

- EXPERTS: Heritage. Political. Identity. Inventive. Resistance. Celebration.
- KAYLEE GOLDING:** **Black music has been part of Britain’s history for hundreds of years, gradually shaping musical styles and influencing UK culture.**
- 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:** **From little known classical brilliance, though jazz from America to calypso and reggae from the Caribbean and the music that we hear today... This is a journey through time, through sound, and through the lives of the artists who changed Britain forever.**
- TITLE: PART 1: 1900 - 1960*
- DR MONIQUE CHARLES: Music generally has a family tree. You can trace elements of particular genres all the way back.
- KAYLEE:** **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: Samuel Coleridge-Taylor grows up in Croydon in the South London suburbs. Who enters the Royal College of Music at the age of 15. He really embraces European classical music but also starts to integrate the melodies and rhythms celebrating his African heritage.
- KAYLEE:** **And Coleridge-Taylor would produce work that made him a star.**
- KEVIN: It’s performed throughout his lifetime and beyond his lifetime.
- KAYLEE:** **But Coleridge-Taylor wasn’t just writing music: he was making a statement about his identity. He supported the new idea of pan-Africanism that aimed to unite black people around the world.**

**PROF MYKAELL RILEY:** Having sold out the Albert Hall at that point than anyone else, 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:** **Britain at the time was a sea-faring nation with a global empire. And black communities formed around the busy ports.**

**KEVIN:** London's East End, Bristol, Cardiff, Liverpool had maritime trade. There were lots of merchant seamen who came from Africa, as well as Caribbeans - people from the West Indies.

**KAYLEE:** **Sailors, labourers and other workers - many of them the descendants of enslaved people - brought with them a range of musical forms. Drumming traditions, work songs and religious music known as "spirituals".**

**KEVIN:** They're very uplifting, they're very rousing, they are emotionally charged. On the one hand it's a celebration of faith. On the other hand, it can be a statement of determination to be free.

**KAYLEE:** **And a sense of freedom was something that drove a new musical style. Jazz has been called the first global youth music subculture. 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.**

**KEVIN:** Musicians like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington performing in Britain to great acclaim is hugely important in terms of Britain becoming aware of this exciting new art form. They're creating new techniques which are revolutionary. But the other thing as well is this idea of dancing freely, as opposed to dancing in a very strict, rigid way.

**KAYLEE:** **The popularity of jazz and it's new style, swing, continued into the 30s. Ken "Snakehips" Johnson was a dancer and a pioneering bandleader who's all black orchestras enjoyed huge success with the wider British public. He was killed during World War Two when a bomb dropped on the London nightclub where he was performing.**

**KAYLEE:** **The War ended in 1945 and had been hugely damaging. So Britain called on countries of the British Empire to help rebuild the nation. The Nationalities Act 1948 gave Commonwealth Citizens the right to live and work in the UK...and people from the Caribbean were invited to come.**

**LINETT KAMALA:** I think that moment of Caribbean immigration is really important because it was a huge shift culturally for this country. There'd always been a black presence here, but the numbers that came at the call of what was then the British Empire. Of course, the people came and they brought along their culture, their music, and there was excitement.

**KAYLEE:** **And in June 1948 the now famous ship, *The Empire Windrush*, arrived at London's Tilbury Docks.**

**MYKAELL:** This was some of the best musicians who were coming over looking for work.

**KEVIN:** There are musicians who arrive on the *Windrush*. Very famously, Lord Kitchener, the great calypso singer from Trinidad...

**[ARCHIVE]** *LORD KITCHENER SINGING "LONDON IS THE PLACE FOR ME"*

**KEVIN:** When you see Lord Kitchener's actually performing "London is the Place for Me", it's another chapter in black British music that's being written before your very eyes.

**KAYLEE:** **Black music was having a broad impact as never before. 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 with her record "Lets Have Another Party".**

**MYKAELL:** She's famous for playing upright piano in a very honky-tonk style. But this belies her true expertise, which is a classical musician.

**KEVIN:** She has number one records. She has her own TV show. And, very importantly, she becomes an international star.

**KAYLEE:** **At the start of the 1960's - the so-called "Swinging Sixties" - black British artists would be presented with both opportunities and challenges.**