Pan-Africanism in jazz

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African-American “jazz”
African-American jazz represents its vast African root system and is the culmination and synthesis of all earlier African-American musical forms. There are infinite sociocultural features of Global-African music that were incorporated into the powerful magnetism of jazz before being distilled into the modern and contemporary musical juba that was labeled “jazz.” In Jazz, Pan-African processes create systems, styles (musical and social), and fundamental processes that tend to focus more upon content than form; so that content often dictates form rather than vice versa. Process involves a series of occurrences that produce change or development. Form involves the shape or appearance of things that make them identifiable to human consciousness. Content is the quantity or essence of phenomena contained within something else. The content of the universe involves everything that exists in actuality while form only involves our limited perception of reality. While exercising musical interaction, reciprocity, synergy, balance, and creativity within the spontaneous compositional process, we can also observe related processes and patterns within the broader universe. Thus we can discover an infinite array of models of viable dynamic systems.

We witness a creative process in motion around common dynamic systems such as beehives, where there is a clear sense of united purpose, organization, direction, individual and collective skill, and continuity, all leading ultimately to the mutually beneficial creation of honey. Clans, villages, and cities also involve dynamic systems of production that involve complex interconnectivity and interaction aimed at mutually beneficial goals. Polarity and duality, call and response, seem to abound throughout such dynamic systems within the observable universe. Tendencies towards balance, stasis, and motion appear to determine the nature of transformations, proportion, and the formation of sequences in nature.

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Through the nexus between the primary elements of music practice, sound production and dissemination, we can explore Global cultural history through the primary lens of jazz music evolution from its traditional African source to the present. Much can be learned through the exploration of the intersections between trans-global cultural development that enables music to serve as a mirror of the world’s history as captured in interdisciplinary domains of dance, visual art, and music ritual. Exploring the evolution of Homo sapiens culture through examining the progression of “jazz” from its African roots, delineates and parallels the historical migrations of humankind, from its African source, through the lens of musical instruments, iconography, cultural and ritual patterns, kinetic expression, and shared musical elements.

**Jazz as a reflection of pure democracy**

Jazz, like characteristics of chaos theory and essential creative processes throughout the universe, is powerfully constructed, unpredictable, interconnected, and evolutionary. It involves a non-linear process that emanates omnidirectional influence. Art is a reflection of universal procedure so musicians, filmmakers, poets, dancers, visual artists often set out on a new body of work without knowing what exactly may be approaching on the horizon. Since Global African artistic expression is a contemporary manifestation capable of creating contemporary myths and influence worldwide, that are reflective of past, present and future thought, it also reflects the ancient African socio-spiritual culture that it retains and perpetuates from the seeds of modern global art styles, ethos, tribal principles, and collective moral beliefs that first emerged from humanity’s parents on the African continent. The concept of African-American “jazz” democracy and other fundamental qualities demonstrate the power of music to present an archetype representing political order that allows for both individual effective organization, outlet for modes of human expression, and innovative collaborative creativity.

African-American “Jazz” is very broadly imitated but can never truly be duplicated, because it reflects a Pan-African consciousness that is a sum total of lifetimes of experiences that enlightens a path toward musical liberty of spirit that is arduous, powerfully communicative and variegated in its disposition. “Jazz: originated and evolved in the African-American community.” Despite lack of the level of funding backing scientific exploration, projects, and thought, jazz developed qualities of powerful and highly effective communication that generates fundamental spirit energy and wisdom that cannot be duplicated through imitation or transubstantiation without exposing conspicuous trans-substantive errors.

