

IB EXTENDED ESSAY

Subject: Music

Traditional Jazz is still present in the modern jazz music world today. Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis are established Jazz musicians who both identify the importance of performing and composing using traditional jazz musical elements.

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ABSTRACT:

In this extended essay, my focus is to demonstrate that old jazz style techniques and aspects, are present in modern jazz, proving that the main core of jazz is transmitted despite the modernization or development of new techniques or technological tools that helps to enhance a better quality sound.

In order to prove this, and to show a specific prove of this, book research, web research and DVD's research was made about the main six elements of music : Pitch, Rhythm, Structure, Tone color, Texture and Dynamics, in order to compare and contrast any similarities or differences in the songs selected, by viewing the implementations of these elements in both pieces. These elements were analyzed one at a time, yet simultaneously so that each element could be better compared.

The general statement concluded was that old jazz still has a great influence in modern jazz, since the techniques used are the same and the elements and format remain almost intact.

Old jazz is also new jazz, as it was proved in this essay, so as well as artists remain faithfully to the contents of jazz, old jazz will remain unchangeable, and will be present in every jazz piece.

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Introduction:

Research Statement: Traditional Jazz is still present in the modern jazz music world today. Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis are established Jazz musicians who both identify the importance of performing and composing using traditional jazz musical elements.

Through analysing the key changes in Jazz music and it's many styles, it is obvious that jazz is a musical language that continues to develop and change for the future.

Through analysing Miles Davis' piece, 'Summertime,' it is clear that Davis aimed to maintain the traditional jazz style of this 1935 song, originally composed by George Gershwin. Miles Davis is reknown for his new developments of Bebop Jazz (Kind of Blue, 1959), however with 'Summertime,' he aimed to herald the traditional antiquity of jazz through his arrangement of this song.

By analyzing these two jazz pieces, 'Summertime' and 'Later' using the Musical Elements, they exemplify how contemporary jazz composers and musicians still continue today to hold onto the traditional jazz principles that were established in the early 20th century.

The Jazz Era

As it is well known, this unique style was born in New Orleans, an American city known for its vast musical culture and for its diversity. It started in the 1890's as a convergence and fusion of the African – American performers that mainly mixed the ragtime syncopations and the expression or feeling of the blues. Approaching to the beginning of a new century, this innovating sound was becoming increasingly and progressively popular, and it began to be recognized as jazz.

First jazz players started expanding throughout the country while the upcoming world war one was about to emerge. This is why the first real and concrete piece of jazz was heard among 1917, performed by a group of white musicians, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band.¹

The Musical Elements

The analytical area will be based on the six elements that are present in music. These six elements are: Pitch, dynamics, tone color, rhythm, texture and structure.

*Pitch*² refers basically to the highness or lowness of the sound, also to the range of instruments present, and their function in the musical piece, and to what family they belong (woodwind, string, brass, etc.), and to the tonality of it.

*Dynamics*³ means the degree of loudness or softness in music. Changes in the loudness or softness of an instrument can occur gradually or even suddenly. A

¹ Burns, K. (2000), *JAZZ- DVD 1- Jazz An Appreciation*. As broadcasted on PBS

² Roger Kamien, (1996), *MUSIC: AN APPRECIATION*. 6th edition. The McGraw-Hill Companies, inc. (p.2). (Accessed: 28th March, 2013)

progressive increase in loudness normally causes excitement, and when combined with a pitch increment, it makes it even more intense. Also, a gradual decrease on loudness often provides a sense of calm and tranquility.

*Tone color*⁴ also denominated as *Timbre*, means the quality of a sound that can make us distinguish instruments even if they are playing the same tone in a dynamic level. This element is a way of describing a musical sound but with words like : bright, rich, powerful, thin, mellow, dark, etc. As well as Dynamics, changes in tone color can happen as well.

