

Making America's Music: Jazz History and the Jazz Preservation Act

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate some significant examples of the process by which jazz has been shaped by the music industry and government and their ideas of the place of jazz within American culture and society. The examples demonstrate that the history and traditions of jazz are not fixed entities, but rather constructions used to understand and utilise issues of race, national identity, cultural value, and musical authenticity and innovation. Engagement with such issues has been central to identifying jazz as America's music, as it earned this status from its worldwide popularity and its identity as an innovative black American art form. Recognition for jazz as American music, in conjunction with its improvisational nature, consequently led to the identification of jazz as 'democratic' music through its role in racial integration in America and in its representation of American democracy in government propaganda programmes.

The different histories of jazz and its status as democratic, American music have all been especially important to the development of House Concurrent Resolution 57 in 1987, referred to as the Jazz Preservation Act (JPA). Authored by Congressman John Conyers, Jr. of Michigan, the JPA defined jazz as a 'national treasure' that deserved public support and inclusion in the education system. Few in the industry have criticised the recognition and public subsidy of jazz, but many have found fault with the JPA's definitions of jazz and its history that have dictated this support. While the JPA has essentially continued the practice of shaping jazz through ideas of its place within American culture and society, it has provided immense resources to promote a fixed history and canon for jazz. Specifically, the JPA has promoted jazz as *the* American music, taking a particular stance on the histories of race and discrimination in the industry and the definitions of authentic jazz that had been sources of disagreement, competition, and creativity since the release of the first jazz record in 1917.

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Chapter 1

Making America's Music

In 1924 band leader Paul Whiteman had twenty-four orchestras that were touring the United States and abroad under his name, each playing a style of music that the press referred to with names such as symphonic jazz, classical jazz, or symphonic syncopation.¹ As the names implied, Whiteman's music mixed the cultural stature and musical refinement of the symphony orchestra with the 'hot' dance music of jazz that had become a popular genre seven years before. In the process, Whiteman distanced his orchestras, musically and socially, from the black creators of the music upon which he had based his career. Paul Whiteman, along with many supporters in the press, saw classical jazz as a truly new, American, artistic form of music and suggested that the music played by the pioneering black musicians from New Orleans 'was so outrageous that most musicians were nauseated at the very thought.'² It was only a year later that Whiteman, one of the most popular musicians in America, started advertising himself as the 'King of Jazz.'³

Paul Whiteman's immense critical and popular success in the 1920s and 1930s has been viewed in many recent histories as a sort of coup against the creators of the authentic

¹Susie Sexton, 'Paul Whiteman Made Jazz Contagious' *American Magazine* (June 1924) in *Jazz in Print (1856-1929)*, ed. Karl Koenig, (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2002), 320; Rudy Vallée, *Vagabond Dreams Come True* (New York: EP Dutton, 1930), 16-17.

²Paul Whiteman, 'What is Jazz Doing to American Music?' *Étude* (August 1924) in *Jazz in Print*, 340-341; Clarice Lorentz, 'Jazz—the Newest Musical Phenomenon' *Melody* (July 1924) in *Jazz in Print*, 327.

³Lee B Brown, 'Jazz: America's Classical Music?', *Philosophy and Literature* 26 (2002), 160-161.

jazz of the period, such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington.⁴ Yet, Whiteman's accomplishments in both creating unique music and advertising it as the most progressive form of jazz have been definitive throughout its development in the twentieth century. Many in the music industry and also the American government have associated jazz with a wide range of concepts in an attempt either to reject or to promote certain styles, musicians, or traditions in order to identify an authentic, 'real' jazz.⁵ This has meant that people involved in radio, live performance, recording, music publishing, labour unions, promotion, managing, music journalism, scholarship, and book publishing, have all helped create the culture and music of jazz.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate some significant examples of the process by which jazz has been shaped by the music industry and government and their ideas of the place of jazz within American culture and society. The examples demonstrate that the history and traditions of jazz are not fixed entities, but rather constructions used to understand and utilise issues of race, national identity, cultural value, and musical authenticity and innovation. Engagement with such issues has been central to identifying jazz as America's music, as it earned this status from its worldwide popularity and its identity as an innovative black American art form.⁶ Recognition for jazz as American music, in conjunction with its improvisational nature, consequently led to the identification of jazz as 'democratic' music through its role in racial integration in America and in its representation of American democracy in government propaganda programmes.⁷

The different histories of jazz and its status as democratic, American music have

⁴Geoffrey C Ward, *Jazz: a history of America's music* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2000), 99-101; Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz: its roots and musical development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 192; Richard Hadlock, *Jazz Masters of the Twenties* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1965), 96-97.

⁵Rudi Blesh, *Shining Trumpets: a history of jazz* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1946); Sidney Bechet et al., *Treat It Gentle* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2002); Frank Kofsky, 'The Jazz Tradition: Black Music and Its White Critics', *Journal of Black Studies* 1.4 (1971).

⁶Alan Howard Levy, 'The Search for Identity in American Music, 1890-1920', *American Music* 2.2 (1984); Paul Fritz Laubenstein, 'Jazz: debit and credit', *Musical Quarterly* 15.4 (1929); Grover Sales, *Jazz: America's Classical Music* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1984); Penny M Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: jazz ambassadors play the Cold War* (London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

⁷'Goodman Adds Noted Negro Pianist', *Down Beat* 6.8 (August 1939); Robert Goffin, *Jazz: from the Congo to the Metropolitan* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1944), 240-241; Peter Watrous, 'Into a Democracy of Jazz', *New York Times* (January 13, 1996).

all been especially important to the development of House Concurrent Resolution 57 in 1987, referred to as the Jazz Preservation Act (JPA).⁸ Authored by Congressman John Conyers, Jr. of Michigan, the JPA defined jazz as a ‘national treasure’ that deserved public support and inclusion in the education system. While receiving little criticism in the industry for the recognition and public subsidy of jazz, many have found fault with the JPA’s definitions of jazz and its history that have dictated this support. While the JPA has essentially continued the practice of shaping jazz through ideas of its place within American culture and society, it has provided immense resources to promote a fixed history and canon for jazz. Specifically, the JPA has promoted jazz as *the* American music, taking a particular stance on the histories of race and discrimination in the industry and the definitions of authentic jazz that had been sources of disagreement, competition, and creativity since the release of the first jazz record in 1917.

During the twenty years since passage of the Jazz Preservation Act, its singular vision has come to dominate ideas about the performance, teaching, definition, criticism, and business of jazz. The JPA has led to the establishment of permanent institutions at the Lincoln Centre in New York and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C., which receive millions of dollars of funding each year.⁹ It has fostered several major educational programmes for secondary schools that currently teach the social and musical history of jazz to over four million children.¹⁰ It has also provided material, financial support, and an artistic agenda for the longest and most significant documentary about jazz, Ken Burns’s 2001 film entitled *Jazz*, which spanned nineteen hours over ten episodes and was

⁸Conyers Jr, John, ‘House Concurrent Resolution 57, 1987: Jazz Preservation Act’ (URL: <http://www.jazzforum.blogspot.com/>) – visited on May 1, 2008.

⁹Robin Pogrebin, ‘New Home For Jazz Gets Mixed Reviews’, *New York Times* (January 24, 2006); Richard Harrington, ‘Smithsonian Jazzmen—Federally Funded Orchestra to Debut’, *Washington Post* (April 25, 1991).

¹⁰Nate Chinen, ‘Jazz is Alive and Well. In the Classroom, Anyway.’, *New York Times* (January 7, 2007), 1; Smithsonian Jazz, ‘Smithsonian Jazz’ (URL: <http://www.smithsonianjazz.org/>) – visited on March 3, 2008; Public Broadcasting Service, ‘Jazz: a Film by Ken Burns’ (URL: <http://www.pbs.org/jazz/>) – visited on March 3, 2008; Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, ‘Jazz in America’ (URL: <http://www.jazzinamerica.org/home.asp>) – visited on March 3, 2008; Jazz at Lincoln Centre, ‘NEA Jazz in the Schools’ (URL: <http://www.neajazzintheschools.org/home.php>) – visited on March 3, 2008.

watched by at least eleven million Americans.¹¹ In fact, *Jazz* has been the most powerful example of the JPA's impact on defining and preserving jazz. For the twenty years before its release, jazz enjoyed only two or three percent of total record sales in America, but after *Jazz* appeared on television sales doubled.¹² The projects under the JPA are also at least partially responsible for interest in many of the products in the jazz industry, which has seen a boost in instructional books and documentaries. There has also been in recent years an expansion of reprints of jazz history books and autobiographies, as well as an exponential increase in the amount of old television and concert footage released on video.¹³

In discussing significant examples of the process by which jazz has been shaped by the music industry and government before and after the JPA, this thesis will illuminate some of the methodologies, motivations, and pressures as they have changed over the past ninety years. While much of the work that has been subsidised as a result of the JPA has drawn criticism for the content and extent of its impact on jazz, current scholarship has given little attention to the JPA itself. This thesis also hopes to collect some of the criticism for individual projects such as Ken Burns' *Jazz* and the institutions at the Lincoln Centre and Smithsonian Institute and focus them into a more coherent critique of the way the 'preservation' of jazz, through subsidies and inclusion into the (mainly secondary) education system, has transformed the process by which jazz continues to be defined. Many have defined jazz and jazz history as 'dead' in reference to excluding most of the jazz produced after the 1960s.¹⁴ However, this thesis argues that it is not history that has suffered, but rather the process of shaping and evaluating that history.

¹¹Dan Harlan, 'Ken Burns and the Coming Crisis of Academic History', *Rethinking History* 7.2 (2003), 169. Other estimates are at 13 million viewers on the first night, 23 million in total: Euan Staples, "'You Can't Steal a Gift": Narrative of nation in Ken Burns's Jazz', *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 21.2 (2002), 15; and Steven F Pond, 'Jamming the Reception: Ken Burns, Jazz, and the Problem of "America's Music"', *Notes* 60.1 (2003), 11.

¹²Nekesa Mumbi Moody, 'Ken Burns' *Jazz* breathes new life into field, PBS documentary sets compact disc sales afire', *The Dallas Morning News* (February 5, 2001), 23A.

¹³Da Capo Press, 'Listing of Jazz Books' (URL: http://www.perseusbooksgroup.com/dacapo/subject_books.do?subjectCid=MUS025000&imprintCid=DC) – visited on May 15, 2008; Various, 'Harlem Roots'; See also appendix, 'Jazz Autobiographies.'

¹⁴Eric Nisenson, *Blue: The murder of jazz* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1997); Tom Piazza, *Blues Up and Down: Jazz in our time* (New York: St Martin's Griffin, 1997), x.

Discussions in this thesis will be referencing various styles and musical terms associated with jazz, and these deserve brief consideration to remove as much ambiguity as possible from their use. The discussion that follows has been taken from what is now a rather standardised history of jazz, depicting an evolution of styles. Because of the widespread usage of such terms amongst academics and the public alike, they should be the most useful. There are also a few terms that should be mentioned, as they occur frequently within this discussion and that of the following chapters and represent categories that can be ambiguous.

An effort has been made to distinguish between several different groups of writers on jazz, scholars, critics, and journalists. ‘Scholars’ refers to writers carrying out academic works, such as scholarly articles or history books. The term ‘critics’ generally refers to the group that write in the music press or for music columns in newspapers, critiquing the music, musicians, or the music industry. ‘Journalists’ then covers those writing in the press, but often for more general stories concerning jazz that need little musical expertise or knowledge. When referring to more than one group of critics, scholars, and/or journalists, the term ‘writers’ is generally applied. These categories are admittedly ambiguous since the same person can in one instance have written newspaper column and in another a scholarly article or book on jazz, but it was felt some distinction should attempt to be made.

Most histories of jazz begin with the New Orleans style played by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and developed by black New Orleans musicians like King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Kid Ory, and Sidney Bechet. This music was characterised by the use of five or six musicians collectively improvising using a polyphonic structure. Polyphony means that different melodies are played by the lead instruments, typically the trumpet/cornet, trombone, and saxophone/clarinet, simultaneously. The New Orleans style was then modified in the mid-1920s by giving room to soloists, a development mainly credited to Louis Armstrong, although Sidney Bechet and others also contributed to this change. Other styles emerged in the 1920s, notably stride piano, which was a solo form for pianists that emphasised a steady, strong rhythmic pattern with the left hand while

improvising with the right. Willie ‘The Lion’ Smith, James P. Johnson, and Fats Waller were the most famous of stride pianists, all of whom were from the East Coast. Classical or symphonic jazz was also developed by Paul Whiteman, Paul Specht, Ben Bernie, Rudy Vallée, and Vincent Lopez and was perhaps the most popular of all forms of jazz during that era. However, some present-day writers discount their music as jazz because it had little of the rhythm and improvisation that are often defined as essential characteristics of the genre.¹⁵

The next major development began in the late 1920s, but grew immensely in popularity during the mid-1930s. This was the swing big band format that used three sections: rhythm (piano, guitar, bass, drums), reeds (saxophones, clarinet), and brass (trumpets, trombones). Typically using fourteen to sixteen musicians, the swing bands relied mainly on written arrangements with some space given to soloists. The leading bands of this style were under Benny Goodman, the Dorsey brothers (Tommy and Jimmy), Artie Shaw, Duke Ellington, and eventually Count Basie and Glenn Miller. Swing was the most popular form of jazz in history, and was synonymous with American popular music from the late 1930s until the end of World War II. Swing was also considered a form of dancing and had its own argot and fashions.¹⁶

After World War II, the increased cost of sustaining a big band led to the resurgence of small bands, usually referred to as ‘combos.’ The wartime tax on establishments allowing dancing led many of these jazz combos to play in front of listening rather than dancing audiences. One such group of musicians returned to the New Orleans style because they saw swing as a commercial exploitation of the important innovations in jazz. The success of these musicians was usually referred to as the traditional or Dixieland revival, although

¹⁵Schuller, *Early Jazz*; Hadlock, *Jazz Masters of the Twenties*; David Dicaire, *The Jazz Musicians of the Early Years, to 1945* (London: McFarland & Company, 2003), 7-112; Ward, *Jazz*, 1-171; Kathy Ogren, *The Jazz Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹⁶Swing big bands constituted almost 70% of the music industry’s profits by the late 1930s. See episode six, *The Velocity of Celebration*, Burns, ‘Jazz’; Wilfred Mellers, ‘The Swing Era: the Development of Jazz, 1930-1945’, *The New Republic* 200.13 (1989); Dave Oliphant, *The Early Swing Era, 1930 to 1941* (London: Greenwood Press, 2002); Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: the development of jazz, 1930-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); David W Stowe, *Swing Changes: big-band jazz in New Deal America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994); Rex Stuart, *Jazz Masters of the Thirties* (New York: Macmillan, 1972).

it was also labeled 'trad' or New Orleans. Many young musicians took up the traditional style, but it was mainly characterised by the resurgence of black musicians from New Orleans, such as Louis Armstrong, Kid Ory, Sidney Bechet, and Bunk Johnson. Another significant group of revivalists consisted of white musicians who had played in Chicago in the 1920s, such as Eddie Condon, Jimmy McPartland, and Pee Wee Russell.¹⁷

In direct and sometimes vitriolic opposition to traditional jazz, some young black musicians developed a new style known as bebop, or simply bop, that displayed an entirely new musical vocabulary. Swing solos had been played over a series of chord changes, and usually identifiably adhered to melody, but bebop challenged this in two important ways. First, a great deal of harmonic complexity was added to the song by substituting chords that explored higher harmonics and more dissonant sounds. Second, soloists rarely paid attention to a defined melody, but rather improvised in any way that fit the chord changes. Played at extraordinarily fast tempos and with more polyrhythmic support from the drums, bebop had almost entirely lost the dancing public once enjoyed by swing. The most famous musicians associated with bebop were Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, but also included in this group were Thelonious Monk, and Kenny Clarke.¹⁸

Many of the innovations of bebop affected jazz over the ensuing decades, as did an accompanying loss in popularity. However, some of the audience was gained back in the mid-1950s with the development of hard bop. Hard bop was marked by the introduction of gospel and blues elements into the technical sophistication of bebop. This style is represented by musicians such as Art Blakey and Horace Silver's Jazz Messengers, Miles Davis, Lee Morgan, and Cannonball Adderley. Part of the goal of hard bop was not only to reintroduce traditional black musical forms into jazz, but to also make it a consciously ethnic or racial music. Developed during the Civil Rights movement, hard bop took on

¹⁷Ward, *Jazz*, 263-266; James Lincoln Collier, *Jazz: the American theme song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 116-121; Scott Yanow, *Jazz: A Regional Exploration* (London: Greenwood Press, 2005), 105-106.

¹⁸Scott DeVaux, *The Birth of Bebop* (London: Picador, 1997); Kenny Mathieson, *Giant Steps: bebop and the creators of modern jazz 1945-65* (Edinburgh: Payback Press, 1999); Eric Porter, "'Dizzy Atmosphere": the Challenge of Bebop', *American Music* 17.4 (1999); Ira Gitler, *Jazz Masters of the Forties* (New York: Collier Books, 1974).

much of the racial pride espoused by the wider black community.¹⁹

Consequently, white musicians rarely made appearances or contributions to hard bop bands and instead developed a style known as cool jazz or West Coast, where a majority of the musicians were based. Cool jazz took the harmonic sophistication of bop but slowed down the tempos to create more flowing, melodic, and laid-back solos. Its most famous practitioners were Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, Lennie Tristano, and Stan Getz. Like the hard bop bands there was little integration in cool jazz combos.²⁰

These styles were to remain dominant until the early 1960s, when free jazz was developed. Free jazz, also referred to as avant garde, eliminated many of the foundational aspects of Western music, such as keys, measures, and time signatures. Instead, there was more of an emphasis on collective improvisation (although there were many free jazz compositions too), unconventional timbre, and atonality. Each year throughout the early 1960s, the music continued to push the boundaries further, and consequently the free jazz of 1960 is significantly more conservative than that of 1965. One of the innovations of free jazz was the use of a double-quartet, with two drummers, bassists, pianists, and horns. Among the leading free jazz players were Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor, and John Coltrane. Their music was constantly referred to as ‘difficult’ by critics, musicians, and even promoters, and it consequently lost much of the public’s interest.²¹

Most of America was by the 1970s listening to rock and roll, funk, soul, and other more accessible and dance-oriented genres of music. In order to engage with this audience, many jazz musicians adopted the rhythms and aesthetic of these popular genres to create the style known as fusion or jazz-rock. It succeeded in putting jazz musicians back into

¹⁹Scott Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the making of the sixties* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); David H Rosenthal, ‘Hard Bop and Its Critics’, *The Black Perspective in Music* 16.1 (1988); Joe Goldberg, *Jazz Masters of the Fifties* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1983).

²⁰Yanow, *Jazz: A Regional Exploration*, 149-167; Ward, *Jazz*, 375-380; Alyn Shipton, *New History of Jazz*, 2nd edition (New York: Continuum, 2007), 504-522; Frank Tirro, *Jazz: a History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1977), 280-292.

²¹John D Baskerville, ‘Free Jazz: a reflection of Black Power ideology’, *Journal of Black Studies* 24.4 (1994); Charles Hersch, “‘Let Freedom Ring!’: Free Jazz and African-American Politics”, *Cultural Critique* 32 (1995-1996); Tirro, *Jazz: a History*, 337-355; Shipton, *New History of Jazz*, 564-585.

the public's notice. Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea were among the many band leaders that popularised fusion in the 1970s.²² Many writers dispute the inclusion of fusion as an authentic style of jazz, including those in programmes subsidised under the JPA. This dispute has extended to jazz histories, where fusion is often included only as an afterthought or as a sign that the development of jazz had come to an end.²³ Such an exclusion has meant that fusion is rarely included in the secondary or university courses on jazz and has few adherents within the current jazz industry.²⁴

The ostracism of fusion from the educational courses and criticism of jazz is but one example of the influence of the programmes that resulted from the Jazz Preservation Act. Some subjective interpretations of jazz history are now becoming accepted fact simply through repetition. This is illustrated by the following two statements, which were published for two different projects. The first was written by Albert Murray, board historian of America's premier publicly funded institution, Jazz at Lincoln Centre, and the second was from the book entitled *The African American Century*, written by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Cornel West. Gates is on Jazz at Lincoln Centre's board of directors.

Louis Armstrong claimed that he was born on the Fourth of July in 1900. True or not, such a birth date was not only appropriate to the status he achieved as a twentieth century American legend, but it is entirely consistent with the crucial role he came to play as the quintessential embodiment of the spirit of his native land as it is expressed in contemporary music.²⁵

[Louis Armstrong] didn't know precisely when he had been born, so he picked July 4, 1900, thereby proclaiming himself a true American for a new century.

²²Yanow, *Jazz: A Regional Exploration*, 223-245; Ward, *Jazz*, 444-449; Shipton, *New History of Jazz*, 605-621; Julie Coryell and Laura Friedman, *Jazz-rock Fusion: the people, the music* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1978).

²³Ward's book (the companion to Burns' *Jazz*) does not consider fusion jazz, saying in a section entitled 'Jazz is Dead,' 'By definition rock does not swing; its beat remains the same; that is a large part of the appeal to young dancers.' Ward, *Jazz*, 449.

²⁴'NEA Jazz in the Schools'; 'Jazz in America'.

²⁵Albert Murray, *The Blue Devils of Nada* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 53; Armstrong's claim is usually credited to his autobiography, see Louis Armstrong, *Satchmo: my life in New Orleans* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1954), 7-8.

The recent discovery of a birth record changes his birth date to August 1, 1901, but his true American status remains: More than any other single person, Armstrong made jazz America's music—And America's greatest aesthetic gift to the world.²⁶

It is not necessarily the assertion of Armstrong's importance to American music that merits attention, but rather the similarity of subjective language that has portrayed this idea. These are the types of examples that can be found not only amongst the board of directors at Jazz at Lincoln Center, but throughout the development of jazz in the twentieth century. It is the aim of this thesis to investigate some of these examples that demonstrate the process by which jazz has been shaped by the music industry and government and their ideas of the place of jazz within American culture and society.

This thesis begins with a chapter that considers the ways in which the process of identifying a history and tradition of jazz music has influenced jazz music and culture. The second chapter follows by investigating the ways in which writers and musicians have 'made jazz America's music.' The third chapter illustrates the efforts of the industry and government to relate jazz to the ideals of American democracy. The final two chapters discuss the definitions of the JPA, how they have been introduced into the industry and education system, and the impact these definitions have had on the performance, teaching, definition, criticism, and business of jazz.

²⁶Jr Henry Lewis Gates and Cornel West, *The African-American Century: how black Americans have shaped our country* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 78. Research for the Armstrong chapter was credited to Richard Newman of the Du Bois Institute for American American research at Harvard University, where Gates is the director.

Jazz Preservation Act

House Concurrent Resolution 57

Introduced by Rep John Conyers, Jr of Michigan March 3, 1987

Expressing the sense of Congress respecting the designation of jazz as a rare and valuable national American treasure.

Whereas, jazz has achieved preeminence throughout the world as an indigenous American music and art form, bringing to this country and the world a uniquely American musical synthesis and culture through the African American experience and

1. makes evident to the world an outstanding artistic model of individual expression and democratic cooperation within the creative process, thus fulfilling the highest ideals and aspirations of our republic,
2. is a unifying force, bridging cultural, religious, ethnic, and age differences in our diverse society,
3. is a true music of the people, finding its inspiration in the cultures and most personal experiences of the diverse peoples that constitute our Nation,
4. has evolved into a multifaceted art form which continues to birth and nurture new stylistic idioms and cultural fusions,
5. has had a historic, pervasive, and continuing influence on other genres of music both here and abroad, and
6. has become a true international language adopted by musicians around the world as a music best able to express contemporary realities from a personal perspective; and

Whereas, this great American musical art form has not yet been properly recognized nor accorded the institutional status commensurate with its value and importance;

Whereas, it is important for the youth of America to recognize and understand jazz as a significant part of their cultural and intellectual heritage;

Whereas, in as much as there exists no effective national infrastructure to support and preserve jazz;

Whereas, documentation and archival support required by such a great art form has yet to be systematically applied to the jazz field; and

Whereas, it is in the best interest of the national welfare and all of our citizens to preserve and celebrate this unique art form: Now, therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that Jazz is hereby designated as a rare and valuable national American treasure to which we should devote our attention, support and resources to make certain it is preserved, understood and promulgated.

Passed the House of Representatives, September 23, 1987.

Passed the Senate version introduced by Senator Alan Cranston (D-CA), December 4, 1987.

Chapter 2

Shaping jazz through its history and tradition

So this night [in 1942 Kid Ory] came out and he stumbled through a couple of his old compositions, Muskrat Ramble and Ory's Creole Trombone. When he played the little spot he just broke it up. The people came all around the bandstand to see him. I mean this guy was a museum piece to them. Most people thought he was dead, let alone still able to play his trombone. The guys all asked me what I wanted with that old man but I just told them, "Look. Can you make that audience break up like he does? Don't worry. He'll bring plenty of customers in this place." He did too.

Barney Bigard, 1980¹

The process of identifying a history and tradition of jazz has been one of the most significant influences on jazz music and culture. The quick succession of stylistic changes in jazz have often caused disagreements as to the role of innovation in jazz and the character of its authentic forms.² While these disagreements are now largely amongst academics, throughout the twentieth century musicians, critics, and members of the music industry

¹Barney Bigard, *With Louis and Duke: the autobiography of a jazz clarinetist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 82.

²John Gennari, 'Jazz Criticism: Its Development and Ideologies', *Black American Literature Forum* 25.3 (1991); Scott DeVeaux, 'Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography', *Black American Literature Forum* 25.3 (1991).

had been the principal actors in formulating jazz history.³ Their participation has helped shape the music itself, the manner in which it is performed, and its place in American culture.

The revival of ‘traditional’ jazz that started in the late 1930s marked the first major impact of history on the industry. The revivalists were a group of musicians and critics who often complained that the developments that characterised swing were too formulaic and clichéd.⁴ Traditionalist critics such as Rudi Blesh, David Stuart, and Ralph J. Gleason thus promoted jazz musicians from the 1920s and earlier as purveyors of the timeless and historically significant style. While a large number of white musicians participated in this revival, the focus of most traditionalist critics, journals, and record labels was on the black musicians of New Orleans.⁵ Many of these ‘original’ New Orleans musicians represented the uneducated, ‘folk’ roots of jazz epitomised by the experiences of many blacks in the early twentieth century South.⁶ In fact, it was their ‘folk’ quality that implied their authenticity and historical significance as the pioneers of American popular music.

As the revivalists looked back to the roots of jazz to identify ‘authentic’ musicians, the critics and musicians promoting bebop in the mid-1940s advertised themselves as creating original and therefore authentic jazz by moving the genre forward.⁷ Bebop musicians wanted to break away from the conceptions of the blues championed by the traditionalists because they found these limiting and unforgiving of their progressive, modern style.⁸ In

³Blesh, *Shining Trumpets*; Paul Eduard Miller, *Esquire’s 1945 Jazz Book* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1945); Nat Hentoff and Albert J McCarthy, editors, *Jazz: new perspectives on the history of jazz by twelve of the world’s foremost jazz critics and scholars* (New York: Rinehart, 1959).

⁴Leonard Feather, *The Jazz Years: earwitness to an era* (London: Quartet, 1986), 82-83; Barry Ulanov, ‘Mouldy Figs vs. Moderns!’ *Metronome* (1947) in *Riffs and Choruses*, ed. Andrew Clark (New York: Continuum, 2001), 137-138.

⁵David Stuart, ‘Bunk Johnson and His Superior Jazz Band/Bunk Johnson (Good Time Jazz M 12048) 1962’, in *Setting the Tempo*, ed. Tom Piazza (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 61-68; Paul Eduard Miller, ‘The Jazz Scene: 1944’, in *Esquire’s Jazz Book 1945*, ed. Paul Eduard Miller (New York: Esquire, 1945), 114-115.

⁶Stuart ‘Bunk Johnson’ 65.

⁷Bernard Gendron, ‘“Mouldy Figs” and Modernists: Jazz at War (1942-1946)’ in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 31-56.

⁸Miles Davis and Quincy Troupe, *Miles: the autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 59; Leonard Feather, *Inside Be-bop* (New York: J.J. Robbins & Sons, 1949), 45.

seeing themselves as the next dominant style of jazz, bebop musicians hoped to enjoy the same popularity as swing big bands, but had significant trouble winning over the sizable audiences who were looking for dance music.⁹ This failure led to varied efforts to popularise bebop, which in conjunction with the uninformed mainstream media, had by the end of the 1940s created popular confusion as to what defined bebop.¹⁰ Despite the confusion amongst the public, bebop had established itself as the most popular style among young musicians and had consequently positioned itself at the forefront of jazz.

The dominant style of jazz changed once again in the 1950s as young black musicians reintroduced elements of the blues and gospel into jazz to form a style referred to as hard bop. This music developed alongside the Civil Rights movement, and eventually took on a politically assertive role with musicians calling for freedom and racial equality.¹¹ Such assertiveness only grew during the 1960s as the Civil Rights movements intensified.¹² At the same time, free jazz was introduced by a new generation of musicians who rejected many fundamental aspects of Western music in favour of political and musical freedom, but the abstract nature of their style failed to attract significant record sales and live audiences.¹³ The increased political assertiveness and decreased audiences of many young musicians created a situation in which the industry instead promoted older musicians such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, extolling them as leading representatives of jazz music.¹⁴ Their historical prominence, international popularity, relative political moderation, and steady, if small, domestic fan base all contributed to the wide public

⁹Bechet et al., *Treat It Gentle*, 192-193; Dizzy Gillespie and Al Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop: memoirs* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979), 223.

¹⁰Bebop is usually considered to be played by five or six musicians, piano, drums, bass, with saxophones/brass. Popularising efforts included big bands, string sections, and traditional musicians. Danny Barker and Alyn Shipton, *A Life in Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 170; Stowe, *Swing Changes*, 215; John S Wilson, 'Nat Nominates Himself Advance Man for Bop', *Down Beat* 16.7 (April 22, 1949), 1.

¹¹Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't*; John Szwed, 'Musical Style and Racial Conflict', *Phylon* 27.4 (1966).

¹²Archie Shepp, 'Black Power and Black Jazz', *New York Times* (November 26, 1967); Frank Kofsky, 'The Freedom Suite/Sonny Rollins (Riverside 3010) 1968' in *Setting the Tempo*, 221.

¹³Yanow called free jazz the 'least commercial and accessible form of improvised music.' Yanow, *Jazz: A Regional Exploration*, 200.

¹⁴Paul Eduard Miller, 'Corrected Manuscript for *The Best Jazz 1967*', 111-112; Von Eschen, *Satchmo*.

acceptance and profitability of these musicians.¹⁵ Their increasing age also meant that a founding era of jazz history was about to pass away forever.

In the 1970s, the aging musicians were included as part of an effort organised by black scholars to rewrite American history.¹⁶ Although black musicians were the primary focus of this history, white writers published most of the new works on jazz. They authored the first jazz canon and comprehensive histories of jazz in the 1970s.¹⁷ Although different canons had been promoted under various styles, many musicians and critics supported the creation of one that demonstrated an evolutionary progression of jazz. The vast majority of critics interested in creating this canon also saw hard bop as the ending point, with free jazz gaining brief mention at best and fusion being generally excluded from the genre. The interest in jazz history and the age of many canonical musicians gave urgency to certain projects, such as capturing oral histories and publishing autobiographies.¹⁸ Most jazz autobiographies were written by ghost writers, who generally demonstrated an interest primarily in the musician's contributions to the developing canon.¹⁹ Musicians considered part of the new jazz canon such as Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, and Dizzy Gillespie were also given recognition for their contribution to American music and culture through Presidential awards and honorary doctorates.²⁰

¹⁵Martin Williams and Ira Gitler, *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1973); Lionel Hampton and James Haskins, *Hamp: an autobiography* (New York: Warner Books, 1989), 160; Scott Yanow, *Jazz on Film* (London: Backbeat UK, 2004), 214-264.

¹⁶See Murray's chapter entitled 'Black Studies and the aims of education' in Albert Murray, *The Omni-Americans: Black Experience and American Culture* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970).

¹⁷Williams and Gitler, *Classic Jazz*; Tirro, *Jazz: a History*; James Lincoln Collier, *The Making of Jazz: a Comprehensive History* (London: Hart-Davis MacGibbon, 1978).

¹⁸See appendix, 'Jazz Autobiographies' for a listing. Also, the Smithsonian inaugurated the *Jazz Oral History Project* in 1972, which included interviews from 122 musicians. Smithsonian Jazz, 'Jazz Exhibits' (URL: http://www.smithsonianjazz.org/exhibits/ex_start.asp) – visited on August 15, 2007.

¹⁹For instance, Dizzy Gillespie's autobiography spends 402 out of 502 pages up until Parker's death (the symbolic end to bebop), Willie 'The Lion' Smith about 240 of 294 pages until the end of the swing era, and Sidney Bechet 159 out of 219 pages until his temporary retirement during the Depression in 1934. See Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*; Willie Smith and George Hoefer, *Music on my Mind: the memoirs of an American pianist* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964); Bechet et al., *Treat It Gentle*.

²⁰Ellington takes several pages to list his awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom (the highest civilian award in the U.S.) and 15 honorary doctorates. Duke Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress* (New York: Da Capo, 1973), 476-490; Hampton and Haskins, *Hamp*, 168-169; Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 527-529.

A revival

Although swing music achieved a popularity in the early 1940s unequalled in the history of jazz, it caused discontent among critics and musicians who favoured the New Orleans styles popularised over twenty years before.²¹ The sheer number of swing bands across the country naturally led certain aspects of the music to become clichéd through repetition. This led a number of jazz critics to become increasingly vocal about what they saw as the corruption of the musical values of jazz. To prove this corruption, the critics wrote about the authenticity of older styles of jazz in contrast to the repetition and unoriginality of swing in an attempt to endow the music with a timeless character and historical importance. Eventually, the collected efforts of these critics created a ‘revival’ under various names, such as traditional, Dixieland, or New Orleans jazz. The different names given to the revival reflected the fact that it highlighted the music of several different groups, including some of the ‘original’ black musicians from New Orleans, some white musicians who had been playing the music since the early 1920s, and a large number of new adherents. Although there was resentment and stylistic differences between the groups, they became allies against the emergence of bebop after World War II.²²

Among the first critics to call for a revival of traditional values were Rudi Blesh, Frederic Ramsey Jr., and Bill Russell, who attempted to demonstrate the authenticity of traditional jazz by stressing its role in the black community’s folk culture. This was a culture in which people developed and played music for enjoyment and social functions, and which the entertainment industry diluted for profit. Rudi Blesh was perhaps one of the most vehement advocates of reviving the idea of traditional jazz as a folk music, as well as being a vitriolic critic of more modern forms. He wrote one of the first historical books on jazz, *Shining Trumpets*, in which he concluded that the artistry of jazz continuously degraded after the ascendancy of the solo artist marked the end of the original New Orleans style.²³ The expansion of jazz in the culture industry centres of Chicago and New York

²¹Swing employed between 30,000 and 40,000 musicians nationwide and constituted almost 70% of the music industry’s profits by the late 1930s. Burns, ‘Jazz’ (Episode 6); Ward, *Jazz*, 240.

²²Collier, *Making of Jazz*, 281.

²³Blesh, *Shining Trumpets*.

further alienated jazz from Blesh's idea of jazz musicians as poor and uneducated black Southerners unlettered in musical notation. The degradation of jazz was addressed by other traditionalists who actively sought to increase the presence of these 'folk' musicians in the industry. To promote these musicians, traditionalist critics wrote articles praising the small record labels, such as Commodore Records, and concert venues that promoted musicians they thought formed the foundation of jazz and its history. While writing for magazines and newspapers across the country, they also began publishing their own music journals like the *The Record Changer* that were devoted to traditional jazz.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the commercial structure for traditional jazz was the career of trumpeter Bunk Johnson from New Orleans, who had not become famous until the 1940s revival. Johnson's greatest success, and the reason for renewed interest in him, was that during the 1910s he had led the Eagle Band in New Orleans—a band made famous by trumpeter Buddy Bolden.²⁴ David Stuart was an enthusiastic producer from San Francisco who recorded Johnson in 1942 on his first records and documented the experience in his liner notes for the compilation album *Bunk Johnson and His Superior Jazz Band* released twenty years later. According to Stuart, musicians like Bunk Johnson were sought out because, 'he needed to be recorded, as soon as possible; time was running out on the New Orleans originals, and the Second World War was about to grab most of us.' Paradoxically Stuart came to this decision after Johnson had sent him an acetate recording of unaccompanied trumpet, which Stuart described as 'no great shakes of a thing,' that 'momentarily gave [him] the blues.'²⁵ Nonetheless, Stuart and two of his colleagues headed down to find Johnson, and proceeded to ask 'a salvo of questions fired by three history-hungry greed-heads.' Their desire to hear Johnson's history was greater than their desire to hear his music. When Johnson suggested that he play something for them instead of talking, Stuart's reaction was tepid. 'This was what we'd come two

²⁴See comments from traditionalist Charles Edward Smith, where he asserts Johnson's prominent place in jazz history: 'It was this band in which Willie (Bunk) Johnson (who was later to have such an influence on Louis Armstrong) played coronet next to King Bolden when he was still in knee pants.' Charles Edward Smith, 'New Orleans Jazz/Variety Artists (Decca A-425) 1940' in *Setting the Tempo*, 26. See also Ward, *Jazz*, 31-32.

²⁵Stuart 'Bunk' 61.

thousand miles for, yet we followed him into the house with some trepidation. After all, he hadn't really played horn for a good number of years, and it was only recently that he'd been fitted with workable false teeth and a new trumpet.²⁶ Regardless of Johnson's poor shape, they deemed him fit to record and started to look around New Orleans for suitable musicians to assemble a band.

Fortunately, they found clarinetist George Lewis, a contemporary of Bunk Johnson who had also failed to achieve fame until the 1940s. Lewis was as much of an authentic jazz musician as they hoped he would be, 'George got out the worst beat-up, wired-together, rubber-band-action clarinet I've ever seen. The keys were loose, one was missing entirely, and the pad on the octave key was a ball of hardened chewing gum. But he "played some" for us all right!' Stuart's reaction to this display was similar to that of Johnson's live performance, 'for the second time in less than a week my eyes were filled. I felt a bit foolish and sentimental until I noticed Russell's and McIntyre's eyes...It was marvellous! We had ourselves a clarinet for the session, no mistake.'²⁷ With the group formed, Stuart and his colleagues made the musicians accompany them back to San Francisco, where Stuart helped transform them into figureheads for the traditional revival.

While some traditionalist writers had viewed swing as a corrupt version of jazz, others excluded it altogether in their version jazz history since it was their most significant rival. One of the more zealous writers, Ralph J. Gleason, promoted the small record labels of the traditionalists so that they could 'skip the [Red] Norvo and [Count] Basie.' Gleason also wanted to 'make [major] firms like Decca agree to record Bunk Johnson instead of [Nat] King Cole,' and implored his readers to 'get mad and write articles for *Down Beat*...and *Esky* [*Esquire*]...there is no answer but to usurp the fountainheads of information ourselves and attempt, by using the word jazz to mean the music of Bunk and [King] Oliver, to erase, in time, the damage already done by Feather-Miller-Goffin-Ulanov and their ilk.'²⁸

²⁶Stuart 'Bunk' 62.

²⁷David Stuart, 'Bunk Johnson and His Superior Jazz Band/Bunk Johnson (Good Time Jazz M 12048) 1962', in: Tom Piazza, editor, *Setting the Tempo* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 65. Bill Russell was a composer, jazz record collector and promoter. He eventually started his own record company, American Music Records, with the intention of recording Bunk Johnson and George Lewis. Hal McIntyre was a disc jockey and traditional jazz supporter in California.

²⁸Ellipses in the original. Ralph J. Gleason quoted in Feather, *Jazz Years*, 82-83. The critics listed

This ‘fountainheads of information’ approach eventually gained good results, and many traditional artists became nationally successful.

Attempts to identify the traditional style of jazz as the most timeless and historically important also had the effect of reviving the careers of some of the most famous musicians of the early 1920s. This was certainly the case for the pioneering trombonist from New Orleans, Kid Ory. He returned to music in 1942—the same year Stuart recorded Bunk Johnson—after fellow New Orleans musician Barney Bigard found him in Los Angeles making twelve dollars a week as a janitor in a morgue. Bigard encouraged Ory to join his New Orleans contemporaries Tom ‘Papa Mutt’ Carey, Ed Garland and Bud Scott who were already playing in Los Angeles.²⁹ Once he established himself locally, Ory returned to national prominence after being featured in a series of radio broadcasts on the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) hosted by Orson Welles—a show that included other famous and respected New Orleans artists of the 1910s and 1920s including Jimmie Noone, Zutty Singleton, Ed Garland, Buster Wilson, Bud Scott and Papa Carey.³⁰

Although interest in their music was similarly revived by traditionalist critics, some of the New Orleans musicians who were famous in the 1920s disagreed with the promotion of Bunk Johnson and George Lewis. Having experienced the early scene in New Orleans, musicians such as Pops Foster and Barney Bigard felt the influence of Johnson and Lewis was simply manufactured. Foster did not even consider Bunk Johnson much of a ‘hot’ jazz player, but rather a ‘sweet’ trumpeter who did not swing.³¹ Barney Bigard felt Johnson

were Leonard Feather, Paul Eduard Miller, Robert Goffin and Barry Ulanov. One comment from *Down Beat* represents their dislike for the role of critics in reviving traditional jazz: ‘New Orleans style, Kansas City style, Chicago style, Upper Flatbrush [New York] style—you like it all I hope. But if you’ve wondered what happened to the Dixieland style of ensemble music, try this for an answer: LOUIS ARMSTRONG KILLED IT.’ ‘Satchmo’s Terrific Solo Style Met and Killed Dixieland Ensemble!!’, *Down Beat* 6.1 (January 1939), 4.

²⁹Bigard, *With Louis and Duke*, 82; See also Joe Darensbourg and Peter Vacher, *Telling It Like It Is* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), 103.

³⁰Miller ‘Jazz Scene’ 114-115. Each of these musicians had been influential in the formative years of jazz as it spread around the country, and had made some of the most influential records in the 1920s. For example, Kid Ory and Zutty Singleton had performed with Louis Armstrong on some of his *Hot Fives* and *Hot Sevens* records in the late 1920s.

³¹Pops Foster, Ross Russell and Tom Stoddard, *Pops Foster: the autobiography of a New Orleans jazzman as told to Tom Stoddard* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 93. The terms ‘hot’ and ‘sweet’ actually denoted categories in dance music in the 1920s and 1930s. ‘Hot’ usually referred

and Lewis were charlatans who boasted too much about their position in New Orleans: 'I never knew Bunk Johnson or George Lewis. Bunk, well, he was pathetic to begin with. People just capitalised on him...A lot of those old characters from New Orleans think that anything they do is alright just because they come from New Orleans.'³² Bigard believed Johnson's promoters made false claims about the musician's historical importance as a marketing ploy. For instance, Bigard remembered that Johnson 'went around telling people that he taught Louis Armstrong, and Louis, bless his soul, he was so good about the whole thing that he wouldn't let you know any different. But he knew Bunk didn't teach him anything.'³³ Eventually, Armstrong did come forward in the traditionalist magazine *The Record Changer* in 1950 saying, 'Bunk didn't teach me anything; he didn't show me *one* thing.'³⁴ Bigard said that boasting was common among the New Orleans musicians, 'A lot of those New Orleans guys bullshit about who they played with...' especially if such information turned into employment.³⁵

Clarinetist Joe Darensbourg, another participant with Kid Ory and other traditional bands, held a similar opinion of Bunk Johnson. Darensbourg recalled a scene with Johnson which illustrates the type of appeal he had:

Another guy that came down to the Tip Toe Inn was Bunk Johnson. He came out there to sit in, but he was pretty feeble then and couldn't play very good. He wasn't like Louis; he didn't have any chops. Still, up in San Francisco he was a legend, he could do no wrong. They had this concert in San Francisco on a Sunday afternoon, a thousand people waiting there, and Bunk shows up about half an hour late and he's pretty well loaded, oiled up, didn't have his

to music like Louis Armstrong's, and 'sweet' was more reminiscent of society dance bands that played with simpler rhythms, slower tempos, and little improvisation. Pops Foster recorded with Johnson under Sidney Bechet, who hired Johnson in 1945 to capitalise on the support Johnson received from people like Rudy Blesh and manager John Reid. Bechet et al., *Treat It Gentle*, 170.

³²Bigard, *With Louis and Duke*, 88.

