

Seven Characteristics or “Markers” of Jazz

1. **Vocalized or a speech-like** use of instruments enables musicians to create a personalized voice.
2. **Unique rhythmic feeling**: also known as “syncopation,” “swing,” or “polyrhythm” and “rhythmic displacement.”
3. **Creativity and individuality** of the performers is emphasized above the intentions of the composer.
Improvisation is the major methodology for achieving personal expression.
4. **Blues tonality** informs the sound of jazz. Jazz makes use of blues tonality and often the formal structure of (folk) blues.
5. **Conflict, ambiguity, tension, and circumlocution** are ubiquitous in jazz across the basic elements of the music.
6. **Call and response (antiphonal) dialogue** is common and has a transformative effect.
7. **Spontaneous Communication** among players is allowed to affect the musical outcome, especially in improvisational formats.