Navigating a jazz journey requires tenacity, strength of character, ancient knowledge, wisdom, and innovative creativity. Musical exchange, migration and evolution involved a global unfolding of ideas, stylistic distinction, and spiritual practices, that forged cultural identities and produced continually advancing episodes generating evolving principles of musical organization and freedom. Each culture’s artists and contributors reveal a different facet of its budding sociocultural identity, perspectives, and the process ultimately unveils reflections of its social psychology and assorted temperaments.
From the perspective of creative freedom and artistic evolution, the ultimate musical goal for many innovative artists is often to aspire to ever-greater degrees of technical skill, imaginative liberty, and artistic enlightenment that extend the well-crafted ancient traditions and vocabularies. Ideally, modern and contemporary artists aspire to reach the same degree of mastery, integrity, unity, craftsmanship, balance (polarity), magic, interaction, organic development, enjoyment (joy), rhythmic groove, and beauty that premeditated musical traditions from the past.

**African source**

Who were the ancestors of the African people who created “jazz” in America and what was the nature of African society before the slave trade disrupted African socio-culture? To understand the transformations that took place within the jazz fission process that resulted in its formation, we must first understand both the African roots of African-American music and the relationship between Europeans and Africans that develop into the adversarial condition that created racism and slave mentality? Much of that tense relationship became the physical, psychological, and spiritual motivation for African people to create and develop modern African-American music?

As African contributions to the evolution of humanity gradually became undeniable, European scholars began denying that Egyptians and Ethiopians were “Black” African people. The intriguing parallel between this controversy and sets of arguments results in a closely related delusion over whether “jazz” (an African-American invention) is African American or “American” in contemporary debates. However, evidence contained within the Mosaic records reveal that the Ethiopians are certainly “Black” people in the annals of all the great early nations of Asia Minor. Likewise, scholars who insist upon maintaining theories of “European” supremacy find themselves refuting evidence that “jazz” is African-American music that is shared freely with global culture. Clearly, if the label “Latin Jazz” exists so must the description “African-American Jazz”—under the same logic.

Music, unlike war, has most always served to bring people together. Music in Africa is an integrated process of communal and individual singing, dancing, visual art, and instrument playing. There is no single word for music in any African language. All music results in infinite shades of tone color, assorted expressive approaches, cultural emotions, thought, implications, and meanings. Elements of music are universal, although its endless modes of composition and implications are not.

Because jazz evolved as a consequence of European attempts at the total annihilation of the African family and culture in the Americas, its adaptation resulted in the formation of brand new transcultural convergences. As such, a consciousness and methodology evolved capable of absorbing, transforming and assimilating any musical principles that entered its artistic sphere. This capability was grounded in the ancient cultural fluidity of Pan-African culture where people throughout the Guinea Coast, Congo, Sudan, Eastern Cattle Area, Khoisan Area and North Africa exchanged knowledge, goods, and culture for thousands of years. Consequently, jazz not only reflects features of West Africa, but also retains features from the entire African continent.

**Stylistic areas of African music**

To comprehend the myriad Pan-African cultural forces reflected in jazz, conscientious historical study of African music cannot restrict itself to the development of musical forms and
style alone. Music is very much a part of the social and cultural African and Global-African worldview and life. Thus, it is important to consider factors that link traditional African society with the outside world in order to widen an investigation of the more subtle African stylistic regional influences retained in jazz.

For many years cultural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa were grouped into geographical regions such as the Khoisan, Guinea Coast, Congo, Sudan, Eastern Cattle, and the Pygmy (Ituri Forest) areas to provide a basic framework for observation of African musical style. Eurocentric musicologists fragmented the continent by separating North Africa from the remainder of Sub-Sahara Africa. All of the diverse stylistic regions on the African continent have been interconnected by influences on music, dialects customs, and other aspects of culture throughout history, and such exchange can never be arbitrarily contained by artificial borders established by Europe. Focused studies of the stylistic traits of musical elements, instruments, functions and stylistic qualities of the Guinea Coast, Khoisan area, Sudan, Congo, Eastern Cattle area, and the Ituri Forest have revealed many similarities and differences between cultures and communities within this vast region.

