Contemporary Music Review
2000, Vol. 19, Part 1, pp. 63–87
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Analyzing Third Stream

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This article offers a music-historical context in which to evaluate the success of third-stream music (c. 1945–65). The claims made in favor of this hybrid fusion of jazz and classical music styles are examined, especially those of Gunther Schuller. The article argues that third stream ultimately failed to realize the often lofty goals of its most vigorous proponents due its tendency not to "swing" and to its strong attenuation of improvisatory freedom that jazz traditionally allots to soloists.

KEYWORDS: Jazz, third stream, Gunther Schuller, Stan Kenton, birth of Cool band

Defining Third Stream

In 1987, Gunther Schuller defined third-stream music as follows:

> **Third stream.** A term coined by Gunther Schuller, in a lecture at Brandeis University in 1957, for a type of music which, through improvisation or written composition or both, synthesizes the essential characteristics and techniques of contemporary Western art music and various ethnic or vernacular musics. At the heart of this concept is the notion that any music stands to profit from a confrontation with another; thus composers of Western art music can learn a great deal from the rhythmic vitality and swing of jazz, while jazz musicians can find new avenues of development in the large-scale forms and complex tonal systems of classical music. (Schuller 1987, 377)

Schuller celebrates, in this passage at least, the synthetic character of third stream, casting it as a powerful blend of the art-music and jazz traditions. According to Schuller, both art music and jazz have something to gain by such a stylistic "confrontation" with one another. But despite such elegant articulations of its aesthetic goals by widely respected jazz scholars like Schuller, third-stream music has remained a controversial endeavor since its inception; perhaps no other style in jazz has been the subject of such divided response among critics, players, and listeners both inside

and outside of the world of jazz. For much of its history, third-stream music has seemed to be caught uncomfortably between the worlds of Western European art music and jazz, at times apparently unwelcome in either world and thus causing its practitioners and advocates to fight an aesthetic battle on two fronts simultaneously.

But the idea of blending jazz and classical music did not begin with third stream. In grappling with the question of defining third-stream music and tracing its heritage, Robert Loran Brown, Jr. has developed a helpful classification of this classical/jazz hybrid music by considering aspects of historical context, intent, and technical approach (Brown 1974). Third stream's roots can actually be found in earlier styles of American music; accordingly, Brown's first category of assimilative music is ragtime, epitomized by the compositions of Scott Joplin. The second is a practice he calls "jazzing the classics"; this category includes both jazz-styled renderings of classical repertoire as well as jazz imitation of classical styles. Brown's third category identifies jazz music that utilizes performance media usually associated with classical music, such as traditionally non-jazz instrumentation (i.e. strings, bassoon, oboe) or electronic computer or tape music. A fourth category encompasses jazz pieces that employ quasi-classical concepts such as programmatic music, extended forms or traditional classical formal models, and serial techniques. Brown rearranges and elaborates on these categories somewhat when he presents his attempt at a strictly historical order of assimilation, and arrives at the following succession of styles: 1) ragtime, 2) jazzing the classics, 3) stylistic imitations of classical music, 4) symphonic jazz, 5) West coast, cool school, and ultimately 6) third stream. Brown, however, does not provide specific dates for each of the periods he enumerates, and a closer look at Brown's parsing reveals a considerable chronological overlap between categories. Categories 1, 2, and 4 were essentially products of the time period from about 1897 to 1930. Category 3 covers virtually the entire history of jazz. Categories 5 and 6 involve a time period from about the mid-1940s to the end of the 1960s.

Brown's categorization — despite the absence of a tidy historical succession — remains a useful point of departure for an overview of what Joseph Stuessy (1977) has termed "confluent music" — the incorporation of jazz and classical music by either stylistic camp in any era. The main focus of this article will be a consideration of the many issues and problems associated with confluence in jazz generally, and in third-stream music specifically; a significant amount of discussion will be devoted to third stream below. But in order to provide a music-stylistic and -historical context in which third stream may be situated, we will first briefly review the history and general characteristics of those styles that lead to third stream according to Brown's interpretation. I will generally employ the

term "classical" music for the sake of brevity in terminology in referring to what is known variously as "European art music," "notated art music," or any combination or derivation thereof as practiced mostly by composers in Europe and the United States.

Ragtime

Ragtime was the first significant infiltration of an authentic African-American music into the mainstream of popular music, and it flourished from approximately 1895 until the mid-1920s. Ragtime was also the first form-conscious African-American music. It was modeled after the march, with three or four sixteen-bar themes, each repeated once, the third usually modulating up the interval of a fourth. It was a sturdy design that remained prominent in the jazz repertoire until the 1930s. Ragtime's greatest composer — and certainly the composer most often associated with the style — was Scott Joplin (1867–1917), who codified the form and style of "classic ragtime" with his "Maple Leaf Rag" in 1899. Joplin also aspired to rise above the realm of popular entertainment and establish himself as the first black "classicist." To this end, he composed two operas and a ballet and, all the while, increasingly complex piano rags that were for the most part too musically sophisticated for the popular audience. The most remarkable of these later rags is Joplin's "Euphonic Sounds" (1909), particularly its startling second strain.

The tonal focus of this rag moves almost immediately from B♭ major to B minor. In the fifth measure, the harmony moves quickly from a V^7 of E♭ major to vii° of C minor. By the ninth bar the tonal center is G minor, D♭ major by the thirteenth bar, and back to V^7 of B♭ major by the fifteenth bar. Coupled with these rapid-fire shifts of key center are complementary dynamic contrasts that provide a sense of a complex multi-thematic work, all in the course of a mere sixteen measures. Here one clearly sees that Joplin was pushing at the music-technical boundaries of popular music, and the result is a rag that was probably difficult for many pop listeners to appreciate.

Joplin's most ambitious work was his opera *Treemonisha* (1911), a combination of ragtime, operetta, parlor songs, and black folk music. Typical of the situation that later befell much third-stream and other confluent efforts, *Treemonisha* could not find an audience. Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis, in their pioneering history *They All Played Ragtime*, report on the one meager performance in Harlem: "The musical drama made virtually no impression... its special quality in any event would surely have been lost on the typical Harlem audience that attended. The listeners were

sophisticated enough to reject their folk past, but not sufficiently to relish a return to it in art" (Blesh and Janis 1950).

Jazzing the Classics

A typical practice throughout the history of ragtime and jazz has been lending a syncopated or jazz treatment to classical works, sometimes motivated more by novelty than earnest musical exploration. New Orleans pianists Tony Jackson and Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton would often render ragtime versions of operatic selections in the Storyville brothels, excerpts such as the "Miserere" from Verdi's *Il Trovatore*. Vaudeville ragtime artist Ben Harney performed ragtime versions of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." Harlem stride pianist James P. Johnson ragged Rachmaninoff's "Prelude in C# Minor," while pianist Eubie Blake syncopated Wagner's overture to *Tannhäuser*. These examples date back to the earliest days of ragtime and jazz (1897–1925).

