

Glossary of Jazz Terms

A Section: *The first section of a tune, typically 8 bars; the main theme.*

AABA: *The most common form in pop music.*

Alteration: *The raising or lowering of a tone by a half-step, from its diatonic value in a chord. In Jazz usage, the fifth and ninth may be raised (augmented) or lowered (diminished); the fourth (or eleventh) may be augmented; the thirteenth may be diminished. The expression 'diminished seventh' is used solely as the name of a chord. Of course, in general music theory, any interval may be augmented or diminished.*

Altered scale: *The dominant 7th scale with a lowered 9th, raised 9th, raised 11th, no fifth, and lowered 13th, along with the usual root, 3rd and 7th. So-called because every possible alteration has been made.*

Augmented: *Raised by a half-step. See 'Alteration'.*

Augmented 7th (+7): *A dominant 7th chord with a raised 5th added. The name is misleading because it is not the 7th that is augmented.*

Axe: *One's instrument. Even said of the voice.*

B Section: *Same as bridge.*

Back-beat: *Beats 2 and 4 in 4/4 time, particularly when they are strongly accented. A term more used in rock 'n roll.*

Ballad: *A slow tune. Ballad playing is replete with its own idiomatic devices.*

Bebop: *The style of Jazz developed by young players in the early 40s, particularly Parker, Gillespie, Kenny Clarke, Charlie Christian and Bud Powell. Small groups were favored, and simple standard tunes or just their chord progressions were used as springboards for rapid, many-noted improvisations using long, irregular, syncopated phrasing. Improv was based on chordal harmony rather than the tune. The 'higher intervals' of the chords (9th, 11th and 13th) were emphasized in improv and in piano chord voicings, and alterations were used more freely than before, especially the augmented 11th. The ground beat was moved from the bass drum to the ride cymbal and the string bass, and the rhythmic feel is more flowing and subtle than before. Instrumental virtuosity was stressed, while tone quality became more restrained, less obviously 'expressive'.*

Block Chords: *A style of piano playing, developed by Milt Buckner and George Shearing, with both hands 'locked' together, playing chords in parallel with the melody, usually in fairly close position. It is a technical procedure requiring much practice, and can sound dated if the harmonies are not advanced enough. Also called locked hands.*

Blow: *The usual term for 'improvise.' It has a more mystical aura. Also, simply to play an instrument.*

Blowing changes: *The chords of a tune, particularly those intended specifically for improvising which may vary somewhat from the changes of the head. Sometimes written on a separate page.*

Blues: *(1) A form normally consisting of 12 bars, staying in one key and moving to IV at bar 5. (2) A melodic style, with typical associated harmonies, using certain 'blues scales', riffs and grace notes. (3) A musical genre, ancestral to Jazz and part of it. (4) A feeling that is said to inform all of Jazz.*

Boogie (boogie-woogie): A style of piano playing very popular in the thirties. Blues, with continuous repeated eighth note patterns in the left hand and exciting but often stereotyped blues riffs and figures in the right hand.

Break: A transitional passage in which a soloist plays unaccompanied.

Bridge: The contrasting middle section of a tune, especially the 'B' section of an AABA song form. Traditionally, the bridge goes into a different key, often a remote key.

Broken time: A way of playing in which the beat is not stated explicitly. Irregular, improvised syncopation. Especially applied to bass and drum playing.

Cadence: A key-establishing chord progression, generally following the circle of fifths. A turnaround is one example of a cadence. Sometimes a whole section of a tune can be an extended cadence. In understanding the harmonic structure of a tune, it's important to see which chords are connected to which others in cadences.

CESH: Contrapuntal Elaboration of Static Harmony, a foolish term used in some Jazz textbooks. The use of moving inner voices to give propulsion to a chord that lasts for a while.

Changes: (1) The chords of a tune. 'Playing' or 'running' the changes means using suitable scales, etc., over each given chord of the tune. Determining the exact changes to use is a big part of preparing a tune for performance. (2) Rhythm Changes (q.v.) for short.

Channel: An old term for the bridge.

Chase: Two soloists, such as the trumpet and sax, taking alternating 4-bar phrases (or 8, or 2). See Trading 4s.

