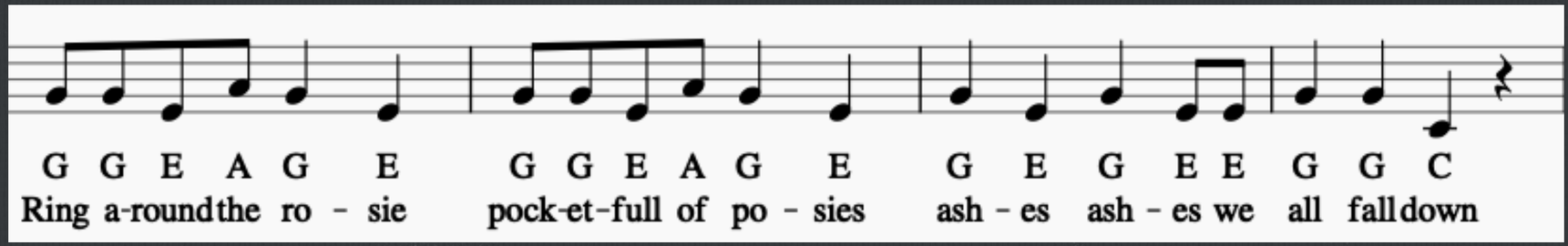
- ☐The easiest scales and melodies for people raised in the western world to sing
- ☐Most children's songs and American folk songs are based on these scales
- ☐Also common in African and Asian folk songs
- ☐Made up of the 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 notes of the major scale (C, D, E, G, and A for example purposes, in green)

Testing It Out In Common Folk Songs

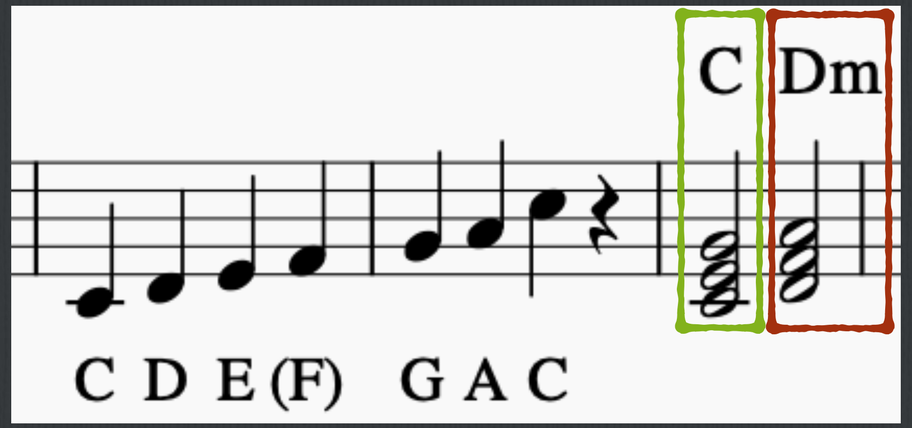






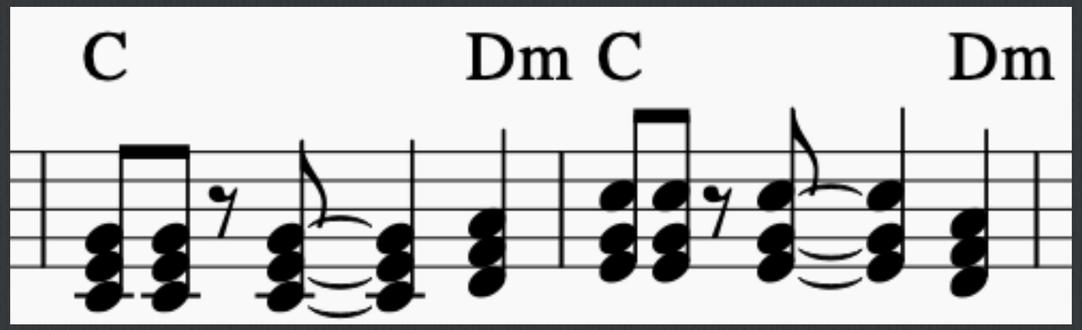


Improvised Harmonies from the Pentatonic Scale



- ☐ Enslaved people did not always have instruments to play, so they sang accompaniment parts
- ☐ Pentatonic melodies are easy to harmonize with, especially with an added note (F, here)
- ☐ Each singer can simply move their notes up or down in the same direction
- ☐ Simply alternate two chords around the pentatonic scale - the C chord (green, made up of C, E, and G) and the Dm chord (red, made up of D, F, and A)

Trying It Out

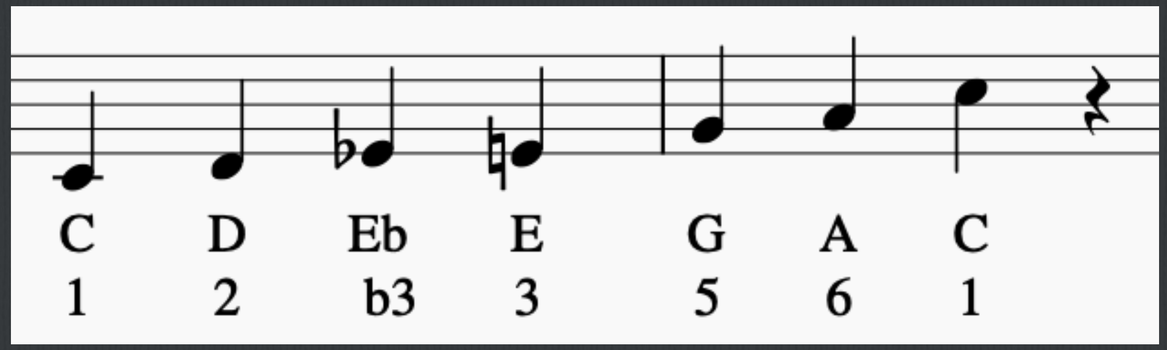


- Room will be split up into three parts - bottom, middle, and top
- Everyone can sing the pentatonic scale - this is a modified version of the melody from the folk song “Gotta Travel On,” which was originally called “Yonder Comes The High Sheriff”
- This type of harmony made it into jazz piano playing, especially with pianists who group up going to church

