

April in Paris, Autumn in New York:
Whiteness and the Racial Formation of European Jazz in the US,
1940s–1970s

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Abstract

This dissertation charts the US reception and dissemination of European jazz and how ideas of European jazz were shaped through racialized narratives in the meeting of African American culture and European whiteness. In a series of roughly chronological case studies, it traces how Americans wrote and thought about European jazz and explore the lives of European jazz critics and musicians who went to the US.

As a historiographical intervention, the dissertation responds to the fact that histories of transnational jazz in large part locate “the transnational” outside the US. The histories told in this dissertation show that the idea of “European jazz” was not only created in Europe, but was also defined by discourses and music created in the US. Mobilizing critical race studies, the dissertation also argues that scholarship on European jazz has avoided the question of its overwhelming whiteness at the expense of colorblind cosmopolitan universalism. By focusing on how European jazz fared in the US, this dissertation highlights how the unavoidable fact of jazz’s Blackness came to set the whiteness of European jazz in relief. This also shows that the account of whiteness and jazz, even within the US, cannot be bounded by strict national frameworks.

Chapter 1 shows how European critics were positioned in the US press as culturally superior to American jazz critics and audiences, through discourses of high-art class hierarchies and racial whiteness. Chapter 2 explores the US careers of the European singers Alice Babs and Caterina Valente, whose gendered whiteness was positioned as a form of exoticized Europeanness in the US. Chapter 3 is a portrait of the Austrian pianist and keyboard player Joe Zawinul, who used narratives of miscegenation, racial passing, and “soul”

in ways that rely on the fundamental instability of racial markers but also on his white privilege to tell such stories. Chapter 4 is a case study of the most prominent European jazz record label, ECM, which built an identity as a *European* label upon the already established American ideas of European jazz, specifically its high-art status, “serious” approach to music, “pure” sound production, and whiteness.

The research presented herein reveals that Americans used the specter of European-ness for their own purposes, reshaping American jazz discourse through transatlantic juxtapositions. Most consistently, American critics and musicians saw these fault lines as one marked by class and race, associating European critics with intellectualism and European jazz with the idea of high art (for instance, through the comparison with European classical music). European ethnicities functioned as a white privileged position from which musicians could negotiate their identities with African Americans, claiming both solidarity and difference. American notions of an intrinsic white, highbrow European sensibility worked to uplift jazz in the cultural hierarchy.

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Introduction. “Europe Invades!”

“Europe Invades!” read the frontpage of the leading US jazz magazine *Down Beat* in May 2006 (see fig. 0.1). The cover story focused on the Swedish band Esbjörn Svensson Trio, which the byline announced, “leads the breakthrough of new, adventurous jazz musicians coming from across the pond.”¹



Figure 0.1. Down Beat, May 2006, frontpage.

¹ “Europe Invades!” *Down Beat*, May 2006, frontpage.

Beyond its own mythological rhetoric, the frontpage has been marked by the myth that, according to the magazine itself, “the group’s appearance on the cover of *Down Beat* marked the only time that a European band has appeared on the cover of the magazine.”² An examination of *Down Beat*’s covers—to say nothing of the articles inside the magazine—reveals that this myth is not true. During the very first year of *Down Beat*’s existence, 1934–1935, Europeans drew frontpage headlines and images. This included the Englishman Ray Noble (see fig. 0.2) accompanying frontpage headlines about the British work restrictions imposed on US musicians, showing how the US press paid attention to transatlantic star power as well as the transnational political economy of music.³



Figure 0.2. *Down Beat*, Jun. 1935, 1.

² “Pianist Esbjörn Svensson Dies in Diving Accident,” *Down Beat* website, 16 Jun. 2008, <https://downbeat.com/news/detail/pianist-esbjoern-svensson-dies-in-diving-accident>

³ Hylton was featured in Jul., Sept., and Oct. 1935. During the first year of publication, *Down Beat*’s frontpages (not yet full-image) with Europeans also included the Viennese waltz king Johann Strauss III (Dec. 1934) and Jack Hylton (Jul., Sept., and Oct. 1935). Frontpage headlines, during that first year, about the British work restrictions were also multiple (Apr.-May, Jun., Aug., and Oct. 1935). As the magazine became more squarely focused on jazz and moved to frontpages with full-page images, the second of those issues featured the English trumpet player Nat Gonetta (1936).

Frontpages from later decades featured multiple prominent Europeans, from Django Reinhardt to John McLaughlin (see fig. 0.3).⁴ More than just an interesting iconographical canon of the perennial “invasion” of European musicians, this shows that the US jazz press has always maintained a keen interest in music from across the pond. A main subject of this dissertation are the intersecting discursive threads that have characterized the US interest in European jazz.



Figure 0.3. *Down Beat*, 18. Nov. 1946; *Down Beat*, 6 Jun. 1974.

These *Down Beat* frontpages are testament to the quality and success of European jazz, reaching back near the beginning of the music’s history. In narratives of European jazz—and global jazz more broadly—the musicians depicted are protagonists in a story of the growing power of jazz outside the US. They exemplify Bruce Johnson’s oft-quoted observation that “jazz was not ‘invented’ and then exported. It was invented in the process of

⁴ During the period covered in this dissertation, this included Ray Noble (1943), Reinhardt (1946), Marian McPartland (1951), Ted Heath (1956), John Tchicai (1965), Jean-Luc Ponty (1977), Joe Zawinul (1978), and McLaughlin (1973, 1974, and 1978).

being disseminated.”⁵ Whether through narratives told by historians or journalists, or in revisionist interventions offered by scholars such as Johnson, this reading of prominent European (and, *mutatis mutandis*, other non-US) musicians, still tends to see the process of dissemination as a one-way traffic: Jazz flows *from* the US and *to* the world. Yet, the perennial “invasion” of European musicians, also shows us that the music flowed back into the US as well. Jazz was also invented in the process of being re-imported to the US.

April in Paris, Autumn in New York: Whiteness and the Racial Formation of European Jazz in the US, 1940s–1970s, explores these transatlantic journeys, asking: what happens when jazz returns home? Where previous scholarship on European jazz has mostly focused on jazz *in Europe*, this dissertation surveys European jazz *in the US*. In a series of roughly chronological case studies from the 1940s to the 1970s, I chart the American reception of European recordings and criticism in the US and follow the musical lives of Europeans who went to the US. Such a history may have chronicled the considerable and growing popularity that European jazz gained in the US—and this is still part of the stories that I tell. More than this, though, my research reveals that Americans used the specter of Europeanness for their own purposes, influencing American jazz discourses through transatlantic juxtapositions. Most consistently, American critics and musicians saw this through intersecting fault lines of class and race. Recurring themes, tropes, and discourses in the US reception work to associate European critics with intellectualism, European jazz with the idea of high art (for instance, through the comparison with European classical music), and see European jazz through the racial formation of whiteness.

⁵ Bruce Johnson, “The Jazz Diaspora,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, eds. Mervyn Cooke and David Horn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 39.

Conversely, the very idea of what European jazz might mean was not just shaped through a process of appropriating American culture but was equally dependent on the US reception of European jazz. Thus, I spend considerable time in the following pages unpacking the representation of European jazz in the US via reception history and discourse analysis. In doing so, my research does not simply chart the flow of jazz back into the US as a story of how Americans represented European jazz as a cultural “other”—not least because Europeans often had more in common with hegemonic white US society than with the internal African American other. I explore not only what the music represented, but what European musicians did in the US. Their experiences of American culture challenged their self-representation and defined their music as a product of transatlantic mediation taking place in the US. This is most evident in the cases of Europeans who moved to the US. These European critics and musicians came to a new conception of jazz, which I argue was informed by a new understanding of what race meant for them and their music. Importantly, I find that the whiteness of European jazz was accentuated in the meeting with American and, specifically, African American culture. European ethnicities functioned as a privileged position from which musicians could negotiate their identities with African Americans, claiming both solidarity and difference, and American notions of an intrinsic white, highbrow European sensibility worked to uplift jazz in the cultural hierarchy. I also show how this framework was often grounded in the shared whiteness of European musicians and US critics who promoted jazz for white, middle-class audiences in the postwar years.

The dissertation makes two key interventions in current jazz research. The first is historiographical and responds to the fact that histories of transnational jazz in large part locate

“the transnational” outside the US.⁶ My history shows that the idea of “European jazz” was not only created in Europe, but in no small part also defined by discourses and music created in the US. The second intervention regards race and argues that scholarship on European jazz has avoided the question of its overwhelming whiteness. By focusing on how European jazz fared *in* the US, I highlight how the unavoidable fact of jazz’s Blackness necessarily came to set the whiteness of European jazz in relief. I also show that the account of whiteness and jazz, even within the US, cannot be bounded by strict national frameworks. This is, in turn, also a historiographical intervention that argues for an increased critical engagement with whiteness as part of jazz histories of the Black Atlantic.

European Jazz Historiography and the Transnational Turn in Jazz Studies

The history of European jazz is dominated by the stories of African American musicians (and their recordings) who cross the Atlantic, inspire local audiences and musicians, who eventually appropriate jazz and form their own nationally bounded scenes.⁷ This is not a one-time origin story, but a repeating series of narratives of intercultural encounter between American culture and Europeans who discover jazz, in Philip Bohlman’s words, at the “edge of [US] empire.”⁸ This standard historiographical approach chronicles stories

⁶ The great exception to this is accounts of the so-called Spanish tinge in early New Orleans jazz and Latin jazz more generally, though this “foreign” identity has also led to an othering of these elements and marginalization within the US jazz canon, see Christopher Washburne, *Latin Jazz: The Other Jazz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

⁷ Wolfram Knauer’s edited volume was the first scholarly attempt at a comparative and somewhat comprehensive European jazz history. Wolfram Knauer, ed. *Jazz in Europa* (Hofheim: Wolke, 1994). Full general histories of European jazz include Francesco Martinelli, ed., *The History of Jazz in Europe: The Music, Musicians, and Audience in Context* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2018); and Walter van de Leur’s forthcoming multivolume series, *The Oxford History of European Jazz*. These publications do still, however, mostly use the nation as the structuring principle.

⁸ Philip Bohlman, “Jazz at the Edge of Empire,” in *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz*, eds. Philip Bohlman and Gofredo Plastino (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 153–178. For a similar theoretical point of view see also Jairo Moreno, “Imperial Aurality: Jazz, the Archive, and U.S. Empire,” in *Audible Empire: Music*,

of the exposure of Europeans to touring American musicians, beginning with James Reese Europe's band during World War I and the spread of American recordings from the 1920s onwards with the increasing internationalization of the recording industry.⁹ The thirties then see the emergence of Europe's first unique jazz soloist in Django Reinhardt and the music's paradoxical popularity and oppression under fascism and Nazism.¹⁰ The interbellum fascination with American jazz is extended in the postwar period where local and national jazz scenes are established; from the fifties onward more American musicians immigrate to Europe, in the case of some African Americans in order to escape racism at home.¹¹ The sixties and seventies are a time of so-called emancipation, where European avant-garde musicians develop a mode of improvisation distinct from American free jazz and other musicians take inspiration from their own cultural heritage and folklore.¹² During

Global Politics, Critique, eds. Ronald Radano and Tejumola Olaniyan (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 135–160.

⁹ See for instance chapters in Luca Cerchiari, Laurant Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer, eds. *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012).

¹⁰ On Reinhardt and critiques of this standard biography see, for instance, Benjamin Givan, *The Music of Django Reinhardt* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010); Benjamin Givan, "'Django's Tiger': From Jazz to Jazz Manouche," *Current Musicology* 98 (2014): 7–40; and on the legacy of Reinhardt see Siv B. Lie, *Django Generations: Hearing Ethnorace, Citizenship, and Jazz Manouche in France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021). On jazz and fascism see Jonathan Wipplinger, *The Jazz Republic: Music, Race, and American Culture in Weimar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017); and Mike Zwerin, *Swing Under the Nazis: Jazz as a Metaphor for Freedom* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000).

¹¹ Paris in particular attracted Americans and has been the topic an impressive array of English-language scholarly books. William Shack, *Harlem in Montmartre: A Paris Jazz Story Between the Great Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Jeffrey Jackson, *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Matthew Jordan, *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Identity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010); Andy Fry, *Paris Blues: African American Music and French Popular Culture, 1920-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Tom Perchard, *After Django: Making Jazz in Postwar France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015); Elizabeth Vihlen McGregor, *Jazz and Post-War French Identity: Improvising the Nation* (Lanham: Lexington, 2016); Rashida K. Braggs, *Jazz Diasporas: Race, Music, and Migration in Post-World War II Paris* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).

¹² The emancipation narrative is mainly associated with German writers and has received its fullest English-language treatment in Mike Heffley, *Northern Sun, Southern Moon: Europe's Reinvention of Jazz* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); see also Ekkehard Jost, see *Europas Jazz, 1960–80* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1987); and Ekkehard Jost, "The European Jazz Avant-Garde of the Late 1960s and Early 1970s: Where Did Emancipation Lead?" in *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts*, eds. Luca Cerchiari, Laurent Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 275–297.

this time jazz is also institutionalized in Europe with festivals, clubs, and increased state funding, as the genre is elevated to the position of high art while maintaining some popular appeal for the middle-class and developing new subcultural scenes and record labels.¹³ In 1986, when Hollywood produces the quintessential jazz film *Round Midnight*, the plot is about an African American musician who goes to Paris (and later returns to the US, only to die tragically).¹⁴ Finally, at the beginning of the new century, when the journalist Stuart Nicholson titles a book *Is Jazz Dead? (Or Has It Moved to a New Address)*, his answer is that the new address is in Europe.¹⁵

This standard history of European jazz—both in the popular press and in scholarly work—has concentrated on tracing the reception and appropriation of American jazz, often with a focus on national histories or specific figures. Writing these histories and biographies provide examples from the global jazz diaspora that establish new canons outside the US. As such, they also provide counter-histories to the established American canon.¹⁶

¹³ On European jazz festivals see Scott Currie, “Individuals, Collectives, and Communities. Festivals and Festivalization: The Shaping Influence of a Jazz Institution,” in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*, eds. Nicholas Gebhardt, Nicole Rushtin-Paschal, and Tony Whyton (New York: Routledge, 2018), 303–312; Kristin McGee, “Staging Jazz Pasts Within Commercial European Jazz Festivals: The Case of the North Sea Jazz Festival,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 20, no. 2 (2016): 141–166; George McKay and Emma Webster, “The Impact of (Jazz) Festivals: An Arts and Humanities Research Council-Funded Research Report,” *Jazz Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2015): 169–193; and Tony Whyton, “Space is the Place: Cultural Heritage and Improvised Music in European Jazz Festivals,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26, no. 6 (2020): 547–557. For a case studies on jazz and state policy see Johan Fornäs, *Moderne människor: Folkhemmet och jazzen* (Stockholm: Nordstedts, 2004); and Christopher Washburne, “Jazz Re-Bordered: Cultural Policy in Danish Jazz,” *Jazz Perspectives* 4, no. 2 (2010): 121–155. For an overview the various local and transnational subcultural scenes and labels see Kristin McGee, *Remixing European Jazz Culture* (London: Routledge, 2020).

¹⁴ Colin Nettelbeck, “Okra and Quenelles: Jazz and Film-making (as Nourishment) in Tavernier’s *Round Midnight* (1986),” *Australian Journal of Film Studies* 39, no. 2 (2002): 250–270; and Nicolas Pillai, “Filming Improvisation: Jazz Criticism’s Neglect of Film Style,” *The Soundtrack* 6, no. 1–2 (2014): 5–20.

¹⁵ Stuart Nicholson, *Is Jazz Dead? (Or Has It Moved to a New Address)* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005).

¹⁶ In this way they are an expansion of the foundational revisionist histories of so-called new jazz studies, even if this scholarship from the nineties focused on the US. The starting point for this new wave of jazz historiography was Scott DeVeaux, “Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography,” *Black American Literature Forum* vol. 25, no. 3 (1991): 525–560; and Krin Gabbard, “Introduction: The Jazz Canon and Its Consequences,” in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005),

As Ken Prouty has observed, the transnational turn in new jazz studies has, in general, fallen along two lines.¹⁷ The first has focused on local jazz scenes outside the US, often exploring the so-called glocal manifestations of jazz. Though this research frames jazz as a global artform, it studies jazz *in* certain locales and national contexts outside the US. This scholarship is, e.g., represented in the ground-breaking anthology *Jazz Planet* edited by E. Taylor Atkins, which contains a series of case studies from across the globe.¹⁸ In this view, jazz is global because of its multiple, diverse iterations across sites and cultures. The other line of inquiry has focused on the cultural values and musical practices that encompass a global *jazz consciousness*, as Paul Austerlitz puts forth in his monograph.¹⁹ Here, jazz is global because it offers a metaphysics that reflects a tension between universal humanism

1–28. For reflections on this turn in jazz studies see Eric Porter, “Incorporation and Distinction in Jazz History and Jazz Historiography,” in *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and its Boundaries*, ed. David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 13–30; and Sherrie Tucker, “Deconstructing the Jazz Tradition: The ‘Subjectless’ Subject of New Jazz Studies,” in *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and its Boundaries*, ed. David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 264–287. It is also no coincidence that the transnational turn in jazz studies emerged in the wake of declarations that jazz was “America’s classical music” and “America’s theme song,” as well as the popular US nationalist jazz history in Ken Burns’s *Jazz* TV series. Grover Sales, *Jazz: America’s Classical Music* (New York: Da Capo, 1992); James Lincoln Collier, *Jazz: America’s Theme Song* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); and *Jazz*, dir. Ken Burns, Lynn Novick, Geoffrey Ward (Burbank: PBS, distrib. Warner Home Video, 2002), orig. broadcast 2001.

¹⁷ Ken Prouty, *Knowing Jazz: Community, Pedagogy, and Canon in the Information Age* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2011), ch. 5. A similar distinction is found in Rashida Braggs’s definition of the *jazz diaspora*: “There are two types of jazz diasporas: in one sense jazz diasporas involve those who thrive and shape individual identity through musical collaboration outside of their homeland. In the second type of jazz diaspora the music travels and through its interactions alters who performs, represents, and claims the music.” Braggs, *Jazz Diaspora*, 5–6.

¹⁸ E. Taylor Atkins, ed. *Jazz Planet* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003). Beyond research already referenced above, see also, for instance, the special issues and edited volumes collecting this strand of scholarship. Stephane Dorin, ed. “The Global Circulations of Jazz,” special issue *Jazz Research Journal* 10, nos. 1–2 (2016); and many of the chapters in Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino, eds. *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016). In making this characterization, I am not, as such, questioning the quality or value of jazz research focusing on the reception of jazz outside of the US. Indeed, there are many practical and scholarly reasons for limiting an investigation to a particular national scope. I am also including myself in this group of scholars, as other strands of my research are marked by the national boundaries of Denmark: Mikkel Vad, “Signifyin(g) Carl: Nielsen’s Music in the Jazz Repertoire,” *Carl Nielsen Studies* 5 (2012): 347–365; Mikkel Vad, “Jazzhus Montmartre: Historiskrivning og kulturel erindring,” *Danish Musicology Online* 8 (2016–2017): 5–21; and Mikkel Vad, “Denmark,” in *The Oxford History of Jazz in Europe*, vol. 1, ed. Walter van de Leur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁹ Paul Austerlitz, *Jazz Consciousness: Music, Race, and Humanity* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2005).

and African American experience, also represented by Steven Feld's conceptualization of *jazz cosmopolitanism*.²⁰

My research takes some inspiration from both lines of scholarship. I retain the emphasis on studying global jazz through local, regional, and national contingencies, with my focus on European jazz musicians and critics in a US context. However, unlike most other studies of global jazz, that see jazz as being transnational only outside the US, I am interested in examining the transnational *within* the US. In this sense, I am guilty of Mario Dunkel and Mischa van Kan's charge of "US-centrism" focused on a "binary trade between the US and other individual countries." They point out that "this form of European jazz history telling entails a certain perspective on jazz that sidelines transnational interactions between actors across borders outside the US."²¹ I agree with this statement, but also suggest that studying transnational European jazz only "outside the US" misrepresents the continued centrality of American musicians and institutions to global jazz.²² However much one may deconstruct the jazz tradition (pace DeVaux), the fact of the matter is that non-US musicians and audiences are still materially and ideologically invested in "binary orientations" towards the American canon. In fact, many times it is this transnational link that defines a specific form of world jazz as *jazz*. Furthermore, although I do not espouse a global, universalist aesthetic of jazz, many of the musicians and critics that I am

²⁰ Steven Feld, *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra: Five musical years in Ghana* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

²¹ Mario Dunkel and Mischa van Kan, "Transnational Perspectives on Jazz in Germany," in *Jazzforschung heute: Themen, Methoden, Perspektiven*, ed. Martin Pfeleiderer and Wolf-Georg Zaddach (Berlin: Edition Emvas, 2019), 19–36.

²² A few studies have charted some histories of US reception of European jazz. Loes Rusch, "Frontierism, Intellectual Listeners and the New European Wave: On the Reception of Dutch Jazz in *DownBeat*, 1960–1980," *Jazz Research Journal*, vol. 9, no.1 (2015): 62–81; Ilona Haberkamp, "Hipp Style or Adaptation?" in *Gender and Identity in Jazz*, ed. Wolfram Knauer (Hofheim: Wolke, 2016), 99–123; and Mischa van Kan, *Swingin' Swedes: The Transnational Exchange of Swedish Jazz in the US*, (Ph.D. diss., University of Gothenburg, 2017).

concerned with are caught exactly in the tension between the particularities of African American music and global manifestation of jazz.

The transnational turn in jazz historiography can also serve to destabilize the US canon itself. Scholars such as Nicholas Gebhardt and Tim Brennan have argued that jazz originated as something equally “foreign” within the US (particularly with regard to the intercultural Caribbean exchange), while Paul Gilroy has placed the music within a larger African diasporic sphere of the Black Atlantic.²³ Indeed, similarly to how Gilroy argues that “we need to see how the presence of strangers, aliens, and blacks and the distinctive dynamics of Europe’s imperial history have combined to shape its cultural and political habits and institutions,”²⁴ I investigate how strangers and aliens populate US jazz and, specifically with regard to the topic of this dissertation, how intertwined European and American discourses of race and culture shaped the idea of European jazz. So, while I certainly acknowledge that jazz has served a vehicle for transnational hybridization, the stories in this dissertation are not celebratory narratives of the mixing of European and American culture. My point of view is closer to George Lewis’s observation that “jazz has been marked by an instability of identity,” suggesting not simply a global extension of the American melting pot through music.²⁵ Emphasizing this instability is, I hope, part of reflections on the possibilities and limitations of cosmopolitan jazz, as discussed by Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino:

²³ Nicholas Gebhardt, “When Jazz Was Foreign: Rethinking Jazz History,” *Jazzforschung/Jazz Research* 44 (2012): 185–197; Tim Brennan, *Secular Devotion: Afro-Latin Music and Imperial Jazz* (London: Verso, 2008); and Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

²⁴ Paul Gilroy, “Foreword: Migrancy, Culture, and a New Map of Europe,” in *Blackening Europe: The African American Presence*, ed. Heike Raphael-Hernandez (New York: Routledge, 2004), xiv.

²⁵ George Lewis, “Foreword: Who Is Jazz?” in *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz*, ed. Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), ix.

The journey between jazz at home and jazz in the world, too, proves far more difficult than the hopeful predictions of jazz as universal, as an American classical music, or as the global symbol of freedom have projected. The jazz canon no longer offers the comfort it once did. The sense of security borne by claims to authenticity disappears against the omnipresence of fusion. The politics of race and place conjoin to serve multiple agendas and the many sides in the struggle for cultural borderlands. The wonder that is world jazz for many is blurred by close listening.²⁶

The case studies in this dissertation confirm, contradict, and further complicate these assertions. The presence of European (and other foreign) musicians as participants in the US jazz world affirm the centrality of the US to global jazz, while putting into question the national essentialisms (whether American or otherwise) that may permeate the jazz canon. Indeed, many of the European musicians and critics that are the main protagonists of the following pages, exemplify the cultural fusion that happens at the cultural borderlands of jazz. At places, however, my research serves as a caution against narratives that celebrate the fluid performance and negotiation of identity that transnational jazz affords. The politics of race and place that Europeans presented did blur the lines that otherwise defined the cultural encounters in these borderlands, yet, as I will argue, their multiple agendas would just as often rely on the essentialisms of race, ethnicity, and nation that various accounts of world jazz otherwise seem to refute. My research shows that the meeting of European and American jazz cultures entailed the reification and stereotyping of national identities, ethnicity, gender performance, class hierarchies, and racialized representation. This dynamic can be especially problematic when one considers the racial and classed roles that Europeans inhabited. When European jazz musicians came to the US, they could often confirm

²⁶ Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino, "Introduction," in *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz*, ed. Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 35.

American hierarchies of race and class as much as they questioned them. I point out that, in comparison to African Americans, the negotiation of identity in the US was more open to some Europeans because of their white privilege. A reading of such multiple agendas should, then, not only lead us to tell stories of cultural exchange that emphasize hybridity and cosmopolitanism. Some of the agendas that Europeans and Americans used to describe the transnational traffic in jazz, would only reinforce ideas of white privilege, Black primitivism, and the supposed highbrow nature of European art—and of course, the very fact that these Europeans oriented themselves toward the US, only confirms the centrality of the US to jazz.

European Jazz and the Problem of Whiteness

During the writing of this project, I have felt much like Rashida Braggs does when she writes:

I felt the danger of conducting research that would ignore the creation of this music in the United States and fail to recognize the contributions of African Americans. The more that I study, the more a potential erasure of jazz's racialized history threatens. This threat has made me question whether this history need remain attached to the music, which was always already hybrid.²⁷

This feeling is only heightened by the fact that I (unlike Braggs, who is African American) am a white European man, writing about a Black American art form. The case studies in the dissertation could easily have become ones that center hybridity—even as I critique it—as a tool and space for white Europeans. So, to address the threat Braggs warns against, I have combined the historiographical intervention outlined above with a focus on jazz's

²⁷ Braggs, *Jazz Diaspora*, xi.

racialized history. Scholarship on European jazz does, of course, address this matter, through a combination of celebratory narratives of Black and white collaboration, creolization, and cosmopolitanism, as well as tragic narratives of racial discrimination, misogyny, primitivist ideology, and classism. I add to these descriptions, by suggesting that European jazz should not only be understood in terms of its reception of African American culture, but also through a critique of its overwhelming whiteness. The dissertation's focus on white, European jazz musicians and critics in the US provides an additional perspective to research on US cultural history, which has examined the relationship between non-African Americans and African Americans, described by Eric Lott as "love and theft."²⁸ Several studies consider, respectively, the relationship between white Americans and their Black countrymen ("men" indeed; the white fascination is often implicated in notions of Black hypermasculinity), or the foreign fascination and reception of African American culture. In my dissertation, these two lines of inquiry intersect.

In doing so, I am following a growing number of primarily US jazz historians who are explicitly drawing upon critical race studies to provide a much-needed critique of whiteness.²⁹ This research stands in contrast to previous commentary on whiteness and jazz,

²⁸ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²⁹ Ingrid Monson, "The Problem with White Hipness: Race, Gender, and Cultural Conceptions in Jazz Historical Discourse," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (1995): 396-422; Laurie Stras "White Face, Black Voice: Race, Gender, and Region in the Music of the Boswell Sisters," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 1, no. 2 (2007): 207-255; Reva Marin, *Outside and Inside: Race and Identity in White Jazz Autobiography* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2020); Kelsey Klotz, *Dave Brubeck and the Performance of Whiteness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); Jack Hamilton, *Just around Midnight: Rock and Roll and the Racial Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), especially ch. 2; Stephanie Doktor, "How a White Supremacist Became Famous for His Black Music: John Powel and *Rhapsodie nègre* (1918)," *American Music* 38, no. 4 (2020): 395-427. The one European jazz historian to use critical whiteness studies at any length is George McKay, *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), ch. 2. The English jazz scholar Tom Perchard also draws upon whiteness studies, though his intervention concerns music theory and is not concerned with European jazz history specifically, Tom Perchard, "New Riffs on the Old Mind-Body Blues:

which has taken the form of what Ingrid Monson calls the “white resentment narrative.” This narrative argues for a “colorblind or race-neutral perspective that views music itself as above and beyond politics.”³⁰ The central grievance that drives the white resentment narrative is the concern that historians have unfairly represented jazz as an exclusively African American art form, and that, consequently, the contributions of white musicians have been downplayed, misrepresented, and excluded from the jazz canon.³¹

The white resentment narrative has extended into the literature on transnational jazz. For instance, Bruce Johnson’s overall argument in *Jazz Diaspora* is a challenge to what he terms “US-centric” nationalist histories that present the music as “the end product of a hermetically sealed aesthetic teleology.”³² Most scholars in the new jazz studies agree with this critique of the jazz canon, but Johnson goes on to conflate US-centrism with *Black* US-centrism, complaining that “the influence of the US-centric canon tended to consign” white, non-US musicians to the margins of the music history. He is sceptical of any form of “black ‘exceptionalism’” and regards discussions of jazz as “a race-based music” as complicit in racial essentialism. Typifying the white resentment narrative, he sees an “‘anti-white’ tendency in the canon” and argues that “the blackness fetish has occluded” the contributions of white musicians and that historians have fallen “under the umbra of ‘blackness’.”³³ Another strand of research that seeks to decenter American and African American

‘Black Rhythm,’ ‘White Logic,’ and Music Theory in the 21st-Century,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 9, no. 3 (2015): 321-348.

³⁰ Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call out to Jazz and Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 16.

³¹ The most (in)famous examples are Gene Lees, *Cats of Any Color: Jazz Black and White* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Richard M. Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contributions to Jazz, 1915–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Randy Sandke, *Where the Dark and Light Folks Meet: Race and the Mythology, Politics, and Business of Jazz* (Landham: Scarecrow Press, 2010).

³² Johnson, *Jazz Diaspora*, 2.

³³ Johnson, *Jazz Diaspora*, 16–17 and 162–163. Johnson continually puts racial markers, especially the word “black,” in quotation marks.

culture in jazz history is invested in the recouperation of European contributions to jazz. Johnson laments that “it is of course recognized that ‘black’ origins were also mingled with European influences, but the latter have been overwhelmingly subordinated to the African heritage.”³⁴ Similarly opposed to what he terms the “Afrocentric point of view,” Luca Cerchiari attributes a whole set of formal features of jazz to white Europeans, including the suggestion that “jazz improvisation mostly comes from the European tradition.”³⁵ On a basic factual level there an obvious truth to Cerchiari’s broad statement that “without European musics—and cultures—jazz itself would not exist,” but when one considers that it is placed in conjunction with the anti-Black white resentment narrative it reads like a jazz-version of “All Lives Matter” rhetoric.³⁶

In line with critical race studies, I regard race to be a social construction. However, this does not mean that race is not “real” or that racial formation does not have material consequences for music. As Andrew Berish has put it: “music and racial identity become mutually constitutive and part of a circular argument: music is proof of racial difference, and racial difference ‘naturally’ produces music.”³⁷ So, in contrast to the views of historians of European jazz quoted above, I do not see the prominence of European (and other non-US) jazz as a refutation of jazz’s status as a kind of *race music*, to borrow Guthrie

³⁴ Johnson, *Jazz Diaspora*, 134.

³⁵ Luca Cerchiari, “Introduction,” in *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts*, eds. Luca Cerchiari, Laurent Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), x–xii.

³⁶ Luca Cerchiari, “Sacred, Country, Urban Tunes: The European Songbook; ‘Greensleeves’ to ‘Les feuilles mortes’ (‘Autumn Leaves’), ‘Gigolo’ to ‘O sole mio,’” in *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts*, ed. Luca Cerchiari, Laurant Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 98.

³⁷ Andrew Berish, *Lonesome Roads and Streets of Dreams: Place, Mobility, and Race in Jazz of the 1930s and 1940s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 14.

Ramsey's term.³⁸ Indeed, George Lewis argues that "African American culture remains central to the narrative of world jazz, and ... that African American musical subjectivities and cultural topics are articulated far beyond America's shores, even when no African Americans are present."³⁹ My case studies confirm this and show how Europeans' engagement with jazz was an engagement with the African American identity of the music. The meeting of European and African American culture does indeed exemplify musical hybridity, but that does not disprove that fact that jazz is Black American music. Conversely, the reception and dissemination of European jazz in the US was also an engagement with whiteness. Thus, a main object of study in this dissertation is the *racial imagination* that European musicians and critics produced, and that Americans projected onto European jazz.⁴⁰ In a parallel to Lewis's statement, I show that whiteness and European ethnicities remain central to the narrative of European jazz, and that white, European musical subjectivities and cultural topics are articulated far beyond Europe's shores, even when there are no Europeans present.

I acknowledge, here, that there is the danger of continuing to present Europe as a "bleached continent," in Gilroy's words, by equating the terms "white" and "European."⁴¹ Tony Whyton suggests that one way to counteract this white image of Europe is to show the postcolonial, multiracial, and ethnic diversity that encompasses European jazz.⁴² My

³⁸ Guthrie Ramsey, Jr. *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

³⁹ Lewis, "Who Is Jazz?" xi.

⁴⁰ Bohlman and Radano define the *racial imagination* as "the shifting matrix of ideological constructions of difference associated with body type and color that have emerged as part of the discourse network of modernity." Philip Bohlman and Ronald Radano, "Introduction: Music and Race, Their Past, Their Presence," in *Music and the Racial Imagination*, eds. Philip Bohlman and Ronald Radano (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 5.

⁴¹ Gilroy, "Migrancy, Culture, and a New Map of Europe," xiv.

⁴² I am planning for an additional chapter on European free jazz that charts and critiques the emancipation narrative tied to European experimental music, in the book version of the dissertation. This will likely focus

case studies of Caterina Valente and Joe Zawinul, respectively, show how even European whiteness itself was contested and cannot be contained by a single “bleached” representation but rather drew upon ethnic diversity in the positioning of their European identities. The other approach is to engage in a critique of whiteness, rather than to revert to writings that do “not move beyond a simple inversion of the jazz-as-American/jazz-as-global binary and, as such, arguably replace one form of essentialist narration with another.”⁴³ Here, the fact that most of the European musicians whom I write about are white should not be read as a bleaching of European jazz; nor should the fact that much of the dissertation discusses Europe and whiteness almost as a homology be taken as proof that Europe is a bleached continent. Indeed, as we shall see (especially in chapters 2 and 3) there are different shades of whiteness at play in the musicians that I discuss. It is also worth pointing out that the positioning of non-white racialized identities was different across European geographies and histories; and though there were a not insignificant number of non-white Europeans and immigrants in Europe during the period covered in this dissertation, this was by and large not reflected in the American reception of European jazz.⁴⁴ The goal of the dissertation is thus not to represent Europe as a bleached continent, but to investigate how European jazz was represented through whiteness in the US. By exposing the overlap between whiteness and Europe, my goal is also to critique some of the discourse that has leveraged white privilege in the representation of European jazz.

on the Afrodanish saxophonist John Tchicai, whose emersion in the New York jazz scene and racial identity provides a counternarrative of the whiteness of the European avantgarde.

⁴³ Tony Whyton, “Europe and the New Jazz Studies,” in *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts*, eds. Cerchiari, Luca, Laurent Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 370. As an example of this kind of writing, Whyton is critiquing Nicholson, *Is Jazz Dead?* in this quote.

⁴⁴ See also Alastair Bonnett, “Who Was White? The Disappearance of Non-European White Identities and the Formation of European Racial Whiteness,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 6 (1998): 1029–1055.

Scope and Outline of the Dissertation

From glossing over the dissertation's table of contents you will recognize a style of chapter titles that perhaps seems a bit outdated: a supposedly catchy quotation followed by the more boring "actual" title. My reason for choosing this format is, however, not testament to my nostalgic tastes, but rather speaks to the dominant methodological approach of reception history that runs through the dissertation.⁴⁵ As a history based largely in record reviews, reports, notes, interviews, editorials, concert adds, liner notes etc. in the music press these chapters are littered with quotes—like the chapter titles—from a wide range of sources. The reader will encounter hundreds of citations and references that draw out several threads that run through the US reception of European jazz. My project is not to define what "European jazz" was or is, but rather to trace how ideas of European jazz were imported and formed in the US. As such, the dissertation is a classic cultural studies project on the production of difference and cultural distinction in discourse and society.

There are some notable omissions in my account of the American reception of European jazz. Three European musicians, whose place in the jazz canon go beyond their mere category as Europeans, are conspicuous in their absence from this dissertation. Two of them, Django Reinhardt and John McLaughlin, do not receive a standalone chapter here, because scholars have already written about them and I did not see a need to expand on

⁴⁵ For discussions of the theories and methods of reception history in musicology see Carl Dahlhaus, "Problems in Reception History," in *Foundations of Music History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 150–165; Mark Everist, "Reception Theories, Canonic Discourses, and Musical Value," in *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 378–402; Steven Pond, "Jamming the Reception: Ken Burns, 'Jazz,' and the Problem of 'America's Music,'" *Notes* 60, no. 1 (2003): 11–45; Adam Krims, "Studying Reception and Scenes," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology* (London: Routledge, 2009), 397–410; and Ken Prouty, "Creating Boundaries in a Virtual Jazz Community," in *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and its Boundaries*, ed. David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 70–88.

other more specialized and thorough accounts.⁴⁶ The third, George Shearing, was arguably the first European to secure a foothold on the US jazz scene—unlike Reinhardt, whose only tour in the US was a failure—and did so in a style that was recognized as ground-breaking and singular. Shearing was, however, not positioned as a European or a Brit in the American press. Though his nationality was sometimes mentioned he was almost immediately given a (minor) place in the American pantheon of bebop innovation. He stands as an exception to the rule in this dissertation, in that his status as a European had almost no bearing on his career. Other names, that deserve their place in a transatlantic jazz historiography include some of those European musicians that have been featured on *Down Beat* front pages: Ray Noble, Marian McPartland, Ted Heath, John Tchicai, and Jean-Luc Ponty. Other important Europeans are, for instance, Jan Hammer, Urszula Dudziak, Joachim Kühn, George Mraz, Jutta Hipp, Tete Montoliu, Toots Thielemans, and Gabor Szabo, as well as the critics Dan Morgenstern, Timme Rosenkrantz, Val Wilmer, and Chris Albertson, and the record producers Alfred Lion and Otto Heinemann. Some of these musicians have received attention elsewhere, some have not, and only some biographies have paid critical attention to the problems of transatlantic jazz historiography that are central concern to this dissertation. Several of these names appear in passing throughout the dissertation.

The case studies that I have selected, represent the problem of European jazz in the US, meaning that their European provenance became a feature of their American reception.

⁴⁶ Specifically, Andrew Berish's article on Reinhardt's visit to the US and Kevin Fellezs's critique of McLaughlin's whiteness can be read as direct parallels to the case studies in this dissertation. Andrew Berish, "Negotiating 'A Blues Riff': Listening for Django Reinhardt's Place in American Jazz," *Jazz Perspectives* 3, no. 3 (2009): 233–264; Kevin Fellezs, *Birds of Fire: Jazz, Rock, Funk, and the Creation of Fusion* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 123–147.

Yet, there is nothing essentially “European” that unites the musicians and critics that I describe. There is also no mistaking that these voices are distinct from their American colleagues. In particular, these European musicians and critics were positioned as “European” by the American press through discourses of whiteness and highbrow cultural distinction.⁴⁷ This also means that I have not imposed any strict definitions on what counts as European. Instead, I have focused on what was perceived as European in the US imagination. The overwhelming number of Europeans that were covered by the American press were from Western Europe, especially France and Britain. Similarly, most of the musicians who emigrated to the US were from Western Europe. Some Eastern Europe musicians and scenes did receive limited exposure, but perhaps surprisingly, unless such stories were explicitly part of a larger Cold War narrative, these musicians were not framed as specifically *Eastern* European.

My resistance to the imposition of strict national boundaries as qualifiers for who counts as European is mirrored in my musicological approach to jazz as a multifaceted, polygeneric practice. Some purists may find that this has led me to include music that is not jazz;⁴⁸ others that I should have provided more analytical statements that clearly designate which musical sounds are European and which are American. Though I occasionally point to places where musicians signal European belonging at the level of musical semiotics, I have resisted using this as an overarching method, following Travis Jackson’s advice that “rather than tallying similarities and differences from single cultural standpoints, as might be the case in a clumsy syncretic approach, thinking metaculturally forces an analyst

⁴⁷ Here, I paraphrase John Gennari’s distinction between Black and white American critics. John Gennari, *Blowin’ Hot and Cool: Jazz and its Critics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 6.

⁴⁸ An anonymous peer reviewer for the article version of chapter 2 (*Journal of the Society for American Music* 2021) suggested as much with regard to my case study of Caterina Valente.

to grapple with the mechanisms through which material entities and ideas about them are replicated, modified, and disseminated beyond their point(s) of origin.”⁴⁹ Rather than seeking cultural origins and categorizing the atomic particles of syncretism, I often critique the ways critics, listeners, and musicians have reified and essentialized Europeanness.

I have a thematic and roughly chronological approach to the chapters in this dissertation, using case studies to illuminate different aspects of the US reception of European jazz. Chapter 1 examines the early dissemination and reception of European jazz criticism in the US in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. As Tom Perchard has remarked, it is “something of a jazz-historical chestnut that serious jazz criticism existed in Europe long before it did in America.”⁵⁰ Rather than pass judgment on the truth of this myth itself, I chart what the components of this myth are, showing that it was bound up in class and race distinctions that marked them as intellectually superior to their US counterparts. The American press continues to use these tropes of a specifically European “serious” approach to jazz when considering not just critics, but also European musicians and audiences. In this sense, the European critics paved the way for a discourse of European jazz in the US. The last part of the chapter is a case study of the British émigré journalist Leonard Feather’s so-called blindfold tests, which I argue are an example of a colorblind ideology that drew upon the tropes and discourses established by these US-European jazz relations. This politics of colorblindness is a direct precursor to the transnational white resentment narrative that I have critiqued in this introduction.

⁴⁹ Travis Jackson, “Culture, Commodity, Palimpsests: Locating Jazz in the World,” in *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz*, eds. Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 385–386.

⁵⁰ Tom Perchard, “Tradition, Modernity and the Supernatural Swing: Re-reading ‘Primitivism’ in Hugues Panassié’s Writing on Jazz,” *Popular Music* vol. 30, 1 (2011): 42.

Chapter 2 examines the American careers of the singers Alice Babs and Caterina Valente in the 1950s and 60s. Their European identities in the US were positioned through the intersection of gender and ethnicity that drew upon some of the tropes of class and race already established in the US reception of European jazz criticism. Furthermore, I show how Babs's and Valente's identities were also produced through musical means. They used high-pitched, gendered vocal styles that represented a "pure" timbral ideal and exoticizing ethnic musical elements that signified European whiteness. Marketed to the US middle-class as a safe form of cultural difference, I argue that whiteness was a key part of their appeal, but also that their gendered and racialized personas were not a direct product of their ethnic identities themselves. This shows us that European whiteness was not created separately on either side of the Atlantic but emerge in a transatlantic dialectic.

Chapter 3 documents shifts in the jazz pianist and composer Joe Zawinul's autobiographical narrative and shows how his self-image changed from the 1960s to the 70s. Initially, he downplayed his own whiteness and Austrian nationality in favor of a universal musical aesthetic and a politics of musical assimilation. Later, he constructed a cosmopolitan "gypsy" heritage from which he sought to forge racial solidarity with African Americans, and he toyed with stories of reverse racial passing (from white to Black). The chapter charts how Zawinul's cultivated a "soul jazz" persona in the 1960s using essentialist Black musical tropes (most prominently the blues) and how he, in the 1970s, sought to position fusion jazz as authentically Black against the perceived sellout and whiteness of rock music. Dreaming of a post-racial world in the wake of the Civil Rights Era, white critics used Zawinul's success in an African American musical style as an argument for colorblindness and as an example to hold up against Black Nationalism. Black critics and musicians,

however, accepted Zawinul's "soul," not because Zawinul proved that jazz was racially universal or colorblind, but because he confirmed rather than transcended the power of Black music and aesthetic markers like "blues" and "soul." Ultimately, I argue that Zawinul's politics and practice of race shows the instability of race that goes beyond essentialism, but nevertheless mobilizes race through appropriation and the privilege of whiteness.

Chapter 4 is a case study of the most prominent European jazz record label, ECM. This label has become the sign of how Europe is now an aesthetically and economically viable site for the production of distinctly non-American jazz. This also explains why my dissertation ends around 1980, as this is the point where Europe had "emancipated" itself. However, looking at the label's US reception during its first decade of existence, the 1970s, we see that this emancipation came about in dialogue with the US. I show how ECM's identity as a *European* label built upon the already established American understanding of European jazz, specifically its "pure" sound production, its high-art status, and whiteness. In the US press, ECM's producer, Manfred Eicher, was presented as a creative genius, marking him as specifically European in opposition to the US music industry associated with discourses of "sellout." In both Eicher, ECM's musicians, and the label's fans, Americans saw a "serious" form of listening that echoed the one of the European critics described in chapter 1. I suggest that, for white American listeners and musicians, the label's critical and commercial success legitimized white jazz as acceptable alternative to interpretations of jazz as a strictly African American music. As such, the US reception of ECM shows how whiteness was both cause and effect in the American imagination of what constituted European jazz.

Chapter 1. “Clearly, the Best Way to Listen”: The White European Critic in the US

In 1940 the French discographer and jazz critic Charles Delaunay (1911–1988) wrote to the readers of the American magazine *Down Beat* under the headline “Delaunay in Trenches, Writes ‘Jazz Not American’”:

I see you smile, my American friends, at the idea that we, poor Europeans without skyscrapers or great orchestras, should proffer our opinions about a music which you have created and which you, rightly enough, should know best of all. However, there is nothing very unusual in one’s not noticing the evolution of a phenomenon bound up in his national habits. It is easy to miss the woods for the trees. While this new Art, as we freely admit was born in the United States, in New Orleans to be exact, it is not altogether surprising that all its originality and promise were first discovered by the intellectuals of ‘old’ Europe, the French artistic *Avant-garde* to be specific. And this discovery took place *more than 10 years before* such enterprising businessmen as [the American] Irving Mills appeared on the scene to exploit this new art by urging it to its most improper and mediocre exhibitions.¹

The main argument of Delaunay’s article was that “jazz is much more than an American music—it is the first universal music.”² The US was, however, according to Delaunay, in the process of killing this new artform. Mapping out jazz and its problems, he relied on a contrast between European and American cultural attitudes towards art in general and jazz in particular: American audiences revel in the bodily pleasures of jitterbug dancing, the American press have made a “sport” out of jazz by creating polls and rankings, and the American music industry is driven by economic goals, not artistic ones. By contrast Europe, or at least Delaunay’s France, has been able to grasp the potentials of this new

¹ Charles Delaunay, “Delaunay in Trenches, Writes ‘Jazz Not American,’” trans. Walter Schaap, *Down Beat*, 1 May 1940, 6, italics in the original; abridged reprint in *Keeping Time: Readings in Jazz History*, ed. Rob Walser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 129–132.

² Delaunay, “Delaunay in Trenches,” 6; for a discussion of Delaunay’s universalism and its relation to anti-commercialism and anti-Americanism see Andy Fry, *Paris Blues: African American Music and French Popular Culture, 1920-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 184–191.

international and interracial music much earlier—and one must understand, much better—than its country of origin. This was, and is, a familiar narrative in the account of jazz reception and in Delaunay’s short report we see how the dialectic between national exceptionalism and cosmopolitan universalism are played out in the dichotomy between Europe and the US. Furthermore, the article is also indicative of the central role European critics played in the American understanding of Europe’s position in the jazz world.

This dissertation begins, then, not with musicians, but with what John Gennari calls the *jazz superstructure* in an aim “to follow the sounds of the music, as it were, from their point of production through channels of distribution out into the public sphere.”³ I do so because critics, journalists, and writers were a main mediating force in the distribution of information about European jazz to American public sphere of jazz.⁴ As the Swiss journalist Andy Gurwitch wrote in a two-page *Down Beat* spread in 1947 on European jazz criticism and hot clubs, “the Europeans[’] ‘forte’ has been the appreciation rather than the playing of this music.”⁵ European critics predated their musician counterparts in having a presence (written or in person) in American jazz culture. American ideas of what Europe means in relation to jazz was initially formed in larger part in response to European writers than to European musicians. As such, the critics also paved the way for the music and musicians who followed (and who are the main focus of the subsequent chapters of this dissertation). This shows that the jazz superstructure was, unsurprisingly, connected with the *jazz base*,

³ John Gennari, *Blowin’ Hot and Cool: Jazz and its Critics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 4.

⁴ My focus on critics in this chapter suggests that they play a prominent and leading role in shaping a discourse of what European jazz looked and sounded like to an American audience. However, this is not to say that all power and agency lay with those critics. Indeed, European critics were themselves often the subjects of interviews, reports, and criticism from fans, musicians, and American counterparts. As Matt Brennan writes: “As such, the music press was not simply the voices of critics, but a microcosm of a much wider genre culture with a range of different constituencies.” Matt Brennan, *When Genres Collide: Down Beat, Rolling Stone, and the Struggle Between Jazz and Rock* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 25.

⁵ Andy Gurwitch, “What Europeans Write About Jazz,” *Down Beat*, 13 Aug. 1947, 10.

to continue this classic Marxist metaphor.⁶ In writing about European jazz, the US publication of European jazz criticism did not merely describe channels that were already established and open across the Atlantic, but were in fact carrying out labor that established opportunities for musicians. Furthermore, their European ethnicities served a mediating function as their nationality and whiteness was positioned in relation to hegemonic white US culture.

While criticism is nominally superstructural, critics are also embedded in the base. As such, critics are an important part of what Alan Merriam and Raymond Mack called *the jazz community*, in a pioneering piece of jazz scholarship.⁷ Similarly, Paul Lopes, drawing on Howard Becker's interactionist concept, presents critics as part of a *jazz art world* and show how they have been central figures in the fight for the cultural elevation of jazz music.⁸ In this, Matt Brennan suggests, jazz was exemplary because it "was arguably the first popular style to generate a fully-fledged art world with a community of critics, articulate

⁶ Notice that I am not using the conceptual framework of base and superstructure in the strictest sense of some Marxist writing in which the base is concerned only with the productive forces and labor of the material production of commodities in deterministic relation to an immaterial superstructure. Here, I am using the concepts in the way that Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall reevaluates them to fit twentieth-century cultural production, emphasizing that the base is a process, not a state, and that the superstructure is best studied as cultural practices, rather than deterministic, homological reflections of the base. This means, for instance, that while Marx in places, and subsequent vulgar Marxism certainly, would relegate performing musicians solely to the realm of the superstructure, we can follow Williams and Hall and see them as connected to and, in some ways, as part of the base. Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," *New Left Review* I, no. 82 (1973): 3–16; Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 75–82; and Stuart Hall, "Rethinking the Base and Superstructure," in *Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History*, ed. Jennifer Daryl Slack and Lawrence Grossberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 75–96. For a discussion of discussion of the concepts, with reference to Williams, within the realm of music studies, see Sumanth Gopinath, *The Ringtone Dialectic: Economy and Cultural Form* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), xviii–xxi.

⁷ Alan Merriam and Raymond Mack, "The Jazz Community," *Social Forces* 38, no. 3 (1960): 211–222. See also, Peter Martin, "The Jazz Community as an Art World: A Sociological Perspective," *Jazz Research Journal* 2, no. 1 (2005): 5–13.

⁸ Paul Lopes, *The Rise of a Jazz Art World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). Becker was himself the author of a pioneering sociological study of jazz and has continued to publish intermittently on the subject throughout his career. See e.g. Robert Faulkner and Howard Becker, *Do You Know...?: The Jazz Repertoire in Action*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

musicians, and avid readers producing an unprecedentedly rich popular music discourse in books, magazines, newspapers, and mimeographs (or what would later be called ‘fan-zines’).⁹ European critics played a defining role in generating this discourse, at a time when jazz was (in Williams’s terms¹⁰) an *emergent* culture, and to American readers they represented highbrow culture and intellectualism, which was a key tool in the quest for cultural legitimacy for jazz in the US.

Working in the jazz art world, critics can often be categorized as what sociologists and cultural theorists term *cultural intermediaries*, after Bourdieu.¹¹ Indeed, in Bourdieu’s original description, journalists figure as one the archetypes of the cultural intermediary, though subsequent scholars have broadened the term to include more occupations in the culture industry.¹² Critics work in a space between producers and consumers, often functioning as taste makers and gatekeepers. As Maguire and Matthews write, “cultural intermediaries must also be defined by their expert orientation and market context. In the struggle to influence others’ perceptions and attachments, cultural intermediaries are defined by their claims to professional expertise in taste and value within specific cultural fields.”¹³

⁹ Brennan, *When Genres Collide*, 5.

