

While we're young: aiko's song's soul harmonies and inspiring lyrics examined

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Individual Music Paper

Music is an art form with many elements such as pitch, rhythm, dynamics and qualities of timbre and texture. Jhene Aiko is a singer and songwriter who uses vocals and beats. The song I have decided to choose for my Individual Music Paper is “ While We’re Young” by Jhene Aiko. The style of Jhene Aiko song “ While We’re Young” and all of her other songs is R&B and Neo-Soul.

The important features of this song that makes it distinctive from other styles of music is the genre being different. Contemporary R&B can give off a jazz feel since it does mean Rhythm and Blues music. For example, Pop Music is characterized as hype and contains elements of “ dance” mostly. Hip-Hop and R&B can be linked together but R&B is more “ soulful”, “ smooth” and includes singing. On the other hand, Hip-Hop has hard beats. You can not quite compare Hip-Hop, Pop, Rock, or Country to R&B besides Jazz and Blues since they are similar.

There aren’t any sub-categories of this style of music, but it can also be labeled as Contemporary and Alternative R&B. They can be used as sub-categorizes because Contemporary R&B is a genre that originated in African-American Communities. It combines Pop, Blues, Soul, Hip-Hop and Gospel. Alternative R&B is used by music journalist to describe a stylistic alternative to contemporary.

The melody of this song is a conjunct. It is sing-able, but usually disjunctive melodies are hard to go along with. The song skips but it is not fast, it is a

steady pace. The beat goes on throughout the whole song and it does not switch up until it reaches the Pre-Chorus, after the Pre-Chorus is over the song goes back to the steady beat. The tempo is described as heart beat slow such as 6 eighth notes per bar. Consonance harmonies are usually two or more pitches that are pleasant. "While We're Young" has a combination of at least three pitches/beats which fades in and out. There are many different forms, some include Binary, Ternary, Theme and Variation and Popular Song. "While We're Young" uses Popular Song form which is an A-A-B-A scheme and goes Verse-Pre Chorus-Chorus-Verse 2-Pre Chorus-Bridge-Chorus-Outro OR could go Verse-Chorus-Verse-Chorus-Bridge-Chorus such as in "Fallin'" by Alicia Keys. The mood Jhene Aiko gives off for this song is settled and calm. All of her songs are soulful and easy to sing along to. She is a singer more than anything and the genre could also be labeled as mainly Contemporary R&B or Neo-Soul.

Jhene Aiko music is mostly about peace, love and pain. She uses her poetry and singing to express herself. It does not tell us much about our culture but Jhene Aiko music can have an emotional impact sometimes. Jhene Aiko music does not have cursing in it and she does not talk about things that are inappropriate for young teens or young adults; therefore, she is not influencing those who listen to her music to do things that would not be wise.

A few of Jhene Aiko songs support the identity of a group of people such as "Frequency", but this specific song "While We're Young" does not. I'd say people from ages 13-30 listen to Jhene Aiko and some may even be social groups.

A culture of a place is represented by the music genre and instruments being used. It depends on the particular musical style. This style does not have much musical and cultural values. Since R&B started from African-Americans, they used this style of music to communicate and express cultural beliefs.

Jhene Aiko role is for healing and loving. Central and social functions is part of what makes us who we are. It can be based on the emotional effects which includes happiness and joy. This type of music can have a beneficial effect on our physiological functions.

Musical features engage me as listener by active listening. I agree to the term "you learn from what you listen to." Being a person, I know what it is like such as what genres, what type of tempos and rhythms I prefer. It is hard understanding why I like what I like. Listening is an experience. Active listening is an important skill. It is best to sit quiet and focus on the melodies, rhythms and forms I like to get a better understanding of why I chose the song, what I like it and what's the difference between other genres.