

Glossary of Jazz and Related Musical Terms

Bass Line - see *Walking Bass*

Be-Bop Tune - a tune fashioned after the jazz tunes of the forties, having a fast harmonic rhythm and frequent modulations to other keys. 1

Ballad - a slow to very slow tune, in respect to tempo. 1

Blue Notes - the lowered 3rd, 5th, and 7th degrees of a scale. 1

Bossa Nova - a tune having a type of Brazilian samba beat and a melody largely written or felt in steady, long, syncopated quarter notes (also referred to latin). 1

Break or Break Time - a point in the arrangement in which all instruments (including the rhythm section) suddenly cease to play for, say, two or four measures while the soloist continues to play alone, then the accompaniment resumes after the break. 1

Call and Response - a musical dialogue consisting of two unequal musical statements; one musician states a phrase and the other fills in the gaps between the phrases. 2

Changes - chords, the harmonic progression. 1

Chord Voicings - the arbitrary spacing of the individual notes contained in an assigned chord. 1

Chorus - a single rendition of a song or a jazz composition in its basic structure (form). 2

Composer - one who creates a musical work which is usually written done for others to perform. Improvisors are often considered spontaneous composers. 4

Comping - a rhythmic activity supplied by the chording instruments (piano and/or guitar) and the drummer to help fill in the texture. 2

Contemporary Tune - a type of tune that generally has a less-predictable chord progression and uses unusual or less-common chord structures. 1

Double-Time - the interpretation of a tempo at twice its given speed, usually by doubling the note density. 1

Form - the constructive organizing element in music, governing the presentation, development, and interrelationship of ideas. 3

Free-Form - in its purest sense, unstructured or spontaneously structured group improvisation, though some organizational device (other than a chord progression) is usually adopted to promote cohesion. 1

Half-Time (Playing in 2) - the interpretation of a temp at one-half its given speed, usually by reducing the density to one-half its previous level. 1

Harmonic Rhythm - rhythm established by the number and relative duration of the chords in a given progression. 1

Harmony - the combining of notes simultaneously to produce chords and the placing of chords in succession, whether or not to produce tonally functional progressions. 3

Improvisation - spontaneous or semi-spontaneous musical creation. 1

Jazz Rock - a style of music, developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, that combines the techniques of modern jazz improvisation with the instrumentation and approach to rhythmic accompaniment of soul and rock music of the 1960s. 3

Latin - the umbrella term used to describe improvisatory music that combines the harmonic elements and practices of American jazz and the rhythmic elements of music-cultures such as Cuba, Brazil, Central and South America and the Caribbean region. 5

Progression - the entire sequence of the chords contained in one chorus of the tune. Sometime called changes. 1

Rhythm Section - a group of instruments within a jazz ensemble, usually piano (and/or guitar), bass, and drums, which form the more stable, consistently present part of the band, supplying *chords, bass line*, time-keeping figures, and suggestions and responses to the soloist. 1

Scale - any of several sequences of pitches dividing an octave into whole-tones and semitones. In Western music, the octave contains 12 semitones or 6 whole-tones. 2

Shout Chorus - a loud, climatic section of an arrangement in which short rhythmic accents or punches (shouts) help define the harmonic and rhythmic structure of the tune. 4

Standard Tune - a tune, particularly those of the thirties and forties, which was once a very popular song and then becomes a perennially played tune. 1

Stop-Time - a long series of *breaks*. 1

Swing - a quality attributed to a jazz performance which refers to a rhythmic phenomenon resulting from the conflict between a fixed pulse and the wide variety of actual durations and accents that a jazz performer plays against the pulse. 3

Tempo - the speed of a musical composition. 4

Time Signature - a numerical symbol of the number of beats in a measure and the value of the note that will receive on beat of duration. 1

Trade With Drums - alternating improvisations with a soloist and the drummer, usually in four, eight, or twelve bar sections. 4

Walking Line - a bass line that moves like a *scale*, four notes per bar. 1

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4. Tracy, Mike
5. O'Mahoney, Terry