

MUSIC IN RELATION TO CULTURE

Certainly, the culture of a particular musician can influence the kind of music he/she produces. At the same time, a piece of music may be considered as a *narrative*. The objective of this project will be to help you determine what forces may have been at work when John Coltrane wrote “Giant Steps”.

Define the following terms as they may be understood as cultural forces shaping a particular piece of music:

SOCIAL

POLITICAL

RELIGIOUS

ECONOMIC

Define the term NARRATIVE and give two examples of how a piece of music can function in this way for a particular culture or period in time.

Select two of the cultural forces you have defined. They should be two that you feel you have the best understanding of and will be able to research well. Circle your choices.

The next part of this project will be to do some brief research into the culture that existed when John Coltrane wrote this piece of music. You must find at least two sources to help you further investigate this topic. To help get you started, I will tell you that he was living in New York City when he wrote this piece and that he completed and recorded the piece in 1959 when he was playing with the Miles Davis Quintet.

Use the following pages to organize your research...

RESEARCH ON CULTURAL CONTEXT OF “GIANT STEPS”

Do a proper bibliography in MLA format for your first source:

1st Chosen Cultural Force

Specific facts about this force (by page):

2nd Chosen Cultural Force

Specific facts about this force (by page):

Do a proper bibliography in MLA format for your second source:

1st Chosen Cultural Force:

Specific facts about this force (by page):

2nd Chosen Cultural Force:

Specific facts about this force (by page):

MUSIC AND CULTURE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Now that you are more knowledgeable about the cultural forces at work when John Coltrane composed this piece of music, you are prepared to investigate your own musical culture and the culture of another musician within your community.

Using a highlighter, go through and highlight the most important facts that you believe could have possibly influenced the way Coltrane wrote this music. After reviewing those facts, formulate ten questions that you could ask another musician (living today in your community) that would help you understand the “cultural forces” at work in the present.

For example, if one of the facts you research stated that Coltrane was living in economic disparity at the time he wrote “Giant Steps” then a question you could formulate based on this would be, “Do you find that being a musician is expensive? How did you manage to acquire your equipment? Do you think you would perform differently if you had the resources to acquire better/different instruments or equipment?”

Write the questions below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

SELF-INTERVIEW

Now, ask yourself these questions and answer them honestly. Try to see if you can figure out the ways in which your own culture influences your music making experiences.

You do not need to retype your questions, just write your answers in the spaces provided below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.