BEBOP
1940’S - MID 1950’S
Bebop Characteristics

Performance aspects differing from swing
- Small combos (3 - 6 members)
- Faster tempos than swing band tempos
- Clarinet and rhythm guitar rarely used in bebop
- Higher instrumental proficiency
- **Bebop** became the 1st style of jazz that was not used for dancing

Bebop musicians
- Disassociated from their own audience, their own employers, non-jazz musicians, and even from other jazz musicians
- Trying to raise the level of jazz from dance music to a chamber art form
- Status of jazz performer - from entertainer to artist
- Drug’s effect on bebop musicians
Bebop Characteristics

The shift to bebop

- “Minton’s playhouse - the hippest jazz club in NY
- The first jazz style that was not used for dancing
- Bebop was not enthusiastically accepted by the jazz community at the time of its emergence
- The origins of bebop - hard to determine
  - Bop was performed in New York, Kansas City, St. Louis, Oklahoma City and elsewhere
- The word "bebop" is usually stated to be nonsense syllables (vocables) which were generated in scat singing, and is supposed to have been first attested in 1928.
  - One speculation is that it was a term used by Charlie Christian, because it sounded like something he hummed along with his playing
Bebop Characteristics

The shift to bebop

- Bebop did not have the same large audience enjoyed by the swing bands

- Jazz, in general, despite of its popularity was not viewed as an art form by the general public

- Bebop was the era from which the majority of our jazz giants emerged

- The musical changes that occurred during that period set the framework for the developing jazz mainstream
Bebop Characteristics

Bebop Compositional Aspects

- Complex melodies
- Large melodic intervals
- Abrupt changes in melodic direction
- Highly syncopated, rhythmically quick and unpredictable
- Original melodies commonly based on popular song chord progressions
- Blues form used often
- Charlie Christian, Hawkins, Young - led the change to bebop
- Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie - took command and crystallized
Bebop Characteristics

**Bebop arranging**

- Melodies in unison (trumpet and sax together)
  - Usually improvised lines
- Standard format
  - 1 chorus melody, improvisations, and 1 chorus melody again for end of the tune
- Faster tempos – not danceable

**Bebop rhythm section**

- Drums – “bombs” (heavy accents) with bass drum
- Guitar - amplified, became an equal melody instrument
- Piano - “comping” according to the soloist improvisation
- Bass - “walking bass” line
Charlie Parker

- Alto saxophonist

- Called “Yardbird” or simply “Bird”

- Credited as THE originator of bebop
Charlie Parker

- Born in 1920, Kansas City, Kansas
  - Raised in Kansas City
  - At age of 15 quits school and starts playing professionally
  - At age of 16 got married first harmony lesson, drugs
- 1939 - began jamming at Monroe's Uptown house
  - Sidemen with Billy Eckstine
- 1943 - NY, central figure of group of musicians including Dizzy, Monk and Clark
- 1941 - the new style "bebop" emerged by Charlie Christian, Monk, Bud Powell, Clarke and Dizzy
- Parker died while watching Tommy Dorsey on television.
  - Though the official cause of death was (lobar) pneumonia and a bleeding ulcer, his death was hastened by his drug and alcohol abuse. The coroner mistakenly estimated Parker's 34-year-old body to be between 50 and 60 years old.
Charlie Parker

- Parker's sound - dry with slow vibrato, the opposite of all favorite that time
- Improvising concept
  - constructed solos on upper structure chords
  - syncopated accents on particular notes
  - double time feel even in ballads
  - influenced all the great players from then on: Coltrane, Powell, Stitt and Gillespie
- Parker also became an icon for the hipster subculture and later the Beat generation, personifying the conception of the jazz musician as an uncompromising artist and intellectual, rather than just a popular entertainer.
- Suggested Viewing “Bird”
Dizzy Gillespie

🎉 Trumpet player

🎉 Called "Dizzy"

🎉 Together with Charlie Parker, he was a major figure in the development of bebop and modern jazz.
Dizzy Gillespie

