

Jazz: A Music of the Spirit

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The music commonly known as Jazz has been around for more than a century. While many of the practitioners have expressed discomfort with the term, Jazz, the attempts to name and explain this properly have been rare. Two of the now living artists who most prominently come to mind as critics of the name, and who have renamed their particular music, are Randy Weston and Max Roach. Mr. Weston determined that his music should be called African Rhythms, and Mr. Roach determined that the music he created was called the Music of Max Roach. Their response was an appropriate one for the 20th Century. However, in the 21st Century, it is imperative that the musicians who are progenitors of the art form, along with organizations that support its propagation, come together to determine and define this music, given the 100 plus years of experiences we have to draw from.

During the last nine years, an historic renaissance of community activism in Brooklyn has once again begun to be associated with this music for the first time since the 70s. This activism has been driven by an organized effort on the part of many collaborating community-based institutions, including the December 12th Movement, Melchizedek Music Productions, Shamal Books, the Central Brooklyn Jazz Consortium, Jazz 966, Black Telephone Workers For Justice, Up Over Jazz Productions, United Music Makers, Janes United Methodist Church, Our Lady of Victory Roman Catholic Church, The Concord Baptist Church of Christ, St Philip's Episcopal Church (to name a few), and has prompted the need for clarity as to the naming of the music.

We propose that the term Jazz be expanded to include the phrase Music of the Spirit in order to best identify, own and differentiate the phenomenon that has occurred in our community over the past nine years.

We define Music of the Spirit as an art form that defies time, genre and culture, even while it is, in fact, identifiably of a specific time frame (20th-21st Century), genre (Jazz) and culture (African American). It comes from within, this Music of the Spirit, and it likewise enters into the listener; it is complex in its simplicity and simple in its complexity, a music that can be described as an enigma wrapped up in a paradox.

Its composers, at work in the creation of art, more often than not, do give cognizance to its source, a higher power that many humans refer to as God. Many of us who help to create this music have at some point in our lives moved away from being limitedly defined by ego to being more broadly defined by spirit, thus moving from me to we, from the individual to the collective, from a group to a movement. Thus the music influences its composers to evolve both spiritually and artistically in order to best express the vocation they've embraced.

Furthermore, the spirit of the music is in the African female voice as it is the female part of our spirit that holds the memory of the past and it the mother who is connected to the child while that child is nurtured in the mother's water. That connection ties every African and African American back to their mothers and to the mother of us all, the continent from which all life evolved. The cry of the Spirit, for African and African American people, can be heard when the baby is first taken from the womb to live in a world that has no value for the life of African people. And our mission as a people has to be to nurture and to restore that value.

Among the male musicians who best epitomize this Music of the Spirit are Duke Ellington, Sun Ra and John Coltrane. Not only did they complete their work in the 20th Century, but, as well, taken as a whole, their contributions represent every style and genre of Jazz: Ragtime, Swing, BeBop, Modal and Avant Garde. Both their music and their lives are instructional for the task before us in the 21st Century.

It is important, in including the female voice into this thesis, that we acknowledge the particular kind of oppression against African women in the 20th century, within this social structure, that has acted as a preventive against their being able to completely develop their crafts and lives to the degree that their male counterparts were able to.

In addition to that, the narratives about their lives have come out of that same oppressive culture that has sought to justify its existence by denying the oppression. Therefore, the mention of Mary Lou Williams, Betty Carter and Nina Simone, while representative of a particularly high artistic quality, might also lack the corresponding information of their male counterparts.

Music of the Spirit is demonstrated best when several factors come together in the lives of the musician cited: (1) some form of transformative event takes place; (2) an advanced improvisational ability is present; (3) leadership and originality; (4) dedication and devotion of the music to the Creator; (5) the given composer understands music as a vocation, whereby he/she is further cognizant of the need to teach it with passion and intensity (6) activism of behalf of the community/ communities from which they came and (7) self determination and ownership of the music they created.

