

Univerzita Palackého

Filozofická fakulta

Magisterská diplomová práce

2014

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The Struggle of Jazz:

**Reception and Notions of Jazz in the US from
Its Inception to the Beginnings of Modern Jazz**

Magisterská diplomová práce

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2014

Prehlasujem, že som diplomovú prácu vypracoval
samostatne s využitím uvedených prameňov a literatúry.

Podpis autora

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Introduction

There is hardly a person in our contemporary civilized society who has not heard of jazz. Over the course of one century it has spread all over the world and established itself as a respected and popular musical genre in many countries, with a remarkable cult following, changing the history of music forever. Indeed, one can hardly imagine the birth of rock'n'roll, RnB, funk, and a whole lot of other music genres, without its spark that brought fresh “hot” rhythm, musical expressivity, and lifestyle. I even dare say that it was jazz, along with its kin, thanks to which there exists popular music as we know it today and with it many other contemporary cultural phenomena. Being a professional jazz musician and street performer, I can hear and see the impact every day. In modern songs the musical influence of jazz is often self-revealing in the nature of rhythmic and harmonic patterns and occasional instrumental solos. In concert halls the social influence of jazz becomes clear in the structure of the audience, where one can see jazz fans old and young alike, of different nationalities, all sharing the passion. But the influence of jazz goes beyond the music itself and stretches, either directly or by extension through its musical offspring, to other cultural aspects, whether general, such as clothing, speech, manners, and opinions, or more specific, such as dancing and nightlife.

However, the road to worldwide success was not an easy one for jazz. From its conception in the USA around the beginning of the 20th century it has gone through many trials and tribulations until it finally became “emancipated” and officially accepted by the general public, both in the US and worldwide. Even though some individuals and groups embraced jazz very quickly, the majority’s stance on jazz was rather schizophrenic. This paper will try to follow and document the development jazz

has gone through during the most important part of its history: from its birth as the poor and disreputable “bastard child” to maturing into an accomplished and respectable being, freed of its earlier constraints. It is therefore imperative that this paper focuses on the most important place where this development took place: the United States of America.¹

Creating a map of human cultural evolution is done slowly, a step at a time, each one adding a new small piece to the overall mosaic. This thesis aims no lower. While it may seem at first sight that the importance of the history of jazz is restricted to music fans and scholars, it is not so. The thesis will try to verify the notion that such a seemingly inconsequential phenomenon as a new musical genre can in great measures change the cultural landscape for good, and in a beneficial way. One can then extrapolate this knowledge to other aspects of our modern lives and suddenly end with a broader picture of how mankind evolves on other levels than biological. Today, in the age of ever-increasing globalization and rapid reshuffling of the world’s demographics, one can hardly look for a brighter and more hopeful example as to how the world will eventually turn out than jazz. Because above all, the story of jazz is a story of hope.

Unfortunately, I was not able to visit the USA, neither for my research, nor for any other reason; I am yet to be granted the favour of time and opportunity. Hence, I could not speak to any US jazzman directly and therefore, the cornerstones of my thesis, its argumentation and supporting evidence, had to be narrowed to two: secondary sources and music recordings. It must be said, though, that a great deal has been both written and filmed about jazz already, be it particular sub-genres, personalities,

¹ Of course, there were countries like France or Czechoslovakia where jazz was prohibited by authoritative regimes (Nazi and Soviet respectively), but the expulsion of jazz from public life was coerced, rather than carried out willingly. It is only after the inner bias is destroyed that true liberation starts.

timelines, and developments, so relevant information, with keen effort, could be found and subsequently pieced together. Besides, in finding out about the oldest of jazz music, one must rely wholly on others' impressions, as there are hardly any surviving witnesses of that era. Music, on the other hand, was from the beginning a complementary must – all the concepts that I will try to elucidate in this thesis in words, the music itself very clearly illustrates with much less strain, not only in lyrics to songs (many jazz compositions are purely instrumental), but in the sheer atmosphere the individual pieces radiate. Here, the reader is advised to read this thesis with an audio player at hand, in case there will be mentioned a particular piece or musician, or just to be able to keep up with the respective jazz genres and periods examined in the work.²

Also, I shall allow myself at times a humble addition to scholarly expertise in the form of my own personal experience. As was mentioned above, being a professional musician certainly let me verify or challenge certain arguments present in the literature, and definitely let me approach the topic more fully. I have attended countless concerts, pub gigs, and jam sessions, both as a performer and a listener, and having talked to a great deal of fellow players and other listeners and having seen varying reactions to the music broadened my understanding of the perception of jazz both by the general public and the fan base of today.

This brings us to the structure of the work. As is evident from the title, the thesis focuses on two main aspects of jazz music and culture. One is the reception of jazz – how did the public, jazz admirers, jazz condemners, and jazz musicians themselves,

² The Internet, of course, is the greatest helper in searching up particular songs. For a rather general outlook on individual sub-genres, free Internet radios can be found easily – especially valuable are American www.jazzradio.com and French www.jazzradio.fr with different channels according to style/instrument/time period. In the Czech lands, Český rozhlas has its own jazz channel available in digital broadcast (can be tuned on the Internet, or through satellite or cable TV).

perceive the music: how appropriate and representative they thought it was, to what extent they accepted or rejected it, what boundaries, if any, they thought it should have, and so on. Underlying all varying opinions on the music and its lifestyle is the second, probably more important, aspect of jazz: the very notions associated with it, the ideas behind it, not only musically, but in the sense of its outlook on life – the philosophy, so to speak – what jazz *meant* to those involved. These two streams are followed chronologically, from the early jazz period of the first decades of the 20th century, through the Swing Era of the thirties and forties, to approximately the 1960s, when bebop was in full bloom and other modern jazz styles were beginning to emerge. However, before the analyses of jazz itself, the roots of jazz and its influences, with focus on its African heritage, must be initially discussed in the first chapter in order for the reader to understand where jazz music and later conceptions about it stem from. We shall see that jazz walked in one direction, basically copying the walk of life of the American Negro – from repression to emancipation – and that this walk was propelled by one underlying vital desire – the wish for freedom and recognition. The thesis will show that even though the appearance of jazz changed considerably during its first half-century of existence, the principal thrust remained the same.

Last but not least is a word of gratitude and dedication. I would like to address both to all jazz musicians, singers, dancers, and other important figures in the field, whose incredible life stories and accounts of their uneasy fates and tremendous accomplishments never failed to move me deeply and sincerely. I wish this paper to stand as the utmost expression of my respect and homage to them. There is a risk of this sounding very cliché, but it is very true. Because, had it not been for jazz, and had I not discovered it, I would most probably cease my music playing due to a growing dislike

of Classical music training, I would not find my means of livelihood, and most importantly, I would hardly set out on a journey more fulfilling and inspiring for me than a life filled with this amazing music. This is the story of the struggle of jazz, told for all those who care.

Chapter 1: Back to the Roots: Pre-jazz Period

The Ancestors: Africans in America

At the beginning, there was a nightmare. Bands of white armed men raided countless villages, ripped thousands of families apart and took the conquered with them as prisoners. These defeated black people were to be forcibly transported from their home soil to a faraway place beyond the ocean, where whites of the Old World came often willingly in search of betterment of their lives and perhaps even more freedom. While whites embarked with feelings of hope, blacks trembled with fear. For them, life of slavery and often brutality awaited.

By 1807, as many as 400,000 native Africans were brought to the US, mostly from West Africa, to work as slaves for white masters, predominantly on plantations in the South (Gioia 7). Familiar places, their homelands, that had given them besides subsistence also a sense of identity, of belonging to the world, became nothing but memories, and tangible things that could remind them of the past were limited to those few they could take with them and conceal during the voyage. Thus, the primary heritage they could retain and that was significant enough to preserve the African spirit in them was of narrative character, and therefore intangible. Alongside folktales, religion was of great importance, if not the greatest, and with it, music: all were derived from African animistic worldview in which the world of spirit gods overlaps with our physical reality – natural phenomena contain in their depths a mysterious life force and anything from living creatures like plants and animals to seemingly lifeless mountains and rivers can be spirit-possessed and worthy of recognition, respect, and admiration (Peretti, *The Creation of Jazz* 11, 18). This worldview presented African religious

rituals with some characteristic elements that were kept alive by the practitioners, albeit transplanted from the native soil to the new “prison” environment. Animism is inclusive – although the sacred is clearly distinct from the mundane, it is not separate, but rather present everywhere around. This idea manifested in the performing of rituals consisting of two crucial components, music and dancing, and provided specific elements that can be found in later forms of black American music, including jazz.

At the core lies the fact that such rituals were interwoven into the social fabric and thus dances and music were an integral part of Africans’ daily lives. Unlike in the Western tradition,³ in which there is an invisible yet impenetrable dividing line between the audience and the musician or the minister (unless the performer explicitly asks the audience to tear down the imaginary wall), African performances were participatory. In the US, such performances could be regularly seen for example at Congo Square in New Orleans, Louisiana, on Sundays in the 19th century; these circular African ritual dances called ring-shouts that were danced by slaves and open to the public, so anyone could either join or observe, were musically accompanied in the background by virtually the same melange of sound as they were in Africa – thud of drums, crackle of jawbone rattles, strumming of calabash string instruments (African predecessors of banjos), chanting, and stomping of any willing participator added to the energetic mixture of moving bodies (Gioia 3-5). As such, the music had specific qualities that reflected its participatory character and social function. Call-and-response was a typical feature that survived in later musical forms of black Americans, most notably in gospels,

³ For the sake of simplicity, I use this term to refer to the broader cultural stance of Europeans and their descendants in North America of the time, the Old World attitudes. Although the term European tradition would be probably more agreeable, it threatens to be seen in a narrower geographical context. I am also aware of many other traditions around the world where art is separated from the audience (for example, the music of Japan), but for the purpose of this thesis such considerations are irrelevant.

blues, work songs, and marginally in jazz as well in the form of two soloists/vocalists alternating, or even as a “dialogue” between an instrument and human voice – one of the best examples of this is any sung version of “Basin Street Blues.” There are, however, two main aspects of black music to which ancient African religious rituals gave rise. The first is its spontaneous and improvised character of the performance, the other is its richness of rhythmic content – both are logical outcomes of many different people participating together in drumming and singing on the spot without previous rehearsal, and both are widely present in jazz in all its styles and sub-genres (Turley 114).

White acceptance of such musical and cultural expression of slaves varied. While in New Orleans the city council proclaimed Congo Square an official site for slave dances in 1817, South Carolina had long before banned the usage of drums by slaves (a response to Stono Rebellion of 1739, where drums signalled attack on whites), and Georgia banned also horns besides drums (Gioia 7). Similar acts of repression show not only blatant animosity towards a particular issue, more often they are a sign of fear. For this reason, New Orleans with its exceptional toleration of slave gatherings was of much importance at the time. As music historian Ned Sublette noted in his comment on the mere party-like appearance of the Congo Square sessions, such events boasted great significance for the participators: “in the United States, where overt manifestations of Africanness had elsewhere been so thoroughly, deliberately erased, [to play a hand drum] was a tremendous act of will, memory and resistance” (qtd. in Gioia 4).

However, not every musical expression of black slaves was looked at with so much suspicion – some were even encouraged. In the households of slave owners, entertainment was a sought-after boost to social life, and there was scarcely a better

opportunity for this than exploiting the talents of a handful of slaves able to play dance tunes on banjo and fiddle, two instruments which were, unbeknownst to the white masters, of similar types already known in Africa since at least the 9th century (Klitz 44-45). Moreover, origins of the so-called minstrel shows can be traced to such household entertainments. Even though they eventually evolved into shows ample with racial slurs and derogatory content, they began as white imitations of black musicians and slave ensembles consisting of banjo, violin and percussion (tambourines or bone castanets, due to the ban on drums), and even after they turned malicious, they still publicized and helped spread some of the black slaves' music and by employing black bands (that grew over time to include also trombone, tuba, cornet, clarinet, or flute) they even helped blacks gain two important things: admittance into the nascent entertainment business, and with it some acceptance and prestige as travelling performers (Klitz 48-49). For the blacks, then, this became a definite opportunity for upward mobility, though a tainted one.

Several decades later, a typical jazzman's predicament reminded strongly of the everlasting endeavour of the enslaved ones to free themselves, both in mind and body, though not from the acuteness of literal slavery, but from the confining life circumstances of "free" black Americans – minimal economic opportunity and severe poverty backed by racism and discrimination on the part of white population froze black Americans in an almost inescapable plight. In such condition, music was one of the very few possibilities of achieving at least some liberation and recognition. Still, strong ambivalence in public opinions regarding the lifestyles of not only black Americans, but jazzmen as well, remained a reality till well into the 20th century. Ranging from

tolerance and liking on the one hand to fear and hostility on the other,⁴ jazzmen met with variable reactions to their vocation. In subsequent chapters it will become clear that jazz bore similar ideas and attracted similar attitudes as those “ancient” forms of black American expressiveness that were either still linked to the slaves’ African homelands’ traditions, like the ring-shouts of the 19th century Congo Square, or were being absorbed and moulded by the newly forming show business, like the minstrel bands.

The Hub: New Orleans and Its Melting Pot

Visitors to the city would find the ambience of the place remarkable. Marching bands filled the streets with music, funerals turned into entertaining parades, and chatter of different languages could be heard around the city quarters. This was to become the magic soil where hidden underground currents would merge with upper flows and create a powerful stream of unforeseeable magnitude that could later flood the rest of the country with unexpected force. Here, jazz would virtually come into being.

