F Ausiophiles A Thirst for Sharps and Flats Searching through jazz's past, present and future

Where has jazz gone? The once-vibrant, pulsing soundtrack of artful innovation has lost its way. Jazz's influence is waning fast - there are more tuxedo-clad Wynton Marsalises on the Lincoln Center stage than young artists putting their blood and tears into this dynamic art form.

While jazz will never die, this playlist is designed to remind listeners of its dynamic power. The songs here swing and sob, cry up and cry out, cut and bleed. They just might help reawaken a dormant creative spirit

TRANSCENDENT

in any artist hungry for inspiration.

FRIO MUSI

CHICK COREA

ROY HAYNES

"Passion Dance"

"Air Raid"

Grachan Moncur III Evolution Blue Note, 1963

Grachan Moncur III is the best trombonist you've never listened to - primarily because he played trombone. Aside from that devastating setback, he was also overlooked because he fought health problems and licensing issues his whole career. In the 1960s he wrote and recorded some of the most transcendent post-bop jazz of the period. This track captures his playing and compositional skills at their best. He leads an all-star group through a song with so many tempo and melodic changes it's difficult to keep up. Moncur's melodic beauty draws you in, but there's also a wild, subversive undertone to the song's structure.



"Toccata" Jaga Jazzist

One-Armed Bandit Ninja Tune, 2010

The best and worst thing about contemporary jazz is how modern composers tend to chase modern trends. Jaga Jazzist are a Norwegian group that does not shy away from showing their electronic music influences.Yet they stray far from their roots as a live combo and write sprawling compositions that combine elements of Kraftwerk and J.S. Bach with a free-wheeling jazz sense that's undeniably their own.

BRIGHT SIZE



Chick Corea Trio Music, Live in Europe EMC, 1984

This song is an ideal analogue for the creative process in any medium. The artists spend a lifetime learning their craft and honing their chops, until, when the time comes, all the years of training and expertise guide their hands in wild passionate moments of spontaneity and creativity. If the result is anywhere near as beautiful as this song, it is safe to say they've created a work of art.

McCoy Tyner The Real McCoy

Blue Note, 1967 This wild, reeling track is the superb example of jazz

willing the creative spirit to life. It's easy to imagine grins splitting the faces of Tyner and his superstar band as they blast through this composition. Each musician plays a game of one-upmanship as they try to top the improvisation of the solo before. It's fast, exciting and if it doesn't get your foot a-tappin, time to try religion.

"Caravan" **Duke Ellington Money Jungle** United Artists Records.

A classic tune that has been covered by countless artists, my vote for the best version goes to

the composer himself.

Ellington is best known for

his work writing and con-

ducting but he was also

an extraordinary piano

player in his own right. This

record captures him in a

tight trio with one of the

greatest rhythm sections

in history (Charles Mingus

and Max Roach). This raw

and emotional version is

the standard that sets the

standard.

1963

"You're My Everything Freddie Hubbard

Hub-Tones Blue Note, 1962

The sentimentality of this track can be deceptive. It exists in the grand tradition of "cool jazz" that is perfect for candlelit dinners and sensual bubble baths.Listen more closely, however, and you'll hear some of the most sublime trumpet playing ever recorded. Freddie Hubbard's crisp, clear and cool tone is your gentle escort toward xquisite emotional absolution.

"Essence" Donald Byrd

"Bright Size Life" Pat Metheny **Bright Size Life** EMC, 1975

> Jazz can be unbridled like Tyner's "Passion Dance" or it can be elegant and restrained like this choice track from Pat Metheny Some consider this the song that launched a thousand smooth jazz careers, but don't let the countless hacks who ripped off the sound dissuade vou. Methenv is smooth and sensual yet his supurb play offers the vibrant improvisational expertise that makes great jazz timeless

Thelonious Monk Monk's Music Riverside, 1957

No composer or performer had a more distinctive sound than the inimitable Thelonius Monk. He was an iconoclast in dress. manner and composition, laying claim to his own unique style - even his dancing is a sight to behold."Epistrophy" is the Monkiest of all his compositions. It offers the delicate harmony of a craftsman at his best while also providing the delightful weirdness that is all Monk.

"Epistrophy"



"Freedom Jazz Dance" Miles Davis **Miles Smiles**

Columbia Records, 1966

Miles Davis was cool for over 50 years. That's Picasso-esque longevity. Choosing a favorite era from a man who reinvented his sound countless times (while the world struggled to keep up) is a challenge. My vote goes to the young and wildly creative second Miles Davis Quintet."



Electric Byrd Blue Note 1970

In the 1960s,jazz,like most other things, got weird. The osychedelic furor that dominated the counter-culture inspired a bright moment in the jazz world with Electric Byrd."Essence," like the rest of the album, is languorously paced.It invokes patience and meditative contemplation in listeners, but spiritual bliss is something worth waiting for.

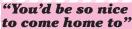


"Remembering" Avishai Cohen At Home Sunnyside, 2005

THENY

Something about the bass seems to draw the most cerebral of jazz musicians. Avishai Cohen is one contempo rary example, making his case to stand alongside players like Charles Mingus and Charlie Haden. On "Remember ing"Cohen plays a little game: He masks his simple bass line behind a lovely piano melody. But as the song progresses he sneaks out little by little until he has taken over. Soon Cohen is soloing aggressively as the piano fade to nothing. In the final bar, the piano returns and Cohen hides again — a

reminder of how far you've traveled.





Jim Hall Concierto CTI. 1975

Few guitar players have left their mark on the history of jazz, particularly puzzling considering the instrument's dominance in popular music during the same time. Jim Hall is one the greatest unheralded jazz guitar players. This record is his opus and his play on opener, Cole Porter's "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To," demonstrates Hall at his best. Hall's crisp, clean lines that are inventive and never sit still. Together they reinvigorated Davis' sound and recorded legendary tracks like this one.As the soundtrack of a music scene in turmoil. the sonorous melodies of bebop linger, but rumbling just underneath is a wild rhythmic duet threatening to spiral out of control.



MEDITATIVE

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