*Rhythm*⁵ is the ordered flow of music through time. Rhythm is divided into several areas such as: beat, meter, time signature and tempo. Beat refers to the division of music into equal units of time. Beats are represented often with marks on a time line, they commonly occur in every ¼ second. Sometimes the beat is easy to detect, maybe in rock, since usually there is a powerful beat created by the drums, or sometimes is almost impossible to notice, which causes a sense of disorientation. Also, there is the meter, which refers to the organization of number of beats into regular groups. If a bar has 2 beats, then it is called a duple meter, if it has 4 beats, it is called a quadruple meter and so on. The tempo is also a very important feature within rhythm. It is usually given at the beginning of the piece, it refers to the speed of the beat, if the tempo is fast, it suggests excitement and energy, and when it is slow, it suggests

³ Roger Kamien, (1996), *MUSIC: AN APPRECIATION*. 6th edition. The McGraw-Hill Companies, inc. (p.4). (Accessed: 28th March, 2013)

⁴ Roger Kamien, (1996), *MUSIC: AN APPRECIATION*. 6th edition. The McGraw-Hill Companies, inc. (p.5). (Accessed: 28th March, 2013)

⁵ Roger Kamien, (1996), *MUSIC: AN APPRECIATION*. 6th edition. The McGraw-Hill Companies, inc. (p.38). (Accessed: 28th March, 2013)

calmness and mellowness. There are different Italian words for different tempo. The time signature means how many beats can be found per bar.

*Texture*⁶ represents the different layers of sound that are present in the musical piece. If there is a single melodic line only performed by one instrument, it is called monophonic. If there are two or more melodic lines, with similar sounds or interests, is called polyphonic. And if a main melody is heard accompanied by chords, then the texture is homophonic.

*Structure*⁷ means the different segments of a musical piece, and how it alternates or repeats. Binary form, is when there is an A section (a stanza or a verse) and then a B section (chorus). Ternary form refers to an A- B – A, section, notice that it goes back to A. And there is a rondo form, which indicates that there is a c section, a new segment that differs from the rest.

The Modern Jazz Performer

Generally speaking, in modern jazz, the leading instrument is known for leading the harmonic line instead of a melody which differs from the other instrumental groups, which is a slight change referring to old jazz and modern jazz. Wynton Marsalis is a relatively modern Jazz performer⁸, however he refutes this statement because in some of his jazz pieces, the main instrument that he plays (trumpet) certainly does leads a

⁶ Roger Kamien, (1996), *MUSIC: AN APPRECIATION*. 6th edition. The McGraw-Hill Companies, inc. (p.67). (Accessed: 28th March, 2013)

⁷ Roger Kamien, (1996), *MUSIC: AN APPRECIATION*. 6th edition. The McGraw-Hill Companies, inc. (p.72). (Accessed: 28th March, 2013)

⁸ A+E Television Networks, LLC. (1996-2013). *Wynton Marsalis biography*. Available at : <http://www.biography.com/people/wynton-marsalis-9399922> (Accessed: 15th April, 2013)

melodic line instead of a harmonic one. In fact, he utilizes several trumpet solos in his pieces to emphasize the main leading instrument, by playing different notes and scales than what other instruments are playing simultaneously. Wynton Marsalis says in documentary about jazz, what jazz means to him, and what it is: “Is an art form that can give us a way of understanding ourselves”, he also mentioned “It is an improvisational art; we can speak together in the language of music”⁹

⁹ Burns, K. (2000), *JAZZ- DVD 1- Jazz An Appreciation*. As broadcasted on PBS

Here is a trumpet solo of the melody and chords of the piece “Later”, by Wynton Marsalis :