Chart: (1) Any musical score. (2) A special type of score, used by Jazz musicians. Only the melody line, words (if any) and chord symbols are given. Clef, key signature and meter are given once only, at the beginning. The standards of musical notation and calligraphy are low. Details are often scanty or inaccurate, which encourages the musician to amend and elaborate the chart for his own purposes. Every Jazz musician has his own book of miscellaneous charts.

Chops: Technical ability, to execute music physically and to negotiate chord changes. Distinct from the capacity to have good ideas, to phrase effectively and build a solo.

Chord: The harmony at a given moment. Loosely, a group of 3 or more notes played together. Strictly, a chord is the basic unit of harmony, regarded abstractly as having a given root and specifying some other tones at certain intervals from the root, without regard to the actual voicing of the notes on the piano (see Voicing and Scale).

Chord tones: The root, third, fifth and seventh of a chord, as opposed to extensions.

Chromatic: Pertaining to or derived from the chromatic scale, which includes all 12 tones to the octave. Chromatic harmony is a vague term referring either to the use of many altered tones in the chord, or to the use of chromatic root-movement in between the given chords.

Chorus: One complete cycle of a tune, one time through from top to bottom.

Close voicing: One in which the chord tones are bunched together, generally within an octave range.

Coda: (1) A portion of a tune which seems like a tail, or extra measures, added to the last A section. It is repeated for every chorus, however. (2) An ending for a tune, used only once after the final chorus. There is often confusion in written charts as to whether a coda is 'every time' or 'out-chorus only'. Some charts, to save space, are written so that the tune appears to have a coda, but it's really just a normal part of the tune.

Cool: The style of the early 50s, taken up by many white musicians and popular on college campuses. The basis was bebop, but the fastest tempos were not used and the sound was quiet and understated. Miles Davis was one of the main originators.

Counting off: Giving the tempo and meter by counting aloud.

Cross-rhythm: A passage in which a different meter is temporarily expressed or implied, while the prevailing meter continues underneath (see meter). Not particularly a Jazz term, but cross-rhythms are universal in Jazz performance. In ballad playing, for example, there is commonly a triplet-quarter-note rhythm that implicitly continues through the 4/4 meter and is "tapped-into" from time to time.

Crush: On the piano, a half-step played simultaneously.

Diatonic: The contrary of 'chromatic'. Said of melody or harmony using only the unaltered major (or sometimes minor) scale.

Diminished: Lowered by a half-step. See 'Alteration'.

Diminished triad: Triad composed of two stacked minor thirds root, minor third, and diminished fifth.

Diminished seventh (°7): Chord composed of 4 notes, stacked in minor thirds. The symbol is a small raised circle. Since an additional minor third on top will be the octave of the bottom note, inversions of a °7 will have the same interval structure in other words, they will also be diminished 7th chords in their own right. The extensions of a °7 are a ninth (or whole step) above each chord tone. Effective modern voicing requires using at least one extension; plain °7 chords sound remarkably old-fashioned. If the chord tones and extensions are put together within an octave, the diminished scale results. Often called just 'diminished' with '7th' being implied.

Diminished Scale: A scale of 8 notes to the octave in alternating whole-steps and half-steps. There are just three different diminished scales. Quite a complicated system of voicings and motivic patterns for diminished has been developed by modern players.

Dot time: A cross-rhythm based on dotted quarter notes, extending through a passage.

Double time: A tempo twice as fast, with the time feel, bar lines and chords moving at twice the speed.

Double time feel: A time feel twice as fast, so that written eighth notes now sound like quarter notes, while the chords continue at the same speed as before.

Eight to the bar: Continuous eighth-note rhythm, as in boogie-woogie left hand patterns.

Extensions: The ninth, eleventh and thirteenth of a chord.

Fake Book: A collection of Jazz charts, published without paying royalties and thus illegal (not in the Public Domain.) For decades, a book called '1000 Standard Tunes' circulated; you can still see its grossly simplified charts, written three to a page.

Free: Without rules. Especially, improvising without regard to the chord changes, or without any chord changes. Usually there is an implied restriction in 'free' playing preventing one from sounding as if chord changes are being used.

