

## Jazz in America Glossary --Elements of Jazz

**Arrangement:** The specific organization or performance order of a given composition (i.e., who plays what when).

**Chord:** Two or more notes played simultaneously.

**Chorus:** A single play-through of the structure (i.e., the entire chord progression) being used to organize the music in a composition; one time through the chords of a tune.

**Comp, comping:** syncopated chording by the keyboardist or guitarist which provides improvised accompaniment for simultaneously performed melodies, ideally in a complimentary fashion that enhances the soloist (comes from the words to compliment and to accompany).

**Embouchure:** The position of the mouth in the playing of wind instruments.

**Ending:** The optional part of the tune which follows the last chorus, sometimes referred to as a coda; could be a vamp, repetition of the last phrase, a tag, etc.

**Form:** Refers to a composition's internal structure; the repeated and contrasting sections in the design of a composition; common jazz forms include 32-bar standard forms (such as AABA and ABAC), 16-bar tune, and 12-bar blues.

**Harmony:** Two or more notes played simultaneously and compatibly; the combination of notes into chords and chord progressions.

**Head:** The melody statement of the tune; usually played as the first and last chorus.

**Improvisation:** Spontaneous invention within the context of a given tune; spontaneous composition.

**Intro:** The introductory section of a tune prior to the theme statement, or head.

**Jam session:** An informal gathering and performance of musicians, stressing improvisation.

**Out-head:** The last chorus of a tune when the music returns to the original theme, or head.

**Rhythm:** The pulse or pattern of beats of a given piece of music; the element of music dealing with time.

**Swing:** 1. To swing is when an individual player or ensemble performs in such a rhythmically coordinated way as to command a visceral response from the listener

(to cause feet to tap and heads to nod); an irresistible gravitational buoyancy that defies mere verbal definition. 2. A way of performing eighth notes where downbeats and upbeats receive approximately  $2/3$  and  $1/3$  of the beat, respectively, providing a rhythmic lilt to the music. 3. A stylistic term to designate a jazz form that originated in the 1930s with the advent of the big bands (as in Swing Era).

**Syncoption:** The accenting of a normally weak beat or weak part of a beat; the accenting of "upbeats."

**Tempo:** Refers to the speed of the underlying beat or pulse of a piece of music.

**Vamp:** One chord or a brief chord progression which is insistently repeated numerous times in succession.

### **A Few "SAT" Words**

**Autonomous:** Not controlled by others or by outside forces.

**Autonomy:** The condition or quality of being autonomous; independence (e.g., Jazz musicians have the autonomy to play chords any way they want.).

**Cognition:** The mental process or faculty of knowing, including aspects such as awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment.

**Cognitive; cognitively:** Of, characterized by, involving, or relating to cognition (e.g., In the same way people converse, most jazz musicians improvise more intuitively than cognitively.).

**Extant:** Already in existence; still in existence (e.g., A contrafact is a tune based on an extant set of chord changes.).

**Intuition:** The act or faculty of knowing or sensing without the use of rational processes.

**Intuitive; intuitively:** Of, relating to, or arising from intuition; subconsciously; reflexively; (e.g., In the same way people converse, most jazz musicians improvise more intuitively than cognitively.).