



## **Jazz in America Glossary for Lesson VII - Avant Garde/Free Jazz; Fusion**

*atonal*: Music not based on a particular key or scale; dissonant music.

*avant-garde*: Jazz (usually atonal) not based on preconceived chord changes; jazz played in a freely improvised nature (but which is not entirely "free" as it generally shows evidence of a structure or blueprint); the term first came into widespread use in the 1960s to describe some of the more freely improvised music of artists such as John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, their peer artists, and those who followed in their footsteps.

*contemporary jazz*: A somewhat mixed designation that has been used to describe modern or current-day jazz styles, as well as the more instrumental pop-inclined sounds also known as "smooth jazz."

*fusion*: Originally used to designate late 1960s-early '70s jazz which encompassed liberal use of rhythms and forms more closely identified with rock music, which was first called "jazz-rock;" the blending of jazz with other musics, particularly rock.

*intonation*: The degree of adherence to correct pitch by a given instrument; good intonation suggests close approximation of the pitch; poor intonation implies the opposite (horn players, unlike pianists, have the ability to adjust their intonation by pushing in or pulling out their mouthpieces as well as by adjusting their embouchure).

*tonal*: Music that is based on the traditional major or minor scales; the entire system of all the major and minor keys.



## **Jazz in America Student Handout--Lesson Plan VII--American History Essay**

### **The 1960s - A Tumultuous Decade**

The decade of the 1960s began on the streets of cities throughout the South in peaceful demonstrations challenging Jim Crow laws. The decade ended in street demonstrations demanding an end to American military involvement in Vietnam. The 1960s was a period of political and social turmoil in America.

During the 1960 presidential campaign, candidate John F. Kennedy won the support of most African American voters. Once elected, the new administration was slow to act, fearful of losing Southern Democratic votes in Congress. However, African Americans would not wait for forceful action by the President and continued to use nonviolent civil disobedience that had chipped away at segregation in the Montgomery Bus Boycott of the mid-1950s.

In February 1960 four African American college students staged a "sit-in" at an all-white lunch counter in a Woolworth store in Greensboro, North Carolina. Sit-ins had a long history dating to the 1870s when African Americans sat in "white only" public conveyances to challenge recently enacted Jim Crow laws. In the 1940s and 1950s they were used occasionally but with limited success. The action of four students in Greensboro now captured the attention of the nation. The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), organized in April 1960, coordinated "sit-in" demonstrations throughout the South

([http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/rcah/html/ah\\_083000\\_studentnonvi.htm](http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/rcah/html/ah_083000_studentnonvi.htm)). In January 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized groups of bi-racial "Freedom Riders" to board buses in the North and travel south to force the desegregation of interstate commerce. On May 4, seven African Americans and six whites boarded a bus in Washington, D.C. and traveled through Virginia to Georgia eating at lunch counters and using public facilities at bus stations as they traveled deeper into the South. Approaching Birmingham, Alabama, the bus was firebombed. The picture of the burning bus conveyed to the world the extent to which some in the South would fight to keep segregation alive. Violence did not stop the Freedom Riders. It had the opposite effect, inspiring more and more to join the ranks. Freedom Riders rode into Montgomery, Alabama, and were attacked by a mob while the police looked on. With the nation's prestige at stake, the Kennedy administration took action after two years of virtual indifference.

Through the office of the Attorney General, the Kennedy administration confronted governors of Mississippi and Alabama who refused to integrate their state universities. Violence erupted at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) in 1962 forcing President Kennedy to send in federal troops to end rioting on campus because of the admission of an African American student. The following year, Kennedy, who had learned a lesson from the violence at Ole Miss, enlisted the Alabama National Guard to integrate the University of Alabama over the protest of Governor George Wallace. On the evening of June 11, 1963, after the successful integration of the university earlier that day, Kennedy addressed the nation announcing that he would send Congress a civil rights bill. Shortly after the address, a sniper murdered Medgar Evers, a civil rights leader, outside his home in Jackson, Mississippi. Public support for the proposed civil rights



