

JAZZ VOCABULARY

axe - instrument
ballad – slow tune
beat – steady pulse
bebop – style of fast swing
blow – to play (including rhythm section players)
blues – a form usually with twelve measures
bossa – a style with the beat divided into twos (also rock, latin)
break – short solo section without accompaniment
bridge – the “B” section of a tune
changes – chords or harmony of a tune
chart – written arrangement
chops – technical ability of a musician
chorus – one complete cycle through a tune
clams – wrong notes
fake book – melodies and chords of tunes
feel – the general shape , structure, tempo or style of a tune
form – architecture of a tune in groups of measures
front line – the horns in a combo
head – melody of a tune
improvisation – instantaneous composition
lead sheet – melody and chords of a tune
monster – a really good player
quote – part of an unexpected melody added to an improvisation
rhythm – lengths of sounds and silence based on the beat
rhythm changes – chords of the tune, “I Got Rhythm” by Gershwin
rhythm section – piano, bass, drums, guitar
riff – short, repeated figure usually behind a soloist
scat – singers using nonsense syllables to improvise
shed – to practice (behind the woodshed)
shout chorus – strong, last chorus
stand – bandstand
standards – tunes all musicians should know
syncopation – rhythms that start between beats and hold through the next
swing - a style where the beat is divided into threes
tag – ending of a tune
tempo – speed of the beat
trading fours – soloists alternating four measures, usually with the drummer
tune – song
up – a fast tempo tune
up front – introduction of a tune
vamp – repeated phrase to stall for time