The perpetual changes that inevitably thwart individual and community stability, balance, and equilibrium are reflected in the mirror of music. The multidimensional physical, emotional, and intellectual dynamics of life in an ever-changing world is reflected in the transformation of traditional African music over the years. Ancient African Khoi, San, Mbuti, and other ancient people, who reside within the Ituri Forest in the Congo region and Kalahari Desert in the Khoisan Area, are usually referred to as “primitive.” However, both ancient African people have actually achieved and sustained harmonious stability with their environment—beginning thousands of years ago and extending into contemporary life. Their chief cultural disruption has been at the hands of self-identified “civilized” societies who imposed foreign social systems through the use of senseless violence, destruction, lack of empathy, and insatiable greed aimed at achieving their own social advancement and power. Similarly, the lives of Africans in America were disrupted, stolen, and displaced throughout the Americas. But, in the final analysis, the cultural and musical adaptations made by African-Americans created a Pan-African musical statement that reveals physical, cultural, and psychological tenacity that became a model of human advancement through jazz.

Just as Egypt and certain other eastern portions of Africa show greater influences from civilizations operating across the Red Sea, North African cultures reflect influences from various Mediterranean areas, its contact with southern regions of Africa are just as clear. A well-traveled land route from the Nile to the Red Sea was used from the time of the Old Kingdom of Egypt. Egyptians built ships as early as 3000 BCE by fastening wooden boards together and stuffing the gaps with strips of cane, enabling them to import goods from Lebanon and the wealthy trade area of ancient Punt. In Indian Ocean trade Eastern African areas traded with inland kingdoms, such as ancient Zimbabwe, to obtain gold, ivory, and iron that were then sold as African exports in the Indian Ocean Trade with India, Southeast Asia, China, and other regions.

The North Africa stylistic region includes Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, and Western Sahara. In addition to native African cultures, the music produced by musicians from the North African regions are influenced by three outside musical cultures, the Persian, Arab, and Turkish. Islam is a prominent language spoken. Much North African music has many elemental properties in common with Middle-Eastern style. This musical stylistic cross-fertilization extends from the borders of the Himalayas to the Atlantic Ocean. A prominent segment of the population of musicians within Northern Africa consists of the Berbers, and the Kurds. Due to a high circulation of migrant people in the region, musical
practices in the area are quite diverse and dynamic. The music is often highly ornamental (melismatic), much like the modern modal jazz of Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Ornette Colman, and other musicians in jazz styles that emerged during the 1960s.

During prehistoric times, Trans-Saharan trade required travel across the Sahara (north and south) to reach sub-Saharan Africa from the North African coast, Europe, to the Levant. The Sahel people were the middlemen of Trans-Saharan trade, when Camels were used as the primary form of transportation where a major item traded between the Sudan Area and sub-Saharan Africa was salt. To the south of the Sahara and the Libyan Desert (one of the hottest and driest desert areas in the world) lies a belt of vegetation that is economically rich and which provides a favorable route for travelers across the continent. Across from the southern Egyptian border was the channel through which Egyptian influence passed southwards to the rest of Africa. Its inhabitants, Cushite tribesmen, ruled northern Sudan for the best part of a thousand years. Many world cultures have influenced other portions of Sudan as well, largely because Sudanese borders touch nine other African countries the country has seen the migrations of many small independent ethnic groups bringing such instruments as the Arab rebec (a pear-shaped two- or three-stringed instrument) and the alkaïta (a reed instrument found in Central Africa and northern Nigeria). The rebec is related to other African chordophones that were Ancient precursors of the African-American banjo. The alkaïta produces a tone and modal style reminiscent of John Coltrane’s modal approach to the soprano saxophone during late 1950s and early-to-mid 1960s.

Jazz reflections of African regional musical styles

Ancient people attempted to reconcile their own personal and collective harmony and rhythm in daily life with nature through copious observation, imitation, ritual displays of reverence, cyclical measurement of time, and metaphysical theorization. People like the Khoi and San of the Kalahari Desert, and as well as the ancient inhabitants of the Ituri Forest often collectively referred to as Pygmies. Bantu and other Pygmy music is sung with a sense of fluidity, organic abandon, and polyphonic texture that shares some characteristics with polyphonic New Orleans jazz from the early twentieth century or Free Jazz that emerged during the 1960s.

