What is "Jazz Theory" Today? Its Cultural Dynamics and Conceptualization

Thesis

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By

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Abstract

This thesis examines the complex sociocultural dynamics that surround the concept of jazz theory from two broad perspectives: *formalized* or *academic* jazz theory, which emerged as a result of the formal institutionalization of jazz in the academy, and *organic* or *intrinsic* jazz theory, which first arose from African American music-making practices. This dichotomy does not suggest that the majority of jazz community members exist at the extremes of either of these two poles. Contrarily, most musicians tend to occupy the grey area somewhere in between. The aim of this study was to shed light on the complex and elusive intersection between formalized and organic approaches to jazz theory. Through an analysis of informal, formal, and virtual (internet-based) jazz music-learning environments, the results offer a thick description of the way in which notions of "jazz theory" affected the social lives of musicians, fostered racialized jazz identities, defined community boundaries, and influenced music-making practices.

The paper includes a variety of case studies, such as Miles Davis' experience studying music at Julliard, an analysis of the first methodological theory books published for jazz students and educators, online forums where jazz students discuss music theory,

and ethnographic data related to modern day jazz theory that I collected from nonacademic and academic jazz learning environments. Two theory-related books examined included George Russell's *Lydian Chromatic Concept* and David Baker's *Jazz Pedagogy: A Comprehensive Method of Jazz Education for Teacher and Student.* In both, the cultural contexts in which the works were created and how many students and educators misinterpreted or omitted elements that reflect the tabooed subject of race were considered. The study also relied on original ethnographic content collected during a field study at a Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop, a racially charged debate between two Aebersold camp attendees, a meeting with saxophonist Ornette Coleman, an interview with a 51-year-old African American jazz drummer and organic jazz theorist named Willie Smart, and a reflection on my experiences with an autodidactic African American saxophonist from Cincinnati, Ohio named Chuck Young.

Overall, the paper elucidates the racialized and transcultural nature of the jazz community's music-learning environments, and examines the role in which jazz theory plays within them. Academic jazz educators may use insights from this essay to create curricula that include an increased cultural and racial competency as well as a greater awareness of approaches to jazz that are traditionally excluded. Jazz musicians, music historians, and jazz fans may benefit from the analysis of jazz theory as a social process.

Dedication

Dedicated to my junior high and high school jazz ensemble instructors

Mr. Johnny Williams, Mr. Clark Lucky, and Mr. John Beasley. Thank you!

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Fields of Study

Major Field: African American and African Studies

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> ***theory*** *[<L.L theoria . . . a looking at, contemplation, speculation, theory] 1 orig., a mental viewing; contemplation 2. a speculative idea or plan as to how something might be done 3. a systematic statement of principles involved. . . 4. a formulation of apparent relationships or underlying principles of certain observed phenomena which has been verified to some degree 5. that branch of an art or science consisting in a knowledge of its principles and methods rather than in its practice; pure, as opposed to applied, science, etc.*[1]

Jazz theory has come to be viewed as a specific form of music theory related to jazz harmony and formalized jazz education. Within the study of European art music, music theory is traditionally identified to be (1) the "rudiments"—taught as elements of notation, key signatures, time signatures, rhythmic notation, harmonic progression, form, counterpoint, et cetera; (2) the formal study of writings about music from ancient times onwards, covering a variety of elements including aesthetics, notation, scales, modes,

1. David B. Guralnik, s.v. "theory," in *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 1475. When confronted with the task of writing about jazz theory, I first examined this formal definition of the term *theory* as a point of departure for my study. I include it here so that the reader may know where I began.

tonality, acoustics, the design of instruments, and performance practice; and (3) a musicological study that endeavors to define processes and general principles in music through the analysis of particular musical works or performances.[2] To accomplish the latter, researchers often employed methodological and theoretical approaches from philosophy, logic, and the perceptual sciences.[3] In 1968, the National Association of Jazz Educators was established to organize the efforts of jazz education within academia. This resulted in the proliferation of jazz studies in secondary schools and colleges, fostering a more formalized version of jazz theory. Since the 1970s, the notion of "jazz theory" has become synonymous with jazz education itself and has represented a collection of practical pedagogical models for understanding and performing jazz. In periodicals such as the *Jazz Education Journal*, *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *Music Educators Journal*, and in trade magazines such as *Downbeat*, writers contributed to a discourse that led to the codification of theoretical approaches that sought to adapt Western music theory to the learning of jazz.[4] Consequently, schools and jazz education camps and

2. David Fallows, "Theory," *Oxford Contemporary Music*. Oxford Music Online, accessed November 1, 2012, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6759.

3. Ibid.

4. See further discussion of this discourse in Chapter 2: A History of Jazz Music; Learning Environments, in N. Michael Goecke, "What Is Jazz Education? Improvisation and the 21st-Century Learning Environment," (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, forthcoming).

workshops around the world have come to offer courses in jazz theory, improvisation, styles and analysis, arranging, composition, and history.

However, theoretical approaches to learning and performing jazz music predate its formalization in academia. Jazz emerged in the late 1800s in New Orleans, Louisiana from relatively poor, working-class black communities in a racially segregated society where blacks occupied the subordinate position. Musicians in this cosmopolitan city synthesized a variety of musical elements from African, black American, European, and Caribbean antecedents to create a distinctive musical tradition that would come to be known as jazz. Unique educational models and ways of thinking about musical improvisation emerged that relied less on music reading and logical analysis and more on oral, aural, visual, verbal, and physical (bodily-kinesthetic) modes of learning. Within this context, jazz theory emerged as a process and musical tradition that unfolded through musical, visual, and verbal interactions among jazz musicians over time. Individual musicians were encouraged by peers to develop personalized theoretical models and performance approaches. Ingrid Monson explained,

> In the absence of a formalized jazz pedagogy, all jazz musicians in some ways had to become their own music theorist, devising harmonic approaches and individualized practice routines that enabled them to maximize their aesthetic agency and creative success on the bandstand. . . . To become one's own theorist—to have one's own concept that in turn leads to the expression of one's own voice—was among the highest aesthetic ideals of the art form. To become an improviser at this high level

> was to become aesthetically self-determining in a world in which other forms of self-determination or agency were more easily frustrated."[5]

In a sense, the improvisational tradition that developed allowed students to draw upon useful musical experiences from a variety of sources while asserting their own personhood through an individualistic approach to music. Paul Berliner added:

> Though aspiring artists may follow different paths initially, arriving at a commitment to jazz along direct or circuitous routes, they ultimately face the same basic challenge: to acquire the *specialized knowledge* [emphasis mine] upon which advanced jazz performance depends. Precisely how to pursue such knowledge is not always apparent to new enthusiasts. Traditionally, jazz musicians have learned without the kind of support provided by formal educational systems. There have been no schools or universities to teach improvisers their skills; few textbooks to aid them. Master musicians, however, did not develop their skills in a vacuum. They learned within their own professional community, the jazz community.[6]

To understand the sociocultural process of jazz theory, the complex relationship between jazz in the classroom and in nonacademic spaces must be understood. It is a relationship complicated by socioeconomic differences, racial tensions, and seemingly contradictory approaches to music-making. My argument is that despite observable incongruities, a *jazz community*[7] does exist and *jazz education* is a part of it. I understand jazz education to be

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5. Ingrid T. Monson, *Freedom Sound: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 286.

6. Paul F. Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 35.

7. Alan P. Merriam and Raymond W. Mack, "The Jazz Community," *Social Forces* 38, no. 3 (1960): 211-222. See also Berliner, 36-59, 772.

the informal and formal processes by which musicians learn the art of jazz improvisation and African American musical performance.

This raises several questions. First, what is *jazz theory*? Second, what is the nature of this *specialized knowledge* and should it be identified as jazz theory? Is it possible to learn this specialized knowledge outside of the jazz community? Also, to what extent do formal concepts about jazz theory resemble or differ from those that predate jazz's formal institutionalization? How do cultural and racial dynamics affect the way in which jazz theory is taught and understood? My proposition is that jazz theory is not only a kind of formalized music theory intended for solitary study, but is also itself a sociocultural process meant to facilitate creativity and inimitability. This process significantly shapes jazz music-learning environments and contributes to the construction of individual jazz identities. Ultimately, my contention is that racial dynamics profoundly affect the way in which jazz theory is conceived of, discussed, and taught inside and outside of the academy. As a result, an examination of these racial dynamics will reveal underlying racial tensions and disparities that exist within the jazz community.

In the following essay, I consider jazz theory from two broad perspectives: *formalized* or *academic* jazz theory, which emerged as a result of the formal institutionalization of jazz in the academy, and *organic* or *intrinsic* jazz theory, which first arose from African American music-making practices. In constructing this dichotomy, I mean not to suggest that the majority of jazz community members exist at

the extremes of either of these two poles. Contrarily, most musicians tend to occupy the grey area somewhere in between. The aim of this study is to shed light on this complex and elusive intersection between formalized and organic approaches to jazz theory. Through an analysis of informal, formal, and virtual (internet-based) jazz music-learning environments, I offer a thick description[8] of the way in which notions of "jazz theory" effect the social lives of musicians, foster distinctive jazz identities, define community boundaries, and influence music-making practices.

I examine a variety of case studies, including Miles Davis's experience studying music at Julliard, an analysis of the first methodological theory books published for jazz students and educators, and ethnographic data related to jazz theory today, which I collected from nonacademic and academic jazz learning environments. Two theory-related books to be examined include George Russell's *Lydian Chromatic Concept* and David Baker's *Jazz Pedagogy: A Comprehensive Method of Jazz Education for Teacher and Student.* Of particular interest will be attempting to identify the author's initial intention and the cultural context in which the works were created. I also use original ethnographic data, including a field study at a Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop, a racial debate between two Aebersold camp attendees, a meeting with saxophonist

8. Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-30. *Thick description* is a term adopted by anthropologist Clifford Geertz to denote a method of observation and analysis that seeks to consider and explain human behavior, cultural context, and the meaning that the two engender.

Ornette Coleman, an interview with a 51-year-old African-American jazz drummer and organic jazz theorist named Willie Smart, and a reflection on my experiences with an African American saxophonist from Cincinnati, Ohio named Chuck Young. My hope is that academic jazz educators may use insights from this essay to create curricula that include increased cultural competency and greater awareness of approaches to jazz that traditionally have been excluded. Jazz musicians, music historians, and jazz fans may benefit from the historical and social analysis of jazz theory as a social process.

Is Jazz Black Music?

What exactly is *black music?* I have examined a variety of definitions and have found a diversity of concepts. One of the broadest notions is articulated by T. J. Anderson who said, "Any composition written by a black composer is black music. The qualitative measure [of] blackness obviously depends on the individual's experience and perception."[9] Similarly, Undine Moore defined black music as "music created *mainly* by people who call themselves black, and whose compositions in their large or complete body show a frequent, if not preponderant, use of significant elements derived from the Afro-American heritage."[10] Many definitions tend to define black music as music

9. Samuel A. Floyd, "Black American Music and Aesthetic Communication," *Black Music Research Journal* 1, (1980): 3.

10. Ibid.

drawing on the lived experience of black people in America. Forefather of jazz education David Baker argued that black music is "the music of black people, embracing the total black experience . . . Music which is based on a constant conflict of rhythms."[11] Jazz pianist Herbie Hancock also said that it is music emanating "from the experiences of black Americans."[12] Samuel L. Floyd also uses a definition based on empiricism: "Black music is that which reflects and expresses essentials of the Afro-American experience in the United States."[13] Floyd continued by explaining that Afro-American music "is characterized by cadences, patterns, timbres, nuances, inflections, and devices peculiar to music originated by black people in the United States—work songs, blues, spirituals, black gospel, and jazz."[14] In 1987, under the leadership of Representative John Conyers Jr., Congress passed House Concurrent Resolution 57, which declared jazz music as a "national American treasure" that brought "to this country and the world a uniquely American musical synthesis and culture through the African-American experience."[15]

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11. Floyd, *Black American Music*, 3.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Under the leadership of Congressman John Conyers Jr., H.Con.Res.57, 100th Congress was passed by the House of Representatives on September 23, 1987 and S.Con.Res.23, 100th Congress on December 4, 1987. Both documents may be accessed from the Library of Congress's online Thomas library website: http://thomas.loc.gov/home/bills_res.html.

Many of the definitions sampled above emphasize the *black experience,* but what is the nature of this *experience*? The idea of one collective black experience has been a major topic of interest to many writers of African Americana. However, it would stand to reason that there are many black experiences had by a diversity of individuals. Depending on what part of the world someone is born into, socioeconomic status of their family, and shade of their skin, a person may experience a wide range of black experiences. Kofi Agawu addressed a similar issue in "The Invention of 'African Rhythm'," where he argued that European and African writers constructed a concept of *African rhythm* based on injurious racial assumptions.[16] Consequently, the concept of African rhythm was imposed onto the peoples of Africa. Kofi argued that a dialectic approach to field research might have prevented such presuppositions by letting the subjects speak for themselves.[17]

Let me explain what I mean by *black music.* I understand black music to be a signifier that is a part of what Neil Gotanda called *culture-race.* He explained, "culture-race includes all aspects of culture, community, and consciousness. The term includes, for example, the customs, beliefs, and intellectual and artistic traditions of black America,

16. Kofi Agawu, "The Invention of 'African Rhythm'," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (1995): 380-95.

17. Ibid.

as well as institutions such as black churches and colleges."[18] He continued, "Only by treating culture-race as analytically distinct from other usages of race can one begin to address the link between the cultural practices of blacks and the subordination of blacks—elements that are, in fact, inseparable in the lived experience of race."[19] My proposition is that there has been a devaluation of African American culture-race dynamics in academic jazz music-learning environments.

One of the primary and practical reasons that I identify jazz to be black music is because it is the way in which many jazz, blues, funk, R&B, gospel, reggae, and other musicians perceive their music. Although a musician may specialize in and identify with one category of music, he or she is often compelled to become competent with a multiplicity of African-American musical traditions. In fact, while studying jazz in black communities, I was often told by musicians and audience members how important it was that I learn how to play traditional blues. At blues venues, I would be told how important it was to know about funk music. Funk musicians often speak about the interconnection of jazz and gospel music and their impact on funk. I know several gospel pianists who are obsessed with learning the jazz musical vocabulary. At *after hour joints*—which are late-night house parties—the musical celebration may begin with a recording of the Gap

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18. Neil Gotanda, "A Critique of 'Our Constitution Is Color-Blind'," in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw et al. (New York: New Press, 1995), 269.

19. Ibid, 269.

Band, followed by Earth, Wind, and Fire, followed by a rendition of "Stormy Monday" sung by a local blues singer backed up by an amateur community band. After the band performs, a recording of John Coltrane may be played, followed by James Brown's "Say it Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud." Given the above, I view these differing musical frameworks as an interconnected web. Thus, black music, or more specifically *black American music,* describes a continuum of musical activity and thought that has its origins in social spaces of people of African descent. It is comprised of customs and aural traditions with roots that can be traced back to African slaves in the Americas.[20]

The term culture is often ambiguously used as a catchall term to identify a number of social phenomena. Monson pointed out that it is also often used as a code word for *race*. In *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call out to Jazz and Africa,* Monson offered an anthropological definition of culture based on social practices that will inform my usage of the term. Culture may be defined as:

> [1] . . . emerging from social practices in a process of contestation and engagement (which occurs over time, that is, history), (2) culture as inevitably mixed and partially overlapping with other cultures around it, and (3) cultures as not bound neatly to space or geography but rather mediated by recording, print, and broadcast media. Culture, then, is not simply about race or ethnicity, but also about the definition and redefinition of collectivities (including races, identities, classes, ethnic groups, genders) through various kinds of social practice, such as playing music, arguing about race, living in the same neighborhood, attending religious services, watching television, marriage, and political activism.[21]

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20. For further discussion about jazz as black music, see Chapter 1: Introduction, in Goecke.

From this perspective, a person does not need to have black skin to participate in *black culture.* Black culture is made up of a variety of black American social practices and cultural artifacts that have their origin in predominantly black social spaces. The argument is sometimes made that concepts of black culture presuppose the existence of starkly segregated environments and promote notions of essentialism. Yet the complex, racialized interplay between black Americans with people of other ethnicities have always been part of the black cultural experience. The defining question of black culture should not be based on the percentage of black people participating in a given social activity, but on a series of social and historical dynamics related to black America. Non-black people that respectfully immerse themselves into black culture may come to be viewed as community insiders by participating blacks. Whereas, a non-black who refuses to engage in such immersion may be viewed negatively, perhaps as someone who seeks to appropriate and take advantage of aspects of black culture. My point is that the dynamics of black culture are quite complex and not dependent upon the number of black people participating.

My approach is informed by Paul Gilroy's notion of the "Black Atlantic." In *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness,* Gilroy argues that the black

21. Monson, 11.

experience is inherently "transcultural" and "transnational."[22] His approach attempts to include the "reflexive cultures and consciousness of the European settlers and those of the Africans they enslaved, the 'Indians' they slaughtered, and the Asians they indentured," which Gilroy points out have been "systematically obscured by commentators from all sides of political opinion.[23] The Black Atlantic, then, becomes a space where constructions of race and nationality inform all interactions between cultural subjects. His analysis differs from traditional models of cultural hybridity, such as synchronization and creolization, insofar as he endeavors to move away from ethnocentric notions of absolutism where cultures begin from untainted origins. For Gilroy, the Black Atlantic is a distinctive space that produced certain kinds of racialized and transcultural experiences. In this paper, I consider the racialized and transcultural nature of the jazz community's music-learning environments and examine the role in which jazz theory plays within them.

Concepts of color-blindness, postraciality, and racial etiquette are also important to the following study. My contention is that within academia, administrative policies of postraciality and social conventions of color-blindness serve to perpetuate a system of racial etiquette in which race is a tabooed subject. Ian F. Lopez defined *racial etiquette* as "a set of interpretive codes and racial meanings which operate in the actions of daily life .

22. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 4.

23. Ibid., 2.

. . [and] a way of comprehending, explaining and acting in the world." [24] It is a kind of racialized social contract where students and educators silently agree to avoid publically speaking about race whenever possible. This concept is similar to Charles Mills's notion of a *racial contract*, which he described as an elusive social agreement that ignores the existence of white superiority and European domination.[25] Mills sought to situate the phenomenon of institutionalized racism within the contextual framework put forth by prominent western social theorists such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. The elusive contractual agreement prescribes "an epistemology of ignorance, a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions (which are psychologically and socially functional), producing the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made.[26] This unspoken pact not to address racial issues has caused discussions about race to be relegated to private conversations among blacks and others sympathetic to the issue.

Postracial refers to a "period, society, etc., in which racism is no longer institutionalized or no longer exists."[27] In "The Effect of Post-Racial Theory on

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24. Ian F. Lopez, "The Social Construction of Race," in *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*, ed. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 165.

25. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1-4.

26. Ibid., 112.

27. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "post-racial," accessed September 15, 2013, www.oed.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/view/Entry/377423?redirectedFrom=post-racial#eid.

Education," Christopher A. Warren explains that "post-racial theory is rooted in the academic discourse of color-blind methodology," and "its core aim, is the elimination of the social construct of race in social analysis and academic discourse."[28] He explained,

> These byproducts of the United States' nearly 400 year investment in the social construction of race to create a stratified society; as well as White supremacy, have created a society in which non-white children continue to bear the brunt of racial trauma through educational inequality, institutional racism through Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy, and race-based teacher bias.
>
> It is my contention that the application of postracial theory in social and legislative arenas will fail to eliminate any of the economic- or curriculum-based inequities within public school education. Furthermore, I contend that the aim of postracial theory to deconstruct race as a tool for social analysis will exacerbate current achievement gaps and guarantee that equity in terms of school funding and quality of nonracist teacher instruction for non-white students will not be achieved or even addressed.[29]

My contention is that a kind of *color-blindness methodology* has become established as the norm in many formal jazz learning-spaces. This has fostered an environment where white students and educators sometimes embrace views that people are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged because of skin color, deny the notion of white privilege, fear appearing racist if race is brought up, and/or feel as if they do not have the right to discuss the subject.[30] Historically, this differs from the experiences of many white jazz

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28. Christopher A. Warren, "The Effect of Post-Racial Theory on Education," *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* 10, no. 1 (2012): 197.

29. Ibid.

musicians who actively immersed themselves into black music-making environments to learn the music. In these spaces, an understanding of race and respect for black culture was often fostered through serious dialogues about the subjects. The practice of whites immersing themselves into black culture in order to learn jazz will be explored further in a discussion about Jack Teagarden in Chapter 2.

Formalized versus Organic Jazz Theory

I define *formalized* jazz theory to be the standardized methods for learning and understanding jazz, particularly those propagated inside the academy. These methods draw upon certain elements from organic jazz theory—particularly those which easily can be systematized or discussed in written form—as well as components from European music theory. Jazz musicians and educators have produced a wide range of technical method books, theoretical treatises, instructional videos, and pedagogical philosophies on how to interpret and perform jazz that exemplify these methods. I view such items to be cultural artifacts that shape both nonacademic and academic jazz music-learning environments. Within academic contexts, such artifacts have been used as ancillary materials in a variety of spaces, including jazz camps, school big-band rehearsals, performances, school jam sessions, college courses such as jazz theory, styles and

30. Derald Wing Sue et al., "Racial Dialogues and White Trainee Fears," *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 16, no. 2 (2010): 206.

analysis, history, and pedagogy. With that, said, formalized jazz theory methods and artifacts are not mutually exclusive to academia. Organic jazz theorists, some of whom spent little to no time in jazz classrooms, often found inspiration from formalized theory artifacts. I argue that the acquisition and use of such artifacts is a distinctive characteristic of organic jazz theory. On the other hand, organic jazz theorists may become educators in academia and seek to find unique pedagogical approaches to foster this process in the classroom. I explore this assertion in detail later in the essay, referencing examples from Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Steve Davis, and Chuck Young.

Formalized jazz theory may be viewed as a specific social process largely tied to the collection of practical pedagogical models for understanding and performing jazz used in music education. Early jazz theory formalizers drew heavily upon European models and orientations toward music education that privileged logical, verbal, systematic, and solitary forms of learning. Given the diverse ways in which jazz is conceived of throughout the jazz community, it follows that the notion of "jazz theory" exists in a multiplicity of facets. Yet, one of the unifying goals from organic to formalized theory is to "learn how to play" and fluently talk about jazz music. Within the jazz community, the notion of being able "to play" refers to a musician's attainment of a socially acceptable level of musical competency. In parlance, the term allows the speaker to maintain a cool disposition while expressing whether he or she believes that another musician is interpreting and performing jazz music well.

Musicians also use verbal approaches to explain their music to fellow musicians. Musicians may draw upon commonly accepted and understood concepts in order to instruct others to execute certain musical tasks. Abstract verbal interactions about supernatural concepts or explicit discussions of tabooed subjects such as sex may also be used as a strategy by the speaker to elicit musical responses from colleagues. Theory may also be used to identify with a particular group of musicians. In academic jazz communities, those who have the ability to discuss more advanced and complicated standardized theories tend to receive greater respect from their peers. In settings such as jazz camps, college jazz departments, and online jazz theory forums, students may engage in a kind of informal theoretical "cutting session," or perhaps "jazz theory battle," where they try to outdo their opponents by describing superior chord/scale relationships to songs. Their fluency with what is a sort of prestige language of jazz theory allows students to achieve higher levels of social status. Also, in- and out-group dynamics arise as larger sections of students embrace particular method books or theoretical models. In these situations, students who do not show reverence for socially accepted methods and theoretical concepts may be ostracized by group members. What is considered acceptable is often greatly informed by curricula and the musical tastes of jazz educators. Detailed examples that illustrate these practices will be explored in more detail later in the essay.

I define *organic* jazz theory to be a creative process, a musical paradigm; that is, a system of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitute a way of viewing

reality for the community that shares them—and a sociocultural[31] tradition with origins in black music-making communities. As a living musical process and paradigm, this theoretical tradition is meant to foster originality and freedom of expression. It privileges open-ended, creative, and critical-thinking techniques that are interwoven into the daily interactions of musicians where the implicit objective is for the performer to develop their "own sound" and approach to music-making. When examining the testimony of a large sampling of jazz musicians, who grew up or studied music in black communities prior to the 1980s, about their musical conceptions, numerous unique theorizations about jazz music-making and learning emerged.[32] For many of these musicians, developing a distinctive approach to thinking about and performing jazz is of the utmost importance. Musicians are encouraged to consider the theoretical constructs of their peers, jazz icons, formal music studies, and any other musical or extramusical phenomena that may inspire thought, and blend them into a unique understanding of music. This often results in somewhat revisionist approaches to well-established musical theories developed by notorious musicians, teachers, and peers within and outside the jazz community. Additionally, extramusical elements such as spiritual beliefs, religious practices, lifestyle choices, political affiliations, racial identities, gender identities, and musical personhood

31. Geertz, 14. I borrow from Geertz's understanding of the term *culture* as "interworked systems of construable signs," (i.e. symbols) that are not merely "something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed," but a context in which these phenomena "can be intelligibly—that is, thickly—described."

32. Berliner.

may contribute heavily to the meaning, intentionality, conceptualization of, and discourse about music.

I know of no existing term that is used within the jazz community to identify simultaneously the specificity and breadth of this unique yet somewhat elusive process of creative musical transmission. Many writers on jazz and black musical culture have examined and discussed this process, yet its ambiguous nature has elicited a variety of explanatory approaches. Berliner alluded to aspects of this, explaining that "as soloists are perpetually engaged in creative processes of generation, application, and renewal, the eternal cycle of improvisation and precomposition plays itself out at virtually every level of musical conception."[33] William Banfield defined black aesthetics as the "philosophy of 'Black art doing'," which is concerned with "what Black artists think about when doing their art and the end results of what we perceive, hear, and experience the artistic expression 'to be'."[34] More abstract elements of this process were suggested by Floyd's concept of "cultural memory" in "black-music making," which he identified to be the "nonfactual and nonreferential motivations, actions, and beliefs that members of a culture seem, without direct knowledge or deliberate training, to 'know'."[35] William T. McDaniel

33. Berliner, 242.

34. William C. Banfield, *Black Notes: Essays of a Musician Writing in a Post-Album Age* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 147.

35. Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 8-9.

echoed this sentiment with his theory of "cultural DNA" in black music, which is the metaphorical transmission of hereditary musical knowledge through cultural interaction.[36] Traditionally, such interactions would take place in predominantly black music-making spaces, which Guthrie Ramsey called "community theaters," or "sites of cultural memory"[37] and musical exchange. I would also include the dynamic concept of *attitude*, or what Banfield called "sass and cool aesthetic sensibilities," which "contribute to the creative process and are recognized as part of the pedagogy, part of the performance practice, and are essential for techniques and music analysis . . . which make the technical and the artistic execution of Black art making meaningful."[38] Amri Baraka added to this sentiment, saying, "Negro music is essentially the expression of an attitude, or collection of attitudes, about the world"[39] where "the notes mean something, and the something is, regardless of the stylistic considerations, part of the black psyche as it dictates the various forms of Negro culture."[40] Attitude is a somewhat elusive element that tends to receive much attention in black community theaters but less in formalized

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36. William T. McDaniel Jr., interview by author, Columbus, October 2, 2012..

37. Guthrie P. Ramsey, *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkely: University of California Press, 2003), 4.

38. Banfield, 149.

39. Amiri Baraka, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: W Morrow, 1963), 13.

40. Ibid., 15. Following the publication of *Blues People,* the term 'Negro' fell out of fashion and Baraka became one of the strongest proponents of *black* as it relates to *black music*. See Amiri Baraka, *Black Music* (New York: W Morrow, 1967).

settings where objective views toward music tend to be preferred. Although some formal educators may discuss it, I know of no jazz theory book or curriculum that explicitly addresses this salient feature of jazz performance. Ultimately, attitude is intertwined with organic jazz theory insofar as it shapes and informs its development.

Although I am ambivalent to construct a term to define this cultural music-learning process, in order to facilitate analysis and understanding, I use *organic jazz theory* as an apt identifier. Broadly speaking, my proposition is that this process is a distinctive element in black American music-making. Based upon traditional definitions, merely identifying this process to be only music theory is too narrow and does little to allow the inclusion of sociocultural elements such as attitude. Yet, black music, or "black aesthetics," as defined by Floyd and Banfield, are too broad—as organic jazz theory is an element of both. Ultimately, analysis is not only dependent upon quantitative approaches to learning musical content, but also upon the creative processes and social circumstances by which such content is understood, assimilated, and ultimately expressed.

Literature Review

One of the most comprehensive studies on jazz theory as a cultural process is Berliner's work *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*. Berliner spent more than 15 years in the field collecting data and using a variety of methods to examine a wide range of musical and cultural activities that inhabit the jazz community. This included musicological analysis, evaluation and interpretation of materials published by

performers and scholars, reflections from his experiences as a jazz trumpeter, and original data from the interviews of 52 legendary jazz musicians. He explored the many ways that jazz musicians developed and conceptualized their music, while considering the varied forms of communication and semiotic expression used within jazz. He said that his goal was to enhance readers' abilities to understand jazz in much the same way as its improvisers do.[41] The first two parts of his work will be particularly pertinent for the following study, as they are broadly concerned with the process of learning and conceptualizing jazz from a historically black American perspective.

In *Jazz Cultures*, pianist and ethnomusicologist David Ake considered the diverse music and identities that jazz communities have influenced throughout the twentieth century. Of particular importance to my work is Chapter 5, entitled "Jazz 'Traning': John Coltrane and the Conservatory," where Ake discusses problematic cultural issues within jazz institutions.[42] Some of these issues include the effect that institutional biases have on the kind of music jazz students value, a critique of the standard Coltrane pedagogical model employed by most jazz programs; the lack of big-band improvisation, Jamey Aebersold and the "chord-scale system," and the problem with jazz education manuals presenting Coltrane's "Giant Steps" as the cornerstone of his music.[43] Also important is

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41. Berliner, 15.

42. See "Jazz 'Traning': John Coltrane and the Conservatory," in David Andrew Ake, *Jazz Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 112-145.

Bruno Nettl's *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music*, which was a meditation on the music-making culture within a midwestern university. He provided methodological insights into the process of evaluating the music culture of which the author was a self-identified member, an endeavor he called "ethnomusicology at home."[44] An analysis of the marginal status of jazz within a college music department is also particularly relevant.

