

The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies



Edited by Nicholas Gebhardt, Nichole Rustin-Paschal and Tony Whyton

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO JAZZ STUDIES

The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies presents over forty articles from internationally renowned scholars and highlights the strengths of current jazz scholarship in a cross-disciplinary field of enquiry. Each chapter reflects on developments within jazz studies over the last twenty-five years, offering surveys and new insights into the major perspectives and approaches to jazz research. The collection provides an essential research resource for students, scholars, and enthusiasts and will serve as the definitive survey of current jazz scholarship in the Anglophone world to date. It extends the critical debates about jazz that were set in motion by formative texts in the 1990s and sets the agenda for future scholarship by focusing on key issues and providing a framework for new lines of enquiry. It is organized around six themes: I. Historical Perspectives; II. Methodologies; III. Core Issues and Topics; IV. Individuals, Collectives, and Communities; V. Politics, Discourse, and Ideology; and VI. New Directions and Debates.

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PREFACE

Jazz is a global musical culture whose complex and contested history is inseparable from many of the most important social and political movements of the last hundred years. The music has been the soundtrack to two world wars, the Cold War, and the Civil Rights movement, and continues to signal its relevance in moments of social crisis and where issues of social justice are at stake, from the Jazz Section in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s to United Nations International Jazz Day and *Black Lives Matter!* today. Jazz speaks to diverse communities throughout the world on themes of freedom, spontaneity, virtuosity, improvisation, individual and collective identity, and social justice, as well as mediating major changes in the relationship between high art and popular culture. The music is also inseparable from the history of other major twentieth-century cultural forms, from cinema and poetry to television and painting, and is critical to our understanding of both the potential and limitations of modern technologies of sound reproduction and mass communication.

Over the last three decades, Jazz Studies has become an innovative field of enquiry that has engaged with, and contributed to, the major theoretical challenges taking place within numerous disciplines, including Cultural Studies, Feminist Studies, Critical Theory, American studies, African American studies, Deconstruction, Narrative Theory, and Psychoanalysis. Groundbreaking edited collections, including Krin Gabbard's *Jazz Among the Discourses*, Robert O'Meally's *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture*, and Nichole Rustin-Paschal and Sherrie Tucker's *Big Ears: Listening For Gender in Jazz Studies*, along with influential monographs such as David Ake's *Jazz Cultures*, George McKay's *Circular Breathing*, and Tony Whyton's *Jazz Icons*, have contributed to redefining our knowledge of the music's significance.

The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies provides a broad summary of this growing area of research, situates its main conceptual and theoretical tributaries within wider debates in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, and identifies some of the most exciting work being done in the field globally. Our aim is to engage key questions in Jazz Studies by focusing on a range of examples that highlight the music's complex history as both sound and symbol, the multiple and often conflicting narratives that have come to define it, and the many cultural meanings and values identified with it. We have tried to do this in ways that are accessible to anyone with an interest in jazz, and to offer a number of different perspectives and approaches that speak to readers at different levels—students, scholars, and general readers—and across several disciplines. We hope that the variety of topics we cover will promote further collaboration between scholars in diverse fields as they seek a better understanding of how jazz works and what it means, but we also want

to encourage readers to investigate the extent to which jazz studies can lead to important insights about our experience of the world and our place within it.

The volume is organized into six parts that speak to the multiplicity of voices, approaches, methods, and practices that jazz studies scholars employ to make sense of the music, along with the people who perform and listen to it. Part I offers an overview of the field by focusing on themes of historical narrative, cultural memory, and musical change. We open with Tony Whyton's study of the hidden histories of musicians and the role they play in mapping the ecologies of jazz performance and production on a global scale. Whyton's chapter shows how materials such as family archives can provide compelling examples of hidden musicians who have contributed to the development of jazz in complex and multidimensional ways. His discussion highlights many of the themes that appear throughout the book, including issues of how we narrate the story of jazz, why we focus on particular individuals, social groups, or practices, and how the music comes to figure in people's lives in very different and complex ways. From there, we move to some of the major historical fault lines within jazz studies, from different accounts of its "diasporic" origins to its subsequent development in multiple artistic, social, and cultural contexts.

Part II explores the range of methodologies that scholars use in the study of jazz, both examining it as an interdisciplinary practice and challenging dominant modes of analysis. The section begins with David Ake's reflection on Wynton Marsalis's presence within jazz studies in literature during the 1980s and 1990s and on some of the questions that the decline of the neotraditionalist movement in jazz highlight for our understanding of the music's past. We also include John Howland's exploration of the ways in which concepts of genre, hybridization, and industry raise questions at the intersection of jazz and popular music, along with chapters that focus on how we make sense of jazz's cultural value and the kinds of theories we rely on to connect it other musical traditions or cultural practices. John Gennari's study of pianist Jason Moran, for example, reconceives jazz in terms of its history of interdisciplinary engagement with other art forms and, as a result, challenges conventional methods of interpretation in jazz studies.

Part III provides a survey of core issues and topics, from the role of the African American vocal tone and the purpose of improvisation to discussions of gender, race, time, and disability. Central to each of these chapters is an examination of the values and processes underpinning the cultural production of jazz, and the kinds of assumptions about the music that remain deeply engrained in our understanding of its meaning and significance. Focusing on temporal relations between players and the temporal roles that musicians occupy, for example, Mark Doffman explores the different approaches to the playing of time and timekeeping that are evident in jazz practices. In Part IV, the focus shifts to particular individuals, collectives, and communities and includes studies of specific artists, historical movements, and iconic groups. The section includes a range of new perspectives, including Deborah Mawer's cross-cultural comparison of recordings by Bill Evans and Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Eduardo Vincente's commentary on the Bossa Nova movement in Brazil, and Michael Pronko's analysis of jazz in Japan.

In Part V, we explore the role of politics and ideology in jazz by focusing on specific attempts to define the music's cultural meaning and value, from its centrality to left-wing debates in the United Kingdom in the 1950s to its connection to the politics of everyday life in the 1970s. For example, Anna Harwell Celenza shows us the decisive role played by the US State Department and CIA in the erasure of Italian jazz in the period directly after the Second World War as part of the American government's effort to redefine jazz as a symbol of American Democracy, while Charles Hersch draws on the Russian theorist Bakhtin to rethink our ideas about improvisation. Part VI concludes the volume with several chapters that outline new directions and debates. Nichole Rustin-Paschal, for instance, underlines how much more work there is to be done in jazz studies on questions of gender and sexuality. Using the examples of Hazel Scott, Lena Horne, Charles Mingus, and Jimmy Guiffre, her chapter examines how jazz performers articulated complex ideas

Preface

about the relationship and permutations between gender and authority, race and ambition, experience and emotion. Digital technology is another area in which our understanding is sketchy at best. In his chapter, David Borgo traces a variety of approaches to, and attitudes about, human-computer interaction in jazz and improvised music and reveals some of the limitations of current models of human perception and participation.

Overall, *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies* is designed to present an overview of the field and to open up new lines of inquiry for the next generation of jazz scholars to pursue. Our hope with this volume is to stimulate debate about our understanding of jazz as a musical and cultural practice but, equally, to take stock of where we are as a discipline—theoretically and culturally. Although the chapters that follow are largely meant to demonstrate the impact of jazz studies in introducing new concepts and challenging assumptions about the music's history and its practices, they also afford us an opportunity to reconsider a series of fundamental ideas that we often presuppose when we talk about the music. These include issues of interpretation, the problems of jazz and identity, music and its relation to culture, the significance of performance practices, modes of embodiment and affect, and the types of consciousness and action we equate with our experience of jazz. This volume, therefore, is as much about questioning the claims we make about the field as it is an invitation to join us celebrating its achievements. This is why we chose for the front cover the graphic image of jazz musicians from a United States postage stamp that appeared as part of a 2011 limited collector's edition. We like not only the design but also the statement of FOREVER along the bottom. This is printed to make clear the stamp's utility well after it has been purchased and the price of a first-class letter state-side has gone up in price. One can apparently use the stamp for domestic mail "forever." For us, this utility speaks to jazz's cultural value as much as to its unique history; and our hope is that the music has a life as long as this stamp.

Nicholas Gebhardt, Nichole
Rustin-Paschal, and Tony Whyton



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This book has its origins in the work of the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA)-funded Rhythm Changes: Jazz Cultures and European Identities project, which ran between 2010 and 2013. Rhythm Changes was a collaborative research program that aimed to develop new insights into the transnational character of jazz and to build an international community of jazz studies scholars. Many of the ideas and debates that feature in this volume began as discussions with colleagues at our regular Rhythm Changes conferences, which have continued beyond the initial conclusion of the project, and many of the authors who appear here are now regular participants. We're grateful for their contribution to this project, as well as for their intellectual friendship.

We also received support for this project from the Faculty of Arts, Design, and Media at Birmingham City University, where jazz studies is recognized as a creative, cross-disciplinary, and strategically important research activity. We have benefited a great deal from our colleagues at Birmingham City University, too. In particular, we want to thank members of the jazz studies research group and the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research who supported this project in numerous ways, including debating ideas through regular research events and contributing chapters to this volume.

Our editorial assistant, Rachel-Ann Charles, has been invaluable to this project, liaising with authors to ensure consistency and working alongside the editors to deliver the project successfully. Thank you Rachel-Ann! At Routledge, Constance Ditzel has our deepest thanks for encouraging us to pursue this ambitious project, supporting us throughout the process, and keeping us on track. Finally, we would like to thank our commissioned authors, who have worked tirelessly in producing this outstanding collection of new research. Their critical insights and ideas demonstrate the ongoing value of jazz studies as an interdisciplinary field of research enquiry; we could not have done this without you!



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PART I

Historical Perspectives



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1

WILKIE'S STORY

Dominant Histories, Hidden Musicians, and Cosmopolitan Connections in Jazz

Tony Whyton

In this chapter, I want to examine the relationship between established traditions and hidden histories to explore ways in which local musicians play a part in creating, informing, and disrupting dominant narratives. As Tim Wall and Simon Barber have stressed in their study of Birmingham-based musician collectives, researching local musicians can challenge both the totalizing histories that define jazz and the dominant representations of British jazz. By examining the lives of local jazz musicians, we have the potential to create valuable alternative narratives that shed light on the unique distribution of music in different regional and historical contexts (Wall and Barber 2015, 119–120).

Furthermore, rather than viewing the work of a musician in one isolated setting, I want to consider the relationship between local musicians and global events, between hidden histories and dominant histories, and to explore ways in which jazz both reflects local sensibilities and has functioned as a transnational music over time, informed by cosmopolitan influences and international encounters. I want to use the personal or family archive as a route to the discovery of new insights into specific historical periods and cultural contexts and, through one musician's story, offer an alternative to limited representations of jazz history. Family archives can be used as a basis for discussing the hidden histories of musicians and the role they play in the ecologies of jazz; I want to show how archival materials such as these can provide compelling examples of hidden musicians who have contributed to the development of jazz in complex and multidimensional ways. Finally, I aim to reflect on the historical relationship between musicians, entrepreneurs, promoters, and audiences, exploring the multifaceted roles that musicians have performed historically, and continue to play, and how these hidden roles inform jazz discourses more broadly.

Constructed, Hidden and Microhistories

Over the past thirty years, the development of New Jazz Studies has led to the creation of new, cross-disciplinary perspectives on jazz history, where naturalized presentations of the past have been replaced with complex cultural readings of history and historiography. Indeed, as this Companion demonstrates, jazz research now features a plurality of methods that have sought to disrupt ever-popular canonical, linear, and causal narratives (Whyton 2010). In his influential essay, "Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography," Scott DeVeaux demonstrated how what we come to understand as jazz history is often shaped by ideological choices, mediating influences, and the constantly changing values of particular cultural groups (DeVeaux

1991). In constructing a tradition, decisions about what is included and excluded from history often fall to institutions charged with creating and preserving a sense of shared cultural heritage, or to influential gatekeepers who seek to celebrate and champion certain cultural forms over others. Within a jazz context, one only needs to consider the output of Martin Williams—whose books and work on the Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz attempted to define the jazz tradition—to get a clear idea of the way in which the history is both narrated and often invented. For example, DeVaux describes the way in which Williams truncated Louis Armstrong’s 1926 recording “Big Butter and Egg Man” for the Smithsonian collection in order to construct an idealized view of jazz history:

What was left out? The first thing removed was a full chorus by the other star performer, the vaudeville singer May Alix. Relatively little is recorded in jazz history about Alix. We know that she worked at the Sunset Café, and that she used to do splits on stage. But such vague information about vaudeville performers is typical in jazz history, despite the fact that some of them (like Butterbeans and Susie) occasionally crop up on early jazz recordings. Alix’s presence—and ultimately, her absence from the Smithsonian—tells us a good deal about boundaries. Eliminating her from the recording helps to separate jazz from two things simultaneously: gender and commerce.

(DeVaux 2005, 24)

This example offers a simple demonstration of how jazz history can be written and rewritten to support particular ideological constructions of the past. Somewhat problematically, the constructed nature of traditions is often overlooked or downplayed, as a sense of the past becomes naturalized and history is presented as fixed and unchanging. Here, it is important to remember that all histories are written in retrospect and are often fraught with contradiction; what jazz means is very much dependent on cultural perspective, or the values that are expressed in different times and places.

Within this context, studying hidden or local histories can offer jazz scholars a powerful means of addressing these issues; hidden histories not only offer an alternative to dominant narratives about the past but also provide added layers of complexity to the historicizing process. Published at a similar time to a number of seminal New Jazz Studies texts, Ruth Finnegan’s book *The Hidden Musicians* offered a challenge to traditional representations and modes of understanding music through an ethnographic study of local music scenes in Milton Keynes. Her influential work highlighted the importance of amateur music making in everyday life and unveiled the overlapping infrastructures, dynamics, and organizational characteristics of local musical networks that, until that time, had frequently remained hidden to participants and audiences alike. In her introduction to the revised 2007 edition of the book, Finnegan also highlighted a range of areas where the concept of the “The Hidden Musician” could be expanded and developed in future, for example, to include studies of professional contexts for music making, the impact of mass media and technology on changing representations and understandings of music, or on the contribution of minority groups to the development of local scenes (Finnegan 2007, xi–xv). These issues have as much relevance to jazz studies today as they did thirty years ago. For example, understanding the role musicians play in everyday life, what jazz means to people in different contexts, and how the music has been invented, adapted, and transformed across time and place are pressing issues for jazz researchers today. Equally, it is important to understand why certain musicians and minority groups have been excluded from popular histories of the music.

In his book *Footsteps in the Dark: The Hidden Histories of Popular Music*, George Lipsitz suggests that the study of hidden histories inevitably involves a blending of the public and private, given that details about musicians not featured in dominant narratives will equally not be featured in

the holdings of official archives, public libraries, and museums. In putting together his study of the hidden in popular music, Lipsitz promotes the need to examine the “alternative archives of history, the shared memories, experiences, and aspirations of ordinary people, whose perspectives rarely appear in formal archival collections” (Lipsitz 2007, xi). Lipsitz’s efforts to present a multitude of perspectives and the politics of narrative evoke the broader field of microhistory, where scholars have advocated the need to move historical research beyond what is published or held in public archives. Building on this, microhistorians are interested in not only facts but also perspectives, and they have also been keen to build the narrative procedures of research itself into their own work, to include identifying agendas (including their own) and the limitations of documentary evidence, as well as highlighting techniques of persuasion and interpretative constructions. This acknowledgment of perspective, narrative procedures, and potential biases breaks with the traditional idea of historical writing being absolute, assertive, and authoritarian, and reality being understood as purely objective. As Giovanni Levi states,

Microhistory tries not to sacrifice knowledge of individual elements to wider generalization, and in fact it accentuates individual lives and events. But, at the same time, it tries not to reject all forms of abstraction since minimal facts and individual cases can serve to reveal more general phenomena.

(Levi 1991, 109)

Microhistorians have sought to identify contradictions within standard historical representations and, subsequently, the social is not perceived as an object to be studied but is instead regarded as a set of ever-shifting relationships.

Microhistories enable a rethinking of previously assumed knowledge by focusing on the detail of individual lives or moments in time. The change in scale and focus of investigation provides a means of injecting new life into previously represented subjects to reveal new meanings for historians. For Levi, microhistory promotes the “belief that microscopic observation will reveal factors previously unobserved” (Levi 1991, 96–97) and that by focusing on specific details in everyday life, general concepts about the historical process can be exemplified.

Taken as a whole, work on constructed, hidden, and microhistories promotes a fluidity of understanding the past that rejects binary constructions and rigid typologies. The challenge for jazz scholars today is not simply to replace dominant and canonical narratives with alternative local and hidden histories. Indeed, by resisting binary formations of history, it is important to explore intersections between local and dominant histories, to consider how the lives of hidden musicians both within and outside of the US have informed and been informed by the household names of jazz, and to examine how dominant narratives around jazz have been formulated and sustained. By doing this, it would be possible to move the field of jazz studies forward by creating a more complex and holistic picture of both the historicizing process and the ecologies of jazz, as well as the multifaceted roles musicians play in everyday life. To illustrate some of these points, I want to draw on a recent encounter with the family archive to demonstrate how the hidden and the dominant, the private and the public, the local and the global, intersect.

Exploring the Family Archive: Wilkie’s Story

My mother-in-law recently handed me a box of materials that belonged to her uncle William—or Wilkie—Davison. On presenting the box of materials, she said that she was not sure about the contents and whether any of the materials had any meaning in relation to Wilkie’s career or broader value in terms of jazz history. Wilkie was a clarinet and saxophone player who developed a career as a multi-instrumentalist and entrepreneur from the late 1920s onwards. According to

family recollections, Wilkie began his career as a brush salesman and began playing music as a sideline amateur pursuit.

Opening the box, I was surprised to see a range of materials from different parts of Wilkie's musical life, including photographs (many of which were signed or had personal messages inscribed on them), press clippings, brochures, festival programs (including a copy of the 1948 Nice Jazz Festival program), and correspondence linked to specific engagements Wilkie was coordinating as a bandleader and intermediary. The materials spanned a twenty-five-year period, dating from the late 1920s to the early 1950s.

On first inspection, many of the materials appeared unrelated; there were general publicity photographs, letters, and programs, but following the dating and chronicling of materials, cross-referencing certain information with the UK National Jazz Archive, and undertaking conversations with family members, three overarching themes emerged that feed directly into the discussion of constructed and hidden histories outlined above. These themes are by no means exhaustive but provide an illustration of the potential of the studies of local musicians and family archives to reveal the powerful and dynamic networks that underpin the transnational development of jazz.

Adapting to Change—Entrepreneurial Spirit

Looking through the materials, I was immediately struck by the way in which Wilkie's career exemplifies an entrepreneurial spirit. As a musician working from the late 1920s to the 1940s, the personal archive reflected the period's musical and cultural changes compellingly, from photographs of the Shanghai Five (Image 1.1) dating from the late 1920s to letters of thanks for



Image 1.1 The Shanghai Five c.1927.

Courtesy of Anne Goh.

performing at a benefit concert for the Bakelite Company in 1941 in support of the war effort. Wilkie was clearly adaptable, performing music that catered for the needs of the time and reflected contemporary attitudes.

For example, consider the Shanghai Five. Wilkie's materials include an original program from a dinner, cabaret dance at the Hotel Metropole in London in 1928 which featured the Shanghai Five as the resident band, alongside a couple of photographs of the group on stage. Within the context of the late 1920s, Shanghai could be seen as a simple novelty signifier of the exotic, a marketing gimmick to appeal to British cafe society. However, in an era where the American jazz age was at its peak, Shanghai would have meant something to British audiences. The Chinese city would have appealed to British dance band society as a symbol of the internationalization of the music, the performers, and Britain's connections with one of the world's largest cities (indeed, around this time, Shanghai was regarded as the Paris of the East, the cabaret and jazz center of Asia). As Catherine Tackley has noted, British dance bands in the mid-1920s, such as the Savoy Orpheans, promoted themselves as "international orchestras," and the activities of American musicians in Britain were increasingly opposed during this time (Parsonage 2005, 172). Indeed, British dance band culture was undergoing a transformation while the relationship to America was being renegotiated. In this context, Shanghai performs as a useful signifier of the exotic and as a marker of the internationalization, industrialization, cultural hybridity, and immigration identified by E Taylor Atkins as crucial to the jazz age (Taylor Atkins 2003). Furthermore, the group also reinforces Tackley's theories of British dance band music at this time as being simultaneously modern, novelty based, and striving for a distinctiveness that set it apart from America (Parsonage 2005, 173).

There is a definite sense of adapting to change within these materials and the ability to transform musical line-ups and repertoire according to context. A simple example is found in a letter from the early 1940s where a patron writes to thank Wilkie for his band's performance at a yacht club and enquires about the name of the band, The Hired Assassins. The letter asks,

Have you so named yourselves thus, or is it because you borrowed it from me, as it is an expression used by yachtsmen when they get their boats sailed away by an amateur friend, or a friendly amateur—anyway, someone, that isn't paid.

Clearly, as an artist, the naming of bands to suit different contextual needs provided a simple way of engaging with audiences.

Behind the Scenes—Hidden Information and the Role of Intermediaries

Looking through Wilkie's materials, I was also interested to read a number of letters and personal notes that would normally remain hidden. The family archive provided insights into the workings of bands of the 1930s and early 1940s by including details of payments to artists, comments about the economic conditions of the period, details of practicalities for the travel and accommodation of musicians, the organization of tours from Witley in Surrey to Brackley in Northamptonshire to Birmingham during wartime. The correspondence also provided evidence of how promoters would secure engagements, ensure professional standards, and guarantee that patrons would be catered for. For example, Wilkie had been bandleader of a group that had performed regularly at the Grand Hotel in Eastbourne in the early 1930s, and the archive contained several letters from Edgar Jackson, the former editor of *Melody Maker* and former manager of Jack Hylton, who was, at that time, responsible for programming music at the Hotel. It is worth noting here that Jackson is a controversial character in British jazz history. Derek Scott discusses Jackson's role as playmaker in establishing codes for what was acceptable as "British jazz" in his book *From the Erotic to the Demonic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). For example, Jackson was

critical of Ellington's early music and was accused of favoring a highbrow white conception of jazz over black American counterparts. Parsonage (2005) counters this argument with a discussion of the limited availability of recordings around this time as well as a discussion of British dance band culture, the changing relationship of Britain to the US, and the novelty roles performed by groups around this time. Within the family archive, letters from Jackson ranged from detailing the practicalities of engagements and justifying the terms of contracts, to criticisms of the band's organization and attitudes to rehearsals the previous year, stressing the importance of "keeping in" with patrons of the time. The variety of musical performances is impressive, with letters outlining the need for musicians to perform novelty cabaret acts, music for children's fancy dress balls, music for local clubs and societies, benefit concerts, hot numbers for dancing, and so on, which clearly emphasizes the versatility of music making throughout this period.

Wilkie had acted as an intermediary between different promoters, local, rural, and suburban venues, and musicians, and the family archive also includes several letters of correspondence dating from the early 1940s that relate to the booking of Stephane Grappelly as a guest performer with various groups. One letter outlines the details of a booking involving Grappelly as guest but also requests Wilkie to follow-up with the artist, given that he was on closer terms with the violinist. The archive even includes flyers, such as one from 1941 where Grappelly is listed as a guest alongside Chappie D'Amato (note the Gallic spelling of Grappelly).

Hidden Histories and Transnational Encounters

As well as general publicity materials, signed festival programs and artists' photographs, where renowned musicians had written a note of thanks or friendship, the box also contains several press publicity photographs, a couple of European brochures, and a handwritten map of Diemen in the Netherlands with instructions on how to find a contact's house. Some of these materials appeared perplexing at first—for example, there seemed to be a disproportionate amount of publicity materials for the American trumpeter and vocalist Valaida Snow—including a handwritten note on a photograph from Snow to Wilkie's wife (Image 1.2)—and the connection between Wilkie and the American artist was far from clear.

No surviving family members had any recollection of Wilkie's performance activities, and my mother-in-law's primary recollection of Wilkie's playing was of his multi-instrumentalism as a clarinet and saxophone player. However, unknown to me at this point, she stressed that in addition to playing clarinet and saxophones he was well-regarded as a double bassist in his later years. After searching the National Jazz Archive's digital collection, I came across two references to Wilkie's bass playing, one of which identified him as the bass player for Valaida Snow's group in her 1936–1937 tour of the Netherlands and Switzerland. One photo of the musicians (minus Snow) is inscribed on the back "The Band broke all attendance records at The Tabaris—Den Haag. Holland 1936" (Image 1.3), and while Snow remains a relatively neglected and enigmatic figure in jazz history, she played a significant role in the international spread of jazz in the 1920s and 1930s, taking the music to places it hadn't been heard before.

Snow's pioneering work as a vocalist and trumpeter gained her fame and notoriety at the time—she was dubbed "Little Louis" after Louis Armstrong—and her colorful career is shrouded in myth, sensation, and tragedy.¹ According to the late Swiss researcher Theo Zwicky:

Valaida and the group played around Holland before coming to Switzerland in May 1937 for a four-week booking at the Sihlporte, at that time an old-style Viennese Coffee House. The engagement was such a success that they were invited to stay on for a further two weeks. After this, Valaida and the group returned to England for a short time and then went to Vienna with a similar line-up, minus Derek Neville [and Wilkie Davison],



Image 1.2 Valaida Snow publicity image.

Courtesy of Anne Goh.



Image 1.3 Publicity photo, Den Haag c.1936.

Courtesy of Anne Goh.

but adding Norman Brown, an American Negro, at one time associated with the Mills Brothers, on guitar. When the Nazis annexed Austria, they arrested bass player Louis Barreiro, an African with a Spanish passport, and handed him over to the Franco government, who shot him. The pianist and arranger Gun Finlay was an emigre German Jew and he was taken by the Nazis.

(Zwicky 1981, 11–12)

Now the map and publicity materials finally made sense, and the versatility and complexity of international connections became all the more apparent. Here, Wilkie's work not only took on an important international dimension but the place of jazz within a highly political and precarious European backdrop was also striking.

The international dimension of Wilkie's work gained in complexity in the postwar period, as he became a founding partner of the internationally successful Berg Larsen mouthpiece company in 1945, a company that, over its history, has boasted an array of iconic devotees from Charlie Parker to Sonny Rollins. An early advert for the company includes a quote from Charlie Parker stating "This is the best mouthpiece I've ever played," listing Wilkie's address in suburban Potters Bar (Image 1.4).



Image 1.4 Berg Larsen advertisement.

Courtesy of Anne Goh.

On the Berg Larsen website today, Bill Clinton is listed as a major advocate of the company's classic mouthpieces, and renowned contemporary saxophonists such as David Murray, Bob Mintzer, and Tim Berne continue to use Berg Larsen mouthpieces. Considering Wilkie's involvement in the founding, production, and promotion of Berg Larsen, we can consider this as a compelling example of how a local musician's activities and entrepreneurial activities engaged with, reflected, and supported the international spread of jazz culture. One only needs to contrast photographs of the Berg Larsen workshop (Image 1.5)—which was effectively a small shed in rural Potters Bar in what was then in Middlesex—to their showroom in New York (Image 1.6) to develop an immediate sense of how the local and global have intersected and related to each other throughout history.

This image shows the Berg Larsen workers (the caption "Our Girls including Daisy and Flora" written on the back of the photograph) outside the Potters Bar building. The next is of the showroom in New York, which was located close to Times Square, two blocks down from Radio City Music Hall on W48th street.



Image 1.5 Berg Larsen workers.

Courtesy of Anne Goh.



Image 1.6 Berg Larsen showroom, New York.

Courtesy of Anne Goh.



Image 1.7 Wilkie Davison behind the counter of the Berg Larsen showroom, New York.
Courtesy of Anne Goh.

The final image (Image 1.7) is of Wilkie behind the counter in the showroom—again, a handwritten caption on the back of the image simply states “another salesman.”

Materials from the mid-1940s onwards relate to the promotion and development of contacts for Berg Larsen and encounters stemming in particular from the first Nice Jazz Festival in 1948. Nice is widely regarded as the first international jazz festival in Europe and the inaugural event included a stellar lineup of American stars, including Louis Armstrong and his all-stars, and European artists, including Django Reinhardt, Stephane Grappelli, and Claude Luter.

Wilkie's attendance at the event was clearly aimed at promoting Berg Larsen, and there are several signed photographs, memos, and comments on the original program from artists and agents Wilkie had encountered during the event. There are notes from Jack Teagarden—who expresses an interest in developing a business idea with Wilkie—Lucky Thompson, who simply writes “My boy—from your boy,” and a couple of messages from Rex Stewart, including a signed photograph with the inscription “To the wonderful Wilkie. Gee I wish I could use a Sax mouthpiece on my cornet. Anyway, best wishes Rex.”

Conclusion

Wilkie's story points to the need both to unearth "other" stories of local musicians—the hidden histories that don't always form part of official narratives but which can breathe new life into established discourses—and to think about relationships and connections between individuals and collectives, the past and the present, and the local and the global.

These forms of study can move us on from reductive and binary configurations of jazz toward an understanding of the complexity of relationships within jazz history; Wilkie's story and personal archives like these can enable us to start a conversation about the realities of the jazz world, the connectedness of people in different cultural settings and operating at different strata of the industry, and the development of jazz as a transnational practice. From this, a more layered and sophisticated reading of the networks, influences, and transnational workings of the jazz world helps to inform cosmopolitan understandings of the music. When I discuss cosmopolitanism here, I would invite us to move beyond the well-trodden idea of the cosmopolitan as being simply a "citizen of the world," toward an examination of the discourses and global networks that exist outside the confines of the nation-state. Jazz cosmopolitanism inevitably involves a desire to interrogate and understand a sense of multi-local belonging through music, as well as Stephen Feld's idea of "genealogies of listening"—how people discover music and perform and imagine a connectedness through listening—and the "agency of desire for enlarged spatial participation" (Feld 2012, 49). When we think about jazz cosmopolitanism, we also need to be mindful of, and sensitive to, the dominant African American narrative and the prevalence of American exceptionalist readings of jazz history. Indeed, in this study I am not trying to add Wilkie to the jazz pantheon or Potters Bar to the mythic places of jazz origin. But we do need to be open to other histories, networks, and transnational practices that shape the meanings of the music around the world. This need is neatly summarized by Kwame Anthony Appiah:

The connection people feel to cultural objects that are symbolically theirs, because they were produced from within a world of meaning created by their ancestors—the connection of art through identity—is powerful. It should be acknowledged. The cosmopolitan, though, wants to remind us of other connections.

(Appiah 2006, 134–135)

Looking through the archival materials presented to me by my mother-in-law, I thought about the interrelationship between dominant jazz narratives and other cosmopolitan connections; in Wilkie, there was someone who was engaged with the transnational realities of jazz, someone who was immediately "other," who drew on and existed outside the official narrative of jazz history but, in his own way, contributed to that dominant history through his ongoing musical activities as musician and bandleader and through the entrepreneurial activities of the Berg Larsen company. I thought about how this one box of materials illustrated the ecologies of jazz through the life of a musician. It illustrated the multifaceted—but often hidden—roles that musicians have performed historically, whether as leaders, mediators, sidemen, or advocates. It also challenged binary ways of thinking in terms of the local and global, the national and the transnational, the professional and the amateur, and the way in which dominant jazz histories tend to be reductive and totalized. The personal archive, when combined with established research methods and infrastructures, can also prove enlightening and offers a route to the discovery of new insights into specific historical circumstances and cultural contexts. When combined with other archival resources, further nuance and complexity can be revealed and new voices can emerge.

If we think about the ecologies of jazz in this way, we can begin to develop a meaningful conversation about jazz's power to facilitate connections between people and to promote cultural

understanding, at the same time as understanding why certain aspects of jazz history remain hidden or become obscured over time. When working in this way, dominant histories are not rejected but are re-appraised, as we gain a more complex understanding of the connectedness of different jazz histories and people's experiences of the music in everyday life.

Note

1. Krin Gabbard describes the way in which Snow, as a trumpeter, bypassed a lot of the ordeals of playing in male-dominated orchestras by becoming an all-round entertainer. "Always dressed in highly feminine clothes—evening gowns as well as skimpy chorus girl outfits—she presented herself as a singer/dancer who worked the trumpet into her act. She was careful to lift the trumpet to her mouth in a graceful, alluring fashion. Then she would play stirring jazz solos in the style of Louis Armstrong" (Gabbard 2008, 66). For further information on the life, music, and myth-making associated with Snow, see Mark Miller, *High Hat, Trumpet and Rhythm: The Life and Music of Valaida Snow* (Mercury Press, 2007).

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2

DIASPORIC JAZZ

Bruce Johnson

New Jazz Studies and Diaspora

The driving premise of this chapter is that “jazz was not ‘invented’ and then exported. It was invented in the process of being disseminated” (Johnson 2002a, 39). With the added impetus of the New Jazz Studies (NJS), it is now unnecessary to argue that point at length. Accordingly, this opening survey will generally sample-cite rather than repeat recent literature. The NJS challenges an entrenched jazz narrative in which the primary texts are recordings by US “masters,” mainly African Americans, of each successive stylistic development. Diasporic jazz studies take us beyond that orbit, not simply out of a contrarian spirit, but because of crucial lacunae they fill.

Jazz was globalized with a rapidity unprecedented for any music, largely via musicians’ migrations and new mass media (Johnson 2002a, 34–40). Given the global demographic, it seems likely that today most jazz is played outside the US. Professional US jazz musicians “make their living largely abroad” (Rasula 2002, 68), with jazz in Europe alone generating \$US250–300-million per year (Harris 2003, 106). It is widely felt that qualitatively also the balance has shifted, as jazz in its homeland has become increasingly conservative (see for example Nicholson 2005, xii, 19–20, 76, 124). Without the contributions made by the diaspora to our understanding of the music, the standard jazz narrative would be incomprehensible.

The importance of the diaspora was already implicit in the recognition that jazz was in a process of formation through its migrations within the US, for which significant stylistic discriminators are often named: “New Orleans,” “Chicago,” “Kansas City,” “West Coast.” The history of the music would make no sense if we did not respect what happened after it left New Orleans. Applied to music, even the name jazz appears to be a diasporic construction (see for example Shipton 2001, 100; Crow 1990, 19–22; Merriam and Garner 1998), while among its New Orleans pioneers the term was unstable, often interchangeable with ragtime (Lomax 1950, 13, 61; Gabbard 2002, 4).

Diasporic Discourses and Infrastructures

The discourses which have conferred intelligibility and gravitas on jazz are themselves diasporic creations (Gennari 2006, 16), and particularly European (Gennari 2006, 111; Heffley 2005, 177). Europeans published the “first serious studies of jazz” (Rasula 2002, 57, and the French produced the first “authenticating narratives” (Braggs 2016, 27), with work from the 1930s by Hugues Panassié, Charles Delaunay, and Andre Hodeir decisive in defining jazz for Americans. Panassié

was of particular importance (see further Perchard 2015, 20–53) in establishing one of the enduring central pillars of jazz historiography by insisting in 1934 that the “only real jazz spirit” was “Negro” (Panassié 1944, 81).

The material supports of cultural forms develop in conjunction with the discourses, and accordingly a great many jazz infrastructures evolved in diasporic sites. The early “aestheticized discourse of jazz” in the 1930s and 1940s emerged from “hot clubs” and their modernist “little magazines” which sustained the crystallizing jazz canon that “defined the very idea of jazz—down to our time” (Gennari 2006, 65). These infrastructures were certainly not in evidence in the putative seminal city, New Orleans, nor primarily in the US, nor did the former initially produce any of what are regarded as the founding canonical “texts”—sound recordings. While the mail order record distributor, the United Hot Clubs of America, was established in 1936 (Kernfeld 1988, 565), the obsessive jazz connoisseurship that began documenting details of the primary texts was largely a product of the English fraternity from the 1930s (Gennari 2006, 61–63). Perhaps the most influential and durable of all the clubs was French: the Hot Club of France (HCF), which at its peak boasted a membership of 5,000 (Perchard 2015, 41).

The first magazines/newsletters devoted to jazz were European. HCF’s *Le Jazz Hot*, began February 21, 1935, only months after the establishment of *Downbeat* (Harris 2003:113), but earlier examples included Sweden’s *Orkester Journalen* from 1933 (Gioia 2011, 159) and Finland’s *Rytmi* from 1934 (Johnson 2002a, 35). The jazz festivals—now a mainstay of jazz activity—were diasporic creations. America’s first Newport Jazz Festival in 1954 was preceded by the first Nice Jazz Festival, organized by Panassié, in 1948, then the Festival International de Jazz organized by Delaunay (Gennari 2006, 211). An even earlier annual festival, the Australian Jazz Convention, was inaugurated in 1946 (Johnson 1987, 87–90). It is still going, which makes it the world’s longest running such event. Even that was preceded by the one-off Sydney Jazz Week in 1919 (Johnson 1987, 4–5). For decades, jazz “education” was informal mentorship. While the “first big American jazz courses,” such as Berklee College of Music or University of North Texas, date from the 1950s and 1960s (Nicholson 2005, 105), jazz had been incorporated into educational projects as far back as the 1920s and 1930s in, for example, Germany, Finland, and France (Kater 1992, 17; Johnson 2002a, 47; Nettelbeck 2004, 52).

Local Jazz Forms

The diaspora also produced local jazz forms, social meanings, functions, and instrumentations. While the highest profile examples include the “manouche” jazz of Django Reinhardt, the “Nordic” sound of Jan Garbarek and ECM records, the bossa nova, there is growing recognition that this is a global phenomenon (see for example Heffley 2005, 32, 190, 211–212; Braggs 2016, 11; Perchard 2015, 107, 191, 193; Nicholson 2005, 93). Many of these have become seminal in their own right, as in the case of the so-called Australian style, the origins of jazz-rock and later “acid jazz” from the UK (Ross 2016; Shipton 2001, 852; Nicholson 2005, 333; for a general overview see Heffley 2005, 68–116, 166–235). In this development, the focus has been from the late twentieth century and the emergence of free jazz (Heffley 2005). Jazz musicians, however, have been drawing on their own local traditions from the early 1920s. The Nordic region, for example, developed early local syncretisms (see Johnson 2002a, 39–40), and “national” styles can be localized further into regional, into particular coteries, and even to individuals (Ross 2016; Perchard 2015, 203).

More broadly, such shifts entail a displacement of an imperialist center/margins model of cultural diffusion and a respectful attentiveness to all attempts to play “jazz,” no matter how geographically or historically marginalized. The supposedly clumsy and gauche work outside the US in the interwar period has significant value, partly as an instructive site of the diaspora in progress,

presenting us with jazz “in the making,” as opposed to the far more “placeless” facsimiles of the two postwar decades. When a group of, say, Finnish or Australian musicians, or even a black US band in Boulder, Colorado (see below) in the early 1920s played and recorded music under the name jazz that now evokes derisive wincing, were the musicians and the dancers wincing? On the basis of what we do know—contemporary reports in the press, in diaries, letters, and recollections—it appears that these now derided bands meant a great deal in terms of pleasure and socio-political meaning to a lot of people. It is instructive to try to understand this; it is certainly an essential part of the story of jazz. These were the sites, not originally New Orleans or Chicago, where jazz first became the internationally influential music on the basis of which its significance rests and which sustains the very discourse that now derides it. How, then, do we engage with popular music which is the source of the vast majority of musical satisfaction across the globe, that by all the analytical tools deployed by scholars is dismissed as “mediocre” or “risible?” (see further Björnberg and Stockfelt 1996). I want to suggest that one way toward the answer is to extend the investigation of diasporic jazz, both because it is a counter-narrative to the US canon-centered version and because of the specific kinds of insights that it will disclose.

Diaspora and the Canon

Such studies will produce revisions of not only jazz history but also the dynamics of the socio-political structures within which the music has lodged. Thus, for example, studies of jazz in authoritarian regimes have begun to reconfigure our understanding of totalitarianism (Pickhan and Ritter 2010; Johnson 2016a). Such insights are exclusive to the study of jazz in its diasporic forms. This is emphatically *not* to argue for the abolition of a canon, but for parallel counter-narratives. Gabbard argues that a “postcanonical” study “is possible only after the discipline has built a foundation around key works” (1995, 6; see similarly Perchard 2015, 232). The canon is a necessary prelude to the development of a “jazz-specific” discourse. The problem with the established narrative is not that it is US canon-centered, but that it continues to declare itself to be the only narrative, the *History of Jazz* (Gioia 2011, my emphasis), in the face of the growing weight of evidence to the contrary. Like cultural theory in general, the canon only increases its explanatory value as it begins to break down under the weight of the social practices it seeks to account for, at which time it is useful as a reference point against which to construct a repertoire of alternative discourses that might reflect more effectively the specificity of jazz practice and history.

That specificity may be articulated under two headings. The first is the sonic modality of jazz—a distinctive phenomenological, cognitive, and affective foundation. Jazz is centrally a sonic phenomenon, not a scopic form from which the prevailing analytical models are derived. Second, it is still necessary to respect the distinctiveness of jazz from other sonic expressive forms. In the formation of the jazz *mythos*, that has most often been “classical” music. The latter’s narrative is also canon-based, with its point of reference written texts—the scored opus (see further Johnson 2002b). Sorbonne musicologist André Pirro’s declaration that he does not need to listen to music, that “to read it is enough” (Johnson 2000, 181), would make no sense at all in relation to jazz. That is, not only for literature but also for art music, the canon is central, yet inapposite for jazz: apart from the obvious inappropriateness of the idea of a scored *oeuvre*, unlike the art music “opus,” even for the most prolifically recorded performer, the recording represents the barest minimum of a musician’s “work.” Furthermore, how a musician addresses a formal recording date is generally very different from the way he or she addresses the conditions of the weekly or nightly gig. The overwhelming majority of the “work,” the site of experimentation, development, and adaptations to the material conditions of her or his output, is the gig, of which usually the only “record” is in an array of subjective, distracted memories colored by conditions that are not musical or “artistic” in the usual sense.

This takes us to questions of historiographical methodology. There is some significant tension between the “great man/work” approach to jazz history and the idea of “representativeness.” Rasula explores the problems of histories based unreflectively on recordings (Rasula 1995; Rasula 2002, 135, 157 fn. 4). There is a difference between a narrative in which the subject is the recordings and one in which the subject is the music (Rasula 2002, 140). Furthermore, a focus on the rare masterpiece, by definition, does not give us the kind of representative sample of a musician’s output that enables us to align her/him with a working tradition; and, even further, the work of the “greats” like Louis Armstrong or Charlie Parker, simply by virtue of its rare excellence (as we judge it), can give only the slightest glimpse of the day to day contours of the enfolding musical landscape. In principle, it cannot be a representative sample of what went on nightly in New York, in the USA, or in the global context on which the claim of jazz’s global significance as a modern music is based. Parker had off-nights, on which he would have fallen back on the formulas which do in fact constitute the basic templates we are trying to discover as historians. And the great majority of journeymen musicians sustaining the music would also provide a more reliable picture of what was actually going on, as well as being aspired to, than a single recording sanctified as a masterpiece. We know, for example, that Armstrong’s “classic” recorded solos were not necessarily an effusion of spontaneous brilliance, but the outcome of a lengthy period of often more or less repetitive workshoping in performance (see for example Harker 2011, 50).

To build an overview on the peaks of its “masterpiece” recordings tells us little about the plains on which most jazz activity was conducted and through which the music was formed. It is in the ordinary, night-after-dull-night performance from which the flesh of “genius” has been stripped, such that we hear the bare bones of the music-in-practice. This will disclose a “history” no less illuminating than those canonical works defined by how exceptional they are; likewise in diasporic bands before they have reached the stage of being indistinguishable from recorded source material, which is itself unrepresentative of the general standard of performance. The “canon” is a place to start, but hopelessly inadequate as a guide to a musician’s “work” and the general landscape. This is all the more so when it is based on solos deracinated from not only the other musicians against which it is constructed but also the larger soundscape with which the performance is negotiating. It is necessary to develop alternative narratives, to continue to shift emphasis from the “text” to the larger historical and cultural contexts, but also to think in terms of different kinds of discourse, as for example the “process approach” discussed by Harris (2003, 120).

These alternative “off-center” perspectives will also sustain a healthy skepticism about the criteria of evaluation that are deployed in jazz historiography, including the dubious instrument of “authenticity” and its associated aesthetics. They include the autonomy of the text that transcends place and time (Williams 1983, 253), the “essence” of jazz, and an imposed teleology (Gioia 2011, 45, 185). It is notable that the teleological model is rarely if ever applied to, for example, tribal musics that are situated as the irredeemably “other.” This teleology is a privilege reserved for Western and westernized musics. By these criteria, performers are understood not on their own terms but only in relation to some platonic model decided upon by commentators. Perchard cautions against “any notion of historical process that is unidirectional and goal-directed, rather than the repetitious, messy and inconclusive” (Perchard 2015, 12). Once the “center” is displaced, we are able to find interest and value in any performance as an engagement with place and history.

Methodologies

To appreciate jazz performance on its own terms, it is also useful to avoid “talking over” the subject, and be prepared to surrender some *ex post facto* essentialisms. Given the testimony of the jazz pioneers, positivist categorizations like “jazz, pure and simple” (Gioia 2011, 63) sound rather glib. The assertion that for Morton, the dividing line between jazz and ragtime was “elusive,” leading to categorizations

that “few jazz historians would agree with” (Gioia 2011, 20), is a solipsism that underlines the cultural colonialism pervading jazz historiography. In fact, Morton had a clear understanding of the distinction between jazz and ragtime (see Lomax 1950, 61–62). The problem is that it is not the understanding that we sanction, based on subsequent developments that inform our “hindsight.” As a general principle of historical research, it is useful to begin by respecting these contemporary accounts, wherever they come from, and then explore their implications. Of course, such testimony is itself not necessarily reliable, especially where some self-aggrandizement might be at work (see further Peretti 1995). But instead of scornfully smiling, it is useful to ask, for example, why an Australian lifestyle journal in 1921 defined jazz as a dance (Johnson 2000, 65). That enquiry will take us much further into the cultural history of the music than a simple ruling that it is not. When we read Duke Ellington’s description of rock as a “raucous form of jazz,” it is helpful to seek “to explain how Ellington could credibly make such a claim in 1955” (Brennan 2017, 4, 31). It might be argued that such testimonies are merely “anecdotal” and unscholarly, but if we trace most jazz primary sources back to their origins, they are generally anecdotal, ephemeral, or based on sound recordings, with their own problems addressed above. The ethnographic dictum “Let the subject speak” distributes the evidentiary burden more evenly, supplementing rather than displacing other primary sources.

Alternative Narratives and Diaspora

The foregoing is the kind of introductory survey of the field appropriate to a Companion format. I now want to unravel some of the issues and suggest avenues along which future work on the jazz diaspora might take us.

Blackness

A shift away from the US as a geographical center would interrogate the perennial motif of blackness, described by Rudi Blesh (1958, 25) as “the key that unlocks the secret of jazz.” “In international academic discourse, American jazz studies have focussed . . . on African roots and African-American fruits of the music” (Heffley 2005, 15). Schuller declared that “*every* musical element—rhythm, harmony, melody, timbre, and the basic forms of jazz—is essentially African in background and derivation” (Schuller 1986, 62, Schuller’s emphasis). This is at best arguable. Take away the European elements and you no more have jazz than if you take away the African. There have been intermittent challenges to the prevailing model of African diaspora in general (see for example Perchard 2015, 7; Gennari 2006, 361–362, 369; Braggs 2016, 6; for a broader discussion of these problematics see Garcia 2017). Even African Americans themselves have disputed the bias. Sidney Bechet declared that the “foundation” of jazz was to be found in France (Perchard 2015, 44), and more recently singer Dee Dee Bridgewater objected to being essentialized as black (Benedict 34’30” to 35’30”). The power of the African cliché, however, is still proclaimed in the image of a (male) black saxophonist that pervades the literature, book covers, festival programs, and other jazz representations. This also reminds us of the jazz gender stereotype. Thus, it surprises even many jazz scholars to discover that in its earliest diasporic phases, jazz was very much a feminized space (Johnson 2000, 59–76; Ballantine 1991, 141; Ballantine 1993, 46–50), a fact which also throws into focus the role of women in the emergence of modernity.

In spite of the emphasis on the African origins of jazz, in New Orleans the cultural mix was far more diverse. Morton’s account of his background, for example, refers to France, Spain, Italy (Lomax 1950, 3, 32, 62, 3–4, 6, 32, 62, 32), and the music of Europe and Christian hymns (Lomax 1950, 6, 15, 16). Noting the connection between the level of public music activity and the city’s multicultural character, Shipton observes the proliferation of festive days: Independence Day (July 4), Bastille Day (French), Mardi Gras (Hispanic Catholic), and various other national-inflected festivities

(Shipton 2001, 74–75; on the cultural heterogeneity of early twentieth-century New Orleans, see further Raeburn 2011). One tradition occluded by the dominance of the “African” model is that of indigenous American culture. Among the multitude of community clubs and associations in New Orleans that had their own parade bands, Lomax refers to one called the Iriquois (Lomax 1950, 11). Morton recalls in detail and at length one of the most popular clubs called the Indians, even out-drawing audiences for the Mardi Gras parade. “When I was a child, I thought they really was Indians” (Lomax 1950, 14). One of Morton’s songs was “an ancient Mardi Gras Number, associated with the Indians” (Schafer 2008, 205). It seems that indigenous culture and its music—like jazz, an improvised form (Nettl and Russell 1998, 5, 6)—was a living presence in the New Orleans community. Louis Armstrong recalled that Morton was able to get work in the District (references to “Storyville” are primarily diasporic) by claiming he was Indian or Spanish (cited Shipton 2001, 92). Doc Cheatham recalled that “back in those far off days there was a lot of hanky-panky going on, between the Indians, the black folks, the white folks”; Cheatham’s own paternal grandfather was a “native North American Indian” (Shipton 2001, 16). Native American identity is a recurring presence in jazz lives, including Frankie Trumbauer (Gioia 2011, 81), Charlie Parker, Cecil Taylor (Heffley 2005, 251), and of course “Big Chief” Russell Moore. New Orleans-born Wingy Manone recalled working in a vaudeville-cum-jazz band led by a Sioux Indian chief. Anthony Braxton’s “fascination with Native American culture and history” feeds into his music (Heffley 2005, 252). In the 1920s, Coeury and Schaeffner included “Native American” culture among possible influences (Mawer 2014, 46). Even this highly selective catalog suggests that the area is worth focused research (see further Johnson forthcoming)—if the jazz narrative could come out from under the African shadow and into its diasporic field. References to jazz as the “Africanization of American music” (Gioia 2011, 5) beg the question: what was “American” music before, or apart from, its Africanization? Native American music has an ancient heritage, and significantly, it shares probably more with African than with early modern European music.

The Genesis Myth

Apart from the issue of ethnicity, the study of diaspora also raises questions about geographical maps of jazz. New Orleans remains identified as the single point of origin, from which all flowed. But a closer exploration of the diaspora presents nuanced alternatives: ‘A growing body of research traces vigorous activity in cities as otherwise unrelated as St. Louis, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Memphis, Houston, Cincinnati, and Minneapolis. “Territory” bands, black and white, traveled complicated itineraries throughout Texas, Oklahoma, the plains states, and the Southwest, bringing hot music with them’ (Sudhalter 2000, 156).

For Joe Darensbourg, the black string bands in his hometown of Baton Rouge were the “first jazz bands” (Shipton 2001, 30). The repertoire of a string band in which George Morrison played in 1915 in Boulder, Colorado included “Darktown Strutters’ Ball”: “played . . . as a jazz number” (Shipton 2001, 30). At the same time, New Orleans native Barney Bigard declared that during that decade (the 1910s) the local bands “didn’t sound anything like the jazz bands that you hear today” (Shipton 2001, 32). In general, Shipton notes the emergence of proto-jazz forms in a number of US centers in the early twentieth century (Shipton 2001, 33–36, 65–67); Wilbur Sweatman, born Brunswick Missouri, recorded his “Jass Band” in 1917 (Shipton 2001, 38).

Diaspora as a Model—Problems

It begins to appear that even the use of the term “diaspora” privileges the center by the flow of traffic it implies. Diaspora provides an essential entry point for this interrogation, but it implies a straightforward genesis myth with a subsequent migration flowing unilaterally from a single

source (Gennari 2006, 48). The idea of “diaspora” is in danger of imposing the very politics we are trying to question. Closer attention reveals a far more complex dynamic than one-way traffic from center to margins, a “polyspora” (Johnson 2002a, 52). Django Reinhardt influenced musicians in Belgium, Norway, Finland, and, via Oscar Aleman, Argentina (Shipton 2001, 391). The “diaspora” also doubled back through the perennial assimilation of non-US sources by US jazz musicians (Shipton 2001, 831–836). Perchard argues that to at least some extent, Coleman Hawkins derived some of his “new approach” that was leading to bop from exposure to Reinhardt, and cites Lawrence Cugny’s identification of examples of “modal jazz” that anticipate Miles Davis’s vaunted work, as early as 1952 (Perchard 2015, 59, 253 fn 12). The history of European composers influencing US jazz musicians is well documented (Mawer 2014; Heffley 2005, 252). The center/margins model underpinning jazz historiography and the canon is deeply misleading, and to recognize this is to open the door to radically new jazz narratives.

Further Directions

If we enlarge our perspective, we will also challenge the exceptionalism of jazz itself, including the much-vaunted distinctiveness of its improvisational element, vis-à-vis the European concert tradition. But if we look beyond the black/US axis to the diaspora, we are reminded of how many practices of which jazz has “taken ownership” are in fact outgrowths of pre-existing local traditions. Manouche jazz is an obvious example, but while improvisation is definitive to jazz (see Johnson 2002b, 103–107), it is not exclusive to it, and every musical culture has a history of improvisation far older than that of notated music. Indeed, improvisation is in many cultures valued above “precomposed” music (Nettl and Russell 1998, 7–8).

In all this, there are implications far deeper than the question of a jazz history that shifts its focus of attention. That shift will also situate jazz studies to take a lead in redirecting the deeper currents of cultural analysis and its models. We would be led to some of these changes in the way we talk simply by changing where we walk. I conclude with some sign-posts.

It would be instructive to go further into studies of the material culture out of which jazz performance emerges, to balance the “ideational” history that pervades the canon model, which sees the history of jazz as primarily driven by aesthetics constructed around the US “center.” Why, for example, the rise of singers in the early 1930s? The most general answer is that tastes changed (Gioia 2011, 122). But why? Some exploration of material forces—demographics, venue sizes, performance amplification—casts light not only on this development but also on the subsequent history of popular music. And these material conditions were in turn an outcome of the diaspora, the shift to the big northern cities and larger performance spaces (see further Johnson 2000, 81–135). The study of material culture would also bring forward the sonicity, rather than just the aesthetics, of jazz. One of the changes in the “diaspora” from New Orleans to Chicago, for example, was in the physical nature of the performance space: from outdoor perambulation to static interior, enabling a transition from loud and portable brass to the string bass, shifts of pace from march to dancing and later static audiences, from open air and small halls to cavernous interiors. The global diaspora also involved climatic shifts, from New Orleans humidity to the dry heat of Australia and the Nordic cold. Every horn player, for example, understands the necessary adaptations to articulation, intonation, and improvisation that must be made to such conditions.

One of the major problems with a jazz historiography based on “textual” canons, center-margins, and the dynamics of figure-ground (soloist-backing) is that it is rooted in discursive models that are ultimately scopocentric. The diaspora invites us to attend to local sonic profiles, and thus more generally it directs our attention to sonic phenomenology. In doing so it can breathtakingly enlarge our horizons of investigation, because this leads jazz studies into theories of cognition and the mind/body relationship (see further Johnson 2016b). Many accounts of jazz affect allude to its

somatic element and the complicity between corporeal and mental responses. Panassié, for example, sought to persuade those who attended his record sessions to experience jazz “somatically rather than intellectually” (Perchard 2015, 30) and involved elaborate gestural theater which he invited his audience to mimic (Perchard 2015, 30–31). The discourse is littered with similar examples (see for example Benedikt 2006, 1’001’02’to 1’01’22; Perchard 2015, 26), but the implications have scarcely been extrapolated. They run parallel with studies of “flow” (see Hytönen-Ng 2013) and point toward developments in cognitive research involving mirror neurons, gestural cognition, and extended mind theory. Sonic phenomenology is well situated to take a lead in this research, and jazz has the potential to be the most instructive among our expressive forms, as its discourses escape the gravity field of the “center.”

The vast majority of jazz performed from day to day has been written out of the dominant discourse, and much of that can be recovered through the study of its “off-center” practices, its diaspora. Without that, we quite simply have a deeply inadequate account of the true scope of the social function of the music. At the same time, while we rest content within the safe framework of the standard US-centric canon model, we attenuate the music’s potential as a vehicle of radical change in cultural analysis. To a significant degree, this project is about historical method and, even more fundamentally, epistemology, a different way of knowing culture and history.

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3

I LIKE TO RECOGNIZE THE TUNE

Interrupting Jazz and Musical Theater Histories

Julianne Lindberg

The best-known recording of Rodgers and Hart's *Pal Joey* (1940) was released by Columbia in 1950. This recording was part of a larger effort on the behalf of Columbia (under the supervision of Goddard Lieberson) to record classic Broadway shows that premiered before the time that cast recordings were typical. These recordings include, among others, the Gershwins' *Girl Crazy* (featuring Ethel Merman's rendition of "I Got Rhythm") and a three-LP recording of *Porgy and Bess*, and Rodgers and Hart's *Babes in Arms* (featuring standards like "My Funny Valentine" and "Johnny One Note"). Columbia's *Pal Joey* includes two standards: "I Could Write a Book" and "Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered," songs that had already by that point been recorded by numerous jazz and pop artists, including Benny Goodman, Doris Day, and Mel Tormé.

The orchestrations on the Columbia album differ in key ways from the orchestrations of both the original stage production (1940) and its celebrated revival (1952). In contrast to the stage numbers, the recording includes a few prominent improvised solos, and many of the tracks on the Columbia record use a "hotter" arrangement, including swing figures and brass effects. *Pal Joey* is built on an association with an urban underworld epitomized by after-hours jazz clubs and burlesque houses. The Columbia recording of *Pal Joey* brings up a number of questions that can most profitably be answered by looking at the histories associated with musical theater *and* jazz, which don't interact with each other nearly as often as the material warrants. The aim of this chapter is to break down some of those disciplinary walls in an effort to better understand the historiography of each field, and to point out the overlap between genres that are typically understood as separate. As a case study, I will consider Rodgers and Hart's *Pal Joey*, looking at orchestrations, instrumentation, and musicians, probing the places where genres and their histories meet.

Genre and Respectability: Jazz and Musical Theater Canons

Disciplines, which Joe Moran notes are linguistically allied with the term "punishment," can both illuminate and conceal, depending on the degree to which a discipline builds a silo around itself (Moran 2002, 2). Jazz and musical theater histories are actively distanced by the disciplines that corral them, hardening the boundaries of genres: jazz historians have typically crafted historical narratives quite separate from that of pop historians, whose narratives have in turn diverged from histories of musical theater, and so on, despite any musical overlap. Genre designations are undeniably unstable. As David Brackett has recently explored, the meaning of a given genre can change

over time, affected by the Jaussian “horizon of expectation” that colors the position of those who invoke a given genre, and can mean different things to different people, be they composer, performer, producer, consumer, historian, or some combination of these (Brackett 2016, 3–4). Sometimes historians avoid engaging with the histories of other disciplines because they seek to avoid—consciously or subconsciously—the ideological baggage of a genre, or an inconvenient history that threatens to derail the narrative favored by the historian.

Scott DeVeaux’s article “Constructing the Jazz Tradition,” a crucial intervention in jazz studies, points out the different critical viewpoints that helped fashion the “jazz narrative” (DeVeaux 1991, 525–560). Even early on, critics were mistrustful of the relationship between jazz and commercial pursuits, and critics writing about swing in the 1930s began to employ the terms “hot” and “sweet” to differentiate between what they considered to be authentic swing and “false” or commercial swing (DeVeaux 1991, 531). Further, critics often self-consciously superimposed race onto these terms, reinforcing black/white binaries. This has been harmful to both black and white jazz musicians who do not fit this binary, and to musicians of other racial backgrounds whose stories and realities typically don’t even rate mention.¹

These early narratives tend to reject commercial swing from the jazz narrative and have gone on to influence contemporary jazz histories, which still tend to shy away from the ways that jazz interacts and interacted with commercial pressures, except in cases, like bebop, where commercial *rejection* is underscored. Indeed, these narratives have tended to reify jazz’s place among other “art” musics while implicitly endorsing a progress narrative. This linear narrative has made it difficult to understand the reality of jazz at the turn of the century, typically marks jazz of the teens and 20s as “primitive,” and cannot successfully deal with artists who saw great commercial success.

As David Ake explains, while parsing out why jazz historians have generally left the band-leader and composer Louis Jordan out of their histories, the baggage associated with the term “popular”—concomitant with commercial values, aesthetic “lightness,” and often technical simplicity—has led jazz historians to avoid music that was commercially successful in the effort to support the common art/effort/complexity assemblage (Ake 2002, 10). This narrative, of course, minimizes the existence of commercially successful bands and music that interact with the genre category “jazz.” Even bands that are firmly part of the jazz canon are not exempt from these associations, even if these associations are downplayed in typical historical narratives. Elijah Wald’s contribution to the volume *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and Its Boundaries*, takes seriously the love that Louis Armstrong had for the music of Guy Lombardo (and vice versa), deconstructing racialized understandings of “hot” and “sweet” and questioning the old narratives of a centrally canonized figure in jazz (Wald 2012, 31–48). Although efforts such as Wald’s are immensely useful in breaking down old ways of constructing jazz narratives, much work still needs to be done.

The history of musical theater studies shows, likewise, a concern with cultural capital and the ensuing desire to rate musicals among the more elevated forms of art. It comes as no surprise that the term “musical play” (often cast in opposition to “musical comedy,” the genre that flourished in the 1930s and beyond) began to be widely used by artists and critics in the decade that saw the first collaborations of Rodgers and Hammerstein, including *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Carousel* (1945), and *South Pacific* (1949), all three shows that are geographically and musically distant from the city-inspired, jazz-infused scores of many musical comedies of the 1930s. Ethan Mordden asserts that musical comedies have a “populist agenda,” while the musical play has “musical ambitions” (Mordden 2013, 51). Mordden, helps craft a binary where musical comedies are considered frivolous, commercial, and ephemeral, while musical plays are serious, concerned only with aesthetic goals, and worthy of revival.

The term “musical play” is deliberately connected to straight theater and is related to the concept of “integration,” a valuative buzzword that is often intertwined with notions of theatrical maturity. The concept of the integrated musical—a production where the score, book, choreography, set, and costumes all work toward a cohesive artistic whole—is rooted in nineteenth-century European musical values. As Geoffrey Block has said:

Just as Beethovenian ideals of thematic unity and organicism became increasingly applied to dramatic works (culminating in Wagner’s music dramas), Broadway musicals after Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Oklahoma!* (1943) would be evaluated on how convincingly they realized a new “ideal type,” the integrated musical.

(Block 1993, 525)

This work-centric focus has relegated many songs, and their shows, to the sidelines. Yet most of the songs that comprise the Great American Songbook (and the countless editions of “real” or “fake” books) are from shows that no one really remembers but were hugely popular and profitable during the time of their premiere. It is often difficult to access the detailed scenarios of musical comedies, especially those of the 1920s and 1930s, as many don’t have published scripts, and access to the particulars of plot, score, and the overall impact of a given production are largely accomplished through archival research. Add to this the fact that cast albums were not typical until after the Decca recording of *Oklahoma!* (1943)—which was part of a larger project related to canonization and preservation—and one might better understand why these shows are not well known.

The conductor and composer Lehman Engel, in his book *The American Musical Theatre* (first published in 1967, during the period when many critics bemoaned a supposed decline in musical theater), retroactively catalogs fifteen musicals that he considered to “represent that theater in its most complete and mature state” (Engel 1975, 35). The earliest of these shows is Rodgers and Hart’s *Pal Joey*, which premiered at the end of 1940. The list goes on to include four shows by Rodgers and Hammerstein, one by Irving Berlin, two by Lerner and Loewe, one by Cole Porter, one by Frank Loesser, one by Bernstein/Sondheim, one by Jule Styne/Sondheim, one by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick, and two with music and lyrics by Sondheim (the latter two added in a second printing of the book).² Lehman demonstrates that all of these shows consider the dramatic integrity of each element of the show, from plot and characters to opening and closing acts. Significantly, Engel doesn’t include any shows prior to 1940—he considers most of these shows unrevivable. And in all fairness, although the concept of musical theater as “art” was being discussed in certain corners during the 1930s, songwriters and book writers were more concerned with producing hits. Consider one of the most quoted lines in musical theater history, typically attributed to the producer Michael Todd (remarking on what he saw to be the certain failure of *Oklahoma!*): “No girls, no gags, no chance” (cited in Mordden 1983, 139).³

Both jazz and musical theater studies have traditionally focused on tunes and artists (and shows, in the case of musical theater) that are considered historically durable and aspire to the condition of “art.” Despite a general reticence on both sides to admit so, jazz and musical theater’s relationship to the hyper-commercial realm of Tin Pan Alley song and, laterally, vaudeville, is a fundamental part of its story. As Mitchell Morris and Raymond Knapp have said: “Like jazz historians, [historians of the musical] rarely bother to note how often those songs also serve—deliberately and even proudly—a broader marketplace” (Knapp and Morris 2011, 81). The contemporary canonization of musical theater dates back to the 1940s, the same decade that is considered by many jazz narratives to mark the arrival of jazz as art, reflecting the desire to create a uniquely American “middlebrow” culture, distinct from the “merely” popular.

Rodgers and Hart

Like Cole Porter and other songwriters who were at the height of their popularity during the swing era, Rodgers and Hart are mentioned only in passing in most jazz histories.⁴ A quick survey of Volume 1 of the “Real Book” shows, however, that Rodgers and Hart’s songs are represented far more than any other theater songwriters, including Porter, Gershwin, and Berlin. This may be because their songs are often rooted in a “jazz age” vein—they are frequently full of syncopations, and their harmonic language is more adventurous than many Tin Pan Alley tunes of the period. Most of the songs are also no longer associated with their shows, so they have no baggage relating to character and plot. More directly, however, these songs likely made their way into the repertoire because of the influence of well-known, and by then canonized, recordings by jazz musicians. Consider, for instance, Chet Baker’s 1954 recording of “My Funny Valentine,” The Miles Davis Quintet’s 1956 recording of “It Never Entered My Mind,” Art Tatum’s 1956 recording of “Isn’t it Romantic,” or Benny Carter’s, along with Earl Hines, 1958 recording of “Thou Swell.” All of these recordings followed earlier recordings by the best-known swing bands and vocalists of an earlier period, securing their place in the jazz repertoire.⁵

Earlier swing recordings—including Artie Shaw’s 1936 recording of “Thou Swell” and Benny Goodman’s recording of “Blue Room” (from the famed live concert at Carnegie Hall in 1938)—featured new arrangements of songs that were already contemporarily popular. In the 1930s many audiences were introduced to Broadway songs via the radio, often performed by the leading swing artists of the day, including the now canonized Goodman and Shaw, as well as a host of forgotten dance bands, and featured singers like Martha Tilton and Helen Forrest. These recordings—of songs by Rodgers and Hart, Cole Porter, George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, and others—popularized many Broadway tunes, but the arrangements were often altered. In 1939 Rodgers and Hart wrote a song that critiqued the swing arrangements of Broadway hits in “I Like to Recognize the Tune,” a song written for the musical *Too Many Girls*. Hart’s lyrics call out musicians like Gene Krupa for “bury[ing] the tune,” and later mention that even Ben Bernie, Horace Heidt, Eddie Duchan, and Kay Kyser—all white show bands that are now considered by jazz historians to represent “sweet” or “commercial” swing—were not “immune” from “bury[ing] the tune.” Rodgers later referred to these swing arrangements as “the musical equivalent of bad grammar” (Rodgers 2002, 193).

Still, the exchange between swing musicians and songwriters was reciprocal. The pit orchestra for the Gershwins’ *Strike Up the Band* (1930) and *Girl Crazy* (1931) featured some of the soon-to-be best-known white swing artists of the period, including Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, Red Nichols, and Glenn Miller. Cole Porter’s shows incorporated the sound of swing to produce a fashionable up-to-the-minute newness, seen for instance in the score of *Anything Goes*. Rodgers and Hart often included swing rhythms and gestures in “collegiate” musicals, which reflected the taste of the young people depicted on stage. In Rodgers and Hart’s *Pal Joey*, which created something of a fashionable scandal on Broadway, the idiomatic sounds of swing are much “hotter” and tend to signal the disreputability of people and places.

Rodgers and Hart’s (and Hans Spialek, Don Walker, and Ted Royal’s) *Pal Joey*

Rodgers and Hart’s famously adult musical comedy about the trials and trysts of the womanizing nightclub Master of Ceremonies (MC) Joey Evans is considered a classic. The show is both a satirical takedown of cheap nightclubs and a psychological profile of the people who haunt them. The show flew in the face of musical comedy convention: the characters and situation were deliberately depraved, and the score was full of comically “cheap” nightclub tunes, reflecting the

unflinchingly realistic setting. By focusing on a disreputable nightclub and its inhabitants, *Pal Joey* commented on contemporary anxieties related to economic instability and shifting gender roles and entered into contentious exchanges related to nightlife and respectability during the period. The nightclub numbers in *Pal Joey* parody a “hotter”—a term used by critics in the 1930s and 1940s—kind of dance band music than was typical on Broadway. These songs feature driving, harder swinging rhythms, the inclusion of improvisatory brass effects, and lyrics that underscored their deviance from the status quo.

Though Rodgers wrote the songs for *Pal Joey*, indicated orchestral figures in his manuscripts, and conferred with the orchestrator on the final product, it was and is common practice on Broadway to employ an orchestrator to realize the score for pit orchestra.⁶ Since shows didn’t run very long in the 1930s and early 1940s, there was no time to spend on the “laborious business of orchestration” (Rodgers 1939). The original orchestrator for *Pal Joey* was Hans Spialek, an Austrian-born musician who worked for the publisher Chappell. By the time he was contracted for *Pal Joey*, Spialek had worked on numerous Rodgers and Hart shows, including *On Your Toes* (1936) and *Babes in Arms* (1937). Rodgers later asked Don Walker, another prominent Chappell orchestrator, to re-orchestrate some of Spialek’s scores (heard in the revivals of *Pal Joey* [1952] and *On Your Toes* [1954]); Rodgers felt that Spialek’s earlier orchestrations were, by that time, too “tame” (cited in Suskin 2009, 105). Throughout the 1930s Broadway had regularly incorporated the idiomatic sounds of swing bands (usually of the “sweeter” variety) into its scores, but, according to Walker, big band orchestration didn’t become typical until the 1940s and 1950s, when it flourished on Broadway. This shift may relate to the large number of dance band players seeking out work in the decline of the swing era.

What appear to be the original stand parts for *Pal Joey* are held in the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization’s theater library. Some important markings exist in these stand parts. The “Overture” part for Trumpets 1 & 2, for instance, lists the names of the brass players, with “1940–1941” indicated; this was a common stamp left by pit players.⁷ Since the names survive, I was able to ascertain that nearly all of these players had big band experience. These players were all in the “sweeter,” more commercial white bands, including Paul Whiteman’s orchestra, The Original Memphis Five, Tommy Dorsey’s orchestra, Al Katz’s orchestra, and Charlie Davis’s orchestra. Vincent Grande’s name also appears; he was trombonist for The Original Memphis Five and was best man in fellow trombonist Glenn Miller’s wedding (Simon 1980, 32).

Spialek’s original woodwind instrumentation was typical for the period: Reed 1 (1st alto sax, doubling flute), Reed 2 (oboe/English horn/alto sax), Reed 3 (clarinet/bass clarinet/tenor sax), Reed 4 (flute/clarinet/tenor sax), and Reed 5 (bassoon/clarinet/tenor sax). Rather than typical big band orchestration, the reed parts appear to be true pit doubles, even though certain songs require the reeds to assume the sound of a swing band. When the 1952 revival was mounted, Walker was asked to add his own orchestrations (Suskin 2009, 105). He rearranged the original five reed books to set up a traditional big band arrangement, approximating the hard-swinging bands popular in the 1950s: Alto I, Alto II, Tenor I, Tenor II, and Baritone (a part he added). His orchestrations can be heard on the revival cast recording released by Capitol.

Walker’s early exposure to dance bands affected his approach to orchestration. In 1928, according to his memoirs, one of his arrangements made its way into the hands of Fletcher Henderson, who performed it with his orchestra on the radio (Walker 2013, 8–10). Walker reportedly cold-called Henderson to see if he could write more arrangements for the band. According to Walker, who greatly admired Henderson, he was star struck when he first met the man and his band, which at the time included Rex Stewart, Buster Bailey, and Coleman Hawkins, among others (Walker 2013, 12). He went on to arrange versions of the Ager/Yellen hit “Ain’t She Sweet,” the Gershwin’s “S Wonderful,” and more for Henderson’s band. Walker’s arrangement of “I’ve Found What I Wanted in You” was recorded by Henderson for Columbia in 1931. After his

involvement with Henderson he went on to arrange parts for bandleader and radio personality Fred Waring, and eventually met the theater and operetta composer Sigmund Romberg, who helped pave Walker's way to Broadway. Walker's early background with Henderson, however, and his knowledge of big band instrumentation and music, shows just how intertwined the path of one of Broadway's top orchestrators was with the world of commercial swing. Walker eventually became valued for his ability to deal with "hotter" material (Suskin 2009, 80).

According to Walker, the instrumentation of Broadway pit orchestras did not match that of a typical swing band until his work on *Best Foot Forward*, which premiered in 1941:

I reasoned that a show about prep school students, their senior prom invaded by a fading movie star in search of helpful publicity, should be evocative of the popular danceband records that young people were buying at that moment.

(Walker 2013, 168)

He goes on to say that he was able to accomplish this because George Abbott, the producer for the show, hired the bandleader Archie Bleyer, "well known to dance musicians as an excellent arranger of 'stocks,'" to direct the pit; Bleyer also helped secure a top notch band, described by Walker as players who "filled important 'chairs' in 'big bands'" (Walker 2013, 168–169). Walker mentions the reaction to this "new" sound in the pit: "Although the critics did not fully understand what had happened in the pit to make the music so bright exciting, they applauded the score. A few even mentioned the orchestrations!" (Walker 2013, 171). Walker used this "new" sound (which by then was conventional) on the orchestrations for the 1952 revival of *Pal Joey*, giving the pit a full complement of saxophones, plus the addition of strings (see Figure 3.1).⁸

The orchestrations for the two earliest recordings of *Pal Joey* (Columbia, 1950, and Capitol, 1952) are credited to Ted Royal and Don Walker, respectively. Royal also worked for Chappell in the 1930s and 1940s and worked as an uncredited secondary orchestrator (with Spialek) on the original *Pal Joey*. He also had experience with and in dance bands, and was thus familiar with dance band aesthetics: from the early 1930s Royal played lead alto saxophone with the Ted Weems orchestra, and he wrote big band charts for Weems, Tommy Dorsey, Paul Whiteman, and Harry James (Suskin 2009, 79–84). A particularly striking track on the Columbia recording is the song "That Terrific Rainbow," which features the character Gladys, a frowsty nightclub singer. The version of the song on the Columbia recording begins with an instrumental rendition of the raucous chorus, idiomatically referencing the blues and burlesque bands, and is characterized by a slow, smeary, laid-back brass melody overlaid by an improvised clarinet solo. Spialek's original orchestrations in the introduction feature two clarinets doubled at the third, playing a countermelody to the brass melody (see Figure 3.2). Whether Ted Royal, Richard Rodgers, Goddard Lieberson, or someone else entirely suggested the improvised solo on the Columbia session remains a mystery. "That Terrific Rainbow," however, serves as an example of how much the harder swinging bands of the 1940s and 1950s had affected Royal's arrangement and the studio musicians' approach to the song.

Another striking difference between the original orchestration and that of the Columbia recording appears on the song "Zip." Originally performed as a mock striptease by the character Melba, a hardboiled reporter channeling Gypsy Rose Lee (perhaps the most well-known stripper of the twentieth century), the song is surprisingly "buttoned up." At the chorus of the song, as Melba begins her mock striptease, Spialek's original orchestrations feature delicate woodwind flourishes at the ends of phrases, tasteful brushwork by the drummer, and pizzicato interjections by the strings. It seems that Rodgers and Spialek relished the opportunity to emphasize the comic contrast between the buttoned-up reporter and the famed stripper, using the innuendo-laden language of burlesque movement, rather than sound, for impact. Much of the commentary in

<i>Pal Joey</i> (1940), Instrumentation: (Principal orchestrator: Hans Spialek)	<i>Pal Joey</i> (1952), Instrumentation: (Principal orchestrator: Don Walker)
<u>Woodwinds:</u> Reed 1: Alto , Flute, Clarinet Reed 2: Oboe , Eng. Horn, Alto Reed 3: Clarinet , Bass Cl, Tenor Reed 4: Fl. , Clarinet, Tenor Reed 5: Bassoon , Clarinet, Tenor <u>Brass:</u> 3 Trumpets 1 Horn 1 Trombone <u>Strings:</u> Violins Cello Bass <u>Rhythm:</u> Drums/percussion Piano	<u>Woodwinds:</u> Reed 1: Alto , Clarinet, Flute Reed 2: Alto , Clarinet, Bass Cl Reed 3: Tenor , Oboe, Eng. Horn, Cl. Reed 4: Tenor , Flute, Picc., Cl. Reed 5: Baritone , Alto, Bassoon, Cl. <u>Brass:</u> 3 Trumpets 1 Horn 2 Trombones <u>Strings:</u> Violins Cello Bass <u>Rhythm:</u> Drums/percussion Piano Guitar

Figure 3.1 *Pal Joey*, Instrumentation for pit orchestra, 1940 and 1952

The image shows a musical score for the introduction of the song "That Terrific Rainbow" from the musical *Pal Joey*. The score is written for Clarinets 1 and 2. It is in 4/4 time and the key signature has two sharps (D major). The score consists of 14 measures, with measure numbers 4, 6, 10, and 14 indicated at the start of their respective staves. The music is characterized by a fast, intricate rhythmic pattern featuring numerous triplets and sixteenth notes. Various musical notations are used, including beams to connect notes, slurs for phrasing, and dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*. The score ends with a double bar line in measure 14.

Figure 3.2 “That Terrific Rainbow,” intro, Clarinets 1 and 2. Transcribed from Reed books 1 and 3 of original stand parts, 1940–41 (Rodgers and Hammerstein Theatre Library)

Pal Joey concerns issues related to sexual containment and its alluring opposite. This song mocks both extremes.

The Columbia recording of “Zip,” in contrast, includes burlesque-reminiscent brass and percussion effects (featuring low trumpet growls and loose tom-tom patter) at the chorus, in addition to the delicate woodwind flourishes from the original. It seems that rather than encourage the sort of subtlety that would have prompted knowing laughs from a Broadway audience, this recording instead plays up the more disreputable elements of the show, signaled through jazz and burlesque affiliated sounds. In this way, in the absence of the staged performance, the recording is more visceral. Perhaps surprisingly, Don Walker’s arrangement for the 1952 revival (featuring Elaine Stritch as Melba) is much closer to Spialek’s original orchestration. One might speculate that Richard Rodgers had something to do with this. The Columbia recording, after all, wasn’t tasked with the same job of conveying character and situation that the stage production was.

Conclusion

Acknowledging the overlap between what are typically considered different musical genres—in this case the overlap between big band musicians and musicians in Broadway pit orchestras, swing band arrangements and Broadway arrangements, and the idiomatic sounds of swing and burlesque and their Broadway analogs—discloses an entirely new area of inquiry. For one, who exactly were the musicians that were employed in dance bands and pit orchestras? What was their musical training? Was improvisation seen as a necessary asset, or a special skill? These players are notoriously hard to pin down and are among the unsung players in both jazz and musical theater histories; as the landscape of the music industry changed, so did their place in it. William F. Lee counts at least 186 working bands in the years between 1920 and 1929, 217 between 1930 and 1939, 147 between 1940 and 1949, and a general decline from there forward (Lee 2005, xii). As demonstrated above, even during the height of the swing era, dance band musicians were doubling as Broadway pit musicians, and the decline of the swing era likely changed the sound of Broadway pits.

Seymour “Red” Press, currently working, at 94 years old, as one of the main orchestra contractors on Broadway, was present for this change. Press started out playing alto saxophone in big bands, including those of Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey, and eventually made his way to Broadway. In an email exchange with Press, he expands on the “large shift” he saw in the late 1950s, as Broadway pits became full of big band players:

I was part of that change. I had played with Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman among many less popular bands and I was hired for the show *Gypsy* in 1959. There were players in that band from Duke Ellington, Stan Kenton, Jimmy Lunceford, Elliot Lawrence, Sauter-Finegan, [and] Paul Whiteman.

(Press 2016)

Press went on to say that his time in big bands prepared him well to blend with a pit orchestra, and especially equipped him with the ability to sight-read (Press 2016). He also mentioned that the racial disparity seen in dance bands in the 1930s through the 1950s was also typical in pit orchestras:

[There might be] a single black musician in a 25 piece orchestra. It changed for a while in the late 60s [and] early 70s. The theater contract called for 25% minority representation in the orchestra. I believe that left the contract in the 80s.

(Press 2016)

Press's insights are rare, indeed; most pit players from that period and earlier have passed on. In older Broadway shows, records of pit players typically appear in the form of contracts, in an off-hand comment by one of the creators of the show, or in less standard forms (like the scrawl of a name on a stand part); more often than not, these records have been lost. These rare opportunities to glimpse into the realm of Broadway pits have proven that there was a significant overlap between the personnel working in Broadway pits and those in swing bands. It would benefit both disciplines to further probe these alliances. David Brackett states: "Simply because a musical text many not [. . .] belong to a genre with any stability does not mean that it does not participate in one" (Brackett 2016, 3). We would do well as historians to take Brackett's point and consider genres and their histories not bounded, but fluid and participatory.

Notes

1. Fletcher Henderson, who was known as both a bandleader and arranger in the 1920s, occupies a precarious place in jazz histories because of the above-mentioned binary. Efforts by Jeffrey Magee, and others, have helped recuperate his place in the narrative (Magee, 2005). Bill Siegel's chapter on Jim Pepper and native identity is one example of ways scholars have deconstructed the above binary in an effort to break out of the monolithic categories of "black" and "white" in jazz history (Siegel, 2016). Gendered binaries, too, have directed jazz histories, erasing the contributions of many female instrumentalists and downplaying the significance of jazz vocalists. Scholars, however, have begun to salvage these histories (Tucker, 2000).
2. Engel's full list includes the following shows: *Pal Joey* (1940), *Oklahoma* (1943), *Carousel* (1945), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), *Brigadoon* (1947), *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948), *South Pacific* (1949), *Guys and Dolls* (1950), *The King and I* (1951), *My Fair Lady* (1956), *West Side Story* (1957), *Gypsy* (1959), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), *Company* (1970), and *A Little Night Music* (1973).
3. Michael Todd, quoted in Ethan Mordden, (Mordden, 1983, 139). Though Mordden attributes the famous quotation to Todd, there is some uncertainty as to its origins (see Symonds, 2016, n. 63).
4. George Gershwin is an exception. Gershwin was demonstrably concerned with aesthetic risks and innovations—mostly praised in the jazz-meets-Western classical music idiom, seen in pieces like his concerto *Rhapsody in Blue*, his piano works *Three Preludes*, and his "folk opera"/musical *Porgy and Bess*—and fits into jazz histories that value such concerns. Further, he knew and sometimes played with Fats Waller (they were mutually influential), was respected by Duke Ellington, and possibly began what became a thwarted project with him. He also hired soon-to-be famous jazz musicians to play in the pit orchestras of both *Strike Up the Band* and *Girl Crazy* (see Pollack 2007, 157–174).
5. It should be noted that if jazz vocalists were more centrally included in jazz histories, it's possible that songwriters would naturally take up a more prominent position in the narrative.
6. Steven Suskin's impressive study of Broadway orchestrators and orchestrating remains the best book on the topic. His introduction on the typical practices (focusing on the "classic" period) of orchestrating for a Broadway show is particularly useful. Steven Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music: A Book of Orchestrators & Orchestrations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3–23.
7. The players (in the order listed) are as follows: Harry Bloom, Ricky Trent, Arthur Gianone, Vincent Grande, Morris Speinson, Irving Solow, and Eddie Kooden, Ralph Hayes (the last three names were likely subs).
8. For an excellent discussion of the original orchestration and an archival-based reconstruction of the original score, see Paul Christman, "Pal Joey: Reconstructing a Classic Rodgers and Hart Score," *Studies in Musical Theatre*. Vol. 3, No. 2, 2009.

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4

“THAT AIN’T NO CREOLE, IT’S A . . . !”

Masquerade, Marketing, and Shapeshifting Race in Early New Orleans Jazz

Bruce Boyd Raeburn

Recent scholarship highlighting the importance of visual representation in shaping perceptions of the jazz tradition declares that photographs “can be effective tools in understanding and contextualizing the lives and music of jazz performers,” especially when detached from “use as a visual rhetoric to the construction of jazz icons” (Heyman 2014–15, 120). In retrospect, some depictions stray so far from heroic narratives that it is hard to see them as anything but demeaning and shameful. Included in a 1920 photograph of the New Orleans Police Department Minstrels are two jazz musicians: Sicilian American banjoist Dominic Barocco, on the right, and behind him clarinetist Alcide “Yellow” Nunez, an Isleño (a Canary Islander—thus the nickname, because canaries are yellow), but he does not look very yellow here because he is in blackface. In his book *Blackface, White Noise*, Michael Paul Rogin uses the term “racial cross-dressing” to describe a process by which Jewish immigrants like Al Jolson were “Americanized” through an initiation into “whiteness” via blackface, and one is tempted to interpret the intent of the Sicilian and Isleño, both of whom could be considered “non-white” at the time, according to that theory (Rogin 1996, 4). Yet there may be more to the story in this case, given the arcane proclivities that are often associated with New Orleans masquerade culture. The convergence of Carnival masking and obsessive racial fetish in New Orleans offers a lens for exploring and decoding jazz musician behaviors through photographic representations. How race and class were performed by jazz musicians depended to a large extent on the functional imperatives that governed the marketing of their services, in conjunction with the opportunities that racial ambiguity deriving from creolization in New Orleans provided under apartheid. Relevant New Orleans eccentricities would include Carnival and its concomitant masquerade culture (such as Black Indians masking on St. Joseph’s Day), interracial sex (institutionalized in both the nineteenth-century practice of *plaçage* and subsequently in the brothels of Storyville), and the “ratty,” underclass music that came to be known as jazz. Accordingly, this chapter follows the “localizing whiteness” path established in such works as *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, edited by Ruth Frankenburg, factoring in the special features attributable to creolization in New Orleans (Thompson 2001, 232–266). The intent of this chapter, therefore, is to view the first wave of seminal New Orleans jazz musicians who traveled beyond the region not as icons but as musical entrepreneurs seeking advantage in markets that were often unreceptive and alien to them and to use photographs to understand those experiences.

In a city that has grown ever more dependent on tourism, marketing has become increasingly critical for survival. Within the jazz community that emerged there in the early twentieth century, the correlation of masquerade, marketing, and *Créolité* invited manipulation of racial categorizations, substituting “blackness” for “whiteness” as a dominant paradigm (indeed, this became synonymous with selling “authenticity,” as with Leo Dejan’s Black Diamond Jazz Band in the 1920s) and generating a “trick bag” of tropes for a much broader range of “spiritual miscegenation” than Rogin covers in his study. Cases in point: the African American cornetist King Oliver consistently used the term “Creole” to describe his bands—under what mandate? How was *passe blanc* (passing for white) used by New Orleans jazz musicians: both intentionally, as with the Afro-French clarinetist Achille Baquet in various bands, and tacitly, as with Jelly Roll Morton’s 1923 recordings with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings? Why was Louis Prima, a Sicilian American, fired at Leon and Eddie’s on 52nd Street in 1934 under the suspicion that he was *passe blanc*?

Jazz emerged during a time of racial reconfiguration, driven largely by black agency and imagination. Taking their cue from black vaudeville, a black marching club called the Tramps insinuated King Zulu’s blacks in blackface into the city’s Carnival establishment in the years 1910–1923. Zulu masking could be read as subservience or as heritage, an ambiguity that enabled black penetration of “whites only” public space (Smith 2013, 22–35). The years of Zulu’s rise also witnessed the waning of Creole culture and identity. In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), a suit brought by a New Orleans Creole who initially expected to win on the grounds that he was not “black,” the Supreme Court sanctioned the implementation of segregation, thus finalizing an American assault on Creole privilege dating from 1803 and exacerbated during Reconstruction. From the American perspective, Creoles had hitherto occupied the penumbra between white and black: part African, part European, but culturally French and free. Segregation eradicated Creole privilege, and Creole exoticism was transmuted into a marketing trope. The term became an ethnically detached signifier used to sell hair products, food, and musical entertainment to consumers with refined tastes.

King Oliver’s Creole Band was photographed in underclass vaudeville drag outside of the Pergola Dance Pavilion in San Francisco, probably in mid-June 1921. Honore Dutrey and James Palao were Creoles; the rest of the band was African American. The title of this chapter derives from a confrontation that occurred at the California Theater in San Francisco in September 1921, by which time Warren “Baby” Dodds had replaced Minor “Ram” Hall on drums. In Larry Gara’s *The Baby Dodds Story*, Dodds tells what happened:

In Frisco we had some trouble and the local union hated to take us in. We were booked at the California Theater as King Oliver’s Creole Band. When the band went on for a matinee some little smart guy in the audience said, “I thought you said those guys were Creoles. Those guys are no Creoles. Those are niggers!” Of the whole band only Joe Oliver and Dutrey could talk Creole fluently, so they began to speak it very fast. The people just stared and that ended the episode, but afterwards the theater was no good. Meanwhile the Pergola dance date, which was supposed to be a long booking, had also fallen through.

(Gara 1992, 34; Anderson 1994, 294)

The incident effectively scuttled Oliver’s chances for success on the West Coast, and by April 1922 he was stranded in Los Angeles, sitting in with Jelly Roll Morton’s band at Wayside Park and the Grand Hotel, bereft of a band. Returning to Chicago, Oliver enticed Louis Armstrong to join him in August, and then a reunited Creole Jazz Band, with the Dodds brothers, Dutrey, and Hardin back in the fold and Bill Johnson on bass and banjo, embarked on a series of recordings

in 1923 that led to success. Yet the California Theater incident is worth pondering because of the questions it raises. Why did Oliver insist on representing his bands as "Creole," given the fact that he was the son of a Baptist preacher from rural Louisiana with no discernable Afro-French heritage, and how did a white heckler in the Bay Area know enough about what the term meant to challenge Oliver's authority to use it?

Clearly, the antagonist's perception of the term was racial. In his mind, Oliver was too dark-skinned to be a Creole. In fact, reports of "brown paper bag" tests notwithstanding, Creole identity was too diverse ethnically and culturally to be predicated on race alone—the Creole preference was to see the term as a cultural and linguistic signifier—yet even before Plessy, control of the image was slipping away. In *Out of Sight: The Rise of African American Popular Music, 1889–1895*, Lynn Abbott and Doug Seroff track Sam T. Jack's Creole Burlesque Company of African American performers beginning in 1891, whose success led to an over-saturation of competitors by 1895. Jack, a white theatrical entrepreneur from Pennsylvania, conceived of the name after a trip to South Louisiana and provided a show that combined burlesque with what the authors describe as "a blurry amalgam of farce comedy and the theatrical display of shapely women in elaborate, revealing costumes" (Abbott and Seroff 2002, 151). Not surprisingly, the implicit suggestion of sex in Jack's promotional strategy was rendered explicit in New Orleans, but with a twist. Alecia Long's investigation of prostitution in Storyville has shown that white women represented themselves as Creole "octoroons" and Latinas in order to charge more for their services. Despite its definition as "black" after 1896, "Creole" remained a racially ambiguous hinge mask that could swing both ways because this is what the white men who patronized The District desired—forbidden sex with women who were legally "black" but looked "white." They wanted a racial masquerade, but as Long points out, it was not always the one they expected (Long 2004, 205, 218). Like Zulu's blackface, Creole became a mask that could simultaneously reinforce or subvert racial imaginaries, and jazz musicians were quick to pick up on these implications.

But Oliver's Creole posture was about cultural immersion, not race, and understanding it requires familiarity with his experience as a musician in New Orleans. Before coming to the city in 1900, he was raised in the rural hinterland outside of Donaldsonville, Louisiana, where French speaking was common—thus, his fluency in Creole dialect. More importantly, the band-leaders who hired and trained him in New Orleans were all Creoles. Cornetist Manuel Perez was a French-speaking Creole of Mexican heritage—a Latino who, along with the Tio family, was among the most revered music educators in the downtown Seventh Ward. From 1904 he was the leader of the Onward Brass Band—an amalgam of Creoles, Latinos, and African Americans. Perez was a legitimate, reading musician, but Paul Barbarin, whose father Isidore played in the Onward, credits him for moving the band in a "ratty" direction: Perez understood the need to adapt to a changing market driven by the rising popularity of intuitive jazz musicians such as Buddy Bolden. Oliver, who was still pretty "ratty" despite some rudimentary reading skills, joined the Onward about 1913. Clarinetist Albert Nicholas appreciated the significance of adding a "get off" man: "Brass bands were mixed bands. Creole and uptown [meaning 'black'] in a brass band—they were solid. They were one, Joe Oliver and Manuel Perez, see?" (Chilton 1987, 18). Indeed, Oliver's widow, Stella, described the relationship as "quite chummy" (Oliver, 1959, reel I, 9). In 1914 Oliver replaced Freddy Keppard in violinist Armand Piron's Olympia Band and in 1917 he joined trombonist Edward "Kid" Ory's Creole Jazz Band. Observers described Oliver as peaking with Ory, using mutes to achieve "hot" freak effects, as with *I'm Not Rough*, a blues showcase for "talking horn." But apartheid soon intervened. On June 19, 1918, the fun came to an abrupt halt. A police raid at the Winter Garden on Gravier Street put Ory and Oliver in jail for "disturbing the peace," and as his wife Stella recalled, "Joe thought it was awful that a man who was making an honest living could be taken to jail like that, so he went to Chicago" (Oliver 1959, reel I, 3).

In fact, this was Oliver's second incarceration for "disturbing the peace": on June 1, 1917, he had been arrested with Armand Piron, Billy Mack, and some unspecified women from Storyville at a private residence on Palmyra Street.

Oliver left New Orleans in August 1918 as a result of the arrests and at the invitation of two groups of transplanted New Orleans musicians in Chicago. Bill Johnson, erstwhile bassist and leader of the Original Creole Orchestra (not actually a Creole, even though he employed some), and Lawrence Duhé, a "country" Creole, from Lafayette, Louisiana, took turns hiring him. By October 1919 he had supplanted Duhé as leader of the band at the Dreamland Café and began the arduous process of upgrading personnel. Although one can argue that the Creole trademark applied to his California band could have come from his residual association with Bill Johnson, it is clear that his interest in *Créolité* was in place before his relocation to Chicago. Oliver had shared a lot with the Creoles—including police harassment—but it was especially evident in a standard of excellence that became intrinsic to his self-image, which included performing in tuxedos, another form of masquerade designed to meet the expectations of upscale white patrons seeking illicit thrills under Prohibition. As a brand, "Creole" conveyed not only an explicit connection to New Orleans, but deriving from that, it was a marker of jazz "authenticity" at a time when ersatz versions were proliferating. Oliver's intent was much the same as Nick LaRocca's in the naming of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, only more viable. Indeed, this is essentially the argument that Ernest Borneman made for jazz as a product of *Créolité* in his "Creole Echoes" articles for *Jazz Review* in 1959.

Yet, one must inquire into the racial implications of Oliver's actions. Following the mass desertion of the members of the Creole Jazz Band by early 1924, Oliver recruited Albert Nicholas, Paul Barbarin, Barney Bigard, and Luis Russell (three New Orleans Creoles and a Latino from Panama) for his new band, the Dixie Syncopators, which name denotes a somewhat mysterious departure from Creole representation. Indeed, one might consider the reference to Dixie as problematical, given its "Old South" associations. Did Oliver recruit these Creoles primarily for their musical skills, or was he also attempting to implement an ethnic "upgrade" and "lightening" of the band's image leveraging *Créolité*? Nicholas remembered how self-conscious Oliver was about his "blackness" and how the Creoles would tease him about it:

Joe Oliver was sensitive about his flat feet and his black color. During one of Oliver's solos [at the Plantation] Jelly Roll Morton passed and said, "Hi, Blondie." Once Barney Bigard drew a foot and put it on Joe Oliver's music rack. Oliver was mad and said if he found out who had drawn the foot, he would fire the person, but he never found out. Morton liked to kid and would always have the last word. Oliver and Morton were close friends.

(Nicholas, 1972, reel II, 3)

Some scholars have used Morton's teasing of Oliver as proof that Jelly was a racist, but as Nicholas confirms, such remarks were typical of the kind of playfulness that passes between good friends, apropos of "the dozens," a form of African American verbal sparring. The duets on *King Porter Stomp* and *Tom Cat Blues* recorded by Oliver and Morton in December 1924 and their frequent covering of each other's compositions on recordings provide a very different perspective, revealing an intimacy based on sincere appreciation and mutual respect. Yet given Oliver's purported sensitivity about race, and the concomitant suggestion that his adaptation of Creole branding could have been a product of shame, was the psychic impact of apartheid a factor in such representations? In fact, it seems unlikely based on the expressive power that is evident on his early Creole Jazz Band recordings, before failing health took its toll in the latter 1920s. Oliver's cultivation of a marketable image with the terms "King," "New Orleans," "Creole," or "Jazz" was essentially pragmatic, based on direct references to his past experience and associations. It was

designed to yield a competitive advantage in the market. His use of Creole representations should therefore not be interpreted as an attempt to circumvent his racial heritage. When the white heckler made his remarks in San Francisco in 1921, the last thing he expected was for Oliver to answer in French. In defending himself, Oliver fought race with culture, just as Creoles had been doing for years until their ethnic identity was obliterated by apartheid in 1896.

Accordingly, some Creoles engaged in "racial cross-dressing" to adapt to segregation by passing for white. Was this behavior a product of racial shame? Since most Creoles differentiated themselves from all Americans, including blacks, it cannot be characterized so simply without embracing the standard bi-chromatic racial paradigm. One scholar has described clarinetist Achille Baquet as "fooling" the white bandleader Jack Laine in the Reliance Band, but the reality was undoubtedly more complicated (Peretti 1997, 43; Sudhalter 1999, 12, 752, Gushee 2005, 16, 38–42, 142). Achille's father, Theogene, was not only the leader of the Excelsior, a prominent Creole marching band, but also the president of Local 242, the first "black" American Federation of Musicians union in New Orleans, established in 1902, so it seems unlikely that Laine would not have known about the family. What mattered to Laine were the skills as a performer and educator that the clarinetist had to offer to his band. Baquet later worked for the white trombonist Happy Schilling and then went to New York City, where he and the trumpeter Frank Christian performed with Jimmy Durante. Meanwhile his brother George, another clarinetist, toured with Bill Johnson's Creole Band and eventually settled in Philadelphia, living as a black man. Given simplistic racial categories based on the bi-chromatic strictures of "whiteness," some Creoles simply thought of "white" as the more appropriate category, *Plessy v. Ferguson* notwithstanding, and yet others did not, so households divided on the issue. The tragedy is that Creoles were forced to choose, since an identity based on *Créolité* was no longer an option. Perhaps this is why identity as a jazz musician—a creative professional judged by merit—mattered so much on both sides of the color line.

Ferdinand LaMothe was another Creole who embraced masquerade to advance his musical career. The name change from Mouton (his step-father's surname) to Morton was a capitulation to Anglophilia, masking francophone heritage. The nickname "Jelly Roll" (sexual slang for genitalia) drew upon his experiences in Storyville and black vaudeville, taking him about as far away from Creole propriety as he could go, but it was an effective marketing tool. There is a photograph of Morton in blackface with Rosa Brown taken in Texas around 1914 during his time in vaudeville, but I don't think we should interpret it as proof of George C. Wolfe's characterization of him as a self-loathing black man denying his heritage in the Broadway musical "Jelly's Last Jam," an indictment that has also found its way into the scholarly literature (Lomax 2001, preface, and Gushee, afterward, Peretti 1997, 21). Another image of Morton, this time in a tuxedo conducting a tutorial with the members of his Red Hot Peppers in 1926, is closer to the Creole mark in terms of conventional expectations, but the contrast reminds us of how New Orleans jazz musicians used various forms of masquerade according to the needs of the moment. In fact, tuxedos were another form of masquerade for New Orleans jazz musicians, often deployed to cater to the pretensions of affluent white audiences that equated jazz with the allure of forbidden thrills in speakeasies, but such apparel was also recognized within the black community as an affirmation of the cultural potency of jazz as an art form worthy of respect. This was a process that unfolded gradually. Photographs of New Orleans jazz bands at home before 1920 never depict them in formal attire; the Oliver's Creole Jazz Band and New Orleans Rhythm Kings portraits from 1923 thus illustrate a shift in marketing strategy reflecting the enhanced market value that derived from such representations. Trombonist William "Bébé" Ridgley recounted the change in fortunes experienced by his Original Tuxedo Jazz Orchestra, originally named after the Tuxedo Dance Hall in Storyville, when the band began wearing tuxedos for performances at the suggestion of Sims Black, a member of New Orleans's uptown white society. The pay went from \$1.50 a night per member in 1915 to \$15 per man and \$25 for the leaders by 1925 (Ridgley 1959, reel I, 3–7, reel III, 21–23).

Of course, with or without tuxedos, the color line did not evaporate when these musicians traveled to northern cities, as seen in Jelly Roll Morton's July 1923 collaboration with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, a white band, for Gennett records in Richmond, Indiana. The Ku Klux Klan was politically ascendant in Indiana in the 1920s, and Gennett made promotional records for the Klan, so a racially mixed recording session was potentially risky business (Kennedy 1994, 76). Trombonist George Brunies recalled how the New Orleans musicians closed ranks on the issue, utilizing racial ambiguity to defend Morton:

Husk O'Hare arranged to have us make the Gennett records. [Paul] Mares had run into Jelly Roll Morton, and we worked out his *Mr. Jelly Lord* and *Milneburg Joys*, which we recorded with him. We thought it best to say that he was a Cuban, so that's what we did.

(Erskine 1962, 23)

When questioned about it, the band members pointed out the diamond inlay in Morton's front tooth, which was accepted as proof positive—a vindication by ethnic stereotype. This vicarious *passe blanc* demonstrated how a shared musical language rooted in a somewhat attenuated communal experience could still foster spontaneous connection among strangers, despite segregation.

Under the auspices of "whiteness," a "white" man could hardly imagine a worse fate than being perceived as "black," but in the jazz community it was considered to be a badge of honor by the late 1930s, as when Marshall Stearns portrayed the New Orleans Rhythm Kings as an "authentic" derivative of black precursors in a series for *Downbeat* in 1936. Decades later, Gilbert Erskine's highest praise for the New Orleans Rhythm Kings in his article on George Brunies in the May 10, 1962 issue of *Downbeat* was that they could swing "like a black band" (Erskine 1962, 23). Under segregation, Sicilians, Jews, and Latinos could be perceived as marginally "non-white." Growing up in one of New Orleans's "crazy quilt" neighborhoods such as Tremé or the Seventh Ward furthered the process and exacerbated such perceptions by coupling parochial cultural eccentricity with racial ambiguity. As we have seen, New Orleans jazz musicians used racial, ethnic, and class stereotypes to dramatize or enhance a musical performance, but in some cases the stereotypes were imposed upon them. The career of Sicilian American trumpeter Louis Prima, whose interaction with Creole and "black" musicians began when he was a child in Tremé, illustrates the point. According to conventional accounts, Prima's playing style was influenced by tuition from his elder brother Leon, but he also took lessons from trumpeters Henry "Kid" Rena (Creole) and Lee Collins (African American), transgressing the color line in the process (Lewis 1968; Father Al Lewis 1972). The concentration of so many Sicilians in the downtown areas of Tremé and the lower French Quarter, areas governed by "crazy quilt" demographics, meant that their exposure to "black" music was intensive and perpetual, especially given the amount of music to be found on the street.

In 1934 Guy Lombardo got Prima his first job in New York City, at Leon and Eddie's on Fifty-Second Street, but he was fired before he could take the stage because the proprietor refused to believe that he was "white." As Lombardo described it: "Eddie Davis on first seeing olive-skinned and swarthy Louis Prima and knowing that he came from New Orleans, had simply assumed he was a black man" (Lombardo 1975, 218–220). Prima had absorbed the Afrocentric culture of his natural habitat completely, and it showed. No wonder he was one of the most popular "white" bandleaders to perform at the Apollo Theater in Harlem (five times in the 1940s), and he became notorious for the extent of his interaction with "black" musicians in New York and Hollywood (Boulard 1989, 61–62). From the 1940s on, he used his "New Orleansness" and his *Sicilianità* as trademarks, expanding his repertoire beyond jazz by purveying Italianesque tunes such as *Angelina*, *Oh, Marie!* and *Zooma Zooma* (a super-charged remake of the highly suggestive *C'è la luna mezz'o mare*), delivered with a blistering New Orleans shuffle beat.



Image 4.1 Piron and Williams vaudeville troupe, with (standing, left to right) Clarence Williams, Ernest Trepagnier, Jimmie Noone, John Lindsay, and William Ridgley; (seated, left to right) Oscar Celestin, Tom Benton, Armand Piron, and Johnny St. Cyr (circa 1916).

Photograph by Arthur P. Bedou, courtesy of the Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University.

Prima's masquerade may have been in the eye of the beholder, but New Orleans musicians had routinely used stereotypes in the early dissemination phase as part of a broader marketing strategy to engage northern audiences, pandering to their prejudices in amusing and sometimes controversial ways. In addition to business cards that read "Music for All Occasions" and "What You Want, I Got It," they cross-dressed as "rubes" and "hillbillies," as policemen and street urchins, as hoboes and roustabouts, and as plantation and prison field hands, crossing class, ethnic, and racial borders with impunity at times for the sake of performance. Throughout his long career, Louis Armstrong actively exploited the contradictions inherent in bi-chromatic visions of race, donning "whiteface" (or something like it) for black vaudeville audiences when he was a teenager, satisfying "white" expectations of blackface in films and stage productions during his rise to stardom in the early 1930s, and "blackening up" to be honored for getting beyond blackface, as when he masked as King Zulu on Mardi Gras Day 1949, even if it meant there would be hell to pay for it later back in Harlem (Raeburn 2013–14, 58–72; Abbott and Stewart 1994, 16; Nose 1949, 20; Armstrong 1952, 6).

Seen through the lens of classist or racist assumptions, these stereotypes were demeaning and about as far from heroic iconography as one can imagine. But from the perspective of New Orleans musicians, they could be viewed as fun—just like masking for Carnival, except you got paid for it. For them, pretty much everything outside of New Orleans was *terra incognita* anyway, so risks were inevitable. Their cultural comfort zone was a matrix of masking, racial ambiguity, and self-promotion,

and they drew upon it to bring their music to the world stage, by which time they were performing as artists in tuxedos. While the potential subversion of racial boundaries implicit in such behavior may have briefly disrupted American apartheid on occasion, the motives of New Orleans jazz musicians were usually less politically ambitious or tendentious. More often than not, they simply desired the freedom to play what they wanted with whomever they pleased as frequently as possible, and to “pass a good time” while doing it: a utopian dream to which jazz musicians still aspire.

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5

JAZZ EDUCATION

Historical and Critical Perspectives

Ken Prouty

Jazz education has had a sometimes awkward relationship with the larger field of jazz studies.¹ Despite the marked growth of critical scholarship on jazz that began in earnest in the late 1980s, few scholars attempted to grapple with the nature of jazz education as a musical and cultural practice, though some limited references can be seen. Such perspectives are reflected in the introduction to Krin Gabbard's landmark edition *Jazz Among the Discourses*, still a seminal work in the development of New Jazz Studies. Gabbard writes that there were (at the time his essay was written) "a number of schools that train young musicians to play the music," citing the Berklee College of Music, William Patterson University, and the University of North Texas as examples (Gabbard 1995, 4). Yet by the mid-1990s, jazz education, as a function of university and college level music programs in the United States (US), was a thriving enterprise, with dozens of jazz programs in the US and around the world; even by this point, it was somewhat unusual to find a post-secondary institution in the US that did not have, at the very least, a jazz ensemble as part of the curriculum. The annual conferences of the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) regularly drew thousands of attendees, drawn mainly (despite the "I" in IAJE) from the US.²

Prior to the last two decades, the vast majority of scholarly work devoted to jazz education emerged mainly from the ranks of its own practitioners, or from researchers in allied fields like music education. What has often been missing from much this discourse is a sense of the "why" of jazz education, or any real meaningful critical reflection about the nature, practice, and culture of the field. As a result, jazz education has often been viewed as a being largely isolated from, and at odds with, the "real world" of jazz.³ In his entry on the subject in the *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, Gary W. Kennedy reflects such a view of jazz education, writing that it "has yet to reach any of the serious artistic goals that the term would imply" (Kennedy 2002, 398).

Nevertheless, jazz education programs remain an important site where issues of identity, canon, and the very nature of the music itself are negotiated and renegotiated in different ways and in different contexts. Increasingly, scholars of jazz have begun to engage more deeply with the significance of such activities, both with respect to their illumination of important aspects of institutional culture and in their relationships to broader jazz communities. In this chapter, I wish to focus on two main topics. First, I will address some particular historical perspectives on jazz education. This discussion includes both the conventional developments of institutional programs but links its emergence and growth to developments *outside the academy*, which have often been overlooked in commonly read histories of the field. The second part of the chapter will focus on an assessment of critical, interdisciplinary efforts to situate jazz education as an important site of

aesthetic and social contestation. In particular, I view the emergence of these discourses as a logical extension of the efforts of scholars aligned with the New Jazz Studies initiative over the last quarter century, whose aims are to apply critical, interdisciplinary methods of inquiry to jazz's historical narratives and musical practices. My aim is to demonstrate that jazz education must not be thought of as an isolated pursuit within the confines of academic music programs, but rather understood as inextricably linked to broader extra-institutional jazz communities, practices, and discourses. Just as scholars within the New Jazz Studies movement have called for a greater understanding of jazz's relationship to issues of race, gender, class, nationality, and so forth, so too have like-minded researchers recast jazz education as a site where the history and identity of the music are being continuously debated and contested. Neither of these discussions is intended to be comprehensive; rather, I wish to reflect on particular issues which reflect jazz education's links to broader, extra-institutional developments.

Historical Perspectives on Jazz Education

At the risk of stating the obvious, there has been jazz education as long as there has been jazz music. From its earliest days in the streets and clubs of New Orleans, jazz has been learned, taught, and codified for transmission from one person to another. Oral histories of early New Orleans musicians are replete with references to important influential teachers, and while the specifics of these pedagogical interactions are often unclear, what is clear is that the learning of this music was far from a random, haphazard enterprise. As jazz spread across the nation, and indeed across the globe, pedagogical materials and methods spread with it. In the last few years of the 1910s, the ability to play in this new idiom became a highly marketable skill. One notable early attempt to capitalize on these new trends can be seen in a 1919 book written and published by Henry Fillmore, an American composer best known for producing a very popular (and arguably somewhat racist) series of "trombone smears," whose novelty drew on the use of exaggerated glissandi. For Fillmore, the new jazz style was closely linked to these humorous effects, and his method book attempted to codify their nature and application. A number of similar books followed (a few of which were arguably direct copies of Fillmore's work), demonstrating that there was a receptive market for musicians to learn this new style.

During the 1920s, more written materials began to appear, some of which moved beyond the application of novelty effects and into more in-depth discussions of "hot" playing, a term which is roughly analogous to improvisation. Lawrence Gushee, writing in an essay on the discourses of "middle-period" jazz improvisation, devotes some attention to the topic of method books. Most intriguing about Gushee's essay is his argument that such resources implicitly (and perhaps explicitly) sought to define what improvisation was. As Gushee notes, by the mid-1920s, "dozens of publications appeared" to provide instruction for nascent jazz musicians, and many of these texts were produced by leading jazz artists of the day, including Miff Mole, Jimmy Dorsey, Red Nichols, Joe Venuti, and Louis Armstrong (Gushee 2009, 271–272). The exact role and influence of such works is unclear, but given the active publishing market for them, which would continue into the 1930s and 1940s (and beyond), they were undoubtedly playing a role.

With the launch of trade publications in the 1930s, especially *Downbeat* in 1934, jazz learners had yet another avenue to learn the ins and outs of the music. *Downbeat* in particular understood that its readers, who were largely professional musicians,⁴ wanted to learn the "tricks of the trade," and the magazine obliged. Its pages were filled with "how to" articles on various topics, from better instrumental technique, to overviews of the styles of particular players. *Downbeat's* relationship to pedagogy and learning continues to the present day, with the magazine still featuring transcriptions and educational materials; probably most significant is the magazine's sponsoring

of its annual Student Music Awards, established in 1976, which has become the most recognized scholastic jazz competition in the US.

At the same time that pedagogical publications in jazz were starting to gain steam, there were sporadic efforts in institutions of higher education in the US to incorporate jazz into the curriculum. In particular, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) became important sites where efforts to include jazz were underway. One of the most notable examples could be found at Alabama State University in the early 1930s. The school's top jazz group, the Bama State Collegians, began touring throughout the Midwest and eventually performed in New York in 1934, where they caused a sensation. Eventually the members of band left the school; one of the trumpeters of the band, Erskine Hawkins, would take over the reins, and the band started touring and recording professionally under Hawkins's name. What is most notable about the Bama State Collegians' story, I would argue, is their deep connection to the professional jazz world, even as a student group.

Formal training was beginning to be felt in the community of professional jazz musicians in other ways. One of the most famous examples from the pre-war era can be seen in the work of Coleman Hawkins who, as a high school student in Topeka, Kansas, enrolled in some music classes at nearby Washburn College. For Hawkins, his relatively advanced knowledge of music theory and harmony was something of a badge of honor; in one particular exchange, Hawkins gently chided trombonist Jimmy Harrison for the latter's perceived lack of knowledge about the intricacies of music:

While still with the [Fletcher] Henderson band, [Hawkins] made a show of mocking his band mate and close friend, trombonist Jimmy Harrison, for [Harrison's] alleged ignorance of harmony: "I used to tell him, 'Doggone shame the way you're fooling people. You ain't doing nothing! You're not playing the changes, you're missing the changes. Look at this—you see this change right here? This change makes this other one sound better because it resolves into the other one.'"

(DeVeaux 1997, 84)

Hawkins is, of course, widely regarded as a technically intricate improviser. The extent to which his formal training influenced his approach is not certain, but as his own comments demonstrate, he certainly was aware of the advantages of such training, and that they set him apart from his peers.

Yet conventional histories of jazz education have often overlooked such developments, focusing instead on the role of a small number of jazz programs, most notably the Berklee College of Music, established in 1945 in Boston as the Schillinger House,⁵ and North Texas State College (now the University of North Texas) in Denton. The latter program offered what is generally believed to be the first college level degree in jazz studies in 1946, based on a curriculum developed by M. E. (Gene) Hall as part of his master's thesis. A third program, the Westlake College of Music in Los Angeles, was also influential in the immediate postwar era but ceased operations in 1961. Berklee and North Texas have often formed two poles in discussions of the history of jazz education, with the former seen as being deeply linked to the contemporary jazz and popular music scenes, and the latter emphasizing the traditions of the big band. And it is this point, the central role of the big band, that perhaps makes North Texas's influence so profound. Hall, and his successor Leon Breeden, developed a close relationship with "progressive jazz" bandleader Stan Kenton, and indeed, Kenton's fingerprints remain on both the program in Denton (the primary rehearsal and recital venue is named for Kenton) and, arguably, given the large number of North Texas-trained jazz educators, on the field as a whole. Kenton's own influence on jazz education was enormous, particularly through his "stage band camps," starting in 1959, and his patronage of the Notre Dame Jazz Festival, a leading collegiate jazz competition. Without diminishing the

importance of these schools, it should be understood that they formed only one part of a larger system of jazz learning.

As jazz education moved into the 1960s, more and more programs would be established, most notably at the University of Miami and Indiana University in Bloomington. While Miami's program was largely of the model established at North Texas, the program at Indiana was led by David Baker, one of the few African American musicians to achieve a high-profile as a jazz educator during this period.⁶ Taking over the program in the mid-1960s, Baker's approach was highly systematic from a pedagogical perspective (he had been a protégé of George Russell, whose *Lydian Chromatic Concept* was highly influential on Baker),⁷ but he also was extremely sensitive to the unique nature of jazz as an African American art form. Along with traditional coursework in jazz, Baker's program emphasized the music's connections to other vernacular and popular idioms, and was deeply invested in the role of jazz as a vital marker of black identity. In an essay on Baker by J.B. Dyas, Baker stresses the importance of such connections:

I felt it was inappropriate for a student to come here, whether it was in music or whatever, and the only course they could take that had anything to do with the Negro in American and black music was jazz. . . . I really felt they needed to have a much broader spectrum than just jazz.

(Dyas 2011, 87–88)

Baker's emphasis on a unified approach to black music was relatively unusual in jazz education, at least within the context of white-dominated music schools and departments of the time (though arguably this is still the case). But it had an important parallel in other kinds of programs, which are again, often overlooked in discussions of jazz education's history.

At the same moment that Baker was working to build his program at Indiana, a radical transformation was taking place at American universities. Students (and many faculty) rebelled against institutional structures that they saw as being very conservative and focused too squarely on white histories and perspectives. This call for greater inclusion led directly to the institution of the first programs in Black Studies, beginning in 1968 at San Francisco State University. Jazz education would also benefit from such changes; indeed, the establishment of the National Association of Jazz Educators in the same year speaks to this idea. Yet most jazz programs, at least in major music schools, were still dominated by white faculty and were predicated on a model in which jazz was systematized and instruction was formalized in ways that paralleled the core music curriculum, drawing on the standards and traditions of Western classical music. But there were some important exceptions to these developments. For example, both Archie Shepp and Max Roach began an affiliation with the University of Massachusetts (UMass), Shepp in 1971, Roach the following year. Both men were affiliated with the university's African American Studies program (although they also had relationships with the music department as well). Shepp's experience is particularly illuminating, as noted by former UMass student and saxophonist/composer Fred Ho. Reflecting on his time as a student of Shepp, Ho describes Shepp as an "intensely contradictory character" in the classroom, but one whose approach provided an alternative to the standard approaches to jazz education:

Shepp allowed anyone to play in his classes, from the most proficient players to the least experienced. Shepp would give everyone a chance to solo, and never say anything about how people played. Mistakes would simply be dealt with by repeating over again the difficult passages. While one could complain about the lack of formal rigor in Shepp's classes, his method of teaching was extremely democratic and "proletarian" since it was

totally inclusive and antihierarchical, welcoming everyone's participation and contributions regardless of formal training and expertise.

(Ho 2009, 172–173)

In a way, Shepp's "alternative" jazz education is a reflection of Black Studies' "alternative" position in academic study generally. Other African American musicians, such as Bill Dixon, Yusef Lateef, Marion Brown, and Stanley Cowell filled similar roles at other institutions,⁸ yet their efforts have gone largely unnoticed in the literature of jazz education itself.

Since the 1980s, jazz education has grown significantly and now forms a core component of American musical academia, with coursework and degrees offered at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral level throughout the country.⁹ While it might be too much to say that the field is no longer marginalized in relation to the Western European canon, it is likely no longer "the academy's neglected stepchild," as David Baker noted in a 1965 essay. Indeed, since this period, jazz education has begun to make its way into the pre-college level as well, with numerous high school and middle school bands active around the US. By 1994, there were at least 120 "bona fide" jazz programs in the US (Jazz in America 2017). The current online database of jazz education maintained by *JazzTimes* lists more than 2,200 programs; although some international programs are included, the vast majority of these are in the US (*JazzTimes* 2017). Of these, nearly 500 are university or college level programs, with the remainder at the high school level, or community arts programs. And while most scholarly work on jazz education has focused on the field's impact on the educational institution, it should also be noted that jazz education's impact on jazz at large has been, as David Ake notes, "among the most powerful forces shaping understandings of jazz" in the US (Ake 2002, 112).

This is not to say the jazz education is an entirely American enterprise. Indeed, jazz programs have become an important part of music education in a number of countries. Canadian, British, and Australian institutions have been especially active in establishing courses of study in jazz. Many major Canadian university music programs now offer some kind of instruction in jazz. In the United Kingdom, jazz programs have been established at some of the leading arts conservatories in the nation, including the Royal Academy of Music, Guildhall, and perhaps most notably, the Leeds College of Music, whose jazz offerings began in the 1960s. Similar initiatives can be found in numerous institutions both in Europe and around the globe. And with such developments will come different perspectives on how jazz is learned and taught.

Jazz Education and the New Jazz Studies

Given the intense activity in jazz education, and its increasing impact on different jazz communities, it is somewhat surprising that more scholarly attention has not been paid to these developments. Indeed, the intersections of jazz and formal institutional learning structures provide a rich field of inquiry. And yet, as I discovered when embarking on my initial doctoral research on this topic in the late 1990s, little critical work was being done in this area. Over the course of the last fifteen years or so, however, this has begun to change. In the remainder of this chapter, I will examine this emerging literature, with an eye toward identifying and analyzing major trends and themes in what I refer to as "critical jazz pedagogy." Many of these works have drawn explicitly on earlier work that critically engaged with musical learning; studies by Henry Kingsbury (1988), Bruno Nettl (1995), and Christopher Small (1977) have been particularly influential on this literature.

One of the first works to critically engage with jazz education in a sustained, systemic manner was written by David Ake, a pianist who completed a doctorate in musicology at UCLA under the guidance of Robert Walser (among others), one of the leading figures in the "new musicology"

movement of the 1980s and 1990s. Ake's dissertation, which was later turned into his widely read book *Jazz Cultures*, contains a chapter which addressed the place of John Coltrane in the academic context. Specifically, Ake argues that jazz educators have largely misread Coltrane's overall artistic output, focusing on works such as "Giant Steps," while largely ignoring his later avant-garde focused efforts. Noting Coltrane's "exalted position" in jazz education programs, Ake argues that those aspects of Coltrane's work that do not reinforce specific, measurable standards of performance are often "brushed aside as aberrations or ignored altogether" in the pedagogy of jazz (Ake 2002, 113). Ake's study, I suggest, had enormous implications for both jazz education, with its pointed (and apt) critique of prevailing practice, and for New Jazz Studies, which had largely avoided jazz education as a topic of inquiry to this point.

On a personal note, encountering Ake's scholarship as a doctoral student in ethnomusicology who had been trained as a "jazz educated" musician¹⁰ was something of a revelation, and was very influential on my own work in this area. Ake's work led to my own dissertation (Prouty 2002) on the culture of jazz education. This in turn led to several articles in which I explore different aspects of jazz education from a critical viewpoint, including new perspectives on the field's history (Prouty 2005), the problematic nature of understanding of jazz as oral tradition (Prouty 2006), the dynamics of power within jazz education (Prouty 2008), and issues with the production of jazz history textbooks (Prouty 2010). Studies such as these formed the core of the discussion of jazz education in my 2012 book *Knowing Jazz*.

Another notable study appeared in *Music Education Research* in 2006. Written by Tony Whyton, the article is a call for jazz educators, and music educators broadly, to approach their subject with an understanding of the uniqueness of the music and the problems that it poses for formalized instruction, to be "critically aware," as Whyton himself states (Whyton 2006, 67). In particular, Whyton tackles the notion of jazz's pedagogical "mythology," a set of deeply held beliefs about the music that seem to place it at odds with formal study. At the same time, Whyton's critiques established discourses in jazz education as potentially limiting a broad-based perspective. In the conclusion of his article, he calls for "a more inclusive, comparative, and interdisciplinary approach to jazz studies, where the canon is subject to continual appraisal and discursive methodologies" (Whyton 2006, 80), which is, I might suggest, an admirable goal for both jazz education and jazz scholarship.

Whyton's article is, like Ake's study, an important intervention into the discourse of jazz education. In particular, there are two areas where I suggest Whyton's work is of importance. First, it is aimed at educators themselves, as evidenced by its appearance in a major music education journal. Second, Whyton, as a British jazz scholar, connects the discourse of the field to a non-American context, making reference to developments in the UK. As noted above, the majority of the literature on jazz education focuses on developments in American institutions; Whyton reminds us that this is only part of the story, and his work thus serves as a model for other non-American scholars to turn the lens on their own institutions and learning systems.¹¹

In 2010, David Ake returned to the topic of jazz education in his second book, *Jazz Matters*. In his chapter "Rethinking Jazz Education," Ake addresses the critical discourse of jazz education emerging from within jazz studies (old and new), highlighting what could be regarded as a tendency toward dismissal and derision. Like Whyton, Ake also engages in a critical discussion of "myths" that are employed to marginalize jazz education, from jazz being an exclusively "urban" music, to the perceived "unhipness" of formal study, to notions of jazz and innate creativity, and finally to attitudes toward subsidization of the arts. For Ake, criticism of jazz education that are derived from such discourses are misplaced; more to the point, jazz education and *jazz* are largely one and the same, and efforts to create a bright line between them miss important connections between "school" and "street." As Ake notes near the end of the chapter, "We need not fear that formal education somehow undermines or embarrasses 'real jazz' or, as Christopher Small suggested, marks the end of jazz as a 'living force'" (Ake 2010, 119).

More recently, Eitan Wilf's *School for Cool* might be the most expansive and focused critical study of jazz education yet produced. Based on his doctoral work in anthropology at the University of Chicago, Wilf's book is a penetrating ethnographic portrait of jazz education, centered on the Berklee College of Music and the jazz program at The New School. Wilf is not reluctant to point out what he sees is a fundamental problem in jazz education, namely, that the enterprise tends to restrict creative practice (the title of Wilf's dissertation was "Swinging Within the Iron Cage"). In particular, he points to what he sees as a "paradox," in that students

strive to inform their playing with teaching and traditions, ideologies, myths, and ideals that they associate with great jazz, in an institutional environment that often entails highly different traditions, ideologies, and ideals.

(Wilf 2014, 13)

Much of Wilf's account is concerned with the ways in which various actors in the institution (most notably students and faculty) attempt to negotiate this paradox, as well as the attendant limitations and difficulties with doing so. Wilf's study is deeply informed, meticulously researched, and deeply grounded in cultural and social theory. Given its somewhat narrow ethnographic focus on Berklee and the New School, two programs which might be said to lie outside mainstream musical academia, its applicability to other contexts might be questionable. Nevertheless, Wilf's study is extremely valuable, addressing important issues facing the field, and grounded in the lived experience of students and teachers.

Other scholars have begun to address jazz learning and teaching in critical, systematic ways. In 2007, *Critical Studies in Improvisation* devoted an entire issue to improvisation and pedagogy; Stephen Lehman and Roger Mantie contributed articles on jazz education-related topics (Lehman 2007; Mantie 2007). In a recent issue of *Jazz Perspectives* Alex Rodriguez writes of his experiences with facilitating an improvisation ensemble as a doctoral student at UCLA, drawing on the work of pioneering ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood and free jazz icon Ornette Coleman (Rodriguez 2015). It is my hope that other scholars will continue to pursue such lines of inquiry, which will benefit both practitioners of jazz education and scholars of jazz more broadly.

Conclusion

Today, jazz education is both firmly established as an integral part of musical education and an important site of study for jazz scholars. That is not to say that the field does not face critical challenges. There is little question that jazz education is overwhelmingly white. It is also overwhelmingly male. These are problems that the field must face up to if jazz education is to be truly inclusive and relevant to future generations of students and teachers. Both of these challenges are widely recognized within the field, yet solutions to such disparities are not seemingly forthcoming. Others point to jazz education's tendency to focus on a relatively narrow range of the music's history (namely, musical developments from 1945 to 1965 or so). These are indeed valid criticisms of the field. That said, canonical narrowness is not unique to jazz. Western art music performance has its own issues of inclusiveness. I would caution against critiques of jazz education that might be more appropriately aimed at institutional musical education at large.

But what is clear is that jazz education can no longer be dismissed as an insignificant side project of a few teachers and students with an interest in the music. Jazz education is inextricably intertwined with jazz outside the academy, and just as there has always been jazz education from the music's earliest days, so too is institutional jazz study fundamentally linked to non-institutional histories and communities. Musicians, students, and teachers should keep this in

mind; distinctions between “school and street” often serve to only further divide an already fragmented jazz community. And jazz scholars will find jazz education to be a rich, deep subject for inquiry, much like the music itself.

Notes

1. The use of the term “jazz studies” itself might be clarified. While many writers have employed the term to refer to humanities-based scholarship (see Gabbard 1995, 2), in the academic context the term has generally been used to refer to performance-oriented programs of studies. Put another way, to major in “jazz studies” at a typical American university, for example, is to major in jazz performance, and to a lesser extent, composition. This convention has been in common use since at least the mid-1970s, when an influential doctoral dissertation by Walter Barr outlined a proposed “jazz studies curriculum.” Barr’s work laid the foundation for guidelines that would eventually be adopted by the National Association of Schools of Music, the main music accrediting body in the United States. See Barr 1974. In this chapter, I refer to performance-oriented courses of study as “jazz education” to avoid confusion between the two applications of the term.
2. The IAJE got its start as the NAJE (National Association of Jazz Educators) in 1968; in 1989, the name was changed again to reflect the growing international nature of the field. In the late 1990s, the name would change yet again, to the International Association for *Jazz Education*, a subtle but (I would suggest) important shift. The IAJE ceased operations in 2008 due to a combination of financial management issues and reduced revenue. I discuss the organization’s history and significance in the final chapter of my book *Knowing Jazz: Community, Pedagogy, and Canon in the Information Age*.
3. David Ake also addresses this topic in his book *Jazz Matters* (2010), which I discuss later in this chapter.
4. *Downbeat* during this period was arguably aimed more directly at an audience of musicians, perhaps more so than today. Its format at the time resembled more of a trade paper than its current manifestation.
5. This name is a reference to Joseph Schillinger, a noted theorist and teacher whose students included Lee Berk, founder of the school.
6. Baker had also been a student at the Lenox School of Jazz, a summer institute held in Western Massachusetts from 1957 to 1960. Lenox attracted a number of young musicians, and its faculty included such figures as George Russell, John Lewis, Jimmy Giuffrè, and Bob Brookmeyer, as well as scholars such as Marshall Stearns and Gunther Schuller.
7. Baker’s systematic approach to pedagogy is easily observed in the numerous pedagogical publications he authored during his long career. One of Baker’s protégés was a saxophonist by the name of Jamey Aebersold, who himself would go on to become arguably the leading producer and publisher of jazz-related teaching and learning materials in the world.
8. For a further discussion of these and other artist-educators, see Hardin (1987).
9. I would suggest that the highly visible and influential neoclassicist movement, spearheaded by Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center, had a major influence on these developments.
10. I received my M.M. in jazz studies from the University of North Texas in 1997.
11. Indeed, recent presentations on pedagogical topics at conferences such as those held under the auspices of the Rhythm Changes research consortium have demonstrated this, featuring papers devoted to jazz education around the world.

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6

SWAN SONGS

Jazz, Death, and Famous Last Concerts

Walter van de Leur

In jazz, more than in any other musical genre, recordings abound that are marketed as the last concert, the last date, the final recording, or some variation on those themes. To name a few: *Last Date* (Eric Dolphy, Fontana 1964), *The Beginning and the End* (Clifford Brown, Columbia 1973), *The Last Waltz* (Bill Evans Trio, Milestone 2000), *His Final Work* (Charles Mingus, Gateway Records 1984), and *Last Testament* (Fats Waller, Drive Archive 1996). There are many more, even though these records do not necessarily offer what their album covers suggest.¹ Indeed, the status of final performances is regularly challenged by other recordings that claim to carry the *true* final notes. For instance, Dolphy's *Last Date* (June 2, 1964) is supplanted by the sessions of June 11, 1964, which surfaced later and have been released as *Unrealized Tapes: The Very Last Recording* (West Wind 1988; reissued as *Last Recordings* [DIW 1988]). Similarly, Stan Getz's nominal *Final Concert Recording* (JVC 1990) was followed by four final concerts recorded in Copenhagen's Jazzhus Montmartre (March 3–6, 1991), issued on Verve as *People Time* (1992), and reissued as the almost inevitable *People Time: The Complete Recordings* (Sunnyside 2010).

At times, existent recordings are repackaged as final recordings, such as *Lionel Hampton Presents the Music of Charles Mingus* (WWLP 1977), which has been reissued as *Charles Mingus: His Final Work* (Blue Vox 1983). Equally, Billie Holiday's 1958 recording with Ray Ellis's orchestra for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), simply titled *Billie Holiday*, was reissued after her death as *The Last Recording*. The appeal of swan songs apparently is such that there is even a fake final album, not merely retitled or mistitled as many other last dates are, but truly doctored to sound like a new find. According to various sources, *Bill Evans Trio: The Very Last Performance at Fat Tuesday's, September 10, 1980* (Domino, also issued as *Bill Evans Trio: Last Note*) in truth brings together a number of recordings which were earlier released on *Turn Out the Stars* in a different order and even at slightly different speeds. *Turn Out the Stars* contains Evans's *Final Village Vanguard Recordings*, the album jacket informs the prospective buyer: to the recording industry the last notes of the real jazz greats can be broken down by venue. There is also a *Last European Concert* by Evans (MSI Music 1980) and *His Last Concert in Germany* (West Wind 1996).

What once was just a performance (be it in the studio or on stage) in hindsight may turn out to be a final performance. This tends to invite listeners to hear the music differently, as the recording accrues new layers of meaning in light of the impending death of the featured star. Hence, Getz's final concerts in Denmark have yielded "a brilliant farewell recording" (Yanow n.d.), a "wonderful testament" (Adcock 2011), and "a passionate coda" (Duda n.d.). The mere fact that these were Getz's ultimate public appearances makes the recording valuable: "It may not be the greatest Getz

on disc, but it's likely the last"—Lange (1992, 42) states in his *Downbeat* review that rates the CD with four out of five stars. Although the vast majority of the songs had been on Getz's recent and not so recent repertoire, Duda feels that they "seem chosen for their emotional content, as if Getz were aware this might be his swan song" (Duda n.d.). To Lange, the record transcends the ordinary, since it is "as much a statement about courage, and perseverance, and creativity defining a life, as it is a musical experience" (1992, 42). Another reviewer, though aware that the earlier *Final Concert Recording* is mislabeled, still hears that record as a "wonderful farewell," too. As reviewer Adcock admits:

Last recordings always carry great poignancy, and there's no exception here [in *People Time*] . . . the sense of finality, mortality, combined with the intimate club setting and a knowledgeable, appreciative audience, makes this a recording to savor more than most.

(Adcock 2011)

The Ghost of Gil: Miles Davis

Critics have felt that poignancy in Miles Davis's July 8, 1991 revisiting of recordings he made with Gil Evans—the late 1940s works collected on *Birth of the Cool* (1957), and the Miles-plus-orchestra-works of *Miles Ahead* (1957), *Porgy and Bess* (1959), and *Sketches of Spain* (1960). The concert was envisioned as a tribute to Gil Evans (who had passed away March 20, 1988), but it is generally seen as Davis's last concert. Virtually every reviewer connects the recording (Warner Brothers 1993) to his passing almost twelve weeks later. That connection in itself is not remarkable, but it shapes how commenters assess the concert. As with Getz's example above, its meaning is partly derived from the notion that the concert was Davis's final public appearance (even though it was not), which encourages a search for deeper meanings. For Johnson (2010), the concert "retains an aura of closure, a last act in the epic musical life of Miles Davis." According to CD-Universe, "it's as if he [Davis] knew that, in a spiritual sense, he had to face this music one last time" ("Miles and Quincy: Live at Montreux"). Elsewhere the reviewer observes that Davis has "come full circle," which suggests that there was nothing left to do for him after this performance: he was ready to go. *Entertainment Weekly* called *Live at Montreux* "simply the most exquisite music of tragedy this side of a New Orleans funeral" (Hajdu 1993).

Reportedly, Davis had reservations about doing the concert (Tingen 2001, 26), but was lured into it by otherworldly powers. Davis's trumpet-double Wallace Roney provided the details: "I'm telling you that Miles told me he did the concert because he had looked in the mirror and saw Gil [Evans] and Gil had told him that he got to do it" (Cole 2005, 426). Perhaps there was a more earthly motivation for Davis to revisit this material: "When asked directly why he was effectively going back on his principles and playing the gig, Davis answered, 'in the first place, they offered me a lot of money'" (Cook 2007, 316). Others maintain that Davis had a master plan and saw to it that through this record "his final breaths on the horn would call out from the afterlife to silence us all again" (Tate 1993).

The reviewer at CD-Universe has Davis practically dying on stage, like a mythological warrior on the battle field: "and at the end, when confronted with the incantory, guitar-like grandeur of 'Solea,' Miles rises one last time to the challenge of these ancient themes, going out like a champion . . . with his boots on" ("Miles and Quincy: Live at Montreux" [ellipses in original]). But Davis was not dead yet and neither did he play the concert "just a few weeks before he was hospitalized for the last time" (Hajdu 1993). In fact, Davis continued to tour

Europe on a heavy schedule that had him playing almost every other day in the month of July. He did a reunion concert in Paris at La Grande Halle De La Villette with a number of his former sidemen, played at the North Sea Jazz Festival in the Netherlands, did two concerts at the Nice Jazz Festival, played with Pat Metheny in Rome, and ended his tour in Vienna by way of Luxembourg. Back in the United States he appeared at three more concerts, including his final concert at the Hollywood Bowl, August 25, 1991 (Werner 2016). Miles Davis passed away September 28, 1991.

I'm Old and Going: Ben Webster

Final concerts tend to vividly stand out to those who were present and are rife with anecdotes that pre-shade the ensuing fatal events. A case in point is Ben Webster's last concert in Leiden, the Netherlands. It has all the necessary ingredients: a bootleg recording, prophetic last words, and for those-in-the-know, the passing of the flame.

Thursday, September 6, 1973, was a pretty warm late-summer night, and Ben Webster played in jazz club De Twee Spiegels (The Two Mirrors, founded 1971), with the Irv Rochlin Trio, with Rochlin on piano, Henk Haverhoek on double bass, and Peter Ypma on drums. According to Ben Walenkamp, founder and owner of the De Twee Spiegels, Webster was not well.

I had some one-hundred people inside and about the same number outside. The performance has become historic, not because he played so well—on the contrary: the man was not in shape. Perhaps he actually couldn't play at all. . . . Had this not been his final concert, it would have been one to forget fast, really fast.

(cited in Mentink 2009, 138)²

The concert had been recorded on an Akai stereo audiocassette recorder by one of the students in the audience, Ton Olde Monnikhof. No one had thought much of the tape, but it took on a new meaning when Dutch TV announced on September 20, 1973 that Ben Webster had passed away at Amsterdam St. Lucas Hospital. "We were devastated," Walenkamp recalls, "but we had run a tape and immediately thought that there might be some nice little business in this" (cited in Mentink 2009, 141). Decades later, Walenkamp (who reportedly received a meager 290 guilders for the tape) regretted the recording: "That LP-record . . . was terrible. [The bootleg tape recording] was of course never intended for an LP" (Deroose 2010). Pianist Rochlin was shocked when Record company EMI/Bovema called him to announce they had a tape of the concert. "I said, 'you shouldn't release that, Ben didn't play well at all.' But the guy said 'I'm not calling you to ask for permission, we have secured the rights already. I'm calling you to ask for the titles of the pieces.'" (cited in Mentink 2009, 141)

Adding insult to injury, his name was misspelled on the record sleeve as Irv Rocklin. Looking back, drummer Peter Ypma said: "It was a bad quality thing, and they still made a record out of it, with the help of all kinds of professional gear, a double-LP, mind you, and it went all over the world. . . . I was deeply embarrassed by the quality." (Deroose 2010)

In sum, Webster was not well, his playing was at times painfully inadequate, the recording balance was off, and the tape was technically inferior, but the value was that it captured Webster's last notes. As an extra, it contained his final words in public, too. At the end of the concert, Webster took the microphone and shared a childhood memory with the audience, which in hindsight resonated with overtones.

Thank you. Now, what I would like to say because all of you are youngsters, and I heard, when I was a kid, from an old [inaudible], he said, yeah: “Son, you are young and growing, and I’m old and going, so have your fun while you can.” [audience approval.] Say it . . . say it in Dutch, my man. [Audience member: “Can you repeat it?”] Yeah, [inaudible]. You’re young and growing, and I’m old and going, so have your fun while you can.

Webster’s closing remarks added further mystique to the concert, and this certainly has not been missed by his biographers. Frank Büchmann-Møller, for instance, hears the recording of the concert quite differently than the original performers Rochlin and Ypma. To him, Webster

played very emotionally this evening. . . . It is as if he senses that this is to be his last performance. . . . After the last tune, and following the applause, Ben addresses the audience. The young audience seems to understand him, and they applaud. However, they have no way of knowing just how prophetic this short speech would be.

(Büchmann-Møller 2006, 317–318)

Indeed, Webster’s words helped to construct the mythology of the event. “If I have to believe the people, some 1,000 were present [that night],” said Walenkamp (Deroose 2010).

Mentink’s book on the history of jazz in Leiden dedicates five pages to the concert and its makeshift recording. Two eyewitnesses, Bert Schrier and Pim Ziegelaar, are pictured holding their original *Last Concert* LPs. Schrier remembers it clearly: “it is etched in my memory, I see everything sharply: Wednesday September 6, 1973 [actually Thursday]. I think daily of the last concert of Ben Webster, the tenor giant” (Mentink 2009, 142). He continues to list some of the pieces Webster played, complete with durations (“no piece shorter than 6:45”): “They played ‘Straight, No Chaser’ as last number, which lasted 12 minutes and 45 seconds” (Mentink 2009, 142). Ziegelaar quotes Webster’s closing remark verbatim and assigns himself a voice in the sonic document: “the silence is longer than his [Webster’s] words, then there are the applause and cheers well into the mouse holes of the bar. . . . I hear myself over the crowd: ‘Yeah man’” (Mentink 2009, 143).

However, the LP does not give a complete registration of the evening. In the audience were tenorist Bob Rigter and his spouse Jasperina Rigter, who took the color slides that night that were used for LP cover. Bob Rigter recounts how Webster was not feeling well at the end of the second set and when he returned from the bar, he asked Rigter to play. Rigter did not want to; he said he did not play anymore and he didn’t have his horn with him, but Webster gave him his neck strap and “Ol’ Betsy” and insisted Rigter played the blues, which he did. “After I had given his instrument back, he played for a while. It didn’t go that well. Then he got up and gave a little speech. . . . The next day he was hospitalized” (Deroose 2010). The story also figures in Rigter’s novel *Jazz in de Oostzee* (*Jazz in the Baltic Sea*). Here, Webster specifically seeks him out in the audience while he repeats his childhood memory. A couple of days later, Rigter’s wife—heavily pregnant—brings up the evening.

Did you hear . . . you should start playing again. Have your fun while you can.
He wasn’t talking to me. He was addressing those students. They are young.
You got shit in your ears?
How’s that?
Son is singular, goofball.

(Rigter 1995, 105)

Rigter indeed went back to playing. What is more, the Rigers's son Simon, who "witnessed the last concert of Ben Webster prenately, and was born on Webster's dying day" (Rigter, n.d.) has become a professional tenor saxophonist, too. While the Rigers themselves refrain from making the all too obvious connection, others find the suggestion too compelling to resist: "Two weeks later . . . at the foot of the old Westertoren [Western Church Tower] Webster blows his last, soundless, short melodic ostinato, and baby Simon Rigter sighs deeply for the first time. A heavy task awaits him" (Ziegelaar, quoted in Mentink 2009, 143).

The Beginning and the End: Clifford Brown

Like Webster's closing remarks, those of Clifford Brown issued on *The Beginning and the End* have become part of the jazz canon. According to the jacket, the record gives "the first and last recorded performances" of this much-celebrated trumpet player, who died in a car crash at the age of twenty-five. On the bootleg recording Brown addresses the audience: "Thank you very much, you make me feel so wonderful. It's been a pleasure being here but I really must go now, it's so hot." These words have not failed to move listeners: "Brown's death was one of the great tragedies in jazz history and his 'goodbyes' to the audience are ironic and, in retrospect, quite sad; don't listen to them twice" (Yanow n.d.). Or: "Listen to the promise contained in the last song Clifford ever played just hours before that promise was snuffed out on the Pennsylvania Turnpike" (Aaron 2012). Strikingly, like Webster's final words, those of Brown were captured on a bootleg recording, made unbeknownst to him. Still, listeners tend to hear them as prophetic statements by musicians who had the premonition that this would be their last time in public and therefore are addressing a far larger audience. To trumpeter Christian Scott, Brown "sort of says a farewell to the world" (Ellis 2013).

However, the date of the supposed final concert is hazy. Is it from June 25, 1956, as the liner notes would have it (hours before Brown died in a car accident), or rather from May 31, 1955? Saxophonist Billy Root (1934–2013), who played with Brown on the recorded concert, has challenged the date on the issued recording as "a lie" (Rusch 1990), because he was on tour with Stan Kenton the night Brown died and could not possibly have played the gig. That has not necessarily changed people's views. "[Phil] Schaap, a jazz historian who has studied Brown's career as closely as anyone, says there is nothing—aside from Root's statement—to prove that the bootleg tape was made in 1955," writes the *Washington Post* (Schudel 2006).

To put an end to what has become a controversy, Don Glanden has looked into the issue for his documentary *Brownie Speaks*. "One very important part of our research has to do with the details surrounding Clifford's death" (Schermer 2014), and therefore Glanden tracked down Ellis Tollin, the co-owner of Music City and the drummer on the tape, who provided him with Music City newsletters that would confirm that the recording indeed took place on the night of Brown's fatal accident. Much to Glanden's surprise, "far from proving that the Columbia date was accurate, the newsletters proved the opposite" (Glanden 2014, 14), since they were dated May 31, 1955 and June 7, 1955. Tollin's letters bore out what Root had been insisting all along: "they took a tape and it was like . . . maybe a year before he [Brown] passed away" (cited in Rusch 1990, 8). Possibly Brown did play again at Music City on the night he died, but that concert was not recorded. Glanden: "almost everyone we talked to mixed up the night of the recording [May 31, 1955] with the night Clifford was killed [June 27, 1956], so they got the wrong tunes and the wrong personnel" (Schermer 2014). Where for Schrier and Ziegelaar the memories of Webster's last concert seem to be shaped both by the concert and the LP, for "nearly all of the people" interviewed for *Brownie Speaks* the recording fully overwrote their actual recollections of the concert, even if they had played with him that night. Neither Ellis Tollin nor Mel "Ziggy" Vines (tenor sax), Sam Dockery (piano), and Ace Tisone (bass) ever publicly challenged the date of the Music City concert as issued on *The Beginning and the End*.