It is estimated that there are between 250,000 and 600,000 Pygmies living in the Congo rainforest. Diminutive African Pygmies, have lived in harmony with nature for thousands of years and are scattered across equatorial Africa. They speak various languages, inhabit different varieties of forests, and have assorted approaches to hunting and gathering food. Studies suggest that the pygmies of Western Central Africa’s Ituri Forest region “descended from an ancestral population that survived intact until 2800 years ago when farmers invaded the pygmies’ territory and split them apart.”^1

Although there is a predominance of duple motifs, triple and alternating duple and triple motifs are utilized frequently. Similar patterns are found in different African societies, but certain patterns are typical of particular geographic areas (such as the bell patterns of the Niger and Congo regions).^2 Some instrumental rhythms (on melodic instruments) may be metrically free and abstract. Others are lyrical. Melodic instruments of one or two pitches can be effective in creating impressive rhythmic patterns.

Certain rhythmic characteristics link African music with “Black” music of other world cultures. Both metronism^3 (the presence of a strict metronomic pulse) and the importance of percussion are aspects of music that have been retained in the sacred and secular styles of “Black” music outside the African continent. Africanisms came to North America principally
via West African sources (more specifically, from the Slave Coast in the vicinity of the Guinea Coast area). With the cessation of slavery, “Black” Americans maintained some of the African musical traditions through activities such as the drumming and dancing in Congo Square, the popularity of street parades, and the tradition of music at funerals.4

Both North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa contain music that has undergone constant evolution as performers modify traditional elements of musical performance to keep their own presentations unique and contemporary. Most of the Africans who came to America during the European slave era were from Sub-Saharan Africa, and the tendency to create unique musical expression was maintained in jazz. Although most African music was initially exposed only to regional influences, eventually other outside cultures also contributed to the overall development of the music. African-American music thus possessed African musical qualities reflective of a wide-ranging collection of influences that allowed jazz to become equally diversified.

Linguistic influences within African music are most conspicuous in the tendencies of African drums to “talk” with clearly articulated representative speech styles and inflections. African-American music maintained some of that linguistic emphasis in its music. In early jazz styles, mutes were applied to brass instruments to increase their spectrum of simulated tonal articulation and timbre. There was a tendency of other jazz instrumentalists to sing while playing their instruments to augment the melodic lines (the singing of pianist Keith Jarrett as well as that of bassists Major Holly and Slam Stewart are examples). Although African language was virtually lost in America over time, some African-American stylistic tendencies reflect ways in which ancestral African griots used linguistic nuances when they performed their stories, songs and messages.

Although rhythm’s evolutionary path in America resulted in a drastically different character as the result of a particular historical process where the function of the drum changed roles, traditional African rhythmic approach is still acutely felt today in “old school” Hip Hop “Boom—Bap” beat. Boom—Bap beat is an African-American adaptation of early foot-stomping and hand-clapping performed in early African-American music that supplied the same time-keeping function as within Pan-African musical styles a half-century years ago. The purpose in both cases was to ground complex vocal delivery with supporting simple rhythmic patterns esconced between the imitation of virtuoso vocal representations of drum patterns of Global African musical heritage.

Certain rhythmic and dynamic characteristics link jazz strongly to both African music and Pan-African music of other world cultures. Sustained intensity, metronism (the presence of a strict metronomic pulse), African linguistic emulation, and the importance of percussion are aspects of music that have been retained in the sacred and secular styles of Pan-African music. Africanisms came to North America principally through West African sources, from the Guinea Coast area referred to historically as the Slave Coast. Remarkably, even when drums were outlawed in North America, Africa-Americans maintained features of the African musical traditions through the drumming and dancing in Congo Square, the musical approaches of street parades, and the tradition of music at funerals.

