



**A Short History...**

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## 1 Introduction

This series of articles for JazzFriends will hopefully offer a perspective on Jazz in a historical and cultural context - and I hope spark some discussion pro and con related to the themes covered in each. I will try to provide my research sources and some recordings to support the views expressed.

As this is an introduction to what I hope will be a complete series [over time], I thought I would outline the future content and also attempt to articulate the context in which I view the development of Jazz and the forces which shaped this music.

The outline is 7 broad categories:

- The earliest African/European cross culturalization
- The roots of Jazz before the turn of the Century
- The New Orleans/Chicago/Big Band Period to Mid-1950's
- The development of Bop and the resulting emphasis on Jazz as Concert Music [rather than a Functional Music]
- The immediate Post-Bop era to mid-1960
- The Modal/Fusion development to late-1970
- The stylistic fractionalization from 1980 to the present

The context is a little longer. So first, I wish to state, that I am self taught in this. I have no formal training in Jazz History - I am a Guitarist. That training was through private lessons and the musicians I worked with [all of whom worked or were taught by others who lived through the period from the late 20's on]. Second, I have no prejudices about what is Jazz [and I'm not going to define what is or is not Jazz] - if it is honest and comes from a "Jazz" esthetic I will accept it, though I might not like it. And finally, I consider the Arts of a particular culture or era an access point into that culture or time period - provided you are willing to learn the esthetic language of the particular Art form [Music is often described as the Universal Language and I would disagree].

I view the history of Jazz as a cultural history of the United States- the good and the bad. It's roots developed from the mingling of cultures, the circumstances of which were, euphemistically, not the best. That such a beautiful and enduring art form could spring from such circumstances is an amazement to me and a tribute to the strength and endurance of the human spirit. That it has become, in reality, an underground music in our present era is a constant grief.

When I decided to write this series I originally was going to jump right in and start on the subject immediately - I decided not to. Instead, this introduction became an important prelude for me. I teach Jazz Ensembles at small music center in Boston. I constantly, in that role, deal with highly motivated people who want to learn, want to play, and, for the most part, force time out of very busy schedules to participate. I thought it would be all theory and more theory. It was not. I found myself dealing with two major issues - Repertoire and Performance Practice. Neither of these are solely theory specific and so learning "Jazz Theory", which essentially is the bebop tradition, will not generate an adequate vocabulary for performance. What was lacking, was an understanding of the different stylistic periods, the repertoire associated with those periods, and how to realize the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic conventions within these styles - to my mind, a lack of historical perspective about the musical styles within the genre we call Jazz.

There is another consequence - a realization that Jazz is not a static language, but is constantly evolving. The Music responds to the cultural environment which surrounds it - and our culture is certainly not static.

Recently, in response to 'Frequently Asked Questions' about styles, I recorded some tapes for class use. I recorded them chronologically from the early 1900's to mid 1990's. I had done this type of listening regularly when I was in college but that was 20 years ago. It turned out to be an education for me. I was comfortable with everything up to the early 1980's - then I had to struggle with what was new. The

music had evolved and I had to catch up ! Yet, I was able to find familiarity in much of what I listened to. But, I had to listen and draw upon my knowledge of what came before.

This whole episode put into perspective a simple statement from my college days - new is often a logical outgrowth or a reaction against previous practice - listening in this fashion illuminated this statement. By the way, this was advice from a professor in a History of Western Music Class. I had admitted no knowledge of the Classical repertoire or history. His advice preceding this statement was listen chronologically, choose what you like, identify what you don't, study both to understand why. I hope I never forget this and always apply it to my musical pursuits.

Again, I hope this Introduction will provide an orientation for the subsequent articles and spark some interaction with the themes of each.

## **2 Africa and Europe : Cross Culturalization**

One of the things I find fascinating about Jazz is how two musical cultures found a common ground for interaction and I thought I would relate some of the things I discovered in searching for these common areas. It might be helpful to look at some generalizations about music and society and then cover the similarities which are found between African and European attitudes and practices regarding music.

First, Music in any culture is integrated with the activities of the society at large - it is defined and placed into the fabric of daily life and this results in the way music is ordered in society and how people think about what music is and should be. This integration varies by culture - but it is not the differences but the commonalities which enable cross culturalization. It is these common areas that can be the most difficult to identify - I think the new and unusual can often overwhelm the similarities between different cultures. Just dealing with how music functions in a society breaks down into numerous parts and not all Genres and Styles function the same within each society and not all functions are specifically musical or artistic.

Music can function as : Aesthetic enjoyment, Entertainment, Communication, Symbolic representation, Physical response, Enforcing conformity and Social norms, Validate social institutions and religious rituals, Contribute to continuity & stability, Contribute to the integration of society, and Emotional expression.

You should know this is not my own list - I found it in "The Anthropology of Music" by Alan P. Merriam [Northwestern University Press, 1964]. It started me thinking about music beyond the Notes and Chord Changes. What I did was take a style of music I was familiar with and try to identify the functions it might or might not have in our culture. It was surprising to see how music works in our culture - and more so, that even in our corporate mass entertainment media these functions still have validity. Ours is a complex society and the components of this culture are complex. All of the music I worked with had more than one function ascribed to it. - it could be Physical response as dance music, Emotional expression as words describing lost love, Aesthetic enjoyment as OK I did like the Notes and Chord Changes, Entertainment as it was fun and enjoyable to listen to.

This was with musics I was familiar with ! Something new and "foreign" would require a little set up work. That set up work was easy - listening. The following list is what I used:

- Roots of Black Music In America-music of the slave areas of West Africa and the music of the United States and the Caribbean; Folkways FA2694
- Music Down Home-an introduction to negro folk music, USA; Folkways FA 2691
- Negro Folk Music of Africa and America; Ethnic Folkways FE 4500
- Ballads of Black America; Folkways FC 7751
- Bantu High Life; Folkways FW 8857

- The Columbia World Library of Folk and Primitive Music, British East Africa; Columbia Ethnic Series 91A.02017
- Black Music of South America; Nonesuch H-72036
- The Country Blues: Vol 2, Edited by Samuel Charters; Folkways RBF 9

It's not an all inclusive list - nor restricted to solely Tribal music. What I wanted was an overview - could I hear similarities in this mix of Traditional and Modern, Native and Transplanted, Authentic and Derivative musics. Well, I could not at first. I needed something to focus my listening. A good reference is a short book - "Folk and Traditional Music of the Western Continents", Bruno Nettl, [Prentice Hall History of Music Series, 1973]. Two chapters were very relevant: Music of Black Africa and Afro-American Folk Music In North and Latin America. One caution: when we speak of African music don't assume all music from Africa is the same - there are very many cultural differences and variations. The term African is just a geographical reference, not a single musical entity - the same can happen when Latin Music is used to describe all music from or rooted in the various genres and styles from Latin America.

One of the interesting items is that some of the general characteristics for tribal music are not found in African music. For instance, in tribal society [Nettl uses the term "non literate" or primitive. I don't agree with this description for a tribal society], participation in musical activities is general and all persons participate equally. To the contrary, in African music, there are many instances of a class of professional musicians who earn their living from music and are regarded as specialists. In some tribes, there is a classification of different types of musicians. The status of musicians vary by culture but Nettl mentions one tribe the Basongye who:

"regard musicians as being of low status. Musicians are said to be heavy drinkers, debtors, unreliable, impotent, adulterers, poor marriage risks.....People do not want their children to become musicians, but the musicians are nevertheless tolerated because they are essential to the life of the whole group"

As a working musician, I thought this statement sounded rather familiar - except for impotent [I just thought that should be mentioned].

The functions of African music are many and varied as in any complex society - and Tribal society is a complex society. Nettl indicates that the uses of music in Africa "parallel those of European folk music". There is a large quantity of music used for religious and ceremonial purposes, for entertainment, social songs, songs of political expression [royal drums, fanfares, criticism/praise of authority], to spread news and gossip, and work songs. These functions are all found in the folk music of 18th Century England and America.

There is also a large variety of instruments - flutes, tuned/untuned percussion, strings both plucked and bowed. The one unifying characteristic is the percussive ideal in instruments [not percussion!] - plucked strings outnumber bowed. Also, there are musical performance groups of varying sizes - up to small orchestras of 30 with a conductor. Again, much similarity with European music, but with one notable difference - a different sound ideal.

Performance practice is probably the one element most retained by African cultures displaced to the New World. Most often mentioned is call and response and improvisation - as a variation on the theme. Call and response has a leader singing a musical phrase and a chorus responding with another. Improvisation as variation works off of the original melody and adds variations to the melody each time it is repeated. The improvisational aspect of the performance also gave:

"rise to polyphonic forms which utilize melodic and rhythmic polyphony organized by short melodic units"

- the performers developed more than one melody while singing together, a percussion section more

than one rhythm superimposed. These African characteristics resulted in a:

“sophistication of musical form rivaling those of European art music - based upon the basic musical principles of brevity, repetition and variation, binary structure, and improvisation”

- any complex musical composition follows an organization in linear time that the listener can make sense of - provided they are familiar with the musical language being used.

In melody, African music sounds familiar. It does not have an exotic or unintelligible sound to it that some other cultural musics have. It seems to fit the “diatonic scheme that is the basis for Western Art Music” - there is not a strangeness to what we hear in African music. Here too, it parallels European Folk music - not exactly but close enough to sound familiar.

These similarities provide a bridge between the two cultures. For any kind of interaction, some common areas need to exist. The more common areas, the easier it is for two cultures to influence each other. These influences are never one way - each culture’s music is affected by the other. The resultant musical mix is a true “Fusion” music. Some African elements and some European elements finding an common ground, interacting, and producing a new music based on elements of both cultures. Similarities are not enough however. In our day of electronics, recording, radio and TV it is easy to forget that without these communication tools some other means of cultural interaction is necessary - the two cultures must be geographically close to communicate and there must be a way for each to contact and experience the others’ music.

Before I sign off for this month, I want to emphasize two points. When comparing two cultures it is too easy to create a perspective where comparison is judged against a fixed standard and influence is only in one direction. There is no fixed standard of comparison - only a methodology for comparing two musical systems. Also, influences must be bi-directional to accommodate the new musical elements that musicians manipulate to create music - and these new aspects may require new skills, perspectives, and theory. I’ve already mentioned the Rhythmic polyphony of African music, but there is also another characteristic I find more interesting. A feature of West African music is the “ability of musicians to keep the same tempo for minutes and hours”. I spend a lot of time developing this ability as a Jazz player - it also is not a characteristic of European Art music. One speaks of the groove or time feel when dealing with Jazz. It is a elemental part of being able to improvise - you must be able to hear where you are going in a tune to successfully improvise and an expectation of what lies ahead is essential. The one thing that ties this together is a common time reference - and this is a purely African element.

I’m sure there are many other similarities between the two cultures besides the ones I mentioned - function, variety and type of instruments, ensemble organization, music specialists, cultural attitudes about music and musicians, performance practice, use of musical forms, and mutually intelligible melodic elements. But even with this brief list, there is enough common ground to communicate musically - what’s needed is time, place, and opportunity.

### **3 Time, Place, and Opportunity**

Last month, I talked about cultures and how they borrow from each other - hopefully stressing the musical similarities between African and European traditions. But I left out one important element - the two cultures must have the opportunity to interact, a geographical proximity for that interaction, and a place in time and over time for the cultural elements to mingle.

Bruno Nettl (Prentice Hall History of Music Series mentioned last month), identifies:

“One of the truly important developments in the recent history of world music was initiated by the forced migration of great numbers of Africans, as slaves, to various parts of the Americas.”

This is the one thing which set the stage for the development of Jazz, and Latin musics in the Americas. It brought two cultures into intimate contact and what evolved from that contact:

“had an impact on all strata of twentieth-century music in the West and elsewhere.”

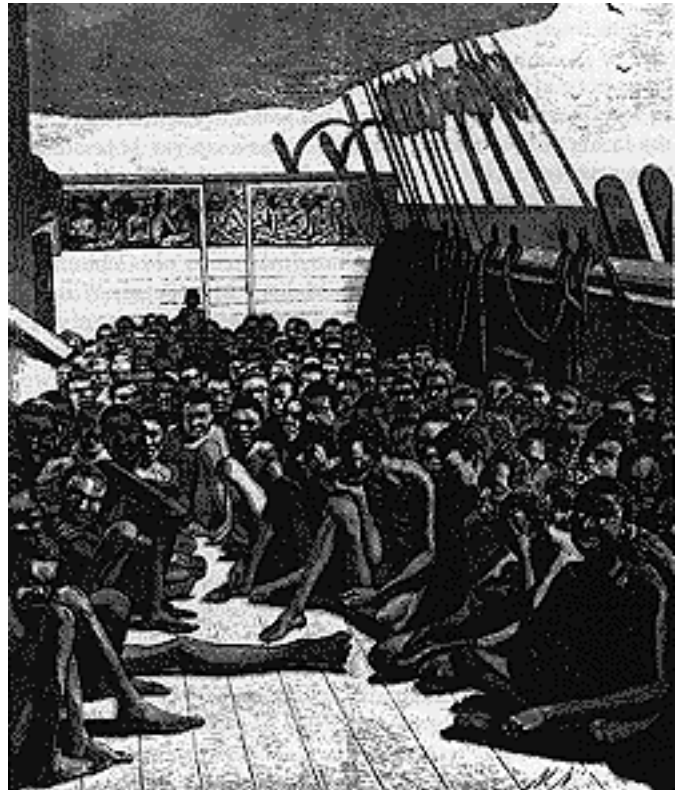
These African elements, imported to the Americas through institutionalized Slavery, have a major responsibility for not only Jazz and Latin musics but also much of Western popular music - gospel, rock, R&B, Blues, etc.. These African heritages are:

“major forces in everyday musical life; and their effect on composers of art music in the United States and Latin America as well as on such Europeans as Antonin Dvorak and Igor Stravinsky has been considerable”.

That such a cultural impact and such a diversity of musics - such beauty in Art - came from such a dismal and degrading practice is for me the ultimate tribute to the human spirit. It never ceases to amaze me that such music as Jazz came from such origins.

In the Americas, the African tradition spread through North, Central, and South America, and also the Caribbean. In each of these areas, the mingling of musical cultures resulted in a unique style. In brief, the differences in which European Colony and native Indian population - as well as the particular African identity imported to that region - resulted in a different musical fusion. The common thread for this spread of African musical culture was the Slave Trade Routes of the period - and slavery was common in all of the Americas (it should be noted that the indigenous Indian population was likewise exploited).

I am going to remain true to my original intent and not sidetrack into the musics of Latin America - that is a separate though adjunct study. It is time to focus on North America and the circumstances peculiar to this geographical region in the development of Jazz.



One of the circumstances which shaped the evolution of African music in North America has to do with the nature of slavery as practiced in this region - and where slaves were obtained. Both of these elements shaped the musical evolution toward Jazz.

First, the majority of slaves were brought to the United States from the West Indies (the Rum, Sugar, and Slave Triangle Trade). Rather than being able to live in:

“closed communities in which African Tribal groups could still function, the Blacks were brought to the United States from the West Indies, where elements of African culture had already begun to change and disappear...”

Here, the African slave was first influenced by the European country controlling the particular part of the Caribbean - either French or Spanish - and the particular music of that country was the first encounter ('Jelly Roll' Morton's Spanish Tinge?). The Black slave often remained in this area for months to years before relocation to the US - time enough to assimilate many European influences.

Second, the dominant religion of the region greatly effected how much of the cultural heritage the Black slave could retain:

“the impact of Protestant denominations in the United States was of such a nature as to annihilate many, if not most of the West African religious practices.”

It was this difference in religious orientation which shaped some of the differences between North and South America. The Catholic colonies, for the most part, were not too concerned with the religious life of the slave. As such, they were allowed much more latitude in retaining the musical and religious culture of West Africa - also, Catholicism had a similarity to West African religions which eased assimilation into the religious practices of the Slave population. Protestant denominations actively proselytized for conversion in the United States and replaced to a much greater degree the religious culture of the Black slave. I feel that this is one reason the music of Latin America retains much more direct African elements than that of North America. Also, coupled with the closer contact between master and slave in North America, the African heritage (while certainly not disappearing) was retained less as specifics and more as a value structure.

