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Locating Jazz in 21st Century American Society

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

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in

Music

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Over the last several decades, jazz has undergone a cultural shift from a music associated with social justice activism to an art music valued for its sophistication and complexity. This shift is regarded by academics as partially a result of jazz's institutionalization within the upper segments of society, including the university, corporate sponsored music festivals, and nonprofit grant agencies. While scholars have considered these recent changes in relation to broader discourse in jazz, few have studied the effects of jazz's institutionalization on a local jazz scene or on perceptions about jazz among the general public. Through ethnographic study of the jazz scene in the Twin Cities, Minnesota, in addition to case studies of contemporary jazz artists Nicholas Payton, BadBadNotGood, and Kamasi Washington, this project examines the effects of jazz's institutionalization by considering how musicians, critics, and audiences have *located* jazz—culturally, socioeconomically, and historically—following this period of shift.

I argue that institutions impact jazz in a number of ways. One, they provide a degree of stability for local musicians that affords them the ability to pursue creative projects with less concern for commercial viability. Two, institutions have cemented what I term a normative path of development for a jazz musician, wherein access to jazz is most abundant among more privileged segments of society. Three, institutions have resulted in jazz undergoing a process of sacralization, where jazz becomes considered as a high art music removed from material concerns, a process that is alternately embraced and contested by musicians, critics, and listeners. Four, the association of jazz with institutions has created a negative image for jazz among the general public, a perception that is only recently beginning to reverse course. As it progresses into its second century of existence, jazz in the 2010s continues to accumulate new meanings and to reflect the wider structural inequalities in American society.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the last several decades, jazz in the United States has become increasingly accepted into institutions of high art in ways that have changed the music's cultural values and its meanings. Jazz is a degree offering in university music programs across the country, is funded by government agencies and private foundations, and receives corporate sponsorship in the form of annual festivals and concert hall programming. As it is increasingly regarded as an art music valued for its sophistication and complexity, jazz becomes more closely associated by the general public with the institutional walls of the university than with its legacy of Black Civil Rights activism. On the one hand, the institutionalization of jazz in grant funding agencies, university arts and humanities departments, and so forth has lent the music a form of legitimization as "America's classical music," leading to a degree of subsidy that allows jazz to survive as market support dries up. On the other hand, jazz's relationship with these upper echelon institutions of U.S. society has created concerns that a music often seen as resisting power structures will lose this legacy of social justice as jazz becomes a high art music. In essence, jazz has reached a turning point, where the material needs of its survival have changed its meaning enough to require a reconsideration of how jazz is currently defined following decades of gradual institutionalization.

The changes jazz has undergone in the last several decades have created a crisis of definition for academics, critics, musicians, and listeners. That is, it is clear that jazz as it stands today, in the 2010s, is not the same as it was in its golden era, whether that is defined as the 1920s or the 1960s. However, jazz has changed drastically as a result of its

becoming reliant on institutions, to the point where its meaning, in addition to its value, is no longer clear. While scholars have dissected the causes and the manner of jazz's institutionalization, few have considered, from a holistic point of view, the effects of jazz's institutionalization on its meaning and its culture.

Though this dissertation is broadly focused on meanings of jazz in twenty-first century American society, its theme coalesces around locating jazz following its institutionalization. Given that jazz has undergone such seismic shifts in the last few decades of its development, where is jazz now? Where is it culturally, socioeconomically, and historically? How do musicians and audience members locate jazz within their own local scene and with respect to national discourse on jazz? How do critics, musicians, and listeners respond to those who insist that jazz is nowhere at all, that it is dead? Through ethnographic study of the Twin Cities jazz scene, of popular jazz artists, and of the public perception of jazz, I explore these questions.

Literature Review

Jazz's more recent institutionalization in university conservatories, grant funding agencies, and so forth is the latest chapter in a much longer story of its legitimization in U.S society. Jazz's increased legitimacy is connected both to the performance-oriented programs that have been founded to teach jazz music in a conservatory setting and to the rise in academic scholarship from the humanities that has been devoted to jazz increasingly since the 1980s. Though I largely conceive of conservatory jazz studies and academic jazz studies as operating within two separate spheres, these two spheres have experienced parallel growth in importance. Both signal jazz's increasing sense of high art

status in American society and produce attendant meanings that affect the general public's perception of jazz. Though in this study, I focus on the effects of the conservatory institutionalization of jazz, this one sphere of institutionalization partially results from the other sphere—jazz's increasing acceptance in humanities academic departments.

In this section, I first review some of the key works that have contributed to jazz's institutionalization within academia, including the interdisciplinary field known as New Jazz Studies. I then narrow my focus to research on institutionalization in jazz, particularly prior studies on jazz university education. Finally, I review jazz research specifically from the field of ethnomusicology to illustrate how my project, on the effects of institutionalization both on a local jazz scene and on the public imaginary, builds upon this past work. As this literature review will show, though academic discourse on jazz has attended to the key issues that have arisen as a result of institutionalization, scholarly conversation around jazz is just another manner in which people with a deep investment in jazz have attempted to assert authority over jazz's definition during its recent crisis point.[1]

New Jazz Studies

New Jazz Studies has operated as a productive intersection of many different disciplinary orientations: comparative literature, English, cultural studies, African American studies, American studies, gender studies, history, anthropology, musicology, ethnomusicology, and others—often with a variety of these approaches all contained

[1] Thank you to Nick Mitchell for suggesting the language of "crisis" with respect to jazz's recent history.

within the same edited volume (Gabbard 1995a, 1995b; Fischlin and Heble 2004; O'Meally, Edwards, and Griffin 2004; Rustin and Tucker 2008; Ake, Garrett, and Goldmark 2012; Heble and Wallace 2013). A glance at the contributors' section of any of these volumes will reveal the wide array of university departments in which these jazz scholars are housed. New Jazz Studies has come to emerge as a unified but multi-disciplinary field partly through the efforts of two organizations in particular: the Jazz Study Group, founded by Robert O'Meally in 1998 at Columbia University and funded by the Ford Foundation; and the Guelph Jazz Festival Colloquium, founded in 1994 by Ajay Heble at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada as well as its related institute, the Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice research project (O'Meally, Edwards, and Griffin 2004, xi; Fischlin and Heble 2004, xi). Krin Gabbard, editor of two influential collections of critical approaches to jazz and jazz representation (1995a, 1995b), attributes these anthologies' origins to a 1990 meeting of the Modern Language Association and a session he chaired on representation of jazz in film, literature, and photography (Gabbard 1995b, vii). Jazz studies' place within academia, as well as the funding provided to it by social science and humanities grant foundations, indicates how jazz has been accepted as a legitimate cultural form that is worthy of study in academia.

The "new" in New Jazz Studies connotes a fresher alternative to an "old" way of doing jazz scholarship. To speak of "old jazz studies" is to refer to the sorts of jazz journalism that appeared in *DownBeat*, *Metronome*, and other jazz magazines, in addition to books written by journalists. These predominantly white jazz critics were mostly not trained as scholars, and thus often fell into their critical position as reviewers through

their avid devotion to jazz record collecting. Given the interests of jazz writers, who often also occupied dual roles in the record industry in order to supplement their income (as writers of album liner notes, for instance), the music of a predominantly African American making was interpreted according to the viewpoints and values of an overwhelmingly white male perspective (Tomlinson 1991; Kofsky 1998; Baraka 1999; Tucker 2000). As such, this perspective shaped the establishment of a jazz canon, as reflected in jazz history tomes, documentary series, recording compilations, and other media. Much of New Jazz Studies scholarship of the last twenty years has been concerned with alternately critiquing, expanding, or deconstructing this jazz canon.

Before detailing efforts to contest the jazz canon, however, first I will cover some of the ways the jazz canon has been established. Martin Williams' writings as well as his work for the Smithsonian Institute have generally been regarded as the first conscious attempt to create a canon for jazz (Gennari 1991; Thomas 2002; Solis 2008). Williams had criticized jazz writers for acting too much like public relations men and amateur journalists and not enough like trained literary critics, so he attempted to bring to jazz criticism a theoretical grounding in New Criticism (Gennari 1991). In being influenced by New Criticism, Williams saw the great works of jazz as containing their own inherent meaning that transcended the circumstances of their creation (Gennari 1991, 484). By doing so, Williams hoped to elevate jazz to an autonomous art form on the level of Western classical music, evaluating jazz performances based on European standards of instrumental proficiency (Solis 2008, 121). Due to the success of the Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz, a 1973 anthology of recordings curated by Williams that has

found usage in nearly every major college textbook on jazz (Tomlinson 1991, 246), Williams' model of appealing to European standards of musical genius and excellence has become the dominant one for establishing jazz legitimacy. Thus, Williams' model of privileging the musical essence found widespread favor, while his contemporary Amiri Baraka's attention to sociocultural context has had less influence on the official jazz canon and its reproduction in university classrooms (Tomlinson 1991, 248; Baraka 1999). As Gary Tomlinson writes

> Placing the music first will always distance it from the complex and largely extramusical negotiations that made it and that sustain it. It will always privilege the European bourgeois myths of aesthetic transcendency, artist purity untouched by function and context, and the lite status of artistic expression. (Tomlinson 1991, 248)

Nonetheless, this model of musical autonomy detached from social, cultural, and political meaning has dominated popular jazz discourse and has allowed for jazz's safe transition into the elevated spaces of government and university institutions as well as into corporate sponsorship. Most notable in this transition are the efforts of Wynton Marsalis, Albert Murray, and Stanley Crouch and their programming of Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) in New York City. In attempting to achieve a legitimacy for jazz as an African American aesthetic and cultural achievement, the trio's strategy was to market the music as "American" rather than specifically African American music, appealing to the universal rather than the particular as a way to render the music attractive to corporate sponsors and to school teachers and administrators (Thomas 2002, 302). In these efforts, JALC was largely successful. As JALC became the face of jazz, however, Marsalis in particular held a power to determine through programming at JALC what constitutes "the

jazz tradition" (Porter 2002, 315). Marsalis and JALC have been criticized for having too narrow a definition of the jazz canon, excluding most notably free jazz and jazz fusion from JALC's programming for not containing an essential blues essence. In addition, Marsalis rejected hip-hop, capitalizing on white America's fears of Black threat in rap by presenting jazz as a respectable Black music tradition that could act as a safer alternative to the rising popularity of rap (Porter 2002, 320). Though cries of "reverse racism" towards Marsalis for supposedly excluding white musicians in JALC's programming have been overwrought (Kodat 2003, 9), criticisms of JALC's gender representation have been well-placed, as the influence JALC yields allows it to reinforce the notion that the jazz tradition consists almost exclusively of great men (Porter 2002, 314; Rustin and Tucker 2008, 5, McMullen 2008). Illustrative of Marsalis's influence on determining the canon of jazz, Ken Burns' popular documentary series *Jazz* relies heavily on the unquestioned authority of Marsalis and Stanley Crouch as consultants; as a result, jazz history is presented as a series of individual great male geniuses (Lipsitz 2004, 15; Solis 2009, 91). Any indication of creation by a community or of a living tradition is missing, as jazz is presented as a series of individual accomplishments that occurred in the past and can now be purchased on CD collections (Kelley 2001; Lipsitz 2004, 17; Solis 2009).

Given the power of dominant jazz narratives, especially the more recent ones propagated by Marsalis and Burns, jazz studies scholars have often explicitly set out to suggest counter narratives to the prevailing orthodoxy of jazz tradition and canon. For instance, Ajay Heble and Robert Wallace choose to focus on musicians opposed to what they call the "Marsalisization of jazz" (2013, 13). Decades earlier, Scott DeVeaux's

landmark essay, "Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography" (1991), is largely credited with initiating an historiographical approach to jazz studies (Thomas 2002, 295; O'Meally, Edwards, and Griffin 2004, 5; Solis 2008, 54; Murphy 2009, 182). DeVeaux writes that the efforts of Marsalis and his peers were an attempt to legitimize jazz within institutions in order to not rely on the whims of the marketplace, in which jazz had long been declining (1991, 526). To do so, however, required the crafting of a coherent narrative of the jazz tradition. DeVeaux argues that the linear development narrative of jazz favored by Marsalis (and, released ten years after DeVeaux's essay, Ken Burns' *Jazz*) was established in the bebop era, when bebop's emergence required the previously warring factions of swing modernists and New Orleans traditionalists to unite under the rubric of "the jazz tradition" as a way to claim jazz's status as an art form (1991, 539). Doing so, however, required adapting an evolutionary model of jazz, where New Orleans jazz led to swing, which led to bebop and then hard bop, and so forth. Bebop is thus viewed as the beginning of jazz's self-consciousness and of jazz's claim to art music and modernist status (1991, 538). To become modernist, jazz needed to rise above its ethnic roots and achieve universal status as abstract art, after which it could be regarded as "America's classical music" (DeVeaux 1991, 546; Kenney 1995, 102; Ramsey 2003, 123; Lehman 2007, 5) While some scholars have repositioned bebop as Afro-modernist, where a respect for cultural roots could exist alongside claims of abstract expression (Ramsey 2003; Stewart 2011), it is the attachment of the tenets of European modernism to bebop that has allowed for the legitimization of jazz in the eyes of elite institutions.

Much of these efforts to understand jazz in relation to the social and cultural contexts of its creation has been influenced by the work of Amiri Baraka. In *Blues People*, written in 1964, Baraka situates jazz's stylistic developments in the socioeconomic lived conditions of what he calls "the blues people," that is, in African American cultural experience (1999). He argues that, given the oppressive conditions in which Black Americans lived, blues and jazz music were born out of a fundamental resistance to white hegemony. Jazz, and especially the then controversial "New Thing" movement, consisting of avant-garde artists such as John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy, and Ornette Coleman, acted as a vehicle for Black musicians to achieve cultural self-awareness. However, this struggle for self-awareness was hampered by both the Black bourgeois and especially by white music industry figures and jazz critics who did not seek to understand Black jazz music on its own terms (Baraka 1999; Gennari 1991, 490; Tomlinson 1991, 245). In addition to influencing future jazz studies scholars to consider jazz more contextually, Baraka's work has also provided the roots of what has become a dominant approach for jazz scholars, one that privileges the resistive and anti-hegemonic aspects of jazz practice—an aspect of *Blues People* that Ralph Ellison lobbied as a criticism in his review (Gennari 1991, 492).

As the popular discourse of jazz is oriented around the music's apparent universal qualities and individual genius of its creators, jazz studies scholars have regularly acted as Baraka's disciples by exploring the social, cultural, political, and even spiritual contexts of jazz music, especially those artists that take a counterhegemonic stance

towards institutions.[2] Ajay Heble, influenced by postcolonial theorist Edward's Said notion of being "out of place" with institutionalized discourses of knowledge production, employs the metaphor of dissonance to argue that jazz improvisation as a practice is often "out of tune" with the normative values of dominant society (Heble 2000, 4). As improvisation by its continually searching nature resists stasis, it can be seen as inherently encouraging alternative forms of community and advocacy for human rights (Fischlin and Heble 2004, 13; Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2013). Especially given jazz's roots in African American cultural experiences in the U.S., jazz musicians as members of marginalized communities could not help but foster non-conformism and social upheaval (Lewis 2004, 135). For example, Ingrid Monson's analysis of John Coltrane's interpretation of "My Favorite Things," through the lens of Henry Louis Gates Jr's Signifyin(g) theory (2014), shows that even jazz performances of Broadway standards can be read as critique of Western hegemony (Monson 1994). The Afrological values of bebop—in particular, the emphasis on finding one's own original sound—per George Lewis encourage this association of African American jazz improvisation with a search for freedom (Lewis 2004, 156). The concrete political statements made regularly by jazz musicians during the Civil Rights era and beyond make this association all the more

[2] Though New Jazz Studies scholarship has largely succeeded at exploring "cultural and political meanings, audience reception, the mediated nature of commodified products, and the social functions of jazz" (Tucker 2000, 23), there have been some worries that this scholarship goes too far in the direction of the cultural, to the detriment of the musical (Spring 2005, 59). For instance, Gabriel Solis advocates an ethnomusicological approach that is sensitive to the "musical pleasure" of the artists and records being discussed as a way to bring cultural theorizing into a more sustainable context (2008, 68). Solis sees this as honoring the values of the musicians without which an ethnography would not be possible.

explicit, and the omission of it in dominant jazz narratives, all the more glaring (Saul 2003; Fischlin and Heble 2004; Monson 2007; Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2013).

Additionally, numerous scholars have pushed back against the overwhelming maleness of dominant jazz narratives (Tucker 2000; Porter 2002; Rustin and Tucker 2008). Ingrid Monson asks, if jazz is ostensibly about freedom and democracy, why is it so difficult for women to be included in participation and in jazz narratives? (2008, 269). Eric Porter (2002), meanwhile, examines why women regularly have not figured into official institutions and grassroots community organizations of jazz. Rather than simply craft an alternate jazz history consisting of forgotten women performers, Sherrie Tucker (2000) examines the structure of gender, and its intersection with race, embedded into male heteronormative narratives. By examining the ways white women, Black women, and non-Black women of color appear (or more often, do not appear) in jazz discourse or in official memory, Tucker uncovers deeply ingrained gendered and racial attitudes arising largely from the perspective of the white male journalist that has dominated jazz criticism and shaped the dominant narrative (2000, 2014).

Jazz Education Institutions

Though much scholarship has been conducted on the ways jazz has been institutionalized within certain organizations, what research that has been devoted to the issue of jazz in higher education lacks a holistic approach, focusing instead on specific programs rather than properly contextualizing these programs within a local scene. Often these studies take the perspective that "real jazz" is threatened by its institutionalization, that the creative potential offered by jazz improvisation is unavoidably stifled if it is to be taught in a university setting (Marquis 1998; Ake 2002; Nicholson 2005). However,

authors of these studies often do not consider the perspectives of those working within the institutional structures of the university—students, educators, administrators, etc.—but rather rely on their own opinions or on those of other experts about how creativity is stifled by institutionalization.

For instance, when writing about changes in the last 30 years of jazz as a whole, Stuart Nicholson's experience as a jazz critic lend him direct access to the insightful perspectives of prominent jazz performers (2005). However, when writing about the issue of jazz education, Nicholson leans too much on the largely negative opinions of those with no real investment in American jazz education, excluding the voices of jazz educators and students who would have a lived experience with jazz education. Though Kenneth Prouty provides an effective historical overview of how jazz came to arrive in the university, his perspective, though much more positive than Nicholson's, still suffers from lack of the on-the-ground study (2013).

More recently, scholars have begun to reconsider negative biases toward jazz education, seeking instead to understand the jazz knowledge production that occurs in jazz education institutions on its own terms. For instance, David Ake writes that jazz's movement into schools, which replace "the street" as sites of knowledge production, has been denigrated and marginalized in jazz discourse (2012, 238). Ake then deconstructs various myths of jazz musicians that influence this lack of scholarly attention to jazz education, including that jazz must be urban and that jazz education is inherently unhip, before issuing a call for more conscious attention to the issue of jazz education. David Ake's call to "re-think" jazz university education seems to have helped mobilize research

on the role that universities and colleges play in shaping jazz meanings—it has also greatly influenced the formulation of this research project (2002, 2012). However, Ake's writings nonetheless also lack deep immersion into the daily workings of the university jazz conservatory, as John P. Murphy (2009, 172) has noted regarding Ake's research (2002) on conservatory instructors' pedagogical emphasis on chord-scale theory when teaching the music of John Coltrane.

In his study of the jazz program at the University of North Texas (UNT), John P. Murphy (2009) succeeds in articulating the need for jazz scholars to consider the university not as a second-rate site of jazz production but as a legitimate musical culture worthy of holistic study. However, Murphy's approach is still faulty for several reasons. Though he is effective at arguing for jazz performance programs to be viewed with more respect from scholars, and not simply dismissed as not the real thing, in doing so Murphy comes across as defensive of the jazz studies program at UNT, where he was teaching at the time. In addition, Murphy's assertion that jazz education need be afforded more respect hinges on the claim that UNT allows students to negotiate their training—an argument for UNT's exceptional quality, not necessarily for the nature of jazz education as a whole. In fact, UNT was one of the very first universities to offer jazz studies as a degree and remains one of the most prestigious and largest jazz departments in the U.S. It thus could hardly be said to represent jazz higher education as it commonly occurs in the U.S.

Eitan Wilf's recent ethnography of the jazz studies programs at the New School of Jazz and Contemporary Music and Berklee College of Music lends deeper

ethnographic detail on jazz education programs than has thus far been offered (2014). Wilf's focus on how everyday student musicians and faculty members negotiate knowledge production within the conservatory is illuminating, and contrasts with studies that until that point had mostly relied on the opinions of big-name figures about jazz education. But similar to the case of Murphy's writings on UNT, I have trouble believing that Wilf's findings can be extrapolated more widely to everyday jazz education programs, as both of these programs are once again more the exception than the norm. Though Wilf makes a compelling argument for how the activity within these programs shows students' ability to assert creative agency within the institutional structures of the university, his study lacks a convincing argument for the larger implications of how jazz university education as a phenomenon has enacted changes on the ways jazz is commonly viewed. This is largely due to the specificity of the cultures at the New School and Berklee, which in fairness, Wilf acknowledges (2014, 16). But the limitations of a study focused on the specific challenges of attending these two schools—namely, students' inability to get gigs due to the glut of performers in New York City and at Berklee—renders Wilf's study lacking in explication of the larger implications of jazz university education. Wilf effectively utilizes the insights of students and educators on the ambivalence of jazz education, but the issue is largely contained within the institutional walls of these programs and is not as well connected to the broader jazz scene in which these jazz programs are contained. Nonetheless, I find Wilf's findings regarding students and instructors' conflicting sentiments towards jazz education to be instructive and to largely hold true to what I observed in the Twin Cities jazz scene.

Though I focus less on the inner workings of institutions themselves and more on the overall impact of this institutionalization on the structures and meaning making processes of a local scene, I seek to carry forward Wilf's approach in examining the institutionalization of jazz through ethnographic research.

Ethnography of Jazz

In the disciplinary divide between musicology and ethnomusicology, jazz has found itself in an awkward spot. As Ingrid Monson writes, jazz's doubleness as an African American music culture in the West has made it too Other for musicology, which has traditionally examined the works of European art composers, but not quite Other enough for ethnomusicology, which has preferred bounded non-Western cultures.in distant locales (1995, 289). That appears to be changing, as ethnomusicological research on jazz has increased steadily over the last two decades (Berliner 1994; Monson 1996; Nettl and Russel 1998; Atkins 2001; Pond 2005; Solis 2008; Solis and Nettl 2009; Feld 2012; Sakakeeny 2013), while new musicology has also facilitated increased attention to non-Western classical music, including jazz (Walser 2014). What ethnomusicology bests lends to jazz studies, and what literary readings of jazz recordings as texts often lack, is an attention to the perspectives of the musicians performing the music and the audiences listening to it.

Ethnographic studies of jazz, however, have tended to be top-heavy, with assertions built on the opinions of well-known musicians at the center, rather than at the periphery, of jazz activity. In line with jazz criticism's long history of hitching narratives to the great men of the genre (e.g. Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, etc.), jazz studies scholars have often turned to musicians with bigger name prestige to give

their research credibility. For instance, though studies by Paul Berliner (1994) and Ingrid Monson (1996) have been crucial contributions to ethnomusicological research on jazz—specifically in their achievement of demystifying improvisational practices—much of their ethnographic data is constructed around the perspectives of esteemed veteran jazz musicians in New York City. Such musicians may have well-informed perspectives on jazz, and in many cases are equipped with decades of valuable experience and knowledge. However, this strategy, which exists in both journalistic and scholarly approaches, neglects the perspectives of the average jazz musician, listener, educator, or other figures. This is key for a number of reasons.

For one, jazz musicians who have "made it" in a jazz industry sense (meaning that their names would be recognized by the average, well-informed jazz fan—not that they would necessarily have household name recognition with the average American) grapple with a very different set of issues than those faced by everyday jazz musicians. They may be in a more established position that provides them the privilege to question the tenets of jazz education, for instance. If their incomes do not mostly depend on the security of the university institution, and they could still survive comfortably by performing and composing, they may be more willing to lob critiques at an educational system that they do not depend on. Such cases, however, represent a large minority of self-identifying jazz musicians. In seeking perspectives only from the effective 1% of the jazz world, jazz scholars and critics risk painting an unrepresentative picture of jazz as it more commonly occurs in scenes across the U.S.

In addition to having different means of making a living, these musicians are also exceptional in that they are often based in New York City, widely regarded by scholars, musicians, and fans alike as the jazz epicenter of the U.S., if not the world. While New York is certainly an important site of jazz activity, such a disproportionate focus on an elite jazz scene again distorts perceptions on what twenty-first century jazz culture is like on an everyday level. While every local jazz scene in a given metro area is likely to contain certain particularities, the New York jazz scene is exceptional—historically, economically, geographically, demographically—in ways only rivaled in the U.S. perhaps by New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz. Though jazz is often associated in the U.S. imaginary with such cities as New York and New Orleans, jazz has persisted across Middle America for nearly the entire history of jazz; the proliferation of standardized jazz education has only furthered this aspect of jazz activity being spread across the U.S.[3] As research on global jazz communities has shown (Atkins 2001, Feld 2012), jazz has been a tradition of peripheries throughout its history.[4] Though these jazz centers certainly drive the discourse, the effects of this discourse on these peripheral but no less important sites have not as well been addressed by scholars. If meanings of jazz are sought, they should also come from areas at the periphery of the jazz universe.

Finally, the kinds of top-flight jazz musicians whose opinions are prioritized by critics and scholars are more likely to include older musicians whose perspectives on a

[3] For instance, Ryan Frane, the director of the jazz studies program at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, told me that if it were not for the concentrated efforts to build jazz programs in places like Duluth, or in Northern Colorado where he formerly taught, the general public in those parts of the country in non-major metropolitan areas might not have much access to live jazz at all.
[4] Thank you to Deborah Wong for this phrasing.

jazz landscape that has changed considerably over their lifetime vary greatly from college-aged musicians who have only known one type of jazz landscape. Again, while these more experienced perspectives have undoubtedly been valuable to ethnographic studies of jazz, overreliance on the views of older, prominent musicians at the center to the exclusion of younger, relatively anonymous ones on the periphery risks telling only one side of the story about how jazz is produced and received in contemporary U.S. society. Much literature has been devoted to the changes jazz has undergone in the last few decades, from jazz's entry into the conservatory to Wynton Marsalis's neo-classicism. The implications of these changes have also been effectively explored in ways that illustrate jazz's shift from a politicized music to one with elevated class connotations. However, fewer studies have been devoted to treat jazz as it currently exists, on its own terms, today. For young players of jazz, many of whom were born after the inaugural Jazz at Lincoln Center concert, the current status of jazz is treated as a given, not as a lamentable state of affairs. For them, jazz still holds a wealth of creative possibilities, even as they recognize the music's popularity is not what it once was. For those musicians, then, what meaning does jazz hold? How do they locate jazz in a twenty-first century American popular imaginary that treats jazz as dispensable and irrelevant? What is jazz culture to them?

As stated, this study is concerned with jazz as it currently exists following a period of great flux, a time in which jazz became increasingly institutionalized within American society. This change, as described above and by numerous scholars, includes a shift in jazz's class connotations in the popular imagination, as jazz's values and

demographics move more toward the normative. Though resistive modes of jazz still thrive in some circles, jazz on an everyday level is more likely to be linked with fine-dining restaurants than acts of protest. Additionally, jazz's class associations have shifted not only in connotations but in material realities, as it becomes a music more likely to be pursued and consumed by those from class backgrounds with access to strong music education. In essence, jazz has become a highbrow art music, and if considered from an ethnographic perspective, this more recent connotation and its effects on local jazz production and reception should be interrogated. Holistic investigation of a more everyday jazz scene provides a closer to the ground lens to examine the effects of such processes of institutionalization as well as responses by human agents to these larger changes. Additionally, certain case studies of well-known jazz artists show how jazz's meaning continually shifts in the popular imaginary as a result of this institutionalization.

Theoretical Perspectives

This study on the effects of institutionalization on jazz meanings and perceptions is considered from four primary theoretical perspectives: music scenes, institutions and formations, sacralization, and multiculturalism. In this section, I introduce these theories and provide justification for their use. First, I examine academic notions of the scene concept and their applicability in describing a contemporary jazz scene such as the Twin Cities jazz scene. I then introduce Raymond Williams' theories of institutions and cultural formations, which I apply when examining structures within the Twin Cities jazz scene. Borrowing from Western classical music discourse, I then introduce the perspective of sacralization to show how jazz can be viewed as in the process of

becoming a high art music. Finally, I introduce concepts of multiculturalism to show how they allow me to consider the racial discourse in jazz in relation to certain political moments, both historically and more contemporarily.

Music Scenes

In the Twin Cities jazz community, musicians and audience members frequently talk about their local scene, often referring to it just as "the scene." They discuss what makes their particular scene unique, the scene's strengths and weaknesses, and its prominent musicians and venues. In many ways, these scene members have already conceptualized their idea of a scene and what makes it work, so in that respect, my use of the term scene is simply in accordance with how it is used in everyday discourse in the Twin Cities jazz community.

However, scene and its related terms have also been developed in academic music scholarship, particularly in sociological research of music, that focuses on larger scale communities of music culture. For instance, the concept of scene in music scholarship is used by Bennett and Peterson (2004, 1) to describe "clusters of producers, musicians, and fans" that share common tastes distinct from other collectives. As this project focuses on a contemporary jazz scene in a manner that values the perspectives of everyday participants, including audience members and others who perform non-musical labor to keep the scene going, this inclusion of roles other than the most esteemed musician is useful when considering all processes of a scene's continuance, from production to reception.

My consideration of the entire "scene" is also informed by sociologist Howard Becker's notion of "art worlds" (1982), which he initially developed through his

experience as a gigging pianist in the Chicago jazz scene. Art world is defined as the cultural scene resulting from collective action not just by the prominent artists, but by anyone who helps construct the art world through their production or consumption. Where Becker mostly investigates those who strongly identify with a given scene or cultural movement, I also consider, particularly in my discussion of audience, those who have no attachment to the scene at all but whose actions and attitudes still affect those who do consider themselves part of the local jazz community. Consideration of the entire art world, expanded to include what I call "non-jazz" listeners (or those who do not normally listen to jazz; I develop this concept in chapters 3 and 5), allows me to examine holistically all contributors to the scene, whether they have elevated reputations or whether they are relatively anonymous. In my view, jazz scholarship conducted from an ethnographic perspective has tended to favor those musicians who are seen to have the cultural authority to speak with expertise on certain issues. While these perspectives are valuable, jazz meanings can also be dictated by those with less, or in some cases zero, investment in jazz discourse. By considering relatively anonymous musicians, including student learners and once-in-a-while jam session attendees, as well as casual listeners and even those antagonistic to jazz, I hope to portray an art world that is more inclusive of various perspectives. Though I ultimately do not employ the term "art world"—as mentioned, I find the term scene to be most appropriate because it matches everyday language—Becker's theory does inform my overall approach in this dissertation, in both the ethnographic and case study chapters.