The Guinea Coast is the coastal region of the West African area from Senegal to Lake Chad. It includes Mauretania, Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo, Dahomey, Nigeria, and Cameroun. Significantly, the majority of enslaved Africans were abducted from this area during the period of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. It is estimated that fifteen to twenty million Africans were transported to the United States alone during the period from around 1640 onward.5 During this same period Guinea Black kingdoms flourished despite the fact that a great portion of the
young and healthy population was subjugated. Africans sent to the southern part of the Western Hemisphere, unlike those sent to North America, were able to maintain much of their culture through traditional African displays of tribal dancing and drumming (batouques).

African music played a significant role in early slave revolts in the Americas. Drums and the singing voice were important methods of communication during revolts on land. Enslaved and displaced people from West Africa used drums to communicate with each other in much the same way as they did at home when first brought to North America during the 1600s and 1700s. Through musical means they sent coded rhythmic messages over long distances that Europeans could not understand. In this way slaves held in different encampments stayed in contact with each other, and rebellions were planned. But eventually Europeans figured that the drums were relaying precise information and quickly decided that it was, 

absolutely necessary to the safety of this Province, that all due care be taken to restrain Negroes from using or keeping of drums, which may call together or give sign or notice to one another of their wicked designs and purposes. —

Slave Code of South Carolina, Article 36 (1740)

From that point on Africans in North America began the transformation that led to the evolution of a unique path to African-American rhythm that now dominates the contemporary musical world. The new musical awareness absorbed the Native American tribal influence, Latin American styles, the folk music of the European colonists, and, in turn, transformed and musical rhythms that came into close proximity, including Global African music.

As a consequence of the drum induced constant slave rebellion, not all abducted Africans remained enslaved in the Americas. Contact with the indigenous people of the Americas was also a result of African musical communication. Maroon is a term used to label Africans who had escaped from enslavement who resided throughout the Americas and mixed with the indigenous peoples of the Americas. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the classification “Maroon” was a European label assigned to a self-emancipated “fugitive” African of the West Indies and Guiana (and their descendants) who escaped from their enslavement. They formed independent settlements and Maroons also assisted other Africans in their protests, struggles against oppression and enslavement. Their cross-fertilized cultural life experiences became bridges to cross-cultural musical expression.

The classification “Maroon” was originally a European label for a fugitive African slave of the West Indies and Guiana in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or a descendant of such a self-emancipated African. Therefore, Maroons became a term for Africans who had escaped from slavery throughout the Americas and mixed with the indigenous peoples of the Americas. They formed independent settlements and the term was also often applied to their descendants. Maroons also assisted other Africans in their protests, struggles against oppression and enslavement. A multitude of cross-cultural exchange emerged from such intimate African contact with indigenous people throughout the Americas and Caribbean.

**Jazz reflections and retentions**

The most successful revolts were orchestrated through very precise musical communication delivered through African drum messages that European captors were never able to decode. As a result, the success of strategic planning through drumming in North America caused a historically significant break with Africa that produced an innovative and unique musical mutation that was unlike anything that ever occurred on earth beforehand. The retention of
African drumming and other cultural rituals throughout the Caribbean and Latin America was lost when drumming was eventually forbidden among African American communities throughout the United States but that event changed the course of global musical history. Ironically, largely due to the significant denial of African-American access to African musical instruments and traditions, jazz evolved along newly invented lines of unprecedented musical freedom of expression and technical development in North America that is found nowhere else in the world. A new Pan-African language was codified that was at once a convergence of ancient African cultural wisdom and creativity and a harbinger of future Pan-African musical tendencies and artistic directions. In the Pan-African regions where African drums were not forbidden, complex polyrhythms were retained in various forms of modern South American and Caribbean music. Trinidadian Calypso, Brazilian Bossa Nova, Cuban Son and Rumba, as well as Haitian Gwo Ka and Compas, do not closely resemble any forms of Jazz, Rhythm 'n' Blues, or Hip-Hop.