Gotta Travel On

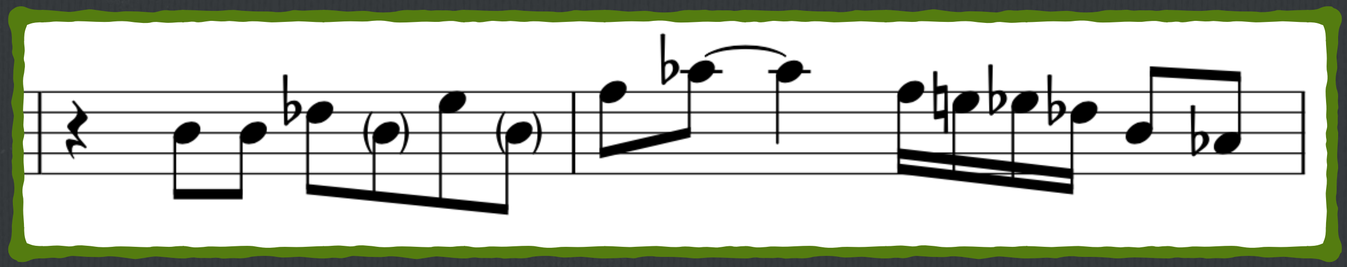
American folk song first documented in the early 1920’s - This arrangement based on the recording by jazz pianist Ray Bryant

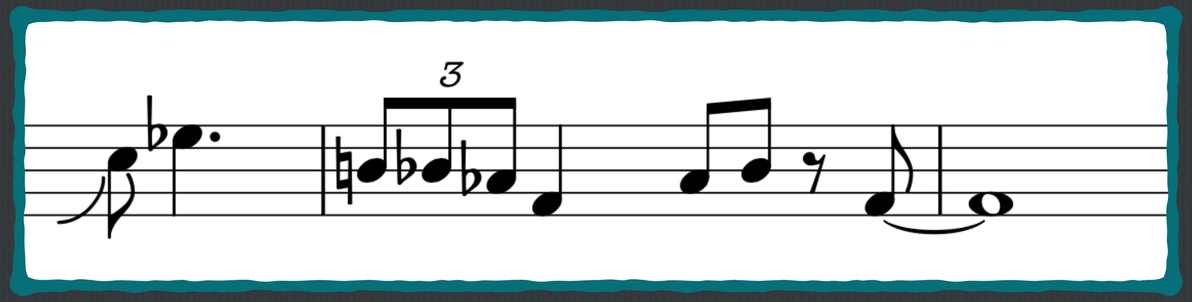
Melody: The Blues Scale

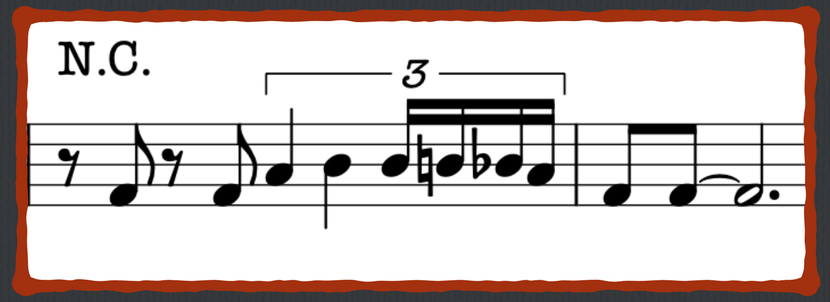


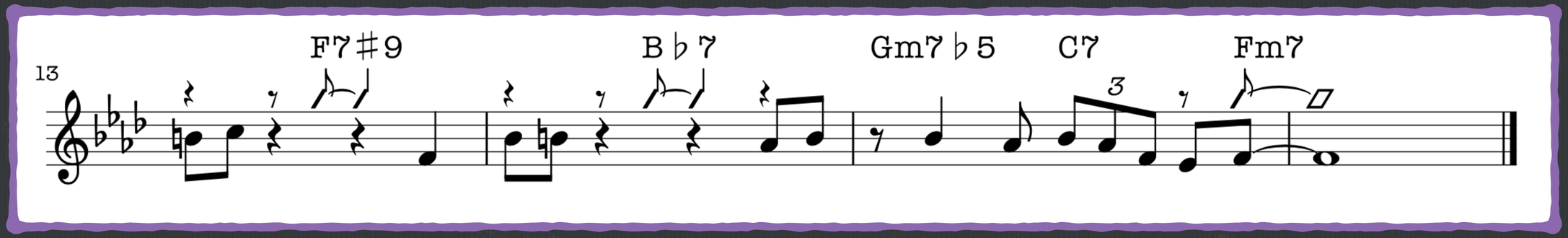
- The basis of modern popular music
  - Pervasiveness in folk traditions, work songs, and spirituals trickled down to blues, gospel, and jazz
- Vocalists changed the pentatonic scale by bending into notes
  - This gave rise to blues scale (above), foundation of blues, gospel, jazz, and later, country, rock and roll, and pop