The Long Fall: Chet Baker

Chet Baker's final hours have gone into public memory quite differently. Baker's swan song wasn't a last concert like Webster's, nor a concert misdated as final, like Brown's, but a final concert that never took place. Baker was scheduled to perform in the Singer Concertzaal in Laren, the Netherlands, with Archie Shepp and his quartet for a live radio broadcast on May 12, 1988, but he didn't show up. His behavior was notoriously erratic because of his heroin addiction and he had missed other concerts before, but this absence accrued relevance in light of the ensuing events. In the early hours of Friday, May 13, Baker was found dead on the pavement in front of the Hotel Prins Hendrik, Prins Hendrikkade 55 in Amsterdam, next to a metal pin that was part of the vertical sliding window of his hotel room. According to biographer De Valk (2007), it was a warm night and Baker must have opened the window, also known as a sash window or a guillotine window. Once opened, the upper part has to be fixated with a metal pin that dangles from a chain. Baker, in all likelihood high on drugs, must have sat in the open window, lost his balance, and grabbed the pin, but to no avail. Contrary to some reports (for example Koert 2011), his absence at the concert had nothing to do with his fatal fall. He died well after the gig ended.

Many have been fascinated by the events that led to Baker's death. Both his substance abuse and the fatal fall are the cornerstones of most biographies and documentaries, and the titles speak volumes. James Gavin's *Deep in a Dream: The Long Night of Chet Baker*, and Bruce Weber's *Let's Get Lost* evoke a life led in a heroin haze. Others predominantly focus on his death, such as Willem Ouwerkerk's documentary *Chet Baker: The Last Days*, or curiosities such as Michael Naura's audio-project *Chet Baker: Der Lange Sturz* (The Long Fall 2002), "a stage fantasy," in which Naura has Baker hallucinating in the hour before his death. Then there are Bill Moody's jazz murder mysteries, loosely centered around the deaths of various musicians. In *Looking for Chet Baker* (Moody 2002), the book's hero digs "into the mysterious death of Chet Baker" (Moody 2014). The whodunit has been published with different covers that show Chet Baker in the still of an open window, or a trumpet on the pavement. (Another Moody crime novel, *Sound of the Trumpet* [Moody 1997], evolves around "recordings purported to be the lost tapes of Clifford Brown" [Moody 2014].) Even the title of Baker's posthumously published, unfinished autobiography is morbid, given his death: *As Though I Had Wings: The Lost Memoir* (1998). In the list of Baker-related oddities, we would not want to miss David Wilcox's *My Old Addiction*, also known as *Chet Baker's Unsung Swan Song*, a piece that takes its inspiration from "what may have been going through Chet Baker's mind that fateful night in Amsterdam" (Leemans 2010).

Jeroen De Valk's *Chet Baker: His Life and Music* is one of the few publications that carry a more factual title. The author seeks to provide a counter-narrative to the by-now canonized stories of the junkie-musician and tries to debunk the conspiracies that surround his death. De Valk has carefully researched Baker's death, although he feels the topic is overrated. Baker "fell out of the window only once, while he made music professionally for forty years" (De Valk 2013, 18). To the Amsterdam police, Baker's fall was by all means an accident. Murder has been ruled out since Baker's hotel room was locked from the inside, the window had fallen shut without the pin to keep it open, and there were no signs of a fight. All his valuables were still there. Suicide seems unlikely, too. Why would one jump with a window-pin in hand? Amsterdam police-inspector Bloos [pronounce as in hose] said that given the drugs found in his room, Baker "maybe thought he could fly" (De Valk 2007, 14). De Valk's championing of Baker's music and his quest for a more rational assessment of his life and death has had little success, he complains in an issue of *Jazz Bulletin* ("25 years after the fall," the cover somewhat infelicitously reads). A case in point is Robert Brudeau's 2009 film short *The Deaths of Chet Baker*, in which a Chet Baker look-alike acts out the possible scenarios that made him fall: accident, suicide, murder. In just under three minutes, Baker goes out of the window three times.

Conclusion

The narratives spun around the final concerts of Webster, Baker, Davis, and Brown reinforce different tropes. All are iconic figures in jazz, but they occupy quite separate spaces. Ben Webster and his “Ol’ Betsy” are authentic and profound; he radiates feeling, warmth, and truth. That they have witnessed Webster’s final performance instills deep pride in local jazz fans, and the accounts they have cultivated around the event lend it authenticity and significance. Webster has become theirs to a certain extent: the Leiden fans share male-bonding stories about urinating with him outside the club during breaks (Mentink 2009, 143). His alcohol addiction is viewed amiably and is the source for good-natured anecdotes. Webster, even when drunk and terminally ill, somehow remained in control. His fellow musicians were painfully aware that he played badly toward the end—which is denied by his biographer—but his music somehow still expresses a deep human understanding. He is the wise old man who foresees his death and maybe his spirit has moved on in a local jazz musician. It won’t get any better than that. Webster’s final concert has affected the lives of those who were present that fateful night. Twenty-seven years later Rigter, Ypma, Haverhoek, and Rochlin (present, but not playing) re-enacted the event in the Twee Spiegheles (Deroose 2010).

Chet Baker, by contrast, was controversial. He was the cool, James Dean look-alike, who true to film-noir plots tragically destroyed himself and died violently. Both as a musician and a man, Baker didn’t know what he was doing. He is seen by many as a fraud who couldn’t read music and had no knowledge of chords, an irresponsible junkie whose music was shallow and subordinate to his dangerous lifestyle. Baker’s socially unacceptable heroin addiction was about giving up control, and song titles that play on that theme are used as titles for books and documentaries: *Deep in a Dream*, *Let’s Get Lost*. The final decade of Baker’s life—when according to De Valk he played some of his best concerts and record dates—tends to be overlooked by most of his biographers, partly because it played out in Europe. That his fall was an accident doesn’t quite fit the script, and consequently commentators have tended to discount the evidence. Baker’s life and music continue to spark controversy, and the memorial plaque on the Amsterdam Hotel Prins Hendrik underlines that: “His music lives on for those willing to hear and feel.”

In terms of controversiality, Miles Davis stands somewhere between the genuinely loved Ben Webster and the mistrusted Chet Baker. *Kind of Blue* (1959) is arguably the best-selling record in jazz and Davis’s recordings with Gil Evans have reached a large audience, too. Yet, his public persona was that of the “angry man of jazz” who arrogantly played with his back to his fans and did not make nice conversation. Furthermore, much as he has been hailed for his work with his famous quintets in the 1950s and 1960s, Davis’s move to rock-jazz, fusion, and pop covers in the final decades of his career have not fared well with many critics. His much-lauded innovative stance backfired when he moved in directions deemed too commercial. Stanley Crouch called Davis “the most brilliant sellout in the history of jazz” in a rant in the *New Republic* (1990). Miles’s one-off revisiting of earlier material at Montreux is welcomed almost with a sense of relief, and many view this break with his own do-not-look-back doctrine as a sign. Given Davis’s frail health, it is not hard to figure out the symbolism of this unexpected turn. The concert is understood as a musical pilgrimage to his earlier now-uncontested successes, a form of penance to right his noisy wrong turns since *Bitches Brew*. At Montreux, it seems, Miles came to terms with his legacy so he could safely leave this earth. However, that script is contradicted by the actual circumstances. First of all, Davis did not mastermind the concert, but was lured into it by Quincy Jones, who had been trying to persuade him for a long time. Second, even though his health was fragile, Davis’s “life came to an end faster than anyone expected” (Cook 2007, 321). Third, Montreux was not his swan song, since he continued to tour.

Clifford Brown was a young, deeply loved, clean-living, brilliant promise who, unlike the other musicians discussed, died “untimely,” his life nipped in the bud. Brown’s career spanned

four years and a couple of months, which makes every recorded snippet valuable. That his final concert, played hours before he was so brutally wiped out on the road, is recorded allows listeners to hear him play to the very last moment. We may find comfort in knowing that every valuable note is preserved, and his foreboding closing remarks add an extra layer of tragedy. The dissonant voice of eyewitness and fellow musician Billy Root, who has repeatedly pointed out that the record did not contain Brown's last concert, has been brusquely brushed aside by historians such as Schaap. Brown's real last recording, a lo-fi air check with the Clifford Brown–Max Roach Quintet from the Continental Restaurant, Norfolk, VA (June 18, 1956), lacks any magical ingredients. Reissued as *The Last Concert* in 2005 (Rare Live), it has been welcomed by fans and critics as an interesting document, but without any of the drama that met *The Beginning and the End*.

Notes

1. Last/Final Recording(s): Bunny Berigan (Allegro 1954), Billie Holiday (MGM 1959), Oscar Pettiford (Jazzland 1962), Bobby Henderson (Chiaroscuro Records 1970), Louis Armstrong (RCA 1979), Mingus (Atlantic 1980), Sonny Stitt (Kingdom 1983), Mel Lewis (Delta Music 1990), Artie Shaw (Music Masters 1991), Dizzy Gillespie (Telarc 1992), Glenn Miller (Star Digital 1995), Annette Hanshaw (Sounds of Yesterday 2003), Frank Rosolino (Sea Breeze 2006), Hank Jones (Sony 2015). Last/Final (Studio) Session(s): Charlie Shavers (Black and Blue 1970), Lee Morgan (Blue Note 1972), Elmo Hope (Inner City Records 1977), Jelly Roll Morton (Commodore 1977), Grant Green (Atlantis 1978), Sting and Gil Evans (Jazz Door 1992), Wynton Kelly (Delmark 1993), Django Reinhardt (Essential Jazz Classics 2007), Sonny Stitt (Savoy 2009), Leo Parker (Phono 2015). Last/Final Concert(s)/Tour: Ben Webster (Bovema 1973), Art Pepper (Tofrec 1982), Modern Jazz Quartet (Atlantic 1989), Miles Davis (Laserlight 1997), Monk (Rare Live Recordings 1999), Stan Getz (JVC 2000), Rosemary Clooney (Concord 2002), Clifford Brown (Rare Live Recordings 2005), Eddie Harris (Act Music 2006), Chet Baker (ENJA 1988).
2. All translations are by the author.

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7

JAZZ ON RADIO

Tim Wall

Radio and jazz emerged into twentieth-century culture at more or less the same time. The “jazz age” is also the point at which radio became a domestic medium. By the end of the 1920s, music was the primary code of radio and radio the primary commodity form of music. Using five moments in jazz history, this chapter reveals the distinctive role that radio took in husbanding jazz in the twentieth century. The first is the point that radio is fashioned from wired and wireless technologies and jazz appears as a vibrant cultural phenomenon. In the decade through to the Second World War, radio and jazz mature as cultural forms, but jazz is seen by radio as a “problematic music.” In the postwar period jazz faces an identity crisis, as trads and moderns battle to define what jazz is, and radio attempts to serve both sensibilities within a mass culture. The final two moments deal with the rest of the century, in which jazz is in crisis as a popular music, but has become a diverse, global cultural form and radio highlights national varieties of jazz, and then finally reformats the music as smooth jazz.

This brief history of jazz on twentieth-century radio draws upon my own research along with the most notable contributions of others. This work reveals that radio is more than a channel through which jazz flows; it is an active mediator, selecting what could be heard of jazz and contributing to defining what jazz actually is. Radio researchers often start with the certainties of standard jazz histories, while jazz historians tend to take the rather reductive assumptions of radio as an institutional form. This includes the overstated case that radio ignored jazz for most of its history. There are important international comparisons to be made, and so the chapter focuses on jazz and radio in the USA and in the UK as they offer good contrasts in the way jazz developed and radio took its institutional form, and show that the relationship between radio and jazz is never obvious or inevitable.

Jazz and Radio Emerge Together

Court Carney (2009) makes the case that 1920s was central to the diffusion of New York-style jazz across the US because of the co-location of Manhattan’s show business orchestras, the Harlem Renaissance, and the emerging radio networks. He does, though, assume that jazz and radio were fixed cultural forms and that the former was merely distributed by the latter. More productively, we should think of radio as a bundle of wired and wireless technologies, owned by diverse groups in pursuit of a purpose for the patents they controlled. These technologies would eventually form the nation’s radio and telephony systems, but the earliest proposition was that they could distribute

live music from remote entertainment venues into people's homes. Correspondingly, what we retrospectively call New York-style jazz was, at the time, diverse music for the jazz-agers.

This can most clearly be seen in the early career of Duke Ellington. Elsewhere, I explore how Ellington's appearance on radio represents three early experiments in what radio could be, and mediated different meanings of Duke and his music (Wall, 2012). The band's earliest Cotton Club broadcasts, between 1927 and 1929 on the local Manhattan-based radio station WHN, were one instance of over fifty "remotes" relayed from venue to a station using wired point-to-point technology, and transmitted from station to New York using wireless broadcast technology. As Doerksen (1999) details, WHN was notorious for its perceived failure to provide culturally uplifting material; a perception perpetuated, no doubt, by its night-time origination of broadcasts from black Harlem. Given these facts, it is hard to sustain the argument made by his biographers that Ellington's place on WHN represented recognition of his genius or his popularity. While these first Ellington broadcasts shared an otherwise inaudible music culture for those outside small Harlem clubs, they also embodied the marginalized nature of jazz during the 1920s.

The Ellington band's 1929 WABC Cotton Club broadcasts are usually presented as the point at which Ellington became nationally famous, mainly because WABC became the originating station of the CBS network and later part of the radio network oligopoly. These appearances offered very little more exposure than WHN when the CBS network had twenty participating stations, the most eastern of which made the Cotton Club relays available in the middle of the night. The importance of the CBS link lies much more in that the network's broadcasts represented the "cultural uplift" programming WHN was criticized for neglecting. The image of Ellington as a debonair musical leader cultivated by his manager, Irving Mills, was enabled and reinforced by his position on WABC. And the early morning timing of the broadcasts re-enforced the commitment of the male radio and jazz "listeners-in" Susan Douglas (1999) discusses. Radio, nevertheless, ran a poor second to records in presenting jazz to the aficionado group who became its stalwart admirers and advocates.

It is Ellington's 1930s Cotton Club relays over WJZ and WEAf, the two flagship stations of the National Broadcasting Corporation's Blue and Red networks, which defined and disseminated the essence of Ellington as the master of negotiating the competing demands of the American entertainment music industry and the conflictual race politics of the time. The band was leaving the Cotton Club for Broadway and continental tours, but the radio shows remained a key part of a multimedia Ellington. The WJZ and WEAf broadcasts made up part of NBC's strategy of cross-media synergy with RKO Pictures. The movie company's attempt to make the radio comic double-act Amos and Andy into film stars through *Check and Double Check* (1930), featured Ellington and his band in a marginal role. Again, this does not represent Ellington's widespread popularity (as his biographers would have it), but more the fact that Ellington appeared at midnight on the same radio station as prime time Amos and Andy. The band's bit parts provide cultural context to a class-conflict storyline that points to the role of jazz as cultural shading within narratives of American life. The wired technology that had made the remote jazz broadcast possible now became the foundation of network radio and, for a time, enabled Ellington to be heard in homes across the US, as long as the listener was prepared to stay up. The Ellington band operated simultaneously across entertainment domains—including Broadway, Harlem nightclubs, New York radio, and American film—and these reveal the place of Ellington's music in an emerging multimedia corporate cultural industry.

The contrast with the treatment of jazz in radio in Britain could not be more marked. Here the BBC dominated broadcasting: first from 1922 as a company owned by receiver manufacturers and then, from 1927, as a public corporation. While writers like Jim Godbolt (1986) have argued that the corporation's attitude to jazz was "haughty," "niggardly," and "aloof" (98, 109, 200), a case can easily be made that jazz was the most broadcast form of music in the early BBC. While this

may have perversely convinced later British jazz fans that the BBC transmitted the wrong sort of jazz in the 1920s, it does not detract from the fact that the BBC was one of the key media through which jazz became British.

Jazz was present on the BBC from the very first broadcast on January 1, 1923, and in February 1923 Marius B. Winter and his orchestra featured a program of British jazz. By April 1923, The Savoy Havana Band and Savoy Orpheans were regularly relayed via the BBC's 2LO London station from the Mayfair hotel in London that gave the bands their names. Originally a confederation of local stations with some shared programming, the BBC made good use of wired and wireless technologies to relay jazz beyond the capital, to a listenership outside the confines of the upper-class attendees at West End hotel nightspots. From 1926, the sometimes daily jazz performances closed the BBC's broadcast day and could be heard in large parts of Britain. This nationalization of a London-based culture was at the very heart of the public service ideal of the BBC and is far more significant in understanding British broadcasting than the widely stated position that a Reithian BBC looked down on jazz. A BBC Dance Orchestra was established in 1928 to produce jazz-influenced music, years before the BBC founded a classical orchestra.

The differences between the US 1920s radio mediation of jazz as the Ellington band in a Harlem speakeasy and the British mediation of exotically named bands in a Mayfair hotel are telling, but not the full story. They were only two of a wider range of attempts to define jazz in this period. Paul Whiteman's 1924 concert at Aeolian Hall, New York, presented a third version of jazz, tracing the music as a development from a primitive music to symphonic jazz, reaching its zenith in the first performance of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" (Osgood, 1926). Behind the exoticizing names of the Savoy bands, the musical sensibilities of the BBC relays mixed this American symphonic jazz with the sounds of novelty entertainment usually associated with music hall and light music. And for all the commitment within the BBC to jazz, it was positioned within the BBC variety department, rather than the music department, awkwardly pulled between ideas of novelty entertainment and cultural uplift broadcasting.

Catherine Parsonage (2005) has argued that "the BBC was responsible for creating and disseminating a stylistically unified music, suppressing the whole spirit of individuality that was to be central to the future development and longevity of jazz" (49). Such views are primarily based in a retrospective redefinition of what constituted jazz and confuse the messy development of the music with the idea that there was an original jazz which became bastardized by commercial trends or the BBC. This was more a cultural space in which the different discourses of what constituted jazz, as art, folk, and popular forms, were played out, and the BBC contributed to defining the line between what was jazz and what was not-jazz.

Radio and New Definitions of Jazz

In the 1930s, US radio music entertainment was increasingly provided by the now predominant major networks and by the professional studio bands they employed. While owing some debt to the New York jazz orchestras of the previous decade, the resultant dominant radio music has led William Douglas (1999) to exaggeratedly claim that there was little jazz on American radio during the jazz age and the decade that followed. While his position is important in making the argument that network radio marginalized black American culture, it does over-simplify. He rightly points out that after the collapse of the US economy in the late 1920s, record companies and the black vaudeville circuit went bankrupt and less than 10 percent of black Americans listened to the radio at home during the 1930s. However, by the late 1930s new forms of radio programming for African American audiences were emerging, and with them new forms of jazz broadcasting. New systems of buying airtime around product promotion emerged in areas with larger black populations like New York, Chicago, and the Mississippi delta (Hilliard, 1985; Pruter, 1991). However,

Nelson George (1988) argues that buying radio airtime would not have been used to target black consumers, as black baseball leagues would have been a far more productive medium.

There is precious little historical work on this area, but that which does exist suggest broadcasts of black musicians were rare on the radio before the war. Given a relatively free market for radio in the US, and even given the insubstantial economic clout of African Americans, one would expect radio stations to program music of black origin, including jazz, more than was the case. As big band jazz and swing became increasingly popular as radio music, it was white bands that gained the lion's share of the airplay, and even Ellington had difficulties gaining airtime for his records or concerts.

The position of jazz broadcasting in the UK could not be more different. Jazz on BBC radio reveals the struggle within the corporation to define its own sense of cultural purpose, but jazz output was far greater than any other type of programming, including forms of culturally uplift programming widely perceived to be dominant. By the 1930s, 15 percent of programming on each of the BBC's regional and national services took the form of dance band and jazz music and jazz was featured in "gramophone recitals." Again, it is Duke Ellington's BBC broadcasts that reveal much about jazz on British radio of the time, and I have documented the full details elsewhere (2017). The headlines, though, remain telling.

When the BBC broadcast the Ellington Orchestra as part of their British tour in June 1933, they were placed in the primetime slot for variety entertainment within the corporation's output. By programming Ellington in its "music hall" slot, the BBC positioned his music as a particular form of entertainment. Nevertheless, the Ellington band's live BBC appearance instigated an enormous change in opinion about Ellington's music that can be traced by the way his music was presented from that point on. The Ellington Orchestra played a thus-far unrecognized part in the formation of a distinctive BBC form of record-based broadcasting. Just as records were becoming increasingly important to jazz fans as a means through which they could know jazz, commercially released records emerged as a characteristic form of broadcast content. While the earlier form of gramophone programming drew on ideas of the staged presentation of music, the new forms drew on emerging attempts in Europe to document and write the history of jazz. It is notable that all but one of the record-based documentaries broadcast in the 1930s emphasized the notion of a historical jazz lineage to which Ellington was a central contributor. This reflected the central importance of commercially released jazz sound recording within an aficionado practice which is captured in UK's rhythm clubs (see Nott, 2002, 199).

Ellington was also presented at the end of the decade through three international relays from New York in which the Ellington Orchestra is positioned as a swing band, the then-dominant framework for contemporary jazz in the US, and Ellington as a leader of a contemporary popular music. The idea of big band dance music, primarily created for dancing, overshadowed the earlier sense of Ellington as a progressive, trans-genre musical genius championed by the BBC. A divide between historically rooted, record-based jazz programming and live swing concerts became characteristic of British jazz broadcasting through to the late 1940s.

Cristina Baade (2012) expertly explores these strands through the early 1940s in her broader study of BBC popular music broadcasting up to and during the Second World War. For Baade, dance music programming was organized as mainstream entertainment, while jazz was focused in a weekly half-hour *Radio Rhythm Club* from 1940 onwards. *Radio Rhythm Club* built on the idea of the jazz aficionado rhythm clubs, placing recorded jazz in its historical context and establishing a canon of recordings. This activity in itself retrospectively placed most of the BBC's earlier broadcasts, which had firmly been understood as jazz, outside the new definition. Live broadcasts were increasingly focused on British recreations of earlier forms of small group Chicago jazz, notably personified by Louis Armstrong's 1920s recordings (Kenney, 1993). This was to form the foundation for the future bifurcation of jazz fandom in the two decades after 1945.

Trad and Moderns Fight It Out

For Bernard Gendron (1993), the 1940s US jazz world was embroiled in “factional wars” between supporters of “Dixieland” jazz and first those of swing, and latterly with bebop hipsters. This replicated the division in the UK between the Rhythm Clubs’ discophilia-historicism and the British swing fan’s dance pleasures. In Gendron’s account, though, this was a battle between jazz as a folk form and as a modernist art. The advocates of the first were labeled “Moldy Figs” by the champions of the second. Gendron’s account restricts the mediation of postwar jazz culture to the discourse of specialist jazz magazines, reflecting a general paucity of research on how North American radio treated “Dixieland” during this period. This makes tracking the discursive formation of the conflict harder to explore, but opens up ways to explore the relationship between jazz and broadcasters that emerged in both the US and Europe during these decades.

Although modernism was one of the cultural frames through which jazz was understood, in these years a vital new sense of jazz was recast as a progressive form of art, a process recounted brilliantly in Scott DeVeaux (1997)’s history of the birth of bebop. Again, though, radio’s role is restricted to hosting the occasional networked broadcast from a prominent musician. In fact, as Marc Myers (2012) shows, radio was a key reason “why jazz happened,” and the innovators of bebop owed a significant debt to radio, which took a key place in a new political economy of jazz built around tight relationships between record companies, live venues, and radio.

While far from the only person operating at this intersection of these cultural activities, “Symphony Sid” Torin’s 1940s career progression through New York radio stations indexes the rising profile of bop in the US: from the marginal Bronx-based multilingual broadcaster WBNX; through New Jersey-based WHOM, where he presented a Friday-night jazz record show attracting listeners in Harlem, to WMCA presenting the *After-Hours Swing Session* from 1944; and finally in 1949 to WJZ, where his midnight show became part of the emergent ABC network broadcasting. The final move was deemed newsworthy enough in radio circles to be captured in the pages of *Billboard* magazine, which noted that “Torin is acknowledged in the music trade as one of the persons most responsible for the promotion of bebop and modern jazz music into a box office factor” (*Billboard* June 11, 1949, 20); according to William Barlow (1999), these programs “heard in thirty-eight states on the fledgling ABC radio network, made Symphony Sid a household name among jazz aficionados nationwide” (158).

Torin linked the independent record companies which first released bop, to the small nightclubs that featured the musicians, to his own radio broadcasts. For Chuck Haddix (2013), Torin, the “tireless self-promoter” (118), combined playing bop records in 52nd Street clubs with promoting the Royal Roost and with live broadcasts from the opening night onwards. He and promoter Monet Kay organized the first bop concerts in May and June 1945, and Torin can be heard, perhaps in his broadcast style, introducing the numbers on recordings of the June concert uncovered only in 2005 (Gillespie and Parker, 2005). In his Symphony Sid persona, Torin articulated the vivid nightlife of New York’s bop scene, reimagining the Roost as the “metropolitan bopera house,” the atmosphere as “jumpin’,” and the audience as “cats and chicks.” In gratitude, musicians slid Torin’s name into the titles of their compositions.

Charles Hersch (2016) has explored Torin’s identification with black American musicians as a New York Jew as a form of hybrid identity, in which black jive-talking was integrated with Yiddish to construct an “outsider” identity (100–101). These forms of jazz radio imagined a new form of personality-driven, record-based broadcasting, which, combined with Top 40 formats, established the foundation for a dominant form of American music radio that dominated the latter half of the twentieth century (Rothenbuhler and McCourt, 2002). Nevertheless, bebop did not sit in isolation from earlier forms of jazz on north American radio in the 1940s, and as the listings of

performers on a variety of US radio stations in Jaker et al. (1998) demonstrates, Torrin's programs sat side-by-side with the likes of Duke Ellington in the role of jazz DJ!

The British response was again characteristically different. In June 1947, the key jazz show was born on the new BBC Light Program as *The Jazz Club*, later becoming *Jazz Club*, a subtle distinction of nomenclature that would set the parameters of jazz broadcasting for the next thirty-seven years. *The Radio Times* listings captured its production personnel as a Club Secretary, host, and Club President, and introduced it as a program of "improvised music played by some of Britain's leading instrumentalists coming to you from the heart of London's West End." In this formation, the "club" of *Jazz Club* related back to the earlier decade's live broadcasts from Mayfair hotels, rather than the record rhythm clubs of *Radio Rhythm Club*, a deceit reinforced by the role of club host being assigned to British jazz bandleader, Harry Parry. With its Saturday 6.15pm time slot, *Jazz Club* became an accessible part of the BBC's output, which increasingly featured the personality who was to personify the changing sense of jazz in Britain.

Humphrey Lyttelton's first appearance on March 5, 1949 captures his commitment to a new form of British DIY jazz that grew out of attempts by rhythm club members to themselves recreate the music they deified. This form of "trad jazz" became an important form of British pop music, as well as a channel for a new progressive British politics in the 1950s and 1960s (see McKay, 2005). Lyttelton would go on to present *Jazz Club* itself regularly from 1961 (as well as its television off-shoot *Jazz 625* from 1965 onwards, replacing original host Steve Race), and in the late 1950s he formulated "mainstream jazz," which attempted to synthesize some of the instrumental showmanship that became associated with British "trad jazz" with the technical mastery and compositional sophistication of what Brits called modern jazz (Lyttelton, 2007).

However, *Jazz Club* broadcast jazz in the then-modern style, featuring Ronnie Scott and Don Rendell as early as September 1951, later featuring a *Jazz for Moderns* strand within *Jazz Club*, and later a self-standing program in its own right. The BBC's continued commitment to British "trad" produced an October 1957 broadcast of "The Battle of New Orleans" between Ken Colyer's Jazzmen and Terry Lightfoot's New Orleans Jazzmen. The record of the BBC's written archives reveals the internal soul-searching over the division within British jazz fans, which was primarily solved beyond *Jazz Club* by programming jazz over a range of stations and day parts. This is apparent both in the policy documents produced by the BBC and in the schedule itself. Trad was increasingly seen as accessible live British folk pop music broadcast on the *Light Programme*, on weekend early evenings and midweek lunchtimes. Modern jazz was increasingly found on the Third Service, usually dominated by classical and art music, broadcast in the evenings in record-based programs. The shows featured dramatically different presentation styles and different conceptions of the listener as "general interest" and "connoisseur." During the 1960s the BBC even established a formal Jazz Committee to coordinate the BBC's output and defend the BBC against a barrage of criticism from jazz fans. Something of the way the BBC presented trad is apparent in recordings of broadcasts made available online.¹

This model established BBC's jazz broadcasting even after 1967's reorganization: the pop music station Radio One was established, The Light Programme was reimagined as Radio Two, the Third Programme as Radio Three, and the Home Service as Radio Four. *Jazz Club* was initially assigned to Radio One until 1970, when it was repositioned on Radio Two, but became a champion of new British jazz. In February 1960 they broadcast The Joe Harriott Quintet, in December 1965 Neil Ardley's New Jazz Orchestra and, in November of that year, The John Stevens Seven got its first airtime; in the last Radio One broadcast, The Mike Osborne Trio and The Phil Seamen Band were introduced by Humphrey Lyttelton. By the 1970s, the BBC increasingly aimed its jazz output at an older generation, best served by Radio Two, and the commitment of the BBC moved on to progressive rock music, established in a late night *Sounds of the Seventies* strand of evening Radio One output. There were examples of innovative jazz programming and even important radio commissions for leading British jazz composers, but by this time jazz was equally well served by the new

commercial local stations, which met their legally-binding public service Promise of Performance by including a two-hour jazz show on one evening.

In the US, jazz became just one format among twenty-five others, attracting local affluent listeners, struggling with new age stations that were increasingly attracting the core demographic served by jazz stations (Barnes, 1988). Barnes (1988, 35) notes the central difficulty of providing a commercial service to a group of listeners driven by a desire to make internal divisions between sub-genres with “its own highly opinionated coterie of fans, many of whom are unwilling to sit through examples of other styles.”

Aaron Johnson traces important changes in jazz radio through the latter decades of the twentieth century, tracking a consistent movement of jazz programs away from profit-maximizing stations and networks to not-for-profit stations on the “left end of the FM dial” (Johnson, 2014). The reasons embrace changing styles of jazz and their perceived suitability for radio play, the declining popularity of jazz, and its predominance among an older, if more affluent listenership. Johnson examines the relationship of this listener group with public radio and campus radio and argues that jazz becomes a mainstay of NPR broadcasting and alternative ownership and control systems for stations before facing a dramatic decline after public radio re-engineered at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Smooth Jazz and Contemporary Jazz Radio

Jazz radio survived in the closing decades of the twentieth century in US college radio. In a wider study of stations based at US universities, I note that jazz, along with world, alternative, and indie rock, folk, and Americana, was seen as “the traditional college radio ideology: to be an alternative to commercial radio” (Wall, 2007, 41). Jazz programs were the cornerstone of college radio’s specialist shows in the 1980s and 1990s, broadcast in the evenings or at weekends, and presented by knowledgeable volunteers with large record collections. The shows present jazz as a tradition of great artists transcending the commercial music industry. This was particularly apparent in the NPR-affiliated stations, which continue that theme of cultural uplift, using a historical canon and discographic detail.

The most significant change in jazz radio broadcasting, though, took place in the late 1980s. As Simon Barber (2010) notes, from this point, the consumer research studies that had dominated radio formatting and playlisting were put to work in the construction of “smooth jazz” radio formats. These industry processes directly challenge the narratives of the artistic autonomy of ‘jazz greats’ central to dominant jazz histories, and to most of other late twentieth-century jazz radio. This led to significant criticism of smooth jazz among jazz fans and musicians, a proposition no doubt intensified by the huge commercial success of the format. Genre is fluid on smooth jazz stations, accommodating R&B, soul, funk, and crossover pop artists. This openness has helped build a broad audience, making smooth jazz attractive to commercial sponsors and establishing a new notion of what jazz is among a wider group of music listeners.

Barber uses Frank Cody, founder of the data-gathering company Broadcast Architecture, to show how audience research tools established the parameters of the smooth jazz format, drawing on large quantities of jazz-pop that had been unexploited by radio stations up to that point. The comfort of the listener was a defining quality and, indeed, the term “smooth jazz” was coined by a member of a focus group set up by Broadcast Architecture for the Chicago station WNUA. Focus group data gathered through interactive research technologies determined the programming of format radio and stations’ target demographics and taste communities, privileging music that did not challenge or alienate its audience. Conservatism in programming was an inevitable result, affecting the decisions of musicians who were compelled to fit into the format to achieve commercial success.

It was GRP Records, founded by composer Dave Grusin and producer Larry Rosen, that responded most effectively, aiming its releases at smooth jazz stations to reach a broad consumer

base, helped by its partnership with major distributor MCA Records. Barber notes that vocals were crucial in establishing crossover hits, and that in-house editing and sequencing allowed GRP to gain maximum airplay. The smooth jazz stations created a space in which advertising and record promotion could reach large audiences, and this collaborative work between radio and the record industry would continue as algorithmic systems defined the digital era of music consumption.

Conclusion

In a 2016 political-economic study of online music radio, I opened by marking the purchase of Last FM by US corporation CBS in 2007 as seminal point in the development of music radio, symbolizing the moment in which over-the-air conglomerates, that had been built up over the twentieth century, recognized that new services which mixed radio-like services with social media's interactivity and listener data-derived music programming were the future. I noted that "in its very name Last.fm, which was founded in 2002, rhetorically asserted itself to be the ultimate radio station for listeners and the end point of music radio's evolution" (259). Services like Last FM, including Pandora and, later, Spotify, offered a much more personalized music service that specialist music fans, including jazz fans, relished.

The field of jazz programming on radio and radio-like services was almost unrecognizable from the 1920s. The sheer ubiquity of music of all genres in the twenty-first century made the environment in which jazz fans listened-in to the small number of jazz radio programs almost unrecognizable. However, it is far more than scale that has changed. The new music services take account of new technological affordances just as much as 1920s jazz broadcasting utilized new wired and wireless technologies. The interactivity and low fixed cost/high marginal cost of online music services contrasts markedly with the one-way flow and high fixed costs/zero marginal costs of over-the air radio production and defines the economics of the two ways of making jazz available as a radio-like service. This means that the very niche nature and affluence of jazz consumers that characterized jazz audiences after 1970 becomes an asset only realized in the early days of American FM services.

Looking back at nearly a century of jazz on radio, though, it is clear that technology may afford certain forms of music provision but does not determine what is available. And while the changing audience for jazz, just as much as the changing form of jazz, influenced the decisions of radio programmers, it is jazz's place in a discursive field of what jazz means as a cultural form which has been the strongest factor in establishing exactly what jazz radio is. The chapter reveals that what jazz radio was conceived to be, in the first fifty years of radio at least, played a vital part in defining what radio was. If the case studies of this chapter prove anything, though, it is that radio is far more than a mediator of jazz. Radio and radio listening were an important place in which debates about jazz played out, and it was host to many of the struggles to define where the boundaries between jazz and not-jazz were set. Jazz would not have been what jazz has been, and would not have been what it is today, without radio.

Note

1. Listen, for instance, to www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKbi2OAHvQ, BBC *Jazz Club* broadcast March 24, 1960.

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PART II

Methodologies



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8

AFTER WYNTON

Narrating Jazz in the Postneotraditional Era¹

David Ake

There was a time, not too long ago, when Wynton Marsalis was the modern-day King of Jazz. Displaying a rare combination of extraordinary musical skills, intelligence, wit, confidence, charm, and good looks, he entertained, impressed, and inspired audiences through both his brilliant performances and his eloquent advocacy for what eventually became known as neoclassical or neotraditional jazz.² Marsalis's hold during this time—roughly the middle 1980s through the first decade of the new millennium—was such that he shaped everything from how and what jazz musicians should play to what they should say and wear on stage. Given his widespread exposure, the specificity of his narrative, and the fervor with which he expressed his vision of jazz, it should come as no surprise that some musicians, journalists, and scholars began to bristle at what they perceived to be Marsalis's excessive influence, even as others continued to celebrate his accomplishments and champion his cause.

Whatever one feels about Wynton Marsalis's efforts, I think we can all agree that his days of dictating which sounds, looks, names, and places get recognized and valued as authentic jazz are over. Truth be told, they have been for a while now. As early as 2003, author David Hajdu, in an article for *The Atlantic* called "Wynton's Blues," asked "What happened to Wynton Marsalis? That may be like asking What happened to jazz?" (Hajdu 2003). Hajdu's piece points to both Marsalis's near monopoly on the genre at the time and a hunch that the trumpeter's authority might be waning. In hindsight, we can see that Hajdu's instincts were correct. Yes, Marsalis still possesses some of the most formidable chops ever to touch a trumpet, and he maintains an extraordinarily well-paying gig as Managing and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center.³ Despite these ongoing successes, however, it is clear that the world's jazz participants now feel less awed, guided, emboldened—or threatened or infuriated—by Wynton Marsalis than they were those few years ago. Most jazz people today simply ignore the neotraditional party line (some younger musicians may not know it ever existed), and jazz's current leading lights embrace a broader array of musical practices and aesthetics than ever before. So now that Wynton Marsalis's long—and, to some, despotic—reign has drawn to a close, we are all free once again to perform, compose, present, enjoy, narrate, celebrate, denigrate, and teach any and all jazz styles without looking over our shoulder to see if his neotraditionalist jazz police are tracking us down. It's a liberating feeling.

I wonder, though, if we aren't going to miss Wynton before too long. Perhaps we are missing him already. For whether or not one agrees with how the neotraditionalists created or depicted jazz in their heyday, one cannot deny that they configured a remarkably coherent and consistent vision of the music, or that their vision found an extraordinarily large and receptive audience.

Equally true, though perhaps less often talked about, the specificity and success of the neotraditional message also provided many of us scholars and teachers with a handy “hegemonic discourse” against which we could fight or which we could subvert by offering our own, alternative visions of this music. So, with Marsalis and the people and institutions with which he is most closely associated—Lincoln Center, the writers Albert Murray and Stanley Crouch, the Ken Burns documentary—now moved to the margins of jazz relevance, we might have to rethink and adjust how we conduct our business of writing about and teaching this music going forward. It seems an appropriate time, then, to explore which aspects of the neotraditionalists’ formerly dominant jazz narrative are likely to persist—maybe even *should* persist—and which of these will change, recede, or vanish as we head further into what we might now call the postneotraditional era.

To get us started, it will help to name some of the norms that Marsalis and like-minded figures upheld as marking jazz’s identity, value, and meaning. Below I outline six categories through which we can understand what the musicologist Robert Walser once described as Marsalis’s “neo-classical agenda” (Walser 1999, 334). To be sure, these categories overlap in many aspects and there are other ways in which we could configure them. But parsing things in this fashion allows us to get a handle on some of the key issues that shaped jazz practices and meanings during the neotraditionalist years and continue to resonate in some ways today. So, before we completely relegate Wynton Marsalis to the dustbin of jazz history, let’s take a moment to consider what he and his peers actually wrought.

Boundaries and Definitions

I imagine that very few people reading this chapter ever fully embraced Marsalis’s definition of jazz, which boils down to a combination of the musical elements “blues” and “swing.” Despite our reticence to accept such a simple equation, however, we do need to acknowledge the effectiveness of Marsalis’s campaign. For no one has ever been as successful as Wynton Marsalis at articulating and disseminating such a neatly circumscribed vision of jazz (or any other genre, for that matter). Recall that he was just 27 years old when he published an article called “What Jazz Is—and Isn’t” in the July 31, 1988 issue of the *New York Times* to help kick off the inaugural season of his Lincoln Center series. Marsalis himself could probably not have predicted just how widely and quickly his neotraditional message would spread, but the immediate impact of that message sent jazz people scrambling to respond. Recall just how many performers (and not just the young ones) during the 1980s and 1990s swapped their casual stage garb and original compositions for tailored suits and a repertoire of tunes by Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk in tribute to “the tradition.”

Of course, the real genius of Marsalis’s strategy was not merely how well he was able to define clear boundaries for the jazz genre. Rather, it was that, by building off and reworking the established reputations of individuals like Ellington and Monk, as well as Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, and a handful of others, Marsalis eventually positioned himself to be seen as the one contemporary jazz musician whose performances and demeanor best exemplified the very same qualities set forth in his own definition of jazz. (I trust we all know whose voice opens and whose music closes the Ken Burns (2001) documentary.)

Ultimately, the very specificity and narrowness that helped Marsalis’s blues-plus-swing definition gain a foothold in the 1980s and 1990s appear to be the same traits that have led to its gradual decline. There were (and are) simply too many musicians, listeners, educators, and writers who refuse to reduce jazz to a short list of fixed musical essentials. Those of us who belong to this cohort can all feel a sense of vindication as Marsalis’s model falls by the wayside. That said, we might want to ask ourselves: if we refuse to define jazz as Wynton Marsalis does, how *do* we define it? What *is* “jazz” that it can maintain an identity while covering such vast and changeable sonic, geographical, and cultural terrain? It would behoove us to have a response at the ready. I think we

can most successfully accomplish this goal by emphasizing that jazz, like every other genre, isn't just a style or collection of musical techniques or forms, but rather an evolving idea or actually a constellation of ideas and narratives. Of course, these are shaped by and refer to certain sounds. Ultimately, however, identities, meanings, and values are configured by how people write and talk about those sounds, as well as how they create, sell, listen, and dance to them. For my part, I have begun using the spaghetti metaphor: jazz as a messy bowl full of noodles, with each strand representing a different way of making and understanding the music.⁴ This may not be quite as neat and pithy as Marsalis's definition, but it gives us a starting point from which to communicate how jazz and its various cultures actually work.⁵

The Past

Another way that Marsalis and his colleagues refashioned, if only temporarily, a dominant jazz narrative is in how they portrayed the music's relationship to its own past. Before the neotraditionalists came along, jazz people had tended to extol musicians who not only crafted an identifiable style for themselves, but who also gave sound in a larger sense to a shared notion of their own place and time. The primary goal of many an aspiring jazz professional in the pre-neotraditional years was to absorb the lessons of yesterday's heroes but then bring something new to the table, or at least to look and sound like "today," however that happened to be imagined at the time. Consider that many beboppers in the 1940s and 1950s dismissed Louis Armstrong as old-fashioned, and that Miles Davis's near-mythical status was earned in large part by seeming to stay always one step ahead of the critics. This philosophy is summed up in the image of Ornette Coleman and his group staring out defiantly from the cover of their 1961 release *This Is Our Music*. We can't be exactly sure who gets included in the "our" part of the record's title. But given the demeanors and postures of these young musicians, the provocative titles of Coleman's releases immediately preceding this one (*Change of the Century*, *Shape of Jazz to Come*), and the music the group made, jazz participants at the time could read this as an invitation to become part of something new, hip, now, perhaps subversive.

Alas, those of us who followed the reasoning of that pre-neotraditional era were wrong, or so the writer Stanley Crouch tried to convince us in a 2002 article for *JazzTimes* called, "The Jazz Tradition Is Not Innovation." Here Crouch argued that each succeeding generation of jazz artists does not change the music in any fundamental way or even bring it up to date. For Crouch, good performers were those who had mastered what he saw as the basic, unchanging elements of jazz, which, augmenting slightly Marsalis's two-part definition, he cataloged as "4/4 swing, blues, the meditative ballad, and the Spanish tinge" (Crouch 2002). In the neotraditional view, then, jazz musicians should not seek to reject, modify, or add to the approaches of their forebears. Rather, they should concern themselves with approximating, even replicating, the now-timeless truths of jazz as codified in the first half-century of the music's recorded existence.

By separating and systematizing certain earlier practices and ignoring others, Crouch worked to inscribe what Eric Hobsbawm and others have famously called an "invented tradition," wherein the diversity, complexity, and all around messiness of what people actually did in the past is smoothed into a stable and coherent narrative of that past (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). The neotraditionalists' strategy is understandable. Finding themselves squeezed on one side by a more visible and varied cohort of "freer" musicians (for example, Art Ensemble of Chicago, the Don Pullen-George Adams Group, some aspects of Keith Jarrett, some aspects of Pat Metheny) and a stylistically diverse constellation of fusion and smooth-ish groups on the other side (for example, Al Jarreau, Bobby McFerrin, Kenny G, David Sanborn, Steps Ahead, Weather Report, and, again, some aspects of Keith Jarrett and Pat Metheny), and with the way ahead blocked by MTV-style rock and other popular genres, the neoclassicists during the 1980s carved out their own space by

“looking backward” (Nicholson 2005, 53–76). Their efforts focused on what the scholar Svetlana Boym described as “restorative nostalgia,” which “manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past.” As Boym notes, restorative nostalgics “do not think of themselves as nostalgic; they believe that their project is about truth” (Boym 2001, xviii). Indeed, jazz’s neotraditionalists did present their aesthetic as the genre’s one and only authentic path.

Like the neotraditionalists’ model of jazz’s ontology, their reverence for the music’s past was too stultifying to survive for long. Even the saxophonist Sonny Rollins, one of the neotraditionalists’ own heroes, stated “Jazz has got to keep moving: It is important to get new music, new melodies” (Timberg 2012). The fact is—and despite Crouch’s pronouncements—jazz did transform fundamentally, even during the decades that he and like-minded commentators hail as the music’s golden age (roughly 1927–1967). And as we can hear in jazz’s recent well-received conversations with hip-hop, rock, country, soul, pop, and European classical music, as well as with sounds and styles adopted from other cultures around the globe, we have returned to an aesthetic that values change and a sense of the present time and place over an essentialism intent on rehashing previously established models.⁶

Yet while I have no regrets in bidding adieu to the neotraditionalists’ reverent recreations of an imagined pure jazz past, we should concede that we have all benefited in various ways from the long glance backward that Marsalis and others facilitated. If the neotraditional era did nothing else, it forced us to deal more consciously with our own history. To be sure, jazz musicians reflect and configure notions of jazz history *unconsciously* all the time, via certain tunes they play, or the instrumentations they employ, or how they dress or interact with audiences on stage. Marsalis and others foregrounded that process, though, in somewhat of an ironic twist, by sparking renewed interest in jazz’s early years, Marsalis also helped generate some of the most compelling and insightful jazz scholarship ever, scholarship that would end up problematizing his own agenda.

For example, had Marsalis not tried so hard to convince us of his particular view of Louis Armstrong (that is, the Promethean artist struggling mightily against the evil forces of a banal popular music industry), perhaps the music historian Elijah Wald (2012) would never have felt compelled to publish his own findings on Armstrong, which, among other things uncovered the long-ignored mutual admiration between Armstrong and the white bandleader Guy Lombardo. For those of you who are not familiar with Guy Lombardo (and why would you be? His music and persona don’t fit our narratives of how jazz developed), his band, the Royal Canadians, was one of the most successful “sweet jazz” ensembles of the 1920s and 1930s. Before our recent wave of scholarship by Wald, and also Jeffrey Magee (2005) and John Howland (2009), and others, many of us had accepted all too easily the perceptions, ossified even before the neotraditionalists came along, of a racial binary equating hot jazz with blackness and sweet jazz with whiteness, that we had begun to lose sight of the complexity and diversity of early jazz cultures. (One little known fact unearthed by Elijah Wald: Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians held the attendance record at Harlem’s Savoy Ballroom in 1930!) (Wald 2012, 37).

Scholars are not the only ones who have found relevance in Marsalis’s turn to the past. Many jazz musicians, even those who have opposed the neotraditionalist wave, have also gained a broadened historical perspective on the music. We can hear the reemergence of certain instrumental techniques—horn glissandi, trumpet growls, stride piano—that jazz musicians had virtually ignored for decades, though now reworked to suit contemporary needs. Players as stylistically varied as Don Byron, Ethan Iverson, Jason Moran, and Nicholas Payton have all demonstrated a keen awareness of and influence from fairly distant forebears. Compare, for instance, Moran’s freewheeling version of “You’ve Got to Be Modernistic,” composed by the 1920s stride-style pianist James P. Johnson, with the neotraditionalist Marcus Roberts’s efforts toward restorative nostalgia on Johnson’s “Carolina Shout” (Moran 2002; Roberts 1993). We can note, too, how the neoclassicists effected a trend toward a darker, woodier sound from the acoustic bass than had been

in the case during the 1970s and early 1980s. (In the process, they also tried to stigmatize the use of electric bass as jazz heresy. Like so many other neoclassical aesthetics, however, that prejudice is also fading. Note the recent use of that instrument by such artists as Ben Allison, Avishai Cohen, Matthew Garrison, Sam Minaie, Kaveh Rasteger, and others.)⁷

The point is, Marsalis and friends did us all a favor when they obligated us to re-explore the past. They reminded us of the remarkable creativity, skillfulness, joy, and beauty that early jazz artists brought to the table and gave us some new/old sounds to re-explore, even as the neotraditionalists' overly neat and simplistic storytelling compelled us to challenge their ideas and rethink how we consider jazz during its earliest decades, and so how we hear, create, and value jazz today.

Cultural Hierarchy

It is no secret that, for the neotraditionalists, jazz is not merely one genre among many. Above all, the neotraditional outlook holds jazz separate from—and *better than*—virtually all other forms of music, save perhaps some European classical works. Popular genres are especially anathema to the neotraditional aesthetic. In that view, jazz musicians may borrow certain melodies or forms from Tin Pan Alley or other pop idioms, but their jazz practices somehow magically transform and elevate the supposed banality of popular tunes to the realm of timeless art (Porter 2002, 291). Not that Marsalis, Murray, and the like invented this trope. Jazz musicians and their supporters had long toiled to have their efforts viewed as high art rather than “mere” entertainment. The late pianist and educator Billy Taylor lauded jazz as “America’s Classical Music” long before the birth of Jazz at Lincoln Center, as did the writer Grover Sales (Taylor 1986; Sales 1984). Indeed, it is doubtful that Lincoln Center’s braintrust would have even considered adding a jazz series had a high art valuation not already been established for that genre; institutional shifts do not come out of the blue. (Imagine if, say, Giorgio Moroder or the Bee Gees had tried to found a Disco at Lincoln Center series in the 1980s. It is highly unlikely that their efforts would have gone very far.) That said, it was the neotraditionalist proselytizers who most forcefully and effectively pushed the jazz-as-high-art narrative, their efforts aided by Marsalis winning Grammy Awards for his recordings of trumpet concerti by Haydn and other canonical figures from the European classical tradition.

Now, we are all very familiar with this aspect of the neotraditional aesthetic, but I do want to point out a few aspects of the lingering effects of cultural hierarchy on and in jazz. First, we should acknowledge that even some of us who have challenged the efficacy and accuracy of jazz’s art music status have benefited from that very status. In my own case, had jazz not climbed to one of the top rungs on the ladder of cultural prestige, there might not have been a university job for me, at least not one in a music department, because the vast majority of colleges and conservatories focus solely on what they view as elite genres. And without my academic jobs, I likely would not have had the time or resources to write my books. Without those books, the editors of this collection would not have invited me to contribute this chapter . . . in which I decry, in part, the pervasive cultural hierarchy in jazz.

Second, and not to be forgotten as we storm the barricades of cultural elitism, musicians have produced a lot of brilliant, moving, beautiful, sublime, insightful, and otherwise meaningful “serious” jazz. Our times would be very different and, I think, greatly diminished, had we not been able to witness performances or heard recordings by Albert Ayler, Paul Bley, Peter Brötzmann, John Carter, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Steve Coleman, Andrew Cyrille, Eric Dolphy, Dave Holland, Abbey Lincoln, Charles Mingus, Paul Motian, Evan Parker, Dewey Redman, Sam Rivers, Archie Shepp, Cecil Taylor, Henry Threadgill, Eberhard Weber, and any number of other supposedly heavy, difficult, or deep performers. These artists have opened invaluable new ways of sounding, hearing, seeing, and being in the world. We need this music.

Even with these important benefits, though, it is equally true that the *unremitting* promulgation of a high art narrative espoused by some (and not just neotraditionalists) has proven detrimental to jazz's viability. As fewer people hear themselves or find joy or fun or relaxation in this music, jazz will be forced to retreat ever deeper into itself, mostly via academic institutions. And while I am an active participant in and advocate for school-based jazz education, I also believe that in order for the music to retain its vibrancy, its relevance, it needs to stretch its legs, so to speak, in community-based venues of nightclubs, coffee houses, public parks, and the like.⁸ Absent these outlets, jazz will turn, inevitably and perhaps irreversibly, toward that hermetic situation the composer Milton Babbitt (1958) envisioned—and even encouraged—for modernist “classical” composers and their works back in the early 1960s.⁹

The good news is that our current postneotraditional moment seems to be reaching a healthy balance between jazz as relentlessly serious or difficult and jazz as entertainment with broad-based appeal. The successes of artists and groups like Bad Plus, the Robert Glasper Experiment, Snarky Puppy, Esperanza Spaulding, and Kamasi Washington make it clear that the broader world is taking notice of this renewed open and inclusive spirit. We can also see this new-found equilibrium or interplay between high and low in the 2013 opening of SFJazz Center, San Francisco's answer to New York's Lincoln Center. The center's Mission Statement reads in part, “SFJAZZ explores the full spectrum of jazz, from the music's origins in the African American community to its diverse present-day expressions around the world”(SFJazz.org 2017). True to its word, the calendar during the center's opening season featured concerts by McCoy Tyner, Brad Mehldau, and other usual suspects of contemporary serious jazz in the US. But it also included performances by the Ethiopian soul-ish, pop-ish, jazz-ish singer Meklit Hadero, and the Berlin-based Max Raabe and his Palast Orchester, which covers tunes by everyone from Cole Porter to Britney Spears, all in a deadpan, campy Kurt Weill-meets-Paul Whiteman-meets-Talking Heads vibe. In other words, SFJazz is a neotraditionalist's worst nightmare . . . even as it replicates the big-dollar/big-donor model of subsidized funding that Jazz at Lincoln Center brought to the fore.¹⁰

How jazz's renewed engagement with popular idioms will go over with the majority of jazz journalists and educators remains to be seen. So much effort has been poured into making jazz a highbrow art form that many well-meaning advocates (and certain upscale corporate sponsors) may be loath to see that narrative undermined. Even so, the postneotraditional move by some jazz people toward the popular, the danceable, sometimes the downright goofy, will strengthen the music, artistically as well as commercially.

Gender and Sexuality

Stanley Crouch's explanation for why certain writers have criticized Wynton Marsalis—namely, that these writers are jealous of the trumpeter because, in Crouch's words, Marsalis “has access to . . . a far higher quality of female than any of them could ever imagine”—must certainly rank among the most demeaning and ridiculous public statements ever uttered by a recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, but it also sums up the pervasive sexism that continues to surround neotraditional aesthetics and practices (Hajdu 2003). As of February 2017, when I am writing this, there still had yet to be a female member of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. How can that be when the likes of Geri Allen, Terri Lynn Carrington, Anat Cohen, Tia Fuller, Ingrid Jensen, Linda Oh, Angelica Sanchez, and so many other outstanding women have been playing in and around that city for years? Jazz at Lincoln Centre (JALC) adoption in 2016 of a “blind” audition process suggests that the organization may be changing its dated ways. This is a welcome development because there simply is no defending this locker-room mentality in any jazz culture, and the sooner this aspect of neotraditionalism goes away, the better for everyone.¹¹

Race and Ethnicity

Among the neotraditionalists' principal mantras has been that playing jazz well requires focused study: of one's instrument, of music theory, and of history. Their narrative serves as a powerful counter to longstanding notions of jazz musicians, particularly black musicians, as possessing abundant "natural" and "instinctive" abilities, but lacking the intellectual capabilities that musicians of European descent supposedly possess to theorize how they go about learning and creating their works. (Murray 1989 [1976], see also Berliner 1994; Porter 2002) Debunking these primitivist understandings of African American cultural achievements is one legacy I hope will linger from the neotraditional era. That is *not* to say that I am calling for a color-blind narrative of jazz history. Quite the contrary, I believe race should remain at the forefront of our discussions of jazz aesthetics, pedagogy, and historiography.

I realize that not everyone ascribes to the idea of jazz as a "black music." At the very least, some believe that that position has been overplayed, especially by scholars from the United States. One non-American scholar at a jazz conference a few years ago told me straight up: "You Yanks are always so hung up on race. Get over it!"

It is true that many jazz scholars from the US are vigilant when it comes to this issue. But rather than dismissing those efforts, I suggest that they be considered steps toward historical accuracy and fairness, attempts to avoid other iterations of that all-too-common cycle over the past century that saw white musicians receiving disproportionately higher accolades (and pay) compared to their African American counterparts within the same genre. It is crucial, for instance, that we always ponder the circumstances that enabled Benny Goodman to be crowned King of Swing, even as Goodman was patterning his own band on Fletcher Henderson's ensemble.

Lest you think that such travesties of cultural and social justice could only happen in the United States, consider that in 2015 the English magazine *music radar* offered its ranking of "The 30 greatest blues guitarists of all time." This publication ranked Stevie Ray Vaughan number one, with B.B. King second, Robert Johnson third, and Jimi Hendrix fourth. Rory Gallagher (5), Peter Green (6), and Eric Clapton (7), came in ahead of Buddy Guy (8), Muddy Waters (9), Albert King (11), Son House (12), and Freddie King (14). Jack White and Joe Bonamassa rated higher than Albert Collins (17), Elmore James (18), and Blind Lemon Jefferson (21) (Music Radar Team 2015).

No doubt, the magazine editors' geographic location affected their assessments. (The Irishman Rory Gallagher as the fifth greatest blues guitarist of all time?!?) But so does race. It is crucial that we—as historians, musicians, teachers, human beings—maintain a sense of when and where cultural works and their aesthetics originate and develop. Yes, we need to take with a grain of salt Stanley Crouch's absurd pronouncements about what he sees as the inadequacy of many non-black jazz musicians. And yes, we need to question and explore how and why various notions of blackness—as well as whiteness and Latin-ness, and Asian-ness—are configured. At the same time, though, the immense contributions to jazz by African American musicians, dancers, listeners, and writers, along with the history of racism and racialized understandings and misunderstandings by non-black participants of black cultural creations, requires that we keep the complex and oftentimes contradictory notions of race on the front burner for the foreseeable future.

The fact is, race has always been a central factor in how people understand and value jazz. So it must remain a central factor in jazz *scholarship* and pedagogy. What is more, given the troubling events in Ferguson, Missouri, and far too many other places in and beyond the US over the past few years, our efforts toward understanding race and ethnicity within the history of jazz might offer some sorely needed insights about race and ethnicity in general.

Nationality

Perhaps no issue has proven more irritating to jazz scholars outside the United States than the neotraditionalists' near-constant invocation of "jazz as America's music" trope. Conceding that jazz might have been born in the United States (US), they argue that the music has always been restlessly international (McKay 2005; Atkins 2003; Prouty 2012). Indeed, some writers have suggested that American-made jazz has lost its vitality, with Wynton Marsalis embodying all that is wrong, not just with the neotraditional sub-genre, but also with American jazz in general: it's provincial, overly competitive, individualistic, brash, arrogant, corporate. A sort of musical equivalent to Donald Trump. Against these understandings, such commentators depict jazz outside the US as more creative, egalitarian, humble, up to date, and/or spiritually imbued than its North American counterpart (Nicholson 2005).

Even with Marsalis out of the way, this binary pitting US jazz against the rest of the world will not be as easy for those advocates to maintain. In fact, that stance may be more difficult to uphold precisely *because* Marsalis is no longer as visible or powerful as he once was, for he won't obstruct certain folks from seeing just how deeply ingrained Americanist understandings remain among jazz communities in many parts of the globe. The truth is, those attitudes persist almost as strongly with audiences outside the US as inside. In 2016, Paris's Sunside Jazz Club—one of the top jazz venues in France—sponsored its 25th annual American Jazz Festival, a six-week celebration of touring professionals from the States. Similarly, a cursory glimpse at the calendar of the Blue Note Tokyo nightclub reveals American acts appear at that establishment at least three times as often as Japanese acts.¹² Given the booking practices at these and other successful venues, it is clear that more work will need to be done to give non-American jazz musicians their full, much-deserved, due. That said, I would guard against any efforts that try to pull jazz in the rest of the world up by bringing American-made jazz down.

Despite certain assertions made in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere, jazz is not dying in the United States. Spend some time in most any city (or on most any college campus, for that matter) and you will hear remarkably vibrant, creative, contemporary jazz music. How else to explain that ECM Records, the label that put European jazz on the map, has stepped up its efforts to record Americans Ralph Alessi, Tim Berne, and others—not in Oslo or Munich, but in New York City. ECM's President Manfred Eicher himself produces many of these sessions. Thus, while I agree that we can shelve the "Jazz as America's music" trope in the way that Wynton Marsalis, Ken Burns, and others have presented it, it would be a mistake to write off the backward, conservative Yanks just yet.¹³

The Shape of Jazz (Historiography) to Come

Whatever one may have thought of Wynton Marsalis's efforts, it is clear that they have left a lasting and in many ways positive impression on many aspects of jazz. Our writing and teaching should reflect that recognition. Scholars and educators are not passive, objective chroniclers of this music's history. What we write or say, whom we choose to name or ignore in our classrooms, conference papers, and publications influences who gets heard as (good, or bad, or authentic, or inauthentic) jazz. As such, it is incumbent upon us to keep our ears, eyes, hearts, and minds open, to assess fairly and honestly, as we seek to acquire a better sense of the who, what, where, and why of jazz's pasts, presents, and possible futures. That said, what a joy it will be to explore and celebrate the full vast range of creative musics that emerge under the jazz umbrella in the coming years and to rethink the world's many and changing jazz cultures as we head further into our postneotraditional era.

Notes

1. This chapter is adapted from a keynote address I delivered at the Rhythm Changes: Rethinking Jazz Cultures conference in Manchester/Salford, UK, April 2013. I thank Tony Whyton for inviting me to speak at that event and also Tony, Nicholas Gebhardt, and Nichole Rustin-Paschal for inviting me to contribute this chapter to their collection. Additional thanks to Daniel Goldmark, Dana Gooley, and Robert Walser for their comments and suggestions.
2. The music that Wynton Marsalis and his cohort made since the 1980s has been termed, among other things, neoclassical, neo-classical, neo-traditional, and neotraditional. I am going with the latter moniker because the term “tradition” so often appears in discourse from and about Marsalis and like-minded commentators.
3. According to Charity Navigator, Marsalis earned \$1,732,739 in 2015 for his role as Managing and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center. www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=search.summary&orgid=3922 (accessed October 17, 2016).
4. For more on the spaghetti metaphor, see Ake (2016, 27–28). As I note in that essay, my food metaphor differs markedly from Marsalis’s frequent reference to jazz as a delicious and spicy “gumbo.” Jazz’s various strands aren’t always so tasty. They can be bland, even noxious (i.e., racist, sexist, homophobic).
5. The most influential study on the process of and stakes surrounding genre formation in jazz remains DeVeaux (1991). For an outstanding exploration of how genres function and are formed beyond jazz, see Brackett (2016).
6. A handful of the countless examples of such musical crossings: Pablo Aslan’s jazz-tango fusions, Uri Caine’s Mahler Project, the remarkable self-productions by the British wunderkind Jacob Collier, Bill Frisell’s country-flavored albums, Lionel Loueke Trio, Rudresh Mahanthappa’s Indo-Pak Coalition, and Dafnis Prieto’s Proverb Trio with rapper Kokayi.
7. For more on the troubled history of electric bass in jazz, see Wright (2015).
8. For more on the importance of jazz-making outside the music’s traditional urban centers, see Collier (1993).
9. For a pointed critique of Babbitt’s stance, see McClary (1989).
10. Thanks to Dana Gooley for pointing out that, despite aesthetic differences, SFJazz seems to have based its funding structure on the model that Jazz at Lincoln Center established for elite non-profit jazz institutions.
11. For more on the sexual politics surrounding Marsalis and his compatriots, see Pellegrinelli (2000); Roth (2008); and Stewart (2007). For more on gender and sexuality in jazz, see Tucker (2008) and Rustin and Tucker (2008).
12. For more on the hegemony of American jazz in Japan (and some musicians’ resistance to it), see Atkins (2001).
13. For more on perceptions of both race and nationality as they play out among jazz musicians, journalists, and scholars in Europe, see Whyton (2012).

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9

JAZZ AND THE MATERIAL TURN

Floris Schuiling

“When you hear music, after it’s over, it’s gone, in the air; you can never capture it again” (Dolphy 1964). Eric Dolphy’s statement signifies a common understanding of music as intangible and immaterial. Because of its emphasis on improvisation, this discourse of immateriality has been particularly influential in jazz. As the music where notes are “picked out of thin air” (Berliner 1994, 1), it has become “a kind of language for expressing the ineffable” (Bivins 2015, 199). Jazz performance is often described, both by musicians and more recently by music theorists, as a “conversation” (Monson 1996), suggesting ideas of orality and immediacy—despite prevailing notions that “real” jazz is instrumental. The very definition of jazz has been described as “if you have to ask, you’ll never know,” making its elusiveness and intangibility essential to the genre. However, we only know Dolphy’s words because they were recorded in 1964, suggesting that even such transient and immaterial experiences are mediated through material practices and technologies.

A growing number of scholars in the humanities and social sciences are turning their attention to such forms of material mediation of cultural expression and experience, and are increasingly finding their materiality to be non-trivial. The study of “material culture,” as two of its major proponents write, “may be most broadly defined as the investigation of the relationship between people and things irrespective of time and space” (Miller and Tilley 1996, 5). Thus, in practice, it is the study of the role played by material objects, artifacts, and technologies in the shaping of human societies, cultures, identities, and knowledge. The authors continue that “the potential range of contemporary disciplines involved in some way or other in studying material culture is effectively as wide as the human and cultural sciences themselves” (ibid.). Twenty years later, this appears as a prophetic statement, as the “material turn” has made a big impact beyond its origins in anthropology and archaeology, with important influences from media studies and science and technology studies, to fields such as history, sociology, literature, art history, gender studies, philosophy, and many others.

The study of material culture, understood broadly, is thus a diverse and vibrant academic field, and it has offered a number of important challenges to traditional approaches in the social sciences and humanities. The study of material culture has frequently led to reconsiderations of the nature of meaning and sociality. As archaeologist Dan Hicks writes, in the intertwining of human and material lives “things themselves can come to constitute contexts, which are *by no means purely human or social contexts*” (Hicks 2010, 83, my emphasis). Instead of a traditional humanist understanding of agency as independence from material and social constraints, scholars increasingly understand human agency according to what Jane Bennett calls a “congregational” rather than

an “atomistic” perspective on agency, wherein agency is not located in a particular subject but formed through a reciprocal relation with the substances, artifacts, and technologies that fill the material world (Bennett 2009, 20). Agency and cognition are often said to be “distributed” over what are variously called “networks” (Latour 2005), or “assemblages” (Bennett 2009). This reciprocal relation implies, first, that such networks are contingent and dynamic, and second, that the material world is active rather than passive—an idea that some scholars express with the concept of “material agency” (Latour 2005).

In music scholarship, such ideas have been explored in depth in the field of music technology (Straw 2012; Sterne 2003; Born 2005) and more recently have also been applied to musical instruments (Bates 2012; Dolan 2013; Moseley 2016; Souza 2017) and music notation (Schuiling 2019, forthcoming). Hence, it would seem that a “material turn” in music scholarship is gaining some momentum. Its late arrival may have to do with the elusive materiality of music itself. Indeed, much of the critical musicological literature since the late twentieth century has precisely argued *against* the “reifying” notion of music as an object, proposing instead to see it as a form of practice (Cook 2001; Goehr 2007). However, this practice is mediated through various material objects and formations: instruments, concert venues, recording and playback technologies, scores, the bodies of musicians and listeners, advertising, and promotional material, music videos, and so on. I would therefore argue, with Will Straw (2012), Georgina Born (2005), and Antoine Hennion (2015), that precisely because of this “paradigmatic multiply mediated” nature (Born 2005), music in fact presents a unique opportunity for conceptualizing the role of material objects in cultural expression and experience.

Jazz, with its emphasis on its own intangibility and elusiveness, is a case in point. Apart from this existence “between process and product” (Cook 2001), which it shares with all other forms of music, there are two more particular reasons why the question of its materiality is significant. The first is historical. As a product of African American culture and history, jazz is to an important extent the expression of a people who have themselves been treated as objects to be exploited and sold for profit, rather than fully acknowledged as human subjects. As the work of Fred Moten (2003) and Alexander Weheliye (2005) suggests, black popular music has frequently employed sound, as the technological mediation of subjective expression, to subvert traditional distinctions between subject and object, negotiate the historical intangibility and invisibility of black subjectivity, and project what Weheliye calls a “sonic Afro-modernity.” The second reason, while less overtly political, is directly related to the first, and has to do with the important role of improvisation in jazz performance. The discourse on jazz improvisation, with its emphasis on personal expression and “finding your own voice,” seems to suggest an ideal of conquering one’s material limitations in order to express one’s authentic self. Given the reconsideration of agency in new materialist scholarship, such understanding may be fruitfully reconsidered.

Genre as Material Culture

The “new” jazz studies came into focus in the 1990s partly through a critique of the jazz canon and the assumption that jazz is a uniform musical category (DeVeaux 1991; Gabbard 1995). Recent work on popular and experimental music has approached genre as “assemblage,” describing it as a process of categorization rather than a uniform category in itself (see for instance Brackett 2016).¹ Genre is understood not in terms of a fixed set of musical characteristics, or even as a discourse of identity and distinction, but as a dynamic process of grouping, of establishing and blurring connections and distinctions; a process made up of human actors as well as objects and technologies of aggregation and dissemination. Benjamin Piekut, for instance, in his work on experimental music, argues that genre is not “something that magically coalesced around shared [musical] qualities,” but “a network, arranged, and fabricated through the hard work of composers, critics, scholars,

performers, audiences, students, and a host of other elements including texts, scores, articles, curricula, patronage systems, and discourses of race, gender, class and nation” (Piekut 2011, 19).

In various ways, jazz scholars have implicitly addressed the material culture that constitutes jazz. Particularly the importance of recordings has been noted, not just because they are the object of study for most jazz scholars, but because listening to records, playing along with them, and copying solos has been an important part of how many jazz musicians have learned to play and develop their own idiom. As a technology of memory (Kenney 2003; Bijsterveld and Van Dijk 2009; Roy 2016), recordings have thus played an important part in jazz history, not just as documents of this history but as common points of reference for musicians to “signify” on and in doing so give new meaning to them (Monson 1996). Arguably just as important for the development of the jazz repertoire has been the role of the Fake (and Real) Books that have been the subject of codification, clandestine exchange, debates over accuracy, and various legal disputes (Kernfeld 2006).

From a new materialist perspective, these objects are not just representations or reflections of jazz, contributing to a discourse around jazz while never permeating it, but integral elements of the jazz assemblage. Jed Rasula, in a classic paper on the “seductive menace” of jazz recordings (1995), argues that recordings constitute myths of an authentic “living reality” of which they can only be inauthentic and partial representations. As a medium of inscription, recordings constitute their own history of jazz in comparison with which the historian’s account can only be “a surrogate act masquerading as authority” (135). Jazz thus comes to be characterized by a nostalgia for presence: “Jazz has been a constant testimony to things that will never be known, people that will forever go unheard, words that will remain unsaid” (152). Rasula certainly identifies an important part of jazz aesthetics, and it is striking how many jazz lovers still primarily approach recordings as representations of performances rather than works in their own right—which is how people today usually listen to recordings. Indeed, John Gennari calls it “the most fundamental and enduring article of faith in jazz” that “its truth is located in its live performance aesthetic, its multitextual, non-recordable qualities of emotional expressiveness and response” (Gennari 1991, 459). However, from this perspective, the “real” jazz is always somewhere else, always just out of reach. Instead, to paraphrase Piekut, I would argue that jazz is *exactly* what scholars and recordings have construed it to be, just not for the reasons Rasula gives (Piekut 2011, 18).

In fact, following anthropologist Alfred Gell (Gell 1998), we might say that the way technology intervenes in the “indexical”² relations of cause and effect, thus trapping, suspending, redirecting, and translating actions and intentions, is essentially what makes art captivating. Part of what defines a musical culture is how this relation between technology and agency is configured, and part of the dynamics of categorization that constitutes genres is thus also a negotiation of how this relation may change; such changes reveal important things about the composition of social and musical relationships in a given musical culture. By way of illustration, consider the album *Blue* by New York-based quartet Mostly Other People Do the Killing (2014). *Blue* is an exact, note-for-note replication of Miles Davis’s *Kind of Blue* (1959), to the extent that the difference is only really audible in small details of timing and timbre when one listens very closely. The album intentionally plays with the kinds of indexical relations described by Gell. *Kind of Blue* owes much of its attraction to the way it appears to “capture” a pure moment of musical interaction, seemingly belying Rasula’s schizophrenic angst. Of course, this informal and immediate effect is, paradoxically, achieved precisely because of technological developments and the possibilities of the LP record that allowed musicians to record more extensive and unpredictable improvisations. *Blue* indexes not only *Kind of Blue* and its iconic status, and the meticulous transcription and rehearsal of the musicians as well as the overdubbing techniques of the producers, but also broader cultural constructs such as the classicizing tendencies in contemporary jazz culture (including the demand to play transcriptions on one’s conservatory recital, which is how the group came up with the

idea). Paradoxically, it simultaneously indexes the currency of poststructuralist ideas in jazz culture that emerged with the intellectualization of the jazz climate—the liner notes feature Jorge Luis Borges's short story about the fictional author Pierre Menard who replicated Cervantes's *Don Quixote* word-for-word, thus creating an entirely different novel.

Obviously, the album created some controversy; the Estate of Miles Davis issued a statement from Vince Wilburn, Jr., Davis's nephew, that it did not support the project (Miles Davis Estate 2014). Wilburn, Jr. himself expressed himself more vividly on his Facebook page: “#BULLSHIT. . . . Yes I Said It!!!!!!!!!!!!!! stay original Motherfuckers FUCK THIS Pro-tools . . . auto-tune now this BULLSHIT. . . . Jimmy Cobb should kick Your ass” (Wilburn, Jr. 2014). Wilburn, Jr.'s comments, in comparing *Blue* to the use of Pro-tools and auto-tune, two forms of technology that supposedly stand in the way of “true artistry” and authenticity, highlight how certain understandings of agency are central to the appreciation of jazz. In fact, bassist Matthew Elliott of Mostly Other People Do the Killing (MOPDTK) says of the album that “the sound is clearly jazz, but because of the process that went into it, it magically becomes ‘not jazz’.” (Elliott 2014) He goes on to compare the album to the work of Wynton Marsalis—consider for instance his *Mr. Jelly Lord* (1999), which features not only very accurate renditions of pieces previously recorded by Jelly Roll Morton, but even a recording of “Tom Cat Blues” made on a phonograph cylinder, making it sonically indistinguishable from early jazz. The differences in reception are striking: both Wynton Marsalis and MOPDTK are criticized for being unoriginal, but where Marsalis is praised for paying tribute to the jazz greats, MOPDTK is praised for its iconoclastic, postmodernist gesture. These differences may not only have to do with the different public images of Marsalis and MOPDTK (in which the politics of race undoubtedly plays a role), but also be because of the indexical quality of the reproduced recordings; we tend to perceive the recordings of Morton as incomplete renditions of a mythical past, while *Kind of Blue* is perceived as an accurate document of a spontaneous and authentic performance. More than a form of “signifying” on a shared history, *Blue* brings into play not just notions of iteration and authorship, but the way in which the genre of jazz implies particular configurations of agency, technology, and creativity that can be brought into focus using Gell's model of indexicality.

A consequence of this model is that listeners, not just musicians, have helped to mediate and assemble the genre of jazz. A significant part of these “acts of assemblage” (Drott 2013) has been performed, quite literally, by collectors of recordings since the 1920s. Jazz is, perhaps more than any other twentieth-century music, a real collector's music, as listeners collect not only recordings, but also photographs, films, paintings, sculptures, and other memorabilia.³ Early collectors aimed to salvage recordings that were frequently of low quality and were becoming unplayable because of heavy use (Cummings 2010, 95). These communities of collectors constructed an ideal of connoisseurship around jazz recordings, where each collector had their own specialism (99). This culture of connoisseurship, together with the emerging jazz criticism in the newly founded periodicals (partly aimed at these collectors) did much for the gradual social acceptance for jazz as an art form. Because of their aim for completeness, these collectors also initiated the practice of jazz discography (Epperson 2013). These collections and discographies constitute the material history of many jazz archives, which suggests that to only see these discographers and their canons as the perpetrators of ideology is a rather limited perspective. Rather, their efforts and obsessions emerge as a significant part of jazz history in their own right. As Ken Prouty (2012, 6) writes: “moves toward canon, and reactions against them, are part of the history of jazz itself.” This does not necessarily mitigate these practices; Alex Cummings describes how white collectors would go into poor black neighborhoods to buy records for prices far below their actual worth, making palpable the forms of appropriation that are inevitably part of the history of the jazz canon (Cummings 2010, 97–98). However, it does make these histories more concrete, and makes clear the contingencies and contradictions inherent in the formation of genre.

Another example of the material history of jazz listening practices suggests that these may not necessarily revolve around connoisseurship and canon formation (or may configure these concepts in a different way). The fact that the early jazz collectors were all men might obscure the fact that the phonograph, from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, was mostly used by women, who thus may also have played a vital role in the domestication of jazz and in its dissemination as a public form of entertainment. As a product intended for domestic consumption, it entered into a social sphere in which women maintained the household, and music was an integral part of this domestic sphere (Kenney 2003, 88–108; Gitelman 2006, 59–86). During the First World War, women gained more employment, also in the music industry, and they played an important role not just in the consumption of recordings, but also in their manufacturing and distribution (Kenney 2003, 97). After the war, as the cities were increasingly inhabited by working women, and with the emergence of recorded jazz and other dance music, these women played an important role in the upcoming “social dance craze” that was not only taking place in dance parlors but was also brought into the home (101–102). These developments have usually been described in jazz scholarship in terms of commercialization and the appropriation of African American music. Although this is undoubtedly correct, these histories of listening suggest that, as Sterne writes, the history of phonography (and thus part of the history of jazz) is “at least as much about the changing home and working lives of the middle class as it is about corporate planning and experimentation” (Sterne 2003, 197). Further investigations of the histories and practices of listening that have shaped the jazz assemblage may reveal further actors that have heretofore been neglected, as well as the conceptions of agency that are itself part of this history, uncovering the discourses and practices because of which these agencies have not yet been articulated.

The Materiality of Making Music Together

In the previous section, I suggested that technological mediation is not external to jazz as a musical and cultural practice but rather an integral part of it. This implies the need for a reconsideration of the role that instruments and other objects and technologies play in jazz performance and particularly in improvisation. Given the central importance of performance, creativity, and musical interaction in jazz studies since the 1990s, it is surprising that the role of instruments has not been a sustained area of investigation. This is not to say that instruments have been neglected. Certainly not: Ingrid Monson’s (1996) influential account of musical interaction was predicated on highlighting the role of the rhythm section instead of maintaining an exclusive focus on the improvising soloist, and there have been various studies of particular musicians that explicitly discuss their playing style in terms of instrumental technique (Givan 2003, 2009; Lash 2011). However, many descriptions of jazz improvisation and expression—such as metaphors of conversation, telling a story, or the concept of signifying—have been cast in terms of “orality,” which has been very important for addressing the interactive and processual quality of jazz as opposed to the traditional text-based approaches of music scholarship, but which does seem to dismiss the role of instruments and other forms of media and technology as a peripheral consideration (see also Prouty 2006). Lydia Goehr’s (2016) discussion of how to respond to a sudden broken string indicates how objects can subvert common assumptions about the nature of improvisation. Rather than an understanding of improvisation as intangible and immaterial, we might reconsider it in terms of what Claude Lévi-Strauss calls “bricolage,” a way of making do with whatever is at hand to achieve present needs (as opposed to the careful planning involved in “engineering,” Lévi-Strauss 1966).

The point made in the previous section, about the “multiple mediation” that forms the basis of music’s existence, applies here with equal force. Recent calls for a “new organology” have emphasized that the study of musical instruments might reconfigure our understanding of musical knowledge, analysis, performance, history, ethnography, and ontology (Tresch and Dolan 2013).

If agency is defined as the ability to act, then instruments clearly have significant influence on the musician's agency. Instruments are not just "tools" for achieving given ends; as Aden Evens points out: "they do not serve an interest that could have pre-existed them" (Evens 2005, 129). Moreover, instruments condition the means of expression and the role in the ensemble of the musician, and as such constructs a *persona* (Auslander 2006) for her that could not have existed without the instrument. The musician, immersed or possessed by the music she plays, is a categorically different kind of actor than the person she is in everyday life. We might characterize this mutual co-dependence with philosopher Karen Barad's term "intra-agency" (2003), which connotes an interdependence not just of two formerly independent entities, but a process by which two actors emerge as separate entities.

The instrument's interface, in such an approach, is an important point of focus as it is the main aspect with regard to which musicians develop these skills. Instruments, like all media, involve "protocols" of use (Gitelman 2006, 7); norms and standards that, according to a medium's technological affordances (J. J. Gibson 2014), emerge around that medium to give it a particular function and meaning in society. The incorporation of an instrument's interface thus constructs the musical knowledge and imagination of the musician, and by virtue of its technological construction the interface constrains and suggests particular musical possibilities within particular musical situations. Musicians might be said to *think with* their instruments; they do not just develop their musical thought in relation to their instruments; in performance the interaction with the instrument forms an integral part of the development of musical thought and the expression of musical ideas (De Souza 2017). Alfred Gell, whose work I discussed in the previous section, similarly describes the oeuvre of an artist not only as a "distributed object," highlighting the interrelated qualities of the works of a particular artist, but also as an extension of the artist's mind, implying that creating these works is also a way of developing her stylistic ideas (Gell 1998).

An approach to the analysis of jazz improvisation grounded in such ideas might understand it less as the construction of musical structures in relation to a chord scheme and the playing of fellow musicians and more as the application of skills learned in interaction with the particular construction and interface of an instrument. In other words, it would no longer take particular recordings as the primary unit of analysis, but see these only as particular instances of a musician's idiom in development. Benjamin Givan's recent analysis of Sonny Rollins' *Blue 7* shows that the "motivic relationships" praised so famously by Gunther Schuller are in fact more accurately described as licks that formed part of Rollins' stylistic idiom at the time, something he illustrates with a comparison of *Blue 7* to other recordings made around the same time (Givan 2014). Moreover, he does not just restrict his discussion to Rollins but also shows that these and similar motives were in fact used by various other musicians at this time, suggesting that this idiom was itself part of the style and musical conventions of a wider jazz community. Although Givan uses none of the theories of methodologies outlined here, it is a good example of how instruments play a central role in the development of musical knowledge and creativity, and he does come quite close to Gell's perspective when he quotes Paul Bley saying "you might think of one's oeuvre as a single piece, and the oeuvre is a lifetime" (228).

Such examples suggest that the social life of instruments is contingent on the skills that musicians develop in reciprocal relation with them (W. Gibson 2006), and given the detailed knowledge of jazz scholars about the development of musical skills, their work is highly pertinent to the ongoing debates about material agency, which is sometimes perceived to sideline the social and embodied processes by which this agency is realized. In addition, the development of skills may also lead us to rethink what an instrument is in the first place. So far, I have been concentrating on how the construction and interface of an instrument constructs particular ways of knowing and acting in the musician. However, the primary focus on the instrument's interface in new organological scholarship might thus represent what philosopher Alfred North Whitehead would call a

“fallacy of misplaced concreteness” (Whitehead 1926). To illustrate, I recently heard Wilbert de Joode, a Dutch double bass player and free improviser, explain at length why he preferred to use thick catgut strings instead of steel:

Such strings have to be made especially, they're not of a standard thickness. One string may be made from around twenty intestines, which have to be wound together, which is a very slow process—it's not very vegan. I also want strings with little winding. In baroque music people play catgut strings, but those are extremely flexible strings. I like strings that offer resistance, that can create tension. This is a harp string, so it's colored because you have to know where the F is among all the hundred thousand strings on a harp, but I've tuned it higher, to a G. [. . .] I use catgut strings because they don't break; in improvised music you want to be an equal partner, and to be able to sound out your voice. A large bass is always a little slow, which is great when you play tempo, but if you suddenly want to make a shift, do something else, then you need the sound to be able to pierce through everything else. I tried to do that with steel but they just broke. It also wasn't the sound I was looking for.

(De Joode and Vingerhoeds 2016)

His comments show the various considerations that come into play only because of a string, which is after all only one part of his relation to his instrument but brings into play concerns with style, interaction with fellow musicians, knowledge of other instruments, genre, even animal rights—the *sound* of the material is almost a mere afterthought. Professional musicians have an intimate knowledge of their instrument that goes far beyond the interface as a site of interaction and concerns the properties and behaviors of the *materials* of which they are made up. Anthropologist Tim Ingold argues that the focus of material culture studies on “materiality” has resulted in a neglect of materials, which include not only wood, textiles, or stone, but also air and water, and the forces of pressure and gravity that move them (Ingold 2007). Creative work, for him, is not an engagement with finished and stable objects, but with materials that are always in motion; developing creative skill is a matter of learning to work with these unfolding qualities (Ingold 2010).

Although I have concentrated here on musical instruments, there are of course various other ways in which technologies can be seen to mediate modes of musical creativity. Marian Jago discusses the overdubbing practices of Lennie Tristano in the early 1950s, which were obviously an important element of his musicianship but are not easily accounted for in terms of improvisation as a “live” and interactive event (Jago 2013). In my own research on Dutch improvising collective the Instant Composers Pool, I found that their approach to improvised music included the use of a large notated repertoire that offered different creative possibilities in performance and were thus integral to their way of working. This directly confronts more or less standard definitions of improvisation in terms of its opposition to the use of music notation (Schuiling 2016). As in the example of *Blue*, such reconfigurations of creative agency are entangled in the dynamics of genre; Jago recounts how the production and reception of Tristano's experiments involved a negotiation of perceived genre boundaries, and in the case of the Instant Composers Pool (ICP), their practice resulted from a cultural position in between free jazz, contemporary art music, and the experimental performance art of Fluxus (Schuiling 2019).

Further research into topics like these might lead to a reconsideration of improvisation, to use Roger Moseley's words, as “a response as well as a call,” in ways that “challenge distinctions between action and reaction” (Moseley 2016, 177). The concept of “bricolage” is enjoying renewed attention in anthropology, as scholars are becoming increasingly aware of the importance and ubiquity of improvisation, not only in creative practices but also to account for the relational dynamics by which objects accrue their cultural significance more generally, as well as

to characterize the process by which people negotiate the variously fluid, resistant, and emergent properties of material objects. Jazz scholars, who have developed a detailed and sophisticated vocabulary for speaking about improvisation, have much to contribute to such discussions.

Notes

1. DeVeaux's emphasis that the history of jazz is better understood in terms of the constant debates about its limits rather than as a fixed category thus prefigures this recent approach.
2. The "index" is a semiotic concept drawn from the work of C.S. Peirce (Peirce 1991), signifying a relation of sign to signified dependent on causation or contiguity; smoke is an index of fire (causation), but a pointing finger is also an index of the thing at which it points (contiguity).
3. This may have to do with the nostalgia and fantasy identified by Rasula; nostalgia and colonial fantasies are important themes in studies of collection as they represent a "longing for an impossibly pure context of lived experience at a place of origin, [. . .] a past which has only ideological reality" (Stewart 1984, 23).

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10

JAZZ MEETS POP IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Catherine Tackley

Jazz is not pop music, that's all.

(Wynton Marsalis in Walser 1999, 342)

Is jazz popular music? Yes! End of discussion.

(Frith 2007, 7)

Jazz is not popular music, but it has had a significant impact on popular music.

(Gridley 1994, 9)

Even in its more sophisticated forms jazz is popular music . . .

(Adorno 1962, 33)

Jazz is . . . no longer a popular music, in the best sense of the word.

(Deveaux 1991, 553)

Is jazz "popular music"? Is some of it "popular music" and some not? Will some of the participants in this [first International Conference on Popular Music Research in 1989] assume that jazz is "popular music" and others assume that it is not?

(Hamm 1995, 117)

The subject of whether and to what extent jazz is popular music continues to occupy jazz academics, musicians, and educators who bring particular "insider" perspectives to their evaluations. These often rest on upholding specific genre definitions in order to accord value in a particular way. While denial of jazz's popular origins can be used, on the one hand, to contribute to its status as art ("America's classical music"), on the other, focusing on jazz's popular credentials can bolster its cultural relevance. Both viewpoints contribute to the importance of the genre within music education, as an area for funding, and as a subject of academic study. It is perhaps hardly surprising then that there is disagreement on jazz as popular music within the multidisciplinary space in which the academic discipline of jazz studies has been situated. Negativity or reluctance to engage with the idea that jazz can be popular evidences the continuing character of jazz studies as an advocacy movement which emphasizes the music's differences from other genres together with its artistic credentials in an attempt to secure status: "The narratives we have inherited to describe the history of jazz retain the patterns of outmoded forms of thought, especially the assumption that the progress of jazz as art necessitates increased distance from the popular" (Deveaux 1991, 553). This has not been particularly helpful either to developing the relevance of the study of jazz within the broader field

of musicology or to gaining a deeper understanding the role of jazz in twentieth-century popular culture. The popularity of jazz remains an “unpopular problem” for jazz academics, as I identified in my 2004 essay on Robbie Williams’s album *Swing When You’re Winning* (Parsonage 2004). The role of jazz within contemporary popular culture remains ripe for consideration.

In a seminal essay on this topic, Simon Frith suggests that the obvious answer to the question “Is jazz popular music?” (“Yes!”) is complicated by the existence of distinct scholarly communities around “popular music studies” and “jazz studies.” Ultimately Frith argues that popular music studies should take account of jazz precisely because it problematizes popularity (2007, 22). Alongside audiences with a particular interest in historical and/or contemporary forms of the music, Frith identifies a mainstream market for jazz which is “contemporary easy-on-the-ear versions of . . . classic jazz, what Stuart Nicholson calls Nu-Crooners and American radio describes as ‘smooth jazz’” (2007, 15). Certainly, “smooth jazz” has received recent scholarly attention (McGee 2013; Barber 2010), and the style’s chief protagonist, saxophonist Kenny G, has been subject to academic scrutiny (Washburne 2004; Whyton 2010). Nu-Crooners and smooth jazz, although (and because) they are culturally mainstream, stretch and challenge the establishment’s definition of jazz to the extent that they may not be accepted at all. Scholarly arguments turn on the way in which smooth jazz has been critically received by the jazz establishment against a broad (and largely unexamined) swathe of popularity outside it. As such, McGee argues for Candy Dulfer’s autonomy and artistry as she “participated in and disrupted the feminized and sexualized associations of smooth jazz to artfully side-step the bonds of anxiety over legitimacy that might otherwise have confined her” (2013, 255). Washburne rehabilitates Kenny G within the jazz tradition: “Regardless of Gorelick’s bad jazz, jazz-lite, or whatever you want to call it, distaste for his music does not justify his exclusion from the historical narrative” (2004, 143). Whyton focuses on jazz guitarist Pat Metheny’s online outburst against Kenny G to analyze the value judgments made within the so-called “jazz community,” observing that “when understood boundaries are challenged or called into question, subjects are instilled with an intense sense of community and personal identification” (2010, 81). Evaluations of “What Jazz Is and Isn’t” (Marsalis 1988) or the boundaries of *Jazz/Not Jazz* (Ake, Garrett, and Goldmark 2012) tend to be made by, and contextualized with reference to, communities of musicians or educators with vested interests in upholding the status of the genre in a particular way. Frith, however, makes a broader important point that transcends this insider/outsider division: “such passionate debate about what counts as jazz seems to be a defining characteristic of jazz as a genre: something certainly isn’t jazz if no one cares if it is or not” (2007, 18), to which the corollary is “something is jazz if someone cares to define it as such.” In the popular sphere, opinion has more potential for impact as it gains critical mass as distinct from the ability of one voice (such as Metheny’s) to have weight within a defined community.

The key point emerging from Frith’s perceptive discussion and the focus of the previous work on smooth jazz is that academic debates about jazz as popular music, despite straddling well-established disciplinary limits, don’t appear to be bringing us any closer to understanding the continuation of jazz within popular culture and society (which is not always the focus of popular music studies, confusingly). Frith advocates adopting a dialectic between an “ever-changing mainstream and avant-garde” rather than a conventional progression from folk to commercial to art as a basis for jazz history (2007, 18–19). Adherence to the latter, I suggest, has had implications beyond misunderstanding the development of the music, and points toward a persistent neglect of the role of jazz in mainstream popular culture, and a fundamental misconception of its history. Indeed, for Guthrie Ramsey, Gridley’s defense of his position (“jazz is not popular music”) suggests that “a history of ‘the’ jazz audience has yet to be written” (2013, 35). Similarly, Washburne comments:

To me, the disjuncture between the jazz tradition and popular culture deserves close scholarly scrutiny. We need to find out about our own cultural context, a context which

enables Kenny G to be so popular, and we need to scrutinize why his accessibility comes at the expense of the exclusion of others.

(Washburne, 136–137)

Extrapolating from this, and moving beyond the specific area of smooth jazz, “(how and why) is jazz popular?” would seem to be an important question to address.

Although often considered separately in scholarly discourses, in practice the interchange between jazz and popular music was and is vibrant and ongoing. Today, these historically rooted connections can be understood to fall into three categories: singers with acknowledged and/or audible jazz roots (for example, Amy Winehouse, Gregory Porter, Jamie Cullum); the incorporation of pop material (e.g., Beatles, Radiohead) into jazz performances; and finally, the adoption of jazz material by mainstream pop stars (for example, Westlife, Paul McCartney, Rod Stewart). Nicholson’s aforementioned exploration of “Nu-Crooners,” in his book *Is Jazz Dead?*, focuses on singers from the first category who are in the main still considered to be “jazz musicians” by both the music industry and audiences (although the musicians themselves often contest this). Although exploration of this category is important in understanding the contemporary popularity of jazz, the incorporation of jazz into contexts where it is encountered by a mainstream audience, whose interest is perhaps more often in the performer than the nature of the musical material, is fundamental in considerations of (how and why) jazz is popular. Indeed, Nicholson’s dismissive attitude to examples of this latter category belies its position on the outer limits of conventional jazz studies, and therefore indicates that this should be studied as an area which bridges not only genre divisions but also scholarly ones:

Far hipper than Robbie Williams’s calculated, one-dimensional Sinatra “tribute”, Cullum’s youthful energy, optimism and confidence had attracted star-in-the-making whippers following his 2002 debut album.

(2005, 84)

In this chapter, I will use the lens of transnationality, a particular focus in recent work in jazz studies, with reference to the UK, to explore how the processes of the adoption of jazz into the mainstream, focusing on recent albums by Robbie Williams and Annie Lennox, are historically grounded. This opens up a rich seam of interaction that has been overlooked due to the inadequacies of academic disciplinarily and a selective approach to historicization of jazz and popular music. Contrary to familiar assertions that “British jazz” only began around the mid-1960s, which Tim Wall (2009) has critiqued with particular reference to the use of Stan Tracy’s album *Under Milk Wood* as a pivotal point in the BBC’s *Jazz Britannia* documentary,¹ looking at the role of jazz in the cultural mainstream in the first part of the century exposes a rich vein of British-specific musical responses to the music from the outset. These provided the foundations, in practical and conceptual terms, for the ongoing interaction between jazz and popular culture.

It is only a small extrapolation from current academic debates around jazz as art/popular music to consider the reception of jazz in Britain when it appeared, as an idea and then sonically, in the latter stages of the First World War. R.W.S. Mendl, author of the first British book on jazz, expressed regret that “modern syncopated dance music has not yet been taken up by any composer of the front rank” (1927, 12). Similarly, composer and critic Constant Lambert wrote: “The next move in the development of jazz will come, almost inevitably, from the sophisticated or highbrow composers” (Lambert 1934/R1966, 198). This aspiration for the future of jazz as art was matched by the vigorous opposition of those who, like Canon Drummond, “had no personal experience of the art of Jazz dancing” but yet strongly condemned it as “mean, low entertainment” (*The Times*

March 15, 1919, 7). Similarly, Sir Dyce Duckworth saw jazz dancing as a sign that “the morals of Old England had become degraded” (*The Times* March 18, 1919, 7).

On the one hand, the music represented a way forward for a society that had been challenged to the point of destruction by the War and, on the other, was symbolic of a continuous slide into a cultural abyss. Beyond recognizing that these reactions represent the furthest extremes of the reception of jazz, perhaps what is most important is that these opinions were contingent upon encounters with jazz mediated by and through popular culture. It was a distinct minority of the British population that heard visiting Americans and aspiring British jazz musicians jamming together underground Soho clubs, but the underworld of London was reported, often salaciously, by newspapers, establishing the degenerate reputation of jazz by association to which Drummond and Duckworth objected. Conversely, advocates for the music cited the importance of composers to develop the music, imposing the values of art music—it was not until later that the importance of individual performers and particularly their improvisations, and indeed the African American roots of the music, became more fully recognized due to the greater availability and understanding of recorded jazz. Already these popular/artistic extremes indicate a certain inevitability about jazz’s eventual mainstream positioning.

If not the first, then certainly a defining group for jazz in Britain, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, appeared initially at the London Hippodrome in a revue, a structured form of variety show, entitled “Joy Bells.” The band was the latest in a long line of imported American acts, and jazz provided the latest novelty as part of a variety show bill which also included comedians and performing dogs. The group was undoubtedly much more successful as a dance band, most notably through their residency at Britain’s first *palais-de-danse*, in Hammersmith, West London, for six months from its opening night. As James Nott points out: “Before the First World War, the public dancing facilities available to the working class were restricted” and principally the domain of the upper and middle-class (2002, 149–150). *Palais-de-danse* were rapidly established in cities and towns throughout the UK and represented a new type of venue for social dance that was large, accessible, and affordable. There are several key points to note with reference to the relationship between jazz and popular culture. First, one reason the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (ODJB) was successful is that their music and presentation served to confirm ideas about jazz that had been circulating for at least two years prior to their arrival—through songs and newspaper reports, for example. Second, the music could only be appreciated as anything more than the latest novelty when the audience were given the opportunity to interact with and embody it through dance, rather than merely observe it from a conventional audience position. Third, the music was introduced and took root through prime mainstream locations of the variety theater and the *palais-de-danse*. Quotidian, mass market encounters with jazz took place within popular entertainment formats that developed more or less in parallel with the presence of the music on British shores and, importantly, were present across the country, not just in London.

Although the musical style and somewhat comedic and anarchic presentation of the ODJB was initially much imitated, Dixieland jazz had quite limited appeal and was relatively short-lived as dance music in Britain. The ODJB was undoubtedly influential on the understanding of jazz, but ultimately the cultural establishment in the form of the leading hotels and restaurants and, from 1923, the BBC, had a strong influence on the way in which jazz was absorbed into the mainstream. The established traditions of the ballroom, associated ensembles, and musical styles remained popular between the First and Second World Wars (and beyond), but there was a sense that jazz, as the most significant trend in popular music, could not be completely ignored by groups that played for mainstream dancing. It was the dance band, and the associated genre of “dance music,” that solved the problem of the adoption of jazz into mainstream popular entertainment in Britain by providing a musical accompaniment to social dance that was both accessible and up-to-date. This often meant incorporating elements of jazz into the repertoire and performance style but still

retaining a breadth of repertoire to cater for the ongoing popularity of dances such as the waltz. On the most basic level, this balance was achieved through the introduction of instrumental colors such as that of the saxophone into pre-existing dance bands that played in hotels, dance venues, and even on transatlantic liners. In this way, jazz was integrated within the accompaniment to participatory popular culture. Indeed, the implications of the extremes of the discourse around the emergence of jazz—on one hand, lowbrow music with undesirable associations with moral degeneracy and, on the other, music which deserved to be venerated as art, actually position the majority of encounters with the music into an emerging mainstream, or middlebrow, culture within which the dance bands were key.

Although indebted to American bandleader Paul Whiteman's "symphonic syncopation," the way in which jazz was adopted within British popular culture through dance bands had undeniable influence on the ways in which the genre was disseminated and absorbed in European countries and beyond in the first half of the twentieth century. Even within the UK, the dance band format had a role beyond the provision of music for dancing and influenced the soundtrack for popular entertainment more generally, as typified by the variety show. Evolving from the nineteenth-century music hall, variety flourished in newly constructed theaters in the first decades of the twentieth century. Unlike American vaudeville, British variety theaters withstood the competition of cinema, running for some time in parallel with variety on radio and, later, television (Double 2012, 55). Jazz formed part of the accompaniment played by a pit band for the plethora of acts that made up the bills of variety shows. Oliver Double describes the "ritual" of the Monday morning band call, where the performers booked for that week would have the opportunity to rehearse the music for their act, using parts which they provided, with the resident pit band (2012, 32–33). From the 1920s, dance bands were also presented as "acts" on the stage. This was also their function in radio entertainment, where they were classified by the BBC as part of a Variety, rather than music, programming.

A successful "band act" would undoubtedly foreground elements of what Double (2012) has identified as the key characteristics of variety theater: personality, participation, skill, and novelty. As such, bands were required not only to present high-quality musical performances, often exhibiting skill to the level of virtuosity, but also to offer something novel or distinctive, through not only musical style but also visual elements such as staging, dress, and movement, the incorporation of comedy to communicate personality, and perhaps also opportunities for audience participation. Leading British bandleader Jack Hylton advised:

Scenic backgrounds and artistic effects are useful to a stage band, but easy good humour and a fair leavening of comedy is a necessity, because no music-hall audience can be kept serious for a long time without signs of restiveness. They pay to be entertained.

(Radio Times *February 8, 1929*, 319)

Expectations and success criteria for bands on the variety stage were certainly well-established as reference points by the time Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington appeared at the London Palladium in 1932 and 1933 respectively. Indeed, the positive reception accorded to Ellington was largely due to the way in which he met and even exceeded the expectations of a "band act"—good quality musical performances; visual interest (via staging, dress, and additional dancers); and novelty, achieved through race and nationality, but without the extremes that many audience members detected in Armstrong's performances. Although Armstrong's act exhibited personality, his skill was questioned by those who were unused to an uninhibited solo jazz artist as an act, and his performance was so novel as to appear threatening to some British audience members. This is a clear demonstration of the need to keep a balance of key elements, and to keep within acceptable norms, in the variety theater context (Parsonage 2005, 235–238).

By the mid-1920s, jazz was firmly established within mainstream popular culture both as an accompaniment for participative dancing and on the stage to be observed. Today, jazz continues to be encountered in contemporary versions of these situations, and thus their aesthetic—to encourage participation and to provide entertainment—plays an important part in the way in which jazz is presented in popular culture. Some examples include the talent show and karaoke, extending to TV formats such as *X-Factor*, which often includes a “big band week” almost as a rite of passage for aspiring pop artists, and social dance; writ large on our screens in the form of *Come Dancing* and latterly *Strictly Come Dancing*. Two relatively recent forays into jazz repertoire and performance style by British pop singers Annie Lennox and Robbie Williams can be understood in terms of continuing this lineage of jazz in popular culture. Both albums were launched with live shows situated specifically within variety environments. Robbie Williams’s *Swings Both Ways* (2013) was accompanied by a concert staged at the London Palladium, established as the country’s leading variety theater in the 1920s under the directorship of George Black. Following the release of her album *Nostalgia* in 2014, Lennox presented “An Evening of Nostalgia,” recorded at the Orpheum Theater, Los Angeles—constructed in the 1920s as part of the Orpheum vaudeville circuit. Beyond this obvious physical positioning, the variety aesthetic permeates the approach of both artists to jazz.

The repertoire of Williams’s album moves away from the Sinatra-dominated track list of his previous swing album but, not unlike Sinatra’s later career, branches out into other types of song and includes many duets with arguably more “hip” artists such as Lily Allen, Olly Murs, and Rufus Wainwright as a way of continuing to address a young pop music audience in an attempt to secure universal appeal, key to any mainstream entertainment product. The novelty, entertainment aspects of jazz are referenced through songs which are already well-established in popular culture and as such invite audience participation, including “I Wanna Be Like You” from Disney’s *The Jungle Book* and “If I Only Had a Brain” from *The Wizard of Oz* and, in particular, Cab Calloway’s “Minnie the Moocher,” which involves call-and-response. The production and orchestration of the album are lavish, adhering to the high production values of pop. Jazz credentials are foregrounded in the presentation, although balanced across the album by self-referential original songs such as “No One Likes a Fat Pop Star” that appear to offer an insight into Williams’s personality. Particularly interesting is a swing version of Williams’s hit “Supreme” from his 2000 album *Sing When You’re Winning*. Whereas the original was positioned firmly in the pop canon, especially by the interpolation of the string countermelody line from Gloria Gaynor’s “I Will Survive” and a retro-styled music video, “Swing Supreme” follows the model of Paul Anka’s 2005 *Rock Swings* album, in which pop-rock classics from the 1980s and 1990s are reinterpreted in a swing-jazz style. “Supreme” is repositioned perhaps rather crudely but unequivocally as a jazz standard mostly via the sonic reference points in the accompaniment (William’s vocal delivery on “Swing Supreme” is actually very similar to the original). These include the sounds of “cool” modal jazz, Hammond organ, big band, and strings—the addition of which has often signified attempts to position jazz in the mainstream (see Howland 2012). These sounds reference a history of jazz that, together with the reinterpretation of his own song within an overall context of variety entertainment, imbue the track with nostalgia.

Annie Lennox approaches jazz in a rather different way, stripping back key standards from the Great American Songbook. Many of the songs—“Memphis in June,” “Georgia on my Mind,” and “Summertime”—reference the American South and the African American experience, implying famous recorded versions by African American singers. A particular example of this is Lennox’s version of “Strange Fruit,” a protest song against racism and lynching, most famously recorded by Billie Holiday. The song required special treatment when Holiday sang it in her shows in New York’s Café Society in the 1930s—an important integrated venue that sought to spotlight African

American talent. Owner Barney Josephson insisted on stillness and quiet as Holiday performed the song as her final number, leaving the stage without any encores (Margolick 2000). Lennox's version is positioned more reassuringly in the center of her album, which closes with an oddly upbeat, cabaret-style version of Duke Ellington's "Mood Indigo." Her version of "Strange Fruit" is framed by warm flutes and piano, and then strings that underplay the raw bluesiness of the original in the interests of the nostalgia concept. In this context, the idea of nostalgia sits somewhat uneasily with the racial implications of this appropriation, a theme which Washburne explores in relation to Kenny G's mainstream success with "smooth jazz" in which, Washburne argues, he appropriates not only the African American musical material but the audience too, giving rise to claims that he is not only inauthentic but highly problematic as an artist (2004, 135). This is not, of course, to imply that those listening to Lennox's "Strange Fruit" would necessarily be aware of the recorded history of the song, but as evidence of the ways in which jazz material is shaped in order to enter the mainstream.

Lennox's album foregrounds a general sense of cultural nostalgia, whereas Williams is more obviously self-referential (as with his previous swing album),² but both effectively utilize jazz within a historically rooted but still relevant variety context as a way of positioning and historicizing themselves within a lineage of mainstream popular music. Like dance bands, manifestations of jazz in the shape of these albums by Williams and Lennox are rather easily dismissed by scholars and critics alike because of their mainstream appeal and success. And like dance bands, I argue for their fundamental importance in creating and reinforcing public ideas of jazz. These interpretations give some idea about the continuation of an image of jazz in the public eye that certainly involves novelty, comedy, and entertainment but also something more serious and, through nostalgia, profoundly historical. This blend offers a stark contrast with the way in which the genre is often understood within the jazz establishment as an ever-changing music at the cutting edge of musical development.

Long established popular entertainment structures were instrumental to the importation of jazz to Britain around the end of the First World War as well as to the way in which it became established as a part of the popular entertainment of the day. Although in time alternative structures—venues, Rhythm Clubs, record labels, magazines, critics, and fans—provided a backdrop for jazz to be presented, received, and critiqued as "art" music, the parallel continuation and development of the original popular entertainment modes, particularly variety, allowed jazz to continue to play a part in the popular culture of this country until the present-day.

This chapter has shown that moving away from definitions of jazz imposed by those with vested interests and inherent bias toward a greater recognition of the nature of public encounters with the music can expose its continued relevance within popular culture. In particular, by focusing on popular entertainment formats such as the variety show, the approaches to jazz by popular musicians and the public understanding of the genre can be understood. Just as Frith argued for popular music studies to take account of jazz, so must scholars and "insiders" take account of the wider impact and role of jazz within popular culture, as much an idea as a musical form, in order to develop a real understanding of its relevance historically and today.

Notes

1. Wall identifies *Under Milk Wood* as ideal for this purpose due to "a synthesis of absorbed American influences and elements of British culture in English pianist Tracy's composition; inspired by a BBC radio play written by 'the nation's best known poet,' Welshman Dylan Thomas; and executed by the established partnership of Tracy and saxophonist Bobby Wellins, who draws on the romantic influences of his Scottish music heritage" (2009, 151).
2. The title "Swings Both Ways" alludes to ongoing speculation about Williams's sexuality which the star has both fueled and refuted.

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ON *BILLBOARD*, ISAAC HAYES, AND THE “SWINGING RELATIONSHIP” BETWEEN JAZZ AND ITS POPULAR MUSIC COUSINS, 1950–1973

John Howland

This chapter explores genre, hybridization, and industry questions around postwar intersections of jazz and popular music. Through a study of US industry press categorizations of late 1960s and early 1970s jazz-related music, particularly in the trade magazine *Billboard* and the jazz magazine *Downbeat*, the often overlooked cultural breadth of jazz practice, as well as the porous style boundaries of jazz, are illuminated. Early 1970s albums by Isaac Hayes help frame this study, as these releases notably topped both *Billboard*’s jazz and Rhythm and Blues (R&B)/soul popularity charts.

While the postwar period saw the decline of the jazz big band as a commercial force, various hi-fi era reinventions of swing-indebted music—for example, Frank Sinatra’s albums of the mid-to late 1950s—were a regular presence on 1950s recording popularity charts. With the arrival of new youth-oriented, mid-1950s rock-pop genres that instigated the era’s hi-fi/lo-fi record production schism between youth and adult genres (see Zak 2010), jazz-trained talent found studio employment as musicians, arrangers, and producers in various hi-fi pop music trends. These developments are central to this chapter. Such jazz-indebted music of the 1950s to 1970s covers various corners of popular entertainment (from film, to television, to Vegas pop glitz), but also 1950s/1960s orchestral R&B and soul and 1970s funk horns, symphonic soul, and disco, among other trends. These out-of-sight contributions of jazz musicians to pop shaped the sound of postwar pop, particularly African American idioms (hence invoking “out of sight” both literally and as a reference to a 1970s slang phrase for hipness). In sum, this chapter aims to articulate rich cross-genre talent exchanges in this “family” of music.

When examining *Billboard* and *Downbeat* for evidence of music industry framing of post-1960 jazz, several interesting trends stand out with the album releases of Isaac Hayes. Three chronologically close examples are illustrative. The first reveals curiosities around the genre permeability of the *Billboard* jazz long-playing (LP) popularity charts. Table 11.1 shows the first ten entries on the December 12, 1970 jazz chart, where Hayes’s *To Be Continued* tops the list, and where his 1969 *Hot Buttered Soul* has moved to number 10 (after seventy-four weeks on the chart), and his 1970 *The Isaac Hayes Movement* has dropped to 8 (after thirty-four weeks) (*Billboard* 1970). While the chart includes albums by Miles Davis and John Coltrane, jazz artists covering rock-pop tunes (for example, Paul Desmond covering Simon and Garfunkel), and popular soul jazz artists (Ramsey

Table 11.1 Billboard Best Selling Jazz LPs chart, listings 1–10, for the week ending 12 December 1970

1	<i>To Be Continued, Isaac Hayes</i>
2	<i>Gula Matari</i> , Quincy Jones
3	<i>Chapter Two</i> , Roberta Flack
4	<i>Bitches Brew</i> , Miles Davis
5	<i>Miles Davis at Fillmore</i> , Miles Davis
6	<i>Black Talk</i> , Charles Earland
7	<i>Indianola Mississippi Seeds</i> , B.B. King
8	<i>The Isaac Hayes Movement, Isaac Hayes</i>
9	<i>Don Ellis at Fillmore</i> , Don Ellis
10	<i>Hot Buttered Soul, Isaac Hayes</i>

Lewis, Charles Earland, Quincy Jones, Wes Montgomery), Hayes was not someone I expected to see here. His presence seems more unusual than chart entries like B.B. King or the spoken word album of the Last Poets (which might be interpreted as jazz poetry). (Roberta Flack’s third-place album is a near-equal curiosity, though.) Second, in March 1971, Billboard announced that Hayes had dually won the National Association of Record Merchandisers (NARM) bestselling male R&B vocals award *and* the “best selling jazz artist” award (*Billboard* 1971). In March 1972, his award-winning film soundtrack to the 1971 Blaxploitation classic, *Shaft*, won the same NARM awards (*Billboard* 1972b). Third, an April 1971 issue of *Downbeat* presented an extended interview of Hayes by editor Dan Morgenstern (Morgenstern 1971), which was complemented by a psychedelic green cover image of Hayes (Image 11.1) alongside the magazine’s new “Jazz-Blues-Rock” logo (a short-lived early 1970s characterization). Neither Morgenstern (a personal acquaintance) nor the jazz-centered *Downbeat* would typically be associated with *Shaft*-era Hayes.

While jazz-rock trends of the era have finally received scholarly attention over the last decade-plus, 1960s/1970s soul jazz idioms—and the era’s rock, soul, and rock/pop parallels to such hybridizations—remain under-researched. In jazz studies, this situation reflects what Catherine Parsonage (now Tackley) terms the “unpopular problem” of the “popularity of jazz” (Parsonage 2004), by which she refers to the normative scholarly oversight of the popular culture legacy of jazz. The porous stylistic boundaries of jazz in the late 1960s and 1970s are especially problematic, however. For example, Daniel Goldmark has written of the problems of genre and jazz label image branding and stylistic eclecticism in Atlantic Records’ 1967–1974 jazz album releases (Goldmark 2012). The Hayes jazz chart curiosities illustrate another perspective on how the industry tracked and marketed musical products as “jazz” in this era. David Brackett has written about genre instability in *Billboard*’s early 1960s R&B charts (Brackett 2016, chapter 7). The late 1960s and early 1970s mark a parallel moment where jazz was (to paraphrase Brackett on early 1960s R&B) “losing its identity” despite its role as a racially defining, elevated African American music idiom. In this era, *Billboard*’s jazz LP charts no longer consistently referred to recordings that others—core jazz fans then or now—could readily recognize as jazz. As in Brackett’s study, both the legibility and stylistic “citationality” of genre and the question of how the magazine tracked sales are of paramount importance to understanding the Venn-like overlapping genre boundaries in this problem. (Such generic citations involve sonic references “by musical texts of previous conventions governing meaning and sound” and entail “the gradual coalescence of a cluster of socio-textual elements, and . . . increasing stability with which these elements are then associated with a genre label” [3–4].) That said, while soul artists like Curtis Mayfield briefly appear on *Billboard*’s 1968–1973 jazz charts, Hayes oddly remains on the jazz charts from July 19, 1969 to November 6, 1971, with

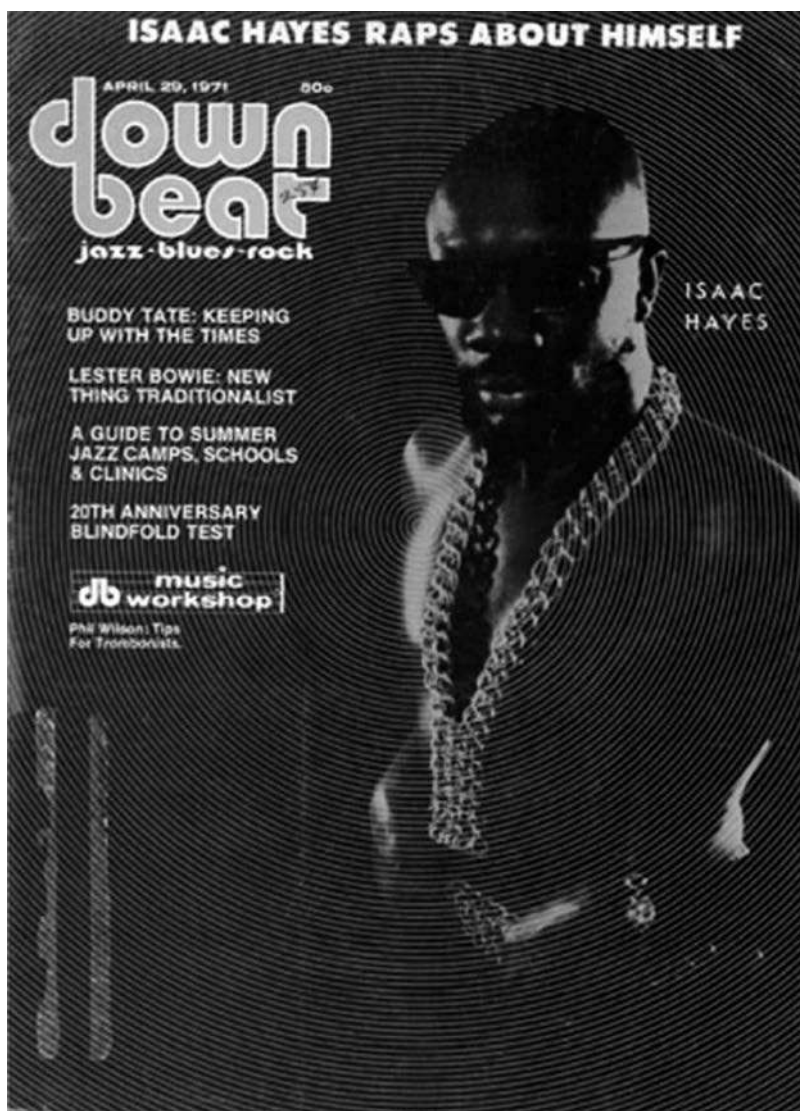


Image 11.1 Cover for *Downbeat*, April 29, 1971.

Shaft at no.1, after which the jazz LP chart was dropped until early 1973. Central to my concern here is *Billboard* magazine's relationship to jazz, and what in particular *Billboard* understood to be jazz—or of interest to jazz recording consumers—in this era.

In the past decade, there has been increased scholarship that explores the “boundaries” of the “core” jazz tradition (for example, Ake 2012). While Scott DeVeaux has described this core as “the essence of the idiom as we have defined it” in post-1930 jazz scholarship (DeVeaux 2005), John Szwed has characterized the “boundaries” of this tradition as “jazz” (or jazz-in-quotes; Szwed 2000, 6–10), by which he means popular music idioms indebted to jazz practice in performance style, arranging conventions, contributing musicians tied to the core tradition, etc. That said, in opposition to the canonic boundaries defended by (core) jazz proponents, some contemporaries

(the general public, promoters, press, and entertainment industry) may have nonetheless identified certain “boundary” music as jazz.

Brackett documents the porousness and instability of various postwar popular music genres, the ever-increasing postwar refinements in genre boundaries, and the disjunctions in genre conceptions between producers, media, and consumers. He observes that

genres are not static groupings of empirically verifiable musical characteristics, but rather associations of texts whose criteria of similarity may vary according to the uses to which the genre labels are put. “Similar” elements include more than musical-style features, and groupings often hinge on elements of nation, class, race, gender, sexuality, and so on.

(Brackett 2016, 3–4)

As noted, Brackett’s conception of music genres functioning through “citationality” and “iterability” is particularly insightful. He further observes that “the conventions of a genre may continue to be cited even as its generic context changes, thus leading to the relabeling of the ‘same’ genre” (13). This historically grounded theoretical framing of genre instability is helpful for understanding both the problems of the 1969–1973 *Billboard* jazz charts and certain postwar precedents.

Though it covered a diversity of music, *Downbeat* centrally represented the jazz industry. The magazine’s 1930s readers’ music polls distinguish only between “swing,” “sweet,” and “corn,” wherein “swing” denoted “hot jazz” (the core). Sweet and corn encompassed sentimental- or novelty-pop trends. The polls also recognize categories of bands (*big bands*), arrangers, soloists, and vocalists. By the early 1940s, small combos were added, as well as “male” and “girl” singer categories, but the swing/sweet/corn distinctions prevailed. That said, many of the big bands functioned as self-contained variety entertainment businesses. Thus, all bands could include elements associated with core jazz practices. By 1944, two years after Frank Sinatra began his solo career, the magazine subdivided singer categories into “vocal group” and “male” and “girl” singers “with band” and “not band”—Sinatra won the latter. The 1952 poll inaugurates a “Hall of Fame” category, won first by Louis Armstrong (then largely a popular entertainer). This parallels an adult-market turn toward nostalgia and a new canon of pre-war “standards” (Howland 2012, 126–130, 140–144). The magazine’s critics’ poll was inaugurated in 1953. Here, genre categories are further reworked and *jazz* is mentioned for the first time in the magazine’s polls, alongside “Best Record-Popular,” “Best Record-Jazz,” “Best Record-Rhythm & Blues,” “Best Record-Classical,” “Dance Band,” “Jazz Band,” and “Combo-Instrumental.” These changes partly reflect 1950s hi-fi consumer trends, the aging of the magazine’s original audience, new popular genres outside jazz, and the new postwar distinction between jazz and “pop” (though the term “pop” dates to the 1920s), among other trends. In the 1954 readers’ poll, “Personalities of the Year,” and “Popular,” “Jazz,” “Latin American,” and “Rhythm and Blues” categories were added, thus indicating further refinements and encroaching celebrity culture. By contrast, the 1953–1956 critics’ polls focus exclusively on core jazz, reflecting a key historiographic moment in the critical elevation of jazz.

Billboard’s reviews and charts represent broader industry genre refinements in the same era. The magazine started regular music popularity charts in the 1930s, with interest in only three categories: Pop, Rhythm and Blues, and Country and Western. While Brackett extensively documents genre discourse in *Billboard* through the 1980s, I offer several complimentary observations here. The music industry of the 1920s and 1930s divided the popular recording markets into national, race, and regional (for example, “hillbilly”) subcategories. In this period, *Billboard* was predominantly concerned with white-made music for white markets, though from 1920 there was increasing attention paid to black music and particularly cross-race sales potential. Though largely focused on popularity (for example, the “Music Popularity Chart”) and large-scale regional sales, as well as national (largely white) and race market sales (through a “Harlem Hit Parade” column),

popular music coverage through the 1940s reflects the jazz/jazz-pop genre framing seen *Downbeat*. Around 1945, they added new market-focused columns (for example, "Most Played Juke Box Records," "Popular Record Reviews," "Folk Record Reviews") to the "Music Popularity Chart" subsection, though genre distinctions remained rather fluid. Under the "Pop Record" section of a January 1943 issue, the reviewer considers Duke Ellington, the dance band of Horace Heidt, the blues of Roosevelt Sykes, and close harmony of the Four King Sisters, among other "pop" releases (*Billboard* 1945). By 1946, the magazine tracked "England's Top Twenty," "Best-Selling Popular Retail Records" (singles), "Best-Selling Popular Record Albums," classical music (singles and albums), new "folk" and "race" jukebox categories, and film soundtracks. Across 1947–1948, "Children's Music" was added, and "race" records were again separated from "Cowboy and Hill-billy Tunes" (previously "folk"). In 1949, the latter two changed to "Rhythm and Blues" and "Country and Western." Around 1951, they begin tracking "Latin American," "Sacred," "Spiritual" (black gospel), and "International" recording sales.

In 1953, *Billboard* finally includes a jazz popularity column, which is regressively titled "Hot Jazz," despite its coverage of postwar (modern) jazz. By April 1955, the magazine deemed it timely to educate its industry readers with a primer on "Categories of Jazz Disks," which outlines modern jazz ("West Coast jazz, East Coast jazz, bop, progressive, cool"), (soloist-centered) "instrumental jazz," "swing," "Dixieland," and "cocktail piano." With the latter, the magazine notes "jazz men that can qualify with the . . . mood-music fanciers. Among them are . . . horn men with strings—for example, the recent Ben Webster and Benny Carter issues. . . . All are perfect antidotes for the pop listener's jaded palate [for jazz]" (*Billboard* 1955, 14). This article was paired with an announcement that "Jazz Disks, Paced by LP, Hit Cool 55% Jump in Hot Year" (1) as well as articles on "Buying, Selling, Programming Jazz Records, Tunes, and Talent" (13–25) and "The Jazz Renaissance" (13). The above comment about the jazz-soloist-with-strings trend (see also Howland 2012) reflects the burgeoning jazz-pop market across the early to mid-1950s. The means by which *Billboard* distinguished jazz from pop, however, are not always clear. For instance, Ella Fitzgerald's gently swinging presentations of standards repertory in the 1956 *Sings the Cole Porter Song Book* album was reviewed as popular music, though the release was called a "bonanza for [disc jockeys], for jazz fans and for the [popular song] sophisticates to whom [Nat Cole] is 'King.'" By contrast, Dinah Washington's *Dinah!*, a related big band-plus-strings release of sung standards, was reviewed as jazz (both in *Billboard* 1956).

The 1955 jazz primer *Billboard* issue exemplifies a pivotal moment, amid a hi-fi adult consumer trend, when jazz became a marketing category distinct from popular music, and this moment notably arrives *after* jazz was no longer centrally tied to dancing and youth-market sales. Across the 1950s, regardless of chart placement, many jazz, jazz-pop, and jazz-with-strings releases were typically swing-indebted, standards-leaning albums marketed to the same broad adult consumer demographic (many of whom were pre-war youth who fueled the swing era music industry boom). The fluidity of jazz/pop genre characterizations in the industry can be seen, for instance, in *Billboard*'s 1954 album reviews of Sinatra's first "songbook" album, *Swing Easy*, and Jackie Gleason's throbbing, instrumental big band-plus-strings mood music/easy listening album, *Music, Martinis, and Memories*, which are both reviewed as popular releases, while three *Oscar Peterson Plays* "songbook" albums (*Jerome Kern*, *Richard Rodgers*, and *Vincent Youmans*) are filed under "jazz." Each release, though, emphasized the newly elevated idea of "the music of the great pop composers" (*Billboard* 1954). Here are the roots of the "Great American Songbook" concept that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, which embodies the jazz-pop foundations of what NARAS (National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences) has termed "traditional pop" (NARAS 2011). That said, the citationality of traditional pop "style," meaning the citationality of a host of jazz-related styles, timbres, phraseology, harmony, and arrangement practices, has a longstanding history, from the 1920s to present, in many genres of popular music beyond a "core" body of music (see

Howland 2017). Both areas of “jazz” citationality are seen in the jazz chart-topping symphonic soul of Hayes.

The sound of Hayes can be illustrated in his 1970 cover of Burt Bacharach’s “The Look of Love,” a tune originally sung by Dusty Springfield in the 1967 comedic James Bond film, *Casino Royale* (Columbia Pictures). *To Be Continued*, the album with this track, was closely related to *Hot Buttered Soul*, from the year before. With these two albums, Hayes merged the Memphis soul sound of the Bar-Kays rhythm section, the reeds and brass of the Memphis Horns, Hayes’s organ work, baritone crooning, and his extended spoken “raps,” wah-wah electric guitars, jazz-derived flute-work, and lush strings, French horns, and woodwinds. These albums richly expanded on Hayes’s work on Stax’s hit singles. These characteristics are in full display in “Look,” alongside arrangement details that variously evoke aspects of contemporary jazz, rock, soul, and funk, and jazz-pop and traditional (orchestral) pop. Example 11.1 presents a transcription of two of the jazz-related textural iterations in the arrangement of “Look.” The number stands as both a black-soul homage and a signification on the lounge-jazz-pop of Bacharach and Springfield. In this repeated texture from the introduction (first at 0:13), backed by a wash of wah-wah rhythm guitar, Wurlitzer electric piano (with wavering tremolo), and subdued drum tom rolls, rimshots, and cymbal splashes, one hears textural and stylistic citations of both 1960s–1970s jazz flute work, as well as the Amaj7 big band-plus-strings jazzy chord stabs that immediately invoke the emerging jazz-funk of both Blaxploitation film scores and symphonic soul (which Hayes helped define).

A filmed live 1973 Atlanta performance with full orchestra (Hayes 2004) aptly illustrates the sustained stylistic and visual juxtapositions of what I have called “luxe pop” production practice (Howland 2017). Here, the bald, goateed, bare-chested Hayes appears on an elevated platform in aviator sunglasses and gold-chain vest, seated behind a Hammond B3. His band, all black save

The image shows a musical score transcription for an excerpt from Isaac Hayes's 1970 recording of "The Look of Love." The score is written for a full orchestra and includes the following parts and dynamics:

- flute (jazzy)**: Melodic line in the first staff.
- alto saxes**: Enter with a sustained chord in the second staff.
- trumpets**: Enter with a sustained chord in the third staff.
- trombones French horn**: Enter with a sustained chord in the fourth staff.
- violins**: Enter with a sustained chord in the fifth staff.
- violas**: Enter with a sustained chord in the sixth staff.
- cellos dbl. bs. & elec. bs.**: Enter with a sustained chord in the seventh staff.

The dynamic marking **f** (forte) is present for the brass and string sections.

Example 11.1 Transcription of an arrangement excerpt (first heard at 0:13 ff.) from Isaac Hayes’s 1970 recording of “The Look of Love.” This Hayes transcription relies upon another transcription score that was generously provided by Rosie Danvers.

for the white, Santana-indebted lead guitarist, appears on the stage in soulful and fabulous early 1970s African American street clothes, set above tuxedoed (apparently) all-white big-band-plus-symphony pit orchestra with dramatic conductor. Hayes notes that they plan “to be a little sexy,” as is readily heard in his rich baritone crooning (ranging from a whisper to gravelly, deep glory) and the lush, soulful groove and melodramatic textures of the arrangement.

Further understanding of Hayes’s conception of this hybrid sound (and image) can be gleaned from period interviews. Hayes remarked that “pop music doesn’t set any restrictions you can use any [style] you want” (Heckman 1972). He commented both that his “music is like a sponge. . . . I’ve absorbed country[,] blues, classics, jazz, [and] pop” (Morgenstern 1971, 31), and that his “influences [a]re all over the map. Sure, I was inspired by [Motown], but I also dug Burt Bacharach. . . . Whatever I heard, I took it down to Soulsville” (Kurland n.d., 2). Hayes further reflected that “people recognize me as one who has put polish on soul music, put it on another level” (Morgenstern 1971, 15), and elsewhere claimed his “goal was to combine the feel of a big symphony with the nasty funk” (Kurland n.d., 2). These juxtapositions of unadorned Memphis soul, instrumental jams, lush orchestral textures, jazz flute and brass, etc., were thus meant to impart a black, urban *aura* of musical sophistication—i.e., a racially evocative orchestral-type sound, *not* actual classical affectations. Hayes further notes “in my raps there are grammatical errors which I don’t care to change. [Likewise,] music is the one language [in which] grammatical errors are accepted” (Morgenstern 1971, 15). Thus, these supposed musico-“grammatical” errors are deeply entwined with intentionally juxtaposed and sustained stylistic, race, and class oppositions. Hayes further remarked “Nat Cole was my idol” (Morgenstern 1971, 14). This, alongside his production work for Billy Eckstine (Eckstine 1971) and his role in developing Sammy Davis, Jr.’s “new image” (Tiegel 1972b), suggests that Hayes’s music repurposed the orchestral-jazz-pop of 1950s Cole, Eckstine, and the Vegas-luxe sound of Sinatra’s Rat Pack. Alongside his Motown reference, it becomes clear that Hayes drew inspiration from several cross-racial pop and jazz-pop models. After *Shaft*, this sound formed the model for underscoring the black urban experience in a host of films. As *Shaft* was partly a black, American urban reimagining of the James Bond franchise (one tagline for the film was “Hotter than Bond”), Hayes’s score provides a similar translation of John Barry’s lush, jazz-informed Bond soundtracks. But questions remain: Why did *Billboard* and NARM see Hayes as chart-topping jazz? And what did Hayes mean to *Downbeat*’s jazz-inclined editors?

This era overlaps with the rise of jazz-rock, especially early electric Miles Davis, Charles Lloyd, and other jazz-centered artists who merged jazz with R&B, funk, and rock. These trends are solidly reflected on the jazz charts, particularly Davis’s LPs. When the *Billboard* jazz charts return in January 1973 (*Billboard* 1973a), Davis’s *On the Corner* is number 3, just after Curtis Mayfield’s *Superfly* and Chicago’s *Chicago V*. The charts are still mixed, with Miles, Pharoah Sanders, and John and Alice Coltrane set alongside soul and soul jazz and spots of rock and pop. By February (*Billboard* 1973b), soul, funk, and rock-pop are gone from the jazz charts, never to return, thus implying an undocumented accounting shift in jazz recording sales/popularity. This 1971–1973 absence of the *Billboard* jazz popularity charts notably echoes the 1963–1965 absence of the R&B chart, but by late 1968 “soul” had become the “de facto term for black popular music” (Brackett 2016, 271, and chapter 7). These developments set the stage for the Hayes-jazz-chart era. Granted, there is a continuum from 1960s soul and funk to jazz engagements with these styles, but most soul was seen to lie at a pop-culture distance from improvisation-based jazz-rock, at least until Herbie Hancock’s 1973 *Headhunters*.

From the late 1950s to 1967—the era of jazz and soul interactions, which set the stage for the jazz chart problem in the late 1960s—jazz is only sporadically tracked in *Billboard*. In March 1967, “special survey” jazz LP charts were introduced (*Billboard* 1967). These charts show minimal crossover from the “Rhythm and Blues” chart. Despite this latter outdated categorization, from

1968, the magazine paired these charts with a “Soul Sauce” column (a title possibly borrowed from a 1965 Cal Tjader album). By then, “soul” was associated both with black pop and soul jazz. Indeed, the “Best-Selling Jazz LP’s” column is a subsection of the “Rhythm & Blues” subsection, set beside the R&B LP charts, and opposite the R&B singles chart and “Soul Sauce” column (*Billboard* 1968a).

Despite musical dialog between jazz- and black pop trends, *Billboard*’s first critical reference to jazz in relation to both “soul” and “funk” was likely a 1960 Les McCann review (*Billboard* 1960). Also, in 1961 the magazine refers to a Blue Note single as a “good side for the soul jazz fans” (*Billboard* 1961), likely following the lead of Riverside’s influential 1960 promotion of Cannonball Adderley via that genre term. Jazz magazines like *Downbeat* and *Jazz Monthly* were also slow to discuss soul jazz as a distinct style until circa 1962, starting with the article “Soul Jazz and the Need for Roots” (Heckman 1962). Though it had little to do with soul jazz, just before these press adoptions of this sub-genre term, there was a mini-trend of “jazz soul” albums, including *The Jazz Soul of Oscar Peterson* from 1959 and *The Jazz Soul of Little Stevie* from 1962, the debut of Stevie Wonder (which notably covers Bobby Timmons’s soul jazz landmark, “Moanin”). The latter instrumental showcase follows the 1961 Ray Charles *Genius + Soul = Jazz* LP, with arrangements by Quincy Jones and Charles on soulful Hammond organ. (The connection of the latter two albums is seen in Wonder’s 1962 *Tribute to Uncle Ray*.) Wonder’s *Jazz Soul* arrived just as Booker T.’s “Green Onions” rose to 3 on the Top 100 and R&B charts. *Billboard*, though, calls “Onions” a “danceable blues tune for teens,” a market characterization likely tied to the “wailing guitar work” of Steve Cropper and heavy drums, not the Hammond organ of Booker T. (*Billboard* 1962). The latter is stylistically not that far from the bluesy organ of Charles or even Jimmy Smith, whose own albums appear on the R&B charts. “Onions” illustrates the proximity of some 1960s R&B instrumentals to early jazz-meets-soul idioms, and Wonder’s *Jazz Soul* (for example, “Fingertips”) is not far from Quincy Jones’s 1962 big-band-plus-jazz-flute-and-bossa-beat “Soul Bossa Nova.” These early 1960s jazz-pop-meets-soul confluences reveal many genre boundary overlaps in African American pop, but even to early 1968, the jazz charts show intrusions of Motown- or Stax-influenced soul, even with a release like *Genius* that foregrounded jazz-centered musicians and marketing (as evidenced in *Billboard* advertisements).

Fabian Holt notes that “the jazz economy took a steep dive in the 1960s and reached a low . . . around 1972 with . . . 1.3 percent of total record sales” (Holt 2007, 86–87). Nevertheless, *Billboard* began tracking jazz again in March 1967. The instability of jazz can be seen throughout period industry press. In May 1968, *Billboard* announced “Jazz Skipping New Beat as ‘Poppouri.’” Here, jazz producer Joel Dorn claims “jazz has become so broad . . . it is . . . difficult to pigeonhole,” and he notes the “overlap of . . . album[s] on the pop and jazz charts” (Gross 1968, 1). A 1967 *Variety* article by Leonard Feather cites Quincy Jones as saying “in the jazz magazines nowadays . . . they seem to be writing about everything but Jazz,” and Feather himself laments that “the charts seem to include everything but jazz.” Writing just prior to the return of *Billboard*’s jazz charts, Feather notes that on pop charts he can only find “the names of 10 artists who, by . . . [any] stretch of the imagination, could be identified with jazz.” Feather identifies albums of Jimmy Smith, Wes Montgomery, and Lee Morgan as “genuine jazz with only minor compromises” to the “soul or rock ‘n’ roll trends.” He suggests a distanced jazz debt in music by Paul Butterfield, Ray Charles, and Lou Rawls, and the bottom of the barrel on his jazz debt list includes the “pop group sound” of Doc Severinson, “the Rhythm and Blues bag” of Ramsey Lewis, the “bossa nova, showmanship” of Sergio Mendes, and Count Basie’s covers of Beatles songs. Feather observes that contemporary jazz can only succeed in the marketplace “by deviating from pure jazz” through “Tijuana Brass imitations, rock tunes, and the like” (Feather 1967).

Downbeat demonstrates how the jazz press adjusted to the new jazz economy. In a June 1967 editorial, Morgenstern announced that the magazine would expand to cover “the musically valid aspects of . . . rock” (Morgenstern 1967). Privately, Morgenstern noted that the magazine

was forced to open its pages [to rock] due to pressure from advertisers. . . . We managed to finesse it, and eventually it . . . vanished. . . . But then the soul thing came along, which unlike rock was . . . a black phenomenon, also seen, from a jazz perspective, as a trend that ought to increase interest in the real thing among [a] younger black audience.

(Morgenstern 2012)

While this socio-political agenda in promoting jazz heritage at its market nadir is not typical of *Billboard*, similar concerns appear. In 1972, *Billboard* featured both “Jazz Scene” (April 29) and “Soul Emergence” (January 29) special issues. The latter proclaimed, with testimonial from Quincy Jones and Cannonball Adderley, that “Jazz Is Soul’s ‘Cousin’ and the two have a swinging relationship” (Tiegel 1972c, 34). In this 1972 jazz issue, Dorn describes his Atlantic releases, from Roland Kirk to soul artists like Donny Hathaway, as simply “adult black music,” a description that captures this market (Tiegel 1972a, 14). The lead article concerns a “new wave of enthusiasm” of “youth respond[ing] to . . . contemporary rhythms” mixed with jazz, with new players “coming out of acid rock” and others “coming from the ghetto” (Tiegel 1972a, 13). The article concerns producers’ views on jazz-rock, but the contributions of black, urban popular culture are relevant here. Despite white producers talking about the “ghetto,” 1972 was saturated with black-produced film and pop images of the “ghetto.” In the Black Power era, as Hayes topped *Billboard*’s jazz and R&B charts, the “ghetto” was not an entirely negative construction in black pop-culture. Lastly, there is the article “Looking for Freshness on a Pop Date? Hire a Jazz Sideman” (*Billboard* 1972a). This trend of jazz musicians lending their talent to pop production is highly relevant. For example, the *Shaft* soundtrack included major contributions by both the jazz arrangers J. J. Johnson and Tom McIntosh and jazz-trained studio musicians. Such connections extend widely across most of the music considered in this chapter. These connections, what Aaron Johnson has called “the university of jazz” (Johnson 2006), illustrate that in 1972 these stylistic cousins lived and worked in the same swinging neighborhood.

In the 1968 “jazz poppourri” *Billboard* issue, such chart crossovers are entirely an LP phenomenon, thus implying important socio-economic and age demographics. But on the best-selling R&B LP chart (*Billboard* 1968c), anomalies like *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* soundtrack stand alongside choice 1968 soul, as well as a Wes Montgomery cover of the Beatles and soul jazz brethren like Jimmy Smith, Eddie Harris, Ramsey Lewis, and the Soulful Strings. Jack McDuff and Booker T. are side by side, and joined by Jimi Hendrix, Vanilla Fudge, and comedians. The R&B charts thus seemingly reflect general sales in stores catering to African Americans. Jazz sales are not easily reduced to one demographic, though. Beyond pop tune covers, the first pop penetration onto *Billboard* jazz charts appears to be Burt Bacharach’s *Reach Out* in January 1968 (*Billboard* 1968b; Bacharach 1967). By May (*Billboard* 1968c), this LP was joined by Aretha Franklin, Lalo Schiffrin’s *Mission Impossible* soundtrack, and Ray Charles. While Davis’s *Nefertiti* and albums by Gerald Wilson, Buddy Rich, and Don Ellis anchor a core jazz tradition, other entries include soul jazz (for example, Jimmy Smith, Wes Montgomery, and Herbie Mann), and the Soulful Strings, which bridged jazz-pop, adult pop, and easy listening.

The sound of late 1960s jazz-pop are heard in Bacharach’s bossa-meets-Tijuana-Brass arrangement of “The Look of Love” on *Reach Out*. Despite its distance from *Nefertiti*, “Look” reflects other jazz chart sounds with its Hammond organ and citations of Lou Donaldson’s R&B-infused “Alligator Boogaloo” sax, the bossa of Sergio Mendes, etc. What is missing are Mann-style jazz flute and Montgomery-style guitar, but Bacharach instead favors crisp Tijuana Brass horn

textures. Much of the jazz-pop I have noted on this 1968 chart crossed over to the pop LPs charts. Not *Reach Out*, though, an album that likely involved Herb Alpert's Tijuana Brass musicians. Conversely, Alpert's releases top the LP and Easy Listening charts but they do not enter the jazz charts, nor does *Reach Out* appear on the Easy Listening chart. That said, there is a postwar easy listening-meets-jazz kinship between *Reach Out* and *Groovin' with the Soulful Strings* (Soulful Strings 1967). *Groovin'* enters the jazz charts in early 1968. Its cross-market conception is heard in its covers of Davis's *All Blues*, the Young Rascals' "Groovin'," Bacharach's "Alfie," and the original, "Burning Spear." The album is all over the jazz-chart-read-as-adult-contemporary-pop map. There is Miles, rock-pop, jazz-with-strings, adult pop from films, tunes from Herbie Mann and the Beatles, funk-infused world-grooves, all with jazz solos, especially flute, sax, guitar, and Hammond. Like "Look," it stylistically cites almost every album on the May 1968 jazz chart. The Cadet label's A&R director, Esmond Edwards, thus reimaged 1950s jazz-with-strings and mood music trends. The ensemble includes Chicago jazz and soul staff musicians for the Chess and Cadet labels.

Such instrumental pop-and-soul releases on Billboard's jazz charts clearly resonate with Isaac Hayes, whose penchant for Bacharach tunes, soulful string sections, and jazz-flute overlap with these middle-of-the-road, adult-contemporary peers, but this still does not explain the dominance of Hayes on the jazz charts. As Simon Frith has noted, the music industry has never been "clear or consistent" in its "genre maps," which "change according to who they're for" (Frith 1996, 77). But is this merely a matter of soul-meets-jazz-as-black-adult-music on the jazz chart, as I suggested? I am not so sure, but without documentation on chart tabulation, it is impossible to know the factors in these sales assessments. Frith notes that "one would . . . get a strange notion of pop . . . history" from the Grammy awards and Billboard charts, which he astutely says "give one a good sense of how the . . . music industry would like to see the market" (78).

Morgenstern observed that in this era jazz was "a convenient label for music hard to categorize, and . . . an industry synonym for black." This comment maps onto Billboard discussions of Hayes representing a new "progressive" and "adult" soul, which is not far from my soul-meets-jazz-as-black-adult-music characterization. Morgenstern notes though that "[as] for the Billboard so-called jazz charts, [*Downbeat*] never took them seriously. . . . [T]he charts [were] about as reliable as pre-election poll results" (Morgenstern 2012).

So is this just a matter of the industry "wishing" that jazz was conceived in a certain way or of white record men not "getting" black music? Again, it is more complicated than such essentializations of black culture. Based on the easy listening concept, liner notes, and redheaded album cover model, I had assumed the Soulful Strings' Esmond Edwards was a white A&R exec, but he was in fact a noted African American producer/photographer tied to Prestige and Verve. In other words, there was cross-racial adult music appeal on the consumption *and* production sides of this soul-meets-jazz-meets-pop territory.

Edwards and Quincy Jones illustrate the era's expanding executive opportunities for African American creative talent. The Blaxploitation film genre was prominent here and opened doors to black directors, actors, and musicians. Hayes's *Shaft* score, which included many soulful, jazzy instrumental tracks (for example, "Cafe Regio's"), was an influential cornerstone with its jazz-pop flute and vibraphone, soulful strings, Tijuana-style staccato brass and fuller Quincy-like big band textures, 1970s wah-wah guitar, Hammond organ, etcetera. Jazz citations were central to this sound, courtesy of top-tier (often black) jazz arrangers and musicians benefiting from the universality of jazz, like other period soul and funk. *Billboard's* coverage of the soul-to-jazz continuum includes commentary from label execs, producers, and musicians who repeatedly characterize black music as an overlapping family of genres, and who remark that genre labels are inherently too reductive with regard to the "swinging relationships" among these musical cousins. This outlook is echoed in the black press. For example, in an issue with a cover photo and interview of

Hayes, *Ebony* introduced its first annual “Black Music Poll.” After noting negative connotations to the word “jazz” and the hope for an “evolve[d]” new word, the magazine remarks that “black music transcends categories” due to “striking similarities running through gospel, jazz, blues and rhythm and blues.” While noting difficulties in the “correct [genre] placement” of various “multitalented” musicians, they ask: “Where does one form of black music begin and the other end?” (*Ebony* 1973, 143). It is from this historical-cultural perspective that Hayes’s jazz chart presence makes some sense in the genre turmoil of the day. Here, the university of jazz, meaning jazz culture contributions to pop, stands as a rich popular music territory that lies just outside the broad, porous genre boundaries of the core jazz tradition. Though *Billboard*’s 1968–73 jazz charts muddy genre history maps, and while I hesitate to call Hayes jazz, this music is clearly both deep in the groove of this era’s jazz-inflected, “progressive” and “adult” soul music and undeniably indebted to the university of jazz.

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12

“WACKY POST-FLUXUS REVOLUTIONARY MIXED MEDIA SHENANIGANS”

Rethinking Jazz and Jazz Studies Through Jason Moran’s Multimedia Performance

John Gennari

I

Over the past decade and a half, the jazz pianist and composer Jason Moran has moved in a direction rather unusual for a major American jazz musician. While continuing to work in common practice jazz situations as a soloist, bandleader, and sideman, Moran has ventured intrepidly into the worlds of performance and conceptual art, exploring uses of extra-musical visual and sonic media, literature, and other forms and artifacts not customarily associated with US jazz presentation norms. Sharing the stage with Joan Jonas, a pioneer of video and performance art since the late 1960s, Moran pummels the piano keys while Jonas, in a flurry of industrial clangor, pounds on a factory-grade metal pestle, drops an armful of poles, and spins a huge metal hoop top-like across the floor. Working with veteran conceptual artist and philosopher Adrian Piper, Moran mimes the rhythmic pattern of Piper’s voice as she chants exhortations to fellow artists, imploring them to demystify their work and push relentlessly for political and social change. Collaborating with his wife, the acclaimed mezzo-soprano Alicia Hall Moran, and with the renowned British historian Simon Schama, Moran plays an original piece for piano, voice, and spoken word narrative based on Schama’s book about revolutionary-era black slaves promised freedom by the British in return for fighting the Americans. In his role as an artistic director of the San Francisco Jazz Center, Moran curates an event in which his trio, Bandwagon, improvises to a crew of skateboarders careening around a ramp set up in front of the band (Adler 2006; Lothringer 2012; Scheinen 2013).

