

Free comparative between two jazz songs essay example

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Music is an individual process of describing a composer or musician's feelings and thoughts, that's why every music masterpiece is so much different from another one. Let us take two great jazzmen, Earl Hines and John Coltrane, who worked in different times, depicting different life of people. They lived and worked in time, when everything was full of jazz as the contrary to classical music, jazz was considered immoral and inappropriate way to play and compose. Everything has changed in time and jazz has become one of the most popular genres of music of the time. Let us describe more precisely the creation of the two great musicians, mentioned above and see how they created their pieces and how much influence they have brought to modern jazz music.

Earl Hines, who was called " the first modern jazz pianist", differentiated from all the pianist of the time with his unusual left hand technique, making pacing rhythms. With his right hand playing clearly ringing octaves to sound over the ensembles, his left hand could even make the imagination of time slowing without even losing the beat. Such way of playing was obviously ahead of time, that's why he was much underrated at first with his great compositions, such as " Rosetta", " You can depend on me", " My Monday date" and many others. Nevertheless he has become a great influence on such musicians, as Jess Stacy, Nat King Cole, Joe Sullivan, Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson.

One of the most interesting chapters in Earl Hines' band and solo work is the period between 1928 and 1947. During this time, he was facing some kind of a work routine, but the majority of his works during this period still remains fitting into the high standards in his compositions of 1934 and 1935.

Jimmy Mundy was his top arranger during this time, with Horace Henderson and Budd Johnson. The last would later find himself as one of the Hines' main musicians, although he also displays his skills and talents on "XYZ" and "Piano Man" compositions. The work was also with partnership of trumpeters George Dixon, Freddy Webster, Ray Nance and the clarinetist Omer Simeon. With this line-up Earl Hines creates the one of his most famous compositions among all the others - the "Gator Swing", on which we should take a look a little but precisely. It belongs to swing sub-genre of jazz, which was really popular through 1930s.

It was the time of the Prohibition in the United States with a nationwide prohibition of selling, producing, importing and transporting the alcoholic beverages that took place during 13 years, from 1920 to 1930. This political decision has resulted in establishing illegal speakeasies, places, where the alcohol could be bought and drunk despite of the legal ban of it. These places have become the venues of the "Jazz Age", including the current dance and novelty songs with show tunes. Swing music has become the visit card of such places, that's why such kind of music has been considered immoral and many people of the older generations have seen it as an example of a threat to old cultural values with the promotion of the unneeded decadent values. Professor Henry van Dyke of Princeton University wrote "it is not music at all. It's merely an irritation of the nerves of hearing, a sensual teasing of the strings of physical passion".

Despite of the bad reputation of this genre, the song "Gator Swing" composed by Walter Hirsch with the cooperation of Johnny Marks and performed by Earl Hines is a great masterpiece, representing all the

characteristics of the swing in their best quality, the rhythm is smooth and plain, with its time signature of 4/4 and the moderato tempo of 110 bpm, which is held by the drummer, making the basis of the song in cheerful mood. There are also great piano and trumpet solos, which infuse the song with the freewheeling and exuberant moods also. It is dance music at first. It has been broadcasted on the radio "live" every night across all the America through many years. Despite of the fact, that the song represents the collective sound genre, it also allowed every musician to improvise their thematic and melodic solos, which can be heard as very complex at some moments.

Hines never stopped to experiment with his playing style, trying himself as the successful in many bands and cooperation with many great musicians of the time through all of his life. He has become one of the founders of Bebop jazz, representing many masterful pieces of his work in this genre. This one has become one of the most popular in the 1940s and still is now. All the musical critics were amazed by creativity and energy of this musician through all of his music life and career. Hines has traveled through all over the world with his band, recorded an enormous variety of albums, remaining famous and well-known until the date of the 22nd of April 1983, when he died in the age of 79. He was one of the greatest music artists through all the time and nobody now can replace such a great musician of jazz music. On the contrary let us describe the next great jazz musician, who worked and created his greatest compositions during the 1950s and 1960s, despite of the fact that he started creating his music as the saxophonist in 1945. His name is John Coltrane and he is well-known for the development of hard-bop

music as the sub-genre of jazz.

Let us compare one of the most outstanding compositions by Coltrane “Moment`s Notice” from his famous album “Blue Train” to the previous composition by Earl Hines, “Gator Swing”. The most obvious distinction between these songs is the genre. While swing by Hines was composed for dancing, hard-bop by Coltrane was created for listening, becoming “music for musicians” with the complexity of melodies, changing drum rhythms with the fast tempo of the whole composition (approximately 240 bpm). During the composition we can hear the various solos on sax, piano and bass, leaving the expression that the whole song was created by the one improvisation and every time the band plays it in a different way. He never recorded the song after the “Blue Train” version of it. Nevertheless many jazzmen have had this song as a standard of the hard-bop sound since 1970s. It has been recorded by McCoy Tuner in 1977, George Coleman in 1979, Fred Hersch in 1994, Arturo Sandoval in 1996 and Billy Hart in 2005.

This is the line-up of the Coltrane`s band, which played this song:

- John Coltrane — tenor saxophone
- Curtis Fuller — trombone
- Kenny Drew — piano
- Lee Morgan — trumpet
- Paul Chambers — bass
- Philly Joe Jones — drums

All of them recorded this song as the part of Coltrane`s album, called “Blue Train”, which was release in 1957 on Blue Note Records in Hackensack, New

Jersey. It's the second solo album by Coltrane and it has been granted a gold record by the RIAA. The song "Moment's Notice" demonstrates the first embodiment of "Coltrane changes", which he will expand in his next album, "Giant Steps". In jazz harmony, this term is also well-known as chromatic third relations or multi-tonic changes, but is also called as Coltrane Matrix or Coltrane Cycle. This is a harmonic progression variation with the usage of substitute chords over the common chord progressions used in jazz. The changes are used as a pattern of chord substitutions for the progression of 2-5-1 (supertonic-dominant-tonic) and are linked to the unusual for those times root movement down by major thirds and not the usual major or minor seconds, building an augmented triad. That's why Coltrane is considered to be one of the most advanced jazz players of all the history of jazz music, his contribution to the whole jazz sound is simply enormous.

Despite their differences, both of the songs have become the standards of their genres and are still well-known by many jazz-lovers of all over the world.