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JAZZ

Jazz is the most elaborate musical genre contributed to the world heritage, this by way of African American communities in the southern United States in the early twentieth century. Now impossible to define in any all-encompassing way, jazz, in its many idioms, is recognized and performed around the globe. It should accordingly be thought of as a counterpart to "classical" music, itself usually perceived as European, though that music too is now universal, having both influenced jazz and been influenced by it.

The Emergence of Jazz. The African, especially West African, roots of jazz can be seen in its emphasis on improvisation in performance and the use of polyrhythms, as well as the prominence of distinct harmonic and melodic elements like blue notes and melisma (the variation of the pitch of a single syllable in song). To this day, jazz follows the performative ritual of call-and-response. One might also, at least with regard to the early history of jazz, harken back to the integrative social role music played in West African societies. This assertion needs to be taken with caution, however. The communal and participatory dimensions of African music and its reflexes in the diaspora are easily essentialized. Jazz and its coeval African American music forms can also be readily turned into another example of a putative "primitive," or naturally spontaneous and intuitive black essence. Indeed, the appeal of African American music has led to a phenomenon which Monson calls "musical-centrism," the reduction of black identity to music, dance, and the emotions they produce.

Since the appearance of Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, scholars have become aware that relationships within the diaspora across the Atlantic were neither unilinear nor unidirectional. The history of jazz, once it began to travel beyond the crucible in which it formed, must be traced instead along complex strands of a web of multiple migratory trajectories. It is therefore better to define jazz more as a product of the "black Atlantic," rather than of Africa, in the first instance. In other words, one cannot comprehend the emergence of jazz and of other African American musics without taking into account slavery, racism, and the modes of cultural resistance devised by descendents of Africans conveyed across the Middle Passage.

What came to be known as African American spirituals borrowed the harmonic structures of European hymns, but their emotional power is without question a reaction to plantation slavery and the Jim Crow racism that followed upon abolition. The blues may be thought of as the secular equivalent of spirituals, derived from the same need to express "soul" in the context of grinding poverty and subjugation. Even the parodic quality of jazz, present to this day in deliberate transgressions of saccharine mainstream melodies (Coltrane's "My Favorite Things" being a notable case in point), can be traced back to the slaves' cakewalk caricatures of European ballroom dances, a mocking response to white domination.

Given the racist milieu from which jazz emerged, it is not surprising that historical interpretations of jazz are polarized along the same racial lines that shaped it as a social and cultural phenomenon. One recurrent theme in these polemics is whether white appreciation or production of jazz should be considered cultural appropriation—the theft of black music by whites, and of the profits made thereby.

From the beginning, jazz was imitated by whites. Cakewalk, one source of jazz, became minstrelry, usually performed by whites in blackface. Ragtime, one of the sources of jazz, was a synthesis of American popular songs and syncopation derived from Africa. Some claim ragtime is the first American, not even African American, musical genre (Berlin, 1994). Scott Joplin, a classically trained African American pianist, was its master, but whites played and tapped their feet to it, recognizing its beauty and charm.

After World War I, the audience for jazz was socially segregated, a brutal fact of American life. But the market for jazz was not as segmented. Whites openly related to it, especially in its Dixieland and later its swing incarnations. Jazz was thus, in some sense, "appropriated" from its early days on.

With good reason, jazz is associated with the city of New Orleans. Under slavery, Congo Square (within what is now Louis Armstrong Park) was famous as the site of Sunday gatherings around collective performances of African music and dance. Many early jazz performers later emerged from the marching band and funeral procession traditions then strong in New Orleans. Equally important, at least initially, were bars and brothels in the district known as Storyville, which provided income to black musicians, one of whom was the pianist Jelly Roll Morton. His "Jelly Roll Blues" was the first jazz arrangement to reach sheet music, in 1915, but by that time Morton and many other New Orleans musicians had been touring in the South and beyond, disseminating New Orleans "hot" jazz. Dixieland, as some call it, is to this day identifiable as a style. Its fundamental instrumentation, brass or reed instruments improvising polyphonically over a rhythm section (guitar, banjo, drums, tuba), continues to shape jazz as a whole.

