

Bebop music evolved during the 1940's and it was later associated with what was known as modern jazz, due to many aspects of bebop being continued later into the 50's, 60's etc. In comparison to previous styles of jazz, bebop music can be distinguished by the fast tempo, virtuosic nature of the solo parts and the greater use of improvisation.

The words 'bop' and 'bebop' came from the stereotypical sound that comes at the end of phrases in this type of music. The shape of the melody was usually written in such a way that it sounded similar to the scat singing from the early years of jazz. It was due to young musicians experimenting with what was previously played, this resulted in a new jazz, one with more freedom for improvisation and creativity. Swing music was all notated and orchestrated; this made it difficult to allow musicians to play virtuosic passages and to show off as all parts were written in the score.

Minimal arrangement, allowing for improvisation and solo sections was a key element to bebop music. Disjunct melodies, uneven phrasing and writing thematic material which is much more angular than tuneful were just some of the ways that the melody has changed and made bebop music such a distinctive type of jazz. Chord progressions for bebop tunes were often taken directly from popular swing-era songs and reused with a new and more complex melody, to write new pieces of music. This practice was already well-established in earlier jazz, but came to be central to the bebop style.

Using the chords to well known tunes and writing completely improvised melodies is another idea that developed during the 1940's and became a major part of the music. The harmonies also changed during this period. Harmonies began to diverge away from what was always the norm and the use of added notes (apart from the 3rd, 5th and 7th) became more common. Flattened and sharpened 9ths, added 11^{ths} and 13ths, as well as the flattened 5th which became a common blues note.

Orchestration once again was reduced. In order for the free, creative feel of the music to come across, having less instruments was vital as the musicians had to play in time with one another and with a big band, remaining in time and allowing for solo sections of improvisation was simply not viable.

The typical line up of a bebop jazz group consisted of a saxophone, piano, trumpet, bass and drums. The drums in particular had become more 'frontline' in a way. The polyrhythmic drumming styles used meant that the beat was less defined as the drums were no longer comping and simply keeping the rhythm as they had a solo part of their own now. The drumming could be very offbeat and fast which make it difficult to hear how many beats are in each bar seeing as it was generally the drum part that allowed people to identify this in previous styles of jazz music.

The bass line then became the key instrument in maintaining the beat of the music. The drum part was no longer just playing crotchet and quaver patterns on the snare and hi-hat. Even the bass line became more adventurous with fast moving passages including many what the classical musician would call 'passing notes', although not always part of the chord at the time, the bass line was always maintaining the rhythm and tempo of the music.

In the beginning of bebop, there were many aspects that were changing from what was previously known as jazz music. The melody, harmony, rhythm and band size all varied from what came before. The knowledge of jazz music theory really came into

play with this style, more virtuosity and more complicated melodic ideas meant that the musicians and arrangers had to know what was suitable for the harmony beneath. Chords became more complicated with many extensions added, this allowed for more variety of possible notes to be played in the melody line above but it also added to the harmonic colour of the piece. Melodies became far more abrupt and it got to the point where having a memorable tune was no longer very important as the melody line was that odd and dissonant if you like at times.

Thelonious Monk's piece 'Bags' Groove' used melodic extensions and sounds very dissonant for large sections of the piece. The solo section is virtuosic and Monk has developed simple ideas into more complicated, motivic phrases. Another example of how Monk has played by the rules of this revolutionary type of jazz is his angular approach to melody writing with his piece 'Misterioso.'

Improvisation was key in bebop music. Arranging music for big bands was very structured and led to the music being very static and did not leave much room for free playing and therefore no room for musicians to portray their virtuosic skills. Charlie Parker wrote a piece called 'Koko' which allowed for much solo playing. Parker played the solo lines and it said that almost the entire piece (heard in the 1945 recording) was improvised as there was no evidence of it in the score. Like many pieces of music of this era, the chords beneath the melody were taken from a well known song. In this case the song was Cherokee, the chords allowed for Parker to improvise fast, intricate phrases.

The bands in the bebop style of jazz were much smaller than big bands. They consisted of usually no more than five musicians as this allowed for maximum freedom for creativity and improvisation. In Koko, there is an alto sax, trumpet, bass, piano and drums. This was a very typical line up for many bands, such as Dizzy Gillespie's All star quintet as well as many other bands of the 1940's. Thelonious Monk on the other hand, had a band consisting of a piano, vibraphone, bass and drums. Very little use of clarinets and rhythm guitar in bop and bebop jazz, this did change though in years to come with the formation of more modern jazz.