

BEBOP CHARACTERISTICS

compiled by David Baker

1. COMPLEX HARMONIC IDEAS
2. LONGER MELODIC PHRASES USING ODD INTERVALS BUILT ON THE EXTENSION OF CHORDS (9ths, 11ths, 13ths, etc.) .
3. HARMONY GAINED EQUAL FOOTING WITH MELODY AND RHYTHM (WESTERN INFLUENCE).
4. A SOUND INSTRUMENTAL TECHNIQUE WAS MANDATORY.
5. A GOOD EAR AND A QUICK MIND WERE INDISPENSIBLE.
6. EIGHTH NOTES AND SIXTEENTH NOTES BECAME THE BASIC UNITS OF TIME.
7. HORNS AIMED FOR CLEAN, PIANO-LIKE EXECUTION.
8. PLAYERS FOLLOWED THE TREND TOWARD THE VIBRATOLESS SOUND (REDUCING THE LATITUDE AND FLEXIBILITY OF SOUND PRODUCTION IS ANOTHER WESTERN CONCEPT). AS A PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION, VIRTUOSITY DEMANDS AN UNENCUMBERED SOUND.
9. THE EMPHASIS WAS MORE ON CONTENT THAN ON SOUND.
10. COMPLEX CHORDS PROVIDED THE SOLOIST WITH A BROADER HARMONIC BASE, CONSEQUENTLY MAKING POSSIBLE A GREATER VARIETY OF NOTE CHOICES AND A HIGHER INCIDENCE OF CHROMATICISM.
11. CHORDS SERVED AS THE IMPROVISATIONAL REFERENTIAL RATHER THAN THE MELODY.
12. HOT IMPROVISATION (FAST, INTENSE, IMPASSIONED) WAS THE RULE.
13. COLLECTIVE IMPROVISATION WAS EXCLUSIVELY BETWEEN THE SOLOIST AND THE RHYTHM SECTION.
14. BEBOP WAS PRIMARILY A SMALL BAND MUSIC, BUT FOUND SOME EXPRESSION IN A FEW SELECT BIG BANDS.
15. A BROADENED CONCEPT OF CHORD SUBSTITUTION CAME INTO BEING; THIS HELPED TO PROVIDE A BROADER HARMONIC BASE.
16. THE MUSIC MOVED EVER CLOSER TO WESTERN EUROPEAN MUSIC BECAUSE OF ITS EMPHASIS ON HARMONY AND INSTRUMENTAL FACILITY AND ITS INCREASING USE OF OTHER WESTERN MUSICAL DEVICES.
17. THE ENTIRE LANGUAGE OF JAZZ WAS QUESTIONED, SUBTRACTED FROM, ADDED TO, PURGED, AND REAFFIRMED.
18. POLYRHYTHM BECAME AN IMPORTANT FACTOR AGAIN.
19. BEBOP TENDED TO CODIFY ALL THAT HAD GONE BEFORE; IT IS CONSIDERED THE COMMON PRACTICE PERIOD IN JAZZ.
20. UNISON MELODY STATEMENTS WERE THE RULE OF THUMB BECAUSE THE INCREASING HARMONIC COMPLEXITIES MADE COUNTERPOINT AND SECONDARY LINES LESS FEASIBLE.
21. THE BREAK AS A STRUCTURAL DEVICE REGAINED POPULARITY.
22. BEBOP PLAYERS MADE LIBERAL USE OF "QUOTES" OR INTERPOLATIONS FROM OTHER TUNES.
23. BEBOP REDUCED MELODY TO ITS ESSENTIALS. THERE WERE FEW BACKGROUNDS, SOME BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS AND ENDINGS, AND SOME UNISON INTERLUDES.
24. MELODIC LINES WERE SCALAR RATHER THAN CHORDAL.
25. MORE SOPHISTICATED SCALES WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LANGUAGE; ONE EXAMPLE IS THE DIMINISHED SCALE (1 ♭2 ♭3 3 #4 5 6 ♭7 8)
26. THERE WAS MORE EFFORT TO MAKE THE SOLO LINES COHESIVE BY LINKING THEM TOGETHER WITH TURNBACKS, CYCLES, AND OTHER MUSICAL ADHESIVE DEVICES.
27. PIANO BECAME THE CENTER OF THE NEW EXPRESSION.
28. ASSYMETRICAL SOLO CONSTRUCTION BECAME A FACT.