B \flat PART

LATER

AS RECORDED ON THINK OF ONE

WYNTON MARSALIS
TRANSCRIBED BY GEOFF BURKE

1 C7

F7 C7

D-7 (SING DOWN) G7 C7

2 C7

F7 C7

D-7 G7 C7

3 C7

F7 C7

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LATER

D-7 G7 C7 GROWL

4 C7 GROWL

F7 C7

D-7 G7 C7

5 C7

F7 C7

D-7 G7 C7 LAY BACK

C7

¹⁰ Wynton Marsalis Enterprises. (2013). *Wynton – Store – Sheet music*. Available at : <http://wyntonmarsalis.org/store/sheet-music> (Accessed: 16th April, 2013)

The score above shows the trumpet melodic line, which is the main leading instrument, not the whole instrumentation. It is in a major tonality in C major. It shows techniques such as vibrato, which was very utilized in early jazz pieces, which is another specific evidence that supports that this artist is influenced by early jazz, instead of modern jazz. In this case, it is known as growl. Vibrato is, “a pulsating effect, produced in singing by the rapid reiteration of emphasis on a tone, and on bowed instruments by a rapid change of pitch corresponding to the vocal tremolo.”¹¹ This technique also applies to wind instruments.

Song 1 Analysis

Referring to the *pitch* of this musical piece¹², we can see that the range of instruments are the following: Drums (percussion family), piano (percussion and string family), the double bass (string instrument), and the trumpet (brass family). There are voices present in the song, they are more like backing vocals rather than a melodic voice.

The tonality of this song is major. According to the score, the song remains in a C major scale.

They seem to be three male tenor voices, which play together as a unison, starting at minute 0:8, till minute 0:20 of the listening track.¹³ They play in a contrasting way towards the instrumental group, they sing short and repeated phrases by their own,

¹¹ Dictionary.com, LLC . (2013) .*Vibrato*. Available at : <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/vibrato> .(Accessed: 18th April, 2013)

¹² Marsalis, W. (2008) *Later: Live Performance*. Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpH7piWxpZQ> Accessed 23rd March 2013.

¹³ Marsalis, W. (2008) *Later: Live Performance*. Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpH7piWxpZQ> Accessed 23rd March 2013.

without background instrumentation, and right after they end their phrases, the instrumental group emerges, they have a questioning and response relation. Moving on to the drums, the utilization of brushes provides a soft and smooth sound, in order to avoid a strong and penetrating sound, so that the trumpet, which is the main melodic instrument, becomes emphasized and centered. From the beginning of the song till minute 0: 24, the drums provides a very low volume beat, very delicate, but a sudden increment, a crescendo¹⁴ in the volume in minute 0:24, where there is a much more firmer and steady beat. From that change in volume, the song gains a more dynamic flow, where the overall volume of instruments increase, and where there is a more noticeable beat caused by the drums and the double bass, therefore a continuous base for the other instruments to synchronize and interact. For the first 24 seconds, the drum only appears in certain beats to focus the sound of it, along with the other instruments, but it doesn't show a rhythmical pattern.

Observing the double bass, it can be noticed that it is very connected to the drum's function, they lead the basis of the song with a repeated rhythmical phrase after minute 0:24. This instrument, in the second it appears, it plays a continuous sequence of ascending and descending scales, throughout the whole song. It is the lowest range instrument, therefore it provides the lower notes to the piece, to create a strong base. It can be easily noticed that its contour is very smooth rather than angular, therefore its more like a linear base with no abrupt fluctuation with notes.

¹⁴ Take Note Publishing Ltd. *Music Theory – Italian Musical Terms*. Available at: <http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php> (Accessed: 19th April, 2013)

At the beginning of the song, for the first 24 seconds, the piano plays isolated chords with some fills in between them when the drum hits the pedal in order to accentuate a specific beat. It can be seen that with the left hand, the performer does the chords, and usually improvises small duration fills or solos with the right hand. In this song the piano sounds like as if it was improvising, since it appears rather occasionally than continuously, and it plays improvised chords and fills, in order to give the trumpet the leading responsibility. However, in minute 5: 14, till the end of the song, the piano does an improvised solo, and the trumpet is no longer playing, which means that for those 7 seconds, the piano is the leading melodic instrument. Piano also play dissonant chords in minute 0: 36. The trumpet is the main leading instrument and the melodic line. It sounds like a long improvisation, and it has a very high range of notes, which makes the instrument to stand out, since the other instruments are low ranged, such as the double bass or have a low volume such as drums.