New Orleans was a very unique city in the US. Thanks to a specific set of conditions, it proved to be the perfect place for a variety of influences coming together and mixing up in a colourful blend out of which ultimately sprang up jazz. This chapter focuses on clarifying the importance of New Orleans for the development of jazz. However, a word of caution is necessary. In reality, it is hard to say where jazz *per se*

⁴ The latter being the official stance, as evidenced by the passing of anti-discrimination acts only in the second half of the 20th century: court ruling in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 that declared the segregation of public facilities unconstitutional, or the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibited discrimination based on race, skin colour, religion, sex, or nationality.

truly started, given a number of facts. First, popular black pre-jazz musicians, typically members of minstrel show bands or marching brass bands, were already well established outside the South and possessed the same instruments and similar musical qualities as later jazzmen (see Klitz). Second, the first printed use of the word “jazz” was in a San Francisco newspaper in 1913, whereas the music in New Orleans was called “ragtime” until the 1920s (Peretti, *The Creation of Jazz* 22). Third and at the same time the most natural and logical argument in the dispute is that the evolution of pre-jazz music into genuine jazz (basically, evolution as such) cannot be squeezed into a quite limited geographical area of one city and a span of a few years during which a handful of individuals would outright invent a new genre, as much as Jelly Roll Morton would wish it to be that way.⁵ Rather, the creation of jazz was fluid, done a step at a time, when musicians exchanged and absorbed musical ideas and ventured into new musical territories with their improvisational experiments. This fact can be easily seen in the scope of influences present in jazz, such as blues, ragtime, or Latin, and the difficulties these forms sometimes pose for proper differentiation between them and jazz. Even though jazz grew in part out of these roots, in the end it overarched them and covered them all under its roof. And it was precisely in New Orleans where much of this process took place thanks to several contributing factors that created a peculiar atmosphere and allowed the fusion of a variety of divergent inspirational sources.

The city holds a very strategic position. A port city, it has naval access to the Atlantic Ocean through the Gulf of Mexico and is in relative proximity to the islands of the Caribbean. Furthermore, the city sits at the Mississippi River delta and therefore has boat access to the Northern and Midwestern states via the river’s vast watershed,

⁵ Jelly Roll Morton (1890-1941) was an early-jazz pianist, author of the first published jazz tune “Jelly Roll Blues” (in 1915), and a self-proclaimed inventor of jazz (Gioia 37).

comprising, among others, Ohio River, Arkansas River, and Missouri River (figure 1). In the past, when mass transport to great distances was still predominantly in the hands of ship crews, these traits gave it immense potential not only for commerce and transportation of goods, but also for a steady influx of people, both from inland and across the ocean. It is no wonder, then, that for political reasons it changed “owners” repeatedly. Founded in 1718 as a French colony, it was ceded to Spain in 1764, only to be given back in 1800 and then sold to the United States in 1803 as part of the Louisiana Purchase; however, the population was not limited to French and Spanish settlers and American newcomers of mostly English ancestry – immigrants from Germany, Ireland, and later from Eastern Europe and Italy, slaves brought from West Africa, and refugees fleeing civil unrests in Hispaniola (today’s Haiti) and Cuba, arriving in New Orleans around 1808 and 1809, were all part of the city’s demographics in the 19th century (Gioia 6-7; Turley 114). This jumble of nationalities, each bringing its own cultural artefacts, was the stem factor, the original source of diverse influences necessary for the development of jazz; of course, among those influences, musical traditions of the respective cultures and the circumstances in which they survived in the US were central to this development. African musical features were already mentioned: of crucial importance to jazz were the blacks’ rhythmical sensibility and improvisational drive coupled with their entertainment potential. European input, however, was of comparable importance.

There are basically two foremost contributions of European musical tradition that enriched American music scene. First, it provided a more colourful instrumentation; second, it broadened the repertoire. Ever since French colonial times, thanks to Napoleon’s encouragement, New Orleans had its portion of military bugle brass and

drum bands, which only proliferated after the Civil War (Turley 109-110). Naturally, either as soldiers and members of such bands, or just as passers-by who happened to come across a discarded horn, picking it up out of curiosity,⁶ blacks had access to these kinds of instruments. From this point, it was only a matter of time until first major musical innovations would be made, especially by combining this kind of instrumentation with the blacks' African rhythmic heritage and improvisation. Furthermore, thanks to blacks, brass (cornets, trombones, tubas) and woodwind (clarinets, flutes) instruments were also introduced into popular entertainment show business – at first minstrel shows, then vaudeville (variety shows). Even though military brass bands playing marches and other military and orchestral music at parades were already in demand (rising to fame in the 1820s-1830s), these “offshoot” minstrel and vaudevillian bands tended to other needs of the population as well – besides playing at the actual shows, their tasks also included drawing audiences by marching through the city and playing a concert as an invitation or advertisement, playing for dances, or providing music for funeral processions (that turned on the way back from the cemetery into parades themselves) – thanks to this wide scope of activities, their repertoire was not limited to military music, but comprised also popular tunes, blues, operatic arias, and ragtime (Klitz 50, 53).

Speaking of ragtime, it is hard to imagine the birth of jazz without another Western instrument played by blacks in America: the piano. Both the epitome of elegance and at the same time the staple of vice parlours, it gave numerous possibilities of musical, educational, or economic self-realization for the blacks. Two distinct developments eventually converged at the ivory keyboard. The first was the Creoles'

⁶ Since after the Civil War the blacks' slave status was abolished, no bans limiting the usage of any instruments by slaves could stop them.

tradition of Western musical education. The Creoles, who were of mixed European (mostly French), African, and Caribbean ancestry, were a peculiar class in New Orleans that boasted several advantages over the black population thanks to the mercy of their white fathers and more distant white ancestors (and probably due to their lighter complexion) – unlike the blacks of consistent African ancestry, they were free persons even before the Civil War and the abolishment of slavery, and so they could hold the middle position in the society, between the rich white upper-class and the blacks at the very bottom; they spoke perfect French, some even possessed their own slaves, had money, occupied decent jobs, and received proper education, which often included classical music training (Turley 113). It was then through their musical upbringing that they would later bring into jazz some Western concepts that helped the music spread and become standardized – most notably, they brought into play the Western style of music notation and its understanding of harmony. The second tradition that eagerly rushed to the piano keyboard was the blacks' inclination to spontaneous music and dance, already discussed in the previous sub-chapter. These two currents would probably remain separate if it was not for one historical incident, that is, the abolishment of slavery and the liberation of enslaved blacks in 1865. In a paradoxical manner, in the 1870s Louisiana passed laws making all persons of African descent, thus including both blacks and Creoles, subject to discriminatory and racist oppressive laws known as Jim Crow laws that virtually isolated Creoles and blacks despite their legitimate free person status from the rest of the society through separation of public and social facilities (Turley 115). Suddenly, Creoles found themselves on equal footing with the former slaves, the blacks – for the former, a terrible loss of status, for the latter, yet another postponement of attaining any kind of status. Ultimately, this meant competition, both economic and cultural, and for this reason, Creoles distanced

themselves from the blacks. Even though Creoles abhorred the possibility of “losing face” by taking menial jobs and instead chose to rely on savings or land holdings, at one point the money must have gone out; when such time came, music proved to be, at least for some, an acceptable variant of livelihood, and so young Creole pianists jumped at the opportunity to economic betterment that was offered mostly, and to the disdain of their families, by brothels and low-dives (Turley 117-118).⁷ However, the same opportunity was equally exploited by black musicians and it was precisely in these houses of vice were some of the otherwise very rare interaction between Creoles and blacks took place. Finally, the two musical flows could merge. When marches built around Western classical harmonies met local dances syncopated in African rhythmic manner, like the cakewalk (possibly a descendant of the 18th century black slaves’ circular dances and the secular version of the 19th century ring-shouts), the resulting sound combined both the percussive stomping and clapping of the dances in the left hand (by providing regular beat with bass tones) and harmony and melody in the right hand; in other words, by the end of the 19th century, “jig piano” and its published variant labelled “ragtime” were born (Klitz 55-56). And from ragtime, adapted to a small ensemble, it was only a short step to the first genuine jazz style – the Dixieland.

Before we move on, however, to the early jazz period, we shall recapitulate the discussed musical development in terms of contemporary thought and circumstances. As was mentioned, brass bands and ragtime pianists were the precursors to jazz. What were, then, the notions, the ideas behind playing such music and how were these

⁷ After the 1880s, immigrants mostly from Italy and Sicily usurped organized crime in New Orleans from the hands of the Irish (who were intolerant to blacks and Creoles) and became heads of prostitution houses and drinking establishments where they nurtured their love of decoration and music, as well as tried to boost the entertainment value of the places – for this purpose, they employed black and Creole pianists (and small ensembles) and encouraged the growth of pre-jazz music (Turley 111-112, 117-118).

perceived by others? Musically, it was an amalgam of Western and African traditions. It seems logical to suggest that the Western portion made the music appealing to the general public through known melodies and pleasing harmonies to which the Westerners' ears were accustomed. In this sense, the music was for the black performers a new ground which they could explore through their African link, their improvisational drive. In fact, witness accounts alongside conductors' and composers' complaints prove that improvisation and melodic embellishments in ensembles were widespread; for example, the famous conductor of the 369th Infantry Band, James Reese Europe (1881-1919), complained: "I have to . . . prevent the musicians from adding to their music more than I wish them to. Whenever possible, they all embroider their parts in order to produce new, peculiar sounds," (qtd. in Klitz 58). This shows us a remarkable dichotomy. On the one hand, there were some who discouraged improvisation and demanded strict interpretation of the music. In a way, this can be seen as the continuation of Western limiting tendencies imposed upon black Africans' cultural expression, similar to the whites' efforts to convert the Africans to Christianity through music, the result of which was the spiritual, sung by a choir, arranged as a European classical composition praising the Lord – indeed, little black music outside spirituals was appreciated by whites (Gioia 7; Peretti, *The Creation of Jazz* 15). On the other hand, there were those to whom improvisation, embellishments, and "ragging" (syncopating) of melodies were of great importance. Thanks to these musical ventures the performers not only kept alive their African spirit, they also could develop and grow musically in their own peculiar way by experimenting in the harmonic and melodic framework provided by the Western tradition. The music became an adventure, something to play with and expand, not to be confined by it. As a professional jazz musician, I can confirm these words from my own experience. For me and many of my colleagues, the

appeal of jazz hides not so much in its swinging rhythm, chord progressions, or “blue” notes, but in the vast opportunities for improvisation, where literally “any note is permissible at any given point” (Collier 26). The implications of the freedom of expression are clear, and for the 19th and early 20th century black musicians, what could have been of greater value than their freedom of mind and thought manifested in front of white audiences? Perhaps only some other, preferably tangible aspect of the music and not just a mere implication could be treasured more. What proved to fulfil this requirement was the economic potential of the new music stemmed in its novelty and entertainment capabilities.

However much this potential was exploited by whites (the proof of which were the white imitations of black performances – the minstrel shows), it nonetheless provided blacks with the possibility of some upward mobility thanks to a decent pay for a comparatively easy job. Vacant spots were filled by the talented from the fringes of society (including also Creoles and immigrants besides blacks), because those “in the centre” were already mostly established in their careers that were kept closed to any newcomers from “lower” social classes. Despite this easy access to work in music and entertainment business, there were obstacles on the road to success and achieving recognition was all but smooth. The main reason, apart from the obvious dislike of blacks by whites, was that show business was only a newly developing field and for the majority of population the notion of popular professional entertainment was quite unknown – before, entertainment was mostly home-made and professional entertainers such as actors or musicians were always rather looked down upon (Collier 9). In addition to this, jazz from its very beginnings was associated with vice, either due to its constant presence in prostitution houses, gambling establishments and honky-tonks, or

because of the “highly vulgar dances that accompany [it]” (Osgood 517).⁸ But even though this stance lasted for many more decades, the music nevertheless bettered the lives of its practitioners and held for the whites a mysterious attraction that gradually spread through all strata of population.

In the upcoming chapters, we shall see these patterns repeated over and over again. Jazzmen struggled with a rather schizophrenic stance in a society that scolded jazz while growing more obsessed by it at the same time. Moreover, they had to reconcile a pressing dilemma – how to stay true to one’s self in performance and retain artistic purity and originality while still conforming to the public tastes enough to be in demand and thus have a secured steady income. Rejection versus acceptance and art versus commerce – these became the most problematic issues in terms of the reception of jazz by the public and the notions and significance of jazz to the musicians.

⁸ Famous vice districts around the country where jazz was regularly practiced after its formation and migration to other cities were for example Barbary Coast in San Francisco, Tenderloin in New York, or Levee in Chicago, besides the already mentioned Storyville in New Orleans (Collier 13). Dances associated with jazz are the likes of Foxtrot, Charleston, or Lindy Hop, that is, dances of couples often in close embrace.

Chapter 2: Some Like It Hot: Early Jazz Period

The Crave: Dixieland on the Move

Sensuous tango played on ivory keys. Melancholic blues strummed on banjo strings. Bouncy tune squeaked by clarinet. What they have all in common is their incredible rhythmic drive that makes your feet tap, if not straight jump to the dance floor. Across the country, dance craze is spreading at a rapid pace and people either succumb to it or fiercely oppose it, disregarding the colour of skin. All this happens because of such a seemingly benign thing as a music fad that managed to travel around with its practitioners.

Cornetist Buddy Bolden (1877-1931), who played with his brass band in New Orleans from 1895 until he was locked up in a mental institution in 1907, was the leader of what is considered to be the first jazz ensemble (Gioia 5). Still mostly prominent in New Orleans and its surroundings, other early jazzmen around this time kept performing in saloons, dance halls, vice districts, and for theatrical productions, especially vaudeville. But by the 1920s, this style of music played in New Orleans, which in time earned the name “Dixieland,” spread across the continent. Bassist Bill Johnson (1872-1972), who moved from New Orleans to Los Angeles, brought the Original Creole Orchestra, featuring at that time Freddie Keppard (1889-1933) on cornet, to California in 1911 and toured with a vaudeville circuit from 1914 till 1918, coming as far as Chicago, thus being the first black jazz band that moved out of New Orleans and introduced a new “hot” style of music to a much wider public (Scaruffi, “The Beginnings: New Orleans”). This novel and exciting music, however, was not the domain of solely black musicians. Originating in the melting pot of New Orleans, jazz

was as appealing to whites as it was to blacks. In 1915, white trombonist Tom Brown (1888-1958) went with his Dixieland Jass Band to Chicago, being the first white band to tour the North (Collier 94). As a matter of fact, for the next decade, it was Chicago that proved to be the new hub for jazz, despite the West Coast's primacy in receiving musical influence from New Orleans.