¹⁰ Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 121–127.

¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

¹² On the expanding notion of the term and review of the literature see Sean Nixon and Paul Du Gay, “Who Needs Cultural Intermediaries?” *Cultural Studies* 16, no. 4 (2002): 495–500; and Jennifer Smith Maguire and Julian Matthews, “Are We All Cultural Intermediaries Now? An Introduction to Cultural Intermediaries in Context,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 15, no. 5 (2012): 451–562. David Hesmondhalgh criticizes this expanded use of the term in “Bourdieu, the Media, and Cultural Production,” *Media, Culture, & Society* 28, no. 2 (2006): 211–231.

¹³ Jennifer Smith Maguire and Julian Matthews, *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader* (London: Sage, 2014), 2.

Cultural intermediaries thus hold considerable power in the jazz art world in defining the values and standards of what some scholars, following Herbert Gans, term a *taste culture*.¹⁴

From its beginnings through the fifties, the American knowledge about European jazz as well as the dissemination of recordings of European musicians was to a large extent mediated by a relatively small number of critics who performed in multiple and often overlapping cultural-intermediary functions as journalists, record and concert reviewers, radio hosts, teachers, songwriters, promoters, managers, and record producers, but also, in the small art world of jazz, as friends, confidants, and antagonists. Working as cultural intermediaries, they embody the dialectical relation between the jazz base and superstructure. Furthermore, the European identity and ethnicity of these critics helped strengthen their position as cultural intermediaries in the US because they conformed to the place of Western European (especially English and French) art held in American cultural hierarchies, even as it was played out here in relation to African American music rather than, for instance, classical music.¹⁵ This also corresponded to the actual petit-bourgeois class position of the critics described here (something Bourdieu saw as a defining feature of their identity¹⁶), to which we can add that their whiteness also was part of their image as European authorities on jazz.¹⁷

¹⁴ Herbert Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste* (New York: Basic Books, 1999 [1974]); Morten Michelsen, "Music Criticism and Taste Cultures," in *The Routledge Reader on the Sociology of Music*, ed. John Shepherd and Kyle Devine (New York: Routledge, 2015), 211–219.

¹⁵ Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

¹⁶ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 359.

¹⁷ The two past decades have seen a critique of these dominant threads on the sociology of art and culture with an emphasis on recentering aesthetic experience and affect with the goal of developing a post-Marxist/-Adornian, post-Beckerian, post-Bourdieuian, or "post-critical" cultural sociology. I do not engage explicitly with this literature, because this chapter is still, after all, concerned with the work of cultural intermediaries rather than with an analysis of artworks. Georgina Born, "The Social and the Aesthetic: For a Post-Bourdieuian Theory of Cultural Production," *Cultural Sociology* 4, no. 2 (2010): 1–38; Tia DeNora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Janet Wolff, *The Aesthetics of Uncertainty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). Some of this work has suggested a

These critics and journalists fall into roughly three (again, sometimes overlapping) groups. Firstly, there were a number of people who sent occasional reports about the state of the European jazz scene (especially as it was relevant to touring American musicians) to American magazines. These people included local European jazz fans, members of so-called hot clubs (fan clubs for record collectors), European journalists and critics, and, especially in the years immediately following the war, American G.I.s stationed in Europe, who of course were not professional journalists at all and did not work as cultural intermediaries to the extent of the critics otherwise described in this chapter.¹⁸ While this group was probably an important link between the US and Europe, their reports were often extremely short correspondences (one-paragraph letters to the editor is the predominant form) and it is thus difficult to trace the nature of these links beyond places, names, and general references.¹⁹

retheorization of the concept of mediation, which—I find—is closer to Williams’s and Hall’s emphasis on the cultural practices that constitute the dialectic between base and superstructure than these critics admit. See Georgina Born, “On Musical Mediation: Ontology, Technology, and Creativity,” *Twentieth-Century Music* 2, no. 1 (2005). 7–36; and Antoine Hennion, “Music and Mediation: Toward a New Sociology of Music,” in *The Cultural Study of Music*, ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (London: Routledge, 2012), 249–260.

¹⁸ American military personnel had, relatively speaking, more money than their European hosts and would thus have had the economic freedom to enjoy culture and, e.g., buy records to the extent that they were available. Later in the post-war period, Americans were increasingly isolated to the system of bases, but the peacetime also created space for more positive contact with the host communities (compared to the wartime and occupation tensions). Thus, Anni P. Baker writes: “Particularly in Europe, where military personnel and host civilians shared a similar culture, broadly speaking, these years [the fifties and sixties] were the golden age of ‘friendship’ activities, such as military band concerts, dances and balls, parades, and festivals.” *American Soldiers Overseas: The Global Military Presence* (Westport: Praeger, 2004), 48.

¹⁹ In the following, I have focused largely on what Lindberg et al. define as *music criticism* (reviews, essays, interviews etc.), because it provides arguments and interpretations that give us glimpses of the ideological distinctions between Europe and the U.S. etc. Smaller pieces of *music journalism* (reports, notes, etc., e.g., letters from G.I.s) appear less frequently in the text, because it less often provides quotable snippets that showcase the debates, arguments, and distinctions that I am mapping. Ulf Lindberg, Gestur Guðmundsson, Morten Michelsen, and Hans Weisethaunet, *Rock Criticism from the Beginning: Amusers, Bruisers, and Cool-Headed Cruisers* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 7. However, as Matt Brennan has argued, such distinctions between criticism and journalism are perhaps more theoretical than actually visible in magazines and papers. Brennan, *When Genres Collide*, 22. Indeed, even though close reading of these individual short pieces of writing does not reveal much of their ideological content, the presence of small notes, reports, op-eds, letters to the editor etc. about jazz in Europe that are sprinkled through the American press gives us a

Secondly, a handful of Francophone critics stand out in that their writings were re-printed at length in translation in the US. In some cases, they were important musical and business partners when American musicians were in France (this aspect of their work is not a part of my research, as the focus is on their American dissemination and reception).²⁰ The American jazz press lauded the pioneering discographical efforts of Charles Delaunay and followed Delaunay's "war" with countryman Hugues Panassié (1912–1974), which mirrored the American debates between jazz traditionalists/revivalists (the "moldy figs") and modernists.²¹ Indeed, when leafing through jazz magazines like *Metronome* and *Down Beat* from the forties and fifties one gets the picture that these French writers were even bigger names in the US than any European musicians were. In the same group is also the Belgian writer Robert Goffin (1898–1984) who is often credited with writing the first "serious" jazz book, *Aux Frontières du Jazz* (1932), and the Frenchman André Hodeir (1921–2011) whose seminal book *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence* (1954, trans. 1956) provided American jazz critics with a model to analyze jazz by the standards of European classical music. This francophone connection is evidence of the longstanding cultural traffic between America and France, especially as regards Black cultural forms, and to the romantic position that France held/holds in the American imagination.

picture of a growing interest in, knowledge about, and cultural legitimacy of European jazz, as well as the growing economic power of the European market for American jazz musicians and promoters.

²⁰ The French exposure to jazz and the reciprocal US interest in French jazz criticism was aided by the fact that France, unlike most other European countries, did not impose labor restrictions on American musicians. Colin Nettelbeck, *Dancing with DeBeauvoir: Jazz and the French* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 37.

²¹ These terms somewhat betray the aesthetic and political commitments of both sides in these debates, in that all of the critics were products and proponents of the modernism of the first half of the twentieth century. It was more a question over what kind of modernism and what the way forward was for this quintessentially modern music. See Bernard Gendron, "'Moldy Figs' and Modernists: Jazz at War (1942–1946)," in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 31–56.

Thirdly, European jazz was covered and promoted by a group of critics in the US who were European immigrants, expats, or long-term/on-and-off visitors. Because of their cultural background and linguistic skills these European-American writers and producers had the abilities and connections to keep the American jazz public updated on the European jazz scene, to advocate for European musicians, and eventually to produce and promote recordings by them. Importantly, as Europeans they sometimes had different perspective on race and a different position and relation to Black musicians than their white American counterparts—or at least they claimed such difference. The most prominent example in this category is Leonard Feather (1914–1994) who became a main voice for a liberal ideology of interracial jazz, which among other things stemmed from his background as a British Jew.

This chapter begins with an account of the early US publication and reception of European jazz criticism, which centered on Franophone writers. My research identifies a series of tropes of cultural superiority that was attached to European critics and audiences. The second part of the chapter shows how the idea of European jazz expertise was buttressed by aesthetics associated with the highbrow European art and philosophy. The supposed objectivity of the European jazz critic was linked to the fact that many European critics were geographically removed from the US and relied on records to carry out their judgements. Even as white, college-educated American writers criticized this lack of lived experience in the US jazz art world, they were attracted to the serious method with which European critics approached the music. The last part of the chapter is a case study of Feather's so-called blindfold tests, which I argue are an example of a colorblind ideology that drew upon the tropes and discourses established by these US-European jazz relations.

“A Typical European Attitude of Seriousness”: The Early US Reception of European Jazz Criticism

The idea that Europeans surpassed Americans as jazz critics and that intellectual sentiments made Europeans more receptive to the qualities of jazz was not merely an idea that Charles Delaunay had come up with to boost his own status.²² The praise for European critics and audiences goes back to the interbellum years when word of the European reception of jazz reached the US (e.g., of Armstrong’s and Ellington’s seminal first tours to the continent in the early thirties). In the thirties, Robert Goffin’s pioneering work was compared favorably to the “positively unlettered” American critics.²³ In the following decade this narrative solidified and became the conventional wisdom we know today. For example, in 1947 Ralph de Toledano established the Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet’s 1919 review of Will Marion Cook’s orchestra as a canonical piece in the jazz literature: “It cannot be too often repeated, to our shame, that Europeans realized the importance and value of jazz many years before Americans who originated it.”²⁴ At least as late as the sixties the specter of superior European jazz critics loomed over a discussion of jazz criticism taking

²² Beyond jazz, this is, indeed, part of a larger historiography—across genres—that positions Europe as more intellectually receptive of US music and in some cases less racist than white Americans. The reality and myths of European reception of 19th century African American minstrelsy forms a key part in Gilroy’s discussion of the *Black Atlantic*, see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 72–110. Focusing on the 1960s, Jack Hamilton chronicles how British reception and mastery of rock’n’roll was key in the “whitening” and cultural elevation of rock music, see Jack Hamilton, *Just Around Midnight: Rock and Roll and the Racial Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016). Similarly, Pwyll ap Siôn shows that European patronage played an important role in establishing American minimalism as a style with critical as well as popular appeal, both in the US and globally. Pwyll ap Siôn, “Moving Forward, Looking Back’: Resulting Patterns, Extended Melodies, *Eight Lines*, and the Influence of the West on Steve Reich,” in *Rethinking Reich*, eds. Sumanth Gopinath and Pwyll ap Siôn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 53–74.

²³ Wilder Hobson, “Introducing Duke Ellington,” *Fortune*, August 1933, reprinted in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 94.

²⁴ Ralph de Toledano, *Frontiers of Jazz* (Oliver Durrell, 1947), 115. For more on the role of Ansermet’s article see Andy Fry, *Paris Blues*, 220–232.

place in Miles Davis's apartment, where Nat Hentoff remarked that while there are European critics with requisite musical knowledge there are only a few in the US.²⁵ By the end of the eighties this had become the standard narrative in jazz historiography, neatly summarized by Ted Gioia: "Just as American jazz crossed the Atlantic to take root in Europe, with jazz criticism Europe returned the favor."²⁶

Sometimes the simple European identity of a writer was itself proof of the American inferiority when it came to jazz criticism as when "the very accent 'aigu' on the final 'e' of his [Charles (sic) Panassié's] name flaunts a scathing indication of our native apathy to take a native art seriously."²⁷ And elsewhere: "One does not talk to Panassié long (he speaks good English), before you realize that he has the fine sensibilities of an artist. It's partly in the way he holds his hands. He looks more like a critic of the old classical school than one of swing."²⁸ The persona of the critic was directly tied to discourses of high(er) cultural capital. At the heart of this is what Loes Rusch calls the one-dimensional "romanticist view" of Europe,²⁹ described by John Gennari as "the image of Europe as a standard-bearer of high art, ostensibly transcendent civilizational values, and superior skills of cutting-edge artistic awareness" in contrast to "American philistinism."³⁰ The European critic, in this view, embodied ideals that centered on four interrelated stereotypes: notions of European intellectualism, that Europeans were "experts" who wrote "serious" jazz criticism, that Europe was more artistically minded, and that this was opposed to the US where jazz

²⁵ Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool*, 205.

²⁶ Ted Gioia, *The Imperfect Art: Reflections on Jazz and Modern Culture* (Stanford: Portable Stanford, 1988), 28.

²⁷ Frederick C. Gwynn, "An Authority on Jazz," *Washington Post*, 30 Aug. 1936.

²⁸ "Chloroform 'Jeeter Bugs,' says Panassié," *Down Beat*, 15 Nov. 1940.

²⁹ Loes Rusch, "Frontierism, Intellectual Listeners and the New European Wave: On the Reception of Dutch Jazz in *DownBeat*, 1960-1980," *Jazz Research Journal*, vol. 9, no.1 (2015): 72.

³⁰ Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool*, 20.

was valued (and corrupted) commercially. The four tropes were often linked together with varying emphasis: the European critic's intellectual mindset was proven by his "serious" terminology and analysis; the intellectual and serious approach to the music proved the ability of Europeans to recognize and convincingly argue that jazz is art; the view of jazz as art confirmed that Europeans were not as easily swayed by the popular trends as American audiences were; European critics valued jazz through intellectual and serious thinking rather than following the "enterprising businessmen" that Delaunay (in the quote that opened this chapter) found were ruining jazz.

Well into the fifties the leading triumvirate of European jazz criticism (as described in the American press) was the Frenchmen Charles Delaunay, Hugues Panassié, and the Belgian Robert Goffin. Delaunay had made his name by producing the first definitive *Hot Discography* of jazz (1936), which made Bill Gottlieb of *Down Beat* characterize him as "the greatest research scholar of American hot music"³¹ in anticipation of his US-visit a decade later. Panassié's *Hot Jazz* (1936) had earned him a reputation as the leading expert on jazz. *The Chicago Defender* wrote of him that "what T.S. Eliot is to poetry, what Fannie Farmer is to cooking, Mickey Mantle—but why go on—Hugues Panassie is to jazz."³² Even in less favorable reviews he was described as "learned," a "high priest of jazz."³³ And the honor of the first "serious" teachers of jazz went to Goffin and Leonard Feather, who organized a jazz history course at the New School for Social Research in 1942.³⁴

³¹ Bill Gottlieb, "Delaunay On 1st Visit to America," *Down Beat*, 26 Aug., 1946.

³² "Satchmo Talks of New 'Jazz'," *The Chicago Defender*, 3 Nov. 1956.

³³ Austin Stevens, review of *The Real Jazz* by Hugues Panasié, *New York Times*, 9 Jan. 1943.

³⁴ A course schedule is reproduced in Leonard Feather, *The Jazz Years: Earwitness to an Era* (New York: Da Capo, 1987), 78.

The most important mark of European intellectualism was the serious approach they had to the music. The term “serious” is ubiquitous in the US assessment of European jazz criticism and in the admiration of European audiences. The critic was cast as a type of Adornian ideal “expert” or “good listener”; and audiences represented the Adornian “good listener” or “culture consumer” who is a well-informed and respects music as cultural asset.³⁵ Indeed, European audiences were framed as “serious” throughout the period covered in this dissertation. For example, on one of his 1939 tours, Duke Ellington observed that “the European fans, familiar with this form of American music solely through the medium of phonography recordings, nevertheless adopted a typical European attitude of seriousness in evaluating our ‘renegade child’ [i.e. jazz].”³⁶ When the *New York Times* ran a multipage article profiling European jazz fans and critics in 1956, it idealized “the true European cat [who] is more likely to be a brooder than a wide-eyed extrovert. He takes his jazz so seriously that even foot-tapping is frowned upon.”³⁷ Finally, the trope of associating serious listening with Europe could also be instilled in the American listener, as when the American vibraphonist Gary Burton, in 1976, described the US demographic attracted to the German record label ECM (the topic of chapter 4): “The typical ECM customer is your more serious listener.”³⁸ Here, it is European-produced jazz itself that attracts and induces a serious listening attitude from the American audience.

³⁵ Theodor Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, (New York: Continuum, 1976), 1–20. I should note here that I am using Adorno’s familiar, if contested, terminology because it correlates roughly to the discourse that critics and audiences were placed in, regardless of whether or not we might agree with Adorno’s categorization. It should also be noted that, as such, the discourse did not usually place the European critics or general audience in Adorno’s category of the “jazz experts” or “resentment listeners.”

³⁶ Duke Ellington, “Duke Says Swing is Stagnant,” *Down Beat*, Feb. 1939, 2, 16–17, reprinted in “Ellington in *Down Beat*: On Swing and Its Critics (1939),” in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), 133.

³⁷ Wilfrid Sheed, “Les Jazz Fans Hot—and Cool—of Europe,” *New York Times*, 18 Nov. 1956.

³⁸ Leonard Feather, “German Label Sticks Toes in U.S. Waters,” *Los Angeles Times*, 31. Oct. 1976.

I should stress here, that I do not mean to suggest that Europeans were in fact more “serious.” Rather, I follow Kelsey Klotz’s critique of discourses of *structural listening* in jazz culture, “to highlight the ways in which musical value, and in particular, forms of close listening and the places in which close listening occur, have been defined by European classical standards, and thus, have been implicitly, and often invisibly, marked as white by critics, audiences, and commentators.”³⁹ Europe represented a cultural attitude through a way of listening, and this reflected a racialized hierarchy as well as a class hierarchy. Such a technique of listening would, as I argue later in this chapter, be epitomized in Leonard Feather’s blindfold tests.

In contrast to these attentive practices of listening stood the jitterbugging American audiences and the critics who, in Richard O. Boyer’s 1944 description, “prefer to emphasize the air of gaudy sin instead of likening it [jazz] to the music of the spheres.”⁴⁰ This fits Simon Frith’s words about critics who are out “to save musicians from themselves” and, we should also add here, save American listeners from themselves by “defining an ideal musical experience for listeners to measure themselves against.”⁴¹ The discourse on jazz criticism idealized a European listening position against which American cultural attitudes were found wanting. It was an oft-repeated observation that Americans by and large had failed to develop these refined techniques of listening and writing about music. In 1946, under the headline “Jazz Criticism Lags, Frenchmen in Lead” *Down Beat* argued that “books written here [in the US] have failed miserably for one of two reasons: the author

³⁹ Kelsey Klotz, “On Musical Value: John Lewis, Structural Listening, and the Politics of Respectability,” *Jazz Perspectives* 11, no. 1 (2018): 27.

⁴⁰ Richard O. Boyer, “The Hot Bach,” in *The New Yorker*, 24 June 1944, reprinted in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 216.

⁴¹ Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 67.

either lacked the thorough grounding in technical information so necessary, or else was hopelessly biased for or against one particular phase of jazz as it is played in this country.”⁴² Emphasis was thus placed on the serious vocabulary and methods that the Europeans represented and on the fact that they were, or at least appeared to be, objective.

Seeking to confuse the line between the objective and subjective Delaunay was quoted in a 1946 interview for *Down Beat* saying that he did “not consider himself a critic.” Shedding the mantle of criticism in favor of a more “objective” role this also gave him a chance to repeat the assessment of the sad state of American jazz criticism, which he linked to musical developments: “Delaunay also feels that lack of real [American] criticism is partly responsible for the lack of greatness in new bands. He feels they are not aware of a growing, developing course that art should follow.”⁴³ For someone who did not consider himself a critic, the stakes of his own criticism were high. Moreover, the image of the US jazz art world painted by Delaunay (and his interviewer Bill Gottlieb), was one of a commercialized culture where jazz was without intellectual leadership that could guide its artistic development—a void that Delaunay and European critics were poised to fill. In other words, the art-commercialism dichotomy does not only apply to the discourse of music, but also to the discourse of criticism itself. For American critics, their European counterparts thus symbolized the potentially central role criticism could play in the formation of jazz itself, instead of just being the “collection of superficial historians or narrowly biased partisans” Delaunay spoke of.⁴⁴

⁴² “Jazz Criticism Lags, Frenchmen in Lead,” *Down Beat*, 4 Nov. 1946.

⁴³ Bill Gottlieb, “Delaunay Escapades—With Gestapo Related,” *Down Beat*, 23 Aug. 1946.

⁴⁴ Gottlieb, “Delaunay Escapades.”

We should note here that Delaunay’s arguments are quite different than those of Goffin and especially Panassié, who both emphasized the emotional power of the music—jazz should be taken in through the heart, not the mind—which again are different from e.g. Leonard Feather’s socially engaged writings,⁴⁵ the German expat Ernst Borneman’s (1915–1995) anthropological approach,⁴⁶ the British emigré Stanley Dance’s (1910–1999) biographies built on close relationships with the musicians themselves,⁴⁷ the New York-based Icelandic journalist Christiern “Chris” Albertson’s (1931–2019) historically meticulous approach (his biography of Bessie Smith remains the standard work on the singer) based in his commitment to public-service broadcasting,⁴⁸ and the Danish jack-of-all-trades cultural intermediary with a baron’s title Timme Rosenkrantz’s (1911–1969) anecdotal comments and photo books.⁴⁹ In other words, the fact that these critics were positioned as a uniform group of intellectuals was a result of the reception of the “serious” rhetoric of their arguments and their image as European experts, rather than necessarily their arguments themselves.

⁴⁵ On Feather’s biography and jazz criticism see Gennari, *Blowin’ Hot and Cool*, 19–59; and Christopher Robinson, *Firing the Canon: Multiple Insularities in Jazz Criticism* (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 2014), 91–140.

⁴⁶ Borneman lived in Canada but published in the US press. For more on Borneman, see Detlef Siegfried, *Modern Lusts: Ernest Borneman, Jazz Critic, Filmmaker, Sexologist* (Göttingen: Berghahn, 2020).

⁴⁷ Dance co-wrote or ghostwrote several musician autobiographies, most notably Ellington’s. Dance’s writings have not received much attention, but is considered in passing in Liam Rodrigues, *Riffin in “I”: Towards a Poetics of Black Jazz Autobiography*, (Ph.D. diss., York University, 2013), 188–202; and Reva Marin, *Outside and Inside: Race and Identity in White Jazz Autobiography* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2020), 8–12.

⁴⁸ In the last stage of his career, Albertson maintained a blog that contains hints at his biography and ideology: <http://stomp-off.blogspot.com>.

⁴⁹ Rosenkrantz functioned as a producer and record dealer, host of salons and parties at his and his wife, the singer Inez Cavanaugh’s, New York home, and wrote for, among other publications, *Esquire*. He was, at times, an important concert promoter linking the US and Europe, for instance organizing the European 1946 tour of the Don Redman band, which included a few beboppers and was probably the first time this new style was heard live in Europe. For more on the tour see the thoroughly researched and documented web publication Armin Büttner et al., *Don Redman’s 1946 European Tour* (blog), <https://donredman1946tour.wordpress.com>. Rosenkrantz’s Danish-language memoirs have recently been translated as *Harlem Jazz Adventures: A European Baron’s Memoires, 1934–1969* (Lanham: Scarecrow, 2012).

Case in point: Panassié belonged to the camp of traditionalist “moldy figs” who were purist proponents of New Orleans style hot jazz and Black racial authenticity. Delaunay sided with the modernists who accepted swing and bebop as viable forms of jazz.⁵⁰ The American jazz press covered the schism between the two old friends and used their images as authorities as points of reference or denigrated the experts in different ways: The high point—or low point, if you will—was Feather’s and Barry Ulanov’s attempted character assassination of Panassié (who was in fact a political arch-conservative) by claiming that he was a Vichy collaborator.⁵¹ Slowly the veil of “objectivity” and “seriousness” fell away and exposed a debate similar to the American discussions of authentic jazz and race. Borneman’s report of riots at a jazz debate in Paris made the front page of *Down Beat* and the same magazine’s D. Leon Wolff aimed the majority of his broadside against jazz critics at the Europeans, characterized by their “neurotic, affected writings” and singling out Goffin’s “dubious musical mentality,” Leonard Feather’s “very specious and supercilious” attitudes, calling Panassié “a riddle wrapped in an enigma”, and concluding that Ernest Borneman “has stumbled over an old obstacle—that of persisting in the tiresome attempt to define jazz” as opposed to Wolff himself, who would “never dream of using it [definitions] to test music objectively.”⁵² Though these tropes were now also targets of critique, it is

⁵⁰ The classic scholarly account is Gendron, “‘Moldy Figs’ and Modernists”; see also Scott DeVeaux, “Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography,” *Black American Literature Forum* 25, no. 3 (1991): 525-560; and Gennari, *Blowin’ Hot and Cool*; for more on the specific debates between Panassié and Delaunay see various recent studies of French jazz culture, e.g. Fry, *Paris Blues*, especially chs. 4 and 5; Rashida K. Braggs, *Jazz Diasporas: Race, Music, and Migration in Post-World War II Paris* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Tom Perchard, *After Django: Making Jazz in Postwar France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), especially ch. 2; Elizabeth Vihlen McGregor, *Jazz and Post-War French Identity: Improvising the Nation* (Lanham: Lexington, 2016), especially 10–14 and ch. 3.; Jordan, *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), chs. 5 and 7.

⁵¹ Hope (pseud., Feather and Ulanov) “But the Hot Club Magazine Falters as its Editors Yearn for Antiquated Jazz,” *Metronome*, July 1945, 15; Panassié’s letter to the editor and the magazine’s retraction in Hugues Panassié, “Reflection on Panassie,” *Metronome*, Oct. 1946, 6.

⁵² D. Leon Wolff, “Are Critics Jazz’ Worst Enemy?” *Down Beat*, 9 Apr. 1947.

notable that these epithets fall in line with the American picture of European intellectual superiority.

“A Peculiar Shift of Values”: European Aesthetics, European Methods

Building on the idea of the jazz critic as an expert, the fifties saw the rise of a new style of jazz criticism focused on formalist elements of the music. This development followed trends in literary scholarship, most notably New Criticism, that focused on intrinsic, formal, and poetic elements of the musical text.⁵³ While these were currents that ran through Anglo-American academia and intellectual life, the model for this new kind of jazz criticism was found in a French book, André Hodeir’s *Hommes et problèmes du jazz* (1954) published in translation as *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence* (1956). The book argued, both explicitly and via its method and structure, that jazz should be seen within the developments of Western art and that it should be studied as such, with the formal and aesthetic tools of classical music and philosophy. Many American reviews opened by explicitly setting Hodeir as the heir to Goffin, Panassié, and/or Delaunay and saw the book as proof of the continued excellence of European jazz criticism. Martin Williams appreciated the book’s highbrow tone and its analyses as proof of presence of masterpieces of jazz.⁵⁴ Because of Hodeir’s emphasis on aesthetics and form, the criticism of his book did not so much revolve around its conclusions, as had been the case in the previous decade’s debates between moldy figs and modernists where the discussion often was reduced to the question of whether one was a hot jazz purist or a bebop fan. Instead, the reviews could

⁵³ See DeVeaux, “Constructing the Jazz Tradition”; Gennari, *Blowin’ Hot and Cool*, ch. 4; and Mark Racz, “Jazz Criticism in America,” in *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism*, ed. Christopher Dingle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 459–483.

⁵⁴ Racz, “Music Criticism in America,” 467.

simultaneously laud Hodeir for his aesthetic, philosophical arguments and analytical sophistication while taking issue with the very same things. This was often done in a rhetoric that read Hodeir's approach and tone as a specifically national one, as when one review stated that "Hodeir's sophistication in viewing jazz as a primarily individualistic art form perpetuates an attitude long characteristic of French jazz criticism"⁵⁵ or when Whitney Balliett faulted the book for its search for the elusive "essence" of jazz in the "hushed zones of French theoretical criticism."⁵⁶ Dan Morgenstern (himself an European immigrant) positioned Hodeir as "the great white father of current criticism," who was lecturing on jazz as a "Serious Art Form" in the "best French intellectual tradition."⁵⁷ While it might seem like a strawman was being made of Hodeir, it is certainly true that he had no rival in intellectual pretensions. His book draws upon European philosophy and is rife with references to Western classical music. Hodeir's aim is for the "book to become, in its small way, the *Discourse on Method* [by Descartes] of jazz."⁵⁸ The book, thus, provoked significant debate in the US with e.g. *Down Beat* devoting a two-page transcription of a "jazz seminar" on it and the question seemed more to be whether Hodeir's definition of an "essence" and the method which he derived was correct, rather than being a question of whether jazz could or should be analyzed with a "method" or not.⁵⁹

As Hodeir presented a European framework on jazz, he also presented white, college-educated American critics with a model for jazz criticism. In a lengthy essay charting the

⁵⁵ Daniel Hoffman, "Basin Street, C'est ne pas á Montparnasse: A French View of Jazz," review of Hodeir, *Jazz: its Evolution and its Essence, Midwest Folklore* 2, vol. 8 (1958): 104.

⁵⁶ Whitney Balliett, *Collected Work: A Journal of Jazz 1954-2000* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 13.

⁵⁷ Dan Morgenstern, "Hodeir's Party" *Jazz*, Feb. 1963, 15.

⁵⁸ André Hodeir, *Jazz: Its Evolution and its Essence*, trans. David Noakes (New York: Grove, 1980[1956]), 19. For more on Hodeir's philosophical and aesthetic thought see Jean-Louis Pautrot, "Introduction," in *The André Hodeir Jazz Reader*, ed. Jean-Louis Pautrot (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 1-19.

⁵⁹ "A Jazz Seminar," with Leonard Feather, Billy Taylor, Nesuhi Ertegun, and Whitney Balliett, *Down Beat*, 27 June 1957, 15-16.

lack of attention his fellow American intellectuals had paid to jazz, Nat Hentoff relied on this dynamic. The superiority of the Europeans was, for Hentoff, not necessarily just a question of knowledge of jazz, because more “European intellectuals are emotionally aware of jazz than their American counterparts.” Thus, the fact that “more Europeans, for example, know that jazz is not the same as ‘pop’ music of the disc jockey and the jukebox than do American intellectuals” built on the idea that intellectualism, high-low distinctions, and a disdain for the commercialization of jazz was *natural* to Europeans.⁶⁰ In contrast to this stood, in Hentoff’s terms, the “mass goofing” of the US intellectuals and audiences who follow the latest fads.⁶¹

The juxtaposition of the cultivated European and the philistine American works as a dialectic that feeds the project of building cultural legitimacy for jazz. Searching for cultural capital also meant devaluing economic capital. European criticism served as a contrast to the supposedly lower, or at least different, standards of American writing and listening. American jazz life was, according to this narrative, tainted by commercial desires of its entertainment industry. As Elizabeth Vihlen McGregor has noted (with regard to France, but this can, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to the discourse in general), jazz fans and critics were caught in a bind arguing against the commercialization of jazz and bemoaning the pressures of the American culture industry (both in the US and in Europe) on the one hand and on the other hand also bemoaning the fact that American musicians were not appreciated enough in the US for them to have economically sustainable jazz careers.⁶² This was

⁶⁰ Nat Hentoff, “Jazz and the Intellectuals: Somebody Goofed,” *Chicago Review* vol. 9, no 3. (1955): 115.

⁶¹ Hentoff, “Jazz and the Intellectuals,” 115. It should, also be noted that, as Nicole Rustin has shown, during the sixties, Hentoff also developed a critique of liberal politics and whiteness. “Cante Hondo: Charles Mingus, Nat Hentoff, and Jazz Racism,” *Critical Sociology* vol. 32, no. 2–3 (2006): 309–331.

⁶² McGregor, *Jazz and Post-War French Identity*, 124–134.

part of a broader mid-century discourse on intellectualism that pointed in two directions. The “jazz cult” of critics that Ernst Borneman described⁶³ was a form of what Brian J. Ford dubbed the cult of the expert.⁶⁴ Europeans fit the bill as serious intellectuals that resisted the low-brow commercialism of American culture, while confirming the global appeal of jazz as an artform with figures of genius on par with canonical European masters.⁶⁵ This was contrasted with a deep-rooted feeling that the US was anti-intellectual by nature, an idea that became solidified with Richard Hofstadter’s treatise on *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* in 1963.⁶⁶

The detached, formalist rhetoric of someone like Hodeir did, however, also speak to a problem with European critics: Their geographical detachment from the US jazz art world. The problem of this “inevitable remoteness,” as the American critic Otis Ferguson had put it in review of Panassié’s *Hot Jazz*,⁶⁷ would continue to plague not only critics, but also European jazz musicians themselves (perhaps to this day) as they were viewed as

⁶³ Ernest Borneman, “The Jazz Cult: I. The Intimate Memoirs of an Acolyte,” *Harper’s Magazine*, 1 Feb. 1947, 141–147; “The Jazz Cult II: War Among the Critics,” *Harper’s Magazine*, 1 Mar. 1947, 261–273.

⁶⁴ Brian J. Ford, *The Cult of the Expert* (London: Hamilton, 1982)

⁶⁵ Gennari highlights Marshall Stearns as the American writer who concretized the liberal consensus view in jazz in the fifties, among other things because of the increasingly international appeal of the music. *Blowin’ Hot and Cool*, 152–153. Though Stearns did not share Hodeir’s formalist approach, Eric Drott argues that Hodeir’s *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence* was the “locus classicus of this universalist trope.” Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution: Cultural Politics and Political Culture in France, 1968–1981* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 128. Ellington was, as mentioned above, the paradigmatic case, both as a musician who was described in terms of genius by critics and fans, and as a composer who pursued “serious” concert music formats; and Hodeir was, as described above, the critic who most forcefully proposed the link between Western aesthetics and jazz. From so-called symphonic jazz and later bebop, free jazz, and neoclassical jazz, the music has in various ways been ascribed middle- and high-brow value and experimented with “art” forms. For specific accounts of Ellington and cultural hierarchy see John Howland, *Ellington Uptown: Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, and the Birth of the Jazz Concert* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009) and “Marketing to the Middlebrow: Reconsidering Ellintonia, the Legacy of Early Ellington Criticism, and the Idea of a ‘Serious’ Jazz Composer,” in *Duke Ellington Studies*, John Howland ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 32–75.

⁶⁶ Kelly Susan Bradbury, *Reimagining Popular Notions of American Intellectualism: Literacy, Education, and Class* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2016), 12–14.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Gennari, “Jazz Criticism,” 467.

imitators of American music and thus inferior to Americans.⁶⁸ In the exiled European Ernest Borneman's account of the "jazz cult" the distance between the European critic and the US meant a reliance on recordings:

To understand the function of this sort of organization of the life of the European jazz fan, his utter dependence upon phonograph records will have to be remembered. Cut off from the living music by time as well as space, he submits to a peculiar shift of values. The record becomes more important than the music... the man who has met the musicians and knows his way through the maze of records becomes more important than the musician himself. Thus the peculiar and altogether top-heavy standing of the so-called jazz 'critic.'⁶⁹

For the anthropologically minded Borneman this separation from lived, musical experience was not a good thing. Distance could, on the other hand, just as well be used as an attribute in that it meant that Europeans were also removed from the very context that was undesirable for an "objective" valuation of jazz (as remarked above in the case of Delaunay). As geographically removed cultural intermediaries, the European critics were for better or worse condemned to the fetishization of recordings. The "seductive menace of records in jazz history," as Jed Rasula has put it, was initially crystalized (among other

⁶⁸ This was not least the case in the perhaps most famous European jazz musician, Django Reinhardt, who visited the US only once, in 1946. Reinhardt's visit and tour with the Ellington band could have been the event that spearheaded European presence on the American jazz scene, but despite generally positive reception it was an unsuccessful endeavor and Reinhardt abandoned an American career. As Andrew Berish has convincingly shown, Reinhardt was confronted with a profound cultural and geographical dislocation that was evident not only in the conditions for his performance (the language barrier and his inability to record due to union rules), but also in the musical tension between Reinhardt and the Ellington band in terms of musical practice, interaction, and melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic preferences for soloing. Berish, "Negotiating 'A Blues Riff': Listening for Django Reinhardt's Place in American Jazz," *Jazz Perspectives* 3, no. 3 (2009): 233–264. Of course, this is not unique to European musicians, but can apply to all non-American musicians although the aspects of race intersect in quite different ways. For an interesting non-European case study see Steven Feld's discussion of Ghanaian musician Guy Warren/Ghanaba, *Jazz Cosmopolitanism: Five Musical Years in Accra* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 51–85.

⁶⁹ Borneman, "The Jazz Cult: I. Intimate Memoirs of an Acolyte," 145–146; in the following essay of the two-part series Borneman devotes a full one-third of its space to the problem of European critics, criticizing them not so much for their arguments as for their rhetoric, which he characterizes as both harsh and dry with a "relationship between the maniacal lack of humor of the European jazz lover and the corresponding lack of humor among their wartime [Nazi] overlords." Borneman, "The Jazz Cult: II," 272.

places) in the discographies and record-driven listening of European writers like Panassié and Goffin. Americans like Marshall Stearns and Gunther Schuller, who produced seminal textbooks on jazz history in the fifties and sixties, continued this tradition of equating jazz history with the history of jazz recordings.⁷⁰ And as I argue below, Leonard Feather's blindfold tests rested upon the idea that listening to recordings was a way towards a jazz world free of prejudice.

The English historian Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012), who (under the pseudonym Francis Newton) painted a picture of the different roles recordings played in Europe and the US:

Whereas jazz came to Europe through the regulated channels of American record imports, which were in turn controlled by the pioneer aficionados and critics, who therefore imposed their own tastes and standards on the wider public, jazz in America was live music, which altogether escaped minority intellectual control.⁷¹

Hobsbawm goes on to assert that this accounts for a “hazier” distinction between jazz and pop in the US. Hobsbawm does not come straight out and say it, but this high-low distinction may, as Gennari has suggested, in fact also be a racial one. In this way, European (especially Francophone) criticism was associated with what Ted Gioia has called *the primitivist myth*.⁷² According to Gioia, European critics promoted an idea of Black music as the “primitive's unreflecting and instinctual relationship with his art” as opposed to the

⁷⁰ Jed Rasula, “The Media of Memory: The Seductive Menace of Records in Jazz History,” in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 134–162.

⁷¹ Eric Hobsbawm [Francis Newton, pseud.], *The Jazz Scene* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1960), 243. See also Roger Fagge, “Eric Hobsbawm,” in *The Routledge Companion to New Jazz Studies*, eds. Nicholas Gebhardt, Nichole Rushtin-Paschale, and Tony Whyton (London: Routledge, 2018), 339–346.

⁷² Gioia, *Jazz: The Imperfect Art*, 36.

European's "overly refined and self-conscious attitude."⁷³ The taste-making powers of European critics were reflected in polls of European magazines that were dominated by Black musicians, whereas the American polls from the thirties to the fifties shows a relative dominance of white bands and musicians.⁷⁴ In fact, the European preference for Black musicians could in itself be a headline in the American jazz press, as when the white-owned *Metronome* criticized an 1938 all-star band picked by Panassié for being centered on African American musicians (rightly attributing this to Panassié's essentialism and primitivism) and the *Black Pittsburgh Courier* countering with a report on how Panassié was being "censored."⁷⁵

The objective, idealized listening of the European critics and audiences can be read in a dichotomy between American and European bodily attitudes. One review of Goffin's *Jazz: From the Congo to the Metropolitan* (1944) presents us with the familiar (American) landscape of jazz populated with sexualized bodies and argues that Europeans have been studying jazz from afar "undisturbed by the water nymphs who inhabit riverboats... without the distractions provided by jitterbugs rampant" and speculates that "perhaps that is the reason that it was from abroad that we had our first appreciations of a new art, our first catalogues of great hot musicians and their recordings. Instead of dancing, the Europeans

⁷³ Gioia, *Jazz: The Imperfect Art*, 29. Such criticism of the racist underpinnings of European attitudes toward jazz are, of course, correct and warranted. Critics like Gioia use this to paint a strong contrast between Europe and the US, in effect furthering the transatlantic distinctions that he is critiquing. It may be worth, once more, noting the dialectic between European criticism and US jazz life, instead. Primitivism indeed has a distinct Francophone lineage, but importantly the fact that it was French and European meant that it was leveraged, in the US, as a proof of the music's potential beyond the primitivist myth. See also Tom Perchard, "Tradition, Modernity and the Supernatural Swing: Re-reading 'Primitivism' in Hugues Panassié's Writing on Jazz," *Popular Music* vol. 30, 1 (2011): 25–45; and Daniel Stein, "Negotiating Primitivist Modernisms: Louis Armstrong, Robert Goffin, and the Transatlantic Jazz Debate," *European Journal of American Studies* 6, no. 2 (2011): 1–19.

⁷⁴ Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool*, 94–95.

⁷⁵ "Hugues Panassié's Opinions Censored," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 12 Nov. 1938.

listened.”⁷⁶ According to this narrative, Europeans stood beyond the regular American jazz listener, based on an epistemology that centered on the medium of recording.

Listening only to the sounds of the recorded music “itself,” critics could argue that their taste could not possibly be marked the visual impediments that defined racism. In this case, as Jennifer Stoeber argues, “the notion that race can be overlooked equated racism almost solely with visible skin color, a limitation that simply intensified the use of sonic cues” of Blackness.⁷⁷ This was exemplified in the case of Panassié who asserted that “clearly race-prejudice doesn’t much exist in France.”⁷⁸ Here, Panassié not only chose to overlook the deportation of French Jews during World War II, but also used this colorblindness to mark the sonic colorline that essentialized Blackness, through primitivism, as the prime authentic criterium for jazz. Some critics, however, took the colorblind ideology even further and argued that the value of recordings lay in their ability to transcend the question of race altogether.

“To Allay All Prejudices”: Leonard Feather, “Crow Jim,” and Colorblind Listening

White male European critics found themselves drawn to the US, to a music culture which they did not truly belong to. They had to negotiate their reverence for American culture in general and African American music specifically while wrestling with their own identities.⁷⁹ Most of the critics I have described so far did so as European outsiders, located

⁷⁶ R.E. Berry, “Europe Studies Our Rhythms,” *New York Times*, 27 Feb. 1944.

⁷⁷ Jennifer Lynn Stoeber, *The Sonic Color Line: Race & the Cultural Politics of Listening* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 231.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Perchard, *After Django*, 48.

⁷⁹ As such, their positioning vis-à-vis a cultural “other” was parallel to that of the white male US jazz journalists facing what Steven B. Elworth calls an “intellectual conundrum” of jazz, aesthetics, and race, in “Jazz in Crisis, 1948–1958: Ideology and Representation,” *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 64–65.

in Europe, with the occasional excursion across the Atlantic. Via their writings they may have been part of the American jazz art world, but their distance from the US meant that they were not truly part of the American jazz community. However, a few European critics emigrated and built careers in the US. The most prominent European jazz critic to become embedded in the American jazz community was Leonard Feather.

Feather came from a well-off Jewish family in London and had emigrated to the US in the thirties in order to pursue his jazz dreams. In a remarkably diverse career, he worked in almost every possible function of a cultural intermediary in the jazz world: composer, record producer, manager (including a brief stint for Duke Ellington), and union organizer, but it was his work as a journalist, editor, radio broadcaster, and author that would make him most famous. Other than his contributions to American publications, Feather served as a correspondent for the British magazine *Melody Maker* and the Swedish *Estrad*.⁸⁰ Feather was also accepted by the African American press and was the first white jazz writer for the Black paper *New York Amsterdam News*. Feather would sometimes stress the similarities rather than differences he shared with African Americans, whether positioning himself as a composer and producer of Black music or as a Jewish immigrant. In 1940s and 50s, Feather was perhaps the most vocal and important ally to Black musicians, constantly documenting the grim details of Jim Crow white supremacy in his articles and trying to break down the colorline through his work as a journalist, producer, promoter, activist, and organizer. Feather was also a huge advocate for female musicians and promoted European musicians to an extent that probably exceeds what his own European background

⁸⁰ On Feather's connection to Sweden see Mischa van Kan, *Swingin' Swedes: The Transnational Exchange of Swedish Jazz in the US*, (Ph.D. diss., University of Gothenburg, 2017), 109–116.

alone can explain.⁸¹ In presenting these thoughts, Feather was a progressive thinker, but not a radical. In this way he was similar to Michael Omi and Howard Winant's description of "early [civil rights] movement leaders [who] were also assimilation-oriented and individualistic to a degree that appears a bit embarrassing today, but made more sense in the repressive and exclusive racial climate of the time. They were moderates who sought to end 'race-thinking' and ensure 'equality' to each individual."⁸² While we should not diminish Feather's wide-reaching efforts, we can also point out that the ideas that drove Feather were not anti-racist, as we would understand it today, but rather a liberal ideology of colorblindness fixated on assimilation and integration.⁸³ In both practical and ideological terms Feather's main target was segregation, to the point where, as Gennari writes, "one has to wonder whether interracialism as an end in itself became an *idée fixe* that undermined the objectivity Feather was so keen to claim for himself."⁸⁴ Indeed, despite the differences in taste and politics that Feather may have had with some of the Francophone critics, he shared with them a commitment to "objective"—to borrow Gennari's term—jazz criticism and despite his adopted homeland, his role in the US jazz community still bore traces of his identity as a European.

⁸¹ In an argument that runs parallel to my critique of his approach to race, Robinson has written about Feather's promotion of female artists, showing that even as he attempted to challenge gender bias, he did so from a "paternal position." Similar to his colorblind approach, he believed, in Robinson's words, that "gender is inaudible." Indeed, as early as 1937, in an article for *Melody Maker*, Feather had explicitly proposed the blindfold test as a means to prove a gender-blind ideology. Robinson, *Firing the Canon*, 109–129.

⁸² Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 161–162.

⁸³ This historical observation is also tied to my theoretical approach to the study of racism, which does not locate it primarily in individual psychological dispositions, but rather, following Bonilla-Silva, "is based in a materialist interpretation of racial matters and this sees the views of actors as corresponding to their systemic location... Whether actors express 'resentment' or 'hostility' toward minorities is largely irrelevant for the maintenance of white privilege." Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 7.

⁸⁴ Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool*, 56.

For Feather, his role as a critic intersected with his status as a foreigner, as he remembered of his first visit to the US in the thirties:

The Savoy engendered in me oddly mixed emotions of alienation (due to my British reserve rather than my whiteness) and of belonging, for it was at the ballroom, and at other retreats north of Central Park, that I would quickly learn to feel more at one with my surroundings than anywhere else either at home or abroad. There was an immediate sense of being welcome in a community where, as Hammond and others had warned, people from downtown might expect to find themselves regarded with acute suspicion. Not being an American, as I soon found out, fortified my credentials.⁸⁵

Feather's venture uptown with his American guide, the US critic and record producer John Hammond, was marked by his privilege as a white person, but also as a Jew, as an English speaker, but not an American.⁸⁶ His pursuit and promotion of jazz was not simply appropriation and fantasy akin to the white socialites who "slummed" through Harlem in the twenties and thirties (slumming was a term for going clubbing in Black neighborhoods)—in fact, he decided not to go to the Cotton Club on his first visit to New York, offended by its policy of only admitting Black people as performers or staff.⁸⁷ Likewise, Feather had no ambition of becoming a what Norman Mailer would later describe as the "white Negro," but instead premised his insider-status on his foreignness, as a white man different from white Americans.⁸⁸ Feather's transnational identity was, by his own account, less about race and more about an assumed American habitus, as he recalled in his memoir:

⁸⁵ Feather, *The Jazz Years*, 17–18.

⁸⁶ For more specifically on Feather's Jewishness see Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool*, 27 and 57-59; and Charles Hersch, *Jews and Jazz: Improvising Ethnicity* (New York & London: Routledge, 2017), 57 and 92–93.

⁸⁷ On the comparison of Hammond and Feather to slummers and other white critics and their desire and appropriation of Blackness, see Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool*, 28–34; on Feather's opposition to both "white negros" and "militant" Black Nationalists see *ibid.*, 259–260.

⁸⁸ Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster," *Advertisements for Myself* (New York: Putnam, 1959), 337–358. For a historical account and critique of Mailer, with a special consideration of music, see Ingrid Monson, "The Problem with White Hipness: Race, Gender, and Cultural

Although my transplantation had come about prematurely and under undreamed-of circumstances [because of the outbreak of World War II], I had long since felt that I was less and less a product of my background, but rather of my American experiences over the last four years. All my closest friends were Americans; adapting to their attitudes and beliefs had already become a half-conscious ambition. Because my accent set me apart among some Americans who found it a curious and perhaps amusing novelty, I lost no time in discarding it. This was not a matter of deliberately assuming the speech patterns of a New Yorker, but rather of simply falling into them as naturally as one would into an armchair.⁸⁹

Here, we need not take Feather upon his word and assume that there is anything “natural” about his assimilation into an American identity. Instead, it is more helpful to see Feather’s change of accent as tool that could be used actively in forging an image. Several American descriptions of European journalists and critics remark upon their accents that mark them as insiders (they speak the language fluently) and outsiders (but they are not Americans, as one can hear). Thus, when describing the West-German critic Joachim-Ernst Berendt’s (1922–2000) visit to the US in 1960, *The New York Times* remarked that “he speaks English fluently, with ingratiating traces of an accent that he thinks was of help to him over here (‘In the Souse they know I am not a Jankee,’ he explained.)”⁹⁰ Rather than seeing Berendt’s use of linguistic difference as a counterexample to Feather’s integration, I would argue that they highlight ways of forging an insider-outsider persona. For both Berendt and Feather this was a way to inhabit the role of the cultural intermediary as one to which the Europeans naturally belonged, exemplifying them as ideal types for the jazz world. Feather’s linguistic performance and change of accent also fit with his politics of

Conceptions in Jazz Historical Discourse,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (1995): 396–422; Scott Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 29–96; and Phil Ford, *Dig: Sound and Music in Hip Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁸⁹ Feather, *The Jazz Years*, 57.

⁹⁰ John S. Wilson, “Swing, Swing,” *The New York Times*, 24 Jul. 1960, X9.

interracialism, as it idealizes assimilation and integration.⁹¹ The two quotes from Feather's memoirs show how subtly he narrated his slip from one sense of belonging and identity to another. In the first case, he emphasizes his Britishness rather than whiteness; in the second he highlights his assumed Americanness—one that remarkably does not mention race and thus in its colorblindness exemplifies the middle-class white male liberal subject that Feather embodied.

As should be clear, Feather's colorblind ideology did not mean that he avoided the topic of race.⁹² It is, in fact, the central issue in one of the main events Feather is remembered for to this day: His 1951 "blindfold test" with the Black trumpet player Roy Eldridge in *Down Beat*. The blindfold tests were an ongoing series of interviews in which Feather played records to musicians who then had to identify and assess them without knowing what was being played for them—they were, as it were, listening "blindfolded" to the music. Under the headline "Little Jazz Goes Color Blind," the article was an interview with Eldridge (nicknamed "Little Jazz") who had, according to Feather's introduction, "claimed [that] he could distinguish a white musician from a Negro simply by listening to his style."⁹³ Framing this interview specifically around race, Feather wrote that the blindfold

⁹¹ For a critic like Berendt there was also a sexual-erotic aspect to the miscegenating mixing of races, in part as a response to Nazi race politics, as he stated: "We—particularly the Europeans—considered it an antiracist act when we slept with black women; we thought that in this way we were contributing to forming a new mankind, in which there were no more races." Quoted in Andrew Wright Hurley, *The Return of Jazz: Joachim-Ernst Berendt and West German Cultural Exchange* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 2009), 63, which also elaborates on how Berendt's intersection of libertinism and liberalism relates to his position of colorblindness.

⁹² Indeed, Feather included a whole chapter on "Jazz and Race" in *The Book of Jazz*, though Scott DeVeaux argues that by confining his discussion of race to a single chapter Feather's point is "not to connect the expressive power of music to oppressive social conditions, but to exorcise them so that the rest of the book may safely be devoted to the development of musical language." Scott DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 20. Similarly, Feather's interest in colorblind listening was not a rejection of the fact that the issue of race mattered to musicians, just a rejection of the idea that it mattered to the music itself, so to speak.

⁹³ Leonard Feather, "Little Jazz Goes Color Blind," *The Blindfold Test*, interview with Roy Eldridge, *Down Beat*, 13 Jul. 1951, 12.

test was “a challenge to [Eldridge’s] ability to separate musicians along racial lines, as opposed to [Feather’s] theory that, in the words of an old blues, ‘you can’t tell the difference when the sun goes down.’”⁹⁴ Mobilizing a quintessential marker of Blackness—the blues—in an argument against an African American musician, not only shows Feather’s rhetorical flair but also the problematic audacity of his colorblind ideology, as he reveled in Eldridge’s eventual failure to correctly identify the race of several of the musicians.

