I can only ask, *what* music? The t.v. cartoons of today are 95% dialogue, and the music is rarely heard at all, unless sound effects may be called music."[73] At the turn of the millennium, little has changed, although a few composers for television cartoons, such as Alf Clausen (*The Simpsons*) and the late Richard Stone (*Animaniacs*), have begun to take Bradley's techniques more seriously, appropriating his ideas for their own use. Bradley's scores, in stark contrast to those of his colleague at Warner Bros., could be at times intentionally crafty and abstruse and at other times remarkably simple. The true complexity in Scott Bradley's music arose from his care in placing his cues against the rest of the cartoon soundscape, avoiding the need to resort to "Jerry-mousing" while treating his music as seriously as any composer could.

Tunes for 'Toons: Music and the Hollywood Cartoon

Daniel Goldmark

Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005

3

Jungle Jive

ANIMATION, JAZZ MUSIC, AND SWING CULTURE

Boogie Woogie is the native musical expression. There is jumpin' jive, as the locals and native animals cut loose in accepted "real gone" fashion.

Review of Walter Lantz's *Jungle Jive*, *Motion Picture Herald*, 13 October 1951

By the early 1920s, a new style of music had worked its way north from New Orleans and begun to infiltrate numerous forms of popular culture and entertainment, including fiction, art, and classical music. Within only a few years, jazz permeated the collective musical culture of America, from recordings and live performances to films focusing on the nature of jazz itself. Cartoons got caught up in the craze as well, and they became an especially potent site for spreading the sound of jazz nationwide. Within two years of the Hollywood sound revolution, cartoons began appearing with such titles as *The Jazz Fool* (Disney; Disney, 1929), *Jungle Rhythm* (Disney; Disney, 1929), *Jazz Mad* (Terrytoons, 1931), *Jungle Jazz* (Van Beuren; Bailey and Foster, 1930), and *Congo Jazz* (Warner Bros.; Harman and Ising, 1930), each with a different stylistic approach to the sound of jazz. The review that appears as this chapter's epigraph shows how entrepreneurs marketing cartoons attempted to cash in on the "swinging" qualities of a short to interest potential buyers.

Jazz would have a featured role in hundreds of Hollywood cartoons, inspiring stories and enlivening performances in shorts from every studio. As the public's reception of new trends in the music changed, Hollywood's approach to the music and the imagery associated with jazz evolved over time. Cartoons produced in the beginning of the sound era afford us a valuable means of understanding how the general public may have viewed

jazz and its practitioners. Likewise, shorts from the 1940s and 1950s show these same perceptions changing as jazz continued to develop.

These cartoons take great pains to portray the music and those who played it, yet they cannot move beyond the level of base generalizations, for "even those cartoons ostensibly celebrating jazz by featuring it on the soundtrack" resort to the use of stereotypical images and racial conceits. Barry Keith Grant further notes the power of cartoons: "in their reliance on exaggeration and simplification in both imagery and narrative, cartoons speak a clear, simple language, like the large capital letters on children's blocks."[1] Such stereotypical depictions may not have been intentionally malicious, but we must at least consider that possibility in interpreting such virulent expressions of racism. My main interest here, however, is the way in which the music is used to construct the story or contribute to the cartoon as a whole. Because jazz has such resonant societal meanings and associations, we cannot separate the music from the culture it has come to represent. As jazz and African American cultural forms in general have been simultaneously condemned and co-opted in America through the years, we should not be surprised that the figures caricatured in the cartoons discussed in this chapter are just that—caricatures composed of nothing but stereotypical attributes. Rather than credit the achievements of these musicians, the cartoons reduce even the most brilliant, creative artists to mere racist punch lines. Thus, while my goal is to examine the different workings of jazz in cartoon scores, the issue of race and representation—and the deplorably racist effect of the imagery—will always be present in some way as well.

Although we cannot ignore the visual representations of jazz musicians in these cartoons, we must pay attention to the music, which functions simultaneously as the inspiration for the narrative and as the explicit source of the rhythm and pacing of each short.[2] As we will see, over time jazz played an increasingly important role in the medium, until it came to touch practically every Hollywood cartoon score. To understand why film composers found jazz's characteristic sound particularly useful, we should begin by examining common attitudes toward jazz as a musical genre in the 1920s.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS OF JAZZ AS FILM MUSIC

Descriptions of the innovative sound of jazz in early film music manuals provide a unique insight into general perceptions of jazz at the beginning of the century. Edith Lang and George West's 1920 handbook

on accompanying declares jazz's unusual rhythmic characteristics ideal for marking special effects:

> Jazz Band—The only way to imitate a jazz band is to hear one of these unique organizations. There is no way of describing it. Each and every player must hear these peculiar effects for himself and then imitate them according to his impression thereof. The general idea is to have one hand play the tune, while the other hand "jazzes" or syncopates around it, the pedals performing the drum and bass parts. The ability to lift your audience's feet off the floor in sympathetic rhythm is the truest test; that you will distress the ears of really musical people goes without saying, but you will not distress their sense of rhythm. This rhythm on your part must be perfectly maintained, no matter what stunts you may perform with hand and feet.[3]

The impression left by this characterization is that although the music's power defies description, properly executed jazz will fulfill the accompanist's needs. Rather than offer instruction in jazz, the authors tell the reader simply to listen to someone who can play it—difficult advice to follow at a time when jazz had yet to reach all corners of the nation. Similar guidance appeared in the *Moving Picture World,* a periodical important to the early film industry. Its "Music for the Picture" column regularly featured music and its performance in the theater. In the "Questions Answered—Suggestions Offered" section, the following query appeared in 1918: "Q. In playing 'blues' how do you get the real 'nigger' effects? A. There is no way to explain the peculiar darky rhythm acquired by Southern players that make 'blues' effective. It is a thing born in the player and not made. Would advise that you hear the real thing."[4] We see here both the mythologizing that surrounded the performance of jazz from very early on and a clear desire on the part of accompanists to incorporate this novel sound into their scores.

Elsewhere, Lang and West prescribe specific uses for jazz: "One important factor in these pictorial farces is the matter of speed. 'Pep' is the key-note to the situation, with the current 'jazz' tunes as a medium. When special effects are to be introduced, or certain moods or emotions are to be 'italicized' and burlesqued, this may be done at any point of the composition played, the piece instantly to be resumed."[5] The authors once more establish a connection between the sound of jazz and those moments in the story when the music must convey a particular message. The budding accompanist might take away the idea that jazz possesses an ineffable quality that will spice up a score without altering it much aesthetically.

Early accounts of live jazz performances usually focus on their rhythm, that element of jazz's sound that white audiences found inexplicably novel. Yet those accounts cannot explain why so many people found the music so compelling, nor why listeners could not keep from moving along to the music. The presumed African heritage of black jazz musicians figured prominently in these critical assessments, where blunt references to the "primitive" and "native" elements of the music were widespread. A critic in a major New York newspaper intending to draw readers to a 1917 variety show at a local theater described "jass" as "an attempt to reproduce the marvelous syncopation of the African jungle. Prof. William Morrison Patterson, Ph.D., . . . says: 'The music of contemporary savages taunts us with a lost art of rhythm. Modern sophistication has inhibited many native instincts, and the mere fact that our conventional dignity usually forbids us to sway our bodies or to tap our feet when we hear effective music has deprived us of unsuspected pleasures.'"[6]

Phrases such as "syncopation of the African jungle" and "music of contemporary savages" allude to the notion that the supposed primitive origins of jazz or ragtime explain the music's perceived freedom. Many cartoons relied on this implicit connection when they set jazz performances in the forest primeval. But more important to the critic and the putative expert he quotes is what jazz says about "us" and "our bodies." Instead of condemning the "savages," Patterson betrays a deep sense of envy: blacks, more carefree and uninhibited, enjoy the ineffable pleasures of their "native instincts," while "modern" civilized society "has deprived us of [such] unsuspected pleasures." Primitivism was a theme running through much early writing on jazz, for it seemed to explain both the essential attributes of the music and what made it so desirable. The mass consumption of black music and culture in the 1920s and '30s by whites heading to Harlem and other black cultural centers was a direct result of such a belief in jazz's innate qualities.

