



Jazz

E i g h t h E d i t i o n

Tanner

Megill

Gerow

Jazz

E i g h t h E d i t i o n

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Basal Text *10/12 Times Roman*
Display Type *Helvetica Light*
Typesetting System *Macintosh™ QuarkXPress™*
Paper Stock *50# Restore Cote*
Production Services *A-R Editions, Inc.*

McGraw-Hill

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Cover and interior design by Wood Street Studio

Cover photograph © Charles Thatcher/Tony Stone Images

Copyedited by Bruce R. Owens, A-R Editions, Inc.; Proofread by Janet Reuter

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 95-83647

ISBN 0-697-28807-2

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Printed in the United States of America

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Photographs

This edition of *Jazz* focuses on presenting a clear, chronological account of the evolution of jazz in a manner that is easily accessible to students. The historical framework offered in this edition is used to introduce the individuals who shaped jazz as it developed into America's signature art form and, at the same time, to support individual instructors in their own presentation of jazz styles and eras.

Features for the eighth edition include the following:

The listening experiences of the reader are the focus; and more than fifty listening guides, including those for commercially available listening collections (Smithsonian, New World Records, and Folkways), are presented.

This edition is accompanied by a two-cassette (or CD) set of original jazz recordings, all with accompanying listening guides in the text.

Listening software will also be available to help guide students interactively through the listening examples.

The text has been reorganized to better reflect how courses are taught. The new restructuring has been designed to support both students' learning and professors' course organization.

Technical material from previous editions has been gathered in the appendices so that it is easily accessible but not overwhelming for the uninitiated student.

The instructor's manual includes example scores of earlier jazz styles as well as organizational materials.

Chapters have been updated to include recent accomplishments by contemporary jazz artists.

New Internet opportunities are now offered to extend the effectiveness of the text. You can correspond with the author (dwmegill@yar.miracosta.cc.ca.us), visit a World Wide Web site (<http://www.miracosta.cc>).

ca.us—look under the music department), or subscribe to a listserv (jazz-l@spock.miracosta.cc.ca.us), where students and professors around the world who use this book can extend their classrooms to discuss their study of jazz.

The new organization of the text and the guided listening examples are designed to introduce students to the stylistic eras of jazz and to expose the fluid nature of stylistic change. The first chapter, "Listening to Jazz," is designed to help students learn how to approach jazz through critical listening skills. The presentation is meant to be appropriate for the general appreciation student through its sparing use of technical terms and examples.

Knowing that musical notation and the technical language of music can unnecessarily intimidate new students to music, we have moved those elements to easily accessible appendices. For students with more preparation, Appendix A contains a more technical discussion of chapter 1, complete with notational examples. Appendix B contains notational examples for the discussions offered in chapters 2 through 8.

The accompanying musical examples include recordings by Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Joe "King" Oliver, Scott Joplin, Art Tatum, Louis Armstrong, Meade Lux Lewis, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Lester Young, Count Basie, Miles Davis, Horace Silver, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Joe Zawinul, Weather Report, Chick Corea, the Yellowjackets, Fletcher Henderson, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Wynton Marsalis, Art Blakey, and the New York Voices.

To help students identify additional recordings found on the *Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz*, the cited recordings are identified by "S." Likewise, examples found on the New World Records collection are identified by "NW" (this collection can be obtained from 3 East 54th St., New York,

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New York 10022). Another important collection for early jazz influences is the Folkways Jazz series, identified by "FJ."

In some cases, we recommend listening examples that are not readily available in these major collections. We do so only because we believe that these are the best examples of the material being discussed. Our dialogue with professors of jazz history makes clear that

individualized listening lists are an important part of most course offerings. We expect that professors will know best how to substitute for these recordings if these prove to be not readily available.

We would like to thank the reviewers for this edition:

Charles Blancq
University of New Orleans

George Bouchard
Nassau Community College
Hermina Watthall Butcher
Randolph Macon Woman's College

David Manuel Garcia
Bridgewater State College

Brad Madson
Jefferson College

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Jazz



What is jazz? What are the unique characteristics that distinguish it from other types of musical composition and performance? Throughout its chronology, jazz has freely imported influences from diverse cultural and musical elements, forming a type of music that has been accepted as uniquely American. "The American popular song is inextricably and profoundly linked with jazz, the one serving—along with the blues—as the basic melodic/harmonic material on which the other could build."²

Jazz is both indigenous to this country and the most democratic music ever devised. Performers in an improvised jazz ensemble are equal partners in the developing musical expression. As the music unfolds, the musical leadership may shift several times as the players contribute their own expressive ideas. Jazz is defined by this balance between the individual voices that constitute an ensemble and the collective expression unique to that ensemble.