While not all of these factors need be present, we find that in the lives of the musicians mentioned most of these factors exist and often overlap. We will look at how two of these criteria lead to the presence of the others.

1. Transformative Event

Judith Viorst, in her book *Necessary Losses*, says the following: "How we mourn and how or if our mourning is going to end will depend on what we perceive our losses to be, will depend on our age and their age, will depend on how ready all of us were, will depend on the way they succumbed to mortality, will depend on our inner strengths and our outer supports, and will surely depend on our prior history--on our history with the people who died and on our separate history of love and loss. Nevertheless there does seem to be a typical pattern to normal adult mourning despite individual idiosyncrasies. And it seems generally agreed that we can pass through changing, though overlapping, phases of mourning and that after about a year, sometimes less but often far longer indeed, we 'complete' a major part of the mourning process."

One of the elements one finds in all the lives of the 20th century composers we've cited is a profound transformational occurrence that seemingly deepened their respective resolve to move them to greater depths of understanding. This sense of resolve resulted in a more intense directive as far as the Music of the Spirit is concerned. With both Sun Ra and Duke Ellington, it happened after the death of someone close to them. With John Coltrane, it happened through the loss of someone close as well as a profound inner transformation.

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington was born in Washington, D.C., in 1899, at the end of the 19th Century, 36 years after Abraham Lincoln had proclaimed Africans living in America to be free. The Emancipation Proclamation, of course, freed few and changed little. After centuries of forced dehumanization, no legal edict was going to make any real changes in the conditions of Africans in America. Culture, however, could make a difference because culture could restore a dignity to a people bereft of an understanding of themselves and their place in the Cosmos. Jazz is/was one of the transformative cultural realities for African Americans.

Culture, as we know it, is a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts that the members of any given social group use to cope with their world and with one another, and that is transmitted from one generation to the next through learning. There are many theories about the creation of Jazz that places New Orleans as its center. While we will concede that New Orleans is one of many places where this valuable cultural reality blossomed, we also hold that there were many other centers where Africans gravitated to and which also supported the creation of Jazz (Birmingham and Mobile, Alabama, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New York City, Chicago, Memphis, etc). In short, wherever there was a need, there was an art form created to satisfy that need, and that is why 105 years later we are still expanding and expounding upon this music, as the need for it still exists.

While we might not want to readily suggest that the ravages of enslavement and the loss of parents or loved ones are comparable, we do suggest that one of the major foci for slave owners in the pursuit of their ultimate aim of dehumanization was the separation of parent from child. During enslavement in America, the loss of one or both parents was a common occurrence and therefore a motivating factor in creating a culture from which the transformational music of Jazz would eventually be created. *And we must we remember that we came to America from somewhere else so it is in Aretha Franklin's voice that we hear the cry of the spirits of our ancestors who line the Atlantic Ocean of the Middle Passage, whose bones according to poet Amiri Baraka, "exist as a railroad track from one side of the ocean to the other."*

In other words, the need that arose in African people as a result of the destruction of their family structure by slave owners was itself a form of trauma that demanded a transformation on the part of the people thus victimized. Consequently, their need to understand the mysteries of life by manipulating sound was made to manifest into a music that reaches into the spirit of the collective self. *It is in the field hollers that we hear the cry of Black Women giving birth while working on some fool's plantation who has no value for child or mother except how he/she will bank on the misery of the same.*

In *John Coltrane*, author Bill Cole quotes Professor Fela Sowande of Nigeria as follows: "By far the most important single factor in African music is the full recognition and practical endorsement and use of the metaphysical powers of Sound."