EARLY JAZZ AND EARLY CARTOONS

The animated sequence in *King of Jazz* (1930, dir. John Murray Anderson), a film that features the orchestra leader Paul Whiteman, is one of the earliest appearances of jazz in animated form.[7] Several scholars have argued that Whiteman uses this film, and in particular the cartoon sequence, to insinuate that he himself was responsible for the "creation" of jazz. According to Krin Gabbard, "the cartoon ultimately portrays Whiteman as bringing jazz to Africa"; Michael Rogin sees it instead as portraying jazz as "the trophy the white hunter brings back from Africa."[8] My own interpretation is closer to Gabbard's: the film's underlying goal is to establish *how* and *why* Whiteman deserves the title "King of Jazz," and how could that better be accomplished than by implying that he introduced the music to the very people most strongly associated with it?

While the question of how someone as mainstream and pop-oriented as Whiteman could claim to be the King of Jazz is fascinating (Russell Sanjek called Whiteman a "press agent–anointed king"),[9] I am more interested here in how the music and imagery used in the opening cartoon support this claim. Like the remainder of the film, which relies mostly on mainstream pop tunes, the animated sequence presents jazz as Whiteman's group preached it to their audiences: band arrangements of current Tin Pan Alley hits and jazz melodies.[10] Songs used or referred to in the cartoon's score include "Music Hath Charms" (Tin Pan Alley), "The Campbells Are Coming" (Scottish folk tune), and a snatch of *Rhapsody in Blue*, George Gershwin's jazz-infused work, which is featured in a later segment of the film.[11] In a quick gag, probably not lost on the audience in 1930, an elephant sprays a monkey with water, angering the tree-dwelling primate into throwing a coconut that hits Whiteman on the head, effectively "crowning" him as king (see figure 15). The tune to "The Aba Daba Honeymoon," another Tin Pan Alley song whose chorus begins "Aba daba daba daba daba daba daba said the chimpey to the monk," can be heard during the monkey's very brief appearance.

"Music Hath Charms," first performed in the film during the opening credits (sung by Bing Crosby, then one of Whiteman's Rhythm Boys), receives the most attention in the cartoon's narrative. The animated Whiteman plays the song for an attacking lion who, instead of mauling the bandleader, gets caught up in the jazzy rhythm and changes from savage beast to swinging cat.[12] The instruments heard during this scene, including violin, rhythm guitar, and bass, typify the swinging sound produced by Whiteman's orchestra and others popular in the early 1930s. As jazz, Whiteman's music did not come close to the hot sound then being produced by such leaders as Duke Ellington or Louis Armstrong. For most white listeners, however, Whiteman's music was fresh and even slightly dangerous in its appropriation of black musical styles. Whiteman succeeded because his audience perceived him as "taming" jazz's "savage impulses"; that is, he used just enough of the innovative sounds of the hot jazz bands to excite his listeners safely.[13]

Walter Lantz, who directed the animated sequence in *King of Jazz*,

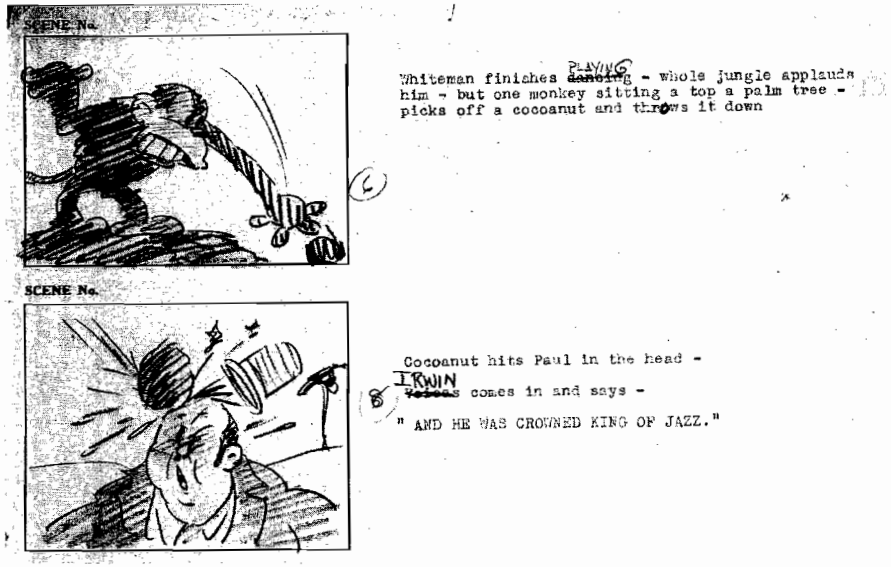

FIGURE 15 Paul Whiteman crowned king in production sketches for *King of Jazz* (Lantz, 1930). Courtesy of the Institute of the American Musical.

recalled that contrary to usual practice, the score was recorded before the animation was created.[14] During the scoring session he wished to set up a system to help Whiteman synchronize the music to the animation, but the musician saw no need for any aid. Whiteman said, according to Lantz, "'Let me tell ya, sonny, I can keep a rhythm on anything. . . . So you tell me how long the picture's going to be—three minutes, four minutes, whatever—and I'll give you the rhythm you want.' 'I said we wanted four minutes,' Lantz continues, 'and I'll be darned if he didn't beat this thing out. It came to four minutes at 2/12 [two beats per second, or one beat every twelve frames].' "[15] The music works well for the short sequence. Because Lantz had the music recorded in advance, he could animate the sequence so that the movements of Whiteman's animated counterpart and of the animals he encounters in the jungle would be underscored. But the sequence's musical argument (if any) is that the music heard in the jungle usually consists of folk tunes and Tin Pan Alley songs, in neither case music produced by Africans.

Despite its setting in "darkest Africa" (as the film's host, Charles Irwin, describes it), Africans have a remarkably small role in the sequence. Natives appear on screen for less than ten seconds, as they dance to the beat of the music, casting tall shadows on the wall behind them

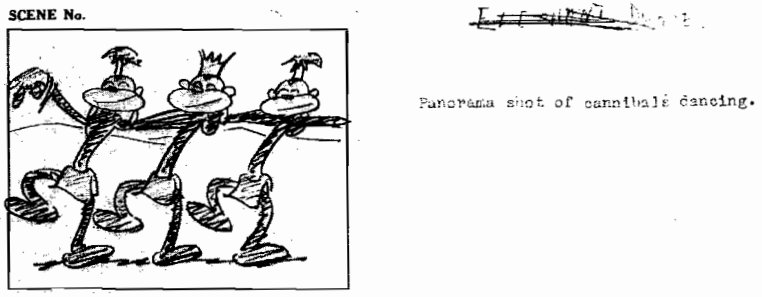

FIGURE 16 Cannibals/natives dancing in production sketches for *King of Jazz*. Courtesy of the Institute of the American Musical.

(see figure 16). At the end of the musical phrase, however, the figures strike a frightening pose, jumping on tiptoe, sticking out their tongues, and bulging out their eyes. Barry Keith Grant notes that we also see dancing "a black rabbit—'a jungle bunny'—enjoying the music."[16] The bunny is actually Oswald the Rabbit, a character owned by Universal (producer of *King of Jazz*) that Lantz had begun animating the previous year, and therefore a logical candidate for a quick cameo in a major feature film.[17] Like Disney's Mickey Mouse and Warner Bros.' Bosko, Oswald had an appearance and mannerisms modeled on blackface performers from vaudeville and elsewhere. He remained a caricature, for details rendering the true complexity of African life would have complicated his representation and thus undercut the fiction.[18]

Like Whiteman's use of jazz, Lantz's depiction of Oswald was helping to create new forms of mainstream white entertainment relying on (white-constructed) codes meant to represent black culture. As is true today, such racial stereotypes and clichés were common then in many forms of entertainment.[19] In his history of black images in cartoons, Henry Sampson describes the narrative trends in animated shorts' use of black characters: cartoons that take place on the stereotypical antebellum plantation or in the jungle and cartoons that depict vaudeville or minstrel shows all date back to the era before synchronized sound.[20] White audiences began seeing jazz as nearly synonymous with black culture by the 1930s, and its influence extends to many of the cartoons that Sampson examines.