The blindfold test with Eldridge has become infamous. It is referenced in both popular discourse (I, for instance, remember being told about it while I was in high school) and in the scholarly literature.⁹⁵ Appearing as both proof of music’s colorblindness and as anecdotal evidence of the misguided racial politics of white jazz critics, the blindfold test itself, however, remains under-examined. This risks making dehistoricized Black-and-white stock characters out of Feather and Eldridge. It also misses the opportunity to provide a theoretical framework for a critique of the blindfold test.

By 1951, Leonard Feather had served many roles in American jazz life but had most prominently secured his place as a superstar journalist, serving as one of the editors for *Down Beat*. In editorials for the magazine as well as general articles and interviews, Feather covered issues of racial discrimination and celebrated bands that combined Black and white

⁹⁴ Feather, “Little Jazz Goes Color Blind.”

⁹⁵ Ingrid Monson has used the article as an example twice: *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 80; and “Jazz as Political and Musical Practice,” in *Musical Improvisation: Art, Education, and Society* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 21–39. Other jazz scholars have touched upon the case in passing or in notes: Guthrie Ramsey, “Who Matters: The New and Improved White Jazz Literati: A Review Essay,” *American Music* 17, no. 2 (1999): 206; Jürgen Grandt, *Kinds of Blue: The Jazz Aesthetic in African American Narrative* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 78; and Tracy McMullen, “Corpo-Realities: Keepin’ It Real in ‘Music and Embodiment’ Scholarship,” *Current Musicology* 82 (2006), 74. John Chilton discusses the case from a biographical point of view in *Roy Eldridge: Little Jazz Giant* (London: Continuum, 2002), 185–189. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. has also used the case anecdotally as a starting point for a discussion of cultural appropriation, in “‘Authenticity,’ or the Lesson of Little Tree,” *New York Times*, 24 Nov. 1991.

musicians, as well as non-American (particularly European) musicians. This is also reflected in the recordings he played for Eldridge (see fig. 1.1).



Figure 1.4. Discography for Eldridge's blindfold test. Leonard Feather, "Little Jazz Goes Color Blind," *The Blindfold Test*, interview with Roy Eldridge, *Down Beat*, 13 Jul. 1951, 12.

Feather opened with George Shearing's white, all-English band, featured the white trombonist Kai Winding (originally from Denmark) on two different recordings, and selected six bands—out of the ten—that were racially mixed. Furthermore, he slyly selected a series of records where, for instance, Black musicians performed in a smoother style (generally coded as white) or where white musicians played with bluesy inflections. In many cases Eldridge could not pick out the race of the musicians or got it wrong. For instance, saying of a piano-duet between Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn: "White or

colored? It's impossible to tell"; and of a recording by the Billy Taylor Quartet that he "couldn't tell who was colored and who was white. They could be Eskimos for all I know."⁹⁶ At the end of the interview, he had to admit to:

I guess I'll have to go along with you Leonard—you can't tell just from listening to records. But I still say that I could spot a white imitator of a colored musician immediately. A white musician trying to copy [Coleman] Hawkins, for instance. And in the same way I supposed I could recognize a colored cat trying to copy Bud Freeman. I can only talk about individual sounds that have made it, highly individual sounds. But you take a sound like [the white trombonist and big band leader] Tommy Dorsey gets—any good musician could get that. Okay, you win the argument!⁹⁷

It is worth quoting Eldridge's afterthoughts in full length as this remark has often been reduced to the last sentence or left out entirely in subsequent references to the blindfold test. Rather than a complete capitulation to Feather's universalizing colorblindness, the quote shows how Eldridge in fact identified the *particular* problems associated with Feather's method and ideology. By putting the spotlight on white imitators, Eldridge highlighted how Feather's narrow framing of racial issues as a matter mostly about Jim Crow segregation policies, as well as his celebration of interracialism, seemed to overlook the problem of cultural appropriation. Furthermore, Eldridge clearly took issue with Feather's privileging of recordings, prompting us to look critically at Feather's combination of the blindfold test and colorblind ideology. A review of the blindfold test's history reveals that the interview was not just a fanciful idea, sprung from Feather's mind, nor was it the *starting point* for an examination of current race politics in the jazz world. It was, in fact, the

⁹⁶ Feather, "Little Jazz Goes Color Blind."

⁹⁷ Feather, "Little Jazz Goes Color Blind."

end point of a debate sparked by an interview with Eldridge that Feather had published in *Down Beat* two months earlier.⁹⁸

Roy Eldridge was a big name in jazz, today chiefly positioned as a pivotal figure in the transition from swing music to bebop.⁹⁹ During the forties he had crossed the colorline and played in big bands lead by the white musicians Gene Krupa and Artie Shaw. He was also a part of Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic tours. In 1950 he joined a group led by Benny Goodman for a tour of Europe and stayed in Paris after the rest of the band went back to the US. It was Eldridge's return stateside in 1951 that was the occasion of an interview that received top-billing in the May 15 issue of *Down Beat*. Under the headline "No More White Bands For Me," Feather presented an interview with Eldridge in which the trumpeter compared his time in Europe with his traumatic experiences of discrimination when touring with Shaw's and Krupa's bands in the US. In a harrowing account, Eldridge described the indignities of not being allowed into the same hotels, train cars, or bars as his white bandmates, and how racism made him physically and mentally ill, summarizing:

Man, when you're on the stage you're great, but as soon as you come off, you're nothing. It's not worth the glory, not worth the money, not worth anything. It was the trip to Europe that made me really realize that and make up my mind for good.¹⁰⁰

Eldridge described how Charles Delaunay had made the proposition that he spend extended time in Europe, eventually using Paris as a base from which he made tours to Germany, Scandinavia, and Tunisia. He recounted how his time in Europe "was a

⁹⁸ A review of *Down Beat* itself, plus other jazz magazines as well as the broader press, reveals that the July 13 blindfold test received no coverage. This includes the Black press, which did not pick up the story.

⁹⁹ Chilton, *Roy Eldridge*.

¹⁰⁰ Leonard Feather, "No More White Bands For Me, Says Little Jazz," interview with Roy Eldridge, *Down Beat*, 18 May 1951, 13.

wonderful year. During that whole time I was never once reminded that I was colored—the only exception was when there were some visiting Americans out to make trouble.”¹⁰¹ That made him conclude: “As long as I’m in America, I’ll never in my life work with a white band again!” (by which he meant that he would not work for a band for a white bandleader).¹⁰² The debate about race that eventually ended with the blindfold test was thus not only about US race relations and Jim Crow segregation. Eldridge and Feather were explicitly motivated by transatlantic experiences of race and jazz appreciation. More than the eventual blindfold test, it was *this* discussion that elicited the debate in *Down Beat* in 1951.

A month after the initial interview where Eldridge announced his decision to refrain from working under white bandleaders in the future, the African American singer and actress Lena Horne was the subject of a page-1 story in *Down Beat* (where another front-page story was about Jim Crow segregation). Horne was quoted saying that Eldridge was “running away” from the problem and acknowledging the work of white allies like Krupa and Goodman.¹⁰³ The same and following issue of the magazine also included short letters to the editor, responding to the interview with Eldridge. The same July 13 issue as the infamous blindfold test also included an article by the white club owner Frank Holzfeind who had recently featured Eldridge at the Blue Note Club in Chicago (and probably spoken with Eldridge on the matter then). Holzfeind took it upon himself to state that Eldridge was not “a crusader” on “a soap box,” and wrote that “because he is the great musician that he is,

¹⁰¹ Feather, “No More White Bands for Me,” 13.

¹⁰² Feather, “No More White Bands for Me,” 1. For more on Eldridge’s time in Europe see Chilton, *Roy Eldridge*, 176–184.

¹⁰³ Gem (pseud.), “Can’t Solve Problems by Running, Lena Tells Roy,” interview with Lena Horne, *Down Beat*, 15 Jun. 1951, 1.

he is asked to play with the best—not because the best is getting big-hearted about the fact that a Negro should be given equal opportunities. These leaders would take a musician like Roy if he were any color.”¹⁰⁴ Despite its motivation, Holzfeind’s article thus somewhat ironically comes across as supporting Feather’s liberal colorblind agenda more than Eldridge’s objections to white supremacy.

Halfway between Holzfeind’s article on page 7 and Feather’s blindfold test with Eldridge on page 12, one finds that issue’s editorial promoting the idea that jazz is a force for democracy and mentioning that Leonard Feather’s had recently been contracted to broadcast for Voice of America in Europe (coincidentally, the page-1 headline article was about US government-promotion of jazz in Europe¹⁰⁵).¹⁰⁶ Next to that, we find a letter-to-the-editor from the African American serviceman Jasper Haynes, writing about contrasting attitudes towards race in Europe and the US. But this was not a response to the articles surrounding Eldridge. Instead, it was critique of *Down Beat*’s editorial from March of that year which stated that “Crow Jim [Is] As Bad As Jim Crow.”¹⁰⁷

“Crow Jim” was a critique of an essentializing fetishism of African American performers at the supposed expense of white musicians.¹⁰⁸ As noted above, this primitivist

¹⁰⁴ Frank Holzfeind, “Roy Wasn’t on a Soap Box, Says Club Op,” *Down Beat*, 12 Jul. 1951, 7.

¹⁰⁵ Len (pseud.), “Gov’t Should Send Bands to Europe: Les Brown,” *Down Beat*, 13 Jul. 51, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Willis Conover, who began as a jazz presenter for Voice of America in 1955, is now the broadcaster mostly associated with this endeavor. See Rüdiger Ritter, “Broadcasting Jazz Into the Eastern Bloc—Cold War Weapon or Cultural Exchange? The Example of Willis Conover,” *Jazz Perspectives* 7, no. 2 (2013): 111–131; and Brandan Buck, “The Mortar Between the Bricks’: Willis Conover and Global Jazz,” *Jazz Perspectives* 10, no. 2–3 (2017): 185–206. On the role of jazz in US Cold War politics and diplomacy see Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009). For critiques of the idea of jazz as democracy see Benjamin Givan, “How Democratic is Jazz?” in *Finding Democracy in Music*, eds. Robert Adlington and Esteban Buch (London: Routledge, 2021), 58–79; and Fumi Okiji, *Jazz as Critique: Adorno and Black Expression Revisited* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 14–18.

¹⁰⁷ “Crow Jim as Bad as Jim Crow,” editorial, *Down Beat*, 9. Mar. 1951, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Following Belew et al., I put the terms “Crow Jim” and “reverse discrimination/racism” in quotation marks. They write that “because racism is a system of power, we see it as incorrect to refer to “racism” against white people in a white supremacist society. Such arguments often disguise racist policies.” Kathleen Belew

myth of Black authenticity was a discourse that was especially associated with French jazz critics and European audiences.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, *Down Beat*'s editorial was a critique of the French magazine *Jazz Hot*'s best-of-the-year poll featuring predominantly Black musicians, supposedly refusing to acknowledge the fact "that in any blindfold test on modern jazz soloists it would be impossible to identify which men are white and which colored."¹¹⁰ Unsigned, but possibly penned by Feather, this editorial thus explicitly laid the groundwork for the connection between European jazz criticism, "Crow Jim," accusations of "reverse racism," colorblind ideology, and the blindfold test that would be realized in the interview with Eldridge four months later.¹¹¹

Suspecting an "unrealized undercurrent of true jim crowism," Sgt. Haynes, in his letter to the editor, wondered "how any comparison can be made between the attitude of the southern vulgarian and that of the European continental... The one is a feeling of outright contempt and brutality to the point of barbarism, the other a feeling of truly civilized liberalism and receptivity." Like Eldridge, he had lived both in Europe and the US (stationed as part of the military, we can assume) and held "that the white American has a long way to go in matching the continental European outlook toward this unnecessarily over-worked idea of race."¹¹² While still attesting to the lesser degree of discrimination in

et al., "Thoughts on the *Associated Press Stylebook*," in *A Field Guide to White Supremacy*, eds. Kathleen Belew and Ramón A. Gutiérrez (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), xi.

¹⁰⁹ This association is confirmed by the first use of the term that I can find in the US press, where Barry Ulanov took aim at European jazz festivals that supposed hired according to "the color line in reverse. Crow Jim." Barry Ulanov, "Crow Jim," *Metronome*, May 1949, 42. Feather continued the attack on French "Crow Jim" attitudes, singling out Panassié, later in 1951, during an article series on European jazz, "Jazz in Europe: France," *Down Beat*, 5 Oct. 1951, 13 and 16.

¹¹⁰ "Crow Jim as Bad as Jim Crow," 10.

¹¹¹ Other than its content, my reason for inferring the authorship of Feather is that a similar article was published under his name in *Melody Maker* the previous year: Leonard Feather, "Jim Crow versus 'Crow Jim': An Inverted Form of Race Prejudice Is Becoming Evident Among Jazz Fans," *Melody Maker*, 13 May 1951, 3.

¹¹² Jasper M. Haynes, "Crow Jim," letter to the editor, *Down Beat*, 13 Jul. 1951, 10.

Europe, he thus refuses to view race as a transatlantic zero-sum game between Jim Crow and “Crow Jim.” This elicited a rare editorial amendment from the magazine, acknowledging that there was no hope of civil equality “without ‘race consciousness’.” Making a transatlantic distinction, the editor’s note continued to point out that “this effort toward an ideal America is to accept each man on his own worth; each musician primarily for his own music. This, it was pointed out in our editorial, many Europeans were not doing. They were excessively color-conscious, though in a different way.”¹¹³ Such attacks on “color consciousness” were not unique to *Down Beat*.¹¹⁴ As historians of twentieth-century United States have shown, this idea of “reverse racism” was the immediate precursor to the ideology of colorblindness that would become hegemonic with the idea of a “post-racial” US society from the 1970s onwards. Omi and Winant argue that “colorblind racial ideology represented a step beyond ‘reverse discrimination’ because it repudiated the concept of race itself.”¹¹⁵ The pages of *Down Beat* in 1951 show an accelerated microcosm of this process, starting with editorials and debate on “Crow Jim” in March and ending with proof of colorblind listening in the blindfold test with Roy Eldridge in July. This also shows how someone like Feather was moving the focus from a squarely anti-segregationist stance to, in George Lipsitz’s words, a “colorblindness [that] pretends that racial recognition rather

¹¹³ Editor’s note, *Down Beat*, 13 Jul. 1951, 10.

¹¹⁴ This accusation of color-consciousness was also latently present in the critique of Eldridge’s statement that he would not work for white bandleaders, which was misrepresented as if he was planning to work with Black musicians exclusively. This is what Carbado and Gulati term the *associational pressure of colorblindness*, in which “white-with-white and white-with-people-of-color associations are perceived as colorblind. However, people of color with people-of-color associations will likely be perceived as color conscious.” Devon Carbado and Mitu Gulati, *Acting White? Rethinking Race in “Post-Racial” America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39.

¹¹⁵ Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 220.

than racist rule is the problem to be solved.”¹¹⁶ Here, it should be acknowledged that both in terms of its progressive and regressive politics, the colorblind ideology that Feather and *Down Beat* presented in the early fifties was, in the general context of US society, ahead of its time, as it was not until the seventies that the discourse of colorblindness gained hegemony.¹¹⁷

Given the rarity of such editorial responses, *Down Beat*'s reply to Sgt. Haynes gains extra weight, and even more so because it was directed at a self-identified Black reader. Such debates over race fit into a pattern of whites accusing racial and ethnic minorities (and in this case also European critics) of “playing the race card.” I argue that *Down Beat*'s and Feather's promotion (alongside other white musicians and critics) of “Crow Jim” discourse is an early example of what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva describes as the *colorblind racism* that became the hegemonic racial ideology in the post-Civil Rights Era US. Under this ideology “whites enunciate positions that safeguard their racial interests without sounding ‘racist.’ Shielded by color blindness, whites can... even claim to be the victims of ‘reverse racism.’”¹¹⁸ In a broader perspective of jazz historiography, the blindfold test is also the precursor to what Ingrid Monson has dubbed *white resentment narratives*, which complain that white musicians have been left out of jazz history or are considered to be less authentic than African Americans. Feather is one of the forefathers to writers who, in Monson's

¹¹⁶ George Lipsitz, “The Sounds of Silence: How Race Neutrality Preserves White Supremacy,” in Kimberlé Crenshaw et al., ed., *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness Across the Disciplines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 24.

¹¹⁷ For a broader history and perspectives on the contemporary ramifications of colorblind ideology in the US see, among others, Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 211–244; Michael K. Brown et al. eds., *White-Washing Race: The Myth of a Color-Blind Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); David Theo Goldberg, *Are We All Postracial Yet?* (London: Polity Press, 2015); Patricia Williams, *Seeing a Color-Blind Future: The Paradox of Race* (New York: Noonday Press, 1997); Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*; Kimberlé Crenshaw et al., ed., *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness Across the Disciplines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

¹¹⁸ Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*, 4.

words, well into the twenty-first century “make use of liberal, individualist ideology to argue for a colorblind or race-neutral perspective that views music itself above and beyond politics.”¹¹⁹ As supportive as Feather otherwise was of Black musicians, this talk of “Crow Jim” combined with colorblind ideology worked in the blindfold test as an attack on Eldridge’s listening skills. Through the blindfold test, Feather mobilized colorblindness as a shield to safeguard his own position as the adjudicator of “correct” listening with more racial literacy than Eldridge, an African American man.

That it was this idea of European “reverse racism” that Feather was taking aim at, is clear from the introduction to his blindfold test with Eldridge:

When Roy Eldridge returned from a year in France, it seemed to me that some of the French Crow Jim attitude had rubbed off on him. Just as the French jazz fan or critic arbitrarily invents such non-existent types as “Black jazz,” “American white jazz,” etc. Roy claimed he could distinguish a white musician from a Negro simply by listening to his style.¹²⁰

Feather’s argument against “Crow Jim” was ideological, but the blindfold tests themselves were equally ideological in the way that they proscribed what Dylan Robinson calls a *normative listening orientation*.¹²¹ To illustrate this, we can go back to the very first blindfold test (from 1946), then published in *Metronome*, which Feather opened with this programmatic statement:

Clearly, the best way to listen to music is without any advance information regarding the artists, the tune, composer or arranger. To allay all prejudices, to cut through all the vast

¹¹⁹ Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 16. See also the discussion of this critique in the introduction to this dissertation.

¹²⁰ Feather, “Little Jazz Goes Color Blind.”

¹²¹ Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 60.

variety of points of view in jazz, we propose to play a series of jazz records to a noted figure in the jazz world.¹²²

The blindfold test is what Jonathan Sterne calls a *technique of listening* or *audile technique*. Sterne traces a genealogy of techniques of listening, charting a history of “regimes” of listening practices.¹²³ Colorblind listening is one such regime, emerging at mid-century in conjunction with ideas and practices that would eventually lead to the wider hegemony of colorblind ideology in US society after the Civil Rights Era.¹²⁴ It sits alongside other audile techniques that Sterne identifies as having a distinctly modern orientation toward sound and listening.¹²⁵ Similar to the sonic work of doctors, scientists, and engineers, Feather’s blindfold tests present listening as a technical skill imbued with rationality and analytic thought—though many of the musicians interviewed would subvert this premise with some very subjective remarks. It also gives symbolic currency to the virtuosity at the audile technique associated with the record reviewer and music critic, such as Feather

¹²² Leonard Feather, “The Blindfold Test,” interview with Mary Lou Williams, *Metronome* 62, no. 9, Sept. 1946, 24.

¹²³ Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 87–177.

¹²⁴ Loren Kajikawa parenthetically suggests the neologism “colordeafness” as a compliment to colorblindness within the realm of music; in “The Possessive Investment in Classical Music: Confronting Legacies of White Supremacy in US Schools and Departments of Music,” in *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness Across the Disciplines*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 156. I do, however, believe that framing the issue in terms of color-blindness is actually extremely apt because these listening practices rest on the privileging of acousmatic sound. Colordeafness—which we could define as the willful inability to link race to sound—can certainly be problematic. I would also argue that as a practice it is less prevalent than colorblind listening. I.e., even people invested in the ideology of colorblind listening are often quite willing to identify certain sounds and styles in terms of racial or ethnic belonging and will in fact sometimes use it as an argument in support of cultural appropriation. Indeed, as Jennifer Stoeber puts it, “American proponents of color blindness have been able to declare race invisible in the twenty-first century precisely because dominant listening practices grounded in antebellum slavery and shaped by segregation continue to render it audible.” Stoeber, *The Sonic Color Line*, 27–28. Lastly, I prefer the term here, because its invocation of the audiovisual litany is more directly applicable to the technique of listening in the blindfold test.

¹²⁵ See also Rhoshanak Khesti, *Modernity’s Ear: Listening to Race and Gender in World Music* (New York: New York University Press, 2015); and Viktoria Tkaczyk, Mara Mills, and Alexandra Hui, *Testing Hearing: The Making of Modern Aurality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

himself.¹²⁶ This places Feather, in his own way, as yet another European intellectual critic, focused on “serious” study of “the music itself,” i.e., the recordings themselves. Indeed, Guthrie Ramsey puts it bluntly: “at its worst, Feather’s blindfolding created a kind of bogus interaction with a musical text that mirrors few musical (or any other) experiences in the real world.”¹²⁷ As such, the blindfold test is a specific rather than universal technique of listening, that may not match well with, for instance, Roy Eldridge’s approach to listening to records.

As the above quote from Feather’s first blindfold test shows, this technique has an ideological aim, which is underpinned by what Sterne has identified as the *audiovisual litany*, a discourse that relies on essentializing distinctions of hearing and vision.¹²⁸ Through the blindfold tests, Feather misrepresents specific ideas around sound and vision, and claims that one technique of listening is universally and normatively “clearly the best.” Such a representation of the senses is, as Sterne puts it, a “zero-sum game,”¹²⁹ where Feather positions colorblind listening as a technique that is opposed to the discriminatory prejudices that he exclusively associates with vision (even though it was not yet explicitly racialized in the case of the first test). Drawing on the audiovisual litany, Feather promoted what I term the *acousmatic imagination*—the privileging of acousmatic listening, and the technological and ideological separation of sight and sound—based on the ontological

¹²⁶ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 93–95.

¹²⁷ Ramsey, “The New and Improved White Jazz Literati,” 206.

¹²⁸ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 15–19; and Jonathan Sterne, “The Theology of Sound: A Critique of Orality,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 36 (2011): 207–225.

¹²⁹ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 16. Elsewhere Sterne concludes that “the problem with the litany is that it elevates a set of cultural prenotions about the senses (prejudices, really) to the level of theory.” Jonathan Sterne, “Sonic Imaginations,” in *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne, (London: Routledge, 2012), 9.

primacy that he afforded recorded music.¹³⁰ Similar to Sterne's call for historicization of techniques of listening, Brian Kane argues that acousmatic listening is a practice and that "the meaning of the practice of acousmatic listening cannot be defined in abstraction from those who employ it."¹³¹ Feather's blindfold test is a technique of listening based in the practice of acousmatic listening. Through its emphasis on recorded sound, he promoted the acousmatic imagination, which is an ideology of listening that he married to colorblind ideology. Omi and Winant argue that in processes of racialization "there is a crucial and non-reducible *visual dimension* to the definition and understanding of racial categories."¹³² Feather was clearly trying to combat the racism he saw coming from ocular-centric white supremacy. But by appealing to the acousmatic imagination, he did not challenge the audiovisual litany that colorblind listening shares with white supremacist listening. As Nina Sun Eidsheim has posited, the *acousmatic question* (as she calls it) presents a central problem in thinking about the racialization of sound.¹³³ Rather than answering the question, Feather took the acousmatic imagination as axiomatic of listening itself.

The development of a colorblind technique of listening has a cultural history that can be traced back at least half a century before Feather started his blindfold tests. The media historian Lisa Gitelman has argued that after the 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson verdict separated the idea of race from physical appearance (instead endorsing the so-called "one-drop rule"),

¹³⁰ Vivian Sobchak briefly uses the term "acousmatic imagination," but without theorizing it, in "When the Ear Dreams: Dolby Digital and the Imagination of Sound," *Film Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2005): 2–15. Simon Atkinson also uses it briefly, without further elaboration, in "Editorial," *Organised Sound* 15, no. 1 (2010): 1–4. Characteristically this latter appearance of the term appears in reference to the *musique concrète* of Pierre Schaeffer. This line of inquiry is the central object study in Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹³¹ Kane, *Sound Unseen*, 9.

¹³² Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 111.

¹³³ Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, & Vocality in African American Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 1–37.

it became easier for the music industry and listener to separate the sound associated with a particular identity from the recorded performer.¹³⁴ As the recording medium spread, it helped displace the visibility of music, strengthening the audiovisual litany. Extending cultural practices of cultural appropriation rooted in minstrelsy into the age of recorded sound and acousmatic listening, the loss of visibility associated with records—and epitomized in the blindfold test—created an ambiguity that made it possible to question the racial identity of performers. Recordings came to embody what David Brackett calls *the sonic aesthetic*, which recognizes the recording as text (as opposed to the European work concept).¹³⁵ Both Eldridge and Feather based their arguments in the sonic aesthetic, but with differing emphases. Eldridge built on the sonic aesthetics' ties to American vernacular musics, particularly African American traditions. As Eldridge's afterthoughts to the blindfold test shows, he privileged the unique qualities of sound associated with particular performers and performances. Conversely, he criticized white imitators of Black sound. Feather, on the other hand, emphasized the sonic aesthetics' reification in the record medium. Gitelman suggests that "if the crassest technological determinism had pertained, or could pertain, the phonograph and then the radio would have been colorblind media."¹³⁶ Feather, it seems, embraced this technological determinism in the pursuit of colorblindness.

¹³⁴ Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 133–135. On recording technology, race, and the separation of sight and sound specifically in relation to jazz, see also Laurie Stras, "White Face, Black Voice: Race, Gender, and Region in the Music of the Boswell Sisters," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 1, no. 2 (2007): 207–255; and Alyssa Mehnert, "McKinney's Cotton Pickers and the 'Unseen Audience': Constructing Blackness on Radio," *American Music* 37, no. 2 (2019): 146–171. To add to this genealogy, it is notable that the one dissenting opinion in *Pessy vs. Ferguson* is one of the intellectual roots of colorblind ideology, see Neil Gotanda, "A Critique of 'Our Constitution Is Color-Blind'," *Stanford Law Review* 44 (1991): 1–68.

¹³⁵ David Brackett, *Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 153–170.

¹³⁶ Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines*, 135–136.

Sociologists have observed how most whites understand racism to be a form of prejudice, whereas for most people of color it is systemic or institutionalized.¹³⁷ Scholars of whiteness have often remarked on how white supremacy draws its power from its apparent invisibility¹³⁸ (at least invisible to white people themselves; as Eldridge’s refusal to work for white bandleaders show, people of color have always been keenly aware of the power of whiteness¹³⁹). Feather believed that he could eradicate prejudice via the medium of recording and acousmatic listening, and indeed used that term (“prejudice”) continually in his articles on “Crow Jim.” Feather’s goal was a colorblind hermeneutics of listening, not only with a lack of racial prejudice but also without any acknowledgement of “prejudice” in the Gadamerian sense.¹⁴⁰ Rather than do away with prejudice and race, the blindfold test just institutionalized it in a new colorblind framework, reinforcing what George Lipsitz has famously called “the possessive investment in whiteness.”¹⁴¹ Ingrid Monson frames the blindfold test exactly in terms of possession (though she does not use Lipsitz’s terms), and writes that when Feather concluded that listening itself was colorblind, “he was asking Eldridge to forfeit his claim to having a special connection to Black music by virtue of being raised as an African American. He was asking him to say that race and history don’t

¹³⁷ Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*, 8.

¹³⁸ Richard Dyer, *White* (New York: Routledge, 1997); and Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

¹³⁹ For critiques of the idea on whiteness as an unmarked marker, see Ruth Frankenberg, “The Mirage of an Unmarked Whiteness,” in *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*, ed. Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene J. Nexica, and Matt Wray (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 72–96; Sara Ahmed, “Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism,” *Borderlands E-Journal* 3, no. 2 (2004); and George Yancy, *Look, a White* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012).

¹⁴⁰ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 278–310.

¹⁴¹ George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Benefit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018).

matter; it had become everybody's music now."¹⁴² The claim to possession that Feather took for himself was based on his European whiteness.

As Feather sought to erase race in a colorblind technique of listening, he was blind to his own whiteness inhabiting what Guthrie Ramsey, Jr. has called *the invisible white critical* "I."¹⁴³ He was able to do this via the acousmatic imagination that presented sound technology as what Sterne calls a *vanishing mediator*.¹⁴⁴ As Alex Blue V suggests, the way that the neutral and unmarked signifies as white extends to practices that imagine sound technology as a vanishing mediator because "white people are able to see themselves reflected in technology without having to be aware of their race, or that the technology is raced."¹⁴⁵ In other words, Feather's investment in colorblind listening rested upon making his own whiteness invisible through his use of technology. More than a mere application of technology, Feather's colorblind technique of listening is related to Tukufu Zuberi and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's critique of academic methods that, even despite their best intentions, re-entrench whiteness. Feather deployed what they term *white logic*, which "assumes a historical posture that grants eternal objectivity to the views of elite Whites and condemns the views of non-Whites to perpetual subjectivity."¹⁴⁶ When administering the blindfold

¹⁴² Monson, "Jazz as Political and Cultural Practice," 33.

¹⁴³ Guthrie Ramsey, Jr., "Who Hears Here? Black Music, Critical Bias, and the Musicological Skin Trade," *Musical Quarterly* 85, no. 1 (2001): 40.

¹⁴⁴ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 218.

¹⁴⁵ Alex Blue V, "'Hear What You Want': Sonic Politics, Blackness, and Racism-Cancelling Headphones," *Current Musicology* 99–100 (2017): 90. Gustavus Stadler has made a similar observation in "Whiteness and Sound Studies," *Sounding Out!* (blog), 6 Jul. 2015, <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2015/07/06/on-whiteness-and-sound-studies/>.

¹⁴⁶ Tukufu Zuberi and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "Toward a Definition of White Logic and White Methods," *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology*, eds. Tukufu Zuberi and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 17. This is related to Philip Ewell's recent similar musicological critique, "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame," *Music Theory Online* 26, no. 2 (2020), DOI: 10.30535/mt.26.2.4. See also, Tom Perchard, "New Riffs on the Old Mind-Body Blues: 'Black Rhythm,' 'White Logic,' and Music Theory in the 21st-Century," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 9, no. 3 (2015): 321–348.

test, Feather took on the de-racialized identity of a jazz scientist who simply recorded the results of a listening exam, as opposed to Eldridge's putatively subjective position. It is perhaps not coincidental that Feather's colorblind listening emerged around the same time as mid-century aesthetics associated with Pierre Schaeffer and John Cage. Marie Thompson argues that these constitute a *white aurality* that continues to mar sound studies. It is not difficult to see the parallels to Feather in her description of "the modernist virtue of scientific and traceless observation; entangled with formations of whiteness, masculinity and Eurocentricism, it pertains to a subjectless position from which the world is observed from everywhere and nowhere, and from which bias is 'removed' through obfuscation."¹⁴⁷ This subjectless whiteness was another marker of the US image of the European critic that Feather pursued through his colorblind project. In the famous case of Eldridge's "failed" exam, the successful invisibility of Feather's own whiteness stood in marked contrast to Eldridge's nominal failure *as a racialized Black person* who could not recognize their own Black music.

Roy Eldridge never forgave Leonard Feather for, to his mind, blowing an issue out of proportion and putting him on the spot, later telling Dan Morgenstern: "Boy, that cat really hung me on the wall with that."¹⁴⁸ Feather, though, did not have second thoughts and reprinted part of the fateful blindfold test under the heading "Riddle of the Races" in his 1958 *New Encyclopedia Yearbook of Jazz*. In order to extend his point beyond Eldridge, he also included a quote from a blindfold test where Miles Davis misidentified the Black saxophonist Buddy Collette, saying "I can't tell... All those white tenor players sound alike

¹⁴⁷ Marie Thompson, "Whiteness and the Ontological Turn in Sound Studies," *Parallax* 23, no. 3 (2017): 272.

¹⁴⁸ Chilton, *Roy Eldridge*, 189.

to me.”¹⁴⁹ For Feather, such statements confirmed his commitment to colorblind listening, but he would also explain how it was, at least in his own eyes, as much a product of his perspective as a European and a Jew, as of his newfound Americanness, writing in the mid-sixties: “The myth of race, a curious distortion of Hitler’s theories, almost disappeared in jazz until the stirring of a chauvinistic theory that Negroes are the only real ‘blues people’ caused an alarming rift.”¹⁵⁰ Here, voices of other critics echo in Feather’s writing. The first echo was a European one, associating any kind of “race consciousness” with racism, as Feather attempts to criticize “playing the race card” by “playing the Nazi card,” as it were. More specifically, Feather was still positioning himself against the primitivist myth of racial difference that he found especially pronounced in French jazz criticism that he had charged were complicit in “Crow Jim.” Feather’s reluctance to giving Black musicians primacy in jazz may also be a reaction to the increased anti-Americanism of the Cold War. As Mary Dudziak has shown, the foreign critique of US Jim Crow discrimination grew to considerable heights in the post-war period.¹⁵¹ American observers were quick to see the connection (correctly) between the supposedly superior European appreciation of jazz and this growing anti-Americanism, associated especially with left-leaning French critics. “Despite the apolitical nature of jazz,” worried the young US historian David Strauss (later the author of a book on French anti-Americanism) in 1965, “the French jazz critic finds in his study of jazz confirmation of many of the unsavory aspects of American life, including segregation and class exploitation.” He concluded that the French jazz critic is “an agent

¹⁴⁹ Leonard Feather, *The New Encyclopedia Yearbook of Jazz* (New York: Horizon Press, 1958), 71–72; Davis’s blindfold test originally appeared as Leonard Feather, “More Miles,” *The Blindfold Test*, interview with Miles Davis, *Down Beat*, 7 Aug. 1958, 29.

¹⁵⁰ Leonard Feather, *The Book of Jazz* (New York: Horizon, 1965), 41.

¹⁵¹ Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 18–46.

for promoting French nationalism of the left.”¹⁵² The French primitivist myth represented a fundamental anti-American misunderstanding of the US, which was at odds with the liberal “apolitical”—and colorblind—ideals of both music and society that Feather and Strauss both saw embodied in jazz.¹⁵³

The second echo was a newer American one, with the reference to Amiri Baraka’s (1934–2014; at the time still going by the name LeRoi Jones) book *Blues People* (1963), in which Feather read a resegregating of jazz into authentically Black and derivatively white forms. As the fifties became the sixties, the Civil Rights Movement became more visible in US society and Feather was increasingly confronted with African American musicians and critics who were explicitly political in their art and writings. As such, Feather also revealed that his racial politics were perhaps more caught up in the waning New Deal Order rather than standing in solidarity with Black political leaders of the late fifties and sixties. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s dream of a colorblind society had a different valence than Feather’s, to say nothing of his response to Baraka’s critique of hegemonic whiteness.¹⁵⁴

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¹⁵² David Strauss, “French Critics and American Jazz,” *American Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1965): 586–587.

¹⁵³ Rather than seeing this as a contradiction, some recent scholarship has emphasized the dialectics of anti-Americanism and Americanization/philo-Americanism. Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, “Always Blame the Americans: Anti-Americanism in Europe in the Twentieth Century,” *American Historical Review* 111, no. 4 (2006): 1067–1091; Egbert Klautke, “Anti-Americanism in Twentieth-Century Europe,” *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 4 (2011): 1125–1139.

¹⁵⁴ In making this distinction I am also arguing that we should resist seeing Feather’s colorblindness as part of an initial, pre-1954 phase of what Jacquelyn Hall has called “the long civil rights movement.” Jacquelyn Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91 (2005): 1233–1263. For a critique of the “long civil rights movement”-historiography see Steven Lawson, “Long Origins of the Short Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968,” in *Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Danielle McGuire and John Dittmer (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011), 9–38. Both historians do, however, agree that attempts to frame colorblindness and integration as a goal in itself are part of factually incorrect, right-wing revisionist histories of the Civil Rights Movement. For an argument against the willful misunderstandings and appropriations of, specifically, King’s ideas about colorblindness see Ronald Turner, “The Dangers of Misappropriation: Misusing Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Legacy to Prove the Colorblind Thesis,” *Michigan Journal of Race & Law* 2, no. 1 (1996): 101–130.

Leonard Feather's blindfold test with Roy Eldridge shows us that mid-century jazz criticism privileged techniques of listening and attitudes that were, to use the term coined by George Lewis, *Eurological*.¹⁵⁵ As Feather's biography and the full history of the motivations behind the Roy Eldridge blindfold test shows, jazz criticism's Eurological discourse was not only so because the profession was made up of mainly Euro-American men. Jazz criticism was Eurological because it centered European critics and their supposedly intellectual, objective, and serious approach to jazz. But as the sixties progressed, Eurological jazz criticism and Feather were confronted with the assertively Black politics of free jazz. In 1970 he re-used the rhetorical reversal that had he had employed with the discourse on Jim Crow/"Crow Jim" in a complaint that his fellow "white critics try to outrace one another in a sort of 'Tom-Uncle' attempt to show a more-militant-than-thou face to black musicians."¹⁵⁶ Rather than embracing his colorblind listening, Feather objected to a discourse that centered around Baraka's blues people. In Baraka, Feather saw a figure similar to Eldridge who insisted on the primary Blackness of jazz.

A main voice of emerging Black Nationalism and eventually becoming a central figure in the Black Arts Movement, Baraka worked as a cultural intermediary, writing poetry, plays, and criticism, as well as engaging in various kinds of cultural and political organizing. In *Blues People*, Baraka asserted the fundamental Blackness of jazz and in contrast to Feather's interracial ideal heard bebop as an "anti-assimilationist sound."¹⁵⁷ To this day,

¹⁵⁵ George E. Lewis, "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives," *Black Music Research Journal*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1996): 91-122.

¹⁵⁶ Leonard Feather, "The Name of the Game," *Down Beat*, 15 Oct. 1970, 11.

¹⁵⁷ LeRoi Jones [Amiri Baraka], *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002), 181. For a sympathetic critique of Baraka's interpretation of bebop see DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop*, 21-29. At the time of its publication, Ralph Ellison was the most prominent critic of Baraka's book. See James Smethurst, *Brick City Vanguard: Amiri Baraka, Black Music, Black Modernity* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020), ch. 2; and Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool*, 274-289.

the book stands as a landmark study that made the social formation of race and class integral to a narrative of African American music history. As the subtitle reveals, the book, as well as Baraka's subsequent essays, was a sustained critique of white supremacy (as well as African American, middle-class assimilationists). Mostly focused on US race relations, his essay "Jazz and the White Critic" (published in *Down Beat* the same year as the publication of *Blues People*, and later anthologized in *Black Music* [1967]) does, however, contain three important instances that specifically ties his critique to the discourse of European criticism outlined above.¹⁵⁸ This canonical essay is usually read in an exclusively US context, but in light of the discourse outlined in this chapter, Baraka is not simply the Black Nationalist counterpart to Feather's colorblindness. He was, in fact, relying on now well-established ideas of the European preeminence in jazz criticism, even when he was arguing against white hegemony in the US:

There were few "jazz critics" in America at all until the 30's and then they were influenced to a large extent by what Richard Hadlock has called "the carefully documented gee-whiz attitude" of the first serious European jazz critics. They were also, as a matter of course, influenced more deeply by the social and cultural mores of their own society. And it is only natural that their criticism, whatever its intention, should be a product of that society, or should reflect at least some of the attitudes and thinking of that society, even if not directly related to the subject they were writing about, Negro music.¹⁵⁹

Here, we recognize the returning trope of "seriousness," but also that this and other "attitudes" are explicitly linked to social conditions specific to Europe and whiteness. This seriousness is flipped around later in the essay, where Baraka writes:

¹⁵⁸ At the end of the sixties and into the seventies, Baraka's political critique would become more international and take aim at imperialism (in solidarity with Third World liberation). See Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon, 2002), 60–109.

¹⁵⁹ LeRoi Jones [Amiri Baraka], "Jazz and the White Critic," *Black Music* (New York: William Morrow, 1968), 12.

It has never ceased to amaze and infuriate me that in the 40's a European critic could be arrogant and unthinking enough to inform serious young American musicians that what they were feeling (a consideration that exists before, and without, the music) was false. What had happened was that even though the white middle-brow critic had known about Negro music for only about three decades, he was already trying to formalize and finally institutionalize it. It is a hideous idea. The music was already in danger of being forced into that junk pile of admirable objects and data the West knows as *culture*.¹⁶⁰

This was a critique of formalist authors, epitomized in Hodeir whose criticism sought to apply European philosophical methods to jazz criticism and to elevate it as a form of high art—in Baraka's eyes bourgeois, white culture. As Baraka later asserted, in a perhaps even more famous essay, being "Europeanized" was synonymous with the secularizing corruption of Black people.¹⁶¹ This was, specifically in "Jazz and the White Critic," exemplified in the case of jazz criticism:

In jazz criticism, no reliance on European tradition or theory will help at all. Negro music, like the Negro himself, is strictly an American phenomenon, and we have got to set up standards of judgment and aesthetic excellence that depend on our native knowledge and understanding of the underlying philosophies and local cultural references that produced blues and jazz in order to produce valid critical writing or commentary about it. It might be that there is still time to start.¹⁶²

As Baraka was criticizing the figure of the white jazz critic, he was explicitly criticizing the *European* jazz critic. Not only does this antagonism reveal the central place of European critics within the US jazz world. It is equally revealing that Baraka's call for a Black theory of jazz still relies on the standard US narrative of superior European jazz

¹⁶⁰ Jones, "Jazz and the White Critic," 18.

¹⁶¹ LeRoi Jones [Amiri Baraka], "The Changing Same (R&B and New Black Music)," *Black Music* (New York: William Morrow, 1968), 12.

¹⁶² Jones, "Jazz and the White Critic," 20.

reception. Still, as such narratives linger on, Baraka's critique also compel us to view the American praises for the European "intellectuals" and audiences with "serious" attitudes that seek to elevate jazz as "art" with suspicion, as they are linked to colorblind ideology and white supremacy.

As is evident from the extensive space they occupied in the US jazz press, European critics were firmly placed within American criticism, but also functioned as a mirror through which white American critics could see themselves. The Europeans not only represented a superior form of criticism but connecting the jazz base and superstructure, the image of the objective, detached (and bourgeois) European critic served to prove the intimate and necessarily deeply embedded role for the critic in the jazz art world. In this context, the role of the white European critic was also to convince Americans that their Black vernacular music was in fact art. The US jazz press positioned European critics as models for a "higher" form of jazz criticism that could thrust jazz upwards in the cultural hierarchy. The European critic embodied ideals of intellectualism, "seriousness," and aesthetic sensibility, which was juxtaposed with the supposedly inferior American attitudes towards jazz. The US press was happy to observe that Americans had by and large failed to develop refined techniques of listening and writing about music. The discourse of jazz as art and Europe as the place that recognizes it as such uses well-known tropes of genius and the work concept from European aesthetics—and as we have seen in the cases of Ho-deir and Feather also explicitly or implicitly relies on a European-coded methodology. This is a marker of a belief in the cosmopolitan universalism of jazz that many European writers held and that some American writers were seeking.

These hierarchies were infused with distinctions of class and race, even as the whiteness of Europeans was rarely marked or they, as Feather, claimed to be colorblind. As Susan Searls Giroux argues, the “refusal to ‘see race’... is a celebrated marker of the professional expert’s detachment and decorum, or is more militantly defended as a form of *realpolitik* waged against pernicious forms of identitarian distraction.”¹⁶³ Thus, even though someone like Feather was trying to position himself against the Francophone critics that he accused of “Crow Jim” identitarian, primitivist distraction, his claim to objectivity still fell neatly in line with the established US understanding of European critics as superior intellectuals.

As I have shown, the US discourse on jazz criticism idealized a European listening position, which is also racialized. This is most extremely represented in the case of Leonard Feather’s quest for colorblind listening. Feather’s blindfold tests were explicitly positioned against a Francophone primitivism that he saw as racial fetishization of Blackness in jazz. However, as I have argued, colorblind listening was itself no less imbued with the tropes of European criticism as it presented listening as an audile technique that can be harnessed through the virtues of detached intellectual expertise that was most associated with European critics. Even as he proposed the blindfold test as a form of colorblind listening, I have shown how it was deeply influenced by transatlantic politics of race and entrenched in whiteness. As we will see in the rest of the dissertation, the intersection of whiteness and high-art class positioning has continued to form a central role in the US reception of European jazz.

¹⁶³ Susan Searls Giroux, “The Age of Unreason: Race and the Drama of American Anti-Intellectualism,” *JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory* 29, no. 1-2 (2009): 303.

Chapter 2. “*Very Female, with the Allure of a Foreign Aura*”: Vocality, Gender, and European Exoticism in the US Careers of Alice Babs and Caterina Valente

In the August 1956 issue of the magazine *Good Housekeeping* music editor George Marek—himself, in fact, an immigrant from Austria—asked, “How can America import ‘American’ jazz? It’s American with a foreign flavor—and it just suits our taste.”¹ He opens by presenting a “time-encrusted,” old Europe in contrast with an implicitly modern USA and continues:

A fine state of affairs! Has tin-pan alley become a street around the world?

When you go to France you hear, instead of the songs of old Provence, American tunes translated into a French that rhymes *l’amour* with *toujours*. In a way that’s a tribute to our pop music; there is something about it that appeals internationally. Slick and sleek, jaunty and easy, the tunes fit whether you wear a hat, a beret, or a sombrero.

But that matter goes even further. The American product is being manufactured abroad. The singers and the band leaders of Europe, the German jazz musicians and the French *chanteuses*, are taking our tunes (or tunes very much like ours), singing them and playing the in American style, and then exporting them back here. And with excellent success!

Many American songs recorded in Europe have become hits *here*. European stars are offering competition to our own pop-music stars. [...]

But even more than the pop song or the dance tune, Europe has appropriated jazz as an enthusiasm. As a new art form, jazz was taken seriously in Europe, particularly in France, long before our pundits glanced at it. As entertainment, it seems to suit the youngsters of Scandinavia, England, Holland, and France. It is less popular in Italy. It is extraordinarily popular in Germany, where it’s almost as much at home in West Berlin as in Berlin, New Jersey. [...]

We may debate whether this universal Americanization is a good thing for music. The whole world seems to be wearing the same hat. Won’t that lead to a weakening of individuality? Obviously part of this standardization stems not from artistic but financial causes.

A shortened version of this chapter is published as Mikkel Vad, “‘*Very Female with the Allure of a Foreign Aura*’: Vocality, Gender, and European Exoticism in the US Careers of Alice Babs and Caterina Valente,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 15, no. 4 (2021): 424–446, DOI: 10.1017/S1752196321000304.

¹ George Marek, “Over There, Over Here,” *Good Housekeeping*, August 1956, 32.

This is the biggest record market in the world, and songs are sung and jazz music is recorded without the thought, Will it sell in the U.S.A.?²

We notice a number of well-known tropes, mentioned in chapter 1, from the American reception of European culture in general and jazz in particular. Marek repeats the narrative that Europeans took jazz seriously, as an art form, before Americans. Indeed, this elevation of European aesthetic attitudes extends to the artists, as Marek affords Europeans more creative agency (even if this is the ability to imitate and appropriate). By contrast American music is “slick and sleek, jaunty and easy” and its culture has universal appeal. This description of American music is tied to standardization and commodification, as it is described as a “product” that is “manufactured.” Marek speculates that this standardization and uniformity towards American music is the result of financial, not artistic, concerns, thus positioning European musicians as (willing) victims of American capitalism. This uniformity of American culture is also marked by the fact that almost all of the musicians Marek mentions are white (although he does not make this explicit), with the foreigners as unproblematic appropriators of Black styles, who only have to compete with white Americans when imported to the US.³ It is telling that Marek ends by stating: “Well, that’s the way it is. The difference between over there and over here is not so great”⁴ even if the initial statement placed “American” in scare-quotes and emphasized that this music has a “foreign flavor.”

² Marek, “Over There, Over Here,” 32 and 198. Marek’s italics.

³ Marek’s white framework in combination with his distinctions of transatlantic cultural capital reflected *Good Housekeeping*’s readership of women from the growing US middle class. Randal Doane, “Bourdieu, Cultural Intermediaries and *Good Housekeeping*’s George Marek: A Case Study of Middlebrow Musical Taste,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 9, no. 2 (2009): 155–186.

⁴ Marek, “Over Here, Over There,” 198.

As is perhaps evident, this is not a deep think-piece, but despite its contradictions Marek's article gives us a picture of the ambiguous yet somewhat cheerful attitude with which European jazz and popular music was greeted with in the US in the 1950s. Indeed, Marek conflates jazz and popular music, or, if you will, takes jazz to be a kind of popular music. His wonder stems not only from the differences between US music and the rest of the world, but from the ease with which such differences are overcome or in fact do not come into play. Unlike most of the writers which were the focus in chapter 1, Marek was not a *jazz* writer specifically invested in building a *jazz superstructure* or a *public sphere of jazz*. He was a music industry man (A&R for RCA Victor) and journalist with a focus on guides and biographies in classical music. One might say that the fact that he was an outsider to jazz could account for the blurring of lines between jazz and pop or his lack of musical specificity. However, it is equally true that there was (and is) a blurring of genre boundaries between jazz and pop styles, as well as in their social realities—after all, why else would many of the authors described in chapter 1 have spent so much time and space trying to distinguish them? In this chapter, I take the blurring of these lines, not as a focus of inquiry in itself—although that is a worthwhile endeavor⁵—but as an invitation to explore a much broader notion of what constituted jazz than a “proper” jazz writer might have done.

Although it is true that there was growth in the number of foreign musicians on the US charts in the sixties, this does not mean that American popular music culture was unaware of any foreign music until the so-called British Invasion in 1964.⁶ Indeed, as William L.

⁵ Much of New Jazz Studies has challenged canon formations and various essentialisms. For a collection specifically on genre boundaries and distinctions see David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark, ed., *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and its Boundaries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); and more broadly David Brackett, *Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016).

⁶ Timothy J. Dowd's statistics show the significant internationalization of the US mainstream music hitlists that happens in 1963/1964. However, one should note that this is not merely the result of the British Invasion,

Schurk, B. Lee Cooper, and Julie A. Cooper have shown in a discographical study of *Billboard* charts 1940–1963, “the global intrusion into the American pop charts was both undeniable and influential” before the Beatles and their compatriots became popular in the US.⁷ The majority of this pre-invasion intrusion came from Europe and Canada and included jazz music, even on the pop charts. Similarly, within the American jazz world, as the previous chapter showed, there was growing interest in the European jazz scene and a significant, if modest, demand for European jazz.

Marek mentions a broad array of European musicians (as well as a few Mexicans, an Argentinian, and a Japanese). He focuses on their ability to imitate Americans and likens them to specific US counterparts (Ted Heath is “comparable to our Les Brown or Stan Kenton,” Jacqueline François sings “smooth American, something on the style of Dinah Shore transplanted to Paris,” and “the raucously American vocal groups are being imitated” by The Blue Stars who have a “strong jazz feel, something like our own Four Freshmen”⁸). The main issue is thus the globalization of “our” American sounds (“Has tin-pan alley become a street around the globe?”; “The whole world seems to be wearing the same hat”⁹) presented in conjunction with gestures towards a dialectic of this music’s potential “foreign flavor.” The article is, however, generally vague and unspecific about where one might get

as such, but is part of a general diversification of the US music market, which notably also included African American crossover artists from formerly racially segregated hitlists; and is linked to the American major labels’ decentralization of record production and shift from nationally broadcast radio to more local stations in the mid-fifties. “The Internationalization of US Mainstream Music, 1940–90,” in *Redefining Mainstream Popular Music*, ed. Sarah Baker, Andy Bennett, and Jodie Taylor (New York & London: Routledge, 2013), 125–136; for a critique of the “British Invasion” as a historiographical concept see Jack Hamilton, *Round About Midnight: Rock and Roll and the Racial Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 91–95. There was also a growth in the American distribution and consumption of European film in this period, Tino Balio, *The Foreign Film Renaissance on American Screens, 1946–1973* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010).

⁷ William L. Schurk, B. Lee Cooper, and Julie A. Cooper, “Before the Beatles: International Influences on American Popular Recordings, 1940–63,” *Popular Music and Society* vol. 30, no. 2 (2007): 230.

⁸ Marek, “Over There, Over Here,” 32 and 198.