While following Ingrid Monson's attention to perceptual agency (2009), as well as Kenneth Prouty's consideration of jazz fan communities (2013), I seek to make interventions in theories of art worlds and scenes through two primary developments. First, I seek to collapse and blur the occupational roles of members of the scene, as the division of labor in jazz communities is not always so clear—student musicians are at times teachers, educators can be audience members, and fans can be jazz musicians themselves. Second, while most studies of music scenes and art worlds rely on self-identification, I also examine the viewpoints of those who do not belong to a jazz community in any sense. That is, what do people who do not listen to jazz regularly (a majority of the population), think about jazz, and how do their opinions affect jazz practices? How do popular misconceptions of jazz influence cultural production by those who are highly invested in the maintenance of the jazz scene and jazz culture? By considering the viewpoints of those outside a scene, I examine how these outsider opinions affect the cultural production by insiders within the scene. Such non-members of a scene, then, are not actually fully outside the scene, as the effects of their non-participation reverberate back within the communities to which they have no attachment.

Institutions and Formations

Though academic notions of the scene emphasize its ephemeral nature, the TC jazz scene, as with most contemporary American jazz scenes, differs from a music scene as commonly conceived in that its historical roots go back many decades, resulting in a stability that is then further bolstered through institutional support that ensures the preservation of what is now regarded as a quintessential American artistic tradition. Additionally, though scholarship on music scenes tends to focus on scenes' informality,

there are also more formal, or institutional, elements that contribute to the construction and maintenance of the TC jazz scene, evidenced by organizational non-profits, grant agencies, high school music programs, and university institutions. In this manner, institutional support ensures the persistence of an already entrenched jazz scene, providing musicians with the resources and capital they need to continue performing and promoting an artistic tradition they hold dear.

In examining jazz in the Twin Cities, as well as recent case studies regarding the public imaginary of jazz, I am primarily concerned with the effects of institutionalization on jazz; as such, institutions theory will inform my analysis. In particular, I make use of Raymond Williams's (1982) theories of institutions and cultural formations, which I further develop in chapter 4 but will briefly define here. For Williams, analysis of institutions and formations is essential to understanding cultural production, an approach I apply to institutions and formations within the Twin Cities jazz scene. While institutions are in some way formalized by the state—in the Twin Cities, this includes college jazz programs and non-profit organizations—cultural formations are looser, organized by producers of culture—for instance, weekly jazz series in the Twin Cities formed around a common musical goal.

The formalized nature of institutions would seem to be contradictory to the spontaneous and organic development of music scenes and of jazz improvisation specifically. In jazz studies, scholars have discussed the antithetical relationship of jazz to institutions and to societal norms more broadly (Heble 2000; Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2013; Heble and Wallace 2013). How then can it be reconciled that in the case of the TC

jazz scene and jazz more broadly, institutional support would be central to the survival of a music scene? How do the core values of creative ingenuity and cultural identity, central both to academic conceptions of scenes and to jazz as an artistic tradition, survive when becoming wrapped up in what is often imagined as the stifling nature of institutions? To what extent do these institutions encourage preservation of jazz as a museum piece, or to what extent do they facilitate forward-thinking approaches, an oft-imagined dichotomy in jazz discourse (Friedwald 2002; Nicholson 2005)? In any case, the central role of institutions in jazz is not unique to the TC jazz scene (though as I describe in chapters 3 and 4, musicians in Minnesota do feel that institutional support there is particularly strong), but rather shapes contemporary American jazz more broadly. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the effects of institutionalization on the construction and maintenance of a scene.

By examining these effects of institutionalization, I do not limit my research to what occurs within the bounded walls of the institutions themselves (as I detail in the literature review above, this has to some extent been sufficiently accomplished with regards to jazz university education), but rather examine the scene within which these institutions have a transformative effect. To this end, my object of study is not so much one bounded institution such as a university jazz studies program than it is an entire music scene, a loose configuration of shifting membership, occupational roles, and organizational structures, including these institutions and formations. Additionally, in the case study chapters (chapters 2, 5, and 6), I examine how jazz's current association with

institutions affect wider perceptions of jazz, particularly among the general public, where ideas about jazz's institutional death run rampant.

The Sacralization of Jazz

Debates over whether jazz can survive in the twenty-first century resemble parallel discussions happening in Western art music discourse. As such, many of the conversations surrounding classical music's recent transformation are useful here. For instance, Mina Yang (2014) describes the "wildly varying assessments of the classical music scene that range from predictions of its imminent demise to acclamations of its newfound vitality, depending on the often narrow viewpoint of the prognosticator" (2014, 3). She later continues:

> Against this onslaught of depressing statistics and forecasts, composers, scholars, and others with a stake in the survival of this art form have taken a staunchly defensive stance, ardently arguing for the intrinsic aesthetic value of the music and the importance of its health to the good of humanity at large. (Yang 2014, 4)

Though Yang's study focuses on Western art music, a category of music and tradition that has often been positioned as diametrically opposed to jazz (Porter 2002; Ake 2010; Prouty 2013; Laver 2015), her words could easily apply to similar transformations affecting the jazz tradition. This similarity includes not only jazz's precarious status in the music industry and in the entertainment landscape in American society more broadly, but also the high art values ascribed to classical music which, I argue, are largely replicated in jazz. For instance, as I read Yang's description of those who argue "for the intrinsic aesthetic value" of classical music, I am reminded of the many musicians who play jazz "because of what it is," that is, because of its inherent value to their lives. To them, jazz's market sustainability is almost irrelevant; the music is

necessary because of its "intrinsic aesthetic value," and so as long as there are those musicians and audience members who believe this to be true, the music will inevitably continue in some form. These aesthetic values may be different—in fact, to many, jazz's specialized focus on improvisation bolsters its claim to intrinsic aesthetic value—but in classical music and jazz music alike, they are now often held as autonomous and inherently important. As Yang speaks of those who promote classical music's "health to the good of humanity at large," I am reminded of the university jazz professor who rejected the notion that a degree in jazz is financially irresponsible. To him, jazz promotes essential humanist values that should be the goal of every liberal arts degree offering. As he put it, if only more students majored in jazz, or at least took some kind of jazz studies class—then we might have better humans.

As the place of jazz in American society has become eerily similar to that of Western classical music, it is worth engaging with theories of highbrow culture and their impact on art music. Lawrence Levine (1988) describes what he calls a process of sacralization that occurred within Western art music in the early part of the twentieth century as an emerging differentiation between high and low culture. The sacralization described by Levine in the American concert hall and opera house occurred within an already revered tradition, though one that had become increasingly accessible to the masses in the 19th century. In the Western art music concert, sacralization of the tradition, enacted through standards of behavior in a concert hall, purification of repertoire, etc., was necessary to maintain a hegemonic elite ruling class. With jazz, a similar process of sacralization occurs, though it is not so much in the splitting of one heterogenous culture

into two diverging high and low cultures as it is in the transformation of a low culture into a high culture. Sacralization still occurs via similar strategies, including an insistence on purity, standards of audience behavior, etc., but this transformation of low culture to high culture also includes a transformation from a music explicitly racialized to one increasingly regarded as universalist and autonomous. As such, this occurrence of sacralization and its attendant effects can be considered an especially drastic one, given its implications of deracination and, if viewed in terms of class, gentrification.

It is in this racialized dimension that the comparison between classical music and jazz breaks down. Though both the classical music and jazz worlds have been subjected to ideologies of multiculturalism beginning around the 1980s, the anxieties produced by these changes differ in the classical and jazz communities. In the former, a tradition long imagined as the exclusive purview of European elites is faced with participation and competition from racial Others, particularly from Asia, as described by Yang (2014). While this seems to fit with the multiculturalist ideals of many classical music enthusiasts, in reality, when the values of the music also become less European, there is still resistance to full acceptance of non-European descendent participants, as Yang describes in the reception of the music of composer Tan Dun and of the attire of pianist Yuja Wang. In the case of jazz, the music similarly undergoes a value shift, but as a result of becoming more white, rather than less. The anxieties produced here among adherents to the tradition have less to do with fears of a racial Other and more with concerns that a historically African American tradition is in danger of losing its essential Black roots and

with it, its political and social vitality (Heble 2000; Friedwald 2002; Porter 2002; Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2013).

For Levine, sacralization entails the elevation of a tradition, but it may also entail a simultaneous dethroning of a culture if it is seen to threaten the purity of the high art tradition. This can be observed within the jazz tradition in denigrations of jazz-rock fusion and smooth jazz (Pond 2005; Ake, Garrett, and Goldmark 2012), as well as most recently in the crossover success of BadBadNotGood, discussed in Chapter 5. Following a process of sacralization, per Levine, the parameters of meaning for a given high culture are established, and it is against these parameters that productions of that culture will be judged. I would argue that the process of sacralization that has occurred in jazz has firmly established these parameters, which can be observed in a given local jazz scene such as that of the Twin Cities and in the jazz community reception of popular jazz-crossover groups. Though I argue that these transformative processes of sacralization and institutionalization in jazz have mostly reached a resting point, that does not mean that these processes are fully complete, nor that these established parameters of meaning are fully accepted by all participants in a jazz high art tradition. Rather, the basic framework has been established, a framework which improvising musicians and audience members have the freedom to adhere to and/or contest in various ways. Ethnographic observation of a local jazz culture allows for investigation of how these processes of sacralization and institutionalization are negotiated by human agents with the potential to reveal the messy effects of a transformation from lowbrow to highbrow culture.

Multiculturalism

As the institutionalization of jazz has facilitated its continual transformation into an art music via processes of sacralization, jazz has undergone shifts culturally and socioeconomically. That is, jazz's entrance into official institutions as a result of its becoming high art has resulted in its association with the racial ideologies of these official institutions, particularly multiculturalist and colorblind rhetoric. As such, it is useful to examine these multiculturalist ideologies and their impact on the reception of jazz following its institutionalization.

While other scholars have explored jazz in relation to resistive ideologies and radical politics (discussed in the literature review above), or that which opposes the state and its institutions, I discuss how jazz musicians and audiences run up against, and in some cases enforce, normative ideologies, or that which is officially sanctioned by the state. I primarily explore this in chapter 2, where I examine Nicholas Payton's re-naming of jazz to "Black American Music" (BAM), a racially particular as opposed to a universalist designation (i.e., "America's Classical Music"). In particular, I consider how defensive reactions to Payton's proclamation embody Robin DiAngelo's (2011) concept of "white fragility," or the inability of white Americans to handle racial stress, including the mere discussion of race. The BAM case study reflects the latest in a long line of racial discourses which purport to be anti-racist but which still seek to marginalize Black identity politics, including those that name jazz as Black (Kofsky 1998; Monson 2007). As such, in chapter 2 I situate Payton's BAM statement within what Jodi Melamed (2011) identifies as ideologies of official anti-racisms, especially including the more contemporary period of neoliberal multiculturalism. Additionally, I draw from Eduardo

Bonilla-Silva's (2014) concept of color-blind racism, a racial ideology that "explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics" and which seeps its way into conversations about race in jazz.

Though this discourse on official ideologies of anti-racism and colorblindness is primarily employed in chapter 2, the rest of the chapters are also informed by these ideas. In particular, chapter 4 takes a closer look at the impact of institutionalization with regards to racial representation in the Twin Cities jazz scene. That is, if jazz in the Twin Cities is supported by official institutions, what cultural and socioeconomic effects does institutionalization have on jazz at a local level? How do musicians, audiences, and activists work to ensure equal access to jazz and what role do institutions play in this regard? By looking both at a local jazz scene and case studies where racial discourse comes to the forefront, I seek to show how contemporary and normative multiculturalist ideologies, as informed by jazz's increasing institutionalization, impact jazz meanings.

Methods

In studying twenty-first century jazz culture and the contemporary meanings associated with it, I use as my methods both long-term ethnographic fieldwork in the Twin Cities, Minnesota and ethnographic readings of case studies of popular, non-Minnesota jazz artists. In both my long-term fieldwork site and in these analyses of national jazz artists, I seek to provide on-the-ground evidence for how such processes of institutionalization play out, particularly in the everyday locations of a contemporary jazz scene and in the everyday meanings people hold about jazz. In the case study chapters, I sought to deeply immerse myself in the discourse of the artists at hand by including in my

ethnographic data not just published materials, such as interviews, album and concert reviews, and feature stories, but also discussion board posts, discussions on Facebook and Twitter, and blog posts. Moreover, though I depart from the ethnomusicological tradition of a dissertation focusing on one ethnography in one space at one time by including both ethnography of a local scene and of broader discussions in jazz, I do this in the hopes of providing a holistic snapshot of what American jazz culture was like in the early to mid-2010s, as the wider discourse always informs the activity that occurs at the local level.

To study the institutionalization of jazz on a local level, I employed ethnographic methods including long-term participation observation and semi-structured interviews with musicians, audience members, and other figures in the Twin Cities jazz scene. Participant-observation primarily occurred at venues where jazz was being performed, including bars and restaurants, concert venues, music festivals, university recital halls, and local jam sessions. For these jam sessions, my participation was not just as an ethnographer, but as a jazz musician myself—I studied jazz composition at a four-year college and performed occasionally in the Philadelphia area on electric bass during this period. Performing at these sessions—namely at Jazz Central Studios, which will be discussed in Chapter 4—allowed me to connect with local musicians and display insider knowledge with regards to jazz practice. Additionally, in-person interviews, which were (mostly) recorded, were held primarily at local coffee shops and restaurants, with some occurring on the phone or via email. Most of this work occurred in the Twin Cities and its immediately surrounding suburbs, but some supplementary fieldwork was conducted in other parts of Minnesota (i.e. Duluth and Northfield) and in Southern California. Unless

otherwise noted, I use participants' actual names rather than pseudonyms (for which permission was obtained prior to interviews), as most interviewees are public figures in the jazz scene who would otherwise seek to publicize their events, recorded music, and identities as performers or composers.

. In addition to formally arranged interviews, many conversations occurred before, between, or after sets of jazz in the Twin Cities, especially while hanging out at the bars of these venues at which shows took place. Though these conversations were not recorded, they greatly informed my overall characterization of the jazz scene in the Twin Cities. Many of these discussions took place with musicians who were performing at these venues, with others occurring with musicians who were not performing that night but were checking out their fellow musicians' sets. In both these cases, musicians often assumed (rightly), that as a young, white man at these bars by himself (as opposed to with a date), I was a musician myself—often, after exchanging introductions, their first question to me was whether I played an instrument.[5] Moreover, it was during more informal conversations that I most frequently gained the perspectives of casual jazz fans or non-jazz listeners, who often stumbled upon the jazz they were watching as a matter of happenstance rather than intention. In that sense, the serendipity of striking up conversation with strangers at my research sites, as opposed to formalized interviews or surveys, contributed to my stated objective of including the perspectives of non-jazz listeners (further developed in chapters 3 and 5).

[5] It should go without saying that my positionality here informed the types of access I had to musicians and audience members, so likewise my findings and insights are impacted by this basic truth. I would expect a researcher of a different positionality to arrive at different, but equally valid, research results.

Additionally, though most of my data comes from in-person ethnography in Minnesota, some virtual ethnography was conducted in the form of social media activity, primarily on Facebook, to keep up with what was happening in the Twin Cities jazz scene once I had left to return to California. Online sources, such as the websites for local non-profits, venues, and blogs (primarily JazzPolice.com), as well as web newspaper articles (e.g. the *Star Tribune*, *City Pages*, *Pioneer Press*, *Minnesota Public Radio*, and *MinnPost*), were also consulted. For the case study chapters, all data comes from online sources, particularly prominent music websites in the form of reviews and interviews with artists as well as musicians' personal blogs. This includes, on occasion, comments on blog posts or web articles, which are more ephemeral in nature (in some cases, posts have disappeared, but I was able to access them in an archived form), but where discourse on a topic often carries on organically.

Why Minnesota?

This project deliberately takes as its object of study a jazz scene that is at the periphery rather than the center of jazz discourse. Prior ethnographic research on jazz has usually been conducted in what are considered primary sites of jazz activity, e.g., New York City and New Orleans (Berliner 1994; Sakakeeny 2013), or in the context of jazz education, the University of North Texas and Berklee College of Music (Murphy 2009; Wilf 2014). Such locations are prominent sites for a reason, in that they have had important impact on jazz's history and its continual development. However, if the goal is to gain insight into how jazz's meaning is defined on an everyday level, it would be less apt to focus on locations that have been drivers of change in jazz. Rather, in order to effectively interrogate the results of such large-scale changes that have occurred in jazz—

particularly the institutionalization of jazz—it is important to study a jazz scene that has been on the receiving end of such changes. Doing so will provide insight into how local actors constituting the larger jazz scene respond to institutionalization, and in many cases, form institutions themselves.

The peripheral jazz scene that I have chosen is the scene in the Twin Cities, Minnesota. The Twin Cities (TC) refers to the metropolitan area surrounding Minneapolis-St. Paul, consisting of an estimated Metropolitan Statistical Area population of approximately 3.5 million. The jazz scene most actively occurs in either Minneapolis or St. Paul, with about an even split between the two. Scattered events occur in other cities in the metro, particularly in Bloomington and in suburbs of the West Metro. Performers that are based in the Twin Cities also occasionally perform in areas outside of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro, in cities such as Rochester, Duluth, Northfield, or Morris in Minnesota, or cities such as Eau Claire or River Falls in western Wisconsin. The audience mostly consists of residents of the Twin Cities metro area, but will occasionally include travelers from other parts of Minnesota or western Wisconsin.

The Twin Cities jazz scene was chosen as the site of study for numerous reasons. First, it effectively qualifies as a local scene on the periphery of the broader U.S. jazz scene (often referred to as "the national scene"). Though jazz musicians that travel frequently may know of the burgeoning scene in the Twin Cities, especially those from Chicago or those who have made connections with TC musicians, it is not usually known by the average national jazz fan. Unlike New Orleans or New York, or even other locations like Kansas City or Chicago, it is not a designated must-visit location for

tourists or hardcore jazz fans for any historical reason relating to jazz. Jazz does not factor into the image of the Twin Cities in the way that it does in New Orleans, where tourism would play a much larger role in how the local jazz scene there is constructed (and in how a research study would be designed and executed). In fact, often when I told people I was studying the jazz scene in the Twin Cities, many responded with some form of "there's a jazz scene in Minnesota?" This happened to me many times, including even in interactions with long-time Minnesotans. Many Minnesotans, unless they were particularly avid music listeners, were not aware of the prolific jazz activity happening in their own backyard.

Though it may not be widely known, the jazz scene in the Twin Cities is large for a metro area of its size. At the time of this writing, at least four venues can be counted among those that offer live jazz around half of days of the week, with several more offering a jazz night weekly or biweekly. With a small degree of effort and willingness to travel, a jazz fan can find a place to listen to jazz nearly every day, with the exception of major holidays. At times, jazz fans are faced with difficult choices when choosing a performance to see, as there might be several high-profile shows occurring simultaneously. Jazz is by no means the most in-demand music in the Twin Cities, and its audience share dwarfs in comparison to local hip-hop or rock shows.[6] However, there is quality jazz to be heard in the Twin Cities if one is looking to find it. National jazz

[6] Though I did not make the hip-hop or indie rock scenes in the Twin Cities a focus of my research, I did attend several shows as a casual observer. These shows usually also featured local musicians who would likely not be well-known outside of the Twin Cities, but even still, the audience was usually at least three times that of an average jazz show, if not larger.

musicians on tour in the Twin Cities often remark on the cities' sleeping giant status as a hotbed for emerging jazz.

The TC jazz scene as an object of study thus offers an effective balance. It is large enough to comprise a full social structure with various levels of hierarchies based on prestige and name recognition (developed in chapter 3). However, it is small enough to observe how national debates and institutionalization processes in jazz get actualized on a local level, away from the pressures and particularities of being in a jazz center like New York. Additionally, though jazz has been in the Twin Cities for about a century, the TC jazz scene does not bear the same weight of jazz's past as faced by cities like New York, New Orleans, Chicago, or Kansas City. This relative blank slate and freedom from touristic concerns offers TC jazz musicians the opportunity to imprint their own regional identity onto their local scene, an opportunity many take by the reins in programmatic concerts focusing on Midwestern identity. However, the dominant position of New York jazz, for instance, is still present in the ideas local TC musicians have about jazz. Many musicians state their fondness for the TC jazz scene in comparison to such larger cities as New York or Chicago, where competition is stronger and rent is much more expensive. Additionally, national acts that come through the TC, most of them either from New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, are still met by both local jazz musicians and audience members with a certain reverence that comes with being based in a more prestigious and larger jazz scene. At other times, local musicians and jazz fans argue for the strength of their local TC jazz scene by declaring that the top talent in the TC could rival that of the big cities. Though TC musicians do not necessarily actively consider these centers of jazz

when making music, and would rather the TC be regarded on its own terms, there is a strong sense of a center-periphery relationship.

Though to some extent, the activity that occurs in the Twin Cities jazz scene can be extrapolated to stand for the typical modern U.S. jazz scene, it is important not to overstate the extent to which the Twin Cities, or any local jazz scene on the periphery, can be generalized. For one, the strong support of jazz in the Twin Cities may not be as easily replicated in metro areas with less public and private funding for the arts. Additionally, though the Twin Cities has become increasingly diverse, especially with the influx of Hmong and Somali refugees in the previous three decades, it is still a predominantly white metro. By some measures, the Twin Cities has some of the worst income inequality, segregation, and policing based on race (Peterson 2016, Olson 2018). Access to strong music education, crucial in the development of a young jazz musician, is not a given for high school students in the Twin Cities' more socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. Meanwhile, well-funded high schools in the predominantly white suburbs of Minneapolis's West Metro often boast multiple jazz bands. Jazz nonprofits, such as the Twin Cities Mobile Jazz Project, the Dakota Foundation for Jazz Education, Jazz Central Studios, and others discussed in chapter 4, attempt to address this shortfall through educational initiatives. Nonetheless, the TC jazz scene, like the Twin Cities metro area more broadly, is still majority white.

While the socioeconomic conditions of the Twin Cities are unique, and may not necessarily exist in other locales, they do offer an effective site within which to study the effects of the institutionalization of jazz. If jazz becomes increasingly reliant on

institutional support and grant funding in order to survive, an ethnography in a state generally lauded for its support of the arts provides an effective means to investigate the effects of this emerging path for jazz musicians. If jazz continues to undergo a gentrification of sorts, where access to a historically African American art form is afforded only to those with the economic privilege to devote time, money, and energy to studying "America's classical music," the socioeconomic conditions of the Twin Cities allows for study on how this plays out on a ground level.

Chapter Breakdown

Each chapter of this dissertation will speak to the broader theme of locating jazz within twenty-first century American society following jazz's institutionalization. As chapter 1, this introductory chapter has provided the broader context for understanding jazz in the current moment, an overview of theory which informs this dissertation, and a justification for my methods and choice of the Twin Cities as the primary site of ethnographic fieldwork.

Chapter 2 examines Nicholas Payton and his "Black American Music" proclamation of 2011, in which Payton declared "jazz," as a genre label and music, to be dead. This controversy revealed how many respondents to Payton were uncomfortable talking about jazz's racial status and resorted to colorblind rhetoric in which white jazz critics have often trafficked. Following elucidation of Payton's argument and the responses to it, I then trace that history of white responses to Black solidarity in jazz through Jodi Melamed's (2011) theoretical lens of official anti-racisms. Though I focus on one moment in jazz discourse—the BAM controversy—I argue that the conversation

surrounding Payton's blog posts revealed that multiculturalist and colorblind rhetoric still had a strong presence in early 2010s jazz discourse and was perhaps exacerbated by the then in-vogue ideas of a "post-racial America" following the election of President Barack Obama.

Chapter 3 shifts to my ethnographic fieldwork site in the Twin Cities jazz scene by offering an anatomy of the scene. The purpose of this chapter is to employ thick description as a means of establishing the parameters of the scene, including its various venues, institutions, and occupational roles. This chapter also develops the concept of a loose tiers system for musicians, in which they unconsciously construct a hierarchy in the jazz scene, in addition to several different audience types based on level of commitment to jazz as a listener. I establish these structures to argue that there is what I call a normative path of development in which a jazz musician progresses and gradually develops increased levels of prestige in their local scene.

Chapter 4 examines how the institutionalization of jazz occurs at a local level by looking at formal institutions—such as high schools and universities, nonprofit organizations, grant agencies—and informal cultural formations—such as the weekly crowdfunded jazz series—in the Twin Cities jazz scene. This chapter also provides a more detailed discussion on the ways institutionalization has facilitated a sacralization of jazz and the impact of these processes on the socioeconomic and cultural status of jazz. As I argue, though institutions and the sacralization processes they entail go a long way toward musicians in the Twin Cities having the ability to be supported both economically

and creatively for their art, they also raise questions of who is able to have access to jazz, especially in highly stratified areas, in terms of race, like Minnesota.

Chapter 5 examines more closely the popular imaginary of jazz, this time focusing on the persistent trope that "jazz is dead." I analyze this popular misconception through discussion of the group BadBadNotGood (BBNG), who shot to viral fame while blaspheming jazz's sacred figures and its education system. Coverage in general music publications of BBNG has consisted of narratives that proclaim jazz to be a dead art form, against which the young, all-white, Canadian jazz and hip-hop group is offered as a fresh alternative despite their rejection by the jazz community. By analyzing BBNG's success and reception among younger listening audiences that are not normally attuned to jazz, I interrogate how a group considered to be outside a culture, banished from the distinction of a genre label, can still have an effect on how that culture and genre is received more broadly.

Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, continues discussion of the popular imaginary of jazz by examining the popular success of Kamasi Washington, who contrary to BBNG, has lauded jazz credentials among critics, thanks in part to his long-term participation in the local jazz scene of Los Angeles. Additionally, Washington's music is rooted in the progressive Black liberation politics of much 1960s and '70s jazz, as opposed to the rejection of jazz history which BBNG embodies. In this chapter, I examine how Washington's sudden popular success resulted from his collaborations with non-jazz artists (most notably, with popular hip-hop and electronic musicians Kendrick Lamar and Flying Lotus, respectively). I then conclude the dissertation by discussing jazz

meanings that have accumulated in recent years, and which I have spent the dissertation detailing, to argue that though things often appear bleak, jazz's cultural meaning is not fixed, but is constantly taking new forms.

Chapter 2: Black American Music and Racial Discourse in Jazz

In late 2011, trumpet player Nicholas Payton became the latest in a long line of public figures to declare jazz to be dead. As he announced the death of jazz, Payton attributed it to a white-controlled music industry that has not allowed Black expression on its own terms. In particular, Payton considered the word "jazz" itself to be tainted—a label forced on musicians to separate them from popular music. As an alternative, Payton suggested his own term for the music he plays: "Black American Music" (BAM), a term rejected by some white musicians and critics because it was seen as racially exclusionary. Though Payton did not directly blame the institutions of jazz education or non-profit foundations like Jazz at Lincoln Center, in the resulting conversation, these issues were commonly raised by musicians as possible causes of jazz's decline.

The discourse surrounding this event revealed competing ideologies of racial particularity and universalism that have occurred throughout jazz's history, but which were given new relevance at a time when Barack Obama's presidential election inspired the idea of a "post-racial society" among many (mostly white) Americans. The controversy also showed how the institutionalization of jazz affected racial discourse among jazz musicians, critics, and audiences. As I argue, the erasure of Blackness from jazz has more recently occurred not so much through overt theft,[7] as was the case in the Jazz Age and Swing Era of the 1920s and '30s-40s respectively, but through

[7] This is, of course, not to suggest that cultural appropriation from Black musicians does not still occur.

institutionalized liberal ideologies of official anti-racism where multiculturalism, rather than racial particularity, is held as an ideal. In the case of BAM, Payton's insistence on naming the music as foremost *Black* clashed with multiculturalist values that have become entrenched in the institutions and discourse of jazz, resulting in Payton's proclamations being viewed by adherents to these multiculturalist ideologies as anti-progress and non-inclusive.

In this chapter, I analyze the BAM controversy and what it revealed about the state of jazz, especially with regards to its racial status, in the early 2010s. First, I provide an overview of Payton's argument, in which he declared jazz to be dead. Next, I show how the concepts of white fragility and colorblind racism are reflected in the responses to Payton's proclamation. Then, I trace a history of jazz's institutionalization since the 1960s, showing how official ideologies of anti-racism via institutionalization have served to marginalize claims to Black racial particularity in jazz. Finally, I close with a consideration of how Payton's reignition of this racial discourse in jazz ultimately moves the conversation about race in jazz forward.

Nicholas Payton and Black American Music

On November 27, 2011, Payton posted the first in a series of confrontational entries on his blog in which he announced "jazz," as a term and genre of music, as dead (Payton 2011a). The opening of his initial post, "On Why Jazz Isn't Cool Anymore," is as follows:[8]

[8] All of Payton's original prose, including grammatical errors and line breaks, are kept intact.

> Jazz died in 1959.
> There maybe cool individuals who say they play Jazz, but ain't shit cool about Jazz as a whole.
> Jazz died when cool stopped being hip.
> Jazz was a limited idea to begin with.
> Jazz is a label that was forced upon the musicians.
> The musicians should've never accepted that idea.
> Jazz ain't shit.
> Jazz is incestuous.
> Jazz separated itself from American popular music.
> Big mistake.
> The music never recovered.