Stereotypes figured not only in the stories and design format of the cartoons but also in their scores. Particular songs that originated in minstrel shows or vaudeville routines came to signify black culture. Although

such famous songs as "Zip Coon" and "Jim Crow" seldom appeared, others that were almost as well known took their place in sound cartoon scores.[21] The song "Sweet Georgia Brown" by Ben Bernie, Maceo Pinkard, and Kenneth Casey is an unusual example, as it frequently denotes moments in the Warner Bros. cartoons when race and gender intersect. This song was used only twice prior to Carl Stalling's arrival at the studio. Its repeated appearance thereafter is thus attributable not just to its presence in the Warner catalogue (the studio had acquired its original publisher, Jerome Remick) but also to Stalling's predilection for using song titles to guide his scores—in this case, the title refers specifically to an African American woman. Such songs may have functioned well as recognizable melodic cues for individual black characters; at the same time, the rhythms and textures of jazz provided the sound that most often signaled to white viewers the stereotyped black community and its culture.[22] Perhaps the most chilling conclusion we can draw from the persistence of such songs is that cartoons are, in many ways, a natural extension of the minstrel show. Just as Mickey and his black-faced, white-gloved brethren carry on the tradition of the minstrel figure, so their singing and dancing give new life to the same old tunes. Where but in cartoons can we today hear the plantation songs of Stephen Foster and other songs popularized on the minstrel stage? Minstrelsy never really died—it simply changed media.

JAZZ AND THE URBAN SCENE: THE FLEISCHER STUDIO

The Fleischer brothers took an unusual approach to jazz in the late 1920s and the 1930s, in that they treated it not as background but as a musical genre deserving of recognition. Instead of just using jazz idioms to color the musical score, their cartoons featured well-known songs by prominent recording artists. Fleischer was a well-known studio in the 1920s, perhaps most famous for pioneering the sing-along cartoon with the bouncing ball in Song Car-Tunes. An added attraction to Fleischer cartoons was that Paramount Pictures, their distributor and parent company, allowed the Fleischers to use its newsreel recording facilities, where they were permitted to film famous performers scheduled to appear in Paramount shorts and films.[23] Thus, a wide variety of musicians and others, including Ethel Merman, Rudy Vallee, the Mills Brothers, Cab Calloway, and Louis Armstrong, began appearing in Fleischer cartoons.[24] This arrangement benefited both the studios and the stars. Once the Fleischers chose a song from the featured artist to use in a cartoon, the writers constructed a story that made the performance of the song the centerpiece of the short. That the song's title usually was borrowed for the cartoon's title was just one way in which such cartoons helped publicize a performer's work.

The Fleischers also responded to local influences of the Manhattan music scene in their choice of performers: they combined themes from their own lives as middle-class, secular Jews in New York with their notions (cultural, musical, etc.) of African Americans, funneling all these raw materials into a popular representational form—cartoons.[25] Their earlier success with the Song Car-Tunes was owed to their use of Tin Pan Alley tunes and nineteenth-century popular songs, styles familiar in the city on vaudeville and other stages. The proximity of the Fleischer studio to premier music venues, particularly the uptown clubs in Harlem that featured artists such as Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, and Cab Calloway, clearly shaped their creation of cartoons in the nascent jazz era. The aura of danger and excitement that surrounded jazz, especially during the Harlem Renaissance, likely added to the attraction. Nathan Irvin Huggins describes it: "How convenient! It was merely a taxi trip to the exotic for most white New Yorkers. In cabarets decorated with tropical and jungle motifs—some of them replicas of southern plantations—they heard jazz, that almost forbidden music. It was not merely that jazz was exotic, but that it was instinctive and abandoned, yet laughingly light and immediate—melody skipping atop inexorable driving rhythm. . . . In the darkness and closeness, the music, infectious and unrelenting, drove on."[26] Lou Fleischer, the brother in charge of music for the studio, remembered going to the Cotton Club to listen to Calloway so that he could choose the songs that might work well in a cartoon.[27] The performances themselves no doubt gave the writers at the studio ideas for future cartoons. They could easily have taken the numbers they had seen onstage and, if they had chosen to view them from the contrived primitivist perspective then dominant, created stories that blended the performers' music and the visual trappings of the clubs with the animators' ideas.

Amiri Baraka points out that whites eagerly engaged with the new black music that offered such a novel image of America,[28] desiring to experience the sensual overtones ascribed to "primitive" music. By visiting clubs in Harlem and even by viewing cartoons, whites could gain access to something they felt implicitly lacking in their lives: the freedom and hedonism believed to be characteristic of a simpler, more instinctual society (an idea alluded to by Professor Patterson). By couching the featured songs

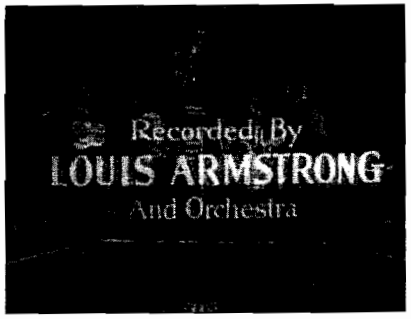

FIGURE 17 Louis Armstrong and the band playing in *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You* (Fleischer, 1932).

within the stereotyped narratives that shaped the musicians' live acts, the Fleischer cartoons enabled moviegoing audiences around the country to experience an even more fantastical version of those narratives—narratives previously enjoyed by a few nightclub patrons in New York City. Just as they had done while attending live stage shows with blackface performers, white audiences could watch blacks in these newer performance venues and hope for what Huggins calls "the possibility of being transported into black innocence."[29] The cartoons that simultaneously presented the ideas of jazz and primitivism also (in a tone mixing envy and condemnation) emphasized the stereotyped notion that blacks live their lives with careless freedom.

Louis Armstrong and his band make their sole appearance in a Fleischer cartoon in *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You* (Fleischer, 1932). Like most of the cartoons in this series,[30] the film opens with a sequence of live footage following the title cards; it features Armstrong and his band performing *before* moving on to the animated story, thereby both giving the audience the opportunity to see the actual musicians and providing Armstrong with valuable publicity (see figure 17). But rather than performing the title song right away, Armstrong and his men play another piece ("Shine") that segues neatly into the background music for the animated sequence.[31] The audience must watch what amounts to half the cartoon before Armstrong begins the title song; it is a clever strategy on the part of the studio to keep viewers' attention on the characters, and a technique that has parallels in the Warner Bros. style of story construction.

The story centers on Betty Boop and her companions, Bimbo and Ko-Ko, as they explore the depths of the African jungle. They inevitably become involved in a chase with some natives, which culminates in the performance of the title song. As Bimbo and Ko-Ko try to give the slip to

their pursuer, a repetitive "ONE-two-three-four" drum beat—a musical stereotype often associated with Native American drumming patterns—starts playing in the background. This short rhythmic cue transitions almost immediately into the title song, for which the drums have set up the tempo. As the beat ostensibly comes from "native" drums and is heard as if being played off-screen, the music establishes, before any lyrics are heard, the supposedly native origin of the song, which then springs full-formed from the primordial rhythm. During the chase, the native pursuing Bimbo and Ko-Ko literally loses his head, which, detached from his body, flies after them in the sky. As the introduction to the song ends and its opening verse begins, the head dissolves into Armstrong's own live-action head in profile, singing the title song (see figure 18). This transformation focuses on another facet of the primitivist caricature, implying that Armstrong is still a denizen of the jungle himself. The skies even darken forebodingly as the native/Armstrong initially runs up behind Ko-Ko and Bimbo, who clearly fear Armstrong, his song, and (implicitly) jazz and the black community that created it.

