

Session 1

Stomping at the 100 Club

• 100 Oxford Street, London •

Around 1890, many musicians from New Orleans and the south of the USA became bored with playing marches and waltzes to amuse the people who employed them. Instead of playing the melodies as written, they began to change the rhythm to make it more fun. This was called **ragging**. Some composers wrote original pieces in this style, the most famous being Scott Joplin. London's historic 100 Club, originally known as Mack's restaurant, was an important venue for this style of traditional jazz.



 *Maple Leaf Rag* 1899 Scott Joplin

Ragging a melody

Let's try this for ourselves. Below is a well-known melody by Beethoven.

The rhythm is simple and repetitive and certainly not jazzy:



Perhaps we can do something about that ...

Pushing notes

- 1 The best way of 'jazzing up' or ragging a melody is to add pushes by playing a note earlier than expected, so it is played off the beat instead of on the beat. This is called **syncopation**.

Play the following phrases. In each case, the first two bars are in the Beethoven style and the second two bars contain pushes to jazz it up. Count carefully and slightly accent the pushed note.

1 
Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 + 1 2 3 4

2 
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 + 3 4 1 2 + 3 4