Free Jazz: A style of the early and middle sixties, involving 'free' playing and a vehement affect. It was originally associated with black cultural nationalism. Sometimes two drummers and/or two bass players were used. Some free Jazz was not very good, and some who played it later denounced it, but the style became an ingredient in future styles.

Fusion: . Incorporated elements of rock into Jazz and made greater use of repetition and non-improvised passages. Harmonic language was simplified; key feeling tended to be established by repetition rather than harmonic movement. Straight-8 time and a strong back-beat predominated.

Front: 'In front' means before the top, as an intro.

Front line: The horn players in a combo, those who aren't in the rhythm section.

Grand Staff: The complete 11 line staff encompassing the treble, alto, tenor and bass cleffs.

Go out: Take the final chorus, end.

Groove: An infectious feeling of rightness in the rhythm, of being perfectly centered. This is a difficult term to define. A Medium Groove is a tempo of, say, 112, with a slinky or funky feeling.

Ground beat: The basic metric beat, most often in quarter-notes, whether explicitly stated or not.

Half-diminished (^ø): The chord with a minor third, a lowered (diminished) fifth, and a minor seventh. Formally called 'minor 7 flat 5'. This chord probably evolved from the IV minor 6th chord, which was common in the swing period; if its sixth is taken to be the root, a half-diminished chord results. The symbol is a small O with a diagonal slash. It is most often the harmony of the ii in a ii-V-I progression in a minor key. Two different scales have been commonly used for this chord; one with a flat 9th, the 'locrian', and one with an unflatted ninth, the latter scale being more modern.

Half time: A tempo half as fast.

Half time feel: A time feel half as fast, while the chords go by in the same amount of time..

Hard Bop: The style of the late 50s, engineered by Horace Silver, Art Blakey, etc. Still essentially Bebop, the style used hard-driving rhythmic feel and vehement, biting lines and harmony drenched with urban blues, rhythm 'n blues and gospel. Original compositions were stressed over the old standards used in Bebop, ranging from simple riff-based blues to elaborate compositions, sometimes using whole-tone scales

Harmonic rhythm: The structural organization of chord progressions in time; the rate at which the chords pass by. Since this may not be related to the rhythms of the actual notes, it is an abstract concept.

Head: The first (and last) chorus of a tune, in which the song or melody is stated without improvisation or with minimal improvisation.

Hip (or Hep): Keenly aware of or knowledgeable about life's developments, especially in the arts. "Hipness is what it is. But sometimes hipness is what it ain't..."

Horn: A wind instrument; or any instrument.

Improvisation (improv): The process of spontaneously creating fresh melodies over the continuously repeating cycle of chord changes of a tune. The improviser may depend on the contours of the original tune, or solely on the possibilities of the chords' harmonies. The 'improv' also refers to the improvisational section of the tune, as opposed to the head.

Inner voice: A melodic line, no matter how fragmentary, lying between the bass and the melody.

Interlude: An additional section in a tune, especially one between one person's solo and another's.

Intro (Introduction): A composed section at the beginning of a tune, heard only once.

Inversion: (1) In traditional music theory, a chord with a note other than the root in the bass. (2) With regard to any particular voicing, especially a left-hand rootless voicing, a rearrangement of the voicing by moving the bottom note up an octave. Or, any one octavewise arrangement of a voicing.

Jazz: (1) A style of American music that originated in New Orleans circa 1900, characterized by strong, prominent meter, improvisation, distinctive tone colors and performance techniques, and dotted or syncopated rhythmic patterns. (2) In a big band chart, a rhythm indication for medium to up-tempo swing (as opposed to latin).

Jazz Standard: A well-known tune by a Jazz musician. See Standard.

Jump: A very fast 4/4, usually in a dance-band context.

Latin: (1) Afro-Cuban, Brazilian or other South American-derived. There are many special terms used in Latin music and I haven't tried to include them here. (2) Played with equal eighth notes as opposed to swung (see swing def. 2). Also 'straight-8'. The feel of bossa novas and sambas.

Lay out: Not play. See stroll.

