

"HOW JAZZ HAS BEEN INVENTED - JELLY ROLL MORTON AND THE EARLY DAYS OF JAZZ"

Multi Media Project by VIDEOPLAN Exposé

The fascinating story of the making of our first world music, Jazz in New Orleans. Moderated by Jelly Roll Morton, the "inventor" of Jazz, we go through the explosive interaction between cultures from the first and third world, meeting in the second ...

1. STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

1.1 NARRATION

To line up the scenes of the film, Jelly Roll as some kind of narrator walks in New Orleans , plays piano and talks...

Not only the music, but also the voice of this brilliant Creole Ferdinand La Menthe are recorded (Alan Lomax' Library of congress recordings "Mr. Jelly Roll"). This original sound track, as well as Jelly Roll's computer generated character mask on the face of an actor creates authenticity, which are partially increased by computer sets, virtual reconstructions of parts of the city at that time (e.g. Storyville, Congo Square, up and down town streets).

1.2 SCENES

In a mix of documentary and fiction sequences Jelly Roll leads to landmarks of Jazz (voodoo ceremonies on Congo Square, street parades, funerals, honky tonks and brothels in Storyville, etc), meets other witnesses of the "early days" and contemporary musicians.

2. DRAMATURGICAL GENRE

As an expression of the still active influences and the permanently developing renewal of Jazz the transitions between then and today should appear dramaturgically almost unnoticeable. To demonstrate the ongoing vivacity of Jazz the idea is not to isolate contemporary shots from the "historical" ones: In décor and clothing the contrast is minimalized between the simulated historical and the actual documentary sequences. Funerals and Mardi Gras for example haven't basically changed too much. Besides the cars people and brass bands have still the same energy now and then.. the same for Storyville honky tonks and jazz clubs today.

3. POSSIBLE PLOTS

3.1 THE ROOTS

3.1.1 Ritual dances and drums in Haiti and Cuba.
Ceremonial elements in voodoo religion

3.1.2 The public Sunday ceremonies on Congo Square
New Orleans, American capital of Voodoo - African rituals blended with catholicism. From the beginning, black musicians used all available instruments they could get: Besides West African stringed instruments, calabashes and bamboula drums they played jew's harps, triangle and banjo

3.1.3 Funerals

-the wake, solo duet and hymn singing

-church service, possession of "walking and running" spirits"

-mournful marching to the cemetery, happy dancing return to town Black secret societies still lay economic foundations for burial expenses that, in their West African belief, appeases the spirit of the departed, thus offering employment to negro brass bands

3.2. ALL THAT JAZZ IN NEW ORLEANS

The popularity of military bands in New Orleans took over to the black who soonly became adapted with European instruments. Picnics, parades, riverboat excursions, balls etc, offered all the possibilities to play this rich cocktail made out of French opera, folk songs, African voodoo drums, rhythms of Haiti and melodies from Cuba, Creole satirical songs, Spirituals, work songs and Blues. Street parades still lead to battles between the brass bands where the public has to decide..

3.3 MULTI CULTURAL EXTASY

Black, brown and white - exchange and creative friction

3.3.1 Preaching, jerking and singing in the camp meetings

The spiritual Great Awakening in the 19th century lead to the first mass blending of white and black musical traditions. In the camp meetings of the poor and lowly classes West African call and response chanting - Gospels - assimilated with white Baptists', Quakers' and others new ceremonies of possessed "jerks" - religious trances that resemble voodoo experiences

3.3.2 First jams between black and creole musicians

The spark that brought this first world music to boom was the forced collision of black and creole musicians. (In the 1894 "Discrimination act" creoles of color lost all the jobs a white man could use - even their place in the downtown parades.) Their privileged status under the French and Spanish rule allowed the creole a.o. to play European instruments and to read notes, quite in contrast to the black uptown musicians who played so hot that they almost killed themselves." Jazz was the bastard of the bastard and appealed to a nation of lonely immigrants.. a moment of cultural extasy."The racial mix out of whites, creoles and blacks gets whirled by jazz: Rising popular Hot Jazzmen push away the creole musicians out of their traditional positions.. while on the other hand poor whites take the jobs of the black

3.4 BIRTHPLACES OF JAZZ

Jazz being played as a folk music, the distinction between player and audience was shadowy. Things changed with the opening of Storyville in 1897. Storyville becomes the greatest red light district besides Montmartre and Jazz became a full time job. .Note keys (clef) opened the doors of white institutions first of all to the creole musicians. Solo pianists could earn a lot of money, Jelly Roll wearing a brilliant in his tooth.

The Naked Dance at Mahogany Hall Naked Dances developped as an art form (pre striptease). Piano players like Tony Jackson and Jelly Roll had to hide behind curtains - so, in order to participate the spectacle, they cut a hole..

The shooting at Tuxedo Dance Hall In 1913 Papa Celestin's Tuxedo Orchestra playing on while a gangsters' shooting took place resulting in a dead man lying on the floor..

Honky Tonks like the "Frenchmen" fill up when the other night clubs close. A colorful folks who love the music without social and race distinction

Reinhard Knoedler 11/96