Of notable black New Orleans musicians, for example, saxophonist Sidney Bechet (1897-1959) came to Chicago in 1917, and cornetist Joe "King" Oliver (1885-1938) in 1918 to take Freddie Keppard's place in Johnson's group, later renamed King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. In 1922, thanks to Oliver's urge, his "pupil" Louis Armstrong (1901-1971) arrived to play as the second cornet by his side. In Chicago, Armstrong would further refine what Bechet had started but was unable to finish due to his stay in Europe – shifting the musical focus from collective improvising to the soloist. This innovation had significant impact on music and bore with it certain ideas that pertain to jazzmen and jazz performance to this very day. This notion will be discussed later.

There were, of course, also important white players who contributed to the development of jazz. Drummer Johnny Stein (1895-1962) played a major, albeit neglected, role by bringing his band to Chicago in 1916. Stein had to stay there due to his contract, but most of the other band members, all white New Orleans musicians, would later move to jump at a gig opportunity in another jazz capital-to-be – New York – and as the Original Dixieland Jass Band make the historically first recordings of jazz tunes, "Livery Stable Blues" and "Dixieland Jass Band One Step," in February 1917. From this point on, recording industry was generally on the rise and jazz recordings proliferated and spread throughout the country, bringing jazz even more into the

mainstream. This was mainly thanks to three things. The distribution of records enabled jazz to capture the attention of even those who did not frequent dance halls or cabarets of vice districts where jazz was regularly practiced before. Second, this wider exposure further fuelled the dance craze that started in the 1910s so much that the music's name itself had become a fad on which many imitators wanted to cash in – the label jazz was put in the names of bands or records in hopes of increasing sales and profits (Collier 99, 102, 133).⁹ Third, despite a wide black following, the mainstream and the majority of the buying public were whites, and whites were the ones whose records were mostly sold and whose work was mostly appreciated (Early 135).¹⁰

At any rate, several crucial points of progress were made in the 1910s and 1920s. Musicians both black and white leaving the South in search of better job and pay opportunities in the cities on the West Coast and in the North were just a drop in the ocean. Generally, starting from about the 1910s, there was a steady flow of migrants from the South, leaving the agrarian lifestyle and lack of decent livelihood possibilities and coming to the blooming industrial centres for work (where, indeed, labour was in demand); for the blacks, the purported Northern tolerance and ease with regard to race, as opposed to severe racism and discrimination in the South, was another factor that very likely influenced their decision (Collier 95). For the musicians, then, the choice was clear. Bigger pay stemmed basically from one thing related to the migration, that is, larger audiences. The city lured many a different personage, of various backgrounds,

⁹ Names and lyrics of some of the songs published by mid-1917 speak for themselves. "Everybody's Jazzin' It," "Everybody Loves a 'Jass' Band" or "Mr. Jazz Himself" all refer to the novelty, popularity and joyous character of jazz. These pieces, however, are musically quite far from jazz and evoke more a comedic interlude in variety theatre than an improvised syncopated danceable tune.

¹⁰ Consider the immense popularity of Paul Whiteman (1890-1967) and his orchestra who, despite his "The King of Jazz" title, did not even play true jazz, but a classically sounding music with only the slightest hints of improvisation or swinging polyrhythms.

that could gather regularly in dance halls, cabarets, theatres, cafes and nightclubs, and the chance of becoming successful without the necessity of travelling too far to new venues rose greatly for the musicians and other professional entertainers. This necessity was nullified also by the emergence of jazz records that allowed the musicians' fame to sweep across the states without their appearance in person. Moreover, the proliferation of radio stations after the first broadcast in 1920 only further helped in this regard. In short, the economic potential of that stirring and restless rhythm from New Orleans was reaching unprecedented heights. Musicians were able to make 50 dollars in Chicago per week by contract, so regular engagement was assured, as opposed to mere 1.50 dollars per night back home where one would struggle to make an adequate living and keep a steady income (Collier 95). Money and job opportunities were, indeed, a vital component of what jazz meant for those involved.

Adventurous migration, the music's successful dissemination, the popularity of recordings, cities' flourishing club scenes – all can be symbolically seen as the transition to a new age. The “Jazz Age.” Steel and concrete replaced wood and brick. Assembly line took on manufacture. In other words, industrialization was well under way, technological advancement was accelerating rapidly, and rural agrarian system focused on farms and villages already shifted to big cities' industrial production. But most importantly, during this time, attitudes changed significantly. The 19th century's Puritan and Victorian sense of decency and order was slowly but surely being replaced by a new spirit of modernism – though bringing with it a certain anxiety stemming from sterility, isolation and alienation typical for city lifestyle, where anonymity is more or less a certainty, its underlying *carpe diem* idea nonetheless provided people with a sort of relief from the reality's harsh circumstances. Enjoyment of the ephemeral and

spontaneous personal expressiveness were no longer looked so down upon, rather such a carefree attitude was more and more praised and encouraged – a completely different view from the demands of the previous century, when decorous and proper behaviour was expected (Collier 5-8). It is no wonder then that the wild sound of Dixieland ensembles filled with fiery group improvisation and rhythmic swinging momentum captured the attention of everyone who heard it. The immediate associations brought to mind when it came to jazz were basically unanimous. The reception of these, however, was starkly divided.

Grown up in the dives and brothels of vice districts, jazz meant for a lot of people the soundtrack to naughty dances and reckless fun fuelled by drinking and obscured by tobacco smoke. Logically, moral leaders of the country, whether active in religion, education, or politics, condemned jazz music as a road to damnation and moral decay, even though what they actually sought to stop, if unconsciously, was the social change that was already underway. Jazz was labelled as “devil’s music” and words of caution were being spread among the population in printed media and from the pulpits. What is interesting is that this anxiety or fear of jazz was common for both blacks and whites. Not only did white journals like *New York Times* or respectable musical magazines such as *The Etude* denounced jazz, which could be expected, but also black papers, e.g. *New York Age*, *Pittsburgh Courier*, *The Crisis*, or *Chicago Defender* attacked jazz (Berger 465; Levine 12). As for the whites, this opposition was sparked, but not limited to, the concept and image of the Negro jazzman that was incompatible with the white leaders’ notions of the Negro – instead of serving the role of the inferior ex-slave and the clownish minstrel, jazzman was carefree and unyielding to the whites’ moral standards; instead of the submissive, obedient, and religious choir singer of

spirituals, jazzman was walking a new path of adventurous and often deviant exploration of the city's new possibilities, whether in music or in daily life (Berger 485). To battle this subversive image, likening of jazz to noise, crash, savagery, musical incompetence and lack of taste was common, as was the stereotype of the uninhibited and barbaric blacks of the jungle playing "hot" music on primitive instruments, tearing down all barriers of decency on the dance floor (see Anderson). This sense of "decency" went hand-in-hand with stress on tradition and the old morals from which jazz and the associated lifestyle broke away. As for the blacks, this departure from "decency" was the main impetus for the renunciation of jazz. Such a debasing stereotype of a black man that was perpetuated by whites must have surely been an agonizing jab at the blacks' dignity, and especially the black middle-class sought to convince the whites of the opposite by conforming to their bourgeois culture and accepting their long established "proper" modes of conduct – in terms of music this meant praising classical music as means to ennobling the character and a proof of refinement (Levine 12).

What is most intriguing is that for exactly the same traits, that is, the careless air surrounding it and the break from stifling traditions, jazz was also highly appreciated. The difference is that while the condemnation was the domain of white and black public opinion makers and receivers, more often than not in the hands of the musically untrained, the appraisal was in the hands of the musically competent – composers, conductors, musicians, many of whom were playing classical music. Considered by many the utmost means for artistic and individual expression, jazz was seen as not only the first and true American native music form, but also a reflection of one of the most important ideas in American society – personal freedom coupled with enterprising spirit. Highly representative of such sentiment is conductor Leopold Stokowski's comment in

a 1924 article “Where Is Jazz Leading America.” To Stokowski, the conductor of Philadelphia Orchestra and other symphonic orchestras throughout the country, jazzmen “have an open mind, and unbiased outlook. They are not hampered by traditions and conventions, and with their ideas, their constant experiments, they are causing new blood to flow in the veins of music” (qtd. in Levine 13).

It is interesting to note the choice of words of those who hated jazz and those who loved it. While the former group often masked their hidden fears of social change and animosity towards the blacks in “musical” terms by referring to noise, throb of tomtoms, discordant harmony, lack of musical training etc., the latter group expressed their reverence towards jazz *as music* in a more general, even poetic language that highlighted the social and cultural importance of jazz. Nevertheless, putting the official stances aside, the most genuine proof of jazz’s reception are actually not magazine articles published and aimed at the public, but the public’s own attitude toward jazz evidenced in its behaviour. Because, the truth is, the “Jazz Age” blossomed remarkably in the 1920s, on to the 1930s.

The Roar: Jazz Essence

Stylish flappers and their suitors dance the night away among other like-minded youth on the dance floor. Hot music hits the walls and jumps off them to mingle with the sound of clinking glasses filled with bootleg liquor. When a band member comes to the front and blows on his horn a hot solo, the audience goes half-crazy and begins to throw tips. Though it’s the wee hours of the morning, the fun only seems to begin.

After the World War I, America was on the rise. Thanks to increased industrial production ignited by wartime demands, jobs were available, such luxuries as cars, radios, phonographs (gramophones), or other electrical appliances, were becoming more common, the gross national product was up by 40%, and consumer way of life was starting to take serious hold on American society (Ogren 5). The city irreversibly replaced the village and lured hundreds of thousands of migrants with countless promises, as evidenced by the great black migration of the 1910s and 1920s. People kept coming, and in such environment, entertainment business could only thrive and new enterprises began to prosper. The city with its opportunities and exciting lifestyle encouraged and invited its inhabitants to spend their salaries in one of its many pleasure and leisure facilities, be it cabarets, nightclubs, theatres, cinemas, dance halls, or cafés. Provided that there were people with enough money they were willing to spend and tastes that needed to be satisfied, jazz could move forward and develop in accordance with the spirit of the age.

After the primacy of New Orleans, Chicago became the next capital of jazz in the US. The reasons why the musicians migrated have already been discussed earlier. Now, the consequences need to be clarified. And among these, one stands out as an important milestone in the history of jazz. In Chicago, Louis Armstrong helped redefine what jazz was about by shifting the focus from collective improvisation of the Dixieland ensemble to the persona of the soloist.

Although Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong started playing in Chicago with King Oliver’s band, in 1925 he made his first Hot Five records featuring a band of skilful New Orleans musicians from Oliver’s group (Johnny Dodds on clarinet, Lil Hardin-Armstrong on piano, Kid Ory on trombone, Johnny St Cyr on banjo). However, these

recordings, while still reminding the listeners heavily of the New Orleans collective style, show a transition to a new facet of jazz music that was to become a defining feature of many jazz performances – the solo. Improvisation done collectively in New Orleans was now to be done more individually. Armstrong’s mastery of the instrument was early on recognized by Lil Hardin-Armstrong (1898-1971), the pianist of Oliver’s band and Armstrong’s wife, and it was she who persuaded Louis to step out of Oliver’s shadow and live up to his potential (“Louis ‘Satchmo’ Armstrong,” *The Red Hot Jazz Archive*). This move proved to be right, and more importantly, commercially an enormous success. Louis also sang and scatted¹¹ and soon the audiences found themselves wanting more of him. The groups for Hot Five and later Hot Seven records¹² changed members, featuring at times only background musicians to supplement the biggest star: Louis the soloist, the charming, charismatic, romantic hero that assimilated jazz to the broad mainstream by playing and singing in a relaxed, poised, and fluid style that became (and for many still is) the epitome of jazz and made Louis the “jazz ambassador” in the world (Gioia 49-50).

It is not incidental that Louis captured the attention of those who heard him. His instrumental skills and raspy voice appealed to the public because of its highly individualistic approach. The 1920s were a time when the new spirit of age was being ingrained in the minds of the young generation – a spirit of romantic individualism, free to express itself, fit precisely into the new jazz idiom – the soloist’s art (Collier 44-47).

¹¹ Scat is the use of voice in a rhythmical jazzy manner: nonsense words and sounds are improvised in a melodic line. Hot Five’s “Heebie Jeebies” (1926) is the pioneering example of scat singing, even though it was not the first recorded one: vaudevillian Gene Greene scatted on “King of the Bungaloos” as early as 1911.

¹² Hot Five and Hot Seven never performed live, only recorded (“Louis ‘Satchmo’ Armstrong,” *The Red Hot Jazz Archive*). In 1928 the second Hot Five records were made, being the last in the series.

Jazz solo seemed to embody the idea that so many of the young ones adhered to. The break from communal tradition both in music and in society was needed so that the new generation could define itself in the present against the past. Since the past was long gone and the conditions of life changed immensely, the shift was inevitable. City lifestyle, ample opportunities, plenty of resources, economic prosperity, all provided the young with new psychological needs as opposed to mere physical ones of sustaining their very being. The well-ordered life of the previous generation, still in the clutches of Victorian morals and emphasizing the importance of communal responsibilities, had little significance for the urban youngsters in the crowded cities where time and money could be spent on entertainment and not just on sustenance. The choice was now more than ever in each one's own hands. Hence, the jazz solo was for both the listeners and the performers the sign of the free individual. Not only free from the past, but also free in the present. Dixieland ensemble was bound to fall and from the ashes, the heroic soloist was to emerge.

Entertainment industry did not wait long for jumping at the opportunity to exploit this evident interest of the public in not only Armstrong, but jazz soloists in general. Orchestras that played arranged dance music (and mostly based in New York) started employing skilful soloists to "heat up" the music with their improvisations whenever the audience demanded it. By 1927, such orchestras as the blacks Fletcher Henderson's or Noble Sissle's, and whites Jean Goldkette's, even Paul Whiteman's, reached out for the best players and able soloists like saxophonist Coleman Hawkins (1904-1969), cornetist Bix Beiderbecke (1903-1931), or saxophonist Frank Trumbauer (1901-1956) to bring in to the music their hot touch (Collier 47). This was the wish of the audience and the concert promoters and band managers were very willing to

conform to such wish. Likewise, the band leaders and musicians themselves were eager to please the audiences as well. Not only because their success depended on their popularity which ensured playing and paying opportunities, but also because jazzmen at that time were still well aware of their entertainment “mission.” Here again comes to the front the junction of art and commerce. However, the demands of the age secured a good compromise between both. Jazzmen could express themselves the way they sought to – in their hot solos – and still retain their steady income thanks to the popularity of hot music and solos among the audience (Collier 114-115).