Talking about the *texture*, it definitely is a polyphonic texture, because it has more than one layer of sound, it has drums, trumpet, piano. Double bass, and vocals. This could be said, because there are two instruments playing improvisations, which means that they are playing different melodies at once, so they are creating polyphony. The two instruments that do this are the piano and the trumpet. A polyphony also means how the sound of instruments, helps to enhance the sound of others, so in this case, the low volume of the double bass and the drums, and the occasionally appearance of the piano, helps to enrich the sound of the trumpet.

Referring to the *tone color*, these instruments show particular qualities in their sound. The softness of the drums and of the double bass provides a mellow, soft and smooth feeling, they do not vary, they remain constant, the double bass has a very thick

sound. The trumpet sounds very bright, due to its constant appearances with high range notes, which also sounds thin. Also it sounds very rich and strong due to the loudness of it, contrasting with the softness of the other instruments.

Moving on to dynamics, it can be easily noticed, that this piece demonstrates different degrees of loudness in some instruments. Clearly the trumpet is the loudest of them all, it seems to be *forte*¹⁵ (loud), while the double bass and the drums remain relatively soft, they remain *mezzo piano*¹⁶. The piano is the instrument that competes the melodic line with the trumpet, so it is louder than the drum and the double bass, it is moderately loud, it is *mezzo forte*¹⁷. There are no examples of gradual changes, but it could be said that a diminuendo¹⁸ occurs at the end of the song, in the last 2 seconds of the song, which means gradually becoming softer.

The structure of this song, is called rondo form. It doesn't follow a pattern such as a binary form , like A- B, or a ternary form A-B-A, it has more than two sections, and they do not repeat. Rondo form means that it includes a C section.

¹⁵ Take Note Publishing Ltd. *Music Theory – Italian Musical Terms*. Available at: <http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php> (Accessed: 19th April, 2013)

¹⁶ Take Note Publishing Ltd. *Music Theory – Italian Musical Terms*. Available at: <http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php>

¹⁷ Take Note Publishing Ltd. *Music Theory – Italian Musical Terms*. Available at: <http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php> (Accessed: 19th April, 2013)

¹⁸ Take Note Publishing Ltd. *Music Theory – Italian Musical Terms*. Available at: <http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php> (Accessed: 19th April, 2013)

Referring to the rhythm, it can be observed in the score, that the time signature is on 4/4 , which is known as common time. It has 62 bars. It doesn't says the tempo , but it seems to be in faster than a walking pace , but not so fast as an allegro piece, it seems to be allegretto, which means moderately fast.

Song 2 Analysis

By viewing and listening to the audio track¹⁹ and the score²⁰, we can tell about the pitch that it has a very vast and various lines of instrumentation. It can be noticed the trumpets (wind instrument), where the flugelhorn differentiates because it is the main melodic instrument, the alto saxophone (wind instrument), different flutes such as C flute, Piccolo flute and Bass flute according to the score (all belonging to the wind instrumentation family). There are horns, trombones and a tuba, which they all belong to the wind instrumentation as well. Also there is a Bass (string instrument) and a drum set (percussion instrument). All instruments are arranged in the score from the most higher range instruments to the lowest. According to the score, the male leading instrument (trumpet) is in a scale of Eb Major. By its sound, it could be said that it is in a minor tonality, because it doesn't sound cheerful, it sounds quite dissonant.

The main melodic instrument, the trumpet or the flugelhorn, is a very high pitched instrument, which highlights above every other instrument for its

¹⁹ Davis, M. (1958) *Porgy & Bess: Summertime*. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQtAWKQ_M7w Accessed 23rd March 2013.

