Fracturing Jazz, Freeing Fusion: Miles Davis's Role in Counterculture Rock

Blake A. Thatcher, Gettysburg College

Class Year
2017

Document Type
Student Research Paper

Date of Creation
Fall 2013

Department 1
Conservatory of Music

Abstract
The paper details Miles Davis's influence in the counterculture rock and roll movement through his development of jazz fusion and his personal connections with rock musicians of the period, as well the overlap in musical ideology that occurred when both rock and jazz began to incorporate elements of each others' styles.

Comments
This paper was written as the final project for FYS 118-2, Why Jazz Matters: The Legacy of Pops, Duke, and Miles, in Fall 2013. The course was taught by Dr. John Jones.

Copyright Note
This is the author's version of the work. This publication appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution.

Recommended Citation

Jazz-rock: Jazz-rock, popular musical form in which modern jazz improvisation is accompanied by the bass lines, drumming styles, and instrumentation of rock music, with a strong emphasis on electronic instruments and dance rhythms. Since the recordings of 1920s bands, notably Paul Whiteman's, there have been. Less commercially successful was the free jazz fusion of Ornette Coleman's Prime Time group (beginning in 1973) and his associates, guitarist James Blood Ulmer, bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma, and drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson, though all led valuable bands in the 1980s. A later development of jazz-rock—contemporary jazz, or light jazz—appeared on the radio in the 1980s and '90s. The paper details Miles Davis's influence in the counterculture rock and roll movement through his development of jazz fusion and his personal connections with rock musicians of the period, as well the overlap in musical ideology that occurred when both rock and jazz began to incorporate elements of each others' styles. Keywords: Jazz, fusion, Miles Davis, rock, 60's counterculture

Disciplines: Music

Comments
This paper was written as the final project for FYS 118-2, Why Jazz Matters: The Legacy of Pops, Duke, and Miles, in Fall 2013. The course was taught by Dr. John Jones. These Miles Davis albums inspired the whole Fusion genre. Jazz-Rock Fusion was so different to Traditional Jazz that many people accused it of not being 'real' Jazz. But this then leads us to the question of 'What is Jazz?' which is far too complex a question to cover here. Have a listen to the following Fusion bands and decide for yourself: Miles Davis (In a Silent Way, Bitches Brew), Return to Forever (Chick Corea), Mahavishnu Orchestra (John McLaughlin) – used irregular meter and slash chords extensively.