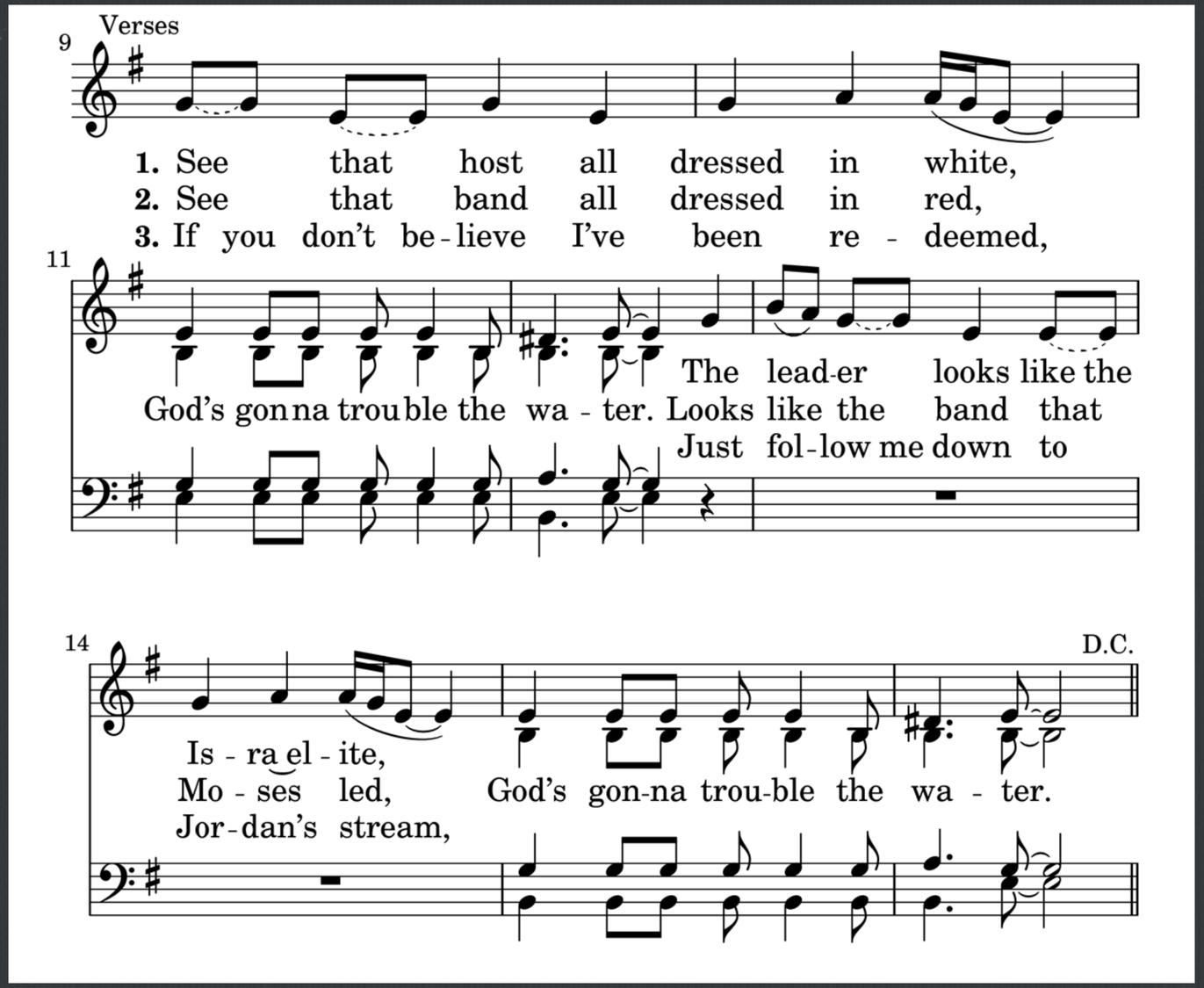
Examples of Blues Scale Melodies In Jazz







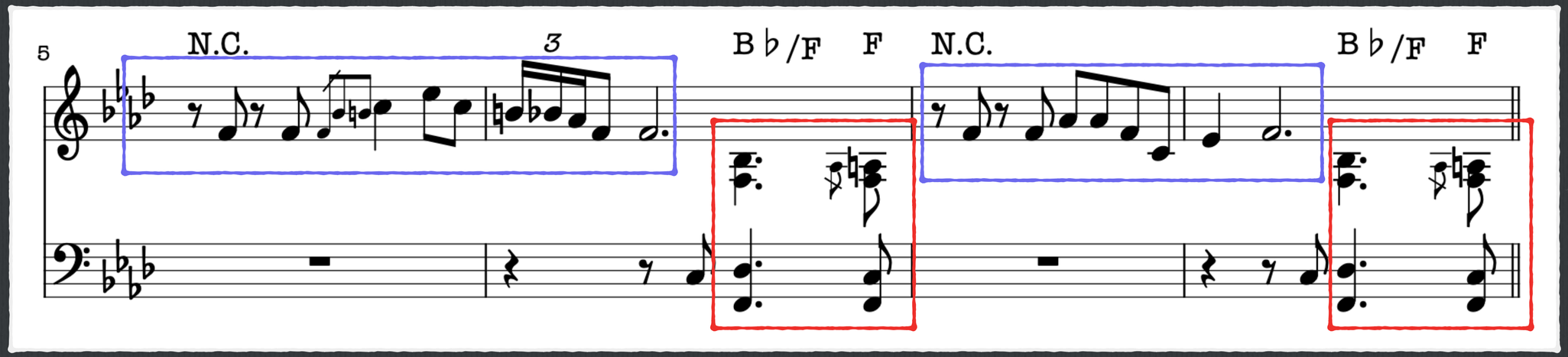




Call And Response

- ☐ In the verse of "Wade In The Water," the response, sung by the congregation, is "God's gonna trouble the water."
- ☐ The call consists of all of the other lyrics, sung by the leader ("see that host all dressed… etc.")
- ☐ The song will often go to a refrain after the call and response section