Another work that greatly informs this essay is Monson's *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa.* Monson combined many historical, cultural, and political strains to make a point about the black experience, political struggle, and cultural expression, with a particular focus on the civil rights era of the 1950s and 1960s. In Chapter 8, "Aesthetic Agency, Self-Determination, and the Spiritual Quest," Monson explored jazz theory through various culturally relevant points of entry. Of particular importance to my study is her discussion of George Russell's *Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization.*

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43. Ake.

44. Bruno Nettl, *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 107.

Chapter 2: Jazz Theory and the Academy

Black American Jazz Music-Learning Environments

In "Chapter 2: Hangin' Out and Jammin': The Jazz Community as an Educational System" in *Thinking in Jazz*, Berliner explored early educational models for jazz music within the black community. He explained, "One conventional way for young artists to share information is through informal study sessions, a mixture of socializing, shoptalk, and demonstrations known as hanging out."[45] Berliner point out:

> [Public] school bands, orchestras, and choirs allowed musicians to perform a diverse repertory that included marches, tunes from musical theater, and simplified arrangements of selected movements from operas and symphonies. Additionally,[46] "every black school had its swing band that played stock arrangements," orchestrated versions of jazz pieces that were initially popularized by Erskine Hawkins, Count Basie, and others."[47]

Berliner continued, "Many of the African American band teachers did not actually teach improvisation but that their sympathy and respect for jazz encouraged students to apply the general skills they had acquired through more formal musical education to their

45. Berliner, 37.

46. Ibid., 26.

47. Ibid. Here, Berliner is citing an unpublished interview he conducted with David Baker.

practice of jazz."[48] This point is significant because it illustrates how certain educators fostered inspiration among students through social interaction. Although students may not have been taught specific methods, they were inspired to seek out the knowledge for themselves. This illustrates what I would describe as a *qualitative learning* environment where the motivations of the students are considered important. This would be different from a mostly *quantitative learning* atmosphere where the focus is structured by strict mathematical methods and theoretical approaches. I revisit this issue in detail later in this essay.

After World War II, some white schools began to develop swing "stage bands" and courses on jazz music for credit.[49] In "Jazz in Higher Education," Jack Wheaton explained that, "in a way, the service bands had a lot to do with the demand for jazz and stage bands in the curriculum after World War II. The Navy had found early in the war that sailors were more receptive to popular music and jazz for entertainment than formal band concerts."[50] This utilitarian application of jazz had a profound impact on its acceptance into the American school system. The GI Bill enabled soldiers returning from war to complete their educations. "Because jazz (i.e. swing) had been their major music expression while in the service, many of the returning servicemen wanted to receive

48. Berliner, 27.

49. Bryce Luty, "Jazz Education's Struggle for Acceptance: Part I," *Music Educators Journal* 69, no. 3 (1982): 39.

50. Jack Wheaton, "Jazz in Higher Education," *NAJE Educator* 2, (1970): 9.

continued instruction in it."[51] Warwick Carter asserted that the demand for college jazz courses created by the GI Bill was an important contributor to the development of the North Texas State University, Berklee, and other early jazz programs. Veterans' desire to study jazz in schools helped to create the need for jazz programs. As the supply of trained jazz musicians increased, and performing opportunities decreased with swing's decline in popularity, many became band directors in primary and secondary schools—increasing the number of what were often called "stage bands" to avoid the negative connotations of the term *jazz*.

Suffice it to say that jazz was not yet given serious consideration as a viable musical art form that could, and should, be taught in academia. Further, many of these early jazz programs that emerged at universities—besides historically black colleges—did not have many black students. Yet, since the emergence of jazz, black musicians developed an interesting and indirect relationship with music colleges and universities. Berliner explained that black students who were able to extend their rudimentary music education from public school in higher learning institutions would blend the "differing worlds of musical knowledge, thus contributing to a mutual artistic exchange that continually enriches jazz tradition."[52] Ultimately, many of these black musicians would return to their communities and share the knowledge that they learned with their peers. I speculate that such knowledge was digested and disseminated in a way that reflects the

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51. Warrick Livingston Carter, "Jazz Pedagogy: A History Still in the Making," *Jazz Educators Journal* 18, no. 3 (1986): 12.

52. Berliner, 55.

creative musical thought and organic music theory processes outlined above. This type of collaboration among black students—perhaps unintended by the colleges—set a precedent for blacks to take advantage of available resources and information from schools and libraries. Such information would often come to be synthesized with other black musical and cultural conventions. Meanwhile, these students would also make an effort to "get around the people who [can] play . . . [the] music and learn" as much as possible from them.[53] They would essentially "take what they need and leave the rest alone,"[54] as it were, from the available resources and filter it through the creative process fostered within the black community. This circulatory exchange exemplifies the process of organic jazz theory, as described above.

My use of the term *circulatory* is informed by Matt Sakakeeny's article "New Orleans Music as a Circulatory System." He offered a theory of a circulatory system to examine African continuities in New Orleans music. His aim was to expand

> the field of inquiry to accommodate the exceptional levels of diversity, interaction, racial mixing, and cultural creolization in the city . . . [by drawing] . . . attention to how this history of human and cultural circulation has forever been shaped, or purified, by narrators who connect the dots between people, places, and music, such as when the 'discovery' of the birthplace of jazz set in motion a series of events that ultimately redefined a city's musical identity.

He explained further:

> People, places, and music are entangled with their representations in media in discourse and together they constitute a circulatory system. This

53. Berliner, 37.

54. Willie Smart, interview by author, Columbus, December 26, 2010, audio recording, in author's possession.

> is a loosely structured system of mobility and interaction, where African ring shout dances meet European military marches; liberating processionals in the streets are captured as sounds, images, and texts; and cultural dynamism is constrained by everything from Supreme Court decisions to researchers who have shaped our understandings of black music.[55]

From this perspective, organic and formal jazz theory processes seem to foster a circulatory system, whereby musicians inhabiting differing socioeconomic and racial circumstances exchange cultural capital in the form of musical concepts and performance practices. Yet, the nature of such exchanges is often defined by political, economic, and racial circumstances. Some of these circulatory circumstances will be examined in the following case studies.

White Musicians in Black Music-Making Spaces

Many white jazz musicians did not venture into black music-making spaces for various reasons. They either did not have easy access to black communities or avoided them out of fear or prejudice. However, despite America's system of apartheid and institutionalized bigotry against blacks, some white musicians were prepared to travel outside of their own communities to soak up the oral/aural traditions of black American music. They would risk the ridicule of their friends and families, as well as the

55. Matt Sakakeeny, "New Orleans Music as a Circulatory System," *Black Music Research Journal* 31, no. 2 (2011): 292.

destruction of their social status, to pursue the tabooed music that was considered by some to be a product of the devil.[56] Monson explained:

> Throughout the twentieth century African and non-African Americans alike have wanted to break free from the rigidities of sociological categories through music, yet it is non-African Americans who have had more freedom in crossing these racial boundaries in society. Welcomed into the black and tan clubs on Chicago's south side and Harlem's dance halls, many young white musicians such as Jack Teagarden, Bix Beiderbecke, Mezz Mezzrow, Benny Goodman, and Artie Shaw found themselves musically and personally transformed by their encounters with African American music.[57]

As a young boy growing up in Texas, the white jazz trombonist Jack Teagarden (1905-1964) was influenced by many black musicians. He recalled listening to the black Texas blues singers on the streets and experiencing black tent revival meetings during his youth:

> The spirituals I heard—the first ones I remember—were in Vernon, Texas, from a little colored revival under a tent in a vacant lot next door to our house. They called 'em 'Holy Rollers' in those days. These spirituals would build up until the congregation would fall on the ground . . . and roll around and they'd get their religion. And they'd get to jabberin' in an 'unknown tongue,' they'd call it. The singin' building up to this climax was really terrific. I'd sit out there on the picket fence we had and listen to it. And the music seemed just as natural to me as anything. . . . I could hum along with 'em with no trouble at all.[58]

Like Teagarden, the finest and most innovative jazz musicians were rooted in the blues and black American spirituals. Teagarden affirmed this as a definite influence on his playing, saying, "I learned all that I know about the blues when I was pretty young. There

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56. Various forms of black music (i.e., blues, jazz, rock 'n roll) have historically been labeled as being the "devil's music" by whites and blacks alike.

57. Monson, 313.

58. Howard J. Waters, *Jack Teagarden's Music: His Career and Recordings* (Stanhope, NJ: Walter C Allen, 1959), 3.

was a Negro section in Vernon and they used to have big . . . meetings, and I used to sit back and listen. . . . Their music just seemed to fit in with what my idea of music had always been."[59]

During his professional career, Teagarden was always looking for opportunities to play with or listen to great black musicians. Oliphant wrote, "Despite the fact that professionally Teagarden worked most often with white groups, he was drawn to black jazzmen when the occasion permitted. Either musicians like Coleman Hawkins and Jimmy Harrison invited Jack to visit their homes in Harlem for jam sessions or, on those rare opportunities when studios in the 1920s and 1930s allowed mixed groups to record, he was included on historic sessions with those figures he so admired and emulated, in particular Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith."[60] His interest in black musicians playing jazz sometimes surprised his colleagues. Tom Joyner, Teagarden's drummer in 1921, spoke of Teagarden's "unusual" affinity for black musicians: "One of the unusual things about Jack at that time was that when we would get through at night, he would want me to go with him to hear one of the colored orchestras play. He strove constantly to improve his style of playing."[61]

This is an important and revealing statement by Joyner. First, it demonstrates Teagarden's desire to be around black musicians and exposes his expectation for fellow

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59. Clarissa Start, "It's Time for Tea and Has Anybody Here Seen Jackson?," *Milwaukee Journal,* 1 September 1941.

60. Dave Oliphant, *Texan Jazz* (Austin: University of Texas, 1996), 140.

61. Waters, 4.

white jazzmen to feel the same way. Secondly, Joyner's negative disposition to the idea of spending time listening to and associating with black musicians is clear. Thirdly, it reveals, at least implicitly, that Teagarden thought his own playing would improve by listening to and associating with black musicians.

By 1929, Teagarden was one of the most in-demand trombone players, making over a hundred recordings for notable bandleaders such as Fats Waller, Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Bix Beiderbecke, Glenn Miller, and Eddie Condon. He also took part in some of the first integrated recording sessions. In the early 1930s, Teagarden based himself out of Chicago playing for Wingy Manone's band. Seeking financial security during the Great Depression, Teagarden signed an exclusive contract to play for Paul Whiteman's Orchestra until 1938. The contract provided financial security but prevented him from spending time with the black musicians with whom he wanted to play. In 1946, Teagarden joined the popular Louis Armstrong's "All Stars." He also led his own band off and on until his death in 1964.

Teagarden's trombone style was unique and reflected the influences of the blues and black spirituals he listened to during his youth. Oliphant asserted, "As a player of the blues, Teagarden was, even from the beginning of his career, fundamentally a soloist rather than an ensemble jazzman in the New Orleans tradition of group improvisation."[62] This is important to note because all of the trombonists who preceded Teagarden, including Kid Ory and Miff Mole, essentially come out of the tailgate New Orleans

62. Oliphant, 136.

trombone tradition--where the trombonist's role was to outline the harmony using smeared glissandos and other expressive devices. Teagarden's self-taught "southwestern trombone style" characterized by a cool, casual, and lyrical flow juxtaposed with his driving rhythmic sensibility is a profound innovation in the lineage of the trombone."[63]

Teagarden's lack of formal training put him in the company of many of the black blues and church singers he admired growing up. Rudi Blesh asserted, "No legitimate teacher would ever have taught Jack Teagarden to bend a tone until it cried, or to slur a note until it quivered, or to ease into those half-minor thirds and sevenths—the night sounds that are the soul of the blues. Jack heard them and played them, with no teacher to rap his knuckles."[64] Teagarden's style possessed many of the musical elements exemplified in the cultural environments in which he was immersed. Some of these elements, found in the blues, include the use of "blue notes" and rhythmically propulsive melismatic lines. According to jazz writer and scholar Alyn Shipton, Teagarden's upbringing in rough black neighborhoods enabled him to become "one of the first white jazz musicians to master the blues, and probably the first to make use of blue notes."[65] Blue notes may be identified as notes sung or played at a lower pitch than those of the major scale, for expressive purposes. They approximately correspond to the flatted third,

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63. Oliphant, 137.

64. Rudi Blesh, *Combo: U.S.A. Eight Lives in Jazz* (Philadelphia: Chilton, 1971), 61.

65. Alyn Shipton, James Lincoln Collier, and Barry Kernfeld, "Teagarden." *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Accessed March 8, 2014 www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/ article/grove/music/J442900pg2 and October 20, 2005 www.grovemusic.com.proxy.libraries.uc.edu.

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flatted fifth, and flatted seventh scale degrees. These notes, combined with the root and perfect fifth, create what has come to be known as the *blues scale*.

The first eight bars of Teagarden's notorious performance of "Saint James Infirmary" (shown in figure 1) showcases his mastery of the blues. Use of the blues scale and blue notes can be found throughout the excerpt. Since the song is a minor blues, Teagarden's use of the flat third is to be expected; however, his use of the nonharmonic flat fifth in measures five and seven showcase his masterful application of this stylistic convention. In measure seven, he uses the flatted fifth on the third down beat, creating a crushing effect with the harmony. His application of a glissando [smear] from the flat fifth to the perfect fourth, concluded with a legato approach to the flat third and root, which is reminiscent of the Texas solo vocal blues style.

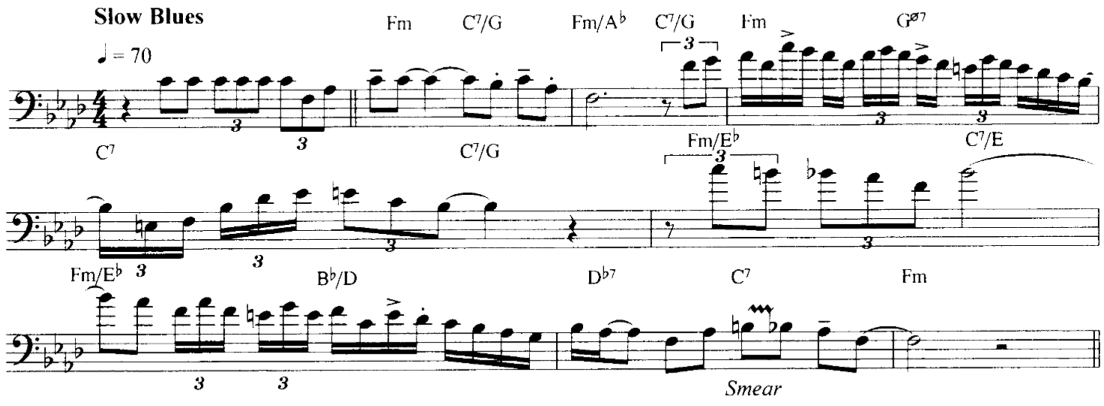

Figure 1. Jack Teagarden's solo on "Saint James Infirmary." Transcribed by author.

Teagarden's use of rhythmically propulsive melismatic lines can be seen in measures three, four, and six. He employed a legato approach with the strategic placement of accents that give the lines a verbal quality. His use of eighth-note triplets juxtaposed with swinging sixteenth-note lines exemplified his high level of rhythmic sophistication. The rhythmically inventive melismatic lines are akin to the melismatic conventions found in the styles of the early black church and southern blues singers. Jazz scholar Gunther Schuller wrote "Teagarden sounds like an itinerant Texas blues-shouter,"[66] characterized by his warm tone, relaxed legato style, and vocal conception.[67]

One notable aspect was Teagarden's ability to sing through sustained notes. Schuller explained that "Teagarden would 'sing' through a note, making it sustain and lead to the next note." An example of this happens in measures five and six. On beat three of measure five, Teagarden hit a high Bb and held it. He relentlessly shaped the note with a discrete vibrato that added to the tension of this dramatic device. Unexpectedly, on the first up-beat of measure six, Teagarden broke the tension by singing through the Bb right into an Ab, which acted as a passing tone to his melismatic material. This element of "squeezing the juice"[68] out of a note through sustaining it is yet another musical characteristic found in both the early black church and the solo blues singer.

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66. Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 600-601.

67. Ibid.

68. The phrase "squeezing the juice out of the note" is often used by musicians within the black community to refer to an emotional and unrelenting sustainment of a musical tone.

Although Teagarden did not start any schools of trombone playing, his influences on jazz and improvisation have been invaluable. His technical prowess juxtaposed with a brilliant melodic and rhythmic sensibility helped redefine the role of the jazz trombone. His fervent pursuit of black music by immersing himself into black culture gave his sound an indelible feeling, likened to that of the Texas blues shouters and church singers he grew up emulating. His access to these musicians seemed to enable him to absorb the *feelin'* and *attitude* of the blues and other black American performance practices. I included Teagarden as an example to show how white musicians who sought to engage in black communities became accepted participants in the black American music culture.

Miles Davis at Juilliard

One of the more famous musicians to exemplify organic jazz theory is Miles Davis (1926-91). Davis grew up in East St. Louis where he was fascinated by music at a young age. At age 13, he began to take trumpet lessons and play in school bands. He attended the all-black Lincoln High School where he studied music with his band teacher Elwood Buchanan. Davis explained that Buchanan had a profound influence on him, both as a music teacher and positive black role model.[69] The bands that Buchanan instructed did not play jazz, but marches and other forms of concert band music. He also did not teach jazz improvisation in private lessons with Davis, but standard brass technique. However, Buchanan's pedagogical approach did not explicitly resemble European or white

69. Miles Davis and Quincy Troupe, *Miles, the Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 30-31.

American music educational norms, but a synthesis of practical musical knowledge coupled with the encouragement to develop one's own sound or musical voice. Davis explained:

> One of the hippest things Mr. Buchanan taught me was not to play with vibrato in my tone. At first, I used to like to play with vibrato because of the way most of the other trumpet players played the instrument. One day while I was playing in that style, with all this vibrato, Mr. Buchanan stopped that band and told me, "Look here, Miles. Don't come around here with that Harry James stuff, playing with all that vibrato. Stop shaking all those notes and trembling them, because you gonna be shaking enough when you get old. Play straight, develop your *own* style, because you can do it. You got enough talent to be your own trumpet man.
>
> Man, I never forgot that. But at the time, he hurt and embarrassed me. I just loved the way Harry James played. But after that I started to forget James and found out that Mr. Buchanan was right. At least, he was right for me.[70]

Buchanan's approach differed significantly from certain European pedagogical methods where the goal was to produce students that sounded stylistically similar. Buchanan's advice to Davis, that he should develop his own sound, sparked his student's creativity in a way common to black American aesthetics.

During high school, Davis also took trumpet lessons with a German trumpet teacher and principal trumpeter for the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra named Gustav. Davis was very impressed with Gustav's musicianship, as well as the craftsmanship and design of his proprietary mouthpieces—which Davis indicated that he still used. At the same time, Davis started to play jazz with neighborhood dance bands such as the Blue Devils. Davis recalled members of the band often correcting him and pushing him to play

70. Davis and Troupe, 32.

at more advanced levels. He also spent time with his mentor and trumpeter Clark Terry. Ultimately, Davis synthesized what he learned in his formal lessons with Gustav, concert band sessions with Buchanan, mentors such as Terry, and dance band experiences with the Blue Devils in black community theaters, to cultivate an organic theory of jazz. Thus, Davis was able to learn the fundamentals necessary to perform while being encouraged to develop his own approaches to music theory.

Davis attended Juilliard for a short time following high school. Although he spent much of his time pursuing his idols Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie on the streets of New York, he endeavored to take advantage of the resources that Juilliard, as well as public libraries, had to offer. Although he was delighted to take advantage of these resources, he had several criticisms of the institution:

> Right off the bat, I didn't like what was happening at Juilliard. The shit they was talking about was too white for me. Plus, I was more interested in what was happening in the jazz scene; that's the real reason I wanted to come to New York in the first place, to get into the jazz music scene that was happening around Minton's Playhouse in Harlem, and what was going on down on 52nd Street, which everybody called "The Street." That's what I was really in New York for, to suck up all I could from those scenes; Juilliard was only a smokescreen, a stopover, a pretense I used to put me close to being around Bird and Diz. . . .
>
> But he [Charlie Parker] was teaching me a lot about music—chords and shit—that I would go and play on the piano when I got to school . . . [and] Dizzy started showing me shit on the piano so that I could expand my harmony."[71]

Davis used his schooling as a means to travel to New York City to be near the active jazz scene. During this time, Gillespie played a particularly important role in fostering Davis's

71. Davis and Troupe, 58.

theoretical development, as he instructed Davis to learn how to play piano and understand concepts of functional jazz harmony.[72] Parker and Gillespie were the two key innovators of the expanding theoretical concepts in jazz toward the style that would become known as bebop. Gillespie's organic pedagogical approach with Davis emphasized learning basic concepts inspired by European theory, yet the goal was to become equipped with the tools necessary to become fluent in jazz improvisation.

In addition to his studies with the innovators of bebop, Davis went on to explain, he did try to get as much out of his experience at Juilliard as he could. Davis asserted, "Like I said, going to Juilliard was a smokescreen for being around Dizzy and Bird, but I did want to see what I could learn there."[73] He remembered using Julliard's pianos to work on harmonic ideas taught to him by Parker and Gillespie. He also recalled playing in the school's symphony orchestra and attending music theory and history classes. Yet, he explained, he felt alienated at the school. He recalled one situation where a white female music history teacher asserted that the reason that black people play blues was "because they were poor and had to pick cotton" and that the blues came from "their sadness."[74] After his teacher said this, he recalled, "My hand went up in a flash and I stood up and said, 'I'm from East St. Louis and my father is rich, he's a dentist, and I play the blues. My

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72. *The Miles Davis Radio Project*, Shows 1-8, produced by Steve Rowland, Jay Allison, and Larry Abrams, aired 1990, MP3 (ArtistOwned.com, 2006) https://www.artistowned.com/track_detail.cfm?artistid=159&TrackID=346.

73. Davis and Troupe, 58.

74. Ibid., 59.

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'."[75] He ultimately said that the teacher was just teaching what had been written down in a book by someone who did not know what they were talking about.[76] I bring this up because it is still an issue today. Many music educators are required to teach courses in which black music is examined, but troublesome stereotypes continue to be perpetuated due to lack of knowledge about black studies or participation in black culture.[77]

When Davis asserted that the school was too "white-oriented" and "racist" what did he mean? He claimed, "At Juilliard, after it was all over, all I was going to know was a bunch of white styles; nothing new."[78] In light of these statements, it seems as if Davis may have had an aversion to learning "a bunch of white styles" or being in a predominantly white learning environment. However, I argue that he was not averse to learning whatever he could about music, regardless of his racial surroundings. Rather, he believed that the Eurocentric learning environment inhibited certain aspects of his creative development. This may be evidenced by his interest in the work of white composers. In the following excerpt, Davis expressed his fervor for learning as much as he could about music from any useful resource that he could access. Furthermore, he provided

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75. Davis and Troupe, 59.

76. Ibid.

77. I speak about this particular issue in detail in Goecke, "What Is Jazz Education?"

78. Davis and Troupe, 59.

illuminating insight into racial suppositions held by some of his black peers regarding music theory:

> Another thing I found strange after living and playing in New York for a little while was that a lot of black musicians didn't know anything about music theory. Bud Powell was one of the few musicians I knew who could play, write, and read all kinds of music. A lot of the old guys thought that if you went to school it would make you play like you were white. Or, if you learned something from theory, then you would lose the feeling in your playing. I couldn't believe that all them guys like Bird, Prez, Bean, all them cats wouldn't go to museums or libraries and borrow those musical scores so they could check out what was happening. I would go to the library and borrow scores by all those great composers, like Stravinsky, Alban Berg, Prokofiev. I wanted to see what was going on in all of music. Knowledge is freedom and ignorance is slavery, and I just couldn't believe someone could be that close to freedom and not take advantage of it. I have never understood why black people didn't take advantage of all the shit that they can. It's like a ghetto mentality telling people that they aren't supposed to do certain things, that those things are only reserved for white people.[79]

Given the above, it is clear that Davis made an effort to expose himself to a diversity of musical perspectives. However, he demanded the freedom to interpret and use these perspectives in the way of his choosing. Along these lines, Monson points out that

> a self-actuated quest for knowledge and understanding was very much respected in jazz circles of the 1950s and 1960s. As musicians explored various ways of thinking about harmony, rhythm, melody, and sound (timbre), they both applied ideas acquired through the study of Western music to improvisational practice and developed their own distinctive harmonic conceptions and practices devised to fit the demands of an improvising musician. . . .
>
> For African American musicians, to seize hold of the reins of musical thinking was in many ways to shatter the idea that their special gift was simply talent rather than intelligence. In this sense the positive value placed on the intellectual exploration of music during the late 1940s and 1950s was anything but a capitulation to whiteness. If musicians at first seemed overly concerned about proving their understanding of

79. Davis and Troupe, 60-61.

> harmony as a prestige discourse, they ultimately developed an improvisational musical practice, harmonic inventiveness, body of compositions, and cultivation of aural skill that far surpassed any debt to classical music.[80]

This is an important point in order to understand the social circumstances that shaped the circulatory system of jazz theory in the past. Some musicians maintained more essentialized beliefs about music and race. One of the most profound was the supposition that studying formal music theory would adversely affect a jazz musician's creativity and ability to perform music that is aesthetically pleasing to blacks. Reflecting Monson's point about the emergence of a "self-actuated quest for knowledge" during this time, Davis refuted the notion that studying European music and philosophy would negatively affect his performance as a black musician. In fact, he criticized blacks who did not seek liberation through access to knowledge. As pointed out by Monson, this kind of attitude flourished in the black community following the 1940s. My argument is that this quest for knowledge within and outside of the black community is a distinctive characteristic of black culture. I expound on this point further below.

Given the above, what did Davis mean when he spoke disparagingly of "white-oriented" learning environments? It seems as if he used the term "white-oriented" in a way that reflected Gotanda's concept of culture-race, which sheds light on the apparent contradiction in Davis's statements. My argument is that Davis was using the notion of "whiteness" at Julliard to refer to a musical and cultural paradigm that did not lend itself to the kind of freedom and creativity that he demanded. Thus, he was less critical of

80. Monson, 286-87.

"white musical styles," which he studied on his own terms, than of the prejudiced musical culture fostered at Julliard. Similar contradictions arose when Davis would assert that white musicians could not really play black music. Yet, he hired and befriended numerous white musicians over the years, including Bill Evans, Gil Evans, Bob Berg, John Scofield, Dave Liebman, and others.

My question is how did Davis use these formal theories from western classical music in his jazz improvisations and compositions? Obviously, concrete answers to this question are hard to discern. However, I find Davis's account to reveal crucial insights into the nature of his creative process. My argument is that Davis was empowered through his practice of organic jazz theory to absorb and use these concepts in creative ways during the course of his career. I maintain that this is the same kind of creative approach to "differing worlds of musical knowledge,"[81] or "reservoir of ideas,"[82] that would inspire Coltrane to use Slonimsky's Thesaurus or draw on the musical and conceptual traditions of India;[83] or inspire Dizzy Gillespie to embrace and experiment with the music of Cuba; or inspire Canonball Adderley to fuse African rhythms with three-quarter time signature in Galt MacDermot's composition "African Waltz;" or inspire Charlie Parker who "counted Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Prokofiev, Hindemith, Ravel, Debussy, Wagner, and

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81. Berliner, 55.

82. Lewis Porter, *John Coltrane: His Life and Music* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 206.

83. See Porter, *John Coltrane*, 209-11 for a discussion about the influence of Indian music and culture in Coltrane's improvisations and compositions.

Bach"[84] as major influences. Parker hoped to travel to Europe to compose and study classical music with Nadia Boulanger and Marcel Mule.[85] Wayne Shorter described Parker's incorporation of Stravinsky-inspired ideas in a concert, circa 1948. "I remember that while Bird was doing his solo, he'd go into Stravinsky. Real quickly, he did the little phrase from *L'Histoire Du Soldat* and the other one from *Petrouchka,* put it in his solo and keep going around."[86] Charles Mingus also recalled Parker improvising along to Stravinsky records.[87]

As demonstrated above, the practitioner of an organic jazz theory program is empowered to be grounded in the history of black musical performance while simultaneously being eager to draw upon a multiplicity of outside influences. This is significant because it reveals a pedagogical tradition that perpetuates a certain creative approach. This process of creative borrowing is not always viewed from this broad perspective, as there have been social and political issues that have caused contentious debates about the creative relationship between jazz and European classical music in particular. As pointed out by Davis above, some members of the black community criticized black musicians who embraced classical music for "putting on airs." Monson pointed out that "it is not surprising that in the late forties and early fifties such emphasis was placed on comparing leading jazz musicians to modern classical composers, for to do

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84. Monson, 86.

85. Ibid.

86. Brian Priestley, *Chasin' the Bird: The Life and Legacy of Charlie Parker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 74.

87. Ibid.

so was to claim a right to higher cultural status for jazz and a new uncompromising identity for the jazz musician."[88] She continued:

> African American musicians have generally been caught between a rock and a hard place when it comes to classical music. On the one hand, a cosmopolitan display of knowledge enabled artists such as Duke Ellington to resist white stereotypes of the folk musician-that untutored, instinctual "noble savage" to which Moldy Fig critics were so attached. On the other hand, musicians who embraced classical music ideals and incorporated references to the European tradition faced at least two types of critical response. First, interest in classical music by jazz musicians was often taken as an admission that jazz innovations were derived from European sources. . . . Second, within African American communities, an overemphasis on classical continuities in the music was considered by some constituencies as pretentious or indicative of insufficient pride in African American roots.[89]

These racial dynamics have caused black musicians to defend jazz as a unique art form not directly inspired by famous classical composers. In an interview, Charlie Parker was asked how many of his "innovations in bebop before 1945 were the product of 'spontaneous experimentation' and how many were the result of 'adaptation of the ideas of your classical predecessors, for example, as in Bartok?' Since Parker was unfamiliar with classical music in the formative years of bebop, he bridled at the suggestion: 'Nothin'-not a bit of the idiom in which music travels today, known as progressive [bebop] music, was adapted [from] or even inspired by the older composers.'"[90]

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88. Monson, 49-50.