In this opening, Payton refers to 1959, which is considered by jazz historians and fans as a watermark year of influential releases (Holaway 2015), most notably including John Coltrane's *Giant Steps*, Dave Brubeck's *Time Out*, Ornette Coleman's *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, and Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue*.[9] Payton mentions all four artists as the post goes on, and later refers to 1959 as "the coolest year in jazz." Additionally, Payton ties jazz's death to when it stopped being "cool" in 1959, remarking "the very fact that so many people are holding on to this idea of what Jazz is supposed to be is exactly what makes it not cool." He continues, saying that "People are holding on to an idea that died long ago," as he implores readers to "Let it go, people, let it go." Though Payton lauds these four artists—he says that "John Coltrane is a bad cat, but Jazz stopped being cool in 1959"—he views the fixation on jazz of the past as "necrophilia," saying that "Jazz ain't cool, it's cold like necrophilia. Stop fucking the dead and embrace the living." Referring

[9] Charles Mingus's *Mingus Ah Um* is often added to these influential albums. 1959 is considered such a landmark year that Chris Bates, a Twin Cities bassist and educator, taught an entire college course on that year alone. In my interview with him, Bates added albums by Bo Diddley, John Lee Hooker, João Gilberto, and Bill Evans to the list of influential records of that year.

to the Biblical story, Payton states "Lot's wife turned to a pillar of salt from looking back. Jazz is dead. Miles ahead."[10]

Though throughout the post Payton oscillates between various points, the central thesis of Payton's post is that jazz has revered the past at the expense of its present and future, causing it to become uncool, and therefore dead. Jazz was never anything more than a "marketing ploy that serves an elite few," where "the elite make all the money while they tell the true artists it's cool to be broke." "Occupy Jazz!", Payton declares, drawing on the then active Occupy Wall Street movement. Expounding on this idea of jazz as a marketing label, Payton says "Jazz ain't music, it's marketing, and bad marketing at that. It has never been, nor will it ever be, music." As such, "If you think Jazz is a style of music, you'll never begin to understand." As he rejects the jazz label, Payton claims his own identity as a musician, referring to himself as a "Postmodern New Orleans musician." Payton also situates himself within a lineage and retroactively rejects the jazz label on behalf of those that came before him, saying that "My ancestors didn't play jazz, they played Traditional, Modern, and Avant-garde New Orleans music." Payton then connects his rejection of the jazz label with racialized oppression of Black Americans, ultimately concluding that like jazz, "America is a lie." He says that his ancestors, "the masters," were victims of a colonialist mentality, a mentality he seeks to rid himself of. Because the masters "opened the door" for Payton, it is his duty to reexamine how Black artists are treated by the music industry. The apparent first step was

[10] The "Miles ahead" contains a double meaning—it acts both as an impetus to look toward the future, but also as a reference to Miles Davis's 1957 album *Miles Ahead*.

to discard the label "jazz," a marketing ploy that had been holding Payton and other musicians back. Anticipating blowback from his post, Payton says "And if you find yourself getting mad, it's probably because you know Jazz is dead. Why get upset if what I'm saying doesn't ring true?"

If the semi-poetic nature of Payton's initial post was at times difficult to interpret, the following post, "An Open Letter To My Dissenters On Why Jazz Isn't Cool Anymore," from December 2nd, left less room for ambiguity (2011b).[11] Here, Payton more clearly defines the crux of his argument, that the term "JAZZ" itself (Payton first insists on capitalizing or using all-caps when typing out the name of the genre, and in later posts will self-censor the word to either "JA**" or "J-word") was the target of his initial take-down, not the music itself. As he hinted in the previous post, "JAZZ," according to Payton, was a term forced upon musicians who played a certain style of music. In Payton's view, being called a "JAZZ" musician should be analogous to being called a racial slur (2011b). For Payton, the issue is the compartmentalization of Black artistry through genre labels such as "jazz." He claims "jazz died" because it had been cut off from other, non-jazz forms of Black musical creativity, particularly rock, R&B and soul, and hip-hop. By re-labeling his music as "Black American Music," Payton attempts to bring it closer to Black popular music forms which had been artificially separated from jazz through racist genre definitions of the music industry. Payton seeks to align himself aesthetically with artists such as Earth, Wind & Fire, George Clinton, J Dilla, and other

[11] Sometime in either late 2017 or early 2018, the posts immediately following Payton's initial "On Why Jazz Isn't Cool Anymore" were removed from Payton's blog. Cached versions of these posts were obtained from the Wayback Machine at archive.org.

musicians that might not be considered "jazz" in the conventional sense (2011c). While claims that jazz has declined in popularity are easy to make, Payton argues this decline is a result of segregationist racialized labeling.

Payton directly links the label jazz to oppression of Black Americans when he writes, "'Jazz' is an oppressive colonialist slave term and I want no parts of it. If Jazz wasn't a slave, why did Ornette try to free it? Jazz is not music, it is an idea that hasn't served any of us well." Here, Payton directly connects his efforts with notions of freedom that have been well-documented in jazz scholarship, especially regarding free jazz (Kodat 2003; Saul 2003; Fischlin and Heble 2004; Monson 2007; Peters 2009; Morris 2012). Payton later calls jazz a "label that was designed to marginalize Black musicians and cut them off from their brilliance." (2011b). This is followed by Payton's self-identification that introduces the term that he would come to adopt to describe his music and those of his musical influences: Black American Music, or BAM!

> The music was just fine before it was called Jazz and will be just fine without the name.
> There is nothing to be afraid of except yourselves.
> I am Nicholas Payton and I play Black American Music.
> BAM!

Additionally, Payton defends himself and his words by declaring that, unlike his dissenters, at least he was doing something to try to "save this music" (Payton 2011b). Payton presents his activity as a matter of breaking the status quo, one where Black music, especially the music referred to as jazz, remains in a position of subservience to a white-controlled music industry.

Payton's ideas about jazz as a label employed by the music industry to compartmentalize Black music and musicians is one that is shared by his musical ancestors, though they would have been in less of a position to speak as overtly as Payton does here. Payton directly positions his opinion about jazz into a lineage of previous Black musicians when he writes,

> What do Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Max Roach, Abbey Lincoln, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Gary Bartz and myself share in common? A disdain for Jazz. I am reintroducing a talk to the table of a conversation that my ancestors wanted to have a long time ago. It is on their shoulders that I stand. (2011b)

By "a disdain for Jazz," Payton refers to those artist's dislike of the compartmentalization of the term "jazz." As Payton expresses, he is by no means the first to suggest that jazz as a term should be abandoned; rather, he is "reintroducing" a conversation that many others have picked up at various points in the music's history. For instance, Sidney Bechet, also from New Orleans, has said that jazz is a name white people have given the music (Monson 1996, 102). Several musicians, most notably Duke Ellington (Porter 2002, 36), have resisted the jazz label, with some like Anthony Braxton going so far as to also suggest alternative labels such as "Great Black Music" (Austerlitz 2005, 3). In that sense, Payton's attempt to rename "jazz," a label given by a white music industry, to something that strongly asserts the music's Blackness is not new, but the context is. Namely, Payton's proclamation occurred in the midst of an imagined "post-racial" America following the election of President Obama, who was still in his first term when Payton introduced the term BAM. In the years since Obama's inauguration, it is easy to see that idealization for what it was, as a delusion, but at the time the idea was certainly believed

by many, especially those who have the luxury of not experiencing racism in their daily lives. Payton preemptively addresses these ideas when he tells the reader "we don't live in a post-racial society… don't think we've crossed over because we have a Black POTUS" (2011b).

At the bottom of the next post, "An Open Letter To Marcus Strickland And His Facebook Friends" (2011c), Payton clarified that in his initial post, he did not mean to suggest that "the music formerly known as JAZZ should adopt that title [of BAM]." Rather, in Payton's words, "I am simply making a proclamation of who I am based on my roots." But because so many people asked him what he thought "the music formerly known as JAZZ should be called," he offered his suggestion in a section titled "Black American, Post Modern Manifesto."

> First, I think we should acknowledge its origin: Black. But it's more than that. Secondly, it's also American. Though it is a Black invention, without Whites, Latinos, Native Americans, Jews or any of the cultures that make America what it is, it would not be possible. And of course lastly–it's music.
> To that I say, I am Nicholas Payton and I play Black American Music.
> Black American Music was created by Blacks, but it belongs to everyone.
> BAM!
> Does that answer your question?

In later posts, Payton would continue to self-censor when referring to jazz (e.g. "JA**") while also using the name "Black American Music" to refer to music going back to New Orleans Brass Bands (2011d).

The BAM controversy was not the first time Payton called jazz dead. In a post from more two years before the BAM posts, "On This Whole 'Death of Jazz' Thing…," Payton (2009a) questions whether jazz was ever alive or if it would even be worth saving,

writing that jazz "has most certainly been on life support for quite some time. Personally, I think somebody should to sneak in the room and euthanize it." In a post from a few months later, "More on the Death of Jazz…," (2009b), Payton attributes the death of jazz not to the music industry, but to close-minded people who insist on defining jazz as a set of stylistic markers.

> Where jazz went wrong to me is when it became a thing of always having to be a walking 4:4 on the bass, and spang-a-lang on the ride cymbal. That idea didn't even exist when Louis Armstrong's Hot Fives were recorded. Duke's music always explored all manner of groove. The early cats were much more open then latter generations were about what jazz should be. Jazz became too much of a "thing", an idea. Something that made cats want to break "jazz" away from itself. The problem is sometimes that breaking away meant a breaking away from the fundamentals.
>
> Who killed jazz? Jazz killed itself and the only thing that will resurrect it is cats swingin' soulfully in all manner of expression available in the arsenal of information we have at our disposal.

The fault here, then, is that jazz has limited itself by defining its stylistic parameters too tightly—insisting on certain standards of groove (walking bass lines and ride cymbal swing) rather than remaining open minded like past musicians such as Duke Ellington and John Coltrane. When Payton says, "jazz killed itself," he speaks more explicitly in a musician's language about the intangible qualities of swing, so it seems that he is speaking more directly to musicians and therefore implicating musicians themselves in the death of jazz. A few years later, Payton would move on from blaming other musicians to implicating larger structural forces such as the American music industry in jazz's death.

Though Payton did not name jazz education or other institutions of jazz in his initial blog posts, many of the responding blog posts, either in the body of the post or in

the comment sections, brought up this aspect as a potential cause of jazz's decline. For instance, one commenter wrote, "I also believe that 'jazz' education is partially responsible for much of the stagnation of the music, because they teach that jazz is played a certain way" (Carey 2011). Another wrote, addressing the cries of reverse racism, "leave it to sensitive rich white kids who have studied 'jazz' in collegiate institutions under the tutelage of people who have never been high-level performers or innovators themselves to complain about 'racism' in jazz" (Carey 2011). One more commenter said, "On top of that you have colleges turning out scads of musicians; Also big business! What is the racial makeup of these students? I'm curious if anyone has a figure. My guess is at least 70% white" (Colligan 2011). Here, jazz education forms part of the background to this discussion, a factor that influences jazz's decline due to its ever-present role in whitening jazz, even if the conversation is ultimately not about jazz education per se. Jazz education is especially informative in the way it reflects the racial and class privilege of those more commonly playing jazz, which in turn affects responses to Payton's proclamations.

Response to Payton

Following his assertion that jazz is "Black American Music," Payton received much blowback from jazz fans and commenters on the Internet, including accusations of racism for naming jazz Black American Music. For instance, the comment sections to George Colligan's (2011) post featured repeated attacks that Payton was a racist, most coming from the jazz writer Brent Black and with several others from anonymous commenters. In the blog post itself, Colligan was mostly sympathetic to Payton's cause,

especially as it related to the unique racial history of jazz—though he ultimately disagreed with renaming the music. Later in the post, Colligan, a white jazz pianist, educator, and blogger, critiqued a review of Payton's most recent album release, *Bitches*, by Brent Black, also a white critic. Black dismissed *Bitches* for lacking originality as he also criticized Payton's singing voice.[12] In the review, Black wrote, "[Payton] uses the indignities suffered by the true pioneers of this AMERICAN art form in order to gain attention for his less than notable career" (Colligan 2011). Here, Black dismisses Payton's BAM proclamation as nothing more than a grab for attention, with Black even going so far as to emphasize, in all caps, the American-ness of jazz as an art form (a move Colligan pointed out was blatantly disrespectful toward Payton).

In the comments section to the post, Black defended himself against Colligan's critique, and further against Payton, by arguing that Payton was a racist for dismissing his review. Per Black's quotation of Payton in the comments (Payton's original post was deleted), Payton wrote: "This piece is hilarious on a certain level because it's so not true. It's a clear reflection of the writer's obvious jealousy and anger. I mean, the hubris of a White man to give me a history lesson on a music that I'm an established master in" (Colligan 2011). Black took offense to this, saying that Payton's identification of his race was "racism 101, case closed." In other comments, Black said he was intent on calling out misogyny (due to the album's title, *Bitches*) and reverse racism, like that which he experienced from Payton. Though most users in the comments argued against Black,

[12] There are striking similarities here to Ira Gitler's negative review of Abbey Lincoln's 1961 album *Straight Ahead* being couched in criticism of her singing (Porter 2002, 176).

some commenters, particularly anonymous ones, echoed Black's sentiments that Payton was a reverse racist. One commenter wrote a lengthy post attempting to rebut Payton's argument that due to a lack of systemic power, Black people could not be racist.

> From reading Payton's posts, and the fact that he assigns certain inherent traits across the board to the white race and then because of that engages in using discriminating language towards whites based on his prejudices he is in fact a racist himself, for this is the true definition of racism, look it up in any of the world's dictionaries from china to africa to the US. But everyone knows this, I shouldn't have had to explain all of that. Sure, Payton plays music with white people, but like many people he's racist when he chooses to be.

This commenter further wrote that while Payton made good points, ultimately, he was being "very divisive" and "does harbor racist views of white people." This commenter concluded that if Payton views jazz as a racist term, he should not be playing at jazz clubs, a sentiment another commenter echoed, writing "Nicholas Payton should stop playing at all jazz venues unless he can convince the owners to change their names from jazz to BAM" (Colligan 2011).

Payton responded to comments that he was being racist in a post titled "On Why Nicholas Payton Is Not A Racist" (2011e) while also clarifying the racial definitions of his re-naming of JA** music inherent in the term "Black American Music." He wrote,

> BAM is the acronym I developed for the music formerly known as 'JA**.' It stands for Black American Music. We wish to credit the creators of this art form by acknowledging that this is Black music. Because it's Black music doesn't mean people of all races can't play it. To the contrary, BAM is for everyone. (Payton 2011e)

Here, Payton continues to assert that his new name for the music is not just for himself, but for a history of music that includes other Black artists. However, he also is sure to point out that Black American Music is not a divisive or limiting term, as he had been

charged, but an inclusive one, as "BAM is for everyone." In this sense, Payton's use of a racially particular designation does not prohibit it from being inclusive, lending credence to the idea that universalism and cultural particularism can co-exist (Austerlitz 2005, ix). Because BAM in its naming is not race neutral, however, it is received as exclusionary by adherents to colorblind and multiculturalist ideologies, such as the (largely white) respondents who rejected Payton's BAM manifesto.

White Fragility

The BAM controversy echoes many of the sentiments that have long been common in racial discourse between white people and people of color, particularly the unwillingness of the former to acknowledge the extent of racism experienced by the latter. The above commenter's point to emphasize the more inclusive "AMERICAN" rather than Payton's more particular "Black American" call to mind more recent rebuttals of Black Lives Matter that insist "All Lives Matter," a rhetorical move that accomplishes nothing but to deny Black struggle and the realities of racism (Adams 2015; Viney 2016).

Responses such as that of Brent Black also call to mind Robin DiAngelo's (2011) concept of white fragility, an idea that found wider circulation in response to these claims of All Lives Matter. Per DiAngelo, white fragility results from the inability of white people, due to insulated racial environments, to handle racial stress. She writes, "White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (DiAngelo 2011, 54). For critics and jazz listeners such as Brent Black, even the mere discussion of jazz's racial status and history of suppression of Black artists caused defensiveness. One commenter on Colligan's blog apparently found the mere discussion of race so intolerable that they wrote that they were

disappointed that Colligan ruined his blog and hoped Colligan would "get back to talking about music" and not "this pointless ancillary shit" (Colligan 2011).

Color-blind racism

The responses of Black and other commenters to Payton's BAM proclamation can also be considered a result of what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2014) describes as color-blind racism. For Bonilla-Silva, color-blind racism is a racial ideology that "explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics" (2014, 14). This racial ideology avoids overt racist discrimination, preferring coded language while denying that racism is a widespread problem. This creates what Bonilla-Silva calls "racism without racists"—a "white habitus" wherein very few white people would profess to be racist or to hate a certain group of people, but where most would through their actions and ideologies still serve to uphold white dominance. For Bonilla-Silva, the dominance of colorblind racism as the foremost racial ideology in the U.S. was further cemented following the election of President Obama in 2008. The idea that with Obama's election the U.S. became "post-racial" made it all the more difficult to challenge white hegemony (2014, 202).

In insisting on race-neutral descriptors for jazz, Payton's detractors adhere to the tenets of color-blindness described by Bonilla-Silva. They also follow what Bonilla-Silva terms abstract liberalism, where equal opportunity is favored by whites in concept only, without endorsement of any practical solutions to inequality (2014, 70). This allows whites to appear reasonable and moral by "not seeing race" and using race-neutral justifications to avoid challenging white hegemony. For instance, whites who oppose affirmative action do so on the grounds that race should not be a determining factor—an

ideal that prohibits any practical solution to structural racism. Some go so far as to claim that affirmative action is equivalent to reverse racism (2014, 143).

If Payton's intervention to re-assert jazz as Black was motivated by a belief that the jazz label unfairly discriminated against Black musicians, then his move can be read as seeking a more practical solution (the re-naming of jazz) to the problem of inequality (the poor status of Black music and musicians labeled as jazz). Though it is debatable the extent to which Payton's solution if widely adopted would affect such change, it is at least a practical attempt to redress a history of exploitation of Black jazz musicians by a white-controlled music industry. The insistence of Payton's detractors to remain race-neutral denies that practical solution. As Bonilla-Silva (2014) writes of color-blind racism more broadly, such denials of practical solutions, even if based on theoretically laudable ideals (that we do not see race) do little but to ensure that the status quo remains. Furthermore, objections to Payton often latched on to the idea that because he was talking about race, Payton was a "reverse racist." If color-blind racism is the dominant racial ideology, those who do not adhere to a race neutral position but rather point out where racism exists will clash with that ideology, forcing a defensive response characteristic of white fragility.

Payton's series of blog posts initiated a storm of controversy within the jazz community, where the topic would be passionately debated well into 2012. Though he did not directly attribute jazz's death to any particular institution, but rather to the music industry, American society, and jazz discourse more broadly, Payton's need to reassert jazz's Blackness can be read as a result of decades of institutionalization that has resulted

in jazz being presented as foremost multicultural rather than culturally particular. If jazz is dead, then institutionalization is at least implicated in its death. Moreover, the BAM debate illustrated the enduring discomfort with and avoidance of discussing issues of race well into the twenty-first century in the U.S., even when pertaining to an art form as historically racialized as "JAZZ" music. This unwillingness to tackle racial truths (that jazz is a Black American music, for example) is a byproduct of ideologies of neoliberal multiculturalism and color-blind racism within the United States. Moreover, the debate follows a long history of similar debates in jazz discourse that have occurred while operating under various versions of official anti-racist ideologies, which will now be discussed.

Jazz in the Era of Official Anti-Racism

As I argue throughout this dissertation, jazz in the 2010s finds itself in a new place culturally and socioeconomically following decades of gradual institutionalization, wherein jazz has been increasingly accepted into the official institutions of society such as NEA funding, public and private universities, and corporate sponsorship. In this dissertation I primarily focus on the effects of this institutionalization and the shifts it has enacted upon jazz, especially on a local level. However, it is first necessary to trace this history of institutionalization to show how official ideologies of multiculturalism affect cultural production and racial discourse in jazz. As I argue, these conversations inform the moment in time, in late 2011, when Payton felt it necessary to affirm jazz's essential Blackness, and they inform jazz discourse surrounding race more generally, discourse which also manifests in local scenes. Though the conversation initiated by Payton took

time at a place when the idea of a "post-racial" America was particularly in vogue, the idea of jazz transcending race, which Payton pushed back against, is not new. Rather, debates about jazz's racial identity, and the tension between universalism and racial particularity, have continually emerged over the last several decades.

In this section, I trace this discourse about jazz's racial identity through the lens of what Jodi Melamed (2011) identifies as ideologies of official anti-racisms, which include racial liberalism (mid-1940s-60s), liberal multiculturalism (1980s-90s), and neoliberal multiculturalism (2000s). To summarize, as the U.S. transitioned following WWII from a sustained period of state-sanctioned racism to a now officially state sanctioned *anti*-racism, it could claim to be the great leader of equality for all people. The U.S.'s now officially anti-racist society would be projected to third world countries to promote the advantages of capitalism over Soviet socialism. However, as Melamed points out, these forms of official anti-racisms "disconnected race from material conditions" (2011) and elevated racism to a moral, social, and cultural issue that could be corrected simply by adopting these official anti-racist ideologies. The reality of racism's reinforced existence as an inherent structural condition of U.S. capitalism then goes unacknowledged.

Melamed positions these three eras of official anti-racism, all of which seek to reinforce American capitalist reach, in contrast to radical anti-racism, which seeks equality by critiquing capitalism and seeking deep change to society. In the new era of multiculturalism, however, there is no patience for anything resembling race-based nationalism, and those radical movements are decried by official ideologies as preventing progress towards equality. Not only do these radical movements have trouble fighting

deep structural change, but they are dismissed as backwards and anti-progress due to their critique of capitalism and acknowledgment of racial oppression. In this sense, these various forms of multiculturalism act as the hegemonic power suppressing radical anti-racist movements that do not work in conjunction with U.S. capitalism. In my view, radical anti-racist organizations, movements, and musicians in jazz and Black American music have been well discussed by scholars for the work they do in "sounding dissonance" toward hegemonic power structures, as Ajay Heble and others have examined (Heble 2000; Rustin and Tucker 2008; Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2013). However, less often have the workings of ideologies of official anti-racism in jazz discourse been interrogated, as I seek to do here.

Melamed's critiques of official anti-racism have relevance to jazz for several reasons. For one, jazz criticism largely developed during the eras that Melamed describes, so it is natural that these ideologies would become entrenched in jazz discourse, particularly as this discourse was largely shaped by white critics. Additionally, the ideologies described by Melamed have been conceived of as liberal in their apparent racial progressiveness, but they ultimately serve to uphold white hegemony by endorsing the status quo of American capitalism. Likewise, many white jazz critics have fashioned themselves as liberals—and in many cases were indeed considerably more left-leaning than their Classical music critical peers—even as they have denied the realities of racism while upholding white control in the jazz music industry (Kofsky 1998; Monson 2007; Rustin and Tucker 2008; Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2013). As these discourses in jazz criticism have formed the foundation of what values are attached to jazz, it is no surprise

that they would continue to influence reactions, especially by white musicians and fans, to discourse about race in jazz. Furthermore, these ever-evolving ideologies of official anti-racism are strengthened by jazz's institutionalization in official organizations such as the NEA, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and university jazz programs, organizations which would serve to reproduce these ideologies that elide the continued effects of structural racism.

Racial Liberalism

Though the African American origins and cultural history of jazz are usually undisputed by scholars, discourse has also regularly worked to erase a Black racial particularity in jazz when critics emphasize the music's "democratic" or "universal" nature (Jarenwattananon 2011, Colligan 2011, Carey 2011, Chinen 2012, Thomas 2012). The desire to promote a colorblind vision of jazz emerged in the era of what Melamed calls racial liberalism (2011). As the United States advanced its interests overseas during the Cold War, it needed to promote the U.S. as an ideal site of democracy by utilizing official discourses of formal anti-racism. In jazz, this was manifested in the State Department tours in the 1950s of well-known jazz musicians overseas, especially in South America and Africa. Though this activity of jazz musicians abroad led to important intercultural collaborations (Kelley 2012; Roberts 1999; Stanyek 2004), it was also attacked by some musicians participating in these tours—most notably, Louis Armstrong—for what it was: a cynical act of imperialism to promote democracy while the U.S. ignored, or at best paid basic lip service to, systemic racial inequality at home (Monson 2007).

In jazz criticism in the 1950s and ‘60s, racial liberalism took the form of critics lambasting the Black nationalist sentiments of jazz musicians for their apparent separatist or reverse racist positions due to their lack of adherence to a colorblind ideology. Infamously, a 1961 panel of *DownBeat* jazz critics led by Ira Gitler interrogated Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln for the musicians’ insistence on advancing a political statement in their music (Kofsky 1998; Monson 2007). Though the panel started as Gitler defending his poor review of Lincoln’s album *Straight Ahead* (in which Gitler blasted Lincoln’s singing while maintaining that his opinion was not motivated by any disagreement with the singer’s politics), it descended into an investigation into racial prejudice in jazz—that is, racial prejudice against white musicians, often termed “Crow Jim” (Kofsky 1998; Porter 2002; Monson 2007). The panel of critics complained about what they felt were discriminatory hiring practices by Black musicians against white musicians, asserting that talent alone with no consideration of race should determine a musician’s career—ignoring decades of music industry practices that disproportionately gave white musicians greater stature and economic success. Black musicians collaborating with other Black musicians to produce expressions of Civil Rights solidarity threatened this liberal desire for colorblindness, a colorblindness that by the nature of racial liberalism and its unwillingness to acknowledge structural racism was favorable to white musicians and critics.

True to racial liberalism’s rejection of monoculturalism, Black jazz musicians that have taken an emphatically Black nationalist stance have been routinely criticized, questioned, and even ostracized by white jazz critics who preferred to think of jazz in

universal, musically autonomous terms (Kofsky 1998; Baraka 1999; Heble 2000; Monson 2007; Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2013). For one, the jazz critic's close relationship with the also largely white-controlled music industry gave them extra incentive to obscure the social relations and political undertones of the music, qualities that were deemed to not sell well to white audiences (Kofsky 1998, 30). Furthermore, though Black jazz musicians themselves may have had very strong political leanings, the music industry forced them to either downplay these associations themselves or to transmit such messages in more covert manners in order that their music not suffer critical backlash and subsequent failure in the marketplace, as occurred with Lincoln's *Straight Ahead*. That is not to say that there were not genuine expressions of universalism among jazz musicians in the civil rights era and beyond, such as the spiritual transcendence expressed by late-period John Coltrane, but this does indicate that those sentiments were given market space for a reason, in that they were more favorably received in a white-controlled music industry that reproduced contemporary discourses of racial liberalism. Strategies of universalism as employed by politically active Black musicians, however, differ in nature than those employed by music industry figures and critics. The former aligned with Black nationalist strategies of the 1960s, particularly the ideologies of the Nation of Islam, which sought to align the world's subordinate peoples—be they from Africa, Asia, or North America—in order to form a global non-white majority to combat colonialism and oppression (Monson 2007, 133; Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2013, 149), and the Ahmadiyya Muslim community (Kelley 2012, 94). That is, these expressions of universalism acted as a challenge to a status quo defined

by oppression of non-white people. The use of universalist and multiculturalist discourses for jazz by government institutions and institutions of criticism such as *DownBeat*, however, reflect Melamed's description of official anti-racisms, in that they maintain "systems of heteronormativity, political economic normativity, and U.S. national cultural normativity by limiting which social representations of difference have appeared reasonable, possible, or desirable" (Melamed 2011, Loc 104). Expressions of Black nationalism or racial particularity in jazz, in this sense, were deemed not desirable, and thus suppressed by white critics and record label executives.

Liberal Multiculturalism

In the 1970s and '80s, the era described by Melamed as one of liberal multiculturalism, jazz studies increasingly found entrance into universities. Melamed analyzes liberal multiculturalism as it occurred in university literary departments, which were overhauled to adhere to this new form of liberal multiculturalism. By presenting texts that claimed to represent various ethnic minority groups, this ideology of liberal multiculturalism would further nurture the "white savior" complex that had been developing in the Cold War. Widespread, prevalent racism would appear to be a thing of the past; liberal students would feel content about their own multicultural outlook; and deeper structural problems still leading to racial inequality would go untreated. Jazz's entrance into the university coincided with this adoption of liberal multiculturalism in literary canons, as jazz initially entered the university through jazz courses taught by jazz musicians in African American studies programs (Porter 2002). This included a course taught by Sun Ra at the University of California-Berkeley in the 1970s as well as many

jazz musicians at the University of Massachusetts, most notably Reggie Workman (Langguth 2010; Porter 2002).

Workman's Collective Black Artists (CBA) was importantly one of the first jazz or Black music collectives to receive significant institutional funding, as by this point in the early 1970s, the National Endowment for the Arts had begun funding, though to a small degree, jazz organizations as a way to preserve what was increasingly seen as an American art form in danger of being lost (Porter 2002, 223). The NEA's funding of jazz can be read as in agreement with strategies of liberal multiculturalism, where cultural and racial traditions are represented and contained, but not allowed to affect actual change to material relations. In this case, the CBA presented jazz in terms befitting to the aesthetic standards of Western classical music, which the NEA would be more comfortable funding. The apparent superiority of these hegemonic aesthetic standards would then not be questioned, but rather reinforced by including multicultural forms of music such as jazz under that umbrella. In addition, in a time of increasing decline in the market value of jazz, this turn to a reliance on government and university funding can be read as a result of an era of de-industrialization which splintered a college educated middle class from a floundering and racialized working class (Newfield 2008, 4). If a college degree was necessary to keep afloat in a changing U.S. economy in the 1970s, a dependence on the university was also being developed within the jazz world. Labor as defined by musicians working performing gigs was increasingly less likely to sustain a jazz musician in a declining market, and thus a turn to the university as a central site of cultural and economic production was necessary.

As the 1970s and ’80s progressed, jazz studies expanded in the form of performance programs in university music departments across the country. In the university, jazz acts as a form of representation of difference when compared to Western art music while also capitulating to the concert-hall standards of classical music (Berliner 1992; Lehman 2007; Prouty 2013). Following the classical conservatory and musicological tradition of a focus on great artistic works that could stand the test of time on the strength of their inherent genius, the university institutionalization of jazz has included a similar strategy. Great standards of jazz are codified in official (no longer bootleg) fake books such as *The Real Book*, originally produced at Berklee College of Music (Kernfeld 2006), as well as in jury evaluations, end of semester ensemble performances, and big band repertoires, all usually without accompanying relevant historical context (Wilf 2014). For example, Sonny Rollins’ “Airegin” is learned for its melody, chord progression, and form—not for its statement of solidarity with African freedom movements (indicated in the backwards spelling of “Nigeria”).

