

## Are We Witnessing The Death of Live music

Is live music dying? It's something that's a bit more complicated than just a simple yes or no. Technically, live music via concerts is still a huge part of our culture. You can see your favorite artist for a low price of 200 dollars all the way in the back where you have to watch through the screens to even see the performer, and that's only if you buy the tickets months in advance before someone else buys it and resells it at double the price. Going out to see live music for artists you like takes a lot of effort, going out to see live music purposefully, to see small bands and artists for free, also takes a lot of effort. Consider this: try to find venues with small artists who will play wide ranges of music for you, or sit comfortably at home to stream music from spotify in the matter of a few seconds.

But people strive for connections, wouldn't that mean people would seek out communities with their interests to meet like-minded peers? Now with social media, and a multitude of other apps, we can make connections again, from the comfort of our own home. The problem is that we have so much access to everything at home.

So when it comes down to music, it's been harder for live bands. Jazz specifically, which is a form of music that is improvised, is an older form of music, and it seems less and less people listen to it streaming, let alone live. But I want to observe how real this discourse around live music and jazz really is. Is it really dying, or is it changing? Are we really losing communities like a lot of people have discourse about, or are jazz communities still alive and well?

People have been trying to erase the history related to jazz for decades. According to Mullone, “Currently, little academic information is available about the modern Black Anglophone community and its continued contributions to the scope of Jazz in Montreal. Due to the dismantling of community history, the historical context has been systematically erased, leaving a new generation of Black Anglophones unaware of the significant impacts from what was known as the golden era of Jazz in Montreal.” This is why live jazz is so important, it keeps it alive, and jazz is something people always talk about how it's “dying off”, yet people continue to go to venues and support jazz musicians.

I arrive at Lucielle’s Harlem on a Friday night, it's 7:45. Thursdays through Saturdays, they have live jazz nights. Upon walking in, I already saw a sense of community. While my waiter is checking me in, a group behind us walks in, and he immediately recognizes them, vice versa. They talked about how they enjoyed the last show so much and wanted to come again. This sense of familiarity already tells me that

there are some regulars here who come to watch live jazz.



As the waiter walked me and my friend to our seats, which was a very cozy corner of a booth, I noticed a few things about the venue. It's very tiny. I did realize that it was hard to make reservations with more than two people, and time slots were filling up quickly when I was originally making the reservations, so actually seeing the place made it make more sense. However despite it being a small venue, it created a more intimate environment, people were sitting closely to each other, talking with one another. It was very dimly lit, and there were a few candles on each table. They had plants along the windows that hung off the ceiling. Blue and purple lighting, which really fit the jazzy mood.

Something interesting I noticed that I never really seen before, there were a lot of people who didn't order anything off the menu at all. People made reservations to simply watch the live jazz, which at this point, hasn't started yet. Once it's 8:20pm the

live jazz starts. Everyone's attention was fixed on the small band. They had a saxophonist, pianist, drummer, and a singer. The music flowed so well together, and the singers' vocals were amazing. Going to Lucielle's means you are going to simply watch live jazz, because it is so loud that you can't even hear yourself trying to talk to the person next to you now. Not a single person was on their phone except for a couple who were trying to take a video. People occasionally got up to tip and support the band. After every song the entire venue would be clapping and wooing. Brand talks about the venue size influencing the audience and the musicians, "For the musicians, their experience was influenced more by suitability of venue to their music, music, the venue's appropriate publicity and facilities. Important though this was to their own experiences, what threw the relationship into sharp relief were these audience members' views on venue size and its influence on their relationship with jazz musicians and how these jazz musicians experienced audiences in smaller, more intimate venues." There is this direct relationship between the audience and the musicians that I saw too, because the venue was small and more intimate it was more clear to see. They interacted directly with each other.

I left at around 9:20 with my friend. As we walked outside we noticed that there were groups of people sitting outside to listen to live jazz. For reference the band is right next to the open windows/entrance area, so listening outside is pretty much the same thing. But that made me realize how deep this community goes. People gather together to simply listen to jazz, alone or with a friend, or a group, you are never really alone though when you have a community like that. According to Ziao, "However, for music lovers, the hardcore group of live music audiences, the stripping away of space creates

a troubling live experience. Here, the findings of this article are not simply underscoring the importance of space for live music, but rather illustrating the value of the body in constructing live music. It is now well established from a variety of studies that the body is considered as a vehicle for cultural experiences (e.g. Benzecry, 2011). And this article argues that the body is not just a vehicle for cultural experiences; it shapes cultural experiences and, likewise, defines the culture itself. In the case of live music, 'live' is not just about watching a performance in real-time; 'live' itself also encompasses and builds on the tangible experience and participation of the audience." The live aspect isn't just about being present in the audience, it's the community that you build.

Live jazz isn't dying, It's alive and well and it will continue to be performed. It's important to preserve the music and acknowledge the rich history that comes with it. Although it's not like mainstream pop-music, and is not generally enjoyed on streaming apps, jazz will always be influential and relevant.

Citations:

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