

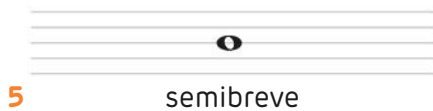


A jazz Combo, New Orleans

## Before reading

1 **Abbina i nomi delle note in inglese (a-e) alla loro traduzione italiana (1-5).**

- a  semibreve    d  crotchet  
 b  quaver        e  semiquaver  
 c  minim



## Jazz

In the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century African slaves, working in the cotton fields of the southern United States, bring their music with them. Many slave owners don't allow<sup>1</sup> slaves to speak to each other, so they communicate and coordinate the rhythm of their work through music. The main singer calls to the other workers and they respond. Their songs tell stories which are sad and express their religious beliefs and their desire for freedom. These work songs are at the root<sup>2</sup> of jazz music. The music of the cotton fields combines with the music of the European white settlers and makes a new style. Black musicians add syncopation<sup>3</sup>, improvisation and swing rhythms.

a clarinet plays the obbligato (a countermelody<sup>4</sup>), and a trombone plays rhythmic and simple harmonies.

The sound is polyphonic, with a single instrument playing the main tune, while other instruments improvise around it.

In Chicago, Louis Armstrong, a famous bandleader, plays the trumpet, but he can also use his voice like an instrument. He improvises using nonsense syllables and sounds. This is *scat singing*.



The Duke Ellington Orchestra, 1943

## Traditional Jazz

Traditional jazz begins in New Orleans. A trumpet plays the melody,

## Comprehension

2 **Leggi i testi, poi rispondi alle domande.**

- Who brings their music to the southern United States?
- What do the cotton slaves express in their songs?
- Where does traditional jazz begin?
- Which instrument plays the melody?
- What is the sound like?
- What is 'scat singing'?
- What do instrumentalists do when they play bebop?
- What are 'blue notes'?

## Vocabulary

3 **Completa le frasi con i seguenti termini musicali.**

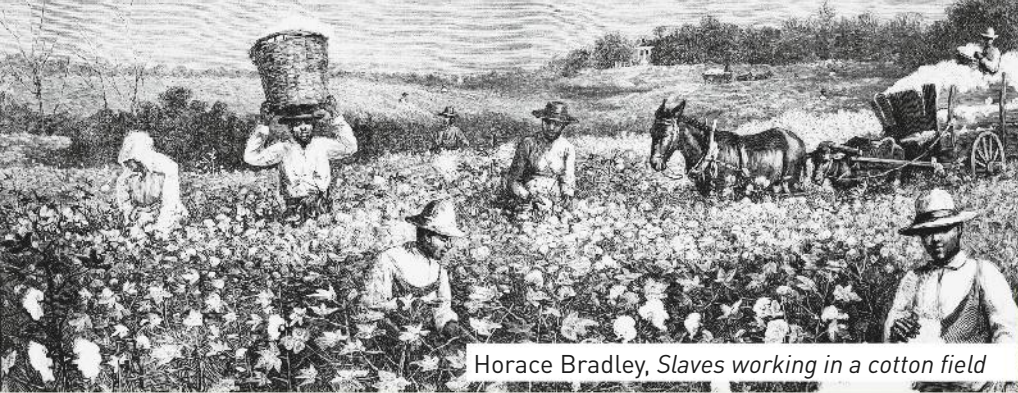
- beat • scale • chord
- time signature

- .....: a sequence of notes going up and down.
- .....: when three or more notes sound together.
- .....: it indicates metre.
- .....: the pulse in a piece of music.

4 **Abbina il nome dello strumento (a-d) all'immagine (1-4).**

- a  trumpet        c  drums  
 b  clarinet        d  banjo





Horace Bradley, *Slaves working in a cotton field*

Other artists try it and Louis becomes an influential musician.

## Duke Ellington and Swing

Swing is a style of jazz that is popular in the 1930s and 1940s and is very rhythmic: musicians play behind or ahead<sup>5</sup> of the beat<sup>6</sup>. Duke Ellington leads a very important band in the swing era. He is charming<sup>7</sup> and polite<sup>8</sup> and he wears elegant clothes and that is why people call him 'Duke'. His real name is Edward and he plays the piano and composes jazz music. He is not alive today but his orchestra, the Duke Ellington Orchestra, is still playing.

## Bebop

This style of jazz is very fast and has complex harmonies.

Solo instrumentalists do wild improvisation. Charlie Parker Jr, who people call 'Bird', starts this kind of music in the 1940s. He is a virtuoso saxophonist and he is brilliant at improvising. At first many jazz artists and fans dislike bebop. They don't like the long improvisations and they want music they can dance to.

## Kind of Blue

This is the title of an album by the great trumpeter Miles Davis and his sextet. Miles Davis is a classically trained<sup>9</sup> musician, but he soon discovers that he can't play bebop like his idol Charlie Parker. In 1949 he forms a band and uses his trumpet to create a tender<sup>10</sup>, dreamy sound. He doesn't like to rehearse<sup>11</sup>, but gives the band melody lines to improvise on. One of the songs, *All Blues*, is in

the style of early American black music (the blues). It has a twelve bar chord<sup>12</sup> structure and *blue notes*. These are the third, fifth and seventh notes of the scale<sup>13</sup>. There are minor sevenths in many chords and a time signature<sup>14</sup> of 6/4. There are two beats in every bar. Each beat has three small beats which gives the music a swing rhythm often used in jazz. The three beat division is similar to the music of the waltz.



Miles Davis

### CLIL Project

#### 5 Fai una ricerca sui musicisti jazz e la loro musica.

- 1 Ascolta su YouTube un pezzo di musica jazz di ciascuno dei seguenti artisti: Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker Jr, Miles Davis.
- 2 Per ognuno scrivi:
  - a il nome del brano musicale;
  - b perché ti piace/non ti piace.
- 3 Scegli il musicista che preferisci e cerca in Internet notizie sulla sua vita e sulla sua musica.
- 4 Fai ascoltare alla classe la musica del tuo musicista preferito e domanda a quali compagni piace e a quali no.



#### 6 And in your country?

- What kind of music do people like?
- Do young people learn to play musical instruments? If yes, which ones?

#### WORDS YOU NEED

1. allow	permettere
2. at the root	alla base, alle origini
3. syncopation	ritmo sincopato
4. countermelody	controcanto
5. behind or ahead	prima o dopo
6. beat	ritmo, battuta
7. charming	affascinante
8. polite	educato
9. classically trained	(qui) con una preparazione classica
10. tender	dolce, morbido
11. rehearse	fare le prove
12. chord	accordo
13. scale	scala
14. time signature	tempo musicale