³³Ibid.; See also Lewis Porter and Michael Ullman, 'Sidney Bechet and His Long Song', *The Black Perspective in Music* 16.2 (1988), 145. Johnson also made a fallacious claim that he found Armstrong his first steady job, but it was actually Johnny Dodds and Peter Bocage with Fate Marable. See Foster et al., *Pops Foster*, 57; Armstrong, *Satchmo*, 181.

³⁴Louis Armstrong, *Louis Armstrong in His Own Words: selected writings*, edited by Thomas Brothers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 40.

³⁵Bigard, *With Louis and Duke*, 89.

teeth or his horn. He says, ‘If you want me to play, you gotta get my teeth and horn out of hock,’ and he hands them the pawn ticket. The owner of the hock shop lived way over in Sausalito and they had to go wake him up and get him to come to San Francisco and open up his shop. This took every bit of three hours but the people waited for old Bunk to play. But that sucker was so loaded he couldn’t hardly play anyway. Still, they enjoyed it.³⁶

Darensbourg’s comparison of Bunk Johnson with Louis Armstrong illustrated not only Johnson’s inferior technique and creativity, but also his lack of professionalism. Still, the prevalence of claims about Johnson’s importance to the development of jazz ensured that he remained popular with the critics, promoters and audiences. It was not until Johnson’s alcoholism made him too unreliable that his career began to fold.³⁷

Throughout much of this debate, white traditional musicians remained largely uninvolved. Commercially, they were often isolated because of race, but when they did play with black musicians it was typically with the most famous to come out of New Orleans, such as Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Pops Foster, and Red Allen. The most prominent group of white traditionalists worked under guitarist Eddie Condon. Condon’s groups included clarinetist Pee Wee Russell, trombonist Miff Mole, trumpeter/cornetists Max Kaminsky, Wild Bill Davidson and Jimmy McPartland, and saxophonist Bud Freeman, most of whom had played together in Chicago in the 1920s. As the leading white traditional band leader in the late 1940s, Condon was able to secure his own radio show and also host one of the first jazz shows on television.³⁸ Although Condon’s bands played an updated style of traditional jazz that allowed for solo space, several of the musicians still saw the importance of positioning and presenting themselves in terms of jazz history. They were among the first jazz musicians to write autobiographies even though their average age was only forty-five years old when they published their books.³⁹

³⁶Darensbourg and Vacher, *Telling It Like It Is*, 101.

³⁷Bechet et al., *Treat It Gentle*, 183.

³⁸*Eddie Condon’s Floor Show* was a half-hour weekly series that aired from January 1949 to June 1950 and featured hot jazz in a similar format as Condon’s earlier Town Hall radio series. Yanow, *Jazz on Film*, 7.

³⁹Four autobiographies of white musicians were published in the 1940s—all but pop composer Carmichael

Despite the quarrels amongst the traditionalists, their most significant concern was the upcoming popularity of bebop music. Many of the traditionalists were openly critical of the young musicians' approach to performing jazz. Traditionalists were especially concerned that bebop's departure from a recognisable melody would be aesthetically and commercially disastrous as well as antithetical to the history of jazz they used to promote themselves. While Bigard admitted he would sometimes 'go off on a tangent' with his improvising, he insisted he would always 'try to keep that melody so they recognise it all the time.' This was in stark contrast to his image of the young beboppers, and he complained, 'That's the trouble today with all this bop stuff. Who in hell knows what's going on. Maybe the musicians and that's about all. I don't like all that monkey business where they are just showing off their techniques. That doesn't make music.'⁴⁰

Though there was a lot of public animosity between the traditionalists and beboppers, promoters often used this to advertise bands and concerts. In 1949, at the height of bebop's popularity, Rudi Blesh started organising musical 'battles' between bop and traditional bands in New York and surrounding areas where the bands alternated sets and let the audience choose their favourite musicians. Among the traditional participants was Sidney Bechet, who recalled his own victory against bop: 'the bop musicianers [sic] came on and played, and the people didn't even move, they didn't move a hand for them. There was nothing for the bop musicianers; bop was dead. And then we came on and we hadn't finished the first number before we had them going.' The concerts were so successful that they became 'a real fad.'⁴¹ According to Bechet, this reaction was consistent even in venues chosen by bop promoters. The New York venue Bop City decided to host some bop versus traditional battles, and once again the traditionalists won. This time it was Louis Armstrong who was the victor, as 'he'd really broken it up. He'd topped all receipts they'd ever had. They told him he could stay just as long as he wanted.'⁴²

were from traditional musicians: Hoagy Carmichael, *The Stardust Road* (New York: Rinehart, 1946); Mezz Mezzrow and Bernard Wolfe, *Really the Blues* (New York: Random House, 1946); Eddie Condon and Thomas Sugrue, *We Called it Music* (New York: Holt, 1947); Wingy Manone and Paul Vandervoort, *Trumpet on the Wing* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1948).

⁴⁰Bigard, *With Louis and Duke*, 60.

⁴¹Bechet et al., *Treat It Gentle*, 192.

⁴²Ibid., 192-193; The animosity between traditional and bebop never completely died off, and Arm-

Louis Armstrong was an acerbic critic of bebop despite his otherwise wide acceptance of different forms of jazz. In one interview with Leonard Feather during which Feather conducted one of his famous ‘blindfold tests,’ Armstrong identified and praised Bunk Johnson’s *Franklin Street Blues*, ‘Ah, the blues!...the blues will last forever. You can hear from the first note that this has soul. The beboppers will probably think it’s old fashioned.’ After rating the song a perfect four stars, Armstrong enthused, ‘You can dance to it! In bebop, they don’t know which way they’re going to turn.’⁴³ While such enthusiasm for Johnson may have been greeted with skepticism by many of his colleagues, Armstrong’s next judgment was even more partisan, as he insisted on awarding eight stars to a record by Guy Lombardo, despite the fact he was not highly esteemed by the jazz community. Armstrong was in fact celebrating the preservation of a jazz heritage, and he observed that ‘these people are keeping music alive—helping to fight them damn beboppers. You know, you got to have somebody to keep that music sounding good. Music doesn’t mean a thing unless it sounds good.’⁴⁴

At the forefront

The national prominence of the traditional revival made many critics interested in identifying the musical and cultural traditions of jazz. Their interest prompted the first efforts to institutionalise the academic study of jazz through writing, classes, and establishing archives. Two of the first jazz critics to teach jazz as an academic subject were European expatriates living in New York, Robert Goffin and Leonard Feather, and their work set an important precedent for the emergence of bebop. In February 1942, they assembled a class at the New School for Social Research in New York and presented a series of seminars

strongly battled Dizzy Gillespie on the CBS television show *Timex All-Star Jazz Show* in 1959. Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 448.

⁴³Armstrong, *Own Words*, 165. Feather’s *Metronome* blindfold test involved playing records for a famous musician without any information as to the artist, tune, composer or arranger so they would have to draw their conclusions without bias. Thus, the musician would have to first try to identify the record, give their aesthetic assessment and rate it on a scale of one to four stars.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 166. Guy Lombardo led a band that played ‘sweet’ music, usually defined in opposition to ‘hot’ jazz music. Sweet bands were not typically well respected by their jazz counterparts because they relied on little if any improvisation and rhythmic complexity.

that covered the stylistic progression of jazz. Feather recalled that, ‘in addition to using records, we planned to persuade musicians to help us with live performances. Because of the unique nature of the project we had no trouble in attracting them: at the first lecture our guest speaker-performers were Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman and Benny Carter.’⁴⁵ While these circumstances were extraordinary, their curriculum presented a progression of jazz development that has been widely reproduced ever since.⁴⁶ The fifteen lectures were organised as follows:

1. Before jazz in New Orleans
2. Ragtime and the pioneers
3. First period of Negro jazz
4. From New Orleans to Chicago—King Oliver
5. Jazz from America to Europe
6. Original Dixieland
7. White pioneers
8. Louis Armstrong
9. From Fletcher Henderson to Duke Ellington
10. Chicago style
11. Big white bands
12. Benny Goodman
13. Outdated and small Negro bands

⁴⁵Feather, *Jazz Years*, 77; ‘Jazz Hits the Classroom in New York City’, *Down Beat* 9.1 (January 1, 1942), 6.

⁴⁶Feather said of the precedent made: ‘Aside from a few isolated lectures by visiting band leaders, there had never been any attempt to offer a serious history and analysis of the music, as part of a regular curriculum.’ Feather, *Jazz Years*, 77.

14. Big Negro bands

15. From spiritual to boogie-woogie⁴⁷

Other institutions soon followed. In 1944, the National Jazz Foundation (NJF) was founded in New Orleans with the goal of building a jazz museum in the city ‘where the historical evidences of hot music will be recorded, preserved and exhibited for all time to come.’ The founders of the NJF knew that a museum would have only a local import and so also wanted to reach out into the mainstream national media by accumulating ‘a complete and authentic fund of jazz data and history and plac[ing] it at the service of writers, motion-picture studios, radio broadcasters, historians and any others who may be interested.’ The NJF also wanted to establish its own radio show and periodical to publicise its museum, work, and favoured choice of jazz music.⁴⁸ At the end of the decade, British jazz critic and record collector Marshall Stearns was also looking to create a similar institute in New York in which scholars would be able to collect and use materials relating jazz.⁴⁹

The attention given to formulating jazz history was essential for bebop musicians and critics, who tried to position their music as the next phase in that musical and social progression. Young fans of bebop often complained that traditional jazz, and to some extent swing, perpetuated many of the racist stereotypes long held by the music industry.⁵⁰ They rejected the history of black music that had become standard in music journals. Although typically meant to praise jazz, articles such as one from *Down Beat* in 1949 reinforced a picture of black Americans that young, modern, urban beboppers wanted to get away from:

⁴⁷Feather, *Jazz Years*, 78. Feather follows a now familiar chronological progression, except for the last lecture. This was an obvious nod to Hammond’s 1938 *From Spirituals to Swing* concert, which was a primary force in popularising boogie-woogie.

⁴⁸Miller ‘Jazz Scene’ 122. The NJF was succeeded in 1948 by the New Orleans Jazz Club.

⁴⁹George Hoefer, ‘Stearns Completes Plans For A US Jazz Institute’, *Down Beat* 16.11 (June 17, 1949), 11. His Institute for Jazz Studies was started in 1952 in New York and is now associated with Rutgers University in New Jersey. It is currently known for having one of the premier collections of recordings, advertisements, publications, and oral history materials for jazz in the world.

⁵⁰DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop*, 169.

The Negro undoubtedly played a most important part in the growth of this music. Originally brought to America in bondage, his own melodies of heart-break and poverty, his work songs, hollers, chants, and dances were soon an established sound and sight throughout the Southern states. The blues, an integral part of jazz, were his ‘discovery’—a direct result of oppression and misery of many years as well as his own particular ability to transmit his suffering and philosophy of life into song for everyone to understand.⁵¹

Associating black music with slavery, rural poverty, and expressions of suffering restricted black musicians more than it liberated them. Thus, the continued belief that black musicians were by nature blues musicians who were expressing their ‘oppression and misery’ limited their repertoire, aesthetics, performance styles and even marketing identities. These limitations made many bebop musicians distance themselves from some aspects of the blues. Even from the early days of bebop, its musicians identified their playing as ‘modern’ and almost entirely eliminated the word ‘blues’ from their song titles. Both actions were meant to place them at the forefront of jazz history and indeed of American society itself through their break with past styles and values.

Bebop musicians wanted to not only move the music forward, but also change the role of black musicians in the music industry and society. There were also important precedents for this type of progress, including two famous performances at Carnegie Hall. The first was John Hammond’s 1938 concert, *From Spirituals to Swing*, which used the stylistic innovations of its musicians to display the ways in which black culture had advanced. Hammond’s concert was designed to show the development from spirituals sung by musicians ignorant of formal musical theory to the highly literate dance bands—a chronological programme that juxtaposed the sounds of slavery with the music of modernity.⁵² Then in 1943, Duke Ellington’s orchestra premiered a composition of similar purpose entitled *Black, Brown and Beige: a Tone Parallel to the History of the American Negro*. In this

⁵¹‘Panorama of Jazz’, *Down Beat* 16.5 (1949), 3.

⁵²Gayle Wald, ‘From Spirituals to Swing: Sister Rosetta Sharpe and Gospel crossover’, *American Quarterly* 55.3 (2003), 387-388.

piece Ellington displayed his interpretation of the social development of black life from Southern slavery to the urban centres of the North, a story of social progress told through music. As a black jazz band playing an extended composition in one of the bastions of high culture, Ellington's band was itself an illustration of that social progress.⁵³

While both of these concerts remain milestones in jazz, they were only single performances that could not have the lasting impact that bebop musicians wanted to achieve. Still, musicians and critics asserted that bebop was at the forefront of a similar progression. In his book *Inside Be-bop* written at the height of its popularity in 1949, Leonard Feather characterised the innovations of bebop as a 'constant struggle against the restrictions imposed on all progressive thought in an art that has been commercialised to the point of prostitution.'⁵⁴ One of the strategies employed by critics and bebop musicians to promote themselves as being progressive was to take advantage of the widespread recognition among critics and the public that 'culture is determined by social environment and social history.'⁵⁵ Critics supportive of bebop observed that the speed, technical facility and intellectual approach of modern jazz clearly demonstrated that their music moved beyond previous conceptions of blues and the connotations of suffering and low caste. As Dizzy Gillespie put it, 'Musically, we were changing the way that we spoke, to reflect the way we felt.'⁵⁶ The conspicuous inclusion of white musicians into many of the seminal bebop bands further promoted the point that bebop was not about black suffering but more a reflection of wartime race relations and goals. When Gillespie's band started to

⁵³Harvey J Cohen, 'Duke Ellington and *Black, Brown, and Beige*: the composer as historian at Carnegie Hall', *American Quarterly* 56.4 (2004). See also Mark Tucker, 'The Renaissance Education of Duke Ellington', in: Samuel A Floyd Jr., editor, *Black Music in the Harlem Renaissance* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993) As early as 1931, Ellington expressed his idea that the 'music of my race is something more than the "American Idiom" ...What we could not say openly we expressed in music, and what we know as "jazz" is something more than just dance music.' Paul Eduard Miller, 'Duke's Hit Tunes (1942)', 7.

⁵⁴Feather, *Inside Be-bop*, 45. The rather extreme tone of this comment must be placed in context of the vitriolic arguments between critics supporting bebop and traditional jazz in the 1940s. See Gendron 'Mouldy Figs'.

⁵⁵Max Harris, 'Thoughts Inspired by *One Meat Ball*', *Jazz Forum Magazine* 4 (1947), 3.

⁵⁶Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 141. Gillespie later said that, 'We refused to accept racism, poverty, or economic exploitation, nor would we live out uncreative humdrum lives merely for the sake of survival...if America wouldn't honour its Constitution and respect us as men, we couldn't give a shit about the American way.' *ibid.*, 287.

play the Three Deuces on 52nd Street in the spring of 1945, his decision to feature white musicians Al Haig on piano and Stan Levy on the drums, in addition to Charlie Parker and bassist Curley Russell, reflected contemporary ideals of racial integration.⁵⁷

Ties between the blues and the antebellum South had long been evident in the industry. Venues such as the Cotton Club, Plantation Club, and Log Cabin, various bands under the name Cotton Pickers, and many songs like Louis Armstrong's *When It's Sleepy Time Down South* depicted racist images of Southern life. These were precisely the representations of black music that bebop musicians rejected, and they were also widespread in the musical academic establishment. As a follower of bebop, eighteen year old trumpeter Miles Davis felt compelled to contest definitions of the meaning and significance of the blues in his music history class at the Julliard School of Music. Davis recalled that his white female teacher stood in front of the class and said 'that the reason black people played the blues was because they were poor and had to pick cotton. So they were sad and that's where the blues came from, their sadness.' Davis was frustrated by this traditional assessment of the blues and replied, 'I'm from East St Louis and my father is rich, he's a dentist, and I play the blues. My father didn't never pick no cotton and I didn't wake up this morning sad and start playing the blues. There's more to it than that.'⁵⁸ Davis was particularly annoyed by the jazz writers who continued to connect the blues with this reductive history of black Americans.⁵⁹

Young beboppers also reacted with anger when older musicians criticised their music. Unwilling to listen to them, bebop innovators like Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker believed that musicians such as Louis Armstrong embodied racist stereotypes and condemned them as 'Uncle Toms' with a 'plantation image.'⁶⁰ Gillespie and Parker realised

⁵⁷'Dizzy Keeps Street Alive', *Metronome* 61.5 (May 1945), 9. While special emphasis was placed on integrating the army and defense jobs during the war, integration became a strong issue within the jazz industry as well. For examples, see 'Nazis Okay, Negroes Not, Lena Leaves Army Camp', *Metronome* 61.2 (February 1945); 'New Tag for Sinatra: Voice of Tolerance', *Metronome* 61.5 (May 1945); 'Hines Nixes Jim Crow Shows', *Metronome* 61.5 (May 1945).

⁵⁸Davis and Troupe, *Miles*, 59.

⁵⁹For more discussion on the equation of blues and sadness, see Albert Murray, *Stomping the Blues* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000).

⁶⁰Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 295-296.

the problems traditional imagery of the blues could cause in their careers when they were touring with the singer Billy Eckstine in 1944. Because Eckstine was black and achieved prominence by means of a suggestive blues song called *Jelly, Jelly*, the band was booked on a tour of Southern dance halls where the patrons expected conventional blues.⁶¹ Although the band was in fact transforming the blues into the ‘modern’ forms less intended for dancing, Eckstine’s marketing strategy reflected that of other popular and more traditional singers. The William Morris Agency’s publicity manual insisted their publicity was ‘correct billing, no changes should be made: Romantic Singing Maestro, Billy Eckstine, and his Sensational New Orchestra featuring Dizzy Gillespie, King of the Trumpet; Sarah Vaughan, Harlem’s Lovely Ballad Stylist.’⁶² While generally failing with dancing audiences, according to *Down Beat*, it was still a commercially successful band. Within six months of forming, Eckstine’s band became one of the top half-dozen black bands in revenues, overcoming racial barriers to secure bookings at white venues.⁶³

Despite its successes the Eckstine band felt under-appreciated by the industry and by what band members thought were unsophisticated audiences. The Eckstine band demonstrated how difficult it was to contradict the assumption that all black bands played blues-based dance music that would by nature appeal mainly to the black community. Even black bands who became popular with white audiences were assumed to have initially been popular in the large black theatres and dance halls that had long supported the most popular black jazz bands in the country. This was a significant problem for bebop musicians through the late 1940s as they tried to garner a black following. Gillespie’s former saxophonist Joe Gayles recalled that ‘At that time I would say that the music appealed much more to the white audiences than it did to the black. Now, you ask Diz, and I’m pretty sure he’d agree with that. This was the truth. The music was more accepted by whites than by our own at that time.’⁶⁴ This corroborates Art Blakey’s

⁶¹Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 190.

⁶²Leonard Feather, ‘Billy Eckstine’, *Metronome* 61.1 (January 1945), 12.

⁶³Ibid.. Gillespie, Eckstine, and Vaughan all recalled the band as failing with dancing audiences. Eckstine suggested that ‘we never got anywhere because they couldn’t hear it, and they wouldn’t let me through with it.’ Quoted in Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 190.

⁶⁴Ibid., 328-329.

famous statement about Charlie Parker, ‘A symbol to the Negro people? No. They don’t even know him. They never heard of him and care less. A symbol to musicians, yes.’⁶⁵ Decades later Gillespie remained frustrated by the black community’s lack of acceptance of bebop as he reminisced, ‘ironically, blacks at that time seemed to be awfully slow to pick up on anything new that came from one of their own, and that included our music.’⁶⁶

The tepid response from black audiences was not from lack of effort. In 1945, Dizzy Gillespie had organised his first big band and was attempting to replace Billy Eckstine’s band as the leading modern orchestra. Although they used arrangements that continued the redefinition of the blues and black music, Gillespie clearly wanted the popularity and success achieved by predecessors like Louis Armstrong. This justified the use of the big band format, and the tour for the band called ‘Hepsations 1945,’ which included tap and ‘shake’ dancers, comedians, and chorus girls.⁶⁷ This was far from the small nightclubs of 52nd Street in New York where Gillespie had spent the past year making a name for bebop amongst musicians and critics. The original success for bebop came with five or six musicians in the band, both on recordings and in their live shows. When Gillespie assembled his big band, which he said was ‘geared for people just sitting and listening to our music,’ he claimed he was unpleasantly surprised when Hepsations 1945 were booked on a tour of large dance halls. Such venues were almost always for dancing, and so were big bands, but Gillespie interpreted his band’s failure as the fault of unsophisticated audiences and not of the complexity of his music:

They couldn’t dance to the music, they said. But I could dance to it. I could dance my ass off to it. They could’ve too if they had tried. Jazz should be danceable. That’s the original idea, and even when it’s too fast to dance to, it should always be rhythmic enough to make you wanna move. When you get away from that movement, you get away from the whole idea. So my music is always danceable. But the unreconstructed blues lovers down South who

⁶⁵Art Blakey quoted in Bob Reisner, ‘Bird’, *The Jazz Review* 4.1 (1961), 9.

⁶⁶Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 194.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 222.

couldn't hear nothing else but the blues didn't think so. They wouldn't even listen to us. After all these years, I still get mad just talking about it.⁶⁸

Much of Gillespie's frustration came from rejection by black audiences. Even the experienced dancers of Harlem did not take to bebop and looked to rhythm and blues acts such as Lionel Hampton's to fill the void.⁶⁹ Still, Gillespie was able to hold on to his big band for most of the late 1940s, even playing on a television special called *Jivin' in Bebop* in 1947 that documents Gillespie's unusual 'variety show' approach to selling bebop to the wider public.⁷⁰

Big band bebop was not the only attempt at popularising the newer music. Against the backdrop of the fiery rhetoric that was being exchanged between traditionalist and bebop critics, some beboppers sought out help from their supposed adversaries to give their music a more approachable sound. Traditional musicians from New Orleans like bassist Pops Foster were known to have played with Parker and Gillespie at jam sessions and informal meetings, but the mid-1940s saw more purposeful collaborations such as the Charlie Parker recording sessions with New Orleans guitarist Danny Barker.⁷¹ According to Barker, when pianist Sir Charles Thompson called asking if he could make a session with Charlie Parker, he replied, 'Charlie Parker! Man—I don't play bebop!...I'd hate to come down there and have the people look at me funny because I don't know that music. I'm not a bopper.' After some reassurance that Charlie Parker had seen him play, Thompson said, 'They want a beat man, and big fat chords. You can do that.'⁷²

Charlie Parker explored other ways to make his music more commercially successful. Starting in 1949, he made a series of albums for Verve Records in which he played in front of a symphony orchestra, deserting the group improvisation that had been a cornerstone of small band bebop. That same year Gillespie had similar ideas: as he said of his last big band for years, 'My boys work hard, and I work them hard. We have something

⁶⁸Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 223.

⁶⁹Leonard Feather, 'A Survey of Jazz Today', in: Paul Eduard Miller, editor, *Esquire's Jazz Book 1945* (New York: Esquire, 1945), 17.

⁷⁰Anderson and Williams, 'Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie: the founding fathers of be bop'.

⁷¹For a word on Foster with beboppers at Minton's. Foster et al., *Pops Foster*, 194.

⁷²Barker and Shipton, *A Life in Jazz*, 170. Session was on September 4, 1945 for Apollo Records.

to sell, and we've gotta use good showmanship to do it. The first thing they learn in this respect is to play up to their audiences.'⁷³ *Down Beat* reported and encouraged this process: an article entitled 'Diz To Put Bop Touch To More Standard Tunes' reported that 'Dizzy Gillespie plans to feature more bop variations on standard tunes in order to make his music more understandable to the average guy, the boppist told KQW's jockey Bob Goerner... "We're going to have the melody going along with some countermelodies so they can understand what we're doing," Diz said.'⁷⁴

Famous musicians from the entire spectrum of jazz then came out to join Parker and Gillespie in popularising bebop. Tenor saxophonist Lester Young, who made his name as an influential soloist for Count Basie's swing band, told *Down Beat* in 1949, 'I don't go for the more wild type of bop, so the boys in the band and I have perfected a more relaxed, listenable form that we called relaxed bop. After all for any new music to catch on it has to have commercial appeal and bop has now been commercialised.'⁷⁵ Popular singer and pianist Nat King Cole joined in the efforts too. *Down Beat's* interview with Cole reported, 'Nat Cole has elected himself national advance man for the boppers. He's going to do the selling job which, he says, the bop purists are neglecting because they're too engrossed in examining their own flatted fifths.' Nat King Cole found that many beboppers were blaming audiences for not liking bebop, as Gillespie had done after his 1945 tour of the South. Cole disagreed, suggesting, 'You can't just call people square because they don't dig bop. Bop has to be explained to them. The public is confused about bop now. They think everything they hear is bop—even an old-fashioned swing saxophone solo...It's wonderful music, but it's got to be ironed out to get the public hip.'⁷⁶

Indeed, the efforts to popularise bebop produced so many different variations of the style that audiences became confused as to what it actually was. In 1949 traditional trumpeter Lee Castle advertised his band as bebop to take advantage of its popularity, even though his band played Dixieland tunes like *South Rampart Street Parade*. While the

⁷³Quoted in Stowe, *Swing Changes*, 215.

⁷⁴'Diz To Put Bop Touch To More Standard Tunes', *Down Beat* 16.4 (March 11, 1949), 3.

⁷⁵Quoted in Stowe, *Swing Changes*, 213.

⁷⁶Wilson, 'Nat', 1.

club's manager and audience remained ignorant of the fact they were hearing traditional jazz, three kids adorned with the symbols of bebop, 'goatees and horn rims,' were reported to have walked in, watched 'with a funny kind of expression' and then concluded, 'Must be some new kind of bop.'⁷⁷ This became such a worry among bebop musicians and their record companies that efforts were made to educate audiences on what bop was. This led Charlie Ventura, leader of the 'Bop For The People' band, to record a series of five musicological lectures in 1949 that explained the innovations of bebop. These five-minute lectures were produced by RCA Victor and then distributed around the country for disc jockeys to play on the radio. In conjunction with singer Jackie Cain and pianist Roy Kral, the lectures described such basics as how chords were used, with musicians providing examples to make each point clear.⁷⁸

Confusion about bebop in the press became a particular source of irritation among musicians who had worked hard to gain recognition and popularity for bebop as a modern, progressive music. As Gillespie complained, 'Once it got in the marketplace, our style was subverted by the press and music industry...the personalities and weaknesses of the in people started to become more important, in the public eye, than the music itself.' The press also included all sorts of music under the banner of bebop, whether or not it would be recognised as such by the musicians themselves. This offended Gillespie, who observed that, 'They diluted the music. They took what were otherwise blues and pop tunes, added "mop, mop" accents and lyrics about abusing drugs wherever they could and called the noise that resulted bebop.'⁷⁹ An early article on bebop by *Time* magazine showed just this problem. The writer quoted two eccentric musicians, Harry 'The Hipster' Gibson and Bulee 'Slim' Gaillard, in their song, *Who Put the Benzadrine in Mrs. Murphy's Ovaltine?*:

She'd never, ever been so happy since she left old Ireland,
Till someone prowled her pantry – man – and tampered with her can! (Wham!)
She stays up nights making all the rounds,

⁷⁷John S Wilson, 'What's Bop? Who's Knowing? Asks Castle', *Down Beat* 16.7 (April 22, 1949), 1.

⁷⁸'Charlie Tells 'Em What's With Bop', *Down Beat* 16.7 (April 22, 1949), 7.

⁷⁹Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 279.

They say she's lost about fifty-seven pounds.

Mr. Murphy claims she's getting awful thin,

And all she says is, 'Gimme some skin!' (Mop!)⁸⁰

While jazz musicians did not consider this song bebop, or jazz at all, it certainly aided *Time's* conclusion: 'What be-bop amounts to: hot jazz overheated, with overdone lyrics full of bawdiness, references to narcotics, and doubletalk.'⁸¹ Misconceptions about bebop continued to hinder its efforts at redefining the role of blues and technical sophistication in jazz. Despite these difficulties, and the intensive coverage of drug abuse among jazz musicians, bebop successfully fixed its position as the latest style in the evolution of jazz.⁸²

Elder statesmen

Bebop had by the 1950s become the dominant style for young musicians playing jazz and had redefined jazz history, but it also brought new problems. Bebop musicians sold only a fraction of the albums sold by swing bands and took a more aggressive stance against discrimination. These factors became increasingly important in shaping the ways in which jazz history was formulated and utilised by the industry. Commercial, political, and artistic pressures eventually led the mainstream currents in the industry to turn away from the most innovative musicians in favour of their older and more marketable counterparts. In ways similar to the traditional revival, the place of each musician in jazz history became an endorsement for their music.

Changing attitudes among musicians toward race and jazz were of course heavily affected by the Civil Rights movement beginning in the 1950s. Many black jazz musicians attempted to regain some of the audience lost by bebop by reconnecting with two cornerstones of black culture: the blues and the church. Young musicians added blues and gospel

⁸⁰'Be-bop Be-bopped', *Time* (March 25, 1946), (URL: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,888157,00.html>).

⁸¹'Be-bop Be-bopped'.

⁸²Scott DeVeaux analyses the idea of establishing an evolutionary history of jazz in his 1991 essay. For specific reference to bebop, see DeVeaux, 'Constructing', 539-541.

elements to the advanced harmonic and rhythmic structure of bebop, and the result became known as hard bop.⁸³ Once again, the song titles showed the change in approach, as the esoteric and academic sounding bebop titles such as *Epistrophy* and *Ornithology* were succeeded by *Dat Dere* and *Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting*. This approach worked well with audiences and also resonated with the demand created during the Civil Rights era for artistic, popular black music that expressed black history and experience. Hard bop was easy to listen to without being overly ‘commercial,’ and it embodied an affirmation of black culture’s rich past that transcended white stereotypes.

The renewed emphasis on black musical roots also had the effect of reversing a lot of the racial integration in bands that had been a conspicuous element of bebop. Younger white jazz players tended to become involved in ‘cool’ jazz that was epitomised by the success of Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker and others who were mainly based in California. While both hard bop and cool jazz drew integrated crowds, white musicians were relatively rare in the leading hard bop bands of Art Blakey, Miles Davis, Charles Mingus and Dexter Gordon, while the reverse was true of the cool bands.⁸⁴ By the early 1960s, the gap widened as hard bop bands started producing material that directly addressed the Civil Rights movement. Works such as Sonny Rollins’s *Freedom Suite* (1958), Max Roach’s *We Insist! The Freedom Now Suite* (1960), and Charles Mingus’s *Fables of Faubus* (1959) and *Freedom* (1963) made social protest and racial affirmation an integral part of the music. This was further articulated by critics such as critic Frank Kofsky, who wrote in the liner notes for *Freedom Suite*’s 1968 reissue:

The *Freedom Suite* was meant as his [Rollins’s] musical response to the enslavement (only the enslaved require liberation) of the black man in this country, formally before 1865 (the date of the Thirteenth Amendment’s ratification), informally thereafter. It was at once both protest against the past and affir-

⁸³For more on the connections between blues/church and hard bop see Saul’s introduction: Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t*, 2-3.

⁸⁴As an example of the climate, Miles Davis said of hiring white pianist Bill Evans in 1957, ‘Many blacks felt that since I had the top small group in jazz and was paying the most money that I should have a black piano player. Now I don’t go for that kind of shit...’ Davis and Troupe, *Miles*, 231.

mation of the future—and perhaps more than anything, a statement of pride in the heritage of being born black.⁸⁵

Freedom Suite epitomised the tension between politics and album sales repeatedly played out as the Civil Rights struggles advanced. Nonetheless, Kofsky's assertion must be taken in its 1968 context, since Rollins's politically assertive statement was deemed too controversial by his record label soon after its release in 1958. They pulled the original album and renamed it *Shadow Waltz*, the name of another track on the record. It was not until the album was reissued in the 1960s that the original name was restored.⁸⁶

Jazz was far from the only genre available to black musicians in the 1960s. The blues, pop, rock and roll, and gospel had all become well established alongside the many styles of jazz to create a market that crossed generations and geography and appealed to a wide spectrum of aesthetic tastes and political opinions. It was out of this heterogeneous environment that free jazz emerged to upset many in the jazz industry. Musicians like Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Albert Ayler, and Cecil Taylor abandoned such formal structures of western music as bars, keys, verse/chorus foundations and traditional timbre because they felt it limited their freedom of expression. In response, an older generation of musicians and critics hastened to condemn them as decadent and self-gratifying. Clearly, jazz was already competing with a vast array of other music and was struggling to retain an audience. By creating music that appealed only to a niche market, many critics and musicians spurned playing 'free.'

The condemnation of free jazz echoed earlier criticism of bebop. Hampton Hawes, a 1940s bebop pianist, was unsympathetic even when he heard the few successful free jazz bands, 'When I first heard the new sounds and saw those young kids...making \$15-\$20,000 a concert while turning your brains to jelly with the volume, I thought along with the other cats I came up with, How dare you steal my stuff, play it so bad and make all that bread?'⁸⁷ Hawes was particularly unimpressed⁸⁷ by the lack of technical ability in

⁸⁵Frank Kofsky, 'The Freedom Suite/Sonny Rollins (Riverside 3010) 1968' in *Setting the Tempo* 221.

⁸⁶See Kofsky 'Freedom Suite'.

⁸⁷Hampton Hawes and Don Asher, *Raise Up Off Me* (New York: Coward, McCann, & Geoghegan, 1974), 306.

the younger musicians. Similarly, Miles Davis was convinced the music represented style over substance, and reiterated that he ‘didn’t like what they were playing, especially Don Cherry on that little horn he had. It just looked to me like he was playing a lot of notes and looking real serious, and people went for that because people will go for anything they don’t understand if it’s got enough hype.’⁸⁸

Joining the bebop generation in their condemnation of free jazz were the musicians who preceded them and had lived through significant social and professional changes. Band leader Lionel Hampton, who had first gained prominence in the 1930s, thought that the younger musicians were, ‘really trying to cover up a lack of musical knowledge and technique. I said so publicly, without naming names. There were a lot of guys who agreed with me but didn’t want to be quoted.’⁸⁹ Many musicians who had once been respected for decades felt the new attitudes promoted by free jazz rejected their experience and accumulated wisdom. Pianist Willie ‘The Lion’ Smith, who had dominated the New York scene in the 1920s, remarked, ‘The young musicians of today have strayed too far from the old masters...when you mention one of the older men’s names to the youngsters, they say, “Oh, he’s been around a long time.” Sure he’s been around a long time—it takes a long time to learn anything.’⁹⁰

In addition to the hostile reception within the community of jazz musicians, many in the press were weary of the militant political stance of many free jazz players. Much like bebop, free jazz musicians felt their musical innovations were not only a rejection of previous forms of jazz, but also a rejection of social expectations. In the case of free jazz, this was tied into political movements for freedom, and free jazz players claimed their collective improvisations were breaking the limitations on their expression imposed by Western music.⁹¹ Other connections were made between this free jazz improvisation, likening it as a return to African music or as a symbol of Black Power. In fact, saxophonist Archie Shepp wrote in a *New York Times* article in 1967 that the new jazz expressed much

⁸⁸Davis and Troupe, *Miles*, 251.

⁸⁹Hampton and Haskins, *Hamp*, 136.

⁹⁰Smith and Hofer, *Music on my Mind*, 287.

⁹¹Hersch, ‘Let Freedom Ring!’, 97-98.

of the anger of black community.⁹²

Many record companies and industry executives reacted negatively to both the music and its frequent representation of militant politics. Ornette Coleman's record label may have asserted the claim for another chapter in jazz history with album titles like *Something Else!!!!* (1958), *Tomorrow is the Question!* (1959), *Change of the Century* (1959), *The Shape of Jazz to Come* (1959) and *Free Jazz* (1960), but the 'old masters' were less politically controversial to promote and also retained wider marketability. Perhaps no artist proved this more than Louis Armstrong. After almost fifty years as a professional musician, Armstrong was to have one of the biggest hits in jazz history with his New Orleans style version of *Hello Dolly*, which in 1964 displaced the dominant British rock band the Beatles from the number one spot on the Billboard charts.⁹³ Armstrong had started out in New Orleans, helped innovate swing, survived bebop, hard bop and now free jazz.

Louis Armstrong was precisely what many industry executives were looking for. As young black musicians aligned their jazz with social reform and the avant garde, the artists who were willing to record new songs like *Hello Dolly* and continue to use old standards like *When It's Sleepy Time Down South* became an important counterbalance. Armstrong's generation had spent their entire careers without having the freedom to make politically assertive music and did not find in the climate of the 1960s reason to change. Successful festival appearances, international tours, and frequent access to mainstream media did not inspire radical changes, and Armstrong continued to play the same music he had been playing for decades. Others like Duke Ellington continued to produce new works, but relied on their old hit songs to bring in audiences and sell records.

Columbia Records development of Long Playing (LP) technology in 1948 had opened up sources of new revenue for older artists and their labels by expanding and reinvigorating the reissues market. LP records were over twenty minutes in length per side, as opposed to the three minutes on each side of a 78rpm disc, and thus enabled the production of

⁹²Shepp, 'Black Power and Black Jazz', J1.

⁹³Ward, *Jazz*, 436.

compilation albums of recordings that went back decades.⁹⁴ During the 1960s compilations particularly focused on older musicians whose extensive catalogue and large worldwide fan base made their records profitable. Contemporary ideas about the significance of jazz history were integral to the promotion and even existence of these reissues. The records released by the major record labels did not celebrate the most popular of early jazz band leaders, such as Paul Whiteman, but rather those whose technical and social influence had shaped the development of jazz. For many record companies and critics, support of Armstrong, Ellington, and the white contemporaries most influenced by their styles demonstrated past and current ties to Civil Rights and black equality without any politically undesirable militancy. Promotion of these musicians proved the willingness of record companies and the critical establishment to rewrite their own history in order to recognise the significant cultural contributions of early black innovators. The process of placing older musicians and records at the centre of jazz history also subtly undermined free jazz, for whom veneration of traditional musical and social styles was antithetical to the new practices and rhetoric of ‘freedom.’

Many of the older jazz musicians were still playing in the 1950s and 1960s, but as they became older they were less active and productive. This prompted a few record labels to build upon a system that had been first developed by impresario Norman Granz for his *Jazz at the Philharmonic* (JATP) series. Granz had begun in 1944 with a series of highly successful jam session style concerts that brought together many of the biggest names in jazz. Thereafter Granz periodically enlisted many of these stars for concerts all around the United States and eventually in Europe. The JATP enjoyed racially integrated audiences, even in the South, and Granz proved the social and fiscal profitability of such high profile collaborations between those who normally headlined their own shows.⁹⁵

The commercial potential for high-profile collaborations between famous musicians drew together many who had been competing against one another for their whole careers.

⁹⁴Mark Coleman, *Playback: From the Victrola to mp3, 100 years of music, machines, and money* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2005), 51-55.

⁹⁵For a list of selected recordings from Granz’s collaborations in the early 1950s, see the appendix ‘Norman Granz’s *Jam Sessions* Series’. See Jazz Discography Project, ‘Jazz Discography Project’ (URL: <http://www.jazzdisco.org/>) – visited on August 28, 2007.

Starting in the 1950s and continuing through the next decade, these records attempted to demonstrate the continuity of jazz history. The vast majority of these records utilised those who had achieved prominence through swing or bebop; however, a few of these collaborations drew in new, younger stars to work with their elders, such as Duke Ellington's work with John Coltrane, Charles Mingus and Max Roach.⁹⁶ Max Roach said of his and Mingus's collaboration with Ellington that 'We were supposed to be the hot young guys, but we were scrambling. Duke had that left-hand stride thing going, his real sharp sense of time. That was covering up the bass, and I was just playing broken time, because it was so strong.'⁹⁷ The resultant album, *Money Jungle*, shows Ellington's abilities were strong enough to guide and even control two young and self-confident musicians. Collaborative projects were not the main focus of band leaders like Ellington, Basie or Gillespie, but they provided a unique kind of marketing that complimented their other work and reinforced their position of influence.⁹⁸

The growing stature and reputation of older musicians, along with the continued appeal of their music and their political moderation, was perhaps best demonstrated in the nationalistic Cold War uses of jazz during the Civil Rights era. In the 1950s and 1960s the State Department chose jazz, because of its international popularity and example of racial integration, as a cultural export that could promote American values and goodwill toward America. The State Department sought politically and musically exemplary representatives of jazz, and began by asking Dizzy Gillespie to reassemble a big band. Eventually Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman and hundreds of others also served as official representatives of the United States, enjoying success in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and South America.⁹⁹

Working for the State Department during the Cold War extended the worldwide pop-

⁹⁶Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 242-244.

⁹⁷Gene Santoro, *Myself When I am Real: the life and music of Charles Mingus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 199.

⁹⁸Drum battles between famous drummers were also a popular phenomenon in the 1950s and 1960s, and included drummers such as Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Art Blakey, Max Roach, and Lionel Hampton. Some were released on records, such as Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich at JATP, *The Drum Battle* Verve MGV 8369 September 13, 1952. See 'Jazz Discography Project'.

⁹⁹Von Eschen, *Satchmo*.

ularity of these musicians and helped secure international commercial tours. These tours assisted older musicians facing declining opportunities to play domestically and at times contributed to a majority of their annual income.¹⁰⁰ By the 1960s the growing ease of international transport allowed for more frequent tours abroad. Many jazz bands that had existed for decades began touring abroad mainly for the higher profits and warm reception they enjoyed in places like Europe and Japan. Bassist Bill Crow recalled that during a tour of Japan in 1964 he met Duke Ellington's orchestra, as well as a coordinated tour that included Tommy Dorsey, Frank Sinatra, Gene Krupa, Dakota Staton, Red Nichols and his Five Pennies, the Dukes of Dixieland with Edmond Hall, Miles Davis, Wynton Kelly, Carmen McRae, J.J. Johnson, and Sleepy Matsumoto.¹⁰¹ Such international tours helped to extend the careers and the prestige of many who may not otherwise have been able to continue playing.

The popular and aesthetic appeal of older jazz musicians during the 1960s was nowhere more apparent than on television. While many more politically militant and artistically adventurous young black musicians were recording and going on tour, few were to be seen on television. Instead it was experienced stars like Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong who dominated the medium. Swing and traditional jazz accounted for more than half of the shows. The absence of free jazz was often conspicuous, as in the 1968 show *Jazz the Intimate Art*, a documentary about 'four of the most popular jazz artists of the era,' which featured Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, and Charles Lloyd. While they were certainly among the most popular jazz musicians at that time, they also represented swing, bebop, cool, and hard bop styles, respectively.¹⁰²

The prominence of older musicians naturally made them the continued focus of the music press. Significantly, many jazz critics were contemporaries of the established jazz musicians and were aging alongside them. Their opinions and attitudes were only partially

¹⁰⁰Some, like Sidney Bechet, moved permanently to Europe. Bechet et al., *Treat It Gentle*, 196.

¹⁰¹Bill Crow, *From Birdland to Broadway: scenes of a jazz life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 211. Much like the jazz festivals like Newport, the tour exhibited many different styles of jazz. Sinatra, Staton, and McRae were singers. The Dukes of Dixieland and Edmond Hall played traditional jazz. Dorsey, Krupa, and Nichols played swing. Davis, Kelly, Johnson, and Matsumoto played hard bop.

¹⁰²See Yanow, *Jazz on Film*, 7-8, 214-264.

influenced by the great changes in the social and musical environments around them. For instance, British emigrant and swing enthusiast Stanley Dance became an associate editor of *Jazz*, a magazine started in 1962 by fellow emigrant Dan Morgenstern.¹⁰³ In his article in the first edition entitled ‘News and Views,’ Dance mentioned Benny Goodman, Pee Wee Russell and Dickie Wells, Woody Herman, and Count Basie, who with the possible exception of Herman were either traditional or swing musicians. It is only later, almost as an afterthought, that Dance noted that Sonny Rollins and bassist Bob Cranshaw were recording with free jazz musicians Don Cherry and Billy Higgins.¹⁰⁴ In 1962, Dance had been a critic for almost thirty years and was a personal friend of swing musicians like Duke Ellington. Like Ellington, Stanley Dance remained one of the most famous names in jazz, and his comments were influential in sustaining the prestige of older musicians. At times, Dance had done this at the expense of free jazz, as in 1969 when he referred to the 1960s as a ‘disastrous [decade] in music generally.’¹⁰⁵

Creating the canon

As the 1960s went on and jazz decreased in popularity, the reissues, collaborations, governmental support, international tours, and television appearances created opportunities that not only kept musicians working but established them at home and abroad as spokesmen for a unique part of American history. In part, conferring this status to jazz musicians worked within a wider movement to rewrite American history in order to include black people and culture, but it was also shaped by the jazz industry’s attempt to create a sustainable market for jazz. By the 1970s the history of jazz had moved beyond being an endorsement for older musicians and had become a product itself. Going to see Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, Dizzy Gillespie, and other stars was to enjoy a piece of jazz history that was slowly dying out. This history was being shaped by a small group of critics and institutions interested in establishing a formal canon.