Melody: Call and Response



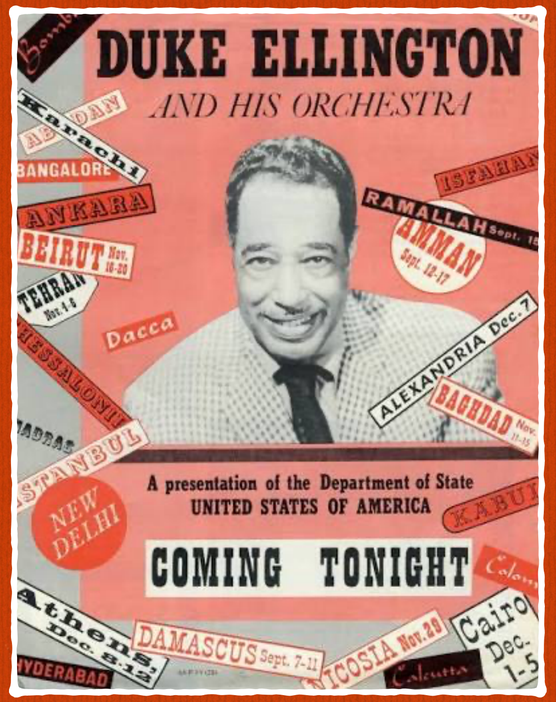
- Call and response: Songs where a soloist and group sing back and forth
  - Ex. Timmons's tune "Moanin'" features a call (blue) followed by the chordal response (red)



Moanin’

Originally recorded on the Art Blakey album of the same name
Composed by Bobby Timmons in 1958

Jazz as a Political and Cultural Force







Integration in Jazz

- [ ] Jazz was one of the first major American institutions to integrate
- [ ] Black and white musicians were known to jam in informal settings throughout the 1920's
- [ ] Louis Armstrong in particular would jam with white musicians in Chicago who were interested in the jazz like Bix Beiderbecke
- [ ] White and Black musicians also ran in a lot of the same circles in New York
- [ ] This led to one of the first major integrated recording sessions in 1929, an Armstrong song titled "Knockin' a Jug" featuring three white musicians (including trombonist Jack Teagarden) and three black musicians

Integration in Jazz continued

- Once early integrated recording sessions started, integrated live performances soon followed
- The most famous integrators of jazz were Benny Goodman and Teddy Wilson
- Producer John Hammond convinced Goodman to do some small group recordings with Wilson and drummer Gene Krupa
- Goodman enjoyed Wilson’s piano playing so much that he began to have Wilson and Krupa play sets in between big band sets on his shows, which were some of the first major integrated performances
- Also added vibraphonist Lionel Hampton to make it a quartet

Integration in Jazz

- Jazz had its first major performance in a major venue when Goodman's band debuted at Carnegie Hall
- The performance featured not only Wilson and Hampton, but members of the Basie and Ellington orchestras sitting in throughout the night
- Performances included Lester Young, Basie, Johnny Hodges, Krupa, and others
- Was widely regarded as the first time jazz rose to the level of more traditional classical music in American culture
- Integrated considerably earlier than most American institutions - major sports leagues integrated in 1945-50, the military in '48, schools in '54, etc.



Honeysuckle Rose

Jazz standard performed by Goodman and members of the Ellington and Count Basie orchestras at the Carnegie Hall concert

Jazz, World Wars, and Global Spread

- ☐ Jazz began to spread in Europe during and after WWI
- ☐ Early swing/dixieland bands like those belonging to James Reece Europe and Paul Whiteman visited Europe in the late 1910's and introduced the continent to the genre
- ☐ Uniquely European approaches to the genre began to develop during this time and through the 30's
- ☐ Most notable is "Gypsy jazz," a French offshoot led by Django Reinhardt

USO Bands and Post WWII

- During WWII, as Europe broke into different spheres of political influence, jazz was often censured in German and Russian controlled areas
- Allied radio stations helped keep the genre alive on the continent by broadcasting USO performances by artists like Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and others
- After the war, jazz remained banned as American propaganda in the Soviet sphere, but exploded in Western Europe as Black American musicians moved en masse to Europe due to segregation

At Last

Performed by the Glenn Miller Orchestra on USO Tours during WWII

Jazz Ambassadors and Cultural Diplomacy

- After WWII the US government wanted to become the cultural leader of the free world and to counteract USSR propaganda and the spread of communism
- Found that their reputation was being tarnished around the world by segregation and racism and rampant interventionism in non-aligned countries
- To counteract this, they started the Cultural Presentations Program in 1956, which enlisted jazz musicians to tour abroad in allied, enemy, and non-aligned countries to promote American culture, values, and ideals
- Bands and musicians were chosen based on their musical abilities, character, and their racial makeup

Jazz Ambassadors and Cultural Diplomacy

- Musicians like Benny Goodman, Dave Brubeck, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Mahalia Jackson, and others went all around the world to promote American culture
- Jazz became huge in Europe and Japan in particular
- Many of the musicians on these tours began to incorporate musical elements from the cultures of the places they'd visited
  - This was used to emphasize American openness to other cultures different from our own
- Many inroads were made with the leaders of non-aligned countries, particularly in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia

Controversies with Jazz Ambassadors Program

- Despite the success of the program in improving America's reputation, it also created animosity and controversy
  - Gillespie was criticized for hanging out and performing/jamming with local musicians rather than attending official events while in Brazil, didn't do another tour for ten years
  - Armstrong refused to participate in the aftermath of the school integration crisis in Arkansas in 1957
  - Goodman did a tour in Thailand, was asked constantly about segregation and racism in the US, then controversially claimed racism had been defeated
  - The CIA sent Louis Armstrong into Congo in 1961 to distract from a coup that they had instigated with the help of Belgium and the UK

