

Free essay on music through the ages

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Who doesn't like music? It would take even a insane person a lot of courage to say that he/she doesn't like music. Such is the power of music that a lot has happened in the world of music over the ages. The Beatles made people swoon and dance to their tunes in the 60s and 70s, and it was during this time that a man by the name of Elvis Presley turned Pied Piper and had women the world over follow his music like the children of Hamelin. These personalities were so popular that they could make people stop in their tracks and take notice. So powerful was their music that even politicians tried to make use of their popularity to gain political ascendancy. Music has always had a way to the heart, and it's no different when young African Americans began to churn out a distinct style of music that has again taken the world by storm. Bob Marley was a great rap singer who used reggae to spread the voice of the underprivileged and economically poor to the rest of the world. Through his music, Bob Marley was able to generate a conscious need for the rich to support and help the poor.

Music began much before Christ and became more predominant during the Middle Ages when words were chanted to the accompaniment of a single string. Gradually, the popularity of music brought it outside churches where people began to experiment with instruments that made queer sounds.

Music was played in Palaces to entertain Kings and Queens and moved to the streets to convey social messages. Music has come a long way. The Renaissance saw the emergence of musicians who played music much different to what was seen in churches. During the 16th century or the period of renaissance, there was a distinct change in how sacred music was played in comparison to the preceding years. The change was quite noticeable when

the church was shaken by the emergence of the Protestants, and they would obviously change their style of music to those of the Roman Catholics.

Ancient practices had died and the renaissance saw the emergence of the new world. The Protestants, under Martin Luther were more vocal and they borrowed certain characters of the secular music. Dean (1997), in ' Listening to Sacred Polyphony c. 1500' states that he was able to establish the literal position of the motet within the ritual easily enough, finding plenty of primary evidence to ratify that " in the papal chapel motets were normally interpolated into the Mass immediately after the plainsong offertory, occasionally sung at the end of the Mass or Vespers in place of ' Deo gratias', and never substituted into the plainsong items sharing the same words." " Music during the Renaissance was performed using a variety of vocal, instrumental, and mixed ensembles. An all-vocal ensemble, known as an a cappella group sang sacred music in churches. The group was made up of male choirs. Instruments were used to accompany the choir only. Secular music on the contrary could be sung by anyone and could also be accompanied by music. Instruments like bowed strings, harps, lutes, and recorders were played indoors, while instruments like shawms and trombones were played in large halls and outdoors" (maxweber. hunter. cuny. edu, n. d). While music was a means to relieve one of stress and worry, it also was played with a purpose.

In contemporary music, the influence of hip hop culture is there for everyone to see. Played out in the streets by black and white youths in the backyards of New York City, this generational music has become synonymous of today's music and soul. According to Reese (2000), " The impact is such that

it is estimated that almost 75% of the rap and hip hop audience is non-black. It has traversed from the streets of New York to the suburbs, and then on to corporate boardrooms. So powerful is this style of music that even conglomerate's such as McDonald's, Coca Cola, Sprite, and Nike, to name a few, have capitalized on this phenomenon to attract the younger generation today. Although critics of rap music and the hip hop culture seemed fixated on the messages of sex, and violence, this genre offers a far more productive paradigm of what marketing can do," he concluded.

Since the 1990s, the world has seen the emergence of a cult that has taken music lovers by storm. Never before has the rise of African-American music become so popular. Hip-hop music and the African-American youth has caused volumes of controversy and forged their way into the mainstream of modern culture. Through rhythm and poetry, these young African-Americans have sought to address the pitfalls of society for their racism, education, sexism, drug use, and spiritual upliftment. This form of music also has its detractors who believe that music like the hip-hop focuses on its negative and antisocial characteristics. Names like 98 Degrees, N Sync, Shaggy, Usher, Eminem, B2K & P. Diddy, LL Cool J, 50 Cent & Nate Dogg to name a few, are among the top rappers in the music business today, while names like Justin Beiber, Selena Gomez, Pink and Christina Aguilera are some well-known and popular teen heartthrobs. " The Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, which called for social relevance, originality, and dedication to Black Arts that challenged American mainstream artistic expression, remained in the music developed by the modern African-American young. The style was unique; the lyrics were slang, and the clothing quite contrary to modern

western attire,” says Gladney (1995). This kind of music has moved on to catch the imagination of young white Americans too, who use this form of music to churn out chartbusters. Hip-hop, rap, classical, reggae, Indie, country, rock and other forms of music has indeed become part and parcel of today’s music culture. Music is not just about singing and instruments, it is delivered with meaning, because this is a form of message that everyone loves to hear. Music has undoubtedly, become the major force for transmitting views and opinions today. As Gladney (1995), remarked, “ What better way to express one’s feelings than through music; music that has made people all over the world sit up and take notice.”

Conclusion

Music through the ages has seen transformation in style and content. What started as a chant and later was accompanied by a single chord to narrate verses in churches, the Renaissance was the time when music began to be experimented with. The early 50s and 60s saw music become more frivolous as artists began to use different kinds of instruments to give music a greater impact. Then there was the mergence of eastern and western music and instruments to give music a different dimension. Today, music is not just singing and sound, it comes with a meaning. Whatever the style or content, music remains the primary source for relaxation and entertainment for human beings. Such is the power of music.

References

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