¹⁰³Other assistant editors were George Hoefer and Dan Priest.

¹⁰⁴Stanley Dance, ‘News and Reviews’, *Jazz* 1.1 (1962).

¹⁰⁵Stanley Dance, *The World of Duke Ellington* (New York: Da Capo, 1970), xiii.

After the Smithsonian Institute published Martin Williams and Ira Gitler's *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz* in 1973, the production of documentaries, television programmes, history books, oral histories, and autobiographies about jazz presented a more standardised version of jazz history than had ever existed in the industry.¹⁰⁶

The standardisation of jazz history started in the late 1960s, when black students and scholars began a campaign to challenge and rewrite an American history that had marginalised them.¹⁰⁷ They were beginning to fulfill the goals historian Arthur Schomburg had articulated in 1925: 'The American Negro must remake his past in order to make his future.'¹⁰⁸ The history of black music would be integral to this effort.¹⁰⁹ Seminarian Louis L. Knowles and political scientist Kenneth Prewitt illustrated the need for a revised history in their book, *Institutional Racism in America*, in which they analysed history textbooks used in California public schools in 1964:

While the authors of the books must know that there are Negroes in America and have been since 1619, they evidently do not care to mention them too frequently. In one book there is no account of slavery in the colonial period; in a second, there is not a single word about Negroes after the Civil War; in a third (composed of documents and substantive chapters) the narrative does not mention Negroes in any connection.¹¹⁰

Jazz provided an ideal counterpoint to such works. 'America's music' had been built by black musicians over the course of the century. It proved relatively easy to find a more sympathetic audience for jazz history since music was one of the few areas of American life in which black people were widely accepted, even in the South. Most significantly for

¹⁰⁶Williams and Gitler, *Classic Jazz*; Yanow, *Jazz on Film*. See also appendix, 'Jazz Autobiographies.'

¹⁰⁷See Murray's chapter entitled 'Black Studies and the aims of education' in Murray, *Omni-Americans*.

¹⁰⁸Arthur Schomburg, 'The Negro Digs Up His Past', in: Alain Locke, editor, *The New Negro* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 231.

¹⁰⁹The examples of black music's importance to their wider history in America goes back to black scholars such as Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and Frederick Douglass in his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), as well as white historians like Cleveland G Allen, 'Spreading the Gospel of Negro Music' in *Jazz in Print (1856-1929)*, ed. Karl Koenig (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2002).

¹¹⁰Louis L Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt, editors, *Institutional Racism in America* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 47-48.

American history, the pioneering efforts of jazz musicians in racial integration had made them some of the leading ‘race’ men and women of their day.

The importance of jazz in the revision of American history gave ideological and social relevance to the industry’s efforts to regain, or at least maintain, an audience for jazz. Interested critics, musicians and record executives alike joined in promoting the formation of a jazz canon that tried to take advantage of the established brand names of the business, including Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Dizzy Gillespie. Musicians had themselves already outlined a marketable canon, though this was in many respects not a deliberate effort. This outline could be derived from interviews and biographies that explored musicians’ opinions about the most influential players in jazz. For instance, in a typical interview, critic W. Royal Stokes said his conversation with Dexter Gordon ‘went on to consider, among other things, the principle influences upon Dexter, whom I knew to be Lester Young and Charlie Parker.’ Gordon contextualised these two influences as part of a progression, ‘I mean, you can hear a lot of Lester in Bird, but what Bird did, now, was to extend what Lester had been doing.’¹¹¹ In effect, Young’s playing had influenced Parker, and in turn both influenced the young Dexter Gordon.

Such accumulations of influences were often relatively easy to trace. In a chapter in his autobiography tellingly entitled ‘Jazz for Young People,’ Duke Ellington observed that ‘The story of jazz is a long list of great names, rather like those lists of kings and queens and presidents in history books. Divided up by instruments instead of countries, you can easily trace how the crown was passed down—and sometimes usurped.’ For the trumpet, Ellington suggested a list of names that included Buddy Bolden, Joe Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Cootie Williams, Roy Eldridge, Ray Nance, Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, Clifford Brown, and Miles Davis. He concluded that ‘Similar sequences of highly influential musicians, each with popular imitators, can be made for all other instruments.’¹¹² Dizzy Gillespie echoed this theory in his reference to the ‘kings’

¹¹¹W Royal Stokes, *The Jazz Scene: An informal history from New Orleans to 1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 61.

¹¹²Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 415. That Ellington’s list of trumpet kings ends at Miles Davis is telling for its publication in 1973. Clifford Brown died in 1956, so the crown seems to have rested with Davis for almost twenty years.

of jazz. Gillespie emphasised the uniqueness of each ‘king’ and declared that with their passing ‘you will never hear sounds like that again. Never in life will you hear such sounds again, live.’¹¹³

Motivations for constructing a jazz canon were different for musicians and critics. The musicians were eager to receive the enduring fame and commercial success that came with a place in the pantheon of jazz greats. Gillespie hailed Ellington and Parker as kings, but positioned himself alongside them: ‘That is the story of our music. It evolves and each age has its heroes. So I was the hero of the ‘40s, then somebody else would come for the ‘50s, another one for the ‘60s.’ Firmly establishing his place in the pantheon, Gillespie broadly asserted that he had influenced numerous subsequent jazz musicians, suggesting that, ‘the music of the ‘40s, the music of Charlie Parker and me, laid a foundation for all of the music that is being played now. So I feel very fine about that, you know, that you’ve been an influence for musicians to go further.’¹¹⁴

By the early years of the 1970s many older musicians who were facing lean times needed the boost that a place in jazz history would give them. As Lionel Hampton noted,

There was a time in the early seventies when jazz changed quite a bit, and it was hard for veterans—with the old sound—to get work. There were a bunch of kids around who weren’t as attentive as they should have been. They called John Coltrane old-fashioned. Some even said Charlie Parker couldn’t play. They were busy playing things in different keys. If you asked them what they were playing, they’d just say, ‘Man, this is freedom.’ They lost a lot, not having any respect for their predecessors.¹¹⁵

It was not long before Hampton was personally vindicated, finding fame again in the resurgent market encouraged by the establishment of a jazz canon. His place in the canon came from performances with Benny Goodman in the 1930s, and in the 1940s with his pioneering R&B band. These provided the basis for Hampton to regain popularity, and

¹¹³Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 185.

¹¹⁴Stokes, *Jazz Scene*, 64.

¹¹⁵Hampton and Haskins, *Hamp*, 160.

he found work reassembling the very bands that had made him famous.

Critics had a less obvious agenda in defining the jazz canon, though they enjoyed enormous influence in its creation. Ultimately, their writings had the most significant influence on defining its cultural and musical borders, and this sometimes generated animosity among musicians. This was especially the case with the younger generation of musicians, since many critics marginalised most of the jazz produced after the late 1960s by ending their histories with the development of hard bop. For instance, in an article for *Metronome* entitled 'The School of Jazz and the Acquisition of Things Past,' Martin Williams suggested that, 'in terms of the way jazz has developed, long enough to be called a tradition: King Oliver's early records and Sonny Rollins's late ones belong to a development that is obviously and legitimately all of a piece, but there is nevertheless a great deal that separates them.'¹¹⁶ Williams asserted his authority for defining and limiting jazz was based on concerns outside of the music itself, arguing that, 'an artist isn't a scholar and he does not have a scholar's way of looking at the past: to him it is not an object for study but living experience which also teaches him how to use his own talents.'¹¹⁷ For Williams, the scholar's more impersonal approach lent a degree of objectivity and practicality that was by necessity inaccessible to the artist.

The implications and reasoning behind such exclusive definitions of the jazz canon were played out in the arguments between critics in the 1970s. Some critics started to compare the model of support and institutionalisation enjoyed by classical music to jazz, opening up discussions of jazz's cultural value, national significance, and commercial structure. The introduction of such support had different requirements and conventions for the wider industry, and was by its nature far more conservative in its aesthetics and presentation. It was for this reason that free jazz and 'fusion' were frequently excluded, despite their commercial success.¹¹⁸ They were seen as counter-productive when trying to

¹¹⁶Oliver's peaked in popularity in the early 1920s, while Sonny Rollins' style fully developed in the late 1950s. Although Williams was a supporter of free jazz, his work overwhelmingly supports the styles that were developed before.

¹¹⁷Martin Williams, 'The School of Jazz and the Acquisition of Things Past', 1.

¹¹⁸Free jazz ceased using formal structures such as bars, keys, and arrangements and so relied on abstract collective improvisation. Fusion gained its name from the combination of jazz and rock elements

portray jazz as a definitively American art form. Thus, winning support for institutions for jazz became more important to their advocates than acknowledging the depth and breadth of its forms. The primary interest was in preserving music they considered highly important to twentieth century culture, but that was becoming economically unviable or quite literally lost as musicians and bands passed away.

The work of jazz historians in the 1970s was given added urgency by the advancing age of many leading musicians. In 1972 the Smithsonian Institute responded by inaugurating the *Jazz Oral History Project* (JOHP) with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).¹¹⁹ As oral histories were collected over the years, they added to jazz history by giving first-person accounts of the music, the industry, and the world around the musicians. At the same time, book publishers showed a similar interest by publishing musicians' autobiographies, especially those of black musicians. An unprecedented expansion of publishing began in the 1970s that has continued until the present day.¹²⁰ Many of these books were little more than polished versions of the JOHP interviews that had been transcribed and edited into a final 'autobiography.'

Publication of these autobiographies gave the musicians a voice in jazz history, but the scope of that history was limited by the editing as well as the choice of whose stories were published. Since most of the musicians preferred to work with a ghost writer, the books were influenced by that writer's interests. For example, New Orleans bassist Pops Foster's autobiography devoted 164 of its 199 pages to his early career in New Orleans and the 1920s, even though Foster's career lasted until the late 1960s. The same could be said of Dizzy Gillespie, Willie 'The Lion' Smith, or Sidney Bechet.¹²¹ Moreover, almost all of the

it employed. The crowning successes of fusion sold many times over the more traditional forms of jazz, with Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew* (1969) and Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters* (1973) albums becoming two of the most successful albums in jazz history—although their status as jazz music has been disputed.

¹¹⁹In 1980, the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey, became the repository for the 122 taped and transcribed interviews collected until the project's end in 1984. In 1992, a new collaboration reactivated the project and expanded its scope as the Jazz Oral History Programme. See 'Jazz Exhibits'.

¹²⁰A survey of the books demonstrates a significant increase in the proportion of black musicians being published after 1970—50% (6/12) of those published before 1970 were of black musicians, as opposed to 76% (31/41) of those published after, including 90% of those published during the 1970s. See appendix, 'Jazz Autobiographies.'

¹²¹Gillespie spends 402 out of 502 pages up until Parker's death (the symbolic end to bebop), Smith

autobiographies were by musicians associated with hard bop or its stylistic predecessors, including a large proportion of traditional jazz musicians. By marginalising free jazz and fusion musicians, these newer areas of jazz history were tacitly acknowledged to be less significant than those that had preceded them.

These formal boundaries of jazz history were reinforced by work undertaken by the Smithsonian Institute to publish a jazz canon. Smithsonian-supported critics Martin Williams and Ira Gitler issued the *Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz* in 1973.¹²² This volume collected what they regarded as the definitive recordings of jazz. The book's selections were also arranged according to an evolutionary model of styles, which had characterised jazz history since the 1940s.¹²³ While not a book with a large general readership, it was influential within the jazz industry, where history opened up commercial opportunities.

This can be seen in the employment of older musicians on television throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Dizzy Gillespie remained the most common subjects of jazz history.¹²⁴ In fact, musicians who were born in the nineteenth century were more likely to be featured than those who were born in the 1940s and 1950s; included among those featured in the 1970s and 1980s television specials was a performance from Eubie Blake, who was born in 1887. Younger musicians like Keith

about 240 of 294 until the end of the swing era, and Bechet 159 out of 219 until his temporary retirement during the Depression in 1934. See Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*; Smith and Hofer, *Music on my Mind*; Bechet et al., *Treat It Gentle*.

¹²²Williams and Gitler, *Classic Jazz*. Following the critical success of this volume, along with recording compilations, two revised editions were printed in 1987 and 1997. Despite fourteen years in between the first and second edition, the only recording listed after 1960 is the World Saxophone Quartet's *Steppin'* from 1981. Martin Williams and Ira Gitler, *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz: revised edition* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1987), 90.

¹²³Scholars who promulgate an evolution of jazz styles contend that, starting with New Orleans, the subsequent styles of jazz evolved from their predecessors through some internal logic. For more on the role of this theory in jazz history, see Krin Gabbard, 'Introduction: The Jazz Canon and its Consequences' in *Jazz Among the Discourses*.

¹²⁴Examples include: *The Boy from New Orleans* (1970)-Louis Armstrong documentary; *A Salute to Louis Armstrong* (1972)-from 70th birthday concert at the Newport Jazz Festival; *All Star Swing Festival* (1972)-Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Dave Brubeck, Count Basie, Benny Goodman Quartet reunion, Louis Armstrong tribute with Dizzy Gillespie, Max Kaminsky and more; *Memories of Eubie* (1979)-PBS special for Eubie Blake, who was 96 at the time; *Jazz in America* (1981)-Dizzy Gillespie. See Yanow, *Jazz on Film*, 214-264.

Jarrett, John McLaughlin, Chick Corea and Pat Metheny, who came to prominence in the later twentieth century, were excluded from such television programmes.¹²⁵ Even though they were among the most popular jazz musicians of the final decades of the twentieth century, the jazz history comprised of film, autobiographies, published canons and critical histories remained heavily focused on their elders.

The proliferation of materials about jazz could not solve one of the most difficult problems concerning its history. Given that improvisation is central to jazz, there was a need to preserve the live sound of previous generations. One of the leading jazz critics trying to solve this problem was Martin Williams. In a 1970 *New York Times* article Williams mentioned ‘indications and rumours in the air that one of our Cultural Centres or Performing Arts Centres is about to “do something about jazz” (as it is usually put).’ Williams suggested that the Lincoln Centre in New York, or an equivalent cultural institution, should hire a full time jazz director, establish permanent repertory bands, and commission new jazz compositions. One of the primary goals of the permanent bands would be the creation of a repertory of ‘great jazz scores, arrangements, and even performances of the past [from transcriptions]...There is a rich heritage on records eminently worthy of being kept in active performance. And I can see no better way of preserving and performing it, or of presenting it to present and future generations.’¹²⁶

While such repertory bands and institutions directly related the historical importance of jazz musicians to their place in the industry, this was a practice that had many significant precedents since the late 1930s. In effect, the traditional revivalists’ exclusive privileging of the 1920s repertoire and style was itself an act of ‘preservation.’ However, preservation was not the only way in which history was used in the industry, since many identified a history of jazz to present themselves as the most progressive of its musicians, socially and musically. That musicians and writers have not engaged with this type of progression since the 1960s shows many in the industry see this use of history as an unnecessary commercial risk compared to the increasingly standardised canon.

¹²⁵Jarrett was born in 1945, McLaughlin in 1942, Corea in 1941 and Metheny in 1954.

¹²⁶Martin Williams, ‘What to Do About Jazz in Our August Cultural Centres?’ *New York Times* January 25, 1970’.

Chapter 3

Identifying jazz as a uniquely American music

Or again, patriotic souls have long been pointing to our native Indian and Negro idioms and their developments as an incipient national music of promise. This latter way lies jazz, a lusty infant of a decade or so, indigenous, clearly revealing in certain prominent features its American origin. Mention of its possible significance for American music or for music in general is almost certain to precipitate heated, if not illuminating discussion. The musical historian of the future will doubtless find his bête noire in this inescapable task of evaluating jazz. Indeed, many of its contemporaries there be who execrate the “stuff” as inebriate, doggerel, degenerate, ghoulish, velturine, etc. ad infinitum—music, or as not music at all, bearing inherent frailties which spell its own ephemerality. Its enthusiastic devotees see in its local generation and popular cultivation the very best attestation of its truly representative American character, and from its study would derive invaluable leading as to the direction which a national music should take. Those holding a middle ground discover in it some elements of permanent value and certain developments which must be counted as real contributions towards the progress of music.

Paul Fritz Laubenstein, 1929¹

¹Laubenstein, ‘Jazz: debit and credit’, 606.

Defining jazz as a uniquely American music started in the early twentieth century amidst a public debate over a national cultural identity. This debate was started by journalists, academics, and artists looking for art forms to represent national achievements and promise.² The spirituals and ragtime, both acknowledged forms of black music, were put forward as representative because of their aesthetic of freedom and their improvisation, harmony, melody, and timbre.³ However, it took the commercial success of jazz to earn black musical forms sustained recognition.⁴ By the end of the 1920s, jazz had achieved acclaim around the world, defined a modern American aesthetic, and lent its name to an era through writer F. Scott Fitzgerald as the ‘Jazz Age.’⁵

Although these qualities were essential to identifying jazz as American, jazz still needed a popular base in order to achieve recognition as representative of American culture. This process began when white dance bands adopted jazz as music that was at once artistic, danceable, and commercially successful. Pioneered by band leaders like Paul White- man, symphonic jazz brought ‘hot’ black music together with classical composition and arrangements to take advantage of the best qualities of both popular and ‘high art’ music.⁶ Symphonic jazz bands bridged the divide between dances and concert halls, establishing jazz as music representative of America in the opinions of many critics, dancers, and musicians alike, in America and abroad.⁷ Much of this success came from their efforts

²Levy, ‘Search for Identity’; Nicholas M Evans, *Writing Jazz* (London: Garland Publishing, 2000), 25.

³W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover Publications, 1994), 156; Kelly Mod- erwell, ‘A Modest Proposal’ *Seven Arts* (July 1917) in *Jazz in Print (1856-1929)*, ed. Karl Koenig (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2002) 116.

⁴“‘Jazz’ the National Anthem’ *Musical Courier* (May 4, 1922); ‘Jazz, the Present-Day Live Issue in the Development of American Music’ *Metronome* (May 1922); ‘Meyer Davis Thinks Jazz Symbolic of America’ *Metronome* (September 1923); ‘Is Jazz “The American Soul”?’ *Musical America* (November 24, 1923); ‘The National Music Fallacy—Is American Music to Rest on a Foundation of Ragtime & Jazz?’ *Arts & Decoration* (February 1924); ‘Jazz is Assuming National Prominence as an American Music Idiom’ *Musical Digest* (November 23, 1926) in *Jazz in Print*.

⁵Fitzgerald is normally accredited with title. He named his short story collection from 1922 *Tales of the Jazz Age* and a 1931 short story ‘Echoes of the Jazz Age.’ This is a common term for the years between the end of World War I in 1918 and the stock market crash of 1929.

⁶Vallée, *Vagabond Dreams*, 85-86; Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: the emergence of the cultural hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 244-245.

⁷Clarice Lorentz, ‘Jazz—the Newest Musical Phenomenon’ in *Jazz in Print*, 327; Kenneth S. Clark, ‘Of Interest to Composers’ in *Jazz in Print*, 212; Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 103.

to alleviate the concerns of parents and social organisations who worried that jazz was corrupting America's youth. One of the primary ways of reassuring the public was to distance themselves in musical style and public image from black performers, such as Louis Armstrong. By the end of the 1920s, white and black bands had created such a variety of commercially successful styles of jazz that jazz became synonymous with American popular music.⁸

Views of jazz as a uniquely American form of music did not change substantially until after World War II when the music lost much of its popularity. Black musicians became the most famous practitioners of jazz for the first time, and bebop emerged as the dominant style, taking the music in new if less popular directions.⁹ The attention of the jazz industry focused on black innovators throughout the Civil Rights era of the following decades, and it was these musicians who eventually changed how jazz figured as an American music. Having not previously had a substantial voice in print or in academic studies of jazz, the emergence of first-person narratives by black musicians in the 1970s helped transform the understanding of jazz from representing American popular culture in general to representing black American experience in particular.¹⁰ It became clear that jazz was experienced differently by black musicians, whose social institutions and practices had formed much of its music and culture.¹¹

Celebrating jazz as a uniquely black American experience created a backlash amongst white musicians and concerned critics who thought that such a position did not properly describe the breadth of the jazz industry.¹² Such a conflict was perhaps inevitable, as jazz had been placed in a contradictory position since the 1920s, when the white musicians who popularised jazz had rejected many of its black musical forms and associations. Recent

⁸Vallée, *Vagabond Dreams*, 163-164; Isham Jones, 'American Dance Music is not Jazz' *Étude* (August 1924) in *Jazz in Print*, 336.

⁹DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop*; Ward, *Jazz*, 336; Reisner, 'Bird', 9; Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 223.

¹⁰Charles Tolliver quoted in Arthur Taylor, *Notes and Tones: musician-to-musician interviews* (London: Quartet, 1983), 220; Max Roach quoted in *ibid.*, 110.

¹¹Quincy Jones, *Q: the autobiography of Quincy Jones* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 285; Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 291.

¹²Collier, *American Theme Song*, 221-222; Gene Lees, 'Jazz black and white' in: *Riffs and Choruses*, ed. Andrew Clark (New York: Continuum, 2001).

histories have decided to take the position that jazz is a black American art form and have consequently dismissed the white bands who first popularised jazz as not even playing jazz at all.¹³ These histories commonly portray both the popularity and artistic recognition of jazz alongside the black creators of the music, though both of these accolades mainly belonged to white bands that are now all but ignored.¹⁴ This perspective on jazz seeks to divide musicological and aesthetic considerations about jazz from its place in American culture and in the process revises the history of racism within the music industry and the morals and taste of the American public. Louis Armstrong might have had the respect of his fellow musicians and cadre of fans, but it was Paul Whiteman's symphonic jazz that initially dominated the industry, gained the most respect for its 'art' amongst American critics, and shaped the musical tastes of a majority of Americans.

Musicology

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, journalists, musicians, and academics tried to identify a particularly American music, as part of a larger 'desire for national identifiability.'¹⁵ This reached a peak in the 1920s when music critic Charles Buchanan claimed 'Possibly, the most peculiar and arresting phenomenon that the heterogeneous art activities of this country have brought forth is the wide-spread idea, amounting almost to an obsession, that American painting and music must create and express themselves exclusively through the medium of an unmistakably national idiom.'¹⁶ For music to be identifiably American it had to possess unique musical traits, represent America's cul-

¹³Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 192; Hadlock, *Jazz Masters of the Twenties*.

¹⁴Miller, 'Corrected Manuscript for *The Best Jazz 1967*', 111-112.

¹⁵Alan Levy begins his study with the 1890s. See Levy, 'Search for Identity'. According to Gerald Early, these debates were centred around 'a conflict occurring about the racial origins and the racial future of the American self.' See Gerald Early, 'Pulp and Circumstance: The Story of Jazz in High Places' in *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture*, ed. Robert O'Meally (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 411-413. Nicholas Evans stated, 'The debates about jazz that emerged circa WWI were conditioned by broader, turn-of-the-century debates about national cultural identity and music's role in defining it.' See Evans, *Writing Jazz*, 25.

¹⁶Charles L. Buchanan, 'The National Music Fallacy—Is American Music to Rest on a Foundation of Ragtime and Jazz?' *Arts and Decoration* (February 1924), in *Jazz in Print*, 147.

ture and values, and also enjoy some popularity among musicians and audiences alike. Although a majority of journalists and conservatory-trained musicians thought only classical music was worthy of consideration, some turned to various forms of black American music such as the spirituals, ragtime, and jazz.

Proponents of the latter described black music's improvisation and distinct rhythm, timbre, harmony and melody as having originated in America and as representing its multi-racial, modern society.¹⁷ However, even some from this sympathetic group saw the spirituals, ragtime, and jazz as primitive forms from which a true American music, employing the values and practices of classical European styles, would emerge. For instance, an article in the April 1918 *New Music Review* commended the spirituals because the composers '[Samuel] Coleridge-Taylor and [Antonín] Dvořák thought well enough of the Negro folk-songs to employ them in different forms.'¹⁸ In fact, by the turn of the century the spirituals had already gained popularity as 'the folk songs of America.'¹⁹ Even if popular interest in the spirituals was waning at that time, there was sustained interest among those concerned with its place in American music. In 1916 the musical journal *Choir Leader* quoted influential music critic and musicologist Henry Edward Krehbiel, who enthusiastically described spirituals with much the same language that would be attached to ragtime and jazz: 'They had a nerve-exciting rhythmical swing that led the congregation to self-hypnotise themselves and often produced cataleptic trances.' Krehbiel believed that spirituals were simultaneously black and universally American, created by a process that was made possible by the contact between the different cultures: 'The susceptible African took these [Methodist] white "spirituals" and gave them a racial twist

¹⁷For a comprehensive musicological discussion of these elements, see Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 3-62. Schuller also lists 'form' as an important element, but this is not as commonly emphasised.

¹⁸Harvey B. Gaul, 'Negro Spirituals' in *Jazz in Print*, 124. Much has been made of Dvořák's residence in America, where he was expected to cultivate an American music. He famously looked to black Americans for inspiration. See Harry Farjeon, 'Rag-Time', *The Musical Times* 65.979 (September 1, 1924), 796-797.

¹⁹Jeanette Robinson Murphy, 'The Survival of African Music in America' *Popular Science Monthly* (September 1899) in *Jazz in Print*, 54. At times such favour was reluctantly given: 'We find, therefore, that the great majority of us are merely the audience as far as American folk-songs are concerned, and that the greater part of our folk-tunes really belong to only certain portions of our population with whom we never wish to be joined by ties of blood.' See Howard, 'Our Folk Music', 170.

and so evolved the Negro “spiritual.”²⁰ Descriptions of the exciting rhythms produced by this combination of African and European musical forms were common amongst musicological studies of the spirituals and succeeding forms and these were interpreted as evidence of the uniquely American character of black music.

However, the spirituals did not achieve the popularity necessary to convince contemporaries that they were *the* American music, embracing all aspects of American society and culture. Since they were primarily found in churches and sung by both choirs and congregations, the spirituals normally had little connection to the practices, profits and concerns of the entertainment industry. Commercially, they could only be performed in concert settings in small halls or churches and this limited their popularity and revenue, especially since the spirituals were most often performed for free and were not intended to support a professional class of musicians. The particularly racial character of the spirituals also made their work economically unviable on a large scale. This quality was noted by musicologist Natalie Burlin, who was both impressed by the power of the spirituals and convinced of the depth of their inherently racial character: ‘I touched upon something that class-rooms and concert-halls rarely hold, nothing less than the primitive essence of untaught and unteachable creative art.’²¹ In the first decades of the twentieth century, participation of white musicians was essential if a musical form was to have a truly national impact, and the infrastructure necessary to teach white musicians the vocal techniques and rhythms of the black choirs was simply non-existent. As an ‘unteachable’ music, the spirituals had to have their most significant musical contribution as an influence on black musicians and singers, and on those classical composers who heard and employed the genre in their own works.

The non-commercial focus of the spirituals did, however, contribute to discussions about the ways in which black music represented America. Black political leaders were drawn to the spirituals for their message of perseverance and self-respect. As W.E.B. Du

²⁰Henry Edward Krehbiel quoted in ‘The Origin of the Negro Spirituals’ in *Jazz in Print*, 111. Krehbiel wrote one of the first books on black American music. See Henry Edward Krehbiel, *Afro-American folksongs : a study in racial and national music* (New York: GP Puntams Sons, 1914).

²¹Natalie Curtis Burlin, ‘Negro Music at Birth’, *Musical Quarterly* 5.1 (1919), 127.

Bois claimed in his 1903 book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, the social life of the black community produced its particularly American character and was reflected in the spirituals: ‘And so by fateful chance the Negro folk song—the rhythmic cry of the slave—stands today not simply as the sole American music, but as the most beautiful expression of human experience born this side the seas.’²² The human experience they related was a paradoxical mix of pain, hope, and deliverance. These all served Du Bois’ conception of black culture well and allowed him to position black people’s striving for freedom in the context of larger American ideals. Du Bois made this relationship explicit: ‘there are today no truer exponents of the pure human spirit of the Declaration of Independence than the American Negroes...we black men seem the sole oasis of simple faith and reverence in a dusty desert of dollars and smartness.’²³ Most importantly, the music and the strivings for freedom were irrevocably connected: ‘Through all the Sorrow Songs there breathes a hope—a faith in the ultimate justice of things...that sometime, somewhere, men will judge men by their souls and not their skins.’²⁴

Other writers also promoted this connection between freedom and black musical forms over the years that followed. The content of these could be widely different in nature, but the premise remained the same—integral to black culture was a deep yearning to be free. Even in an article that derogatorily dismissed blacks as ‘a child race’ that shows promise in ‘the long path of human evolution,’ black music nonetheless ‘voiced their love of freedom.’²⁵ As musicologist Natalie Burlin pointed out, the reasons for this were simple: ‘For this music sprang from men who best know how to value freedom, and I feel that their songs, as well as their lives, are their immortal gifts to Freedom’s cause.’²⁶ Although the redemptive lyrical content of the spirituals allowed for literal references to this hope

²²Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 156. Du Bois used the term Sorrow Songs to convey a general sense of black folk music, but particularly the spirituals, which were most supported by the intellectuals of the time.

²³Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 7.

²⁴Ibid., 162.

²⁵John Tasker Howard, Jr., ‘Capturing the Spirit of the Real Negro Music’ *The Musician* (March 1919) in *Jazz in Print* 130.

²⁶Howard, ‘Capturing’ 130. These comments are echoed by others, as from Harvey Gaul, ‘The Negro had something to sing about and filled his songs with the desire for freedom.’ Gaul, ‘Negro Spirituals’ 124.

in justice, they shared aesthetic qualities with other forms of black music.

Critical praise for the freedom inherent in black music continued with the popularisation of ragtime. Like the spirituals before it, ragtime also earned the praise and support of the European composers for being an innovative and distinct American music. American classical critics and musicians consequently held great amount of resentment, as their music did not often receive such attention. Their frustration was noted in a 1917 article in *Seven Arts* magazine: ‘There is a large professional class in this country devoted to the business of complaining that American music is given no recognition.’²⁷ According to the author, these complaints were best answered by distinguished foreigners not subject to the same biases, ‘Such distinguished visitors as Ernest Bloch and Percy Grainger are delighted and impressed by American ragtime; foreign peoples accord it a jolly respect. Only the native-born, foreign-educated musician scorns and deplores it.’²⁸ The problem was essentially being able to respect black vernacular culture as much as its European classical counterparts: ‘Why should the self-respecting singer be ashamed to sing the dialect of Sixth Avenue any more than the dialect of Kipling’s English Tommy? Is a dialect “literature” when its home is across the ocean, and “vulgarity” when its home is around the corner?’²⁹ Despite the adamant appeals of its opponents, the greater commercial potential of ragtime allowed it far greater significance in American music than spirituals.

Ragtime supported a large class of professional musicians as well as producing commercially successful commodities such as sheet music and player piano rolls.³⁰ Part of this commercial success came from ragtime’s involvement with popular social phenomena like dancing. The integral link between dancing and ragtime was demonstrated by the English couple Vernon and Irene Castle, who became the most popular dancers in the United States. The Castles employed black band leader James Reese Europe to provide ragtime

²⁷Moderwell, ‘Proposal’ 116.

²⁸Ibid., 117. A majority of the classically trained musicians in America studied in Europe in the early twentieth century because there were few conservatories in the US. See Levy, ‘Search for Identity’, 72.

²⁹Moderwell, ‘Proposal’ 117.

³⁰The player piano, or pianola, was a piano that essentially played itself and was patented in 1902. It was powered by suction, pumped by foot pedals, programmed by tiny perforations on interchangeable rolls of paper, and played by felt-tipped wooden fingers pressing the keys. Coleman, *Playback*, 4-5.

music for their performances.³¹ His work with the Castles, in addition to the syncopation of his ragtime music, made him one of the most successful dance band leaders in New York City and gained his Clef Club Orchestra a performance at Carnegie Hall in 1912. Europe's band impressed the audience at this prestigious venue despite the racial barrier, in part because his music appeared particularly American. According to one concert reviewer for the *New York Age*, this performance was a success: 'I was forced to conclude that despite the adverse criticism of many who are unable to play it that syncopation is truly a native product—a style of music of which the Negro is originator, but which is generally popular with all Americans.'³²

The success that black music enjoyed as an American music led many white musicians to perceive it as a threat to the status they enjoyed in a racially segregated music industry. For instance, white musician Eugene De Bueris asked in a letter to the *The Globe* newspaper in 1915, 'Why should a famous dancing couple [the Castles] prefer a Negro orchestra for their dancing exhibitions? Even the New York hotels are now beginning to discard the white musician for the Negro. It will not be long before the poor white musician will be obliged to blacken his face to make a livelihood or starve.'³³ In response to De Bueris' complaint, black intellectual and artist James Weldon Johnson reflected the self-confident attitude encouraged by black music's popular success:

There are good and sufficient reasons why Negro musicians are preferred at social affairs. Modern music and modern dancing are both Negro creations...In a way, Mr De Bueris is right when he says that white musicians can play ragtime as well as Negro musicians; that is, white musicians can play exactly what is put down on paper. But Negro musicians are able to put into the

³¹The Castles promoted widely accepted dances based on forms often coming from the black community, from which they removed the elements that were condemned for their suggestive or immoral nature. With such a basis in dance, the accompaniment of black music/musicians was an logical choice.

³²Carnegie Hall was a bastion of classical music and catered to upper class white audiences. The acceptance of a black ragtime orchestra was thus an epochal occasion. Review quoted in Lester A Walton, LH White; AWK and Lucien H White, 'Black-Music Concerts in Carnegie Hall, 1912-1915', *The Black Perspective in Music* 6.1 (1978), 75.

³³James Weldon Johnson, 'The Poor White Musician', in *Black on White: black writers on what it means to be white*, ed. David Roediger (New York: Schocken Books, 1998), 168-169.

music something that can't be put on paper; a certain abandon which seems to enter the blood of the dancers, and that is the answer to Mr De Bueris' question, that is the secret, that is why Negro musicians are preferred.³⁴

Johnson's response stressed three essential points that eventually became dominant issues in discussions of black music: that modern American dance and ragtime were both products of black culture, that black musicians and dancers were the most skillful practitioners, and that the attempts by white musicians to copy these skills could not be entirely successful. These points were made not only to defend the professional advancement of black musicians, but to publicly celebrate black music and its place in American popular culture. This recognition was one of the most important factors in breaking down the racial barriers that prevented black musicians from participating in various aspects of the music industry.

The praise for black music being uniquely American music increased with the immense success of jazz, which far surpassed that of the spirituals and ragtime.³⁵ While jazz had its first commercial success in the 1917 recording of *Livery Stable Blues* by the white Original Dixieland Jazz Band (ODJB), it was built upon the same elements of black music as its predecessors. Consequently, it enjoyed wide recognition by audiences and critics as a product of black culture. Like its predecessors, jazz became venerated in America and abroad as a uniquely American music, adding the polyphonic structure popularised by the ODJB and other New Orleans bands to the admired qualities of improvisation and unique rhythm, timbre, harmony and melody. The various ways in which these qualities were employed gave jazz a commercial versatility well beyond the religious music of the spirituals and the more constricted rhythms and improvisations of ragtime. In fact, by the 1920s jazz quickly began developing a wide variety of forms, including stride piano

³⁴Johnson, 'White Musician' 168-169.

³⁵A sample of newspaper headlines is telling of this conflict: "'Jazz' the National Anthem" *Musical Courier* (May 4, 1922); 'Jazz, the Present-Day Live Issue in the Development of American Music' *Metronome* (May 1922); 'Meyer Davis Thinks Jazz Symbolic of America' *Metronome* (September 1923); 'Is Jazz "The American Soul"?' *Musical America* (November 24, 1923); 'The National Music Fallacy—Is American Music to Rest on a Foundation of Ragtime & Jazz?' *Arts & Decoration* (February 1924); 'Jazz is Assuming National Prominence as an American Music Idiom' *Musical Digest* (November 23, 1926) in *Jazz in Print*.

that descended from ragtime, New Orleans bands, big bands that relied heavily upon arrangements, and society dance bands that played a jazz-inflected style of popular music. All were considered part of the genre.³⁶

As a form of modern culture consumable through a wide variety of media, jazz also gained recognition as American music due to its appeal to a broad cross section of the American population, regardless of divisions of race and class. However, diversity amongst jazz audiences did not imply that they experienced the music in the same fashion. The patrons of a Paul Whiteman concert at the segregated and prestigious Aeolian Hall would not likely be listening to the jazz played in after hours speakeasies in Harlem. Nevertheless, certain musicians were able to cross the boundaries, such as the pianist Willie ‘The Lion’ Smith, who played everywhere from brothels to the private parties of rich white patrons. Smith recalled going around New York City with fellow pianist Fats Waller: ‘Fats and I got in on every kind of party you can think of, ranging from society on Park to the United States fleet at Brooklyn,’ where the musicians ‘had to leave through the back window when the sailors got in trouble with the local boys because they were taking over the home-town girls.’³⁷ This made the improvisational qualities of jazz a great asset, as the same stock tunes could be played to in different ways to accommodate different tastes, from the virtuosic and competitive to the radio friendly or ‘low-down.’

Such versatility allowed jazz to achieve unprecedented commercial success in developing media such as radio and records in America, Europe and as far afield as Russia, China and Australia. The breadth of styles in jazz, and hence the difficulty of focused musical definition and criticism, led to more general assessments of the music. Writers praised the music’s ‘vitality’ for winning so many adherents across the breadth of American society and beyond: one writer in *Current Opinion* enthused that ‘American music at this mo-

³⁶Stride pianists usually played solo and were exemplified by artists such as Willie ‘The Lion’ Smith. New Orleans bands were normally five member combos built on collective improvisation and polyphony, typified by bands like the ODJB. The early big bands (usually from ten to sixteen members) led by Jelly Roll Morton and Fletcher Henderson necessitated the use of arrangements but also relied on improvisation. The society dance bands are no longer commonly perceived as being jazz, but at the time were identified as such and were instrumental to its dispersion. Such bands were typified by Paul Whiteman’s.

³⁷Smith and Hoefer, *Music on my Mind*, 228.

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ment is sweeping the world and its progress is due not to any artificial characteristic but to certain elemental melodic and rhythmic features which have given musical vitality to all who listen to them.³⁸ This quality of vitality once again played a complementary part in the rise of dancing and therefore the popularity of the hedonistic lifestyles associated with the speakeasies of Prohibition America and nightclubs of urban post-war Europe.

Just as the spirituals represented ideas of freedom, in the 1920s the descriptions of jazz represented a way of coping with the fast-paced and chaotic modern world. In one such description, the conductor Leopold Stokowski identified the musical forms of jazz as representative of American culture in particular, and that of a post-war world more generally, 'In America lies the future of music. Amid the chaos, the nebulous uncertainty, the constant ferment of new thoughts, new modes of expression through which the art of music is today drifting, America stands out as the hope of the world.' Resisting the dismissal of jazz as a fad in a culture obsessed with novelty and change, Stokowski insisted, 'Jazz has come to stay. It is an expression of the times, of the breathless, energetic, super-active times in which we are living, and it is useless to fight against it.'³⁹ Songwriter Irving Berlin agreed, arguing 'it is the rhythmic beat of our everyday lives. Its swiftness is interpretive of our verve and speed and ceaseless activity. When commuters no longer rush for trains, when taxicabs pause at corners, when business men take afternoon siestas, then, perhaps, jazz may pass.'⁴⁰ Musical expressions of chaos actually complemented those of freedom, as freedom and improvisation were seen as key abilities in the constantly changing modern world.

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Jazz had created a sizable conflict throughout the 1920s over whether or not it embodied American values and was thus a truly American music. However, even among those who supported jazz, the question remained of determining its artistic and cultural status.

³⁸'Jazz and Ragtime' 147.

³⁹'Stokowski Declares in Favour of "Jazz"' *Musical Observer* (April 24, 1924) in *Jazz in Print*, 302.

⁴⁰'Say Jazz Will Surely Live' *New York Times* (January 16, 1924) in *Jazz in Print*, 270.

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The divide between classical music as high art and popular music was one that played a significant role in the production and consumption of both forms.⁴¹ These categories were fundamental to determining venues, record labels, advertising, and remuneration for musicians. Thus record companies limited popular music recordings, including jazz, to three minutes, because of the physical limitations of the record itself.⁴² However, because classical music had developed before the advent of such technology, record companies imposed no such limitations and instead used the required amount of discs required to record the entire piece.⁴³ Besides the significant differences in the industry, high art and popular music were seen by contemporaries as having contrary cultural value. In an assessment typical of many articles on jazz from the early 1920s, composer and pianist Percy Grainger noted the differences between the categories:

The public likes Jazz because of the shortness of its forms and its slender mental demands upon the hearer. No music is ever really popular which is too long or too complicated. On the other hand, length and the ability to handle complicated music are invariable characteristics of really great genius...Therefore, the laws which govern Jazz and other popular music can never govern music of the greatest depth or the greatest importance. I do not wish to belittle Jazz or other popular music...but there will always exist between the best popular music and classical music that same distinction that there is between a perfect farmhouse and a perfect cathedral.⁴⁴

Although Grainger and many other classical musicians tried to keep this distinction clear, there was a significant movement in the 1920s of musicians who tried to blur this boundary in order to take advantage of the benefits of both categories. These musicians were

⁴¹For an extended discussion on this divide, see William Howard Kenney, 'Historical Context and the Definition of Jazz: Putting more of the History in "Jazz History"', in: Krin Gabbard, editor, *Jazz Among the Discourses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 110-111.

⁴²Coleman, *Playback*, 1.

⁴³The term record 'album' comes from these early classical recordings, which required several records and were therefore collected and sold as book-like albums.

⁴⁴Percy Grainger, 'What Effect is Jazz Likely to Have Upon the Music of the Future?' *Étude* (September 1924) in *Jazz in Print*, 353.

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indispensable in the propagation of jazz and its acceptance as art, but, paradoxically, they accomplished this by rejecting many of the musical traits that had initially characterised jazz and black music.

While jazz began to earn widespread acceptance by many musicians and journalists in the early 1920s, this music simultaneously faced musical, moral, and racial opposition that created considerable pressures within the industry. Jazz was still characterised as black music, and so journalists largely affiliated it with the cabarets, sporting houses, speakeasies, theatres, and various other places that were accessible to black musicians who faced segregation elsewhere. The aesthetics of jazz, rightly or wrongly, were therefore associated with activities that occurred in these venues—most notably gambling, drinking, relaxed sexual mores, and even prostitution. Vices of this nature were far removed from the music of ‘respectable’ concert and dance halls. Although guided more by racist stereotypes than evidence, jazz appeared to such people as guilty by association, which helps explain why many distanced themselves from the music.

Ironically, some of the first to articulate their unease with jazz were members of the black middle class, whose control of most of the black press meant jazz received surprisingly little support. Instead many supported the idea that the best social examples came from black classical musicians and not from the popular music industry, which was more open to the type of racism aimed at jazz. By participating in the high art of classical music, black musicians performed on the same playing field as the best white musicians, thus avoiding the negative and racist descriptions and reviews of critics. While there was some logic to this approach, it failed to acknowledge the considerable professional restrictions black musicians faced when performing ‘white’ music, and the pressure to limit themselves to forms of music recognised as black, which kept most of them away from classical music.⁴⁵ However, the black press faced considerable pressure from their readers to counteract racial stereotypes, but often this had to be done in a way that

⁴⁵This was the case with pianist Earl Hines in the 1920s: ‘I studied to be a classical pianist and placed all my heart and soul to be a concert master. But we had the racial trouble as to a black man being in that type of music. It looked like it would be an impossibility for me to get anywhere and I would probably be out of the picture by the time the racial situation was straightened out.’ Stokes, *Jazz Scene*, 28.

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minimised controversy and the threat of retribution from white authorities or vigilantes. The result of this difficult situation was that throughout the 1920s black publications featured a variety of responses to jazz, but few were of substantial help to musicians.