The placement of jazz in a conservatory thus often sees things like “artistic merit” and “individual skill” posited as supposedly autonomous qualities that can be evaluated on their own terms—obviously hardly the case. As Georgina Born notes in her ethnography of the avant-garde composer’s society IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique), even the supposedly sterile and detached environment of the musical conservatory is a force of cultural production (Born 1995, 23), though the musical material taught in these institutions is presented as not needing any accompanying cultural associations. This decontextualizing process of

institutionalization becomes even more troubling when applied to the music of a subaltern group, in this case African American jazz musicians. Though Black cultural and musical aesthetics have long been held up as the ideal for musicians of any color to strive for in producing "good" jazz (Monson 1995; Kofsky 1998; Lewis 2004), these aesthetics are also often detached from their cultural and social context, allowing for advocates of colorblind ideologies of jazz to argue that so long as these aesthetic standards are met, skin color does not matter. Grammy nominations and *DownBeat* reader polls have regularly confirmed that color does matter, as the white Stan Getz regularly took home "best saxophonist" titles over his Black peers, and Dave Brubeck received a Time cover story before any of his Black peers, which angered many (Porter 2002, 119). As long as critics championed the Black aesthetic, however, they could dismiss accusations of prejudice, particularly in an era of deep racism where simply praising a Black artist or covering Black music in the first place was viewed as progressive and liberal. In Ingrid Monson's words, "to erase that aesthetic history in the name of universalism, many contend, is a whitewash that allows white people to appropriate black cultural forms with impunity" (Monson 2007, 70). She continues:

> Yet, as in all things pertaining to race in the United States, the idea of the modern artist was a double-edged sword. If it enabled African American musicians to partially break out of a race-based, second-class citizenship by appealing to merit and genius, it also provided a rhetoric through which white musicians could insist that the music be understood as colorblind and dismiss those who emphasized its black heritage as reverse racists. This basic discursive framework has shaped the way in which debates over race and jazz have been argued about since the mid-twentieth century. (Monson 2007, 70)

Eventually, the removal of relevant context from these aesthetics would progress to the point where these aesthetics could be recalled without any specific reference to blackness, to where these qualities could be held as truly autonomous and colorblind, achievable by any musician willing to commit the required time in the practice room. This deracination process benefits the university conservatory, which seeks greater inclusion, but often occurs at the expense of important social and cultural context. In this sense, in addition to their emulation of the Western classical conservatory model, university jazz programs closely follow the canon established in the 1980s by controversial trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and the critics Stanley Crouch and Albert Murray.

Much has been written of the problems inherent in the attempts of Marsalis, Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC), and Ken Burns to canonize jazz (Monson 1996; Heble 2000; Peters 2009; Rustin and Tucker 2008; McMullen 2008; Gioia 2011; Porter 2012; Washburne 2012). Loren Kajikawa writes that even as Marsalis and Crouch worked to present a vision of jazz rooted in African American cultural expressions that required hard work to master, Marsalis's presentation of jazz as "America's classical music" in fact "parallels the rhetoric of color blindness espoused by certain politicians and their allies in the 1980s" (Kajikawa 2012, 212). Where jazz discourse had previously celebrated color blindness as a way to justify white participation, or to promote democracy abroad in Cold War diplomacy programs, neo-traditionalist models of jazz in the 1980s adhered to contemporary ideologies of multiculturalism largely in order to

establish a classical legitimacy for jazz, and thus to receive institutional funding from the NEA and other sources (Heble 2000, 6).

While Marsalis, Crouch, and Murray, in a sense, succeeded at validating the African American cultural achievement of jazz via the establishment of canonic repertory, they did so in a manner that necessitated a de-emphasis of jazz's Black particularity and the re-emphasis of long entrenched notions that jazz could be "America's classical music." To do so required a focus on the apparently autonomous artistic merits of the music and a subsequent erasure of some of jazz's less comfortable political statements, as evidenced by the near total exclusion of free jazz from JALC's programming. Removing jazz from its cultural and social context allowed it to be placed and consumed safely in the concert hall, where it could then be given ample corporate sponsorship (Gabbard 1995, 2; Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz 2013, 122). Marsalis and his cohorts' canonizing efforts have also presented jazz as a masculine realm, with JALC continually criticized for its lack of female representation. This has trickled down to university jazz programs, which at best frequently skew overwhelmingly male (McMullen 2008), and at worst produce accusations of rampant sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender (Berliner 2017; Lazar 2017; Pellegrinelli 2017; Russonello 2017; Sevian 2017).

Furthermore, JALC's canonizing of acceptable and respectable jazz, supported by corporate sponsorship and government funding, has resulted in a containment of what jazz has been and could be stylistically. The jazz canon established through JALC is limited to a more easily consumable bebop-rooted repertoire of Miles Davis, Dizzy

Gillespie, and so forth, with no exposure to the political sentiments of Archie Shepp or Wadada Leo Smith, for example. In this sense, JALC enables "liberal multiculturalism to defeat critical multiculturalism" in the manner described by Melamed with regards to literary canon wars (Melamed 2011, 33). Marsalis and JALC may have given jazz an official presence in a manner previously not open to African American music, but they have done so in a manner that allows the music and its ability to grow and produce effective critique to be sterilized. In this sense, jazz's institutionalization via JALC fostered an official anti-racism in the form of liberal multiculturalism, but an anti-racism that is superficial and does not pose a serious, "critical" threat to the structures of U.S. capitalism. This kind of official anti-racism is anti-racism only in theory, as it does little to elide the effects of structural racism.

Neoliberal Multiculturalism

The third phase of official anti-racism described by Melamed, neoliberal multiculturalism, is one that relies on an ideology of neoliberal sovereignty, where wealth, mobility, and political power are accredited to multiculturalism and the lack of such official prestige is the own fault of monocultural societies. Anti-racism now becomes not only an official ideology, but a feature of global capitalism itself. An appearance of multiculturalism is an indicator of progress, even if often the only way to demonstrate this multiculturalism is to become a participant in global capitalism by consuming goods or adopting wholly Western outlooks. Nicholas Payton's demand that his and previous generations of Black musicians' music be referred to as BAM ran counter to a neoliberal multiculturalism that imagines the U.S. as not encumbered by racial divides. In this sense, Payton's insistence on labeling his music so monoculturally

as *Black* American Music was viewed as anti-progressive. For jazz to achieve staying power in a globalizing economy, it would need to shed its monocultural racial labels and embrace an ideology of neoliberal multiculturalism. Only then could jazz gain the institutional support needed to prevent the music from dying.

Payton's ability to speak out against unfair treatment of Black musicians where his musical ancestors were not was partially a result of the efforts of Wynton Marsalis in legitimizing jazz in official institutions. Previously, when Black artists such as Max Roach and Abby Lincoln spoke out against white co-opting and control of their music, their careers suffered for it—particularly Lincoln, whose career never recovered following the critical lambasting of her album *Straight Ahead*. While Payton was certainly met with discursive backlash among certain segments (a small but loud minority) of jazz critics and fans, he seems to have experienced little material repercussions for his outspokenness. This perhaps results from the cultural authority Payton has been able to hold following Marsalis's ascension to perhaps the most authoritative voice in the institutions and imaginary of American jazz. In particular, Marsalis and the younger Payton's shared backgrounds as Black trumpet players from New Orleans provides them both a built-in cultural authority, one which many white musicians seem to resent, even if they do not come out and say it. Implicit in the backlash to Payton's proclamation is that jazz should be a meritocracy, where authority is determined not by racial identity or cultural upbringing but by playing ability. When Payton asserts his authority to speak about jazz and to re-name it as thoroughly Black, it offends those that wish for race to not be a factor in the discourse on cultural authority.

And though the efforts of Marsalis and JALC to gain a legitimization have elicited criticisms with much merit (the respectability politics, adherence to Western art music standards, underrepresentation of women, etc.), some credit is due to Marsalis for his success in establishing a degree of cultural authority for Black artists over their own music. This authority is by no means unproblematic, uncontested, or even complete—the jazz music industry is still largely controlled by white men. But there is a sense of empowerment that, as Payton alludes to, allows him to speak where his ancestors could not; this might not have been possible, at least under the current conditions of official anti-racisms, if jazz had not been first institutionalized as an "American art form" via Marsalis.

Payton himself, however, appears to be no fan of Wynton Marsalis and the image Marsalis achieved for jazz. In one blog post, Nicholas Payton (2011d) seems to directly address Jazz at Lincoln Center and artists associated with it, saying that "Right now, "JA**" lives on Columbus Circle, the most coveted piece of realty in all of Manhattan."[13] Using a writing style that imitates stereotypes of Black speech found in blackface performances, Payton sarcastically mocks this idea of jazz having gained respect, saying "Lawd, we be done made it to the Promised Land." He continues by saying "We got a soda attached to the names of one of our ancestors," referring to Dizzy's Coca-Cola Club, which is associated with JALC (Laver 2015, 148). Payton continues to mock, saying,

> We gots rich White folk who gives us money to build this nice establishment here. So what, if we gotta tap dance a little to get them to sign that check. So what, if I have to keep making contrived Blues records

[13] Columbus Circle is a neighborhood in Upper West Side Manhattan where Lincoln Center is based.

> with White artists because it's the image of Black music that our White donors are comfortable seeing. JA** Hands. (Payton 2011d)

Later in the post, Payton calls these artists Uncle Toms, saying that they will "continue to play the oppressive caricaturization [sic] of Black American Music called 'JA**'" (the post is also peppered with images of blackface performers). Though he does not call out anyone by name, he seems to address successful artists associated with JALC by saying "you can keep your $1,000 suits and shoes, I rather keep my dignity, thank you very much" (Payton 2011d). Payton concludes by confidently asserting, "I've already talked to the ancestors and #TeamBAM is where the true spirit of the music will live from now on." In this post, Payton is at his most diametrically opposed to the goals of JALC, essentially equating the respectability politics of Marsalis and JALC as nothing more than a form of blackface for white audiences and corporations.

So though Payton and Marsalis both yield a similar kind of cultural authority, there is an irony in where they depart regarding jazz's racial status. Marsalis succeeded by elevating jazz according to Western standards as a way to legitimize a Black music—essentially playing into the hands of white hegemonic institutions, but in a way that forced them to materially acknowledge (via funding) the value of a Black art form in unprecedented ways. Doing so required a certain amount of de-emphasis of jazz's Black particularity, to market it as *America*'s classical music, safe to be consumed by all Americans. Though Payton uses the cultural authority that Marsalis's efforts helped provide him, he uses it to push back against that same notion—America's classical music—that provides him that authority in the first place. In other words, Payton is in an empowered position to speak for his ancestors and reclaim jazz's racial particularity

because the music had first been deracinated as a step on the path toward its legitimization via institutionalization.

Conclusion

When Nicholas Payton declared jazz to be dead and proposed his own label for his music, Black American Music, he revealed that racial discourse in jazz was far from settled. Though the BAM moment was informed by a long history of debates within jazz criticism, particularly between racial particularly and universalism, it reflected a moment in American society, post-Obama but pre-Trump, where many white Americans held on to the belief that race should not and does not matter. More specifically, Payton's ruffling of feathers showed that there were several elephants in the room following several decades of jazz's institutionalization, not the least of which was the racial status of jazz. For Payton, jazz becoming accepted and codified as an officially sanctioned idea removed the vitality from the music, separating it from other forms of Black music and ultimately killing it.

This is the backdrop against which jazz in the 2010s has operated. Though like the jazz critics of the past, most jazz listeners and scholars would acknowledge the racialized origins and cultural history of jazz, particularly as it relates to the Civil Rights movement, in official discourse, jazz is still often idealized as colorblind, multicultural, or universalist. Conversations about race among white musicians and audiences are still not easily held, but at least for a moment in late 2011 and early 2012, the jazz world was forced to have that conversation. Still, many of the material conditions that have resulted in jazz's disassociation from Blackness remain unchanged. Though Payton's role in

reigniting the conversation was crucial, deeper intervention in the institutions of American society and in the ideologies of white America is needed to continue the anti-racist work of Payton and his musical ancestors.

Chapter 3: The Anatomy of the Twin Cities Jazz Scene

In the previous chapter, I examined through Nicholas Payton's "BAM" proclamation how recent discourse in jazz has centered on jazz's decline in the marketplace and in the popular imaginary. Though Payton attributed this decline to racial segregation via the imposition by critics and music industry of the label "jazz," the idea of jazz's downfall more broadly continues to dominate. In particular, institutions are often blamed for stagnating the creative growth of jazz. Jazz musicians are imagined to be constantly regurgitating the same old standards and styles of jazz eras of the past, as they have been taught to do in the university conservatory, a stereotype about contemporary jazz I further explore in chapter 5.

Though popular perceptions of jazz may have drifted toward a view of jazz as irrelevant, local jazz scenes continue to hum away. In the Twin Cities, Minnesota, many musicians regard the local jazz scene as growing, experiencing an influx of creative energy rather than a stagnation. Though this larger discourse about jazz's decline forms a backdrop to the activity occurring in the TC jazz scene, at a daily level, musicians are too busy forming new collaborations and projects to be weighed down by this bleak outlook toward jazz. What then keeps a local jazz scene in a metro area such as the Twin Cities, which is not particularly known for jazz, going and in many cases expanding? What kinds of meanings do Twin Cities musicians attach to jazz and how do they organize their local scene around these meanings? How do networks of venues, musicians, and audience members contribute to the lively scene building activity happening in the TC jazz community?

As explained in the introduction chapter, there has not yet been an ethnography of a local jazz scene that 1) focuses on a jazz scene on the periphery rather than the center of the jazz world (i.e. New York, New Orleans, etc.) and 2) considers the scene holistically in its entire anatomical infrastructure rather than just privilege the opinions of the most esteemed musicians. Thus, in order to set the stage for my discussion of TC jazz institutions in the following chapter, this chapter will foremost describe the anatomy of the Twin Cities jazz scene, including the venues and institutions, musician tiers, and audience types that shape the local scene. I argue that this broader network of institutions, musicians, and audience members form what I term a normative path of development for a local jazz musician. As the economic value of jazz remains depressed, even in a local jazz scene that is well-regarded for its public and civic support for the arts, it is replaced by a prestige value that motivates the activity of local musicians and audience members.

This chapter proceeds as follows: First, I review scholarly discourse on the concept of scene to show how these theoretical perspectives can bring insight to the TC jazz scene. Then, I provide an overview of the various music venues and institutions at which jazz activity in the TC occurs. Following that, I categorize jazz musicians in the Twin Cities into four loosely defined tiers before showing how one's progression from one tier to the next typically adheres to a normative path of development. Next, I consider various audience types and their impact on how local jazz is presented and received in the TC. Finally, I close with a consideration of the prestige value that musicians hold as they reflect on their devotion to playing jazz.

Music Scenes

Musicians in the TC jazz community speak regularly of "the scene," both when referring to the local, Twin Cities jazz scene or what is conceived as a broader, imagined "national scene." Music scholars have also frequently discussed the notion of scene as a way to investigate how music communities form around a particular set of values. Though I draw on this literature on music scenes to describe the TC jazz scene, it should be noted that my use of the term scene is primarily intended to honor the language used by members of the TC jazz scene. As I show, however, a modern jazz scene such as that in the TC challenges conventional academic notions of what a scene entails—namely, that a scene must be strictly local, unstable, and vulnerable to passing stylistic trends.

Scholarship on music scenes, which are defined as the "clusters of producers, musicians, and fans" that share common tastes (Bennett and Peterson 2004, 1), has tended to emphasize the volatile and tenuous nature of such scenes. For instance, Steve S. Lee and Richard A. Peterson write, "But in months, or at most a few years, the creative energy of local scenes is spent, the music becomes commodified, and new fans increasingly seek entertainment free of any serious lifestyle commitments" (2004, 198). In contrast to virtual scenes, where there is less material overhead, in physical, local scenes, where production is paramount, the effort it takes to sustain a scene is likely to eventually wear out its participants. If a local scene is picked up by mass media and incorporated into mainstream culture, the subcultural nature of such a scene becomes lost, and the creative drive of the scene's primary producers is decreased until the scene as a distinct community disappears entirely. A local scene, then, is theorized to be both physically and temporally limited.

While this characterization may be sufficient to describe many local music scenes, it is less apt when applied to the typical modern jazz scene. For one, jazz scenes are largely based around the notion of a long-standing artistic tradition and are imagined to have existed continuously for a longer period. The roots of many local jazz scenes can be traced to the period of rapid proliferation outside of New Orleans in the 1910s. In the popular jazz narrative, this is typically depicted as including New York, St. Louis, Chicago, and Kansas City as post-New Orleans cultural centers for jazz, but smaller metropolises such as Minneapolis also saw burgeoning local jazz scenes around this time. In the lone book-length historical study of the Minnesota jazz scene, Jay Goetting connects jazz's roots in the Twin Cities to a Jelly Roll Morton steamboat tour in 1908 (2011, 5), with local jazz likely following around World War I. Contemporarily, a fair number of Twin Cities jazz performers who were active as far back as the 1950s continue to perform, mentor the next generations of musicians, and participate in discourse of what jazz is in the Twin Cities. Occasionally, elder musicians get together to hold panels discussing their memories of the Minneapolis-St. Paul jazz scene when they first started in the 1940s-60s—one such event was held at the Minnesota History Museum in April 2016 and was sponsored by Minnesota Public Radio and the state's Legacy Act. These musicians' accounts of their early playing days often focus on how things have changed, particularly emphasizing the greater number of gigs there used to be, but direct relationships exist between the current crop of up-and-coming college (or high school) aged musicians to those who have been performing for over 60 years—in more than a few cases, these old and young musicians have even shared the bandstand.

Additionally, though venues, musicians, and gigs have come and gone, the scene as a whole has persisted despite the many societal changes that have affected jazz and the live music scene in the Twin Cities more generally.[14] As such, the scene could be considered relatively stable, at least in comparison to the type of music scene described by Lee and Peterson (2004). Twin Cities jazz is certainly not in much danger of co-option by mainstream culture, nor does there seem to be much risk in musicians' creative drive disappearing. Additionally, the constant influx of young musicians from local high schools and universities contributes to new configurations of ensembles, which can inspire elder musicians.

Jazz as a quintessential American art form, as it is often imagined by musicians, also lacks the novelty factor that Lee and Peterson use to describe many local music scenes (2004, 200). A noted exception is hot jazz, but this is often treated in the TC as a marked category to the unmarked and more generic "jazz." For instance, though many musicians central to the TC jazz scene do also play in "hot jazz" groups, they will often specify that they have a "trad jazz gig" coming up.[15] The broader and default definition of jazz, as articulated by TC jazz scene members, stems from the aesthetics and values of 1980s jazz neoclassicism, in that it is invested in the idea of a timeless jazz tradition. Many musicians, particularly those in their 40s to 60s, have been influenced by Wynton Marsalis's efforts to promote jazz as an art form in reaction to what some TC musicians

[14] For instance, Twin Cities guitarist Zacc Harris mentioned in an interview that he felt the state of Minnesota's ban on smoking in bars had a large impact on the number of jazz gigs.
[15] For all intents and purposes, the terms "trad jazz" and "hot jazz" are often used interchangeably to refer to older, New Orleans-based styles of jazz.

felt was a superficial and gimmicky era of jazz-rock fusion in the 1970s and '80s. Most musicians, however, are not purists about the style of jazz with respect to its instrumentation and rhythms. Especially as older musicians often collaborate with younger ones, who may be more up to date on current trends, most musicians are open to experimentation so long as improvisation remains at the music's core. For instance, Mac Santiago described jazz not as a set of stylistic markers but as an approach, one which he believes determines whether a jam session is successful, as he has observed at his own Jazz Central Studios. Santiago also refers to jazz as "that thing that they did in Congo Square a hundred and twenty years ago," while trumpet player Steve Kenny is adamant that jazz is not a "dance craze" or a "style," but a transcendent experience, an art form.[16] The jazz scene is conceived then as anti-novelty, based not in current trends or nostalgia but as a sustainable and rich artistic culture with an essence that remains unchanged even as its stylistic features evolve.

The additional factor of institutional support—through high school and university music programs that continually produce aspiring jazz musicians, as well as through increased grant funding opportunities—provides an increased sense of stability that contradicts the academic notion of a scene. That is not to say that participants of the jazz scene always feel that the scene is stable; many, in fact, passionately advocate for even greater institutional support, on par with that received by Western classical music. However, even if the market share of jazz is at its lowest point and audiences have

[16] I talk more about Santiago and Kenny's definitions of jazz in chapter 4, particularly how these definitions shape each musician's role in curating local jazz shows.

declined, the scene will continue as long as musicians, curators, and serious jazz fans continue to believe in its value as a musical form. This aspect of institutional support will be further discussed in Chapter 4, but some connections to prominent institutions in the TC will be made in this chapter.

Obviously, this is far from the type of music scene described as lasting only a few months or years. Nevertheless, I would not hesitate to characterize the jazz community in the Twin Cities as a "scene" in the academic sense. It fits in various ways the definition provided by Bennett and Peterson:

> [A scene is a] focused social activity that takes place in a delimited space and over a specific span of time in which clusters of producers, musicians, and fans realize their common musical taste, collectively distinguishing themselves from others by using music and cultural signs often appropriated from other places, but recombined and developed in ways that come to represent the local scene. (Bennett and Peterson 2004, 8)

For one, the jazz scene in the Twin Cities is heavily premised on the idea of locality. A number of musicians have either relocated from out of state or to another state (most commonly, New York City), but are still considered by fellow musicians and audience members as in some way still part of the scene so long as they maintain connections to Twin Cities musicians. Additionally, those who had left for New York and subsequently returned for occasional one-off gigs are welcomed as "returning home." Moreover, the TC jazz scene is certainly oriented around a "common musical taste" with attendant cultural signs that indicates one's status as an insider to jazz culture (e.g., when to clap for solos, what terminology to use to describe the music, which local and national artists to know, etc.). TC jazz scene participants also specifically and frequently point to the state of Minnesota's strong public and civic support of the arts as a factor that

distinguishes it from other local jazz scenes, an aspect that will be further explored in the next chapter on institutions. Perhaps most importantly, the TC jazz scene is consciously and explicitly referred to as a scene by its participants. Note also that the term scene as used by academics is derived from its original use in bohemian jazz culture of the 1940s (Bennett & Peterson 2004, 2), making its application here all the more appropriate. In sum, the TC jazz scene fits the traditional definition of a music scene, having a delimited space, cluster of roles, and specific cultural meanings while also departing in other areas of how scenes are typically discussed. However, its span of time is much larger, and stability is therefore much more paramount.

Though the TC jazz scene is primarily a local scene, it also contains elements of the translocal, which Bennett and Anderson define as "widely scattered scenes drawn into regular communication around distinctive form of music and lifestyle" (2004, 6). The TC scene is certainly constructed around commonly shared meanings of jazz that are transferred across disparate U.S. metropolitan jazz scenes. More materially, musicians travel as well—particularly, in the case of the Twin Cities, to Chicago, the rest of the Midwest, and New York. Moreover, many musicians who are central figures in the jazz scene also participate in other music styles in the Twin Cities; some may even bristle at being labeled the more limited "jazz musician," as opposed to the general "musician." As such, it is important to note that though the TC jazz scene does have certain local meanings attached to the production and consumption occurring within it, it is not a neatly contained scene—musicians participate in other scenes, both in different music scenes in the TC and in other jazz scenes across the U.S. Nonetheless, perspectives of

both the local and translocal are useful starting parts when examining the cultural meanings of the TC jazz scene.

The third perspective of scenes described by Bennett and Peterson, the virtual, requires a bit more complicating for the purposes of this project. The virtual scene is imagined by Bennett and Peterson and others within this edited volume as uniting people across disparate locations under a common cultural interest. While this is certainly true in many cases, the virtual scene might not necessarily entail a geographically disparate group of participants. In the case of the TC jazz scene, the virtual essentially acts as an extension of the local. Musicians primarily use social media sites, namely Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to promote upcoming gigs in the local scene. In that sense, the virtual acts in service of the local, to spread awareness of events happening in the physical world and to facilitate attendance to such events—events that keep the local scene viable. A given local musician's social media audience might include friends that are geographically dispersed but, due to the nature of Facebook as a social media platform, would mostly include people that the musician knows in real life. Activity in the virtual sphere of the TC might include the cognitive activity described by Lee and Peterson (2004), through discussion about jazz, the music industry, or non-musical topics such as politics. But this activity would include primarily, if not entirely, participation from those who have met in the physical world—not the kinds of anonymous and globally dispersed commenters of virtual scenes with no attached local space that is often

at the center of scholarship on virtual scenes (Lysloff 2003; Boellstorff 2008, 2012).[17] As such, it may be inappropriate to describe the activity occurring in Facebook comment threads, etc., as a virtual scene at all, given that it is heavily predicated on the local. However, there is certainly a virtual component to the local scene in which active discourse among musicians and audience members takes place.

The Local and National

Throughout this chapter and the dissertation, I refer to "local jazz" while at other times referencing "national artists" or the "national scene." Like my use of the term scene, I use the terms local and national in the ways they are employed by local musicians and fans. For instance, the Twin Cities-based Jazz Police website has a section titled "National Scene," which features previews and reviews of shows happening in other U.S. cities besides the Twin Cities. "Local" musicians, then, refers to artists who perform primarily in the Twin Cities and whose reputations extend to mostly just a local audience base. National artists are those who might live in a particular city but who make much more of their income and activity based on touring and who have reputations that are known to the "national jazz community." The "national scene" as referred to by TC musicians and fans is not necessarily limited to American artists or a jazz community contained within the U.S., but any jazz artist who is known nationally. This would not preclude them from also being known internationally, or touring internationally, so in many cases, it would be more accurate to say certain artists have international

[17] A notable exception would be the consumption of some Twin Cities-based groups' recorded albums, which due to services like Bandcamp, iTunes, and Spotify, have found a wider reach. Zacc Harris, who runs the TC-based label Shifting Paradigm, has noted that the label regularly receives website hits and blog reviews from international locations.

reputations. Due especially to the reach of the Internet, artists that are known nationally in the U.S. are likely to be known internationally as well. The term "national," however, is still most frequently used by the jazz community when referring to the idea of a broader scene that stands in contrast with the local scene. Obviously, there cannot be a true "national scene," as the amount of jazz happening in the U.S. is too large to be bound into one contained structure. Rather, the national scene could more accurately be called an imagined community (Anderson 1991), as it contains shared values and ideas of belonging to a jazz culture, while most members of that imagined community do not ever meet.

National artists tend to be more highly by audiences, as evidenced by the attendance at certain concerts with nationally recognized artists as compared to strictly local ones. This is partially because national artists perform in Minnesota less often—some going a few years between performances—while local artists can be caught at local bars and restaurant several times a week. But as I discuss in the section on musician tiers, it is also a result of prestige associated with musicians who have "made it" nationally. Though many musicians and audience members take pride in the fact that several nationally recognized artists have made the Twin Cities their home base, or at least a frequent stop-by if they now live somewhere else, there is still a prestige value attached to artists who live in New York or Chicago, even as some would put the quality of the top tier of TC musicians up there with the bigger metropolises. Additionally, though in my analysis on musician tiers I exclude those who are purely national and who have no connection to the Twin Cities, these national artists still have occasional presence in the

TC when they perform there, concerts which are especially valued by local jazz enthusiasts. The relationship of the local scene to national artists at times comes into conflict, a discussion which will be expanded in chapter 4 as I examine the Twin Cities Jazz Festival.

Structure of the Scene

A key aspect of how the Twin Cities jazz scene is organized and sustained is the structure of venues in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. There are few—some would argue zero—fully dedicated "jazz clubs," that is, commercial venues solely focused on showcasing live jazz music. Rather, jazz often occurs on specific nights at certain bars and restaurants that do not exclusively book jazz, or in one case, at a non-commercial, non-profit institution run by musicians for musicians.[18] Certain venues connote a prestige value as musicians progress along a normative path of development, which will be discussed later. Therefore, to understand how musicians create meaning within their scene, it is first necessary to provide a basic overview of the anatomical structure of venues for jazz in the Twin Cities.[19]

Venues

When I was conducting fieldwork from 2015 to 2016, musicians would constantly lament the loss of the Artists' Quarter (AQ), a venue in downtown St. Paul that was specifically devoted to jazz and served as the breeding ground for several of the Twin

[18] Jazz Central Studios will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

[19] For simplicity's sake, I use present tense for this entire section, but the venues and institutions listed here are those that were active during my main fieldwork period of 2015-16. Some venues listed in the present tense have since closed, as will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Cities' original jazz groups. The AQ closed on New Year's Eve of 2013 after its owner Kenny Horst, himself a jazz drummer, could no longer afford the rising rent costs in a revitalizing downtown St. Paul. Though I had never attended the AQ, I felt its importance even while only ever experiencing its absence through the memories of the musicians that had spent a lot of time there. As I detail further in chapter 4, the AQ's closure produced a need for strong support for jazz from a venue, a void in the scene since filled to varying degrees by other institutions and musician-curators in the years since the AQ shut its doors.

The Twin Cities' most familiar jazz venue for those not necessarily entrenched in the local scene is the Dakota Jazz Club in downtown Minneapolis. That is, it is the first result that will be listed if one Googles "Minneapolis jazz club." It was also the first place I had ever seen jazz in the Twin Cities a couple years prior to moving there to conduct fieldwork. Though the Dakota is most likely to host nationally prominent musicians, especially those who have been active for multiple decades, it does not exclusively put on jazz concerts, despite jazz being in the name of the club.[20] Rather, the Dakota has many evenings devoted to R&B, soul, folk, traditional pop, and other styles. Cover charges for national artists range from $35 on the low end to as high as $70 or $80 per seat.

Local musicians and audience members generally have a conflicted relationship with the Dakota. Though many musicians have played there at some time, most used to do so more often than they did when I lived in the Twin Cities, as by that point, the

[20] The Dakota received national press when it was reported that the venue was one of the last places Prince visited before his death in April 2016, as he attended a performance by singer Lizz Wright (Murphy 2016).

Dakota was mostly hosting nationally recognized artists rather than local acts. Local acts did perform occasionally, but usually for a much smaller cover and to reduced audiences. Additionally, the scene's most devoted jazz fans generally have mixed feelings at best about the Dakota as a venue, as they regard it as having too steep of an entrance fee and an atmosphere that is too stuffy and not conducive to listening. Some avoid it entirely, unless a national artist they strongly desire to see is playing there. However, even if they disagree with the venue's current focus, many musicians still express admiration for the sustained efforts of the Dakota's owner, Lowell Pickett, in supporting Minnesota jazz over the decades, especially through non-profit initiatives like the Dakota Foundation.

As part of the Dakota's efforts to continue offering local jazz shows, Pickett opened a second club in downtown St. Paul in the same space as the former Artists' Quarter. Opening in July of 2015, the new club, Vieux Carré, is a New Orleans themed restaurant and bar which hosts jazz concerts on average three to four times a week, not including the dinner sets, which are usually jazz solo or duo sets (the other three nights or so are filled by folk or country artists, usually). Though most of the cities' premier local jazz musicians perform there at some point or another—some of them multiple times a week—the musician consensus seems to be that it is not quite the same as the AQ. For many, the appeal of the AQ was that it was run by a fellow musician, so it was truly a jazz venue designed for and by jazz musicians. Where the AQ did not have a menu proper—one woman, Vanessa Lopez, would come in with homemade food that she would sell for fairly cheap—Vieux Carré has a full wait staff dressed in all black and white tablecloths, etc. For that reason, some lament that Vieux Carré is trying too hard to

replicate the fancier Dakota. One musician complained that the sound in the venue was not the same as it used to be, as they removed the (ugly) carpet when it became Vieux Carré, resulting in a venue that became more visually appealing but less acoustically so. These issues aside, Vieux Carré is one of the main venues that presents local jazz, while also occasionally hosting national acts (often to rooms that quickly sell out, as the ticket prices are never more than $25, unlike the $50 or more the Dakota might charge).