The commercial success of such enterprises speaks well of the reception of jazz by the public. Whether in a small band setting or a bigger orchestra, hot jazz hit the right strings in the audience’s hearts. In this regard, however, one must not forget to mention an interesting phenomenon in the development of jazz. The so-called symphonic jazz, the “sweet” variety as opposed to the “hot” music, was highly popular with the public opinion makers. Symphonic jazz of the likes of Art Hickman (1886-1930) and Paul Whiteman (1890-1967) attracted the praise of journals and music critics because of its sophistication – it was arranged, highly orchestrated, played by trained musicians, and most of all, played by whites (Anderson 143-144; Seago 45). Symphonic jazz was close to European classical music in many respects and therefore it should be of no surprise that as such it was deemed the only respectable and worthy kind of jazz in the “high” circles of society – Whiteman was even the best paid musician in America in the 1920s, and his orchestra the most famous (Early 130-131). However, the simple fact that even Whiteman himself hired “hot” soloists (Beiderbecke, Trumbauer, Teagarden) speaks for itself. Musically, hot jazz had the upper hand in the long run, even though being still looked down upon in contrast to the sweet ambiance of symphonic jazz.

Another interesting social phenomenon serves as the evidence that hot jazz was far from being disapproved of: the slumming white middle- and upper-class. No matter how much the blacks' jazz was condemned by the public leaders, countless whites succumbed to the lure of the exciting nightlife culture that bloomed in the black neighbourhoods in cities like Chicago or New York after the great migration (Kenney xiii). Entertainment industry, aware of the economic potential, strived to gather and amuse large portions of not only the black resident population, many of whom they also employed as waiters, janitors, floor managers etc., but more importantly the visiting curious whites who came to experience the thrill of interracial contact on the backdrop of the Prohibition.¹³ The reason why entertainment businesses aimed to cater to the whites so much is simple enough – whites had more money to spend than blacks.¹⁴ The leadership's cautionary tales of the “devil's music” and its perverting influence on morals probably finally hit the spot. Alcohol was sold illegally throughout the 1920s in the entertainment facilities like cabarets, nightclubs, and dance halls, under the protection of powerful mobsters with connections to the police and political circles, so the atmosphere was set from the very entrance into such a speakeasy (the term for an establishment selling alcohol illegally) – excitement stemming from deviance and social daring in interracial contact was a way out of the monotony of daily life. Despite such conduct being only a temporary escape, done in the leisure time of the white middle-class indulging in the fun of the moment, it nonetheless provided the visiting whites with a sense of rebellion, of mingling together with the blacks under safe circumstances,

¹³ The importation, production, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages was made illegal in the US by the Eighteenth Amendment and Volstead Act in 1919, taking effect in 1920, and lasting till the repealing of the Amendment by the Twenty-first Amendment in 1933 (Ogren 5).

¹⁴ According to a pre-WWI report on the Chicago's South Side black community, black business succeeded financially only if two thirds of its customers were white (Kenney 6).

of cultural pluralism that blended all classes into a distinct and somehow functional American social patchwork (Peretti, *The Creation of Jazz* 95). And since due to the colour of skin the blacks were barred from most professional schools and enterprises and banned from commercial free-time activities such as skating rinks or amusement parks, they had to focus their energies on and spent their leisure time in the one field where they were allowed, the entertainment industry, often on the border with the illegal: saloons, gambling and prostitution houses, and bootlegging were a vital counterpart to the show business nightlife of dance and music (Kenney 5, 16).

In other words, the “Roaring Twenties” were the culmination of hot jazzy lifestyles. It might not be far-fetched to suggest that during this time, for those involved, jazz meant above all a kind of freedom. Jazz solo was for both the musician and the listener a symbol of individual expression, highly personal and unhindered by traditions. For the musician, jazz was not only the occupation – it was his vocation, a way of life, a means to let the spirit soar. White trumpeter Wingy Manone (1900-1982) confessed that “without my horn, I’m lost. I got to have music or I’m nowhere” (qtd. in Peretti, *The Creation of Jazz* 107). Moreover, without financial security, mere personal freedom would hardly provide the real-life circumstances in which musical and individual growth of jazzmen would be possible – luckily, the practitioners found in jazz the necessary economic opportunity and stability thanks to booming entertainment business with its countless nightlife facilities like cabarets, clubs, dance halls, and theatres, backed by the underworld and funded by illicit alcohol sales and other rackets.¹⁵

¹⁵ For example, in Chicago’s South Side’s vice district called the Levee, consisting of twenty square blocks filled with entertainment facilities, there were as many as 500 saloons, 6 variety theatres, 15 gambling houses, 56 pool rooms, 500 bordellos, and 1000 clubs; even though the district was officially “closed” in 1912, this fact only helped move the enterprises throughout the city and neighbouring streets (Kenney 14).

Despite the association of hot jazz with such shady enterprises and its condemnation by the officials, the interest in it remained strong for blacks as well as whites who listened to it, danced to it, and played it, and to whom it was the expression of the age, of the excitement, adventure, and glamour of modern city life, of *carpe diem* philosophy, of material abundance and prosperity that permitted any one to do whatever he or she pleases to do. However, this paradise was soon to fall with the coming of the Depression, when jazz found itself in the constraints of the strict rules of show business.

Chapter 3: As Time Goes By: The Swing Era

The Breakthrough: Big Bands, Ballrooms, Radio

Black jazz orchestra performs at a renowned nightclub. The show is broadcasted live via radio and people across the nation tune in. The black bandleader has already become a celebrity and his musical ideas, originality and ingeniousness far surpassed that of his white colleagues. Still, it is the whites who control the business and cash in on it the most.

While New Orleans in the 1910s was awash with small ensembles collectively improvising, and Chicago in the 1920s featured a sort of continuation of New Orleans bands, only with prominent soloists, in New York, the next capital of jazz for the following decade, “new” musical phenomenon was starting to take the lead. Dance orchestras, later called big bands, though still smaller than symphonic orchestras but bigger than traditional jazz bands, were slowly beginning to dominate the market, and with them there came a radical shift: jazz moved out of the underworld into the broad light. This transition was apparent, undeniable, and even inevitable, after Paul Whiteman made “a lady out of jazz” and introduced to the wide public his version of jazz in almost symphonic attire in the 1920s, the landmark being his concert at the Aeolian Hall in New York, a venue till then reserved for classical European art music, in 1924 (Early 130). Before Whiteman’s involvement, jazz was played by small ensembles, reserved mostly for the young and rebellious, and more for blacks than whites, who congregated in often disreputable establishments like brothels and speakeasies; indeed, it was hard to hear jazz outside these contexts, probably the only exception being a phonograph at home. Whiteman’s fusion of classical music with

slight hints of jazz and his good sense for publicity made jazz known and accepted on a much wider basis than it had previously been (Levine 16). Even though musically quite far removed from the genuine sound of jazz as it was known then and is known today, Whiteman nevertheless sparked the interest of the public and many other bands, including black orchestras, followed his example: they played arranged music that sounded more or less like jazz (black big bands used generally more jazzy devices and swinging rhythms than white bands) with occasional solos. It had become “hip” to listen and dance to jazz music and in the course such “whites-only” establishments as the Roseland Ballroom in Manhattan or the famous Cotton Club in Harlem started employing black bands to perform for white audiences – Fletcher Henderson’s band was a regular at the Roseland throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and Duke Ellington’s band was the Cotton Club’s house band from 1927 to 1931, later replaced by Cab Calloway’s (Scaruffi, “New York: Big Bands”). The novel format of jazz music, that is, the big band, due to the relative musical “affinity” to its European classical counterpart, the symphonic orchestra, attracted a much wider (and more affluent) public than the exotic hot sound of New Orleans and Chicago ensembles. In response to this, however, bandleaders and their orchestras were expected to provide for the growing audiences material presented in a way that would suit their tastes for dancing and easy listening. With some remarkable exceptions that will be discussed later, repertoire was mostly composed of popular tunes, basically pieces from Broadway musicals, vaudeville and other theatre productions, and Tin Pan Alley¹⁶ music (Scaruffi, “New York: Big Bands”). The dilemma of the contemporary sincere jazzman is apparent to us. Art

¹⁶ Tin Pan Alley is a common denomination for a set of New York’s music publishers and songwriters, responsible for creating commercially profitable and popularly known melodies. Some of the most famous are Irving Berlin (1888-1989), George Gershwin (1898-1937), Gus Kahn (1886-1941), and Cole Porter (1891-1964).

versus commerce lies once again at the core of the issue. Luckily, hot jazz was in its prime during the 1920s, so a compromise could be made: popular tunes were played in a swinging manner with some improvised solos. Besides this arranged dance music with hot touches, there was the “sweet” variety, the symphonic jazz of the likes of Paul Whiteman, and it was this kind of jazz that attracted the most praise, coverage, and money. It is therefore hard to say that critics, the opinion makers, and the “high circles” of society finally approved of jazz, since what they actually approved of was only its hybridized white version; musical magazine *Etude* in 1924 made this point clear by printing an article expressing sentiments that black jazz was still “jungle” noise and low-brow music as opposed to the respectable high-brow symphonic jazz of Whiteman (Anderson 143).

Despite Whiteman’s legitimizing of jazz to the white population, his musical efforts alone would hardly make jazz as popular as it had become. The 1920s brought with it a technological invention that helped spread jazz among the public across the US at a rapid pace: the radio. Thanks to it, commercial potential of jazz bands had risen immensely. Regular broadcasts from esteemed entertainment establishments helped bring fame to bandleaders performing there with their dance orchestras. The Roseland, the Cotton Club, or the Savoy Ballroom, transmitted live shows that served excellently as means of advertising, especially for the black big bands that would otherwise remain largely in the shadow of their white competitors who already got enough publicity. Sales of records went up, and performances of the most famous black jazz orchestras, like the aforementioned Fletcher Henderson’s, Duke Ellington’s, Cab Calloway’s, or Jimmie Lunceford’s, were attended by people from as far as hundred miles, over six hours one-way by buses or cars, who were eager listeners of their radio-broadcasted

gigs (Wilkinson 171-172). Radio had become a major presence in society and jazz rode along.

Speaking of black bandleaders, two deserve further discussion. The first is Fletcher Henderson (1897-1952). In the 1920s he led the most commercially successful black big band, and his orchestra became the model for other big bands to follow: three separated yet cooperating sections became the standard of swing bands for decades – rhythm section consisted of piano, tuba/bass, banjo/guitar, and drums; reed section featured saxophones and clarinets; brass section had trumpets and trombones (Scaruffi, “New York: Big Bands”). So ultimately it was jazz that brought Henderson recognition and financial security. But he probably had not dreamed of such a career in the first place. A middle-class born man, he graduated in chemistry from Atlanta University and moved to New York in 1920 to further his studies in a post-graduate program. There, however, he found that due to the colour of his skin, job opportunities in the field were virtually nonexistent for him, and instead he found work as a “song plugger” – pianist demonstrating sheet music – for W. C. Handy’s music publishing company before becoming a manager at the Black Swan Recording Company and organizing a backing band for the blues singer Ethel Waters (1896-1977) (“James Fletcher Henderson,” *Red Hot Jazz Archive*). From 1922 he led his own jazz orchestra, first at the Club Alabam, and then in 1924 he moved to the Roseland Ballroom; in the same year he hired Louis Armstrong for thirteen months whose playing caused a sensation and brought hot soloing into big band arrangements, inspiring in the process Henderson’s saxophonist Coleman Hawkins (1904-1969), who went on to become the first great jazz saxophone player, an instrumental role until then quite ignored (Collier 105). Henderson’s orchestra disbanded in 1939, and Henderson then joined Benny Goodman’s Orchestra

as the pianist and arranger – a daring move for a white band to hire a black musician to appear on stage with the orchestra (“James Fletcher Henderson,” *Red Hot Jazz Archive*).

At any rate, jazz provided for Henderson the freedom he otherwise lacked in society. Despite his holding a university degree, his black skin proved to be an impenetrable barrier to the world of professional jobs. Were even education failed, music did not. Show business remained open to him and allowed him and his colleagues, his fellow players, to earn reputation, money, and achieve creative realization – something that most of human beings naturally strive for.

The second important individual to discuss is Duke Ellington (1899-1974). Pianist, arranger, and most of all a highly prolific composer, Ellington led probably the most famous black big band of all times, and is responsible for a tremendous number of jazz standards that are still played today, like “Satin Doll” or “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing).” Ellington earned fame quite early in his career. His band started as a small ensemble, The Washingtonians, in 1923, later taking on new members and changing the name to different variations of Duke Ellington and his Orchestra (depending on the house it was either the Kentucky Club Orchestra or the Cotton Club Orchestra). But it was especially thanks to two persons who collaborated with him that Ellington achieved such early recognition. First, trumpeter Bubber Miley (1903-1932), a master of growls and wah-wah sounds using plunger mutes and derby hats, who played with Ellington from 1923 till 1929, was responsible for the “jungle sound” of the band, sparking intense attraction and appeal among the curious whites, and Ellington was wise enough to benefit from it and incorporate the sound in many of his compositions (“Edward ‘Duke’ Ellington,” *Red Hot Jazz Archive*). The second person was Irving Mills (1894-1985), Ellington’s manager, booking agent, promoter, and publisher,

working with Ellington from 1926 till 1939 and recording and publishing Ellington's compositions. In 1927 Ellington already got engagement at the Cotton Club (staying there till 1931) which made him more famous still. Regular radio live broadcasts from the club exposed his band nationwide. This exposure several times a week brought not only fame, but also the need of artistic innovation: Ellington was prompted to write new material for regular listeners who could otherwise get tired of hearing the same performance repeated for weeks, even months, as the Cotton Club shows were elaborate and rehearsed (Collier 108). Financially secured, Ellington could thus concentrate on musical advancements and sound experiments. On the one hand, this necessity of new material intended for a wide audience demanding jazzy danceable tunes was reflected in many of his short works, now considered jazz standards; on the other hand, Ellington could put some effort in composing extended and more classically sounding pieces, such as "Black, Brown and Beige" or "Creole Rhapsody," by means of which he sought to earn reputation and achieve realization also as a serious composer making statements about the history of the American Negro (see Cohen, "Duke Ellington and 'Black, Brown and Beige';" Homzy).