In the context of contemporary US jazz—an eclectic field still in search of a post-Marsalis paradigm—Moran’s multimedia performances exude something of an aura of left-of-center experimentalism, closer kin to the downtown New York avant-garde scene than to the Lincoln Center Jazz alliance between midtown corporate capital and uptown African American authenticity. Moran himself is a decidedly uptown character. Amiably hip with his stubbled face and a Thelonious Monk-inspired penchant for rakishly stylish hats, Moran cuts a figure emblematic not just of the jazz tradition but also of fresh, dynamic stirrings in hip hop-era African American cultural and intellectual life. Born in 1975 and raised in a middle-class

Houston, Texas family before moving to New York to attend the Manhattan School of Music, Moran now is a central figure in the efflorescence of art and culture that has been dubbed the New Harlem Renaissance (Ogunnaike 2006). A polymath intellect with special interest in the visual and plastic arts, Moran moves easily among musicians, artists, filmmakers, museum curators, designers, celebrity chefs, writers, and scholars. Often working in collaboration with his wife, Moran traverses longstanding racial boundaries in New York's cultural geography and carries his border-crossing, polyglot vision to arts and cultural institutions across the United States and beyond (Wilkinson 2013).

Moran frequently performs his music in art galleries and museums; an extensive part of his creative practice over the last decade has involved residencies in institutions such as the Whitney Museum in New York and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (Moran 2006). For the 2012 Whitney Biennial, Jason and Alicia Hall Moran curated a set of collaborative performances called "Bleed," a title that invokes the bleeding together of art worlds and political discourses, as well as the bonding of African American people through familial blood and shared memories of a soaked-in-blood history. The event featured a wide variety of sound, image, and dance-based fare interspersed with short talks by scholars, journalists, and artists. Alicia Hall Moran sang a version of Beyonce's "Run the World (Girls)" accompanied by Japanese Taiko drummers, a relatively conventional performance compared to the one in which she talked about her life as an artist while receiving acupuncture. The visual artist Kara Walker joined Bandwagon for a performance called "Improvisation With Mutually Assured Destruction." As Bandwagon played along with a recording of the Rolling Stones's "Brown Sugar," Walker projected images of Mick Jagger alongside the song lyrics, coupled with words and phrases of her own that intensified the song's demonic aura of slave rape and heroin (Ramsey 2012; Ratliff 2012).

"Bleed" received far more attention in New York art circles than in jazz ones. In the art museum, such work typifies a much-noted shift away from an exclusively object-based curatorial mindset toward inclusion of traditional performing arts like dance and music and newer time-based arts like experimental film, video art and installation, sound art, and performance art (La Rocca 2012). In jazz studies, where Scott DeVeaux and his apostles have turned *core*, *boundary*, and *periphery* into field-defining keywords, Moran's multimedia projects are located on the far periphery of the periphery, figuring little or not at all in mappings of the music's current boundary-lines (DeVeaux 1991; DeVeaux 2005; Porter 2012). This is partly attributable to the ephemeral nature of multimedia performance, its insistence on live, real time enactment, and the resulting practical and philosophical difficulties associated with its preservation. But it is also, as I aim to show, illustrative of jazz's equivocal relationship to other arts, notwithstanding the strong interdisciplinary turn of the New Jazz Studies. I will argue that while jazz is inherently interdisciplinary and has always been a multimedia form, its deep historical connections with other multimedia forms (especially the American theater) generated a need for jazz to mark out its own distinctive, sovereign space, and in so doing to muffle certain of its interdisciplinary energies.

Jazz's cross-arts interdisciplinarity, then, is both exalted and repressed. I have found this to be true of my own feelings about Jason Moran's work: I am fascinated by his multimedia projects, and yet sometimes I wish all he would do is sit at the piano and play straight-ahead blues. My objective here is not so much to offer deep critical analysis of Moran's multimedia performance as it is to use this work as an occasion to reflect on the history of jazz's relationship to other arts; to explore the contact zones between jazz and allied expressive forms; to touch lightly on aesthetic issues prompted by that inquiry; and, finally, to consider how jazz studies is implicated in these issues.

We have met Jason Moran and will return to him in due course. Time now to think about the terms *multimedia* and *performance* in relation to jazz.

II

Multimedia has become a slippery and imprecise term, referring as often to mass-produced home electronics and geeky digital technologies as to avant-garde art works. In the 1960s, the term was applied to any form of artistic experiment that involved several media used at the same time. The stereotypical conception of multimedia was the kind of activity labeled a "multimedia happening" that one could see in art schools and museums. In motion picture caricatures, it is seen as a kind of post-beatnik séance with psychedelic hallucinogens: someone reads bad poetry while musicians play drums and saxophones over the rumbling of audiovisual equipment as dancers move around sculptured and random objects against a background of film projections or a light show. In more authentic guises, multimedia connoted a serious reckoning with aesthetic concepts and procedures through an effort to erode the boundaries separating artistic disciplines. This impulse, tied to a piercing of the boundary between art and everyday life, was an animating force in the Fluxus movement, a loose international clutch of composers, artists, writers, and performers inspired by the maverick ideas of John Cage and (through Cage) Marcel Duchamp.

In 1966, Fluxus artist and theorist Dick Higgins wrote an influential manifesto titled "Inter-media," hailing that term as a better descriptor for Duchamp pieces that were "truly between media, between sculpture and something else," and for the most exciting interdisciplinary creative activity subsequent to Duchamp's assault on the conventions of high art (Higgins 1966; Higgins 2002). Among the most memorable Fluxus-affiliated performances were concerts of "new music" that deconstructed or mocked standard concert protocols. "Wearing classical concert dress," writes Fluxus historian Joan Rothfuss,

the artists performed iconoclastic 'event scores'—short texts instructing them, for example, to dismantle a piano, polish a violin, urinate into a bucket, or simply count the audience out loud. . . . The concerts were like live anthologies of the unexpected: music might be the product of a telephone call, a flushing toilet, or a haircut; poetry was visual, paintings were danced. Audiences were both perplexed and delighted.

(Rothfuss n.d.)

Cage and the Fluxus movement had a much smaller impact on jazz in the US than in Europe. True, the eclectic oeuvre of John Zorn—file-card compositions, game pieces, duck calls blown in buckets of water, collaborations with performance artists—connects this tradition to the downtown experimental jazz scene. But more revealing of the overall trend-line are the pointed efforts by AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians) composer and theorist George Lewis to critique what he calls Cage's "narrative of dismissal" in regard to jazz, and to characterize Cagean indeterminacy not as an original cultural formation but rather as an outgrowth of postwar developments in improvisation and spontaneity that originated in bebop (Lewis 2004a). While Lewis has framed the indeterminacy/improvisation polemic as a split between a "Eurological" paradigm associated with Cage and an "Afrological" one associated with Charlie Parker, Rebecca Kim has argued for what she calls Cage's "tensely separate togetherness" with jazz (Kim 2012). Cage's negative aesthetics (his effort to vacuum art and performance clean of expressiveness, sentiment, narrative, and even, in his fatuous misappropriation of Buddhism, the ego and the self) hinged on a Hegelian relationship to jazz; the music's interpersonal intimacy, emotional content, and discursiveness (its conversational, call-and-response dynamic) served as the antipode to Cage's ideal of affect-free purity (McMullen 2010). Cage's seeming disdain for jazz, however, did not inoculate him from contact with jazz musicians more open-minded, anti-didactic, and dialectically spirited than he. In 1965, the AACM's Joseph Jarman, intrigued by the essays in Cage's book *Silence*, arranged a collaborative performance for Cage and his quartet called *Imperfections in a*

Given Space. Jarman and his sidemen remember a convivial encounter; Cage, when he first talked about the collaboration fifteen years later, fretted over whether he had helped the jazz musicians overcome their unfortunate “old habits of conversing and answering” (Kim 2012, 80–81).

Jarman was soon to become a member of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, whose formative period in Paris in the late 1960s/early 1970s coincided with a flurry of ludic “happenings” and Fluxus events then taking place in that city and across Europe (Steinbeck 2011, 42).¹ In his book *Northern Sun, Southern Moon: Europe’s Reinvention of Jazz* (2005), Mike Heffley delineates how European jazz musicians like Peter Brotzmann, Derek Bailey, Evan Parker, and Willem Breuker both emulated and diverged from American jazz culture during the apogee of African American cultural nationalism, embracing the ethos of free improvisation associated with John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler and others, but also embarking on an effort to cultivate a separate jazz aesthetic informed by a non-American cultural ethos (Heffley 2005, 3–22, 63, 137–138). Walter van de Leur, in a recent conference paper, details Dutch jazz’s association with the Fluxus movement, which brought jazz-centered “happenings” in iconic public spaces drawing on nationalist folklore and idioms of humor and irony thought to be distinctively Dutch (van de Leur 2013). Nearly a half-century after the European free jazz *Emanzipation*, jazz’s Dutch masters have not abandoned their interest in Fluxus-inflected performance practices. Critics, alas, do not necessarily share their taste for the antic and the ludic. Reviewing a set of performances at the Guelph Jazz Festival in 2006, one critic lauded Misha Mengelberg’s piano work but lamented his deployment of “wacky post-Fluxus revolutionary mixed media shenanigans that the Netherlands was (still is) famous for”; another castigated drummer Han Bennink for indulging in “the kind of antics . . . that would get most ordinary mortals a one-way ticket to a secure institution” (*Paris Transatlantic Magazine* 2006).

Moran found his way to jazz through hip-hop, discovering Monk and Horace Silver in De La Soul break-beat samples (Ouellette 2011). His forays into multimedia performance resonate with the multiple technologies and forms of address characteristic of that interdisciplinary aesthetic (for example, DJ turntable-ing, rapping, spoken word performance, break-dancing, graffiti). Jazz, too, is an interdisciplinary aesthetic; the music, it is not too much to say, was born and nurtured and then re-born in multimedia performance environments. Think of New Orleans second line parading, with its rambunctious dancing and flamboyant costuming; Duke Ellington in the Cotton Club revue, with its lascivious dancing and elaborate staging; Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Ethel Waters, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and other famous jazz musicians in any number of swing era Hollywood films; Armstrong, Fats Waller, and Cab Calloway mixing music and comedy in their vaudeville-style stage acts. Later, bebop and free jazz musicians collaborated with poets, playwrights, dancers, and painters under the banners of the Beat and Black Arts movements. As Aldon Lynn Nielsen points out, many jazz musicians of the post-Second World War years “saw themselves as interdisciplinary artists. Cecil Taylor was a poet and was engaged with modern dance. Archie Shepp was a poet and playwright. Joseph Jarman was a poet. Herbie Nichols was a poet” (Nielsen 2013, 36).

Thinking in general terms about jazz in relation to other art forms is one thing; thinking about jazz as one of multiple artistic languages employed in particular art works and performances takes the matter a step further. Paul Steinbeck has taken the lead with his work on the Art Ensemble of Chicago’s blending of jazz with theatrical sketches, poetry, spoken word, humor, elaborate visual displays, and extra-musical sound; his analysis of the AEC’s “A Jackson in Your House,” a piece that uses surrealist verse, sardonic laughter, a mock-minstrel show stump speech, sirens, and gunfire, is a groundbreaking model one hopes will spur further efforts to apply both intermusical and intermedia analysis to close readings of particular performances and texts. As Steinbeck notes, jazz studies has been slow to engage the “expanding body of literature on intermedia and musical multimedia, which is currently dominated by writings on flagship classical genres (opera, art songs) and popular forms (music videos, film soundtracks)” (Steinbeck 2011, 153).

An exception to this lacuna is the study of jazz and poetry. This is so not just because canonical African American poets like Langston Hughes and Amiri Baraka performed with canonical jazz musicians like Charles Mingus and Archie Shepp, but because modern African American literary theory and criticism have adopted the central tenants that black music is the black poet's primary muse, and that black music itself is fundamentally a form of oral vernacular—a black language in the literal (not metaphorical) sense. Even so, the scholarly literature on jazz and poetry is conspicuously thin when it comes to analysis of actual performances of poets and musicians in collaboration. And while it is undeniable these two expressive forms share certain aesthetic properties and often overlap in theme and purpose, the critical tropes commonly used to describe this kinship—rhythmic vitality, soul, funkiness, etc.—may reveal very little about the singularity and idiosyncrasy of a given performer or performance. Indeed, the jettisoning of overworked critical tropes might itself be the point of a particular work. Meta DuEwa Jones, in her book *The Muse Is Music: Jazz Poetry From the Harlem Renaissance to Spoken Word* (2011), examines a performance by saxophonist Hamiet Bluiett and poets Yusef Komunyakaa and Nathaniel Mackey. While Bluiett and Komunyakaa bear out familiar jazz poetic notions about "the tactility and physicality of language," Baraka's "how you sound" injunction, and the interplay of vocal phrasing and bodily rhythm, Mackey strenuously resists expectations of the hyper-expressive musicality and charismatic physicality associated with African American poets, especially in this age of the poetry slam (Jones 2011, 224).²

In fact, Mackey, who in addition to being a major poet is also perhaps the most sophisticated contemporary theorist of the jazz/literature nexus, rejects the assumption that live performance (the poet reading her/his own work) brings out a poem's truest meaning (Mackey 1993). Mackey calls himself a "writerly" poet and insists on the visibility of words on a page, not the physical sounding of those words, as the foundational essence of the poem. He posits the "animacy of the word" itself in the frame of the pagescape as the authentic performance of the poem: poetry, for Mackey, is the art of "words being made to perform by the poet" (Jones 2011, 21; Mackey 2004, 228–236). Musicologists might recognize this formulation as a canny framing of the ever-vexing issue of *text versus performance*, the question of whether music resides in its written textual form or in its performed (physically sounded) instantiations (Cook 2001). Mackay proposes an unraveling of the text/performance binary: poetry resides in the performativity of the text itself.

We begin here to touch on the way multimedia art works, however much or little might seem compelling about their interdisciplinarity, can have the effect of quickening our interest in fundamental aesthetic issues, of sharpening our thinking about the ontologies of art forms themselves. When Nathaniel Mackey enriches and complicates our thinking about poetry, he also enriches and complicates our thinking about jazz, calling into question conventional notions of improvisation and overt expressivity as *sine qua non* of jazz authenticity. Mackey, in fact, urges and enables us to think harder about the very idea of *performance*. "*Performance* is a bothersome word for writerly poets," he writes. "Performance poetry, poetry slams and the like have made the term synonymous with theatricality, a recourse to dramatic, declamatory, and other tactics aimed at propping up words or helping them out" (Mackey 2004, 228).

Jazz, too, has an ambivalent or even adversarial relationship with performance and theatricality, one that is embedded in the history of jazz's long and complicated relationship with the institution of the theater itself. This takes us back to the so-called Jazz Age of the 1920s—and even further back than that. Bear with me as I briefly rehearse some of this history.

III

In *Highbrow/Lowdown: Theater, Jazz, and the Making of the New Middle Class* (2009), theater and performance studies scholar David Savran argues that the American theater came to be viewed as an institution of "legitimate" high culture, the kind of theater associated with Eugene O'Neill

and other literary playwrights, only after it “defeated” jazz. The American theater came into its own at the end of the 1920s, that is, only by defining itself as something different from jazz. This meant purifying itself of its deep institutional and aesthetic entanglements with jazz, as well as countering jazz’s power as a metonym for all that was new and daring in American culture. Jazz changed the way American bodies sounded, looked, and moved, in turn changing the shape of American imagination and desire. In the Jazz Age, jazz stood for flash, flesh, vitality, transgression, spectacle; jazz was, in a word, *theatricality*. Jazz’s revolutionary cultural power, of course, had much to do with race and the frisson of difference. Jazz was miscegenation—not just in its racial crossbreeding, however, but also in its formal hybridity. As an artistic practice, the key to jazz’s cultural hegemony was its versatility as a mode of performance that cut across and disturbed the integrity of different media. “Given its many manifestations, guises, contexts, and performance venues,” Savran writes, “jazz . . . represented the most significant form of cross-mediated performance in the 1920s.” Jazz was “a form that undermined the authority of dance and concert music, cabaret, social dancing, vaudeville, revue, and narrative theater. It was, in short, less a discrete style than a musical and social energy linking all these performative practices” (Savran 2009, 17).

Savran’s thesis proposes a cultural logic that can help us think about the history of jazz’s framing as an artistic and disciplinary field in relation to its kindred arts. If the theater needed to defeat jazz to win sanction as art, jazz, if it was to be considered art, needed to defeat theater. More precisely, like American drama it needed to vanquish that part of theater culture that had come to be synonymous with jazz—jazz not as high art but as lowbrow entertainment. To put it another way, what the art-and-little-theater movement and the jazz-as-art mission held in common was a disdain for *theatricality*. Anti-theatricality was crucial to each art’s claims to seriousness. Theatricality in this context could mean exhibitionism, staginess, or gaudiness in the sense in which one thinks of Jazz Age commercial amusements, Broadway musical theater, Las Vegas revues, and the like. But on a more basic level it means *performativity* itself, a suspicion about any kind of performance that calls attention to itself as a performance; an act, not the real thing.

The performance tradition lurking specter-like in the shadow of the cultural history I am sketching here is blackface minstrelsy. The minstrel stage engendered and bequeathed the performance codes, sonic and visual aesthetics, and (not least) racial dynamics of twentieth-century American entertainment on down to early television variety shows and the Rat Pack. A wealth of scholarship in recent years has explored the complex history of blackface: its production of degrading racial stereotypes, leading to countervailing missions of uplift and respectability by black public intellectuals and political leaders; its function as a space of white expressive freedom, eroticism, and fantasy; its central importance as a laboratory for the development of performance skills by black and white artists alike. My interest here is much narrower: I want simply to underscore that minstrelsy is synonymous with imposture, dissimulation, and illusion. As a multimedia spectacle involving song and dance, sketch comedy, oratory, fortune telling, impersonation, and ventriloquism, minstrelsy was first and foremost the putting on of an act. The very essence of minstrelsy was its inauthenticity. It was a charade. It was not true. It was a performance.

Jazz, we know, has a long history of attracting true believers, believers in the truth-telling properties of true jazz. The historiography of jazz is coterminous with never-ending arguments about jazz’s true essence and with ardent efforts to separate “real jazz” from “pseudo-jazz” or even “anti-jazz.” Jazz’s familiar series of style wars have been so intense because, at the time of their unfolding, sectarian combatants believed they were arguing not about mere stylistic differences but rather about the difference between what is true and what are travesty, denial, concealment, facsimile, and simulation. The point I want to emphasize is that if jazz authenticity hinges on believing that the music is defined by its truthfulness, its sincerity and integrity, jazz then is fundamentally at odds with the idea of *performance*, especially insofar as the idea of performance attaches itself to traditions of the theatrical, in particular blackface minstrelsy and its long legacy.

The earliest and most enduring discourse of jazz authenticity posits that the truth of the music resides in its connection to the blues. This is a conviction shared by a group of jazz theorists otherwise as sharply dissonant as Rudi Blesh, Amiri Baraka, and Stanley Crouch. For these three and for many others, the blues is jazz's truth both in the sense that it is the indispensable and irreducible essence of its constitution, and in the sense that it ensures jazz's honest engagement with the real, the nitty-gritty, the unvarnished fundamentals of life. In her important book, *Staging the Blues: From Tent Shows to Tourism* (2014), Paige McGinley, a scholar of American theater and performance, maps out the emergence of the blues within the theatrical context of black entertainment. Before she recorded for Paramount in 1923, Ma Rainey was known primarily as an actress, the theatrical star of the Rabbit's Foot Minstrels. Rainey and Bessie Smith cultivated stage acts of "glamour and sophistication for a largely rural audience," establishing conventions of black stardom through elaborate costuming and self-fashioning. Only when recordings isolated the sound of blues from its theatrical context did the blues become a musical object to be collected, archived, and critically analyzed and evaluated.

Blues criticism, McGinley argues, started out as an explicit effort to separate folk culture from theater; later it became a doctrine of folkloric purity defined by its suspicion of theatricality. When Paul Oliver skewers Howlin' Wolf as "just about the biggest ham actor on stage" and takes exception to Sonny Boy Williamson's dandyish derby hat, gloves, and umbrella, McGinley takes him to be representing "a more widespread anti-theatricality in blues criticism, which dismisses the theatrical trappings of blues performance as secondary, feminized, derivative, or affectively excessive" (McGinley 2014, 9). McGinley's notion of blues criticism's anti-theatricality strongly aligns with the arguments I make in *Blowin' Hot and Cool: Jazz and Its Critics* (Gennari 2006) about the anti-sentimental and anti-affective masculinism that suffused jazz criticism in its formative years. It also brings to mind Eric Porter's identification of

long-standing prejudices against vocal music in musicians' and critics' circles, because vocal music has often been linked with women and the female body, which in turn have been associated with emotions, irrationality, and sexuality, rather than with the masculine mind or heroic romanticism assumed to be the generative force for serious improvised art.

(Porter 2013, 99)

IV

There are several ideas in play over the foregoing paragraphs that I would like to underscore, augment, and fold into a final set of still unfinished thoughts about Jason Moran's multimedia work and its meaning for jazz and jazz studies.

First: *performance* is both a complicated and a clarifying term in jazz owing to its affiliation with histories of racialized and gendered practice and ideology. Jazz is shadowed not just by minstrelsy (and what McGinley calls minstrelsy's "vicious hangover"), but more deeply by the history of the black body and its centrality to both the suffering and trauma undergirding American capitalism and the joy and pleasure generated by American entertainment. Saidiya Hartman argues that the compulsory performances demanded of enslaved persons—the coffle, the coerced gaiety at the slave market, the spectacle of bodies on the auction block—constituted a form of public theater dramatizing the racial logic of the US social order (Hartman 1997; McGinley 2014, 9). United in that logic are minstrelsy's trope of the singing and dancing slave and what Anthony Braxton calls "the reality of the sweating brow," the exercise of white power through consumption of an enforced, performed happiness in which signs of the black performing subject's willing labor must be manifest. This history permeates the work of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, whose

members—Paul Steinbeck shows us—were familiar with the codes of minstrelsy and used them in wickedly satirical commentaries on the absurdities, calumnies, and tragedies of race (Steinbeck 2011, 144, 148–149).

This history also saturates the creative imagination of artist Kara Walker. One of her recent works was an *in situ* installation featuring an enormous sculpture of a black woman working in a sugar cane field, crouched in a posture of acute sexual vulnerability, yet at the same time full of the self-possession and sovereign repose of a Buddhist icon or a monumental Egyptian sphinx. The sculpture, “A Subtlety, or the Marvelous Sugar Baby,” was made out of thirty tons of refined white sugar molded on to vast blocks of polystyrene foam. Heralded by the *Times* as “one of the most substantial works of art to hit New York in years,” it sat in the cavernous sugar shed of the old Domino factory in Brooklyn, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors during the summer of 2014 (Gopnik 2014). The installation serves as a kind of diptych with the piece Walker performed with Jason Moran at the “Bleed” exhibition at the 2012 Whitney Biennial—that exhibition, like an Art Ensemble of Chicago concert, a kind of postmodern minstrel show in its mixture of song and dance, oratory, body art, and alternative medicine. On that occasion, Walker was a performance artist using the stage name Karaoke Walkrrr, singing in a willfully grating voice to Moran’s band’s gloss on the Stones’ “Brown Sugar,” while her laptop projected blow-ups of words like “crawl,” “beg,” “grovel,” “slit,” “blood,” and others connecting Mick Jagger’s libido to the history of sugar, plantation slavery, and the subjection of the black female body.

The paradox of performance art—or rather, its whole point—is the genre’s distaste for and distrust of performance in the conventional, theatrical sense. “Performance artists, in general, are not performers,” writes artist and curator Helene Lesterlin (Lesterlin n.d.). “They are engaging in a visual arts-based practice that hinges on the idea that their body, or the body of others, is their material.” Performance art and conceptual art emerged as almost exclusively white avant-garde movements in the 1960s and 1970s. The renaissance of those fields in recent years has been driven by black artists like Homer Jackson, Clifford Owens, and Xaviera Simmons, building on the work of pioneering forbears like Sherman Fleming and Adrian Piper (Weaver 2012). This is as it should be: since so much of American performance in the theatrical sense traces its origins to blackface minstrelsy, and so much American performance in the Erving Goffman “presentation of self in everyday life” sense has to do with the negotiation of racial codes, performance art’s ironic, trenchantly knowing stance toward performance *per se*—its self-reflexive commentary on the ways bodies perform in public—compel it to engage forthrightly with race. Performance art has always been on the cutting edge of gender discourse; more recently, it has become an extremely rich and provocative space for thinking about gender as always racialized, and race as always gendered. In Jason Moran’s multimedia works, as in his more conventional jazz presentations, the male jazz body is a vital, even integral presence. And yet, as in much performance art, female bodies (Joan Jonas, Adrian Piper, Kara Walker, Alicia Hall Moran) figure centrally in the formal, conceptual, and ideological grammar of Moran’s multimedia pieces in ways that create gender dynamics unusual for jazz. Especially noteworthy for jazz studies are the ways Walker, as Karaoke Walkrrr, and Alicia Hall Moran, as a performance artist interrogating her role as a conservatory-trained theatrical performer, implicitly embody antidotes to the trope of the feminized jazz singer.³

Second: Jazz’s relationship to *multimedia*, *intermedia*, and *interdisciplinarity* has been ambivalent, and in some cases vexed, in spite of (or maybe because of) the music’s singularity and preeminence in the modern arts. Some notion of what jazz was presumed to represent (primitivism, bohemianism, interracialism, improvisation, spontaneity, vitality, etc.) was the key ingredient that conferred modernity on theater, concert music, dance, film, the graphic and plastic arts, and writing. At the same time, the mission to legitimize and canonize jazz as an

art of its own entailed detaching the music from its multi-art contexts; quarantining it in its own exclusive, often cultish preserve; and codifying its history in an archive of recordings and iconic memorabilia. Jazz studies, even in this period of desacralization and anti-essentialism, continues to hold on to romantic, exceptionalist notions of jazz not just as an art but as an ethic, a community, an intimacy.

Just as theater needed to defeat jazz and jazz needed to vanquish Jazz Age theatricality in order to fashion an image of seriousness and substance, so latter-day evangelists of jazz seriousness have found it necessary to repress the dominant multimedia art and social energy of our own time, hip-hop. Much has been made of Stanley Crouch's critique of rap music videos as contemporary minstrelsy ("*Birth of a Nation* with a backbeat") and of his disavowal of black cultural nationalism, but his performance as a jazz moralist hinges equally on a forswearing of the multi-arts agenda he himself pursued as a poet, playwright, and musician during his Black Arts period in Los Angeles (Isoardi 2006, 75, 101, 137–139).

Third, and finally: Jason Moran's multimedia work raises intriguing questions about what jazz actually is, what constitutes a jazz performance, where the performances should take place, and so on. The editors of the collection *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and Its Boundaries* (2012) suggest that while many scholars claim that "jazz has no essential characteristics," we still fall short of the state of radical relativism that would make the category completely meaningless, the evidence being that "the Sex Pistols has never been seen or heard as jazz," and "neither has Lady Gaga, Snoop Dogg . . . or Weird Al Yankovic . . ." (Ake et al. 2012, 5–6). The point is clever and well taken. But it eludes the question of how we should think about collaborations between performers who have already been coded as being inside and outside of jazz's ostensible boundaries. When Jason Moran, who we call a jazz musician, works with Joan Jonas, who we call a performance artist, is the resulting performance a jazz multimedia piece, a piece of multimedia performance art that uses a jazz musician, or something else? What part of the performance is the jazz part? Doesn't that last question become more interesting when we notice that Joan Jonas is at least as improvisational as Jason Moran, and maybe more so?

Philip Auslander proposes "what musicians perform first and foremost is not music, but their own identities as musicians, their musical personae" (Auslander 2006, 107). What Jason Moran performs, in this formulation, is not primarily jazz music, but rather his own jazz persona—a persona that is positioned in a larger cultural matrix. When he performs that persona in a multimedia piece in a museum with fellow performers and audience members not primarily engaged in performances of jazz personae, rather than in a jazz club with fellow musicians and an audience very much so engaged, he raises knotty, perhaps un-answerable questions about jazz, its processes and objects, and its very ontology. He makes the meaning of the performance—and jazz's range and scope of possibility to create meaning—a matter not just of music and sound, but of location, identity, culture, and history. He implicitly invites us to consider: how are the sounds of a jazz performance situated in relation to extra-sonic (for example, visual, physical, literary, philosophical, and political) elements that shape the cognitive maps of performing musicians and their listeners? Where is the "jazz" in a given performance in relation to the flow of cultural discourses and cultural information surrounding the performance?

V

Studying Jason Moran has re-energized my interest in jazz history, aesthetics, criticism, and scholarship, and it has deepened what had been a relatively casual interest in conceptual and performance art. I have become more fascinated by jazz's relationship with poetry, theater, dance, painting, and other of the time arts and the visual and plastic arts, even as I have also become more intensely aware how much I love simply listening to the music. The Jason Moran I most

enjoy is the one who plays solo piano, reworking the possibilities of jazz's standard repertory. This is the Moran who brought the *New Yorker* political writer Hedrick Hertzberg back to jazz after a decades-long withdrawal. "It was stunning. I'd never heard anything like it before," Hertzberg wrote after hearing Moran perform a twenty-minute interpretation of James P. Johnson's "You've Got to Be Modernistic."

I had no idea what 'tune' it was or even what genre it was. It wasn't really a 'tune' at all. It was like a trip through an unfamiliar aural city—a city of obscure but careful order and full of ancient and modern architectural vistas, a new neighborhood and a new mood around every corner.

(Hertzberg 2012)

Whether as a blues and stride neotraditionalist who reminds us of jazz's time-tested verities, or as an experimentalist who surprises us with his wacky post-Fluxus mixed media shenanigans, Jason Moran is a musician and conceptual artist who challenges our jazz presuppositions, stretches our jazz imaginations, and transports jazz beyond what we thought were its borders.

Notes

1. See also Corbett (1994).
2. See also Harris (2004) and Jackson (2004).
3. The artistic collaboration between Jason Moran and Alicia Hall Moran is fruitful terrain for a critical re-assessment of the figure of the jazz wife. For suggestions on how to think about this figure against the back-drop of traditional jazz ideology, see Tucker (2012, 272–274).

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13

CONCEPTUALIZING JAZZ AS A CULTURAL PRACTICE IN SOVIET ESTONIA

Heli Reimann

According to William Sewell, cultural practice is a concrete and bounded system of beliefs as well as practices and actions.¹ Those who participate and create culture need to be familiar with this system and to master themselves in specific techniques and attributes for successful participation. Estonian cultural theorist Rein Raud defines culture in his new integral theory as an integrated system of practices and emphasizes the role of actors: key here is what actors do and how they realize themselves as subjects in particular cultural environments.² Jazz as a cultural practice is extensively discussed by Bruce Johnson, who asks what jazz discourse should look like, what aesthetic values it should subscribe to, and what disciplinary traditions it should draw on.³

This chapter tries to present the web of meaningful categories transmitting the beliefs, practices, and actions underlying jazz as a cultural practice in Soviet Estonia. In other words, it provides a web of concepts through which jazz as a cultural practice manifests itself and makes the discussions about Estonian jazz culture meaningful. While interacting with the canonical American system of meanings, however, jazz as a cultural practice in the Estonian context established its own web of meaningful categories as a result of interaction between the local socio-political conditions and the actions of musical actors. This article proposes two categories, two dichotomies forming the underlying framework for meaningful discussions of Soviet Estonian jazz. While the public-private divide is crucial for an understanding of how jazz culture functioned in the Soviet socio-cultural space, then the high/low dichotomy explains, in turn, the status of jazz within the classical/popular hierarchy. The empirical material for the study originates mainly from the history of the late-Stalinist era.

Public-Private Divide

I will start by introducing an aspect which I think is important for understanding the nature of Soviet society and culture, including jazz culture—the distinction between the public and private spheres. However, the portrayal of Soviet society according to the dualist model of social spaces, in which one sphere was formed by the ideology-driven propaganda machine of the regime, and the other by the everyday experiences of the people, is an obvious oversimplification. Edele, for instance, argues for the “inter-penetration” between different aspects of the social whole.⁴ I will conceptualize the private-public divide in a more nuanced way by making a distinction between the public, informal public, and private spheres.⁵ According to this division, jazz existed in the state-controlled public cultural space in the form of a public media discourse, state-owned jazz

orchestras, and the tradition of jazz festivals. The public-private cultural space included amateur jazz orchestras active in houses of culture and other institutions, playing primarily for dances. The most private space for jazz belonged to friendship groups of jazz fanatics where members listened to the music and theorized and learned about it.

The state of jazz in the public sphere was highly dependent on political tolerance in the Soviet Union. The political situation was in a constant process of change, and the status of jazz became affected by the fluctuations of political power. As music historian Boriss Schwartz has stated: "Jazz has had a chequered history in Soviet Russia. Popular in the 1920's, suppressed by Stalin, disliked by Krushchev, belittled by Khrennikov,⁶ jazz has managed to survive and grow in popularity."⁷ Alexei Yurchak, discussing ambiguities in the interpretation of foreign cultural forms in the Soviet Union, points out the open-endedness of their meaning.⁸ The meaning is not fixed—it could shift depending on how and where these forms were used.

The shifting status of jazz was most clearly revealed in the public media sphere, which functioned within the limits of the valid ideological paradigm and was rigidly controlled by censorship. The most rapid changes appeared during the period of late-Stalinism, when jazz shifted its status from a politically favorable musical form during the post-WWII years to the position of disfavored music. Jazz was in favor and practiced without constraint until 1946. The USSR's cooperation with the allies fostered the appearance of a politically liberal period when jazz was even considered a symbol of the allies' friendship. But the situation changed in 1946 with cultural campaigns called *Zhdanovshchina*, where jazz experienced the lowest political tolerance it ever had in the Soviet Union. The three *Zhdanovshchina* campaigns involved assaults against two literary magazines, *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* in 1946, the decision about Vano Muradeli's opera *Great Friendship* in 1948, and the campaign against cosmopolitanism in 1949.⁹ These had direct parallels with the publication of jazz-related articles in *Sirp ja Vasar*: each new decree had a successive, gradually intensifying reaction in the form of the articles on jazz. The jazz-inimical rhetoric falls into two categories: those generally denigrating the West and those specifically directed against the musical and cultural aspects of jazz. Musically, jazz received reprimands for not being Soviet enough: Estonian authors were suggested to compose Soviet jazz. But those calls remained at the level of simplistic rhetoric since no further explanations were given regarding the musical features of Soviet jazz. Ojakäär's "On Present-Day American Jazz Music"¹⁰ was probably the most strident anti-West writing. As its main purpose was anti-American and anti-capitalist propaganda, the article condemned American racial injustice and manipulated jazz history to fit the Soviet ideological paradigm. The rhetoric is clearly exemplified in the last sentence: "Modern American jazz music is a vivid reflection of the condescending mentality of American bourgeois society and its rapid approach to decline." Common anti-jazz vocabulary incorporated terms such as formalism ("jazz is the style that still contains the remnants of formalism"), condemnation of the foxtrot and other Western dances ("eccentric Western foxtrots"), and critique of the style of American jazz orchestras ("worn-out patterns of American jazz orchestras").

The public Soviet anti-jazz campaigns of the late-Stalinist era succeeded; the music disappeared from public discourse for three years. The article that returned the word *jazz* back into public discourse was Leonid Utyosov's¹¹ writing "On Singing and Light Music," translated from Sovetskaja Muzyka and published on December 18, 1953 in *Sirp ja Vasar*. Utyosov openly criticizes Soviet dance reform that promoted old ballroom dances and made an attempt to rehabilitate the position of the saxophone in the Soviet field of music. He was probably one of the first speakers who resisted the politicization of the sound of a musical instrument. As he claimed:

there are lot of people who are still talking about "socialist" or "capitalist" sound of one or another musical instrument. They think, for instance, that saxophone (used also in

classical music) is a brainchild of capitalism and to play Soviet tunes on those instruments is inappropriate.

Khrushchev's Thaw brought the word jazz back to public discourse, and from that period on jazz was more or less a publicly accepted phenomenon. Although, from time to time, some heavily ideologically loaded appearances occurred. For instance, the radio broadcast from 1961 called *Negros, Jazz and Racial Politics*¹² is full of Soviet style rhetoric. Driven by the ideological paradigm of the Soviets, which positioned them as the natural allies of those oppressed by international capitalism, the broadcast attacks the white ownership of jazz, the exploitation of blackness, the commercialism of jazz and American values. The example below illustrates the general "timbre" of the broadcast's language:

Black musicians have been subjected to psychological pressure which white Americans have never experienced. Many Black musicians who have turned to jazz to make their living and are looking for emotional escape from reality, would have been a doctor or engineer if they had been born white.

However, public media discourse was not entirely and not always in the grip of this kind of ideology-driven rhetoric. For instance, radio broadcasts conducted by the Estonian jazz historian, publicist, and musician Valter Ojakäär focused on promoting jazz and exposing an insider view on jazz in talk shows introducing the everyday life of the musicians. Ojakäär's first preserved broadcasts in the Estonian Public Broadcasting archive originate from 1959. In the 1960s, he led two series of broadcasts called "Let's Talk About Jazz" and "For Jazz Fans." "For the Lovers of Light Music" in the 1970s was a series of talk shows with Estonian musicians who were active in the field of jazz and popular music. Those memories of the musicians about their everyday musical life are valuable historical sources of an otherwise sketchily documented jazz history.

The institutionalization of musical culture in the form of state-sponsored musical collectives was a part of the Soviet cultural project.¹³ All the arts were considered important in accomplishing the cultural project, and the artists as the agents of enlightenment and ideological education were "engineers of human souls." Two state-owned orchestras were active during the post-WWII period in Estonia. The Jazz Orchestra of the Estonian State Philharmonic (JOESP) was a part of the Estonian State Philharmonic—a state-owned concert organization in Soviet Estonia. The host institution for the Jazz Orchestra of Estonian Public Broadcasting (JOEPB) was the Radio Committee. The functions of the collectives were determined by their affiliation. JOESP was a part of state-run concert organization and functioned according to the concert schedule of the Philharmonic. The orchestra spent most of the year touring throughout the Soviet Union, with the longest tour lasting eight months, as recalled by the son of the conductor Vladimir Sapozhnin.¹⁴ Oleg Spozhnin, who often joined the tours of the orchestra with his father, recalls the difficult touring conditions. As he said,

The orchestra was traveling from Tallinn to Leningrad and from Moscow to Urals. Then back to Moscow for a tour to Transcaucasia. We spent countless hours in trains. And it was hard since the travel conditions were poor. We had to catch often the transit trains and sleep on the floor of the station on our package.¹⁵

The example of administrative procedures of State Philharmonic is a meeting at the Estonian Philharmonic regarding the fulfillment of the 1946 year plan. The event is preserved in the form of report (protocol) on 28 pages.¹⁶ JOESP happened to be under fire from critics for several reasons. First, the orchestra was unsuccessful in fulfilling the annual concert plan: according to the

annual plan, the orchestra had to give 174 concerts, but performed on only eighty-seven occasions, which meant that eighty-seven concerts went unperformed, and as a result, the organization lost 552,800 rubles in potential revenue. The second target of the criticisms was JOESP's program, which was considered inappropriate in light of the resolution of the Central Committee of the Union-wide Communist Party of August 14, 1946. As Aron Tamarkin, member of the artistic council of the State Philharmonic and a representative of the Committee on the Arts said:

It is clear that we need to revise the jazz orchestra's repertoire as a result of historical decisions by the Central Committee, which decided that this repertoire is 100 per cent unsuitable. Why? Because it contains too much American jazz music. The original Estonian repertoire should be more extensive than during the first inspection. This was the direction given to jazz,¹⁷ but it is difficult to find a quick solution.

JOEPB functioned as a studio orchestra playing on live musical shows on the radio. The frequency of their performance was two times a day—noon concerts in the middle of the day and dance music in the evening. According to Ojakäär, JOEPB had lot of American jazz in their repertoire and no changes occurred until 1948, when the impact of the orchestra reform initiated at the Union-wide level started to affect the activities of the collective.¹⁸ The orchestra reform involved changes in instrumentation, arranging techniques, repertoire, and the titles of the orchestras. The instrumentation was reorganized according to the new sound requirements: since the sound of the saxophones made too direct a reference to jazz, the instruments were eliminated and replaced by violins. Ojakäär recalls the changes in JOEPB in the following example:

The sound of the saxophones was hidden in the general sound of the orchestra and the saxophone section was eliminated. The saxophonists Ilmar Kureniit ja Herbert Kulm became clarinetists, one tenor player Lembit Raudmäe was hired by the Estonia theatre orchestra as a bassoon player and the former alto players Udo Kallas and me remained in a vague position playing sometimes the part of the third clarinet or remaining hidden under a unison of strings.¹⁹

The new instrumentation was a challenge for the arrangers, who had to soften the general sound of the orchestra by hiding the jazziness of the woodwinds. The repertoire reform consisted of an increase in vocal tunes leading to the loss of the independence of the orchestras on the concert scene. Instrumental pieces could be found only at the beginning of the first and second halves of the concert. The fear of the word jazz made the authorities enforce changes in the titles of the orchestras. On March 21, 1948, the word jazz disappeared from the title of JOEPB; the group was initially called the Orchestra Conducted by Rostislav Merkulov and then the Orchestra of Public Broadcasting. Its final name, The Estrada Orchestra of Estonian Public Broadcasting, was given in January 1949.²⁰

The reformation of JOESP was not just an externally forced act but an internal conflict between the members of the orchestra and the administration. The bandsmen spending most of the year touring asked for a vacation between two tours. The administration, however, refused to satisfy the musicians' desire and this, in turn, led to the replacement of personnel. The collective disbanded in 1948 and was re-established in 1951 under the name Estrada Orchestra of Estonian State Philharmonic.²¹

The events defining the importance of Estonian jazz culture at the Union-wide level were jazz festivals. Ojakäär marks the concert of two jazz groups, Swing Club and Miceys, arranged in the hall of the *Tööstuskoperatiivide Peavalitsus* in 1949 as the first event in a succession of Tallinn jazz festivals. Interestingly, the event is well documented in an almanac of the jazz group Swing Club, where the author of the article, Heldur Karmo, makes an extensive overview of the concert on

eighteen pages. Besides reviewing the concert and listing the repertoire, Karmo introduces the results of a poll carried out among the listeners. Surprisingly, the event took place at the time of the strongest political pressure against jazz, where the party directives literally silenced the sounds of jazz in the public sphere. The first five jazz gatherings, however, can be called rather the fore-runners of jazz festivals considering their appeal. The first event meeting the standards of a proper jazz festival was the two-day jazz happening, with twelve groups performing in 1958. The first participants outside Estonia were two groups from Leningrad attending the festival in 1959. The year 1966 marked the expansion of the geography of the participants to the West: the two groups from neighboring countries—Helsinki's Jazz Quartet from Finland and Jan Johanson's trio from Sweden—were the first guests from the Western world.²²

The most significant event in the series of jazz festivals in Soviet Estonia was the legendary *Tallinn 1967*, which was followed by a break in the festivals of two decades. The importance of the festival lies in the fact that it was the biggest jazz celebration to have taken place on Soviet territory until that time, with 122 musicians forming twenty-six groups from seventeen cities, 200 foreign journalists, and 5,000 visitors from all over the Soviet Union; the event had the largest foreign media response of any previous Soviet Estonian cultural event; and the performance by the Charles Lloyd Quartet marked the moment when modern jazz was played for the first time in the musical scene of the Soviet Union.²³

Jazz groups active in the less formal private-public sphere included amateur jazz ensembles hosted by culture houses and other institutions such as industrial enterprises or administrative establishments. For instance, Mickey's host institution was The Tallinn Club of the Workers Union of Local Industry in the Communal Economy (*Kohaliku tööstuse kommunaalmajanduse alal töötajate ametühingute vabariiklik Tallinna klubi*). The main advantages the collectives received because of their status were free practice rooms, material support in terms of musical instruments, and the availability of a professional group leader-arranger. Functioning mainly as dance orchestras, those groups were also obliged to perform at the events arranged by the host institution. Public holidays such as the October Revolution Day or International Workers' Day on May 1 were especially busy.

Despite being affiliated, amateur collectives experienced lower levels of administrative monitoring and greater levels of freedom. Even playing in *haltuuras*,²⁴ for instance, demonstrates the existence of something like a free market environment: musicians earned money by playing at dances outside regulative restrictions of the state. A sign of the relatively looser control over amateur orchestras was the way these groups responded to the Soviet dance reform in the late 1940s. The aim of the reform was to regulate dance culture by banning "vulgar" modern dances and replacing them with ballroom dances such as waltzes and pas des quatre. Musicians, however, adapted to this reform "from above" and applied their own maneuvering tactics. As Treufeldt describes, Mickey's added to their repertoire some ballroom dances, which were played at the beginning of the dance party. They would then continue, however, with their regular dance repertoire after playing the mandatory ballroom tunes.²⁵

One of the methods the authorities used to achieve control over the activities of ensembles was to inspect their repertoires. Valter Ojakäär, for instance, recalls the incident of how one group, RütmiKud, introduced their repertoire at a special Commission of the Executive Committee of Tallinn city:

since it was immediately clear that our usual repertoire was unsuitable on this occasion, we decided to play something more neutral—some waltzes or some beautiful 4/4 songs. It was actually a relief for us to see that the commission consisted of two female-comrades who did not seem to be so evil. Actually, they seemed to feel quite uncomfortable in their role. Podelski wrote one tango for that occasion and he was really fast—the piece was ready for performing within one hour. The tune itself was not a masterpiece

of course but we put our heart and soul into it while performing. Although the tango as such was not the favorite of the Soviets, the commission nevertheless liked it and we left them with a very positive impression.²⁶

Finally, the most private part of the jazz world functioned at the level of interaction between musical individuals or friendship groups, and preparatory musical or non-musical activities supporting the processes of the development of jazz musicianship and musical identity. One example of how jazz culture functioned in this sphere includes the brief introduction of the musical collective Swing Club. The group was formed in 1947 by young Estonian jazz fans whose great passion for and deep interest in the music drove them to form a friendship group of like-minded individuals. The ensemble became first of all a “laboratory of jazz”—a testing ground for new musical ideas for its leader Uno Naissoo, and a creative association assembled for the purpose of discussing and learning about jazz. In addition, the group made a great contribution to the documentation of Estonian jazz history: a collection of writings gathered into their unpublished almanac is a unique testimony to the contradictions of the late 1940s.²⁷ In surroundings inimical to jazz, musicians managed to establish their own nurturing micro-environment to acquire new knowledge and develop skills through musical debate and practical learning-by-doing during rehearsals. The fanaticism and dedication the musicians demonstrated in discussing jazz was astonishing. As Agur later stated in an interview:

We debated jazz a lot and took it very seriously. [. . .] We wrote doctoral dissertations, as we called our essays, on certain problems. The essays were read to each other and discussed. Unfortunately, most of them are lost. [. . .] I recall that Karmo had a thick book full of essay-like writings called “Between my feelings and common sense.”²⁸

The primary available source for contact with jazz became radio stations. Fanatical listening to American Forces Network (AFN), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and other stations helped musicians to stay up to date with the latest trends and was an important method of jazz learning. As Ojakäär recalls:

The repertoire was obtained through foreign radio stations. Since nobody had a tape recorder (only Estonian Public Broadcasting had one at this time) we needed to memorize the music. The main source was the AFN (American Forces Network), a station that was broadcast on frequencies from Munich and Stuttgart and provided entertainment and information for the American armed forces stationed in Europe.²⁹

Although the private sphere was the territory where the forces “from above” had little chance of intervening, musicians curbed their own expressions with self-censorship as the almanac of the Swing Club demonstrates. The general mode of expression and formal structure of the texts demonstrated an apparent similarity to official public texts full of slogan-like Soviet rhetoric. On the one hand, it was the fear of the regime that induced musicians to censor their own written expression, but on the other, fitting jazz into Soviet paradigms was a tactic to help maintain jazz’s position in the cultural arena.

High/Low Distinction

To determine the position of jazz in the Soviet musical high/low scale, one has to keep in mind that in musical culture, as in the other cultural forms, the category of high dominated the popular: classical music was held in higher esteem, and often its ideological orientation was considered a

standard for musical evaluation in general. The Soviet regime tried to create a sophisticated high culture and make it accessible to the Soviet people. This accessibility was not achieved by adapting culture “down” to the masses but, on the contrary, by raising the educational standards of the working-class in order to make high culture available to a wide audience. The ideological orientation of the arts, including music, was formulated in the doctrine of Socialist realism, declaring that Soviet art should be “socialist in content and national in form.”³⁰ Jazz had little potential to fit the Soviet cultural paradigm: it neither belonged to the category of classical, nor complied with the principles of socialist realism. But this incompatibility had no capacity to prevent the spread of jazz. One of the paradoxes of the socialist system according to Yurchak was the coexistence of contradictory positions, views, and cultural forms.³¹ This argument explains the ambivalent status of jazz throughout its history in the Soviet Union when, despite the changing tolerance of the political authorities and the superiority of the standards of high culture promoted from above, jazz never disappeared. Besides, people in the Soviet Union did not live in a vacuum—contact with the West and Western culture never disappeared entirely and popular global musical trends always reached the Soviet territories.

The terminology indicating the “low” part of the high/low dichotomy in the Soviet context had no consistency. The adjective “popular” such as “popular culture” (*popularnaja kultura*) or “popular music” (*popularnaja muzyka*) in particular were not widely used in the Soviet Union. In the field of popular type of musical forms there were several phrases signifying what we consider popular music. The terms used in the Estonian cultural context were *levimuusika* (mass disseminated, for example radio broadcast, or “low” culture music), *kerge muusika* (light music), and *meeleolumuusika* (“mood” music). For more specific definitions we find in the Estonian vocabulary *estradimuusika* (estrada music), *tantsumuusika* (dance music), and *massilaul* (mass song); the groups playing in a popular style were called *vokaal-instrumentaalansambel* (vocal-instrumental ensemble). The word jazz itself had two meanings—it was used to refer to a musical style and to an orchestra playing jazz. Jazz could be appropriate to almost all the above-mentioned terms: it makes no great difference whether jazz is referred to as a part of *levimuusika*, *kerge muusika*, or *meeleolumuusika*. Jazz was performed in *estrada*-arenas (JOESP for instance) and therefore fell within the category of *estradimuusika*. When the music was played to an accompaniment of dances it also qualified as a dance music (for instance the music of the group Mickey’s).

The latter-mentioned division between *estrada* music and dance music has implications for exemplifying a high/low divide within jazz culture. The jazz performed on *estrada* stages belonged rather to a high musical domain. The forms of *estrada* culture were elevated to the status of art, and besides the purpose of establishing state control in the domain, this act facilitated equality among the various musical genres and created a balance between high and low culture. The institutionalization of *estrada* as art enabled *estrada* workers to gain the dignity enjoyed by other artists, as well as the legalization of the music vocation and control of professional activities, by providing *estrada* workers regular employment, pensions, and health insurance.³² The tradition of *estrada*, however, included a number of artistic forms of performance such as comedy, circus arts, and dance as well as jazz music. According to Uvarova, *estrada* art had to reflect the Soviet reality of the time: joy, pleasure in work, the formation of a Soviet personality; it is the art of small forms and mobility.³³ The main institution responsible for disseminating the *estrada* type of entertainment was the Estonian State Philharmonic. As mentioned before, JOESP was the jazz collective on the payroll at the State Philharmonic through 1944–1948. Since 1951, the Estrada Orchestra of the Estonian State Philharmonic became an orchestra playing light/ *estrada* (jazz) music. *estrada* music as a genre can be characterized as a singer’s art accompanied by large *estrada* orchestras. The *estrada* music itself was melodic, with elements of blues, jazz, pop, and classic rock. The *estrada* department, as a distinct unit at the State Philharmonic, was established in 1951. Interestingly, in 1963, the *estrada* studio of the State Philharmonic was opened as an educational division taking

care of the training of *estrada* artists. The studio also became an educational platform for several jazz singers such as Marju Kuut and Mare Väljataga. In sum, in *estrada* settings, jazz had relatively little independence—the music was randomly included in the repertoire of *estrada* orchestras, and few jazz soloists performed at *estrada* shows.

The other jazz, including the music played for dances, obtained a lower position in the official stylistic hierarchies. This fact, however, had no impact on audiences whose hunger for dancing was especially strong during the post-WWII period. Oleg Sapozhnin recalls that dancing was the main form of entertainment during this period; he attended parties at least two times a week. As he humorously says,

The saddest days were the days of Lenin's death when no dance parties took place . . .
[. . .] Of primary importance was the orchestra that played at the dances and secondary was the girl to dance with [. . .] Every dance hall had its own group and you could select the hall according to the group. Kuldne 7, Rütmikud were the most popular groups of the time.³⁴

Jazz-oriented dance music was, however, replaced by more modern styles such as rock in the early 1960s.

The discussion around the status of jazz in the high/low scale can be found in articles by Heldur Karmo in the Swing Club almanac.³⁵ For “jazz philosopher” Heldur Karmo, jazz meant primarily dance music. The music was seen as a light genre that should nevertheless meet the criteria of high art. While in American discourse jazz achieved the status of high art with the advent of bebop, Karmo argues for the high art status of swing. According to my interpretation, the act of appropriating jazz into classical music paradigms aimed to make the music resonate with the principles of Soviet musical standards and to give it legitimacy.

The high/low division in jazz had close links to the professional/amateur classification in the Estonian context. The distinction between amateur and professional remained an important feature, primarily distinguishing the status rather than the artistic level of jazz collectives. What was important here was whether the collectives/individuals made their living working in state-owned collectives (JOESP) or their musical activities took the form of a hobby and derived some additional income by playing in dance *hatauuras* (Mickeys, Rütmikud). However, the high artistic level of the amateur output was a factor that was sometimes difficult to ascertain.

One feature determining the nature of Estonian jazz culture was the mobility and diversity of musical personnel. Frequently, musicians were active in state-owned orchestras during the daytime and in dance orchestras playing *hatauuras* in the evening. For instance, saxophone player Valter Ojakäär was a member of the JOEPB during the daytime, while membership of the dance group Rütmikud brought him to the dance hall in the evenings. Several musicians moved freely between classical and light genres. Kalju Terasma, who was engaged as a percussionist in the Estonian State Symphony orchestra all his life, was also active in the jazz scene as vibraphone player and later as a singer in the male quartet. Jazz was the first musical love for subsequently well-known conductors such as Eri Klas and Paul Mägi. Those who practiced jazz composing were dominantly classically well-educated composers. Uno Naissoo, an important figure in the Estonian jazz scene, for instance, graduated from the Tallinn Conservatoire as a composer in 1952. His teacher, Heino Eller, however, was not very supportive of Naissoo's jazz interest and allowed him to play jazz, according to a half-joking statement, only on Sundays from three to four o'clock.³⁶ A distinctive group of jazz musicians was formed by those educated and active in non-musical fields. For instance, Herbert Krutob, a member of the Swing Club, was educated as a civil engineer employed finally at the Ministry of the Economy; violinist and arranger of the Swing Club Ustus Agur (1929–1997) was an electrical engineer with remarkable achievements as a scholar in the field of informatics.

This brief glance into Soviet Estonian jazz history has tried to provide some of the strands in the web of meaning for jazz as a cultural practice. The explanatory capacity of the private-public divide was manifold. First, it makes it possible to demonstrate how jazz as a cultural practice functioned in the Soviet socio-cultural space, and to have a holistic approach to jazz culture concurrently distinguishing different forms of jazz as a cultural practice. In addition, the triple typology applied here answers the question about the extent of regulation and ideologization of jazz culture.

Musical actors, in order to realize their passion for jazz, had to “get by” under the conditions of the Soviet Union. They applied tactics including inventiveness, a sense of humor, the skills of adaptability, curiosity, dedication, and intellectualizing jazz. The low/high dichotomy was first of all about the status of the music. While jazz in general as a music of American and non-classical origin was classified as a “lower” musical form, part of it was elevated to a higher status through “estradization.” The status of jazz was also revealed through the professional/amateur dichotomy and the divided affiliations of those involved according to jazz, classical, and non-musical categories.

Notes

1. William H. Sewell, Jr., “The Concept(s) of Culture,” in *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn*, ed. Gabrielle M. Spiegel (New York, London: Routledge, 2005), 86.
2. Rein Raud, “Üldine kultuuriteooria,” in *Kuidas uurida kultuuri? Kultuuriteaduste metodoloogia*, ed. Marek Tamm (Tallinn: TLÜ kirjastus, 2016), 95–100.
3. Bruce Johnson, “Jazz as a Cultural Practice,” in *Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, eds. David Horn & Mervyn Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 96–113.
4. Mark Edele, “Soviet Society, Social Structure, and Everyday Life: Major Frameworks Reconsidered,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 8, 2 (2007): 369.
5. I will follow the model provided by Oswald and Voronkov. See Ingrid Oswald and Viktor Voronkov, “The ‘Public-Private’ Sphere in Soviet and Post-Soviet Society: Perception and Dynamics of ‘Public’ and ‘Private’ in Contemporary Russia,” *Europea Societies* 6, 1 (2004): 106.
6. Tihhon Khrennikov was the first secretary of Composers Union of USSR 1948–1991.
7. Boriss Schwartz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 629.
8. Aleksei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 165.
9. For a detailed overview see Heli Reimann, “Late-Stalinist Ideological Campaigns and the Rupture of Jazz: ‘Jazz Talk’ in the Soviet Estonian Cultural Newspaper Sirp Ja Vasar,” *Popular Music* 33, 3 (2014): 509–529.
10. Sirp ja Vasar, August 09, 1949.
11. Utesov was a famous Soviet entertainer of Jewish origin with an outstanding, many-sided personality. As a comic actor, singer, conductor, and organizer, he synthesized theater, jazz, and song in his art. He became known as an inventor of “Thea-jazz” (theatrical jazz) tradition in Soviet Union in 1929. “Thea-jazz” showed all the features of a theatrical performance requiring high-level of theatrical mastery from musicians-instrumentalists.
12. Neegrid, dzäss ja rassipoliitika. Audio archive of Estonian Public Broadcasting. <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/kontsertvestlus-neeGRID-dzäss-ja-rassipoliitika>
13. Kirill Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939–1953* (London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 4.
14. Author’s interview with Oleg Sapozhnin. 23.04.2014.
15. Ibid.
16. The protocol is preserved at the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum, MO 276–4.
17. The word jazz marked both the musical style and the orchestra in Soviet discourse.
18. The radio broadcast Oli kord orkester 3. The audio archive of Estonian Public Broadcasting. <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/oli-kord-orkester-oli-kord-orkester-3-saade>
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Valter Ojakäär, *Sirp ja sksofon* (Tallinn: Kirjastus Ilo, 2008), 109.
22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.
24. *Haltuura* is a Russian word meaning slovenly or negligent work. In musicians' slang, the word means occasional or additional earnings. The word is almost equivalent to the English word gig except it inclines toward more negative connotation.
25. Ibid.
26. Radio broadcast Papa Valter pajatab: sekstett Rüttnikud. Audio archive of Estonian Public Broadcasting. <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/papa-valter-pajatab-papa-valter-pajatab-sekstett-ruttnikud>
27. Almanac is preserved in the Estonian Museum of Theatre and Music.
28. Radio broadcast *Siis kui džäss ja pop olid põlu all*, 11.08.1990, Audio archive of Estonian Public Broadcasting; Unfortunately, none of the writings—including “Between My Feelings and Common Sense”—are preserved.
29. Radio broadcast Papa Valter pajatab: sekstett Rüttnikud. Audio archive of Estonian Public Broadcasting. <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/papa-valter-pajatab-papa-valter-pajatab-sekstett-ruttnikud>
30. Nikolai Slonimsky, “Soviet Music and Musicians,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 22, 4 (1944): 1–18.
31. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 168.
32. Ana Hoffmann, “Kafana Singers: Popular Music, Gender and Subjectivity in the Cultural Space of Socialist Yugoslavia,” *Narodna Umjetnost* 47, 1 (2010): 152.
33. Darja Uvarova, *Russkaja Sovetskaja Estrada 1930–1945: Očerki istorii* (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1977), 6.
34. Author's interview with Oleg Sapozhnin. 23.04.2014.
35. Almanac of Swing Club, article “Jazz pro ja contra.”
36. Valter Ojakäär, *Jaak Ojakäär. Uno Naissoo: põgene, vaba laps!* (Tallinn: Tea kirjastus, 2011), 127.

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AND THEN I DON'T FEEL SO BAD

Jazz, Sentimentality, and Popular Song

Alan Stanbridge

In contrast to the canonical status of songwriters such as Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, George and Ira Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Johnny Mercer, and Duke Ellington, the work of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II has always occupied a somewhat ambivalent position in the pantheon of American popular song. Although the partnership between Rodgers and Hammerstein undoubtedly represents one of the most successful in the history of musical theater, their legacy from a jazz perspective is less unequivocal, with only a relatively small number of their songs becoming established as jazz standards. To cite only one key example, in addition to those songwriters named above, Ella Fitzgerald's *Complete Song Books* (1994), includes two full albums by the earlier songwriting team of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, but not one song by the later duo. Indeed, Fitzgerald's discography features only a handful of Rodgers's subsequent collaborations with Hammerstein, a tendency that is similarly evident in the choices of many jazz instrumentalists.

The reasons are not hard to fathom: compared to the urbane wit of figures such as Cole Porter, Ira Gershwin, and Johnny Mercer, Hammerstein's often square and solemn sentimentality appears to be the antithesis of stereotypical jazz "hipness." Consequently, the critical response to jazz readings of Rodgers and Hammerstein songs has tended to find parody and irony in such readings, whether in Cecil Taylor and Sunny Murray's renderings of "This Nearly Was Mine" or John Coltrane's versions of "My Favorite Things." But musical meaning is seldom so easily contained, and, in this chapter, I explore the charges of sentimentality, banality, and commerciality leveled not only at Rodgers and Hammerstein's work but also at Fletcher Henderson's populist—and critically reviled—repertoire of the early 1930s. Most often, such charges stand in contradistinction to claims of "authenticity" in jazz versions of such repertoire—a dichotomy which I refute, arguing that some work in jazz studies simply fails to engage with the sentimentalism that remains a fundamental characteristic of much jazz and popular music.¹

Still Dreaming of Paradise: Irony Versus Sentimentality

Based on several stories from James A. Michener's Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Tales of the South Pacific* (1947), which addressed the lives of American servicemen and women stationed in the South Pacific during the Second World War, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* premiered on Broadway in April 1949 (with Mary Martin and Ezio Pinza in the starring roles) and was released in a film version in 1958. The song "This Nearly Was Mine," which appears late in Act II,

reflects the despair felt by Emile de Becque, the French plantation-owning protagonist, pondering what might have been, after having been spurned by the US Navy Nurse, Nellie Forbush, whose racial prejudices refuse to allow her to accept de Becque's mixed-race children: "Now, now I'm alone, Still dreaming of paradise."² The song was a popular repertoire choice for male vocalists of the 1950s and 1960s and has received a limited number of jazz treatments over the years, including versions by Chico Hamilton, Don Shirley, the Art Farmer-Benny Golson Jazztet, Oscar Peterson, and Jimmy Smith.

In addition to these more straightforwardly jazz-oriented performances, the song was interpreted by the pianist Cecil Taylor, on his album *The World of Cecil Taylor* (1960), which was recorded in October 1960 for the Candid label. This performance raises some interesting questions with regard to avant-garde jazz musicians engaging with the standard repertoire and the critical response to such engagement. In an extended, eleven-minute trio rendition, Taylor bends the tune out of shape, refashioning it to his own purposes, in a manner that side-steps simple satire in favor of a richly nuanced reading which, for all its manifest disruptions and eruptions, retains considerable respect for both the overall structure and feeling of the song. But the nuance was lost on Amiri Baraka (then known as LeRoi Jones), who heard only irony in Taylor's interpretation, with Rodgers and Hammerstein's song conceived of as merely a satirical target. In his review of the album, Baraka stated:

the best tune on the album, "This Nearly Was Mine," is a tune that under ordinary circumstances is one of the most terrifyingly maudlin pop tunes of our time. But Taylor seems to come to the tune with this in mind because he almost completely rearranges the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic devices of the tune and succeeds in making a music that is so personal and intimate as to give one the feeling that the original "This" never really existed, except as a kind of dyspeptic nightmare. . . . As another for instance, this same tune, "This," as I said a frighteningly fragile piece of "midtown" fluff, Cecil has made into a subtle but genuinely bluesy blues.

(Baraka 1968, 128–129)³

In sharp contrast to Baraka's overly dismissive perspective with regard to the original song, Buell Neidlinger, the bass player on the session, had already made his feelings known in the liner notes to the Candid release, applauding both Taylor's unique reading *and* the original vehicle on which it was based:

Cecil transforms 'This Nearly Was Mine' into a blue aria. Richard Rodgers wrote the melody for Pinza to sing, and I find it most moving. In this track, Cecil's ideas and his playing demonstrate his ability to *sing* an interpretation.

(Neidlinger 1961)

But even more noteworthy than Neidlinger's eloquent endorsement of the song is Taylor's own response to Baraka's critique, in an interview with Joe Goldberg for the book *Jazz Masters of the 50s*, first published in 1965. Goldberg notes Taylor's "general dislike and distrust of the people who promote and write about jazz" and shows Taylor a copy of Baraka's review of *The World of Cecil Taylor*, complete with his comments on "This Nearly Was Mine": "Taylor looked at the review in stunned amazement. 'Doesn't that fool know,' he asked finally, 'that I recorded that tune because I *like* it?'" (Goldberg 1983, 216–217).

"This Nearly Was Mine" was subsequently given another unique reading by the drummer Sunny Murray, who could hardly be described as either a musical satirist or sentimentalist, known more for his groundbreaking and ferociously modernist free jazz drumming in the company of

Cecil Taylor and Albert Ayler. Recorded in Paris in January 1969, the song appeared on Murray's album *Big Chief* (1969), which featured an international octet including American bassist Alan Silva (here playing violin). On the one hand, it might seem that Murray's satirical impulses are, indeed, front and center: the song is subjected to a ragged, dirge-like reading, the horns incessantly repeating the melody while Silva's hyperactive violin see-saws its way through two full choruses, over the churning accompaniment provided by Françoise Tusques's pseudo-rhapsodic piano, Beb Guérin's powerfully contrapuntal bass lines, and Murray's thundering drums. From this perspective, Murray's arrangement might be readily interpreted as a hip, mocking parody of a "corny," "sentimental" Broadway show tune, and this is how it has been heard by many friends, students, and conference delegates for whom I have played the piece.

On the other hand, denying the strictures of a strictly satirical interpretation, the piece remains strangely affecting, bringing an entirely new vocabulary to Rodgers's poignant waltz, yet still offering an obliquely respectful and hesitantly tender reading of the song. Stuart Broomer captures evocatively the equivocal nature of Murray's version of the song when he describes it as "a wailing, hymn-like recitation that takes on the mood of a lyrical crucifixion" (Broomer 2009). The delicious ambiguity inherent in Murray's reading of "This Nearly Was Mine"—which runs the interpretive gamut from mischievous parody to expressive sentiment—has kept me coming back to this particular piece for forty years, relishing my own uncertainty and indecision with regard to its meaning, significance, and value.

More recent recordings of the piece by Chick Corea, Fred Hersch, Ethan Iverson, Paul Motian, Pat Metheny, and Dave King—all of which adopt a non-parodic, almost reverential approach—simply confirm the song's contemporary relevance as a vehicle for improvisation and deny Baraka's glib claims for its maudlin, fragile fluffiness. In his liner notes to his solo piano album, *Fred Hersch Plays Rodgers & Hammerstein* (1996a), Hersch offers a heartfelt tribute to his source material, thereby preempting any critical readings that might find irony or parody in his inventive interpretations:

Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote the first popular music I ever heard. Long before I played (or even knew about) jazz, their songs were part of my musical world. From hearing original cast albums on our family's Philco to playing yellowed sheet music on my grandmother's piano to accompanying the fifth-grade choir in selections from *The Sound of Music*, I have always been drawn to the rich harmonies and timeless melodies of these songs and the way that they express universal sentiments so beautifully.

(Hersch 1996b)

"I Love Trees": Irony Versus Sentimentality, Again

Based on the real-life story of the Trapp Family Singers, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music* premiered on Broadway in November 1959, with a Hollywood film version following in 1965. The show tells the story of Maria Rainer, a postulant nun at Nonnberg Abbey in Salzburg, who leaves the Abbey to take up the position of governess to the seven children of the retired Austrian Navy Captain Georg von Trapp. The story is played out against the background of the Anschluss, the German annexation of Austria in March 1938, and the musical ends with the Trapp family fleeing Nazi-occupied Austria. The original Broadway production of *The Sound of Music* ran for 1,443 performances, from 1959 to 1963. The film version was released in 1965 and went on to be the highest grossing film in the US in the 1960s. Richard Keenan notes that, by 2001, the film "had grossed (adjusted for inflation) \$797 million, making it the third highest grossing film of all time" (Keenan 2007, 127).

In October 1960, motivated, in part, by the success of the Broadway show, John Coltrane recorded a version of "My Favorite Things" (1961), which went on to become one of his most popular

and well-known recordings. In common with Amiri Baraka's perspective on Cecil Taylor's version of "This Nearly Was Mine," some observers have claimed to find irony in Coltrane's interpretation. For example, arguing that "irony and parody are more central and expected means of aesthetic expression in the African American tradition" (Monson 1996, 225), Ingrid Monson suggests that Coltrane's version "inverts the piece on nearly every level . . . it transforms a sentimental, optimistic lyric into a vehicle for a more brooding improvisational exploration" (1996, 116–117). Monson argues that the "effect of ironic reversal, or transformation of a 'corny' tune into a vehicle for serious jazz improvisation, is communicated by multiple musical parameters," and she focuses upon "transformations of form, harmony, and groove in 'My Favorite Things' to illustrate the contrast between the Broadway and Coltrane versions of the tune" (1996, 106–107). Hence, in Monson's analysis—and notwithstanding her various caveats with regard to essentialism—ironic signification is reserved strictly for African American jazz-based musicality, which is characterized as "serious" (1996, 107), "innovative" (1996, 111), "superior" (1996, 115), and "complex" (1996, 115), while white Broadway-based musicality is resigned to being only "vapid" (1996, 107), "corny" (1996, 107), "simple" (1996, 114), and "sentimental" (1996, 117).

The most immediate and obvious question to be asked here is why Coltrane's transformations of the song must necessarily be regarded as "ironic." Lewis Porter has argued that

Ingrid Monson makes the mistake of assuming that Coltrane wanted to dress this song up because he must have thought this tune was silly. Quite the opposite: He took the song seriously and saw things in it that the composer had not.

(Porter 1995, 19)

And, as Porter suggests,

Coltrane was under no pressure to record such a song. In fact, he told [French critic François] Postif, lots of people imagine wrongly that "My Favorite Things" is one of my compositions; I would have loved to have written it, but it's by Rodgers and Hammerstein.

(Porter 1998, 182)

Quoting from the same interview, Ben Ratliff characterizes Coltrane as "giddy" in his enthusiasm for the song, which Coltrane describes as

my favorite piece of all those I have recorded. I don't think I would like to do it over in any way, whereas all the other discs I've made could have been improved in some details. This waltz is great: when you play it slowly, it has an element of gospel that's not at all displeasing; when you play it quickly, it has other undeniable qualities.

(Ratliff 2007, 59)

In Monson's analysis of the original Broadway version of "My Favorite Things," the word "sentimental" clearly functions in the pejorative, as an unquestioned claim of inconsequential triviality. The charge is one that is routinely leveled at *The Sound of Music*, and particularly the film version, which is commonly critiqued as a locus of popular culture sentimentality, with the general tone of such criticism captured in a random sampling: "romantic nonsense and sentiment"; "icky-sticky . . . square and solid sugar"; "fatuous"; "sickly sweetness"; "the purest *schmatz*." Characterizing it as a "sugar-coated lie," film critic Pauline Kael dubbed the film "The Sound of Money," while Julie Andrews's co-star Christopher Plummer famously called the film "The

Sound of Mucus” and described working with Andrews as “like being hit over the head every day with a Hallmark card” (quoted in Gorsky 2013, 202).

But Rodgers and Hammerstein were no strangers to the accusation of sentimentality, a charge that left them thoroughly undismayed. In a 1958 television interview with Mike Wallace, more than a year and a half before the premiere of *The Sound of Music* on Broadway, Hammerstein had some interesting things to say about sentiment, which require no further exegesis on my part:

In my book there's nothing wrong with sentiment because the things we're sentimental about are the fundamental things in life: the birth of a child; the death of a child, or of anybody; falling in love. I couldn't be anything but sentimental about these basic things. I think to be anything but sentimental is being a “poseur.”

And, responding to critic Kenneth Tynan's charge that he and Rodgers, with their “love for trees and earth and the simple life . . . [had] forfeited the civilized virtue of mature wit and urban irony,” an unperturbed Hammerstein replied:

Well maybe I have. I'm not very interested in urban irony. I'm not that kind of man, I'm not ironic, I'm not very urban. I love trees. I hope I'll never stop loving them. Trees, green meadows . . . who cannot love them? Doesn't Kenneth Tynan like those? I imagine he does.⁴

Richard Rodgers was similarly unrepentant: in a 1968 interview, commenting on the film version of *The Sound of Music*, he stated:

It's the most successful picture that's ever been made and that's very pleasurable. It isn't just a question of money. What I enjoy particularly is what it has done for the un-self-conscious people of the world—the selfconscious ones sneer at it. It *is* sentimental, but I don't see anything particularly wrong with that. I think people have been given a great deal of hope by that picture.

(quoted in Nolan 1978, 225)

In more recent years, Martin Gorsky has highlighted the extent to which *The Sound of Music* has been reassessed by a wide range of critical scholarship “alert to diversity of textual meaning and the complexities of spectator reception” (Gorsky 2013, 203) and encompassing a similarly wide range of interpretations: “as nostalgic imagining, weapon of imperialism, lesbian performance, and proto-feminist fable” (2013, 216). This has included, for example, revisionist approaches that situate Maria as a “contemporary countercultural figure with her Vidal-Sassoon-like unisex short hair, flat shoes and folk-style dresses . . . a spritely coffee-house troubadour, guitar case in one hand and carpet bag in the other” (2013, 204).

Hence, Gorsky argues, “by the new millennium the reduction of Maria to subservient drudge and the film to cozy sentiment had become less tenable” (2013, 205). Gorsky goes on to make his own provocative and insightful reading of the movie, suggesting that, rather than representing a sentimental, conservative bulwark against the apparently radical spirit of the swinging 1960s, the film might more accurately be regarded as a constitutive part of that curious decade: “The critics who initially decried the film's sentimentality reasonably argued for a cinema more directly engaged with the present, but they also overlooked the serious intent beneath the sugarcoating” (2013, 216).

Incontrovertible Truths? Art Versus Commerce

The stereotyped false dichotomy that Monson's analysis suggests—between, on the one hand, a hip, ironic, African American jazz aesthetic and, on the other, a corny, sentimental, white Broadway aesthetic—prompts two further observations that serve to offer a somewhat more accurate historical perspective on these thoroughly interrelated musical traditions. First, it needs to be acknowledged that the African American jazz tradition has no monopoly on irony and parody—both the Broadway and Hollywood musicals have been prime exponents of these techniques since their earliest days, in which contexts they are equally—or maybe more—“central and expected means of aesthetic expression” (Monson 1996, 225).

Second, and in sharp contrast to Monson's claims for the centrality of irony and parody in the African American tradition—practices which, she suggests, “quite literally pervade jazz improvisation” (1996, 106)—I would argue that a non-ironic sentimentality has been central to the jazz tradition throughout its history. A few examples will serve to illustrate the point: the characterization, in the 1940s, of popular big bandleader Tommy Dorsey as “The Sentimental Gentleman of Swing”—a characterization that was accurately reflected in the band's ample repertoire of ballads and love songs; the down-home hokum of Louis Armstrong's “When It's Sleepy Time Down South”—commenting on Armstrong's affection for his theme song, which he recorded almost one hundred times during his career, James Lincoln Collier notes: “He had a sentimental streak, no question” (1983, 245); the honeyed vibrato of Johnny Hodges's alto saxophone tone, which, Joachim-Ernst Berendt acknowledged “may occasionally approach sentimentality on slow pieces” (1976, 216); the distinctive tenor saxophone sound of Ben Webster, characterized by Richard Cook and Brian Morton in terms of its “unique timbre . . . breathy, swooningly romantic” (2004, 1654); and the Ellingtonian ballad playing of the self-confessed “sentimentalist” Archie Shepp: “I'm really worse than a romantic; I'm a sentimentalist. Duke has written some of the most beautiful ballads in America, and I've always been drawn to them” (quoted in Hentoff 1965, 6).

My objective here is not to denigrate the work of these artists, all of whom are central to the jazz tradition, but rather to emphasize the fact that irony and parody are not central to their artistic practice—or, indeed, to the artistic practice of many of their contemporaries and peers. More significantly, however, I want to highlight the manner in which the disparaging of so-called sentimentality offers a curiously skewed version of jazz history, simply reproducing a formalist discourse of aesthetic autonomy and artistic “authenticity” which willfully ignores the rather broad and blurry borderline between constructed notions of “art” and “commerce.” James Koehne has noted the manner in which, adopting the “umpire's role,” the work of “critics and musicologists . . . is littered with diatribes against the banal, the vulgar, the trivial, the sentimental and the simple” (2004, 124)—an observation that encapsulates rather neatly some aspects of Gunther Schuller's analytical perspective in *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz 1930–1945*. Although Schuller's text remains a remarkable achievement, full of musical and historical insight, there is no doubt that he had his blind spots.

For example, Schuller bemoans Fletcher Henderson's engagement with “the Tin Pan Alley pop tunes of the day”—which are dismissed as “ephemera” and “trivia”—and which included the songs “Malinda's Weddin' Day”; “I Wanna Count Sheep (Till the Cows Come Home)”; and “My Sweet Tooth Says I Wanna (But My Wisdom Tooth Says No)” (Henderson 1990)—and even Schuller acknowledges the “*classic*” nature of that title (1989, 323). Schuller similarly laments how “amazing and incongruous” it is to hear

one of the most forceful and original and virile soloists of the day, Coleman Hawkins, cheek by jowl in the same performance with some whimperingly puerile crooned vocal, the rest of the arrangements usually emulating white “sweet” (hotel) band styles:

Lombardo-ish saxophones, insipidly sentimental brass (both sections excessive vibratos were alleged to represent *real* sentiment), [and] chunky two-beat rhythm sections.

(1989, 323)

In an accompanying footnote, Schuller then launches into one of the aforementioned diatribes, indulging in more than a few gender stereotypes as he castigates, in scatter-gun fashion, the “phenomenon of the effeminately voiced crooners in popular music, both then and now, and the appalling taste that spawns it,” as well as the “falsetto warbling of thousands of rock groups.” For Schuller, in light of what he claims to be the “generally ‘macho’ outlook of the average American male consumer”—a questionable observation that deserves much unpacking—the popularity and success of vocalists such as these represent baffling problems, the “further explanation” of which he leaves to “sociologists and psychologists” (1989, 323).⁵

Hence, Schuller plays the “umpire’s role” here with incontestable certitude and a startling lack of self-reflexivity, enforcing the rules of the game in a manner that has no truck with griping appeals or disgruntled petitions. But note that there are two sharply contrasting analytical modes at work here: an effusive celebration of “virility” and originality, linked to an “authentic” view of jazz as a durable art form (based, it must be acknowledged, almost solely on assessments of three-minute recordings); and an anxious, indignant condemnation of “effeminacy” and sentimentality, which are linked to an apparently worthless, evanescent commercialism. The vacillation between the twin poles of acclaim and censure offers a curiously unsatisfactory vision of the overall nature of the jazz world of the period and suggests little by way of a deeper understanding of the wide range of factors—musical, social, cultural, economic, political—that influenced that world.

It is fascinating to compare the fulminating invective in the previously quoted passages with the strikingly similar language that Schuller employs to praise the “virtually flawless solo contributions” by tenor saxophonist Don Byas to Count Basie’s “Harvard Blues” (Basie 2003), recorded in January 1942—a language that might readily be inverted to the cause of critique:

Perfectly constructed, it is simple and affecting, poignant and languorous. Playing softly with a sense of intimacy not often encountered in jazz, Byas places each of his notes as if they were a series of incontrovertible truths, Jo Jones all the while enveloping these lovely sounds with caressing cymbal swooshes.

(1989, 255)

Notwithstanding the gloriously extravagant language—for a man who values so-called “virility,” there is much poignancy, languorousness, caressing, and swooshing going on here—it comes as little surprise to discover that Schuller’s rampant formalism leads him to explain the “eerie beauty” of Byas’s “anguished moan” at the beginning of his second chorus in purely technical terms, with reference to Byas’s use of the Lydian scale, Schuller claiming that Byas is

exploiting, un-or subconsciously, the momentary confluence of two diverse musical worlds: the classical modes (which go back to Greek antiquity) and the blue notes of jazz. For the C^b head-tone of the scale . . . is both the blue seventh of the key of D^b and the fourth degree of the related Lydian scale (of G^b).

(1989, 255)

Whether Byas’s note choices represent “incontrovertible truths” remains a matter of debate. But one wonders why Byas, a highly skilled and harmonically astute improviser, might not have been credited with exploiting these techniques consciously, with Schuller’s “un-” and “sub-”

prefixes merely reinforcing the hoary old myth of innate African American talent. Moreover, in response to the indisputable rulings of Schuller-as-umpire, when one consults the recording in question one quickly realizes that a somewhat different series of interpretations is readily available to the listener. Yes, the Byas solo is a very fine example of the genre, but it is hardly the *urtext* of tenor saxophone solos. And what critical line-in-the-sand, one ponders, insulates its warm vibrato and breathy romanticism—not to mention the “affecting, poignant and languorous” qualities identified by Schuller himself—from being filed under the *verboden* category “sentimental”? The rhetorical machinations at work here are extraordinary.

In terms of Henderson’s repertoire choices, Schuller simply dismisses many of these song selections as “artistic lapses” that were

undoubtedly desperate maneuvers to find a sustaining public beyond a small coterie of jazz enthusiasts. That is the only explanation of the distressingly trite pop material the band recorded (was forced to record?) in those early years of the thirties.

(1989, 323)

John Chilton offers a similar assessment of these pieces, arguing that the Henderson band appeared to “backtrack” at this time, “producing dull recordings of the indifferent commercial songs of the day” (Chilton 1990, 67). But when one surveys Henderson’s entire output from this period, it becomes clear that he was simply engaging in a set of practices that was commonplace among his contemporaries and peers: namely, exploiting the resources of Tin Pan Alley and Broadway in the context of a working band that required a continually renewed repertoire. The famous photograph of the Henderson band in Atlantic City in the summer of 1932, under a large sign carrying the name of the venue, *Danceland*, dramatizes that working context in a salutary manner, highlighting the fact that, rather than recording three-minute artistic nuggets for posterity, as critics such as Schuller and Chilton might have us believe, it was the quotidian provision of populist entertainment—often in the form of music for dancing—that was the primary component of the band’s day-to-day activities.⁶

In 1931, in what John Chilton describes as “a deluge of recording activity” (1990, 77), stimulated by their ten-month residency at Connie’s Inn in Harlem and the subsequent radio exposure, the band recorded thirty-six sides over twelve sessions. In contrast, following the end of their Connie’s Inn stint, Chilton has noted that 1932 was a “very ordinary” year for the Henderson band:

For a good part of 1932 Henderson’s orchestra worked in various theatres, playing week-long residencies as part of a touring show. As in years past, they also fulfilled engagements in the vast New England ballrooms, and played return dates at New York’s most famous dance hall, the Savoy.

(1990, 77)

In short, they spent many weeks on the road, with Chilton’s use of the expression “very ordinary” functioning as code to indicate that the band did not record much in that year. The recorded legacy of Henderson’s band in 1932 consists of only thirteen sides, recorded over three days in the studio, two in March and one in December. It becomes clear, then, that any assessment of Henderson’s work in the period 1931–1932 based solely on recordings will necessarily offer a partial, skewed account of the band’s activities.

In response to the dismissals of Henderson’s repertoire choices by Schuller and Chilton, Jeffrey Magee offers a refreshingly alternative perspective on Henderson’s recorded output in this period,

suggesting that any balanced perspective on these issues “begins with looking at the venue, not the recording studio, and seeing the extent to which recordings manifest one by-product of the band’s professional activity, not its chief focus.”

Connie’s Inn required a versatile band with the stylistic dexterity to shift quickly among numbers in a disparate repertory. Russell Procope recalled that the band played “tangos, waltzes, foxtrots, college songs, current hits, excerpts from the classics in dance tempos, just about everything,” and for Procope, that kind of versatility marked success. . . . In the early 1930s, then, the job—rather than a desperate need for one—led Henderson’s band to make records of current pop tunes among many other kinds of pieces. Recordings of Tin Pan Alley fare that sound like “severe artistic lapses” or “backtracking,” then, simply reflect part of the varied repertory demanded by the job. In fact, the recorded legacy is less lamentable for mixed artistic success than for its highly selective view of the band’s repertory and style. Among the records there are no tangos, no waltzes, no college songs, no dance arrangements of the classics. Together, the records comprise a detail from a broad canvas that we will never see.

(Magee 2005, 138)

Rather than lamenting Henderson’s repertoire choices for their opportunistic sentimentalism and crass commercialism, then, one might applaud them for their musical savvy and resonant topicality—the very same qualities that Coltrane exploited in his selection of “My Favorite Things” for his Atlantic recording in 1960.

Conclusion

One of the most problematic aspects of the pejorative dismissal of “sentimentality” is that such an accusation simply underestimates the extent to which sentimentalism remains a fundamental discursive characteristic of much popular culture, as is evident through several examples: the sentimental ballad is a cornerstone of folk cultures around the world, and, as David Metzger observes, the power ballads of contemporary rock music simply “attest to the longevity of sentimentality” (2016, 660); the Harlequin-style romance novel is founded on sentimental plots and storylines, and its popularity remains undiminished (estimates for the book sales of the late Dame Barbara Cartland range from 750 million to one billion); the stereotypical “Happy Ending” of the classic Hollywood film virtually defined—and, in many cases, continues to define—sentimentality in the public sphere; the “human interest,” kids-and-puppies stories at the end of local television news shows are grounded in sentimentality, serving to console viewers after the everyday horrors chronicled in the rest of the broadcast; the bellicose veneer of reality television—the confrontational antagonism, the mercenary egotism, the cruelly exaggerated pauses, the tearful exit interviews—offers only the thinnest of disguises for a mawkishly manufactured sentimentalism; and the world of sports is suffused with sentimentality, from the hushed tones of golf commentators assessing a “round for the ages,” to the aggressively fawning post-9/11 militaristic patriotism inherent in Major League Baseball’s addition of “God Bless America” to the seventh inning stretch.

And, as a final example, following Lady Gaga’s song medley at the 2015 Academy Awards ceremony, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the film version of *The Sound of Music*, the sentimentalist spirit that is so central to contemporary popular culture guaranteed that the surprise entrance by the incomparable 79-year-old Julie Andrews would leave not a dry eye in the house. Not—to underscore one of my key points here—that there’s anything wrong with that.

I want to conclude by citing the work of the literary scholar June Howard, who makes a compelling argument for the need for a substantially revised approach to the question of sentimentality:

I believe that scholarly usages of “sentimentality” are more closely intertwined with everyday meanings of the term than we usually recognize, that they often rely on unexamined and untenable assumptions about the nature of emotion, and that intermittent slides into condemnation or celebration undermine their analytic value. We need to move on from arguments for and against sentimentality to the task of conceptualizing it as a transdisciplinary object of study.

(Howard 1999, 63)

Howard goes on to suggest that “characterizing something as sentimental should open, not close, a conversation . . . the appearance of the term marks a site where values are contested” (Howard 1999, 69), and her approach to the topic therefore offers a challenging agenda for any future work in jazz and popular music studies that aims to address issues of sentimentality, denying the cavalier dismissals summarized above and inviting a more complex and thoroughgoing engagement with this ubiquitous, inescapable, and profoundly human concept.

Notes

1. A useful definition of sentimentality can be found in *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, with relevance beyond the field of literature: “For the most part a pejorative term to describe false or superficial emotion, assumed feeling, self-regarding postures of grief and pain. In literature it denotes overmuch use of pathetic effects and attempts to arouse feeling by ‘pathetic’ indulgence” (Cuddon 1992, 857).
2. Spoiler Alert: It’s okay, folks, Nellie eventually realizes the error of her ways, and they all live happily ever after.
3. For a detailed discussion of Taylor’s interpretation of “This Nearly Was Mine,” and Baraka’s critical response, see Harper (2015).
4. The video and transcript of the interview are available online, in the collection of the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin: www.hrc.utexas.edu/multimedia/video/2008/wallace/hammerstein_oscar_t.html
5. As Schuller extends his vitriol to include contemporary performers, he name-checks Boy George, and I must confess to the guilty pleasure of always having enjoyed the fact that “Boy George (singer)” appears in the index of Schuller’s *The Swing Era*.
6. The photograph is reproduced in Ward and Burns (2000, 191).

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PART III

Core Issues and Topics



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SPACE AND PLACE IN JAZZ

Andrew Berish

Over the past twenty years, the study of space and place has become a core part of the humanistic disciplines. Scholars studying art through the analytical lens of space and place have generated large bibliographies in diverse fields: anthropology, art history, cultural studies, history, literary studies, and sociology. Musicologists and ethnomusicologists, including jazz scholars, have only recently begun incorporating these ideas into their work. As will become clear, there is a lot of writing about specific jazz places, from nightclubs to cities to nations, but not as much writing that tries to understand exactly how musical sound and its spatial character relate to the places of its sounding.

The Interdisciplinary Analysis of Space and Place

The “spatial turn” in humanistic scholarship of the past several decades is rooted in the work of several key writers spanning critical theory, geography, history, and sociology. French scholars Gaston Bachelard (2014), Michel Foucault (Rabinow 1984), Henri Lefebvre (1991), and Michel de Certeau (1984) have all produced influential writing on space and place, in each case arguing for the necessity of thinking spatially in any analytical endeavor. Building on their work, Edward Casey (1993, 1997), David Harvey (2004, 2006), Doreen Massey (2005), Edward Soja (1989, 1996), Nigel Thrift (2008), and Yi-Fu Tuan (1977, 1979) have written wide-ranging accounts of the nature of space and place in modern life. Despite the diversity of their writing, these scholars all reject any *a priori* notion of space and place as a fixed background for social life. Space and place, they argue, is not a thing but a *process*, one inextricably bound up with our basic sense of subjectivity and sociality.

But how do we define space and place? For most writers, space is the more abstract of the two ideas. In much philosophical and geographical writing, space is fixed, the frame in which we record or plan events. David Harvey calls this “absolute space . . . a pre-existing and immoveable grid amenable to standardized measurement and open to calculation” (Harvey 2006, 121). In the twentieth century, the broad cultural influence of non-Euclidean geometry and Einstein’s theories of space-time offered a new conceptualization of “relative” space—what seemed fixed and absolute is actually multiple, depending on the positions of the observers and the nature of the thing to be measured. But in both of these understandings, space is still background, and there is little accounting for social life—how people live in, shape, and manage the absolute and relative spaces of their lives. In his influential 1974 book *The Production of Space*, French philosopher Henri Lefebvre challenged this idea, arguing that any critical engagement with social life

must confront the multiple spaces of modernity. For Lefebvre a “unitary theory” of space would combine “first, the *physical*—nature, the Cosmos; secondly, the *mental*, including logical and formal abstractions; and, thirdly the *social*.” “In other words,” he writes, “we are concerned with the logico-epistemological space, the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias” (Lefebvre 1991, 11–12). These terms become the foundation for Lefebvre’s influential “trialectic”: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space. Although not the first scholar to speak about space as a social product, Lefebvre’s ideas—especially his rich dialectical model analyzing spatial practices and representations—have become the cornerstone of nearly all scholarship since.

Lefebvre’s ideas offer a corrective to the asocial abstractions of earlier ideas of space. But for many scholars, that corrective is not enough; space remains too abstract. For these writers, the word “place” is the best way to build an understanding of the relationship of space to social life (Tuan 1977; Casey 1993; Casey 1997; Cresswell 2015). The most vigorous theorizing of place happens at the intersection of phenomenology and geography. For geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, place is “a unique and complex ensemble—rooted in the past and growing into a future.” It is a “symbol” that calls for “humanistic understanding” (Tuan 1979, 388). As Cresswell concisely puts it, “place at a basic level, is space invested with meaning in the context of power” (Cresswell 2015, 19).

Discussions of space and place imply movement, or at least a tension between stability and instability, fixed positions and unfixed ones. French historian of religion Michel de Certeau provides one of the most influential explorations of this idea. For de Certeau, place is “an instantaneous configuration of positions” implying stability. Space, in contrast, “takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables.” It is “actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities.” In short, de Certeau asserts, “space is a practiced place” and amenable to “tactics” that can disrupt the controlling “strategies” of powerful people, institutions, and ideologies (de Certeau 1984, 117).

Echoing de Certeau, David Harvey coins the term “relational space” to convey a similar idea: in relational space, processes “define their own spatial frame” (Harvey 2006, 123). But in all these different conceptualizations—Tuan’s notion of place, de Certeau’s polyvalent and conflictual “space,” and Harvey’s “relational space”—the emphasis is on dynamic, fluid complexity. Place (or space) operates through “constant and reiterative practice,” its contingent character defined by context (Cresswell 2015, 70). This is what Marc Augé calls “anthropological space,” the dynamic and fluid space of “identity, of relations, and of history” (Augé 1995, 52).

The body of work considering music in these terms is rapidly growing. A 2011 short essay by Robert Fink, part of a Colloquy in the *Journal of American Musicological Society*, argues for a spatial turn in musicology. Fink references the pioneering work of other music studies scholars such as Tricia Rose, Murray Forman, and Adam Krims, each of whom have written monographs focusing on the urban spaces of post-industrial popular American music (Rose 1994; Forman 2002; Krims 2007). A spatial turn has also been a driving force in historical studies of American and European “art” music, often fusing with a new strand of spatially oriented work under the banner of ecocriticism and eco-musicology (Allen 2011). Books by Daniel M. Grimley (2006), Denise Von Glahn (2009), and Georgina Born (2013) look closely at the ways historical compositional practices evoke real and imagined spaces and places. There has been a similar spatial turn in ethnomusicology, starting with Martin Stokes’s influential collection, *Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (1994) and continuing with writing by Thomas Turino (1993), Marina Peterson (2010), and Fiona Magowan and Louise Wrazen (2013). Because it is so deeply indebted to theoretical models outside of musicology, spatial music studies continue to be deeply

interdisciplinary with contributions from anthropology, geography, sociology, and history. In the rest of the chapter, I use “space” for more theoretical or abstract discussions, and “place” when writing about particular locations.

Jazz Scenes: City and Country

Although not always theorized, jazz scholarship and criticism have from their beginnings been attentive to the places of the music: where it was developed, practiced, recorded, and performed. As sociologist Howard Becker writes, referring to his own experiences playing the music, the specifics of jazz performance such as repertoire and style are often “completely dictated by the circumstances of the places” one plays in (Becker 2004). Most scholarly discussions of jazz places begin in the complicated transnational and multicultural city that was turn of the twentieth-century New Orleans. From some of the earliest jazz writing to more recent historical accounts, critics and scholars have emphasized the unique city as the catalyst that triggered the stylistic and generic fusions that forged the music (Sargeant 1938; Schuller 1986; Walser 1999; Brothers 2007; Charters 2008; Hersch 2008; Charters 2008; Raeburn 2009; Raimondi 2012; Suhadolnik 2016). A growing body of scholarship has expanded our geographical understanding of the historical development of the music by focusing on other US cities and states, from the well-known centers of jazz popularity—Kansas City (Russell 1973; Pearson 1994; Driggs, Frank, and Chuck Haddix 2005), Chicago (Kenney 1993), New York (DeVeaux 1999; Chevigny 2005; Burke 2008; Stewart 2007; Jackson 2012; Greenland 2016; Heller 2017), and Los Angeles (Bryant, et al., 1998; Gioia 1998; Pastras 2001; Isoardi 2006;)—to the less well-known historical jazz communities of Boston (Klotz 2016), Detroit (Bjorn and Gallert 2001), Indianapolis (Balensuela 2014), and Newark (Kukla 2002).

For many historians, the history of jazz is also the history of the city in twentieth-century America (Ostransky 1978; Peretti 1992; Philips 2013). Travis Jackson writes that “the development of jazz . . . was not simply a function of developments in musical style; it was also a function of developments in the use of urban space” (Jackson 2012, 4). Eric Lott’s influential article, “Double V, Double-Time: Bebop’s Politics of Style,” describes the emergent bebop style as an aesthetic of speed and displacement that modeled itself on the black urban experience (Lott 1998, 461). In *Come In and Hear the Truth*, Patrick Burke narrows the focus down to a single and centrally important musical street, New York’s 52nd St., during the 1940s and 1950s.

But as recent scholarship demonstrates, jazz has always existed outside the city, shaped by other geographic and cultural forces. The focus on cities, in addition to a deeper, often unacknowledged “center-periphery” metaphor of cultural history, has made the idea of “rural jazz” seem nonsensical (Washburne 2012). In *Jazz on the Road: Don Albert’s Musical Life* (2001) and *Big Band Jazz in Black West Virginia 1930–1943* (2012), Christopher Wilkinson documents how jazz developed and thrived in places on the seeming periphery of urban musical life. In his book *Jazz Matters: Sound, Place and Time Since Bebop* (2010), David Ake offers a general critique of jazz scholarship’s urban bias, focusing on a counter-tradition anchored in rural and suburban life. Surveying the early work of pianist Keith Jarrett, guitarist Pat Metheny, and keyboardist Lyle Mays, Ake traces the emergence of a “pastoral jazz” in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Jazz as Mobility

Despite its longstanding association with specific American places, from its beginnings, jazz has always been on the move, transmitted by touring musicians, soldiers, tourists, and recordings (Shack 2001; Kenney 2005). In his survey of the music’s history, Alyn Shipton traces these early movements of jazz across the globe, examining the influence of late nineteenth- and early

twentieth-century traveling African American performers on European musicians. And where American musicians did not travel, recordings acted as proxy ambassadors, introducing audiences to new African American-derived musical styles (Shipton 2007; Cerchiari 2012). Writing about Louis Armstrong, Charles H. Garrett explores how the trumpeter's music "sounded" migration, specifically the Great Migration, a demographic movement that brought millions of African Americans from the South to the North. Garrett identifies the ways recordings such as "Gully Low Blues" integrated Southern musical practices with Northern ones, offering a sonic embodiment of the real-world negotiations black Southerners had to make in the North. Garrett's chapter is a reminder that the articulation of place to music (and vice versa) is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship, but rather a relationship among multiple places.

But the spread of jazz is more than simply the story of traveling musicians or media dissemination; it is a story of nationalism and globalism writ large—of the ways cultural works have supported and also challenged twentieth-century nationalist movements. As many recent scholars have argued, jazz was always already "international," created from transnational movements across the Black Atlantic and beyond (Roberts 1979; Floyd 1997; Atkins 2001; Garrett 2008; Von Eschen 2004, 2009; Toynebee, Tackley, and Doffman 2016; Evans 2016). As E. Taylor Atkins writes, the journey of jazz around the globe "helped shape a burgeoning global consciousness that coexisted, if uneasily, with the rampant nationalisms that made that century so violent." The music's "global consciousness," however, remained in tension with other powerful "affiliations based on notions of nation, region, gender, ideology, or class" (Atkins 2003, xxi). Jazz today, as Stuart Nicholson writes in *Jazz and Culture in a Global Age*, is a truly global phenomenon, often thoroughly integrated into local and national musical cultures in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America (Nicholson 2014, x).

Although journalists have been writing about the spread of jazz across the globe for decades now, it wasn't until the 1970s and 1980s that scholars produced extended, critical English-language studies of jazz in places other than the United States (for example, see Bisset 1987; Berendt 1975, 1984; Goddard 1979; Roberts 1979; Starr 1983; Godbolt 1984). Recent jazz writing on this topic has focused on the tensions between the local and global, the intimate and the general. In their introduction to *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz* (2016), Philip V. Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino point to jazz's paradoxical evocation of place: "Jazz clings relentlessly to place—the jam session, the scene, the city, the nation. Yet jazz also moves fluidly and fluently to other places—up the Mississippi River or across the Atlantic to the entrepôts of exile." For musicians, this paradox is felt at the level of performance. Improvising musicians, Bohlman and Plastino write, "turn inward, enclosing themselves in a world they selectively inhabit," even as they reach out and embrace "networks of musical practices conjoined by a willingness to accept a unifying ontology of jazz" (Bohlman and Plastino 2016, 1, 6). Ethnomusicologist Paul Austerlitz echoes this idea in his notion of "jazz consciousness," a mode of social-musical engagement that creates a global "virtual space where we can confront, learn from, and even heal the contradictions resulting from social rupture" (Austerlitz 2005, xvi). Steven Feld's recent book *Jazz Cosmopolitanism: Five Musical Years in Ghana* offers a rich, ethnographic exploration of the complex ways American jazz has developed outside the USA. Through encounters with a range of Ghanaian musicians and artists, Feld explores what he calls a "vernacular cosmopolitanism"—a "cosmopolitanism from below." His book offers a look at the especially rich dynamics of Afro-Diasporic music returning to Africa—how "the performance of jazz in Africa, and Africa in jazz . . . relate[s] to the anthropology of globalism and cosmopolitanism" (Feld 2012, 4). As this very brief survey shows, any comprehensive accounting of jazz, whether inside or outside the borders of the United States, must sensitively account for the music's historical mobility, its remarkable ability to move from place to place. Recognizing jazz's "inherent transnationalism," scholars must "investigate situated, localized communities alongside moving, global ones" (Braggs 2016, 7, 124).

With all the focus on the geography of jazz, its specific locales, and its frequent movements across the US and the globe, scholars have been less consistent in their attempts to understand the relation between musical sound, spatiality, and the social. The most promising avenues for research are those that pursue a “critical phenomenology of the musical or sonic orchestration of public and private experience, in all its social-spatial dimensions” (Born 2013, 26). What is needed is a sonic phenomenology of place that is balanced by a Lefebvrian critical analysis of social and institutional space. In this way musical sound—as practice and performance—is understood as fully part of the story of jazz places. If jazz is made meaningful through its emplacement in the world, can you hear place in jazz? And can what you hear have a different relationship to *where* you are hearing it?

The Spatial Imaginary

In my own writing I have tried to describe the complex ways we can hear place in musical sound (Berish 2009, 2012). For example, I discuss the music of swing era bandleader Charlie Barnet and his obsessive need for travel. This urge to wander the country—despite its difficulties, Barnet loved touring with his orchestra—had an analog in his desire to cross America’s “color line.” During the 1940s, Barnet’s band was frequently touted in the jazz press as the “blackest white band of all” (Simon 1939). Drawing heavily on the sounds of African American jazz orchestras, especially those led by Count Basie and Duke Ellington, Barnet’s recordings from the 1940s—performances such as “Pompton Turnpike,” “Skyliner,” and “Drop Me Off in Harlem”—evoked specific places with a self-consciously interracial musical style: a white band explicitly adopting the hot style widely associated with the black bands of the time. But my account represents only a beginning: there is much more work to be done in developing a “critical phenomenology” of Barnet’s life and music, an accounting that can fully account for all its “social-spatial” meanings. The bandleader’s literal and figurative travels were premised on a much deeper social historical phenomenon: the “racialization” of place by government and citizens. To really comprehend the bandleader’s career and music, we must understand the ways he attempted to negotiate different “spatial imaginaries,” one white and one black (Lipsitz 2011, 5).

The “white spatial imaginary,” rooted in the history of European conquest of North America, “idealizes ‘pure’ and homogenous spaces, controlled environments, and predictable patterns of design and behavior.” In addition, “the white spatial imaginary views space primarily as a locus for the generation of exchange value.” In contrast, the black spatial imaginary offers a different understanding of the “scale, scope, and stakes of place and space” by emphasizing a different “moral geography” of “differentiated space” that “privilege[s] use value over exchange value, sociality over selfishness, and inclusion over exclusion” (Lipsitz 2011, 29–30, 51, 61–63).

The values of the black spatial imaginary were manifested not only with the material transformations of segregated American spaces (such as the transformation of a black barber shop into a center of political organizing) but also in the creations of African American expressive culture. George Lipsitz gives the example of the young Louis Armstrong who was able to move freely through segregated New Orleans by marching in the city’s many parades. The parade not only allowed black musicians such as Armstrong to move more easily through normally off-limits neighborhoods, but also brought black music and dance to the white parts of town (Lipsitz 2011, 63).

The idea of racialized “spatial imaginaries” provides a more nuanced way to conceptualize Charlie Barnet’s place in the segregated world of 1940s dance band jazz: his orchestra represented a mixing of spatial imaginaries. Barnet’s musical shifts through the era—from “sweet” to “hot,” white to black—were attempts to reconcile two deeply rooted and opposed spatial imaginaries, a white one that celebrated movement as an American birthright and a black one, that, excluded

from this understanding, sought other means of making life hopeful and free. Like gears that rotate independently and at different speeds, Barnet's music reflected a "differential" experience of place. His band's music could sound one spatial experience while working within the confines of another (or vice versa). The result is something more complicated than I originally described and points to some new directions in the study of jazz spaces and places.

But to really understand the differential nature of these musical spaces—the ways the phenomenological experience of music interacted with the physical places of performance—we need to look at the Barnet Orchestra "on location" and interacting with specific historical places. In the chapter on the 1940s from his autobiography *Those Swinging Years* (Barnet 1992), Barnet provides two exemplary examples of such interactions. The first involved a 1942 "riot" of African American fans at a blacks-only concert at Washington DC's Griffith Stadium. The second event from a year later involved a tense but ultimately peaceful performance that occurred at a whites-only performance at the Eastwood Gardens in Detroit.

The bandleader presents these events as unconnected, but the two stories are remarkable for the similar ways they describe the segregated geography of the era's commercial music. The events that unfolded at Griffith Stadium were rooted in bad planning. The invited bands, Barnet's and Louis Armstrong's, were set up on the field, but a contingent of on-field listeners obscured the view from fans in the stands. The inadequate sound system only exacerbated the problem. When someone threw a bottle onto the field, the crowds surged forward. Police, aided by servicemen in the crowd, were unable to quell the growing chaos. The concert promoters soon cut the music and lights, shutting the event down. Police arrested sixteen and another six were taken to a local hospital. More than just another example of fanatical jitterbuggers venting youthful energy, the event represented the consequences of the nation's racialized understandings of place. At one point, trying to manage the situation, master of ceremonies Willie Bryant pleaded with the crowd, "This is the first time our race has ever been able to get Griffith Stadium for an affair of this sort. Let's not make it the last time" (*Variety* 1942). The inadequacies of the place were connected to a much deeper set of restrictions on where and how blacks could publicly congregate. It is not hard to see the "riot" as a protest against such large-scale restrictions on the black use of public space.

Barnet's second anecdote recalls events at an all-white concert in Detroit's Eastwood Gardens. The concert happened in the immediate aftermath of the city's devastating "race riots" (Barnet remembers "bodies floating in the Detroit River").¹ The bandleader was nervous about the gig, especially because he had two black trumpeters in the band, Peanuts Holland and Al Killian. In spite of the tension and the "heavily armed riot squads," the concert was a great success. "Every time Peanuts or Al dropped a mute or hit a loud clam," Barnet writes, "the people would cheer. Peanuts and Al could do nothing wrong so far as that audience was concerned." (Barnet 1992, 119–120)

His quick gloss on the events of 1943 only hint at its true scale: the multi-day conflict was among the most violent, racially motivated urban crises in modern American history. Believed to have started after a fight between whites and blacks on Belle Isle, a park in the Detroit River, the uprising by Detroit's African Americans was fed by years of housing and work discrimination, intensified by the migration of thousands of black workers into the city's booming wartime economy. Fed by white police inaction, the exceptionally violent clashes lasted for two days until thousands of federal troops arrived and restored order. Thirty-four people were killed, twenty-five of them African American, and hundreds more were injured. Most of the property damaged occurred in the black neighborhood of Paradise Valley (Capeci and Wilkerson 1990). With this in mind, the bandleader's anecdote takes on a much more ominous tone. The audience's reaction to Barnet's integrated band had enormous stakes with the very real possibility of violence.

Both anecdotes show how deeply race informed the places of 1940s music making, and how any understanding of Barnet's music must take into account the dynamics of these racialized spaces. These stories also emphasize the way music and place generate *feeling*—both stories

are suffused with *affect*, a complex mix of excitement, fear, uncertainty, and comradeship. As Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg write, “Affect arises in the midst of *in-between-ness*: in the capacities to act and be acted upon . . . affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body” (Gregg and Seigworth 2010, 1). In both anecdotes, Barnett vividly describes how the venues were charged with intense feeling and a palpable sense of bodies and minds aligned, of force, intensity, and direction. These feelings were formed at the intersection of race, music, and place. Both the unrest at Griffith Stadium and the interracial embrace at Eastwood Gardens show how thoroughly experiences of place and music were fused with ideologies of race and social structures of power. What deserves greater scholarly exploration is a more refined account of this complicated interrelationship between sound, listener, and place. In particular, what was the nature of the new, contingent musical-social places created through musical performance? How did the music create a sense of belonging to that place? And how did different spatial imaginaries interact with musical performance to create what Nigel Thrift calls “spatial affect” (Thrift 2008)?

From the nightclub to the concert hall, from New Orleans to New York City—jazz has been more than the soundtrack to twentieth- and twenty-first-century modern life; it has been a *spatial force* on par with other social forces, shaping our fundamental ideas and experiences of modern life. Older historiographical habits tying certain jazz styles to certain locales—Chicago or New Orleans Jazz—needs to give way to an understanding of jazz as itself a spatial practice, a practice that shaped listeners’ ideas about, and feelings for, the geography of their daily lives.

Note

1. The events of 1943 were cataclysmic for Detroit. The complex history of that event and its place in the city is still being debated. For a recent accounting of the scholarship, see Capeci, Jr. and Martha Wilkerson (2009).

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16

TIME IN JAZZ

Mark Doffman

You've got to play. Together. You can't play jazz alone.

(Marsalis and Wigeland 2001, 167)

In looking at time in jazz, Wynton Marsalis's words are a helpful starting point in thinking about the "time" of the music—to be together means to be together *in time*. Jazz performers cite a player's "time," more precisely, the individual awareness of time as the key element to be developed in the constitution of a jazz musician. A British drummer spoke to me of his period of study in New York and recalled the standard response when his peers (on all instruments) were asked what they had learned from their teacher;

to a man or a woman they would come back and say "need to work on my time" and [the great teachers] would hear you play unaccompanied, and hear you play a tune, the form, or hear saxophonists play a line and they would say, "Ok, you need to work on your time."

(BA, drummer)

It is fair to say that the centrality accorded to time by jazz musicians is not fully reflected in the scholarly writing on the music. Over the course of this chapter, I hope that a modest re-balancing can be achieved, as I look at what "time" means in jazz—through the variety of ways in which the playing of time is understood as part of individual dispositions, in relation to the significance of temporal relations *between* players and the temporal roles that musicians occupy, and through the usage of temporal models that structure the music.

Playing in Time, Playing With Time

Jed Rasula has described jazz as an "exploration of the plasticity of time" (Rasula 1995, 146). He makes this point in relation to the sounds, history, and perhaps the very notion of jazz; the point is well made, but I want to nuance this plasticity, particularly in reference to the sounds of the music, by making the case for an equal imperative towards thinking of time as having a necessary solidity.

The distinction between playing *in time* and playing *with time* is important here in thinking about the time of the music as being solid and flexible, as functional and as expressive (Monson 1996). Both these ways of thinking about the playing of musical time also point to one of the

problematics of jazz, which is the relationship between serving the group and self-expression. The capacity to play *in time* is a vital component in contributing to a coherent group feel, and playing *with time* is central to the expressive, communicative qualities of, for example, a great solo. Paying attention to both are prerequisites for musicians' establishing their place in this practice community.

Jazz musicians devote a large amount of their practice to playing *in time* and achieving a stability and consistency in their placement of notes (Doffman 2013). At a local level, this means being consistent in relation to the preceding and subsequent phrases (horizontally), and also in relation to being synchronous with other players on a particular shared beat (vertically). At a global level, being in time points to the stability of the tempo across the performance of the piece. Bass players and drummers, in particular, are judged and celebrated for this stability and regularity in their playing, and musicians aspire to having "great time," a shorthand for these qualities.

Broadly, to be in time, the phrasing of solo lines or the comping underneath a solo need to articulate rhythm in a way that is audible and comprehensible to other players in the group. Playing *in time* is related to but not to be confused with "playing time"—a phrase that musicians use to describe the functional characteristic of working as part of the rhythm section. *Time* here is a trope for the rhythm section playing a swung jazz feel, and often also carries with it the idea of a pared down, fundamental groove being played that is not too dense or complex.

Alongside the notion of playing *in time*, as an ideal in jazz performance, is the sense of playing *with time*. This facet of playing is the expressive, perhaps playful, shaping of rhythm that adds communicative value to a performance. For example, a bassist may push the walking bass line ahead of her/his normal playing position to add excitement or to respond to another member of the group. Musicians actively play with temporal difference and discrepancy in order to affect others and contribute to the temporal dialog of the group. This chimes with Gregory Bateson's notion of information (in this case, temporal) being a "difference which makes a difference" (1972, 315). In a similar way, a number of jazz scholars have developed Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s notion of "signify(n)g)" in African American language as a model for thinking about repetition and quoting in jazz as a form of intertextuality (Floyd 1995; Monson 1996). This can appear in the temporal domain when players cite celebrated musicians (in music and discourse) and shape their timekeeping through reference to them—"play more like Elvin Jones on this number." These sorts of namings and reference points are more tropic than literal, feels more than structures, that nevertheless have a solidity or iterability about them.

The distinction between playing *in* and *with* time can also be understood by the roles that musicians occupy as they play. Bassists and drummers are seen as carrying a foundational responsibility for the quality of the time in a group. They function as timekeepers and need to play *in* time. As bassist Phil Bowler comments in relation to the bassist's role, "It's like the earth—you walk on the earth. The bass is like the earth" (cited in Monson 1996, 30). Musicians in rhythm sections, particularly bassists and drummers, feel a very strong sense of role, perhaps being hailed into a role, which goes beyond the joint responsibility that all musicians might feel for playing competent time. Billy Higgins, the celebrated jazz drummer, pointed to his own sense of obligation to playing in time in helping other musicians sound good (*ibid.*, 63).

Clearly, all forms of music involve playing in and with time and require a balance between putting oneself in the service of the group and self-expression. Where jazz appears to be rather different is in the weight given to this balancing of the intersubjective time feel and expression, and in the degree of reflexivity on the part of musicians about time and how it is shaped in performance.

One of my primary duties is to make sure that the music feels good, it's grooving, it's in time; it's not slowing down speeding up whatever. To keep it feeling right, so I suppose

when I play, I'm always conscious of "How's my time? Does that work within the group? Does it feel good, does it sound good?" And if not I'll try and hang back or I'll try and push ahead.

(LS, *bassist*)

As implied in this quote, musicians conceive the underlying beat of the music as having a certain width (Berliner 1994, 151), and players spend a lot of practice time developing a feel for this expanse. Playing at the front of the beat or playing at the back generates certain affective dimensions in the music; a player who plays at the front or back may be associated with a particular sense of drive or relaxedness as they play. Musicians vary in their attitude towards the placement of notes. Pianist Fred Hersch, in Paul Berliner's ethnography, speaks of the need to be able to play with these different placements to meet the demands of the music (*ibid.*, 151). Other players that I have spoken with expressed a commitment to particular ways of playing in relation to the beat; a guitar player used a metaphor for beat placement as "sitting at the front or back of the bus" and spoke of how "invariably, people with good time sit towards the back of the bus. I think that's pretty fair to say" (PN, *guitarist*).

Given the opaqueness of musical timing evident in the discourse of musicians, some scholars have attempted to provide greater precision in framing the ways in which jazz musicians manipulate timing. A study by Brian Wesolowski (2016) points to a tendency to phrase swung eighth notes more evenly than the archetypal swung triplet rhythm suggests—a very clear feature of jazz performance at most tempos; it is also a historical feature—the timing of pairs of eighth notes tends to be more even in contemporary playing (and indeed from bebop) among soloists. There are very few studies that have focused on the temporal profile of individual players, but Friberg and Sundström (2002) did examine the swing ratio of a small number of elite drummers; they found, in contrast to the stereotypical notion of swing ratios being tied to the triplet subdivision, that these players tended to play the skip beat more as a sixteenth note. Only at certain tempos did the playing conform to the triplet subdivision.

Temporal Relations, Temporal Roles

The different approaches to the playing of time and timekeeping that musicians articulate in terms of their own note placement, and as an ideal, become three dimensional when they play together in performance. Charles Keil, in his framing of the way in which structurally simple music is meaningful or feelingful, put forward the idea that much of the pleasure derived from music lies, not in formal complexity, but in the human, expressive qualities that color the dynamics, timbre, pitch, and timing of performance (Keil and Feld 1994; Keil 1995). The *participatory discrepancies* that he viewed as essential to our being moved and socially engaged by music are spoken of by musicians in similar ways. Much of the discourse of time in jazz hinges on the way that musicians think about the time as relational and emergent; that is, the time of the group cannot be reduced to the time of the individuals comprising the group. As a drummer pointed out,

my primary focus is a collective sense of time . . . in a small band context, it comes back to collective time. If someone has a time that is very distinctive, it has to work for the band, it has to be reined in a bit.

(BA, *drummer*)

This idea of the joint time of a group is captured in the term "swing"—a temporal, collective effervescence.

Swing as a Temporal Relation

André Hodeir (1956) talked of the “vital drive” in jazz as a quality that marked the essential character of the music; the term “swing” is close to this idea, and also a powerful description of the motional qualities that musicians and commentators see in great jazz performance. Swing is a multidimensional term within the discourse of the music. It can appear to describe an era and style. The swing era lasted for about a decade from the mid-1930s, and the term marks out a style and organization of the music that was seen as juxtaposed to the term “jazz” at that time, “jazz” being used to describe small group music derived from New Orleans (Giddins and Deveaux 2009, 171).

Swing is also used in distinct ways with regard to time and rhythm, and it is these senses of the term that are of relevance to this chapter. Swing describes a quality in performance that is similar to the notion of groove, and the way in which music can move us bodily and affectively. It is the phenomenal feeling of musical time as played collectively by the musicians. As a thought experiment, one might imagine two rhythm sections playing the same number in the same sort of way at an identical tempo. One of these might engage the hand, heads, and feet of an audience, while the other may fail to do this. There is nothing in the musical material, as notated, that swings—it is the way in which the players combine that accomplishes this. But swing, as more or less synonymous with groove, is not simply about the music’s drive or its motional qualities. Musicians’ descriptions of swing or groove are colored by a strongly social language, and by a sense of commitment to making the music feel right for other players and the audience. Most jazz musicians understand this, but it is in the rhythm section that the commitment to swing or groove is most pronounced as part of one’s role.

Bass and Drums

The performance of time in jazz is deeply connected to the performance role that players inhabit, and certain roles are linked together more tightly in time than others. So it is for the bass and drums, whose work within a jazz group is proscribed rather more than for other players. Although pianists and guitar players function as a third member of the rhythm section, the bass-drums dyad operates in a unique way within the group, hence the focus here.

Bass players and drummers frame much of their musical practice in terms of the “hook-up,” in other words, the manner of their tuning into one another. Although there has been some skepticism expressed about the validity of Keil’s work in relation to audiences’ abilities to hear the subtle temporal maneuverings of musicians (Butterfield 2010), there is little doubt that players do strongly feel the nuances of time as they play (Doffman 2009). Musicians speak regularly of a conscious negotiation with the time of others,

It’s very hard; it all depends on who you are playing with so you kind of have to marry everyone’s own personal sense of time, into a group feel that works and feels good, you know. So if I’m playing with a drummer who plays quite behind the beat. . . . I’ll compensate. To kind of keep the mean, [to keep it] in the right pocket.

(LS, bassist)

Not all rhythm section players are known for their negotiating skills, however, and some musicians become known for their pronounced and quite fixed temporal characteristics as they play with others; Ray Brown, the legendary bass player, was famous for his playing walking bass lines that were well “ahead of the beat,” and drummer Elvin Jones was celebrated for his behind the beat phrasing, and with such performers, other musicians would generally fit in with their strongly marked sense of time. More often however, rhythm section players are working towards a certain

middle ground, particularly if they are not familiar with the other half of the pairing. Charli Persip, a revered jazz drummer who contributed his insights to Paul Berliner's ethnography of jazz, commented that "for things to happen beautifully in the ensemble . . . the drummer and the bass player must be married. When I listen to the drummer and the bass player together, I like to hear wedding bells" (Berliner 1994, 349). This sort of talk alludes to the correspondence between temporal congruence and social affiliation. While there are numerous well-known instances of musicians falling out on the bandstand and continuing to make great music, it would be hard to think of a pair of musical roles that are so invested in maintaining a social and musical bond as the bass and drums.

While it is the soloist who has dominated the discourse of jazz (Whyton 2010), there are a number of bass-drums pairings whose work over many performances and recordings comes to define a sound and time feel that are held up as examples of how to play as a rhythm section: Ron Carter and Tony Williams, Sam Jones and Billy Higgins, Paul Chambers and Elvin Jones, and Walter Page and Jo Jones. Each of these rhythm sections had quite distinct approaches to timekeeping and all appeared to contribute to a temporal environment that was more than the sum of its parts (see Hagberg 2017). The characteristics of these players as bass-drums pairings is clearly more than the quality of their timekeeping together; their combined and individual sound and their approach to the musical texture (the density of their playing, for example) also marks them out.

The Soloist

The temporal milieu of the soloist in jazz is rather different to that of the rhythm section, and this is reflected in the greater autonomy of expression that is accorded whoever is soloing at any particular time. While there is an almost infinite set of possibilities for how a soloist might interpret time when they play, it is more usual to hear horn players, for example, playing behind the rhythm section—phrasing behind the beat. A small number of studies have shown empirically that the asynchronies between performers in jazz have a tendency to follow an order in which the drums and bass are followed by the soloist (Prögler 1995; Rose 1989), and the recent study by Wesolowski (2016), which focused on the timing of one saxophonist, Chris Potter, showed similar sorts of findings—Potter's note placement was found to be about 75 ms behind the average of the bass and drums. Other studies, however, have not shown a marked delay in the beat placement of the soloist. A study of Louis Armstrong's note placement on downbeats suggested that there was no significant "behind the beat" approach in Armstrong's playing, indicating that his placement of notes was more of a mechanical than intentional nature (Collier and Collier 2002). The authors of such studies would readily recognize the limitations of work featuring small number of musicians. Nevertheless, the majority of such studies suggest that the ways in which musicians discuss the relationship of the soloist's time to the rhythm section has some support in the more empirical literature on jazz.

There are occasions when the temporal style of the soloist may seem at odds with the rhythm section. A pianist described her experience of playing with horn players who played "behind" as follows:

[I played in a] duo with [X, a well-known saxophonist], and he has got a fantastic sense of pulse and a great feel but he is quite behind and I find that hard. . . . You have got a few who play really behind the beat to the extent that I would say it is quite detrimental on the rhythm section and sometimes we really struggle. Sometimes it will get into that thing where the bass and drums start pulling in different directions, like one goes with [the horn] and one tries to compensate and I am in the middle!

(WK, pianist)

Soloists are sometimes characterized by the way in which they are regarded as “loose” or “tight” in relation to the rhythm section. Horn players can be described along a continuum that ranges from floating over a rhythm section—a style that suggests being quite free with the time, to a way of playing that “digs in” or carries the time more strongly within the lines being played. In an interview, a guitar player reflected on this aspect of their soloing,

My natural thing is I like kind of floating over things and moving things round and I am sort of aware [that] it is a bit like a wave; that's why I keep thinking of this [makes wave gesture] you know, it's like a wave thing where, sometimes you just pull back and let it go again, pull back and then you just come forward and that's actually what it feels like to me when I'm playing.

(CD cited in Doffman 2009, 142)

Cultural Models of Time in Jazz

The focus so far has been on the embodied practices of timing that form part of jazz performance; I now turn to the notion of cultural models (Shore 1996)—the readily nameable scripts or templates that underpin a cultural milieu—as a way of thinking about the temporal structure of jazz. In contrast to the practices outlined so far, the idea of a cultural model alludes to temporal features in jazz that acquire status as musical objects, can be deployed or not in the course of performance, acquire historical weight, and achieve discursive power—they can be represented, named, and argued over as musical facts. Without attempting to offer a full taxonomy here, I highlight a number of temporal models that are critical to the characterization of jazz.

Swing Rhythms: Shuffles and Ten-to-Ten

Swing has been discussed above as part of the emergent, temporal feeling of the music. A verb. In the final meaning of swing, I refer to the characteristic rhythmic template of much jazz—the uneven, long-short patterning of successive eighth notes. Swing as a noun. It is in this sense as a temporal model that swing contributes to the temporality of jazz. Swing, as an identifiable rhythmic shape with a specific architecture, consists of a long-short pairing of notes. This long-short pair of eighth notes is often described as being a triplet with the middle of the three notes tied to the first, thus creating the long-short effect. This unequal rhythmic division is the basis of a series of beats in blues, jazz, and R&B such as the shuffle and the characteristic “ten-to-ten” ride cymbal pattern in so much jazz performance. With the middle beat of a triplet added back into the pattern, then the shuffle or ten-to-ten pattern becomes a 12/8 feel, consisting of four groups of triplets—usually with a snare played on beats two and four. Monson (1996, 53) describes the archetypical ride cymbal pattern in jazz as just one within the shuffle “family of rhythms” which, although generally notated in 4/4, as a shorthand, are more appropriately thought of as 12/8 meter, although this is dependent on tempo (see Figure 16.1).

In shuffle patterns, the long-short ostinato is articulated directly in the surface features of the pattern (usually played on the ride cymbal or hi-hat of the drum kit). In the ten-to-ten ride cymbal patterns that we most associate with jazz performance, then the long-short pattern is implied on beats one and three and stated on beats two and four, but the swing feel persists.

The patterns that are outlined here are relatively stable but not unchanging over the course of the music. The introduction of the ten-to-ten pattern on the ride cymbal is associated with Kenny “Klook” Clarke (1914–1985), who was frustrated by the constraint of playing this pattern on the hi-hat with his right-hand, so constraining the ability of his left-hand to pick out rhythms on the snare drum. The performance of the ten-to-ten pattern on the hi-hat was in itself an innovation in

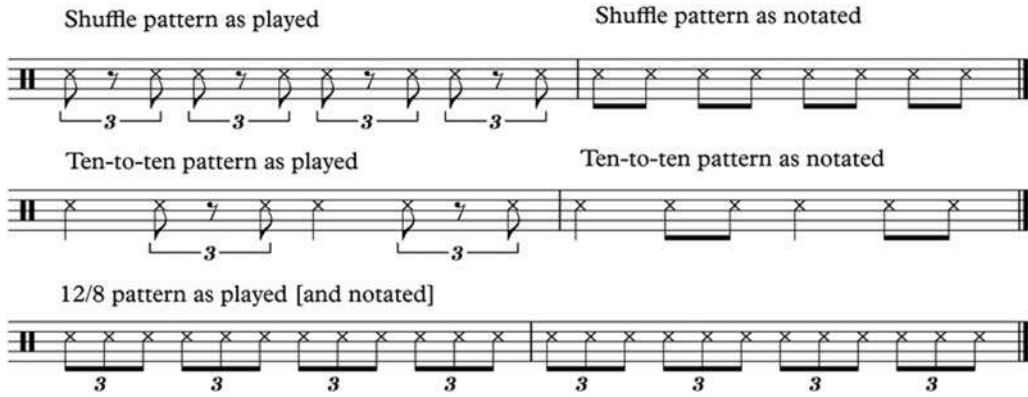


Figure 16.1 The family of shuffle, ten-to-ten and 12/8 ride cymbal patterns

the late 1930s as Jo Jones, drummer with the Count Basie Band, moved away from the bass drum and snare supplying a regular pulse to the band (effectively reinforcing the walking bass line of the bassist). It is also important to note that the characteristic “swung eighth” note feel in jazz is more evident or not according to the period of the music, the instrument being played, and the tempo.

Two and Four

A further underpinning of jazz performance is the notion of “two and four” as the temporal focus. Beats two and four in common time (4/4 meter) are referred to in a number of ways as oppositional to beats one and three—as “offbeats,” “upbeats,” and, in the development of popular music styles, the “backbeat.” The roots of this temporal focus are sometimes traced to the African American ring shout ritual, and the repetitive “stomp-clap” that could characterize the ring shout can at least be reimagined as the bass/snare ostinato that underlies so much African American music (Floyd 1995; Iyer 2002).

The feeling of two and four is frequently set up without a note being played. If there is an image that is emblematic of jazz, it might be the finger click on the two and the four that musicians routinely use to bring a band in. Much of jazz temporality seems distilled in that sound, and in the moments before the band begins a number, it is the precise isochronic character of the clicks from the bandleader’s fingers that signals the insistent pull of two and four in the architecture of the music. Furthermore, a poor count-in that contains an erratic set of clicks may not augur well for the head that follows.

It is possible to conceive of the second and fourth beats of the bar in jazz as simply agogic accents, but the idea of two and four in jazz is more than this; it is a simple but extremely important model in the construction of a jazz sensibility. Lawrence Zbikowski (2004) focuses on the two and four in an analysis of the Miles Davis recording “If I Were A Bell” (Davis, 1958). Davis clicks his fingers eight times in the manner of a hi-hat before Red Garland, his pianist for that session, enters on piano. Zbikowski points to the disruption that we feel on hearing the entry of the piano on beats one and three and so highlights an important point about temporal models within a musical culture, which is that for audience and players, it cannot be assumed that both will be working from the same temporal construct. For non-literate listeners, the finger click sets up an expectation that the click lies on beats one and three (simply because for most listeners, the first sound will tend to be heard as the downbeat; anacrusis or a similarly displaced beat will only become clear as the piece develops and we metricize the piece).

If there is a disruption here or not, the significance lies in having cultural knowledge of beats two and four—similar to the distinction that Geertz understands between a “wink” and a “twitch” (1973, 6–8). The two and four for musicians are not just points in time but part of their sense of themselves as jazz players. Most jazz musicians will have had the experience of a bandleader, who may not be a jazz musician but wants to incorporate the music in his set, counting off a standard on beats one and three. It is significant how musicians’ embodied behaviors and identity can be so intertwined at those moments. As an aural cue into a song, the finger clicks on two and four *and* one and three provide the same timing information, but each provides an entirely different cultural resonance for the players.

The Walking Bass

Equally characteristic of the temporal structuring of jazz is the “walking bass” line. The sound of the bass on all four beats of each measure was something that only began in the late 1920s and is often credited to Walter Page, bassist in the Count Basie Band at that period. The earliest incarnations of the music used brass instruments as much as string basses to play bass parts; the emphasis in the early period of the music lay on producing the harmonic outline, usually in terms of firsts and fifths, on beats one and three, not least because it is hard to continue to play four beats to every bar on a tuba (Crow 2000, 669).

In summarizing this small number of paradigmatic temporal patterns, it is important to recognize that these operate as relatively loose scripts that are deployed by musicians in very different ways. While they are the classic exemplars of jazz temporality, these are fluid templates for performance rather than immutable rhythmic forms. The ten-to-ten cymbal pattern that emerges out of 1920s developments on the snare drum (perhaps Warren “Baby” Dodds being the earliest exponent of a buzz roll on beats two and four, which appears to be the precursor to the cymbal pattern) has always been subject to variation. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, drummers such as Elvin Jones, Max Roach, and latterly Tony Williams are constantly shifting the skip beat of the pattern. Similarly, the sense of two and four in the music *generally* moves towards a more even emphasis of accent across all four beats from bebop and beyond—a move no doubt associated with the shift from jazz as a music for dancing to one that is listened to.

Concluding Remarks

While other facets of the music, its harmonic structures and improvisational practices, in large measure, seem to define the image and value of jazz within the larger public sphere, time and timing within the field itself are often held to be the most significant elements of what it means to be a valued player or to produce a great performance. Without a strong awareness of time, then players are unlikely to achieve a significant profile as a great improviser within the community of practice.

I end with a few thoughts on the paradoxical aspects of time that highlight its complexity as part of jazz practice. First is the relationship between the expressive and the functional character of time in the music, and the tension between them, which contributes strongly to the individual and collective understanding of jazz performance. Temporal practice also speaks to the changing sameness of the music—the paradox that LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) articulated in understanding the complex threads that make up the tradition (1998, 180–211). There is a temporal component in the “changing same”; that is the synchronic attunement of in the moment performance, surely an unchanging aspiration for musicians, and the diachronic temporal models—the musical scripts that modulate over time. And finally, time is the constituent of the music, *par excellence*, that entrains bodies and glues musicians together by a matter of milliseconds, and yet is, at the same time, the symbolic capital that identifies, distinguishes, and ultimately separates players one from the other.

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JAZZ AND DISABILITY

George McKay

*What is jazz? Is it art, a disease, a manner, or a dance?**Bandleader Paul Whiteman, New York Times, 1927**(quoted in Watts et al. 2008, 184)*

Art or disease? This chapter both draws on and seeks to extend recent interdisciplinary scholarship in music and disability studies (DS) by looking at the case of jazz. Consider here a definition of the musical instruction *alla zoppa*, which is usually employed in Western classical music to signal a physically impaired character: *zoppa* in Italian is “lame,” “limping,” and so it has been applied to music. But it can also mean “syncopated”—and so the rhythmic feature at the heart of much jazz has a musical connection with a physical disability, a disability which is about moving differently. A small body of work has been exploring the relation between jazz and disability (Stras 2008, 2009; Johnson 2011; Lubet 2011, 2013; Rowden 2009; Pearl 2009); the approach has tended to be around a particular artist (Stras on Connie Boswell, Lubet on Oscar Peterson), or a specific period (Johnson and Stras on early jazz and dance music in the 1920s), or a particular disability (Rowden on visual impairment, Pearl on neurological issues). Some of this work is intersectional, in particular, unsurprisingly for jazz, around disability and race. I want to draw on that as well as extend it in order to make a case for jazz as a music of disability.

The chapter is in two parts, focusing first on discussing aspects of jazz as a music of disability, from its earliest days, even pre-history, in both the United States and Europe. I then look at a small number of representative and contrasting major jazz figures who were disabled in some way (and there are many others). I have chosen to write about these not just because they are representative and contrasting, but also because of their foundational status in the development of the music, or because their creative practice—which is a facet of their life experience—has something particular to say about negotiating disability in the entertainment world. One can say, I think, that each of these artists explored what it meant to be (or to become) disabled through their music and performance, whether this exploration of selfhood and expressive representation was an intended or conscious one or not. I seek here to answer a question I raised largely in passing in *Shakin’ All Over: Popular Music and Disability*: “Shall we say . . . that jazz music is predicated on disability?” (McKay 2013, 163).

Jazz as Music of Disability

In what ways has jazz been understood as such? In this section, I want to approach the question in terms of both the disabling and the enabling interpretations and capacities of the music. First, I look at the early reception of the music, as the foundational historical and cultural context in its pathologizing and disabling narrative. This is primarily a negative perspective on disability, related to disease, infection, and fear. Then I widen out to the presentation and consideration of ways in which jazz can be thought of as a music of disability and of how the frame of DS can contribute fruitfully to the understanding of jazz (studies)—which offers more positive and inclusive perspectives.

Early Jazz Reception

The birth and early reception of jazz has been widely studied and includes an increasing number of works looking at how the music was received, adopted, and adapted, as well as rejected, in different countries around the world in the first decades of the twentieth century. These pivotal times set a template during which, as Russell L. Johnson puts it, “jazz was disabling” (2011, 14). How was jazz in its early reception understood as disabled, in the “jazz-mad nation” of 1920s USA? Johnson explains that the

disability argument against jazz started from the critics’ reaction to the fact that due to syncopation and polyrhythms, the music failed to follow “‘normal’ rhythms.” It was unrhythmical, discordant, and ultimately “defective” music. . . . [J]azz dancing . . . reminded critics of the movements of people with epilepsy or nervous disorders. . . . [J]azz [w]as an undesirable element behind the new American nervousness [of the times].
(2011, 17, 18, 21)

One early eugenicist perspective on jazz focused on what would become its primary novel instrument, the saxophone. Viewed as “a hybrid of reed and brass,” the saxophone figured therefore as a kind of “musical miscegenation”—and the eugenics’ view of miscegenation, of course, was that it was a route to racial and cultural degeneration (Johnson 2011, 29). That jazz’s creative proponents were usually African American, with a significant presence of Jewish musicians and white southern Europeans, simply confirmed the cultural degeneracy viewpoint. (Douglas C. Baynton reminds us that “the attribution of disease or disability to racial minorities has a long history”: quoted in Johnson 2011, 15.) Johnson continues:

Jazz in 1920s America brought to the forefront debates about disease, disability, noise, and rhythm. Attempting to de-legitimise jazz, newspapers, popular and academic magazines, church pulpits, lecture halls, and books were filled with descriptions of jazz as defective or disabled music.

(2011, 31–32)

In her own work on early jazz, drawing on both American and British examples, Laurie Stras has found that it “was condemned in explicitly pathological terms. . . . Clear associations between jazz and disability were expressed by sociologists, physicians, music critics and musicians, and were promulgated in both the specialist and the popular press” (2009, 300). US newspaper headlines in the 1920s warned readers of the music’s disabling dangers, particularly for young women: ACTRESS SAYS JAZZ DEFORMS GIRLS’ LEGS, or, in the context of pregnancy, JAZZ LIFE MAY MEAN CRIPPLES (i.e., lead to birth defects) (quoted in Stras 2009, 318 n.8, 319 n.9).

Such “anti-jazz” discourses produced a sort of culmination in the extraordinary public campaigns against jazz that were organized in the new Irish Republic in the 1920s and 1930s. The Irish anti-jazz movement could articulate its concerns in pathologizing language, too, claiming that, as Eileen Hogan puts it, “jazz effected mental illness” (Hogan 2010, 66). The *Irish Independent* reported in 1921 that a “number of scientific men who have been working on experiments in musico-therapy with the insane declare that . . . the effect of jazz on the normal brain produces an atrophied condition on the brain cells.” A decade later the same newspaper was lamenting that, its earlier warning seemingly unheeded, jazz “has made a terrible number of people abnormal, and . . . these people, whom I might call jazz addicts, have lost control of themselves” (both quoted in Hogan 2010, 66, 68–69).

Reading Jazz Through Disability Studies; or, Crippling Jazz

How convincing is the connection? It is worth briefly comparing jazz with DS work on other music types to begin to identify the space jazz may uniquely inhabit. Let us consider the classical orchestra, and then the blues, for each will throw some light on the claims of jazz.

Within studies of music and disability, Alex Lubet’s work stands out for its most committed championing of the specific practice of jazz. In his view, “the interpretive latitudes of jazz—to arrange, improvise, and compose one’s parts” (2011, 50)—are a vital liberatory feature. Lubet sees the jazz cultural system in stark opposition to the Western classical tradition. Even if jazz is “no utopia, [it nonetheless] provides expressive latitudes sufficient to accommodate the embodied variations of technique and style” of differently abled instrumental players. By contrast, the Western classical tradition is largely a “crip-free” zone, its orchestras “sonic Spartas that eliminate” those unable (for whatever reason) to be good enough (Lubet 2011, 77). In the context of disability accommodation, for Lubet classical music is “a rigid, ungenerous cultural system” that practices “a particular kind of psychological cruelty” (2011, 33). “The protocols” of jazz, on the other hand, “are shown to accommodate individual impairments far better, even allowing for unique approaches to virtuosity, thus providing an apt model for full participation of musicians with disabilities” (Lubet 2011, 11). The contrast could hardly be clearer, nor more provocatively stated. Lubet cites the example of the disabled guitarist and jazz innovator Django Reinhardt, who will be discussed further later: “Brilliant as a jazz guitarist, with an idiosyncratic, self-adapted technique, *he would have been unable to play even the most basic classical repertoire*” (Lubet 2011, 89; emphasis added).

There are other ways of looking at jazz through disabled music. In her work on disability and public culture, including of the street, Susan M. Schweik has argued that

among American arts traditions, blues is notable for claiming disability. It might even be argued that *to a significant extent impairment constituted the blues*. As [Stuart] Broomer puts it, “Jazz usually cultivated grandeur in its naming—King Oliver, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, the Pres’ Lester Young, Lady Day. . . . The blues, however, had an eye for the quickly noted disability. Apart from some early singers with regal titles . . . the blues celebrated the infirm (Peg Leg Howell and Cripple Clarence Lofton).”

(2009, 199; *emphasis added*)

And of course, the African American blind blues tradition was also one of naming and claiming: Blind Willie Johnson, Blind Willie McTell, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Boy Fuller, and so on. (Elsewhere, Terry Rowden (2009, 1) shows how for visually impaired African American musicians “their blindness, like their blackness, has been a ‘difference that has made a difference’ in both the music they produced and the ways that music has been received.”) Of particular interest is

that Schweik and Broomer's efforts at crippling the blues are performed specifically *in contrast with* jazz, which is viewed in this instance more narrowly and critically, as a form of music fantasizing (or, arguably, possibly signifying) social privilege.

However, notwithstanding the blues, we can extend the discussion about jazz's relation with disability. So far we have looked mostly negatively at ways in which the early reception of jazz was seen as threatening and damaging to what was presented as normal, healthy society: jazz as disabling. But there are other perspectives, which can frequently be thought of as more enabling. Lubet identifies an ideal moment or situation, which is

when musicians have been able to craft a praxis around their impairments, to actually *perform their impairments* in a manner that yields something musically unique. The impairment either inspires a music that would simply never occur to an able-bodied performer or the impairment enables music that would be impossible for a more typically abled artist. Both of these scenarios have framed the careers of important jazz musicians.

(Lubet 2011, 41)

Jazz is periodically a freaky, squeaky, leaky form, in which extended instrumental techniques produce novel sound, noise, and effects. It has frequently been an oral/aural practice, not fixed on notation. Sonic abnormalities have been core aspects of its production. Improvisation and adjustment are core aspects of its creative process. All of these features speak to the lived experience and cultural articulation of disability. There is wide acceptance—even expectation—of unconventional technique toward instrumentalism, by which, for aspiring jazz musicians with disabilities, “necessity has been the mother of . . . stylistic invention” (Lubet 2011, 52). Also, as if to underline the music's expressive lability, free improvised music, including the anti-technique turn of in particular second-generation European free players, has encouraged an accessibility to creativity and a less value-laden aesthetic sensibility.

Jazz's generous inclusion of musicians with (physical) disabilities, and acceptance that that also involves supporting and facilitating their presence, should not be underestimated. There is also the intersectional argument. Frequently a music of or at the margins, jazz's essential engagement with peripherality may have encouraged adjacent or overlapping identities and experiences. Thus we can begin to think of the enabling music of jazz “whose essence is *the embrace of difference*” (Lubet 2011, 65). Lubet tentatively suggests a “complex” argument that, as music of black origin rooted in transatlantic slavery, jazz has a relation with disability that allows overlapping constituencies of jazz musicians and people with disabilities to function together as a kind of socio-cultural “coalition of the oppressed.” Such a reading rather assumes that one accepts the intersectional relationship; in my experience that is not always the case. (To understate the resistant position, let us simply say that, really, not everyone wants their special identity touched by the crip.) But there may indeed be something in this particular “black music's power to accommodate impairment,” as he suggests (Lubet 2011, 67).

Disabled Jazz Musicians

Before [pianist] Bud [Powell] went to Bellevue [psychiatric ward in 1946], everything he played had a wrinkle in it; there was always something different about the way the music came off. Man, after they bashed his head in and gave him some shock treatments, they would have done better cutting off his hands.

Miles Davis (1989, 202)

I want to turn now to consider the cases of a small number of important jazz musicians. It is not my purpose to replicate unproblematically here a jazz canon; it *is* my aim to illustrate something

that DS scholars know very well from many critical discussions of other social and cultural contexts. The moment we begin to look for people with disabilities and aspects of disability itself, we find them everywhere. Or, as Joseph Straus has put it in *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music*, “disability has been so thoroughly stigmatized in our culture as to render it largely invisible in critical accounts. But it has been hiding in plain sight” (2011, 102). For example, besides Connie Boswell, discussed below, the childhood contraction of polio in seasonal epidemics prior to the introduction of mass vaccinations in the 1950s was a significant formative experience for a set of notable jazz musicians, including Charlie Haden, Horace Parlan, Dave Liebman, and David Sanborn. This is not simply a medical cluster: consideration of these musicians’ autopathographies reveals an intimate relation between disability and musical creativity. So, for example, both Sanborn and Parlan were encouraged to take up their instruments in childhood as an element of their physiotherapy and recovery. For each musician, it is arguable that the successful musical career came about *because of rather than in spite of* the childhood disease, musicality originating as a therapeutic response to the residual symptoms of the medical condition. Besides Roland Kirk, discussed below, jazz has frequently made a space for the visually impaired musician, from Art Tatum to George Shearing, Lennie Tristano, Tete Montoliu, and Diane Schuur. At the very least, this evidences the situation that, as Rowden notes, “for centuries, music has been one of the few respectable careers available for the blind (as it was for African Americans)” (2009, 2).

Buddy Bolden

That’s Buddy Bolden. He’s gonna blow his brains out someday because he plays too loud.

*New Orleans drummer Paul Barbarin’s mother, to the young Paul
(quoted in Marquis 2005, 70)*

Charles “Buddy” Bolden (1877–1931) was an innovative New Orleans cornetist and bandleader active around the turn of the century. He is not only frequently acknowledged as an “important pivotal figure in early jazz history” (Marquis 2005, 82), but indeed is “often cited as the first jazz musician,” while his band is “the most important unrecorded ensemble in the history of jazz” (Gioia 2011, 33, 199). Though a brass player himself, Bolden’s main work was not with brass parade bands but rather the string bands of dances and parties—the only surviving photograph of him shows (six of) his seven-piece band with double bass and guitar, for instance (Image 17.1). Ted Gioia sees his embrace of “the blues sensibility and structure” as Bolden’s major achievement in his decade or so of active playing, going on to observe that,

even if he did not invent jazz, he had mastered the recipe for it, which combined the rhythms of ragtime, the bent notes and chord patterns of the blues, and an instrumentation drawn from New Orleans brass bands and string ensembles.