Risking a very general “generalization”, the European countries involved in the slave trade had markedly different ways of dealing with the African. The Catholic countries of France and Spain allowed the African to function in a closed group which allowed the African to retain more of his culture. The North American area - mainly English and Protestant - did not. Here, the African was forced to assimilate to a greater degree and as a result lost more of his particular culture - and was influenced to a greater degree by the culture of the slave masters. The process also worked in the other direction - the African slave had a greater impact on the surrounding European culture. It was the closeness of the cultural contact which was so different - and that closeness extended to the musics of both cultures.

It seems to be that:

“on the whole, those features of music that were most strongly developed in Africa have to some extent also been retained in Afro-American music; and, conversely, those which were not developed to any great degree of complexity or distinctiveness (such as scale) seem to have given way to traits bearing the European trademark.”

The African features retained are the emphasis on rhythm, the use of syncopation and complicated rhythmic figures, an emphasis on “beat”, adherence to strict meter and tempo, call and response patterns, love of instruments and instrumental musics, and vocal techniques, improvisatory techniques, and use of short theme variation. The European features incorporated are musical forms, harmonic structure, instruments, and scale.

These are the common musical aspects mentioned in any discussion of Jazz Origins. But, to my mind, it is not Jazz - yet. The Afro-American musical culture is more than just the idiom of Jazz. There is a rich tradition of Afro-American folksongs and other musics - they are just not as widely known. I mentioned some recorded sources last month for listening. To my ear, the Folksongs are closer to the European/American Folk Idiom than the African - with African elements present but not predominant. Both cultures borrowed freely in this area and that of Religious musics, and Popular musics of the period - 1800's. We still need the unique set of circumstances which produced Jazz.



The three European cultures mentioned [Spanish, French, and English] exchanged colonial possessions - some areas living under the rule of each of these in succession. In these areas, the African slave was subjugated under the different attitudes about slavery and variations of music of each colonial power. Also, I should mention that each of these colonial powers had previous experience in Africa - Spain was occupied by the Moors [often mentioned as an influence on the unique nature of that countries music]. But still, one last element is needed - a geographical area - one where all the influences can converge and intermingle; where the social factors were present to allow these four cultures to function concurrently; a period of relative political stability; and a heritage of freely accessible musical activity.

## 4 New Orleans

Before we visit New Orleans, we're going to stop in the West Indies. Last month, I mentioned the factors of the slave trade and how the European Colonial Powers imported the slave population to the New World and the Islands of the West Indies as the first major stop in this forced migration. Remember also, that the treatment and attitudes toward the African Slave varied between the Latin-Catholic and the British-Protestant colonies. A more detailed description to the West Indies will provide some necessary background for New Orleans.

I will be using two sources for this next section:

- "The Story of Jazz", Marshall W. Sterns, Oxford University Press, New York, 1958
- "A Story of Jazz". Paul Tanner & Maurice Gerow, W.C. Brown Co., Iowa, 1973

Each island in the West Indies represents a unique blend of African and European elements. Dutch Guiana - now the Republic of Suriname - had a large element of slaves who escaped into the interior jungle and they retained almost all their African heritage; those who remained on the coast and in close contact with the predominant European culture lost most of the African heritage. Haiti is a predominately Dohomean/French culture and the music is a blend of French folk melodies with African elements. Cuba is a predominately Yoruba/Spanish culture and the music also reflects this - the Habanera, Guajira, Punto, and Guaracha contain strong Spanish elements; the Rhumba, Conga, Son Afro-Cubano, Mambo, and the Cha-Cha are predominately African. Trinidad is a mixture of Spanish, French, and English influences - Spain and England held it as a colonial possession and the French entered as colonists. Important for us is a group of people called Shouters. This group were in effect a culture of African, Latin-Catholic, and with a final overlay of Protestantism (by conversion). The resultant religious music of this group is very close to a style of Revival music found in the United States.

These examples show how the particular European/African blend resulted in a uniquely different musical hybrid. The Shouters experienced the closest circumstances to that of the United States - and developed a music very similar to the Revival style in the United States. But, New Orleans added more to the mix. The circumstances here were similar but additional factors were present. It is the sum of these circumstances and influences which made New Orleans the Place in Time with the Opportunity for Jazz to develop.

The colonial history of New Orleans is a microcosm of the period. It was a French colony for its first 46 years. Customs were established that have endured to this day and during this period resembled the French West Indies. It was ceded to Spain in 1764 and then briefly back to France in 1800. In 1803, as part of the Louisiana Purchase, it was sold to the United States. In short, it was a Latin-Catholic colony of both France and Spain for 82 years and then part of a British-Protestant country. This history of the city created an environment very different from the rest of the US.

The slave population reflected each colonial preference - Yoruba with Spanish and French sovereignty (as France had taken over many Spanish possessions); Dahomeans, again, with French sovereignty. But, this population was mostly imported from the West Indies. Later, many were obtained from San

Domingo with a stop over in Cuba. Also, there was still an influx directly from Africa. It is in New Orleans that the many African Tribal Cultures were able to also influence each other - right up to the Civil War.

The city, however, remained a predominately Latin-Catholic area. This - even with the increasing Protestant influence - enabled the African to retain much of his music and culture. But the increasing range of musical influences upon the African was unique. The Creoles who combined Spanish, French and African ancestry attained considerable social status and assimilated much of European Culture - many sent their children to school in Europe; the slave population in the large surrounding plantations were able to maintain most of their African heritage; and the economic prosperity of the city opened the paths of cross-culturalization.

With the Louisiana Purchase the great western migration started in the US. The opening of the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys created a demand for supplies most easily transported up the Mississippi river from New Orleans. New Orleans prospered and the city population doubled in seven years - from 10,000 (1/2 white & 1/2 black). This created a demand for entertainment and a singular mixing of the European and the African. Early on, the city was segregated along economic lines rather than racial - this spread the black population across the city and did not concentrate it in any one area (till the import of Northern prejudice after the Civil War). Sterns maintains that this economic prosperity is really what enabled this mixing of cultures to take place.

Two African-american practices have direct influence on the development of Jazz - the practice of Vodun and the pre & post Civil War performances by slaves and former slaves in Congo Square. The Vodun ceremonies (a African/Catholic mixture) tended to act as a preservation of many of the African cultural elements. It flourished in the city because of the long Latin-catholic history and the importation of slaves from the West Indies. Sterns indicates that 'Jelly Roll' Morton was a devout believer. The Congo Square performances (outdoor dances held 1817 - 1885) were legalized by the city's Municipal Council in 1817 - in part to combat the underground practice of Vodun (which was illegal) and to provide a safety valve to keep the slaves contented. The performances brought the sounds of Vodun out into the open and hastened the blending of European and African elements. Each of these, in varying degrees, used melodic elements which were French-creole, were sung in a French-creole patois, and gradually mixed with European instruments as the century wore on.



The Latin-catholic heritage of the city pervades this pre-jazz period in many ways. The most direct link (to my mind) is the French Military Band. This particular performance group reached its peak in Napoleonic France. It spread throughout the United States as entertainment and New Orleans followed the French tradition. These Bands were employed at almost all functions - including funerals. The Afro-american followed this tradition and organized similar musical organizations early on. Coupled with the development of the 'secret society' and 'fraternal organizations' which provided employment for these groups; they became a focus for the blending of European and African musics and instruments. It should be noted that the fraternal/secret societies and the forms of funeral ceremonies utilizing the Bands have parallels in the West African Traditions of the slave and former slave populations - the mixing of cultural influences is now in earnest.

One last factor needs to be expanded upon - the Creoles of Color. The Black Code of 1724 provision for the manumission (freeing) of slaves in which the children shared the status of their mothers created a new social class in the city. When a white aristocrat died, he frequently willed that his part-african mistress/slave should be freed and his children by this mistress were also freed. These people became known as Creoles of Color - with French, Spanish, and African ancestry. The children were often given all the advantages the family could provide - including a European education - and as such, assimilated a distinctly European heritage. The Creoles of Color attained status and wealth, some, by 1830, owning

cotton and sugar plantations and slaves of their own. Their status however ebbed and flowed with the tide of prejudice in the city. By 1889, they were no longer considered a separate class and assumed a place in the Black community. Here, their European training in music combined with the influences of the former slave population and again provided a means for European and African musical cultures to mix. The Marching Bands provided the focal point of much of the musical contact.

But, it's still not Jazz - yet.

## 5 The Birth of Jazz

Last month I felt I had covered all the background that was necessary to discuss the accepted start of Jazz in New Orleans at the turn of the century. After 4 articles, and the research associated with them, the actual writing had become routine. Starting this month's article - I thought - would be just the same. It was not. First, the material I had on hand was very light on the specifics of the period; second, I had only a few cuts of what was supposed to be New Orleans Dixieland (as opposed to the Chicago style), and lastly, I could not focus on a particular artist's work for epitomizing the era. This article became



**Buddy Bolden**

difficult; but the mentioned reasons were not enough to diagnose a writers block - so I pulled out an old book ("A Pictorial History of Jazz", Orrin Keepnew & Bill Grauer, Crown Publishers, Inc, 1966). I'm glad I did.

The hard part about writing a historical perspective (for me) is getting caught up in facts - but Jazz is not about facts, it is about people and the times they lived in. Looking at the pictures in this book put a human face to the words I had written and the facts I had researched. The deck of a slave ship, the sale of slaves after landing, streets with no cars, a view of the riverfront in New Orleans with clearly visible Paddle Wheel Steamers - all reiterating a 'picture is worth a thousand words'. The reality of reading about historical facts

and the danger of interpreting and imagining with a modern 'minds eye' does often distort our perspective, for what I saw was a society and musical environment far different from mine.

The pictures of the early New Orleans bands are most striking to me. There is one of Buddy Bolden taken before 1895. Much has been written about him - he is the musician (Trumpet) with whom Stearns starts his discussion of New Orleans Jazz. They are posed in dark suits and bow ties - not much different from today.

There are also two pictures - one of the Original Superior Orchestra (with Bunk Johnson) and the Imperial Band (with Manuel Perez) in uniforms - almost as if they took the picture before a street 'gig'. It was here that these pictures became a window into their time and place

In picture after picture, what I felt and saw in my 'minds eye' were people - people who lived, played music, worked hard to make a living, and had no idea they were making Jazz History. One aspect however is missing. The sounds of the bands and the people and the city. The names had no sounds linked to them:



**Superior Band**

- Buddy Bolden, Willie Cornish, Frank Lewis, Frankie Duson, Bunk Johnson, Louis Nelson, Manuel Perez, Paul Barbarin, Luis Russell, Albert Nicholas, Peter Bocage, Lorenzo Tio, Jr. , Oscar "Papa" Celestin, Jimmy Noone, John Lindsey, Johnny St. Cyr, Buddy Petit, Zue Robertson, Armand J. Piron, Louis Cotrelle, Freddie Keppard, Adie Venson, George Baquet, Bill Johnson, Dink

Johnson, Jimmie Palao, Norwood Williams, Sidney Bechet, Joe Oliver, Baby Dodds, Honore Dutray, Louis Armstrong, Fate Marable, Johnny Dodds, Pops Foster, Bill Ridgeley, Dave Jones, Joe Howard, Kid Ory, Mutt Carey, Ed Garland.

just faces staring back from the page. Yes, some were eventually recorded later on but by then the music of Early New Orleans had already been influenced by the Chicago Dixieland style. What we know about this period is through reminiscences by the musicians who lived through it - it is the last era with no contemporary sound recordings (first jazz recording was done in 1917).

These people were working musicians and I felt an affinity for who they were and what they did. I think I would feel comfortable with them as I do with anyone I play music with today. The recording industry and the public had not created superstars - though some were. They were people playing the music they knew and loved - trying to make some income while doing it. I doubt if they thought about and analyzed this music as we do - I am sure they studied it - but for them, Jazz History was not yet a subject for study, they were writing the first chapter.

Sterns states the dates for New Orleans Dixieland as 1900 - 1917 and as a music which we would recognize as jazz. It was here, that the:

“over-all direction switched from European Elements dominating African elements to European Elements being influenced by a new combination dominated by African Elements”

The influences of French, Spanish, and British music continued to be a part of this new music. The melodies and rhythms of the popular songs of the day were a standard part of the repertoire. The execution of this style had some universal characteristics - The Cornet/Trumpet played the melody line with allowed embellishments (but not to obscure the melodic line), the clarinet played a harmony line above the melody and rhythmically created momentum within the ensemble, the Trombone played the most important note in the current chord change, the rhythm section consisted of banjo, tuba, and drums. This particular instrumentation lent itself well to both outdoor marching events and concerts/dances - not much different in function from the standard Septet format.



**Eureka Band**

In conception, it was much different (in my opinion) than our modern jazz one. The rhythm section played a ‘flat four’ rhythm - four unaccented beats to the bar. This made it very close to the European March Rhythm and the 2 & 4 accent of the typical Jazz pulse is still absent. The Front Line (Cornet, Clarinet, & Trumpet) conceived their parts horizontally through the harmonic content of the particular tune. The typical performance practice was ensemble chorus, solo choruses, and a return to the ensemble chorus. This ensemble chorus was not strictly constructed through improvisation over the melody but often contained patterns which crept into the tunes through common practice - but the effect was a collective improvisation with great rhythmic complexity among the Front Line players.

The bands themselves varied greatly in sound - depending on the players available for any particular engagement and according to the dictates of the particular job and the audience present. As such, they often moved between a rough sound or a sweet sound - something which carried through into the Swing Era classification of bands. Also, this music was not an exclusively Afro-American preserve and there were White bands functioning in the same idiom - Pappa Jack Laine for example.

The other musics associated with the birth of Jazz - Blues, Work Songs, Minstrelsy - all contributed to the mix prior to 1900. But, there was still much to be developed before that accented pulse of 2 & 4

emerged with Chicago Dixieland. It would be Ragtime (a piano style), the establishment of Storyville by New Orleans Alderman Sidney Story in 1896, and its closing by the Navy in 1917 which set the stage for the Chicago style.

The date 1917 is a pivotal one - both in general history and this jazz history. The country as a whole moved outward with the involvement of WW I - whether we wanted it or not - we changed into a 'modern' country in a 'modern' era. For Jazz, the first Jazz recording was made by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band during a stint at Reisenweber's Cafe in New York City. The music played by this group was to name an entire decade - the Jazz Age of the 20's. So, just about 300 yrs after the first slave were brought to and sold in this country, the music that they had such a great part in creating was recorded - ironically by a white group - and was to be the popular music for the next 40 yrs.

## 6 The Jazz Age

I'm still browsing the Keepnews Pictorial History of Jazz - I really haven't looked at in years till I took it out last month. The pictures have a fascination for me ..... or maybe I'm seeing with different "eyes". The section on Chicago Dixieland is in some ways very similar to the previous New Orleans chapter but also, very different. The Instrumentation is still basically the same and 5 pieces seem to be the rule. One striking absence is the lack of String Bass in some of the pictures and the inclusion of an additional low brass - Tuba/Sousaphone in others. Also, the similarities in poses for the publicity photos is notable - as well as the number of indoor shots at the clubs and dance halls.

The one thing I found most interesting was the Bandstands. Invariably, they had an appearance of being part of the room - not add ons stuck in as an after thought or in a corner. The area was decorated to frame the musicians as a center of attention and there was room to sit and set up properly - including the Baby Grand piano .....but, no amplifiers, microphones, or wires. The dress was most familiar, only different in style - dark suits or tuxedos, with a hint at a uniformed dress (same ties, or cut of the suit).

The instrumentation seems to build on the basic 5 piece unit as the decade of the '20's advanced. The reed players doubled on saxophone, and the units got bigger with two saxes added, the addition of the String Bass (still doubling on Tuba/Sousaphone), and the increased appearance of the Guitar - usually as a double by the Banjo player. By the last pictures in this chapter, the bands seemed to average 7 players. This seems to support the 'text book' resources describing the differences between New Orleans and Chicago Dixieland :

- Tenor Sax was added
- Guitar replaced the Banjo
- Addition of the Piano and String Bass

This change in instrumentation was also accompanied by stylistic changes in the music. For now, the soloist gained in importance and the ensemble supported this soloist; the into's and ending's became more elaborate; the voicings moved in parallel; and the flat four pulse was supplanted by the accented 2 & 4.