Left hand rootless voicing ('LHRV'): A close-position voicing without a root, played mainly in the octave of middle C. In a style perfected by Bill Evans, these left-hand chords are sprinkled in irregular syncopations under the right-hand melody. The absence of roots both frees the bass player and allows a richer harmony in the voicing. This has become the mainstream style of left-hand playing.

Legit: The Jazz musician's somewhat ironic term for music, or a gig, that is not Jazz.

Line: (1) A melody of successive, single notes. (2) A composed melody over predetermined chord changes, (3) One of the different voices, such as the bass or the melody.

Line-up: The personnel of a band.

Long Meter: A chart in 4/4 time is said to be written in long meter when a written eighth-note feels like a quarter-note, and a written half-measure feels like a whole measure. In this way, for example, a 64-bar tune can be written as if it were a 32-bar tune, which may make it easier to read. The term, though useful, is little-known.

Lydian: A major scale or chord with a raised 4th; the mode of the major scale built on 4. Regarded as the most fundamental Jazz scale by influential theorist George Russell.

Lydian Dominant: A dominant 7th scale with a raised 4th (11th). One of the fundamental forms of the dominant chord; also sometimes called 'lydo-mixian'. The scale/chord most appropriate for non-V dominants, such as II7 or bVII7.

Mainstream: The style of Jazz regarded by the average player as today's norm, as opposed to fusion, rock, avant-garde, etc.; sometimes the term implies a somewhat conservative, relatively diatonic vocabulary exemplified by Oscar Peterson.

Mainstream Jazz is in a highly evolved state, having incorporated virtually the entire harmonic language of 20th century tonal music. In timbre, phrasing, form and rhythmic feel mainstream Jazz still rests on a basis of Bebop, which is why 'modern' Jazz is considered to have started with Bebop in the early 40s.

Medium: One of the standard Jazz tempos, neither 'up' nor 'ballad'.

Melodic minor: In Jazz, a scale with a minor 3rd but a major 6th and 7th (both up and down). This scale and its modes (Altered, Half-diminished and Lydian Dominant are the familiar ones) make up a realm called melodic minor harmony. Also called 'tonic minor'.

Melody: Specifically, the topmost line or voice.

Meter: A basic music term, but sometimes not fully understood. The organization of the beats of time (or ground beat), moving at a certain rate (the tempo), into groupings which are hierarchical, that is, there is a unit of a stated number of beats (the bar) which includes strong and weak beats in an organized pattern. All this is implied by a 'meter' of 4/4, 3/4, etc.

Modal: (1) Said of a section, or a whole tune, having static harmony (using one chord) and using scales from a particular mode, most typically the Dorian. (2) Having a key feeling derived not from dynamic chord progressions (like circle-of-fifths) but rather from repetition, monotony, and weight. (3) Loosely, a harmonic style that is diatonic and makes use of quartal harmony.

Mode: An incarnation of a scale in which a certain note is taken as the root. Thus, each scale has as many different modes as it has different tones. In common usage, the major scale and the melodic minor scale are regarded as 'given' and the scales constructed with other notes as the root are called modes. The modes of the major scale have names (Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Locrian); these names were applied in the Renaissance and have no relationship to the Greek originals. Some of the melodic minor scale's modes have names in today's theory: mode 3, the augmented major 7th; mode 4, the Lydian dominant; mode 6, the half-diminished; mode 7, the altered.

Modern: The styles of Jazz since 1945. Especially applied to Bebop, Cool Jazz, and Hard Bop.

Modulation: The establishment of a new key. This is mainly a matter of harmonic progression, but expectation, emphasis and phrasing also enter into determining whether a new key has really been established. In standards, a modulation to the beginning of the bridge is strongly expected. Typically, a II - V or a iii - VI - ii - V progression in the new key is used.

Moldy Fig: A term used by the Beboppers to deride players and fans of older styles, especially trad. Someone whose tastes are not up to date.

Monster: A superior player.

Montuno: A term of Latin music which crops up in other Jazz. (1) An indefinitely repeated pattern of 1, 2 or 4 bars in the piano, typically with ingeniously syncopated moving inner voices and a differently syncopated bass line. (2) Incorrectly, a pyramiding vamp in which one instrument enters alone, then another is added, and so on at regular intervals.

