

The Origin of Modern Music

Spiritual songs/Negro Spirituals: are religious songs sung by African slaves. They often have a fast beat and the singer's clapping normally sets it.

Ragtime (ragged-time): is an original music genre that enjoyed its peak of popularity between 1897 and 1918. Its main characteristic is its syncopated or "ragged" rhythm. It began as dance music in the red-light districts of American cities such as St. Louis and New Orleans.

Blues: the term 'the blues' refers to the 'blue devils,' meaning melancholy and sadness. Originally an improvised song sung in the southern rural areas of the United States. It was usually accompanied by guitar or banjo.

New Orleans Style/Dixieland (1900-1920): is formed by a small instrumental group (6-8 musicians) including a clarinet, a trumpet, a trombone (which plays the melodies and improvises) and a rhythmic-harmonic base: drum-set, double-bass, piano or banjo.

Swing (1930-1940): is a style of dance music played by the big bands/orchestras formed by more than 15 instruments divided into groups:

- Rhythmic: drum-set, double-bass, piano and guitar.
- Woodwind: clarinets and saxophones.
- Brass: trumpets and trombones.

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Activity

Practice your knowledge of 'The Origin of Modern Music' by filling out the blanks in the following sentences:

1. The origin of most of the styles of western modern music comes from the _____ community.
2. The term 'the blues' refers to _____.
3. Dixieland is another way of saying _____ style.
4. The 'ragged' rhythm of Ragtime is technically known as _____ rhythm.
5. _____ have a fast beat and the singer's clapping normally sets it.
6. _____ was originally a melancholic song accompanied by a guitar or banjo.
7. Swing was usually performed by _____.
8. The rhythmic section in a *Big band* was usually formed by _____, _____ or _____.
9. Ragtime is an original music genre that enjoyed its peak of popularity between _____ and _____.
10. _____ was a style of dance music popular in the 1930-40s.