This music was evolving to adapt to different circumstances and environments. With the closing of Storyville by the Navy in 1917, the music on New Orleans fanned out across the country - not just 'up the river' to Chicago. It spread to any location that had work opportunities and transportation - Kansas City and New York. But it was Chicago which provided the easiest access. And it was the transplanted New Orleans musicians who created the style (Berendt states that Chicago Dixieland was created by young white musicians trying to copy the New Orleans players). But the New Orleans players dominated the Chicago Jazz scene early on. King Oliver lead the most



**King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band**

important New Orleans band in Chicago, Louis Armstrong formed his Hot Five and Hot Seven here, Jelly Roll Morton the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Johnny Dodds his New Orleans Wanderers.

This was a period of flux for the nation as a whole. WWI would push the nation into the “modern era”, new technologies were emerging - radio, talking pictures, records, and the migration from south to north (of which the New Orleans musicians were only a part) was changing the demographics of the country. With the advent of the ‘20’s, a period of economic prosperity and changing social structure was slowly remaking the face of the United States. In my mind we were evolving from a regional outlook into a national one - not overnight but slowly and steadily aided by the radio, the talking picture, the record player, and the increased ease of transportation. F. Scott Fitzgerald gave the name to this era - the Jazz Age...more a statement of attitude than music.



**Louis Armstrong's Hot Five**

But, the name was descriptive of the excitement that swept the country with this new music. It was spread by the advent of the record and the emerging technology of the radio. The event which marks this is the 1917 debut of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band at Reisenweber's Cabaret on Columbus Circle in New York - they also made the first Jazz recording in that same year. Jazz moved to New York - Red Nichols, Miff Mole, and Jimmy Dorsey all recorded in the city. A crop of young musicians entered the field - Pee Wee Russell, Dave Tough, Bud Freeman, Gene Krupa, Eddie Condon, Mezz Mezzrow, Benny Goodman, Bix Biederbecke, Muggsy Spanier, Bunny Berrigan .....the “Austin High Gang” and their friends.

The record and the radio were major events in the evolution of Jazz. The timing was just right - 1917 for the first recording (1921 for the first black group - Kid Ory) and Sept. 14, 1920 for the first radio show. These two technologies made the music not just a live event or service industry but a commodity - you could buy it and walk home with it. Prior to this, the closest was the sheet music industry. The sales of which reached a million units in 1905 and was shown to be a money making commodity by William Handy the American composer (Memphis Blues, Yellow Dog Blues, St. Louis Blues, etc.) - Jazz could be written down and sold; now it was recorded and sold. A secondary effect of the record was it could be shipped, carried, exported, and imported - you no longer had to be in New York or Chicago or New Orleans or Kansas City to hear what the bands were doing ! Jazz became a true popular culture side by side with the radio and the record. The books I use for these articles all state that the ODJB was not the first or the only Jazz group playing the new style but just in the right place at the right time - so was the Music... right at the advent of the technological developments to spread this music nationally and to a large popular audience.

This music is still available - you can buy it and carry it home. Here's a short list :

1. The Genius of Louis Armstrong, Volume 1:1923-1933; Columbia G 30416; The John Hammond Collection. This includes cuts from The Hot Five and The Hot Seven.
2. The Immortal Johnny Dodds, South Side Chicago Jazz of the 1920's, Milestone MLP 2002. This has a cut with Freddy Keppard.
3. Louis Armstrong and King Oliver with Lil Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Baby Dodds, Jelly Roll Morton, Milestone M-47017. This has 16 cuts by King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band.
4. Bix Beiderbecke and the Chicago Cornets, Milestone M-47019. This features Bix with the Wolverines and has cuts with Miff Mole, Frank Trumbauer, Tommy Dorsey, and Muggsy Spanier.

This period is for me the start of Jazz - it is alive still. The sounds of the names, bands, and places can still be heard - the pictures from Keepnews are no longer two dimensional but three.....one can still

hear their music. From this point on, the one notable fact is the documentation on recording of the music's evolution and the changes brought by a changing society and culture of which it is so much a part. It is this opportunity to listen chronologically which has shaped my attitude about Jazz. Jazz evolves - one style it is not and the new builds or evolves or reacts in relation to what came before...to meet new cultural or technological developments.

## 7 The Passage To Swing

The Swing Bands which emerged in the early '30's actually owe their development to the tradition of the popular dance bands of the '20's. It was not the Dixieland Jazz groups which evolved into these large units but Dance bands such as Paul Whiteman, Ben Pollack, and Jean Goldkette.



**Paul Whiteman**

The Paul Whiteman band [to my mind actually a small orchestra or concert band] was a large group which basically adopted European Concert devices and flavored them with Jazz Elements. He did however have a major impact on the popularity of the Jazz Idiom and helped set the stage for the Swing Era. Keepnews' picture of the band in 1928 shows 25 musicians - including Bix Biederbecke and Frank Trumbauer; another in the same year shows 26 members - a second piano had been added. The instrumentation was very close to the standard Swing Band : 2 piano, 1 accordion, 4 Trumpet, 4 Trombone, 7 Reeds, 5 Violins, 2 Tuba/Bass, 1 Banjo, 1 Percussionist.

This band and its leader, while again not a Jazz Band, advanced the popularity of Jazz immeasurably. In February 12, 1924 Whiteman presented a 'Jazz Concert' at Aeolian Hall. This was a academic site and his aim was to to gain the jazz approval of the recognized authorities of music - he succeeded. It also paved the way for the popularity of large bands.

Whiteman and Goldkette organizations were aimed at larger venues - big ballrooms, hotels, major vaudeville and movie houses. His orchestra sounded fuller and richer than the Dixieland groups and they utilized carefully rehearsed arrangements. And, he made money - I am sure one of the major factors in the proliferation of the large groups.

Whiteman and later imitators provided much needed income for the Jazz instrumentalist. Beiderbecke, Venuti, Lang, the Dorsey Brothers, and Trumbauer among others found employment with him. This period between the Aeolian Concert and the Depression of 1929 are confusing years in the Jazz Scene. The



**Whiteman Orchestra**

ascendancy of the large dance band overshadowed the small Dixieland group, but one of the conventions of the dance bands was to employ a smaller unit generated from the larger group to provide interludes of 'Hot Jazz'. Dance bands also hired a few accomplished soloists to provide jazz improvisations during the large group performance - Biederbecke with Paul Whiteman. This ability to play sweet - the swing bands doubling as a smooth dance band and the small Jazz group within the larger Swing Band can be traced to this.

Because the large venues made more money for the bands than the smaller rooms, the trend was to increase the size of the musical unit. The increase in size was necessary because amplification was in its infancy and the only way to meet the volume requirements of the larger rooms was to increase the number of musicians. It was this trend to larger venues and larger groups which paved the way for the

Swing Bands of the following era. But first, some problems needed to be solved - the larger the group, the more written arrangements were necessary. But, the arranger had to find a way of preserving the jazz feel in larger groups and at what point did the band become too top heavy (too many musicians playing over the rhythm section) and rhythmic momentum stop.

Fletcher Henderson (with his arranger Don Redman) is credited with the pattern for Swing arrangements. Originally a pianist, Henderson talent was with arranging and solving the problem with his own expanding group. He first tried an enlarged Dixieland group but with the addition of Redman (studied at the Boston and Detroit Music Conservatories) tighter harmonic control became a major interest. What he finally established as a standard was the independent use of a trumpet, trombone, sax, and rhythm sections with the incorporation of soloists within the arrangement - this was an evolution from the standard '20's dance band of 2 Tpts, 2 Saxes, 1 Tbne, and 4 Rhythm (banjo, piano, drums, tuba)



**Fletcher Henderson Band**

Henderson was well aware of Whiteman (Whiteman purchased 20 of Redman's charts) and tried to imitate the plush arrangements - but when Louis Armstrong joined his band in 1924, the band would never be classified as 'sweet'. Armstrong's playing was too strong and 'hot' - Redman stated "I changed my style of arranging after I heard Armstrong".....Redman worked out the swing formula after Armstrong had left the band.

At the same time Chicago Dixieland was peaking in popularity New York and Kansas City were also becoming important geographic areas for the developments that were leading to Swing. In New York's Harlem the emerging bands of Fletcher Henderson (at the Roseland Ballroom), King Oliver (at the Savoy Ballroom), Sam Wooding, Cecil Scott, Chick Webb, Don Redman, Charlie Johnson, William McKinney were appearing regularly. The clubs proliferated such as The Band Box, the Lenox Club, and the Cotton Club (Duke Ellington opened there in 1927). But unlike Kansas City, there was no real New York School - a characteristic of heavily structured arrangements was the only real identifying trait.



**Bennie Moten**

Kansas City on the other hand was a well defined sound shaped by a large Black population and supported by several large ballrooms. It was a blues based riff structure - smoother and sweeter than the '20's Dixieland sound but with the drive demanded by the southwest audience still intact. Bennie Moten is a good example of the transition from the Dixieland of the early '20's to the changes started in the late '20's. He started with the traditional sound of the Dixieland groups but expanded the group starting in the middle of the decade - to create more sonority he added reeds to his sax section and had expanded to 3 trumpets and 2 trombones as early as 1931.

This is the band that Count Basie 'inherited'. Basie was stranded in Kansas City and joined the Moten Band. He left to form his own group and took many of Moten's players with him. Moten died just as this was happening and Basie in effect took over the rest of Moten's organization. But, Moten and Basie were not the only K.C. based bands - Andy Kirk (with Mary Lou Williams) and Walter Page among others were based here.



**Count Basie**

The years 1924 - 1929 was to my mind a true transition period. The new



technologies of the phonograph, radio (by 1925, 563 Radio stations had been licensed), microphone, talking pictures, and the jukebox had great effect on the spread and popularity of Jazz. The big dance bands were influenced by the new music, provided employment for jazz players, brought jazz 'flavors' to the general public, and were a start for the evolution to Swing. The centers of Jazz activity moved to New York and Kansas City - and as Jazz dried out in the mid-west attracted the major talent. Then in 1929 the Depression hit. The struggle for economic survival saw some of that talent leave for Europe (Ellington and Armstrong), radio staff jobs (Goodman), and some surviving in 'sweet' hotel bands (Lombardo).....but the music business hurt just like the rest of the country. Jazz would not be heard of again till 1935.

## 8 Ritz Crackers

The Swing Era lasted 10 years from 1935-1945. The term Swing Music was used originally by the British Broadcasting Company which felt that the term 'hot jazz' represented something immoral. The original term was hot but that was 50 years prior. The name stuck and labels this era and style of Jazz. In a way it mirrors the difficulties the music surmounted in gaining acceptance - as anything labeled 'new' must. Rhythmically, it differed greatly from the preceding dance music - often called 'two beat' - while at the same time growing out of that older style. It was the popular music of its time and the musical influences still touch us today - 60 years later. The music came of age at a time when the technologies of radio and movies and recording had matured beyond the term 'new' and had secured a niche in the life of this country. It was marketed with all the tactics of modern publicity - and made money for those who played it and those who sold it. But not right away.

The Depression had greatly affected the entire country and the Music Business had been no exception. But now the economic environment was recovering. The effects were fading, especially for the better off segment of the middle class, and the music rapidly gained an audience among the college students. Keep in mind this was the early '30's and this audience was smaller and above average in income by today's standards. Coupled with the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 - which brought the music out of the Speakeasy and into larger venues - it provided a base of popular demand for the Big Bands. The audiences that embraced this new music were young and they danced. The Swing Bands and Swing Music were functional.

The Musical formula which enabled a large group of musicians to still play jazz had been worked out by the Harlem Bands of the preceding decade:

1. It stabilized at 13 musicians organized into sections (5 Brass [3Tpt, 2Tbne]; 4 Reeds; and 4 Rhythm).
2. The 'hot' solo line was harmonized and notated for the whole section and this harmonized line had to be written in the same style that a soloist would use if improvising.
3. The use of 'Riffs' - the adoption of the West African Call & Response pattern - kept the Brass and Reed Sections answering each other in endless variations.  
The soloists were supported with background riffs.
4. The rhythm section backs up all the others with a steady defined pulse.

It was also the era of the Arranger - in the words of Benny Goodman:

"Up to that time [1934] the only kind of arrangements that the public had paid much attention to, so far as knowing who was responsible for them was concerned, were the elaborate ones such as Ferde Grofe's for Whiteman. But the art of making an arrangement a band can play with swing - and I am convinced it is an art - one that really helps a solo player to get off, and gives him the right background to

work against - that's something very few musicians can do."

And, it was also the age of the Soloist - one of the unusual aspects, as the large group and section work would seem to hide the players within the ensemble. As Joachim Berendt mentions:

"the thirties also became the era of great soloists: the tenor saxists Coleman Hawkins and Chu Berry; the clarinetist Benny Goodman; the drummers Gene Krupa, Cozy Cole, and Sid Catlett; the pianists Fats Waller and Teddy Wilson; the alto saxist Benny Carter and Johnny Hodges; the trumpeters Roy Eldridge, Bunny Berigan, and Rex Stewart."

If any one lived the history of the era it was Benny Goodman and his emergence as the King Of Swing is a chronicle of the era. Although there were two pioneering bands before Goodman - the Dorsey



**Benny Goodman**

Brothers and the Casa Loma Band - they did not hit the right combination of musical elements to impact the way Goodman did. The Goodman Band actually replaced the Casa Loma unit on the Camel Caravan radio show in 1936 and Sterns states that the Goodman story is how "many qualities suddenly jelled in one band to produce a blend of enormous appeal".

Goodman was born in 1908 and came to New York with the Ben Pollack Band - which had both Goodman and Jack Teagarden as soloists - in 1928. This unit functioned till the Depression hit and Goodman survived doing Club Dates and radio programs with the commercial orchestras. He met John Hammond in 1933 and Hammond worked out a session for the English Gramophone Company. Usually, the record companies of the period insisted on very conservative and commercial material - what was already selling [seems things haven't changed much]. Goodman himself had recorded in 1928 and on the recording had

mimicked Ted Lewis who was sufficiently impressed to hire Goodman - a job which got him through the Depression.

The Hammond date was different. First, he insisted on special arrangements and as such it was a hit in England. When the US companies picked up on the recording Hammond successfully defended against a coupling of each side with a sweet commercial number. This recording of *Shirt Tail Stomp* [Brun 3975] enabled Goodman to make a series of recordings for Columbia - at a new low of \$100 per side [still the days of 78's]. One of the developments of these Columbia dates was the increasing employment of Black musicians by Goodman - Teddy Wilson, Coleman Hawkins, and Mildred Bailey. Goodman finally broke the precedent against mixed bands when he hired Teddy Wilson at the Hotel Congress in Chicago. He readily admits John Hammond's influence in this - against the strong social conventions and prejudices of the period.

By 1934, Goodman had his own band and a below scale job at Billy Rose's Music Hall - then the Big Break.

The National Biscuit Company was ready to launch its new Ritz cracker and had settled on using the radio to advertise. They supported the 'Let's Dance' radio show with three bands - Xavier Cougat, Kel Murray, and Benny Goodman. The Company financed 8 new arrangements for Goodman - who purchased them from Fletcher Henderson. The small but devoted following that developed through the program brought the Goodman Band to the attention of MCA [Music Corporation of America]. Willard Alexander at the agency was the one who persuaded MCA - much to



**Goodman Band**

annoyance of most of MCA - to book the band. They were placed in the Hotel Roosevelt in NYC [the home of Guy Lombardo] - the band was not a success. Alexander in desperation arranged a tour of mostly one night stands culminating on the West Coast. This too, was not very successful for Goodman - although he switched to 'sweet' dance band arrangements to get through the tour.

At the Polomar Ballroom in Los Angeles, the band had become desperate. Moral was low and its continued existence was questionable. Goodman took the plunge:

“If we had to flop, at least I'd do it in my own way, playing the kind of music I wanted to.....I called out some of our big Fletcher arrangements for the next set.....the first big roar from the crowd was one of the sweetest sounds I ever heard in my life.”

The Swing Era was born the night of August 21, 1935.

## 9 The Old and the New

The swing era lasted just ten years - from 1935 to 1945. In researching this article, I realized when the Swing Era ended, it also marked the end of Jazz as a Dance and a Popular music. It also marked a change in the culture of this country. What went before was never to be again - the society that created the music from New Orleans Dixieland through this era had changed for good. I personally feel that World War II created such an accelerated pace of change - technologically and socially - that the post war years do not relate to that immediate past. That past time had been destroyed by the immense social disruption which accompanied the War itself - but, it was the foundation (good or bad) for who we are today. As such, my orientation for this period is both the culmination of fifty years of musical evolution and as a transition to the “modern” - a new way of viewing the world and a new way of viewing Jazz.