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legislation swelled; however the bill stalled in Congress until the Kennedy assassination when President Lyndon Johnson pushed for its passage as a tribute to the assassinated president.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., months before the integration of the University of Alabama, organized peaceful street marches in Birmingham to protest racial barriers. King and over 1,500 demonstrators were arrested and jailed. On April 16, 1963, King wrote his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (<http://members.aol.com/klove01/jailltr.htm>) in response to an open letter in the Birmingham News signed by eight of the city's leading clergymen. In their letter to the editor, the white clergymen criticized King's tactics and advised African Americans to withdraw their support for demonstrations. King explained his commitment to civil disobedience in his reply written in his jail cell on the margins of the newspaper.

King and other prominent civil rights advocates, including A. Philip Randolph, who used a planned march on Washington to encourage President Franklin Roosevelt to end discrimination in defense contracts in 1941, organized a massive march on Washington to dramatize their commitment to persevere in the struggle against segregation. On the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his memorable "I Have a Dream" speech (<http://members.aol.com/klove01/dreamsp.htm>).

King's dream of one day when "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and girls and walk together as sisters and brothers" was shattered on September 15, less than a month after his words rang through the nation. Four little girls attending Sunday school at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama were killed when a bomb was thrown into the basement of the church during services. The brutal killing of four children shamed the nation. Dudley Randall's poem "The Ballad of Birmingham" (<http://www.edu.pe.ca/birchwood/power/puzzles.htm>), written in response to the church bombing, conveys the sense of hopelessness in rearing a child in a violent time.

Alabama was again the scene of violence on "Bloody Sunday," March 7, 1965. Civil rights leaders in Selma, Alabama, organized a march to the state capital in part to protest violence directed against peaceful demonstrators and the dismal record of voter registration of African Americans in Alabama. State troopers assembled on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma blocking the route to Montgomery and ordered marchers to disperse, giving them two minutes to respond. When marchers stood their ground, troopers fired tear gas canisters into the crowd and charged the marchers pushing them back with swinging clubs and cattle prods. Two young girls who were in the march described their experiences in the desegregation of Selma in their book *Selma, Lord, Selma*.

On March 15, President Johnson, in a nationwide television speech, attacked literacy tests that had been used to prevent eligible African Americans from voting in the South, and called for the passage of a new civil rights bill to guarantee voting rights. The march from Selma to Montgomery, delayed by Bloody Sunday, resumed on March 21. After a massive rally in the state capital, Viola Liuzzo, a white housewife and civil rights worker from Detroit, was murdered by Ku Klux Klansman as she was returning to Selma giving a black teenager a ride. Another name was added to the list of martyrs who had given their lives in the struggle for civil rights (<http://detnews.com/history/viola/viola.htm>).



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During the summer of 1964, three civil rights workers were murdered in Philadelphia, Mississippi, while attempting to register voters. The rash of brutal murders, church burnings, and beatings directed against civil rights advocates convinced some to abandon civil disobedience and join militant organizations. In northern cities, race riots broke out during the "long hot summer" of 1964. By 1968, race riots had broken out in major cities across the nation with a tremendous cost of life and property damage. The Los Angeles Watts riot in 1965 and the Detroit and Newark riots in 1967 were the most costly in human lives. Despite the Johnson administration's "War on Poverty," growing unemployment among African Americans in the North and West (and the perpetual cycle of poverty) fueled these violent confrontations and turned inner cities into battlegrounds.