Apparently the animators believed that placing the story within the jungle and "native-izing" Armstrong did not create an obvious enough connection between the setting and the music. The final minutes of the film are underscored with Armstrong's version of "Chinatown, My Chinatown." While a group of natives dances around a captured Betty, the animators visually transform a drummer (through the same dissolve effect used with Armstrong's head) into Armstrong's own percussionist Tubby Hall (see figure 19). "Chinatown, My Chinatown" is an interesting choice for the final cue, as its reference to an Oriental opium den evokes a different type of exoticism than that portrayed in the cartoon's action. Thus, an American interpretation of African life is mediated through a song about the presence of Far Eastern decadence in the United States.[32]

By placing Betty into a perilous setting in the jungle juxtaposed to Armstrong's savage image, the animators created a very compelling and successful story. This plot was so successful, in fact, that in the three Betty Boop cartoons starring Cab Calloway, Betty likewise finds herself in what the animation historian Paul Wells describes as a "dark, mysterious underworld, characterized by transgressive behaviour and taboo imagery. Even in its crudest forms, representations of black-ness or black-oriented contexts, operate as signifiers of danger and cultural threat."[33] Betty represents the quintessential flapper: a young, newly liberated, and highly sexualized woman. Her entrance into such a den of urban iniquity

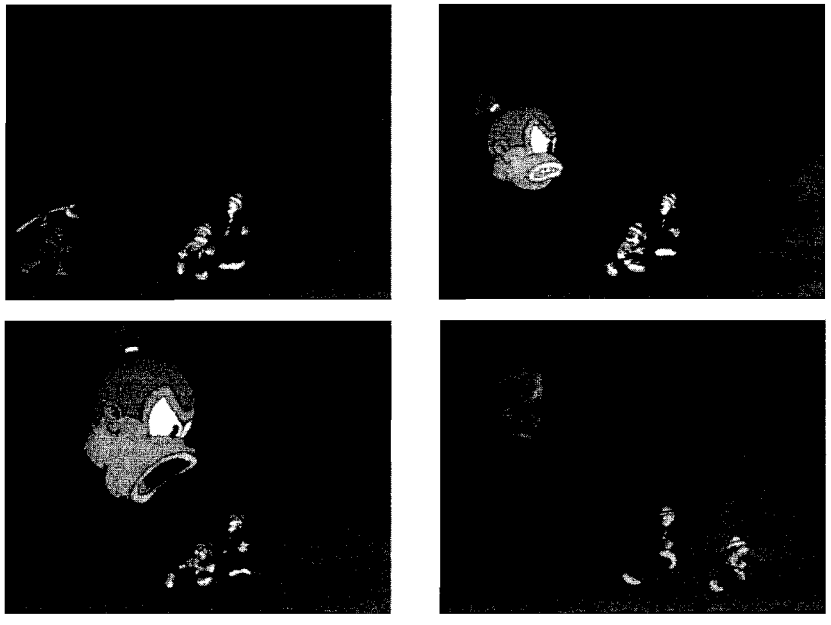

FIGURE 18 A native becomes Armstrong in *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead.*

makes her vulnerable to the visceral temptations of jazz that I have already mentioned. Betty's presence also exposes her to black men, who, stereotypically, want to make off with and possess white women, a characteristic of "bucks," as Donald Bogle defines them in his history of blacks in film: "Bucks are always big, baadddd niggers, oversexed and savage, violent and frenzied as they lust for white flesh."[34] In the jazz cartoons with black musicians, Betty almost always ends up being chased by the animated representatives of jazz—Cab Calloway in *Minnie the Moocher* (Fleischer, 1932) and *The Old Man of the Mountain* (Fleischer, 1933), Don Redman and a bunch of other literal "spooks" in *I Heard* (1933), and natives in *I'll Be Glad,* a trope that perpetuates cultural myths about rapacious black males. To be sure, Betty is pursued by men in many of her cartoons; but the issue of race complicates the chase by making her a forbidden object of desire.

By locating Betty aurally in a jazz world, the cartoons also place her in the ideological world of black music. The dark jungles represent jazz's supposed primeval origins, while the caves that appear in all three Calloway cartoons work as metaphors for the urban source of jazz, Harlem nightclubs.[35] The portrayal of these exotic locales in cartoons provided

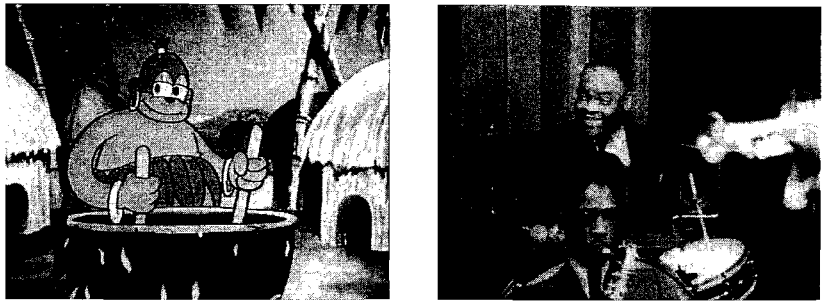

FIGURE 19 A jungle drummer becomes Tubby Hall in *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead.*

white audiences with a safe outing to a strange and unusual world, much like a visit to the Harlem clubs. As Huggins remarks of the clubs, "It was a cheap trip. No safari! Daylight and a taxi ride rediscovered New York City, no tropic jungle. There had been thrill without danger. For these black savages were civilized—not head-hunters or cannibals—they would not run amok."[36] Several other features of these cartoons made them attractive for white viewers. Not only were audiences transported to faraway lands, but the humorous and fantastical sight gags that characterized the Fleischer style also removed the aura of danger from Africa and even made it somewhat laughable, especially because they painted a dehumanizing image of African natives. Such portrayals could naturally be extended to the urban American black, who could become less (or more) fearsome to white audiences through such caricatures. Their experience of the forbidden music of Armstrong or Calloway as a soundtrack to the journey created an additional level of excitement.

This cartoon appeared in theaters just before Armstrong began to be criticized by other jazz musicians and the black population in general. With his wide grin, affable nature, and questionable repertoire, including his ongoing use of the song "When It's Sleepy Time Down South," Armstrong was accused of striking the pose of a "tom"[37]—a stereotypically friendly, nonthreatening male black—in order to please white audiences and ensure his popularity in the entertainment world. The cartoon also came at the very beginning of Armstrong's film career (according to Gabbard, only one feature film, unfortunately lost, predates *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead*).[38] Armstrong's early films show how others portrayed him in what many saw as a less than honorable fashion. The Fleischers were no different, as the cartoon's creators applied to his image as a black performer almost every conceivable stereotype of primi-

tive Africans. Armstrong, of all the jazz personalities featured in Fleischer cartoons, probably received the most extremely stereotyped treatment in his single appearance. The dissolve between Armstrong's live-action head and that of his animated counterpart made the animators' visual statement about the constitution of his "inner" nature absolutely clear.

Even Armstrong's voice lent itself to the stereotype of the savage persona. In vaudeville, as Huggins points out, the dialect associated with minstrelsy characters "was coarse, ignorant, and stood at the opposite pole from the soft tones and grace of what was considered cultivated speech."[39] Of course, Armstrong's raspy and ebullient singing was a signature element of his act, yet in the context of this cartoon, his style of making music suddenly takes on primitive characteristics—especially given his frequent exclamations that often bordered on the unintelligible. Later cartoons that caricatured Armstrong fetishize the same idiosyncratic elements of his performing style; his voice is usually the most obvious, most easily imitated (albeit poorly), and therefore most often satirized aspect of his public image.

Many of these features highlighting Armstrong's "savage" qualities first appeared in *A Rhapsody in Black and Blue* (1932), a one-reel Paramount musical short that was directed by Aubrey Scotto. The film opens in a rundown home where a black man sits listening to his Louis Armstrong records and playing a makeshift drum kit while his wife admonishes him to clean the house. When she knocks him out cold with a mop, the bubbles in the soap bucket, combined with the jazz music in the background, lead to his wild fantasy in which he is the king of Jazzmania. The scene is (apparently) set in a throne room where, dressed in a military outfit, the "king" is entertained by Armstrong and his band, all dressed in leopard skins and similar costumes, while (unseen) bubble machines churn away and fill the foreground (see figure 20). Armstrong sings "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You," followed by "Shine"; then the man awakens from his reverie.