Swing Music made big money - the trend toward larger groups was stimulated by this ability. I looked through the Keepnew's Pictorial History of Jazz and came across an amazing photo. It was a picture of the marquee of the Strand theater in New York City and Artie Shaw's band was to play at this venue. His name is displayed in lights - a dominating presence in size and wattage. On the marquee itself, his band is given equal billing with the movie - Wings of the Navy. It was so strange for me to see this - only rock stars got that kind of exposure ! But then I realized there was no difference between the Shaw date and any high profile popular music of today - they were immensely popular and immensely lucrative. The bottom line was this similarity. But then, slipping back into my present day orientation the strangeness returned - it did not 'fit' my view of what Jazz is. That Artie Shaw picture indicated to me that the very functionality of the music itself - and the percentage of Art perception associated with it is radically different in our times.

Jazz up to the advent of Bebop was a dance music. Its function was to provide musical accompaniment for dancing - in venues designed for dancing. Its very development was a striving to fill larger and larger spaces which existed to fill the social need for dance entertainment. Swing did this better than anything that had come before - but it was the final music whose function was social. Bop changed the artistic percentage - its focus turned inward, centering on the musical elements and the expressive abilities of the individual artist in manipulating those elements. The audience was left to participate only as consumers of art, not participants.

This change in orientation would have profound effects on the future course of Jazz. The most immediate effect was a narrowed audience - one which was capable of following complex and abstract musical expression. Those who wished to dance either did not embrace the new music or sought out alternatives. This accelerated as the following generations explored new alternatives which provided that dancing function. Within the genre itself, the musician increasingly viewed himself as an artist - and artists are not motivated by audience share but rather by standing in the artistic community. The music increasingly feedback on itself - as any 'pure' art will and ultimately created an audience of musicians and cognoscenti - it relegated itself to an artistic niche. What Paul Whiteman wanted so many years

before - acceptance by the musically knowledgeable had come to pass. Now, it shared the same fate as the art music of the concert hall: an audience that viewed it as art, created by artists, and to be judged only on its artistic elements. It had effectively pulled back from any hope of again being a Popular Music.

Please don't assume that Bop was the death of jazz - in many ways, Bebop was a logical conclusion to the Swing Era and many of its elements had direct roots in the Swing Bands of the Era. The Basie Band which lent so much momentum and depth to the Swing Era planted many of the seeds which sprouted into Bop. Basie's piano style led directly to a de-emphasis of the left hand in modern Piano, the drumming of Jo Jones left a mark on all Bop drummers, and Lester Young's relaxed style of playing directly influenced the Cool School. In addition, the rationing of World War II changed the whole economic basis for the large bands - touring was virtually impossible during the war years and many players were called or volunteered to serve - Glen Miller being the most visible casualty. The economic basis for the music business would no longer support large units and the small group came to the fore.

Also, the musicians themselves were striving to break loose from the musical cliches of the Era. Bop reflected a revolt against the confines of the Big Bands - the sparse solo spots in the swing arrangements minimized the opportunities for exploratory improvisational expression. This also reflected a change in emphasis from the melodic to the improvisational. The younger players chafed at the restrictions the Swing style and the Big Band imposed. Part of this was due to the 78 rpm record which was limited to 3 min per side. This limitation was not removed until the advent of the 33 rpm record in 1948 (seems another Jazz style is tied to a technological innovation). And finally, in some ways, the younger players felt section work did not favor or reward creativity but rather craftsmanship - and the craftsmen were earning more than their fair share of fame.

The influences of these two eras are with us today - 50yrs from the end of Swing and the advent of Bop. But, to my mind, the real impact is not the musical elements but rather the orientation with which we view the music. We seem to be caught between two opposing camps. One is the popularity and economic rewards associated with the Swing Era - a time when the music was economically healthy, the performing venues plentiful, and musical craftsmanship its own reward. The second, is the artistic values of Bop - when creativity, improvisatory exploration, and instrumental prowess turned inward to the music itself. This legacy is still being resolved.

## **10 Bop Till You Drop**

The advent of Bop was sudden and for the working musician it was almost 'overnite' - but in reality, the origins span a greater length of time and several factors contributed to its development. First, WWII had great impact on the Black Community in this country. The color line between Black and White started to break down and the economic potential of the Black audience started to be noticed. The Broadway and 52nd Street Clubs started to advertise for the Afro-american market and this in turn created a highly receptive audience which in turn influenced the music. Secondly, within the music itself, the color line which had begun to break down in the '30's - and hastened by WWII - enabled a closer association between musicians and eased the transition of influences and innovations which no longer had to cross a color barrier. What gave the appearance of 'overnite' was the recording ban of 1942-44 - those who depended on recordings for jazz music did not encounter it till 1945. And this music which emerged was a radical departure from the Swing Era as the very function of the music had changed from Dance to Art.

The Bop Era was both an internal revolution and an evolution with regard to the Swing Era. Most of what I have encountered focuses on the revolution - but I would state that there were equal parts of both. Last month, I mentioned the revolutionary aspects and these are the accepted elements which sparked the music - I agree totally with these factors but the evolutionary is also significant. I offer the musical lives of "Two Giants" - one the revolutionary and one the evolutionary. They were opposites in almost every aspect of their lives - both musical and personal - and yet were inseparable musical partners in this new music.

Dizzy Gillespie [born on October 21, 1917] came from a well structured and musical family. His father, who was an amateur musician, taught his kids several musical instruments. Dizzy, as such, studied harmony and theory while still young and had music studies paid for by his father till age 15. He took over Roy Eldridge's chair in the Teddy Hill Band in 1937. Eldridge was Dizzy's musical idol and played a good imitation of him but gradually developed his own style. An interesting note from the Berendt book states that the time distance between Dizzy and Armstrong is surprisingly short - the Hill band grew out of the Lewis Russell Orchestra and Russell had taken over the King Oliver Band in 1929. A case might be stated that Dizzy's immediate roots in jazz are the traditions of New Orleans and Chicago Dixieland. It should be noted that his first recording - in 1937 - was Jelly Roll Morton's King Porter Stomp with the Teddy Hill Band. Returning to the States after a tour of Europe in 1937 with the Hill Band - where his playing abilities were already recognized - he became a member of the Cab Calloway Orchestra [with the famous/infamous Diz cutting Cab story].



**Dizzy Gillespie**

Dizzy, in spite of his admission of 'difficulty' copying Eldridge's style and that he 'quite didn't get it', worked in the bands of Benny Carter, Charlie Barnet, Lucky Millander, Earl Hines, Duke Ellington, and Billy Eckstine. He also started to arrange and Woody Herman, Jimmy Dorsey, and Ina Ray Hutton bought his material. I think it is safe to say that Gillespie was well versed in the Swing Era Idiom. This association with large groups was his first love. Deep down inside, he was a big band player - he founded his first band in 1945 and from '46-50 led large bands almost exclusively. The Afro-cuban experiments were also presented in a large group format. It is with this history that Dizzy evolved out of the Swing Era into Bop - for while embracing and creating the new idiom he made logical advances based on his previous experience. If Parker was the 'tortured creativity' of the Bop Revolution, Dizzy was the one who 'gave it the power and glamor' to conquer the jazz world - for part of him still held with the idea that music was functional entertainment not exclusively Art.

Charlie Parker [Born August 29, 1920] did not have the same early musical experiences that Dizzy did - his family life was just not as stable, supportive, or musical. His first attempts at sessions were a



**Charlie Parker**

disaster, but the experiences [as a 10 year old] pushed him to try harder and by 1936 no one in his peer group came close to equaling him on Alto - by age 15 he was already supporting himself as a musician and [some evidence of] his narcotics habit . He joined the Jay McShann Band in 1937 and, consistent with his early musical experiences, played and heard the Blues nightly with that band - a riff based Kansas City organization. He held menial jobs to make ends meet but always seemed to 'scuffling' for money. He quickly was bored with the stereo typed changes of Swing and early on searched for something else. At this stage, his playing was not well received [the Jo Jones and the Cymbal incident], but the revolutionary in him could not be suppressed.

He came to NYC in 1941 with the McShann band and there, played with Dizzy for the first time [they met originally while Dizzy was in KC in 1939]. When the McShann unit left for Detroit, Parker accompanied them but left soon afterward - he never cared much for Big Bands. After this, he went almost nightly to Minton's to sit in with the regular band of Thelonious Monk-Piano, Charlie Christian-Guitar, Joe Guy-Trumpet,

Nick Fenton-Bass, Kenny Clark-Drums. He met Gillespie again and the two became inseparable - by 1942 they were playing regularly together and had begun to record in spite of the recording ban which held up releases. Much has been said of these Minton's sessions but Monk put it all in perspective:

“Nobody, was sitting there trying to make up something new on purpose. The job at Minton’s was a job we were playing, that’s all”.

Parker found the Quintet Format [Sax, Tpt, & 3 Rhythm] his favored musical palate - the Charlie Parker Quintet became the modern jazz equivalent to Armstrong’s Hot Five of the Traditional Era. This format has become the Bop standard and to this day is the typical small group makeup. The sounds he was searching for inwardly, when brought to the surface, were truly new to Jazz. It is interesting to note, that when asked to name favorite musicians, the majority were Late 19th & 20th Century Classical composers: Brahms, Schoenberg, Ellington, Hindemith, & Stravinsky [listed by Berendt]. The album he considered the culmination of his musical life was the Parker and Strings recording - it was as close as he got to the Modern Symphonic literature he so admired. I also would note that these were the ‘cutting edge’ composers of their idiom - Stravinsky felt so constrained by the limitations of Conventional Harmony he created his own swirl of controversy. It would seem that the Bop Revolutionary admired the revolutionary spirit and art these musicians lived and expressed - and heard a companionship and empathy to his own search.

The Revolutionary and the Evolutionary who were so different personally and in musical influence also shared, besides a friendship, the admiration of their peers for their instrumental proficiency and musical innovation - becoming recognized masters of their respective instruments and creators of a new music. But, this journey ultimately took two different paths - the Evolutionary becoming Elder Statesman and the Revolutionary a mythical figure.

## 11 A Fork in the Road

The Music of Parker and Gillespie soon promulgated its own branches - again, either in reaction to or as an outgrowth of the elements which came to characterize the Bop movement. The two immediate offshoots were the Cool School and Hard Bop [and its offshoot the Funky style]. The Hard Bop movement was centered around New York City and is associated with - among others - Art Blakey, Hank Mobley and Horace Silver, (both of whom were in the original Jazz Messengers Quintet of 1955), Lee Morgan, Donald Byrd, Sonny Rollins, Max Roach, Clifford Brown, and Art Farmer. This is the East Coast Sound offered in comparison with the West Coast Cool - which in turn was a sub-set of the Cool School (as was Third Stream Music). These two movements - Hard Bop and Cool - spanned the decade of the ‘50’s. And in their turn would spawn further developments in the ‘60’s. It should be noted, that Berendt recognized the terminology of East/West as a ‘record company slogan’ not a stylistic description - more accurately the tension was between a Classicist direction and an updated Bop (which also incorporated elements of Gospel, Funk, and the Blues).



The Cool School has been sometimes described as a revolt against the complexities of Bop. I would rather not use the term revolt in describing its evolution but rather deal with the styles as a difference in emphasis - both were complex. Bop emphasized the melodic line in relation to the vertical chord structures while Cool emphasized the melodic line in relation to the harmonies that linear structure implied. With this orientation, the particulars of the Cool Style became a logical outgrowth of Bop - and a problem both were seeking solutions for: freedom and extension of the melodic and improvised line.

The term Cool [in Jazz] has been used to describe a sophisticated (if not arrogant) point of view, a ‘school’ of musicians, and a style of music. By the end of the ‘50’s, the attitude of Cool had faded, replaced by artistic hard work; the musicians who were members of the

School had left their permanent mark on Jazz; and, the style influenced not only Jazz performance and composition but had found its way into Tin Pan Alley arrangements.

Leonard Feather dates this style from the Miles Davis group of 1949-50. It is often described briefly as an unexcited, quiet, dreamy, behind the beat, with a striving for a feel of relaxed swing. The Miles Davis recording dates in 1949 included Lee Konitz, Bill Barber, Gerry Mulligan, Joe Shulman, and Gil Evans. The classic album of this unit was prophetically titled 'Birth of the Cool' which demonstrated that European instruments unusual to Jazz, early forms, and more modern harmonies could be introduced into Jazz without ruining the feeling of a light and swinging rhythm - it is all of this but also much more.



**Lester Young**

Lester Young was the first outstanding exponent of the style - a slightly misleading statement. It was Lester Young's STYLE (with part of Parker) that led to the evolution of Cool, not Cool which produced Lester Young. It was his treatment of time which was unique. He played 'behind the beat' in a period when Swing demanded an 'on top of the beat' placement. This, coupled with his lighter and thinner sound ideal, created a new rhythmic conception in Jazz.

Lennie Tristano was the transitional figure - carrying the music toward further complexity. His use of chromatic passing chords, dissonant voicings, unresolved intervals, and bi-chordal structures pointed not to just complexity but tended toward atonality. He had his own school of followers: Lee Konitz, Warne Marsh, Billy Bauer, and John LaPorta. Among these, Lee Konitz proved more influential than his teacher. A featured soloist in the Claude Thornhill band of 1947-48, he pulled out of the mainstream for a few years, returned with Stan Kenton in 1952, and formed his own band in 1954. As mentioned in the Stern book, he clearly articulated the objective of the Cool School;

"I feel that it's possible to get the maximum intensity in your playing and still relax"

and credited the roots of Cool to Lester Young

"Too many people have forgotten what Lester did in the Basie days.....he never sounded frantic.....it was very pretty and at the same time, it was very intense"

and the lyrical side of Charlie Parker

"Listen to Parker's 'Yardbird Suite', that's the Parker I like"



**Lennie Tristano**

The style characteristics of 'Cool' support the statement that "Lester Young created a new conception of Jazz".- and these stylistic elements are present in the two branches of the Cool School (West Coast, and Third Stream). In brief, the Cool ensemble can be compared to a classical Chamber Orchestra in instrumentation, rhythmic fluidity, and sonority. The use of French Horn, Tuba, bowed strings, Flute and Oboe are all unusual to the immediately preceding period - either the function was different as in the case of the tuba and violin or they were new colors as with french horn and flute. The extended forms of the period were not only restricted to the overlapping phasing between chorus' and soloists but included a flirting with classical forms such as the Rondo and Fugue. Both of these broke the confines of working within standard song forms and created a fluid continuity in performance - a subtle difference from the Head/Solo/Head structure to one of a unified sound event over time.

It was in this concept of time that the Cool School stood unique. This new concept of Rhythm directly forced radical changes in the Rhythm Section and it was proponents of the West Coast School which articulated it best. Jimmy Guiffre stated clearly:

“The beat is implicit but not explicit.....in other words, acknowledged but unsounded”

- the listener is to feel rather than hear the rhythmic pulse ( a concept from the Classical Tradition ). This concept of implicit time led directly to a major characteristic of the West Coast Sound - the elimination of the drummer. This required a change from all working in the Rhythm Section - especially the drum function within the Cool School.

The Drummer had to change his entire approach to the elements in his ‘Kit’:

1. The Bass Drum was used infrequently but accurately to propel the soloist
2. The rhythmic center shifted from the bass drum to the Ride Cymbal
3. The snare provided accents tied to the melodic rhythm.

The Piano/Bass/Guitar:

1. The Bass assumed the responsibility for defining the pulse - again, it is NOT stated but truly defined
2. Enabled the Pianist to free the left hand for chordal punctuations and the right hand for a fast and complicated melodic or improvisation line ( Basie’s style gives ample precedence for this )
3. Bass and guitar become solo instruments in their own right - with the introduction of the Amplifier
4. The Bass was freed from the Root-5th line and able to weave freely through the complex harmonies
5. (Jimmy Blanton is credited with this development ).

The Rhythm Section Unit:

1. The section began to work to assist the soloist, NOT keep the time
2. The ability “to ‘feed’ the soloist with the correct ‘beside the beat’ punctuations became the determining factor for the successful rhythm section musician”.

Tanner and Gerow give the dates 1954 - 1963 for the ‘Funky’ period. Actually, the Funky Style was an offshoot of the Hard Bop School. Originally a piano style attributed to Horace Silver, it is characterized

“by slow or medium blues, played hard on the beat, with all the feeling and expression characteristic of the old blues”  
[Berendt]

and later with gospel influences - a ‘soul’ style different but with the same roots as the Pop music Soul.