Moving inner voice: A momentarily prominent line played by a voice in between the melody and the bass.

Neo-bop: The conservative Bebop style of several successful players in the 90s, like Roy Hargrove.

Open voicing: One in which the chord tones are spread out over a greater range.

Original: A tune composed by a Jazz musician and played by him but perhaps not well-known to others.

Out: The last chorus of a tune, when the head is played for the last time. On the stand the gesture of a raised clenched fist or a finger pointing to the head indicates that the out chorus is coming up.

Outer voice: The melody line or the bass, the top or bottom line.

Outro: A jocular term for coda; an added ending section.

Outside: (1) The A sections of a tune, the parts other than the bridge. (2) A manner of playing over changes that avoids using the normal scales, or has no relationship to the changes. (3) A style of playing without using conventional Jazz chords.

Pattern: A pre-planned melodic figure, repeated at different pitch levels. Something played automatically by the fingers without much thought. Reliance on patterns is the hallmark of a weak player.

Pedal: A bass line that stays mainly on one note (or its octaves) under several changes of harmony. Also pedal-point. The most typical situation is when a dominant pedal (bass on V) underlies a turnaround progression like I - VI - ii - V. The root of the I chord can also act as a pedal.

Pentatonic: Pertaining to scales of 5 notes to the octave, in particular 1-2-3-5-6 of the major scale. Pentatonic melodies are typical of much indigenous music around the world, and these scales are also an important part of the modern Jazz sound. Pentatonic melodies and patterns were especially typical of Jazz and fusion in the seventies.

Pickup: A phrase beginning that comes before the beginning of the first bar. A pickup can be one note or a longer phrase.

Pocket: In the pocket means perfectly in time, especially bass playing that is 'in the center' of the beat (rather than slightly leading or dragging the beat).

Polytonality: The use of two different keys simultaneously. Despite much loose talk, true polytonality is rare. Upper structures (q.v.) and outside playing do not usually qualify because there is always a strong single underlying tonality.

Progression: A definite series of chords, forming a passage with some harmonic unity or dramatic meaning. One speaks of the progressions that crop up repeatedly in different tunes, and studies how to negotiate them. Chords in progressions are labelled with Roman numerals (I, II, etc.) while scale degrees, and upper structures (q.v.), are labelled with arabic numerals (1, 2, etc.).

Quality: The character of a chord given by its third, fifth, and seventh. The qualities are major, dominant, minor, tonic minor, half-diminished and diminished. In theory augmented major and augmented (dominant) would also be 'qualities' but they are usually just considered alterations.

Quartal: Based on fourths.

Quote: A snatch of some other well-known tune thrown into a solo. A good quote is unexpected, incongruous and yet seems to fit perfectly.

Remote key: A key distant on the circle of fifths from the original one, such as E major compared to C major.

Riff: (1) A relatively simple, catchy repeated phrase. May be played behind a soloist or as part of a head. Often in a bluesy style. Riff tunes are made up of riffs, characteristic of the black bands of the 30s. (2) A pre-packaged phrase used by an improviser when he can't think of anything else, especially one which is especially catchy.

Root: The fundamental pitch on which a chord is based, from which the chord takes its name, and to which the other tones of the chord are referred to intervallically the third, seventh, and so on, regardless of their actual intervallic relationship in an actual keyboard voicing. Note that the root is often absent in Jazz piano, both in voicings and in r.h. patterns and lines. This avoidance of the obvious is part of the character of Jazz.

Rhythm Changes: The chords to 'I Got Rhythm' (Gershwin), somewhat modified and simplified. Many Jazz tunes use these changes and every player must know them. There are several variations.

Rhythm Section: The piano, bass and drums in a combo, those who play throughout the tune, behind the soloists. Might also include guitar or vibes, or there might be no piano.

Run: A rapid descending, or ascending, usually right-hand passage on the piano in the form of a continuous scale, or a scale with variations.