A Rhapsody in Black and Blue clearly had a powerful influence on the Fleischer animators. In *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead,* they used the same songs featured in *Rhapsody* and held on to the idea of primitivism. Though the live-action short never leaves the soundstage, the Fleischers took advantage of the immense freedom of their medium by setting the story in the jungle itself. They even retain some of the camera work from *Rhapsody.* Only two musicians get close-ups in *Rhapsody,* Armstrong and his drummer, Tubby Hall; likewise, both Armstrong and Hall receive

FIGURE 20 Bubbles and animal skins in *A Rhapsody in Black and Blue* (Paramount; Scotto, 1932).

special emphasis in *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead,* as both have their visages transposed with those of jungle natives.

Another take on primitivism and jazz is offered by the Warner Bros. short *The Isle of Pingo-Pongo* (Avery, 1938). Set on a remote island, the cartoon consists mostly of travelogue-type narration and blackout gags, many of which involve Egghead, the character that eventually became Elmer Fudd.[40] About halfway through the cartoon we meet the inhabitants of Pingo-Pongo, almost every one of them tall and black, having excessively large feet and lips and a striking facial resemblance to the island's wild animals. The omnipresent tour guide chimes in: "As we near the village, we hear the primitive beat of jungle tom-toms. We come upon a group of native musicians, beating out the savage rhythm that is as old and primitive as the jungle itself." After the establishing shot of four musicians—four black natives squatting in front of four drums and beating the familiar "ONE-two-three-four" rhythm—the quartet suddenly jumps up and does a western-style performance of "She'll Be Comin' 'Round the Mountain," complete with yodeled responses to each line of the second verse. The unexpected (perhaps absurd) use of an American popular tune creates the humor here, especially since "She'll Be Comin'" is *not* as "old and primitive as the jungle itself." We have clearly been set up to expect something in a far less familiar vein. The black natives singing in a western harmony style adds a further sense of irony to the gag.

The narrator's line about the "primitive savage rhythm" leads the audience to connect jazz and the jungle, a connection driven home in a later scene that portrays a "native celebration." Several male-female couples dance a short minuet, perfectly synchronized and with arms upraised, to imply refined, proper style. This presents yet another of Avery's comic juxtapositions of contemporary cultural conventions with the mores of the jungle dweller. Suddenly a short, squat native (clearly meant to be

FIGURE 21 *The Isle of Pingo-Pongo* (Warner Bros.; Avery, 1938).

Fats Waller, as can be inferred both from his size and from his singing style) announces the next song, a rendition of "Sweet Georgia Brown" with Waller and four natives (in black tie) representing the Mills Brothers singing around a period radio microphone (see figure 21). The dancers respond, predictably, with movements that are much less refined and more stylized.[41] The startling performance by Waller and the Mills Brothers is the showstopping musical cue of the short: the brothers perform all their characteristic tricks of imitating instruments with their hands, while Waller scats his way through a chorus of the song. The number ends with a final chorus played by a native orchestra on modern jazz instruments. The cartoon's penultimate cue further confuses the musical construction of the story: when the narrator tells us it is time to bid farewell to Pingo-Pongo, the melody of "Aloha Oe," typically associated with Pacific islands (particularly Hawaii) slows down the momentum from the previous song. This conflation of white-constructed primitive attributes indicates that another stereotype is at work here: *all* peoples categorized as "primitive" look and act the same.[42]

In both films examined here, the music of African Americans, portrayed as "contemporary savages," quickly changes from stereotypical jungle melodies (beating drums) to a much more modern and swinging sound, though one still understood to be primitive in origin. The Fleischer and Warner Bros. cartoons were not alone in fostering images of the emergence of jazz from the savage hinterland; all the major studios reproduced and circulated this prevalent stereotype of jazz's origins.[43] Juxtaposing African American jazz musicians and a primitivist performance of uncivilized music, urban Americans and uneducated savages, creates a fictive identification that serves only to stereotype. Given such manipulation, we have to ask ourselves whether we are hearing the music and the social history embedded within it, or simply what we want to hear. All the studios helped perpetuate such myths; for some, jazz represented a total lack of civilization, while others moved the jazz sound into rural and urban settings as well.

JAZZ AND POPULAR SONG: THE WARNER BROS. CARTOONS

The Warner Bros. approach to jazz was very different from that of the Fleischers. While the Warner directors and animators did *not* have direct access to famous performers, they had the next best thing—their songs. The Warner cartoons could use contemporary jazz or big band hits, taken from the studio's extensive holdings of popular sheet music, and then—relying on celebrity impersonators to imitate the voices of famous singers—have them apparently performed on screen by the biggest names in the business. This was the method used in *The Isle of Pingo-Pongo*.[44]

Warner Bros. already had a strong identification with the musical film: the studio produced *The Jazz Singer* (1927) and a line of musicals that included *Gold Diggers of 1933*, *Gold Diggers of 1935*, and *42nd Street* (1933). Most of the early cartoons produced by Warner Bros. had a narrative framework similar to that of the musicals; in particular, the story line tended to shift into song every so often before returning to "reality." But in cartoons, of course, the notion of reality is far more flexible and is not disrupted by the introduction of music; that characters should burst into song is just as logical and rational as anything else that happens in an animated environment. The film historian Hank Sartin does point out one important distinction between live-action and animated musicals: *all* characters in a cartoon can take part in any musical number. "Everyone in the cartoon is a potential performer," he observes, "and singing and dancing are an integrated part of normal experience."[45] Because such a close relationship existed between the score and the story, the actual music, not just its cultural implications, helped create meaning in the cartoons.

Clean Pastures (Freleng, 1937) is a morality tale that takes us back to the heyday of the Harlem clubs, offering us an example of how (cartoon) musicals shift between the main story and a musical interlude or number. The short derives from a very successful all-black Warner Bros. musical film, *The Green Pastures* (1936), itself an adaptation of one of the most popular plays of the early twentieth century (written by Marc Con-

nelly, it premiered in 1930).[46] The main title begins in an unusual manner, which immediately establishes the cartoon's theme of redemption. An all-male (and clearly understood to be all-black) chorus sings the a cappella phrase "Save me, sister, from temptation" over the opening credits—a song taken from yet another Warner Bros. musical film, Al Jolson's *The Singing Kid,* released only a year before *Clean Pastures.* Its brief appearance foreshadows the cartoon's religious theme.

The plot is simple: heaven ("Pair-O-Dice") has a shortage of residents, in contrast to hell ("Hades, Inc."), where the wanton inhabitants of Harlem head after a lifetime of dancing, drinking, and carrying on (all to the tune "Nagasaki"). The angel in charge sends his assistant, an angel who is a caricature of Stepin Fechit, down to Harlem to lure the Hades-bound to Pair-O-Dice, but to no avail (see figure 22). During Fechit's entreaties to the Harlemites, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson walks by and soft-shoes "Old Folks at Home"; he is followed by Al Jolson in blackface, who sings a chorus of "I Love to Singa," further confusing the hapless spirit. Several other musicians in Pair-O-Dice (Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Cab Calloway) persuade the head angel that "rhythm" will make the place more attractive (see figure 23). They descend to Earth and launch into a swinging version of "Swing for Sale."

(chorus)

[Cab Calloway and his orchestra]

If your rhythm's been too dreamy [echo] and you like your trumpets screamy, [echo]
That's when you should call to see me, ['cuz] I've got SWING FOR SALE.
If you think a waltz is horrid, and you like your rhythm torrid,
'Till it makes you mop your forehead, I've got SWING FOR SALE.

[Mills Brothers]

Rhythm is what this country needs, for years and years, I've said it.
When you buy from me, it's C.O.D., I sell swing but not for credit.

[second phrase of chorus repeated by Armstrong, including a trumpet solo]

[Cab Calloway]

There's no tellin' what can happen, I can start your toes a tappin'.
I can set your fingers snappin', I've got SWING FOR SALE.[47]

The song works perfectly as an enticement to come to Pair-O-Dice. Armstrong's impassioned solo (during which his eyes bug out and his face

FIGURE 22 Stepin Fechit in *Clean Pastures* (Warner Bros.; Freleng, 1937). The sign reads "Pair-O-Dice Needs You! Opportunity. Travel, Good Food, Water Melon, Clean Living, Music, Talkies."

