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Frank Sinatra

         Frank Sinatra was a well-known artist throughout the 1950s.  He sang popular songs including “Fly Me To The Moon” and “My Way”. He is still known today because of his impact on society as well as the for the impact his music had on the record world. Sinatra was very active during the post-World War II era, making new music and building up his reputation with known recording companies including Columbia Records and his very own show called the The Frank Sinatra Show. His music appealed to adults because many of his songs were mature in the lyrics, which during the time period, was different because the songs of other popular artists were aimed towards teenagers. These songs written for the younger generation were usually about sexual acts and true love. Frank Sinatra brought heart and soul to his music, which was then distributed to his listeners in society by his records. Sinatra was an example of a pop mainstream artist of the 1940s and 50s when rock ‘n’ roll first was first developing. One of his first singles, “Love and Marriage”, was the beginning to his career as a musician. Though Frank Sinatra’s music expressed conservative social values in “Love and Marriage”, during the era of rock ‘n’ roll, his personal and professional life showed a commitment to racial diversity and class equality.

         During the 1950s and 60s, the majority of rock ‘n’ roll music was directed towards teenagers, but Frank Sinatra’s “Love and Marriage”, was more or less meant for the adults during the time period because the song was about marriage and the adult themes involved in maintaining a marriage. “Love and Marriage” is a song in AABA form, “with the three A sections presenting identical (or nearly identical) music accompanied (usually) by different words each time, and the single B section presenting new words *and* new music” (Schloss et al. 27). In “Love and Marriage”, the first and second verses possess the same harmony and melody, but with different lyrics to make the song memorable to the listener. In the third verse, the bridge or B in the AABA form, changes in harmony, from a trudging sound to a bright and whimsical sound. This change offers variety to the song and keeps the listener engaged. As I listened through the song, the sound of “Love and Marriage” is made by Sinatra, a solo pop singer, and by a big band or orchestra. The band is made up of drums, flutes, violins, tubas, trumpets, clarinets, basses, and a triangle. Each instrument contributes to the sound of the song by playing its own part and adding in a unique part during the interlude. The melody of the song features a memorable melodic ‘hook’ that repeats several times in the first, second, and fourth verses with the words ‘Love and marriage’. The melody is most prevalent in the A sections of “Love and Marriage” because it is an AABA song and the A sections are the same melody but with different lyrics. The rhythm of “Love and Marriage”, is in 4/4 time, with the accents on the first and third beats. Even in the instrument interlude, the drums, trumpets, and tubas are accenting the first and third beat. The performance of “Love and Marriage” by Frank Sinatra showed that Sinatra was a true musician. His clear, smooth voice glides throughout the song hitting every note, high and low, perfectly. Sinatra’s unique character consists of his jazz and pop voice and his accompaniment made of an orchestra and a band. During “Love and Marriage”, there is an interlude, where the instruments build on top of each other and play out the melody without Sinatra singing. Sinatra’s voice is a big part of his character because his voice is a mix of pop and jazz. When he sings, he makes the song his own by dragging out some words and notes in the song. At the end of the song, the back up singers sing a line to break up the constant singing of Sinatra, and they also add more life to the song at the very end. The back up singers also act as other husbands who are married, who have gone through marriage, and are agreeing with Sinatra as he finishes the song. The band and orchestra contributed to the song as well because they help make the sound of the song and gives the song its texture. Frank Sinatra is a known artist and during the 1950s, “Love and Marriage” made him more known in society.