Ellington's example further clarifies the notions of jazz. Like in the case of Henderson, jazz proved to be one of the few areas where a black person, albeit by way of necessity and lack of other options, could achieve unprecedented success, prestige, and appropriate financial reward. This in turn led to artistic self-realization, as evident in Ellington's remarkable career. Implications of freedom, though a somewhat tainted one, are clear. Yet, in terms of reception, the very thing that made Duke's orchestra famous in the first place – the "jungle sound" of Bubber Miley's muted trumpet, and referring to it as such – only testifies to the still underlying racist notions of jazz music as

opposed to the “sweet” symphonic variety (Jenkins 424-430). However, from about the 1930s the attitudes slowly began to change and jazz was being gradually accepted and recognized not only in the US, but all around the world.

The Royalty: Swing in Its Prime

The youth flock to see the revolutionary bandleader perform with his mixed-race group. Black and white jazzmen on stage radiate an extraordinarily easy feeling and the pleasurable swinging melodies flowing from their instruments sway the heads and shoulders of the audience. Jazz has reached the peak of its popularity.

Two events had great impact on jazz’s further development and the transition from hot jazz of the 1920s to swing in the 1930s. The stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent period of economic recession, commonly known as the Great Depression, placed severe economic constraints on jazz bands. While a considerable portion of businesses that gave jazzmen jobs in previous decades were bankrupting, musicians were forced to stick to big dance bands that were in regular demand by the dance-wanting public: the uncertainties of the age impelled the bands to be more reserved in their hot jazzy endeavours and adhere closely to the public wishes for popular dance melodies (Peretti, *The Creation of Jazz* 167). Another blow came in 1933 when the Prohibition ended and alcohol was made legal again. Speakeasies in the form of brothels, cabarets, bar rooms, or gambling houses, until then so much central to jazzmen’s income, lost their foremost position as the proponents of jazz music since there was now no need to congregate in such places in order to hear jazz, and they were replaced by a more intricate and growing network of publishing houses, record sellers,

respectable nightclubs, and radio stations (Scaruffi, “New York: Big Bands”). One can see that among these entertainment enterprises, only one actually requires live performers. Coupled with the strict economic circumstances of the period, jazz musicians on the whole suffered. New Orleans style was long dead, and even such star as Louis Armstrong was forced to conform to the restrictive atmosphere: in 1929, his manager Tommy Rockwell, a force in popular music with connections to the underworld, made business decisions for him, moved him from OKeh to Victor recording company and had him sing popular tunes like “Ain’t Misbehavin’” or “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love, Baby” instead of the blues and hot jazz pieces with comic lyrics like “Heebie Jeebies” that were the staple of Hot Fives repertoire (Collier 115). In 1935, Armstrong was with the manager Joe Glaser who had him perform and record old, time-tested material – 40 recordings of “St. Louis Blues” and over 50 of “Basin Street Blues” – and perform with a big band until the interest of the audiences shifted once again in the 1940s when swing and big bands were becoming obsolete (Gioia 65-66). But the Swing Era marked, for a time at least, the absolute dominance of commerce over art, two forces that were until then more or less in balance. Still, there were some substantial achievements in the 1930s regarding the development of jazz in the US, and a certain Jewish clarinetist was to blame.

Benny Goodman (1909-1986) was largely responsible for bringing “swing” style to the forefront of American music scene and thus making jazz even more popular than before. Later dubbed the “King of Swing,” Goodman was the bandleader of a big band formed in 1934 and brought to national fame a year later, then featuring a highly individualistic and soloing drummer Gene Krupa (1909-1973) and Fletcher Henderson as the arranger, thanks to whom there remained a definitely hot touch to the music. In

1935, Goodman's orchestra received wide exposure on the radio through programs like "Let's Dance" and live broadcasts of its concerts at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles caused a sensation, especially among the white youth who regarded Goodman's orchestra as a sort of social revolution (Scaruffi, "New York: The Swing Era"). The public's interest in jazz music rose exponentially and with it, the reception began to gradually change as well, away from the official condemnation of old and on to new appraisal by printed media as well as formal education system. Already in 1934 the first magazine devoted to jazz, *Down Beat*, came into existence, then in 1936 a formerly classical-music oriented magazine *Metronome* switched to swing, and finally, in 1940 Ellisville Junior College in Missouri offered its students a jazz course (Collier 136-138). The change was slow though, but it was there, despite such incidents as Hollywood Bowl's rejection of jazz concerts for fear of associating the word jazz with it as late as 1945, or when the Constitution Hall in Washington, D. C., refused jazz because of the type of audience that visits such performances in 1946 (Berger 467). Though commercially an enormous success, Goodman's big band was probably not as nearly as important for cultural and social development in the US as his small ensemble, put together in 1935 and a year later enriched by one new member. Goodman on clarinet, Krupa on drums, and blacks Teddy Wilson (1912-1986) on piano and later Lionel Hampton (1908-2002) on vibraphone comprised the first racially integrated band that appeared on stage in front of the public. This was an unprecedented move, highly daring for its time, yet with very bright prospects for the future. Speaking of racial integration, one event needs to be mentioned. In 1938, Goodman played with his orchestra at the Carnegie Hall in New York. Now, this undertaking is already significant in itself – such a prestigious venue holding a jazz concert speaks of the grown acceptance of this musical genre among the high circles of society. But more

importantly, this concert revised Whiteman's 1924 all-white symphonic jazz notions – featured as guests were members of Count Basie's and Duke Ellington's orchestras (Early 144). Here comes to the front an interesting note: even though the “King,” who had the title only bestowed on him after his rise to fame, was white and was scarcely, if at all, referred to as “King Goodman,” the black “Counts” and “Dukes” who were commonly referred to by their “royal titles” (which they earned before their names got well-known) were the ones who helped show the way to go.

The Swing Era, though lasting only about ten years, starting in 1935, nonetheless marked a radical change in jazz development. The shift from small ensembles to big bands that started taking place already toward the end of the 1920s went not only hand in hand with public tastes but also with social and economic circumstances of the age. Probably for the first time in history, jazz found itself reclining more towards the commercial aspects of show business than the artistic realization of the musicians. But it was probably thanks to such commercial endeavours as intense publicising and radio exposure that jazz had finally become a widely recognized and accepted phenomenon in the US. By the intricate workings of show business, jazz had become the popular music of America. However, the swing scene was predominantly white, and, as it later turned out, an artistic cul-de-sac. Despite such gems as Ellington's fruitful career that eventually survived half a century or Basie's orchestra indulging in a bluesy and boogie-woogie style with riffs and extended improvisations, it was the whites' bands that were reaping the most fruits: Tommy Dorsey (1905-1956), Artie Shaw (1910-2004), Glenn Miller (1904-1944), or Woody Herman (1913-1987) led the most famous big bands of the time, playing sentimental ballads or popular dance tunes to satisfy the tastes of big audiences (Scaruffi, “New York: Big Bands”). This trend, though, was

soon to be blown away by a musical revolution akin to a paradigm shift. What came next caused much stir among jazz fans and musicians themselves: a new jazz genre was created, and blacks usurped back their primacy in jazz. In the 1940s, bebop was born.

Chapter 4: Into the Wild: Bebop and Modern Jazz

The Jam: Revolution Years

Jazzmen take turns on the stage. A queue of saxophone and trumpet players, each one waiting for their turn, shuffles around, while the current soloist embarks on his melodic flight. The pianist, drummer, and bassist are not mere accompanying support – they too will get their due space for improvisation when the moment comes. Everyone knows the tune that is being played, because these young musicians are already established in contemporary big bands, their repertoires well-known and well-rehearsed. But, being bored or perhaps disgusted of the swing music business, they invent new forms out of the old ones. They look for their own way: for a new technique to express oneself in an ever-accelerating age.

In the depths of New York's lush nightlife, many a club remain obscure, but there are some clubs that earned their rightful place in jazz history. Monroe's Uptown House and especially Minton's Playhouse were at the forefront of a newly emerging musical language. These clubs, besides others, hosted musicians at regular jam sessions that took place there in the "after-hours," when jazzmen came after finishing their gigs or on their evenings off. And it was during these jam sessions over the course of less than a decade that a young generation of black jazz musicians moulded a new musical idiom, destined to become the first modern jazz genre, which to this very day probably remains the typical representative sound of jazz music in the popular mind.¹⁷ Thus, jam

¹⁷ As a jazz pianist and accordionist, whenever I get asked about the kind of music I play, concerning its suitability for a certain venue or event (such as a wedding), I immediately clarify my initial response "jazz" by a further remark that I play "old jazz, swing, bouncy music for dancing, not the modern type." This habit has developed only out of necessity due to years of witnessing doubtful looks upon hearing the word "jazz."

sessions had a seminal role in the creation of new sound of jazz. The reasons may seem obvious, but for the musician there is much more to it. Generally speaking, jam session is a recreational activity of the musicians: an informal get-together which in the early days may have taken place at musicians' own homes or back-yards, well hidden from the public. As such, jam session presents the musicians with a remarkable degree of musical freedom. It allows for practice with fellow players, melodic and harmonic inventions, and expanding soloing techniques, not to mention the occasional success in composing a new piece entirely by improvising it on the spot. It should be of no surprise, then, that a radically different jazz style, wholly original and acutely challenging to the established formulas, matured precisely in such an open-minded environment as a jam session often is. In terms of thought and its realization, jam session provides theoretically limitless expressive space thanks to the absence of the formalities of an official musical job – requirements for good sight-reading, proper technique, harmonic and melodic precision, discouragement of too adventurous solos or dissonant sounds, audience waiting to be entertained according to their wishes etc. However, for the creation and diffusing of the new genre, which later earned the name “bebop,” another aspect of the contemporary jam session was at least as crucial as the freedom to musical experiments. Since the advent of entertainment business and the proliferation of nightlife and other recreational facilities, people of all walks of life, especially those of the modern urban “stock,” including musicians, could spend a considerable portion of their free time in clubs, bars, and the likes. Musicians' willingness to taking the jam session out to the pub is logical – besides indulging in music-making untethered by night peace or other limitations, the availability of meals and drinks, socialising opportunities, and leisure-time activities like pool or cards, all contribute to the easy, relaxed frame within which “jamming” can comfortably take place. Within this context,

jazzmen can gather, make new contacts and acquaintances, and find like-minded individuals for future collaborations. Speaking from my own experience, networking is an indispensable side-activity of the professional musician's life, securing gig opportunities and maintaining and reaffirming the musician's reputation.¹⁸ Already before the Swing Era there were clubs that served as a sort of sanctuaries for the musicians: hang-outs such as Harlem's the Rhythm Club or the Onyx Club were frequented by bandleaders and musicians alike, the latter collecting wages for previous week's work and making themselves available by writing their names on a slate on the wall (DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop* 208). Such places were basically only musicians' clubs, and jam sessions were kept off the eyes of the public. But with the coming of Swing Era, the rise in the popularity of jazz lent to the idea of making the jam session open to listeners, and from then on this trend only strengthened.¹⁹ However, jam sessions remained for the most part confined to the "after-hours," which means that besides the musicians themselves only the true jazz enthusiasts attended, and these enthusiasts listened attentively to the music being created on the bandstands, not wanting to disrupt the authenticity of the improvisation by any demands or expectations.

At any rate, what contributed most to the birth of bebop during the 1940s was the changing *zeitgeist*, and in the jazz world the jam session served as the principal

¹⁸ Over my years in the music business, I found out that for the musician to earn money and keep his income steady it does not matter as much how good he can play (of course, a certain level of competence is necessary, though depending on the circumstances the required level varies) as who he knows in the game – producers, promoters, organizers of events, fellow musicians who can secure gigs etc.

¹⁹ One of the pioneers was Milt Gabler (1911-2001), owner of the Commodore Record Shop and founder of the United Hot Clubs of America. In order to promote the music and expand his business, he first organized Sunday jam sessions at record studios in 1935, open only to a narrow circle of his most ardent customers, but in 1936 he moved the sessions to a club, paying the musicians and charging the audience admission; this successful formula was soon repeated by many other clubs hoping to cash in on this new enterprise (DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop* 278).

point of contact, a fertile soil where the seeds of the age could grow. What happened is that in the 1940s, swing, like every other fad before, was becoming obsolete. Swing had reached a matured state and crossed the peak of its popularity: just like the Dixieland and New Orleans jazz long before, and Chicago hot jazz after that, swing had become stale, a musical genre incapable of and unwilling to further come up with new ideas so as not to disturb the convenient position in which it was poised (DeVeaux, “Constructing the Jazz Tradition” 543). The demand was there and money was flowing in. Economically, musicians (and myriads of booking agents, record companies’ executives, publishers, and promoters) were secure. And it was probably due to this material security that the young generation of jazzmen was seeking to expand their freedoms to other directions as well. As we have seen, jazz, since its beginnings, glowed for its practitioners above all the aura of economic opportunity. Surely though, jazz was always the music of highly personal expression as well, while the commercial and entertainment aspect was guiding the musicians on the path to success. Early jazzmen knew they had an audience to please, but they still kept their artistic endeavours more or less in balance with the requirements of the entertainment business. However, the Swing Era proved to be just too much – the balance was destroyed, commerce took over recklessly and money-making efforts dictated the course jazz was expected to take without questioning its rightfulness. Swing, while still providing a significant economic basis, had become a “richly decked out palace that was soon going to be a prison” (Baraka 22). Young black jazzmen sought to break the commercial fetters and escape the stuffy, confining atmosphere of show business, and maybe even more so, subvert the widely accepted image of the jazz musician in a tuxedo with a glaring clown-like appearance, the Louis Armstrong or Cab Calloway type of “selling-out” entertainer. In this respect, young, and especially black, jazzmen did not feel just

the urge to come up with their own, original, and more appropriate musical expression. Besides employment, they wanted respect, recognition as artists and not just mere entertainers; in other words, their notions of jazz started taking in the public's reception and perception of jazzmen in a serious, consistent manner. Thanks to this, the former utilitarian and pragmatic view of jazz held by the musicians took on a new form which boasted a much more philosophical depth. The connotations of freedom were characteristic of jazz music from its very beginnings, but only now they started to be consciously dug up. And with these endeavours, the excitement of exploration, of breaking new ground and pushing the boundaries further, came along naturally. This is reflected in the very character of the music: bebop, and all modern jazz for that matter, has a very distinguishable experimental sound, often dissonant and moving between extremes of notes in quick succession and long held wails set to complex harmonies and irregularly accented rhythmic patterns. Musically, these jazzmen achieved unprecedented freedom. The beboppers were the revolutionaries who made the sharp turn toward modernity which bore with it a load of other implications – musical, social, cultural, and even political. This will be discussed in the last sub-chapter and as we shall see, bebop was just the starting point and was soon going to be surpassed in many different aspects.

