

# JAZZ

TANNER  
GEROW  
MEGILL

6.6



# *JAZZ*

SIXTH EDITION

PAUL O. W. TANNER  
*University of California, Los Angeles*

MAURICE GEROW  
*University of California, Los Angeles*

DAVID W. MEGILL  
*MiraCosta College*

**wch**

Wm. C. Brown Publishers  
Dubuque, Iowa

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 87-71921

ISBN 0-697-03663-4

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Printed in the United States of America by Wm. C. Brown Publishers  
2460 Kerper Boulevard, Dubuque, IA 52001

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2



# Preface

Even though some of the eras of jazz music sound extremely different from others, it is our contention that jazz has evolved logically from one era to the next. This study attempts to show the logical musical derivatives and developments of jazz and at the same time to point out the important elements that comprise the individual styles of jazz as they evolved from era to era. *Jazz*, sixth edition, tries to define jazz and its developments as precisely as possible. The authors have strived for a comprehensive, complete, well-researched, and effectively organized textbook. Because video tapes are becoming more accessible and because several companies have made strong commitments to the production of jazz video tapes, we have added new in this edition a videography which lists many of the most recent available tapes on jazz.

Martin Williams has gathered a very impressive record collection for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. This collection is superb and essential to the study and enjoyment of jazz. For the convenience of the teacher and student, we have utilized examples from the *Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz* at every specific point possible. To further emphasize this aid, we have placed a signal (S) after each record reference that is part of the Smithsonian Collection.

Another record resource which is easily available is found in an anthology called *New World Records* (Recorded Anthology of American Music, Inc.) which

is located at 3 East 54th St., New York City, NY 10022. As was accomplished in the Smithsonian collection, these researchers have obtained permissions to press what they consider to be the most important recordings in the history of American music. At this writing, there are exactly 100 albums available and more promised. It is impossible to detail the event of this collection here, but suffice to say, it travels through every type of music made in America, naturally, covering all phases of jazz. Any teacher or other serious student of this music must be encouraged to avail himself or herself of this memorable collection.

Once again, we have tried to simplify the difficult problem of logical jazz examples. Again we have examined the text and pointed out the many fine examples to be found in the *New World Records* collection; we have signaled these by placing (NW) after each one.

The authors also suggest the fine collection entitled *Folkways Jazz* which contains many excellent and pertinent examples. We have indicated certain recorded examples which can be found in this source with the signal (FJ) following the suggested record.

Therefore, the problem of available jazz examples has been simplified in this sixth edition. The faculty, school library, or students, may have one, or all three, of these truly fine collections. The signals are:

(S) for the *Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz*  
(NW) for the collection by *New World Records*  
(FJ) for the collection by *Folkways Jazz*

## Additional Sources

Because we feel that certain inaccessible recordings may still be the best examples of some specific jazz styles described in the text, we offer some additional suggestions for those having difficulties locating these recordings. In the Spring of 1985, John Swenson wrote a useful book called *The Rolling Stone Jazz Record Guide*.<sup>1</sup> This publication specifies what Swenson considered available in retail sources at that time. Two of the better mail-order catalogues are Mosaic and Smithsonian. Mosaic can be contacted at:

Mosaic  
197 Strawberry Hill Avenue  
Stamford, Connecticut 06902

Suggestions on how to listen to jazz are expanded. References and lists for recommended reading are included as chapter resources. Of course, many features of the fifth edition have been retained, and, as in former editions, the written music in the text can be heard on the cassette accompanying the book. The record included with previous editions is now a cassette tape. There are also new demonstrations on this tape in order to bring the listener up to the present time.

New to this edition are over twenty examples of listening guides to visually aid the listener with a second by second account of what is being heard. These guides cover all the taped material plus many works found in the Smithsonian and New World collections.

There are new and intensely interesting jazz areas developed in this edition. Included are entire chapters devoted to such contemporary directions as Free Form—Avant Garde, Crossover—Fusion, including Third Stream and Jazz/Rock, The Big Band Legacy, Jazz and the New Technology, and a chapter on Jazz Esthetics and Criticism. Obviously, the authors have delved deeply into all of the newer electronic developments and have examined the works of the leaders in these fields.