89. Ibid., 86-87.

90. Ibid., 8.

When he was compared with Bach, Ravel, and Stravinsky, Duke Ellington responded:

> If I seem a little shy about being displayed on a critical platform with the classical big shots, let me also dispel the notion that I hesitate to place the jazz medium in a top musical category. Jazz, swing, jive and every other musical phenomenon of American musical life are as much an art medium as are the most profound works of the famous classical composers. To attempt to elevate the status of the jazz musician by forcing the level of his best work into comparisons with classical music is to deny him this rightful share of originality. Let us remember that many "long-hair" composers (still current) freely admit that they have been influenced by the jazz idiom. . . . Music, like any other art form, reflects the mood, temperament and environment of its creators.[91]

Above, Parker and Ellington asserted that it would be wrong to assume that the creation of jazz automatically stems from European classical music. But, why was jazz art music often misattributed to European music? One underdiscussed reason is that the practice of incorporating European musical innovations, along with African, or Cuban, or Indian, or other innovations, is a distinctive characteristic of black music theory, particularly in jazz. This is true, insofar as musicians are encouraged to study and find inspiration from a variety of musical traditions. Yet, it must be understood that the nature of this education is being filtered through what I would describe as a black musical paradigm. Here, I intend the word *black* to imply Gotanda's culture-race as defined above. In other words, black individuals who did extend their rudimentary music education within predominantly white institutions for higher learning would then often associate with other artists trained by ear and "blend [the] differing worlds of musical knowledge, thus

91. Monson, 87.

contributing to artistic exchange that continually enriches jazz tradition."[92] This collaboration, perhaps unintended by white institutions, helped establish a unique educational model where black students absorbed and synthesized various forms of music and musical training systems, resulting in a unique and distinctive music-learning process and approach to music theory.

Early Jazz Recordings and Method Books

One important landmark for jazz education and its music-learning environments occurred in 1917 with the first jazz recording. As asserted by Carter, McDaniel, Suber, and others, recordings were often viewed as the first jazz "textbooks."[93] Not only did recordings change how people learned music, but they also created new kinds of social circumstances in which people experienced it. First, early vinyl discs could only record about three to four minutes per side. This resulted in the need to prepare music that was between three to four minutes long. Listeners then grew accustomed to listening to music of this length. However, the length of live performances was much more varied, often being much longer. Second, the earliest forms of recording technology did not allow certain instruments to be effectively recorded (e.g., drum sets were often replaced with wood blocks). Consequently, the recording studio emerged as a particular kind of music-

92. Berliner, 55. For further discussion also see Ronald Radano and Michael Bohlman, "Music and Race, Their Past, Their Presence," in *Music and the Racial Imagination*, ed. Ronald Radano, Michael Bohlman, and Philip Vilas (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 2000), 18-24.

93. Carter, 11; McDaniel, *The Status of Jazz*, 120; Mark Suber, introduction to *Jazz Pedagogy: A Comprehensive Method of Jazz Education for Teacher and Student* by David Baker (Chicago: Maher Publications, 1979), iii.

making and music-learning environment. Furthermore, as people of all ages began to huddle around phonographs, radios, and jukeboxes, these recordings created new circumstances for listening and learning music in public and private spaces. With that said, it must be emphasized that most early musicians would not exclusively use recordings as a primary source of music education, but as an important ancillary to observing live music and participating in private musical instruction and social music-learning. Thus, records may be viewed as a particularly important musical artifact that radically changed the ecology of music and fostered new orientations toward performance, listening, and music-learning.

What role did and do recordings and radio play in the oral/aural transmission of African American music? Although it is true that recordings provided an excellent study aid, the majority of great jazz musicians—black or white—that emerged out of the new culture of recorded music had direct contact with the established masters at some point and were therefore afforded the opportunity to take part in what Carter called the *African continuum*.[94] Authors often use the broad concept of *oral/aural transmission* to describe the nonliterate learning processes of African antecedents to black American music. In general, I find this catchall term—along with the often-referenced oral-versus-literate music culture dichotomy—to be problematic, as it does not take into account the importance of the physical and visual processes intertwined with aural and verbal ones. Upon considering the details of African musical edification, I am compelled to move

94. Carter, 10.

toward a theory of music-learning that goes beyond what is often implied by the notion of oral/aural transmission. First, musical communities that rely on oral transmission are sometimes framed as "other," or as the exception to, literate music-making cultures. This viewpoint tends to situate literate music and its notational practices as different or more highly evolved than oral approaches. Such a simplistic perspective seems not to do justice to music-learning methods from both nonliterate African and European antecedents. Second, music-learning within an African context is a mental, physical, and spiritual experience—spiritual is used here to illustrate cultural views that ascribe musical prowess, ability, and learning to supernatural phenomena, such as gods, God, spirits, or the supernatural—that relies on more than just solely learning by rote. Integrated into oral and aural forms of learning are visual and physical methods, even when listening to recordings or the radio.

In addition to disparaging jazz because it was created by black Americans, many music educators asserted that it was impossible to learn or teach jazz music in a formal academic setting, and that it was impossible to develop a jazz pedagogy. However, Carter explained that the earliest attempts at academic jazz education trailed the first pedagogical efforts of the practitioners.[95] He argued that the earliest pioneers of jazz, including Buddy Bolden, Joe Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Buck Johnson, and other New Orleans musicians all put forth efforts to develop a jazz pedagogy that would ultimately serve as models for the next group of New Orleans musicians, including Louis Armstrong

95. Carter, 10; McDaniel, *The Status of Jazz*, 114-139.

and Kid Ory.[96] During the 1930s, students of jazz learned the fundamentals of music in a variety of ways, including private instruction as well as formal and informal community institutions (such as churches), public schools, and in professional bands. Private teachers, especially in Chicago, New York, Boston, Houston, Denver, and Los Angeles began to expressly teach jazz improvisation.[97] In 1934, the Chicago-based jazz magazine *Downbeat* began publication. Charles Suber explained:

> Downbeat published regular columns on components of jazz education: Sharon Pease's analysis of jazz piano styles (later collected in book form) and improvisation; saxophone studies by David Gorston; arranging by Will Hudson and others; other instrumental columns, many at least nominally written by famed jazz musicians—and transcribed solos of jazz masters such as Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins, Bix Beiderbecke, Jack Teagarden, et al.[98]

In 1935, Norbert Bleihoof published his popular *Modern Arranging and Orchestration* which was the first attempt at explaining jazz improvisation and arranging.[99] Then in 1936, Carl Kelly and Russell Brooks, both Chicago musicians, "began to teach their system of improvisation based on learning chord structures, passing tones, and blue notes—transcribed from jazz records. This, of course, happened as swing music was increasing in popularity. In the mid-1930s, popular musicians such as Gene Krupa, Frank

96. Carter, 10.

97. Ibid., 11.

98. Suber, iii.

99. Carter, 11.

Trambauer, Eddie Lang, and others produced jazz method booklets which frequently included play-along records."[100]

Heinrich Schillinger arrived in the United States from Russia in 1928 and began to teach at several universities in New York. His teaching methods differed from traditional conservatory training. He developed a mathematical system that composers and improvisers could use to arrange compositions and improvisations. Schillinger's methods became popular, and soon composers and musicians from different backgrounds endeavored to study with him.

> "Schillinger's system seemed to work in practical application," the composer Nicolas Slonimsky remarked. Before long, Schillinger was the cult figure and mentor for a string of composers and arrangers from Broadway and Hollywood—each "in search of practical formulae" and "willing to pay good Broadway money for the initiation into the mysteries of Schillinger lore." Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and Oscar Levant flocked to study at his apartment; Glenn Miller created his "Moonlight Serenade" as an exercise for a Schillinger lesson. For four and a half years, beginning in the spring of '32, George Gershwin came to Schillinger for three lessons a week. . . . Gershwin loved musical games and delighted in the endless schemes Schillinger came up with, like his claim, in one case, that 46,656 different styles of composition could be extracted from a particular set of chords. . . . Schillinger watched over Gershwin's shoulder as the composer worked on Porgy and Bess, the Cuban Overture, and the variations on I Got Rhythm for piano and orchestra.[101]

Detailed accounts of the music-learning environments in Schillinger's apartment and classroom is somewhat limited, yet his influence intersects between several communities including mostly white jazz musicians, Broadway and Hollywood composers, and

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100. Carter, 11.

101. Albert Glinsky, *Theremin: Ether Music and Espionage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 132.

twentieth century classical composers. Schillinger's method was published posthumously as *The Schillinger System of Musical Composition* in 1946 as a large two-volume 1,640 page series that included comprehensive studies in music theory, musical instruments, stylistic practice, and orchestration.[102] Also after his death in 1943, the Schillinger House—renamed the Berklee School of Music in 1973—was established by Lawrence Berk in 1945. The school offered courses in jazz composition and arranging based on Schillinger's system, and a two-year curriculum which would result in an artist diploma.[103] Regional private lesson studios specializing in the Schillinger system also emerged. Schillinger's approach influenced musicians for years to come, including organic jazz theorists such as Muhal Richard Abrams, founder of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (established in 1965), a nonprofit organization that developed music education programs for inner-city blacks in Chicago.

George Russell's Lydian Chromatic Concept

In 1953, George Russell (1923-2009) published what many consider one of the first significant theoretical methods for jazz improvisation entitled *The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization*. Russell grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio where he spent time

102. Glinsky, 132.

103. Michael Worthy, "Jazz Education," *Oxford Contemporary Music*: Oxford Music Online, accessed November 8, 2012, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2093226. Also see Carter, 10-11.

immersing himself into what he called "deep black church music."[104] Russell emphasized how important these black cultural roots were to his musical development saying that "it opened a door to a life that wasn't stagnant and that was exploratory and that was an open door to the universe."[105] He also had early musical experiences playing drum and bugle in the Boy Scouts and spending time with Jimmy Mundy—a famous jazz arranger who lived next door.[106] Another early musical influence was the famous Mississippi riverboat bandleader Fate Marable.[107]

While attending the predominantly black Withrow High School, he immersed himself in the jazz scene as a drummer playing with various musical groups.[108] He then received a scholarship to become a member of the jazz ensemble at the historically black Wilberforce University. He joined the Wilberforce Collegians, but cut his college career short due to illness. During his lengthy stay in the hospital, he learned how to arrange music. He soon moved to New York and became known as a composer/arranger, yet he suffered a relapse of tuberculosis and was hospitalized for fifteen months in 1946-47. During his recovery, he began to explore his own concepts of music theory that would ultimately result in his *Lydian Concept of Tonal Organization.* When he had recovered his health, he wrote for several bands, including Earl Hines's. His first large-scale success

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104. Monson, 292.

105. Ibid.

106. Ibid., 287.

107. Olive Jones and George Russell, "A New Theory for Jazz," *The Black Perspective in Music* 2, no. 1 (1974): 63-65.

108. Ibid.

came with his arrangement of *Cubana-Be Cubana-Bop* that combined jazz and Afro-Cuban elements and was played by Dizzy Gillespie's big band in 1947.

Ultimately, Russell "found the constraints of traditional music theory useless to explain music beyond Wagner and, more significantly, totally inadequate for the analysis of Afro-American music, particularly blues and jazz."[109] Russell credited "the so-called Be-Boppers (Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, et al.)" with having inspired him to investigate the potentials of the Lydian scale because of their practice of "ending their pieces on the flatted fifth tone of the key of the music."[110] Russell also recalled an inspirational sharing of theoretical ideas with Miles Davis:

> Miles sort of took a liking to me when he was playing with Bird along the street. And he used to invite me up to his house. We'd sit down and play chords. He liked my sense of harmony. And I loved his sense, so we'd try to kill each other with chords. He'd say, "Check this out." And I'd say, "Wow." And I'd say, "Listen to this . . . " I asked him one day on one of these sessions, "What's your highest aim?-musical aim?" and he said, "To learn all the changes." That's all he said [laughs]. At the time I thought he was playing the changes, you know. That he was relating to each chord and arpeggiating or using certain notes and extending.[111]

This is an important account by Russell, as it reveals one of the ways that jazz theory was cultivated within black cultural contexts. As Davis and Russell practiced together, they not only effortlessly shared perspectives about music theory, but also participated in an important social tradition. This correlates with Berliner's observation that "one

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109. Jones and Russell, 63.

110. Ibid.

111 Monson, 288.

conventional way for young artists to share information is through informal study sessions, a mixture of socializing, shoptalk, and demonstrations known as hanging out."[112] This is an important point, as the social component of learning jazz is often not sufficiently considered or emphasized by educators who fail to understand this salient process.

In an attempt to share his knowledge of jazz with a wider audience, Russell set out to create a jazz theory treatise that would benefit professional musicians and students. In the introduction to his book, Russell explained:

> The Lydian Chromatic Concept is an organization of tonal resources from which the jazz musician may draw to create his improvised lines. It is like an artist's palette: the paints and colors, in the form of scales and/or intervallic motives, are waiting to be blended by the improviser. Like the artist, the jazz musician must learn the techniques of blending his materials. The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization is a chromatic concept providing the musician with an awareness of the full spectrum of tonal colors available in the equal temperament tuning. There are no rules, no "dos" or "don'ts." It is, therefore, not a system, but rather a view or philosophy of tonality in which the student, it is hoped, will find his own identity. The student is made aware of the whole chromatic situation surrounding the chord (vertical) or a tonal center (horizontal). It is believed that this knowledge will liberate the student's melodic inhibitions and help him to intelligently penetrate and understand the entire chromatic universe.[113]

It is significant that Russell identified his method as a liberal philosophy of tonality designed for the readers to find their own identity or unique sound. Thus, the method is presented to the student not as hard and fast musical laws, but ideas that are malleable to the extent that the student's imagination is able to absorb and creatively use the

112. Berliner, 37.

113. Jones and Russell, 63-65.

information. This represents a theoretical approach that does not offer strict musical laws or doctrine, but an observation of musical structures and one person's conceptual approach to creative jazz improvisation. I make this point because it may be observed that formalized jazz theory has not always maintained this objective. This will be expounded upon later in the essay.

In "Lesson One," Russell explained that "very frequently the jazz musicians are required to improvise upon written chord symbols" and he then explains how "chord symbol must be converted into a scale (i.e., a melodic line) that 'best conveys the sound of the chord'."[114] This is particularly significant because subsequent chord/scale methods promulgated by David Baker, Jamey Aebersold, and others would follow this approach. Russell's work ultimately generated praise from his peers, including John Lewis who asserted that the method is "the most profound theoretical concept to come from jazz,"[115] and Ornette Coleman who said "It surpasses any musical knowledge I have been exposed to."[116] Furthermore, David Baker, who had been head of the jazz department at Indiana University since the 1970s, adopted the text as his primary jazz theory text book. In 1974, Baker regarded it as the "foremost theoretical contribution [to jazz] of our time."[117]

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114. Jones and Russell, 65.

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

Yet, it seems that many people in academia failed to perceive Russell's intention. In the way that Russell shared his theoretical thoughts with Miles Davis, he sought to do the same with a wider audience. Musicians and educators that were trained using European educational norms sometimes found it hard to use the method, particularly the way the author intended. Russell did not like to have his theory viewed as academic: "See, a lot of people feel that it's academic, [especially] if they have an academic feeling. I'm not really an academic. It just made perfect sense for me to educate myself, but once I educated myself I didn't mean to stumble on something that I had to make a complete commitment to. . . . "[118]

Russell did not like the idea of being hemmed in or feeling held back by a particular theory. From an organic jazz theorist's perspective, concepts and approaches may be malleable and numerous. This differs from some Eurocentric approaches where it is expected to stick rigidly to the tenants of the method book. Monson explained that, like Max Roach, Russell was suspicious of formal education, saying "I always dreaded the small life, the small mind, which I sensed controlled the educational system. . . . The streets would be my school and food for my art."[119]

It is significant to note that Russell viewed himself as an artist-philosopher. He explained:

> At the top level I put the artist-philosopher; at the second level, the artist; at the third level, the popularizer; and at the lower level, the incompetent. Sometimes an artist-philosopher may seem to be incompetent; I mean,

118. Monson, 292-93.

119. Ibid., 293.

> because his thing is so different and strange, he's considered incompetent. When Charlie Parker came along, for example, most people, many people thought he didn't know how to play his horn at all. And when Ornette came along there was this big hue and cry, "What in God's name is happening to music?" And sometimes it can happen that when an established artist-like Coltrane, for example-seeks to grow and goes into another style, he loses many of those who were his admirers.[120]

Above, Russell mentioned many innovators of jazz and explains that they were often viewed as incompetent due to their unique approaches to music. For these jazz musicians, the practice of challenging their peers with new approaches almost seemed like the norm. Yet, formal approaches to jazz theory tended to instruct students to learn what these innovators did instead of the open-ended thought processes that often allowed them to innovate. Russell's intention was not to create a rigid method, but an approach that would foster creativity.

Why did Russell conceive of his theoretical system based on the Lydian scale? Russell drew inspiration from a variety of spiritual and philosophical traditions. In the following passages, he put his theories into conversation with that of the ancient Greek philosophers:

> Russell believes the significance of his concept to be that it puts music back on the track where it started back in the time of Pythagoras and other Greek philosophers. He feels that the problem has been that certain laws of Christianity influenced the development of music to such an extent that it was pulled away from its most natural systems toward the super-imminence of the major mode. And traditional theory has served only to describe the process this development has taken over the past two thousand years. The Lydian Chromatic Concept reestablishes the link between the relatively recent laws of equal temperament and the ancient laws with their emphasis on movement through pure fifths. If one starts on

120. Jones and Russell, 69.

> a tone and moves up through a succession of pure fifths, as did Pythagoras (e.g., C, G, D, A, E, B, F#), then compresses the tones within the octave span (e.g., C, D, E, F#, G, A, B, C), the Lydian scale evolves naturally. Russell's theory begins at this point and moves outward.[121]

Monson explained that the Lydian chromatic concept was not just a theory of music, but was "a life-giving philosophy that mingles elements of religion, science, and non-Western spirituality. For Russell, working on this concept was literally life giving, in the sense that his quest enabled him to endure the lengthy hospitalization that was central to his recovery from tuberculosis."[122] Monson continued that "Russell's relationship to music theory, systematicity, and unity" can be related to "pan-denominational spirituality merging elements of religion, science, self-knowledge, and mysticism."[123] For Russell, his system represented a personal quest for knowledge. "This is intuitive intelligence. It's intelligence that comes from putting the question to your intuitive center and having faith, you know, that you're intuitive center will answer. And it does. I had gone through a number of religious experiences as a child. I was sort of forced into it. My mother was very religious. Searching for something desperately."[124]

Monson noted that Russell's theories were inspired by his panreligious beliefs and thinkers such as G. I. Gurdjieeff who "talks about gravity, harmoniousness, space travel, the planet Saturn, unity, and the idea of spiritual essence." Monson explained:

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121. Jones and Russell, 65.

122. Monson, 292.

123. Ibid.

124. Ibid., 293.

> The rebelliousness of formulating a musical philosophy that inverts traditional understandings of harmony by placing the "devil's interval" (the tritone) at the center of musical understanding is also of significance. Given the choice of pursuing a traditional understanding of musical structures or of inventing his own system, Russell chose the path of self determination and with it a link to what Cornel West has called the prophetic: "Prophetic Theology cuts much deeper than the intellect; Prophetic Theology forces us to exemplify in our own lives what we espouse in our rhetoric. It raises questions of integrity, questions of character, and, most importantly, questions of risk and sacrifice."[125]

Russell was not alone in his quest to fuse musical, spiritual, philosophical, and political aims into his music. Musicians such as John Coltrane, Sun Ra, Albert Ayler, Ornette Coleman, and others were notorious for connecting their music with spirituality, deep philosophical meaning, self-realization, and enlightenment. This creative fervor, perhaps led by these pioneering musicians, inspired many others to become more concerned with their own personal development, believing that it would undoubtedly contribute to their musical achievements. With that said, few formal jazz theory books or curricula explore these salient elements. The spiritual inspirations, musical philosophies, and emphasis on personal development, which were so important to many of the jazz musicians who have been the objects of the most study, are rarely explored or acknowledged in modern pedagogical approaches to jazz theory. My contention is that doing so serves to undermine an opportunity to better incorporate black cultural studies into formal jazz education. Some may argue that some of this content is covered in jazz history courses. It is beyond the scope of this essay to explore the degree to which this is true or false, but I maintain that not including this material in jazz theory edification is problematic. I mean

125. Monson, 293.

not to suggest that students be taught such content in a fashion where they feel they must *learn what to think*. Rather, connecting the historical context of spirituality, black self-determination, and philosophical exploration to the study of jazz theory may help students *learn how to* think. The latter is arguably the object of organic approaches to jazz theory.

Chapter 3: Baker, Aebersold, and Formalized Jazz

David Baker and Jazz Pedagogy

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, jazz departments began to develop in high schools and colleges throughout the United States. It was during this time that jazz educators such as David Baker, Billy Taylor, Jerry Coker, Jamey Aebersold, and others published articles and educational method books and conducted seminars that would eventually become early models for jazz education. Jazz theory would ultimately become an indispensable part of jazz pedagogy within the discipline of jazz education/studies. At that time, the courses on jazz theory, style and analysis, and improvisation that began to emerge had been profoundly influenced by the pedagogical models of these early writers. One of the first educators to codify jazz was David Baker (born 1931). He has made more than 65 recordings, authored over 60 books, and published more than 400 articles. Two of his most influential classics are *Jazz Pedagogy: A Comprehensive Method of Jazz Education for Teacher and Student* published in 1979 and his series on bebop entitled *How to Play Bebop Volumes 1-3*. In *Jazz Pedagogy,* Baker addressed the tendency for music conservatories to approach jazz from a Eurocentric perspective. David Ake

suggested that Baker's work in some ways may have contradicted his original intentions:[126]

> Baker objects to the reinscription of classical ideals on jazz students. But even he reinforces these aesthetics to a large degree. The sample course syllabi he provides for prospective jazz improvisation teachers deal overwhelmingly with memorization of songs and jazz-related harmonic theory. Baker does stress some ear training, but the mock exams he includes test students only on their ability to notate chord symbols and write out scales' one finds no material in his syllabi that relates to either rhythmic or timbral approaches.[127]

It is true that many of Baker's methods have been widely embraced as standard approaches to teaching by members of the music education community. Also, the way in which his methods have been interpreted and prorogated by educators has left a presupposition among many students that his systematic approach, especially to bebop, is strict and tedious to learn. Critics purport that his method overemphasizes the use of "bebop licks" and memorization of bebop compositions. However, his prescriptions for extensive black cultural and historical edification have been largely ignored. This has caused organic theoretical elements that appear to be inherent in Baker's approach to not be understood or transmitted.

What is the nature of Baker's prescriptions for black cultural and musical education? How does it relate to organic jazz theory? Why did educators adopt certain aspects of Baker's pedagogical approach, particularly those reflecting European musical norms, while rejecting others? To explore these questions, I examined the contents of

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126. Ake, 121-122.

127. Ibid.

Baker's influential *Jazz Pedagogy.* In this text, Baker offers his theory of jazz pedagogy. In my analysis, I focused particular attention on portions of the book that emphasized cultural and historical education. First, I outlined relevant aspects of Baker's book and second, considered important social and racial issues revealed by what jazz educators had generally chosen to incorporate or reject during the construction of modern jazz programs.

In the preface, Baker explained that the central focus of the book was for the task of teaching jazz, rock, popular music, and other forms related to the sources of jazz.[128] He explained that it is unlike most pedagogy books in that it not only considered the methods, but also examined what should be taught by offering course guidelines, syllabi, reading and listening lists, and other relevant information about running a jazz studies program.[129] In the first chapter, entitled "Myths," Baker attempted to address many of the erroneous myths and stereotypes that surround the prospect of black music in general and jazz education in particular. First, he refuted the myth that "you either got it or you ain't," which suggested that jazz cannot be taught, by asserting that the performance practices of any music can be analyzed and its "rules" understood.[130] Then, he dismissed the notions that analyzing jazz destroys its "essences," that "you can't learn to play jazz by playing

128. David Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy: A Comprehensive Method of Jazz Education for Teacher and Student* (Chicago: Maher Publications, 1979), viii.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

clichés, patterns, formulae, etc.," and that pure jazz comes from "the heart."[131] He explained that "no intelligent musician would deny the necessity for emotional involvement in jazz music," but that "the point is that jazz also requires some basic fundamental skills and a grasp of the language."[132] Without learning the "jazz syntax and grammar," a jazz musician is limited. This is significant as many jazz educators continue to relate learning how to improvise jazz with learning a verbal language. Baker continued, "Trying to create without these requisite skills is very much like trying to write a novel in a foreign language without understanding the grammatical and syntactical structure of that language."[133]

Baker also refuted the myths that one style of jazz is better than another and that the student must learn styles in any particular order. He challenged the notion that teaching jazz will "create a generation of robots all sounding like their teachers, and tending to sameness."[134] This is a perspective that many musicians and students hold to this day. However, Baker said this was not an issue with effective educators who do not seek to impose their own preferences. Next, he confronted the notion that "jazz has no place in the academy," and explained:

> Because jazz had its origins in a tradition outside the parameters of Western art music, its lack of acceptance was virtually assured. At the time of its birth, around the turn of the century, America was still

131. Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy*.

132. Ibid.

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid., 3.

> genuflecting at the European Cultural Shrine. Any American music which deviated from European models was viewed condescendingly. . . . [W]hen this attitude was coupled with the hostility that existed toward anything that could be construed to be part of the black culture, then the picture for jazz vis-a-vis respectability was very bleak. . . . Americans burdened with a concept that I call Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism have not yet learned to accept the cultural contributions of black people. Black speech, art, music, folklore, and so forth have only recently begun to be grudgingly accepted as valid subject matter for college and high school courses.
>
> In the past, whenever jazz had been thought respectable vis-à-vis polite and correct society, it had been diluted and eviscerated and attributed to the white imitators of black originators (e.g., Paul Whiteman, "the King of Jazz;" Benny Goodman, "the King of Swing;" the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, "the inventors of jazz;" etc.)[135]

Baker acknowledged that the initial rejection of black music and culture in academia had its origins with the establishment of the United States, and he referenced several racially disparaging quotations to support his point. These included a quote by Thomas Jefferson "On Negro Ability," followed by a variety of other quotes that illustrate reproachful views toward black culture. This was followed by a detailed rebuking of Eurocentric views toward jazz education articulated by musicians, such as criticism about Charlie Parker and Ornette Coleman's tone, and the notion that students who study jazz will lack exposure to "the masterworks" of European art music. Baker devoted over eight of eleven pages in the first chapter to issues of race and black culture. In the end, he criticized music programs and textbooks such as Grout's *A History of Western Music,* for omitting black music or giving it a "woefully disproportionate treatment."[136] This begs the

135. Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy*, 4.

136. Ibid., 10-11.

question, if jazz was to be taught from a black musical perspective, what might be included in the curriculum? Baker did his best to address that issue later in the book.

In Chapter 2, entitled "Jazz Education: Some Problems," Baker explored several practical issues, including the importance of having well-trained professional musicians doing residencies, facilitating clinics, judging festivals, and conducting jazz seminars. He also addressed the prospect of holding music school auditions for jazz programs and evaluating juries for students. He explained that most teachers in conservatories "do not have the necessary background and knowledge"[137] to effectively evaluate a student of jazz. Baker also addressed student recitals and advocated a program that considered a broad range of musical styles, including jazz and European art music. After addressing several other issues, including the importance of effectively training jazz vocalists, string instrumentalists, and students with nontraditional instruments, he offered three sets of sample recital programs. The first set features all jazz, the second mixes jazz with European art music, and the third with two separate recitals: one jazz and the other European art music. The selection of jazz songs included a variety of styles, but seemed to emphasize jazz *standards* and *bebop*. Baker, who was an accomplished composer of European art music as well as jazz, advocated a pedagogical synthesis of jazz and European performance practices.

"Chapter III: Some Thoughts on the Formulation of a Jazz Degree Program" outlined practical information for educators and administrators for implementing jazz in

137. Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy*, 18.

college programs. Baker asserted that "upon completion of his degree program, the student should be prepared psychologically, technically and musically to deal with anything the commercial world has to offer (i.e., studio performance and recording, road bands, shows, club dates, jazz of any type, etc.)."[138] He emphasized the importance of hiring trained jazz educators instead of relying on educators only trained in European art music to try to instruct jazz musicians. He also addressed issues that surround hiring black educators with an anecdote:

> Some administrators assume that posture of a dean who called me about 1968-69 looking for an instructor to start a jazz band at his small college. The conversation went something like this:
> *Dean*: Mr. Baker, we're looking for someone Black to start a jazz band at ---------- college; he will also teach jazz history, theory, a humanities course, low brass, and perhaps help with the marching band.
> *Baker*: Gulp! Uh-huh, ok. When do you need this person?
> *Dean*: Spring semester." (This was December 4th.)
> *Baker*: Whew! What, uh, rank and salary are you prepared to offer??
> *Dean*: Well, we can offer him an instructorship and $6,500 to start.
> *Baker*: Ho-ho — ha-ha, giggle, howl! (Dissolving into hysterical laughter for one minute and a half.)
> *Dean*: Mr. Baker, I don't understand.
> That conversation is virtually verbatim!
> I think that point I'm trying to make is obvious—as is often the case in this and other circumstances, the gentlemen was looking for the elusive mythical figure known as "super nigger." This conversation could be multiplied by ten in circumstances involving aspiring young Black and white jazz teachers.[139]

Above, Baker's break from standard scholarly decorum to express his point about institutionalized racism in the academy reflects attitudes fostered during the Black

138. Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy*, 36.

139. Ibid., 37.

Liberation/Power movement. He continued by explaining the disparity that exists among black musicians who do not have college degrees, yet are more than qualified to teach. He pointed out that some of the "most capable as well as potentially valuable teacher/performers in the jazz world have earned their degrees in the streets and clubs. They are no less qualified than their distinguished counterparts from the Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic, and Bayreuth."[140]

Baker then offered a list of sample courses for a jazz degree. Some of these include large ensemble, chamber ensembles (combos), pedagogy, music business courses, history, and theory. Under theory, he prescribed improvisation, composition, arranging, orchestration, the Lydian concept, and style and analysis. Baker offered a short explanation about the theory curriculum:

> The courses included in this area are the core courses for the aspiring jazz musician. Note that no theory courses, at least in the traditional sense of the word "theory," are included. It is this writer's opinion that the basic theory courses offered in the music school's curriculum suffice to lay the theoretical background; consequently, a jazz theory course would be redundant. Also, all of the courses listed involve theory in more or lesser degrees.[141]

It is important to note that Baker was addressing many music educators and administrators who were resistant to the idea of a jazz major. This caused Baker to emphasize often the importance of courses that specialized in jazz theory, as opposed to only requiring classical theory courses. In the section on jazz improvisation, Baker

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140. Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy*, 38.

141. Ibid., 43.

continually stressed how important it was that teachers be trained in jazz and why including improvisation training is important.

