

EXPERTS:	Heritage. Political. Identity. Inventive. Resistance. Celebration.
KEVIN LE GENDRE:	Black British music is basically the music that's been created by communities of African and Caribbean heritage and then their children as well, the subsequent generations, once they put down roots in Britain.
KAYLEE GOLDING:	This is a journey through time, through sound, and through the lives of artists who changed Britain forever. We are picking up the story at the start of the last century with Britain's first major classical composer of African descent. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in 1875 to a British mother and a father from Sierra Leone in West Africa.
KEVIN:	He really embraces European classical music but also starts to integrate the melodies and rhythms celebrating his African heritage.
PROF MYKAELL RILEY:	He'd be no different to Stormzy today, translating his experience of being a black individual, commenting on the diaspora within the context of his music genre.
KAYLEE:	By the 1920s and 30s, the Western world was dancing to it and Britain wanted in. American musicians began touring here, playing music halls and clubs, bringing with them a sound that was fresh, exciting and rebellious. The Second World War ended in 1945. Britain called on countries of the British Empire to help rebuild the nation. And in June 1948 the <i>Empire Windrush</i> arrived at London's Tilbury Docks.
KEVIN:	There are musicians who arrive on the <i>Windrush</i> . Very famously, Lord Kitchener, the great calypso singer from Trinidad...
[ARCHIVE:	<i>LORD KITCHENER SINGING "LONDON IS THE PLACE FOR ME"]</i>
LINETT KAMALA:	People came and they brought along their culture, their music. And there was excitement.

KAYLEE: The singles chart, now the UK top 40, started in 1952. And two years later Trinidadian pianist, Winifred Atwell, was the first black artist to go to Number 1.

[ARCHIVE: WINIFRED ATWELL PLAYING PIANO]

KAYLEE: The Windrush Generation, who'd arrived in 1948 and beyond, brought music from the Caribbean. Calypso and early Reggae.

MYKAELL: They found that the systems, stereo systems here, were not up to scratch and set about building their own amps and speaker systems.

KAYLEE: That early sound system culture would have a vital influence on the music that would follow in years to come. And a truly Black British music genre, originated in the UK, was born in the 1970s. "Lovers Rock". The classic Janet Kay track, "Silly Games", became an anthem and went to Number 2 in the charts in 1979.

[ARCHIVE: JANET KAY SINGING "SILLY GAMES"]

LINETT: We were very excited to see black British performers on TV. For many of us, it was for the first time seeing that.

KAYLEE: Throughout the 80s black British artists regularly featured in the Top 40.

MYKAELL: Musicians start to transition from Reggae into R&B and Soul.

KAYLEE: And, at the end of the decade, came Soul II Soul...

[ARCHIVE: SOUL II SOUL PERFORMING]

MYKAELL: Jumping from, say, Soul II Soul to the early 90s, we have technology that says "you can now sample the past".

LINETT KAMALA: So they would play the music at almost twice the tempo. And then this music became known as Jungle music.

DR MONIQUE CHARLES: One of the pioneers of that scene is an artist known as Goldie.

[ARCHIVE AUDIO:

GOLDIE - 'INNER CITY LIFE']

KAYLEE:

By the late 1990s, UK Garage emerged as a new sound and a new scene.

LINETT:

I think UK Garage was like a really upbeat, fun scene. Very playful lyrics.

KAYLEE:

In the early 2000s it was So Solid Crew that transitioned from UK Garage and laid the foundations for Grime.

MYKAELL:

What's important about So Solid...it set a benchmark that says "Be who you want to be, say what want to say."

LINETT:

Technology had become more accessible. It was a lot cheaper, so people could literally create music in their own bedrooms.

KAYLEE:

By the 2010s, Grime artists were creating a huge fanbase.

MONIQUE:

It got to the point where they got so big, it was undeniable, and even the record industry wanted to have a piece of the pie.

KAYLEE:

The Glastonbury Festival is the biggest live pop music event in the UK. Black British artists had made appearances before but had never been the star of the show...until Stormzy appeared as the headline act in 2019.

LINETT:

I'd never seen anything like that. For the first time, I think people felt it was much more representational. That moment was a very...iconic, I would say. Important moment.

KAYLEE:

We've followed the journey of black music in Britain for more than 100 years. But, what lies ahead?

KEVIN LE GENDRE:

I think the artists will go telling new stories as they see fit, according to their experience and the experience of the people around them.

LINETT:

That's what I'd say about black music - it's authentic, it's the real deal!