This book can be used most effectively in a variety of situations, at either the secondary or college levels. At the high school level, it can be used to supplement and extend studies of southern folk songs, Stephen Foster's songs, black spirituals, blues, and work songs. At the college level, this book can be used as a text for a course entirely on jazz.

Much has been written about jazz, and, as a consequence, the references recommended for additional reading have been carefully selected for their accuracy, authenticity, and applicability to school and college use.

## Acknowledgments

We wish to thank these reviewers for their assistance with the sixth edition of *Jazz*:

Ronald Pen  
University of Kentucky, Lexington  
Robert S. C. Myers  
DePaul University  
Robert G. Delwarte  
California State University, Northridge  
Craig Whittaker  
University of North Carolina, Greensboro  
Richard Lawn  
University of Texas, Austin  
Charles Blancq  
University of New Orleans  
Terry Steele  
Slippery Rock University  
Charlotte Mabrey  
University of North Florida  
Darhyl S. Ramsey  
University of Texas, San Antonio

1. John Swenson, *The Rolling Stone Jazz Record Guide* (New York: Random House, 1985).

# Contents

*Recorded Examples ix*

*Photographs xi*

*Preface xiii*

## 1

**What is jazz? 3**

Jazz interpretation 5/Improvisation 6/Rhythm 7  
/Syncopation 7/Sounds associated with jazz 8  
/Form 9/Summary 9/Suggested classroom  
activities 10

## 2

**How to listen to jazz 11**

Listening techniques 12/What to listen for in  
jazz 12/Jazz ensembles 12/Some musical concepts  
in jazz 13/Listening suggestions 18/Suggested  
classroom activities 18/Listening guide 19

## 3

**Jazz heritages 20**

African and European 20/Music from Africa 21  
/African rhythms 21/Call and response 22  
/European influences 22/Blacks in early colonies 23  
/Congo Square 23/Creole music 23/Field hollers  
(cries) 24/Worksongs 25/Religious music 25  
/Mahalia Jackson and the Black church 27/Ray

Charles 29/Liturgical jazz 29/Marching  
bands 32/Additional reading resources 33  
/Suggested classroom activities 34

## 4

**The blues 35**

The origin 36/The accepted chord progression 37  
/Blue notes 37/Blues lyrics 39/Blues  
performers 40/Additional reading resources 43  
/Additional record resources 43/Suggested  
classroom activities 43/Listening guide 44

## 5

**Early New Orleans Dixieland (1900–1920) 46**

New Orleans 46/The oral tradition 47  
/Instrumental obligations 48/The King 49  
/Dixieland jazz spreads out 51/Summary 52  
/Additional reading resources 53/Additional record  
resources 53/Suggested classroom activities 53  
/Listening guide 53

## 6

**Ragtime (1900–1917) 55**

Stride piano 58/Ragtime lives on 59/Additional  
reading resources 61/Additional record resources  
61/Suggested classroom activities 61/Listening  
guide 62

## 7

### **Chicago Style Dixieland (the 1920s) 63**

The roaring twenties 63/The two dixieland styles 64/Chicago 66/Bix Beiderbecke 67/Summary 69/Additional reading resources 69/Additional record resources 70/Suggested classroom activities 70/Listening guide 70

## 8

### **Boogie-Woogie (the 1920s and 1930s) 71**

Ostinato bass 71/The players 72/Origin 74/Summary 74/Additional reading resources 75/Additional record resources 75/Suggested classroom activities 75/Listening guide 75

## 9

### **Swing (1932–1942) 76**

Beginnings of the swing era 76/Jazz arrangements 77/Fletcher Henderson 78/New York 78/Kansas City 80/Swing becomes accepted 82/Paul Whiteman 82/The recording industry 83/The swing bands 84/Swing combos 88/The demise of swing 89/Summary 89/Additional reading resources 89/Additional record resources 89/Suggested classroom activities 90/Listening guide 90

## 10

### **Bop (1940–1950) 91**

The shift to bop 91/Bop arranging 91/Musical expansion 92/The bop rhythm section 93/The performers 94/Summary 100/Additional reading resources 100/Additional record resources 101/Suggested classroom activities 101/Listening guide 101

## 11

### **Cool (1949–1955) 103**

Changes 104/The performers 106/Lester Young 107/Miles Davis 107/Summary 108/Additional reading resources 110/Additional record resources 110/Suggested classroom activities 110/Listening guide 111