Hard Bop which dominated the second half of the ‘50’s was centered in New York City. Berendt states:

“...the purest bop, enriched by a greater knowledge of harmonic fundamentals and a greater degree of instrumental-technical perfection.”

It should be noted - among the players already mentioned within this Style - that early John Coltrane can be listed among them.



In summarizing this period, Marshall Sterns stated:

“Indeed, modern jazz as played in New York by Art Blakey and his Messengers,...has never lost its fire. The harmonies of cool jazz - and bop - were taken over, the posture of resignation disappeared, the light sound remained, but the music always has a biting sharpness. In a word: It has changed, but fundamentally it remained ‘hot’ and ‘swinging’.”

All of the stylistic changes brought by the Cool/Hard Bop Schools stem from the advent of Bop. When the music no longer functioned as dance music and became a concert Art Music it did not have to state the Rhythmic pulse for a dancing audience - the time could become as fluid, free, and the harmonies as complex as the Art factor demanded. It also centered the attention of both audience and musicians on the creation of Art - in an improvisatory music that attention is necessarily centered on the Improviser. But, above all else, one must realize that Hard Bop and Cool are two manifestations of the same immediate post Swing musical trends - many of characteristics are shared and both Hard Bop and Cool musicians had elements of both in their playing styles.

## **12 Yin and Yang and all that Jazz**

A recent NewsWeek article included a chart on music market share for the various genres of recorded music. The Jazz share was 3.0% - Classical was 2.9%. It seems the Artistic leap brought about by the emergence of Bop has relegated Jazz to the Artistic Marketplace - and a comparable marketshare. This transformation from a functional popular music to an ‘Art Music’ was a logical progression for the Jazz genre - one also reflected in the influences mentioned by Charlie Parker. In naming his favorite musicians he mentioned Brahms, Schoenberg, Ellington, Hindemith, and Stravinsky. At a very basic level, what the musics shared was an adaption to a modern culture and a modern world - a striving for the music to reflect the time and place both existed in and of the people involved with these musics to express and reflect that time and place.

Music is a living language and responds to new circumstances in a constant evolution to reflect, relate, and express the time and place it exists in. But change is never easy - it requires the Artist and Audience to constantly learn a new musical language and actively explore the musical art utilizing this new musical language. It is not an easy process - it is one which constantly meets with resistance. The new must be explored to become comprehensible and the accepted previous norms realized as not rules but ‘accepted norms’ for another time and place.

This resistance to the new is not new - for it has accompanied every change in the musical language:

- Boethius [an accoustical theroitian c.480-524]:

“Music was chaste and modest so long as it was played on simpler instruments, but since it has come to be played in a variety of manners and confusedly, it has lost the mode of gravity and virtue and fallen almost to baseness.”

- Jacob of Liège [regarding the Ars Antiqua and the Ars Nova c. 1425]:

“Music was originally discreet, seemly, simple, masculine, and of good morals. Have not the moderns rendered it lascivious beyond measure ?”

- G.M. Artuse [composer and theorist 1600]:

”They are so enamored of themselves as to think it within their power to corrupt, spoil, and ruin the good rules handed down in former times by so many theorists and excellent musicians.”

- August von Kotzebue [German dramatist 1806]:

“The Overture to Beethoven’s opera Fidelio was performed recently, and all impartial musicians and music lovers were in complete agreement that never was anything written in music so incoherent, shrill, muddled, and utterly shocking to the ear.”

- Henry Pleasants [author of the Agony of Modern Music 1955]:

“Serious music is a dead art. The vein which for threehundred years offered a seemingly inexhaustible yield of beautiful music has run out. What we know as modern music is the noise made by deluded spectators picking through the slag pile.”

These quotes are from the Joseph Machlis text “Introduction to Contemporary Music” It is the source for my research for this part of the series. The subject area is the Modern Western Concert Tradition - but the concepts are relevant for any contemporary art music in our modern society. I originally turned to the book to get some information on the influences Parker mentioned - as I read, I realized that Jazz not only shared some very broad similarities with this music but also the changes in musical elements. Both were seeking a new expressive musical language - a language that was discriptive of a modern society.

Machlis mentions Rules and the Artist. What he in essence says is that the rules of artistic creation are not broken for the sheer joy of breaking them. These rules are used to achieve freedom of action within a self-imposed frame and when these rules are rejected it is because they have ceased to be meaningful. It is not the concept of ‘rules’ which changes but a search for new rules reflecting the new time and place - a search to make music expressive of this new time and place.

To start this exploration of the ‘new’ musical elements one must understand the Yin and Yang of Art - any work of art, regardless of medium, exists on two basic levels: the Formal vs the Expressive. Both of these impulses are always present throughout the history of Art - at times one will predominate over the other. That predominance is a matter of degree - but always ‘in the mix’. Which of these is the major influence has immediate effects on the elements of the Artistic Medium. These elements are shaped by the predominate artistic impulse and in turn shape the Medium to reflect that impulse.

The Formal seeks above all to safeguard the purity of form. It reflects the values of order, lucidity, and restraint. It seeks a purity of style and proportion, striving to bring perfection to what already exists. The Artist achieves a certain measure of detachment from the artwork and expresses himself through symbols that have achieved a universal validity. The Expressive is concerned with the expression of emotion. It exalts the unique character of the artist’s personal reactions, striving always for the most direct expression of emotion. It is a rebellion against the Traditional, valuing passionate utterance above perfection or form - an art of sensual enchantment. To these formal and expressive aspects, Nietzsche ascribed two images - that of Apollo, god of Light and Harmonious Proportions and Dionysus, god of Wine, Ecstasy, and Intoxification. For the Western Concert Tradition, the shift from the Dionysian to the Apollonian became one of the gestures of the new music of the 20th Century - but what of the Jazz Idiom.

Though the roots of Jazz have a 300yr history, it certainly is not a comparable time span to the Western Concert Tradition - traced back to Judiac Chant. But this Yin and Yang of Formal vs Expressive is still present in the music. Once this Jazz music entered the Artistic sphere and left the realm of Popular

Music it must, out of necessity, embrace the same strivings that the Western Classical Tradition must - to be relevant as a medium of expressing our current time and place. Its language - as it had from the very first identification as a genre called Jazz - must express the time and place it exists in. Popular Music must also - but it is the difference in function that is crucial. For such music, its reason for being is to provide entertainment. That is its function and all else is secondary. It changes over time to address that need - make the entertainment component responsive to time and place. Art music is a medium of communication and exchange between audience and artist. Its 'function' to communicate - and its success is judged by how well it accomplishes that communication. The search for a language to successfully communicate the time and place of the artist is constant - the interim periods are 'stressful' and meet 'resistance'. Above all it's language must adapt to the current and the new - just as we must constantly adapt to a lifetime of change.

Jazz evolved to speak to a modern age - and like Tradition Concert Music sought a new language of musical elements to communicate this modern time and place between artist and audience - because it is an art music. Its "function" is to communicate.

### 13 Searching

Of all the changes occurring within Jazz, it seems the great enabling event of the music was its emergence as an Art form. Its movement out of the popular realm was a necessity for further development - to evolve it needed to be free of its dance music function. The limits imposed rhythmically by this function constricted all other musical elements - to evolve, the music had to be free of any restrictions imposed from outside the music itself. It needed to make the musical elements which, when manipulated, defined the music as jazz the primary focus. Any constraint by the need to define a dance beat as primary would have precluded any further growth as a musical genre. From the Bop era onward, this freedom allowed the music many avenues of growth and expansion.

A period of experimentation and innovation flowed from the developments of the 1950's. Accompanying this was a fundamental change in the approach toward Jazz. From its beginnings, the one consistent and unifying thread between the different styles of the genre was the practice of using pre-existing material adapted for use [or original material written in a pre-existing style]. This freed the jazz performer and allowed him to concentrate on improvisation. This borrowed material included everything from spirituals to popular songs - the bulk coming from a vocal tradition.

The 1950's saw the extension of the technical resources of the soloists and an increase in the complexity of the material accepted, modified, or composed for jazz. The language of Jazz had been greatly enriched by the advent of Bob and the West Coast school of the era. In the '60's, the previous pattern of evolution and revolution regarding prior styles would continue but something new would happen - it would almost mirror the developments of the new trends of Western Concert Music.

This additional path would be concerned with the disintegration of the structural background of the music itself [much like their 'Classical' counterparts]. The jazz musician - in considering established practice no longer relevant to contemporary culture and society - would start a search for a new musical language relevant to contemporary life. Like the Contemporary Composers of the Western Concert Tradition, they experimented with the elements of music - attempting to redefine and reinvent them for the new and modern world they lived in.

No longer functioning as a Popular Music, but rather a true Art Music, they were free of any market considerations or audience demands. This enabled experimentation and innovation dependent only on artistic 'vision' - and as such, parallel much of what the New 'Classical' music did in manipulating the musical elements. The 20th Century Concert Tradition is a logical introduction to this next and multi dimensioned Jazz period. In investigating these changes, it is best to keep in mind the Yin and Yang of any art music - that swing between the Formal and the Emotional. This constant tension - both of degree, dominance, or rejection - determines the parameters of the musical search for a contemporary musical language.

- **Melody:** neither the formal beauty of the Classical nor the lyric beauty of the Romantic were emulated. The 20th Century composer had little use for standard patterns - in phrase or repetition of theme or motif. The melodic contour has been divorced from vocal tradition - it was not conceived in terms of what the voice can do, utilizing wide leaps, jagged turns of phrase, and an angular line. It becomes an abandonment of the familiar landmarks on which the listener relies to recognize a melody.
- **Harmony:** the vertical 'height' of the chord was extended upward, creating a demand to 'hear' this extension simultaneously - as a vertical construct rather than a successive linear one. A development of polyharmony as two streams of harmony played against each other - almost as single strands of melody in counterpoint. Different chord constructs other than the superimposed third - chords constructed in fourths, fifths, and seconds [clusters]. An interest in dissonance rather than resolution led to tone combinations of unprecedented complexity - a reflection of the heightened tension and drive of contemporary life.
- **Tonality:** Free use of all twelve tones of the scale - still a functional harmony but one which expands the borders of tonal space - blurring the distinction of Major and Minor. An almost revision to earlier musical organizations such as the medieval church modes, use of non-western scales based on other intervals than the half step, and the use of artificial scale constructs.
- **Rhythm:** A revolt against standard meters which in turn spurred exploration of less symmetrical patterns in favor of the unexpected - a reflection of the hectic rhythms of modern society, city life, and the machine. A drawing from rhythmic conceptions outside of European music - 'primitive' rhythms of Stravinsky and Bartok, the syncopations of Jazz, free prose rhythms of Gregorian Chant, supple [no defining strong beat] rhythms of the medieval motet and the renaissance madrigal, development of national schools prized for their 'off beat' qualities. New rhythmical devices developed: Avoidance of the four measure phrase, non symmetrical meters of 5/4, 7/4, 9/4 - divided in various combinations, multiple meters in compositions with free movement between them, and the bar line lost its power as the arbiter of musical flow.
- **Texture:** Broke up the thick chordal textures of the previous period, a revival of counterpoint, linear melody, and transparent texture. The reconstruction of contrapuntal values is one of the prime achievements of the modern age - 20th Century composers use dissonant intervals to separate the lines and make them stand out against one another. It restored the balance between vertical and horizontal elements in the music.
- **Form:** Embraced the Classical conception of a form based on purely musical elements but with a movement away from clear cut symmetry - irregular phrases, repetition [basic principle of form] is disguised, varied, spaced in irregular intervals and unexpected places [a Dynamic Symmetry instead of Equal Symmetry - exact repetition]. It was a true adaption of established forms to the modern age.

The changes listed are a brief description of the many changes brought about in Contemporary Western Concert music. They do not constitute one style but are a statement of the many influences and directions within the genre. There would no longer be one dominating style - but rather many off shoots loosely labeled 20th Century Concert Music. Jazz in sharing these changes would also follow this pattern - many experiments and musical directions constituting not one dominant style but many directions of exploration and influence. What is common and universal are the demands on the listener as these trends redefined or abandoned long developing musical landmarks. The listener had to actively study and assimilate the new landmarks to make sense of the new music - it was a new language.

## 14 Which Way Now ?

One on the consistent and fundamental aspects of the Jazz Genre was its basis in utilizing preexisting material and styles - it was the distinctive manner of performance which identified the particular jazz style. This nature of this material, in many ways, defined the particular jazz style: spirituals, hymns, marches, blues, dance tunes, popular songs [to name a few]. The general characteristics were a melody oriented music, a distillation of 19th Century European Music, and to varying degrees a reflection of middle-class American musical taste. Jazz began with this fundamental characteristic and evolved within its strictures until the 1960's. With this new generation, the music underwent a very fundamental change - the search for new expressiveness and a vocabulary to address modern life and culture broke the bounds imposed by a use of preexisting material. Jazz which previously had been defined by this material now was to be defined by the new, the evolutionary, and the exploratory.

The History of Jazz has been relatively neat and concise in its course. One major effect of the change would be a splintering of current directions - producing many identifiable and concurrent 'schools'. The History was no longer neat with clearly defined styles and time lines. Because of the many directions jazz took in the 1960's, it would be beneficial to summarize the different style characteristics of the preceding eras - if just to provide a reference for what was to develop:

### NEW ORLEANS DIXIELAND [1910 - 1925]

- RHYTHMIC PULSE was Flat 4
- FRONT LINE consisting of Cornet [melody], Clarinet [obligato of smaller note values], Trombone [counter melody]
- RHYTHM SECTION of Tuba, Banjo, Drums
- PERFORMANCE STYLE was group improvisation above a triadic harmonic underpinning
- TEXTURE was polyphonic
- IMPROVISATION was a melodic paraphrasing of the original melody - Chorus' were embellishments of the original theme in a 'theme and variation' format; the Break was only true improvisational solo but usually no more than a brief connecting link between group solo passages

### CHICAGO DIXIELAND [1920 - 1928]

- RHYTHMIC PULSE was an accented 4 ['2 beat'] to accommodate a new function as dance music
- FRONT LINE was similar to NOD but with addition of Sax and Trumpet
- RHYTHM SECTION included String Bass, Piano, and Guitar
- PERFORMANCE STYLE was still group improvisation
- TEXTURE was polyphonic

- IMPROVISATION began to stress individual soloist, utilized harmonic variation based on chord structure, and a greater emphasis on individual virtuosity

### SWING [1935 - 1945]

- RHYTHMIC PULSE was accented 2 & 4
- FRONT LINE was developed into large sections of reed and brass
- RHYTHM SECTION of Bass, Drums, Piano, and Guitar
- PERFORMANCE STYLE was a large group written arrangement with 'open' solo sections - arranger became a central figure; stress on clean and precise sound ideal
- TEXTURE was homophonic - a vertically conceived ensemble sound contrasting the tone qualities of reeds and brass
- IMPROVISATION still greater emphasis on the individual soloist but within the confines of the Section and the Arrangement

### BOP [1945 - 1950]

- RHYTHMIC PULSE was an accented 2 & 4 but now freed from the confines of providing a dance music function

- FRONT LINE returned to a smaller ensemble classically a Trumpet and Sax - but some larger groupings in this style
- RHYTHM SECTION of Piano, Bass, Drums, with Guitar achieving solo instrument status. Redefined functions with the Bass and HiHat holding down pulse definition
- PERFORMANCE STYLE was Head/Solo/Head with the soloist the central figure
- TEXTURE was homophonic - a horizontally conceived solo based on the underlying harmonic structure
- IMPROVISATION was completely soloist oriented with multiple chorus' the rule rather than the exception and virtuosity a major element

#### COOL [1950 - 1955]

- RHYTHMIC PULSE was accented 2 & 4 but understated and implied
- FRONT LINE - small groups with larger groups utilizing 'unusual' instrumental colors
- RHYTHM SECTION was handled with understatement

- with pianoless or drummer less ensembles appearing
- PERFORMANCE STYLE was Head/Solo/Head but with seamless and interwoven entrances - emphasis on the rational and 'classical'
- TEXTURE was almost a return to the polyphony of Dixieland
- IMPROVISATION completely soloist oriented

#### HARD BOP [1955 - 1960]

- RHYTHMIC PULSE was accented 2 & 4 hard, driving, and emotional
- FRONT LINE - small groups
- RHYTHM SECTION of Piano, Bass, Drums
- PERFORMANCE STYLE was Head/Solo/Head with the emphasis on the emotional with R&B and Gospel influences. A disregard for the 'European' mannerisms of the Cool School
- TEXTURE was homophonic
- IMPROVISATION completely soloist oriented

This history chronicles a steady evolution with the revolutionary a reaction or rejection of past practice. Yes, there were some very fundamental changes which occurred - but these changes did not reinvent or reject the musical elements of Jazz. Each of the styles maintained a link with these musical elements varying only in emphasis - the foundations remained common and firm only the structures built upon the foundations were varied. The 60's were to work on the very foundations of the music.

