

Essay on the evolution of contemporary jazz

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Introduction

The term art has diverse description based on the area of application. It originates from the word artificial meaning man-made therefore considering everything that has been built by man and has an emotional link to an artist and the audience is art. Art plays a major role in our daily lives; a deeper imagination of the world without arts is simply not possible. The world we live in today is full of arts from the shoes we wear to the desk in our offices. It involves designing of an object or an activity to solve a particular problem. Musicians sing to pass certain messages, we wear shoes to avoid foot injuries and many other problems solved by arts therefore the world needs arts to exist. Comprehensively, art is a creative, inventive and non-scientific division of knowledge regarded collectively. Modern academics integrate arts with humanities subjects like literature, history and linguistics. Originally arts is classified to seven categories namely architecture, painting, music, sculpture, dance, cinema and poetry. Recent additions include photography and comic. This paper classifies jazz as a piece of art under music and examines its advancement, when and why it was it was invented, and its evolutionary impacts on human over duration.

Jazz is a genre of music that begun in the 20th century as result of a mixture of African and American music culture. For over a long period jazz has included 19th and 20th century's music. West African jazz has a unique characteristic that uses blue notes, improvisation, syncopation, polyrhythm, call-response and the swing note. Jazz has generated different subgenres namely: Dixieland, which existed in the early 1910s, big band style swing

from 1930s to 1940s, bebop from mid 1940s, free jazz, hard bop and a range of Latin fusions. The Latin fusions further included afro-Cuban which lived from 1950s and 1960s, jazz fusion from 1970s, acid jazz from 1980s. Acid jazz merged both funk and hip-hop features. Afterwards Nu jazz preceded acid jazz later in the 1990s.

Jazz has no clear definition up date, since it difficult to associate it with either European or African. It originated because of confrontation of the blacks by the European music. There are elements of jazz that distinguish from the European music namely, unique association with time also referred to as swing, an impulsiveness and liveliness of musical production wherein improvisation has a duty and the way phrasing that reflects individuality of perform jazz artists.

The Atlantic trade took many Africans to the present United States, who were mainly from West African. These Africans carried along with them their culture that brought ethnic musical customs. The Congo square in New Orleans hosted festivals on Sundays where Africans would gather and dance on Sunday. Similar scenario happened in New England and New York. The African music was largely used for work and ritual purposes and deployed only a solo-melody and call-and-response pattern devoid of European notion of harmony. The jazz of that time reflected African vocalizations models. Blue notes resulted from the employment of pentatonic scales in blues and jazz. In the premature 19th century, most African had knowledge of using European instruments, specifically the violin that was used to satirize European-dancing style. Fortunately, the minstrel show that had European American origin publicized the music globally, after coalescing syncopation

with European harmonic complement. Other black slaves had already gained knowledge of harmonic version of hymns and integrated it in their music as spirituals. The blues have no clear basis; however, they can be viewed as worldly complement of the spirituals. This marked the origin and advancement of jazz music.

Jazz music has advanced over time characterized by periods. The first period was referred to as rag time which is characterized by the eradication of slave trade. It was experienced from 1890s to 1910s. This opened up new prospects for the African Americans at liberty. Employment was limited to the educated Africans hence resorted to entertainment. They provided cheap entertainment in dances and vaudeville, mostly bring together the bands formed. Ragtime emerged as a sheet of music, popularized by musicians like Ernest Hogan, Vess Ossman.

The jazz age preceded the ragtime and it existed between 1920s and 1930s. During this age, the sale of alcohol was prohibited resulting to rise of illegal speakeasies changing to scene of the jazz age. This era had popular music that had present dance songs, originality and show tunes. During this stage, jazz acquired a negative reputation of being decadent. Members of older generation pictured this to threatening to old customs in culture and supporting immoral values. The media including the New York Times belittled jazz and its artist by taking stories just to interrupt jazz. The first black jazz band was Kid Ory's original Creole jazz band in 1922 in New Orleans.

However, the 1930s presented a revolution in jazz music, bringing forth the big band style swing that famed the virtuoso soloist. Outstanding figures in the emergent of big band swing include count Basie, Cab Calloway and

Tommy Dorsey. Additionally, swing had a dancing feature. Even though it was a comprehensive sound, swing provided an opportunity to jazz musicians to invent melodic and thematic solos. Eventually, the social boundaries concerning racial separation in America gradually relaxed. The whites joined black bands and blacks joined the white bands, which was positive progress in fighting racism. Other countries like France discovered the European version of jazz with the Quintette du Hot club de France established in 1934. The gypsy jazz from Belgium was also getting popular. Mature 1940s experienced the resurgence Dixieland music. This was supported largely by the record company reissuing early on jazz classic. Two key player groups were involved in the revitalization of the Dixieland. One group comprised of players who started playing jazz traditionally and were reverting back to it or going on with what they have been doing, for example Bob Crosby's bobcats. The second resurgent comprised of young musicians, such as Lu Watters. Premature 1940s had an emergence of Bebop performers who shifted from danceable to a more sophisticated music, different from swing. Late 1940s was characterized by replacements in Bebop feature, omitting its rough and energetic nature paving way for cool jazz. Another extension of bebop referred to as hard bebop. It integrates effects from blues, gospel music and rhythm and blues. It existed in mid 1950s. Late 1950s was an era of modal jazz that takes the mode as the foundation of musical organization. Other forms of jazz that preceded modal jazz include Latin jazz that incorporates both African and American rhythm, post bop that originated from earlier versions of bebop. In the mid 1970s, jazz funk emerged exemplified by strong beat and electrified sound.

In conclusion, jazz as a piece of art was established as result of a mixture of music culture between Africans and Americans. It bridged the racial gap between the whites and the blacks hence brought humanity and peace. However, the jazz community has undergone a lot of evolution from the 1890s to date. This shows how any piece of art changes over a period provided its emotional link to human exists.

References

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