This practice of jazzing the classics has continued over the years, though these later efforts were mostly not intended as humorous novelty numbers and were often more serious in their motivation. French jazz artists in the 1950s and 60s seemed particularly fascinated with the idea of performing European art music in a jazz style. Consider, for instance, the work of the Jacques Loussier Trio, with Loussier playing straight renditions of Bach on the piano underpinned by jazz bass and drums. The (Ward) Swingle Singers and their predecessor, The Double Six of Paris, also recorded performances of Bach works with a swing beat. In the United States, there was Bill Evans and Claus Ogerman's 1965 recording for Verve Records (*Bill Evans Trio with Symphony Orchestra* Verve V68640), which featured easy-listening jazz renditions of works by Bach, Chopin, Scriabin, and Fauré. British pianist and percussionist Victor Feldman recorded jazz renditions of Chopin in the 1970s and pianist Bob James did jazz versions of Rameau in the 1980s.

Stylistic Imitations of Classical Music

Another area of jazz/classical confluence is the stylistic imitation of classical music. This can involve several aspects, some more superficial than others. Often one finds the employment of what would popularly be considered non-jazz, or marginally jazz instruments, i.e. strings (other than double bass), double-reed instruments, french horn, or timpani. This will often suffice for some listeners or critics to consider a group or performance

as a jazz/classical hybrid. Paul Whiteman's orchestra, prominent in the 1920s and 30s, was comprised of orchestral instruments (strings, double reeds, harp) in addition to jazz instruments such as the saxophone and banjo. Later recordings — among the many that might be cited — are Pete Rugolo's *Reeds in Hi-Fi* (Mercury MG 20260), or the Jack Marshall Sextet's album *18th-Century Jazz* (Columbia), on which the group uses early-music instrumentation to play jazz standards. Both of these recordings are from the 1950s; in the mid to late 1950s one can look to the jazz brass-choir recordings of Gunther Schuller and J. J. Johnson, as well as to the Gil Evans/Miles Davis wind-orchestra recordings, all of these for Columbia records.

A second area of classical stylistic imitation would be long, programmatic jazz works that may give the impression of an integrated epic piece, but are most often a series of short works with extended improvisations and linked by a prevailing extra-musical theme. Beginning in the 1930s but more prevalent in the 1950s and early 1960s, this approach would include many of the suites and other extended works by Duke Ellington (*The Far East Suite* (1966), *The Queen's Suite* (1962), *Such Sweet Thunder* (1957) and Charles Mingus (*The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady* (1963), *Epitaph* (1962)).

The musical conceptions of Duke Ellington (1899–1974) were highly personal vehicles that both expressed his own imagination and begged for musical comment from his bandmembers. The success of Ellington was not his ability to mimic the classical tradition; he was no more interested in that than he was in upholding a jazz tradition. His success was in extending the range of his musical vocabulary by coalescing the totality of his musical environment and manifesting it in an unpretentious, unselfconscious way that swung to the satisfaction of the jazz community and yet captured the imagination of the classical community.

From the 1930s on, Ellington wrote a number a long works in a variety of forms. Most are suites, a collection of four or five minutes pieces linked programmatically, but Ellington also wrote lengthy multi-section single pieces. The earliest and most celebrated is his 1935 work *Reminiscing in Tempo*, an elegy for his mother. This thirteen-minute piece, filling four 78-r.p.m. record sides, stands out from other longer Ellington works in that it shows perhaps the finest formal and developmental control he ever exercised. He avoids the multi-thematic and multi-(short) movement, and the extension through improvisation paradigm of myriad extended jazz works, including many of his own. "Reminiscing" is restricted to one main theme, a secondary theme, a couple of transitional passages, and a four-chord vamp. The main theme appears fourteen times in the course of the piece, with only three of the iterations exhibiting any variation in melodic character. Ellington casts the theme in a

variety of keys, registers, harmonic contexts, and instrumentation. He drew heavily upon his intimate knowledge of the unique tonal quality of his individual band members for his developmental decisions. He did not, however, draw upon their improvisational input, using only prescribed solos (Schuller 1989, 76–8). Ellington continued his assault on the regularity of the four-bar phrase in "Reminiscing," creating twenty and thirty-bar structures subdivided into groups of ten, fourteen, and eighteen measures. These phrasing irregularities add to the overall effect of seamlessness, and they participate in Ellington's balancing of predictable and unpredictable elements as the piece unfolds. Another notable work in this form is *The Tattooed Bride* from 1948, which consistently employs a brief motive throughout the entire thirteen-minute work.

Charles Mingus was the next major jazz composer to routinely use extended form in jazz. Gunther Schuller, in fact, credits Mingus with coining the term "extended form." In Mingus's case, form was usually extended by the improvisations of his band members. Mingus was very much influenced by the compositions of Duke Ellington, but more by Ellington's idiosyncratic use of harmony, orchestration, and creative interaction with his sidemen than with his propensity for jazz compositions beyond the perfunctory four-minute limit. Unlike Ellington, Mingus did have the opportunity to study classical composition in his youth and, as early as 1939, wrote *The Chill of Death,* a brooding piece for narrator and orchestra that he did not have recorded until 1971, when it was included on the Columbia album, *Let My Children Hear Music* (CK 48910). After 1955, Mingus resolved to abandon the practice of extensively notating his compositions, electing to teach them to his performers by rote. A notable exception in this regard was *Revelations,* commissioned by Gunther Schuller for inclusion in the 1957 Brandeis Summer Festival.

Mingus, like Ellington, did not seek to imitate classical models, but to bend the rules of jazz form in his day. He used the AABA form of the American popular song, but with asymmetrical phrase groupings such as 8, 16, 14, 8. He also sought to use more polyphonic and heterophonic counterpoint than is usually found in the more common homophonic texture of jazz. In rarer cases, jazz composers have employed traditional forms drawn from classical music such as fugue or developmental techniques from dodecaphonic composition, and these can be found particularly in the work of John Lewis, John Carisi, and Gunther Schuller.

Symphonic Jazz

The confluent approach that is best known, and the most infamous in both jazz and classical circles, is the so-called "symphonic jazz" approach

of the 1920s. The chief proponent was bandleader Paul Whiteman, who engineered a successful blend of society dance music, jazz, and classical music. He had a massive dance orchestra of around thirty-five instrumentalists, including harp, strings, and woodwinds. Whiteman's music was an effort intended to "make a lady out of jazz" by diluting the features of jazz rhythm and improvisation and legitimizing jazz with occasional interpolations of Wagner, Stravinsky, or Debussy. This popular combination culminated with the commission and premiere of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" at Aeolian Hall in 1924, the climax of a program Whiteman called "An Experiment in Modern Music." The idea of legitimizing jazz by Europeanizing it also influenced some of New York's black jazz composers. To cite a single exemplary event, there was a 1928 concert at Carnegie Hall that featured the premiere of Harlem stride pianist James P. Johnson's "Yamekraw," an extended piece for piano and orchestra similar in form and concept to Gershwin's "Rhapsody."