The situation was precarious enough to discourage most black political publications from even commenting on music, but as debate about the unique contributions of jazz to American arts developed it became harder for writers to ignore. For instance, it took two years for the black political magazine *The Opportunity* to feature an editorial on jazz in America. In May 1925, editorialist Charles Johnson agreed with the position that the ‘American essence’ was expressed in jazz by the ‘unlikely Negro.’ Encouraged by the increasingly popular and prominent place that jazz had achieved in American culture, Johnson concluded, ‘What an immense, even if unconscious irony the Negroes have devised! They, who of all Americans are most limited in self-expression, least considered and most denied, have forged the key to the interpretation of the American spirit.’⁴⁶ However, three years later when Johnson had the opportunity to create his own one hour radio programme about black American arts, he excluded jazz in favour of consideration of a Negro artist, three poets, African art, two piano pieces by Chopin and Rachmaninoff and a singer performing both European opera and Negro spirituals.⁴⁷ Maud Cuney-Hare, the music editor for the political magazine *The Crisis*, took this lack of support further by infamously condemning jazz. She saw jazz as a ‘common combination of unlovely tones and suggestive lyrics,’ and concluded that ‘Music should sound, not screech; Music should cry, not howl; Music should weep, not bawl; Music should implore, not whine.’⁴⁸

National black newspapers, whose editors were members of the successful black middle class, also defended classical musicians as promoting the best social example. Robert S. Abbott, editor of the *Chicago Defender*, made a public display of going to the opera in order to demonstrate that black Americans could have good musical taste, although he

⁴⁶Charles Johnson *The Opportunity* (May 1925) quoted in Alwyn Williams, ‘Jazz and the New Negro: Harlem’s intellectuals wrestle with the art of the age’, *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 21.1 (2002), 6.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁸Maud Cuney-Hare *Negro Musicians and Their Music* (1936) quoted in Lawrence W Levine, ‘Jazz and American Culture’, in *Jazz Cadence*, 437.

also quietly encouraged those in the 'commercial' field of music such as Noble Sissle, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, and Earl Hines.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the real focus of much black print media was on the same preference for classical music that was producing most of the antipathy for jazz. Abbott's allegiances were clear, as he wrote about performances by black tenor Roland Hayes and the black compositions played by the Chicago Symphony, enthusing that 'No one could...not have felt, with a sense of deep satisfaction, that the Race is making progress in music.'⁵⁰ Abbott's choice of music was consistent with his choice of musical editor, Dave Peyton, who complained that 'heretofore our orchestras have confined themselves to hot jazzy tunes.' Peyton was particularly intent on demonstrating a middle class perspective, 'We have played music as we think it should be played without trying to find out if we are playing it correctly. So few of us have the time to visit the grand symphony orchestras, the deluxe picture houses and other places where things musically are done correctly.'⁵¹

The affinity of the black middle class for classical music was also shared by many white musicians who were turned away from jazz by the racial, moral, and musical condemnations that it provoked. White musicians were alert to the commercial benefits of 'hot' jazz and that was adapted to classical instrumentation and arrangements. In the process, however, such musicians and composers eliminated or greatly simplified most of intrinsic characteristics of black music which made it popular as something representative of America, namely improvisation, its unique rhythm, timbre, harmony and melody. Such a move was expedient for white musicians, not least because it helped make jazz into a more generally American product disassociated with race.

As perhaps the most successful of orchestra leaders in this movement, Paul Whiteman never hesitated to advertise his music as jazz to take advantage of the excitement it had generated as a uniquely American music. However, he had simultaneously rejected

⁴⁹Lawrence Schenbeck, 'Music, Gender, and "Uplift" in the *Chicago Defender*, 1927-1937', *The Musical Quarterly* 81.3 (1997), 362.

⁵⁰Robert Abbott 'The Week' *Chicago Defender* (24 June 1933) quoted in Schenbeck, 'Chicago Defender', 362.

⁵¹Dave Peyton 'The Musical Bunch' *Chicago Defender* (28 January 1928) quoted in Levine, 'American Culture' 437.

or weakened the formal traits upon which these judgments had been based. The self-proclaimed ‘King of Jazz,’ Whiteman recalled that, ‘At that time jazz was so outrageous that most musicians were nauseated at the very thought.’⁵² By rejecting the formal characteristics of their New Orleans jazz, Whiteman deftly implied his orchestra’s symphonic jazz had been transformed to reach the highest standards of classical music. He feigned surprise when he found European composers had little interest ‘in the magnificent works of such American composers as MacDowell, Carpenter, Chadwick, Cadman and others. “We know all that,” they said, “but jazz is a new note—something different, something particularly American, like the Sousa March. We want to know about jazz.”’⁵³ As the leader of the most commercially successful jazz band in America, no one could better explain to them the nature of jazz than the ‘King’ himself.

Many would follow Whiteman by similarly transforming jazz to suit their music. Implementing the ‘American’ qualities of jazz, such as syncopated rhythms, they were able to create compositions that were actually far more similar to classical music than to New Orleans polyphony. Fellow dance band leader Rudy Vallée described Whiteman’s contribution to jazz:

I consider Paul Whiteman the fore-runner and creator of a style of dance band music that has been rightly termed symphonised syncopation. His was the first mind to apply the principles of a symphony orchestras to his instrumentation and style of music; he was the first to split the chorus up into phrases, some of which were played by the saxes, suddenly followed by the brass for several more phrases and then by the strings. He was really the first to use several violins, several saxophones and a full team of brass.⁵⁴

This allowed them to place themselves at the forefront of national culture as respectable artists playing in the national idiom. For instance, Clarice Lorentz’s 1924 article in *Melody* acknowledged that ‘Abroad, jazz is recognised as American music, a unique contribution

⁵²Paul Whiteman, ‘What is Jazz Doing to American Music?’ *Étude* (August 1924) in *Jazz in Print*, 340-341.

⁵³Whiteman, ‘American Music’ 340-341.

⁵⁴Vallée, *Vagabond Dreams*, 85-86.

to the world's culture. At home, we are slowly coming to take the same view of the matter, and to develop this musical founding, which the Negro orchestras of an earlier day left bawling lustily and in rag-time upon our national doorstep.' Lorentz later described the process by which many of the innovative formal elements of jazz were dropped in favour of established classical music techniques as 'development.' Instead of the more aesthetically challenging aspects of black culture, which Lorentz identified as 'the wild acrobatics of the Negroid jazz band,' there were 'the smoothly wrought but still pulse-quickenning strains of "classical jazz."' ⁵⁵

The concept of classical jazz, also referred to as symphonic jazz or symphonic syncopation, was one that attempted to associate jazz as much as possible with the most respected of musical skills, composition. The same thing had happened with ragtime, when journalists tried to give the music respectability through associating syncopation with European composers, while simultaneously undermining credit for black musical innovation.⁵⁶ Whiteman was particularly interested in this push towards composition and commissioned several works for his orchestra, famously trying to make 'a lady out of jazz.'⁵⁷ A hopeful article from 1920 could easily have been used by Whiteman as an advertisement for his orchestra, especially for its performance of such works as George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*: 'And when the man comes who, taking that [American] spirit, can glorify it, ennoble it, and beautify it through his genius, that man will be the first real American composer, and his music will be the first truly American art music the world has received.'⁵⁸ Composition in jazz thus appeared to enable artists to create something both American and 'noble.'

⁵⁵Lorentz, 'Phenomenon' 327.

⁵⁶A comment from *Étude* (June 1899) is representative in spirit, 'We need not go farther back than to the music of the god-like Beethoven to find examples of ragtime music...' See 'Ragtime' in *Jazz in Print*, 51. See also 'Syncopated Music' *Brainyard's Musical Journal* (Autumn 1899); 'Ragtime' *The Musician* (March 1900); 'Something About Ragtime' *The Cadenza* (September 1913).

⁵⁷Duke Ellington wrote a song about Whiteman's effort called *A Drum is a Woman* which said Whiteman, 'dressed her in woodwinds and strings.' Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 103.

⁵⁸W.L. Hubbard, 'A Hopeful View of the Ragtime Doll' *Musician* (August 1920) in *Jazz in Print*, 149. For instance, Carl Van Vechten wrote in *Vanity Fair* that Gershwin's composition was 'the very finest piece of serious music that had ever come out of America.' Quoted in Carol J Oja, 'Gershwin and American Modernists of the 1920s', *The Musical Quarterly* 78.4 (1994), 653.

Determining its artistic and cultural status

Paul Whiteman had not only gained musical prestige, he had created a very lucrative business. Readers of the *New York Times Book Review & Magazine* in 1922 learned that Whiteman's musicians achieved their own elite status, for 'each player must be a trained musician, who would probably be a member of a symphony orchestra, save for that God-given trick of being a master of syncopation that has taken him out of the mere highbrow financial class and into the \$250 a week up class.'⁵⁹ By the mid-1920s there was such a demand for symphonic jazz that Whiteman and other famous band leaders started numerous orchestras under their own names. According to Rudy Vallée, top names like Whiteman, Vincent Lopez, Ben Bernie, and George Olsen created offices that supplied 'replicas of the original band called units...these units may vary in size from three pieces to one hundred, at varying prices, depending on whether there are star men in the outfit or just ordinary talent.'⁶⁰ By 1924, Whiteman alone was profiting from twenty-four orchestras under his name that were touring the United States and abroad.⁶¹

Even with such a high demand for jazz bands, many leaders avoided the label 'jazz,' considering it too controversial for their business. Vincent Lopez, who lead one of the most successful white dance bands in the country, did his best to distance himself from jazz by referring to his work as 'modern music' or 'modern popular music.' An editorial in the *Musical Courier* in February 1924 agreed with Lopez that using the word jazz 'leads to a lot of misconception...and [jazz] would take its proper place especially with the mass of our people, were the term by which it is to be called not suggestive of an unpleasant phase in our history from which we have happily escaped.' In an effort to identify this tainted heritage, the editorialist stated that jazz 'is suggestive of things unpleasant, of atavistic leanings of which we are all properly ashamed, of borrowing from savages, of near-orgies that have quite properly been combated by those who have care of the young and the morals of youth.'⁶² This was a common criticism during this era, and often associated

⁵⁹Helen Bullitt Lowry, 'Putting the Music into the Jazz' *New York Times Book Review & Magazine* (December 29, 1922) in *Jazz in Print*, 216.

⁶⁰Vallée, *Vagabond Dreams*, 16-17.

⁶¹Susie Sexton, 'Paul Whiteman Made Jazz Contagious' *American Magazine* (June 1924) in *Jazz in Print*.

⁶²'Jazz Or-' in *Jazz in Print*, 273.

the alleged primitive origins of jazz with the licentious music and dancing of the 1920s.

Dancing was a major concern for the music industry, public, and press alike and there was a concerted effort by the media to ensure dancing remained appropriate and moral. Worried by the reduction of sexual mores, many local and national organisations formed, such as the Parents' League, which determined whether or not theatre, music, dancing and other entertainments were fit for America's youth.⁶³ Often jazz was condemned because of the dancing that accompanied it. In 1923, the General Federation of Women's Clubs gathered representatives of two million members in Atlanta and voted to 'annihilate' jazz: 'Jazz is having a bad effect on our girls and boys and on society in general. It must go and concerted action by the women's clubs of America will wipe it out of existence. Let us furnish real music for our young folks—but no jazz.'⁶⁴ Organised resistance to jazz was generally avoided rather than confronted by the major white dance bands of the day. In an article in the *Musical Courier* in November of 1922, Whiteman's symphonic music was defended as having refined jazz to eliminate its negative effects, 'Furthermore, this quieter "jazz" does not incite to objectionable dancing. On the one evening when the writer felt plutocratic enough to dance under Mr. Whiteman's violin bow he observed but one couple who were dancing improperly, and they would have done a lustful dance to a Beethoven minuet.'⁶⁵

The balance between being at once artistic, inspiring morally acceptable dancing, and achieving commercial success was often very difficult to obtain, but it characterised the country's most successful jazz bands in the 1920s. Because these bands were invariably white, they made jazz as 'American music' somewhat paradoxical. The majority of the jazz music Americans were listening to was produced by white musicians who were consciously distancing themselves from the music's black innovators. While being seen by most present-day scholars as compromising jazz or not playing jazz at all, white band leaders like Paul Whiteman were indispensable in making it the popular music of Amer-

⁶³For a brief word on the Parents' League, see John Hammond and Irving Townsend, *John Hammond On Record* (New York: Ridge Press, 1977), 37-38.

⁶⁴'Representatives of 2,000,000 Women, Meeting in Atlanta, Vote to Annihilate Jazz' *Music Courier* (May 31, 1923) in *Jazz in Print*, 238.

⁶⁵Kenneth S. Clark, 'Of Interest to Composers' in *Jazz in Print*, 212.

ica.

Thus jazz increased in popularity during the 1920s, despite the fact that the white bands who led the way often tried to disassociate themselves from the genre. Band leader Isham Jones became exasperated at having his music described as jazz, complaining that ‘Because [a] song is successful and played by practically every dance orchestra, it is called jazz; but that is not my idea of jazz.’ Instead, Jones saw jazz as ‘the “down South Negro type” of blues.’⁶⁶ Rudy Vallée experienced the same problem with the popularity of jazz, asserting that ‘Whenever possible I correct any publicity that would style our little group of eight a “jazz” band, or me a “jazz” band leader’ because Vallée saw jazz as music played by the ‘various coloured bands up in Harlem...These bands have a style all their own, and at times it seems as though pandemonium had broken loose.’ Disassociating himself from jazz was difficult for Vallée and others, for ‘today “jazz” is applied to almost any form of orchestra or band music which is not strictly classical, and this is a grave error, inasmuch as dance music may be just as sweet and beautiful as true classical music. Therefore I believe it is absolutely incorrect to use the word so indiscriminately.’⁶⁷

Representing the black experience

Making jazz all but synonymous with American popular music, innovation by black musicians, and popularisation by white bands continued until after World War II. Starting in the mid-1930s, jazz came to be dominated by swing big bands, which constituted almost 70% of the music industry’s profits by the late 1930s.⁶⁸ Swing had become a hundred-million dollar industry employing between thirty and forty thousand musicians nationwide, and bandleaders such as Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw and Glenn Miller were making up to \$20,000 a week when seventeen percent of Americans remained unemployed and the payment from Social Security averaged \$22 a month.⁶⁹ Unlike the 1920s, a small

⁶⁶Jones, ‘Dance Music’ 336.

⁶⁷Vallée, *Vagabond Dreams*, 163-164.

⁶⁸From episode six, *The Velocity of Celebration*, Burns, ‘Jazz’.

⁶⁹Ward, *Jazz*, 240; George Brown Tindall and David E. Shi, *America: a narrative history*, Sixth edition (W.W. Norton and Company, 2004), 917, 928.

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number of successful bands were black, but the vast majority remained white.⁷⁰ The commercial success of jazz meant that it had a pervasive influence on American culture, especially in the clothes, language, and dancing of American youth.

Media perceptions of what kinds of jazz constituted ‘American’ music started to change as its popularity faded after the war, and the dominant performance style shifted to bebop. The widespread popularity of jazz had always been essential to its definition as music representative of America, so the loss in audience that coincided with the shift in musical styles meant that critics were less willing to see jazz in unproblematic terms as ‘America’s music.’ It was not until the 1970s that scholarly interest in the history of jazz inspired a critical revision of what made jazz American music. A key element of this revisionism was the engagement of black musicians, which marked a change from the previous fifty years, when despite the popularity of jazz, black musicians’ voices were seldom heard. The musical traits of jazz remained an essential part of the American identity of the music, but journalists and scholars took less note of what jazz represented amongst its audience and instead began to focus more on how jazz represented the musicians who played it.

Musicologists, newspaper critics, and journalists had provided many of the discussions of American music in the 1920s, but during and after the 1970s this was taken over by the first-person accounts of black musicians who, as the music’s innovators, were seen as the primary sources of information for explaining jazz as uniquely American. Some of the main products of the interviews, autobiographies, and oral histories were descriptions by musicians of the ‘black experience’ embodied in making jazz. For example, Dizzy Gillespie recalled that, ‘Within the society, we did the same thing we did with the music. First we learned the proper way and then we improvised on that.’⁷¹ This type of improvisation reflected a necessary way of life for all black Americans, not least professional black musicians. As trumpeter Quincy Jones learned from his experience, facing major restrictions in their careers and social lives meant that black musicians had to develop certain ways of adapting that whites did not require, ‘Black music has always had

⁷⁰Ward, *Jazz*, 281.

⁷¹Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 291.

to invent its own society, a subculture to help the disenfranchised survive, psychologically, spiritually, and creatively. We come up with our own slang, body language, sensibility, ideology, and lifestyle to go with the music.’⁷²

Just as early white band leaders like Isham Jones, Vincent Lopez, and Rudy Vallée rejected the term jazz because of its associations with black music, black musicians had by the 1950s often rejected the term jazz because of its associations with pre-war white bands. They saw jazz as a genre fashioned by whites, while black musicians simply referred to their music as black music or African American music. Thus in an interview with fellow musician Art Taylor, trumpeter Charles Tolliver insisted that jazz could not be defined by the music or musicians, for ‘what it should be and what it isn’t is a matter of who controls what.’ He suggested that ‘If you control the media you can change the dictionary and put in, “Our form of music is a black experience. It was originated by black people and it should be called Afro-American music”; something like that would be cool.’⁷³ Other black musicians joined the call for redefinition: drummer Max Roach asserted that ‘The proper name for it, if you want to speak about it historically, is music that has been created and developed by musicians of African descent who are in America...So for a title I would call it African American music.’⁷⁴ Persistent efforts by musicians to rename jazz as African American music and describe it as a product of the black experience consequently made scholars and critics engage with jazz as a vital element of black history: ‘Jazz music *is* black history, and it has been practiced all along as an ongoing medium of memory.’⁷⁵

Asserting that jazz was a product of black experience proved to be an unpopular move amongst those who were more comfortable with jazz as a race-less and class-less American music. Included in this group were many in the press, academia, and government, and white musicians were particularly outspoken in this regard. Their livelihoods were directly threatened, and many consequently accused their black counterparts of discriminating

⁷²Jones, *Q*, 285.

⁷³Charles Tolliver quoted in Taylor, *Notes and Tones*, 220.

⁷⁴Max Roach quoted in *Ibid.*, 110.

⁷⁵Emphasis in the original. Jed Rasula, ‘The Media of Memory: the seductive menace of records in jazz history’ in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 156.

against them, a kind of inverse discrimination labeled ‘Crow Jim.’ Outspoken bassist and band leader Charles Mingus exemplified the black musicians’ reaction to this when he suggested that

Until we start lynching white people, there is no word that can mean the same as Jim Crow means. Until we own Bethlehem Steel and RCA Victor, plus Columbia Records and several other industries, the term Crow Jim has no meaning...Aren’t you white men asking too much when you ask me to stop saying this is my music? Especially when you don’t give me anything else?⁷⁶

Still others saw the African American moniker for jazz as not going far enough to remove white participation and ownership in jazz. In conjunction with ideas of Afrocentrism in the 1960s and 1970s, many black artists simply called jazz African music, taking it out of its American context.⁷⁷ For drummer Art Blakey, acknowledgment of jazz’s American historical roots were imperative to dealing with its place in American culture, as ‘Jazz is known all over the world as an American musical art form and that’s it. No America, no jazz. I’ve seen people try to connect it to other countries, for instance to Africa, but it doesn’t have a damn thing to do with Africa.’ While some of the musical culture of black Americans had clearly descended from their African ancestors, it was their experience in America’s ‘multi-racial society’ that defined the culture and music: ‘There are no black people in America who can say they are of pure African descent. Our parents were slaves, so you don’t know whose grandmother was bending over picking cotton when the slave owner walked up behind her! There was nothing we could do about it.’⁷⁸ Blakey articulated a common perception that the unique racial situations in the United States had produced the people and sensibilities from which jazz came.

Although influenced by the Civil Rights movements, advancing the idea that jazz represented black American experience was not simply a political stance. In many ways, the

⁷⁶Charles Mingus quoted in ‘The Playboy Panel: Jazz–Today and Tomorrow’ (February 1964) in Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t*, 154-155.

⁷⁷Saxophonist Albert Ayler is an example of a jazz musician that held well-known Afrocentric views in the 1960s and 1970s. See Ward, *Jazz*, 439.

⁷⁸Art Blakey quoted in Taylor, *Notes and Tones*, 242.

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social impact of the jazz industry was considerably different for black musicians because for much of the twentieth century music was one of the only professional fields available to blacks in the United States. Even within the music industry, black musicians were mostly restricted to genres recognised as black in origin, making jazz itself particularly important. Many jazz musicians had hoped to play classical music, but realised this was not possible. This kind of discrimination continued through the years of Civil Rights, and Miles Davis experienced it during his studies at Juilliard, claiming that ‘I knew that no white symphony orchestra was going to hire a little black motherfucker like me, no matter how good I was or how much music I knew.’⁷⁹ Quincy Jones recalled this rejection from the perspective of a composer and arranger:

Back in the fifties, the easiest way to starve in America was to be a black arranger writing for strings. You could’ve been Mozart, Stravinsky, Wagner, and Beethoven all rolled into one, but if you came from Harlem, USA, and had nappy hair and black skin, your ass went to the blues and jazz department of every record company and I don’t give a hoot if you were God. Strings were considered sophisticated and for whites only.⁸⁰

Both the professional opportunities offered by jazz and its formal musical traits made it important to many in the black community. Quincy Jones described both of these aspects as having an impact on his childhood in a poor neighbourhood near Seattle. To Jones, the bebop records he heard carried meaning both in their form and as a symbol of ambition, ‘I knew they were black, from the world that included me. The music was the substance, but it was also the metaphor for getting out of the place I was in. You can’t even imagine the impact that the jazz musicians had back then.’⁸¹

In addition to describing the black musical innovations and professional culture, the first-person accounts often included evidence about the black American institutions and social practices essential to jazz. These tied the American identity of jazz even more

⁷⁹Davis and Troupe, *Miles*, 59.

⁸⁰Jones, *Q*, 121.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 41.

closely to black history. One of the most pervasive examples cited by black musicians in shaping both their music and social environment was the black Christian church, especially that of the Holiness and Sanctified churches.⁸² Dizzy Gillespie found this influence to be unequalled, 'Like most black musicians, much of my early inspiration, especially with rhythm and harmonies, came from the church.'⁸³

The church also provided examples of the importance of communal participation in creating music. Dizzy Gillespie's childhood experiences with the Sanctified church services in South Carolina provided lessons in musical and spiritual cooperation, as he remembered that 'They used to keep at least four different rhythms going, and as the congregation joined in, the number of rhythms would increase with foot stomping, hand clapping, and people catching the spirit and jumping up and down on the wooden floor, which also resounded like a drum.' The powerful music and singing of the church brought the whole community together, including the white and black folk who sat outside the church just to listen. This lesson was not lost on Gillespie, who as a Methodist was one of those on the outside: 'The Sanctified church's rhythm got to me as it did to anyone else who came near the place...I received my first experience with rhythm and spiritual transport going down there to the well every Sunday, and I've just followed it ever since.'⁸⁴

Gillespie was certainly not the only one to take an interest in the services of the church and to identify their role within the black community as well as the community of black musicians. Miles Davis was another, and he was inspired by the sound of his grandfather's Saturday night church service in Arkansas. Davis later said that the experience 'stayed with him,' and helped form his understanding and appreciation of music. 'That kind of sound in music, that blues, church, back-road funk kind of thing, that Southern, Midwestern, rural sound and rhythm...when I started taking music lessons I might have already

⁸²Cornel West's comments on the cultural and musical role of the church reflect its respect among black intellectuals: 'The black church, black-owned and black-run Christian congregations, is the fountainhead of the Afro-American spiritual-blues impulse. Without the black church, with its African roots and Christian context, Afro-American culture—in fact, Afro-America itself—is unimaginable.' Cornel West, 'On Afro-American Music: From Bebop to Rap' *Le Monde Diplomatique* (1983), in *Cornel West Reader* ed. Cornel West (New York: Civitas Books, 1999), 481.

⁸³Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 31.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*

had some idea of what I wanted my music to sound like.’⁸⁵ Duke Ellington also touched upon the subject with his typical scholarly approach, which addressed the importance of the church to jazz and black music in general. For Ellington, ‘The fervour and warmth of gospel music were often translated as directly as possible by jazz musicians, and for a long time the adjective “hot” was used in praise of their improvised solos and tonal techniques.’⁸⁶ Gospel was able to provide an example of both improvisation and timbre as well as the qualities of ‘fervour and warmth’ that would be essential to jazz.

In addition to the institutions identified as important to the birth of jazz, black musicians also mentioned the special social functions that the music had enjoyed over its development. More than simply an aesthetic expression, various forms of black music had served as an essential form of social communication when more overt forms were either dangerous or socially and commercially unviable. This level of communication was important through much of the development of jazz for, as Duke Ellington noted in 1944, ‘You can say anything you want on the trombone, but you gotta be careful with words.’⁸⁷ However, the roots of secret musical communication originated in black adaptation to slave life. B.B. King mentions this in his conversations about the blues with his great-grandmother, who had been a slave, ‘She’d talk about the beginnings of the blues. She said that, sure, singing helped the day go by...But the blues hollerers shouted about more than being sad. They were also delivering messages in musical code...the blues was about survival.’⁸⁸ This historical function had its greatest significance in the early years of jazz. As Ellington explains, ‘Call’ was ‘where people send messages in what they play, calling somebody, or making facts and emotions known. Painting a picture, or having a story to go with what you were going to play, was of vital importance in those days.’⁸⁹ While

⁸⁵Davis and Troupe, *Miles*, 28-29. For other examples on the influence of the Sanctified church services, see Hampton and Haskins, *Hamp*, 8; Foster et al., *Pops Foster*, 19; B.B. King and David Ritz, *Blues All Around Me: the autobiography of B.B. King* (New York: Avon Books, 1996), 15,18. For a detailed and more literary description of the church service, see James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Dial, 1963), 49-50.

⁸⁶Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 418.

⁸⁷Richard O. Boyer, ‘The Hot Bach’ *The New Yorker* (24 June, 1 July, 8 July 1944) in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 238.

⁸⁸King and Ritz, *Blues All Around Me*, 8-9.

⁸⁹Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 47.

Ellington felt this ability was slowly eliminated by the 'scholastic' development of the jazz that followed, its presence in early jazz forms demonstrated the unique connections between black American culture and the musicological development of jazz.

The wealth of information about black culture that came to inform the birth of jazz and its role as American music created a rather complicated position for white musicians both in the industry and in their place in jazz history. A number of critics found the descriptions of the black cultural traits of jazz to be too exclusive to take into account the entire commercial environment of the music. James Lincoln Collier, a leading critic of the definition of jazz as an exclusive product of 'the black experience,' argued that, 'As a consequence, we have a *Down Beat* writer denominating as "African American music" a record by a white trumpeter Warren Vaché, accompanied by the Beaux-Arts String Quartet playing Tin Pan Alley tunes like *With the Wind and the Rain in Your Hair*. This is simply ludicrous.'⁹⁰ While Collier felt the existence of such music rebutted any claims for jazz as uniquely and solely representative of 'black experience,' Collier's opponents felt the music he referred to was the result of an industry in which black musicians had little control.⁹¹ In a stronger argument, Collier examined how the positive roles of white American and European culture on jazz should be represented in 'black experience.' One oft cited example questioned just how much publicised influence of modernist European composers such as Stravinsky should be considered when they were incorporated by black musicians in jazz music.⁹² If black musicians were in fact accepting these ideas as representative of their experience, their position in 'African American music' would necessarily be complicated.

Such complications have been an inevitable and often divisive product of discussions of jazz as American music because the contradictions inherited from the 1920s, when white musicians who rejected many of the black musical and aesthetic elements of jazz nonetheless made the music popular and significant enough to be considered as American music. Most recent histories of jazz have dealt with this by minimising or ignoring the im-

⁹⁰Collier, *American Theme Song*, 221-222.

⁹¹Charles Tolliver quoted in Taylor, *Notes and Tones*, 220.

⁹²For an example of such influence, see Davis and Troupe, *Miles*, 60-61.

portance of the white bands who popularised jazz as a particular American art. However, they usually ascribe the art and popularity of jazz in American culture gained largely by white bands with the black innovators of the music. A few scholars, such as Gerald Early, have noted the complex relationship between innovation in jazz and creating American music:

Blacks may very well have created most American forms of music and dance, but they certainly could not popularise them. This means, strictly speaking, that they never created American popular music and dance but rather contributed a lion's share of the ideas that helped to shape an American popular imagination. They constantly needed whites as brokers, intercessors, collaborators, and promoters in order to help introduce them to wider audiences and to make the music truly popular.⁹³

This was especially the case in the seminal period for jazz, when the white bands' versions of jazz were aesthetically and commercially dominant. During the public debate on American music of the 1920s, jazz was far more Paul Whiteman than pioneering black band leader Fletcher Henderson or soloist Louis Armstrong.

However, as most histories of jazz accept an evolutionary pattern for the music with one style leading into the next, Henderson and Armstrong can far more logically be seen to fit into jazz because of their contribution to the swing big bands of the 1930s. Thus, in a musicological study of jazz they would be expected to receive more attention. This was the case with Gunther Schuller's *Early Jazz*, which presents a musical view of the first years of jazz's development. Schuller gave Armstrong his own chapter and Henderson ample attention in a section on big bands, while the 'King of Jazz,' Paul Whiteman, was confined to a footnote in the discussion of his trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke.⁹⁴ Symphonic jazz bands

⁹³Early, 'Pulp' 418-419.

⁹⁴Schuller at least acknowledged Whiteman deserved study, but was outside the scope of his book, claiming that 'Whiteman was a sociological phenomenon responding to a particular need in the society of his time, the 1920s. As such there are social implications in his career and his music and his influence on American music, the analysis of which go beyond the purview of this book.' See Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 192.

and the composition of the music industry were also generally ignored by histories of jazz musicians focusing the early twentieth century. In David Dicaire's book, *Jazz Musicians of the Early Years, to 1945* he excluded detailed coverage of band leaders such as Paul Whiteman.⁹⁵ Similarly, Richard Hadlock's book, *Jazz Masters of the Twenties*, focuses on those musicians who are today recognised as the most influential, all but ignoring those who were successful and influential during the early twentieth century.⁹⁶

The omission of such musicians may not appear to be a major oversight for musicological studies of jazz, but it is far more important to histories of the period that cover the contexts in which the music was created. For instance, Geoffrey Ward's *Jazz* presented the 1920s as the triumph of Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Jelly Roll Morton, Bix Beiderbecke, the Chicagoans, and stride pianists while only briefly mentioning Paul Whiteman.⁹⁷ By trying to construct jazz as a black American art form and a popular music at the same time, Ward fails to cover many of the musicians who made jazz popular in the first place. Although such studies seek to redress the racism that dominated the music industry, presenting the black innovators as the way in which most Americans related to jazz in fact ignores the significant racism that black jazz musicians faced in the 1920s.

⁹⁵Dicaire's section 'The Jazz Age' covered stride pianist James P. Johnson, New Orleans clarinetist Jimmie Noone, singer Ethel Waters, Fletcher Henderson, Louis Armstrong, guitarist Eddie Lang, Bix Beiderbecke, pianist Earl Hines, stride pianist Fats Waller, and trombonist Jack Teagarden. Although all three white musicians, Lang, Beiderbecke, and Teagarden, worked for Whiteman, the band leader only received brief mention. Dicaire, *Jazz Musicians*.

⁹⁶This list consists of: Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines, Bix Beiderbecke, the Chicagoans (a group of white musicians such as Wingy Manone, Muggsy Spanier, Jimmy and Dick McPartland, Frank Teschemacher, Benny Goodman, and Bud Freeman), Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, Jack Teagarden, Fletcher Henderson, Don Redman (Henderson's arranger) Bessie Smith, and Eddie Lang. See Hadlock, *Jazz Masters of the Twenties*.

⁹⁷Bix Beiderbecke was a white trumpeter from Davenport, Iowa and considered one of the only white jazz musicians to contribute innovations to the music. His most popular years were with Whiteman's orchestra. The Chicagoans were also white, and included saxophonist Bud Freeman and clarinetist Benny Goodman. Ward, *Jazz*, 63-171.

Chapter 4

Equating jazz and democracy

Jazz has already played an important part in the fight for human freedom. It is the music of freedom, freedom of individuals and of races. It is the great art of democracy, irreconcilable with the philosophy of the dictators.

It is high time for America to be aware of this, and to prepare to establish this power through the world. Jazz can be a universal instrument in the accomplishment of a bloodless victory. The time is not far distant when jazz will develop in every continent along the lines of local influences, with the same power that enabled the so-called European classical music to submerge many national musical forms until today.

This is not merely an indication of artistic importance, but also a proof that American civilisation is one of world-wide significance. This power of radiation parallels the history of the Greeks and the Romans, who were able to impose their artistic achievements on the limited expression of their contemporary and subsequent civilisations.

Robert Goffin, 1944¹

Sustained efforts by writers and musicians to directly relate jazz to the ideals of American democracy have been central to establishing the valued place of jazz in American society. Their comments have often focused on the early years of jazz, when the community of jazz musicians provided an excellent example of racial cooperation, informally

¹Goffin, *Jazz*, 240-241.

in the 1920s and then with the integration of major bands beginning in the late 1930s.² Such efforts within the industry have then been bolstered by cooperation with the federal government in propaganda campaigns during World War II and the Cold War.³

One of the most favoured examples of democratic function in jazz was the jam session. As informal meetings, jam sessions were renowned for their mix of races, ages, genders, and styles.⁴ In fact, the integrated and creatively open environment was essential to the development and popularity of jazz before World War II. Jazz was popularised in a large part by white bands, and the jam sessions provided a forum in which they could freely interact with innovative black musicians.⁵ ‘Cutting contests,’ pitted soloists against each other in the sessions, making musical ability the primary basis for judgment and allowing for an exchange of ideas.⁶ Because of these conditions, critics and musicians frequently cited jam sessions as being exemplary of the freedom of expression, cooperation, and shared influences essential to the music and culture of jazz.⁷

It was not until Benny Goodman hired Teddy Wilson in 1936 that the racial integration of jam sessions was translated to a nationally prominent band. While Wilson’s addition was a success, he was only allowed to play at intermissions and with the Benny Goodman Trio (Goodman, Wilson, and drummer Gene Krupa).⁸ Integration did not occur on a large scale until 1939, when many of the nation’s most popular white bands hired black soloists and singers.⁹ Integrated bands faced many troubles on tour, but they were generally

²Tirro, *Jazz: a History*, xvii; Eddie Condon and Thomas Sugrue, *We Called It Music: a generation of jazz, revised edition* (London: Corgi Books, 1962), 173; Leandro Saija, ‘Jazz Abroad: Jazz in Italy’, *Jazz Forum* 5 (1947); Felix Belair Jr., ‘United States Has Secret Sonic Weapon—Jazz’, *New York Times* (November 6, 1955); Dan Morgenstern, ‘Preface’, *Jazz* 1.2 (1962).

³Michael H Kater, *Different Drummers: jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Von Eschen, *Satchmo*; S Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The fate of jazz in the Soviet Union 1917-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

⁴Bruce Lippincott, ‘Aspects of the Jam Session’ in *Riffs and Choruses*, ed. Andrew Clark, (New York: Continuum, 2001), 116-120.

⁵Bud Freeman and Robert Wolf, *Crazeology: autobiography of a Chicago jazzman* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 6; Condon and Sugrue, *We Called it Music*, 72.

⁶Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 420; Smith and Hoefer, *Music on my Mind*, 154-156.

⁷Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 170; Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 379.

⁸Teddy Wilson, Arie Lighthart and Humphrey Van Loo, *Teddy Wilson Talks Jazz* (New York: Cassell, 1996), 46.

⁹‘Pianist’, 1; ‘Goodman Plans to Add More Negroes to Band’, *Down Beat* 6.9 (September 1939), 2; Dave Dexter Jr, ‘I’ll Never Sing With a Dance Band Again—Holiday’, *Down Beat* 6.12 (November 1,

successful with audiences and critics alike. In fact, several of the major music magazines began to support integration more assertively by publishing articles that questioned some of the industry's discriminatory practices.¹⁰ However, most writers saw the music and musicians as a democratising force and confined their criticism to people such as concert promoters, theatre managers, and radio broadcasters in order to both represent democracy while revealing its limitations. Confining criticism in this way became an established practice from World War II onwards.

The media's use of jazz as a symbol of democracy became more prominent in the lead up to World War II. The American government and the music industry both sought to take advantage of the demand for jazz at home and abroad by co-opting jazz music and musicians into the war effort.¹¹ Many critics joined whole-heartedly in the patriotic cause and submerged their professional disputes and opinions within the language of protecting democracy.¹² Large numbers of musicians and songwriters contributed by producing 'war songs' that addressed the experiences of being in the armed forces, or more commonly, of being separated from loved ones.¹³ Although the songs had mixed results, the market for jazz boomed in the 1940s, especially in Europe, where jazz became a symbol of American freedom and an underground resistance to the Nazi occupation.¹⁴ The great international success of jazz prompted the American government to use it in their propaganda campaigns as well as entertainment programmes for G.I.s, and consequently more directly involved jazz in the representation of democracy.¹⁵

1939), 6.

¹⁰'Racial Prejudice Flares Again; Atkins is Out', *Down Beat* 6.5 (May 1939), 25; 'Are White Bands Stealing Ideas From the Negro?', *Down Beat* 7.24 (December 1, 1940), 5; 'Hines Nixes Jim Crow Shows', 9.

¹¹'Music Can Help Win This War!', *Down Beat* 9.9 (May 1, 1942), 10; Barbara Dianne Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom: radio, war, and the politics of race, 1938-1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

¹²'What Does War Mean to Musicians?', *Down Beat* 6.10 (October 1, 1939), 10; "'I Did My Duty" Says Jim—"CIO is Un-American"', *Down Beat* 7.2 (January 15, 1940), 1.

¹³Kenneth D. Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation: a social history of Americans in World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 163-183.

¹⁴Kater, *Different Drummers*; Carlos de Radzitzky, 'Jazz Abroad: Belgium', *Jazz Forum* 1 (1946); Charles Delaunay, 'Jazz Abroad: France', *Jazz Forum* 1 (1946).

¹⁵Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom*; Saija, 'Jazz Abroad: Jazz in Italy'; Charles James Rolo, *Radio Goes to War* (London: Faber, 1943).

The efforts of the music industry and government during World War II created an immense worldwide audience for jazz, who became a focus of diplomacy during the ensuing Cold War with the Soviet Union.¹⁶ Starting in 1955 with Willis Conover's 'Music USA' for Voice of America radio, government-sponsored programmes about jazz gained an international audience of over one hundred million by the 1960s.¹⁷ This was a significant boost to the jazz industry, especially for musicians popular around the years of World War II. Their fame abroad secured them employment with the State Department, who sent hundreds of jazz musicians abroad as Ambassadors of Goodwill.¹⁸ Known as the 'jazz ambassadors,' musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Dizzy Gillespie toured all over the world and won plaudits for the diplomatic value of jazz in the domestic and international press.

The popularity of jazz as a representative of American democracy was largely supported by critics and musicians, who espoused the benefits for musicians' careers and for the place of jazz in American culture.¹⁹ In the context of Civil Rights movements of the era, black musicians working as national representatives, especially when leading integrated bands, supplied a positive example that contrasted sharply with abuses that were occurring in America.²⁰ The willingness to make such a positive statement brought increased respect in the domestic and international press for the government and for the musicians involved. Nevertheless, being employed by the government also created a precarious situation for musicians, as they then had to protect their endorsement while still resisting discrimination.²¹

¹⁶Von Eschen, *Satchmo*; Penny M Von Eschen, 'The Real Ambassadors', in: Farah Jasmine Griffin Robert O'Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, editor, *Uptown Conversation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); John S Wilson, 'Who is Conover? Only We Ask', *New York Times* (September 13, 1959); Adam Makowicz, 'Willis Conover', *Jazz Times* 26.7 (1996).

¹⁷Dana Adams Schmidt, 'US Disk Jockey a World-Wide Hit', *New York Times* (June 26, 1960), 9; Wilson, 'Who is Conover?', 64.

¹⁸Von Eschen, *Satchmo*; Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 413-427; Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 301-330; Jones, *Q*, 110-118.

¹⁹Dan Morgenstern, 'Preface', *Jazz* 2.1 (January 1963); Dana Adams Schmidt, 'World Jazz Fans Rocked By "Voice"', *New York Times* (November 13, 1955); Angelo Eagon, 'Overseas with American Music', *Music Educators Journal* 51.5 (1965).

²⁰Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 413-427.

²¹Charles Hersch, 'Poisoning Their Coffee: Louis Armstrong and Civil Rights', *Polity* 34.3 (2002); Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 308-309.

Jam Sessions

In their autobiographies and reminiscences, many jazz musicians recalled that it was in jam sessions that integration and a truly democratic musical form emerged most clearly. In the inauspicious setting of night clubs after hours, musicians came together regardless of age, gender, race, or musical style and held ‘cutting contests’ to gain professional respect and share ideas. Such a unique environment fostered a special relationship between musicians. Duke Ellington described the reception of master pianist Art Tatum in New York among the city’s most formidable jam session musicians, recalling that ‘Though [Tatum] challenged them, they loved him, and this kind of association with fellow musicians is a big and profound subject that is impossible to explain.’²²

Although white musicians received most of the access to gigs, recording opportunities, and radio shows, in addition to higher salaries, black jazz musicians were open to sharing ideas and techniques through informal jam sessions. This was especially important to white musicians in the 1910s and 1920s, who were largely responsible for the national popularity of the techniques they learned from of their black counterparts. In the early 1920s, white musicians mainly listened to black bands to learn the music and did not frequently play in jam sessions with them. This was the case with saxophonist Bud Freeman, who played in Chicago in the 1920s. He first became interested in jazz by listening to a record from the white band, the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, but it was not until he heard King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band that he felt he was ‘hearing the real thing for the first time.’ According to Freeman, all of the white musicians in Chicago went to the city’s black South Side neighbourhood to listen to King Oliver’s band with Louis Armstrong and ‘learned to play their beat.’²³ Guitarist Eddie Condon also went to see Oliver, and he recalled the mass of white kids who ‘came to listen and to learn; we sat there, stiff with education, joy, and a liquorice-tasting gin...’²⁴

²²Ibid., 170.

²³Freeman and Wolf, *Crazeology*, 6. Those that attended alongside Freeman included many of names of the first famous white jazz musicians: Jimmy and Dick McPartland, Dave Tough, Frank Teschemacher, Wingy Manone, and Bix Beiderbecke.

²⁴Condon and Sugrue, *We Called it Music*, 72.

As white musicians introduced the music to the majority of Americans through radio and records and jazz became commercially successful, others also tried to learn from the music's black creators. Thus a generation of white musicians sought out black jazz in order to learn it and become professional musicians themselves. Pianist Art Hodes was in Chicago in the 1920s by the time Louis Armstrong had his own band on the city's South Side. Hodes, with trumpeter Wingy Manone, listened to Armstrong's records, saw his live shows, and eventually befriended him. It was Armstrong who introduced them to the life of the South Side, where Hodes and Manone learned the jazz on which they based their careers. Hodes credited Armstrong for introducing him to a black culture that was otherwise unknown and inaccessible, 'Louis, knowing I loved the blues, took me and Wingy to a barbecue place on State Street near 48th where the primitives, the pianists that come up from the South, hung out...That's when my real jazz education started.'²⁵ Hodes eventually learned how to play like the black musicians on the South Side and, having scored some success, influenced many other white jazz musicians to follow him.²⁶ Though white musicians had a dominant presence in the commercial side of jazz clearly built upon music they were learning from black musicians, few openly questioned their competitive advantage.

While the motivation to learn from black musicians had obvious commercial benefits, it is less clear what motivated the black musicians to teach their white counterparts, who were making most of the money from jazz. The examples of such tutelage are numerous, as white musicians visited clubs, parties and jam sessions where they could learn more about jazz. Pianist Willie 'The Lion' Smith, who played piano in New York before jazz had become popular in the city, saw this trend of white musicians going back to the days of ragtime with such pianists as Jimmy Durante and Irving Berlin. Smith said that

²⁵Art Hodes and Chadwick Hansen, *Hot Man: the life of Art Hodes* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 61.

