

# Music of the 1930's essay sample

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Many people probably wouldn't have made it through the 1930's without music. The people who listened to the music said it was their way of life (Microsoft music). Music helped people forget about all the bad and horrible things going on around them, it let them escape their day to day troubles if just for a little while. The kind of music most people listened to was the high beat " Swing". Swing was said to have been born in 1938 when Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers recorded " George Swing" (Microsoft music). Others say it started on a cold night when Bennie Moten's band got an entire Kansas City ballroom jumping (World Book 159). Still others say it all started in 1932 when the great Duke Ellington recorded the album " The Anthem of Idiom", " It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)". From the definition of the Webster Dictionary, swing involves a departure from the written score by maintaining the underlying beat, but playing the melody between and around the beat in a fashion other than it is written (Pg. 2121). More commonly, swing refers to what we call " big band" jazz of the 1930's- music performed by groups which generally featured several of each instrument and playing a steady but still wild beat that was great for dancing. Swing was a big band music with some exceptions like Benny Goodman's small bands. The great swing band included those of Louis Russell, Earl Hines, Jimmy Lancford, Andy Kirk, Harlen Leonard, Claude Hopkins, Chick Webb, Don Redmen, Benny Carter, Bunny Bengan, Charlie Barnet, Harry James, Woody Herman, Lionel Hampton, and the great Count Basie. Count Basie started out his young career as a jazz musician playing to silent movies. Then in 1928 he joined Walter Page's Blue Devils, starting a 20 year long association with the Bassist. When the Blue Devils broke up Basie

joined Bernie Moten's band, and then in 1935 started his own band, the Reno Club and quickly went to the top. In 1938, the band recorded the classic track "Jumpin At the Woodside" with three of the most accomplished musicians of the time, featuring solos by, Earl Warren and Herschel Evans as well as Young and Clayton.

One of the people who made the biggest impact on the 1930's music was the trumpet player, Louis Armstrong. He was the true soloist of jazz.

Armstrong was a great improviser, technically, emotionally, and intellectually (The Simon and Schuster Listener Guide to Jazz, 28). He changed the format of jazz by bringing the soloist to the forefront, and his recording groups, the Hot Five and the Hot Seven, showed people that jazz improvisation could go for beyond simply ornamenting the melody; he created new melodies based on chords of the initial tune (Microsoft, Encarta). He also made standards for all later jazz singers, not only by the way he changed the words and melodies of songs, but also by improvising without words, by using instruments in place of words (The simon and Schuster Listener guide to Jazz, 27). The most innovative pianist of the 1930's , comparable to Armstrong, was Earl " Fatha" Hines, a Chicago born musical wizard considered to have a wild, unpredictable imagination (Microsoft Music). His style influenced pianist of the next generation.

One of the most popular ways of playing the piano in the 1930's was called the boogie-woogie, a form of blues and swing mixed together. It consists of a short, sharply accented bass pattern played over and over by the left hand while the right hand plays freely, using a variety of rhythms (Microsoft

Encarta). Leading boogie-woogie pianists included Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons, Pete Johnson, and Pine Top Smith. The great efforts of Armstrong, Ellington, Henderson, and others made jazz a dominant influence on American music during the 1920's and 1930's. Popular musicians such as the band leader Paul Whiteman used some of the most common beats and rhythm of jazz, although with less freedom and skill than were displayed in the music of the great jazz players. Attempting to combine jazz with light classical music, Whiteman's orchestra also played jazzy pieces by American composers such as George Gershwin. I believe that these artists I have talked about were some of the most important people during the Depression. When people were sad and nothing was going right they always had their radio to turn on. Without the good times jazz brought to them, who knows how the Depression would have turned out without the music of the 1930's.