(Gioia 2011, 34)

Bolden was effectively playing “the music that became jazz,” in Alyn Shipton’s neat phrase (2002, 83). He developed his band’s music into a sound that would appeal to “a liberated, post-Civil War generation of young blacks” (Marquis 2005, 43). The “daring lyrics” to his wonderfully entitled signature song, “Funky Butt,” were “symbolic of the more outspoken attitude of the younger black men of his day” (Gioia 2011, 34). Of “Funky Butt”’s incendiary potential, none other than Sidney Bechet recalled “the police put you in jail if they heard you singing that song” (quoted in Marquis 2005, 111). Bolden and his band set New Orleans alight.

But, although he lived until 1931, Bolden’s sonic, performative, and attitudinal innovations lasted only roughly from 1894 to 1906, for in that year he experienced a series of mental health



Image 17.1 The only photograph of the Buddy Bolden Band, c. 1903–05. L–R Rear, Jimmy Johnson (bass), Bolden (cornet), Willy Cornish (valve trombone), Willy Warner (clarinet). Front, Brock Mumford (guitar), Frank Lewis (clarinet).

Wikipedia. Public Domain.

crises, variously described by Donald M. Marquis as “depression,” “dementia,” and “fits of insanity” (2005, chapter 9), and he became prone to violence. The following year, very swiftly by now “a derelict, a drunk . . . impoverished and incoherent,” he was declared insane and committed to the Louisiana asylum at Jackson, not yet aged 30, for the rest of his life. There exists no known recorded trace of Bolden’s playing. Yet what is remarkable is the way Bolden’s cornet tone, sound, choice of notes and arrangements, and the impact of these on listeners, audiences, and fellow musicians, are described. His sister-in-law Dora Bass said Bolden “broke his heart when he played”—not *her* heart, but his own. A local musician described how “He played like he didn’t care,” while another said “with all the notes he’d throw in and out of nowhere, you never heard anything like it” (each quoted in Marquis 2005, 99, 101, 101). Most resonant, perhaps, is the memory of trombonist Bill Matthews:

on those old slow blues, that boy could make the women jump out the window. On those old, slow, low down blues he had a moan in his cornet that went all through you. . . . Everybody was crazy about Bolden.

Also, he influenced other musicians strongly: on hearing Bolden once only, George Baquet remembered that “after that I didn’t play legitimate so much,” and violinist Paul Dominguez also recalled his delegitimizing impact, which we can think of as the power to make you play wrong: Bolden “cause[d] those younger Creole men like Bechet and [Freddie] Keppard to have a different style all together” (each quoted in Marquis 2005, 100, 99, 100). This new sound that Bolden played, which would come to be called jazz, was powerful and life-changing.

Apparently from an edge, the edge of sound mental health or a normal life itself, Buddy Bolden, “the most mysterious figure in the annals of New Orleans music” (Gioia 2011, 33), seems to have had a mind that let him hear and create a new music, even as his cognitive function could not bear the weight of what he was making. Or are we already entering the “overblown” (Whyton 2010, 4) myth-making world of jazz legend, of *jazz madness*? Bolden’s tantalizing as well as desperate story, his achievements and influence, which are shrouded in silence, is also one of cognitive impairment at the heart of the jazz tradition. There is no music, and it is everywhere. Bolden seems to confirm from the very start of the music (I appreciate the problematic underlying that formulation) what

Stras has found in her work, that, “most commonly, jazz and its consumption were seen as both the origin and the product of mental or ‘nervous’ disorder” (2009, 300). There may be something else though with Bolden the instrumentalist and jazz, which is a wider point about music; in discussing the relation, we can see “the advantages in working with a nonverbal medium. Music can represent mental states directly, including those classified as illnesses or disabilities, without the mediation of language” (Lerner and Straus 2006, 8).

Django Reinhardt

The Belgian-born French guitarist Jean Baptiste “Django” Reinhardt (1910–1953) can be thought of as “a perfect case study of adaptive virtuosity.” Lubet is in no doubt about Reinhardt’s significance and achievement, which are in his view profoundly connected: he was “arguably the single most important jazz guitarist of all time and the first great jazz innovator from beyond African American roots [who] developed both a technique and style that emanated from a seriously impaired fretting hand” (2011, 45, 50–51). With violinist Stéphane Grappelli, Reinhardt founded the Quintette du Hot Club de France in 1934, also featuring two rhythm guitars and double bass. The band drew on Gypsy traditions, folk music, jazz improvisation and repertoire, and classical composition within the French music scene to become “pioneers of European jazz” (Gioia 2011, 160). Reinhardt had been something of a child star, playing in Parisian dance bands as a teenager, but a caravan fire aged 18 caused major burns over the left side of his body and resulted in two years of treatment and rehabilitation, in which he learned to walk again, as well as play his instrument once more, though his left hand was permanently damaged (Image 17.2). During his rehabilitation, as he taught himself to play again (he was self-taught and did not read music), Reinhardt also changed instruments, switching from a six-string banjo-guitar to a six-string steel-string acoustic guitar. Benjamin Givan cites various explanations for this switch, related to his concurrent physical transformation: the guitar required a lighter touch than the banjo and so was easier to play, or the sound of the guitar was mellower and so “better suited to the hospital ward” (Givan 2010, 8).

Within his extensive analysis of Reinhardt’s repertoire, Givan includes a comparison between two versions of the tune “A Little Love, a Little Kiss,” one by Reinhardt and the other, earlier, by US guitarist Eddie Lang. He concludes that, “from a technical standpoint, Lang’s version serves as a stark reminder that Reinhardt’s disability was, despite his adaptability, considerable. . . . [His injury] represented a colossal challenge, imposing considerable limitations on his instrumental technique” (2010, 18, 24). As for Django’s adaptability, “although his left hand clearly was disfigured, the view of some authors that two of his fingers were ‘useless’ or ‘paralyzed’ is misleading” (Givan 2010, 10).



Image 17.2 Django Reinhardt, New York City 1946.

Photography by William P. Gottlieb, from the William P. Gottlieb Collection, Library of Congress. Classification no. LC-GLB23-0730. Public Domain.

He had some capacity with the impaired third finger for playing chords, and, for barré chords, he could employ his left thumb over the top of the fingerboard to hold the bottom E-string note.

So influential was Reinhardt that it is common enough today to see in the legion of able-bodied guitarists who play in the Hot Club/Gypsy/manouche jazz style the conscious restriction to using only two fingers of the fretting hand, “as both an act of reverence and an attempt to approximate their idol’s sound” (Lubet 2011, 47). We should pause here and consider further this deliberate act of halving oneself (from four to two fretting fingers). Within an entire genre of improvised music making, with generations of followers playing in the Gypsy jazz idiom, there are many lead instrumentalists who consciously restrict their left-hand capacity in order to attempt to imitate the special sound or quality of his chord voicings, arpeggios, and runs. By such players, the authentic Django guitar sound is viewed as a *crip* technique, and they are, we can say, self-(pseudo-)cripping in the attempt to capture that form of jazz’s expressive possibilities.

Connie Boswell

Connie Boswell (1907–1976) was a white southern singer from New Orleans, first with two family members in a close harmony vocal trio as the Boswell Sisters in the 1930s, when they were major radio stars across the US, and then as a solo artist, and in an enduring set of duets with singer and film star Bing Crosby. Her deep voice, blues-inflected and sometimes scat-oriented singing style, unique arrangements, and sense of vocal playfulness made her a “key figure . . . in the development of the voice as a carrier for jazz” (Stras 2009, 317); she was a significant influence on the likes of Ella Fitzgerald, who recalled that Connie “was doing things that no-one else was doing at the time” (quoted in Stras 2008, 259). According to Laurie Stras, Boswell holds “a unique position as the only visibly disabled ‘A-list’ female popular entertainer for most of the twentieth century” (2009, 298): she was a wheelchair user as a result of contracting poliomyelitis (“infantile paralysis”) in childhood. In an indication of the multiple roles that members of bands and ensembles can play—both musicians and facilitators; thus the ensemble is also a support network (see McKay 2013, 191)—in their early years on the vaudeville circuit in the late 1920s, the three would arrive at a small town theater and her sisters Vet and Martha would carry Connie in a fireman’s lift to the door (Stras 2008, 256). On stage she would be positioned *in situ*, at a piano or seated, before the curtain came up, or would use a disguised adapted wheelchair, or, later, a fitted lower body brace over a voluminous dress to give the appearance of standing autonomously.

While primarily a radio star, listening audiences could not always tell whether Connie was black or white (Stras 2007), let alone have an inkling that she was physically disabled. But, while “her story remains untold in most histories of jazz” (Stras 2008, 251), it is in Boswell’s solo turn and its concurrence with the media shift from aural (radio) to visual (film, television) delivery that her disability became more of a (public career) issue. Decades later she remembered how “producers who knew me only from radio or recordings would call and ask me to audition for the show. I’d go over and as soon as they saw me in a wheelchair they’d freeze. It hurt. Really hurt” (quoted in Stras 2008, 261). For a while she tried opening up about her impairment, possibly inspired by her work for polio survivor President Roosevelt’s new March of Dimes campaign to eradicate polio, at least until the bookings began to dry up. So, feature articles appeared with headlines such as “She Has Made a Good Thing of Life in a Wheel Chair” (*New York Post*), and “Boswell Would Refuse Cure for Paralyzed Legs to Help Economic Cripples!” (*Downbeat*) (Stras 2008, 261, n. 56, n. 57). Looking back on what Stras calls her “post-confession career” (2008, 264), Boswell recalled her normalizing strategies.

When for a time I wasn’t getting booked, I wanted to know why. I found out that the getting on and offstage was a pretty painful-looking procedure. People came to night clubs to

enjoy themselves, to have fun. They wanted to get away from trouble. I could understand that well enough and that's why I went to work to smooth out my entrances and exits. . . . That's how I dreamed up the skirt-covered wheelchair I use for my appearances.

(quoted in Stras 2008, 264)

The intersection of gender and disability is present in the case of disabled singer Connie Boswell, who interrogated the extent to which a (female) public figure could negotiate her disability, on stage, on screen, and in print. Boswell was, after all, the A-list musical star who *tried coming out* about her disability in the same period as the wartime POTUS was engaged in his “splendid deception” aimed at hiding his own polio-derived impairment from the American public.

Rahsaan Roland Kirk

African American saxophonist and multi-instrumentalist Rahsaan Roland Kirk (1935–1977) is a compelling jazz figure in the context of disability, starting most obviously with his visual impairment, which was iatrogenic as a result of hospital error during childhood. In Terry Rowden's view, “more than any other African American blind artist, [Kirk] was both self-consciously black and self-consciously blind” (2009, 94). Relatively unusually for disabled artists, Kirk regularly explored what it meant to be disabled in his own music making. The title track of his 1968 album *The Inflated Tear* is a musical and vocal narrativization of his experience of being blinded as a child. Interrupting alternating childlike percussion, ballad, and dissonant multi-sax sections, Kirk's voice shouts in panic the words of the nurse who was treating him: “Help him! Help him! Please! I don't know what's happened. . . . I'm sorry” (Kirk 1968). Kirk often explained to sighted listeners: “Sound is to me what sight is to you” (quoted in Rowden 2009, 95). He used the phrase “audio color” in one album title, 1975's *The Case of the 3 Sided Dream in Audio Color*. This was a double album, a kind of a concept album that contained a mostly silent—that is, empty—final fourth side in original Long-Playing (LP) form. We can think of this extraordinary gesture in disability cultural terms as a presentation and interrogation of aurality and its lack, from the visionary blind musician. According to Josh Kun, Kirk “talked about sound . . . through visual grammars” (2005, 117). On 1971's *Blacknuss*, featuring music played using only the black notes of the piano, “the difference between the ‘e’ [of blackness] and the ‘u’ is the difference between sight and sound” (Kun 2005, 133)—it is also an intersectional creation by Kirk that confirms his understanding of the relation between race and disability.

It is well-known that Kirk constructed and adapted his own instruments. The stritch and the manzello were two of his own wind instruments (each a kind of modified saxophone), and a third one was what he called “black mystery pipes,” which, rather wonderfully, consisted of a piece of bamboo and some hosepipe. He also played flutes and recorders, whistles, and sometimes introduced alarm clocks and sirens into the music. Most of these would be hanging round his neck during shows. (There may have been a pragmatic rationale for this: as a blind man on stage he would always know where each was, and that it was within reach.) The overt presence of the body would be displayed in his solos via techniques including overblowing with his voice on flute and circular breathing on saxophone. He would play three instruments at once, effectively functioning as his own horn section. And he dressed in eccentric and arresting style. But such experimentation came at a price, and Kirk was frequently dismissed as a carny act, a clown (see McKay 2005, 196 n.8)—a “freak for the festival” (Kirk 1975)—at best a showman. In *Bright Moments*, his biographer John Kruth describes Kirk in full flight. Note the emphasis on both specularity or visual display, and the choice of words which speak the discourse of enfreakment.

He was truly a sight to behold, with this nostrils flaring like a *mad* bull and his cheeks puffed out like a *monstrous* chipmunk, pumping air continuously into a *strange* array of

instruments that hung from his body like *crazy* plumbing or *tangled* octopus tentacles, all stuck together with masking tape.

(quoted in Rowden 2009, 93; emphasis added)

It is the “masking tape” Kruth mentions in particular that should further interest us. In 1975 Kirk had a major stroke, which significantly paralyzed the right side of his body. But he kept playing, recording, and touring. Those two previous decades of adapting and modifying instruments, his pleasure in the exploration of freaky noises and effects, and his openness to other sources of sound and music, meant that Kirk had the experience and skills to draw on to find new ways of making music. Also, he had *always* been a disabled musician; now he was simply (. . .) a multiply disabled one. If he could no longer play three instruments simultaneously, he could at least (still) play two or even only one. Adapted and modified technologies of acoustic music making were his life’s effort, and, with new self-designed prosthetic efforts and refingerings, they would keep him going a while longer.

Oscar Peterson

The prodigious Canadian pianist Oscar Peterson (1925–2007), renowned for a relentless technicality and velocity in playing, had a stroke in 1993, undertook extensive physiotherapy, and managed to return to the recording studio and the concert stage late the following year. His touring schedule was reduced (though he still appeared internationally), and there were longer gaps between shows for recuperation. He continued to play publicly until a few months before his death. The stroke affected his left side and arm, resulting in a significantly diminished capacity for his left hand at the piano. According to Alex Lubet, he “regained only extremely limited use of his left hand in his playing, almost always playing only the occasional bass note or [dyad]. . . . He was thus, post-stroke, practically a one-handed pianist” (Lubet 2013, 153, 156). For Peterson, whose reputation had rested on extraordinary technical prowess, and who was often thought of as carrying on the mantle of his hero the earlier jazz piano pyrotechnicist Art Tatum, his playing post-stroke is “re-imagined, not simply an impaired version of his older style” (Lubet 2013, 162). While the odd reviewer of concerts following his return was negative (“frankly, embarrassing”—quoted in Lubet 2013, 153), Lubet finds most willing to look for the positive in both the narrative of rehabilitation and the revisions to his own playing and those of his bandmates. The consensus Lubet finds is that in Peterson’s post-stroke playing there is “a new aesthetic sensibility born of technical limitations [and perhaps also] a new reflectiveness as an aesthetic maturing in response to loss” (2013, 163). Peterson discussed his musical adjustment in 2002:

I still don’t have the dexterity I had before. . . . It’s a matter of reactions. If I’ve got an idea in my head, certain things have to happen if I’m going to play it. If that trigger isn’t there, I’m going to be late. If I have to question myself in any way, if I have doubts, I don’t go there. . . . I am trying to play in a more lyrical way now.

(quoted in Lubet 2013, 153)

The wider point is that jazz is a music form and practice that permits and accepts such adjustments—even from as wide a shift as Oscar Peterson’s diminished pianism encapsulated. Lubet presents a theorization of the kind of facilitative musical support of his bandmates as a form of “performative prosthesis” for Peterson—the technical prowess of his chosen guitarists and double bassists partly chosen with that in mind, to supplement the lack of such prowess now from Peterson himself. Alternatively, on two of his post-stroke albums he is accompanied by another pianist. Thus, for

Peterson as a disabled musician, “the prosthetic function is performed not by devices, but by people” (Lubet 2013, 158, 157).

In thinking about the likes of Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Peterson, it is useful to draw on Straus’s argument, from *Extraordinary Measures*, that “‘late style’ is usually better understood as ‘disability style.’” Though writing specifically of Western classical composers, his acute observation stands also for improvising musicians: “Music written [or played] in an apparently ‘late style’ usually has more to do with the physical and mental condition of the composer [or improviser] than with chronological age [or] proximity to death” (Straus 2011, 82, 83). To be able to play or sing in one’s late or disability style, *and* to have an audience willing to listen to what one has (still or newly) to say, is a commendable feature of jazz music, and one which confirms its enabling capacity.

Conclusion: The Jazz Cripples

At its best, we can think of jazz as a generous, inclusive form that has wanted and been able to accommodate the differently embodied or minded, because jazz was capable of flexibility and sought novelty, and because jazz was a music forged in the experience of oppression, resistance, and liberation. In its concern with the individual voice of expression, its fetish of the desire for the musically unique in tone or approach, jazz was open and welcoming to those who could, as Laurie Stras has put it, “sing a song of difference” (2009). This embrace of its inner crip was there in the fundamentals of the music—its freak noises and effects, its syncopated rhythms that are *alla zoppa*, its out-of-control dancing body, its acceptance of alternate techniques or voices. The embrace is also there in the music’s history and innovation, from the very start, in the United States (Buddy Bolden) as well as in Europe (Django Reinhardt). And, as its musicians have aged or transformed, experiencing diminished or different physical capacities, say, jazz has offered ways to keep them playing and hear and enjoy their “late” (in Straus’s meaning) wisdom. As Alex Lubet, jazz’s strongest advocate in terms of disability (and a disabled jazz musician himself—I am guessing that these are not unrelated), argues,

it is clear that jazz is a musical social confluence within which artists with physical disabilities are able to pursue or continue their careers. This owes to the nature of jazz virtuosity, which does not simply permit but demands personal idiosyncrasy.

(2013, 154)

The field of jazz studies, new or otherwise, is somewhat behind the curve in thinking about the relation between music and disability—a surprise in some ways, for the scholarship of a music of (apparent) spontaneity and improvisation that likes to think of itself as culturally *and* socially liberatory. The “incorporation of disability studies into musicology,” which has in recent years led to significant development of “models for how the hermeneutics of disability studies can be applied to music” (Stras 2009, 299), has faltered or even been absent in jazz studies. (It is I think notable that little of the scholarship cited about music and disability in this chapter is by researchers recognizably associated with jazz studies—we currently have to look elsewhere for ideas on how to crip jazz.) There is much further work to be undertaken here in this field, which is after all rich in disability achievement and presence and ripe for such work. Yet in some ways—in enough ways already—surely we can see and hear that jazz is a form of music founded on disability; it is a form of music *sounded* on disability; it is a socio-cultural practice made by and making space for disability. If you look in your local listings for clubs and gigs, you will note that the Jazz Cripples are playing near you, very soon. Go and see them. They are a great band. Doing the “Funky Butt.”

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RACE IN THE NEW JAZZ STUDIES

Patrick Burke

Jazz is a music pioneered by black musicians in a segregated nation. Race therefore has always been a central concern of its historians and critics. During the 1920s, black intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance claimed jazz as what Langston Hughes termed “one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America—the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul” (1926). His contemporary Alain Locke agreed that jazz was “basically Negro . . . though fortunately also human enough to be universal in appeal and expressiveness” (1936, 72). A predominantly white group of critics at mid-century tended to stress this presumed universality over racial divisions. Leonard Feather’s famous “blindfold tests,” for example, “challenged the idea that race was a determining factor in jazz performance,” even as Feather remained devoted to pointing out “the grim details of racism” in his work (Gennari 2006, 56). During the 1960s, the Black Arts movement responded by asserting the music’s essential blackness. Amiri Baraka proclaimed that “the spirit, the World Explanation, available in Black Lives, Culture, Art, speaks of a world more beautiful than the white man knows” (1967, 175). By the 1990s, a backlash against this so-called reverse racism in jazz informed a controversial polemic by Gene Lees, who asserted that “any statement that jazz is ‘black music’ and only black music is racist on the face of it” (1994, 198). Only the most formalist jazz scholarship has avoided overt discussion of racial issues altogether, and even this absence often implies positions on race, such as the assumption that European notions of musical coherence and quality can be treated as universal.

In addressing race, then, the “New Jazz Studies,” which I define here as that body of work that since the 1990s has drawn on the insights of cultural studies and critical theory in examining jazz, is less a radical departure than the continuation of a long tradition. What make these studies “new” are their methods and conclusions rather than the subject of race per se. In this chapter, I survey a necessarily incomplete selection of recent scholarship to identify some common themes and approaches in a diverse discipline.

The scholars whose work I address typically operate from the premise that race is always simultaneously a social *construction*, developed historically and culturally rather than determined biologically, and a social *reality*, a powerful idea that has had unavoidable, material, and often painful effects on musicians and their audiences. Just as ideas about race have created the conditions under which jazz is performed and perceived, jazz also helps to construct race by promoting shifting, competing notions of racial identity. As Andrew Berish puts it, “music and racial identity become mutually constitutive and part of a circular social argument: music is proof of racial difference, and racial difference ‘naturally’ produces different music” (2012, 14). The New Jazz Studies thus

examines both the social and political structures underpinning racial discrimination and the more abstract question of how musicians perform, and audiences hear, whiteness or blackness.

A simple, binary division between black and white, however, fails to account for the intricacy of the interactions and slippages between these categories as well as those racial identities that fall outside the binary altogether. How, asks the New Jazz Studies, can we acknowledge this complexity without losing sight of the distinct contributions of African American musicians or drifting into a utopian vision of the melting pot that fails to take racial inequalities and power struggles into account? As Ingrid Monson explains, “situations of . . . cultural hybridity . . . present daunting challenges to cultural analysts committed to neither denying difference and its structural persistence nor reifying culture into a biologically based essentialist paradigm of race” (2007, 10). Nicholas M. Evans points out that this is not a new dilemma: from its beginnings “music like jazz was seen to be fundamentally African American yet simultaneously a cultural hybrid, and in both respects it was considered definitively American” (2000, 2). Although the widely promoted view of jazz as a “color-blind” music that transcends race often reflects well-meaning liberal opposition to racism, it also masks racial inequality and injustice; “the color-blindness discourse . . . builds the supremacy of whiteness upon a stigmatized but contained category of blackness” (Panish 1997, 8). While the New Jazz Studies often continues to view race through a black-white binary informed by racial ideologies in the United States, it frequently shifts perspective to reveal the mutual dependence of these categories and the uncertainty surrounding their division. My survey begins with such works before turning to other studies that point past the binary by addressing Asian American and Latinx musicians in United States (US) jazz or considering the varied racial meanings jazz carries in a global context.

Blackness: Essence or Practice?

One of the most significant debates of the last twenty years has centered on how to balance an understanding of jazz rooted in black identity and history against an antiessentialist stance that deconstructs racial generalizations while still acknowledging the social effects of race. The former position was argued influentially by Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., whose model of African American music history, explained most fully in *The Power of Black Music* (1995), updates and refines Amiri Baraka’s notion of a “changing same” that maintains an essential core even as its external forms diverge (1967, 180–211). For Floyd, jazz is founded on the “cultural memory” of the ring shout, which he views as “central to the cultural convergence of African traditions in Afro-America,” and also on a broader, more all-encompassing quality that he terms “the master musical trope of Call-Response” and which includes a group of essential melodic, rhythmic, and timbral practices (1995, 8, 1991, 266–268, 276). Jelly Roll Morton’s 1926 *Black Bottom Stomp*, for example, “is governed by the Call-Response principle, relying upon the Signifyin(g) elisions, responses to calls, improvisations (in fact or in style), continuous rhythmic drive, and timbral and pitch distortions that I have identified as retentions from the ring” (Floyd 1991, 279). Floyd refers here to literary critic Henry Louis Gates, Jr.’s notion of Signifyin(g), a rhetorical practice of revision and intertextuality that Gates sees as fundamental to African American culture (1988). Robert Walser similarly employs Gates’s ideas in assessing Miles Davis’s 1964 performance of *My Funny Valentine* as a link in a “chain of signifyin[g]” that incorporates “the melodic possibilities, formal conventions . . . harmonic potentials, and previously performed versions of the original song” (1993, 351). More recently, Douglas Malcolm has drawn on Gates’s theories to identify irony in the music of Duke Ellington, who satirized “white fantasies of African-American authenticity and instinctual emotiveness,” and Dizzy Gillespie, who “problematize[d] through parody the teleological trajectory of popular music and its social implications of a white-based normativity” (2015, 213, 218).

Signifyin(g) has provided critics with an influential, albeit generalized, means of situating jazz within the broad stream of African American culture.

Other critics hope to move away from a monolithic conception of blackness while preserving attention to jazz's African American innovators. In his widely discussed book *Lying Up a Nation: Race and Black Music* (2003), Ronald Radano "locates black music's power not in a segregated racial preserve but in the relational position of a black sound confessing the mulatto truth of a white supremacist nation" as he also "defends the magical, miraculous quality of black performance" (12–13). Matthew Butterfield argues that swing itself, often seen as fundamental to authentic black jazz, actually helps to construct the very idea of racial authenticity:

the success or failure of social interaction in the maintenance of the swing groove produces a quality of feeling in conjunction with specific musical processes that can be described through language invoking race, such that racial meanings are imposed upon this feeling. The rhythmic quality is thus understood in terms of race, and in this way it does work in producing race as a form of difference.

(2010, 332)

Blackness in this formulation is not so much generative *of* jazz as generated *from* jazz, in a process that encompasses language and affect as well as sound and performance.

In *Race Music* (2003), Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr. seeks to mediate between blackness as essence and blackness as construction, explaining that

while I recognize and share, to a large degree, the recent critical stance against a monolithic conception of black culture, I do want to rescue from the critical guillotine the idea of a collective black critique, a collective sensibility, however contested it may be.

(11)

While continuing to uphold jazz as a "race music," Ramsey argues that jazz reflects specific historical and social contexts rather than a single model of black identity; for example, "jazz in the 1940s represented the quintessential Afro-modernist expression of black urbanity" (2003, 187). Charles Hersch, in his study of early New Orleans jazz, similarly proposes that black identity in jazz was both flexible and central, writing that although "the existence of Creoles challenged the binary racial system, and indeed the concept of race itself, in a number of ways," such challenges never fully undermined Jim Crow segregation or the "one-drop rule" (2007, 9–10, 21). Charles Hiroshi Garrett, considering Jelly Roll Morton's infusion of the blues with a "Spanish tinge," makes the related argument that

subscribing to a binary model of race threatens to flatten the more multifaceted reality of Morton's life as a Creole: his cultural background profoundly shaped his musical career even as it forced him to negotiate life as a nonwhite subject in a segregated society.

(2008, 51, 62)

Racial identity thus remains essential to jazz as both a shifting, unstable set of ideas and practices and a sense of rootedness and coherence.

Many studies treat blackness as not only a matter of cultural inheritance but also a set of signifiers that musicians have employed consciously and strategically. Such an approach enables scholars to address specific aspects of musical style not as essential racial traits but rather as strategies of *performing* race that sometimes reinforce old conventions and sometimes suggest new possibilities. Taken together, important works in the New Jazz Studies trace racial ideology through the

history of jazz. Of New Orleans jazz, Hersch suggests, “if one rejects a polarized choice between upholding and transgressing racial lines and instead focuses on the ways they are continually negotiated, challenged, and upheld, the actions of these musicians become comprehensible” (2007, 87). During the swing era, black musicians in the US found ways to counter racist beliefs within the context of mass-marketed entertainment, often by demonstrating mastery of both European “classical” techniques and those associated with African American traditions; as Scott DeVeaux puts it, “the most satisfying way to undermine” racial stereotypes “was to incorporate elements of what the white world respected as musical knowledge and literacy *into* the cultural practices that fueled the stereotype” (1997, 62–63). Jeffrey Magee describes the diversity of Fletcher Henderson’s early repertoire as a counter to the critical cliché that “black jazz is improvisatory, authentic, and non-commercial and therefore ‘true,’ and white jazz is written down, diluted, and commercial, and therefore ‘false’” (2005, 27–28). Lisa Barg and Walter van de Leur assess the racial implications of Duke Ellington’s compositional strategies in his 1943 work *Black, Brown, and Beige*:

through its successive themes, its restless progression of transitions and modulations, and its sudden changes in tempi and meter, Ellington sought to ‘parallel’ the monumental movements, migrations, and ruptures in racial time and space that have characterized African American historical consciousness.

(2013, 450)

Such studies provide a corrective to older narratives of jazz history in which an assertive politics of black identity entered jazz only with the bebop innovators of the 1940s.

During the bop and post-bop eras, African American musicians continued to negotiate the definition of authentic black music in the face of racial stereotypes. In his book on the music and career of pianist and composer John Lewis, Christopher Coady demonstrates “the persistent tendency of the trade press to decipher and write about African and African American music as inherently rhythmic, effusive, mystical, and naïve,” a tendency that has led Lewis’s interest in European concert music to be interpreted as “an abdication of African American identity” (2016, 6). Coady posits instead that “Lewis’s music appears to evince a weaving together of versions of African American identity at play during the 1950s rather than an assimilationist move toward a European cultural aesthetic” (2016, 104). Scott Saul, examining 1960s “soul jazz,” hears an intentionally “blacker” alternative to the “integrationist vision” of mainstream pop music, one that

stressed musical effects identified with African America: emphatic use of open fourths and fifths, rhythmic vamps that shuffled back and forth for extended periods, gospel cries of enthusiasm from the bandstand, melodies that traded the snaky chromatics of bebop for simpler repeated blues statements.

(2003, 195)

Several scholars have explored the movement in post-bop and avant-garde jazz toward Afro-modernism, which Ingrid Monson defines as a “blackening of modernist aesthetics” that did not preclude European and non-Western influences but also rejected a color-blind universalism (2007, 71). Radano points to Anthony Braxton’s “articulation of a vital, dynamic art that referred to the modernist legacy but in a distinctly African-American creative voice [and] signaled the appearance of a dramatically new kind of musician: the *black experimentalist*” (1993, 5).

One group of works focuses on institutions founded by such experimentalists in the US during the 1960s and 1970s in response to what Eric Porter terms “a Black Arts imperative—what Larry Neal described as a duty to ‘speak to the spiritual and cultural needs of black people’” (2002, 192). Saul suggests, “the results might surprise those who slight the Black Power movement,

and its cultural affiliate the Black Arts movement, for making reductive appeals to the essence of blackness” (2003, 304–305). Chicago’s Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), for example, “inventively rediscovered the roots of a black aesthetic even as its focus on ‘creative’ music suggested that music was beyond category, the ongoing discovery of an open form” (Saul 2003, 318). Daniel Widener describes Horace Tapscott’s Pan Afrikan People’s Orchestra, based in Los Angeles, as “less a musical group linked conceptually to the local black freedom struggle than a part of the organizational fabric of the movement itself” (2010, 146). Often, however, Tapscott embraced a relatively conservative style that resisted the tendency to link “radical politics and unconventional aesthetics” (Widener 2010, 149). Organizations designed primarily to support Afro-modernist musicians sometimes faced difficult questions. What was more important, engagement with black communities or the individual prerogatives of the artist? To what extent could white musicians participate? For St. Louis’s Black Artists Group, for example, “the imperative to formulate and address a black nation collided with an aim toward universality in the group’s artistic vision” (Looker 2004, 67). In his study of the New York “loft jazz” scene of the 1970s, Michael C. Heller describes collectives for which “the centrality of blackness” was not “a contested argument that required constant affirmation” but rather “an underlying premise that guided the group’s activities,” even when these groups did not exclude non-black participants (2017, 119). Debates within New York’s Jazz Composers Guild pitted “black nationalist imperatives to close down interaction with European history and culture” against a “will to self-actualization” that would allow black musicians to work with whites and to draw on whatever influences they wished (Piekut 2009, xx). The early AACM chose to limit their membership by voting out white vibraphonist Emanuel Cranshaw:

in the context of the burgeoning influence of a newer kind of African American cultural and political nationalism, one could well imagine the AACM coming under considerable pressure regarding its bona fides as a truly “black” organization as long as Cranshaw remained a member.

(Lewis 2008, 197)

Such work on jazz collectives has shed light on the social and aesthetic means by which the blackness of jazz has been maintained and redefined.

Although these collectives often showcased the work of men, Widener insists on “the need to see black women as providing aesthetic direction as much as a material underpinning” for such groups (2010, 131). This claim is one example of a broader movement in New Jazz Studies toward examining the intersections of gender politics and black identity. Eric Porter argues that “investigations of race and racial history in that thing we call jazz require attention to gender as a mode through which race is lived and as a broader field of power that is itself raced” (2008, 231). A significant number of works have focused on black masculinity. Jennifer Griffith examines the ways in which Charles Mingus “struggled to rearticulate black masculine identities both as a performer and as an artist” in response to the tenacious stereotypes of vaudeville and minstrelsy (2010, 337). Monique Guillory argues that such rearticulations have had negative consequences: “in the attempt to reclaim the masculinity that American history denied them for so long, black jazzmen fashioned a cloak of masculinity that reified the patriarchy, misogyny, and sexism of the white mainstream” (1998, 192). An assumed link between blackness and masculinity has been the subject of critique by black women musicians. Linda F. Williams argues that while “African American women born before 1945 emphasize the prioritization of racial empowerment over sexual liberation,” younger musicians often “put forward the notion that racism and sexism coexist and should be critiqued and analyzed on equal terms” (2007, 120–121). In an ethnographic study of female saxophonists in New York, Yoko Suzuki describes a scene in which authentic black jazz

is seen as masculine while white women saxophonists receive attention as innovators, leaving black women “invisible at the intersection of feminist and anti-racist interests” (2013, 221). Farah Jasmine Griffin, discussing vocalists, argues that “one mythical source of black modernity is the haunting voice of a black woman . . . but because it develops alongside and not fully within the nation, it maintains a space for critique and protest” (2004, 113, 119).

Whiteness: Appropriation and Reflexivity

While studies such as those cited above sometimes consider white musicians in relation to a jazz tradition led by black performers, other writers have devoted more detailed attention to the question of white identities in jazz. Some critics simply assert that white musicians are important too, in defensive reaction to a supposedly “politically correct” version of jazz history that dares to mention structural racism, what Richard M. Sudhalter calls “the ‘white men can’t jump’ approach embodied in the jazz history canon” (1999, xvii) or Randall Sandke “the pervasive white=equals-racist paradigm” (2010, 5, 8). This work represents less a rethinking of racial categories than the perpetuation of old ideas about white entitlement.

Scholars more invested in considering racial inequalities and the social construction of race in the US have explored white fascination with and appropriation of black music, what Eric Lott terms “love and theft” in his frequently cited book on blackface minstrelsy (1993). What did it mean for white performers to “sound black” (Stras 2007, 208) or “play black” (Burke 2008, 24)? Some of this work addresses the period before the Second World War, when European immigrants and their children sought to assimilate into a white American identity. Michael Rogin suggests that temporarily mimicking a black identity served as an ironic means for ethnic minorities to lay full claim to whiteness; for the Jewish protagonist of the 1927 film *The Jazz Singer*, “blackface propels him above both his father and African Americans into the American melting pot” (1996, 100). More recently, however, Charles Hersch has argued

in contrast to Michael Rogin’s analysis of Jewish blackface minstrels such as Al Jolson, many Jews did not identify with blacks in order to become white. Rather, they engaged with black culture in order to avoid “melting” into an American mainstream they considered bland and intolerant and to “re-minoritize” Jewishness.

(2017, 92)

Frederick J. Schenker’s work on American jazz musicians drawn to Balkan music during the 1980s reveals an updated, indirect form of appropriation practiced by white performers self-conscious about both their own racial inauthenticity and the politics of imitating black musicians. For white Americans, Balkan music provides the possibility of drawing on a “racially distinct” music without risking criticism as appropriators of black music; “even though Balkan music might seem to be a music of Europe, it was explicitly marketed to primarily white audiences as a racial supplement ready to be consumed” (Schenker 2015, 231).

Other work on whiteness focuses on its intersections with gender and sexuality, often through examining white men’s efforts to mimic a stereotyped vision of black masculinity. Ingrid Monson argues that for white would-be hipsters such as Norman Mailer,

the bald equation of the primitive with sex, and sex with the music and body of the black male jazz musician is so voyeuristic and sexually objectifying that it is no wonder James Baldwin criticized white obsession with the image of the African American male as “walking phallic symbol.”

(1995, 404)

In her close reading of Mezz Mezzrow's 1946 autobiography *Really the Blues*, Gayle Wald demonstrates that

"voluntary Negro" passing is a theoretically and ideologically impure enterprise, in which notions of the permeability of the color line compete with the projection of inexorable and essential difference onto racially defined subjects, and in which masculine authority is maintained or even expanded through the eroticization of black men and masculinity.

(2000, 57)

Other writers have moved away from a male-dominated model of minstrels and hipsters to address female performers and whiteness. Laurie Stras, in a study of the Boswell Sisters, argues that anxiety surrounding their indeterminate racial identity "was mitigated by their sustained performance of another social and cultural stereotype, the southern lady or belle, a social role that is transparently performative" (2007, 210).

A related trend among white jazz scholars and critics has been toward self-reflection. How does a writer's own racial identity affect his or her views on race and jazz? John Gennari points out that "in a field of black creative leadership, most jazz critics are white, and they've often brought to their work a heightened sense of social purpose in a culture in which crossing the color line historically has been fraught with complications" (2006, 8). While this sense of purpose often leads white critics to adopt antiracist positions, these positions may coexist with what Ted Gioia calls "the Primitivist Myth" of jazz: "a stereotype which views jazz as a music charged with emotion, but largely devoid of intellectual content, and which sees the jazz musician as the inarticulate and unsophisticated practitioner of an art which he himself scarcely understands" (1989, 137–138). Ramsey, in a 1999 essay reviewing what he terms "the new and improved white jazz-literati," argues that "inasmuch as the idea of cultural criticism and interpretation is fraught with identity politics, the lack of white scholars theorizing how their own subjectivities shape their interpretations of black music is regrettable" (1999, 214). In the absence of such self-reflection, what Ramsey calls "the taken-for-granted, naturalized 'Critical White I'" seems to speak from a position of objective authority (1999, 214). Ingrid Monson responds to this issue with a thoughtful essay on her own complex identity as "a woman, a trumpet player, a Midwesterner, a Norwegian American, a daughter of the white middle class, and perhaps the most damning, a lesbian. . . an apparently impossible portfolio of inauthenticity and unhipness for the would-be scholar of jazz and African American music," a formulation that highlights the relationship between race and issues of gender, sexuality, and class (2008, 267). Hilary Moore optimistically proposes, "in black music scholarship, white scholars have the potential to assert and erode difference through their acknowledged transgression of musical and racial borders" (2007, 15). For white scholars, then, the challenge is to decenter whiteness, recognizing and theorizing its privileges and effects in order to produce new understandings of race in jazz.

Beyond the Binary

Black, white, and their variants are, of course, hardly the only racial categories relevant to jazz, but musicians and communities outside this binary have been marginalized in conventional studies of jazz in the US. Deborah Wong demonstrates that

the long history of Other colors in jazz—that is, Asians and Latinos—is consistently refigured as absence. If the very idea of an Asian American jazz is new or strange, this

demonstrates—successfully—the American hermeneutics of race as binary: either/or, Black/White. Any other kind of jazz simply isn't.

(2000, 67–68)

Christopher Washburne similarly describes a discourse in which “Latin American- and Caribbean-inflected jazz is segregated from the mainstream, black-versus-white, US-centric ‘real jazz’ world” (2012, 90). The exclusion of Asian Americans, Kevin Fellezs argues, derives in part from gendered stereotypes of Asian American men as a feminized “model minority” who lack the masculine creative force supposedly essential to authentic jazz (2007, 72–73). Scholars seeking to reinscribe Asian American musicians into jazz discourse often point to their relationship to black performers. Loren Kajikawa argues that, beginning in the 1960s, by “emulating the political stances and performance styles of African American players, Asian American musicians used the cultural space opened up by revolutionary black nationalism and the jazz avant-garde to begin investigating their own identities” (2012, 198). One such musician, composer and critic Fred Ho, explained that “I have sought through the use of music to promote the solidarity of Asian Americans and African Americans, by forging what I have termed ‘an Afro Asian New American Multicultural Music’” (2008, 21). Reconsideration of Latinx or Caribbean contributions to jazz tends instead to stress African-diasporic connections and negotiations between performers and genres. David García reveals, for example, that the Afro-Cuban jazz collaborations of Dizzy Gillespie and Chano Pozo represented “an expression of a broader and fervent movement to (1) define jazz as a modern African American art form with African and Caribbean roots and (2) transform the knowledge of Africa and its cultural inheritance in the New World” (2011, 197).

US-centered assumptions about blackness and whiteness have been further extended and challenged by recent studies that emphasize the diverse range of racial meanings that jazz takes on in transnational contexts. In some cases, these significations involve cosmopolitan variants on the “Primitivist Myth.” In 1930s Shanghai, as Andrew F. Jones demonstrates, the supposedly primitive blackness of jazz demonstrated by contrast “China’s implicit inclusion in a modern circuit of civilized commodity consumption” (2003, 235). Micol Seigel explains that Brazilians of the 1920s saw jazz as paradoxically both primitive and central to European modernity: “Clearly the music was black, but there it was, adored and uplifted in the centers of ‘civilization’—places Brazilians had understood as the antitheses of blackness” (2009, 121). Jeremy F. Lane reveals how black colonial intellectuals such as Léopold Senghor and white primitivist critics such as Hugues Panassié negotiated the meaning of jazz in relation to the Francophone “black Atlantic” (2013, 90–125). In other instances, jazz signaled a modern, American identity as much as a racial one. Christopher Ballantine explains that South African jazz during the swing era was “based on the confident assertion of a racial and cultural identity between black people in South Africa and those in the United States,” but also on a “looser” notion of American popular culture that encompassed white performers such as Woody Herman and the Andrews Sisters (2012, 20–23). These studies examine jazz scenes in which, while the music retains a perceived link to African American identity, ideas about blackness vary in relation to local circumstances and global political movements.

As George E. Lewis argues, however, “a recent outgrowth of the rise of world jazz” is “that musicians who identify with the genre of jazz do not necessarily consider fealty to African American aesthetics, histories, and canons as critical to membership in jazz communities” (2016, xx). One example is the Brotherhood of Breath, a London big band of the 1970s comprising both South African and British musicians; Jason Toynbee argues that “by calling on African sources directly” they “bypassed African America as the font of jazz” (2013, 14). In such contexts, examining hybridity may be more productive than tracing jazz back to its African American origin. Carol Ann Muller, in her study of South African women in jazz, proposes a model of “entanglement”

that “avoid[s] the pressure to highlight ideals of purity, authenticity, harmony, sameness or difference (as race studies have done) by privileging instead the processes of hybridity, creolization, and blurred boundaries” (2011, 52). Some critics view the globalization of jazz as holding the potential to break down racial and political boundaries, in what Paul Austerlitz (citing Paul Gilroy) calls “planetary humanism” (2005, xv, 188). Rashida K. Braggs argues for a notion of universalism that “does not merely connote global but black-cum-global-cum-cosmopolitan-cum a host of contradictory and complementary significations” (2016, 167).

The transnational turn challenges us to think beyond the US-centered, black-white binary that has dominated jazz scholarship, and its calls for a nuanced, politically astute global humanism are as necessary as ever in a world marked by a resurgent white nationalism and struggles over immigration and diversity. By continuing its inquiry into the complexities of race, the New Jazz Studies still has much to teach us about the music and its significance.

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THE VOCALIZED TONE

Tom Perchard

By 1956, Leonard Bernstein was one of America's most famous musicians and, by dint of his TV lectures, a highly admired public educator. That year, Columbia released one of the conductor's talks on record, under the title *What Is Jazz?* For Bernstein as for many other commentators, the answer to that question centered on a set of performance practices: blue notes, the transformation of popular song material through improvisation, and the vocalized instrumental tone. "Jazz would not be jazz without its special tonal colors," the conductor says. "These colors are many, but they mostly stem from the qualities of the Negro singing voice." By way of proof, Bernstein compares two recorded excerpts of a Louis Armstrong performance, one sung, the other played, but voice and trumpet indistinguishable in their phrasing and treatment. Perhaps even more than the trumpet, the jazz saxophone for Bernstein—"breathy, a little hoarse, with a vibrato or tremor in it"—showed most clearly this characteristic relationship between the music and an imagined black vocality.

Bernstein was describing a jazz practice of long pedigree. The manipulation of pitch and timbre, the instrumental imitation of the vocal, had been for decades what identified jazz as "hot," and often, as black; "sweet," commercial dance bands, often white, tended to downplay those tonalities even as they incorporated other jazz features (this raced distinction will be explored below). In the 1920s and 1930s, brass players had mastered the use of plunger and wah-wah mutes, with hand and mute shaping and reshaping the horn's aperture like a mouth shapes words, a talking effect resulting. Several of those musicians were identified with the Duke Ellington orchestras: trumpeters Bubber Miley and Cootie Williams, trombonists Tricky Sam Nanton and, later, Quentin Jackson. Into the 1940s, the breathy growl of saxophonists like Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster, or the ecstatic shriek of Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, could be equally suggestive of human vocal equipment, as was the half-valve technique of trumpeters like Rex Stewart, Dizzy Gillespie, and, by the end of the 1950s, Lee Morgan. John Coltrane's model, an important part of which was a highly vocalized sound, became globally influential from the early 1960s onwards, entrenching a particular idea of sonic vocality for decades. All of this attested to a broader tradition of vocalized instrumental performance in African American music, and the important principle of what has been called "the moan within the tone" (Miller 1995).

It should be noted at the outset that this set of expressive techniques both embodied and concealed ideas around gender. Lara Pellegrinelli (2008) has argued that, while jazz histories have usually positioned blues singing as an important precursor for the music, singers, often women, tend to be excluded from the narrative once "jazz proper" is deemed to have begun; jazz and

singing are “separated at birth,” and the music’s subsequent development is described through a succession of innovative “Great Man” instrumentalists. But perhaps rather than “separated” at birth, perhaps the singing voice was merely sublimated; as Pellegrinelli writes, critical interest in the voice has often been shifted sideways, to the vocalized instrument, the vocal ignored in favor of its simulation and yet still in some way taken as signifying a musician’s “natural,” personal qualities. For complex reasons, the professional worlds of jazz instrumental performance have often been profoundly exclusionary, and so the history of the vocalized instrument can be seen as doubly or even triply gendered: in the first instance, because of a longstanding male hegemony in instrumental practice; in the second, because of the supposedly “masculine” qualities usually imputed to vocalizing effects (roughness, harshness, hoarseness); and finally, in the continual re-narration and consolidation of that male-dominated historical tradition (in which, its critical intent aside, this piece participates).¹

Twenty-first century players like saxophonists Matana Roberts and Ingrid Laubrock show that vocalizing techniques came to characterize players of whatever gender subjectivity, cultural background, or geographical origin. Nevertheless, for many musicians and commentators, instrumental vocalization has been suggestive of some deeper meaning or value system original to an implicitly masculine but often explicitly black American experience. In this chapter, I will examine why this might have been so. I will also survey the broader musical tradition of vocal-instrumental blurring so that more recent theoretical work, some of which emerges outside jazz scholarship per se, might extend what have to date been somewhat truncated critical interpretations of the practice. As is already becoming clear, at stake in the vocalized tone was a complex of ideas around race, the self, and the body: ideas that, across the history of jazz and indeed modernity in general, could be articulated in celebration or in fear.

“The Negro Singing Voice”

Before thinking about what it meant to transpose the vocal to the instrumental, we need to identify those qualities apparently special to “the Negro singing voice” that Bernstein evoked. Wrapped in the idealized timbres and intensities of this voice was both mystery and possibility. “The” black voice was thought and portrayed by African Americans and others as unusual not just in its sound, but also in its ability to bear and express a history of oppression, and that history’s transcendence. It was exceptional in its ambiguous pitching between joy and sorrow; it articulated a humanity in music that was denied in law.

These ideas would endure into the twenty-first century, but they were fully formed by the middle of the nineteenth. In a much-cited passage on plantation singing from 1845, Frederick Douglass (1817–1895), formerly enslaved but latterly a figurehead of the abolition movement, recalled that “every tone” sounded “a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. . . . To those songs I trace my first glimmering conceptions of the dehumanizing character of slavery” (Southern 1983, 83–84). The notion that a quality of voice could form a bulwark against adversity was later taken up by W.E.B. Du Bois, the black sociologist whose book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) would become one of the central works of the American century. Each chapter of this ruminative study of black American existence is headed by a fragment of music and verse taken from the spirituals or, as Du Bois calls them, the “sorrow songs.” “Ever since I was a child these songs have stirred me strangely,” Du Bois writes. “They came out of the South unknown to me, one by one, and yet at once I knew them as of me and of mine” (Du Bois 2007 [1903], 167).

For Du Bois, sorrow songs gave pre-linguistic access to the history of the race, sounding and meaning with purpose to those that shared in that history. And perhaps to those that did not: many nineteenth-century travel writers, memoirists, and folklorists had recorded their first impressions

of a black vocality that, especially in its plaintive mode, often astonished. Ronald Radano has argued that these white commentators “attributed to African American musical creativity unique qualities of performance,” notably a vocal expressivity that exceeded the powers of whites. “Difference,” Radano continues, “thus becomes key to figuration of black music, assigning a status of exception that gives African Americans a source of racialized power” (Radano 2003, 229). This difference was repeatedly ascribed, yet always mutable, as Nina Sun Eidsheim notes in her consideration of a vocal “sonic blackness”; this she defines as “not the unmediated sound of essential otherness or the sound of a distinct phenotype” but as the following:

a combination of interchangeable self-reproducing modes: a perceptual phantom projected by the listener; a vocal timbre that happens to match current expectations about blackness; or the shaping of vocal timbre to match current ideas about the sound of blackness.

(Eidsheim 2011, 663–664)

Those ideas, that vocalized difference and exceptionalism, were to be seen being reproduced in popular commentaries like Bernstein’s lecture, in scholarly texts like Eileen Southern’s 1971 landmark *The Music of Black Americans: A History* (Southern 1997 [1971]), and, much more importantly, amid innumerable lived, performed experiences. Into the twenty-first century, African American vocal traditions have remained a vital site of cultural definition, participation, and historical witness, observable and meaningful to those both in and outside that cultural group (Griffin 2004). Whatever form it has taken across jazz’s global history, it is to this phenomenon that instrumental vocality owes much of its critical weight and centrality even if, as I will argue later, that association obscures the practice’s other origins and motives.

The Voice as Bearer of Individual Identity

It was not just cultural difference that would be marked by the imagined black voice, but also individual difference, and here we return to this chapter’s main concern. As we have already seen, in jazz practices emerging from the early twentieth century, various “non-standard” playing techniques were applied, particularly to wind instruments, in the effort to imitate or index the human voice. These techniques became central to jazz’s culture and printed critical discourses, the latter of which, not coincidentally, began to take shape as did a new kind of star player, one who had stepped out of early jazz’s collective improvisation to take extended, virtuosic solo flights. Increasingly detailed press coverage of increasingly numerous “name” jazz instrumentalists helped develop a new kind of connoisseurship for the music, and this centered on the identification and appreciation of a musician’s personalized approach (Perchard 2015, 20–53).

For many serious fans, writers, and musicians, an individuated instrumental sound was not just a fillip or trademark, but the soul made audible; along with the improvised musical thought, it was the guarantor of an expressive authenticity unique to jazz.² The French organizer, discographer, and critic Charles Delaunay wrote in 1939 that, in this music,

what we could call the interior note, that’s to say the note felt by the artist and the note emitted by the instrument, can only be one. A single and same vibration must run through the musician, from his heart to the bell of his instrument. His whole being primed, one can say he becomes the horn. This explains in part the preference of jazz musicians for wind instruments . . . jazz is a form of expression that is direct, total and definitive.

(Delaunay 1939, 71)

It was not surprising that this instrumental “vocality” could be heard as sounding the player’s authentic self: as numerous intellectual historians have described and twentieth-century thinkers like Jacques Derrida have critiqued, this notion has been present in Western thought and culture for millennia. According to this “phonocentric” way of thinking, expression that is judged most true is that which is not mediated by distance, time, or any kind of writing. Speech and the voice come to signify the unproblematic expression of an interior self, because they are uniquely present in one place, communicating directly from that subject to its audience; expression mediated by writing, however, is apt to be interpreted differently from reader to reader, especially if those readers hail from contexts removed by time or place from the speaking subject’s own. The speaking, present subject can only ever be itself, but writing is mutable, detached from and exceeding its originating thought. Speech is reality; writing is its representation.³

If this sounds rather abstract, then it’s worth noting that more than a few early commentators on jazz praised the music in similar terms. For them, a supposedly played-out repertoire of old composed classical music could no longer speak to modern experience, but jazz, this direct, vital, putatively oral form, emphatically did (Panassié 1942). And if it has become common to look for ways in which African American participants have skirted or undercut those cultural assumptions basic to normative “Western” culture or thought, then so has the notion of personalized, embodied voice been all-important in African American cultural worlds. Cheryl Keyes (2009, 19) writes that “in the black sacred context, one associates ‘spirit’ with the manifestation of an intangible being or presence which is often felt, experienced, or made known through its ability to act upon or ability to speak through a living form”; Keyes explicitly stages the instrumental voice as a further (secular) instantiation of this concept.

More to the point, the idea has long underpinned the value system described by jazz musicians themselves. “When I know a man’s sound,” John Coltrane said in 1966, “well, to me that’s him” (Kofsky 1970, 225). “The only thing nobody can steal from you is your sound,” said Coleman Hawkins. “Sound alone is important” (Miller 1995, 159). “The sound of the improvisation seems to tell us what kind of person is improvising,” claimed Yusef Lateef. “We feel that we can hear character or personality in the way the musician improvises” (Lewis 1996, 117). These utterances from the historical jazz literature could be multiplied by the hundreds, and the principle survives into the current century: “every musician finally needs a sound,” writes jazz critic Ben Ratliff (2007, x), “a full and sensible embodiment of his (*sic*) artistic personality, such that it can be heard, at best, in a single note.”

Such statements seem universally applicable. Yet, as we have seen, there has been a long-standing critical desire to conflate a perceived authenticity of expression with a perceived authenticity of racial lineage. Those early advocates for jazz who, in Europe especially, could be eager to take the music as a token of black exceptionalism, sometimes railed against white players like Bix Beiderbecke, whose sound could be judged by a writer like Hugues Panassié as too “honeyed” to embody “the spirit of the Negro musicians,” for that French critic “the only real jazz spirit” (Panassié 1942, 81). Later interventions re-articulated this idea in more sophisticated terms. In his important 1963 book *Blues People*, LeRoi Jones lamented the “dreadful split between life and art” enacted in (white) Western culture, where autonomous art objects were polished up and rendered distant from everyday experience. Such a split, Jones argued, was nowhere to be found in Afro-diasporic culture, as the “hoarse, shrill,” human quality of black American singing and playing showed. For Jones, the playing of a white alto saxophonist like Paul Desmond thus reflected a particularly “European” concern for the aesthetically ideal—and a “clean, round” tone—over human expression; meanwhile Charlie Parker, the critic wrote, “produced a sound on the same instrument that was called by some ‘raucous and uncultivated.’ But Parker’s sound,” Jones continued, “was *meant* to be both those adjectives” (Jones 1963, 29–30).

This radical separation of European/white and African American approaches is reinscribed by Doug Miller (1995), who situates early white American jazz saxophonists like Frankie Trumbauer and Jimmy Dorsey in a Euro-American classical and band tradition which—unlike jazz—required a firm embouchure to ensure “proper” ensemble intonation (Miller 1995, 157). That idea is echoed in George Lewis’s often-repeated definition of “Afrological” and “Eurological” practices, the former black-music-based and centered on improvisation and sounded “notions of personhood,” the latter prioritizing composition and ensemble execution (Lewis 1996, 117). Lewis’s theorization recognizes that successful participation in either mode is owed to learning rather than skin color—and thus can account for vocalizing white players like the cornetist Muggsy Spanier or baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams—yet it does little to challenge what is an enduring binary division of music cultures.⁴ In the Eurological, distinctive voices are seen as belonging to composers, not their executants; in the Afrological, that situation is reversed.

We are moving away from those imitative or indexical vocal effects described at the outset and toward a more metaphorical kind of voice, this formed in part by that individuated (and vocalized) sound, but standing for originality more broadly. This understanding of voice, too, soon became unassailable jazz dogma, and one that went far beyond questions of color. “There ain’t no rule saying everybody’s got to deliver the same damn volume or tone,” Billie Holiday was reported as saying:

You can’t copy anybody and end up with anything. If you copy, it means you’re working without any real feeling. And without feeling, whatever you do amounts to nothing. No two people on earth are alike, and it’s got to be that way in music or it isn’t music.

(Holiday and Dufty 1992 [1956], 48)⁵

As these words suggest, little has caused more alarm among jazz commentators than the apparent absence of such a voice, and the perversion of that individualist value. In 1967, the French tenor saxophonist Barney Wilen explained to an interviewer that he had stopped listening to John Coltrane so as to avoid sounding too much like him. “It’s always seemed to me that to imitate Coltrane is a small crime of *lèse-majesté*,” he said. “When Charles Lloyd does it I find it detestable, indecent even” (Ginibre 1967, 28). Paul Berliner’s monumental ethnographic study of jazz musicians (1994) records many criticisms similarly aimed by players at colleagues who had taken on another’s sound without developing their own.

Yet despite universal assent to its basic premise, at some points in jazz’s history the generalized notion of the instrumental voice has become the focus of specific anxieties. In the 1960s, and in the playing of saxophonists like Archie Shepp or Dewey Redman, vocalicity came to characterize “avant-garde” and free jazz saxophone technique to an extent that discomfited many observers—not least that critical fraternity which, composed largely of white men, could hear its roar and scream as the presentation of a newly assertive and confrontational black masculinity. Such was recognized by a comparatively open member of that commentariat, Nat Hentoff, who wrote in 1967:

nearly every jazz breakthrough in the past has first been challenged as being too “intellectual”, too “European”, not “hot” enough. These days, the opponents of what’s happening now seem to be charging that too much emotion is erupting in this music. . . . But too much for whom? (Hentoff 1967)

In highly policed press contexts, and under repeated questioning as to whether their tonally intense playing represented an implicitly political “anger,” musicians like Eric Dolphy and John Coltrane were apt to counter that they were aiming for an exploration of sound, or an affective

register abstractly described. Something similar can be seen in that Hentoff piece, liner notes for Pharoah Sanders's Impulse album *Tauhid*. As well as the careful distancing from any idea that the screams and shrieks in his playing related directly to the roiling contemporary struggle for civil rights and black liberation—a distance, to be sure, that some musicians did not seek—Sanders's own words are a good example of the by-then venerable notion of vocalized expression as unmediated subjectivity. “I don't really see the horn anymore,” Sanders told Hentoff.

I'm trying to see myself . . . as to the sounds I get, it's not that I'm trying to scream on my horn. I'm just trying to put all my feelings into the horn. And when you do that, the notes go away.

And yet the rest of Sanders's statement suggests that something else was up, too:

By tightening my embouchure, fixing my teeth in certain positions, and overblowing the horn, I was able to make clusters of notes. Why did I want clusters? So that I could get more feeling, more of me, into each note I played.

(Hentoff 1967)

Descriptions of specific technical procedures like this one have been as unusual as descriptions of performed emotion have been common: musicians have rarely felt it useful or appropriate to enter into specialist discussion with their journalist interviewers. But Sanders's words highlight that, however sacred the dogma of immediacy and pure human expression, it is the process of instrumental *mediation* that is really the point: the challenge has not been to remove the instrument from the equation, not to efface it, but rather to stage it as central—and even then to overcome it by achieving a sounding “personhood.” Any idealist critical meaning is underpinned by material creative endeavor and the inventive manipulation of instrumental resources.

There is, in music, a tradition of comment to this end. In his remarkable 1930 recording *Playing My Saxophone*, Fess Williams offers a virtuoso display of vocalizing techniques, as well as a vocal refrain that dwells precisely on the operations in question: “going up out of range, flutter-tonguing a note down low/holding high notes a long time, playing my saxophone.” Less verbally explicit but just as illustrative are those performances by players as varied as Earl Bostic or Peter Evans, in which signifiers of human vocality are piled up on to signifiers of instrumental facility not available to the voice—wide interval leaps, rapid arpeggiation—such as to focus attention on the ambiguous status of the sounding metal. As Richard Middleton has written (1990, 264), this is a traditional African American dialectic, in which “the often noted importance of ‘vocalized tone’ is only part of a wider development in which ‘instrumental’ and ‘vocal’ modes meet on some indeterminate ground.”

We will return to that idea. But moving toward a conclusion, I want to explore how this complex of cultural identity, individual subjectivity, and instrumental (im)mediation has been accounted for—that is, how the practice's origins have been explained, its meanings interpreted—in academic literature of the latter twentieth and early twenty-first century. This will lead us to some new thoughts about those origins, and to some considerations of the ways we interpret jazz history more generally.

Theorizing the Vocalized Tone

It has been common for scholars to locate the vocalized tone's origins amid a loosely defined “African” heritage. In his much-read (if problematic) 1971 study, *Black Talk*, Ben Sidran identified that sound and a “peculiarly ‘black’ approach to rhythm” as Afro-diasporic music's “essential”

elements; these features, he argued, extended an African oral culture and reflected “the greater oral ability to lend semantic significance to tonal elements of speech. . . . The manner in which drums were used to ‘talk’ is typical of this communication mode” (Sidran 1995 [1971], 6–7). Later musicological work followed in this vein. Portia K. Maultsby (2005, 333–334), wrote that:

the concept of sound that governs Afro-American music is unmistakably grounded in the African past. . . . In Africa and throughout the diaspora, black musicians produce an array of unique sounds many of which imitate those of nature, animals, spirits and speech. . . . Musicians bring intensity to their performances by alternating lyrical, percussive, and raspy timbres; juxtaposing vocal and instrumental textures . . . and weaving moans, shouts, grunts, hollers, and screams into the melody.

Maultsby goes on to cite the Cameroonian musician Francis Beby and his assertion that “Western distinctions between instrumental and vocal music are evidently unthinkable in Africa where the human voice and musical instruments ‘speak’ the same language” (334). No doubt there is some truth in some of this, and jazz musicians have long used the image of talk in describing the meaningful instrumental performance. Recalling Sidney Bechet in his autobiography, Duke Ellington described the reeds player “calling” through his “throaty growl,” a common early jazz practice “where people send messages in what they play, calling somebody, or making facts and emotions known” (Ellington 1974, 47).

But we should be suspicious of neat descriptions of such complex musical genealogies. Too many writers on music have sought to pick apart densely interwoven cultural practices by reducing them to separate, identifiable strands, these strands leading directly back to some cultural stock itself reductively identified as African or European. The same can be said for interpretations that, working in the reverse direction, see in such historically enmeshed phenomena the easily legible results of a binary hybridization process; in another piece, Maultsby (1985) positions vocalized jazz performance technique as sounding an “African” adaptation to “European” instruments, one analogous to the supposed adaptation of the tempered, diatonic scale (the mythical origin of the blue note similarly laying in the bending of such Western scales to fit African custom and sensibility).

Alexander Weheliye (2002) offers an interpretation that, while strikingly different and more theoretically nuanced, is nevertheless related to these previous accounts. Weheliye’s study is not of the vocalized instrument, but of the instrumentalized vocal, namely, the vocoder voice found in 1970s and 1980s jazz fusion, R&B, and electro (see also Rollefson 2008). But that concept has a long history in African American music styles, and from scat singing in the 1910s to auto-tune 100 years later, whether through performance or technological mediation, the conventionally human voice has often been rendered “machine.” Though Weheliye approaches it from the other side, this compact of sounded humanity and technology is no different from that under discussion here; moreover, since it emerges outside a rather too entrenched discourse around the individuated jazz sound, this is a theory that may suggest a new approach to that technique and its meanings.

Making reference to various works from cyborg theory, Weheliye suggests that these practices are owed to a creative questioning of the ideas around “humanity” so important in early conceptions of the black voice. Weheliye writes that the post-Enlightenment, liberal subject has always been defined as a free individual, a person free to think and to act according to his or her own will. However, black subjects present in the “New World” can hardly be expected to simply identify with this concept of selfhood, given the practices and histories of slavery and colonialism which took their ancestors to that place. In addition, while liberal subjecthood has been identified with free will, a rationality that privileges the mind and effaces the body, black peoples of the West have often been identified with their bodies first and foremost: as slave bodies born to work, as

sexualized bodies subject to desire, or as entertaining, athletic bodies gifted with putatively exceptional performing powers. This doesn't mean that what Weheliye calls "Afro-diasporic thinking" has simply rejected ideas of the self-possessed human; instead, that figure is critiqued, its ironized historical contingency underlined, and this often through creative work. It is by dehumanizing and disembodimenting the voice that African Americans have questioned supposedly universal, post-Enlightenment ideas of humanhood, subjectivity, and freedom, showing those things to have been "mutable" and selectively available without rejecting them outright. This is why black music practices have often highlighted rather than concealed "the flow between humans and machines" and the bleed between those categories (Weheliye 2002, 31).

That idea seems easily applicable to the vocalized jazz sound, opening up the possibility that, as much as making their instruments more human, "critical" jazz players might also have been rendering themselves more instrument. Think of the wah-wah mute, one of the quintessential jazz sounds from its introduction in the mid-1920s; then the 1960s wah-wah pedal, designed to provide the same effect for guitarists but at the same time helping usher in a new, electrified sonic agenda for popular music; then think of Miles Davis, who having in the 1950s made his name with a personalized, breathy use of that mute, at the turn of the 1970s introduced the pedal to his amplified setup, adding a layer of technological mediation which, though boldly electro-futuristic, nevertheless rendered his performance more "vocal" than ever before. Notions of the human, the instrument, the voice, and the machine are multiplied and superimposed, the lines between them audibly blurred.

Work emerging from this important and influential discourse around Afro-futurism can show new interpretive possibilities for the creative confusion of voice and technology. But the idea that such confusion might always enact a creative critique of the liberal category of "human" is destabilized when recalling those jazz musicians cited above, who, speaking at different times and from different parts of the jazz tradition, were united and definitive in their identifying of instrumental sound with its maker's full, authentic subjectivity. There was no problematizing of the "human" by mid-century African American musicians for whom, after all, exceptional musical expression was a public demonstration of the self-possession often denied them in non-musical contexts.

Yet speculative readings like Weheliye's should not necessarily be subservient to something more narrowly empirical: written and sounding practices are closely intertwined, and criticism can make music meaningful in ways players sometimes can not. Still, an application of Occam's razor might lead us to work closer to home in seeking progenitors of the humanized jazz instrument (or the instrumentalized jazz human). We need, finally, to properly historicize these practices, to see their uses, performance contexts and critical meanings in flux, if we are to understand them at all: singular, transhistorical, or static interpretations will never tell the whole story. And that goes as much for those jazz musicians' association of instrumental voice and player subjectivity—surely beholden to a then-hegemonic idea of the Romantic artist—as it does for Weheliye's twenty-first-century critical production.

That is not to reject either interpretation. How could it be: in different ways and to different extents, these meanings have held, been subscribed to, and been "true." Instead, it is to argue that the problem of the instrumental voice is over-determined, that its origins, and its meanings, are multiple, complex, intertwined, contradictory. So, in the search for a new account of the vocalized tone, I want to close by exploring an important area of musical practice often neglected in jazz historiography, and this means working with a different interpretive strategy. Cultural critics are used to taking extremely seriously the forms for which they act as advocates. But what do we miss if those forms were not always meant to be serious? For decades, the vocalized tone has been made to bear much critical weight, but it may be that an important part of its origin lies in the realm of pleasure and play, and the vaudeville culture that nurtured jazz and blues artists in the first years of the twentieth century.

As vaudeville's commentators have always noted, that form put spectacle and novelty above all. One of the ways that these things were accomplished was in the confusion of categories that is basic to comedy of all kinds. Vaudeville acts often pivoted on the transformation of one thing into another, usually an imagined opposite. So, adults acted as children, men as women, blacks as whites, whites as blacks. The pleasure of the uncanny was central: one of the earliest reports of blues singing on the stage described not a human, but a ventriloquist's dummy, Henry, the "little wooden-headed boy" who could be found touring alongside his human co-star Johnnie Woods in 1909. The distinction between living and inanimate was tested nightly on the vaudeville stage, and often by jazz players: by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's barnyard effects, immortalized on the "first" jazz record, *Livery Stable Blues*; by the "laughing cornets" of Charles "Doc" Cooke's *Syncopated Orchestra*; by the definitive, hugely influential "jungle style" of Duke Ellington's talking horns (Abbott and Seroff 1996; Kenney 1986).

Vaudeville houses were often as segregated as many other American public institutions at the time, but both white and black circuits shared in the "gorgeous variety" of music that Caroline Caffin described in her 1914 essay on the institution. This music ranged "from melody extracted from the unwilling material of xylophones and musical glasses"—those xylophones were sometimes made of skeleton—"through the varying offerings of singers and instrumentalists, both comic and serious, to the performances of high-class chamber music or the singing of an opera diva" (Caffin 1984 [1914], 209; see also Laurie 1953, 63–66).

In Caffin's observations are two principles that we can finally identify as fundamental to the phenomenon and tradition of the vocalized tone. The first is by now familiar: "melody extracted from unwilling material," the apparent imbuing of the inanimate with will, with humanity, in the name of creativity and spectacle. But the second lies in that porousness, which Caffin underlines throughout her piece, between "high" and "low" musical materials and practices, a porousness then common in vaudeville and musical life more generally. Just as the stars of musicals and light opera "drift[ed] with apparent indifference from one sphere to the other" (Caffin 1984 [1914], 209), so did those vocalizing musical effects. Just as jazz performance was rooted in novelty and entertainment, so would it quickly prove capable of carrying the most profound meaning.

By way of illustration, let us end as we began, with Louis Armstrong. To Leonard Bernstein and who knows how many others, Armstrong was a conjurer of deep feeling and high comedy, a player whose raucous tonal effects decorated lines that were constructed with the most cultivated ingenuity. But in the insightful analysis of Brian Harker, such a sober appreciation of that cultivation belongs to a later moment in jazz's cultural progress; what marked jazz's beginning, and shaped Armstrong's early playing, was its emergence from a vaudeville tradition that functioned according to an "aesthetic of constant surprise," a sensibility "that cast individualistic solo gestures as manifestations of novelty" (Harker 2011, 15, 17). Perhaps the primary bearer of such novelty was the vocalizing "gimmick," the effect that could amount to a personal (and professional) trademark. In the 1910s, a jazz vaudevillian like King Oliver could be found using his mute to imitate a crying baby, and the New Orleansian Creole Band, as the *Los Angeles Tribune* reported, could wow audiences by making "the very instruments assume new personalities" (Harker 2011, 18–19).

The vocalized tone, then, can be seen as a traditional practice that, from vaudeville to Rhythm and Blues to free jazz and beyond, has been formed of a relatively stable set of technical procedures. But, like all traditions, that formal stability has both begotten and belied a great variety of imaginative and critical meanings, these changing over time according to performance, political, or philosophical context. Vocalized instruments have been played for laughs, but they have also articulated the most deeply felt beliefs. The vocalized tone has spoken of collective belonging, but it has also been the guarantor of highly individuated identity and originality. In this

vocal-instrumental sound is a claim to personal, artistic authenticity, and in the self-conscious confusion of musician and instrument a demonstration of the creative relativism that has inspired so much music of African American origin.

Notes

1. On the gendering of sound, texture, and noise, see Smith 2008. Elsewhere (Perchard 2015, 112–143) I have argued that Miles Davis used various performance breath techniques to construct a sounding “feminine” character in his music for Louis Malle’s film *Ascenseur pour l’échafaud*—and that this construction remained central to his practice and sonic identity for some years.
2. Listeners—often aided by the phonograph—could forge a kind of quasi-intimate identification with instrumentalists as people just as they had begun to with crooners, those singers who exploited new microphone, radio, and phonography technology to sing close and quiet over a full-band backing (Lockheart 2003).
3. This complex is clearly apparent in Radano’s discussion of nineteenth-century notions of the black voice and the limits of transcription. For a useful discussion of Derridean logocentricity in a jazz improvisation context, see Moreno (1999); for a psychoanalytical take on the same issues, see Dolar (2006).
4. Indeed, the marking and remarking of that division, and the entrenchment of the cultural identities on either side, is at its most fraught when identities are shown to be less discrete than assumed. Laurie Stras’s 2007 study of the 1930s vocal trio the Boswell Sisters shows how anxious listeners could be when exceptional “black” voices emanated from evidently white bodies.
5. As Huang and Huang note (2013, 287), many commentators and colleagues remarked upon the intimate connection between speech and music in Holiday’s singing style.

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JAZZ AND THE RECORDING PROCESS

Benjamin Bierman

One of the most obvious intersections of music and technology is the recording process.¹ As a sub-topic in the vast subject of jazz and technology, this includes the history of recording technology, together with its invention and evolution as an analog process through the move to digital recording. It also includes the roles of producer—whether it is the artist or a producer particularly hired for that role—and pre- and post-production work. In addition, the dissemination of music—both for sales and promotion—takes on many guises at this point. CDs,² LPs,³ and streaming and downloads of audio file types such as MP3,⁴ FLAC,⁵ and AAC,⁶ as well as streaming video and social media, are now integral to the recording and dissemination process, as are terrestrial, streaming, and satellite radio. The question of how these various issues actually affect the content of the music, how musicians approach the creative process, and the ways artists are finding to support themselves and their work are important areas to examine. I briefly discuss these issues as an entryway into the intersection of jazz and technology and conclude with a look at how they affect the artistic and business choices of three of today's most successful jazz artists.⁷

There are, of course, numerous scholarly books and articles, textbooks, and journalistic approaches in regards to particular jazz artists and their recordings and about the relationship of technology to our consumption of music, again from a variety of viewpoints. Also, there is music scholarship specifically examining recording technology from many perspectives: general books on recording; more specific books on mixing, mastering, and digital audio workstations; sound design and synthesis; the history of electronic music; the role of the producer; the relationship of technology to our consumption of music; and computer music technology. In fact, it seems to be one of the most popular subjects in music today if the new textbooks I am sent on the subject at least twice a month are any indication. They all have interesting things to say, but few books dealing specifically with music and technology actually discuss jazz and its relationship to technology at any length. Perhaps this is because the recording ethos of jazz is generally perceived as a simple one: sonically capture the performance with as little interference with the music as possible, while also keeping it as close to the aesthetic of a live performance as the recording process will allow. This, however, is a gross oversimplification—to the point of being a stereotype—but it is also true in many respects.

Expectations of Jazz Recordings

Beginning in 1917 with the Original Dixieland Band (“Livery Stable Blues” and “Dixieland Jass Band One-Step”)—and some believe even earlier with artists such as clarinetist-composer Wilbur Sweatman (“Down Home Rag”) in 1916—jazz and jazz-related music has been recorded through all of the various means available. Regardless of style, the documenting of music in the early days of recording had the same benefits and challenges. In acoustic recording—employing a single horn or array of horns—balance could only be accomplished through placement of musicians in relationship to the horns, yet some say that this acoustic method created a particularly cherished realistic sound. The invention of the microphone—in wide use by 1925—brought electrical recording and more possibilities regarding how musicians could be recorded and balanced. In relation to jazz, both of these methods went along well with the general expectations of jazz recording—capture a performance—but in many ways, contrary to much of what is written about jazz recordings, jazz artists, recording engineers, and producers have always, in one way or another, employed most of the latest in recording innovations. That said, the expectations of jazz recordings still, for the most part, have changed very little.

Orrin Keepnews—a legendary jazz producer and co-founder of Riverside Records, one of the iconic jazz record labels—sums up the feeling of many:

Next week, I’m going to be in the studio editing and sequencing a CD. The fact that it was recorded digitally, which is very different from early LPs, does not impact my work in the studio. Technology changes but, with jazz, neither the product nor the vocabulary has changed that much. . . . The technologies are very different, but the reason why it’s being done and the effect that we’re trying to accomplish is exactly the same. As a record producer who, in 1956, was producing Thelonious Monk, I frankly don’t think any challenge anybody can throw at me today is going to be any more demanding than that challenge was then. I am saying that the key element in jazz is, as it always has been, the artist. The key challenge to the producer is to establish a successful relationship with the artist. Technological differences between present and past are secondary to that.

(Jarrett 2016, 8–9)

Keepnews’s statement echoes the sentiment of many producers, musicians, and music journalists and scholars, but it’s deceptive in some ways. In this chapter, I hope to raise some issues that suggest that this is an overly simplistic way to look at the recording of jazz, both past and present. After a quick glance at jazz’s relationship to the evolution of recording media, I begin by examining the use of overdubbing and editing in jazz to debunk the notion of jazz as technologically non-interventionist that is often seen in the literature on jazz recording processes and jazz recordings. A discussion of three top contemporary musicians further illuminates how most contemporary jazz and jazz-related artists are as up to date as anyone in this regard and deeply embrace technological advances for both artistic and business reasons.

78—33 1/3—700 MB—Downloads and Streaming

An obvious example of how recording technology has affected the presentation of jazz—or any musical style for that matter—is the amount of music that has been able to fit on the various media types used over the years. One side of a 10-inch 78-rpm disk could only hold approximately three minutes of music, meaning, in relation to jazz, fewer and shorter solos, say a chorus or part of a chorus (not necessarily a bad thing), making these recordings greatly truncated versions of what was being played live. In 1948, the move to LPs played at 33 1/3-rpm quickly

became the standard—first in mono and eventually in stereo—and the two sides combined hold approximately 40–45 minutes of music. Consequently, the three-minute limit on recording was gone and players could record longer solos that were more reflective of the concert experience as well as the spirit of improvisation so central to jazz. In the mid-1960s, cassette tape cartridges were introduced, and by the mid-1980s they outsold LPs, but they mimicked album content, including the need to turn the cassette over to hear the second side. Compact Discs—CDs—were introduced in 1982 and again raised the bar regarding how much music could fit on a disk, as a CD can hold approximately 80 minutes of music (700 MB of data).

For many musicians at this point, the CD also seems to be becoming a thing of the past with the advent of digital downloads and later the streaming services, though these challenges to the CD are creating interesting strategies that encourage physical sales.⁸ As a result, many musicians are either questioning the need for physical CDs at all or are duplicating far fewer than in the past. Further complicating this issue is the fact that for many independent artists, including jazz musicians, physical sales of CDs and even LPs—currently experiencing a resurgence—are more economically viable than streaming revenues, putting them at odds with the larger music business.⁹ Additionally, even though the ascension of individual downloads and streaming services seems to indicate that the concept of an album is no longer commercially viable, jazz musicians are still very much thinking of their records as distinct objects to be heard as a whole in a particular order. This reflects the history of the LP, the media that first allowed for this concept. I think of this particular phenomenon as an *analog reaction* to the digital world as artists look back to older values, including questioning the “improvements” of digital audio and its distribution methods.¹⁰ Consequently, while streaming seemingly takes over the music business, CDs and LPs are very much alive in the jazz world.

Overdubbing and Editing in Jazz

Along with the invention of magnetic tape and its editing capabilities, certainly one of the most important innovations was overdubbing through various means.¹¹ Thomas Edison experimented with this as early as 1877, and as far back as 1941, soprano saxophonist Sidney Bechet was bouncing tracks from acetate disk to acetate disk to create two sides of a 78—“The Sheik of Araby” and “Blues of Bechet”—performing on multiple reed instruments, piano, bass, and drums, exhibiting his strength as a multi-instrumentalist.¹² Guitarist-inventor Les Paul is the most famous for his early overdubbing and recording innovations (*sound on sound*).¹³ He had been using this technique on acetate disks in the 1930s and recorded his breakthrough 1947 version of the standards “Lover” and “Brazil” using this technique, overdubbing eight guitar parts. Paul’s 1951 hit version of “How High the Moon,” with his wife, the singer Mary Ford, is an example of his move to overdubbing using magnetic tape.

Also around this time Lennie Tristano overdubbed himself playing two piano parts on “Juju” and “Passtime” in 1951, and in 1955 overdubbed his piano parts on a trio recording. When working with the important producer George Avakian at Columbia Records in 1954 to record *Louis Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy*, Louis Armstrong

overdubbed both a trumpet solo and a scatted vocal obbligato onto the original tape of “Atlanta Blues.” The released performance . . . permits him to conceive and execute the discrete roles of melodic interpreter and accompanimental obbligatist separately, rather than by a process of swift alternation in real time.

(Givan 2004, 202)

Avakian also used innovative editing techniques to splice various takes for Miles Davis’s *Miles Ahead* (1957). Other well-known recordings have surprising overdubs as well, such as *Jazz at*

Massey Hall (1953).¹⁴ The live recording originally had an inaudible bass part, so Charles Mingus overdubbed a new part at the studio of one of the most renowned jazz recording engineers, Rudy Van Gelder. In 1954 Van Gelder recorded the eclectic Bobby Sherwood as a one-man big band bouncing tracks on two tape machines (Skea 2001, 63–64).¹⁵

Others took advantage of these early opportunities. Pianist-arranger-composer George Handy produced and arranged two records with saxophonist Zoot Sims overdubbing multiple saxophone parts—*Zoot Sims Plays Alto, Tenor, and Baritone* (1956) and *Zoot Sims Plays Four Altos* (1957). Jimmy Giuffrè recorded an entire album, *The Four Brothers Sound/Jimmy Giuffrè* (1958), by overdubbing four tenor saxophone parts to recreate the sound he was a part of with the Woody Herman Orchestra (the recording was engineered by the renowned Atlantic Records engineer Tom Dowd). Pianist Bill Evans overdubbed himself playing three piano parts for *Conversations With Myself* (1964),¹⁶ and followed up with *Further Conversations With Myself* (1967) and *New Conversations* (1978).

Further, with the advent of magnetic tape recording, even in jazz, the producer's role expanded, largely because of the greatly increased editing capabilities, as well as an improved ability to overdub. In terms of editing, while the tropes of the first take artist, authenticity, and the importance of through takes in jazz are common, the splicing of takes, the splicing in of a solo from a different take, or an overdubbed solo to make the final master is a common occurrence, and has been since the invention of the tape recorder. Perhaps the most famous example of this includes the partnership of Miles Davis and his producer Teo Macero.

Macero's editing of Davis's later records ranged from simple splices from different takes to more intensive editing, such as extensive reordering and creating tape loops and effects, to such a degree that his involvement became more that of a compositional collaborator than a traditional producer on records such as *In a Silent Way* (1969), *Bitches Brew* (1970), *Jack Johnson* (1971), and *On the Corner* (1972). In a fascinating twist regarding the capturing of a live performance, some of the surprisingly abrupt cuts and edits created in the studio actually had an effect on the live performances of works from these records, as the post-production work preceded the live performances and influenced their direction.¹⁷ Granted, this is an unusual situation in jazz, but the ability to multi-track record, overdub, and edit certainly brought jazz recordings into the world of post-production.

These are just a few of the many early examples of overdubbing and editing in jazz, and by the mid-1950s overdubbing, and of course the editing of tape for all kinds of reasons, including practicality, allowing people to express themselves as multi-instrumentalists, and financial considerations, was an accepted fact in all of music. Given this ubiquity of overdubbing and editing in jazz, it essentially becomes a moot point to discuss its importance, but given non-jazz writers' tendency to ignore the use of technology in jazz, it becomes important to note this fact.

Jazz in the Literature of Music Production

After being somewhat ignored in the literature, recent excellent scholarship and journalism examines the recording process from various perspectives, such as comprehensive histories of recording technology (Horning 2013; Burgess 2014),¹⁸ the aesthetics of record production (Zak 2001; Moorefield 2005; Katz 2010); examinations of jazz record labels and particular record albums;¹⁹ and journalistic-style interviews with producers (Massey 2000, 2009; Jarrett 2016).²⁰ Few, however, deal with jazz record production or jazz producers at any length. When they do, jazz recording, and often jazz itself, is unfortunately often mischaracterized or misunderstood given the fact that overdubbing and editing of the records from the 1950s discussed above have been common knowledge for many years.

Regarding developments in record production in jazz and classical music, Virgil Moorefield states: "These forms of music are generally recorded live, without overdubs, and with minimal, if any, post-performance enhancement. The idea is to capture the live performance in the tradition

of ‘realistic’ recording, as it has existed since the 1870s” (Moorefield 2005, xiv). While he’s correct that much of jazz production focuses on the concept of a live performance either in the studio or a concert, often a great deal of production went into creating that sound.²¹

Albin Zak, in *The Poetics of Rock*, a landmark book regarding the compositional element of production in pop and rock music, also touches briefly on jazz:

While records were extremely important in the development of the jazz tradition, the art of jazz recording up until the emergence of jazz-rock fusion was focused on the quality of the sonic presentation and on capturing a good—and complete—take.

(Zak 2001, 7)

Here, like Moorefield, Zak misses the fact that extensive production values were in use long before jazz-rock fusion in the 1960s and 1970s. Further, while Zak believes that “altering [the musical moment] after the fact challenges the traditional ideology of authenticity in jazz” (Zak 2001, 7), the history of jazz recording again proves that jazz musicians immediately embraced technology that allowed them to create or improve their recorded product with any technological means at their disposal.

Susan Schmidt Horning clearly has an appreciation for jazz and presents informative accounts of jazz recording sessions, yet at times she mischaracterizes jazz and jazz record production. Horning speaks of jazz’s “unrestrained solo improvisations” (Horning 2013, 46), which is certainly a one-dimensional characterization while also harkening back to primitivist stereotypes regarding jazz. And while she correctly acknowledges that not all jazz musicians were concerned with the notion of the importance of the first take, her discussion of Miles Davis in this regard is lacking: “Miles Davis, for instance, used the recording studio to improve his performance not by electronic intervention but by playing and listening and by honing his interpretation of the music over successive takes until he had achieved what he wanted” (Horning 2013, 197), ignoring the amount of technological manipulation that was involved in his recordings from the 1950s until the end of his career.

Richard James Burgess touches on jazz lightly throughout his history of record production but provides a more complete description of the collaboration between producer Teo Macero and Miles Davis:

Macero extended his creative integration of studio-manipulated compositional techniques based on improvised performance similar to those he had employed on Davis’s preceding album, *In a Silent Way*. Paradigm shifting productions in any genre are worthy of respect but to make quantum creative leaps and create enduring music that sells is a consequential achievement.

(Burgess 2014, 92–93)

Mark Katz’s intriguing book, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, also avoids these stereotypes in his chapter on the 1917 recordings of The Original Dixieland Jazz Band. Chapter 3 “explores how the possibilities and the limitations of early recording technology shaped nearly every aspect of jazz performance and composition” (Katz 2010, 5), which is prescient and applies to jazz today as I later discuss in relation to contemporary jazz artists. Katz’s book also highlights the difficulties inherent in writing about music and technology. Originally written in 2004, Katz revised it in 2010 by adding a chapter on contemporary technology, which is now quite out of date, and from my perspective the technological changes since then serve to directly challenge some of his main points. This is not just Katz’s issue, of course—as I wrote this chapter new articles constantly came to my attention that did something quite similar to my arguments, and I’m sure by the time this is published it will also be out of date.

Howard Massey's *Behind the Glass: Top Record Producers Tell How They Craft the Hits* (Massey 2000) and its follow-up, *Behind the Glass, Volume II* (Massey 2009), are rare examples of books that provide intimate examinations of the record production process from many perspectives, though they largely bypass jazz records. Massey speaks of "the rarified world of jazz and classical recording" (Massey 2009, 101) and does, however, have an excellent profile of Steven Epstein, a top producer in those fields. Contrary to some of my main points, Epstein states:

There are some producers that might not have a problem recording jazz with a significant amount of overdubbing, but my feeling is that, since everyone is spontaneously supposed to play off everyone else and derive their inspiration at that moment—that, after all, is what makes jazz exciting and wonderful—it should all be recorded in real time and without overdubs.

(Massey 2009, 101)

Moving beyond the stereotypes and tropes that can occur in books on record production, Michael Jarrett's *Pressed for All Time: Producing the Great Jazz Albums* presents an excellent and unique examination of the intricacies of jazz record production through extensive interviews with fifty-five high-level jazz record producers. While Jarrett's interviews are invaluable and extremely informative, I take issue with one point of his when he states that "while the album shows no sign of disappearing, it also shows no sign of further development" (Jarrett 2016, xvi). The following discussion of three contemporary artists gives a more hopeful and wider perspective than Jarrett's regarding the future of records in the jazz world.

Contemporary Issues in Technology

Technological advances in music—and in any field—often have both good and less good ramifications. The fact that digital music is so easy to disseminate and distribute widely also means that people can easily steal music (and they do so in many ways), and the money paid for streams, the fastest rising method of consuming music, is paltry to say the least. The formulas regarding payment for streaming royalties are extremely complicated and details are beyond the scope of this chapter, but for example: artists receive different amounts depending on if a listener is a paid or free subscriber; how long the stream is activated is calculated to determine if payment will be made for the stream; and different services pay different royalties. In terms of monetization, in very rough terms, at the time of this writing it takes approximately 1,000 streams to equal the payment to an artist for a single download and therefore approximately 10,000 to equal the payment for one album download of ten songs. Taking this one step further, this means that to equal the sale of 100 CDs that an independent artist could fairly easily sell at gigs and to family and friends, they would need in the range of 1,000,000 streams of music from their CD, an unlikely number for an independent artist. Obviously, this has radically changed the economy of the music business.

So, while music is more easily available and we can hear any type of music we want at any second, it's also becoming extremely difficult to make money with recordings. Since jazz is commercially marginal anyway, this has indeed changed the ballgame for us. The classic artists we all listen to had record deals that actually paid them money and they received royalties (unless they had poor contracts, a common occurrence).²² It was not their sole living, but it was part of it, and this is no longer true for most of us. In fact, outside of the three major music conglomerates' sales of top artists (Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, and Warner Music Group), neither the artists nor the labels have a clue how best to approach the music business these days, either in terms of how to best distribute their creative work or to monetize it.

Many artists, however, are coming up with creative solutions that work for them, as I discuss below, and certainly the democratization of distribution is a boon to independent artists and labels: what large distribution networks or labels do for artists for either a fee or a licensing deal we can now do quite cheaply and easily on our own through distribution service companies such as CD Baby, bandcamp, Distrokid, and TuneCore. Given this situation, other than top-selling artists, we are now essentially all independent artists on our own in a morass of a business climate. Fortunately, jazz musicians are actually quite tech-savvy, and we are taking advantage of the economically viable home, project, and independent studios, while creating new opportunities for ourselves, for example, by self-producing and self-releasing or creating cooperative record labels. Examining three of today's most successful artists—each handling the technological and business issues of 2017 differently—provides a real-world look at how artists are affected by technology and how they react to these issues, as well as how technologically savvy contemporary jazz musicians are.

Esperanza Spalding, Maria Schneider, and Nicholas Payton

One of today's most commercially successful jazz artists is Esperanza Spalding. Spalding took the music world by storm, including four Grammy Awards, has emerged as one of jazz's biggest stars, and is currently signed by Concord Music Group. Her *Emily's D+ Evolution* (2016) sits more comfortably in a pop-oriented medium and consequently is more reliant on contemporary recording technology, as seen by her collaboration with Tony Visconti, David Bowie's producer, as well as by the overall sound quality of the production. To some of us who have followed her meteoric career, this was a surprising record, though ideally artists are appreciated without particular expectations and allowed the freedom to be as broad as they choose to be.

Spalding's September 2017 project, *Exposure*, is a very interesting and even telling response to the musical experience of *Emily's D+ Evolution* as well as to the demands of her label, and provides us with the opportunity to look at new ways technology is allowing and encouraging music to be presented. Spalding spent seventy-seven hours in a studio with a few musicians to compose and record an album of ten songs, most with lyrics, and the entire process was broadcast as a live feed on Facebook, including her eating and sleeping in the studio. In other words, she essentially moved in reverse from a pop style recording process that entails a long and involved recording and production process to a more traditionally jazz-oriented style that entails doing an album quickly (though seventy-seven hours is a long time compared to completing a record in a single three to four hour session, a common occurrence in the past). Conversely, at the same time she also used the latest technology of streaming video on social media to reach a potentially vast Facebook audience. It also seems as if she is trying to reclaim her independence—the record label in this case will not be able to have a say in what she records—that ironically, but not unusually, has been threatened by her success.

Exposure is being released as a limited edition of 7,777 CD packages that include a piece of manuscript paper from the process. Interestingly, it is not available for streaming or download—again a return to an earlier period of means of distribution—and, even though it is still in the digital domain, I see this, and her time limitations in the studio, as other examples of an analog reaction to the digital revolution. Certainly Spalding's success at selling records allowed her the power to negotiate with her label to pay for this unique recording circumstance and puts a sharp focus on the difference between her and the rest of us in terms of star power, even including one of jazz's most successful contemporary composers, Maria Schneider.

Schneider has had to find a different route to fund her creative work through her participation with ArtistShare, an established and organized vehicle for fundraising and crowd sourcing, and many artists use a version of this method if they cannot afford to fund projects themselves. You can

essentially only get her CDs through their website, she does not put her music on streaming services or YouTube, and she spends a great amount of effort to protect her work and her ownership rights. In fact, to do so she has become a major activist in this area in the U.S., and this brings up some of the most important areas regarding intellectual property rights today.

On her own and through the MusicAnswers organization (musicanswers.org), Schneider is fighting battles on several fronts. For one example, she is a leading spokesperson for changing the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) that is currently destroying the power of copyright. This includes the notion of “take down leave it down,” which entails getting rid of the safe harbor provision that makes it so difficult to keep our work off YouTube if we so choose. She is also supporting the Fair Pay Fair Play Act, which would mandate that performers be paid for radio play in the same way that composers and publishers are currently receiving compensation. And in an open letter, Schneider protested the Recording Industry Association of America’s recent stand on “moral rights” regarding rights of attribution and the importance of accurate metadata to protect ownership rights.

So in order to protect her ability to make money off of her work, as well as help her fellow content creators, Schneider—a leading composer in the jazz field and beyond—has essentially been forced to become an activist regarding rights issues. I find it an interesting development that while she is decidedly an acoustic instrumental composer, seemingly with little interest in digital music creation beyond the recording process, Schneider is still smack in the middle of technological issues and advances and their various positive and negative ramifications. Someone who *has* taken great advantage of current music technology on many levels is trumpeter Nicholas Payton.

Payton brings up different yet related issues. He’s been quite prolific over many years and his work is incredibly varied, including straight-ahead small group albums with varied themes, a recreation of the Miles Davis–Gil Evans collaboration *Sketches of Spain*, and his *#BAM: Live at Bohemian Caverns (BMF)* on which he plays both trumpet and Fender Rhodes keyboard, often at the same time.²³ Two recent albums get to some of the points I am exploring here regarding music technology, including business decisions he has made and his expression of himself as a multi-instrumentalist. He is also an outspoken person who uses social media effectively—in particular his blog²⁴—and to some controversially.

Payton alternately speaks of his 2011 CD, *Bitches*, as a blues album and a Rhythm and Blues (R&B) album, both of which make sense to me. His lyrics tell a story of an affair from start to finish, and he refers to it as a semi-autobiographical break-up album from an adult point of view. On first listen it might seem very different from other things he has done, but if you look at the totality of his output it is something his music has been leading up to for a while. He wrote the music and lyrics, plays all of the instruments, sings, and did the drum programming, and has guest jazz and pop vocalists including Cassandra Wilson and Esperanza Spalding. Contemporary high quality recording technology that is available at relatively low cost allows Payton to express himself as a multi-instrumentalist much more easily than in the past.

Concord Records declined to release *Bitches*, so Payton licensed it—a very common arrangement these days even for well-known artists—to the German label, In + Out Records. *Bitches* was originally released for streaming and download and on CD and he also released it as a limited edition of 999 numbered LPs, an example of the resurgence of vinyl LPs and similar to Spalding’s limited release of *Exposure*.

As is true for so many artists now, Payton is self-releasing his work on his own label on bandcamp—a streaming and downloading site for independent artists that offers great flexibility for both the artist and consumer—which fits in with the sometimes anti-establishment attitudes we see on his blog. This is also something that contemporary music technology has not only allowed but actually encourages. While he has always been prolific, it’s interesting to note that now that he is self-releasing, his output has increased and has become even more varied. For example, for his 2016 *Textures* project he set up his keyboard and laptop with the visual artist

Anastasia Pelias and her blank canvasses and created what he refers to as “off the cuff tracks done in real time with an artist that paints” (Payton, 2016). His most recent 2017 release, *Afro-Caribbean Mixtape*, is a double CD. It features his working band, a cellist also playing sound effects and samples, and a DJ on turntable and sampler. It has elements of *musique concrète* and electroacoustic music and is a rich mix of extremely varied music that at times superimposes numerous samples of people speaking over the music, including Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Max Roach. The whole CD seems to be more about flow as an entity than traditional tunes and solos, though that element is there as well. Finally, *Bitches*, *Afro-Caribbean Mixtape*, and Spalding’s *Emily’s D+ Evolution* are clear examples of artists continuing to create albums meant to be considered as an entity, as opposed to tracks independent of each other, even with the proliferation of individual downloads and streaming. In addition, it is fascinating and illustrative that each of these three artists have taken control of his or her artistic output and careers in a unique manner.

Conclusion

This chapter only begins to touch on issues regarding jazz record production and jazz in today’s marketplace, and these are just small parts of the much larger topic of jazz and technology, a topic that is ripe for deeper investigation. To mention a few important areas, a thorough examination of artists that embrace technology as part of broadening concepts of jazz, or cross-genre work that embraces popular styles such as Rhythm and Blues, rap, and hip hop—including pianist-composer Herbie Hancock, pianist-producer Robert Glasper, and trumpeter-bandleader Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah—is a particularly timely subject. Intellectual property concerns such as those Maria Schneider, guitarist-activist Marc Ribot, and others are pursuing are crucial to the future of jazz and music in general, as is a more in depth examination of new and innovative business models. Instrument technology, both acoustic and electronic, and their effect on contemporary jazz would be a fascinating study, and how jazz musicians are using home studio technology is an important and closely related topic. Finally, an investigation of methods that contemporary jazz scholars are using to examine jazz and technology would be a valuable endeavor. In some ways, jazz and technology might be the most pressing area in jazz studies for continued investigation, as at this point it essentially impacts all aspects of jazz and jazz musicians’ careers today in one way or another. I find it inspiring and exciting to think that as we continue to examine this topic we will always be out of date.

Notes

1. While recording technology is the most obvious, issues of instrument technology, both acoustic and electronic, are perhaps the most crucial, and this is certainly an area ripe for continued examination.
2. Compact disc.
3. Long-Playing.
4. MPEG Layer 3.
5. Free Lossless Audio Codec.
6. Advanced Audio Coding.
7. To give the reader a better view of my perspective, my involvement in the topic of jazz and technology is multifaceted. I am a composer, trumpet player, and multi-instrumentalist; I have a home studio and self-produce my music as well as the music of other artists; I am a jazz scholar, lately primarily investigating jazz composition and jazz composers; and I initiated a music technology program at my school, John Jay College, City University of New York, and teach all of the courses in it. Consequently, I’m keenly observing this crucial and ever-changing area that fascinates me and confounds me at the same time.
8. For example, during the first week of November 2017, country artist Kenny Chesney’s release, *Live in No Shoes Nation*, reached No. 1 on the Billboard album chart with only 1.6 million streams. This is compared to three other albums in the Top 5 that each had over 50 million streams. In this case, a purchase of the

physical CD was bundled with concert tickets, clearly a winning strategy and a new approach to encourage the more profitable physical sales (Sisario 2017). I also discuss this further later in the chapter in regards to Maria Schneider, Esperanza Spalding, and Nicholas Payton.

9. Vinyl sales continue to rise. Nielsen Music's 2017 Q3 report states that 16 percent of all physical sales were vinyl LPs, the highest percentage since the CD was introduced. Also, jazz record buyers tend towards physical sales. Newvelle Records (newvelle-records.com) is a company that exemplifies this interest. For \$400 dollars a year, subscribers receive six high-quality jazz vinyl LPs a year. Artists on the label retain all rights but commit to two years of exclusive vinyl release with Newvelle.
10. The relative sonic quality of analog versus digital is a broad and divisive topic and beyond the scope of this chapter. Two recent books provide fascinating insights surrounding this issue: David Sax's *The Revenge of Analog: Real Things and Why They Matter* (2016); and Damon Krukowski's *The New Analog* (2017).
11. I would like to extend my thanks to Benjamin Givan for sharing his unpublished 2002 paper with me, "The Rise of Overdubbing in the American Recording Studio," as well as for his thoughtful insights and suggestions as I muddle through my various projects, including this one. Thanks also to John Wriggle, Benjamin Lapidus, Bill Kirchner, and Kwami Coleman for their comments on this chapter.
12. Vocalist-guitarist-multi-instrumentalist Slim Gaillard was doing this in 1951 as well, as were numerous others.
13. Paul's work is discussed throughout Burgess 2014 and Horning 2013, and in great detail in Mary Alice Shaughnessy's *Les Paul: An American Original* (1993).
14. This recording documents the only time Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Charles Mingus, and Max Roach recorded together.
15. Sherwood recorded four trumpet parts, trombone, mellophone, vibraphone, piano, guitar, bass, drums, and four vocal parts.
16. For this recording Evans performed on pianist Glenn Gould's piano, and Gould's heavily edited and iconic version of J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* is one of the most famous examples of in-studio editing in the classical world.
17. The innovative producer Bill Laswell points out this issue (Jarrett 2016, 133).
18. Andre Millard's *America on Record: A History of Recorded Sound* (1995) and Mark Cunningham's *Good Vibrations: A History of Record Production*, 2e (1996) are older valuable surveys of record production.
19. Some books on jazz record labels are: Ashley Kahn's *The House That Trane Built: The Story of Impulse Records* (2006), Rick Kennedy's *Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy, Gennett Records and the Rise of America's Musical Grassroots* (2013), and Jason Weiss's *Always in Trouble: An Oral History of ESP-Disk, the Most Outrageous Record Label in America* (2012). The Oxford Studies in Recorded Jazz series (Oxford University Press) includes books that examine individual record albums, including: Keith Waters's *The Studio Recordings of the Miles Davis Quintet, 1965–68* (2011); Catherine Tackley's *Benny Goodman's Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert* (2012); and Gabriel Solis's *Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane at Carnegie Hall* (2013). Tony Whyton examines *A Love Supreme in Beyond A Love Supreme: John Coltrane and the Legacy of an Album* (2013).
20. Ted Fox's *In the Groove: The People Behind the Music* (1986) also has insightful interviews with a variety of record producers.
21. Chapter 2 of Darren Mueller's 2015 Duke University Ph.D. dissertation, "At the Vanguard of Vinyl: A Cultural History of the Long-Playing Record in Jazz," offers a uniquely thorough examination of the LP in jazz as he details the intense post-production that went into the classic 1956 LP, *Ellington at Newport*.
22. As an example, drummer Jack DeJohnette, one of jazz's most important musicians, in an open letter to the 2016 New York State gubernatorial candidate Zephyr Teachout, states: "Since downloads and YouTube started, my recording music royalties have declined by over 90%. I am all over YouTube, [and] everyone but me gets an income from this" (<https://thetrichordist.com/2016/06/27/4-questions-for-zephyrteachout-jack-and-lydia-dejohnette-letter/>, accessed November 15, 2017).
23. #BAM is Payton's acronym for Black American Music, a hashtag he prefers to other labels referring to black American music in general, including jazz.
24. Payton's blog can be found at <https://nicholaspayton.wordpress.com/>. For one example, see Payton's post, "On Why Jazz Isn't Cool Anymore," <https://nicholaspayton.wordpress.com/2011/11/27/on-why-jazz-isnt-cool-anymore/>.

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21

FIGURING IMPROVISATION

Peter Elsdon

The man is playing with his heart right here. He's not readin' notes off a piece of paper, he's writin' it—as he plays with a feel. In the moment! Now that's jazz. That's improvisation. That's genius. And we invented that—New Orleans. Right here.¹

In these lines from an episode of David Simon's *Treme*, trombonist Antoine Baptiste (played by Wendell Pierce), is explaining to the school band he is coaching why they are not ready to play at Mardi Gras. He puts a CD into a player, and out comes the famous opening trumpet cadenza of Louis Armstrong's "West End Blues" (1928). Antoine then uses Armstrong to demonstrate his point, via the words above, a point that conflates the creation of jazz with place and a very particular expressive aesthetic, all against the backdrop of post-Katrina New Orleans where *Treme* is set. While this is a statement about jazz that rehearses familiar tropes, it is worth considering the importance improvisation comes to play in rhetorical terms. Consider for a moment a convoluted transposition of the above statement. What if Antoine was trying to describe a piece of classical music? Would he exclaim, "that's composition"? Perhaps that is a simplistic point to make, but it prompts the question: how many other forms of music have come to be so defined by a mode of creation as jazz? And to Antoine it is not just that this music is improvised, but that it sounds the way it does because it is improvised. I suggest that this intertwining of jazz with improvisation ought to give pause for thought and might prompt a critical account of just what effect this conflation of the two things has had within jazz scholarship.

Almost all accounts of jazz make light of the concept of improvisation. Jazz has often been defined through the presence of improvisation. But this relationship also works the other way; improvisation has come to be defined by jazz. In this chapter, I want to pursue the idea of improvisation as a concept that has emerged from jazz discourse, being shaped by conceptions about music and culture. Seen this way, improvisation is an idea about music making that emerges from specific contexts and discourses, rather than being some kind of absolute that exists outside of place or time. And in this chapter, I discuss some key changes of direction in this discourse that have framed the study of improvisation in a new way. To begin, I want to start by problematizing the actual term itself.

Because improvisation was largely regarded as a curiosity within the Western art music tradition for a long time, it tended to be identified in musics from outside the Western world. The result is that most studies of improvisation emphasize plurality, confronting the reader with the sheer

range of contexts in which it is practiced.² Partly because the idea of improvisation originated in a discourse dominated by the Western art music tradition, it was framed against the normative idea of composition. Laudan Nooshin has demonstrated how discourse on improvisation constructs it as composition's "other" (Nooshin 2003). Because composition functions as the norm within this discourse, improvisation has been described entirely in terms of composition, specifically how it differs from the act of composition. Nooshin explains how, when Western scholars encountered Iranian music, they began describing parts of its *musiqi-e assil* tradition as improvised, regardless of the fact that Iranian musicians had no corresponding term. This discourse did cultural work by imposing distinctions between composition and improvisation onto a tradition that had no such distinction. A westernized view of musical creativity was imposed on a non-Western music, and practices of music making were labeled as improvised and thus othered. This is a critical insight, because it reveals that to use the term improvisation is to accept a certain view of musical creativity, premised on an opposition between composition and improvisation.

In this light, the conflation of jazz with improvisation can be read in broad historical terms as prompted by the kind of binary that Nooshin describes. Discourses on Western art music were, in the first part of the twentieth century, very much bound up with the work concept, and the *werktrue* ideal that Lydia Goehr identifies (Goehr 2007). The idea that a composer left a definitive version of their intentions expressed through the medium of the notated score led to a discourse that was centered very much on composition rather than performance—performance being merely the execution of the composer's wishes. The fact that extemporization had been a crucial part of earlier traditions was an inconvenient truth that was subservient to a broader narrative about white male European composers and the works they produced. The way that notation employed by contemporary composers of the time tended toward an exactitude and prescription of a kind that was quite new almost legislated against any real form of creative agency on the part of the performer. Even when the experimental tradition began to introduce notions of indeterminacy and chance, as most famously in the work of John Cage, there was, George Lewis argues, a move to actively deny the influence of jazz as a model, thereby invoking a hierarchy that elevated serious art music above the supposedly populist leanings of jazz (Lewis 2004b).

For this reason, it is not surprising that one of the most familiar tropes in early jazz discourse is how jazz is *different* from the Western art music tradition. This difference is, of course, usually framed in terms of improvisation. The distinction might often be framed like this: classical musicians play from a score, and jazz musicians play "from nothing." Onto this dichotomy were also mapped a series of other binaries: art/popular, mind/body, and so on. This represents what I will call a *figuring* of improvisation; not a definition of the concept, but the invocation of a whole series of ideas about the practice that serve to locate it in relation to discourses about musical practices and cultures. This figuring of improvisation is dependent on the idea of composition, as that which provides improvisation with its identity through difference. To figure improvisation is to enact a set of beliefs about what it represents, and how it can (or cannot) be located as a musical practice. Seeing improvisation this way is to acknowledge that it is not an absolute, but rather a frequently romanticized idea about music making that had its origins in a particular cultural situation. And thus, in doing this, we acknowledge the contingency of the whole idea. Just as early jazz musicians would have had little or no use for the term, so its ubiquity within contemporary jazz pedagogy marks the fact that we think and talk about it as something universally understood.

Paul Steinbeck has already suggested a similar way of thinking in his article "Improvisational Fictions" (Steinbeck 2013). He suggests, following Marian Guck's idea of "Analytical Fictions," that as music is participatory, writings on music contain traces of interactions with music and reveal the beliefs and values of those doing the writing. Steinbeck suggests that three of the common fictions are these: improvisation is like composition, improvisation is primarily a social practice, and improvisation is about critique and opposition. To that I might add what I have just

suggested: improvisation is different from composition. There is also a kind of meta-fiction here, to alter Steinbeck's terminology. All these fictions are themselves dependent on the very idea of improvisation as a practice that can be located and discussed. And because improvisation itself might be described as a fiction, the very invocation of the concept is often as significant as how it is discussed. Where I differ from Steinbeck is terminology, because I am wary of the implication of the term fiction as untruth or fantasy. To talk about the figuring of improvisation is to acknowledge that as it is placed in different contexts so it acquires meaning, and that in turn that meaning has broader consequences.

That is why we must interrogate how, in the wholesale integration of the idea of improvisation into jazz studies, the idea of improvisation becomes itself part and parcel of the discourse. Rather than being a fixed entity, it is something that is emergent from the telling of jazz history and wider narratives about jazz, instead of acting as the frame on which we construct those narratives. Improvisation is figured through discourses on jazz, rather than emerging directly from jazz itself. And the way that improvisation has become a central theme on jazz studies marks out certain frames through which jazz has been viewed. In what follows, I present what is no more than a sketch of some views of improvisation as it has been figured in discourse. I am particularly concerned with the implications these figurings have for the direction jazz studies has taken, and for our view of jazz history.

Jazz as Improvisation

I suggested above that the difference of improvisation from composition marked a key starting point for jazz discourse. One of the more specific manifestations of this approach comes from a figuring of the relationship between the two, as I have already suggested. That is, while improvisation is a defining feature of jazz, it is also premised on the idea of composition, and thus the two function in a particular hierarchical relationship. If the real and authentic quality of jazz is spontaneity, which can only emerge in a context where improvisation is present, then the act of composing only serves as a means to an end—to create the conditions under which musicians can improvise and create jazz. A particularly salient example of this tendency emerges in Jerry Coker's 1978 book *Listening to Jazz*. While this text might not be considered particularly well-known, I use it here merely as an exemplar of an idea that is much more wide-ranging. Coker's text is a kind of listener's guide to jazz, designed to lead the beginner through an understanding of the functioning of the music and the contributions of some of its greatest exponents. He frames improvisation as the core of jazz. Jazz is, he suggests, "the only music founded on the expressive craft of improvisation" (Coker 1978, 44). For Coker, because this is the case, the real history of the music is found in the solos of the great improvisers. Improvisation is identified here as an act of the individual musician, invoking the "great man" trope of historiography. Coker sees compositions as providing vehicles for improvisation, thus placing the two in a relationship in which one serves the other. Composition is no more than the means by which improvisation can be allowed to take place. The compositions jazz musicians play are no more than canvases on which the real stuff of jazz improvisation happens.

Other manifestations of this idea occur in texts oriented toward similar audiences. For example, in John Postgate's *A Plain Man's Guide to Jazz* from 1973 we find this:

Jazz is at heart an improvised music. The tune or theme, so important in most orthodox music, is relatively unimportant in jazz. Its function is to set a mood for the jazz musicians' improvisations and (usually) to supply their harmonic foundation. It is what a jazz musician makes of a tune that is important.

(Postgate 1973, 24–25)

In *The Power of Black Music*, Samuel A. Floyd, Jr. talks of tunes and arrangements as “only materials on which a good *performance* can be built” (Floyd 1995, 228). And we can also see how jazz pedagogy is built on much the same idea. The huge market for play along books and recordings has established the idea that what one practices is improvising, and it is the composition that facilitates that. In fact, in this approach composition is often relegated to the role of helping to create the backing track, which cycles round endlessly.

In this figuring of improvisation, composition becomes subservient to it as an old hierarchical relationship is reversed. This figuring assumes that improvisation and composition are different kinds of creative acts, not merely in terms of temporality, but aesthetically and in what they produce. This view of jazz as a music made primarily by musicians, not composers, is a familiar one. But when it is applied with a historical brush it has interesting, albeit predictable consequences. Consider, for example, that the list of major figures in jazz Coker provides does not include Duke Ellington, nor any other musician who worked in a comparable field. This approach sidelines a whole range of musical activities or forms of musicking that do not fit the iconic image of jazz. Consider, for instance, just how little is said about the skill involved in arranging for the swing bands of the 1930s, how much attention is instead given to the name soloists in the prominent bands featured in much of the literature. This figuring of improvisation serves to bring out the importance of the individual, to contribute to the kind of “great man” history of jazz that has been so roundly critiqued.³

Improvisation not only is an individual expression but also brings the personalities of its players to the forefront. This effect of unmediated immediacy has been key to jazz, and one arguably rooted in the blues aesthetic, as articulated via the idea of jazz as a folk tradition, thus unencumbered by the neutralizing effect of transmission in the form of being inscribed as notation. This idea of the “voice” of musicians manifesting through the sound they make when playing is enormously important. It gives rise to perhaps the most pervasive metaphor in the discourse, that of improvisation as storytelling. This is to invoke not only ideas of folk traditions and oral transmission but also some of what George Lewis describes as “Afrological” approaches to improvisation. For Lewis, the broad ideas of “Eurological” and “Afrological” approaches are “historically emergent rather than ethnically essential” (Lewis 2004b, 153). Part of Lewis’s exposition of the Afrological includes a notion of improvisation as related to sound and identity, as I alluded to earlier, and is worth quoting here:

Part of telling your own story is developing your own “sound.” An Afrological notion of an improviser’s sound may be seen as analogous to the Eurological concept of composition “style,” especially in a musically semiotic sense. Moreover, for an improviser working in Afrological forms, “sound,” sensibility, personality, and intelligence cannot be separated from an improviser’s phenomenal (as distinct from formal) definition of music.

(156)

This idea of an improviser’s sound as something personal and individual but at the same time rooted in tradition and context is absolutely central in Lewis’s Afrological aesthetic. It is indeed something that can be traced right back through a whole range of discourse, from LeRoi Jones to Albert Murray. It can be described as part of the “blues idiom expression” Walton Muyumba identifies as emerging from this discourse, an expression steeped in individual experience but also formed as public expression (Muyumba 2009, 15). Improvisation comes to be significant here because of its power to embed the idea of personal voice, individuality, and agency. It cannot be understood as mere text, laid bare through the artifacts that it leaves behind.

The storytelling metaphor hardly needs explaining. It is manifest in so many different famous sayings on jazz, discussed by so many writers. Ingrid Monson’s now-classic book *Saying Something*

is perhaps one of the most apt works to be mentioned here in its direct use of the metaphor as a central theme (Monson 1996). The storytelling metaphor has important implications for figuring improvisation. But these are also confusing in that they point in two seemingly different directions. Or put differently, these directions draw on two different facets of language that are intimately connected but give rise to very different, almost diametrically opposed critical viewpoints: voice and syntax.

The metaphor of storytelling immediately invokes the idea of improvisation as language, a language in which there are identifiable and repeated components that might be said to carry meanings or implications. One of the earliest manifestations of this approach was in the way a number of scholars, but most famously Thomas Owens in a dissertation on Charlie Parker, dissected the elements of an improviser's vocabulary (Owens 1974). From Owens's work came the idea of what was sometimes called formulaic improvisation, identified as such in Barry Kernfeld's article "Improvisation" for the *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* (Kernfeld 1994). This approach has strong precedents in the study of literature and particularly work on epic oral poetry, such as Albert Lord's 1960 book *The Singer of Tales* (Lord 2000). Gregory Smith's 1983 dissertation on Bill Evans made this link explicit, while taking a similar kind of approach to Owens (Smith 1983).⁴ In these kinds of approaches, improvisation is figured as a language that is specific to an individual while also being part of a larger tradition. The operation of this language serves to characterize the voice of that individual, while some musicians served as exemplars because of the extraordinary facility they had in manipulating this language (Charlie Parker is the prime example).

Other approaches take the language metaphor in a more structuralist direction. Developing on analytical methodologies that aimed to explore the relationship between different elements in a musical discourse, a range of writers applied techniques like Schenkerian analysis and pitch-class set theory to jazz improvisation. Consider briefly two examples here, which demonstrate, in their own way, how improvisation figures in this discourse. Gary Potter's article "Analyzing Improvised Jazz" from 1992 serves as a useful review of a range of different approaches. Midway through the article he pauses to consider an important issue:

Any music analyst needs to ask two questions: Why analyze this music? And for whom is my analysis intended? My answers to these questions determine the direction of the rest of this article. Why analyze jazz? Jazz deserves to be studied because, at its best, it is glorious music, worthy of appreciation on all levels including the intellectual. For whom is my analysis intended? Any fairly well-trained listener-reader, whether jazz lover or not, particularly the musician who may have little exposure to jazz and who can be guided to greater understanding and, therefore, greater appreciation.

(Potter 1992, 17)

Appreciating music through intellectual understanding is a classical Western aesthetic, familiar from accounts of canonic art music and a discourse of appreciation. But what it also implied here is a classic Cartesian duality of mind/body. Left unsaid is the implication that jazz has generally been understood as raw unmediated physical sensation, via an old-fashioned kind of primitivism. The invocation of the idea of the intellectual is not just to do with the traditional discourse of appreciation, but as a counter to this physicality. Another scholar who championed the use of analytical techniques for jazz, Steve Larson, regularly invoked the comparison of improvisation with composition. In his article on Schenkerian analysis, for instance, he emphasizes the commonalities between composed and improvised music, and ends with a statement about exceptionality and (implicitly) genius (Larson 1998, 241). This ties in to one of Steinbeck's fictions: improvisation is like composition. In both these cases, improvisation functions as the thing that elevates jazz, allowing it to demonstrate similar structural characteristics to the tradition of composition that

these kinds of analytical methods had usually addressed. While both writers have in mind to argue for the significance of jazz, the aesthetic grounds on which they do so only reinforce the terms of a hierarchy that is problematic.

The kind of approach Potter and Larson take is representative of a body of literature that now seems to occupy only a very marginal place within the jazz studies oeuvre. That is because of the way both musicology and jazz studies have moved forward, taking quite different paths that have tended to sideline analytical inquiry. More importantly, the reason such kinds of approaches have not been more widely adopted is because they represent a way of thinking about improvisation. That is, improvisation can be understood via the products it creates, musical texts that can be subjected to analytical inquiry that reveals the structural relationships at work. This way of thinking is one that came under wide scrutiny within musicology during the 1980s and 1990s, via a series of now-famous critiques that suggested that analytical inquiry was having the effect of treating the musical text as autonomous, free of any cultural or social context, pure music that could be understood and analyzed as such. Put simply, is it possible to analyze jazz simply through notes, without for instance understanding the context in which it was made, what those notes might come to signify, and so on? This approach figures improvisation as a process that can be understood in terms of the music it produces, via analytical models that quantify the relationships between those notes and consider ideas such as structures and relationships. One of the most specific attacks on this kind of approach is Bruce Johnson's essay in the *Cambridge Companion to Jazz* (Johnson 2002). Johnson sees jazz as a music that had too often been marginalized because of the way that it challenged a whole series of assumptions usually made about music that was the subject of musicological inquiry. For Johnson, jazz was better considered in relation not to non-improvised musics (in other words, composed musics, acting here as a shorthand for the Western art music tradition), but to other non-musical traditions.

If one of the reasons that the kind of analytical models we find operating in Pressing (Pressing 1987), Larson, and others have been relatively little used, it is perhaps because they imply a view of improvisation as product rather than process. They see language in terms of the utterances it creates, rather than the dynamic processes involved in conversation. But it is in thinking about and figuring improvisation more as process that leads to what has been a range of much more significant and influential approaches to the subject. As Vijay Iyer puts it, thinking about improvisation as process implies "a collective activity that harmonizes individuals rather than a telegraphic model of communication as mere transmission of literal, verbal meanings" (Iyer 2004, 394). As we will see, this view of improvisation as language leads in a very different direction.

This figuring of improvisation as a form of storytelling that is personal but also communal and social finds its most salient explication in two books, namely Ingrid Monson's *Saying Something* and Paul Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz*. (Monson 1996; Berliner 1996) Taken together, both volumes on their publication in the 1990s represented a highly significant shift in thinking on improvisation. Both approach improvisation not in terms of the musical text but as an activity that is profoundly social. And both write about improvisation from the point of view of ethnography, as a living tradition that can be experienced and understood from within. Monson's explanation of her title is worth quoting here:

Since saying something—or "sayin' something," as it's usually pronounced—requires soloists who can play, accompanists who can respond, and audiences who can hear within the context of the richly textured aural legacy of jazz and African American music, this verbal aesthetic image underscores the collaborative and communicative quality of improvisation.

(Monson 1996, 1–2)

Improvisation is placed here at the moment of performance, and in terms of the effect it has, namely creating a sense of community through the way it encourages responses and draws in participants. Monson's formulation of this set of relationships also echoed what Christopher Small would, in his 1998 book, call musicking—music not as a thing but as an act involving both musicians and audiences (Small 1998). Both Monson and Berliner's work serves to document the complexities of learning to improvise and how players form themselves in relation to a tradition, aware both of the of ideas cultivating an individual voice while also articulating a respect for and understanding of that tradition. Both writers cover a whole range of musical practices: soloing, comping, time playing, and so on. For Berliner in particular, improvisatory music making is the heart of jazz practice. But what that means is a broad concept no longer beholden to any narrow definition of spontaneous invention. Berliner charts, for example, the ways musicians interact with tunes, learn ideas from each other and from records, pick up parts of a tradition, and become aware of the normative limits of what was and was not idiomatically appropriate and accepted, all as part of this broad tradition of improvisation. Similarly, what emerges most strongly from Monson's work is the idea of improvisatory practice as something that happens within an ensemble, no longer merely the province of the individual musician playing solos but something much broader. But Berliner sometimes displays, Scott DeVeaux suggests, an "indifference to the complications of historical context" (DeVeaux 1998, 395). And that is to say that the particular framing of musical practice he presents is specific to a certain group of musicians located in a particular time, place, and stylistic idiom. It is, for instance, the fact that this account has little to say about the practices of musicians who play more avant-garde kinds of jazz, or for that matter much more traditional styles, or in big bands where reading from notation becomes particularly important. Improvisation is figured as a practice that takes place in small groups, and largely in a style that we might characterize as post-bop. This suggests, then, that what this point represents in jazz studies is not just a different view of improvisation, but a new kind of figuring of improvisation as a broad category of music making that incorporates a whole range of ideas and approaches and certainly no longer holds to the fairly strict ideals of spontaneous invention.

If the work of Monson and Berliner represents part of a move away from a focus on the musical text, toward a broader theorization of improvisation as a practice that is social and cultural as well as musical, some recent moves in jazz studies and beyond have extended that critical trajectory further. The establishment of the journal *Critical Studies in Improvisation* in 2004 marked the bringing together of work started at symposia held at the Guelph Jazz Festival in Canada. While the journal does not focus on jazz specifically, many of the musics discussed are closely connected with jazz, hardly surprisingly. It is worth here quoting the journal's aims, as stated in its first issue:

Broadly considered, improvisation, we contend, offers a salient point of entry for theorizing a broad range of pressing issues of cultural concern: power and resistance, the politics of identity formation, intercultural collaboration, intellectual property rights, social mobility, institutional constraints, multiculturalism, alternative pedagogies, community development, human rights, hope, and new networks of social interaction.⁵

Improvisation figures in this kind of discourse in quite a different way from the contexts I have presented up to now. While the authors are clear that the subject of the journal is improvisational music, music is less the object of this discourse and more the thing that enables a much broader critical debate to take place. This can be seen in how, in their 2015 book *The Fierce Urgency of Now*, Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz, two of whom act as editors of *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, talk about their subject this way:

Improvisation . . . can be defined in a number of ways; as a form of asymmetrical engagement between the individual and the community; as a metonymy for the ways larger

cultural forms take shape; as a critique of discourses that do not allow for the kinds of anarchic exploration of sonic vocabularies and registers to be found in improvisation at its freest and as a test of the limits of free speech and free thought, and how that freedom both challenges and establishes a framework for the encounter between the so called individual and the social framework in which she operates. *At its most reduced, and knowing how dangerous it is to make these sorts of definitive affirmations, improvisation is a site of encounter.* (Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2015, 61, emphasis my own)

This marks not a decisive critical turn but part of a broad refiguring of improvisation, away from a musical process that results in a text that can be analyzed, toward something where the object of the discourse is less the music itself and more the way it articulates values, ideas, identities, relationships, and so on. In the move away from analytical inquiry that had the effect of instating autonomy to the text, the general consensus came to be that music was a product of the socio-cultural condition in which it was created and as such had to be understood in relation to that context in terms of how it enacted relationships of power. Here it is the act of improvising that not only reflects a set of circumstances and conditions but also participates in challenging existing frameworks and establishing new conventions.

This move is also, in many respects, about challenging the claim that music has laid to the term improvisation. George Lewis remarks that “music is already in a leading, perhaps overdetermining position within improvisation studies” (Lewis 2013), suggesting that the general assumption that improvisation refers to music making might lead to a kind of decoupling of the two. Indeed, as co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies*, Lewis has, arguably, put that edict into practice (Lewis and Piekut 2016). While the book is listed within the music section of the publisher’s catalog, it includes contributions that consider the role of improvisation within yoga, poetry, dance, comedy, and management, to name but a few. Its very remit suggests the possibility of an improvisation study that is genuinely interdisciplinary and fosters a dialog about the nature of improvisation in a vast range of different contexts.

But to conclude, I want to return to Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz’s (2015) *The Fierce Urgency of Now*. Even in a text that is passionate about its subject and celebratory of the power of improvisation, there is a certain figuring of improvisation that again needs to be drawn out. That is that, in celebrating improvisation’s power, especially in contexts where it functions as a device for communities that are disenfranchised, what is being discussed are certain musical forms, most particularly those where improvisation serves as part of a musical discourse that seeks to extend the vocabulary of the normative. Improvisation comes to be aligned with a certain kind of musical language. But that musical language is culturally and historically specific, and as much as this approach is inclusionary, it excludes certain styles and forms. Consider again how little this work says about the practice of improvisation in contexts like swing band music and how its emphasis particularly on forms of music that might either broadly be termed free improvisation or free music can exclude a whole range of jazz.

My point here is a broad one, and it is not to challenge the insights that these new debates have produced but instead to point to the way in which discourse is always formed out of certain culturally inherited suppositions. The manner in which the idea of improvisation as representing this site of encounter has emerged has tended to mean that certain kinds of idioms serve this discourse much better than others. The figuring of improvisation and its changing conception has always resulted in views of jazz that emphasize certain aspects over others, perhaps art over popular, progressive over conservative, or performance over composition and arranging. Thus, the history of jazz is also a history of changing ideas about improvisation. The other side of that coin is that as our understanding of improvisation has changed, so has our view of jazz history; the two exist in a symbiotic relationship. But by paying attention to the nature of this relationship and the way in

which improvisation is being figured, we can come to see the significance of those words I quoted at the outset, to understand how it is that improvisation can carry so much weight as a statement of cultural and musical identity.

Notes

1. 'Treme No. 16: "Feels Like Rain", Edward Copeland's Tangents." Accessed January 9, 2017, <http://eddieonfilm.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/treme-no-16-feels-like-rain.html>
2. See for instance Solis and Nettl (2009). Bruno Nettl had, years earlier, proposed that all musics could be placed somewhere on a continuum between improvisation and composition (Nettl 1974). A similar argument is advanced by Carol S. Gould and Kenneth Keaton (Gould and Keaton 2000).
3. See for example Whyton (2010, 16–17).
4. See also MacKenzie (2000).
5. Frederique Arroyas, Ajay Heble, and Ellen Waterman, "Editorial," *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2004. www.criticalimprov.com/article/view/2/7 (accessed January 11, 2017).

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LISTENING FOR EMPIRE IN TRANSNATIONAL JAZZ STUDIES

Frederick J. Schenker

“Jazz studies is transnational these days,” Rashida Braggs writes in her book on African American musicians in post-Second World War Paris, “there is no limit to the places that scholars have located and investigated the music.” Braggs continues, arguing that the “battle” to promote transnational stories “has largely been fought and gloriously continues” (2016, xi). It is easy to concur with part of Braggs’s statement, for there has been a marked growth in jazz scholarship covering new and different “places” that had long been ignored. Some scholars, however, seek to qualify Braggs’s optimism. Catherine Tackley and Tony Whyton agree that “the study of jazz in international settings has blossomed over the past ten years to the point where researchers from around the world can now draw on research into how the music works within specific national settings” (2012, 109). They acknowledge the importance of this scholarship but suggest that there is a distinction between work on jazz in “specific national settings” and research that engages with jazz “as a transnational practice” (ibid.). In particular, they argue that a transnational or global approach—one that differs from merely shifting the geographic focus of jazz studies—enables scholars “to resist American exceptionalist readings of jazz history,” a reading that has long dominated jazz historiography (2010, 94).

To put this another way, Tackley and Whyton suggest that much of what has come to be considered part of a new transnational jazz studies does not actually challenge American exceptionalism. Writing a history of jazz in a location outside the United States of America (US) might call attention to the historic myopia of jazz scholarship and offer a valuable contribution about the ways in which jazz developed in particular settings. As scholars involved in world history make clear, however, changing a geographic lens does not necessarily disrupt dominant narratives. As Micole Siegel argues in an article on the pedagogy of world history, “too many world history courses . . . simply add non-European regions without changing the story, producing a Western Civ[ilization] with ‘add-ons’” (2004, 432–433). Tackley, Whyton, and others suggest that what falls into the transnational jazz camp too often produces, in effect, an official history of jazz with “add-ons,” one that expands the canon without challenging it. Despite its valuable contributions, the transnational turn in jazz studies often remains trapped by an American exceptionalist narrative, albeit one that has expanded to encompass the entire globe.

Jazz studies is not alone in turning to the transnational to critique exceptionalist historiography. American studies has also embarked upon a transnational turn as part of a dramatic shift toward an anti- or post-exceptionalist field of study, a shift that began in the early 1990s and accelerated in the years after 2001. Unlike jazz studies, however, much of the transnational turn

in American studies has been marked by a focus on a specific method to disrupt the discourse of exceptionalism, namely the study of empire. Employing empire and the imperial “as a way of seeing,” to borrow Paul Kramer’s phrase, has transformed American studies in its attempt to move away from exceptional readings of US history (2011, 1350). In this chapter, I offer a brief overview of the ways in which empire has informed the transnational turns of both American studies and jazz studies. I suggest that one possible method for jazz scholars “to resist American exceptionalist readings of jazz history” is to follow the model of American studies and place empire at the center of transnational histories of jazz.

Transnational American Studies

The transnational turn in jazz studies echoes similar trends in a number of other fields of study, including American studies. According to Donald Pease, a prominent historian of American studies, a “transnational turn has effected the most significant reimagining of the field of American studies since its inception” (2015, 39). Of particular interest to jazz scholars are the ways in which this shift toward the transnational emerged as a method to imagine an anti- or post-exceptional American studies. I seek to highlight a few main trends of the transnational turn in American studies, paying special attention to the emergence of empire as a lens through which to pursue an anti-exceptional study of the US.

American studies emerged in the years after the Second World War, a period when scholars imagined the US as an exceptional, anti-imperial nation. Daniel Rodgers has examined how American historians in the 1940s came to believe that the “universal laws” of history that had brought about the implosion of Europe did not apply to the US. They concluded that the US was not merely different from European nations; rather, it was an exceptional nation (1998, 21–40). Scholars of the 1940s noted that one important dimension of this exception was that socialism had only spread throughout Europe and the Soviet Union, not the US. Thus, as the US gained in global influence in the early years of the Cold War, American scholars framed the US in stark contrast to the Soviet Union, the other emerging superpower. This contrast was not merely about socialism, however, but imperialism. In the decades immediately after the Second World War, Jan Radway writes, “public debate was structured by the perceived opposition between the aggressive empire of the Soviet Union and the supposedly disinterested, democratic republic of the United States” (2002, 47–48). Thus, scholars exploring the supposedly exceptional nature of the US in this era were, according to Pease, “grounded in an anti-imperialist ethos” (2010, 63). In an approach that would inform scholarship over subsequent decades, early American studies scholars “retroactively” reinterpreted American history according to the concerns of the present, shaping an anti-imperial history of American exceptionalism extending back to the nation’s founding (ibid.).

The shape of American studies began to change when anti-imperial American exceptionalism lost its foil with the Soviet Union’s dissolution in 1991. In the following years, American scholars increasingly voiced new critiques of the logic of exceptionalism, in part by presenting the US as an imperial power. The most famous single work that signaled this shift was Amy Kaplan and Pease’s (1993) edited volume *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. Kaplan’s germinal opening essay, “Left Alone With America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture,” set the stage for a new direction in American studies (1993, 3–21). Kaplan argued that American exceptionalism had been maintained by willfully erasing any traces of empire from US history. She identified, in particular, three “absences” relating to this topic: 1) “the absence of culture from the history of US imperialism”; 2) “the absence of empire from the study of American culture”; and 3) “the absence of the United States from the postcolonial study of imperialism” (ibid., 11).

Kaplan’s call was specific to scholars of the US, but *Cultures of United States Imperialism* should also be situated alongside broader transnational and imperial turns in other disciplines and fields of

study. By the 1990s, scholars from multiple disciplines were increasingly imagining their research in ways that rejected traditionally bounded studies. One dimension of this broader inquiry was a return of sorts to empire, a topic that had been previously popular before the Second World War. The return to empire, though, was not merely a re-spatializing project. Rather, “the new imperial studies,” as it has been called, also drew heavily upon the contributions of postcolonial theory to re-assess the uneven and ambiguous qualities of the colonial process. Ann Stoler identifies two main dimensions to the new imperial studies: “the premise that colonizing bodies and minds was a sustained, systemic, and incomplete political project in colonial regions *and* in Europe” (2002, 10).

The significance of the “new imperial studies” to American studies grew after the attacks on September 11, 2001. To justify the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, the Bush administration returned to an exceptionalist narrative of US empire, one in which they once again depicted the US as a disinterested, benevolent state in opposition to an evil empire. In response, as Micolé Siegel argues, American studies’ embrace of the “transnational method” in this era should be considered part of political project intended “to critique US nationalism in the era of US imperialism” (2009, xv). In the years after 2001, many have analyzed imperial relations between the US, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Philippines in part to provide broader context for contemporary US politics. Indeed, the imperial dimension of the transnational turn has become one of the most important tools for a new anti- or post-exceptional American studies.

Much of the work on empire in American studies remedies Kaplan’s “absences” and addresses the two areas that Stoler identified as critical for the “new imperial studies.” There has been a particularly robust push toward exploring how US empire has transformed life within the borders of the US. This work has examined subjects from interior decorating to popular music, for example, showing how Tin Pan Alley songs about the Philippine war brought debates about imperial conquest into American living rooms (Hoganson 2007; Rydell 2013). One dimension of this approach has been to propose new frames through which to imagine the US in relation to the world, whether by depicting cities as nodes within broader imperial circuits or by proposing new alignments such as the “transpacific” (Shu and Pease 2015). Another direction has been to dispute the myth of the US as an exceptional (non-)empire by comparing it to European empires (Go 2011).

The imperial has become a critical dimension of the transnational turn in American studies, but the influence of exceptionalism has proven difficult to escape. Pease, Brian Edwards, and Dilip Gaonkar have argued that even Kaplan’s canonical essay “Left Alone With America” “unwittingly reinstalls exceptionalism,” a charge they level against other works of transnational American studies (Edwards and Gaonkar 2010, 9; Pease 2010.) Given the history of American studies as a field of study, one born from a discourse of American exceptionalism, Pease wonders how or if “there can be an American studies after American exceptionalism” (2010, 58). While the debate about the successes of the transnational and imperial turns in American studies is still ongoing, the ways in which empire has come to the fore as a tool for analysis offer a useful model for considering American exceptionalist narratives in the historiography of jazz.

Transnational Histories of Jazz

If Kaplan’s (1993) essay and post-9/11 critiques of US neocolonialism were key catalysts for the transnational turn in American studies, Ken Burns’s 2001 documentary *Jazz* played a similar role for scholars of jazz. Amid the subsequent debates about jazz historiography sparked by the film, E. Taylor Atkins pointed out in 2003 that the film—like much of jazz scholarship—was myopically focused on the US. Atkins proposed a focus on the global and the transnational as a methodology to disrupt the “parochial parameters and implicit nationalism” of jazz studies, especially the “premise of American exceptionalism” that shaped much of jazz discourse (2003, xi, xvii). He called for new global histories of jazz to dispute the idea that jazz is “the product and reflection of

a uniquely American national experience" (ibid., xxvii). In short, Atkins saw the transnational as a way to craft fundamentally new narratives of jazz history.

In practice, however, global histories of jazz often appear to be driven by other agendas. As Atkins notes, even many of the contributors to his volume *Jazz Planet* work to demonstrate how non-Americans should fit into "the jazz master narrative," or "the pantheon" (ibid., xxii). Transnational jazz studies appear, in this case, not so much as a way to critique the "pantheon" but rather as a way to make room for new members. The notion that transnational approaches can be used to focus attention on previously ignored musicians is widespread and takes several forms. For example, Carol Muller has argued that there is "an ethical imperative to strive for greater inclusiveness in the writing of jazz history" (2011, xviii). In many cases, however, the push toward "inclusiveness" has often required universalizing assumptions about particular values, such as musicians' "search for individual musical identities" that result in accounts replicating a master narrative (Atkins 2003, xxiv).

Making the jazz canon more inclusive in this manner has its uses, but it does not inherently challenge American exceptionalism. As Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino argue, expanding the jazz canon ends up perpetuating a particular "order of history," one based on the values of American exceptionalism. They suggest that much of transnational jazz scholarship is simply following a familiar model: "After silence or marginalization (as in the case of free jazz and of fusion) the canon is widened to include the marginalized scenes or genres or histories, but the inclusion respects the usual scheme" (2016, 8–9). The underlying narrative—and the logic of that narrative—does not change merely by adding to it or expanding its borders. Expanding the canon by showing how musicians make jazz in different locales can certainly be valuable and important, but such scholarship may not always demonstrate the disruptive promise of transnational jazz.

What I am suggesting, then, is that empire might be a useful tool to pursue a more transformative transnational turn in jazz studies. To be clear, empire has not been absent from jazz scholarship, but it most commonly appears in studies about jazz as a medium for anti-imperialist sentiment. While this subject has provided fascinating insight into the intersections of jazz, politics, and race, it has also supported the notion that jazz is primarily a music of colonial resistance and decolonization, a concept that reinforces what Andy Fry calls a "utopian impulse . . . sometimes witnessed in writings on global jazz" (2014, 19). Using empire to resist this utopian impulse can allow jazz scholars to contribute to the growing body of work offering more ambivalent assessments about music and empire. This scholarship reminds us to listen for the "noisy" processes of colonialism and to consider how new forms of musical labor, performance practices, and theories of sound can act as a "colonizing force" (Radano and Olaniyan 2016, 2). In the following paragraphs, I highlight several ways in which scholars have already begun to examine jazz as an ambivalent imperial form.

One productive approach toward making the imperial a frame for understanding jazz history has been to explore how empire has informed the logic of jazz historiography. Timothy Brennan, for example, critiques narratives that present jazz as "officially (and only)" an American form as "an imperial brag" that denies the "pan-American character" of jazz (2008, 217, 231). The writing of jazz history itself, he contends, can be a violent act of imperialism when it ignores musical influences from outside the US. These histories are not merely confined to the written page. In his study of Guy Warren/Ghanaba, Steven Feld shows how Warren struggled in 1950s New York in part because American musicians considered African music only as a distant resource based in the past, not as a cultural form of equal value to jazz (Feld 2012, 53–85). For Warren, conceptions of jazz that privileged the US and marked other regions and musical cultures as inferior were reinforcing America's position as a global power. We could consider jazz historiography as imperial, too, in the tendency to transplant US-based ideas about race and music to the rest of the world. The common claim that jazz has been "a symbol of hope for exploited underclasses across the

globe” because it is improvisatory and rooted in African American traditions assumes a problematically singular interpretation of the racial—and musical—character of jazz (Bakkum 2013, 52). We need to interrogate how the act of writing transnational stories can, as Brennan suggests, be an imperial act imposing particular ideas about musical meaning or racial formation.

Another approach for a jazz history shaped by empire is to examine the circulation of music and musicians in relation to larger imperial processes. Mapping the structures through which people, goods, and ideas moved between and across colonial borders can help scholars move beyond the frame of the nation-state to identify new routes and reasons for the movement of jazz. These imperial circuits also commonly crossed colonial borders and connected cities and scenes that are often presented as disconnected from one another (Schenker 2016). Examining the ways in which military, economic, and political infrastructures of imperial powers have informed the travels of jazz also contributes to a focus on what Travis Jackson describes as “the play of power and inequality in the development and dissemination of jazz” (2016, 382). Jazz did not travel along colonial routes on its own as an autonomous form. Nor was it accepted solely because of its aesthetic appeal. Rather, the movements of jazz were informed by shifts in global labor, military actions, and the global expansion of the popular music industry. As Brennan argues with the case of James Reese Europe’s triumph in Europe, it was not uncommon for jazz to travel “at the point of a rifle” (2008, 230). Situating the spread of jazz to diverse locales as part of the political and economic expansions of imperial ambition critiques a vision of an “America global” that, as Edwards and Gaonkar argue, “is often agentless” (2010, 28). By examining the movement of jazz between colonies, former colonies, and metropolises, we can map routes for the movements of jazz beyond national borders and emphasize the various agents involved in jazz’s circulation.

One more approach toward an imperial study of transnational jazz echoes American studies by re-situating US jazz in relation to the rest of the globe. Nicholas Gebhardt, for example, proposes reimagining New Orleans music in relation to broader Caribbean and Latin American history in a way that “refigures jazz from the perspective of the world” (2012, 195). Gebhardt’s proposition is similar to works that consider cities such as New York, San Francisco, and Paris as colonial cities in order to think anew about how imperial ideologies and policies inform the politics of jazz performance and reception within familiar sites of jazz scholarship (Ngô, 2014). Some of this research also refocuses US jazz history toward the Pacific as a way to call attention to how the black/white racial binary of jazz needs to be considered in relation to immigration policies resulting from US imperial actions. Finally, bringing the world into the US can also provide us new ways to listen for audible but ignored markers of colonial legacies, as John Troutman demonstrates in his study of the Hawaiian steel guitar (2016). The approach of re-situating US jazz in relation to the world through the lens of empire is particularly useful because it demonstrates how a transnational study of jazz need not rely upon unexplored or unusual locations. Rather, it shows how transnationalism is a methodology of seeing and hearing the world.

The Imperial Gift of Jazz

A turn toward empire in jazz studies does not represent an arbitrary move, for the imperial has shaped the global circulation of jazz and informed how we talk about its global history. A brief examination of the common trope claiming jazz as “America’s gift to the world” makes this clear. The depiction of jazz as an offering from a benevolent nation can be traced back to at least 1927, when the Australian composer and arranger Percy Grainger remarked “America has given a great gift to the world in perfecting jazz as it has” (“Sharps and Flats” 1927, 258).¹ Grainger’s notion has been repeated over the decades and is commonplace today. The idea that global jazz is the result of gift-giving is obviously related to a parallel claim promoted by figures from W.E.B. Du Bois to Paul Whiteman to Archie Shepp to consider black music, from slave songs to jazz, as gifts from

African Americans to the US (Du Bois 1903; Whiteman and McBride 1974, 4; Kofsky 1970, 9; Radano 2003, 278–286). When jazz is recast as America’s gift to the world, however, the nature of the gift changes.

In the US, the discourse of American cultural forms circulating globally as gifts is intimately linked with imperial ambition. When Grainger made his remark in 1927, Americans and Europeans regularly framed imperial conquest as an act of gift-giving to the uncivilized, non-white populations of the world. Soon after the US sailed into Manila Bay in 1898, for example, President McKinley cast the project of colonizing the archipelago as an act of “benevolent assimilation” that would charitably transform the Philippines from a state of savagery into a model of US-style democracy (Rafael 2000). A 1902 report from the US Congress explained the basic premise of McKinley’s claim: “In carrying to the people of these islands the gift of civil liberty and free institutions the United States can not be termed an oppressor” (“The Filipino Campaign” 1902, 6583). The importance of casting empire as a gift from an altruistic nation is critical for maintaining the myth of American exceptionalism for it masks ulterior motives and recasts violence as the result of illogical refusal to accept whatever the US kindly offers.

During the 1920s, jazz was often viewed as a distinctly imperial gift, a benign agent for US global dominance. While the American journalist Burnet Hershey famously argued in 1922 that jazz “follows the flag,” arriving only after military conquest and economic expansion generated new audiences, others gave jazz greater agency (8). In 1925, Hershey’s fellow *New York Times* reporter P. W. Wilson argued that jazz was among the cultural forms enabling the emergence of an exceptional American empire. Wilson described the process of US imperial domination as one conducted not through violence but through the stealthy spread of American products such as “ice cream . . . , automobiles . . . , jazz bands, revues and funnies.” Similar to other Americans who believed in the power of cultural and consumer diplomacy, Wilson imagined that the circulation of American products would soon lead to a moment when “the world wakes up to discover itself absorbed, soul, mind and body, by the United States” (1925, SM7).

While Wilson’s view of a singular reception to US products was clearly reductive, many recipients of America’s gift of jazz and empire feared that his vision would come true. Similar to Wilson, they saw American products, from chewing gum to jazz, as agents of a US imperial project, or as one Filipino writer put it in a Manila magazine, of “American civilization’s conquest of other cultures” (“The World Gone Yankee” 1929, 4). For Filipinos, this was not merely a matter of conquest in a cultural sphere separate from politics. In 1923, Jorge Bocobo, the dean of the University of the Philippines, argued that the spread of jazz throughout the archipelago was threatening the future of an independent Philippine nation. During a blistering critique of American imperialism, Bocobo argued that the presence of American cultural forms, including “that intensely barbaric and primitive conglomeration of jarring and nerve-shattering sounds known as jazz,” was dangerous to the Philippine independence movement (1923, 8). Bocobo’s description of jazz may seem to echo widespread global criticism of jazz as a symptom of broader social and economic changes, but his condemnation of the music was not simply on aesthetic or moral grounds. Instead, he saw the growing ubiquity of jazz in the Philippines as a direct attack on his compatriots’ ability to preserve the “native virtues” and cultural practices that demonstrated the vitality of a Filipino race (ibid.). It was an attack that threatened to prove that Filipinos were unfit for self-rule.