The most readily available substitute for drums was the human voice. When drums were taken away from enslaved Africans in America, they maintained stealthy communication through their early African-American songs. Field hollers, children’s game songs, various vocal instances of religious vocal call and response, work songs, prison songs, and all kinds of rhythmic augmented vocal music were acquired. In each instance the voice replicates drum patterns and created polyphonic singing and chanting further enhanced, extended, and embellished by voice techniques that also included guttural effects, interpolated vocal technique, melisma, ululations (high-pitch female warbling sound), and other expressive additions. Work songs were common on the African continent and labor such as chopping wood, working on railroad construction, and plantation work provided an organic physical meter over which the polyrhythmic and polyphonic vocal sounds could unfold and improvise—just as jazz musicians would later do in scat singing. Vocal traditions established an important role in the preservation of African rhythmic and some features of linguistic heritage.

African American vocalists mastered the art of emotional rendering and double entendre (conveying one meaning to European American society while simultaneously sending a hidden, genuine meaning to the intended recipient on southern plantations). In the African-American Blues forms this approach to conveying emotional messages is often contrasted with the addition of strong dosages of humor. Northern Sudan is comprised of four main cultures: the Nubians (the most ancient), the Mahass, the Galien, and the Shaigai, all living on the Nile River. The Nubians use the lyre and the duff (a single-headed drum) to accompany songs and dances. The music is sometimes melancholy with a single melody being performed in a variety of social situations. The tradition of the Mahass is similar. On the other hand, the musical culture of the Shaigai is cheerful and often satirical. The melodies are brief love songs; exotic dances accompanied by the lyre or two daluka drums (a clay sounding-box covered with goatskin).

Beginning initially on the plantations of the Carolinas and Georgia, and as the African drum ban spread pervasively, Africans converted everything around them into percussive instruments. Spoons, washboards, their own bodies, hand clapping, drumming on various surfaces of the body (Patting Juba), foot stomping, shuffling (during the Ring Shout), and early rhythmic dance approaches that eventually emerges as African-American Tap Dancing. Various forms of brass mutes also eventually emerged to reflect the tonal tendencies of tonal African languages.

The Eastern Cattle Area includes Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania (the latter formed by the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964). This region forms the 618,934-square-
mile area of East Africa where its music, customs, creeds, languages, and general ways of living are so variegated that it is difficult to draw general conclusions regarding style. One clear characteristic is that the music is extremely rich in rhythm. The chief dancing instrument is the drum. Rhythms serve a vital function in all dancing and as a means of communication in daily life. Tribes of East Africa, such as the Sogo, Ganda, and Acholi, prefer quick and “hot” rhythms in dancing. Slow and graceful rhythms are popular among the Tusi (Watusi), Kiga, and Karamojang dancers. These rhythms are rich enough to sustain dancing without instrumental or vocal accompaniment. As with early African-American music, in nearly all areas of East Africa clapping is very common, though it is not always used to accompany dances. In various other dances, however, clapping helps singers and drummers to keep steady time. In Buganda, drums are sounded to call people to do communal work and as in the Guinea Coast Area, drums warn people of approaching danger.

The freedom that emerged from African-American rhythmic approach was striking compared to traditional approaches to African drumming. In some African societies the privilege of playing certain musical instruments is governed by strict rules. In Ruanda, for example, the privilege of playing the six royal drums was reserved for one particular musician. Only a few young musicians of exceptional virtuosity could ever aspire to be one of the official drummers. However, traditional African drumming styles are based on multiple polyrhythms, syncopation, poly-metrical stratification, and dense textures instrumental and vocal textures. African-American jazz retained many such qualities.

Thus Pan-African rhythm traditions survived through mutation and adaptation, and formed a stylistic foundation in African-American music that was independent of the drum. Beginning in the nineteenth century, the music of Ragtime, Minstrelsy, Spirituals, Salon Music, Jubilee, Blues, and Gospel became percussive music without drums historians. The appropriation of enslaved Africans’ music by European mainstream society in the United States started at the time of early religious camp meetings (where African Americans and European Americans worshiped together in segregated, but adjacent, camp grounds) and continued to grow with the unfortunate phenomenon of the Blackface minstrelsy. Stephen Foster was the first European American to openly exploit Pan-African derived rhythms played on the African-American banjo, and incorporated them into his songs such as Oh Susana, which quickly became one of the most popular American songs of all time. The mixing of Pan-African traditions with European folk music continued to serve as the basis of bluegrass and country music that emerged subsequently as a consequence of African American and European Americans in rural communities in the South working and socializing together.

