

## Popular Music and Jazz - Specimen Questions

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(a) Explain what you understand by any TWO of the following:

- ? call and response
- ? pitch-bends
- ? riff
- ? scat singing [2+2]

(b) Link the terms you have chosen in your answer to question (a) to a context from a specific work. You should name the work, the bar (and if necessary beat) number(s) and the instrument(s) or voice(s) involved. [2+2]

(c) Four (p. 468) is essentially a theme and variations.

(i) Describe THREE ways in which Davis varies the material of the head in the chorus sections. [2+2+2]

(ii) How is a sense of climax achieved in the third chorus? [2]

d) Compare the approach to guitar writing in Howlin' Wolf's I'm leavin' you and Don't look back in anger by Oasis. [14]

### Popular Music and Jazz - My Answers

a) Pitch bends - the use of pitches between semitones as a way of sliding onto a note.

b) Example - Four, 3rd beat of 1.19-1.20, Trumpet

a) Scat singing - a style of jazz singing, using nonsense syllables instead of words.

b) Example - West End Blues, Bars 31-42, Louis Armstrong vocal

c) In the choruses, the double bass has a continuous line, unlike the disjointed notes at the start of the head. The trumpet improvises around (and away from) the chords in a way unrelated to the head material, however there are odd fragments of the initial tune which appear from time to time.

The piano part is more independent than in the head where it was following the stresses of the trumpet. In places it is more sparse than the head, often stopping for bars at a time.

ii) Climax is achieved by the use of very high notes at the beginning of the third chorus suggesting the music has reached its peak.

d) I'm Leavin You - 51      Don't Look Back in Anger – 57

In 57, both rhythm guitar and acoustic guitar play just chords, with the same rhythmic patterns throughout nearly the entire piece. It is therefore more of a harmonic function than rhythmic. However, in 51, the rhythm guitar reinforces the shuffle feel while also providing harmonies. As such it is a more independent, recognisable line within the music, rather than just noise in the background. The rhythm guitar in 51 uses generally 2 notes per chord.

The rhythm guitar in 57 uses distortion whereas in 51 it does not, meaning the individual notes are more pronounced.

In 51 the lead guitar tends to fill in the gaps when the voice stops, improvising on the blues scale. It sometimes has a rhythmic role, using triplets a lot, which fits in with the shuffle rhythm. At points it joins with the piano and drums for a whole bar of triplet chords to introduce a new section. The part has a range of around 2 octaves. Most of the time it sticks to a single note, although sometimes it plays thirds and there are some examples of triads.

In 57 the role of the lead guitar changes regularly. It is not as prominent during the first section as in 51. It even stops completely during the chorus.

The range of the part is around 3 octaves. It generally plays one note at a time although there are chordal sections, including one where it plays on the weak beats of the bar. The solo section is quite unvirtuosic.

## Popular Music and Jazz - Specimen Questions 2

(a) Explain what you understand by any TWO of the following:

- ? blue note
- ? fill
- ? solo
- ? swung rhythm [2+2]

(b) Link the terms you have chosen in your answer to question (a) to a context from a specific work. You should name the work, the bar (and if necessary beat) number(s) and the instrument(s) or voice(s) involved. [2+2]

(c) The following questions refer to West End Blues (p. 461).

(i) Identify ONE special vocal effect. [2]

(ii) Identify THREE aspects of the piano playing that you consider to be particularly demanding. [2+2+2]

(d) Why did Oasis's Don't Look Back in Anger (p. 509) appeal to a wider audience than did Miles Davis's Four (p. 468)? [14]

## Popular Music and Jazz - My Answers

a) Blue note - the use of flattened 3rds and 7ths, the characteristic notes of the blues scale, often juxtaposed against their naturals. For example in the key of C major - Ebs and Bbs are typical blue notes.

b) Example - Honey Don't - Vocal part, Bar 7, a G natural on "won't"

a) swung rhythm - where the rhythm is not straight (i.e regular)- two quavers will be played with the first longer than the second, possibly using a triplet rhythm. It has a lilting effect.

b) Example - I'm Leavin' You - Rhythm Guitar throughout, denoted as Shuffle Rhythm.

c)i) Scat Singing - Louis Armstrong singing using nonsense syllables instead of words in bars 31-42.

ii) Very fast demi semi quavers in the right hand in bars 43-46 - requires much dexterity.

Parallel octaves starting bar 47 - particularly difficult at that speed to judge hand position.

The left hand, playing in 'stride' style has some large movements, and hard to set against the right hand's fast runs.

d) The appeal of Oasis compared to Miles Davis is as much down to the music industry as to the music itself. Oasis have benefited enormously through publicity and promotion; people will buy the records regardless of their quality in much the way that they will buy branded clothing. Fashion, and media coverage have led to a high public awareness, and in the modern age this is more important than the product itself. Jazz has not received this kind of attention since popular music developed into a strand separate from jazz.

That said, the music itself must play a part in its popularity. 'Four' has no words hence it is considered in a different way to 'Don't Look Back...'. 'Four' is more about musical virtuosity than telling a story. It may not provoke any significant emotions, and dancing to it would be pretty impossible. It therefore does not function as a piece of pop music in the conventional sense; instead it could be considered classical music that you can tap your feet to. Despite its complexity compared to Oasis, 'Four' is less pleasing on the ear at first listening and this would turn off most listeners who were unfamiliar with the genre.

## From Textbook - A student's guide to AS music:

"How has the role of the drummer changed in the development of Popular Music?"

Fundamentally, the role of the drummer as timekeeper to the band remains unchanged, however it is the extent of his involvement in the music that has changed, albeit in a minor way. In West End Blues there is no drummer audible, with the only percussion being a milk bottle sound. Black and Tan Fantasy is an illustration of the background nature of the role. At no point is the drummer prominent as a soloist and he often stops completely. A similar role is played in I'm Leavin' You, but is in complete contrast to Four where the drums are an equal member of the quartet, with a significant solo section. The playing is virtuosic compared to most of the other extracts. In Honey Don't the drums play constantly, even when other instruments stop. The style is the same throughout. However, in Waterloo Sunset and Don't Look Back In Anger the drums help to distinguish the sections and become more elaborate in the chorus. In most of the later extracts, the drummer gets occasional moments of glory by playing fills between sections and during gaps in the solo lines.