Bocobo urged Filipinos to reject the gift of jazz. He did not view America’s supposed benevolence as a gift, something that David Graeber defines as “an act of pure generosity with no expectation of return” (2001, 161). Bocobo, Wilson, and others like them, recognized that the US expected that the spread of jazz would result in some sort of reciprocal action or goodwill. Why else, then, would the State Department later create its Jazz Ambassadors program during the Cold War? The effectiveness of jazz as a tool for promoting American interests might be limited, but

viewing jazz as a gift to the world ignores the broader forces behind its circulation and perpetuates the exceptionalist discourse of US imperial benevolence.

It might be uncomfortable for scholars with a deep love of jazz as a musical form to examine its broader circulation through the lens of empire. As Jairo Moreno points out, “music seems eminently suited for an imperial deafness . . . the music sounds good, and it *feels* even better” (2016, 145, emphasis in original). Yet listening to jazz history for—and with—empire can allow us to hear new narrative forms and different ways that jazz has been made meaningful throughout the world. More critically, as the imperial turn in American studies has shown, empire can be an important tool for scholars to pursue what Tackley and Whyton argue is a central goal of transnational jazz studies, namely, “to resist American exceptionalist readings of jazz history” (2010, 94). I do not mean to suggest that empire is the only way to achieve this goal. But attempting to see the world through an imperial lens has already transformed American studies and contributed to an emerging anti-exceptionalist field of study. Listening to the world with an ear for empire could also provide an important method to fulfill one of the main promises of transnational jazz studies.

Note

1. As was common practice, no author is listed for this article.

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PART IV

Individuals, Collectives, and Communities



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NEW ORLEANS, THE “CREOLE CONCEPT,” AND JAZZ

Wolfram Knauer

Jazz was born in New Orleans, a city that had a rich and varied history and that, as most history books will have it, was a melting pot of cultures. Musicians in New Orleans took ingredients from all of these cultures and mixed them together, thus inventing a musical style that could not have been formed anywhere else. Jazz's birth, in this narrative, is firmly bound to the place and time and social environment of New Orleans in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century.

History, however, is more complex than that. While there are good arguments for a broader view that finds the foundations for jazz in rural areas of the South as well as in other cities such as, for example, Charleston, South Carolina, New Orleans did play a decisive role in the formation of the music. New Orleans offered a peculiar political and cultural climate which was built upon its diverse communities, made up from many different ethnicities—Spanish, French, all sorts of British (including Irish and Scottish), German, Mexican, Canadian (= Acadian or Cajun), Caribbean, African, indigenous or native American, and everything beyond and in between. The social relationship between these groups in New Orleans was more open than in many other places in the United States. The city had a long history of regular changes in its ruling parties, even the ruling countries, and their respective legal customs. New Orleans was a major harbor, an international trade hub (for goods as well as slaves), with connections to other federal states, to Latin American countries, to Africa and old Europe. It clearly drew a different kind of people than one would later see or meet in Chicago or in Kansas City. New Orleans was probably the most international city of its kind in the New World.

And everybody brought his or her own culture. Henry Arnold Kmen's *Music in New Orleans* sets the picture. “The story of music in New Orleans” he begins his book, “must begin with dancing” (Kmen 1966, 3). Dancing, quite obviously, is one of the ingredients for the melting pot, a mutual form of entertainment that keeps memories of home alive and at the same time allows others in. One does not dance by oneself. One dances with a partner, and one rather dances with others who join the fun. Kmen pictures the balls that were held in the early 1800s, balls that were fun as well as social events, balls that marked class, influence, and power. Formal balls and public dance halls proved to be a class-transcending form of entertainment, although the splendor of the upper-class events clearly spilled down to the cheaper festivities. The dances were gavottes, cotillions, and waltzes as well as the English or the French quadrille. Soon these dances were taken up by the non-white population as well; so-called Quadroon Balls were frequented by free colored citizens but often also admitted slaves. And, of course, jazz history books are full of stories about Circus Square, better known as Congo Square, where the city government had approved

Sunday “negro dancing” under police supervision. In the early reports about the dancing in Congo Square, we see a similar response to the new forms of social entertainment as we would see later when jazz came to Europe in the 1920s. What most impressed the eyewitnesses was the dancing, slow or wild, leaps or circle dances, accompanied by percussive music beaten out on drums and banjos, with the lines of the lead singer followed by responsive chants from the crowd (one of many examples can be found in the travel reports of Christian Schultz; see Schultz 1810, 197).

There was opera and classical music in New Orleans in the nineteenth century as well (see Baron 2013). The city, after all, had the first opera house in the United States, and soon even two of them, and was proud of staging major works shortly after they had been premiered in Europe. The influence of opera on jazz is both direct and indirect. The orchestras brought many good musicians to the city who served as teachers to a number of later jazz players; the opera also provided a common vocabulary New Orleanians would be familiar with, not so much different from how in Italy arias could become a hit whistled by the working man on the street. Louis Armstrong is the best example for the influence of opera on jazz, not so much in a direct impact as in the dramatic conception of his solos, in his emphasis on melody, in his awareness for musical effects.

Dance, opera, African traditions . . . add to these the many ethnic music traditions brought along by citizens as well as visitors to the city. Add Scottish reels, Irish jigs, German choirs, and much more, and you get a picture of what actually goes into the melting pot with which jazz history books like to start their narrative.

Fast forward to the year 1994 and my own first personal visit to the Crescent City. It must have been in August or early September. It was a hot and humid day when I arrived. My friend Scott met me at the airport and took me into town. We wandered around the French Quarter, a drink in our hands, and I was emotionally shaken by the experience of finally being in the city I had read so much about, a city that was home to the music at the center of my life. In the evening we went home. Scott lived on Burgundy Street, a small backyard house that used to be the slave servants’ quarters to the main house. Two stories, balcony, a small garden with banana plants, fans turning in the tiny rooms to each side of the staircase. I remember falling asleep with an open window—as a European I was not accustomed to air conditioning—listening to the sounds that mingled in the night. And I remember waking up, sweaty from the subtropical heat, hearing the calliope from a Mississippi steam boat down by the river.

Wait . . . a calliope? How could I hear the calliope so clearly when it was a mile away? I recalled that famous legend about Buddy Bolden, whose cornet supposedly could be heard across Lake Pontchartrain. And then it struck me. My one-sided reading had understood the image of the melting pot as a social and cultural phenomenon, but I had completely left out the climatic component of this image. Sound travels differently in humidity than in dry air. A subtropical climate, houses with cooling courtyards, enormously well-carrying acoustics, and an ethnical mix of residents as was custom in the days—all of this in a time when you didn’t close your windows in the summer but opened them widely. . . . You hear songs, drums, the calliope, street musicians, or just the street noises over blocks of houses, mixed in a mush of sound that makes the melting pot tangible as an acoustic phenomenon.

* * *

In her essay on the formation of Afro-Creole culture, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall runs down the different meanings of “creole” over the years in American history. She explains the origin in the Portuguese “crioulo,” meaning a slave of African descent born in the New World, its extension to include Europeans born there as well, and its meaning in the Spanish and French colonies where “creole” distinguished American-born from African-born slaves. She explains how “the Latin-American elite born in the Americas was called the creole elite and was accused of being incapable of self-rule in part because of its racially mixed heritage,” and how, “rejecting this

heritage, the creole elite of Latin America redefined the word creole to mean people of *exclusively* European descent born in the Americas" (Hall 1992, 60, my emphasis). This understanding was strengthened by writings such as George Washington Cable's *The Creoles of Louisiana* (Cable 1884), endorsing an all-white definition of creole, although Cable in other essays opened up the understanding by referring to white purity being softened by real-world necessities (Tregle 1992, 175). The fact that many people of color were identified as "creoles" was for a while excused as a terminological error to be attributed to "the pre-Civil War association of members of this class with the true creole population, giving them identity as 'creole negroes' in much the same way that one refers to 'creole tomatoes' or 'creole cattle,' signifying origin in Louisiana soil" (Tregle 1992, 133).

One might say that from the 1870s onward, the term "creole of color" was accepted "as a permissible designation for mixed-race offspring or descendants of legitimate creoles" (Tregle 133; see also Ostendorf 2013), and that for most Americans "creole" stood for an African American with light skin and possibly some "Caucasian" features. The term clearly had quite different undertones, referring either to race or class or social standing in a world that was on the lookout for a new national identity among the many ethnic groups that populated it and continued to arrive.

The "free black creoles" of the nineteenth century had a special status in New Orleans. They had "emerged from French and Spanish rule not only with unusual rights and powers but also with a peculiar assertiveness and self-confidence" (Logsdon and Bell 1992, 204). Many of them were wealthy within their ethnic group and were skilled in "occupations normally closed to free persons of African ancestry in Anglo-America." They felt superior to the slave population of the city, and they self-confidently felt that they had the right of equal citizenship in the United States. Over the years laws tried to get a grip on the changing racial relationship between whites, free people of color, slaves, and non-American whites. Black creoles "escaped much of the renewed severity by living within the virtually autonomous creole municipal districts of New Orleans that were created in 1836, where enforcement of almost all laws was notoriously lax." As a result, "free and slave black creoles continued to gather for festivities, frequent bars and dance halls, and cohabit despite the state laws designed to constrain such activity" (Logsdon and Bell 1992, 207).

Most of the black creoles in New Orleans saw themselves as French Creoles and had a specific pride in their French heritage and language, which both set them apart from mainstream America and in times of a changing social and racial situation gave them a very specific identity. The black creoles of New Orleans developed their own cultural traditions, ritualized events involving food, dance, and music. They also established their own system of aesthetic and social values, a system which ultimately was no less based on group affiliation than the general value system in the United States based on race and national origin.

Enter Music . . .

Then came the Civil War and Louisiana Legislative Code No. 111, which "designated that anyone of any African ancestry was Negro" (Buerkle and Barker 1973, 9). "The change was devastating for the Creole of Color," explain Jack Buerkle and Danny Barker, as "it required the laborious task of creating a new self-image" (ibid.). By the 1890s, "the Creoles of New Orleans were being pushed out of their old trades and down on the social scale" (Lomax 1949, 79). "The Creoles of Color," though "making their adjustment to new occupations, tried to capitalize on their educational background and training whenever possible" (Buerkle and Barker 1973, 10). A musical consequence of this development was that black and creole people of color were being denied access to subsidized music training, a fact which "must have been especially discouraging for the Creoles of Color, for where the dark Negro had not known formal instruction in music in earlier days, the Creoles had" (ibid., 63). As a consequence, "the Creoles of Color and the blacks (. . .)

developed their own means to continue (in the case of the Creoles), or to begin (in the case of the blacks) formal music instruction without depending upon the whites" (ibid., 63). It was during this time, then, that music, which for many of the creoles had mostly been a pastime, became a source of income. Creole musicians prided themselves in their musical knowledge and defended themselves against the non-creole black musicians who for the most part came from a common laborer or service worker background, possessed "no training in music whatsoever and succeeded in this field only because of their talent" (Lomax 1949, 80). "Music, which had been an avocation, became by necessity a vocation. The Creoles' contact with the black man, which had been as minimal as possible (for there had been vast status differences), became much more extensive" (Buerkle and Barker 1973, 63).

Enter Jazz . . .

Let us look at some examples . . . Jelly Roll Morton, one of the most important musicians documenting early jazz life in New Orleans, called himself "New Orleans Creole and Inventor of Jazz." Alan Lomax begins his collection of Morton's accounts of his own life with a chapter titled "My Folks Were All Frenchmans," in which the pianist and composer claims his French heritage, his ancestors having arrived in New Orleans long before the Louisiana Purchase. He had anglicized his name, Morton explains, from the French *La Menthe* because he did not want to be called "Frenchy." Jelly Roll Morton's younger sister, Frances M. Oliver, explains the tension and its consequences: "At one time," she says, "some of the Creole people in downtown New Orleans believed in *class* and *caste*. But my brother wasn't prejudiced against dark people" (Russell 1999, 91).

Similar to Morton's case, the clarinetist Barney Bigard starts his autobiography with a chapter titled "All My People, They All Spoke French," and then identifies his family's ethnic background as "'Creoles of color,' which was essentially a mixture of Spanish and French" (Bigard 1985, 5). Even though Bigard does not differentiate anymore, he paints his teachers, all of them professional creoles, as highly skilled (classically trained, that is) clarinetists (ibid., 18).

Paul Dominguez, a creole New Orleans fiddler, explains "creole" to Alan Lomax: "A Creole," he says, "is a mixture of Spanish and white and must talk French" (Lomax 1949, 83). Dominguez then differentiates between different wards, pointing out that the Seventh and Eighth Wards in New Orleans are predominantly creole, while in the Ninth Ward they might call themselves creole, "but they're black and they got bad hair. They're from the country" (ibid.).

The clarinetist Sidney Bechet takes another route and starts his autobiography by identifying his grandfather as a former slave, thus linking him and himself all the way back to Africa (Bechet 1960, 6). Bechet, of course, later moved to France and thus embraced the other side of his . . . well, call it his cultural heritage, as well. Bechet, who had come from a creole bourgeois family that still spoke French in the 1890s (Chilton 1987, 2), hardly differentiates between creole and black musicians. Creole, for him, is part of an overall black New Orleans with only the names different, not the music or the musical approach. At the same time, though, Bechet had learned his trade from descendants of a long line of creole clarinet players and teachers, among them George Baquet, Luis "Papa" Tio, and Luis Tio, Jr.

Leonard Bechet, on the other hand, a dentist, trombonist, and Sidney Bechet's older brother, explains that during his childhood Creole musicians tried not to mix with black musicians. They considered themselves professionals and the style of playing of the black uptown musicians as being too "rough." He gives an example: "Louis [Armstrong] and them played that low-down type of music, when us Creole musicians always did hold up a nice prestige, you understand, demanded respect among the people, because we played nice music" (Lomax 1949, 96). The same rough, risk-taking approach that favored improvisation over planned musical structures was

highly popular, though, which made young musicians strive to learn both approaches, the more formal one as well as the one favoring hot playing, or, in the words of the older Bechet, “You had to play real *hard* when you play for Negroes” (ibid., 98).

Although the inner-ethnic differentiation according to skin color, African or Caucasian features, specific origin, name, language spoken, lineage of family, teachers, colleagues, and bands played with continued to be a decisive factor for getting work in the 1920s, when the jazz scene had moved up to Chicago, at one point the idea of “creole” had become mostly nostalgic, a memory of days when it was so much easier to differentiate between people, between musicians, between cultural concepts.

King Oliver’s ensemble, which made highly influential jazz recordings in 1923 featuring the young Louis Armstrong, called itself the “Creole Jazz Band,” riffing on a seven-piece ensemble that had toured the United States from 1914 to 1918, called the Creole Band or the Creole Orchestra. King Oliver hired *some* musicians who would qualify as “creole,” such as Honoré Dutrey, Johnny St. Cyr, and later Barney Bigard or Albert Nicholas, but most of his band members would be identified as New Orleans uptown blacks. The name was a label, and apart from some mocking remarks that some of the self-confident creole musicians on the scene would provide to put down their non-creole colleagues, nobody in the North knew or cared about the difference. Class differentiation in the North was designated through what W.E.B. Du Bois called the “talented tenth”: ministers, lawyers, doctors, and educators who “strove to exercise civic leadership for all blacks in the realms of culture, morals, religion, and politics” (Peretti 1992, 61). Some of the Northern blacks felt that the Southerners “brought discrimination with them” when they arrived and didn’t quite fit into the middle-class culture that had developed among blacks in the North (ibid.). The cultural segment of the talented tenth looked at white art music for guidance, instead of the rougher forms of music making, which was essentially seen as backward, rural, Southern, past. The writing about music during the Harlem Renaissance reflects this move to adapt black aesthetics to a European system of values instead of analyzing and embracing it as a merit in itself.

However, although the term “creole” became obsolete both as a stylistic and a class category in music, there is some element of the creole/black discourse in New Orleans that survived in jazz and became a decisive factor in this music to this day. Well aware of the different meanings of the term “creolization” (see Ostendorf 2013), I would opt for a different terminological solution for this phenomenon. I call it the “creole concept.”

The creole concept would be the realization of Creole musicians in New Orleans that, in order to continue their musical journey, they not only had to let others, in this case the uptown black musicians, into their world, but that this kind of merging was essential, basic for the music they were playing. The creole concept would be the realization of black musicians in New Orleans that in order to continue their musical journey they needed to keep developing their own voice as well as take the advice of others, of downtown creole “musicianers” (as Sidney Bechet would call the learned professionals). The creole concept would take into consideration the reality of a musical world where the sounds of French opera, German *Chorvereine*, all sort of British ditties, Caribbean melodies and rhythms, and the drums, banjos, and responsive chants of Congo Square had to mix because music not only preserves memory but also lives in the “now” and mirrors the present. The creole concept would not reinforce class differences but create community, based in this case on the cultural values of the music. The creole concept, then, would be the realization that in order to play this music, jazz, you need to accept many different things: the tradition of the music, the heritage of the community in which the music originated, the background of the musicians you play with, the expectation of your audience, your own personal musical background that inspires you and makes you want to play. The creole concept would be *the* element that makes jazz such a productive music, asking everyone playing it to respect its tradition—but also in respecting its tradition, everybody playing it should put his or her own story into the music and thus change

the same tradition. The creole concept would be a concept of pride and daring, of preserving and experimentation, an acknowledgment that human culture develops by people coming together, mixing their experiences, and constantly changing history.

The creole concept is jazz.

The creole concept, as I call it, would be different from a hybrid concept because “hybridity” just takes the facts and not the deliberate willing into consideration, the consciousness of incorporating different traditions, backgrounds, musical vocabulary, or musical strategies within specific strains of the genre family. One could use another, less loaded term and talk about the productivity of jazz, which asks every musician to add his own five cents to the music, and only then, only if he or she is aware of his or her personal position within the cultural relationship, will he or she be fully able to grasp the art form. The creole concept is a productive concept as it constantly changes the subject itself with every new addition, as it changes reality, as it changes the scope and the sound of the music with every new musician mastering the idiom. Some specific examples may help to explain this idea of what I call the creole concept in jazz history.

Example 1: Duke Ellington

In his autobiography, Duke Ellington talks about the first New Orleans musicians he had in his band, the bassist Wellman Braud and the clarinetist Barney Bigard. He loved Bigard’s “woody tone,” as he calls it, the way he put “the filigree work into an arrangement” that at times reminded him “of all that delicate wrought iron you see in his hometown” (Ellington 1973, 115). Where Bigard and Braud spoke of their proud creole heritage, Ellington was already developing his own kind of creole concept, a sound strategy for his band that emphasized the individual voice in a way never before used in jazz and hard to follow by other composers or arrangers. Ellington is well known for having selected members of his band for their individual sound more than anything else. Each of his trumpeters, trombonists, and saxophonists was instantly recognizable, even if they played within the section—a horror for any other bandleader, but bliss for Ellington and us. The magic of his concept is that his music sounds like Ellington, first of all, even though he has all of these highly individual voices, thus proving that the creole concept is not one of chance, live and let live, hybridity, but one of aesthetic curiosity that comes out of the conviction that any new but authentic ingredient will only add to the persuasiveness of the thing itself.

One can hear this aspect in Ellington’s music in many of his recordings; however, for the sake of focusing on one particular example, a composition from his “New Orleans Suite” from 1970 will do perfectly.¹ The piece is called *Second Line*, and it starts with that woody clarinet sound mentioned above that Barney Bigard had introduced, played here by Russell Procope. What one should listen to, though, is the ensemble playing of the orchestra and how one can clearly hear each of the musicians within the instrumental sections; one hears these sections not so much like one voice but more as a moving sound in which it seems possible to identify all of the overtones—and whoever knows Ellington will actually be able to name them, identify the musicians in that section just by listening to the arranged parts.

Example 2: Albert Mangelsdorff

The creole concept becomes especially visible when musicians who are not originally from the United States take up the music. In each country, European jazz history went through a process of fascination, imitation, assimilation, and innovation. It’s in the last of these stages in which musicians grasped the very idea of jazz, which is that in order to play this music convincingly you not only had to learn the vocabulary and structural grammar but also had to be able to identify your own personal position within the music’s continuum. It was not enough to sound like an African

American artist whom you admired; you had to find your own voice that came from within you, informed by the musical socialization you had gone through yourself. And thus, when jazz spread all over the world, the music’s experiences during its own birth became most important. Its productivity, the creole concept, as I call it, is written into the DNA of jazz: take whatever will come from your heart and incorporate it into the ever-growing idiom of jazz.

Albert Mangelsdorff is a case in point. He started playing jazz right after the war, building his style on the model of musicians such as J. J. Johnson, establishing his status as one of the “best” European trombonists in modern jazz. However, a visit to the United States in 1958 changed his approach completely, because he realized that he would never be able to play anything comparable to Miles Davis or all of the other American musicians he heard there, simply because they could draw on such a long history of African American music that he loved but was not his own background. Mangelsdorff’s personal style as well as his band style changed after that. He looked into where he came from, protestant hymns, contemporary composition, and a kind of versatility on his instrument that reflected the German virtue of diligence.

His recording of *Ant Steps on an Elephant’s Toe*² is a case in point. One of Mangelsdorff’s solo performances in which he employs a technique called multiphonics, this allows him to play polyphonic, chordal lines by playing one note and singing another, thus evoking overtones that fill up the chord. The example also shows that productivity in jazz is not a one-way street, that jazz is not, as the Smithsonian Institution for a long time wanted us to believe, “born in the USA, enjoyed worldwide”;³ instead, inventions such as Mangelsdorff’s stylistic addition to the improvisational vocabulary of his instrument became a reference point among trombonists in America, the birthplace of jazz, in a way not so much different from when habanera rhythms found their way into New Orleans street bands as an element of the Spanish tinge.

Example 3: David Murray

The next example is the exact opposite of Mangelsdorff. In 1997 the tenor saxophonist David Murray recorded an album in Guadeloupe entitled *Creole*. For this album, he brought together American colleagues such as flutist James Newton, pianist D. D. Jackson, bassist Ray Drummond, and drummer Billy Hart as well as a group of Caribbean percussionists, vocalists, and the guitar of Gérard Lockel. Before this, he had recorded the album *Do Deuk Revue*, which combined his saxophone sound with Senegalese griots and rappers. Murray’s understanding of “creole” is closer to the idea of Paul Gilroy’s Black Atlantic, a discovery of cultural links through music.

On the album *Creole*, one finds songs in French and Portuguese and a strong percussive rhythm section; however, Murray’s aesthetic dominates the music. Murray was born in Oakland, California, in 1955, became part of the New York post-free jazz loft scene of the 1970s, was a founding member of the World Saxophone Quartet, and has generally been considered a major voice of American jazz since the 1980s. Murray, who lives in Portugal today and is a presence on the European concert and festival scene, is a major link between the New York loft scene and the European avant-garde. Gérard Lockel, on the other hand, is a musician born in Guadeloupe who moved to France in the 1950s and then returned to his home country in 1969, where he is both known for his nationalist convictions and is credited with bringing the traditional Gwo-ka music up to date. Gwo-ka literally means “big drum” and is the name of a major Guadeloupean folk music traditionally performed during outdoor celebrations held on Friday or Saturday nights (Camal 2012, 170). It is music a bit reminiscent of what we read about the historic Congo Square, with drums building a foundation above which other percussion instruments embellish and interact with dancers, singers, and the audience.

The idea of Gwo-ka and how David Murray is involved in the traditional format can best be heard in the song “Savon de Toilette” on the album; however, “Guadeloupe Sunrise” and

“Guadeloupe After Dark,”⁴ both duets by Lockel and Murray, are perhaps most interesting as a meeting of equal souls, of two musicians who value the traditions they come from yet are curious enough to listen to what the other has to say.⁵

Example 4: Soweto Kinch

Soweto Kinch is a young British alto saxophonist and rapper, born in 1978 to British-Caribbean parents, who was turned on to jazz after meeting Wynton Marsalis, and who in the 2000s became a big name on the British jazz scene. Kinch has a conventional approach to his jazz sets, influenced just as much by Sonny Rollins as by classical music or his British colleague Courtney Pine. He often performs in a trio setting with bass and drums, playing virtuoso improvisations over an intense dynamic rhythm; at the same time he will sing his rap tunes or use all kinds of pop or other music references, confronting his diverse audiences, no matter where they come from, with both familiar and suspicious musical material. A case in point is his double album epic “The Legend of Mike Smith” from 2012 that tells the story of an aspiring rapper possessed by each of the seven deadly sins.⁶ Soweto Kinch and other musicians of his age (and in other countries as well) believe in jazz as an ever-evolving musical idiom, not a thing of the past but desperately in need of the present. If anything, this is the other side of the creole concept: it’s not just respect for other cultures touched by the music; it is not just the need to acknowledge one’s own musical background to be authentic; it is only by staying in touch with the present that a productive music such as jazz will keep evolving.

Finally: New Orleans Today

New Orleans lost its position as a musical capital around the time jazz became popular. Musicians from New Orleans migrated to where the entertainment industry had their factories, theaters, and recording studios: to Chicago, New York, California. Yet, while New Orleans was no longer at the center of the action, it did not lose its music. Already in the 1920s, the idea of New Orleans had become mostly nostalgic, a stereotype of “way back when.” Musicians continued to work in the Crescent City with its many restaurants, bars, and venues of all kinds, playing the music fitting the city’s cliché of “Let the Good Times Roll”: smooth, often danceable Dixieland music with a hint of the blues and Cajun. There was modern jazz as well. New Orleans had its share of swing orchestras and bebop bands, of modern jazz combos and free jazz sessions. However, these clearly were a minority within the local music scene; if you played anything more modern than classic New Orleans or commercial Dixieland you would probably soon leave the city and move elsewhere. What New Orleans always retained, though, was a strong feeling of community based on the fact that the city over the twentieth century was and remained one of the poorest in the nation, a fact especially visible in its black population. Outlets for this feeling of community were, as they always had been, the black church and music. The celebrations of New Orleans, from the traditional Mardi Gras to the cutting edge Southern Decadence, from old-time jazz funerals to loud and happy block parties—and remember Henry Kmen’s words, “The story of music in New Orleans must begin with dancing”—the celebrations of New Orleans were and are class-transcending events, building a feeling of community stronger than in most other American cities.

After Katrina, the need for communal unity became even stronger with the realization that neighborhood help was closer than the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Music served an important function in the healing process of the stricken city. Musicians and music lovers from all over the world partook in initiatives to help reconstruction of New Orleans and to support the return of its people in an effort to keep a place alive that for them had as much emotional importance as it did for me when I first arrived there in 1994.

New Orleans after 2005 was far from New Orleans in the mid-nineteenth century. The ethnic diversity had trickled down to three major groups: white, black, and Hispanic. The divisions which ethnic groups tried to establish within themselves by subdividing their ethnicity into even smaller fragments had made place for a clear class differentiation: rich vs. poor. And, of course—and unfortunately it seems more so than ever—racism is still a subject. Being on the poorest end of the United States economy, though, New Orleanians are pragmatic: if Washington does not help, if the government in Baton Rouge is not effective enough, we have to help ourselves. Centuries of community-building experiences help New Orleanians in this effort to live a decent life, re-build their city in a better way, remember their past identity, good and bad, and build a future based on the smallest social networks, a system they can trust in because it always worked: their communities.

To this day, New Orleans music has a special function within these communities. If you come across one of the young brass bands gathering on street corners, yes, they play for the tourists, but they play for their own sake as well. They play their own music of the twenty-first century, riffing on Louis Armstrong and the Eureka Brass Band just as much as on Miles Davis, James Brown, Michael Jackson, Madonna, Eminem, or Jay-Z. Their music won't be at the avant-garde of today's jazz, but you can be sure that out of their ranks will come some of the future jazz inventors, because they learn the creole concept from the bottom up: be part of a community, acknowledge the difference, listen into your own past, know what's going on in the world, find your own voice, play your own thing.

Notes

1. Duke Ellington: *Second Line* from LP “New Orleans Suite” (Atlantic SD1580), recorded 27 April 1970.
2. Albert Mangelsdorff: *Ant Steps on an Elephant's Toe* from LP “Solo Now” (MPS 0068.067), recorded 9/10 February 1976.
3. This had for many years been the annual slogan for Jazz Appreciation Month.
4. David Murray & Gérard Lockel: CD “Creole” (Justin Time JUST115–2), recorded 19/20 October 1997.
5. A discussion of the terms “creolization,” “Creole,” and “créolité” (but not what I call the “creole concept” in this essay) in reference to David Murray's music, can be found in an essay by Jerome Camal (2012).
6. Soweto Kinch: *Invidia* from the CD “The Legend of Mike Smith” (Soweto Kinch Recordings SKP003D), recorded 11/12 April 2012.

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SITTING IN AND SUBBING OUT

The Gig Economy of 1960s New York

Marian Jago

Despite the popular mythology surrounding the jazz club culture of New York in the 1950s and 1960s, surprisingly little research has investigated the ways in which that city's jazz musicians navigated an ever fluctuating network of gigs and sessions in an attempt to earn a living. Some information related to wages, job security, and the various interlocking and at times co-dependent scenes that formed the basis for jazz activity in New York can be gleaned from reading interviews, biographies, liner notes, and *Metronome* and *Downbeat* magazines, but there has been no study that speaks to these issues explicitly. This chapter therefore offers an important preliminary step toward addressing the day-to-day economic realities of jazz musicians in New York during the mid-twentieth century. The lives of working jazz musicians present a picture of an original gig economy—a professional life predicated upon temporary, often low-paying engagements that afforded little or no job security, limited access to unemployment and health insurance, and rarely linked together into seamless stretches of employment, particularly for that majority of players who worked outside the mainstream jazz canon.

Given the lack of preexistent research I therefore turned to musicians who had been active on the New York scene and simply asked the awkward question, “so, how much did you get paid?” In doing so, a fascinating picture of subsistence, ambition, mobility, and scenic interdependence began to emerge. Vibraphonist Warren Chiasson, for example, played for an extended period with George Shearing yet only found economic stability in the original Broadway run of *Hair*, while saxophonist Don Palmer worked frequently with the Latin bands of Tito Puente and Machito and led a varied career as substitute player to support his jazz interests. Saxophonist Lee Konitz and bassist Peter Ind participated in the gig economy from positions that were slightly more rarefied, given their status within the jazz community, yet which were also simultaneously precarious in ways that many may find surprising. Even though the 1950s and 1960s were decades of rich and significant jazz activity, a paid gig in an established club would come around infrequently (perhaps more often for those in the rhythm section), and therefore for all but a select few, a living had to be cobbled together from one-nighters and other forms of musical employment that may have been related to, though perhaps not actually, jazz. With performance opportunities further limited by New York's convoluted set of “cabaret laws” (1926–1990), “jazz musicians experienced their lives as scuffling for a living” (Chevigny 1991, 5).

Scenes are areas of social and cultural space in which individuals circulate, maneuvering consciously and unconsciously away from or toward a central object or activity—here jazz. Scenes often share their liminal spaces—their boundary areas—with other scenes, and what is commonly

referred to as the New York jazz scene of the 1960s is perhaps best thought of not as a single, clearly bounded entity, but rather as a closely related set of micro-scenes which drew upon one another. While jazz artists associated with recording contracts might have occupied the most obvious of these jazz scenes, only those with significant commercial cachet might have occupied this one scenic sphere exclusively, and even then not at all times during their career. Rather, most musicians occupied multiple scenes at once, traversing various professional and interpersonal networks as they traded their various skills and associations for paying work that kept them, somehow, in jazz. The musicians I spoke to moved with regularity between the worlds of the unpaid jazz rehearsal band; the advertising studio; the Broadway pits; jazz clubs; network television orchestras; dance bands; and myriad social engagements:¹

In many cases I would be subbing in some band and not know that the guy sitting behind me on trombone was Kai Winding or somebody I would have known. Things like that happened quite often on those sorts of gigs. There weren't enough jazz gigs for anyone, really, other than like Stan Getz, and those guys . . . [so other well-known but not as commercially successful players] did whatever they had to do to make a living. And you'd find some really surprising guys on [club dates]. Those guys did all kinds of things. Some of them probably did rock and roll records because they paid well . . . better than any jazz gig.

(Don Palmer, personal communication, January 10, 2017a)

This network of scenes was related to, yet also separate from, the mainstream public-facing jazz scene, which had at its heart well-known clubs such as Birdland (until 1965), the Village Vanguard (ongoing), the Five Spot (until 1967), and the Half Note (on Hudson until 1972, then 54th until 1974). By trading upon musical skills not necessarily specific to jazz, and through the development and maintenance of large social networks, musicians could move frequently and fluidly from one scene to another (e.g., Palmer); exist primarily in one scene and then another (e.g., Chiasson); or occupy one scene for the most part while moonlighting largely anonymously in one or more of the others (e.g., Konitz).

Canadian saxophonist Don Palmer moved to New York in 1959 to study with alto saxophonist Lee Konitz and pianist Lennie Tristano. Fresh from four years in the Royal Canadian Artillery band where he played clarinet and flute (but not saxophone), Palmer ended up capitalizing on his sight-reading skills as a means to paid musical work to augment his jazz playing. Importantly, these ad hoc jobs at times proved direct conduits to meaningful personal and performance opportunities in jazz. The cost of living in New York during the 1960s was still reasonably low, and Palmer was able to rent an apartment on 53rd Street and 8th Avenue² in the heart of Manhattan's theater, concert, and studio districts, despite a lack of predictable income. In conjunction with his ability to double across the woodwinds and to sight-read reliably, this location was an essential aspect of his scenic mobility. Palmer quickly developed a professional profile as a "sub": a substitute player called in to attend rehearsals, performances, recording sessions, or portions of engagements that the regularly employed player could not attend. Last minute and short-term, these jobs nonetheless provided financial solvency (if not stability) and a network of social connections that eventually afforded him an enviable, almost accidental access to high-profile engagements at the Village Vanguard and on record with producer Teo Macero.

A lot of it [working as a substitute player] happened because I was living on 53rd street, and I could get there [to a theatre or studio] very quickly, and the word got out . . . that opened up a lot of doors that wouldn't have if I'd maybe lived in Brooklyn. Sometimes I'd wake up and not have a gig for the rest of my life, and then I'd get a call and

an hour later I'd be sitting in a studio somewhere. All the Broadway show work I got started with a guy calling me up and asking if I could get there in 10 minutes and I said yeah. I didn't think it was a big deal. And then I started getting these other calls. And sometimes it was just to finish or begin a gig, and the guy would show up in the middle and I'd just go home. And he'd pay me, and usually for the whole night, because I'd just saved his ass.

(Don Palmer, personal communication, January 10th 2017a)

As is often the case in any sort of scenic environment, it is as often who you know as much as what you know that can open a door to opportunity. Palmer found this often to be the case as his activity as a substitute player across a variety of interlinked scenes (jazz, Broadway, studio, session, etc.) significantly increased his professional and social exposure, oftentimes well beyond the scope of his current status in other regards (age, experience, reputation). Rock and roll shows, for example, would often tour into New York, bringing only minimal instrumentation and hiring out for extra parts, including horn sections. After having been called on short notice to play in such a manner for the Four Tops at Carnegie Hall, Palmer was frequently hired to play behind them on their New York engagements. On one such occasion, waiting to sound check with a variety of bands slated to perform a revue-style rock show at Madison Square Garden:

there must have been 15 of us or something, and there was this one guy pacing around, looking really nervous, and so being the nice Nova Scotian I am, I went over and said "is everything alright man?" and he says "yeah, but I have to do this sound check and my group is not going to go on for at least an hour and I [also] have a record date in about 20 minutes" and I look down and he's carrying an alto and I say "hey, I'll do your sound check for you, I've got to be here anyway," and he says "you'd do that for me?" and I say "sure, it's no big deal" and he says "what's your name?" and tell him and he's gone. Like running out the door before I'd even finished my last name. That was Friday. Saturday the phone rings and the guy says "this is Jerry Dodgion" and I knew who that was, though I wouldn't have recognized him, and he says "what are you doing Saturday night?" and [I] knew he was the lead alto on Thad's band³ . . . and I say "nothing" and he says "do you want to come play with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis band"? And it was sort of like [someone asking] how'd you like to pitch for the New York Yankees? And when I got there the guy [that I'd done the sound check for] was sitting there in the lead alto chair. The guy that I had helped out. And I guess I did well enough that he called me. . . . I don't know how many times [but quite frequently]. I was subbing always on second alto. And if it was Jerry who wasn't there the regular second alto player would play lead.

(Don Palmer, personal communication, January 10, 2017a)

The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra was established as a rehearsal band in 1964 when, having written charts for the Count Basie band that Basie had then declined to play,⁴ Jones suggested to drummer Mel Lewis that they establish a rehearsal band that could make use of the arrangements and for which they could write on a regular basis. A rehearsal band was (and still is) in large part an exercise in musical and professional goodwill in which players commit to performing music, often newly written and untried, generally without payment. Arrangers and composers used rehearsal bands as an opportunity to hear their work, and the players generally welcomed an opportunity to play good charts (often by accomplished composers/arrangers) in what was usually very fine, peer-selected musical company. In New York rehearsal bands often met in the afternoon at any

one of the city's many rehearsal spaces, or on Monday nights, the usual off-night for Broadway houses and clubs.

There were all kinds of guys who would make rehearsal bands, because it was either a favour to the writer . . . most of the rehearsal bands were organized by guys who were writers, or arrangers at least. Because that way you got to hear your music, and if there were some mistakes certainly the guy playing it will tell you, because it was always very friendly, those things, or you'd hear the stuff and think of different things to do and you'd find yourself playing music by well-known arrangers or composers.

(Don Palmer, personal communication, January 10, 2017a)

Despite being jazz players of some significance, both Jones and Lewis were also employed by the New York studios: Jones by CBC and Lewis by ABC. Not coincidentally, the original roster of players for their orchestra drew heavily on personal and professional connections in the studio scene: trumpeters Jack Rains, Cliff Heather (both with CBS), and Snooky Young (formerly of the Count Basie Orchestra and the trumpet section leader for NBC's *Tonight Show* band); pianist Hank Jones (on-staff at CBS); saxophonists Jerry Dodgion and Eddie Daniels; bassist Richard Daniels, who worked the studios, jazz gigs, and classical engagements; and others who were, as Mel Lewis described, "all nice cats and experienced jazz musicians, as well as studio players who could read music with lightning speed" (Grouse 1998/1999, 586–587).

Though originally formed as a rehearsal band, the orchestra came together so well that with the assistance of critic Dan Morgenstern and disk jockey Alan Grant, it debuted at the Village Vanguard on February 7, 1966. Vanguard owner Max Gordon agreed to pay \$18 per player, and to see how long the experiment continued to draw an audience (Grouse 1998/1999, 588). As the popularity of the band outstripped the expectations of all involved, opportunities for substitute players emerged; jazz gigs such as the Vanguard Orchestra were labors of love, but the studio musicians who made up the orchestra's core were often professionally committed elsewhere. Palmer continued to sub in for Jerry Dodgion until 1974, and his booking diaries confirm that a Monday night at the Village Vanguard paid as little as \$20 in May of 1974, and a two-night engagement with the Orchestra in Toronto, Canada, paid \$100 in July of the same year (Don Palmer, professional engagement diary, 1974).

While substitute roles in jazz gigs often presented artistically satisfying work but didn't pay particularly well, the New York studio scene presented an almost inverse relationship to finance and art. Vibraphonist Warren Chiasson considered infrequent work in the Manhattan studio scene as an important aspect of his ability to survive as a working jazz musician. Recording an advertising jingle for one of the New York firms would pay the relatively princely sum of \$37 for a one hour and twenty minute call, more if the job required assorted percussion, for which Chiasson would be paid above the usual union scale rate, or if the session ran over the allotted time. Advertising work was regulated by the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) in a way that most jazz gigs were not and offered the added benefit of contracts that at times paid residual fees, and from which deductions were taken toward government unemployment insurance.

[One of the things] that kept me going was doing jingles . . . A jingle for 1 hour 20 mins would pay \$37 dollars and you would get residuals from time to time, if it ran. So this was like, a chance for you to survive. I've got one here [in his engagement diary] on Thursday Feb 28th 1963, for an advertising agency, and that paid \$94.50. So that must have run overtime. They tried to keep everything under an hour, or under the hour and 20 minute deal, but sometimes they'd have a big orchestra [and things would take longer].

And I would usually play a lot of percussion. Marimba, xylophone . . . in addition to my [vibraphone] work. I would get paid for a double if I played assorted percussion.

Unemployment Insurance . . . that was also an option. And that would pay you maybe \$37.50 to keep you going. Places that you worked that were covered . . . this wouldn't include cash gigs, but I was doing jingles, so they took tax out for that, and that's how I got my unemployment.

(Warren Chiasson, personal communication, December 15, 2016)⁵

At times, a reputation for being a steady and reliable substitute could lead to remarkable playing opportunities outside and beyond a player's usual scope of social and professional influence. Saxophonist Don Palmer, for example, after being sent in as a rehearsal substitute for altoist Lee Konitz, ended up being asked to perform with the ensemble at Newport, and subsequently to record with them. The ensemble in question was led by legendary producer Teo Macero and featured the likes of Konitz, Phil Woods, Al Cohn, George Young, Stan Getz (live), Pepper Adams (recording), Gerry Mulligan (live), Michael Moore, and Jimmy Madison.

Lee had sent me in as a sub for one of the rehearsals, and. . . I couldn't have sounded so good [in such company] but Teo asked me to join the group. That freaked me out, because it made no sense. Everyone there was a legend.

(Don Palmer, personal communication, January 10, 2017a)

In the same way that his introduction to the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis orchestra had come as something akin to the repayment of a professional debt by Jerry Dodgion, Palmer's opportunity with Teo Macero came about not simply because of his student/teacher relationship with Konitz, but because Palmer, when regularly employed by the Latin dance bands of Machito (c.1966–1968) and Tito Puente (1969–1972), had occasionally been able to offer similar substitution jobs to Konitz.⁶ While Konitz was a welcome and celebrated addition to these jazz-oriented bands,⁷ there were times when Palmer suggested Konitz for casual work on club dates and with more sedate dance bands and was turned down because the bandleaders were afraid that Konitz would present “too much jazz” for the situation. At times these employers had no idea what Konitz looked like and he would occasionally take cash jobs using the moniker “Zeke Tolin.”⁸ In the 1960s Konitz took out classified advertisements in *Downbeat* offering his services as a teacher to “singers and players at any stage,”⁹ and Palmer recalls being asked to pay for several lessons in advance when he began studying with Konitz in 1959.

Rather than having to integrate himself slowly into the complex and competitive New York jazz scene, Warren Chiasson auditioned directly into the George Shearing band in 1959, debuted with him at Newport on July 2, 1959, and remained with the ensemble until the end of 1961. The band was paid well by contemporary standards, with Chiasson recalling that the \$200 per week he was offered at the start seemed like a very big figure at the time. On top of traveling expenses and his \$200 a week salary,¹⁰ Chiasson discovered that the band was often paid extra for particularly lucrative appearances:

I went to this little diner, and of course I was expecting my \$200 for the week or something like that, and then I opened up the pay [envelope] and all these \$50 bills and \$20 bills started coming out . . . and before I knew it I had over \$500 dollars, and [up to that point] I was wondering if I should buy a chicken sandwich or go for the steak . . . and then pulling out all this money, you know I couldn't believe it. We'd been paid [extra by Shearing] for the concerts. So you know, that was a good week.

(Warren Chiasson, personal communication, December 15, 2016)

In order to keep working, however, the Shearing group spent the majority of its time on the road with few New York residencies. With one-nighters and overseas tours interspersed as necessary or available, the band took advantage of the extended engagements, which were still the norm for nightclub culture, spending as much as a month in larger cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, or San Francisco.

In those days, they were location gigs. If you played the Sunset Strip in California, in LA, you got an apartment for the whole month. And if you did that in San Francisco you got an apartment for the whole month, and you were [just] there. Location. We usually did those [west coast] things in the winter time. If we were in Chicago we played the London House, and we would be there for a month. . . . It was different. It was a different scene.

(Warren Chiasson, personal communication, December 15, 2016)

In 1962, however, Chiasson left Shearing and began a freelance career in New York, balancing jazz playing with a gigging life needfully oriented toward paying the bills and building a sustainable life as a working musician.

All of the clubs paid about the same. You didn't make too much money. You basically did it because it was a real chance [to play jazz]. A lot of great musicians were in the same boat as you were. They were glad to get the gig.

(Warren Chiasson, personal communication, December 15, 2016)

Chiasson's booking diaries from the 1960s bear out the notion that jazz gigs for the most part paid meager wages. An engagement at the Five Spot in February 1963 paid him \$100 for the week, Birdland in 1965 in a band that included Art Davis and Frank Strozier paid \$22 for a single evening, a "weird little disco gig" with Jim Hall and Jimmy Rainey paid \$175 for the week, and the Five Spot again in 1965 netted \$15, and this with Billy Higgins in the band.¹¹

In addition to low-paying jazz work and the studio income that augmented it, Chiasson received royalties on a tune he had written for Shearing—"My Own"—that paid several hundred dollars a year for a time, spent intermittent bouts on unemployment insurance, and kept club dates that paid in the neighborhood of \$25 a night. Being able to play a wide range of mixed percussion and being accustomed to classical music performance from his time in the Royal Canadian Artillery Band, Chiasson also found himself involved in several "Third Stream" projects in the early 1960s.

In Autumn of 1962 I started doing some modern classical concerts along with Teddy Charles, because he was into avant-garde classical music . . . we would do these reading sessions, going over this classical repertoire, rehearsal stuff. And eventually I would do a concert with Gunther Schuller about modern classical things. . . . I did a concert called *Perspectives of New Music* that was done at Carnegie Recital Hall (14th March, & 18th April 1963), and we did compositions by Gunther, Eric Dolphy was on flute and bass clarinet. I think that gig paid maybe \$150 or \$200 if that. Maybe \$100.

(Warren Chiasson, personal communication, December 15, 2016)¹²

In 1968, however, Chiasson was hired to play the original Broadway run of the musical *Hair*, a gig he expected to last only a few months but that ended up providing him with four-and-a-half years of steady employment and a large proportion of the pension upon which he now depends.

I got a pension from [Hair]. After the first year I hated doing it. [I]t interfered a lot [with playing jazz]. But I made good money. It was a little Broadway house on 47th called the

Biltmore . . . it was a small house and they couldn't have a big orchestra, [so] they had to give you extra money for that [for doubling]. We got paid extra for being on the stage and not in the orchestral pit. They tried to put a scrim up so that we couldn't be seen but to their credit the actors didn't want that . . . they wanted the full presence of the musicians, so we got paid extra for that. And so my salary was around \$800 a week. And on top of that I would get recording dates [in the daytime]. So I did OK. I was kind of living middle class for a while.

(Warren Chiasson, personal communication, December 15, 2016)

While it's perhaps unsurprising that relatively obscure players such as Don Palmer and Warren Chiasson worked notable jazz clubs for fairly non-descript wages, it is worth emphasizing that many well-known jazz artists of the period worked for similarly modest fees. Lee Konitz recalls that working a week at a club like the Vanguard, Half Note, or Five Spot with a band of experienced and well-regarded players might pay him \$250 a week,¹³ and Joseph Termini, co-owner of the Five Spot, recalled that the club paid \$76 per week for a sideman and \$90 per week for a leader; in other words, \$12–\$15 per night over a six-night week for performances which ran approximately 9pm–2:30am.¹⁴ The Thelonious Monk Quartet earned a combined \$800 per week (\$200 per musician, \$30 per night), something of an extravagance and a considerable financial risk for the club (Chevigny 1991, 50). While these wages might initially appear to be sufficient given the cost of living at the time, one must bear in mind that these sorts of jobs were temporary and didn't represent anything approaching a steady or predictable monthly income, even for well-known players.

Cost of living was still low in the 1960s and was perhaps the main thing that allowed both New York-based jazz musicians to survive and jazz clubs to remain in business: a symbiotic relationship of low wages, low cover charges, and cheap rent. Warren Chiasson recalls that his rent in 1962 was \$40 a month for the lower-east side walk-up he shared for a time with saxophonist Don Palmer, at a time when both the *New York Times* and a subway ride cost five cents.¹⁵ Bassist Peter Ind, perhaps best-known for his association with pianist/educator Lennie Tristano, agrees that while wages for jazz work were perilously low, the overall economic picture in New York during the 1950s and 1960s enabled most jazz players to cobble together some sort of living and, in conjunction with the artistic outlet the music afforded them, to feel reasonably accomplished.

Well it was still basic survival [wages]. You know I couldn't have really raised a family on that you know. But. . . I was unattached, and [therefore] it was enough that I felt relatively affluent. And of course what I was thrilled about was coming to New York and the acceptance I received [from other musicians]. Rent was manageable. In 1960 when I got this loft downtown on 2nd Street at Avenue B, I moaned to my landlord [about the rent], and it was something like \$100 a month. I never really worried about it too much [about money]. I think the main thing. . . I didn't feel extreme financial pressure in those days. Yeah, we'd all moan [about the state of things] but it wasn't a question of can we pay the bills. [But] it would have been hard to have had a family. And I think a lot of the [other] musicians as they grew older and had families they realized how tough it was.

(Peter Ind, personal communication, January 4, 2017)

One of the factors that both depressed wages for jazz musicians and at the same time enabled the music to acquire a popular enough appeal to remain commercially relevant was the low cost associated with attending a jazz club to listen. Even the city's most famous clubs—the Village Vanguard, Half Note, Five Spot, and Birdland—charged either a minimal cover charge or relied upon customers ordering a “minimum” charge in food or beverages. The clubs were all relatively

small spaces, with estimates putting the Half Note and Five Spot at a capacity of about 50–70, and the basement location of Birdland on 52nd as being perhaps a bit larger.

The Five Spot was small place. These were all small places. They were all about the size of the Vanguard, but a different shape. The only really big one of the full jazz clubs, was Birdland. It was quite big. And I sat [at Birdland] in the . . . what they called the peanut gallery or whatever name they had for it. And that was the \$1.50 seats. I think if you took a table it was different, in a place like that. And the tables were closer to the bandstand, but it was a wonderful sound. I heard every note. Every nuance. I heard John Coltrane with Miles Davis and Philly Jo Jones were \$1.50 at Birdland. And the thing I learned how to do very quickly was just sip on the beer, because they wouldn't throw you out if you had one in front of you. So I'd sip, and listen to 5 tunes, and sip. I don't remember much paying a cover charge. Like I said, I got Davis and Coltrane for two beers, and if you kept a beer in front of you they'd leave you alone.

(Don Palmer, personal communication, January 10, 2017a)

Harry Sewing, who began going to New York City jazz clubs in 1960 and attended the Half Note numerous times between 1960 and 1965 to hear the various groups fronted by Lennie Tristano, recalls that the music charge might have been \$2.50 at the Half Note, and that the food was inexpensive, with a meatball sandwich adding another \$1.50 to the bill. At the time, Sewing was working for a charter bus company in New Jersey and recalls making about \$3–4 per hour, or about \$160 per week before taxes.

In addition to work in clubs and other forms of live performance and studio work, there was at times also work on jazz recordings. It is here that one hopes that future research might make concerted use of whatever archival materials exist for the major jazz labels (Blue Note, Verve, Impulse, Prestige, Black Lion, Pacific, etc.), but anecdotal evidence again suggests that for all but the most commercially successful jazz artists, whatever recording sessions might have meant in terms of prestige or artistic achievement, they often meant very little in economic terms. Peter Ind recalls that when working with Roy Haynes to record “Pastime” and “Ju-Ju” for Lennie Tristano in 1951, he was paid a lump sum of \$50 for the session with no royalties, and that such fees were quite standard for short recording dates upon which you were not the leader. If one worked a longer session and was included on an album length release, that lump sum might have been \$100 or \$150, recalled Ind, but again mostly likely without any provision for the later payment of royalties.

Maybe \$100, \$150 that was about it. There were [no residuals if you weren't the leader] and if you stood out for it [more money] there was a kind of unacknowledged black list, so you daren't ask for more. Yeah, the record company owners and producers [didn't like to pay much].

(Peter Ind, personal communication, January 4, 2017)

Lee Konitz concurs with this recollection, and suggests that

the money was never enough with the gigs or the recordings. Once in a while they'd slip through an extra couple of bucks and we were very pleased at that, but overall they would get away with paying scale, you know [for the recordings]. [And] I receive cheques sometimes from companies, for a couple of hundred dollars or so, and they don't specify what they're for, so I deduce they're royalties for a recording but I don't know which ones.

(Lee Konitz, personal communication, January 8, 2017)

For all but the most famous and commercially successful jazz musicians, the gig economy of the New York scene presented a precarious and fractured network of musical employment. Often predicated upon the cultivation of social networks and through participation in unpaid jazz work such as rehearsal bands, the gigs that enabled most musicians to stay “in jazz” were often only tangentially related to jazz performance practice. Though jazz was the main artistic focus for musicians such as Warren Chiasson and Don Palmer, it was not jazz but rather work in the pit orchestras and studios, country clubs and wedding receptions, and one-nighters in myriad unnamed bars and restaurants that provided the economic wherewithal upon which to base a musical life. Even for artists as well established and well respected as Lee Konitz, the “jazz life” required a constant hustle—a mix of recording dates, live performances, teaching, and cash gigs in an unlikely array of dance bands, orchestras, and studios. While the cost of living in New York in the 1960s largely enabled this gig economy to support functional lives for many jazz musicians, it was, as Peter Ind and Konitz point out, a difficult prospect for anyone with a family.

The increasing institutionalization of jazz has in some ways prompted a developing sense of nostalgia for what many regard to be a golden age for jazz in New York City and beyond: an era when jazz was simultaneously respected as an art and well-regarded as an element of popular culture. Oftentimes, the linked assumption is that jazz was, at least more often than not, better paid “back in the day” than is commonplace now. However, as Iain Anderson points out (Anderson 2002), it was in some ways the very institutionalization of jazz that *enabled* musicians (many of them black practitioners of less mainstream forms of jazz) to enjoy stable periods of work that were well compensated and directly linked to their performance practices. Given these seemingly contradictory stories—that the current state of economic affairs for working jazz musicians is either worse or perhaps better than it was—we should continue to explore ways toward a more nuanced, locally focused, and realistic approach to the ways in which musicians have had to cope with the economic realities of pursuing lives in jazz.

Notes

1. In New York musician parlance, a country club, wedding, or bar mitzvah engagement was called a “club date” though this did not refer to an engagement or gig playing jazz, or indeed even one that took place in a club venue.
2. Palmer recalls his rent at 53rd and 8th Ave being about \$150 per month, and that his next apartment on 85th and Columbus was a bit less than \$200 per month in the mid-1960s.
3. The rehearsal band of Thad Jones and Mel Lewis had a Monday night residency at the Village Vanguard since 1966, and continues on today in the same manner as the Village Vanguard Orchestra.
4. And declined to pay for. Thad Jones had to bring AFM proceedings in order to receive payment for the work he’d done writing ten arrangements (Grouse 1998/1999, 585).
5. Chiasson’s engagement diaries from the mid-1960s list several periods where unemployment insurance is listed as a source of income.
6. Palmer has possession of a bootleg live recording of the Machito orchestra recorded in New York in the early 1960s where one can clearly hear Konitz’s tenor solo.
7. Machito would make a point to include Konitz’s name in the stage announcements.
8. Konitz’s decision to leave Lennie Tristano to tour with Stan Kenton in 1952 was in large part motivated by the prospect of a steady \$175 a week salary, and Konitz likewise recalls Norman Granz with some fondness for having provided an advance on his Verve recording contract in acknowledgment of his financial situation (Hamilton 2007, 80, 146). Konitz’s first marriage ended during the early 1960s, but the union had produced five children.
9. *Downbeat* October 8, 1964, pg. 45 and March 9, 1967, pg. 44.
10. Chiasson recalls that after taxes his pay amounted to \$175–180 per week, but that those deductions enabled him to apply for unemployment insurance and counted toward his pension.
11. Information taken from Warren Chiasson’s engagement diary for 1965 and relayed via personal communication December 15, 2016.

12. Unbeknownst to the musicians, this concert was recorded and released much later by Schuller under Eric Dolphy's name (*Vintage Dolphy*, GM Recordings—GM3005D, 1986 [LP]). Chiasson lodged a complaint with the AFM in order to receive due payment for the release (along with other players on the date).
13. Lee Konitz, personal communication, January 8, 2017.
14. Harry Sewing, personal communication, January 17, 2017.
15. When Chiasson moved into his apartment at 569 3rd Ave (a second-floor walk-up with a roof) in 1964 he paid \$57.50 per month, an amount that was raised shortly thereafter to \$60, at which it stayed for about a decade. In 2014, due to rent control, he was paying just \$730 per month for a home in the heart of Manhattan.

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GEORGE LEWIS'S VOYAGER

Paul Steinbeck

Founded on Chicago's South Side in 1965 by four African American composers, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) was the most significant collective organization in the history of jazz and experimental music. Or rather, *is* the most significant—the Association celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2015 and shows no signs of slowing down. Important new AACM artists seem to emerge every few years, and the Association's impact can be seen in many corners of contemporary culture, including visual art, intermedia performance, and aesthetic theory. But its influence may be strongest in the realms of social relations and musical sound.

From the earliest years of the organization, AACM musicians were united by a social commitment to support one another's creative pursuits. This ethic of mutual support was evident in countless concerts and recording sessions, when AACM composers called on fellow members of the organization to help bring their music to life. The AACM's social relationships also operated behind the scenes, making the Association a dynamic community of "dedicated creative artists" who constantly encouraged their colleagues to keep practicing, studying, and developing their music.¹ In this social environment—or "atmosphere," the term favored in the 1960s—AACM musicians were expected, even required, to be innovative (Lewis 2008, 116–118). The members responded to this mandate by creating a number of performance practices and musical techniques that would become synonymous with the Association, from multi-instrumentalism and the use of "little instruments" to extended forms and unprecedented blends of composition and improvisation.²

The AACM's 1960s innovations attracted immediate attention from Chicago audiences and critics, and a series of recordings with local independent labels like Delmark brought the music from the South Side to listeners around the world. Indeed, albums such as Roscoe Mitchell's *Sound* (1966), Joseph Jarman's *Song For* (1967), Muhal Richard Abrams's *Levels and Degrees of Light* (1968), and Anthony Braxton's *For Alto* (1969) were so revolutionary that the AACM's place in history would be secure even if the organization had disbanded at the end of the 1960s, like most other musicians' collectives formed during that decade. Instead, the Association continued to thrive. In 1969, Mitchell and Jarman's Art Ensemble of Chicago relocated to Europe, as did Braxton and his bandmates Leroy Jenkins and Wadada Leo Smith. By the early 1970s, Braxton's group and the Art Ensemble were back in the United States, recording for New York-based major labels and encouraging many of their AACM colleagues to move to the East Coast. In Chicago, meanwhile, the Association was welcoming a steady stream of new members, throughout the 1970s and in every decade thereafter.

Of all the figures who joined the AACM during its 1970s “second wave,” few did as much to shape the organization as George Lewis. He came aboard in 1971, and four years later served briefly as the Association’s chair, directing the 1975 Tenth Anniversary Festival, a landmark event that established a precedent for AACM anniversary concerts presented at high-profile venues in Chicago (Lewis 2008, 313, 318–320). Lewis also functioned as the AACM’s in-house historian. From the 1970s to the twenty-first century, he published a number of important writings about the Association, including the book *A Power Stronger Than Itself* (2008), the definitive history of the AACM. Additionally, Lewis’s performances and compositions left a lasting mark on the Association. In the mid-1970s, he established himself as one of the world’s top trombonists, recognized for his virtuosic technique and his imaginative approach to improvisation. By the end of the decade, he was making music with computers and synthesizers, often blending electronic sounds with traditional acoustic instruments. These early experiments were successful, and during the 1980s and 1990s, computer music became central to Lewis’s compositional practice. He also composed for acoustic ensembles, writing chamber music, orchestral scores, pieces for improvising groups of all sizes, and even an opera, *Afterword* (2015), based on the final chapter of *A Power Stronger Than Itself*.

Lewis’s best-known composition was *Voyager*, a pioneering work in which a human musician and a software-powered “virtual orchestra” improvise together (Lewis, quoted in Parker 2005, 84). A number of leading improvisers have given performances of *Voyager*—Miya Masaoka, Roscoe Mitchell, Evan Parker, and many more—but usually the featured instrumentalist was Lewis himself on trombone.³ In the decades since its 1987 premiere, *Voyager* has been played in hundreds of concerts around the world, making it Lewis’s most-performed piece, and perhaps the most-performed work by any AACM composer (Lewis 2014). Another measure of *Voyager*’s significance: the prominent place it occupies in histories of experimental music, which portray the piece as a major breakthrough in “human-computer interaction” (Born 2005, 32). These histories tend to emphasize the composition’s technical features, its relationships to comparable works, and other topics of interest to computer music researchers. With few exceptions, however, these histories neglect to examine a crucial influence on *Voyager*: the musical practices of the AACM.⁴ This chapter sheds new light on *Voyager*, placing the composer’s own statements about the origins and meaning of the work in dialog with an analysis of a 1995 performance at an AACM concert in New York.⁵

Prelude

Lewis attended his first AACM event when he was still in high school. Born in Chicago during the summer of 1952 and raised on the city’s South Side, he attended public schools for a few years before receiving a scholarship from the Laboratory School, a prestigious K–12 academy operated by the University of Chicago. Lewis took up the trombone at the Lab School, playing in the concert band, jazz band, and orchestra. By his mid-teens, he was listening to bebop, avant-garde tape compositions, and late-period John Coltrane—an array of contemporary music styles that should have prepared him for his first AACM concert, a 1968 performance by tenor saxophonist Fred Anderson (Lewis 2008, 281–282). Anderson sounded a bit like Coltrane in those days, and his group played compositions modeled on the music of another free jazz innovator, Ornette Coleman (Steinbeck 2010, 4).⁶ However, Lewis had a hard time comprehending Anderson’s fierce performance. “It was . . . too far out for me, and I just couldn’t figure it out,” he remembered (Lewis 1997a). Still, Lewis was intrigued, and he attended several more AACM concerts during his senior year at the Lab School. One of these AACM experiences was especially unforgettable: the Art Ensemble of Chicago, in one of the last performances given by the group members before their 1969 move to Europe. The Art Ensemble event took place on

the University of Chicago campus, just down the street from the Lab School, and Lewis had a front-row seat. As he recalled:

I was stunned by Joseph Jarman's body-painted arms, attacking a vibraphone with mallets swishing dangerously close to my nose. I remember being so frightened that I literally seemed to faint. When I came to, Lester Bowie's trumpet squeals and raspberries were leading to long drone sections where Malachi Favors' bass unwound long strings of melody, while Roscoe Mitchell contentedly pattered about in a secret garden of percussion.

(Lewis 2008, 282)

Not long after the Art Ensemble concert, Lewis finished high school. As a Lab School graduate, he had the credentials to be admitted to an elite university, and he chose Yale, becoming one of ninety-six black students in the 1969 freshman class—then the largest cohort of black undergraduates in the institution's history (Karabel 2005, 66). At Yale University, Lewis hoped to major in music. Unfortunately, Yale's music professors were less than welcoming to students without classical training, and Lewis became disenchanted with the university. So he took a break from Yale after his sophomore year and spent 1971–1972 back in Chicago, working a nine-to-five job and practicing his instrument. One day in the summer of 1971, he was walking home from work when he heard a band rehearsing—it was Muhal Richard Abrams's group. Lewis introduced himself to Abrams's crew and revealed that he played trombone. Within weeks, he was invited to perform with some of the AACM's foremost musicians, including Abrams, Douglas Ewart, Steve McCall, and the members of the Art Ensemble. Soon Lewis was formally accepted into the Association, and 1971–1972 became his “AACM year,” a period of intensive study that gave him a thorough grounding in the AACM's practices and inspired him to pursue a career in music (Lewis 1997a).

In the fall of 1972, Lewis returned to Yale. He changed his major to philosophy, bypassing the university's conservative music faculty, and earned his BA in 1974. Then he headed home to Chicago, where he reunited with the AACM and worked as a freelance trombonist. He also began to delve into composition, studying with Abrams as well as with Richard McCreary, an African American composer of electronic music who taught at Governors State University in south suburban Chicago (Lewis 1997a). Before long, Lewis's performance career was on the rise, and he was coming into his own as a composer. By 1976, he was touring internationally with artists like Count Basie and fellow AACM member Anthony Braxton (Lewis 2008, 341). He was also developing important electroacoustic compositions like *Homage to Charles Parker*, for electronics, percussion, synthesizers, and trombone (Parker 2005, 83). In 1977, while visiting California, he met David Behrman, a computer music pioneer who devised software that enabled personal computers—also known as “microcomputers,” then a brand-new technology—to interact sonically with other computers and even with human instrumentalists (Lewis 2007, 86–87). After the encounter with Behrman, the possibilities of computer music seemed endless to Lewis, and he “rushed home . . . determined to get a microcomputer.” He “postpone[d] paying the rent that month to buy the thing,” and started teaching himself how to program while in the process of moving from Chicago to New York (Lewis 2007, 88). Lewis was a quick study: in 1979, at the Kitchen performance space in downtown New York, he premiered his first computer music piece, *The KIM and I*, in which his trombone interacted with a custom-built computer controlling a Moog synthesizer (Lewis 2007, 83).

Interactive computer pieces like *The KIM and I* opened numerous doors for Lewis. He already had a name on the jazz scene, especially along the European and North American corridors where AACM musicians toured and recorded, but now his compositions were gaining an audience in the world of experimental music. Eventually this led to recognition from prestigious foundations and research institutions, including a “genius grant” from the MacArthur Foundation (2002), an

endowed professorship at Columbia University (2004), and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation (2015), the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2015), and the British Academy (2016). The first fruits of Lewis's computer music efforts, however, were invitations to return to the Kitchen, initially as a composer-performer, and later as the center's music director from 1980 to 1982 (Lewis 1997a, 2008, 384). The connections he made at the Kitchen helped him secure his next position, a residency at the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM) in Paris. While at IRCAM, Lewis composed and premiered a new computer music piece, *Rainbow Family* (1984), which would form the foundation for *Voyager*. *Rainbow Family*, like its famous successor, was conceived as an interactive work for human instrumentalist(s) and an improvising orchestra. In this composition, the orchestral textures came from a trio of Yamaha DX-7 synthesizers controlled by Apple II computers running Lewis's own software. At the heart of the software was a group of algorithms that created music in real time while also generating sonic responses to the playing of four improvising soloists: Derek Bailey, Douglas Ewart, Steve Lacy, and Joëlle Léandre (Lewis 2007, 90–91). Performed to a “packed” house at IRCAM, the *Rainbow Family* premiere was a technical and creative triumph (Lewis 1997a). IRCAM's old-guard directors—then engaged in a power struggle with Lewis and his sponsors—reacted less favorably, but even they could not dim Lewis's enthusiasm for his project (Born 1995, 192). He started searching for a friendlier work environment, and found one at the Studio voor Electro-Instrumentale Muziek (STEIM) in Amsterdam. Lewis left Paris at the end of 1985 to take a resident-artist position at STEIM, and immediately after his arrival, he began developing his next series of interactive compositions, culminating in *Voyager* (Lewis 1997a, 2000b, 34).

Listening to *Voyager*

The 1987 *Voyager* premiere was the first of many versions of the composition. Over the following two decades, Lewis continued to revise the work in response to new performance opportunities and advances in technology. Initially, *Voyager*'s musical output was sent from a Macintosh computer to a Yamaha synthesizer (as in *Rainbow Family*), but during the 1990s, Lewis updated the software so that it could generate sounds directly using Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) samples. And in the 2000s, Lewis recreated the entire composition in a new programming language—Max/MSP rather than Forth—allowing the software to play an acoustic piano, the MIDI-capable Yamaha Disklavier (Lewis 2014). All of these versions, though, relied on the same underlying architecture and reflected Lewis's original vision for *Voyager*: a software-driven, improvising entity that could create orchestral textures based on the sonic ideals of the AACM (Lewis 2007, 83).

The AACM's musical practices influenced *Voyager* in a number of areas, especially the work's distinctive instrumentation. *Voyager* was an orchestral composition, but the (virtual) instruments heard in performances were not limited to those found in a European symphony orchestra. Instead, *Voyager* combined symphonic strings, winds, and percussion with instruments from Africa, the Americas, East and Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. These sonic resources could—theoretically—yield textures as dense as a *tutti* orchestra, but ordinarily the software chose much sparser groupings of instruments, often forming unconventional “ensembles” rarely encountered in the concert hall (Lewis 2000b, 34–35). These configurations sounded less like a handful of players plucked from a symphony and more like a gathering of AACM multi-instrumentalists—groups such as Muhal Richard Abrams's Experimental Band and the Art Ensemble of Chicago, in which the musicians had an array of instruments at their fingertips. The AACM's explorations of multi-instrumentalism began in the 1960s, when Experimental Band members, the Art Ensemble, and other AACM improvisers “moved to develop multiple voices on a wide variety of instruments” (Lewis 2000b, 36). By the decade's end, the members of the Art Ensemble were

playing dozens of different instruments each, as Lewis discovered during that late 1960s concert at the University of Chicago, where Joseph Jarman and Roscoe Mitchell performed on percussion as well as various woodwinds (Lewis 2008, 282; Steinbeck 2017, 49–50). The next time Lewis encountered the Art Ensemble, at the 1972 show documented on the Delmark album *Live at Mandel Hall*, the band's instrument collection had grown exponentially (Art Ensemble of Chicago, 1974; Steinbeck 2017, 181–212). “When I saw the Art Ensemble in 1972,” he remembered, “they’d have like a thousand instruments on stage” (Lewis, quoted in Parker 2005, 84). In performances such as this, Lewis observed, “the extreme multiplicity of voices, embedded within an already highly collective ensemble orientation, permitted the timbral diversity of a given situation to exceed the sum of its instrumental parts, affording a wider palette of potential orchestrations to explore” (Lewis 2000b, 36).

Voyager's relationship to AACM-style multi-instrumentalism was evident in every performance, and at times its sound could uncannily resemble certain AACM groups. For example, listen about seven minutes into Lewis's September 16, 1995 performance of *Voyager*, at a concert hosted by the New York chapter of the AACM (Lewis 2000a). As the piece approaches the seven-minute mark, the texture created by *Voyager* grows more and more complex. Sounds reminiscent of an old analog ring modulator are joined by other synthesizers, percussion instruments, and even a harmonica. The orchestra begins to grow louder, then suddenly falls silent, and a few seconds afterward, Lewis drops out too. At 7:10, when *Voyager* returns, it is playing five new instruments: drum set, a log drum, marimba, double bass, and a low-pitched saxophone. This particular combination of instruments can be heard in numerous performances by the Art Ensemble of Chicago, with Famoudou Don Moye on drum set, Lester Bowie on log drum (or concert bass drum), Joseph Jarman on marimba, Malachi Favors Maghostut on bass, and Roscoe Mitchell on baritone or bass saxophone. In this Art Ensemble-esque passage, *Voyager's* playing is spacious and searching, and when Lewis rejoins the texture, he adopts a similar improvisational approach, sounding just one note at a time on his trombone and waiting for the orchestra to respond. The texture continues until 7:46, when several winds, strings, and synthesizers enter in short succession, drowning out all of the old instruments except the drum set and marimba. It is as if an Art Ensemble concert has been interrupted by another group, perhaps Misha Mengelberg's ICP Orchestra or one of Muhal Richard Abrams's big bands from the 1980s and 1990s (Abrams 1983, 1989, 1991). Lewis, too, hears this intervention as a break from the previous Art Ensemble texture, and he decides to rest, allowing *Voyager* to take the lead.

Lewis remains silent for quite some time: thirty seconds elapse before he plays his next note. This period of rest, though, is brief in comparison to the way Lewis elected to open the performance, when he let *Voyager* play unaccompanied for almost three minutes before entering. During these orchestra-only passages, *Voyager* demonstrated to the concert audience that it was able to create its own music in real time, with or without Lewis's trombone. Indeed, in any *Voyager* performance, all that the human instrumentalist needed to do was type the commands “start playing” (to begin the piece) and “stop playing” (to bring the concert to a close). In between “start playing” and “stop playing,” the musician did not have to make a single sound or provide the software with any additional input (Lewis, quoted in Dean 2003, 164). The *Voyager* orchestra, in other words, could conduct itself. For Lewis, this meant that *Voyager* was “incarnatic,” not “prosthetic”—it made independent musical decisions and was not a mere extension of the human performer (Dean 2003, 81). According to Lewis:

If you choose to go in and play [with *Voyager*], it's happy to listen to you and dialog with you, or sometimes ignore you, but the conceptual aspect of it is that it's pretty autonomous. You can't tell it what to do. . . . So improvisation becomes a negotiation where you have to work with [*Voyager*] rather than just be in control.

(Lewis, quoted in Parker 2005, 85)

Voyager used a software subroutine called *setphrasebehavior* to generate its music. This subroutine determined which of the orchestra's instruments would play and arranged these instruments into one or more "ensembles," each with its own distinctive musical behavior (Lewis 2000b, 34). Ensembles were assigned different pitch sets and tuning systems, algorithms for spontaneously composing melodies, and many other parameters that shaped their sonic output, including event-density, melodic range, tactus, tempo, and volume. The *setphrasebehavior* routine ran every few seconds, forming new ensembles and transforming the old ensembles by recombining or even silencing their instruments. At the same time, *setphrasebehavior* decided how each ensemble would interact with the human improviser, either "imitating, directly opposing, or ignoring" the sounds he or she played (Lewis 2000b, 35).

If the human performer was resting, *Voyager* could keep making music by itself. But while the instrumentalist was playing, *Voyager* listened closely, converting his or her sounds into MIDI data and tracking some thirty musical parameters (Lewis 1993b). In the rhythmic realm alone, *Voyager* measured sounding duration, interonset duration, interonset duration range, and frequency of silence (Lewis 1999, 103–104). MIDI listening gave *Voyager* a detailed and continuously updated map of the human musician's input. However, the program did not use this data to detect melodic motives or store up musical ideas for later use. In Lewis's view, those techniques were "essentially Eurocentric" and would conflict with *Voyager's* non-hierarchical, AACM-inspired approach to open improvisation, in which the performer and the software worked together in real time to articulate musical form (Lewis, quoted in Dean 2003, 171).

Instead of merely echoing the notes played by the human musician, *Voyager* engaged in non-motivic, "state-based" approaches to listening, analysis, and interaction (Lewis 1999, 105). *Voyager's* state-based analyses processed the performer's sounds not as isolated melodies and rhythms but rather as complex contributions to an ever-evolving texture. The software's *setresponse* subroutine, working independently of *setphrasebehavior*, aggregated and then averaged all of the musical parameters emerging from the instrumentalist's audio-to-MIDI input, de-emphasizing "moments of linear development" to more accurately represent the "sonic environment [in] which musical actions occur" (Lewis 1999, 105). This unconventional analytical technique enabled *Voyager* to respond to the human performer with astonishing sensitivity. During passages when *Voyager* was following the instrumentalist, it could emulate his or her input across virtually every parameter, and it often seemed to be reading the musician's mind. To describe this phenomenon of "bidirectional transfer of intentionality through sound," Lewis coined the term "emotional transduction," an allusion to electroacoustic devices like microphones and speakers that transduce—that is, convert—sound waves into electrical impulses, and vice versa (Lewis 2000b, 36). According to Lewis,

musical behavior is a carrier for complex symbolic signals. [In *Voyager*,] [g]esture is construed as an intentional act, that is, an act embodying meaning and announcing emotional and mental intention. Through gesture the emotional state of the improviser may be mirrored in the behavior of the computer partner—a kind of 'emotional transduction' which is essential to a feeling of dialogue.

(Lewis 1997b, 5)

There were many instances of emotional transduction in the 1995 *Voyager* performance, none more striking than an exchange early in the concert, shortly after Lewis's initial entrance. Prior to Lewis's entry, *Voyager* had been performing independently and creating a series of contrasting textures. The first distinct orchestral episode lasts a minute and a half. During this passage, *Voyager* introduces ten different instruments, none of which move to take charge of the texture—not even the piccolo and harp, which overlap in register and share the same melody-generating algorithm. After a brass-and-drums burst at 1:30, the orchestra resets itself: new ensembles are formed and

the texture gradually becomes denser. By 2:45, several instruments—balafon, koto, drums, and saxophone—are playing much faster and louder than before. Lewis seems to want *Voyager* to do something else, and at 2:57 he finally picks up his trombone and proposes an alternative musical idea, playing a single note, E♭3, at a moderate volume. One of the orchestra's ensembles immediately follows suit. A few woodwinds play a quiet melody, G4–E♭4–D4, and the strings repeat this line an octave higher, joining with the wind instruments to form a delicate harmony. However, this contrapuntal texture is short-lived. The balafon, which had been playing unobtrusively underneath the winds and strings, begins to perform frantic glissandos in the upper register, rejecting Lewis's attempted intervention and pushing all the other orchestral instruments to the background. As the new texture unfolds, the balafon sounds like it could continue in this vein indefinitely, and at 3:24, Lewis intervenes again with a markedly oppositional gesture. He plays an inversion of the winds' G–E♭–D melody, drawing out each note and using a loud, brassy tone that covers up the balafon. *Voyager's* other ensembles react instantly. Synthesizers and strings enter first, followed by brass instruments and saxophones that precisely match Lewis's durations, volume level, and tone color. This musical consensus emerges so quickly that even the balafon seems compelled to respond. It drops out briefly, then resurfaces at 3:30, performing sparsely and softly, with no hint of the busy glissandos it was playing just seconds before. The texture has been transformed, not only through Lewis's incisive musical gestures but also because of how *Voyager* interpreted his intentions. This is exactly how *Voyager's* emotional transduction was meant to work. "When everything is going properly," Lewis affirmed,

what people play into the computer should come out of the computer with some aspect of the emotional and other messages that are part of the sound intact. What people are playing are carriers for another signal; the sounds we hear aren't the main thing. . . . You have to approach it on the level of *emotion*, on the level of creating dialogue.

(Lewis, quoted in Casserley, 2006)

In *Voyager* performances, the process of emotional transduction was not always led by the human musician. Emotional currents could also flow from *Voyager* to the performer, when the orchestra suggested a particularly evocative musical state and the instrumentalist played gestures to confirm the new texture. One such interaction takes place around the nine-minute mark of the 1995 performance. Lewis is fully warmed up at this point in the concert, and every facet of his formidable technique is on display as he plays virtuosic runs spanning the trombone's three-octave range. *Voyager's* orchestral contributions are just as colorful, with a number of different instruments chattering away, from brass, saxophones, and strings to drums, synthesizers, and an African mbira. Then at 9:03, the orchestra's strings land on a low E♭2, creating a dramatic pedal point that demands a response. Lewis answers right away. A split second after the orchestra's arrival on E♭2, he plays the same note two octaves higher, holding E♭4 for a moment and then bending it upward through E4 and F4—a chromatic climb that pulls hard against the low pedal point in the strings. When Lewis pauses for an instant to breathe, *Voyager* keeps the texture going, using the saxophones to add a few more high register long tones. Once Lewis catches his breath, he returns with another E♭4–E4–F4 ascent, and this time *Voyager* assembles its pedal point texture from the top down. The orchestra's instruments enter one by one, playing a descending sequence of long tones that form a lush E♭ dominant-thirteenth chord, capped off by another low E♭ in the strings. Lewis chimes in with a low E♭ of his own, reinforcing the chord outlined by *Voyager*. At 9:12, the orchestra's chord begins to recede, and Lewis offers yet another supportive gesture, stepping down from E♭3 to D3 as the orchestra fades to silence. Lewis's adroit resolution of the E♭ harmony gives the orchestra space to establish a new texture, and *Voyager* does just that, directing a few instruments to dialog with Lewis while forming additional ensembles that gradually lead the improvisation in a different direction.

Postlude

The 1995 *Voyager* performance continued for another eleven minutes, with fascinating exchanges like this throughout. Lewis or *Voyager* would present a compelling sonic gesture, and the other would respond in ways that kept the improvisation moving forward into new textures and possibilities. For many in the concert audience, passages characterized by audible agreement and emotional transduction would have been the highlights of the performance, and they might have concluded that Lewis's ambition for *Voyager* was designing a "creative machine" capable of passing a musical Turing test by improvising as intelligently as a human instrumentalist (Lewis 2007, 83). However, the dozen or so AACM musicians in the house would likely have heard the performance differently, as a real time demonstration of the aesthetics—and ethics—of open improvisation (Lewis 1996, 111). The members of the Association had long been attuned to the social implications of musical sound, as Lewis learned when he joined the organization:

I hadn't thought much about the process of creating music until I met people from the AACM in 1971 . . . play[ing] with people like Muhal Richard Abrams and Roscoe Mitchell. We talked about where music was coming from and what it was for—were we just making sounds and that's it? It seemed pretty clear that the tradition, at least in African American music, was really not centered around making sounds for their own sake. There is always an instrumentality connected with sounds; you make sounds for pedagogical purposes, to embody history or to tell stories, and so on.

(Lewis, quoted in Casserley, 2006)

The AACM's social philosophies were at the core of *Voyager*, even though the piece involved a human improvising with a computer rather than an in-person encounter between multiple human performers. "When the computer possibilities came along I tried to maintain that [AACM] sensibility," Lewis stated,

so I still think the interesting thing about computer music is focusing on the process of musical creation as done by humans. When you play *Voyager* the idea is that you put the computer on the stage in order to focus on the people.

(Lewis, quoted in Casserley, 2006)

In the opening moments of a *Voyager* performance, listeners discovered that the software could create its own music without external input, just like a human improviser. As the performance continued, they heard *Voyager* engage with its human partner in every conceivable fashion, from sympathetic interaction ("emotional transduction") to ignoring or opposing the musician's sonic input. These were exactly the kinds of musical decisions made by the human instrumentalist—*Voyager*'s way of revealing to the audience the essential processes at the core of any group improvisation, whether human-computer, human-human, or even computer-computer.

When musicians improvise together, no matter the genre or style, they listen to one another, analyze the texture as it takes shape, and choose the kinds of sonic responses that will best serve the music. In an AACM-style open improvisation, moreover, the performers' rights and responsibilities are even greater. Improvisers who move away from standard forms take on a shared, mutual responsibility for determining how the performance will unfold. Furthermore, because all participants in an open improvisation can contribute musical ideas, no one possesses sole authority over the performance, and the ultimate trajectory of the piece must be determined by real time sonic negotiations in which everyone has the right to be heard. Entering into such an open-ended musical environment would be a considerable challenge for some improvisers, but not for George

Lewis and his AACM colleagues, who had been developing novel approaches to improvisation since the Association's founding. Indeed, in Lewis's book *A Power Stronger Than Itself*, the very history of the AACM becomes an open improvisation writ large. Establishing a new music community on Chicago's South Side, inventing the practice of multi-instrumentalism, carving out territory for African American composers and performers on the experimental music scene—all of these AACM accomplishments were without precedent and could only have been achieved by a group of artists working together to create order spontaneously, without relying on existing models. No two AACM members contributed to these efforts in the same way: Muhal Richard Abrams was the visionary leader, “first wave” AACM musicians like Anthony Braxton and the members of the Art Ensemble were the most committed to multi-instrumentalism, and Lewis was the Association's primary exponent of cutting edge computer music. But they all gave something of lasting significance, and in more than a few cases—including Lewis's *Voyager*—their musical offerings resounded for years on end.

Notes

1. In 1965, before the AACM had a name, the members considered calling the nascent organization the “Association of Dedicated Creative Artists” (Lewis 2008, 110–111).
2. For an account of the AACM's discovery of “little instruments,” see Steinbeck (2017, 45–46).
3. Roscoe Mitchell appeared on the first recording of *Voyager* (Lewis 1993a).
4. A few studies (Born 2005, 27–28; Monaghan 2000, 146–147) briefly explore *Voyager's* connections to the music of the AACM, but typically this important context is downplayed or ignored. See Dean (2003, 81–84, 123–126, 162–176, 178–179); Gbadebo (2012, 11–15); Gottschalk (2016, 209–210); Hagan (2016, 143–144); Nelson (2011, 112–113); and Tanner (1999, 47).
5. The 1995 performance of *Voyager* was released on Lewis's album *Endless Shout* (2000a).
6. Anderson's late 1960s playing can be heard on Joseph Jarman's *Song For* (1967) and *As If It Were the Seasons* (1968).

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QUIET ABOUT IT—JAZZ IN JAPAN

Michael Pronko

Japan is the largest home for jazz outside the United States (US). Though the number of musicians and venues for jazz in Japan are as extensive as those of any country or region, how jazz is received, learned, practiced, and considered in Japan is much less known than in other countries. Stuart Nicholson's (2005) thoughtful survey of jazz outside the US, *Is Jazz Dead?*, offers only two passing mentions of Japan. Alyn Shipton's monumental and otherwise inclusive *A New History of Jazz* (Bloomsbury 2001) mentions Japan not once in its nine hundred-plus pages.

Yet Japan can boast of a century of jazz history and over one hundred active jazz clubs in Tokyo and Yokohama alone ("Zenkokuban Live House"). Jazz is a fully integrated, uniquely processed, and historically rooted Japanese cultural import. Stéphane Dorin argues that "the history of jazz can also be regarded as a multiplicity of stories, sometimes parallel, sometimes divergent, with different branches, linked to various places and social worlds in which jazz was listened to and played" (Dorin 2016). If so, Japan's story is important in the larger diaspora of jazz.

A brief survey of the history and current scene in Japan shows how fully, if unexpectedly, jazz is importable, exportable, and capable of being treasured and created across cultures. Jazz became popular among Japanese for many of the same reasons as in other countries, though distinctively Japanese attitudes and practices contribute to its flourishing. Jazz, it seems, can be played similarly but felt differently. It can employ the same essential elements but generate quite different meanings. Perhaps no stronger argument for jazz's universality can be found than in Japan's vibrant jazz scene.

Several key institutions, social conditions, and cultural forces have secured jazz's position in contemporary Japanese culture. First, the role of the jazz *kissaten*, or coffee shop, the past dance halls, and current jazz clubs all contribute powerfully to jazz's enduring presence in Japan. Secondly, jam sessions, music schools, and amateur big bands, together with a vibrant jazz press, have kept jazz from losing cultural ground—even gaining some.

Several traditional cultural beliefs and practices, such as Zen and a strong craft tradition, have also contributed to jazz's status and popularity. The Japanese attraction to complex art forms that display a human touch draws musicians and fans toward the virtuosity, creativity, and authenticity that is central to jazz. In that sense, jazz's establishment in Japan as a cultural experience and dynamic practice is no surprise whatsoever.

Jazz Kissaten

Jazz coffee shops, or *jazz kissa* for short, have played an essential role in the unabated interest in jazz from the beginning of the twentieth century and are still central to Japanese jazz culture now. Eckhardt Derschmidt notes that jazz started to spread around First World War, but

nowhere in Europe, and of course not in America, did an institution like the Japanese *jazu-kissa* evolve, a cafe, whose main, and as from the middle of the fifties, whose sole function was to provide a space in which to listen to jazz.

(Derschmidt 1998)

The *jazz kissa* have a long and influential history and are arguably the central space for jazz's dissemination, study, and enjoyment. At *jazz kissa*, the music is the point, not the background to other activities.¹ There was never dancing and *jazz kissa* were always more affordable, costing the price of a cup of coffee for hours of listening.

One of the longest running *jazz kissa* is Chigusa in Yokohama. Founded in 1933, famed owner Mamoru Yoshida ran his place with dedication and passion. Chigusa's history and space was, and still is, the standard for the hundreds of other *jazz kissa* throughout Japan.

Don De Armond, a serviceman stationed in Yokosuka during the American Occupation, knew Yoshida well, sending him vinyl records from America after his return to America. Armond noted how Yoshida's and Chigusa's fortunes followed the times:

Mamoru Yoshida and his Chigusa were in business from 1937 to 1941; closed by military direction during the war years; demolished by the allied forces bombing of Yokohama in May 1945; rebuilt and reopened in 1946; and continued under his management until his death in 1994.

(Pronko 2012)

Now, new owners run Chigusa, but the atmosphere is unchanged.

Jazz kissa provided fans and musicians access to rare and expensive recordings. The effect of having a place for learning and sharing the music, as well as foreign culture, cannot be underestimated. Toshiko Akiyoshi said she learned to play jazz at Chigusa from Yoshida's records.

The only way to learn was to listen to records in those jazz coffee shops. If I asked Yoshida-san to play that particular little bit again, he would pick the needle up and drop it there again. So, on some Long Plays (LPs), that particular little place on the record would get worn out. Chigusa was a very important place for me.

(Pronko 2004)

Akiyoshi's experience was not unusual.

In the 1960s, jazz vinyl recordings gained even higher prestige but remained too expensive for most fans. *Jazz kissa* became spaces for young people rebelling against the stifling conformity and social oppressiveness of the postwar Japan order. They increasingly turned to free jazz. Film director Koreyoshi Kurahara not only featured jazz soundtracks for his tales of youthful rebellion and social malaise but also used *jazz kissa* in the Shibuya area of Tokyo as settings for several of his films, including *Black Sun* (Kurahara 1964) and *The Warped Ones* (Kurahara 1960).

In his fascinating study of the cultural meanings of *jazz kissa*, according to Mike Molasky,

there were over 500 jazz cafes reported in the magazine “Jazz Nippon-retto” of 1976. What’s more . . . the cafes which answered the questionnaire was 80 percent out of all cafes in Japan. There could have been over 600 jazz cafes in the middle of ’70s.

(Molasky 2010)

The numbers have fallen off from that peak, but ironically the international coffee shops edging them out now also play jazz as background music.

The *jazz kissa* that remain—and there are many—continue to be devoted to jazz. The walls of places such as Shinjuku’s Dug (opened in 1961), Yotsuya’s Eagle (opened in 1967), Kichijoji’s Meg (opened in 1970), Shinjuku’s Old Blind Cat (opened in 1965), and Samurai (opened in 1965) are all decorated with classic jazz LP covers, and the shelves are filled with CDs, vinyl records, and books and magazines about jazz for customers to read.

In a *kissa*, a select, high fidelity stereo system is central to the space. The “master”² chooses works from his vinyl or CD collection, but customers can also request specific songs or recordings. Some *jazz kissa* welcome regular customers to bring in recordings to play on the system. Others host evenings that introduce recent releases. Every *jazz kissa* has a bulletin board with information about concerts, new releases, jam sessions, lectures, or other jazz activities, underscoring their community-oriented nature.

As in a library, customers can stay as long as they like. *Jazz kissa* were, and still are, privileged, dedicated spaces for listening to music on high-end sound systems. Under such conditions, *jazz kissa* are sanctuaries that inspire respect in customers, similar to the propriety shown inside a Buddhist temple.

Dance Halls

In early twentieth-century Japan, dance halls were the main jazz and dance venues. Jazz transferred easily to the wide-open entertainment districts of Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe, Osaka, and other metropolitan centers—especially the port cities—in the 1920s and 1930s. Vera Mackie notes that “such cities as Shanghai, Yokohama, Nagasaki, Hakodate, and Kobe were linked with international trading routes. . . . Ocean liners plied these routes, transporting tourists and traders, jazz bands and dancehall girls between the treaty ports” (Mackie 2013).

As well documented in E. Taylor Atkins’s *Blue Nippon*, the jazz age in Japan started in the 1920s, a bit behind other world cities. Atkins notes that “the year of the stock market crash in America, which in many ways signaled the coda of Fitzgerald’s Jazz Age, was the same year that witnessed Japan’s most intense engagement with jazz to date” (Atkins 2001).

Ironically, at that time, Tokyo’s musicians appeared to have been too well-schooled to easily pick up the new music of jazz. Masahisa Segawa notes,

Tokyo musicians played semi-classical music with a lack of jazz taste. One of the reasons for this was that Filipino musicians arrived at Kobe along with their ship and often stayed in the port. Young merchants in Kansai were modernized and liked jazz music and adopted it as the dance music.

(Segawa 1981)

Popular music, in particular the Takarazuka Revue and the Shochiku Revue, all-female musical groups, also influenced jazz in Osaka.³ Shuhei Hosokawa argues that early Dotonbori⁴

jazz was deeply influenced by the musicians, singers, and popular style of these musical shows, and that musicians, Filipinos in particular, playing in the revues learned how to improvise from records and musicians sometime between 1925 and 1927 (Hosokawa 2013). Jazz was an imported music, but it quickly blended with other musical performance styles and entertainment practices of the time.

Military and conservative forces eventually brought an end to such westernized forms of music, leisure, and culture in Japan. According to Atkins, “by 1939 dance halls began closing for lack of business, as social censure effectively inhibited customers from patronizing them” (Atkins 2001). *Jazz kissaten* fell under surveillance by military authorities as potential breeding grounds of dissent, and by the mid-1940s, jazz was completely banned as a subversive Western influence.

Jazz was not heard again in Japan until the American Occupation, when it became the music played at dance halls. Later, at clubs, dancing started to take a backseat to performance. The American bases were a generator of all kinds of transformations. Shunya Yoshimi notes that, “Numerous powerful cultural influences—jazz, fashion, sexual culture—spread out from the American bases and took root very soon after the beginning of the occupation” (Yoshimi 2003). Jazz was again exciting and appealing to younger Japanese.

Japanese musicians started to play jazz under the tutelage of musicians stationed in Japan, and later they helped to transform it from dance music into an art form. Toshiko Akiyoshi, who started playing after the Second World War, had this to say about that transitional period:

In 1959, I was playing at a nightclub in Ginza. There were a lot of beautiful hostesses and everyone danced. I was one of the best-paid sidemen in Japan, but I just didn’t want to do it. So I quit, and formed my own quartet called the Cozy Quartet. There were only the American service clubs and also a place in Yokohama called the Seamen’s Club. It was a real rough place. Once a week they would have a fight. But it was a place where I could play whatever I wanted to play.

(Pronko 2004)

During and even after the American Occupation, much of the attraction to jazz was also an attraction to the newly imposed democratic institutions. Japanese values, which many felt led directly to the war, were rejected. As Yukiko Koshiro points out, “amid the cultural and intellectual impoverishment of the Occupation and their weakening sense of esteem for the nation, the Japanese were desperately turning to the United States for cultural and intellectual stimuli” (Koshiro 1999).

However, Japanese also became interested in jazz not just for its openness, otherness, and non-Japanese-ness but also as a musical form, style, and way of thinking that was valuable in and of itself. By the end of the American Occupation in 1952, jazz clubs had started to become a central place for jazz culture, and with the social strife of the 1950s and 1960s, with political turmoil and cultural rebellion, jazz became a place to escape conservative mainstream Japanese values.

Jazz Clubs

After dance halls disappeared, jazz clubs proliferated. Situated in small, underground spaces with casual interiors and excellent sound systems, jazz clubs thrived because of increasing interest in jazz itself. Jazz was a form of rebellion, and during the economic bubble years, jazz became a sophisticated backdrop for business entertainment.

Estimating the current number of clubs is difficult, but the website *At Jazz* lists 676 jazz clubs throughout Japan. However, that number includes many places that feature live music only occasionally. From a search of active websites, Tokyo and Yokohama are home to over one hundred

clubs featuring live jazz nightly. The sheer number is testament not only to the extensive nightlife of Japan's densely populated cities and the sophistication of music consumers but also to the Japanese passion for jazz.

The club scene is extensive and complex, spread widely over the greater Tokyo area with a diversity of venues. Musicians can try out new styles and approaches for eager listeners. A typical Tokyo jazz musician might play with anywhere from six to ten different groups in a month, at just as many venues stretching from Tokyo to Yokohama, and out to the surrounding prefectures of Chiba, Saitama, and Kanagawa.

That level of collaboration and cross-pollination serves important functions. Musicians are able to hear others play and find like-minded colleagues. They must also stay flexible enough to fit into new groups with different leaders, styles, and approaches. Established musicians often lead "sessions," which, though paid, serve as tryouts for a reshuffling of personnel. More formal gigs use the band's or the leader's name plus "trio," "quartet," or "quintet."

Most of the better-known jazz clubs are found inside the central Yamanote train line loop in the major entertainment hubs of Kannai-Sakuragicho (in Yokohama), Shinjuku, Roppongi, and along the east-west Chuo Line. Many more clubs are located along the train lines that run out to the suburbs, with a friendly, neighborhood atmosphere.

Diverse locations allow musicians to play for different customers in each location. Of course, the individual character of each club, what types and genres of music they feature, also helps to ensure that fans hear a rotating diversity of jazz, while musicians have a chance to play for a different audience in different styles. Many clubs were hit hard after the earthquake in 2011, when many customers did not go out, but the majority have continued to do business as customers have returned.

What has dropped off in number are the jazz festivals, which used to draw large summer audiences to beachside and mountain resort areas, and large urban venues. The major festivals have all but disappeared. One enduring festival, the annual Yokohama Jazz Promenade, is now in its twenty-fifth year. Yokohama promotes itself as the home of jazz in Japan. In 2015, the port city's festival drew over 150,000 people to fifty-one venues for 347 performances over two days.

Other smaller festivals have started to spring up supported by local businesses and governments, such as the Asagaya Jazz Streets, held around Asagaya Station, just west of Shinjuku in Western Tokyo. This cozy festival is truly of, by, and for the community. Students at the local elementary school design jazz-themed posters; mothers groups act as volunteers; local businesses volunteer their showrooms, and merchants set up tents for free shows. Famous musicians, like Yosuke Yamashita, play up close in the local school gymnasium, church, or community center. Jazz clubs and local festivals are deeply integrated into Japan's nightlife and neighborhoods.

Learning Jazz in Japan

In the 1960s, many of Japan's top players went to America to study jazz. Since then, with each returning musician, more and more opportunities for studying jazz developed inside Japan. By the late 1980s, schools such as Sengoku Gakuen School of Music, the first college to offer a jazz course of study, emerged. Following Sengoku, Koyo Conservatory in Kobe established a jazz program in conjunction with Berklee School of Music as Sengoku had done. Meanwhile, classical and traditional Japanese conservatories, such as Shobi Music University, Kunitachi College of Music, and Showa University of Music, developed full programs of jazz study.

Equally important to formal schooling are the nearly 200 different jam sessions throughout Japan.⁵ These range from once a week, open-mic opportunities to sessions run by professionals. One of the most famous clubs devoted to jamming is Jazz Bar Intro in Takadanobaba. The club offers instruments, equipment, and a rhythm section house band. Most jam sessions are

free, while others, especially those run with professionals, cost a nominal fee (“Zenkokuban Jazz Session”).

Learning about jazz is as important as learning how to play jazz. Japan’s jazz media remains dedicated, extensive, and influential. Three publications, *Jazz Hiho*, *Jazz Life*, and *Swing Journal*, had impressively large readerships until the Internet pulled readers away. At the peak of readership at the turn of the century, *Swing Journal* had a circulation of 300,000 (*The Asahi Shimbun*). Add onto that the 70,000 readers of *Jazz Hiho* and the 100,000 readers of *Jazz Life* (*Ongaku Zasshi Ichiran*), and those reading about jazz in Japanese at the peak of publication was much greater than the 70,000 English readers of *Downbeat* and 100,000 of *Jazz Times* in English (Mandel 2009).

Many other jazz magazines have come and gone in the past several decades. Though *Swing Journal* ceased publication in 2010, other periodicals such as *Jazz Japan* and *Jazz Perspective* are still dedicated to publishing reviews, histories, interviews, and other jazz-related articles. “Mooks”⁶ with a specific focus, such as *Jazz Vocal*, *Jazz Bass Player*, and *Guitar Magazine* continue to print on paper as other online jazz sites have sprung up. *At Jazz* is one of the most extensive, with listings of club date listings, jam sessions, and everything jazz-related. The Internet radio site *jjazz*⁷ offers streaming along with information and reviews. *Jazz in Japan* is the biggest English-language site, and *Tokyo Jazz Site* offers many different types of articles, as well as a podcast. Other smaller sites have begun to spring up, filling in for the decrease in paper-based magazines.

Estimating the number of books about jazz theory, scores and charts, playing techniques, history, interviews, and jazz-related topics is impossible due to the sheer volume. But the number published in Japanese is as significant as any online search or visit to a large Tokyo book, music, instrument, or CD and vinyl store will reveal. Brick and mortar book, music, instrument, CD, and vinyl stores are still prevalent throughout Japan.

The Centrality of Big Bands

Most Japanese first learn jazz playing in big bands. Japanese jazz musicians and fans alike often begin playing in their junior high or high school brass band before progressing to a jazz big band at university. That interest continues long past graduation. Many high schools formed jazz bands after the popular 2004 comedy film *Swing Girls*, directed by Shinobu Yaguchi, appeared in theaters. Nowadays, 70 to 80 percent of colleges and universities have jazz big bands or jazz study “circles.”⁸ The circles can be quite formal and disciplined and are given space and support at schools.

Nearly every top Japanese jazz player would have participated in their university’s jazz circle. Alumni who become jazz professionals take pride in returning and helping to mentor their former circle.

Big bands offer a chance for a large number of students to participate and serve a social function, but they also focus intensely on performance. The annual Yamano Big Band Jazz Contest shows just how intensely. Now in its forty-eighth year, this year’s 2017 contest will feature thirty-five college jazz big bands, selected from all across Japan (*Kaisai Gaiyo Dai*). The contest auditorium is always standing room only. The winner is chosen by a panel of professional musicians, jazz critics, and teachers. Junko Moriya, longtime judge and leader of her own big band, said “every year, the contest is getting better and better because there are many more good teachers than ever before, who know what a great big band sounds like” (Moriya 2017).

After university, many *shakaijin*⁹ join local big bands and keep up their playing. The *At Jazz* site lists 591 *shakaijin* big bands all over Japan (“Gakusei Big Band”). Moriya, who often travels to small towns to play as a guest musician, holds workshops and helps the bands perform charts, including her own. She has said, “big places like Nagoya, Osaka, and Hiroshima have festivals with at least ten big bands per city, but the amazing thing is even small towns, with only 50,000 population, in Yamaguchi-ken or wherever, will have a big band” (Moriya 2017).

University alumni big bands are often formed so graduates can continue to play together long after graduation. Big universities would have five or six alumni big bands all at different ages from twenties to eighties. Big bands allow individuals to participate in a group unrelated to the pressures and relations of their workplace. Many of these amateur big band musicians only love big bands, but others are complete jazz fans who find it a pleasure to listen to the music and make it, too.

Big bands are appealing to the general Japanese social orientation toward groups, but they also reveal an abiding interest in personal pastimes that continue all through life. Japanese tend to like pastimes that require studying of specialized—even arcane—knowledge. Jazz serves as an engrossing, endless topic for leisure time, one that includes knowing history, culture, and music—and with big bands—performance.

Blending Cultures

Big bands are one of the most common lures for Japan's many jazz fans, but the fascination with the music comes from cultural as well as historical forces, which go deep into issues of Japanese identity. As Yoshimi emphasizes, "during the course of postwar history, Japanese people reconstructed their own sense of national identity through the medium of desire and antipathy towards America" (Yoshimi 2003). That sense of identity was not based on totally discarding traditional values, but rather on a new blending of old and new, Japanese and Western values.

Zen Buddhism exerted an enormous influence over Japanese arts, aesthetics, and the daily life of present-day Japan. The Zen idea of art arising from a spiritual plane as a religious practice adapts easily to the complexities of jazz. The spare, spiritual nature of the traditional music of Japan, such as that accompanying Noh theater, rests on the Japanese concept of *ma*—the notion that sound can only exist in conjunction with silence. That may seem at odds with the often-densely complex structure of jazz, but at root, the idea is not far from the jazz concepts of playing the space between notes, of laying out, and of intricate rhythm.

Zen aims (without aiming) to establish a mindset in which selflessness allows genuinely natural movement. That is quite similar to the mindset needed for jazz improvisation. The attention to acting without conscious effort is both a Zen and a jazz ideal. Both Zen and jazz also depend on the body and breathing as a way of focusing, without effort, on creative, human action.

For many Japanese jazz players, the approach to jazz involves the same respect, devotion, and practice as Zen-influenced painting, flower arrangement, martial arts, and calligraphy. No Japanese jazz fan goes to a jazz show thinking they will be experiencing an exciting, new cosmopolitan form of music as they would have in the 1920s or that they are freeing themselves with a democratic American music as many would have in the 1950s. Rather, jazz is a very high-level art form that speaks deeply to the inner self, a self that is constructed through a confluence of traditional Japanese culture, international experience, and universal human values.

Another aspect of Japanese culture that contributes to the respect for jazz is the Japanese tradition of craftwork. The still-present traditional crafts of Japan such as pottery, lacquerware, woodwork, sword-making, weaving, or dyeing all demand an extensive period of apprenticeship under the supervision of a master. That these traditional crafts have survived at all under the pressures of a highly evolved consumer economy is a testament to the powerful forces of tradition. That force of tradition and personal artistic dedication transfers easily to jazz, with its similarly high demands for technical mastery and virtuosity.

As Denis-constant Martin argues, "the creative thrust that stimulated the invention and development of jazz and other African-American musics always operated as a practical negation of difference" (Martin 2008). Yet, at the same time, jazz for Japanese musicians and fans is less about transcending the particulars of jazz's origins and more about meeting what Martin describes as

“the emotional and aesthetic needs of people living in diverse societies around the world” (Martin 2008). Jazz in Japan is an intense experience where free play, creative complexity, wordless expression, openness to universal values, and improvisation can be experienced, felt, and hoped for.

The Future of Jazz in Japan

Kiyoshi Koyama noted that Japanese jazz was in many ways imitative for the first half of its history:

The oldest jazz record in Japan, “Walla Walla” (Nitto/King) was recorded in 1925 by the Nitto Jazz Band, whose members are now unknown. From this incunabulum to “Blues Suite No. 3” (Victor), recorded in 1962 by the Hideo Shiraki Quintet, almost all of the jazz in Japan was more or less imitative of the jazz heard on records.

(Koyama 2000)

If that was the past, then the future looks much less imitative. While almost all musicians still want to spend time at the source of jazz, in America, the idea of originality and authenticity has evolved steadily since 1956 when King Records started to release full albums from Japanese jazz musicians. It is no longer so much “do I sound like Miles?” but rather “do I sound like I want to sound?” For Japanese musicians no less than for musicians in other countries, the drive to play well is an individual artistic one, even if tinged with collective cultural pride.

Because of that, the future of Japanese jazz looks bright. In the past two decades, several longstanding clubs have closed, but just as many new ones have opened. The audience is no longer chain-smoking, middle-aged businessmen with expense accounts. Instead, younger clientele interested in the music or a specific musician or a certain style has begun to fill clubs.

Jazz styles continue to diversify with unique combinations of elements melding into a vibrant approach to music. Small festivals are dedicated to *jazz manouche*, Hammond B3 organ, free jazz, and Latin jazz, as well as to big bands. Musicians acquaint themselves with many different styles before developing their own.

More women are playing jazz and leading their own bands. At the turn of the century, women primarily performed as singers or pianists. But now, musicians like trumpeter Hikari Ichihara and saxophonists like Ayumi Koketsu, Saori Yano, and Erena Terakubo are leading their own groups. Traditional Japanese *koto* player Michiyo Yagi plays electrified 21-string *koto* and 17-string bass *koto* complete with loopers and effects to expand the range of her sound.

Some musicians are turning to Japanese sources to find inspiration. Pianist Junko Moriya, who won the 12th Annual BMI/Thelonious Monk Jazz Composers Competition, released a CD based on the life and birthplace of Ieyasu Tokugawa on the 400th year anniversary of his rule. Pianist Yosuke Yamashita has blended his piano with *shakuhachi* and *kodo* drummers. Inspiration comes from outside Japan, too, as more percussionists go to study and play in South American and Caribbean countries to pick up clave and other Latin rhythms at the source.

Many more groups expand the range of their material outside the great American songbook. Free jazz and improvised music continue to be played by musicians as diverse as Satoko Fujii, Akira Sakata, and Eiichi Hayashi. Saxophonists Kazutoki Umezu and Naruyoshi Kikuchi, and pianist Takeshi Shibuya, are masters of recombining genres into intense new forms. The future may not see the development of a particularly Japanese style of jazz, but perhaps that's more genuine. Jazz is now more than ever a multicultural music drawing on many sources and inspirations.

When considering the larger diaspora of jazz, it's clear that innovation, individuality, and authenticity in jazz were never entirely exclusive to a particular area, subculture, or ethnicity. Japan is not so far away as it once was, either, with the opening of borders, the ease of travel,

and the global flow of information and culture. If thousands of people outside of Japan can become fans of Japanese *manga*, animation, design, sushi, films, and literature, will Japanese jazz be far behind?

Notes

1. Jazz was not the only music. Classical music *kissaten* are still running, along with a few tango and chanson *kissaten*. Blues and rock are available at evening bars.
2. “Master,” taken from English, is the word for the owner of small, individual shops, bars, or restaurants.
3. Takarazuka is still hugely popular.
4. Dotonbori is the central entertainment district in Osaka.
5. These are listed on the *At Jazz* online site.
6. “Mook” is a Japanese neologism combining the “m” from magazine with the English word “book.”
7. jjazz.net.
8. “Circle,” from English, is the name for college groups that focus on extracurricular activities.
9. *Shakaijin*, literally “society person,” refers to working adults, not students.

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PERFORMING IMPROVISATION

Bill Evans and Jean-Yves Thibaudet

Deborah Mawer

This case study-styled chapter engages with matters of performance and improvisation, fundamental questions about jazz with wide relevance and applicability, which are directed to music of the incomparable improviser, pianist, and composer Bill Evans (1929–1980).¹ Central research issues concern the following: in what ways do recorded improvisations and other recorded performances relate and differ? How can one (re)perform an improvisation? How much spontaneity remains, and where might composition enter into this articulation? Beyond his jazz environment, “the subtle keyboard deployment and open, trusting expressivity of Evans’s music has attracted classical musicians and listeners” (Distler 1997, 8), and such “jazz–classical” interaction is pertinent to probe ideas of performance and improvisation that both connect and distinguish jazz from its classical “other,” or “outsider.” Thus, a transcultural prism is adopted that focuses on subsequent recordings of Evans’s music by the classically trained French concert pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet (b. 1961), who in Jed Distler’s view has “a genuine feeling for Bill’s idiom” (Distler 1997, 9). Conversely, for Thibaudet, Evans offered something of a “jazz utopia”: privileged access to an attractive but elusive world, beyond his direct experience. So Thibaudet performed his *Conversations with Bill Evans* (1997) in tribute to Evans’s highly innovative overdubbed piano album *Conversations with Myself* (1963).

In essence, this chapter posits that disciplinary boundaries or distinctions between performance and improvisation (jazz emphasis), as well as between improvisation and composition (classical emphasis), tend to become more blurred through the process of recording and fixing, complicated by the extraneous variables of studio recordings. Nonetheless, it argues that notable differences may be perceived between comparable performances of Evans and Thibaudet, with special attention being paid to Evans’s late output.

Interpretive Approach

It is prudent to offer at least working definitions of the main concepts and the mooted nature of their (inter)relations. Although performance and composition supposedly need no introduction, the same cannot be said about the more intangible, fluid realm of improvisation, and in fact nothing should be taken for granted.

Within this study, performance means the activity of being a pianist, whether jazz or classically trained. And in terms of our dual subjects, for Evans it denotes one crucial dimension of a multi-dimensional persona, whereas for Thibaudet it represents his main expressive outlet as a concert

artist. For Evans, performance involves reifying the music of others and bringing to life his own creative thinking; for Thibaudet, it is exclusively a matter of interpreting and projecting the works of others, through his artistic prism. The focus in this chapter is on what happens beyond a first musical performance, especially one that necessitates, or is synonymous with, improvisation.

Improvisation is not exclusively a jazz-based notion, having been an acknowledged component of classical performance practice, whether involving singers' ornamentation in baroque operatic arias or improvised cadenzas in early concertos, and still enjoys a circumscribed role today. In jazz studies, the idea of an entirely free and wholly spontaneous improvisation has long been debunked as a "myth" by figures such as Paul Berliner (1994, 1–17). Studies of Evans's music have, however, sometimes bought into this myth; witness even Gene Lees in the original liner notes for *Conversations*: "Had this been written music, all carefully pre-planned, Bill's performance would be amazing enough. When you remember that everything is improvised, it becomes unbelievable" (Lees 1963, n.p.). A basic improvisational typology has been outlined by the likes of Barry Kernfeld (1995, 119–158), who identifies solo, collective, "paraphrase" or thematic improvisation (after André Hodeir), formulaic, and motivic kinds (Mawer 2014a, 147). We might argue that improvisation represents a wonderfully liberated, yet highly demanding, mode of performance; or, more controversially, a circumscribed mode of composition, since parameters such as form, instrumentation, and melodic-harmonic framework may be predetermined. But this latter would be a negative, limiting view that downplays the importance of "liveness," being of the moment. For Evans, the notion embraces a spectrum from high-order paraphrase improvisation of jazz/popular standards to more profound, almost mystical or spiritual, freer creation.

So to composition, the third element of this complex overlapping triangulation, which also comes with associated baggage. It is not solely a classical phenomenon, and jazz would not be the rich domain that it is without the compositional masterpieces of Duke Ellington, George Russell, Gunther Schuller, Dave Brubeck, and many others. Jazz is a sufficiently broad church to embrace composition as one specific practice, and to evaluate any connections or resonances with classical (or popular) music on their own merits. For Evans, such reciprocity and generosity are crucial, especially when it proves challenging, even futile, to determine where improvisation and composition end and start. For an expansive, thoughtful addressing of the complexities of the compositional-improvisational axis, we may refer to the valuable work of the late-lamented Steve Larson (2005). Moreover, various commentators on Evans readily invoke the term composition, for instance, "to a program of mainly standards, he added one new composition of his own, 'Peri's Scope'" (Pettinger 1998, 93), in a positive, complimentary spirit, in no sense downplaying Evans's jazz credentials.

Finally, the elephant in the room is recording, the effects of which often impose a greater finality and fixedness (authority?) on any combination of the elements above than may be desirable. Obvious problematics include the limits of technologies, distortion, the perils of remastering, editorial "interference," and so on. And yet, for all these caveats, recordings still offer an aural window on another time and place and, while rarely neutral (*pace* Nattiez 1990), an invaluable ontological trace and source for analytical interpretation, supplemented by even less neutral transcriptions and testimonies of artist and critic, shaped by their positioning and experiences. And for Evans himself, that certain recordings, notably his overdubbed ones, could not readily be recreated in "natural live performance" did not reduce them to mere "gimmick"; rather, he felt it important "to state my firm belief in the integrity of the idea" (Evans 1963, n.p.).

Two sets of case studies follow that employ an accessible analytical approach, combining aural analysis of recordings with discussion of music transcriptions to enable close comparative readings. (In pitch and chordal groupings, separation by a comma denotes a neutral listing, whereas conjoining by means of the sign "—" denotes a progression, either linear as in voice-leading, or harmonic.) The ensuing interpretations are best read in tandem with rehearing the precious recorded legacy.

Evans (Re)Performing Evans (Conversations 1)

In the spirit of Evans's *Conversations* and *Further Conversations with Myself* (New York: Verve V6-8727) of 1967, this biographical conversation explores music from the contemporaneous albums *Kind of Blue* and *Portrait in Jazz* (1959), with the Bill Evans Trio, in relation to the entwined questions posed in the introduction. This initial “control” focuses on comparing Evans's own re-performing with a slightly nuanced variant of the second question: in what ways do Evans's re-recorded improvisatory pieces differ from their “originals”?

The iconic “Blue in Green” has been selected, albeit that credit for the creation of this “brooding masterpiece” was initially contested between Evans and Miles Davis (Pettinger 1998, 82; Khan 2000, 118–119); Evans asserts simply that “I took a tune of mine called ‘Blue in Green’” (Hennessey 1985, 9). Relevant to our agenda, the harmonies of “Blue in Green” were prefigured by Evans at the start of “Alone Together,” featuring the trumpeter Chet Baker and recorded on the album *Chet* in December 1958: “the resemblance [between them] is too close to admit coincidence” (Pettinger 1998, 74; Khan 2000, 119). “Blue in Green” was developed by Evans and Davis in *Kind of Blue* (spring 1959) and re-recorded twice on Evans's *Portrait in Jazz* in December 1959.

A later recording from around 1974, with Evans's second trio lineup of Eddie Gomez and Marty Morell, was also released posthumously in 1991 by his manager/producer Helen Keane on the album known as *Blue in Green* (Milestone M-9185). And here can be identified subtle new finds: “a sense of adventure in the choice of voicings” and “the varied tone attached to them: perhaps a single note would be given more center as it stood out over a sparse harmony, while a thicker chord might spread its tone more evenly from bottom to top” (Pettinger 1998, 225). This insightful critique offers a nicely nuanced response to the delicate, eloquent nature of Evans's rethinking of his own work and an apt launch pad for our enquiries. The recorded performances and transcriptions used as main sources are given in Figure 27.1.

(A) Recording artist, performers	Album details	Recording date, place	Duration (take, track)
1. Miles Davis (sextet, including Bill Evans)	1959. <i>Kind of Blue</i> . New York: Columbia CL 1355. Reissued [1997]. Columbia/Legacy CK 64935.	March 2, 1959, New York	5:37 (track 3)
2. Bill Evans Trio (with Scott LaFaro, Paul Motian)	1960. <i>Portrait in Jazz</i> . New York: Riverside RLP 12 315. Reissued n.d. Riverside/Original Jazz Classics 20 088-2.	December 28, 1959, New York	5:23 (take 1, track 9)
3. Bill Evans Trio	<i>Portrait in Jazz</i> (details as above)	December 28, 1959, New York	4:26 (take 2, track 11)
(B) Transcriptions	Publication details		
Miles Davis (Bill Evans). Transcribed by Rob DuBoff, Mark Vinci, Mark Davis, and Josh Davis.	n.d. [c. 2000]. <i>Kind of Blue</i> . Milwaukee: Hal-Leonard.	Matches March 2, 1959 recording (take 2)	
Bill Evans	n.d. <i>The Miscellany of Rare Transcriptions</i> . Vol. 1. Sony Music Publishing.	Matches December 28, 1959. <i>Portrait in Jazz</i> recording.	

Figure 27.1 Sources consulted for Evans (Davis), “Blue in Green”

Figure 27.1 shows a pattern of shortening performance durations (5:37, 5:23, 4:26), accompanied by a reduction in ensemble size (*Kind of Blue*: sextet including piano; *Portrait in Jazz*: trio including piano) and an increasing sense of the piano's primacy. Both the instrumentations and "orchestrations" are differentiated. Immediately, the evidence supports a supposition of significant change in Evans's re-performing of this improvisatory material, born in part of its "bordering on absolute minimalism" (Khan 2000, 121). This may be supplemented by two distinct transcriptions, which—even allowing for a generous measure of notational interpretation and inaccuracy—reveal substantial re-voicing and modifying of chordal constructs and overall form. Indeed, the essence of this material is its "ten-measure circular form" (Evans 1959, n.p.), which thereby conflates start and finish, neatly disorientating the listener.

The *Kind of Blue*, 87-measure transcription works in the "one-flat" key of D minor, in 4/4 meter marked "Slowly," and offers a basic formal guide. Evans plays a four-measure introduction, followed by Davis's full trumpet solo (A: 20 mm.); Evans again (B: 10 mm.), Coltrane's intricate scalic solo (C: 10 mm.); Evans's "Double time (Rubato)" (D: 10 mm.), plus Davis's detailed solo (E: 20 mm.); ending with Evans's "Rubato" tune postlude (F: 13 mm.). Meanwhile, the *Portrait in Jazz*, 104-measure transcription is also notated in D minor, but in an expanded common time (MM ♩ = 66). It identifies the main tune (T-1: 10 mm.), followed by a characterization using dyads of thirds and eighth-note triplets (T-2); a more scalic rendition (Fig. 1: 10 mm.); a focus on quarter-note and eighth-note triplets (Fig. 2); right-hand sixteenth-note diminution (Fig. 3); left-hand punctuating offbeat chords, followed by right-hand diminution and punchy triplet chords (Figs. 4–5: 5 + 5 mm.); the climactic tutti, with left-hand dense four-pitch chording (Figs. 6–7); and a more spacious portion (Figs. 8–9: 10 mm.), leading to the final return of the tune, finished with a four-measure postlude.

The chordal sequence for these two versions is that common ten-measure pattern of four simple progressions onto a tonic, whose creative potential can be demonstrated by charting the rich, composite harmonies obtained (Table 27.1). Nevertheless, the surface (and upper middle ground) presentations—those melodic decorations, arpeggiations, rhythmic and textural characterizations, plus some pitch/chordal contents—are notably differentiated.

Crucially, these findings are congruent with critical aural analyses of the *Kind of Blue* and *Portrait in Jazz* recordings. Interestingly, that observation about shortening performance times is compounded by an aural pattern of increasingly slower tempi: ♩ = 66; 63; 58. The *Kind of Blue* sextet recording is very much jazz ensemble music, which foregrounds the dynamic persona of Davis, emphasizing the solo trumpet even in its initially muted metallic characterization supported by hi-hat and bass punctuation. Sonically, this version enjoys an episodic symmetry leading from trumpet (via piano, with distinct shades of "Peace Piece" in its right-hand arpeggiation) to Coltrane's central solo, and back out again. There is, however, a gradual crescendo of virtuosity

Table 27.1 "Blue in Green": Chordal progressions and composite harmonies (mm. 1–10)

Chords (Key) (mm. 1–5)	IV— [I: Gm]	V—	I (: Dm)	II— V—	I (: B♭)
Harmonies (mm. 1–5)	Gm ^{7(13/11/9)}	A ^{7(#5)}	Dm ⁷⁽⁹⁾ [C#dim]	Cm ^{7(11/9)} — F ^{7(13/9)}	B [♭] _{major} 7(#11/9)
Chords (Key) (mm. 6–10)	V—	I (: Dm)	II—	V—	I (: Dm) [V: Gm]
Harmonies (mm. 6–10)	A ^{7(#5)}	Dm ^{7(11/9)}	E ^{7(#9)}	Am ⁷⁽⁹⁾	Dm ^{7(11/9)}

through the first two solos to Davis's second culminating solo, which combines Coltrane's intricate scalar athletics with a more expressive melodic sustaining.

Although the two *Portrait in Jazz* trio versions share this overall feel and melodic-harmonic framework, they exhibit significant freedom that results in substantial change. In Take 1, a greater melody-line emphasis is balanced by bass punctuation, but, in what was Davis's first solo, richer textures occur with the piano's inner-part voicings. As in *Kind of Blue*, there is a process of increasing ornamentation/elaboration (the equivalent of Davis's second solo is notably lively), coupled by a confident directness. Take 2, particularly, features a piano-focused incisiveness, attractive energy, and light-heartedness. Toward their closes, however, both trio versions partake of a much more subdued, introspective quality.

So, the balance of evidence on this small canvas is that Evans, with his varied supporting players, does reconceive his own improvisatory material from one occasion to the next, beyond mere surface or foreground level, at least to an underpinning upper middle ground. Against expectation, perhaps, Evans does not resist his own discoveries undergoing quite a deep process of rethinking.

Thibaudet Performing Evans (Conversations 2)

This second, posthumous conversation between Evans and Thibaudet, and potentially others, extends the cultural terrain and temporal span to enable further analytical exploration of, and emergent scope from, those same underlying questions. While very different in nature, an important inspiration for this current transcultural study has been the supremely well, if rather strictly, executed Schenkerian analyses by Larson (2009) of the jazz composition "Round Midnight" created by Thelonious Monk (together with Cootie Williams, Davis, and others), then reinterpreted both by Oscar Peterson and Evans. The vehicle for investigating these complex (inter)relations of artist, musical locus, genre, and technique is that of the comparative case studies below. Several loci are presented within a loosely chronological sequence that encompasses early and late output: "Peace Piece" (1958), "Waltz for Debby" (1956), "Song for Helen" (*New Conversations*, 1978), and "Your Story" (1980), the various sources for which are given in Figure 27.2.

"Peace Piece" (1958)

I have previously touched on this Evans–Thibaudet jazz–classical relationship, noting Thibaudet's "beautifully finessed, yet curiously literal, performances of Evans's improvisations" (Mawer 2014a, 240, 2011, 87), while students on an elective course about *Musical Intertextuality and Borrowing*, taught at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in 2014 and 2015, have compared and critiqued Evans's 1958 recording of "Peace Piece" with Thibaudet's 1996 equivalent.

The immediately obvious difference concerns the recorded durations: Evans's 6:43, against Thibaudet's much more extended 7:32, performed from Jim Aikin's standard transcription of 1980. (By contrast, a 2012 transcription of Evans's improvisatory "take" by William Hughes is either much more meticulous or overly literal, dependent on one's stance. For instance, Hughes captures Evans's *tempo rubato* with notated ties across bar-lines. It is a question about how much of the notation captures "Peace Piece" as composition; and how much represents Evans as one performer on one occasion, so as to leave space for potential reinterpretation in future performance.)

Thibaudet's performance of Evans is at a slower overall tempo and, even within those bounds, employs much more *rubato*. A second audible distinction concerns piano tone: touch and sonority. While in a jazz milieu Evans's tone is typically regarded as soft-edged, refined, and reminiscent of the sound-world of Debussy and Ravel, and their interpreters, when compared with Thibaudet

Musical locus	(A) Evans recordings	(B) Thibaudet recording	(C) Transcriptions
1. “Waltz for Debby”	(i) Early. 1956. <i>New Jazz Conceptions</i> . New York: Riverside RLP 12 223. Reissued 2009. Not Now Music NOT2CD299. Recorded September 18, 27, 1956, New York. Track 8. Solo pf. Duration: 1:20	1997. <i>Conversations with Bill Evans</i> . London: Decca 455 512-2. Recorded July 26–29, 1996, New York. Track 2. Solo pf. Duration: 1:57	Thibaudet uses a transcription by Jed Distler. (See too Jack Reilly. 2009. <i>The Harmony of Bill Evans</i> [using The Richmond Organization (TRO) transcriptions]. Vol. 2. Milwaukee: Hal-Leonard.)
	(ii) Late. 1989. <i>Bill Evans: His Last Concert in Germany</i> (with Marc Johnson–bass, Joe LaBarbera–drums). West Wind 2022. Live recording August 15, 1980, Bad Hönningen. Track 10. Trio. Duration: 7:05		
2. “Peace Piece”	1960. <i>Everybody Digs Bill Evans</i> . New York: Riverside RLP 12 291. Reissued 2009. Not Now Music NOT2CD299. Recorded December 15, 1958, New York. Track 7. Solo pf. Duration: 6:43	<i>Conversations with Bill Evans</i> (details as above). Track 10. Duration: 7:32	Jim Aikin. 1980. “Bill Evans [transcriptions].” <i>Contemporary Keyboard</i> 6/6, 44–55. (See too, William Hughes. 2012. “Complete Transcription: Bill Evans–Peace Piece.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Spa5wWFYJqc .)
3. “Song for Helen”	1978. <i>New Conversations</i> . New York: Warner Bros. Records Inc. 8122-79576-1. Recorded January 26–February 16, 1978, New York. Pf., electric-pf., overdubbed. Track 1. Duration: 7:48	<i>Conversations with Bill Evans</i> . Track 1. Duration: 4:13. Pf., overdubbed (after Bill Evans, 1963. <i>Conversations with Myself</i> . New York: Verve V6-8526.)	Distler arrangement. (See too Reilly 2009. Also, Art Murphy, arr. n.d [1991]. <i>Bill Evans: The 70s</i> . New York: Ludlow Music.)
4. “Your Story”	1994. <i>Letter to Evan</i> . Bill Evans Trio. Dreyfus Jazz 191 064-2. Live recording July 21, 1980, at Ronnie Scott’s Jazz Club, London. Track 5. Duration: 3:56	<i>Conversations with Bill Evans</i> . Track 11. Duration: 5:37	Distler transcription. (Also, Reilly 2009.)
	<i>Bill Evans: His Last Concert in Germany</i> (details as above). Track 7. Trio. Duration: 4.30		

Figure 27.2 Comparative sources consulted for Evans and Thibaudet performances

(and acknowledging major differences of piano, period, and recording techniques), Evans's sound has a compelling directness, at times bursting out into a raw energy, coupled by passion and an occasional hard-edged sonority. Thibaudet, meanwhile, obtains the most exquisite, velvety tones, the ultimate in distilled refinement; but maybe yet too controlled and circumscribed, also verging on the slightly self-indulgent. Arguably, no longer jazz? Might Thibaudet's well-intentioned *homage* and nostalgic yearning to capture a precious jazz utopia, ironically, have destroyed something at the heart of his source?

Unsurprisingly perhaps, and despite our attempts to avoid preconception and maximize open-mindedness, we tend to appreciate and value that with which we are most familiar. Almost invariably, those Conservatoire students responded according to type: classically trained pianists much preferred and so rated more highly Thibaudet's interpretation, which was in their own image; jazz aficionados remained true to the Evans source.

"Waltz for Debby" (1956)

The pattern of Thibaudet's 1996 rendition taking much more time than Evans's original continues and is more acute in the jazzed "Waltz for Debby" than for "Peace Piece": 1:57 (almost half as long again), as opposed to 1:20. Strikingly, though it is Evans's last concert recording in Germany from August 15, 1980, subtly supported by Marc Johnson and Joe LaBarbera, which totally transforms the territory, remaking his own piece at c. 7:05—incorporating a reference to "Your Story," Johnson's late solo, plus a little audience applause, and functioning as an extended finale. So while both artists take their time when revisiting "Waltz for Debby," Thibaudet's is essentially a slower rendition of that original, whereas Evans's is profoundly reconceived and re-improvised.

In more depth, Evans's initial tempo (1956 recording) approximates to $\text{♩} = 69$, against Thibaudet's much slower, variable tempo that ranges from around $\text{♩} = 44$ to 58. Both artists generate increased momentum for the central B section (m. 33ff. of Reilly's transcription), where Evans creates a *cantabile* emphasis upon the melody. By contrast, Thibaudet brings out the tenor line, also exaggerating a pensive slowing of the repeated descending treble phrase (Reilly, mm. 37–41): D–C–B \flat , A [G–F]; D–C–B \flat , A [B \flat –A], balanced by a quickening ascent (m. 43). Although some jazz commentators felt Evans had a problem with swing (Knox 1966, 6), in the subsequent reprise of section A (m. 49ff.) such swing is still much more apparent in Evans's original, while Thibaudet finds more dynamic variety, working from *piano* via a crescendo to a much stronger marking of the penultimate climactic peak (m. 61). In starting the coda, both performers keep the character *con moto*, pushing forward to the majestic peak (*fortissimo* in Thibaudet; m. 70), before a final slowing and sonic reduction *al niente*. Reinforcing earlier impressions, therefore, Evans's original has a directness and simplicity; Thibaudet's tribute is sophisticated but slightly mannered and inevitably fixed.

"Song for Helen" (1978) and "Your Story" (1980)

So do similar durational/tempo patterns apply when comparing examples of Evans's late output, as re-recorded by Thibaudet using Distler's notated arrangements? Where "Your Story" is concerned, the answer is affirmative. Evans's July 1980 trio recording from Ronnie Scott's is 3:56, while Thibaudet's solo piano tribute is a full 5:37. Revealingly, however, just as with "Waltz for Debby," Evans's last concert of August 15, 1980 with his same trio yields a duration of 4:30, a good half-minute longer than his version from the previous month. Evans's tempo for this ballad composition is appreciably faster than Thibaudet's, and despite both players varying the speed, Thibaudet again ranges much more widely (from c. $\text{♩} = 50$, up to 76). Apropos *Conversations*, Gene

Lees was deeply impressed by Evans's highly accurate maintenance of pulse across a large temporal span, so that beginnings and endings matched up almost exactly (Lees 1963, n.p.).

By contrast, "Song for Helen" (Keane, Evans's record producer and friend) proves an exception to the rule, though partly due to its rather different nature. This is Evans's overdubbed track *par excellence*, a substantial composition for piano and electric piano of 7:48 rather than an improvisation, since it is essentially predetermined by virtue of its layered electronic recorded processes. As Larson notes, certainly "*Conversations with Myself* problematizes the traditional distinction between composition and improvisation" (2005, 241, 272). And the basic principle of "Song for Helen" is still that employed in the first *Conversations*: as "an artificial duplication of simultaneous performance," Evans would perform on a second track while listening through headphones to the previous one, and then on a further track while hearing the previous two (Evans 1963, n.p.). In the main liner notes to *Conversations*, Lees writes aptly about the sense in which Evans's persona was divided stereophonically into three: "Bill Left," "Bill Center and Bill Right," each contributing to an artistic whole. The third track typically involved the greatest embellishment. Meanwhile, for Evans himself, the experience was like being in a trio ensemble, but with the added plus that he could please himself (Evans 1963, n.p.). Thibaudet's version, while also overdubbed, is determined primarily by its conformance to Distler's piano transcription and comes in at just over half the length (4:13).

As for other dimensions of these outputs, "Song for Helen" involves the development of a repeated twenty-measure composition in D \flat major. Before the entry of the main stepwise, sequential ascending line (F–G \flat –A \flat ; A \flat –A–B \flat ; B \flat –C \flat –D \flat ; mm. 1–6) with its emotive harmonies, Evans creates a prelude (c. 31") featuring bell-like, pentatonic sonorities, while Thibaudet's opening flourish (c. 39") already brings in overdubbing. At the balancing other end, Evans's postlude yields intense scales and a flourish to the top. In terms of a jazz–classical agenda, Evans's song is an expressive vehicle not unlike a classical *étude* or set of variations, whereby each revisiting of the main material (notably the third time) enables a greater level of virtuosic ornamentation and resetting of the registral space, especially an octave higher. One nice touch in Thibaudet's modified version, as arranged by Distler, is a final incorporated quotation from Chopin's *Berceuse*, in turn noted as a model for "Peace Piece" (Mawer 2014a, 230–233). With reference to Reilly's skeletal score (which uses the basic TRO transcription), we can appreciate Evans's improvisatory interpolations and markedly spread chords, occasionally reminiscent of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (c. 1:50; c. 5:00). Both artists create a rhapsodic quality using *tempo rubato*, with Thibaudet again reading much detail into Evans's cross-measure phrasings, articulated by gradations of dynamic. But, despite any lack of a Steinway, it is the second half of Evans's original that exhibits a much more animated syncopation and swing, with full piano bass, confident and extensive in its own overdubbed conversations, echoes, and ensemble effects with the electric piano.

Finally, we have "Your Story" as Evans's own story. In its last poignant recording, this locus is inextricably bound up with, and literally embodies, the philosophical question of "lateness," as pursued by the likes of Said (2006) and Straus (2008, 2009; Mawer 2014b), notwithstanding recent caveats (McMullan and Smiles 2016). Lateness is a complex, paradoxical—even contradictory— notion of a powerfully intense, spacious utterance of one fully in command, wise, and somehow knowing of finality, yet coupled by sheer struggle or difficulty, not least in the face of physical, bodily frailty. It is a way of thinking still highly applicable to Evans's case: with his last trio, he

found renewed energy to lift performances and explore new avenues. He also knew that his health was deteriorating fast with doctors expressing surprise that his liver was still functioning at all. He was still deeply distressed by his brother's death.

(Hennessey 1985, 12)

Although the character of Evans's playing is rhapsodic and contemplative, its sound quality maintains a familiar incisive clarity and directness. (Sadly, the sound in this live recording of August 1980 suffers at the start from distortion and consequent wandering of pitch.) Brought into renewed relief here is the song-like nature of "Your Story," with a beguiling simplicity and poignancy born of experience, and a seemingly heightened spirituality. Paradoxically perhaps, that incisiveness too is intensified (at the B section, m. 17ff.; see TRO transcription reproduced by Reilly): a sense of outdoing and defying, at least temporarily, an inevitably failing body. There is an insistence to the relentless motivic mordent, and a packing of hard-edged punch, which leads in the coda (m. 49ff.) to a most impassioned playing that at times borders on the frantic. Evans's fellow trio players give discreet support with soft brush sounds (LaBarbera) on the repeat, and hints of bass punctuation (Johnson) in the coda. After the flow comes the ebb and, like the early "Waltz for Debby," the music fades *al niente*, ending with Evans's quirky oriental, pentatonic flourish.

Thibaudet's more extended performance of Evans's composition exhibits his softer-edged, more mellow sound, but it also constitutes a very thoughtful, surely consciously felt, tribute. His in-depth reading maximizes the contrasts inherent in "Your Story." As he acknowledges: "I'm playing the notes Bill played, but I channel them through my own feelings about dynamics and embellishments" (Distler 1997, 9). Overall, his phrasing is very subtle and beautifully shaped, while his complete pianistic facility means that those restless mordents at times approach a trill-like oscillation. At the reprise of section A (m. 33ff.), he achieves an Evans-style directness with a big bass sound; similarly the augmented coda with its *fortissimo* shares in Evans's passion and displays a most impressive technique. At the other extreme, Thibaudet accesses the intimate, harmonically remote moments—with their "heartbreaking inner voices" (Distler 1997, 10)—most apparent in the reprise and coda, especially the second time where the sound is laid hollow and bare (*una corda*, m. 53): a reflective *sotto voce*. Fittingly, the final chord has no third.

In short, Thibaudet's reading has a melancholic, ethereal quality. His quest is investigative and he treads lightly, but the tone is almost regretful: the inescapability of history and Evans's imminent death. Evans's own performance of his composition is contradictory: stronger, fuller, and yet glass-like; it is edgy and could break. This risk-taking arguably makes it the more compelling.

Conclusion

It is appropriate now to summarize the main case study findings in terms of the research questions posed. In testing how recorded improvisations and other recorded performances relate, substantive differences have been revealed between the performance styles, artistic personae, and sound-worlds of Evans (as jazz "insider") and Thibaudet (as jazz "outsider"), even when treating what was, in theory, the same musical material, having made suitable allowance for "up-to-date sonics" (Distler 1997, 10). Of course, this issue of material is itself not "neutral" or straightforward and relates to matters of ontology: Evans's first recording of any given number inevitably assumed the status of "source," but theoretically there could be multiple valid sources. Evans's late oeuvre constitutes a particularly precious resource.

By extension, we come to the conundrum about (re)performing an improvisation. For Evans, this was successfully achieved by remaking his materials, such as "Blue in Green," so creating quite far-reaching changes (reflective of much imaginative spontaneity) across his own re-recordings. But for Thibaudet, this proved something of an impossibility since in attempting to do so the improvisatory element largely ceased to be. In "Peace Piece," Evans's improvisatory hallmarks or licks (his clusters of seconds, fourths, fifths; his squashed octaves and mordents) are essentially

replicated by Thibaudet. Nonetheless, Thibaudet's typically slower tempi and delicate pianistic touch help to lend an exploratory pensiveness to his renditions of Evans's improvisations: a sense that his performance is still "feeling its way"; that at any moment, the fixity of the whole is not yet inevitable, albeit this is an aural illusion, confirmed by the pre-existence of music transcriptions. To be fair, Thibaudet did find occasionally, as when working with an overdubbed version of the "Love Theme" from *Spartacus*, that:

In trying to sync up those fast 32nd note runs, I suddenly began inventing my own lines. It wasn't planned, I just did it on the spur of the moment, playing all kinds of things based on what Bill originally played.

(Distler 1997, 10)

Through Evans's exemplar, he experienced a rare sort of freedom where he almost felt outside of himself.

As for the place of composition, the case study findings have generally supported the main tenet of this chapter that generic boundaries do become more blurred through the fixing process of recording. What emerges is a spectrum of practice: performance–improvisation–composition, with improvisation lying at its heart and itself embracing a further spectrum. This argument serves to extend a music theory stance on composition–improvisation whereby "all musical creation really lies on a continuum between these poles," with privileged status afforded to improvisation (Larson 2005, 242, 273). And the boundary issue constitutes a particular challenge in studying an artist like Evans, whose original work so deftly defies easy categorization, being simultaneously performance, improvisation, and composition.

Moreover, that blurring is further compounded (confounded?) when the cultural frames of reference are shifted from those within a jazz milieu to those of the classical music world: that jazz–classical progression. Ironically, perhaps, while classical music once led the way in improvisational terms, especially in the nineteenth-century romantic era of the virtuoso performer, such modern classical performance of Evans effectively transforms some of his improvisational work into composition (as remarked on earlier, other Evans output is already acknowledged as composition). From one perspective, this might be perceived as raising its artistic status and broadening its (trans)cultural appeal: for Thibaudet, "after all, the music is so wonderful, and what better way to expose classical audiences to the riches of jazz" (Distler 1997, 8). From another, however, it is more deeply problematic since, in not being "of" or "in the moment," some might claim it effectively ceases to be jazz. But that might of course be deemed completely in keeping with Thibaudet's elusive, if not impossible, pursuit of his idealized jazz: utopia.

As intimated at the start, there is much scope for future studies along these lines: for instance, other artists' recordings of Evans's improvisatory–compositional work, such as those by Hughes; or comparative re-recordings of compositions of Duke Ellington (embracing Thibaudet's 1999 album: *Reflections on Duke*, Decca 460 8110-2), which undoubtedly remain as exceptional jazz. And while it is likely that similar patterns of congruence–divergence and blurring of categories would emerge in case studies drawn from the musics of other jazz artists, the real fascination—as it is hoped has been conveyed here—lies in the intricacy and beauty of the musical details.

Note

1. A short paper version of this chapter was delivered at the fourth *Rhythm Changes Conference: Jazz Utopia*, Birmingham City University (April 14–17, 2016); an expanded written version is being developed to further the music theory agenda.

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BOSSA NOVA AND BEYOND

The Jazz as Symbol of Brazilian-Ness

*Eduardo Vicente**(Translation to English by Daniel Gambaro)*

The relationship between Brazilian popular music and jazz is broadly known. Certainly, Bossa Nova was the most important Brazilian musical genre to emerge from this fusion; the first album was released almost sixty years ago. Even more significantly, Bossa Nova basically shaped how Brazilian music related to jazz and to other international musical influences such as rock 'n' roll, funk, hip-hop, etc. These relations were accomplished in the form of a musical exchange that resulted in the local music incorporating other musical genres and thus ensuring that, after all, it remained "Brazilian music."

However, the apparent paradox contained within this relationship may not have been sufficiently discussed. How was a North American musical genre incorporated into a strongly nationalist Brazilian musical tradition, in a fusion that created one of Brazil's most universal and long-lasting musical symbols, acknowledged and respected all around the world?

This is a complex question, especially when we consider that in the 1960s, when Bossa Nova flourished and inspired a whole generation of artists linked to musical movements such as the MPB and Tropicalism, Brazil was undergoing a period of great political turmoil; this had been amplified following the 1964 military coup and was a period in which resistance to cultural and political influence from the United States assumed great importance.

Throughout this chapter, we will discuss the importance of the jazz component within Brazilian music, mainly from a sociological perspective. This shall lead us to consider how jazz, before the creation of Bossa Nova, can be located in the debate around the development of a cultural and political project for Brazil that included the sounds of popular music. Likewise, we will see how this debate in the field of popular music is also related to the development of a record music industry and the market of symbolic goods (Bourdieu 2007) as a whole in Brazil.

The chapter contains four sections. The first summarizes the debate around national identity in Brazil and focuses on the first period of Getúlio Vargas's presidency (1930–1945), the cultural and political project that significantly influenced the setting of Brazilian popular music. Following this, we will discuss the emergence of Bossa Nova in the 1950s, which occurred in a context of renovation and politicization of cultural production in Brazil. At that time, the rising development of a market of symbolic goods in the country also played a fundamental role.

The next section discusses the immediate outcomes of this process during the 1960s, when the outstanding presence of a left-wing political discourse on cultural production provided Brazilian popular music with a politically engaged appearance. Although criticized for moving away from the preferences of the average public, the aesthetical deeds and the artistical autonomy of Bossa Nova's artists were maintained and enlarged, thus contributing to the foundations of a

long-lasting process of stratification and legitimation of Brazilian popular music production. Finally, the conclusion will show how Caetano Veloso's (2008) proposal of an "evolutive line" of Brazilian Popular Music (based on the dialogues with international music started with the Bossa Nova movement), survived in the Brazilian music tradition.

Questions About Identity and Modernity in a Peripheral Nation

The definition of a national identity is central to the history of social thought in Brazil. Renato Ortiz, when discussing this subject, observes that

all identity is defined in relation to something exterior to it, it is a difference. We could ask why this insistence in pursuing an identity that superposes over the foreign. I believe the answer can be found in the fact that we are a country in the so-called Third World, which means the question is a structural imposition placed from this dominated position itself, the one we find ourselves in the international system. Therefore, authors from different traditions and politically antagonists encounter each other when trying to formulate an answer to what would be a national culture.

(Ortiz 1985, 7)

As Ortiz understands it, "national identity is deeply connected to a reinterpretation of the popular by social groups" (Ortiz 1985, 8). The development of Brazilian popular music was certainly influenced by this perspective.

One should note that the field of erudite music also saw the development of a similar debate over nationalism in music in Brazil. However, although there had been notable works and artists,¹ this type of musical production always had a much-restricted reach. Hence, what has proved original in the Brazilian situation is how discussions about nationalism encompassed popular music, particularly from Getúlio Vargas's first presidency (1930 to 1945), a period in which samba became the main symbol of Brazilian national identity in music.

Also important is that by 1930 urban popular music was already well established in Brazil. The first recordings of popular songs occurred in 1902, the first factory of discs was inaugurated in 1913, and the first recording of a samba dates from 1917 (Franceschi 2002). The first Brazilian radio station, the wireless society Rádio Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro, was created in 1923.

Nonetheless, only at the end of the 1920s did Brazil see the arrival of big international recording companies such as RCA-Victor, Brunswick, and Columbia (Vicente and De Marchi 2014, 12). In 1932, new legislation enabled the expansion of commercial radio in Brazil. And, in 1941, the Vargas regime took over control of Rádio Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, making the company the principal radio station in Brazil's history and also a fundamental aspect of the government's cultural and political project, in which music and radio are central elements (Saroldi and Moreira 1984; Goldefeder 1990).

The role of Rádio Nacional in defining the course of Brazilian popular music must not be neglected. A first generation of popular music composers and interpreters, such as Carmen Miranda, Francisco Alves, Ary Barroso, and Lamartine Barbo, and others, was made famous through the broadcaster. Rádio Nacional maintained in-house orchestras and was important for approaching jazz and Brazilian popular music. The role of maestro Radamés Gnattali in the show *Um Milhão de Melodias* (*A Thousand Melodies*), created by the station in 1943 under the sponsorship of the Coca-Cola Company, should be highlighted as an example:

The programme mixed Brazilian and international music and featured the Orquestra Brasileira de Radamés Gnattali that had been formed with the specific purpose of

providing orchestral arrangements to Brazilian popular music of a similar standard to that provided by Benny Goodman in the United States. Um Milhão de Melodias formed part of the “Good Neighbour” strategy between the Vargas government and the United States at the time, exemplified in cultural terms by Carmen Miranda and Ari Barroso’s trip to Hollywood, and Walt Disney’s, Brazilian-inspired animated film, *Alô Amigos* (Hello Friends).

