Reaction Paper Week #3

Over the course of this week, we finished discussing the roots of music (including Jewish influences), and moved over to talking about the Blues as an art form. For this week, I didn’t think there was a lot of controversial discussion, so I mostly wanted to discuss the similarities between Jazz and the Blues.

Although technically speaking, Jazz and Blues follow different patterns (where Jazz followed an AABA form, and Blues followed an AAB form), the two music forms derived very much from similar roots. Both can be traced back to the Tin Pan Alley songs. What’s interesting is how both of these forms carried forward both African American roots and European roots. I think that both music forms were used as an expression of youth uprisings and thus, some people referred to them as the “Devil’s music.” However, similar to what we saw with Minstrelsy shows, these music forms allowed white individuals to embrace African American culture without having to admit it.

Despite similarities in their roots, the two music forms also differed in their purposes. Because both Jazz and the Blues were being developed around the same time period, I believe they served as strong counterparts for each other. Whereas Jazz was more focused on relationships and intimacy, the Blues was more focused on evoking emotions that would rid you of troublesome feelings. With these two together, we can cover a broad spectrum of emotions that we would want to identify through music.

Overall, I just find it very interesting that these similar but different music forms developed in the same time period. They shared the same origins and were able to have similar societal implications, but at their core, they had fundamentally different purposes for the people.