This is not to say that all was changed - actually two main trends emerged. The era continued with the evolutionary pattern: an exploration within the limitations of already existing styles and their accompanying performance characteristics, a maintenance of functional harmony, a division of labor between the Rhythm Section and the Front Line, and a continuing and reoccurring accented pulse. The era was also characterized by a disintegration of the very structural background of Jazz: an intentional assault on the rigidity of the historical framework, a replacement by a new system of order to fill the vacancy left by the assault on this historical framework [first evident in the area of harmony - melody, rhythm, meter, and structure to soon follow with a return to group improvisation based on new conceptions], a growing interest in 'world music', a new attempt to synthesize Jazz and the music of the European Fine Art Tradition, revitalization of the large group, and continued incorporation of 'Popular Music' into the Jazz Style - but a very different 'Pop Music'.

Culturally, the world of the 60's epitomized these two main trends - the evolutionary based on previous values and practice and the something beyond revolutionary - a rejection of the the past as irrelevant to the 'Now' and a search for behaviors, vocabulary, beliefs, and systems to order and make comprehensible a world of rapidly - almost daily - newness. It was a search for new rules in a world where the rules had suddenly changed - or was rapid, accelerated, and constant change the only rule? Jazz was and is a part of the cultural environment - it could do nothing but reflect this environment and express the emotions of those experiencing this cultural, social, and musical reinvention.

## 15 The Age of Aquarius

The historical documentation of Jazz is nothing more than a chronicle of the stylistic changes that occurred within the music. These changes were adaptations of the music to the cultural and social forces that occurred within the environment - this has been the main content of these articles. One of the fundamental characteristics to be changed [with Bop] was Jazz's functional shift from Dance Music to Art Music. This resulted in the music responding to 'Art' driven forces rather than the 'pop' market. A immediate result was that change increasingly originated with the artists involved - and their need to

adapt the music's language to new artistic demands.

By the end of '50's, two major engines of stylistic change came to the forefront - a dramatic increase in the technical skill of individual soloists and the increased complexity of compositions accepted or modified for the jazz idiom. The technical side of this put pressure on the music to provide improvisational 'space' to showcase this technique but it also influenced the next generation of players - which not only built upon this technical evolution but then expanded upon it. The complexity of the compositions are a result of this pressure - to provide a musical vehicle equal to the artist's technique - but also a contributing factor for future change. While the respect for preexisting material remained a definitive factor; substantial changes took place with the enrichment of the harmonic content and the shift from an eight note to a sixteenth note pulse subdivision. This is the foundation for Jazz in the '60's - an 'art' driven music, an enriched harmonic vocabulary, and a redefined underling pulse.

The '60's took two paths. The first was a continuation of the evolutionary pattern of using preexisting styles and patterns: a maintenance of functional harmony, exploration within the limitations of these styles and performance practices, a division of labor between the rhythm section and 'front line', and a regular and reoccurring accented pulse. The second was a disintegration of the structural background of the music: an intentional assault on the rigidity of the historical framework, a replacement by a new system of order to fill the vacancy left by the assault on this framework, a growing interest in other musical systems, a new attempt to synthesize Jazz and the Contemporary European Fine Art Tradition [already 50 years into its own revolution]. These two paths provided opportunity for a stylistic diversity unprecedented in the history of Jazz. Again, the evolutionary and revolutionary appear, not as a matter of emphasis, but as two simultaneous occurrences - it is the revolutionary which is most obviously revealed in the elements of Jazz.

### **THE SEARCH FOR COLOR**

Jazz, for its entire history, was realized on a relatively small number of European instruments [Trumpet, Trombone, Clarinet, Saxophones, Piano, Tuba, String Bass, Guitar, Drums, and Voice] with secondary additions of Violin, Flute, Vibes, and French Horn. Variety of color was achieved by contrasting instrumental families and use of tonal effects exclusive to Jazz performance practice. The emphasis on color was most obvious in the Cool School of the '50's - the '60's gave this element even more consideration.

Now, an unprecedented assortment of instrumental resources and coloristic effects enter into the music: Exotic instruments from non western cultures, a renewal of African concepts of tone production and vocal practice, an acceptance of all European instruments, practices from the Fine Art Avant-garde, Electronic or electrically modified instruments, and new orchestral combinations. This exploration of 'outside' coloristic resources was also a reflection/result of current social forces: musicians began to take new musical interest in the 'Third World' of Africa, Asia, and South America, the rise of Islam in the Afro-American community ignited an interest in the music of North Africa and Arabia, and a general interest in the mysticism of Asia - all opened an easy access to cross-cultural musical influences.

### **SOURCES::AFRICA**

True 'folk' instruments were introduced into the jazz performance - reed and wooden flutes, whistles, thumb piano, animal horns, and a variety of bells, rattles, and drums. While usually employed in an accompanying role, they added atmosphere and spice in improvisational support. Accompanying this was a renewed interest in the concepts of African Tone Quality - especially those which parallel the African Tonal Languages.

Complex rhythmic textures were also adapted: the use of multiple drummers, layering of polyrhythmic and polymetric activity, and an increase of rhythmic density. The development of 'melodic' drumming [as a consideration of pitch in drumming practice] was influenced by the drum languages of Africa.

A movement toward collective expression and improvisation broke down the division of labor between the 'front line' and the rhythm section. Now everyone was responsible for 'keeping the time' - not just

the drummer. This had the effect of not only allowing 'melodic' drumming but liberated the entire rhythm section - allowing the section to expand their role beyond time keeping.

The search for knowledge of African music sparked a number of visits by American Jazz musicians. They went not only as a pilgrimage, but to learn and experience first hand the musics of Africa - Randy Weston come notably to mind.

#### **SOURCES::ASIA**

Interest in the Classical music of India and other Asian cultures introduced Oriental flutes and percussion, the Japanese Koto, and Indian instruments to Jazz. The Indian influence - focused on the Raga - brought Ravi Shankar to the United States and initiated experiments seeking a common ground between the musical cultures - Don Ellis formed the Hindustani Jazz Sextet for this express purpose.

#### **SOURCES::SOUTH AMERICA**

The emergence of the Bossa Nova - a uniquely Brazilian style - generated interest in Afro-Brazilian percussion and rhythmic practices. It parallels the Afro-Cuban focus of the late '40's and initiated a mutual exchange with Brazilian musicians - Gilberto, Jobim, and Bonfá among many others.

#### **SOURCES :: CONTEMPORARY FINE ART MUSIC**

Spurred by the Third Stream proponents, many more European instruments were accepted into the Jazz environment - the entire Orchestral percussion family, Soprano Sax, Flugelhorn, all ranges of flutes, Violin, Tuba, Cello, Oboe, Bassoon, and Clarinet were added or reappeared. Some of these instruments [as with the Indian instruments] were aided by the advancements in amplification. This was also accompanied by the expansion of the Sound Vocabulary of these instruments: an expanded range in the wind instruments to the very extremes of the possible, unconventional means of tone production [manual manipulation of the Piano strings, Harmonic and 'false' tone production, and experiments in the use of voice and instrumental combinations].

#### **SOURCES::ELECTRONIC INSTRUMENTS**

Electric amplification of instruments and voice was not new - the Amplified Guitar and the Microphone were around for considerable time. What did occur was the advances in electronics made it relatively cheap, reliable, and applicable to any instrument - but more important, direct electronic manipulation of the sound envelope and harmonic organization of the tone became possible. A new sound source had now entered into the music and with it new colors.

#### **RAMIFICATIONS OF THE SEARCH FOR COLOR**

These many sources for new musical color reflected: the era's quest for different, new, or more intense musical stimuli, a freedom and spirit of experimentation to make music by any means available, and a need to communicate on the artist's own terms. What resulted was a new Jazz where sound was not just a means to an end but an end in itself. The music became a sound oriented rather than a Theme oriented music - not in totality, but still at a very basic level influencing even the most conservative artist.

### **16 The Times they are a Changin'**

#### **TEXTURE AND VOLUME**

With the on going search for color, Jazz increasingly became Sound rather than Theme oriented - again, not in totality but still at a very basic level. This concern for color was closely linked (as Michael J. Budds states in 'Jazz in the Sixties', University of Iowa Press, 1978) with Texture and Volume.



The music of the 40's and 50's had a transparency in which the instrumental line and quality was both distinctive and distinguishable. This was now complicated by the new colors and coloristic techniques. But, a new element was added to the mix - a growing contention that 'it's not about notes any more, it's about feelings' (Albert Ayler). This new orientation sparked a break from traditional procedures and sense of musical order - it was the effect produced and the summation of sound which became an end in itself.

To meet these dramatic demands, more instruments were added to the standard quartet or quintet - sometimes to add drone and ostinato functions or just to augment the percussion section with rhythm and color. But, the ensembles did grow in size - if just as a result of added instrumental colors - and the musical texture gained in density and complexity.

Accompanying this change in Texture was a general - and pervasive - demand for greater volume. This music was to be felt, not just heard - it was to envelop the listener in sound. As such, performance practice changed with respect to Volume: dynamic range increased, a louder sound ideal emerged for individual instruments, and 'acoustic' instruments were increasingly replaced by electronic instruments or supplemented by amplification.

Jazz, as a result, lost some of the intimate qualities of the small and acoustic groups of the 40's and 50's. It was no longer suitable to the small club but almost a return to the large venues of the Big Bands - the concert hall rather than the large dance hall. This additive process with regard to volume affected both the vertical and horizontal components of the music - it was a bigger sound and with little use of silence.

## **MELODY AND HARMONY**

Jazz traditionally borrowed from preexisting material - both as a source of thematic material and a harmonic structure for improvisation. As the complexity of the harmonic content increased, the vocabulary of improvisation was forced to expand and adapt in accommodating this evolving complexity - use of chromatic alterations, increased harmonic rhythm, and chordal substitution.

Each era in Jazz has a 'characteristic' harmonic rhythm reflective of the currently available music sources. The 20's: triadic harmony and one chord per measure (Muskrat Ramble), the 30's: appearance of two chords per measure and four note voicings with the addition of the 6th and 7th interval above the root (Georgia On My Mind), and by the 50's: three to four chords per measure with increasing use of Chordal Substitution (Round Midnight).

The 60's continued this tradition of utilizing preexisting source material - expanded in complexity - but also explored new approaches. These new approaches effectively resulted in a structural assault on the Traditional - both attempts to extend or modify functional harmony and in attempting to replace it altogether. This structural 'assault' was not a single and radical leap but rather a series of incremental steps - ultimately culminating in the Free Jazz Movement where none of the traditional performance practices were thought obligatory or indispensable. This challenge directed at Functional Harmony is one of the major events of the decade - it focused on the concept of the 'Tonal Center' (the major organizing principle for manipulating musical sound).

## **INTRODUCTION OF MODAL SCALES**

The introduction of Modal Scales was not a rejection of Functional harmony, but an attempt to obscure it without destroying the presence of a Tonal Center. 20th Century Fine Art Music had already used these in melodic construction which resulted in: the avoidance of the leading tone; permitted unconventional voice leading; and unorthodox chord progression. In Jazz, it created a static harmonic content by: the use of the drone or pedal point to establish the tonal center (rather than a defining chordal progression); the leading tone and the Tonic/Dominant relationship were avoided; and allowed the vertical component to be improvised (Modal 4th's in Mehegan).

For the soloist, this resulted in a freedom from the 'rigidity' of making the changes. The jazz improviser could create with the resources of a single mode which in turn offered a freedom to concentrate on the

improvised line without constraints from the Vertical Chord structures - the phrase was also liberated from its relationship to harmonic rhythm. As Miles Davis stated: 'When you go that way you can go on forever. You don't have to worry about changes and you can do more with the line.....I think that there is a return in jazz emphasis on melodic rather than harmonic variation. There will be fewer chords but infinite possibilities as to what to do with them.....Too much modern jazz has become thick with chords'.

Early on, the modal idea was a conservative one. It was grafted onto inherited form, tonal framework, and metric patterns. Coltrane took the next step - his treatment of modal principles was much freer: he expanded the pitch material to include elements outside the modal scale and increasingly used irregular phrases which further obscured the four and eight measure subdivisions of form.

### **NON-WESTERN MELODIC RESOURCES**

This modal experimentation opened up the jazz world to other cultures and musics which were not organized with vertical chord structures but horizontally with the melodic elements. Indian music - with its characteristic drone, scale system, and rhythmic patterns attracted much attention. It was not so much a complete acceptance of this musical system but attempts at fusion.

### **USE OF QUARTAL HARMONY**

Our traditional musical system is based on harmony constructed of superimposed thirds - but this is not the only system resulting in vertical structures. Quartal harmonic and melodic organization was another - again a way of reflecting or expanding beyond the limitation dictated by tradition. Melodic and Thematic material in parallel, consecutive, and displaced fourths - accompanied by chords constructed of superimposed 4ths were increasingly used. In some ways this was an extension of the chromatic harmony of the 50's - a search for a new 'sound' but closely related to previous practice.

### **SERIAL PROCEDURES**

This is where functional harmony was completely abandoned - and pointed toward the Free Jazz movement. An established 20th Century Fine Art technique, it offered another system of organization outside of the Functional Harmonic boundaries. There were not a lot of compositions based upon this system but it did point toward the 'general' dissatisfaction with the inherited harmonic practice. It became part of the technical language for constructing atonal backgrounds for 'free' improvisation and for organizing large ensembles without the previous harmonic foundations. It was used especially by the Third Stream Movement (Gunther Schuller - 'Conversation') but presented problems as an improvisational technique: just as restrictive as traditional harmony in its rules and procedures, required the improviser to memorize the tone row, and any exceptions to its rules to facilitate improvisation caused confusion when employing the tone-row.

To my mind, the state of Jazz in the 60's was a period of searching. Many paths were taken and explored - some to a dead end. More so, this period was the end of 60 yrs or so of linear development harmonically and melodically - it was struggling to develop a vocabulary to meet the expressive demands of the contemporary culture. Unfortunately it was losing more and more of its listeners - leaving many behind as it grappled with so much change.

## **17 Up, Up, and Away**

### **METER AND RHYTHM**

For the first fifty years or so of Jazz History, time was organized in a straight forward duple meter. Its function as a dance music demanded that this be so. But, by the end of the '50's, many became convinced that this need not be - why restrict meter and rhythm to provide dance rhythms when it was no longer a requirement. This realization produced Jazz which was organized according to new rhythmic patterns and organizations. What occurred was again a duality within the music: Time organizations

based upon the previous practice of a 'steady reoccurring pulse' and one not confined to that particular time element.

Meter in the 50's began to stretch the previous confines of dupal time organization. The Jazz Waltz was soon incorporated within the Jazz Genre and manipulated so as not to invalidate the concept of 'swing'. Soon other experiments - with irregular meter began to appear. Dave Brubeck's Take Five, Time Further Out, and Time Changes albums incorporated many of the 'odd' time signatures and sparked further experimentation. This irregular meter use was soon incorporated into the contemporary large group ensembles - Don Ellis was a notable example.

The irregular or odd meters employed [ $5/4$ ,  $9/8$ , etc] can be reduced to groupings of stress patterns [accented and unaccented beats] of two or three beats. They can be thought of as a composite of two or more time signatures:  $5/4 = 3+2$  or  $2+3$ ,  $7/8 = 4+3$  or  $3+4$  or  $2+2+3$ . The Harmonic rhythm usually reinforces the metric scheme and the rhythm section as always defines this organization.

Don Ellis [whose early big ensemble experiments resulted in the aptly named 'Live in  $3 \frac{2}{3} \frac{1}{4}$  Time in 1967] published 'The New Rhythm Book' in 1972. It offered a methodology for acquiring improvisational and performance skills in odd signatures. His contention was that the Fine Art Music in the Western Tradition suffers in comparison to the vitality of most of the worlds cultures - including European Folk Music [especially that of Eastern Europe]. In fact, Fine Art Music itself had already experienced a period of metric and rhythmic reevaluation after 1910. Under the leadership of Bartok, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg; the metric features of European folk music and other world cultures were incorporated into that tradition - not without controversy.

