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Scott Joplin

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Bessie Smith:

“In 1925, Bessie Smith waxed her take on W.C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues," featuring a young Louis Armstrong on cornet. It became one of her most popular and enduring recordings. No blues singer can escape the influence of [Bessie Smith](#), "The Empress of the Blues." Through hugely popular recordings and a busy nationwide touring schedule, she gave the blues a raw, regal poignancy — and marketability. Her feverish growls and impassioned delivery informed nearly every facet of African American music.” –npr

The lyrics tell of a sophisticated woman from [St. Louis, Missouri](#) who has stolen the affection of the singer's lover. The opening line, "I hate to see that evenin' sun go down" may be one of the more recognizable lyrics in [pop music](#), and set the tone for many subsequent blues songs.

Handy said he had been inspired by a chance meeting with a woman on the streets of St. Louis distraught over her husband's absence, who lamented: "Ma man's got a heart like a rock cast in de sea", a key line of the song.^[1] Details of the story vary but agree on the meeting and the phrase.

introduction as well as the sixteen measure bridge.^[4]

While blues became often simple and repetitive in form, the St. Louis Blues has multiple complementary and contrasting strains, similar to classic [ragtime](#) compositions.

King Oliver:

Joe Oliver is one of the most important figures in early Jazz. The phrase Hot Jazz, really refers to his style of collective improvisation (rather than solos). He was the mentor and teacher of [Louis Armstrong](#). [Louis](#) idolized him and called him Papa Joe. Oliver even gave [Armstrong](#) the first cornet that [Louis](#) was to own.

"Dippermouth Blues is probably the most widely copied solo ever played. Oliver's wa-wa feature on "Dippermouth Blues" reveals how the utterly simple (three successive choruses based on a six-note blues scale) can be rendered profound." –delmark

Louis Amrstrong West End Blues:

"**West End Blues**" is a multi-strain [12 bar blues](#) composition by [Joe "King" Oliver](#).

considered one of the masterpieces of early [jazz](#).

[Louis Armstrong](#) plays [trumpet](#) (and does some relaxed [scat singing](#)).

In an eight-bar trumpet solo near the end of the record, Armstrong played a solo considered among the finest recordings in jazz history.

Other portions of this record also in high regard include the trumpet introduction by Armstrong that begins the song - this cadenza

incorporates an almost syncopated opening, the wordless 'scat' singing chorus by Armstrong where he accompanies and varies a melody played by the clarinetist.

"West End Blues" has been recorded many times since, usually owing much to the Armstrong version. Jazz writer and historian [William Russell](#) has commented that other jazz trumpeters would be better off avoiding the too frequent imitations of Armstrong's introduction on the number; while the most virtuosic may have the technical ability to duplicate Armstrong's notes, they still suffer in comparison to Armstrong's feeling and originality.

Ella Fitzgerald:

"I stole everything I ever heard, but mostly I stole from the horns... Once, when we were playing at the Apollo, Holiday was working a block away at the Harlem Opera House. Some of us went over between shows to catch her, and afterwards we went backstage. I did something then, and I still don't know if it was the right thing to do - I asked her for her autograph." – Ella

Ella Fitzgerald had an extraordinary [vocal range](#). A [mezzo-soprano](#), (who sang much lower than most classical contraltos) she had a range of "2 octaves and a sixth from a low D or D flat to a high B flat and possibly higher". -wiki

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Basie:

William “Count” Basie has had such a widespread influence, it can be heard in virtually every big jazz band to date. Basie was first noticed on the scene when he joined Bennie Moten’s [Kansas City](#) Band.

They were developing a new sound in big band jazz; A style that was simpler than that of [Duke Ellington](#) or Fletcher Henderson. It used short phrases called “riffs” exchanged back and forth between sections. This Call and response method of playing left plenty of room for soloists to be highlighted and many different disciplines of jazz and blues to find a place in the [big band](#) sound. Count Basie’s piano style fit this incorporation perfectly.