Bebop pioneers-to-be in the early 1940s were fed up with the commercialism of contemporary jazz scene and they gathered informally off-the-job and jammed together at the Minton's Playhouse in Harlem, New York. Some of the most notable were saxophonist Charlie Parker (1920-1955), trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993), pianist Thelonious Monk (1917-1982), drummer Kenny Clarke (1914-1985), and bassist Milt Hinton (1910-2000), who were all musicians well versed in the swing idiom striving for

a change. Gillespie and Hinton worked for Cab Calloway from 1939, Gillespie later in 1942 joined Earl Hines's band where he played alongside Parker; Monk was with Coleman Hawkins, himself a supporter of the new style and a frequenter of jam sessions, from 1944; Clarke was with Roy Elridge among others before becoming the house drummer at the Minton's around 1941 (Scaruffi, "Bebop," "Bebop Pianists," "New York: The Swing Soloists"). These players, disconcerted by the big band machinery, favoured the small combo setting for their musical experiments and the jam session proved to be an ideal space. Their music drove away from the established forms of mass popular entertainment and went into new directions as well as back to the blues roots, albeit from a very different perspective and with a wholly novel technical execution.²⁰ The music went radically against the popular, shedding its association with dance and public taste and instead focused on the utmost personal and individual expression fit for the age, free of external influences. And what these jazzmen's improvisations resembled was more of a jittery running up-and-down across the traffic lights than an easy flowing down the river under the moonlight. Bebop could not be danced to by the masses, but instead, a handful of earnest jazz enthusiasts devoured the music with genuine interest in the music *itself*: jazz had become music to listen to in a concert setting, not a fashionable pastime at the dance hall. Still, big bands were generally demising after the war (due to the passing of the fad and the recording ban of 1942-1944 sparked by the dispute over royalties between the musicians' union and record companies) and this only further boosted the emergence of bebop.²¹ The birth of this new jazz genre marked

²⁰ Many bebop compositions are in the 12-bar blues form, such as Thelonious's "Blue Monk," or Parker's "Now's The Time."

²¹ Of course, big bands did not disappear completely, but they never recovered their level of popularity. Instead, the likes of Woody Herman or Stan Kenton (1911-1979) continued playing while trying to

the last significant shift in jazz history – the shift to modern jazz with all its subsequent sub-genres, and a great shift in terms of the notions of jazz and its reception. Because as much as swing was overly leaned toward the commercial aspect of the music, bebop suddenly moved jazz to the pedestal reserved for Art (DeVeaux, “Constructing the Jazz Tradition” 543).

Jazz, from that point on, was on the way to self-isolation due to its at times exaggerated intellectual pretensions. Jazz musicians took on the air of the Western non-conforming Bohemians, the elite of socially aware, politically conscious, and highly intellectual artists. It was with bebop that such phenomena as suit-clad, beret-sporting, goatee-growing “hipsters” (inspiration drawn heavily from Dizzy Gillespie’s appearance) flooded the US jazz scene (see Monson). Jazz community now emerged. Centred around nightclubs and specialty record shops, jazz fans created a self-conscious circle of connoisseurs. Compared to the earlier times it was an intriguing development. When jazz was just a nascent music form, and when it later became the popular music of America, there was hardly such a distinctive and pronounced jazz community as there was after bebop. Before, jazz was woven into the fabric of social life in the form of urban nightlife entertainment. Though disapproved of by the authorities and debased by the publicists, people were free to attend the dances, watch cabaret and theatre shows, or spend time at the speakeasies, and they did so in a carefree atmosphere. The point was to have fun. To the audience, it mattered little whether the band played intricate and genuine jazz improvisations as long as they could dance to the music. But by moving the music out of the popular sphere and into a “laboratory” of musical experimentation, this wide accessibility and appeal of jazz disappeared. Jazzmen found themselves

incorporate the new music into their arrangements, like Herman’s rendition of Gillespie’s “Down Under” (Scaruffi, “Bebop Big Bands”).

removed from the limelight as well, and it is difficult to say how much this alienation was self-inflicted and desired. As rebels, did the jazzmen want to change the world or did they want to create an entirely new world just for themselves? What might shed some light on this issue is Charlie Parker's remark: "The most important thing to us is to have our efforts accepted as music," (qtd. in Levine 18). This wish for unspecified recognition points to an interesting revelation. Even though the beboppers' complex music estranged them from the public, we can still presume that they did not want to become so detached, that they in fact wanted to be truly appreciated, to become widely respected as artists. What they did not realize was that the detachment was inevitable, however, due to the inability of the majority of population to appropriately evaluate such a peculiar and eccentric music, and probably even more due to their unwillingness to at least try, since it is easy to reject that which one does not understand. In this vein, the alienation stemming from the unusual and for the casual listener even incomprehensible music caused and further perpetuated general ignorance and indifference at best and outright disdain at worst,²² and the gap between the public and jazz, by now represented by a close-knit community of musicians and their ardent fans, broadened more than ever (see Cameron). In a paradoxical manner, with the change of public reception, official reception changed as well, as will become clear in the last subchapter. When jazz was removed from show business and wide public acceptance moved aside to make way to the delicate world of Art, intelligible only to the chosen

²² Condemnation came also from other colleagues in the field and the feeling of further estrangement even from some of the contemporary jazzmen (especially the old-school – swing and hot jazz players) ensued; besides, the 1940s was also the age of the revival of New Orleans jazz, and such a well-known musician as Louis Armstrong is known to have publicly ridiculed bebop (Scaruffi, "Bebop"). The discouragement coming from many sides only strengthened the boppers' sense of alienation and uniqueness and prompted them more to interact only with others from their own circles (see Mack and Merriam).

elite capable of “true” appreciation, so too did the official stance on jazz change significantly especially from the 1950s onward. Similarly, even though jazzmen now enjoyed a much smaller audience of highly refined tastes, this audience was more than willing to spend large sums in support of the musicians. Records remained by and large the staple of jazz economy. But regarding live music, instead of the usual dance hall and nightclub admission fees, the money now rather took the guise of concert and festival tickets.

The Artists: Post-Bebop Development

Cool, hard, free. As cliché it may sound, these epithets do the modern jazzmen justice. Whether playing cool jazz, hard bop, or free form avant-garde, most of the contemporary jazz musicians appear distinctively artistic – cool in their posture as well as attitude, hard and unyielding in their aesthetic maxims, and most of all, free and unconstrained in their creativity and expressive range. Yet, despite radiating such a high, lofty air, they still enjoy enough commercial success that they can keep their artistic efforts going on unrestrained. The dictates of the show business no longer pave the way as they did before; *au contraire*, the musicians’ own personal fundamentals upon which they built the music are the leading guiding principle. That old struggle so central to jazz history, the struggle between commercialism and artistic notions, seems to have finally produced a winner.

After the advent of bebop, only two decades were enough for jazz to become completely emancipated, so to speak. Indeed, what bebop started, future jazz genres brought through to the end. The first step up after bebop was cool jazz. Trumpeter Miles

Davis (1926-1991) was musically “raised” playing by Charlie Parker’s side during the 1940s. But by the end of the decade, between 1948 and 1950, he formed his own ensemble (an inter-racial nonet) and recorded singles and EPs the collection of which was later released as the album *Birth of the Cool* in 1957. On these recordings, while still reminding us of the bebop idiom, Davis nonetheless inaugurated a new style in the direction of which he continued in the subsequent years. Cool jazz in its musical exploration gradually moved from bebop’s rapidity towards other extreme – instead of quick succession of notes in often dissonant intervals, cool jazz focused more on phrasing and timbre, on carefully thought-out musical effects with the frequent use of pauses and intriguing tonal qualities. Sound texture, ambience and mood became more important than either harmony or melody. In this way, jazz “joined the general trend towards ‘soundsculpting’ that was the quintessence of 20th century Western music” (Scaruffi, “Cool Jazz”). This brought further intellectualizing of the music which in turn helped move jazz to the academy. This was, until that time, an unthought-of idea – entertainment had no place in the halls of education. Of course, jazz bands were regularly hired for extracurricular purposes like student parties and proms – King Oliver’s, Kid Ory’s, Henderson’s, or Ellington’s orchestras played for dances at the campuses – but by the middle of the 1950s, concerts moved to school auditoriums and suddenly became a part of education, with lectures and jazz courses ensuing, and such cool jazz ensembles as Dave Brubeck’s, Gerry Mulligan’s, or The Modern Jazz Quartet, were warmly welcomed on the academic ground and enjoyed firm support from college teachers as well (Collier 142-143). It should be noted here, however, that cool jazz was particularly popular among whites, listeners and musicians alike. The greatest stars of cool jazz besides Davis were mostly white: the aforementioned pianist Dave Brubeck (1920-2012) and baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan (1927-1996), tenor saxophonist

Stan Getz (1927-1991), alto saxophonist Lee Konitz (1927), pianist Bill Evans (1929-1980). Their music and cool jazz in general were much removed from the African elements of jazz and closer to contemporary European classical music, which was also aided by the fact that cool jazz was predominantly played on the West Coast, miles away from the hubs of black jazz – New Orleans, Chicago, and New York (Scaruffi, “Cool Jazz,” “Cool Jazz in Los Angeles”). Such an intellectual, pensive, and white form of jazz was certainly more appropriate to be allowed entrance to the academy than its danceable, syncopated black ancestors: hot jazz and swing.

The developmental tendency of jazz was now fully on the course that bebop had set out. The movement of jazz music from the entertainment sphere to the world of art meant not only the change of jazz philosophy, but also the shift in reception. First, it finally gained respect as a proper art form, the evidence of which can be most clearly seen in the embracement of jazz by the academy and even the state. In this regard, two events mark important steps forward: in 1954, a newly conceived tradition of jazz festivals at Newport, the summer enclave of the rich, the “guardians of culture” and the festivals’ future sponsors, led to a more institutionalized acceptance of jazz, and in 1956 the State Department planned international tours for jazzmen to “export” American culture abroad – Gillespie, Armstrong, or Goodman toured Asia, Europe, Middle East, and Africa on behalf of the US as cultural ambassadors (Collier 141).²³ The fact that jazz became the representative cultural artefact to be exported speaks for itself. Concerning the academic acceptance of jazz, there were several contributing factors besides the music’s intellectuality and artistic self-consciousness. For one thing, as natural as it can be, the old generation of educators was retiring. Teachers and

²³ The tours were even so successful in disseminating the ideas about American culture that *New York Times* in 1955 called jazz the US secret sonic weapon (Levine 17).

instructors trained in classical music who still considered jazz a frivolity and a competition to their students' attention were slowly being replaced by a new generation that probably spent their young years in a more open-minded and enthusiastic attitude toward modern American urban culture of which jazz (and entertainment as such) was an indispensable component. Furthermore, the ranks of this new generation of music educators were reinforced by contemporary musicians as well. After WW2, the demise of big bands logically led to the dismissal of a quantum of capable musicians who thus turned their attention and ambitions to music education (Collier 138-140).

Second, jazz by the 1960s reached a stage where freedom was not just an implication – it was the out-spoken goal, and this was especially true for the blacks. After the war, during a time of rapid change and social upheavals, demands of the blacks were increasing and mere liberty to musical innovation backed by economic security was not enough. Musical creativity was consciously associated with social and political freedom during a time of the Civil Rights Movement. Two modern jazz genres reflect this view, albeit somehow differently. Hard bop, which evolved in the middle of the 1950s, focused on the more ethnic part of the Movement and incorporated explicitly black American musical influences in its language. Though being an obvious descendant of bebop, following the common structure of theme-solos-theme and utilizing similar improvisation techniques, it was gospels, rhythm'n'blues, and African folk roots that were the common material from which hard bop musicians drew their inspiration.²⁴ In opposition to the overly intellectualized bebop and cool jazz, hard bop relied on pure driving energy of older jazz genres via strong rhythm, spontaneous rather than elaborate solos and easily recognizable and catchy melodic themes. Hard bop was

²⁴ A good example of gospel-like hard bop piece is "The Preacher" by Horace Silver (1928-2014). Likewise, in the case of "Work Song" by Nat Adderley (1931-2000), the title is self-explanatory.

thus more “black,” and not only concerning the music itself, but also concerning the musicians: drummers Max Roach (1924-2007) and Art Blakey (1919-1990), pianist Horace Silver (1928-2014), saxophonists Sonny Rollins (1930) and Benny Golson (1929), the Adderley brothers, trumpeter Nat (1931-2000) and saxophonist Julian a.k.a. Cannonball (1928-1975), or trumpeters Clifford Brown (1930-1956) and Lee Morgan (1938-1972) were among the finest and well-known hard-boppers of the era, virtually overshadowing any white hard bop musicians. Moreover, their sense of black ethnicity led some musicians to actively join the Civil Rights Movement and make musical statements about their dissatisfaction with the *status quo* and their desires for a change. One of the most prominent was bassist and composer Charles Mingus (1922-1979). Of his most explicit compositions, “Fables of Faubus” treats the issue of institutionalized racism.²⁵ The lyrics take the form of a dialogue between Mingus and his drummer Dannie Richmond (1931-1988). General sentiments “Oh, Lord, don't let 'em shoot us!/ Oh, Lord, don't let 'em stab us!” etc. are followed by concrete references:

Name me someone who's ridiculous, Dannie.

Governor Faubus!

Why is he so sick and ridiculous?

He won't permit integrated schools.

Name me a handful that's ridiculous, Dannie.

Faubus, Rockefeller, Eisenhower.

Why are they so sick and ridiculous?

Two, four, six, eight:

They brainwash and teach you hate.

²⁵ The song itself is a direct protest against an incident in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957, when governor Orval E. Faubus (1910-1994) ordered the National Guard to prevent black students from entering a formerly all-white high school, thus defying the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* of 1954 which declared segregation unconstitutional.