In its early development, all music not clearly classical was generally considered jazz, thereby putting jazz, country and western, rock and roll, and all popular and other types of music into one category. As jazz developed, the lines between it and the other musics in America became much clearer. In fact, even the distinction between "good" and "bad" jazz seems to have settled into a general consensus, but this consensus has seldom developed free of controversy. The newer musical expression often served as a reaction to the jazz status quo.

The music of America has many faces. Few of these musical expressions survive a temporary popularity, but jazz ultimately matured in a way that wove it into the American fabric itself. It is often called "America's classical music," and it has proven to be an appropriate subject of study in colleges and universities around the world. Although there was other musical activity during this time—such as country and western, blues, rhythm and blues, and the popular songs of musical theater—only jazz claimed a dominant foothold in the American identity.

Jazz embodies the irony of how a music can move from such lowly origins as the heartfelt expressions of American slaves, the music of the church, and the dance hall to the American academy and the concert stage.

This musical and cultural phenomenon was not to be replicated until the advent of rock and roll, which now appears to have an equal amount of cultural energy to etch itself, as jazz did, into the American identity.

Listening to Jazz

***"Jazz is considered by many to be America's greatest contribution to music. Its impact on American society has been enormous and its influence on world culture has been far reaching. Its message has been direct, vital, and immediate, enabling it to hurdle cultural, linguistic, and political barriers."*¹**

At Bob Reisner's Open Door, Greenwich Village, New York, ca. 1953. (Left to right): Charles Mingus, Roy Haynes, Thelonious Monk, and Charlie "Bird" Parker.

Photo by Bob Parent

Understanding jazz requires an understanding of the jazz performer. Unlike music of the Western European tradition, which traces the history of musical composition, jazz traces its history through the performance of individuals. Jazz is about personal, unique expressions, and those performers most remembered by history have always stood above others in the power of their personal expressions. These expressions have always depended on the unique balance of the technical and aesthetic prowess of the performers themselves.

Because jazz is defined by the personal voices of its performers and only secondarily by its composers, it is misleading to force the musical styles used to define jazz into overly rigid categories. The stylistic similarities among players of a particular era are useful in understanding the evolution of jazz, but they are only a shadow of the individual creative voices that propelled jazz's evolution. Along with many others, author-critic Henry Pleasants has tried to identify the origins of jazz: "The influence of a variety of indigenous musical styles originating in the Negro communities of New Orleans and other American cities, in the Negro communities of the rural South, and in the Negro or mixed communities of the Caribbean islands and some areas of South America in the early decades of the twentieth century has been felt and reflected in the popular music of most of the civilized world."³

Pleasants's statement, emphasizing the contribution of African Americans and the geographical origins of jazz, is only partially correct. Jazz was fired in a more complex crucible. It required all the musical and cultural forces at work in America to reach its ultimate definition: the crosscurrent of the western European harmonic system and song form as well as the expressive melodic and rhythmic elements of the African heritage. It also

required the American cultural context with all its contributing forces, both (arguably) good and bad.

Pleasants does, however, invalidate several of the misconceptions concerning jazz:

Prevalent assumptions are: (1) that the distinguishing feature of jazz is syncopation; (2) that the distinguishing feature of jazz is improvisation; (3) that jazz cannot be played from notes; and (4) that jazz is a Negro music and can be played properly only by Negroes. All are easily disposed of: (1) If syncopation were the distinctive element in jazz, then much European music would be jazz. (2) Improvisation was common in European music well into the 19th century, and most church organists improvise to this day without producing anything that sounds like jazz. (3) The time has long passed when an astigmatic jazz musician could get by without spectacles. (4) While the Negro has certainly been the decisive contributor to jazz, there is no jazz in Africa that was not brought there by Americans or Europeans, white, black and mixed.⁴

Jazz is about the balance between **improvisation** and composition. Although jazz is best known for being improvisational, it is certainly more than that. In fact, some of the distinctive characteristics of certain jazz periods involve just this balance. Some periods, such as bebop and free form, used a high degree of improvisation and only a small amount of precomposed material. On the other hand, the swing era's big bands used highly structured arrangements that left little room for improvisation, although even within these large bands small groups (e.g., the Benny Goodman orchestra) played improvisational jazz. However, even these small groups included an overall plan of some kind that guided the performance. For example, the strains of two- and three-part harmony played by the clarinet, piano, and vibraphone on "Avalon" could not possibly have been performed unless they had been previously contrived.⁵