In a way, the AQ has been succeeded not by the venue that took its literal place in downtown St. Paul, but in spirit by Jazz Central Studios (JCS) in Minneapolis. Though JCS was around before the AQ closed, having been established by Mac Santiago in 2010, it is now the only venue that hosts jazz, and only jazz, at least five nights a week (sometimes six or even seven). It is comparable to AQ in that it is also an exclusively jazz venue for jazz musicians by jazz musicians, but because JCS is a designated non-profit, it is even more removed from the business decisions that usually accompany a music venue. Similar to the AQ, there is no restaurant or wait staff, though Lopez brings hotdishes to JCS just as she did to the AQ, usually halfway through the evening's first set so that there is food ready between sets. Like the AQ, JCS is in a basement, completing the homelike atmosphere with its kitschy (but sound absorbing) carpet, couches, and other personal touches like portraits of local musicians on the walls. However, because JCS is a non-profit, a designation that gives it great latitude to focus on its mission of education and community outreach, it is not permitted to serve alcohol. Patrons are also forbidden from drinking alcohol, a point that some jazz fans include as a knock against JCS. If one goes to JCS, they are going just for the music. Audience counts are usually

lower than at places like Vieux Carré, even for some of the scene's most prominent local musicians. However, if a musician is looking for a venue without business imperatives to try out creative, original music, JCS is often the place they look to. More detail will be devoted to JCS as a local institution in chapter 4.

Finally, as far as mostly jazz-focused clubs go, there is Crooners Lounge and Supper Club in the suburb of Fridley, about 15 minutes north of downtown Minneapolis. Crooners is also relatively new, founded in 2014, and has become a competitor to the Dakota as a jazz club that deigns to offer a more sophisticated experience. As the name suggests, Crooners prioritizes vocal jazz, featuring regular performances from some of the cities' most popular local singers. Instrumental jazz is relegated to "instrumental Tuesdays," though some of the national acts that come through on other days of the week may bump up the amount of instrumental music to 2-3 times a week. The national acts, as well as some of the local acts, usually play in Crooners' "Dunsmore Room," which sits facing Moore Lake and is designated as a dedicated listening space—patrons are encouraged to keep conversation during the performance to a minimum, though table service is still offered. As Crooners is more removed from the city centers, and because it tends to favor vocal music, which is more popular with an older audience, there are much fewer younger people at Crooners compared to other venues. The average clientele at Crooners consists of white couples in their late 40s-early 70s.

Aside from these venues that specialize in jazz, several venues across the Twin Cities offer jazz once or twice a week, though the venues themselves are not "jazz venues." These pop-up jazz shows, however, are usually consistent and regular enough to

give these venues reputations as key places to see jazz in the Twin Cities—often times even more than the above listed locations. In a few cases, jazz does not simply occur at these venues once a week, but these once-a-week events are marketed as proper jazz series in the hopes of establishing a consistent audience base. The nature of these series will be further discussed in the next chapter, but these weekly series occur in particular at the Icehouse in south Minneapolis, a venue which hosts experimental and popular music of all sorts, including hip-hop, folk, indie rock, and others; Khyber Pass Café in St. Paul, an Afghan restaurant which presents "adventurous improvised live music" at the motivation of the restaurant's co-owner;[21] the Reverie, formerly the Nicollet, in south Minneapolis, which also hosts non-jazz music on other days of the week but particularly favoring folk, rock, and metal; and the Black Dog in Lowertown St. Paul, which hosts a weekly jazz series on Saturdays.[22] For these series, the performers change every week and are chosen by musician coordinators— JT Bates for the Icehouse; Paul Adam Linz, Kevin Cosgrove, Paul Metzger, and the artistic collective 6 Families for Khyber Pass; and Steve Kenny for the Black Dog and Reverie. These venues may also have jazz on other days of the week, but they are not advertised as part of a recurring series in the same manner as the ones above.

[21] The description is from Khyber Pass's website, which does not use the term jazz. An article on Khyber Pass and its co-owner, Emel Sherzad, was published in the *Star Tribune* (Robson 2016b). Of the series listed in this section, Khyber Pass focuses the least on marketing its recurring improvised music nights, with awareness, prior to the *Star Tribune* article, spreading mostly on a word of mouth basis.

[22] Though I use present tense, I refer specifically to the time of my fieldwork (2015-2016), as at least one of these series, by the time of completing this dissertation has ended, as will be discussed further in the next chapter.

In addition to the weekly series, there is a once-a-month or so series at Studio Z in Lowertown St. Paul, a venue designed as a listening space and which usually only serves cans of beer or glasses of wine. The Jazz at Studio Z series, organized by guitarist Zacc Harris, also sometimes attaches masterclasses or live podcast recording sessions to the evening's proceedings, prior to the performance. Though a lack of adequate funding caused the Studio Z series to be canceled in 2017-18, it returned in 2018-19. Finally, there is a full jazz concert series at the Target Atrium at downtown Minneapolis's Orchestra Hall, which hosts the Minnesota Orchestra. This series consists of five or so themed and programmed concerts and is announced alongside the concert series for the orchestra. Generally, this series attracts a larger but older audience, many of them likely Minnesota Orchestra subscribers, and features the region's most esteemed local musicians often wearing more concert appropriate attire (full suits and ties) than they might wear at the weekly jazz series. As of 2018-19, the Jazz at the Target Atrium series was entering its fifth year.

Other bars and restaurants host local jazz occasionally, including weekly but on a more casual basis, without the programmatic effort of a jazz series. In the actual cities, this includes Hell's Kitchen, Boom Island Brewery, Aster Café, Kitty Cat Klub, and Loring Pasta Bar in Minneapolis and Ngon Bistro, Amsterdam Bar, Bedlam Lowertown (since closed), Public Kitchen, and the Saint Paul Hotel Lobby Bar in St. Paul. In the suburbs, there is Parma 8200 in Bloomington, Lunds & Byerly's Kitchen in Wayzata, Birch's on the Lake Brewhouse & Supperclub in Long Lake, and 318 Café in Excelsior. Other spaces that operate as concert spaces, sometimes hosting national jazz acts (usually

not more than once a month), include St. Barnabas Church in Plymouth; Hopkins Center for the Arts in Hopkins; and the Walker Art Center, Guthrie Theater, and Cedar Cultural Center in Minneapolis. Additionally, educational institutions, including private music studios (e.g. Walker West Music Academy in St. Paul and MacPhail Center for Music in Minneapolis), high schools (especially those in the West Metro), and universities and colleges (particularly the University of Minnesota and McNally Smith College of Music), also host jazz concerts monthly or more, featuring both their own student performers and locally recognized artists, sometimes together.

University Institutions

University institutions of jazz and their implications will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4, but it is worth briefly mentioning here the major colleges and universities that contribute to the structure of the scene, both by producing young musicians and by allowing a stable source of income for experienced musicians. The two major higher education institutions located in the Twin Cities most relevant to jazz musicians are the University of Minnesota and McNally Smith College of Music. Though the music department at the University of Minnesota is based on a conservatory model, and has a higher portion of classical musicians, it does have a significant program of jazz ensembles, classes, and instructors. McNally Smith College of Music, on the other hand, is known as a contemporary music school, with the school's instructors insisting it is *not* a jazz school. Nonetheless, several local jazz musicians have positions there while quite a bit of the younger jazz talent went to school at McNally, whether as an undergraduate or

as a master's student.[23] Other smaller music programs offer jazz classes, and employ TC jazz musicians as adjunct faculty, at institutions like Augsburg College in St. Paul in addition to St. Olaf College and Carleton College in Northfield (about an hour's drive south of the Twin Cities). Outside of the Twin Cities, musicians from the TC metro area are most likely to attend the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Lawrence University (Appleton, WI), and the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Other jazz musicians may leave the area completely and attend noted jazz programs such as that at the University of North Texas, Berklee College of Music, the University of Michigan, and others. The prestige of one's university will be discussed in the tiers section.

Media & Publicity Forms

There are several avenues through which musicians promote their gigs and seek publicity for their performances. One is done through social media—primarily Facebook, where local musicians will post announcements of their gigs, usually on the day of. This includes posting statuses, creating events, and, for some, updating their profile picture or cover photo to a visual ad for their upcoming gig (usually including the names of the musicians on the gig, the time and place, and the cover charge, if applicable). Some musicians also maintain personal websites and blogs where they post a full calendar of dates,[24] but many use Facebook exclusively. Most of the venues listed in the previous section also maintain a website with show dates listed.

[23] Crucially, McNally Smith closed in December 2017. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.
[24] Andrea Canter, who during the time of my fieldwork ran the editorial side of things at Jazz Police, wished that more musicians kept regularly updated websites, as it would make her job compiling and publicizing upcoming show dates and times much easier.

A main source of publication for the local jazz scene is JazzPolice.com, a website maintained by Andrea Canter on the editorial side and Steve Kenny on the programming side.[25] While Kenny runs several jazz series in the TC and is himself a trumpet player and composer, Canter, a non-musician, is just as busy. A retired school psychologist for the Minneapolis Public Schools system, Canter is frequently seen at gigs with her camera taking photos to post on the Jazz Police website or on Facebook—many of these photos are reposted or reused by musicians (with permission) on Facebook or on their personal websites.[26] For Jazz Police, Canter regularly previews many of the week's upcoming premier gigs, previews which usually include a short description of what to expect as well as bios of the musicians involved. Occasionally, Canter and others will also post reviews of notable concerts, such as from the Twin Cities Jazz Festival. Canter writes anywhere from four to eight posts a week (mostly show previews), with longer posts around the time of the Twin Cities Jazz Festival.

In addition to running Jazz Police, Andrea Canter has a weekly radio show, "The Lead Sheet," on 88.3 FM, also known as Jazz 88. For this, Canter reads an extensive list of the week's upcoming gigs, sometimes including a one sentence description for the more prominent shows. Each week features a segment with a local musician in studio, where that musician will talk for fifteen minutes with Canter about an upcoming premier

[25] Canter stepped down from full-time editorial work with Jazz Police in May of 2018, becoming Senior Editor Emeritus. As of August 2018, Steve Kenny was planning a rebranding and relaunch of the website.

[26] In August of 2017, one prominent saxophone player had his instrument stolen—the photos Canter had taken of this performer and his saxophone were credited by another musician as crucial in helping them successfully track down the saxophone.

gig as well as any recent projects. The segment usually ends with Canter playing a studio recording of that artist's recent work. In addition to offering several radio shows devoted to jazz, Jazz 88 often sponsors local jazz concerts, including the Twin Cities Jazz Festival.

Tiers of Jazz Musicians: A Hierarchy of Prestige

In addition to providing opportunities to listen to jazz, venues around the Twin Cities serve to organize musicians into networks based on their levels of experience and prestige. That is, certain premier venues will feature the Twin Cities' top musicians, in addition to national artists outside of the Twin Cities, while others function as a training ground for young musicians—many do both. While attending these various venues for jazz over a 10-month period, I observed an unconsciously organized tier system for musicians in the Twin Cities jazz scene: tier 1 consists of nationally recognized musicians who are TC based; tier 2 includes experienced, gigging musicians whose reputations are mostly local; tier 3 contains younger musicians with quickly growing local reputations, who are often termed "young lions"; and tier 4 consists of musicians who are still developing the chops and connections they need to perform regularly around the jazz scene.

Though I note these several tiers of musicians in the Twin Cities jazz scene, there is overlap between tiers; the boundaries are not firmly drawn. Additionally, these tiers are not explicitly acknowledged by musicians but are rather a result of my own theorizing based on my long-term observation of the Twin Cities jazz scene. These tiers then should not be taken as authoritative categories, but as a rough guide to considering how the scene is unconsciously structured by musicians and their audiences. I base this tier

structure on my ethnographic research of the TC jazz scene and use several factors: 1) how certain musicians are discussed by fellow musicians and audiences (e.g., how much it is expected that you know who a certain musician is), including in face-to-face conversations and online; 2) with whom a musician performs; 3) what kinds of gigs they perform (venues, audience size, cover charges, stylistic preferences); and 4) their activity outside the Twin Cities scene, if applicable. These tier structures inform a larger trend of what I call the normative path of development in the jazz scene, the process of which will be discussed following the elucidation of the four tiers.

The highest tier consists of musicians who reside in the Twin Cities and occasionally perform there, but who also have national reputations. As they often have toured with nationally or internationally recognized musicians, these tier 1 musicians do not have to hustle for gigs in the same way that a strictly local musician might. Their performances in the Twin Cities are often sporadic, either because they are busy touring or because they can afford to be more selective with what kinds of gigs they perform. Often, when they do perform, they draw larger crowds than some of the local regulars who perform several nights a week, but there are still some lesser publicized gigs by tier 1 musicians that might have a humble number of audience members. These musicians have often served as mentors for several other musicians, particularly in tier 2, and have in the past (or present) given years of private lessons to those musicians.

Musically, tier 1 musicians have usually played traditional jazz at some point in their careers, and often still do on occasion. When they do, they are more apt to take risks with the source material, particularly standards, or perform their own compositions. Just

as often, however, these musicians are liable to play entire sets of their original or entirely improvised material, sometimes hardly recognizable as "jazz" in a traditional sense at all. What makes it jazz is the musicians' reputation as proficient jazz players (read: acoustic straight-ahead jazz) when they need to be. This affords them the license to play music that more readily departs from the expectations of a jazz show while still allowing it to be labeled by audiences and local press as "jazz." These performances may sound more adventurous in the ways that they generally emphasize texture and pure improvisation over the rigidly defined structures of a conventional 32 bar form or the standard jazz repertoire. Both harmonically and rhythmically, they are often more exploratory, sometimes bordering on "free." Additionally, these musicians also have greater license to experiment with different instrumental combinations, sometimes performing in unusual duos (two drum sets, or sax with drums, etc.) or even solo. At other times, the format is traditional—e.g. a piano trio—but the group experiments with texture, form, harmony, etc. without fear of losing audience members because their reputation affords them a built-in audience. Examples of this tier include, but are not limited to, drummer Dave King (started with local band Happy Apple and then became internationally known with the Bad Plus—still performs occasionally with his own groups in the TC); bassist Anthony Cox (performances and recordings with John Scofield, among others); saxophonist Michael Lewis (as with King, started with Happy Apple, then later toured with indie rock band Bon Iver); drummer Eric Kamau Gravatt (toured with Weather Report, others); saxophonist George Cartwright; and others.

Tier 2 consists of musicians whose talent or technique may be on par with musicians from tier 1—what distinguishes them is that their reputations are mostly local. Whereas musicians from tier 1 may be readily recognized outside of the Twin Cities, tier 2 musicians are well-known and active in the TC but mostly unknown outside of it—with the exception of certain nearby cities like Milwaukee or Chicago in which certain musicians have connections, or New York City if they have lived there at one point or another. These musicians usually perform much more often in the Twin Cities than musicians from tier 1 and would be more easily categorized as "gigging musicians"—they typically make most of their income through something related to music, whether it is performing, composing, or teaching (or all three). Where tier 1 musicians might not perform in the Twin Cities for weeks or months, tier 2 musicians can be caught performing in public at the key venues anywhere from two to four times a week. Tier 2 musicians take a variety of gig types—some of them standards gigs (including private jobs for corporate events or weddings), others all original music; some more traditional jazz, others more experimental. Most teach in some form, including those who are full or part-time time at local universities, others who are visiting artists in residence, and others who teach privately or with music studios. These musicians might perform gigs with upwards of a hundred audience members at times, and then even within the same week perform gigs with not more than ten people in the audience. Though their reputation on the scene provides them with some built-in audience, tier 2 musicians do not have the same consistently guaranteed reach of the nationally recognized musicians. This tier is also split according to age, consisting of both musicians with decade long careers, with

quite a few into their 50s, 60s, or 70s (and at least one into his 80s), and musicians who are younger, i.e. late 20s, 30s, or early 40s. The older range of musicians are more likely to favor jazz that is rooted in bebop or hard bop (also sometimes called post-bop), especially the jazz of the post-Wynton Marsalis 1980s acoustic revival.[27] The younger range of musicians are more likely to play jazz that "swings" in a traditional sense less often—though they can still swing and often do—and incorporate the straight 8th notes and backbeats of jazz coming from a post-ECM lineage, or the Dilla beats, neo-soul style post-Robert Glasper (more on this in chapters 5 and 6). However, musicians of all age groups often collaborate with one another, with local bands usually mixing and matching various instrumentalists. For example, Group 1 might consist of Guitarist A, Drummer B, and Bassist C, while Group 2 consists of Guitarist A, Drummer D, Bassist C, and Saxophonist E. Many musicians in tier 2 have performed with one another at some point, with new groups sprouting to allow for new combinations and permutations of musicians. Groups that mix age ranges often fall somewhere in between the neo-traditionalist Marsalis sound and the more contemporary styles of jazz that are less beholden to notions of swing and acoustic purity.

Many musicians in tier 2 are friends or collaborators with musicians from tier 1, having often studied with or been mentored by tier 1 musicians. They often even perform with tier 1 musicians when tier 1 musicians perform locally. Musicians from neither group would proclaim that the tier 1 musicians are "better" simply because they have

[27] Though for some of the older musicians, they would have been playing this style of straight-ahead acoustic jazz in the 1950s or '60s, before it underwent a dip in popularity and then resurgence via Marsalis.

national reputations, and that is not my claim either—the caliber of musicianship is nearly equal in most cases. However, the distinction arises in how these musicians are received locally—tier 1 musicians generally have a bigger built-in audience because of their experience recording or performing with national acts than do tier 2 musicians. Some musicians from tier 2 have expressed frustration that musicians from tier 1 draw much larger audiences for performing the same kind of music that tier 2 musicians perform on a regular basis. For those musicians, they still respect tier 1 musicians, but can recognize sometimes that what these tier 1 musicians are playing on a given gig is not as extraordinary as they are capable of—sometimes the tier 1 musician has had too much to drink and is "just bullshitting," or the group communication simply is not clicking because the gig was thrown together last minute. However, the crowd usually "eats it up" regardless, which can cause some slight resentment for some tier 2 musicians. This resentment is pointed more toward audience members who they feel are not able to distinguish a good performance from an okay one but are simply letting the reputations of the musicians on stage determine their reaction to the music.

In addition to having more regular appearances on gigs throughout the week, tier 2 musicians are the ones primarily responsible for setting up and maintaining weekly jazz series, as they reside in the Twin Cities most of the year (some may tour for a couple weeks at a time, but most of their time is spent in Minnesota). Though these musicians might not have national reputations, they have a strong reputation with local audiences who attend these series week after week. These musicians are arguably more integral to the maintenance of the Twin Cities jazz scene in its daily operations, as they give the

scene its sense of cohesion, stability, and reliability. The dedicated efforts of these tier 2 musician-curators will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Tier 3 consists of musicians who are often termed by local media, fans, and more seasoned musicians as "young lions," borrowing the term used to describe Wynton Marsalis and his cohorts in the 1980s. Alternatively, these musicians may be referred to as "young cats," but in either case, the younger age of this group of musicians is often emphasized by older musicians and audience members. These musicians range from their late teens to mid-late twenties and are usually either currently attending college or a master's program, often with a major in music, or they have graduated within the last 5 years. For particularly advanced musicians, this group can stretch to include talented high schoolers, but for the most part it is limited to around college age. Many of these musicians attend college somewhere outside of the Twin Cities, meaning that they are only available for performances during breaks from school—summer and winter break. The influx of young, talented musicians is especially notable in the summer, with new bands forming or reuniting just for a few months before their members return to school. For this group of musicians, the prestige of the school they attend during the fall and spring months is often cited alongside testaments to their talent or skill (i.e. Berklee College of Music, the New School, etc.).

The slightly older sub-group of tier 3 includes musicians who are fresh out of college or who are currently attending a master's program, usually at McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul. Similarly, these musicians may be described as "young lions" or might perform with the still in college student musicians, though awe at their

youth by audiences might be slightly diminished as they reach the age and experience to nearly be included into tier 2. Generally, there is more racial and ethnic diversity among tier 3 musicians, which is partially attributed to the master's program at McNally Smith. This specifically includes McNally's President's Scholarship, which has brought in musicians from elsewhere in the country or internationally.

For both the college aged and immediately post-undergrad students, their youth is often emphasized by fellow musicians and audiences. In general, however, their skill and playing ability is regarded on their own terms without handicap for their age. For example, these musicians play the same kinds of gigs as tier 2 musicians—the weekly jazz series and pop-up gigs at various restaurants—though maybe slightly less often, as they might not be "first call" for their instrument. Tier 3 musicians also do not yet usually have positions at universities or colleges, though some might teach privately at music studios. Tier 3 musicians do, however, regularly collaborate with tier 2 and sometimes even tier 1 musicians—one notable instance featured an 18-year-old musician performing with a musician well into his 80s. The main thing that separates tier 3 from tier 2 is their lack of experience—tier 3 musicians are still considered to be maturing and developing their sound or voice, even as their technical ability is regarded as accomplished and they are still booked at least occasionally for the scene's showcase gigs.

Tier 4 of jazz musicians in the scene includes those who are still acquiring their basic skill sets, including repertoire, ability to play a gig in a combo setting, and improvisational technique. They range from those who are still learning jazz in a school setting, either in high school or undergrad, to those who are post-college but not yet at the

level of a tier 3 player. These musicians will play opening sets at the weekly jazz series, which provides them experience in playing a gig but offers less pay and prestige than the headliner slot. Unlike both tier 2 and tier 3 musicians, who are usually a name with those familiar with the scene, tier 4 musicians are lesser known, in that they have not yet developed their reputations as performers. They can play proficiently and get by in a gig without any major faults, but their performances are not remarkable in a way that would make their shows must-sees for the hardcore jazzheads. If they do perform gigs, the sets are usually more standards heavy, closer to what would be heard at a jam session with predictable solo orders and aesthetic choices that stay relatively inside the straight-ahead, acoustic box. Where tier 1, 2, or even 3 musicians might take more liberties with a standards gigs to make it more interesting for the seasoned jazz listener, tier 4 musicians are still developing skills like interaction between ensemble members, a sense of a larger narrative in their improvised solos, fluctuations in dynamics and groove, etc. Unlike tier 3 musicians, who are also on the younger side, tier 4 musicians do not usually perform with tier 2 or 1 musicians, though they may study privately with those musicians and know them personally, as well as frequent their gigs.

The main avenue through which tier 4 musicians improve their facility and gain more experiences and connections, in addition to whatever schooling they may be receiving, is the local jam session. When I first moved to the Twin Cities, there was one public jam session at Jazz Central Studios on Monday nights. Not long after I moved back to California, another jam session, this one a designated B3 organ session, started on Sunday late afternoons at JCS. Though tier 2 and 3 musicians will also attend the jam

sessions, sometimes serving as the house band, it is usually less regularly than tier 4 musicians who rely on the session to improve their skills, as they do not regularly have gigs throughout the week. Tier 4 musicians are also given the opportunity to perform as the house band preceding the session, though they must have proven to have the requisite skills and repertoire knowledge to get through a combined three to four-hour set and jam. As with most opportunities for tier 4 musicians, performing as the house band for the jam session is unlikely to pay much—just what is collected at the door (a $10 cover charge) split among however many band members are performing (four on average). Usually, the audience at Jazz Central Studios during the house band portion on Monday nights is not more than fifteen, sometimes as low as five or six. These audience members usually consist of either fellow musicians who are looking to jam after the opening set or friends and family members of the house band.

Though a musician's status in this hierarchy in tiers can be determined by what they do for a living, particularly if they are a prominent teacher of jazz, for the most part, musicians' primary occupation does not determine their standing among their peers. That is, one need not make their living solely playing jazz in order to be held in high esteem, as most recognize that making a comfortable living with music is a lofty goal in the first place. However, the lack of market support for jazz does not prevent musicians from doing what they have dedicated their lives to doing. Musicians regularly discuss ways to survive while still making the music they wish to create, to balance getting by vs. finding creative fulfillment. Some negotiate this by taking every gig they can (within reason), with the attitude that someone somewhere is listening and that every gig could lead to the

next big, financially rewarding opportunity. Musicians who use this approach generally also make much of their income through teaching, whether privately or through local universities and colleges. Another approach prioritizes musical opportunities that are personally fulfilling. Musicians who follow this mindset are more selective with how they invest their time and creative energy. Because they are playing jazz not for the money, but for the fulfillment, they do not feel the need to take on jobs which will not personally fulfill them—though they generally do not judge those who do "gig hustle" and recognize that not everyone has the financial security to be able to be picky about their gigs. This type may also hold down a day job that is separate from music altogether, though generally the most accomplished musicians have made music (and its related pursuits such as teaching) the majority of their income.

Normative Path of Development for a Jazz Musician

In addition to acting as a starting point for thinking about how musicians unconsciously organize themselves on the scene, this tier system allows me to consider how one develops in their career as a jazz musician. For instance, a musician may progress from a tier 4 musician performing only at weekly jam sessions to a tier 2 musician who is a regular part of the scene. Though I was not in Minnesota long enough to witness that gradual of a transformation, by the end of my time, or during my return visits, I did sense that some former "young lions," i.e. tier 3 musicians, were being gradually accepted into the ranks of tier 2 musicians, where they were no longer considered for their youthful potential but for what they bring to the table as fully developed musicians.

These process of transformation from one tier to the next forms what I call the normative path of development for a jazz musician, defined as the expected course a musician should take to become a full-fledged member of the local jazz scene. I call this path "normative" for two reasons: for one, this path of development is facilitated by institutions of society, particularly high schools and universities, that encourage certain shared values and norms. This can include the expected repertoire and aesthetic standards that form the basis of jazz education in addition to the social networks of musicians that are facilitated by cultural formations in the form of weekly jazz series. Secondly, the path is "normative" in the sense that if a musician does not adhere to these standard practices, they run the risk of receiving criticism from their peers or those with more prestige in the local scene.

There is an unspoken agreement that a musician must earn their stature in the scene by paying their dues in standards gigs and by fully developing their facility as a soloist and ensemble player. For instance, a tier 2 caliber musician may express, privately and usually without naming names, that there are tier 3 musicians who are "not all there yet" and might not deserve some of the accolades or gigs they are getting, particularly if these gigs are with tier 1 musicians or at the main stage of the annual Twin Cities Jazz Festival, the year's big showcase event. These overachieving tier 3 musicians might be viewed with suspicion, that their achievement of a certain gig was based not on their musicianship but on their ability to effectively network, or on some other non-musical factor. For instance, one white male tier 2 musician admitted his own skepticism when a female tier 3 student, then still a college student, began playing with a tier 1 musician.

> She's talented, she's worked very hard. She's attractive. And I saw she had these gigs with this jazz legend. I remember thinking, uh, how'd that happen? And I want with all my heart to believe that he heard her or something and just thought because you're the person who's really hungry to learn, he wanted to support that. But I was suspicious, I have to say. So I don't know if that's just my human nature. She's young! I'm thinking, like, how'd that even happen, you know? But there's no accounting for taste either.

This musician felt that the female instrumentalist's talent and experience level was not yet proficient enough, due to her age, for the requisite prestige that comes with playing with a "jazz legend." He feared that there may have been ulterior motives for this young woman being chosen for a premier gig related to her attractiveness, a commonly expressed skepticism regarding female instrumentalists in jazz that reflects a greater latent sexism in jazz culture (Lehner 2014, Berliner 2017, Pellegrinelli 2017, Russonello 2017, Sevian 2017). In this case, the skepticism is greatly informed by the younger musician's gender, but more generally, if a musician achieves a level of prestige they are believed to not yet have earned, some musicians might point out how they feel a younger musician's talent is not fully developed. For instance, Chris Bates, a bassist, described TC musicians' perceptions of the quality of bass players in the Twin Cities.

> As far as soloist and really going for an original approach? Bass players? Personally I think there's more, but I know that some of my friends would argue it's still not enough. And there are some people who are perceived in that way who don't have the skills yet to be present in those things.

Though experienced musicians might be hesitant to call a tier 3 musician for their band if they feel that musician still has things to improve in their playing, they may also be supportive of their growth, publicly sing their praises, and attend their performances as audience members.

Put another way, a jazz musician should undergo the normative path of development to becoming a jazz musician and the requisite level of gig frequency and prestige that comes with each level. If a musician jumps too quickly or at too premature of an experience and ability level to a type of gig normally reserved for a tier 2 or 1 musician, they might be viewed with suspicion by more accomplished musicians who sense that their musical personality is not fully formed and that they are being rewarded for other reasons. Though musicians might express skepticism on some musicians who they feel are gaining more prestige than they have yet earned, generally, veteran musicians look to mentor younger musicians and assist in their creative development, as their larger interests lie in the health of the scene as a whole. This is often facilitated by high school and university institutions, where many local musicians teach or hold clinics with prospective young jazz students, or by informal institutions in the scene, such as the weekly jazz series. The normative path of development for a jazz musician, then, would typically look something like this.

First experiences playing jazz often occur in high school, or perhaps in middle school for students from wealthier districts. These students are in their school's jazz big band, with some also playing in smaller ensembles of 4-7 musicians (i.e. "combos"). If serious about pursuing jazz in college or as a career in some form, these musicians would also ideally be studying with a private teacher, mostly likely someone from tier 2 but perhaps tier 3. Additionally, high school students are encouraged to seek out jam sessions (i.e. at Jazz Central Studios) as opportunities to play in public and develop their combo playing skills in a relatively safe environment without fear of judgment. Some ambitious

high school age students may also put together their own combos to play the opening sets at the Reverie (formerly the Nicollet) or Black Dog, or late or weekend sets at JCS, especially under the leadership of Andrea Canter and the JazzInk Youth project. The particularly gifted of these would audition for and perhaps be selected for the Dakota Combo, a Twin Cities-wide youth ensemble put together by the Dakota Foundation and currently under the leadership of bassist Adam Linz.[28] Placement in the Dakota Combo especially puts these young jazz learners on the path to becoming "young lions," as bios of current young lions often include mention of their Dakota Combo alumni status.