Scale: (1) A selection of tones in the octave, arranged in ascending or descending order, usually but not always using intervals of half- or whole-steps, and using the same notes in every successive octave. One tone is usually thought of as being the root, but it need not be the first note played. Most scales have 5, 6, 7 or 8 notes to the octave but any number from 2 to 12 is possible. (2) The same group of tones regarded abstractly as a 'pool' of available notes. In this sense, scale really means the same as chord. There is a maxim: 'Scales are chords and chords are scales.' (3) A section of melody in the form of a scale.

Shed: Short for Woodshed, to practice diligently.

Shell: A two-note structure in the left hand, consisting of the root and one other note, usually the 7th, the 3rd or 10th, or the 6th.

Shout chorus: A special, complete, through-composed chorus played just before the final out-chorus.

Side-slipping: To play a passage, a melody or chord, a half-step up or down from its expected place or in relation to the given harmony.

Solo: Any one player's improvisation over one or more choruses of the tune (occasionally, especially in ballads, less than one chorus). A sharp distinction is made between soloing, and playing the head.

Song form: A musical form with two contrasting themes A and B, thus-- A (8 bars); A repeated; B (8 bars); A repeated. The three A's have slightly different endings (turnarounds). Another common form may be called song form also, ABAB' (the second B starting like the first but ending differently)

Stand: The bandstand or stage.

Standard: A tune universally accepted and played by many Jazz musicians. A professional Jazz musician is expected to know many, many standards.

Stop time: A rhythm where certain beats aren't played, e.g. 1 2 3 (rest) 1 2 3 (rest).

Straight 8s: With equal, even 8th notes. Same as 'Latin'.

Stride: The typical piano style of the 30s, tending towards virtuosity. The left hand plays alternating low-register bass notes (or octaves, fifths or tenths) and middle register rootless voicings, giving an 'oom-pah' effect, interspersed with step-wise parallel tenths. The right hand often employs busy runs, arpeggios and octaves or full chords. Suggestions of stride remain in the technique of many of today's players.

Stroll: Omit the piano. A soloist (playing a horn) strolls when he plays for a time with bass and drums only (or maybe the pianist strolls outside to have a smoke).

Substitution: A chord put in the place of a different chord. A substitution can be made throughout a tune, or just ad lib at a particular moment. Usually the operative idea is that the root of the chord is changed, while the other voices are common to both chords. Typical examples bII 7 for V7, and iii for I.

Swing: (1) The style of the 30s, when the big band was the dominant form of Jazz. The style implies certain types of harmony (use of added 6ths rather than 7ths in major and minor chords, of un-embellished diminished chords, frequent use of the augmented 5th and little use of the augmented 11th, etc.) and a rhythmic organization that states the beat explicitly, puts more weight on 1 and 3 and tends to obey the bar-line phrasing. (2) A rhythmic manner, unique to Jazz, in which the first of a pair of written 8th notes is played longer than the second, even twice as long, while the second tends to receive a slight accent, though the distribution of accents is irregular and syncopated. (The degree of this effect depends on the overall tempo, and is modified by the requirements of expression and phrasing.) (3) As a

direction in a chart, played with a swing feel, as opposed to latin. (4) A mysterious, unexplainable quality in any music, but especially Jazz, which makes one 'feel that shit all up in your body' (Miles Davis).

Syncoption: The process of displacing 'expected' beats by anticipation or delay of one-half a beat. The natural melodic accent which would fall, in 'square' music, on the beat, is thus heard on the off-beat. This adds a flavor of ambiguity as to where the beat is (not an actual ambiguity, only a flavor).

Tenor: The voice above the bass, often that played by the thumb of the left hand. Not a Jazz term.

Tetrachord: A four-note portion of a scale. For example, the diminished scale is composed of two tetrachords with identical interval constructions.

Third stream: A term coined by Gunther Schuller in the early 50s. The supposed confluence of Jazz and classical music.

Thumb line: The Jazz term for 'tenor' (q.v.). A line played by the pianist's left thumb.

Timbre: [pronounced tamb'r] Tone quality, characteristic instrumental sound. Not especially a Jazz term, but note that timbre is one of the basic dimensions of music along with rhythm, melody and harmony. Students sometimes have trouble developing a real Jazz timbre. For the piano the word 'touch' is more usual.