The symphonic jazz efforts of the 1920s are indicative of the mindset of many jazz musicians of the day. Among these musicians there was a yearning to command the large forms found in classical music. At the time, improvisation was a relatively new concept and thus one that very few musicians had mastered. Many musicians and audiences were intolerant to the idea of improvisation, holding to the notion that notated music was controlled — and thereby better — music. There was a prevailing feeling that jazz was a comparatively inferior music that had to graft on elements of European art music to lend it legitimacy; it should aspire to take on the refined image of classical music in some way, even if it was only in the style of its staging in performance.

West Coast Cool Jazz

The "West Coast," "cool," and third-stream jazz movements began in the 1940s and continued to about the mid-1960s. The mid-1940s saw the redefinition of jazz as high art rather than popular music, and this occurred with the emergence of "bebop." Jazz soon saw an influx of predominately white jazz composers, arrangers, and instrumentalists, some of whom were trained in contemporary classical-music techniques. While others were self-taught or mentored outside the academy, both groups shared modernist aesthetic tendencies and sought new approaches to jazz. One group of these new modernist writers came from the Claude Thornhill band, a moderately successful big band that began integrating streamlined bebop lines and Ellingtonian orchestration into its canon. Thornhill's arrangers included Gerry Mulligan, John Carisi, and their patriarch Gil Evans. These arrangers teamed with Miles Davis in 1949 to

form a nonet, a smaller version of the Thornhill band, known in later years as the "Birth of the Cool" band.

The Birth of Cool band was a pivotal event in the development of third-stream music. In the first place, it brought together prominent musicians from several different jazz endeavors. The group's leader, Miles Davis, had begun his career with Charlie Parker four years earlier and, at twenty-four, was already an elder statesman in bebop. Konitz, Mulligan, Gil Evans, french hornist Sandy Siegelstein, and tubist Bill Barber were Thornhill veterans. John Lewis and Kenny Clarke were recently of the Dizzy Gillespie big band and Lewis would subsequently form the Modern Jazz Quartet, the band Schuller felt personified the third-stream ideal. The Birth of Cool group recorded for Capitol Records, a relatively new Los Angeles label tied closely to Stan Kenton, and the label that recorded Lennie Tristano's historic small group recordings at about the same time. The band was essentially a writer's workshop, emphasizing the written arrangement at a time when the enthusiasm for unencumbered improvisation was at a fever pitch. The group got a tepid reception at the time, recording only a dozen sides and playing a mere three weeks at a half empty Royal Roost in New York. But the seed for third stream was planted in New York, particularly in the mind of French hornist Gunther Schuller, who played his first jazz gig with the Birth of Cool band.

Modernist musical behavior and confluent activity was also to be found on the West Coast; its chief proponent was the Stan Kenton orchestra of Los Angeles, the most unique and longest lasting emblem of classical/jazz confluence and probably the first example of the third-stream concept proper. At a time when most big bands were dead or dying, Kenton created a forty-piece orchestra devoted entirely to explorative compositions by a team of visionary writers. This particular group, the "Innovations" orchestra (which folded in 1951), ended up personally costing Kenton $200,000; nonetheless, Kenton continued undaunted with several incarnations of his band until his death in 1979. No one, with the exception of Duke Ellington, showed such longevity and steadfast high-mindedness as did Stan Kenton.

Like Duke Ellington, Stan Kenton (1911–1979) knew how to balance making commercial hits with artistic pursuits, using the former to subsidize the latter. What set him apart was his ability to sell his artistic wares to the general public. Even at his most uncompromising, he filled concert halls with people, making it fashionable to be a discriminating listener to esoteric music. For all the musical and financial chances he took, he still died a millionaire. The popular successes of Boyd Raeburn, Claude Thornhill, and Dizzy Gillespie, big band leaders and contemporaries of Kenton following the same musical path, were much more short-lived by

comparison. Kenton's prime motivation was his vision of what a concert jazz orchestra should be: a big, loud jazz orchestra.

Kenton dubbed his music "progressive jazz," a tongue-in-cheek working title that stuck because no one could come up with anything better. Pete Rugolo recalled, "It caused a whole new thing in music. It was the first time anyone wrote music that sounded very modern, like Stravinsky and Bartók... Bernstein... [and] Milhaud, whom I studied with. Nobody had that kind of sound before in jazz or big band music. I wrote 5/4 bars, 3/4 bars, 1/4 bars" (Daryll 1992).

It is only coincidental that Kenton's propensity for modernism was realized when bebop was just coming to full flower in New York. Kenton was based in Los Angeles and his modernist investigations developed far from the New York influence of Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, John Lewis, or any of the other East Coast "modernists." His stylistic lineage actually stemmed from the intricate writing found in the Jimmie Lunceford band. Lunceford, in turn, had studied "out west" in Denver with Wilberforce Whiteman, father of "symphonic jazz" king Paul Whiteman. (Lunceford's startling 1934 composition "Stratosphere" exemplifies the character of this western United States stylistic family tree.) And, though it is a popular belief that migrating New York cool-schoolers brought their style with them to the West, several of Kenton's sidemen, such as Lennie Niehaus and Shorty Rogers, were already establishing a concomitant style when the Easterners arrived.

The writers Kenton used were as far removed from the New York modernist scene as he was. Pete Rugolo studied with Darius Milhaud at Mills College in Oakland, California (as did Dave Brubeck and Cal Tjader). Bill Russo was a Chicagoan who studied with Lennie Tristano. Bill Holman studied at the Westlake College of Music in Los Angeles. Robert Graettinger, another Westlake student who studied extensively with studio arranger Russell Garcia, was the most enigmatic of Kenton's composers. He epitomized the intensity of Kenton's commitment to modernism — with or without deference to jazz style — in his 1948 (rev. 1951) composition *City of Glass*.

In fact, the most dangerous aspect of Kenton to the jazz mainstream of the 1940s was that he rendered eastern bebop almost irrelevant. It is not that Kenton was naive about bop or that he rejected it. His constituents also included Lee Konitz, Gerry Mulligan, Stan Getz, and Gil Evans, some of the most important figures of the New York "cool school." There was tenor saxophonist Vido Musso, veteran of the Benny Goodman band. He also had some of the most formidable bop stylists from the West Coast, particularly alto saxophonists Charlie Mariano and Art Pepper, trombonist Frank Rosolino, and drummer Shelly Manne. Bebop, however, was an addendum to a notion Kenton had been holding since the 1930s:

It is a fact that in the minds of many of us in creative music that the modern symphonic composer and the composer whose heritage is jazz use many of the same techniques in the process of composition. The difference in the end result lies in the interpretation of the work. The same music performed by a symphonic orchestra will have and entirely different dimension when played by jazz musicians. (Kenton 1951)

The confluent styles surveyed thus far exhibit a couple of common characteristics. From the late 1890s until the mid-1940s, there was a prevailing feeling in ragtime and jazz that association with the classical music tradition was the means by which to legitimize African-American music. Musicians in these early years were consciously seeking to attach a "classical" persona to their ragtime and jazz music. While it is nice to think that such efforts were made in order to create better and more interesting music, it is more likely that the confluence was motivated by novelty or by an apologetic self-consciousness or defensiveness intent on raising the fledgling jazz music to the long-standing stature of the European art music tradition. Overall, early confluent efforts sought to win over a certain audience, one of considerably higher social position and influence than the proletariat with which jazz had already connected.