⁹ Marek, “Over Here, Over There,” 32 and 198.

a taste of this foreignness. Other than the artist-to-artist associations the closet we get to an indication of what might distinguish European performers is Marek's gendered description of vocalists: "Singers, particularly if they are *very* female, give the home-grown music the allure of a foreign aura."¹⁰

What was it that Marek heard as being "very feminine" and how was that connected to a "foreign aura"? In this chapter, I focus on two of the singers Marek highlights, Alice Babs and Caterina Valente, in order to explore what discourses of gender, ethnic difference, and belonging Marek might have been hinting at with this assertion. Here, I examine the imitation, assimilation, appropriation, and difference that mark Babs's and Valente's transnational careers. Babs started her career as a Swedish teen star blending European yodeling and African American jazz. Over the course of her career she changed her singing style to a more "classical" soprano-sound and ended as a featured soloist for Duke Ellington, where her "pure" timbre signified gender, European highbrow culture, and whiteness while retaining elements of yodeling with connotations to an (imagined) European folk culture. Valente, a French singer with Italian roots who started her career in Germany, was presented as a cosmopolitan figure with an "international" voice that could easily sing in a plethora of languages and styles. Americans marveled at her versatile soprano voice which embodied a whiteness and femininity that could appropriate several ethnicities.

It is important to note that I do not take what Marek called "aura" to be an essence of foreignness, Europeanness, whiteness, or femininity.¹¹ Rather, I take it as a point what Stuart Hall calls *positioning*, emphasizing the production of cultural identity (as opposed to

¹⁰ Marek, "Over Here, Over There," 32. Marek's italics.

¹¹ Nor do I, or Marek, use the term "aura" here in the sense theorized by Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," in *Selected Writings* 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 101–133.

inherent, essential identity; becoming as opposed to being).¹² Following Hall, I argue that the production of Babs's and Valente's cultural identities "was not, and could not be, made directly, without 'mediation.'"¹³ I want to highlight the ways in which Babs's and Valente's American positioning as European women was, to paraphrase Hall, "not [about] the so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms with [their] 'routes.'"¹⁴ The formation of specifically gendered and European ethnic identities was mediated by transatlantic routes, exemplified above by Marek's statements.

In the following, I trace the ways in which Babs and Valente positioned themselves, in words and music; and how they were positioned in words and images by critics, labels, and promoters, as well as the way they were positioned in a musical context by producers, composers, arrangers, and other musical interlocutors. This positioning was also the crafting of a *musical persona*, encompassing, as Philip Auslander theorizes it, the real person (the performer as an individual), the performance persona (the performer as a social being), and the song character (the role the performer plays in a specific song/work).¹⁵ In the cases of Babs and Valente, the interaction of these blended their real personae as Europeans and

¹² Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 222–237.

¹³ Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 231. Although I do not draw upon it explicitly, another fruitful way of framing these case studies comes from Bourdieu's theories of cultural production, which shares the term "positioning" with Hall. Bourdieu's writings supplement Hall particularly as regards the class-positioning of higher symbolic capital that Europeanness holds in the US that was also associated with Valente and, especially, Babs. This is related to the American middle-class consumption of Babs and Valente, in that the symbolic capital of Europeanness was used in a display of middlebrow cultural capital. (Readers should, however, be aware that Bourdieu does not account well for popular culture, its mass-produced products, and the power of the 20th century culture industry, for which one finds a better explanation in Hall and kindred Birmingham School writers.) See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993); and *Distinction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

¹⁴ Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), 4.

¹⁵ Philip Auslander, "Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 14, no. 1 (2004): 1–13; Philip Auslander, "Musical Personae," *The Drama Review* 50, no. 1 (2006): 100–119. Auslander is building upon, among others, Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On Value in Popular Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 183–225.

women, their performance personae using musical elements that marked Europeanness and gender, and sometimes individual song characters through lyrics, vocal performance, and arrangements. Furthermore, as Kai Arne Hansen has pointed out, the personae is not only mediated through musical performance, but takes place across multiple media.¹⁶ My study goes beyond musical analysis and also includes the representation of Babs and Valente in text and image (including autobiographies, press material, record sleeves, critical reception, and TV performances).

Babs and Valente formed these personae in the changing musical world of the 1950s and 60s and certainly fulfill some stereotypical expectations of easy listening, middle-of-the-road popular music of the period.¹⁷ This music may mainly have been consumed by the conformist and heteronormative white American middle class; and it may seem that the “light” sound and stylistic heterogeneity of female singers like Babs and Valente is the sound of something aesthetically lightweight. However, as Albin Zak has argued in his account of the music of the 1950s: “The new sounds pointed in no particular direction, yet, paradoxically, it was the era’s unfocused meandering that fuelled its revolutionary thrust.”¹⁸ Simultaneously to canonically revolutionary musical developments like rock ’n’ roll and free jazz, Babs and Valente provided the soundtrack to the mid-century expansion of the middle class, which was less “revolutionary” but nevertheless transformed society.

Furthermore, even as Babs and Valente were successful pop singers, they were also jazz singers. As feminist interventions of the new jazz studies have highlighted, the cultural

¹⁶ Kai Arne Hansen, “(Re)Reading the Pop Personae: A Transmedial Approach to Studying the Multiple Construction of Artist Identities,” *Twentieth-Century Music* 16, no. 3 (2019): 501–529.

¹⁷ I discuss the particulars of this music below, but a good overview is found in Keir Keightley, “Music for Middlebrows: Defining the Easy Listening Era, 1946–1966,” *American Music* 26, no. 3 (2008): 309–335.

¹⁸ Albin Zak, *I Don’t Sound Like Nobody: Remaking Music in 1950s America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 7.

politics and political economy of jazz is such that vocal music, female musicians, and music that lies at the intersection of jazz and pop gets marginalized and sometimes even denigrated.¹⁹ The singers in question here are all those things and part of this project is thus to explore and cut against the grain of such narratives. Jazz certainly has a masculine bias, both in scholarship and journalistic narratives, but in the broader context of popular music around 1960 Jacqueline Warwick has also warned us that “if our histories of the period valorize the activities of boys and men, they also valorize the aesthetic priorities of popular music associated with maleness.”²⁰ This chapter heeds these words and engages seriously with the “very female” sounds of Babs and Valente that might otherwise easily be trivialized as middle-of-the-road pop and non-jazz.

Babs’s and Valente’s vocalicity was a main vehicle for them to represent their European identities and gender and their vocal virtuosity, in itself, became main elements in their personae. Vocal performance is key to how personae and identities are conveyed as listeners perceive them to embody and represent gender, race, ethnicity, and authenticity.²¹ My research here builds upon the recent wave of scholarship that seeks to theorize the voice anew with a particular interest in timbre, performance, and identity.²² My attention to the

¹⁹ Vickie Willis summarizes the discourse of jazz as one where “singers are not ‘real’ musicians, and women are largely ignored.” “Be-in-tween the Spa[ces]: The Location of Women and Subversion in Jazz,” *The Journal of American Culture* 31, no. 3 (2008): 294. See also Lara Pellegrinelli, “Separated at ‘Birth’: Singing and the History of Jazz,” in *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies*, ed. Nicole T. Rushtin and Sherrie Tucker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 31–47.

²⁰ Jacqueline Warwick, *Girl Groups, Girl Culture: Popular Music and Identity in the 1960s* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 6.

²¹ Nicola Dibben, “Vocal Performance and the Projection of Emotional Authenticity,” in *The Ashgate Companion to Popular Musicology*, ed. Derek Scott (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 317–333; Serge Lacasse, “The Phonographic Voice: Paralinguistic Features and Phonographic Staging in Popular Music Singing,” in *Recorded Music: Performance, Culture, Technology*, ed. Amanda Bayley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 225–251; and Allan Moore, *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Popular Recorded Song* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 179–214.

²² Some of these trends are summarized by Martha Feldman in her introduction to “Why Voice Now?” colloquy, ed. Martha Feldman, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 68, no. 3 (2015): 653–685; and

American reception of these European voices is not merely of historiographical interest, but is also a methodological move that follows Nina Sun Eidsheim's insistence that "voice is not innate; it is cultural" and that "the voice does not arise solely from the vocalizer; it is created just as much within the process of listening."²³ The following does contain analysis and close reading of Babs's and Valente's vocal performance but does not conclude that there is a vocal formalism of European singing. My focus on reception history is meant to uncover some of the ways the encounter between European singers and American listeners shaped the voices of Babs and Valente.

Babs's and Valente's gendered personae were positioned in conjunction with what Philip Gentry has called the "playfully performative ethnicity" that some white, female singers employed in the fifties.²⁴ This includes the important considerations of race (which is left characteristically unmentioned by Marek) and how the ethnicity of these European singers played into their vocal styles and their American reception. A hallmark of Babs's and Valente's singing was their high-pitched voices and clear timbres, which historically have been coded as white in contrast to the lower-pitched, "darker" timbres found to be the essential characteristics of Black, African American voices. This vocal performance style was combined with exoticizing musical elements signifying Europeanness. Although "European," these tropes function similar to the orientalist markers of otherness that Susan McClary has called "fetishized pitches" (e.g. lowered sevenths, raised fourths etc.).²⁵ In the case of Babs and Valente, we might thus even talk about fetishized pitch, not only because

Nina Sun Eidsheim and Katherine Meizel, *The Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

²³ Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre & Vocality in African American Music* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 11.

²⁴ Philip Gentry, *What I Will Be: American Music and Cold War Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 90.

²⁵ Susan McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 54.

their vocal performances used such fetishized pitches but also because their voices were fetishized for their high pitch.

As Grant Olwage writes, “the voice assumes its vocal identity, its sonic and therefore social identity, from the aesthetics of musical pleasure in which it is embedded... So, instead of the color of the voice, we might speak about the color of the ear.”²⁶ Thus, we must go beyond Babs’s and Valente’s voices as such and explore American desires for a particular kind of voice—the color of the American ear—that produced a conception of a feminized and exoticized European, foreign aura.²⁷ Their forays into American jazz and pop were not only an appropriation of Black music—in fact they rarely engaged in extensive passages of what Matthew Morrison has termed *blacksound*, i.e. sonic blackface²⁸—but was just as much the construction of a white, European otherness, which is not directly equivalent to any white American sound but is doubly marked as not African American and not American. Yet, Babs’s and Valente’s racial position was still elided with US whiteness. Marek’s failure to explicitly name the whiteness he linked with the vocal “aura” of Babs and Valente exemplifies the observation that whiteness often appears, in white society, as an unmarked marker.²⁹ However, as other whiteness scholars have pointed out,

²⁶ Grant Olwage, “The Class and Colour of Tone: An Essay on the Social History of Vocal Timbre,” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 13, no. 2 (2004): 216–215.

²⁷ I follow Ralph Locke’s view on the problems in conceptualizations of “exoticism” and stress that while it is a musical technique of cultural representation that may work through essentialism, it is methodologically and theoretically unproductive to define it in essentialist terms for the purpose of analysis. Rather, it is fundamentally relational, historically contingent, reception-based, and cannot be captured in definitions of musical formalism. It must be viewed in what Locke calls the “all the music in full context” paradigm, in *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59. For a concise summary on the problems of terminology see his “Afterword: A Helpfully Troubling Term,” in *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 324–326.

²⁸ Matthew D. Morrison, “The Sound(s) of Subjection: Constructing American Popular Music and Racial Identity through *Blacksound*.” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 27, no. 1 (2017): 13–24. See also Daphne A. Brooks, “‘This Voice Which Is Not One’: Amy Winehouse Sings the Ballad of Sonic Blue(s)face Culture,” *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 20, no. 1 (2010): 37–60.

²⁹ Richard Dyer, *White* (New York: Routledge, 1997)

whiteness only remains invisible to those who inhabit it.³⁰ In this case, Marek’s commentary reveals how European ethnicities were positioned as forms of otherness interior to whiteness. Babs’s and Valente’s position as Europeans was marked as a difference from US musicians, but the whiteness they shared with hegemonic US culture was what made their appropriation of jazz and US popular music acceptable. This echoes studies of musical difference which have emphasized the sameness that is also central to transnational music.³¹ Through this analysis of race, ethnicity, and difference, we come to see that musical whiteness is in fact rarely unmarked, but functions through a series of racialized musical tropes and ways of listening for race.

Alice Babs does “European things to American tunes and American things to European tunes”: The Yodel Girl Goes to America

Alice Babs (1924–2014) began her career as a music and film teen idol in Sweden in 1939. Her breakthrough role in the film *Swing it, magistern!* (“Swing It, Schoolmaster!” 1940; see fig. 2.1) presents a blend of modernity, youthful rebellion, jazz, folk, and pop. The implied breakdown of class barriers, gender roles, and ethnic boundaries was not uncontroversial—the head of the Swedish popular composers’ copyright society famously

³⁰ This critique goes as far back as, at least, W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Souls of White Folk,” in *Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to Be White*, ed. David Roediger (New York: Schocken, 1999 [1920]), 184–199; and more recently, Ruth Frankenberg, “The Mirage of an Unmarked Whiteness,” in *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*, ed. Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene J. Nexica, and Matt Wray (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 72–96; Sara Ahmed, “Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism,” *Borderlands E-Journal* 3, no. 2 (2004); and George Yancy, *Look, a White* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012).

³¹ Olivia Bloechl with Melanie Lowe, “Introduction: Rethinking Difference,” in *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*, ed. Olivia Bloechl, Melanie Lowe, and Jeffrey Kallberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 4.

called her a “slut.”³² In this heated mix of values and styles one of her defining characteristics became her yodeling: her very first recording codified her early performance persona “Joddlarflickan” (“The Yodel Girl,” 1939), but she also mixed the style into her broader repertoire.



Figure 2.5. Film still of Babs from *Swing it, magistern!* (1940).



Figure 2.6. Record sleeve of the German release *Alice Babs jodelt und singt*, Polydor, EPH 20 229 (1956).

³² Swe.: “slyna”, Johan Fornäs, “Swinging Differences: Reconstructed Identities in the Early Swedish Jazz Age,” in *Jazz Planet*, ed. E. Taylor Atkins (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2003), 222.

A song created as advert for a radio set, “Jag har en liten Radiola” (“I Have a Little Radiola”; 1939), gives us an example of how she inserted, mixed, and conflated an African American jazz performance style with yodeling,³³ with the lyrics literally stating that these are the sounds she hears from the “negroes of Harlem”:

From the Negroes of Harlem, I hear:
 [Scat:] Ba-da-di-li-ya-la-i-yu-di-day-di-dau,
 And London adds, *yes sir*,
 A little *spleen*,
 I have a little Radiola,
 And it means everything to me,
 A catch from Vienna to Berlin,
 And from Paris to Tunis,
 And back to you!³⁴



Figure 2.7. Babs's scatting and yodeling in the bridge of “Jag har en liten Radiola,” at 1:13. The yodel is marked with a bracket.

Babs’s vocal acrobatics could be heard as a version of African American vernacular singing, but she also inserts a yodel-hiccup in the middle of her scatting, which more obviously connoted sounds of the Swiss and Austrian Alps and thus offered Swedish listeners a more familiar exoticism as shorthand for musical difference (see fig. 2.3). The yodel-

³³ According to Timothy Wise, a formal definition of yodeling is difficult. Here, I use the term in its widest sense, meaning an oscillation of tones, often between different registers with the use of a vocal break. Even so, as Wise notes, thinking of it in terms of “register” can also be problematic especially regarding a soprano singer, like Babs, who sings a lot exclusively in “head voice.” Following wise, the important thing is that the yodel is a point of sonic difference, a musical event he calls the *yodeleme*. Timothy Wise, “Yodel Species: A Typology of Falsetto Effects in Popular Music Vocal Styles,” *Radical Musicology* 2 (2007): n.p.

³⁴ My translation from the Swedish. The words in italics are in English in the original.

hiccup is doubly marked, as it is also situated in a phrase that features a play around the regular, major third that gestures towards the blue third (in my transcription marked as a F#-grace note and a scoop up to the G, indicating a blues inflection). By mixing these vocal elements, Babs blends two forms of vocal difference and adds an extra layer of musical hybridity. African American style, i.e. scatting and blue notes, is mediated and assimilated into a European context via yodeling.³⁵ The Swedish cultural historian Johan Fornäs has argued that, in a song like this, Babs mixed modernity, globalization, technology, and commodity fetishism that points to the beginning hegemony of American culture. Furthermore, this opening towards US culture works, as seen in the case of Alice Babs, through the transposition of Blackness onto other ethnic differences in Sweden.³⁶

During the 1940s and 50s Babs expanded her range, musically—three and a half octaves—and geographically, beyond Sweden, making a name for herself in Scandinavia and then in Europe (most significantly as a schlager singer in Germany where she had success with several specifically yodel-themed songs and records; see fig. 2.2). So, by the late fifties she was looking across the Atlantic.

In 1957 she went to New York on what seems to have been part vacation, part inspiration tour, and part preparation for a push onto the American scene. She gave interviews, jammed at clubs, and met with American managers. In her memoirs, she describes it as a “culture shock”³⁷ and in her correspondences from the time (some of which are edited and

³⁵ It should be noted that there in the US there is also a tradition of both blackface yodeling and yodeling in black music. Bart Plantenga, *Yodel in Hi-Fi: From Kitsch Folk to Contemporary Electronica* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

³⁶ Fornäs, “Swinging Differences,” 213–214; Fornäs’s wider narrative of Swedish jazz reception and his argument that the overriding signifier for jazz was modernity (and that e.g. race functioned as a marker of modernity) is presented in *Moderna människor: Jazzen och folkhemmet* (Stockholm: Norstedts förlag, 2004) and “Exclusion, Polarization, Hybridization, Assimilation: Otherness and Modernity in the Swedish Jazz Age,” *Popular Music and Society* 33, no. 2 (2010): 219–236.

³⁷ Alice Babs, *Född till musik* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1989), 311.

reprinted in her autobiography) it is indicative that she falls into some of the same narratives and tropes that characterized Marek's descriptions quoted above. Her perception of the US was formed by its universal appeal, but also fear, premised on a capitalist culture industry. Thus, she recounts being skeptical of the managers and refers to one of them, using the American word, as a "gangster type."³⁸ During her visits the following years these impressions continue and her image of the US is formed by American popular culture and focuses on the service industry and consumer products. The emphasis on standardization leads her to imply a dichotomy between the US and a more artistically minded Europe: she e.g. describes how she and Danish guitarist Ulrik Neumann had to fight to amend their second (and otherwise identical) set at Los Angeles's Coconut Grove to include their version of a Bach fugue.³⁹ In a similar vein she directly links praise of her nationality and belonging to the fact that the European music industry is not as exploitative as the American, describing how (too) many people in the US demand a cut of the artists' wages: "The insight I got to get into American performing-life during my three years in the US completely saved me from dreams of America! I praised my lucky star that I was Swedish and a European."⁴⁰

³⁸ Babs, *Född till musik*, 309; interestingly enough some of these tropes also show up in Valente's memoirs, including the gangster figure.

³⁹ Babs, *Född till musik*, 323. The question of repertoire is, in this case, an issue presented as a problem that otherwise could become a strength, and certainly became one for the Swe-Danes. Contrary to this anecdote, *Down Beat's* review of their album points to Neumann's classical training as the most important aspect of his style; J.A.T. (pseud.), Music in Review column, *Down Beat*, 27 Nov. 1958, 23. As part of a mid-century category of easy listening music, Keir Keightley suggests that "these 'classical' appropriations contributed to a sense of 'classiness' and bourgeois luxury that meshed neatly with both the populist consumer promises of an 'easy' life and the middlebrow sensibilities of the period." Keightley, "Music for Middlebrows," 317.

⁴⁰ (My translation.) "Den inblicken jag hann att få i amerikanskt artistliv under mina tre år i USA frälste mig helt från Amerikadrömmar! Jag prisade min lyckliga stjärna att jag var svensk og europé," Babs, *Född till musik*, 324.

In 1959 Babs partnered up with Neuman and violinist Svend Asmussen to form the band Swe-Danes (a portmanteau of their nationalities) and returned to the Coconut Grove (and later Minneapolis and Chicago). Thriving on “jaunty and easy” American culture they, in Babs’s words, had significant “drive and pepp [sic.]” (she uses the American words here).⁴¹ The initial response from the *Los Angeles Times* was, however, that they “seemed better suited to some other place than this home of sophisticated entertainment” and that “the act needs brighter material,” although the “Yodel Cha Cha” Babs performed was apparently not that sort of bright material.⁴² Still, they ended up with considerable success and it is a bit ironic that the same newspaper described what was ostensibly the same show next year as “bright.”⁴³



Figure 2.8. American newspaper ads for *The Swe-Danes*. Notice the ad placed in the middle here, from the *Minneapolis Star*, Oct. 20, 1960, which pitches the band to the Scandinavian-Americans in the region with a Scandinavian festival and the Scandinavian word for “hello,” *goddag*.

⁴¹ Babs, *Född till musik*, 336.

⁴² “Scandinavians Team at Grove,” *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 3, 1959.

⁴³ “Night Life Scene: Shawn, Newhart Fracture Clubbers,” *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 15, 1960.

If one listens to their hits, like “Scandinavian Shuffle” (the title track of their 1960 album), one gets a sense of how this perceived brightness was directly tied to their vocal performance, with the *Minneapolis Star* describing them as having “refined scat singing to a modernistic degree, voicing syllables in close harmony, and using this technique to imitate instruments and to blend vocal and instrumental harmony.” In this “the Swe-Danes do European things to American tunes and American things to European tunes.”⁴⁴ This transatlantic mix was a result of the repertoire (which included jazz standards, “O sole mio,” and yodeling), but central was Babs’s high-soaring, clear-toned soprano that blended classical singing, yodeling, and the instrument-imitation in Asmussen’s arrangements. While her voice still presented a “diversifying hybridity,” to use Fornäs’s term,⁴⁵ it was—to use Marek’s contemporary characteristics—decidedly more “slick and sleek” than previously, not least secured by the virtuosity of the music and her increased vocal range. The repertoire was “bright,” which worked as a synonym for light music and easy listening, though perhaps extending its connotations to a white, middle-class, female identity that Babs embodied and represented with her vocal timbre.

“A Perfect Antidote to Acute Hipsterism”: Alice Babs Sings for the Middle Class

From the mid-fifties Babs increasingly tried to downplay explicit yodel-singing, even if it still echoed in her voice, or at least minimize its presence in the repertoire. Babs’s exotic folkloricism, timbre, and preference for higher pitches was characterized by an increasing use of open vowels and sometimes in recordings aided by studio manipulation in

⁴⁴ Bob Murphy, “Swe-Danes—Ingenuity in a Scandinavian Way,” *The Minneapolis Star*, Nov. 1, 1960.

⁴⁵ Fornäs, “Swinging Differences,” 228.

what Serge Lacasse calls *vocal staging*.⁴⁶ This is most evident in an album she made with Svend Asmussen, *Scandinavian Folk Songs Sung & Swung!* (1964), which was produced in a special release by Philips for the US market. Aiming specifically at an international, Anglo-American audience, the album contains English-language versions of Nordic folk songs, mobilizing the emerging European songbook in jazz, specifically the category of ethnic secular tunes identified by Luca Cerchiari as a source of repertoire for European jazz musicians.⁴⁷ The songs on the record are jolly representations of an imagined pastoral past and melancholic ballads representing the cold climate and wide spaces of the Scandinavian landscape, creating a Nordic exoticism.⁴⁸ In either case, Babs utilized her incredible range (sounding relaxed and comfortable around C6) to signify high-spirited folk idyll or tall peaks in the landscape. In the latter case, as for example the tune “Blue Mountain Land,” the arrangement and mix amplify this sonic image by adding an astonishing amount of echo and reverb to her voice (see fig. 2.5). This combination of reverb and high pitch is a musical othering common in mid-century exotica, described by Peter Doyle as a *double remove*, where “the sound is ‘laterally’ removed by the reverb and then ‘lifted’ off the ground into the ethereal realm.”⁴⁹ This makes her seem to float above the musical landscape

⁴⁶ Lacasse, “The Phonographic Voice.”

⁴⁷ Luca Cerchiari, “Sacred, Country, Urban Tunes: The European Songbook; ‘Greensleeves’ to ‘Les feuilles mortes’ (‘Autumn Leaves’), ‘Gigolo’ to ‘O sole mio,’” in *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts*, ed. Luca Cerchiari, Laurant Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 100.

⁴⁸ Even if Babs and Asmussen are representing their own Scandinavian homeland(s) and engaging in a form of nationalism/regionalism, they are doing so in a highly stylized manner for an intended audience from abroad and thus, as Locke argues, “in the broader cosmopolis, they function (instead or as well) as an exotic product.” *Musical Exoticism*, 77.

⁴⁹ Peter Doyle, *Echo and Reverb: Fabricating Space in Popular Music Recording, 1900–1960* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 133; on the uses of echo and reverb in 50s music see also Zak, *I Don’t Sound Like Nobody*, 153–164. See also William Moylan, “Considering Space in Recorded Music,” in *The Art of Record Production*, ed. Simon Frith and Simon Zagorski-Thomas (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 163–188; and Paul Théberge, “The Sound of Nowhere: Reverb and the Construction of Sonic Space,” in *The Relentless Pursuit of Tone: Timbre in Popular Music* ed. Robert Fink, Melinda Latour, and Zachary Wallmark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 323–344.

in a figure-ground relation, emphasizing the geographic as a signifier in the music and her voice as eminently natural, indeed almost part of the environment. It also uses what Rebecca Leydon has called a *soft-focus sound* in the mid-century easy listening genre, which feminizes her voice through the excessive reverb and marks her as embodying a persona of fantastical, faerie-like Nordic femininity.⁵⁰



Figure 2.9. Babs's vocals in the outro of "Blue Mountain Land," at 2:38. Her voice has reverb added and is placed further back in the soundbox than during the performance of the song itself. Sung in unison with strings that glissando, close-miked up to the beginning notes of the chromatic sigh-motifs after the double barline.

Quickly dubbed the "Swedish Dinah Shore," Babs (as a part of Swe-Danes) actually appeared on *The Dinah Shore Chevy Show* several times. In a 1961 episode of the show Babs distinguishes herself from her American counterpart by ending their duet performance in a high-pitched cadenza (arguably yodel-inspired) that had become her trademark of timbre and vocal virtuosity (see fig. 2.6; one even sees Shore give a surprised glance when it happens).⁵¹

Shore's persona was the embodiment of the fifties ideal of a middle-class, all-American woman. Babs was mirrored in this image, but unlike Shore's appearance, which had been physically (through plastic surgery) and culturally altered from Jewish, bluesy jazz

⁵⁰ Rebecca Leydon, "The Soft-Focus Sound: Reverb as a Gendered Attribute in Mid-Century Mood Music," *Perspectives of New Music* 39, no. 2 (2001): 96-107. This soft sound may also have racial connotations, as shown in Grant Olwage's study of the "continuum of Victorian vocal sound, where at the one end—the 'right,' white end—soft-singing taught and indexed good, pure tone, the shout of the black voice placed at the other end." Olwage, "The Class and Colour of Tone," 212.

⁵¹ Babs is not literally, technically speaking yodeling here, or in the subsequent examples I give. Yet, I argue that given Babs's history as a yodel-singer, this is what Timothy Wise calls "stylized yodeling," which retains its signifying power as what he terms a *yodeleme*. Wise, "Yodel Species," n.p.

singer to white entertainer,⁵² Babs was still positioned in a persona that accentuates her ethnicity with the folk-inflected crocheted dress that points to a regional identity (in fact the same dress she had worn when representing Sweden in the Eurovision Song Contest; see fig. 2.7).

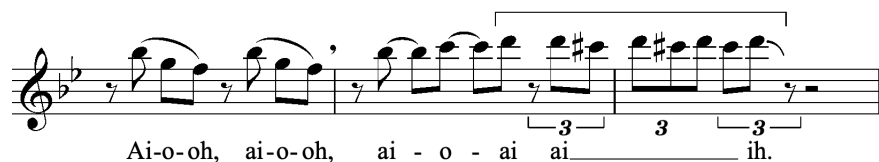


Figure 2.10. Babs's final cadenza from "I'm Sitting on the Top of the World" from The Dinah Shore Chevy Show, 5 Feb. 1961. "Yodel" marked with brackets.⁵³



Figure 2.11. Babs on The Dinah Shore Chevy Show, Feb. 5, 1961.

In other words, Babs's image was also being crafted to fit the American audience, indeed similar to the star-making machine that Dinah Shore went through.⁵⁴ Similar to the

⁵² Shore had plastic surgery performed on her nose and dyed her hair blond, which helped her transform into an All-American star and enabled her to subvert her ethnic, Jewish appearance. This was accompanied with a change in repertoire and style, from the African American inflected blues and popular music with "Schmaltz" to a "cleaner" style in the pop and mainstream jazz repertoire. Lola Clare Bratten, "Nothin' Could Be Finah: The Dinah Shore Chevy Show," in *Small Screens, Big Ideas: Television in the 1950s*, ed. Janet Thumim (London & New York: I.B. Taurus, 2002), 88–104.

⁵³ *The Dinah Shore Chevy Show*, "From Beautiful Copenhagen," aired Feb. 5, 1961 (recorded 1960), NBC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIP8F14VMVw>, at 0:23, accessed on Mar. 23, 2020.

⁵⁴ However, the implication from Babs in her autobiography is also equally that this kind of cultural construction had not taken place earlier in her career, which other than being untrue (apart from a surgical

“neutral Americanness” that Shore presented,⁵⁵ Babs offered a white, if exotic, European-ness that could remind American listeners and viewers of the old country of white, ethnic safety while serving as a postcard for the American middle-class tourist, who dreams of visiting a Europe that is both historical and folkloric, but also modern and fashionable.⁵⁶



Figure 2.12. Promotion images of Shore and Babs. In an image caption in her autobiography she curtly put down that “this is how they wanted me to look as a ‘star’ in the US.”⁵⁷ Notice how there is a parallel between the soft-focus sound and the soft-focus of the image.⁵⁸

This US fascination with Scandinavians goes as far back as, at least, Emerson, who located the ancestral home of whiteness and Anglo-Saxon identity in the region.⁵⁹ Well

change) amplifies the narrative of an American culture industry dominated by standardization and a European art scene with its values intact.

⁵⁵ Bratten, “Nothin’ Could Be Finah,” 95.

⁵⁶ Christopher Endy has argued that the post-war rise of American tourism in Europe not only stemmed from increased middle-class prosperity, but also required, among other things, the cultural mediation and promotion of transatlantic cultural exchange, which paradoxically also saw the entrenching of national identity. His study shows how this included the representation of France (but this fits equally with the representations of Scandinavia on *The Dinah Shore Chevy Show*) as a place of antimodern Old-World nostalgia and timeless civilization that was advertised as a destination for “sober” middle-class travel (or dreams of travelling). *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 100–124.

⁵⁷ Babs, *Född till musik*, 307.

⁵⁸ Leydon, “Soft-Focus Sound,” 99.

⁵⁹ Nell Irvin Painter, “Ralph Waldo Emerson’s Saxons,” *The Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (2009): 977–85.

into the mid-twentieth century “Nordic” continued to be used as a term to draw a racial colorline between white Europeans from northern Europe (including Anglo-Saxons and the Irish) and the southern “Mediterranean” race.⁶⁰ This white, middle-class Scandinaviness is clearest in Babs’s and Neumann’s first American record, *When the Children Are Asleep* (1958; recorded before they teamed up with Asmussen to form Swe-Danes), distributed by the Hollywood-based pop label Dot Records (owned by Paramount). The repertoire emphasized middle-class coupledness with tunes like the title track, as well as “Two Sleepy People,” “Home with You,” and “Let’s Put Out the Lights” played in intimate (but not erotic) duet arrangements. This was an “adult-oriented” jazz-pop album with a selection of standards that exemplify the “age-format stratification” in the political economy of music in the fifties, as described by Keir Keightley. Furthermore, it was an LP, which carried a higher symbolic capital into its middlebrow context.⁶¹

Likewise, the album iconography (see fig. 2.9) shows Babs and Neumann in front of the fireplace in a well-decorated living room, depicting them as idealized spouses, intentionally exploiting the song characters of the romantic repertoire to create the performance personae of a married couple (Babs and Neumann were not a “real” couple); liner notes declare that “even married people can be in love” and suggests listening to the record when the children are asleep.⁶² The iconography draws attention to an imagined listening

⁶⁰ Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: Norton, 2010), 301–326.

⁶¹ Keir Keightley, “Long Play: Adult-Oriented Popular Music and the Temporal Logics of Post-War Sound Recording Industry in the USA,” *Media, Culture & Society* 26, no. 3 (2004): 375–391; Keir Keightley, “You Keep Coming Back Like A Song: Adult Audiences, Taste Panics, and the Idea of the Standard,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 13, no. 1 (2001): 7–40.

⁶² Uncredited liner notes for Alice Babs and Ulrik Neumann, *When the Children Are Asleep*, Dot Records, DLP 3128 (1958). It is worth noting that the Swedish release used a different cover image, without the living room setting (simply a medium wide shot of them performing together), and other liner notes. *Down Beat*’s review simply assumed them to be a “Swedish husband-and-wife team,” which they were not. J.A.T. (pseud.), Music in Review column, *Down Beat*, Nov. 27, 1958, 23.

experience placed in a domestic space, which paired is with the new LP format, middle-brow culture, and a middle-class social setting.



Figure 2.13. Album cover for Alice Babs and Ulrik Neumann, *When the Children Are Asleep*, Dot Records, DLP 3128 (1958)

On *Scandinavian Folk Songs* the liner notes draw explicit attention to the sophistication of the audio production of the record and marvels at the fact that “90% of the record was made in the living room” of the recording engineer.⁶³ This invites the listener, perhaps especially the American one, to imagine the music in a homely, adult setting and as a product of the modern Scandinavian welfare state as well as its folkloric past.⁶⁴ In her early

⁶³ Sture Wahlberg and Roland Ferneborg, liner notes for Alice Babs and Svend Asmussen, *Scandinavian Folk Songs Sung and Swung!*, Philips, PHS 600-184 (1964).

⁶⁴ Records like these prove to be exceptions to the rule of the gendering of domestic sound systems, especially hi-fi, as mediators of masculine (middle-class) space in the post-war period. In this case, especially evident in *When the Children Are Asleep*, the records and sound reproduction systems function as a mediator of *togetherness* with the recording technology placed in the common living room, as opposed to the “man-cave” alongside *Playboy* magazines and whiskey. See Keir Keightley, “‘Turn It Down!’ She Shrieked: Gender,

career in Sweden, Babs was at the vanguard of musical modernity and cultural hybridity, but as she grew older and travelled across the Atlantic her positioning changed. No longer the disruptive schoolgirl of *Swing it, magistren!*, her age, ethnicity, race, and musical style instead placed her at the vanguard of adult-oriented jazz and pop marketed to the growing white middle class. As *Down Beat* concluded in the review of *When the Children Are Asleep*: “Recommended as a perfect antidote to acute hipsterism.”⁶⁵

“She Has Overcome the Problem of Singing as Pretty as She Looks”: Alice Babs and Duke Ellington

Despite the relative success of Babs’s performances on the American stage and screen she decided to abandon a touring career in the US, opting to make her base permanently in Sweden. This did not mean that her transnational career was over. In the sixties she expanded her repertoire of European folk and art songs, and most importantly, throughout this period she actively sought to change and “improve” her technique by taken lessons from a classically trained singer and vocal coach. But it was her collaborations with Duke Ellington that secured her legacy in American jazz history.

Babs first met up with Ellington for a 1963 recording session in Paris (released in Sweden, 1966). The association with a jazz great like Ellington was, however, not enough to do away with the stylistic heterogeneity that troubled some listeners. The music historian Olle Edström recounts that Swedish jazz critics “had issues with the many-sidedness of

Domestic Space, and High Fidelity, 1948–59.” *Popular Music* 15, no. 2 (1996): 149–77. On the use of jazz and hi-fi systems in the creation of the postwar, middle-class living room as a social space see Tom Perchard, “Mid-century Modern Jazz: Music and Design in the Postwar Home,” *Popular Music* 36, no. 1 (2017): 55–74.

⁶⁵ J.A.T. (pseud.), Music in Review column, *Down Beat*, Nov. 27, 1958, 23.

Alice Babs—that is, she sang everything from yodeling songs, schlager, and swing, to Elizabethan songs and (later) classical art songs, all with the same pure quality of voice, intonation, and musicality.”⁶⁶ He also argues that there may have been a gendered bias in these assertions as “it seems as if the role of a female singer in a band entailed a stricter stylistic ‘purity’ that had to do both with gender and the quality of the voice, but perceptions of an ideal American singer might also have been the yardstick that some of these critics used in comparison.”⁶⁷ Edström speculates that it may have been a consolation for Babs that, unlike the Swedish critics, Ellington “accepted her as a jazz artist.”⁶⁸ This is probably true, but Ellington also selected Babs for his projects (most notably the second and third *Sacred Concerts*) because she inhabited a many-sidedness, which I argue was available to her—and Ellington—via her whiteness, ethnicity, and gender.

Ellington recruited Babs specifically for the *Second Sacred Concert*, premiered in New York on 19 January 1968 and she participated in the subsequent recording sessions, but did not follow the band on tour, though she joined the Ellington band for four European performances in 1969 (two in Sweden, and one each in Paris and Barcelona). In the summer of 1973, she performed again with the Ellington band for two concerts in New York. In the autumn of 1973, she performed for the *Third Sacred Concert* (released as a live recording from the London premiere; Babs also sang at the Barcelona performance) and for one concert in Sweden.

Ellington might have been less concerned with marketing and image making than Babs’s comparisons to someone like Dinah Shore may suggest, but he too had a difficult

⁶⁶ Olle Edström, “Ellington in Sweden,” *The Musical Quarterly* 96 (2013): 501.

⁶⁷ Edström, “Ellington in Sweden,” 501.

⁶⁸ Edström, “Ellington in Sweden,” 502.

time divorcing the image of Babs from the sound of her voice. In his autobiography, *Music is My Mistress*, he writes of her (referring to the *Second Sacred Concert*, 1968):

[S]he is probably the most unique artist I know. She is a coloratura soprano, an unlimited soprano. She sings opera, she sings lieder, she sings what we call jazz and blues, she sings like an instrument, she even yodels, and she can read any and all of it! No matter how hard the intervals, when you hand her the music, she sight-reads and sings it as though she had rehearsed it a month. Every word comes out perfectly enunciated, understandable and believable. Alice Babs is a composer's dream, for with her he can forget all the limitations and just write his heart out. [...] She is a terrific musician, and when I look at pictures of her taken in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine—why, I think she looks like an angel! She is a beautiful person who has overcome the problem of singing as pretty as she looks. In referring to her, one never says, "There are just a few left," because she was probably the only one born.⁶⁹

Describing her in otherworldly terms he positions her persona as—again going back to Marek's words—"very female." And it is very telling that apart from her looks, the otherworldliness, in Ellington's description, is linked to her coloratura-like singing, sight-reading skills, and virtuoso ability to perform difficult compositions, i.e. all values tied to the classical, European music that she had been studying in order to change her technique and sound.

Both of the sacred concerts are vehicles for Babs's singing on open vowels with clear, classical music-like timbre in the highest soprano range. Furthermore, Ellington composed music that, especially performed by Babs, sounds uncannily like classical art songs or European oratorios. In the song "Heaven" from the *Second Sacred Concert* (see fig. 2.10) Babs's vocal skills are on display in a seemingly simple song, if one were to look at the form (AABA), harmony (four-chord vamp in the A-sections and a bridge dominated by II-

⁶⁹ Duke Ellington, *Music is My Mistress* (New York: Da Capo, 1973), 288.

V-I connections), and rhythmic structure of the melody (repetition of a four-note motivic cell).

Figure 2.14. Leadsheet for "Heaven," Second Sacred Concert.

However, the melody emphasizes altered notes and is constructed of intervals of diminished seconds, tritones, and sevenths. Edström notes how these “are the sort of melodic lines that are more common in twentieth-century art music than popular music and jazz.”⁷⁰ Ellington’s oeuvre is replete with music that shows how he bridged low, middle, and high-brow forms. In this case, he composed music that both in its formal structure and in its use of Babs’s voice gestured toward modernist, European music and employed her whiteness to signal highbrow universalism.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Edström, “Ellington in Sweden,” 503.

⁷¹ John Howland has written extensively on Ellington and cultural hierarchies. John Howland, *Ellington Uptown: Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, and the Birth of the Jazz Concert* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009); John Howland, “Marketing to the Middlebrow: Reconsidering Ellingtonia, the Legacy of Early Ellington Criticism, and the Idea of a ‘Serious’ Jazz Composer,” in *Duke Ellington Studies*, ed. John Howland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 32–75. Catherine Tackley discusses the English reception of the *Sacred Concerts* and their position in the cultural hierarchy, in “Art or Debauchery?: The Reception of Ellington in the U.K.” in *Duke Ellington Studies*, ed. John Howland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 100–107.

Babs's voice was no longer "slutty" or "bright," but instead, according to Leonard Feather, it was "glorious"⁷² with "unprecedented radiance" and, indeed, specifically "feminine."⁷³ Most reviews of the sacred concerts emphasized Babs and named her as a "soprano" (not simply as "singer"). John S. Wilson's assessment of the sacred concerts in the *New York Times* are indicative, as he commented extensively on the quality of her voice. It was "magnificent," a "pure, full-bodied, amazingly lithe in flights of bends and scoops, with warmth and strength at both ends of a broad range"⁷⁴; a "superb voice" with a "warm translucence,"⁷⁵ but also invoking her Nordic identity through associations with landscape familiar from *Scandinavian Folk Songs* by describing her voice as "clear, clean and sparkling as a running mountain stream."⁷⁶ Furthermore, he remarked on her virtuosic singing skills and how Ellington had used her as an "amazing Ellington instrument" (the way that he might have used e.g. Kay Davis previously).⁷⁷

Remarking on these timbral qualities, the American press was engaging in what Melanie L. Marshall has called a *purity logic* of the voice, which "is used to adjudicate and control belonging, to claim some singers and Other others."⁷⁸ Comparable to the British early music singers from the 1960s–1980s that Marshall describes, Babs experimented with folk-singing motifs (namely yodeling), but masked this style in favor of a "purer" sound.

⁷² Leonard Feather, "Ellington Plays Sacred Concert," *Los Angeles Times*, Apr. 16, 1968. The word is also used multiple times in Ed Steane, review of *Second Sacred Concert*, *Hip* 9 [vol. 14], no. 6 (1971), 20–21.

⁷³ Leonard Feather, "Ellington, 69, Pursuing Musical Muse," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 22, 1968.

⁷⁴ John S. Wilson, "Ellington's 'Sacred Concert' Is Given Premiere," *New York Times*, Jan. 20, 1968.

⁷⁵ John S. Wilson, "Ellington Still Changes," *New York Times*, Jul. 4, 1971

⁷⁶ John S. Wilson, "Alice Babs Puts Sparkling Voice in Duke's Song," *New York Times*, Jul. 3, 1973.

⁷⁷ Wilson, "Ellington's 'Sacred Concert' Is Given Premiere."

⁷⁸ Melanie L. Marshall, "*Voce Bianca*: Purity and Whiteness in British Early Music Vocality," *Women & Music* 19 (2015), 42. There is a parallel to the early American reception of another Swede, Ingrid Bergman, and the subsequent construction of her persona, defined as wholesome, pure, and spiritual, by the American film industry. David W. Smit, "Marketing Ingrid Bergman," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 22, no. 3 (2005): 237–250.

Similar to her contemporary colleagues in the early music world Babs used “voice training as a prime tool for shaping subjectivity and for producing an illusory sound of purified unity.”⁷⁹ Significantly, she performed with this voice in Ellington’s religious oratorios, in the church venues also favored by the early music movement, and in the 1970s Babs began a successful career performing Elizabethan songs. Furthermore, such sonic and spatial perceptions of purity is not only a matter of class and gender but is also racially coded as white. Jennifer Stoever has traced the American reception of a “pure,” European, virtuosic voice back to another Swede, the so-called Swedish nightingale, Jenny Lind. The American ear linked whiteness, femininity, and nationality in the voice of Lind during her American tour, 1850–1852. Americans thought that clear-toned soprano voices embodied a “female range” that was characteristically far away from the lower pitches signifying African American vocality.⁸⁰ A century later Lind’s compatriot, Alice Babs, came to the US performing in a style that emphasized the highest ranges of the female voice with timbral qualities that are associated both with European classical music and European folk music. The fact that these vocal gestures signified something “angelic,” “pure,” “graceful,” and “controlled” is also part of their white privilege, as such gestures are always already embodied even when they are heard as transcending their bodily origins. By contrast the politics of the sonic color line would demand that a Black voice would always remain rooted in the body. This resonates especially with the religious context of Ellington’s sacred concerts and recalls Ronald Radano’s assertion that “the acquisition of white purity is

⁷⁹ Marshall, “*Voce Bianca*,” 37.

⁸⁰ Jennifer Lind Stoever, *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 86. See also Julia Chybowski, “Jenny Lind and the Making of Mainstream American Popular Music,” *Open Access Musicology* 1, no. 1 (2020): 130–151. Laurie Stras also lists this as one of the black signifiers picked up by white singers, “White Face, Black Voice: Race, Gender, and Region in the Music of the Boswell Sisters,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 1, no. 2 (2007): 207–255.

racialized through the negative force of blackness whose place is insistent, essential. Singing racially hybrid song becomes a way of passing through the categories of race in order to transcend them in the name of a deracinated (white) godliness.”⁸¹ When Babs was heard as angelic it is through a discourse that uses her gender, class, and identity as an argument for the transcendence of her body and this relies on her vocal embodiment of whiteness.



Figure 2.15. Excerpts from Babs's vocal fills in "Almighty God," from 2:28; all sung on "oh"; brackets mark "yodel"-motifs.

⁸¹ Ronald Radano, *Lying Up a Nation: Race and Black Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 134.

We hear Babs's vocal splendor at several points in the sacred concerts, where she is given vocal solos, but even if her timbre is one of classical purity, she still retains elements of folk and Black music. When she, for example, sings "Almighty God Has Those Angels" (from the *Second Sacred Concert*) she engages in a call-and-response with clarinetist Russell Procope and the choir in a way that blends a gospel style appropriate for Ellington's oratorio of Black music with timbres and inflections that recalls elements of her classical training. In fact, I would argue that even though listeners heard her radiant voice as a signifier of sophistication and transcendence there was still an element of her yodel-singing in her improvisation. We hear it in "Almighty God" where her vocal fills in multiple instances include rocking motifs (most often a third), reminiscent of the vocal oscillations of yodeling (see fig. 2.11). What we do not hear, however, is direct instrument imitation or the use of scat syllables that would indicate vocal Blackness. Instead, Babs opts for singing in the highest register, on an open "oh," supporting her clear timbre and whiteness.

It seemed that Ellington was interested in employing her diverse talents, not only for their musical purposes in themselves, but also for the cultural associations that they held. Babs's change from yodel girl to Ellingtonian hymn singer in a sense follows the standard narrative of jazz going from lowly pop to high art. I would, however, also suggest that her career and style show that this was not a case of jazz either "naturally" evolving into a (high) art form or that it, conversely, radically was revolutionized and thrust upwards in the cultural hierarchy. Rather, Babs actively transformed her voice using the techniques of classical music and that these techniques were closely linked to such a "low" style as yodeling, which also carried connotations that met at the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender.

From Istanbul (not Constantinople) to Malaga: Caterina Valente's Exoticism

Caterina Valente's (1931–) biography was central to her image and stardom from the very beginning of her career. Her multilingual abilities and range of musical styles came to define her as a cosmopolitan persona. In marketing and in the press Valente's multinational identity—from an ethnically Italian family of performers, speaking with a French accent, and holding a German passport—was paired with her upbringing “on the stage” as part of an artist-family (her mother was a prominent circus clown and her father and brothers were dancers and musicians; the family often performed together), which was quite exotic compared to her image as a German *Mädchen* (girl) and later as a middle-class mother.⁸²

These facets of Valente's identity often intermingled and co-existed in an apparently seamless manner, but as often happens with such transnational, cosmopolitan personas there is a fundamental tension between the local and the global in her. This is also evidenced in one of the only scholarly studies of Valente, which summarizes her as “‘the German world-star,’ characterized through the attractive blend and harmonization of numerous contradictions and opposites.”⁸³ These dialectics of harmonization and contradiction, of Germany and the world, of the national and international played out in a career that saw Valente become a TV star on both sides of the Atlantic and in her repertoire of German schlagers, French chansons, and songs in Spanish, Italian, and other languages, plus a

⁸² A concise biography can be found in Ricarda Strobel and Werner Faulstich, *Die deutschen Fernsehstars. Band 2: Show- und Gesangstars* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 18–23.

⁸³ (My translation.) “Caterina Valente: ‘der deutsche Weltstar,’ charakterisiert durch die attraktive Vermischung und Harmonisierung zahlreicher Widersprüche und Gegensätze.” Strobel and Faulstich, *Die deutschen Fernsehstars*. 16. The other study, focusing on dancing, is Jürgen Arndt, “Zwischen Revuefilm und Jazz-Ballett. Caterina Valente und Wolfgang Lauth,” in *Music – Tanz – Mannheim*, ed. Jörg Rothkann, Martina Krause-Benz, and Thomas Schipperges (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2017) 285–300.

constant undercurrent of various Latin American styles (with occasional other folkloric, exotically tinged songs evoking other places and ethnicities) and swing music. This repertoire variety, which simultaneously signaled everywhere and nowhere specific, blended together in the persona of a *Cosmopolitan Lady* (the title of her 1959 album) who is *The Greatest... In Any Language!* (the title of a 1961 album).⁸⁴

Not all of the many vocal and musical styles Valente embodied and inhabited held equal force in her American career (there was never an American market for her German schlager singing). She sang mainstream jazz and pop, which proved that she could transplant her sound into an American context. But the style that secured her a breakthrough in the US and continued to figure as a marker of exotic difference was a broadly conceived Spanish or Latin American sound. I do not mean to suggest that Latin American and Spanish musical styles as such were foreign to jazz or US American popular music. Indeed, from Jelly Roll Morton's "Spanish tinge" and the tango craze, from Chango Pozo and Dizzy Gillespie's Afro-Cuban bands to the inclusion of bossa nova as subgenre of jazz, Latin American music has been present in US culture and music. Similarly, from Gil Evans and Miles Davis's *Sketches of Spain* to Chick Corea's *My Spanish Heart* as two canonical examples, particularly Spanish music has had a place in the jazz world. Nevertheless, such styles were distinguished from the mainstream of jazz.⁸⁵ Indeed, as Philip Hayward argues,

⁸⁴ Caterina Valente, *Cosmopolitan Lady*, Polydor 46065 LPHM (1959). This record was however not, as far as I can tell, not distributed in the U.S. Caterina Valente, *The Greatest... In Any Language*, Decca DL 4052 (1961).

⁸⁵ It is perhaps no coincidence that it was during the period in question here, the fifties and early sixties, that the very term "mainstream jazz" became part of common jazz discourse, apparently popularized by the British critic Stanley Dance. Originally it was used to distinguish swing from traditional New Orleans jazz and bebop, but soon it also encompassed bebop and hardbop, as these styles were "mainstreamed," to use Mark Tucker's phrase. Mark Tucker, "Mainstreaming Monk: The Ellington Album," *Black Music Research Journal*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1999): 227–244. The term is also discussed in Scott DeVeaux, "Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography," *Black American Literature Forum*, vol. 25, no. 3 (1991): 550–551.

the fifties and early sixties was the highpoint for the exotic in popular music, perhaps unrivalled until the advent of “world music” in the eighties and nineties. However, where the latter is invested in cultural authenticity, the exotica of the mid-century uses novelty styles and is notably more kitsch and less concerned with authenticity (as is also evidenced by the fact that Valente sang in such a plethora of languages and styles).⁸⁶ Even in jazz where such styles were not necessarily seen as kitsch they were still marked as different from the genre-normative styles of swing and bebop. Christopher Washburne points out that Latin jazz—and I believe that this argument can, *mutatis mutandis*, be expanded to other styles and subgenres—is persistently marginalized and pigeonholed in slots “reserved exclusively for the exotic, the novel, the lightweight, the not real jazz music.”⁸⁷ Engaging in this performance of difference between genres and languages, Valente persona and music was part of the “mediatized cosmopolitanism” that Tom Perchard identifies in postwar middleclass consumption.⁸⁸

Whether it is just indicative of her musical versatility (a word that is ubiquitous in the American reception of Valente) or it was a more conscious effort to avoid being pigeonholed, Valente did, however, seek to break through in the US with a number of swing jazz and mainstream pop recordings, alongside her sprawling “international” repertoire. This music was part of the midcentury orchestral jazz-pop idiom that John Howland terms *populuxe*, spanning cocktail lounge big band jazz and “classy” symphonic textures that the

⁸⁶ Philip Hayward, “The Cocktail Shift: Aligning Musical Exotica,” in *Widening the Horizon: Exoticism in Post-War Popular Music*, ed. Philip Hayward (Sydney: John Libbey, 1999), 1–18. Albin Zak has accounted how popular music of the period, in general, was characterized by a use of gimmicks, novelty, and stylistic pluralism, including novel techniques of record production. *I Don’t Sound Like Nobody: Remaking Music in 1950s America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), especially chapter 3.