(Stroud 2008, 15)

The “Orquestra Brasileira da Rádio Nacional” (Rádio Nacional’s Brazilian Orchestra) was created for the show and was a typical rhythmic session of jazz orchestras replaced by a Brazilian rhythmic session, formed by acoustic guitar, cavaquinho, seven-string guitar, pandeiro, and ganzá (Saroldi and Moreira 1984, 57).²

There can be no doubt that Rádio Nacional, by helping to assemble a relevant marketplace for the consumption of a domestic musical repertoire as well as the transformation of Rio de Janeiro’s urban music, such as the samba, into *the* “Brazilian music,” developed an extraordinary process of aesthetical and cultural valorization of Brazilian music. Such process is connected to how popular culture was defined by intellectuals connected to the Vargas Government, especially during the dictatorial period called Estado Novo (New State, 1937–1945).³

Élide Rugai Bastos, upon studying the line of thinking followed by Estado Novo’s *intelligentsia*, observes that an “enlightened illusion” can be seen across the work of several authors. It was their proposal that Brazil needed to “reach a level of civilization that made us equivalent with the occidental nations” (Bastos 1986, 108). The magazine *Cultura Política*, published by the government between 1941 and 1944, was one of the principal means used to promulgate these intellectuals’ ideas. Álvaro Salgado, who contributed to this publication with manuscripts about radio broadcasting and popular music, wrote about samba in 1941:

Samba, bringing in its etymology the mark of sensualism, is ugly, indecent, disharmonic and arrhythmic. But, let’s be patient: let’s not repudiate this brother of ours because of its defects. Let’s be benevolent: let’s use intelligence and civilization. Let’s try, little by little, to make it more educated and sociable [. . .]. It doesn’t matter whose son it is [. . .] samba is ours; born in Brazil just like us. It’s our most popular music.

(Salgado 1941, 85–86)

According to the perspective assumed by those intellectuals, the “nationalization” of popular music, in particular of samba, comprised a process of cultural expropriation that eliminated ethnic and local identifications.” Therefore, returning to Ortiz’s statement, we have a “reinterpretation of the popular by social groups” from an elitist and conservative perspective, which highlights the concept of miscegenation in the sense of a “whitening” of black heritage. Pedro Anísio, another scholar linked to Vargas’s government, would also praise the role played by Rádio Nacional—citing specially Radamés Gnattali and Ary Barroso, author of *Aquarela do Brasil* (1939)—in “taking the samba from the street corners,” “dress[ing] it with the orchestra smoking,” and “treat[ing] it with culture and good taste” (Saroldi and Moreira 1984, 49–50).

In any case, this discourse of power must be relativized. The development of communication means, the inherent quality and popular roots of many artists, the fast growth of the music and radio marketplaces, and the complexity of Rio de Janeiro’s urban tissue—a city between the sea and mountains, where interactions between center and periphery constitute the local culture—never allowed the “enlightened illusion” of Estado Novo’s intellectuals to limit samba (and popular music in general) to the model they proposed. Then, in 1945, Vargas’s regime was deposed, ending the dictatorship and inaugurating a new political moment in the country.

Therefore, although the efforts of the government to discipline and instrumentalize popular culture must not be ignored, they should be considered non-determinant factors in the process; the trajectory of samba from a “cursed rhythm into the national and, somehow, official music” (Vianna 2002, 29) certainly had a lot of “mystery” attributed to it by Hermano Vianna (2002).

By the time Vargas’s government constituted communication structures that allowed the national promotion of samba, it also favored the development of an academic debate around popular music and its legitimation as an acting field for artists with remarkable artistic and intellectual formation.

I understand this scenario as connected, to a certain extent, to the development of Bossa Nova in the late 1950s. Before moving to this subject, though, I would like to comment on the development of music critique in Brazil and how the debate over popular music developed after the Second World War.

Music Critique in Brazil and the Advent of Bossa Nova

Tárik de Souza (2006), in presenting the development of music critique in Brazil, lists some of the first publications devoted to Brazilian popular music, such as *Jornal das Modinhas* (*The Modinhas’ Newspaper*—1908), *Revista Musical* (*Musical Magazine*, 1923–1928), and *Phono-Arte* (1928–1931), among others (Souza 2006, 16). From the 1950s on, popular music—well-developed and already established in both the radio market and popular preferences—received attention from specialized publications such as *Revista do Rádio* (*Radio Guide*) and *Revista da Música Popular* (*Popular Music Guide*). The latter, which was issued between 1954 and 1956, has been considered by many authors as the most important publication dedicated to the critique of popular music published until that point. Adélcio Machado (2016) believes *Revista do Rádio* and *Revista da Música Popular* initiated a differentiation process in the development of popular music critique in the country: while the former concentrated on best-selling artists, the latter’s approach was historical, pointing to the formation of a popular music production field. According to the author, the “creation of images of tradition and authenticity” around the samba and the choro is accredited to the *Revista da Música Popular*, which “opposed the foreign music and commodification” (Machado 2016, 75). Simultaneously, the publication dedicated substantial space to jazz artists, for example King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, and Booker Pitman (Machado 2016, 65), hence establishing a proximal relationship between samba and jazz that later helped to legitimate Bossa Nova.

The new moment Brazil was undergoing must be considered. After Vargas’s dictatorship ended in 1945, the country experienced the longest period of political freedom and democratic normalization until that point. As a consequence, there was an important increase in the presence of left-wing intellectuals in the field of arts, especially members of the Brazilian Communist Party, which had existed since 1922.

At the same time, as a result of the beginning of the Cold War, the nationalist discourse (especially from a left-wing perspective) also marked the opposition to the growing political, economic, and cultural influence of the United States. Such discourse led Getúlio Vargas back into power in 1951 through direct election, thus becoming central to the political debate that had germinated and intensified after the military coup of 1964.

In terms of development of a market of symbolic goods, we may affirm that, while *Revista do Rádio* was oriented toward an average public, the *Revista da Música Popular* aimed at what Ortiz described as

a public that, without becoming massive, sociologically defined the potential expansion of activities such as theatre, cinema, music and even television (. . .) a specific audience, but considerable, formed by median urban layers.

(Ortiz 1994, 102)

Ortiz mentions as examples of this process the creation of the *Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia* (TBC, the Brazilian Comedy Theatre, founded in 1948) and the Vera Cruz Cinematographic Company (established in 1949) as well as the rise of Bossa Nova (Ortiz 1994, 72).

Marcos Napolitano suggests that Bossa Nova represented “the articulation of a new musical conscience, the appearance of myths of aesthetical rupture, the incorporation of new musical elements by artists identified with the nationalist cause that was vigorous during João Goulart presidency” (Napolitano 2010, 09). Bossa Nova also expressed the economic optimism that characterized the progressist government of Juscelino Kubitschek (1956–1961), which was marked, for instance, by the development of the automotive industry in Brazil and the construction of the new federal capital, Brasília, inaugurated in 1960.

Moreover, private wealth had a more decisive position regarding the production of popular music in the economic context of Bossa Nova’s advent. In 1958, Festa, a Brazilian independent record label, was responsible for releasing what is considered Bossa Nova’s inaugural record: *Canções de Amor Demais*.⁴ After frustrated experiences as a music producer in the Brazilian branches of Odeon and Philips, Aloysio de Oliveira created the indie label Elenco in 1962 to record the *oeuvre* of artists he admired, including Tom Jobim, Roberto Menescal, Dick Farney, João Donato, and Baden Powell, among others (Zan 1998, 67).

The major segmentation of the music industry enabled by such independent labels, associated with the introduction of the Long Play (LP) format in Brazil (1951), surely favored the development of more sophisticated music production and greater stratification of music consumption.

Furthermore, while in the 1930s and 1940s the presence of state-owned Rádio Nacional had been fundamental to the national promotion of samba, private television stations assumed a central role in the recent process of renovation of the “musical star system.” TV shows exemplified by *O Fino da Bossa* (*The Finest of Bossa*, 1965), hosted by Elis Regina and Jair Rodrigues, helped to promote a whole new generation of Brazilian music artists that were appearing and being consecrated at popular music festivals—competitive showcases promoted by TV stations such as Excelsior and Record from 1964 on. By means of those festivals, artists like Chico Buarque, Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Edu Lobo, Geraldo Vandré, Milton Nascimento, and so on became known all over the country.

However, we should be careful when contemplating the new political context in which this production developed. The formation of a public apt to consume more sophisticated works simply does not explain the politicization, vanguardism, and diversity of the period’s cultural production. Ortiz approaches this subject by comparing the Brazilian case and Perry Anderson’s thesis on the emergence of modernism in France. Ortiz argues that Anderson

notices the advent of this modernity associated to three coordinates in the social field. The first concerns a classical past, highly formalized by visual arts [. . .] The second coordinate is tied to the technological innovations the European society comes to know in the period [. . .] The third element Perry Anderson names as “an imaginative closeness to the social revolution.”

(Ortiz 1994, 104)

In the Brazilian case, according to Ortiz,

the classical past, we didn’t possess it. In Brazil [. . .] there was a historical correspondence between the development of an incipient culture of market and the autonomisation of a universal cultural sphere. [. . .] That phenomenon allowed a “free flow”, a reunion of groups inspired by the artistic vanguard, such as the concretists, to the movements of popular music, Bossa Nova and Tropicalism.

(Ortiz 1994, 104)

Ortiz's remarks uncover a fundamental point in explaining the sophistication of Brazilian popular music, directing attention to a significant permeability between what Pierre Bourdieu (2007) defined as a field of restricted production and a field of large-scale production. In terms of the second coordinate proposed by Anderson, Ortiz observes,

the technical present yet indeterminate, that we have in abundance [. . .] [n]ew technologies, radio, television, cinema, records, all opened perspectives to experiences as diverse as possible. Experimentalism had two faces: a negative one associated to the actual technical difficulties the professionals had; the other, positive, related to the search for new, eventually well-engendered, solutions to bypass the problems faced.

(Ortiz 1994, 106)

In this respect, Ortiz mentions the artisanal features of the Cinema Novo.⁵ Likewise, in popular music precarity also enables inventive solutions. Tom Jobim stated in an interview that the

precarity of recording in our studios [. . .] obliged us to reduce the pitches in the chords. It resulted from a long period of study with the combination of a sound of orchestra, a sound of piano, with a sound of voice, with a sound of acoustic guitar. We were trying to make present what until then didn't appear. That amorphous mass of 100 violins had no use. Then it came that total economy: a flute, 4 violins playing in unison most of the times, in one attempt to bring to the listeners an idea.

(in Zan 1998, 65)

In turn, Ortiz interprets the third dimension, the "imaginative closeness to the social revolution," as the

political ferment, opening the horizon for a perspective of substantial changes in the Brazilian society, even when claimed by groups ideologically opposed. The period we are considering is marked by a whole nationalist utopia, which tried to take an underdeveloped society out of its position of stagnation.

(Ortiz 1994, 108)

By some means, Bossa Nova is also inserted into this debate. When discussing it, Brasil Rocha Brito affirmed in 1960 that

never before an occurrence in the milieu of our popular music had brought such an incitement in controversies and polemics, serving as motivations to debates, articles, news coverage and interviews, hence motivating a variety of promotion means.

(Brito 1974, 17)

The polemics were mostly due to an evolving process of the politicization of the arts, first initiated in the 1950s and whose peak was reached in the following decade. The optimism during Kubitschek's government was followed by an economic crisis and growth in the organization of, and the claims by, social and labor movements that had in response the military coup that deposed President João Goulart. The intense debate continued even after the takeover, at least in the cultural sphere, leading Roberto Schwarz to declare in 1969 that, "notwithstanding the right-oriented dictatorship, there is relative cultural hegemony of the left in the country" (Schwarz 1978, 62).

According to Ortiz, the “cultural hegemony” was consequence of an intense process of politicization of the artistic work, which started to embrace elements of social and political critique. During this process, traditional theatrical plays, such as those by the above-mentioned TBC, were being criticized as “alienated” and faced competition with new, more experimental, and more critical works produced by Teatro Oficina and Teatro de Arena, established in 1953 and 1958, respectively. The same occurred with Vera Cruz Cinematography Company and the newly established movement of Cinema Novo (Ortiz 1994, 103). As we shall see next, also Bossa Nova was criticized for its political inadequacy in this new scenario.

The Birth of the MPB

The manifest of the Centros Populares de Cultura da União Nacional dos Estudantes (CPC-UNE, Popular Centers of Culture of the National Students Union), released in 1962 as a clear attempt of those intellectuals to get closer to the working class, stated that “outside the political art cannot exist a popular art” (Martins 1962; Hollanda 2004, 131). According to Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda (2004, 23), it was “a conception of art as instrument for seizing power,” with no room left for other audiences than the common people (the working-class). Although not all musicians aligned with CPC-UNE’s proposal, pressures for a greater politicization of popular music became evident.

As for Bossa Nova, Marcos Napolitano indicates that the leftist sectors of the students’ movement understood the necessity for its politicization, and

two possible ways of achieving such objective were then opening: to incorporate the musical technics featured in Bossa Nova, by merging them with folkloric and traditional music material; or expunging the technical sophistication of those songs addressed to the popular masses, by using consecrated musical genre and styles in a purely exhortative purpose. While popular music should seek the right equilibrium between form and content to transmit an ideological message consonant with the reformist ideal, it also would have an active role in the nationalization process of the entire set of cultural products.

(Napolitano 2010, 12)

Although it is not possible to further develop this debate here, we may at least emphasize that the option to “expunge the technical sophistication” has never been true for the Brazilian popular music produced by the 1960s generation. Marcos Napolitano recalls that the clash inside Bossa Nova between a jazz stream and a nationalist one had been evolving since the beginning of that decade, and intensified after a gig at Carnegie Hall in New York on November 23, 1962, which included the participation of several artists from the movement. The gig stimulated critics against Bossa Nova, who accused it of being anti-popular and “sell-out” (Napolitano 2010, 24).

According to Napolitano, the deadlock ended with a rapprochement between Bossa Nova and the artists of traditional samba, such as Cartola, Nelson Cavaquinho, and Zé Ketí, a fundamental step in the foundations of MPB (Napolitano 2010, 27). The acronym, suggested around 1965, defines neither all popular music produced in the country nor a specific musical genre. Instead, it refers to a group of artists that has in common works sustained by a political view that is both critical and nationalist, authorial productions that were grounded on research, and composition of songs based on traditional musical genres, while keeping the aesthetical deeds and the artistic autonomy of Bossa Nova. Napolitano believes the acronym became itself “a true institution, a source of legitimation in the Brazilian socio-cultural hierarchy, capable of absorbing elements originally alien, such as rock and jazz” (Napolitano 2010, 07).

Caetano Veloso, who became one of the principal names of the Tropicália movement arisen by 1967—also sheltered under the umbrella of MPB—defended this course of action in a debate promoted by the publication *Civilização Brasileira* in 1966:

The question around the Brazilian popular music has currently being raised in terms of loyalty and communication with the Brazilian people. That means: one always discusses whether it is important to have an ideological view on the Brazilian issues, and if the music is good provided it clearly exposes this view; or whether we must resume or only accept the Brazilian primitive music. [. . .]

Well, the Brazilian music is modernized and still Brazilian, by way of all information is profited (and understood) from the experience and from the comprehension of the reality of the Brazilian culture. [. . .] Only the restart of this evolutive line can provide us with some organicity to select and be capable to criticize the creation. Saying that samba can only be made with a frying pan, a tambourine and a guitar without sevenths and ninths does not solve the problem. [. . .] João Gilberto has a contrabass, violin, horn, sevenths and ninths, and has samba. Actually, João Gilberto is to me the moment this happened: the information about the musical modernity used in the re-creation, in the renovation, in the step-ahead taken by the Brazilian popular music.

(Veloso, 2008, 21)

Veloso ends up reiterating the idea of an “evolutive line” in the Brazilian popular music, to which the assimilation of foreign references, the “information about musical modernity,” becomes a fundamental condition. Therefore, the presence of jazz in Brazilian music through Bossa Nova turns out to be defined as not only an aesthetical choice but also a procedure model essential to a meaningful segment of Brazilian music produced since that moment. It thus became part of the country’s musical identity, ensuring the autonomy and artistic quality of the music housed under the MPB tradition over the next few decades.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the presence of jazz in Brazil, beginning with how it was inserted into the tradition of Brazilian popular music as well as into the political and cultural debate that developed in the country, especially between the 1930s and 1960s.

We tried to demonstrate that the entire period was marked by the debate around Brazilian identity, established under the conservative bias of Getúlio Vargas’s first presidency, between 1930 and 1945. At that moment, the first approach to jazz came through the orchestral arrangements created by Radamés Gnattali and other professionals at Rádio Nacional, which was owned by the Brazilian state. That was also the moment samba, born in the hills of Rio de Janeiro, was consolidated as the national music.

The 1950s saw the most important moment in the relationship between jazz and Brazilian music, expressed by the advent of Bossa Nova. By then, the process of sophistication and modernization of Brazilian popular music was occurring under a more progressist perspective and in a context in which the development of a market of symbolic goods was occurring without a significant presence of the State.

During the 1960s, as part of the process of increasing politicization of the artistic community, both the sophistication of the popular music and the autonomy of its creators were questioned. However, as Caetano Veloso proposed, the idea of an “evolutive line” prevailed, meaning that the research of popular music genres expanded beyond the samba, and dialog with international music references was no longer limited to jazz. The aesthetical feats and the idea

of legitimation of Brazilian popular music by means of artistic relevance instead of marketing success were sustained.

There was a moment of extreme musical creativity produced throughout the 1960s, which included the entrance of a whole generation of artists associated with what was conventionally called MPB. Inside the framework of MPB, we have a variety of artists, from Chico Buarque and Edu Lobo, who were closer to samba and other traditional genres, to vanguard and experimental works by “tropicalists” such as Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, and Tom Zé that, in many cases, engaged in dialog with rock under the premise of an “evolutive line.”

During the subsequent decades, the exchange between MPB and international music also served as the base for new and extraordinary musical movements, for instance the Clube da Esquina of Belo Horizonte, between the 1970s and 1980s, as represented by Milton Nascimento, Beto Guedes, Lô Borges, Toninho Horta, and others; and the Mangue Beat of Recife in the 1990s, whose main exponents are the bands Chico Science e Nação Zumbi and Mundo Livre S/A. In a recent work (Soares and Vicente 2017), we showed that even a current musical production such as rap made in the periphery of the city of São Paulo, which has strong ethnic and identity characteristics, preserves an intense relationship with MPB through many of its artists.

The Bossa Nova heritage has been constantly updated within Brazilian music by means of fusion and many interpreters. In addition, the jazz reference certainly sustains its vigor among the production of Brazilian instrumental music; it is fundamental to a musical tradition that seems likely to keep its singularity as well as its political, artistic, and social relevance, even if exchanges with world music are intensified.

Notes

1. The writer and music critic Mário de Andrade deserves a special attention alongside composers such as Heitor Villa-Lobos, Camargo Guarnieri, and Oswaldo Lacerda, among others.
2. Cavaquinho is a steel string ukulele; ganzá is a kind of shaker, and pandeiro is a hand frame drum with metal jingles.
3. Getúlio Vargas became president in 1930 by means of the so-called Revolution of 1930. In 1937, Vargas cancelled the elections that should have chosen his successor and remained in power through the Estado Novo (New State) coup, which had a strong fascist orientation.
4. The record has songs composed by Tom Jobim and Vinícius de Moraes, interpreted by Elizeth Cardoso, accompanied by João Gilberto on guitar.
5. Cinema Novo (New Cinema) was a politically engaged cinematographic movement initiated in the 1950s, inspired by Italian Neorealism and French Nouvelle Vague. Among the most recognized names are Glauber Rocha and Nelson Pereira dos Santos.

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INDIVIDUALS, COLLECTIVES, AND COMMUNITIES

Festivals and Festivalization: The Shaping Influence of a Jazz Institution

Scott Currie

Since its emergence at the dawn of the modern jazz era, the jazz festival has not only provided important sources of income and recognition for artists, but also has offered crowd-sourced, if industry-driven, operational definitions of jazz—both for the tradition as a whole and for its featured constituent sub-genres and styles individually. A transnational institution from its earliest instances in France, as well as in its widely exported forms under the Newport/Kool/JVC and Montreux brand names, the jazz festival expresses and occasionally manages to transcend, at least in part, the inherent tensions among the local, national, and global. Within this context, this chapter will examine the jazz festival as a site of semiotic collaboration and political-economic consensus-seeking among key stakeholders—including artists, audience members, journalists, and impresarios—over the representation and meaning of the music.

“There is No Jazz Without Festival; There Is No Festival Without Jazz” (George McKay 2016)

At the outset, it seems well worth noting how remarkable it should be that so few today would find the pivotal role festivals play in the contemporary jazz world at all remarkable. Indeed, for the first decades of this past century—roughly a third of the music’s entire history, corresponding to the period of its greatest commercial popularity—jazz resounded most characteristically within thoroughly quotidian socio-cultural contexts. So deeply interwoven into the texture of everyday life, improvisational syncopations came to structure the recreational and procreational rhythms of socialization from speakeasy to dance hall, throughout the Jazz Age and the swing era, themselves named after successive musical manifestations of this evolving African American tradition. Notwithstanding its subcultural origins, mainstream audience members consumed pre-war jazz primarily, albeit in successfully commodified forms, through participatory engagement in the practices it defined, notably including amateur musical performance as well as dance hall and nightclub socializing. In fact, extant historical documentation suggests that part of its “viral” appeal lay precisely in the widespread presumption that playing jazz, much like dancing a foxtrot, was something intrinsically enjoyable that most anyone could *do*, with or without formal training.

However, George McKay’s *no jazz without festival/no festival without jazz* formulation (2016) challenges jazz scholars to think through the re/doubled transformations of the music, in stages running the gamut, as we shall see, from liminal rite though leisure activity to liminoid pursuit. Not only did jazz, as McKay reminds us, emerge from the carnivalesque complex of such

African-diasporic festive forms as Mardi Gras, but some of its earliest recorded origin tales situate it firmly within the ritual sphere of funeral processions. Perhaps this legacy could help explain some of the music's mildly subversive associations, whose symbolic retention could not but have contributed significantly to its residually countercultural allure, even after transformation into a commonplace leisure commodity. Nonetheless, as contemporaneous critics such as Theodor Adorno (1936/2002) could plausibly contend, culture-industrial relations of production and consumption would necessarily confine any transgressive experiences of transcendent freedom from normative social constraint to fleeting glimpses of liberation from totally administered society—just potent enough to motivate the expenditure of a last nickel for another jukebox play or a borrowed dime for one more taxi dance. In short, one might well argue that the music's interbellum commercial success as quotidian commodity rendered its potentially subversive liminality latent, cleaving jazz from festival so neatly and completely as to make the very notion of a jazz festival somehow incongruous or unnecessary, if not entirely inconceivable. Unsurprisingly from this perspective, aside from the occasional jitterbug marathon or spirituals-to-swing concert, the music's history in fact manifests no fully realized conceptions of jazz festivals as such during this period of its greatest mainstream popularity.¹

In short, amid the tumultuous transformations of the postwar jazz world—on both sides of the Atlantic (and Pacific)—the emergence and rise to definitive genre predominance of the jazz festival should represent not a taken-for-granted state of affairs, but rather a historical problem demanding further exploration and explication. In particular, the issues presenting themselves most acutely and immediately for analysis stem from the festivalization of jazz, that is, the manner in which the institution of the jazz festival has influenced “collective understandings and practices” of jazz with respect to three key orientations laid out in Roche's influential formulation (2011, 127): space, as redefined by currents of transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, and globalization; time, via staged realizations and revisions of evolving historical narratives; and agency, through identity-affirming communal participation in the performative instantiation of deeply held, collectively shared ideals. Making sense of this phenomenon will entail exploration along three lines of analysis: anthropological, historical, and political-economic.

Anthropologically speaking, the contrasting paradigms of jazz—as festive celebration on the one hand, and as mundane entertainment on the other—call to mind Victor Turner's (above-referenced) theoretical distinction between liminal and liminoid (1974), and indeed suggest promising directions for further refinement of these concepts in application to the case of the jazz festival. Performance theorists such as Turner (1969, 1984), Alessandro Falassi (1987), and John MacAloon (1982) have proposed and developed conceptions of festive celebrations in urban industrialized societies as fulfilling roles analogous, or otherwise akin, to those identified with the liminal stages of rites of passage found in small-scale indigenous societies. In the context of Western modernity, with its differentiated forms of religion and the arts, Turner contended, liminality became fragmented into liminal religious and fraternal rites on the one hand, and “liminoid” leisure practices of art, music, literature, dance, and theater—as well as sports, games, and other entertainment genres—on the other (1974, 86). Turner's analyses suggested that liminoid phenomena shared the culturally creative potential of liminality—even increasing its complexity by encouraging freer play of symbolic bricolage—and enhanced ritual's socially transformative capacity, by allowing “lavish scope” for creative individuals to critique and even subvert the status quo (1974, 71–73).

In all societies, at whatever level of scale or complexity, Turner asserted, each cyclical or seasonal transition in individual status or group condition entailed a moment of liminality. What he termed the “subjunctivity” of such moments contrasted sharply with what he considered the “indicative” mode of normative social structure (1984, 20–21), understood as a differentiated and often hierarchical system of typically ascribed roles, statuses, and relationships. Liminality, he contended, entailed a different dimension of social experience, defined by what he termed *communitas*:

“a direct, spontaneous, and egalitarian mode of social relationship” (Turner and Turner 1982, 202), engendered through the “direct, immediate, and total confrontations of human identities” (1974, 77) among participants in ritual contexts, an “essential and generic human bond, without which there could be *no* society” (Turner 1969, 97).

According to Frank Salamone, jazz performances establish rituals to ensure a state of *communitas* wherein “performers and audience enter into a fellowship of complicity in which their mutual construction of reality strengthens their solidarity” (1988, 101). “*Communitas* has something of a ‘flow’ quality,” for Turner, who proposed that flow might well represent “one of the ways in which ‘structure’ may be transformed or ‘liquefied’ . . . into *communitas* again” (1974, 89). In so doing, Turner explicitly linked his concept of *communitas* to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s concept of “flow,” an autotelic “merging of action and awareness . . . made possible by a centering of attention” on a task at hand with such intensity and complete absorption as to result in “loss of ego” (Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 44–55)—a transcendent ideal to which, as Travis Jackson has documented (2000, 45–49), prominent jazz musicians aspire. Flow, however, is predominantly an individual experience arising predictably within rule-defined social-structural situations (for example, mainstream jazz improvisation), while *communitas* is a collective experience arising spontaneously outside of ordinary social structure (for example in festival contexts). Thus, for Salamone, jazz is “often in jeopardy of becoming routinized” with a prevalent “rather rigid state of relationships only now and then overcome in true *communitas*” (1988, 101). To the extent that festival contexts can help foster the collective effervescence of *communitas*, they can engender a virtuous circle, wherein performative flow liquefies social structure into *communitas*, which further facilitates the attainment of flow in a self-reinforcing cycle.²

Applying this Turnerian interpretive framework to jazz thus yields a conception of festivals as liminoid phenomena—with all the ludic, subversive capacities that may involve—aspiring to the condition of liminality, toward the end of drawing artists and audience members together in a spirit of *communitas*.³ Improvisational performances represent the primary modality by which jazz festivals achieve these ends, by allowing audiences the opportunity to observe firsthand the flow of creativity in process instead of in product, and offering them a glimpse of the communal aesthetic engagement shared among interacting performers. Listeners’ apperceptions of sharing the same eyewitness experience of liminality with other audience members engender a feeling of jazz community, uniting them directly with one another and indirectly, but profoundly, with the performers. To the extent that festivals manifest such liminal tendencies toward *communitas*, they may serve to advance subcultural agendas semiotically by imbuing music with affective meanings generated in and through its performative evocation of “alternative models for living, from utopias to programs, which are capable of influencing the behavior of those in mainstream social and political roles (whether authoritative or dependent, in control or rebelling against it) in the direction of radical change” (1974, 65). In general, the sensory overload festivals create through the intensity of immersive experience tends to overdetermine preferred meanings, making them key sites of what Richard Middleton might characterize as “articulation,” all the more potent inasmuch as they implicitly but indelibly define their object (for example, jazz) by curatorial selection, while simultaneously establishing cross-connotative evocative links between the music and other “constituents of the cultural repertory,” “combining existing elements into new patterns,” and “attaching new connotations to them” (1990, 8–9).

“Jazz Doesn’t Belong to [Critics]; It Belongs to the World” (George Wein)⁴

The first jazz festival of enduring international significance took place in Nice in 1948, followed soon after by two festivals in Paris in 1948 and 1949.⁵ In considering the many significant historical precedents these festivals established for those following in their wake, several key aspects of

performative conceptualization stand out as particularly salient: jazz as a transnational art form, developing from traditional roots in African American culture, through various stylistic forms in popular culture, to contemporary manifestations in cosmopolitan contexts. Inasmuch as impresarios typically need to find a way to deal with the notoriously vexed problem of defining jazz as expediently as possible, in order to move onto the pressing organizational issues always at hand, the allure of a simply grasped and readily staged programmatic narrative can hardly be overstated. Indeed, Paris festival organizer Charles Delaunay (1985, 210) clearly recognized how aptly the emergent paradigm of an evolving jazz tradition, embracing an unbroken succession of kindred forms from blues and ragtime through New Orleans and Chicago jazz to swing and (perhaps) beyond, catalyzed the development of a postwar jazz festival industry.

Even Delaunay's bitterest critical rival, Nice festival organizer Hugues Panassié, booked a progressive swing band (Jean Leclère's) with modernistic leanings of the sort he otherwise denounced in the starkest polemical terms, thus demonstrating the almost inexorable power of a structurally embedded modernist narrative to impose itself upon the most traditionalist of contexts.

While much text-centered jazz scholarship has tended to consider jazz history as discursively constructed by critics, a focus on festivals might well offer a persuasive counter-argument for its concomitant performative construction. With comprehensive jazz histories few and far between in the immediate postwar era, and jazz journals often catering to partisans in the traditionalist ("moldy figs") vs. modernist ("sour grapes") camps, jazz festivals like Panassié's, Delaunay's, and, ultimately, George Wein's may well have helped establish the consensus notion of a jazz tradition more widely and more compellingly, at least among their audiences, than too often polarized and polarizing critical discourse alone. Indeed, the pragmatic bottom-line imperative such impresarios faced of appealing to the broadest possible audience, by presenting something for everyone, gave them every motivation to help musicians, critics, and audience members alike find the common ground that eventually gave rise to a jazz mainstream by the late fifties. If a picture is worth a thousand words, a festival easily could write a book: presenting Sidney Bechet with Kenny Clarke on drums, as Delaunay did in Paris, no doubt made at least as eloquent an argument for jazz ecumenism as any of his published columns.

Furthermore, the historically premised broad-mindedness implicitly but ineluctably cultivated by festival programming found striking analogs in the geographically expansive cosmopolitanism it fostered. While both Panassié and Delaunay clearly featured renowned African American artists—from Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet through Coleman Hawkins and Rex Stewart to Charlie Parker and Miles Davis—at the heart of their programming, they contextualized this marquee placement within a much broader international frame by booking artists not only from France but also from across a wide range of its Western European friends and neighbors, including England, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. By thus providing European artists and audiences from otherwise far-flung local scenes with shared opportunities for firsthand exposure to the "latest developments" from across the Atlantic, this transnational orientation fostered the development of durable professional networks among European artists as well as between them and their American counterparts, many of whom appreciated the warmth of this welcome to the extent of prolonging mutually beneficial engagements abroad and even relocating in some cases to Europe as expatriates. The widely circulating accounts of the respectful, dedicated, budding talents that African American artists had encountered abroad effectively set the stage for a series of Cold War era musical "diplomatic mission[s]" that sought both to "foster a sense of cross-cultural unity," and to "increase the international exposure" of a new jazz festival (Wein and Chinen 2003, 183), which had just sprung up on the opposite side of the Atlantic from the final edition of Delaunay's Paris Jazz Fair concept, right in the nick of time to seize the torch.⁶

If the pioneering endeavors of Panassié and Delaunay established both the example that subsequent jazz festivals would largely follow, and the standard to which most would aspire, Wein

hit upon the formula capable of providing the longterm sustainability to institutionalize jazz festivals as a cornerstone of the industry. Whereas his French predecessors were critical writers and passionate listeners first and foremost, Wein's background as a professional musician from his late teens, who had owned and operated a pair of nightclubs and a record label (as well as providing artist-management services) by his late twenties, placed him in a uniquely advantageous position to create a successful business model based on his substantial experience in so many key music industry roles. Starting out with a two-day festival supported by a \$20,000 donation, he had doubled the length and increased the budget more than tenfold within five years (Gennari 2006, 212; Goldblatt 1977, 61–65). In that time, he had also managed to arrange for overseas festival broadcasts through Voice of America; to scout, recruit, and showcase all-star youth bands both at home and abroad; and to organize one of the first festival-artist tours of Europe (Wein and Chinen 2003, 146, 183, 193–194). In addition, he provided just the right set of propitious circumstances for Miles Davis and Duke Ellington to revitalize their careers with widely acclaimed “comeback” performances, legendary not only for the inspirational outpouring of *communitas* generated through virtuosic improvisational flow amid transformative festive liminality, but also for the successful mediation and commodification of this experience via radio broadcasts, commercial recordings, and ticket sales.

The need, so clearly manifest here, for festivals to pay the piper points toward the bellwether role they played in mid-century transformations of the political economy of jazz, as well as a significant lacuna in Turnerian theory. Even though Turner readily acknowledged that “the liminoid is more like a commodity—indeed, often is a commodity, which one selects and pays for—than the liminal” (1974, 86), his disinclination to pursue the implications of this insight leaves his main distinction between them drawn in terms of a notion of the liminoid as somehow “freer than the liminal, a matter of choice not obligation” (1974, 86), without considering how economic factors can limit or even eliminate that choice, by predicating participation upon the possession of sufficient disposal income. In view of the thoroughgoing commodification of leisure in late capitalism, liminoid events like festivals essentially serve to package and sell ritual transcendence—or, more accurately, the mere possibility or hope thereof—at a premium, thus potentially placing it out of reach for many or most, and thereby resignifying it as a mark of distinction. Compared to an earlier era's thirty-cent admission to the Savoy Ballroom, a five-dollar ticket to the 1957 Newport Jazz Festival—corresponding to a contemporary purchasing power of roughly \$40–45 over sixty years later—clearly represented more of a luxury expenditure, likely imposing exclusionary class barriers even before accounting for the much more onerous costs of travel and lodging at an elite seaside resort like Newport (or Nice). In a manner analogous to the roughly contemporaneous transition from single recordings to long-playing albums, that substantial increase in the total price of admission doubtless played a role in helping to transform jazz from a “people's music” (Finkelstein 1948/75), enjoyed by everyone every day, to a lifestyle brand indexing progressive taste and distinction—at the very moment when an emergent global leisure class was reconstituting itself through new technological modes of cosmopolitan mobility as a “jet-set.”

Although tailor-made for this globe-trotting elite by the transnationalist ethos of trailblazing impresarios like Pannasié, Delaunay, and Wein, jazz still remained largely dependent on mass-consumption models of patronage, especially in festive presentations supported by admissions and public/private tourist-industry subsidies, engendering a structural conflict that would play out in the historical development of jazz festivals going forward. In this context, paying the piper also entailed audience development strategies aimed at attracting affluent potential consumers with mainstream popular tastes, toward the end of cultivating them as jazz fans, initiated through affect-laden ritual participation in celebratory performative manifestations of its evolutionary folk-popular-art master narrative. By the late 1950s, the purist connoisseurship that had characterized Pannasié's and Delaunay's influential but short-lived efforts had begun to give way

to Wein's broader-based programming strategies, which featured popular talents including Ray Charles, Chuck Berry, the Four Freshman, and the Kingston Trio, booked on bills with such distinguished jazz artists as Mary Lou Williams, Gerry Mulligan, Count Basie, and Dave Brubeck. As successful as these cross-genre bookings appear to have been in building jazz audiences—if contemporaneous trade journal accounts offer any indication—they also provoked heated critical polemics. Even such initially supportive journalists as Nat Hentoff assailed Wein's Newport Jazz Festival (on whose board of advisers Hentoff had once served) with charges of “insensitive, grasping commercialism” (Hentoff 1959, quoted in Wein and Chinen 2003, 194).

By 1960, only a handful of other festivals had established themselves in the United States (US)—notably including the New York (Randall's Island) Jazz Festival and the Monterey Jazz Festival—while almost a dozen new festivals had sprung up across both Western and Eastern Europe, from England (Beaulieu), France (Antibes), and Italy (San Remo) to Estonia (Tallinn), Poland (Warsaw Jazz Jamboree), and Yugoslavia (Ljubljana). The early 1960s saw jazz festivals increase only modestly in number before the onset of a dramatic expansion starting in the latter half of the decade. Significantly, and probably not coincidentally, this festival boom occurred during a period of recession in the US nightclub economy, as the mainstream popularity of jazz declined sharply in the wake of the British Invasion, and psychedelic rock increasingly displaced jazz (and folk) on college campuses. In contradistinction to emergent rock festivals of the era, largely defined by a broadly shared hippie anti-establishment ethos, jazz festivals took the first steps toward corporate sponsorship at this time, beginning with the Schlitz Salute to Jazz presented by Wein's Festival Productions Inc. in 1968 and followed shortly by his network of Kool Jazz Festivals.

Although relatively little in the way of hard quantitative data or reliable historical statistics exists to document the increasing expansion of jazz festivals in subsequent years, the extensive sample originally compiled by Paul Laird (Kernfeld and Laird 2003) would appear to provide a useful starting point. Taking a decennial census of his selective listing of several hundred significant festivals, featuring “professional musicians of international renown,” yields a reasonably broad-based overview of accelerating growth both in Europe and North America, from a few dozen festivals in 1970 to a couple hundred in 1990, with the rate of growth significantly tapering off between 1990 and 2000.⁷ One complicating factor in this regard concerns the definitional issues raised by “jazz” festivals increasingly presenting Rhythm and Blues (R&B), soul, and rock in the jazz fusion era. Moreover, amid this loosening of genre boundaries by predominantly large and especially corporate branded festivals—with mainstream pop acts far outnumbering recognized jazz artists in Wein's Kool Jazz Festivals of the 1970s and 1980s—smaller festivals serving niche markets of purists, especially those favoring early and avant-garde jazz, also proliferated.

If the emergence of the festival was only conceivable in the postwar modern jazz context of a music that was no longer “popular” in the sense of mass participation in either production or consumption, the rapid expansion and ascent to predominance of the jazz festival in the 1970s and 1980s clearly helped fill the void left in the wake of shrinking local jazz nightclub scenes by fostering the development of transnational jazz touring networks circulating acclaimed artists through seasonal itineraries of festivals, especially those staged in succession all across Europe during the summer months. The concomitant proliferation of jazz education programs, inculcating evolutionary folk-pop-art historical narratives (with fusion often sidelined as a problematic anomaly), served to fuel the resurgence of the mainstream jazz styles prominently showcased at festivals by recruiting students to fill the ranks of aspiring young (semi) professionals and sophisticated audience connoisseurs. To the extent, though, that this renewed demand coincided with industry economics making it less and less feasible to bring major jazz acts to often struggling local nightclubs, jazz fans increasingly had to travel somewhere else to experience live jazz by internationally recognized artists, with festivals offering particularly compelling destinations for such pilgrims.

“Why Would You Come All the Way to Tampere to See Jazz When You Come From New York?” (Finnish Railroad Ticket Agent)

In spite of frequent, common, and casual allusions to pilgrimage among fans, writers, and other participants at jazz festivals—or perhaps in part because of them—the widespread notion of festivals as sites of pilgrimage has received surprisingly little sustained attention to date from jazz scholars,⁸ whether in contrast to festival pilgrimage literature focused instead upon folk (Quinn and Wilks 2017) and electronic dance music (St. John 2008; Luckman 2016), or in comparison to the attention devoted to jazz festival tourism. While recent jazz festival scholarship (for example, Webster and McKay 2016; Whyton 2018) has significantly advanced the understanding of such issues as cultural and countercultural heritage mainly in the terms of jazz’s impact upon tourism, rather than pilgrimage *per se*, the distinction between the two has grown less and less salient, as contemporary theorizations of festivals (for example, Bowditch 2010) tend to challenge it with notions of secular pilgrimage (if not sacred tourism), harking back to Victor and Edith Turner’s adage that “a tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist” (Turner and Turner 1978, 20).⁹ Indeed, anthropological studies of pilgrimage in contemporary, even pop culture contexts (for example, Porter 2004)—based on Alan Morinis’s expansive reconceptualization of pilgrimage as a “journey undertaken by a person in quest of a place or a state that he or she believes to embody a valued ideal” (Morinis 1992, 4)—offer a fruitful paradigm for thinking through the phenomenon of jazz festival pilgrimage. How exactly do valued ideals, above and beyond the simple desire for suitably edifying entertainment, become embodied by jazz festivals that make fans travel around the world to attend them, at any of the particular sites where they take place?

In the latter respect, cultural heritage probably contributes more to lifestyle branding (Bennett and Woodward 2016) than site sacralization, since most festivals cannot readily serve as sites of jazz pilgrimage in the same straightforward way as recognized cradles of jazz like New Orleans, Chicago, and New York, or for that matter Paris, Berlin, and London. Very few if any fans visit Nice or Newport—let alone Moers, Vienne, or Tampere—to commemorate some extraordinary jazz epiphany or to immerse themselves firsthand in the history of jazz in the place where that history was made, especially since not many surviving jazz institutions of any sort (whether in villages, resorts, or metropolises) have remained at the same location where they first gained renown. Nicola MacLeod’s observations regarding the “placelessness” of festivals, in globalized contexts of postmodernity (2006, 226), certainly apply to the enterprise of bringing artists and audiences someplace far away from any of their homes to a traveling exhibition half the world away—for an ephemeral event in a place where, in all likelihood (with a very few prominent exceptions proving the rule), nothing notable in jazz history has ever happened, except of course for previous festival performances. Notwithstanding, though, quite reasonable concerns about the dangers of homogenization (McKay 2018) and routinization (Tackley and Martin 2013) inherent in this situation—echoing as they do Turner’s model of spontaneous (unpredictably transcendent) *communitas* devolving into normative (reliably institutionalized) *communitas* (1974, 79–80)—his notion of liminal spaces as interfaces for the generation of cultural meanings (1974, 72–73) suggests that festive *communitas* can allow and empower participants to endow their surroundings collectively with shared significance arising from the very cosmopolitan ideals whose performative realization has brought them all together.

Viewing jazz festivals in terms of such a quest for meaning and authenticity, common to both tourists and pilgrims, in light of Dean MacCannell’s wry revisionist twist on Walter Benjamin’s notion of aura (1936/78) makes at least as much sense—if not a good deal more—in this age of digital reproduction as it did in Benjamin’s age of mechanical reproduction. To the extent that MacCannell’s contentions apply to live jazz in the sense that it “becomes ‘authentic’ only after the first copy of it is produced,” that “the reproductions *are* the aura,” and that “the ritual, far from

being a point of origin, *derives* from the relationship between the original object and its socially constructed importance” (1976/2013, 48), recordings and concerts emerge as mutually constitutive polar opposites: the former’s disembodied product reifying the latter’s embodied process, which is in turn “authenticated” by the former’s reproductions. From this perspective, one vital ideal motivating the jazz pilgrim’s quest reveals itself in the search for the immediacy of performative creativity as social process, reconciling tradition and innovation in the heat of the ritual moment. Jazz festivals’ focus on improvisation thus foregrounds a fundamental characteristic of all festivals: the creative remembering, recreation, and realization of past traditions to meet the present challenges of future contingencies. While all festive performances are “pre-formed” by prior rehearsals, recordings, and stagings, nonetheless no two are ever the exactly the same, and it is precisely this contingent singularity of socio-aesthetic experience that jazz festivals characteristically and perhaps even uniquely celebrate.¹⁰ Herein, perhaps, lies the potential contribution that jazz festival studies might make to scholarship on festivals more generally, in addressing the question McKay has posed: “Why jazz (and not, say, rock or folk) music for thinking about festival and cultural heritage?” (2016). Whereas folk festivals embrace the homegrown *communitas* of collective solidarity and Electric Dance Music (EDM) festivals enshrine the utopian ecstasy of individual transcendence, jazz festivals embody the vital flow that pulses between the two. Betwixt and between the comforts of the home left behind and the raptures of the shrine somewhere ahead, jazz festivals epitomize the liminal archetype of eternal pilgrim, forever on the road searching for the meaning of it all. Or, as Sidney Bechet once explained it:

That’s what the music is . . . a lost thing finding itself. It’s like a man with no place of his own. He wanders the world and he’s a stranger wherever he is; he’s a stranger right in the place where he was born.

(Bechet 1960/2002, 48)

Notes

1. Noteworthy pre-war precursors of the jazz festival include: the 1926 International Jazz Congress in Chicago, and the 1938 Carnival of Swing in New York City, as well as the 1938 and 1939 Spirituals to Swing concerts in New York City.
2. Paul Gonsalves’s famous “Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue” solo from Duke Ellington’s fabled 1956 Newport Jazz Festival performance represents one obvious example of this feedback phenomenon.
3. While numerous scholars have engaged critically with Turner’s notion of *communitas*, to date no rival conceptualization has emerged with sufficient explanatory power to displace it from (ever-expanding) scholarly usage. Accordingly, my use of *communitas* hereinafter will take influential critiques into account by heeding John Eade’s call to “to place *communitas* into its proper perspective—as an ideological programme that is only partially and fleetingly realised in practice” (Eade and Sallnow 1991/2013, xiii).
4. Quoted by Gennari (2006, 246)—the particular critics Wein called out by name were Nat Hentoff and Whitney Balliett, who had quite vehemently contested the broadness of his industry-friendly operational definitions of jazz.
5. Although often cited as the “first fully fledged jazz festival” (for example Kernfeld and Laird 2003), the Australian Jazz Convention explicitly rejects that designation in its own publicity, which stakes its claim instead as the “longest running annual jazz event in the world . . . organised as a **convention for the musicians** rather than a festival for the general public” <www.australianjazzconvention.org/history.htm>.
6. Delaunay’s third and final edition of his *Salon International du Jazz* concluded on June 7, 1954; Wein’s first Newport Jazz Festival opened on July 17, 1954.
7. Laird’s data show European festivals comprising the clear majority of all festivals, consistently outnumbering North American festivals by a factor of two to three. While Laird does not offer any comparable data updated for 2010, an impressionistic survey of online European Jazz Network listings suggests a modest increase with continued leveling of growth rates.
8. The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival (see Souther 2003; Walton 2012) represents one notable exception (albeit one that helps establish the rule).

9. Dean MacCannell provided the foundation for rethinking tourist-pilgrim dualisms, with such insights as “the motive behind a pilgrimage is similar to that behind a tour: both are quests for authentic experiences” (MacCannell 1973, 593).
10. It is in this sense that the second half of McKay’s axiom—“no festival without jazz”—appears most apposite.

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PART V

Politics, Discourse, and Ideology



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THE BIRTH OF JAZZ DIPLOMACY

American Jazz in Italy, 1945–1963

Anna Harwell Celenza

*The State Department has discovered jazz.
It reaches folks like nothing has.*

Dave & Iola Brubeck, The Real Ambassadors (1962)

On November 6, 1955, a foreign correspondent for the *New York Times* declared “America’s secret weapon” in the Cold War to be “a blue note in a minor key.” Since then, countless scholars have designated the mid-1950s as the beginning of American jazz diplomacy, with the Soviet Union and Africa as primary targets. But as this chapter makes clear, the United States government’s use of jazz as a tool for suppressing Communism began in Italy at least a decade earlier and set the stage for the well-known Jazz Ambassadors program launched by President Eisenhower in 1954.

As I explain in my recent book, *Jazz Italian Style: From Its Origins in New Orleans to Fascist Italy and Sinatra* (2017), Italy posed a problem for the United States at the conclusion of the Second World War. Whereas England, France, and Germany had always looked to jazz as a “foreign” art form, “exotic” in nature, with indelible connections to African American culture, Italy embraced jazz, at least in part, as a “native” art form. This was largely due to the release of the first jazz recording, “Jazz Band One-Step” and “Livery Stable Blues” by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band in 1917. The band’s leader/trumpet player (Nick LaRocca) and drummer and (Tony Sbarbaro) were the children of Italian immigrants who had moved to New Orleans at the turn of the century. Their Italian heritage led listeners in Italy to claim that the origins of jazz could be linked to Italy. Consequently, as the Jazz Age spread across the Atlantic, Italian Futurists praised “the virile energy” of jazz. Mussolini described it as the voice of Italian youth, and musicians, mesmerized by its “progressive” sounds, abandoned the Italian opera houses and conservatories for the dance halls and dinner clubs that had begun to populate the urban centers between Rome and Milan (Celenza 2017, 3–4).

This chapter picks up the story at the end of the Second World War, when musicians who had thrived under Mussolini’s protection began distancing themselves from their past and rewriting the history of Italian jazz. The United States (US) State Department and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) played decisive roles in this conscious erasure of Italian jazz. In an effort to redefine jazz as a symbol of American Democracy, the US poured money into a wide range of propaganda efforts, from V-Discs and periodicals to jazz festivals and radio programming. And in each of these efforts, the music promoted was largely limited to American jazz composed and performed by black musicians.

The Final Years of WWII

American troops landed in Sicily on July 10, 1943, and Italy's political landscape underwent a drastic transformation. On July 25, the Fascist Grand Council voted to oust Mussolini, and under orders from King Victor Emmanuel III, he was arrested and eventually jailed on Gran Sasso, in the Apennine Mountains. Italy's new prime minister, General Pietro Badoglio, signed an armistice with the US and its allies on September 3. Nine days later, Mussolini was liberated from Gran Sasso by German paratroopers under orders of Hitler and appointed leader of the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* (RSI)—informally known as the Republic of Salò—a puppet state established by German forces in the Italian regions north of Rome. German occupation of the northern half of the peninsula sparked a civil war in Italy, and divisions between the nation's two regions deepened as the Axis-controlled North fought against the Allied-controlled South (Celenza 2017, 159).

As the US and British troops moved their way north from Sicily in 1943, one of their primary objectives was to take control of each region's communication systems, including newspapers, and most importantly *Ente Italiano per le Audizioni Radiofoniche* (EIAR), the national radio broadcasting system established by Mussolini in 1927. The EIAR transmitter in Palermo was the first to be seized, on August 6, 1943. Next came the transmitter in Bari (September 23) followed by the takeover of the EIAR transmitter in Naples (October 14). Every time, the radio stations were manned with personnel from the Propaganda War Bureau (PWB) and transformed into Anglo-American communication centers. The Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS), which had been established by the US War Department in May 1942, was given the mission of providing entertainment that simultaneously comforted soldiers and opposed propaganda broadcasts (*Historical Summary: American Forces Radio and Television Service*, n.d.).

The American troops who manned the captured EIAR stations in Italy brought V-discs, short for Victory Discs, with them. These long-playing, 12-inch 78 rpm gramophone discs were sponsored by the Music Branch of the Special Division of the War Department and manufactured by RCA and Columbia beginning 1943. The US government quickly realized that the American broadcasts, especially the programming featuring jazz, appealed to local populations (Celenza 2017, 161). The V-Disc effectively spread American culture and in doing so became an essential tool of soft diplomacy. In total, just over 905 disks, which carried upwards of 2,700 separate compositions, made their way into Italy, where they were used to fill the programming of the EIAR radio stations controlled by the Allies in Palermo, Bari and Naples (Piazzoni 2011, 35–36).

In the North, where the Germans had installed Mussolini as the figurehead of the RSI, Italian jazz continued to be presented as a product of youthful modernity, and the stars of Italian jazz who remained in the RSI—most notably Gorni Kramer, Cinico Angelini, Pippo Barzizza, Alberto Rabagliati, Natalino Otto, and the Trio Lescano—continued to record jazz-infused songs for the Italian record labels Cetra and Fonit and foreign affiliates like Parlophon. They also continued to sing on EIAR broadcast in the RSI. Although the Lescano sisters were Jewish, they nonetheless held their exalted position in Northern Italy. Mussolini had granted them Italian citizenship in 1941, and in 1942 they joined the Fascist party (Celenza 2017, 158).

The continued popularity of Italian jazz among many Italian listeners no doubt influenced Mussolini to use radio as a means of garnering support from the Italian population. In the summer of 1944, Mussolini established a new radio station called Radio Tevere (Galligani 2012, 170–171; Isola 1966, 110). Listeners believed the transmission was a clandestine broadcast coming from within Rome. The first broadcast took place on June 10, 1944, just one week after the capture of Rome by Allied forces (Celenza 2017, 170).

Radio Tevere should not be confused with the English-language program, “Jerry’s Front Calling,” transmitted by the German forces from Rome (1943) and then Como (1944–45). Hosted by

Rita Louise Zucca, the Italian “Axis Sally,” this broadcast was aimed at Allied soldiers. The music performed was American swing and the commentary was propaganda aimed at weakening the morale of Allied troops (“Americans Seize Axis Sally in Italy” 1945, 9)

Radio Tevere transmitted during the evening hours—from 8:00pm to 1:00am—and its goal was to attract Italian listeners in the South and regain support for Mussolini. The tone of Radio Tevere was relatively neutral, yet its alliance with Mussolini and Italian Fascism was not difficult to recognize. The primary content of Radio Tevere was Italian jazz, and the broadcasts proved popular among Italian listeners, primarily because the programming was unlike anything else on the airwaves at the time. Romano Mussolini, the dictator’s youngest son, remembered listening to the broadcasts regularly during the final months of the war (Celenza 2017, 170–72).

By the winter of 1945, jazz had become the primary weapon in a “war of the airwaves” that raged across Italy, with Allied Forces Radios broadcasting American jazz on one side and Mussolini’s Radio Tevere transmitting Italian jazz on the other. Despite the growing oppression of German forces in the RSI, Italian jazz survived as a cultural symbol of Mussolini’s Italy (Celenza 2017, 172). But this would not last long.

As Allied forces worked their way up the Italian peninsula, more and more Italians abandoned Mussolini and the RSI. By the spring of 1945, the V-disc had turned American jazz into the soundtrack for everything anti-Fascist—liberty, democracy, racial equality. On April 26, Allied forces took control of the transmitters for Radio Tevere and EIAR Milan. The next day, Communist partisans captured Mussolini, his mistress Clara Petacci and a group of Fascist officials as they attempted to cross the border into Switzerland. Mussolini and the others were executed by gunfire the next day, then transported back to Milan, where their corpses were pelted, spat upon, kicked and disfigured by an angry mob (Luzzatto 2014, 68–71). From that day forward, the concept of jazz as a symbol of the Fascist state was willingly abandoned. As the war came to an end, there was a widespread “conviction that the name and very idea of Italy had been irreparably sabotaged by Fascism” (Lanaro 1992, 18). This conviction tended to encourage, both in public speeches and policy, a rejection of Italy’s immediate past and a turning outward to embrace the cultural traditions of the US.

On April 29, 1945, General Heinrich von Vietinghoff signed the instrument of surrender on behalf of the German forces in Italy. Italian jazz musicians quickly responded. For example, in an effort to show his loyalty to the American and British troops, Gorni Kramer published a fox-trot titled “Black and Johnny.” The cover of the sheet music bears a pair of US and British flags, the date “April 30, 1945,” and the following inscription: “Ai valorosi soldati alleati gli autori dedicano” (Dedicated by the authors to the valorous Allied soldiers). Various recordings of “Black and Johnny” were released shortly after the publication of the sheet music, the most popular being those performed by Kramer and Natalino Otto in 1945 on the Fonit label and by Ernesto Bonino and the Pippo Barzizza Orchestra in 1946 on the Cetra label. Kramer was also one of the first musicians in Italy to embrace Bebop, a new style of jazz imported by the Americans via V-Disc just after the war’s conclusion (Salveti and Antolini 1999, 312). Kramer recorded his “Picciando in Be-bop” (Fonit 12957 B) in Turin on November 1, 1948.

US Interventions After the War

The US State Department willingly assisted Italians in their attempts to forget the links between Fascism and jazz, despite being advised by specialists to refrain from launching propaganda campaigns in Europe at the war’s conclusion. For example, in October 1945, Howard Laswell—a political scientist from Yale considered the leading authority on propaganda at the time—submitted a memorandum to the US State Department titled “Information Policies

Concerning Russia,” wherein he advised officials to refrain from embarking on a campaign of psychological warfare.

There is a danger that a cultural armaments race between America and Russia in the countries lying between them—in the form of scientific, artistic, and educational expenditure. Furthermore, there is a danger of aggressive psychological warfare through mass media of communication. We should undertake to obtain joint declarations of policy condemning cultural armaments races and aggressive psychological warfare.

(Laswell 1945)

Although Laswell recommended a truce in the psychological warfare that had begun to develop between the ideals of Democracy and Communism, the US chose a different path. And in Italy, this new clash of cultural armaments employed jazz, specifically, as an effective weapon. There were two basic reasons for this. First—the popularity of the V-Disc program during the final years of the war had proven that American jazz could serve as an effective symbol of American Democracy among Italian audiences. Second—the Communists in Italy had long denigrated jazz as a symbol of corrupt capitalism. For example, in 1927 Antonio Gramsci commented on the arrival of African American jazz in Italy:

If there is a danger, it lies in the Negro music and dancing that has been imported into Europe. This music has completely won over a whole section of the cultured population of Europe, to the point of real fanaticism. It is inconceivable that the incessant repetition of the Negroes’ physical gestures as they dance around their fetishes or that the constant sound of the syncopated rhythm of jazz bands should have no ideological effects.

(Jones 2006, 117)

At the end of the war, Gramsci was promoted by figures such as Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the Communist Party in Italy, as the ideal of Italian political culture. And with this renewed veneration of Gramsci came proclamations from the Italian Communist Party that jazz served not only as a symbol of Fascism under Mussolini but also as a symbol of corrupt capitalism in the hands of the Americans. So for the US, promoting jazz in Italy performed by well-known African American musicians offered the opportunity of killing two birds with one stone, in that jazz could effectively be used as a tool to suppress the rise of both neo-Fascists and Communists.

One of the first steps in the Cold War was the establishment of the United States Information Services (USIS), which replaced the Propaganda War Bureau run jointly by the US and Britain during the war. As Simona Tobia notes in her detailed study of the USIS, *Advertising America*, the government’s choice of the word “Information” in the title of this division of the State Department was just a friendly way of saying “Propaganda” (Tobia 2008, 40). Indeed, the central mission of the USIS was propaganda, and jazz was just one of its initiatives. The USIS set up libraries in Italy and funded publishing and advertising campaigns among other activities. They also facilitated the establishment of various publications, right after the war, whose central mission was to promote American Democracy. Countless articles promoting American jazz appeared in these publications. Some were written by Americans, others were penned by Italians, often with input from American sources. Allow me to offer two representative examples.

The first is a piece published in the inaugural issue of *Nuovo Mondo* titled “Jazz: Musica popolare che diventa arte.” Written by Rudi Blesh, an up-and-coming music scholar and art critic, the article offered a brief history of jazz, from the arrival of slaves from West Africa in the 1700s to the stars of the swing era: Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Benny Goodman. Blesh explained that although “jazz was born as the song of men who were not free,” it had evolved in recent times to a

genre that in its very essence symbolizes freedom. With regards to race, he defined African American jazz as “authentic” and performances by white musicians a “europeanization” of jazz (Blesh 1945). But no matter their race, all jazz musicians had a place in the American soundscape, according to Blesh, and this was demonstrated in the photo spreads accompanying the article. It should be noted that these photographs were taken by photojournalist Gjon Mili and first published in 1943 as part of an article titled “Jam Session” in *LIFE* (Mili 1943, 117–124). Blesh concluded his article by reminding readers of the symbolic importance of jazz. More than the music produced in Communist nations, jazz serves as a symbol of equality:

Jazz is essentially the music of the masses. It is still easy to recognize its humble origins. The popular sources continue to renew inspiration. But jazz isn't simply popular music, but rather music that truly *belongs* to the people. This is what gives it its creative value and its meaning.

(Blesh 1945)

Blesh was commissioned to write his brief history of jazz by a subdivision in the USIS called the Office of War Information (OWI), and as noted, his article appeared in *Nuovo Mondo*, an Italian-language news/photo magazine published by the US State Department. As the new Italian ambassador to Italy, Alexander Comstock Kirk, explained to a reporter in August 1945, the goal of publications like *Nuovo Mondo* was to “restore political circulation to a nation mummified by two decades of fascism.” That said, Kirk insisted “that a sharp line be drawn between areas of US and Italian responsibility.” This is why he was adamant that *Nuovo Mondo* be openly identified for what it was. “Since the paper is in fact US propaganda,” said Kirk, “it should be billed as such” (Busch 1945, 89). But not all publications funded by the USIS after the war were clearly labeled as propaganda. A case in point is *Musica e Jazz*, a jazz magazine launched in 1945 and still published today.

Although *Musica e Jazz* carried the logo of the PWB inside every issue during its first twenty-four months in press, most of the articles were not written by Americans. Instead, well-known figures in Italian jazz were supplied with information from American sources—generally various affiliates of the USIS. Because the US wanted to avoid engaging Italians who might be sympathetic to Communist causes, USIS initiatives generally worked with well-known “reformed” writers and musicians who had established their reputations in the 1930s and 1940s working under the protection of the Fascist party. Such was the case with *Musica e Jazz*.

Musica e Jazz was founded by Gian Carlo Testoni, who had been a prominent figure in Italian jazz since the 1930s. Testoni was the co-founder of the *Circolo del Jazz Hot* in Milan. He was also the co-author of *Introduzione alla vera Musica di Jazz* (1938), which he had dedicated to Vittorio Mussolini, who in addition to being the dictator's oldest son was a well-known jazz critic (Celenza 2017, 105). Testoni joined forces with a young publisher and jazz fan named Arrigo Polillo, and with funds from the USIS, they launched *Musica e Jazz* and successfully completed the first stage in the US State Department's development of jazz diplomacy during the Cold War (Celenza 2017, 178).

The extent of American influence on the rewriting of jazz history in Italy was revealed in the headline article penned by Testoni that appeared in the first issue. Titled “Un sogna che avvera” (A Dream Come True), it began by stating the central goals of the journal, which included building the public's interest in and understanding of jazz. Testoni then explained that the intended readership was not limited to “specialists” or “a specific social or economic class,” but intended “for everyone.” With these necessities out of the way, Testoni then offered a retelling of the history of jazz in Italy through the lens of the *Circolo del Jazz Hot* in Milan. Like so many others after the war, Testoni revised history here, claiming that for many years “a journal” that was “focused on jazz” was nothing more than “an unattainable chimera” (Testoni 1945, 1). He even went so far as to claim that the new journal represented the freedom “to use the word jazz without any

worry,” even though the word jazz continued to be used throughout the war by the Fascist press (Celenza 2017, 174–175). The influence of the US State Department was especially noticeable in the final paragraph of the article. Here Testoni defined jazz as a purely American product, a symbol of Democracy (Testoni 1945, 15). Thus it should come as no surprise that the early issues of the journal featured articles about American musicians almost exclusively. In the December issue of the inaugural year, an article appeared titled “Caratteristiche e significato del Jazz” and attributed to Rudy [*sic.*] Blesh. Like the article that appeared in *Nuovo Mondo*, this essay concludes by declaring the political symbolism of jazz:

It is music of the people, warm, human, alive and free. It says to all people who will listen to its dancing accents: “We move towards tomorrow, wake up and begin living!” Apart from any question of musical form, this, in its broadest sense is the message and the vitality of American jazz.

(Blesh 1945b, 5)

With regard to *Musica e Jazz*, reading through the first dozen or so issues of the publication reveals that one of its primary purposes was to draw as many male readers as possible—even those who had little to no interest in jazz. Each cover featured a full-page photo of a scantily clad, young American singer or starlet, like Marion Hutton or Ginger Rogers. And the articles all made a subtle distinction between jazz, which was presented as a definitively American style of music, and *musica leggera* (light music), the popular music composed and performed by Italians.

In December 1946, changes in the USIS’s approach to propaganda led to the halt of the agency’s financial support of *Musica e Jazz*. The primary reason the State Department pulled funding was likely because recent studies completed by their operatives had revealed that radio was more efficient than print publications. With radio, a bigger audience could be reached with less investment of funds (more about this below). The sudden withdrawal of funding from *Musica e Jazz* caused a one-month pause in the magazine’s publication schedule. When the first issue of the “new” version finally appeared in January 1947, the look and content of the magazine had changed drastically. Gone were the cover girls designed to attract general readers and articles touting American Democracy. In their place were photographs of great jazz performers and articles highlighting collaborations between Italian and American musicians. Even the name of the magazine had changed. *Musica e Jazz* became *Musica Jazz*, and with the elimination of that one small word—e (and)—all references to Italian “light music” disappeared, leaving only discussions of “Jazz Music” for engaged aficionados.

The cover of the first issue of *Musica Jazz* carried a photo of Louis Armstrong, whose relationship with Italy dated all the way back to the 1930s (Celenza 2017, 104–108). In an article published in 1934 and titled “Cinque dischi hot” (Five Hot Discs), Vittorio Mussolini became one of the first to welcome officially the arrival of “hot” jazz on the Italian market:

Those who enjoy this species of jazz music will be glad to know that these five new discs contain all the elements that make the “hot” disc interesting: the rhythm, the perfect tightness of tempo, the singing—these elements are never abandoned on these recordings by the most famous orchestras.

(Mussolini, V. 1934, 10)

With regards to Armstrong specifically, Vittorio Mussolini’s admiration was quite outspoken for the time:

Which brings us to the most characteristic of hot orchestras, that of Louis Armstrong’s Negroes. For them, the “hot” [style] is a natural thing, and they had the rhythm in their

ears as soon as they were born. Thus, if one wanted to define the “hot” style, one could say that it is the fox[trot] arranged by Armstrong without fear of making mistakes. Louis plays the trumpet in a perfect manner. He alone has the capacity to achieve on it the specific timbres of the clarinet or violin. He sings in a funny accent that leads instinctively to laughter and is no less effective in “Georgia on My Mind” or “Lazy River.”

(Mussolini, V. 1934, 10).

Several months after this review appeared, Armstrong visited Italy for the first time and presented two concerts, on January 15 and 16, at the Teatro Chiarella in Turin. The concerts sold out almost instantly and were warmly received by those in attendance. As a reporter for *La Stampa della Sera* noted after the first concert: “Armstrong is great, and only those with an ignorant, preconceived aversion to his art could impede its diffusion” by refusing to participate as a member of its “most diverse public.” Turin embraced Armstrong for his exhilarating music and all that it represented, and Armstrong appeared equally enamored of the Italians. In a thank you letter mailed to his Italian sponsors, Armstrong raved about the warm greeting he received in Turin, where he had his “biggest success in all Europe” (Celenza 2017, 108). USIS officials no doubt knew about Armstrong’s successful visit to Italy in 1935. And his appearance on the cover of *Musica Jazz* twelve years later fueled the State Department’s plan to bring Armstrong back to Italy for a multi-city tour in 1949.

When Armstrong arrived in Milan on October 21 for the first leg of his twelve-day tour, he was greeted by Gorni Kramer, USIS officials, and an Italian film crew. In the newsreel released shortly thereafter, an enthusiastic Italian commentator describes the excitement around Armstrong’s arrival and the wide array of black jazz stars who have accompanied him:

From the American South heavenly drums greet the King of jazz, Louis Armstrong, as he arrives with his orchestra at Malpensa airport. Accompanied by his wife, he has traveled from Amsterdam. Here in Milan he will begin his concert tour of Italy. Wilma Middleton [arrives as well] with her nostalgic voice and a body that is sometimes as round as the panetone [cake] that is offered to the arriving guests. Our [Gorni] Kramer is on the airfield. And this is the bassist Arvell Shaw. This is the piano player Earl Hines. . . . [Armstrong] takes a look at the score composed by Kramer. Armstrong already has a fever in his muscles to play his trumpet and sing.

(“Arrivo in Italia di Louis Armstrong con la sua orchestra” 1949)

One member of Armstrong’s entourage, who is not mentioned by the newsreel commentator, is Slim Aarons, a famous fashion photographer who had spent the Second World War working as a combat photojournalist in Italy. The omission of Aarons from the newsreel is not surprising. By 1949, he was associated with the CIA, which had been founded in 1947. Aarons was sent to Italy on special assignment by Henry Luce, of TIME-LIFE, who served as an early facilitator of CIA operations. Luce was no doubt also the one who supplied the USIS with the Gjon Mili “Jam Session” photos used in 1945 for the inaugural issue of *Nuovo Mondo*. In an effort to offer Aarons cover, Luce set up a TIME-LIFE Bureau in Rome, which Aarons ostensibly directed. Aarons’s fame as a fashion photographer enabled him to get close to figures important to CIA operations. In addition to photographing every moment of Armstrong’s tour, Aarons traveled to Sicily in 1950 and spent several weeks tracking the movements of the deported Italian American gangster, Lucky Luciano.

Armstrong’s visit to Italy in 1949 spurred renewed interest in his music among Italian listeners, and the USIS took full advantage of this interest as they expanded their efforts in the realm of Italian radio.

US Involvement in Italian-Language Radio Broadcasts

Although broadcasting was briefly decentralized in Italy after Germany's surrender, regular broadcasts reemerged within a few months as the stations in the North were incorporated into the new national broadcast system, Radio Audizioni Italiane (RAI), which facilitated the return of many former personnel (Forgacs and Gundle 2007, 177). Consequently, many of the musicians who worked for EIAR and Cetra during Mussolini's years returned to positions of prominence in the late 1940s.

By 1947, the USIS fully realized the useful role radio could play in fighting Communism in Italy, and as a study by International Public Opinion Research, Inc. revealed, the effectiveness of Voice of America broadcasts in Italy was largely due their broadcasts of American music, i.e., jazz:

A large part of the population—and presumably to some extent of the radio listening audience—is Communist, but neither Communists nor non-Communists would want to hear broadcasts which were weighted on the side of America in cold war. They cannot afford to. Instead their inclinations, almost wishful thinking, center on wanting to hear music.

Many Italians listen solely for pleasure to Voice of America. They naturally expect to hear about the United States, but they also expect free entertainment. No world problems are ever so pressing to an Italian that he would not like to have them presented as enjoyable as possible.

(NARA 1950, 76–77)

Given assessments like the above, it should come as no surprise that in the early 1950s, Italy became the most important target country in Western Europe for VOA broadcasts. This is shown not only in the shortwave broadcasts of VOA, but even more so in the radio programs prepared by VOA but broadcast surreptitiously on RAI. As a USIS directive in 1952 explained: "In all production for RAI, we prefer no VOA attribution if it can be avoided" (NARA 1952). With regards to jazz, the programs written by USIS officials but broadcast on RAI as "Italian" programming between 1950 and 1953 included: *Vita musicale in America*, *La vetrina del jazz*, and *Punti e spunti americani di Renzo Renzi*.

The Left Pushes Back

As the postwar years progressed, the inundation of American music facilitated by the USIS and CIA troubled many in Italy, most notably those cultural and political leaders aligned with the Communist Party. Consequently, an effort was made in the 1950s to reclaim the concept of a specifically Italian style of *musica leggera* that was disconnected from jazz. In 1951, the *Festival della canzone italiana di Sanremo* (San Remo Festival of the Italian Song) was founded. The mastermind of the contest was a musical director at RAI named Giulio Razzi (Forgacs and Gundle 2007, 186). Publishers submitted a total of 250 songs, which were whittled down to twenty, which were then performed live by Italian musicians at the San Remo Casino so that listeners in the audience and at home could vote and select three winning songs. From the beginning, the festival drew substantial public involvement, and its popularity grew with each passing year. Most importantly, the San Remo Festival launched the careers of a new generation of Italian singers, and became the new propagandist for Italian popular song, creating melodies and lyrics that sold thousands of records and were repeatedly played on national radio (Forgacs and Gundle 2007, 186).

In reaction to this new promotion of Italian popular music, Arrigo Polillo, one of the original editors of *Musica e Jazz*, and jazz critic Pino Maffei decided to produce a jazz festival in San

Remo alongside the successful singing competition. The *Festival del Jazz di Sanremo* (San Remo Jazz Festival) was designed in imitation of the Newport Jazz Festival, founded by George Wein in 1954 and broadcast in Italy over VOA beginning in 1955 (Wein 2018). The inaugural concerts took place on January 28 and 29, 1956. In a review of the festival published in *Musica Jazz*, Polillo commented on the festival's success at attracting "the so-called general public" to performances of native Italians playing American jazz.

The press has talked about why, perhaps for the first time in Italy, jazz created and performed by Italians was brought in contact with the so-called general public. . . . Alongside the *aficionados*, who arrived at San Remo in caravans or in groups, were seated the casual viewers, tourists passing through, and the patrons of the Casino's gambling tables.
(*Testoni 1956*, 7)

To officials of the US Information Agency (USIA)—which had recently replaced the USIS—who witnessed the organization of the festival, the lineup of Italian bands, all of which claimed to specialize in the pre-Fascist era style of Dixieland jazz, must have seemed promising. Even Henry Luce's photographers were there to capture picturesque scenes of the Italian spectators who formed a second line behind the Original Lambro Jazz Band as they marched through the streets of Milan on their way to the venue. Among the groups scheduled to play at the first San Remo Jazz Festival were: the Milan College Jazz Society, the Riverside Syncopaters Jazz Band, the Lucio Reale Quartet, the Basso-Valdambrini Quintet, a Sestetto Italiano and the Nunzio Rotondo Quintet. The pianist for this last group was listed as Romano Full. But much to the dismay of US officials, and the delight of the Italian spectators, Romano Full was none other than Romano Mussolini, the youngest son of Italy's infamous Fascist leader. As a German reporter for *Der Spiegel* noted on February 8, the surprise appearance caused quite a stir:

Romano Mussolini, 28, Jazz-Pianist, youngest son of the former Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, appeared as a member of a quintet under the pseudonym "Romano Full" at an international "Jazz-Festival" in the Italian Riviera spa resort San Remo. According to the Turin *Gazzetta del Popolo*, a deadly silence filled the concert hall when Romano Mussolini "with the broad and face burning eyes of his father sat down at the piano." The public greeted the young Mussolini with stormy applause and later stood in line for autographs.

(*Personalien 1956*, 44)

The commentary written by Henry Luce's American reporter, which ran in newspapers and magazines across the US within days of the concert, offered a markedly different description of the event and a distortion of Romano's experiences during the war:

"In the groove" at the San Remo international jazz festival, 28 year old Romano Mussolini, younger son of the late Italian dictator, plays hot piano jazz as part of a piano, string, drum and trombone quartet. The unassuming son of "Il Duce," first turned to music in 1945 when the whole Mussolini family was in a concentration camp. Though not being able to read music, he shows a great natural talent, and experts have called him one of Italy's top jazz pianists.

(*AP wire photo caption [df51530rom] 1956*)

The US reacted quickly to Romano Mussolini's appearance at San Remo. Just this one performance threatened to wipe out more than a decade of jazz diplomacy in Italy. To the surprise of

many in the jazz world, the recording label RCA immediately offered Mussolini a multi-album contract featuring his performances of American Dixieland jazz. RCA had deep connections with the CIA during these years, and one cannot help but wonder if there was some government influence behind RCA's sudden decision to offer Mussolini a lucrative record contract. Over the next decade, the young Mussolini was promoted in USA press reports as the rebellious son who defied his dictator father and chose the freedom of American jazz over Italian Fascism. Toward the end of his life, Romano Mussolini rejected such portrayals of his relationship with his father (Mussolini, R. 2004).

Romano Mussolini's appearance at San Remo eventually led to greater USA influence on the programming of the Festival. Over the next eight years, the San Remo Festival grew more American in character. In 1957 Sidney Bechet and Dick Collins appeared on the program. In 1959 the Sonny Rollins Trio and Chet Baker were the featured performers. By 1960, Americans began to dominate—Roy Eldridge, Ella Fitzgerald, Shelly Manne Quintet, Bud Powell Trio, Kenny Clarke, and the Max Roach Quintet. Half the performers were American in 1962, and in 1963 all the performers were American except for one Austrian. There were no Italians. As *Billboard* magazine reported:

Out of 21 participants in the San Remo Jazz Festival, including the Jazz Messengers, the Cannonball Adderley combo and Ella Fitzgerald, 20 were American Negroes, the exception being Adderley's Austrian pianist, Joe Zawinul.

(*Billboard* 1963, 73)

George Wein was largely responsible for the booking of these American musicians, and because he was so efficient in his work, the State Department asked him to assist in other jazz initiatives. In 1958, he assembled an International Youth Band to perform at the Newport Jazz Festival. To do this, he traveled to Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia. Wein covered the cost of finding the musicians and bringing them to the USA with \$30,000 of surplus funds raised by the Newport Jazz Corporation, the non-profit entity that underwrote the Newport Festival. The State Department assisted with obtaining visas for the foreign musicians, and they organized and paid for additional performances by the International Youth Band at the World's Fair in Brussels later that year (Wein 2018). It should come as no surprise that the musician representing Italy—drummer Gil Cuppini—had played on Radio Tevere during the war and was a member of Romano Mussolini's trio. Over the next decade, the State Department continued to support tours, most notably those by "avant-garde African American jazz musicians," organized by Wein under the auspices of the Newport Jazz Festival (Von Eschen 2004, 187–190). And in the 1970s, the State Department put Wein in charge of the Jazz Ambassadors program, which had been founded in 1956 by President Eisenhower and members of Congress, proving once and for all that jazz was indeed America's "Secret Sonic Weapon."

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JAZZING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

South Africa and Beyond¹*Christopher Ballantine*

Does jazz matter? I want to approach this by way of a philosophical detour, and by asking a different but much more important question. Ostensibly unrelated yet in truth fundamental to the argument I shall develop, this question is: can we live together? Hardly any issue today is more urgent and problematic. The question refers, of course, to social cohesion, usually taken to mean the properties that hold societies together as united, harmonious, and functional. In South Africa (my primary focus here, though of course the topic is pressing everywhere), the realization of such a society continues to be out of reach, perhaps more strikingly than at any time since the inaugural democratic elections of 1994. The problem is more extensive than the waves of xenophobic violence that, here as elsewhere, tend to dominate the headlines. A recent survey of social attitudes and political views by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation showed that in 2003 the desire among South Africans for a united society stood at nearly 73 percent, but that by 2013 it had dropped to 55 percent (Wale 2014, 40). That is a decrease of nearly 18 percentage points in a single decade. Even more worryingly, given the country's past, "race" as a primary identity among South Africans actually increased in popularity (*ibid.*, 16).

Yet it is starkly evident that no social cohesion project will ever succeed if it does not also deal with dire injustices embodied in the material conditions of existence. To the extent that talk of social cohesion ignores these conditions, in the South African case it is likely at best to be regarded as premature, or even (in the words of one commentator) "a slap in the face of the millions of South Africans whose lives are a daily battle just to survive" (Seabe 2012).

At worst, it could even put the project itself at risk. Indeed, for a critic such as Bhekizizwe Peterson, the ideal of social cohesion—spawned by 1994's historic compromise—is no more than a political imaginary and a strategy of containment. Its purpose, he argues, is to mask the link between unjust social relations and the political economy, which it does by inventing a chimera: namely, "the deification of forgiveness as the *sine qua non* of nationhood and progress" (Peterson 2012, 5). These are serious criticisms. And yet it is entirely unclear how social justice could be achieved, or even what it would mean, if the search for it took place in isolation from a focus on what has been called our "human foldedness" (Nuttall 2010).

Identity, alterity, and the aesthetic

So the question remains. Can we live together? Many people have pondered this, but none more than the great French sociologist Alain Touraine. What is really involved here becomes clearer when he parses the question into two others: “how can I communicate and live with other people?” And “how can we reconcile our differences with the unity of a collective life?” In other words, how do we create a basis for living together with people who are different from ourselves? Touraine also points the way forward. Yes, we can live together, he says, but on one condition: that we accept that the process of imagining and building new forms of collective and personal life will require that we be willing to lose our identity (2000, 3, 6, 15).

Now, losing—or at least loosening—our identity is a daunting and deeply puzzling prospect. How should we make sense of it? We could start by thinking of it as a readiness to lose, or loosen, those aspects of our social and personal selves that barricade us in, that rupture our common humanity. We could also turn to the philosopher Judith Butler, who uses different words to wrestle with the same idea. In an unforgettable formulation, she argues that we have to allow ourselves to be undone by each other. Nothing short of that will reveal that our fates are inextricably entwined; nothing less will produce a “we.” Finding my ties to “you,” she says, means discovering that

my own language must break up and yield if I am to know you. You are what I gain through this disorientation and loss. This is how the human comes into being, again and again, as that which we have yet to know.

But there is an absolute precondition here: the ability really to listen. When we truly listen, we open ourselves to a narration that decenters us, that undermines our supremacy. To listen properly is to hear further than ourselves, “beyond what we are able to hear” (Butler 2004, 18–23).

These thoughts strike me as profoundly important. They also offer an extraordinarily rich philosophical basis for thinking about jazz and its role in society. Music’s essential founding conditions, after all—and here jazz is a paradigm example—are those of sounding and hearing: listening to that which has been sounded. Moreover, the key idea here is that the experience of hearing has the potential to decenter the listener. I am going to argue that this also applies to music, with similar social implications. In principle, the universal context for music is one of reciprocity: a mutual giving and receiving, where the activity of sounding meets the reciprocal activity of hearing, in an exchange that has the capacity to leave both sides undone yet newly produced as a “we.” Remarkably, no words are needed for this to happen. The story is told of a woman friend of Beethoven’s who lost her child; the composer invited her to come round, and when she arrived Beethoven was already sitting at the piano. All he said was, “Let us speak to each other by music.” And for more than an hour he played to her. Her verdict was: “He said much to me, and at last gave me consolation” (DeNora 2013, 2).

If music has abilities of this sort, it has them for a variety of reasons, none of them magical. I have already mentioned one reason: in a genuine process of encountering the Other, an exchange of sounding and listening can cause language to “break up and yield,” undoing or decentering its participants, moving them away from their initial conditions, reorienting them, producing a “we.” But let me briefly mention three other reasons for these abilities of music.

First, music (and jazz is a remarkably vivid instance) is a form of play. It is not by coincidence that we speak of “playing” music—and we know that play is a kind of imaginary world-making, where we can discover or invent new pathways to transfigure our initial templates (ibid., 42–43). Music can play with its given frames: step out of one, try on another, reshape a third, even merge frames; this, as I will show later, is one of the ways music can combat stereotypes, transcend

national and ethnic particularisms, and create images of coexistence or cosmopolitanism. Second, music is lived through the body, not just the mind. Research has shown that this, in part, is why music has the ability to authorize behaviors and attitudes (*ibid.*, 88)—as it does, say, in dancing, working, marching, singing, or quite simply feeling. Third, because musicking takes place in, or constructs, shared times and spaces—those of the real world, as well as of the imagination—it has the ability to “synchronize time” across its various participants (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 116). For those taking part in music, this social synchrony is a “mutual tuning-in relationship”; as such, music making and music-participating are themselves already varieties of “we”-making (Schütz 1951, cited at *ibid.*).

Now, for several centuries there has been a substantial, ongoing discussion of the role that the emotions must play if any process of social change is to lead to a more just, humane, and cohesive society. Particularly compelling in this discussion and in the evidence adduced in support of it is the crucial function assigned to the aesthetic. The argument is that if we are interested in genuine, deep-rooted change, then the aesthetic dimension will have to play a fundamental role. The aesthetic can’t just be a pleasant add-on, or a “nice-to-have.” The case, in other words, is that our social goals will be imperfectly realized if the aesthetic is absent, or if it is just an optional extra to the processes taking place in the streets, behind the barricades, or in the corridors of power.

A number of thinkers have advanced this thesis, but the one who in recent times has done so most compellingly is the philosopher Martha Nussbaum.² It is especially striking that her aesthetic argument turns on the idea of love—as a value and a disposition of huge importance in the political domain. With great originality, she harnesses this aesthetic argument to a strategy for social change. Nussbaum’s basic proposition is that “all of the core emotions that sustain a decent society have their roots in, or are forms of, love”: that is, “intense attachments to things outside the control of our will.” Principles alone are not enough. By themselves, they will not do the job of securing a just society, for the straightforward reason that they are “too near the surface of the mind.” The mind must also be engaged at a deeper level—a level below the reach of conscious control, in a domain where emotions reside, where love is anchored: love being the emotion, she says, that “gives respect for humanity its life, making it more than a shell” (2013, 15). Crucially, in the realm of artistic practice, and hence of jazz, this deeper-level engagement of the mind necessarily takes place on the aesthetic plane.

We can now draw several inferences. First, in principle, aesthetic engagement is a highly potent modality of pleasure: of *jouissance*; second, the aesthetic is a privileged gateway to emotions and attachments below the reach of conscious control; third, the aesthetic domain is strongly linked to our capacity to love; and fourth, aesthetic engagement is potentially a form of “we”-making. From these insights, it is only a small step to understanding the hugely important role that music and the other arts can play in society. The conviction that jazz can help facilitate social change rests, then, on an argument about music’s aesthetic reach. Of course, words are free to join with music to achieve this end: they can precede or follow music, or combine with it. But let us be clear. It does not follow that music depends on words. Nor should my comments be taken to imply that music is inherently a force for good. Its capabilities can of course also be harnessed for deeply divisive ends. Let us remember Bourdieu (1984): because of the ways that aesthetic preferences become linked to social class, aesthetic practices—including music—can reinforce social differences, entrench a sense of superiority or inferiority, buttress privilege, and legitimize inequality. But it can get much, much worse than that. And it does.

Around the time of the Second World War, for example, fascists everywhere deployed music as one of the essential armaments in their arsenal. They used it to mobilize support for the party, whip up toxic emotions, create a powerful sense of us-not-them, subordinate the individual to the collective, and choreograph the goose-stepping parades (Macklin 2013, 430–431). In Rwanda in 2005, a Hutu popular musician by the name of Simon Bikindi was indicted by the International

Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda because he had written songs that dehumanized the Tutsi people, stirred up hatred against them, and helped launch the genocide of 1994 (see Baker 2013; Gowan n.d.). In a rather more comical example, until a little more than a decade ago music was used as a weapon in the tense standoff between North and South Korea. Each side placed enormous loudspeakers along the 200-kilometer border, so that each could degrade the other by blasting them with exactly the sort of music they would find horrendous. The North tried to terrorize the South with revolutionary and ideological songs; the South got back at the North by tantalizing them with sensual decadence: they blasted them with American pop (Howard 2010, 70–71). It was a war of aesthetic propaganda designed to fuel hate and keep people apart.

What interests me here, however, is music's ability to make a difference for the good, and how this has played out in a great variety of social circumstances, cultural contexts, and historical eras. In postwar situations such as Rwanda, Bosnia, and parts of the Middle East and Africa, music has enabled its audiences and participants to reach out symbolically. Through music, opponents have sometimes found one another, discovered points of contact, forged a reality to accommodate difference, repaired relationships, and worked towards reconciliation (see for instance Castelo-Branco 2010, 243–252; Slachmuisjlder 2005). Kenya offers a particularly compelling example. There, the music of popular singer-songwriter Eric Wainaina played an important role. By merging antagonistic Kenyan and Indian popular musical styles and singing in a variety of local languages, Wainaina's songs enacted the cultural and ethnic integration he and others desired.

The Second World War offers a very different example—from another world and another era. In June 1941, the United States entered into a wartime alliance with the Soviet Union. But how was this sudden and unprecedented cooperation with Stalin going to be justified? How to secure a buy-in from the American public? How to change popular American perceptions of the dreaded Bolsheviks, at least until the end of the war? The answer, or at least part of the answer, came from music, which was tasked with playing a key role. Russian classical music was suddenly given special public prominence; but the piece that, more than any other, reshaped attitudes in the US was, remarkably, Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony. Composed during the siege of Leningrad, nicknamed after that city, and repeatedly performed, broadcast, and discussed in the US in 1942 and 1943, it was this evocative 80-minute work, in particular, that won over large number of Americans to the alliance with Stalin and gave them a sense of the Soviet Union that was quite different from the stereotypical attitudes of suspicion and fear (MacCurtain 2013).

Let me now redirect this narrative to South Africa. How is it relevant here?

The “What”: The Case of Jazz in South Africa

What I find especially striking is that, for a country with as long and as traumatic a history of separateness, alienation, and repression—or perhaps because of this—South Africa has a rich history of what I call transgressive music: the sort that disputes fixed boundaries, transcends alterities, negotiates difference, seeks cohesion, forges unity. I want to illustrate this through brief discussions of a variety of local idioms and genres.

Arguably, jazz has led the way. But fundamental to the growth of local jazz, and present from the start, is *marabi*—a city music that took root in South Africa's urban slums (principally those of Johannesburg), during the second and third decades of the twentieth century. Now it is important to understand that *marabi* was, at its core, transgressive, and integrative: it was a pan-ethnic dance idiom that drew its melodic inspiration eclectically from a wide variety of “traditional,” African-Christian, and Western-popular sources. *Marabi* was forged by unschooled slumyard musicians. Perhaps their most singular achievement was that this new idiom provided a unifying cultural form for the variety of people in the slumyards: people of very different cultural backgrounds who had migrated to the country's industrial heartland to find work. By the late

1920s, *marabi* had begun to extend the scope of its integrations: it explored ways of fusing with the mainstream jazz that was being imported from the US. This gave birth in South Africa to what I call *marabi-jazz*, a unique jazz genre whose magnificent early flourishing can still be heard in the big-band “swing” recordings that have survived from the 1930s and 1940s (Ballantine 2012). Much of the country’s greatest jazz has been built on this transgressive platform and has followed the example of its bold integrations.

Not surprisingly, the end of apartheid and the arrival of a democratic order created new imperatives and asked new questions, at least some of them aesthetic. For the progressive jazz and other music of the time, the fundamental question was this: in the new democracy, how might music shape identities so as to help construct new sorts of human foldedness?

An extremely impressive answer to that question came from the work of a jazz band put together in the years following the formal ending of apartheid; their CD, *Mahube*, named after the band, was released in 1998. A twelve-piece outfit made up of top musicians from across southern Africa, *Mahube* (a Sotho word meaning “new dawn”) explicitly set out to create music that would be the very image of a democratic, egalitarian, non-racial future, in which all could meaningfully live together. Apartheid had split South Africa from the rest of the continent; healing that split was always going to be difficult—as sporadic outbreaks of terrible xenophobic violence have since confirmed.

The music of *Mahube* was historical as much as geographical: associated with memory, as much as with place and culture. Its complex sonic weave was transgressive and cosmopolitanist; it sought to destabilize identities that had become too fixed and bounded. By offering new forms of identification, the music involved listeners in new forms of transgression and integration. The musical entanglements were many, subtle, and overlapping. They included various traditional idioms; the harmonic progressions of *marabi*; the close-voiced wind arrangements of South African township jazz of the 1940s and 1950s; the bright instrumental sounds, vocal harmonizations, and bouncy rhythms of later township genres (such as *mbaqanga*); and the *maskanda* guitar style of migrant workers. The band no longer exists, but its solitary CD vividly demonstrates that such idioms collided, happily and unexpectedly, not only with each other, but also with ones from further north: the music also incorporated, say, Shona mbira patterns from Zimbabwe, or even the vocal melodies and harmonies of Congolese popular music of the 1950s. The music was an ecstatic invocation of a new, southern African “we.” Consider, for example, the track named “U Shonaphi Na?” In this piece alone, one hears traces of seven distinct and entirely different styles and idioms, seamlessly fused together, and blended into a song of great beauty and complexity. In addition to *maskanda*, *marabi*, and township jazz—mentioned above—we also hear *isicathamiya* (a migrant-worker choral idiom made globally famous by Ladysmith Black Mambazo), protest song, the *hoshu* rattle from Zimbabwe, and an entirely alien 7/8 meter. So the piece subverts the old South African “normal” and seductively evokes the cosmopolitanism of some hybrid future time.

A listener encountering *Mahube* in the early years of democracy and reflecting on the long tradition of *marabi-jazz* would surely have believed that jazz in the new dispensation would need little encouragement to follow such compelling examples, and even to become the musical signature of the post-apartheid order. In the main, however, this is not what happened. Instead of taking the lead, jazz in the early years of South Africa’s new democracy often fell victim to more venal temptations. The fledgling order brought freedoms, changes in the configuration of social values and, at least for some, a sudden explosion of opportunities to make money. For jazz, the implications of this state of affairs quickly became apparent, in at least three closely related ways: jazz frequently became corporatized, commercialized, and conformist. The struggle against apartheid was over; so, too, the new order seemed to proclaim, was struggle in general. Jazz had had a long and honorable association with the quest for social justice, but now the job was “done.” The music’s pedigree was impeccable; its deeply entrenched symbolic association with the defeat of

apartheid yielded significant cultural capital, which now conferred a high degree of social, political, and economic respectability. For those so inclined, jazz musicians could take up residence in the Promised Land and enjoy themselves. But if these were blessings, they were very mixed indeed (Ballantine 2012, 194–198).

It need not have been this way, of course. In addition to the obvious invitation to continue to build on the long, diverse, extraordinarily rich, and musically integrating history of township jazz, there were also the recent and continuing practices of towering jazz figures. One of these was Abdullah Ibrahim, South Africa's best-known jazz musician for some fifty years. He had been—and continues to be—a vessel in which diverse, even contradictory musical cultures and idioms run together. In addition to *marabi*, these have included traces of Xhosa and other endogenous styles, missionary hymnody, Western classical sources, the *ghoema* rhythms of the Cape Malays, the melodic inflections of his adopted Islam, a jazz pianism informed by Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk, and much else. The significance of these profound, original syntheses remains clear. They foster new ways of identifying, collaborating, joining; they connote new forms of identity, personhood, and community. As such, they are musical metaphors of cohesion: of living together.

The “How”: The Example of Chris McGregor

Musically, my examples have indicated a variety of musical outcomes: they have pointed to the sorts of aesthetic consequences we might expect to find at the end of process of being “undone”—that is, after we have permitted our identities to be loosened through radical creative encounters with musical others. If, then, these examples are endings, or places of tentative arrival, what might beginnings look like? Can we think of examples of the kinds of paths that might get us there? This inquiry replaces, or at least supplements, the “what” with the “how.” I focus now on the example with which I am most familiar, and that in the South African jazz context seems to me to offer the clearest, most striking answer. I refer to the life lived and the music made and played by the late Chris McGregor.

A figure at least as impressive as Ibrahim, McGregor was one of South Africa's greatest and most influential jazz pianists, composers, and bandleaders. The end of a human life is always meaningful, but the death of Chris McGregor on May 26, 1990 at the age of 53 is tragically ironic in ways that may not be immediately apparent. His life was just long enough—by a little more than three months—for him to see the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, but it ended too soon—by just four years—for him to rejoice in the inauguration of the (formal) South African democracy for which he had always longed and, through his artistic practice, had always striven. His life and career were profoundly shaped by the multicultural human and musical values he learned at the feet of extraordinary mentors in his boyhood and youth, and by the choices he made to place himself off limits, beyond the boundaries that apartheid society deemed to be normal, conventional, and safe. When political circumstances forced him into exile, he became better-known and appreciated abroad than at home, and his death occurred at exactly the moment that it would have been possible for him to return, either as a resident or as a regular visitor. In part because he had lived in political exile in Europe since 1964, he was, and still is, little known in South Africa—certainly much less so than Ibrahim. And yet, for reasons deeply relevant to the argument of this chapter, the example of his work and life seems to me of seminal importance to the future of South African jazz and its potential social role.

In a nutshell, what shaped the life and career of Chris McGregor were his profoundly formative adventures of being undone by music other than his own, and the ways that his uncommonly intense musical and social encounters with others deemed different from himself helped loosen his identity. That is, he was shaped by the multicultural human and musical values he learned at

the feet of extraordinary mentors in his boyhood and youth, and by the choices he made to place himself off limits, beyond the boundaries that apartheid society deemed to be acceptable, legitimate, and safe.

Important to our purposes, then, is to think about McGregor's work as a *socially relevant aesthetic exemplar*. In doing so, I draw upon an extended interview I was privileged to have with him in London in 1986. Chris McGregor grew up in the eastern Cape district of South Africa (where his father was a teacher at a mission school); the earliest, and certainly the most formative, musical experiences of life occurred there, and were those of the African music that surrounded him. These musical experiences would have included traditional Xhosa songs of work and ceremony: as a small boy he would go and listen, dance, clap, and sing.

As a white kid with open ears, you just had to listen on the wind to hear it. I would observe and listen—for example to the kind of things that two Xhosa women would sing, with interwoven parts. For sure, those were my first counterpoints. I was very much into it, actually. I was one who would dance and clap and sing whenever possible [laughs]! Not that this was without its difficulties, especially regarding identity: I had genuine problems identifying myself. It caused me quite a lot of anguish later on.

Later, at boarding school, he would use weekend leave to rush down to the “blacker” end of town in order to listen to the music coming out of the black record shops—*mbaqanga* (the urban-black township jazz of the time), but also Ellington, the Mills Brothers, the Inkspots, the King Cole Trio. Free Saturday mornings were especially valuable: “I used also to walk around with my guitar and sit down with a black accordion player on the street—playing the street music of the Africans living in the towns.” That was possible because “this music was all over the streets, and it was fun, and I’d kind of stumbled on it.” And he loved it. But hearing Ellington, on record and on the radio, fell into the category he labeled “wake-up experiences.” Thinking about why Ellington’s music “really got to me,” he surmised that this was “perhaps because it offered a certain solution to the problem of ‘black’ traditions in a ‘white’ world. Indeed, ‘Mood Indigo’ struck me as a complete mastery of all worlds.” He also befriended a black pianist who introduced him to Fats Waller. Soon he had his own small jazz band at school. Unsurprisingly, “fellow pupils, teachers and whatnot considered me a fairly weird case, you know.”

Simultaneously, and often in tension with this even during his high school years, were his serious piano studies in Western classical music: working hard on Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin, laying the foundation, as many believed, for a future as a performer. The tension was not just a matter of public expectations. “I can remember quite clearly feeling a certain malaise with [the classical repertoire], and feeling that it excluded too much of my real day-to-day experience of Africa.” The malaise afflicted him still more strongly during what promised to be a brilliant musical career as a music student at the University of Cape Town. The course was Western, classical, and conventional—and it was steadily superseded by McGregor’s deepening personal involvement with the black jazz scene in and around the city. He met some of the outstanding figures of South African jazz when the musical *King Kong* came to town in April 1959: Kippie Moeketsi, Jonas Gwangwa, Sol Klaaste, and others. Around the same time, he had two other powerful, confirming experiences. One of these was the discovery, together with his black jazz associates in Cape Town, of Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk (“our jam sessions became more intensely bebop,” and he regularly attended the already avant-garde Abdullah Ibrahim’s “famous hangout, the Ambassador School of Dancing” in Woodstock, Cape Town); the other was an immersion in township jazz, mainly through sitting in (as the only white) with a fifteen-piece black band for Saturday night dances at a hall in the impoverished township known as Langa. By his third year he “was treating the whole university with a fair amount of abstraction,” and by his fourth year “things were becoming

completely impossible.” Increasingly, he was now involved in “a tight routine of very intense jazz activity.” Quite plainly, though, for a white boy in the deepening gloom of apartheid South Africa, this was jazz activity of the “wrong” sort.

Very different musical ingredients had by this time played a role in McGregor’s development. Some people saw these ingredients as incommensurable, but his later work proved how wrong they were. Remarkably, these syntheses were already happening at this early stage, when he was just starting out as a young professional.

We were fairly consciously beboppers, playing Charlie Parker, but also *mbaqanga* stuff at dance sessions in Langa. This meant finding a pattern, finding agreement with the guitar especially, and with the bass, but doing quite a lot of “punching in”—which relates to the sort of comping that you do in bebop. In fact I learnt a lot about bebop comping by doing this, learning to create something that falls at a certain place in the bar, or in a four-bar sequence, and then repeating it. This was very good training, because it showed that meanings could change according to context. It might just be an accent in a line; but if other players hear it as implying a circular rhythm, then there is a certain compulsion to repeat that accent. For example, if the accent has the effect of transforming the third bar in a *mbaqanga* sequence into a first bar, that accent could excite somebody, say the lead trumpeter, to make a phrase that actually begins there.

These were also my first experiences of building things from riffs. You’d get the *mbaqanga* chords going, the lead trumpeter or sax player would improvise a melody, and then, in the next eight-bar sequence, out it would come, voiced and all. That was magic to me! Out of this would emerge the most amazing complexity of texture, instrumental color, melodic interactions, the rhythmic interactions of three or four riffs going together, and a soloist in front, improvising. I didn’t see a contradiction between these two (bebop and “township”), so much as a complementary relationship of linear and circular procedures.

How, one might ask, was this musically possible? How could a logical contradiction between linear and circular procedures—between bebop and “township,” between the metropolitan North and its apartheid Other—be rethought as complementary? McGregor’s explanation is revelatory. Without using these terms, he pointed to the bidirectional listening, the loosening of identity, and the mutual undoing that provided the ground for this new synthesis, making the impossible possible.

It seemed to me that the same skills were being demanded. With *mbaqanga* music, because you’ve simplified the thing and made it circular, you are always confronted with the result: a circuit works itself out, and then you invent very much on formal implications. In contrast, in quite a lot of American jazz you say something and then leave it and do something else. It’s like telling a story, but the story doesn’t always have to hang together all that well; there are conventions, but you can even just stop what you’re doing and zoom off in a different key. It’s done with depth, but quite often it’s just done with flash.

As a musician, you quickly understand there are other things going on in *mbaqanga*. Bebop makes a bridge between itself and its classical background; you’re dealing with fairly sophisticated harmonic languages. *Mbaqanga* offers a nice counterbalance: a rhythmically oriented music in which you look for other aspects, such as rhythmic and melodic depth. I don’t like to say “polyrhythmic” as people always get the wrong idea. I mean, there’s a lot going on there. There’s even a certain impulse to create, a compulsion to create just to keep it interesting.

The very best players compress enormous inventiveness into that four-bar *mbaqanga* thing. It can also be an eight-bar sequence in which the melody sits only over the third beat of the first bar to the first beat of the second bar. That same bit of melody might happen in a 16-bar sequence, you see. You'd get people working all the options with fascinating results. There were people, like those in the band led by "Cups and Saucers,"³ working with a really great sensitivity to this kind of structuring, and very cleverly, too. Sensitive, clever and absolutely spot-on, you know, like never goofing at all. I can remember at times being on tenterhooks—like wondering, which way will things go? And if I put that in there, can I find it again? Ja, wow, I can! Damn, yes, and what a great feeling it is! That aspect of the melodic thing goes on today, you know. I mean I hear it today, people still working the implications of all that.

So in addition you learn a certain responsibility, but also a certain responsiveness. You realize that one thing isn't just one thing, and that—yes—you can play with different allusions. And you learn about the rhythmical impulse in bebop, where some things just go by—so if you are too intent on linearity, or on building up something, then, in the example I've just given, you would be unable to relate a new outcome to its origin. You would be unable to recognize the outcome as a musical situation where you are confronted with both linearity and circularity: where a certain cross-rhythm has been set up with one meaning, but has also come to mean something else, such that where it began is happening at the same time as what it came to. I think an awareness of this certainly does help explain the distinctive flavor in South African jazz . . . yes, I think so.

At stake here, manifestly, was the making of an original repertoire, founded in turn upon the forging of an original style. How, I asked McGregor, would he describe that style?

Wow, how would I describe it? It was our version of hard bop, if you like. It was an African hard bop—there you go!—coming in part from our *mbaqanga* and big-band experience, but influenced by and tending towards the outputs of Americans we felt close to: John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Eric Dolphy. So you could say that our direction was towards the freer end of hard bop.

Crucial, of course, to its character as "the freer end" was that Chris McGregor and the Blue Notes "felt close" not just to the likes of Coltrane, Coleman, and Dolphy, but also the likes of Abdullah Ibrahim (still known then as Dollar Brand), Hugh Masekela, and Kippie Moeketsi (then members of the Jazz Epistles),⁴ with their roots, like those of the Blue Notes themselves, in *marabi* and *mbaqanga*. Yet the musician who at this stage appears to have had the greatest impact on the continuing "undoing" and remaking of Chris McGregor was the extraordinary Tete Mbambisa, whom he met in Langa in 1960 or 1961. Better known today as a pianist, Mbambisa was then the leader of the Four Yanks:

They were a wonderful vocal group, who impressed me no end. . . . They were really an eye opener to me. They were very sophisticated, in the sense that they were using harmonies and voice leadings that you would think were completely impossible. They were very masterful, really . . . with a harmonic language as high as a skyscraper. Really insane stuff, insane stuff! I've never heard anything quite like it since, you know. In fact I don't think there's been anything quite like it. . . . They had a whole repertoire—vocal *mbaqanga*, American stuff, popular standards—but all very interestingly worked out with regard to voice placing, vocal texture, very sophisticated voice leading, and harmonization. They had voicings that led to clusters involving semitones and whatnot, and, oh

God, you'd hear the top voice and the middle voice like a minor ninth apart, and they'd be leading things chromatically all round the place! Extremely sophisticated. Very difficult stuff to hold up, really.

In everything the FourYanks did, the same mentality was at work, and it was very, very intense and very, very together and very, very polished, with a lot of "dimension." So impressive! My goodness me, it bowled me over immediately! Like wow, such a lovely sound! And the voicings! And the working out of it! . . . But boy, what elaboration! I mean, really incredibly elaborate stuff.

And I learnt a lot when I was sitting at the keyboard for the FourYanks. I was working out all kinds of things—different ways of coloring, and whatnot—and besides, the Four Yanks worked entirely by ear, with nothing written out: it was all ear and memory. That's big work—very big work!

At this point in our conversation, it started to become clear to me that the "loosening" of McGregor's identity had led to his becoming open to more than just new ways of thinking about, and making, jazz. It had also enabled a radically altered approach to some of the sociality embodied within jazz, and to an appreciation of how that sociality might—perhaps should—be valued. What led me to this insight was his response to my astonishment that the majority of the musicians producing these complex and original musical outputs were largely or wholly untutored. Sharpening this into question, I asked if it ever seemed to him that a lack of formal training had left these musicians with deficits? He answered as follows:

Actually, there's another way of looking at that—and it's another fascinating aspect of the whole thing. It relates directly to a whole tradition of African-village life, which is that people contribute what they can. . . . Now, in this kind of big-band *mbaqanga* tradition that we're talking about, people are getting an education at the same time, you know. You can't really think in terms of limited technical expertise. A guy might know three notes on the sax, and see a way of inserting them in this thing; he might see a way of involving two others, perhaps because he's a little ahead of them and can find a way of including them. It's an aspect of African music that people really should study, I think. So if your beginner in the sax section is musically attuned, that's the way he'll start getting in there. And it's a very valuable thing. It's as good as most colleges. It's even better, because you learn a whole thing, you learn a whole communal experience, and a whole attitude besides just the notes you play. I would hate to see that get lost. . . . What's interesting is that you can get a guy who started there, and who comes out making the conservatory student look ridiculous. You don't have to hunt for examples of that, they abound [laughs]!

Conclusion

On the South African jazz scene, Chris McGregor is a model of how the musical and existential dynamics suggested in the philosophical section of this chapter might be approached and achieved. His social, psychological, and musical upbringing invited him to experiment creatively with various sorts of social and aesthetic boundary breaking. Enticed, perhaps provoked, to listen with openness to the music that his historical circumstances had labeled "other," he courageously allowed himself to be "undone" by what he heard and the contexts in which he heard it. This path led him into powerful and aesthetically meaningful encounters with a wide variety of musical idioms and styles. In addition to passing through Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, and Western hymn singing, it took him to indigenous African part-singing, *marabi*, township jazz, Ellington, Parker,

Kippie Moeketsi, Tete Mbambisa, Coltrane, Coleman, apparently incommensurable linear and circular musical procedures, and so on. The process challenged him to reconcile different, even ostensibly contradictory ways of understanding music, the world, and one's place in it. Among the many significant consequences of this journey was a deepened—indeed transcultural—approach to the sociality of jazz, and a socially integrative appreciation of how the music might be learned.

It is of course much easier to pursue social cohesion on the plain of aesthetic practice than in the hard, material reality of everyday life. But if we take seriously my arguments about the need for emotional and aesthetic engagement in any successful social change, then the sorts of jazz-making, musical communities, and sustaining practices I have referred to are heuristic. They are musical experiences of rapprochement, coexistence, boundary transgression, synchronized modalities, and merged frames: in short, of imaginary world-making. In varying degrees, they are sites where musical language breaks up and yields, where identity is undone, where a new “we” is tentatively produced. As such they are also pointers to some of the ways these issues might be thought in the quotidian South African context (though manifestly not that context alone); and they challenge composers, performers, teachers, programmers, and others across the range of jazz genres and practices. We are, after all, trying to build—perhaps to discover—a humane future for our society, and our world. And one of the essential characteristics of this future, if it is to be worth having at all, is that cohesion will have been achieved and sociality realized in a way that enables all of us to live together, and everyone to belong and to flourish.

Notes

1. In its earliest and decidedly different iteration, a version of this chapter was given as the keynote address to the Ninth Annual Congress of the South African Society for Research in Music (SASRIM), held in Cape Town from July 16–18, 2015. Published here is a version now substantially revised and extended; it also adapts and quotes freely from Ballantine (2013, 2016).
2. See for instance Nussbaum (2001, 2013).
3. “Cups and Saucers” is the nickname by which jazz saxophonist Ephraim Nkanuka was commonly known.
4. Founded as a recording group by visiting US pianist John Mehegan in 1959, the name Jazz Epistles was adopted when Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) replaced Mehegan. Other members of this critically acclaimed group were Hugh Masekela, Kippie Moeketsi, and Jonas Gwanga.

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ERIC HOBBSBAWM

Roger Fagge

Two days after Duke Ellington's death on May 24, 1974, the *Observer* newspaper published an obituary written by the historian Eric Hobsbawm. It was symptomatic of Hobsbawm's significance as a jazz writer that he was asked to write about such an important musical figure, and the article paid tribute to "the last and greatest of jazz musicians" who "spanned the entire history of the music for which he invented a mode of collective composition." Ellington was at his best, Hobsbawm suggested, when working with his band, and without this he would be remembered as at most as a "composer of enchanting songs," "an ironical and reticent jazz pianist," and "perhaps as a dandy and viveur." But "with and through it he became as fine a composer as any who has come out of the United States" including inventing "jazz composition and arrangement almost singlehanded." Hobsbawm continued, "it is doubtful whether jazz as we have known it will survive his death." In many ways this was a perceptive, scholarly account of Ellington, but the review then introduced a more personal note. After pointing out that critics and musicians would continue to work out his significance in the future, he suggested that the only thing "gone forever" was the opportunity to see Ellington live, and here Hobsbawm became more emotional. Jazz fans, as he suggested, have "moments of unforgettable, vivid, dreamlike but lucid ecstasy, remembered in every detail." And for Hobsbawm, "none was quite like the great Ellington nights," recalling two occasions: "an all night breakfast dance in the improbable setting of the Streatham Astoria in 1933" and "an extraordinary evening in a San Francisco nightclub in 1960" (Hobsbawm 1974).

This obituary captured perfectly Hobsbawm's relationship with jazz. On one hand he was an academic with a growing reputation as a historian; on the other, he was a jazz critic and fan. This emotional connection with jazz, including his involvement in the jazz scene, when balanced with his considered academic style, is what makes his jazz writing interesting and important. The 1933 Streatham Astoria breakfast dance was an important factor in encouraging Hobsbawm's interest in jazz and was recalled on various occasions in his writings (Hobsbawm 2000). He had recently returned to Britain with his family and, under the influence of his cousin, Denis Preston, developed an interest in jazz, not least through the latter's collection of records and the journal *Melody Maker*. The Astoria gig at which the 16-year-old Hobsbawm and his cousin nursed a single glass of beer each, and walked four miles home at dawn, sealed his love of jazz. "I was hooked for good," he later wrote (Hobsbawm 1993, 128).

Hobsbawm began to take a professional interest in the music. Working for the Army Education Corp during the war, he arranged teaching sessions for young recruits on recent jazz releases. The records were provided by another serviceman, and friend, Charles Fox, who later became

a significant jazz critic and broadcaster (Hobsbawm 2003, 154, 169–70; Hobsbawm 1961, vii; Fagge 2017). After the war, when his academic career took him from Cambridge back to London, Hobsbawm became more involved in the jazz scene. As an academic, intellectual, and communist, he sometimes stood out, but he became a regular in Soho and elsewhere, and became part of what he later called the “avant-garde cultural Boheme in Britain.” He also became a tour guide for visiting academics and other visitors, and as the jazz and academic community interacted, he became part of a global jazz community (Hobsbawm 2010, 2003, 224–225). And this had an influence on the way he approached and wrote history:

Jazz was the key that opened the door to most of what I know about the realities of the US, and to a lesser extent of what was once Czechoslovakia, Italy, Japan, postwar Austria, and not least, hitherto unknown parts of Britain.

(*ibid.*, 80–81)

It was almost inevitable that the historian Hobsbawm would write about jazz, and he began with a regular column for the *New Statesman* in the late 1950s. This soon led to a book contract from the trendy publisher McGibbon and Kee, for a fuller length consideration of the music and its social and cultural context. *The Jazz Scene* was published in 1959, significantly the same year as *Primitive Rebels*, which were Hobsbawm’s first monographs. This again underlines the significance of jazz in Hobsbawm’s academic writings, although *The Jazz Scene* was published somewhat mischievously under the pseudonym Francis Newton—the name of a communist trumpeter who had played with Billie Holiday. Hobsbawm gave several explanations for this, including keeping his academic and jazz life separate, but it was not much of a secret, as he talked openly about jazz during talks and lectures in this period (Gott 2002).

The Jazz Scene was not a big seller, but it made a significant contribution to jazz criticism. It was also, as Bounds has suggested, a “transitional text” that offered a more nuanced approach to popular culture than had been the case from much Marxist writing, and in the process anticipated the cultural studies movement of later years (Bounds 2012). *The Jazz Scene* drew on many of Hobsbawm’s contacts in the jazz world and offered the opportunity to develop many of his ideas about jazz. It was also a wide-ranging study, offering sections on the history of the music and its contemporary significance, including its relationship with other arts, the jazz business, politics, audiences, and even appendices on the average British jazz fan, as well as the language of jazz. The overwhelming message of the book was that jazz was now an important global cultural force. He argued jazz was not just a type of music, but a cultural form that had made “an extraordinary conquest” and was a “remarkable aspect of the society we live in.” This was illustrated by the presence of jazz in most of the major cities of the world and, moreover, the fact that “British working-class boys in Newcastle play it is at least as interesting as, and rather more surprising than, the fact that it progressed through the frontier saloons of the Mississippi valley” (Hobsbawm 1961, 1–6).

Hobsbawm argued that this was remarkable not least because jazz had developed and changed so quickly, but that it had grown from its folk roots and become a global force amid commercialized culture as both a popular and art music. In the process it had never been overwhelmed by the “cultural standards of the upper class” (Hobsbawm 1961, 4–10, 33). In this reading, popular culture was not an undifferentiated mass, and jazz, unlike most other folk forms, could remain authentic, creative, and periodically renew popular music. Jazz could also be participatory through watching, playing, or talking about it, and its appeal rested on offering the originality and excitement that was lacking in other areas of popular culture (*ibid.*, 10–12).

Jazz’s position as a commercial music without subsidy meant that artists had to make a living, and Hobsbawm offered some interesting thoughts on the jazz business. Once again this suggested a more flexible picture than might have been expected from a Marxist historian. He argued that in

the 1950s jazz was “one of the last frontiers of private enterprise” and open to enthusiastic young businessmen. Indeed, fans sometimes influenced record companies through their knowledge of, and demand for, records and even became involved in the business. Hobsbawm suggested that some of these jazz impresarios were notably left-wing and opposed to racial discrimination, citing Norman Granz and John Hammond as examples. Hobsbawm was not blind to the exploitative side of jazz and pointed out that the unions also played a big role in getting musicians a good deal (Hobsbawm 1961, 169–190).

The Jazz Scene had many other attributes, including a detailed history that illustrated Hobsbawm’s knowledge of jazz and brought in the role of race, class, and urbanism. The book also dealt with the role of politics, both what Hobsbawm saw as the left’s influence on jazz, particularly during the New Deal era, and the way in which jazz was political. He argued that this was often “vague” and sometimes accidental. Politics came from jazz’s working-class and essentially democratic nature. It broke down class lines, and also to some extent race lines, and it often appealed to a subcultural sense of being outside the mainstream, but did not always translate into an idea of what jazz was actually “for” (ibid., 252–269).

By the end of the 1950s, the arguments between modern and traditionalist strands in jazz had calmed to some extent, and *The Jazz Scene* avoided stepping into the argument. That having been said, although Hobsbawm realized the social and political basis of bebop and the fact that modern jazz had become “less wild” as time went by, he wrote about it without great enthusiasm. In particular he was concerned by the different audiences modern jazz attracted, and their correspondingly different relationship with the performer. “The modern revolution—‘bebop’—was a musician’s revolt, not a movement of the public,” he wrote, adding, “indeed it was a revolt directed against the public as well as against the submergence of the player in standardized floods of commercial noise” (ibid., 76–77). If the essence of jazz could be found in the live performances of Ellington and others, then modern jazz was more “self-conscious” and less about “fun,” and attracted among its audience specialists, including white intellectuals and bohemians who engaged with jazz in a different way (ibid., 63–79). There was a certain inevitability that Hobsbawm would find it more difficult to understand the music of the next generation, and this underlines his interest in jazz as a fan, as a solely academic approach might have allowed him to overcome this. Looking back, Hobsbawm later reflected on the issue, noting that critics and players who had “developed an enthusiasm for the music in the 1930s and 1940s” had a “notable gap in both taste and context” with the “small corps” of musicians “who played and formed the only real public for modern jazz before Miles Davis began to make his impact.” Hobsbawm suggested that writing in the 1950s meant trying to understand bebop, but that he was not sure “how far I succeeded, except for an admiration for Thelonious Monk and an immediate passion for the supremely talented and intelligent Dizzy Gillespie, the most dazzling trumpeter in the world.” Charlie Parker also drew praise, but it was Miles Davis whom Hobsbawm believed was the key figure of the 1950s (Hobsbawm 2010). As suggested above, Davis was influential in Britain, and indeed Hobsbawm pointed out that, along with Oscar Peterson and Ellington, the trumpeter was a best seller in Birmingham (Hobsbawm 1961, 2). *The Jazz Scene* contained no less than twelve references to the trumpeter. The album *Milestones* was listed as a recommended record in the list at the end of chapter two. It was summarized as “characteristic and superb performances by the leading artist of the 1950s and excellent accompanists” (ibid., 245).

The Jazz Scene drew generally good reviews. Benny Green in the *Observer* praised the book as “one of the most lucid and informative” ever published on jazz, not least because of Hobsbawm’s willingness “to learn the mechanics of a musician’s life before passing judgment” (Green 1961). Fellow critic and poet Philip Larkin noted that “it is a pleasure to read a jazz writer who can speak seriously without becoming stilted or absurd” (Larkin 1959a, 22). Max Jones in *Melody Maker* said it was “a book to get your teeth into” while Toronto’s *Daily Star* suggested that Hobsbawm “was

a social critic in the tradition of George Orwell, and his ideas are sound and helpful” (Jones 1959; *Toronto Daily Star* 1959). There were also criticisms, however, with Larkin in another review of the book suggesting that Hobsbawm “had little charm as a writer,” although his commendable love of the music “convinces the reader of his sincerity, even if some of his contentions start rather than settle arguments” (Larkin 1959b, 22–4). The *Daily Worker* pointed out that “I get the feeling Mr. Newton is less at home when writing about modern trends,” which the historian would have agreed with, although maybe less with the suggestion of the *Times Literary Supplement* that the book got “out of its depth” when considering politics (*Daily Worker* 1959; *Times Literary Supplement* 1959). The significance of the *The Jazz Scene* was clearly appreciated by many at the time of publication, but its influence has increased over the years. It has been reprinted several times and has remained an important jazz text, as noted in recent jazz writing (Fagge 2016, 2017; McKay 2005).

The Jazz Scene raised Hobsbawm’s profile within the jazz community and also underlined his intellectual adventurousness in academia, in the process helping to open up the study of jazz as a subject of serious academic research. Hobsbawm continued writing for the *New Statesman* until the mid-1960s, and for other journals, including the *New York Review of Books*, *London Review of Books*, and the *Guardian*, as well as introductions to jazz volumes. He collected some of his best writing in a seven-chapter section in *Uncommon People: Resistance, Rebellion and Jazz* (1998). These writings stayed largely true to the arguments of *The Jazz Scene*, although his later work was generally more overtly historical and concerned with the growing hegemony of pop and rock.

Hobsbawm was clear about how jazz critics and audiences helped shape an understanding of jazz, particularly in Britain and Europe. This awareness of a jazz writing and the creation of a “canon” has become characteristic of the later “new” jazz studies (Deveaux 1991; Tucker 2012). For example, in “Jazz Comes to Europe,” included in *Uncommon People* and one of his most significant articles, Hobsbawm argued that “esoteric jazz scholars” helped shape the reception of jazz in Europe, with fans becoming “familiar with elements in the black tradition which a purely commercial evolution” would not have achieved. In contrast, the audience for jazz and wider black music was “volatile” in the United States. This meant that, with regard to the blues, firstly the Rolling Stones were influenced by blues enthusiasts and performers including Alexis Korner, and by the mid-1950s “typical teenagers in Birmingham were more likely to be familiar with Chicago blues-bar performers like Muddy Waters than typical teenagers in Indiana” (Hobsbawm 1998, 268–269).

There were differences between Britain and continental Europe within this, with jazz-related music having a wider reach in Britain, due in large part to the fact that it had “already formed part of a linguistically and musically unified zone of popular culture with the USA.” Hobsbawm argued that the “uniquely large” British working class gave jazz a popular base through dancing. He pointed out that the dance halls that emerged pre-1914 in the “proletarian seaside resorts like Blackpool, Margate, Moorgate, and Douglas, Isle of Man” were followed in 1918 by larger dance venues, starting with the Hammersmith Palais. The *Original Dixieland Jazz Band* played the latter venue in 1919, and although Hobsbawm admits not everything played in these postwar dance halls was jazz, and there was a move to “strict tempo” dancing, “nevertheless, jazz made its mark as a name, and idea, a novel and demotic sound” (*ibid.*, 268–269).

Moreover, many European jazz enthusiasts first experienced jazz in Britain, or artists from the latter. For example, bandleader Jack Hylton was important in this regard (and was “probably better known in Europe than” many American performers). Hobsbawm estimated that the dance band musicians numbered as many as 30,000 in Britain by 1931, and that they, along with the *Melody Maker* trade journal from 1926, and “Rhythm Clubs” (Hobsbawm estimated ninety-eight of these were established between 1933 and 1935 alone) made up the core of the new “jazz evangelists.” Although there were upper-class jazz fans in Britain (including King Edward VII), the essentially popular nature of the music marked a contrast with the Europeans, where alongside

the spread of jazz-influenced popular music, there was more of an intellectual engagement with the modernist elements of jazz. As Hobsbawm put it, “the strong popular component in the British jazz public distinguished it from the continental publics, which were overwhelmingly composed of members of the established middle classes or the college-going classes.” Hobsbawm argued that this explained why modern jazz was more readily accepted on the continent and was slower emerging in Britain, but that the educated classes in Britain became more interested in jazz after 1945 (ibid., 269–273).

Hobsbawm’s observations on the importance of the European jazz critics and fans was repeated elsewhere, and he later suggested that this illustrated how jazz was “taken more seriously in Europe earlier than in the US” (Hobsbawm 1989). As he also noted, this sometimes incurred the displeasure of jazz writers from across the Atlantic, which duly happened when James Lincoln Collier accused him of patronizing “ignorance” and Martin Williams made further allegations of Marxist bias. Hobsbawm quoted Collier back at himself about early European receptiveness of jazz but underlined how he had not tried to downplay the importance of jazz in the United States (Fagge 2016).

Hobsbawm’s somewhat ambivalent approach to modern jazz was apparent in his later writing, but he was relatively careful in his use of sub-genre and neat teleologies of jazz development—again something that was questioned in the later “new” jazz studies. In particular, he came to see the late 1950s as a significant period in the development of jazz when modern jazz was “exhausting itself” but smaller groups were “flourishing.” He made this point in a 1969 introduction to *The Jazz Scene*, continuing that this period was “a golden age of this kind of music” similar in some ways to swing in the 1930s. Hobsbawm recalled that seeing jazz in New York or San Francisco “in, say 1960, was an exhilarating experience” (Hobsbawm 1969). He repeated this argument again twenty years later, reiterating the notion of a “golden age” in the 1950s, and that “we knew it.” He continued, “the years between 1955 and 1961 were one of the rare periods when the old and the new coexisted in jazz and both prospered” (Hobsbawm 1989, 244). In fact there is a slight tension here with some of Hobsbawm’s contemporaneous comments on this period, as in the *New Statesman* in January 1960 when he wrote that the 1950s were actually a “disappointing” period for jazz, in part because it “remained parasitic on the achievements of earlier years.” We catch some ambivalence toward Miles Davis here, as he was singled out as the most important artist, but “an altogether lesser man” than Armstrong or even Parker. This was due to a loss of passion and attempt to intellectualize jazz (Hobsbawm 1960).

It is clear that hindsight changed Hobsbawm’s perspective somewhat, as from the later vantage point the jazz of the 1950s became more influential, and “in fact most of the developments of the 1960s and 70s were already being anticipated in 1960” (Hobsbawm 1989, 249–254). More damningly, he argued that “jazz has been a wasting art in the 1960s” (Hobsbawm 1969). That having been said, Hobsbawm had some time for the free jazz of the 1950s and 1960s as a political force, as well as some of its musical achievements, as in the case of Ornette Coleman, who maintained a “deep, tearing feeling of the blues” (Hobsbawm 1963a). His concern, however, was the march of jazz away from the popular and the way it had become marginalized and swamped by developments in popular music. As he put it, “shortly after *The Jazz Scene* appeared, the golden age of the 1950s came to a sudden end,” finished in by the explosion of rock music (Hobsbawm 1998, 300, 1969). Hobsbawm had long been critical of popular music and saw it in a very different light to jazz. Moreover, he believed pop music had always been parasitical on more authentic jazz forms, starting with Tin Pan Alley commercializing ragtime. As he put it in *The Jazz Scene*, “Thus the perennial pattern of an original jazz style almost immediately absorbed and vulgarized by pop music, was established from the start” (Hobsbawm 1961, 34–36, 46–47).

Hobsbawm argued that the penetration of pop music from the 1950s was on a different scale altogether, and this was made somewhat ironic by the fact that the popular, democratic, and

youth-based music of the jazz revival in Britain, and the popularity of the blues, in many ways prepared the ground for the “triumph of rock” (Hobsbawm 1998, 270–273, 1993, 142–151). Popular music of the 1950s didn’t absorb but overwhelmed jazz. “Sometime in the 1950s American popular music committed patricide,” he wrote, and “rock killed jazz” (Hobsbawm 1998, 329; Basie 1987, 246–248). In the *New Statesman* in January 1964, Hobsbawm reviewed pop and blues releases, noting that the “beat vogue” was now dominant and that “it marks a major breakthrough of mass culture.” As for jazz, it “remains where it has long been, scouring the bottom of the Parker barrel, or semi-quarantined in the avantest of avant-gardes” (Hobsbawm 1964a).

Timing was important for Hobsbawm, as the success of the Beatles in particular came so soon after jazz’s 1950s “golden age was at its peak.” And he argued that unlike jazz, rock was not a “minority music” and did not offer the same balance of art and commercial characteristics. It was based upon the increasing importance of affluent teenagers and the associated, commodified youth culture that was crossing social and geographical boundaries. Rock music drew on jazz and the blues and offered some of what these offered, but with a much more commercialized ethos. Rock music also lacked an artistic cutting edge and preferred vague messages, even when dealing with politics. Hobsbawm saw Woodstock as an example of this with very little political significance (Hobsbawm 1998, 285). Rock and pop were “light music,” even if some of it was good. Jazz, in contrast, was “heavy music”—“small, but made of uranium.” Rock musicians could never have the impact of jazz stars like Billie Holiday or Bessie Smith, and he singled out a band that he particularly disliked—The Rolling Stones (Hobsbawm 1969). Matters were made worse by the fact that rock music was strongest in the US and UK, areas where jazz had been most popular, even though newer regions were now listening to jazz now. However, rock would create a global hegemony (Hobsbawm 2003, 250–261, 1989, 330–407).

Hobsbawm’s role as a critic required contemporary comment and denied him the luxury of a longer view of events that informed his historical writing. This explained his somewhat dismissive review of the Beatles in the *New Statesman* in 1963. Jazz critic Hobsbawm suggested that unlike the blues music of artists like Sonny Boy Williamson, which had a long history, the Beatles would be a short-lived phenomenon, and that “in 29 years nothing of them will survive” (Hobsbawm 1963b). Hobsbawm later acknowledged his “spectacular failure to recognize the potential of the Beatles” (Hobsbawm 2010). Indeed, he later became more appreciative of the band, particularly as their music became more adventurous. By 1969 he was arguing that although there was hype in the way they were presented, he considered the production and musicality such that they were “musically serious and popular.” He added, though, that “we must not exaggerate” (Hobsbawm 1969). Hobsbawm also had some time for Bob Dylan, including claiming that he proposed to his second wife Marlene at a concert by the latter (Hobsbawm 2010). In 1964 he published a mixed review of Dylan, criticizing his singing and comparing him adversely with blues singers. However, he also suggested that Dylan’s songs had potential and might well work if they were performed by other, “better” musicians (Hobsbawm 1964b).

If Hobsbawm saw some value in certain forms of popular music, he had little time for others, most notably hip-hop. In 1993 Hobsbawm discussed how jazz was in danger of becoming a “form of pastiche or archaeology for the cultured public,” with hip-hop being popular among black youths who no longer dream of singing the blues but “of being in great rap groups.” This was something Hobsbawm had little time for, as it was “a form of art which, in my opinion, is musically uninteresting and literary doggerel. In fact, it is the opposite of the great and profound art of the blues” (Hobsbawm 1993, 219–24, 1998, 390).

Eric Hobsbawm’s dismissal of hip-hop, while in some ways explained by generational differences, ignored both the cultural vibrancy and variety of hip-hop, including its sometimes close relationship with jazz. After all, Miles Davis’s last album, *Doo Bop* (1992), which was released posthumously, was a collaboration with Easy Mo Bee. Similarly, Max Roach, Branford Marsalis, and

others were also working with hip-hop artists at this time (Cole 2005, 307–340). Hip-hop may have been unpopular with much of the jazz community, but it was popular with a larger public, and it was democratic and responded to the problems and experiences of black America. In many ways, this reflected Hobsbawm's view of jazz as a working-class music that was unsubsidized and artistic but commercially successful. It is also, like jazz, resilient and has not been taken over by upper class values, as well as periodically refreshing mainstream pop music (Rose 1994; Neal 1999; Dyson 2010).

Hobsbawm did not see this side of hip-hop, nor did he see the complexity and occasional artistic value of the pop and rock that emerged from the 1950s, other than in one or two artists, and even here in a qualified way. In this respect, Francis Newton, the jazz fan who fell in love with the jazz at the Streatham Astoria in 1933, was more influential than Eric Hobsbawm, the historian. However, most music critics and academics are fans as well as writers, and this creates blind spots for certain types of music. There is much of value in Hobsbawm's jazz writings, and they are an important contribution to jazz studies. This includes his considered, historical view of the development of jazz, which provides an example of how historians can approach the subject. *The Jazz Scene* is the most obvious, but not the only, example of this, with its broad analysis of the music, avoiding a narrative of big stars or a strict teleological account of jazz development. Hobsbawm placed jazz in its social, economic, and cultural context and helped establish its historical significance. His jazz writings will be read for many years to come.

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JAZZ AT THE CROSSROADS OF ART AND POPULAR MUSIC DISCOURSES IN THE 1960S

David Brackett

It may now be taken for granted in some circles that jazz is a marginal form of music. Even when not stated explicitly, such a formulation implies that if jazz is, in fact, marginal, it is marginal with respect to popular music. Yet as Scott DeVeaux (1991), David Ake (2002), and others (Ake, et al. 2012; Brackett 2016, 149–191) have indicated, it was not always thus, and jazz was understood as a form of popular music up until around 1950.

The idea of jazz as a marginal category of music will be explored in this chapter through a detailed study of a rather narrow historical moment, 1965–1967. I will argue that this period was crucial in the development of new ideas about the marginality of jazz. Through an analysis of jazz criticism and mass media discourse, this chapter will examine jazz in relation to popular music with a focus on the populist form of African American music, Rhythm and Blues (R&B). The increasing split between jazz and R&B, which dated back to the emergence of R&B in the 1940s, played a role in the decline of the audience for jazz, as did the legitimization of certain forms of rock music. The mid-1960s were crucial not only for the relation between jazz, R&B, and rock, but also for how struggles in the larger musical field inflected the field of jazz itself: during this period, some types of jazz (for example, “soul” jazz) could still be considered a form of R&B, even as the mainstream and avant-garde wings of jazz steadfastly rejected such associations or, at best, remained ambivalent. At the same time, the associations of free jazz with Black Nationalism, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the place of soul jazz at the boundary between jazz and R&B, increased the sense of an internal divide within jazz. By studying jazz as a complexly differentiated field, it becomes possible to go beyond merely asserting that jazz is marginal in an abstract sense and to gain a sense of how it might be marginal as part of a larger musical field.

The Backstory

The sense of jazz as a type of music outside of popular music was nothing new in the mid-1960s. Dating back to the 1930s, early jazz critics and connoisseurs on both sides of the Atlantic distinguished between “authentic” hot jazz and commercialized swing music (see Frith 1988; Genari 2006). Musicians, critics, and audiences carried this opposition forward into the 1940s with debates about “moldy figs,” “modernists,” “hot jazz,” and “swing” that were folded into early discussions about the merits of bebop (Gendron 2002). These debates played a role in redefining jazz from a form of popular music to a form of art music during the 1940s and 1950s, leading to

a greater emphasis in critical discourse about jazz on the value of symbolic capital (see Gendron 2002, 121–157; Gennari 2006, 165–205; DeVeaux 1991; Walser 1999, 193–222; Brennan 2017).

Matt Brennan, in his detailed discussion of *Downbeat*'s treatment of jazz and popular music, discusses the crucial period in the early to mid-1950s when the magazine tentatively included discussions of Rhythm and Blues (and country music) only to abruptly abandon R&B in 1956 (Brennan 2017, 60). The interest in country, R&B, and mainstream pop was spurred by the economic downturn in the fortunes of jazz musicians and swing bands at the end of the 1940s, and sprang from *Downbeat*'s desire to expand their readership. The magazine's engagement with R&B at this time resembled discussions of popular music in music industry publications like *Billboard* and *Variety* in its focus on economic viability rather than aesthetics. This approach differed significantly with *Downbeat*'s approach to jazz at the time. As the introduction to the inaugural R&B record reviews section proclaimed, "records in the popular and rhythm-and-blues sections are reviewed and rated in terms of broad general appeal. Records in the jazz section are reviewed and rated in terms of their popular musical merit" (Record Reviews 1952, 10). Further discussions of R&B over the next few years by writers such as Ralph Gleason, bandleader Les Elgert, and Leonard Feather stressed the low musical quality (and what they saw as the banality of the lyrics) of R&B, but some averred that R&B might be useful as a way of eventually funneling listeners toward jazz. The staunchest defender of R&B in the pages of *Downbeat*, Ruth Cage, tried to use the musical similarity of R&B to jazz, the professional musical backgrounds of the players, their former affiliations with jazz, and their formal study, musical literacy, and status as composers of their own work as a way of legitimating R&B—the same techniques that had been used by defenders of jazz in previous decades (see Brennan 2017, 70–79). Cage interviewed Quincy Jones in 1955, who concisely offered his support of her advocacy:

it used to be that r&b and jazz were pretty closely related . . . and we seem to be moving right back to that state. . . . As far as rhythm and blues is concerned, the words are really just for the sake of commercial convenience. The basic element of r&b is, in a sense, the basic emotional element in jazz.

(Cage 1955, 42)

Jones then proceeds to mention Ray Charles as an example of a "top r&b musician . . . as well as a very fine jazzman," and to cite Count Basie's "Everyday I Get the Blues" as an example of how jazz can be popular when married to the blues. Even Jones (and, by implication, Cage) can't escape a whiff of condescension, however, when he declares that Charles, "like a lot of other great musicians . . . turned to the blues to make a living." Despite this, it is beginning "to look as if he . . . might some day soon begin to make use of ALL [his] talents" (ibid.).

Despite Cage's spirited defense of R&B, she remained *sui generis* at the time on *Downbeat*'s staff. Not only white jazz critics heaped approbation upon R&B; African American jazz musicians scorned the genre as well: Nat Hentoff published a survey of musicians including Billy Taylor and Milt Hinton whose approval of R&B was tepid at best. Taylor described R&B as a genre that "grew out of the race records" and "took the worse parts of that music—monotonous rhythm, bad harmonies, double-meaning lyrics—and capitalized on them." Hinton spoke more optimistically about the potential for jazz players on R&B sessions to improve the quality of the sessions, but at the same time described R&B as a "lower form of music" (Hentoff 1956, 12, cited in Brennan 2017, 83).

By the end of the decade, *Downbeat* had dropped its coverage of R&B, and statements made by critics like Barry Ulanov resembled nothing so much as those by famed 1950s mass culture critics like Dwight MacDonald (Ulanov 1957, 40).¹ Although coverage of popular music in general and R&B in particular declined in the jazz press during the late 1950s and early 1960s,

a populist wing of jazz—"funky" or "soul" jazz—did garner some attention. An article by John Tynan, "FUNKGROOVESOUL," appeared in *Downbeat* in November 1960 that discussed a shift in terminology from "funky jazz" to "soul jazz." Tynan tries to describe the difference between the two forms: "funk" is a "broad use of blue tonality," whereas "'soul' simply means heart and conviction, an unconscious feeling for jazz roots that emerges in a musician's playing and makes it authentic" (Tynan 1960, 18). Voicing what must have already been common associations between the idea of "soul" in music and African American gospel music that would become common by the end of the decade, Tynan disparages this connection "because gospel is musically limited," taking its "inspiration . . . from a socially, and culturally limited area." Gospel music contrasts with the blues, which is also "a limited form . . . but it is a form uniquely suited to secular artistic expression. It is the foundation of jazz" (*ibid.*, 18–19). His disparagement springs from an aversion to connecting jazz to racial politics, a thread that was to become more prominent as the 1960s wore on:

"Holiness" influence . . . can be traced more to racialistic feelings . . . than to the further development of jazz as art. It is as if [Negroes] hurl the challenge at their white colleagues: "Copy this, if you can." The Gospel feeling is indisputably theirs, and they know it.

(*ibid.*, 19)

Such feelings of white inferiority vis-à-vis black jazz musicians were nothing new, as the advocacy for a white jazz that would be free of African American influence can be found as far back as the late 1930s (Brackett 2016, 169–170). Tynan does praise the ability of gospel-influenced jazz to connect more to the audience than bebop, recalling the earlier discussions of Ruth Cage and Quincy Jones in their approval of Ray Charles: "Funk? Soul? Dirty blues? yes, Ray Charles embodies these terms. He is in fact, their personification. Jazz or Rhythm and Blues? Does it really matter?" (Tynan 1960, 19).

An *Ebony* article from December 1961, "The Soul of Soul," clarifies the usage at this time. "Soul music," according to the author, Lerone Bennett, Jr., is an "extraordinary movement in contemporary jazz" and an "outgrowth of a bitter musical war with muted racial undertones." "Soul music" or "soul jazz" is contrasted with "the rather anemic West Coast school" and described as "stress[ing] a hard-swinging, gospel flavored blues feeling" (Bennett 1961, 112–116). Bennett observes that "qualities deemed soulful" could also be described as "funky" (*ibid.*, 112). Yet the author of the article finds it necessary to qualify further this label:

Soul, to be sure, is not even a music. It is the feeling with which an artist invests his creation. And, above all, it is of the musical spirit rather than the letter. Guy Lombardo, for example, playing "See See Rider" is Guy Lombardo playing "See See Rider." One and one, in this case are two. But Jimmy Smith [soul jazz organist] playing "See See Rider" is another thing. One and one are three. The man adds something. The added increment? Soul—a certain way of feeling, a certain way of expressing oneself, a certain way of being. Similarly, Ray Charles or Mahalia Jackson singing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" is soul par excellence. Soul is the interpretation, not the song.

(*ibid.*)

Bennett clarifies that soul is not a category of music but rather a component of African American-associated genres, an affect, a performance practice. The article closes with an observation that closely anticipates a connection between black popular music and the idea of "soul" that would become common by the late 1960s: "There is in the music a new note of racial pride, a celebration of ties to Africa and a defiant embrace of . . . all that middle-class America

condemns" (ibid., 116). Bennett, then, appears to agree with Tynan that "soul" had an undeniable association with African American identity—they differ strongly in whether or not this is a positive development.

The Discursive Field of Jazz: 1965–1966

Discussions of the racialized connotations of soul and the intense reactions occasioned by these discussions figured prominently in mid-1960s jazz journalism. Tynan's comments, in fact, referenced a debate that had already commenced about the role of racial politics in the institutions that supported jazz and in jazz criticism. Indeed, debates about "reverse racism" or "Crow Jim" in the early 1960s revived assertions from the early 1950s that white musicians were suffering because black bandleaders were discriminating against them (see Porter 2002, 176–180; "Racial Prejudice in Jazz, Part I" 1962; "Racial Prejudice in Jazz, Part II" 1962; "Crow Jim" 1962). The two sub-genres that aroused the most controversy, soul jazz and avant-garde jazz, were connected to each other via attributions of their heightened sense of racial politics and their exclusion of white musicians, although this was not strictly true in practice (Brennan 2017, 94; Fellezs 2011, 38–39). At the same time, these two sub-genres could be differentiated by mapping them onto the opposition—developed in the work of Pierre Bourdieu—of economic capital (derived, in part, from commercial success) vs. symbolic capital (derived from the approval of other artists and the institutions of high art).² Of these two sub-genres, avant-garde jazz attracted far more attention for its politicization and association with Black Nationalism (see Kofsky 1970; for an overview see Gennari 2006, 251–298; Porter 2002, 191–239). Soul jazz, for its part, tended to arouse debate both because of its heightened sense of African American identity and via its association with popular music in general. Debates about the place of avant-garde jazz and soul jazz codified how jazz remained poised between artistic autonomy and commercialism at this time.

Two publications in particular, *Downbeat* and *Jazz*, bore witness to these developments, as did less-specialized publications such as the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice*. The jazz publications' reliance on young musicians, which had boosted sales in the late 1950s, had begun to falter, and new measures were instituted to attract young readers. *Downbeat* had targeted young musicians since the mid-1950s with advertisements of band instruments. Beginning in 1965, a series of instrument ads, promoting the sale of Kent electric guitars and Vox amplifiers, gestured toward a different sort of young musician ("Sooner or Later" 1965, "Vox: Sound of the Longhairs" 1965; see also Brennan 2017, 98–99). In addition to musical instrument ads directed toward younger fans of rock music, *Downbeat* featured a range of voices and opinions about both popular music and avant-garde jazz, echoing the magazine's gestures toward even-handedness from the 1950s but with a bit more vigor. The overwhelming tone, however, in all forums for the discussion of jazz (except, perhaps, for the music industry press) was condescension toward popular music and bewilderment toward the avant-garde. Particularly from mid-1966 onwards, complaints about the inclusion of popular music competed with the fear of Black Nationalism in avant-garde jazz for domination in *Downbeat's* letters-to-the-editor section, "Chords & Discords: A Forum for Readers." Other hot topics included jazz covers of pop/rock tunes (with a mostly negative response), the dwindling audience for mainstream jazz, and discussions of the role of the proximity to classical music and higher education for the legitimization of jazz. Critics' and readers' polls exposed the porous boundaries between jazz and pop/rock via the range of artists who appeared in the rankings. Discussion of blues artists became a regular feature, although these artists were invariably discussed as progenitors of jazz, regardless of whether any empirical evidence could confirm the historical veracity of such formulations.

Herbie Hancock, Stanley Turrentine, and an Example of Soul Jazz

When Don Heckman interviewed Herbie Hancock in the fall of 1965 for *Downbeat*, Hancock had already achieved status as both a serious artist and a commercially successful one. His work with the Miles Davis quintet, beginning in 1963, catapulted him to the front ranks of the mainstream jazz world. This group, often referred to as “The Second Quintet,” blended certain conventions of the 1950s, such as the playing of standards, with techniques from the avant-garde, such as dispensing with chord changes and novel approaches to rhythm. Hancock also had an active career as a sideman and solo artist, balancing commercial success on recordings like the archetypal soul jazz track, “Watermelon Man” (a #10 pop hit in 1963 in a cover version by Mongo Santamaria), with songs that would become “post-bop” classics such as “Maiden Voyage” and “Dolphin Dance” (both 1965). Heckman, in his introduction to the article, recognized this delicate balancing act in words that might have been chosen by Bourdieu:

The tenuous line between jazz-as-art and jazz-as-popular-entertainment is one that few jazz artists have successfully bridged. It is all the more unusual, therefore, that pianist Herbie Hancock, at 25, already has gathered fruits of both worlds.

(Heckman 1965, 12)

Hancock, in response, seems to acknowledge that his commercial success might make him vulnerable to criticism by stating that “[I] didn’t want to prostitute myself. . . . I also wanted to write something that was actually authentic, something that I knew something about” (ibid.). He relates his search for the authentic to his racial identity by revealing how he had to explore “his own ‘personal American Negro background,’ to find within himself what he had gone through that could be projected musically.” While not arguing with Hancock’s explanation of this process, Heckman acknowledges the practical benefits of such a search: due to his use of “the most salable commodity at the time . . . soul music,” “*Watermelon Man* has given Hancock access to an audience far wider than that reached by most jazzmen” (ibid.). The tension between symbolic capital (“jazz-as-art,” “something authentic”) and economic capital (“jazz-as-popular-entertainment,” “a salable commodity,” “a wider audience”) is almost palpable.

Yet Hancock does not appear to accept the terms of the economic/symbolic opposition; he “recognizes that ‘popular’ does not have to mean ‘tasteless’ or ‘shoddy.’” In turn, he places himself within transformations occurring elsewhere within the musical field at this time by connecting his activity to “significant changes taking place in pop music” (ibid.). It appeared that shortly before the interview, some three years *after* the recording of “Watermelon Man,” he had a further revelation about the interconnection of jazz and R&B, and, by extension, of art and entertainment. It is worth quoting the following passage at length:

“My sister Jean loves rhythm and blues, and she’s been playing a lot of these things,” he said. “At first I didn’t pay any attention to it. But once she had a record on by somebody, I think Dionne Warwick, and I was just passing through the living room when all of a sudden I said, ‘Wait a minute. What is this?’ I heard some strange chords being played and different kinds of phrases—three-bar phrases and 19-bar tunes. And pretty soon I began listening to these things. Through the technical interest that was stirred up in me, I finally got back to the emotional thing which is actually the basis for rhythm and blues. It just happens that certain tunes have 19 bars or have three-bar phrases. I think it’s becoming very artful, as a matter of fact. The Beatles, for example; some of their songs are very artful. And Dionne Warwick,

James Brown, Mary Wells, Smoky and the Miracles, the Supremes—I even know the names now.”