Although it may have been viewed as controversial, Baker emphasized the important of quality jazz history courses that, at best, come from a black perspective. He wrote:

> The history courses are among the most important courses in a jazz curriculum! The reasons are many and varied. Because we jazz musicians are human, we are affected by our environment. I find it folly of the first order to teach the mechanics of a music, the ways of playing it, how to merchandise it, etc., without understanding the conditions which gave and continue to give rise to the music, and the milieu in which it thrives. *In no other kind of music is the student expected to become proficient without understanding the music's traditional aesthetics.* [142]

He continued, "The four courses listed represent collectively a clear and precise look at the Black man's general contributions to world music and his specific contributions to jazz and music in the U.S.A."[143] Then he highlighted why African American music courses were so vital:

> The offering of "history of Black Music in the Americas" (a survey course) and "Contemporary Black Non-Jazz Music" is predicated on the premise that all Black-derived musics have their roots in the same sources. Despite the rather arbitrary divisions into specific categories and courses, all are different facets of the same phenomenon. I must also admit that I'm of the opinion that this kind of in-depth study of the music of Blacks results in certain facts and perceptions affecting very deeply the attitudes of most students with regard to jazz, and indeed, music in general.[144]

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142. Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy,* 43.

143. Ibid., 45.

144. Ibid., 45-46.

Later in the book, Baker offered sample syllabi for courses. Among the required books and materials to be covered for the history of jazz would be *Blues People* by Leroi Jones (Amiri Baraka); Alan Merriam's "African Music," accompanied by the recording *Bantu Music from British East Africa*; and *Jazz* by Nat Hentoff. Baker's prescribed program emphasized the inclusion of a black cultural perspective. Although much of Baker's prescribed curricula have profoundly influenced many college programs across the country, I find the emphasis on black studies and a black cultural context lacking overall. Few jazz history courses offer required readings from *Blues People* or other African American-centered texts. Consequently, students may not develop the cultural competency necessary to understand the nontechnical aspects of organic jazz theory. Although I believe even more curricular changes would need to be made beyond Baker's prescriptions to create a more culturally competent jazz student, Baker's emphasis on black studies courses is essential.

Jamey Aebersold Jazz Camp and David Baker's Theory Masterclass

One of the most influential and successful jazz educators and publishers to emerge as a result of the jazz education movement in the late 1960s was Jamey Aebersold, who began selling his popular jazz play-alongs in 1967. His organization ran a series of popular jazz workshops on college campuses, and his publishing company, Jamey Aebersold Jazz, published over 4000 different method books, jazz play-alongs, and other materials. He was also known for codifying a very influential jazz nomenclature that has

become a standard for many high school and college jazz programs. My research suggests that Aebersold's literature and jazz workshops have fostered a unique cultural milieu, which influences not only how jazz is taught in schools around the world but also how the music is culturally perceived and received within and outside of academia.

Over the years, Aebersold's methods have been both praised and criticized.[145] Aebersold advocated learning methods that include his chord-scale system and the practice of learning, and plugging in, ii-V-I licks. The latter approach consisted of the student learning melodic lines that fit the chord structure. Students were encouraged to learn lines in all twelve major and sometimes minor keys. They were also instructed to understand the harmonic relationship of the licks and be able to plug them in, or improvise with them at will. This system has been criticized for producing students who sound very similar to one another. To paraphrase drummer Willie Smart, in the past, musicians would listen to unfamiliar musicians and ask them what city they were from. Now musicians ask "what school do you go to?" Further, Smart asserted that one could listen to some players and identify which method book they studied.[146] The implication is that students are taught in a way that does not foster creativity or an organic approach to jazz theory.

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145. For an analysis of Aebersold's influence on jazz education and theory, and a critique of his chord-scale method, see "Jazz 'Traning:' John Coltrane and the Conservatory," in Ake, 113-45.

146. Smart, interview.

How to Play Jazz and Improvise Volume 1

Aebersold's *How to Play Jazz and Improvise, Volume 1,* first published in 1967, is one of the first books that many students of jazz obtain when they become interested in learning how to improvise.[147] It has an accompanying play-along with a series of exercises and informative texts to read. Also, a video cassette accompanies the play-along produced by Aebersold in 1993. The first eight pages were dedicated to some introductory material that addresses some fundamental issues regarding improvisation. Aebersold's main thesis was that "anyone can improvise." He asserted, "I have never met a person who couldn't improvise! I *have* met many who think they can't."[148] Like Baker in his *Jazz Pedagogy,* Aebersold proceeded to address some common assumptions about jazz, such as the idea that "you can't teach jazz."[149] He then expounded on his own theory of jazz improvisation, offering the reader concepts to consider and exercises to master. Some of the main topics covered include the concept of balancing "right brain" with "left brain" approaches to jazz; how to practice scales, chords, and patterns; how to play with recordings; beginning to improvise for the first time--music fundamentals to keep in mind; the assertion that beats 1 and 3 are the most important to building melodies;[150] ear

147. Jamey Aebersold, *How to Play Jazz and Improvise*, Rev. 6th ed. (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz, 1992).

148. Ibid., 3.

149. Ibid.

150. Ibid., 27.

training; chromaticism; time and feeling; his proposed jazz nomenclature; song lists; articulation; and playing the blues.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to provide a detailed critique of this work. Many other jazz educators and critics have evaluated Aebersold's curricular methods and discussed their pros and cons.[151] My purpose is to consider the extent to which an African American historical and cultural context is addressed. Unlike Baker's focus on race and the importance of black culture and history in his *Jazz Pedagogy*, such issues are never addressed in Aebersold's influential *How to Play Jazz and Improvise*. Although it could be argued that Baker's work was meant for educators while Aebersold's is geared toward students, I would refute this argument by pointing out that Aebersold's book remains an influential first look at jazz improvisation for students and educators alike. Although Baker's work was very influential in the development of early jazz programs during the 1980s, it is currently out-of-print and unknown to many present-day jazz educators. On the other hand, music educators from high school stage band instructors to tenured professors of jazz performance are thoroughly acquainted with Aebersold's book, and for many, it was perhaps one of the first pieces of jazz education literature they ever sought to use. When considered next to Baker's work, the lack of historical or cultural discussion in Aebersold's introductory text is striking, especially in the section called "Playing the Blues."[152] A discussion about the blues will often invoke a discussion about the troubling sociocultural circumstances in which the blues emerged, the liberating spirit of the blues

151. Ake, 112-145.

152. Aebersold, *How to Play Jazz*, 36-41.

based in the history of African Americans' fight for freedom, or other details that might offer the reader a broader African American musical context. Yet, racially conscious or socioculturally informed content is noticeably absent in Aebersold's *How to Play Jazz and Improvise.*

As expressed by organic jazz theorist Willie Smart, the *feelin'* in jazz is one of the most important aspects to members of the jazz community. In Chapter 5 of this paper, I examine how Smart's invocation of the concept *feelin'* has deep cultural meaning not adequately addressed in the European sense of "feel" or "musical feeling." Instead of providing a historical context for the blues, Aebersold explained that "to get the 'feel' of playing the blues progression spend time just soloing on 2 or 3 notes. For instance, play the *root* and the *lowered 3rd.* Use rhythmic imagination and see if you can make just those two notes swing. . . . Carry this good "swing feel" into the other recorded tracks that utilize the swing feel."[153] The presupposition is that jazz music can be understood primarily by just listening to it. Smart agrees that listening to and emulating the music of jazz greats is one of the most important elements of learning to play jazz. Yet, he also expresses how important it is for an aspiring jazz musician to draw inspiration from historical and cultural elements surrounding the music. He criticizes approaches to jazz education that fail to acknowledge African American sociocultural dynamics, saying, "By looking at what they [formalized jazz educators] produced, you wouldn't know that black

153. Aebersold, *How to Play Jazz*, 37.

people had anything to do with the music [jazz]."[154] The question is how much black cultural context can and should be made part of formalized jazz curricula?

Jamey Aebersold's Summer Jazz Workshop

In July 2010, I conducted an ethnographic field study at a Jamey Aebersold summer jazz workshop and had the opportunity to participate in David Baker's famous theory course and combo.[155] Consequently, I had the opportunity to talk about jazz pedagogy, theory, and black culture with him. One of the first observations that I made in his theory class was how much his teaching style contributed to bringing the material in his book to life. This stems from a presupposition among students that Baker's bebop approach would be strict and tedious to learn. When I was originally exposed to Baker's work in high school, I was turned off because of this stereotype. Yet, I thoroughly enjoyed his jazz theory class and found it to be very insightful into the intentions of his method book. First, Baker was very engaging, witty, and humorous. Much of the course consisted of Baker at the piano working through different bebop patterns and chord changes with the large concert hall of students playing along on their instruments.[156] Although Baker often referred to his method book, he tended to downplay the notion that each lick had to be mastered before moving to the next—which was my own supposition.

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154. Smart, interview.

155. Goecke.

156. David Baker, interview by author, Louisville, July 15, 2010, audio recording, in author's possession.

He referred to his books as merely a guide that had some fundamental ideas about performing bebop. In a private conversation, he explained that nobody had really codified bebop conventions when he began to write in the 1960s and 1970s. He explained that he might never have begun to produce methodological treatises if it were not for a tragic accident that prevented him from continuing his career as an award-winning jazz trombonist.

Another interesting cultural observation that I made at the camp was that theory classes and combo assignments contributed to social status among students. Depending upon which theory class a student was assigned, or what combo director was assigned, peers would view the student differently. Further, if students did not get into the desired class, they would sometimes express their disappointment. On the first day of the camp, students had to audition on their instrument and take a music theory test. The test was designed to evaluate the student's knowledge of formal jazz theory. This included identification of ii-V-I progressions and naming chord/scale relationships. The students were then placed into theory classes and combos based on their advancement level. The next day, assignments were posted on the walls in the large lobby area of the music building, which was a meeting place for students and staff. Several students asked me what theory class and combo I had been assigned. I said that I was in Jerry Coker's combo[157] and Baker's theory class. One of the students shook his head approvingly and explained that Coker's combo is one of the best—second only to Baker's combo. During

157. During the second week of my study at the Aebersold Camp, I was in David Baker's combo.

the second week of the camp, I had the opportunity to be in Baker's group as well. I asked the student what the hierarchy of the theory classes was, and he explained that Jamey Aebersold taught beginners, Dan Hearle intermediate, Pat Harbison advanced, and David Baker also taught an advanced theory course. Then, two other students began to discuss the social hierarchy based upon the combo instructors.

During the discussion, I noticed that one young saxophonist was eager to show off his music theory knowledge. He did this by discussing each educator's specialized theoretical approach. He explained that Baker's class consisted mainly of playing through bebop vocabulary outlined in his book; Harbison spent a lot of time discussing upper-extension triads and alternate chord changes; and that Hearle and Aebersold were very basic, with their focus being mostly on chord/scale relationships. The student concluded by saying that he was not sure if he would go to the theory classes because he already knew all of the material. Consequently, he expressed displeasure in not being challenged enough by the theory classes in particular and camp in general.[158] Although students were encouraged to attend every class, the theory courses did seem to be what students periodically skipped. If they did so, often they would go to a practice room to work on the songs they were learning for their combos, or sometimes even meet up with other students to form an informal jam session.

As I continued to discuss the dynamics of the jazz camp with the other students, one of them proceeded to name some of the other jazz camps that he had attended and

158. Students, interviews, conversations, and observations by author, Columbus, July 4, 2010, audio recording, in author's possession. (The names of the students are being withheld to maintain confidentiality.)

compared them to Aebersold's camps. I was less familiar with these other camps, and interested to hear a bit about them. Our conversation revealed there is a small community of young students (roughly 14-18 years old) who travel from jazz camp to jazz camp pursuing their music education. I found out later that some of these students were "stars," or well-known jazz students in the world of formal jazz education. During the camp, I continued to talk with the students. After developing a better rapport, I asked them questions about their concepts of race and their understanding of jazz history. Some of the students became uncomfortable with the discussion, while others explained that race did not really matter anymore. Yet, two of the students realized that they did not know much about black culture and were interested in hearing more of my perspectives on the subject.

Shariif and Tom

On the third morning of the second week of Jamey Aebersold's Summer Jazz camp, a black jazz piano student in his 40s, named Shariif, sat in a room at the University of Louisville's music building, growing agitated. He was surrounded by about 30 fellow Aebersold campers, all attentively listening to the jazz trumpeter and world-renowned music educator Pat Harbison during his advanced theory class. Harbison sat on a piano bench near a black baby grand with his trumpet in hand, as he discussed concepts about jazz improvisation and techniques for musical practice. Out of about 30 campers in the theory class, there were 3 Caucasian females, 3 African American males, and about 24

Caucasian males ranging in age from 14 to 72. Black ink on the white dry-erase board communicated abstract musical information through a special code. "ii-V-I," "V/V," "Lydian-Dominant scale," "BMaj7, "upper-extension triads," and "Coltrane Changes" adorned the board next to symbols derived from western musical notation. As Harbison continued to speak, Shariif looked more and more frustrated. He squinted while slightly shaking his head and crossing his arms in front of himself. Shariif's disposition stood out from his fellow campers, who are listening with rapt attention. Continuing to talk, Harbison stood and walked to the dry-erase board to make an addendum next to the material concerning upper-extension triads. As he did so, Shariif raised his hand. When Harbison turned back toward the class, he saw the hand and called on Shariif to speak. He said, "Man, black people practice differently from white people! What you're talking about won't work for everybody."[159]

Some campers appeared to be uncomfortable as they looked down toward their instruments or crossed their arms. I, a fellow black musician, was amazed by the comment and perked up a bit. My eyebrows rose slightly as I looked around at the reactions of others. I experienced a moment of what W.E.B. Du Bois has described as double-consciousness.[160] The term was used to describe a black person whose identity is divided into several factions as a result of a social sphere formed around race. He saw double consciousness as a useful theoretical model for understanding the psychosocial

159. Students, interviews, conversations, and observations.

160. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Cambridge, MA: University Press John Wilson and Son, 1903), 3.

divisions existing within American society, where subjects would be forced to identify themselves within two differing realities. Du Bois describes double consciousness as:

> A world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two warring souls, two thoughts, two reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.[161]

I became very aware of my blackness and conscious of how I should or should not react. I assumed that some people would look over at me to see if I smiled in support of the statement, or looked surprised or disapproving. Internally, I was emotionally torn by the statement. I identified with the frustration that Shariif's body language and voice inflections suggested. On one hand, I found that black musicians who have participated and been immersed in black music-making environments do often conceive of, and practice, music differently. And, I was frustrated that the cultural competency of black music was not normally addressed or acknowledged in many academic jazz spaces. On the other hand, I found Harbison's theoretical approach to be fairly unique, intuitive, and loose enough to allow for organic creativity. Although it did rely heavily on advanced and technical theoretical concepts such as upper extension triads and superimposing "Coltrane changes" on songs (i.e., imposing melodic improvisations using *Giant Steps* or *Countdown*-inspired chord changes—characterized by a root movement down by major thirds—over standard chord changes), his approach seemed practical and useful to me. I

161. DuBois, 3.

also appreciated Harbison's brief discussions about some of his spiritual conceptions about jazz performance. He implied that aspects of his practice sessions were akin to meditation.

The room remained fairly quiet after Shariif's statement. Although it looked as if Shariif tried to suppress his racially charged comments, he was unable to do so and did look a bit relieved after his statement. I looked around and noticed that the comments seemed to have hurt and frustrated some of the white campers who seemed to carry a great deal of ambivalence about the issue of race and jazz studies. Unlike some jazz settings outside of the institution, many of these students were sheltered from racial issues and education in their schools or at music camps. Race was certainly a tabooed subject, whose complexities have engendered an implicit racial etiquette among students, faculty, and administrators.[162] As "a set of interpretive codes and racial meanings which operate in the actions of daily life" that engender a "way of comprehending, explaining and acting in the world," a system of racial etiquette has suppressed discussions about race.[163] This racial contract has served to keep underlying racial issues elusive.[164] This unspoken pact not to address racial issues has caused discussions about race to be relegated to private conversations among blacks and others sympathetic to the issue within academic environments. Because of these social norms, discussions about race and identity by students in private spaces sometimes served to strengthen their individual

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162. Lopez, 165.

163. Ibid.

164. Mills.

relationships. Similarly, such discussions and social dynamics may have acted as a connecting force between students and educator-mentors.

That evening, I had a private discussion with Shariif during a faculty concert at Masterson's restaurant. After talking about issues of race in jazz education, he brought up the incident that occurred during theory class earlier in the day. He explained that he perceived Harbison's practice methods to be too Eurocentric and not applicable to all students. He also told me that one of the other students, named Tom, took issue with his comment, and approached him to talk after class. Tom was a white male in his 50s, who made his living as an attorney and enjoyed playing music as a hobby. Shariif explained that Tom asked him what he meant by his comment, which spurred a brief debate about the issue. Shariif did not go into detail about what was discussed, but said that he did not want to start any contentious arguments. However, he insisted that he would not hesitate to assert and defend his strong beliefs about jazz and race. Suffice it to say, this would not be the last debate between Shariif and Tom.

Following Harbison's theory class the next morning, Tom began to question Shariif again.

> *Tom*: The process of improvisation is not the birthright of any culture in any corner of the globe.
> *Shariif*: I think that you may disagree with me.
> *Tom*: Of course I do.[165]

165. Shariif and Tom, conversation with author, Louisville, July 15, 2010, audio recording in author's possession. (The full names of the conversation participants have been withheld to maintain confidentiality)

As we left the classroom, the conversation began to get a bit heated. The two men ended up standing in the University of Louisville music building lobby, next to a table occupied by free catalogs and booklets. Numerous students rushed by Shariif and Tom en route to their next class or rehearsal. Some 14- and 15-year-old boys and girls toted saxophone cases alongside 50- and 60-year- old men proceeding to their next activity. Some students slowed down to listen to the impassioned discussion happening near them. Others stood in the lobby and tried to appear as if they were not listening, while revealing uncomfortable looks on their faces. On the other side of the lobby was the large wall with windows that made the warm sun shining outside visible. I approached the two men and began to listen:

Shariif: You got to understand one thing. The overall thing is this: jazz music, it was meant to be stolen, but it couldn't. It was meant to be stolen. You take cats like Jamey Aebersold . . .
Tom: How can you own it? What do you mean?
Shariif: It's ours! We own it, it's ours! It's ours! Anyway you look at it, it belongs to us.
Tom: It's a process, it's a creative process.
Shariif: It's a creative process, but it still belongs to us. It came from us! Out of our genes, not yours! It comes from our genes, it belongs to us. You contributed to it--that's how you take ownership in part of it. But it did not originate with you. Just like hip-hop did not originate with you, just like our style of dress did not originate with you.
Tom: There were elements. The triplet came out of Africa; the tempered scale came out of Europe. They got together. It's all what you bring to it.
Shariif: Later on, but in the beginning it came from us. It originated with us.[166]

166. Shariif and Tom, conversation.

Both individuals were making what can be viewed as common, albeit extreme, arguments from two different ends of the spectrum. Tom articulated the problematic assumption that triplets came from Africa and that melody came from Europe. Scholars and musicologists have penned many books exploring this debate, yet I will point out that the concept of a 'triplet' is itself European and African American melismatic and ornamented melodic styles strongly seem to resemble indigenous African vocal styles. Yet to this point, scholars have been unable to prove exactly where every individual black American musical element came from. However, in black music the creative lens in which such elements are filtered is of particular significance.

Tom also argued that jazz is a creative process that is not owned by any particular race of people. This position has been articulated by many critics over the years. John O. Calmore pointed out that "these critics argued that jazz is not primarily an African-American art form because anyone can learn to play it; jazz has no particular social content—"specifically, it in no way pertains more closely to black experiences, perceptive modes, sensibilities, and so on than it does to white."[167] One common response to this argument is there are many great non-white performers and composers of European and western classical music. Yet, it is usually not purported that such music is non-European because outsiders became masters of the idiom. In *Some Problems in Jazz Research,* Lewis Porter highlights this issue:

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167. John O. Calmore, "Critical Race Theory, Archie Shepp, and Fire Music: Securing an Authentic Intellectual Life in a Multicultural World." In *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw et al. (New York: New Press, 1995), 318.

> Many white writers say that because whites play jazz, it cannot be black music. These are confusing two separate issues. Everyone knows that some of the great opera singers are black, but no one would say that, therefore, opera is black music. Jazz and classical music both have an international appeal and require great deal of technical skill, which can be mastered by persons of any culture. On the other hand, it is not valid to try to discredit the black American nature of jazz on the basis of its cross-cultural appeal and influence. Of course, non-blacks have contributed a great deal to jazz and have created their own styles but the basic language of the music still derives from black America.[168]

Porter's point alludes to the politics behind defining what jazz music is and is not. Ultimately, naming and defining the terms used to identify musical traditions construct power relationships that influence the direction of the music. Those who have the power to define a musical tradition or record a musical history exhibit a profound influence and power over the musical subject.

Shariif emphatically argued that jazz is black music and that white people have tried to steal it. For Shariif, where the music originated was of the utmost importance when determining who should and should not 'own' it. But what does it mean to own a musical style? For Shariif, ownership was connected with the power to innovate and control the destiny of the music. His argument was that some whites attempted to exclude blacks and sought to control the destiny of jazz. Within this frame, the attempt to develop a postracial jazz academy was equivalent to developing an institution meant to exclude blacks from participating.

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168. Lewis Porter, "Some Problems in Jazz Research," *Black Music Research Journal* 8, no. 2 (1988): 201.

Historically, black and white jazz musicians have had impassioned debates and arguments based on race. Monson explains:

> Although essentialist discourses were often used to draw the line between black and white in the heat of argument, the raising of the racial boundary was frequently circumstantial and compensated for by practical personal relationships and much longer histories of knowing one another within the jazz world. These debates were in some ways public rituals of racial catharsis in which the white representatives were made to stand symbolically for the whole history of white racism and the African American representatives were made to exemplify the entire history of racial injustice. During heated arguments, the distinction between the personal and the sociological, the micro and the macro frequently collapsed as the structural became personal.[169]

The conversation quickly became personal for Shariif, and it appeared to be somewhat cathartic. It was as if much of what he had been holding back over the years due to racial etiquette was coming out. And perhaps since Tom was bold enough to confront Shariif about his race-related comments, Tom became the symbol of white racism and of the appropriation of black music. At face value, some passersby may have assumed that Shariif just had a problem with white people. However, during our conversation the night before, Shariif expressed his deep love and respect for Jamey Aebersold. He explained that he had known Aebersold for many years, and that Aebersold had personally helped him out in the past. He also mentioned that Aebersold had donated a lot of money and resources to underprivileged youths, although the jazz educator preferred that such philanthropy not be publicized. Thus, Shariif seemed to have great ambivalence about the state of jazz. On one hand, he asserted that jazz was stolen by whites from blacks. On the

169. Monson, 280.

other hand, he did not direct his blame at Aebersold or other famous figures. At this point, I wonder if "ownership" could mean "respect," and acknowledging that the origins of the music are black American.

At this point, Tom snatched one of the free educational catalogs from the table and opened it up.[170] He pointed to a page that depicted the Academy's standard representation of the blues scale:

Tom: What is this?
Shariif: Improvisation, jazz, whatever.
(Tom points to something inside the booklet.)
Shariif: The blues scale? The blues scale? Did you hear anything about the blues scale in that room?[171]
Goecke: The blues scale is really a codification or way to explain the music that came after the fact, 'cuz cats like Robert Johnson didn't play [or] think about a blues scale, he played the blues.
Tom: The blues, right? Those are the notes, the choice of notes that were in that vocabulary.
Goecke: Well, not necessarily. There are other ways to actually teach the blues . . .
Tom: I'm not talking about teaching it, I'm saying. . .
Goecke: . . . or talk about it, because that's where we're at right now—is talking about the music, which is a totally different animal than [playing it]. . .
Tom: You have to be able to talk about it to identify [the] historical questions he's talking about.
Goecke: You are right, but the question becomes from what perspective do you talk [about jazz] from. From what cultural paradigm or background . . . you have to develop a way of explanation that's conducive to the people or the culture from which you are trying to communicate, right?
Tom: Helpful too . . .

170. See Appendix (figure 5).

171. "That room" refers to Pat Harbison's advanced theory class.

> *Goecke*: No, conducive—able to communicate. If I start speaking in a different language that you don't understand, then that's not going to be helpful—if you want to use that word—it's not going to be useful. Effective. You know?[172]

What is really meant by "the blues" in this conversation? To what extent might the term *blues* be what Stuart Hall called a "floating signifier?" Hall posited that *race* is a "discursive construct" that is incapable of having a fixed meaning. He explains, "Race is a signifier which can be linked to other signifiers in a representation. Its meaning is relational and it is constantly subject to redefinition in different cultures, different moments. There is always a certain sliding of meaning, always something left unsaid about race. Hence, race is a floating signifier."[173]

My argument is that the term *blues* is emerging as a racially-charged floating signifier. Attempting to come up with a definition for the blues that everyone would agree on is quite a difficult task. The term *blues* is not only associated with dozens of musical genres and styles, but for many it also denotes an indescribable feeling, attitude, culture, era, lifestyle, musical style, literary style, or identity. Depending on the particular cultural backgrounds of an individual—or the culture(s) he or she is actively immersed into—the aforementioned categories could be and usually are considerably different. In the *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz,* Paul Oliver explains that *the blues* are:

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172. Shariif and Tom, conversation.

173. Stuart Hall, "Race the Floating Signifier" (DVD of lecture, Goldsmiths College, London, 1997), Media Education Foundation, 2002.

> A secular, predominantly black American folk music of the 20th century, which has a history and evolution separate from, but sometimes related to, that of jazz. . . . [The] 'blues' can also mean a way of performing. Many jazz players of all schools have held that a musician's ability to play blues expressively is a measure of his quality. Within blues as folk music this ability is the essence of the art; a singer or performer who does not express 'blues' feeling is not a 'bluesman.' Certain qualities of timbre sometimes employing rasp or growl techniques are associated with this manner of expression; the timbre as well as the flattened and 'shaded' notes . . . so distinctive to the blues can be simulated, but blues feeling cannot, so its exponents contend.[174]

Blues music has functioned as an important source of cultural identity for people of many ethnicities; however, the blues is often associated with the lived identity of peoples of African descent, especially in the sociopolitical context of the United States. The blues theorist Amiri Baraka asserted that "the Blues Aesthetic must emotionally and historically carry the heart and soul of the African antiquity, but it is also a *Western Aesthetic*, i.e., expressing a western people, though African American."[175] In discourse, "blues" sometimes appears to become synonymous with the racial term "black." In a social sphere governed by a domineering racial etiquette, talking about the blues can sometimes be a way for musicians to allude to blackness or the black experience without explicitly signifying it. In such cases, music and social meanings are embedded into the term. The blues may also be invoked to refer to a style of performance that prominently features *bluesy* characteristics such as slides, moans, growls, etc. A big-band leader might

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174. Paul Oliver, "Blues," *Oxford Contemporary Music*. Oxford Music Online, (accessed September 1 2013), www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/03311.

175. Amiri Baraka, *Digging: The Afro-American Soul of American Classical Music* (Berkely: University of California Press, 2009), 20.

say, "Play that section more bluesy" to elicit these qualities. It may also be discussed as if it were an esoteric black religion that only a handful of people could understand or *feel.* In such instances, the argument is sometimes made that the blues cannot be discussed, but only felt. From this perspective, the blues may be viewed as a metaphor for life itself.

For many, the blues represents a kind of freedom or liberation. In response to the notion that jazz is complaint about hardship, famous jazz saxophonist Branford Marsalis articulated this position in a 1996 interview for Ken Burn's documentary series *Jazz*:

> *Question*: The blues aren't a complaint, though, are they?
> *Marsalis*: No, they're not. The blues are about freedom. The blues are about freedom. You know, there's, there's liberation in reality and when they talk about these songs, when they talk about being sad? The, the fact that you recognize, the fact that you recognize that which, which pains you is a very freeing and liberating experience. It's just, it must be strange for other cultures where you spend most of your time trying to pretend like you don't have any of these problems or any of these you know, situations. When I hear the blues, the blues makes me smile. You know, and they can be talking about gettin' the blues but it's just, it's like such a positive thing, you know? It's but, when you listen to a guy like Sun House or a song called "Death Letter" which is sheer genius, you know, you know,
> *". . . woke up this morning with my eyes seeing red,*
> *I got a letter this morning said my, my, my love was dead. . ."*
> you know,
> *". . . looked at her stretched out there on the coolin' board. . . "*
> you know,
> *". . . didn't know I loved her. . ."*
> you know, it's just like, you know,
> *". . . 10, 000 people at the burial ground, didn't know how much I loved her 'til they put her down. . ."*

> But when I hear that it's so great, you know, it's so wonderful, it's not like, "Oh this is terrible. Oh this is so sad." This there's such a freedom in that, you know, there's such a freedom in, in, in, in that recognition.[176]

Branford accomplished several things in his response. First, he challenged the myth that the blues are inherently sad. This is still a prevalent assumption that some jazz students and music educators make. He asserted that the ability to identify what pains you is liberating. Second, to better articulate his point, he sang the words to a blues song. As he sang it, he was not sad, but smiling. Although the content is tragic, the process of using song to address irksome circumstances can be cathartic. Historically, the blues have expressed countless contradictions. On one hand, the blues are understood to be an expression of sorrow birthed from the lives of African slaves. On the other hand, the blues may be viewed as a liberating musical and cultural force that can cause great joy and happiness. Is it possible for happiness and sorrow to co-exist within a musical piece? If so, is it possible to teach these complex dynamics within a formal classroom setting?

Blues also may be used to identify a type of composition, 12 bar chord progression, scales that contain "blue notes," or songs where performers employ blues scales. In formal jazz settings, I have talked with many students and some educators who tend to assume this concept of blues, similar to how Tom did. The blues scale seems to represent the blues for Tom. I interject that the blues can be taught and discussed in a manner that is not based on the codified information in the "How to Play Jazz" booklet he

176. Branford Marsalis, interview by Ken Burns, November 19, 1996, transcript, Ken Burns Jazz, accessed September 10, 2013, www-tc.pbs.org/jazz/about/pdfs/MarsalisB.pdf.

was holding. I have often been critical of the narrow interpretations of blues within academic jazz circles. After Tom held up the blues scale for us to consider, I began to address the question of cultural competency. I explained that recent theorists in ethnomusicology have come to refer to "music as culture," which evolved from the concept of "music in culture."[177] I explained that this perspective does not seek to separate music from culture but to understand that music is culture itself. Tom said that it sounded like I was using a verbal "sleight of hand," but that he would need a moment to take in the concept.