Malcolm X, one of the earliest and most articulate voices for Black Power, came to the forefront of a Black Nationalist movement. In 1964, a year before his assassination, he broke with Elijah Muhammad's Black Muslims. Malcolm X readily acknowledged that he was an extremist. He declared that the "black race in the United States is in extremely bad shape. You show me a black man who isn't extremist and I'll show you one who needs psychiatric attention." By 1966 "black power" had become the rallying cry for change. Radical members of the Southern Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) became disillusioned with King's tactics. Under the leadership of Stokely Carmichael and later H. Rap Brown, SNCC adopted a separatist philosophy declaring that African Americans had to "construct an American reality defined by Afro-Americans." The Black Panther Party, formed in Oakland, California, in 1966, advocated a similar policy of separation and vowed to destroy capitalism.

Dr. King persisted in his policy of civil disobedience and held firm to the belief that the races could live together in an integrated America rather than adopt the policy of black separatism. King brought his campaign north in an effort to break down de facto segregation. He likewise joined in the growing number of voices in opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Despite growing support for Black Nationalism, King still was a charismatic leader, and his prestige and influence greatly aided the peace movement.

Growing unrest in the nation over the war in South Vietnam erupted into massive demonstrations patterned after the civil rights protests earlier in the decade. In October 1967, 100,000 marched on the Pentagon demanding a withdrawal from Vietnam confirming the administration's fear that the New Left (a loose confederation of black nationalists, anarchists, pacifists, and Marxists), Students for a Democratic Society (predominately college students from white middle-class families), and civil rights organizations would ally and would threaten the government's ability to carry out the war. The "Tet Offensive" beginning on the first day of the Vietnamese New Year (January 30, 1968) marked the beginning of the end of the Johnson administration ([http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/rcah/html/ah\\_085200\\_tetoffensive.htm](http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/rcah/html/ah_085200_tetoffensive.htm)) . Street fighting in Saigon and the fall of important strategic areas to the Viet Cong had tremendous repercussions in the United States. Controversy over war policy deepened and Democratic political leaders began to question the ability of Johnson to be reelected. At the end of March, 1968, Johnson announced that he would not seek reelection. A week later Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated in Memphis, throwing the nation into one of the most violent riots in American history.

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In August 1968, at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, thousands of protestors gathered representing a number of organizations. African Americans from the Poor People's Campaign, anti-war protestors, and Yippies (members of the Youth International Party) converged on Chicago. Over a thousand Chicago police, on 24-hour shifts, had been given an order to "shoot to kill" if violence erupted. Another 12,000 troops and Illinois National Guardsmen were placed on alert armed with rifles, flamethrowers, and bazookas. War broke out on the streets of downtown Chicago and television cameras recorded battles on Michigan Avenue in which police wielded clubs to beat protesters and turned on onlookers and reporters who attempted to shield the injured.

Richard Nixon, who lost the 1960 election to John Kennedy, emerged as the winner of the 1968 presidential election with 43 percent of the popular vote. Many credit Nixon's victory to the violence at the Democratic convention. The inauguration of a new president in 1969 did nothing to halt demonstrations against the war and racism. The turbulence of the "troubled decade" carried over to the 1970s with little hope that the wounds inflicted during the struggles of the '60s could be healed.

Protest music during the 1960s expressed feelings of shame and rage over the continuation of racism and the increased American involvement in the Vietnam War. Folk songs were the rallying cry of the civil rights movement. Among the numerous songs of the 1960s expressing support for the civil rights movement are:

**We Shall Overcome**, written circa 1900 and based on a gospel song, became the anthem of the civil rights movement  
(<http://www.ksu.edu/english/nelp/american.studies.s98/we.shall.overcome.html>)

**Mississippi Goddamn** (<http://www.high-priestess.com/mississippigoddamn.html>)

**A Change is Gonna Come**  
(<http://www.ksu.edu/english/nelp/american.studies.s98/a.change.is.gonna.come.html>)

**Everyday People** (<http://www.webfitz.com/lyrics/Lyrics/1969/131969.html>).

Free Jazz and Fusion expressed both pride and anger while reflecting on the social trauma and civil tumult of the 1960s.