**The power of sacred African myth**

Many global religious, philosophical, and mythological traditions believe in the incorporeal spirit of an internal, intangible living being in the soul. African American “jazz” and other stylistic approaches are soul music. A spiritual nucleus to guide individual life was a quality retained from Africa. Soul is the immaterial portion of a human being that bestows individuality and humanity. It is often considered synonymous with the mind or the internal self and involves the immaterial essence, animating principle, or actuating cause of an individual life. Theologically speaking, the soul is that part of an individual which participates with divinity and survives the incarnation of the body.7
The sustained intensity that African-based music provided for some religious rituals related to the celebration drove African-American practitioners to a state of religious ecstasy. Sacred West African cultural practice was maintained in the Americas through such institutions as the Pentecostal Church and Voodoo practice. Shouts were generally applied in a religious context such as a spiritual dance in voodoo rituals and by worshippers in some Protestant ceremonies. It was inherited from African religious dances and was applied to a variety of contexts in America. Voodoo (or Vodun) inspired many slave revolts. Haitian nationalists found in Vodun a spiritual force that could not be separated from the people’s yearning for liberation. Voodoo also kept the rhythms of Pan-Africa alive at Congo Square in New Orleans and elsewhere in the United States.

African-American jazz is soul that engages a brand of inventive reincarnation in its musical learning, growth, and dissemination process. The consciousness of past progenitors, mentors, and titans enters the bodies of new protégés to perpetuate the process of evolving the musical consciousness. Despite humanity’s continual legacies of conflict, suffering, and stratification of societies, the human species is of a single fabric, all one group striving to move forward progressively. Progress is forward or onward movement toward a destination. A destination is the physical, psychological, or spiritual place that someone or something is going to be, or is being, sent to. Reincarnation is a progressive process that allows musical traditions to continually reinvent themselves.

Jazz as a mirror of human consciousness

Jazz developed from an organic process unlike that of any other modern musical style. This process involved inventing a new African music in America that was forcibly detached from its traditional social structures, languages, musical instruments, spiritual worship, and all other aspects of traditional African culture. The evolutionary developmental progression through field hollers, children’s game songs, spirituals, blues, barrelhouse, ragtime, and all other stages of advancement produced music that contained an expressive and spiritual dimension powerful enough to invade the global psychological temperament throughout the twentieth century and beyond. Since no other art form had ever been so thoroughly disconnected from its ancestral roots en masse, the innovative, expressive, and emancipated musical vortex that the new African American art form engendered was immediately addictive to all those who engaged it on assorted levels. Its power, and quality of freedom, in turn continuously fashioned supplementary nascent musical and cultural offspring (The Jazz Age, jazz dance, jazzer-cise, etc.). Thus jazz became an example of modern musical fission.

The African-American innovation that utilized embellishment of African-derived rhythm and melody, and reimagined European harmonic features, enabled Jazz to gradually become the most imitated stylistic approach and most significant musical explosion of the last millennium. As a consequence of its powerfully creative force, African-American jazz, as a global influence, has become largely synonymous with American music. Jazz spread its influence at a rapid pace initially after James Reese Europe took his music to France during World War I, and it’s influence was further accelerated after WW2, as the United States program of cultural imperialism aggressively saturated the world with its ideas, narratives, images, and cultural propaganda when it became a global economic and military super power. The pervasive dominance of all modern influential African-American music styles, including Jazz, Blues, Rhythm ‘n’ Blues, Motown, Soul, Funk, Rock, Disco, Hip-Hop, House, Pop, and other musical evolutions and revolutions, is nonetheless a consequence of the creation of the most independent music to ever emerge in global society—that is a clear reflection of the power and potential of Pan-African music.
Notes

1 Gibbons.
4 Ibid., p. 17.
5 Oliver, *Dawn of African History*, p. 68.