That is to say that it wasn't a coincidence that as a means of addressing a major imbalance created by the enslavement of millions of people those same people were provided with a music that could be spiritually transforming, giving them a means through which to understand how their music and lives could be important to their sense of collective dignity and respect, creating a gift to themselves and the world. *The cry in the Music of the Spirit that we hear in the African American female voice is the cry of the mother of Emmett Louis Till and the mothers of Emmett Tills in every city that colored people populate. It is the cry of the mother of every Black child/woman and man butchered and or wrongfully imprisoned in this country. It is the consciousness that was and is absent from America when it comes to the lives of any people of color. It is the consciousness that is and was absent from America as it seeks and sought to free butchers who do and did their bidding.*

The cry of the Music of the Spirit heard in the voices of Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith and Nina Simone, is recognized as the cry that is lodged in our collective DNA. It is a cry that we can never forget and that will never stop until justice is done, until balance is achieved, until the plantation owners and their children and their children's children die to be reborn as feeling human beings with a conscious. It is cry that we will never forget until justice is done to a people who have ravaged and who continue to be ravaged by such terror.

Duke Ellington was already an international celebrity by the time he met Billy Strayhorn in 1938. Their fateful meeting was one that David Hajdu eloquently described in *Lush Life*, the biography of Strayhorn. Billy had apparently wanted very much to meet the Maestro (as Duke was also called), who was on tour in Strayhorn's hometown of Pittsburg. The young Strayhorn had an impeccable ear and memory. Having completely absorbed the music of Ellington while in the audience during the performance, he managed to get into the dressing room where there was a piano. Strayhorn began to play Duke's compositions exactly as the Maestro had done in performance and then proceeded to play the same composition as he, Strayhorn, would have played it. This combination of boldness and skill, of course, got Duke's attention and landed Strayhorn a job for life.

Over the subsequent years their relationship grew so close that they could compose compositions together while in different parts of the world. Music critic Robert Palmer said in the liner notes to Duke Ellington's tribute recording to Billy Strayhorn, "...they were capable of interacting so seamlessly that even the two of them had trouble pinpointing where one man's contribution ended and the other's began."

Ellington's transformation, occurring much later than that of Sun Ra or Coltrane, was connected to his impending loss of Billy Strayhorn to cancer, a three year process of deterioration diagnosed in 1964 and ending with Strayhorn's death in 1967. Duke Ellington first performed a Sacred Concert in 1965, and after Strayhorn's death he did 200 such concerts. The work on these concerts alone has become the subject of Janna Tull Steed's, *Duke Ellington, A Spiritual Biography*, published in 1999. An excerpt from Ellington's eulogy for Strayhorn reveals volumes about Duke as well, to wit: "He demanded freedom of expression and lived in what we consider the most important of moral freedoms: freedom from all self-pity (even throughout all the pain and bad news); freedom from fear of possibly doing something that might help another more than it might help himself, and freedom from the kind of pride that could make a man feel he was better than his brother or neighbor."

Sun Ra was born (or as he would say, "arrived") in Birmingham, Alabama, May 22, 1914. He had little recollection of his father and was primarily raised by his great Aunt Ida. Primarily self-taught, Sun Ra did not come from a family of musicians, yet by 11 years of age he had acquired a piano from his Aunt and taught himself how to read music. This is all the more remarkable considering the fact that the culture of 1920s Birmingham was not one of encouraging African Americans to find careers in music or to get some form of musical instruction (especially with Booker T. Washington's influence and emphasis on practical trades). Sun Ra, however, defied the mold given to him and taught himself how to compose, arrange and play the piano by listening to the live territorial bands passing through Birmingham. Eventually, his knowledge of music led him to become a reluctant but apparently respected bandleader.

The transformational moment in Sun Ra's life occurred in 1946, when his Aunt Ida died. Though he was fully grown by then, the event nevertheless created a profound change in this composer's life. He left Birmingham for Chicago, not to return until some forty-two years later. When Herman "Sonny" Blount did return it was as a reinvented Sun Ra, world-renowned composer/arranger/ improviser, leading one of the more recognized big bands in the country. His transformation was more than that of a name change as it also involved his complete

absorption into every aspect of music, African and (specifically) Egyptian culture, and a philosophy that dealt with Eternal things, at the core of which was a profound understanding of the Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Omniscience of the Creator.

