

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE GENRE OF NU JAZZ:
DEFINING ITS CHARACTERISTICS
CASE STUDY: DAY BY JAGA JAZZIST, AND
SHADOWS BY THE KILIMANJARO DARKJAZZ
ENSEMBLE**

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ABSTRACT

Musical development throughout the history has generated the creativity of many new artists and musicians. The styles and genres that have been created over the past years quickly evolved into countless other sub-genres making an impossible classification to each one of them. The numerous combinations, mixtures, and fusion of different musical elements add more indistinctiveness to these new sub-genres. Musical style such as *Industrial* and *Intelligent Dance Music* or *IDM* in the *Electronic Music* subcategory, *Post Progressive*, *Technical Metal* and even *Avant-garde Metal* in the *Rock* subcategory, as well as *Trip Hop* in the *Hip Hop* and *R&B* subcategory are all musical experimentations without clear explanation or extensive study. In the late 1990's, a new sub category which is known today as *Nu Jazz* was introduced. This particular sub-genre is said to be a combination of jazz with elements of mostly danceable styles particularly *Electronica*. Originated from the United States, it is popularized mostly in the European countries such as Norway and the Netherlands. *Nu Jazz* has now spread widely throughout the world. The vast sound and concept of *Nu Jazz* may vary greatly from artist to artist making a true definition with regards to its form and structure, specific jazz harmony and theory, and exact instrumentation for this sub-genre is yet to be determined. Thus, this research dissertation is designed specifically to truly define the characteristics of the *Nu Jazz* genre. Qualitative method was used in collecting data such as books and literature reviews, information from official websites, questions and answers in which the respondents vary from music professors, doctors, composers, and musicians, plus, extensive analysis of full transcriptions on two *Nu Jazz* 's compositions.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Music has undergone frequent evolution for centuries. Numerous musical styles have emerged every now and then through the creativity of musicians - either out of developing it more; or even experimenting and/or fusing existing styles. This occurrence continues until today; thus widening the multitude of musical genres even farther.

Most traditional jazz tunes particularly the 12-bar blues are easily recognizable whether or not the tunes fall under the genre. This is mainly for the reason that in classic blues; it has a distinctive form in lyrics, phrasings, rhythmic-harmonic structure, and progression. The twelve-measure chord progression itself has its own innate character that can truly be defined even if and when there are some changes or alteration is done to it; on top of a few varieties of standards and/or fixed interchange of re-harmonization. The 12-bar blues has provided much framework for several jazz styles that arose in the intervening decades since 1935 and had a strong influence on several more in the present.¹

As time passes and seasons changed, with new musical ideas, theories and experimentations flourishing; it is almost impossible to really define every single sub-genre that emerges rapidly. Additionally, there are inadequate studies on these new sub-genres being done. As more sub-genres emerge, it thus creates confusion for true definition. In view of this, it triggered my curiosity and interest to further investigate on one particular sub-genre which is still undergoing an evolutionary process since its creation in the late 1990s. This sub-genre is known as: *Nu Jazz*.

¹ D.D.Megill & R.S.Demory. *Introduction to Jazz History* (1984), Prentice-Hall Inc., page 25.