⁸⁷ Christopher Washburne, “Latin Jazz, Afro-Latin Jazz, Afro-Cuban Jazz, Cubop, Caribbean Jazz, Jazz Latin, or Just... Jazz,” in *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and Its Boundaries*, ed. David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 90.

⁸⁸ Perchard, “Mid-Century Modern Jazz,” 57.

American middleclass played on its new hi-fi stereos (Howland's case studies are Nat "King" Cole's and Frank Sinatra's recordings, with arrangements by Nelson Riddle, for Capitol Records).⁸⁹ Using these musical techniques, Valente was largely successful in breaking in to the US market, but even in these more American-sounding recordings her voice was marked by that aura of foreignness and femininity that Marek heard.⁹⁰

The opening measures of Valente's first hit record in Germany serves as an example and introduction to the things outlined above (see fig. 2.12). Recorded in 1953 with Kurt Edelhagen and his band, "Istanbul (Not Constantinople)" is a humorous novelty song (sung in English) that, as its title suggests, relies on orientalist tropes for its musical and lyrical wit.⁹¹ The tune opens with a clarinet playing arabesques in a phrase that ends with an orientalist emphasis on the diminished second (Db). The clarinet (and a few measures later, Valente's voice) is the top part of what Rebecca Leydon identifies as a *layered texture* characteristic of much musical exoticism of the period.⁹² Below the clarinet is a sparse, stable rhythm section of an orientalist bass ostinato and castanets (or something akin to them in sound), as well as sustained chords from trombones and muted trumpets, all creating an exotic setting, perhaps even gesturing towards and appropriating a jungle jazz style, itself an exoticist style of jazz, especially associated with Duke Ellington.⁹³ This layered,

⁸⁹ John Howland, *Hearing Luxe Pop: Glorification, Glamour, and the Middlebrow in American Popular Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 114–147.

⁹⁰ In the following I concentrate on Valente's American reception and her music and TV career in the US. For an account of her German career see Strobel and Faultich, *Die deutschen Fernsehstars*.

⁹¹ Strobel and Faultich assert that Valente's association with Edelhagen—not least that she was "discovered" by him—is important in the German reception and retrospective assessment of her as a true *jazz* singer, i.e. Edelhagen's status as a jazz musician ensured the authentication of Valente. *Die deutschen Fernsehstars*, 47.

⁹² Rebecca Leydon, "Utopias of the Tropics: The Exotic Music of Les Baxter and Yma Sumac," in *Widening the Horizon: Exoticism in Post-War Popular Music*, ed. Philip Hayward (Sydney: John Libbey, 1999), 48–51. This idea is developed within a jazz context in Phil Ford, "Jazz Exotica and the Naked City," *Journal of Musicological Research* 27, no. 2 (2008): 113–133.

⁹³ Unlike the case of Ellington, where complex musical and social politics of race played into the formation and reception of the exotic jungle style, I see the possible gesture towards the jungle style here as a more straight-forward case of musical exoticism, i.e., the allusion of a far-away place or "other" via an exotic trope.

instrumental texture is answered by a vocal cadenza with Valente's vocalise in three parts. First, a metrically offset phrasing that gives the sensation of half-tempo that contributes further to the multilayered groove. Second, her own arabesques mimicking the clarinet. Valente's arabesques then, thirdly, lead into a scat break where she and the band switch from rubato-like feel and straight eighths to swing.

The image shows a musical score for the opening of "Istanbul" by Duke Ellington. It consists of two systems of music. The first system features a Clarinet (Cl.) part with a melodic line marked "Simile" and a Bass (15mb) part with a rhythmic pattern. The lyrics "Ah da du da da du" are written below the clarinet part. The second system starts at measure 6 and features a Bass (15mb) part with a rhythmic pattern marked "Break! Swing 8ths" and the lyrics "da ah. Bri-uh ba du ba du ba oh ba du ba".

Figure 2.16. Opening of "Istanbul." The instrumentation also includes (not transcribed here) trombones and muted trumpets playing sustained chords, as well as castanets (or a percussion instrument imitating castanets) playing on each beat.

The combination of the arabesque and the scat singing is jarring in its juxtaposition. The free-flowing rhythmic delivery of the first phrase gives it both a rubato feel and a polyrhythmic layering that (though not captured in transcription) gives the feeling of triple against duple time. These vocal elements all contribute to the exotic texture and layering highlighted in the instrumental arrangement. Furthermore, while the first phrase does not reach the highest soprano range its initial leap to the high-note of C5 is contrasted with the plunge towards the low-note on F3 in the scat-phrase. This follows the trope of lower pitches signifying Black vocal styles. However, the juxtaposition is also alluring in its

For a discussion of Ellington's jungle style see Jeffrey Magee, "Ellington's Afro-Modernist Music in the 1920s," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duke Ellington*, ed. Edward Green (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 89–93; and Kimberley Hannon Teal, "Beyond the Cotton Club: The Persistence of Duke Ellington's Jungle Style," *Jazz Perspectives* 6, no. 1-2 (2012): 123-149.

uncanny suggestion that the two styles of vocalizing are sides of the same coin. Similar to Babs's mix of yodeling and scat in "Jag har en liten Radiola," the intro to "Istanbul" gives us a convergence of a folk-like, and in this case orientalist, exoticism and African American scat singing.

In "Istanbul" the exoticism was confined to the lyrics and the music in the intro (the rest of the recording is in a swing jazz style), but, as noted above, subsequently various exotic styles became a staple of Valente's music. Her next two hits, which inaugurated her American career, were indeed a full musical exercise in Spanish-themed sounds. Like her first hit, "Malaguena" and "The Breeze and I" (recorded 1954, with Werner Müller's orchestra) open with Valente's melismatic arabesques, this time moving her geographical signifier to the other end of the Mediterranean. Valente's exoticism functions via what we might term an extended orientalism and expands Derek Scott's point that "musical Orientalism has never been overly concerned with establishing distinctions between Eastern cultures and that an interchangeability of exotic signifiers proved to be commonplace rather than astonishing."⁹⁴ More broadly, this exemplifies Homi Bhaba's observation, that it is ambivalence that gives stereotypes their currency and "ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures."⁹⁵ The two songs are based upon movements from the Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona's *Suite Andaluía* (1933) and with "Malaguena" and "The Breeze and I," Valente moves easily from the orientalist sounds of "Istanbul" to Spain, itself the site of various elisions of orientalist and exotic musical imaginations in European opera and classical music. Valente sang "Malaguena" in German (later she

⁹⁴ Derek Scott, *From the Erotic to the Demonic: On Critical Musicology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 158.

⁹⁵ Homi Bhaba, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 95.

produced versions in other languages, including Spanish) and “The Breeze and I” in English. The genealogy and performance of the songs, thus, reveal the transnational, exoticist repertoire that became central to Valente.⁹⁶ Many of her songs—including “Malaguena”—follow the template from “Istanbul” and stages Valente’s even higher-soaring vocalises and arabesques, a vocal presentation common in exotica of the era.⁹⁷ They are often placed in intros and middle sections, giving them both a marginal status against the normative pop and jazz singing in the verses and choruses, but also distinguishing them as musical moments that require special attention from the listener. Indeed, “The Breeze and I” stretches the introduction of the song to take up almost a full minute and “Malaguena” achieves the same feat by orchestrating the verse as a minute-long introduction before the proper groove sets in for the refrain. In both cases we are presented with an explosive array of brass hits, cymbal crashes, castanets, Spanish guitar, chromatic descents by flutes and strings, and of course Valente’s vocalise above it all.

The Hi-Fi Nightingale: Caterina Valente’s Voice and Image in the U.S.

In the spring of 1955, the record label Decca (partnered with the William Morris agency) courted Valente and flew her to the U.S. where she was shuffled from promotion work in New York to Los Angeles for more press and a performance on the TV show *The Colgate Comedy Hour*.⁹⁸ The short trip paid off and in December–February 1955–1956

⁹⁶ Tim Taylor lists “The Breeze and I” as one of the main “exotica standards” of a repertoire in fifties that included a range of subcategories from Hawaiian over Near Eastern to Latin American orientalist songs, in “Korla Pandit and Musical Indianism,” in *Widening the Horizon: Exoticism in Post-War Popular Music*, ed. Philip Hayward (Sydney: John Libbey, 1999), 31–32.

⁹⁷ Leydon, “Utopia in the Tropics.”; John Haley, “A Re-evaluation of Yma Sumac Based on Live Recordings,” *ARSC Journal* 43, no. 2 (2012): 163–195. Valente was indeed later compared to Sumac, John Scott, “New Star Shines in Las Vegas,” *Los Angeles Times*, Apr. 21, 1964.

⁹⁸ In her autobiography, she states that she sang and danced jazz. I have not been able to identify what that meant and which songs she sang. Valente, *Bonjour, Katrin!*, 135.

she was back in the US for engagements at clubs and in radio and TV shows. In the US, Decca marketed Valente as the “Malaguena girl,” crafting a performance persona out of her song character; she charted in *Cash Box* (see fig. 2.13; but not in *Billboard*) and received sixth place in the *Down Beat* critics’ poll under the category “Female singer—new star” (she continued to chart on this poll until 1957, albeit in lower positions).



Figure 2.17. Caterina Valente on cover of *Cash Box* magazine, as the “Malaguena girl.”

The US press stressed her artistic family background and nationality, as well as her singing and gender. One paper called her an “Italian feminine singer”⁹⁹ and another used the adjectives “slender, girlish” and dubbed her “the girl with the rollercoaster voice.”¹⁰⁰ This image of a young girl was echoed the following year with a description that also emphasized her appropriation of Black music: “New pop singers influenced by some of the greatest Negro jazz singers today include: Caterina Valente, lean attractive ponytailed singer from Germany who learned American jazz style from recordings by Louis Armstrong, Ethel Waters and Billie Holiday.”¹⁰¹ *Time* magazine even went so far as to describing her in racially ambiguous terms: “Her singing style has settled into a kind of modified Moorish that can develop into a frightening, savage howl or sink into a sweet whisper.”¹⁰² These statements reveal the intersections of genre, gender, and race that were made more explicit with Valente’s steps onto the American scene. The two sides of Valente’s voice were racially coded, with the savage howling representing Blackness and the sweet whisper connoting whiteness. Valente is positioned as a white pop singer as opposed to the Black American jazz musicians. What makes her exceptional is her talent for appropriation and making that Black-white opposition hearable.

As is clear from the reception and presentation of her, Valente’s vocal style was important to her musical persona, evidenced by the title chosen for her first American LP, *The Hi-Fi Nightingale* (1956). It included “Malaguena” and “The Breeze and I,” as well as several other tunes that effectively placed Valente as a singer of Spanish and Latin

⁹⁹ Wayne Oliver, “Star Flies 14,000 Miles for 10 Minutes on TV.” *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 18, 1955.

¹⁰⁰ Mercer Cross, “‘Smoke Filled Room’ Is Laugh-Filled Record,” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, Oct. 6, 1957.

¹⁰¹ George Daniels, “Fats Domino Mr. Hit Maker,” *Curtain Time*, *Daily Defender*, Nov. 19, 1956.

¹⁰² “New Pop Singers,” *Time*, Nov. 19, 1956, 53.

American styles (e.g. “Siboney,” “Begin the Beguine,” “Fiesta Cubana,” “[Tango] Jalousie”). The combination of repertoire, vocal staging, and Valente’s hi-fi persona exemplifies how such records, as Tim Anderson puts it, “manifest not only exotic musical techniques but also recording methods and aesthetic sensibilities that appear exotic” to listeners.¹⁰³



Figure 2.18. Front cover of *The Hi-Fi Nightingale* (1956).

The title and cover iconography (see fig. 2.14) clearly play on Valente’s age and gender as a young girl whose voice sets her free. A technological fetishism continues in the

¹⁰³ Tim Anderson, *Making Easy Listening: Material Culture and Postwar American Recording* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 162. For more on the combination of orientalizing styles and spatial recording technique in mid-century exotica see Andrew Wenaus, “Anxiety in Stereo: Les Baxter’s *Space Escapade*, Armchair Tourism, Polar Inertia, and Being-in-a-World,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 26, no. 4 (2014): 484–502; and David Toop, *Exotica: Fabricated Soundscapes in the Real World* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 1999).

liner notes that pronounce: “The voice of Caterina Valente is an international sensation. It captured America through the medium of one exciting recording” (referencing “Malaguena”). One notices not only the emphasis on the recorded voice and the international, but also the reversal of the caging-metaphor suggested by the cover: Her voice is set free but in doing so it captures US listeners.¹⁰⁴ The vocal and the international are stressed in the rest of the text (her “universal appeal can be attributed in part to her continental parentage” and her voice is “amazing”) and hinged together: she is “a true international star possessing a beauty and personality that match her sparkling vocal technique.”¹⁰⁵ If one is to believe an anecdote told in her autobiography, part of the sparkle of “Malaguena” was a specific product of the recording’s vocal staging. Werner Müller was unhappy with the initial takes: “It needs to sound like a dream and the voice must simply float and yet be very present.”¹⁰⁶ In order to achieve this they ended up placing Valente’s microphone in the marble-clad ladies’ room and using it as a makeshift echo chamber and recording booth. (I will, however, suggest that Valente may be misremembering and that the recording in question was “The Breeze and I,” which unlike “Malaguena” has considerable reverb on her voice and places her in the middle-to-back of the soundbox.)¹⁰⁷ Similar to Babs’s vocal

¹⁰⁴ This connection between technology and the “international” is not unique to Valente. In fact, it places her squarely within “the craze for exotic music [that] exactly coincides with a proliferation of pseudo-scientific discourse about audio equipment.” Leydon, “Utopias of the Tropics,” 61. Although Valente was never positioned via the same sexual allure as the most famous European woman of those years, Brigitte Bardot, there were parallels to her persona, summarized by Vanessa Schwartz as: “her youth, modernity, mobility, confidence, and freedom.” Schwartz, “Who Killed Brigitte Bardot? Perspectives on the New Wave at Fifty,” *Cinema Journal* 49, no. 4 (2010): 149.

¹⁰⁵ Loner notes for Caterina Valente, *The Hi-Fi Nightingale*, Decca, DL 8203, 1956. Liner notes.

¹⁰⁶ (My translation.) “Es muß wie ein Traum klingen, und die Stimme muß einfach schweben und trotzdem sehr präsent sein.” Caterina Valente, *Bonjour, Katrin! Singen, tanzen, leben* (Bergisch Gladbach: Gustav Lübke, 1985), 124.

¹⁰⁷ She also states that she attributes the success of “Malaguena” to the arrangement, the “very special sound, the ‘natural’ echo-effect, and perhaps also my voice, which sometimes sounds more like a musical instrument than human song.” (“[...] dem ganz besonderen Sound, dem ‘natürlichen’ Echo-Effekt und vielleicht auch meiner Stimme, die manchmal mehr klingt wie ein Musikinstrument als wie menschlicher Gesang.”).

staging on *Scandinavian Folk Songs*, this is a technique of soft-focus sound. The surplus of space not only gives her voice its extra “sparkle,” but further feminizes her and gives her something akin to the “very feminine” and “foreign aura” identified by Marek in the way that it stresses the timbral qualities of her voice and suggests distance and thus perhaps foreignness (in combination with the musical style and origin of the tune). On *The Hi-Fi Nightingale*, Valente’s high-pitched melismas were also used on “If Hearts Could Talk” (including a technological or bathroom-based manipulation of her voice) and “Siboney” features a section where she again blends jazzy scat singing with arabesque inflections.

The Hi-Fi Nightingale stems from Valente’s first push onto the American scene but consisted of recordings made in Europe. For the rest of her American career she still relied heavily on the Latin repertoire and sentimental pop songs, but her late-fifties attempt to break into the US was sought via jazz recordings. For her first album recorded in the US, *Plenty Valente* (1957), Decca paired her with the African American arranger Sy Oliver and a big band including notable jazz musicians like J.J. Johnson, Charlie Shavers, and Hank Jones. This followed the crossover practice established in swing music during the previous decade, according to which an African American sounding band was palatable for white, mainstream audiences but generally required a white rather than Black singer.¹⁰⁸ The band and arrangements indeed point to the jazzier end of popular music, but Oliver and the producer, Milt Gabler, clearly found that her “rollercoaster voice” should be foregrounded from the very first song of the record, which pointed more in the direction of novelty and exotica. After a brass hit, “Poinciana” begins with Valente’s voice floating high above the

Valente, *Bonjour, Katrin!*, 124–125. Again, here I suggest that this applies equally to “The Breeze and I,” which also charted in the US.

¹⁰⁸ Brackett, *Categorizing Sound*, 173.

band (see fig. 2.15). She enters with a gentle crescendo from almost nothing and again her voice is staged via extra reverb, the combination of which gives us the impression of Valente coming to us from afar.



Figure 2.19. Vocal intro from “Poinciana.”

If Alice Babs’s singing suggested Nordic open spaces and cold mountains, Valente’s voice was the warm breeze on southern shores. Valente’s “Poinciana” worked as a well-chosen sequel to “Malaguena” and “The Breeze and I.” The lyrics exchange the “blue night” of “Malaguena” with a “pale moon” and substitute the “breeze” for a “tropic wind.” In music-theory terms, we may label Valente’s performance of the wind a *topic*.¹⁰⁹ This functioned as a flexible vocal signifier, yet strong enough to afford Valente with a certain vocal brand that fitted her persona. The wind topic and images of tropical shores are repeated in “Flamingo” and the theme of longing through the night is found again in “Nocturne for the Blues” (the jazz standard “Harlem Nocturne”). In both cases this is paired with a high-pitched vocal melisma, which has added reverb, not unlike Babs’s voice in the folkloric tunes on *Scandinavian Folk Songs Sung & Swung!*¹¹⁰ Thus, it is not only through

¹⁰⁹ A good introduction to musical topic theory is Danuta Mirka ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹¹⁰ Valente’s wind topic is more ubiquitous and thus easier to assign than any particular element of Babs’s singing. Yodeling certainly functioned as a central topic for Babs in her early career, but from the sixties onward she transformed it and instead used less semiotically clear signifiers. *Scandinavian Folk Songs* may provide the most direct parallel with its vocal melismas, sonic space and reverb, and folk music repertoire that point to what we might tentatively suggest as a cold, mountain topic.

repertoire and lyrics that evoke the exotic. Peter Doyle has shown how spatial recording practices in mid-century popular music, created through echo and reverb, were used to set up *pictorial spaces* that often signify exotic locations and otherness.¹¹¹ *Plenty Valente* may consist of jazz standards played in a mainstream swing and pop style, but Valente, Sy Oliver, and Milt Gabler managed to position her voice (which the liner notes again made the main selling point) to signify distance, longing, and something exotic.

“Miss Valente Sings in Six Languages, Cooks in Most Languages Too”: Catarina Valente’s Domestic Internationalism

The next ten years, from the late fifties through the sixties, Valente became a major name in the US. Her success included a Grammy nomination in 1959 and she was voted best female singer in *Motion Picture Daily* and *Television Today*’s poll for *Fame* magazine in 1965. She became a regular on American television and even briefly co-hosted the show *The Entertainers* in 1965. She sang jazz, pop, and expanded her repertoire of Latin music to include the newly popular bossa nova (where she would often accompany herself on guitar). She also recorded *Classics with a Chaser* (1960), an album with pop versions of classical music, her clearest attempt at matching her own pan-European background with the symbolic capital of European highbrow music. Albums like *Strictly U.S.A* (1963) and *I Happen to Like New York* (1964) on the other hand emphasized American standards. Through the sixties her vocal quality and abilities were a constant point of positioning in both the reception of her music and in the promotion of her recordings, exemplified by an album like *Superfonics* (1961) using the rhetoric of *The Hi-Fi Nightingale* to describe the

¹¹¹ Doyle, *Echo and Reverb*, 6–9, 15, and 120–142.

marriage of recording technology and “her extraordinary dynamic range” and “incomparable vocalizing.”¹¹² And while much of the American reception of her music continued along the positive notes of the fifties, sour notes also began trickling in. Thus, in a review of her appearance in a 1963 Bing Crosby TV special she is accused of marring a song to the point where it is “stylized beyond recognition.”¹¹³ This type of accusation that had appeared by the late fifties and been brought against artists associated with hi-fi aesthetics, such as Valente. It reflected a change in attitudes towards adult pop, where the appeal of jazz-inflected pop and sentimental ballads from the major labels shifted. What had once seemed well-produced, now seemed over-produced.¹¹⁴ By 1967, when Valente’s US career was beginning to peter out, her primary attribute is still her “splendid voice,” but it is used in the service of “vocal trickery” and she is found wanting: “Her vocal improvisations are stunning, but unlike Ella Fitzgerald, who never forgets what song she is singing, the flights of fancy often were curiously unrelated to the material from which they spring.”¹¹⁵ The comparison to Fitzgerald becomes striking when one revisits a joint performance they gave on the *Perry Como Show* in 1966.¹¹⁶ Foregoing the melody and lyrics to “Avalon” (leaving that to Como), Valente and Fitzgerald instead perform a stylized, written-out unison of scat singing. The unison lines seem to suggest an equal vocal performance, but the listener who knows both Valente and Fitzgerald is left with an impression that highlights their musical discrepancies as much as their similarities. The written-out scat mimics Fitzgerald’s

¹¹² Liner notes for Caterina Valente, *Superfonics*, RCA Victor, LSP -2241 (1961).

¹¹³ Paul Gardner, “Bing Crosby Appears with Buddy Ebsen and Caterina Valente,” *New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1963.

¹¹⁴ Albin Zak, “No-Fi: Crafting a Language of Recorded Music in 1950s Pop,” in *The Art of Record Production*, ed. Simon Frith and Simon Zagorski-Thomas (New York: Routledge, 2012), 52.

¹¹⁵ William Rice, “Catering Valente is a Talented Performer but She’s a Tricky One,” *Washington Post*, Sept. 29, 1967.

¹¹⁶ Catarina Valente, Ella Fitzgerald, and Perry Como, “Avalon,” *Perry Como’s Summer Show*, aired Apr. 25, 1966, NBC, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_sbY2w8pTZ4, accessed Mar. 27, 2020.

hallmark style, which Valente imitates using her virtuosic and versatile voice.¹¹⁷ Fitzgerald is arguably the preeminent virtuosic singer of the jazz canon, but in this performance she seems to be locked in the pre-written scat and impeded by lack of improvisation. Valente was a virtuoso, but her appropriation of African American singing now seemed like an inauthentic imitation and exposed as a novelty technique.

A further problem contributing to Valente's falling popularity in the US, may have been that her girlish image from the fifties, along with its sonic associations, was being substituted for a more mature persona. She thus hit the problem identified by Laurie Stras, "we don't want girl singers to be women."¹¹⁸ Valente was no longer the caged virgin bird of *The Hi-Fi Nightingale* but appeared as the adult woman in talk shows with famous male hosts or was portrayed as a housewife in the press. In the latter case, the domestic female identity was paired with her life as jet-setting star by using cooking as a metaphor for her international identity and vocal versatility: "Miss [sic] Valente, who sings in six languages [...] cooks in most languages too."¹¹⁹ Elsewhere she was described as "musical goulash,"¹²⁰ and a review that makes the link between repertoire and cooking, lauds her as a polyglot and praises the way she compartmentalizes national musical styles ("she uses different musical arrangers for each language"), but while "her ability to take off on flights of wordless vocalizing" is a strong point she is "more apt to grind a song down than to light

¹¹⁷ Judith Tick notes the vocal jam and text jam as central aspects of Fitzgerald's singing, in "Ella Fitzgerald & 'I Can't Stop Loving You,' Berlin 1968: Paying Homage to & Signifying on Soul Music," *Daedalus* 148, no. 2 (2019): 83–91. David Ake highlights Fitzgerald deliberate use of "aesthetic imperfections" in *Jazz Matters: Sound, Place, and Time Since Bebop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 46–49.

¹¹⁸ Laurie Stras, "Introduction: She's So Fine, or Why Girl Singers (Still) Matter," in *She's So Fine: Reflections on Whiteness, Femininity, Adolescence, and Class in 1960s Music*, ed. Laurie Stras (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 4.

¹¹⁹ Fleming, Cecil. "Caterina Valente Cooks Up Storm." *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 21, 1966. It is odd that the article uses the prefix "miss," seeing as Valente was married and the article makes a point of that.

¹²⁰ "Berlitz Baedeker," *Newsweek*, Mar. 16, 1964.

it with life.”¹²¹ Her cooking is clearly linked to middle-class heteronormative femininity which is by extension connected to voice and identity.

In these articles, Valente still occupies an international position and has gained an adult, female persona, but the judgement is that her music and voice had suffered. The American desire for a “very female” voice, to return to Marek’s phrase, may then also be a desire for the youthful voice. A possible precursor to Valente (and Babs), Deanna Durbin, serves as a point of comparison. As Jennifer Fleegeer has argued, Durbin initially inhabited a pan-European identity through her operatic repertoire and film narratives that gave her various Europe origins (she was in fact Canadian but raised in California). Later, her film company tried to strip her of her European characteristics and give her a more adult persona, but “ironically, Universal’s efforts to remake her in the image of the American film star only made her appear more foreign, for her characteristic voice failed to signify anything but opera.”¹²² The same irony could be at play in the case of Valente in that her “vocal trickery” could be accepted as an aspect of the somewhat exotic sounds of Latin American music within the middle-of-the-road pop sounds of the fifties and early sixties. However, unlike Babs who transitioned from the easy listening era and secured her place in the jazz canon via Ellington, Valente engaged in the full range of middle-of-the-road pop and TV, but lost her star in the US as those vocal sounds were eclipsed by the youthful and intercultural authenticity of rock.¹²³

¹²¹ John S. Wilson, “Caterina Valente, Polylingual Vocalist.” *New York Times*, May 19, 1964.

¹²² Jennifer Fleegeer, *Mismatched Women: The Siren’s Song Through the Machine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 98.

¹²³ In this sense Babs and Valente ended up on each side of the “fault line” described by Vincent Stephens, “Crooning at the Fault Lines: Theorizing Jazz and Pop Vocal Singing Discourse in the Rock Era, 1955–1978,” *American Music* 26, no. 2 (2008): 156–195.

By the late sixties Valente sounded too much like the aging crooners she appeared alongside in *The Perry Como Show* (twelve appearances, beginning in 1959), Bing Crosby TV specials, *The Danny Kaye Show*, *The Dean Martin Show*, *The Texaco Star Parade*, *The Meredith Wilson Show*, *The Mike Douglas Show*, and *The Johnny Carson Show*. This part of her career peaked when she briefly became the co-host of *The Entertainers*, a TV variety and talk show. In these shows she was still presented as an “international” star, who could toggle between convenient identities, as exemplified by the “international medley” that she performed on the Bing Crosby Show in 1963. Valente’s role in these TV shows was as a conduit of various exotic styles. In some cases, this even went as far as not merely presenting Valente as the cosmopolitan appropriator, but in fact expert instructor of music that she held no national or ethnic claim to. Her imitation of African American singing sounded increasingly inauthentic, but at the end of her American career she leveraged her associations with Latin American music to appear as a bossa nova singer. As K.E. Goldschmitt has shown, the “mixture of foreignness and cosmopolitanness was part of [bossa nova’s] appeal” to US audiences and that by the mid-sixties the genre was increasingly associated with images of jet-set living and adult, white middle-class easy listening.¹²⁴ These were, as we have seen, all things that fit with Valente’s persona. In a 1966 appearance on the Dean Martin Show, she and the host are chatting and Martin plays off of Valente’s slight accent and goes into an undefinable European accent (Italian, French, German?) prompted by her suggestion that they sing bossa nova.¹²⁵ He thus willfully and/or comically mistakes the

¹²⁴ K.E. Goldschmitt, *Bossa Mundo: Brazilian Music in Transnational Media Industries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 50, and chs. 1 and 2 in general.

¹²⁵ I have not been able to pinpoint the exact date of this performance. Epguides.com lists three appearances of Valente on *The Dean Martin Show*, Nov. 17, 1966, Dec. 16, 1967, and Dec. 5, 1968, “The Dean Martin Show (a Titles & Air Dates Guide),” *Epguides.com*, <http://epguides.com/DeanMartinShow/>, accessed Mar. 31., 2020; Dean Martin and Caterina Valente, “One Note Samba,” *The Dean Martin Show*, n.d., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuEv942wOZs>, accessed Mar. 27, 2020.

Brazilian origin of that style for Valente's pan-European persona. Furthermore, she is positioned as the authority on this Brazilian style of music, teaching Martin how to sing the bossa nova. Here, Valente is the "ideal appropriator" via cosmopolitan authentication.¹²⁶ This, I would argue, is an ability predicated upon her whiteness, as white people are allowed to pick up other voices and master them, in contrast to people of color who can only be essentialized as representative of their own ethnicity.

American ears found Valente's internationalism in the versatility of her voice as expressed in her vocal range that extended from her exoticized high pitches to her ability to sing in multiple languages and fitting within the styles of jazz, latin, and pop. In other words, her foreignness came not from a direct representation of e.g. specific German, Italian, French, or even Brazilian authenticity and ethnicity, but from an embodiment and reification of multiculturalism, difference, and cosmopolitanism itself. To this end, a vague pan-Europeanness was, as she recalled, literally better suited than any national particularities: "I always dressed as European as possible on the stage. The Americans love it."¹²⁷ Furthermore, because the idea of a melting-pot of ethnicity and culture was already foundational to the *national* identity of US Americans the position as a multinational star was open to Valente. Within a US context this avenue was also predicated upon her whiteness.

¹²⁶ Valente's reification of cosmopolitanism and Martin's caricature of it also serves as an example of why Sarah Collins and Dana Gooley issue the warning: "We should be wary of using the term cosmopolitanism as a casual descriptor for the multitude of diverse encounters, affiliations, and alliances we discover. Not all border-crossing encounters reflect or produce cosmopolitan sensibilities." Here, Martin's sensibility (or lack thereof) and Valente's identity is instead closer to "the stereotype of the rootless or effete cosmopolitan, which took shape in the late nineteenth century and effectively reduced 'cosmopolitan' to an identity marked by a lifestyle of luxury and travel." "Music and the New Cosmopolitanism: Problems and Possibilities," *Musical Quarterly* 99, no. 2 (2016): 140–141.

¹²⁷ "Auf der Bühne habe ich mich immer so europäisch gekleidet wie möglich. Das lieben die Amerikaner." Valente, *Bonjour, Katrin!*, 202.

* * *

For Farrah Jasmine Griffin, writing about African American female vocalists, “representations of the voice suggest that it is like a hinge, a place where things can both come together and break apart.”¹²⁸ Because of Babs’s and Valente’s whiteness and European identity they had the privilege to play with vocal signifiers on the hinges between white and Black, and float between styles that connote jazz, classical, folk, and popular music.

As female, European singers Babs and Valente were cast as “*very* female” with “the allure of a foreign aura.” Their femininity and foreignness was expressed and perceived through the use of the highest soprano range, clear and “pure” timbres, and a repertoire that emphasized non-US places. In the case of Babs that place was Scandinavia and later via her more “classical” sound it was perhaps a broader, highbrow northern Europe; Valente’s geographic signifiers were more widespread, because her persona was constructed through a southern-European identity that stretched from Istanbul to Brazil. Their voices, ethnicity, and gender were commodified as products for the white American middle classes, positioned as domestically safe, yet exotically alluring.

It is significant that the “female” and “foreign aura” that Babs and Valente embodied was often found in vocalises. Writing about girl groups in the same era, Jacqueline Warwick posits that “these vocables, which express more than conventional language allows,” can be understood in terms of Hélène Cixous concept of an *écriture féminine*, which highlights ways in writing (in the broadest sense of the term) through the body may resist the

¹²⁸ Farrah Jasmine Griffin, “When Malindy Sings: A Meditation of Black Women’s Vocality,” in *Uptown Conversations: The New Jazz Studies*, ed. Robert G. O’Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, and Farrah Jasmine Griffin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 104. At the end of the essay Griffin provides a reading of Ellington’s “Come Sunday” and, in fact, mentions an “especially beautiful version with the white Swedish vocalist Alice Babs.” I take the fact that she does not remark further upon the racial anomaly that Babs represents to her narrative to be one more example of the hinge-like nature of the voice as a place where things come together and break apart.

language of patriarchal discourse.¹²⁹ In this way, Warwick writes, “singers do quite literally write with their bodies and voices, bringing out utterances from deep within and through flesh, fluid, and bodily tissue.”¹³⁰ Similarly, Roland Barthes famously found *the grain of the voice* in “a dual posture, dual production—of language and music.” The melismatic vocalises of Babs and Valente were perhaps, in Barthes’s words, an attempt to “displace the fringe of contact between language and music.”¹³¹ These points of contact were indeed placed at the fringe of the vocal range and at the fringes of songs, in intros, middle sections, and codas. Paradoxically, Valente’s and especially Babs’s vocal and bodily performance can also be heard as gestures away from the body. Their open vowels, clear timbre and tone, vocalises and melismas that float above the rest of the music, and the versatile and effortless, virtuosic vocal control is a representation through the voice that embodies a “very female” range, style, and technique—an almost grainless grain of the voice. This timbral quality and vocal range was also tied to whiteness. As such, the vocal gestures—even as they seek to escape the body—are predicated upon the body. The fact that these vocal gestures may even signify the “pure” and “controlled” is also part of their white privilege, as such gestures are always already embodied even when they are heard as transcending their bodily origins. When Babs was heard as angelic it is through a patriarchal discourse that uses her gender and identity to transcend her body, which relies on her whiteness. Similarly, Valente was lauded for her versatile voice and transnational performance, which was tied to her talents as a polyglot and the cosmopolitanism she thus embodied, but this flexibility of identities was predicated upon her whiteness (as perhaps also evidenced

¹²⁹ Hélène Cixious, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” *Signs* 1, no. 4 (1976): 875–893.

¹³⁰ Warwick, *Girl Groups, Girl Culture*, 38.

¹³¹ Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice,” in *Image – Music – Text* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977), 181.

by the fact that African American transnationalism, by comparison, was explicitly politicized and antagonistic to hegemonic US society). Furthermore, the use of non-language vocalizing positioned Babs's and Valente's identity as something alluring, exotic, and foreign, yet not more different than it could be easily consumed.

However, rather than seeing Babs's and Valente's voices as endpoints of essentialized and commodified performance my argument is that the fact that they were essentialized and commodified is indicative of their reception and positioning. Nina Sun Eidsheim points out that "because the myth of vocal essentialism and innateness runs so deep, we create complex, schizophrenic, layered listening situations in order to compensate for confrontations with the non-essential nature of voice—confrontations caused, for instance, by vocal likeness, imitation, or ventriloquism."¹³² Babs and Valente were active players in the game of vocal likeness, imitation, and ventriloquism. But they were also being played, or as Eidsheim puts it as regards race and the voice (and to this we could add, gender), "the evidence is rigged."¹³³ When Babs and Valente went to the US the game of vocal likeness cast them as jazz and pop singers imitating African American styles and as white and/or cosmopolitan Europeans who were inevitably foreign.

The US careers of Babs and Valente show us that notions of what constitutes musical US-Americanness or Europeanness are not created separately on either side of the Atlantic but emerge in a transatlantic dialectic. These case studies reveal that gender and class are important categories in the formation of European identities and that such identities were not created in Europe and then imported to the United States but were created in the process of transmission into the United States. Furthermore, though often less obvious, race and

¹³² Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound*, 23–24.

¹³³ Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound*, 24.

ethnicity were used by musicians, critics, and listeners to position Babs and Valente as Europeans. Their whiteness was transposed in a US context and their stories tell us as much about US ideologies of whiteness as it does about European ethnicities.

Chapter 3. “He Was as Soulful as Any Black Person I Ever Heard”: The Question of Joe Zawinul’s Soul

Joe Zawinul (1932–2007) was riding the waves of a relatively successful career as a sideman in his native Austria and southern Germany when he arrived on ship in New York City in January 1959. The young pianist had, as he later recounted, “started really digging black folks.”¹ He had become “obsessed with wanting to go to America and learn how to play music”² and later concluded: “I *had* to get to the United States if I was going to grow as a musician. I had to have contact with the music as a living force. And I couldn’t get this in Vienna.”³ To say that he needed to learn how to play music, was not merely a question of acquiring the correct technique (his European recordings from the fifties reveal that he was already a competent, if unremarkable pianist). “Learning to play music,” then, was also about a somewhat more metaphysical “growth” through contact with the “living force” found at the source of jazz, the United States:

When I was walking [down Broadway], I had this feeling, and it made me kind of sad because I knew I was never going to leave America. I mean, I had found it here—right here. I didn’t know a person—no relatives, no friends, nobody. Not even an acquaintance. I just went and said, “I’m going to start from the beginning,” and I felt sad because I knew this was where I was going to be. I wanted to learn... to suck in, to inhale all that life—Harlem, the clubs... In order to express yourself, you’ve got to get the knowledge to do it. I was tired of searching; I was ready to find things.⁴

¹ Conrad Silvert, “Wayfaring Genius,” *Down Beat*, 1 Jun. 1978, 14.

² Julie Coryell and Laura Friedman, *Jazz-Rock Fusion: The People, the Music* (New York: Delacorte, 1978), 186.

³ Pete Welding, “From Vienna with Love, Joe Zawinul,” *Down Beat*, 17 Nov. 1966, 24.

⁴ Coryell and Friedman, *Jazz-Rock Fusion*, 186.

Complete Details

**The First DOWN BEAT
Hall of Fame Scholarship**

Down Beat has set up a full year's scholarship to the famous Berklee School of Music in Boston, the present home of the DOWN BEAT Hall of Fame and one of the nation's most prominent schools in the use and teaching of contemporary American music.

This scholarship is offered to further American music among all young musicians and also perpetuate the meaning of the Hall of Fame.

The scholarship will be in honor of Benny Goodman, chosen by the Down Beat readers as the 1957 Hall of Fame member. The scholarship award shall be awarded to an instrumentalist or composer to be selected by a board of judges appointed by Down Beat.

Who is eligible?
Any instrumentalist or composer who will have either had his (or her) 17th birthday or who will have finished high school, on or before June 15, 1958. Anyone in the world fulfilling this requirement is eligible.

Dates of competition:
Official applications must be postmarked no later than midnight, February 28, 1958. The scholarship winner will be announced in the April 17, 1958 issue of DOWN BEAT, on sale April 3.

How judged
All decisions and final judging shall be made solely on the basis of musical ability. The judges, whose decisions shall be final, will be: Hall of Fame member, Benny Goodman; the Editor of DOWN BEAT, Lawrence Berk, director of the Berklee School of Music, a prominent educator and a noted professional musician-composer whose names will be announced later.

Terms of scholarship
The scholarship as offered is a full tuition grant for one school year (2 semesters) in the value of \$700.
Upon completion of a school year, the student may apply for an additional tuition scholarship grant.
The winner of the scholarship may choose any of three possible starting dates . . . September, 1958; January, 1959; May, 1959.

How to apply
Fill out the coupon below, or a reasonable facsimile, mail to Hall of Fame Scholarship, Down Beat, 2001 Calumet, Chicago 16, Ill., to receive the official application form.
With the official application, you will then send to the above address a tape or record of your playing a musical instrument or your original musical composition.

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Please send me, by return mail, an official application for the DOWN BEAT Hall of Fame Scholarship honoring Benny Goodman. (Schools and teachers may receive additional applications upon request):_____

Name _____

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City _____ Zone _____ State _____

Official applications must be postmarked no later than midnight, February 28, 1958 220

Hall of Fame

After many hours of carefully listening to demonstration tapes and discs and checking applications, the board of judges for *Down Beat's* Benny Goodman Hall of Fame scholarship found a winner.

Nicholas Brignola, 21-year-old reed man from Troy, N.Y. has been named winner of the Hall of Fame scholarship, entitling him to the \$700 scholarship at the Berklee school of music in Boston, Mass.

Brignola has worked with the Reese Markewitch quintet at the Randall's Island jazz festival and Cafe Bohemia in New York. He recently participated in the Markewitch group's first LP, for Modern-age Records.

The flood of applications for the Hall of Fame scholarship unveiled many fine jazz talents. This led *Down Beat* to name five additional winners of scholarships for study at Berklee.

Karl Drewo, 21, from Vienna, Austria won a \$350 scholarship. A versatile jazzman, Drewo plays tenor, clarinet, vibes, and piano. He has worked with several leading Austrian jazz groups and has headed his own group, too.

Three \$200 scholarships for study at Berklee were awarded to:

Richard L. Wright, 23, a brass and reed student from Bremerton, Wash.

William R. Jones, 29, a reed man-composer-arranger from Cleveland, Ohio.

Joe Zawinul, 25, a pianist from Vienna, Austria.

A special award was made to 18-year-old Louis Gasca, a senior at Jefferson Davis high school in Houston, Texas. Gasca, not in the Hall of Fame competition, was awarded a \$350 Berklee scholarship.

Figure 3.20. The ad for Berklee scholarship that Zawinul responded to, *Down Beat*, Feb. 20, 1958, 37; and the announcement of his award, *Down Beat*, May 15, 1958, 9.

Zawinul had won a scholarship to attend the famed Berklee jazz conservatory in Boston (see fig. 3.1) and was thus one of the first international students to enroll in the growing American jazz education industry. The trajectory of Zawinul's education reveals that, for him, the place to "find things" was perhaps not within the institutional frames of a conservatory and later rationalized that he had come to the US "with the purpose to kick asses," and that he had had to "do a lot of learning, not in school, but out there with the musicians."⁵ Kicking ass is, perhaps, more easily done outside the confines of formal education and

⁵ Silvert, "Wayfaring Genius," 15.

Zawinul dropped out of school after a few weeks and joined Maynard Ferguson's big band. In this sense, Zawinul's move to the US was not so much a break in his career, but actually a continuation of the job as a journeyman musician that he had occupied in Europe. Ironically, though getting formal jazz education was the reason why Zawinul went to the US in the first place, his rejection of this opportunity fits well—at least in his retrospective narration of it—with jazz pedagogy scholar Ken Prouty's assertion that the “prevailing narratives of the history of jazz education reinforce the perceptions of a fundamental distinction between academic and non-academic identities.”⁶

Through the sixties, Zawinul established himself as a reliable sideman for musicians such as Ferguson (who also secured him a green card), Dinah Washington, and most prominently Cannonball Adderley. His work as a composer flourished under Adderley, for whom he wrote the hit “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy,” and in 1969 he provided material for Miles Davis's seminal albums *In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*. In 1970 he formed the band Weather Report (the other key bandmember being Wayne Shorter), which became the most prominent fusion band in jazz.⁷

Joe Zawinul, perhaps more than any European musician described in this dissertation, has thus become part of the American jazz canon. As such, he became a symbol of the central dialectic of jazz as a transnational, yet American—and particularly African

⁶ Ken Prouty, *Knowing Jazz: Community, Pedagogy, and Canon in the Information Age* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2011), 45. See also ch. 7, “Birth of the School,” in Tony Whyton, *Jazz Icons: Heroes, Myths, and the Jazz Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 153–177; ch. 5, “Rethinking Jazz Education,” in David Ake, *Jazz Matters: Sound, Place, and Time Since Bebop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 202–120; and Eitan Wilf, *School for Cool: The Academic Jazz Program and the Paradox of Institutionalized Creativity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

⁷ The most comprehensive overview of Zawinul's career is Brian Glasser, *In a Silent Way: A Portrait of Joe Zawinul* (London: Sanctuary, 2001); see also Günther Baumann, *Zawinul: Ein Leben aus Jazz* (Salzburg: Residenz, 2002), an interview book, which has a more disjunct, yet valuable, narrative that focuses less on a chronological presentation of his life and more on topics and interlocutors.

American—art form. Conrad Silvert summarized this tension in the opening to his big 1978 *Down Beat* portrait article:

Although a compelling argument can be made that jazz has become the world's most international art form, suffering from few barriers of geography, language or race, it remains true that the great majority of jazz innovators have been American blacks. The exception to this rule has been the emergence of Josef Zawinul—a white man born in Austria—as one of jazz's prime innovators.⁸

In the following I want to take up the issues Silvert identifies and focus on how Zawinul fared “out there with the musicians,” particularly in terms of how he negotiated his role as a white Austrian working in mixed-raced bands, playing an African American musical style. At various times Zawinul would try to downplay his status as non-American or white and at other times he would forcefully insist on the black identity of his music. Sometimes he would reference his national and ethnic background, only to dismiss his own identity, or talk of the universal, cosmopolitan aspects of jazz culture at other times. Complicated and perhaps contradictory, as such statements were, for Zawinul, these positions were not entirely at odds with each other.

Given Zawinul's biography, music, and statements, I follow Rogers Brubaker's reframing of the study of “ethnicity, race, and nationhood as a *single integrated family of forms* of cultural understanding, social organization, and political contestation.”⁹ Even as this chapter foregrounds whiteness, the story of Joe Zawinul shows how the shifting weight of ethnicity, race, and nationality interacted in ways that do not map neatly onto the

⁸ Silvert, “Wayfaring Genius,” 13; Silvert also writes, “that he was fast becoming the first European to have a major influence on jazz, that most American of musics.”

⁹ Rogers Brubaker, “Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 22. Brubaker's italics.

conventional distinctions of these concepts. It is my argument that studying Zawinul's understanding of African American culture as well as his own Austrian roots, his experiences in the social organization of American musical life, and his contestation of genre politics in jazz and popular music more broadly, reveals whiteness as a central problem in his biography and music.

The chapter consists of three sections. First, I give an account of the racial politics in Zawinul's autobiographical statements. Secondly, I look at the "soul jazz" that he played in Cannonball Adderley's band and how that was received by white and black musicians and critics. Lastly, I examine the politics of genre and race that confronted Zawinul with the critiques of fusion jazz in the seventies.

"To Me, Black People Are the Easiest to Understand": Joe Zawinul's Narratives of Assimilation and Passing

The first bigger profile of Zawinul in the American jazz press appeared under the title "From Vienna with Love" in *Down Beat* in November 1966. Zawinul was about to have his first major break as the composer of "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy," which was going to become a big hit for Cannonball Adderley's group in the coming months and earn him a Grammy nomination. Looking back at the tune a decade later, in the next big *Down Beat* interview (referenced above), Silvert described the tune as "a funky, happy tune that seemed to refute the author's geographical origins."¹⁰ In 1966 Zawinul too was happy to personally denounce his origins and *Down Beat* reported:

¹⁰ Silvert, "Wayfaring Genius," 18.

He refuses to attach any particular significance to the fact that he is one of a handful of non-American musicians to have achieved any prominence in jazz, let alone to have contributed something to it... to hear Zawinul tell it, there's nothing remarkable in his having attained perfect mastery of modern jazz piano unaided by any direct contact with U.S. jazzmen, major or minor, in the unsettling atmosphere of a four-power-ruled Vienna in the years immediately after World War II. Nor does he attach any significance to the fact that, given his background, he currently should be occupying the piano chair in one of the reigning groups in jazz, succeeding in the job men such as Bobby Timmons, Barry Harris, and Victor Feldman.¹¹

It is difficult to glean from Zawinul's statements in the sixties what the exact reasons for the negotiations of his identity meant at the time. In later decades, though, Zawinul would further complicate his notions of identity, race, and belonging.¹² Instead of continuing to refute his Austrian roots, following a logic that could lead to colorblindness and universalism (although this would also appear from time to time), he changed his autobiographical *authenticating* strategy, to use Reva Marin's term, and his ethnicity and nationality became a source from which he sought to forge solidarity and affinity with African Americans.¹³

¹¹ Pete Welding, "From Vienna with Love," *Down Beat*, 17 Nov. 1966. The fact that Victor Feldman was British can maybe explain why Zawinul was less willing to attach particular value to his provenance.

¹² Although these statements do not amount to a single-authored monograph, I still rely on the theoretical and historical frameworks laid out by scholars of jazz autobiographies, as I consider the ways Zawinul narrated his own biography. One difference, however, is that my focus is mainly (though not exclusively) on Zawinul's autobiographical statements from the sixties and seventies and not a on retrospective view from later in life. Christopher Harlos, "Jazz Autobiography: Theory, Practice, Politics," in *Representing Jazz*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 131–166; Daniel Stein, "The Performance of Jazz Autobiography," *Genre* 36 (2004): 173–200; Daniel Stein, *Music Is My Life: Louis Armstrong, Autobiography, and American Jazz* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012); Ajay Heble, *Landing on the Wrong Note: Jazz, Dissonance, and Critical Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 89–116; Eric Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz: African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Brent Hayes Edwards, *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017); Nicole Rushtin-Paschal, *The Kind of Man I Am: Jazzmasculinity and the World of Charles Mingus Jr.* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2017); Krin Gabbard, "Writing the Jazz Life," in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*, eds. Nicholas Gebhardt, Nicole Rushtin-Paschal, and Tony Whyton (New York: Routledge, 2018), 465–473; and Reva Marin, *Outside and Inside: Race and Identity in White Jazz Autobiography* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2020).

¹³ Marin, *Outside and Inside*, 3–36.

From the seventies Zawinul would be more willing to concede that there was an importance to where he came from and he used this to develop a cosmopolitan and multiethnic identity. In 1979 he declared:

I'm an international person and I've always travelled. I come from a Hungarian-Czechoslovakian family background and you know, it's just whatever comes out. I play now like I played when I was still in Austria. Stylistically, idea-wise, composition-wise, I did pretty much the same thing 20 years ago.¹⁴

The interviewer followed this up by asking if he had listened to “gypsy music” growing up in Vienna, to which Zawinul responded: “Well, this is just something that’s there and it’s part of the atmosphere.”¹⁵ This “gypsy connection” was not simply the interviewer using the trope of conflating Eastern European nations with “gypsy” culture, it was, in fact, a trope Zawinul had begun using himself. Indeed, in 1978 he stated: “I am not only gypsy at heart, but in ancestry.”¹⁶ Taking on such a “gypsy” persona served to blur the lines between race and ethnicity by appealing to European-American immigrant identities famously described by Matthew Frye Jacobsen as “whiteness of a different color” despite the

¹⁴ Larry Birnbaum, “Weather Report Answers Its Critics,” *Down Beat*, Feb. 1979, 15.

¹⁵ Birnbaum, “Weather Report Answers Its Critics,” 15. While some Romanies self-identify as “Gypsies,” it is often used in the pejorative sense by non-Romanies. See Siv B. Lie, “Genre, Ethnoracial Alterity, and the Genesis of *jazz manouche*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 72, no. 3 (2019): 710. I place the term in scare-quotes here to acknowledge the othering and commodifying discourse that Zawinul and others are using here. In current jazz parlance the term is almost exclusively tied to the music of Django Reinhardt. See Benjamin Givan, “‘Django’s Tiger’: From Jazz to Jazz Manouche,” *Current Musicology* 98 (2014): 7–40.

¹⁶ Silvert, “Wayfaring Genius,” 14. Zawinul would repeat this account of his ancestry and identity the rest of his life, most prominently on the first page of Brian Glasser’s authorized biography (the book was originally intended to be a ghostwritten autobiography). For the 1993 symphonic work *Stories of the Danube* his tune “Dr. Honoris Causa” (originally written in honor of Herbie Hancock) appears in the movement titled “Gypsy.” All of these statements only use the vague “gypsy” and the most precise acknowledgement of his lineage that I have been able to find only comes from late in Zawinul’s life, where he explains that his grandmother was a Hungarian Sinti. He and the interviewer connect this, via a reference to Reinhardt, to Zawinul’s supposed metaphysical Black-white mixed race identity. Peter Rüedi, “Das ist die Kunst,” interview with Joe Zawinul, *Die Weltwoche* 12, vol. 6 (2006), accessed online: http://web.archive.org/web/20070929091215/http://www.birdland.at/images/content/pdfs/bericht_weltwoche_zawinul_06-13.pdf.

fact that Zawinul was unequivocally white.¹⁷ The most famous “gypsy” in jazz history, Django Reinhardt (who, unlike Zawinul, actually was Romani/manouche), was similarly positioned by critics. As Siv. B. Lie has documented, Reinhardt’s racialized “gypsy” identity has been used by critics and historians (though, importantly, not by Reinhardt himself) in an elision of Black-white racial markers, so that “Reinhardt’s ostensible similarities to black performers would have rendered him a more plausible ‘hot’ performer than other white musicians.”¹⁸ By evoking the persona of the “gypsy,” Zawinul was entering the same discourse racial and ethnic ambiguity that he could leverage as an argument for his jazz authenticity.