Important to this discussion is James Reese Europe, composer, violinist and organizer born February 22, 1881, in Mobile, Alabama (not far from New Orleans), but was later raised in the same District of Columbia as Duke Ellington. Although Mr. Europe is not here singled out as one who epitomized this Music of the Spirit, he is very much a part of its foundation. His impact is several fold, for without Mr. Europe the music we call Jazz would have taken a decidedly different turn. James Reese Europe was a visionary. He saw that in order to protect the need the music spoke to and the direction it was moving in an organized effort on the part of its progenitors was required. Mr. Europe therefore organized the first known union of African American musicians in New York and called it the Clef Club. The importance of Europe lay in his lectures to the 100 plus musicians who were part of his Clef Club Symphony Orchestra, which by the way, performed at Carnegie Hall as early as 1912. He insisted that there was no need to compete with European musicians in the creation of this art form but that African musicians needed to create their own music based on their own experiences and collective need. This dual principle was taken to heart by people like Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake, two of the better known artists directly influenced by him and who went on to exert influences on the direction this music would take. It is the insistence on originality emanating from one's own spirit that connects Europe to Ellington, Sun Ra and Coltrane.

The central hallmark of Jazz is originality. The music coming from the likes of Ellington, Sun Ra and Coltrane, Betty Carter, Nina Simone and Mary Lou Williams speaks to that. They created their own original molds for the furtherance of that music. And in terms of a Music of the Spirit, there is hardly a more original voice than that of John Coltrane. Unlike the other two, his transformation comes as a result of the loss of a loved one and as a product of a spiritual awakening.

Born September 23, 1926 in Hamlet, North Carolina, John Coltrane was exposed to a rich mixture of education and religion early in life. His mother had attended college and as well played piano and sang. His father was an amateur string player. Significantly, both of his parents were also the children of Methodist Ministers. Coltrane's early interest in music occurred just as he was about to go through the first of the two major transformational occurrences in his life. At the age of 13, a few months after picking up the saxophone, Coltrane's father, maternal grandparents and uncle all passed away. In his book, *A Love Supreme*, Ashley Kahn says of this period in Coltrane's life: "Coltrane became withdrawn; his school performance suffered drastically. Instead, he turned to music for company, solace, and strength. What had been an enthusiasm became a means of survival; his saxophone, a spiritual lifeline. The loss of his father at the beginning of his teen years was critical."

Eventually, by 1943, his mother moved to a fertile area for Jazz, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in which city 'Trane would grow to maturity as a musician. Although there are recordings of Coltrane from as early as 1946, his real career spans the twelve years between 1955 and 1967, during which time he reshaped modern jazz and influenced generations of other musicians. Coltrane was freelancing in Philadelphia in the summer of 1955 when he received a call from trumpeter Miles Davis. Davis, whose success during the late forties had been followed by several years of decline, was again active, and was about to form a quintet. Coltrane was with this first edition of the Davis group from October 1955 through April 1957, a productive period in which influential recordings from Davis and the first signs of Coltrane's remarkable abilities became apparent.

During the latter part of 1957, Coltrane worked with Thelonious Monk at New York's Five Spot, a legendary gig. It was also in 1957 that he experienced his second major transformation. Up until that time, Coltrane had grown addicted to both heroin and alcohol. On the liner notes of one of his incredible recordings, **A Love Supreme**, Coltrane writes: "During the year 1957, I experienced by the grace of God, a spiritual awakening which was to lead me to a richer, fuller, more productive life. At that time, in gratitude, I humbly asked to be given the means and privilege to make others happy through music."

In his biography, *John Coltrane*, Bill Cole puts it this way: "In 1957, 'Trane went through an experience of spiritual rebirth where in his own words, he communed with God. Clearly, when he emerged for the second time he had developed a sense of direction with his music right at the heart of that direction. But his life was more than just making music: it was the offering up of this music from a now spiritually mature musician to God and to the uplifting of people everywhere. His religion became the innermost awareness of the relationship in the unity of God, nature and man. He developed a reverence for life, and he articulated this reverence not only through his music, but in his whole being."