Time feel: (1) The subjective impression of which time unit constitutes one beat and how long a bar is. May or may not correspond to the written music. (2) The emotional quality of the rhythm.

Tonic minor: A scale / chord with a minor 3rd and a major 6th and 7th, generally used for the tonic or home chord in minor keys. Distinguished from other minor chord functions.

Top: The beginning point of each chorus, the first beat of the first measure.

Trad: (Traditional) the Jazz style of the of the early 1900s, known retrospectively as Dixieland. Used a marked 4/4 beat, triadic harmony, 'sectional' tunes (with numerous separate sections), simultaneous improvisation, largely I - IV - V type harmonies, etc.

Trading 4s (or 8s, 2s): A form of discontinuous drum solo in which 4 measure sections are alternately played solo by the drummer, and by the band with another soloist (who goes first). The latter can be one particular soloist throughout, or it can cycle through the different instruments. Also, two different instrumental soloists can trade 4s with each other, such as the trumpet and the sax. This is called a chase. Trading 4s usually goes on for one or two choruses.

Tranpose: To write or perform (a composition) in a key other than the original or given key, most often to accomodate the range of a vocalist or another instrument.

Triad: (1) Concretely, a chord of three notes - the root, 3rd and 5th - played together in close position in one of the three inversions. (2) Abstractly, a chord with a root, 3rd and 5th but no 7th. Might be decorated with the 6th or 9th. Triadic harmony is characteristic of Dixieland and rock.

Tritone: The interval of three whole steps, i.e. an augmented 4th or diminished 5th.

Tritone substitution: See 'Substitution'. The substitution of a chord whose root is a tritone away. In turnarounds it's common to do this for any of the chords.

Tune: A single Jazz composition or Jazz performance, a piece. The word 'song' is frowned on.

Turnaround: A sequence of chords, or the portion of a tune that they occupy, that forms a cadence at the end of a section of a tune, definitively establishes the tonic key and leads back to the opening chord of the next section, or to the top. Typically the turnaround chords are I - VI - ii - V, with half a measure apiece. With possible substitutions and alterations, the variations are infinite. There are also entirely different progressions possible. If the opening chord of the next section is not a I chord, the turnaround must be suitable. Learning to negotiate turnarounds is essential to making a coherent solo.

Up: In a fast tempo.

Upper structure: A triad used in the upper register over a chord of a different root, such as an A major triad over a C7 chord. From the standpoint of C7, the A triad consists of the 13th, the flat 9th, and the 3rd; at the same time it has the unified sound of a major triad.

Vamp: A simple section like a riff, designed to be repeated as often as necessary, especially one at the beginning of a tune. Also a constantly repeated bass line over which a solo is played.

Verse: In many older standard songs, an introductory section, often rubato, that leads up to the 'chorus' or main strain, which is the tune as generally recognized. Jazz players (and fakebooks) usually omit the verse, though singers like to use them.

Voice: Any one of the melodic lines formed by the flow of the music. The bass line and the melody form the two outer voices, and the tones in between may, to a greater or lesser extent, form melodic lines of their own called inner voices.

Voice-leading: Getting the succession of harmonic tones in the inner voices to form coherent melodic lines of their own, or, at least, to move in a smooth, mainly step-wise motion. The perfection of voice-leading was in Bach, where 4 or more independent melodies can mesh to form perfect chordal harmony.

Voicing: A particular arrangement of the notes of a chord in which chosen harmonies color the tone.

Walk: In bass playing, to play mostly one note per beat, making a smooth, continuous quarter-note line. A fulfillment of the time-keeping function of bass playing, which many bass players have transcended since around 1960. The pianist can also walk with his left hand.

West Coast School: A much criticized label for the 'Cool' style (q.v.) as it was taken up in California in the early 50s by mostly white players, like Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker and many lesser figures like pianist Russ Freeman. In addition to the typical features of cool Jazz, the style experimented with 'classical' instruments and complex counterpoint.

Whole-tone: A 6-note scale, of which there are two, made up entirely of whole-step intervals, or the harmonies derived from it.

Woodshed: To practice diligently. Also 'shed'.

X: 'Time'. Thus ' 4X ' on a chart means '[play] four times'