Born in 1917 in Cheraw, South Carolina

- Studied harmony and theory, took instruction on several instruments
- 1937 - replaced Roy Eldridge in Teddy Hill Band
- Worked with Mercer Ellington, Cab Calloway, Benny Carter
- Virtuoso with very good understanding of the theory
- Wrote; "Con Alma", "Groovin' High", "Woody ‘n you”, “A night in Tunisia”
- He was instrumental in founding Afro-Cuban jazz, the modern jazz version of what early jazz pioneer Jelly Roll Morton referred to as the “Spanish Tinge”
  - “Manteca” – the first Latin Jazz tune
Dizzy Gillespie

Gillespie was a trumpet virtuoso and gifted improviser, building on the virtuoso style of Roy Eldridge but adding layers of harmonic complexity previously unknown in jazz.

In addition to his instrumental skills, Dizzy's beret and horn-rimmed spectacles, his scat singing, his bent horn, pouchched cheeks and his light-hearted personality were essential in popularizing bebop, which was originally regarded as threatening and frightening music by many listeners raised on older styles of jazz.

He had an enormous impact on virtually every subsequent trumpeter, both by the example of his playing and as a mentor to younger musicians.

Influenced: M. Davis, R. Rodney, F Navarro, K. Dorham, T. Jones
Bebop Pianists

**Bud Powell**
- Classically trained pianist
- Created the model of bebop piano
- Approach derived from Tatum with bop phrasing of Parker and Gillespie
- Modern comping--two or three note chords

**Thelonious Monk**
- Piano-composer, co-founder of bebop, approach derived from Waller-stride piano playing and Ellington's percussive comping
- Improvisation style: avoided the difficulties of finger dexterity
- Technical virtuosity (rapid scales, arpeggios) was not characteristic
- Compositions--difficult chords, symmetry, unique logic, shifting accents
Bebop musicians

**Roy Eldridge**
- Trumpet player
- Played with Fletcher Henderson in 1936
- Fiery style of playing
- Virtuosic trumpet technique
  - Use of the extreme upper register of the trumpet
- Featured with bands like Gene Krupa and Artie Shaw

**Charlie Christian**
- Revolutionized the concept of jazz guitar playing
- Excellent guitarist
- *Christian* took the role of the guitar from a rhythm instrument to a solo melody instrument equal to other instruments
- Pioneered the use of the amplifier as early as 1937
- Played and made recordings with Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington and others big names
Bebop Musicians

Kenny Clarke - drums

- House-drummer at Minton’s Playhouse w/ Gillespie, Monk, C. Christian, B. Powell
- 4/4 pulse from bass drums to ride cymbal
- Bass drum and snare--independent background accents

Oscar Pettiford - bass

- Bass-cello-bandleader, first bassist to apply virtuosity of Blanton within bebop context
- Co-leader with Dizzy, worked with Ellington
Bebop Musicians

Oscar Peterson – piano
- Style derived from Tatum and Powell
- Extraordinary technique
- Trios with R. Brown, N. E. O. Pederson

Max Roach – drums
- House-band at Monroe’s Uptown House with Bird & Diz
- Developed K. Clarke's style into bebop

Modern Jazz Quartet
- John Lewis-piano-arranger-composer
- Milt Jackson-vibraphone; warm bluesy melodic lines w/ slow vibrato
Bebop Musicians

- J.J. Johnson - Trombonist-composer
  - Paved the path for trombonist in the bop style
  - Active composer, particularly for TV and movies in the 70’s

- Fats Navarro – Trumpetist
  - Replaced Gillespie in Eckstine band, 1945
  - Smooth eight-note lines with sprinkled accents, some Parker influence

- Lucky Thompson - Tenor sax, soprano sax (later)
  - Played with Parker, Gillespie and Kenton

- Sonny Stitt - alto-tenor sax, "Lone Wolf"
  - Recording over 100 records
  - The greatest disciple of Charlie Parker

- Sonny Rollins - tenor sax
  - One of the last still living legends of jazz;
  - Still performs very actively throughout the world

- Clifford Brown – trumpet
  - An influential and highly rated musician
  - Considerable influence on later jazz trumpet players