Swing and Segregation. From the end of World War I until the end of World War II, jazz captivated broad sections of the American public and made significant inroads into Europe, where connoisseurs had become aware of the music played by segregated black military bands, the most famous of which was James Reese Europe's Regiment, the "Harlem Hellfighters." Although it took another decade for indigenous European bands like the Quintette du Hot Club de France or the gypsy jazz of Django Reinhardt to develop, jazz had planted its seeds beyond the United States.

Back in the United States, jazz became the iconic music of modernity, symbolizing on the one hand the embrace of technology—the automobile, the telephone, even air travel—and on the other hand, subversive resistance. Jazz was, at least by connotation, the background music of speakeasies and illicit pleasures, as it had been in New Orleans. At the same time, it entered mainstream white society. Black musicians such as King Oliver, Bessie Smith, and Louis Armstrong recorded and developed recognizable styles as artists, but so did a smaller contingent of white musicians, such as Bix Beiderbecke. Swing, as the jazz of the 1930s is usually described, became the standard for dance music. White big-band leaders, such as Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and Glenn Miller, were both talented and successful, but their rivals included Count Basie, Fletcher Henderson, and Duke Ellington, among others. Almost all band leaders on both sides of the racial divide rose to their position through virtuosity on their chosen instruments, another implicit criterion in jazz. As the white band leaders turned increasingly to talented black musicians (Teddy Wilson, Lionel Hampton), lines were crossed in the world of jazz that were not to be crossed within wider American society for decades.

As music, swing can be defined by its increasing reliance on written arrangements upon which solo improvisations can be based, as opposed to the collective and relatively free-form improvisations previously the norm, and for a shift from two-beat to 4/4 time, a time signature more conducive to dancing. Swing continues to echo in jazz today. The melodic and rhythmic innovations it wrought on what is known as the Great American Songbook (the popular commercial music shared by many Americans until the age of rock-and-roll) sits at the core of jazz's musical code.

Experiment and Self-expression. Just as World War I brought radical changes to jazz, so did the next big war. Because of the rationing of gasoline and rubber, the cost of travel in the United States ballooned. African American jazzmen (and to a lesser extent, to be sure, jazzwomen) were also affected by the rationing of shellac, which impeded recording, a medium that had allowed them some earnings without undergoing the dangers of travel in segregated America (Porter). These restrictions and constraints had the effect of turning African American musicians back to their own milieux. Ensembles were downsized. The African American

public largely forsook jazz, turning its affection to rhythm-and-blues, the new label for "race music." At roughly the same time, rock-and-roll and then other forms of commercial music marginalized jazz as popular music in white America.

Bebop, a radical shift in jazz, came out of this set of social circumstances. Bebop was first and foremost music played for other musicians, or at least those whose interest in music was primarily as something to listen to. Live music was no longer, at least at that point in time, viable in spaces big enough to dance in. The end effect was that jazz became elitist. In the racially charged environment of post-World War II America, this meant first that African Americans who played jazz saw themselves as expressive artists instead of mere entertainers. Swing, with its numerous compromises, social as well as musical, lost its appeal. Even the blues, with its reliable chord sequences and accessible emotionality, was rejected as a compromise with the "primitivist" expectations white society had of blacks.

The bebop artist was above all an intellectual who flaunted his mastery of techniques and discovery of musical ideas. The persona of the alienated but authentic bebop artist was readily assumed, albeit in different ways, by figures such as Charlie Parker, Thelonius Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, and, in her early years, Ella Fitzgerald. Formal descriptions of bebop usually mention the sophistication of its chord progressions, including chromatic or dissonant effects, and the new emphasis on rhythm by both drums and string bass, not only as a foundation but as a voice in improvisation, intricate sometimes asymmetrical melodies, and freer structures.