After the dawn of bebop-style jazz in the mid-1940s, the context and motivation of confluent music had evolved. Jazz, in the form of bebop, had established itself as a notable art music apart from the European tradition. Here the exploration of classical/jazz hybrids was driven more by the sincere curiosity and creativity of the musicians rather than by the need to reach the popular audience or to establish an "artsy" image. Additionally, the European art-music approaches utilized in confluent jazz from the 1940s on, such as twelve-tone or atonal techniques, appealed to a much smaller audience than the more popular late Romantic and French Impressionist styles that were prevalent in earlier confluent jazz. If audience appeal was the motivation in later confluent jazz, then it was understood that the audience was reduced, for the most part, to other musicians. In fact, confluent music from this point period forward exhibits a pressing need to be viewed as musically erudite, to shed the role or image of jazz as popular music. At the same time, confluent composers wanted to make it clear that the combining of European art music and jazz was a union of two musics of equal artistic weight, that one style would not *improve* the other, but that any musical style would, as Schuller states in his definition of third stream, "stand to profit from a confrontation with another."

Third Stream

Having presented a brief historical and stylistic overview of confluence in jazz, the remainder of this study will focus on third-stream music. I

suggest, along with Brown, that third-stream music is best viewed as a confluent effort of a particular era, one that raised aesthetic and artistic questions for its time and reflected the particular motivations of its creators. Chronologically, I will view the period from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s as the prime years for third-stream practice as Schuller originally saw it, noting the emergence of third stream from the context of bebop and West Coast jazz activities. I take the mid-1960s as the end of the third-stream era proper because, by that time, rock had so marginalized jazz *and* classical music that the issues and importance of the classical/jazz confluent effort came to be minimalized and so too, the musical activity that went with it. It is not coincidental that rock, having come of age at this time and assuming jazz's role as classical music's perceived popular music nemesis and artistic "wanna-be," took up the investigation of hybridizing with classical music itself. This conspicuously began with the Beatles' watershed *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* in 1967 and continued primarily in Britain with the "progressive-rock" efforts of Yes, King Crimson, Emerson Lake & Palmer, and others.

I will limit my discussion to those generally considered to be "jazz" musicians, with the exception of Gunther Schuller, whom I do not consider a jazz musician but rather a knowledgeable and active participant, spokesman, and aesthetic advocate of the movement.

History, Aesthetics and Cultural Issues of Third Stream

Third-stream music really did not work; no one would let it. The idea of combining elements of notated European art music with jazz style and improvisation seemed perfectly logical to its practitioners; for, by 1957, many jazz musicians saw "classical" music and jazz as kindred musics within the realm of high art. Both musical cultures were responding to a general post-war modernism movement in the arts, striving for both complexity and social elitism (Bürger 1984). What better offspring could result than one born from such a union?

Unfortunately, many critics, musicians, and listeners viewed this creation as a mutt — a dangerous half-breed that threatened the pedigree of each musical tradition. Interestingly, the majority of this rancor came not from conservative advocates of art-music culture, but rather from voices within the jazz community. Rather than bringing about the kind of cultural synthesis its advocates intended, third-stream music exacerbated bitterness over the long-standing struggle of blacks to validate their art within the mainstream of American culture against the prevailing esteem of European art music in the public consciousness. The idea of infusing jazz with classical music elements seemed to once again insinuate that the

former needed the latter for that validation, that the European musical tradition was still the standard by which all music should be judged. Yet, it is undeniable that black jazz modernists "...borrowed liberally from concert styles and practices. By the 1960s, free musicians had transformed the modernist aesthetic for their own uses, recasting it to assert a specifically black-oriented artistry" (Radano 1993, 109).

In truth, Schuller and other proponents of third-stream music had a genuine need to create and perform *art* music. To state it again, they saw jazz and classical music similarly as art (as opposed to popular music), so they combined them, hoping for a music that was thoughtful, well-crafted, and original. For these jazz musicians and composers, third stream would be the sum total of their experience in both stylistic realms, and thus — they hoped — would be judged on its own merits and not by its ability to uphold any one tradition.

Far overriding the notion of correcting a fault in one idiom with a virtue from another was the need for jazz musicians to disassociate their music from crass commercialism, its function merely as dance music and, above all, to rescue both musical traditions from stasis by dismantling public stereotypes and expectations, leaving the way open for uninhibited musical exploration. As Stan Kenton told jazz writer Nat Hentoff:

> Jazz for a long time was mixed up with pop music. Now, as it has always been in Europe, jazz is being differentiated from pop music as well as classical music. The modernists deserve the credit for proving that jazz doesn't have to be danced to... As a matter of fact, I don't think jazz was meant to continue as dance music. People got the idea just because it was confused with pop music... Jazz has to develop; it can't always remain functional dance music. (Hentoff 1952, 6)

This distinction from popular music was, of course, not nearly as urgent in twentieth-century art music; modernist classical music certainly struggled for public understanding and acceptance, but its identity as art — even when it was called bad art — has infrequently been in question. The struggle of jazz to define its position along a continuum that might be drawn between popular music and art, however, reaches back to its earliest years. Emerging into public consciousness as a novelty dance music in 1917 and for years thereafter using popular songs and night clubs for performance vehicles and venues, jazz was typecast as popular music, and was consequently accused of "getting above its raising" (to quote a Ricky Skaggs song) when it opted for artistic pursuit. Schuller, however, sees in this a tendency of Americans to underestimate their own musics:

> [We Americans] have suffered for a long time (and still do to some extent) from a tremendous inferiority complex about our own music. That's partially understandable when one realizes that we are a very young country and we had, in fact, to import our musical traditions primarily from Europe in order to have any... But I think those days are long gone

now, and I think it's high time that America be quite proud of its musical traditions.... (Hasse 1985, 198–199)

American classical music has, in fact, also been subject to such underestimation, and it too struggled for aesthetic legitimacy earlier in the century. Young composers such as Aaron Copland, Roger Sessions, Roy Harris, and Walter Piston fought against the critical and public indifference to European-style art music by American composers in the 1920s by forming the League of Composers. In his lively and sarcastic autobiography *A Smattering of Ignorance,* pianist Oscar Levant writes: "It is well to recall that in the early twenties, when modern music was attracting more attention in America than it ever did before, or has since, the public interest was wholly confined to European products — American music was in complete disrepute" (Levant 1940, 64). Levant goes on to say that the League "sought to establish in the East Sixties [of New York] an equivalent of the Parisian salons." One readily detects the similarity to the situation Levant describes in the bohemian bebop enclave of 52nd Street in the 1940s. Such a parallel suggests that this struggle for acceptance as serious artists was perhaps "an American thing," transcending stylistic affiliation and eventually establishing the basis for a brotherhood among some jazz and classical musicians who found themselves victims of similar cultural attitudes.