Zawinul had gone from a position of downplaying his whiteness and nationality (perhaps in order to align himself more securely with the soul jazz musicians he played with) to cultivating an image where he complicated his ethnicity, race, and nationality.¹⁹ Embracing a cosmopolitan identity, he would also connect this to issues of race:

The mixing of races and the mixing of cultures creates the greatest of all things. This is my theory. This is what I really believe in. Not only in the 20th century, but period.... Take Austria, for example, when it was like a small United States, with all those different countries under one banner, the Austria-Hungary Empire. There were Czechs, Hungarians, Serbians, Croatians, people from parts of Asia, it covered so much, man. And all these people met in a central melting pot, which at the time was Vienna. It created a completely new world and way of thought.²⁰

¹⁷ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹⁸ Lie, “Genre, Ethnoracial Alterity, and the Genesis of *jazz manouche*,” 678.

¹⁹ Stein has argued that these shifts in autobiographical narration can be compared to jazz performance itself. In both liberating, and, I argue, in ways that still rely on essentializing tropes and racialized power dynamics, my study follows Stein’s analysis of how jazz musicians “frequently seize the opportunity to re-mythologize themselves.” Stein, “The Performance of Jazz Autobiography,” 177.

²⁰ Ray Townley, “The Mysterious Travellings of an Austrian Mogul,” *Down Beat*, 30 Jan. 1975, 16.

This comparison of Austria and the United States is striking in its romanticism. Zawinul was, of course, born after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and his vision of what it was is laden with imperial nostalgia. In this, Zawinul shares some similarities with his fellow European expatriate fusion musician John McLaughlin, who, in Kevin Fellezs's words, at times would reference and use people of color and in doing so would obfuscate "inequitable relations of power, supporting condescending notions of racialized agency, and obscuring the real and symbolic violence done to subaltern epistemologies and cosmologies by white imperialist power."²¹ While Zawinul did not share McLaughlin's interest in Eastern mysticism—he read Nietzsche rather than Sri Chinmoy, McLaughlin's guru—he had desires linked to an imperial past. His imagination of a multiethnic, multiracial empire was troublingly untroubled by the colonial traumas of many of its subjects. Here, Fellezs's words about McLaughlin may be paraphrased: "No matter the sincerity of his motivations or the quality of his aesthetic cultural productions," Zawinul "could not fully escape this historical predicament."²² Rather than responding to the history of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Zawinul's desires for the colonial past functioned through the idea of multiethnic cosmopolitanism to mirror the US melting pot. Tying it explicitly to race, Zawinul even spoke of it in almost Darwinian terms:

Take African people, but African people *in America*, where all this mixing has been going on. The black man over here is so talented and creative because of that. From a mathematical viewpoint, I was thinking of this: everything which is true, the exact opposite is also true. Since the weakest thing is incest, that means the strongest thing has got to be the exact opposite. So the further the races go apart, the greater the freshness of the blood.²³

²¹ Kevin Fellezs, *Birds of Fire: Jazz, Rock, Funk, and the Creation of Fusion* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 130.

²² Fellezs, *Birds of Fire*, 130.

²³ Townley, "The Mysterious Travellings," 14; Zawinul's phrasing and grammar may—characteristically—be a bit confusing here, but from the context it is clear that by referring to how "the races go apart," he is not

For Zawinul this was personal, because of his supposed Austrian-cosmopolitan identity, but also because he was married to an African American woman, Maxine, with whom he had three children. Zawinul felt an affinity towards Black culture and family life, which he portrayed in an essentialized manner:

To me, they [Black people] are the easiest to understand, the closest to my environment. The way I grew up, you know—joke-wise, fun life, big families and all that. A simple life—not too much dough, but a lot of humor, and very close. People are alike all over the world in a way.²⁴

This exemplifies Reva Marin's observation of the autobiographical statements of white jazz musicians, who "looked to black music and culture as a central (though not exclusive) model on which to form their personal and musical identities."²⁵ According to Marin it is a common feature of white jazz autobiography to emphasize "immersion experiences in African American jazz communities as a necessary part of their search for jazz authenticity."²⁶ Zawinul's description of an immersion experiences here works by imagining a homogenous Black life that he can "understand" through a series of stereotypes. This combination of worldly universalism and essentialist notions of African Americans is mirrored in some of the cosmopolitan ideology of new jazz studies, as when Mike Heffley writes that "Zawinul stepped up to embody and activate simply by being... an 'other' from that same Western classical culture who could morph into the African American 'self' so

thinking of a further distance between races, but that a monoracial group may become mixed race. He might have meant that the races "fall apart." Another disturbing aspect of Zawinul's statement is, that one could infer that he believes that Africans are racially and culturally backward of African Americans, who have been able to mix with other races, ethnicities, and cultures in the US.

²⁴ Silvert, "Wayfaring Genius," 21–22.

²⁵ Marin, *Outside and Inside*, xvi.

²⁶ Marin, *Outside and Inside*, xx.

seamlessly as to show that what was going on here was indeed the power of music to transcend all its local/traditional aspects and converge and converse in any one of them globally.”²⁷ Rather than working dialectically, I would argue that this juxtaposition relies on a reification of Black subjectivity and a universalist aesthetics of music grounded in a white subject’s power to appropriate and transcend the Black-white binaries. In doing so, Zawinul, and later Heffley, maintain what bell hooks calls “a deep emotional investment in the myth of ‘sameness,’” even as his statement reflects the primacy of whiteness and difference as markers that inform who he is and how he thinks.²⁸ But Zawinul could also claim that his attitudes towards Black people were a product of his time in the US, where he had worked hard to associate and immerse himself in African-American culture:

In the first six or seven years in this country I was so much in the black world, it was unbelievable... I hardly knew any white people at all.²⁹

It is undoubtedly true that Zawinul spent more time around Black people than the average white American, not to speak of the average white Austrian. However, to say that he hardly knew any white people is equally hyperbolic. Indeed, as Zawinul continues his narrative, it turns out that not only is he playing with the identity of the “white negro,”³⁰ he is

²⁷ It is perhaps no coincidence that Heffley’s chapter is itself written in the form of autobiography. Mike Heffley, “Revisioning History Lived: Four European Expatriates, Three Men and One Woman, Who Shaped One American Live in Two American Cultures,” in *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts*, eds. Cerchiari, Luca, Laurent Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 393.

²⁸ bell hooks, “Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination,” in *Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to be White*, ed. David Roediger (New York: Schocken, 1998), 41.

²⁹ Silvert, “Wayfaring Genius,” 15.

³⁰ Norman Mailer, “The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster,” in *Advertisements for Myself* (New York: Putnam, 1959), 337–358, originally published in *Dissent* (1957). See also Ingrid Monson, “The Problem with White Hipness: Race, Gender, and Cultural Conceptions in Jazz Historical Discourse,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (1995): 396–422; Scott Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 29–96; and Phil Ford, *Dig:*

in fact proudly participating in a game of racial passing. First, he tells a story of how he was the victim of racial segregation in the South (a white sheriff would not allow Zawinul, the only white member of Dinah Washington's band, play in a Black club), but then goes on to reminisce on his own racial ambiguity:

This type of thing happened often in the South, but I never had any problems. We always stayed in black hotels or with black families. When I was with Cannonball's band, I was staying in this one house in Florida with this little old lady about 75. And she never knew that I wasn't black. I always had a tan and looked kinda funny, you know—"That light-skinned boy sure is nice!"³¹

Zawinul took his racial transgression as an example of his resistance to racial segregation and white supremacy. This resistance is, however, guaranteed by his whiteness from becoming truly dangerous (he "never had any problems," unlike his Black colleagues, we must infer). In these cases of racial passing we are, as Gayle Wald observes, "reminded simultaneously of race's power and of the possibility that subjects may undermine, question, or threaten this power through practices that mobilize race for various self-authorized ends."³² Zawinul's politics and practice of race shows the fluidity and instability of race that goes beyond essentialism, but nevertheless mobilizes race through appropriation. This places Zawinul alongside contemporaries who traded in racial appropriation and modern versions of minstrelsy, like Janis Joplin, Steve Reich, and Joni Mitchell.³³ It also places

Sound and Music in Hip Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). I discussed the figure of the "white negro" briefly in relation to Leonard Feather, in chapter 1.

³¹ Silvert, "Wayfaring Genius," 15.

³² Gayle Wald, *Crossing the Line: Racial Passing in Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 5.

³³ Jana Evans Braziel, "'Bye, Bye Baby': Race, Bisexuality, and the Blues in the Music of Bessie Smith and Janis Joplin," *Popular Music and Society* vol. 27, no. 1 (2004): 3–26; Sumanth Gopinath, "Reich in Blackface: Oh Dem Watermelons and Radical Minstrelsy in the 1960s," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 5, no. 2 (2011): 139–93; Miles Park Grier, "Gender, Race, and the Ma(s)king of 'Joni Mitchell,'" in *The*

him in the genealogy of white jazz musicians, like Mezz Mezzrow, who sought racial conversion³⁴; and further back into the deep history of American minstrelsy. This fits with Eric Lott's description of the "love and theft" of blackface that shows how minstrelsy not only created the cultural justifications for slavery. It also served as a method for whites to express their desires for Blackness, which sometimes can go so far as voicing opposition to white supremacy.³⁵ Love was definitely a part of Zawinul's attitude towards African Americans, as seen quite literally in his marriage, but theft and appropriation was, I would argue, part of the Zawinul's racial desires as well. Furthermore, the Black-white relations of Zawinul's life and music were negotiated through his self-image as an cosmopolitan immigrant with "gypsy" ancestry that parallels Michael Rogin's study of Jewish cultural assimilation, which "appropriated an imaginary blackness to Americanize the immigrant son."³⁶ This is also to say that when I am situating Zawinul within a legacy of blackface I am also arguing that we can understand him to be engaged in what Mollie Godfrey and Vershawn Ashanti Young term *neo-passing narratives*: "acts and stories of passing that recall the complex racial politics that defined classic passing narratives but that are performed or produced after segregation."³⁷ Zawinul was toying with the idea of "reverse passing" (i.e. passing from white to Black).

So far, I have only described Zawinul's forays into Blackness in terms of his immigration to the US and the way he situated himself in African American culture. In the

Cambridge Companion to the Singer-Songwriter, eds. Katherine Williams and Justin A. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2016), 201–214.

³⁴ On Mezzrow, see Wald, *Crossing the Line*, 53–81.

³⁵ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

³⁶ Michael Rogin, "Blackface, White Noise: The Jewish Jazz Singer Finds His Voice," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 18, no. 3 (1992): 421.

³⁷ Mollie Godfrey and Vershawn Ashanti Young, "Introduction," in *Neo-Passing: Performing Identity after Jim Crow*, ed. Mollie Godfrey and Vershawn Ashanti Young (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018), 2.

following, we will see that Zawinul's narratives of race and passing were not only found in interviews but were intimately linked to his music.

“He Proves He’s a ‘Brother’ Under the Skin by the Way He Plays a Funky Gospel Beat”: Joe Zawinul’s Soul Music

Zawinul’s racial ideology and aspirations were embedded in his aesthetics and in his musical style. Miles Davis had linked race directly to Zawinul’s music, in the short blurb that appeared on the back cover of Zawinul’s eponymous 1971 album:

In order to fit this music you have to be “Cliché-Free.” In order to write this type of music, you have to be *free inside of yourself*, with two beige kids, a black wife, two pianos, from Vienna, a Cancer and cliché-free.³⁸

Zawinul must have been proud to have such an endorsement from Davis, one of the biggest names in jazz. It was more than an approval of his music. Davis confirmed the natural, familial, and metaphysical affinity that Zawinul believed he had with African American culture and music, though he was also equally signifying upon Zawinul.³⁹ This was based, in no small part, in Zawinul’s successful, nearly decade-long stint as a member of Cannonball Adderley’s band, 1961–1970. As one biographer puts it, Adderley “arguably did more than any other single musician to popularize the idea of ‘soul jazz’.”⁴⁰ Zawinul penned the group’s biggest soul jazz hit, “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy” (1966). It charted high

³⁸ Miles Davis, liner notes for Joe Zawinul, *Zawinul*, Atlantic SD 1779, 1971, LP.

³⁹ Thank you to Tammy Kernolde for this reading.

⁴⁰ Kenny Mathieson, *Cookin’: Hard Bop and Soul Jazz, 1954–1965* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2012), 128–129.

in both its single and album versions during 1967, as well as charting in three different vocal cover versions by other artists, and Zawinul won a Grammy for the composition.

The tune showcases many of the stylistic features of soul jazz (see fig 3.2).⁴¹ The melody is quite simple, with motivic repetitions, on the pentatonic scale, plus the flat seventh, giving it a blues feeling. This is heightened by bluesy slide between tones, which the two horn players use during the statement of the theme. Similarly, Zawinul liberally sprinkles blues inflections across his solo, which is the only one on the recording (see figure 2.3).

Figure 3.21. Leadsheet for “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy” from The Real Book. Notice the instructions to play it in “gospel/funk.”

⁴¹ For a short summary of the musical style of soul jazz, see Barry Kernfeld, *What to Listen for in Jazz* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 193 and 197; and Tom Perchard, *Lee Morgan: His Life, Music, and Culture* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2006), 99–107.



Figure 3.22. First eight measures of Zawinul's solo on "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy."

The harmony is equally straight-forward, oscillating between the tonic (Bb7) and subdominant (Eb7)—a plagal cadence that supports the gospel, church vibe—plus the occasional dominant (F7 or F9sus4[Cm7/f]) and a tag with diatonic parallel chords that suggests a hint of modal jazz or pop-R&B. The most unconventional part of the piece is the form, which eschews the Tin Pan Alley song structures ubiquitous in much other mainstream jazz in favor of a 20-bar form: eight measures of main theme followed by a driving build with an open hi-hat over four measures of pedal-point, then a shouting fanfare-like motif (also four measures), and finally the four-measure tag that winds the tune back down to its quiet beginning.⁴²

With “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy” (and other soul jazz compositions that he wrote in the late sixties) Zawinul was able to keep the popular appeal of a tune while using the device of *enstrangement* in the form.⁴³ The initial I-IV vamp does indeed feel like a verse, but the following section of pedal-point (on Bb) may feel like a prechorus, but in the larger scheme of the composition it also seems to be placed too early, so to speak—its harmonic loop and driving build more akin to something placed at the end of a song with a soloist burning

⁴² This in itself was, however, also a characteristic of soul jazz and the band. For instance, both Zawinul and Cannonball had written several tunes in the less conventional 14-bar blues form for the band.

⁴³ Previously often translated as “defamiliarization” Shklovky’s term is now translated this way. Viktor Shklovsky, “Art, as Device,” trans. Alexandra Berlina, *Poetics Today* 36, no. 3 (2015): 151–194.

over it. Otherwise, the section with pedal-point could have been a bridge in an AABA-form, but instead of returning to the main theme the tune moves to the dominant (F7) on a shouting horn-riff that gives the impression of being a refrain—or given its brevity, another prechorus or bridge—although it is cut short and falls into the *subito piano* of the tag. The tag starts with chords on ii7–iii7 (Cm7–Dm7)—again sounding almost like a prechorus or bridge—but then goes to the relative minor of the tonic, vi (Gm7), whereby we reinterpret the harmony of the tag as iv7–v7–i (Cm7–Dm7–Gm7). Heard like this, “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy” consists of a verse followed by a series of bridges/prechoruses/tags, but with no with no real refrain. Complicating the formal structure in soul jazz, Zawinul was pushing beyond his initial desire to mimic conventional jazz forms and had begun enstranging it.⁴⁴

The enstranged sound was aided by the attack and timbre of Zawinul’s electric piano, which in Larry Wayne’s words “creates the song’s sonic identity. [...] We hear the gospel flavor of ‘Mercy’ [...] because of the gritty, dirty, Wurlitzer tone.”⁴⁵ Add to all of this, the live setting of the recording (which was in fact created in the studio as a kind of “fake” live concert with an invited audience), with its background noise of clinking bottles, talking, and applause that gives the track a feeling of liveness and authenticity. On the LP release, the recording includes Cannonball Adderley’s opening sermon-like statement, delivered over a slow groove from the rhythm section, and building to a call-and-response chant with the live audience:

⁴⁴ His later colleague in Weather Report, Wayne Shorter, was engaged in similar experiments, see Keith Waters, *Postbop Jazz in the 1960s: The Compositions of Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 25–53.

⁴⁵ Lawrence A. Wayne, *Bitches Brood: The Progeny of Miles Davis's Bitches Brew and the Sound of Jazz-rock* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2007), 146.

You know, sometimes we're not prepared for adversity. When it happens, sometimes we're caught short. We don't know exactly how to handle it, when it comes up. Sometimes we don't know just what to do when adversity takes over. And I have advice for all of us—I got it from my pianist, Joe Zawinul, who wrote this tune—and it sounds like what you're supposed to say when you have that kind of problem. It's called: Mercy, mercy, mercy!⁴⁶

In the midst of the Civil Rights Era, this would not have been a surprising message from a leading, Black soul jazz musician and educator. “What is so unorthodox,” as Leonard Feather framed it, “is that is that ‘Mercy, Mercy, Mercy!’ a deepdish helping of Negro soul jazz, was composed by a pianist named Josef Zawinul, from Vienna, who did not emigrate to this country until 1959.”⁴⁷ Cannonball Adderley's biographer, Cary Ginell, set the song firmly within a political context:

The song is a modern-day version of the kyrie, a lament impelling black Americans to turn mercy into activism; it is a statement of Zawinul's musical identification with African Americans' struggle for equality.⁴⁸

Ginell's interpretation brings together different strands of soul jazz—gospel, Blackness, politics—but does not question Zawinul's stakes in these politics, positioning him as a solidaric insider (it is his identification *with* not *of* African American struggles) and eliding his whiteness. By contrast, contemporary commenters remarked more often upon the strange fact that this anthem, with all the musical and aesthetic markers of African

⁴⁶ The Cannonball Adderley Quintet, *Mercy, Mercy, Mercy! Live at “The Club,”* Capitol T/ST-2663, 1967. The single was released in 1966; the radio edit version did not include the Cannonball's introduction. The performance of the song, from the band's Japanese tour, also included the spoken introduction (although the Japanese audience did not offer the responses to Cannonball's calls), which stated that the song is “a kind of thing based on [pause] things in general. There are a lot of things happening now in our country, most of them bad right now. But everything's gonna be all right.” Cannonball Adderley Quintet, *Cannonball in Japan*, Capitol CDP 7 73560 2, 1990 [American rerelease of an original 1966 Japanese record].

⁴⁷ Leonard Feather, “Viennese Scores in U.S. Jazz Group,” *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 21, 1967.

⁴⁸ Cary Ginell, *Walk Tall: The Music and Life of Julian “Cannonball” Adderley* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2013), 120.

American culture was composed by a white Austrian. In the white, mainstream press this could, in the words of one reviewer, serve as “proof that soul jazz is not the sole property of the ‘soul brother’ [...]”⁴⁹ Zawinul and “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy” could be used to stake a possible white claim to jazz or against the Black primacy of jazz, as in a *New York Times* report on a 1969 festival in Berkeley:

If diversity seemed so natural as to need no mention, so too, did the fact that with only one important exception (Cannonball Adderley’s pianist, Ed [sic] Zawinul), all the festival artists were black. There was no talk of ‘Crow Jim’ or any aggressive ‘jazz is the blackman’s [sic] music’ nonsense; it just happened that virtually all of the musicians were black.⁵⁰

Observations like these should be seen in the context of the Civil Rights Era and (white) dreams of a post-racial society.⁵¹ Here, Zawinul becomes the poster boy for a musical colorblindness in which the Blackness of jazz is almost coincidental and where the Black Nationalist aesthetics of writers like Amiri Baraka loom in the background, framed as an aggressive and nonsensical position. Elsewhere in the *New York Times*, Zawinul could serve as a mouthpiece for indignation against such Black Nationalism. Reporting from one of the Adderley band’s college lecture-recitals, under the headline “What’s Black Music? Cannonball Adderley Explains,” it was Zawinul who did the explaining:

[Joe Zawinul] deals with the differences between European music and African music, explains African and Arabic scales and the qualities of blue notes. He is the only nonblack in the group and, if a student asks if a white man can have “soul,” it is Mr. Zawinul’s role to answer indignantly, “Are you kidding.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Louise D. Stone, “Adderley Scores with a New Album,” *Washington Post*, 16 Apr. 1967.

⁵⁰ Michael Lyndon, “At Berkeley, a Joyous Two Days of Jazz,” *New York Times*, 11 May 1969.

⁵¹ See the discussion of colorblindness in ch. 1 for a historiography of these ideas.

⁵² John S. [Wilson], “What’s Black Music? Cannonball Adderley Explains,” *New York Times*, 12 Nov. 1969.

This indignation can work because of Zawinul's presence in a Black band and as an apparent authority on Black music. This legitimizes what Homi Bhabha calls the discourse of mimicry, which is however "stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power."⁵³ Furthermore, as Zawinul is placed between mimicry and mockery, between love and theft, his balancing act of identity threatens the racial solidarity that he seeks. In his neo-passing narratives and compositions, to paraphrase Bhabha, the excess and slippage produced through the ambivalence of mimicry becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the Blackness as a partial presence of Zawinul's subjectivity, and by extension only a partial presence in jazz.⁵⁴

Zawinul's soulfulness was, however, also noted by Black musicians and in the African American press. Thus, the musician and sometime journalist Rex Stewart reported that Zawinul "sounded as if he were a native of Harlem."⁵⁵ The *Los Angeles Sentinel*'s Bill Lane wrote:

If 'soul' means something which only Negroes can 'feel', then alterations are due on the idea that Negroes are the only people that 'with it' when you listen to a white Austrian named Joe Zawinul play his own song, 'Mercy, Mercy, Mercy,' on piano with the Cannonball Adderley group. Who found more soul in it than the Negroes?⁵⁶

⁵³ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 122.

⁵⁴ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 123.

⁵⁵ Rex Stewart, "Adderly's [sic] One-Night Stand Now a Week," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 Jun. 1967.

⁵⁶ Bill Lane, "The Inside Story: Around the Town," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9 Mar. 1967.

This may have been a positive assessment of Zawinul's cultural appropriation, but the same paper's Gertrude Gipson went even further and thought that if "soul" was something Zawinul had found, he had managed to internalize it:

[Cannonball's music] has a solid soul base, but it's broad enough to include his blue-eyed pianist, Josef Zawinul. Born in Austria, he wrote 'Mercy, Mercy, Mercy,' and proves he's a 'brother' under the skin by the way he plays a funky gospel beat.⁵⁷

Leaving aside the fact that Zawinul had brown eyes, this is a remarkable acknowledgement of the power of Zawinul's music (Gipson was, probably, indirectly comparing Zawinul to English, so-called blue-eyed soul). We should note that Gipson does not use Zawinul as proof that colorblind music transcends race or to refute "Crow Jim" arguments. Cannonball Adderley himself referred to Zawinul as a "brother" in the intro to the band's performance of Zawinul's composition "Country Preacher" at Operation Breadbasket. Adderley explains that the tune is inspired by Operation Breadbasket and its leader, Jesse Jackson, and is a testament to what the "concept of what the country preacher *feels* like to him."⁵⁸ This statement does not serve to justify Zawinul's appropriation or passing. Rather, Adderley's stress on the word "feels," as well as Gipson's note of Zawinul's musical abilities, suggests that the power of Black music is a practice from which racial solidarity can be forged.

In these cases, Zawinul was not portrayed as one of Norman Mailer's "white negroes" with his glamorization of supposed Black, male existential pathologies. This was also due

⁵⁷ Gertrude Gipson, "Cannonball Really Socking," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 5 Jun. 1969.

⁵⁸ Cannonball Adderley, *Country Preacher: "Live" at Operation Breadbasket*, SKAO-404, Capitol (1970). For more on Adderley and Operation Breadbasket see Scott Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 343–350.

to the change in the politics of style that had happened from the late fifties to the mid-to-late sixties, described by Scott Saul: “Soul-jazz hipsters could never be mistaken for hipsters of the cool school. Instead of modeling ironic detachment and emotional self-editing, they opened jazz up as an idiom of earthly delights, impromptu feeling, and blues conjugation.”⁵⁹ Here, the fact that Zawinul played, composed, and embodied soul jazz outshone his neo-passing narratives. Importantly, as Miles Davis had noted, Zawinul’s engagement with Black music was “cliché-free.”

“Soul” and “blues” (and other markers of Blackness) carry a lot of weight as stylistic indicators and metaphysical categories in the descriptions of Zawinul and his music. These terms do a lot of work in authenticating his jazz music and legitimating his position as the white player-composer in a Black genre. It is perhaps easier to locate the blues in Zawinul’s music, because of its association with particular formal characteristics (harmony, melody, form), but from the way it was being used by white and Black critics alike, it is clear that, like “soul,” it holds meaning well beyond such essentialized descriptions. Since the late fifties, *soul jazz* had been used as a label to describe the hard-swinging, bluesy, gospel-inflected music of bands like Adderley’s, in contrast to the fast-paced bebop, avant-garde free jazz, the cooler modal jazz, and the more restrained sounds of so-called west coast jazz. Over the next decade the term “soul” spread from jazz to the broader discourse of American popular music. Jack Hamilton asserts that “the far-flung metaphysicality embedded in the word’s implications made it an ideal vehicle for a host of complicated discussions about cultural ownership versus cultural availability, racial essence versus racial

⁵⁹ Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain’t*, 83; there was, of course, also an actual stylistic difference, which Zawinul himself tried to summarize regarding the Adderley band: “[...] wir hatten etwas, was Miles nicht besaß: Eine Groove, die von Soul und Funk geprägt war.” Günther Baumann, *Zawinul*, 70.

transcendence, music as a utopian sphere of unraced democracy versus music as a delineation of racial authenticity.”⁶⁰ According to David Brackett, in the mid-sixties, “soul” was often used in relation to whiteness and “blue-eyed soul.” As the Civil Rights Movement evolved, ideas of Black Power and Black aesthetics entered the mainstream and the word “soul” took on a power of its own. It increasingly signified an affect or performance practice of African American-associated genres, but still a component in or synecdoche for rhythm and blues. Finally, in the years 1966–1969, it shifted from being a vague quality of R&B to the designation for Black music itself.⁶¹ Obviously, the use of the word “soul” in connection with Zawinul is related to the fact that he played in a premier soul jazz band and points to the musical features of his playing and composition. However, given the racial connotations of the term and its changing meaning and valence during the sixties it is clear that we should not understand it as a mere description of Zawinul’s style. Someone like Gipson could portray Zawinul as a blue-eyed soul jazzman, who through appropriation and assimilation may have held promises of a politics of integration. Yet, in the context of the musical and political meanings that “soul” had gained by the late sixties, the term could, according to Portia Maultsby, “best be defined as black nationalism.”⁶² Thus, it would be difficult to assume that Black critics and musicians would have taken Zawinul’s blues riffs

⁶⁰ Jack Hamilton, *Just around Midnight: Rock and Roll and the Racial Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 172.

⁶¹ David Brackett, *Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 267-273. On the definitions and genealogy of “soul” see also Hamilton, *Just around Midnight*, 172; Portia K. Maultsby, “Soul Music: Its Sociological and Political Significance in American Popular Culture,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 17, no. 2 (1983): 51–60; Matt Brennan, *When Genres Collide: Down Beat, Rolling Stone, and the Struggle Between Jazz and Rock* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 93; Andy Flory, *I Hear a Symphony: Motown and Crossover R&B* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 69–99; and Emily Lordi, *The Meaning of Soul: Black Music and Resilience since the 1960s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 19–45.

⁶² Portia K. Maultsby, “Soul Music: Its Sociological and Political Significance in American Popular Culture,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 17, no. 2 (1983): 54.

alone as proof of his soul. Indeed, if white critics saw Zawinul as an refute to the question of race in jazz culture, Black critics and musicians found that Zawinul's presence itself posed a question rather than an answer.

Zawinul's musician colleagues were perhaps especially attuned to his musical characteristics and the ease with which cultural contradictions coexisted in his music. Cannonball Adderley was quoted defending Zawinul's "soul":

A member of his [Adderley's] musical group at the time was a white man named Joe Zawinul. Adderley told me that certain black musicians had criticized him for having a 'white cat' in his band. But, he said, he was only interested in a man's ability to play the music, and he said, Zawinul could do that very well. I brought up the subject of 'soul,' a much-abused term in jazz, then and now, and I asked for his opinion on the claim that only black musicians possessed soul. Expletive deleted. Adderley said race had nothing to do with a musician's soul. He said Zawinul proved that.⁶³

Likewise, the bassist Walter Booker, who played with Zawinul in Cannonball Adderley's group, told Zawinul-biographer Brian Glasser:

I guess we were one of the most popular groups around, mainly because of 'Mercy, Mercy, Mercy'—it was a seller all over—and 'Walk Tall'. And it's funny, because Joe played piano with Dinah Washington, playing the blues, and he wasn't supposed to be able to play that kind of stuff, being white and from Europe. But the thing about Joe is, he knows how to look out there and how to act to make you think he's doing what he's doing... That's partly what music is, anyway. Actually he wasn't doing something, you see; it's just like Shakespeare used to say: 'Virtue—assume it if you have it not!'.⁶⁴

And Zawinul's successor as pianist in Adderley's band, George Duke, reminisced about the uncanny crossover Zawinul was able to pull off:

⁶³ A.S. "Doc" Young, "The Subject Is," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, Jul. 31, 1975.

⁶⁴ Glasser, *In a Silent Way*, 96.

I wanted to take Joe Zawinul and take it into a more ‘black’ experience. But actually, Joe had that as well, which is amazing considering where he came from. I don’t know where he got it, but he was as soulful as any black person I ever heard.⁶⁵

Adderley, Booker, and Duke marvel at the racial and aesthetic borders that Zawinul traversed. Like their Black journalist colleagues, they use the key markers of “the blues” and “soul,” which are not simply stylistic traits but also a question of a deeper aesthetic practice, a virtue. As Matt Brennan concludes, “‘soul’ was not so much a set of musical characteristics as a signifier of a racial difference.”⁶⁶ Indeed, “soul” and “the blues” were racial markers that were applied to Zawinul by African American critics and musicians in a way that resembles Paul Gilroy’s insistence on the *anti-anti-essentialism* of the Black Atlantic. As Gilroy emphasizes, though such categories of Black identity are often felt to be natural and spontaneous they are in fact the outcome of practical activity: “In the black Atlantic context, [these significations] produce the imaginary effect of an internal racial core or essence by acting on the body through the specific mechanisms of identification and recognition that are produced in the intimate interaction of performer and crowd.”⁶⁷ To this we can add the interaction of music criticism and musicians’ autobiographical stories. The American press, as well as American musicians singled out soul, blues, and other related terms as essential stylistic elements of Zawinul’s composition, improvisation, and performance. In these arguments such markers served to prove his successful appropriation of and immersion into African American culture, even if they also marked him as an exception in this regard. But they also go beyond essentialism because Adderley, Booker,

⁶⁵ Glasser, *In a Silent Way*, 147–148.

⁶⁶ Matt Brennan, *When Genres Collide: Down Beat, Rolling Stone, and the Struggle Between Jazz and Rock* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 93.

⁶⁷ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity of Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 102.

Duke, and the Black journalists cited above could use them as examples of how these categories could not exclude Zawinul. The virtues of soul and blues were not out of reach for Zawinul, but something that he had assumed. On a fundamental level, it also served as a bridge between empirical, musical style and a metaphor for Zawinul's subjectivity, mirroring the racialized autobiographical narratives. Zawinul fits well within Daniel Stein's characterization that "the bourgeois notion of 'soul,' of an interior landscape in need of examination (through autobiographical self-questioning and 'soul'-searching), is transformed in jazz autobiography to the (usually) Black, elusive 'soul' that drives the musician's playing and improvising."⁶⁸ However, Zawinul's biography and self-narration should also caution us against Stein's somewhat celebratory notion of how autobiography mimics jazz improvisation and performance.⁶⁹ This may be, but it is important to note that Zawinul's performance also included the white mimicry of Black culture.

In this context, the African American reception of his music was important to Zawinul and served as what Reva Marin terms *reverse authentication* in jazz writing, where white jazz musicians are portrayed as "possessing the musical skills and cultural familiarity that grant them legitimacy within African American jazz tradition" (as opposed to the regular flow of authentication in jazz criticism, where a white critic/author proves that African American music is worthy of study; this form of authentication is described at length in chapter 1). Marin notes that this often happens by evoking essentialisms, such as the idea of "soul." This desire for authentication is clear in some of Zawinul's statements, and in 1977 an interviewer wrote that that Zawinul had told him that "it was the black

⁶⁸ Stein, "The Performance of Jazz Autobiography," 181.

⁶⁹ Stein shares this idea of autobiography as improvisation with Heble, *Landing on the Wrong Note*; and, to a certain extent, Edwards, *Epistrophies*. An equally helpful, but quite different, parallel between jazz practice in music and writing, may be to think of autobiography as akin to arranging.

community's acceptance of *Mercy, Mercy, Mercy* in 1967 that freed him from the last of his own insecurities as a non-Black, non-American jazz musician."⁷⁰ This confirmed Zawinul's idea of himself as what Phil Rubio has termed the "exceptional white."⁷¹ In the end, however, the deployment of anti-anti-essentialism, in this case, says more about Black musicians' and critics' view on jazz in general and Joe Zawinul specifically, than it legitimizes his neo-passing and appropriation, as such. The African American reception of Zawinul's music shows us that tales of musical appropriation and assimilation are often more complicated than the politics of essential stylistic markers suggest on the surface. By contrast, Zawinul's own self-image also shows us that African American writers and musicians were, perhaps, better attuned to the nuances of the appropriation of their music than a white guy from Austria was.

"We Don't Play No White Music!": Genre, Race, and the Fear of Selling Out

In an interview with Zawinul—conducted the same year, 1970, that he would also call "the year of the whores" because of the supposed sellout of jazz musicians⁷²—Leonard Feather tried to grapple with the influence of rock music in the jazz world. Feather used Zawinul (and perhaps by extension himself) as an example of more amicable musical migration from the time before of the British Invasion:

When he joined Adderley, the world was a much simpler place to live in at every level. Musically, jazz was over here and the big beat was over there; nobody had rocked anyone else's boat, nor attempted to jump ship; walk over water and join a rival crew... After 12 years in the United States, very little of his native Vienna is discernable in Zawinul except

⁷⁰ Sy Johnson, "Zawinul from Birdland to 'Birdland,'" *Jazz Magazine* 2, no. 1, Fall 1977, 47.

⁷¹ Phil Rubio, "Crossover Dreams: The 'Exceptional White' in Popular Culture," *Race Traitor* 2 (1993): 68–80.

⁷² Leonard Feather, "A Year of Selling Out," *Down Beat* '71, 1970, 10.

for a slight accent... [he] is thoroughly assimilated to contemporary American life styles and mores.⁷³

From a jazz critic's point of view the fifties and early sixties were probably a much simpler time to live than 1970. It was a time where the European jazz musicians who immigrated to the US sought to assimilate and integrate into US culture; it was a time before the Beatles and the bands that followed in their wake. This fits with what Hamilton has criticized as a "monolithic concept of the British Invasion" that enfolds a vast network of transatlantic connections into a singular idea.⁷⁴ In fact, if one can extrapolate a narrative from this remark by Feather it is that the musical world was simpler because the transatlantic connection was one with clear distinctions of genre and geography: the implication seems to be that jazz was American and that rock ("the big beat") only became a problem when it was re-imported to the US.⁷⁵ It also reveals the American bias of jazz and rock historiography, which, according to Hamilton, in "even its more self-flagellating forms... enacts its own sort of parochial exceptionalism, with America at the center and the 'invaders,' heroic as they may be, as irreducibly alien."⁷⁶ Feather proved this, doubly, by adding the case of European jazz, represented by Zawinul, as a counterexample to the British rock musicians. In this historiographical model the US was still at the center of the jazz world to which musicians gravitated and assimilated, in contrast to the world of rock where the US was a place to be invaded. Making this distinction, Feather also made the *problem*

⁷³ Leonard Feather, "Is Rock Responsible for a Jazz Renaissance?" *Los Angeles Times*, 7 Jun. 1970.

⁷⁴ Hamilton, *Just around Midnight*, 89.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of Feather's concerns about the blending of jazz and rock see Brennan, *When Genres Collide*, 108–115.

⁷⁶ Hamilton, *Just around Midnight*, 92.

of transatlantic migration, dissemination, and “invasion” one that was monolithically about rock and not about jazz.

Feather’s attempt to draw genre boundaries obscures the fact that the blending of genres, both high and low, was of course not a new thing for jazz in general or for Zawinul in particular. At a glance, his career up till the late sixties may seem like one of a journeyman jazz musician playing straight-ahead jazz, including his early recordings as a leader, *To You With Love* (1961) and *Soulmates* (with Ben Webster, 1964), both in a mainstream, post-bop idiom, and *Money in the Pocket* (1966) in the soul jazz style of the Adderley band. From thereon Zawinul seemingly took a turn and released *The Rise and Fall of the Third Stream* (1968; with compositions and arrangements by William Fischer) and notably contributed the composition “Experience in E,” a twenty-minute piece for jazz band and symphony orchestra, to the Third Stream record *The Cannonball Adderley Quintet & Orchestra* (1970). Perhaps Zawinul could have occupied a different role in jazz history if his Third Stream music had opened new aesthetic and financial opportunities for him or, conversely, if he had been relegated to the relative dead end of jazz history that Third Stream has come to represent.⁷⁷ On the other hand, we can see Zawinul’s Third-Stream efforts as part of a musical project that is wholly congruent with his canonical place in jazz history as a founding figure of fusion music.⁷⁸ Third Stream and fusion represented attempts to mix jazz with

⁷⁷ I do not mean to say that third stream music is bad, but rather that it never fulfilled its promises as a vibrant aesthetic and institutional subgenre of jazz and classical music. There are, to this day, many successful partnerships and compositions that cross jazz and classical music, but the two streams never did coalesce into a third one—unlike fusion jazz, which despite its disparate nature became a force of its own within the jazz world. Third stream remains forever an experiment, but not one that poses a challenge to jazz. For an assessment of the possible reasons for the failure of third stream see the second half of David Joyner, “Analyzing Third Stream,” *Contemporary Music Review* 19, no. 1 (2000): 63–87.

⁷⁸ I follow Fellezs’s definition of “fusion”: “For my purposes *fusion* will refer to a merging of jazz, rock, and funk music aesthetics and practices and the subsequent (or, better, the further) blurring of these large-scale genre boundaries in articulation with other musical traditions that each musician engaged in a more limited fashion.” *Birds of Fire*, 17. For a critical overview of discussion about the term see Steven Pond, *Head*

other genres from each end of the cultural hierarchy (classical music versus pop/rock), but they also both tested the boundaries of the genre and its audiences and offered compositional routes out of the confines of the song structure of much conventional jazz composition.

Similarly, soul jazz was also a subgenre that blended genres and styles in order to explore new musical possibilities and to find a new aesthetic, social, and commercial position for jazz in the cultural hierarchy. Soul jazz gestured to a more popular style (namely R&B) and had actual crossover appeal, producing hit singles that sold beyond the jazz audience. This, inevitably, led to discussions of sellout and that, in Scott Saul's characterization of these attacks, "soul jazz musicians had surrendered the modernist imperative to 'make it new' by indenturing themselves to a perfunctory hipsterism."⁷⁹ Adderley's band became a particular target and even as Adderley tried to create a counternarrative in his columns for the *New York Amsterdam News* he was accused of commodifying Blackness and commercializing jazz.⁸⁰ The aptly named *Soul Magazine* published a two-page apology for Adderley and "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy," because of the "financial success hanging over the group now." Writer Leroy Robinson submitted that the compositional aspects of the tune were in order, as there was no "intention of [Adderley's band] members to prefabricate their material so as to make it commercially appealing." Furthermore, he reported that the critique of "Mercy" was not merely a formal one, but also rooted in the political economy of genre:

Hunters: The Making of Jazz's First Platinum Album (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 10–18.

⁷⁹ Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't*, 99.

⁸⁰ Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't*, 98–103 and 209–210; Ryan Jones, "'You Know What I Mean?': The Pedagogical Canon of Julian 'Cannonball' Adderley," *Current Musicology* 79/80 (2005): 184–185.

[T]here have been dissenting fans who have rejected the tune as a ‘nothing’ piece. Some of the more devout jazz enthusiasts took offense because of the tune’s success over the rhythm and blues stations, and because the Quintet’s appearances in clubs considered R&B nightclubs (“Mercy” was recorded “live” at an R&B club which also includes jazz from time to time). These fans felt that the unique sound of the well-liked Cannonball Adderley Quintet might be delving in the more fruitful rock’n’roll bag.⁸¹

Zawinul’s soul jazz background and his experiences with the problems of genre thus both explains why he may have wished to disassociate himself from rock music and why he was primed to be antagonistic towards accusations of sellout.⁸² As the music developed in the years around 1970, the aesthetic and economic stakes were only heightened and subsequent histories have tended to simplify the seventies as, in Eric Porter’s words, a “moment of failure in jazz history.”⁸³ Feather’s remarks, quoted above, show that the waves of jazz discourse were high and fusion jazz was, as Steven Pond puts it, dismissed “as a marriage of convenience, a Faustian bargain for market share by jazz artists.”⁸⁴ Several music historians, often focusing on Miles Davis, have shown how the critique of fusion jazz was informed by a conservative view of jazz history that saw this turn in the music as a betrayal of its artistic promise and/or the abandonment of a African American (masculine) authenticity in favor of a commodification of Blackness.⁸⁵ Zawinul and his fellow fusion

⁸¹ Leroy Robinson, “On and Around the Jazz Scene: Cannonball’s ‘Now’ Music,” *Soul Magazine* 7, Aug. 1967, 16–17.

⁸² For a history of the term and an extensive discussion of the discourse of sellout, especially in pop, rock, and hip hop, see Britany Klein, *Selling Out: Culture Commerce, and Popular Music* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020)

⁸³ Eric Porter, “Introduction: Rethinking Jazz Through the 1970s,” *Jazz Perspectives* 4, no. 1 (2010): 4.

⁸⁴ Pond, *Head Hunters*, 3.

⁸⁵ Gary Tomlinson, “Cultural Dialogics and Jazz: A White Historian Signifies.” *Black Music Research Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1991): 229–264; Eric Porter, “‘It’s About That Time’: The Response to Miles Davis’s Electric Turn,” in *Miles Davis and American Culture*, ed. Gerald Early (Saint Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 2001), 130–147; Fabian Holt, *Genre in Popular Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 81–101; and Jeremy A. Smith, “‘Sell It Black’: Race and Marketing in Miles Davis’s Early Fusion Jazz,” *Jazz Perspectives* 4, no. 1 (2010): 7–33. An important early revisionist assessment of Davis’s fusion music was Greg Tate’s 1983 essay “The Electric Miles, Parts One and Two,” reprinted in *Flyboy in the*

musicians (including Davis) did, of course, not see themselves as sellouts and, as outlined above, Zawinul was just as invested in African American authenticity as his Black colleagues, despite the fact that he was white.

If Zawinul got his soul-jazz pedigree from Adderley, he got his fusion-jazz pedigree via his association with Miles Davis. Zawinul was a key member of Davis's band in the pivotal period that saw the release of *In a Silent Way* (1969; the title composition was Zawinul's) and *Bitches Brew* (1970). Davis's and Zawinul's relationship was clearly creatively productive, but also somewhat contentious because Zawinul took issue with some of the ways that Davis rearranged his compositions (Davis also continued to use Zawinul's pieces after he had left Davis's band, including "Directions" which briefly became a sort of signature tune for Davis).⁸⁶ Importantly, Zawinul joined Davis's band at a point where jazz was being increasingly electrified and infused with rock sounds. Zawinul then teamed up with another Davis alumni, the saxophonist Wayne Shorter, and fellow European, the Czech bass player Miroslav Vitous, and formed one of the defining fusion jazz bands, Weather Report. The band enjoyed popular and critical acclaim—for all the debates over fusion, the band, for instance, received five-star reviews in *Down Beat* and placed in top places in the magazine's annual polls throughout the decade (in hindsight it appears that the question never really was whether fusion was jazz or not, but what kind of jazz it was and what the popularity of this kind of music said about the state of jazz).

Buttermilk (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 68–84; For wider discussions of fusion and its discontents see Fellezs, *Birds of Fire*, 65–90; Brennan, *When Genres Collide*, 147–177; and Pond, *Head Hunters*, 3–28

⁸⁶ On the compositions and reworkings of them see Victor Svorinich, *Listen to This: Miles Davis and Bitches Brew* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015). Larry Wayne writes that Davis "*de-composed*" (his italics) Zawinul's compositions on *Bitches Brew*, in Wayne, *Bitches Brood*, 74.

Zawinul had already been playing electric instruments (Fender Rhodes and Wurlitzer pianos) before joining Davis, as e.g. heard on “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.”⁸⁷ The link between the electric instruments and the commercial success of “Mercy” did not go unnoticed. The abovementioned review that saw the tune as “proof that soul jazz is not the sole property of the ‘soul brother’” continues: “Austrian to his toes, pianist for the group, Joe Zawinul, wrote this money maker using an electric piano.”⁸⁸ Thus, the critical assessment went, the sound of the electric piano was also the sound of money, the sound of sellout. With fusion jazz—switching the organs and electric pianos of soul jazz for synthesizers and increasingly sophisticated uses studio editing—this sound was amplified.⁸⁹

For jazz musicians, the allure of rock music was of course one of popularity and commercial opportunities, with all the politics that entailed, but it was equally alluring for the creative possibilities afforded by its instrumentarium and timbral explorations. Kevin Fellezs writes, “timbre became the terrain on which fusion musicians marked their use of rock, experimental new music aesthetics, and traditional or folk music traditions.”⁹⁰ Weather Report did, indeed, incorporate elements from jazz and rock, but also folk and world music and new music. Zawinul’s use of, initially, electric pianos with stereo effects, wah-wah pedals, reverb, delay, and ring modulation and, later, synthesizers were key to

⁸⁷ Davis mentions hearing Zawinul’s playing on electric keyboards on “Mercy” as a motivation for hiring him, Miles Davis, with Quincy Troupe, *The Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 294.

⁸⁸ Stone, “Adderley Scores with New Album.”

⁸⁹ I should stress that while I emphasize soul jazz as a precursor to fusion jazz, because of its importance in constructing a narrative of Zawinul, this was only one of the subgenres in the genealogy of fusion. Indeed, as the pivotal example of Miles Davis shows, fusion grew out of many other things than soul jazz. Similarly, I want to echo Fellezs’s account and stress that despite all the accusations of sellout, the major sellers of fusion (Davis, Herbie Hancock, John McLaughlin, Weather Report) were “fairly singular in terms of achieving financial success and that their marketplace achievements were overshadowed by rock and pop stars of the period.” Fellezs, *Birds of Fire*, 69. In other words, it may be that the sounds and timbre of fusion jazz was a semiotic red herring that seemed to indicate sellout even where there was no actual exceptional profit made.

⁹⁰ Fellezs, *Birds of Fire*, 83.

the sound of the band. As the seventies progressed, Zawinul expanded his park of electric keyboards and then synthesizers. He used them both to imitate “old” sounds and timbres, but perhaps more than any other jazz pianist radically abandoned a “pianistic” approach to playing these keyboards and instead used the electric pianos and synthesizers as instruments to create different sounds. Zawinul quickly realized, as Jonathan De Souza writes, that “synthesizers are not simply machines for making sound. They also suggest ways of investigating and conceptualizing it.”⁹¹ Thus, it increasingly defined his compositional process as one where he jammed his way to a composition by improvising musical ideas and recording it to tape, computer, or as samples on the synthesizer. This was then followed by further rehearsal with the other band members and editing in the studio.⁹² (This model had, of course, been pioneered in rock music, but was something Zawinul first extensively experienced during his stint with Miles Davis.⁹³)

Griffin Woodworth has presented the “problem” that synthesizers in the years around 1970 as a dialectic tension of “simulation versus exploration” or between “familiar and foreign sounds.”⁹⁴ Put this way it is not difficult to understand why these instruments and

⁹¹ Jonathan De Souza, “Timbral Thievery: Synthesizers and Sonic Materiality,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre*, ed. Emily Dolan and Alexander Rehding (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), online.

⁹² Zawinul demonstrates this in *Zawinul: A Musical Portrait*, directed by Mark Kidel, originally aired 2005, on BBC, accessed https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cal_EZqS7JM, accessed Mar. 12, 2020; he also addresses his compositional process in various interviews, e.g. in a 1984 interview reprinted in Greg Armbruster, “Joe Zawinul: Synth Stories,” *Rideout: Synth Gods* (Milwaukee: Backbeat, 2011), 180–190; and Len Lyons, “Josef ‘Joe’ Zawinul,” *The Great Pianists: Speaking of their Life and Music* (New York: Da Capo, 1983), 284–293.

⁹³ On the compositions and (post-)production of Davis’s fusion music, especially *Bitches Brew*, see Paul Tinggen, *Miles Beyond: The Electric Explorations of Miles Davis, 1967–1991* (New York: Billboard Books, 2003); Svorinich, *Listen to This*; Bob Gluck, *The Miles Davis Lost Quintet and Other Revolutionary Ensembles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 35–56; Simon Zagorski-Thomas, “Directions in Music by Miles Davis: Using the Ecological Approach to Perception and Embodied Cognition to Analyze the Creative Use of Recording Technology in *Bitches Brew*,” *Technology and Culture* 59, no. 4 (2018): 850–874.

⁹⁴ Griffin Woodworth, “Synthesizers as Social Protest in Early-1970s Funk,” in *The Relentless Pursuit of Tone: Timbre in Popular Music*, ed. Robert Fink, Zachary Wallmark, and Melinda Latour (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 235–236.

sounds were alluring to Zawinul. In a sense, his musical life centered on the same dialectic: his geographic exploration going from Europe to the US; his simulation of Black music and culture; his discourse of the contrasts and similarities between his familial lineage and his new life in a mixed-race household in a foreign land; his play with familiar and foreign sounds.

If timbre was one field of contention and site for exploration, rhythm was another. As Larry Wayne has shown, the underlying rock- and funk-inspired grooves “grounded” Weather Report’s music and made the timbral, formal, and harmonic explorations possible.⁹⁵ However, as much as these grooves opened up possibilities, they also signaled a rejection of conventional jazz harmony, form, melody, and timbre. Like timbre (and the increased volume of fusion music), the straight eighths of rock and funk rhythms signaled an abandonment of the swing that was deemed essential to jazz by the detractors of fusion.⁹⁶ This went back to the earliest reception of the band, with Hollie I. West of the *Washington Post*, who posed that “the group hasn’t found a way out of the boredom that comes with using repetitive bass rhythms in rock style.”⁹⁷ As Fellezs argues, some jazz critics conveniently ironed out the paradoxes of such an essential definition of swing while they equally conveniently overlooked the complex meters, polyrhythms, and interlocking grooves that fusion musicians produced. Anti-fusion critics saw these rhythms as a step backwards in the evolution of jazz, and a step down the cultural hierarchy.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Wayne, *Bitches Brood*, 167–171.

⁹⁶ On the general decline of shuffle and swing rhythms in American popular music during the fifties and sixties, and especially exemplified with the rise of funk music, see Alexander Stewart, “‘Funky Drummer’: New Orleans, James Brown, and the Rhythmic Transformation of American Popular Music,” *Popular Music* 19, no. 3 (2000): 293–318.

⁹⁷ Hollie I. West, “Weather Report: Partly Cloudy,” *Washington Post*, Jun. 20, 1971.

⁹⁸ Fellezs, *Birds of Fire*, 88–90.