Tom then asserted, "We are in search of one thing, that is, some level of truth. And truth is a common denominator in any culture. Would you agree with that?" I quickly replied, "No," and he asked why I would not agree. I began to explain that we would first need to define truth. Shariif quickly interjected:

> Ultimately, you have to accept what was done to us during slavery and how we were re-taught things. You understand what I'm sayin'? If we did it our way and you look at us before slavery, then it totally contradicts what you say. You understand what I'm sayin'? We were re-taught, when we were brought over here as slaves, our whole culture was stripped from us. Our whole way of thinking was taken from us. And then we were free and taught different ways of doing things. All people come into power do that to the people that they subjugate. The next group of people comin' to power is going to do that too, also. You understand what I'm sayin'? Whoever was in power, you see what I'm sayin'? But that wasn't our way. Our way if you go back to our culture and study it thoroughly, it was totally different from the way that you think right now.[178]

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177. David J. Elliott, "Music as Culture: Toward a Multicultural Concept of Arts Education," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 24, no. 1 (1990): 147-66; Marcia Herndon and Norma McLeod, *Music as Culture* (Norwood, PA: Norwood Editions, 1979); Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

178. Shariif and Tom, conversation.

The dynamics of our conversation about the blues was taking three distinctive directions. Tom emphasized the compositional nature of blues. In an attempt to shift the focus from technical to social definitions of the blues, I engaged in a discussion about cultural competency related to musical culture. Then Shariif invoked the tragedy of slavery as a way to articulate his grievances about the annihilation of indigenous African societies and the appropriation of black American culture.

In an attempt to show the importance of cultural immersion as a plausible and necessary educational model, I told him about the great Caucasian tabla player I knew from Cincinnati. I explained that this musician had a profound love for and obsession with Indian culture. He spent his life not only learning book knowledge about it, but also totally immersing himself into it. He frequently took extended trips to India where he sat at the foot of a guru learning musical mastery and cultural competency. His wife also happened to be Indian. Due to racial issues in the United States, there was a double standard when it came to cultural education. Many people would not question this musician's love of Indian culture and his immersion into it in order to learn the art of Indian classical music. However, it was taboo to suggest that non-black musicians love, respect, and immerse themselves into black culture for the sake of learning how to play black music.

I told him about my ethnomusicology dissertation topic that examined the complex intersection of race and culture in jazz education. I explained that one of my research questions was to what extent could one learn jazz without knowledge of black

American culture or history? I then explained my definition of black music as a continuum of sociocultural musical experiences. Tom said that he disagreed with the very foundation of my thesis and that "you don't have to be immersed into the culture." I then brought up the names of several white musicians who were notorious for performing and hanging with black musicians. Tom asserted that we needed to break down what we meant by immersion, and offered names of musicians who he thought were not raised in "American Black culture," including Horace Silver (which I thought was a curious example since Silver is of mixed racial ancestry—consequently, considered to be black—and who was particularly immersed in black culture).[179] The discussion continued:

> *Shariif*: Let me say this then. Maybe this will help you. All the creative new forms of music that have been created here in America, who created them? We did. We did! R&B, soul, soft jazz, hard jazz, hip-hop, its all ours. Think about it, it's not a racist statement. It's the truth!
> *Tom*: I think it's kind of like trying to make a point with a shotgun.
> *Shariif*: No I'm not, that's the way that you're looking at it. You're taking offense of it . . .
> *Tom*: I understand the sense in which you're coming from, but I also think that in a way it is a very overused statement. I think when you really get down into it and look at it . . . there's a lot of pride and other emotions. The irony is that here we are, all three of us Americans, and I think that where we can all agree is it's certainly, if you take the cultural and the racial stuff—put it over here for a second . . .
> *Goecke*: but you can't though!
> *Tom*: for a second, and say that it's American music. It was born here, in that sense, right? It was born on these shores and it came from America, did it not? This music. Okay, the irony is that we are standing here having intelligent discussion on elements that we

179. See Horace Silver and Philip Pastras, *Let's Get to the Nitty Gritty: The Autobiography of Horace Silver* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) for more details on Silver's upbringing and the challenges that he faced as both a mixed-raced and black musician in the United States,.

> can agree and disagree on, that music is being taken away from 'the US.'[180]

Above, Tom articulated a viewpoint that many students and educators of jazz have. However, it was not often articulated because educators and African American students did not emphasize its importance or held their peers accountable to recognize it. It is problematic to ignore the "cultural stuff" of jazz. But, what is the "cultural stuff" of jazz? Does this conversation make up the stuff of jazz culture? I would propose that it does.

Ultimately, I assert that it is important for aspiring students of jazz to become knowledgeable of what I call the *black musical continuum*. To do this, I suggest that a pedagogical approach of cultural immersion is the best method to learn any music, but in this case, black music. The logic of this argument is that if one wants to learn Indian music you might aspire to find a guru in India. If you want to learn European art music, it would be great to attend a conservatory in Europe where you could not only learn about the music, but also about the cultural context surrounding it. I assert that one who seeks knowledge of jazz should at some point become immersed into black culture. As Willie Smart put it, "If I want to learn how to play classical music, I'm not going to go study it in Africa."[181] Some might consider my argument to one of "culturalism" which Arif Dirlik describes as that "ensemble of intellectual orientations that crystallize methods logically

180. Shariif and Tom, conversation.

181. Smart, interview.

around the reduction of social and historical questions to abstract questions of culture."[182] However, my assertion is for students to engage in black music-making spaces and study the history of black America as a part of their education. Such a notion seems to go unquestioned for aspiring students of European or Indian classical music. My pedagogical proposition is more in line with that of Mantle Hood's notion of bimusicality.[183] In Hood's model, students or researchers of a foreign music-making culture must learn both sociocultural and musical performance traditions from a first-hand perspective. This would be done through cultural immersion and by learning to perform their subject's music, preferably taught by a cultural insider.

The debate continued for several more minutes. Tom argued that jazz is not only not black music, it might not really be American anymore, given its popularity in Europe. Then a discussion about Miles Davis ensued. Shariif defended Miles Davis as Tom called him the "biggest fucking bullshit artist," and racist. As the debate about Davis continued, I saw some young children walking by starring at us. I wondered if they had ever been exposed to a racially charged debate such as this one. Although these kind of frank discussions about race were common in dark jazz bars at one a.m., they were rare within the cloistered sphere of an Aebersold camp. This conversation revealed the tabooed racial dialectic that was so often avoided in these formal settings: black versus white; ownership of black music; subjugation of musicians—on and off the bandstand; Bill

182. Arif Dirlik, "Culturalism as Hegemonic Ideology and Liberating Practice," *Cultural Critique*, no. 6 (1987): 13, 17.

183. Mantle Hood, "The Challenge of *Bi-Musicality*," *Ethnomusicology* 4, no. 2 (1960): 55-9.

Evans as a model and symbol for white jazz musicians versus Miles Davis for blacks; the proposition of jazz as a postracial world music; and the primacy of jazz as an "American" music. As the conversation came to a close, Tom continued to make a case against cultural immersion:

> *Tom:* . . . your culture in your place. You two guys, I bet you . . .
> *Goecke:* I grew up in a white family.
> *Tom:* (surprised look) alright, see . . .
> *Goecke:* We can get into this now, we can take this wherever you want to go, you know what I mean? I didn't grow up in the black community; because I wanted to learn this music as an outsider, I immersed myself into the black community.
> *Shariif:* (clapping and smiling)
> *Tom:* (Pointing to a picture of Conrad Herwig) Do you think that his trombone playing brings less to the evolution of the music than Jay Jay?
> *Goecke:* (louder) I've hung with this cat, man. He loves black culture! This cat loves black culture. I know this cat.
> *Tom:* Do you think that he played lame before he got so deep into black culture? You go ask Dan, when he showed up at North Texas State how he played. Go ask. Or. What do you think . . . Point/set and match, how many black guys do you think Rotund[i][184] hung out with in Butte, Montana? How many of his friends even listen to jazz? How much black culture did he hang out in? Do you think that all his playing evolved after he got to New York?
> *Goecke:* I don't know, 'cuz I don't [personally] know him.
> *Tom:* He was a mother-fucker when he was 16. But, I'm sure that you will do a beautiful job with your thesis. Email me a copy. I mean, in a way, that's the beautiful thing about this music. The place it happens. The people it comes out of.[185]

Tom then talked about his upbringing. He grew up in New York City and he said that his idea of jazz was profoundly influenced by posters of musicians who were playing at the

184. Jim Rotondi (b. 1962) is a jazz trumpeter and one of the more popular educators at the Aebersold camp.

185. Shariif and Tom, conversation.

Village Vanguard published in 1971. He explained that he went to the Vanguard to see Bill Evans and Ahmad Jamal every other weekend when he was 16 years old. For him, that is what jazz was. He thought that New York was where it was all happening. But then he came to a Jamey Aebersold camp and heard Eric Alexander, a white musician from Montana, and was blown away. This caused him to realize that this music was not just a New York and Chicago thing, but was taking place around the world on a high level.

At the end of the discussion, I walked outside into the humid 90-degree heat. I look at the sunshine bouncing off the dark green leaves of a nearby tree. As I walked down the steps in front of the music building, a young student came over and seemed as if he wanted to say something about the conversation that he overheard. He asked me how things were going and I said that I was just getting some air before combo rehearsal. We exchanged pleasantries and I went downstairs to a vacant hallway to warm-up my trombone.

Monson shed further light on the historical context of racially charged debates like the one above:

> The venting of anger toward individual white people in the jazz community, of course, displaced a great deal of structural anger on a particular individual. At these moments the structural was personalized and embodied in the figure of someone who could be only partially responsible. Yet the challenging of white authority was certainly a healthy and necessary impulse, even if at its most extreme a logic of payback dominated. These debates forced non-African Americans to think about racial issues in jazz whether they liked it or not. Many of the white people who went through these uncomfortable events without sinking into a

> reactive discourse of reverse racism emerged on the other side with stronger individual relationships to the African Americans in the jazz community and an even deeper commitment to whatever sense of togetherness the jazz world offered.[186]

How does Shariif and Tom's discussion fit into the historical context outlined by Monson? In Shariif and Tom's case, they did not know each other before the confrontation and, as far as I know, did not become friends' afterward. Shariif expressed what is viewed as controversial perspectives about race, and Tom confronted Shariif to debate him about it. Although I did not agree with all of Shariif's statements, I found Tom's approach to be disrespectful. He did not approach Shariif wanting to hear him out, but seemed as if he wanted to pick a fight intending to push buttons and win the debate. One of the most interesting dynamics to me was the young children that stood by and watched the debate. Some of them looked as if they had never seen two people have a racially fueled argument. It was as if for a moment real passion and emotion emerged based on the underlying issues of race that are seldom publically addressed in institutionalized and predominantly white music-learning spaces.

The debate showed that much educational work must be done within jazz studies to address issues of race. Because of the socially constructed racial-etiquette system that pervades academic jazz, issues of race remain elusive. Consequently, many do not perceive a problem until an impassioned debate like the one above occurs. This problem will not go away if it is simply ignored. Formalized jazz studies must better integrate race and black studies into its curriculum, as David Baker initially suggested in his *Jazz*

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186. Monson, 281.

Pedagogy almost 35 years ago. Informed discussions about the nature of institutionalized racism would allow students to better understand and confront social problems before they uncontrollably erupt. In black music-learning spaces, race is a subject that is frequently discussed. Racial injustices that occurred in the news, personal experiences of discrimination, economic inequalities, et cetera, are freely discussed. Such discussions often fuel the conception of inventive theoretical approaches to music or new songs. Through the infinite art of improvisation, negative feelings about race are constructively channeled into music. This has historically been the case with jazz since its beginning, and remains so to this day in predominantly black music-making environments.

Online Jazz Theory Forums

Since the late 1990s, many jazz students regularly discuss jazz theory on internet forums.[187] The following excerpt is from an internet forum called *Talkbass* under an individual thread named "Aebersold Theory on Scales/Chords over Jazz changes?" I include a substantial portion of unedited text below because it sheds great light on how formalized jazz theory engenders a certain kind of cultural discourse:

> *Posted by Bruce Lindfield on 11-09-2001, 03:50 AM:*
> Maybe a question for Chris Fitzgerald, but one that might interest others? I was at a workshop this week with a local Sax Player/Composer who took us through a tune he had written and arranged. He mentioned that occasionally he teaches on the Guildhall Jazz course in London and

187. See Kenneth E. Prouty, "Creating Boundaries in the Virtual Jazz Community." In *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and Its Boundaries*, ed. David Andrew Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 70-89, for a discussion about the voices of fans in virtual jazz communities.

had tried this out on the students there and how one of them--an American woman--complained about his advice and that she had studied for many years with Jamey Aebersold and wouldn't play what he advised. So in the last 4 bars of the tune, there are a series of altered G7 chords and the composer advised that a diminished scale would fit over this part. But the person in question said that no - she would take each chord and play it on its merits.

So is this what Jamey Aebersold teaches and even if this is so--do you think that if a composer "hears it" one way you should play how you feel or how somebody else has told you? I talked a bit more to the composer in the pub and he said how he thought it was ironic as he was thinking of a bluesy feel that came to him from hearing the solos of US-based sax players like Sonny Rollins etc. So is Jamey Aebersold teaching an approach that the classic performers don't follow?

Sorry that's two questions at least now (!)--but I think it's an interesting area for discussion anyway! ;)

Posted by Don Higdon 11-09-2001, 08:21 AM

I can't comment on Abersold [sic], and I question whether or not the complainer accurately represents what Abersold [sic] stands for. Use of a diminished scale over a 7th chord is another legitimate harmonic device, nothing new. The "person in question" is being arrogant and amateurish. In my world, you make your point if you must, then play what the leader/composer says, or you quit. You don't defy him and keep your job. And if the composer is a guest, sheer courtesy says you just shut up and play. I only wish the woman could experience the kind of humiliation Benny Goodman would have handed out.

Posted by Chris Fitzgerald 11-09-2001, 09:02 AM

First of all, this woman is either a complete idiot, or she's acting like one. Or, put in the language of some of my younger students, she's got some "issues."

Yes, Jamey does teach chord scale relationships, and he does teach that every chord has a corresponding scale...and sometimes, when he plays that way, he plays some things that I wouldn't play because I'm hearing the tune differently. But he ALSO teaches a right brain/left brain approach to improvisation, which translates into PLAY WHAT YOU HEAR. He's big on singing lines over chord changes, and if you can do that, he almost never has an issue with chord scale relationships.

I've talked about the whole chord/scale relationship thing with him on many occasions, and there are some things that we don't agree on . . . but the beautiful thing about Jamey is that he doesn't insist that you always agree with him, or that you always teach the same approach that he's

> teaching--even when you're working for him at the camps. It is common for a student to get up in the morning and go to one of his theory classes where he's talking about "every chord has a scale," and then walk into a master class of mine and hear me talking about thinking of key centers and tonalities within a tune instead of a new scale for each chord . . . and he's cool with that. In fact, he encourages that kind of thing because it exposes students to different approaches and ideas. And it's not like he's not aware of the concept that often times one scale can cover the changes to a series of chords, and he points this out in his materials again and again.[188]

What do these excerpts suggest about the way in which jazz theory informs debate about jazz pedagogy today? What light does it shed on the culture that surrounds formalized jazz theory? First, it must be understood how significant these forums are. Thousands of students and jazz connoisseurs from around the world use them to discuss standardized approaches to jazz theory. Mathematical approaches to learning jazz are taken very seriously and many authors seem to take pride in their ability to discuss complex theoretical issues. By defending and advocating different theoretical models, the authors express the nature of their own constructed jazz identity. Sometimes participants have a tendency to express a sense of arrogance while harshly attacking unsophisticated questions or answers. Also, contributors who do not conform to the generally accepted doctrines of the community are often harshly rebuked.

Lindfield sought a perspective about Aebersold's theoretical approach from Chris Fitzgerald, one of Aebersold's educators. Lindfield was struck by the refusal of a musician to improvise in the way that the composer requested. The extent to which an improviser is free to interpret changes is a major point of contention within formalized jazz circles.

188. Bruce Linfield, Don Higdon, and Chris Fitzgerald, posts to "Aebersold Theory on Scales/Chords over Jazz Changes?" November 9, 2001, Talkbass Forums, accessed December 22, 2010, www.talkbass.com/forum/archive/index.php/t-30859.html.

Such debate among jazz studies majors seems to be similar to ones in classical music, where there is a great concern for properly interpreting the *musical texts* of the composer. Consequently, musicians take pride in their ability to interpret and reproduce the music intended by the composer. I am particularly interested in the way that both Higdon and Fitzgerald harshly criticized the "woman in question" and advocated that the musician should have done what the composer suggested. My question is this: In what way does this kind of criticism affect others who endeavor to *fit in* with this jazz community? Given that these kinds of implicit codes inform the construction of group identity, what type of individual jazz identities do such codes create for members? Grounded on the premise that music is culture,[189] what kind of music/culture does this discourse produce?

To explore further the way in which jazz theory affects culture, I consider an online forum from the popular AllAboutJazz.com website. Under the heading "Music Theory and Analysis: Discuss composition, improvisational ideas, analysis of specific songs, recommended books and concepts, etc.," there are many threads devoted to both general and specific issues in jazz theory. Some of the discussion headings include:

- Bird Quote on Cheryl at 0:48
- Starting with Ear Training
- Wayne Shorter, form and improvisation b9 over iiø7 Chord in Minor Progressions Seeking help with analysis of "A Child is Born," Enharmonic note usage
- In between the octatonic scale,

189. Herndon and McLeod.

- 5^{th} mode of Bebop scale[190]

- Subdominant Minor and Modal Interchange

  Is this Salsa figure typical or obscure?[191]

Consider the following excerpt from the thread entitled "5^{th} mode of the Bebop Scale:"

> *Posted by princeplanet, April 2009:*
>
> I recently discovered that the 5th mode of a mixo "bebop" scale can serve for the ii V of the key a 5th away. It's basically a mixo with the added b3 as opposed to the #7. So, G mixo bebop can be used against Am6 and D9 just by starting on any note other than a G7 chord tone.
>
> Usages I can think of include G7 to Am-use same scale, but alternate starting notes (g b d f for G7 and a c e f# for Am6). dm7 - G7 then to am7 (6) to D7.
>
> Cmaj7#11 to Fmaj7#11
>
> D7 to G7. This is cool, same scale against the I7 and IV7 in Blues! Just alternating starting notes perfectly outlines each chord. In fact the A7 back to tonic D7 in blues can be handled by the mixo bebop that is common to both of those chords, i.e. D mixo bebop.
>
> I mentioned this elsewhere and was met with a barrage of "bebop scales are useless for bebop, don't bother . . ."
>
> I already know this so please spare me the lesson. Just wanted to know if anyone out there exploits this "magic bebop" scale as I've dubbed it. Are there other examples of octatonic scales that combine notes from 2 different keys that are playable against either simply by changing starting notes?
>
> Thanks.
>
> *Response posted by Jazz Oud, Guitarist/Oudist/Composer, Author of 804 posts:*
>
> This is interesting, I've never thought of it that way. I know Mozart (and probably others) used this scale as a Major scale with a passing b7 added (sort of as a leading tone to the leading tone, which I guess makes it more of a #6).

---

190. princeplanet, jazz oud, guitarjazz, dogbite, jazzman1945, and jazzonebyone posts to "5th Mode of Bebop Scale: Jazz Bulletin Board," December 1-2, 2010, All About Jazz forum, accessed December 22, 2010, http://forums.allaboutjazz.com/showthread.php?46950-5th-mode-of-Bebop-scale.

191. Ibid.

I don't know how practical it is, but it's an interesting insight nonetheless.

Response posted by guitarjazz:

There are Charlie Parker lines over G7 that go GFEEbDCBAG or 1 b7 6 b6 5 4 3 2 1

I see your scale (over A minor as going) A G F# Fnat E D C B A or 1 b7 6 b6 5 4 b3 2 1

Basically you are going from the root of the chord down to the fifth chromatically via the b6.

In the case of G7 the F#(in the traditional G7 bebop scale) is a passing tone between chord tones.

In the case of Am7 the F# is a chord tone and the Fnat is a passing tone.

Dogbite made me aware of the fact that if you combine the minor pentatonic with the major pentatonic you get the 5th mode of the Bebop scale but I'm not sure this is useful with how I hear music . . . more like a happy coincidence.

D F G A C minor pentatonic together with

D E F# A B major pentatonic make the 5th mode of the G7 bebop scale.

I guess, to me, your discovery just points out that the more chromatic elements are introduced that more likely it is to see these similarities.

Response by jazzman1945, July 2010, Author of 605 posts:

If we talk about bebop, the melodic patterns important to maintain a style than a set of pitches in the scale. Each chromatic sound in melodic pattern automatically becomes part of a common set of sounds, so that you can use it again.

We just forgot that first there was a melody, a scale was dragged from her later--with the theorist hands. . .[192]

What does this discussion reveal about the nature of formalized academic jazz communities? First, I am struck by how passionate the writers were about jazz theory. Of particular interest is princeplanet and guitarjazz, who both seriously considered the implications of the theoretical issue brought to bear. Further, according to the forum

192. princeplanet et al.

details, jazzman1945 had posed over 600 posts and jazz oud over 800 to date (July 2010). Overall, many of the jazz theory threads had thousands of responses published online. I am also struck by the nonchalant way in which princeplanet used the term 'mixo' to refer to mixolydian. It contributes to princeplant's attempt to show a certain level of mastery over standard jazz theories. This was done while portraying an air of cool nonconformity through his refusal to spell out the entire word. He proceeded to consider ways in which his novel interpretation could be applicable to other harmonic situations. His statement "this is cool, same scale against the I7 and IV7 in Blues!" suggested a casual attitude towards blues changes. In anticipation of adversarial responses regarding the usefulness of the bebop scale, he provided a preemptive statement that acknowledged this viewpoint. Finally, he named his theoretical construction the "magic bebop scale," thereby asserting his ownership of the idea.

Jazzoud responded by asserting that Mozart used some form of princeplanet's proposed scale. I will not consider the accuracy of his assertion at this time, but I will point out that it is not uncommon for students to draw theoretical parallels between jazz and European art music. In doing so, authors sometimes unwittingly downplay the significance of the original jazz innovators. Consequently, by suggesting that European composers had already mastered certain melodic and harmonic inventions, European composers are uplifted and Eurocentic notions reinforced. It may be asserted that "Mozart and Bach already did that," which is an opinion sometimes applied to the nature of bebop. I speculate that such a supposition implicitly positions these composers as founding fathers of jazz, thereby activating an injurious misappropriation. This practice also

contributed to an attitude among students that jazz is simple and easy because past composers had mastered such feats before the creation of jazz. Also, there seems to be a sense that if one could understand jazz theory, the music would be easy to play. In these forums, conversations about rhythm, tone, timbre, syncopation, *feelin'*, and other qualitative elements were not often discussed. Thus, without considering the larger musical and sociohistorical context, students and educators feel comfortable making such connections between European art music and jazz theory.

Another theme in these forums is that players who were more inexperienced assumed authority over jazz theory and endeavored to teach other students. On one hand, it could be looked at as a positive thing that students were empowered to share their knowledge with others, but what is often striking is the way in which the knowledge was transferred. Sometimes it came across as pretentious and self-aggrandizing to others in the discussion. On a forum called Sputnikmusic.com, the administrator named Spastic created a discussion thread called the "Official Jazz Theory Thread." He writes "Here it is, folks: The OFFICIAL Jazz theory thread ☺. This thread is for anything related to jazz theory, but DON'T post it elsewhere. Any questions you have go in here, and if you just want to add some info on it, it also goes in here. Have fun." In the following posts, he listed a compendium of formal jazz theory elements, many of which are found on Jamey Aebersold's scale list.[193] On one of his posts, he had apparently signed it "Theory Guru MX Jazz Chief." One of the other forum members reprimanded him for it:

193. See Appendix, figure 6.

Posted by Zoroaster

I'm sorry to have to burst your bubble, but your grasp of music theory is as primitive as a rock. You fail to even touch upon the surface of enharmonic intervals; an imperative in jazz, and how it can be interrelated with tritone substitution. I suggest that you comprehend musical theory in its entirety beforehand you elevate yourself to the status of "Theory Guru".

P.S.: I have listened to your 'compositions' and I can only designate them with the term: pretentious. Your music is solely comprised of incoherent and dampening injections whose singular purpose is to impress upon the audience a sense of superiority. That, sir, is the mark of failure.

Reply by Spastic

Wow, man. I put "Theory Guru" as a joke, only because I know more theory than a lot of people here, and try to help anyone that asks me. I don't believe I know everything about theory. But I also didn't post everything I know in this thread.

And I'm glad you enjoyed my songs :-/ [194]

Heated arguments, theoretical duals, and personal attacks are not uncommon in some of these forums. Participants often like to challenge each other's knowledge, put down others whom they do not like, or criticize others that they think they are smarter than. On the other hand, some participants attempt to maintain what seems to be an almost forced sense of civility and etiquette.

Another theme, alluded to above, is that jazz theory is very easy. In the following exchange, one forum member expresses his views:

Posted by Jazz+:

Jazz theory is not complicated, it's the way some authors try to present it that is complicated.

Reply by JazzyProf:

194. spastic and zoroaster, post to "Official Jazz Theory Thread: Music and Musicians Forum," October 12, 2003 and November 1, 2003, Sputnik Music Community, accessed September 1, 2013 www.sputnikmusic.com/forums/showthread.php?t=116892.

OK, how about giving us a series of mini-lessons, "Jazz Theory for Dummies"?

Reply by jazzwee:

+1 [Jazz+]. Even the notes played in jazz is not that complicated.

OK so agreeing that "Jazz Theory" is not complicated. But "Jazz Practice" is truly difficult. I mastered the theory in a year. I wish I could have learned to play in a year...

Reply by etcetra:

Yea exactly, you can learn most of the theory you need in like [a] month or two, but to be able to really use those ideas musically takes a lifetime. Having that basic theory does give you a foundation you can rely on. It well help you make sense of things when you are transcribing too.

The thread continued with *tremens* expressing "jazz theory is for people who otherwise couldn't play anyway." Then jazzonebyone, referring to an early thread started by Jazz+, replied "I don't understand how anyone could approach jazz without being able to hear (and play) tunes 'by ear'--but I realize that the musical experience is different for each of us."[195]

Pianojazz then posts:

In terms of chronological order, creativity and inspiration have always occurred before the theory existed that explained why it works. Theory is something that comes along after-the-fact that is used as a means or framework to explain some new achievement. Certainly theory has its place but knowing all the theory in the world is not going to make anyone a great jazz player or a great composer. But I'm not sure if the original post was directed toward music theory itself or some particular unnamed author's presentation of it--perhaps both?

Reply by etcetra:

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195. Jazz+, JazzyProf, jazzwee, etcetra, pianojazz, tremens, Mark, posts to "Jazz Theory Is Not Complicated," October 25-28, 2009, Piano World Forums, accessed September 1, 2003 www.pianoworld.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/1293675/ Jazz%20theory%20is%20not %20complicated.html

> I know the Clayton brothers and most great musicians doesn't put emphasis on theory too, but that doesn't mean they didn't study the mechanics behind the music.
>
> The problem is that we are studying jazz too much like classical music, and a lot of the musicians are concerned that jazz is losing its roots as an aural tradition because of that.
>
> From what I can tell, jazz musicians internalized music by imitation . . . they learned licks, solos, and tunes by ear much like how you do in learning language, and in time those things became part of their language. Theory is just a conclusion you came up with from you study. It should be about sound, and hearing something you like and having the desire to want to understand it and make it your own . . . and hopefully you can come to your own conclusion about music.
>
> It doesn't mean you can get away with not doing your homework. In fact the homework you have to do (learning everything by ear) is much hard and time consuming than the theory path.
>
> You can probably understand most of the theory you need by learning to maybe 10 great jazz solos by ear. But I can guarantee you that if you've never done that before, learning an entire solo on your instruments without writing any of it down is really difficult . . . it might takes months to get your first one right.[196]

Etcetra's response is an example of one way in which the "playing by ear" debate is articulated in formal learning-environments. Should music be memorized by ear? Should fakebooks be used to help memorize jazz tunes or should they be thrown in the garbage? If fakebooks were to be used, how much could a musician rely on them? How long would it take to learn jazz theory? How much jazz theory would be necessary if musicians are supposed to play be ear? These fundamental debates are had by educators and students alike. I contend that such theoretically fueled discussions are themselves the stuff of present-day formalized jazz culture.

Then Mark interjects with the following:

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196. Jazz+ et al.

I love Jazz and Blues, but find it very difficult. I find my classical type training much easier. And the whole ear thing seems impossible. I envy you guys.

Reply by Tremens:

are you implying ear is not important for classic music?

Reply by Mark:

Playing by ear vs playing using your ear is different, at least foe me.

Reply by etcetra

yea, playing by ear means different things to different people.. when you ask them what it means, you usually get a really vague idea. You can jam on I-IV-V chord and call it playing by ear, and there are some gifted people who can play Ravel's Bolero without ever seeing the music for it . . . that's playing by ear too.

However learning by ear is an entirely different issue, and that's how the Clayton brothers and older jazz musicians learned their music. It's about being part of an aural tradition in which the music is passed down by imitation . . . and not from books.[197]

The debate about play-by-ear and improvisation also thrives in the world of European classical music. When Mark implied that classical musicians do not need to know how to play-by-ear, he jokingly shared a picture (figure 2) of J. S. Bach, who was known for being a great improviser. Superimposed over Bach's face are sunglasses, which symbolize "coolness" within modern-day contexts.

197. Jazz+ et al.

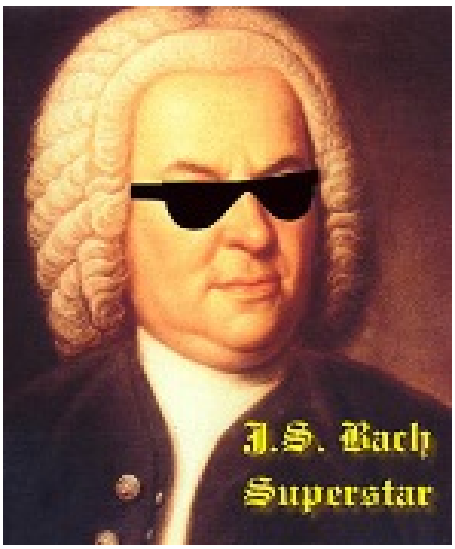

Figure 2. J. S. Bach Superstar. Photo courtesy of Piano World Forum[198]

This picture is evocative of a kind of humor often seen among some jazz students and educators. This humor may consist of quirky cultural references, highbrow or witty jokes, epigrammatic sayings, bad puns, or dry, deadpan humor. Etcetra's discussion of the Clayton Brother's discussion of jazz theory reminded me of a masterclass they had conducted at the University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music while I was a student. I remember the Claytons making a very big deal about relying on one's ear. They challenged many of the most common ways in which jazz is taught at most colleges. I even remember one of the jazz professors taking issue with some of the Claytons' strong assertions about relying on one's ears. Interestingly, it was not uncommon for guest artists

198. Tremens, post to "Jazz Theory Is Not Complicated," October 27, 2009, Piano World Forums, accessed September 1, 2013, www.pianoworld.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/1293675/Jazz%20theory%20is%20not%20complicated.html.

to criticize formal jazz education during their presentations, while offering perspectives that reflect a more organic approach to theory.