²⁶Hodes openly acknowledged his and, indirectly, many others' debts, 'Most of us Chicago lads learned from the great Negro players who went there from New Orleans and elsewhere...I would bring two or three people at a time to the barbecue place. I brought Benny Moylan; he played sax. I brought Johnny Lane; he played clarinet. Two fine white pianists came later, George Zack and the late Frank Melrose. I don't know how many others they brought. It became a place to go, a hangout.' *Ibid.*, 63.

even though black musicians were usually in segregated venues, whites ‘would show up in the saloons where we played. Now you know where a lot of them got their ragtime styles.’²⁷ Throughout the late 1920s, Smith and his fellow pianist Fats Waller played in Park Avenue apartments for rich patrons, where they were able to teach white musicians as well. Smith recalled that at the parties, ‘show-business celebrities would study our work and try to get our music arranging ideas. I saw people like Harold Arlen, [George] Gershwin, Vernon Duke, Roy Bargo, at those affairs in Mrs. Williams’ shack on Park.’²⁸ At the same time Duke Ellington was playing at the Kentucky Club on Broadway in Manhattan. It was a small club, but after it closed each night, musicians came from all over town to hold jam sessions. Ellington’s drummer Sonny Greer recalled some of the most famous white musicians of the day coming to play in the integrated environment: ‘everybody could sit in. At three or four in the morning, you would see Bix Beiderbecke, Tommy Dorsey, Miff Mole, Paul Whiteman, and musicians like that.’²⁹

The 1920s were the height of this seemingly contradictory situation. There would never be such a difference between the commercial success of white and black bands, to say nothing of the nearly ubiquitous acknowledgment by white musicians that their styles were derived from black musicians.³⁰ Surprisingly, race did not seem to play a significant role in the lives of musicians after hours. Since musicians tended to have strong relationships with one another, often regardless of race, black musicians’ problems were with the larger industry and with American society as a whole. Whereas white musicians would play with and often tip black bands in after hours clubs, a far more rigid relationship existed with the record companies, radio stations, theatre managers and unions that were the chief mechanisms for enforcing segregation. Perhaps one of

²⁷Smith and Hofer, *Music on my Mind*, 55. Although it would have been impossible to stop playing a gig in order to prevent a white musicians from learning ideas, there seems to be little complaint from black musicians either. For an example in jazz, Pops Foster remembered Red Nichols doing the same thing, ‘Nichols used to come to places where you were playing and sit there all night picking up ideas. You’d hear him later doing the same thing you did.’ Foster et al., *Pops Foster*, 169.

²⁸Smith and Hofer, *Music on my Mind*, 227.

²⁹Sonny Greer quoted in Dance, *The World of Duke Ellington*, 53.

³⁰Even Paul Whiteman was consistently open about his debt to black innovators of jazz. See Ward, *Jazz*, 100.

the greatest reasons behind the surprisingly open relationship between white and black musicians came from the fact that, ironically, many black musicians saw white jazz as aesthetically inferior and therefore not a threat. After all, it was the black innovations in jazz that were regarded within the community of musicians as the most significant qualities of the music.

The respect given to black musicians was unmistakable and no amount of white commercial success changed those perceptions. Sonny Greer had befriended white trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke after playing together in the Kentucky Club and they also went to other venues around the city. It was Greer's opinion that Beiderbecke was praised by critics just because he was playing in the nation's most commercially successful orchestra under Paul Whiteman, 'They made him an invincible trumpet player, but he wasn't that good. You could never have put Bix up on a bandstand with Louis Armstrong, Joe Smith, and Bubber Miley when they were at their peak. The competition was pretty fast then, and he was never in life a legend.'³¹ Black musicians also had the confidence that they were providing the most significant musical innovations, even if white musicians were popularising them. New Orleans trumpeter Doc Cheatham worked in New York and met some of the most famous white musicians in the country, but still the influences were clear, 'I met Bunny Berigan and Bix Beiderbecke, and...the young Benny Goodman and Frankie Trumbauer. They were all star musicians, but with Louis on the scene, everyone was listening to him because he had so much to offer.'³²

Black musicians were confident that their music was superior, and believed that there was an unbridgeable gap between black and white jazz. Sidney Bechet thought white musicians had played jazz 'as best they could,' but still, 'it wasn't our music. It wasn't us. I don't care what you say, it's awful hard for a man who isn't black to play a melody that's come deep out of black people. It's a question of feeling.'³³ Others had the same impression of bands into the 1930s. Clarinetist Barney Bigard thought the

³¹Dance, *The World of Duke Ellington*, 53.

³²Doc Cheatham, *I Guess I'll Get the Papers and Go Home: the life of Doc Cheatham*, edited by Alyn Shipton (London: Cassell, 1996), 17.

³³Bechet et al., *Treat It Gentle*, 114.

main difference between white and black bands was that white bands would swing ‘more politely.’ In contrast, ‘The coloured musicians, as a rule, had jazz in their soul. The white boys, they just didn’t have that feeling.’³⁴ For Doc Cheatham, the gap between the two races at that time was just as fundamental. Like many black musicians, he insisted, ‘I can tell a black musician from a white musician blindfolded, any time. There’s always a little bitty something that’ll come out from white musicians, especially trumpet players, however great they are and however good they are.’³⁵ White musicians often agreed, as did Mezz Mezzrow, who even rejected his Jewish heritage and conceived of himself as black, claiming that ‘I was going to learn their music and play it for the rest of my days. I was going to be a musician, a Negro musician, hipping the world about the blues the way only Negroes can...I went in [to prison] green but came out chocolate brown.’³⁶

The confidence of black musicians lasted through much of the Depression, even though the economic hardships had a greater effect on black bands. With Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Cab Calloway among the few successful black artists, and an entire new generation of soloists scoring success among their colleagues, there was much to be confident about musically, even if the commercial prospects were discouraging. White bands dominated the national industry on radio, records and in the press, but black and white musicians continued to get together after hours. Jam sessions proliferated across the country, and diminishing economic opportunities meant that musical skill and originality was at a higher premium. Billie Holiday attended many jam sessions in New York in the 1930s and suggested that the sessions were often combative, but the atmosphere remained one of friendship: ‘Cats like Benny Goodman and [Goodman’s trumpet soloist] Harry James would come up after they finished their gigs in the big radio studio orchestras. They would sit in with the greatest guys around—Roy Eldridge, Lester Young, Benny Webster. They were all friends of mine.’³⁷ When Harry James started playing with black musicians, Holiday recalls, ‘he was hostile at first,’ because he thought he was ‘the world’s greatest

³⁴Bigard, *With Louis and Duke*, 70.

³⁵Cheatham, *Get the Papers*, 17.

³⁶Mezzrow and Wolfe, *Really the Blues*, 18.

³⁷Billie Holiday and William Dufty, *Lady Sings the Blues* (New York: Abacus, 1975), 49.

trumpeter,’ and because he was from Texas ‘where Negroes are looked on like they’re dirt.’³⁸ However, instead of simply excluding James, the musicians found a way to rid him of these ideas. He was put up against fellow trumpeter Buck Clayton in one of the sessions, and ‘it took only a few earfuls of Buck Clayton’s playing, and Harry wasn’t so uppity. He’d had his lesson, and after that came up to jam and loved it.’³⁹

Integration

As both a black and popular music, jazz owed much of its place in American culture to cooperation between white and black musicians in informal jam sessions and meetings. Since at least the mid-1930s, integration amongst musicians also took place on stage, and this prompted many writers and musicians to celebrate jazz as a force to eliminate legal and social discrimination in America. The positive example that jazz set for racial integration in America was used by writers through the 1960s, when critics like Dan Morgenstern claimed that the ‘natural fraternity’ of musicians should provide an example of how to end segregation.⁴⁰ However, if the ‘natural fraternity’ of musicians were exemplary of the ideals of American democracy, writers and musicians rarely had the same praise for the wider industry. Almost all of the businesses were owned and managed by white people, and efforts to end *de facto* segregation in jazz met with nearly as much concerted resistance as legal segregation.

Black musicians were rarely featured in the American press before World War II, but they began to have an unavoidable presence after the first prominent jazz band was integrated in 1936. However, both the mainstream and musical press remained disinclined to discuss racial discrimination in the industry until 1939, when several of the nation’s most famous white bands hired black musicians. Critic and record executive John Hammond recalled that magazines such as *Down Beat* that then supported integration avoided the

³⁸Ibid., 45.

³⁹Ibid., 46.

⁴⁰Dan Morgenstern, ‘Preface’, *Jazz* 2.3 (March 1963), 1. Morgenstern said in a previous issue: ‘Jazz occupies a unique position in American history: despite shortcomings, it has represented a kind of spiritual oasis in the soul-searing desert of so-called race relations.’ Morgenstern, ‘Preface’, 1.

issue in the mid-1930s: ‘But even at *Down Beat* I was blue-penciled in areas important to me. I could write about Negro musicians, but not as people who could not get a break because of their race. Nor could I write about the many malpractices I had discovered in the band business while working for [Irving] Mills.’⁴¹ In 1939 *Down Beat* covered several stories about segregation and its negative impact on the industry and on American society, including an article that highlighted the relationship between the music industry and its fight for democracy with the questioning headline, ‘Democracy?’ The article was about the Daughters of the American Revolution’s (DAR) exclusion of singer Marion Anderson from their Constitution Hall because she was black, and it concluded: ‘What was it we remember from our history books about the American Revolution, from which the DAR took its name? Something about a war that was fought to make Americans “free and equal?” The ladies of the DAR had better check up and make sure!’⁴² Another article claimed that ‘racial discrimination raised its fat ugly head’ when the license for a bar was revoked until the management fired the resident black band and hired white replacements.⁴³ Perhaps the most incisive of the articles featured in *Down Beat* in 1939 was the front page headline, ‘Should Negro Musicians Play in White Bands?’ The article reported the response of several white musicians:

‘No! Definitely No!’ said many leaders and side men.

‘But why?’ asked *Down Beat*’s reporters. ‘It’s professional suicide’ said one, ‘but don’t quote me. It’s not fair for Negroes to replace white musicians when there is so much unemployment.’ ‘The Union should forbid it!’ said another.

‘It will break down race lines,’ said a third. ‘But in music and art we thought there should be no race lines,’ interposed DB’s reporter.⁴⁴

A month later, *Down Beat* printed a reply by a black musician, who vociferously attacked the racism of white musicians, especially as it was ‘generally conceded that the Negro

⁴¹*Down Beat* was first published in 1934. Hammond and Townsend, *John Hammond On Record*, 148.

⁴²‘Democracy?’, *Down Beat* 6.4 (April 1939), 10.

⁴³‘Atkins’, 25.

⁴⁴‘Should Negro Musicians Play in White Bands?’, *Down Beat* 6.10 (October 15, 1939), 1.

musician has been of tremendous assistance to his white brother in helping them create this latest craze “SWING.”⁴⁵

As a supporter of integration within the industry, *Down Beat* allowed the black musicians working in early integrated bands to voice their complaints. One such musician was singer Billie Holiday, who toured with Artie Shaw in 1939. According to Holiday, the treatment she received from the management made her turn away from singing with dance bands for the rest of her career. Holiday had to stay backstage when she was not singing, and since Shaw gave in to pressures from theatre managers she was able to sing only two tunes every night. In addition to the common practices of making black musicians enter through the back door and ride on the freight elevators, Holiday was often not even allowed backstage when she was not performing, but was forced to return to her room. Spending most of her time reading while the band played their sets, Holiday was at least getting her two songs aired on a national radio broadcast, which helped establish her national reputation. When Shaw finally had to stop her from singing on the radio, she quit the band.⁴⁶

Many writers challenged the practice of segregation in the industry, but they could also reinforce the assumptions upon which those practices were based. One of the most prevalent of these was that the American public did not want, and would violently reject, integrated bands. This assumption formed a basis for articles such as that found on the front page of *Down Beat* in August of 1939 with the headline ‘Goodman Adds Noted Negro Pianist.’ The article claimed that Benny Goodman dared ‘to do what no other leader has done before’ in his decision to add Fletcher Henderson to his regular orchestra, and it later applauded Goodman’s bravado by reporting, ‘Mixed bands have never been successful with the American public, but Benny is paying no heed to that accepted fact.’ This ‘accepted fact’ appears to be little more than presumption. The article later notes Goodman had already toured for several years with his trio and quartet with Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton, and they were ‘eminently successful’ and that ‘even in the South,

⁴⁵William Everett Samuels, ‘Union Editor in Fiery Reply’, *Down Beat* 6.13 (November 15, 1939), 6.

⁴⁶Dexter Jr, ‘Never Sing’, 6.

Benny experienced no trouble with dancers.⁴⁷ Only a month after adding Henderson, *Down Beat* reported that ‘Goodman Plans to Add More Negroes to Band.’ Once again, in seeming defiance of the ‘accepted fact’ that mixed bands were not popular, Goodman was not ‘a bit surprised with the success he has had in using a Negro pianist regularly with his band.’⁴⁸

Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton credited John Hammond for helping Goodman overcome the industry’s disapproval in his decision to hire black musicians.⁴⁹ Hammond’s drive for racially integrated bands was matched by his power within the music industry, and he enjoyed wealth, successful writing, and an executive position at Columbia Records.⁵⁰ First, through his position at Columbia in 1935, Hammond arranged for Wilson to be band leader on recordings with several top white musicians, including Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, and Harry James.⁵¹ A year later, Hammond convinced Goodman to take Teddy Wilson on tour with him. Wilson was only allowed to play solo during intermissions, and as part of the Benny Goodman Trio, but this small group became famous for their live performance and records. Hammond guaranteed some powerful business connections and public support for Goodman, while, according to Wilson, everyone else was telling him, ‘You’re a bright young man, you’re a very talented clarinet player and you’re going to block your career at its very beginning. You’re only in your twenties and you’ll never be successful if you hire a Negro player.’⁵² Ignoring the beliefs and attitudes of these ‘show business people,’ Goodman ‘decided to take the gamble and it turned out to be a great success for him. And when he hired another Negro, Lionel Hampton, a year

⁴⁷‘Pianist’, 1.

⁴⁸‘Goodman Plans’, 2.

⁴⁹They also credit Hammond as one of the few white men in this era who actively and aggressively sought equal treatment for musicians. Leonard Feather was another important advocate for integration, as Feather said, ‘racism in jazz was a self-evident bane, one against which I joined John Hammond and countless others in speaking out during the 1930s (and trying to match actions with words)...’ Feather, *Jazz Years*, 127.

⁵⁰Hammond also joined the board of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) in 1935: ‘Joining the NAACP board was the beginning of a thirty-year association in which I served actively and proudly, the largest and most influential effort to achieve integration in America. Next to jazz, the NAACP became the means to fight for the social change I sought.’ Hammond and Townsend, *John Hammond On Record*, 158.

⁵¹Wilson et al., *Teddy Wilson Talks Jazz*, 22-23.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 46.

later, there was no doubt as to whether it would work.⁵³

Despite their success, Lionel Hampton and Teddy Wilson both recalled the difficulties they had faced when touring with Goodman in the mid-1930s, but they thought such difficulties were primarily the result of racist authorities and segregation rather than rejection from the audiences. Hampton remembered ‘that *Down Beat* carried the headline, “Predicted Race Riot Fades As Crowd Applauds Goodman Quartet.” In fact, we were so popular at the Paramount that we had kids screaming and dancing in the aisles...’⁵⁴ Clearly, it was the police and other civil authorities and not the audience that expected problems because of the integrated band. Generally, Wilson and Hampton faced the discrimination and segregation endured by black bands but without the support that this black musical community could provide. While their white band mates were able to stay in hotels and eat in restaurants, Wilson and Hampton had to head ‘straight away to the Negro ghetto in the town’ to eat and sleep.⁵⁵ Wilson and Hampton were also repeatedly mistaken for Goodman’s valet or the band’s water boy, but they had no choice but to accept the situation and play their music. Even white musicians like Goodman faced problems because of their use of integrated bands. Many Americans resisted integration, and some wrote to Goodman and to the managers of the theatres in which he played to protest the use of black musicians, and this anger was perhaps enhanced by success of the band. On one famous occasion, Goodman became so angry that he hit one of the theatre workers on the head with his clarinet when the man told him that he should ‘get those niggers off his show.’⁵⁶

Such treatment in the late 1930s was common in an industry that remained almost entirely segregated. As John Hammond recalled, indignation at racial discrimination in the music industry helped in creating the first major venue for jazz with an integrated audience, the Café Society in New York City. Owner Barney Josephson, who was a businessman with little direct knowledge of the jazz industry, met with Hammond in 1938

⁵³Ibid.; See also Hampton and Haskins, *Hamp*, 52.

⁵⁴Ibid., 49.

⁵⁵Wilson et al., *Teddy Wilson Talks Jazz*, 45.

⁵⁶Hampton and Haskins, *Hamp*, 63.

to discuss the possibilities of opening a club in Greenwich Village. Jazz had been popular for over twenty years, but until Josephson's project, segregated audiences were standard across the city. Hammond recalled their motivations in starting the club: '[Josephson] wanted what I had always wanted: an integrated night club with mixed entertainment and mixed audiences...It would be a place where I could put new jazz talent, a place where blacks and whites could hear the best music in the city.'⁵⁷ When Café Society opened, it became one of the premier jazz venues in New York City and remained so for over a decade, becoming a high-profile example of a successfully integrated club. Some of the most famous jazz musicians secured or increased their fame with residences at Café Society, including Billie Holiday, Hazel Scott, and Lena Horne.⁵⁸

Jazz as American democracy

During World War II jazz was publicised as a symbol of democracy in the media and amongst its international audience. America's entry into the war prompted one music journal to claim, 'Bandsmen today are not just jazz musicians, they are soldiers of music.'⁵⁹ As with every other major industry, music was subsumed into the war effort to preserve democracy, and writers and musicians had to balance their own professional concerns with patriotism and support for the war. The language of public discourses about the war influenced writers to express the music industry's pressures and situations in terms of political struggle and national duty. Writing about jazz was instrumental in solidifying the effectiveness of jazz as a symbol of democracy in Europe and America.

Before the war began, much of the sentiment in the music trade press reflected a popular reluctance to be dragged into a military conflict. This was primarily based on the concerns of many musicians for their jobs. As the American government prepared to shift from the Depression-era bodies like Works Progress Administration (WPA) to

⁵⁷Hammond and Townsend, *John Hammond On Record*, 207.

⁵⁸Billie Holiday said, 'I opened Café Society as an unknown; I left two years later as a star.' Holiday and Dufty, *Lady Sings the Blues*, 89.

⁵⁹Quoted in Ward, *Jazz*, 296.

those necessary for a war economy, many musicians feared they would lose governmental support. An headline from July of 1939 expressed distress at the coming economic crisis: ‘9,000 WPA Musicians May Have to Build Roads!’ Decrying the bill that was passing through Congress, the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) was worried about the unemployment of thousands of musicians who were playing in WPA community orchestras. With the union unable to sustain such a large growth in the unemployed, it was thought that such musicians would have to join projects that were seen as more essential—such as building roads, sewers or other infrastructure.⁶⁰

However, as tensions in Europe grew over the summer, concerns about employment took a decidedly different shape. In September of 1939 the German invasion of Poland started hostilities in Europe, and some American journalists feared that foreign propaganda would be used to instigate their participation in a war in which America had ‘no conceivable business.’ This fear was especially associated with Great Britain, which was the source of much of America’s news in Europe: ‘From now on Americans will learn little from Europe except what those governments WANT US TO KNOW. Radio today permits direct communication with every European nation, AND THE PROPAGANDA LIARS will be as busy as they were in the last war, seeking to sway American sympathies.’⁶¹ The consequences for musicians were made in no uncertain terms, ‘To those of you who have spent a lifetime mastering your instrument, you will trade a violin for a rifle! To those of you who have struggled hard for success, you will give it up to be slaughtered, maimed or gassed!’⁶²

The war also raised the threat of fascism and communism within America. With the rise of dictatorships in Russia, Spain, Italy and Germany, the national media was quick to publicise perceived threats to American institutions. This prompted the music trade press to report on the presence of these threats within the industry. A *Down Beat* article

⁶⁰‘9,000 WPA Musicians May Have to Build Roads!!’, *Down Beat* 6.7 (July 1939), 21. To get an idea of the magnitude of the impact, at the time swing was America’s most popular music and employed between 30,000 and 40,000 musicians nationally. Ward, *Jazz*, 240.

⁶¹Capitals in the original. ‘War Propaganda Should Be Marked “Poison”’, *Down Beat* 6.10 (October 1, 1939), 10.

⁶²‘What Does War Mean to Musicians?’, 10.

published on October 1, 1939 entitled 'Communists and Nazis Mean Terrorism' typifies how the ideological and practical fears of the time were translated to professional concerns:

The embrace of Soviets and Nazis in a trade and now an aggression agreement while Poland is butchered is revealing! And it is making many Americans see that Communism and Nazi-Fascism have much in common. Both systems sacrifice the individual to a one-party dictatorship which regiments and purges every fragment of society to its will. There is no place for artists or musicians in a society that murders men who dare to think or feel for themselves.

There is no place in America for doctrines that feed on hate, and cruel individuality. Nor is there a place here for men who would smash all who do not agree with them.

Forewarned is forearmed. For those who face facts, Fascism and Russian Communism are more alike than unlike...AND THEIR LIKENESS IS INCREASING DAY BY DAY! Watch out for signs of dictatorship and intolerance in your union.⁶³

The vigilance prescribed by the writer could be found elsewhere in everything from governmental media to newspapers, magazines and radio announcements. Still, such unbridled support for democracy against the fascist and communist threat was mainly conceived as a struggle within America, not as an endorsement for fighting overseas.⁶⁴

The media's reaction to the potential political threats of the war became focused on the musicians' union, American Federation of Musicians (AFM), and especially its uncompromising president James Petrillo. He came under often acrimonious scrutiny from publications across the political spectrum that culminated in criticism of the AFM recording ban in 1942.⁶⁵ The media often compared Petrillo to American enemies, which enabled his critics to align themselves with patriotic fervor against such un-American ideologies as fascism. Many in the musicians' union and press first criticised Petrillo after

⁶³Capitals and ellipsis in the original. See 'Communists and Nazis Mean Terrorism', *Down Beat* 6.10 (October 1, 1939), 10.

⁶⁴See Peter Carroll and David W Noble, *The Free and the Unfree* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 347.

⁶⁵Petrillo was president of the Chicago local from 1922, and in 1940 became president of the AFM.

he instituted a local recording ban in Chicago in 1937 that was claimed to have hurt musicians.⁶⁶

When Petrillo decided to run for the presidency of the national office against incumbent Joseph Weber two years later, his opponents used the recording ban to portray him as an enemy to the AFM and America. Carl Cons, the editor of Chicago's *Down Beat* magazine, condemned Petrillo as a 'Czar-like' official who considered himself 'the union' instead of the members he was supposed to serve. Cons conversely emphasised that Weber 'lives and breathes Americanism,' and that he is a 'man who for 40 years has proved the superiority of the American way—the democratic way—by inspiring and practicing democracy in unionism.' Cons also claimed that Weber 'has never used the power of his office, however cleverly or under the disguise of promoting the welfare of the union, either to DICTATE, RESTRICT or DESTROY any other man's opportunities to make a living.'⁶⁷ Cons' imagery of Petrillo's dictatorial actions, which were antithetical to Weber's Americanism, were epitomised by the emphasis placed on comparisons with dictatorship.

Carl Cons' editorials did not mark the end of criticisms of Petrillo's bargaining methods as dictatorial. In January of the following year, when he was still only head of the Chicago Federation of Musicians, he was accused of the censorship of local Chicago musicals who were praising his political opponent. The typically anti-unionist *Time* magazine described Petrillo as 'Mussolini' and 'Tsar,' and suggested that he 'required the local managers of George White's *Scandals* and of the Kaufman-Hart comedy *The Man Who Came to Dinner* to drop references to John Lewis, [and] announced that any mention of CIO and its boss will be forbidden hereafter on Chicago stages.'⁶⁸ After the accusations of

⁶⁶A future national ban would be based on this local trial. Petrillo's main argument was that jukeboxes and radio were significantly hurting employment of live musicians, and so the recordings that they use should carry a licensing fee that would go to pay unemployed musicians in the union. Many were upset he carried the ban out during wartime, when music was seen as necessary for morale. See 'Petrillo Bans Strikes Until War is Ended', *Down Beat* 9.1 (January 1, 1942), 1; 'Petrillo Resolved to Halt Recordings', *Down Beat* 9.13 (July 1, 1942), 1. For more details on Petrillo and AFM ban, see Scott DeVaux, 'Bebop and the Recording Industry: the 1942 AFM recording ban reconsidered', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 41.1 (1988).

⁶⁷Capitals in original. See Carl Cons, 'A Man Has a Right to Live!', *Down Beat* 6.7 (July 1939), 10.

⁶⁸'Caesar's Fun', *Time* (January 8, 1940), (URL: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,763149,00.html>). Some avoided the emotive language—see 'No J.L. Lewis in *Scandals*, Head of Musicians Union Bans His Name from Loop Shows', *New York Times* (December 25, 1939), 28.

ensorship, Petrillo recanted. The following week *Down Beat*, a strong supporter of the musicians' union, published an article claiming that the 'dictator' Petrillo had 'pointed out that he had simply made an humble request of the shows' producers, that he certainly didn't want to be dictatorial, that he thought John L. Lewis and the CIO were a menace to democracy and felt it his duty to do his bit to prevent spread of subversive influences.'⁶⁹

The example made of Petrillo demonstrated the expanded fears about war and political radicalism in the United States, but also the commitment of writers and musicians ostensibly to protect democracy. However, commitment to the war effort also occasioned more direct changes to the music industry because the conflict had expanded production in the American economy. Many industries underwent significant changes due to shortage or rationing of materials and wartime needs, and this had a variety of implications for the music industry. A majority of musical instrument manufacturers switched their industrial capacities to military equipment, while musicians, songwriters, and publishers changed their music.⁷⁰ Here too the language of the war infused the aesthetics of the music, as preparations for war encouraged a demand for and a consequent supply of songs addressing the conflict. These were often novelty songs that were platitudinous, and music industry protests against them appeared in print:

Several bands are getting on a phony 'patriotism' kick which is beginning to smell bad. Mercenary opportunism is sprouting like stickweed from certain band leaders who are grabbing up and commercialising to a sickening degree any tune which had the vaguest suggestion of Americanism, Democracy, pa-

Petrillo opposed Lewis because the AFM was a member of the largest federation of unions, the American Federation of Labour (AFL). They were bitter rivals with the second largest federation, the Congress of Industrial Organisations, which formed in 1938 after opposition and legal battles with the AFL. See Carroll and Noble, *The Free and the Unfree*, 341.

⁶⁹'Un-American', 1.

⁷⁰An advertisement from C.G. Conn Ltd., one of the largest instrument manufacturers in the US, details this change: 'C.G. Conn Ltd. is now the world's largest manufacturer of magnetic compasses for ships...Since those critical days early in 1942, when Conn was asked to convert to the strange and difficult job of compass manufacture, we have made over 65,000 compasses of various kinds...When the Navy tells us we have furnished enough compasses for complete Victory, we'll gladly resume our peacetime role and apply ourselves to the job we love best—producing the world's finest band instruments. C.G. Conn Ltd, Elkhart, Indiana.' See C.G. Conn Ltd., 'Advertisement for C.G. Conn Ltd.', *Metronome* 61.1 (January 1945), 2.

triotism or anti-warism. What these leaders don't realise is that rather than contributing anything constructive toward national unity, all they're actually doing is giving genuine patriotism a black eye.⁷¹

Some critics were worried about these wartime songs, not only for their lyrics but for the increasingly formulaic musical structures that supported them.⁷² The musicians were less concerned because of the immense profits being made.⁷³ Nonetheless, the musicians too felt the sentimentality of wartime music and films rewarded nostalgia more than innovation.⁷⁴

The market for patriotic songs increased after the United States entered the war on December 8, 1941. By February of the following year, complaints were again being made by music critics who thought the song publishing companies were trying to capitalise on the war effort: 'The publishing nabobs, with one eye on the cash register, rounded up every prospective writer and set the gears of the raw music business for full speed ahead. Each wanted to be first. The public was ready for war songs.' Once again, the war songs were thought to be opportunistic and 'clothed in phony patriotism and aimed at commercialism.'⁷⁵ Even though the war songs were accused of being 'phony,' there was a great amount of pressure put on musicians to contribute to the war effort. As 'soldiers

⁷¹'Phony Patriotism Can Be a Dangerous Thing', *Down Beat* 7.20 (October 15, 1940), 10. While there was a profusion of songs directly addressing the war, love songs remained the popular during wartime, and Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* (sung by Bing Crosby) topped the charts. After America entered the war, the most popular songs particularly addressed the separation experienced by sixteen million American men and women enlisted in the armed forces. See Rose's chapter on popular culture in WWII, Rose, *Myth*, 163-183.

⁷²See Marvin Freeman, 'Black Music's on Top; White Music Stagnant', *Down Beat* 7.7 (April 1, 1940), 7; George Avakian, 'Where is Jazz Going?', *Down Beat* 6.9 (September 1939), 9.

⁷³There were notable exceptions, including Duke Ellington, who was in perhaps his most celebrated period of creativity. See Duke Ellington, 'Duke Concludes Criticism of the Critics', *Down Beat* 6.5 (May 1939), 14.

⁷⁴Band leader Artie Shaw said of his concerts aboard US Navy ships in the South Pacific: 'You'd play three notes and the whole audience was instantly roaring with you...These men were starved for something and to remind them of home and whatever—"Mom and apple pie." And the music had that effect I suppose.' Quoted in Ward, *Jazz*, 296.

⁷⁵Eddie Beaumont, 'Sure We Want Victory but War Songs Still Smell', *Down Beat* 9.4 (February 15, 1942), 11. Later *Down Beat* complained the war songs were not grim enough: 'when the average guy sings *Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland*—and then hears that twenty thousand men were killed that day in Russia—he feels like a silly ass.' Mike Levin, 'New War Songs Are All Too Syrupy! They Lack Grimness', *Down Beat* 9.11 (June 1, 1942), 14.

of music,' *Down Beat* proclaimed their success as a contribution to victory: 'Nation's musicians will help us win this war. TEAMWORK IS GOING TO WIN THIS WAR FOR AMERICA!'⁷⁶

One of the main ways in which musicians helped win the war was through service in military bands. Since most musicians in the United States were young and male, they were often conscripted, and the loss of musicians became a major issue for bands. Most prominent musicians who joined the armed forces, especially those who were white, were promised relatively safe positions in military bands, but this was not always a consolation for the bands they left behind. Some band leaders publicly argued for the morale-building effects of their work in order to retain their sidemen.⁷⁷ Although many popular band leaders, including Lionel Hampton and Count Basie, ended up losing many of their musicians, they continued by finding replacements as best they could.⁷⁸

The participation of musicians was encouraged by the Roosevelt administration, who wanted the music industry to help expand and exploit the popularity of jazz music around the world.⁷⁹ Some of the most significant domestic and international propaganda efforts that incorporated jazz were through radio. Radio was considered a significant political tool, as the world's listening audience numbered over three hundred million during the war.⁸⁰ Jazz was particularly effective for broadcasts sponsored by the Office for War Information (OWI) in America that aimed at easing racial tensions that undermined the war effort, since there were several national famous black bands that would draw

⁷⁶Capitals in the original. 'America Needs Music!', *Down Beat* 9.10 (May 15, 1942), 10. One of the first hit war songs was *Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition!* by Frank Loesser. Some other song titles tell of the sentiment expressed in relation to the war, including *Goodbye Mama, I'm Off to Yokohama* and *You're a Sap, Mr. Jap*. Rose, *Myth*, 174-175.

⁷⁷Colonel Manny Prager, 'Manny Prager: "Conscription Will Ruin My Band"', *Down Beat* 7.20 (October 15, 1940), 2.

⁷⁸Hampton and Haskins, *Hamp*, 82; also Count Basie and Albert Murray, *Good Morning Blues: the autobiography of Count Basie* (New York: Random House, 1985), 252-253.

⁷⁹'Help', 10.

⁸⁰Charles Rolo stated in 1943: 'There were more than 100,000,000 [radio] sets in existence. Europe had 40,000,000, the United States 55,000,000, Latin America 4,000,000, Africa and the Near East nearly 1,000,000, the Far East and the Antipodes 6,000,000. Even in such small and remote communities as Ceylon and Madagascar, Burma, Angola, and Iceland, radio listeners could be counted in the thousands or tens of thousands.' See Rolo, *Radio Goes to War*, 17-18.

significant audiences of all races.⁸¹ In Europe, the OWI and British government utilised the interest in jazz to broadcast hours of music interspersed with their ‘news’ in English and in various other languages on networks like Voice of America.⁸² The popularity of these broadcasts disturbed chief Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels, both because of popular interest in the banned *entartete Musik* and because it carried with it harmful propaganda.⁸³ In a shrewd and ironic maneuver, Goebbels then employed jazz music himself in his English language broadcasts to Britain and America in order to entice allied personnel to listen to his own ‘news.’⁸⁴

One of the other major efforts of American musicians during the war came through United Service Organisation (USO) performances on military bases, on armed forces radio, and in recording V-Discs.⁸⁵ Black musicians were amongst the most popular contributors. Count Basie recalled his first ‘Command Performance’ for the armed forces radio in Hollywood, ‘According to *Metronome*, it went out to Allied troops in thirty-two countries. A lot of top-ranking stars went on those shortwave broadcasts. The ones on the programme with us were Clark Gable, Bette Davis, Dinah Shore, Carmen Miranda, and Jerry Colonna.’⁸⁶ As an established practice in the music industry, radio performances were able to bring together celebrity entertainers with relatively little regard to race, but live performances remained segregated. Like black American soldiers, black musicians faced a great deal of danger and discrimination, as many of the army bases were in the South.⁸⁷

The profusion of jazz through American propaganda campaigns and a small number of imported records gave it the profile and popularity to become a widespread political

⁸¹For a detailed look at these efforts, see Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom*.

⁸²Rolo, *Radio Goes to War*, 189.

⁸³Goebbels was Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda for the Nazis from 1933 to 1945. *Entartete Musik* translates to ‘degenerate music.’

⁸⁴Kater, *Different Drummers*, 122.

⁸⁵V-Discs, or Victory-Discs, were records produced non-for-profit by agreements between the U.S. government and commercial record companies. They were sent to soldiers and army radio stations abroad for morale purposes.

⁸⁶Basie and Murray, *Good Morning Blues*, 260; for more info on Basie’s V-Disc contributions, see *ibid.*, 257, 270-272.

⁸⁷See ‘Hines Nixes Jim Crow Shows’; ‘Nazis Okay’; ‘Sinatra’; Hampton and Haskins, *Hamp*, 85; Hammond and Townsend, *John Hammond On Record*, 255-256.

symbol to Europeans under Nazi occupation. French writer Charles Delaunay, an important coordinator of jazz records and clubs during the war saw the previous decade's 'small nucleus of jazz fans' in France turn into something much larger. After the war, he recalled in a British jazz magazine that 'The German occupation occasioned a quite unexpected phenomenon...almost all the young people of France became infatuated with jazz within a few days. They spoke of nothing but Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Fats Waller and other American stars.' With almost all the American musicians gone, French jazz musicians became 'popular immediately.' However, it was not only the French who were increasing jazz's popularity: 'The production of discs increased tenfold and the demand for jazz records grew all the more because of the many Germans who, long deprived of jazz, stampeded French record shops.' Delaunay explained this sudden surge in popularity as a reaction to censorship. He thought that without 'American films, cut off from the *climat américain*, the young people of France suddenly realised that jazz was really their music.'⁸⁸ For the youth of France it was not only aesthetically appealing, but it created a community based on knowledge of the American musician's language, dances, and sartorial style. Since this knowledge was banned, it was also a form of rebellion against the Vichy regime and the occupying Nazis.⁸⁹

For much the same reasons, jazz became popular among the youth of many other European countries. In occupied Belgium, Carlos de Radzitzky reported on similar circumstances, 'In reaction against the stifling atmosphere created by the Nazi occupation, youth showed a delirious infatuation with jazz...' This manifested itself not only in the same type of fanatic record collecting as in France, but also an underground network of enthusiasts that relied partly on Charles Delaunay to obtain the latest American records.⁹⁰ The same processes were at work within British society, wherein jazz fans looked to the United States for the latest developments in jazz. British saxophonist Johnny Dankworth recalled that the few American records that came over each month 'amounted to precious

⁸⁸Delaunay, 'Jazz Abroad: France', 13.

⁸⁹The group of French jazz fans that adopted the language and dress of Americans were known as *zazous*. See chapter 'Jazz as a Protest' in Francis Newton, *The Jazz Scene* (London: Penguin, 1959), 252-269.

⁹⁰De Radzitzky, 'Jazz Abroad: Belgium', 15.

little evidence of what was happening at that time in the birthplace of jazz across the submarine-infested Atlantic. In those circumstances every bar, every note, every nuance became the object of close scrutiny and endless discussion.⁹¹ Such devotion was even evident in Germany during the war, most notably with a group that called themselves the *Swingjugend* (Swing Kids) who used jazz music as a politically anti-assimilationist symbol.⁹² Much like the underground clubs elsewhere in Europe, the activities of the Swing Kids were based on covert record collecting, discussions, jam sessions and dances. Of course, not all fans of jazz would be so dedicated. The audience in Germany was similar to those in other countries and was wide-ranging, even including soldiers in the field.⁹³

The devotion of European jazz fans was translated by the American musical press as motivation for their contribution to the war. As early as 1939, *Down Beat* was enthusiastically reporting on the respect for jazz abroad. One article quipped ‘That is typical of the British—deadly sincere one moment and ready for hot jazz the next.’⁹⁴ *Down Beat* also reported in February 1939 the high demand for American jazz records, ‘Berlin, Germany—it’s the same story the world over, swing’s the thing. Of the 437 records issued in Germany in the past six months, only 36 were waxed in England.’⁹⁵ By the end of the war, jazz was celebrated by even more major works, including Robert Goffin’s book *Jazz: from the Congo to the Metropolitan*.⁹⁶

⁹¹John Dankworth, *Jazz in Revolution* (London: Constable, 1998), 13-14.

⁹²This name was based on and opposed to the Reich’s *Hitlerjugend*. See Michael H Kater, ‘Forbidden Fruit? Jazz in the Third Reich’, *The American Historical Review* 94.1 (1989). For a discussion of the *Swingjugend*, see pages 39-41.

⁹³Kater, *Different Drummers*, 123. Jazz was similarly banned in Italy, and there was also an underground scene there. See Saija, ‘Jazz Abroad: Jazz in Italy’, 17.

⁹⁴Andy Whitehouse, ‘Jazz Holds Its Own in War Scarred Europe’, *Down Beat* 6.10 (October 1, 1939), 2.

⁹⁵‘U.S. Platters Are Germany’s Favourite Despite Hitler Rule’, *Down Beat* 6.2 (February 1939), 2.

⁹⁶Goffin, *Jazz*.

Government definition

After World War II, the American government dismantled much of its propaganda machinery, including the Office of War Information and the Voice of America radio network. However, America's desire for international influence as the Cold War began meant that attention was turned back to the effectiveness of wartime propaganda campaigns. The Voice of America was reinstated in 1947, first with Russian language broadcasts and eventually with coverage all over the world in over fifty languages. In the 1950s the State Department also started to promote and export American culture as a way of justifying the expansion of its presence in the world. As *Time* magazine pointed out, this effort was well behind other Cold War efforts: 'In its concentration on exporting its dollars, tools and advice to the postwar world, the US has been slow and a little timid about exporting its culture. But now culture is catching up with the atomic cannon, the dam builders, the agricultural advisers and the diplomats.'⁹⁷

Because of the international popularity of jazz and its success as a propaganda tool during World War II, it was a natural choice for American government sponsorship during the Cold War. Jazz was known around the world as an indigenous American music and had a widespread and established symbolic meaning as a 'music of freedom' in many countries.⁹⁸ Ironically, jazz was declining in popularity within the United States during the Cold War as big bands became financially unsustainable and rock music took over as the most popular dance music. However, growing popularity abroad allowed many of America's most internationally famous musicians to perform and tour on behalf of the State Department, including such major figures from the World War II years as Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman. In return for their services to the government, the tours provided them with a steady, lucrative income and a chance to expand their worldwide audiences. The impact of government sponsorship for jazz was profound, both for the genre and for individual musicians. As jazz lessened in popularity within the

⁹⁷'Export', *Time* (May 14, 1956), (URL: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,808427-2,00.html>).

⁹⁸Goffin, *Jazz*, 240-241.

United States, it nonetheless gained public attention for its role in representing the State Department's ideas of the internationalisation of American freedom and democracy. In fact, Louis Armstrong had so much success as an official Ambassador of Goodwill that his nickname was transformed from 'Satchmo' to 'Ambassador Satch.'⁹⁹

The first major government-sponsored programme for jazz was 'Music USA,' a radio programme that was broadcast over the Voice of America (VOA) network starting in 1955. In 1953, the VOA had been transferred from the State Department to the newly created United States Information Agency (USIA), and 'Music USA' was part of this change.¹⁰⁰ The DJ for the show was Willis Conover, whose extensive knowledge of jazz, massive record collection, and easily understood accent helped the programme to gain an unexpectedly large following. Soon after 'Music USA' started, VOA received over ten thousand fan letters from listeners around the world.¹⁰¹ By 1959 Conover's show had moved to the prime time slots before and after the news and had over thirty million listeners in eighty different countries.¹⁰² Even though this number grew to over one hundred million listeners in the 1960s, Conover was virtually unknown in the United States, where VOA was not broadcast. Still, he was so famous abroad that he went on a world tour and attracted large crowds, even in countries such as Russia that had often jammed VOA broadcasts.¹⁰³

'Music USA' was one of the most effective programmes for the USIA. An Egyptian newspaper declared that 'Conover's daily programme has won the United States more friends than any other daily activity.'¹⁰⁴ This remained a common assessment for over thirty years: as one foreign policy commentator asserted in the 1980s, 'The best-known

⁹⁹ *Ambassador Satch* was also the name of an album released by Columbia Records in 1955. Von Eschen, *Satchmo*.

¹⁰⁰ The USIA was disbanded in 1999 and current efforts are managed by the Bureau of International Information Programmes. Both were chartered to 'deliver information about current U.S. foreign policy and about American life and culture.' See Bureau of International Information Programmes, 'America.gov: Telling America's Story' (URL: <http://www.america.gov/>) – visited on March 16, 2008.

¹⁰¹ Schmidt, 'World Jazz Fans', 84.

¹⁰² Wilson, 'Who is Conover?', 64.

¹⁰³ Schmidt, 'US Disk Jockey', 9; Wilson, 'Who is Conover?', 64. Pianist Adam Makowicz said, 'Willis himself got a king's welcome on his first visit to Warsaw, Poland in 1959...It was like meeting a god or a prophet.' Makowicz, 'Willis Conover', 48.

¹⁰⁴ Von Eschen, *Satchmo*, 15.

American in the Soviet Union after Reagan is Willis Conover, host of VOA's popular "Music USA."¹⁰⁵ As well as spreading the music, Conover used powerful and emotive language that propounded the government's view of jazz being representative of American democracy, such as his comment printed in a British magazine in 1958:

Jazz is a classical parallel to our American political and social system. We agree in advance on the laws and customs we abide by and having reached agreement, we are free to do whatever we wish within those constraints. It's the same with jazz. The musicians agree on the key, the harmonic changes, the tempo, and the duration of the piece. Within those guidelines, they are free to play what they want. And when people in other countries hear that quality in the music, it stimulates a need for the same freedom in the conduct of their lives.¹⁰⁶

Although Conover's view ignored the struggles within the American political system occasioned by Civil Rights and McCarthyism, the ideas of freedom and democracy in jazz resonated with its wide audience. 'Stimulating the need' for freedom was particularly effective in countries within the Soviet sphere of influence, and this in turn made the greatest impression among the American media.¹⁰⁷

A vast majority of the languages broadcast by the VOA were those spoken in communist countries, where the show had a notable impact. Polish pianist Adam Makowicz first heard 'Music USA' with friends in 1955 over short wave radio. Makowicz was trained only in classical music, but became intrigued by jazz, 'The music, open to improvisation, coming from a free country, was our "hour of freedom:" music we had not known before; it was our hope, and joy, which helped us to survive dark days of censorship and other oppression.' Makowicz thought that Conover's presentation and knowledge of jazz were instrumental to its popularity abroad: 'Because of Willis, jazz became associated with

¹⁰⁵John Spicer Nichols, 'Wasting the Propaganda Dollar', *Foreign Policy* 56 (1984), 135.

¹⁰⁶Quote from *Jazz Forum* 1958 (From the UK, not to be confused with *Jazz Forum* published in Poland starting in 1972. See Voice of America, 'About VOA: Willis Conover' (URL: <http://www.voanews.com/english/about/2007-willis-conover.cfm>) – visited on March 8, 2008.