FIGURE 23 Jazz greats appeal to the head angel in *Clean Pastures.*

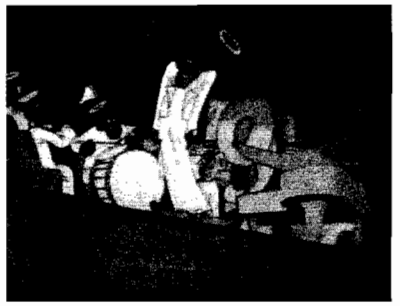

FIGURE 24 Cab Calloway and his band and Louis Armstrong in *Clean Pastures.*

turns purple), together with the vocal hand and mouth effects employed by the Mills Brothers (see figure 24), convinces the Harlem pleasure seekers to sing and dance their way to the promised land.

Clean Pastures' climax (like that of its theatrical predecessors) evokes the spirit of a revivalist camp meeting, complete with the promises of

salvation available to anyone who repents of his or her sinful ways.[48] In its proposed route to salvation, *Clean Pastures* uses rhythm as a metaphor for religious faith, showing again how strongly the white population identified jazz with aspects of black culture, including religion and the unfettered expressions of emotion associated with it. Rather than offer an alternative to the swinging Harlem music, the heavenly musicians appropriate the very hottest sounds for their own purpose: to lure people to Pair-O-Dice. The joy seekers embrace a lively version of James Bland's minstrel tune "Oh! Dem Golden Slippers" on their way skyward. As hot music is combined with a traditional spiritual, both the music-loving Harlemites and the angels in heaven get what they want. Furthermore, placing the creators of "good" hot jazz in heaven suggests that certain types of black music are better than others: "hot" music made in such places as Harlem would lead to debauchery and eventually to Hades, Inc.[49] Only through the noble efforts of famous black musicians could souls be turned to a better direction. Armstrong and Calloway must have been deemed safe enough—or at least sufficiently nonthreatening to whites—to represent angels. Their success as crossover musicians, popular among both white and black consumers, no doubt helped establish them as harmless (as it would have for the other artists we have already come across, like the Mills Brothers).

Like the Hollywood musicals of the 1930s on which so many of the Warner Bros. cartoons were based, *Clean Pastures* moves from the real world (the urban city) to a surreal realm. In this case, the all-star band, singing promises of a swing-filled eternity, eventually leads the righteous away from Harlem and into heaven, beyond any bounds of earthly reality. Since neither we nor the righteous Harlemites get to see what glories await in heaven, the music *must* paint a compelling picture of the blissful times to be had. In fact, the unseen pleasures are so attractive that Satan himself comes to call at the cartoon's close (see figure 25). Using the popular images of Armstrong, Calloway, and the like enabled the writers to entice the Harlemites upward and to present an alternative to the hedonistic nightclub scene. According to Donald Bogle, paradise in *The Green Pastures* is "a perpetual Negro holiday, one everlasting weekend fish fry. Harmony and good spirits reign supreme."[50] The Warner Bros. animators use the same model for their utopia: heavenly Harlem shops and singing choirs make up their vision of paradise, without any acknowledgment of the stereotype implied in such an image.

While this imagined paradise worked for the studio, it apparently did not please the censors. In his book on censored animation, Karl Cohen

FIGURE 25 Satan comes calling in *Clean Pastures*.

cites an article from 1939 in which the Warner Bros. cartoon producer Leon Schlesinger claimed that "the phrase 'De Lawd' was cut out of the cartoon and that the censors wanted to eliminate the halo over the head of a Negro angel."[51] Michael Barrier provides more information, describing *Clean Pastures* as "one of the few cartoons to run afoul of the Production Code. The Code required rejection of any film that was a burlesque of religion, and the Code's administrator, Joseph I. Breen, condemned *Clean Pastures* as exactly that. In a letter to Leon Schlesinger, Breen cited the portions of the film set in an ersatz Heaven called Pair-O-Dice, and said, 'I am certain that such scenes would give serious offense to many people in all parts of the world.'"[52] Unfortunately, Breen's letter does not specify what in the scenes he perceived to be sacrilegious. Possibly the offense lay in their depiction of blacks not only as denizens of heaven but also as the angels who ran the place. Angels are stereotypically pure, saintly, and, most important, white—in their vestments as well as their race. The censors apparently did not like the idea of a heaven filled with people who were, according to the cartoon, gamblers, dancers, drinkers, and, above all else, jazz fans. *Clean Pastures* also resembled *The Green Pastures* in its manifest image of a black heaven; this image may have elicited some of the critiques of the cartoon. The notion of black men, women, and children—or, as Bogle calls them, "angels with dirty faces"[53]—living their (after)lives in the same heaven as white folk, portrayed in the feature film through its southern recharacterization of Bible stories, possibly appeared in *Clean Pastures* even more threatening to white viewers.

Musically, the story features several Warner Bros.–owned songs, including "Sweet Georgia Brown," "I Love to Singa," and the extended version of "Swing for Sale." The score here supplies both the foundation for the

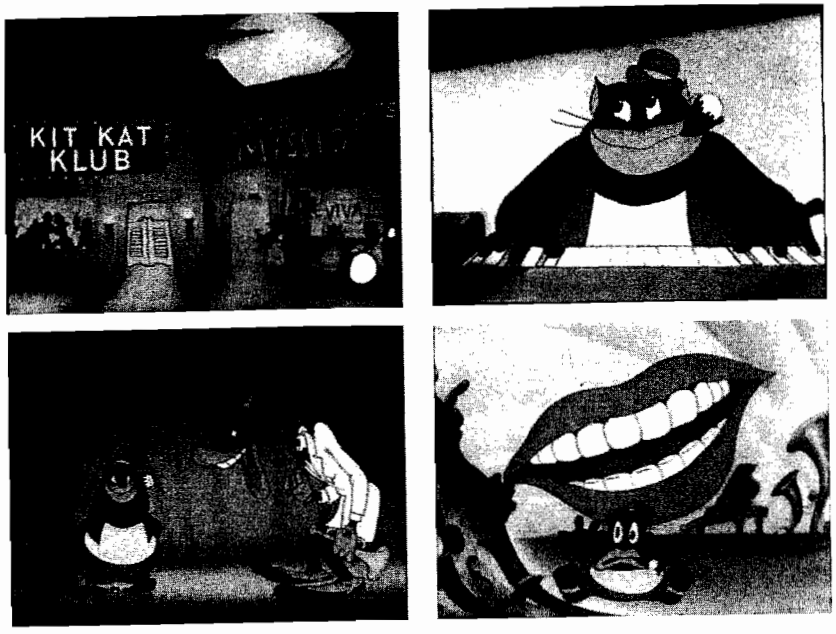

FIGURE 26 *Tin Pan Alley Cats* (Warner Bros.; Clampett, 1943).

story and the driving force behind the animation. Even in sequences in which no performers are visible, the animation still moves precisely with the music; for example, the righteous bound for Pair-O-Dice two-step their way up toward heaven in time to "Oh! Dem Golden Slippers," led by Calloway and Waller.

Clean Pastures inspired the Warner Bros. cartoon *Tin Pan Alley Cats* (Clampett, 1943), which also conveys a highly moralistic message in suggesting that jazz is the music of disorder and decadence.[54] In this cartoon, a cat (Fats Waller caricatured once again) must choose between the musically square cats in the Salvation Army, playing "Gimme That Old Time Religion" outside a seamy nightclub, or the hot tunes produced inside. Having chosen the latter (in his words, "Well, wot's de mutta wit dat?"), Fats shows off his musical skill on the piano by blazing through the opening chords to "Nagasaki," which are taken up immediately by the whole nightclub. Finally, a scatting trumpet player literally blows Fats out of this world, landing him in a bizarre netherworld filled with fantastic creatures (see figure 26).[55] Transported into a universe seemingly created from the excesses of jazz, Fats cannot make any sense of it: voices speak to him from nowhere, and its creatures—including a

two-headed dog/cat mutant chasing itself—shock him. Rejecting this wacky land, Fats returns to the world he knows; he immediately runs from the club to join the righteous in their song of salvation, apparently converted to their way of thinking. Their rendition of "Old Time Religion" has no swing or joy to it whatsoever; the exaggeratedly dry performance strengthens its function as a protective mechanism against the chaotic impulses of jazz. The message of *Tin Pan Alley Cats* seems to follow the more typical line of reasoning that too much jazz will make you lose your grip on reality (as happened to Fats). Its message makes the reversal in *Clean Pastures,* in which jazz can be the means not just to damnation but also to salvation, even more surprising.[56] Of course, we can't overlook that Fats gorges himself completely on wine, women, and song before being brought back to the straight and narrow. Though the story ends with the more conservative choice, most of the film focuses on Fats's indulgences, in essence endorsing the high life over a righteous one—and leaving the audience once more with a very mixed message.