(*ibid.*, 12–13)

Now, in addition to the conflation of “art” and “entertainment” that had already occurred, Hancock mixes up other elements that are often cordoned off from one another and assigned either to jazz or popular music: “technical interest” (associated more with jazz than R&B) helps him “get back to the emotional thing which is actually the basis for rhythm and blues.” His choice of artists illustrates how he is referencing a generic and stylistic hybridity that is already in process. The Beatles drew upon many of the same Tin Pan Alley harmonic and formal conventions that served as the basis for mainstream jazz; the instrumentation and organization of James Brown’s band derived from swing ensembles, and his performances were jazz-like in their reliance on improvisation (a recording like his “Night Train” [1962] could even pass for a soul jazz track); and the musicians who supported Mary Wells, the Miracles, and the Supremes in the Motown studios were all active performers in the Detroit jazz scene.

The reference to Dionne Warwick, however, points to the clearest interaction between mid-1960s popular music/R&B and mainstream jazz. It is not clear which recording of Warwick’s he might be referring to—one with “strange chords,” “three-bar phrases,” and “19-bar tunes.” But it is extremely likely that the song in question would have been written by Burt Bacharach, whose songs are filled with the kind of irregular phrasing referenced by Hancock. The jazz-influenced chord progressions of Bacharach’s songs are joined with Warwick’s vocal style—a marriage of gospel influences and jazz-cabaret sophistication, not unlike her near-contemporaries Nancy Wilson and Abbey Lincoln (prior to her avant-garde recordings).

Bacharach’s songs constitute a kind of musical prosody that feature overlapping and elided phrases in addition to phrases of varying lengths (often with changing meters so that the number of beats is not a multiple of two or four as in almost all other popular songs of the time). Warwick’s second hit, for example, “Anyone Who Had a Heart” (1963), begins with two two-measure phrases of nine beats, the second of which is extended by one 4/4 measure. This is followed by two more phrases that total five measures. The extended coda is eight bars long, including two measures of 7/8 and many chains of syncopations and elisions. The “strange chords” consist of harmonies outlining the Phrygian mode on A at the beginning; this is followed by a shift to A-flat major in bar 6.

The technically interesting features that Hancock might have found in “Anyone Who Had a Heart” are not anomalous within the recordings on which Warwick and Bacharach collaborated (which also included lyricist Hal David). The approach to harmony, if not the approach to phrasing, of these songs was already indebted to jazz: not only to the Tin Pan Alley approach found in standards, but even to relatively recent developments such as the modal jazz that emerged in the late 1950s. The use of the Phrygian mode at the beginning of “Anyone Who Had a Heart” is one example of this. Another can be found in Warwick’s biggest hit from the 1960s, “Walk On By” (1964). This tune begins with a vamp on A minor, which is clarified as the dorian mode on A when Warwick enters with her vocal. The fifth measure of the vocal introduces a modal shift with the appearance of a G-minor-7th chord, which initiates a movement that eventually reveals the key of the piece to be F major.

The phrasing of this song, however, is one of the more regular pieces in the Warwick/Bacharach canon, consisting of five four-measure phrases—divided into a twelve-measure verse, and an eight-measure refrain—albeit a piece filled with the elisions between phrases and sections that we have come to expect, along with free sounding recombinations of small melodic fragments. Why spend so much space discussing this song, then, if its phrasing is among the least remarkable of Bacharach’s compositions? Perhaps it is the very regularity of the song’s phrasing (relatively speaking) that recommended it to numerous jazz musicians during the 1965–1966 period. Versions of the song by Roland Kirk, Gabor Szabo, Brother Jack McDuff, and Stanley Turrentine all appeared and,

although significant differences can be heard among them, three (Szabo, McDuff, and Turrentine) tend toward soul jazz, and all make use of the Latin groove featured in Warwick's recording.

In the controversy at *Downbeat* over the threat of popular music and the merits or dangers of economic capital, soul jazz played a major role. Although the term "soul jazz" was no longer in heavy circulation at *Downbeat* at this time (compared with its usage in the early 1960s), "Rhythm and Blues," "rock and roll," "soul," and "rock" are all used more or less interchangeably. I will use "soul jazz" here to refer to a retroactive grouping that connects the work of Horace Silver, Lee Morgan, Hancock's "Watermelon Man," and numerous organists (including, most famously, Jimmy Smith) with the work of the period under discussion of artists like Cannonball Adderley, Nat Adderley, Brother Jack McDuff, Stanley Turrentine, and Ramsey Lewis (see Rosenthal 1992, 101–116). The latter's recording of the "The 'In' Crowd" in 1965 ascended to #5 on the pop charts and #2 on the R&B charts late in 1965, sparking off debates in *Downbeat* that brought together matters of aesthetics, musical style, and popularity.³

Much of the discussion centered on the recording as a touchstone for the success of jazz-related work and the possible motivations for performing/recording in such a style. Assessments based on the negative effects of the acquisition of economic capital (that is, "selling out") included headlines such as "'In Crowd': Nothing Succeeds Like Success" (*News and Views*, 1965: 11). Not all comments were negative, however. Leonard Feather, who returned to Lewis's recordings in his "blindfold tests" like some sort of obsessive mantra, called "The 'In' Crowd" a record that "can rival the Beatles for the top spot, among all the hundreds of bundles of trash that litter the list of best-sellers week after week" (Feather 1966, 31).

A similar consideration of boundaries and the possible defilement via association with commerce can be found in the *Downbeat* review of Turrentine's album, *Rough "n" Tumble*, which included his version of "Walk On By." The album "falls somewhere between the jazz and rock categories," and although "his playing is strong and catchy, it usually leaves much to be desired." Furthermore, in a telling comparison with a genre on the other side of the art/commerce divide, the reviewer declares that Turrentine's playing is "simple, melodically and rhythmically dull, and not as uninhibited as the best rock-and-roll tenor work." The reviewer does allow that "the most enjoyable track is *Walk*" (Pekar 1966, 38).

Turrentine's work lies somewhere in-between R&B honker and mainstream jazz; the album *Rough "n" Tumble* includes, in addition to "Walk On By," a cover of Sam Cooke's gospel-derived R&B/pop crossover hit, "Shake" (the "A" sections of which are a twelve-bar blues), Ray Charles's "What Would I Do Without You," and several other gospel and blues-influenced tunes. In trying to imagine what *Downbeat*'s reviewer might have been responding to, the performance of "Walk On By" could have seemed rather restrained compared to a straight-ahead "blowing" session of the time. The arrangement presents the melody of the song in a head arrangement very closely modeled on the arrangement heard on Warwick's recording, with Turrentine sticking fairly closely to the tune. Two improvised choruses follow by Turrentine. These are again relatively restrained compared to a virtuosic hard bop solo of the time, although he does build to a few high register "screams" that refer both to the legacy of previous tenor sax "honkers" and to his hard bop contemporaries. Following a one-chorus trumpet solo, Turrentine returns to the melody, played again with subtle embellishments. Turrentine's down-home style can be traced back to Southwestern territory bands of late 1930s in a lineage of tenor players that spans from Illinois Jacquet and Arnett Cobb through to Johnny Griffin, Gene Ammons, and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis (Rosenthal, 103–104). In contrast to *Downbeat*'s reviewer, Turrentine's tenor-sax-playing contemporary, Clifford Jordan, offered this assessment:

Some people can play that [soul jazz] and really extend that, like King Curtis or Stanley Turrentine. They can play that little snap. It's right in their body and they're not trying to imitate nobody. It's a natural feeling that they project.

David Rosenthal, in his survey of hard bop, refers to Turrentine's

sweet yet muscular sound. . . . A flexible voice, it can deepen to a resonant honk, soar into one of the most piercingly full-throated cries in jazz, and broaden to a thick, sensuous vibrato on ballads. Turrentine tends to play on top of the beat, making for a deep, trancelike groove, and his phrasing draws on both modern jazz and R & B.

(*ibid.*, 109)

Rosenthal's description captures how Turrentine's playing looks forward to aspects of "smooth jazz" and his own later work with CTI records,⁴ an example of which can be found in his late soul jazz classic, *Sugar* (1970).⁵

Overall, the attitudes toward popular music (be it rock, pop, or soul) expressed in *Downbeat* during this time remained decidedly mixed, although when commentators defended popular music, positive views tended to emphasize the music's social importance rather than its musical quality. A profile of Barney Kessel from July 1966 is indicative. He anticipates objections to his views but argues that "whether you like it or not, rock-and-roll is a valid form of music. It expresses the feelings of people who are living and breathing at this time." Perhaps anticipating again possible criticisms of commercialism in rock-and-roll, he adds, "It is real—not manufactured" (Kessel 1966, 28). On the other hand, a negative attitude toward popular music surfaces repeatedly in *Downbeat's* "Letter to the Editor" section, the aptly named "Chords & Discords." Negative aesthetic evaluations merge with a critique of commercial success, as evidenced by comments like "great classical and jazz musicians are starving while these people eat off a silver platter" (Chords and Discords 1966a, 8). Another reader wondered whether the magazine was doing a sufficient job of patrolling the borders of jazz:

I have watched in recent months the decline of *Downbeat* as a jazz magazine. The increasing coverage and mention of various rock groups is beginning to become just a little disgusting, the recent critics poll issue being no exception. . . . We see many "critics" voting for such exciting "jazz talent" as the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Byrds, Supremes.

(*Chords and Discords* 1966b, 8)

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Categories of music do not begin at a punctual moment in time and do not carry within themselves an unvarying essence of stylistic features. I have argued elsewhere that a grouping of stylistic features, images, performers' social identities, and musical values becomes associated with a label gradually through a label's continued citation in conjunction with a grouping of attributes (Brackett 2016). Perhaps more importantly for the discussion here, a category of music becomes meaningful in relation to other categories of music that are circulating at the same time. In the case of jazz in the mid-1960s, at the most general level its identity depended on its difference from popular music, on the one hand, and from Western art music, on the other. This differentiation can be understood in terms of how these categories relied on values associated with either symbolic capital (most clearly connected to Western art music) and economic capital (most clearly connected to popular music).

These large categories were also the site of internal struggles over value, and in no category did this appear more clearly than in jazz. To return to an assertion I made at the outset, jazz could be associated with marginality in a number of ways: jazz was marginal with respect to symbolic capital when it aspired to the kind of autonomy associated with Western art music, in comparison to which jazz lacked the institutional legitimacy that would create the same kind

of separation from commerce. Jazz was marginal with respect to economic capital as it lacked the audience share of popular music. Within jazz, the two controversial sub-fields, avant-garde jazz and soul jazz, represented the most extreme tendency towards either pole of the symbolic-economic opposition. These two sub-fields also aroused the ire of white critics because of their associations on the one hand, with African American political struggles in the case of avant-garde jazz and, on the other hand, with black identity, in the case of soul jazz. Even at *Downbeat*, however, the attention paid to these controversies was not symmetrical, with avant-garde jazz receiving far more attention. How curious, then, that jazz scholarship has reproduced the same asymmetry. Let the current study stand as a tentative step towards contributing to a better understanding of how jazz musicians, fans, and critics negotiated the boundary between jazz and popular music in the mid-1960s, and to understanding what was at stake in the controversies of the time.

Notes

1. For examples of American mass culture criticism, see MacDonald (1962) and Rosenberg and White (1957).
2. For the clearest exposition of this opposition, see Bourdieu (1993). For a critique of applications of Bourdieu's theory that impose social theory onto empirical data and eviscerate the aesthetic qualities of specific works, see Latour (2005) and Born (2010).
3. Although the initial review of the album on "The 'In' Crowd" appeared (also titled *The "In" Crowd*) only intimates that there might be a controversy of any kind in the most oblique way: "The mixture of a polished, deliberately dramatic surface over an insistently rhythmic beat continues to work well for Lewis' group" (W. 1965, 39). It's true that the reviewer thinks that the album "works well" but with a "polished . . . surface" and "an insistently rhythmic beat"—damning with faint praise, perhaps?
4. Creed Taylor Incorporated.
5. For more on the connections between soul jazz, CTI, and smooth jazz, see Carson 2008.

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THE RHETORIC OF JAZZ

*Gregory Clark**This is triumphant music.**Martin Luther King, Jr.*

The music King is describing here is jazz. He placed this description at the conceptual center of a foreword he wrote for the program book of the 1964 Berlin Jazz Festival—the only writing we have from King about jazz (Jackson and Dempsey 2011, 62). To describe jazz music as “triumphant” is to treat it first and foremost as a music with a message. For King, in his short essay, that message is a persistent affirmation of the equality of individuals in the ongoing collaborative project that is democratic life. People hearing jazz worldwide have received that message, particularly in the music made in the United States in direct response to the fact that the founding promises of the nation have not been fully realized in the lives of the people from whose experiences this music has come. In my reading, King’s point in his foreword essay is this: whether by way of a bandstand display of democracy-in-practice through which the music is made, or in instrumental sounds and sung lyrics composed to confront this persistent injustice directly, jazz expresses a demand for full equality and consequent individual freedom for everyone. But recognizing the reality that this is still (adapting Langston Hughes) a demand deferred, he pointed also to the message of consolation he finds in jazz music, of hope that things will get better.

For King, jazz is triumphant first because it expresses all that even while located historically in a nation that insists on professing democratic values as it fails, egregiously at times, to attend to their conscientious public practice, and second because in one way or another jazz can almost always be heard as music made in protest of that. Even when manifest as an eclectic global music in which its American origins can at times hardly be heard, jazz music still looks and sounds distinctly democratic. As Malachi Favors, longtime bassist in the Chicago Art Ensemble, once reminded a bandmate, “We’re preaching freedom, whether we like it or not” (Jarman 1977, 98). Favors’s reminder acknowledges at work in jazz what philosopher Richard Weaver described at work in our communication in general: “We are all of us preachers in private or public capacities. We have no sooner uttered words”—or made music—“than we have given impulse to other people to look at the world, or some small part of it, in our way” (1970, 225). Giving others that impulse to understand and aspire in a particular way is the effect of most every message we send. When we try to make that happen, whether the change we seek is trivial or urgently important, we use rhetoric.

Definitions of rhetoric typically point to the capacity for influence that is inherent in our use of words. But we also wield influence without words. Wordless expression most certainly “preaches” as readily as words do, in the terms of metaphor Favors and Weaver both used, by presenting people with opportunities to occupy new perspectives, to inhabit at least imaginatively a new kind of experience of the world that is alternative or even alien to their own.

So, *rhetoric* might be best understood as a term that refers to the ways that influence, wielded by words or wordlessly, can prompt people to change what Kenneth Burke called their “orientation” (1984, 309). Burke defined *orientation* as a complex of attitudes that follows from the experiences that shape a person’s sense of self, both individually and in relation to others. Attitudes are what follow from perceptions, interpretations, judgments, commitments, and aspirations, and they shape a person’s thoughts and actions. Applied to the work of jazz studies, rhetoric understood in this way suggests a method that focuses critical attention on the music as communication in order to understand not so much what jazz *is* as what it *does*—on its influences on those who listen. In what follows, I’ll use that method to explain some of the ways that jazz conveys an advocacy message: prompting listeners indirectly or directly to recognize how people who value individual equality and freedom can and ought to interact as they form and then maintain groups and communities. I’ll do that first by offering a bit more definitional explanation of rhetoric. Then, with a relatively stable concept of rhetoric at hand, I’ll explore the message jazz tends to send, advocating the kind of equality among associating individuals that enables both personally and politically their democratic relationships.

Defining Rhetoric

Rhetoric first emerged as a definable term as Plato and Aristotle and other educators described systematically the knowledge and skills that were required of the Athenian elite to practice their democracy. Since then, those descriptions have been elaborated and extended, revised, and complicated in that Greco-Roman tradition as the need to teach people to self-govern as groups both in public and in private has continued. The idea of rhetoric that has developed through that process is much more expansive than the common concept of rhetoric as persuasion. Persuasion does the work of influence through argumentation, but that is just one model of influence. As a purpose and consequence of communication, influence operates much more broadly than that as disparate individuals try find ways to establish and maintain the kind of agreements that enable them to pursue with others projects and purposes that require their cooperation.

Jazz is often described as the music of freedom, the sound of democracy. That description marks the start of an understanding of this music as rhetorical in the way it shows those who pay attention to jazz being made how democratic cooperation ought to work. On the bandstand, an ensemble of individual musicians displays in action an intimate sort of democracy as each one adapts to the other’s playing in ways that enable their distinct musical voices to contribute constructively to the music they are making. The intensely collaborative process of a jazz ensemble’s performance, seen and heard, makes audiences witness to the fact that people *can* cooperate and still remain themselves; they *can* interact productively in a profoundly collaborative way. A band’s display of that is subtly rhetorical: people see and hear an ensemble making space for each separate voice; they notice individual musicians expressing new ideas or heightened feelings in response to other’s performances; and from the audience they watch musicians nudge each other toward making music none of them could have made nor imagined before. Witnessing that, these people might find themselves considering the possibility that such things can happen off the bandstand as well, that they might find themselves doing outside the music what improvising jazz musicians do within it: encountering firsthand a new “worldview,” as Wynton Marsalis puts it, that confronts them with the possibility that “this [the way things are] could be like *this* [a better way that ought to be]” (2007).

What audiences witness here is *dialog*, with that term understood as the name we give an ongoing exchange of rhetorical statements among people whose shared circumstances demand their collective attention and cooperative action. In operating principle, dialog requires that each participant acknowledge others as equal voices in a collaborative project of determining what they will together believe and do. Rhetoric at its most constructive works within the collaborative conversation of a dialog where each statement that would wield influence is made as a response to a previous statement and anticipates a critical response that is likely to prompt the person who made the last statement to change. Through this process of mutual critique and revision, the wisdom of many is brought to bear on a shared problem at hand. By contrast, rhetoric at its most destructive works to undermine the possibility of that kind of collaborative composition of shared knowledge by diminishing or excluding some voices while amplifying and authorizing others in ways that force the opinions of some on others, rendering participants fundamentally unequal. Both of kinds of interaction will be called dialog, but the first practice is what dialog ought to be while the second is at best its dishonest double.

The problem is that in practice even the purest dialog readily falls into patterns of exchange that fail to make space for the voices of everyone who will be affected by decisions the discussants will make. That begins when participants in this process refuse to submit themselves to what Thomas Docherty calls “the possibility of [their own] transformation” there (2006, xiii)—to the possibility that they might change their positions in response to the influence of others. To be willing to submit oneself to that possibility in dialog requires ready recognition of the essential equality of everyone engaged. Most people, it seems, will not do that. So, typically, what begins as dialog soon becomes the familiar clash of competing monologues that is really a competitive debate. In our intimate and informal dialogs as well as in our public and political ones, the decisions that affect us seem to be most frequently made through exchanges that establish winners and losers. So when a jazz performance offers eloquent display of cooperation in action, the message implicit there about equality and democratic citizenship is probably not noticed by those who recognize only voices that confront them directly in battles about social control and civic privilege. That’s when jazz music is made to state that message directly in ways that demand change from those who would dominate others in the project of their self-government. Both kinds of statements—the display of what ought to be and the direct and explicit demand for change—can be acts of jazz rhetoric.

After Dialog

Because the way jazz music is made can itself be understood as a democratic dialog of individual musical statements made and remade in response to each other in the collaboration of an improvising ensemble, performers can at times find themselves exercising equality almost to perfection. Of course, there are structures of authority that apply. There is a leader who sets the agenda, and various dynamics of personal power and professional prestige are in operation. Still, we can recognize even in the music of a carefully composed Duke Ellington Orchestra performance a strong sense of equal recognition for all musicians who do their work that is, in itself, a rhetorical statement rejecting the manipulative sort of discourse that may have the general form of dialog but is designed to preserve the dominance of some and minimize the voices of others.

Much if not most jazz music works rhetorically in the implicit way of democratic display. But after implied statements have failed to influence or effect any change within a governing public discourse, there is and always has been in the American tradition jazz music that tries to intervene in or circumvent that discourse to insist that the principle of civic equality be put into immediate practice. Since the model jazz offers of democracy fully realized, though often appreciated and acknowledged, rarely generates serious discussion or influences public decisions, this is jazz music

made and played as protest. As Wynton Marsalis has noted, “a work of art is always some type of protest. If it affirms something it protests something else” (2007b). It seems that this protest is always present in jazz—it is just the way that message is delivered that differs.

In the United States, there has always been jazz music that directly confronts the racism experienced by African Americans. For people who understand the social and political context of this music, a protest of that is always present in the music for those who will hear it. After playing a sample track in a recent presentation I mentioned offhand that in these rhythms, these changes, these voicings, and these timbres, I hear some of the sorrow out of which jazz music comes. When a white member in the audience objected, saying “I didn’t hear that. I didn’t hear it at all,” my co-presenter, who is African American, said something like, “I heard it. I always do. I can’t not hear that.” In jazz, he was saying, the protest has always been present from the beginning for those who understand where the music comes from, and even people beyond American borders who struggle with the sorrows of racism and failures of freedom have heard the message and embraced the music.

To illustrate all this, I will describe briefly two recent, rhetorically explicit works of jazz that protest at length and in concrete detail injustices African Americans experience as a consequence of racism. Both focus on a representative example of that problem that is mostly ignored in political discourse in the United States: the fact that a grossly disproportionate number of black men are in prison. The first of these works is Wynton Marsalis’s 2007 quintet recording, *From the Plantation to the Penitentiary*, a suite of jazz performances that sustains a graphic and pointed protest from first composition to last. The second work, Louis Reyes Rivera’s *Jazz in Jail* (2016), is not music. Rather, it is an epic poem made of ragged rhythms and jazz-like images that recount in Whitmanesque detail a story of oppressed American people of color led by a spirit-man named Jazz who embodies their collective experience. My purpose in offering these examples is to show how, when political and moral dialogs fail, jazz music can move beyond modeling equalitarian democracy to open dissent of injustice that is ignored by the powerful.

From the Plantation to the Penitentiary is a suite of seven compositions, most with vocals, made of music that varies from spare, harsh, and dissonant to rich, multidimensional, and romantic, sometimes within a single tune. The compositions all swing rhythmically in the jazz convention, but they also swing hard in mood: from hope to despair, from love to violence, from wisdom to blind anger, back and forth in a dizzying encounter with the sort of life that so many African Americans experience. Like Coltrane’s “Alabama,” the instrumental compositions in the suite identify the target of protest with a title and then the music speaks for itself. The tunes with lyrics that sharpen the point of the instrumentals are sung frank and unornamented by Jennifer Sanon and, in the final track, by an outraged Marsalis himself. As an example of a confrontational message asserted both in words and wordlessly that offers listeners a richly imaginative and emotionally potent vicarious experience of the situation protested, *From the Plantation to the Penitentiary* is masterful.

The first track, titled “From the Plantation to the Penitentiary,” begins with drumbeats that sound like a whip on flesh under horns playing in tones that seem darker than minor key. Over this Sanon sings an almost atonal narrative of what a life is like that must be lived day after day “in the name of freedom, in chains.” On the second track, “Find Me,” the arrangement shifts back and forth from what sounds like orchestral ballad to dissonant disorder as Sanon describes “shattered people” who roam city streets, invisible, and hopeless. In a phrase that addresses American listeners directly, she corners them to ask, “Oh say can you see?” On a later track titled “Supercapitalism,” Sanon sings for some time a frantic chant of “Gimme that. Gimme this. Gimme that,” the rhythm of the phrase repeated back aggressively by the band. The last track, “Where Y’All At,” is a high velocity, in-your-face rap voiced by Marsalis over vibrant New Orleans jazz to confront his listeners with this: “you 60s radicals,” you “righteous revolutionaries and Camus readers, Liberal students and equal rights pleaders. . . . Where Y’All at”—where are *you* in the face of all that? All this subjects

listeners to a sustained encounter with images of harrowing way of life that makes an insistent protest that seems to me irresistibly transformative for those who engage it (Marsalis 2007a).

Transformative too is the experience of reading Rivera's *Jazz in Jail*, a novelistic poem that immerses readers in a heavily annotated catalog of peoples and music that have flowed out of the African diaspora in the Americas. Here "Jazz" is personified as representative voice for all those who have resisted and demanded recognition and change in the face of deeply rooted racism that pervades the United States. The experience of reading *Jazz in Jail* is epic-like as it pushes relentlessly through an extended parable that makes painfully concrete what it looks and feels like to have one's opportunities persistently and systematically stunted. As the story goes, Jazz is put in jail, along with all those who have played the music—many, many by name—as well as those who have listened and affirmed its message. The poem tells story after story of their struggle there until the police, politicians, developers, and corporate executives—those of the ruling class—conclude that these people are too many to hold and, more to the point, keeping them in prison costs those who imprison them too much because there these folks aren't available for exploitation. Besides, they still play jazz in there anyway. In the end all are let out of jail, Jazz and the woman-spirit Freedom are reunited as lovers and as patriarch and matriarch of the jazz people. Here's the final scene:

In front of the stoop / where the Haunt of Freedom lives/a crowd of music gathers . . .
and there announce upon the steps / the birth of one who comes from both / the breath
of Jazz and Freedom Now.

(Rivera 2016, 150)

What Marsalis's suite and Rivera's poem do rhetorically in relation to politics as usual can be explained in terms of Cornel West's concept of "deep democracy" as described in his *Democracy Matters*. Calling himself a "democratic truth teller" (2004, 68) who is "first and foremost a bluesman—a jazzman in the life of the mind" (2000, xv), West is an activist academic philosopher who insists that democracy become "more a verb than a noun," that it be treated as "more a dynamic striving and collective movement than a static order or stationary status quo." This is his description of civic and political processes that look more like what a jazz ensemble does on a bandstand than what we learn in a civics class (West 2004, 68). In the terms I have been using, democracy practiced as a verb would be enacted in intensely equalitarian dialogs that would find ways to include rather than exclude even inconvenient statements because that seems to be what is required to keep dialog democratic. And because democracy fails when the dialogs that sustain it don't engage everyone its decisions would affect, the "dynamic striving and collective movement" of deep democracy would insist upon a place for all and then push participants toward the "deeper soul-searching" and "penetrating visions and truth-telling" (West 2004, 67) that can lead them toward realizing together "a vision of everyday people renouncing narrow self-interest and creating a web of caring under harsh American circumstances" (West 2004, 95).

Danielle Allen draws upon Aristotle to develop some practical terms that describe what that would require in her book, *Talking to Strangers*. This sort of dialog, she explains, must be built on "political friendship" that is put into practice in the rhetorical exchanges people use to govern themselves. In language that aligns with Docherty's point that genuinely democratic dialog demands that participants accept and acknowledge the possibility of their own "transformation" there, Allen notes that equality and democracy require of individuals shifting degrees of sacrifice as majorities rule and minorities acquiesce. It is political friendship that manages that, she explains, as "a set of hard-won, complicated habits that are used to bridge trouble, difficulty, and differences of personality, experience, and aspiration" (2004, xxi) by creating situations where "the diverse negative effects of collective political actions, and even of just decisions, can be distributed equally, and constantly re-distributed over time, on the basis of consensual interactions"

(2004, 29). That would enact a society of democratic “equity,” her name for “the arena of public decision making where resolutions can be achieved only when citizens and politicians establish conditions in which adversaries can yield” (2004, 141). The interaction ongoing on the ground there would be speaking and listening, insisting and relenting, learning and teaching, demanding what you want and then compromising to make the process collectively productive. Such interaction is inherently rhetorical and, more specifically, dialogical.

From the Plantation to the Penitentiary and *Jazz in Jail* can be understood rhetorically as turns taken in this most demanding sort of dialog—or, more precisely, as statements that attempt to initiate the sort of exchange that acknowledges even enemies as equals in a community that needs to cooperate. The problem is, there aren’t many Americans who have heard Marsalis’s suite or read Rivera’s poem. What Marsalis and Rivera both face is the fact that relatively few of the people among those their works would address are likely to allow the “transformation” demanded, to compromise and change in response. What follows from that fact is a realization that deeply democratic dialog on this fundamental American problem does not yet exist. In the terms of Keith Gilyard’s distillation of West’s doctrine, whether their voices can find a place in the ruling dialogs or not, deep democrats must continue to work rhetorically to sustain “a relentless examination of received wisdom coupled with a willingness to adopt the role of . . . a frank and fearless speaker in confrontation with irresponsible power.” And while they voice more or less constantly “an abiding concern with justice and the plight of the less privileged,” these people must respond to the inevitable discouragement of their situation by maintaining the attitude of “tragicomic hope,” that “indomitable, keep-on-pushing sensibility reflective of the African American freedom struggle, blues and jazz” that this music teaches is the only alternative to despair (2008, 5).

From the Plantation to the Penitentiary and *Jazz in Jail* are elegant examples of aesthetic expression that, rhetorically, does just that. The living images they present of people facing again and again the fact that at some level their very humanity is denied, might prompt in a few of those who encounter these jazz works significant and productive changes in understanding and attitude. But in general, these works probably won’t make much progress toward solving the problem they protest. So, for those whose lives feel diminished by racism, jazz provides something else: a message of consolation and hope that someday and somehow the things will change. That is what enables them to continue trying to make space for their voices in the dialogs of governance and find ways to protest when they are not heard there.

Consolation

West has few illusions about the possibility of deep democracy in America. What is required to hold people together in such rigorous and difficult dialog is not only good will (which is already lacking) and the shared humility manifest in a common willingness to be persuaded (which seems absent altogether). What keeps a person at that work is a willingness to become what West calls “a freedom fighter against those obstacles that stand in the way of a rich individuality” (2004, 74). The fight at hand involves an insistent assertion of equality expressed over and over again in the “profoundly democratic action of taking back power over one’s life” (2004, 94). But because this is a utopian project and, so, just out of reach, West seems to offer it up not as a plan of action but a North Star toward which people can continually navigate fueled by that attitude of “subversive joy and revolutionary patience” (1998, 165) that is expressed in “the painful eloquence of the blues” and “most exuberantly in the improvisational virtuosity of jazz” (2004, 16). That attitude can, along the way, open people “to the humanity of individuals and to the interiority of their personalities” (2004, 100) in ways that allow them some empathy for others and some consolation for themselves.

When Aristotle wrote down the rhetorical patterns he observed in Athenian political practice he described three categories of rhetoric-in-use: deliberative rhetoric—statements made among legislators and designated “deciders” about how to solve public problems; judicial rhetoric—statements made among those who must judge guilt, innocence, and punishment; and epideictic rhetoric—statements made to prompt people to remember and reaffirm their commitment to bonds of their community that are neglected or eroding. Aristotle didn’t explain epideictic rhetoric much beyond that, but a rich body of theory has developed since. Here epideictic rhetoric is described as more aesthetic than analytical, more like literature in its address than argument, and more or less narrative in its shape and poetic in its form in order to bring disparate people experientially into a world it presents as if already shared.

Kenneth Burke, whose ideas about aesthetic expression Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray drew upon extensively as they developed their own theories and practices of African American literature, described art of all sorts operating rhetorically as “equipment for living,” by which he meant providing people with experiences that can define and guide their responses to difficult shared “situations” they are likely to face. (1974, 293). One of those situations is when dialog fails. Dialog fails when in this process through which people negotiate their commonality some participants simply do not open themselves to the influence of others. That is the rhetorical situation faced by Marsalis and Rivera: the rhetorical effect of their work is limited by the fact that most Americans won’t engage, much less seriously consider, what they have to say. As their demand for equality is locked out of the deliberative and judicial discussions that maintain the social order of the nation and culture where they live, epideictic rhetoric is their only option. But it is a potentially powerful one. Epideictic rhetoric has always carried the bad rap of impracticality. But while deliberative and judicial dialogs do decide particular practical matters, epideictic rhetoric reminds groups of people of lasting principles, values, and collective aspirations that are the bonds that should hold and guide them. It is those matters that jazz music addresses and in that is both hope and consolation.

Here is Martin Luther King, Jr.’s full description of that most important message of jazz:

God has wrought many things out of oppression. He has endowed his creatures with the capacity to create and from this capacity has flowed the sweet songs of sorrow and of joy that have allowed man to cope with his environment in many situations. Jazz speaks of life. The blues tell the stories of life’s difficulties, and if you will think for a moment, you will realize that they take the harshest realities of life and put them into music only to come out with some new hope or sense of triumph. This is triumphant music.

King must certainly have had in mind two environments those who would read what he wrote about jazz in 1964 would be coping with: racial strife at home in America and Cold War conflicts that would be a shadow on the minds of everyone at a jazz festival held in the shadow of the Berlin Wall. So, he described what that kind of coping looks and sounds like: “When life itself offers no order and meaning the musician creates an order and meaning from the sounds of the earth which flow through his instrument.” That, he continued, is how

much of the power of our Freedom Movement in the United States has come from this music. It has strengthened us with its powerful rhythms when courage began to fail. It has calmed us with its rich harmonies when spirits began to lag.

(Jackson and Dempsey 2011, 62)

Kenneth Burke once explained that political change must begin with changes in attitudes (Burke 1969, 50). Jazz music invites a change of attitude that, on the one hand, acknowledges

injustice as intransigent, and cooperative dialog as susceptible to being coopted by self-serving contenders for control. Still, jazz persists in insisting, subtly or not, that self-government in every setting, public or private, best proceeds through the dialog of equals. It demonstrates that while this is difficult, if people prepare for and commit themselves to this process, it can be done. And until then, jazz reminds, those who suffer when the democracy of dialog fails can continue working toward that goal comforted and energized by the “subversive joy and revolutionary patience” they can hear in this music.

“What it all represents,” wrote Albert Murray of jazz, “is an attitude toward the nature of human experience (and the alternatives of human adjustment) that is both elemental and comprehensive.” In jazz, the attitude is expressed in two messages. The first message is “about confronting the complexities inherent in the human situation and about improvising or experimenting or riffing or otherwise playing with . . . possibilities that are also inherent in the obstacles, the disjunctures, and the jeopardy.” The second is “about perseverance and about resilience and thus also about the maintenance of equilibrium despite precarious circumstances and about achieving elegance in the very process of coping” (1989, 250–251). These messages offer “equipment for living” that includes consolation and hope. King knew that and ended his note about jazz for Berlin with this:

In the particular struggle of the Negro in America there is something akin to the universal struggle of modern man. Everybody has the blues. Everybody longs for meaning. Everybody needs to love and be loved. Everybody needs to clap hands and be happy. Everybody longs for Faith. In music, especially that broad category called Jazz, there is a stepping stone toward all of these.

Whatever jazz is, whatever it means, what jazz *does* may be what matters most. And what jazz does is preach democracy, with *democracy* understood as a way of life people make and maintain from the equality that enables them to work together to make and sustain community. The idea of democracy promises a way of life that is still unrealized, but jazz keeps its potential present for those who will listen, reminding them of ways to make debates into dialogs and make their dialogs dig “deeper” into individual and community both. In times of social and political discouragement, jazz offers vivid display and insistent assertion of this ideal in music that sounds like equality and democratic hope.

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UNFINALIZABLE

Dialog and Self-Expression in Jazz

Charles Hersch

Dostoevsky's hero is not an objectified image but an autonomous discourse, pure voice; we do not see him, we hear him.

(Bakhtin 1984, 53)

Though musicians spend years trying to find their musical voices, and an audience often emotionally responds to what it hears as their inner revelations, the notion of jazz as a form of self-expression is not exactly a thriving one in the literature.¹ Scholars tend to see the idea as at best a kind of passé Romantic individualism and at worst a dangerous form of mystification that diverts us from seeing the way jazz performances are the products of larger social forces like race, class, and gender. Thus David Ake (2010, 18) criticizes “musical anthropomorphizing,” whereby listeners mistakenly see performances as direct reflections of the musician’s inner life and personality.² Similarly, Robert Walser (1997) has criticized understandings of jazz performances as expressions of an individual subjectivity “detached from social experiences” (272); Walser praises alternative understandings, which he associates with black musicians, of the music as “a shared public discourse” and “the fulfillment of tradition” (276).

Ake and Walser are right to criticize Romantic notions of jazz performances as pure manifestations of individual subjectivity and to call our attention to the way larger musical and extra-musical discourses shape the jazz musician’s expressions. However, such discursive analysis creates the danger of losing the notion of jazz as self-expression altogether, subsuming the individual to larger social forces.

In this chapter, I use Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogic theories to rescue the notion of jazz improvisation as self-expression from its individualistic versions. Although a number of jazz studies scholars have referenced Bakhtin in passing, few have considered the implications of his work for jazz in an extended manner.³ For Bakhtin, because the self is rooted in language it is inevitably intertwined with the social world. But it is not socially determined, for we have the potential for what he calls “unfinalizability”—the ability to shape ourselves. Bakhtin shows us both that jazz improvisation is a struggle to differentiate one’s own voice from others’ and that one can only find one’s own voice in relation to others through a variety of kinds of dialog. I argue that jazz, as a dialogic art form Bakhtin calls (referring to novels, but using a musical metaphor) “polyphonic,” is particularly suited to the expression of the unfinalizable self, which requires a supportive group of equals.

Finding One's Voice in the Vocabulary of the Other

For Bakhtin, the self is largely constructed linguistically, since we think in words. Yet a primary fact of human social life is that the words by which we construct our selves are not our own. As Bakhtin puts it, "I live in a world of others' words" (1986, 145). A speaker "receives the word from another's voice and filled with another's voice, . . . permeated with the interpretations of others" (Bakhtin 1984, 202). Thus in our thoughts and utterances the past is constantly speaking through us, for every word "tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life" (Bakhtin 1981, 293). Utterances are never simply self-expression because they are always (in Bakhtin's words) "overpopulated," saturated with the voices of previous speakers (294).

Yet, at the same time individuals are shaped by the discourse of others, they are never completely defined by them, because we all have the capacity for what he calls "unfinalizability," the ability to (within limits) shape and express ourselves. In the midst of others' words, Dostoevsky's *Underground Man*

knows that he has the final word, and he seeks at whatever cost to retain for himself this final word about himself, the word of his self-consciousness, in order to become that which he is not. His consciousness of self lives by its unfinalizability, by its unclosedness and indeterminacy.

(Bakhtin 1984, 53)

The concept of unfinalizability suggests that although one can achieve moments of self-definition—one can avoid being completely defined by social discourse—such a self is never static, but constantly evolving.

Individuals pursue unfinalizability by engaging in three kinds of dialog with the words of others. The first is a kind of interior dialog where we respond to the internalized utterances of others. This kind of creative engagement helps us shape our unfinalizable selves. Second, we respond to the words of others by recontextualization. For Bakhtin, words literally mean nothing without a context, and a new context changes their meaning. Using someone else's word in a new context changes the word and creates "internally dialogic relationships" between the original word and the word in the new context (Bakhtin 1984, 200–201). The word of another can be further dialogized when we "assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate" (or "reaccent") others' phrases by, for example, stating them in ways that have personal resonances, like undermining their meaning through a sarcastic delivery (Bakhtin 1986, 89; see Bakhtin 1981, 293). Not all individuals fully pursue their potential for unfinalizability, of course; many are content to be passively defined by the words of others, but for Bakhtin this represents a renunciation of our capacity for freedom.

The dependence of subjectivity on the discourse of others as well as the ability to maximize unfinalizability through internal dialog, recontextualization, and reaccenting can be seen in the expressions of jazz musicians as well. Like Dostoevsky's *Underground Man*, the jazz soloist struggles with the discourse of others, but in this case a musical one. Every jazz great has begun by imitating others, as is apparent through recordings of a young Charlie Parker playing Lester Young solos (Parker 1991). Players learn David Baker licks, memorize Charlie Parker's solos from the *Omnibook*, and play the changes from *The Real Book*. The jazz musician cannot escape the tradition, for if what he or she plays sounds like jazz, it reproduces the past through the familiar harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic devices that make it "jazz" in the first place. Since no jazz player can improvise original lines all the time, "jazz" phrases carry meaning left over from previous musicians who have used them. Musicians are also confined by the requirements of genre so that someone playing "bebop" or "swing" is bound by certain rules that define the genre; even "free jazz" has its own rules.⁴

Finding one's voice in jazz seems an almost impossible task, given this need to assimilate the vocabulary. Musicians tell themselves that imitation is a process of absorbing the tradition and developing their own voice. But what if the player never reaches his or her own voice? Lick-playing jazz soloists, in Bakhtin's eyes, negate their own freedom by letting themselves be defined by others.

One approach would be to prioritize one's own voice by shunning predetermined "licks." Thus saxophonist Lee Konitz strives to avoid playing preplanned ideas:

As soon as I hear myself playing a familiar melody I take the mouthpiece out of my mouth. I let some measures go by. Improvising means coming in with a completely clean slate from the first note. . . . The most important thing is to get away from fixed functions.

(Hamilton 2007, 103)

But such originality can never be fully achieved because jazz is a language, and a completely idiosyncratic vocabulary would not be heard as jazz. Konitz in fact draws on the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic conventions of jazz, despite his quest for originality. Further, as a practical matter no improviser can invent constantly, and Konitz like any other player has a reservoir of phrases from which to draw.

But Konitz does pursue unfinalizability through musical self-dialog, a kind of interior conversation whereby the soloist listens and responds to his or her own ideas, themselves drawn from the jazz vocabulary. Many musicians describe a solo as a conversation with oneself. On a polyrhythmic or polyphonic instrument like drums or piano, one melody or rhythm might be pitted against another, as when the interaction between figures on the bass drum, snare, high-hat, and ride cymbal or a pianist's two hands creates a dialog.

But a succession of single melodies or rhythms can also create dialog. For Max Roach, each phrase he plays answers his previous one, so that "when I play, it's like having a conversation with myself" (Berliner 1994, 192). Konitz also sees every note he plays as a response in real time to previous ones, creating what he calls "note-to-note" playing (Hamilton 2007, 71, 106). Though not creating themselves anew with each solo, dialogic improvisers like Konitz are constantly in dialog with their past, as their improvisational choices position them in relation to what they have played before. They are also in dialog with the jazz tradition itself. Musicians playing a standard like "Body and Soul" are also aware of, and can hear in their head, previous canonical versions (by Hawkins, Coltrane, and so on), and their improvisations place them in relationship to the past, whether they imitate, draw on, or reject those previous versions.

Musicians also use recontextualization and "reaccentuation" to avoid being defined by the tradition and its discourse. Just as Dostoevsky "often divined how a given idea would develop and function under certain changed conditions, what unexpected directions it would take in its further development and transformation," and in doing so "placed the idea on the borderline of dialogically intersecting consciousnesses" (Bakhtin 1984, 91), a musician might bring a bebop line into a new harmonic context and change it. Thus, playing a standard in a new way, or using a phrase by Clifford Brown in a new context, allows improvisers to explore the relationship between the present and the past, contemporary and older consciousnesses. When Charlie Parker quoted Louis Armstrong's cadenza from "West End Blues" in the context of a bebop solo, he brought new resonances to it, showing Armstrong's modernity at a time when many saw him as old-fashioned or perhaps poking fun at the elder (Parker and the Stars of Modern Jazz 1989).

A jazz soloist can "reaccent" a line in a number of ways: a traditional phrase might be displaced rhythmically, put in a different meter, or articulated idiosyncratically (e.g., all staccato), notes might be left out or added, and so on. Parker's quotation of "The Blue Danube Waltz" in a live

version of “Perdido” uses both recontextualization and reaccenting (Parker 1973). It is startling to hear the classical theme in the middle of a jazz solo, and it is made further idiosyncratic by playing the 3/4 melody in 4/4 time. One who would criticize the use of traditional licks or forms, in Bakhtin’s words, “ignores those changes that take place in a word during its passage from one concrete utterance to another, and while those utterances are in the process of orienting to one another” (Bakhtin 1984, 200). Engaging in dialog with tradition is a way of bridging the gap between the self and other as well as the past and future.

Self-Expression Through Group Improvisation

Inner dialog, recontextualization, and reaccenting musical lines help create a dialogic self and thus help musicians pursue their own unfinalizable voices. But these measures only go so far, because ultimately if the individual is to find his or her own voice it must be through dialog with another. Bakhtin shows us the restless, never-ending process of self-discovery and self-expression through engagement with the utterances of others, but he also shows us the way such self-exploration is intertwined with our real relationships with those individuals. Playing music, like speaking, is a communicative act, and one discovers one’s own voice only in conversation with others. “In dialog a person not only shows himself outwardly, but he becomes for the first time that which he is . . . not only for others but for himself as well. To be means to communicate dialogically” (Bakhtin 1984, 252).

Two scholars have meticulously explored the dialogic possibilities of the jazz group: Ingrid Monson and Paul Berliner. Monson’s *Saying Something* (1996) details the complex interactions among rhythm section players in jazz, illustrating the “collaborative and communitive quality of improvisation,” its creation of temporary or long-lasting communities “through the simultaneous interaction of musical sounds, people, and their musical and cultural histories” (2). Her focus is the way musicians actively listen and respond to one another with “cooperative choices” that create the kind of “groove” or “rhythmic flow” that is key to a successful jazz performance (27, 28). Monson describes such active listening in dialogical terms: “It is a type of listening much like that required of participants in a conversation, who have to pay attention to what is transpiring if they expect to say things that make sense to the other participants” (84). Similarly, Paul Berliner’s magisterial *Thinking in Jazz* (1994) plumbs the depths of jazz dialog for 882 pages, replete with first person accounts of the process of group improvisation and musical transcriptions that notate all the instruments in a particular performance, like a fifteen-page score of Miles Davis’s “Blues by Five,” which details every note, chord, and drum hit by the performers with detailed commentary (732–757). These accounts and transcriptions shine an x-ray on the process of small group jazz interaction and reveal much about numerous levels of dialog within the jazz performance.

Perhaps the most obvious form of dialog within the jazz group is trading phrases—as when Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker “trade fours.” But as Monson and Berliner show, in the ordinary course of a small group performance players in the band listen and respond to one another in myriad ways: the drummer matches the timbre of the instrument he or she is accompanying (Berliner 1994, 346), the bassist or drummer adjusts the beat placement (on top, behind, ahead) to other members of the band (351–352); musicians mirror each other’s rhythmic ideas (355); band members collectively work out the details of a tune’s harmony (substitutions, turnarounds, and so on) within the framework of the written chords (356); rhythm section players respond to and encourage the soloist, engaging in “imitative interplay” (358); and players alter a line’s dynamics or density in response to others (371). Such responsiveness requires a particular kind of listening that one musician called “dividing your senses,” listening to each member of the band simultaneously (362).

Jazz musicians in live performances are in dialog with the audience as well. Musicians adjust their style and repertory, even in mid-performance, to listeners. Thus one musician in his first set

played short, uninspired solos for a small, distracted audience, yet held forth with long, adventurous improvisations for a throng in the third, sounding like an entirely different player (Berliner 1994, 472–473). The musicians Berliner described discerned whether an audience was responsive or listless, sophisticated or simple, educated in jazz or not, and played accordingly. A good audience responds to creative, adventurous playing, spurring players to take risks and more fully be themselves, whereas unsophisticated audiences, even enthusiastic ones, provoke discouragement or lead to what bassist Chuck Israels calls “pandering” (465). Singer Carmen Lundy compares a jazz concert to a church service, where “everybody, not just the people in the choir, is part of the music,” through exhortations, swaying, and dancing (391, 469).

Such audience “comments,” verbal or otherwise, then cause the musicians to change the way they play, creating what Berliner calls a “communication loop” (Berliner 1994, 459). Musicians describe putting forth a musical “suggestion,” seeing how the audience responds, and if the response is positive (“Yeah! I hear you!”), the musician develops it further, further exciting the crowd. As trombonist Curtis Fuller put it,

I’ll put something else out there in my solo, and I flirt with it to feel them out to see what the response would be. . . . When I get the audience around that, they won’t let me off the stage.

(468)

In Berliner’s words, “audience members enter into and broaden the base of the conversation, responding to the musical statements of band members as if they were literally speaking with them” (468).

Supporting Bakhtin’s analysis, it is only through such musical dialog that the individual voice fully emerges. Individual musicians do not fully know who they are, or become who they are, outside of their interactions with others. Pianist Kenny Barron has talked about how he alters his style and in a sense becomes a different musician with different drummers (Berliner 1994, 364). This mutability of the musical self leads musicians to play things in the context of a group that they have never played before and are as surprised as anyone to hear them emanating from their instrument. According to one,

by talking to people up on stage through your music, you can start working on stuff you’ve never heard and never done. . . . I’d find that there are these things coming out of myself, which I didn’t even know were there, I’d never heard them, I didn’t know where they came from. . . . But playing with others triggers it.

(Berliner 1994, 816)

The same is true of playing before different audiences.

Like Dostoevsky’s polyphonic novel, the best jazz performances present a conversation between voices, each of which becomes most fully themselves through dialog. Thus the Bakhtinian soloist pursues self-expression, yet he or she can only do so in dialog with him- or herself and others. From this perspective, jazz improvisers are simultaneously themselves, what is not (yet) themselves, and other people.

Jazz Improvisation and an Ethic of Responsiveness

Bakhtin’s conception of dialog is descriptive, emphasizing the way all utterances arise from and only have meaning in relation to those of others. However, there is also a prescriptive element that sees the polyphonic artwork as a model for community, one characterized by an ethic of mutuality

and responsiveness that allows for the fullest development of the individual. For Bakhtin, “there is nothing more terrible than a *lack of response*” (1986, 127), and a person who is not acknowledged by others becomes a “*voiceless thing*” (161). The best jazz performances enact a world where individuals recognize and respond to each other, allowing them to emerge in the fullness of their unfinalizability.

Such an ethic of responsiveness and group interaction is illustrated by the improvising philosophy of Lee Konitz. When asked what he is thinking about when improvising, Konitz says,

Just trying to . . . be interested in what’s going on around me. . . . I want to hear the other players as clearly as possible. . . . If I hear what they’re doing, I never run out of things to play, because they’ll always feed me something.

(Hamilton 2007, 108)

He has described the pleasures of dialogic improvisation in great detail:

Now, I start to play . . . and, one-by-one, they join me . . . such a nice feeling to hear another sympathetic voice—nothing can compare to this process for me. . . . So, I hear the bass notes, then the piano plays a chord, and I say—in some part of me—“Wow, what was that?” Not enough time to really put a label on it, so I do the best I can to match that sound. Then the drums enter—great to hear! So now I am listening to myself in relation to three other sounds. “What’s the pianist doing now? Interesting, but what can I do to correspond to that nice progression.”

(125)

This description shows the existence of both internal and external dialog, each reinforcing the other. He is “listening to [himself]” but also “in relation to” the other musicians. His method also resists the finalization of himself and others, for in the moment, there is not time to “put a label” to what he hears—either his own notes or those of the other musicians—for that would finalize him and them as well as the music itself, and the dialog would be at an end.

The musicians who have played with Konitz have attested to the joy of being listened and responded to. According to Rufus Reid, “As a bass player you’re not relegated to the ‘basement’ with him. We get our materials from one another, and that’s what real jazz is” (Hamilton 2007, 115). The responsive band member then inspires Konitz in return:

There’s nothing more inspiring to me than to hear someone react to something I just did, and to tell me that he’s interested. Maybe he doesn’t love it, but he’s interested. I will respond immediately. Whatever I had in mind, I will go in that direction *immediately*, because he’s talking to me.

(127)

The comment, “maybe he doesn’t love it,” implies that Konitz is looking not for pure affirmation or adulation but the kind of pushback one gets from a friend in a good conversation that then inspires one to develop one’s own thoughts and feelings more fully. This point is illustrated in his complaint that pianist Brad Mehldau was too quick to respond to him in an imitative way: “He was telling me that he was listening to me, and whether he agreed with it or not, he played with me. But it wasn’t an expansion of it” and did not “challenge” him enough (Hamilton 2007, 226). He seeks in a fellow musician what Bakhtin called “an active (not a duplicating) understanding, a willingness to listen” (1984, 299).

Konitz's responsiveness to those around him leaves him vulnerable, because if they are not similarly responsive, his own improvisations will be weak. As pianist Alan Broadbent, who has played with Konitz, put it, "Lee is completely dependent on who he's playing with, which is the way it's supposed to be" (Hamilton 2007, 71). "Dependent" has negative connotations, yet Broadbent's comment that dependence is "the way it's supposed to be" conjures up an image of healthy interdependence, where self and other are made stronger by the connection and are not entirely separable. When a musician responds to a musical idea of another, he or she takes that idea and makes it his or her own, perhaps incorporating it into his or her vocabulary. To the extent that one's musical ideas constitute one's musical self, a kind of dialogic interpenetration of selves then occurs, for what Konitz calls "expanding" an idea suggested by another musician creates what Bakhtin calls "double voiced discourse." Such "double voiced discourse" requires actively evaluating and responding to the speech of others rather than simply reproducing it or "merging" our voice with it (Bakhtin 1984, 195). Thus Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, though his "inner speech" is "inundated . . . with these words of others," reaccents them, "entering into a passionate polemic with them. Consequently his inner speech is constructed like a succession of living and impassioned replies to all the words of others he has heard" (238).

Such a responsive conversation differs both from merging and from an unresponsive musical conversation, where (in Wynton Marsalis's words) people are "thinking about what they are going to tell you next, instead of listening to what you're saying" (Berliner 1994, 401). The conversational model envisages a constant negotiation between individual will and the collective, in a "give and take." Berliner (1994) describes a situation where "group members alternate between asserting their own interpretations of time and adjusting them to those of other players" (352). The best acts of improvisation allow tremendous individual expression and group solidarity, each coming more fully into focus at different times.⁵

Of course, group jazz performances are not always conversational. Some soloists might prefer not to be "fed ideas" or be directly responded to by the rhythm section in many situations, and in any case some kinds of jazz (for example, big bands) inherently have less musical dialog (Givan 2016). Some leaders are overly directive, and there are always conflicts. Players might not listen, instead relying on their own or others' prefabricated licks (Berliner 1994, 400); the rhythm section might keep repeating a soloist's idea when he or she wanted to move on (403); a pianist might harp on a substitute chord that interferes with the harmony being developed by the soloist (404); or a rhythm section player might put forward intrusive comping figures, or be overly busy so as to interfere with the soloist's development of ideas (404). But the Bakhtinian musical conversation, the dialog out of which the personal voice most fully emerges, is something to strive for, as the fulfillment of unfinalizability.

Bakhtin also shows us the difficulty of real self-expression in jazz. Unfinalizability by its very nature precludes standing still, and from a Bakhtinian perspective, even developing and repeating one's own licks finalizes and confines the individual, not allowing him or her to "become that which he is not." As Bakhtin says,

a man never coincides with himself. . . . In Dostoevsky's artistic thinking, the genuine life of the personality takes place at the point of non-coincidence between a man and himself. . . . [and] is made available only through a *dialogic* penetration of that personality.
(Bakhtin 1984, 59)

Such a "dialogic approach to one's own self" results in "destroying that naïve wholeness of one's notions about the self that lies at the heart of the lyric, epic, and tragic image of man" (120). Yet the alternative to the self of Romantic individualism is not just the socially determined self but

rather a dialogically evolving one. The quest for selfhood is ongoing, for “when dialog ends, everything ends” (252). Soloists in pursuit of unfinalizability must never be content to fall into routinized improvisation, for they only become what they are by becoming what they are not. And yet this new self is only a temporary resting place to be negated again in the pursuit of further self-definition.

From this perspective, one can see why a Bakhtinian soloist like Konitz admires Heraclitus’s saying that “everything flows. . . . When I step into the river neither I nor the river are the same” (Hamilton 2007, 114). Dialogically engaging with “All the Things You Are” countless times, Konitz says, “I still have the feeling that I’m playing the first set of variations that I ever played on it” (199), for with each attempt he shapes himself anew. There is no definitive version of “All the Things” by Konitz or anyone else, for (Bakhtin) “as long as a person is alive he lives by the fact that he is not yet finalized, that he has not yet uttered his ultimate word” (1984, 59).

Notes

1. The author wishes to thank Brian Weiner and Daniel Melnick for their helpful suggestions in the writing of this chapter.
2. Ake (2010, 18) does allow that “parallels sometimes exist between the style of a musical performance and the biographical circumstances, attitude, or personality of the artist who created the performance,” but says it is “just as likely” that qualities attributed to the artist by listeners are projections. (Ake hedges his bets a bit by denying he is not “dismissing this sort of transference as mere fantasy,” though that seems close to what he is doing.)
3. There have been brief discussions of Bakhtin in the jazz literature but few extended treatments. Ingrid Monson (1996) refers to Bakhtin a handful of times, mostly utilizing the idea of “heteroglossia” from “Discourse in the Novel.” David Ake (2010) uses Bakhtin’s concept of the “carnavalesque” from *Rabelais and His World*. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (2012) also discusses the carnivalesque in relation to jazz humor. Tony Whyton (2010, 2013) considers Bakhtin in relation to questions of tradition and canonicity. Gabriel Solis (2007) refers to Bakhtin in his discussion of musical influences in relationship to Monk. David Borgo (2004) and Peter Hollerbach (2004) also discuss musicians’ use of musical influences in the development of their personal voice in relation to Bakhtin. The fullest consideration of Bakhtin and jazz, particularly regarding “unfinalizability,” is Panagiotis A. Kanellopoulos (2011), though Kanellopoulos’s approach differs from mine in that it focuses mostly on the early Bakhtin writings “Toward a Philosophy of the Act” and “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity.” None of these authors uses Bakhtin’s *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, which I find his most useful text for thinking about jazz. I also use Bakhtin in Hersch (2007, 2017). Borgo, Hollerbach, and Monson discuss Bakhtin in conjunction with “signifying” (as theorized in Gates [1998]). Gates (1998) discusses Bakhtin’s concept of “double voiced discourse” in relation to signifying (50–1, 110–13, and 131). The relationship between Bakhtin’s dialogism and “signifying” goes beyond the scope of this essay, but I will say that while signifying is a process of revision of a text akin to parody (“repetition with a signal difference”) as a way to alter a dominant culture, Bakhtin’s dialogism has more emphasis on a back and forth or interactive process between individuals that to my mind makes it particularly appropriate to illuminating jazz improvisation. Other uses of signifying to understand jazz include Gary Tomlinson (1992), Robert Walser (1995) and Hersch (2007). Finally, no discussion of dialog in jazz would be complete without mention of Christopher Small (1987). Though he mentions neither Bakhtin nor signifying, Small’s *Music of the Common Tongue* insightfully focuses on many of the same questions; central is his assertion that “in all musical performances, as situations in which human beings encounter one another and try to create meaning from those encounters, it is the relationships that are established between the participants which constitute the most important element of that meaning” (62). Uses of Bakhtin to think about popular music include David Brackett (2000), George Lipsitz (1990), and Richard Middleton (2000), while Kevin Korsyn (1999) incorporates his work in a consideration of classical music. For a brief discussion of jazz and Bakhtin’s notion of polyphony in relation to John Edgar Wideman and other African American writers, see Tracie Church Guzzio (2011, 21–23). Guzzio cites other sources connecting Bakhtin with African American writing at 253n33.
4. According to Bakhtin, genres limit what we can comprehensibly say, for “even in the most free, unconstrained conversation, we cast our speech in definite generic forms,” ones with varying degrees of flexibility (Bakhtin

- 1986, 78). Genres (greetings, farewells, business conversations, etc.) structure our speech as much as grammatical rules do, and we unconsciously perceive the given genre once someone starts speaking, and this perception allows us to predict the length, tone, and structure of the utterance (79).
5. See Hersch (1998, 106–126) for a discussion of the free jazz of the 1960s in light of the dynamics between individual and group raised here.

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IMPROVISATION

What Is It Good for?

Raymond MacDonald and Graeme Wilson

A teacher stands in front of a class of young children holding an outstretched hand with her palm facing the ceiling. When her finger touches her palm, she invites the whole class to sing in unison any note they wish. When she removes her finger from her palm she asks the class to stop. She repeats this five or six times and each time the class of twenty children produce a rich and textured chord. The children are exhilarated by the spontaneous generation of new music. They are also surprised at how conventionally beautiful this exercise sounds. They are all improvising in the sense that they are selecting a note, choosing dynamics, making decisions about timbre etcetera. While this example may not immediately appear related to jazz, it contains the core elements of what might be considered jazz. Improvisation is routinely hailed as a defining feature of the genre. Considered more broadly as a uniquely collaborative, creative, social, and spontaneous generation of music, improvisation can also be at the heart of children's music educational experiences. These types of activities can therefore be used not just with children but also with adults who have no experience of music making or musicians who are experienced but are somewhat nervous about improvising. Improvisation can thus be viewed as an approach that facilitates the development of new music skills and exploration of creativity. It can also help develop confidence in creative activities and an awareness of collective music making can develop primarily as a result of engagement in improvisational activities.

This chapter outlines some fundamental features of improvisation and attempts to explain why these processes are important. One contention of this chapter is that conventional jazz notions of improvisation could to be broadened to include wider musical and psychological processes. Defining improvisation is not easy, and a definitive description that encompasses all improvisational activities will probably remain elusive. Broader definitions that also incorporate mainstream jazz improvisational activities will facilitate a greater understanding of the nature and importance of improvisational practice. In addition to being a defining feature of jazz, improvisation is a key component of jazz musicians' musical identity. Moreover, in recent years there has been a significant growth in psychological interest in improvisation, not just as a feature of jazz, but as an accessible and social creative process whose spontaneity can facilitate collaboration between many musical genres and across disciplines. This has highlighted improvisation as a contested term. If improvisation is a universally accessible mode of social interaction, this has implications for musicians whose identities and livelihoods may rest upon more virtuosic definitions of improvisation. This chapter will explore how musicians talk about

improvisation. It will also discuss how musicians critique their own improvisation, drawing on data from a study where musicians improvised in trios and immediately commented, in individual interviews, on a recording.

The chapter begins by highlighting the importance of identity, suggesting that identity processes (how we think about ourselves, talk about ourselves, and present ourselves) are crucially important for musical behaviors in general and improvisational behaviors in particular. It then presents a model to describe improvisation across a variety of different contexts and finally offers some ideas about why improvisation is important to health and wellbeing.

Musical Identities

Musical identities refer how we view ourselves as musicians and also how we use music, our musical tastes, and our music experiences, to construct a sense self (MacDonald, Miell, and Hargreaves 2017; MacDonald, Miell and Hargreaves 2002). Even if we do not view ourselves as particularly musical, we all have thoughts about our level of musical skill and engagement. Whether that is “I only sing in the shower” or “I can play a few chords on the guitar,” beliefs about our musical skills help shape our musical identities. Of course, professional musicians also employ these types of narrative to help construct their musical identities (for example, “I play cello in the Boston Symphony Orchestra,” “I am a professional saxophonist”). Identity constructs, such as “I can only sing in the choir,” “music is the most important part of life,” “my family do not have musical genes,” or even “I am tone deaf” are all important markers of musical identities and help shape our musical interactions and tastes. This makes studying how people talk about music a valuable focus for research (Miell, MacDonald, and Hargreaves 2005). An important issue is that these identities may not be linked to musical qualifications or technical proficiency but will be influenced by social influences, including family and education environments. Musical identities are therefore universal and constructed in how we think and talk about our musical experiences. Furthermore, when we talk about our musical lives, we are not necessarily describing an objective truth but rather creating narratives that help form our musical identities. This makes talking about music an important part of the overall process of musical communication, since talking about music shapes our musical identities and musical identities influence how we listen to, perform, and engage with music. Within the context of jazz music, how jazz musicians talk about their work, their lives, and, importantly, how they talk about improvisation provides an excellent lens through which to study the nature of improvisation.

Constructing Improvisation

Improvisation is or can be social: nearly all improvising is done with other people; even solo performances are influenced by interaction with the audience. Talk, as our primary medium for social interaction, is inevitably used to position ourselves and our views (Potter and Wetherell 1987), and talking about music is therefore a fundamental part of how we make sense of music. This is particularly important for musicians: identity as musician is a prominent concern for professionals, and talking about music not only describes but also constructs situations and, by implication, influences how music is engaged in. We therefore contend that improvisation can only be fully understood if we take into account how we talk about improvisation.

For example, in 2006, musician and conductor Daniel Barenboim presented The Reith Lectures, an annual series given by internationally prominent figures for the BBC (the UK’s broadcasting organization). Barenboim’s lectures explored the interplay between music and society. Following his first lecture, highlighting the importance of music for society and its potential role in healing, Barenboim was asked by English pianist Julian Joseph about his views

on improvisation. Barenboim replied that improvisation was the highest form of art, implying a view of improvisation as an elite pursuit practiced by individuals who have honed and crafted their skills to the highest level and are able to execute lightning musical reflexes to respond to particular musical contexts. A few weeks later one of us (RM) was watching the Johnny Depp film version of *Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory* with his two young daughters. In the scene where Augustus Gloop attempts to drink the chocolate river and falls in, the Oppma Loompa factory staff spontaneously sings, “big fat greedy Augustus Gloop is a big fat nincompoop.” The hero Charlie asks Wonka how they could have known in advance what would happen to Gloop so as to have a song about this on hand. Willy Wonka replies that improvisation is a parlor trick that anyone can do. This alternative construction of improvisation emphasizes it as a *universal* capacity; it also relegates the activity from the highest form of art to a superficial party game. In a similar vein, Bailey’s influential account of improvisation (Bailey 1989) alludes to improvisation as a “doubtful expedient” or even a “vulgar habit.” From a discursive perspective, neither version of improvisation—pinnacle of artistic achievement or sleight of hand party trick—is “true.” Both have merits and both constructions are also problematic: one seeks to position improvisation as an activity only for the initiated, the experienced, or the elite; while the other constructs improvisation as universally accessible activity but possibly a frivolous or deceptive pastime.

Shortly after these instances, RM encountered the well-known Glaswegian comedian Billy Connolly in a fish and chip shop in Glasgow and chatted about music. Connolly asked if he knew a particular Glasgow saxophonist. RM replied that although he had played with this individual in big bands, he now played improvised music, describing this as “unlistenable music that nobody liked” and so didn’t play with that saxophonist any more. Connolly replied: “Brilliant, if those jazz bastards don’t like you must be doing something right.” In this final scenario, improvisation is constructed as something undertaken with particular expectations that differ between groups with a stake in performing it, who may label themselves with terms such as “jazz” or “unlistenable”; Connolly’s response asserts that such oppositional approaches to conceptions of improvisation can bear creative fruit and be used to help develop new ideas.

For Barenboim, describing improvisation as the highest form of creativity also acknowledges the skill, dedication, and virtuosity of those musicians engaged in improvisation; it creates an image of the improviser at a particular peak of artistic prowess and of an improviser as part of an elite group of musicians of similar status to others he has been lecturing on. In the script for *Willy Wonka*, a quick reply to a seemingly impossible state of affairs, the immediate and spontaneous construction of a fully arranged song to accompany a freak accident, offers a satisfactory explanation. Connolly, on the other hand, constructs a version of improvisation as a flexible musical activity that is often practiced within relatively inflexible parameters, but highlights the importance to creative development of the negotiation of these parameters: challenging conservative notions of improvisation is inherently a good thing. Jazz musicians’ musical identity may be tied to a particular construction of improvisation; if what they prioritize is challenged, then this may pose a threat to their identity, leading them to cast those with alternative views as an “out-group.”

Although different, these constructions of improvisation are not mutually exclusive; a social constructionist view would argue that different versions of improvisation will be fielded in support of different identity claims. Rather than each scenario offering alternative and competing truths about improvising, each claim constitutes a different social construction of improvisation to serve particular psychological and social needs for the speaker. Claiming some forms of art as higher or less genuine than others is a means of staking territory for what the speaker wishes to be treated as valid, valuable, or important in music; and Connolly, like any participant in a casual and amiable encounter, would be likely to align his views with what he perceives the other person

to value, to validate that person's account of themselves. These shifting definitions of improvisation in our talk serve specific psychological purposes for the speaker in creating, negotiating, and maintaining a particular line of argument. This line of argument is linked to the musical identities and broader psychological identities of the speaker. We do not suggest that people consciously fabricate their musical lives in order to create a public image of how they engage with music, but rather that how we talk, describe, and explain our experiences help create a workable version of those experiences. This is influenced by both the discourse analysis and phenomenological traditions (Potter and Wetherell 1987; Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009).

Talking About Music

One way in which we have attempted to understand improvisation is by talking to musicians about what they think they are doing. We have interviewed musicians in different contexts and asked them about their practice (Wilson and MacDonald 2005).

We have highlighted that defining jazz, and improvisation in particular, is difficult even for musicians, and that even among themselves competing accounts are accessible. For example, one participant in a focus group of jazz musicians (MacDonald and Wilson 2005) suggested that

if you asked other jazz musicians they would say something different, they might. I'm just saying certain musicians. See they prioritise different things in the music for themselves(.) I would agree the swing thing kind of is a defining element but that's me and whoever's here. You know. There are certain musicians that we widnae work wae. Who've got probably different ideas. I mean everybody's got a different idea of what jazz is(.) anyway I'll get ma coat.

We have also provided evidence to suggest that jazz musicians view their professional life as challenging in comparison to other types of musicians; another participant stated:

Look at classical musicians, it's like a different (.) world. You get I, did a couple of classical gigs there. It's just amazing. How different it is. If you're out after midnight you get paid more, you get a proper meal at the gig, if you're out after midnight somebody pays for a taxi take you home, turn up somebody's put your music's on the stand in order, if you play a guitar or something like that there's an amp, a lead, everything sitting there for you. Turn up at a jazz gig and . . .

We identified two distinct styles of talking about jazz improvisation, framing these in the discourse analysis concept of talk repertoires. A repertoire is a way of describing or accounting for a person or an event that people use in their talk (Sherrard 1997), a form of shorthand to construct ideas about identity where someone tries to position themselves or others people as a particular sort of person. The two repertoires we identified were termed *mastery* and *mystery* (Wilson and MacDonald 2005). The mastery repertoire aligns with the notion of studying hard and developing particular skills and knowledge through sustained commitment. For instance, in the extract below, improvisation is contextualized within a mastery discourse as necessarily developed through study and the challenging acquisition of skills and knowledge:

K . . . it's not always that kind of romantic notion that everybody has, ya know, there has to be some sort of effort.

H Yeah it doesn't magically happen.

K There has to be effort and there has to be some degree of training.

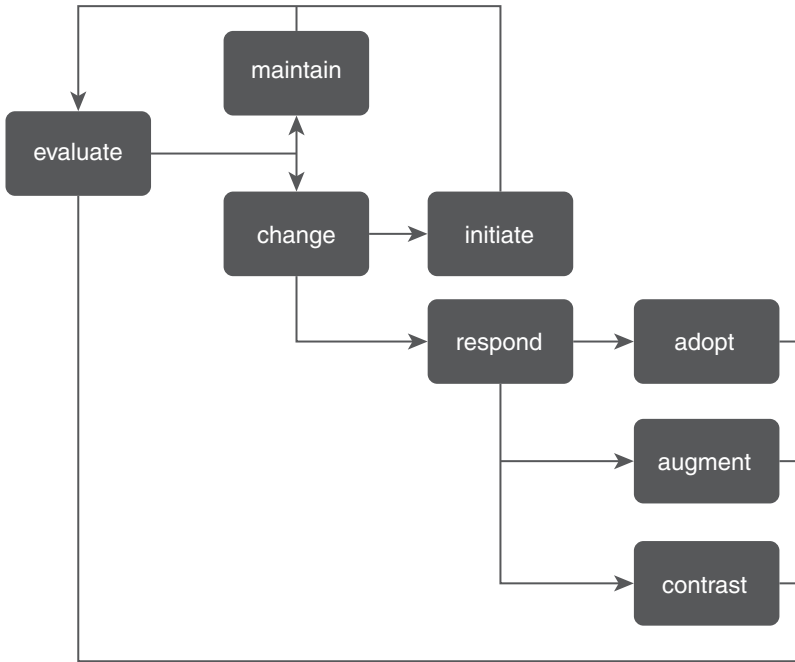


Figure 36.1 Model for the process of individual choice during group musical improvisation¹

By comparison, in the mystery repertoire, improvisation is instinctive and uncontrolled, arising from unfathomable (and unlearnable) inspiration. In the example below, the same focus group participant emphasizes more soulful, ineffable qualities of improvisation:

H . . . when you're truly improvising you're playing with this intensity. And y-you don't really care what, mistakes just go by and it's like, doesnae matter cause you're playing with intensity and (.) and passion.

Interviews in our earlier studies were focused upon generic jazz or improvised practice or examples specific to each participant that they singled out from their own career. We were subsequently interested to understand more about how multiple musicians described the choices they made in specific shared instances of improvising. With this in mind, we undertook a study asking trios of musicians to play short improvisations. Immediately after each recorded performance, we interviewed the performers individually and invited them to reflect upon their improvisations by listening back and commenting upon the music performed (Wilson and MacDonald 2015). Through analysis of these interviews, we developed a model to describe how musicians in any genre might choose how or what to play while improvising with others. This model is displayed in Figure 36.1.

If improvisation involves an impromptu a series of creative decisions within a social context, this model highlights the key types of options faced when choosing how to interact. These categories are described below in three levels of decision, illustrated with excerpts from participants in Wilson and MacDonald (2015).

Maintain or Change

At any moment, an improviser's immediate choice is whether to continue what they are playing or change. Our results suggested that much of a musician's time when improvising will be spent

sustaining one figure or sound or texture. A drummer keeping a steady beat must make decisions about when to alter what is played; a bass player playing a walking bass line must make decisions about whether to maintain the line or make small alternations based upon what is being played within the rest of the ensemble. In the extract below, one of the participants outlines how he negotiated this aspect of improvising:

The fact that I'm just keeping that note there I knew at some point they would both be like "Ok he's going to do something in a minute." You keep that idea going and the chances are that at some point you're going to move away from it. . . . I think it empowers you to be the person who does the next change. If you keep doing the same thing people know that you're probably going to do something quite dramatically different.

Initiate or Respond

If a musician decides to change what they are playing, they are faced with two alternatives: initiate a completely new idea, or respond to musical ideas already being played. The initiate option requires musicians to produce, in real time, an unprecedented musical idea. In the following extract (Wilson and MacDonald, 2015), the participant clearly outlines how they would like to introduce a new idea—the phrase “set the pace and the mood thereafter” concisely highlights that the music created should function as a new idea: “I made the decision to fill that gap after the big gesture and kind of set the pace and the mood thereafter.”

However, improvisers more often described responding to what was going on around them.

Adopt, Augment, or Contrast

If musicians choose to respond, then they are developing a musical idea already taking place. In this case, there are three different categories of possible decision. Improvisers may adopt an idea already in progress and incorporate it into their own playing. In the extract below, the phrase “we just all hit the squeakiness” describes the other trio members choosing to adopt a sound already in play.

Certainly at the end of it you can hear this sort of squeaky sound that I'm making, that's quite suggested from 1A's [object] squeaking, but then 1B's on it really quickly as well so we just all hit the squeakiness.

On the other hand, musicians may choose to adapt what is already being played, to modify it in some way rather than replicating it. This is the augment category; in the extract below, “building that idea” signals that the improviser is consciously augmenting or transforming some aspects of an idea that is in progress:

it's just building that idea and throwing in a few more textual anomalies. In keeping with what the guitars had been doing previously, really, with the long harmonics and the “bup bup bup” sort of stuff.

(5A)

Finally, improvisers may respond by offering contrast, consciously choosing to play something distinct from musical events already in progress, but complementing them in that person's view. For that person, this is not the same as introducing their own completely new idea; their options are narrowed and suggested by what someone else is doing. In the extract below, the distinction

between “the textures” and “undercurrent of burbling nonsense underneath” highlight the improvisational contrast.

that’s sort of leaving space for 3B to sit over the top of that with what she’s doing which is nice. So she’s providing the textures. We’re providing the undercurrent of burbling nonsense underneath it.

(3C)

In summary, this model stipulates that improvisers primarily select whether to maintain what they are doing or else change. Change involves choices either to initiate a new idea or to respond to already emerging music. If responding, this can be to adopt, augment, or contrast the contributions of the other participants. The model offers a different account of improvisation from that in existing literature. The improvisers’ choices suggest a focus on broader structural features of music as it emerges (for example, texture or rates of change) and as such has relevance for improvising in any genre. Indeed, it would be useful for future research to apply this model to different categories of improvising, such as bebop jazz or Indian classical music, for example. In the following section, we move on to consider how this broad model of improvising might influence wellbeing.

Improvisation Health and Wellbeing

Improvisation is a fundamental feature of music therapy, an established health profession using music within a therapeutic relationship to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs. Furthermore, improvisation offers an accessible and flexible type of music making that can be based around what clients can or wish to do. Music therapy is available for children and adults globally and is a growing profession with a well-established body of evidence to support its use across a wide range of domains (MacDonald, Kreutz, and Mitchell 2012). Music therapists’ work is predicated on a sensitive and highly nuanced understanding of music as communication, and improvisation is a vital part of this process (Wigram, 2004).

Pothoulaki, MacDonald, and Flowers (2012) report a music therapy intervention focused upon group improvisation in which individuals, all patients at a cancer hospice, attended weekly group music therapy sessions. Participants had little or no previous experience of playing music, and the sessions were focused upon group improvisations involving various instruments. Singing was also an important element. Interviews with all participants before and after the sessions highlighted that improvisation provided an environment wherein participants could communicate with each other in meaningful non-verbal ways. Musical improvisation allows connections to be made between people that may not be possible using spoken language that requires rules of syntax to be followed. Additionally, people with health problems can have difficulty expressing their thoughts and emotions explicitly but may find it possible to express them abstractly using musical improvisation. Engendering group cohesion was also a crucial component of the improvisation sessions, and participants discussed how improvisation helped achieve a positive group dynamic. Participants found the experience of group communication enjoyable and rewarding, noting that they could communicate together and at the same time. Speech requires turn taking, but in group improvising, many voices can be heard at once and people can express difficult and complex emotions in abstract ways and in unison. This separate channel of communication can be therapeutic for the participants. The deep and profound relationship that a skilled music therapist can develop with clients through improvisation thus is not developed around teaching music, but via the connections made through musical expression. Music is by nature abstract sound and therefore ambiguous; this allows anybody performing music to express profound emotions in abstract and ambiguous ways to therapeutic effect.

We published a review of research into improvisation for health and wellbeing (MacDonald and Wilson 2014). Within music therapy it has been suggested that improvisation may be able to produce reductions in stress and anxiety, improved communication, and joint attention behaviors in children with autistic spectrum disorders (Pavlicevic 2000). Images of the brain activity of jazz musicians improvising indicate reduced activity in the inhibiting region of the medial prefrontal cortex associated with self-expression (Limb and Braun 2008; though see Beaty 2015). This finding suggests improvisation provides opportunities for renegotiating a sense of self, including problematic selves (Tomaino 2013). Improvisation may have beneficial effects across numerous contexts because it provides creative and expressive links between conscious and unconscious processes. Many authors have suggested that improvisation can help images and thoughts to emerge from the unconscious and provide a means for individuals to explore aspects of self and identity within a safe and therapeutic context (Pavlicevic and Ansdell 2004). Procter (2016) and Seabrook (2017) suggest that therapeutic free improvisation can aid the manifestation and communication of inner states, unconscious conflicts, and repressed emotions. These features can help awareness of the relationship between unconscious processes and problems in everyday life. For example, individuals who are depressed often have low self-esteem, and patients with cancer or chronic conditions are often unable to perceive agency in their daily lives. These individuals can regain a sense of autonomy through improvisation (Erkkilä et al., 2012, Pothoulaki, MacDonald and Flowers, 2012; Van der Walt and Baron 2006; Metzner, 2010).

Improvisation also produces demands on attention and cognitive processes in terms of the particular type of non-verbal, social, and creative interaction involved; this may also produce beneficial effects (MacDonald and Wilson, 2014). Improvisation creates opportunities for creative, engaging, and unexpected interactions to occur; this can produce a heightened state of awareness, placing unique demands on attention and cognitive processes. Improvisation therefore provides absorption and immediate reward for social, psychological, and creative investment (MacDonald and Wilson, 2016). The attentional, social, and psychological engagement associated with improvising may also help distract and divert thoughts for those burdened with problems and/or pain, such as cancer patients (Pothoulaki, MacDonald, and Flowers 2012).

The unique communication features of improvisation also mean that it has the capacity for expressing difficult or repressed emotions without the need to articulate these verbally. Furthermore, co-participants negotiate in-the-moment the musical expressions and responses they create together. This experience has been shown to have positive effects for individuals with depression (Erkkilä et al. 2012), for bereaved adolescents (McFerran and Wigram 2005), and for patients receiving palliative care (Hartley 2000). One key feature is that improvisation provides individuals who have problems communicating verbally an opportunity to communicate without speaking (Gilbertson 2013; Næss and Ruud 2007; Gold et al. 2013). Kim, Wigram, and Gold (2009) suggest that children with ASD experiencing improvisational music therapy undergo social processes without being required to frame their thoughts in verbal language, and their motivational and interpersonal responses are thus facilitated. Thus, as a social and collaborative communication event, improvising offers opportunities to develop interactive engagement skills. Importantly, while improvisation is undertaken in music therapy for clinical purposes (that is, to form a therapeutic relationship not for educational and aesthetic reason), the process itself may produce health benefits to other populations beyond the clinical. MacDonald and Wilson (2014) propose a model outlining how musical improvisation can produce specific positive effects on health within the overall salutary effects of music.

This model emphasizes the importance of musical improvisation to facilitate access to the unconscious, to produce creative absorption and social interaction, and to facilitate emotional expression.

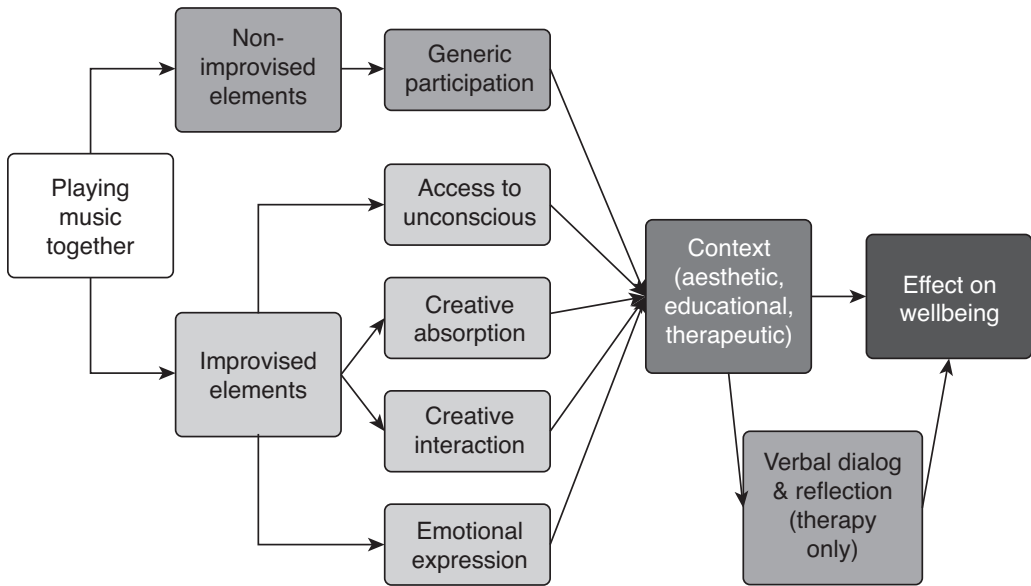


Figure 36.2 Model outlining how musical improvisation can produce positive effects²

Conclusion

This chapter has approached improvisation as a unique, accessible, and social form of collaborative creativity and as a fundamental aspect of contemporary music making. It has shown how musicians’ identities are constructed through talk and how talking about improvisation is a key part of jazz musicians’ identities. Improvisation overall is conceptualized as a series of decisions executed in real time. These decisions ensure the music is sustained and generative and enable performers to interact in real time. Conceptualizing improvisation in this way also offers a less daunting challenge to the novice improviser and a potential way around a “block” for creative practitioners. This model of improvisation is applicable across all forms of improvisation, and future research should test how it can inform understanding of improvisation in different types of music, or indeed in other art forms such as dance or theater. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the use of improvisation to promote health and wellbeing, highlighting that improvisation facilitates an engagement with unconscious processes and provides cognitive emotional and creative engagement within a social yet non-verbal context. It is for these reasons that improvisation may have beneficial effects upon wellbeing.

Improvisation can be conceptualized as a unique form of distributed creativity in that the creative acts of improvisation do not reside within the individual but rather are distributed among any group of people involved in an improvisational endeavor. Improvisation provides opportunities to challenge existing hegemonies and produce a democratization of shared musical processes. It has this potential as it is universally accessible and provides a context where novice improvisers can legitimately work alongside experienced virtuoso players with valid creative outcomes. Future research should seek to explore further the processes and outcomes of improvisation in contemporary cross-disciplinary practice. Importantly, if broader definitions of improvisation, such as have been proposed in this chapter, are adopted, this could open new career opportunities for jazz musicians. Jazz musicians’ identities and professional practice are related to their understanding of improvisation, and jazz musicians have advanced technical skills within improvisatory situations.

Harnessing these skills within broader contexts (for example, early years music, health, and well-being and community music contexts) could open up new vistas of employment opportunities, career-enhancing situations, and life-changing experiences for musicians who often struggle to exercise the full scope of their vast improvisational skills in lifelong employment.

Notes

1. Reproduced from: Wilson and MacDonald (2015) Musical choices during group free improvisation. *Psychology of Music*, 44(5), 1029–1043. doi:10.1177/0305735615606527
2. Reproduced from: R. MacDonald and G. Wilson. (2014) Improvisation, health and wellbeing: A review. *Psychology of Well-Being* 4(20) doi:10.1186/s13612-014-0020-9 www.psywb.com/content/4/1/20

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FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Jazz and Everyday Aesthetics

Nicholas Gebhardt

“We were living at the time in a tiny ground floor apartment in which I was trying to write,” recalls Ralph Ellison in *Living With Music* (Ellison 2002, 3–14), his autobiographical account of Harlem in the early 1950s. “I say ‘trying’ advisedly,” he continues.

To our right, separated by a thin wall, was a small restaurant with a juke box the size of the Roxy. To our left, a night-employed swing enthusiast who took his lullaby music so loud that every morning promptly at nine [Count] Basie’s brassy started blasting my typewriter off its stand. Our living room looked out across a small backyard to a rough stone wall to an apartment building which, towering above, caught every passing thoroughfare sound and rifled it straight down to me. There were also howling cats and barking dogs, none capable of music worth living with, so we’ll pass them by.

(ibid., 4)

By focusing on the multitude of sounds and songs, rhythms, and riffs, voices and vocations that characterized his particular neighborhood, Ellison’s essay explores music’s everyday meaning: how it comes to define the places we inhabit, the things we do, our view of the world, and the people we know and engage with on a daily basis. He charts the changing relationship between his musical values and his day-to-day routines and habits, including working, conversing with family and friends, making trips to the store, looking out the window, or listening to a record. For him, music is inseparable from our sense of social being; it speaks to questions of who we are and what our lives have come to mean. It heightens our quarrels just as easily as it can heal old wounds. It marks the processes of growing up, settling down, and growing old by carrying within it echoes of lost time and dreams of escape.

Ellison’s sketch provides a useful starting point for thinking about everyday aesthetics in the context of jazz studies. His meditation on the problems of reconciling his own aesthetic values with those of his noisy neighbors raises some fundamental questions about how we account for our experiences of the music in terms of concepts such as the familiar, the ordinary, the vernacular, and the commonplace. His evocation of everyday life, with its uneven, fluid, and varied musical landscapes, opens onto a different sense of jazz’s history that is subterranean and dispersed, as focused on the uneventful in our lives as much as it is about the unremarkable. In this chapter, I want to discuss how this everyday sense of jazz shapes our perception of its value, and what this can tell us about why the music matters to people, as well as how it comes to matter to them.

Everyday Life

Everyday life became a major theme for philosophers, ethnographers, historians, sociologists, cultural theorists, and artists in the early twentieth century, and it continues to inform some of the most important debates in all of these fields (Highmore 2002). The use of the term, however, is often vague and paradoxical. It has been applied, on the one hand, to experiences that are common to everyone, such as eating, sleeping, walking or talking; on the other hand, it is used to describe social practices that are somehow excluded from or in some way resist incorporation into the standard narratives of modern life. Philosopher Henri Lefebvre sums the problem up nicely. “Everyday life,” he argues, is defined by

“what is left over” after all distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities have been singled out by analysis. . . . Considered in their specialization and their technicality, superior activities leave a “technical vacuum” between one another which is filled up by everyday life. Everyday life is profoundly related to all activities and encompasses them with all their differences and their conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond, their common ground. And it is in everyday life that the sum total of relations which make the human—and every human being—a whole takes its shape and its form. In it are expressed and fulfilled those relations which bring into play the totality of the real, albeit in a certain manner which is always partial and incomplete: friendship, comradeship, love, the need to communicate, play.

(Lefebvre 1991, 97)

Much of the debate about the meaning and significance of everyday life focuses on finding ways of registering its openness, ambiguity, and indeterminacy, without undermining the specific qualities and practices that have come to define it. Given its elusiveness, however, this is an especially challenging task. After several years of studying the “obscure heroes” of the ephemeral, those “walking in the city, inhabitants of neighborhoods, readers and dreamers,” Michel de Certeau and Luce Giard conclude that we hardly know anything about the lives of these people all. It is difficult to make sense of “the types of operations at stake in [their] ordinary practices, their registers and their combinations,” they point out, “because our instruments of analysis, modeling, and formalization were constructed for other objects and with other aims” (de Certeau, Giard, and Mayol 1998, 256). Studying ordinary culture, in their view, is first of all “a practical science of the singular, which takes in reverse our thinking habits in which scientific rationality is knowledge of the general, an abstraction made from the circumstantial and the accidental” (*ibid.*, 256).

Music and Everyday Life

There have been a number of influential studies of the relationship between music and everyday life over the last few decades. Sociologists such as Simon Frith and Tia DeNora have explored the value that listeners attach to music and how it shapes their individual and collective identities. According to Frith, “music gives us a way of being in the world, a way of making sense of it” (Frith, 1996, 272). He writes that it is particularly important to our sense of self because of its

unique emotional intensity—we absorb songs into our own lives and rhythm into our own bodies. . . . Music, we could say, provides us with an intensely subjective sense of being sociable . . . it articulates and offers immediate experience of collective identity.

(ibid., 273)

DeNora underlines this aspect of musical experience, too, through her study of ways in which different groups of women in the United Kingdom and the United States engage with, and use, music in their lives. She concentrates on the intimate connections that her subjects have developed with music, from its value as a mode of understanding, to its use as a therapeutic resource for health and wellbeing. Ultimately, music functions in her analysis as a medium for the construction of social reality; it speaks to our consciousness of self and society, as well as defining the limits of our bodily conduct and collective agency (DeNora 2000, 151–163).

Ethnomusicologists have undertaken similar studies. Crafts, Cavicchi, and Keil, for example, highlight the multiple contexts in which musical experiences take shape and the complex ways in which different social groups locate music's value and meaning in everyday activities (Crafts, Cavicchi, and Keil 1993). Their study of people ranging from 4 to 83 years old in the United States reveals the intricate and variable roles that music plays in people's lives, and the authors offer a rich medley of insights into how music structures their subjects' daily life. Even as he addresses similar questions of music's value and meaning, Ronald Radano develops a very different perspective on the ordinary dimensions of musical experience in his analysis of the Muzak Corporation. Rather than offer an interpretation of the musical object, Radano proposes a shift in our focus towards the listener, in order to understand the ways in which Muzak has reshaped our sonic environments and, in turn, recalibrated our experience of the everyday (Radano 1989, 449).

The ubiquity of prerecorded background music in public spaces such as shopping malls, airports, hotels, cafes, and offices signals a fundamental transformation in our relationship to the main sources of musical value and cultural authority. "Today," Radano writes,

individuals commonly develop musical taste not from private or institutional instruction but from listening to the radio and Music Television [and other electronic media]; accordingly, taste finds its form in the offerings of the culture industry and the listening practices that have developed during the age of recording.

(ibid., 457)

These changes to our listening practices and sonic environments are so profound that the older models of musical analysis and interpretation seem largely irrelevant. Instead of denouncing its effects on everyday life, he proposes that we develop a different approach, which begins to explore "the varieties of meanings these modes of production encourage and in turn the kinds of musical forms they inspire" (*ibid.*, 458).

Music psychologists have also undertaken numerous studies of people's subjective experience of music in daily situations, including gyms, churches, schools, and other public spaces, in order to better understand the ways in which music affects emotional states, shapes our perception of the world, and enhances subjective identification. Their approach aims to capture the richness and diversity of everyday musical experience while also taking into account the social context in which music listening occurs and the meanings the people attach to it. In a wide-ranging survey, Sloboda, O'Neill, and Ivaldi (2001) report that among their respondents, music as a cue to reminiscence (nostalgia) was the single most frequently cited use. "The activities which music accompanied," they point out,

were predominantly domestic or solitary, and included doing housework, studying, driving, resting. Indeed some respondents made a point of qualifying their use of music (for example "the car is the only place where I can listen to it loud enough without annoying other people"). Several respondents made explicit links between activities/contexts and their psychological functions (for example on arrival home from work "music lifts the stress of work: it has an immediate healing effect"). In other cases, a clear and almost

unbridgeable gap was implied between the private world where music can be part of a deeply personal “emotional repair process” and the public world where appearances must be kept up.

(Sloboda, O'Neill, and Ivaldi 2001, 13)

A notable theme in many of these studies is that music is rarely the primary focus of people's day-to-day activities. Participants frequently talk about doing something else, such as housework or traveling or eating out, with music as the accompaniment to that activity (ibid., 22).

Everyday Aesthetics

Since at least the eighteenth century, the field of aesthetics has been concerned primarily with the experience of natural beauty and works of fine art. The term “everyday aesthetics” refers to a recent movement among philosophers and cultural theorists that questions this preoccupation and explores instead the possibility of an aesthetic experience related to daily activities, feelings, affects, and objects (Irvin 2008, 29–44). Scholars who focus on the concept also raise important questions about the cultural and political purpose of longstanding aesthetic distinctions, particularly those that currently stand between the fine and popular arts and between aesthetic and non-aesthetic experiences, and they seek to challenge many of our assumptions about what counts as a work of art. John Dewey's *Art as Experience* is a founding text for many of the thinkers and artists who make up this movement, especially his claim that “the esthetic is no intruder in experience from without, whether by way of idle luxury or transcendent reality, but . . . is the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to normally complete experience” (Dewey 1934, 48). Furthermore, for Dewey, because human experience is cultural and historical, art is fundamentally a social practice. Aesthetic understanding, he argues, emerges from creative processes, not independently of them; art, in its form, “unites the very same relation of doing and undoing, outgoing and incoming energy, that makes experience to be experience” (ibid., 50).

Although Dewey remains a key reference point for anyone engaged with these kinds of issues, there are also connections to continental philosophers such as Husserl, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger, the ordinary language philosophy pioneered by J. L. Austin, and the ethnography developed in France by Marcel Mauss. Collectively, these thinkers speak to an interpretive practice that aims to get back to the things themselves by locating meaning and truth in the particular and the ordinary. Their ambition was to develop a science of the concrete by exploring the logic of common sense words and everyday actions, and thus return our understanding of experience to the core of human existence (Cavell 1988, 153–178; Stewart 2007). As Mauss observed in the 1920s, a tin can “characterizes our societies better than the most sumptuous jewel or the rarest stamp” (Mauss quoted in Fournier 2006, 277). Such shifts in perspective involve us in a profound (and ongoing) process of revaluing our cultural practices and values, especially our relations to the forms and contents of everyday objects and events, along with the terms by which we account for their significance in our lives. This raises several questions: what connects aesthetic sensibility to our everyday lives? How can we know what counts as an aesthetic experience in this context? And how does everyday life give rise to, or provide the basis for, an aesthetic expression or experience?

Friends and Neighbors

Try to imagine what it was like to visit saxophonist Ornette Coleman's loft apartment in SoHo in the early 1970s. There were countless people coming and going, and many of them were involved in one way or another with the performances of music and dance that Coleman was hosting there

most days (Heller 2017, 34–35). The numerous performers and friends who stayed in the loft recollect what a special place it was, and not just for musicians and other artists who gravitated towards its supportive atmosphere, but also for locals who drifted in and out of the space. “We would arrive in New York from Sweden every year and my dad [trumpeter Don Cherry] would head off to see Ornette almost as soon as we landed,” the singer Neneh Cherry recalled.

It [the loft] was a special place—a hub for musicians and poets and artists. Very free, very open. A lot of my memories come from the time—watching them play together, listening to them rehearse, always this music being made. . . . Around the time that (the album) *Friends and Neighbors* (Coleman 1970) was recorded, my mother made a tapestry that hung behind Ornette’s group as they performed. It hangs on a wall of our house in Sweden now. I remember we’d turn up sometimes and Ornette would be there alone, with just his saxophone and his music on the stand, always practicing.

(Cherry 2015)

Throughout the 1960s, Coleman had made several attempts to take control of his own financial affairs and secure some degree of artistic autonomy in the face of what he saw as the deeply ingrained racism and exploitative practices of the music industry. “I don’t feel healthy about the performing world anymore at all,” Coleman explained to fellow musician Arthur Taylor.

I think it’s an egotistical world; it’s about clothes and money, not about music. I’d like to get out of it, but I don’t have the financial situation to do so. I have come to enjoy writing music because you don’t have that performing image. . . . I don’t want to be a puppet and be told what to do and what not to do.

(Taylor 1993, 35)

This dissatisfaction and frustration led him to think about alternatives for creating and presenting his music, and the possibilities for fostering a community of artists who could make a living outside of the established circuits of wealth, power, and ownership that for him characterized American society.

One alternative that emerged for him during this period related to property. In April 1968, Coleman was part of a group that obtained a seven-story building on 131 Princes Street (Shoemaker 2018, 125). Initially, he acquired the second and third floors of the building, and then later on, he agreed to take over the first floor for his own projects (McRae 1988, 56). He envisaged the loft as an independent performance venue for improvised music and experimental dance, an exhibition space and a meeting place for musicians, writers, visual artists, poets, critics, and filmmakers, and a neighborhood space, that was open to anyone. To this end, he encouraged people to rehearse, perform, and record there at all hours of the day and night. The atmosphere was informal, it was decorated with African décor and original paintings and tapestries, and at any one time, there were friends and relatives living in the apartment with Coleman. Audiences attending the concerts were not asked to pay or make donations, although they often left other artistic works as gifts (as Neneh Cherry’s mother did), and all the events held there were based on the same principles of self-sufficiency that had formed the basis for some of Coleman’s earlier concert experiments in the mid-1960s (Litweiler 1984, 53; Litweiler 1994, 138–139).

Several firsthand reports confirm the importance of the loft, referring to it as a meeting place for a new generation of African America improvisers and composers, many of whom were struggling to establish themselves in New York, as well as other key figures in the musical and artistic

avant-garde. In an interview in 1978, the violinist Leroy Jenkins recalled that when he first arrived in New York from Chicago in the early 1970s,

[W]e stayed downstairs at Ornette's Artist House, which at the time wasn't decorated. It was cold down there, where we slept. Ornette gave us a mattress but he didn't realize how cold it was. One night something happened and he came downstairs to wake us up. He said, "Wow, your cats better come upstairs . . . I spent three months up there, staying at his house, doing everything. Answering the door, helping him copy music, arguing about his harmolodic theory.

(quoted in Primark 1979, 24, 50)

It offered them a context in which to negotiate the particular and often daunting problems presented by the New York artistic world (finding a place to live, meeting other musicians, making friends, covering living expenses, finding work, and so on), but also a place in which they began to find their way to a sense of what their (the new) music meant to them (Lewis 2008, 325–388). "Ornette would give out the space to musicians," remembers drummer Rashid Ali.

It wasn't even about renting the space. He would give it to you for almost nothing. We would produce and perform our own concerts there. We were the producer, the performer, did all the legwork, the P.R. work and everything like that in order to get people to come.

(quoted in Heller, *op. cit.* 35)

The most detailed account of the loft comes from a Japanese journalist, Kiyoashi Koyama. His feature article, "Ornette at Prince Street," was published in Tokyo, in the October 1969 issue of *Swing Journal*, and contains a wealth of detail about the living space, several striking photographs of Coleman playing billiards, rehearsing, and working, as well as a description of a rehearsal with Ed Blackwell, Don Cherry, Charlie Haden, and Dewey Redman. "When we visited," Koyama writes,

Ornette's home was still being remodeled. He bought it last April, and his architect friend is turning the third floor into a loft apartment. Underneath the window facing Prince Street are a pool table, a stereo, and a desk for composing. In the middle of 3500 square foot room there is a large table, while on the other side there is Ornette's bed, a sauna, and a shelf with tapes and records. The kitchen, still under construction, is surrounded by a mazelike group of walls. The whole set-up feels a lot like an art gallery. Even the elevator door is a piece of art!

(Koyama quoted in Edwards and Whately 2015)

The loft was not without its problems, however. Coleman had acquired the building early on in the phase of loft conversions in SoHo, before New York City officials had established how these buildings would be regulated. John Snyder, who was Coleman's lawyer at the time, recalls that

he had bought two floors in the building, and it was not really set up legally correct. So he got into a lot of disputes with his neighbors over noise. He said he owned his spaces, he could do what he wanted, which was not entirely the case.

(quoted in Litweiler 1994, 154)

After Coleman was evicted from the bottom floor of the Artist House, following legal action by other owners, it became Snyder's job to prevent his eviction from the second floor. What had

begun as a utopian vision of a community living and creating together ended when Coleman abandoned the loft altogether in the mid-1970s (ibid., 154–155).

What has always interested me about this account is the tension between the optimistic title of the recording he made in the loft in 1970—*Friends and Neighbors*—and Snyder’s somewhat resigned comment that Coleman “got into a lot of disputes with his neighbors over noise.” Every time I listen to the record and look at the photos of Coleman’s home in that period, I find myself coming back to a comment in Jacques Attali’s book *Noise*, about the politics of contemporary music:

Free jazz . . . created locally the conditions for a different model of musical production, a new music. But since this noise was not inscribed on the same level as the messages circulating in the network of repetition, it could not make itself heard.

(Attali 1985, 140)

As we know from Ellison’s account, there is nothing so ordinary as a neighborly dispute about noise. But who were Coleman’s neighbors that they objected to his music? Were they the same neighbors who joyfully sing along with Coleman on the first track of the recording? Were his friends and neighbors the same people? And when they complained about the noise, was it because they were fed up, unable to sleep, on edge, or simply unhappy about living next to a group of musicians? And what was the problem with what they heard? Was the music too loud, or was there something else going on? One of his neighbors was a composer, Emmanuel Ghent, with whom Coleman collaborated on several occasions, so it’s safe to assume he was not involved in the complaint (Hayes and Whately, op. cit.). Who were these others, though, who felt that the activities taking place on Coleman’s floors were in some way at odds with their own day-to-day existence?

There are no easy answers to these questions. As far as I can tell, no one who visited the Artist House in this period thought to ask Coleman or his neighbors about these issues, and his biographers have devoted only one or two pages at most to the history of the loft. There were a number of reviews of the concert series that Coleman produced there, under the title “New and Newer Music,” but it was rare for the reviewers (even the most sympathetic, such as John Rockwell or Robert Palmer) to display any significant interest in what was most ordinary or uneventful about these events (and when they do, it was accidental: they were simply setting the scene for their reviews). While thousands of words have been devoted to documenting and explaining the studio-backed 1961 recording, *Free Jazz* (Coleman 1961), hardly a critic has found a way to say anything interesting or insightful about the self-produced *Friends and Neighbors*, other than to note its presence in Coleman’s discography and comment on the unusual context for its production (Jost 1994, 65; Litweiler 1994, 137).

In some ways, this lack of critical interest in the loft indicates the difficulty of chronicling musicians’ lives without focusing solely on those sensational or unconventional aspects that remain the focus for many biographers (sexuality, addiction, violence, and so on), let alone finding an adequate set of critical and conceptual terms with which to make sense of the everyday contexts for their musical practices (Lewis 2008, 353–370). Elsewhere in his book Attali notes that “in noise can be read the codes of life, the relations among men [*sic*]” (ibid., 6). If we take Coleman’s disputes with his neighbors as more than just an isolated incident, but involving the problem of living and playing music with others, then *Friends and Neighbors* assumes a new significance in our understanding of post-1960s jazz. This is a point that Edwards and Whately highlight in their article as well, when they note that Wilmer’s iconic photo of Coleman rehearsing with Dewey Redman, Ed Blackwell, and Charlie Haden is a memorable image,

not only because it captures the warmth and commiseration of the men’s working relationship, but also because it seems to imply a link between that collaborative spirit and

the setting—as though that relaxed intensity was engendered by, or flourished in, the stark, open atmosphere of a prototypical loft, airy and unadorned.

(*Edwards and Whately, op. cit.*)

In the nine years between the release of *Free Jazz* and the recording of *Friends and Neighbors* in his loft, Coleman was primarily focused on securing a social space in which jazz was supported as a distinctive art form and creating a situation within which African American jazz musicians were acknowledged and respected for their contribution to American culture. In an interview with the journalist A. B. Spellman, a few years before he acquired the loft, Coleman remarked that the “insanity of living in America is that ownership is really strength. It’s who owns who’s strongest in America. It’s strategic living” (Coleman cited in Spellman 1985, 131). The reconstruction of downtown New York seemed to present just this sort of strategic opportunity for him and his many collaborators, especially those who were interested in the emerging forms of avant-garde and experimental music that were taking shape in New York in this period (Rockwell 1997).

As a number of influential studies have shown, beginning with Amiri Baraka’s (LeRoi Jones) 1963 essay on the downtown loft scene (Jones 1971; Lewis 2008), the opening up of former factory buildings or warehouses for use by artists became an integral part of jazz cultures in New York from the early 1960s and was inseparable from the immense changes in urban space that were transforming the whole city in this period (Harvey 1999). SoHo was an exemplary case in this regard, because the city’s planners and developers did not consciously set out to attract performing and visual artists to the area (Zukin 1989). The loft scene emerged in the vacuum left by the protracted debates about the proposed redevelopment of lower Manhattan. The two decades of uncertainty about the plans for the area resulted in serious disinvestment, as tenants moved out, landlords ceased maintenance of their buildings, and squatters and drug users moved in (Heller, *op. cit.*, 28). However, once groups of artists started to make use of these spaces, urban regeneration through the arts became part of a coordinated citywide project of revitalizing old industrial sites as objects for new forms of capital investment. What these studies demonstrate above all is that the emergence of the loft scene in SoHo involved a fundamental re-positioning of the social spaces and relations of artistic production that would have profound implications for musicians throughout the city (Lewis, *op. cit.*).

Friends and Neighbors was conceived in many ways as a response to this process and proposes, to some degree, a temporary solution. Each of the pieces on the recording oscillates between the abstract and concrete, the personal and the impersonal, and the local and the global, without the performers trying to resolve their performances in either direction. The opening sing-along, one of two title tracks, begins with Charlie Haden’s funk-inspired bass riff (F G G F G B ♭ G–1), and then the voices enter: “Friends and neighbors that’s where it’s at; friends and neighbors that’s where it’s at; friends and neighbors that’s a rap; hand in hand that’s the score; all the world, small, small, small . . . Ow!” The chant echoes songs such as “It’s a Small World After All” or the “Sesame Street Theme Song” and acts as the signature tune for the collective claims of the Artist House as a neighborhood space. At the same time, the song parodies not just a folksy community song but also sounds like an advertising jingle, so it is not at all clear what kind of community the people gathered for the recording are aiming to produce. The chant is then enfolded within, and transformed by, a dense and relentless sequence of motivic associations and sound manipulations that develop between Haden on bass, Dewey Redman on tenor saxophone, Coleman on alto saxophone, violin, and trumpet, and Ed Blackwell on drums. In the final section, the friends and neighbors return with a renewed sense of the homeliness or ordinariness of the artistic space: “friends and neighbors, that’s where it’s at . . . etc.” The questions that this opening track sets up (and which the rest of the album goes on to explore) are the problems involved in the transformation of a highly localized moment of collective practice—that specific group of people performing

at that particular moment and in that place—into an abstract musical commodity (the recording) produced for global consumption.

What I want to suggest is that we can really only start to make sense of this recording once we focus on the series of mediations at work within it; that is, the movement from the everyday experiences of the people who lived and worked at Coleman's loft, to the processes of urban regeneration taking place in Manhattan's downtown areas, and, then, to the increasingly dominant role played by finance capital on Wall Street (Jameson 1998, 136–161). Those uneventful or ordinary periods of time (hours, days, weeks . . .) in between performances or gatherings in the loft, when people were simply talking, eating, sleeping, listening to one another practice, making a tapestry, hanging out together, or playing pool, were critical to the form of the music they created there, and why it was important to them (Abrahams 2005, 83–95).

This leads me, finally, to an important comparison. In my view, *Free Jazz* was Coleman's attempt to disconnect the most rudimentary elements of music—tone, timbre, harmony, melody, rhythm—from their associations with the exploitative, yet intimate world of jazz clubs, bars, juke joints, restaurants, hotels, and recording studios that jazz musicians mostly relied on for their livelihood. The use of Jackson Pollock's 1954 painting *White Light* on the cover of the recording signaled this shift as much as anything we hear on the recording. Almost a decade later, *Friends and Neighbors* offers a very different understanding of jazz's meaning and value. By blurring the boundaries between who is performing for whom, the recording forces us back into that world, in order to deal with its contradictions and its limitations, but also to identify its possibilities. The larger point here is that along with the help of his friends and his neighbors, Coleman was attempting to reconceive of jazz as a musical practice that was continuous with, rather than distinct from, everyday life; it was music arising not from the separate activity of artists who renounce their relationship to the world, but from within the attempt to live with, and by, the noise of others. As Ellison so eloquently puts it, "in those days it was either live with music, or die with noise. And we chose rather desperately to live" (Ellison op. cit., 3).

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PART VI

New Directions and Debates



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“THE REASON I PLAY THE WAY I DO IS”

Jazzmen, Emotion, and Creating in Jazz

Nichole Rustin-Paschal

The most consistently flagged characteristic of jazz is that of the musician communicating emotions through his chosen instrument, that instrument a conduit of feeling improvised into sound in the moment. “Jazz music is born of emotion. . . . In jazz, emotion comes first; musical form is subservient to it,” is a common sentiment expressed in jazz literature, both popular and academic (Reger 1964). Jazzmen, those who have aligned their whole lives with the music, have used the language of emotion to categorize musicians, to define acceptable music behaviors, and to grade musicians’ expressivity. These behaviors and value judgments were shaped by competing inter- and intraracial expectations of music as a social practice, as an opportunity for expressions of individuality, and as a representation of cultural traditions. The emotions have become both a critical and aesthetic language used to capture the uniqueness of jazz as music, a culture, and a political worldview. Despite the prevalence of the trope of emotion in jazz, little effort has been made to parse through how it has been used in the culture. In this chapter, I explore these ideas through discussion of Hazel Scott, Lena Horne, Charles Mingus, and Jimmy Guiffre.

The language of emotion is fundamentally about gender in jazz culture. By listening to how jazzmen describe their feelings, describe their interactions with one another, and describe the music, we hear them talk about jazzmasculinity, an “ethos of male camaraderie . . . , a model for behavior on the bandstand, and an ethos for artistic growth in a friendly yet competitive atmosphere (Porter 2002).” Further, by understanding that “race is everywhere in music,” we talk about racialized jazzmasculinity, shaping a culture marked by “the ambiguity of men reproducing men without women (Carby 1998),” despite the culture’s historical roots among blues women singers (Carby 1998; Porter 2002). In the postwar period, the racialization of that gendered context intensified as associations between race, creativity, and oppositionality were linked with black men primarily, white men secondarily, and women not at all (Feldstein 2005, Feldstein 2013, Tucker 1996–1997).

I explore this story of women’s exclusion by focusing on the experiences of Hazel Scott and Lena Horne at Café Society in the 1940s. Representing the intersection of jazzmasculinity and race womanhood, Scott and Horne illustrate how black middle-class women artists understood themselves to be speaking to and for black experience and emotion. In the predominately male music scene of New York in the forties, female instrumentalists, white or black, were heavily scrutinized, and their femininity was often read as a measure of their lack of musical knowledge, skill, and authenticity (Erenberg 1998; Tucker 2000). And yet pianist Hazel Scott found a home at Café Society Downtown, “jazzing the classics” and mastering “boogie-woogie,” a piano style that had emerged in the late nineteenth century (Holt 1945; Gioia 1997; Ulanov 1952; Ulanov 1958; Gitler

1983; Hairston 2009). Critic Leonard Feather explains that Scott maintained aesthetic integrity while simultaneously appealing to a wide audience because what she offered was “not aimed solely at the jazz specialists. . . . [S]he has learned how to combine an innate musicianship and orthodox technique with an unusually commercial quality which is aural as well as visual (Feather 1942).” Feather praises Scott’s technical skill, her awareness of the demands of commercial appeal, and her nuanced understanding of the relationship of jazz to other music. Scott’s appreciation of these characteristics of jazz masculinity, including the recognition of jazz both as a business and a form of work, positioned her to chart a career as a successful soloist.

Scott relied on a proliferating discourse of racialized and feminized genius, the story of her start as a child prodigy, to counter reviewers who found her style too gimmicky and lacking in understanding of classical music. They are as scathing in their interpretation of her talent as LeRoi Jones had been when he claimed that the emotionality of her music was inauthentic and laughable, writing that her performance was like a crude “kind of modern minstrelsy.” Unlike Billie Holiday, Scott did not remain in the streets, but sought the affirmation of middle-class whites (Jones 1963).

As Scott matured from precocious talent to *femme fatale*, the increased attention on her femininity and sexuality illustrates both the limited language for women’s musical genius and an increasing conservatism around gender during the postwar period. Scott’s femininity made her a relatable and accessible star. She was “sweet and hot,” and her inexpensive strapless evening gowns, which she called her “overalls,” a term more associated with work than feminine vanity, provided an enticing display. Her sensuality enhanced the physicality of her performance.

All the lights would go out, Hazel would make her way to the piano, and then suddenly a spotlight would catch her. For a moment the audience would gasp, because it looked as if she were seated there nude—the height of the piano, the bare-shouldered dress, nothing but the golden-brown shoulders and arms, the super-talented fingers.

(Hawes 1940; Powell 2002)

Lena Horne, unrivaled in her role as glamorous race woman and “a respectable sex symbol,” was also featured at Café Society (Feldstein 2013). The relationship between Horne and Scott makes clear the minefields racially conscious women faced making their way as artists in New York during the 1940s (Griffin 2013; Rustin 2005).

Though Scott and Horne were featured separately at the two Café Society nightclubs—one downtown, the other uptown—the animosity and competition between them was a public secret. And, according to Horne, “Hazel and I . . . we’d go to hear Billie [Holiday] together, and that’s one time we would settle down and not fight. Because here was this voice speaking for the people” (Denning 1996). The “original ‘woman singer’” at Café Society, Holiday had paved the way for both Scott and Horne. Her status as race woman was solidified with her 1939 performance of “Strange Fruit,” a song that articulated the heartache, despair, and anger that black communities experienced because of lynching. Her music made that racialized experience accessible so that a broader audience could feel outrage. Holiday exuded authority, femininity, and emotion. Her voice was an instrument finely tuned to the racial, gender, and musical registers of her times. Scott and Horne emulated Holiday in ways that affirmed their identities both as jazzmen and race women. But their individual efforts to inhabit those identities created tensions between them, providing insight into the pressures they each faced as a performer.

In her autobiography, Horne acknowledging that her development as a singer had as much to do with the quality of the musicians she worked with as it did with her changing political and racial consciousness and her parental responsibilities. Integration made for a better and happier performer, one who could emote freely through song and engage the audience as participants in the performance. She attributed that change partially to Barney Josephson, grateful for his willingness

to challenge the status quo; his integrated clubs reflected his recognition of "the true meaning of democracy. He understood that he could not enjoy democracy fully so long as anyone else was denied its blessings." She credited the change in her style to learning

to stop lumping everybody into a group and to recognize that people were individuals, irrespective of color, I loosened up when I sang. I was no longer singing to a roomful of enemies. . . . I was beginning to sing to them as much because I was learning to like them and wanted them to enjoy my performances as because I had to eat.

(Horne 1965, 177, 178–179, 192)

At Josephson's behest, Horne began incorporating more "blues" into her repertoire. But he remained concerned about her ability to project racial authenticity, sending her to Holiday for instruction. He believed that if Horne acted "more black," she'd become a better performer, whereas Horne felt that she was already performing a blackness that interpreted and expressed her experiences in both integrated and segregated spaces.

In telling of her own coming of age as a jazzman and race woman, Hazel Scott freely admits that she "worshipped" Holiday, even down to modeling her singing style after her. Scott first heard Holiday when she was 14, when Holiday was performing with Ralph Cooper's band at the Apollo. "I couldn't believe the way she sounded. I had never heard anything like it in my life." Scott's mother, Alma, and Holiday were close friends. As Scott recalls, Holiday "would be sitting in the kitchen talking to mama, and they would chase me away. She was closer to my age than she was to my mother's, but she was a woman already and I was still a kid" (Taylor 1977). In *Lady Sings the Blues*, Holiday takes credit for both launching Scott's career and striking a blow at inequality at Café Society.

Holiday's account underscores the persistent fact of color prejudice at Café Society. By supporting Scott, she forces Josephson to acknowledge the privilege accorded black women who fit an ideal of beauty akin to that of white women and the limitations that black women labored under because of those prejudices. Holiday, again "speaking for the people," draws on her own capital as a jazzman and race woman to make the case for Scott. She constructs Scott as an innocent, "a little girl in with her mother," wearing a "pink mammy-made dress," but one with talent, one who has been denied an opportunity because of color.

The juxtaposition of Josephson's attraction to Horne and his initial dismissal of Scott is a telling reminder of how differently the two women experienced their femininity and how the conditions of their work became embodied in their identities and performances. Josephson tells Horne he wants to mark her: "I want people to know who you are. Let me present you as a Negro performer." He requires her to introduce the blues into her repertoire, "because the people sitting out front, the white people, won't be sure what you are. When you sing the blues they'll think, well, I guess she is [black]" (Josephson 2009). Color prejudice undoubtedly privileged Horne and disadvantaged Scott. Lighter skin provided Horne with opportunity; her politics radicalized her art and gave her a way of being black in an integrated setting. For Scott, a certified genius, color nearly derailed the launch of her career.

For some, emotion in jazz culture reveals evidence of traits typically associated with masculinity, including authority, creativity, truth-telling, self-determination, and authenticity. Emotions also included so-called feminine feelings of love, vulnerability, and melancholy. The language of "emotions," music, allowed for a collective, ever-evolving political language, capable of wrestling with the meaning of the contemporary moment. The shorthand of "emotion" circulates in and through jazz culture primarily as a term inclusive of subjectivity and experience, rather than of physiological expressions of feeling (Rustin 2017; Meyer 1961; Livingston 1997). Jazzmen's emotions are often richly imagined feelings of community, wellbeing, and selfhood. Though

jazzmen used the language of emotion to describe what they valued about jazz music, musicians, and culture in terms of “feeling,” the word “feeling” was usually intended as a “terminological variant” of emotion (Nussbaum 2001). Jazzmen like Mingus described emotion through bodily effects when, at specific moments in their personal experience, the music came alive for them emotionally and intellectually. For others, bodily feeling marked jazz as a site of the primitive and of unmediated expression. Despite these warring conceptions, both camps viewed jazz as key for an individual’s flourishing precisely because it articulated emotions and feelings that mainstream society diminished (Rustin 2017).

Mingus understood emotion as an expression of his ambitions as a composer and performer. As he grew more assured in his musical authority, he grew increasingly unwilling to make concessions with his art. In 1953 he commented that he’d “come to the point musically and personally, where I have to play the way I want to. I just can not compromise anymore” (Hentoff 1953). His ambitions were sometimes thwarted by his own actions, but more often than not he managed to create aural landscapes that spoke of his experience, his heart, and the world he knew.

Along with tongue-in-cheek descriptions of the recording process, damning takedowns of jazz critics, praise for the skill of his band members, and celebrations of his own genius, Mingus’s self-written liner notes often reproached jazz culture. He condemns a jazz audience who, by relying solely on the recommendations of critics, allows itself to be “brainwashed” rather than take responsibility itself for deciding what constitutes good music. “This means you need an analyst,” Mingus observes (Hentoff 1953). In fact, he invited his own analyst, Edmund Pollack, to contribute to the notes of *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady*, drawing connections with the same narrative issues that concerned him in *Beneath the Underdog*: time, music, and an individual’s fragmentation. Though initially reluctant, Pollack eventually embraces the opportunity, reasoning that his training in interpreting “behavior and/or ideas communicated by words and behavior” could be applied as well to music. Pollack sees the album as a plea, for “all mankind must unite in revolution against any society that restricts freedom and human rights (Mingus 1963).” In Mingus’s recording, he discerns the sounds of both an American society inching closer to achieving integration and an individual’s continuing emotional evolution. He also hears a religious statement, one in which ecstatic tears of anguish, depression, love, and joy are released. The variety of emotions expressed, he concludes, reveals an essential dynamic of Mingus’s personality. Mingus “feels intensely. . . . He cannot accept that he is alone, all by himself, he wants to love and be loved.” Pollack writes, “Inarticulate in words, he is gifted in musical expression which he constantly uses to articulate what he perceives, knows, feels (Mingus 1963).”

Bob Thiele produced both *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady* and *Mingus Plays Piano*, Mingus’s only solo piano album. He had signed Mingus after attending the 1962 Town Hall concert and Mingus’s performances at the Village Vanguard. Of the Vanguard performances, Thiele remarked that the “music . . . just had to be recorded (Thiele 1964).” What started out as an artistic match made in heaven, however, soon revealed conflict about who controlled the recording session. In *JAZZ* magazine, Mingus accused Thiele of losing a number of tapes that contained better cuts of the various tracks on *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady*. He reported spending a number of nights recomposing the missing music; when they had finished recording, the original tapes were then found. An outraged Thiele faulted Mingus in turn, belittling his professionalism and discipline. Thiele’s attacks, however, did not manage to refute the truth of Mingus’s claim, but rather underscored them.

During the contract negotiations with Impulse!, Mingus made extensive demands, knowing that it was rare for black jazzmen to be adequately compensated for their work. He never hesitated to draw attention to the inequities between musicians and those who profited off their music. Dannie Richmond explains Mingus’s position like this: “He felt exploited. If he worked for you, you were exploiting him. The money you paid him was never enough. Maybe it wasn’t”

(Gordon 1982, 106). When Mingus learned that Thiele was paid every two weeks, he demanded that a similar clause be added to his own contract. "I want to be like an executive—like a white man—I want to be paid every two weeks (Priestley 1982, 145)." As a professional in a world in which musicians depended on infrequent recording gigs, short runs at nightclubs, or long tours, a demand to be paid fairly and consistently could have been viewed as an assertion of dignity, but it struck Thiele as an aggressive display of Mingus's racial biases. "This was *my* first confrontation with certain of Mingus' *Negro and white* views." Thiele's disdain intensified as their working relationship deteriorated. He characterized Mingus as a race-baiter: "Mingus ranged from friendly tirades about the white oppressor—the a & r man in the booth? The engineer?" But described himself as a no-nonsense boss:

I took no BS from Mingus—without any question he sensed that I meant business—I was not interested in racial problems while actually at work in the studio; get to the job, do it well and be done with it.

(Thiele 1964; Priestley 1982)

Whether or not Thiele thought of himself as a racist, he embraced a discourse that valued black jazzmen as vessels for emotion but not as self-determining architects of creative and economically sustaining careers. Thiele reflected:

Perhaps his trouble is a deep-rooted hatred of white people—indeed in humanity itself? . . . I believe that his orchestrating ability is limited—and this, coupled with a strong admiration for Ellington, could be inflicting strong depressant factors on his psyche. Has he completely matured?

(Thiele 1964)

Though Thiele disliked having to serve as a "lay psychologist," he had no doubt that Mingus suffered from mental disturbances and was too needy. Mingus, he claimed, could not distinguish between a friendship and a professional relationship. Mingus was someone who "*needed* a friend and some guidance (Thiele 1964)." Despite his expressed concern about Mingus's supposed emotional instability, Thiele couldn't resist the chance to make a record that captured that emotionality for profit and posterity. Thiele's assessment differs wildly from Pollack's, who considered Mingus an advanced social subject, one who has been able to integrate the concentric sites of experience that are his daily life into his identity. The conflict between Mingus and Thiele echoes the disharmony within jazz culture, between the emotional expressivity demanded of jazzmen and the authority to make claims about that emotionality.

Mingus's desire for music without labels did not preclude him from understanding that what he was creating—and the traditions he drew on—were contributions to a distinctly black cultural project.

Jazz is still an ethnic music, fundamentally. Duke Ellington used to explain that this was a Negro music. He told that to me and Max Roach . . . and we felt good. When the society is straight, when people really are integrated, when they feel integrated, maybe you can have innovations coming from someplace else. But as of now, jazz is still our music, and we're still the ones who make the major changes in it.

(Walser 1998)

Mingus had a consuming interest in the complex social and personal negotiations required by integration. While he could claim that jazz is essentially an "ethnic music" and that only with

genuine integration would that change, it is not so clear that he believed that jazz was “race” music. Though Mingus challenged “race” as an identity, he nevertheless remained committed to a social politics and identity defined by race. He believed black musicians were owed economic and social debts. Jazz was not just black music, nor simply entertainment, nor art for art’s sake. It was rooted in a particular experience and reflected ways of being in the world. The twinned bogies of “race” and authenticity obscured the roles played by a deep knowledge about the music’s traditions and the disciplined musicianship required to develop emotional articulateness.

In his autobiography, *Raise Up Off Me*, pianist Hampton Hawes explains that

the reason I play the way I do is that I’m taking the years of being pushed off laps, denied love and holding in my natural instincts when I was a kid, of listening to the beautiful spirituals in my father’s church and going in the back doors of clubs to play for white audiences, of getting strung and burned in the streets and locked up in dungeons when I tried to find my way—taking all that natural bitterness and suppressed animal feeling out on the piano.

(Hawes 2001)

Eschewing labels for the music, except for good or bad, Hawes tells us that his music is inextricably linked to his experience from his youth, through his years on heroin, through his recovery. The music is him, revealing his becoming at each stage of Being. Like other black jazzmen, Hawes understood that to play with feeling was to play from experience, to craft emotionally resonant performances out of an understanding of the self. How, though, did white musicians and critics writing about white musicians approach the idea of emotion in narratives about their art, about becoming at each stage of Being?

In 1959, Lorin Stephens interviewed saxophonist, clarinetist, and composer Jimmy Giuffre for *The Jazz Review*. In introducing the interview, Stephens explained it would delve into the “impact of hipness in jazz,” and he expected the reader to “be moved by Jimmy Giuffre’s willingness to expose himself honestly in the interest of furthering understanding of jazz and the jazz artist” (Stephens 1960). The Dallas, TX-born Giuffre moved to Los Angeles in the mid-forties, after college and a stint in the Army. Giuffre had been a member of Howard Rumsey’s Lighthouse All Stars and had been featured on the CBS program “The Sound of Jazz” with his trio of Jim Hall on guitar and Jim Atlas on bass by the time of Stephen’s interview. Giuffre explained to host John Crosby that his music was “modern jazz,” a “mixture of happiness and sadness . . . I try to let the feeling or the flow of things get the last word over the mathematical. A big pool of feeling (Stephens 1960).”

Stephens opens the interview wondering why jazz musicians seem to fall under the sway of certain artists, like Charlie Parker, and completely change their styles in imitation of them. Stephens’s question echoed the complaints of many critics who believed that individuality was being sacrificed to mimicry. The result, critics feared, would be the existential death of jazz. Stephens asked, “do most musicians who pattern their ways after, say Sonny Rollins do so to achieve freedom or to serve the hip ritual?” (Stephens 1960). Implicit in the question is a conflation of concern about both technique and emotional authenticity. Were you free or constrained by a fad? How did styles evolve and come to shape jazz, and how does the individual musician find freedom within the form to express true emotion? Rather than disentangling the questions, Stephens fixated on the idea that form existed outside of a situated experience.

“The thing that’s hard for a non-performer to understand is how things keep changing inside. A listener often analyzes changes as being arbitrary, but they’re not,” replied Giuffre. “You must go through different changes.” As he relates his musical story, Giuffre offers that he had been consumed, for at least twenty years, with the desire that his playing “required this

sound, this subtle, soft, mellow, deep sound." Guiffre then analyzes how and why he changed his approach—essentially what he had come to learn about himself through an understanding of the relationship between experience, emotion, and musicality to explain his personality in relationship to his music.

Perhaps it comes from my childhood. It was sort of like not wanting to out unless I was dressed properly. I couldn't release this music inside of me unless it sounded perfect—that was the first consideration—to have a beautiful sound quality . . . The ideas in the whole thing were secondary to sound.

(Stephens 1960)

This "beautiful sound" was intimately linked, Guiffre suspected, to his personality. He wanted his music to be "pretty," though he wasn't sure why. "I can't figure it out except that I just didn't want to look ugly, didn't want to offend anybody." The sound was also elusive when played in a group setting; increasingly he "just wanted to play the instrument by itself and hear the sound." Now, remember, Guiffre is attempting to explain to Stephens that musicians change their approach to music not because they are influenced primarily by the new "hip" thing, but because they have engaged in an organic process over the course of their career. He begins by describing the draw to a particular, as he'll call it, "concept"—in this instance the desire for softness, prettiness—and evolution to a new concept. Guiffre insists that the new doesn't invalidate the old, but what is key is overcoming fear to cultivate the new, to embrace change.

Guiffre appreciated the assertion of personality, the certainty of perspective that imbued the playing of Monk, Rollins, and Art Tatum. He recognized that they had a way of approaching the world in their music, a mature expression of their beliefs that suggested to him a new attitude for himself. "And this began to be interesting. I was tired of being soft, as valid as softness is." He was in a "sound prison" and needed a key out.

Well **this** time something happened, either in my experience, my success, my maturity or something, I reached the point where I'm not afraid to sound ugly for a little bit . . . I discovered how full of fear I was before—I was holding back a lot of things because I was afraid of sounding ugly. . . . It was a revelation. *(Stephens 1960)*

Abandoning his fear of sounding ugly, of his dependence on softness, opened Guiffre up to exploring freedom in his improvising and composing.

The wonderful thing about this point is that it has nothing to do with the ideas or the musical content, it has to do with the statement—and when somebody gets to this point where he can be this free and this sure in his statement, then it's just a matter of his speaking.

(Stephens 1960)

Freedom lies in connecting and communicating, the willingness to be unafraid in the moment of being.

While Guiffre did not express a completely new idea about freedom as a signature aspiration for a jazzman, he did, as Maurice Capel noted, to his delight, speak convincingly about what it was to be in the moment of creation. Capel, writing in *Jazz Monthly*, kvelled that Guiffre had propelled the project of a "Jazz Philosophy" forward by

describ[ing] himself, in purely existential terms, his processes of creation and improvisation. . . . We now have a text that, in sheer psychological and technical importance, is in

the nature of a revelation: for the first time a musician shows us the moment of creation as he lives it in his own consciousness.

(Capel 1960)

For Capel, the power of creation in jazz improvisation is that it precedes musical consciousness. To improvise is to be free of the constraints of introspection and open to “musical flow,” which “literally speaking, IS the consciousness, and the consciousness is nothing before its own ‘substance’.” Capel suggests that each new improvisation is a becoming, the birthing “in a new solo the new-born soul of a man” (Capel 1960).

Capel recognizes in the jazz performance, particularly that of the genius like Charlie Parker or Miles Davis, the communication of the ineffable, a “catharsis” by which the musician liberates the man who in turn liberates the musician, ad infinitum. Jazz is singular in its power, Capel argues, “to be and to create all at once, in a single act of Freedom, the individual as an artist, and the artist as an individual” (Capel 1960). This presentation of the self is, in his mind, exactly what Guiffre suggests in his description of the “conviction” he was struck by in the musical statements of Monk and Rollins. However, Guiffre was insistent that his new stance (as LeRoi Jones writes, “The music is the result of the attitude, the stance” (Jones 1970)) was the result of introspection, of a conscious desire to say something new about who he was as a musician, how he’d come to understand that what Monk and others were most successful at was the relating of experience, not evading it.

Bringing Hazel Scott, Lena Horne, Charles Mingus, and Jimmy Giuffre together to explore ideas about emotion and its role in jazz performance helps us to understand how jazzmen wanted their work to be understood beyond categories of genre, modernity, or hipness. These jazzmen articulated complex ideas about the relationship between and permutations among gender and authority, race, and ambition, experience, and emotion. Their intellectual projects show the scope of feeling and practice imbued in the music and help us to think more broadly about how to tell the story of jazz, how to listen in the silences for ideas about creativity and artistry that have compelled musicians to keep making music even in the face of marginalization, criticism of ambition, and the next new thing.

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THE ART OF IMPROVISATION IN THE AGE OF COMPUTATIONAL PARTICIPATION

David Borgo

As for jazz and computers, the question is what they could possibly have to do with each other. The values and processes of the one—an art of spontaneous, inspired collective improvisation, evolving through an oral tradition, born of African-American culture but accepting creative individuals by way of true meritocracy—seem antithetical to the other. . . . I can imagine computers delivering goods and services on a global scale, much more efficaciously than ever before. But I have a hard time conceding they’ll ever provide us with the sustaining reflections of jazz.

Howard Mandel (1997)

What makes the two things work together is that even though they seem so incompatible the premise of free jazz is that you improvise with whatever is in your environment. If it’s a machine, you interact with that.

Matthew Shipp (in Nicholson 2003)

In his 1935 essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Walter Benjamin interrogated how mechanical reproduction removes the “aura” surrounding art by confounding its unique existence in time and space, thereby altering perceptions of its originality, authenticity, and embeddedness in tradition. In addition, he was concerned with how new technologies shift or augment human perception, cultural production, and social and political participation. For Benjamin, like many of his Frankfurt School colleagues, new modes of appreciation and engagement arise in tension with new modes of deception and distraction. This chapter extends these questions into the contemporary era by interrogating the art of musical improvisation, often considered to be an essential aspect of modern jazz that provides it with an “aura,” in settings that also involve computational participation.

Jazz music evolved in tandem with the development of mechanical and electronic sound recording, and with the evolution of sound reinforcement, transmission, and production technologies (Myers 2012). More overt electronic sound manipulation has also been part of the jazz soundscape since at least the late 1950s, but until quite recently computational approaches were too slow and too cumbersome to engage effectively with musicians in the live situation, unable to offer the sense of spontaneity, discovery, and interaction cherished by jazz performers and listeners. The term computer music may still evoke room-sized contraptions from the 1950s slowly churning out grist for an elite composer’s mill, or, more recently, someone hunched over a laptop making barely perceptible movements on stage (perhaps checking email? as the well-known joke goes), neither of which seems easy to reconcile with the emblematic intensity and spontaneity of a jazz

improviser. Increasingly, however, computers—in a variety of guises and with a diverse array of “abilities”—share the stage with human performers, affording not only an expanded sonic palette but also the possibility to transform auditory space and time, to distribute creativity widely across persons, things, and locations, and to invite new musical actors, new forms of musical agency, and new modes of musical perception and production into the artistic experience.

This essay explores this post-millennial moment by tracing a variety of approaches to, and attitudes about, human-computer interaction, specifically in jazz and improvised music. It does not pretend to chronicle all of the diverse activities of contemporary improvisers who invite computational participation into their musical practice, by now an unwieldy task. Instead, it focuses on a few examples of computerized systems that present themselves as semi-autonomous agents, having the capacity to invent, provoke, and respond, rather than as “instrumental” extensions of a human performer or as “proxies” for a human composer, with the hope that this may provide some insight into larger trends and salient issues.

For instance, what are the repercussions of exploring musical improvisation through an algorithmic, computational, and combinatorial lens? Do approaches such as these invite us to rethink deeply held assumptions about creativity? Do they encourage novelty and innovation, or might they actually run the risk of undercutting difference by emphasizing and redistributing what is already statistically common? Can we conceive of improvisations as mediated by the skills, bodies, and desires of all the participating actors and agents, including non-human ones? How do artists and researchers reconcile the in-time, phenomenologically rich, and open-ended dimensions of actually doing musical improvisation with the over-time, reflective, and symbolically mediated dimensions of designing non-human improvising agents? In short, in what ways does computational modeling simultaneously elucidate, challenge, and perpetuate normative conceptions of improvisation?

In this chapter, I argue that the details surrounding the implementation of a given improvising system can shed light on how designers conceive of improvisation and interactive processes, while also illuminating how performers *perform* their personal identities and ideologies through specific strategies of interacting with these systems. Like Benjamin, I am also interested more broadly in changing modes of human perception and participation, and in that light, I hope that this chapter, focused as it is on the aesthetic and conceptual work that musical improvisation can do in the computer age, might contribute not only to the “New Jazz Studies” but also to the wider discourse on new media and technocultural studies.

Strike Up the Virtual Band

The notion of a “virtual” band in jazz has arguably been with us since the introduction of “Music Minus One” and Jamey Aebersold “Play-A-Long” recordings. None of these, however, could be called interactive, in the sense that they are capable of responding to human performers in the course of performance or of using input information derived from a musical performance to shape compositional decisions. Every time one puts on a record to play along, one hears the recorded musicians develop the performance in exactly the same way. These can provide useful practice tools for developing musicians who may not have access to—or may not wish to burden—a live rhythm section (although this likely has also contributed to the reification of the soloist in jazz pedagogy). The opportunity to play alongside seasoned jazz musicians (“Is that Ron Carter on bass?”) undoubtedly contributes to the success of this format as well. The technological medium of conventional audio recording, however, does not provide interactivity or an ongoing sense of musical surprise.

More recent computerized accompaniment programs, such as *Band-in-a-Box* or *iReal Pro*, offer additional possibilities, usually by allowing users to decide upon aspects of the performance

beforehand (for example, tempo, key, meter, or style), after which the system generates an appropriate accompaniment. Once generated, however, this accompaniment functions more or less like a play along record (although Ron Carter will likely have been replaced by Midi notes triggering sampled bass sounds). Again, these software tools can be useful practice aids (for example, the current version of iReal Pro offers the option for automatic tempo increase and transposition at every repeat of the song form), but without any listening or learning functionality they cannot offer real time musical interaction.

François Pachet, the director of Sony Computer Science Laboratory Paris, is a jazz guitarist who has developed several systems for interactive musical performance. His projects titled *VirtualBand*, *Virtuoso*, and *Continuator* are the most relevant to the current discussion. *VirtualBand* is the outcome of Pachet's desire to make a truly interactive play along system (Moreira, Roy, and Pachet 2013). Like other machine learning applications, *VirtualBand* has a "training" period during which musicians on different instruments (for example, guitar, piano, bass, drums) are recorded in studio situations playing in a variety of styles. These recordings are later analyzed by the system using signal processing techniques (primarily based on music information retrieval research) that segments and tags different parts of their performances and organizes them into a style database. To use *VirtualBand*, one selects a song structure (essentially information from a jazz lead sheet such as harmony, meter, and form) and the number and type of accompanying musicians. The important difference, according to Pachet, between a standard play along and *VirtualBand* is that his system is designed to respond to the dynamics and musical development of a human soloist as the performance unfolds. For instance, as a user builds a solo in intensity (perhaps by increasing volume and/or density of notes), the system detects this change and is designed to respond accordingly.

Continuator is a related project that offers a kind of pedagogical scaffolding and performative interactivity to jazz soloists. As its name suggests, *Continuator* is designed to continue the musical ideas being developed by a human partner in real time in a stylistically appropriate fashion. It is designed to "learn" an individual musician's performing style in real time so that it can engage that musician in a type of call-and-response playing. An earlier project with a similar goal designed by Belinda Thom was humorously titled *Band-out-of-the-Box*. Videos of *Continuator* in operation demonstrate engaging moments of musical "trading" as the system quickly builds operational representations of the current style being explored by its human counterpart, and one video in particular pits the system against a skilled improvising pianist in a musical "Turing test" that, at least according to the comments provided for the video by Pachet's lab, had two music critics deciding largely in favor of the computer.¹

A third system being developed in Pachet's lab, *Virtuoso*, generates a highly virtuosic style of improvisation by taking input from a human operator using a Nintendo Wii remote with a Nunchuck controller to steer the automated production of individual notes and longer, rapid sequences or phrases, all of which can be constrained by the user choosing a default scale (such as diatonic, chromatic, blues, or diminished). The system's virtuosity easily exceeds the technical abilities of even the most rapid-fire instrumentalists, sounding in practice something like a hard rock or bebop musician on steroids.

A crucial point to make is that each of these three systems requires that a considerable amount of standard jazz theory and conventions be built in—either to the software or to the process of training it—for them to function in expected ways. For instance, the computer drummer in *VirtualBand* switches from playing gentle brushes on the snare drum, to using sticks on the high-hat cymbal with occasional "bombs" on the snare, to eventually keeping time on the ride cymbal and incorporating more pronounced hits on the toms, all in response to the perceived energy of a soloist. Similarly, the bass player in the "virtual band" switches from walking in 2 to walking in 4 as the perceived intensity and density of input from the soloist increases. These are conventions of mainstream jazz accompaniment but are certainly not the only way that drums and bass can

increase their dynamism (and arguably some of the most interactive mainstream jazz does not always conform to these conventions, such as the Bill Evans trio).

Likewise, while the *Continuator* system appears to offer a promising way for improvising musicians to engage a computer system that quickly learns, adapts to, and extends one's own ideas, it, too, has certain cultural conventions "baked" into its design. The most obvious moments of joy in the video documentation are when the musicians interacting with *Continuator* hear their own ideas coming back to them in slightly modified form. This kind of cat-and-mouse playing, however, is frowned upon in some improvised music circles, and one may tire quickly of a system that constantly mirrors one's own behavior or requires continual prodding in order for new musical ideas to emerge.

Lastly, the *Virtuoso* system is certainly capable of generating fast and intricate melodic "lines," under the "steering" control of a human operator, but to do so, it conforms explicitly to underlying chord-scale conventions that betray a particular historical, cultural, and institutional bias (Wilf 2014). As was alluded to at the outset, these implicit biases designed into computational systems may serve to further codify and disseminate standardized practices in ways that could ultimately discourage real novelty and innovation.

He Has Heard

Shimon is a robotic marimba player capable of improvising complex jazz-inspired melodies and chordal accompaniment. Currently, it uses four mallets, each attached to an independently moving mechanical arm, which are in turn connected to a large mechanical torso with a protruding head and a single large eye. This makes Shimon vaguely resemble Luxo, Jr., the animated lamp that serves as the "i" in the logo for Pixar films, which was an early design inspiration.

According to Gil Weinberg, one of Shimon's developers at the Georgia Institute of Technology, the term "robotic musicianship" may strike some as an oxymoron, since to "play like a robot" is a phrase most commonly used to critique a human performer who is unable to add the requisite musicality and sensitivity to "lift" the notes off the printed page, offering only a "mechanical" reading of the score (Bretan and Weinberg 2016, 100). For Shimon's team of researchers, however, the pursuit of robotic musicianship is an interdisciplinary scientific and artistic endeavor. It has an engineering side, which involves the study and construction of physical systems that generate sound through mechanical means ("musical mechatronics"), and a computational side, which focuses on developing algorithms and cognitive models representative of various aspects of music perception, composition, performance, and theory. Mason Bretan, a key member of Shimon's research team, explained in a phone interview how Shimon's playing is shaped by the material affordances and constraints of its mechanical design:

It has a representation of some musical language or some musical knowledge, but then on top of that, when it makes its decisions it thinks about: "I have four arms and they can move in this particular way, so how can I achieve this particular goal." So something as simple as playing a motif that goes up in pitch, Shimon really has to think about its body in order to do that. So its body influences what note it might start on within the motif, and where it is going to end, and what it is going to do in the middle, and how fast it can go is all dependent on its body.

(Bretan 2015)

Shimon has also been programmed with a repertoire of listening techniques and "ancillary" movements—those not directly related to sound production—that are designed to assist with musical coordination and to provide a more engaging performance. For instance, in addition to

its anthropomorphizing value, Shimon’s “eye” serves as a visual tracking system that allows it to notice movements made by its co-performers and use this information to attempt to synchronize certain musical behaviors, similar to how human performers can use their own eyes to track Shimon’s body movements to assist with musical coordination or anticipation.

For audiences, seeing Shimon wildly swinging mallets, twisting its neck to follow its co-performers, and bobbing its head to the beat, appears to influence the perception of the robot and the music it creates. In one early experiment, listeners were either provided audio-only or audiovisual recordings of Shimon performing with a human musician. With the audiovisual recordings, participants consistently reported higher levels of appreciation of how well the robot played, how much it played like a human would, and how responsive it was to the human performer and the human performer to it (Hoffman and Weinberg 2015). Shimon is a Biblical name that means “he has heard.” It appears that being able to see the robot’s physical embodiment and engaging movements contributes greatly to a sense that it is listening well.

That being said, Bretan, a jazz percussionist and pianist himself, admitted to me that his early encounters with Shimon felt like performing with a really amateur musician who needed a strong and clear articulation of the beat in order to stay synchronized.

It has improved a bit, and now there are moments where it feels like I am interacting with a person . . . [but] it is hard to get Shimon to progress the music, the interactions . . . to create a beginning, and end form, a sort of higher-level structure. Shimon makes a really nice call-and-response demo, but it needs to have a better understanding of higher-level structures . . . it has to be able to tell a story.

(Bretan 2015)

The Georgia Tech research team has frequently articulated an overriding goal of the project is to create a system that can “listen like a human, but improvise like a machine” (Murphy 2016). Having the two additional independent arms already gives Shimon the possibility of playing chordal and melodic structures on the marimba that are spaced beyond what even a skilled four-mallet human performer could achieve. This raises the question of whether Shimon’s specific mechanical abilities and constraints might lead to its own idiosyncratic style of improvising. Eitan Wilf, who conducted extensive ethnographic research at Shimon’s lab, quotes one of the researchers describing Shimon’s improvising style:

You see, [Shimon] has its own style because of the arm movements and the limitations. You’d hear the beginning of a natural run [i.e., a phrase that consists of notes adjacent to one another] and then suddenly a note would go up in the octave—you’d hear some note being played by a different arm in a different octave because the first arm is not fast enough to play it so the other arm would compensate for it. And I think that’s unique to [Shimon].

(Wilf 2013, 728)²

One might argue, however, that there is a certain disconnect between programming Shimon with human music—melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic structures that are indelibly stamped by the physicality of human performers and human instruments—in order to have it produce machine music.

In the more theoretical portion of his work, Wilf writes compellingly about both the material constraints and the normative ideals that inform computational and mechanical approaches to modeling improvisation. For example, Shimon’s research team has recently explored ways of imbuing the software with an ability to mix improvising styles by combining aspects of the styles

of historically important improvisers, as derived through statistical analysis of transcriptions of their improvisations. Wilf writes about a session in which Shimon was tasked with improvising with a mix of 33.3 percent the style of Miles Davis, 33.3 percent the style of Charlie Parker, and 33.3 percent the style of the player improvising with Shimon, which Shimon could learn in real time. According to Wilf, not only does a residual style still pervade Shimon's playing regardless of which mix of styles it is asked to perform, at least in part a result of its physical embodiment, but this tactic of quantifying creativity, dividing it into building blocks, and recombining them, betrays many normative beliefs and practices (*ibid.*, 719). What is deemed important in music is invariably culturally inflected, and Wilf argues that Western music analysis has a long history of emphasizing an underlying parametric paradigm of creativity, which can now, through computational mediation, be taken to its logical extreme.