Review the "African-Americans in the Twentieth Century" time line for 1960 (<http://www.liunet.edu/cwis/cwp/library/african/2000/1960.htm>) for a year-by-year review of major events during the decade. The "Encyclopedia Britannica Guide to Black History" (<http://blackhistory.eb.com/>) features short informative articles, photographs, film clips, and audio recordings that profile the civil rights movement.

For further research on the civil rights movement, view the online photography exhibit by Charles Moore, who catalogued the civil rights movement for Life Magazine (<http://www.kodak.com/US/en/corp/features/moore/mooreIndex.shtml>). The exhibit features several of Charles Moore's famous photographs taken during the violent clashes



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at the University of Mississippi, Birmingham, Selma, and rural Mississippi between 1958 and 1965. Also examine the Encyclopedia Britannica's Black History website (<http://blackhistory.eb.com/>) for a capsule view of the civil rights movement with hot links to audio and video clips or take a virtual tour of the Civil Rights Museum to explore pivotal events in the civil rights movement (<http://www.mecca.org/~crights/cyber.html>).

Questions to consider:

1. In the 1960s, what strategies did the civil rights movement use in order to achieve desegregation?
2. How effective were the "sit-in" demonstrations and the Freedom Rides?
3. Why did Martin Luther King, Jr. write the "Letter from Birmingham Jail?" What were the points he made in this famous letter?
4. Why is the "I Have a Dream" speech considered to be an American classic?
5. How did the violence against African Americans during the 1960s help to secure popular support for the passage of civil rights legislation?
6. How did the philosophy of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King differ?
7. How did protest music of the 1960s help marshal support for the civil rights movement and opposition towards the Vietnam War?
8. How did Free Jazz and Fusion reflect the times?

Suggested Amazon.com links:

*Voices of Freedom : An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s Through the 1980s* by Henry Hampton, Steve Fayer (Contributor). Paperback (February 1991)

(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0553352326/qid%3D972777060/103-3420126-1153432>)

*Selma, Lord, Selma* by Sheyan Webb, Rachel West Nelson, and Frank Sikora. Paperback (September 1997)

(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0817308989/qid%3D972775281/103-3420126-1153432>)



### **Jazz in America Student Handout--Lesson Plan VII--Jazz Biography 1**

#### **ORNETTE COLEMAN, ALTO SAXOPHONE** (b. 1930) Biography

(<http://www.harmolodic.com/ornette/>)

Ornette Coleman, a pioneer of "free jazz," believed that the musician should not be structured by established styles. According to Coleman, a musician should be completely free to explore and improvise without melodic or harmonic constraints. As a youngster, Coleman taught himself to play the saxophone from a "how-to" piano book. As an adult, he taught himself to play the trumpet and violin. Following other jazz greats, Coleman sought to break down barriers between modern jazz and classical music. He has composed much music including a symphonic suite, *Skies of America*, performed by the London Philharmonic and the American Symphony Orchestra.

Consider the following questions as you read the biography of Ornette Coleman:

1. When did Ornette Coleman form his first band?
2. Why did Coleman leave Fort Worth, Texas?
3. What was the basis of Coleman's "Harmolodic" music? Why was it so controversial?
4. How has African music influenced Coleman's compositions?

### **Jazz in America Student Handout--Lesson Plan VII--Jazz Biography 2**

#### **HERBIE HANCOCK, PIANO** (b. 1940) Biography

(<http://www.downbeat.com/artists/window.asp?action=new&aid=254&aname=Herbie+Hancock>)

Herbie Hancock, introduced to the piano as a child, became fascinated with jazz in high school. Hancock entered college seeking a career as an electrical engineer but decided instead to seek a career in music and moved to New York. Hancock wrote scores for several Hollywood movies and, in 1986, won an Oscar for his score for the jazz film *'Round Midnight*.

Consider the following questions as you read the biography of Herbie Hancock:

1. Who were the influences in Herbie Hancock's career?
2. What form of jazz did Hancock pioneer?
3. What awards has Hancock won for his music?
4. How has Hancock influenced modern jazz?