

# Research paper on jazz- storyville: the greatest party of all- time

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



Jazz is one of the most popular genres of music that has been entertaining people for a long time. Jazz is believed to be originated in last years of nineteenth century in different parts of the United States of America. Jazz emerged due to rich ancestral and artistic fondness of African American community. African Americans have been practicing various types of music in their traditional ceremonies and jazz is the modern, experimental and organized version of their fond for the music. Storyville of New Orleans sheltered jazz music where jazz witnessed new heights. This paper intends to discuss jazz music and its history along with discussing its relation with Storyville.

## **History of Jazz Music**

Jazz was not in the same form in Storyville as it is today. Artists like Freddy Keppard and King Oliver experimented a lot to give a shape to jazz. Jazz did not have even a name in those days. This genre of music was known as 'Jass' that was inspired by jasmine perfume that prostitutes of Storyville used to use. This 'Jass' became Jazz in coming years. The jazz music has travelled a very long way to reach to its current form (Gioia).

Almost half a million African Americans were brought into United States of America from western African region. They were brought as slaves and for the purpose of slave trade. These people brought their musical traditions with them and they use to practice the same on different occasions. These musical performances were rhythmic in a counter metric composition and used to reflect call and response prototype. Musical performances by people of African American communities witnessed various changes over a period of time and a new genre of music came into existence in the form of jazz.

<https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-jazz-storyville-the-greatest-party-of-all-time/>

Slave gatherings started taking place in New Orleans by 1840's. Performers from different parts of America used to participate in these gatherings. These festivals became very famous lately as slave music festivals. Robert Palmer mentions one of such festivals in his book, *Deep Blues*. Palmer writes " Such music was associated with annual festivals, when the year's crop was harvested and several days were set aside for celebration. As late as 1861, a traveler in North Carolina saw dancers dressed in costumes that included horned headdresses and cow tails and heard music provided by a sheepskin-covered " gumbo box", apparently a frame drum . . . . settlers came from the vicinity of New Orleans" (Palmer, p. 37).

New Orleans witnessed a huge increase in activities of African Americans by 1860 especially after the American civil war. Slavery was abolished from America and African Americans were free to do whatever they liked to do. African Americans got various opportunities of education, employment and various other activities. They started organizing cultural activities and redefined their traditional music. Some African Americans started their music clubs and operated commercially.

The music that African Americans created was initially mocked by saying it as music of slaves and music of blacks. The basic reason behind such mocking was the major participation of African Americans in the Jazz music. This music was mainly controlled by people of African American community. This fact kept jazz music oppressed for many years. Other communities distanced from this genre music and treated it in despicable manner.

## **Era of Jazz**

African Americans became free but there was still segregation between African Americans and white population. Getting employment was difficult for African Americans. Some of them chose music as a way of livelihood. They started entertaining people by singing, dancing and minstrel shows in their clubs. Many of them used to sing and play musical instruments in bars, brothels and pubs. People of African American community emerged as successful entertainers and this was the beginning of the ragtime.

Ragtime made many African Americans popular as musicians. Earnest Hogan emerged as a hit singer and his songs became very popular among music lovers during 1895. Banjo master Vess Ossman composed medley of various songs and presented a customized ragtime medley. Tom Turpen became the first African American who published rags. William H. Crell, a white man entered compiled piano instrumentals and published the same as 'Mississippi Rag'. Jazz started gaining popularity in this era and dedicated artists contributed enormously in this popularity (Roberts).

Scott Joplin, a well-trained classical pianist introduced rags in a new and experimental manner. Joplin presented 'Original Rags' and 'Maple Leaf Rags'. Both of them became very famous and Joplin emerged as most famous artist of that time. His style was based on traditional African patterns. Joplin uses inquillo and habanera rhythm extensively in his compositions. He also uses tressilo rhythm in syncopated fashion that was admired by music lovers and Joplin became a star.

Buddy Bolden is remembered as the first musician who became a celebrity for playing jazz. Bolden experimented with his trumpet and discovered a

syncopated rhythm, 'Big four'. This was an exclusive invention that gave Bolden new heights and inspired him to form first jazz band. Ferdinand Joseph was a pianist who left his home in order to play in brothels of Storyville. Jelly Roll Morton used to note down his music compositions on paper and he became the first of his kind.

Sydney Bechet, a Creole who used to play clarinet, as well as Saxophone, was known as the poet of jazz music. Joe King Oliver used to play cornet and lead a band in Storyville. Oliver used to play jazz music in different brothels, clubs and bars of Storyville and also used to perform in private functions. Oliver moved to Chicago once Storyville was closed and all clubs, bars and brothels were seized in the area (Gioia).

Louis Armstrong is the most famous jazz artist. He used to play trumpet in the clubs of Storyville. Armstrong was born in a poor family and started playing trumpet after being inspired by King Oliver. He succeeded Oliver's team in Chicago and succeeded in achieving international fame for his music. The jazz was now emerged as one of the most popular genres of the music and its followers were increasing day by day.

### **Storyville: a new shelter for Jazz**

Storyville was not the birthplace of jazz but it certainly sheltered jazz music. Jazz flourished in Storyville and witnessed new heights at this place. There was a strong relation between jazz and Storyville and were various reasons behind this relation. Storyville was established in the year 1897 through an ordinance in order to control prostitution and drug use and confine it into a certain area. Authorities wanted to confine all activities of prostitution and

drug use in one are so they could monitor and regulate it effectively.