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A Night In Tunisia

Dizzy Gillespie standard with Afro-Cuban influences played throughout the world

Jazz as Civil Rights Music

- Many famous jazz protest songs and musicians that served as prominent proponents of civil rights
- Some famous examples include:
  - Billie Holiday's Strange Fruit as a response to lynchings in the south
  - Charles Mingus Fables of Faubus against AK's response to school integration
  - John Coltrane's Alabama in response to the KKK bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church
  - Nina Simone - Mississippi Goddam, I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free, Four Women, others
  - Max Roach - We Insist! Freedom Now Suite
  - Ellington - Black Brown and Beige, New World A-Comin

Strange Fruit

- Billie Holiday's most socially important song
- Written by Abel Meeropol to protest the lynching of black Americans in the south with a metaphor comparing lynching victims to the fruit of trees
- Holiday always closed with it, and would require silence from the audience and the lights off except for on her face
- Sometimes called the beginning of the Civil Rights movement
- Had trouble convincing Columbia (her label) to record it, had to get an exemption to record it on Commodore
- Brought a ton of backlash to her, most notably from Federal Bureau of Narcotics director and noted racist Harry Anslinger, who was determined to stop her from singing the song
- When she checked herself into a hospital for heroin issues in 1959, Anslinger placed her under arrest, and refused to allow doctors in to care for her

Jazz as Civil Rights Music

- Other prominent examples of actions taken by major artists to fight segregation and racism:
  - Ray Charles refusing to play to segregated audiences in Georgia, eventually leading to “Georgia On My Mind” becoming the official state song
  - Nat King Cole canceling performances in Las Vegas if his band wasn’t served in the restaurants, suing hotels to let him and his band stay
  - Ellington intentionally getting turned away from restaurants in the south to draw international headlines
  - Louis Armstrong refused to go abroad for the state department to promote American culture behind the Iron Curtain until they ended segregation
  - Jackie Robinson jazz picnics - dozens of jazz artists performing for free to raise money for jailed protestors in the south and the NAACP

I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free

Billy Taylor composition covered by Nina Simone

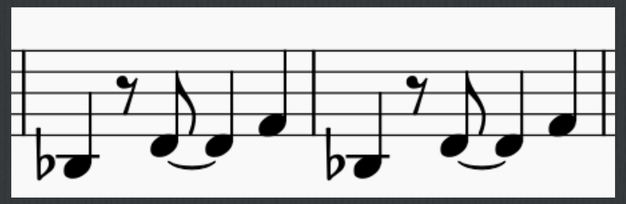
Jazz as the Influence for Other Popular Music Genres







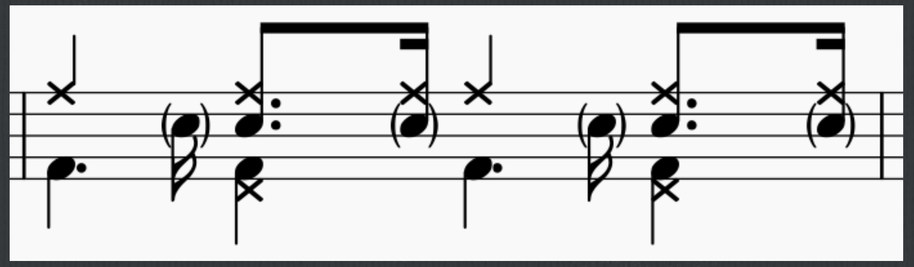
Jazz in Jump Blues, Early R&B and Rock and Roll

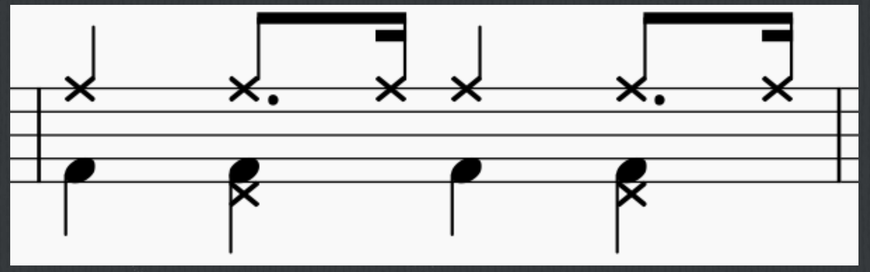


- They used the tresillo rhythm in the bass (above), which became the foundational rhythm of early rock and roll
- Professor Longhair had the influence, Fats Domino made the money with his inspiration
- Elvis took these concepts for “Hound Dog” and got the most credit and attention
- Dave Bartholomew - jazz trumpeter, influenced by Armstrong
  - Important figure in the transition from jump blues and swing to R&B and rock and roll
  - Best known for his work with Fats Domino, also extremely influenced by Professor Longhair