¹⁰⁷Starr, *Red and Hot*.

freedom of expression of any kind, known all over the world, and treated as a treasure, much earlier than the U.S. government named it a national treasure. He had become the best Ambassador of American Culture, and the best-known and loved American.¹⁰⁸ The adoration for jazz and democracy behind the ‘Iron Curtain,’ despite suppression of the VOA, was often used by the American media to portray the attractiveness of American culture and society. While jazz did not face an outright ban, VOA did, but it was the best source for hearing new songs. Marc Fisher gave an example of the illicit nature of the VOA for jazz fans in Russia for the *Washington Post*,

The first time I visited the Soviet Union, I found myself late one night in the apartment of a jazz fan whose thirst for music had pushed him into dissident status. After midnight, I sat in his living room and watched as he pulled down the shades, turned the TV up to a painful blare, and then switched on his radio, which he furtively tuned to the Voice of America. Soon, we were listening to the great Willis Conover, for decades the radio ambassador of jazz on the U.S. government’s shortwave station. For this slice of forbidden Western art, my friend had risked prosecution and occasional involuntary trips to a mental institution.¹⁰⁹

Conover’s success also established a knowledgeable audience that was essential to American jazz musicians when they were finally allowed to play in the Soviet Union.¹¹⁰

‘Music USA’ also expanded the audience for jazz in countries all around the world, which was essential for the other major government project with jazz, the State Department’s Ambassadors of Goodwill tours. The State Department tours were a product of the popularity of ‘Music USA’ and of the international commercial tours already being undertaken by jazz musicians, as well as of canvassing by journalists and critics. *New York Times* correspondent Felix Belair was in Geneva in 1955 covering the unsuccessful Geneva Summit when he noticed the success that Louis Armstrong was enjoying in the same city

¹⁰⁸Makowicz, ‘Willis Conover’, 48.

¹⁰⁹Marc Fisher, ‘Freedom in the Air’, *Washington Post* (April 12, 1998), X9.

¹¹⁰Hollie I. West, ‘The Diz and Ponomarev, Two Jazz Horns of Plenty’, *Washington Post* (June 18, 1977), B1.

while on tour. To Belair this meant that ‘Right now [America’s] most effective ambassador is Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong. A telling propaganda line is the hopped-up tempo of a Dixieland band heard on the Voice of America in far-off Tangier.’ The accessibility of music had far greater potential for political benefits than the more esoteric wrangling of diplomats: ‘What many thoughtful Europeans cannot understand is why the United States Government, with all the money it spends for so-called propaganda to promote democracy, does not use more of it to subsidise the continental travels of jazz bands.’¹¹¹ With such reasoning, Harlem congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr. helped persuade the State Department to send out jazz bands under the pay and auspices of the government. Powell and other supporters of the first tour suggested using black band leaders and ‘mixed’ bands to maximise the representation of America’s ‘democratic spirit.’¹¹²

Colloquially referred to by the media as ‘jazz ambassadors,’ the programme started in 1956 by sending Dizzy Gillespie’s big band on a seven-country tour centred in the Middle East.¹¹³ After the overwhelming success of Gillespie’s tour, the jazz ambassadors programme eventually sent hundreds of jazz musicians all across the world. As with other State Department and USIA programmes, the aim of spreading jazz globally was to win converts to American political values and the ‘American way of life.’¹¹⁴ The most successful show in the early years of the programme was Louis Armstrong’s visit to Ghana in 1956, which attracted more than one hundred thousand fans, the most that had ever gathered for a musical show anywhere.¹¹⁵ Four years later, Armstrong’s regal reception in the Congo prompted a reaction about the diplomatic effect of jazz that was becoming common in the press: ‘Louis Armstrong and trumpet, speaking a language clearly understood, have done better there recently than a good many statesmen.’¹¹⁶

The tours consisted of lectures, press conferences, and publicity appearances as well as concerts. Accompanying Dizzy Gillespie’s inaugural tour, scholar Marshall Stearns

¹¹¹Belair Jr., ‘Secret Sonic Weapon’, 1. See also Von Eschen, ‘The Real Ambassadors’, 189.

¹¹²Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 413.

¹¹³‘Export’.

¹¹⁴Von Eschen, *Satchmo*, 7.

¹¹⁵Von Eschen, ‘The Real Ambassadors’, 189.

¹¹⁶Gilbert Millstein, ‘Africa Harks to Satch’s Horn’, *New York Times* (November 20, 1960), 24.

gave lectures about jazz before and after the concerts.¹¹⁷ Duke Ellington also gave many ‘lecture demonstrations’ on his tour in 1963, and he used these as an opportunity to connect the music to America and freedom. He introduced his lectures by explaining that instead of using the term jazz, he preferred to say ‘American idiom’ or ‘Music of Freedom of Expression.’¹¹⁸ Typical publicity and photo sessions involved the jazz musicians having contact with locals playing their own traditional music. For Gillespie, this meant appearing with snake charmers in Pakistan, while Duke Ellington had publicity photos taken with sitar players in India.¹¹⁹

Outside of these functions, most of the time was spent in concerts and receptions with leading public figures and diplomats, often hosted by US embassies.¹²⁰ Even in such staid official surroundings, the audience’s response was usually enthusiastic. During a concert in Afghanistan, Ellington found ‘(His Royal Highness) the Victor of Kabul’s finger-popping pulse and mine are together. We are swinging!’¹²¹ Benny Goodman enjoyed a similar reaction in 1957 from the former Prime Minister of Burma. *Time* magazine reported that, ‘When he blew into Burma and gave out with some hot licks at the University of Rangoon, Jazzman Benny Goodman was greeted after the performance by ex-Prime Minister U Nu, who cried ecstatically: “Your music makes my toes tickle!”’¹²² In 1962, Goodman was the first jazz ambassador to tour Russia after restrictions against American musicians were relaxed, and his visit included a concert in Moscow attended by Premier Khrushchev and other communist party officials. The concert was a phenomenal success, and so was the debate held at the US Embassy on the Fourth of July between Goodman

¹¹⁷Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 418; Jones, *Q*, 115.

¹¹⁸Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 309.

¹¹⁹Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 418; Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 313.

¹²⁰For instance, in a reception for Duke Ellington in Kabul, Afghanistan, there were twelve members of the royal family, the Minister of the Court, the Chief of the Royal Secretariat, the President of the National Assembly, the Vice President of the Senate, the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Finance, National Defense, Justice and Planning, the Chief of Staff, and the Commandant of the Royal Afghan Air Force, in addition to ambassadors from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Poland, the USSR, and Yugoslavia. *Ibid.*, 305.

¹²¹Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 305.

¹²²‘Cats in Asia’, *Time* (January 21, 1957), (URL: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,865687,00.html>).

and Khrushchev.¹²³

The American media coverage of the jazz ambassador programme inevitably associated the music with American democracy, especially within the Cold War context. In an episode entitled ‘The International Significance of Jazz’ on the American television show *The Subject is Jazz* in 1958, host and critic Gilbert Seldes invited international musicians and Willis Conover to present and briefly discuss jazz. Seldes quoted journalist Edward Murrow’s comment, which typified press coverage of the government’s jazz programmes: ‘To hear jazz played by American musicians, people have travelled for days. They’ve stormed the doors of concert halls. They’ve risked their freedom and perhaps their lives picking up the Voice of America on radio receivers or playing jazz records, both forbidden by their countries.’¹²⁴ The connections with the Cold War were powerful, as can be seen by Dan Morgenstern’s reaction in his journal *Jazz*, which he had started in 1962. Morgenstern’s preface to the second edition summarised the attitudes of the time and the context which shaped them and deserve to be quoted at length:

The present state of international relations might not strike the majority of Americans as conducive to gestures of good will toward the communist world. Nonetheless, we believe that a peaceful solution to the problem of co-existence is anything but impossible, and while some may consider jazz a minuscule factor in promoting understanding between peoples, we feel that jazz is one of our best and cleanest weapons in the battle for a brighter world. That is why the staff of *Jazz* has decided to make available, free of charge, our publication to all jazz lovers outside the dollar zone who have no means of obtaining a subscription. The letter from a Polish fan which appears in this issue of *Jazz* is but one of many indication of sincere interest which have come

¹²³‘Music Abroad’, *The Musical Times* 103.1434 (1962), 552; Theodore Shabad, ‘Khrushchev Visits U.S. Embassy Fete’, *New York Times* (July 5, 1962), 1. Leonard Feather, who was at the concert, said, ‘The concert was received with prolonged applause, but there was none of the hysteria that Soviet officials had feared might arrive if, say, a Louis Armstrong had been invited. (That supposedly, was a principle reason Armstrong never did play in the Soviet Union. He was too popular.)’ Feather, *Jazz Years*, 217.

¹²⁴*The Subject is Jazz* band was lead by pianist and educator Billy Taylor. See Billy Taylor, ‘Billy Taylor Jazz’ (URL: <http://www.billytaylorjazz.net/>) – visited on March 3, 2008.

to our attention from eastern Europe. Jazz, with its message of life and hope, has captured the imagination of young people throughout the world. Jazz, born in America, symbolises that creative union of all races and creeds which lies in the future. It is the music of our time, the universal art. By helping in a modest way, the spread of jazz where it is needed most, we hope to make a small contribution to the cause of peace and freedom. Our potential for so doing will grow in proportion to the support we receive here in the homeland of *Jazz*.¹²⁵

National press coverage and musical journals such as Morgenstern's *Jazz* influenced the academics who were producing some of the early seminal studies of jazz starting in the late 1960s. In much of the academic work, jazz and democracy were related by the freedom and unity inherent in the music's aesthetics and ethic. For instance, Gunther Schuller's 1968 book *Early Jazz* claimed that an essential innovation of jazz was the 'democratisation' of rhythmic values, while Frank Tirro introduced his 1977 *History of Jazz* by writing 'Jazz is a democratic music in the best sense of the word, for it is the collective achievement of a people...The performance and enjoyment of jazz embodies those principles of equality of rights, access of opportunity, and fair treatment that are taken for granted by all people of a free society.'¹²⁶ While Schuller's democratic beat describes the musical form of jazz, Tirro expanded this concept to the organisation of jazz bands and their place in the music industry.

For all of the support from writers and the government, the situation was a delicate one for musicians. Many of their listeners expected black musicians to use their status as public figures to support Civil Rights, and many felt their involvement with the State Department provided them an excellent opportunity to do so. Nonetheless, it also served to limit their ability to criticise racial discrimination or the government. This was apparent in the press conferences that were held during the State Department tours. Many of the musicians were often asked questions on the social and political topics of the day,

¹²⁵Morgenstern, 'Preface', 1.

¹²⁶Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 6; Tirro, *Jazz: a History*, xvii.

and while given freedom to offer their personal opinions, they realised that open condemnations of the United States would abruptly end their tour.¹²⁷ However, musicians such as Dizzy Gillespie and Duke Ellington treated their position as representatives of America as a demonstration that the country was improving. Dizzy Gillespie thought his band showcased the cooperation of many different races and ethnicities under their black band leader: 'We had a complete "American assortment" of blacks, whites, males, females, Jews and Gentiles in the band.'¹²⁸ This image of integration was far from the reality in America, as this band toured during the Montgomery bus boycott in 1956.¹²⁹ Duke Ellington also fielded questions from foreign journalists on race, state subsidies in the arts, and economic equality during his tour in 1963.¹³⁰ His and Gillespie's answers could be summed up by Gillespie's succinct response, 'We have our problems but we're still working on it.'¹³¹

Such measured responses about American democracy were not always given. In an infamous statement made in 1957, Louis Armstrong condemned President Eisenhower for failing to respond to Governor Faubus's rejection of desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas by saying, 'the way they are treating my people in the South, the government can go to hell...It's getting almost so bad a coloured man hasn't got any country.'¹³² Soon after, Armstrong cancelled his scheduled State Department tour to Russia, with Benny Goodman being chosen to replace him. Although Armstrong initially refused to recant of his criticism, he later gave his public support for Eisenhower.¹³³ This particular story about Armstrong is useful for illustrating the type of relationship jazz musicians and music had in representing the American democracy or democracy in general. From the 1920s, co-

¹²⁷Jones, *Q*, 114.

¹²⁸Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 414.

¹²⁹The Montgomery bus boycott occurred in Montgomery, Alabama and started in December of 1955 after the arrest of Rosa Parks. Parks refused to get up from her seat for a white passenger. Various black Civil Rights groups organised a near complete boycott of the buses, and in December of 1956 they were desegregated. Carroll and Noble, *The Free and the Unfree*, 406-407.

¹³⁰Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 308.

¹³¹Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be, or not...to Bop*, 421.

¹³²Louis Armstrong quoted in Hersch, 'Poisoning Their Coffee', 372.

¹³³See 'Louis Armstrong, Barring Soviet Tour, Denounces Eisenhower and Gov. Faubus', *New York Times* (September 19, 1957), 23; 'Negro Star Hails Eisenhower', *New York Times* (October 11, 1957), 12.

Government definition

operation between different ages, races, genders, and styles helped define and expand the technical and aesthetic expression of jazz while exposing the social and professional barriers that also shaped the music and industry. In addition to the government's extensive use of jazz in propaganda programmes, the role of jazz in bringing racial integration gave it a lasting relationship with ideas of democracy for writers and the public.

Chapter 5

Definitions of the Jazz Preservation Act

It's especially important that we should be together here in America's house to celebrate that most American of all forms of musical expression, jazz. Jazz is really America's classical music. Like the country itself, and especially like the people who created it, jazz is a music born of struggle but played in celebration.

President Bill Clinton, 1993¹

The Jazz Preservation Act (JPA) was a government mandate to preserve a history and canon that it defined, primarily through a wide variety of publicly supported jazz performances, historical studies, and educational initiatives. The JPA identified jazz as a black American art form, a description that has been widely favoured by writers and musicians for decades and in turn has gained further support.² However, associating jazz with a particular race, nationality, and cultural value has made its supporters attempt to reconcile several contradictions, or even manipulate them to serve their own purposes.³ As

¹President Clinton quoted in Howard Reich, 'Jazz at the White House: Newport stars, the Clintons and WTTW celebrate America's music', *Chicago Tribune* (September 12, 1993), 3.

²'JPA'.

³Burns, 'Jazz'; Stanley Crouch, 'Blues to Be Constitutional: a long look at the wild wherefores of our democratic lives as symbolized in the making of rhythm and tune', in *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture*, ed. Robert O'Meally (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 154-165.

a black music developed during the twentieth century, jazz was subjected to the same racial discrimination found across the country, yet it was frequently identified as ‘democratic’ music.⁴ In fact, some claimed that much of the reason for describing jazz as democratic was because it demonstrated the discrimination present in American society.⁵ While the terms ‘black’ and ‘democratic’ have generated some debate among writers, they have not been as controversial as the identification of jazz as an ‘art form’ similar to classical music in both cultural value and need of subsidisation.⁶ Although few denied jazz was a form of artistic expression, the term ‘art form’ was one that implied a sense of European ‘high’ art that has long been antithetical to ‘low’ or popular culture.⁷ It is this sense of ‘high’ art that has been widely supported since the JPA, even while celebrating jazz for its status as the popular music of America in the 1930s and 1940s.⁸ This has meant that the popular songs Duke Ellington wrote for dancing audiences in the 1930s are now described as art, mainly in an effort to distinguish them from contemporary forms of popular music such as R&B and funk that do not share Ellington’s musical complexity.⁹

In identifying jazz as a black American art form, the text of the Jazz Preservation Act struck several balances between these sometimes contradictory ideas, oftentimes utilising a strained logic to achieve its goal of preserving jazz. The difficulty with the term art form in reference to Duke Ellington is one such example, as the JPA promotes a history that at once recognises jazz as a popular music of the honky tonks and juke joints and as an art form of the conservatory.¹⁰ However, identifying jazz as an art form, commonly referred

⁴Ward, *Jazz*; Watrous, ‘Into a Democracy of Jazz’; Garry L Hagberg, ‘On Representing Jazz: an art form in need of understanding’, *Philosophy and Literature* 26 (2002), 190; Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t*, 6; Robert O’Meally, editor, *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), xii.

⁵Cornel West, ‘The Ignoble Paradox of Modernity’, in *The Cornel West Reader* ed. Cornel West (New York: Civitas Books, 1999); Mary Ellison, ‘The Marsalis Family and the Democratic Imperative in Jazz’, *Race & Class* 43.1 (2001), 3.

⁶Nisenson, *Blue: The murder of jazz*; Brown, ‘Jazz: America’s Classical Music?’; Pogrebin, ‘New Home’.

⁷Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: the emergence of the cultural hierarchy in America*.

⁸Burns, ‘Jazz’; Ward, *Jazz*; John Edward Hasse, editor, *Jazz: the first century* (New York: William Morrow, 2000); O’Meally, *Jazz Cadence*.

⁹Wynton Marsalis and Robert O’Meally, ‘Duke Ellington: “Music Like a Big Hot Pot of Good Gumbo”’ in *Jazz Cadence*.

¹⁰Brown, ‘Jazz: America’s Classical Music?’.

to as ‘America’s classical music,’ privileges the written compositions and Western musical foundations (key signature, time signature, measures, classical timbre, pitch) needed to compete with classical music on both the educational and repertory levels.¹¹ This has had a real effect on the study of jazz, as it has largely excised styles of the music that frequently turned away from compositions and Western music, such as free jazz and fusion.¹² Identifying jazz as black American music has also been done with practical consideration, as it opened debates about race and democracy useful for its promotion among American arts funding bodies and in introducing jazz into classroom through its social contexts as well as musical.¹³

To describe the nature of jazz as black American music, writers have had to balance its black creation and national ownership in their work on jazz music, culture, and contexts. While its musicological roots were primarily African and African American, they also include European music in a way that reflects the unique mix of cultures in America.¹⁴ In a similar way, scholars have often constructed the history of jazz through its associations with the black community, especially in the twentieth century struggle for civil rights.¹⁵ However, their research has inevitably been shaped by larger American contexts, including Prohibition, the World Wars, and music industry innovations such as juke boxes and Long Playing (LP) records.¹⁶ Both the black and national contexts of jazz contributed to its development, but its innovations have still reflected a black sensibility, often identified as ‘the blues.’¹⁷ Scholars have usually seen the blues as being essential to jazz, and while

¹¹See Sales, *Jazz: America’s Classical Music*; Billy Taylor, ‘Jazz: America’s Classical Music’, *The Black Perspective in Music* 14.1 (1986).

¹²Lolis Eric Elie, ‘An Interview with Wynton Marsalis’, *Callaloo* 13.2 (1990), 282; DeVeaux, ‘Constructing’, 555.

¹³‘NEA Jazz in the Schools’; ‘Jazz in America’; ‘Jazz’; ‘Smithsonian Jazz’.

¹⁴Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*, 3-4; Ward, *Jazz*, xxi.

¹⁵Albert Murray, ‘Jazz: Notes Toward a Definition’, *The New Republic* 231 (2004); Jim Merod, ‘Jazz as a Cultural Archive’, *boundary 2* 22.2 (1995).

¹⁶Ogren, *The Jazz Revolution*; DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop*; William Howland Kenney, *Chicago Jazz: a cultural history, 1904-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹⁷Leroi Jones, *Blues People* (New York: Perennial, 2002); Worth Long, ‘The Wisdom of the Blues—Defining Blues as the True Facts of Life: An interview with Willie Dixon’, *African American Review* 29.2 (1995); Samuel A Floyd Jr, ‘Troping the Blues: From Spirituals to the Concert Hall’, *Black Music Research Journal* 13.1 (1993); Murray, *Stomping the Blues*; Stanley Crouch, *The All-American Skin Game, or, The Decoy of Race* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).

identified as black, they have been played and enjoyed by all Americans.¹⁸

In addition to addressing issues of race in jazz, some prominent scholars and musicians have also promoted the music's artistic status. By constructing jazz as 'America's classical music' enthusiasts and promoters have taken advantage of the respect given to European classical music in the cultural establishment.¹⁹ Even though jazz has enjoyed a far less elevated cultural status during most of its history, contemporary equal treatment of black American and European music is seen by many writers as a way in which to confront racism still present in American society.²⁰ Still, other writers have seen this as an attempt to simply prove black musicians can be as sophisticated as white classical musicians.²¹ The formulation of 'America's classical music' has been practical as much as theoretical, and the necessity for written music and an interpretation of jazz that ignores free jazz and fusion are simply functions of the repertory orchestras and educational programmes that have been the central forces of jazz preservation in America.²²

Jazz's battle against racism has been a key aspect in the JPA's identification of jazz as a music that reflects, promotes, and enacts democracy. Jazz bands have often been compared by writers and musicians to an ideally functioning (American) democracy and even to the Constitution itself.²³ For example, scholar Stanley Crouch's essay 'Blues to be Constitutional' viewed the function of jazz as analogous to American democracy because essentially, 'the Constitution is a document that functions like the blues-based music of

¹⁸Musicians of all races are supported by public programmes, but an overwhelming majority have been black. See appendix 'NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships, 1982-present' for examples.

¹⁹This places American classical composers and musicians in an awkward position, but essentially their music is considered to be in the European tradition, while jazz created a new type of American tradition in 'classical' music. Again, the terminology is used in this case to emphasise jazz's artistic qualities and worthiness for inclusion in cultural institutions. Sales, *Jazz: America's Classical Music*; Taylor, 'Jazz: America's Classical Music'.

²⁰Winthrop Sargeant, "'Hot jazz" vs. "Fine Art"', in *Riffs and Choruses*, ed. Andrew Clark (New York: Continuum, 2001); Elie, 'An Interview with Wynton Marsalis', 282.

²¹Nisenson, *Blue: The murder of jazz*; Davis and Troupe, *Miles*, 360-361.

²²Williams and Gitler, *Classic Jazz, Revised*; Martin Williams, 'Programme for The Great American Music Ensemble April 22, 1990, 127th Annual Meeting of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC'; 'Jazz Exhibits'; Herb Wong, *The Ultimate Jazz Fake Book* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1988).

²³Watrous, 'Into a Democracy of Jazz'; Theodore Gracyk, 'Jazz after *Jazz*: Ken Burns and the Construction of Jazz History', *Philosophy and Literature* 26 (2002); Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*, ix; O'Meally, *Jazz Cadence*, xii.

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jazz: it values improvisation, the freedom to constantly re-interpret the meanings of our documents.²⁴ Here improvisation is privileged over composition, as personal expression is here the more effective for supporting jazz as something intrinsically American. Jazz is also seen to be a democratic ‘unifying force’ in its ability bring Americans and their cultures together and create an environment of open ideas and influences.²⁵ Because of the wide applicability of these ideas to publicly supported arts and in teaching jazz music and history, they, like the other aspects of jazz as a black American art form, have become commonly accepted by scholars, teachers, and public alike.²⁶

Balancing black creation and American ownership

One of the essential challenges posed by the JPA was finding a balance between identifying jazz as representative of both black American culture, and of the country as a whole. In the words of the JPA, jazz brought ‘to this country and the world a uniquely American musical synthesis and culture through the African American experience.’²⁷ While a majority of jazz creators and musicians were black, a solely black focus became controversial among musicians and critics because it served to marginalise the contributions of others based on race.²⁸ However, an increasing amount of scholarship on the music, culture, and aesthetics of jazz published since the JPA has focused on this balance by connecting black sensibilities with their wide appeal.

Musicological analysis has provided the most widespread agreement on the black and American origins of jazz. Histories of jazz almost uniformly argue for its black musical

²⁴Crouch, ‘Constitutional’ 159.

²⁵‘JPA’. Quincy Jones quoted in Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*, iv; Murray, ‘Jazz: Notes Toward a Definition’, 27.

²⁶Tom Piazza, ‘Duke Ellington’, *The New Republic* 199.2 (1988), 36; Chinen, ‘Alive and Well’; Paige, Rod, ‘Statement of U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige on Jazz Appreciation Month’ (URL: <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/03/03312004.html>) – visited on March 3, 2008; ‘Jazz in America’; ‘NEA Jazz in the Schools’.

²⁷‘JPA’.

²⁸Richard Sudhalter’s work on white jazz musicians is exemplary of this sentiment and scholarship. See Richard M Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: white musicians and their contribution to jazz, 1915-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

foundations, with special emphasis on African music and black American forms of ragtime and the blues.²⁹ Scholars commonly depict the unique timbre, harmony, melody, rhythm and improvisation that are key elements of jazz as developing from black music and reflecting black experiences and history. Geoffrey Ward's judgment epitomises the social commentary inherent in this approach: 'Jazz music belongs to all Americans, has come to be seen by the rest of the world as the symbol of all that is best about us, but it was created by people routinely denied the most basic benefits of being American.'³⁰ The balance between representations of black Americans and of the rest of the country lies between the creation of jazz and its subsequent popularity and symbolic, as well as real, ownership.

Still black music and musicians have not come to be seen as the sole source of jazz, since the JPA's 'uniquely American musical synthesis' was predicated on the convergence of many cultures in America. This synthesis was one that resonated with one of the most common images of American history, in which the nation functions as a 'melting pot.'³¹ Although the African elements of jazz first brought it popularity, their application to European musical contexts reflected America's diverse culture and made the music distinct from its antecedents in both continents. This view of jazz has been favoured by musicologists throughout the twentieth century. For instance, Gunther Schuller's writing on the origins of jazz showed the impact of America's social environment on the music:

²⁹This was the case with seminal works and more recent volumes, for example: Schuller's introductory chapter, 'The Origins' focuses on African and European music, gospel, blues and ragtime—Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 3-62; Collier's first chapter, 'The Precursors' covers: the African Roots, American transplantation, the blues and ragtime—Collier, *Making of Jazz*, 3-56; Gioia's 'Prehistory of Jazz' covers African music, blues and ragtime—Ted Gioia, *The History of Jazz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3-28; Ward's chapter 'Gumbo: Beginnings to 1907' covers New Orleans' music, ragtime, blues, church music and also Buddy Bolden, Jelly Roll Morton and Sidney Bechet—Ward, *Jazz*, 1-35; Hasse's chapter 'The Emergence of Jazz' covers African and European music, New Orleans' music, blues, and ragtime—Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*, 1-24; Dicaire covers the blues, ragtime, and black New Orleans culture in his introduction—Dicaire, *Jazz Musicians*, 1-3.

³⁰Ward, *Jazz*, 2. This is similar to President Clinton's comment, 'Like the country itself, and especially like the people who created it, jazz is a music born of struggle but played in celebration.' Quoted in Reich, 'Jazz at the White House', 3.

³¹The term 'melting pot' was first popularised in 1908 by a play of the same name. It was meant to symbolise the transition from diverse immigrant communities into 'Americans.' See Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot: drama in four acts* (London: William Heinemann, 1919).

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‘It seems in retrospect almost inevitable that America, the great ethnic melting pot, would procreate a music compounded of African rhythmic, formal, sonoric and expressive elements and European rhythmic and harmonic practices.’³² Since most of the innovators in jazz were black musicians, jazz writers have often portrayed them as the crucible in which these elements and practices melted together.

Studies of American social contexts that contributed to the development of jazz connected these musicological studies to the narrative of jazz history. Again, black musicians had a unique experience because of racial discrimination, but they are used to reflect the country’s struggles with democracy and social justice. As a music expressed ‘through the African American experience,’ much of the writing on jazz since the JPA has consciously located black musicians within the black community and its experiences. Thus, descriptions of a particular jazz artist or performance are frequently juxtaposed with the lynchings, race riots, and legislation that have composed the popular landscape of the ‘African American experience.’ The interdependent development of jazz and race relations is one of the primary features in works ranging from Ken Burns’ documentary, *Jazz*, to Eric Lott’s essay, ‘Double V, Double-Time: bebop’s politics of style.’³³ These works are by no means isolated. Musicians of other races are also necessarily a part of the considerations of social contexts of the ‘African American experience.’

However, although the development and culture of jazz are inseparable from race relations in America, race was not the only significant context. The narrative of jazz history is also one framed by American business and culture. Studies such as Scott DeVaux’s work on bebop in the 1940s have drawn connections between musical changes and larger American social contexts.³⁴ DeVaux traced the careers of bebop’s most influential musicians and concluded their artistic development was affected by such things as fuel rationing,

³²Schuller, *Early Jazz*, 3. For a more recent examples, see Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*, 3-4; Ward, *Jazz*, xxi.

³³Burns, ‘Jazz’; Eric Lott, ‘Double V, Double-Time: bebops politics of style’, in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995). A few other examples include academic works like Jon Panish, *The Color of Jazz* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997); and the autobiographical material from black musicians.

³⁴DeVaux, *The Birth of Bebop*.

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entertainment taxes, a recording ban, and World War II politics. Broader histories of jazz have also covered the impact of national institutions and culture upon its dissemination. For instance, John Hasse's *Jazz: The First Century* contains short insets describing different places and phenomena that played a role in jazz history, including South Side Chicago, tap dancing, swing dancing, and New York's Cotton Club, Savoy Ballroom, and 52nd Street.³⁵ These were often cited not simply as black American places or innovations, but also as integral parts of American culture.

Creating a balance between black creation and national ownership has been central to the work of writers Albert Murray and Stanley Crouch, in conjunction with trumpeter and protégé Wynton Marsalis, who have all worked with the leading national institution for jazz, Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC). Albert Murray noted the relationship within black music that establishes this balance: 'Thus, as an art form it is a direct product of the U.S. Negro sensibility, but it is a by-product, so to speak, of all the cultural elements that brought that sensibility into being in the first place.'³⁶ Murray has also remained adamant that black experience is not a physical attribute but a cultural perspective. In discussing the nature of the African American experience in jazz, he concluded, 'we are dealing with cultural, not racial factors. There is no relationship between physiognomy and the music.'³⁷ As Murray and Crouch explained on numerous occasions, the blues were the 'cultural factors' that originated in the black community.

In many of the interviews and articles written by these JALC scholars, the blues represent a style of interpreting the world, as much as a style of playing music, and one that was often based in the social realities of racism.³⁸ However, the blues were perhaps most often seen for their universal appeal for a wide variety of experiences and feeling, not the least of which were those of romantic relationships. The blues were thus capable

³⁵Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*, 31, 44, 57, 43, 61, 94-95.

³⁶Murray, *Omni-Americans*, 147.

³⁷Eric Alterman, 'Jazz at the Centre: Jazz at the Lincoln Centre artistic director Wynton Marsalis criticises paternalism among jazz critics', *The Nation* 264.18 (1997), 8.

³⁸See Murray, *The Blue Devils of Nada*; Murray, *Stomping the Blues*; Crouch, *All-American Skin Game*; Stanley Crouch, *The Artificial White Man: essays on authenticity* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2004); Crouch 'Constitutional'. A sample from other writers include: Jones, *Blues People*; Long, 'Wisdom of the Blues'; Floyd Jr, 'Troping the Blues'.

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of passing its interpretation of the world through the music. This was a common idea among musicians, such as bluesman Willie Dixon, who thought blues music was a means of disseminating wisdom: ‘But blues...along with the rhythm and the music, brings wisdom. When youngsters get a chance to hear the wisdom along with the music, it gives them a chance to get a better education and have a better understanding.’³⁹ Stanley Crouch also defined the blues as the shared wisdom of his community in Los Angeles, which was comprised of people he described as ‘not so much blue-collar as *blues-collar*.’⁴⁰ The blues approach to life was created by circumstances faced by the black community, but the popularity of the blues around the country and world proved their resonance beyond their social contexts as well. Albert Murray summed up this universal quality: ‘As for the blues, they affirm not only U.S. Negro life in all its arbitrary complexities and not only life in America in all of its infinite confusions, they affirm life and humanity itself in the very process of confronting failures and existentialistic absurdities.’⁴¹ The blues as African American experience have both black origins and universal appeal.

While the characteristics of the blues could be conceded as having wide appeal and application, such an assessment created a somewhat unexpected problem for the claims of the JPA. In addition to being an essential aspect of the black experience, many critics saw the ‘blues-impulse’ as the defining characteristic of a wide range of musical expression—including alongside jazz other genres such as rhythm ‘n’ blues (R&B), rock ‘n’ roll, soul, funk and even gospel. The blues provided an aesthetic and technical foundation for so many important American musical forms that it had an even stronger case than jazz for deserving the status of ‘national treasure.’⁴² However, Stanley Crouch countered this possibility: ‘I am quite sure that jazz is the highest American musical form because it is the most comprehensive, possessing an epic frame of emotional and intellectual reference,

³⁹Long, ‘Wisdom of the Blues’, 211. See also King and Ritz, *Blues All Around Me*, 8-9.

⁴⁰Crouch, *All-American Skin Game*, 24.

⁴¹Murray, *Omni-Americans*, 147.

⁴²For work defining the ‘blues-impulse’ see Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 78; Jones, *Blues People*, 194; Craig Werner, *Higher Ground: Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Curtis Mayfield and the rise and fall of American soul* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2004), 8; Cornel West, ‘On Afro-American Music: From Bebop to Rap’ *Le Monde Diplomatique* (1983), in *Reader*, 481. (West uses the term ‘spiritual-blues impulse’).

sensual clarity, and spiritual radiance.’⁴³ If the blues defined much of black American experience and music, it also lacked the artistic quality required to achieve the goals of the JPA.

Re-evaluating the cultural significance of jazz

With a government mandate to preserve jazz, many writers took the freedom to re-evaluate the cultural value of jazz. Stanley Crouch wrote essays and speeches that supported the idea that jazz was ‘the highest American musical form,’ a form that many referred to as ‘America’s classical music.’⁴⁴ Associations between jazz and classical music had been first developed in the 1920s by musicians such as Paul Whiteman. Much like Whiteman two generations earlier, the new movement wanted to take advantage of the popularity and identity of jazz while gaining the prestige and financial support bestowed by Western culture on artistic, ‘serious’ music. Moreover, the JPA’s acknowledgment of jazz as both a black music and a classical art form confronted another legacy from the 1920s, namely the racist images of jazz as degenerate, unsophisticated music incapable of emotional depth.⁴⁵

Jazz had often occupied an ambiguous position between art and popular music, as epitomised in the career of one of the most famous jazz composers, Duke Ellington. He was at various times accused by critics of either pandering to audience expectations for financial reward or, as in the case of his 1943 extended composition *Black, Brown and Beige*, of being ‘pretentious’ and of going beyond his place.⁴⁶ Ambiguity became less of

⁴³Crouch ‘Constitutional’ 160.

⁴⁴Wynton Marsalis uses similar language to emphasise the complexity of jazz: ‘It is the hardest music to play that I know of and it is the highest rendition of individual emotion in the history of western music.’ Quoted in Ellison, ‘Marsalis Family’, 3. For seminal works see Sales, *Jazz: America’s Classical Music*; Taylor, ‘Jazz: America’s Classical Music’.

⁴⁵See John R. McMahon ‘Unspeakable Jazz Must Go!’ *Ladies Home Journal* (December 1921) in *Jazz in Print (1856-1929)*, ed. Karl Koenig (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2002), 160-163; Henry T Finck, ‘Jazz—Lowbrow and Highbrow’ *Étude* (August 1924) in *Jazz in Print*, 336.

⁴⁶Critic Mike Levin called Ellington’s 1948-49 work ‘derivative, depending on memories of past splendours’ Michael Levin, ‘Reputation Shredded, Duke Should Disband, Mix Claims’, *Down Beat* 16.11 (June 17, 1949), 12; it was John Hammond that accused Ellington of trying to work outside his three-minute dance tunes by viciously condemning his *Black, Brown and Beige*. Hammond and Townsend, *John Ham-*

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a problem with the introduction of bebop after World War II, as musicians and critics hailed the move from dance to concert music as enabling a fuller expression of the artistic qualities of jazz. Their focus on distancing themselves from ideas of popular music was also made significantly easier by the fact that bebop was simply not popular. Both the niche market popularity and concert format continued to dominate jazz when the JPA was passed in 1987, and so similar conditions existed to promote jazz as an art. By funding and disseminating the work of the writers and musicians who referred to jazz as ‘serious’ and as ‘art,’ they lent this conception of jazz historical and critical support.⁴⁷

An influential jazz educator and musician, Billy Taylor, was a figurehead of this movement through essays such as ‘Jazz: America’s Classical Music.’⁴⁸ The foundation of Taylor’s argument was that jazz was uniquely American and was socially worthy of being considered art: ‘As an important musical language, it has developed steadily from a single expression of the consciousness of black people into a national music that expresses American ideals and attitudes to Americans and to people from other cultures all around the world.’ Although this could be said of other genres based on the blues such as R&B and rock and roll, Taylor made the distinction that, ‘Though it is often fun to play, jazz is *very serious* music.’⁴⁹ This quality of seriousness was essential to the creation of the JPA, and had very practical implications. As Taylor well knew, classical music was the recipient of most of the formal study and public endowments for music. If jazz was to compete in these realms, it needed to be equally worthy, serious, and ‘classical.’⁵⁰

Illuminating the serious aspects of jazz was not an easy task, as critics traditionally defended the division between popular and ‘high art’ music. Even when mainstream jazz critics and musicians had begun to accept the end of jazz as popular dance music in the 1940s, the development of new forms had not come with a new artistic status.

mond On Record, 133. See also David Schiff, ‘Built Pieces: like Igor Stravinsky, Duke Ellington was a brilliant assembler of other people’s music’, *The Atlantic Monthly* 275.1 (1995), 94.

⁴⁷Quincy Jones’s statement in his forward to Hasse’s history is now typical, ‘One of the things I’m most grateful for in my life...is that I grew up at a time when I was able to witness, and play a role in, the maturation of the only true indigenous American art form: jazz.’ Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*, iv.

⁴⁸Taylor, ‘Jazz: America’s Classical Music’.

⁴⁹Italics in original. Taylor, ‘Jazz: America’s Classical Music’, 21.

⁵⁰Ibid., 25.

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This status remained largely governed by the bastions of classical music, who did not see artistic qualities of jazz. For example, conservative music critic Winthrop Sargeant's famous 1946 article "Hot Jazz" vs "Fine Art," derided the 'lofty critical language' of writers like Leonard Feather who supported bebop. Sargeant complained that 'They have even argued that the great musical issue of the day is that of jazzism vs "classicism," that jazz is in some way the American successor to the venerable art of concert music, its tunesmiths and improvising virtuosos the latter-day equivalents of so many Beethovens and Wagners. Bach, after all, used to improvise too.'⁵¹ Sargeant's dismissive comments can be seen as exactly the type of criticism challenged by Billy Taylor and the JPA, for Sargeant believed that jazz 'is not a music in the sense that an opera or a symphony is music...[jazz] exhibits no intellectual complexities, makes a simple, direct emotional appeal that may be felt by people who are not even remotely interested in music as an art.'⁵² Still, most writers and musicians did not question Sargeant's formulation of the artistic qualities of music so much as assert that jazz fit into that formula.

As a response to similar criticisms raised throughout the history of jazz, the project to define jazz as 'America's classical music' had to privilege certain aspects of jazz history. For influential band leader Wynton Marsalis, any style of jazz that was not sufficiently artistic and classical should be excised from the genre. He was particularly dismissive of jazz fusion and believed its simplified musical structures and shameless appeal for popularity threatened the artistic qualities of jazz. Fusion's adoption of rock and roll elements provided the perfect excuse for its dismissal from jazz history:

What fusion does is it relieves us, our country, of the problem of dealing with jazz and the contribution of the Negro to the mythology of America. The question in jazz has always been: is it pop music or is it a classical music? And I don't mean classical in terms of European music, but I mean does it have formal aspects that make it worthy of study, and does it carry pertinent mythic information about being American. The thing that these musicians did

⁵¹Sargeant 'Hot jazz' 71.

⁵²Sargeant 'Hot Jazz' 73.

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in the 1970s is they relieved all of the cultural pressure that Duke Ellington placed on our nation to address the music seriously and teach it, which would make us deal with ourselves and our racism, which everyone knows is our greatest problem...'⁵³

Ellington was a particularly important figure for Marsalis since he was seen by critics as the greatest jazz composer. Marsalis finds that the intellectual complexity of his compositions gave his music 'formal aspects that make it worthy of study.' Furthermore, Marsalis saw Ellington's music as containing 'information about being American,' and thus it served perfectly his promotion of jazz as America's classical music.

However, privileging composition over the collective improvisation of fusion risked undermining the system of value that had first distinguished jazz from classical European music and placed black music at the centre of American culture. Jazz had first gained its status as particularly American and 'worthy of study' by challenging the system of musical value that Marsalis accepts. What first attracted many to jazz was the secondary importance of composition. Improvisation made the musician the composer of the tune, with the melody and harmony subsumed by his or her personal expression. This quality had been long discouraged by classical musicians, as typified by the objections of an editorial in 1910: 'There are so many so-called "players" who think that an excellent ear, and the possession of some ability at natural transposition, gives one the right to improve upon or substitute an accompaniment for that of some composer who has spent perhaps a lifetime in study.'⁵⁴ The use of improvisation popularly accompanied the racial stereotype of 'natural' playing by black musicians, which contrasted with the learned methods of European music. However, for a small but influential group of classical composers, including Darius Milhaud, Igor Stravinsky, and Dmitri Shostakovich, it also represented a value found in black music they felt would influence the development of classical music.⁵⁵

⁵³Elie, 'An Interview with Wynton Marsalis', 282.

⁵⁴Edith Lynwood Winn, 'Questions and Answers' *Jacob's Orchestra Monthly* (September 1910) in *Jazz in Print*, 84.

⁵⁵See Chris Goddard, *Jazz Away From Home* (London: Paddington Press, 1979), 123; Karen C C Dalton and Henry Louis Gates Jr, 'Josephine Baker and Paul Colin: African American dance seen through Parisian eyes', *Critical Inquiry* 24.4 (1998), 907; Starr, *Red and Hot*, 62-63.

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Despite his own respect for improvisation and its essential place in jazz music and history, Wynton Marsalis concluded that the classical sophistication of jazz was at times compromised by improvisational solos. Marsalis explained to an interviewer that the problem with jazz after 1940 was that ‘a lot of sophistication was cut out, because you have a genius like Charlie Parker who mastered single-line playing. So single-line playing became elevated over the mastery and genius of somebody like Duke Ellington, who had control over many lines.’ While the interviewer was momentarily taken aback, Marsalis explained his logic by comparing the examples of Charlie Parker’s solos in 1945 to Duke Ellington’s 1938 extended piece *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue*. His conclusion was that Parker’s work was ‘definitely not more sophisticated in any way, shape or form. It might make people mad, but I’m sorry. If you give any musician in the world a pen and paper, play those two records and say which one you would rather transcribe, they’d definitely pick Bird’s music.’⁵⁶ The formula for Marsalis was based on a directly proportional system: simpler harmonies and arrangement and less accomplished musicians made the ‘level of social statement much simpler.’⁵⁷

Wynton Marsalis was certainly not alone in these beliefs, but his high public profile meant that he drew a lot of criticism. Many of his detractors, such as scholar Eric Nisenson and trumpeter Miles Davis, rejected entirely what they dubbed his conservatism or ‘neo-classicism’ in favour of the perpetual innovation they saw as essential to jazz.⁵⁸ In this way, they saw the classical music formula as directly contradicting the history and spirit of jazz. For instance, scholar Lee Brown saw Marsalis’ aspirations as an effort to perpetuate the elevation of ‘serious music,’ which removes its compositions from the social milieu that had made them popular and subversive. Brown quips, ‘Were I to wave a wand and retrieve something, it might be the seething funkiness and unbuttoned vitality of Vine Street in Kansas City around 1937. For the culture that Marsalis wants to save, we have to shift

⁵⁶‘Bird’ was a common nickname for Parker. Elie, ‘An Interview with Wynton Marsalis’, 279.

⁵⁷Ibid., 278.

⁵⁸Nisenson wrote a book about how Marsalis and his colleagues are ‘killing’ jazz. Nisenson, *Blue: The murder of jazz*, 11-15; Miles Davis and a public and acrimonious tussle with Marsalis about preserving jazz by changing it, not keeping it stagnant. Davis and Troupe, *Miles*, 360-361.

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the scene to the chic venues of Lincoln Center.⁵⁹ This presented a difficult contradiction for Marsalis. His efforts to promote jazz as America's classical music often segued into undermining his own views of jazz history, which emphasised the importance of the social context in which the music was made. However, the changes in the industry provided a means for addressing such dilemmas. With jazz having already shed its associations with the brothels and honky-tonks referred to by Brown, its present location at the Lincoln Center reflected its elevated status as a serious art form.

Whether or not critics and musicians agreed with Marsalis, the support supplied by the JPA meant that there had to be some method of 'preserving' jazz. There were no shortages of musicians and critics who were in favour of public support for jazz, so most at least tacitly accepted the idea of identifying jazz as America's classical music. At least part of this acceptance came from the acknowledgment that the repertory orchestras and educational programmes that Marsalis promoted necessitated the use of written scores. Indeed, the logic behind the tacit support for Marsalis was hard to rebut, and received support from the press:

Today at the Lincoln Center young players are again being apprenticed and educated, and casually integrated audiences are sitting and swinging together. They are doing so to the musical arrangements of a man universally acknowledged to be a master musician and perhaps the most ambitious composer alive. If this is 'conservatism,' it's of a kind sorely needed by a nation that chews up and spits out its great black artists. Our culture has little that is more deserving of conservation than the legacy of Armstrong, Ellington and the great canon of American jazz.⁶⁰

With such acceptance being given, the pronouncements of jazz educators like Billy Taylor seemed to become increasingly difficult to question. Jazz, as America's classical music, 'defines the national character and the national culture...No matter when or where it is composed and performed, from the "good old days" to the present, jazz, our ubiquitous

⁵⁹Brown, 'Jazz: America's Classical Music?', 169.