THE 1940S: RACE, RHYTHM, AND SWING

As we have seen, cartoons of the 1930s often featured musical numbers that fit into a larger story. As the public's fascination with swing music continued to grow into the 1940s, swing culture became a pervasive part of all forms of entertainment, including cartoons. Rather than spotlighting one or even two short musical numbers, these cartoons exuded swing from beginning to end: the performance never stopped. Practically every cartoon studio in Hollywood used music of the big bands and the boogie-woogie revival in their shorts—musically, visually, or both. MGM produced several jive-influenced shorts, such as *Swing Social* (Hanna and Barbera, 1940), *Red Hot Riding Hood* (Avery, 1943), and *Zoot Cat* (Hanna and Barbera, 1944). After Paramount took over the Fleischer studio in 1942 (removing the brothers and reorganizing the studio as Famous), Popeye continued occasionally to encounter jazz and swing performers, though not celebrities such as those who had habitually appeared in the cartoons of his predecessor, Betty Boop. But Warner Bros. and Walter Lantz deserve special attention: Warner for continuing to produce animated takes on the black music scene, and Lantz for dedicating an entire series to swing music.

No cartoon at Warner Bros. combined swing and animation more effectively, or with more pervasive racist imagery, than *Coal Black and*

de Sebben Dwarfs (1943). The story is a modern, urban retelling of the Snow White story, with frequent references to Disney's 1937 feature version of the tale. The animation is some of the most vibrant produced by the studio at this time, and the story moves along succinctly from gag to gag.[57] Its director, Bob Clampett, felt so strongly about the need to create "authentic" images and music for this cartoon that he took his animators to a black club on Central Avenue in downtown Los Angeles, the Club Alabam, to observe the nightlife. He even attempted (unsuccessfully) to hire only black musicians to record the score.[58] He did have luck with the voice talent, however: Vivian Dandridge of the Dandridge Sisters trio played So White, her mother Ruby played the narrator, and Leo "Zoot" Watson, a drummer who worked with Louis Armstrong, took the part of Prince Chawmin', as his name was spelled in flashing lights on his car door.[59] The furor surrounding *Coal Black,* mainly due to its extreme and (therefore) offensive stereotyping of blacks, has all but eclipsed the film itself. Practically every gag, visual or aural, alludes to a stereotypical image of African Americans. One such joke gave the zoot-suited prince teeth entirely of gold except for the front two, which are dice.

Carl Stalling provided a score that mainly highlighted two songs, "Old King Cole" and "The Five O'Clock Whistle," both of which were current pop tunes (naturally, owned by Warner Bros.).[60] Other songs in the cartoon include "Nagasaki," "Blues in the Night," and a short cue of "Dixie." But the final score is hardly a typical arrangement for the Warner Bros. orchestra: instead, an ongoing groove pervades the entire cartoon. Usually cartoons rely on the delivery of a strictly verbal punch line to break any silences in the background score. In *Coal Black,* the dialogue keeps the momentum progressing smoothly as the actors speak their parts with a keen, rhythmic sense of swing, which seconds later is absorbed back into the score. Such a break in the music occurs when So White, kidnapped by Murder, Inc., is set down in the forest, presumably having won her release by putting out for her abductors (so the lipstick that covers their faces suggests). As the men place her body on the road, a quick bit of scatlike patter keeps the sense of the beat for about ten seconds as the underscoring music cuts out altogether.

All the characters in the cartoon talk in a rhythm that accentuates their jive-speak, but not everyone gets to perform musically. So White does sing a few notes when she mentions that she gets "the blues in the night"; she also sings a chorus of "The Five O'Clock Whistle" as she cooks up breakfast for her soldier boys, the dwarfs:

> Oh the five o'clock bugle, it just blew
> I'm fryin' eggs and pork chops too
> Didn't join up 'cause I'se good lookin'
> But to answer the boys when they say 'What's cookin', honey? What's cookin'?'"

The dwarfs also join in with So White, as they all sing a brief chorus of "In the Army Now" (earlier in the film).

However, the performance in the film that is most important, and most closely tied to the imagery Clampett created, is given in the final scene. Having eaten the poison apple given to her by the Mean Old Queen, So White is, as the dwarfs say, "out of this world! She's stiff as wood! She's got it bad and that ain't good!" Only Prince Chawmin' and his "dynamite kiss!" can awaken her—yet he cannot. As the prince tries and fails numerous times to wake the girl, a few notes on a solo trumpet underscore each impotent peck; they progressively weaken and wobble as they slowly ascend the scale. After the prince gives up, the smallest dwarf (apparently meant to resemble Disney's Dopey) plants a kiss on So White that sends her pigtails straight into the air with little American flags on them, while the trumpet in the background doubles the joke by reaching a piercingly high note. The jazz trumpet, typically a signifier of masculinity for the black men who play it, can also serve as a sign of phallic powerlessness: musical incapacity is equated with psychological castration.[61] In this case, the prince has already been set up as less than a real man—when So White was kidnapped by Murder, Inc., the prince displayed a cowardly yellow streak that grew straight up his back. His inability to wake up So White from her sleep simply confirms his less-than-manly qualities. Only a real man (in this case, a man in uniform) has what it takes to rouse her, and thus the music reflects his rhetorical and physical power.

On a par with, if not exceeding, the insulting racial imagery of *Coal Black* is the 1941 Lantz cartoon *Scrub Me Mama with a Boogie Beat,* directed by Lantz himself and part of the Swing Symphonies series. Drawing on an entirely different set of black stereotypes, this short dwells on images of indolent blacks in Lazytown, lounging around a river landing on a hot summer day. Everybody moves slowly: two men fighting slap each other upside the head in slow motion, a listless man on the dock reacts slowly and deliberately to being stung on the nose repeatedly by a wasp, and a woman washing clothes almost stops moving altogether. A remarkably lethargic version of "Old Folks at Home (Swanee River)" underscores the sequence. As a riverboat pulls up to the dock, it releases

jazz's invigorating spirit and rhythm into the town. A full band of musicians, led by a mulatto (in Bogle's rubric) female singer, injects the spirit of jazz into the locals. The singer tells the woman washing clothes that she just needs rhythm, and the woman replies, "What do you all mean 'rhythm'?" As in *Clean Pastures,* a jazz tune, in this case the title song, saves the people in the cartoon; the happy result here is not heavenly salvation but an awakening from physical stupor. The imagery becomes, if possible, even more offensive, as greater numbers of stereotypical characters (a man eating watermelon, pickaninnies, an Uncle Tom figure) appear to take part in the jamming.

During several quick shots of the musicians playing together, an unusual combination of images is presented. All four men shown are black, and three (the bass, trumpet, and piano players) exhibit the big-lipped, chimpanzee-faced design that typifies these cartoons. The clarinet player, in contrast, appears almost to have stepped out of a Harlem club, with very realistic and human-seeming face and body, as if he alone had been drawn by someone more sympathetic to the portrayal of blacks. Though this clarinetist never assumes a substantial personality in the story, his brief appearance reminds us how sharply such renderings can differ from cartoon to cartoon, and even within the same scene.