Suffice it to say, much more could be said about these excerpts, the phenomena of online jazz learning communities, what they reflect about modern concepts of formalized jazz theory, and the attention to issues of race—or the lack thereof. To the present date, I have yet to see a serious cultural study done on this aspect of the academic jazz community. Ultimately, these forums may be a fertile ground for further research into the influence that jazz theory has on present-day jazz communities. What is the role of this kind of theoretical activity? Should these discussions be viewed as discourse among jazz musicians or music theoreticians who may or may not be able to play jazz? I am also interested to explore the extent to which such musical speculation is informed by black musical thought. The cultural context in which these students exist is far removed from their musical predecessors. My argument is that the discussions above represent a particular cultural paradigm that developed after the advent of academic jazz programs. On one hand, it is great to see young people on forums passionately discussing jazz. It shows the great potential to educate willing students. On the other hand, it is disconcerting to see trends such as the assertion that jazz theory is easy or that jazz is just like certain forms of European art music. This "I can just easily learn jazz in my spare time" attitude serves to undermine and disrespect the history and artistry of jazz.

Every great jazz musician that I have had the opportunity to meet, including Curtis Fuller, Ornette Coleman, Charles Lloyd, Kenny Garrett, Mulgrew Miller, and Dave Liebman, were all incredibly humble. They did not feel the need to prove their

intellectual superiority by showing off how theoretically advanced they were. They all exuded an honest love and respect for the music and its history. In some instances, they wanted to hear what I, as an aspiring student, thought. Garrett did a residency at my school—College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati—during my freshman year; he came over to me when I was at the piano messing around with some chords. He asked me to show him what I was doing. This was before I had taken any piano courses; I could play only what I had taught myself by ear. I showed him my composition and he looked very interested. He sat down and then began to play them, using more advanced chord voicings. As a student, this was very inspirational for me. My overall point is that Garrett was not condescending, but humble, about his jazz abilities. By hanging with these musicians, I learned life lessons. I do not mean to say that this does not happen for some students in some formal jazz circumstances. But forum conversations such as the ones above indicate to me that jazz education could benefit from a paradigm shift informed by a greater understanding of black culture, performance practices, and history. In the next section, I further explore qualitative and quantitative music-learning paradigms.

Chapter 4: Qualitative versus Quantitative Jazz Education

Aebersold Camp Trombone Masterclass

I would briefly like to consider the notion of qualitative vs. quantitative jazz learning environments. By constructing such a binary, I do not mean to presuppose broad generalizations about realities that are reasonably complex. Many of the greatest jazz educators in academia are known for their efforts to motivate students, and some of the most innovative learning models were developed by nonacademic musicians. However, I do argue that there are observable differences between educational approaches and objectives within black musical contexts and academic environments. I find the predilection of qualitative vs. quantitative learning objectives and methods within differing jazz communities to be illuminating. On one hand, qualitative approaches to jazz theory seem to focus on feeling, emotion, personal motivations (the why), and musical creativity. Qualitative methodologies are predominant within organic jazz theory. On the other hand, quantitative approaches signify a passionate focus on formal methods, standardized theories, and mathematical musical constructions. Quantitative methodologies are often embraced within formal jazz learning-environments. Again, I must stress that these two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but represent a certain orientation toward jazz theory and performance.

To demonstrate this point I will again draw on data from my field research at a Jamey Aebersold jazz camp in July 2010. It was the final day of classes for the workshop, and I was in our last trombone masterclass with Rick Simerly, Tim Coffman, and Steve Davis. Throughout the week, the trombones were usually divided into smaller groups based on ability; however the entire studio assembled for the final session. I learned that it was usually customary for the teachers to open up the floor for final questions and discussions. The age of the students in the room varied from adults in their 60s to young teenagers. Out of roughly fifteen people, there were one white female, two African American males, and twelve white males. After several questions were posed, I noticed that they were all technical in nature: for example, extending one's range on the trombone, learning to incorporate alternate changes, and achieving greater virtuosity. Although these may not seem like odd questions for a jazz trombone masterclass, many of these issues had already been addressed at great length during the course of the week. Furthermore, before the commencement of the question-and-answer session, the educators had explained that they would be willing to answer other kinds of questions, including ones about their musical careers and the like.

I decided to ask a question that I had not yet heard uttered at the camp but was a central part to my qualitative jazz education within black communities. The question was, "Why do you play jazz?" The three trombonists looked pleasantly surprised by the question. Judging by their reaction, it is not the type of question that they were asked. They each looked down as if they were pondering the inquiry. It must be understood that my role as a 27 year old African American male affected the way in which this question

was perceived. My intention was to ask a simple question that would engender a critical reflection on the personal motivations of the educators. My hope was that they would respond with deep and thoughtful testimony. Before answering, they looked at each other to see who would begin speaking first. Coffman began to talk, and gave a short biographical sketch about his musical and family background. Ultimately, he fervently asserted that he made music because he has to.[199] Although this statement may seem to have been a cliché, I was convinced of how important music-making was to him. As a student, I found it very inspiring to hear Coffman discuss some of his personal motivations for playing. Subsequently, the mood in the room seemed to shift from a very serious and methodical atmosphere to one that seemed more personal.

Rick Simerly followed with an equally personal account. He was then followed by Steve Davis, who looked eager to respond. First, he made a brief introductory statement where he identified with Coffman and Simerly's stories. Second, he paused, and before he could begin to talk about his own motivations, he was cut off by an older male adult student sitting to my left. Given the student's facial expression and untimely interjection, he seemed to be impatient with the line of questioning. The question that he asked turned out to be another technical question about jazz trombone performance and theory.[200]

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199. Tim Coffman, interview by author, Louisville, July 16, 2010, audio recording, in author's possession.

200. Steve Davis, interview by author, Louisville, July 16, 2010, audio recording, in author's possession.

Although Davis looked surprised, he shifted gears and kindly proceeded to answer the new questions. What does this interaction reveal about the orientation of jazz education? I have found that some educators often adhere to quantitative cultural conventions because that is what is socially accepted and expected. In personal conversations, Davis and I discussed his inspirational story about learning how to play jazz, along with some of his beliefs about jazz theory and education.

Davis, who is white, talked about his eager pursuit of jazz within black music-making environments after enrolling in the Hartt School in 1985.[201] He developed deep relationships with musicians such as Dr. Jackie McLean and Curtis Fuller, and recalled what it was like "paying his dues" as an aspiring white jazz musician in predominantly black music-making spaces. His playing earned him the respect of his peers, and he would go on to participate in the final assembly of the Jazz Messengers.[202] In our discussion, he explained that he would like to talk more freely about some deeper racial issues, but that it is taboo in most formal jazz-learning spaces. I feel privileged to have had these conversations with him, and I think that much of the qualitative information that he expressed in our discussion could be of great help to other students. I do not sense that he is averse to sharing such stories publically, but that the opportunity to do so is not often available. How might the orientation of jazz education and theory within formal settings be changed to allow for both quantitative and qualitative jazz perspectives?

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201. Steve Davis, interview.

202. Ibid. Also see Steve Davis, "Why I Chose Hartt," *The Hartt School*, accessed October 30, 2013, http://harttweb.hartford.edu/ http://harttweb.hartford.edu/admissions/choose/academic/stevedavis.aspx.

Peer-Reviewed Academic Discourse about Jazz Theory

In addition to music students, jazz musicians, and music educators, discussions about jazz theory also take place among professional music theorists, musicologists, music historians, psychologists, cognition researchers, and others. The primary vehicles for this discourse are in paper presentations at academic conferences, books, and peer-reviewed academic journals. The *Journal of Music Theory*, *Music Theory Spectrum—The Journal of the Society for Music Theory, Music Perception, Music Analysis, Ethnomusicology, Journal of the American Musicological Society, Jazz Education Journal, and the Journal of Research in Music Education* all contain articles dedicated to the theoretical analysis and explanation of jazz music. Jazz educators may use analysis for the express purpose of cultivating and enhancing jazz curricula. Historians or social scientists may use musical analysis to support their respective research projects. Scientific studies related to jazz theory may turn up in journals such as *Perceptual and Motor Skills* or the *Journal of Experimental Psychology.* Overall, the scope of peer-reviewed academic discourse varies from formal theoretical concepts meant to help music educators teach prospective students and scientific studies related to human physiology and sociology to more esoteric studies that employ abstruse forms of musical analysis only intended for other music theorists or academics to examine.

One of the primary tools used for this kind of discourse is musical analysis. Ian Bent and Anthony Pople explained that analysis is "that part of the study of music that

takes as its starting-point the music itself, rather than external factors. More formally, analysis may be said to include the interpretation of structures in music, together with their resolution into relatively simpler constituent elements, and the investigation of the relevant functions of those elements."[203] There is some debate among academics over the usefulness of more abstruse kinds of musical analysis in jazz that were not meant to explicitly benefit students, educators, or professional musicians. There is little evidence that suggested black American musicians traditionally participated in this kind of music theory, particularly if it was not to enhance their performance abilities. As mentioned earlier, musicians such as Charlie Parker and Miles Davis examined the scores of classical composers and developed their own practical analyses with the goal of developing their performance abilities. This differs from approaching "analysis, as a pursuit in its own right"[204] within the academy, where the analyst seeks to remove music from its practical and social contexts for the purpose of examining it on its own terms. This form of musical analysis emerged as a cultural product among the elite classes of Europeans. I say "cultural product" to point out that, although this form of analysis often does not consider social implications, it is itself a product of a particular cultural milieu. Bent and Pople explain:

> The origins of musical analysis as one now thinks of it lie in early 18th-century philosophy and are linked with the origins of the aesthetic attitude itself. For it was in the 18th century, and particularly with the English philosophers and

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203. Ian D. Bent and Anthony Pople, "Analysis," *Oxford Contemporary Music*: Oxford Music Online, accessed September 1, 2013, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/41862.

204. Ibid.

> essayists, that the idea came to the surface of contemplating beauty without self-interest— hat is, without motive of personal improvement or utility. This new attitude was termed, by one of its earliest protagonists, Lord Shaftesbury (1671—1713), "disinterested attention." It embodied a mode of interest that went no further than the object being contemplated, and was engrossed in the contemplation itself. Leibniz, at about the same time, evolved a concept of perception as an activity in itself rather than as a processing of sense-impressions. This active concept of perception was important in the work of Alexander Baumgarten (1714—62), who coined the word "aesthetics." It was during this period that the notion of "fine art" as such, divorced from context and social function, arose."[205]

In general, culturally "disinterested" and scientific approaches to analyzing jazz music in academia elicit several problems. First, given the history of racism and the appropriation of black cultural forms in the United States and Europe, this kind of objective analysis can serve to disenfranchise the original creators and their communities from defining and controlling their own creations. Willie Smart once made the point that "those who control the definition [of an art form] can also control the image," and studies that objectify black culture tend to undermine it. Second, my assertion is that it is not possible to construct culturally unbiased studies. The desire and belief in culturally unbiased studies is itself a manifestation of a particular kind of thinking informed by a cultural lens. Decisions such as what music is deemed worthy of analysis and what is not undoubtedly reflect cultural biases. Dr. Kelichi Kalu asserted that academic writing is "politics par excellence."[206] Purportedly objective analysis of black music may be viewed as a discourse with political implications that serves to undermine black American musical traditions. The problem

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205. Bent and Pople.

206. Kelichi Kalu, "Methodological Perspectives in African American and African Studies" (lecture series, The Ohio State University, Columbus, September to December, 2008).

here is that on one hand, culturally disinterested musical analysis is a tradition among elite western academics. Therefore, it may be viewed as an admirable and harmless pursuit of knowledge. On the other hand, jazz musicians have tended to not participate in these theoretical discourses, but have developed their own analytical traditions elsewhere. Perhaps the exception to this is the discussion of jazz theory by jazz educators; however, the purpose of their discussions was usually pedagogical in nature. This brings up the question: Is there a way to create culturally disinterested analysis of jazz music that gives voice to the creators of the music? Is it possible to create culturally disinterested analysis of jazz music that does not divorce the music from is sociocultural context?

To explore this issue further, I consider Mathew Butterfield's "Why do Jazz Musicians Swing their Eighth Notes?" The element in jazz called *swing* has been the object of great interest for many music theorists. Butterfield's study endeavored to contribute to this discussion through a scientific analysis of microrhythms. He based his study on what Fernando Benadon called "Beat-Upbeat Ratio" (BUR) which "expresses the durational relationship between the long, downbeat eighth note and the short upbeat that follows it." He explains that this kind of research had traditionally been used to find the average swing ratios of musicians, "often motivated by an interest in quantifying the essence of swing, as though finding the ideal 'golden ratio'."[207] Butterfield explained that this research was limited because it "generally failed to explain the affective consequences of the wide range of BUR values actually employed by jazz musicians in

207. Matthew W. Butterfield, "Why Do Jazz Musicians Swing Their Eighth Notes?," *Music Theory Spectrum* 33, no. 1 (2011): 4.

performance."[208] He asserted that what had not been adequately explored in research on jazz rhythm is why jazz musicians swing their eighth notes and what they gain from doing it.[209] Butterfield hypothesized that swing "is less a specifiable rhythmic essence than an active rhythmic process involving the skillful management of 'motional energy' in the midst of performance" and that "jazz musicians achieve this in multiple ways, one of which is the microrhythmic variation of swing eighth-note durations over the course of a melodic phrase."[210] *Motional energy* is defined as "momentum with which some musical events are directed toward others."[211]

Butterfield summarized and highlighted the BUR statistics collected by other researchers. Some of these included research by Richard F. Rose on the solo breaks from fifteen jazz recordings (1940s-1960s), and timing relationships among piano, bass, and drums on a Jamey Aebersold play-along; Collier and Collier's swing ratios of stop-time solos by Louis Armstrong on "Potato Head Blues" and "Cornet Chop Suey;"and the swing ratios of an assortment of musicians whose identities were not defined in this article.[212] In addition to summarizing past research, Butterfield shared the original swing ratio analysis of John Coltrane, Lee Konitz, and Sonny Clark. To measure the swing

208. Butterfield, *Why Do Jazz Musicians?*, 4.

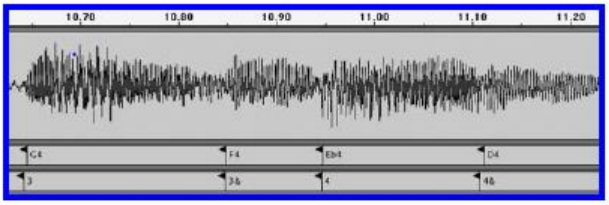
209. Ibid.

210. Ibid.

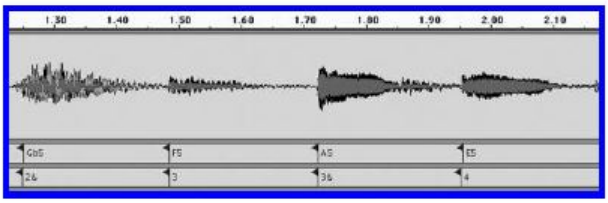
211. Ibid.

212. Ibid., 5.

ratios of these musicians, he examined passages as wave files in Audacity audio software on a computer.



EXAMPLE 14. *Waveform envelopes of a series of eighth notes played by Coleman Hawkins (tenor saxophone) on "'S Wonderful" Four eighth notes are shown here with pitch letter names and beat locations given below the diagram: wave amplitudes of downbeat pitches (G_4 and $E\flat_4$) are wider than those of upbeat pitches (F_4 and D_4), indicating that they are played more loudly*



EXAMPLE 15. *Waveform envelopes of a series of eighth notes played by Sonny Clark (piano) on "Can't We Be Friends" Four eighth notes are shown here, pitch letter names and beat locations shown below the diagram; wave amplitudes of upbeat pitches ($G\flat_5$ and A_5) are wider than those of downbeat pitches (F_5 and E_5), indicating that they are played more loudly*

Figure 3. Waveform images used to analyze BUR of swing eighth notes. Courtesy of Matthew Butterfield.[213]

I find the presentation of the swing ratios collected by other researchers to be problematic. In many cases, the research was summarized in a way where the identities of

213. Butterfield, *Why Do Jazz Musicians?*, 14.

the musicians were not listed. The "common melodic patterns performed by three contemporary saxophone players" is much too ambiguous. Presumably, the musicians did not perform smooth jazz, which is sometimes called contemporary jazz. Butterfield explained that "Mark Ellis asked three professional jazz saxophone players to perform three melodic patterns 'common to the swing style' over twelve-bar blues with bass and piano accompaniment."[214] Did these professionals use a free jazz interpretation, hard bop, swing era concept, or otherwise? This is a highly problematic study. In jazz, context matters. Without knowing the cultural background and stylistic concepts of the musicians, an understanding of their swing ratio is not helpful. For example, the Art Ensemble of Chicago trumpeter Lester Bowie sometimes used exaggerated forms of swing that, when heard with the full ensemble, could signify ironic humor. Taking the swing out of context could serve to undermine the intended meaning of the performers.

Another problem with these studies is the lack of diversity in the performers sampled. There are many different types of jazz with many different conceptions of swing. This was narrowly addressed by including the BUR of Louis Armstrong with John Coltrane. The problem is that a certain canon of jazz styles and musicians has come to be privileged in academic circles. Avant-garde or free jazz musicians such as Ornette Coleman, Archie Shepp, Albert Ayler, and Sun Ra were not included in any of these studies. Although the latter part of John Coltrane's career was spent in exploring these styles, records and performances from this period were not considered. The

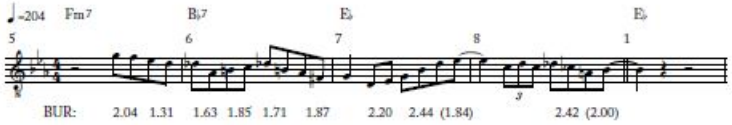
214. Butterfield, *Why Do Jazz Musicians?*, 6.

underrepresentation of musicians associated with these styles, which are often associated with the civil rights movement and black liberation, served to implicitly define a narrow view of jazz.

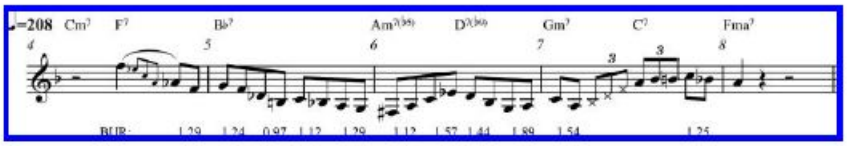
One of Butterfield's most problematic arguments stemmed from comparing a Coleman Hawkins solo with one of Charlie Parker. He argued that the two passages were "quite similar and provide a good basis for comparing each musician's conception of swing."[215] He observed that Hawkins usually had a higher BUR than Parker had, "reflecting a very uneven, triplet-like swing conception."[216]

215. Butterfield, *Why Do Jazz Musicians?*, 8.

216. Ibid.



EXAMPLE 4. *Coleman Hawkins, tenor sax solo (excerpt) on "'S Wonderful," recorded in 1944. BUR values for each pair of consecutive eighth notes are shown below the staff. (The articulation of the progression by the rhythm section is understood but not transcribed here.)*



EXAMPLE 5. *Charlie Parker, alto sax solo (excerpt) on "Confirmation," recorded in 1953. BUR values for each pair of consecutive eighth notes are shown below the staff. (The articulation of the progression by the rhythm section is understood but not transcribed here.)*

Figure 4. Transcribed excerpts of a Coleman Hawkins and a Charlie Parker solo. Courtesy of Matthew Butterfield.[217]

Butterfield continued:

> What difference does this make? Which passage swings more? Jazz critic Harvey Pekar favored Parker and other beboppers over their swing-era predecessors. "The extremely infectious swing of a good bop performance . . . ," he wrote, resulted in part from the use of ". . . eighth note lines [BUR 1.0] in places where many swing era musicians employed dotted eighth-sixteenth note figures [BUR 3.0]." By contrast, "[t]he playing of some swing musicians, like Coleman Hawkins, who relied on dotted eighth-sixteenth note lines, seemed to chug rather than swing." In Examples 4 and 5, to be sure, Hawkins's eighth notes are not quite as uneven as Pekar suggests, nor are Parker's as even. I am nevertheless inclined to agree with him that Hawkins's line "chugs" along, whereas Parker's exhibits greater forward propulsion and drive, and that the difference emerges chiefly from the widely divergent BUR values employed by these musicians.[218]

To what extent can a musician's "conception" of swing be understood by examining a swing ratio? How can such conceptions be examined from musicians from different

217. Ibid.

218. Butterfield, *Why Do Jazz Musicians?*, 8.

historical eras without the use of historical or ethnographic methods? This is a highly problematic line of analysis that serves to undermine the true intentions of the artist. How does the musician explain their conception of swing? What is their conception of swing throughout the history of jazz? Another problematic issue is the way in which notation is discussed. Pekar's statement that "the playing of some swing musicians, like Coleman Hawkins, who relied on dotted eighth-sixteenth note lines, seemed to chug rather than swing."[219] First, it should not be assumed that Coleman Hawkins conceived of his swing rhythm as dotted eighth-sixteenth notes or eighth notes. Although jazz began as an oral tradition, a tradition of writing down jazz did emerge. Usually writing down jazz was for the practical purpose of musicians communicating to other musicians. Although it could be argued that western notation is unable to represent jazz fully, swinging what are identified as 'eighth notes' became part of an oral-literate performance practice. Musicians knew what swing sounded like and used sheet music as a particular kind of reference. However, analysis such as Pekar's objectifies jazz rhythm in a way that is far removed from actual jazz performance. In a sense, he is imposing concepts that are not in line with what the musicians were "thinking." It is unlikely that Coleman Hawkins and Charlie Parker were thinking about BURs during their solos.

Another problem here is the shifting from purportedly objective analysis to aesthetic criticism. Butterfield failed to establish a historical, cultural, or aesthetic lens in which to respectfully evaluate the data. One comment that stands out is the claim that

219. Ibid.

Coleman Hawkins "seems to chug rather than swing" and that Charlie Parker and bebop era musicians "swing harder." Although this statement may have been valid in a piece of jazz criticism in which the author's purpose would be to give an opinion, it is problematic here--where the author's goal is to look objectively and scientifically at rhythm. Also, comparing Parker with Hawkins in this critical light is like comparing apples to oranges. They were very different performers that emerged in different eras.

Butterfield ultimately concluded that "jazz musicians swing their eighth notes to produce anacrusis on the off beats," which "generates motional energy directed toward the ensuing downbeat." He continued that "by subverting downbeat closure in one way or another, jazz musicians can sustain the sense of forward propulsion characteristic of the rhythmic quality we call swing." What is the usefulness of this theory? On one hand, it is a unique way of looking at rhythm that gives insight to how the author conceived of swing. On the other hand, it relied on conceptions of music that were traditionally not used by jazz musicians. Although musicians may understand the concept of anacrusis, it was traditionally associated with classical music and not a common subject of discussion among jazz musicians. It may be assumed that many of the jazz musicians sampled did not conceive of swing as producing anacrusis on the off-beats. At the end of the article, Butterfield explained:

> Swing is not a specifiable quantity, of course, nor is it a quality that is precisely quantifiable; it is rather a feeling that emerges from quantifiable processes, both rhythmic and microrhythmic, syntactical and subsyntactical, as I have sought to

> demonstrate. We come closer to understanding this feeling when we recognize the plurality of sources and the variety of means for its production.[220]

Yet, Butterfield failed to define what "feeling" is in music. It is not clear how an individual's experience of music can be connected with the quantifiable process explored. I am unconvinced that the objectification of jazz, without making an effort to directly connect it to its cultural context, brought us closer to understanding the experiences had by musicians and listeners.[221]

My critique of Butterfield's work is meant to reveal the problematic nature of studies that served to objectify jazz from its historical and cultural origins. The consequences of doing so could serve to misrepresent the conceptions of the musical communities involved. Some ethnographers used a method during fieldwork where they allowed their subjects to read what they had written, to see if they thought it accurate. Could this form of analysis be made more socially or culturally relevant if musicians were invited to participate in the construction of these kinds of analytical theories? Although this method would have some problems, I mention it here to make the point that it is problematic to divorce conversations about jazz from the social and cultural dynamics that surround it—and the musicians who create it. I mean not to suggest that jazz musicians do not benefit from making transcriptions, using musical analysis, or studying method books or big-band scores employing western notation. The point is that

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220. Butterfield, *Why Do Jazz Musicians?*, 24.

221. See Matthew W. Butterfield, "The Musical Object Revisited," *Music Analysis* 21, no. 3 (2002): 327-380 for Butterfield's defense of "musical object" analysis and his exploration of the "musical object versus subject" debate among anthropologists, musicologists, and ethnomusicologists.

a practical and unique approach to musical analysis rooted in jazz's oral tradition already exists, particularly among organic jazz theorists and musicians. Yet, the nature of this organic theoretical process was sometimes ignored or not understood by academic educators or theorists who endeavored to divorce musical concepts of black music from its historical and cultural contexts.

Ornette Coleman: Organic or Intrinsic Jazz Theory

Many musicians have developed their own unique theoretical models for discussing and performing jazz music. As discussed previously, I view this practice of developing one's own creative approach as part of a theoretical tradition that is inherent in forms of jazz that originated in black American music-making spaces. Parker, Gillespie, Davis, Coltrane, Tristano, and many others were known for pushing musical and theoretical boundaries. This was often done through the construction of unique approaches to jazz improvisation and composition. These approaches represented unique ways in which the musicians theorized about their music. I view such innovations not as exceptions, but as the rule, within jazz. In other words, the rule is to develop unique ways to understand the music and challenge the accepted norms. In my view, the jazz tradition that indelibly links the music of Louis Armstrong with Cecil Taylor and others is the practice of challenging accepted norms through innovation and artistry. This often results in innovators being harshly rebuked by peers for being different.

As pointed out by George Russell earlier in this essay, innovators of jazz can sometimes seem "incompetent" because they are so unique.[222] Yet, historically, factions of the jazz community have not only allowed but also expected this kind of creativity. One musician among the most prolific innovators is alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman. He was known for developing his own unique conception of jazz theory called *Harmolodics*. In a 1983 Down Beat article called "Prime Time for Harmolodics," Coleman described his system as "the use of the physical and the mental of one's own logic made into an expression of sound to bring about the musical sensation of unison executed by a single person or with a group. . . . [Thus], harmony, melody, speed, rhythm, time and phrases all have equal position in the results that come from the placing and spacing of ideas."[223]

There was actually very little that had been written about the details of Coleman's abstract approach. Rumors of a theory book on harmolodics by Coleman first emerged in the 1970s; however such a work has yet to be published. Eric Nisenson explained:

> Coleman began to discuss his "harmolodic" theory, which I think was greatly influenced by George Russell's Lydian Theory of Tonal Organization, around the time of the formation of Primetime. Basically, Ornette's "harmolodic" theory is a method of permitting the jazz player to improvise vertically, that is to improvise his harmonic structure at the same time he is improvising horizontally—playing melodically—an approach that George Russell calls "supravertical." But theories greatly expand the very concept of the tonic, providing freedom, but not freedom completely without laws ("Which is not really freedom at all," according to Russell), for the improviser and composer. If nothing else, Ornette's "harmolodic" theory, a theory which I have never heard adequately explained, even by Ornette,

222. Jones and Russell, 69.

223. Ornette Coleman, "Pro Session: Prime Time for Harmolodics," *Downbeat*, 50 (July 1983): 54-55.

> at least answered those critics who claimed that Coleman's music was simply the work of an anarchic eccentric, with no intellectual structure to support it.[224]

The degree to which Coleman's harmolodic theory was directly influenced by George Russell's Lydian theory is unclear, although Coleman said that "it surpasses any musical knowledge I have been exposed to."[225] However, what I would like to explore further is the significance of Coleman's theoretical construction as a culturally creative process. In 2008, I had the privilege of personally experiencing this theoretical tradition with Ornette Coleman at the Chicago Jazz Festival. Following Coleman's headlining performance, my saxophone friend Ryan Wells—who is Caucasian--and I found him backstage talking with fans and signing autographs. We positioned ourselves along the 2-½ foot high temporary fence that separated Coleman from his fans. My friend had his new digital camera and I possessed a copy of my band's DVD, which featured two of Coleman's songs. After a few minutes, he worked his way to us. After shaking his hand, I explained that "I'm a jazz trombonist and professor of music and black studies at Northern Kentucky University."[226] Before I could finish my full introduction, he grinned and immediately began to impart some of his jazz theory to me. He said there are three important chords/modes that I could use over any chord progression or musical improvisation. He described them as C Major 7, Bb Minor 7, and D minor 7 with a flat

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224. Eric Nisenson, *Ascension: John Coltrane and His Quest* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), 250.

225. Jones and Russell, 65.

226. Ornette Coleman, Interview by author, Chicago, August 28, 2008, audio recording in author's possession.

5th.[227] He briefly explained that every note of the chromatic scale is emphasized within these chords. He ultimately suggested that improvisations based upon these chords/modes would result in creative and unique solos.

After our meeting with Coleman, my friend and I began to discuss the experience in the parking garage where my car was. As a jazz musician, I felt as if Coleman may have imparted to us some secret esoteric jazz theory that could potentially transform our playing. We were both very excited and inspired to begin improvising on the chords. During our discussion, I took out my trombone and started to experiment. I attempted to play phrases that outlined each chord and seamlessly moved from one chord to another. On the drive back to Cincinnati, my friend and I continued to discuss critically the significance of these three chords and the type of improvisations that they might create. We were both very excited and motivated to find ways to use the open-ended concept in our playing. What I found most important about the above anecdote is the creative and unique dialectical process that occurred between the three of us. Coleman quickly offered my friend and me three chords that have since fostered many creative acts. Consequently, I am interested in "jazz theory" as an oral and written creative process that emerges through discourse among musicians.