By the 1950s, bebop had diversified. Miles Davis and John Coltrane both pushed it into new avenues, Davis inflecting it at first toward cool jazz (his 1949 album, *The Birth of the Cool*, being a marker of this change), Coltrane becoming one of the most striking composers of free jazz. The former style can be thought of both as a reaction to the aggressivity of early bebop and as a fusion of bebop itself with the more relaxed styles associated with white and West Coast jazzmen, such as Bill Evans, Dave Brubeck, and Stan Getz. As for free jazz, it stretched the harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic conventions of jazz to what some considered the breaking point. Its major proponents, however, conceived their music within the context of the struggle for freedom within racist America, finding, as did Ornette Coleman in his 1961 album, *Free Jazz*, that his musical revolt coincided with his political one (Monson). As for Coltrane, who died in 1967 at the age of forty, his "sheets of sound" and the powerful spiritual impulse he conveyed to jazz still sound revolutionary (in the album *A Love Supreme*, 1964, among many others). For various reasons, including the long-term residence in Europe of many of its innovators (Albert Ayler, Pharaoh Sanders, and Steve Lacy), free jazz sank roots there, and is more much prominent within the European jazz scene than in the United States.

A Complex Contemporary Matrix. There are those who consider the history of jazz as such to be more or less over. Its audience has drastically shrunk. Nor does there seem to be a center that truly holds, despite the continuing audience for "straight-ahead jazz," generally played by performers who have been active for years, some since the 1950s. The music featured in jazz festivals in the United States is drawn from a diversity of idioms, the majority of which reflect past styles and traditions, to the point that the label "jazz" is often more a marketing device than a description of any musical common ground. On the one hand, many jazz techniques have been integrated into pop or fusion, including hip-hop. On the other, there has been considerable borrowing from the gamut of world music—ironically, on occasion, from the music of Africa or from the diaspora. It accordingly remains to be seen if jazz will be more than a fascinating and intensely creative moment of twentieth-century music.

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JOHNSON, SAMUEL

Samuel Johnson (1846–1901) embodied the diversity of thought that struggled to define Africa's identity and future during the nineteenth century. In a career spanning more than thirty years as a missionary, clergyman, and political agent between the British colony of Lagos and Yoruba states, Johnson negotiated contending intellectual terrains to produce the first and the best-known study published on Nigerian history. His *History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate* is at once historical narrative, cultural exposition, and imaginative repudiation of racialist depictions of Africa. In this work and in his journals and correspondence, Johnson articulated a world view that situates Africa as an important and proud part of human civilization and the Yoruba as a distinct cultural identity.

His background highlights the dilemma that early generations of Western-educated African intellectuals confronted and which shaped the intellectual currents of the period. Born in Hastings (Sierra Leone) to liberated slave parents of Yoruba descent, Johnson was of that very first generation of young Sierra Leoneans who had not experienced slavery but had to be grateful for emancipation. With dislocated identities, they shared their parents' dread and longing for ancestral homes they knew nothing about while living in a yet unformed pan-cultural and increasingly cosmopolitan identity of the West African coast. Liberated slaves held a desire to reunite with estranged kin and kith. Upon his return to Yorubaland with his parents in 1858, Johnson received his primary education at the mission school in Ibadan and further missionary training at the Church Missionary Society Training Institute at Abeokuta until 1866. He credits his writing and intellectual skills to the broad general education he received at the Institute. His inquisitive mind and its thought process reveal wider influences.

Samuel Johnson began his career as a schoolmaster and catechist at Ibadan in 1866 and became priest and pastor of Oyo, a position he held until he died. His service coincided with and thrust him into the momentous events of nineteenth century Yorubaland. The collapse of the Oyo Empire following jihadist conquest in 1838 threw the region into a continuous state of war which did not end until British colonial rule. As catechist and a protégé of the English missionary at Ibadan, the most powerful of these states, and in the course of his missionary journeys, Johnson knew and was courted by the rulers of the warring Yoruba states. In this way, he soon became the envoy between these warring states and the arrowhead of missionary peace initiatives. The British colony in Lagos appointed him as an envoy and political agent in peace moves and resolution of the Yoruba civil wars. Traveling across Yorubaland enabled Johnson to further his knowledge of the Yoruba and develop further a long-held interest to situate the Yoruba in the complex intellectual currents of the nineteenth century by documenting their culture and history. For these