Storyville had all the features that pull crowds. The place was adjacent to railway station that made it easily accessible for travelers. A huge number of people used to visit Storyville because of their fondness of prostitution and drugs and abundance of both in the area. These people used to spend a lot of money in clubs and bars of the area. They also spent some of their money on artists who performed in these bars. When these visitors returned back to their places, they propagated about the jazz music and it gave the required publicity to jazz. Artists also got huge help and protection in Storyville (Shaw).

Storyville emerged and earned a reputation of a place where party continued uninterrupted. People enjoyed their time in brothels, clubs and bars of the city. Storyville had every tool of entertainment and pleasure for the people who were able to spend money. Beautiful prostitutes, abundance of drugs and soothing musical performances by different artists were available there to entertain people. People from different parts of America used to visit clubs and brothels of Storyville.

Hiring piano players became a trend of brothels in Storyville. Artists were hired to play piano and other instruments at the time of welcoming guests in brothels of Storyville. A number of famous music players started their career in the district of Storyville. All of them used to sing and play in brothels, clubs and bars in order to earn their livelihood. Buddy Bolden, Pops Foster, Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton are some of jazz artists who became very famous in later years but initially had worked in Storyville brothels, clubs, and bars. Storyville continued sheltering jazz artists till its existence

and contributed enormously in the successful journey of jazz.

This amazing genre of music was nurtured in the clubs, bars and brothels of Storyville. Brothel owners, club owners and bar owners used to hire piano players in order to play to please customers. The trend of playing musical instruments was developed in the brothels while welcoming customers. Jazz artists used to play musical instruments before couples leave for their rooms. Storyville saloons also employed various artists in order to attract customers by playing trendy melodies.

Storyville sheltered and witnessed the significant journey of jazz. It saw jazz performers, performing in clubs and brothels. Storyville enjoyed singing and dancing of jazz artists. The city also saw jazz artists performing in the funerals. A lavish jazz funeral included many artists who used to march and play various musical instruments. A number of jazz bands emerged and all of them served different purposes. Some of these bands performed in parties, functions and some of them performed in funerals (Shaw).

The interesting aspect of jazz in the Storyville is the amalgamation of art and trade. Jazz was basically an art, but it was so amalgamated with commerce that both became inseparable. Trade supported jazz and jazz was used basically for trade purposes. Such examples are rare to find in other parts. Art and commerce are usually considered to be separate things but the situation of Storyville and needs of contemporary jazz artists brought both of them together. Art and commerce joined hands to support each other and only art was able to survive in the struggle of existence. The existence of Storyville came to an end but it exists somewhere in form of jazz music.

After sheltering jazz and jazz artists for almost twenty years, Storyville was

closed in the year 1917. Buildings of Storyville were destroyed and the place was used for other purposes. All jazz artists were compelled to leave the place and they moved to different places in search of livelihood. They propagated different styles of jazz and used to perform various skills that they learnt and developed in the Storyville. These artists played very significant role in spreading jazz in different parts of the United States of America.

## **Expansion of Jazz**

All artists started departing into other areas once Storyville was vacated. Artists like King Oliver and Louis Armstrong left for bigger cities. Oliver formed his band in Chicago and Louis Armstrong joined this band in later years. Various other parties shifted into other parts of the United States of America. They carried their teams and instruments with them and started performing in public. Their performance gathered huge support from public and jazz became famous across the United States.

Jazz was coming out of its traditional ways of music. A number of new techniques and instruments were introduced and used by the artists in their performances. The jazz music was earlier labeled as music of slaves and music of blacks but due to its varieties, innovations, and popularity, jazz became popular among whites of America. Gradually it spread outside America and reached into Europe where it gained huge popularity. Various eminent artists took jazz music at new heights (Roberts).

Jazz music witnessed new popularity in the middle of twentieth century. A number of famous artists including Dizzy Gillespie, Mongo Santamaria,



Chano Pozo, Charlie Parker, Earles Hines, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Machito and Mario Bauza applied their talent in their performances. These artists have made their identities as excellent jazz performers. Jazz music has become very versatile because of contribution of many artists who are associated with the jazz music.

## **Conclusion**

Having observed an overview and succinct analysis of the abovementioned subject, this paper concludes that jazz is one of the most popular genres of the music that has entertained music lovers for a long time. Storyville sheltered jazz music and jazz artists in the time of their struggle. The jazz was though not originated in the Storyville but jazz was certainly nurtured in the Storyville. Various clubs, bars and brothels of Storyville patronized jazz music by employing jazz artists. Many famous jazz artists started their career in Storyville and worked in brothels, bars and clubs of Storyville for their livelihood. The amazing jazz music was flourished in the clubs, bars and brothels in the Storyville. When Storyville was closed, all jazz artists were spread into different parts of the United States of America. Storyville loved jazz and helped jazz in sustaining and spreading even if the city itself was seized to exist within few years of its establishment.

## **Works Cited**

Gioia, Ted. *The History of Jazz*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Palmer, Robert. *Deep blues*. New York: Penguin Books, 1981.

Roberts, John Storm. *Latin Jazz*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1999.

Shaw, Arnold. *The Jazz Age: Popular Music in the 1920's*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.