

Learning Target

- I can critically assess the history, types, and functions of jazz.

“What is Jazz?” Projects

1. **Analysis Essay:** Is Beyoncé doing jazz?

Watch “Déja Vu Jazz Medley – Beyoncé”
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4TvEtDqzNA>)

In a brief essay (no more than 300-400 words, or one typed, double-spaced page), answer the following questions:

- Which of the musicians we have read would call this jazz, and why?
- Which of the musicians we have read would not call this jazz, and why?

Consider not simply how the music sounds (its *aesthetic form*), but also how it is being made (the *community*), by whom (its *culture*), and for what purposes (its *attitude*). You are encouraged, but not required, to bring in other information about Beyoncé or this performance into your analysis, but make sure you cite any references in your report (“According to Maria Smith...”) and list them at the end.

2. **Performance:** Do different definitions make a difference?

Alone, or in a group of up to four people, perform *two different versions* of one of our four songs (Alabama, It Don’t Mean a Thing, Song for My Father, ~~When the Saints~~). Each version should be brief (1 minute, or 1 time through the tune or improv form), and represent a very different perspective on jazz. Some strong contrasts could include:

- Amiri Baraka (jazz as anti-commercial, anti-racist)
- Wynton Marsalis (jazz as democracy)
- Ralph Ellison (jazz as cultural fusion)
- Wikipedia (jazz as a kind of sound)

- Theodor Adorno (jazz as a mass commodity)
- Kimberly Benston (jazz as breaking patterns)