The classical music establishment voiced most of its dissension over the comingling of jazz and art music in the early part of the twentieth century — a time when America still looked to Europe for its musical values. Classical music was nurtured by wealthy American families such as the Carnegies and the Vanderbilts, as well as by music critics, journalists, and music educators. The threat of African-American music was not so much whatever competition for the attention of the public it might offer, but the more serious threat that jazz might influence and even graft on to classical music. As most historical accounts of the period run, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the rise of intense nationalism within European music, typified by the music of composers such as Norway's Edvard Grieg, Finland's Jean Sibelius, Czechoslovakia's Antonín Dvořák, and Russia's Modest Mussorgsky and Igor Stravinsky. Advocates of nationalism within the European classical community urged the American composers to draw likewise upon their own indigenous musics and traditions; the musics of African- and Native-Americans might be employed to help establish a distinctly American nationalistic style. Some European composers even employed what they took to be American musics themselves, resulting in pieces such as Dvořák's "Symphony from the New World," Debussy's "Golliwog's Cakewalk," Stravinsky's "Ragtime for Eleven Instruments," and Darius Milhaud's "La Creation du

Monde." (Milhaud would eventually teach composition to some third-stream jazz composers at Mills College in California.) But the American art-music culture steadfastly refused to recognize its cultural distinctiveness in the blending of European and African influences, and consequently, few American composers pursued such a synthesis in earnest. Those who did, such as Aaron Copland and Samuel Barber, misguidedly drew more inspiration from syncopated vaudeville bands than from authentic jazz bands.

Ironically, this same attitude about the inherently superior quality of European music led black Americans to believe that classical music was the only worthwhile pursuit for young musicians; unfortunately, it was also clear there would be no welcome place for black musicians in the orchestra, on the opera stage, or in the recital hall at the end of such training. Barred from the culture of white art music in America, though at the same time constantly browbeaten with the perceived superiority of this music, black Americans set about establishing their own art. By the end of World War II, jazz had developed an intricate and unique harmonic practice, as well as a rhythmic system with subtleties that standard notation could not possibly capture. But perhaps most importantly, jazz took the practice of improvisation to unprecedented heights. The new jazz was dubbed "bebop" by the press; its authors were trumpeter John "Dizzy" Gillespie, saxophonist Charlie Parker, and pianist Thelonious Monk.

With the emergence of bebop, jazz fans and the classical music community now had to reassess their perceptions of jazz; its image as popular music now seemed inappropriate. The bebop jazz musicians were no longer entertaining buffoons or providers of dance music; now they were serious, artistic performers. Their music was specialized as well as technically and intellectually demanding. Some welcomed these changes in jazz, relishing the new complexity and expression. Other critics and fans were bewildered by this new jazz and abandoned bebop either for rhythm and blues, or for the establishment of a primitivist revival of early New Orleans music. But, like it or not, jazz now had a claim for recognition as art in traditional art-music aesthetic terms: it was complex absolute music that existed for its own intrinsic value, to be contemplated aesthetically in those terms alone.

Bebop was born within a tight circle of New York black artists, a community that was galvanized by the racism of the time. This socio-political *milieu* was the proud parent of a music that was capturing the imagination and respect of the world. But, as jazz historian John Litweiler observed,

> The bop milieu had internalized one of the nasty features of the social tidepool in which it had spawned: intolerance. Bop musicians and audiences tended to ignore the discoveries of

such eastern players as Herbie Nichols, Elmo Hope, and even, for many years, Thelonious Monk; these artists were simply peripheral to the dogmas of taste derived primarily from Charlie Parker and his successor as a model of taste, Miles Davis. (Litweiler 1992, 64)

For a moment, bebop was the radical "new thing" in jazz, delivering it from the world of popular music where, in the eyes of many, it had unfairly languished for years. But, ironically, bebop soon became the new jazz establishment, and shortly thereafter the ultra-orthodox moldy fig. Never had there been a more standardized time in jazz than during the reign of bebop. Guitarists, trombonists, and pianists — every instrumentalist, it seemed — strove to sound like Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker.

Oddly enough, the most stylistically tolerant artist from the bebop camp was probably Parker himself. Though he had little formal training, he delighted in various contexts and styles of music, as exemplified in his controversial "Charlie Parker with Strings" session for Verve (MGC 501) in 1949. Many jazz afficionados and critics accused Parker of going commercial, but Parker considered it one of the high points of his career. He admired the compositions of Edgard Varèse and hoped someday to study with him. In the August 1948 issue of *Metronome* magazine, Parker commented on Stan Kenton, an already established experimenter of jazz/classical hybrids. "Kenton is the closest thing to classical music in the jazz field, if you want to call it jazz. I mean, as far as I'm concerned, there's just forms of music; people have different conceptions and different ways of presenting things. Personally, I just like to call it music, and music is what I like" (Friedwald, 1991).

Stan Kenton's music evokes extremes of opinion, either worshipful devotion or scathing criticism and hatred. Everyone will agree that subtlety is lost on the Kenton style. Both he and his orchestra were large, imposing figures. His ten man brass section (before you include the occasional section of french horns or mellophoniums) delved into the extremes of range and volume. The music was often pretentious, pompous, and overdone. Kenton believed in the adage that it was better to be hated than unnoticed. There was also the perennial accusation that his band did not swing. But, as Kenton arranger Pete Rugolo stated, "...it wasn't supposed to swing. Stan was trying to do a different kind of music... It did have a beat here and there, but it didn't always have to go 4/4. And a lot of it didn't have any beat at all. They were concert pieces with a jazz sound" (Friedwald 1991, 7).

Charlie Parker's acknowledgment of Kenton's music indicates that Parker seemed confident enough in the artistic establishment of his musical innovation, bebop, to view Kenton or classical music without malice or jealousy. Bebop and third stream music were not the same thing, but third stream did develop from the same modernist spirit that prevailed in bebop at the time. Parker apparently welcomed any serious

musical investigation, including confluent music, though circumstances dictated that Parker would have little opportunity to pursue confluent projects himself. Another New York musician who would pursue confluent music, equally inspired by the work of Stan Kenton, was Gunther Schuller.