As they graduate high school, the particularly promising musicians may decide to study music in college, which many do, but not all of them. For instance, one now-young lion majors in a science field, not music, at a state university, even as he is recognized as one of the most promising young voices in the TC jazz scene. However, entrance into a prestigious music program helps bolster a student's reputation, or at least acts as confirmation of the ability and potential many already hear. At this point, the particularly dedicated and gifted musicians may progress to "young lion" i.e. tier 3 status, now earning gigs with tier 2 or perhaps even tier 1 musicians as opposed to simply playing with just their tier 4 peers. In fact, it is this acceptance by tier 2 musicians and approval to play the regular (i.e. not opening slot) gigs with more accomplished musicians that signals a musician's progression from a tier 4 musician to a tier 3 young lion. This is not

[28] According to Andrea Canter, the Dakota Combo was inaugurated with the intention of exposing student musicians to small ensemble playing, as opposed to the big band repertoire they usually acquire in high school. Per Canter, the Dakota Combo's director Adam Linz also encourages students to write their own original music, a skill that is less commonly taught to high school students.

to say that the tier 3 musician is done learning, and the tier 2 musicians would still likely be hesitant to call the younger musicians for more high-stakes gigs like a private engagement at a corporate event or for the big showcases at the TCJF or the Target Atrium at Orchestra Hall. Rather, the tier 2 musician recognizes that the now tier 3 musician is at a place where they can contribute to a gig, by not simply competently holding their own, but by providing youthful inspiration and collaborative potential that the older musician can use to generate new ideas. For instance, I witnessed on multiple occasions musicians transition from only playing the opening slot of a jazz series to becoming a sideman in a tier 2 musician's band in the headline slot,[29] often giving the more veteran musician's band a different musical dynamic than it had previously.[30]

Some of the more buzzworthy young musicians make this leap somewhere in college, sometimes at the very beginning or even prior to high school. However, not all musicians make this leap at the age of 19 or 20 but may still be working on it post-graduation. Their reputation may also be somewhat split; some may see them as ready for the regular gigs, but others might not be ready to call them. For these musicians, the jam

[29] A "sideman" refers to a musician who is a supporting member in a group named after its leader. The term is commonly used in the scene to refer to men and women; I am not aware of any gender-neutral alternative.

[30] Perhaps the most notable instance I witnessed was when Steve Kenny, a trumpet player and organizer of the Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog series, began playing with drummer Rodney Ruckus in the former's Steve Kenny Quartet at the Black Dog. After several shows with this group, Kenny then invited Ruckus to substitute on a more premier gig with Kenny's Illicit Sextet at the Dakota Club. The Illicit Sextet is often credited as one of the first groups in the Twin Cities to pursue a style that used acoustic jazz and original compositions, and as such has had a built-in fanbase in the TC. Ruckus's performance at the Dakota Club that night elicited strong reactions from the club's audience. When speaking to the audience, Kenny noted that this was Ruckus's debut performance at the Dakota, but that his next performance at the Dakota ("or in New York or god knows where") would be ten times the cover, the implication being that Rodney was too talented to play small local shows in the TC for much longer. Within a year, Ruckus had moved to the San Francisco Bay Area. At the time of this writing, he had moved to New York City.

session is especially crucial, as it affords them the opportunity to not only hone their skills, but to showcase these skills for fellow musicians, many of whom are their peers but some of whom may be tier 2 musicians. In this sense, a musician may be able to leap from a tier 4 to tier 3 musician by having their talent recognized by a tier 2 musician and being called for gigs with these tier 2 musicians. This may happen because a tier 4 musician is called as a sub by someone of the same instrument, particularly if that instrumentalist is their own teacher and has seen their progress enough to know that the gig opportunity is warranted.

More frequently, however, a developing tier 4 musician forms their own groups with their peers to practice together and ideally land a gig, first at one of the early time slots at the Black Dog or Reverie series or at Jazz Central Studios. Dedication and improvement in playing ability as exhibited in those opening slots may eventually lead to a promotion of sorts for the whole group to the headliner slot at the jazz series, or individual musicians might have their talent recognized by a tier 2 musician and called as a sub for a gig, etc. The genesis of these tier 4 groups may occur via the school of its participants, either high school or college, or through the jam session. It is common after a jam session for musicians who had just played together to exchange business cards or numbers in the hopes of setting something up outside of the jam session. This can also include musicians who may be older than most other tier 4 musicians, but are returning to jazz after an extended absence after having performed it more regularly in high school or college. For these musicians, depending on their previous experience and current dedication to practicing, attending jam sessions, etc., they may be able to more quickly

leap to tier 3 or even 2 once they prove themselves to have the skills needed to perform alongside those tier 2 or 3 musicians with more established reputations.

For musicians to prove themselves and gain entrance to a network of tier 3 or 2 musicians, it is also helpful to make semi-regular appearances at the shows of established musicians. As choosing members for a band is as much a social fit as a musical one, established musicians that become personally familiar with a newer face might more readily accept that musician into their circle of gigs, provided that the necessary experience and skills as a musician are there. For instance, one musician, after having finished his masters at a state university outside of Minnesota, moved to the Twin Cities without knowing anyone there. He claimed that he just started showing up to gigs and introducing himself to people and before long was being called for gigs—he did not feel it was too difficult to gain entrance into the scene because the scene is not as crowded as other cities like Chicago or New York. His ease of entrance, however, was likely influenced by his playing ability in addition to what he attributed to the openness of the TC jazz community, which he characterized as having an attitude of mutual respect rather than prioritizing individual egos.

Entrance into a higher tier of musicians, which comes accompanied by more frequent and higher profile gigs with more esteemed musicians, rests largely on the approval of those more esteemed musicians. One rarely "comes up" on the scene through audience approval alone, but must depend on the acceptance of those who have gained clout on the scene through the jazz series they run or the other musicians they work with. As such, a younger, unproven musician will hope to impress a tier 2 or 1 musician if one

shows up to a place they are playing. In one case, I witnessed a musician become outwardly nervous when he realized, after he had gotten off stage, that one of the scene's premier players on his instrument was in the audience. This musician, who I will call Jack, was not scheduled to perform that night, but had been invited earlier that day by the leader of the headliner that night to sit in. Jack played two tunes with the band before leaving the stage. He held his own during the entire set, taking technically proficient solos strongly rooted in the melodic line playing tradition of bebop.[31]

Around this time, Jack would arguably have been entering the ranks of a tier 3 musician—proficient enough now to land some gigs around town, but rarely playing the premier shows around the scene. This happened during one of my return visits to Minnesota; Jack was more like a tier 4 musician when we had met during my initial fieldwork period, during which time I would jam with Jack at the weekly jam session at Jazz Central Studios. We had often chatted about the ins and outs of learning tunes, particularly the seemingly ever-expanding body of repertoire that one must know to be able to play a gig. Even in the five months since I had finished my initial fieldwork period in Minnesota, Jack had become more active, now gigging a few times a week. After he sat in that night, however, Jack asked me repeatedly how he sounded, especially after I had confirmed that one of the scene's most prominent musicians, who I will call Alex, had been in the crowd watching. I assured him that he sounded good, and that people seemed to be into it. Jack said that he was only invited by the group's leader to sit

[31] Bebop line playing consists of playing scale notes that fit the given chord, often in a manner that emphasizes 8th note and triplet rhythmic patterns and melodies that move in steps or arpeggios organized in thirds.

in earlier that day, so they had not really planned anything. He was not worried about it until he noticed Alex in the crowd. Jack asked if Alex had said anything to me about his playing. I said he had not, but he also had not said anything negative and seemed to be enjoying it just fine. I told him he should relax; he sounded good!

Though it is a bit easier to identify when a tier 4 musician has made the jump to tier 3, as was seen in this case, the transition between a tier 3 and tier 2 musician is a bit murkier. A tier 3 musician is already playing the kinds of gigs that a tier 2 musician plays, just less frequently. The transition happens when the tier 3 musician is no longer thought of as a young person who still has some developing to do but as someone who is fully formed and accepted as part of the main circle of musicians.[32] This seems to occur around a musician's late 20s, when they are no longer still fresh out of college but have been in the real world for several years. By this point, if they have been performing several gigs a week consistently, they might be thought of as a regular on the scene. An additional signal for a musician entering tier 2 is whether they have begun teaching at an institution in some capacity, not counting private music studios. For instance, a pianist who teaches as an adjunct at a local small liberal arts college would no longer be thought of as a "young lion" but as someone who is fully invested in the grind of making a living performing music, and who is mature and experienced enough to teach college students. That is not to say one must teach to become a tier 2 musician, as some do not desire to teach at all. Other signals of entrance into tier 2 can include the musician working more

[32] Of course, most musicians would identify themselves, no matter their age, as still having growing to do—continual growth is a common mindset for lifelong improvisers (Bailey 1980).

frequently with more accomplished musicians than other young lions, touring more frequently (even if small regional tours), or taking on more ambitious projects as a leader that result in a CD of mostly original music recorded in a studio.

Musicians that transition from tier 2 to tier 1 are rarer, as fewer musicians have nationally recognized status. Some of the musicians in tier 2, however, could be argued to be closer to tier 1 as their reputations grow and they perform more frequently outside of the Twin Cities. Not all tier 2 musicians, however, even desire to become tier 1 musicians, as they do not want to have to endure all that comes with "making it" in the national scene. For them, being a nationally recognized artist is not necessarily a more desirable position, so they would not consider their position to be any "lower" than a tier 1 artist in the first place. If they are comfortable with their routine and finances as a musician in Minnesota, then they already have "made it" whether they have a national reputation or not. For instance, one tier 2 musician told me that unlike some of his peers who had moved to New York with bigger ambitions, he never had that desire, as he preferred to be able to afford to buy a house and settle down with his family in the Twin Cities, where he was also born and raised. Though this musician also semi-regularly tours outside of Minnesota, particularly in the Midwest, he had not fully dedicated himself to "making it" in the traditional jazz sense of moving to New York and trying to cut it there. Without doing so, however, that musician will likely not develop the same national reputation as some tier 1 musicians that he is regarded as on par with, musically, but who have spent more years grinding it out on the national scene. The musician's local reputation, however, has not suffered as a result of his remaining Twin Cities-bound.

Though many tier 2 musicians in Minnesota feel their local scene provides all that they need, especially as the livability and affordability of the Twin Cities allows them to survive comfortably, one musician, who had spent time in New York, told me that he felt this attitude limited the Twin Cities jazz scene and its visibility outside of Minnesota. He felt that more Minnesota musicians should put forth effort to promote themselves outside of Minnesota by going on tours, as they already have the ability and creativity needed to "make it" but not the national awareness. He felt this was especially a problem for the Twin Cities, as it is isolated from other major metropolitan areas—the closest being Chicago, a roughly eight hours' drive, or perhaps Milwaukee, a smaller city that is still about seven hours away. On the east coast, musicians are better able to travel up and down the coast and hit clubs in several big cities, but Minnesotans are more content to stay in the Twin Cities because it is less convenient to visit other cities and because the TC jazz scene is self-sustaining. Though some bands may embark on a short two-week tour following a record release, most tier 2 musicians seem to not tour more than a couple times of year at best—those with stable teaching gigs or families might not leave at all.

Though in many cases, tier 2 or 1 musicians act as mentors to younger tier 3 or 4 musicians, in some cases, they might actively serve to block the paths of those they view as competition for their gigs. In other words, they seek to preserve their place in a jazz musicians' hierarchy by ensuring that they are still getting premier gigs. Though I was not as plugged into these politics of the scene as musicians were, I did not observe much of this activity in the TC jazz scene, and in fact often saw examples of more experienced musicians facilitating the growth of younger musicians by including them in their bands.

Additionally, other musicians have commented on what they feel is an anti-hierarchical attitude in the scene, with musicians going out of their way to support others by attending their gigs or giving them advice. However, bassist Chris Bates noted what he felt were oppositional attitudes by elder musicians when he and his brother, drummer JT Bates, were coming up on the TC jazz scene:

> I ended up playing other genres [than straight-ahead jazz], because, I mean quite honestly it's part of the reason JT plays the music he plays, it's because there's some drummers in town when he was young who wouldn't give him gigs in the jazz circle because he was better than them already.

Bates then described veteran bass players who continued to not call him to sub on gigs because they feared he would displace them. Bates clarified that he hoped it was not just his "ego talking," but he looked at certain musicians who were chosen over him and knew that he had more experience and ability to "bring it to the gig" than a musician who was "less of a player." As Bates put it, "it actually hurts me to think that way, because if I need a sub I'm gonna send the best dang person I can. Because the music is the most important thing." For Chris and JT Bates, being rejected by some veteran musicians has not hurt their development in the least; both are among the biggest names on their instruments in the Twin Cities. However, to a certain degree, being excluded from "the jazz circle" caused both Bates brothers to more readily play music styles other than jazz, an adaptability that likely increased their reputations in the long run.

As they seek to develop their own voice as a musician, a foundational desire for improvisers and which is essential to progressing to a higher tier,[33] a musician often encounters a conundrum regarding what to focus on in their training. One must demonstrate mastery of certain skills and repertoire in jazz, particularly within the styles of bebop and hard bop. However, one also must demonstrate a knack for originality and stylistic well-roundedness. Chris Bates described this as a tension between depth and breadth, as he also provided an example where experienced this conundrum at his undergraduate education at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, after he wanted to play music more like Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*:

> I ran into that at Eau Claire. It was like "Chris you can't play bebop yet!" I was like, well, I'm working on that. But that's not gonna be there when I graduate. That's something that the players themselves have to work on for a long time to get results with it. But you can play free music, and you can improvise with people and figure out how to jam and groove off of each other and take your music to a really cool place without needing to have that foundational element of bebop and more traditional swing-oriented stuff.

Bates continued to describe how he felt institutions of learning jazz have contributed to this necessity of learning the basics before progressing to free music.

> I think when you're in school, especially on a collegiate level, you have to show results. And that is the big conundrum is that you're bound to choose things that, as an instructor especially, build a player up in a logical way. I struggle with that with my students because they have ideas about what they want to do or how they might want to sound, even if they actually can't play at the level that they need to actually logically address that. You hear a lot of talk about develop your own voice, develop your own sound. But without trying to be someone else for a minute, you can't really define who you are, you know?

[33] The idea of developing one's own voice is similar to what George Lewis describes as Afrological processes of improvisation (Lewis 2004).

As Bates describes it, the expectations of an institutionalized education lead to the quantifiable building blocks of jazz—the bebop harmonic and melodic language, standard repertoire, etc.—being encouraged at the expense of finding one's own voice in improvisation.[34] As an educator, Bates feels the need to play the role of encouraging his student to address these basic building blocks first, even as when Bates was a student himself, he felt the same desire to move past bebop into freer territory, even if prematurely.

The role of institutions in shaping the normative path of development for jazz musicians is thus multifold. On one level, jazz educational institutions from high school to college cement the standards of pedagogy that result in styles such as bebop being presented as the essential and "logical" building blocks that are necessary for jazz musicians to master to gain proficiency and approval by fellow musicians. This is reflected in the aesthetic preferences of the gigs of musicians in different tiers; tier 4 musicians will be more likely to play shows in a straight-ahead style than tier 1 musicians, who may choose to play straight-ahead but just as likely will play free music. While tier 4 musicians are still learning these fundamentals of bebop, tier 1 musicians have long mastered it, affording them the ability and reputation to play more experimental styles.

[34] While alternative pedagogical models of improvisation outside of the bebop paradigm have been proposed (see Morris 2012), jazz education remains largely centered aesthetically on the melodic and harmonic language of bebop and post-bop (Ake 2012; Prouty 2013; Wilf 2014).

On another level, as jazz training largely occurs in secondary and higher education institutions, one's progression along this normative path of development is largely predicated on their access to these forms of education. One veteran musician, Jay Epstein, felt that there are more "advanced players at a younger age" in the TC jazz scene than there have ever been, a fact he attributed to a "stronger emphasis in education of jazz." Though some musicians I talked to believed that it was still possible to learn jazz without going to school for it—by learning through online video tutorials and showing up frequently to jam sessions, for instance—there were very few young musicians I encountered in the Twin Cities who did not learn jazz in school in some form. This creates the potential for unequal representation in the jazz scene, where local musicians come from public schools with funding for music programs, a factor which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Audience Types

While one's progression along the normative path of development is determined largely by the approval of other musicians, a musician's standing can be observed in what types of audiences attend their shows. The tiers of musicians, and the scene itself, would not exist without the audience members that contribute to the success of the jazz series and venues that provide musicians the financial support necessary to keep making creative music. Like musicians, audience members can also be broken into several types: musicians, jazzheads, casual listeners, and non-jazz listeners.

Type 1 is the musician audience, as musicians in any tier can also at times be audience members. Usually when a musician talks about the audience, they are assuming

a non-playing audience; having musician friends at a gig is great, but drawing an outside crowd would allow one to sustain the gig, as the cover charge money would not be just coming from a musician's own small circle of musician friends—essentially just cycling through the same group of people with no net gain. The musician audience type can consist of any tier of jazz musician, but is most frequently tier 3 and 4, as the musician audience skews younger, especially for events that are later in the evening. As tier 3 and 4 musicians are not as experienced, they might not be playing as many gigs in the week, so their schedules are freer to attend other musicians' performances more regularly. The musician audience will often attend the performances of their peers or mentors, and for tier 4 musicians especially, those of their private teachers. For younger musicians, especially those still in high school, there is often an outward display of physically manifested enthusiasm for the performance, ranging from aggressive foot tapping to head bobbing. For those in their mid to late 20s, their physical demeanor is usually more reserved, though they may throw in the occasional cheer or "jazz woo."[35] Musician audience members often congregate among themselves, especially at the bar in certain venues. In some cases, musician audience members talk to each other during the performance, as their attendance at a show is to not only support their peers or mentors but to catch up with one another; it is a social gathering as much as a space for listening.

Type 2 consists of those who are sometimes termed "jazzheads." Jazzheads attend jazz shows several nights a week, including frequently the "must see" events as

[35] Nate Chinen (2013) has coined the term "jazzbro" to refer to this type of young male musician and the behaviors he exhibits at jazz shows.

noted by websites such as Jazz Police and by Jazz 88 radio, as well as shared on Facebook. Jazzheads usually have a much deeper familiarity with jazz artists spanning back several decades and can specifically identify what types of jazz they most enjoy listening to. They are usually familiar with the canonical names in jazz as well as contemporary national jazz artists. Some jazzheads may even casually play an instrument themselves and relate to TC musicians in that way, though they do not perform publicly. Because jazzheads are regular fixtures at certain shows, they are often on a first name basis with certain musicians. As jazzheads pride themselves on their knowledge of jazz—historical, national and local—they might distinguish themselves from more casual jazz listeners, especially those who are at a venue where jazz is taking place but are not really listening to the music but rather conversing with friends, etc. Jazzheads prioritize listening closely to the music, often arriving early and taking seats as close to the bandstand as possible. This focused attention to jazz performances illustrates the larger investment that jazzheads have in the local scene; for instance, one jazzhead told me that after the Artist's Quarter closed, he felt a personal responsibility to go out and support live local jazz more often than he had been doing. Jazzheads are predominantly middle-aged to older white men, though there are also a handful of dedicated women listeners. Some jazzheads are also involved in pursuits that directly contribute to the wellbeing of the scene, be it in booking concerts, photographing and video or audio recording performances, preparing meals, or writing up brief reviews, though in those cases the jazzhead crosses over from being an audience member to a scene organizer and contributor.

Though most hardcore jazzheads are men, there is a small contingent of dedicated listeners who are women. One woman in particular has felt that the gender disparity in both musicians and fans has caused her to experience latent sexism in the way musicians and other audience members interact with her. She feels that as a woman, she is assumed to not really be a serious jazz listener with the knowledge of jazz history, current performers, etc., but is often assumed by some to be more casual, even as she goes to several performances a week. Worse still, she is assumed to be a girlfriend or partner of a musician, as she feels that as a single woman attending concerts alone and not with a male partner, some musicians and other audience members do not know how to interact with her or place her into their understanding of gendered roles in the jazz scene. She feels that musicians are usually slower to recognize her as a regular at their gigs than they are for male listeners, and when they do, conversation is often awkward, if it occurs at all. She has felt that most musicians are much quicker to join conversations with a group of male audience members, musician types or not, which means that as a woman she feels that she is not able to break into their social circle. As she put it, being witness to conversations between male musicians but not being included in them makes her feel that she is "always on the outside listening to their pissing contest. It's not nice to listen to people's pissing contest." She has taken to using the term "groupie" ironically to describe herself, as she feels that is how many people see her anyway.[36]

[36] In the years since my initial fieldwork period, this jazzhead has expressed to me that the situation in the TC scene has gotten much better for her as more musicians have come to recognize her presence at gigs.

A third type of jazz audience member is the casual listener. Casual listeners may also attend certain jazz series regularly, but usually less often than the jazzheads and may come and go as listeners. They usually profess to enjoy jazz a lot, but may be less apt to describe what they are hearing or what about it they enjoy, not usually being as familiar with jazz history or its stylistic developments. They are, however, often aware of larger narratives about jazz, such as its precarious position in the music industry. For instance, one casual listener I met a downtown Minneapolis venue implored me to "keep jazz alive!" after I finished telling him about my research. Though they might not be as dedicated as the jazzheads, there are also a higher number of more casual jazz listeners so their presence at concerts is crucial. Some of them may be personal friends with some of the musicians and attend shows to lend their support, as well as, for some, contribute financially to tip jars and crowdfunding campaigns for new recordings.

The fourth type is what I term "non-jazz listeners." These are people who do not usually attend jazz concerts, would not profess to be jazz fans, and often did not even intend to be in a space where jazz was occurring. Rather, they attended a certain café, restaurant, or bar for another reason—a drink after a baseball game, a dinner out during a business trip, a date night—and happened upon jazz in the process. This type ranges from people who are appreciative of the jazz they happen to be hearing to patrons who outright ignore the music and talk over it, much to the chagrin of the jazzheads and some casual listeners. For these audience members, the music is subservient to their experience socializing, eating, and drinking and should not interfere with that experience.

There are some cases where non-jazz audience members' expectations of their dining and drinking experience come to clash with the jazz they are hearing. In one instance, an audience member, a travelling businessman from Denver, became outright hostile toward a bartender at a downtown Minneapolis bar because he felt the jazz group he was hearing, the cities' longstanding Wolverines Trio, was too loud. He expressed that he would have stayed to have another glass of wine, but had to leave because he could not stand the music, especially the drummer. After the patron left shortly thereafter, the bartender turned to me and said "who doesn't like the Wolverines? Everybody likes the Wolverines!"[37] At the Black Dog, non-jazz listeners are especially common during the summer months, as the venue is right near the stadium of the professional baseball team the St. Paul Saints.[38] In one instance, a woman sitting in the front row of the seats listening to a group comprised of some of the cities' best local musicians continually turned around attempting to shush some loud patrons in the back to no avail. In another instance, St. Paul's annual Santacon wove through the Black Dog just as the weekly Saturday night jazz was beginning, causing an odd clash of jazz fans with revelers dressed as Santa and his elves. I suspected that when the music started, the band played even more loudly and aggressively than they might have otherwise in an attempt to

[37] It is my suspicion that the man's reaction was at least partially informed by the fact the drummer in the Wolverines was a woman—one of the only female drummers I encountered in the TC jazz scene, Jendeen Forberg.

[38] Though the St. Paul Saints draw their name from the prior minor league team active until 1960 (as a farm team for the Chicago White Sox, Brooklyn Dodgers, and Los Angeles Dodgers), the current incarnation of the Saints plays in the American Association of Independent Professional Baseball, with no affiliation with Major League Baseball. However, attendance at the team's games is plentiful enough to cause a notable uptick in foot traffic in Lowertown St. Paul.

drown out with sound those who were there but had no interest in the music. These non-jazz listeners were thus unlikely to leave a tip in the tip jar but would take up space and noise anyway. Most of the Santacon participants left within ten minutes of the music starting.

Musicians vary in their active consideration of what kind of audience they are attracting. Some are not concerned with the audience at all and simply seek to play the kind of music they want to play, with the expectation that if the music is good enough, people will want to hear it. Others are highly attentive to the demographics of the room they are playing to and will shape their music accordingly. For instance, pianist Benny Weinbeck describes his approach to playing to different age ranges:

> If it's older folks in their 70s, 80s, 90s, you don't want to be playing music that's too crazy or inaccessible like bebop tunes. You want to play old standards and things they know. Then there's kind of the middle group that if you play bebop, it's still gonna be inaccessible for them because they're in their 50s or 60s and they wanna hear songs they know too. Classic rock was kind of the main music when they were growing up, and Burt Bacharach tunes and stuff like that. Really it's all about paying attention to the audience, and playing stuff they know and like or groovy stuff if they wanna dance. You find that sweet spot. If I had to sum it up in two words, it would be, "be nice." Be nice to your audience, be nice to bartenders, be nice to the customers.[39]

While Weinbeck seeks to meet his audience's interests where they already lie, others consider how their music can cross over to audiences that do not normally listen to jazz and perhaps pull them into the jazz scene, or at least their own shows, a bit more. For

[39] In the shows I have seen him perform, Weinbeck played at restaurants, breweries, and more up-scale bars, sometimes during happy hour, mostly at places not known purely for jazz. His audience consisted mostly of casual jazz fans and non-jazz listeners, with some serious jazz fans attending as well. For instance, Weinbeck noted an exception to his rule of not playing bebop for audience members in the form of an 80-year-old man who attends his gigs and loves bebop. Per Weinbeck, "he's the exception. But if he's the only one there, definitely you're gonna play to him. And he'll come back."

instance, Lars-Erik Larson, leader of the local group Mancrush, expressed to me an interest in appealing more to rock fans in the Twin Cities. Larson will selectively book gigs that target a younger audience rather than focusing on the usual regional jazz festival circuit. Some musicians are a bit more antagonistic or cynical toward their audience, particularly around the time of the Twin Cities Jazz Festival, when downtown and Lowertown St. Paul are flooded with thousands of listeners, a large percentage of whom likely will not attend another jazz event during the year. Steve Kenny, organizer of the Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog series and the Black Dog stage at the TCJF, has equated (on a few occasions) these once-a-year jazz listeners to "church goers on Easter Sunday." On the other hand, Zacc Harris, also a jazz series organizer and leader of several prominent TC groups, believes that exposure to this audience directly leads to purchases of his CDs and more offers for private gigs for himself or his band Atlantis Quartet, so the tradeoff to him is worth it.

Conclusion

In her study on jazz education outcomes, Alice Marquis (1998) estimates that only 10% of those who major in jazz end up making a living in it. I argue, however, that thinking of "success" in these terms misses the point while also excluding many that are important contributors to the jazz scene but have no intention of making jazz their entire livelihood. Therefore, in determining what qualifies one as a "jazz musician," I value self-identification as a jazz musician over the valorized idea of making one's entire living as a jazz musician. The TC jazz scene is full of well-regarded musicians who contribute to the maintenance of the scene but who do not necessarily reap much economic benefit.

For instance, some musicians intentionally choose day jobs that are separate from their music careers so that they do not tire out of music through relentless gig hustling. But that choice does not disqualify them among their peers from being considered accomplished jazz musicians. Other musicians, who may have studied music in college but pursued careers in other fields and ceased performing music publicly almost completely, may only play jazz at the jam session every couple of weeks but still self-identify as jazz musicians. Additionally, they may still attend jazz performances and become members of a dedicated audience, an audience which is needed to sustain the activity of those playing the music.

The jazz scene in the Twin Cities, then, traffics not in economic value, or even in a cool factor, but in a prestige value. That is, musicians generally prioritize how the music they play will fulfill an artistic vision and a personal calling to playing improvised music. As one musician described it, "jazz is a stupid way to make money but a great way to make art." The TC jazz scene is still a "scene" in the sense that people gather together in a local setting to create meaning using shared cultural values. The scene has a sense of stability in that musicians and audiences ascribe a timelessness to the music they produce and consume, but at the same time, the scene is still at the end of the day largely constructed through the informal actions of individuals. As such, there is a mixture of stability and instability in the TC jazz scene—the art is timeless, and the scene will always be there, but the components of the larger structure are always changing. In the next chapter, I discuss how institutions and cultural formations, which are themselves

unstable, create a larger sense of stability that allows musicians in the TC jazz scene to prioritize making creative music in a way they feel is truest to the meaning of jazz.

Chapter 4: Institutions & Formations in the Twin Cities Jazz Scene

When I spoke to local musicians in the Twin Cities jazz scene, I regularly, and without prompting, received remarks from them that attested to the state of Minnesota's strong record of public support for the arts in the form of grant funding and educational institutions that support jazz. Though the extent of this institutionalized support for the arts was held by musicians to be unique to Minnesota, jazz in twenty-first century American society has more widely come to rely on institutional support. While jazz studies scholarship has addressed the canonizing efforts of figures like Wynton Marsalis and Ken Burns, less often has it addressed the effects of institutionalization on a local scene. In this chapter, I examine institutions of jazz in the Twin Cities, institutions which allow the jazz scene to sustain and even grow in stature.

I consider the institutionalization of jazz in the TC both at an informal level—the efforts of local musicians to establish weekly "jazz nights" at neighborhood cafes—and the formal level—the state funding local musicians and organizations receive and the high schools and universities that produce local jazz musicians. In describing these various types of institutions, I primarily seek to uncover the effects of this institutionalization on jazz. How does institutionalized support for jazz affect the type of music that jazz musicians are able to create? How is the anatomy of the scene, described in the previous chapter, formed around certain institutions? How do musicians consider these institutions in relation to jazz culture in the TC? What are the socioeconomic

implications for a jazz scene that looks increasingly toward institutional support to make up for inconsistent market support?

As scholars have noted, one impact of increased institutionalized support for jazz in North America more broadly has been the abstraction of jazz into the realm of autonomous art music with modernist values akin to Western classical music (Benson 2006; Solis 2008; Stewart 2011). In this chapter, I argue that as jazz becomes institutionalized, it undergoes a process of sacralization, wherein jazz is held in high prestige. This occurs as an effect of institutionalization, as a means of acquiring greater institutional support, and as a strategy for musicians to create meaning that will persist even if the money dries up. The sacralization of jazz implies a degree of abstraction where jazz is conceived as an art form with inherent value regardless of its material support. However, institutionalization, or the lack thereof, also has real impact on musicians' livelihoods and with respect to who has access to learn jazz, as can be observed through on the ground study in the Twin Cities.

This chapter proceeds as follows: First, I provide key theories related to institutions, both formal and informal, to show how they can inform how a local jazz scene operates. Then, I discuss in detail various institutions in the Twin Cities: the weekly jazz series; the annual corporate sponsored jazz festival; the local nonprofits; arts grants foundations and government agencies; and music programs at high schools, colleges, and universities. Finally, I close with a consideration of how the sacralization of jazz occurs not just in the strategies of presenting jazz for institutional funding, but in the

lives and beliefs of local musicians dedicated to playing a music with inconsistent market support.

Institutions Theory

As this chapter is concerned with the relationship between institutions, both informal and formal, and jazz cultural production, it is first useful to review scholarship that has addressed the relationship between culture and societal structures. In chapter 3, I considered the TC jazz community from the perspective of the entire anatomy of the scene, defined as a localized setting formed around shared cultural meanings. This chapter moves past a broad conception of a holistic scene and into particular institutions and formations within that scene, as well as some institutions outside of the scene that have an impact on TC jazz culture.

