

Leslie Cabrera

## Jazz

Jazz is what populated during the Harlem Renaissance, and it's recognized by African Americans because it's their Cultural heritage. One of the most famous jazz singers is Ella Fitzgerald. She is well known as the "Lady of Jazz" she was called this way due to her amazing vocals. At the age of 17, Ella performed at Apollo located at 125 Street, which is near City College, it's nearly 16 minutes away by



foot.

This image that I'm sharing

took place in the Apollo Theater and it's where Fitzgerald started to gain her popularity. Initially she was supposed to dance but instead sing with Webb. (Nadelson, R. "The Theater Where Ella Fitzgerald Got Her Start" Magazine, *The New York Times*, 25 June 2020) But of course, she did some collaborations



with someone well known for his strong voice, Louis Armstrong.

They both have inspired so many people, they made a few albums together called “Ella and Louis”, “Ella and Louis Again”, etc.

This topic is relevant now because February is known as Black History Month and during parades or any kind of celebration, they will play jazz music. But to add on, it’s important for people to know because Fitzgerald would perform her first debut in the Apollo theater during the Harlem Renaissance. As time passes by not a lot of people are familiar with the genre of Jazz, I personally feel its underrated. I say this because I didn’t know much about Harlem music or listen to their genre till 11th grade. My English teacher was the one who introduced me about Jazz, I remember how she ask the class if anyone knew who The Roots were and clearly no one knew, so she played on of their popular songs called “You got me “. Ever since then when I started to listen to music related to The Roots, I’ve been hooked up, but this genre of this song is a mixture of American Jazz and Hip-hop jam. However, there are different types of styles when it comes to Jazz, there is Early jazz, Classic jazz, and of course Hard bop Jazz.

To know more about Jazz, it originated in New Orleans and started to populate in the 50s and as more people listen to the genre, it started to spread in the early 1900s like a disease this was caused by jazz players who were doing tours around and it became an international phenomenon. Due to Duke Ellington and Louise Armstrong, it helped New York City to gain its popularity of jazz and influenced others to go there. (*Hotel Beacon NYC*, March 28, 2022) An observation I made when I was searching about Jazz is when the melody begins people believe it's all scripted for example they band/musician has rehearsed it, and they are going to play the same thing repeatedly. But the music would be switched up because jazz musicians tend to improvise by playing different kinds of notes, it can be high, low, long and short. However, they are still playing the same melody, just slightly differently because they use this technique that’s called “Musical Extemporization” or “Musical Improvisation”. Normally when jazz musicians do these improvisations it's because they are feeling it in the moment. “These studies draw attention to the importance of aural imitation in musical development and raise questions about the relationship of aural imitation to instrumental jazz improvisation achievement. (May, L. F. “Factors and

Abilities Influencing Achievement in Instrumental Jazz Improvisation.” *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 51, no.3, 2003, pp 246. This indicates that the aural imitation method is not something that happens by accident but it's what they feel while they are performing. An example can be Charlie Parker, he is known as “The Master of Jazz Improvisation”. I’m bringing this up because it amazed me how jazz musicians can improve their music.



To wrap this up, jazz is an underrated genre that people should start listening to and it can be of any age. And a way to start is by listening to Ella Fitzgerald in which she has impacted people to listen to her and what she did during the Harlem Renaissance. Or going to the Apollo theater (253 W 125th St, New York, NY 10027) where there are events going on and discover more about Black American performers.