Scrub Me Mama was just one of the shorts that Lantz produced in the early 1940s in the Swing Symphonies series; not surprisingly, they emphasize swing music and swing culture, though many do not focus on music per se. More often, the stories present life as somehow unfulfilling and lacking sparkle until everybody gets rhythm—frequently bestowed on them by the boogie-woogie man, as in *Boogie Woogie Man* (Culhane, 1943), *Greatest Man in Siam* (Culhane, 1944), *Boogie Woogie Sioux* (Lovy, 1942) and *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company "B"* (Lantz, 1941). Not all the Swing Symphonies feature African American characters, however. *Pied Piper of Basin Street* (Culhane, 1945), *The Hams That Couldn't Be Cured* (Lantz, 1942), *The Sliphorn King of Polaroo* (Lundy, 1945), and several other cartoons feature musical numbers based on boogie-woogie without resorting to racist visual imagery, although other racial elements are pervasive. Jazz is brought in through standard cartoon plot devices: the pied piper's hot tunes attract rats, the three (hip) little pigs ham it up in a music teacher's shop, and so on.

Like those of the Fleischers a decade earlier, Lantz's cartoons benefited from a hometown connection. Darrell Calker, who scored Lantz's cartoons in the late 1930s and much of the 1940s, was a jazz pianist known in local clubs around Los Angeles. Lantz could thus get

inspiration from local jazz and, through Calker's connections, feature in his cartoons known jazz stars—Jack Teagarden (*Pied Piper of Basin Street* and *Sliphorn King of Polaroo*), Bob Zurke (*Jungle Jive;* Culhane, 1944), and several others. But unlike the Fleischers', Lantz's cartoons did not serve as promotional shorts. The featured musicians received minor billing in the credits and were given no time on screen, live-action or animated. Only their performances make these often offensive cartoons memorable.

WHITE JAZZ

Jazz in cartoons did not belong solely to black characters. In fact, white characters appear quite frequently playing jazz; the animated sequence in *King of Jazz* demonstrates how far back these portrayals can be found. The best known, perhaps even beloved, example occurs in the Warner Bros. short *I Love to Singa* (Avery, 1936), a truncated and animated version of *The Jazz Singer* (1927) that features the opening (and closing) song from 1936's *The Singing Kid* (both Warner Bros. films starring Al Jolson). *I Love to Singa* presents the now-familiar theme of the old world clashing with the new. Professor Owl teaches strictly classical music (the sign on his housefront vehemently states "NO JAZZ"), but his youngest son, Owl Jolson, is born to be a crooner. (He literally pops out of his shell dressed in a red blazer, singing the title song.) Papa throws sonny out, but eventually the family accepts him for who he is—after he finds success singing on Jack Bunny's radio show.[62] Like that of his big-screen predecessor, the singing of Owl Jolson is relatively tame. The conflict in the cartoon between traditional and popular styles recalls that of the original film, in which the young Jakie Rabinowitz (Al Jolson) had to make a far more emotional choice between the religious faith pressed on him by his ailing father and popular fame. The similarity of the cartoon's music to that in *King of Jazz* is quite striking, as both (animated) white performers stay a safe distance from anything resembling truly hot jazz, opting instead for the safer ground of swing-infused pop songs.[63] In Whiteman's film, the songs were simply drawn from his band's typical playlist. Likewise, the director of *I Love to Singa,* Tex Avery, used the music sung by the real Jolson.

The image of hot jazz musicians, established (as we have seen) through generations of stereotyping, persisted into the late 1950s.[64] With the bebop revolution fully ingrained in the music world, and free and modal jazz just around the corner, a more modern and sanitized image of what

hot jazz sounded like began to surface. The 1957 Warner Bros. cartoon *Three Little Bops*, yet another short reinterpreting the story of the three little pigs, features the trumpet work of the West Coast jazz luminary Shorty Rogers and ultra-hep narration by Stan Freberg, a star of comedy recording.[65] Suddenly there seems to be nothing anomalous about three white (or pink) characters playing jazz (see figure 27). On the contrary, the pigs set up grooves that swing everywhere they go, frustrated only by the unmelodic sounds of the Big Bad Wolf, whose unhip playing rubs the pigs and their audience the wrong way. We can see that by the time *Three Little Bops* appeared, what was once an old stereotype (only black musicians can play good jazz) had been shattered, supplanted by a new stereotype created by the musicians themselves: only tonal and melodic jazz is worthwhile.

The music the wolf plays sounds vaguely like an early form of free jazz, a style fomented in the Los Angeles jazz scene, particularly at the hands of the saxophone player Ornette Coleman. It does not gain acceptance until after the wolf has blown himself up and wound up in hell, where he can play truly hot (that is, tonal and melodic) jazz, as the pigs state the cartoon's moral,

> The big bad wolf
> He learned the rule
> Ya gotta get real hot
> To play real cool.

The wolf twice sits in with the pigs (and sneaks in a third time), only to be ostracized and kicked out of the club when his trumpet licks have nothing to do with what the pigs are playing. He is further humiliated when he tries to enter the pigs' club (the House of Bricks, "built in 1776") disguised as a 1920s hipster, complete with fur coat and playing "The Charleston" on a ukulele. His sound finally gets ultra-cool down in hell, where his trumpet suddenly takes on a muted timbre with smooth articulations. Whiteman and Jolson pleased their audience by confining themselves to playing what was, in their time, the most widely accepted (and also conventional) type of pop or jazz, shying away from the hot jazz preferred by innovative black groups. Twenty-five years later we find the definition of "conventional" shifting. The West Coast or bop style became the new norm, exemplified by the three *white* pigs. As a result, the innovative free jazz sound became the music that is too hot to touch. We cannot discount the possibility that Rogers, a known figure in the L.A. music world, might have used *Three Little Bops* to make a statement

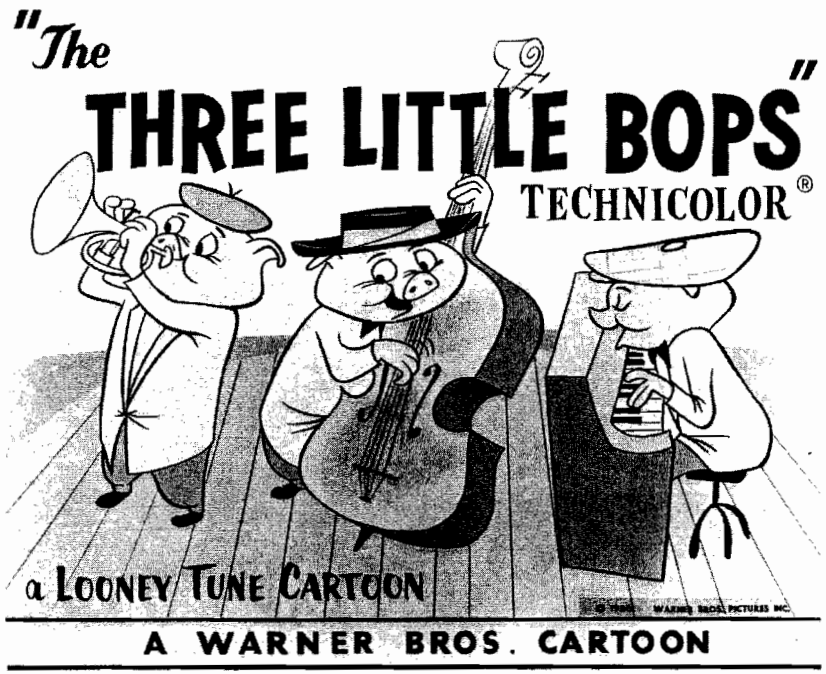

FIGURE 27 *Three Little Bops* (Warner Bros.; Freleng, 1956). © Warner Bros., Inc.

against Coleman's experimental style of music, with which he was undoubtedly familiar.[66]

OTHER VOICES: JAZZ IN THE CARTOON SCORE

Jazz made an indelible mark on both the creation and scoring of cartoons, which portrayed jazz performances and appropriated jazz styles. The music of race, of course, had long been woven into mainstream popular culture. Well into the 1950s, Stephen Foster's tunes and other familiar minstrelsy songs mentioned above continued their work of musically evoking a mythologized Old South. Much of the legacy of blackface is maintained—whites are still watching from the audience and blacks are still onstage performing—except now cartoons have replaced minstrelsy, and somehow Mickey, Oswald, and Bosko are not seen as caricatures of blacks. The black characters in the cartoons were associated with songs, whether nineteenth-century folk or modern pop, that helped reinforce their supposedly intrinsically primitive nature and simultaneously reaffirm whites' assumption that black culture is generally unso-