²⁰ Jazz Lines Publications, (1935). *George Gershwin Music: Summertime, Full Score* Available at: http://www.ejazzlines.com/mc_files/2/summerime_jlp-8499.pdf

intense and strong volume. Though there are other trumpets, their role does not interfere with the main one, their function is to delicately provide a strong harmonic base along with the horns, trombones, tuba, flutes and bass, in a teamwork way, so that the emphasized instrument can be the trumpet. The trumpet doesn't show a structural pattern, but an improvisational one. It has a very angular contour, very fluctuating, therefore contrasting with the function of the other instruments. This trumpet is indicated to be *mezzo forte*²¹, which means very loud. It is the only instrument with this characteristic, in order to enhance its sounds and to prove it is the main melodic instrument.

Referring to the flutes, they have a very consistent task very similar to the trumpets, though in a different scale, which then could be said that there is a unison encounter that is to harmonize, so that the trumpet could set the melody. However, the main function of the flutes, is to play ascending scales in pair notes, and reach, after ascending, a prolonged note, which creates a rhythmic phrase, that when it ends, gives the entrance to the trumpet. A use of a call and response interaction between the instruments is implemented. Though these flutes have different ranges, they play the same in different scales. According to the score, this task is to be performed with *legato*²², which means in a very smooth manner without interruptions. Trumpets that accompany the main instruments also have

²¹ Take Note Publishing Ltd. *Music Theory – Italian Musical Terms*. Available at: <http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php> (Accessed: 19th April, 2013)

²² studybass, (2003 – 2013). *Legato and staccato – By Andrew Pouska*. Available at: <http://www.studybass.com/lessons/bass-technique/legato-and-staccato/> (Accessed: 19th April, 2013)

this same role, as well as the horns. The functions of this instrument are present in the whole song, though some variations occur as time advance. For example in minute 1 : 15, where it can be heard that these scales are moved one octave higher in the staves, therefore a much more higher sound.

The tuba and the bass are the lowest pitched instruments present in this piece. They contribute to the creation of a base for the trumpet by applying long notes, with a high volume, to become a strong base, ergo the denomination forte. It can be observed that other instruments such as the trombones, horns and flutes are directed to play mezzo piano²³, which is very soft, creating a contrasting sound between these instruments. However according to the score, it sometimes enters in a mute period, in which the other instrument ignoring the main trumpet, ascend their volume to forte, meaning loud. This can be observed in bar 10, where the tuba and the bass are not participating.

Referring to the drums, it is a very soft sound yet a sound that sets the beat correctly and firmly. Its 4\4 time signature is well heard. It uses the cymbals continuously, knowing that it is the smoother sound in the drums set, to avoid drawing attention, in order to emphasize the leading instrument. It does not have a pedal, which helps to set the beat, but instead it makes more use of cymbals and the snare drum to substitute that deep sound. It is a unified instrumentation used to centralize the main melodic instrument.

²³ Take Note Publishing Ltd. *Music Theory – Italian Musical Terms*. Available at: <http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php> (Accessed: 19th April, 2013)

Talking about the texture, it is a polyphonic texture. Not only due to the numerous layers of sound, but also because there isn't another instrument that is competing for the melodic line, there is only one melodic instrument, and all the rest are used to harmonize the surrounding of that instrument. The softness of the instruments that accompanies the main melodic instrument, enriches the sound of it, creating polyphony. They are complementary to each other.

Moving on to rhythm, the tempo of this song is defined as rubato²⁴, which means that the performers may take some liberty as in respecting the pace of the piece. This means that the pace could go slightly faster or slightly slower, without any drastic alterations. The time signature is in 4/4, which is known as common time.

The structure of this song shows that in the transaction of the first second of the piece, the audio shows an anacrusis²⁵. During this second, the main melodic trumpet plays an introducing note to the song, until 0:02, where the instrumentation begins. The structure represents a binary structure, which means that it starts in A section, goes to a B section, and then returns to A section again. It is clear that it returns to A section in minute 2 : 26, where the melodic phrase is repeated.