Schuller was born in 1925, son of a New York Philharmonic violinist. He was a child prodigy, developing into a formidable french horn player while still a teenager. By the age of sixteen, he was a member of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, where he was the soloist for his own horn concerto. Soon afterward, he was principal horn with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in New York. From his earliest days, however, he had an interest in jazz. He was fascinated by the music and performances of the Duke Ellington orchestra on records and on the radio, and much of his activity outside the opera orchestra involved cruising New York's 52nd Street, epicenter of the jazz scene. Observation turned to participation in late 1949 and early 1950 when Schuller became involved in the Birth of the Cool band led by Miles Davis.

During this time Schuller divided his attention between his two musical worlds: composition in the manner of Schoenberg and Webern, and involvement with the jazz world. Schuller's involvement with jazz world was somewhat limited, however. He was never a jazz stylist, nor was he involved in jazz as a full-time occupation; he understood it, transcribed it, conducted it, wrote about it, critiqued it, and documented it, but he was never an improvisor or practitioner of the idiom in any real sense. Schuller's playing of jazz was limited to the notated score, the ensemble portions of the jazz performance. In the realm of composition, Schuller composed a series of serial classical works that incorporated jazz stylistic flavorings, the most famous being his *Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee* (1959), particularly the movement "Little Blue Devil."

By the mid-1950s, Schuller was actively investigating the fusion of jazz and European art-music elements. Unlike earlier jazz and classical artists, Schuller was not trying to legitimize or improve jazz, but was seeking ways to expand its possibilities, the same motivation shown by Parker, Monk, and members of the late 1940s "cool school" strain of bebop such as Lennie Tristano, Lee Konitz, Dave Brubeck and John Lewis. Schuller felt that he was synthesizing his two musical worlds.

Gunther Schuller's direction of this new confluent effort led to the occasion of the 1957 Brandeis University Festival of Creative Arts in Waltham, Massachusetts. In that year, Schuller was able to commission six confluent works from colleagues in both the jazz and classical communities. Composers from the jazz world included George Russell and Charles Mingus; those composers from the world of contemporary art music included Milton Babbitt and Harold Shapiro, and, of course, Schuller

himself. In a lecture at the festival (an excerpt of which is quoted at the beginning of the present article), Schuller described the efforts of himself and his fellow composers as a "third stream" fed by the European art music and jazz streams. Intending it only as a descriptive term, the phrase "third stream" became an appellation as well as a liability for Schuller's approach to jazz.

Schuller's fellow proponent integrating European art music elements into jazz was pianist John Lewis (b. 1920). Lewis had earned a degree in music from the University of New Mexico. He met bebop drummer Kenny Clarke while in the service during World War II, who invited him to join the New York jazz scene. He became the pianist for Dizzy Gilliespie's big band and formed The Modern Jazz Quartet from its rhythm section. He was pianist for the Miles Davis "Birth of the Cool" sessions in 1949 and 1950, for which he arranged Denzil Best's "Move" and his own "Rouge." He formed an alliance with Gunther Schuller in 1948 and, together, they inaugurated a series of jazz writer's workshops in Lenox, Massachusetts. They produced a series of recordings and live performances exploring this jazz/classical fusion. In the mid-fifties, they discovered free jazz alto saxophonist and composer Ornette Coleman, whom they saw as "the new Bird" ("Bird" was Charlie Parker's nickname) and purveyor of a new practice of improvisation that would complement their compositional explorations.

Lewis attempted to provide a framework, a guide, for the soloist, a prescriptive pacing of stylistic and emotional contrast that the improvising soloist had little choice but to follow. He told journalist Nat Hentoff,

> the audience for our work can be widened if we strengthen our work with structure . . . I do not think, however, that the sections in this structured jazz — both the improvised and written sections — should take on too much complexity. The total effect must be within the mind's ability to appreciate through the ear. Also, the music will have to swing. (Goldberg 1965, 124)

This statement reinforces the third-stream ideal: creating music of formal integrity, hopefully without impeding the spontaneity of the improvising soloist. Gunther Schuller credits Lewis and the Modern Jazz Quartet with defining the cool movement of jazz in the 1950s and implied that the compositional prowess of Lewis and the improvisational spontaneity of vibraphonist Milt Jackson personified the third-stream ideal. Yet, while attempting to give equal credit to both form and improvisation, there is an obvious self-consciousness, an apologist attitude on the part of Lewis and Schuller in the assertion that longer forms had not been employed in jazz. It is not beyond suspicion that Lewis's motivation in using traditional formal models was as much to demonstrate his knowledge of these forms to the classical world as to seek a better type of jazz.

He seemed oblivious, however, to the "shotgun marriage" nature of the group. From Lewis' point of view, he was attempting to provide a framework for the improvising soloist. To Jackson, whose improvisational approach was right off of 52nd Street, and to much of the jazz audience, Lewis' formal roadmaps were an intrusion into the process of spontaneous improvisation. Audiences grew so tense from this aesthetic friction that in concerts they would heckle "Let Milt blow!"

In light of these events, the no-win predicament of third-stream music begins to emerge. In attempting to bring about a peaceful coexistence between musical traditions, third-stream composers brought to the forefront aesthetic clashes between the worlds of written and improvised composition in which resolution could only be hoped for in theory but never completely achieved in practice. The problem, if not the solution, is made clearer by looking at each camp's general perception of the other's shortcomings.

The ongoing "problem" with jazz, as far as the classical world was concerned, was its limitation to short, cyclic forms, such as the twelve-bar blues form or the AABA thirty-two-bar popular song form, designed by the composers and lyricists of New York's Tin Pan Alley. Another constant in jazz had been the regularity of the prescribed music's phrasing in even two-, four-, and eight-bar groupings. Bop pioneers such as Charlie Parker and Lennie Tristano consciously sought to compose and improvise irregular melodic phrases over these regular forms, "reparagraphing" as Lee Konitz called it, but the stuctures themselves were still locked into regular, even, and divisive phrasing. Gunther Schuller and John Lewis, siding in a way with the classical-music critics of jazz, felt that employing techniques of traditional thematic development and multiple contrasting themes or sections within a composition would take jazz to the next logical step in its evolution and, consequently, resolve one of its significant shortcomings in the eyes of the classical music community.

Another factor in this new merger was, surprisingly, American composers' increasing involvement with atonality and serialism. By the mid-1940s, the American composition community had divided loosely into two basic camps. The first group was the tonalists, those who followed the style of Stravinsky, Aaron Copland, and Bela Bartók. The second group had embraced and developed the atonal and twelve-tone practice of the "Second Viennese School" — Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, and Alban Berg (Peyser 1987). By the 1950s, Schuller was firmly in the second group. The mainstream jazz community had tended to lean more toward the stylistic tendencies of the first group, and was still, in the period after 1945, quite infatuated with the ramifications of French Impressionistic tonal practices such as extended tertian harmony, and tritone and whole-tone usage. However, the approaching jazz practice of

polytonal or atonal work, and open or ambiguous formal structures, was leading jazz to be more in line, in a general sense, with post-World-War-II serialism, as well as with formal experimentation in art music. A syncretism seemed to be in order, and once again, the hope of third stram's advocates was to quell accusations about jazz's shortcomings from the art-music community — in this case, that jazz was restricted to employing only conventional tonality or old-fashioned extensions of it.