Coleman also had a profound effect on John Coltrane. In a 1963 interview with a French journalist, Coltrane explained:

> I love him. I'm following his lead. He's done a lot to open my eyes to what can be done. . . . I feel indebted to him, myself. Because, actually, when he came along, I

227. Ibid.

> was so far into this thing ["Giant Steps" chords], I didn't know where I was going next. And I don't know if I would have thought about just abandoning the chord system or not. I probably wouldn't' have thought of that at all. And he came along doing it, and I heard it, I said, "Well, that must be the answer."[228]

During the time of this interview, Coltrane's music was becoming much freer. Graeme Boone explained that "in the mid-sixties, Coltrane became increasingly focused on an adventurous and impassioned variety of free jazz as his medium of expression. ' Ascension [1965]' is his most celebrated recording from this period, and it provides a good illustration of this style. In it Coltrane uses a fairly large group, reminiscent of (but not identical to) Coleman's *Free Jazz double quartet.*"[229] As a result of Coltrane's new path, he received many negative reviews from critics and lost some of his fan base.[230]

However, Coltrane did not allow such criticism to prevent him from unapologetically pursing his musical path. In his own words, "Damn the rules, it's the feeling that counts."[231] However, the irony is that much of the theoretical and pedagogical foundations of academic jazz are based upon the works of Coltrane.[232] Many of the musical rules in which present-day jazz students trust were derived in some way from theoretical interpretations of a narrow cross-section of Coltrane's work. One of the first songs that beginning jazz students often learn is "Impressions" while "Giant Steps" is a

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228. Ake, 136.

229. Graeme Boone, "Music 253 Course Packet," *Music* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 2009), 69-70.

230. Ake, 136-37.

231. Joe Goldberg, *Jazz Masters of the Fifties*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1980): 210.

232. Ake, 112-145.

test piece reserved for advanced students. Suffice it to say, the latter portion of Coltrane's development, especially after the release of his album *A Love Supreme,* is often disregarded along with the work of other avant-garde or free jazz performers.

Chapter 5: Organic Jazz Theorists

Willie Smart

Willie Smart was a 51-year-old African American jazz drummer from Cincinnati, Ohio when, on December 17, 2010, I conducted a phone interview with him about his thoughts on jazz theory. At the time of the interview, I had had a musical relationship with Smart for almost nine years. He was critical of formalized methods in jazz and advocated a qualitative approach that seems to exemplify what I am calling *organic* jazz theory. Also, he articulated a viewpoint held by many who dislike the effects of academic jazz.

> *Goecke*: What is jazz theory today, and what should be done about it?
> *Smart*: Did you Google Jamey Aebersold?
> *Goecke*: [laughing] Yeah, I'm going to address that side of it, but. . .
> *Smart*: I don't recognize a term like that in my world because I'm a drummer, but I understand what you're asking and I understand how we use it in our terms. For me, the theory can only come through listening. You know, theory can be put down on paper—okay this is some theory—and have all of these different explanations about changes and ABA. That's part of the mechanics of how it works. But my thing is that the only way that I can interpret jazz theory is that I got to do a lot of listening. The same thing that Tony Williams is doing on that Miles tape where he could remember all the horn solos.
> . . . To me the theory is to know the feelin' of the music. Of different songs, periods, that's what theory is for me. I don't interpret it like the ABA form and BAA, and changes. Cause there are a lot of people that

> can learn all that shit and still can't swing—and still can't play. See, it's all about can you play?! Can you play? Can you swing?[233]

Of particular interest is Smart's emphasis on critical listening, being adept at playing, and performers' ability to connect with and convey the proper *feelin'* of the music. Above, Smart was referring to an interview with Tony Williams, where he demonstrated his familiarity with Miles' recordings by singing along with Davis's solo.

As Williams sang along, he offered analytical commentary about the music. Williams was known for having studied his favorite jazz recordings so thoroughly that he could sing every note of every instrument on the record.[234] Smart emphasized the importance of being able "to play." Within certain jazz communities the term *play,* or being *able to play,* refers to the attainment of a certain acceptable level of musical competency. Although this may seem to be implied, the cultural meaning of the term suggests a deeper significance. In discourse among musicians, the term allows for the speaker to sustain a cool disposition while expressing an issue that is of great importance to him or her. Within this frame, being "able to play" is vital. Consequently, performers who cannot play may have disparaging remarks said about them behind their backs, or be confronted about it by a peer. Sometimes older musicians would encourage a younger musician by acknowledging their hard work and potential, but also remind them that they can't play yet. In this way, older musicians push and motivate the younger generation to attain higher levels of artistry. Similar to the way in which social codes inform the discussions

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233. Smart, interview.

234. *The Miles Davis Radio Project*.

on the academic theory forums examined earlier, the social interactions among jazz musicians within this community inform performers about implicit aesthetic ideals held by its members. Consequently, respect and acceptance into the community may be gleaned by being regarded as someone who can "play." In this sense, being able to play signifies a kind of membership status into an elite community of jazz musicians.

Such statements as "that cat can play," or "man, he can't even play," may be understood to be implicit performative utterances.[235] In "How to Do Things With Words," the linguistic philosopher J. L. Austin refuted the idea that sentences have only true/false values or descriptive capabilities; rather, speech itself has the power to perform certain kinds of actions in the world.[236] One of the most common examples of an explicit performative utterance would be the statement "I now pronounce you man and wife," as uttered by someone who has been "vested" with the power to perform marriage ceremonies. Given that I am not authorized to conduct marriage ceremonies, the statement does not mean the same thing or perform the same action if I were to say it. However, uttered by a clergyman or judge within the appropriate sociocultural context, the statement can engender change in the world. Similarly, when a fan in the stands at a baseball game yells "strike," it does not carry the same meaning or perform the same action as when a uniformed umpire says it.

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235. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, ed. J. O. Urmson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 5-6.

236. Ibid.

As performative utterances, statements that allude to one's ability to play may be analyzed on several levels. As a locutionary act, the expression may sometimes function phatically, that is, speech used to share feelings or to establish a mood of sociability, as a polite public statement or gesture.[237] I have seen many instances where a respected jazz performer publically announced that another musician "can play" only to retract the statement in private. In these situations, it would have been impolite for the speaker to express their true sentiments publically. Thus, the statement was used as a social strategy to show respect and maintain civility. In other instances, the term may be used as an indirect or direct illocutionary act.[238] One common example is when a young student is told by a respected jazz elder in public that he or she "can play." However, in private the elder may tell the young person or others that he "can't really play yet, but that he [or she] is going to be a great player one day." In both instances, the desired perlocutionary effect is to inspire and motivate the student to practice. In such a scenario, the respected jazz elder is vested with the power to pronounce a musician as "a player." Or, by projecting that he or she will become a great player, the speaker alludes to the musical potential that the young person has. In some cases, an elder may use the above statements with *young lions* (young jazz students who are developing quickly), to prevent them from becoming conceited. This often happens to young lions who show early advancement and, as a result, are often significantly praised by patrons and musicians of the jazz community. Before the student has the opportunity to believe themselves great, it becomes the

237. Austin, 61.

238. Ibid., 116.

mentor's job to remind them that they need to stay focused and keep working hard. This is something that I have observed Smart do with younger aspiring musicians.

My brief linguistic analysis above is meant to establish the important and complex roll that "playing" has within the context of Smart's jazz community. Such utterances have deep cultural meaning and reveal significant insight into the community's value system and educational process. It is clear that one of Smart's chief values in jazz is apt performance. Thus, jazz theory is important to the extent that it produces jazz musicians who can adequately meet or exceed the aesthetic conventions of the community: be "able to play." Within this context, it is understood that someone who can "play" can also *swing* and play with the correct *feelin*.' In light of this, Smart criticizes the students of jazz who may be conversant in standard jazz theory but are unable to meet his performance criteria. The interview continued:

> *Smart*: Those are theories to me, man. The theory in why cats can have all that other shit together, the institutionalized theory and book knowledge shit but they can't play, and when you hear a guy that can play, you know what I mean? . . . I do understand the institutionalized way that they use, and can relate to it in that way but . . . It's like Chuck, he's got tremendous theory. But if you go into the institution with Chuck and he starts to explain his theory, he wouldn't have the same theory as Rick Van Matre.[239] You know what I mean? Chuck would probably totally disagree with more than 50% of what Rick Van Matre was saying as far as theory. 'Cuz Chuck would say 'you don't have to play that, you can play this.'
>
> *Goecke*: Or, you don't have to think about it like that, you can think about it like this

239. Rick VanMatre is Professor Emeritus and former head of the jazz department at the College Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati.

Smart: Right. Everybody has theories. You know, mine is about a feelin'. . . So jazz theory to me has always been about just listening and having an idea about what the music is supposed to do and how it's supposed to do it.
The real part of this music is improvisation. That is the real big principle of this music, that makes this music what it is, improvisation. To me, that's the biggest part that is being forgotten is the improvisational part. We think that, well he just solos and you get people to transcribe things and then they play it back. Charlie Parker and them didn't sit down and play somebody's transcription. That's a whole new thing over the last 30 or 40 years.

Goecke: Are you talkin' about written transcriptions?

Smart: The written transcription and not focusing on improvisation. I mean really focusing on it, like that's what makes the music the music. It's really gotten lost, and that's my forte is the improvisation.

Goecke: In the past you've talked about the jazz language. What do you mean by jazz language?

Smart: The language, in my interpretation . . . are the standards and how we talk to each other. You just can't get up on the bandstand and start playing jazz, that's what I'm talking about. That's why the jam session is the perfect place for us to keep our fundamentals together. Swing is the language and those tunes, the standards that we go through, has a lot to do with the language. If you learn those tunes you let people know that you're workin' on shit. Learning the language is listening to this music. Really listening to the history of this music. That becomes the language. The only way that you can hear that is through listening. Through hearing all this music. I mean like day and night, living the music, just hearing it and listening to so much music.[240]

A few issues may be brought to bear here. First, Smart alluded to the importance of improvisation and expressed his view that it was progressively becoming a lost art form. Consequently, he felt that schools often did little to foster the forms of creative improvisation exemplified by artists like Archie Shepp, Sun Ra, Ornette Coleman, and others. This is a common criticism often applied to academic jazz; some suggested that the

240. Smart, interview.

focus on big-band literature is the culprit. For example, Bruno Nettl explained, "The large jazz band, a miniature of the concert band, plays from scores a substantial amount of music that may lack improvisation. This kind of big-band has a very modest role in the outside world of jazz, but the school nevertheless selects it to be the exemplar of jazz within its walls."[241] Ake added that the "discussions of soloing concepts in big-band rehearsals remain minimal"[242] and that many bands use charts where solos are written out for students to read.

Finally, I asked Smart about his notion of the "jazz language." In the past, he had emphasized the importance of learning the jazz language, which I understood to be the fundamentals of jazz--much of which are emphasized within an academic context. The first time that I heard him talk about the language, I thought he sounded like any professor of jazz at a school, who emphasizes the same thing. Yet Smart was reluctant to link his notion of learning jazz language to the academic context. The pedagogical questions that his assertion engendered are the ones that formal jazz educators have toiled over for years. How should students learn the jazz language? Smart contended that total immersion into all aspects of the music would be essential. He claimed that the student of jazz must "live the music." In fact, many musicians have identified jazz to be synonymous with life itself, suggesting that "if you don't live it, it won't come out your horn," as remarked by

241. Nettl, 107.

242. Ake, 114.

bebop innovator and saxophonist Charlie Parker.[243] Such an assertion is certainly qualitative in nature and suggests an intense seriousness for the music. For Smart, music was not a hobby or a profession but a lifestyle. In other words, he viewed music as synonymous with life itself. Given the precept for organic jazz theory, I view Smart's notion of "music as life" and jazz being about *the feelin'* to be an apt summation of his own personal jazz theory.

Smart mentioned the importance of the jam session as a meeting place for musicians of all ages to come together and develop the music. In particular, he was referring to a jam session that he and I organized in a nonalcoholic, nonsmoking environment within a black community. The aim of the session was to attract entire families to jazz outings. Historically, jazz occurred in bars in which young people were not legally allowed. (I recall being let into 21- or 25-and-over bars when I was 16 or 17, in order to participate in live jazz.) Our mission was to make a jazz jam session available to all ages, in an environment that was not too formal or sterile (as Smart viewed academic jazz learning-environments) and ultimately foster a sense of community. Some younger musicians started to come with their friends and family every month. One of them is now studying jazz saxophone performance at Berklee. Smart's efforts to break jazz out of the bar scene was also inspired by his lifestyle and philosophy about health and diet. He practiced the Mucusless Diet Healing System by Professor Arnold Ehret, and he attributed much of his inspiration to play music to this lifestyle. For Smart, his

243. Gene Lees, *You Can't Steal a Gift: Dizzy, Clark, Milt, and Nat* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), ix-x.

dietary and musical pursuits went hand-in-hand with his spiritual aspirations. It is beyond the scope of this essay to delve too deeply into these perspectives. Yet, I would like to draw a parallel between Smart's unique musical inspirations and motivations with what Monson refers to as the "spiritual quest"[244] that is akin to the lives of many other organic jazz theorists mentioned earlier, such as John Coltrane, George Russell, and Ornette Coleman.

Chuck Young

Chuck Young is an older African American saxophonist from Cincinnati, Ohio. Willie Smart identified him as one of the greatest jazz saxophonists in the city and the only one to possess a truly unique saxophone "sound." He was a controversial figure among many local musicians for his eccentric manner and unconventional views on music. During my undergraduate studies in jazz trombone performance at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music, Smart suggested that I hang out with Young to gain a unique theoretical perspective that I could not receive at school. I would go to his house with a mini-disc recorder and tape our study sessions. Scattered on the floor of his apartment were numerous Aebersold play-alongs, an assortment of sheet music, and other jazz related texts. During my first session at his house, he pulled out Russell's *Lydian Chromatic Concept* and started showing it to me. I had never heard of the method,

244. See "Chapter 8: Aesthetic Agency, Self-Determination, and the Spiritual Quest," in Monson, 283-311.

but he showed me how he had interpreted and reinterpreted the theories. After playing through some scales, he grabbed a copy of Aebersold's *Jazz Handbook* and turned it to the page "Scale Syllabus."[245] I had been familiar with but intimidated by the syllabus. It seemed as if many of my peers at school, or at Jamey's camps, had memorized all of the content on the list; but I tended to avoid it because it seemed too complicated. I thought that it would be a very daunting task to try to memorize each scale in all 12 keys. I had a good command of my major and dorian modes—and blues scale—but I had yet to focus on many others. Young told me that I did not have to think about it in such a compartmentalized fashion. First, he suggested that I initially master the chromatic scale—because there was only one of them, the whole-tone scale—because there are two of them, and the diminished scales—because there are only three of them. He explained that if I focus on learning those six scales on the full length of my instrument, I would automatically learn many of the scalar possibilities. Furthermore, as I experimented with different permutations of these scales, I would also learn about major, minor, and augmented triads. Ultimately, once I had the scales under my belt, I should begin to use my ear to improvise with them. Suffice it to say, before being offered this big picture approach from Young, I thought that I needed to learn hundreds of keys instead of 6 crucial symmetrical scales.

After this discussion, Young proceeded to begin running some of the other scales on the list. His choices seemed random, but he explored various melodic shapes. He said

245. See Appendix.

that once I get the symmetrical stuff, I could just sit around, pick a key, and play through some of the other scales. Then he looked at me coyly and said, "You know we jazz musicians are crazy. Sittin' around all day runnin' scales." I found the sentiment to be endearing and it made me want to be a part of the crazy jazz elite who sit around and run scales all day. Later, Young put in an Aebersold play-along and started to improvise on every song. Although I had not played on each song before nor studied all of the changes, he encouraged me to use my ear to play. He claimed that I would eventually start really hearing the changes. He also possessed a slow-downer machine (from the days before software transcribers were prevalent) and would show me how he learned Sonny Stitt's solos by ear.

I learned a great deal by just being exposed to the creative way in which Young thought. Although my first experiences as a *busker* (street performer), playing music on the streets of Cincinnati were with Willie Smart, I soon started playing with Young. He created a mobile electronic musical rig using a car battery hooked to a power-inverter, through which he operated a small karaoke machine. He would go to local events--the Findley Farmer's Market, or Cincinnati's famous Ludlow Avenue shopping district--and set-up to play for tips. He used the karaoke machine to play Aebersold play-along recordings, in which he would often use only the isolated drum and bass channel. He felt eliminating the piano from the recordings gave more freedom to generate what he thought to be a more potent musical experience. One of his primary inspirations of going out on the street was to develop his "inside playing," (i.e. playing along with standard jazz changes or harmony). It also allowed him to take his music directly to the people,

since there were limited opportunities to perform "straight-ahead" jazz in public venues. Ultimately, playing on the street not only helped me develop my improvisational abilities but also to evolve greatly as a person. The experience cultivated creativity, humility, ability to improvise under unique circumstances, and an indelible sense of freedom that inspires me to this day.

Young greatly expanded my views of jazz theory. He encouraged me to learn as much theory at school that I could, but to think about it in my own creative way. In his view, each person's unique creative process and personalized approach to learning jazz was of the utmost importance. Armed with this liberal creative lens, I felt empowered to study as much music as I could without worrying about sounding like someone else. From the scores of Lutosławski, to Iranian radifs, to Armstrong's vocables, to Coltrane's tone and Parker's powerful rhythms, I felt as if I could essentially improvise my own music theory on the spot--in any context. In other words, jazz theory itself could be improvised based on set of aesthetic circumstances. Again, many similarities may be drawn between Young's organic theoretical approach and that of others discussed earlier in this paper, but the one I will point out is "creativity of thought." Educators often ask if creativity can be taught or if it is something fundamental that a person is born with. I cannot say with certainty whether the phenomenon of creativity is more closely related to nature or nurture, but my proposition is that students of jazz can develop or further cultivate their creative abilities in the presence of musician-mentors or educators who simultaneously demonstrate and encourage creative thought. My contention is that this is a strong

tradition that thrives in the jazz community, particularly among organic jazz theorists and educators.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

"damn the rules, it's the feeling that counts."

—John Coltrane[246]

In conclusion, I return to the two most fundamental questions with which I began this thesis: what is jazz theory, and how do cultural and racial dynamics affect the way in which it is taught and understood? I argued that jazz theory is not only a kind of formalized music theory intended for solitary study, but is itself a sociocultural process meant to facilitate creativity and inimitably. I contended that this process significantly shapes jazz music-learning environments and contributes to the construction of individual jazz identities. To understand better the complex relationship between jazz in academic and nonacademic learning environments, I closely examined several case studies which revealed fundamental differences in the ways that jazz theory is taught and conceived of within differing jazz subcommunities. I observed that many of these differences were due

246. John Coltrane, quoted in Goldberg, 210.

in part to tensions based upon racial, socioeconomic, and cultural dynamics. Ultimately, I focused on the ways in which racial disparities, institutionalized racism, and Eurocentric educational frameworks profoundly affect the ways in which jazz theory is conceived of, discussed, and taught inside and outside of the academy. Administrative policies of postraciality and social conventions of color-blindness serve to perpetuate a system of racial etiquette where it is not appropriate to discuss race or freely acknowledge that jazz is black music. This significantly differs from predominantly African American music-making spaces where issues of race are not only commonly discussed, but are sometimes the inspiration for specific conceptualizations of jazz.

To facilitate analysis and discussion of these contrasting social dynamics, I constructed the concepts of *formalized* and *organic* jazz theory. Although I remained ambivalent about constructing dichotomous terms to identify these culturally based music-learning systems, I found it to be essential in order to better illustrate the fundamental differences within dissimilar jazz-learning environments. I defined *formalized* jazz theory to be the standardized methods for learning and understanding jazz, especially those propagated inside the academy. These methods draw upon certain components from organic jazz theory, especially those easily systematized or discussed in written form, as well as elements from European music theory. Today, the notion of "jazz theory" has become synonymous with jazz education itself; it represents a collection of practical pedagogical models for understanding and performing jazz. A large amount of

these instructive approaches is heavily based on conventions borrowed from European art music theory and less on African American cultural antecedents. This is due, in part, to the fact that many early formalizers of jazz education had backgrounds in European classical music. Although some were experts in both black American and European musical traditions, such as David Baker, many relied on their fundamental understanding of European music to form pedagogical theories about the best ways to learn jazz. Also, since many administrators and educators viewed jazz as inferior to European music--and not worthy of being taught in secondary schools or universities--some early formalizers endeavored to make jazz seem more respectable by synthesizing it with educational conventions from European classical music. These early formalizers were ultimately successful in helping to institutionalize jazz within academia. However, one major consequence was that the music has come to be taught primarily from a western point of view that privileges European-derived values and aesthetics. Thus, African American historical and cultural contexts often are not addressed or emphasized within formalized versions of jazz education.

I defined *organic* jazz theory to be a creative process, musical paradigm, and sociocultural tradition with origins in black music-making communities. It is rooted in oral, aural, visual, verbal, and physical (bodily-kinesthetic) modes of learning. It privileges open-ended creative and critical-thinking techniques interwoven into the daily interactions of musicians, where the implicit objective is for the performer to develop

their "own sound" and approach to music-making. Musicians are encouraged to consider the theoretical constructs of their peers, jazz icons, formal music studies, and any other musical or extramusical phenomena that may inspire thought, and blend them into a unique understanding of music. This often results in reinterpretation of well-established musical theories developed by notorious musicians, teachers, and peers within and outside the jazz community. Additionally, extramusical elements such as spiritual beliefs, religious practices, lifestyle choices, political affiliations, racial identities, gender identities, and musical personhood may contribute heavily to the meaning, intentionality, conceptualization, and discourse about music. Broadly speaking, I identified this process to be a distinctive element of black American music-making.

In constructing this dichotomy between formalized and organic jazz theory, I meant not to suggest that the majority of jazz community members exist at the extremes of either of these two poles. Contrarily, most musicians tend to occupy the grey area somewhere in between. However, I argue that a jazz student's overall orientation may tend to be more influenced by one of the two sides. To explore further the contrasting teaching methods of formalized and organic jazz theory, I examined differences between what I call *qualitative* and *quantitative* jazz learning environments. Qualitative approaches to jazz theory seem to focus on *feelin'*, *groove*, emotion, personal motivations (the why), and musical creativity; quantitative approaches focus on formal methods, standardized theories, and mathematical musical constructions. Again, I must stress that

these two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but represent a certain orientation toward jazz theory and performance. Given the diverse ways in which the jazz community conceives of jazz, it follows that the notion of "jazz theory" exists in a multiplicity of facets. Yet, one of the unifying goals in formalized and organic jazz theory is to learn how to "play" and talk fluently about jazz music. In this concluding gesture, I endeavor to highlight and synthesize pertinent details from the aforementioned case studies with additional examples to support my proposition that jazz theory is a sociocultural process that significantly shapes students in differing music-learning environments. I contend that these differences may largely be drawn from culture-race dynamics, which are reflected in my theory of formalized versus organic jazz theory.

Revisiting Formalized Jazz Theory

In Chapter 3, I considered early jazz formalizers David Baker and Jamey Aebersold. Baker, who is African American, sought to create a curricular model for jazz education that synthesized African American and European musical conventions and perspectives. However, he ultimately asserted that this synthesis should reflect an African American perspective or conceptual framework. Baker devoted a large portion of his book *Jazz Pedagogy: A Comprehensive Method of Jazz Education for Teacher and Student* to issues of racism and prescribed ways to teach jazz from a black cultural perspective within an academic setting. He asserted that it is important that curricula have

courses that "represent collectively a clear and precise look at the Black man's general contributions to world music and his specific contributions to jazz and music in the U.S.A."[247] He continued that all "black-derived musics have their roots in the same sources" and that the in-depth study of the music of black people is crucial because it deeply affects "the attitudes of most students with regard to jazz, and indeed, music in general."[248] However, Baker's emphasis on race and framing jazz as black music has gone largely unrecognized by his fellow jazz educators and interlocutors, resulting in jazz departments and educational programs rooted in what I describe as *color-blindness*. As a result, topics of race and black culture continue to be inadequately addressed within many formalized jazz-learning environments.

Jamey Aebersold's Thoughts on Race and Jazz

Examining Aebersold's jazz educational empire inspired me to ask: What are Aebersold's thoughts on the controversial subject of race? The work of Aebersold, one of Baker's closest colleagues, tended to exemplify a color-blind approach to jazz education. In Chapter 3, I considered *How to Play Jazz and Improvise,* where I observed that Aebersold was careful not to address underlying issues related to race or black culture. I argued that by not addressing race, particularly in a musical form profoundly shaped by

247. Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy*, 45.

248. Ibid., 45-46.

racial dynamics, illustrates a color-blind approach to jazz education. Ultimately, I was not able to relay Aebersold's personal thoughts on race. I have been unable to find any interviews or articles where Aebersold is directly asked to address questions about the relationship between African American culture, race, and jazz education. While conducting my field study at Aebersold's camp, Shariif introduced me to Aebersold and I had the opportunity to talk briefly with him about my ethnographic study. I quickly explained that I was doing a study on the dynamics of race within the culture of jazz education. He nodded, acknowledging that he had heard me, but did not express any strong reaction, positive or negative, to the tenants of my study. This was interesting to me because Aebersold was the only person, of the many educators and students that I spoke with, that did not have a strong reaction to the subject of my work. I had hoped to obtain a formal or informal interview with Aebersold while at the camp, but he said that he did not really have time to do a face-to-face interview. He suggested that I send my questions to his assistant, who would get back with me. Given the nature of my study, and the nature of the racial etiquette at play within the culture of formalized jazz education, I did not feel comfortable sending a list of provocative questions about race to Aebersold's assistant without the opportunity to explain their context in person. It is my hope that I will have the opportunity to discuss the subject of my study in detail with Aebersold in the future.

By addressing Aebersold's reaction to the subject of my study, I mean not to criticize him for not speaking with me or for not offering his opinion about race in jazz education. But from an ethnographic standpoint, I found it interesting to compare and contrast the varying reactions that I received from other educators and students at his camp when first discussing the subject of my project with them. For instance, trombonist and educator Steve Davis expressed much interest in the topic of my study and asserted that race is an important issue that is not adequately addressed within formal settings.[249] He explained that as an educator he finds it uncomfortable to discuss issues related to race or black culture in the environment of the Aebersold camp. He then shared some of his experiences as an aspiring white jazz musician immersing himself into African American jazz-learning environments in New York City. Ultimately, he expressed a humble respect and appreciation for black culture reminiscent of fellow iconic jazz trombonist Jack Teagarden. Another educator at the Aebersold camp, trumpeter Pat Harbison, seemed quite interested in the topic of my study and expressed curiosity in hearing more about it. This was true of many educators I talked to, including Rick Simerly, Tim Coffman, Gene Walker, Jerry Coker, and others. David Baker expressed great interest and support for my study. He encouragingly remarked that I reminded him of himself years ago, with my dedication to seeing the academy be held accountable for embracing black American musical perspectives. However, he admonished me of how

249. Steve Davis, interview.

challenging it will be to take on this task. Similar words of wisdom have come from other African American jazz educators who spent much of their lives teaching jazz within academia, including Elis Marsalis, Harold Battiste, and William T. McDaniel.[250]

Although none of the educators I talked with expressed opinions dissenting from my thesis, some of the students did. As discussed in Chapter 3, Tom strongly disagreed with my proposition that black cultural and historical competency should be an important component of jazz education. He asserted that jazz is a creative process and "not the birthright of any culture in any corner of the globe."[251] During a discussion about culture and race, he said "If you take the cultural and the racial stuff—put it over here for a second," then jazz can best be understood as American music.[252] My contention is that arguments that seek to situate jazz as fundamentally American, and more recently as world, music serve to disenfranchise black Americans from the music. My argument is that the climate of racial diversity and inclusivity historically fostered among jazz musicians is inherently a distinctive characteristic of black American music-making culture. Blacks have traditionally embraced musicians of all races and ethnic backgrounds if they could "play" and were respectful of the black community. Perhaps

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250. Baker, interview; Elis Marsalis, interview by author, New Orleans, September 2, 2010, audio recording, in author's possession; Harold Battiste, interview by author, New Orleans, September 1, 2010, audio recording, in author's possession; McDaniel, interview.

251. Shariif and Tom, conversation.

252. Ibid.

this creative spirit of inclusivity contributed to forms of black music being some of the first to be embraced by peoples around the world, following the proliferation of recordings and better methods of world travel in the early 20th century. Yet, the inclusivity and openness of black music to the world community is rarely framed as a distinctive element of black music culture by academic music educators. Instead, philosophies of color-blindness are embraced, which can serve, albeit unintentionally, to belittle the historical contributions of African Americans.

Passionate Debate about Race and Jazz Education

Perhaps one of the most convincing examples of the racial unrest within formalized jazz learning environments was in the debate among Shariif, Tom, and me, addressed in Chapter 3. This argument revealed a critical underlying problem, in which race is the fundamental element. Shariif argued that jazz is an African American music stolen from blacks by greedy whites. Tom disagreed and asserted that jazz is an American music and therefore unnecessary to immerse oneself in the culture and history of black Americans to learn how to play jazz. In my discussion with Shariif and Tom, the topic of the blues came up when Tom opened up an Aebersold theory book and pointed out a blues scale. Tom suggested that Aebersold's booklet adequately addressed the blues concept by offering an examination of the "blues scale." My assertion was that merely learning what has come to be called the blue scales, or understanding a 12-bar form, is

not sufficient to learning how to play the blues. As Miles Davis said in a discussion about the blues with one of his teachers from Julliard, "There's more to it than that."[253] For me, the cultural and historical elements of the blues are a critical component for learning how to play it.

Jazz Theory Forums, Academic Discourse, and Eurocentrism

Discussions about jazz theory occurred in places other than academic classrooms or jazz camps. In Chapter 3, I considered the interactions between jazz students and educators on internet-based forums. The conversations revealed a handful of social dynamics associated with formalized jazz theory. Some of these included the way in which European classical music is often used as a benchmark for jazz, and how standardized theoretical lingo is used as a kind of prestige language upon which social status is based. Also, students tended to express the attitude that it would be easy to intellectually master the components of jazz theory but harder to put into practice. Such sentiments correlated with the conversations I had about jazz theory with students at the Aebersold camp, highlighted earlier in the chapter. An evaluation of the forum conversation shows a lack of discussion about African American cultural antecedents, although correlations between jazz and European music were freely made. In one of the

253. Davis and Troupe, 59.

forum threads, a participant suggested that European composers had already mastered certain melodic and harmonic inventions directly related to jazz, asserting, "Mozart and Bach already did that."[254] I argued that the common attribution of credit to great European composers for what can be viewed as similar musical elements reinforces Eurocentic notions by implicitly positioning these composers as surrogate founding fathers of jazz.