More radical was the movement which sought to work without a regular reoccurring pulse present - it was not without precedent. The late '50's practice of 'breaking the time' - usually a short section superimposing a '3 against 2' feel - effectively obscured the time structure for short passages. This rhythmic tension was resolved by the return to the original duple stress pattern - it was also usually combined with an 'out' section which again, was resolved by the return to the original tonal center.

This new attitude toward time can be summarized by Ornette Coleman:

"...my music doesn't have any real time, no metric time. It has time, but not in the sense that you can time it. It's more like breathing, a natural, freer time.....I like spread rhythm, rhythm that has a lot of freedom in it, rather than the more conventional, netted rhythm. With spread rhythm, you might tap your feet awhile, then stop, then later start tapping again. That's what I like. Otherwise, you tap your feet so much, you forget what you hear. You just hear the rhythm."

This is called 'Tempo Rubato' which distorted the time by accelerando and decelerando - Coleman's 'The Shape of Jazz to Come' and 'Change of the Century' albums are prime examples.

This concept of time structure - obscuring the meter and abstract time composites - became quite important in the collective improvisation of the 'Free Jazz' movement. Here, the very function of the rhythm section was preempted. Rhythmic energy became a characteristic of each voice in the overall texture - the stereotypical metric formulas were avoided and the bar line existed only as an abstract. These practices effectively destroyed the foundations essential for the 'concept of swing' - which relies upon the tension created between a syncopated melodic line and a regular, reoccurring, and accented pulse.

## **STRUCTURAL DESIGN**

Another aspect of Jazz, prior to this decade, was improvising upon a fixed form and harmonic structure. Here, the original composition provided the form and chord changes that the subsequent improvisations must adhere to - the exceptions to this usually appeared in formal arrangements and were incorporated to

extend the form. Reaction to this fixed structure, again, have precedence in the '50's. The preoccupation with form in the Jazz of the '50's resulted in a review of Western Art Music practices - it led to experiments with extended forms such as the Fugue and Rondo. This general dissatisfaction led [again] to two contradictory trends - one stressed the formality of structure which was carefully determined and composed; and one allowed the structure to 'happen' according to a small number of fixed elements.

Third Stream music sought to deliver Jazz in the shape of European forms and compositional techniques. It benefited from a generation of musicians who could perform in both idioms as well as the emergence of a common ground between the two musical traditions - so that composition and performance practice could accommodate both. The most conspicuous employed an alteration of the idioms - composed and improvised sections either utilizing Fine Art Techniques within a Jazz setting or a Jazz ensemble combined with typical Fine Art ensembles.

One of the longest [1952-1974] enduring Jazz groups - The Modern Jazz Quartet - played a prominent role in this music. Under the musical direction of pianist John Lewis and with close association with Gunther Schuller, a successful method of incorporating the Symphonic orchestra in the performance of Jazz was established. They were not the only proponents - Stan Kenton, Oliver Nelson, and most notably Miles Davis worked within or utilized the Third Stream framework.

This music saw the rise of extended works easily classified as 'Program' music - the 'Maiden Voyage' album of Herbie Hancock depicting the Sea, 'Afro-American Sketches' by Oliver Nelson chronicling Afro-American history with music, and 'New Orleans Suite' by Duke Ellington as a remembrance of the city [as well as the First and Second Sacred Concerts]. These all borrowed from the Fine Art forms - such as Rondo, Suite, and Cantata.



**Duke Ellington**

The other major structural design - which allowed the performer maximum control in shaping form through 'open ended' procedures - was an attempt to achieve maximum emotional intensity by relaxing and simplifying the strictures of form. It allowed the performer to concentrate on the communication of emotion unconstrained by traditional musical elements. It is best described by Cecil Taylor:

"This is not a question of 'freedom' as opposed to 'non-freedom', but rather a question of recognizing different ideas and expressions of order".

The two notable organizing principles were the adoption of 'Fixed Elements' and the Bass Ostinato. Fixed Elements was an agreed upon list of parameters applied to individual pieces - it assured musical coherence while still allowing the performer maximum control over the unsubscribed elements. The Bass Ostinato was the organizing principle - its placement, repetition, and contrast 'to' provided an aural guide to the 'form' of a musical work.

This movement toward freer forms was part of a larger one which considers the world in terms of 'possibilities, not necessities'. In Fine Art Music it is known as Aleatory Music, Chance Music, or Music of Indeterminacy. In these, compositional choices were based on random selection with many details left to the performers decision. As such, no two musical performances were ever identical in the traditional sense of a composed musical work.

Charles Mingus' contributions and activities anticipated many of these practices. His choice of 'Jazz

Workshop' to identify his ensembles reflected this idea of performer choice and group improvisation. His work often suggests a suite-like character with sections contrasted by thematic material, mood, instrumentation, tone color, meter, and dynamics.

## 18 Let Freedom Ring: Introduction

The 60's was a decade of change - and the social and cultural upheaval of that period was reflected - as always - in the evolution and revolution within the Jazz Genre. Ekkehard Jost in his book 'Free Jazz' [Da Capo Press, New York, 1981] is well aware of this. The stylistic direction - labeled the 'New Thing' at the end of the '50's and as 'Free Jazz' after Ornette Coleman's '60's album - showed precisely how tight the links between musical and social/cultural factors are. The music, like the larger cultural environment, was rejecting the 'old' directions, assumptions, solutions, and rules and seeking the 'new' rules of the game - yes, FREEDOM developed its own methodology.

Through the Hard Bop Era, the conventions of Jazz and Jazz Improvisation could be reduced to a relatively narrow and stable system of 'agreements'. These 'agreements' or set of musical assumptions are necessary in any improvisatory music. It enables the soloist to create an improvisatory line aesthetically and 'mechanically' against the expected harmonic and rhythmic background provided by the rhythm section. Free Jazz did not do this in such a universal way.

Basically, the only point of agreement within this Jazz Style was its negation of traditional forms and norms. As such, a large number of divergent styles developed within the larger genre - any classification of common approach would be an oversimplification. This music demands an individual approach by artist or music group - as each had a unique 'solution' for the 'new rules of the game'. But, while termed the 'new thing', it also had its pioneers - those associated with the prior tonal idiom while also contributing to the Free Jazz evolution/revolution.

The Jazz Framework had essentially remained unchanged to the end of the '50's - basically a musical 'universal' that defined the music as Jazz : Formal simplicity of a theme taken as a basis for improvisation; this Theme served primarily to provide a harmonic and metrical framework for the improviser; Improvisation is the focus of Jazz - not the material; Prerequisites were the laws of Functional Harmony reflected in the Theme, acceptance of strictly applied and relatively easy to handle formal patterns [standard chord progressions], the continuous and accented underlying pulse. The various styles differed in 'choices' of these universal agreements - but not in principles.

The emancipation from the traditional musical universals occurred first with Functional Harmony and the development of 'Modal' playing. With the advent of this style, whole sections of a tune were built upon a single modal 'center' - not vertical chord changes. Because of this horizontal emphasis, melodic development was freed from vertical constraints and the necessity for regular phrase lengths [to fit the harmonic rhythm] became unnecessary. If the traditional elements of form were retained, it was done so out of habit - again, not necessity.

It was Miles Davis who made the first statement in this new music - but he did not do it alone or to completion. His association with John Coltrane during this period was essential to the developments of Modal playing and Coltrane was essential to its mature development.

John Coltrane was born Sept. 23, 1926 in Hamlet, North Carolina. He took Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins as models and grew into the 'modern' jazz of the '40's under the influence of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. As early a



John Coltrane

1947, he worked briefly with Sonny Rollins in one of Miles Davis' groups but soon left to work with Jimmy Heath, and later the bands of Dizzy Gillespie, Earl Bostic, and Johnny Hodges.

He was hired by Davis in 1955. Coltrane's approach was still exploratory - this period would culminate in his 'sheets of sound' technique. In mid-1957 he left Miles to work with Thelonious Monk whom he considered a 'musical architect of the highest order'. Benefiting from Monk's help in harmonic exploration and his own study of past practices Coltrane's approach is best summed by his own words:

“...I've found you've got to look back at the old things and see them in a new light”.

In 1958, he rejoined Miles Davis - then in a middle period of stylistic change. A period where Miles was utilizing minimum chord changes and freely flowing horizontal lines. The concepts Miles was working under acted as a catalyst - Coltrane first tried to adapt his 'sheets of sound' approach but soon recognized the wider potential of Davis' interests: 'I could play three chords on one. But on the other hand, if I wanted to, I could play melodically. Miles' music gave me plenty of freedom.'

The first phase of modal playing was the Milestones album - a year later, the second phase appeared with the Kind of Blue album of 1959. The tune So What is easily accessible as an example of Modal playing: within the 8 bar sections, there is no harmonic movement at all, improvisational material for the A section is D Dorian and the B Section Eb Dorian - with no functional relationship between the sections, just an abrupt chromatic shift. But it was the Flamenco Sketches cut which was the most consistent modal piece contained within the album: no actual theme in the sense of a 'composed melody', the form consists of five sections of different lengths, and each section was based upon a different modal center.

Having the improvisations vary in length [coupled with the varying modal centers] had some important consequences for the development of Free Jazz: with the standardized 'bar patterns' of a given form dropped, other means of signaling the end of a solo had to be developed; the change in Modal centers [within the improvisation] was signaled either by the Rhythm Section setting up a series of suspensions or by the soloist 'leading' to the new Mode. Both of these required intense listening to each improviser in order to follow the entrance into an new section and accommodate the varying length of the improvisation. While this album was the exception to current practice [the group dissolved soon after], it was indicative of what was to come. With the dissolution of this musical unit, Miles went back to working with Gil Evans and it was left to Coltrane to expand the principle of Modal Playing.

John Coltrane's first important LP as leader of his own group was Giant Steps in 1959. Here, he reverts to the mult-chord structures of his 'sheets of sound' but also moves beyond the harmonic framework of Hard Bop - the changes are not based on 'circle of fifth' movement but rather chords a third away. The improvisation is based on arpeggiated chords - impressively played to say the least, but still vertical structures. The recording and the approach it contained led Coltrane to a realization:

“I haven't completely abandoned this approach, but it wasn't broad enough. I'm trying to play these progressions in a more flexible manner now” [from a Downbeat interview in 1960]

A year after Giant Steps and the restrictions of the vertically oriented improvisation, Coltrane returned to Modal playing and a concentration on horizontal melodic development.

In October of 1960, he recorded the My Favorite Things album. The title tune is a Richard Roger Waltz written originally for a musical - not one obvious for Modal treatment. The chord movement in the first sections is minimal Emi at first and a following section of GMaj - it is these sections which Coltrane utilizes for his Modal improvisation. This, coupled with his use of the soprano sax, make the treatment unique. Also, while the 8 Bar sections become obvious, it is his horizontal approach and Tyner's tension building piano accompaniment which avoid the inherent monotony of scale based [vs chordal] improvisation. After this album, Coltrane recorded with Don Cherry - then a member of Ornette

Coleman's Quartet and the stage was set for John Coltrane's move toward Free Jazz in next year.

## 19 Let Freedom Ring: John Coltrane

Coltrane's recording of 'The Jazz Avant garde' with Don Cherry can be used as the pivot point in his move toward Free Jazz. While it does hint at Coltrane's later directions, the album is more symbolic than substantive. On this recording, Coltrane sounds hesitant - almost erratic - and Don Cherry much more conventional than was typical of his work with The Ornette Coleman Quartet. But, soon after, Coltrane collaborated with Eric Dolphy and this cleared his path toward Free Jazz.

Eric Dolphy started with Coltrane as the second woodwind soloist [Alto Sax, Flute, & Bass Clarinet]. While their backgrounds were very different, the common search for musical expansion and new means of expression provided a unity of musical direction.



**Eric Dolphy**

Born in 1926 in Los Angeles, Dolphy started his career with Gerald Wilson and Buddy Colette - attaining his initial recognition with Chico Hamilton in 1958. He came into contact with the avant garde while working in the groups of Charles Mingus and George Russell. At the beginning of the 60's, he like Coltrane, inhabited the border between the growing offshoots of Hard Bop and the radical approach of Free Jazz. But, unlike Coltrane - who steadily gained independence from traditional practice - vacillated between the Traditional and Free styles. He renounced the traditional harmonic and rhythmic practices on Ornette Coleman's 1960 'Free Jazz' album - of which he was co-leader - but also was associated with Oliver Nelson and Booker Little in the Hard Bop vein. He worked with such standard materials as 'Don't Blame Me' or 'You Don't Know What Love Is' just before his death in 1964.

Dolphy's collaboration with Coltrane was short - a few months - but still a dynamic influence on Coltrane. After this, Coltrane began to color individual tones reminiscent of Dolphy's bass clarinet sound as well as the use of larger intervals characteristic of Dolphy's solo lines. Coltrane had experimented before with tone color but now it sounded natural and fully integrated into the

improvised line - the interval work was used much more sparingly than Dolphy and usually in contrast to a contoured eighth note line.

The partnership was not without controversy - the reaction was, in reality, not particular to these two but aimed at the 'new directions' - they just happened to be visible and the music did spark the 1961 Downbeat article by John Tynan:

“At Hollywood's Renaissance Club recently, I listened to a horrifying demonstration of what appears to be a growing anti-jazz trend exemplified by these foremost proponents of what is termed avant garde music.....I heard a good rhythm section.....go to waste behind the nihilistic exercises of the two horns.....Coltrane and Dolphy seem intent on deliberately destroying [swing].....They seem bent on pursuing an anarchistic course in their music that can but be termed anti-jazz”.

One of the main charges hurled at the group was the excessive length of their pieces. While extended

compositions and performances had been presented before, the nature of the Modal improvisation left listeners of the time without the familiar landmarks to follow. The abandonment of functional harmony and formal patterns - and with this a readily comprehensible time division - made for added difficulty in following the music. This new approach demanded new listening - and not everyone was willing to follow this particular path.

Culminating five years of musical experimentation, exploration, assimilation, and perceptions, Coltrane recorded 'A Love Supreme' in December of 1964. Ekkhard Jost states that with this album, Coltrane's role as a pioneer of technical innovation was transformed into one of 'a new self-realization'. This may be true, but the culture as a whole was reflective of this new self-realization and Coltrane, in the liner notes - reminiscing about his time addicted to narcotics and alcohol [mid 1957] - does state the following:

"I experienced, by the grace of God, a spiritual awakening which was to lead me to a richer, fuller, more productive life.....in gratitude, I humbly asked to be given the means and privilege to make others happy through music".

Whatever the motivation for the concept - it was to mark a new direction for him.

The composition is a suite of four movements - each with a different structural framework ['Acknowledgement' - relatively freely treated modality, 'Resolution' - cadential 8 bar periods, 'Pursuance' - 12 bar blues pattern with a modal flavor, 'Palm' - strict modality and intensive simplicity] reveals a new feature in Coltrane's work - motivic ties between sections. These 'ties' occur in various permutations and connect the 4 movements. This technic would become a typical procedure in his later work - either sequencing the motif through the keys as it progresses through the different parts of a composition or superimposing it on a modal foundation in the bass and piano.

After this recording, Coltrane - 'the man in the middle' - became, with 'Ascension' made a half-year later, a central figure for the second generation of Free Jazz musicians. His musical journey wandered many paths and to my mind he was clearly the bridge between what came before and what is 'now' - just as Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker had done previously. He died on July 17, 1967 - and I think of all he has done Archie Shepp summed his life the best:

"He was a bridge, the most accomplished of the so-called post-bebop musicians to make an extension into what is called the avant garde.....He was one of the few older men to demonstrate a sense of responsibility to those coming behind him. He provided a positive image that was greatly needed and stood against the destructive forces that have claimed so many. Having suffered and seen so much himself, he tried to see that others coming along wouldn't have to go through all that."

## **20 Let Freedom Ring: Charles Mingus**

Mingus spent his youth in the Watts section of Los Angeles and would become a prominent band leader here in the '40's. Born in Nogales, Arizona he was relocated to Los Angeles while still very young and this locale would provide his early musical impressions - the Gospel music of the Church and the ensemble sound of Duke Ellington. His first 'live' Ellington experience was a - to say the least - exciting experience for him:

"When I first heard Duke Ellington in person, I almost jumped out of the balcony. One piece excited me so much that I screamed" [Hentoff, 1961].