The objections to Kenton's, Schuller's, and Lewis's ideas of swing, meter, form, and tonality among the jazz orthodoxy are not as much the result of musical conservatism as they might at first seem; they are, rather, the result of a more fundamental clash of a closely held notion of jazz's foundational attributes with third stream's more classical-oriented approach. The concerns tend to focus on: 1) a perceived threat to the maintainance of the characteristic swing feel and pulse, or "groove"; and 2) an unhealthy preoccupation with elaborate writing and formal structures that inhibit creative freedom for the improvising performer (and threaten the ability of a jazz group to maintain a consistent "groove" or swing feel in the music). Improvisational freedom and maintenance of the groove are seen to be paramount to the jazz aesthetic; the fear is that these defining features at the heart of jazz are easily undermined by some of the classical tendencies in third stream discussed above. In short, for the critics of third-stream music the debate is not between new jazz and old jazz; it is between jazz and not-jazz.

In the view of many within the jazz community, jazz begins to suffer and lose its essence without the presence of an overt, constant pulse (DeVeaux 1994). Jazz has never moved so far from the idea of "the groove" that jazz advocates fail to expect it. When jazz pieces cease having a groove, it is considered either a respite between rhythmic sections, an anticipatory effect to build tension (much like a cadenza in a concerto), or just bad jazz. This has been evident in criticism of the Bill Evans Trio with bassist Scott LaFaro, who some critics accused of not swinging. An important and distinctive feature of the Evans trio was the contrapuntal interplay between the bass and piano — a feature that defied the traditional role of "walking bass" as contributing to the projection of a steady pulse and groove. The same was said of the Dave Brubeck Quartet, a group that experimented with compound meters and was one of the most rhythmically explorative jazz groups of the 1950s and 1960s. Brubeck, it is important to note, was a major influence on modern pianists Cecil Taylor and Paul Bley.

To fully realize the gravity of these issues, we have to come to a basic understanding of what creates swing or a groove. Swing is best defined as the superimposition of relaxation over tension. The tension is the insistent, audible, and regular underlying rhythmic pulse. The relaxation

is the various contrapuntal interactions against or between that pulse. Scott Joplin and other ragtime pianists certainly realized this basic duality, which is why the piano is the instrument best suited to creating the "ragtime effect" of a syncopated melody over a steady bass. This rhythmic duality was also observed early on by Igor Stravinsky, who said "Which of us, when listening to jazz, has not felt an amusing and almost giddy sensation when a dancer or solo musician persists in marking irregular accentuations but does not succeed in diverting the ear from the regular pulsation beaten out by the percussion?" (Stravinsky 1942, 45). Stravinsky's inference, as I read it, is somewhat condescending: try as they might, he seems to be saying, syncopated melodies in jazz never quite obscure the regular meter. He is obviously comparing the function of syncopation in jazz to what he so successfully achieved in pieces such as *Le Sacre du Printemps*, a monument of rhythmic innovation that does not happen to swing in performance (nor, to be fair, is that the intent). Stravinsky failed to see that syncopation in jazz does not function to obscure the basic pulse; it rather creates a duality, a dialectic. In his *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*, André Hodeir accurately assesses the importance of the basic pulse:

> The rhythms of jazz, which are very simple in themselves, have the "giddy" power Stravinsky refers to only when they are set against a steady beat. By destroying the basic pulsation, our composers killed the principle of attraction on which the phenomenon of swing depends. The positive element of an electric current has no power if it is cut off from the negative element, its opposite; and in the same way, a syncopated rhythm becomes insignificant and loses it Dionysian power when cut off from its invaluable auxiliary. (Hodeir 1980, 260–261)

Mere use of syncopation, however, is not enough to create the compelling effect of swing. Another important element of swing is the manner of articulation and accentuation. It is one of the most subtle and elusive of swing elements, much more so than playing syncopated rhythms. This type of playing works at both extremes, sharply articulating selected notes while barely uttering others, referred to in jazz parlance as "ghosted" notes. There is also the use of a generally softer attack of the note, a "doo" rather than "too" articulation that creates a swing sensation. This is the opposite of the crisp, sharp articulation considered desirable in rhythmically active pieces in the European tradition such as, for instance, marches. Articulation was a point of controversy between the hard bop and cool bop aesthetic. The cool school subscribed to the philosophy of a soft timbre and accentuation in order to heighten the effect of asymmetrical phrasing. Streams of eighth notes were played with relatively even emphasis and almost evenly, compared to the 2:1 ratio characteristic of "swing eighths," which accent the upbeat more. In employing European-style trained musicians in the performance of third-stream pieces,

the proper articulation necessary for the ensemble to swing has been a particularly difficult to achieve. The nature of bowed string instruments seems particularly susceptible to this kind of rhythmic shortcoming. This single factor probably accounts for the reason so many third-stream pieces are formatted in a concerto-grosso format; the swinging is left to the jazz musicians, while textural filler and the "classical" portions are relegated to the traditionally trained orchestral musicians.

Maintenance of rhythmic momentum and the groove has a decided effect on form. The more expansive developmental practice of Romantic-era composition catered more to use of rubato and less to the custody of rhythmic momentum. The apparent formlessness of rhythm-oriented musics from Africa and India reminds us that elaborate structural form interrupts rhythmic momentum, whereas repetition of shorter strophes contributes to the momentum of the groove. This results in a spiraling rather than circular effect. In other words, the repetition, rather than going nowhere, rolls forward and builds in momentum.

Form is the biggest incentive for the rise of third-stream music and certainly the biggest issue in comparing the two musical traditions of jazz and classical music. It is the aspect many assume classical music has the best control of and that jazz most quaintly tries to imitate. It is important to bear in mind, however, that prescriptive composition and improvisation have two different goals in mind, and imposing the criterion of one on the other is fruitless and self-defeating. Therefore, observations of formal structure are best employed for purposes of stylistic comparison, and not as a means of determining musical superiority.

Classical music uses venerable forms such as the rondo, sonata allegro, fugue, motivic developmental processes, and other structural models and procedures. Developmental elaboration may include elongation or contraction of the prescribed form, disturbing regularity of repetition in the form, such as one gets with theme and variations. This allows for points of great rhythmic repose (rubati, cadenzas, etc.), particularly in the Romantic repertoire, with no particular obligation to maintain a steady tempo since the music is primarily for listening. The dramatic pacing of a prescribed classical piece is determined out of real time, without spontaneity (but with a great deal of contemplation), and is often a logical working out of the thematic, harmonic, rhythmic, and/or formal material. Formal designs do not facilitate spontaneous musical intervention and elaboration; instead, they are more preoccupied with the intricacies of the compositional craft itself.