Of central importance to my consideration of structures in the TC jazz scene is Raymond Williams' work. In *The Sociology of Culture,* Williams calls for a social analysis of cultural institutions and formations as a way to better understand the relations between these institutions and formations and the material production of culture (1982, 14). Williams defines institutions as official and formalized by the state while formations are that which producers of cultures, i.e., artists, organize themselves (1982, 35). In addition, Williams theorizes several different types of formations organized by cultural producers, including such loose concepts as artistic "movements" or "schools of thought." Though with "school," the names of these formations are often patterned after more formal institutional terms, they are usually without a formal organizational structure. They are based on a shared artistic value or approach, not strict membership to

an organization. Artistic movements or schools of thought can be national or "paranational," or "related to the institution of an effective world market" for forms of culture (1982, 83). In emphasizing both the internal and external relations in these types of cultural formations—that is, how members relate to each other and to those outside their formation—Williams provides a theoretical model for research on music to produce grounded explication of the workings of social organizations that generate culture, as I seek to do here.

In the TC jazz scene, both institutions and formations produce the material workings of jazz culture. Institutions include educational organizations, such as high schools and universities, and grant agencies that award funding for the arts. Formations are the weekly jazz series that occur in certain venues under the leadership of musician-curators. In some cases, formations become associated with institutions as they receive grant funding or produce jazz as part of a larger umbrella institution. Formations in the TC also operate in relation to a paranational jazz culture, or what I described in the previous chapter as "the national scene," which is also similar to what Williams describes as a "larger effective culture" such as "Western music" (1982, 83).

Though I focus on formations and institutions in the TC jazz scene, like Williams, I do not assume culture to be a simple product of societal structures. Rather, I analyze these structures to uncover how jazz culture is constructed in a modern jazz scene. I echo the strategies of many ethnomusicologists who, following Stuart Hall's notion of articulation, consider how music is neither determinant of nor determined by social structures, but rather is based on contingent relationships with larger social structures

(Pacini Hernandez 1995; Austerlitz 1997; Averill 1997). Additionally, following Tia DeNora (2000), I demonstrate how theories of institutions and formations get put into action on a grounded, local, and everyday level. Though institutions and formations help structure the broader scene, they are ultimately the result of the actions of a small group of dedicated individuals. Furthermore, as I will show, these institutions and formations in the TC should not be considered separately from musical creation, as structures that have an effect on music or vice versa. Rather, the weekly jazz series of the TC do not just lead to the creation of musical activity; many of these formations *are* musical activity. The creation of institutions and formations to support jazz in the TC can be considered as a form of "musicking," to borrow from Christopher Small's (1998) term to describe activities other than the actual creation of music itself that contribute to musical activity. That is, these series are as much a defining element of TC jazz culture as any musical aesthetics, as evidenced by the musicians who attributed the strength of the TC jazz scene to the state's strong institutional support and to the entrepreneurial activities of individual musicians.[40]

Sacralization

To some degree, institutions in the Twin Cities have contributed to the jazz scene's continuance where market support has dried up—a reality that reflects the state of jazz in the twenty-first century more broadly. In order to argue for the value of continuing to perform and compose jazz, many musicians insist on the timeless and transcendent

[40] In fact, when I asked musicians in interviews how they would characterize the TC jazz scene separately from other U.S. jazz scenes, none were able to strongly claim any aesthetic preference unique to Minnesota. However, in follow up comments, many did then suggest that the degree of institutional support was unique to Minnesota.

value of jazz or improvisation more broadly. This emphasis on inherent aesthetic value as a means of elevating jazz can be interpreted as the sacralization of jazz, to borrow from Lawrence Levine's work on sacralization within classical music (1998). For Levine, sacralization entails strategies of elevating classical music to the realm of high art while separating it from the lower classes. A similar process happens when jazz is sacralized: it is discussed in the language of high art, which allows it to receive funding from upper segments of society. However, neither this transformation nor the impetus behind it are as simple as leaving behind the lower classes. Certainly, the ability to study jazz in college and attempt to make a living as a musician has become increasingly implicated with the privilege required to take such financial risks. That jazz is becoming inaccessible to Black communities, because of education discrimination and broader socioeconomic inequalities, is a matter urgently in need of attention; this cause has been taken up by organizations and musicians in the TC. Nevertheless, many musicians are at the end of the day still working class. As jazz musicians, they struggle to be afforded the reputation and respect that classical musicians hold in addition to making a living playing music in the first place. The sacralization of jazz, then, has multiple effects, as I will show. On the one hand, it helps foster a legitimacy for jazz that can garner it respect in the marketplace and the institutional support necessary to sustain music that takes creative risks. On the other hand, sacralization can render jazz inaccessible for communities without the institutional support needed to ensure equitable access to arts education.

Cultural Formations

One manner in which jazz musicians build audience support and establish a prestige value for their music is through the cultural formations organized by musicians. In this section, I highlight the roles that cultural formations, in particular the recurring jazz series, play in shaping jazz in the TC. These weekly series feature different local bands each week and are based around the efforts of a musician-curator. Therefore, each series takes on the aesthetic preferences of its leader, but only to a degree, as those who book bands tend to value musical process over aesthetic parameters. The Twin Cities had multiple jazz series during the time I spent doing fieldwork there, with some coming and going in the time since I have left. The most prominent of these included Jazz at Studio Z, a monthly series organized by guitarist Zacc Harris that prioritized original music and featured more of a concert-hall style listening environment;[41] Jazz Implosion, a series curated by JT Bates that occurred every Monday at the Icehouse and which tended to often feature avant-garde and genre-collapsing improvisational music;[42] and Steve Kenny's Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog, the series on which I will be focusing.

One might be tempted to characterize these weekly jazz series as an artistic "movement," a type of cultural formation given by Williams where artists come together in pursuit of some specific artistic aim (1982, 62). Many in the TC jazz scene share

[41] Jazz at Studio Z was unable to secure funding for the 2017-18 season, so they shifted to curating weekly shows on Fridays at Crooner's Supper Club, which operates more as a typical jazz venue in terms of charging a cover, serving dinner and drinks, etc. However, the Studio Z series resumed in 2018-19.

[42] Jazz Implosion at the Icehouse is a continuation of Bates' weekly jazz nights in the Clown Lounge at the Turf Club, a rock-focused music venue in St Paul. Bates started his shows at the Clown Lounge in the early 2000s as an informal place for musicians to hang out while also being able to play music that was different than what the other clubs had to offer (Robson 2016a).

artistic approaches and at first glance would appear to fit into Williams' definition of a movement or school of thought. However, I hesitate to identify any clearly delineated movement within the larger jazz scene. There are certainly groups of musicians that are more likely to perform with another, as is the case with any musician circle that doubles as a social circle; though musicians collaborate across age groups, and at times skill levels, they are still most likely to perform with musicians similar to them in age range, as they might share ideas about what jazz improvisation should sound like to them. However, most musicians would likely not consciously align with any one school of thought, as the TC jazz scene is not large enough for subdivisions of an already niche group of performers, relative to the music scene in TC more broadly. As one performer told me, the TC jazz scene is big enough that there is enough top shelf talent needed to create boundary pushing groups, but it is still too small to justify the existence of sub-scenes in the jazz scene. That is, though a musician may have their aesthetic preferences or strengths, most performers are conversant in a variety of jazz styles ranging from standards gigs and hard bop to free improvisation. There is not so much a "free jazz scene" in the TC as there are certain musicians who tend to play that style most often, but even most of these musicians will play in non-free styles as well.

Formations in the TC jazz scene, then, are not so much consciously built around certain approaches or styles, such as free jazz, hard bop, contemporary, etc., as most musicians play in each style at some point—they must, to get enough gigs. Rather, informal cultural formations are based on jazz series that provide a goal with respect to improvisational approach and consistent availability of quality live jazz. These

formations are similar to what Williams describes with schools of thought and artistic movements, in that there is no defined membership and no formal organizational structure. But they are a bit more organized than Williams' typical formation, as those in charge of series consciously establish a reliable and structured once-a-week event based on a loose set of guiding aesthetic principles. They also more associated with place, as each jazz series takes place in the space of a given venue and is impacted by the environmental factors of a venue's demographics, neighborhood, etc.

Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog

One of the longest running and high-profile jazz series in the Twin Cities has been Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog (SNJATBD), which is run by trumpet player and composer Steve Kenny. In addition to performing in his own groups The Illicit Sextet, Group 47, Steve Kenny Quartet and others, Kenny has run several weekly jazz series in the Twin Cities, which in addition to SNJATBD include Friday Night Jazz at the Reverie,[43] the All Originals Jazz Series at Studio Z, and the Illicit Jazz Workshop at Jazz Central Studios on Friday nights. In addition to booking, promoting, and at times performing with the bands at these jazz series under the umbrella Illicit Productions, which he runs, Kenny produces records (mostly CDs but at least one vinyl) for Illicit Productions, including two Twin Cities Jazz Sampler CDs. A computer scientist by trade,

[43] Friday Night Jazz at the Reverie, held in south Minneapolis, became Thursday Night Jazz at the Reverie when the series was bumped to a non-weekend day so that the venue could book more popular music on Fridays. It was then changed to Thursday Night Jazz at the Nicollet, when the venue changed names after remodeling. The series then became defunct when the Nicollet's lease was not renewed. Before the series ended, Kenny expressed frustration at the amount of times he had to change the name (including the logistical complications of changing a Facebook page name), which he felt affected his ability to brand the series effectively.

Kenny is also responsible for maintaining the website infrastructure of the primary TC jazz Internet resource, Jazz Police, which at the time of my fieldwork he co-ran with Andrea Canter,[44] a prominent fixture in the TC jazz scene as a photographer, reviewer, jazz radio show host, youth showcase organizer, and other roles. While staying busy with all of these activities, Kenny also attended, during the time of my fieldwork, the University of Wisconsin, River Falls (UWRF) as a graduate student in computer science. Kenny also attended UWRF several decades ago as an undergraduate, where he was not a music major but took music classes and ensembles. One of Kenny's bands, Group 47, contains three current or former UWRF students. Though he can be found in either Minneapolis or St. Paul multiple times a week, either performing or as host of one of the jazz series, Kenny travels from River Falls in western Wisconsin—about a 30-minute car ride from St. Paul, or 50 minutes from Minneapolis (depending on the traffic).

As a leader and composer for the Illicit Sextet, Kenny had an important role in shifting the TC jazz scene towards original, acoustic based music in the mid-late 1980s. Steve Kenny credits Wynton Marsalis's emergence in the 1980s, in addition to others of the "Young Lion" generation which Kenny counts himself among, as opening the door for him to play jazz that was free from commercialism. This was particularly important after the 1970s, when he felt jazz musicians were being pushed into playing only commercially viable music that lost the spirit of 1960s innovators like Wayne Shorter, Miles Davis, and Herbie Hancock. Kenny personally felt that his professors at UWRF

[44] Canter has since stepped down from her role as lead editor for Jazz Police, with trumpet player and composer Adam Meckler taking over. Canter still contributes to Jazz Police on a partial basis.

were telling him and his peers that they "couldn't play bebop or post-bebop" and should not "try to sound like Freddie Hubbard or an Eric Dolphy record." Kenny therefore considers Marsalis a "hero" of his for demanding respect for jazz as an art form as well as making it acceptable to once again play original compositions in an acoustic-based post-bop style as those records by Hubbard, Dolphy, and others had captured.

Kenny has taken this emphasis on original music and used it to shape how he books acts for his numerous jazz series. In these series, groups may perform covers and standards, but at least some of the set should include original compositions. Kenny's determination of style for the bands he books, however, is not limited to Marsalis's straight ahead, hard bop revivalist aesthetic. For Kenny, style is less important than ethos.

> I think anytime you have someone improvising to a groove of some kind, whether it's a swing groove, any kind of groove—and groove is a big word, it has a lot of meanings—and a person's improvising on top of that, and it's in some other kind of context, that's jazz. That's the thing that takes all of the study and dedication, that's the transcendent experience in my opinion. The rest of it is around that.

In my observation of dozens of shows Kenny has booked, between the Reverie/Nicollet and the Black Dog, Kenny's belief about what lies at the core of jazz was reflected in the type of music that was performed there. The types of grooves certainly varied, but improvisation was always at the core of the type of music featured on stage at these series. Original music was also prioritized, with there being very few sets that consisted solely of standards or compositions by other jazz musicians.

Though this focus on original music has helped encourage a creative environment where musicians are free to experiment with new sounds and instrumental combinations, it has had the unintentional effect of marginalizing, to some extent, jazz vocalists in the

Twin Cities, the vast majority of whom are women. Because jazz vocal gigs prioritize the performance of standards, which audiences tend to expect, vocal jazz is rarely heard at SNJATBD, or any of these recurring jazz series, as it does not fit into the emphasis on original music. As such, women tend to be underrepresented as performers at these prominent showcase shows.[45] Kenny at one point attempted to address this shortcoming of the series by booking a vocalist who performed her own composed music, but that show was reportedly poorly attended.[46]

Kenny's main series, Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog, has been running every consecutive Saturday, with the exception of holidays, since late 2014. Typically, the Saturday performances feature two bands: an opener, usually made up of less experienced musicians, at 7 PM and a headliner playing the prime-time spot of 8:30 PM. For younger bands who play the openers, this opportunity is crucial to getting practical experience on a gig with a built-in audience that also pays modestly. Usually, the crowd is lighter during the opening set, but there are still more audience members than are

[45] It should be noted that outside of these jazz series, which act as showcases of original music, jazz vocalists are in fact prominently booked for performances, especially at venues like the Dakota Jazz Club and Crooners Lounge and Supper Club. Some of the TC's top jazz vocalists (e.g. Pippi Ardenia, Debbie Duncan, Mary Louise Knutson, Charmin Michelle, Patty Peterson and others) are in fact probably better known among casual jazz fans in the TC than are the instrumentalists I mention in this chapter. Drummer Phil Hey, who often performs with vocalists, expressed in Jay Goetting's book on the history of jazz in Minnesota that vocalists are "running the show," a sentiment he worried might cause him to lose work (Goetting 2011). It is not so much, then, that women vocalists are not able to get gigs, so much as they are separated from the showcase events of the weekly jazz series, which tend to have more prestige value among hardcore jazz fans and instrumentalists in the TC than do standards gigs with vocalists.

[46] In addition to causing fewer vocalists to be showcased, Kenny's preference for avoiding standards-focused bands has caused him to favor certain instrumental ensemble formats over others, which he freely admits. For instance, at one show when he introduced the Javier Santiago Trio, a piano trio, Kenny attested to the trio's originality by noting that he rarely books piano trios for the Black Dog headliner slot, as he thinks piano trios are usually more suited to background music (he then quickly and self-deprecatingly admitted this was a stupid thing to say). But he felt the Santiago trio's original approach made them one of the best piano trios in North America and thus worthy of a Black Dog appearance.

usually found at Jazz Central Studios, the other major venue for younger bands to get experience, as the Black Dog will have café patrons who were not necessarily intending to see jazz. During my initial fieldwork period and follow up visits, I observed several younger tier 3 or 4 musicians make the leap to the headlining slot, though most had to first pay their dues in the opening slot first.[47]

Though other local series may occasionally book out of town performers,[48] SNJATBD books almost exclusively local musicians. At the least, the advertised leader of a group is almost always TC based. These bands consist usually of tier 2 or 3 performers for the headliners, though they occasionally include tier 1 musicians. Some of these performances with tier 1 musicians will draw much larger crowds, sometimes more than the Black Dog can comfortably hold and often extending into standing room only territory. For the average local band of tier 2 or 3 musicians, the audience size is around 20 to 50, depending on factors like other shows around town, the names on the bill, and the weather (though for the big jazzheads, subzero temperatures and snow on the forecast will not impede them from going out).

[47] The tier system was detailed in the previous chapter, but to briefly recap: tier 1 consists of national artists who are TC based, tier 2 includes regularly gigging musicians whose reputations are strong but almost entirely local, tier 3 are the "young lions" who are gaining reputations but are still up and coming, and tier 4 contains the relatively anonymous, usually younger musicians who are still developing their skills but may perform occasional opening slots at venues like the Black Dog.

[48] In particular, JT Bates' Jazz Implosion at the Icehouse brings in the occasional nationally prominent artists to big crowds in a relatively small space, at least compared to the concert hall or jazz club venues where national artists are often booked (e.g. the Walker Art Museum, Guthrie Theater, and Dakota Jazz Club). According to Bates, his goal is to have six to eight shows a year that feature national artists, with the purpose of both increasing the Implosion's audience on local nights and to offset the costs associated with running the series (mostly renting pianos) (Robson 2016a). In my experience, these shows with national artists were must-see events for local musicians and jazzheads, due likely to the combination of the name status of the visiting artists and to musicians' and audiences' respect for Bates' efforts as a curator.

Before each set the headliner plays, Steve Kenny welcomes the crowd to Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog and gives a brief spiel about the series. Most of this time is spent toward describing how the series is entirely crowd-supported and encouraging the audience to put money into the tip jar. Kenny will usually explain that if the audience does not have any cash, the bar will sell tip jar tokens, small cards that can be purchased with a credit or debit card for $10 and then dropped into the tip jar (the bar will then pay Kenny whatever they have earned from selling these tokens). In asking the crowd for money, Kenny balances earnest pleas for support with humor to ease the awkwardness, such as by glibly asking for thousand-dollar donations. Once or twice per set, Kenny will walk around the restaurant with the tip jar and present it to anyone who is present, though he will not shame anyone for not giving money. Though Kenny is not shy about asking for money, he also frequently tells the crowd that if anyone among them is lacking food or shelter, they should feel free to take from the tip jar rather than give, as he can always simply live in his van. At first, I thought the latter part was a joke, but later learned that Kenny does in fact give money out of his own pocket to support the series, and that living out of his van "would have been a huge step up from being homeless" during the years he struggled with drug addiction.[49]

Kenny handles all funds himself; he says that part of the deal with the Black Dog and Reverie was that they did not want to be responsible for handling any money. Essentially, Kenny uses the space provided by the Black Dog and Reverie—which brings

[49] Kenny talks openly about how his addiction at one point torpedoed his jazz career, also speaking proudly about his current sobriety.

in customers to buy food and drinks from these venues—but the event is presented by Kenny, not a booking agent or promoter at these venues. This has allowed Kenny a fair amount of creative control, but also creates more work for him in the scheduling and promotion of performances. To keep track of money coming in and out, Kenny maintains a master spreadsheet of all groups that have played at each of his series. Unlike most performances that are supported by tips, Kenny guarantees a certain pre-agreed upon payment for musicians, which he then attempts to recoup through his aggressive passing of the tip jar. In thinking about how to run a series, Kenny felt it was important for musicians to know that they are walking home with a certain amount of money. Certain groups, he says, would not entertain the idea of playing for an uncertain number of tips or cover charges, so that guaranteed fee was necessary. While these more popular groups might allow Kenny to recoup his payment through the tips accrued by a larger audience attending, they also allow him to brand a legitimacy for the series that would encourage people to come back for the subsequent week for a group they might be less familiar with. The branding of "Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog" is important for Kenny; if there is one thing that he asks for in exchange for his unpaid labor of organizing these events, it is that when artists promote these shows on social media that they advertise the show as part of the SNJATBD series, not simply as their own show that happens to be occurring at the Black Dog on a Saturday night.[50]

[50] For instance, if a musician advertises their upcoming Saturday show at the Black Dog, but does not mention the name of the series, Kenny will tag the Facebook group page for the series in the comments.

Kenny estimates that the time he devotes to booking bands, promoting upcoming shows, and manning the jazz series nights as host occupies around sixteen hours a week—4-8 hours a week for booking, promoting, and contacting bands and 8 hours hosting the two series a week. Kenny described his attitude toward all the time he puts in to the series:

> At a certain point, I will have to step down. I mean, I just can't keep doing it all the time. It's still rewarding; at 18 months, I'm not jaded at all. I'm still happy about it. But it's a big commitment. It's a part time job for sure, and all of that is not compensated.[51]

Though Kenny worried here about the possibility of becoming burnt out, he has yet to show signs of slowing down. At the time that I interviewed Kenny in June of 2016, he had just hosted the 94th consecutive (with the exception of holidays) Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog show. Three years later, that series is still going strong, still holding weekly concerts in addition to multiple day, four-sets a day shows during the annual Twin Cities Jazz Festival. Though Kenny's less successful series in Minneapolis at the Reverie (formerly the Nicollet) ended in July of 2017 after the Reverie's lease was not renewed at their location in South Minneapolis,[52] Kenny has since taken on a new series: the Illicit Jazz Workshop at Jazz Central Studios, hosted on Friday nights.

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[51] Kenny would go on to describe how he manipulates his own thinking on nights where he performs at his own series, which counts as further labor for which Kenny does not pay himself. As Kenny described, "weeks that really do make money, sometimes I've walked out of there like really feeling maniacal about 'Jesus, I've just personally pocketed $350,' but I forget I just played too… The weeks that do really well seem to be the weeks I'm actually on the bill. And there's exceptions to that, but I can always guarantee it's not going to lose money if I'm playing, and one of the reasons is if I don't pay myself. And you see that's twisted, because if I appear with a quartet that is well-known, and then I take myself off the payroll, and then I pay the cats $80 each, well, now you've got a headlining, room filling jazz band for $320 that's going to make money."

[52] As of August 2018, the Reverie was still seeking a new building to reopen, having in the meantime rebranded as a food truck. Kenny, however, had long ended his relationship with the restaurant. When I

I asked Kenny what kept him going with these jazz series when they have proven to demand much of his time, and even significant financial investment on his part. He attributed his commitment to the seriousness with which he regards jazz as an art form.

> Because of what it is, there are people who are going to be involved in it where it might lose money. You go out, and you got a really serious penchant for this art form, you're gonna play your saxophone or your trumpet for a few hours or more everyday anyway because you're involved in the lifelong pursuit of learning this art form. But try and live on the hundred dollars a couple nights a week, you can't do it.
>
> Why do people do it? It's because of what it is. It's not a style of music any more than serious martial arts is a form of ballroom dancing. Unfortunately, the jazz art form is confused as a "music" and it's marketed and sold and promoted as if it were music, and then people compare its popularity compared to the popular idea of "music" and it suffers by comparison because then people get confused about what it is.

For Kenny, jazz's elevated status as a high art form—which he at other points in the interview attributed partially to the efforts of Wynton Marsalis, and partially to its acceptance in university halls—is what merits musicians' extreme dedication to continuing the art form, even in the face of lacking financial prospects. Kenny's dedication and sacrifice in the name of participating in the jazz art form may be more extraordinary than most—Kenny estimates that he personally loses five figures a year between his multiple jazz series. But it is jazz's high art status that has enabled this dedication, which in the case of Kenny translates to the creation and maintenance of cultural formations with the purpose of keeping jazz viable. While the efforts of Marsalis and other Young Lions who have sought to elevate jazz have often been criticized for taking vitality out of the jazz (Nicholson 2005; Solis 2008; Peters 2009; Fischlin, Heble,

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interviewed him in June of 2016, he had foreseen the writing on the wall, as he told me that he did not feel Thursday nights would ultimately work out there.

and Lipsitz 2013; Wallace and Heble 2013),[53] relegating it to a highbrow museum music, for Kenny, Marsalis's model provided him with the motivation to create formations that encourage creative vitality. In the TC, this has resulted in multiple jazz series with hundreds of gigging musicians being provided with well-paid gigs, especially for concerts that consist primarily of original, at times daring material. In this sense, Kenny has taken the "larger effective culture" (Williams 1982, 83) of jazz institutionalization via Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center and localized it as he forms his jazz series around certain "schools of thought" that hold jazz as a prestigious art form worthy of serious dedication.

Sponsorship: Twin Cities Jazz Festival

Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog and jazz series like it have become mini institutions within the TC for their role in giving musicians and audiences structure in the at-times volatile nature of the jazz scene. Outside of occasional small grants to offset some of the costs associated with running these series, however, these cultural formations largely result from the actions of a few individuals. For SNJATBD, the series lies almost entirely in the hands of its creator, Steve Kenny, and thus Kenny is able to present jazz in a way that suits the interests of insider musicians and audience members in the TC jazz scene. Once a year, however, SNJATBD becomes subsumed under the larger institutional

[53] Ajay Heble and Rob Wallace contest what they a call a "Marsalisization of jazz" by promoting the views of musicians who re-attach a social and political urgency to jazz that Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center erased by appealing to corporate interests. However, they also acknowledge that Marsalis's efforts are "paradoxically in line with the same kinds of arguments made by politicized jazz musicians coming out of the 1960s: that jazz was important to American life, that it necessitates serious interest and discipline, and that it requires respect and institutions to further its dissemination." In many respects, then, the approach of musicians like Steve Kenny follows the latter part of this Marsalisization.

apparatus of the Twin Cities Jazz Festival, a corporate and privately sponsored annual event at which Steve Kenny curates the largest local jazz stage of the festival. SNJATBD then becomes a formation within an institution, where the local comes into conflict with the national, the diehard with the casual listener.

The TCJF has been held every June in downtown St. Paul after having moved from Minneapolis in 2004. Partially due to the support of St. Paul's mayor Chris Coleman,[54] the festival has become entirely based in St. Paul. The city of Minneapolis declined to make its downtown Nicollet Mall available to the festival organizers, claiming it to be too expensive, per Andrea Canter. In 2016 and 2017, when I attended the festival, the festival took place over three days in late June (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday), though pre-festival activities extended as far back as the preceding Tuesday. The festivals centered in Mears Park in the Lowertown district of St. Paul, with the main stage and one side stage in the park. Additional outdoor stages were set up at the Union Depot train station in Lowertown and in Rice Park in downtown. Simultaneously with the main stage, many restaurants and bars around downtown and Lowertown St. Paul hosted performances by local musicians. This included the usual sites for jazz shows in St. Paul—Vieux Carré, the Black Dog, Bedlam Lowertown, and Amsterdam—as well as some restaurants and bars that do not as often have jazz shows, such as Golden's Deli, SW Craft House, and others.[55] Though the area is generally pedestrian friendly, the city

[54] Mayor Coleman left office in 2018 after declining to run for a fourth term. When I interviewed her shortly after the 2016 festival, Andrea Canter, who was on the board of the TCJF, expressed some concern that St. Paul's support for the festival could change whenever mayor Coleman leaves office.

[55] Of these, at least two venues that had hosted performances during the festival in 2016 had closed by the 2017 festival—Bedlam Lowertown and SW Craft House.

of St. Paul also offered free metro transportation for festival goers to get from Lowertown to downtown, which is normally about a fifteen to twenty minute walk.

The TCJF has several qualities that make it relatively unique for a jazz festival. For one, as Steve Kenny repeatedly mentioned during his pre-show introduction to the audience at the Black Dog, it for the most part does not book non-jazz performers. The 2016 festival included a performance by singer/songwriter Michael Franti, the furthest either the 2016 or 2017 festival strayed from traditionally defined jazz. But Franti's performance, though it reportedly drew a bigger audience than most of the main stages performances, took place at one of the side stages away from Mears Park. Second, the festival has managed to remain free, even in spite of what Andrea Canter described as an uncertain financial status. Unlike other festivals, such as the Detroit Jazz Festival, to which Canter compares the TCJF, the TCJF does not have a large endowment or rich benefactor from which to draw funds over a span of many years. The TCJF's funding consists mostly of small private donations—volunteers carry around boxes for cash donations during the festival—in addition to an assortment of local corporate sponsors. These sponsors usually change every year, causing a delay in booking national acts, who are not usually announced until just a couple months before the festival when funding is secured. Additionally, the TJCF does not have the kind of money to book the most expensive headliners—unlike the Detroit Jazz Festival, they could not afford someone like Chick Corea—or to book very many of them. Outside of the half dozen national acts that fill the big headline spots, the majority of performances around St. Paul during the festival are by local musicians, including about half of the main stage performances.

For these local musicians, the extended weekend of the TCJF serves as the busiest time of year, with some musicians playing multiple gigs a day with different bands. Though the main stage does feature some local bands, most of the local musicians play at venues other than the main stage. In particular, the Black Dog showcases some of the most prominent local bands in the TC jazz scene and acts as a better attended extension of the weekly Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog series; it is also curated by Steve Kenny. During the festivals in 2016 and 2017, the Black Dog put on four shows each of the three main days of the festival, starting at 4 PM and usually concluding around midnight. Though the shows occurring at the Black Dog happen under the TCJF umbrella and are included in the festival schedule, Kenny is given complete autonomy in booking acts for the Black Dog. However, he is not given the same funding for payment to musicians that the main stage receives. So, even during the TCJF, the Black Dog shows are funded through the tip jar as they normally would be on Saturday nights.

Though a vast majority of those who attend the festival seem to mostly stick to the outdoor stages, the Black Dog still becomes much more crowded during the three festival days than it would be on almost any other Saturday night in the rest of the year, save perhaps a performance by a local tier 1 musician like Dave King. This bump in crowd size not only gives Steve Kenny a bit more relief in knowing that the musicians' payments will probably be covered through tips, but also allows him the opportunity to promote Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog to audience members who might not normally attend jazz shows at the Black Dog (though the regular attendees are also there). In speaking to the audience before each set, Kenny will advertise the following

Saturday's show while also occasionally making jokes that equate festival goers to "church goers on Easter Sunday." At the same time, Kenny boasts of the festival's cost-free status and in its stubborn refusal to book non-jazz acts in an effort to draw in bigger crowds.[56] Kenny also expresses pride in the Black Dog's own "festival within a festival," as he calls it, as the activity at the Black Dog—approximately 12 bands over 3 days—would be enough for its own small festival. If one stayed entirely at the Black Dog during the TCJF and did not venture over to the main stage at all, they would perhaps encounter more stylistic diversity than they would at the main stage. Though most attendees wander around at least a little bit, many of the hardcore jazzheads and musician audience members make the Black Dog their de facto home base during the festival.

As someone who by the time of the 2016 festival had been going out to shows in the TC for close to 10 months, I also found myself gravitating toward the Black Dog, where most of the local bands I knew would be playing. Though I felt a bit guilty passing up the opportunity to hear someone like Ellis Marsalis play on the main stage, the Black Dog was simply more appealing—though it was still crowded, you could hear the music very well in standing room only areas of the venue, while I struggled to hear most performers on the main stage unless I got there early in the day. Additionally, most of the people I had come to know were also hanging out at the Black Dog. I felt that Kenny was right about the "festival within a festival" aspect: those at the Black Dog were there because what they were looking for in the festival was more easily found at the Black

[56] In his mid-concert banter to the audience, Kenny made this point—that the TCJF is still a *jazz* festival and that people like Paul Simon do not need a jazz festival to get gigs—before playing a cover of Simon & Garfunkel's "Scarborough Fair."