To be a discriminating jazz listener, one must assess the level and appropriateness of the improvisation in any given style. To expect a highly improvised performance from a highly precomposed style can lead only to a disappointing listening experience. Pursuing the example of "Avalon" further helps clarify this point. The Goodman big band may have used highly composed arrangements, but not all big bands did the same. Kansas City bands, such as the early Count Basie band, used a much less formal approach to big-band performance. Their "riffing" style was often developed in an improvisatory manner, unlike the more specifically notated arrangements of bands such as Goodman. The performances of each of these bands reflect the manner in which their arrangements were created: one structured very loosely and openly and the other controlled and more complex. Each approach had its advantages but also precluded the assests of the other.

But an even finer distinction can be made in this example. The Basie band actually later became known as one of the most precise ensembles in big-band history, a development that required Basie to shift to more spe-

What Is Jazz?

"Jazz I regard as an American folk music; not the only one but a very powerful one which is probably in the blood and feeling of the American people more than any other style."

—George Gershwin

"It is difficult to give a definition of Jazz. Those offered are as varied and numerous as those who have played or listened to it."

"Who invented jazz? The city of New Orleans did."

—From a display at the New Orleans Jazz Museum

cific arrangements than he used with his earlier ensembles. So, even within the work of one musician, the balance between improvisation and composition is shifting. This balance is subtly at work even in the process of improvisation itself. While performers improvise, they make compositional decisions that cannot be edited because they are made in real time rather than before the performance began. The excitement of improvisation must be balanced against the possible complexity that an edited composition allows. Again, there are advantages to both, and listeners must align their expectations with the compositional/improvisational balance offered by the performance.

As mentioned, musicians must be allowed to define jazz from period to period and not to force it into any one narrowly defined category. Doing so lets one enjoy both the wider breadth of the jazz tradition and the individuals who define it. One's understanding of various jazz styles then comprises only very general descriptors,

not specific mandates for performers to follow. Such an inclusive jazz definition helps one approach the history of jazz honestly and allows future jazz expressions more room to breathe.

An important first step to understanding jazz is recognizing that jazz is not static within its own tradition. This must be established before trying to distinguish it from the other musical traditions in America, a task that at first seems obvious but that ultimately proves more elusive than one would expect. What characteristics are common to most all jazz and are not typical of other musical traditions? It is much easier to recognize something as jazz than to state how one knows it is jazz and not something else. The more technical musical activities understood only by the practitioners of music somehow signal to even the untrained listener that it is jazz rather than some other musical style. Actually, the musical elements of jazz are very similar to those used in other musical styles. Also, most of the musical forms

Jazz Interpretation

The main characteristic of jazz is the individual musician's interpretation of his or her material, whether it be originally written for a jazz group or from a popular tune, an aria or a classical theme, using the elements of jazz such as improvisation, syncopation, blues scale, etc. A jazz musician absorbs the material and models it according to his ideas and talents, "forming the link between the composer and the audience." The tradition of interpretive jazz has as its source the musical style of slaves singing as they worked in the field, worshiped in church, or celebrated during their free time. A specific interpretation can be identified only by comparison to other styles. It might include such jazz elements as blues scales and harmony, smears, fall, bend, growls, flutters, vibrato, glissandos, or differing tone colors in muted brass instruments. Also possible are pitch variations, one-half valved notes, and "tricks" used by early jazzmen. These musicians sometimes guarded their individual styles, many times using a cloth over the valves to hide their technique. Many early jazzmen refused to record because they feared their techniques would be stolen by other musicians.

Improvisation

The art of improvisation is as old as music itself, for early musicians, like early jazz players, were both composers and performers.

Improvised music, which has occurred in all musical systems of the world, evolves into written music, thus completing a cycle from spontaneous creativity to traditional repetition of written

melodies. Every development of a new form and style of music has in its beginning elements of improvised material. Improvisational music dominated the polyphonic music of the fifteenth century, and was the essential element of eighteenth century music for harpsichord and piano, as played by Johann Sebastian Bach and his contemporaries. A resurgence of improvised music came in the form of jazz in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, after lying dormant.

Jazz became the foremost improvisational style at the turn of the twentieth century, evolving from many different types of music, especially the Negro music in and around the city of New Orleans.