⁶⁰Alterman, 'Jazz at the Centre', 9.

American music speaks to and for each generation—especially the generation that creates it.⁶¹ For all of the opposition to neo-classicism there has not been a halt to comments like that of singer Tony Bennett, ‘Every civilisation is known by its culture, and jazz is America’s greatest contribution to the world—it is our “classical” music.’⁶²

Models of democracy

In addition to recognising the place of black experience and arts in American culture, the Jazz Preservation Act also set out ways in which jazz represented and enacted American democracy. A wide variety of scholars, critics, and musicians saw the connections between democracy and jazz as principally demonstrated by its musical ethics, and they interpreted the functioning of jazz groups as expressions of democratic principles. The JPA ordained that jazz ‘makes evident to the world an outstanding artistic model of individual expression and democratic cooperation within the creative process, thus fulfilling the highest ideals and aspirations of our republic.’ This democratic model was extended to the country as a whole, where the cooperation inherent in jazz groups was seen to translate as ‘a unifying force, bridging cultural, religious, ethnic, and age differences in our diverse society.’ Jazz also represented American democracy in its aesthetics and musical roots because it had been influenced by all of the peoples of the United States. According to the JPA, jazz ‘is a true music of the people, finding its inspiration in the cultures and most personal experiences of the diverse peoples that constitute our Nation.’⁶³

Much like the support for jazz as a classical music, these interpretations of jazz as a democratic music necessarily excise pieces of its history and culture. As a music produced through ‘the black experience,’ which openly ties jazz to the legal segregation and discrimination that made American society decidedly undemocratic, the music itself is distanced from the practices and prejudices of both the industry and audiences. Instead, the music is the ‘unifying force’ that bridged the differences in spite of discrimination,

⁶¹Taylor, ‘Jazz: America’s Classical Music’, 22.

⁶²Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*, v.

⁶³‘JPA’.

‘fulfilling the highest ideals and aspirations’ of American democracy and accepting all cultures, experiences, and people without regard to social custom or prejudice. While there is evidence of all of these aspects of jazz, there is often an unresolved tension between separating the music from the corrupting influences and practices of its surroundings and yet demonstrating the ways in which jazz tangibly affected them.

The most common depiction of jazz reinforced under the JPA was the representation of jazz bands as microcosms of democratic function. Jazz was produced by a group of individuals having to collectively improvise based upon a common understanding of guidelines and values. This made them very different from a classical orchestra, each of whose musicians followed a strictly proscribed line written by the composer and dictated by the conductor. Acceptance of this basic definition of jazz and democracy has become so widespread amongst writers that it has been employed in everything from work on jazz history to concert reviews of jazz bands. For example, Stanley Crouch’s essay ‘Blues to be Constitutional’ viewed the function of jazz as analogous to American democracy because essentially, ‘the Constitution is a document that functions like the blues-based music of jazz: it values improvisation, the freedom to constantly re-interpret the meanings of our documents.’⁶⁴ If the Constitution institutionalised improvisation, so too does jazz, and Crouch found that both are designed to confront the limitations imposed upon them. Each has a system through which change can be enacted by the will of its constituents: ‘Just as American democracy, however periodically flawed in intent and realisation, is a political, cultural, economic, and social rejection of the automated limitations of class and caste, jazz is an art in which improvisation declares an aesthetic rejection of the preconceptions that stifle individual and collective invention.’⁶⁵

More common are comparisons between jazz and democracy in general, and these can implicitly suggest the origins of jazz in American culture. John Edward Hasse’s comments in his introduction to *Jazz: the first century* prove to be typical, ‘The jazz musician, through inflections and stylings, puts his or her own distinctive stamp on the

⁶⁴Crouch ‘Constitutional’ 159.

⁶⁵Crouch ‘Constitutional’ 162.

material making something personal out of something shared. Like democracy at its best, a jazz band maintains an optimum balance between the individual and the group and upholds the value of both.⁶⁶ The example of jazz as a functioning democracy has been used widely, from Ken Burns' television documentary *Jazz: a film by Ken Burns* to scholar Gary Hagberg in his article 'On Representing Jazz' to journalist Peter Watrous in his 1996 concert review for the *New York Times*, 'Into a Democracy of Jazz.'⁶⁷ In fact, this has become one of the most prevalent themes explored by scholars, as shown by Robert O'Meally's inquiries in his recent book on jazz studies, 'May we say—without the blare of jingoism—that jazz offers a vital model for free democratic operation and cooperation at their highest levels? That jazz is naturally the music of our still forming, blueprint society, that the United States is a jazz country?'⁶⁸

Particularly interesting among this group is Peter Watrous, whose observations as a newspaper columnist lie outside of formal jazz history. While in no way funded by or involved with the JPA, his observations echo its language and perspective. Watrous observed that during the first tune of the performance he was reviewing, tenor saxophonist Don Braden repeated a figure that called for the rest of the band members to adapt: 'Playing it again and again, Mr. Braden sucked the band into its rhythms, forcing the music to take a new structure.' Within the ensemble, the soloist's position as leader meant that the others had to structure themselves around his decisions in order to keep the form. Their collective improvisation having been successful, Watrous claimed that 'It was band democracy in action, and it was exciting.'⁶⁹ The band's complementary function based on an agreed upon set of principles is precisely what many scholars such as Gary Hagberg have identified as the essence of jazz ethics and democracy: 'the very nature of the art form itself, its "work-indeterminacy," if you will, does not only reflect,

⁶⁶Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*, ix.

⁶⁷For comments on Burns and Hagberg see Hagberg, 'On Representing Jazz', 190; see also Watrous, 'Into a Democracy of Jazz'.

⁶⁸O'Meally, *Jazz Cadence*, xii.

⁶⁹Watrous, 'Into a Democracy of Jazz'. This type of example was one developed by Scott Saul in his work on jazz in the 1950s: 'The hard bop group, with its loose, spontaneous interplay and its firm sense of collective groove, modeled a dynamic community that was democratic in ways that took exception to the supposedly benign normalcy of 1950s America.' Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't*, 6.

but in truth instantiates, democratic expressivity.⁷⁰

As reflected in the examples from Crouch and O'Meally, much of the writing subsequent to the JPA has endorsed the democratic ethics of jazz specifically in relation to America. In fact, much of this writing has presented jazz as the form of democracy that America continues to strive for but has never fully attained. The JPA claims that the democratic principles of jazz have fulfilled 'the highest ideals and aspirations of our republic.'⁷¹ Albert Murray viewed this in terms of jazz's representation of the 'spirit' of America. For instance, in discussing Louis Armstrong's fallacious claims that he was born on July 4, 1900 Murray observed that, 'True or not, such a birth date...is entirely consistent with the crucial role he came to play as the quintessential embodiment of the spirit of his native land as it is expressed in contemporary music.'⁷² Many have connected America to this spirit through black life and music, which have undergone significant struggles to achieve democratic equality. Cornel West's comments characterise this position, highlighting how 'the ignoble paradox of modernity has yielded deep black allegiance to the promises of American democracy. The primeval screams and silent tears of enslaved Africans, the victims of American democracy, have been transfigured into the complex art of jazz, the most democratic of art forms.'⁷³ Wynton Marsalis agreed with West that 'Jazz is something Negroes invented and it said the most profound things, not only about us and the way we look at things, but about what modern democratic life is really about.'⁷⁴

Black jazz musicians not only aesthetically represented democracy, but were recognised as major contributors, alongside their counterparts of other races, in promoting racial integration in American society and democratic government across the world through their

⁷⁰Hagberg, 'On Representing Jazz', 190. Stanley Crouch, who said the 'demands on and the respect for the individual in the jazz band put democracy into aesthetic action,' located the principles of work-indeterminacy in a common understanding of the music's 'melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and timbral elements.' Crouch 'Constitutional' 161.

⁷¹'JPA'.

⁷²Murray, *The Blue Devils of Nada*, 53. This is the same sentiment expressed by Geoffrey Ward as he asserted jazz 'has always reflected Americans—all Americans—at their best.' Ward, *Jazz*, xxi.

⁷³West 'Paradox' 53. On black struggles and democracy, West said, 'The terrors and horrors of black life have been fought against in the name of a fairer and freer American democracy. The best of the black freedom struggle...has been America at its best.' Ibid. This idea had long been around black writing. W.E.B. Du Bois wrote on the subject, see Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*.

⁷⁴Ellison, 'Marsalis Family', 3.

extensive work with the U.S. State Department. Scholars and musicians have often written about jazz as, in the words of the JPA, ‘a unifying force, bridging cultural, religious, ethnic, and age differences in our diverse society.’⁷⁵ The first-person accounts of black musicians who played jazz in segregated America often attested to the ability of jazz to have a notable social impact. Their accounts have also demonstrated the ways in which the music is separated from the practices of the industry. Quincy Jones’ experiences in jazz as a trumpeter, composer, arranger, record executive, and producer made him agree that jazz had the ‘power to make men forget their differences and come together.’ For Jones, it was the primacy of individual expression in jazz that enabled the emotional and cultural breadth required to make this possible, not only in America but all around the world.⁷⁶ However, sometimes these claims did not resist hyperbole, as was the case with the proclamation at the opening of the Lionel Hampton School of Music at the University of Idaho: ‘Whereas, Lionel Hampton, a Goodwill Ambassador for the United States of America, has done more for the understanding of all nations than perhaps any other human being.’⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the flattery of the statement betrays the belief that jazz was a powerful unifying force, and a uniquely American one.

Scholars have also commented extensively on the unifying quality of jazz, including Albert Murray. In one instance, Murray used philosopher Kenneth Burke’s concept of ‘representative anecdotes’ to show that the jazz is the cultural product best able to represent the American environment in which it was developed.⁷⁸ Murray found the connection between the music and representation of America to be part of the universal appeal of jazz: ‘As the musical equivalent of representative anecdotes, not only do jazz performances make people around the globe feel they know what the texture of life in the United States is like, they also make a significant number of those people want to become American.’

⁷⁵‘JPA’.

⁷⁶In Jones’ words, jazz has the ‘power to make you laugh, cry, jump, dance, think, and love. It’s a power that doesn’t recognise colour, class, religion, or geographic boundaries—it’s universal.’ Quoted in Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*, iv.

⁷⁷Hampton and Haskins, *Hamp*, 172.

⁷⁸Burke’s term is used in his process of ‘scope and reduction’ by which a concept of wide scope (in Murray’s case, American culture) is reduced by producing representative illustrations (jazz). Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1945), 59-61.

Such was the strength of jazz's ability to bring people together, Murray thought its power reached beyond the country's borders: 'I wonder how many immigrants to America the performances of Louis Armstrong are responsible for.'⁷⁹ Such a statement is clearly conjectured, but it shows Murray's conviction that even the most universal qualities of jazz point back to America and the ideals and aspirations of its democracy.

The idea of jazz being a unifying force was further reinforced by the JPA's description of jazz's cultural synthesis and stylistic fecundity as modeled on democratic access and ownership of musical ideas in jazz. In the words of the JPA, jazz 'is a true music of the people, finding its inspiration in the cultures and most personal experiences of the diverse peoples that constitute our Nation.'⁸⁰ To support this point, writers have mainly focused on the community of jazz musicians before World War II, ignoring the role of race in the industry. As white bands commanded a vast majority of the American audience for jazz before World War II, their having received most of the profits from finding 'inspiration in' black culture has frequently been viewed by musicians and writers as a form of theft, not democracy. Focusing on this period has also generally ignored the racial politics that divided jazz throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The ironic outcome of the focus on the democratic access to 'inspiration' from other cultures has been to recognise the continuing innovations present in jazz that have been almost entirely ignored in preference to preserving a history and canon of jazz that ends in the early 1960s. As the JPA states, jazz has 'evolved into a multifaceted art form which continues to birth and nurture new stylistic idioms and cultural fusions.'⁸¹

Although the numerous criticisms have complicated the JPA's formulation of the democratic access and ownership of musical ideas in jazz, the idea of such open access has enjoyed frequent, if unqualified, support amongst writers. Much of this support was built on writings from the 1970s that largely assumed the kind of democratic sharing of information and 'equality of rights, access of opportunity, and fair treatment' eventually

⁷⁹Murray, 'Jazz: Notes Toward a Definition', 27.

⁸⁰JPA'.

⁸¹Ibid.

propounded by the JPA.⁸² Many recent writers have focused on a musician's merit as the primary factor for their success, and the source of unity amongst musicians that overcame social barriers. Scholar Bruce Boyd Raeburn saw the merit-based evaluation of jazz as something unique within American society and therefore worthy of special commendation: 'The willingness to let talent or innovation serve as the standard (as opposed to "race" or "class") was a major breakthrough and helped to cement relations within the broader jazz community.'⁸³ Thus, as Wynton Marsalis observed, the lack of prejudice in jazz has been a social democratising force, as well as a musical one: 'jazz can set the tone for a better and more equal world: it is based on negotiation and mutual appreciation and respect. It is egalitarian democracy in sound.'⁸⁴

One of the favourite cases for illustrating the democracy of influences and ownership in jazz has been Duke Ellington. He was always listening to other musicians, whether employed by him or not, for ideas to incorporate into his own work. David Schiff commented on this ability when he labeled Ellington a 'brilliant assembler of other people's music.'⁸⁵ Tom Piazza took this assessment a step closer to the JPA in his view of Ellington's later works. Piazza claimed, 'Ellington created an American vernacular classical music that was steeped in the idiomatic usages of jazz and the blues. He codified this heritage and used it to create an idiom *sui generis*, as Bartók, Dvořák, and others have done with the indigenous music of their own countries.' One of the primary ways of accomplishing this was to incorporate the particular abilities of his instrumentalists, as well as the content from their solos, to produce a style identified with Ellington himself. Despite having a band comprised of some of the most respected musicians in jazz, according to Piazza it took 'Ellington's genius to make a singular musical unity of such diversity, demonstrating in the process the extent to which jazz is democratic in its essence.'⁸⁶

This image of democracy, in conjunction with the identification of jazz as a black

⁸²Tirro, *Jazz: a History*, xvii.

⁸³Bruce Boyd Raeburn quoted in Collier, *American Theme Song*, 223.

⁸⁴Wynton Marsalis quoted in Ellison, 'Marsalis Family', 2.

⁸⁵Schiff comments further, 'His band and his compositions were collections of instrumental colours and musical styles brought together by his guiding sensibility.' Schiff, 'Built Pieces', 94.

⁸⁶Piazza, 'Duke Ellington', 36.

American art form, has had practical purpose as well. Such a definition of jazz has been central to the efforts of the largest public arts funding organisation in the United States, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and its president, Dana Gioia. When Gioia took over the NEA in February 2003, he expanded the work done in line with the JPA. This was in part a reaction to the previous NEA administration that had gained negative press from works it sponsored, including the homoerotic photography of Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano's 'Piss Christ,' a photograph of a crucifix suspended in a beaker of urine.⁸⁷ Jazz provided an antidote for the negative press against the NEA through its 'broad proletarian appeal and built-in political armor' and enabled Gioia to convince the Republican Congress and George Bush to increase the NEA budget by \$18 million in 2005.⁸⁸ Identifying jazz as a black American art form and democratic music has also been useful for its inclusion in the primary, secondary, and university education system, which in addition to its arts funding, has made them commonly accepted among scholars, teachers, and public alike.

⁸⁷Tom Sabulis, 'Art Agency Remakes Image, Reaches Out', *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (March 14, 2004), M1.

⁸⁸Ibid.

Chapter 6

Impact of the Jazz Preservation Act

It may be too much to expect a TV documentary to restore jazz to the mass popularity it enjoyed decades ago.

But Ken Burns' voluminous and talked-about Jazz, which wrapped up last week on PBS, has created a surge of interest in the music. CD sales are up, and a companion book is debuting on The New York Times best-seller list next week...

And the increase in album sales has not been limited to the Burns titles. The traditional jazz market has seen at least \$1 million more in sales since the series began, said Michael Kauffman, senior vice president of sales and marketing at Verve.

'Jazz sales in the United States last fall were roughly a little over 2 percent of sales,' he said. Since the series, 'We've seen the sales go up to just over 4 percent.'

While that might not seem like much of an increase, for the jazz world it's huge, he said.

'The whole jazz category has risen through the impact of the Ken Burns jazz series,' Mr. Kauffman said.

'We're hoping that people are able to appreciate artists like John Coltrane and Miles Davis,' said Jeff Jones, senior vice president of Columbia/Legacy Recordings, 'and then make the leap to Branford and Wynton Marsalis.'

The influence of the Jazz Preservation Act (JPA) came in part through its validation of the larger social and cultural significance of the history of jazz. This has been a process centred on the notion and definition of a canon and has permeated the different ways in which consumers experience jazz through recordings, live performances, in the classroom, on video, or on television.² The ways in which the JPA disseminated and standardised its history and canon have been varied, but mainly it has been through jazz performances, historical studies, and educational initiatives.³ All are bolstered by public and private endowments, and the educational work has the added advantage of access to millions of students throughout the country.⁴

At the centre of all the financial support given for jazz performances, historical studies, and educational initiatives is the mandate given by the Jazz Preservation Act:

Now, therefore be it Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that Jazz is hereby designated as a rare and valuable national American treasure to which we should devote our attention, support and resources to make certain it is preserved, understood and promulgated.⁵

This resolution led to the creation of an institutional structure to preserve jazz because ‘this great American musical art form has not yet been properly recognized nor accorded the institutional status commensurate with its value and importance.’⁶ Within a few years of the JPA, the most influential institutions were established at Lincoln Center in New York City, and at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. to take advantage

¹Moody, ‘Ken Burns’, 23A.

²David Hajdu, ‘Wynton’s Blues’, *The Atlantic Monthly* 291.2 (2003); Jazz at Lincoln Centre, ‘Jazz at Lincoln Centre Profile’ (URL: http://www.jazzatlincolncenter.org/about/a_profile.html) – visited on August 15, 2007; ‘Jazz’; Yanow, *Jazz on Film*.

³Smithsonian Jazz, ‘Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra’ (URL: http://www.smithsonianjazz.org/sjmo/sjmo_start.asp) – visited on March 3, 2008; Burns, ‘Jazz’; Chinen, ‘Alive and Well’.

⁴Pogrebin, ‘New Home’.

⁵‘JPA’.

⁶Ibid.

of the new financial support for jazz.⁷ The main role of these institutions was to bring jazz performances to a wide audience through their repertory orchestras and establish a permanent place for jazz in the nation's leading centres of performing arts and historical memory.⁸

Repertory orchestras have been essential to these efforts to preserve a carefully defined jazz history because of their participation in live performances and education.⁹ Usually formed as a big band of fourteen to sixteen musicians, the orchestras are committed to the performance of classic mid-century swing, and are simultaneously more generally focused on introducing the major figures of jazz history to American audiences.¹⁰ Critics have often commented upon their choice of repertoire as evidence of an 'establishment sensibility' that caters to the conservative taste of their wealthy patrons, yet repertory orchestras are popular across the country.¹¹ In fact, many major cities now have a jazz repertory orchestra in addition to their classical music counterparts.

The success of efforts to disseminate a standardised history and canon under the JPA has affected the entire jazz industry. Their concentration on historical rather than original and innovative jazz has informed jazz and jazz criticism as a whole.¹² Therefore any new approach to jazz composition and performance is evaluated in terms of its historical antecedents and influences such as bebop, swing, free jazz, and New Orleans, rather than on its own, trend-setting merits. These terms confine the music within its historical context while ostensibly carrying it forward. The canon-based approach is even more widespread in jazz education, as can be seen in its instruction books, curricula, and repertoire.¹³ Here the historic styles of jazz have a pervasive influence in the training

⁷'Profile'; 'Smithsonian Jazz'; Mike Giuliano, 'From *Peabody News* marked "Fall 1990": Martin Williams Produces Jazz Series featuring Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, and Thelonious Monk'.

⁸'Profile'; 'Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra'.

⁹Ben Ratliff, 'Coltrane 101: Echoes of a Giant', *New York Times* (September 8, 2006); Ellison, 'Marsalis Family'.

¹⁰Harrington, 'Smithsonian Jazzmen—Federally Funded Orchestra to Debut'; Mike Joyce, 'Smithsonian Jazz Orchestra', *Washington Post* (August 5, 1991); David S. Broder, 'Real Jazz', *Washington Post* (August 28, 1991).

¹¹Pogrebin, 'New Home'.

¹²Sid Gribetz, 'Hearsay', *Jazz Times* 26.7 (1996); Deni Kasrel, 'Hearsay', *Jazz Times* 26.7 (1996); Bill Milkowski, 'Hearsay', *Jazz Times* 26.7 (1996).

¹³Wong, *The Ultimate Jazz Fake Book*; Dominic Alldis, *A Classical Approach to Jazz Piano Impro-*

of young musicians, from beginners to the most respected university programmes in the country.¹⁴

Much of the academic work done since the JPA has also tried to reinforce the image of jazz as a historically black American art form inextricably linked to racial discrimination, artistic concerns, and commercial considerations.¹⁵ Recent histories, especially Ken Burns's documentary *Jazz*, have used this image to revive the wider market for jazz and create a basis for national educational programmes.¹⁶ Although Burns has drawn resentment from many musicians, critics, and academics, his presentation of jazz is in perfect accord with the JPA and is common across a variety of jazz histories.¹⁷ History books, documentaries, recording compilations, and even academic work all focus primarily on the same jazz canon and issues, namely the evolution of major styles and key contexts like race, national identity, and cultural value.

All the attention that has been focused on the canon has provided an immense amount of advertising for the industry to help it sell the 'primary sources' of jazz history: record reissues, autobiographies, written anthologies, films, and even live performances.¹⁸ The popularity of older products from the JPA's canon has often surpassed those of current jazz musicians, and so has created difficulties within the industry for new music.¹⁹ The fixed nature of the canon has also meant that no new products will be considered part

visitation (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2003); Charles Beale, *Jazz Piano from Scratch: a how-to guide for students and teachers* (London: Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music Publishing, 1998); 'Jazz in America'; 'NEA Jazz in the Schools'.

¹⁴The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, 'Jazz Curriculum: Course Listings' (URL: <http://www.newschool.edu/jazz/>) – visited on March 15, 2008.

¹⁵International Association of Jazz Education, 'IAJE and Conference History' (URL: <http://www.iaje.org/iaje.aspx?pid=44>) – visited on March 3, 2008; Farah Jasmine Griffin Robert O'Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, editor, *Uptown Conversation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Barry Dean Kernfield, editor, *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz: second edition* (New York: Grove, 2002); Bill Kirchner, editor, *Oxford Companion to Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁶Burns, 'Jazz'; 'Jazz'.

¹⁷Harlan, 'Ken Burns'; Staples, 'Narrative of Nation'; Pond, 'Jamming the Reception'.

¹⁸John L Walters, 'Kind of Overkill: Miles Davis wouldn't have wanted his out-takes made public, so why all the box sets?', *Guardian* (February 10, 2006); 'Miles Davis Seven Steps to Heaven (Columbia/Sony, seven CDs)', *Guardian* (October 8, 2004); Robert Gottlieb, editor, *Reading Jazz: a gathering of autobiography, reportage and criticism from 1919 to now* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997); Giddins and Simmons, 'Satchmo'; Carter, 'A Duke Named Ellington'.

¹⁹Hajdu, 'Wynton's Blues', 54.

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of jazz history, and therefore will not be granted the prestige of earlier recordings or musicians.²⁰ However, the canon-based history of jazz continues to be a primary source of revenue for the industry and the focus of programmes under the JPA, and so their cooperation looks to have a strong future.²¹

Preserving the major figures in American music

A significant aspect of the Jazz Preservation Act has been an expanded effort to preserve the musical and cultural history of jazz, especially in reference to its place and meaning within American society. The JPA supported placing jazz within wider contexts in order to emphasise a meaning to the music beyond its aesthetic value: ‘it is important for the youth of America to recognize and understand jazz as a significant part of their cultural and intellectual heritage.’²² This context-based approach has had the effect of broadening attention from the music itself to the individual performers, culture and events that influenced its creation. For instance, focusing jazz history on the musical forms of swing only partially satisfies the message endorsed by the JPA. However, identifying Duke Ellington as one of the major proponents of swing helps place the music within the contexts essential to demonstrating its cultural significance in America by introducing specific examples and narratives. Ellington’s life and career are thus used to illustrate explanatory contexts for his music as varied as racial discrimination, dancing, or World War II.

One of the primary ways in which attention has been focused on these figures has been through the major jazz institutions and their repertory orchestras. The first major orchestra to be founded was the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO), the house band of Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC).²³ Founded in 1988, the orchestra’s manifesto for

²⁰Benny Golson and Jim Merod, ‘Forward Motion: an interview with Benny Golson’, in: Robert O’Meally, editor, *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

²¹Moody, ‘Ken Burns’.

²²‘JPA’.

²³On the JALC’s executive board of directors, writer Albert Murray is listed as Board Historian, and Wynton Marsalis is Artistic Director. See ‘Profile’.

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the JALC has been to promote jazz through performances and educational programmes. The performances of the JLCO are themselves educational in nature and include historical contexts. According to *New York Times* columnist Ben Ratliff, JALC's concerts 'never completely lose their pedantic side; they're always functioning in part as lessons.'²⁴ Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis has been the artistic director since 1992, and his platform has closely followed the JPA and its canon.²⁵ Repertory orchestras followed the JLCO in other cities, especially in Washington, D.C., and these too have been supported by larger institutions. In 1990, Congress gave funding for the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum of American History to found the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra (SJMO).²⁶ According to the Institution's current publicity:

Its mandate is to preserve the history of jazz by re-creating the greatest performances of all time...Its eclectic repertoire ranges from Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Fletcher Henderson to Jimmie Lunceford, Glenn Miller, and Stan Kenton. The SJMO's versatile musicians don't just play the music; they duplicate the individual styles of saxophonist Johnny Hodges, trumpeter Miles Davis, and dozens of other outstanding instrumentalists.²⁷

The examples celebrate an 'eclectic' repertoire that is in fact almost entirely confined to swing. Even though this was the most popular and widely adopted style performed by big bands, its exclusive stature within the canon of the repertory orchestras significantly restricted the history of jazz. The biggest change from the JLCO, whose repertoire is similarly narrow, is its different method for acknowledging the primacy of jazz as a performer's

²⁴Ratliff, 'Coltrane 101', E1.

²⁵From the JLCO: 'Under Music Director Wynton Marsalis, the JLCO features a vast repertoire, from rare historic compositions to JALC-commissioned works...[including] compositions and arrangements by Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Fletcher Henderson, Thelonious Monk, Mary Lou Williams, Billy Strayhorn, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Goodman, Charles Mingus, Sy Oliver, Oliver Nelson, and many others.' See 'Profile'.

²⁶The SJMO was financed by a \$242,000 congressional appropriation and directed by Gunther Schuller and David N. Baker. It was 'part of a major expansion in the Smithsonian's commitment to jazz that will unfold over the next three years.' See Harrington, 'Smithsonian Jazzmen—Federally Funded Orchestra to Debut', C2. For more on early concerts see Joyce, 'Smithsonian Jazz Orchestra', B7; Broder, 'Real Jazz', A23.

²⁷'Jazz Exhibits'.

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art. Only the SJMO goes to the length of suggesting the importance of individuality in jazz by imitating the timbre and style of particular musicians.

Such imitation and choice in repertoire are not only dictated by concerns of style and preserving jazz history, but they are also a product of the financial pressures upon endowed institutions. When JALC opened its own facilities in October 2004, its operating costs soared, and it needed to continue raising donations while consistently drawing in audiences. One of the organisation's trustees said this type of balanced revenue was essential despite its \$10,000,000 endowment: 'You have an enormous amount of space that needs to be maintained. You can't just take that money out of your operating budget. You have to do additional fund-raising.' This funding is dependent upon its non-for-profit status, which is in turn dependent upon its role in preserving jazz. Thus, the JALC's critics have accused it of developing a restrictive musical programme, based upon a strictly limited jazz canon, for financial rather than artistic reasons that reflect an 'establishment sensibility.'²⁸

These critics do not see the JALC as compromising to make its jazz accessible to a wide public, but rather as specifically catering to what they see as its rich, conservative donors. Their evidence has been the expensive ticket prices, some of which exceeded one hundred dollars when shows in independent clubs were usually between ten to twenty dollars.²⁹ Such exclusive pricing has frustrated others in the industry who have worked with the JALC, such as Scott Southard, the president of the International Music Network booking agency:

The cost structure of producing events in their facilities is such that they

²⁸Pogrebin, 'New Home', E1. The Indianapolis Jazz Orchestra has a 'frequently asked questions' section on its website that is particularly helpful in understanding repertory orchestras. A question dealing with funding states: 'Q: How does a jazz orchestra operate financially? A: A repertory jazz orchestra operates just like any symphony orchestra. Like the symphony, a repertory jazz orchestra usually is registered as a not-for-profit organization. It is community-supported through ticket sales, donations, sponsorships, and grants. The Indianapolis Jazz Orchestra is part of the Jazz Arts Society of Indiana, a statewide not-for-profit arts organization. See Jazz Arts, 'Indianapolis Jazz Orchestra' (URL: <http://www.indyjazz.org/faq.htm>) – visited on March 8, 2008.

²⁹For instance, a sample of prices from shows advertised in New York's *Time Out* magazine from January 2006 show a average of about \$14. 'Music Listings', *Time Out New York* 536 (January 5-11, 2006), 131-139.

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have to stay fairly mainstream in their programming and to keep a fairly stiff ticket price...What it's doing is speaking to the upper demo[graphic] that are comprised of bankers and insurance companies that underwrite their programme. The \$100 ticket price is hardly an inclusive mechanism for building audiences.³⁰

In a reply to this criticism, Derek E. Gordon and Lisa Schiff, president and chairman of the board of Jazz at Lincoln Center, wrote a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*. Ignoring the financial criticisms, they countered that: 'We are dedicated to the establishment of a jazz canon and the recognition of the early masters of this truly American music. Why shouldn't jazz get the same respect as other art forms?'³¹ Indeed, while Southard's criticism may be partially true, one problem with his equation of mainstream taste with the institutional cost structure is that it does not reflect the genuine interest in a similar jazz repertory across the country.

Repertory orchestras for jazz have been founded all around the United States.³² For instance, the Great American Music Ensemble (GAME) started in Washington D.C. as a permanent 'repertory jazz orchestra dedicated to authentic performance of outstanding compositions and arrangements from the entire scope of jazz history.' Like the JLCO and SJMO, GAME's coverage of the 'entire scope' of jazz 'ranges from the earliest masterworks of Jelly Roll Morton through Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington and Count Basie to major contemporary writers including Thad Jones, Frank Foster and Gil Evans.' Director Doug Richards' insistence on the ensemble's devotion to 'preserving and playing the country's extensive jazz literature,' failed to acknowledge that with the exception of Morton and Evans, all of the masterworks fall under the rubric of swing.³³

Throughout jazz history, big bands were almost exclusively associated with the swing

³⁰Pogrebin, 'New Home', E1.

³¹Derek E Gordon and Lisa Schiff, 'The House That Jazz Built', *New York Times* (February 4, 2006), A12.

³²Although these have met with varying degrees of success, some examples include: Orchestra USA, the National Jazz Ensemble, American Jazz Orchestra, and Jazz Repertory Orchestras in New York, Indianapolis, Seattle, New Orleans, North Carolina, Kentucky, San Francisco, Chicago and Orlando.

³³The 'contemporary writers' Jones and Foster had been Count Basie's arrangers and became the successors to his big band after his death. Quotes are from: Williams, 'Programme'.

style, so bands constructed with fewer members would have allowed for a wider variety of compositional sources. Nevertheless, even the creators of smaller orchestras were usually disinclined to look past the standardised canon for inspiration. The process of curating a musical genre did imply a certain conservative bias, and this was exacerbated by the concentration of curatorial power in very few hands. For instance Martin Williams, who was with the Smithsonian organisation for years, was also given the opportunity to curate a concert series in the Fall of 1990 at the Kennedy Centre's Terrace Theatre. The series featured bands performing the works of such classic artists as Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, and Thelonious Monk. Williams defended his choice with the observation, 'These are major figures in American music. Because they're dead doesn't mean the music has to die.'³⁴ Indeed the depth of institutional support they were receiving ensured their music was not dying, and this was support that most living jazz musicians had to do without.³⁵

Canon as the starting point

The limited view of jazz and its history presented by repertory orchestras brought to public view many of the ways in which jazz preservation had started to affect musicians. Officials of the JALC and its critics became divided over the place of history in the industry. The JALC defended its policy of promoting the standardised canon saying, 'Jazz at Lincoln Center has used this canon as a starting point to explore jazz of all kinds. It has presented not just artists from the traditional vein, but also those with a more progressive aesthetic. New works have been commissioned each season from artists as diverse as Jason Moran and Yusef Lateef.'³⁶ The difference between their position and their critics' came with the use of the canon as a 'starting point.' In practice, this has

³⁴Martin Williams quoted in Giuliano, 'Peabody News'.

³⁵In fact, many of the players in the major repertory orchestras have employment elsewhere, especially in education. From the JLCO this includes saxophonist Victor Goines (Juilliard) and Sean Jones (Duquesne University). Most of the SJMO are educators, including director David Baker (Indiana University), saxophonists Jay Brandford (Long Island University), Shannon LeClaire (Berklee College of Music), Randy Salman (DePauw University), and Charlie Young (Howard University).

³⁶Gordon and Schiff, 'The House That Jazz Built', A12.

often meant new music is commissioned, defined and judged according to the strictures of an established canon, thereby restricting the range and style of ‘new’ jazz.

The practice of using the canon as a starting point for new jazz has been adopted by much of the industry. For instance, Ben Ratliff’s review in the *New York Times* entitled ‘Departing the Mainstream to Meld Intriguing Currents,’ defined saxophonist Ted Nash’s performance in terms of his departure from the standardised jazz canon. Nash was, in fact, a member of the JLCO, ‘one of the crew who spent much of their working lives finessing Ellington, Basie and the rest of what you might call the jazz canon.’ However, Ratliff described Nash as moving beyond these constraints: ‘Jazz musicians should never be read by their covers: inside every musician who seems a hardcore bebopper or avant-gardist or whatever, there are dozens of interests at play. And making all those interests evident in one’s music at the same time is basically the new challenge in jazz.’³⁷ Even while creating something new and ostensibly carrying the music forward, the bebop of the 1940s and avant-garde of the 1960s remained inescapable starting points.

The profound influence of standardised canon on the critical language used to describe jazz has in turn influenced the music itself, an effect not welcomed by many. Musicians like Miles Davis saw such an institutional respect for the history of jazz as keeping the music stagnant.³⁸ Davis’s complaint against repertory orchestras remains common amongst writers and musicians, as can be seen in a more recent comment by Ben Ratliff: ‘The past of jazz ought to be revisited and understood, just as it ought to be betrayed. But contemporary musicians and old music are often parallel lines. Jazz repertory concerts are often benign contrivances, history lessons or concept shows.’³⁹ This inability to ‘betray’ jazz history places a palpable burden on the industry. Without being able to define a new style and expand the canon and history, new approaches to playing face potentially restrictive comparisons to the ‘major figures of American music,’ and are inherently incapable of achieving the level of respect of their predecessors.

³⁷Ben Ratliff, ‘Departing the Mainstream To Meld Intriguing Currents’, *New York Times* (March 24, 2005), E1.

³⁸Davis and Troupe, *Miles*, 360-361.

³⁹Ben Ratliff, ‘Giving an Unpredictable Force His Due’, *New York Times* (March 7, 2008), E3.

A clear example of this comes from one of the leading jazz magazines in the United States, the *Jazz Times*. In one issue from September 1996, a typical assessment of new musicians in a column called 'Hearsay' illustrates the deep and pervasive influence of jazz preservation. One example was a review of Jonny King, a thirty-one year old pianist. Despite being described as representing 'the best of what jazz has to offer in the '90s,' his principle influences were listed as Earl Hines and Teddy Wilson, who came to prominence in the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁰ A second example, twenty-five year old trumpeter and vocalist Jeremy Davenport, provided a similar turn to the past. Davenport's description of his approach echoed the idea of using the standardised canon as a starting point, 'I love Frank Sinatra, Chet Baker, John Coltrane, Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington. Basically, I've thrown all that into a funnel and come out with this.'⁴¹ A final example was thirty-three year old trumpeter Ron Miles, who defined his music as an abstraction of his influences:

I think that music has to be a product of its time. So to ask musicians to pretend that we grew up in 1940 makes no sense at all. What I'm really doing is taking that music that inspired me and making abstract versions of it that hopefully will move it forward a little bit. As Keith Jarrett put it, "Seek what the masters sought, not what they found."⁴²

Of all the examples, Miles came closest to envisioning jazz in his own terms, but he is still forced to deal with the implications of the jazz canon. Popularity and success in the present appeared to be dependent upon an acknowledgment of and reliance upon the past.

The imposition of the canon only seemed to become more widespread as the next generation of jazz musicians entered the market. A major reason for this was the vast expansion of the use of jazz in secondary education, which is almost entirely based on the techniques and songs of the canon.⁴³ Even a superficial look into some educational

⁴⁰Gribetz, 'Hearsay', 22.

⁴¹Kasrel, 'Hearsay', 23.

⁴²Milkowski, 'Hearsay', 23.

⁴³This expansion has also caused a growth in private tuition, which generally follows the same curriculum. Chinen, 'Alive and Well', E1

materials reveals the depth of the canon's influence. This is initially evident in the repertoire taught to most students in classrooms or private tutorials, which is composed of jazz 'standards.' Standards, or 'established items in the repertoire,' are songs commonly known among musicians that provide a shared vocabulary. The mixing of personnel between jazz groups means that these standards are extremely useful. They provide familiar melodies and harmonic structures upon which the musicians can improvise, although jazz standards are primarily played according to the conventions established by swing and bop. The most common implementation of a standard is to play the melody of the song as a group and then each soloist improvises over the chords of the melody. This is a practice most associated with the jam sessions of the 1930s and 1940s, which were nearly ubiquitous among the jazz community. Many standards have also come from later styles like cool jazz and hard bop, but like the critical language and styles of jazz, these standards have not significantly changed since the 1960s.⁴⁴

Stagnation is largely due to the fixed canon, as training to play in a specific style presently employs the standards used by its original practitioners. The best sources for standards are sheet music compilations known as 'fake books.'⁴⁵ As expected, the contents of most fake books presently available end with styles developed in the 1960s. For instance, in the *Ultimate Jazz Fake Book*, there are over six hundred songs in the following categories: traditional, swing, bebop, latin/bossa nova, hard bop/modern jazz, and Tin Pan Alley/show tunes.⁴⁶ The categories alone preclude contemporary popular songs. The influence of these books upon young musicians and those involved in jazz education is substantial because they form the basis of songs that all students learn. In fact, the author of the *Ultimate Jazz Fake Book* is Herb Wong, a pioneering jazz educator and former president of the International Association for Jazz Education.

⁴⁴Fernando Gonzalez, 'Pop Composers, Where Are Your Standards?!', *Washington Post* (August 26, 2001), G5.

⁴⁵The term 'fake book' refers to the practice of improvisation, often called 'faking it.' With basic harmony and melody listed in the fake book, a musician is then able to 'fake' the song.

⁴⁶Wong, *The Ultimate Jazz Fake Book*. Other examples: Aaron Stang and Bill Galliford et al., *Just Jazz Real Book* (Miami: Warner Brothers Publications, 2002); Chuck Sher and Larry Dunlap, *The All-Jazz Real Book* (Petaluma: Sher Music Company, 2001).

In addition to the fake books, which could be said to support the canon through song selection, instructional books on jazz performance follow a similar rubric of styles and sources. Although they usually employ small musical examples without reference to a specific song, most instructional books teach techniques and concepts that constitute a musicological history of jazz until the 1960s. When they do reference specific works, these are almost invariably recognised jazz standards.⁴⁷ Interestingly, these books on jazz instruct students on the musicology of the jazz canon as a starting point to move the music forward—an idea shared by the JALC and other musicians and critics. Dominic Alldis was careful to point this out in his conclusion to *A Classical Approach to Jazz Piano: Exploring Harmony*:

Finally, there are no rules in jazz, only questions of musical taste. Nevertheless, a start has to be made, and the process of internalising the harmonic devices shown in this book and studying the musical examples should provide a sound harmonic basis for further study, one that can always be rejected at a later stage. This learning process should be followed by a more open and intuitive approach to learning about the jazz piano idiom—listening to musicians live, transcribing from original recordings, studying written transcriptions of jazz solos, playing and adapting classical and other repertoire, and seeking playing opportunities with other musicians in a wide range of styles.⁴⁸

Although Alldis emphasises that learning jazz techniques should advance beyond the confines of the book, he still acknowledges that students finish their formal education of jazz after mastering the styles of the canon.

This influence is evident within the unique contexts of the classroom as well. While

⁴⁷For example, Dominic Alldis references *The Real Jazz Book* by Hal Leonard (a reference to the fake books) because it has ‘excellent standards, as well as latin and bebop songs.’ Alldis, *Improvisation*, 54. See Hal Leonard Publishing Corporation, *The Hal Leonard Real Jazz Book : over 500 songs* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1998). Charles Beale lists people like Miles Davis, Stan Getz, Modern Jazz Quartet, Cannonball Adderley in his ‘Listening Guide,’ but also references ‘Recent Developments’ Abdullah Ibrahim, Bheki Mseleku, Julian Joseph, Perfect Houseplants, Michel Petrucciani, Julian Arguelles Octet. panoBeale, *Scratch*, 185-186.

⁴⁸Dominic Alldis, *A Classical Approach to Jazz Piano: Exploring Harmony* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2000), 206.

big bands are rare in the professional community, they are still the focus of much of high school and university jazz education. They are also the form adopted by most repertory orchestras, such as the JLCO, who focus much of their time on mentoring young bands.⁴⁹ Training in the canon and in often standardised ways has become one of the most significant influences on younger musicians. According to Nate Chinen of the *New York Times*, this is a trend that is only increasing: ‘For almost every prominent under-40 artist, you could name an affiliated programme, from the pianist Brad Mehldau (The New School) to the saxophonist Miguel Zenón (Berklee). For musicians now in their 20s the ratio is even more extreme. By most measures the age of the autodidact is over.’⁵⁰ Indeed, a look at the jazz programme at the New School in New York City shows the ways in which the canon is employed to train the young musicians. Upon enrolling, they can choose to perform in ‘individual composer and band leader ensembles’ that mirror 1960s jazz.⁵¹

Constructions of jazz history

Studies of the cultural history of jazz are likewise shaped by the jazz canon, and they have added social and political contexts to studies of the musicological development of jazz. Such works completed after the JPA tend to present jazz as a black American art form inextricable from racial discrimination, artistic concerns, and commercial considerations. Using this as a framework, scholars have attempted to construct an uncontroversial narrative that contains the music, its major figures, and contexts. Documentaries, jazz history books, and scholarship have employed the narrative of a black American art form because it has proved to be engaging to a wide audience and useful for teaching jazz in

⁴⁹Chinen, ‘Alive and Well’, E1.

⁵⁰Chinen, ‘Alive and Well’, E1.

⁵¹Ensembles are listed as: Ornette Coleman Ensemble, Thelonious Monk Ensemble, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers Ensemble, Wayne Shorter Ensemble, John Coltrane Ensemble, Charles Mingus Ensemble, Charlie Parker Ensemble, Chick Corea Ensemble, Electric Miles Ensemble, Herbie Hancock Ensemble, Sonny Rollins Ensemble, and Sun Ra Arkestra. Although many of these musicians have influenced jazz for more than a decade, only Parker (who died in 1955) could not be included in a list of the most successful band leaders of the 1960s. See ‘Course Listings’.

schools.