## 12

### **Hard Bop—Funky (circa 1954– ) 112**

The music 113/Performers 113/Gospel jazz 116/Charles Mingus 116/Sonny Rollins 117/Straight-Ahead jazz 119/Additional reading resources 120/Additional record resources 120/Suggested classroom activities 120/Listening guide 121

## 13

### **Free Form—Avant Garde 122**

Ornette Coleman 123/Cecil Taylor 125/John Coltrane 125/Anthony Braxton 126/The free jazz controversy 128/Summary 128/Additional reading resources 129/Additional record resources 129/Suggested classroom activities 130/Listening guide 130

## 14

### **Crossover—fusion 131**

Third stream 132/Jazz in classical composition 134/Jazz/Rock fusion 135/Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew* 135/Chick Corea, Return to Forever 136/Joe Zawinul, Wayne Shorter, Weather Report 137/Jazz in rock 137/Jazz/Pop/Rock 139/Latin jazz 141/Summary 142/Additional reading resources 142/Additional record resources 142/Suggested classroom activities 142/Listening guide 143

## 15

### **Big band legacy 145**

Ghost bands 145/Transition bands 145/Contemporary large bands 146/Don Ellis 146/The school scene 149/Additional record resources 150/Suggested classroom activities 150

## 16

### **Jazz in television and motion pictures 151**

Motion pictures 151/Television 152/Summary 154/Additional resources 154

## 17

### **Vocal Jazz 155**

Spiritual singing 155/Gospel singing 156/Singing work songs 156/Publishing popular music 156/Singing the blues 157/Bessie Smith 157/Billie Holiday 158/Ethel Waters 160/Contemporary jazz singers 160/Summary 162/Additional reading resources 164/Additional record resources 164/Suggested classroom activities 164

## 18

### **Jazz and the new technology 165**

The recording medium 165/Digital recording 166/Amplification—loudness 166/Synthesizers 167/Computers and effects 169/Musical instrument digital interface 170/Studio performance/composition 171/Summary 171/Additional reading resources 172/Additional record resources 172/Suggested classroom activities 173/Listening guide 173

## 19

### **Jazz esthetics and criticism 174**

An historical perspective 175/Jazz controversies 175/Historian versus critic 177/Prominent critics 179/Suggested class projects 180/Listening guide 180

## 20

### **Six out of many 181**

Louis Armstrong (1900–1971) 181/Duke Ellington (1899–1974) 184/Benny Goodman (1909–1986) 187/Charlie Parker (1921–1955) 189/John Coltrane (1926–1967) 192/Miles Davis (b. 1926) 194/Additional reading resources 196/Additional record resources 197

Appendix A

**Scores 199**

Appendix B

**Awards and films 238**

Appendix C

**Discography 242**

Appendix D

**Videography 245**

Appendix E

**Listening guides 248**

*Glossary 249*

*Bibliography 254*

*Index 258*





# *Recorded Examples*

Demonstration 1 for written example 1A—Melody *without* jazz interpretation.

Demonstration 2 for written example 1B—Melody *with* jazz interpretation.

Demonstration 3 for written example 1C—Melody with *improvisation*.

Demonstration 4 for written example 6A—Bending a *minor* to a *major* third.

Demonstration 5 for written example 6B—Bending a *fifth* downward to a *flatted* fifth.

Demonstration 6 for written example 6C—Bending a tone *upward* to no specific pitch.

Demonstration 7 for written example 6D—Bending a tone downward to no specific pitch.

Demonstration 8 for written example 9A—A hymnlike melody used with the blues harmonic construction.

Demonstration 9 for written example 9B—The same melody given jazz interpretation.

Demonstration 10—Early New Orleans Dixieland.

Demonstration 11—Ragtime.

Demonstration 12—Chicago Style Dixieland.

Demonstration 13—Boogie-Woogie.

Demonstration 14—Swing.

Demonstration 15—Bop.

Demonstration 16—Cool.

Demonstration 17—Funky.

Demonstration 18—Free Form.

Demonstration 19—Crossover.

Demonstration 20—Synthesized drums.

Demonstration 21—Synthesized bass.

Demonstration 22—Synthesized brass.

