

## Classic Jazz on the Internet: Performance and Meaning

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### Abstract

This essay argues that classic African American performance, specifically jazz, posted on the internet is at risk of misinterpretation due to the nature of video hosting sites such as YouTube. The author asks questions regarding the relevance of context to the understanding of moving image content, particularly regarding issues of race and gender. Aspects of American and African American culture become essentialized without reference to the milieu. Regardless, performers present a “political blackness” that has been an evolving trope over time. The powerful ways in which the black arts have acculturated the world, mute, to some extent, the concern with the details of the past. The creation of a democratic meta-archive suggests a perpetual interest in black music although within the limits of a “clip” and “loop” paradigm.