Jazz in Jump Blues, Early R&B, and Rock and Roll

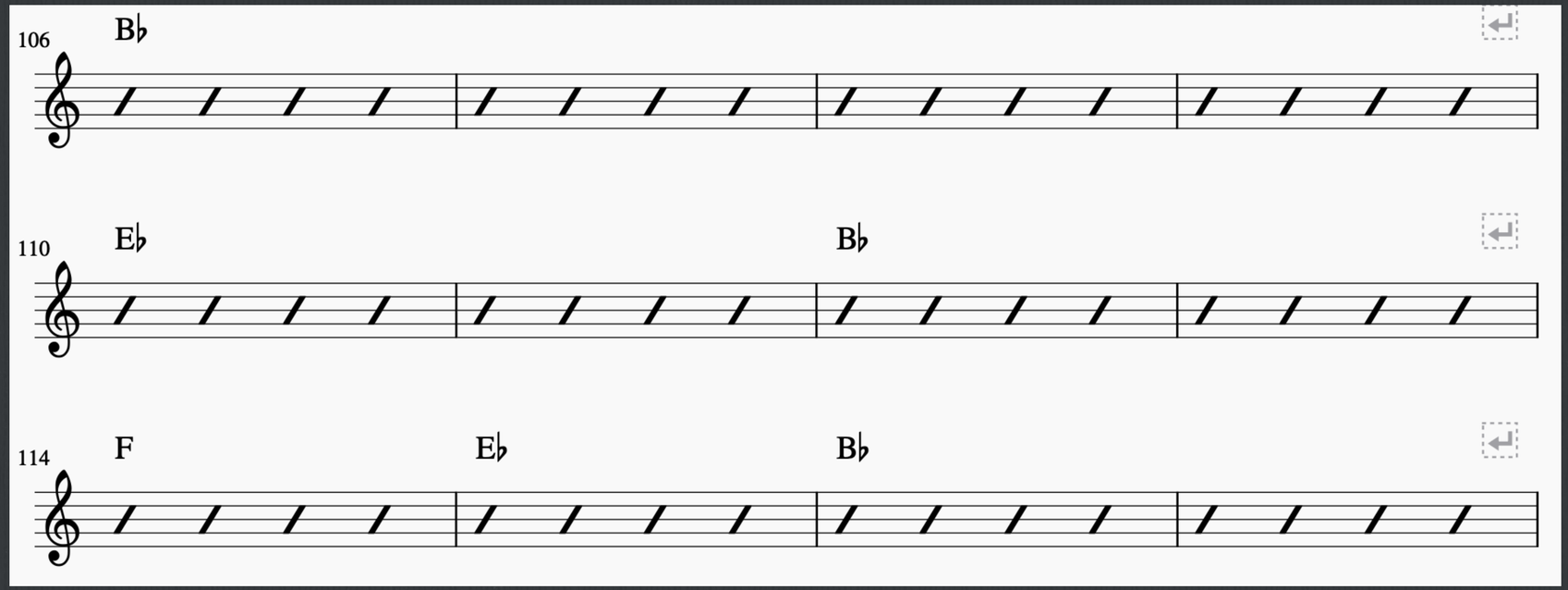
- A lot of the Fats Domino and Professor Longhair stylings were based on the 12 bar blues, a form standardized in the jazz idiom by artists like Count Basie
- Artists like Louis Jordan, Louis Prima, and Nat King Cole used the 12 bar blues form for their earliest standards and modeled their onstage personas after artists like Cab Calloway, Armstrong, and others
- In addition to musical forms and mannerisms, big improvised saxophone solos and swing grooves became essential to the early rock and roll sound





Jazz in Jump Blues, Early R&B, and Rock and Roll

- Twelve bar blues form - played as a swing (Now's The Time), NOLA tresillo groove (Mardi Gras In NOLA) jump blues shuffle (Jump Jive and Wail), and rock and roll (Hound Dog)



Pennies From Heaven

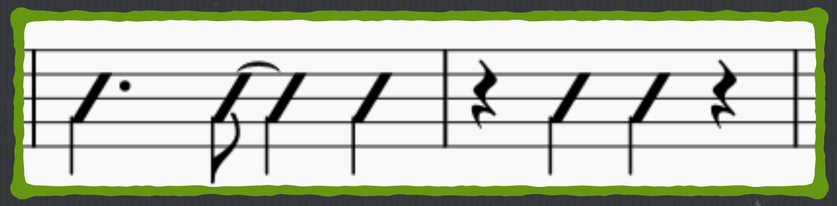
Jazz standard done in a rock and roll style by Louis Prima in 1957

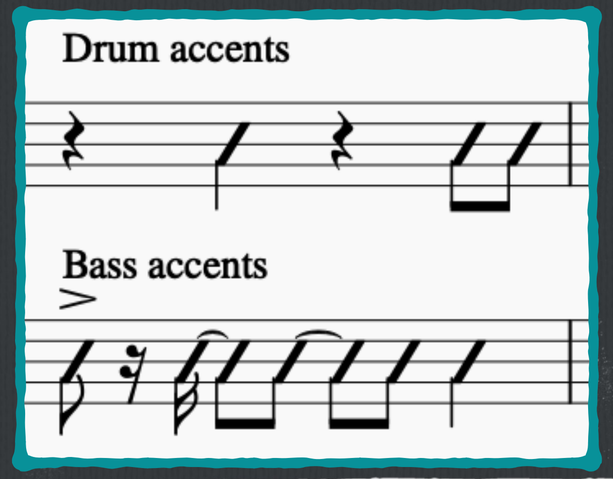
Jazz and the Origins of Funk

- ☐ Funk music largely came from different applications of New Orleans rhythms, especially the tresillo and second line rhythms
- ☐ Key NOLA artists that aided the development of funk music were Allen Toussaint (a producer and pianist musically descended from Professor Longhair) and the Meters
- ☐ Toussaint and the Meters worked together in the mid-60's, playing second line rhythms and jazz influenced chords to create funk
- ☐ James Brown, the first popularizer of funk music, was largely successful because his rhythm section was using these NOLA based concepts

Jazz/NOLA Rhythms in Funk

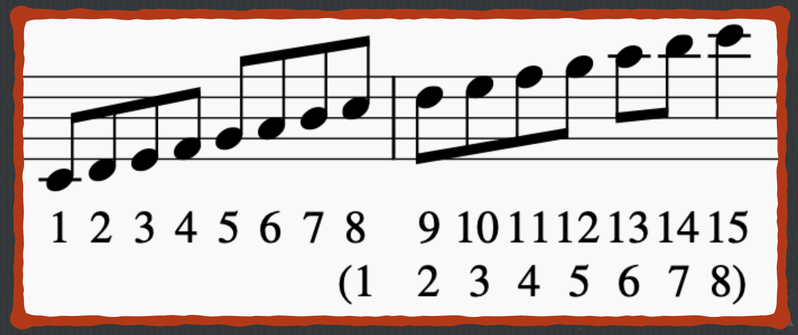
- The tresillo rhythms in NOLA R&B was placed in two bars of 4/4, and in the clave pattern (green)
  - The each note of the pattern served as an accent point, and the eighth notes were swung while the sixteenth notes remained straight
- The Meters would condense this pattern to a single measure and put strong emphasis on beat one, slow down the tempo
- Took the clave pattern out of the drums, accented 2+4