Mary Lou Williams was born with a "caul" over her head, an event that foretold the ability to "see" things. This event at birth set her apart from other children in her family and was a key component in her ability to play the piano from the age of three. Her short childhood in a home of poverty and alcoholism, but with a harmonium and later a player piano served as a cauldron for her creativity in which her refuge was music. In her biography of Mary Lou, Linda Dahl, quotes a poem which she sees as central to Mary Lou's life.

Jazz created for all people
Jazz created through suffering
Got beaten everyday.
And school-Amy Frank

Mary's grandparents were enslaved and she spent many hours under the bed listening to their stories of cruelty and also to the way that those beaten or abused would create a new song or spiritual when they returned to the field and would be joined by others in song. Mary Lou was a child prodigy known as the "Little Piano girl of East Liberty". As a child left to fend for herself with her brothers and sisters, she soon learned how to use her talent to support her family. By all accounts, although estranged from her mother and raised in part by her older sister, she learned much from the musicians who were her mother's boyfriends. As a musician on the Black Vaudeville circuit Toba, she met and played with all the greats, Fats Waller, Duke Ellington's Band, Louis Armstrong. Her lovers included Ben Webster and Don Byas. She was known for the strength of her playing and her ability to memorize any music she heard. She believed strongly that playing Jazz was improvising not reading music from the page. Mary moved from having other musicians write out music for her to writing her own arrangements anywhere she could write them including on the band stand. She became known as a musician's musician writing arrangements for many bands including the Ellington band. Duke Ellington said of her "Mary Lou Williams is perpetually contemporary..... She is like soul on soul."

In 1945, Mary Lou wrote The Zodiac suite. Many of the signs were dedicated to Jazz musicians and the suite was performed at Carnegie Hall. Mary worked with so many great jazz musicians, a young Art Blakey, Bud Powell and Thelonius Monk were her friends and musical collaborators. A key issue was that though many musicians "borrowed" her ideas, she was not given recognition for these ideas.

In the 1950's exhausted by a tough life in music, she experienced a spiritual conversion in which she forsook playing for a while. She gave herself to helping her family and musician friends, many of whom got caught up in drug abuse. After sometime she returned to music coining the phrase "Jazz is healing for the soul". She went on to write a jazz masses called St Martin de Porres, Mass for the Lenten and Music For Peace. In this, she precedes Duke Ellington's sacred masses. She also organized the first Jazz festival in Pittsburgh in June 1964 and created a history of jazz record. She founded her own record company Mary Records and publishing company Cecilia Music in 1962.

" I'm praying through my fingers when I play..... I make it through sticking with my work and thinking that everything's going to be okay_ which it will be"

Nina Simone was born Eunice Kathleen Waymon in Tryon, North Carolina on February 21st, 1933. She too was a child prodigy, playing the piano at the age of four. She trained as a classical pianist studying at Julliard. She had hoped to attend the Curtis Institute but was rejected because of racism. This was the beginning of a lifelong struggle against racism. To support her family financially, she gave piano lessons and then she started working as an accompanist in a bar in Atlantic City, but was asked to sing as well. She did her first recordings in 1950.

Her repertoire included jazz standards, gospel and spirituals, classical music, folk songs of diverse origin, blues, pop, songs from musicals and opera, African chants as well as her own compositions and the hit song " I love you Porgy" made her famous though not rich as she signed away her rights.

In the 1960s, Nina Simone was part of the civil rights movement and later the black power movement. Her friends included playwright Lorraine Hansberry and Malcolm X.

Her songs are considered by some as anthems of those movements, and their evolution shows the growing hopelessness that American racial problems would be solved. Nina wrote Mississippi Goddam, when four black children were killed in the bombing of a church in Birmingham, Alabama and after Medgar Evers was murdered in Mississippi. Of the progenitors, Simone is the most explicit in her inclusion of her activism in the Civil Rights songs: Why? The King of Love is Dead, capturing the tragedy of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Brown Baby, Images (based on a Waring Cuney poem), Old Jim Crow, and To be Young, Gifted and Black.