Perhaps no history of jazz has illustrated this as much as *Jazz—A Film by Ken Burns*, which was partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and produced in conjunction with the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).⁵² The documentary was in production from 1995-2000 and aired in 2001 to an audience estimated to be from eleven to twenty-three million viewers.⁵³ Although this documentary was made for those who had little or no pre-existing knowledge of the subject and was therefore often simplified, it has been frequently criticised for its presentation of jazz as representing and explaining America, and its short treatment of the full and varied history of jazz after 1960. Such criticisms continue to accumulate against *Jazz* for its construction of jazz history, but few have acknowledged that Burns was following the mandate given by the JPA that was widely supported throughout the industry.⁵⁴ Perhaps unsurprisingly, much of this criticism has come from musicians outside the canonical styles who were not enjoying the commercial boost that came with *Jazz*. As noted in one newspaper article, the profits from the series were substantial: ‘Ken Burns’s cachet as documentary filmmaker extraordinaire could eventually make *Jazz* one of the biggest revenue generators of his 25-year career. Sales of related merchandise—books, CDs, DVDs and videos—surpassed \$15 million halfway through *Jazz*’s 10-episode airing.’⁵⁵

Burns’s emphasis on democracy, civil rights, and a particular representation of jazz and America reflected the spirit of the JPA and many other treatments of jazz history. Burns concentrated on the music’s black innovators and related their life to American struggles for civil rights. Throughout, critics and musicians such as Stanley Crouch,

⁵²Burns ‘Jazz’.

⁵³Harlan, ‘Ken Burns’, 169; Staples, ‘Narrative of Nation’, 15; and Pond, ‘Jamming the Reception’, 11.

⁵⁴For example, Scott Yanow gave the documentary two out of ten stars—the worst score given out to but a few of the many hundreds in his book. Yanow, *Jazz on Film*, 68. Essentially, much of the criticism from scholars and newspaper reviewers lamented the fact that the \$3m budget and 19 hours of footage provided a unique opportunity that did not ‘do it right.’ There are many versions of what the ‘right’ history would be, but most contradicted the sources of funding that made the project possible in the first place. This contradiction is rarely acknowledged or resolved. See Howard Reich, ‘The Heat’s on Burns’ *Jazz*’, *Chicago Tribune* (November 26, 2000), 1.

⁵⁵Gary Strauss, ‘Ken Burns, the brand: a marketing boomlet, latest PBS series jazzes up sales of CDs, books’, *USA Today* (January 31, 2001), 1B.

Albert Murray, Gerald Early, Wynton Marsalis, and Nat Hentoff comment on what jazz means in and to America. Their eventual conclusion is that the improvisation and blues aesthetic of jazz are exemplary of individual fulfillment in American culture, while the relationship between musicians in a jazz band provides a working definition of democracy. The commentators and narrator also frequently and persistently identify jazz as art and jazz musicians as artists. The narrative is thus constructed around two of the music's most famous artists, Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. They are useful to Burns not only for their contributions to the music but for the fact their prominence lasted from the 1920s until the 1970s, and so their careers are able to cover all of the episodes. Extensive coverage of Armstrong and Ellington may be to the exclusion of other musicians, but Burns used them to illustrate the birth, development, and death of jazz history.⁵⁶ Except for this symbolism, the narratives about their lives are similar to those of other documentaries.⁵⁷ Burns justified these narrative choices for their utility: 'I'm going after an audience that's moved away from jazz. I have been selective because I didn't want this to become a boring encyclopaedia. But we have chronicled several symbolic and emblematic events.'⁵⁸

Despite being criticised for omissions and pontificating, Burns did not contradict the vast majority of the jazz documentaries already available for consumers, nor have more recent documentaries significantly revised Burns's vision. The most significant differences between other documentaries and *Jazz* are in the length and scope rather than critical approach. Most documentaries have typically addressed a far more specific subject, such as a particular musician, place, or event and generally do not include broad observations on jazz as American music.⁵⁹ Most jazz documentaries similarly take advantage of photographs, recordings, video footage, and interviews with colleagues and critics to construct the history of their subject. No matter what aspect of jazz history is covered,

⁵⁶Theodore Gracyk accused Burns of ending jazz history 'while posing a post-historical pluralism for the subsequent thirty-five years of jazz.' Gracyk, 'Jazz after *Jazz*', 185. For other examples of criticism on Burns see Pond, 'Jamming the Reception'; Staples, 'Narrative of Nation'; Harlan, 'Ken Burns'.

⁵⁷See Giddins and Simmons, 'Satchmo'; Carter, 'A Duke Named Ellington'.

⁵⁸Geoff Chapman, 'Burns Says *Jazz* is His Best Ever', *Toronto Star* (January 7, 2001), 16.

⁵⁹Some examples include Dibb, 'The Miles Davis Story'; Stern, 'Jazz on a Summer's Day'; Sargent, 'Story of Jazz'.

the narrative rarely strays from the idea of jazz as a black American art form.

The only other publicly funded resources for jazz that have achieved a level of popularity similar to *Jazz* have been some of the educational initiatives supported by the same funding bodies. These initiatives provide some of the most wide-reaching and significant pathways for the dissemination of the JPA's vision of jazz and America. The placement of jazz within the educational curriculum was also mandated by the JPA: 'it is important for the youth of America to recognize and understand jazz as a significant part of their cultural and intellectual heritage.'⁶⁰ Recent improvements in the use of the internet for education have allowed for new multi-media ways to engage with jazz history, and several groups have successfully secured public funding through the NEA, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Department of Education to create online jazz curricula and lessons.⁶¹ These are specifically aimed at certain ages, such as grades 3-5 or 6-8 and in some cases are geared to different subjects such as social studies, music, math and language arts. Students can then engage with recordings, pictures, autobiographical material, written history, and video.

The 'Jazz in America' lesson plans provide an example of the way in which information is integrated for students to use. For instance, lesson Plan 6 for grade 8 is entitled 'The Great Depression, World War II, and the Post-War Period, 1929-1949' and includes a handout for the students that discusses aspects of American history that provide a context for jazz. This employs much the same narrative as other resources, such as Ken Burns's *Jazz*, but in a way that takes advantage of the wealth of resources available the internet. The handout for the lesson offers succinct summaries of American history from 1929-1949 as well as links to other government-sponsored websites that expand on specific points. An excerpt shows both the content and the structure of the handout:

Mobilization and production for World War II led to significant migration flows in the 1940s, drawing millions of Americans to jobs in war factories in northern and western cities. Because so many men had gone overseas to

⁶⁰'JPA'.

⁶¹'Smithsonian Jazz'; 'Jazz'; 'Jazz in America'; 'NEA Jazz in the Schools'.

fight, women entered the work force in record numbers. About 750,000 black southerners were among those who moved to California, Michigan, and Ohio hoping to get jobs in defense industries. [Link: *Picture This: California Perspectives on American History*, “World War II: Post War Era: 1940s-1950s.” http://www.museumca.org/picturethis/4_8.html.] Another 35,000 black ‘Okies’ left the Dust Bowl–drought-stricken areas of Oklahoma and the Great Plains–and resettled in the fruit and vegetable growing San Joaquin Valley of central California. [Link: *Public Broadcasting Company, American Experience*, “Surviving the Dust Bowl.” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/dustbowl/>.]⁶²

This historical background is then followed by information on jazz music and culture, connecting them to the history provided:

Central Avenue, Los Angeles Jazz Musicians

Because racial covenants prevented ‘persons not of the Caucasian race’ from buying or renting houses in certain areas of the city, African Americans migrating to Los Angeles in the 1940s lived along Central Avenue. Stretching south for seven miles from downtown to Watts, the Central Avenue district became home to black residents, businesses, churches, and night clubs. Angelenos—rich and poor, black and white—crowded into places like Club Alabam, the Dunbar Hotel, and the Plantation to listen to jazz, blues, and other music.⁶³

Lessons 1-5 present a similarly basic and uncontroversial history, but later lessons show more of the influence of JPA. Although ‘Jazz in America’ generally avoids the emotive language about America and democracy used by Ken Burns and Wynton Marsalis, the handout for lesson 7 (1954-1968) uses bop pianist Thelonious Monk as the sole musical example in a chapter that ostensibly covers free jazz and fusion alongside the Civil Rights era.⁶⁴ Monk is not considered to play in the styles of free jazz or fusion, nor was he one of

⁶²Jazz in America, ‘Student Handout Lesson 6: Grade 8’ (URL: <http://www.jazzinamerica.org/student.asp?LPOrder=6&Grade=8>) – visited on March 3, 2008.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Some language is used to assert the importance of jazz. The website’s video ‘Journeys into Jazz with

the many musicians who brought Civil Rights issues to the music, such as drummer and activist Max Roach. The choice of Monk is therefore particularly significant in light of the fact that free jazz and fusion are two styles generally excluded from the JPA's canon, as is much of the political militancy of many jazz musicians of that period. Perhaps more tellingly, the next and final lesson, which mainly covers the improvements in race relations since the 1960s, uses JALC, SJMO, Terrance Blanchard, Randy Brecker, Herbie Hancock, Roy Hargrove, Alvin 'Al' Jarreau, Branford Marsalis, Wynton Marsalis, Christian McBride, Dianne Reeves, David Sanborn, and Cassandra Wilson as musical examples. Perhaps with the exception of the 'easy-listening' music of Sanborn, this list of musicians fits comfortably into the definition of jazz espoused by the two leading institutions—JALC and Smithsonian Jazz.⁶⁵

The success of these relatively new websites has been significant. In 2006 alone, the NEA Jazz in the Schools website had over four million users.⁶⁶ The popularity of groups such as the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE) also shows the expansion of jazz into the education system. The IAJE annual conference, which in 2007 was held in New York City, drew thousands of students and teachers from around the world. The executive director of the IAJE, Bill McFarlin, suggested the health of jazz education had increased under the JPA: 'I don't have empirical data, but I would have to guess that the jazz education industry has quadrupled in the last 20 years.' The association's director of education, Greg Carroll, concurred, 'I can recall back in the early '60s, when it was sort of taboo for jazz to be presented in the classroom. Now it's unusual if a music programme does not have a jazz programme embedded within it.'⁶⁷ However, McFarlin and members of the IAJE rely on the government funds that began with the JPA to maintain the health of jazz education.⁶⁸

Herbie Hancock' (lesson 1) begins the lesson saying 'We proudly present one of the greatest stories ever told about a very special invention created over a hundred years ago that changed the world forever...' Hancock's introduction also says '...one of America's greatest creations—jazz.'

⁶⁵During the 1970s Herbie Hancock was a leading fusion player, but his performances of the past decade have mainly been on acoustic piano with a small combo.

⁶⁶Chinen, 'Alive and Well', E1.

⁶⁷Chinen, 'Alive and Well', E1.

⁶⁸Siddhartha Mitter, 'Conference is a Chance to Look at the State of Jazz', *Boston Globe* (January 12,

Comprehensive jazz history books can actually be said to have created the narrative structure employed by both Ken Burns's *Jazz* and the educational curricula. The first histories that covered what is now considered the jazz canon were published in the 1970s, and their studies of the development of jazz have been important predecessors to the JPA.⁶⁹ These books were intended to be accessible to readers unacquainted with jazz and therefore presented jazz mainly through a series of black innovators and their styles. The central difference between these and the books influenced by the JPA is the latter's inclusion of more social contexts for jazz.⁷⁰ The JPA's focus on jazz education in schools has also significantly shifted the demographic of the jazz history books' audience, which is reflected in their extensive use of pictures and links to other resources.⁷¹ The most recent history, Alyn Shipton's *New History of Jazz* (2007), has also shown the influence of criticism against excluding musicians outside of the canon, and so it has made more of an effort to include new developments.⁷²

While the JPA's history and canon have often been critiqued by academic work on jazz history, a large majority of papers and monographs remains focused within their boundaries. For instance, the papers presented in 2007 at the world's largest academic conference on jazz exclusively covered musicians who came to prominence before the 1960s and played within the canon's styles, including Bobby Hackett, John Coltrane, Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans, Frank Trumbauer, Cy Walter, Kenny Wheeler, Max Roach, Louis

2007), D15.

⁶⁹See Tirro, *Jazz: a History*; Collier, *Making of Jazz*.

⁷⁰See Gioia, *The History of Jazz*; Ward, *Jazz*; Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*.

⁷¹The commercial and educational benefits of integrating a range of resources were recognised by in the early 1990s by Martin Williams. In his proposal to the Smithsonian to produce a video history of jazz he said, 'Jazz has been declared a national treasure by the United States Congress, and courses in jazz proliferate on both the high school and college level. There are three prominently used classroom text books, with two more in preparation (one Smithsonian text), and all of them are keyed to the contents of *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz* record album...Under these circumstances, it is most appropriate for the Smithsonian to select and offer a home video companion to each of these collections.' Martin Williams, 'Budget Summary for 2 Two-hour "Jazz Home Videos" 3/19/91'.

⁷²Shipton's coverage after the free jazz of the 1960s is still limited. He uses about 600 pages to cover the first forty years of jazz and about 100 for the next forty years. Pages 605-626 to cover fusion (including jazz-rock, smooth jazz, and jazz with hip hop) and pages 713-725 for 'postmodern' jazz that either looks backward or forward. (Categories in between these chapters are Piano Jazz since WWII, Jazz Singing since 1950, and Jazz as World Music). Shipton, *New History of Jazz*.

Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Bernard Peiffer. Most of these studies are musicological, but Civil Rights dominated the papers covering social issues.⁷³ Similarly, the essays within the 1999 issue of the *Black Music Research Journal* devoted to Thelonious Monk addressed contexts common to the standardised history and canon.⁷⁴ These essays questioned the ways in which Monk has been placed within the jazz canon and his relationships with the industry, Civil Rights, or other musicians, but they also highlight Monk as an important black American artist in ways similar to the work directly under the JPA.

A number of other contemporary academic collections share the practice of simultaneously questioning and reinforcing the influence of the JPA. A recent collection of essays, *Uptown Conversation*, enlisted many of the leading American scholars of jazz to develop jazz studies as an academic discipline. Editor Robert O'Meally's introductory comments look like a thinly veiled critique of Burns's history of jazz:

[The authors] challenge any notion of a strictly linear development of singular jazz styles and insist that we look around or behind the Giants of Jazz to consider less well-known figures as well as the communities that surround, support, and imbibe the music. These writers do not construct a triumphant narrative of jazz as representative of a democracy lacking in disruption and dissent and counter-narratives.⁷⁵

However, of the essays written about specific musicians collected in *Uptown Conversation* only Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington receive attention. Of these, Armstrong is the focus of three articles and Ellington of two.⁷⁶ These essays place the jazz musicians within the varied contexts of avant-garde aesthetics, commercial pressures, political critique, bricolage, film, and

⁷³'IAJE and Conference History'.

⁷⁴Ingrid Monson, 'Monk Meets SNCC', *Black Music Research Journal* 19.2 (1999); Robin D G Kelley, 'New Monastery: Monk and the Jazz Avant-Garde', *Black Music Research Journal* 19.2 (1999); Krin Gabbard, 'Evidence: Monk as Documentary Subject', *Black Music Research Journal* 19.2 (1999); Scott DeVeaux, "'Nice Work if You Can Get It": Thelonious Monk and Popular Song', *Black Music Research Journal* 19.2 (1999).

⁷⁵Robert O'Meally, *Uptown Conversation*, 6.

⁷⁶Ibid.

literature. So while this work did introduce new, broader approaches to studying jazz, it largely confined itself to exploring jazz history through the standardised canon.

The academic work that comes closest to undermining the perceived utility of the canon are the various jazz reference books that have been a significant feature of academic work produced after the JPA and a symbol of the growing public interest in jazz history. *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, *The Biographical Encyclopaedia of Jazz*, and *The Oxford Companion to Jazz* are some recent examples of reference collections.⁷⁷ These books have a very different approach from the essay collections or journals in that they consist of a large number of short articles. For instance, *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* alone has over 7,750 entries covering three volumes and almost three thousand pages. The reference books' vast coverage does not significantly privilege any artist or style in regards to the length of their article, and so by sheer numbers creates an immensely varied and relatively unbiased coverage of jazz history.

However, such an encyclopaedic format does not necessarily imply an egalitarian treatment of jazz history. General histories of black Americans have incorporated many jazz musicians and have concentrated primarily on the standardised canon. For instance, Martin Williams wrote articles on Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Jimmy Blanton, Paul Gonsalves, Billy Strayhorn, Cootie Williams, Cat Anderson, and Bubber Miley for the *Encyclopaedia of African American Culture and History*. The encyclopaedia is 'a five-volume, 1 1/2 million-word work covering the entire experience of African Americans in the United States from colonial times to the present.'⁷⁸ Although there was enough room to cover any number of jazz musicians, of the musicians Williams was asked to write about, only Louis Armstrong and Fletcher Henderson came to fame outside of Ellington's orchestra.

Similarly, *The African-American Century* is a book that consists of one hundred short biographies of black Americans, including seventeen jazz musicians. However, no musician

⁷⁷Kernfield, *New Grove*; Leonard Feather and Ira Gitler, editors, *The Biographical Encyclopaedia of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Kirchner, *Oxford Companion to Jazz*.

⁷⁸Jack Salzman, 'Letter from Jack Salzman, Editor of EAACH, July 5, 1991'. See Jack Salzman, David L Smith and Cornel West, editors, *Encyclopaedia of African-American Culture and History* (New York: Macmillan Library Reference, 1996).

is mentioned after John Coltrane except for Wynton Marsalis, the man most associated with the JPA's canon.⁷⁹ Jazz musicians are lauded within the book because of their role in race relations, American culture, and the economic development of the black community. The inclusion of Wynton Marsalis suggests his adoption of the standardised canon and proselytising to young musicians is reviving these values. Marsalis received particular acclaim for his contribution in bringing back black musicians to what was becoming a genre almost entirely played by other races: 'Marsalis's work places him at the centre of a rapidly expanding constellation of young black jazz artists who, bucking the popular musical trends toward hip-hop and R&B, are carrying a rich tradition of musical excellence into the twenty-first century.'⁸⁰

A similar commendation of Marsalis appeared in the final episode of Ken Burns's *Jazz*, which first portrays the literal and figurative death of jazz through the passing of old musicians and the ascension of avant-garde jazz and fusion. Burns commented on the importance of Marsalis to the present constructions of jazz as a black American art form: 'I decided to consciously disengage and end the narrative after Duke Ellington died in 1974, and when Miles Davis said jazz is dead...but our final piece has Dexter Gordon when he returned (from self-imposed exile in Europe) and Wynton Marsalis, and surely they represented the symbolic rebirth of jazz. It never died.'⁸¹ In *Jazz*, Marsalis was mentioned in a section called 'Homecoming,' and he was praised by Burns's narrator for his revival of jazz: 'Marsalis soon began to soak up all the jazz history he could, grounding his own experiments in a thorough knowledge of the music's rich past.' As recognised by Newport Jazz Festival founder George Wein, this revival was predicated on the participation of black musicians:

And I listened to him play, and I started to cry. I couldn't believe it because I never thought I'd hear a young black musician play that way. And I could hear

⁷⁹Henry Lewis Gates and West, *African-American Century*. 12 other musicians are mentioned: Scott Joplin (ragtime), Thomas Dorsey (gospel), W.C. Handy (blues), Marion Anderson (opera), Robert Johnson (blues), Jimi Hendrix (rock), James Brown (funk), Marvin Gaye (soul), Leontyne Price (opera), Michael Jackson (pop), Jessye Norman (opera), and Tupac Shakur (hip hop).

⁸⁰Henry Lewis Gates and West, *African-American Century*, 362-365.

⁸¹Chapman, 'Burns', 16.

he had been listening to Louis Armstrong. And that meant so much to me because the only young musicians that paid attention to Louis Armstrong were white musicians. Young African American musicians did not pay attention to Louis Armstrong.⁸²

The implication of the comments in Burns's *Jazz* and *The African-American Century* is that jazz, as a black American art form, will only remain healthy if carried on by black musicians.⁸³ The importance of black musicians in the current industry is certainly recognised and reinforced by programmes under the JPA.

Two of the most significant examples are the JALC and the NEA Jazz Masters Initiative. The JALC has at times been criticised for hiring primarily black musicians or scholars, despite its promotion of jazz as black music.⁸⁴ The NEA Jazz Masters Initiative has also focused mainly upon black musicians. Founded in 1982 as the NEA Jazz Masters awards, the programme expanded in 2004 to increase in the number and remuneration of awards in addition to including radio shows, a compilation CD produced by the Verve Music Group, and a tour of performances and seminars reaching all fifty states.⁸⁵ In the years up until its expansion, only four of sixty-seven Jazz Masters were not black.⁸⁶ After the expansion, this number has increased to include twenty of the hundred fellowships. The exact opposite proportion exists for the new award given to managers, critics, and impresarios involved with jazz, the Jazz Advocacy award, as four of the five winners have been white.⁸⁷ Both the proportion of black musicians and white advocates generally represents their representation in jazz histories, from books to Ken Burns' *Jazz*. Black musicians are the primary subjects, while most of the written sources and commentary is

⁸²Burns, 'Jazz'.

⁸³This can be compared to the comments of Geoffrey Ward, the scriptwriter and author of the companion book for *Jazz*, 'Most of all it just kills me that kids don't listen to this music today, especially black kids, but kids in general.' Quoted in Reich, 'The Heat's on Burns' *Jazz*', 1.

⁸⁴Alterman, 'Jazz at the Centre', 8-9.

⁸⁵NEA Jazz Masters, 'NEA Jazz Masters' (URL: <http://www.nea.gov/national/jazz/index.html>) – visited on March 3, 2008. See appendix 'NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships, 1982-present' for list of winners.

⁸⁶These were Gil Evans (1985), Louis Bellson (1994), Anita O'Day (1997), and Marion McPartland (2000).

⁸⁷Nat Hentoff, George Wein, John Levy, Dan Morgenstern, and Gunther Schuller were the Jazz Advocacy winners (2004-2008, respectively).

provided by white critics and scholars.⁸⁸

Building blocks of jazz history

Present formulations of the canon and its history that have been shaped by programmes under the Jazz Preservation Act, in conjunction with the music industry, direct how jazz fans consume its history. This is generally a collaborative effort, although one which is oftentimes indirect. For instance, Jazz at Lincoln Center may promote Duke Ellington to serve their own contemporary conceptions of jazz and its history, but the popularity of Duke Ellington amongst audiences is often largely dictated by historical products like record reissues, documentaries, film footage, and books. While JALC and its educational initiatives may be providing immense amounts of free advertising for Ellington products, the ultimate production and distribution of his work lies in the hands of the industry. This is particularly the case with record reissues, which are the most essential of all the commodities in reconstructing the history of jazz. They comprise the primary medium through which consumers, critics, and historians alike access and evaluate individuals and styles.

The current relationship between reissues and jazz history was first seen with the introduction of the Long Playing (LP) record. Previously, records were confined to about three minutes per side, but with the LP this expanded to over twenty minutes. Record companies took advantage of this by assembling reissues with several songs on one disc. Even though these LP reissues were produced before there were many written histories or canons for jazz, the perception of historical importance had a profound impact on the selection of records for reissue. For instance, critic Paul Eduard Miller noticed that LP reissues in the 1960s were organised around the contemporary evaluations of jazz musicians, which often failed to reflect their original market:

Oddly enough, however, some of the moderately successful and even obscure jazz bands of the past have become long-range money-makers and through

⁸⁸For example, see Hasse, *Jazz: the first century*; Burns, 'Jazz'.

an ironic reversal of economic probabilities, the underdogs become the successes. Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson, Red Nichols, Bix Beiderbecke, Bunny Berigan, and a host of others whose recorded performances have been reissued again and again at inflated prices—these can hardly be termed the popular bands of the 1920s and 1930s. That honour, if it be such, goes to groups headed by men such as Paul Whiteman, Isham Jones, Ben Bernie, Abe Lyman, Coon-Sanders, Ted Lewis, Guy Lombardo, Ralph Williams, Horace Heidt, Hal Kemp, Kay Kyser, Freddie Martin, the reissue market for whom is practically nil.⁸⁹

This was reaffirmed when the great increase in fidelity and versatility introduced by Compact Disc (CD) technology in 1982 provided record companies with another chance to evaluate the commercial appeal of each of its recordings. Once again, the connection between a musician or album and jazz history proved to be an important factor in selection. At present, there are hundreds of the Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong recordings available, while Ted Lewis, Ralph Williams, Hal Kemp, and others remain in relative obscurity.

Historical interest has become even more marketable after the JPA, so much so that many reissues are released and advertised for their historical importance rather than their musical content. One band that has no doubt benefited from this is the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, which is known for producing the first jazz record on February 26, 1917. Despite the poor recording quality of the time and the general disregard for their music, their place at the beginning of jazz history has merited numerous reissues.⁹⁰ The liner notes of *The Essential Collection* released by Avid Entertainment assert this precarious

⁸⁹Miller, 'Corrected Manuscript for *The Best Jazz 1967*', 111-112. The bands listed were the white bands that played symphonic jazz or 'sweet' jazz, as opposed to the 'hot' jazz of black bands. Although they were considered the leading jazz bands of their day, they are not presently considered to be jazz bands at all because of their lack of rhythmic 'swing' and blues aesthetic.

⁹⁰Examples from the Original Dixieland Jazz Band include *75th Anniversary* (RCA 1992), *Sensation!* (ASC Living Era 1994), *The Complete Original Dixieland Jazz Band 1917-1936* (RCA 1995), *1917-1923* (Jazz Archives 1997), *The Creators of Jazz* (Avid Records 2001), *In London 1919-1920 Plus the Okeh Sessions 1922-1923* (Challenge 2004), *The Return* (Hep Records 2006), *The Essential Collection* (Avid Entertainment 2006).

historical role: ‘Often dismissed as white guys copying African American music (which did indeed have some elements of truth!) these recordings...still hold a unique charm for us in the 21st century. Whatever the arguments about their place in jazz history, the fact remains...[they had] the first jazz record ever released!’⁹¹

A similar attitude underlies the common inclusion on jazz albums of alternate takes, outtakes, and other material that was never intended for release. To take full advantage of the popularity of the jazz canon, companies have released just about every recording in their back catalogue. ‘Previously unreleased’ material is now the focal point of many reissues and of the often sizable and expensive box sets and ‘complete sessions.’⁹² Almost without exception, the box sets justify their expense by celebrating this unheard canonical material, and often long accompanying booklets document the history of the time in question with essays, interviews, and pictures. According to Adam Sieff of Sony BMG, who have released many of Miles Davis’s box sets after his death, ‘It’s more than the music. Miles is such an important guy...It may not all be of the same high standard, but historically, there’s a damned good reason for all this to be released, and I get great pleasure from it.’⁹³ Sony BMG also benefits from the records, which have sales in the hundreds of thousands—far more than the albums of a vast majority of new jazz musicians.

The historical relevance of much of the previously unreleased material has to do with the improvisatory nature of jazz music. The standardised canon has led many to consider specific versions of songs a definitive version by which others are judged. The inclusion of alternate takes and outtakes allows dedicated fans and studious musicians to hear the process during which the definitive version was created and are especially useful for comparing different improvisations. For example, on Duke Ellington’s CD, *Such Sweet Thunder*, ten of the twenty-two tracks are ‘bonus tracks’ that include stereo LP masters,

⁹¹Original Dixieland Jazz Band *The Essential Collection* (Avid Entertainment 2006).

⁹²Box sets are simply several CDs packaged together in one box, such as Miles Davis’s 3-CD *The Complete In a Silent Way Sessions* (Sony 2001). Other examples of ‘complete sessions’ include: Eric Dolphy *Complete Memorial Album Sessions* (Lonehill Jazz 2004), Wynton Kelly *Complete Blue Note Trio Sessions* (Jazz Factory 2004), Charlie Parker (4CD) *Complete Dial Sessions* (Stash 2004), Lester Young (2CD) *The Complete Aladdin Sessions* (Definitive 2000), and Stuff Smith *Complete 1936-1937 Sessions* (Hep Records 2007).

⁹³Walters, ‘Kind of Overkill’, E3.

extra tracks, outtakes, and alternative takes. For Miles Davis's *Milestones*, three of nine tracks are alternative takes of the original songs. Miles Davis's *Porgy and Bess* CD also includes two bonus tracks 'not on original LP.'⁹⁴ However, since the music was not considered good enough to put on the record, Davis was adamantly against the public release of this material. Davis's producer at Columbia Records, Teo Macero, agreed and was famously quoted as saying the inclusion of the additional tracks on reissues was 'bullshit.'⁹⁵ Far more gratuitous have been the Miles Davis box sets, which consist of hours of outtakes, alternative takes, and remixes.⁹⁶ Nonetheless, these have still proved successful even if the substandard quality that originally excluded them from release makes their value more historical than musical.

The release of recordings from the standardised canon created difficulties for young jazz musicians putting out new records, including Wynton Marsalis. Bruce Lundvall, CEO of the Blue Note label, observed the result, 'I remember [saxophonist] Javon Jackson saying to me, "I'm not competing with Joshua Redman so much as Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane and Lester Young and Stan Getz"—the whole history of saxophone players, which is available [on CD].'⁹⁷ Jeff Levenson, Vice President for Jazz at Columbia, added 'In paying homage to the greats, Wynton and his peers have gotten supplanted by them in the minds of the populace. They've gotten supplanted by dead people.'⁹⁸ Columbia, which was Wynton Marsalis' label, has ample reason to pursue the past. Their back catalogue includes many of the most marketable names of jazz.⁹⁹

⁹⁴Duke Ellington *Such Sweet Thunder* (Sony 1999), Miles Davis *Milestones* (Sony 2001), Miles Davis *Porgy and Bess* (Sony 1997).

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶According to the *Guardian*, after Sony bought Columbia Records, they have left 'no stone unturned to reissue every note the label ever bought from Miles Davis.' See 'Seven Steps', B2. In fact, Miles Davis's box sets total 85 CDs: *Miles Davis: The Columbia Years 1955-1985* (4CDs), *The Complete Live at the Plugged Nickel 1965* (8CDs), *The Complete Miles Davis At Montreux: 1973-1991* (20CDs), *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions* (5CDs), *The Miles Davis Quintet, 1965-68: The Complete Columbia Studio* (6CDs), *The Complete Columbia Recordings: Miles Davis & John Coltrane* (6CDs), *Seven Steps: The Complete Columbia Recordings 1963-1964* (7CDs), *The Complete In a Silent Way Sessions* (3CDs), *The Miles Davis and Gil Evans: Complete Columbia Studio Recordings* (6CDs), *Complete Bitches Brew Sessions (August 1969-February 1970)* (4CDs), *The Cellar Door Sessions 1970* (6CDs), *The Complete On the Corner Sessions* (6CDs), *The Legendary Prestige Quintet Sessions* (4CDs—for Prestige Records).

⁹⁷Hajdu, 'Wynton's Blues', 54.

⁹⁸Hajdu, 'Wynton's Blues', 54.

⁹⁹This list includes the following: Ahmad Jamal, Art Blakey, Art Tatum, Artie Shaw, Ben Webster,

While a great number of canonical jazz musicians had passed away by the time the JPA became law, there were still many who were alive and active. Their continuing presence in the industry provided an important connection to the past, and consequently bestowed their work with greater prestige and significance. This also applied to the sidemen of canonical musicians, and words such as ‘the former pianist of John Coltrane’ became a powerful endorsement of quality through a sort of living history. The focus on history in the industry encouraged by the JPA extended the endorsement to the younger generation who played with the older musicians, and was thus one of the most effective ways to launch a career. Saxophonist Benny Golson, who had played with Dizzy Gillespie, John Coltrane and Lionel Hampton, was asked by his record company to help young trumpeter Roy Hargrove: ‘[They] wanted me to do an album with him six years ago. I told them no. No, no, no, no. The idea was to give him credibility. I said, “No. No, I don’t think so.” Some of these guys can play. But they’re not there—wherever that is—yet. They’re not where John Coltrane was at their age.’¹⁰⁰ Younger musicians had always joined the bands of their elders to make a name for themselves, but the fixed nature of the standardised canon meant the prestige of being a part of jazz history would never again be passed to younger generations in the way it had in the past.

The same relationship exists between older musicians and other jazz commodities, such as autobiographies and oral histories. The often entertaining and personable first-person narrative present in autobiography makes these books an accessible way for many consumers to have contact with jazz history. Backed by interest in the musicians generated by the JPA, publishers have not only supported many new titles but have also reprinted a majority of the previously published titles.¹⁰¹ Some of the autobiographies achieved a

Benny Goodman, Bill Evans, Billie Holiday, Bix Beiderbecke, Cab Calloway, Carmen McRae, Charles Mingus, Charlie Byrd, Charlie Christian, Chet Baker, Clifford Brown, Cole Porter, Count Basie, Dave Brubeck, Dexter Gordon, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Errol Garner, Eubie Blake, Fletcher Henderson, Freddie Hubbard, Gene Krupa, George Gershwin, Gerry Mulligan, Harry James, Herbie Hancock, Hot Lips Page, J.J. Johnson, John Coltrane, John McLaughlin, Josephine Baker, Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Milt Jackson, Nina Simone, Ornette Coleman, Paul Desmond, Sarah Vaughn, Scott Joplin, Sonny Rollins, Stan Getz, Tommy Dorsey, Tony Williams, Wayne Shorter, and Woody Herman.

¹⁰⁰Golson and Merod, ‘Forward Motion’, 56.

¹⁰¹See appendix ‘Jazz Autobiographies.’

sizable national audience, such as *Miles: the autobiography* from Miles Davis and Quincy Troupe, which made the bestseller lists of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Village Voice* and the *New York Times*, was translated into six languages, and also won an American Book Award in 1989.¹⁰² A more recent example of commodifying the first-person accounts of musicians has come with the large and expensive CD box set of interviews entitled *Talking Jazz: an Oral History*.¹⁰³ These interviews were conducted over National Public Radio by Ben Sidran and mostly feature canonical musicians, such as Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, and Betty Carter. However, unlike the autobiographies, a small number of younger musicians also appear.

A similar bias toward the jazz canon came from anthologies that have aimed to provide a survey of primary materials frequently used by jazz historians. As the three sections in Robert Gottlieb's *Reading Jazz* attest, these have mainly been taken from autobiography, reportage, and criticism.¹⁰⁴ Since the study of jazz has continued to expand under the JPA, a more recent anthology by Andrew Clark included academic sources and consideration of subjects as diverse as jazz-inspired dance, literature, and film, and linguistic and sartorial style. According to Clark, it 'is a reader and resource tool. The book meets the interests of a broad readership, but it is also intended to be used in classrooms involving a variety of courses in jazz music, jazz history, and writing on the cultural dimensions of—and approaches to—jazz.'¹⁰⁵ From the sources Clark has chosen, it is clear that jazz history is equated with the standardised canon. For instance, the section including autobiography features Whitey Mitchell, Dicky Wells, Mary Lou Williams, Mike Zwerin (on Claude Thronhill), Eddie Condon, Mezz Mezzrow, Ferdinand 'Jelly Roll' Morton,

¹⁰²Jacqueline Trescott, 'The Poet In Pursuit of Two Legends: Miles Davis & James Baldwin, as told to Quincy Troupe', *Washington Post* (November 22, 1989), D1; John Szwed, *So What: the life of Miles Davis* (London: Arrow Books, 2002), 395; Davis and Troupe, *Miles*.

¹⁰³*Talking Jazz: an Oral History* (Unlimited Media 2007) The box set is composed of 24 CDs.

¹⁰⁴Gottlieb, *Reading Jazz*.

¹⁰⁵Andrew Clark, editor, *Riffs and Choruses* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 8. Clark's coverage includes: 1) Jazz and Definition (origin, terms, early reception) 2) Jazz and History (criticism, canon, historiography) 3) Jazz and Style (convention, repertoire, improvisation) 4) Jazz and Culture (context, audience, social practice) 5) Jazz and Race (colour, identity, otherness) 6) Jazz and Myth (narrative, romance, fabulation) 7) Jazz and the Jazz Life (orality, autobiography, mediation) 8) Jazz and Language (vernacular, argot, hipness) 9) Jazz and Literature (word, text, performance) 10) Jazz and Film (cliché, stereotype, ambiance).

Hampton Hawes, Dizzy Gillespie, Art Pepper, and Louis Armstrong—all of whom came to prominence in the 1940s or before.

Although film is also an important source for jazz history, the limited quantity and quality of jazz on film has meant that a large number of the videos available have been produced after the 1960s.¹⁰⁶ Still, many of these videos are of musicians from the canon, including videos of Miles Davis from Montreal (1985), Munich (1988), and Paris (1989), and Dizzy Gillespie from Montreaux (1977), Montreal (1981), New Jersey (1987), and London (1989). Appearances in motion pictures, in Soundies, and on television since the 1920s have also been collected, usually by small independent companies.¹⁰⁷ Video releases have allowed consumers to see much of the history of jazz and its wider collaborations within the entertainment industry.

Demand for the ‘primary sources’ of jazz history continues to be strong enough to support the commercial structure, and in the past five years there have been signs that demand will increase. With the construction of a \$131m facility in New York, the JALC has taken an important step in increasing its prestige and permanence as the premier institution for jazz in America.¹⁰⁸ The online curricula for jazz education have also begun within the past five years, and their success has opened the door for similar projects. So too has been the expansion of repertory orchestras, as their numbers increase every year.¹⁰⁹ All of these have been organised to support the standardised canon that has resulted from the JPA, and will continue to expand its influence in both the industry and in education.

¹⁰⁶Releases are on DVD (Digital Versatile Disc) and VHS (Video Home System).

¹⁰⁷See appendix ‘Jazz Documentaries on DVD’ for a list. The Soundies were musical films shown in a jukebox called the Panoram. Over two thousand of these films were made between 1941 and 1947, starring many of the popular recording artists of the day. The Soundies ‘captured on film many superb musicians at the peak of their powers making an irreplaceable contribution to the history of American music during this period.’ See Various, ‘Harlem Roots’.

¹⁰⁸Pogrebin, ‘New Home’, E1.

¹⁰⁹There are currently approximately 35 community-based repertory jazz orchestras in major metropolitan areas throughout the country. ‘Indianapolis Jazz Orchestra’.

Chapter 7

The impact of making jazz

America's music

The dominating presence of the jazz canon in the industry and in education has meant that much of the recent public engagement with jazz has come through its history. Jazz music and culture have been played out through history books, repertory orchestras, record reissues, documentaries, television specials, tribute concerts, and musicians' autobiographies. There have even been numerous orchestras bearing the names of canonical band leaders who had passed away, including Glenn Miller, Count Basie and Charles Mingus.¹ In fact, in one festival in 1996, there were 'recreations' of the big bands of Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, Gil Evans/Miles Davis, and Gerry Mulligan, some of which included former members.²

Privileging jazz history produced bitter arguments among critics that reached their peak in the late 1990s. On one hand there were critics who thought 'the only real tradition

¹See Glenn Miller Orchestra, 'The World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra' (URL: <http://www.glennmillerorchestra.com/>) – visited on March 3, 2008; Count Basie Orchestra, 'About the Count Basie Orchestra' (URL: <http://countbasie.com/about.html>) – visited on March 3, 2008; Jazz Workshop, Inc, 'Mingus Big Bands' (URL: <http://www.mingusmingusmingus.com/MingusBands/>) – visited on March 3, 2008.

²Doug Ramsey, 'Live!', *Jazz Times* 26.7 (1996), 52.

in jazz has been no tradition at all.’³ Eric Nisenson’s book, *Blue: the murder of jazz*, made the case that Wynton Marsalis and JALC were murdering jazz:

However, the clearest indication that jazz is fading as an art form is the increasing diminution of genuine creative vitality. Indeed, there seems to be a wholesale avoidance of the kind of fresh inventiveness and risk-taking that had always kept jazz a vital and continually stimulating art form. At times there seems to be a conscious attempt to prevent jazz from being as fiercely creative and innovative as it has been in the past. This violence to the driving motor of jazz is what I, and a number of other longtime lovers of this music, consider to be nothing less than the murder of this one-time feverishly fecund and innovative art form.⁴

In rebuttal were critics like Tom Piazza, who supported the efforts of Marsalis and JALC to preserve jazz history. Piazza wrote in the introduction of his book published the same year as Nisenson’s, ‘Claims that jazz is dead, even that it has been murdered, arise regularly, like seven-year locusts. In some quarters those claims have risen again. I hope that my reasons for finding this idea absurd will be clear by the end of the book.’⁵ Their debate bore a resemblance to the critical battles of the 1940s between bebop and the traditionalists. While bebop musicians insisted on innovation, the traditionalists promoted an authentic jazz through established styles.

However, the resources in support of the preservation of jazz have proved overwhelming to those wishing to diminish the influence of the ‘neo-classicists’ in the industry.⁶ Debate about the ‘death’ of jazz was then transformed after the release of Ken Burns’s *Jazz* in 2001 after he ‘decided to consciously disengage and end the narrative after Duke Ellington died in 1974, and when Miles Davis said jazz is dead.’⁷ Scholars consequently criticised the

³Nisenson, *Blue: The murder of jazz*, 16.

⁴Ibid., 13. He lists critics Francis Davis, Gary Giddins, and Gene Lees, in addition to Wayne Shorter, Gary Bartz, David Murray, Lester Bowie, Clark Terry, and George Russell as supporters of this opinion. *ibid.*, 2.

⁵Piazza, *Blues Up and Down*, x.

⁶Nisenson, *Blue: The murder of jazz*, 14. Nisenson also calls Marsalis and his colleagues ‘revivalists.’ Nisenson, *Blue: The murder of jazz*, 18.

⁷Chapman, ‘Burns’, 16.

writers of *Jazz* for ‘ending their narrative in the mid-1960s while posting a post-historical pluralism for the subsequent thirty-five years of jazz.’⁸

Debate amongst writers and musicians continues concerning the ‘death’ of jazz and its history, and the impact that these have on the current industry.⁹ While I have argued that these issues are important, I have emphasised the health of jazz lies not in one definitive and ‘correct’ history or canon, but in a plurality of perspectives on jazz history. Jazz history is not now, nor has it ever been, an entirely fixed entity, but rather a process by which jazz has evaluated itself and its tradition to shape the present and future of the music. This is a process that by nature cannot ‘die.’ Discussions are ongoing concerning issues of race, national identity, cultural value, and musical authenticity and innovation that address jazz as an American music or as a democratic music. These discussions, and the structure that has emerged as a result of the JPA, continue to have a profound effect on lives of musicians and the state of the industry.

This has had an especially demonstrative effect on the attitudes of musicians who are considered a part of this history, including bassist Buddy Catlett, who has played with Ben Webster, Sonny Stitt, and Quincy Jones. Catlett came to prominence for his role in Jones’s band during their 1959-1960 European tour. When Jones returned to New York, he took an executive position with Mercury Records and turned much of his attention to pop tunes, and while Jones received a lot of criticism for this amongst jazz musicians, Catlett saw this as a way of remaining involved with musical innovation in ways inaccessible to jazz.

Quincy took jazz as far as it could go for him. The best part of his life, he gave to jazz. Think about it. What was he supposed to do after Europe, spend

⁸Gracyk, ‘Jazz after *Jazz*’, 185.

⁹A recent article from the *San Francisco Chronicle* has likened the arguments to those between evolutionists and creationists in biology, but suggest that ‘This is an argument that the creationists won a long time ago. The top creationist, Wynton Marsalis, rules the roost, and the evolutionists have had to make accommodations. The institutional focus of jazz since 1980 has been relentlessly on tradition, on exalting and studying—the evolutionists would say, “copying”—the masters. This year, during SFJazz’s Spring Season, the subject was Thelonious Monk. In the recent past across the country we’ve seen cottage industries spring up around John Coltrane and Louis Armstrong.’ David Rubien, ‘At Healdsburg Jazz Festival, the tradition is untraditional’, *Sac Francisco Chronicle* (June 5, 2007), E1.

his life playing jazz so he could apply for a lot of grants and shit? So some middle-aged college professor and some nerdy bunch of dudes can sit around and give him a grant to play the music he helped make? No way. Dig, how far can jazz go anyway? Think about it. How different is the shit that the young cats are playing now from what we played fifty years ago? They play it better. They sound fresher, newer, they add a lot to it, but it's the same shit. It's coming from the same place. The difference now is that they're playing it as history, and back then it wasn't history. It was our lives. It was real, and we lived it.¹⁰

Catlett's indictment of playing jazz 'as history' reflects the dominance of efforts to 'preserve' jazz in the present industry. Although the history of jazz and its identity as democratic, American music has long been an influential ideas that have shaped the development of jazz, they have been greatly magnified by the programmes and institutions that have been funded as a result of the JPA. Seeing the influence of the industry and government before and after the JPA is not only necessary to create a more coherent critique of the 'preservation' of jazz, it provides a far greater understanding of the comments of those, such as Catlett, who are the most profoundly affected by such efforts.

¹⁰Buddy Catlett quoted in Jones, *Q*, 149.

Appendix A

Jazz Autobiographies

Reprint information is listed after the standard bibliographic entry. If printed again by original publisher, it is listed as 'Reprint.' Books are listed in chronological order to illustrate the interest in particular musicians at certain times. All books listed here are also listed in the bibliography.

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