American Popular Music

Hotter Than That
Ragtime

- Altered popular music sound
- Catalyst for changes in music
- After Civil War, Black musicians play ragtime and syncopated music

**Syncopation**: accents come *between* beats of a rhythm, rather than *with* them
Scott Joplin

“Maple Leaf Rag” - 1899
- First commercially successful piano rag
- Based on march, added syncopation
- Complex African-inspired rhythms introduced
- **Sheet music** = accessibility
- Joplin’s rags = most enduring music of ragtime era
Resistance

- Considered immoral
- Fit for saloons and brothels where it was played
- Product of inferior race, lacking European musical sophistication
- People danced to it—scandalous!
The Phonograph

- 1877- Thomas Edison invents phonograph
  - Early record player
- Symbol of upward mobility
- Huge step in development of APM
- Victrola- most popular brand synonymous with “phonograph”
Early Jazz

- New Orleans as birthplace

- Flourished in cultural mix
  - French and English descendants, Blacks, Whites, Caribbean immigrants

- 1892- Jim Crow legislation affects development of music
Blended instrumentation from genres:
- Marching band: clarinet, cornet/trumpet, trombone, tuba, drums
- Minstrel show: banjo
- Ragtime: piano, syncopation

Front Line: cornet, clarinet, trombone

Rhythm Section: banjo, piano, bass/tuba, drums
Original Dixieland Jazz Band

- **ODJB**
  - First “jass” recording in 1917
  - Led by Nick LaRocca
  - White musicians commercialize Black jazz
  - “Tiger Rag” - 1918
    - Syncopation
    - Stop time
    - Interplay of frontline
King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band

- Joe “King” Oliver
  - Bandleader
  - cornetist
  - “Dippermouth Blues”-1923
    - **Collective Improvisation**
      - Players simultaneously make up music together as they play, rather than playing music that is already written
Louis Armstrong

- First great soloist in jazz
- Joe “King” Oliver - teacher and mentor
- Regular studio performer for Okeh Records
  - Records featuring him sold better than others
  - “Louis Armstrong’s Hot Five”
- “West End Blues” 1928
Paul Whiteman

- Led most successful dance band of 1920s
- Self titled “King of Jazz”
- “Safe” version
  - “Made an honest woman out of jazz”
  - Defended against moral critics
- “Whispering” - 1920
The Modern Era

- **Radio Broadcasting**
  - 1920: first commercial radio broadcast
  - Microphones, amplifiers

- **Talking Films**
  - *The Jazz Singer* - first talking picture - 1927

- **Crooners**
  - Dominant Popular singer of 1930s/40s
  - Appeared on more recordings, radio programs and films
Bing Crosby

- Conversational singing style
- “Same room” as listeners
  - Contrast to Al Jolson
- Intimacy through technology
- “I’ve Got the World on a String” - 1933

“Crosby was the first singer to really use the microphone well”