He first learned to play piano in his hometown of Red Bank, New Jersey. Basie’s first influences were Earl Hines, Teddy Wilson and [Fats Waller](#). These musicians shaped his minimal style. He then joined the vaudeville circuit in New York, playing the thumping stride style accompanying the show. By smoothing out the syncopated thump of this style, he further advanced his own. In 1927, [Count Basie](#) got a job playing piano accompaniment to silent movies. He

then joined Walter Page's Blue Devils and from there along with several other members joined Bernie Moten's Kansas City Band. When Bennie Moten passed away in 1935, Basie formed his own 9 piece group, Barons of Rhythm, that included tenor saxophonist Lester Young and drummer Jo Jones. Through live broadcasts from the Reno Club, they attracted quite a bit of attention. Their style was a powerful swing, intensified by Basie's frequent playing with the rhythm section alone, giving the band a unique sound and identity. This raised Basie's stature in the community onto an even keel with Duke Ellington, earning him the nickname "Count".

Initially, his band didn't cause much stir when booked for a run at Chicago's Grand Terrace, but by expanding to 15 members before his next engagement at New York's Famous *Door* on 52nd Street, the band took off. Though their early efforts were rough, their exuberance and enthusiasm attracted audiences in droves. Drawing his early repertoire from Fletcher Henderson and the Mills' Blues Rhythm Band, his simple riffs shot through with blues, combined with Jo Jones's lighter, cymbal oriented drumming , loosened the beat and put the emphasis on Page's steady bass and Basie's swinging piano.

In 1950 Basie and his band called it a day, due to the strain WWII put on big bands, but by 1952, he was back in the game.

He played right up into his 70's, though hampered by illness, he was still irrepressible at the key board until his death in April of 1984.

Bud Powell:

Bud Powell is generally considered to be the most important pianist in the history of jazz. Noted jazz writer and critic Gary Giddins, in *Visions of Jazz*, goes even further, saying that "Powell will be recognized as one of the most formidable creators of piano music in any time or idiom. His first recordings were made in 1944, when he was a 20 year old pianist in the Cootie Williams Band, and his last recordings were made in 1964 when he returned from several years in Europe to play at Birdland. Between those dates Bud Powell played with the greatest jazz musicians of his generation including Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Dexter Gordon, Charlie Mingus and Max Roach. The recordings he made for the forerunners of the Verve label and for Blue Note, as well as many lesser known labels, are among the greatest jazz recordings of all time.

Not as much of a showman as musicians like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell has not received as much public recognition as some of his contemporaries. Nevertheless his fellow musicians were in awe of his creativity and skill, which in his prime were considered almost superhuman. –budpowelljazz.com

Monk Quartet Evidence:

Thelonious Sphere Monk^[1] (October 10, 1917 – February 17, 1982) was an American [jazz pianist](#) and [composer](#) considered "one of the

giants of American music".^[2] Monk had a unique [improvisational](#) style and made numerous contributions to the standard jazz repertoire, Monk is the second most recorded jazz composer after [Duke Ellington](#), which is particularly remarkable as Ellington composed over 1,000 songs while Monk wrote about 70.^[3]

Often regarded as a founder of [bebop](#), Monk's playing later evolved away from that style. His compositions and improvisations are full of dissonant harmonies and angular melodic twists, and are consistent with Monk's unorthodox approach to the piano, which combined a highly percussive attack with abrupt, dramatic use of silences and hesitations. Monk's manner was idiosyncratic. Visually, he was renowned for his distinctive style in suits, hats and sunglasses. He was also noted for the fact that at times, while the other musicians in the band continued playing, he would stop, stand up from the keyboard and dance for a few moments before returning to the piano. Monk made his first recordings as leader for [Blue Note](#) in 1947, which showcased his talents as a composer of original melodies for improvisation. In August 1951, New York City police searched a parked car occupied by Monk and friend [Bud Powell](#). The police found narcotics in the car, presumed to have belonged to Powell. Monk refused to testify against his friend, so the police confiscated his [New York City Cabaret Card](#).