I also worry that by dividing mechanical from computational dimensions, and listening from generative procedures, this type of research subscribes to binaries that are unsustainable. When I asked Bretan if Shimon was listening to itself, he laughed and admitted that they “try to isolate Shimon from being able to listen to itself because in order to get a clean audio signal they need it to focus only on the other sounds around it” (Bretan 2015). This, to me, highlights a significant shortcoming, in that improvisers listen intently to their own sounds, along with those of others, and often explore new musical directions based on intimate forms of auditory and haptic feedback and feedforward provided by the tight coupling of player and instrument, in addition to that between the various musicians.

At its best, however, this research does offer substantial empirical insight into issues of timing, anticipation, expression, mechanical dexterity, and social interaction—at least in terms of expressive behaviors and musical cueing—that are central to music making and to human behavior more generally. At times, however, the researchers' aspirations seem to get the best of them. For instance, Weinberg and Breton write that Shimon will inspire humans to “invent new genres, expand virtuosity, and bring musical expression and creativity to uncharted domains” (Bretan and Weinberg 2016, 102), a type of language not only filled with teleology and hyperbole, but also seemingly unaware of the ways in which it is culturally situated and arguably gendered as well, in that it appears to reflect stereotypically “masculine” experiences and prejudices.

Intimacy and Opacity

Maxine is a software-based improvising system designed for more experimental forms of free improvisation created by Ritwik Banerji, an ethnomusicologist from the University of California Berkeley, who is currently a fellow at Free University of Berlin. In intriguing ways, Banerji envisions Maxine as both a performance system and as a tool for ethnographic investigation of the improvisation community (Banerji 2016). I begin with a brief discussion of the technical aspects of the system before exploring the ethnomusicological dimensions of Banerji's project.

Maxine is realized using Ableton Live software and Max/MSP, a programming language commonly used by computer musicians whose name Banerji borrowed and intentionally feminized. Maxine's design uses multiple agents analyzing auditory input and controlling sonic output simultaneously. Many of these agents are linked to a pitch detector, the Max/MSP object called [pitch~], that, when presented with the complex and often pitchless sounds of free improvisation, usually fails. This means that Maxine's output will correspond in general to the overall pacing and event-density heard in the playing of a human partner, but how and why particular correspondences are made can be difficult to deduce. For the sound producing agents, Banerji employs digital instruments and processes from Ableton Live that create “unusual” timbres, such as “metal percussion, synthesized versions of prepared or ‘extended’ guitar and piano techniques, a variety of synthesizers, and signal processing tools” (*ibid.*).

After experiments with early versions of the system, Banerji (a saxophonist himself) decided that Maxine's output conformed too closely to the temporal and timbral developments of its human partners. He felt that Maxine required too much prodding to produce things of interest (a concern I raised with respect to Pachet's *Continuator* above). To address this shortcoming, Banerji decided to add a type of cybernetic feedback to the system by positioning an additional microphone close to the system's own speaker output (a marked contrast to Shimon's design team, who intentionally avoid having it listen to its own playing). While it is conceivable that this setup would create runaway feedback, Banerji found that the unusual timbres he chose for Maxine's output continued to confound its pitch detector, providing a greater sense of "mystery and individualism" to its output (ibid.). Somewhat fortuitously, Banerji realized that he could alter the distance from speaker to microphone as an additional variable affecting the system. For human partners who desire a more "aggressive" profile, Banerji positions Maxine's microphone closer to its speaker, providing it with more independence. For those wishing for a more "sympathetic" response, he moves the microphone further away, causing its output to correspond more closely with theirs.

With these new possibilities in place, Banerji began soliciting post-performance feedback from Maxine's musical partners for insights that might lead to further improvements in system design. Some players found Maxine to be "too meek, hesitant, or reserved in its interactive behavior," unable to inspire their own improvising (ibid.). Others felt that Maxine was too "self-absorbed," unable to "meet them halfway" (ibid.). Some felt Maxine needed to be more skilled at recognizing and (re)producing conventional musical features, such as meter, interval relationships, harmonic progression, standard phrasing, etc., while others wished for more unpredictability. Interestingly, Banerji found that opposing traits were sometimes desired by the same individual, depending on the context of the unfolding musical performance. After all, while musical "aggression" in one context might be desirable, in another it may be repugnant.

Many felt, in ways similar to Bretan's concerns with Shimon, that computer systems have difficulty creating the impression of evolving musical form across longer expanses of time—of "telling a story." One participant expressed that Maxine demonstrated "a frustrating inability to sustain the drama of the interaction" (ibid.). Others expressed that Maxine lacked the important ability to be able to switch between leader and follower roles, or to provide longer periods of either support or opposition in musically appropriate ways. Many wished that the system could produce musical materials to mesh better with their own, often expecting Maxine to emulate the style of human improvisers personally familiar to them.

Banerji soon realized that the feedback he was receiving offered valuable insight into the unspoken norms and cultural politics that emerge in scenes of musical improvisers, a kind of insight that is not easily attainable since free improvisers tend to avoid conveying these kinds of explicit preferences or critiques to one another, likely out of deference to their musical liberty. Since Maxine is a non-human agent, participants felt far more comfortable critiquing its performance. Through this process, Banerji also became more self-aware that his design decisions with Maxine betrayed his own cultural location, making the interactions between Maxine and its partners an opportunity to elucidate the relative distances between their cultural locations and his own.

Ultimately, Banerji realized that it is impossible to separate out an evaluation of Maxine's performance provided by *her* human co-performers—and here I intentionally shift to using the feminine pronoun—from an evaluation of their own performance, in terms of how they interacted with the system. As an improvising "system," Maxine's performances do not rely on traditional notions of leader and follower, or reify ideas about instrumental virtuosity or creative teleology, which appear to be dominant motivators in the labs of Pachet and Weinberg, based on their system designs and published comments. Any assessments of musical quality in a performance with Maxine are embedded in a specific socio-cultural context and are mediated between the skills

and desires of all agents, including the human participants, Maxine and Banerji, and all of the programmers and designers behind Ableton Live and Max/MSP as well.

On a purely technical level, it can be argued that Maxine is a less complex computer system. It is not based on a massive database of transcribed solos or on complex “style modeling” methods. In fact, it does not attempt to represent musical knowledge in any way. Its primary feature extraction method (pitch tracking) is arguably poorly chosen, given the kind of musical “information” it will most likely encounter. Yet, because of these things, rather than despite them, it represents an overture toward a different paradigm for understanding and modeling collective improvisation.

Traditionally, artificial agents have been programmed to sense, represent, compute, and respond to an agent-independent pre-given world. Banerji’s approach, by contrast, is more in line with a cybernetic view that upholds a vision of the world as a place of continuing interlinked performances, what Andrew Pickering calls a performative ontology (Pickering 2010). A performative ontology insists that agents learn through an ongoing cycle of perturbation and compensation that resists the detour of knowledge through representation (see also Borgo 2016). Cybernetic systems are not programmed to seek goals in reference to predefined states of the world—goals which would necessarily be extrinsic rather than intrinsic—and their actions cannot be fully explained through linear cause-and-effect relationships. Perturbation, after all, contains the root word *turbid*, meaning opaque.

Banerji’s system does not have any explicit memory, learning, or predictive capability, which might be seen as a significant detriment, but when viewed as a cybernetic system, his interventions in the system (e.g., altering microphone placement or revising the number and behavior of software agents), along with how Maxine’s co-participants alter their musical behaviors to mesh better with hers, can all be viewed as forms of systemic learning. In this more cybernetic view, humans both configure—and are configured by—the technologies around us (Borgo and Kaiser 2010).

Telling a Story

In the same year that Benjamin wrote his well-known essay “Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” he authored a less well-known essay titled “The Storyteller.” These essays deal with different technologies—cinema and photography in the former, and printing in the latter—and seemingly offer rather different perspectives on our engagements with technology: a difference that some have read as a change of heart in Benjamin’s own thinking. In “Work of Art,” Benjamin celebrates the potentially democratizing aspects of cinema and photography, as well as their ability to alter human perception and experience through new camera-angles and editing techniques such as slow-motion and close-up. In “The Storyteller,” he mourns the passing of storytelling as a lived, oral tradition under the impact of the printed word and the pre-digested nature of information conveyed through newsprint. Benjamin feared that storytelling was disappearing in modernity because face-to-face contact and living praxis were giving way to “information” as decontextualized and instrumentalized knowledge. Read together, however, these essays demonstrate less a change in heart than a call to be cognizant of the different ways that different technologies interact with culture, and of how the same technologies can lend themselves to diverse and divergent readings (see Hogg 2012).

Without a doubt, there have been significant strides made in artificial intelligence and machine learning in just the past few years, but consideration of social and cultural issues within these research communities remains rare. One obstacle is the simple fact that gaining the requisite knowledge in both the technical aspects of learning algorithms and in the critical theories of the contemporary social sciences and humanities is an imposing challenge. Media coverage of this research also tends to promote sensationalist views that favor hype over reality, using dystopian or utopian rhetoric in place of real critical engagement. The following, for instance, are recent

headlines from articles covering the activities of the robotic musicianship research group that created Shimon: “A Four-Armed Robot Can Now Improvise Music as Well as Human Bandmates”; “This Robot Is a Better Jazz Player Than You”; and, perhaps with a sly reference to this trend, “Your New Robot Overlord Turns Out To Be A Pretty Good Marimba Player.”³

Nick Collins, who has both technical skills in this domain and a desire to address relevant social and ethical issues, argues that these emerging musical agents are best understood as “projected intelligences” rather than artificial intelligences, since they result from a composer’s anticipation of the dynamics of a concert setting made manifest in programming code (Collins 2006). Collins admits in a slightly later publication, however, that “machine musicianship continues to advance, and machine learning techniques may undermine many sureties here” (Collins 2011).

One thing that does not change, however, is the ways in which specific technologies mark and often maintain specific cultural positions and presuppositions. For instance, Cathy O’Neil’s (2016) research suggests that sexism, racism, and other forms of discrimination are being built into machine learning algorithms simply because these already exist in the data that is being learned. Just as face recognition software trained on photos of people who are overwhelmingly white will have a harder time recognizing non-white faces, it stands to reason that computer improvisers trained on a heavy diet of Sonny Stitt and Michael Brecker will have more difficulty “understanding” Ornette Coleman and Albert Ayler. Learning algorithms are only as good as the data they are trained on (“garbage in, garbage out”), and data of this sort has a complex history.

Extracting only a “solo” voice from the complex, collaborative, and social environment that informs jazz musicking is already problematic, as is the reliance on parametric representations of jazz “vocabulary” as analyzed through transcription of recorded solos. While music may have some language-like qualities, it is not language, and its differences should not be minimized or ignored just so that researchers can conveniently borrow deep learning algorithms that have proven successful in that realm. Recognizing and predicting correlations between written text is not the same as developing spoken fluency (which involves the pragmatics and prosody of language use, among other things), nor would generating expert-level musical improvisations using the symbols of music notation be the same as performing and interacting fluently in a live context. On the whole, researchers in artificial intelligence have realized that it is relatively easy to get computers to do formalized adult things (like play chess and do math—or perhaps even to play a generic form of bebop), but decidedly more difficult to get them to do things that come naturally to a small child (like play with a ball, identify a dog, develop a sense of humor, or entrain to a musical beat).

It is also worth noting that designing computers to learn how to emulate jazz—either from recorded or real-world examples—and then injecting that emulation back into the world ultimately affects the world that the system is intended to emulate. This is not simply a pedantic question of which style will be favored in the world of computer-based jazz. It is also a pressing question of diversity and inclusivity. Kate Crawford (2016) writes:

Like all technologies before it, artificial intelligence will reflect the values of its creators. So inclusivity matters—from who designs it to who sits on the company boards and which ethical perspectives are included. Otherwise, we risk constructing machine intelligence that mirrors a narrow and privileged vision of society, with its old, familiar biases and stereotypes.

To invoke Benjamin one final time, a story differs from information in that it allows—even demands—that listeners interpret, reflect, share, remember, and transform it in their own way—to make the story their own. Narrative, according to Benjamin, “achieves an amplitude that information lacks” (Benjamin 1968, 88). Information, seen only as raw data, denies wisdom,

shared experience, and the networks that forge community. In “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Benjamin interrogates not only the modern media technologies of cinema and photography but also psychoanalysis, which provided new understandings of the workings of the unconscious mind and promised a therapeutic method for bringing this material into our conscious awareness. The thread that connected these for Benjamin was their ability to provide the necessary critical distance for new understandings to emerge.

Working with computers has provided new ways to share and experience the social and psychological dimensions of our lives, but it may be the critical distance they can offer on our own creativity, our own humanity, and our own failings that will prove to be among their greatest contributions. In an interview (Nicholson 2003) exploring his approach to combining electronics and jazz improvisation, Matthew Ship remarked: “The machine is something that takes you outside yourself, but I’m actually finding the machine is allowing [me] to connect more inwardly with myself.” “It’s a kind of a paradox,” he mused, “but it’s really fascinating how it’s working out.” I am hopeful that insights like these, and the critical distance offered by the academic community as well, will continue to inform and propel the exploration of the art of improvisation in the age of computational participation.

Notes

1. Sony CSL. 2012. “Musical Turing test with the Continuator on VPRO Channel (Amsterdam).” *You Tube*, January 11. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynPWOMzossI.
2. Although Wilf anonymizes his sources in this article, in a personal communication with the author he confirmed that it is based on research done in the Shimon lab.
3. Mills, Jen. 2016. “This Robot Is a Better Jazz Player Than You.” *Metro (UK)*, May 23. <http://metro.co.uk/2016/05/23/this-robot-is-a-better-jazz-player-than-you-5900966/#ixzz4cvA4ZlIE>; Murphy, Mike. 2016. “A Four-Armed Robot Can Now Improvise Music as Well as Human Band-mates.” *Quartz*, May 22. <https://qz.com/689827/moogfest-shimon-music-robot/>; Tsioulcas, Anastasia. 2016. “Your New Robot Overlord Turns Out To Be A Pretty Good Marimba Player.” *All Songs Considered*, May 23. www.npr.org/sections/allsongs/2016/05/23/479159266/your-new-robot-overlord-turns-out-to-be-a-pretty-good-marimba-player.

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RENAISSANCE OR AFTERLIFE?

Nostalgia in the New Jazz Films¹

Björn Heile

Jazz films are rather like the proverbial omnibus. Fifteen years passed between Woody Allen's *Sweet and Lowdown* (1999) and Damien Chazelle's *Whiplash* (2014), so fans of the genre may well have given up by that time. Furthermore, the former had a relatively low profile and the latter is in many ways quite untypical of the genre so that its identity as a jazz film has been questioned. The demise of the genre could hardly have come as a surprise, given the dramatic decline in popularity and mass appeal of the music itself and the competition from slickly produced television documentaries, such as Ken Burns's *Jazz* (PBS 2001). Nevertheless, *Whiplash* was followed by *Miles Ahead* (Don Cheadle, 2015), *Born to be Blue* (Robert Budreau, 2015), and *La La Land* (2016, Chazelle again) in quick succession, and others may well follow.²

It would seem that, as in so many cases when an art form's demise has been diagnosed (think of opera, the novel, or painting), there is more life in the old dog yet. In this context, it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the apparent revival of the jazz film was preceded by a wave of successful popular music biopics, including *Ray* (Taylor Hackford 2004) on Ray Charles, *Walk the Line* (James Mangold 2005) on Johnny Cash, and *La Vie en rose* (*La môme*, Olivier Dahan, 2007) on Edith Piaf (Inglis 2007), so it could be argued that the recent series of jazz films is an epiphenomenon of the wider popularity of pop music biopics.

Appearances can be deceptive, though, and I will be arguing in this chapter that what we are witnessing is not so much the renaissance of the jazz film but its afterlife. Although it would be problematic to establish a straightforward parallel between the fortunes of jazz films and the music they depict, I contend that its cinematic representations tell us a lot about dominant cultural perceptions of jazz.

I will focus predominantly on *Miles Ahead* and *Born to be Blue*, since both are more characteristic of the established conventions of the jazz film. By comparison, despite his evident love of and interest in jazz, Chazelle's offerings are rather more unusual (but hardly less interesting or enjoyable). *Whiplash* is set in a conservatory, which links it more closely to the rite of passage movie. Furthermore, while the conflict between obsessive devotion to one's art on one hand and love or anything resembling ordinary life on the other is not untypical of jazz films, the way it is enacted, with the protagonist Andrew (Miles Teller) falling under the spell of his professor, the charismatic bully Fletcher (J K Simmons), is weirdly more reminiscent of an army or sports movie. Nicholas Pillai (2015, 6, 2017) makes an interesting comparison with Scorsese's *Raging Bull*, arguing that *Whiplash* should be viewed as part of "a tradition of expressionistic cinema devoted to male obsession" (and, perhaps less persuasively, as a horror film). More problematically, the film's depiction

of jazz is lopsided: the students at the fictional Shaffer Conservatory undergo a rigorous military drill, entirely focused on technical facility, flawless execution and precision, enforced through cut-throat competition. Although these values are important in jazz, they are typically subservient to expressivity and originality, about which the film has nothing to say (cf. Brody 2014).³ Whatever one may want to say about jazz education, it almost invariably involves improvisation, which likewise is entirely absent in the movie. The climate depicted in the film would, if anything, be a more recognizable—if still caricatured—depiction of classical music training. *La La Land*, for its part, is a musical, directly alluding to the golden age musical, so its generic concerns are somewhat different, if related.

The New Jazz Films and Their Old Models

Miles Ahead and *Born to be Blue* are almost uncannily similar in many respects. Both are biopics on revered trumpeters, Miles Davis and Chet Baker respectively, who were almost exact contemporaries. Indeed, Miles plays a small but crucial role in *Born to be Blue*, earning him the distinction of having been revived cinematically twice in one year. Both are “neoclassical biopics,” according to Dennis Bingham’s (2010, 17–18) categorization, in that they combine aspects of earlier phases, although both veer strongly in the direction of the “warts-and-all” biopic, with *Miles Ahead* displaying a simultaneous tendency for the “classical, celebratory” form (mostly, although not entirely, avoided in *Born to be Blue*). Crucially, both home in on a moment of crisis in their protagonists’ lives, when they were unable to perform and had to painstakingly relearn to play their instruments (although that phase is mostly elided in *Miles Ahead*), and proceed to fill in much of the backstory with flashbacks. Although the condensation in the two films is probably unusual, this prominent use of flashbacks is not unconventional in biopics as such, where, despite popular beliefs to the contrary, the seemingly standard cradle-to-grave narrative is more the exception than the rule (Vidal 2014, 2; see also Custen 1992; Bingham 2010). Moreover, as I will argue, the way flashbacks are used enhances the nostalgic effect of both movies. In the process, both also “embellish” the biographical facts with fictional elements (some more excusable than others). Further, true to the jazz film tradition, both are rather reveling in the graphic depiction of the destruction and misery wrought by drugs and the attendant crime. To be sure, these unsavory aspects were central to the lives of the characters depicted (and *Born to be Blue*, in particular, could actually be accused of sugarcoating the extremes to which Baker went), but it is telling to what extent filmmakers have been drawn time and again to the most notorious figures in the tradition, thereby contributing to somewhat dated stereotypes about jazz. This is not to deny the prevalence of alcohol and drug addiction during particular periods of jazz such as the 1950s and 1960s, but it is noteworthy that there are no biopics of level-headed, sane figures, such as Dizzie Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, or, for that matter, Louise Armstrong or Duke Ellington (both hardly strangers to the silver screen but never the subjects of biopics properly speaking).

Julie F. Codell (2014, 159–160) has analyzed how in biopics of visual artists abjection must be accounted for and ultimately erased to validate the production by such artists of “great” works that represent the high culture proudly claimed by their respective societies and nations:

[These films] have erased, exaggerated, or invented biographical content to naturalize abjection as the essence of the artist’s character and define the artist’s function as cultural scapegoat. . . . Eminent artists creating famous works permit spectators to partake of this “magic” moment that obscures contradictions between the posthumous idealization of artists in cultural memory and their seemingly innate marginalized, dirty, immoral, and self-destructive abject selves.

Much the same happens in jazz films from the seminal *Young Man with a Horn* (Michael Curtiz, 1950) onwards: over and above its undeniable reality, what Codell calls “abjection”—in our case variously drugs, alcohol, crime, poverty, racial discrimination, violence, and sexual promiscuity—is emphasized and stylized as the condition of genuine creativity and genius. According to these narratives, the jazz musician has to live outside the norms of society in order to deliver what that society truly needs. Writing about traditional ethnographic methods (rather than film per se), Ingrid Monson (2009, 6) has drawn attention to the way in which what could be viewed as the depiction of bohemianism merges with common stereotypes about African Americans, speaking of the “voyeuristic quality of the outside gaze that emphasizes the social transgressions of musicians (especially sex and drug-related ones) at the expense of their broader and frequently more humane humanity” (even where, as in *Young Man with a Horn*, the musicians portrayed are white, their representation is informed by popular perceptions of jazz as a music and culture associated with blacks).

After the showbiz biopics from the tail end of the swing era (before jazz became commonly viewed as an art form rather than entertainment), such as *The Fabulous Dorseys* (Alfred E. Green, 1947), *The Glenn Miller Story* (Anthony Mann, 1954), and *The Benny Goodman Story* (Valentine Davies, 1956), virtually all jazz films have followed the model of *Young Man with a Horn*. It hardly matters whether they are “genuine” biopics, such as Sidney J. Furie’s *Lady Sings the Blues* (1972) on Billie Holliday and Clint Eastwood’s *Bird* (1988) on Charlie Parker, fictitious but (more or less loosely) focused on real characters, like Dale Turner (based on Lester Young and Bud Powell) in Bernard Tavernier’s *Round Midnight* (1986) or Rick Martin in *Young Man With a Horn* (based on Bix Beiderbecke), or is entirely fictional, such as Paul Newman’s Ram Bowen in Martin Ritt’s *Paris Blues* (1961), Bleek Gilliam in Spike Lee’s *Mo’ Better Blues* (1990), or Emmet Ray in Woody Allen’s *Sweet and Lowdown* (1999): the pattern is much the same.⁴

Miles Ahead and *Born to be Blue* thus follow a well-trodden path. The same can be said about both movies’ female characters who, despite some moments of independence, generally fulfill the role of long-suffering but faithful and submissive love interest. In *Miles Ahead*, Davis’s first wife Frances Taylor (Emayatzy Corinealdi) is mythologized as his lifelong muse, with Miles (Don Cheadle) plagued with regret many years after their break-up (the movie is set in 1979; the couple finally divorced in 1968). By contrast, his third wife Cicely Tyson, who did actually nurse him back to health and helped him to perform again during their marriage from 1981 to 1988, goes entirely unmentioned. This liberty is not entirely without justification, since in his autobiography Davis articulates the kind of regret that colors the movie, declaring: “Frances was the best wife that I ever had and whoever gets her is a lucky motherfucker. I know that now, and I wish I had known that then” (Davis and Troupe 1990, 282). Yet, he also says of Tyson that they “had this real tight spiritual thing” (Davis and Troupe 1990, 330), detailing with evident affection and gratitude how she had looked after him, so cutting her out entirely does seem unjust.

In *Born to be Blue*, Carmen Ejogo’s Elaine is a composite character—a common device particularly for female characters in biopics (Bingham 2010, 5)—determined to redeem the notoriously wayward Chet Baker. Although both movies are quite frank—even if ultimately exculpatory—about their protagonists’ philandering and physical and emotional abuse of their partners, their conservative insistence on traditional monogamous, redemptive romance ranks among their most problematic features.

The representation of race is not entirely without problems either. Co-written and directed by the African American Don Cheadle, who also stars in the lead role, it is difficult to fault *Miles Ahead* in this regard, but it is odd how the story is told from the perspective of the supposed *Rolling Stone* journalist Dave Braden (Ewan McGregor), who manages to coax Davis out of his isolation, identified by Richard Brody (2016) as Eric Nisenson,⁵ as if mainstream, predominantly white audiences could not be expected to relate directly with a black protagonist without a white

intermediary. When it comes to *Born to be Blue*, its hero Chet Baker, after originally lionizing black jazz musicians, particularly Miles Davis, became more and more convinced that he was rejected on account of his race. In the movie, he keeps repeating the mantra “Hello, Dizzy, hello, Miles. There’s a little white cat on the West Coast gonna eat you up” to himself. This is not explained, but, according to an oft-repeated piece of jazz lore, this is what Charlie Parker is supposed to have said to Davis and Gillespie after hearing Baker in Los Angeles and employing him as a sideman. As James Gavin (2011, 53) points out in his biography of Baker, which must have acted as the basis for the film, the only source for the quote is Baker himself, who was a pathological auto-mythologizer and as credible as any professional junkie. Although the movie does not endorse Baker’s racism (at least in his later years), its studied objectivity, while interesting from an aesthetic perspective, is somewhat grating from a social one. If neither movie is quite unequivocal in its representation of race, it is Chazelle’s films that have raised most concern. While the “white-washing” of jazz in *Whiplash* (Williams 2015; Brody 2014) could be seen as an implicit criticism of conservatoire culture, the reduction of African American music to some kind of authenticating “blackdrop” for the white and straight romance between musician and jazz aficionado Sebastian (Ryan Gosling) and actress Mia (Emma Stone) in *La La Land* (Madison III 2017; Calvario and Calvario 2016; Mirkinson 2017; Lott-Lavigna 2017) is harder to explain.

Failing to Perform

It is worth dwelling a little more on the dramatic climax in *Miles Ahead* and *Born to be Blue*, when their protagonists find themselves unable to play their instruments. In *Miles Ahead*, this comes near the end, when Miles demonstrates his inability to play to the journalist Dave and Junior (Lakeith Stanfield), a rising trumpet star, in whom Miles sees a younger version of himself and who seems to rekindle his creativity. At this point, we have seen and heard him play on numerous occasions, but all these scenes were in flashbacks—memories of his former glories before he went into (temporary) retirement. When he finally picks up his trumpet in the primary narrative time layer of the film, all he manages to produce are pathetic grunts and squeals.⁶ In the very next, closing scene, his embouchure is already magically restored, and he is seen and heard playing more powerfully and expressively than ever before. We must assume that months of laborious and painful practice occurred between the two scenes, but we are not allowed to witness this.

Chet Baker, in *Born to be Blue*, hits rock bottom much earlier, so that much of the film consists of the stubborn and gradual regaining of (some of) his former prowess, a form of rags-to-riches story compressed into a moment of crisis rather than covering a whole career. He had famously been the victim of a mugging, in which drug dealers he owed money knocked out his front teeth. We next see him in a bathtub valiantly trying to hold a note while blood is running from his ill-fitting dentures out of his mouth and over his body.

It is impossible not to be reminded of Krin Gabbard’s discussion of the phallic symbolism of the trumpet and symbolic castration in jazz films, including *Young Man with a Horn* and, in particular, *Mo’ Better Blues* (Spike Lee, 1990). As Gabbard (1996, 147) puts it, in these films “a common scene occurs in which the player’s inability to hit the right notes is a metaphor for his sexual or masculine inadequacy.” The parallels between the four movies (*Miles Ahead*, *Born to be Blue*, *Young Man with a Horn*, and *Mo’ Better Blues*), the way they all depict a very similar inexorable downward trajectory toward the dramatic (anti-)climax, before making a sudden reversal toward a happy or, in the case of *Born to be Blue*, ambiguous ending, are striking. What sets the new jazz films apart is overstatement: where Rick Martin and Bleek Gilliam fail to hit the right note, Miles and Chet do not manage to sustain any note at all. Indeed, *Born to be Blue* drives the sexual symbolism home none-too-subtly by including a scene cutting between footage of Baker painstakingly relearning to play and his partner Elaine teaching him how to make love to her with feeling

and consideration. Although the two newer films are biographical in contradistinction to their fictional or semi-fictional predecessors, the way in which they follow well-established models is unlikely to be entirely accidental.

Jazz, Flashbacks, and Nostalgia

Their formal and narrative quirks aside, then, the new jazz films are stereotypical of the genre, separated from their predecessors primarily through the passage of time. But there is one crucial difference. Most of the classic jazz films appeared at a time when jazz was still a vibrant cultural force. In terms of the relation between jazz films and the jazz culture they depicted, several phases can be distinguished: while the swing era showbiz films, such as *The Fabulous Dorseys*, *The Glen Miller Story*, and *The Benny Goodman Story*, came near the end of an era in which jazz was a commercial, mass market, *Young Man with a Horn* inaugurated the modern jazz-musician-as-serious-artist faux-biopic. The film *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), starring a young Sidney Poitier and, even more influentially, Bill Haley & The Comets' hit "Rock Around the Clock," is often seen as a watershed, marking the ascendancy of rock 'n' roll and eclipse of jazz as a commercial music with youth appeal, epitomized in a scene during which teenagers trash a teacher's jazz record collection. To be sure, *Young Man with a Horn* precedes *Blackboard Jungle* by some five years, but there is a clear sense in the film that jazz has grown up and is vying for artistic (although not necessarily social) prestige, more than teenage fandom. Indeed, it can easily be argued that jazz could only be taken seriously once it had become a minority concern, seemingly requiring an educated taste and discernment and thus garnering cultural capital.

Later classics of the genre, such as *Round Midnight*, *Bird*, *Kansas City* (Robert Altman, 1996), and *Sweet and Lowdown*, appeared after jazz's heyday and, in contradistinction to *Young Man with a Horn* or, for that matter, *Paris Blues*, were all set in the past. For a classic biopic, such as *Bird*, this may seem obvious and is part and parcel to jazz's having come of age. It is notable, though, that *Round Midnight*, too, is set in the 1950s, some thirty years before the film's production, and in its lugubrious atmosphere a yearning for a supposed golden age is unmistakable. *Kansas City* and *Sweet and Lowdown* are both set in the 1930s and 1940s, but not necessarily primarily because of the music.

Nevertheless, all these films seemed to speak to then present concerns and to emanate from a society in which jazz played a vital role, even as a minority taste. They clearly trusted their audiences to share a culture in which jazz is understood and widely appreciated.

The same cannot be said about the new crop of jazz movies. They seem to hearken back to a bygone age, separated from the present by a gulf. *La La Land*, alone, is upfront about this. "Jazz is dying," Sebastian proclaims in one scene, declaring his mission in life not to allow this to happen "on [his] watch"—but he is clearly under no illusions. In a later scene he is challenged by Keith (John Legend), the leader of a successful band, who has offered him a lifeline:

Jazz is dying because of people like you. You're playing to 90-year-olds at The Light-house. Where are the kids? Where are the young people? You're so obsessed with Kenny Clarke and Thelonious Monk. These guys were revolutionaries. How are you going to be a revolutionary if you're such a traditionalist? You're holding onto the past, but Jazz is about the future.

(Cornish 2017)

Sebastian simply remains silent. In an interview, Chazelle has admitted that he identifies with him and his demand for "purity," not Keith (Cornish 2017), and the whole movie suggests as much. It is an enormous nostalgia-fest, dedicated to the "golden age" musical of the 1920s to 1950s

even more than to classic jazz (up to the 1960s). It seems fully aware that its position is untenable but gleefully indulges in contradictory golden-ageisms nonetheless (it never seriously attempts to blend the post-bop idiom of the diegetic jazz scenes with the show tune pastiches of the song and dance numbers and underscore, for instance). Nor is there any sense that Chazelle expects his audience to understand and share his and Sebastian's enthusiasm: when, in one scene, Sebastian "mansplains" jazz to Mia in the most simplistic and reductive terms, this is clearly intended to educate the audience as much as Mia.

Miles Ahead and *Born to be Blue* are not necessarily less conflicted but a good deal less self-aware. *Miles Ahead*, in particular, is characterized by a historical split consciousness that announces itself in the formal structure. As mentioned before, the movie is set in 1979, during Davis's retreat from the stage and (save for some unissued recordings) the studio. It's told in a double-flashback structure. The outer frame consists of an interview the fictional Miles gives to Dave Braden following his comeback, modeled apparently on one the real Davis had granted to Bryant Gumbel on National Broadcasting Company's (NBC's) *Late Show* in 1982,⁷ while the main narrative layer consists of the months leading up to this moment. Much of the story, however, is filled in with extensive flashbacks-within-the-flashback, which, crucially, include lengthy re-enactments of some of Davis's most influential recordings, which are presented as Miles's memories. The result is an odd contradiction between Miles's frequent statements about the necessity for the music to move forward—including his disdain for the very word "jazz," speaking instead of "social music"—and his constant reveling in reveries about his former glory days. Almost needless to say, as audience members we are complicit in this: who doesn't want to hear "So what?," "Miles Ahead," "Nefertiti," and all the others, even if their performance is simply mimed to the original recording? We have come for the tunes, although we may stay for the story. As a result, jazz is doubly removed from the present: it takes place in a movie set almost forty years ago, where it already represents but the distant, unrepeatable memories of an aging and ailing former star. To be fair, at the very end, the film keeps its promise and brings Miles's music into the present—rather confusingly, *our* present, not that of the film. Miles is unveiling his new social music—the "fusion" (literally) of jazz, rock, and funk he created during the 1980s, lightly updated by the film's composer, Robert Glasper. That the scene is set now, outside the diegesis of the film, can be seen in some details, such as the hashtag #socialmusic on Miles's shirt (which was used by the film's promotion company in their actual twitter feed) and the make of some of the instruments (notably the keyboard, which is a recent model). With the fictional Miles are his real-life collaborators, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter (now in their seventies and eighties, respectively), whose younger selves we have seen earlier played by actors, and much younger jazz luminaries Esperanza Spalding, Gary Clark, Jr., and Antonio Sanchez. Over the end titles, we also hear the rapper Pharoahe Monch, further testifying to the continuity of black music (the "changing same," in Amiri Baraka's (2002) words). The music, we are told, unites past, present, and future; it transcends all boundaries of age, race, and gender, even between fiction and reality. In other words: Miles lives! It is a marvelous scene and the attention it pays to today's music and musicians, young and old, sets the film apart from the others discussed here. Nevertheless, this closing scene, or rather *postlude*, cannot hide the fact that the rest of the film is dealing with ancient history and treating jazz as a relic of a long bygone era.

Born to be Blue relies less heavily on flashbacks as a formal device, since much of the narrative follows Baker relearning to play the trumpet after his encounter with the drug dealers, getting his first gigs and so forth in a linear manner. But there is one extended and crucial flashback early on in the film, showing Baker's seminal gig at Birdland, when he was billed above Miles Davis (during the first half of his month-long engagement, he was featured above the good-natured Dizzy Gillespie, without any recorded incidents). In the film, a putdown by Davis—"come back when you've lived a little"—destroys Baker's self-confidence and is depicted as the motivating

factor behind the whole drama: Baker's downward spiral into drug addiction and his pulling himself up by his bootstraps and steely determination to earn the respect of the jazz scene are linked to his rejection by his erstwhile idol. The model here appears to be the cymbal that, following an apocryphal story, Philly Joe Jones throws at Charlie Parker in Clint Eastwood's *Bird* and that makes repeated appearances at crucial junctures in the narrative. What exactly Davis may have said to Baker remains conjecture, but the main gist of the storyline of *Born to be Blue* is borne out by Gavin's biography: "Long after most of the 'brothers' had stopped caring, Baker felt the sting of their early rejection [at the time of his Birdland engagement], and he never stopped resenting them for it" (Gavin 2011, 99–100). In the end, the film goes full circle, closing on a comeback gig at Birdland (which never happened), with Gillespie and Davis once again in attendance. Thus, even though the flashback takes up only a small part of the film—at least compared to the dominance of flashbacks in *Miles Ahead*—it could hardly be more crucial for the narrative. It is also set off from the remainder by being shot in black and white (a technical gimmick that *Miles Ahead* eschews, although it arguably might just as well have gone the whole hog, considering that the performance flashbacks feel sepia-tinted despite being shot in color). After the flashback, Baker spends the rest of the film trying to recapture his former prowess and status (which is a curious gambit for a music film, since it means that the bulk of the film features only rudimentary music making, bookended by more impressive performances at the two Birdland gigs).

As mentioned before, the flashback is a conventional device in biopics, used to focus the story on its dramatic core and avoid the tediousness of long stretches of linear, more or less eventful, narrative (*Bird* is virtually alone among jazz biopics in its reliance on linear narrative, instead using the flying cymbal leitmotif to structure the succession of events). Nevertheless, its use in *Miles Ahead* and, to a lesser extent, *Born to be Blue* accentuates historical distance. Jazz appears as a reminiscence from a bygone age, twice removed from the present: in films set in the past in which it is already evoked in sepia-tinted memories. Although *Miles Ahead* makes a valiant attempt at gesturing toward the present and future of jazz and *La La Land* at its preservation on life support in its "pure form," on the whole these films are primarily interested in jazz as a historical relic, not as a living presence.

Conclusion

While we may thus rejoice at seeing jazz being celebrated on the silver screen again after so many years, and while we may welcome that potential new audiences are being introduced to the music (although *Miles Ahead* and *Born to be Blue* are unlikely to attract many viewers who aren't already jazz fans, *La La Land*—almost uniquely among jazz films—is a veritable blockbuster), the picture the new crop of jazz films paint of jazz is ultimately far from flattering. Jazz is implicitly and partly unwittingly presented as a thing of the past. Although earlier jazz films were set in the past or were based on long-dead musicians, they gave the impression of a historical continuity between the past and the present. This is no longer the case: in the new jazz films, performance is largely relegated to nostalgic flashbacks or is being preserved in its dying but supposedly pure form. What these films are celebrating is jazz's afterlife, not its renaissance.

We may of course dispute this diagnosis; most of us can recite exciting musicians, albums, and gigs, or name festivals, labels, clubs, and broadcasters that keep the music alive and vibrant. But what cinema represents, usually accurately, are not facts but popular perception. And it is hard to disagree: jazz may thrive in its niches and will continue to do so for some time, but it is not widely popular and is not going to become so.⁸ Moreover, in most people's consciousness, it is associated squarely with the past—how many can name a single jazz musician who came to prominence after about 1970? We may look forward to more jazz films still, and there is no reason not to enjoy them while we can, but let us not kid ourselves about what that means about the music's presence in popular consciousness and its cultural role.

Notes

1. I wish to thank my colleague Ian Garwood for his valuable comments on a draft version of this chapter.
2. Boundaries can be fluid and definitions are by their nature problematic, but for the purposes of this chapter the definition of “jazz films” adopted by Jenny Doctor et al. (Doctor, Elsdon, and Heile 2016, 1) is valid: “narrative feature films focusing on actual or imaginary jazz musicians (‘biopics’), set in the jazz milieu, or at least using jazz as a soundtrack.” This can be contrasted to documentaries or concert footage.
3. It is worth pointing out that, although Brody (2014) is justified in criticizing the film’s depiction of jazz, his apparent conviction that it completely endorses Fletcher’s actions or otherwise shares the beliefs of its protagonists (including the lionization of Buddy Rich) is bewildering.
4. Paul Newman’s Ram Bowen in *Paris Blues* may be seen as an exception since he has no obvious vices—presumably because he eventually abandons jazz for classical composition—but he too is referred to as a “night person” by his friend and musical partner Eddie Cook (Sidney Poitier), and he leaves his love interest Lilian Corning (Joanne Woodward) to focus entirely on his art.
5. The identification of Braden as Nisenson is plausible, although it too does involve some license. Nisenson had met Davis a good deal earlier and was actually supposed to ghost-write his autobiography. Davis split from him in 1982, when his second wife Cicely Tyson demanded a clean break with his past (“Eric Nisenson” 2016).
6. In his autobiography there is no indication that Davis was physically unable to play, although he states that “from 1975 until early 1980 I didn’t pick up my horn” and that he was in poor health—he actually had sickle cell anemia, osteoarthritis, and a number of other conditions, on top of his addictions to drugs and alcohol: Davis and Troupe (1990, 323); Carr (1984, 274–279). To be sure, after such a long period of inactivity his embouchure would have been poor, but he would have been able to play more or less normally, at least for brief periods. Another “interesting” license the makers took is that they attribute his bad hip to a fight with his first wife Frances Taylor—implausibly started by her, moreover. It was in fact caused by osteoarthritis.
7. This is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHeYG9SNaS0 (accessed January 22, 2017). His rejection of the term “jazz” and preference for “social music” can be found here word for word.
8. The figures, at least, are clear. According to the *Nielsen Music Year End Report US 2016*, jazz ties with classical as least popular genre in the USA, accounting for 1 percent of music consumption: www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2017-reports/2016-year-end-music-report-us.pdf (accessed January 23, 2017).

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COMICS AS CRITICISM

Harvey Pekar, Jazz Writer

Nicolas Pillai

Over the past forty years, comic books have gained cultural legitimacy as a medium, and, as that has happened, a theoretical and critical literature has emerged around their study. Broadly speaking, the field of Comics Studies combines two kinds of writing. A long tradition of fan scholarship (focused primarily on creator practice and bibliographic detail) exists in parallel with the theoretical writing developed out of mid-century American sociology and cultural studies (see Rosenberg and White 1957, which devotes four chapters to the sociological effect of comics and only one to jazz).¹ Like Jazz Studies, Comics Studies has proven an exemplary interdisciplinary field, often operating on the fringes of academia and consequently pioneering digital forms of scholarship.² Notably, several key works of comics theory have been published *as comics* (McCloud 1993; Souzanis 2015), representing an integration of theory and practice which might present useful models for the New Jazz Studies.

In this chapter I use Harvey Pekar, author of the autobiographical comic series *American Splendor*, as a frame through which to view comics' interaction with jazz music. Many readers will know that Pekar was himself a jazz fan, an obsessive record collector, a prolific jazz critic, and a tireless supporter of experimental music, enthusiasms which he often worked into his comic books. However, my interest here is not in determining how "successfully" Pekar represented jazz or in developing what film studies would term an auteur study. Rather, I wish to view Pekar's comic book treatments of jazz as extensions and developments of his prose criticism in publications such as *The Jazz Review*, *Downbeat*, and *Jazz Journal*. I contend that in these comic strips Pekar is experimenting with the form of jazz criticism itself, and is developing its language and effect.

A Poet of the Quotidian

Harvey Pekar (1939–2010) was, for most of his life, employed as a file clerk at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in his hometown, Cleveland. In a youthful reminiscence written late in life entitled *The Quitter* (Pekar, Haspiel, and Loughridge 2005), Pekar describes a troubled working-class adolescence in which street fighting and obsessive interests in sport and jazz defined his identity within the local community. A self-diagnosed obsessive-compulsive, Pekar dropped out of college, was rejected by the US Navy and worked short spells for local businesses before securing a file clerk post with the federal government in 1965. He would remain in this job until he retired in 2001. Through a friendship with countercultural star Robert Crumb, Pekar became interested

in expanding and adapting the bohemian idiom of underground “comix” to develop his notion of the “quotidian”:

I thought, “Jeez, comics can be about anything.” I was also impressed by the fact there was so little realism in comic books. [. . .] I started theorizing about comics and what else could be done with them. [. . .] I also wanted to write about everyday life, quotidian life, because I felt that writers in just about every area had ignored a lot of what goes on in everyday life.

(Rhode 2008, 147)

From 1976 onwards, he would write, self-publish and self-distribute the *American Splendor* comic, an anthology series of autobiographical vignettes drawn by a changing roster of artists working in different styles.

In the early 1970s, Pekar’s first comic strip stories had been published in existing underground publications such as *The People’s Comics*, *Bizarre Sex*, and *Flamed-Out Funnies*. At this point he had not fully committed to autobiography and so presented himself through analogs such as “Jack the Bellboy” (see Pekar 2003, 61–71). Even in his earliest writing, Pekar self-identified through a caricature of working-class labor; in this chapter I use “Pekar” to refer to the writer and “Harv” to refer to the autobiographical construct featured in the comics. While many of these early strips anticipate the subject matter of *American Splendor*, others conform tonally with the obscene idiom common to subversive comix.

As Roger Lewis notes, the comic strip form was inherently subversive: “Wall posters in China and anarchist comics in pre-civil war Spain suggest how much earlier revolutionaries in other countries realized the potential of the illustrated medium” (Lewis 1972, 69). Like that other mass-produced visual medium, the cinema, comics were a powerful communications tool, easily digestible by the poorly educated and the young but also possessing hip counter-cultural appeal for intellectuals. In the conservative climate of postwar America, concerns over the damaging effects of comics on youth had led to the establishment of the Comics Code.³ While DC, the major American comic publisher of properties such as Superman and Batman, remained resolutely staid during the 1960s, their new rival Marvel “developed a complexity that coincided, in time, with the first ripples made by the emerging drug sub-culture,” often depicting “spaced-out, light-show-type illustrations” (Lewis 1972, 68). One only has to pick up a collection of Marvel’s Greenwich Village-set *Dr. Strange* from the late 1960s or early 1970s to see the extent to which the imagery of the counter-culture had been subsumed, and defanged, by this time.⁴

Pekar’s decision to stop submitting to existing underground comix anthologies and create his own title, *American Splendor*, was motivated by his desire to experiment with graphic narrative.

I published it because I frankly had more and more grandiose ideas about what I could do in terms of stories in comic books—more complex stories and longer stories. And frankly, there weren’t any publishers around that I thought would accept any of these stories.

(Rhode 2008, 151–152)

Pekar would work with artists local to Cleveland as well as others from further afield such as Frank Stack, Joe Sacco, and Crumb (Rhode 2008, 18). Printing each issue was an onerous process: in an interview conducted at the 2005 Small Press Expo in Bethesda, Maryland, Pekar recalled print runs of ten thousand generated by two local printing companies (one handled interior black and white pages, the other color covers) which were then assembled at a bindery: “Then I had to pick

them all up, take them back home, stick them in my basement, and start soliciting orders” (Rhode 2008, 153).

Between 1976 and 1991, Pekar self-published and distributed sixteen issues of *American Splendor*. From issue 17 onwards, Dark Horse Comics distributed the title up until issue 26 (September 1999). Pekar would regret ceding control to a large company who “were really interested in putting out comics like *Star Wars*” (Rhode 2008, 153). For a later 2006–2008 mini-series (Pekar 2007, 2009), he developed a more amenable relationship with Vertigo Comics. After a number of false starts, a film adaptation (Shari Springer Berman, Robert Pulcini 2003) successfully wove together a number of *American Splendor* stories; the actor Paul Giamatti took the lead but Pekar narrated the film and appeared as himself in docu-drama segments.⁵ The film brought Pekar a level of international publicity that he had never before experienced. Contracts with major publishers resulted that led him to work more in the graphic novel form, publishing book-length stories rather than the single-issue anthologies of short stories which had characterized the *American Splendor* series between 1976 and 1999.⁶

The subject to which Pekar’s comics continually return is the coexistence of banality and beauty in everyday life, provoked by his lifelong love of the European naturalist novel. In particular, a passion for early twentieth-century Russian writers inspired Pekar’s interest in the microcosmic.⁷ Minor events like the breakdown of a car (Pekar 2005b, 23–35), a delayed supermarket queue (Pekar 2003, 78–82), or the loss of a front-door key (Pekar 2005a, 238–251) become, in Pekar’s hands, miniature studies of American life in the twentieth century, portraits of the neurotic American working-class male.⁸ No draftsman, Pekar always worked in collaboration, providing rough stick-figure storyboards that a variety of artists would interpret in different styles. The ever-changing visual style of *American Splendor* ensures that the only constant is Pekar’s authorial voice, generating an intimacy with the reader usually only experienced in the diary form. While his work is predominantly autobiographical, Pekar would sometimes act as a reporter of others’ life experience, a mode in which he grew increasingly ambitious in later years.

As a writer, Pekar narrates in the street argot of working-class Cleveland, embellished with self-parodic hipster flourishes. Ethnic difference is often marked through pidgin forms that can create problematic representations (just like Crumb).⁹ Pekar’s depiction of himself as a flawed, often selfish, individual is tempered by street wisdom and casual erudition. The constantly rotating artists’ impressions of Harv ensure continuing commentary and psychological complexity, avoiding self-hagiography. This textual effect is nicely captured in the 2003 film, as Harv’s future wife Joyce Brabner (Hope Davis) anticipates meeting him:

It’s the way all the different artists draw you [. . .] Sometimes you look like a younger Brando but then the way Crumb draws you, like a hairy ape, with all these wavy, stinky lines undulating off your body . . . I don’t really know what to expect.¹⁰

I have made a comparison to European novelists above. We might also see Pekar as self-consciously modeling his artistic career on the avant-garde jazz musicians that he admired.¹¹ Beginning in an established form (underground comix), Pekar pioneered his own mode of production and distribution, using the medium in an innovative way and drawing inspiration from constant collaboration. In later years, Pekar was admired by the mainstream, permitting him to produce more expansive and ambitious work. However, this established narrative of Pekar’s life omits the considerable volume of prose criticism he wrote over his lifetime. In the remainder of this chapter I wish to ask how he integrated his critical impulse within his comics making, and so develop a model with which we might analyze comics in the New Jazz Studies.

Pekar, Jazz Critic

When he embarked upon *American Splendor* in 1976, Pekar had been a published jazz critic for seventeen years. His first jazz review was published in 1959 when he was 19 years old, working as a playground supervisor. The article, reassessing Fats Navarro, had begun life as a long letter written to the editor of *The Jazz Review*, Martin Williams. Impressed by the erudition of the missive, Williams invited Pekar to work it up into an article. This was a watershed moment for the teenager at a time of personal insecurity; its impact may be measured by the frequency with which Pekar returned to this moment in interviews and in his comics. Pekar often framed his reminiscences with mention of his friendship with jazz critic Ira Gitler; the approval of these gatekeepers was evidently important to the young man.¹²

Reading back Pekar's early pieces in *The Jazz Review*, we see the righteousness of a young fan protecting his heroes. In the Navarro piece, he writes "various comments on the work of Fats Navarro have seemed to me grossly unfair and inaccurate as estimates of his style and achievement" (Pekar 1959a, 66). Similarly, a month later, he complains "Thad Jones always seems to be in someone's shadow" (Pekar 1959b, 30). In later pieces for *Jazz Journal*, he mounted stirring rehabilitations of cornetist and trumpeter Johnny Dunn and the avant-garde saxophone style of Teo Macero (later of course a Columbia A&R man) (Pekar 1971, 28–30, 1972, 22–23).

As a critic, Pekar wrote in an idiomatic style but with great technical know-how and discographical knowledge. In later years, he would note "I really like to write in specific musical terms rather than impressionistically" (Rhode 2008, 53). This did not stop him from indulging in colorful metaphor, however, writing of Navarro's avoidance of cliché: "He was remarkably conscientious in this respect, like a good housekeeper who pounces on dirt the minute she sees it" (Pekar 1959a, 66). His prose was informed but not dry; in a review of the album *Ben Webster & Associates*, he writes of Coleman Hawkins's contribution:

Hawk makes me laugh. His crashing intensity completely spoil [sic.] the sitting-by-the-fireside-on-a-cold-winter-night atmosphere. He's the big bully who breaks up the marble game. He sure makes it though. His sound is huge and tough. He never relaxes. You get the feeling someone is holding your mouth open and jamming licks down it.

(Pekar 1960, 31–32)

Compare the demotic use here to the formality of the Navarro piece quoted above. Pekar's triumph was to find a space where impressionism and technical knowledge could coexist and, as we shall see, this defined his treatment of jazz in comics.

Pekar was an iconoclastic critic, often challenging the rigid historical narratives that pervaded jazz criticism.¹³ Writing of rock and roll tenor sax, he made the heretical suggestion that "Lester Young may have had quite a bit of influence on this style. It was he who discovered that tension could be built up by holding a note through several chord changes, one of the rockers' favorite devices" (Pekar 1961a, 24). Similarly, he may have provoked a few aneurisms in readers of *The Jazz Review* when he argued that most of Art Tatum's records were "interesting only technically" and that "Tatum's conception of jazz has more to do with Paul Whiteman than with Miles Davis" (Pekar 1961b, 26). In a 1970 edition of *Downbeat*, he would publish a three-page feature on the ambition of Jefferson Airplane (Pekar 1970, 18–20).

Pekar's prolific output as a cultural critic is usually downplayed in studies of his comics work. Yet the critical vocabulary developed by Pekar from 1959 through the 1960s and into the early 1970s is one that persists, in adapted form, in his subsequent comics writing. Pekar published jazz writing often, driven by financial need: in a seventeen-year period, he wrote for top journals such as *The Jazz Review* (US), *Downbeat* (US), *Coda* (Canada), *Jazz Journal* (UK), *Jazz Monthly* (UK),

and the *Evergreen Review* (US). During the 1970s, however, he stopped writing for these magazines. Quizzed on this hiatus, Pekar explained: “I was really burned out [. . .] I was on reviewing staffs and things like that, and I was assigned to review records that I wasn’t interested in writing about” (Rhode 2008, 53). In his strip “A Story About a Review,” he goes further: “I wrote for ‘Downbeat’ [sic.] from 1962 to 1971, and I was the garbageman of their reviewing staff, the only guy who’d write about anything because I needed that \$5 a review” (Pekar 2005a, 123). He stayed away from journalism for some fifteen years, only picking it up again in the last years of his life, writing for *The Austin Chronicle*, *Northern Ohio Live*, and others.

In a study of anecdote within jazz practice, Tony Whyton suggests that “anecdote confuses the relationship between past and present; anecdotal accounts are almost always constructed in retrospect, yet their narrative is capable of giving the recipient the sense of experiencing an event in the present” (Whyton 2004, 117). In the pages of *American Splendor*, Pekar told and retold significant events in his life, providing different emphases according to context and distance from the event. A common framing device is the image of Harv directly addressing the reader, “breaking the fourth wall,” somewhere between a stand-up comic and a teacher (see, among many others, Pekar 2003, 4–24, the cover of Pekar 1991, 2005b, 78–98, 151–174). Facing out to the reader, Harv comes over as a rust-belt Lennie Bruce; early examples of this kind of direct address in his strips also strongly recall Woody Allen’s framing segments in *Annie Hall*, especially in the use of a blank backdrop.¹⁴ It is significant too that this mode of address, in which a rendering of the author proceeds through consecutive panels addressing the reader like a TV presenter, is later taken up in McCloud (1993), a foundational work of Comics Studies.

In a number of respects, Pekar’s storytelling style in comics mimics the form of jazz anecdote, famously described as containing “candour, conceit, warmth, contradictions, bitterness, nostalgia, fulfillment, and frustration” (Shapiro and Hentoff 1962, 14). The punchline of “The Day Before the Be-In” (*American Splendor* #7 “Big Divorce Issue,” 1982, reprinted in Pekar 2003, 25–37; pencils by Greg Budgett, inks by Gary Dumm) is bittersweet: absorbed by a conversation about jazz with a (black) parking attendant, Harv has forgotten his wife’s coffee. As with the jazz anecdotes Whyton describes, the story presents a fixed temporal frame: a copyright credit notes publication in 1982; a caption at the beginning of the story establishes the setting as “Saturday Morning Summer 1970,” dramatizing the quotidian moment but framing it with hindsight. Music makes up the fabric of the everyday, something to be recalled and thought through outside of specialist realms. For Pekar, a conversation in a parking lot is as valuable as a feature article in *Downbeat*. Pekar’s jazz comics function as jazz historiography, an ongoing fight to merge critical thought and creativity.

Retelling the Story

In a study of Alan Lomax’s biography of Jelly Roll Morton, Nicholas Gebhardt notes how Lomax addresses the inadequacies of jazz historiography.

It is not just a collection of people’s memories, an oral history that aims simply to recall and, therefore, repeat a sequence of events from the past in which Morton was the central character; rather, it is a study of how we remember, of the processes of recollection, and of all the issues that such processes raise for our understanding of the present.

(2017, 197)

Equally, the meta-narrative of *American Splendor* is a meditation upon memory. Pekar’s comics regularly use modernist distancing techniques to complicate and comment upon the ostensibly realist mode of autobiography. Whether he is recounting his own direct experience or that of

others, the Pekar project matches that of Gebhardt's description of Lomax, "expanding the field of imaginative possibilities available to the historian" (2017, 195).

In "A Story About a Review," Pekar's return to jazz journalism is provoked by a realization that Django Reinhardt may have anticipated free jazz elements in Lennie Tristano's work. Artist Joe Sacco depicts Harv complacently listening, then hearing something new, then sharing the idea with a musician friend. The four-panel sequence culminates in a panel with no illustration, just text containing a quotation from Pekar's eventual review in arts magazine *Northern Ohio Live* and an addendum.

So I wrote: "He also did some interesting unaccompanied free tempo solo work. In fact it appears that in April 1937 Reinhardt may have made the first free jazz recording, 'Improvisation,' because his improvisation on it does not appear to be based on a preset foundation like a chord progression and cannot be divided into units like a chorus." (Of course it's always possible that the 1937 "Improvisation" is based on a structure unlike any that the musicians who listened to it and I are familiar with, or even that Django, who wasn't supposed to read music, could have memorized the entire piece before recording it, but this is unlikely.)

(Pekar 2005a, 124)

Pekar contextualizes his review's argument within an emotional structure ("Boy, I felt good about making that discovery") that also notes the limitations of the journalistic form. After reproducing his argument in quote marks, his addendum provides nuance that the original review could not. The comics form permits not only articulation of the musicological argument, but also commentary upon the moment of critical inspiration and its emotional implications.

A similar impulse guides "Bop Philosophy" (Pekar 2009, 87–95), a strip which combines the rhythms of quotidian conversation found in "The Day Before the Be-In" and the explicit analysis of critical process seen in "A Story About a Review." "Bop Philosophy" depicts a phone conversation between Harv and his friend Tony Lavorgna (creator of the comics *Bebopman* and *Lois*; one-time saxophonist with The Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra). Prompted to be candid, Harv criticizes Lavorgna's saxophone style for staying within bebop and failing to push beyond, like "the guys that are keeping jazz alive, the ones that add to the musical vocabulary" (Pekar 2009, 94). As their conversation progresses, the strip's artist Dean Haspiel surrounds the conversationalists with floating images of bop players (Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, Horace Silver, Dizzy Gillespie, J. J. Johnson, Dexter Gordon) and Pekar's beloved avant-gardists (Eric Dolphy, Cecil Taylor). The strip concludes with Harv sketching out stick-figure storyboards as he asks Tony if he can write up their conversation as a comic strip (Pekar 2009, 95).

Dean Haspiel's art in this strip is unconventional even by *American Splendor* standards. It sometimes foregoes conventional panel borders (the traditional marker of time elapsing in comics), conveying a fluidity of mutual thought as the conversation progresses. Despite Harv and Lavorgna being divided by geographical distance, Haspiel repeatedly chooses to place them within the same frame, especially as their dialog becomes more argumentative. Haspiel also references famous photographs of key musicians (for example, "Charlie Parker," William Gottlieb 1940; "Bud Powell Performing at Birdland," Michael Cuscuna, 1958; "Horace Silver At Piano," Bob Parent 1956; "Dexter Gordon at the Royal Roost, 1948," Herman Leonard). Beyond nostalgia, we might see Haspiel's intertextual referencing of jazz photography as engaging with those questions of iconography and musical style problematized by Peter Townsend (2000, 163–166) and celebrated in Cawthra (2011).

Space does not permit me to fully treat those strips in which Pekar takes on the role of biographer, shifting focus from his own life to those of others. By no means did these all focus on

musicians (see endnote 6). However, even within his biographies of musicians, we find great variation. In Pekar and Sacco (1997), a collection of music comics originally published in *Village Voice* and *The Austin Chronicle*, two-page strips portray events in the lives of such diverse musicians as Slim Gaillard, Jabbo Smith, Sheila Jordan, Bill DeArango, Teo Macero, Sun Ra, Joe Maneri, Greg Selker, and The Who. Characteristically, Pekar inserts his critical perspective into these accounts, often in a few concluding panels that show Harv looking out at us in lecture mode. Equally characteristic is the tone of anger and frustration that colors many of these commentaries, as Harv rails against the forces that overlook or oppress adventurous musicians. In “Jabbo Smith,” a final panel shows us Harv fiercely observing,

If the jazz crowd at the Lincoln Centre was into anyone but already acknowledged greats like King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Ellington, and Armstrong, they’d be hyping Jabbo “con mucho gusto.” But that’d be too much like right. . . . You could learn about him yourself though.

(Pekar and Sacco 1997, 11)

On the subject of musicians, Pekar’s sincerity is never in doubt, though we might take with a pinch of salt the deprecation he uses to describe his own jazz writing: “The only reason I kept at it was because it made me feel good to think of myself as an author, though I’d already become one of America’s great file clerks” (Pekar and Sacco 1997, 1). In the same piece, Pekar deplors “hack journalists more interested in slick prose full of metaphors, literary imagery, and social and political commentary than the analytical stuff, full of stubby little words, that I wrote” (Pekar and Sacco 1997, 1). In his comics work, we find Pekar exploring the limits of expressive jazz criticism.

You Can Do Anything With Words and Pictures

Comics are particularly appropriate as a medium to tell stories of everyday life; they are everyday objects, often strewn on the floors of children’s bedrooms. Indeed, Pekar’s use of the medium draws upon the tradition of comics being connected to learning and first experiences with reading and communication (again, note Pekar’s self-deprecation in *Bop Philosophy*, the first page devoted to his unfamiliarity with hands-free phones). The Pekar strips that serve as brief biographies of musicians have a clear lineage from 1940s publications such as *Jukebox Comics*, which provided “origin stories” for jazz musicians such as Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, Cab Calloway, and Ella Fitzgerald. However, as I have argued, Pekar’s strips do not merely tell a history; they comment upon it, interrogating jazz historiography through words and pictures.

Evidently, Pekar’s comics use a double temporality common to jazz anecdote. Thinking through criticism’s place in the everyday, they provide a compelling model for ways in which the New Jazz Studies might resolve the sometimes antagonistic relationship between theory, criticism, and practice. For Harv (the comic book character), this attempt at meta-critical analysis of jazz and comics would no doubt be suspect, the defensive verbosity of the pointy-headed intellectual. For Pekar (the author, the critic), the attempt to think creatively about how we account for our engagement with music might represent an opportunity, not to be wasted.

Notes

1. Michael Kammen reminds us that even earlier, in 1924, Gilbert Seldes had celebrated jazz and comics in *The 7 Lively Arts*: “Seldes explained that he loved the comic strip as a genre because it connected in meaningful ways to the ‘average American life’” (Kammen 1996, 96). Modern Comics Studies would likely dispute this classification of comics as genre rather than medium.

2. This confluence of acoustic, graphic, and digital realms shaped the special collection on jazz and comics I co-edited with Ernesto Priego (see Pillai and Priego 2016).
3. Comics regulation is commonly seen as resulting from psychologist Fredric Wertham's research during the 1950s into the relationship between comics, delinquency, and sexual behavior. See Warshow (2002, 53–74) for a contemporary response to Wertham. In recent years, Kiste Nyberg (1994) and Beaty (2005) have contextualized the outcry.
4. There is a chapter to be written on superheroes and jazz musicians, tracing parallels between public figures and societal outsiders, the notion of heroism and a world of night. Even a brief survey of Batman comics, as an example, is suggestive. We might note that Batman's primary antagonist, The Joker, was drawn during the 1940s as a whiteface hipster, often using radio broadcasts to disrupt the social fabric of Gotham City. In a February 1949 strip, bandleader Kay Kyser appeared as a guest star assisting Batman in *Detective Comics* 144. During the 1960s, the popularity of Neil Hefti's jazzy soundtrack to the Adam West Batman TV series prompted a cash-in record that featured core members of the Sun Ra Arkestra. In 1970, *Detective Comics* 224 saw Batman travel to New Orleans to solve the mystery of a murdered jazz musician, and in 1992, in an episode of *Batman: The Animated Series*, the caped crusader battled the jive-talking gangster Jazzman. Perhaps most intriguingly, in 1995 as part of the alternate-universe *Legends of the Dark Knight* imprint, Batman encountered a Charlie Parker avatar who had faked his own death in *Batman: Jazz*.
5. See Hight (2007) for an account of the film's adaptation from Pekar's comic.
6. Pekar's first major long-form work was written in collaboration with his wife (Pekar, Brabner and Stack 1994). *Our Cancer Year* was a record of Pekar's diagnosis, treatment, and depression; its plot points provide the structure for the second half of the 2003 *American Splendor* film. Later single-volume graphic novels include the Vietnam memoir of a black serviceman (Pekar and Collier 2003), a reminiscence of Pekar's adolescence (Pekar, Haspiel, and Loughridge 2005), experiments with biography (Pekar and Dumm 2006), treatises on Macedonia (Pekar, Roberson, and Piskor 2007), student politics (Pekar, Buhle, and Dumm 2008), and the Beat poets (Pekar, Buhle, and Piskor 2009), and final reflections on Judaism and Israel (Pekar and Waldman 2013) and life in Cleveland, published posthumously (Pekar and Remnant 2012).
7. Quizzed on his favorites, Pekar stated, "Gogol, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Bely, Pilnyak, Zamyatin, Khlebnikov are among my favourite Russian writers. I'm very interested in Russian modernism from 1900 to 1935" (Rhode 2008, 30).
8. At a public lecture held in Northampton Town Hall on October 9, 2010, my wife Róisín Muldoon asked Alan Moore (*The Ballad of Halo Jones*, *Watchmen*, *From Hell*) about the work of Pekar, who had recently died. Speaking enthusiastically, and at length, about Pekar's ability to evoke the small pleasures of life, Moore named "Hypothetical Quandary" (Pekar 2003, 154–156) as his favorite strip, in which the smell of fresh bread brings solace after a long day.
9. Accusations of racism evidently bothered Pekar; he rebuts them in strip form in "Self-Justification" (2005a, 172–179).
10. Joyce Brabner is a distinguished author and political activist in her own right. Her work includes comics anthologies critical of the US Department of Defense and the CIA's involvement in the Iran-Contra affair.
11. Asked in 1994, Pekar was "particularly interested these days in the work of avant-gardists like John Zorn, Dave Douglas, Mark Ribot, Roy Nathanson, and Anthony Coleman, who—in some ways—have gone beyond synthesizing jazz with other forms and are creating new music" (Rhode 2008, 32).
12. An account of submitting the article is given in a short strip from 1994 entitled "My Career Begins" (Pekar 2005a, 121–122). Pekar retells the story in his longer-form bildungsroman *The Quitter*, featuring Gitler as a character within the story (Pekar, Haspiel and Loughridge 2005, 59–60).
13. Despite containing many interesting passages on jazz, it is telling that the collection *Harvey Pekar: Conversations* omits the second half of an interview with David Garland focused specifically on Pekar's musical taste (Rhode 2008, 55).
14. In a 2001 interview with Shawna Ervin-Gore, Pekar explicitly noted the influence of stand-up comedy: "For the most part I'm thinking about timing: how to break up the dialogue, or if I'm trying to be humorous, how to arrange the panel for maximum effect. Sometimes it's just being thoughtful about where to put the final word when I'm finishing up a rap. So pacing and timing are two of the most important things to me" (Rhode 2008, 110).

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FREE SPIRITS

The Performativity of Free Improvisation

Petter Frost Fadnes

When their hearts pounded with excitement their souls pounded too, when their pulses raced their spirits were aroused, when their eyes moistened with tears of happiness it was their minds that felt the joy.

Salman Rushdie (2015, 145–146)

Writing this, as 2016 is coming to an end, and in a world where refugees are drowning in their desperate attempts to reach European shores, we are reminded that *identity affiliation* (passport/nationhood/politics/family/tribe/etcetera) may be a life and death issue. *Free* in this context conjures up not just abstract music and avant-garde subcultures, but goes deep into human values, ideologies, dreams, and aspirations. You may freely (. . .) interpret the heading of *Free Spirits*, but for me¹ it refers to a process of *liberation*, attempting to escape the “old-world order” and representing the emancipative force Albert Ayler once called for through *Spiritual Unity* (1964) and *Spirits Rejoice* (1965). We are also reminded of Hegel’s *Geist* (spirit/mind), pursuing freedom through *Sittlichkeit* (ethical life). Hegel realized that freedom is not about transcending structure (as an abstract ideal), but rather about challenging and developing systems (cultures) from *within* in the pursuit of identity; and in this chapter I try to pursue *Free Spirits* through similar reasoning.

Introducing Free Performativity

To begin understanding ideologies of free and relevant thinking around the perception of individual freedom, we need to view free as a multifaceted conceptual *construction*, challenging cultural, political, and aesthetic restrictions on how subjects interact with the world. Forms of such interaction can be heard in the *performativity* of freely improvised music. Performativity of free is therefore not just about breaking musical norms and idiomatic restrictions² but is a deep-rooted and ideologically based desire to interact (unhindered/uncensored) with whomever is prepared to engage. If we twist Judith Butler’s writings on gender identity toward musical identity we recognize identity-formation as a process “instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts.” Such *doings* are “both intentional and performative” in the “construction of meaning” (Butler 2011, 190–191), broadening out the moment as “ritual” where “ritual is a condensed historicity” (1997, 3–4). *Performativity of free*, therefore, is the act of identity-formation based on the act of playing music in ways that somehow touch upon meanings of free. Poignantly, Butler describes *performativity* through the First Amendment’s interpretation of free speech and that speech “content”

is “*the action that the speech performs*” (her italics). Although recognizing that “language does act,” Butler rationalizes that language does not necessarily *act on* (1997, 72), with no “linguistic injury” to participants. With that follows that violent sounds are not violent behavior, but also helps explain why pursuing free improvisation *on stage* can be perceived as violently provocative acts *off-stage*.

Freeing Up Jazz (Jazzing Up Free)

Let us start with a description of a film clip. The scene in question is from Mike Figgis’s *Stormy Monday* (1988). Set in a rather gloomy Newcastle, and the celebration of “America week,” a shady entrepreneur played by Tommy Lee Jones is schmoozing the town gentries with a lavish hotel dinner, in a venue draped in the red, white, and blue. In anticipation of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” our chosen clip starts with guests rising for the anthem, played by the hired function-band. The backstory to the first “oh, say can you see” is that the original function-band crashed on the motorway, and as the Krakow Jazz Ensemble happens to be staying in the venue hotel, they step in last minute. The thing is, this is a “Polish free jazz” band, “giving it all” with a version more along the lines of Albert Ayler or Sonny Sharrock than the conventional sounds of national romantic “anthem aesthetics.” The juxtaposition between the formal, patriotic event and the free sounding version of the anthem is both hilarious and profound. It manages to set the idea of free expression up against nationalistic, stereotypical borders as two binary opposites: artistic freedom challenging notions of canonized structures and expectations of right and wrong.

This scene plays on stereotypical ideas of Polish free jazz as particularly radical and outrageous. It has some personal resonance with me: as a teenager just starting up playing jazz in early 1990s Norway, Polish free jazz became a label for the most free sounding music I could think of. Pleading teenage ignorance, I was unaware of how the connotation of free in Polish free jazz was draped in politics of resistance, and was more fascinated with the apparent deviant performativity of the music itself than with its wider implications. Writing about early fifties Polish jazz, Pietraszewski reminds us how “jazz became the badge of freedom and independence,” and that through participating in “jazz music parties, young people contested the imposed political system and manifested their distinctive lifestyle” (2014, 57). Jazz had a chance to grow and evolve, partly through a lack of governmental control (either turning a blind eye or through lacking resources), but also as a sign of “freedom” and “the music of rebellion, a forbidden art” (57). Through cold war rivalry, jazz became a symbol of what McKay (2005, 19) points to as “the so-called American Dream” and its “narrative of freedom and opportunity.” Within this narrative, jazz is firmly united against totalitarian forces and communist oppression in the Eastern-bloc, but with a certain ignorance of “other” political phenomena like domestic American racism, paranoia of the political left, and imperialistic politics. Jazz in such a light is both internally and externally conflicted. The internal conflict between innovation (modernists) and conservation (“moldy figs”) shatters the illusion of jazz as a United American art form, but equally reveals some of the aesthetic motivation within jazz as something valuing (or at least allowing for) individual opinions and idiosyncratic identities. Externally, “how to define jazz?” becomes the cliché question to an impossible answer. In a 1973 interview on Finish television, Duke Ellington was asked what jazz means to him, answering with a stern look, “to me jazz just means freedom of expression . . . that’s what I think of it . . . that’s all” (1973). Without doubting Ellington’s sincerity (and lifelong strive for expressive freedom), it nevertheless implies jazz as a driving force toward what McKay calls a “coca-colonizing alternative reading in which the world sings together in perfect harmony” (2005, 10). In fact, Hatschek underlines how jazz in Poland during the Cold War was used by the American diplomacy “as a form of propaganda” in order to “help counter the troubling realities of America’s segregation and racism” (2010, 253). On the other hand, “outspoken artists such as Dizzy Gillespie or Dave Brubeck” were not shy in sharing thoughts on “the struggles for equality going on at that time

in the U.S.” (253), illustrating, perhaps, how authorities on both sides of the Cold War divide were united in fearing such emancipatory thinking. In parallel, Soviet officials in the early sixties refused the offer of Armstrong touring behind the Iron Curtain (“might cause riots”), Ellington being completely out of the question (“too far out”), and finally settling on Goodman as “the public will understand his music” (Davenport 2009, 118). The contemporary sound of Ellington somehow exuding musical meaning capable of shaking the foundations of totalitarian³ politics, while Goodman is deemed less dangerous, more entertaining (“they’ve heard . . . that kind of swing”), and perhaps more “white” and confirmative in his expression. Ellington was at times heavily criticized for not speaking up against domestic racism (“shuts his eyes to the abuses being heaped on his race” (John Hammond, quoted in Radano and Bohlman 2000, 591)), while simultaneously perceived as a political antagonist behind the Iron Curtain through the sound of his cluster chords, mixed-race orchestra radical arrangements, and subtly political titles. The sound of free might therefore not be that obvious (not always abstract and totally deviant), shifting in perspectives through time and space (nations and cultures). For Polish trumpet player Tomasz Stanko, jazz was “synonym[ous] with Western culture, of freedom” (Hatschek 2010, 295). Stanko was an early member of Alexander von Schlippenbach’s Globe Unity Orchestra and was at the center of the pioneering free jazz movement in Europe in the 1960s. The European free-jazzers wanted to emancipate canonized restrictions and include modernistic, European thinking, radical arts, and left-wing politics to their performative aesthetics (for example, fluxus, the Darmstadt School, and Marxism). At the same time, for postwar Poland, the sound of the social and political freedom Stanko refers to seems to encompass the whole range of the jazz spectrum, from Dixieland to avant-garde. Seemingly, such a broad idiomatic specter undermines free performativity but equally raises valid questions regarding how we identify free within idiomatic performance practices. In fact, Steve Lacy (another member of Globe Unity Orchestra) recognized his “post-free period” as getting more preoccupied with “structures, texts, notes,” and that free jazz “necessary in its time, was not varied enough,” claiming it “gave rise to monotony.” Lacy specifies that such thinking is not about limiting freedom but is more about facilitating and being a catalyst for freedom: “It’s up to the musicians to bring about the changes, to arrange for something to happen; what you get by limiting yourself is the real freedom” (Weiss 2006, 45). Herein lies much of the illusiveness and confusion about what free might mean in an improvisatory, performative context. Lacy looks for agency through limitation; raising urgent questions on how mechanisms for restricting and systematizing (borders, walls, rules, traditions, norms, techniques, cultures, and so forth) are indeed capable of facilitating freedom. Although these mechanisms seem to be on contradictory terms to free, a thorough understanding of *structure* is the key to appreciate the co-dependency between them; as poignantly highlighted by Corbett with the analogy “think of those butcher shop posters, with an animal mapped out into segments; to understand a particular cut, you’ve got to have a picture of where it fits on the beast” (2016, 80). In short, understanding structure and seeing the architecture behind the music empowers musicians and listeners alike with not just insight for a deeper appreciation of the music but also skills to identify and empathize with free music beyond mere stereotypical *effects* like forms of abstract noise and atonality. Barre defines British free music as “radical and unconventional approaches to rhythm, tonality and harmony” (2015, 37), and although this goes some way in identifying musical characteristics, it raises more questions than answers to the nature of free performativity.

Free Context (Contextualizing Free)

The idea of what free *should* sound like—either within an idiomatically defined context or as an ideologically innovative pursuit—is illusive, many sided, and contradictory, and increasingly confusing as we move beyond the initial pioneers of free jazz and improvised music of

the 1950s. As Polish free jazz became the tongue-in-cheek term I and my fellow jazz-youngsters used to express a desire to expand the level of freedom within a specific piece, just like in Figgis's caricature ensemble, we often ended up in a musical landscape sounding a bit like a pastiche version of *our take* on free jazz or free improvisation. Using the term "freeing it up," we were ridiculing our own obsession with free (a bit like this film clip) but were also deadly serious: playing free jazz became the perfect outlet for rebellion and student angst (as black metal or punk would work for others). The *Stormy Monday* scene is funny in the contrast between the formal diplomatic event (in which you would expect a straight version of the American anthem) and the pseudo-Ayler version we are presented with (including the ensuing non-responsiveness from the audience). It reflects that free music does not belong in an ordered world; free represents chaos, disorder, anarchy, and angst. Jacques Attali writes how "the history of tonal music" can be summarized as making "people believe in a consensual representation of the world" (1985, 46); conversely, free perhaps offers resistance/opposition to the conventions of "tonal music" and the idea of harmony and order. Amira Baraka puts this in a jazz context:

From the Slave Trade, certainly one fundamental call in Black art has been the cry of Freedom. Whether we are quoting Fred Douglass or Thelonious Monk, the concept and will to freedom always animated our conscious and instinctive lives here.

(2009, 106)

Emancipation from slavery and oppression predates the Iron Curtain of Eastern Europe (parallels are still present between, for example, gay rights in Russia and racist police shootings in the US), where jazz can be seen as emerging as a long crescendo and an increasingly angry force breaking free of Victorian musical values and ideas of (high) culture. In this light, jazz is the antithesis to the culture of establishment, bourgeoisie, the old-world, and what eighteenth-century critic Matthew Arnold championed as "being a pursuit of our total perfection" (2006, 5). Arnold never mentions music as worthwhile culture, but does show us how *perfection* is a keyword in describing what free thinkers ("liberal" and "Nonconformists" in his mind) are trying to avoid. Arnold wanted to enlighten the "Nonconformists" and "develop their full humanity more perfectly," and believed he could add "fresh and free thought" through perfection. By nuancing this slightly and talking about an *ideal* more than perfection, free expression and, in our context, free performativity are more about creating systems that provide ideal situations for the "perfect" musical output. This is twisting Arnold's words but also illustrates how free improvisers equally search for "total perfection," set the highest standards, (even) have conservative schools of thoughts, and strive for discipline and, ultimately, the high art Arnold seeks in order to repress "anarchy and disorder" (149).

Taking this further, free is also breaking out of the notion of perfection, challenging perfection, where, instead of perfection being a goal in itself, performativity of *imperfection* becomes a symbol of human life. *System* (systematic thinking) equaling *imperfection* might initially seem like an oxymoron, but the performance system free improvisers strive for is often built on strategies stimulating elements of musical imperfection. In this light, imperfection becomes a tool for attempting to push performance in new musical directions. Call it "the element of mistake," where what is in fact being played (not what is thought of) is the reality to which improvisers react in real time. The element of "risk" is sometimes referred to as part of this process (for example, Bell 2003): risk in the pursuit of originality. Although "boldness to take risks" comes into it, it also gives the impression of a performance strategy almost frivolous in nature, whereas improvisers tend to push boundaries (seek out mistakes) through clear intent and as an important part of their idiomatic approach. In other words, the "wrong" phrase or odd musical note

that materialized on stage is what guides the further directional choices being made, and *not* the initial idea (the thought of a note or phrase that *never* materialized). Some improvisers seek the unknowns or unthought-of that results from “mistakes” and use it as a creative tool, providing directions that the mind might not have otherwise conjured up. Indeed, two mechanisms are probably at play here: 1) technical errors/inaccuracies leading to “wrong” notes materializing and, 2) referring to Bolla’s concept “unthought known” (and the object casting “its shadow”), improvisers are “reliving through language [. . .] that which is known but not yet thought” (1987, 4). Within improvisational performance practices both are relevant: 1) playing the “wrong” note can be devastating or fun depending (on how it sounds), but the “mistake” is public regardless and “has to be dealt with” in real-life (like the mispronunciation of a word during a speech). And, 2) the aesthetic moment of the *unthought known* is the object’s “deliverer of an experience” from the Freudian unconscious, otherwise suppressed within more stringent musical idioms than improvised music (1987, 29).

In viewing them as performance mechanisms, therefore, the mentioned *risk*, *mistakes*, *imperfection*, *resistance* all provide the music played with personality, character, and, ultimately, a reflection of human life. In a historic context, early century jazz may be identified as entertaining and danceable, but also utterly bitter and defiant underneath the surface. Through the decades this developed through bebop’s “angry” and “defiant” young men (for example, Ottley in Neal 2013, 20) and further through Civil Rights associations with free jazz and hard bop (Anderson 2007; Monson 2007). I deliberately avoid elaborate historical context in this chapter. Instead, focusing on artistic practices, I see historical and socio-political backdrops as *musical scores*, steering the music steadfast in directions where the *sound* of defiance is clear and where deviance becomes the weapon of choice. Amiri Baraka (2009) claims that “the ideas contained in Afro-American art [. . .] oppose slavery and desire freedom,” adding the important point that sound “carries ideas” (107). Through Tin Pan alley, speakeasies, Harlem nightclubs, and 52nd Street bars, through to international jazz festivals and the jazz vernacular, the performance practices of jazz improvisation are guided by context in all its forms. Again, quoting Baraka:

Slave narratives, Harlem Renaissance, Black Arts Movement arise because the most sensitive artists reflect the society (the culture) the people and speak to the same issues, reflect the same interpretations and respond to conditions.

(2009, 109)

By adhering to a performance strategy where boundaries are challenged and shifted, the output becomes vulnerable to criticism and critique of musical standard or levels of musicianship. In a 1961 review of Ornette Coleman’s *This Is Our Music* (1960), *Downbeat* dished out a mere *one star*, with critic Don DeMicheal comparing Coleman with the “babblings” of a 2-year-old (in Alkyer and McDonough 1995, 111). *Downbeat*’s West Coast Editor, John Tynan, recalls in 1960 his confusion when first hearing a test pressing of *Something Else!!!!*—“the guy’s crazy . . . where is he?”—eventually hearing what are presumably viewed as qualities: “power . . . force . . . freedom” (1995, 113). In referring to Bourdieu’s field theory, Lee (2006) brings up how *legitimacy* comes about through “being accepted within an artistic field,” enlightening us to the avant-garde failings at being legitimized in its own time through a lack of acceptance. Then again, legitimacy tend to arrive through time and historical hindsight: inclusion into the canon and a general acceptance that Coleman was not “crazy.” Today, the spelling of *Ornette* rings iconic as part of the jazz mainstream, true authenticity, and what Whyton, in his critique of mainstream iconization, would refer to as “god-like” and “a benchmark by which current jazz should be judged” (2010, 16).

***Freebag* and (Hints of) Social Democracy**

Although ideologies of free performativity encounter constant limitations (as a rule of life), they nevertheless challenge idiomatic expectations by exhaustingly exploring musical possibilities within all forms of structural context. Such exploration is about maneuvering space, and *ideas* of space or spatial relations, and is central to improvisational practices and improvisational thinking. In fact, this is often the very reason why musicians chose improvisation as their “weapon of choice,” revealing a form of improvisational architecture where, in the words of Sun Ra’s iconic 1974 album, *Space Is the Place*. Through keen “architectonic glasses,” there are many aspects of this I could comment on: ideas about familiarity to context, skills, and aesthetics, in addition to identity creation and identity affirmation, and how improvisers are masters at maneuvering between inside and outside structure (for example, harmonic sequences or stylistic approaches). “Space” is always bound to musical “place,” either as physical room (for example, stage, venue) or as creative thought process impacting your improvisational choices (for example, composition, mood, fellow musicians). Freeing up space for spontaneous acts within an improvisational context is therefore often dependent on a level of structural control; gained through an analytical approach that pursues tools and approaches in order to ensure levels of spontaneity. In other words, by identifying what was previously mentioned as the “particular cut” of “the beast,” you could adapt thought processes, skills, and aesthetical choices thereafter. In my view, freeing up space (for greater spontaneity) is about challenging “the beast,” not about breakage. Breaking structure habitually puts you in danger of losing the catalytic effect that structure can provide; for instance, defeating the purpose of compositional material by somehow disregarding or destroying it. Although “turning my back” to compositional frameworks can work as a clear aesthetic choice in itself, it nevertheless (at least in the long run) defeats its purpose. Equally, abandoning instruments to pursue sound sources free of conditioning might be liberating at first, but quickly re-forms as new conditioning, where the “new” instrument ends up posing all new habits and restrictions. One of the reasons why Sonny Rollins swore to forms of thematic improvisation was to properly harbor the compositional material and its melodic possibilities for variation (listen to versions of *St. Thomas*, for example). In the liner notes to *Kind of Blue*, Bill Evans refers to Japanese Zen ink-painting techniques, where “[e]rasures or changes are impossible,” and “allowing the idea to express itself in communication [. . .] in such a direct way that deliberation cannot interfere.” Evans continues that the picture might lack “complex composition and textures” but “those who see well find something captured that escapes explanation” (Davis et al. 1997). This “something” is ambiguous, but also part of the quality Evans wants to purvey to the listeners. In fact, the super-iconic status of the album is telling in itself of how the soloistic personalities of Evans, Parker, Davis, and Adderley shine particularly bright as part of this “something,” where much of the foundation to *Kind of Blue*’s mythical status is found in its structural makeup—like compositional sketches, studio, ambience, and personnel.

As Evans was highlighting less (or no) “deliberation” as a strong *quality* and mechanism for boosting individual spontaneity, similar qualities are highlighted by Jencks and Silver through the term “ad hocism,” which, borrowed from architecture, “involves using an available system in a new way to solve a problem quickly and efficiently” (2013, vii). McKay later preferred “ad hocery” (2005, 195/326) to describe ad hoc strategies utilized by improvisers from the British free scene (“it makes no claims to the scientific or theoretical rigor of an—ism, and it rhymes with mockery”). If we then chose to take this further, and use spontaneity as a negotiating tool between the opposites stagnation and anarchy—adding Borgo’s (2007, 13–35) use of the parallels “certainties” and “uncertainties”—we get closer in describing a type of music based on a “science of surprise,” but where our musical *choices* are based on a conscious balance between the two. Such a balance equals *context*, where Evans highlighting “no deliberation” most likely means *less* deliberation and *more* spontaneity (than, e.g., pre-modal structures), but where context nevertheless

is central to understanding what governs the specific choices being made in an improvisational moment. Going back to Borgo's use of uncertainties, he rightly points out how (in everyday life) "we may take steps to reduce or offset their inherent risk" (2007, 13); nevertheless, the use of improvisational structuring as "decision-maker," restrictor, or facilitator of freedom, is ambiguous. Mal Waldron alludes to *breaking out* into freedom in that "[b]ar lines was like going to jail for us" (Saul 2009, 3); and, in contrast, Alexander von Schlippenbach said to me regarding his attempts at structuring the "free for all" Globe Unity Orchestra:

There is a lot of power play, staggering violins and chaos, chaos, chaos in it. And because of this, some of us may have felt a desire to escape this thing, the chaos.⁴

Jenkins (2004) also refers to this by setting free jazz under the ambivalent heading of "controlled chaos," and by that hinting at a performance practice engaging in correlations between structure and agency. In fact, even as binary opposites, *control* and *chaos* can indeed function co-dependently as embodied improvisational skills. By setting the two up in a "political" relationship, Schlippenbach gets to both "escape the chaos" (through introducing levels of control) and also ensure agency through forms of adhocery (in ways where *chaos is never chaotic*).

A useful political metaphor can be found in one of the pillars of Norwegian social democracy, and the rather notorious organizational concept *frihet under ansvar* (freedom with responsibility). Equally spurned and admired by international business-life (American oil company CEOs had a hard time managing Norwegian employees back in the pioneering age of Norwegian oil), this social democratic term is fitting in describing how performance practices of free improvisation utilize forms of responsible, "chaotic" freedom in interacting with structure. Here, structure represents form, discipline, and hierarchy, but also opportunity, flexibility, and idiosyncrasy. Schlippenbach's "escape plans" never regressed (depending on your point of view) Globe Unity from cutting edge avant-garde to canonized mainstream. Instead, he found ways of maintaining and challenging his great pool of idiosyncrasies (Evan Parker, Peter Brötzmann, Han Bennink etcetera) within forms of order and discipline: *frihet under ansvar*. This way, through music-driven social democratic thinking, the musicians never turn their back on performativity of freedom as a worthwhile ideology. Even used "responsibly," freedom can be audible, clear, and present, in other words. In Norway, the expression *freebag* has been a favored terminology since 1962 . . . How do I know this? Well, according to historian Bjørn Stendahl (2011, 78), Dexter Gordon was asked by members of the audience what he thought about Cecil Taylor (who had just previously played Oslo): "That is not my bag," Dexter Gordon answered, and hence the term *freebag* was thoroughly established. Freebag is still primarily a Norwegian term, used to describe a type of idiomatic improvising equal to stereotypical free jazz/free improvisation characteristics. Although freebag also has uncanny connections to Norwegian social democracy (chaos contained in a bag . . .), this localized genre or idiom still emphasizes how the urge to audibly *hear* freedom can be an aesthetic driving force in itself.

Free Learning (Learning Free)

It goes to say that a performance practice based on personal and collective discipline is dependent on forms of skill acquisition. The act of refining and honing performance skills furthermore represents conformity one way or another, where through training of canonized skills, levels of spontaneity are in danger of being drained (with more "bag" than "free"). David Toop poses the poignant question: "Once you have put in the hours is it ever possible to become free of that conditioning?" (2016, 59). Cecil Taylor underlines how musicians, "part of your community," need to learn a common language in order to communicate: "And if they understand, it means it

has to have been worked upon; and if it's worked upon, it's not a manifestation of freedom, it's a manifestation of a particular dedication and training" (Mandel 2010, 228).

I was recently listening to the first recording I ever did—I was probably around 17—and I was struck by the level of playfulness; sort of Ayleresque qualities in there, which completely disappeared during my college training (where I spent much of my time trying to sound like Steve Coleman). What we see as obtaining artistic maturity is about refining habits to the extent the habit becomes virtuoso performativity, but where the music performed might not be that exciting in terms of spontaneity, creativity, and playfulness. A fascinating example of this is the Norwegian saxophone player Jan Garbarek. Hitting international attention in the early 1970s (with his album *Afric Pepperbird* (Garbarek 1970) being one of Edition of Contemporary Music's (ECM) first releases), he had previously played with George Russell and Don Cherry, and was well versed in the free form playing of Coltrane and Ayler. During the next decades, he became closely associated with the spacious, roomy sound of ECM and started refining an idiosyncratic tone-quality and a highly linear way of improvising; melodic and thematic in development, more than the previous abstract parallels to free jazz and free improvisation. Today he is one of the most commercially successful jazz musicians in Europe and tends to stick strictly to his own idiomatic approach, with little spontaneity or "out of character" approach to his playing. Analyzing such a process further, Bjørkvold brings up two key stages of learning in *primary music making* (the spontaneous, childlike) and *secondary music making* (based on training), pointing out that moving into the area of secondary, we lose the ability of primary music making (1996, 204). Put even stronger, simply through learning notation, children are in danger of losing much of their aural-based knowledge of music, hampering (or "weeding out") improvisational abilities in the process. In other words, through our professional training we build up a catalog of skills as tools for our creative output, but find it difficult to draw the line as to where the skills (for example, fluent knowledge of genre) become a sort of creative hindrance (killing primary music making). As someone who spent much of my youth in a practice room, this is a depressing thought, but envisage a scenario where the level of creativity goes down as the level of skill increases, bringing to mind the stereotypical assumption that we get more conservative and "set in our ways" the older we get. On the other hand, I strongly suspect the *creativity versus skill axis* is much more complex than that, and in fact very much based on perspective and individual perceptions of free performativity. According to Dybo, Garbarek "seeks an open, naked space in which his forceful tone can expand and develop in time" (Dybo 1996, 35, my translation), and perhaps this pursuit has led him into music sounding much more structured than his earlier work. Perhaps, for Garbarek, the sound of playfulness was never that playful; he was heavily influenced by Ayler and obsessed by Coltrane, and had not at this stage developed the personal idiom we now recognize as Garbarek. The Corbett question, "perhaps improvisation is . . . parasitic rather than 'free'" (1995, 220), becomes relevant. Then again, freedom can also be found in the "parasitic," through developing virtuoso performativity founded on musical heroes from the past. Alternatively, through "self-parasitizing" (even narcissism) *personal idiom is refined*, with Garbarek finding freedom through consistency and predictability. Cecil Taylor reveals his ambiguity toward this: "Freedom became a cuss word the beboppers applied to us. I'm not free of them. They are very much part of my development" (Mandel 2010, 228).

I would like to bring the Polish free jazz version of the American national anthem back here, as it vividly illustrates how the perception of music is tied to context, where free jazz may tip on a scale between idiomatic improvisation and sounding crazy or experimental (in an unusual context, or to new listeners). This way, Garbarek still sounds much more experimental in 1970, even to the extent where few listeners would even recognize Garbarek from his early recordings. And, due to the fact that this improvisational approach never really hit the mainstream of jazz, the historic timeline is effectively bypassed—where decades-old music still sounds experimental to most listeners (due to *unfamiliarity*). As a long-gone teenager "freeing it up" with Polish free jazz, I am

starting to realize the irony of how two decades' worth of performance experience makes me feel freer than ever, while simultaneously suspecting I sound progressively safer ("in") to listeners. The *Geist* of Hegel and the fine-tuning of *Sittlichkeit* comes back to haunt me, it seems.

Freedom and Happiness in the End(?)

The quest for *freedom of expression* seems a common denominator if one is to look for what freedom actually means to an improvising musician. In 1997, Jacques Derrida famously interviewed Ornette Coleman, and after quickly leading the conversation into deconstructionist territory, Derrida wonders about the process where a musician reads a "framework" (that is, a composition) and then "brings his own touch to it." The response provides us with a healthy perspective on free performativity, with Coleman explaining that in "improvised music, [. . .] the musicians are trying to reassemble an emotional or intellectual puzzle" (Murphy 2004, 322). Under our question-marked final sub-heading of *happiness*, therefore, assembling such a puzzle is about personal gratification, and that the Derridean frameworks are "robust" enough to carry the weight of subjective "emotional" and "intellectual" input. Nachmanovitch here uses the expression "play-space" to underline the importance of "play" and playfulness within a structure: "Acts are pulled from their normal context into the special context of play. Often we establish a protected setting or play-space" (1990, 43). The difficulty is recognizing levels of playfulness within an individual improvisational approach, which, furthermore, makes it impossible to generalize what level of freedom justifies the description playful to begin with. However, the joy and spontaneity at work in *play* is logically linked to levels of self-fulfillment ("warts and all"). Referring to instinct, phantasy, and psyche, Sapien underlines how the "aesthetic dynamic of mental life is not about pleasure or beauty but about wholeness, the conveyance of feeling and meaning, the desire to see into, consume, identify, resonate" (2012, 86). Assembling Coleman's puzzle, it is about "wholeness" achieved through a form of structural plasticity and an invitation to play, and exactly what Butler at the start referred to as "acts" or "action." In an *ideal world*, performativity is therefore constantly challenging set beliefs: adhering to meanings of free through pioneering innovation and provocative action and, conversely, when unsuccessful, in danger of diluting free through idiomatic restraints, censorship, and "no play."

In an attempt to sum up, I quote Kroes, who says, "America is non-Europe, . . . it provides a counterpoint to our culture, a utopian realm for our dreams of escape" (quoted in McKay 2005, 19). One of the most important teachers in my life, the Hungarian jazz drummer Barna Palko, defected to Norway in the early sixties. Up until that point in his life he had played jazz more or less underground in Budapest—which had been labeled *imperialistic music* by the communist party. As an advocator of free performativity within any repertoire or idiomatic approach, he showed a group of teenagers, myself included, the importance of standing up for and believing in *what you play*. Only through believing would the music matter, have impact, and somehow reflect and express a sense of personality. In 1941, the German occupying authority in Norway sent out a decree that demanded the registration of all clubs and organizations. For some unknown reason, sewing clubs were omitted from their orders. Subsequently, all the jazz/swing clubs disappeared during the winter of 1941 and resurfaced as "sewing clubs." Three jazz clubs in Oslo became "Sew 1," "Sew 2," and "Sew 3" (Stendahl and Bergh 1991, 46). The Norwegians' resistance had a sense of humor and a passion for keeping "swing" and "rhythm clubs" open through otherwise dark times. Referring to Attali's take on tonal music as propaganda for worldly consensus and togetherness, we see how jazz (as the *atonal* representation of resistance) stands out as a tool against imperialistic forces. In the pursuit of free identities, we go full circle: attempting to *free ourselves from* restrictive forces, and through shouting from barricades, we fine-tune free as less of an ideal than an affirmative action. The opening Rushdie quote highlights the complex feeling

of “happiness” and “joy” situated between the physical and the spiritual, “mind” or “soul” (or whatever you wish to call it), reminding us of how the pursuit of freedom is a basic human driving force in the construction of identity. Although of course, the jinnia, Dunia, realized that Aristotle was right: “the self is both with the body, and perishes with it too” (2015, 145)—a poignant but sentimental reminder of both the key to happiness and the impossibility of true freedom.

Notes

1. *Me*: Norwegian performance-based researcher, improviser, and saxophone player; schooled and worked in the UK/Leeds for a number of years; working internationally within improvised music and jazz; now based in my hometown of Stavanger, Norway.
2. Stereotypically (and often jokingly) referred to as “pling-plong musikk” in Norway, or, as the title of Barre’s book on the UK free scene calls it, *Plink, Plonk & Scratch* (2015).
3. Recommended further readings dealing with “jazz and totalitarianism” (Johnson 2016).
4. Personal interview, Berlin, 09.10.13.

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MY JAZZ WORLD

The Rise and Fall of a Digital Utopia

Simon Barber

In this chapter, I explore the culture and practices of an online community devoted to the digitizing or “ripping” of rare and hard-to-find jazz records.¹ I am prompted by Cheal’s (2016) conceptualization of gift economies, as part of a broader political-economic analysis, to think through the ways in which tastemakers in such communities produce, prepare, and distribute music using digital tools; their motivations for carrying out this work; the rituals of reward and reciprocation involved; and how they participate in, and respond to, the discourses of fans, artists, and critics.² I locate the restoration and “remaking” of jazz records in the digital sphere as part of the “globally connected” DIY preservation that Bennett (2009, 483) argues represents a “re-writing of contemporary popular music history,” but also endeavor to contextualize this activity in relation to recent debates about file-sharing within the music industries (Lessig 2004; Shang et al. 2007; White 2010; Andersson 2013). This research reveals tensions at play between the value of these “MP3 blogs” as archives and venues for taste-making, versus the sorts of ethical, moral, and industrial complexities they engender for rights owners and other vested interests.³ My case study, which examines a website called My Jazz World (2007–2010), also provides an opportunity to think about the ways in which these activities embody and reflect values held by jazz fans, such as a love for high fidelity sound and audio technologies (O’Neill 2004), tendencies towards collecting and completism (Kelly 2004; Anderton 2016), fetishism of the vinyl record (Yochim and Biddinger 2008; Shuker 2010), and the importance of cultural capital and prestige among peers (Straw 1997; Shuker 2004). By offering free access to a vast archive of rare or out of print jazz music, My Jazz World became a kind of *digital utopia* for the jazz fan. And yet, just as the derivation of the word utopia (from the Greek meaning “no place”) provokes questions about the likelihood of such imagined perfection in society, the “world” that Smooth, the My Jazz World founder, developed online also remained heavily contested and difficult to sustain.⁴

To explain the key terms I am using, I turn firstly to Cheal (2016, 19), who defines a gift economy as “a system of redundant transactions within a moral economy, which makes possible the extended reproduction of social relations.” He describes these transactions as redundant because the financial profit that one associates with a market economy is subjugated here in favor of “a system of transactions which are defined as socially desirable (that is, moral), because through them social ties are recognized, and balanced social relationships are maintained” (2016, 15). Within the blogosphere, transactions are not usually specific to one particular geographical area, nor are they organized around financial reward.⁵ This form of distribution also typically does not involve the licensing of intellectual property rights or the payment of royalties to copyright holders, and as a

result, many such websites maintain a complicated status with regard to copyright (Collins and Long 2015, 83). On the other hand, MP3 blogs often make a valuable contribution to articulating cultural heritage by including material that is either out of print or not commercially viable.⁶ If, as Baker and Collins (2015, 983) suggest, the production, distribution, and consumption of musical genres and forms that underpin the archiving of popular music tend to coincide with the “commercial logic” of the music and recording industries, then the demise of more inclusive and comprehensive digital libraries like My Jazz World represents a form of cultural erosion. A significant conceptual dimension of this research is therefore prompted by Cheal’s (2016, 4) claim that the study of gifts as an important sociological concept has been marginalized by political economists who have placed a (perhaps unsurprising) emphasis on control over the means by which goods are produced. Drawing on Mosco (2009, 2), who defines political economy as “the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources,” I foreground the sociology of the MP3 blog within the wider political economy of the music industries, paying attention to questions of culture, technology, organization, politics, and engagement with legal systems. This allows me to explore what is possible for these kinds of communities in their interactions with the music industries and the public, without overlooking the specifics of how they function or the contributions that such communities make to our understanding of popular music.

Approach and Further Context

As part of my primary research, I conducted an in-depth interview with the founder of My Jazz World, who remains anonymous here under his online moniker “Smooth.”⁷ A jazz aficionado, record collector, and audiophile from Europe, Smooth is the main source of information about the ways in which My Jazz World was organized and how it operated. This includes the technical process of ripping LPs, the equipment used, and how music was prepared for release and distributed online. As a result of this relationship, I was able to receive copies of correspondence with third parties, including fan mail to the website, industry solicitation, and cease and desist notices, some of which has been included and anonymized. My interview with Smooth was carried out by email, and so while this necessitated a structured set of questions submitted in anticipation of detailed responses, I was able to follow up later with additional requests for information or clarification. I complemented this work with a period of virtual ethnographic research consisting primarily of examining archived pages of the My Jazz World website and comments made by the public (some of them users of the site) in online fora. As the site had closed down some years ago and was no longer publicly available online, I did not announce my presence as a researcher to members of the My Jazz World community or in other public spaces where conversations about the site had taken place. However, through the process of interviewing the founder of the website, permission was sought to use his comments in their anonymized form. I also consulted a range of secondary literature on the subjects of gifting, record collecting, popular music heritage, archiving, and memory, particularly the work of Bennett and Rogers (2015), Baker and Collins (2015), and Collins and Long (2015), the latter of which speaks directly to practices of music archiving in virtual spaces.

With regard to the broader theoretical concepts shaping this work, the major study in the area of gift exchange is *The Gift* by Mauss (2016, originally published in 1925), who argues that the giving of gifts is not the product of altruism, but instead involves an obligation to provide a gift in return. While the principles of reciprocity and social patterns of gift exchange are covered in some detail elsewhere (McGee and Skågeby 2004; Skågeby 2010; Yan 2012), in file-sharing communities this usually revolves around “seeding” (contributing computing resources to propagate files) and/or giving thanks to the uploader. Bauwens’s (2005) take on peer to peer (P2P) activity

adopts a fairly neutral stance by claiming that “each contributes according to his capacities and willingness, and each takes according to his needs”; however, users of niche file-sharing communities are often bound by an obligation to seed and/or to give thanks (Carter 2013). The ability to reciprocate properly is often bound up in mastery of the customs, rituals, and language of such communities, and this is often necessary in order to maintain access. While many of the rules and regulations of file-sharing websites exist in order to protect against negative attention from rights holders and to guarantee a steady flow of new content, Strachan (2017, 24) confirms in his discussion of software piracy that “a key motivating factor for individuals involved in the scene is the accumulation of subcultural capital.” By locating, curating, and making out of print jazz records available in a digital format, Smooth came into contact with the needs and agendas of music fans, recording artists, and industry workers, some of whom provided him with the prestige and motivation required to continue his work.

As the owner of *My Jazz World*, Smooth’s work involved a regular routine of ripping vinyl records, digitally removing noise such as pops and clicks, encoding files in the MP3 format, and photographing and color-correcting original artwork, as well as categorizing, describing, and uploading the music to file-hosting platforms. Given that such activities require high-end audio-visual equipment, specialist editing skills, and access to rare records, this contribution represents a great deal of time and effort, as well as a significant economic investment. It is therefore not hard to see why concepts of altruism and benevolence continue to have a place in studies of gift economies (Ripeanu et al. 2006; Baym 2011). However, this situation also raises questions about the extent to which such tastemakers can determine the sound and meaning of the products they collect and distribute. If Smooth’s remastered releases offer a new experience, changing the way that the music has previously sounded or, potentially in some cases, was meant to be heard, what complexities are engendered through the remaking of the music to suit the tastemaker’s sonic ideals? And how does this challenge notions of artistic or corporate autonomy? As Laver’s (2015) work on jazz’s relationship to marketing demonstrates, there are multiple ways in which jazz values might be understood through their codification in products, so what meanings might Smooth’s intervention introduce in this context?

Throughout history, jazz has frequently been described and understood as a gift to our cultural lives.⁸ And yet, the production, distribution, and consumption of jazz is bound up in the same economic imperatives as any other form of commercial music. The transactions that took place via *My Jazz World*, were, on the surface, economically redundant, and the majority of music distributed through the website was either out of print or not available on compact disc at the time of posting. However, a number of parties determined that Smooth’s actions still had negative implications for jazz musicians and record labels. So, while these sorts of interactions are often symbolic in nature, it is still important not to overlook the significance of non-economic activities, even in a predominantly capitalist system. Elder-Vass (2016, 4) argues that the emergence of the digital economy has revealed a “proliferation of innovative economic forms” (2016, 4).⁹ He proposes a framework which he calls a “political economy of practices,” intended as a fluid way to understand the economy as a “complex ecosystem” (2016, 5). In this context, it becomes easier to understand both the contested space that MP3 blogs occupy and the contribution made by such sites as repositories for commercially neglected music.¹⁰

The Rise of *My Jazz World*

During the early 2000s, the practice of making and distributing vinyl rips became an important part of how blog owners shared their music tastes with others. A large proportion of this activity took place via Blogger, the go-to platform for such activity despite its association with Google from 2003 onwards.¹¹ *My Jazz World* was created between spring and summer of 2007, the same

year in which Rojek (2011, 132) claims “the CD/vinyl market in the USA shrank by nearly one third” and “digital/vinyl sales were 15.4% down”—figures that represented a twenty-year low for vinyl (Shubber 2014). As commercial music sales reached their nadir in this period (Stolworthy and Barnes 2014; Chapman 2017), the increasing availability of inexpensive, professional-grade recording and editing tools combined with free blogging platforms and ubiquitous internet access afforded vinyl enthusiasts around the world, whose records had previously rarely been seen or heard outside of their own homes, an opportunity to begin to digitize and distribute their collections.

My Jazz World was among the most prolific of such sites due in large part to the efficient technical processes employed by its owner. Inspired by MP3 blogs like *Orgy In Rhythm*, *Baby Grandpa*, and *Killer Groove Music Library*, Smooth started by acquiring LPs using the auction website eBay to track down what he describes as “impossibly rare stuff.” For Smooth, this typically meant music that had not been released in any format other than vinyl and was no longer readily available. Smooth acknowledges that he spent a significant amount of money acquiring many of these titles. “I wanted to share and educate,” he relates. “I could have amassed this vinyl collection for myself, but I knew sharing would be much more rewarding for me. Not financially, but spiritually.” By foregrounding his altruistic tendencies, Smooth positions himself as an educator and tastemaker. However, despite this desire to “help others fill the gaps in their collections, and serve the music world as whole,” he also acknowledges that much of this activity was motivated by competition with other bloggers, and a desire to “show taste and knowledge.” This statement chimes much more with Strachan’s (2017, 24) claims about sharing communities, revealing a focus on accumulating subcultural capital (see also Raymond 1998), as well as a general sense of the fan drive for completism common to record collectors and jazz fans. Smooth therefore achieved a sense of reward both through the act of educating others and through the kudos he received as the agent of restoration for so much neglected music.

Production, Distribution, and Consumption

Studying the production, distribution, and consumption of the content posted on My Jazz World provides an opportunity to learn more about the culture of music file-sharing communities, particularly, in this case, around niche genres like jazz. For My Jazz World, audio production centered around Smooth’s vinyl ripping station, the hub of a highly efficient process, which he claims “resulted in files that came really close to a CD and set a standard in the blogosphere.” Because of the particular applications Smooth was using, he was able to multi-task in his recording and editing process. “Usually I was working on three to four albums at the same time,” he reports. Using only vinyl classified as VG++ (very good) or mint condition, the routine began with cleaning each record on a Hannl Mera cleaning machine. Smooth then played the record on a high-end Nottingham Analogue Spacedeck turntable through a Heed Audio Quasar phono pre-amp. He used a separate Apogee Rosetta 200 A/D-converter to capture the digital audio, connected through “only the highest quality cables.” Once the audio existed on the computer, Smooth removed clicks and pops with ClickRepair, a piece of software selected because it removes undesirable noises using a mathematical algorithm rather than an audio-degrading filter. He would then split the audio file into individual tracks, normalize the files (uniformly increasing the amplitude of the audio waves), make a fade in and fade out for each using an audio editor, and then use iTunes to add all of the metadata and the cover art. He archived the original files in the Apple Lossless format (a typical format of choice for audiophiles) and offered MP3s encoded at 320kbps through the My Jazz World website.

When reproducing album artwork, one of the problems that Smooth encountered is that LP sleeves do not fit on A4 scanners. He considered stitching two halves of the image together in Photoshop, but eventually opted to create a mini photo studio specifically for the purpose of

digitizing record sleeves. Using a Nikon D300s with a 50mm prime lens mounted on a tripod, the camera would be focused on the floor where the album cover would be positioned. Smooth set up two professional photography lights about four feet to the left and right of the target, which ensured that no reflections would be seen on the image. He used a variety of techniques to achieve depth of field, photographing even warped covers sharply, and attended to white balance by placing white paper on the floor next to the cover. In editing, Smooth used an array of tools to ensure the cover was properly aligned and square before removing any imperfections and correcting color to match the original object. Finally, the image would be exported for use on the web.¹² Through this process, Smooth created digitally remastered versions of more than 1,000 jazz, funk, and soul albums in just three years.

As I have discussed elsewhere in my work on jazz radio (Barber 2010), musicians, producers, record labels, and the media are already engaged in a contest for authorial control over musical material. The participation of the MP3 blogger further complicates this process, both through the unprompted act of bringing a physical artifact into the digital domain and, perhaps more invasively, by deciding what “corrective” work might be required. Through this account of the production process, we can begin to appreciate the extent to which the conversion of the analog audio and the reproduction of the record sleeve remediates the fetishized vinyl object for online distribution in line with the tastemaker’s sonic and visual ideals.¹³ Moreover, the technically advanced interventions that Smooth makes during this process raises questions about the concept of the “amateur archivist,” a category in which such workers have been placed (Collins and Long 2015). If we were to compare Smooth’s work with the technical standards adopted by jazz record labels in the reissue market, it is conceivable that, acknowledging the absence of proper licensing, *My Jazz World* would be understood as one of the most prolific organizations devoted to the preservation of this music, a situation that would seem to defy conventional notions of amateurism.

Turning to the distribution of the content online, we can begin to think more specifically about how MP3 bloggers accomplish the act of sharing files, and how gifting works practically within these communities in the face of critical attention from the outside. The process of disseminating music via *My Jazz World* involved the creation of a zip-archive containing the files for each album, which were then uploaded to the file-sharing service, RapidShare.¹⁴ During this period, links to unauthorized content via RapidShare were typically prone to expiration or removal in response to copyright claims. As a result, Smooth endeavored to ensure reliability by acquiring premium hosting: “I paid for a pro account,” he relates, “that allowed the files to reside online indefinitely.” By investing significant time and money, Smooth endeavored to ensure the sustainability of the archive he was creating, and the reliability of access to the music for the user. As is customary on music sharing blogs like *My Jazz World*, the RapidShare links to the files were usually placed not in the main body of the post but in the comments section as a way to evade the eyes of the casual browser or even the uninitiated copyright owner. While this would appear to feed into Barbrook’s (1998) discussion of the web as an “anarcho-communist utopia,” the home page of *My Jazz World* did contain the proviso that copyright owners could have their works removed at any time. If, as Cheal (2016, 11) argues, an adequate model for understanding reciprocal expectations would require “microstructural analyses of the communication processes by which expectations are formed and maintained” (2016, 11), then we can observe that through his attempts to offset criticism for unauthorized use of intellectual property, Smooth demonstrates a desire to introduce an ethical framework for his activities (Shang et al. 2007) and to make expectations clear for rights owners.

In keeping with Godbout and Caille’s (2014) claim that the modern gift is uniquely characterized by the altruistic desire to give, Smooth kept up what he described as a “frantic pace,” posting an LP almost every day for three years. In doing so, Smooth created a notable archive of jazz music that was out of print or had become lost to the ages in some way, and introduced his

audience to some obscure gems; however, he also attracted a significant amount of criticism. By examining the consumption and reception of this content, we can get a sense of how fans, artists, and critics responded to these activities and tease out some of the tensions that exist between those who seek access to specialist knowledge and material versus rights owners and other vested interests who may find such opportunities morally or legally unsound. My Jazz World generated a fervent following, developing relationships with music fans, jazz artists, and the publicity departments of record labels. According to figures acquired via Google Analytics, from April 27, 2009 to May 3, 2009 My Jazz World received 66,000 page views and almost 30,000 hits from 13,631 unique visitors. Given that these numbers represent a single week of activity, we can conclude that the site was a popular destination for music fans, particularly the audience for obscure 1970s and 1980s jazz, funk, soul, and rhythm and blues (R&B), and that visitors were returning to the site more than once in a given week. These statistics also raise further questions about the nature of the audience. Were these people jazz fans? To what extent did the audience for the site comprise file-sharers whose goal was simply to accumulate music files on the basis that the content is rare or collectible, many of which they would never actually listen to? In the end, there were a few distinct groups that emerged, having made contact through the site. The first category of these were fans and musicians who appreciated the work Smooth was doing:

WOW! What a wonderful effort! Thank you so much for compiling these all in one place. I am Ilona, fiancée of Gerry Brown (the drummer on these recordings). He and I are eternally grateful for what you have done—Ilona & Gerry Brown.

Thanks Smooth for making this available!!! I didn't have a copy of this album. And I played on it!—John Rowin.

Many thanks for your site. As a consequence, I went to the attic and unboxed my vinyl. The records sounded terrible. Pops, cracks & surface noise. So, I got a Knosti record bath. It was a real eye opener. I now have a new hobby, and it's all thanks to you—Craig.

In these examples, Smooth provided a valuable service to musicians who did not own copies of recordings they had performed on, and one visitor paradoxically rediscovered a love for physical vinyl. In addition to this form of fan mail, some enthusiasts sent important contextual information about the recordings, which contributed to the sharing of knowledge and the development of the archive:

Be careful, friends. This is not an Antonio Carlos Jobim album. This is a fake. The album is a compilation of rare Luiz Bonfá material from the Sixties. All titles, authors and credits listed are inventions—Sam Laurie.

The second category of correspondence derived from music industry workers seeking publicity/promotion. For instance:

Hello, since you seem to be a major fan of Chico Freeman, please be informed that Chico is about to reissue large part of his back catalog. If you want to support this initiative we suggest you embed in your blog our widget for Chico Freeman on GetJuke. We thank you for your help!—The GetJuke Team.

And finally, critics emerged in the form of music fans, industry workers and artists:

No one's holding a gun to your head, making you spend so much time on this blog. There are musicians on this blog that cannot afford health insurance. Shame on you and all of the other music bloggers. You should all be ashamed of yourselves—Gavroche Thénardier.

Guys, this is how I make my living, and I wouldn't ask you to forward your pay check to me, nor expect to come to your house and take some of your property—David Diggs.

I happen to know that Mike Mainieri's rights were in the process of being retrieved for this album, and now you've jeopardized a re-release. Why don't you look Mike Mainieri up and send him your original copy? I'm sure he doesn't even have one of his own—Sarah.

Although so-called “parasitic” gifting communities like Napster (Giesler and Pohlmann 2003; Giesler 2006) have received scholarly attention with regard to the role they can play in evolving consumption, the chief criticism of *My Jazz World*, which was the primary source of tension between *My Jazz World* and the wider music industries, was the position that, despite the fact that these albums were not readily available commercially, Smooth had done such a good job on remastering the LPs that these informal “releases” were destroying the market for future legitimate re-issues.

The Fall of My Jazz World

My Jazz World met its end in 2010 through a confluence of two events. In the first instance by the so-called musicblogocide (Michaels 2010) in which Google, without warning and citing copyright violations, shut down at least six of the most popular music blogs, instantly deleting years of archives. And latterly, once *My Jazz World* was relaunched elsewhere, its ultimate demise was brought about by the threat of legal action from jazz-funk flugelhornist Chuck Mangione. From the start, the website attempted to deflect negative attention by only posting music not currently available on compact disc, and by displaying a notice on the front page of the site that stated that that copyright holders could have their work removed at any time. In the event of a reissue, Smooth updated his existing posts with links to buy those releases at Amazon. However, this approach didn't work for jazz musician Adam Niewood, son of the late saxophonist Gerry Niewood, who protested strongly about the posting of his father's material. Says Smooth: “They had the idea that his mother could live off his old catalog, and now that I had re-released his old records, this would no longer be possible.” Niewood also alerted Mangione's management to the infringement taking place on the site, and Smooth was soon in receipt of what he described as a “frightening letter” from Mangione's lawyers.

We call upon you to immediately remove these recordings from your website and cease making them available to the public. We also call upon you to immediately furnish us with information as to how many copies of these albums have been downloaded—Mangione's legal representation.

Smooth took the website down the same day in an effort to appease Mangione's legal team and no further action was taken, but he maintains that he was justified in his approach to sharing: “If those people are unable to keep the material in print or if they let the music fade into oblivion,” he says, “then music fans have the moral right and duty to remedy the situation with vinyl rips and sharing blogs.” In his book *Free Culture* (2004), Lawrence Lessig divides the different kinds of content shared by file-sharers into five categories, including one devoted to content that is no longer commercially available:

For content not sold, this is still technically a violation of copyright, though because the copyright owner is not selling the content anymore, the economic harm is zero—the same harm that occurs when I sell my collection of 1960s 45-rpm records to a local collector.

(Lessig 2004, 68)¹⁵

If, as Lessig suggests, the economic harm of such actions is likely to be zero, one can begin to appreciate Smooth's rationale, particularly given the comprehensive nature of some of these archives and the knowledge they represent about our cultural heritage. Nonetheless, this position fails to address the main objection raised in the previous section, which concerns the notion that once music is released for free in a high-quality digital format, the market for a future commercial release is potentially damaged or compromised, even when the informal release is not sourced from the original master tape but derives from an out of print analog artifact. Ultimately, the efficiency and technical facility with which Smooth industrialized the art of the vinyl rip, and his desire to lead in this community through sharing his work, hastened the failure of his utopian experiment.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have primarily been concerned with how production, distribution, and consumption are organized in music file-sharing communities, and the sorts of limitations tastemakers encounter in their relationships with the music industries. While the discourses of audiophilia, record collecting, and social status that surround jazz music and constitute its culture are writ large in the microcosm of *My Jazz World*, Smooth's vision for this digital utopia was essentially a response to a situation in which all of the world's music was not available to him, and other collectors, in high-quality digital formats. This is significant because it suggests that there is an extent to which MP3 bloggers understand vinyl records as a wellspring of music that can be laundered from its rights associations through transfer to the digital domain. However, through his ideology, Smooth was forced to confront the dominant modes of thinking within the music industries (and among some fans) about what happens when private individuals make executive decisions about the intellectual property of others. As a result, he was left with a negative view of both the American legal system and companies like Google, whom he aligns with the "big brother" tradition of dystopian science fiction.

While the example of *My Jazz World* helps to illustrate Elder-Vass's (2016, 5) notion of the complex ecosystem that governs the digital economy, it is still difficult to see how models such as these will become politically, economically, and socially feasible in the long-term.¹⁶ With the resurgence of vinyl as a commodity and websites like Discogs allowing us to access detailed data on more than ten million recordings by six million artists as well as a marketplace in which those artifacts are sold, there is perhaps less of a demand for this kind of activity in contemporary blogging practices.¹⁷ While I am not claiming that MP3 blogs are a relic of the digital age, it is useful to consider the next steps in building sustainable archives based on user-edited databases, where the emphasis is not transferring music from an analog to a digital domain for free distribution online, but discovering, documenting, and purchasing the world's physical music products in their original formats. As for Smooth, the future of his utopian vision for jazz remains equally as uncertain:

At the moment I cannot tell if, when, how and where my state-of-the-art vinyl rips will resurface. Should I decide to continue, you will hear about it in the blogosphere—Smooth.

Notes

1. "Ripping" refers to the practice of recording both sides of a vinyl record into a computer to create a digital version of an album.
2. The general notion of online communities as participatory is a recurrent theme here drawn from the work of Jenkins (2006).
3. MP3 is the digital audio coding format used to compress audio files for convenient distribution via the Internet and other forms of media. An MP3 blog is a website where the primary purpose is to make MP3 files available for visitors to download.

4. Most references to utopia derive from Sir Thomas More's sixteenth-century book *Utopia* (1516), which gives an account of a fictional island society.
5. Blogosphere is a collective term for a network of blogs.
6. Scholars like Sterne (2006) have argued in favor understanding the MP3 as a cultural artifact in its own right.
7. All direct quotes from Smooth come from an interview conducted via email on August 23, 2015.
8. See, for instance Gerber and Covarrubias (2015) and episode two of the 2001 PBS documentary series *Jazz* (dir: Ken Burns) entitled "The Gift: 1917–1924."
9. In *Envisioning Real Utopias* (2010), Wright gives the example of Wikipedia as an egalitarian venture which could be considered anti-capitalist.
10. This is not to suggest that all MP3 blogs focus on commercially neglected music. It is perhaps a consequence of My Jazz World's visibility in this period that its owner adopted what he perceived to be an ethical policy with regard to copyright.
11. The central importance of the Blogger platform to this culture was identified by Collins and Long (2015, 81) in their work on archival practice in online communities.
12. It is still possible at the time of writing to find about 1,000 covers online that were photographed by Smooth during this process.
13. I refer to the definition of remediation used by Bolter and Grusin (1999). Of course, debates about the sonic and aesthetic superiority of vinyl exist; see Bartmanski and Woodward (2015).
14. RapidShare was a file-hosting service that existed from 2002 to 2015.
15. Cenite et al. (2009) proposed a multitude of motivations for file-sharing based on Lessig's model.
16. Currah (2007) and Baym (2011) are two scholars who have begun proposing ways in which gift economies and industrialized creativity can coexist.
17. "Discogs – Database And Marketplace for Music on Vinyl, CD, Cassette And More." 2018. www.discogs.com.

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44

WRITING THE JAZZ LIFE

Krin Gabbard

In 1995 the list of jazz musicians with published autobiographies was so long that Christopher Harlos (1995) could say that jazz literature was “inundated” with autobiographies (131). Harlos specifically mentioned auto-narratives by Louis Armstrong, Danny Barker, Count Basie, Sidney Bechet, Garvin Bushell, Bill Coleman, Pops Foster, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Lionel Hampton, Hampton Hawes, Milt Hinton, Art Hodes, Billie Holiday, Andy Kirk, Mezz Mezzrow, Charles Mingus, Art Pepper, Pony Poindexter, Sammy Price, Willie Smith, Rex Stewart, Dicky Wells, and Bob Wilber. Today we can extend this list by adding Gary Burton, Buddy Collette, Buck Clayton, Joe Darensbourg, Benny Golson, Herbie Hancock, Anita O’Day, George Shearing, Horace Silver, Nina Simone, Horace Tapscott, Clark Terry, Randy Weston, Joe Wilder, and Teddy Wilson, to name only a few.¹

In this chapter, I search for useful ways of thinking about the autobiographies of important jazz artists, but first I would like to dispel an old myth about jazz artists. Eric Porter (2002) has exhaustively refuted the stereotype of the tongue-tied black jazz artist mumbling inside jargon in *What Is This Thing Called Jazz?*, an intellectual history of the music based entirely on utterances of African American jazz artists. Nevertheless, in spite of the many jazz musicians who have expressed themselves clearly and forcefully in words, it is nevertheless true that many come to autobiography at a disadvantage. In the West, the genre of autobiography has almost always belonged to white European males, a breed very different from black jazz musicians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Jazz artists confronted a genre with built-in rules demanding a clear narrative arc and a set of incidents that illustrate the lessons the autobiographer wishes to pass on. Few African Americans, especially African American jazz musicians, have had the luxury of a life sufficiently orderly to be suited for this kind of writing.

Nevertheless, virtually all jazz autobiographers have tried to make their work conform in some ways to the dominant model, and almost all have worked with an editor, almost always a white editor. Even Rex Stewart (1991), who had already published a series of engaging journalistic pieces, hired Claire P. Gordon to edit his autobiography, *Boy Meets Horn*.² Stewart, a distinguished cornetist and composer who played with Duke Ellington and Fletcher Henderson among many others, worked with Gordon even though he could tell his story on his own. But as Gordon points out in “A Few Words From the Editor,” her preface to *Boy Meets Horn*, the autobiography was unfinished when Stewart died in 1967. He willed all his writing to Gordon, knowing that she could assemble a chronological narrative from a large collection of Stewart’s jottings, most of it rife with typos and spelling errors (Gordon 1991, vii–viii).

Kevin McNeilly (1997) has suggested that Stewart consulted an editor for his autobiography because he wanted to avoid the vernacular chattiness of Louis Armstrong, whose *Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans* (1954) would have been the paradigm for Stewart's book. In order to distinguish his autobiography, Stewart and Gordon made what McNeilly has called "a self-conscious effort at a crafted, professorial and neutral style" (51).

On some occasions, busy jazz artists who are uninterested in the actual writing of their story will turn the greater part of the work over to a co-author. Albert Murray, for example, exhaustively researched the career of Count Basie before interviewing Basie himself for a few comments and then sitting down to write *Good Morning Blues: The Autobiography of Count Basie* (1985). Joking that he was "Basie's Basie," Murray pictured himself sitting at his typewriter just as Basie sat at his piano. When he was performing, Basie would periodically raise his head to give an identifiable look to a musician, letting him know it was his time to solo. Similarly, Murray would look up from his keyboard to ask Basie to "solo" by dropping a few notes into Murray's stream of words (Murray 2004).

Writing in the Afterword to the updated edition of *Straight Life* (1994), Laurie LaPan Miller Pepper speaks of her delight at the stories that the white alto saxophonist Art Pepper told her when they first met in Synanon, the rehabilitation center where both were recovering from their separate addictions. As the two drew closer, eventually marrying in 1974, Laurie noticed that Art's stories took on new, often contradictory details as he retold them. When she decided to write her husband's autobiography, she asked to hear his stories again and again, regularly stopping him for clarification and insisting that he avoid exaggeration and embellishment (Pepper and Pepper 1994, 478). *Straight Life* is a fascinating, often harrowing account of a self-destructive musical genius who probably could not have written such a book on his own.

Billie Holiday's *Lady Sings the Blues* (1956) has remained in print since its publication. We know much more about the book thanks to John Szwed's (2015) book on Holiday. Szwed has found evidence that Holiday was much more involved in the writing of the book than many have believed. When Holiday suggested that she never read her own autobiography, she was apparently concealing her disappointment about a book that never became what she had wanted it to be. The book was said to have been cobbled together by the journalist William Dufty, who was married to one of Holiday's close friends. *Lady Sings the Blues* was supposedly based on a few conversations with the singer but mostly on newspaper interviews and Dufty's own speculations. Szwed, however, has found a large cache of material that was edited out of the published version of *Lady Sings the Blues*, much of it involving Holiday's extraordinary encounters with celebrities such as Orson Welles, Tallulah Bankhead, and even President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Holiday wrote the book in large part to assert that she was no longer a drug addict and that she was ready to go back to work with a re-instated cabaret card. She hoped to make her case more forcefully by cataloging her encounters with important people, almost all of them white. But when the editors at Doubleday excised much of this material for fear of legal reprisals, the book became something very different (Szwed 2015).

Robert G. O'Meally (1991) has suggested that Holiday was nevertheless pleased with how *Lady Sings the Blues* presents her as a nobly suffering artist, calling it "a dream book, a collection of Holiday's wishes and lies" (21). On one level this is surely true. Holiday was not above creating fictions about herself when it made the book more distinctive (and more marketable). Consider the book's opening sentences: "Mom and pop were just a couple of kids when they got married. He was eighteen, she was sixteen, and I was three" (Holiday 1956, 5). None of this is accurate, if only because Holiday's parents were never married. But the opening lines are as forceful as they are memorable.

* * *

Both Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong had a way with words. We know that letters flowed profusely from the portable typewriters that Louis Armstrong carried everywhere, beginning in 1922 when he first arrived in Chicago to join King Oliver's band. Only a small selection of these letters, some of them running to several pages and many addressed to people that Armstrong only knew as correspondents, have been published (Armstrong 1999). Armstrong's first autobiography, *Swing That Music* (1993), published in 1936, was extensively edited and rewritten. When Armstrong sat down to write his second autobiography, *Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans* (1954), he may have been reluctant to tell it all, recalling how his words had been taken away from him the last time.

Armstrong's second autobiography did indeed please his editors. They cleaned up his spelling and punctuation but made few substantive changes. William Kenney (1991) has argued, however, that Armstrong found subtle ways of expressing himself *in spite of* the pressure he felt to make *Satchmo* more acceptable to mainstream readers. For example, he speaks adoringly of Bix Beiderbecke, even calling him godlike. At one point we read, "Whenever we saw him our faces shone with joy and happiness, but long periods would pass when we did not see him at all" (Armstrong 1954, 209). Kenney suggests that Armstrong—who may have regarded Beiderbecke and his cult with something less than total reverence—managed to construct an account that did not rouse his editors to take up the red pencil but also contained a telling trace of ambiguity (Kenney 1991, 51). If left to his own devices, Armstrong was clearly capable of writing his own story with wit and clarity, as when he produced a long, handwritten document in a hospital bed the year before he died (Armstrong 1999, 3–36). But if Kenney is right, anyone who delves into *Swing That Music* and *Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans* must read between and around the lines.

Duke Ellington's autobiography, *Music Is My Mistress* (1973), must also be read with a degree of skepticism. When confronted with the inevitability of writing his story, Ellington continually postponed the actual writing even after he had set aside time to conduct interviews with journalist Stanley Dance. After a concert or a tour, the two would sit down for an interview session, but Ellington would turn away, silently watching old movies on television (Ellington and Stanley 1978, 172). My guess is that Ellington was not sure how to translate his debonair, witty, carefully constructed stage persona into auto-narrative. Determined to complete the project, Dance collected statements that Duke made on and off the record, with and without requests for specific information, much of it scrawled on napkins and the backs of envelopes. Like Claire Gordon with Rex Stewart, Dance then stitched it all together to produce *Music Is My Mistress* in 1973, a year before Ellington's death.

Music Is My Mistress is full of glowing praise for family and friends in several sections of the book called "Dramatis Felidae," alluding to the Latin phrase, *Dramatis Personae*, or Persons of the Drama. Because *Dramatis Personae* is more commonly translated as Cast of Characters, "Dramatis Felidae" is meant to be a Latin translation of "Cast of Cats," but it is essentially gibberish. Trying to put some Latin into an autobiography is typical of Ellington in particular and of the "professorial" turn in jazz autobiography in general.

The consistent eulogizing of friends throughout the "Dramatis Felidae" sections of *Music Is My Mistress* has inspired critics to sniff out a bit of damning amid faint praise as well as the few significant omissions. His very brief section on tenor saxophonist Ben Webster, with whom he had some nasty quarrels, begins with the usual encomium but ends with Duke remembering a photograph of Webster on skis and wondering why the skis "were pointing *up* the mountain" (D. Ellington 1973, 164). There is no mention in *Music Is My Mistress* of two women who were in fact his mistresses, Beatrice "Evie" Ellis and Fernanda de Castro Monte, both of whom he supported for many years during his life (Lawrence 2001, 356). Nor does Ellington mention Edna Thompson, the wife he never divorced. Similarly, in *Good Morning Blues: The Autobiography of Count Basie*

(1985), Albert Murray has Basie saying, “Yes, there were some women during those days, but that’s no one’s business” (87).

Ellington always wore a mask in public, setting it aside only for a handful of intimates. He may have learned his lesson early when, in an unguarded moment in 1935, he sharply criticized George Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* because it failed to capture the real spirit of the black residents of the opera’s South Carolina regions and because it sounded nothing like African American music. Unfortunately, a reporter for the periodical *New Theatre* was present when Ellington made these remarks (Tucker 1993, 114–117). The aftermath of the article put Ellington in a difficult position with people who admired Gershwin. (He showers Gershwin with unironic praise in *Music Is My Mistress* [D. Ellington 1973, 104–106]). For the rest of his life, Ellington preferred to speak only with humor and urbanity in public and conscientiously avoided candor, even when he must have had strong feelings about an issue. For example, when an interviewer told Duke that an English critic had praised his compositions for recalling “the opalescent subtleties of Debussy,” Ellington replied, “Don’t those London fellows push a mean pen?” (Tucker 1993, 113). He probably found the critic’s comments a bit absurd, but knowing that he would be quoted, he responded with his trademark insouciant humor. With statements like this, Ellington revealed his real talent with words.

Ellington’s reluctance to disclose his inner self in his autobiography may also have stemmed from an African American man’s reluctance to relive the humiliations and dangers he faced throughout his career. Nevertheless, like all jazz autobiographies, *Music Is My Mistress* was part of a tradition that begins with slave narratives and includes efforts by black authors to alert the world to their sufferings and to reclaim the personhood that had been denied them. Some black jazz artists can be understood as part of this tradition, but many more—Armstrong and Ellington most prominently—tended to put a happy face on their encounters and soft pedal the dark side of their experiences as African Americans.

Because of his carefully constructed persona as well as his extraordinary music, Ellington was invited to the White House by Richard M. Nixon to celebrate his seventieth birthday. During Nixon’s first term as president (1969–1973), the United States government was aggressively punishing African Americans for two decades of civil rights demands. Nixon’s “Southern strategy” and the FBI’s multifaceted attempts at undermining the African American agenda were unprecedented in the twentieth century. That Ellington was embraced by Nixon himself during these same years is a striking testament to his success in setting himself apart from race and politics.

Ajay Heble (2000) has argued that *Music Is My Mistress* is consistent with Ellington’s goal of “moving contentedly” through the corridors of white power. Heble demands that we read the book *not* in terms of what is omitted or downplayed but rather in terms of how it reflects Ellington’s ability to achieve “power, credibility, and autonomy” (115). Ellington understood his precarious position as a black American and thus competed “for access and public legitimacy not by explicitly challenging dominant structures of knowledge production but by improvising *within* an already constituted system” (Heble 2000, 115, *italics in text*).

* * *

Miles Davis may be the best example of a jazz artist who had no driving interest in staking a claim to his own story. When Simon and Schuster approached his agent with a contract for an autobiography, Davis chose Quincy Troupe as his collaborator. Troupe had won Davis’s respect when Troupe interviewed him a few years earlier for a long piece in *Spin* magazine. After the contracts for *Miles: The Autobiography* (1989) had been signed, Troupe and Davis spoke for many hours, engaging in disjointed, almost stream-of-consciousness conversations. Neither man seemed intent on constructing a chronological narrative. At some point in his conversations with Troupe, Davis lost interest and refused to continue. He had, of course, taken the publisher’s advance money, but

this did not stop him from walking away. In desperation, Troupe appears to have dipped into Jack Chambers's (1998) biography of Davis to fill in the gaps after Miles's departure (Crouch 1990, 35). (The first volume of Chambers's books was published in 1983).

Most of *Miles: The Autobiography*, however, is a heavily edited version of what Davis spoke into Troupe's tape recorder. Troupe gave the recordings of his interviews to a typist who transcribed them. The transcripts, often marked up with extensive changes by Troupe, are housed at the Schomburg branch of the New York Public Library in Harlem. They show how Troupe rephrased Davis's statements so that they read like what Troupe believed the authorial voice of Miles Davis ought to be. On some level, he got it right. Many critics who reviewed the published text remarked that the book really *sounded* like Miles. Nevertheless, Troupe frequently misrepresented what Davis told him, choosing on several occasions to "print the legend."

An intriguing aspect of *Miles: The Autobiography* is its close attention to the discographical details of Davis's career. The book regularly tells us who Davis was playing with at a recording session or at a club date. So far as I can tell, the information is always accurate even if the narrator regularly adds "I think," "I forget," and "I'm not sure" when personnel are listed. Troupe probably did this on his own, but it's also possible that Davis had his own reasons for insisting that the names of the musicians he hired be included. At some stage in the process, he may have instructed Troupe to look up all those discographical details and add them to the narrative. Passages with "I think" and "I forget" were added so that Davis does not sound like a jazz nerd reciting session personnel. Miles retains his devil-may-care attitude as well as his self-image as a benevolent mentor to young musicians.

Davis also seems to have liked some of the stories that Troupe made up, including one about Frances Taylor, Davis's first wife. When Taylor came back into Davis's life, the narrator says that everyone loved her, including Marlon Brando and Quincy Jones. He adds that Quincy Jones gave her a ring, presumably an engagement ring (Davis and Troupe 1989, 227). In an interview with Gerald Early, Quincy Jones says that when he told Davis, "Miles, you know that's bullshit," Davis responded, "Man, that fucking sounds good" (Jones 2001, 43). Davis may have walked away from the project because he had lost interest but also because he was content with how Troupe was filling in the gaps.

* * *

Treat It Gentle, by the New Orleans-born Creole clarinetist and soprano saxophonist Sidney Bechet, may be the most celebrated of all jazz autobiographies. Unfortunately, the extent to which the book presents the actual words of Bechet is largely unknown. Although there is evidence that Bechet was recorded extensively so that his words could be transcribed for *Treat It Gentle*, almost all the tapes are missing. Jessica Teague has suggested that the tapes were never considered important enough to be preserved (Teague 2013a). To further complicate questions of attribution, *Treat It Gentle* went through three editors and two publishers before reaching print. We do have two hours of taped interviews that Desmond Flower, the book's final editor, conducted with Bechet in Paris in 1957. But these tapes were clearly made after most of the book had been drafted and "served primarily to fill in gaps and bring the story up to date from where it left off around 1936" (Teague 2013b, 125–126).

Bechet the writer also wrote short fiction intended for either stage or screen. The Bechet section of the Charles Delaunay collection in Paris contains a screenplay from 1951 based on the popular song "Frankie and Johnny" and called *Wildflower (or, The Story of Frankie and Johnny)*. In about 1955, Bechet wrote another treatment for a film or a novel, a four-page story about a jazz musician living in Paris who reminisces about a love affair from twenty years earlier. Like *Treat It Gentle*, the story is vaguely autobiographical (Teague 2013b, 126).

Actually, parts of *Treat It Gentle* are not even *vaguely* autobiographical. The most memorable chapter in the book is about Omar, the escaped slave that Bechet claims as his grandfather. In

fact, Bechet was Creole on both sides of his family tree, and if some of his relatives were slaves, it would have been several generations earlier. More intriguingly, Bechet appropriated the story of Omar from a figure in African American folklore known as Bras-Coupé. In the earliest versions of a story that dates to the 1830s, Bras-Coupé is the leader of a group of ex-slaves hiding in the swamps near New Orleans. From there they make raids on stores and plantations. He supposedly lost his arm—and gained his name—when a police officer amputated it after an early attempt to escape from slavery. In an exhaustive and thoughtful account, Bryan Wagner (2005) has shown that Bras-Coupé's legend was appropriated by New Orleans police officers in the early nineteenth century to increase their own power. When New Orleans passed from French to American hands in 1803, citizens were profoundly suspicious of a police force that had previously been employed by the King of France and were accustomed to making full use of that power. Policemen subsequently made the clever decision to embellish the Bras-Coupé story, turning him into a black monster with almost supernatural powers. They then spread the story in hopes of terrifying the population into giving them more guns and sanctioning their use of force (Wagner 2005, 120).

The legend of Bras-Coupé was substantially enhanced when the white American writer George Washington Cable (1998) heard the story in New Orleans and decided to create his own version. The novel added several elements to the story that made it important to Bechet, especially a scene in which Bras-Coupé joins the slaves dancing in Congo Square and distinguishes himself as the most graceful and athletic of the dancers (Wagner 2005, 131). With Cable's additions, Bras-Coupé becomes a key figure in the history of jazz, at least as it was conceived in the early years of the twentieth century when Congo Square was designated as the place where the continuity between blacks in Africa and blacks in America was most profound.

Although the dancing in Congo Square ended well before what we now call jazz was first being performed, Sidney Bechet accepted the importance of Congo Square and claimed Bras-Coupé/Omar as his grandfather, thus placing his own bloodline at the origins of jazz history. Early in *Treat It Gentle*, Bechet asserts that Congo Square “was my grandfather's square. He never had to hear it from a distance. It was there in his mind even before he got to the square and began performing it” (Bechet 1978, 8). Bechet extends the story of Omar with various borrowings that may have come from oral tradition but more likely from Cable's novel and a version of the Bras-Coupé story that appeared in 1945 in a collection of New Orleans folktales, *Gumbo Ya-ya* (1945).

Bechet's retelling of the Bras-Coupé legend takes up a fifth of his autobiography. The rest appears to be a more straightforward but consistently compelling account of a musician's career. The entire story is told in a colloquial but authoritative fashion that probably came from his editors as much as from Bechet. John Ciardi, who worked on the text after it had been transcribed and edited by Bechet's secretary, Joan Williams, has said that his main goal was to restore some of the flavor of Bechet's speech (Teague 2013b, 125). How much actual access Ciardi had to Bechet's own words is unknown, as is the extent to which Ciardi made his own additions to the text. After Joan Williams threatened to sue Bechet and his publishers, claiming that she was the true author of Bechet's autobiography, Ciardi's text was shelved (Chilton 1987, 291). A few years later the text was rediscovered by the art collector and jazz enthusiast Desmond Flower. He worked with Bechet to bring the story up to date before editing and publishing it with his own press, Cassell and Co (Chilton 1987, 292).

We may never know precisely how Bechet's stories moved from his mouth to the printed page. For our purposes, it is enough that he wanted to create a history of jazz by forging an existential connection between a highly musical slave and his own origins. It was also the story of a mythical grandfather who literally embodied the music. The men who punished the escaped slave could cut off his arm, but they could not disconnect him from the music (Wagner 2005, 138). Regardless

of what we think of Bechet's self-mythologizing, *Treat It Gentle* is an especially beautiful artifact in the history of jazz writing.

* * *

From a purely literary point of view, the most remarkable autobiography by a major jazz artist is Charles Mingus's *Beneath the Underdog* (1971). The book was in no way ghost-written or transformed by an editor. The 870-page manuscript that Mingus composed in 1963 and that is now archived at the Library of Congress was reduced by half and carefully edited by Nel King, a screenwriter Mingus had asked to help him write his autobiography (Mingus n.d.). Regina Ryan, who acquired the book for Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., also worked on the manuscript. But Mingus was intimately involved with every editorial change and added new material with and without the requests of his editors. More than any other major jazz musician who has told his or her own story, Mingus is responsible for everything in *Beneath the Underdog*.³

More importantly, Mingus did not write in the guise of a carefully constructed persona like Duke Ellington. And he brought an unmistakably artistic sensibility to his writing. Consider a passage from *Beneath the Underdog* that is one of many conversations with Mingus's close friend, the trumpeter Fats Navarro, nicknamed "Fat Girl" because of his high-pitched voice and his tremendous girth. Late in the book, however, Navarro has lost an enormous amount of weight because of tuberculosis combined with substance abuse. He knows he is dying, and at least in his conversations with Mingus, he rejects all religious faiths and embraces death.

Mingus tells Navarro,

There's no need to kill yourself—*think* yourself to death. Go ahead, Fats, you know you're right, there ain't no God. You know more than Christ, Buddha, Socrates, Plato, Mohammed, Bird, Judas, Mingus, Casals, Stravinsky, Benjamin Franklin, Swami Vivikananda and Norman Mailer! You know there ain't no God, you know more than anyone except some of them dumb agents, critics and congressmen.

(Mingus 1971, 361)

The litany of sages that begins with Christ and ends with Norman Mailer could only have been constructed by a man who knows his world and its absurdities but who also possesses a profound sense of irony. By placing Benjamin Franklin, a Swami, and Mailer at the end, he reveals that he is gently mocking Navarro even as he praises him. And we are not taken aback when he audaciously lists his own name immediately before Pablo Casals because this seemingly egotistic display is further undermined by the placement of his own name immediately after Judas. Like a serious poet, Mingus knows that the ironist can say much more by suggesting than by declaiming.

Mingus's book begins with the author talking to his psychoanalyst. In the first sentence of the book, Mingus declares, "In other words, I am three." He then describes three very different people with their own distinct responses to his world. When the analyst asks which is real, Mingus replies, "They're all real" (Mingus 1971, 3). At the outset Mingus sets himself apart from the familiar autobiographical subject who comfortably tells a story in a single voice. His claim of "I am three" takes him at least one step beyond W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of black America's "double consciousness" (1993). And in another move that reveals a literary sensibility, Mingus frequently shifts among first, second, and third person voices, referring to himself variously as "I," "You," "My boy," and "Mingus," among others. Mingus was ahead of his time in problematizing the familiar conventions of autobiography and narrative. I am even tempted to call his writing postmodern.

Mingus built his life story around a consistent set of themes that connect the jazz musician's predicament to sexuality and ultimately to prostitution. Both jazz artists and prostitutes regularly

sell vital parts of themselves for little or nothing. Like the women in the novel who are so in love with Mingus that they turn to prostitution to help him survive, Charles the jazz artist must regularly play music for which he has no use. And when he does have the opportunity to play the music he loves, he is regularly deprived of fair remuneration.

Because sexuality and prostitution are so important in *Beneath the Underdog*, there is plenty of erotic writing. Unlike Ellington and Basie, Mingus is not at all reticent about his sex life. And yet very little of the writing is pornographic. The sex is always part of a larger tale, especially Mingus's own development as a man seeking truth in the flesh as well as in the spirit. And although sections of the book can only be fantasy—such as the claim that he had sex with twenty-three Mexican prostitutes in one evening (Mingus 1971, 4)—Mingus usually errs on the side of shameless honesty.

I believe that *Beneath the Underdog* makes the case for Mingus's exceptionalism just as strongly as his music (Gabbard 2016). Although Mingus did indeed work with two editors, they were not primarily concerned with preserving his vernacular speech patterns and then recasting them in a "suitable literary tone." Regina Ryan was most concerned about avoiding lawsuits (King 1971, 42)! Mingus occasionally does make use of African American idioms, but often ironically. Refusing to adopt the clichés of the typical jazz autobiographer, his prose can be both learned and poetic. The variety of voices in which he speaks, and the range of narrative techniques he deploys, reveal the many possibilities available to the writer of a jazz life.

Notes

1. Much of this chapter has been adapted from the section on Charles Mingus's *Beneath the Underdog* in my book about Mingus (Gabbard 2016, 113–157).
2. For Stewart's journalism, see Stewart (1972).
3. The extent of Mingus's involvement in writing, revising, and editing *Beneath the Underdog* is extensively documented in the correspondence in the Alfred A. Knopf Archives at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, Austin.

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