Zawinul participated actively in this discourse and, even as he defended his fusion music, he relied on the narrative of jazz-complexity versus rock-simplicity. He told Feather:

Too much reached the stage where people couldn't understand it or feel the beat... I'm talking particularly about whites, but also many black people lost interest. Rock with its simplified styles and meters, provided a bridge from public apathy and disenchantment into a new acceptance of jazz. While I enjoy rock, I believe that jazz is the greatest art form; still, if we want recognition for it, we have to do certain things the general audience will dig; then you can take them along to the point where they'll listen to something that requires more thinking. Look at the way Miles Davis has done it [...]. He realized that with rock dominating the scene, a change had to be made, a simplicity in the pulse was required.⁹⁹

Like using the terms “blues” and “soul,” talking about rhythm and rock was about navigating a map of genres, where the fault lines were racial as much as they were purely sonic. Zawinul saw a clear difference between jazz and rock, even as he engaged in a fusion of the two. Rock rhythms were different than jazz rhythms, and while Zawinul may have not been selling out he was certainly buying into rock. As the seventies progressed Zawinul pursued this pulse through his work in Weather Report. The group's third album, *Sweetnighter* (1973), both cemented their status (*Downbeat* published two different reviews of the album) and pointed in new directions (the two reviews, a 5-star and a 3-star, also reflected the controversy of fusion; it was also the first album where Zawinul used his ARP 2600 synthesizer extensively). Zawinul later told fusion-chronicler Stuart Nicholson:

I wanted the band to get stronger rhythmically, even stronger than Cannonball and Miles and all those. But there was just one thing, I just didn't like the backbeat, that two and four backbeat, it destroys and sensibility of rhythm because it is not rhythm, it is time, and time and rhythm in music are two different things. A groove is a groove, but time doesn't give

⁹⁹ Feather, “Is Rock Responsible for a Jazz Renaissance?”

you a groove, time gives you a certain exactness. “125th Street Congress” [from *Sweet-nighter*] is a groove and that is what I wanted—I come from Cannonball, I come from Dinah Washington, everything I ever grew up with an liked about jazz is there.¹⁰⁰

Emphasizing his association with African American jazz greats, Zawinul positions himself and his music against the heavy backbeat of rock music. Zawinul’s defense against the portrayal of his rock-aspirations does, however, betray the fact that Weather Report’s grooves were becoming less like free jazz and more like rock and funk. In a big 1979 interview-article in *Down Beat* titled “Weather Report Answers Its Critics,” journalist Larry Birnbaum wrote that he “was especially struck by the heavy rock feel, especially in the bass and drums.” This comment incensed Zawinul and also bassist Jaco Pastorius, who displayed what Matthew Hughley has called *affective whiteness*, a racial performance that often ends up supporting hegemonic whiteness even when it is comes from a place of progressive racial politics.¹⁰¹ Pastorius said, “if there’s a heavy feel, it’s r&b, not rock.”¹⁰² Zawinul even maintained that “all our rhythms are totally different. No r&b group plays rhythms the way we do. It has the power of r&b, but there’s a difference, man.” Making the connection between rhythm, genre, and race clear, he stated, “we don’t play no white music, because rock ’n’ roll is a white music. [...] English music is rock ’n’ roll.”¹⁰³ These comments highlight the racialized contrast between rock and R&B, and between rock and jazz, respectively. As Jack Hamilton has shown, “no black-derived musical form in American history has more assiduously moved to erase and blockade black participation than

¹⁰⁰ Stuart Nicholson, *Jazz-Rock: A History* (New York: Schirmer, 1998), 170.

¹⁰¹ Matthew W. Hughey, “The (Dis)similarities of White Racial Identities: The Conceptual Framework of ‘Hegemonic Whiteness’,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33, no. 8 (2009): 1289-309.

¹⁰² Pastorius was especially sensitive to the such accusations because he, as an electric bassist working in a jazz world otherwise committed to the upright bass, had work to reinforce his credibility as a jazz performer. Brian Wright, “Jaco Pastorius, the Electric Bass, and the Struggle for Jazz Credibility,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 32, no. 3 (2020): 121–138.

¹⁰³ Birnbaum, “Weather Report Answers Its Critics.”

rock music. When rock ideology purged itself of (visible) blackness it was foreclosing not simply African American performers but an entire young tradition of interracial fluidity.”¹⁰⁴ When Jimi Hendrix died in 1970—the same year that fusion jazz fully emerged—he was already seen as the last Black exception in a genre that was imagined as fundamentally white. By contrast, jazz maintains a canon of African American performers at its core, at least up until the advent of fusion. Zawinul reflected himself in this Black canon and saw the image of rock as a haunting specter that threatened to expose his whiteness. As Godfrey and Young argue, “passing is not just a matter of how identities are performed but also a matter of how identity performances are policed.”¹⁰⁵ From Zawinul’s forceful answers it is clear that while he may have been white his music was to pass for Black.¹⁰⁶

* * *

As critique of the popularity and supposed sell-out of Weather Report’s fusion jazz grew throughout the seventies, Zawinul took that as an attack on the Blackness of his music. This may have seemed like a new question spurred by the discourse on fusion jazz. However, as I have shown, the question of the aesthetics and political economy of race and genre was present in Zawinul’s mind and music before he turned electric. In this, his soul jazz career and narratives of passing were mirrored by the aesthetic battles of fusion jazz.

Zawinul’s explorations in fusion jazz opened up a rift that had already been present as a more subtly demarked color line present in his soul jazz of the sixties. If jazz is Black music, as many scholars and critics argue, then, as Steven Pond elaborates “fusion jazz,

¹⁰⁴ Hamilton, *Just around Midnight*, 10–11.

¹⁰⁵ Godfrey and Young, *Neo-Passing*, 12.

¹⁰⁶ His rhetoric also aligns with the “policing” of terms that Miles Davis, famously, used during the same period, stating that “I don’t play rock. Rock is a white word. And I don’t like the jazz because jazz is a nigger word that white folks dropped on us. We just play black.” Quoted in Smith, “Sell It Black,” 19.

with its ethnically diverse personel distribution and audience demographics, and in particular its comfortable fraternization with rock music, seemed to some a watering down of a black musical tradition.”¹⁰⁷ Many Black fusion musicians did not see it this way. It should be obvious that, for example, Herbie Hancock’s *Head Hunters* (1973) was as Black as anything around, and Miles Davis’s turn to fusion was in part an explicit move to develop a Black audience.¹⁰⁸ Zawinul aligned himself with his Black colleagues in this argument¹⁰⁹: Jazz is Black. Rock is white.

However, given Zawinul’s own whiteness, his insistence of the Blackness of his musical identity takes on a different valence. As Ruth Frankenberg states, whiteness, as an articulation of race, is “more about the power to include and exclude groups and individuals than about the actual practices of those who are who are to be let in or kept out.”¹¹⁰ Zawinul’s statements on race are illustrative of this in the way that he drew hard boundaries between Black and white music and culture; his social and musical practice equally illustrates Frankenberg’s point, as his own life, career, and music show the many ways in which the boundaries between Black and white were not clear-cut.

Zawinul’s music straddled the ideological divide between Black and white music, while the rhetoric of his autobiographical statements shows less willingness to traverse the divide. Or more precisely, Zawinul’s neo-passing narratives show us that he was willing to pass the divide, but only in one direction, from white to Black. By analyzing Zawinul through the framework of neo-passing, I am not suggesting that he is exemplary of

¹⁰⁷ Pond, *Head Hunters*, 14.

¹⁰⁸ Smith, “Sell It Black.”

¹⁰⁹ Such discussions also fall within a wider discourse of jazz musicians grappling with the word “jazz” itself, see Krin Gabbard, “The Word Jazz,” in Mervyn Cooke and David Horn, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–6.

¹¹⁰ Ruth Frankenberg, “Introduction: Local Whiteness, Localizing Whiteness,” in *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Ruth Frankenberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 13.

appropriation of Black music by white, European musicians. Rather, I have done so because this framework applies specifically to Zawinul. Contrary to many of Zawinul's own statements, my analysis has shown that his music is more accurately captured by Black musicians and critics, who accepted Zawinul's "soul." This portrayal and reception of Zawinul is one that can accept the undeniable Blackness of jazz, while also realizing that that there is no definable boundary between "Black music" and "white music." In fact, the case of Zawinul shows that narratives of neo-passing happened because such boundaries are ideological, discursive constructs that are matched by a contested negation of genre and style, as well as the mixed-race, international social reality of the bands in question.

What Zawinul *is* exemplary of is the fact that the rise of fusion music also saw the first substantial influx of European musicians as leading figures in the American jazz world (in this the Europeans were prominent, because one of the early centers of fusion experiments was the UK; but not exceptional, as there was a general internationalization of the American jazz world in the seventies, notably with many Latin American musicians, whose presence in jazz goes back to its roots). Zawinul, of course, appeared in Miles Davis's pivotal fusion band that produced *Bitches Brew*, together with the English guitarist John McLaughlin and English bassist Dave Holland. McLaughlin's hugely popular and influential Mahavishnu Orchestra also included (at various points) the Czech pianist Jan Hammer, Irish bassist Rick Laird, and French violinist Jean-Luc Ponty; Tony Williams's Lifetime band included (again at various points) McLaughlin, Scottish bassist Jack Bruce, and English guitarist Allan Holdsworth; and the first iteration of Weather Report included, as mentioned, Czech bassist Miroslav Vitous. Another point of similarity with other European musicians (not only within the realm of fusion) were the labels that were applied to them.

Like Zawinul, Dave Holland received the moniker “White Soul Brother”¹¹¹; the English drummer Ginger Baker, of Cream fame, was portrayed in *Down Beat* under the headline “Anglo Afro?”¹¹²; and the Hungarian guitarist Attila Zoller traded in the same Middle- and Eastern European exoticism as Zawinul and titled an album *Gypsy Cry* (1970). What differentiates Zawinul was the forceful way in which he himself crafted a persona within the framework of Black authenticity.

The question of Joe Zawinul’s soul is a story that defies many of our expectations of what “soul” is and who can have it. Zawinul’s career and music shows us the stylistic variation and aesthetic, as well as social development, that jazz went through in the sixties and seventies. In fact, in many ways the breadth and heterogeneity of this music seems to be overshadowed by the debates that surrounded it, including the claims Zawinul made about his own identity and authenticity. Zawinul’s statements are often more essentializing than his actual music would suggest. We might paraphrase Miles Davis’s words and say that Zawinul’s music was “cliché-free,” but his words were not.

¹¹¹ Leonard Feather, “Dave Holland: White Soul Brother,” *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 13, 1968.

¹¹² Valerie Wilmer, “Ginger Baker: Anglo Afro?” *Down Beat*, Mar. 19, 1970, 16–17.

Chapter 4. “Albums Calculated to Reinforce American Preconceptions”: The ECM Label and the US Understanding of European Jazz in the 1970s

In January 1980, Dan Morgenstern published a retrospective article taking stock of the seventies, singling out the German record label ECM as one of the defining newcomers of the past decade. He noted:

It is no coincidence, however, that ECM is a European based operation, and that certain kinds of new improvisation music, which may or may not be jazz, had a much larger audience in Europe than they did here.¹

Morgenstern characterized ECM as part of a new kind of “symphonic jazz,” associating classical music with European art music. It was also an only slightly-veiled allusion to the historic whiteness of so-called symphonic jazz, famously championed by Paul Whiteman in the twenties and thirties.² The causal links between genre distinctions, class hierarchy, race, and geographic origin that had come to define the American understanding of European jazz, are present in Morgenstern’s description and underscores how ECM has become the revered and reviled symbol of Europe jazz.

ECM (Edition of Contemporary Music) was founded by Manfred Eicher (1943–), with backing from the businessman Karl Egger, in Munich, 1969.³ Eicher was a classically trained bassist but had transitioned to record producing and through the seventies he

¹ Dan Morgenstern, “Jazz in the ‘70s,” *Down Beat*, Jan. 1980, 19.

² For more on class, race, and symphonic jazz see John Howland, *Ellington Uptown: Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, and the Birth of Concert Jazz* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009).

³ For a detailed chronicle of ECM see Steve Lake, “ECM, a Chronology,” in *ECM: A Cultural Archeology*, eds. Okwui Enwezor and Markus Müller (Munich: Prestel, 2012), 218–245.

quickly established ECM as a leading label within jazz music (later adding classical music to the catalogue, focusing primarily on early music and contemporary new music). From the very beginning, Eicher seems to have been particularly interested in actively forging relationships between American and European musicians, rather than simply documenting already established names and groups, demonstrating what the musicologist Peter Elsdon calls a “transatlantic view of jazz.”⁴

Initially ECM’s records were not easily available for the American audience, but in 1973 the label got a US distribution deal with Polydor (which later shifted to a deal with Warner Brothers, and then in the mid-eighties back to a renamed Polygram). By 1976 the label’s reputation in the US was big enough that it could organize a nation-wide tour of concerts featuring its transatlantic roster of musicians under the ECM banner; and by the end of the decade, as the jazz historian David Ake remarks, “ECM had become one of the most commercially viable and instantly recognizable jazz labels on the planet.”⁵ Jazz fans will often speak of an “ECM record,” “ECM jazz,” or the “ECM sound.”⁶ The use of the term “sound,” specifically, also illustrates how ECM was placed within the larger emerging discourse of record production in the sixties and seventies, charted by Paul Théberge, that associated a distinct, recognizable “sound” with select producers or record labels. Importantly, as Théberge writes: “The concept of ‘sound’ was not simply a ‘technical’ phenomenon in the limited sense of the term; recording technology must be understood as a complete ‘system’ of production involving the organization of musical, social, and

⁴ Peter Elsdon, *Keith Jarrett’s The Köln Concert* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 18.

⁵ David Ake, *Jazz Matters: Sound, Place, and Time Since Bebop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 85.

⁶ In the US reception, this occurs as early as, at least, Larry Rohter, “A Distinctive ‘ECM Sound’,” *Washington Post*, 24 Oct. 1976.

technical means.”⁷ In other words, identifying a distinct “ECM sound” goes beyond addressing the fact of the record company, but describes, as Bruce Johnson terms it, ECM’s “house style.”⁸ This included many aspects of record production, as captured in this 1978 review:

Founder-producer Manfred Eicher and his staff oversee each release, and while the styles of the musicians are different, the packaging and recording of their work bears a unifying ‘ECM stamp.’ The covers are tastefully designed with subtle graphics and informative liner notes. The recordings are similarly understated—lushness of sound and clarity of playing are provided by the musicians, studio tampering is avoided.⁹

Such comments are not merely descriptive but denotes a set of values that are believed to be shared across the ECM catalogue, regardless of who the musicians on the record are and what they are playing. These values are articulated in the modernist art photography and design of the visual iconography of ECM releases and through the attention to recording, sound engineering, and mixing, encapsulated in the slogan “the most beautiful sound next to silence.”¹⁰ This sonic and visual style ties otherwise disparate musicians together across the label’s catalogue and speaks to the powerful way in which ECM *itself* has become a musical commodity (in other terms, a *brand*), not simply a mediator and distributor of music. Indeed, Daniel Goldmark gives ECM as an example of the of how jazz “record labels often become genres unto themselves if they specialize in a particular style, genre,

⁷ Paul Théberge, *Any Sound You Can Imagine: Making Music/Consuming Technology* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), 193.

⁸ Bruce Johnson, *Jazz Diaspora: Music and Globalisation* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 80.

⁹ Harry Sumrall, “Modern Expression of the ‘All-Night Jam’,” *Washington Post*, 6 Aug. 1978.

¹⁰ The phrase was taken from review of Jarrett’s *Facing You* (1972) in the Canadian magazine *Coda*. Lake, “ECM, a Chronology,” 220.

or even approach.”¹¹ As I will argue, ECM’s status and function as a *record* label is important. ECM’s style, both musical and visual, was bound to the recorded medium. Its recording aesthetics were not those of liveness, which otherwise had been the dominant ideology of jazz record production, but lay solidly in the realm of *phonography*, to use Evan Eisenberg’s term,¹² despite any claims (as in the review above) that “studio tampering is avoided.” This also affected the understanding of the musicians, for as Matthew Butterfield notes, “recording alters the stature of musicians fortunate enough to obtain contracts with good record labels. They become ‘recording artists,’ celebrities within the larger jazz community.”¹³ ECM’s association with a transatlantic roster of musicians, who often appeared across the catalogue on each other’s records, created the synergy with which the recording was at the center of the label’s and its musicians’ identity. More than serving as a home for European musicians, ECM gave American musicians access to world-class recording studios and engineers in located in Germany and Norway; and, as I will show, Eicher’s own growing celebrity status as a producer drew on tropes of high-art sensibility, intellectualism, and genius long associated with whiteness and Europe in US jazz reception (as outlined in chapter 1).

In his comprehensive study and theorization of record companies Keith Negus takes the dual view that “*an industry produces culture and culture produces an industry.*”¹⁴ The former perspective describes how corporations (i.e. record labels) set up structures of

¹¹ Daniel Goldmark, “‘Slightly Left of Center’: Atlantic Records and the Problems of Genre,” in *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and Its Boundaries*, ed. David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 162.

¹² Evan Eisenberg, *The Recording Angel: Music, Records, and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 89–131.

¹³ Matthew Butterfield, “Music Analysis and the Social Life of Jazz Recordings,” *Current Musicology* 71–73 (2002): 333.

¹⁴ Keith Negus, *Music Genres and Corporate Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1999), 14, his italics.

organization and institute working practices to produce identifiable products. In the case of ECM, the label created and mediated a transatlantic network of musicians with mainly European production centers under the oversight of Eicher. The product was an identifiable sound and iconography that came to symbolize “European jazz.” The second perspective describes how wider cultural formations, outside the corporation itself, shape the habitus of cultural workers and practices of production. Eicher’s choice of musicians, as well as their choice of repertoire and style was not merely a result of his supposed singular vision or the musicians’ innate creativity but was formed by the currents of the jazz world as well as growing independence and prominence of a distinct European jazz scene. This included the so-called emancipation driven by European free jazz musicians,¹⁵ a sustainable festival and club circuit,¹⁶ and independent record labels.¹⁷ For instance, as recounted in the previous chapter, the dominant critical battle in the jazz of the seventies was over fusion music and the authenticity of jazz. Fabian Holt argues that the proliferation of new small jazz labels in Europe was a response to those debates. Seen in this light, ECM, Holt writes, “became a refuge for many American artists in and provided a space in between the

¹⁵ According to the emancipation narrative, European musicians of the sixties and seventies stopped following American models for jazz and developed approaches independent of US influence. The narrative is especially associated with the writer, broadcaster, promoter, and producer Joachim-Ernst Berendt, see *Ein Fenster aus Jazz Essays, Portraits, Reflexionen* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1977); as well as the musicologist and critic Ekkehard Jost, see *Europas Jazz, 1960–80* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1987); and Ekkehard Jost, “The European Jazz Avant-Garde of the Late 1960s and Early 1970s: Where Did Emancipation Lead?” in *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts*, eds. Cerchiari, Luca, Laurent Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 275–297. See also, Mike Heffley, *Northern Sun, Southern Moon: Europe’s Reinvention of Jazz* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005). In the book-version of this project, I plan to write an extra chapter that deals explicitly with European free jazz and the emancipation narrative.

¹⁶ On the centrality of Europe in the emergence of the jazz festival see Scott Currie, “Individuals, Collectives, and Communities. Festivals and Festivalization: The Shaping Influence of a Jazz Institution,” in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*, eds. Nicholas Gebhardt, Nicole Rushtin-Paschal, and Tony Whyton (New York: Routledge, 2018), 303–312.

¹⁷ Immanuel Brockhaus provides a short account of ECM in the context of other European independent jazz labels of the seventies in “Organizing Emotions in Time: Klangästhetik und Studioteknologie im ECM-Sound der frühen Jahre, 1970–1980,” *European Journal of Musicology* 16, no. 1 (2017): 99–102.

commercial conditions of fusion and the precarious economy and radicalism of avant-garde jazz.”¹⁸ Parallel to this movement of American musicians to ECM, Stuart Nicholson argues, was a contrasting cultivation of European musicians “who brought elements of their own culture played a significant role in broadening the expressive range of jazz at a time when the American model had become increasingly inward-looking. ... Indeed, ECM’s success helped shift the centre of jazz innovation ever closer to Europe.”¹⁹ In this context, ECM may be exemplary as a European record label with substantial impact in the US. Paraphrasing Negus’s words, we can say that ECM produced “European jazz,” but also that transatlantic networks and the European jazz scene produced ECM.

In this chapter, I build upon these references to ECM made by previous scholars, as well as individual case studies of ECM artists. Furthermore, there is a rich popular literature on ECM, most prominently displayed in several luxurious coffee-table books about the label (the book-format matches the style, packaging, and ideology of ECM’s records), often produced by or in partnership with ECM. My argument is that ECM’s status as a *European* label—building upon the already established American understanding of European jazz, outlined in the previous chapters—played a significant part in its rise to prominence in the US. Firstly, I provide an account of the ways in which the American critics and listeners found ECM to be a specifically European label, which drew on many of the discourses of associating Europe with high art status and whiteness. Secondly, I show that ECM’s producer, Manfred Eicher, was presented as a creative collaborator and auteur in the studio; properties that were marked as specifically European in opposition to the

¹⁸ Fabian Holt, *Genre in Popular Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 101.

¹⁹ Stuart Nicholson, “Fusions and Crossovers,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, ed. Mervyn Cooke and David Horn (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2002), 248.

American music industry. The chapter ends by showing how American musicians, critics, and listeners projected social desires of whiteness and middle-class tastes onto the label. Importantly, ECM's transnational Europeanness also included some white American musicians who collaborated with Europeans and explored their own Euro-American identities through country-music-derived sounds. To white American listeners and musicians, the label's critical and commercial success legitimized white jazz as viable alternative to interpretations of jazz as a strictly African American music. As such, the US reception of ECM shows how whiteness was both cause and effect in the American imagination of what constituted European jazz.

“European Considerations”: ECM as a European, Transnational Label

The fact that ECM was a European label is important because it primed American audiences to listen for something foreign and different—something different that “may or may not be jazz,” as Morgenstern put it in the quote that opened this chapter. Sociologist and marketing scholar Damon Phillips has shown how recordings produced outside the central industrial hubs of jazz (New York City or more broadly the US) receive more popular attention when adhering to the consumer expectations of jazz, while records from a place not immediately associated with jazz benefit from frustrating the expectations of what jazz is. In fact, listeners find “strange sounds” even more appealing if they know that they come from a “strange place.” For instance, Phillips shows, that a recording with an unexpected, unusual instrument has greater appeal when the source of the recording is also unexpected or unusual, in this case non-American. Put simply, selling difference is profitable. (This point is also exemplified in my case studies of the European exoticism of Alice

Babs and Caterina Valente in Chapter 2). Phillips argues that this difference is as much geographic as it is stylistic, noticing an added market value of non-Anglophone names and paratextual information that highlights a record's foreignness.²⁰ ECM is a case in point, as it created difference and distance by musical as well as extramusical means. The label's strategy and market success rested upon the sounds and repertoires that marked and marketed it as coming from outside the American urban centers of jazz, but importantly, this was combined with iconography and other paratextual material that emphasized the label's distance and difference from the American jazz metropole. A simple example of this may be ECM's most successful record, Keith Jarrett's *The Köln Concert*, which preserves the city's German name rather than titling the album "The Cologne Concert."

Sonically, the stereotypical ECM album is characterized by pristine recording quality and a style of mixing that uses long reverb. Composition and improvisation often revolve around folk-like melodies, modal themes, and diatonic playing, which in conjunction with the sonic production style leads to a heightened focus on dynamics, timbre, and texture as structural elements in the music. Some scholars also hear an abandonment of essentialized African American musical characteristics—the absence of swing-feel, blues inflection, or the complex harmonic changes and chromaticism of post-swing jazz—and a rapprochement to classical, i.e. European, music—detailed chamber music-like ensemble playing, solo concert playing, straight (but not necessarily rock or funk) eighths.²¹

²⁰ Damon Phillips, *Shaping Jazz: Cities, Labels, and the Global Emergence of an Art Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 13–39.

²¹ Gerald Early, "Keith Jarrett, Miscegenation & the Rise of the European Sensibility in Jazz in the 1970s," *Daedalus* 148, no. 2 (2019): 76–77; Haftor Medbøe, "Cold Commodities: Discourses of Decay and Purity in a Globalised World," in *The Nature of Nordic Music*, ed. Tim Howell (Routledge: London, 2020), 127; Mervyn Cooke, *Pat Metheny: The ECM Years, 1975–1984* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 5–8.

This house style may seem familiar today, but the beginnings of ECM should caution us against disconnecting ECM entirely from US jazz culture. Much of ECM's early catalogue lay in the wake of US free jazz innovations of the sixties, linked to the Civil Rights Movement and avant-garde anti-commercialism. Indeed, a not insignificant number of ECM's releases in the seventies were by leading US experimental improvisers, most notably the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Of course, by appearing on a European label such African American sounds also became framed through transatlantic perspectives on class and race. This meant that ECM's avant-garde sounds were heard in conjunction with a European art-music tradition, along the split George Lewis has termed *Afrological* and *Eurological* lineages of improvisational practice.²² In the increasingly desegregated jazz world of the seventies and eighties, one must often read between the lines to find this distinction, though it was sometimes made explicit. Thus, Chris Sheridan drew both jazz historiographical and racial lines across the Atlantic in a three-page 1980 article that sought to summarize, for the American reader, what ECM was:

ECM reflects deep traits underlying much of the jazz played by Europeans in Europe, where even the 'free' players suffer from being too strongly academic. ECM's product may be the present-day equivalent of the 'cool jazz' of a generation earlier: laid back, discrete, chamber oriented, with a Third Stream basis imposed predominantly by white musicians.²³

Here, the Europeanness of ECM is again equated with its intellectual ("academic") approach akin to classical music and racialized as white. Sheridan uses much of the article grappling with the fact that ECM's catalogue also included some Black improvisers but

²² George Lewis, "Improvised Music After 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives," *Black Music Research Journal* 16, no. 1 (1996): 91–122.

²³ Chris Sheridan, "ECM's Third Stream Boogaloo," *Down Beat*, Jul. 1980, 32.

concludes that these are anomalies in the broad scheme of the label's production. In the end, it is clear that the article's title, "ECM's Third Stream Boogaloo," is an uncomfortable racialization that concribes "Third Stream" to the Eurological side of jazz and "Boogaloo" to music by Black musicians. This also shows us that the distinction between Eurological and Afrological music in the reception of ECM, was not always between two different approaches to improvisation, as Lewis describes it in his original article. Rather, the comparison to Third Stream, with its emphasis on through-composed music in the model of European art music, suggests a simpler stereotypical opposition: Composition (Eurological and white) versus improvisation (Afrological and Black). Despite ECM's significant output of Afrological improvised music by African American musicians, this discourse has also contributed to a general whitening of ECM's image, equating Europeanness and whiteness at the expense of the Black contributions to the label's catalogue. As such, ECM serves as the example of what Tony Whyton has called the "ideological and imperial bleaching of Europe."²⁴

The juxtaposition between African American improvisation and free jazz on the one side and European composition and classical music on the other—between Afrological and Eurological—became one way of placing ECM in a transatlantic jazz historiography, and can be exemplified by taking *Down Beat's* reviews of the white German bassist Eberhard Weber's (1940–) albums as a case study. A 1979 review of Weber's *Fluid Rustle* invited a direct comparison to the African American free jazz pioneer Ornette Coleman:

It's getting to the point where the acronym 'ECM' conjures up almost as much wind (and dirt, too, I might add) as did 'Ornette Coleman' just about 20 years ago. If many of Manfred

²⁴ Tony Whyton, "Europe and the New Jazz Studies," in *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts*, eds. Cerchiari, Luca, Laurent Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 370. See also my discussion of this in the introduction to this dissertation.

Eicher's projects don't swing in the conventional sense—and this one doesn't—or if they emphasize a more conceptual, textural approach over song form, the experimental proclivities that initiated the label still conceive some brilliantly varied projects. Whatever excesses (perhaps that word's antonym would be more appropriate) the company may allow, the exploding of traditional jazz and chamber ensemble instrumentation is inarguably one of ECM's true triumphs.²⁵

Even as such comparisons acknowledged the Afrological primacy in jazz, it also insisted on the production of classed and racial difference in transatlantic music, coding ECM's European jazz through allusions to chamber music and lack of swing rhythm. This reveals how American critics were unable to escape the Afro-/Eurological binary when listening to ECM's records. This was sometimes thematized explicitly by American reviewers, as when Steve Metalitz wrote of Weber's *Colours of Chloë* (1975):

This is an album calculated to reinforce a few American preconceptions about the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary European improvisors... Weber opts for stillness, set pieces of keyboard and strings succeeding each other rather abruptly, rather than organically. *Chloë's* colors are beautiful all right, but this is a slide show, not the flowing kaleidoscope which the best collective improvisation sets in motion... All that is missing is a sense of freedom. Possibly that illustrates one difference between our side (historically improvised) and their side (historically precomposed) of the pond.²⁶

This neatly ties ECM's European roots and perceived rejection of free jazz together with the stereotypical "stillness" of the label's music, and the high cultural capital of European art music. The fact that ECM and many of its musicians were European reinforced US preconceptions that placed the music on the Eurological side of improvised music, even when one could argue that e.g. Weber's jazz music owed more to the African American, Afrological jazz tradition than it did to the Eurological composers described by Lewis, e.g.

²⁵ Zipkin, review of Eberhard Weber, *Fluid Rustle* ECM 1-1137 (1979), *Down Beat*, Dec. 1979, 46.

²⁶ Steve Metalitz, review of Eberhard Weber, *The Colours of Chloë*, ECM 1042 ST, *Down Beat*, 30 Jan. 1975, 25.

John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen. The way in which some ECM music was inevitably associated with European art music, also reveals the dialectic of “epistemological othering” of jazz in music criticism, described by Lewis.²⁷ In this assessment of ECM, we see how European musicians themselves were othered in order to preserve the essentialist views that equate European music and whiteness with composition and African American music with improvisation. The “lack of freedom” that Metalitz heard was interpreted as a Eurological turn away from free jazz and by extension the political commitments of Black, or Afrological, improvised music.²⁸ Reviewers made the connection between European art music and its detachment from social concerns clear:

The characteristics that some find annoying about the European ‘chamber music’ approach to jazz—a dreamy, drifting, almost detached sensibility—are those very qualities that bassist-composer Weber most consciously strives toward. And evaluation of his pensive aural tone poems is difficult as attempts to explain a particularly poignant dream.²⁹

Such criticism also shows that the positioning of ECM’s Europeanness was not always celebratory. More often, though, the observations were more positive or matter of fact, if equally essentialist, as when the same magazine reviewed Weber’s next record and used it as an occasion to summarize this trend:

In the last few years, a new classical school has taken form in jazz... By classical, I mean that the elements of a piece’s composition are more likely to emerge from European considerations than a blues orientation.³⁰

²⁷ Lewis, “Improvised Music After 1950,” 103–105.

²⁸ It should be noted that George Lewis himself subscribes to the emancipation narrative, albeit with an important intervention that especially at the “early stage in the development of European free improvisation, the musicians made no attempt to deny the Afrological influence upon their work.” *A Power Stronger than Itself: AACM and American Experimental Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 250.

²⁹ Simon, review of Eberhard Weber, *Silent Feet* ECM 1107, *Down Beat*, 5 Apr. 1979, 26.

³⁰ Gilmore, review of Eberhard Weber, *Yellow Fields*, ECM 1066 ST (1974), *Down Beat*, 17 Jun. 1976, 22.

These values were read into ECM's emphasis on high-quality recordings and mixing as well as the coherent visual program, according to Herbert Hellhund, "to form an aesthetic complex that binds together the enormous idiomatic variety of the ECM oeuvre, itself an expression of Eicher's desire for synthesis."³¹ This synthesis brought the label's identity across different recordings and Eicher's agency to the fore. More than simply distributing European jazz music to US audiences, Mervyn Cooke has highlighted "the importance of ECM in drawing *European jazz thinking* to the attention of American players and audiences in the 1970s."³² Cooke's phrase emphasizes that ECM was not simply producing and distributing jazz music played by Europeans, but that the label was engaging in a more thorough-going aesthetic, ideological project ("European jazz thinking") that, through its transatlantic scope, was understood by critics, musicians, and listeners to be specifically European.

The idea that ECM is representative, perhaps even constitutive, of "European jazz (thinking)" goes beyond the fact that it happens to be a European label or that critics have found its musicians to play in European styles. Indeed, this is not to say that all ECM records exhibit the stereotypical, essentialist characteristics of "European jazz" described above and associated with e.g. the so-called Nordic tone of Scandinavian musicians like the Norwegian saxophonist Jan Garbarek (1947–).³³ Furthermore, of course many of

³¹ Herbert Hellhund, "Roots and Collage: Contemporary European Jazz in Postmodern Times," in *Euro-jazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts*, eds. Cerchiari, Luca, Laurent Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 444.

³² Cooke, *Pat Metheny*, 9. My italics.

³³ The most (in)famous manifesto on the "Nordic Tone" is Stuart Nicholson's chapter "Celebrating the Global: The Nordic Tone in Jazz," in *Is Jazz Dead? (Or Has It Moved to a New Address)* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 195–222. Tony Whyton has argued that the idea of the Nordic tone in jazz often engages in a celebratory mythmaking of a native European sound that belies the cultural appropriation and whiteness that dominates this sound and style. Whyton, "Europe and the New Jazz Studies." Nicholson has since

ECM's musicians were not Europeans and many European musicians did not record for ECM. It speaks to the popularity of ECM and the power of the ideology attached to it that Europeanness became to defined through ECM, regardless of the contradictions that this can hold. Indeed, in some cases it is ECM itself—through paratext and critical discourse—that provides the symbolic value of Europe, rather than just the music on the record. For instance, as both Peter Elsdon and Gerald Early argue, Keith Jarrett is an example of an American musician who managed to create “European jazz” through his association with ECM. It also means that ECM's Europeanness encompassed music that is otherwise explicitly American.³⁴ Indeed, David Ake's study of what he terms the *American pastoral jazz* on Keith Jarrett's and Pat Metheny's albums for ECM shows how the label and European musicians were instrumental in the conception a new form of American jazz nationalism in the seventies.³⁵ What American pastoral jazz shares with a stereotypical image of ECM and European jazz, is its whiteness, and we could just as well highlight the connection by calling it Euro-American pastoral jazz or settler-colonial pastoral jazz.

engaged with this criticism, elaborated on his initial text, and acknowledged the problematics of essentialism (referencing Paul Gilroy), but also refuses to reduce the Nordic tone to commercialism and whiteness, and to recognize the historical contexts that produce a “sound of some Scandinavian musicians (by no means all) defining their identity with an approach to jazz that has become associated with a specific geographical area.” Stuart Nicholson, *Jazz and Culture in a Global Age*, (Boston: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 130. The centrality of the Nordic region for ECM is reflected in much writing about the label, see for instance Michael Tucker, “Northbound: ECM and ‘the Idea of the North’,” in *Horizons Touched: The Music of ECM*, ed. Steven Lake & Paul Griffiths (London: Granta, 2007), 29–46. For musicological accounts of the Nordic tone and musical Nordicness in general, Michael Fjeldsøe and Sanne Groth Krogh, “‘Nordicness’ in Scandinavian Music: A Complex Question,” in *The Nature of Nordic Music*, ed. Tim Howell (London: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 3–19; Philip Bohlman, “Musical Borealism: Nordic Music and European History,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Popular Music in the Nordic Countries*, ed. Fabian Holt and Antti-Ville Kärjä (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 34–56; Fabian Holt, “Nordic Modernity and the Structure of the Musical Landscape,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Popular Music in the Nordic Countries*, ed. Fabian Holt and Antti-Ville Kärjä (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 57–74; and specifically in jazz, see Medbøe, “Cold Commodities”; and Fabian Holt, “Jazz and the Politics of Home in Scandinavia,” in *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz*, ed. Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 51–78.

³⁴ Elsdon, *The Köln Concert*, 17–18; Early, “Keith Jarrett, Miscegenation, and the Rise of the European Sensibility in Jazz.”

³⁵ Ake, *Jazz Matters*, 77–101.

Such examples show us that the emerging importance of European identities and the popularity of ECM was part of a globalizing trend in jazz in the seventies and eighties, which notably also gained traction in the US. Critics often framed this in national terms, as when *Down Beat* wrote: “Enrico Rava is doing for Italy what Eberhard Weber is doing for Germany and Dollar Brand for South Africa: creating jazz that is distinctly flavored by the music of his own culture.”³⁶ (Rava was, like Weber, signed to ECM, while Dollar Brand, later known as Abdullah Ibrahim, had released music on JAPO, owned by ECM.) Sometimes such critical assessment would include more specific analytical and associative language. This was already seen in *Down Beat*’s first full review of Garbarek’s work:

Jan Garbarek... reminds one of the craggy mountain fjords of his native Norway. His playing is full of jagged edges and beautiful surprises, Coltrane-influenced but his own... Garbarek should be heard. As wary as I am of generalizations, I would venture that not since Django Reinhardt has there been a European jazz musician so original and forward-looking as this young Norwegian.³⁷

Such remarks exemplify the production of difference in the reception of someone like Garbarek. The comparison to Reinhardt lays the groundwork for his iconic status outside of an American jazz canon, a status which in no small part entails associating the European musician with national and ethnic identities.³⁸ It is also worth remarking upon the comparison to Coltrane, which places Garbarek in the Afrological tradition. It speaks to the free-jazz style that was still evident in his music here in 1972, when he had not fully developed the Nordic tone he would become the most famous exponent of. While *Triptykon* (1972)

³⁶ Clark, review of Enrico Rava, *Enrico Rava Quartet*, ECM 1-1122 (1978), *Down Beat*, 12 Jul. 1979, 25.

³⁷ Joe H. Klee, review of Jan Garbarek, *Esoteric Circle*, Flying Dutchman FD-10125 (1971) and *Affric Pepperbird*, ECM 1007 (1971), *Down Beat*, 20 Jan. 1972, 20.

³⁸ Siv B. Lie, “Genre, Ethnoracial Alterity, and the Genesis of *jazz manouche*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 72, no. 3 (2019): 665–718.

contains a track (“Selje”) where Garbarek plays the Norwegian folk instrument selje flute, an American reviewer also remarked that the “use of folkish-type melodies adds an early-Ayler cast to a number of the tracks.”³⁹ The blaring presentation of Norwegian folk tune, “Bruremarsj,” does certainly sound a lot like Albert Ayler’s use of folk- and fanfare-like motifs. This shows that the emergence of European sounds on ECM cannot be easily classified as an abandonment of US models at the expense of national, European styles, sounds, and repertoires. This music was the result of a transnational creative practice and it took work on part of musicians, ECM, and critics to reframe them as distinctly European.

Thus, the growing prominence of ECM and popularity of non-American musical tropes was not and should not be understood as a cultural isolationism that terms like *emancipation*, *Nordic tone*, or *Eurological* might seem to imply. Indeed, in much jazz criticism, both popular and scholarly, ECM is held up as an exemplary transnational label as well as an exemplary European label—and those ways of framing it are not mutually exclusive but may in fact work in tandem. When Eric Porter, in a historiographical reconsideration of jazz from the seventies, writes of the “increasing influence [of] record labels based outside the United States, such as ECM,”⁴⁰ this should prompt us to see the label as a catalyst for non-American jazz, not only as it gained independence from the US, but also as non-American styles became more interesting to an American audience.

It is not accidental that ECM’s rise prefigures and coincides with the advent of *world music* as a marketing category of “other” sounds and *world beat* as a subcategory denoting the mixing of “traditional” music with Western popular music. ECM musicians like Garbarek, who turned to folkloric sounds, did not do so to conjure forth a jazz nationalism

³⁹ Review of Jan Garbarek, *Triptykon* ECM 1029 (1972), *Down Beat*, 8 Nov. 1973.

⁴⁰ Eric Porter, “Introduction: Rethinking Jazz Through the 1970s,” *Jazz Perspectives* 4, no. 1 (2010): 4.

aimed solely at listeners from their own countries or regions.⁴¹ Rather, as Michael Denning emphasizes about world music, musicians and labels shifted from focusing on national markets to targeting “external markets, attempting to sell distinct vernacular musics to a transnational audience.”⁴² Considered in this economic and historical context, it is clear that ECM became a “European” jazz label because it was a transnational, transatlantic label.

Affiliations to world music also have histories within the jazz world itself. Because of its promotion and incorporation of sounds from outside the American jazz tradition, Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino suggest that ECM should be situated as part of a *world-jazz ideology* in the intellectual lineage of the German critic and jazz promoter Joachim-Ernst Berendt’s notion of *Weltmusik* (even if there was considerable personal antagonism between Berendt and Eicher⁴³). Berendt’s project, and by extension ECM’s, was dual: In Bohlman and Plastino’s view, an “attempt to provide some other solid element toward a real, effective European jazz emancipation from African American models”⁴⁴; and, as Andrew Hurley argues in his biography of Berendt, “to overcome and make amends for past German nationalism, as well as providing a beacon for a tolerant, cosmopolitan future.”⁴⁵ In other words, the fact that a record label with ECM’s approach and aesthetics was

⁴¹ On the concept of *jazz nationalism* see E. Taylor Atkins, “Toward a Global History of Jazz,” in *Jazz Planet*, ed. by Atkins (Jackson: Uni. Press of Mississippi, 2003), xi–xviii.

⁴² Michael Denning, *Noise Uprising: The Audiopolitics of a World Musical Revolution* (London: Verso, 2015), 228. The scholarship on world music is too vast to list here; a short overview can be found in Martin Stokes, “Globalization and the Politics of World Music,” in *The Cultural Study of Music*, eds. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2012), 107–116. One article is, however, worth singling out as it takes Jan Garbarek as one of its case studies: Steven Feld, “A Sweet Lullaby for World Music,” *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 145–71.

⁴³ Andrew Wright Hurley, *The Return of Jazz: Joachim-Ernst Berendt and West German Cultural Exchange* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2009), 134–135.

⁴⁴ Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino, “Introduction,” *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz*, ed. Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 28.

⁴⁵ Hurley, *The Return of Jazz*, 229.

European and specifically West German was no coincidence. As with any formation of national or regional jazz identities and indeed the establishment of a non-American record label such as ECM, “emancipation” is a word that belies the fact that it rested on the dialectical (not oppositional) relation to the US, and specifically African American culture, as well as the formal and material connections between Americans and Europeans.

ECM exemplifies a different side of the *emancipation* associated with European free jazz of the sixties and seventies: As a parallel to the free-jazz emancipation, ECM has come to be the standard bearer for jazz in European idioms (inspired by folk music, classical music, nationalism, mythology etc.), as well as for white American musicians to explore non-Black American idioms (namely, inspired by country music). These stylistic and aesthetic developments were, importantly, supported by a more material form of emancipation in that ECM facilitated European sites of production and channels of distribution that had meaningful impact across the Atlantic. Moreover, Eicher’s aesthetics, his and the ECM engineers’ studio practices, and the creative networks offered by the label, attracted scores of prominent American musicians to Europe.

“The Shaper and Spoiler of This Affair”: Record Production, and Manfred Eicher as Collaborator and Auteur

Music historians have observed that discourses of jazz recording have celebrated perceived liveness as a main criterium for jazz recordings and that the use of studio techniques or post-production that disrupted this sonic ideal has traditionally threatened that discourse.⁴⁶ ECM managed to bridge the two sides of this problem, as Manfred Eicher

⁴⁶ Benjamin Bierman, “Jazz and the Recording Process,” in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*, eds. Nicholas Gebhardt, Nichole Rushtin-Paschal, and Tony Whyton (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 209–219;

emphasized high-quality studio production as a hallmark and selling point for the ECM sound, while maintaining its difference from the perceived commercialism of fusion jazz. Rather than only situating the ECM house style in the compositional and improvisatory style of its musicians' performance, the musicologist Tor Dybo asserts that "the studio production becomes part of the sound aesthetics for the ECM artists."⁴⁷ And the music production scholar Immanuel Brockhaus goes as far as to write that in the seventies, "ECM defined the sound of European jazz primarily through the use of technology."⁴⁸ In a big US portrait article and interview afforded Eicher in 1976, *Down Beat*'s Charles Mitchell emphasized how recording aesthetics was the crux of ECM:

Thus it appears that, for the first time in the recording of contemporary improvised music at any rate, we can speak of a recording process that is more fully integrated with the music—an art to match the art of being documented.⁴⁹

Descriptions of ECM, its musicians, and records often included references to the recording process in a manner similar to the discourse Louise Meintjes identifies as the

Marian Jago, "What Is a Jazz Record Anyway: Lennie Tristano and the Use of Extended Studio Techniques in Jazz," in *The Art of Record Production: Creative Practice in the Studio*, eds. Simon Zagorski-Thomas, Katia Isakoff, Sofie Stévançe, and Serge Lacasse (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 142–54; and Darren Mueller, "Quest for the Moment: The Audio Production of *Ellington at Newport*," *Jazz Perspectives* 8, no. 1 (2014): 3–23. Bierman, in particular, argues that this discourse is neither historically precise nor helpful in a 21st century setting. Similarly, in his broader cultural history of sound reproduction, Jonathan Sterne notes that "the very idea that a reproduced sound could be faithful to an original sound was an artifact of the culture and history of sound reproduction." *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 282. On the concept and ideology of "liveness" see Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London: Routledge, 2008); and Paul Sanden, *Liveness in Modern Music: Musicians, Technology, and the Perception of Performance* (London: Routledge, 2013). One should also note that the privileging of liveness in jazz is, perhaps ironically, not at odds with structuring the jazz canon as the history of recorded jazz, see Jed Rasula, "The Media of Memory: The Seductive Menace of Records in Jazz History," in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 134–162.

⁴⁷ My translation. "På denne måten blir studioproduksjonen med som en del av sound-estetikken hos ECM-artistene..." Tor Dybo, *Jan Garbarek – Det åpne roms estetikk* (Oslo: Pax, 1996), 44.

⁴⁸ My translation. "ECM hat in diesen Jahren den Sound des europäischen Jazz vor allem durch die Nutzung von Technologie definiert." Brockhaus, "Klangästhetik und Studioteknologie im ECM-Sound," 113.

⁴⁹ Charles Mitchell, "The Fine Art of Recording Fine Art," *Down Beat*, 15 Jan. 1976, 38.

fetishization of the recording studio.⁵⁰ This also centered the record producer to a degree incomparable to most other jazz labels. And the guitarist John Abercrombie presented Eicher's as a producer motivated by musical, rather than market-driven forces:

Eicher is the ideal producer; he is totally immersed in musical values. We are never pushed in any commercial direction.⁵¹

Importantly, ECM's sound and Eicher's role as a producer was positioned as something integral to the creative process rather than a technological disruption of live-music making. Although jazz has always been technologically mediated, in the seventies, these criteria were confronted with the overt technological mediation of fusion music, which was accused of inauthenticity, among other things because of its transparent embrace of studio production.⁵² Indeed, ECM was often positioned against fusion, despite the fact that the label released records that can only be characterized as part of fusion, e.g., Chick Corea's first record with his Return to Forever band (1972). Thus, it was through reviews and press coverage that readers could be assured that while someone like Pat Metheny challenged the stereotypical ECM sound, it was different than most other fusion music:

Even though Metheny finds himself moving into more dynamic musical modes—away from the austere intellectuality that he feels characterizes some of the ECM output—it's not toward anything remotely related to what could be called the current jazz-rock-funk sellout.⁵³

⁵⁰ Louise Meintjes, *Sound of Africa! Making Zulu Music in a South African Studio* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 71–108.

⁵¹ Leonard Feather, "The Oslo-Style: Return to Ideals," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 Apr. 1979.

⁵² For references on fusion jazz and technology, see chapter 3. Mark Katz's account of early jazz recording shows that technology has always influenced the creative choices of musicians and producers, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 72–84.

⁵³ John Alan Simon, "Pat Metheny: Ready to Tackle Tomorrow," *Down Beat*, 13 Jul. 1978, 22. Notice also the continued dichotomy of "intellectuality" and "sellout" that mirrored longstanding tropes associated with the juxtaposition of European aesthetics and American commercialism, as outlined in chapters 1 and 3.

Even artists who had come out as squarely anti-fusion were described within this prevalent discourse of the time, as when a 1975 review of the solo records by Keith Jarrett—who was on a self-confessed “anti-electric-music crusade”⁵⁴—announced in its headline that “The Acoustic Piano Can Be Electrifying.”⁵⁵ Though there was some ambiguous acknowledgment of the technological production that went into the creation of the ECM sound, as when another headline the same year summarized ECM’s music under “Technical Skill, Acoustic Clarity, and All That (Recording) Jazz.”⁵⁶ In this sense, ECM and Eicher were not the exact opposite of fusion jazz, but part of the same embrace of studio production that eventually leads to what Dean Reynolds calls *a recording-oriented aesthetic of jazz* (as opposed to a liveness-oriented recording aesthetic).⁵⁷

The technical skill and clarity of sound was reflected in the distinct visual style of the album covers, emphasizing the centrality of the record as an object. The album sleeves use modern, minimalist graphic design and typography, and the iconography often show landscape or seascape images, modernist artwork, or monochrome art photography. Graphic designers, like the frequently employed Barbara Wojirsch and photographers like Dieter Rehm, create a sparse visual style across the ECM catalogue that serve as the visual equivalent to the label’s sonic aesthetic and suggested a commitment to the authenticity of clear-toned “acoustic” timbres, “folk” identities, and a modern, “serious” artist subject. Indeed, ECM is probably as famous for the way it packages its records as for the sounds contained

⁵⁴ Keith Jarrett, liner notes for Keith Jarrett, *Solo Concerts: Bremen/Lausanne* ECM 1035–37 (1977).

⁵⁵ John Wilson, “Jazz Notes: The Acoustic Piano can be Electrifying,” *New York Times*, 2 Mar. 1975.

⁵⁶ Larry Rohter, “Technical Skill, Acoustic Clarity and all that (Recording) Jazz,” *Washington Post*, 20 Apr. 1975.

⁵⁷ Dean Reynolds, “Song, Beat, Sound, and Solo: Production, Musical Style, and a Recording-Oriented Aesthetic of Jazz,” *Jazz Perspectives* 11, no. 2 (2018): 111–38.

in them. As Tony Whyton writes, attention to these materials is all the more important when studying a label that uses marketing to distance itself from the market:

Through the textual and intertextual readings of advertising and marketing, it is possible to gain an understanding of the semiological process first-hand, examining how products convey denotative and connotative value, and how the icon can play a dominant role in consumer understanding of jazz practice. This type of analysis takes on a broader significance when considering the way in which ‘serious’ jazz consumers and practitioners distance themselves from the marketplace, believing that they are immune to the powers of advertising. Indeed, this perspective is often referenced by the opinion that only the music matters, and that as art can speak for itself, marketing and commercial forces have little impact upon the ‘true’ jazz enthusiast or collector.⁵⁸

ECM most definitely appealed to the serious listener and in fact, that very term—“serious listener”—figured in the second sentence of the above-mentioned big portrait article in *Down Beat* in 1976. With ECM, though, listening also happens with the eyes and Elsdon argues that these issues are especially pertinent to ECM’s visual designs:

This mode of presentation can be seen to articulate a philosophy of production that avoids artifice or narrative while presenting only the bare factual information. These production aesthetics have become intrinsically associated with the ECM label, but at the same time as they appear to boast their transparency, they disguise as much as they reveal.⁵⁹

This ideology of the autonomy of art and resistance to market forces was even reflected in the choice of the label’s name. Okwui Enwezor contends that “by naming the label ‘Edition of Contemporary Music,’ [Eicher] seemed to imply the democratic spirit of the idea of the artistic multiple without completely succumbing to the seduction of mass production.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Tony Whyton, *Jazz Icons: Heroes, Myths, and the Jazz Tradition* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2010), 83.

⁵⁹ Elsdon, *The Köln Concert*, 14.

⁶⁰ Okwui Enwezor, “Great Big Ears: ECM – A Cultural Archeology – Notes Towards an Exhibition,” in *ECM: A Cultural Archeology*, eds. Okwui Enwezor and Markus Müller (Munich: Prestel, 2012), 33.

Such ideas of anti-commercialism are rooted in the discourses of aesthetic autonomy that are associated with European art and aesthetics and have been tied directly to ECM, as when the British jazz musician and writer Ian Carr contends:

[Eicher] was concerned first with musical quality and only secondarily with financial profit. This view of music as art and not as mere commodity was essentially European and it was diametrically opposed to the view of the American recording industry, which put sales and profit first.⁶¹

Such dichotomies of European aesthetic sensibility and American commercialism has (as described in chapter 1) its roots in transatlantic jazz reception going back to the forties. Given that ECM emerged during the height of fusion jazz and the debates over its legitimacy, one might think that ECM could have been threatened by these discourses of authenticity and technological mediation because of the emphasis placed on sound recording and mixing in the reception of the label's albums. However, the critical and commercial success of ECM complicates such frameworks. Indeed, Eicher functioned as a mediator of technological mediation. This was, e.g., presented in an interview with the guitarist John Abercrombie, where he mentions the use of a volume and effects pedal, something that could otherwise easily have been framed as a fusion jazz device:

John is a longtime user of the volume pedal, since he likes the swelling, vocal effects he can with it. "It takes a little time to develop a technique with it," he says. "It's just a little matter of how you want to use it. When I started recording for ECM, Manfred Eicher said that he loved that effect, that sound. He asked if I could do more of it. I said, sure, that's easy. He made me more aware of the effect musically."⁶²

⁶¹ Ian Carr, *Keith Jarrett: The Man and his Music* (London: GraftonBooks, 1991), 59.

⁶² Tim Schneekloth, "John Abercrombie: A Direction of his Own," *Down Beat*, 22. Feb. 1979, 16–17 and 42.