The second genre with strongly pronounced ideals of freedom was, as the denomination immediately suggests, free jazz. Though the first apostles were already reaching the free jazz format in the middle of the 1950s, most notably classically-trained pianist Cecil Taylor (1929), what proved to be the catalyst for true free jazz revolution was done by alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman (1930) on his 1959 record *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, followed by his *Free Jazz* a year later. Free jazz more than any other genre before went beyond the established rules, even from the viewpoint of already experimental bebop and cool jazz. Free jazz proved to be the culmination of the music's liberating tendencies – with limits of melodic and harmonic conventions surpassed for more than a decade by now, rhythm was logically the next in line. Free jazz released the rhythm section, consisting of bass and drums,²⁶ from its time-keeping duties and allowed for the exploitation of its full potential – percussions and bass indulged in continuous soloing like the rest of the instruments. The resulting sound was on the verge of cacophony, but underneath, one could hear the founding notions. True, it could hardly be further from the legible musical narratives of earlier jazz styles. Even in bebop with its wild solos, a somewhat discernible musical progression was expectable; one could still “hear” what was coming next. Free jazz, however, was a total outburst, a stream of consciousness with abrupt and unexpected turns, with emerging steady beats and explicit melodies that were to be immediately destroyed in an explosion of pitches, crashes, and instrumental screams. Solo bass improvisations shifted seamlessly to collective salvos as easily as drums dropped rhythmic bombs in the midst of saxophone screeches. An exquisite reflection of the tense atmosphere of the

²⁶ Piano, still bound to the rhythm section and providing the beat in the Swing Era, received its freedom with the coming of bebop. Moreover, free jazz ensembles at times dismissed piano altogether and focused on horns, bass and percussions instead.

era, free jazz was the expressed angst, frustration, ambition, rebellion, and ultimately, liberation of the oppressed and “imprisoned.” The return to spiritual roots of music is thus apparent in the work free-jazz musicians. Tenor and soprano saxophonist John Coltrane (1926-1967), one of the greatest jazzmen to this day, is a prototypical “messiah.” His albums from the middle of the 1960s, most specifically *A Love Supreme*, *Ascension*, *Om*, and *Meditations*, are self-conscious attempts at freeing the artist from the constraints of the world, whether musical, social, or personal; the urge for catharsis seems to be the driving force in these musical journeys.²⁷ What is more, free jazz, though this is not immediately perceivable, is linked to the ancient African musical traditions, themselves highly spiritual in nature, through its heavy use of instrumental screams – basically an emulation of human voices and animal sounds, just like the wah-wahs and growls of early jazz musicians. Despite all these accomplishments, musical and otherwise, free jazz shared with its ancestor, bebop, the same fate in terms of reception: it was often ridiculed, misunderstood, or ignored by the colleagues in the field – other jazzmen; in fact, even though as early as 1964 the first free-jazz festival, “October Revolution in Jazz,” came into being, the “apostles of free jazz had to cope with a degree of negative feedback from their own community that was unprecedented in black music,” (Scaruffi, “Free Jazz: The Apostles”). Europe, on the other hand, was rather unbiased and was as interested in free jazz as it had been in previous jazz genres, perhaps thanks to the Europeans’ familiarity with the ongoing classical avant-garde that broke down established musical barriers as skilfully as free jazz: though different in

²⁷ Saxophonist Albert Ayler (1936-1970) comes very close to this notion as well, especially with his albums from the 1960s like *Spiritual Unity* or *Music Is the Healing Force of the Universe*.

techniques and forms, classical avant-garde sounded often much bolder than the wildest free jazz improvisations.²⁸

The 1960s meant for jazz the entry to its final stage of development. The possibilities of “pure” jazz music exhausted and artistic freedom at last reached, jazz could turn for novelties only towards other musical traditions of the world and age. Here, again, the libertarian attitude of jazz provided for the exceptional open-mindedness with which jazz incorporated various influences in its language. Musically as well as geographically there were no limits. Rhythms, instruments, melodic conventions, and harmonic foundations of world’s diverse folk musical styles, all were borrowed from. In a similar vein, Latin American, Far-Eastern, Indian, Near-Eastern, and coming full circle, African musical heritages were fused with jazz in wholly original concoctions, the craftsmanship of which was so typical for jazz musicians. The very word “fusion,” however, got reserved for the mixture of jazz and popular contemporary genres, most notably rock with its heavy, steady rhythm and easily recognizable melodic themes. These two developmental branches, jazzed-up world-music and jazz-rock fusions went in quite different directions as far as the philosophy is concerned. World-music stews were exploring just that – the musical potential of the world and often the local worldview could be heard underlying the music: consider *Music for Zen Meditation* by clarinetist Tony Scott (1921-2007) or *The Wailing Dervishes* by flautist Herbie Mann (1930-2003). In such cases, artistic, spiritual, or even academic interests were clearly

²⁸ Norway in particular is very receptive to free jazz – I have met a plethora of jazz musicians from all over Europe, and only those from Norway (or schooled in Norway) were well versed in free jazz and indulged in it both on formal (concerts) and informal (jam sessions) occasions. Regarding the classical avant-garde musical experiments, widespread were toying with electronics (synthesizers, computers, magnetic tapes), white noise, silence, polytonality, quarter tones, tone clusters etc. To name a few examples, Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), and Pierre Schaeffer (1910-1995) were some of the most notable European avant-garde composers. In the US, particularly popular was minimalism represented by John Cage (1912-1992) or Philip Glass (1937).

above commercial considerations. This was, however, the opposite with jazz-rock and funk. Fusion genres sought to bring back the alienated audiences and to inject popular music elements (and a good dose of commercialism) back into by now highly intellectualized jazz (DeVeaux, “Constructing the Jazz Tradition” 548). Thus the utilization of electronic instruments and putting them up front – Hammond organs and especially guitars suddenly earned a prominent place in jazz-fusion ensembles, just like in contemporary rock bands, whereas horns stood aside and provided only decorative accents to the music’s flow. The public’s response was corresponding and they lavished appreciation on the musicians. Pianist/keyboardist Herbie Hancock (1940) was particularly successful in bridging the gap between popular audiences and jazz-based music. A winner of several Grammy awards, his funky-soul-jazz album *Headhunters* from 1973 is one of the biggest selling jazz records ever (Scaruffi, “Pre-fusion Pianists”). Still, as characteristic of jazz musicians as it can be, they hardly limited themselves to only one strictly defined musical style. Thus it was no problem for the world-music inspired flautist Herbie Mann to record funky album *Memphis Underground* or for the jazz-rock guru Herbie Hancock to include a free-jazzy improvisation “The Egg” on the record *Empyrean Isles* alongside his signature funky tune “Cantaloupe Island.”

At any rate, jazz has reached its ultimate goal – freedom – in the most explicit manner imaginable. Finally, no obstacles, neither musical nor commercial, could stand in the way of the artist’s creativity and self-expressive potential. But the price was dear. The further jazz moved to the inner spiritual world of the musicians, the more it became personal and the less it became conventional, so too the audiences, the external physical world so to speak, became less in tune and turned their attention elsewhere. Fusion

genres tried to reverse the situation and bring jazz back to its former popularity, but it was already too late. Various subspecies of rock and pop claimed the title of *the* popular music of America and jazz never regained the wide exposure it had during the first half of the 20th century. Even though all modern popular musical styles evolved more or less from jazz and its melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements, after the bebop revolution jazz *per se* stayed reserved for a much smaller segment of the public: the “upper” strata of society – intellectuals, professionals etc. And what is more, jazz became more “white” than ever. While in the past ball rooms and clubs were frequented by blacks and whites alike, today jazz clubs are mostly concentrated in affluent white neighbourhoods, the bulk of record buying public is white as well (though this has always been the situation), and jazz education is dominated by white instructors and aspirants (Collier 219-221). In the process, jazz became as “high-brow” as any art form considered “classical,” and this stance remains true to the present day.

Conclusion

Already a century passed since jazz, the exciting new music of the 20th century, hatched on the banks of the Mississippi River. And what a life it had. Confined in the beginnings to dubious parlours, it served the lascivious to brighten up the mood. It served the poor in the streets and the grieving ones on their way from the cemetery to do just the same. It served the actors, comedians, and dancers, as the accompaniment; it served the theatres as a means of advertising. It served not only those who listened to it, it served in the same way also those who played it, and with the added bonus of cash reward besides the uplifting charms. It served both blacks and whites alike, though the latter had a rather difficult time acknowledging it and giving the music its due. The music had something very peculiar to offer. Then, it served all. After that, they all started to put pressure on it. The pressure was eventually so unbearable that jazz rather fled the scene. And today, it serves only those who show their sincerity and genuine interest. The struggle is over.

We have seen that jazz changed its appearance quite a few times during the time of its existence. Old pre-jazz based around ragtime and marching brass bands grew into Dixieland ensembles which in turn gave way for hot soloists, themselves later featured in big bands that began to dominate the jazz world so much that some of the jazzmen had to invent a totally new musical language out of the previous one to combat the stifling atmosphere. But the principal thrust, the driving force giving the musicians energy and will to go on remained the same all throughout its history. It was the will to freedom, the will to recognition, the will to decent livelihood. Concerning the roots of jazz, African specific rhythmic and improvisatory musical traits mingled with European harmonies, scales, and instruments, to create a wholly new music. Jazz thus provided a

certain link back to Africa while showing a new direction to which the musicians could head – a connection of the past with the exploration of the present. In this manner, jazz had for its practitioners a highly personal value – it was that bit of freedom and release they longed for. On the top of it, jazz was highly entertaining as well, and thanks to this it had immense economic potential. These features greatly added to its value for the musicians and also for those around, whether they comprised the audience wanting to be entertained by a theatre show, the young eager to dance the night away at a dance hall, or the publishers and record sellers hoping to profit on it. Indeed, the promised riches were a great lure in the world of show business of which jazz became an integral part. But officially, jazz was condemned – how could such a carefree and morally lax music be deemed appropriate for anyone? Luckily, it could not be stopped, since it catered to the true needs of the population of the time, despite the protests of journals and moral leaders. Fire, drive, and passion were in demand by the common urban folk. Dixieland and hot jazz provided just that. The soloist then contributed his highly individual approach, again so liberated in the popular mind that he became the epitome of the romantic soul showing his unbreakable will and fighting against adversity, emerging triumphant in the end. *Carpe diem* philosophy underlied such notions of freedom, but the symptoms were very pragmatic – people simply wanted to have fun. Dance was thus a necessary complement to the music and the population happily jumped in to fill the gap. Then, after jazz was made into a “lady” married to symphonic music, it was accepted by the country leaders as well, but the public’s wish was different – hot preceded sweet, and so it was more valuable in the long run. But peoples’ minds are fickle. As much as jazz ensembles and musicians were popular, the urge to dance was stronger than any considerations of the music. Soon, jazz bands were replaced on the pedestal by big dance orchestras which only featured soloists and played

instead arranged music that caught the attention of the public more after the prime of hot jazz had passed. Dance was above all and so the orchestras yielded to the pressure. Commerce won, it seemed. Artistic innovativeness and personal liberty had to make way for wagons of money to be made. But then, everything changed again. Musicians saw through the charade and recognized that big bands were becoming overbearing, that their promises were a devil's pact – to earn money required the sell-out of the jazzmen's artistic ambitions and identities. But they stood up against the machinery and created something of their own, something that would bring them true artistic self-realization. The wish to earnest recognition overshadowed the superficial satisfaction with financial rewards and widespread popularity. And so, jazzmen became artists. They revolted against the association of jazz with entertainment for the masses and created a new image of jazz, the artists' music for the elite. Even though now comprehensible only to a few, the show business did not let go, instead it adapted to the situation and aimed to promote jazz to the educated classes. Because in the process, jazz lost its wide appeal and the audience shrank significantly. Jazz is considered an intellectual music due to its wild sound with many underlying notions of freedom, unbound creativity, and musical experiments. Thus today's big commercial radio stations play little or no jazz. Instead, jazz is found on small, publicly funded, or college affiliated radios. And according to a study by the National Endowment for the Arts from 1982, the better educated the group, the more likely it is to be interested in jazz (Collier 219).

All in all, jazz has walked the path from obscurity and damnation, through exposure and obsession, to reclusive and incomprehension. It went from being unanimously associated with vice to being the representative popular phenomenon of the US modern culture until it landed on the peak of mount Olympus where Art and the

Muses reside. It suffered being hated and condemned while at the same time being loved and praised until the latter tendency grew into plain abuse. It revelled at its subsequent liberation from all constraints, though somehow still missed the former days when it was needed so much in society. But throughout the whole of its story, with its trials and ups-and-downs, jazz and its practitioners were propelled by one vital desire – to become free in mind, body, and spirit. And in the end, they earned all of it.

Resumé

Jazz je bezpochyby jeden z najpozoruhodnejších kultúrnych fenoménov dvadsiateho storočia. Za sto rokov existencie nielenže zmenil charakter modernej hudby, ale vďaka nemu priam vznikla populárna muzika v podobe, v akej ju dnes poznáme. Jeho vplyv siaha až tam, kde to na prvý pohľad nie je poznať a bez jazzu by moderná populárna kultúra ťažko vyzerala tak, ako vyzerá. Okrem zjavnej hudobnej inšpirácie, ktorú poskytol mnohým neskorším žánrom, akými sú napríklad rock and roll, ska, ba dokonca rap, jazz formoval aj podobu ďalších, s hudbou priamo či nepriamo súvisiacich kultúrnych výdobytkov súčasnosti – tanca, nočných klubov, módy, žargónu, spôsobu života, mestských zvykov a mýtov. Hoci je jazz už dávno celosvetovo rozšírený, známy a s úctou prijímaný, jeho cesta od počiatku k aktuálnemu stavu bola farbistá až strastiplná. Najväčší kus na tejto ceste však prešiel v krajine svojho vzniku, teda v Spojených štátoch amerických, a to najmä za prvých šesťdesiat rokov. Vskutku, približne každé jedno desaťročie nastala v podobe jazzu zásadná zmena, ktorá posunula celkové vyznenie muziky ďalej a obohatila ju o nové prvky. Tieto zmeny však prišli na popud zmeny „filozofie,“ teda pohľadu na život, momentálnu situáciu a podmienky, v ktorých muzikanti žili. Ruku v ruke s tým sa menilo aj prijímanie jazzu verejnosťou. Hudba tak v skutočnosti len zrkadlila, čo sa v spoločnosti naozaj deje pod povrchom.