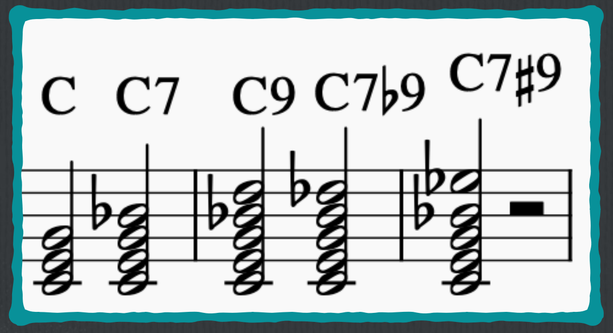


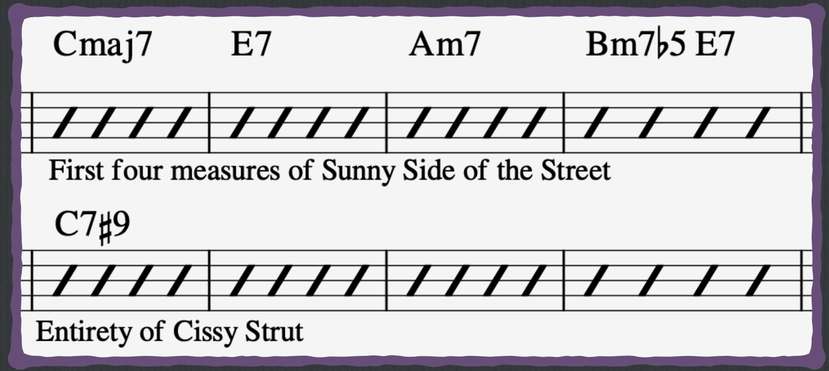


Funk Harmonies and Chords

- ☐ The notes used in funk chords are borrowed from jazz chords that originated with many NOLA musicians
- ☐ Jazz musicians took regular chords based on major scales (red) and stacked other notes on top to make more interesting chords (blue)
- ☐ Funk musicians took those more interesting chords and sat on them for minutes at a time (rather than rapid fire chord changes like in jazz)





