

## **Hard Bop - 1955-1965 to present day**

1. In opposition to cool, hard bop was an East Coast revival of bop but with a harder edge.
2. Miles Davis instigated this turn when he reacted to what he viewed as overintellectualized jazz and started, in 1954, to record a tougher, more urban, straight-ahead, more rhythmic and emotional music ("Delores"). Even his work with Gil Evans reflected this change to the new mainstream jazz, which was adverse to experimentation.
3. This music was played mostly by urban musicians originally from Detroit and Philadelphia and reflected an East Coast, extroverted response to urban life. It contrasted with the West Coast's cooler, more introverted response.
4. In contrast to cool jazz, the timbre of hard bop was heavy, dark, and impassioned and focused on the lower tenor sax and drummers who played in a more assertive style. Some hard-bop bands reduced the harmonic complexity of bop to chords in a way reminiscent of R & B, resulting in a subset of hard bop called soul jazz. Some of the bands that played this music featured the electric organ, a mainstay of church music. In effect, they were trying to reconnect with popular music.
5. Both cool and hard bop represented natural developments from bop.

Style characteristics and performance practices:

1. Complex harmony, melody, and rhythm
2. Forms became increasingly complex, asymmetrical, and unpredictable
3. Expanded use of different time signatures
4. Expanded scale vocabulary
5. Required great technical skill and facility
6. A small group music
7. Tune sources included the following:
  - a. blues
  - b. I Got Rhythm tunes
  - c. original tunes (contrafacts and others)
  - d. modal tunes
  - e. jazz tunes

Important players in this style include Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Clifford Brown, Sonny Rollins, and numerous others.

## **Clifford Brown (1930-1956)**

Clifford Brown's career only lasted four years. He died in a car accident at the age of twenty-five. He was born in Delaware and went to Maryland State College, then played in Philadelphia and toured with an R & B band. He had great tone, technique, time, and creativity.

Unlike Parker and other young jazz musicians, Brown did not drink, smoke, or take drugs.

Brown-Roach Quintet: in 1954, drummer Max Roach brought Brown to Los Angeles for a concert. After this they formed their own band, which was considered by many as the last great bebop band. It influenced emerging hard-bop bands with its driving performances of unusual pieces and originals (e.g., Brown's "Joy Spring"). Brown also recorded with Zoot Sims and singer Dinah Washington, which led to requests from other singers such as Sarah Vaughan and Helen Merrill as well as an album with strings. In 1955 tenor player Harold Land left the group, to be replaced by Sonny Rollins.

A number of hard-bop trumpeter modeled themselves on Brown as an alternative to Miles.

LISTEN TO CLIFFORD BROWN "SWINGIN'"  
LISTEN TO MILES DAVIS "DELORES"

## **Sonny Rollins (b. 1930)**

Like Brown, Sonny Rollins was a model for many young tenor players in the 1950s. Unlike Brown, he had a long, successful career, changing his style a number of times along the way. Unpredictability and playfulness characterize his playing.

Born and raised in Harlem, he studied piano and alto and then tenor at sixteen. At eighteen, Monk asked him to take part in rehearsals, where he learned much, including the idea that improvisation should play off the melody as well as the harmonies.

At nineteen he was a sideman with Bud Powell and J.J. Johnson, playing with the timbre of Hawkins and the fleetness of Bird. As a member of Miles's band, he composed pieces that jazzers loved to play ("Airegin," "Oleo," and "Valse Hot," the first bop waltz).

In 1955 he recorded the album *Worktime*, and then in 1956 *Saxophone Colossus*, both central albums of the period. He often plays older unlikely pieces. In 1959 he took a two-year hiatus, the first of three, to practice and recharge.

### **LISTEN TO SONNY ROLLINS “STRODE RODE”**

#### **John Coltrane - tenor and soprano sax**

Within the world that Miles Davis created through his choice of musicians and their lasting influence, none looms larger than John Coltrane. Coltrane fully explored the modal world and the cultural, musical, and ethical avant-garde of the 1960s in his short-lived and controversial career.

Although the same age as Davis, he made no significant recordings until 1955, as part of Davis's quintet. Over the next few years he recorded many albums establishing himself as the rival of Sonny Rollins. He organized his own band in 1959, around the same time as Davis's falling off after *Kind of Blue*. Coltrane filled the leadership role vacated by Davis.

Davis returned with his second quintet in 1964, the same year Coltrane released *A Love Supreme*, an album that garnered both critical and popular acclaim. But both Davis and Coltrane were dissatisfied with their music. Both pushed on into experimental forms of jazz.

<http://hardbop.tripod.com/coltrane2.html>

**LISTEN TO JOHN COLTRANE “GIANT STEPS” & “MR. P.C.”**  
**LISTEN TO MCCOY TYNER (John Coltrane’s pianist) “LAZY BIRD”**

#### **Hard Bop evolves into Free Form - 1960's**

Free Form jazz musicians enlarged the boundaries of hard bop jazz. The avant-garde stretched them to the breaking point. The key figures, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane, had very different approaches, but they all challenged the status quo.

1. Rhythm: discarded a steady dance beat for an ambiguous pulse or several at once.
2. Harmony: discarded harmonic patterns based on scales and chords for an unpredictable harmony based on the needs of the moment.

3. Melody: whether melodic or noise-heavy, melody was disengaged from traditional harmonic patterns and resolutions.
4. Structure: blues and song forms were discarded for the creation of form through free improvisation.
5. Instrumentation: in addition to typical jazz instruments, symphonic and world music instruments were used.
6. Presentation: jazz was no longer entertainment; it was now serious and challenging-art for art's sake.
7. Politics: its assertive posture placed it in the general context of the increasingly militant racial and antiwar struggles of the 1950s and 1960s.
8. The appearance of Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor on the scene divided the jazz world. Depending on whom you asked, they were either geniuses or charlatans.

LISTEN TO JOHN COLTRANE "TRANSONIC"

LISTEN TO ORNETTE COLEMAN "FREE JAZZ"

LISTEN TO CECIL TAYLOR "JITNEY"

LISTEN TO MILES DAVIS (with Wayne Shorter on sax) "ORBITS"

LISTEN TO KURT ELLING (modern day vocalist) "GINGERBREAD BOY"

### **More Thoughts on Free Jazz**

Free jazz was developed in the 1950's and 60's by pioneering musicians such as Albert Ayler, Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane. It was brought about as a reaction against white interest in popular jazz styles that were beginning to take hold in the 1950's. The integration of previously radical music into the predominantly white mainstream was viewed as another means of racial control. Thus, one of the reasons for its inception was to make it less commercial to the large white audiences.

As its name would suggest, there is no clear definition for Free Jazz. It owes its name to the title of Coleman's innovative album, Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation. Though it was only intended to be the name of an album, it soon became established as the term for the entire movement. At the time, there was controversy, even amongst jazz musicians, as to whether the style could be called jazz at all. It is characterised by an abandonment of previous adherence to established chord progressions or harmonies. It is heavily reliant on improvisation and largely dispenses with a set rhythm or beat. In the 1960's it came to be known as The New Thing or Energy Music.

Though at the time the "Free" movement was developed as a statement against the mainstream and prided itself on being entirely new, today it has built up a set of traditions. It represents a freedom of expression that some consider absent in

more conventional styles of jazz; the importance being laid on energy and spirit rather than form and marketability. Though it does largely remain outside the realms of commercial popularity, there are established scenes across the world, particularly in Europe and Japan, where the style is still very much alive and well.

- jazz-music-makers.com