Some of the true founding fathers of jazz were also concerned that their innovations and contributions might be attributed to European composers. In Chapter 2, I provided one example, where Charlie Parker asserted to an interviewer that "Nothin'-not a bit of the idiom in which music travels today, known as progressive [bebop] music, was adapted [from] or even inspired by the older composers."[255] Similarly, when compared to Ravel, Bach, and Stravinsky, Duke Ellington felt it necessary to "dispel the notion that I hesitate to place the jazz medium in a top musical category," and that "to attempt to elevate the status of the jazz musician by forcing the level of his best work into comparisons with classical music is to deny him this rightful share of originality."[256] Given the tenor of the forum discussions, Parker's and Ellington's statements about the misattribution of jazz are as relevant today as they were fifty or sixty years ago.

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254. princeplanet et al.

255. Monson, 86-87.

256. Ibid., 87.

Ultimately, I argued that the injurious misattributions of jazz reflected in the forum discussions contribute to an attitude among students that jazz is important because it resembles European music. This causes many students to feel that jazz theory is simple and easy to understand, since past European composers had already mastered such feats before the creation of jazz. Noticeably missing from these forum discussions are conversations about African American musical culture and history, or culturally informed discussions of *feelin'*, tone, development of one's own sound or theoretical concept, connection of one's personal character with music-making, and other qualitative elements.

There is also a lack of African American cultural and historical contexts in the academic discourse of some music theorists and musicologists. The methods of formal analysis sometimes used for these kinds of studies often take "as its starting-point the music itself, rather than external factors."[257] I argue that using such methods to isolate jazz from its cultural context can lead to problematic assumptions about the meaning, intentionality, and conceptualization of the performers being examined. One such example is where Butterfield compared the swing concept of a Coleman Hawkins solo with one of Charlie Parker. He observed that Hawkins usually had a higher BUR than

257. Bent and Pople.

Parker, "reflecting a very uneven, triplet-like swing conception,"[258] and asserted that "Hawkins's line 'chugs' along, whereas Parker's exhibits greater forward propulsion and drive."[259] I argued that this perspective is problematic because Butterfield failed to establish a cultural, historical, or aesthetic lens in which to evaluate the data respectfully and objectively. From a historical perspective, comparing Hawkins with Parker in this type of critical light was like comparing apples to oranges. It was particularly disrespectful to Hawkins, who directly influenced many bebop innovators. He was noted for his tireless ability to evolve as a musician, reflected by recordings he made later in his career with some of the most progressive jazz musicians--including Sonny Rollins, who considered Hawkins his main influence,[260] and John Coltrane. Hawkins was also a notable guest performer on "Driva Man" from Max Roach's 1960 *We Insist!* suite,[261] an album known for its racially and politically charged sociomusical commentary.

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258. Butterfield, "Why Do Jazz Musicians?," 8.

259. Ibid.

260. Eric Nisenson, *Open Sky: Sonny Rollins and His World of Improvisation*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000), 26.

261. Max Roach, *We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite* originally recorded 1960, Columbia Records, 1980.

Revisiting Organic Jazz Theory

Theoretical approaches to learning and performing jazz music predate its formalization, and a close examination of black American musical and cultural traditions reveal ways in which jazz theory was conceived of and taught differently from those that have become most accepted within academia. In Chapter 2, I considered several case studies that exposed jazz theory as an organic cultural process within historically black American jazz music-learning environments. Although there was a certain kind of relationship that black musicians had with white musical institutions, I contended that the knowledge gleaned was often taken back to the black community and filtered through a black cultural lens. I observed this process, made possible in part by national policies of segregation, to be a distinctive characteristic of black music-learning processes. I also considered the prospect of white musicians who sought to learn about jazz in black music-making spaces. Again, I found the immersion of aspiring white musicians into black culture, exemplified in this essay by iconic trombonists Jack Teagarden and Steve Davis, also to be a distinctive characteristic of black music-making culture. Again, these cultural dynamics were historically shaped by policies of racial segregation. Ultimately, Teagarden and Davis' intense respect for and pursuit of black American music culture for the purpose of learning how to play jazz was an important traditional jazz learning model, underdiscussed in modern-day academic jazz educator circles.

In Chapter 2, I identified Miles Davis as one of the most iconic organic jazz theorists. I pointed out how Davis synthesized what he learned in his informal and formal musical experiences to cultivate an organic approach to jazz theory. Following high school, Davis briefly attended Julliard. Although he claimed to have used Julliard as a pretense for relocating to New York City to be near Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, he took full advantage of school resources and training. This included pianos, to apply much of the music theory that Gillespie was sharing with him, and access to libraries, where he could obtain scores of European and European-American composers to study. Although Davis' actions may seem natural today, it was a revolutionary act for a black person to embrace a sense of entitlement for knowledge and resources usually meant only for whites. As a practitioner of organic jazz theory, Davis felt empowered to be grounded in the history of black musical performance while remaining eager to draw upon a multiplicity of outside influences. As Davis put it:

> Knowledge is freedom and ignorance is slavery, and I just couldn't believe someone could be that close to freedom and not take advantage of it. I have never understood why black people didn't take advantage of all the shit that they can. It's like a ghetto mentality telling people that they aren't supposed to do certain things, that those things are only reserved for white people.[262]

This sentiment is significant because it not only reveals the evolving sense of personhood being adopted by blacks leading up to the Civil Right movement, but a pedagogical

262. Davis and Troupe, 60-61.

tradition in black music in which the struggle for civic liberation results in a great freedom of creative artistic expression.

The practice of blacks using available resources to learn and create world-class art is a distinctive element of black culture that may be traced to all corners of the African diaspora. Jazz had its origins with blacks having access to a surplus of abandoned European concert band instruments following the American Civil War.[263] On southern plantations during slavery, resourceful blacks learned to construct single-stringed instruments out of a single string of bailing wire tensioned between two nails on a board over a glass bottle. These monochord zithers, which have come to be known as *diddley bows*, were intertwined with the history of the creation of the blues and may be traced to West Africa.[264] My contention is the actions of early blues musicians making their own instruments, poor black street musicians performing world-class music using only household items, and early jazz musicians taking full advantage of abandoned concert band instruments express the resourceful spirit that is a fundamental element of black American music-making. I argue that the cultivation of Miles Davis' unique sound

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263. James L. Conyers, *African American Jazz and Rap: Social and Philosophical Examinations of Black Expressive Behavior* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001), 56-58. Conyers wrote, "The combination of West African musical retentions and the American Civil War played important roles in the development of jazz. The writer believes the Civil War was significant in the development of jazz. This significance was provided by the abundance of cheap band instruments that were sold by disbanding military units or abandoned on the field of battle during and after the Civil War. The instruments were not new to the ex-slave because the marching armies exposed much of the South to the use of the instruments by playing popular marches." Also see *The Land Where the Blues Began*, directed by Alan Lomax (Pacific Arts Video, 1979).

264. Gerhard Kubik, *Africa and the Blues* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), 16-17.

quality, Louis Armstrong's innovated improvisatory style, Charlie Parker's melodic approach, John Coltrane's innovative use of Slonimsky's Thesaurus, Ornette Coleman's construction of his own Harmolodic theory, George Russell's development of the Lydian Chromatic Concept, David Baker's bebop pedagogy theory, and Chuck Young's ingenuity to use a car battery and power-inverter to perform Jamey Aebersold play-alongs on the streets of Cincinnati are all expressions of organic jazz theory. They illustrate the spirit of improvisation that is synonymous with jazz and the black American experience.

Oral/Aural Traditions

In Chapter 2, I consider the impact of early jazz recordings, method books on jazz, and the oral/aural tradition. I argued that the dichotomous oral/aural versus literate music culture concept is problematic, as it does not take into account the importance of the physical and visual processes intertwined with verbal and aural ones. In discussions about music recordings being "the first jazz textbooks," the culture in which the recordings were listened to is often not addressed. From black juke joints to phonographs in the home, the people who listened to records did so while being influenced by their cultural orientation. I endeavored to offer a theory of music-learning that goes beyond the oral versus literate music culture concept, as music-learning within an African context is not just an oral or aural, but also a mental, physical, and spiritual, experience that relies on more than just learning by rote. Further, musical communities that rely on oral

transmission are sometimes framed as "other," or as the exception to literate music-making cultures. This frame tends to situate literate music and its notational practices as different from, or more highly developed than, oral approaches. I argued that such a simplistic perspective seems not to do justice to music-learning methods from both nonliterate African and European antecedents.

Final Thoughts

In this essay, I examined the notion of "jazz theory" as a social process and considered the way in which it exists within differing jazz communities. Broadly speaking, I connected formalized jazz theory with the culture that academic jazz education has engendered, and organic jazz theory with the traditional edification process found in African American communities. Although I am not completely satisfied with the terms formal and organic jazz theory, I found it important to draw a distinction between these two approaches. By looking at jazz culture through the lens of jazz theory, I shed light on racial disparities, racialized social etiquettes, Eurocentrism, and disrespect and a disregard for black culture that serves to disenfranchise the music from its historical roots. Although jazz seems to be thriving in the academy, educators have been very slow to deviate substantially from European notions of art and music. In order to change this, the academy would have to accept new aesthetic criteria and forms of creativity from outside the European and Euro-American schools of musical training and performance.

I am well aware that most jazz-learning environments blend qualitative and quantitative learning methods. My purpose was not to imply that academic theory objectives are all mathematical and African American all qualitative. However, I hoped to show that there are profound differences in the ways that students become oriented toward the practice of learning jazz. I endeavored to show how sociocultural value systems in the jazz community tend to be drawn along educational lines reflecting constructed racial and socioeconomic boundaries. I found that many academically oriented jazz students, educators, and researchers have a predilection for discussing complex theoretical ideas based on standardized approaches to jazz, as evidenced by the forum examinations and Butterfield's article. Conversely, within black musical contexts, there is an exigency to play music that expresses the right feelin', is spiritually meaningful, grooves, and swings. Furthermore, in general, musicians are encouraged to explore and develop personal theories about music that work for them. Later these theories may be discussed among peers, where they can influence and possibly change the musical thoughts of others. However, this organic tradition is quickly eroding as fewer young black children endeavor to learn to play instruments, and consequently jazz, than in past generations.

What should be done about jazz theory in the future of jazz education? I will address this question by posing another: If students and teachers were better educated about African American history, black American music culture, critical race theories, and

dynamics of ethnic diversity, and if they had first-hand experiences performing in African American musical contexts, would they be better equipped and more likely to enter into discussions about race, or feel more comfortable addressing African American musical antecedents? My proposition is that the current paradigm of color-blindness within academic jazz education should be shifted to one of cultural and historical competency, where it is no longer taboo to discuss issues of race or assert that jazz is black music. To do this, students and educators alike would need to be more effectively educated about the nature of race and diversity. Furthermore, increasing racial diversification within jazz departments should be a top priority for music school administrators. Perhaps if academic jazz learning-environments evolved to become more culturally sensitive to African American values and systems of education, there would be a greater retention rate among black students. Many black students, such as Shariif, say that they feel uncomfortable in academic learning environments where they are unable to express themselves in ways that do not conform to Eurocentric social norms and racial etiquettes.

Overall, I prefer a jazz program that favors diverse forms of knowledge and differing perspectives. However, the context in which knowledge is disseminated and interpreted is just as important as the content. Thus, the sociocultural circumstances and motivations of the knowledge seeker will be inextricably linked with the knowledge to be gained. I agree with David Baker that jazz history and performance should be taught from

a black cultural perspective and social context.[265] Although I have constructed a theoretical binary for the purposes of this paper, I would like to see a single paradigm develop that is rooted in the organic tradition and inherently allows for a multicity of approaches. It should inspire students to examine the past while moving forward into the future. A musician, then, does not merely study New Orleans style jazz or bebop for the sake of preserving a lost style, but investigates the totality of black music with a creative frame that fosters new directions. This creative perspective, which I argue has been a part of jazz's artistic center from its beginning, is the endangered improvisatory art that many jazz elders voice concern about losing. Willie Smart asked, "But can you play?" My subsequent question is, "Can you create and innovate?" To what extent may the requirement to be able to play be linked with an obligation to innovate? To what extent is damning the rules and playing with feeling, as asserted by Coltrane,[266] itself the rule?

265. Baker, *Jazz Pedagogy*, 45-46.

266. Goldberg, 210.

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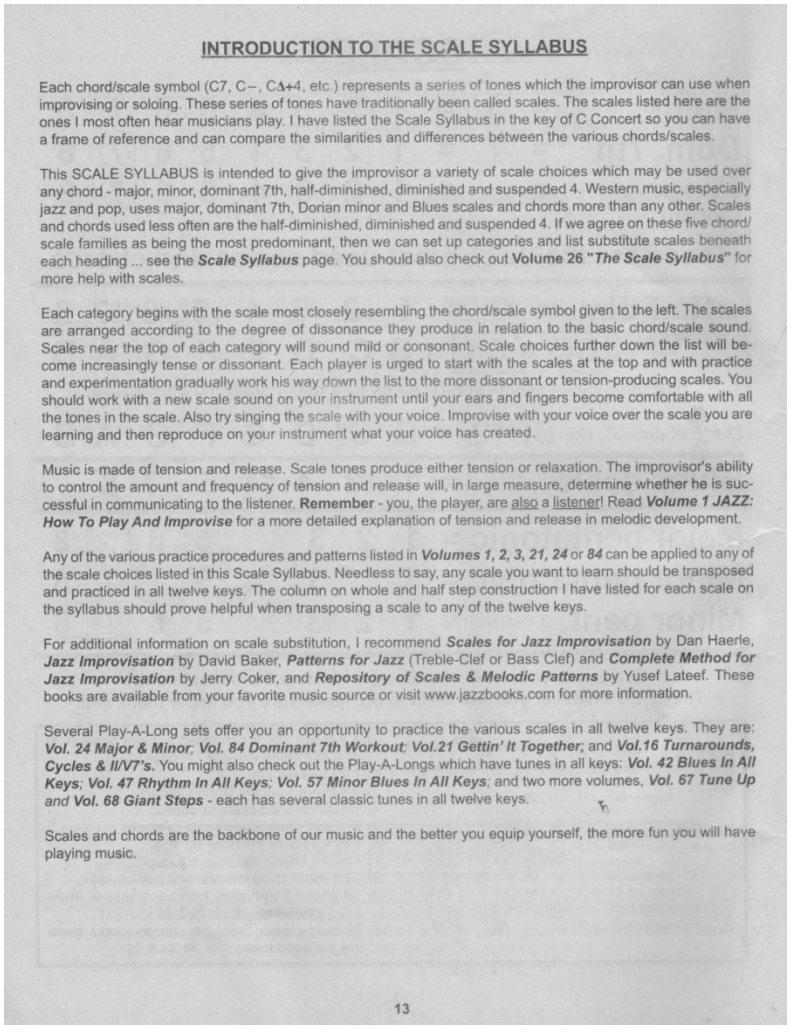
Appendix: Excerpts from Jamey Aebersold's *Jazz Handbook*.



INTRODUCTION TO THE SCALE SYLLABUS

Each chord/scale symbol (C7, C−, CΔ+4, etc.) represents a series of tones which the improvisor can use when improvising or soloing. These series of tones have traditionally been called scales. The scales listed here are the ones I most often hear musicians play. I have listed the Scale Syllabus in the key of C Concert so you can have a frame of reference and can compare the similarities and differences between the various chords/scales.

This SCALE SYLLABUS is intended to give the improvisor a variety of scale choices which may be used over any chord - major, minor, dominant 7th, half-diminished, diminished and suspended 4. Western music, especially jazz and pop, uses major, dominant 7th, Dorian minor and Blues scales and chords more than any other. Scales and chords used less often are the half-diminished, diminished and suspended 4. If we agree on these five chord/scale families as being the most predominant, then we can set up categories and list substitute scales beneath each heading ... see the ***Scale Syllabus*** page. You should also check out **Volume 26 "*The Scale Syllabus*"** for more help with scales.

Each category begins with the scale most closely resembling the chord/scale symbol given to the left. The scales are arranged according to the degree of dissonance they produce in relation to the basic chord/scale sound. Scales near the top of each category will sound mild or consonant. Scale choices further down the list will become increasingly tense or dissonant. Each player is urged to start with the scales at the top and with practice and experimentation gradually work his way down the list to the more dissonant or tension-producing scales. You should work with a new scale sound on your instrument until your ears and fingers become comfortable with all the tones in the scale. Also try singing the scale with your voice. Improvise with your voice over the scale you are learning and then reproduce on your instrument what your voice has created.

Music is made of tension and release. Scale tones produce either tension or relaxation. The improvisor's ability to control the amount and frequency of tension and release will, in large measure, determine whether he is successful in communicating to the listener. **Remember** - you, the player, are also a listener! Read ***Volume 1 JAZZ: How To Play And Improvise*** for a more detailed explanation of tension and release in melodic development.

Any of the various practice procedures and patterns listed in ***Volumes 1, 2, 3, 21, 24*** or ***84*** can be applied to any of the scale choices listed in this Scale Syllabus. Needless to say, any scale you want to learn should be transposed and practiced in all twelve keys. The column on whole and half step construction I have listed for each scale on the syllabus should prove helpful when transposing a scale to any of the twelve keys.

For additional information on scale substitution, I recommend ***Scales for Jazz Improvisation*** by Dan Haerle, ***Jazz Improvisation*** by David Baker, ***Patterns for Jazz*** (Treble-Clef or Bass Clef) and ***Complete Method for Jazz Improvisation*** by Jerry Coker, and ***Repository of Scales & Melodic Patterns*** by Yusef Lateef. These books are available from your favorite music source or visit www.jazzbooks.com for more information.

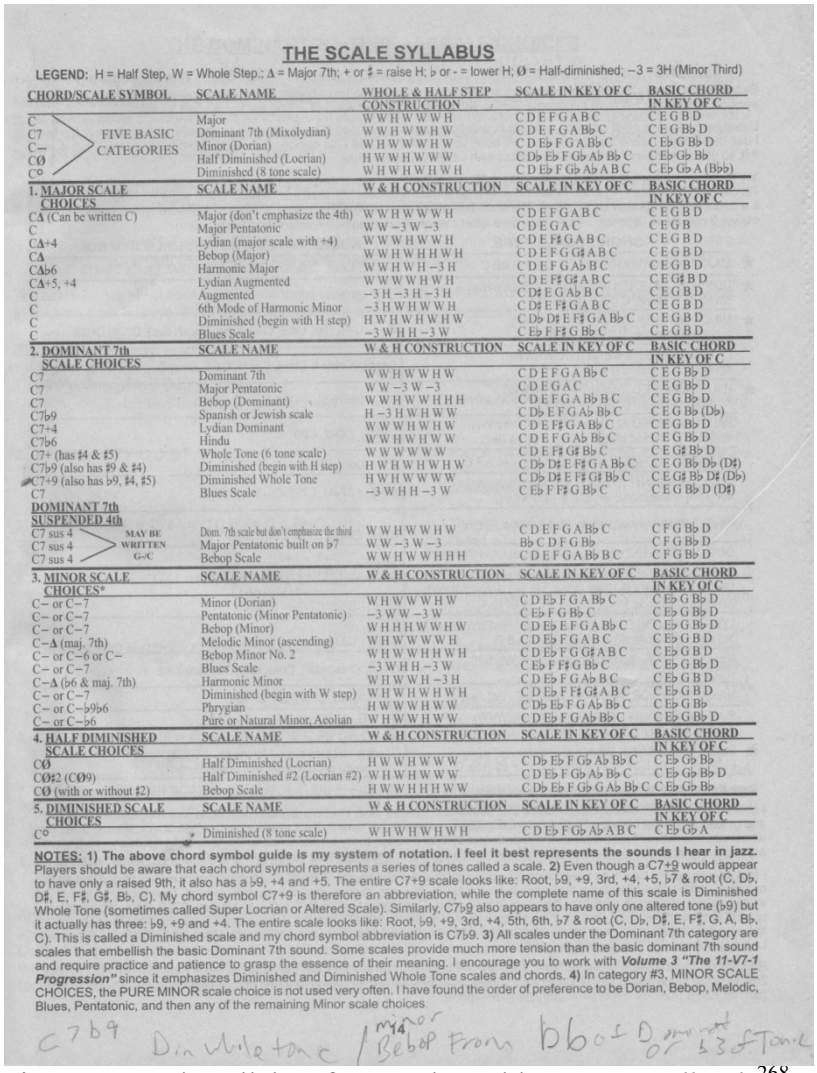
Several Play-A-Long sets offer you an opportunity to practice the various scales in all twelve keys. They are: ***Vol. 24 Major & Minor***; ***Vol. 84 Dominant 7th Workout***; ***Vol.21 Gettin' It Together***; and ***Vol.16 Turnarounds, Cycles & II/V7's.*** You might also check out the Play-A-Longs which have tunes in all keys: ***Vol. 42 Blues In All Keys***; ***Vol. 47 Rhythm In All Keys***; ***Vol. 57 Minor Blues In All Keys***; and two more volumes, ***Vol. 67 Tune Up*** and ***Vol. 68 Giant Steps*** - each has several classic tunes in all twelve keys.

Scales and chords are the backbone of our music and the better you equip yourself, the more fun you will have playing music.

13

Figure 5. Introduction to the scale syllabus from Aebersold's *Jazz Handbook*.[267]

267. Jamey Aebersold, *Jazz Handbook* (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz, 2000), 13.



THE SCALE SYLLABUS

LEGEND: H = Half Step, W = Whole Step.; Δ = Major 7th; + or ♯ = raise H; ♭ or - = lower H; Ø = Half-diminished; –3 = 3H (Minor Third)

CHORD/SCALE SYMBOL	SCALE NAME	WHOLE & HALF STEP CONSTRUCTION	SCALE IN KEY OF C	BASIC CHORD IN KEY OF C
C	Major	W W H W W W H	C D E F G A B C	C E G B D
C7 — FIVE BASIC	Dominant 7th (Mixolydian)	W W H W W H W	C D E F G A B♭ C	C E G B♭ D
C– — CATEGORIES	Minor (Dorian)	W H W W W H W	C D E♭ F G A B♭ C	C E♭ G B♭ D
CØ	Half Diminished (Locrian)	H W W H W W W	C D♭ E♭ F G♭ A♭ B♭ C	C E♭ G♭ B♭
C°	Diminished (8 tone scale)	W H W H W H W H	C D E♭ F G♭ A♭ A B C	C E♭ G♭ A (B♭♭)
1. MAJOR SCALE CHOICES	**SCALE NAME**	**W & H CONSTRUCTION**	**SCALE IN KEY OF C**	**BASIC CHORD IN KEY OF C**
CΔ (Can be written C)	Major (don't emphasize the 4th)	W W H W W W H	C D E F G A B C	C E G B D
C	Major Pentatonic	W W –3 W –3	C D E G A C	C E G B
CΔ+4	Lydian (major scale with +4)	W W W H W W H	C D E F♯ G A B C	C E G B D
CΔ	Bebop (Major)	W W H W H H W H	C D E F G A♭ B♭ C	C E G B D
CΔb6	Harmonic Major	W W H W H –3 H	C D E F G A♭ B C	C E G B D
CΔ+5, +4	Lydian Augmented	W W W W H W H	C D E F♯ G♯ A B C	C E G♯ B D
C	Augmented	–3 H –3 H –3 H	C D♯ E G A♭ B C	C E G B D
C	6th Mode of Harmonic Minor	–3 H W H W W H	C D♯ E F♯ G A B C	C E G B D
C	Diminished (begin with H step)	H W H W H W H W	C D♭ D♯ E F♯ G A B♭ C	C E G B D
C	Blues Scale	–3 W H H –3 W	C E♭ F F♯ G B♭ C	C E G B D
2. DOMINANT 7th SCALE CHOICES	**SCALE NAME**	**W & H CONSTRUCTION**	**SCALE IN KEY OF C**	**BASIC CHORD IN KEY OF C**
C7	Dominant 7th	W W H W W H W	C D E F G A B♭ C	C E G B♭ D
C7	Major Pentatonic	W W –3 W –3	C D E G A C	C E G B♭ D
C7	Bebop (Dominant)	W W H W W H H H	C D E F G A B♭ B C	C E G B♭ D
C7b9	Spanish or Jewish scale	H –3 H W H W W	C D♭ E F G A♭ B♭ C	C E G B♭ (D♭)
C7+4	Lydian Dominant	W W W H W H W	C D E F♯ G A B♭ C	C E G B♭ D
C7b6	Hindu	W W H W H W W	C D E F G A♭ B♭ C	C E G B♭ D
C7+ (has ♯4 & ♯5)	Whole Tone (6 tone scale)	W W W W W W	C D E F♯ G♯ B♭ C	C E G♯ B♭ D
C7b9 (also has ♯9 & ♯4)	Diminished (begin with H step)	H W H W H W H W	C D♭ D♯ E F♯ G A B♭ C	C E G B♭ D♭ (D♯)
C7+9 (also has ♭9, ♯4, ♯5)	Diminished Whole Tone	H W H W W W W	C D♭ D♯ E F♯ G♯ B♭ C	C E G♯ B♭ D♯ (D♭)
C7	Blues Scale	–3 W H H –3 W	C E♭ F F♯ G B♭ C	C E G B♭ D (D♯)
DOMINANT 7th SUSPENDED 4th				
C7 sus 4 — MAY BE WRITTEN G–/C	Dom. 7th scale but don't emphasize the third	W W H W W H W	C D E F G A B♭ C	C F G B♭ D
C7 sus 4	Major Pentatonic built on ♭7	W W –3 W –3	B♭ C D F G B♭	C F G B♭ D
C7 sus 4	Bebop Scale	W W H W W H H H	C D E F G A B♭ B C	C F G B♭ D
3. MINOR SCALE CHOICES*	**SCALE NAME**	**W & H CONSTRUCTION**	**SCALE IN KEY OF C**	**BASIC CHORD IN KEY OF C**
C– or C–7	Minor (Dorian)	W H W W W H W	C D E♭ F G A B♭ C	C E♭ G B♭ D
C– or C–7	Pentatonic (Minor Pentatonic)	–3 W W –3 W	C E♭ F G B♭ C	C E♭ G B♭ D
C– or C–7	Bebop (Minor)	W H H H W W H W	C D E♭ E F G A B♭ C	C E♭ G B♭ D
C–Δ (maj. 7th)	Melodic Minor (ascending)	W H W W W W H	C D E♭ F G A B C	C E♭ G B D
C– or C–6 or C–	Bebop Minor No. 2	W H W W H H W H	C D E♭ F G G♯ A B C	C E♭ G B D
C– or C–7	Blues Scale	–3 W H H –3 W	C E♭ F F♯ G B♭ C	C E♭ G B♭ D
C–Δ (♭6 & maj. 7th)	Harmonic Minor	W H W W H –3 H	C D E♭ F G A♭ B C	C E♭ G B D
C– or C–7	Diminished (begin with W step)	W H W H W H W H	C D E♭ F F♯ G♯ A B C	C E♭ G B D
C– or C–♭9♭6	Phrygian	H W W W H W W	C D♭ E♭ F G A♭ B♭ C	C E♭ G B♭
C– or C–♭6	Pure or Natural Minor, Aeolian	W H W W H W W	C D E♭ F G A♭ B♭ C	C E♭ G B♭ D
4. HALF DIMINISHED SCALE CHOICES	**SCALE NAME**	**W & H CONSTRUCTION**	**SCALE IN KEY OF C**	**BASIC CHORD IN KEY OF C**
CØ	Half Diminished (Locrian)	H W W H W W W	C D♭ E♭ F G♭ A♭ B♭ C	C E♭ G♭ B♭
CØ♯2 (CØ9)	Half Diminished #2 (Locrian #2)	W H W H W W W	C D E♭ F G♭ A♭ B♭ C	C E♭ G♭ B♭ D
CØ (with or without ♯2)	Bebop Scale	H W W H H H W W	C D♭ E♭ F G♭ G A♭ B♭ C	C E♭ G♭ B♭
5. DIMINISHED SCALE CHOICES	**SCALE NAME**	**W & H CONSTRUCTION**	**SCALE IN KEY OF C**	**BASIC CHORD IN KEY OF C**
C°	Diminished (8 tone scale)	W H W H W H W H	C D E♭ F G♭ A♭ A B C	C E♭ G♭ A

NOTES: 1) The above chord symbol guide is my system of notation. I feel it best represents the sounds I hear in jazz. Players should be aware that each chord symbol represents a series of tones called a scale. **2)** Even though a C7+9 would appear to have only a raised 9th, it also has a ♭9, +4 and +5. The entire C7+9 scale looks like: Root, ♭9, +9, 3rd, +4, +5, ♭7 & root (C, D♭, D♯, E, F♯, G♯, B♭, C). My chord symbol C7+9 is therefore an abbreviation, while the complete name of this scale is Diminished Whole Tone (sometimes called Super Locrian or Altered Scale). Similarly, C7♭9 also appears to have only one altered tone (♭9) but it actually has three: ♭9, +9 and +4. The entire scale looks like: Root, ♭9, +9, 3rd, +4, 5th, 6th, ♭7 & root (C, D♭, D♯, E, F♯, G, A, B♭, C). This is called a Diminished scale and my chord symbol abbreviation is C7♭9. **3)** All scales under the Dominant 7th category are scales that embellish the basic Dominant 7th sound. Some scales provide much more tension than the basic dominant 7th sound and require practice and patience to grasp the essence of their meaning. I encourage you to work with ***Volume 3 "The 11-V7-1 Progression"*** since it emphasizes Diminished and Diminished Whole Tone scales and chords. **4)** In category #3, MINOR SCALE CHOICES, the PURE MINOR scale choice is not used very often. I have found the order of preference to be Dorian, Bebop, Melodic, Blues, Pentatonic, and then any of the remaining Minor scale choices.

C7b9 Dm whole tone / minor Bebop from b6 of Dom or b3 of Tonic

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Figure 6. Scale syllabus from Aebersold's *Jazz Handbook*.[268]

The bottom of page 14 has some personal notes that took. I am not sure when these notes were added. It says C7b9; Dm, whole tone/minor bebop from b6 of dominant or b3 of tonic.

268. Jamey Aebersold, *Jazz Handbook*, 14.