         During Frank Sinatra’s time, the world was recovering from World War II and its destruction. Pop and R&B music was being made by many different artists and Sinatra was one of them. The society of post-World War II was fixated on the working class, women were pushed back toward their homes from the factories they worked at for years and the men were put into the factories and jobs the women held while they were in Europe fighting in the war. Sinatra began working as a musician and, “as ideas of the average American male alter from World War II to the 1950s, Sinatra’s working-class image exposes the extent to which issues of class alienation and disenfranchisement are concealed in a postwar culture stressing the elimination of class barriers” (McNally 14). Sinatra’s image as a musician and actor, showed the social issues of the working class. When Sinatra was young, he sent some money to the NAACP because he wanted to help out. Later in his career, “Sinatra displays his loyalty toward the working-class Italian American community of his youth and reinforces his strong ethnic identity. Sinatra’s cultural experience also prompts his intense involvement with tolerance and civil-rights issues” (McNally 69). Sinatra respected the working class because he grew up in the working class and wanted to help out any way he could, like he did with the civil rights issues. Frank Sinatra was influenced by many artists including Bing Crosby, Billie Holiday, and Lester Young. He took bits and pieces from each artist that influenced him and used their unique styles to create one of his own. As a performer, he was influenced by Black artists and women artists, and used them as a guide to help him become a better performer because he saw how successful they were. When Sinatra was younger, “he inherited a predilection for the bel canto style of singing” (Pleasants and Keightley 1) because his parents were from Italy. He had no musical training whatsoever but went on to create music as a “big-band vocalist with Harry James” (Pleasants and Keightley 1) and then had a solo career, selling albums and going on tours. Sinatra set himself apart from the rest of the artists during that time was his vocal style.

Sinatra’s name became virtually a byword for the American popular singer, and his singing represents a consummation of this longstanding tradition not likely to be equaled. Possessed of complete confidence in his talent, despite his lack of musical training, he set out to devise a singing style different from that of Bing Crosby, then the outstanding figure among popular singers. From Tommy Dorsey, Sinatra adopted certain key aspects of jazz phrasing, particularly regarding breathing; later he expressed a debt to the jazz style of Billie Holiday and the narrative style of Mabel Mercer. But the crucial innovations in Sinatra’s approach were based (unwittingly) on the Italian bel canto tradition, particularly his legato attack (known to his detractors as “mooing”), his handling of portamento and rubato, and his sensitive modulation of vowel sounds (Pleasants and Keightley 1).

Sinatra was different from other artists, which made him more appealing to the public. This also attracted the media and critics, who either enjoyed his works or did not.

         Frank Sinatra’s “Love and Marriage”, was a pop hit during the 1950s, but only caught the ears of adults because the lyrics spoke specifically to married couples. It also taught teenagers that love and marriage are a package deal. In a short review of the song, Alex Young said that “Love and Marriage” has a “thin, gimmicky veil of displeasure”. Young also criticizes other works of Sinatra’s, which result the same review. Young seems to dislike Sinatra and his work based on his word choice when reviewing the songs. Over the years, Frank Sinatra has still been present in the music world, mostly due to his Christmas albums, but the views on Sinatra are split because some people are fans and other people are not. Whether society likes Frank Sinatra or not, there will always be differing opinions on him and his music. Similarly, an artist during the 2000s, Michael Bublé, receives similar reviews to Sinatra. Michael Bublé is a Canadian artist who was influenced by Sinatra at a young age. Bublé recently released a new album that has gotten mixed reviews, but most of them are in favor of the new music. In a review of Bublé’s new album, Roisin O’ Connor says, “No one does smooth quite like Michael Bublé…While his rich, sonorous timbre has shades of fellow crooner Frank Sinatra, Bublé decorates his own vocal performance with the flair and flexibility of the best modern pop”. O’Connor seems to enjoy Bublé’s style of music and his latest album because of his positive word choices when describing Bublé’s vocal style. O’Connor does say, “Calling it his “most romantic album to date” is a bold claim, but this certainly is a more settled sound compared to his wildly varied 2016 record *Nobody But Me. Love* is Bublé doing what he does best”. This review is mainly a positive pull for Michael Bublé’s newest album and will influence many listeners’ thoughts on the album. Frank Sinatra and Michael Bublé both received different opinions on their music during their careers, but their fans are true still to this day. Even though their music took place in different centuries, Sinatra and Bublé both influenced many people with their unique vocal styles.

         Frank Sinatra was a contributor to the music industry and to society. He brought many songs and albums to society and they changed due to the different time periods that he produced music during. With his cover versions of different song to his originals, such as “Love and Marriage”, Frank Sinatra contributed greatly to the music industry because he brought a style of performing to the stage that no other artist did or will ever bring.

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