Syncopation

Syncopation occurred in early jazz, characterizing a style of musical performance different from any heard before. While improvising on a given theme was not unique to jazz, the elements of music used by these early jazz musicians in their own colorful style was singular. Syncopation is the deliberate upsetting of the normal pulse of meter, accent or rhythm. It is felt as a contradiction or disturbance between the underlying pulse and the actual pulse of music and is created by sustaining or stressing notes or by adding rests in unsuspected places.

The best description of this use of unestablished rhythm is "... a jazz performance using syncopation makes it swing."

—From a display at the New Orleans Jazz Museum

(or structures) of jazz are not new to American music. However, jazz is still recognizably different, its most distinctive attribute being the manner in which all these elements and forms are performed and the improvised context in which this jazz interpretation is carried out.

The interpretation of music in the jazz style originally came about when African Americans attempted to express themselves on European musical instruments. These early instrumentalists tended to think of their musical lines in terms of how they would be treated vocally. Eventually, the attitude developed that *what* was played was not as important as *how* it was played.

In jazz interpretation, the player restricts interpretative ideas to his or her conception of the melody, coloring it by the use of rhythmic effects, dynamics, and any other slight alterations that occur to him or her while performing. The player remains enough within such melodic restrictions to allow a listener to recognize the melody easily, regardless of the player's interpretation. Almost any kind of melodic line can be performed with jazz interpretation. Most jazz musicians will agree that to write down an exact jazz interpretation is next to impossible, and all will agree that only a musician who has played jazz can even approximate the notation.

Critical Listening

*"There need be no mystery about jazz, but each listener has a right, even a duty, to be discriminating."*⁶

To appreciate music, the listener must be actively involved, and understanding and enjoyment go hand in hand. Passive listening will not bring intelligent musical enjoyment. Rather, such enjoyment is fostered through active participation that includes understanding, careful listening, and emotional response. The thrust of all musical learning should be to develop a sensitized awareness of those expressive elements of music that will foster a wide range of musical interests and activities and a variety of musical pleasures.

Listening Techniques

The primary aim in listening to a composition is to focus attention on the various musical events as they unfold—not an easy task. Mental concentration of a high order is needed. The mind is so conditioned to hearing music as a background **accompaniment** to daily activities—in the dentist's office or at the supermarket—that it is difficult to devote full attention to listening to music.

In daily living, one encounters many spatial relationships—high walls and low walls, houses and garages, sidewalks and streets, country and urban vistas—that are immediately visual and easily identified. In listening to music, one must forget the visual and learn to concentrate on the nonvisual elements.

Another difference is that music moves in time, and time relationships are less obvious in daily living. For example, a painting can be viewed at leisure and its parts observed in relationship to the whole, but not so when listening to a musical composition, when memory becomes important. The mind must remember at one point what has transpired so that one part of a piece of music can be compared or contrasted with another part.

Finally, if one is to learn more about the structure of music, it is important to develop the ability to separate juxtaposed musical sounds and to focus attention on a single musical element. For example, when identifying the **ostinato** bass employed in boogie-woogie playing, one must be able to shut out the right-hand piano sounds to recognize what the left hand is realizing at the keyboard.

What to Listen for in Jazz

Sounds Associated with Jazz

In classical music, each instrument has an "ideal" sound or tone, or at least there is a consensus as to what the ideal sound is. The jazz musician, though, finds such conformity of little importance. As long as the sound communicates well with peers and listeners, the jazz musician appreciates the individuality of personal sounds. This situation, in which personal expression is more important than aesthetic conformity, often causes listeners not accustomed to jazz to question the sounds that they hear.

Certain sounds peculiar to jazz have their origins in oral tradition and are the result of instrumentalists attempting to imitate vocal techniques. Jazz singers and instrumentalists use all the tone qualities employed in other music and even increase the emotional range through the use of growls, bends, slurs, and varying shades of **vibrato**, employing any device they can to assist their personal interpretation of the music. Jazz musicians have always had a great affinity with good singers, especially those whose interpretation closely resembles their own. Such singers include the early great blues singers (to be discussed later) and other talented performers such as Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, Sarah Vaughan, Billy Eckstine, and Betty Carter.

Distinctive jazz **instrumentation** produces unique sounds. For example, a featured saxophone section or a **rhythm section** is seldom found in other types of music. Although it is a mistake to claim that mutes are indigenous to jazz (mutes were used in the 1600s), it is true that a larger variety of mutes are used in jazz.

To many listeners, the sounds of jazz are personified and identified through the musical interpretation of specific artists. Listeners who have not heard much jazz are often surprised that the well-initiated can recognize a soloist after hearing only a few notes—at least within the listener's preferred style. Talented jazz musicians seem to