Demonstration 23—Synthesized flute.

Demonstration 24—Crossover.



# *Photographs*

- |                                      |     |  |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|--|-----|
| Mahalia Jackson with Louis Armstrong | 28  | Horace Silver                                  | 114 |
| Duke Ellington and His Orchestra     | 31  | Les McCann                                     | 115 |
| Marching Band                        | 32  | Charles Mingus                                 | 117 |
| Huddie Ledbetter                     | 41  | Sonny Rollins                                  | 118 |
| Ma Rainey                            | 42  | Wynton Marsalis                                | 119 |
| Joe "King" Oliver and His Orchestra  | 51  | Art Blakey                                     | 120 |
| Original Dixieland Jazz Band         | 52  | Ornette Coleman                                | 124 |
| Jelly Roll Morton                    | 57  | Anthony Braxton                                | 127 |
| Fats Waller                          | 59  | Gunther Schuller and Dizzy Gillespie           | 133 |
| Art Tatum                            | 60  | Chick Corea                                    | 136 |
| Earl Hines                           | 66  | Weather Report (Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul) | 138 |
| Bix Beiderbecke and friends          | 68  | Herbie Hancock                                 | 140 |
| Meade Lux Lewis                      | 73  | Toshiko Akyoshi                                | 147 |
| Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra | 77  | Don Ellis                                      | 148 |
| Count Basie and His Rhythm Section   | 81  | Bessie Smith                                   | 158 |
| Benny Goodman and His Orchestra      | 85  | Billie Holiday                                 | 159 |
| Glenn Miller and His Orchestra       | 87  | Bobby McFerrin                                 | 163 |
| Dizzy Gillespie                      | 95  | Stanley Jordan                                 | 168 |
| Thelonious Monk                      | 97  | Chick Corea                                    | 169 |
| Stan Kenton                          | 98  | Nat Hentoff                                    | 176 |
| Woody Herman                         | 99  | Art Lange                                      | 177 |
| Modern Jazz Quartet                  | 105 | Martin Williams                                | 178 |
| Gerry Mulligan                       | 107 | Leonard Feather                                | 178 |
| Lester Young                         | 108 | Joachim-Ernst Berendt                          | 179 |
| Miles Davis                          | 109 |  |     |

André Hodeir 179  
Louis Armstrong 182  
Duke Ellington 185  
Benny Goodman 187  
Charlie Parker 189  
John Coltrane 193  
Miles Davis 195

**JAZZ**



# 1

## *What Is Jazz?*

**F**or more than eighty years jazz has exerted an influence upon many composers of the twentieth century both in America and in Europe. Jazz audiences listen to their favorite music with the same intense interest as the most devoted symphonic or chamber music lovers. (It is interesting to note the popularity of jazz in the Far East. More American jazz records are sold in Japan than in any other country, including the United States.) Many modern jazz musicians are highly trained instrumentalists using the same complex harmonies and rhythms that classical composers use. All good musicians are painters with sound.

What is jazz? What are the unique characteristics distinguishing it from other types of musical composition and performance?

Throughout its chronology, jazz has been a melting pot, taking diverse cultural elements and forming them together into a music that has been accepted as American. It is both indigenous to this country and the most democratic music ever devised. Jazz is a way to shape musical material.

Some people consider all music that is not classical to be jazz, thereby putting jazz, country and western, rock, all levels of popular music, and other types of music into one all-inclusive category. Of course, much music that borrows from jazz is hardly jazz itself. Furthermore, academia must be encouraged to distinguish good jazz from bad just as it distinguishes good classical music from bad. Writer-teacher Leon

Dallin has this to say about the misunderstandings concerning jazz:

*In choosing between good and evil the acceptance of the one implies the rejection of the other. This is not true in choosing between the classics and jazz, though admittedly more often than not it works out that way. I prefer to think that the two aspects of musical art are perfectly compatible and that to appreciate both of them requires only an understanding of what each is—and is not. . . . There are some parallels, and music might be divided along similar lines into "music which costs" and "music which pays." Symphonies, string quartets and the like would constitute the former; Dixieland combos, swing bands and their successors, the latter.*