Nina Simone left the US in the 1960's and lived Barbados, Liberia, Switzerland Britain, the Netherlands and finally France. She published her biography, *I Put a Spell on You*, in the 1990's and continued to record and perform.

Her originality was in creating herself and standing out against what was accepted as the norm which earned her the name of an eccentric as she struggled for her rights as a black woman and as a musician.

In 1995, she won ownership of 52 of her master recordings in a San Francisco court, She died April 21, 2003, in her adopted homeland, France.

In a 1969 interview with Phyl Garland, Nina Simone said:

There's no other purpose, so far as I'm concerned, for us except to reflect the times, the situations around us and the things we're able to say through our art, the things that millions of people can't say. I think that's the function of an artist and, of course, those of us who are lucky leave a legacy so that when we're dead, we also live on. That's people like Billie Holiday and I hope that I will be that lucky, but meanwhile, the function, so far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times, whatever that might be.

Nina Simone is often classified as a jazz singer, but this is what she had to say in 1997 (in an interview with Brantley Bardin):

"To most white people, jazz means black and jazz means dirt and that's not what I play. I play black classical music. That's why I don't like the term "jazz," and Duke Ellington didn't like it either -- it's a term that's simply used to identify black people."

Betty Carter was born Lillie Mae Jones in Flint, Michigan, on May 16, 1930. At a young age, she began the study of piano at the Detroit Conservatory of Music, and by the time she was a teenager she was working with Charlie Parker and other bop musicians when they performed in Detroit. She joined the Lionel Hampton band by 1948, billed as Lorraine Carter. Betty did several shows at the Apollo, playing with such notables as Max Roach and Dizzy Gillespie, toured with Miles Davis in 1958 and 1959, and spent much of the rest of the time on the outskirts of the jazz scene. Her refusal to adopt a more "mainstream" jazz style led to difficulty in finding bookings and making recordings. She made her first recordings in 1955 with Ray Bryant. The album, *Meet Betty Carter and Ray Bryant*, was little received, and her second set of recordings, with the Gigi Gryce band in 1956 was not published until 1980.

She was known as a fiercely independent woman and a devoted jazz singer, and her popularity among the inner jazz circles was high, but critical and popular acclaim eluded her. She was becoming well-known for her signature style that combined off-beat interpretations of classic tunes and wild scat-singing that never seemed to find the right beat. Even a move to the ABC label for her 1960 album *The Modern Sound of Betty Carter* did little to help that.

Ray Charles, on a recommendation from Miles Davis, agreed to take Betty on tour with him in the late 1950s. Enchanted by her voice and looking for a partner to record a series of duets, he enlisted Ms. Carter in a project that became *Ray Charles and Betty Carter*. The album, recorded in 1961, became an instant critical and popular smash; the single *Baby It's Cold Outside* gave Betty her first introduction into the popular music.

Despite this success, Betty chose to raise her sons, Myles and Kagle Redding. Other than the 1963 Atco album *Round Midnight* (which showcased a different side of Betty that many critics strongly disliked), and a very short 1964 United Artists album called *Inside Betty Carter*, she made no recordings between 1961 and 1968, though she continued to perform in New York.

She started her road back with a live recording on the *Roulette* album. Finally - *Betty Carter* (an apt title) is considered one of her finest works, but it didn't garner much interest at the time. A second live recording, again titled *Round Midnight*, met with the same fate. Unable to drum up enough interest and tired of trying to satisfy the demands of recording companies, she came up with a solution - she founded her own company. *Bet-Car* was founded in 1971, and would be the soul source of her recordings until she signed with Verve in 1988.

In 1988, she burst back on to the popular jazz scene with *Look What I Got*, the album that earned her only Grammy award. The next decade produced several more outstanding recordings that featured a more mature sound - not reined in by any means, but perhaps softer, *Betty Balladeer* instead of *Betty Be-Bop*. She garnered

Grammy nominations for 1990's *Droppin' Things* and 1992's *It's Not About the Melody*. She continued to feature young, up-and-coming musicians on most of her albums, a practice broken only on the 1994 album *Feed the Fire*, considered by some to be her finest work since *Audience*.