In the realm of written jazz compositions and arrangements, one traditionally finds the head-choruses-head format and the strophic use of compact forms such as the 12-bar blues, the 32-bar song form, or a through-composed theme usually based on a couple of riffs or a chord cycle. Jazz

compositions are lengthened in a number of ways, often through multiple choruses of solo improvisations or written passages for sections of instruments. Longer concert jazz works are often in the form of suites, a collection of short pieces programmatically strung together to create a longer work; a variation on that idea is a single piece with multiple contrasting themes. It is exceedingly rare to find a lengthy jazz work based on a single theme that does not rely on improvisation for most of its elaboration: such a piece, in any case, would miss the improvisational ideal of the jazz aesthetic anyway.

Improvisation is a spontaneous creation in reaction to the musical and environmental situation of the moment. Jazz improvisational form is therefore shaped by emotional decision. A jazz musician draws from a mental lexicon of formulae and assembles an ongoing melody that coincides with the harmonic sequence and the metric pattern, yet (hopefully) creates a satisfying and compelling dramatic event. There is rarely reference to material used earlier in the solo, since the material is created spontaneously and quickly forgotten. The only recurring factor is the repetition of the underlying form of the prescribed composition, the vehicle over which one improvises. (The exception to this is improvisation in the "free jazz" style, which uses no formal underpinning and alters the improvising behavior to some extent.) The design of this improvisitory event changes with each new performance, as the improvisor negotiates between his/her own sense of tension and release and what seems appropriate to the mood of the audience and the fellow players. It is essential that the improvisor be free to react unencumbered to the prescribed piece, the other musicians, and their own muse. Complex, elongated, and unpredictable forms pose a distraction to the improvising musician and are not fertile ground for spontaneous creativity. Indeed, by the late 1950s, a large contingent worked toward abandoning form altogether in order to keep their improvisations as unfettered as possible. This creates the most basic aesthetic clash between classical music and jazz: compositional control versus improvisational freedom.

Jazz improvisation, in the hard bop ideal, flourishes only in the most delicate of situations. The prescribed form provides guideposts and gives the soloist points of measurement where they decide to rephrase, change ideas, or defy. On the other hand, the form must help maintain the momentum of the groove and not impose upon the spontaneous dramatic shape created by the improvising musician. This has resulted in the general use of the 32-bar AABA or AA' form of Tin Pan Alley popular song and the twelve-bar blues form as vehicles for jazz improvisation. Beginning in the 1950s, through-composed chord-cycle pieces approximately sixteen bars in length ("Tune Up," "Pent-Up House," "Giant Steps," etc.) were added to the canon. The strophic repetition of the form

both maintains the groove and provides a predictable underpinning for the improvisor. For the listener who is more composition-oriented and oblivious to the process of the improvisation, this practice is formally tedious and simplistic. To the musicians preoccupied with the act of improvisation, the prescribed form is merely a facilitator to spontaneous creativity. When the form-oriented composer attempts to apply a more expansive prescribed form on the improvisor, he imposes sanctions on the improvisor that conflict with his musical ideal. This is one of the reasons that ragtime ultimately died as a vehicle for jazz. As spontaneous improvisation became more of a preoccupation in jazz, the ragtime form proved too lengthy and complex. Being dominantly a written tradition, ragtime did not facilitate improvisation beyond mere embellishment of the prescribed notes. One of the themes, usually the third (in the subdominant key), became the vehicle for solos, repeated until everyone had their fill. Over the course of the 1920s, ragtime gradually fell into disuse in favor of the briefer popular song form.

Here we come to the basic problem in blending the techniques, styles, and aesthetics of two very different musical traditions. We are reminded repeatedly that the employment of elaborate formal design was the primary issue in the rise of third-stream music. But as form becomes more extensive, it also becomes more restrictive to rhythmic momentum (the groove) and the discretion of the improvising soloist to design a spontaneous dramatic shape. Groove and spontaneity are also impeded by the use of classically trained musicians not conversant in the rhythmic subtleties that create a swing feel. Third stream smacked of European art-music elitism, implying that classical music approaches had come to the rescue of jazz, solving a problem that jazz aficionados never thought existed in the first place. The final failure of third stream was its supposed attempt to reach a broader audience. Jazz fans view formal orchestral presentations of jazz as stuffy. Classical audiences view a bopping jazz tenor saxophone soloist standing in the middle of a symphony orchestra as quaint. Even the most sympathetic observer of third stream rarely regards the effort as much more than heartwarming diplomacy between two musical cultures.

In recent years, "third stream" has been redefined by Schuller, his main disciple Ran Blake, and the Third Stream department of the New England Conservatory of Music, the legacy of Schuller's tenure there as president in the 1960s and 70s. Third stream now supposedly encompasses the improvised tradition in combination with world ethnic musics, no longer only the European art-music tradition. Nevertheless, as late as 30 April 1995, Schuller appeared on National Public Radio's news program Weekend Edition Sunday to promote his compact disc *Rush Hour* (Blue Note CDP 7243 8 29269 2 4), a collaborative effort with saxophonist Joe Lovano.

Schuller still expresses the traditional concerns and goals of third stream: formal expansion beyond the head-choruses-head format of many jazz performances, use of traditionally non-jazz instruments, and a tonal vocabulary that moves beyond the thread-bare pentatonic and tetrachordal language of post-Coltrane. Schuller insists that this project is not simply "third stream thirty-five years later," but an effort to revitalize jazz through new musical resources.

There is one final issue reflected in the third-stream effort, the artistic striving for innovation — for the "new thing." Unfortunately, this is yet another area where third stream failed. It failed because it quickly, artificially, and self-consciously tried to fuse disparate traditions together. Such fusions are not impossible, of course, but they are usually achieved only over a long, natural, and unselfconscious period of syncretism; like a good sauce, flavors must have time to blend. The creators as well as consumers of the new product must have time to acclimate to the new stylistic environment; the product also must be something with which a large group can identify, enough so that the new musical practice moves toward the mainstream of the culture.

In terms of this last criticism — that it never really caught on with a broader public, even within the jazz community — third stream does not deserve exclusive condemnation. Throughout this essay, I have used the term "mainstream" to refer to the large audience for popular music, to the classical and contemporary classical community, and to the bebop and free jazz communities. But in today's musical setting, Arthur C. Danto finds no mainstream at all, "simply confluences of individual tributaries with no mainstream to flow into" (Danto 1989, 794). In the latter half of the twentieth century, we find there is no overwhelming stylistic leader, no standard of innovation, either in classical music, jazz, or popular music. Schuller himself stated this in his keynote address to the 1980 conference of the American Society of University Composers. Third stream obviously has not turned out to be the answer in establishing a new musical tradition or stylistic offspring. As composer Larry Austin once put it, third-stream music is a mule. It cannot replicate itself; one is forced to go back to the horse and donkey each time and start over. Third stream does, however, celebrate the spirit of diversity in American music, and even its harshest critics would acknowledge that, at its best, third-stream music at least exhibits the exploratory and innovative tendencies that are the hallmark of true art.

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