

Jazz, or any genuine art form, is supposed to bring people closer across social borders, for the arts by definition contain inherent universal values. In practical terms, this is achieved via invoking and nurturing of pure appreciation for the craft within/among sincere aspirants, which in effect ought to remove much of the prejudices, presumptions and bigotry, that may otherwise be considered socially "normal". And these "effects" are expressed through the music in various colors and forms of "emotional expression", the ultimate currency of measure in any art form. Without intentful expression of such effects, Jazz is not Jazz, and it is not even music. It is good practice at best which, to be fair, has its merits; all those etudes aren't for nothing. And while at it, nationalism has its own "emotional" colors and smells too when expressed via social gatherings or through music and other art forms. Whom will those expressions appeal to other than just the one group of people, categorized and defined by the "accident" of birth? In purely biological and psychological sense of the terms nationalism and racism are identical in that they both intend to promote and empower one('s own) group of people over another. But to clarify, nationalism ought not be undermined altogether, as its value in the arena of international relations, i.e., world politics, is fundamental and absolute. (As is war.) And it inevitably affects domestic policies as well to an extent, as they should. The point is that we, as artists on the personal level, need to be able to discern which characteristics and forms of expression belong where. And that takes deep reflections and overall maturity which is ironic to speak of amongst musicians.

Many in Jazz often forget that these seemingly subtle emotions, energies and things actually matter in music both for listeners and performers- any that are actually trying to be "good" beyond being better or having more gigs than the next guy, in the latter cases of which, one might as well try climbing up the corporate ladder to the better use of time and talent. Otherwise, it becomes impossible to escape from being mired in endless ironies of conflicting values in one's own life; between the outwardly apparent profession of Jazz vs. the actual overall approach to life that is opposed to the universal values associated with the arts. And these ironies are then reflected upon one's

actions and speech, ultimately including the artistic expression itself. For the sufficiently observant, life is hard enough already, filled with paradoxes without trying mounting any extra on top.

As we move out further in time from the source of this music, in-depth study and appreciation of its history and its creators become more essential in finding meaning behind what we do. (E.g., Classical performers wouldn't question for a second that this is part of their craft.) It is important for Jazz aspirants to understand that the times and struggles and suffering endured by the creators are not only of scholastically referential value, but that these were what it took to transpire their stories into the music. This is not a subject to be taken lightly in a whimsical fashion at all. For serious aspirants, their stories ought to feel vividly personal. Learning their phrases and ideas is not at all in the same ballpark as telling the story of this beautifully poignant aspect of humanity. It is merely a starting point(although anyone can agree the starting points are always the most fun). This does not imply that one go through such similar hardships nor those that have gone through some of life's hardships automatically are of more value in their artistry. So what's left? That is the job for the serious aspirants to figure out.

But sure. One step at a time. Not everyone can be the mad monk running around naked, living in a cave in the Himalayas. Most won't even think that that is in the least bit desirable, as they ought not to in their right minds. But it may all just come down to varying degrees of how much reality we can or are allowed to digest. And artists are supposed to have a bigger appetite than normal(which is why they didn't understand the meaning of "real job" when their dads told them to get one). But these kinds of utterance tend to make people go two steps backwards so... Cafe52 will reduce Jazz events to once a month starting June, 2021. - CJK