Betty remained active in developing new musicians through the Jazz Ahead program, founded in 1993, that brought unknown jazz musicians to New York to work with her. She performed at the White House in 1994, and was a major headliner at Verve's 50th anniversary celebration in Carnegie Hall. She continued to stay active with her teaching right up until her death from pancreatic cancer on September 26, 1998.

2. An Advanced Improvisational Ability

The key element of Jazz that links all the progenitors is that they were masters of the art of improvisation. As a Music of the Spirit, what we call Jazz includes improvisation, a term and a phenomenon that implies "the act of making better," as improving one's social and therefore spiritual condition. The historical condition of African people in America is one that certainly has been in continual need of greater improvement. The creation, therefore, of a music that has improvisation at its center (with all of what the term implies), and that is fundamentally connected to the Blues is definitely a music that seeks to move both performer and listener to an "other" reality, hence a Music of the Spirit.

This Music of the Spirit, which we have created to affirm our humanity, gives the world the very unique expression called the Blues.

The All powerful, All knowing and Ever present reality further demonstrates through the Blues, a harmonic innovativeness that is at once unique to the American African and the birth right of that group. A basic Blues structure using the I-IV-V-I chords of a diatonic scale in twelve measures is, in itself, a creation that implies the presence of a higher power. One only has to observe how spiritually moving the Blues can be when performed by players of particular quality and ability to transmit its depth. The Blues, an art form created by people who were not necessarily sophisticated (i.e., formally educated) in worldly affairs, yet were able to tap into the universal "twelve" (understood by numerologists as one of the numbers that represents God) via its basic twelve-bar structural form.

The manifestations of this are evidenced in common everyday universal things that provide the necessary clues. Take, for example, the fact that there are twelve months in the year with twelve astrological signs so corresponding; there are twelve hours in the day, twelve in the night; twelve years in Chinese Astrology; twelve tones in music; twelve years during which an initiate must do Tapas before being regarded as a Yogi; and, of course, there are twelve grades or steps many educational and therapeutic programs make use of and structure themselves around.

Since twelve is not a primary number, it is generally understood that it must be broken down into $1+2=3$. Three is the number of God at work in the world of expression and therefore the number for creativity. Three is known to be a number of spirituality as in the trinity (the father, the son and the Holy Ghost) or the primal trinity (Isis, Osiris and Horus). When we multiply 3×3 we get 9, which also indicates a deep spirituality at work. Nine, for instance, is the only number that when multiplied against any number adds up to nine (54, 72, 81, 108, 117, etal). The letters of the word, Jazz, also provide a metaphysical clue. "J" is the tenth letter of the alphabet ($J=10$), "a" is the first ($a=1$), and "z" is the twenty-sixth letter ($z=26$). Thus $10+1+26+26=63$, and, of course, $6+3=9$. And so numerologically speaking, even the word, Jazz, signifies that it is deeply involved in spirituality, i.e., that it is a Music of the Spirit. And so, we should call it for what it is.

Music of the Spirit, as exemplified by Duke Ellington, Sun Ra, John Coltrane, Mary Lou Williams, Betty Carter and Nina Simone is a form of art that deals with the transformative nature of sound when manipulated by a master craftsman. When the artist understands the true intention of music and commences to work on developing one's self spiritually in order to impart that passion to the listener, the result is a music that comes from within the spirit of self and art. However, even when this understanding is not consciously sought by the artist, the spiritual nature of that music can still have its effect. Whenever the understanding, the intentionality and the belief system adhered to are aligned, the product of the artist is a music of enduring quality as exemplified by the six models we've used here.

It is important to understand that Music of the Spirit is essential to the lives of the people in the communities from which it emanates, and therefore the need exists to develop, sustain and support venues in those communities wherein this art form can be nurtured and allowed to prosper.

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