

THELONIOUS SPHERE MONK



Thelonious Monk was such an original that sometimes it's hard to find words to describe him. His parents must have thought he'd be something special after all they named him Thelonious Sphere Monk!

Monk is often credited as one of the original musicians who helped create bebop with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie but in many ways, Monk's music was different. His music had a lot of stops, starts, turns, twists and sudden silences. His stop-and-go playing style left big "holes" in his music, something that made Monk's piano playing stand out. Some of his most famous compositions include "Round About Midnight", "Ruby My Dear" and "Little Rootie Tootie." Many of his songs were about his family and his everyday life.

Monk's songs became so popular that in 1964 he was featured on the cover of Time magazine, an honor that had only been given to three other jazz musicians. Thelonious Monk is most remembered for his eccentric style and mysterious personality but his music lives on in the hearts of people worldwide.



Ballad- a slow song, sometimes with lyrics that tell a story

Bebop- the first modern jazz style, developed in the 1940s and characterized by complex harmonies

Blues- a twelve bar song form that evolved from black spirituals and slave work songs

Brass band- a band made up of brass instruments including trumpet, trombone, tuba and French horn

Chord- three or more notes played at the same time that outline a scale

Cool jazz- a style of jazz that originated in the 1950s; also identified with "West Coast Jazz"

Fusion- a mix of different musical styles, like jazz and rock or jazz and R&B

Nonet- a group of nine musicians

Ragtime- the music that came before jazz and mixed European classical music with the syncopated rhythms of African-American music; created by pianist Scott Joplin

Swing- a type of dance music that became popular during the 1930s

MILES DEWEY DAVIS



Miles Davis was born in St. Louis, Missouri. When he took up the trumpet at age 13, his parents nudged him toward classical music but Miles preferred jazz. Miles left St. Louis and enrolled at the prestigious Julliard School of Music in New York City, but once he got to New York he became obsessed with the music of saxophonist Charlie Parker. Miles and Charlie eventually became good friends and started to play music together.

Miles ultimately joined Charlie Parker's band and replaced the trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie. While Dizzy had played high and fast, Miles developed his own style: low and slow. In 1949, Miles formed a new group, a nonet, which featured a "laid-back" style. His group, which was making music like no other jazz artist, recorded an album entitled "Birth of the Cool." This record started a new style of jazz called "cool jazz."

Later in the 1960s, Miles would combine jazz and rock music, which resulted in a new style called fusion. After his "cool" period, he changed jazz forever with the record "Kind of Blue". He also teamed up with an orchestra to create large-scale compositions like "Porgy and Bess" and "Sketches of Spain."

Miles would go through many changes in his musical career, which spanned over 50 years. He even blended jazz music with hip-hop! Next to Louis Armstrong, Miles is considered one of the most influential jazz musicians of all time.



JazzReach, Inc.

JazzReach is a non-profit organization dedicated to building new audiences for jazz music. Through its entertaining and educational multi-media programs, JazzReach travels all across the country striving to give young people a better understanding of jazz and promoting jazz's rich history and relevance as an American art form. Since 1997, JazzReach's programs have served over 75,000 young people.

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HANGIN' WITH THE GIANTS





LOUIS "Satchmo" ARMSTRONG

Growing up in New Orleans, Louis Armstrong heard all kinds of music. At a very young age, Louis had to work to help support his family, who was very poor. To earn extra money, some of his jobs included singing on street corners, cleaning graves and selling coal. These jobs took Louis all around New Orleans where he was exposed to many different music styles. Some of these musical styles included classical, blues* and New Orleans brass band* music, which often accompanied parades and funerals.

Already a natural musician with a truly remarkable voice, Louis taught himself how to play cornet, a brass instrument much like the trumpet. Soon, Louis gained national attention and moved to New York to perform and record his songs. He performed in theaters and concert halls, on the radio and in over 50 movies. Sometimes playing popular songs in the jazz style, Louis was considered the most important figure in jazz because he helped create a wider audience for jazz music. Some of his most well-known recordings included ones with pianist Duke Ellington and a song called "Hello Dolly."

Louis sang and played his trumpet constantly. He had the opportunity to travel all around the world. During one trip to Africa, he was greeted by more than 100,000 people who came to hear his music. With his big smile, cheerful personality and instantly recognizable voice, Louis Armstrong captured the hearts of people everywhere. He spread his love of jazz around the world and for this reason is known as "Ambassador Satch."



EDWARD "Duke" ELLINGTON



Edward "Duke" Ellington began playing piano when he was just seven years old. Like many of the pianists of his time, Duke was influenced by ragtime*. But Duke combined many styles of music like ragtime, the blues, and classical music to create his own unique blend of music.

By age 19, Duke was playing piano professionally and had made a name for himself in his hometown of Washington, DC. By 30, he was leading his own orchestra at New York's legendary Cotton Club. Duke assumed that if something sounded good to him, then it was good. That allowed him to try many different instruments in a combination that no jazz musician had used before. Duke wrote some of America's most cherished songs including "Mood Indigo" and "Take The A Train."

Duke experimented with compositions and his orchestra toured all over the world. His travels often served as the inspiration for much of his music. For over 50 years, Duke Ellington wrote some of jazz music's most memorable songs and symphonies- almost 2,000!- and demonstrated to all what happens when there are no limitations put on music.



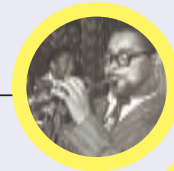
CHARLIE "Bird" PARKER



Recognizing his unique gift for music, Charlie Parker's mom bought him a saxophone when he was 11 years old. By the time he was 15, Charlie decided he wanted to become a professional musician. He played all over his hometown of Kansas City, Missouri, performing with a variety of blues and jazz groups.

Charlie was very determined at becoming the best musician but suffered several setbacks. Once when he was still a teenager, Charlie was jamming in a local Kansas City club. He decided to try to play the ballad*, "Body and Soul", at a faster tempo. Everyone in the club fell out laughing. Another time, he sat in with the well-known pianist Count Basie. Charlie started out playing well but fell out of key, then lost the rhythm of the song. The band's drummer stopped playing and threw one of his cymbals at Parker's feet! Charlie, humiliated, packed up his horn and left the club.

But Bird was determined. He later showed up playing his saxophone in Chicago and then in New York. In New York, Bird met Dizzy Gillespie and together they helped invent a new style of jazz called bebop*. Bird made many wonderful recordings including "Groovin' High", "Now's The Time", and "Koko". Charlie "Bird" Parker was a legendary figure in his own lifetime and inspired generations of jazz musicians to come.



JOHN BIRKS "Dizzy" GILLESPIE



When Dizzy Gillespie was 15, he won a scholarship to The Laurinburg Institute in North Carolina, where he learned to play both trumpet and piano. In later years, Dizzy would advise young horn players to learn the piano because it forced them to learn chords* and harmony, things that were very important to writing good songs.

Dizzy, who always loved a challenge, started out playing his trumpet by copying Roy Eldridge, the fastest, highest playing trumpeter around. Diz got so good that he eventually replaced Roy in a local swing* band when Roy left. But later, Diz left swing bands because he wanted to play a more advanced kind of music.

In the 1940's, Diz, Charlie "Bird" Parker and Thelonious Monk, along with a few others, put together some music which became known as bebop. The songs that Dizzy and Bird made together were some of the most innovative in jazz. Some notable ones included "Salt Peanuts" and "A Night in Tunisia."

Dizzy not only had a very unique sound, he had the look to go with it. When he played his trumpet, his cheeks bulged out like balloons- an image, along with his exceptional sound, that made him recognizable around the world.