²⁴ E- MusicMaestro.com, (2009). *What is rubato?*. Available at :

<http://e-musicmaestro.com/emm-bar-view.asp?barid=3173>

(Accessed: April 20th, 2013)

²⁵ About.com., (2013). *About.com.piano – Anacrusis*. Available at:

http://piano.about.com/od/musicaltermsaz/g/GL_anacrusis.htm

(Accessed: 21st April, 2013)

The tone color is specific in every instrument. The main trumpet represents a very strong sound, because it is the main leading instrument, therefore it must stand out. It sounds nasal and thin, which makes reference to the high range of notes. It has tranquil sensation due to the slow pace, and for its prolonged duration notes. Moving on to the accompaniment instruments, the drums have a very mellow sound. It is very smooth yet it remains fairly firm. It sounds very soft and delicate as well as the other instrumentation that accompanies the trumpet. The tuba has a very smooth sound, very thick as well as the double bass. This is very appropriate since they have the lowest range and pitch in all the instrumentation present.

Looking at dynamics, we can see that there is a very clear division as in the dynamics of each instrument. Referring to the trumpet, as it is shown in the score, its volume goes above any other instruments. In page one, we can see that while the whole instrumentation are forte²⁶ (loud), the trumpet remains mezzo forte (very loud), in order to be the main instrument. A certain pattern could be observed. As we get closer to the *coda*²⁷ , the instrumentation goes softer and softer. In the last page of the core we can see that the whole instrumentation is in piano, meaning soft, which contrasts with the previous dynamics. By listening

²⁶ Take Note Publishing Ltd. *Music Theory – Italian Musical Terms*. Available at: <http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php> (Accessed: 19th April, 2013)

²⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc, (2013). *Coda – Written by Mark DeVoto*. Available at: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/123869/coda> (Accessed: April 20th , 2013)

the score, a music technique called *ritardando*²⁸ can be heard in minute 3 : 04, which is a technique most used to conclude a musical piece. It gradually becomes softer until it reaches the end. The dynamics divide also in three parts. The first part of the score is denominated *rubato*²⁹, a free pace for the artist, the second page is said to be directed, which means that a professional will direct and decide how to do it, and the last part is *medium swing*³⁰, which means a: “temporal variation played at one time scale”. Swing is said to be a feeling, an expressive technique, it’s a jazz technique to play around the beat, a bit freely.

²⁸ Take Note Publishing Ltd. *Music Theory – Italian Musical Terms*. Available at: <http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php> (Accessed: 19th April, 2013)

²⁹ Take Note Publishing Ltd. *Music Theory – Italian Musical Terms*. Available at: <http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php> (Accessed: 19th April, 2013)

³⁰ Southern Oregon University, Ashland, OR USA 97520. *A technical look at swing rhythm in music - By Kenneth A. Lindsay and Peter R. Nordquist*. Available at: http://www.tlafx.com/jasa06_1g.pdf (Accessed: 20th April, 2013)

Conclusion:

Research Statement: Traditional Jazz is still present in the modern jazz music world today. Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis are established Jazz musicians who both identify the importance of performing and composing using traditional jazz musical elements.

Analyzing both musical pieces, it is clear that modern jazz is still influenced by old jazz. There is a main melodic instrument with a layer of harmonic accompaniment composed by an instrument or a group of instruments. Not only this is evidence of traditional jazz, but also the techniques used such as improvisation, vibrato, crescendo, decrescendo, etc., which were typical in old jazz eras. Musical elements in old traditional pieces as well as in modern pieces of jazz are very similar, specially in pitch, rhythm and structure, where the groups of instruments are composed by some specific instruments (stringed, woodwind, percussion) , and where the structure is clear, with introduction, development and an ending or a coda, and the syncopation or changes in the rhythm which are classic in jazz pieces.

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