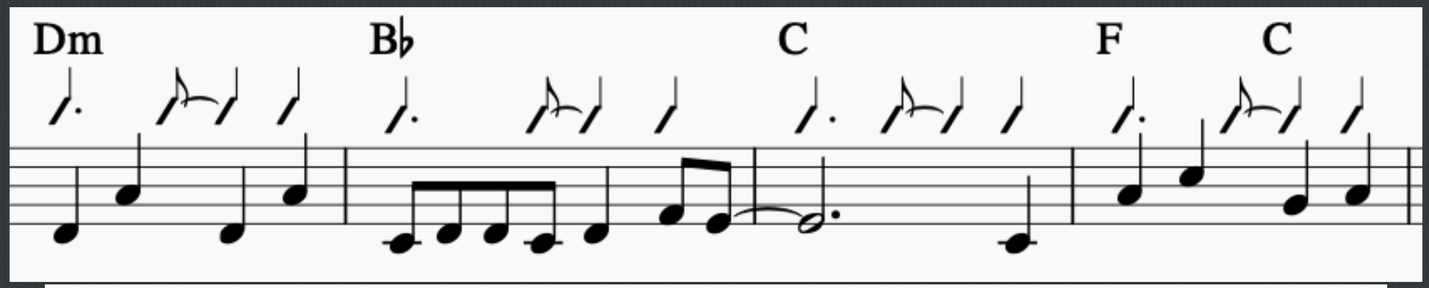


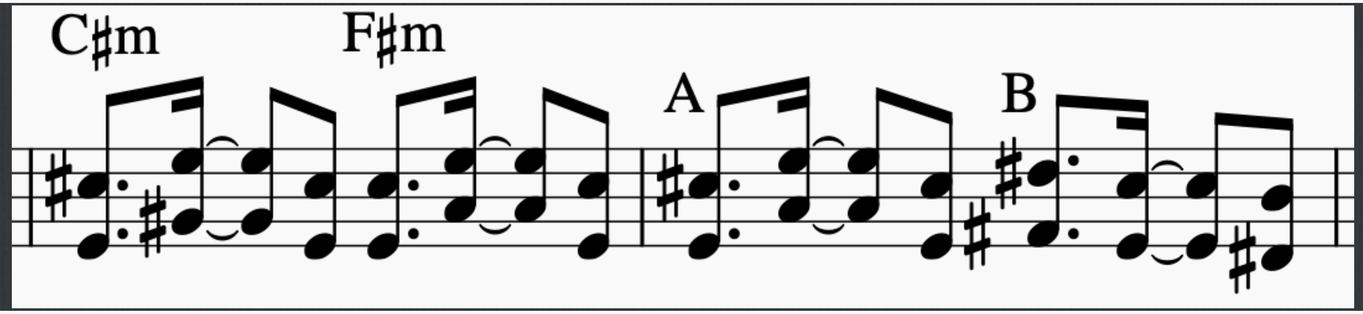
Cissy Strut

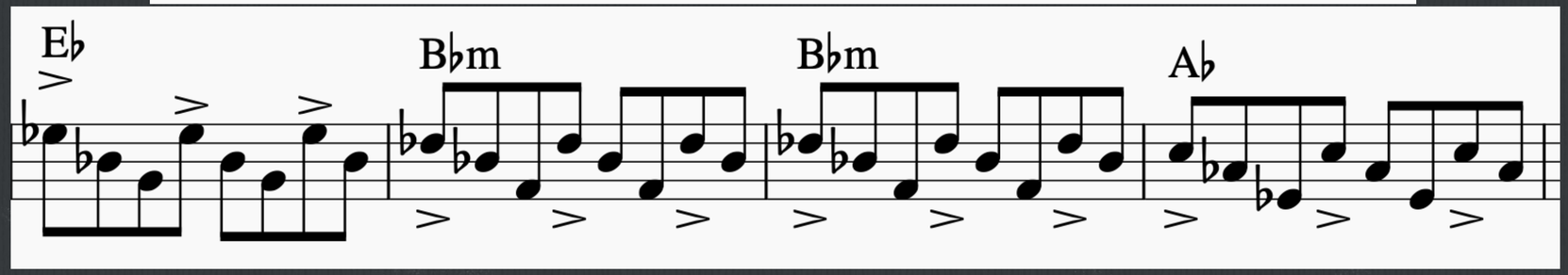
The Meters, 1969 - Reached number 4 on the R&B chart, produced by Allen Toussaint

Jazz in Modern Pop: Rhythm

- Tresillo rhythms are everywhere. Most common rhythm in modern pop music

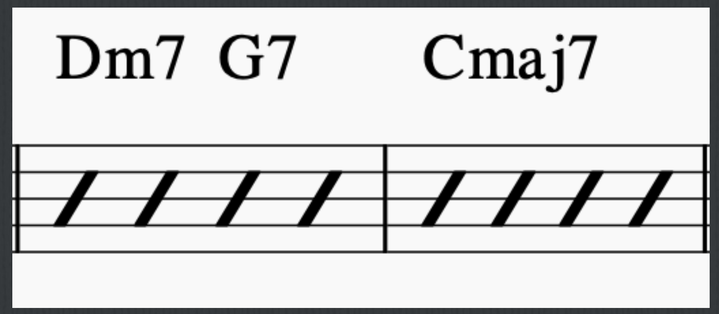






Jazz in Modern Pop: Chords

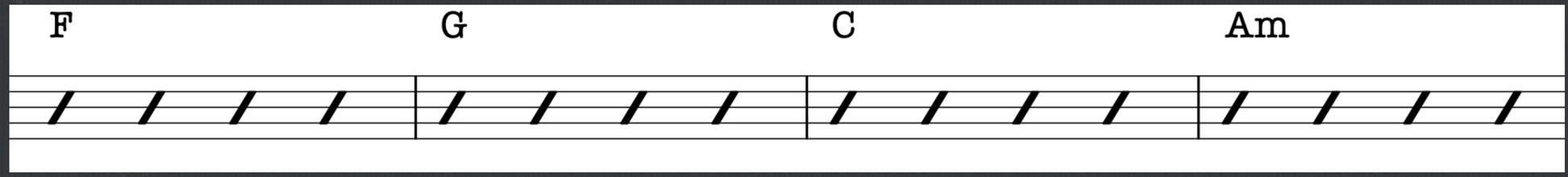
- Modern popular songs use chord voicings and progressions from jazz to make richer sounds



Maroon 5
"Sunday Morning"

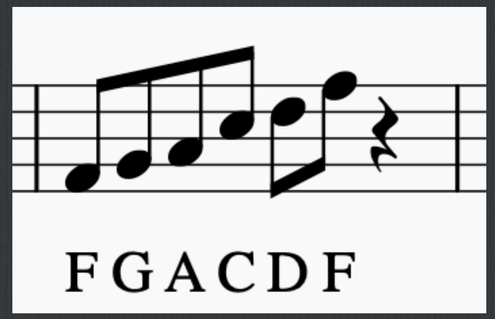
I - iii - vi - ii - V - I
IV vii iii

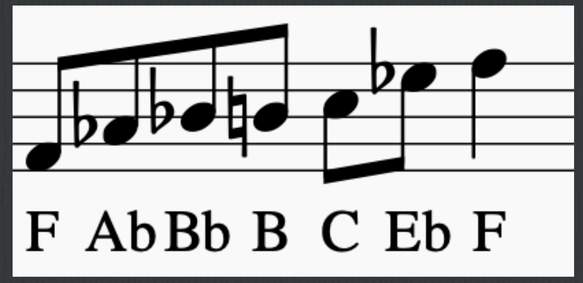
Taylor Swift
"The Man"



Jazz in Modern Pop: Melody

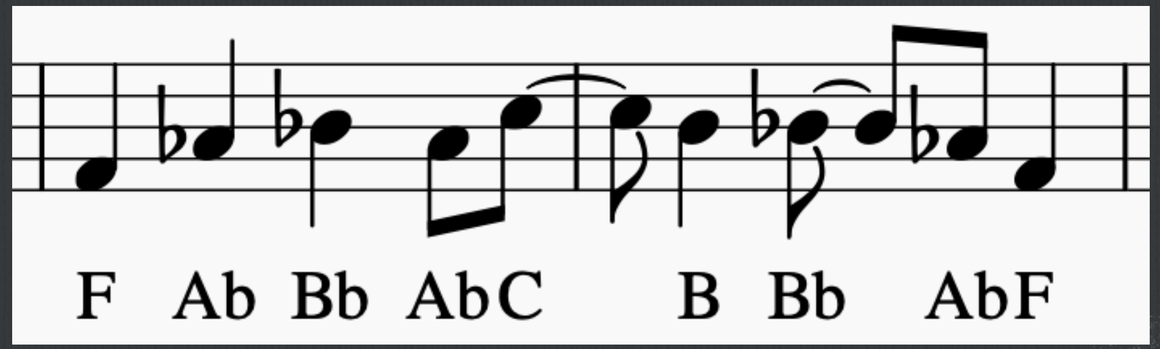
- Many melodies in popular music are based on the blues scale and the pentatonic scale that were standardized in jazz music







Bruno Mars “I Just Might”



Pharrell “Happy”

Just The Two Of Us

Bill Withers and Grover Washington hit with jazz harmony scattered throughout