He also had an affinity for the European Impressionist composers - Debussy and Ravel.



He became nationally known in the '50's as the bassist with Red Norvo's trio - Red Norvo/vibes, Tal Farlow/Guitar. He settled in New York City in 1951, co-founding - with Max Roach - Debut Records and joined the Composer's Workshop circle of experimentalists. His musical history prior to that was filled with variety and a diversity of Jazz styles - working as a sideman with Kid Ory, Louis Armstrong, Lionel Hampton, Red Norvo [as mentioned], Art Tatum, and while in New York 'every bop musician of consequence'.

This pioneer of Free Jazz directly influenced that movement on two fronts - as a virtuoso Bassist and a Composer. Interestingly, he seems to have not been very impressed either with the Free Jazz movement or his influence on the next generation of Bassists working in that idiom. Litweiler, in his book, 'The Freedom Principle' states that Mingus 'despised' Free Jazz and looking back in 1974 Mingus stated:

"I used to play avant guard bass when nobody else did.  
Now I play 4/4 because none of the other bassists do"

...rather ironic considering his impact on that particular music.

Mingus developed musically in marked contrast to John Coltrane. While Coltrane evolved stylistically over a period of time - moving further from his starting point - Mingus fused the widespread areas of his musical influences into a personal whole. This truly personal idiom was not a stylistic aggregation of influences but a unique fusion of the ensemble sound of the Ellington Orchestra, the collective improvisation of Dixieland, the call and response of Gospel Music, bebop phrasing, and folk music.

He was a virtuoso on his chosen instrument - with a unique conception that set him apart from the Bassists of the '50's. So strong was this instrumental esthetic that his playing would influence the likes of Charlie Haden, Scott la Faro, and Steve Swallow. Most of the outstanding Bass players of the period - Paul Chambers, Sam Jones, Doug Watkins - worked within the Ray Brown school. It was a '4 to the bar' time keeping role and solos were rare - either in an ensemble style without the ensemble or technical displays [frequently with no relation to the original musical context]. Mingus partly dispensed with the time keeping role and worked with rhythmically independent lines running contrapuntally to the melody - both as a foundation and a counterpoint.

These innovations were only incorporated superficially at the time - Hard Bop had no room for this style within its particular set of conventions.

Compositionally, most of his advanced ideas were introduced by the summer of 1957. Like Ellington, he composed for the particular personnel in his groups - but went one step further. He did not so much compose for them but rather with them - working from sketches outlining the basis of the compositions - he provided space for individual contributions and fostered an atmosphere of spontaneous interactions within the group:

"As long as they start where I start and end where I end, the musicians can change the composition if they feel like it. They add themselves, they add how they feel while we're playing" [Hentoff liner notes Atl.1377].

One of the notable consequences of this approach is that the outward features of his music changed with the musicians. These 'Jazz Workshops' provided the setting for his contributions as Free Jazz Pioneer - it was his musical individuality as a composer which set the stage for later developments.

His concept of form rarely fit the formal structures of the '50' and '60's - for the most part he still worked in the traditional 12 and 16 bar blues forms and the 32 bar song form. But, while accepting these formal patterns he filled them with new content - breaking the 'theme/improvisation/theme' convention. In expanding these short forms he often juxtaposed several contrasting themes which provide a differentiation to the musical structure - and change the emotional levels as the form unfolds.

He further provided variation with his concept of tempo. Hardly one piece keeps the initial tempo throughout - either by double time in the Bass and Drums or a constant accelerando with a sudden 'pull back'. This was often combined with an alteration of the basic rhythm and sometimes meter. It created a powerful and driving performance.

It was the use of collective improvisation - one very notable aspect of Free Jazz - which firmly establishes his pioneer role. While a practice of the Cool School and used by the likes of Gerry Mulligan, Al Cohen, and Zoot Sims - it was usually confined to a two horn dialogue before the return of the last theme [out chorus]. Mingus's use of this technique had much of the vitality of early Jazz and often formed the emotional climax of a composition. It was also the method through which he brought his musicians into a process of spontaneous co-creation - either against a written theme or a fixed and repeated rhythmic ostinato.

He died after a period of increasingly ill health in 1979.

## **21 Let Freedom Ring: Ornette Coleman and a New Way-Part 1**

Ornette Coleman - born March 19, 1930 in Fort Worth, Texas - started working at 14 with local R&B bands throughout the South West. A recording for Contemporary in February, 1958 actually started his career in Jazz and it happened by 'accident'. He had approached Lester Koenig to offer some of his compositions for recording and Koenig, after hearing Ornette play through some of them, offered to record Coleman for Contemporary.

Two LP's resulted - 'Something Else! The Music of Ornette Coleman' and 'Tomorrow is the Question'. Both of these were made with Don Cherry who played a decisive role on both recordings. Shortly after, both went east and studied at the School of Jazz in Lenox, MA and it was here that Coleman studied with Gunther Schuller and John Lewis [of the Modern Jazz Quartet] - at the same time, they were put under contract with Atlantic Records.

It was a Five Spot engagement in 1959 that introduced them to the Jazz community - but typically with a great deal of musical controversy. As Nat Hentoff observed:

“For months, grimly skeptical jazz men lined up at the Five Spot's bar. They made fun of Coleman but were naggingly worried that he might, after all, have something to say - and in a new way”.

Much of the reaction was due to Coleman's instrumental technique - or rather lack of technique [he was not a virtuoso player] - and his apparent appearance 'out of nowhere' onto the NYC Jazz scene and in one of the most sought after venues.

His musical statements presented 'in a new way' were truly, Coleman's way. The group appearing at the Five Spot included Don Cherry, Charlie Hayden, and Billy Higgins and it is evident, that Coleman schooled this group with his own Jazz esthetic:

“It took me a long time to get them interested in studying with me, and staying.....because when I met Charlie [Hayden] and Billy [Higgins] and Don [Cherry], they were into Bebop. They got very interested in the things I was trying to write to play. So when we got together, the most interesting part is: What do you play after you play the melody if you don't have nothing to go with? That's where I won them over...”

Coleman didn't provide chord changes on which to improvise - so what do you play? Ornette clearly stated:

“usually, when you play a melody, you have a set pattern to know just what you can do while the other person's doing a certain thing. But in this case, when we played the melody, no one knew where to go or what to do to show that he knew where he was going”

This new music was not about 'changes', but about emotional expression:

“I finally got them to where they could see how to express themselves without linking up to a definite maze.....I think it was a case of teaching them how to feel more confident in being expressive like that for themselves. It was the innovations that Coleman developed which allowed that 'expressive confidence”

and these innovations are essential elements of a new musical language spoken by a new generation of jazz musicians - for the New Jazz started when Coleman and this Five Spot unit began playing together.

He basically negated the use of a stated harmonic framework to provide a base and form for improvisation. This harmonic framework was not replaced by another 'way' but actually not present in his conception - the recordings for Contemporary reflect this with his and Don Cherry's struggles with the rhythm section on 'Something Else! The Music of Ornette Coleman' [Bassists Red Mitchell & Percy Heath, Drummer Shelly Manne, Pianist Paul Bley]. In a 'traditional' jazz setting, these accomplished players would have been ideal but for Coleman and Cherry it was not. Both were forced to improvise over set changes but with a conception which did not accommodate such a fixed harmonic structure. 'Tomorrow is the Question' had a better relationship with the rhythm section - without a chording instrument present the free space allowed the soloist expanded considerably but more needed to be done to accommodate Ornette's conception. When Charlie Hayden became a permanent addition many of these problems were solved. Hayden was a participatory bassist [vs an accompanying one], following the horn lines free from functional harmonic orientation, and favored the low registers of the instrument - all factors which liberated the improvised line.

Ornette's music did conform with the concepts of conventional form but while accepting formal structure he 'omits' the harmonic implications of form. His is a totally linear approach to making music - the point of reference is not the 'changes' but a fundamental 'sound'.....a tonal relationship to one underlying tone rather than functional harmony. The Modal Approach to improvisation - by choosing a modality for improvisation actually is a choice among 'musical sets' and the acceptance of the internal order of relationships within the mode. The Focal Tone Approach has no such implications and provides a much freer space for improvisation.

Both approaches can stagnate easily and Coleman's solution incorporated two elements - motivic improvisation [termed Motivic Chain-association] and shifting to secondary 'tonal centers'. Motivic improvisation in this context is the invention a Motif independent of the stated Theme: one idea grows from another - linearly - which then evolves into another new idea. It is almost analogous to the 'Stream of Consciousness' literary style of Joyce or the 'automatic writing' of the surrealists. The shifts to secondary tonal centers develop from these Motivic Chain-associations and independently of time order - while retaining the ability to provide contrast for bridge sections [again, Coleman accepted the concept of conventional form].

One of the major criticisms - I'm sure part of the Five Spot reception - is Coleman's intonation. He was accused from the beginning of 'wrong intonation' - the subtle manipulations of embouchure to bring notes into tune on his instrument. He often speaks of the 'human quality' of his intonation - the 'human pitch' or 'vocalization of the sound': 'When I play an [ f ] in a song called Peace, I think it should not sound exactly like the same note in a song called Sadness' [from Berendt]. Berendt infers that the [ f ] should not be equal in vibrations [how pitch is measured] - Jost, on the other hand, indicates that what Coleman is really saying is that they should not 'sound' the same. This concept is used within Ornette's

improvisations but - again, as Jost states in referring to his early recordings - he is very off pitch 'in a very real sense' and with 'clashes which cannot be interpreted as expressive technique.

Coleman's Rhythmic conception is simple in principle and his music often has a 'folk song' quality. He does however utilize a type of rhythmic displacement - passages of 'on the beat' notes contrasted with just as simple a rhythmic passage but played 'off beat'. In addition, he often subdivides eighth note lines into odd groupings by shifting accents - the bar line with its implied accents is irrelevant in his music and it is very difficult to determine 'one' in his melodic line.

So what do you play? In 'traditional' Jazz, the Theme functions as a means to outline the improvisational passages which follow - for both the musicians and the audience. The melodic content provides a reference point for what is to follow and provides a set series of Chord Progressions. In Coleman's music the Theme determines the expressive content of the improvisations - this Unity of Theme and Improvisation is emotional and expressive rather than formal and functional.

## 22 Let Freedom Ring: Ornette Coleman and a New Way-Part 2

Ornette Coleman's compositions can be split into two broad and significant categories [several types have 'crystallized'] - a Type 1 and a Type 2 and both of these are not dependent upon chord structure.

**Type 1:** exemplified by 'Mind and Time', has no implicit harmonic progression[s] but rather a melodic-rhythmic line that determines the emotional nature of the improvisation. This line sets the initial tempo...and provides no clear tonal center. Rhythmically, it fits none of the common metric schemes and since it is 11 1/2 bars in length the division of the melody into bars is irrelevant. It should be noted that once a melody is divided by the bar line a series of reoccurring accents is implied. This melodic construction of 11 1/2 bars has an indicated repeat which changes the melodic accents between the first play through and the repeat - notes occurring on beat 1 the first time will occur on beat 3 with the repeat. What this line essentially provides is a 'relatively non-obligatory framework for improvisation' - for range, motion, and perhaps dynamics.

**Type 2:** exemplified by 'Congeniality', which follows an A - B1 - A - B2 standard song form. These sections are actually melodic constructs of contrasting rhythms which set the emotional context of the piece - not one specific emotional orientation but rather these contrasting sections provide 'emotional' choices for the soloist to develop an improvised line.

If any one common element can be identified within these two types, 'Freedom of Choice' for the soloist must be primary. The constricting elements of functional harmony, a tonal center, and the 'tyranny' of the bar line are all absent - but, at the same time, the organization which provides Theme and Improvisational unity remains. It is not a free form performance just a 'New Way' of organization, a way freed from the previous confines of chords, standard metric patterns, and tonality.

In 1959, Ornette stated: 'Perhaps the most important new element in our music is our conception of free group improvisation'. The group which brought this to fruition was the unit which recorded 'Free Jazz' in 1960 [Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Charles Hayden, Billy Higgins, Ed Blackwell, Eric Dolphy, Freddie Hubbard, and Scott La Faro]. Prior to this '60's release two previous jazz performance norms remained present - the dominating role of the soloist and the accompanying role of the rhythm section [in which the Bass and Drums still defined the time] - they had to 'keep the beat'.

This 36 minute composition is organized around a series of agreements rather than a musical score in the traditional sense. Here, individual passages ['single complexes'] are led by a different 'soloist' and are linked by transitional 'ensemble' interludes. Some of these interludes are completely notated while others exist as partially written structures ['harmonic unison']. The harmonic unison provided the players with tonal material but with no fixed timing - this would become an important compositional technique in the later development of Free Jazz. The 'tonal center' and the tempo were also agreed upon - with Hayden and Blackwell responsible for the fundamental rhythm which was 'constantly challenged and consciously endangered by La Faro and Higgins'.

The music created on the basis of these ‘agreements’ depends almost totally on the player’s readiness to interact - it was an expansion of the ‘motivic-chain associations’ to a larger group context. Here, these associations develop and evolve within the group as a whole. Ideas introduced by the ‘soloist’ of a given section are taken up by the other musicians, developed further, and then handed back to the soloist in an altered form. It is a network of musical interactions - by imitation, continuation, and contrast that is continually renewed from within by the flow of musical ideas.

The performance [and much of this ‘composition’ is dependent upon performance] remains static - with little emotional climax. But it did - along with the work of Mingus - move closer to the idea of a ‘musical collective conversation’ and away from the primacy of the individual soloist...a demonstration that a long collective improvisation had potential for ‘unity of form’ in the new music.

Ornette, after this album, retreated into smaller musical associations. He returned in 1965 for an engagement at the Village Vanguard with bassist David Izenzon and drummer Charles Moffet - playing two more instruments: Violin and Trumpet. Here, the additional instrumental voices were handled in typical Ornette fashion...as ‘sound tools’ rather than the expected ‘traditional playing techniques’. His treatment of these instruments were as producers of sound, rhythms, and emotions - not the expected melodic roles normally occupied by either [though eventually the trumpet was utilized in its expected role]. Soon after, he took a two year ‘voluntary inner exile’ - not from the music but rather from the music business:

“I don’t feel healthy about the performing world anymore at all. I think it’s an egotistical world; it’s about clothes and money, not about music. I’d like to get out of it, but I don’t have the financial situation to do so. I have come to enjoy writing music because you don’t have to have that performing image...I don’t want to be a puppet and be told what to do and what not to do...” [1966].

By the end of the ‘60’s, things grew quiet for Coleman. He presented concerts in his home on Prince Street in Manhattan but did record again in 1970 releasing ‘Ornette Live at Prince Street: Friends and Neighbors’. In 1971, his quartet appeared in Lisbon, Portugal - with Charlie Hayden arrested and released with the intercession of the American Cultural attache. This incident developed after Hayden dedicated his ‘Song for Che’ to the ‘Black people’s liberation movements of Mozambique, Angola, Guinea’.

Coleman’s compositions were not only in the jazz genre - his string quartet ‘Dedication to Poets and Writers’ was recorded in a 1962 Town Hall concert. A Woodwind Quintet ‘Sound and Form’ was recorded in 1965 at a concert in Croydon, England. He received the first Guggenheim Fellowship ever awarded for a jazz composition and the ‘Inventions of Symphonic Poems’ composed for that Fellowship debuted in 1967. ‘Sun Suite of San Francisco came in 1968 and he recorded his 21 movement ‘Skies of America’ in 1971. ‘Skies of American was recorded the next year under conductor Davic Measham with the London Symphony.

Ornette continued his musical journey going to Joujouka, Morocco in 1973 and working with Prime Time from the mid 70’s [a quintet in 1975, sextet in 1979, and then a septet]. He recorded ‘Of Human Feelings in 1979 and appeared on James ‘Blood’ Ulmer’s ‘Tales of Captain Black’.

I feel, what can best sum up Coleman’s view of music is a comment about his Joujouka trip - the music and the musicians:

“And the thing that was so incredible is that they were playing instruments that wasn’t in Western notes, wasn’t no tempered notes, and yet they were playing in unison. It’s a human music. It’s about life conditions, not about losing your woman, and you know, baby will you please come back, and you know, I can’t live without you in bed. It’s not that. It’s a much deeper music. There is a music that has the quality to preserve life...The thing that was

very beautiful about Joujouka and the same time very sad was that all the musicians have to survive is their music. I mean, they don't have anything else but that."