Všetko sa to začalo africkými otrokmi v Spojených štátoch. Len čo stratili slobodu a dostali sa do područia politického a ekonomického zriadenia belochov, snažili sa aspoň chvíľami navrátiť do pôvodného stavu. K tomuto účelu výnimočne poslúžila ich hudobná tradícia, ktorá spĺňala najmä spoločenskú funkciu: sprevádzala náboženské obrady. Tých sa mohli zúčastniť všetci, a teda každý mohol hudobne prispieť, buďto tleskaním, dupaním, spievaním, či hrou na nástroje. Výsledný zvuk bol rytmicky

bohatý, vzbudzujúci k pohybu či tancu a bol z veľkej miery improvizovaný. Tieto charakteristiky boli a sú podstatou jazzovej muziky. V Amerike sa tieto hudobné prvky zmiešali s európskou tradíciou formalizovanej klasickej hudby. Tá, okrem samotného repertoáru, prispela hlavne inštrumentáciou. K africkým bubnom a jednoduchým strunným nástrojom (predchodcom bendža) sa tak pridali trúbky, trombóny, klarinety, husle, flauty, kontrabasy, tuby, klavíry. Nasledovalo hudobné experimentovanie a asimilovanie všetkých vplyvov do nového zvuku, z ktorého sa neskôr vyvinul jazz. V tejto oblasti bola dopraná černochoch teda nebývalá sloboda, ktorú patrične zužitkovali. Nová muzika naďalej plnila spoločenské funkcie (ako napr. pohrebné pochody v New Orleans), no rozšírila svoje pole pôsobnosti aj na komerčnú sféru vznikajúceho zábavného priemyslu, a to hlavne divadelné žánre minstrel show a vaudeville, známe v USA. Zábavný a ekonomický potenciál novej hudby bol tiež využitý vo všemožných podnikoch pochybnej povesti, nevestincoch, miestach pre hazardné hry, baroch a krčmách. Takéto široké spektrum aktivít dávalo muzikantom nielenže umeleckú (a teda do určitej miery aj osobnú) slobodu, ale poskytovalo im práve možnosť finančného ohodnotenia, ktoré bolo na danú dobu a životné okolnosti černochoch nevídané. V istom zmysle teda muzika poskytla hudobníkom aj praktickú slobodu čo sa materiálnych statkov týka, nie len duševných. Toto bolo na prelome devätnásteho a dvadsiateho storočia.

Jazz sa ako taký vyvinul potom na počiatku dvadsiateho storočia, a to zo spomenutých afrických a európskych hudobných vplyvov a spoločenských a životných podmienok černochoch v Spojených štátoch. Jazz sa tak stal zvukom osobného vyjadrenia a slobody v neslobodnom prostredí, zvukom prísľubu práce a zárobku v chudobnej dobe. Netrvalo dlho a bielych uchvátila táto hudba rovnako, ako čiernych.

Navyše, módna vlna nových tancov, pri ktorých tancovali páry v tesnom objatí, zasiahla americkú mládež a jazz bola dokonalá muzika k sprevádzaniu – rytmická, divoká, trúfalá, ohnivá, pohyblivá. Autoritám sa však takéto „výstrelky“ nepozdávali. Dalo by sa povedať, že hoci bol jazz len prostriedkom k sebareflexii, a teda len odrážal vnútornú túžbu obyvateľstva po zábave, slobode, odpútaní sa od strnulej a bolestnej minulosti a prijatí vzrušujúcej prítomnosti, oficiálne stanovisko videlo za touto zmenou postoja práve jazz a kládlo mu za vinu poškvrnenie mravnej čistoty. Moralisti vystríhali pred škodlivým vplyvom tejto divokej hudby a tanca. Podľa autorít bol príčinou úpadku jazz, ktorý kazil mládež, nie „pokazená“ mládež, ktorá sama vyhľadávala jazz. Pravdou však je, že napriek oficiálnym snahám očierniť jazz a vymiesť ho z tanečných sál a iných podnikov, verejnosťou bol jazz obdivovaný práve pre tie vlastnosti, kvôli ktorým bol zatracovaný. Nespútaná zábava jednotlivca, slobodné osobné vyjadrenie, odmietnutie neomylnosti autority a hľadanie vlastnej cesty sa stali novým krédom modernej mestskej spoločnosti. Jazz len splňal tieto požiadavky. V desiatych rokoch dvadsiateho storočia tak činil prostredníctvom Dixielandových ansámblov zložených z kolektívne improvizujúcich muzikantov.

V ďalšom desaťročí sa do popredia jazzových skupín dostali výnimoční sólisti. Charakter zvuku zostal rovnako divoký, no čo sa jazzovej „filozofie“ týka, dotiahli títo sólisti moderné myšlienky individualizmu ešte ďalej. Jazzman sa tak stal romantickým hrdinom, ktorý aj napriek prekážkam osudu zvíťazí. Takýto imidž apeloval na rebéliu mladých a naďalej podkopával oficiálne stanovisko zdôrazňujúce poslušnosť a striedmosť. S príchodom prohibície sa len zdôraznila spojitosť jazzu s nekonvenčnosťou a jeho odsun do podsvetia bol neodvratiteľný. Morálne „nástrahy“ v podobe nelegálneho alkoholu a miešania sa s černochochmi vzrušovali bielych, ktorí tajne

navštevovali slumy a putiky, v ktorých vyhrávali jazzové kapely. Síce v tomto období vznikol tzv. symfonický jazz, ten však mal s pravým jazzom len málo spoločného. Bol navyše hraný výhradne belochmi, preto bola táto forma „jazzu“ aj oficiálne uznávaná a propagovaná. Popularita černošských skupín však neupadala, ba naopak. Dôkazom sú černošské veľké jazzové orchestre, ktoré napomohli príchodu ďalšej formy jazzu – swingu – ktorý dominoval v tridsiatych rokoch.

Éra swingu znanemala pre jazzovú scénu viacero zmien. Hudobne nastal výrazný odklon od improvizácie smerom k aranžmánom. Malé kapely boli vystriedané veľkými orchestrami a repertoár sa výrazne upravil požiadavkám show biznisu a publika prahnúceho po tanci. Pribudlo tak množstvo pomalých a uhladených balád či populárnych pesničiek známych z divadelných produkcií, a to na úkor divokých Dixielandových úprav z predošlých rokov. Ekonomický potenciál jazzu výrazne zatienil jeho oslobodzujúci charakter. Osobná muzikantská inovácia bola často utopená v predpísaných partoch a túžba po väčšej umeleckej slobode učičíkaná zaistenou finančnou odmenou. V tomto období však jazz dosiahol zrejme najväčšieho rozšírenia, keďže swing čoby tanečná muzika bol vysoko žiadaný. Paradoxne, vďaka „zneužívaniu“ show biznisom sa jazz stal dobovou populárnou muzikou Spojených štátov amerických. Takéto komerčné zásahy však nenechali mladých muzikantov chladnými. Preto v štyridsiatych rokoch prišla partička hudobných rebelov s novou podobou jazzu v snahe prinavrátiť mu dôstojnosť a zvýrazniť jeho umeleckú hodnotu.

Bebop, ako sa neskôr hudba týchto jazzových vzbúrencov nazvala, znamenal odklon od prílišnej komerčnosti k väčšej autentickosti. Jazz získal nazad svoj divoký zvuk, hoci v úplne odlišnej forme než mal jeho Dixielandový predchodca. Bebop naviazal na tradíciu sólistov a dotiahol ju ešte ďalej. Do muziky sa vrátila vysoká miera

experimentovania a jazz tak získal novú tvár, ešte viac individualistickú než kedy predtým mal. Zároveň bolo snahou bebopových muzikantov zmeniť postoj verejnosti. Jazz tak prestal byť obyčajnou zvučkou k zábave, dost' bolo jeho posluhovaniu tanečným chůtkam publika. Jazz sa vďaka bebopistom stal hudbou na počúvanie, intelektuálnym zážitkom, ktorý treba vnímať s plnou koncentráciou, keďže moderný jazz je hudba nanajvýš komplikovaná. Muzikanti si tak nekompromisne vzali späť svoju umeleckú a duchovnú slobodu, hoci to znamenalo stratu veľkej časti poslucháčov. Oficiálne stanovisko sa však vďaka tomu konečne obrátilo – jazz sa stal rešpektovaným a podporovaným, a to dokonca aj na akademickej pôde.

Táto tendencia k čoraz väčšej osobnej slobode odvtedy neútlíchla. Jazzman prestal byť zabávačom v niečích službách, stal sa umelcom zodpovedným sám sebe. A nech sa akokoľvek podoba jazzu menila aj po ďalšie desaťročia, skutočný popud k zmene zostával rovnaký. Päťdesiate roky priniesli cool jazz, šesťdesiate zas hard bop a free jazz, sedemdesiate fusion. Hoci stále vznikajú nové hudobné zlúčeniny s jazzom, v pozadí stojí snaha experimentovať a posúvať hranice slobodného vyjadrenia. A aj napriek tomu, že v súčasnosti je jazz pomerne mimo populárnej hudobnej sféry, možnosti zárobku sú stále dostatočné a jazz tak naďalej poskytuje svojim spriaznencom ako duchovnú, tak materiálnu podporu. S oficiálnym uznaním už navyše nič nebráni jazzu v ceste za poznaním. Boj sa skončil.

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Appendix



Figure 1. Mississippi River Watershed.

Available at <<http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/gulfofmexico.jpg>>

Annotation

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Name of thesis: The Struggle of Jazz: Reception and Notions of Jazz in the US from Its Inception to the Beginnings of Modern Jazz

Supervisor: Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph. D.

Number of pages: 79

Number of appendices: 1

Language of thesis: English

Keywords: 20th century, bebop, culture, Dixieland, jazz, modernity, music, popular, reception, swing, the United States

Abstract: The thesis explores the notions and reception of jazz in the US from the beginning of the 20th century till about the 1960s. Starting with the pre-jazz period at the turn of the centuries, it examines the musical and ideational influences that contributed to the creation of jazz, mainly African animistic worldview reflected in its musical tradition boasting rhythmic richness and improvisational character and European formalized musical tradition with its colourful instrumentation and business endeavours. Jazz provided for the musicians a sort of freedom and release from the confining circumstances of the age, both musically in terms of thought and in more concrete terms of economic opportunity. The thesis then proceeds to the early jazz period of Dixieland ensembles and hot soloists, claiming that jazz captured the attention of the wide public

while at the same time being disapproved of by the authorities due to its association with the underworld, salacity, and modern individualistic and happy-go-lucky attitude. This attitude permeated jazzy lifestyle and valued personal expression, unhindered by conventions. The next chapter, focusing on the Swing Era, exposes the slippery slope on which jazz found itself – jazz’s tendencies to please the audience were being exploited by the show business and reckless economic pursuits obscured the underlying notions of jazz’s liberating potential. However, thanks to such exploitation, jazz became widely known and was truly the popular music of the day. Lastly, the examination of bebop and modern jazz reveals the last shift in the reception and notions of jazz, that is, towards a more fully appreciated music, finally regarded as art instead of mere entertainment. The rebellion meant the loss of a great portion of audience, but it granted the musicians the utmost freedom in their artistic, personal and social expression, free of commercial expectations. The thesis shows clearly that the notions of freedom were paramount, and that reception swayed between official rejective stance and popular acceptance, until it became the other way around.

Anotácia

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Vedúci práce: Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph. D.

Počet strán: 79

Počet príloh: 1

Jazyk práce: angličtina

Kľúčové slová: bebop, Dixieland, dvadsiate storočie, hudba, jazz, kultúra, modernizmus, Spojené štáty americké, swing

Abstrakt: Diplomová práca skúma, ako bol jazz vnímaný a prijímaný v Spojených štátoch amerických, a to od počiatku dvadsiateho storočia po približne šesťdesiate roky. Prvá kapitola pojednáva o predjazzovom období na zlome storočí a hudobných a myšlienkových vplyvoch, ktoré tvorbu jazzu ovplyvnili. Ide hlavne o africký animistický pohľad na svet odrazený v hudbe, ktorá je rytmicky bohatá a improvizovaná, a európsku tradíciu formalizovanej hudby s pestrou inštrumentáciou a obchodníckym duchom. Jazz dával muzikantom pocit oslobodenia, ako hudobne a myšlienkovy, tak konkrétne v podobe možnosti zárobku. Nasledujúca kapitola sa zaoberá obdobím raného jazzu, ktorý mal podobu Dixielandových ansámblov a prvotných významných sólistov. Zatiaľ čo oficiálne bol jazz zavrhovaný kvôli spojitosti s podsvetím,

uvoľnenými mravmi a ľahkovážnosťou, pre rovnakú spojitosť bol obyvateľstvom naprieč všetkými spoločenskými vrstvami obdivovaný a vyhľadávaný. Takýto životný štýl totiž vyzdvihoval individualizmus a osobné vyjadrenie nebrzdené konvenciami. Tretia časť sa sústreďuje na swingovú éru, počas ktorej bol jazz a jeho snaha ulahodiť publiku zneužívaná show biznisom. V tomto období ekonomický potenciál jazzu dominoval nad jeho oslobodzujúcim charakterom. No vďaka takémuto zneužívaniu sa jazz stal skutočne populárnou muzikou Spojených štátov, a to hromadným rozšírením pomocou nahrávok, rádia a propagácie. Posledná kapitola skúma bebop a počiatky moderného jazzu. Od polovice storočia sa totiž začal meniť pohľad na jazz do dnešnej podoby, teda nastal odklon od prostého vnímania jazzu ako hudby pre zábavu a tanec k oceneniu jeho umeleckých hodnôt. Veľká časť publika však pre prílišnú komplikovanosť a intelektuálnosť moderného jazzu stratila záujem. Muzikanti ale získali najvyššiu mieru slobody pre svoje umelecké a osobné vyjadrenie, bez zásahov komerčných záujmov. Práca teda ukazuje, že pre jazz bola sloboda prvoradá a jeho nadšené prijímanie verejnosťou a zatratenie autoritami sa s bebopom obrátilo.