

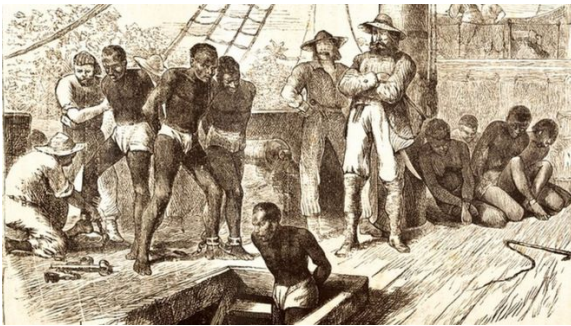
The Blues

Year 8, Autumn

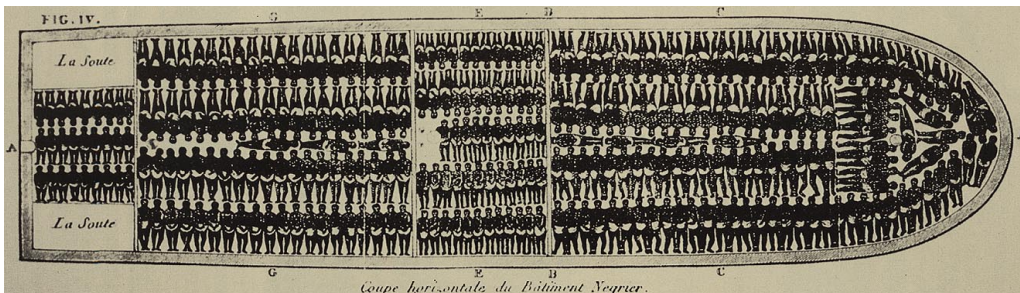
The History of Blues Music

From the 16th-19th Century, a slave trade system existed between Africa and America. Africans were captured and held as prisoners, taken by boat to America. In America the Africans were treated as slaves, and made to work on farms and in houses for white American people.

Whilst working the African people were forbidden from communicating with each other, so as a way to talk and express their feelings they would sing – it was said that they were ‘singing the blues’. In time they started to create rhythms with their tools, which with the signing, created the first form of Blues music.



These pictures show how poorly the African people were treated, in very poor conditions.



Elements of Blues Music

Blues music typically consists of 3 key elements:

- The 12 Bar Blues – a special chord sequence
- Walking bassline – a bass line which goes up and down in pitch
- Improvised melody – a melody which is made up on the spot.

C	C	C	C
F	F	C	C
G	F	C	C

This grid shows the 12-bar blues in C major. Each box is one bar, and each bar is worth four beats.

Skills Developed

- Develop the ability to play chords, in a clear sequence, with each chord lasting 4 beats.
- Learn how to play a walking bassline.
- Learn how to improvise, using a set of notes (a blues scale), whilst your partner plays the 12 bar blues.
- Develop ensemble skills by playing with a partner.
- Develop performance skills by performing to the class.
- Develop listening skills and ability to analyse pieces of music using the elements of music.