

ORAL PRESENTATION ESSAY OUTLINE

Topic: Investigating the music and dance of the period in The Great Gatsby

Main Statement

The 1920's were known as the Jazz Age. It was also an era of social, economic and most important to this presentation, cultural change. The kind of music and dance of the Jazz Age was revolutionary and showed how society had much changed and become less conservative. Entertainment of that sense was more upbeat. Even music and dance were seen as a powerful symbol of social status as well as a symbol of the decline of the American Dream.

- Fitzgerald captured all three into one novel, The Great Gatsby.
- In that age, it was possible to tell much about people by the parties they hosted and those they attended. Such occasions determined who's who in society by looking at their tastes, their social status, their friends, and their lifestyles.
- People made assumptions about Gatsby's character by observing the kinds of parties he hosted which would include wild music and dance as well as guests who "conducted themselves according to the rules of behaviour of amusement parks".
- Symbolism of dance – Daisy and Gatsby danced. He did a fox trot, which is a graceful, conservative dance. Says something about his character.
- The explosion in the popularity of Jazz music was appalling to the older generation and quite appealing to the new. It represented a loosening of social airs and graces. There was a sense of freedom associated with it but to some, it was one of the evils that the era had brought along with flappers, women smoking and automobiles.
- The dancing associated with Jazz music suggested an absence of decorum and dignity. Some people were bothered by the bodily movements with which listeners responded to the music.
- Fenton T. Bott, the head of the National Association of Master's Dancing warned that "those moaning saxophones and the rest of the instruments with their jerky rhythm make a purely sensual appeal. They call out low and rowdy instincts. Jazz is the very foundation and essence of salacious dancing. The words are often very suggestive, thinly veiling immoral ideas".
- New Jersey Supreme Court Justice J.F. Minturn said, "...in response to jazz's call there ensues a series of snake-like gyrations and weird contortions of seemingly agonized bodies and limbs, resembling an Asiatic potpourri which . . . is called a dance."

Types of Dances

- The Charleston
- The Lindy-Hop
- The Fox Trot
- The Black Bottom
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