The implication is that many guitarists use such effects without proper technique, in an unmusical manner—whatever that may mean. Eicher plays a key part in such narratives, recasting the role of technology as an acceptable element of jazz production. This somewhat idolizing image of Eicher creeps even into otherwise critical, scholarly accounts, such as Andrew Blake’s history of music producers, which describes him as “the inspired mediator between artist and listener.”⁶³ In some cases, this even meant positioning Eicher more centrally than as cultural intermediary and casting him, to take the words from one of the hagiographic ECM-produced coffee table books, as a *meta-artist*.⁶⁴ In this sense, Eicher did not fit the mold of the ideal jazz producer or engineer, that Michael Jarrett has termed “self-effacing,” who aims for a non-intrusive or inaudible production style.⁶⁵ While ECM’s records were less likely to revel in the technological and organological marvel associated with fusion jazz, this did not mean that critics did not hear Eicher’s personal imprint in the music. Thus, in one of the first mentions of Eicher in the US press (on the occasion of ECM’s US-distribution deal with Polydor), the headline was “Taking Jazz Personally” and from reading the opening lines it is clear that the personality at the center of ECM is Eicher’s, not his artists’:

Jazz record producers have traditionally functioned as middlemen, balancing their artists’ desires against their employers’ demands for salable product, attempting to create studio conditions conducive to both to music making and to optimal sound reproduction. In pop and soul music, the artist is often simply the producer’s “voice.” In jazz, few producers have been able to establish personal styles without compromising the individuality of their

⁶³ Andrew Blake, “Recording Practices and the Role of the Producer,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, and John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 53.

⁶⁴ Peter Rüedi, “The Audible Landscape,” in *Sleeves of Desire: A Cover Story*, ed. Lars Müller (Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 1996), 29.

⁶⁵ Michael Jarrett, “The Self-Effacing Producer: Absence Summons Presence,” in *The Art of Record Production: An Introductory Reader for a New Academic Field*, ed. Simon Frith and Simon Zagorski-Thomas (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 129–48.

artists in the process... the unprecedented clarity with which Eicher has captured [performances] has contributed to the popularity of ECM as an import line.⁶⁶

The aesthetic integrity associated with ECM and Eicher went hand in hand with carefully crafted branding and savvy marketing that was applied to many different musicians and styles on one label. This shows us that “the market” is not wholly antithetical to “the music,” and that narratives that cast record producers and labels as figures of corruption are, at best, inaccurate, and, at worst, avoids describing the political economy of jazz that is otherwise usually the main force of such narratives. Furthermore, the cross-over appeal of some of ECM’s records (most notably Jarrett’s *The Köln Concert*) shows us that a commitment to “acoustic” jazz and refusal to “sell out” via fusion was not equal to confinement to “declining marketability,” small audiences, and low record sales. Turning the recording itself into an acceptable object of middle-/highbrow aesthetic desire was key to ECM’s coupling of marketing and music.

Simon Zagorski-Thomas suggests that “one of the ways in which extensive technological mediation can gain acceptance with an audience, is for that mediation to be perceived as part of the artists’ communal or individual creative practice.”⁶⁷ ECM’s albums’ status *as records* has not only been accepted but is celebrated by fans and critics. Central to this is the prominent position the record producer himself, Eicher, has in ECM’s overall identity as an active participant in the musical process and eventual recorded product.

ECM’s approach to studio recording and Eicher’s role as a producer straddles the *modes of collaboration* described by Edward Kealy in an early, now classic, article in the

⁶⁶ Robert Palmer, “Taking Jazz Personally,” *New York Times*, 10 Mar. 1974, 135.

⁶⁷ Simon Zagorski-Thomas, “The Stadium in Your Bedroom: Functional Staging, Authenticity, and the Audience-Led Aesthetic in Record Production,” *Popular Music* 29, no. 2 (2010): 261.

scholarship of record production: The *craft union mode* with a focus on the producers' and engineers' technical skills as recordists; the *entrepreneurial mode* associated with independent companies, like ECM, where the owner is often heavily involved in the recording and mixing process, and where there was a greater deal of fluidity in the collaboration between musicians, engineers, and producers than in the craft union mode; and the *art mode* associated with singular producers like Phil Spector and Teo Macero, or bands like post-*Sgt. Pepper* Beatles, where the recording and mixing process itself was a creative act.⁶⁸ Eicher's oft-mentioned obsession with microphone placement in the studio showcases the technical competency associated with the craft union mode, but his representation in the US press more often highlighted him engaging in entrepreneurial and artistic collaboration with his musicians.

The combination of these modes of collaboration should be seen as a counterimage to the prevalent discourses of the political economy of jazz in the seventies. According to Eric Porter, there is a sense in many narratives (referenced in the previous chapter in relation to fusion jazz) that "jazz during the 1970s was either corrupted by the intrusion of the market or by its declining marketability."⁶⁹ The 1976 *Down Beat* interview with Eicher, made his collaborative profile clear and presented it as a difference between Europe and the US:

Eicher's meticulous attention to detail and quality is setting new standards that, sooner or later, the cost-cut-crazy American recording industry will have to deal with. ECM's

⁶⁸ Edward Kealy, "From Craft to Art: The Case of Sound Mixers and Popular Music," *Sociology of Work and Occupations* 6, no. 1 (1979): 3–29. Zagorski-Thomas criticizes Kealy's model for the lack of distinction between the producer and the sound engineer. Simon Zagorski-Thomas, *The Musicology of Record Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 160. With Eicher, though, that distinction is not clear, either because he in fact does participate in the engineering process and/or because blurring those distinctions helps maintain the image of creative collaboration on his part.

⁶⁹ Porter, "Rethinking Jazz Through the 1970s," 3.

musicians are so loyal and enthusiastic about what Eicher is doing that this in itself sets the company apart from other labels, where legendary battles often rage between artists and middlemen who seek to turn creative endeavor into “product.”⁷⁰

This presentation not only describes the entrepreneurial mode and art mode of Eicher’s collaboration with musicians but ascribes a distinctly European identity to such an approach. Here, decades-old tropes of European anti-commercialism and artistic authority are read into the figure of Eicher by way of his collaborative rather than stereotypically antagonistic relationship with the musicians. The portrait presents Eicher’s persona as one that is as serious as ECM’s listeners and his interaction with the musicians as thoughtful as the music, characterized by a collaborative art mode. He is quoted stating: “I think the producer’s function is primarily psychological.”⁷¹ Taken in conjunction with the article’s sharp distinction between American and European approaches to record production, Eicher personifies “European jazz thinking.”

According to the reception of ECM, Eicher managed to straddle a historical distinction outlined by Antoine Hennion: “The *creative collective*, a team of professionals who simultaneously take over all aspects of a popular song’s production, has replaced the individual creator who composed songs which others would then play, disseminate, defend or criticize.”⁷² ECM was presented as a collective, as many of its musicians appeared in multiple constellations across the catalogue, and Eicher and his engineers were seen as creative collaborators working in the art mode in the studio, essential to the making of the ECM sound. However, the constant centering and singling out of Eicher also resisted this narrative of

⁷⁰ Mitchell, “The Fine Art of Recording,” 38.

⁷¹ Mitchell, “The Fine Art of Recording,” 38.

⁷² Antoine Hennion, “The Production of Success: An Antimusicology of the Pop Song,” *Popular Music* 3 (1983): 160.

the collective and maintained the producer as an individual creator whose meta-artistic genius transcended that of any individual performer or collective set of musicians, unifying all of the records under the ECM brand and through the ECM sound.

In many ways Eicher was positioned as an *auteur*, the literal term being applied to him at least a couple of times in the seventies, though one of those descriptions are somewhat disparaging (here, in a review of a Ralph Towner record):

In a larger sense, though, producer Manfred Eicher is the shaper and spoiler of this affair, since the same criticism could be fairly leveled at most of his ECM fare. He is the *auteur* of his stable (only Jarrett and Burton transcend his vision), and his predilection for airy and arid productions results too often in dynamism, personal sonority and rhythmic flow. In other words, it doesn't swing. Now that's not necessarily bad—in fact it's sort of conceptually challenging—but unfortunately it makes for pretty bland and uninvolved records.⁷³

By employing this term, the reviewer is comparing Eicher to the film directors, most notably those of the French New Wave (and, not coincidentally, Eicher developed a long-standing partnership with the film director Jean-Luc Godard). Here, I am not using the term to suggest that it is necessarily the best, precise analytic concept to explain the empirical reality of Eicher's practice. Rather, I am suggesting that the persona Eicher cultivated and the way he appeared in the American press, shares many similarities with some key aspects of *auteur theory* in film studies, as described here in a much-referenced text by the film critic Peter Wollen:

⁷³ Gilmore, review of Ralph Towner & Solstice, *Sound & Shadows* ECM 1095 (1977), *Down Beat*, 23 Feb. 1978, 24; the term is also used about Eicher in passing in Neil Tesser, review of Keith Jarrett, *Sun Bear Concerts*, ECM 1100 (1978), *Down Beat*, 22. Feb. 1979, 24. As I was finishing this chapter, the music critic Ted Gioia published a piece on ECM, which repeats many of the elements of ECM's American reception, including referring to him as an "auteur." Ted Gioia, "The Most Beautiful Sound Next to Silence," *City Journal*, Winter (2021), <https://www.city-journal.org/ecm-german-music-label>.

The *auteur* theory does not limit itself to acclaiming the director as the main author of a film. It implies an operation of decipherment; it reveals authors where none had been seen before. For years, the model of an author in the cinema was that of the European director, with open artistic aspirations and full control over his films. This model still lingers on; it lies behind the existential distinction between art films and popular films.⁷⁴

If one replaces “director” for “producer” and “film”/ “cinema” for “music,” one can understand the reception of ECM through this theory. Though Eicher may not be the “main author” named on an album, he is often figured as a main author of the recording. His presence reveals a new kind of jazz producer, more than an engineer or a record label owner, though, as the only music scholar who explicitly theorizes the *auteur* concept, Richard Burgess, notes, the *auteur* music producer is also often the owner of a production company or label.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Burgess writes: “The level of control and the signature sound are the characteristic qualities of the *auteur* producer who commonly takes complete command of the production.”⁷⁶ With Eicher’s production of the “ECM sound” and his involvement in every ECM production, it is easy to understand why he was framed as an *auteur*, although that role has more often been associated with the rock and pop producers that Burgess describes.

Similar to *auteur* film theory, the distinct Europeanness of Eicher’s role is also present in the critical assessment of ECM. In this sense, Eicher is less of a collaborator and appears

⁷⁴ Peter Wollen, “The *Auteur* Theory,” in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 566.

⁷⁵ Richard Burgess, *The Art of Music Production* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 10. Burgess includes the *auteur* as one category of producer in his overall typology. He also notes that in actuality the types often overlap, and indeed, Eicher also contains elements of the “facilitative,” “collaborative,” “enablative,” and “consultative” producer. Albin Zak also briefly mentions the use of the term *auteur* and comparisons between film and music, stating that it “is controversial,” while Jarrett uses the term to note that *auteurs* “remain an anomaly,” and Virgil Moorefield uses the term to describe the contemporary producer. However, none of these scholars theorize the concept or analyze it in depth. Albin Zak *The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 178–180; Jarrett, “The Self-Effacing Producer,” 145; and Virgil Moorefield, *The Producer as Composer: Shaping the Sounds of Popular Music* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), xiii.

⁷⁶ Burgess, *The Art of Music Production*, 12–13.

instead, like the auteur film director, as a subtle force creating “a structure which underlies the [recording] and shapes it, gives it a certain pattern of energy cathexis.”⁷⁷ Eicher, then, is the key figure who ties all the otherwise disparate ECM albums together, again comparable to Wollen’s account of the film auteur:

The structure is associated with a single director, an individual, not because he has played the role of artist, expressing himself or his own vision in the film, but because it is through the force of his preoccupations that an unconscious, unintended meaning can be decoded in the film, usually to the surprise of the individual involved. The film is not a communication, but an artefact which is unconsciously structured in a certain way.⁷⁸

Here, I want stress that applying the term “auteur” to Eicher is not simply descriptive, but implies a set of connotations and values. As John Caughie asserts, auteur theory in film is an ideology and that such a theory is also a historical event.⁷⁹ Similarly, ECM’s and Eicher’s emergence in the seventies can then be understood in conjunction with, rather than in opposition to, the debates of technological mediation and authenticity, as well as the role of the producer and record label, that were well-known in the discourse around fusion jazz. In this sense, Eicher represents a jazz-rapprochement to pop and rock production aesthetics, and should be grouped alongside contemporaries like Phil Spector, who the historian of music recording Evan Eisenberg characterizes as “the first auteur among producers,” or Brian Eno who in 1979 lectured on how to use “The Studio as Compositional Tool.”⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Wollen, “The Auteur Theory,” 577.

⁷⁸ Wollen, “The Auteur Theory,” 578.

⁷⁹ John Caughie, “Authors and Auteurs: The Uses of Theory,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Film Studies*, eds. James Donald and Michael Renov (London: Sage, 2008), 408–423.

⁸⁰ Eisenberg, *The Recording Angel*, 103; Brian Eno, “The Studio as Compositional Tool,” in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, eds. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner (New York: Continuum, 2006), 127–130. Blake directly compares Eicher to Eno, “The Role of the Producer,” 53.

It should, however, also be remembered that Eicher's own background was as a classical bassist and his studio practices was indebted to recording aesthetics of symphonic and chamber music works that allowed for a certain intervention on the part of the producers and engineers, in collaboration with the conductor or performers. In his history and critique of recording practices in classical music, Arved Ashby traces this lineage back to the conductor Leopold Stokowski, who, in Ashby's words, that may be applied to Eicher, "'played' sound technologies as if they were musical instruments."⁸¹ In case studies that are contemporaneous to the emergence of ECM, Ashby describes the conductor Herbert von Karajan as a "studio auteur" who "bent any sense of acoustic space to the music making, and not vice versa"⁸²; and the "acoustic choreographies" that the pianist Glenn Gould and his producers engaged in through recording technology.⁸³ Like Eicher, Karajan and Gould were obsessed about microphone placement and making minute changes to dynamics, balance, and space in the mixing process. As Ashby argues, such aesthetics stress that the recording can be a musical text of primary interest and of creative exploration. Equally to a comparison to rock and pop producers, it was this art-music approach to recording that Eicher drew on.

This not only speaks to Eicher's methodology and ideology of studio production and recording, but equally to the way he was represented through the idea of the auteur. The producer and scholar Virgil Moorefield's description of the Phil Spector as an auteur holds striking parallels to Eicher: "The most visible element of his influence was the cult of

⁸¹ Arved Ashby, *Absolute Music, Mechanical Reproduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 46.

⁸² Ashby, *Absolute Music, Mechanical Reproduction*, 50 and 58.

⁸³ Ashby, *Absolute Music, Mechanical Reproduction*, 55.

personality which grew up around him.”⁸⁴ The constant reference to Eicher as the main creative force behind all ECM productions is evident in the early American reviews and journalistic coverage from the seventies, and has only become stronger in the reception and, most notably, in the hagiographic coffee-table books about ECM. In this way, Eicher was, like Moorefield’s assessment of Spector, a “‘star,’ brand-name producer,”⁸⁵ or similar to star conductors like Karajan. Eicher became a star in his own right and the link between the label and him so strong that the term “brand-name” could apply equally to “ECM” and “Eicher.”

Affording creative agency to Eicher served to shift the ontology of jazz slightly in favor of the recording rather than liveness and performance. With ECM, the ontological primacy, “underlying structure” (to use Wollen’s term), and work status sits with the jazz *record*, rather than the live performance.⁸⁶ This is acceptable to critics and listeners (and the musicians themselves, for that matter), because the recording is reconceived as a creative rather than simply commodifying act.⁸⁷ Eicher’s persona as a producer combined the craft mode of collaboration that emphasized documenting performance (most famously with *The Köln Concert*) as well as the creative collaboration that placed him as an integral part in the composition and production of the final musical product. The ECM sound was

⁸⁴ Moorefield, *The Producer as Composer*, 15.

⁸⁵ Moorefield, *The Producer as Composer*, 15.

⁸⁶ Elsdon argues that even live recordings, such as Jarrett’s solo piano concerts, were imbued with qualities of liveness qua their status as mediatized records rather than directly through the original concert performance, *The Köln Concert*, 8–10.

⁸⁷ This also challenges the somewhat simplified view of jazz performance held by some cultural theorists, for instance Georgina Born, who sees jazz’s improvisatory practice and its embrace of commodification and mediation as an assemblage that is fundamentally dialogic and fluid. ECM’s album’s embrace mediation, but by avoiding the standard repertoire and placing a lot of weight on the “transparency” of the record as a recording, i.e. as an audibly legible quality of the recording rather than as an invisible/inaudible quality (i.e. a positive absence in the recording), ECM’s embrace of mediation does not flatten the recording’s ontological status as the primary, work-bearing object. Georgina Born, “On Musical Mediation: Ontology, Technology, and Creativity,” *Twentieth-Century Music* 2, no. 1 (2005): 7–36. See also, Brian Kane, “Jazz, Mediation, Ontology,” *Contemporary Music Review* 37, no. 5-6 (2018): 507-28.

associated with a clarity and transparency that masked the mediatization of recording while celebrating the ECM as a recorded artifact.

Viewing Eicher as an entrepreneurial collaborator shifted his role from that of an interfering executive to that of a legitimate co-creator; and framed as an artistic collaborator, Eicher's use of technological mediation in fact became an aesthetic, authenticating asset to ECM's sound. Viewing Eicher as an auteur did not so much reflect his actual studio practices—of which the critics and listener did not actually know many concrete details, other than the fact that he is obsessed with the placement of microphones—but rather provided a theory of who he was and an presented an ideology of what the ECM sound was.

* * *

In this reception history of ECM, I have catalogued how US critics, musicians, and audiences associated ECM with a specific sound, which was tightly bound to the medium of recording itself, and in turn evoked “serious” listening, classical music, and a European approach to jazz. This resulted in elevated cultural and economic capital for the label, but also attracted some criticism, to the point where the reviewer Neil Tesser could write of the “ECM controversy,” in this case, symbolized by the American guitarist Pat Metheny:

Critics of the label, its producer, and its distinctive sound quickly point to Metheny (along with his former employer Gary Burton and a few others) when they start moaning about white middle-class jerkwater jazz and suburban soul. He is written off as being too clean, sounding too pure; even his song titles come under icy fire.⁸⁸

This is an example of how, as Peter Elsdon points out, ECM production aesthetics were sometimes also negatively associated with social stereotypes.⁸⁹ As has already been

⁸⁸ Neil Tesser, review of Pat Metheny, *Watercolors*, ECM 1097 (1978), *Down Beat*, 12 Jan. 1978, 24.

⁸⁹ Elsdon, *The Köln Concert*, 135.

hinted at throughout the chapter, and as this quote makes clear, race was one of those social stereotypes that intersected with the categories of class (high- and middlebrow musical genres and tastes), gender (the overwhelming maleness of the musicians), and geography and ethnicity (European or Euro-American identities). As a conclusion to this chapter, I want to highlight the ways in which race, and specifically whiteness, was associated with ECM, not only via their European musicians, but also in the reception of prominent white American musicians on the label's roster.

Musicians and critics at the time were cued into the intersections of race, class, and belonging (gender was mentioned less explicitly) in ECM's reception. In an interview with Leonard Feather, the vibraphonist Gary Burton tried describing ECM's appeal:

Burton sums up the ECM audience as from college age up to 30, predominantly white, and eclectic—they'll own the new Stevie Wonder album, the best of the latest classical records, the more refined rock or pop artists, and some good representation of jazz. There's a strong movement toward that kind of diverse expertise among young people who consider themselves more educated, more informed culturally."⁹⁰

Burton seems to have been keenly aware of how audience demography corresponded to musical taste. His image of the ECM listener is similar to what Richard Peterson has dubbed the cultural omnivore.⁹¹ However, while the omnivore may add ECM to their eclectic record collection, this "diversity" of taste is not matched by racial diversity or transformative class consciousness. In Burton's view, the ECM listener is associated primarily

⁹⁰ Leonard Feather, "German Label Sticks Toe in U.S. Waters," *Los Angeles Times*, 31 Oct. 1976.

⁹¹ Richard A. Peterson, "Understanding Audience Segmentation: From Elite and Mass to Omnivore and Univore," *Poetics* 21 (1992): 243–258; Richard A. Peterson and Roger M. Kern, "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore," *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 5 (1996): 900–907. For a discussion of this term within the specific context of the sociology of music see Morten Michelsen, "Being In-Between: Popular Music and Middlebrow Taste," in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music and Social Class*, ed. Ian Peddie (New York: Bloomsbury, 2020), 13–35.

with the upper-middle class (signified here by their college education) and whiteness. In this the ECM listener is a parallel, or, perhaps in omnivorous consumption, the same as the part of the white American middle-class that Fred Pfeil identifies as the consumers of the contemporaneous New Wave music (exemplified by The Talking Heads), Philip Glass's minimalism, and Laurie Anderson's performance art.⁹² Furthermore, the omnivorous attitude—really a mode of consumption—is directly linked to an “expertise” (earlier in the interview he notes that the “typical ECM customer is your more serious listener”), which is coded as white and middle class, historically associated with white, European music critics and audiences (see chapter 1). This expertise may be represented as European intellectualism and, for instance, the auteurism of Manfred Eicher. But, if we follow Pfeil, it is as much an example of the post-World War II American professional-managerial class' postmodern structure of feeling, which is confirmed by adding ECM records to their portfolio of music for serious listening.⁹³

Another side of ECM's appeal to white audience tastes did not stem from the perceived homogeneity of the label's European musicians and the ECM sound. Rather, it was represented by the mixed-race and/or international bands, as well as the racial and ethnic ambiguity of some of its music and musicians. According to Gerald Early, no one symbolized the viability of such “integrated jazz” more than ECM's most famous musician, Keith Jarrett.⁹⁴ Since the seventies, Jarrett, who is American and white, has built a true transatlantic career. Jarrett's manager, George Avakian, had been planning European tours as a

⁹² Fred Pfeil, “Postmodernism as a ‘Structure of Feeling,’” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 381–403.

⁹³ Pfeil expands this argument in “‘Makin’ Flippy-Floppy’: Postmodernism and the Baby-Boom PMC,” in *Another Tale to Tell: Politics and Narrative in Postmodern Culture* (London: Verso, 1990), 97–125.

⁹⁴ Early, “Keith Jarrett, Miscegenation, and the Rise of the European Sensibility in Jazz,” 71.

springboard for wider publicity since the time when Jarrett was a part of Charles Lloyd's band in the late sixties. When Jarrett got a contract with the US label Impulse Records in 1972, Avakian made sure to insert a clause in the contract that allowed for "special projects" with ECM.⁹⁵ Jarrett's transatlantic identity also became embodied in his two bands, known today simply as the "American quartet" (with Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden, and Paul Motian) and the "European quartet" (with Jan Garbarek, Palle Danielsson, and Jon Christensen). As noted, scholars like Peter Elsdon argue that Jarrett's work in Europe was central to his popularity in the US and Early places Jarrett—an American—as the central figure of the rise of the "European sensibility in jazz in the 1970s," not least secured by his solo piano concerts reminiscent of classical music performance.⁹⁶ Furthermore, Early argues that Jarrett, who in the seventies wore his curly hair in a afro-like hairstyle, "would become the symbol of European support for a new vision of a mixed-race or racially transcendent jazz because he himself seemed so racially miscegenated, as a player and as a presence."⁹⁷ Within this context, Jarrett's and by extension ECM's appeal to omnivorous middlebrow tastes, mixed-race bands, and transnational Europeanness legitimizes white jazz as viable alternative to African American music.

Another aspect of ECM's musical profile which was also racialized, was the way it was placed in opposition to fusion jazz. This served a dual function. Firstly, it could place ECM as a whole, as well as Eicher, or individual musicians as a *jazz hero*, to use Tony Whyton's term, though importantly they are white rather than African American heroes.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Carr, *Keith Jarrett*, 29–34 and 61.

⁹⁶ Elsdon, *The Köln Concert*, 17–18; Early, "Keith Jarrett, Miscegenation, and the Rise of the European Sensibility in Jazz."

⁹⁷ Early, "Keith Jarrett, Miscegenation, and the Rise of the European Sensibility in Jazz," 71.

⁹⁸ Whyton, *Jazz Icons*, 16–37.

In the case of Jarrett, for instance, his “anti-electric-music crusade” (referenced above) plays on a narrative of heroic struggle in defense of “true,” acoustic jazz, though his whiteness also places him in the role of the white savior.⁹⁹ Secondly, the fetishism for unelectrified music in general and, specifically for Jarrett, the development of his solo piano concerts, cultivated an image of genius that drew upon the musicking and ideology of European classical music, which lent him cultural (and economic) capital. Comparing ECM to classical music was not merely a description of the ECM sound, but directly linked to transatlantic cultural hierarchies, exemplified by John S. Wilson’s observation regarding Keith Jarrett’s transatlantic career that in Europe “musicians classified as jazz performers are more apt to be accepted on the same level as classical musicians than in the United States.”¹⁰⁰ Jarrett may have disavowed the supposed commercialism of fusion jazz, but his lucrative ECM albums and solo piano concerts (in many cases organized by Eicher) were still deeply concerned with a political economy of music that afforded a white pianist, exhibiting a performance practice associated with European art music, success in the US.¹⁰¹

I would like to suggest that the emphasis on ECM’s similarities to Western art music is linked to what Loren Kajikawa has described as American white hegemony’s “possessive investment in classical music.”¹⁰² As I have shown in this chapter, the comparison of ECM’s music to European art music was ubiquitous and often served to frame ECM as a Eurological rather than Afrological label. Countless reviews liken performers to composers

⁹⁹ The *white savior* has been most thoroughly described and theorized within film studies, see e.g. Matthew Hughley, *The White Savior Film: Contents, Critics, and Consumption* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014).

¹⁰⁰ John Wilson, “Jazz Pianist to Slow Pace,” *New York Times*, 23 Mar. 1974.

¹⁰¹ For more on Jarrett in the context of American ideology in the seventies, see Elsdon, *The Köln Concert*, 43–46.

¹⁰² Loren Kajikawa, “The Possessive Investment in Classical Music: Confronting Legacies of White Supremacy in U.S. Schools and Departments of Music,” in *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness Across the Disciplines*, ed. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 155–174

from the European canon (as when Jarrett's music was compared to both Scriabin and Chopin within the same review¹⁰³) or by associating ECM's music in looser terms to stylistic, aesthetic categories such as romanticism or impressionism (as when a review of Jarrett's European quartet opened by putting forth that "Jarrett [is] maximizing his European-Romantic insights at the expense of his incredibly powerful rhythmic and blues roots"¹⁰⁴). Such comparisons served to place even fully-improvised music like Jarrett's solo concerts—which at times include grooves that have in common with James Brown than with Johannes Brahms—in the realm of Eurological playing. Furthermore, this association with classical music was sometimes explicitly racialized, as when Larry Birnbaum described Pat Metheny's music as "a cleanly orchestrated rhapsody in white, bearing none but the most tangential relationship to Afro-American traditions." With a word play on *Rhapsody in Blue*, this placed an ECM artist in the lineage of Paul Whiteman and George Gershwin's symphonic jazz (similar to the quote by Dan Morgenstern that opened this chapter).

The fact that American critics heard echoes of classical music in ECM's productions did not only signify its Europeanness or highbrow culture but was just as much a testament to the white, middleclass listeners that Burton had described. By extension this also encompassed ECM's musicians and someone like Metheny was criticized for championing, in Neil Tesser's words, a "suburbanized shadow of jazz," alluding both to the musicians as well as the geographic and class location of the stereotypical ECM listener. Why did this music generate such disparaging characterizations, Tesser asked and suggested:

Part of the answer concerns Metheny's label, ECM, and its emergence as an esthetically respectful environment for white improvisers. There is no racism intended here—merely

¹⁰³ Tesser, review of Jarrett, *Sun Bear Concerts*.

¹⁰⁴ Stern, review of Keith Jarrett, *My Song*, ECM 1115 (1978), *Down Beat*, 7 Dec. 1978, 18.

the recognition that there are white and black schools of musical thought; sometimes they overlap, and in any case, players of either color can develop into gifted practitioners of either school. There is no racism, either, in the simple statement that an unusual large amount of this decade's jazz developments—including fusion, selected aspects of the avant garde, and the 'new cool school' healthily represented in ECM—have been the work of white musicians. It is a matter, I think, *not* of white musicians asserting their paleness or some such nonsense; rather, it is a matter of no longer apologizing for this background, as white musicians have felt more free about incorporating their separate roots into improvisational music.¹⁰⁵

With ECM's emergence on the American and global jazz scene, white musicians had found a place to unapologetically explore their own whiteness. Not only did ECM provide a platform from which European musicians gained increasing popularity in the US. American musicians also benefitted from associating with ECM's Europeanness. Through the ECM sound, the folk music-inspired tunes, pastoral jazz, comparisons to classical music, and Eicher's status as a European auteur, ECM played a pivotal role as a mediator of whiteness in jazz.

¹⁰⁵ Neil Tesser and Fred Borque, "Pat Metheny: Musings on Neo-Fusion" [analysis by Tesser and interview by Borque], *Down Beat*, 22 Mar. 1979, 12.

Conclusion. “Europeans Love Jazz More Than They Understand It”

The American-European racial imagination can be read onto the front sleeve of Count Basie’s enormously popular LP *April in Paris* (1957; fig. 5.1). Though the album was recorded in the US, the cover image plays on the title track and situates Basie in France with the Arc de Triomphe in the background, wearing a French-signifying beret, joyfully interacting with a (presumably) local, older, white woman. Both are smiling, standing face-to-face as equals. Here, there are no direct signs of primitivism or “Crow Jim.” Instead, the image shows “April in Paris” (literally and figuratively) as a space for the transatlantic, interracial acceptance that Europe has come to represent to Americans. By contrast, though arguably proving the same point, the cover image of Joe Newman’s *Counting Five in Sweden* (1958) would cause American furor, as some US dealers refused to carry the record because the younger age of the image’s characters (Newman and his white wife Rigmor Alfredson Newman) suggested miscegenation in a way that *April in Paris* did not (fig. 5.2). *Down Beat* led their review of the record with: “To our secluded southern swingers who may never see this album, because of the non-apartheid cover photo, I submit his review.”¹ The pictures of Europe are used here not simply to accurately portray European race relations but are mobilized as a counterimage to US racism and segregation.²

¹ B.J.G., review of Joe Newman, *Counting Five in Sweden*, World Pacific WP-1288 (1958), *Down Beat*, 23 Jun. 1960, 34.

² Mischa van Kan provides additional context and makes this point about the Newman record. Mischa van Kan, *Swingin’ Swedes: The Transnational Exchange of Swedish Jazz in the US*, (Ph.D. diss., University of Gothenburg, 2017), 244–246.



Figure 5.23. Count Basie, April in Paris, Verve MG V-8012 (1957).



Figure 5.24. Joe Newman, Counting Five in Sweden, World Pacific WP 1288 (1958).

The Swedish biopic *Waltz for Monica* (2013) revisits this period in jazz history and follows the Swedish jazz singer Monica Zetterlund in search of her US breakthrough in the years around 1960.³ However, where the album covers discussed above, represented racial equality in quite literal iconographic terms, the film's portrayal of Black-white, US-European experiences of race and racism centers on the white protagonist (although that is perhaps inevitable given the biopic form). In a sequence of scenes taking place during Zetterlund's autumn (and winter) in New York in 1959–60, the film explores racism and African American identity in a manner that mobilizes European jazz history to affirm fundamentally colorblind attitudes toward jazz life. A fictionalized Ella Fitzgerald tells Zetterlund to “sing about your own life” rather than “pretending to be somebody else” via the blues. But rather than framing this as a Black critique of white appropriation and inauthenticity, the film represents this as an African American blessing of the Europeanization of jazz. Most spectacularly, the film contains a scene taking place at a Manhattan nightclub where Zetterlund is humiliated and fired for thinking that the management and audience would allow her to perform with an all-Black, male band. The film portrays Zetterlund's baffled naivety as a justifiable colorblind stance and centers her experience of racism (and sexism): she is the one that gets fired because of racism (her Black sidemen cast as merely accidental victims of the racism directed at her), or as a Danish reviewer commented on the scene, gesturing at the discourse of “Crow Jim”: it is an American “paradoxical racism” in that “Monica was too white to sing with the Black musicians.”⁴ Such revisionist assessments

³ Per Fly, dir., *Monica Z* (Eng. *Waltz for Monica*) (Stockholm: Svensk Filminsustri, 2014).

⁴ Morten Piil, review of *Monica Z*, dir. Per Fly, *Ekko*, 19 Mar. 2014, <https://www.ekko-film.dk/anmeldelser/monica-z/>

of US-European racial encounters centers whiteness at the expense of Black performers and furthers an ideology of European jazz as fundamentally colorblind.

The narrative and reception of *Waltz for Monica* shows that European jazz still contains undercurrents of the “Crow Jim” discourse, though it is dominated by ideas of colorblindness. This use of past and present European colorblindness is often invoked in the branding of European jazz. For example, in my research on the Danish venue Jazzhus Montmartre, I have shown how the current iteration of the club brands itself via the legacy of colorblind acceptance of African American musicians in the 1960s.⁵ Of course, there is both myth and reality to this image of Europe as a safe-haven for African American musicians.⁶ However, as Rashida Braggs bluntly states about Paris, though I believe that it can *mutatis mutandis* be applied to similar places in Western Europe, the narrative of Europe as “color-blind proved more illusion than reality the longer one stayed and the later in the twentieth century it became.”⁷ Indeed, when one looks at the African American discussions of Europe, a far more ambivalent picture of the European racial imagination appears.

As I covered in chapter 1, Roy Eldridge recounted in his 1951 blindfold test with Leonard Feather, his time in Europe “was a wonderful year. During that whole time I was never once reminded that I was colored.”⁸ Similarly, the saxophonist Sahib Shihab moved to Europe because he “wanted to get away from some of the prejudice” in the US and that “Europeans appreciate music more than in the States.”⁹ On the other hand, even when a

⁵ Mikkel Vad, “Jazzhus Montmartre: Historieskrivning og kulturel erindring,” *Danish Musicology Online* 8 (2016–2017): 5–21

⁶ Rashida Braggs discusses some of the varying reasons that Americans may have had for going to Europe. Rashida K. Braggs, *Jazz Diasporas: Race, Music, and Migration in Post-World War II Paris* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 94–103.

⁷ Braggs, *Jazz Diaspora*, 103.

⁸ Leonard Feather, “No More White Bands For Me, Says Little Jazz,” interview with Roy Eldridge, *Down Beat*, 18 May 1951, 13.

⁹ Jack Lind, “Sahib Shihab’s Expatriate Experience,” *Down Beat*, 14 Mar. 1963, 38.

musician like the African American drummer Kenny Clarke, who lived in France for forty years, managed to combine aesthetic programs of Blackness and universalism, he was still sensitive to his foreign status: “I am way out of the European society. I am not accepted. I just stay at the outskirts. In a sense no white society is going to accept a black man. The sooner black people figure that out, the better off they will be.”¹⁰ In 1980 (when the case studies in this dissertation end), an American reviewer of the Dutch pianist Rein De Graaf tried to characterize the history of European jazz reception along the lines of greater aesthetic and racial acceptance of this Black music. Nevertheless, they concluded by quoting the African American expat Johnny Griffin, saying: “Europeans love jazz more than they understand it.”¹¹ Such quotes illustrate that the conception of a Europe as a space that has overcome its negrophilic primitivism and replaced it with colorblindness, must be nuanced and historicized further. It also illustrates the necessity of engaging directly with the hegemonic whiteness of the European jazz world. When a scholar like Bruce Johnson accuses jazz historians having fallen “under the umbra of ‘blackness’” at the expense of white musicians, he is also ironing over the wrinkle that experiences like Clarke’s expose in the otherwise colorblind ideology of European jazz.¹² Johnson’s argument may be from 2020, but it is not unsimilar to the *Down Beat* editors (described in chapter 1) who, in 1951,

¹⁰ Quoted in Braggs, *Jazz Diasporas*, 165. Staying at the outskirts, Braggs argues, Clarke did explicitly not engage in French politics (e.g., with regard to the Algerian War). In one of his case studies of French jazz, Tyler Stovall writes that “Black expatriates were acutely aware of their status as guests of the French. Throughout the twentieth century, the French government had welcomed foreign political exiles on the implicit assumption that they abstain from involvement in French politics.” Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 254. This political pressure also ensures that the Black internationalism and subaltern solidarity that might otherwise be cultivated between African Americans, Europeans of color, and immigrants is discouraged, as white Europeans are positioned as the organizing force behind jazz’s universalist cosmopolitanism.

¹¹ Freedman, review of Rein de Graaf Quintet, *New York Jazz*, Timeless Muse 321 (1979), *Down Beat*, Aug. 1980, 49.

¹² Bruce Johnson, *Jazz Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2020), 16.

accused an African American service man stationed in Europe to have fallen under the umbra of “excessively color-conscious” European “Crow Jim” attitudes.¹³

Historically, African American expat musicians gained a foothold in Europe because of their racial authenticity and superior musical skills. This is mirrored in the American press’s coverage of US expats in the fifties and sixties that perennially described Europe as a space for steady employment. Conversely, European musicians were positioned as musically less capable and in need of Americans to train them and keep them up to speed on the developments of jazz.¹⁴ By the 1970s, European musicians and record labels were demonstrating a different and viable path away from African American definitions of jazz, via, among other things, the European free jazz “emancipation,” the prominence of ECM, and the world jazz of musicians like Jan Garbarek. As the jazz world diversified—both stylistically and geographically—the Black authenticity of swing and bebop that African American performers held did not always carry the same value to European musicians who were developing their own styles and scenes. Thus, white European musicians entered into interracial partnerships with a different conviction and enhanced sense of privilege than earlier. For example, as Rashida Braggs points out in her study of Kenny Clarke, he was highly lauded for his mentorship of European musicians, but his universalist aesthetics were also appropriated by Europeans to legitimize their own status, in the process downplaying the African American specificity of his experience.¹⁵ Similarly, the free jazz performers who relocated to Europe for longer or shorter periods of time may, David Ake suggests, unwittingly “have brought the seeds of destruction for their own relatively

¹³ Editor’s note, *Down Beat*, 13 Jul. 1951, 10.

¹⁴ Loes Rusch, “Frontierism, Intellectual Listeners and the New European Wave: On the Reception of Dutch Jazz in *DownBeat*, 1960-1980,” *Jazz Research Journal*, vol. 9, no.1 (2015): 62–81.

¹⁵ Braggs, *Jazz Diasporas*, ch. 5.

privileged times overseas. For the very parameters of music that this highly creative and compelling contingent had ‘liberated’—above all, a consistent swing rhythmic feel and standard set of chord changes—were also the areas where U.S.-raised musicians had excelled over their European counterparts.”¹⁶ Confirming this narrative from an American perspective, the late seventies saw the US celebration of returning jazz heroes, most notably Dexter Gordon who literally titled his first album after coming back from Europe, *Homecoming* (1977).¹⁷ These biographies of immigration, exile, and return can be used to confirm the centrality of the US to jazz. However, as Europe continues to develop aesthetic independence from US jazz, American musicians are relegated to the confines of national and/or racial identity and can be positioned as outsiders to a progressive, global idea of jazz itself. Therefore, as George Lewis argues, this “emancipation” of European jazz must still be viewed in a transatlantic framework:

In a sense, the notion of “European jazz” itself began as a European internalization of American cultural hegemony that conflated all of the combined histories, languages, and styles of the continent into a single monolith. By the mid-1970s, however, the political stance of the new European musicians began to perform precisely that conflation, moving well beyond the notion of “European jazz” toward an emerging pan-European political and cultural nationalism that included nativist politics that identified African American music and musicians as foreign competitors.¹⁸

While Europe may continue to be attractive to American musicians, who continue to receive top billing in Europe, the relative independence of the European jazz scene has also

¹⁶ David Ake, *Jazz Matters: Sound, Place, and Time Since Bebop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 127–128.

¹⁷ See also Dale Chapman, “‘Homecoming’: Dexter Gordon and the 1970s Fiscal Crisis in New York City,” in *The Jazz Bubble: Neoclassical Jazz in Neoliberal Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), 65–102.

¹⁸ George Lewis, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 253–254.

meant that foreign Americans are still seen as first and foremost that, foreign.¹⁹ For their part, American expats living in Europe today must continue to pursue strategies of national and/or racial difference (as Americans and/or African Americans) or assimilation. This illustrates how these musicians must remain in the categories of racialized other, or forego their national identity, in order to retain legitimacy. The other side of this US-European racial imagination is the fact the American expats who embrace a universalist, global ideology of jazz are overwhelmingly white.²⁰

In this light it, is not surprising that by the eighties (when my narrative in chapter 3 ends), Joe Zawinul turned away from his anxieties associated with jazz-rock fusion and embraced world music as a new multicultural, universalist fusion. Likewise, ECM became a place from which European musicians (under the continued direction of Eicher) could explore cross-cultural world jazz that nevertheless embodied the European identity of the ECM sound. Spearheaded by ECM, Europe has become one of the main centers of the transnational jazz industry (the critic Ted Gioia writes, “when [Eicher] launched ECM, the general rule for success for a non-American jazz musician was to move to America... That changed in the 1970s and 1980s, and almost entirely through Eicher’s efforts”²¹). This globalization and commodification of transnational jazz has, as William Kirk Bares points out in his case study of the North Sea Jazz Festival in the Netherlands (one of the world’s largest jazz festivals), “brought to the fore the competing visions of jazz universalism... as

¹⁹ In a study of French clubs and festivals Myrtille Picaud has shown that even when American musicians are relatively privileged in booking policies, they are branded via Black masculinity; furthermore, these priorities continue to marginalize performers from, or with roots in, the global South. Myrtille Picaud, “We Try to Have the Best’: How Nationality, Race, and Gender Structure Artists’ Circulations in the Paris Jazz Scene,” *Jazz Research Journal* 10, no. 1–2 (2016): 126–152.

²⁰ Ake, *Jazz Matters*, 121–139. In the same book (77–101), Ake makes a similar point regarding ECM white American musicians.

²¹ Ted Gioia, “The Most Beautiful Sound Next to Silence,” *City Journal*, Winter (2021), <https://www.city-journal.org/ecm-german-music-label>.

visions of jazz as American melting pot dazzle alongside stagings of jazz as European haute culture or jazz as African diasporic consciousness.”²² If Europe is, the new address for jazz (pace Nicholson²³), it is idealized as such because it presents jazz universalism “according to a logic of managed liberal-democratic multiculturalism.”²⁴ It is a “postpolitical” realization that seemingly escapes the “race consciousness” that Leonard Feather identified as “Crow Jim.” Instead, the European jazz industry sells the “allure of a foreign aura” that Alice Babs and Caterina Valente were also marketed with. Celebrating multicultural ethnic difference rather than overtly racialized identities, Europe is represented as the colorblind production center of new local forms of jazz as a viable alternative to neoconservative, nationalist, Afrocentric versions of US jazz represented by Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center.²⁵ Such Europeanist representations of jazz are, for instance, evident in the reclassification of Django Reinhardt’s from a jazz guitarist in the general sense (albeit one with a singular style) to a figure of distinctly un-American French or manouche “gypsy jazz”²⁶; or in the celebration of the so-called Nordic tone in jazz.²⁷

The establishment of European jazz as a category is marked by canonic figures like Joe Zawinul, “ethnic” performers like Caterina Valente and Alice Babs, the status of a European label like ECM, and the discourse of serious European critics and audiences that goes back to the forties and fifties. Such elements of European jazz are now folded into

²² William Kirk Bares, “Transatlanticism as Dutch National Spectacle: Universalism and Postpolitics at the North Sea Jazz Festival,” *American Music* 33, no. 3 (2015): 347.

²³ Stuart Nicholson, *Is Jazz Dead? (Or Has It Moved to a New Address)* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005).

²⁴ Bares, “Transatlanticism as Dutch National Spectacle,” 348.

²⁵ For example, the first half of Nicholson’s book is devoted to chapters that critique US jazz mainstream, Marsalis, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and conservative US conservatory training. Nicholson, *Is Jazz Dead?*

²⁶ Benjamin Givan, “‘Django’s Tiger’: From Jazz to Jazz Manouche,” *Current Musicology* 98 (2014): 7–40; and Siv B. Lie, *Django Generations: Hearing Ethnorace, Citizenship, and Jazz Manouche in France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

²⁷ Stuart Nicholson *Is Jazz Dead?*, 195–222. See also footnote 33 in ch. 4.

larger narratives of emancipation from the US and the celebratory reification of literal and metaphorical remix culture.²⁸ However, as this music celebrates belonging—European and otherwise—issues of race, ethnicity, and nation become commodified and depoliticized in order to serve as resources for primarily white, European musicians. Such an approach also has its parallel in new jazz studies, where primarily white, European academics chart the transnational diversity of jazz and, sometimes, use this multicultural, global jazz against arguments that assert the centrality of African American culture to jazz. This came to play as I was finishing this dissertation, in a discussion on the Jazz Studies Collaborative Facebook page, related to a thread about the African American trumpet player Nicholas Payton’s concept of Black American Music.²⁹ In a discussion over the implications of such a reframing, an African American musician and scholar asserted that “jazz is Black American. Period. If others are playing it then they are playing a Black American art form.” This was in response to a white European academic, one of the editors of the forthcoming *Routledge Companion to Diasporic Jazz Studies*, who stated that:

Reframing something as globally diverse as jazz (studies) based on a field’s scope that attributes epistemological priority to “(North) America” and “blacks” could lead to ignore or de-emphasise multiple non-black identity positions and geopolitical contexts, not to mention that for laymen not familiar with the decolonial implications of BAM [Black American Music], the field’s name clearly outlines both the geographic and racial orientation of the field of study. This is, of course, not at all (!) to belittle the quintessential importance of black diasporas... My problem is _reframing_ jazz studies as such because it inevitably leads to ignore Other racial/mixed groups and geocultural locations. Put differently, if he [the original poster of the question] had said “reframing jazz studies as post- or

²⁸ Mike Heffley, *Northern Sun, Southern Moon: Europe’s Reinvention of Jazz* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Kristin McGee, *Remixing European Jazz Culture* (London: Routledge, 2020).

²⁹ The discussion originated in Payton’s blogposts on nicholaspayton.wordpress.com; see also David Ake, “On the Ethics of Teaching ‘Jazz’ (and ‘America’s Classical Music,’ and ‘BAM,’ and ‘Improvisational Music,’ and...),” in *Improvisation and Music Education: Beyond the Classroom*, ed. Ajay Heble and Mark Laver (London: Routledge, 2016), 19–31.

decolonial cultural studies” I wouldn’t had anything to say expect [sic] for my wholehearted support concerning the “shape of jazz studies to come.”³⁰

The African American colleague gave one last reply: “for you this is science. For me, this is my culture and my heritage.” Some may find that the initial “period” is hyperbolic, but I would argue that this is an understandable response to the universalist, transnational version of the white resentment narrative furthered by European musicians and scholars. This is not to say that there are not many valid reasons to resist essentializing and racialist definitions of jazz, but as Ingrid Monson has argued:

Since whiteness tends to be a sign of inauthenticity within the world of jazz, the appeals of white musicians to universalistic rhetoric can be perceived as power plays rather than genuine expressions of universal brotherhood. If jazz is one of the few cultural activities in which being African American is evaluated as “better” or more “authentic” than being non-African American, a white musicians appeal to a colorblind rhetoric might cloak a move to minimize the black cultural advantage by “lowering” an assertive African American musician from his or her pedestal to a more “equal” playing field. It is this use of colorblind rhetoric that often provokes African Americans to take more extreme positions of ethnic particularity.³¹

I want the study of European jazz to take its whiteness seriously and avoid a universalistic rhetoric that sees itself in opposition to African American claims to jazz. Unfortunately, as Andy Fry observes, “a paradoxical effect of cosmopolitanism and internationalism is the provincialism and prejudice they generate as counterforce: these phenomena must surely therefore be understood in both polarities in order to grasp their

³⁰ Comments by Maya Cunningham and Adam Havas. Clay Downham, “Hi all, I’m curious where we are in terms of reframing jazz studies as Black American Music studies...” Facebook, 10. Sept. 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/jazzcollab/>.

³¹ Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 203.

historical significance.”³² Especially given the current rise of racism, anti-immigrant politics, and right-wing nationalism in Europe, we should grasp the particular and transnational production of whiteness and not mythologize Europe as a space of equality and interracial harmony. Placing universalist jazz aesthetics and colorblindness as key values in European jazz continues to place white subjectivity as central to European jazz, as whiteness remains the perennial unmarked marker—for Europeans themselves—that also marginalizes European performers of color.³³ Bares argues that “behind postpolitical European jazz universalism lurks, in other words, European ideology: hardly overtly racist, it is nevertheless patronizing in its rational appropriation and apportionment of the world’s cultural inventory according to European worldviews.”³⁴ In this dissertation, I have taken a transnational perspective on the roots of this European ideology. I have shown that the US has been a key site for the reception and production of ideas about European jazz. In this conclusion, I have suggested that this may even have laid some of the foundation for its application in the jazz world today. This should not lead us to draw sharp distinctions between US and European (or US and global) jazz. Rather, we must examine the ideological coproduction of such distinctions on both sides of the Atlantic.

* * *

Jazz is simultaneously a transnational *and* American, specifically African American, form of music. As such, African American culture is embedded in European jazz; and as I have shown in this dissertation, Americans have maintained a strong interest in European

³² Andy Fry, *Paris Blues: African American Music and French Popular Culture, 1920-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 10.

³³ Tony Whyton, “Europe and the New Jazz Studies,” in *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics, and Contexts*, eds. Cerchiari, Luca, Laurent Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 366–380.

³⁴ Bares, “Transatlanticism as Dutch National Spectacle,” 368.

jazz almost since the music's inception. I regard this Europe-US relation as a dialectic, not an impossible juxtaposition. To complement the literature on the European reception of African American music, I have sought to illustrate this dialectic by studying how Americans thought about European jazz, as well as what Americans thought of European thinking about jazz. Americans have used the idea of Europeanness for their own purposes, reshaping American jazz discourse through a transatlantic imagination. Most consistently, American critics and musicians frame this in terms of class and race, associating European critics, musicians, and audiences with intellectualism, serious listening, sonic purity, the idea of high art. All these tropes are also racialized markers of whiteness.

So, while it is axiomatically true that African American culture is of utmost importance to European jazz, I have also shown that European jazz has played a significant role in the US jazz world. Many of the social and aesthetic values of US jazz are influenced by Europe. Indeed, Tony Whyton has argued that "even though Eurocentrism is resisted within the rhetoric of the jazz mainstream, the cultural infrastructure on which current jazz practice is founded is born out of a model that celebrates art as a sacred entity shaped by European values."³⁵ As I have demonstrated, this idealization of European jazz voices that associated them with high-art concepts has a legacy in the US that runs back to, at least, the 1940s. In this way, Eurocentrism has been built into the American jazz infrastructure (as part of the jazz superstructure), initially by privileging European jazz critics. This built the foundations for the American valorization of European jazz.

I have also argued that the American reception of European jazz confirmed and heightened the question of whiteness. Though interracial collaboration was abundant between

³⁵ Tony Whyton, *Jazz Icons: Heroes, Myths, and the Jazz Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 30.

European and American performances, I have shown that this did not necessarily lead to colorblindness, even in people like Leonard Feather who explicitly tried to further an ideology of colorblindness. Europeans responded to the racial formation of the US and Europeans were inevitably perceived through the racial imagination of US society. Often Europeans had more in common with white hegemonic US society than with the internally othered African American. In this way European nationality, ethnicity, and whiteness functioned as a privileged position from which European musicians could participate in this African American art form. Of course, such constructions of European whiteness also demonstrate the instability of identity and, indeed, constructed nature of white racial identity. My insistence on the problematic importance of whiteness to European jazz has in this way also been an attempt to, in Richard Dyer's classic formulation, "make whiteness strange."³⁶ A continuing observation throughout the case studies of this dissertation has been how common this strange whiteness is to European jazz. Even musicians like Joe Zawinul who at times sought to resist their own whiteness end up confirming how central whiteness is to the racial imagination of European jazz. In bringing attention to this I agree with Patrick Burke that "for white scholars, then, the challenge is to decenter whiteness, recognizing and theorizing its privileges and effects in order to produce new understandings of jazz."³⁷ If we are to ultimately decenter whiteness in European jazz, we must first grapple with it.

³⁶ Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 2017), 4.

³⁷ Patrick Burke, "Race in the New Jazz Studies," in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*, eds. Nicholas Gebhardt, Nicole Rushtin-Paschal, and Tony Whyton (New York: Routledge, 2018), 191.

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