*Symphony and chamber music players and composers would agree to this distinction. On the other hand, the very mention of the word "commercial" in jazz circles suggests Lombardo and Garber [and Welk]. Another argument against this distinction in music is that some of the more creative aspects of jazz have been the least successful financially and for a time, during the early days of the Depression, were pursued mainly, if not exclusively, for the sake of art.*

*Formerly the problem of pigeonholing music could be accomplished nicely by approaching the problem from the standpoint of use. There was dance*



music and concert music. This distinction loses validity with the invasion of "dance" bands into Carnegie Hall and the prohibition of dancing in the "Storyville" and Basin Street Clubs, traditional haunts, for lack of a better term, of the jazz men. The issue is confused hopelessly by the mixture that streams out of radio and television sets, though there is no question where the emphasis lies.<sup>1</sup>

As far as considering jazz to be dance music and classical music to be concert music, it should be remembered that most jazz stopped being a music primarily for dancing in the 1940s. And it should be noted that two of the greatest composers of dance music were Wolfgang Mozart and Johann Strauss, and that in 1597 Thomas Morley published very precise instructions for writing actual dance music in *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Praticall Musick*.

It is extremely doubtful that any amount of teaching can produce a jazz performer of the quality of Louis Armstrong or Charlie Parker—too much in jazz is concerned with personal experiences and feelings. But what can be taught are appreciation and discernment, at least to the capacity of each student. Incidentally, it must be emphasized that it is the capacity of the student, certainly not of the teacher, that sets the limit. In regard to the study and teaching of jazz, Charles Suber, editor of a leading jazz publication, *Down Beat*, has best expressed certain pertinent views:

*To be a successful professional performing musician you need three basic things. First is a strong, outgoing ego—something inside of you that must speak out. Second is ambition—a strong, almost ruthless drive that makes everything besides music insignificant. The third, and the most elusive to define, is talent. Talent has many ingredients, such as mastery of instrument, thorough knowledge of the theory and literature of music, and the ability to communicate your music and personality to an audience. Talent is a quality that is usually regarded by others as a relative value—"He's the best (or worst)." To the top pro, talent is more of an absolute. He sets his own standard of excellence and consequently is his own best (and worst) critic and judge. You can be sure that Ellington or Parker or Heifetz set his own (seldom or never-to-be-achieved) standard and did not accept the criteria of others.*

*The same three things—ego, ambition, and talent—are needed to be a successful music educator; especially today, when there is a very thin line between professional teacher and professional performer. It is no longer true, if it ever was, that "only unsuccessful*

*musicians teach."* Being able to make it as a full-time working professional is denied to many musicians because of many other factors. (Remember that less than 5 percent of the 240,000 union musicians in the U.S.A. earn their full-time living from music.) It is fortunate that in today's education market there is a place for talented professional musicians to teach and perform in the jazz idiom. To be involved in school jazz as student or teacher is becoming a requirement for acceptance as a complete musician in all idioms.<sup>2</sup>

Along with many others, author-critic Henry Pleasants has tried to define 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."<sup>3</sup> Pleasants's formula, emphasizing the contribution of the American Negro and the geographical origins of jazz, is really no formula at all. He 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 [classical] 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.<sup>4</sup>*

1. Leon Dallin, "Classics and Jazz: An Eternal Conflict?" *Music Educators Journal* 45, no. 2 (November-December 1958):32.

2. Charles Suber, "The First Chorus," *Down Beat* 35, no. 18 (September 1968):4.

3. Henry Pleasants, *Serious Music and All That Jazz* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969), p. 51. Copyright © 1969 by Henry Pleasants. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster, a Division of Gulf and Western Corporation.

4. Pleasants, *Serious Music and All That Jazz*, p. 62. Copyright © 1969 by Henry Pleasants. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster, a Division of Gulf and Western Corporation.

Many individuals who write about music state that improvisation is the *only* type of jazz or that jazz is strictly improvisation. Improvisation is the art of composing original music while performing the music, with or without the aid of written music. Most improvising musicians, however, make up their individual parts based on an overall plan that has been previously agreed upon by all the participating performers.

We contend that all jazz is *not* improvised, because if it were much of what is classified as jazz would not fall strictly into this category. To illustrate this point, look to the music performed by the smaller groups within the Benny Goodman orchestra. Very few would argue that the Benny Goodman trio, quartet, and other small ensembles are not playing jazz. In a particular composition or performance these smaller groups continuously alternate between music that is improvised and music that is notated or at least planned. The two- and three-part harmony strains played by the clarinet, piano, and vibraphone on "Avalon," for example, could not possibly be performed unless they had been previously contrived.<sup>5</sup> Hence, to those who hold the view that jazz consists exclusively of improvisation, the Goodman groups would seem to fluctuate continually between jazz and some other style of musical performance.

Writers often refer to the use of improvisation in dixieland music. Those who have never been involved in the actual performance of dixieland music seldom realize the musical techniques used by performers of this type of music. (These techniques are explained in chapter 5.) Regardless of the feeling of spontaneity perceived by the listener, there is actually very little improvisation in the ensemble portions of dixieland music. The better dixieland players have performed their repertoire for so long that during the ensemble sections they usually play established lines or at least planned patterns instead of improvisation.

Count Basie's orchestra is generally accepted as a jazz organization; yet this musical group plays written arrangements with parts left open for improvisation by solo instruments. It cannot be maintained that such small groups as those led by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and the early Miles Davis groups play music containing a few bars of jazz followed by a few bars of something else. It is our opinion that everything these groups perform is jazz.

Therefore, it is clear that jazz can be both written (planned) and improvised and that jazz and improvisation are not synonymous.

It is also our opinion that certain elements are generally found in jazz that distinguish it from other music, and that all of these elements may not be equally present in any one jazz performance. These elements

are jazz interpretation, improvisation, rhythm, syncopation, sounds associated with jazz, and particular musical forms. Only by understanding and identifying the elements that comprise jazz can the listener develop an appreciation and understanding of jazz itself.

## Jazz Interpretation

The interpretation of music in the jazz style originally came about when Afro-Americans attempted to express themselves on European musical instruments. The natural way for these early instrumentalists to think of their musical lines was as the lines 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 as would allow a listener to easily recognize the melody regardless of the player's interpretation. Almost any kind of a 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.

Another way of explaining jazz interpretation is to speak of the jazz "idiom." Classical music and jazz music differ primarily in idiom. A classical musician plays the notes, but the playing lacks the same idiomatic execution usually found in jazz. The European system of musical notation cannot represent this kind of expression. "The conventional symbols could, in other words, indicate in a general way *what* should be played, but could not indicate [precisely] *how* it should be played."<sup>6</sup> Idiomatic expression in jazz is the result of the black American musicians interjecting African music into European music. However, ". . . when jazz compromises its own characteristics of pulse, contour and cadence, to accommodate a more nearly European frame of expressive reference, calling upon strings, or employing its own European instruments in a European [classical] manner, it jeopardizes its idiomatic identity."<sup>7</sup>

5. Benny Goodman, "Avalon," *Benny Goodman Carnegie Concert*, Columbia Records, OSL-160.

6. Pleasants, *Serious Music and All That Jazz*, p. 32. Authors' brackets. Copyright © 1969 by Henry Pleasants. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster, a Division of Gulf and Western Corporation.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

This technique is illustrated by examples 1A and 1B, the first without jazz interpretation and the second with suggested jazz interpretation. Listen to the differences in the performances on the cassette that accompanies this book.

Today, two completely diverse directions in jazz interpretation are very active. One kind of interpretation seems to be closer than ever to classical music. This trend started about 1950 and continues as more schooled musicians enter the jazz field. The other direction is toward **avant garde** jazz, in which some players disregard all earlier approaches to musical lines. These musicians maintain that instead of interpreting lines per se they are playing emotions such as rage or pain.

## Improvisation

Improvisation is similar to interpretation, but without melodic restriction. When a jazz player improvises, the “standard” procedure is to use the original as a point of departure and to invent a new melodic line while still fairly well restricted by the harmonic structure of the original melody. However, as discussed in chapter 13, there is a contemporary style called “free form” or “free improvisation” in which the player’s only restriction is to compose lines related to the musical sounds made by the other musicians in the group.

Improvisation did not come into being with jazz nor is the technique confined solely to jazz, as some authorities state. Jazz improvisation in principle is no different than the time honored improvisational techniques

### Example 1A

#### *Taped Demonstration 1*



### Example 1B

#### *Taped Demonstration 2*