Dog. It was not that they were protesting the main stage, but the big names that the main stage offered to casual jazz listeners (the Easter Sunday church goers) they did not need. What they do look for in jazz—community, stylistic diversity, and an environment more suited for listening—was better offered by the Black Dog.

Local musicians have a complicated relationship with the festival; while they recognize the festival's civic importance, some musicians resented how local musicians are treated by festival organizers and festival goers in comparison to national acts. For instance, one musician told me to ask some of the scene's leading local musicians the last time they played the festival main stage—he felt the festival does not accurately represent the local scene. Another musician told me that he was bothered by the fact that at a photoshoot of the TC jazz scene organized by Andrea Canter, which she called "A Great Day in St. Paul,"[57] he overheard a festival organizer express surprise at how many local musicians had shown up. For this musician, the organizer's comment revealed that the organizer was not truly in touch with the local jazz scene, as anyone who attends local jazz shows regularly would have known that Minnesota boasts a plentiful supply of jazz musicians. While some musicians considered the exposure they gained through playing the festival to have a lasting impact on drawing audiences in for future gigs, others disliked the politics at play in which local musicians are chosen to play on the main stage. A few musicians professed to avoiding the festival entirely, with at least one having deliberately booked out of town gigs during the festival weekend. For other young

[57] The naming and concept of this photoshoot was modeled after "A Great Day in Harlem," a famous photograph of jazz musicians taken in 1958.

musicians, however, a gig at a prominent spot at the festival, especially the Mears Park main stage, offers an important reputation boost.[58]

Though some of the TC's most longstanding local bands (e.g. Atlantis Quartet, the Illicit Sextet, Red Planet, Adam Meckler Orchestra, and others) often play the festival, some do not play every year, and many groups are put together just for the occasion. Andrea Canter, who has written artist bios for the TCJF website and photographs the festival, acknowledged that the constant change in lineups, in addition to making her job as the bios writer more difficult, also made the lineups less representative of who performs in the scene the rest of the year. She did believe, however, that the festival was important for inaugurating certain local jazz groups that might not have come together if not for the festival and who have managed to continue to perform following the festival.

In sum, though the festival presents some of the best the Twin Cities jazz scene has to offer in a short period of time, it serves more as an exceptional weekend of the year than a representative one in terms of attendance and concentration of performances in a contained space. Canter describes the gap between TCJF attendees and the jazz audience in the rest of the year.

> The 30,000 people who come to our festival is probably 25,000 more people than are normally at jazz events in the Twin Cities. So a lot of people if they like music, they'll go to any music festival and they'll even have a good time. But how many of them say "gee, now that I've gone to a couple of these events I want to find out more." They'll say, "this was

[58] In my initial fieldwork period, one tier 3 musician in particular I constantly heard introduced as being a rising star as evidenced by his multiple appearances on the main stage at the previous year's jazz festival. As his reputation became more established over time, this was less frequently mentioned as proof as his credentials.

> really fun, I'll do it again the next year." Also, it's free and there's not that much high-end jazz around here that's totally free. It doesn't cost very much for the most part, but people don't necessarily want to throw a 5 or 10-dollar bill into the tip jar or pay a 5 or 10-dollar cover.

As someone who attends jazz shows around four to five nights a week, Canter was skeptical of there being much of a post-festival bump in attendance at local jazz events in the TC. Neither did she feel the few non-jazz artists, such as Michael Franti, who the TCJF brought in did much to funnel people from the designated rock and blues stage toward the jazz performances.

> The question is, do they then go to the other jazz events or do they stay at that stage? I don't think in terms of education probably it's going be all that successful. But in terms of bringing more people to the festival and raising more revenue I'm sure it is.

While the festival organizers ultimately seek to maintain a strong jazz focus, they might make occasional concessions to non-jazz forms like rock and blues for revenue purposes.

This strategy of compromise between jazz proper and non-jazz popular music is by no means unique to the TCJF and has been described in other North American jazz festivals (Laver 2015). Like most jazz festivals, the TCJF sits on a spectrum between jazz and non-jazz or rock on one hand and local jazz and national jazz on the other. In the former, the TCJF is about 95% or higher jazz, as Kenny likes to boast, with the 5% being viewed as a necessary concession to ease some burden on fundraising. In the latter, the main stage performances are about 40% national acts (and some national acts might include local sidemen in their bands), but in the whole scope of the festival including every small venue participating the national acts might not number more than 10% of all performances. Canter's points of comparison for the TCJF would sit differently on such a spectrum: Detroit may have more national acts because it can afford them, but generally

it also shies away from non-jazz acts; the New Orleans Jazz Festival has a much higher proportion of national acts and non-jazz acts (Canter described having to read down 12 or 13 names on the list of headliners until she found a jazz artist). In Canter's opinion, though the festival is successful in staying mostly rooted in local jazz and in curating almost entirely jazz music, its limited infrastructure—the labor in putting together the festival is done mostly by volunteers—also limits its recognition as a leading jazz festival. Even as someone who takes great pride in the TC jazz scene, Canter considers the Detroit Jazz Festival to be the gold standard of a jazz festival and believes the TCJF would be hard pressed to rise to that level while being in a much smaller metropolitan area and while not having the kind of financial endowment that Detroit has received for its festival.

In essence, the TCJF like any other jazz festival must strike a balance between curating a kind of festival with local respectability and one able to stay afloat financially. Like most aspects of the TC jazz scene, then, it is a push and pull between prestige and economics; prestige offered by the proud status of the festival as mostly sticking to jazz, much of it local, and economics offered by the national and very occasional non-jazz act that boost festival attendance. For some local musicians, the balance between prestige and economics might not be to their liking, or they might take issue with what kinds of local artists are given prestigious spots on the main stage. But generally, local musicians recognize the TCJF as a challenging balancing act. Whether they personally agree with the organizers' approach or not, they still recognize the festival's importance to the local scene. Additionally, as the festival bears the name of the cities in which these musicians

make their art, many are ready and willing to debate the best approach to the difficult task of curating such a public facing representation, albeit an imperfect one, of the Twin Cities jazz scene.

For instance, bassist Chris Bates noted in 2016 that he deliberately took fewer gigs so that he could participate in that year's festival as a listener rather than just as a musician.

> I know that we just finished jazz festival and I don't think there was as much diversity from the local scene as there could have been. And actually this year, I only chose 3 sets, one a day; that was a conscious choice on my part because I wanted to see the festival again, I wanted to see who's around and who was doing what. And I think it's a little bit more compartmentalized than it needs to be right now. I don't know what we can do to change that.

Though Bates criticized the local jazz offerings at the 2016 festival, he did so because he wanted the festival to represent the level of stylistic diversity that he feels the TC jazz scene has to offer year-round. For Bates and many others, their desire for the ideal selection of local artists to play the festival, and the more prestigious main stage specially, stems more from a belief that the cities' more innovative bands, those playing original music, should be given their due during an event that draws the most listeners to jazz in any three-day span, by far, in Minnesota. For some musicians, the Twin Cities Jazz Festival might not completely achieve that goal, but they recognize the balance between financial stability and prestige is difficult for festival organizers to achieve.

Nonprofit Institutions

Though many of the more visible jazz performances in the Twin Cities happen at pop-up events at restaurants and bars, or during the concentrated activity of the Twin

Cities Jazz Festival, perhaps more crucial to the institutional infrastructure of the scene are the nonprofit organizations dedicated to fostering jazz activity at all stages of a musician's development. Among others, these include the Twin Cities Mobile Jazz Project, which hosts after school events in underfunded public schools; the Dakota Jazz Foundation, an umbrella organization that disperses funding to various schools and projects in the TC area in addition to putting together its own all-star youth jazz combo; and Jazz Central Studios, a community performance and rehearsal space. Though these institutions have various roles, they are dedicated less toward providing financial support to musicians than they are the educational and cultural support, in addition to material support like rehearsal space and instruments, that allow the scene to keep going. In this section, I focus on Jazz Central Studios, which has become an important staple of the TC jazz scene.

Jazz Central Studios

Jazz Central Studios was co-founded in 2010 by Tanner Tyler and Mac Santiago, with the latter since becoming the sole director.[59] As of 2018, JCS's board of directors consisted of president Alden Drew, founder of Northwestern Foods Inc, a local dry goods company; vice president Anthony Cox, a Minneapolis-based (tier 1) bassist and composer; treasurer Steve Kenny, discussed earlier in this chapter; secretary Mike Wolsted, a local entrepreneur and recording engineer; and executive director Mac Santiago. According to Santiago's account on the JCS blog, Tyler, Santiago, and Luis Santiago, Mac's father who was also a percussionist (he passed in late 2014, with a

[59] Per Santiago, Tyler now lives in Des Moines, Iowa. Though Santiago now solely runs JCS, he credits Tyler's playing ability with garnering JCS a reputation that would help get the operation off the ground.

musical memorial service held at JCS), first looked at the space in Southeast Minneapolis in June of 2010, though at the time they did not know what to do with it—they just "knew that 'the music' needed a home in Minneapolis and this could be the place to get together with our jazz comrades to play and enjoy each other's company and talents in this casual, lower level studio" (Santiago 2014). Though their initial motivations were simply to find a place to jam, the space itself soon became a site of collaboration for TC jazz scene members, who pitched in with ideas about what to do with the site. Per Santiago (2014), "fortunately, almost immediately, folks began to inquire and actually see the potential value in this space that we decided to call Jazz Central Studios."

Jazz Central Studio's stated mission is to "provide these opportunities to musicians of all ages and experience in an environment that allows creativity unencumbered by commerciality" (Santiago 2014). The space is used for private rehearsals, recording sessions, teaching sessions and workshops, jam sessions, performances, recitals, and fundraisers. Per JCS's website, over 400 individual musicians performed at JCS "in almost every configuration and style." This usually includes 5-6 performances a week, the number sometimes rising higher when there are two separate events in a night (jazz ensembles from local colleges would sometimes have their recitals during a late-night set following a more prominent musician). In 2016, the total number of musical events at JCS surpassed 360. As part of an effort to ensure that musicians have the ability to review and reflect on their own performances, JCS also maintains a private recording archive, of which there are over 5,000 live tracks recorded, per the JCS website. Finally, there were over 20 "masterclasses, clinics, and interactive youth

programs" held in 2016, educational events which are stated to grow "in number and size for 2017!"

Though it was founded on a loose idea of simply having a space "for the music," Jazz Central Studios has since undergone several shifts in institutional status. In October of 2013, it was granted non-profit status as a single-member LLC (limited liability company) in partnership with the Twin Cities Jazz Festival and its board of directors. In February of 2015, JCS became a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which allowed it to be able to receive private tax-exempt donations directly, apply for public grant money without the use of a fiscal agent, and generally increase their fundraising efforts without being encumbered by commercial considerations (Santiago 2015a).

Though JCS occasionally utilizes its non-profit status to receive grants from foundations, including $6,000 in 2015 and $7,500 in 2016, most of its financial backing is made up of private donations. This includes both larger donations from benefactors in addition to small amounts placed in JCS's tip drum. For performances, there is a volunteer who collects cover charges, typically $10, but sometimes a higher amount for masterclasses. Local musicians can usually book JCS as a rehearsal space free of charge, but JCS will occasionally charge a fee for private events and clinics. Santiago estimates that operations and rent at JCS cost around $1,700 a month, or around $20,000 a year, a relatively low cost that JCS has been able to afford without accumulating debt thanks to both a generous landlord, Bob Beugen, and many volunteers providing numerous services for free or greatly reduced cost. Accounting is provided by Lauren Santiago, website maintenance by Mike Holst, piano maintenance by Wells Pianos, homecooked

hotdishes by Vanessa Lopez,[60] and other audio equipment courtesy of local musicians.[61] Additionally, in December of 2015 there were 12 artistic directors and 10 event hosts at JCS (Santiago 2015b), all of whom were unpaid with the exception of a modest payment of around $400 a month for marketing and Internet work (Santiago 2016b). The artistic directors are almost entirely musicians, both younger (early 20s) and more experienced (30s-50s), who program a series on a given day every month by booking performers and sometimes by performing themselves. The event hosts at JCS are those that work at the front desk for around four to five hours in a given night, helping set up and break down the stage, collect cover fees, and pay the performing musicians. Santiago estimates that this unpaid labor of volunteers, who have other jobs and typically volunteer at nights, is valued at around $125,000 of uncompensated time and effort (Santiago 2016b).

When I first visited JCS in fall of 2015, the cover charge was not mandatory, though I would always pay. After I became a regular face at JCS, the event host volunteering at the front desk would occasionally decline to collect money from me, particularly if I was there for the jam session or had arrived after a given band's performance was already halfway over. However, some patrons would enter JCS without paying, enough so that one of the event hosts, John, convinced Mac to implement a mandatory charge. John was motivated to require a cover charge because he felt that it

[60] The hotdish is a distinctive culinary feature of the upper Midwest, including Minnesota and the Dakotas. It is roughly equivalent to a casserole, with roots in the community potlucks of the Lutheran church. As such, it is usually homemade and meant for sharing with larger groups.

[61] In October 2016, after guitarist Julian Manzara started a GoFundMe to raise money for a house guitar amp at JCS, another local guitarist, David Ziffer, caught wind and donated one of his amps instead. The money raised by Manzara instead went into JCS's "gear maintenance fund" (Santiago 2016a).

was not fair to the musicians performing to have their music given away for free. Even still, musicians rarely walk home with much money in their pocket after a gig at JCS; John told me that he feels awkward when he has to give a legendary jazz musician a paltry $10 for three hours of great music.

As JCS programs music 6 nights a week, there can be a wide variety in the type of jazz that is presented, though typically there is consistency in what to expect on a given day of a week. Monday nights are based around the weekly jam session, which typically sees the highest average attendance thanks to the many local musicians who come out to play. The jams are preceded by a set of music from a local band, which then acts as the house band as the jam session begins. Jam sessions can end anywhere between 11 PM to 12:30 AM at night, with conversation often lingering until Santiago indicates he wants to close up for the night.

Tuesday nights are devoted to big bands, with each band assigned a given Tuesday of the month. Each Tuesday essentially acts as an open rehearsal for some of the Twin Cities' prominent big bands, as the bands try new charts in front of a small audience (typically, the audience is smaller than the band, which can have anywhere from 13 to 16 members). These bands usually have gigs elsewhere in the TC, often larger festival gigs or private events, so their monthly residences at JCS usually act as each group's lone opportunity to get the full band together to prepare for other more visible gigs. Many of the musicians in these bands, particularly the horn players and the subs that are called in if another horn player cannot make it, do not make their full living playing music.

"New Boundaries Wednesdays" typically feature higher proportions of original music from local artists, with the occasional out-of-state artist taking the slot as well. These nights are curated by a local musician once a month, with each Wednesday of the month going to a different musician (in 2017, John became the first non-musician to curate a Wednesday). Current and past curators have included Chris Bates, Pete Whitman, Charley Lincoln, and others. These Wednesday performances are most likely to feature experiments with new configurations of local musicians, so Wednesdays are often the most stylistically expansive night, with group formats ranging from solo piano to trios to larger sextets. Sometimes, the bill for a given Wednesday changes even on the day of the performance, as one musician cancels and another is called to fill in.

Every Thursday at Jazz Central is dedicated to vocal music, again with each Thursday of the month given to a different local vocalist to headline. The artistic director of Thursday vocal nights has typically been Sarah Greer, with other local vocalists at times curating certain nights. On Thursdays, JCS is often made to appear more welcoming for women and couples, with tablecloths and small plastic candles being placed on the usually bare tables.

The format for Friday performances has changed over the years, but it has usually been similar to Wednesdays: a featured local artist performing mostly original music. At one point this was titled "Friday Masters" and featured more experienced local artists, though band leaders may elect to have younger members in their bands. In fall of 2017, Steve Kenny took charge of curating Fridays, turning them into his series "The Illicit Jazz

Workshop."[62] At times, the local artist performance on Fridays is followed by a recital from a jazz ensemble from a local university or college. Most of the time, there is no event on Saturdays, though there are occasional master classes or fundraising events during the day on Saturday. Finally, Sundays emerged in 2016 as another jam session day, this one hosted weekly by local guitarist Cole Mahlum and typically featuring a performer on JCS's B3 Hammond organ.[63] At times, Sundays also feature a late performance, perhaps by a touring, non-local band.

Typically, shows start around 8 or 8:30 PM and end between 10 and 11, with bands either choosing to play two 45-minute sets or one longer 90-minute set. As one enters JCS off the street, they descend into the basement space, where they are greeted first by the sounds of improvised jazz and then by the given night's event host to collect the cover charge. In addition to the main room, there is a separate office space that doubles as a backstage area for the performing musicians, a hallway between the bathroom and the main room where the front desk is set up, and an extended back room area with some tables, chairs, and couches. The performance room at JCS is organized as a listening space, with two couches set up against the back wall and a couple dozen or so chairs, with some tables, facing the stage. The walls are adorned with local sponsors, such as Jazz 88 radio and Wells Pianos, in addition to posters and photographs of local jazz musicians and historic figures in jazz. The "stage" is more accurately a performance

[62] The name refers to Kenny's jazz groups going back to the 1980s, the Illicit Sextet, as well as to Kenny's Illicit Productions, the umbrella under which he organizes his jazz series and releases recordings.

[63] Mahlum told me the impetus behind starting the jam session was to make better use of the B3, which had mostly been sitting unused.

area, as there is no elevated platform but a simple carpet on which members of the band set up. Depending on where one sits, view of the performance may be obstructed by one of the large support pillars in the basement room. One of these pillars holds Jazz Central's "tip drum"—an old snare drum with a slot carved into it, into which patrons can choose to insert cash or check donations (which are tax-deductible, as a helpful sign on the drum points out).

Talking is usually kept to a minimum in the main room while performances are ongoing, though musicians sometimes mingle in the backstage areas during performances. Occasionally, this has caused conflict between patrons and young musicians at JCS supporting their peers, with the former demanding a quiet audience and the latter wanting to socialize with their friends. Generally, however, audience members—both jazz fans and musicians—listen respectfully while performances are ongoing. During intermissions, audience members and musicians often mingle in the main area and in the back room. By this time, Vanessa Lopez will have often set up the evening's hotdish or soup in a crockpot in the back room; small plates or bowls can be purchased for $3 cash.

The audience at Jazz Central usually does not surpass 20 members; even that many would be considered a good showing. Audience members often consist of band members' close friends and family members as well as local musicians who want to check out their friends' new projects, which often first emerge on a Wednesday at JCS. Many of the local jazzheads—the hardcore jazz fans described in the previous chapter—make regular appearances at JCS, often being the first to arrive and snagging prime spots

on the back couches. The low audience total has contributed to the small pay the local musicians take home, though no one involved in playing at JCS has seemed to have any misapprehension about what kind of pay they would receive.

The quality of music is often the same as at the local restaurants that host the regular jazz series which draw bigger crowds (especially at the Black Dog)—in fact, usually the same bands that play at those series will also play at JCS, perhaps in lead up to a bigger event. The reputations of the musicians playing at JCS also seem to have little effect in increasing the audience size, as I have seen several tier 1 musicians at JCS with not more than ten people in the audience. The low audience total at JCS is attributable to several factors: for one, JCS is not permitted to sell alcohol, nor is alcohol allowed on a BYOB basis, which limits some clientele from attending, especially those for whom jazz is secondary to eating and drinking. Second, JCS is not centrally located in a walkable downtown area of Minneapolis or St. Paul. Rather, it is across the Mississippi River in the Old St. Anthony neighborhood, far enough from the University of Minnesota campus that its foot traffic is limited. Attending a show at JCS is a conscious choice to listen intently, without distractions, to jazz music. Having this dedicated listening space is appreciated by local musicians and hardcore jazz fans, but in my experience talking to casual jazz listeners in the TC—the type to go to the Twin Cities Jazz Festival but probably not see much other local jazz during the year—many did not even know that JCS existed. JCS, then, exists as a space primarily for the local jazz community, as Santiago said when founding JCS. It is a space for new and experienced musicians, dedicated jazz listeners, students and teachers, and local music education organizations.

A crucial factor in JCS being able to provide support for the local jazz scene despite a limited audience is its status as a non-profit. According to Santiago, 501(c)(3) status has given JCS greater autonomy in its operations, in addition to allowing JCS to put music first.

> The idea of [becoming 501(c)(3)] is it means that it adds to the legitimacy as an arts organization, as something that is not a club. We're not a club, man. We're a community organization. Non-profit charitable organization. We're just providing space for performances. So having [501(c)(3) non-profit status] helped to intensify that. We've had a couple cool fundraiser things and things and we've got a couple of benefactors, there's people who have walked up with a nice little taste, helps keep the operation going.

Santiago elaborated that part of the motivation for going the non-profit route was informed by consideration of the alternative for a performance venue like JCS: obtaining a liquor license. Santiago felt that going down that road opened up a "complicated mess" he did not want to have to deal with—he especially did not want to have to be a restaurant manager. What's more, Santiago was tired of the way that club owners treat musicians with regards to how they compensate musicians in comparison to how much the venue earns selling alcohol:

> Because we know if you want to make money in the music business, get a liquor license. Most of the stuff is at night, you get a liquor license, you sell booze, you pull Summits out of a tap that costs you a quarter and sell them for $7 just like every other place does. "So what did you make on that gig?" "Oh, we just played for the door." "You mean while they're pouring $6, $7 Summits and serving $9 cocktails? You played for the door? That's bullshit." And the thing is, at Jazz Central, that's not bullshit. You play for the door. That's what it is. Because nobody's making any money off of $9 cocktails.
>
> So in this situation, it's a reasonable thing. Yeah, hit up all your friends, we'll do our weekly pub, we'll put the stuff on the website, and then you gotta bring people in. As opposed to the business model in the clubs, if you don't use your Facebook and your social media to round out your

> fanbase to get out to the clubs that they can sell drinks to, you won't be back. What the f… I use the expression pure intent. The intention is pure. People come in, sit down and listen to the music. There's the ears, and there's the music. You don't mix a lot of other media in there except for somebody singing once in a while during our Thursday night thing. But it's pretty much simple and that's it. It's Marxism, straight up. And to me, that works best.

Santiago describes how many music venues work, not just in jazz: the band is expected to bring their own audience base into the venue, with the venue owing little to the band in terms of promotion. At JCS, this is still the case—though JCS does spend some money on marketing and makes regular Facebook posts about upcoming gigs—but the venue is not making money off any sales of alcohol or a dinner menu. Later, Santiago describes how young musicians approach him feeling guilty that they did not bring in enough of an audience to their own show.

> Even now, once in a while, [imitating young musician]: "oh man, sorry I didn't get many people out." I say, "I don't give a shit. It sounded great. I'm glad you had the opportunity to do it." That's the first thing I tell 'em: I say, "man, don't even think about it. You made it happen. And it's being heard right here in the Twin Cities."
>
> The purpose is we're here to make music. To me that's the beauty of it. It's commercially unencumbered. It's like, ahhh, I love that. I struggled with that all my life. I gotta go out and play for money? Oh that means I gotta put on a tuxedo? Show up way too early? Set up all my stuff? And play "Brown Eyed Girl." Oh. Is that what making music is? No! It is, kinda. But it's not what I'm in it for. It's nice to make a little cash. Please pay me well. But when it comes to jazz music. It's like, okay. I'm going in with the idea that I could make money, I could not. The main thing is I'm doing the shit I really dig, you know? That's the main thing. I'm digging it.

Santiago here posits jazz as something that is transcendent of other music styles and of material concerns. Though he acknowledges that musicians need to be paid for their

labor, he draws an exception for himself in needing fair compensation if the music is jazz.

For both Santiago and Steve Kenny, running their respective jazz ventures seems to be a means of obtaining control over how jazz is presented to audiences and valued relative to the prestige it holds for musicians. Ideally, this involves less of a conventional club owner mindset but rather allows these musician-curators to interact with other musicians directly and present jazz on their own terms, where they are able to uphold a legitimacy they believe that jazz holds. As Santiago says, there is no other media interfering with jazz music—no TVs showing local sports games, and generally, patrons stay off their smartphones when a performance is in session (the reception in the basement of JCS is poor anyway). Furthermore, when musicians "play for the door" at other venues that are making profit off of their labor, even if indirectly through liquor sales, jazz becomes devalued, both in terms of economics and prestige. At JCS, musicians do not necessarily make more money; as Santiago points out, they really "play for the door." But at least then, there is no façade of "doing it for the love;" the intention really is pure. And in this situation, no one is making money, but if nothing else, music is being played in a creative space, without hindrance for commercial concerns, for an audience who intentionally chose to be there to listen to the music.

As Santiago describes, the important thing for him at JCS is for the music to be "commercially unencumbered," to not "become secondary." If the music is not crafted in mind for an audience to which to sell expensive cocktails, then, it naturally follows that there would be greater potential for freedom in what kinds of music are performed at Jazz

Central Studios. But how is it determined what constitutes the "jazz" indicated in the name of the venue? Though Santiago passes a lot of the booking of acts to JCS's "artistic directors," most of whom are also performing musicians, his idea of what jazz is still sets the template for what kinds of acts perform at JCS.

Like Steve Kenny, Santiago maintains an open-minded vision of what jazz should be. He acknowledges that jazz is not a preferred term for many, including some of his close colleagues and collaborators, but feels that a label is necessary for the music being "more widely accepted as America's creative music." Mac Santiago described jazz not as a set of stylistic markers but as an approach, one which he believes determines whether a performance is successful:

> I see that they're making music the way the guys did in New Orleans. Not the same kind of music, but their manner and their methods for creating it. Here's an arrangement or here's lead sheet, here's a tune, here's a melody, here's some changes, I want this kind of groove on it. 1, 2, 3, 4, let's go. And the guys know what to do. Drop an idea, a limited structure. It's not about the groove anymore. It's not about the chord changes anymore. It's more about, are you guys creating the music in that manner? It's that spontaneous composition, which is improvisation.
>
> If you get up there and you just hack through some shit that sounds rehearsed? And almost a certain level of contrivance—it ain't do shit. You look up there and you know that there's guys that are adept at improvisation and there's some point, in the musical event. That freedom, that individual freedom shines through it? Then it's cool. I don't care what groove it is or if you're playing one chord, I don't give a shit. It's more about that you're doing *that thing*, that they did in Congo Square a hundred and twenty years ago. That's the tradition to me. It's not a stylistic thing.

What Santiago describes here is similar to George Lewis's concept of an Afrological approach as the basis for jazz improvisation process, in that it relies on discipline, technical knowledge, and a knowledge of the history and culture of jazz (Lewis 2004).

Though Santiago is generally open minded about what kinds of grooves or harmonies can constitute jazz, his one sticking point for defining jazz, which some of his peers stray from, is that rhythm is a necessary component:

> To me, I'm sorry, there's gotta be some time, some groove, there's gotta be movement. It's the African part of it. When guys don't do that, no, you totally forgot the mission. This comes from Africa. That's what beat is. There would not be beat here if Africans weren't forced here in the first place. That's why that happens.
>
> But I try not to be too… "oh this is jazz that's not jazz." Okay so we got the rhythmic component and then we got the manner in which it's created. Or the mode, in other words, sort of a limited, whatever structure it happens to be but be able to spontaneously make it happen. Okay, that's it! Stop right there!

Though Santiago positions jazz as something transcendent of individual styles or grooves, he is also careful to credit its origins in the Africa diaspora, even specifically mentioning Congo Square.[64] Before giving the caveat that rhythm is necessary, Santiago described well-regarded local musicians who have performed at JCS without basing their music around a beat or groove, who have played entirely "out of time." As these musicians still play regularly at JCS, and in many cases are Santiago's close collaborators, clearly Santiago does not rely on his personal idea of jazz, that it requires a rhythmic component, to police what occurs at JCS. Santiago himself usually plays in groups in conventional hard bop or Afro-Cuban jazz styles. But rather than prioritize his personal preferences for programming at JCS, Santiago yields control over defining the boundaries of jazz to the wider jazz community in the TC, mirroring his description of

[64] Just before our interview, Santiago had mentioned to me that he was reading Ingrid Monson's *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (2007).

JCS as a community organization that has been established through the collaboration of the whole TC jazz scene.

In the 10 months I spent visiting JCS at least weekly, I encountered many types of jazz, on a wide spectrum from "inside" to "out," or "traditional" to "modern." Repertoire varied as well, from sets featuring mostly jazz standards, to those with entirely original compositions, to those that featured covers of contemporary non-jazz but jazz-adjacent artists such as D'Angelo or Janelle Monae. Though most musicians performed on acoustic instruments, it was also common to hear electric basses, keyboards, and guitars with varying levels of distortion and effects pedals. Santiago's stated ethos of not caring about what kind of groove or harmony musicians use was reflected in practice, with musicians freely experimenting with different textures and styles of improvised music, usually rooted in jazz but not always audibly sounded like the "jazz" that leading figures like Wynton Marsalis might promote. Additionally, though the artistic directors usually know what they are getting into when they book an act, sometimes they simply ask one musician to perform and choose their own band, with no real expectation of what kind of music might occur until the performance starts.

One area where the ethos of the hosting venue is most clearly reflected is in the jam session. During my fieldwork, I attended the Monday night jam session a dozen or more times (the Sunday night jam session did not exist until after I left). Though the jam session has historically existed as a space for musicians to gather after hours and freely experiment after their regular well-paying but usually more conventional gigs were over, the JCS jam session primarily functions as a training ground for younger musicians (tier 3

and 4, as described in the previous chapter).[65] As a former jazz studies undergraduate major and performer who had gradually started playing less and less with the rigors of graduate school, I found JCS's jam session to be crucial in allowing me to re-foster my skills in improvisation and combo playing as well as to meet other jazz musicians in the TC. Though the jam session at JCS is important for lesser experienced musicians or those getting back into practice, such as myself, to get up and start playing, musicians of all calibers will play at the jam session, including tier 2 or tier 1 musicians. At times I felt intimidated by those who I knew were some of the cities' best musicians playing on the same stage I would soon be sitting in on, but at no point did I feel unwelcome by those who clearly had higher aptitude.

Though JCS is important for fostering musical ability at younger ages, it also serves as a community space for experienced musicians to play music they personally value most. Though they might not make much, if any, money at JCS, Santiago's status as a performing musician himself has helped offset concerns that he may be exploiting jazz musicians' labor for having them play for next to nothing. Musicians know that Santiago is not making a profit at JCS and that his intentions are as pure as he states they are. Drummer and educator Dave Schmalenberger described his experience playing at JCS for very little or no money:

> Yeah, I mean jazz is my first love as far as drum set playing. The kind of music I love to play but it's tough to find an environment to do it and make any money. I play at Jazz Central a lot for zero just because I like to

[65] Those with gigs elsewhere in town do, however, occasionally show up at JCS towards the end of the session on Monday nights. In one case, several members of a touring trad-jazz show band based in New York showed up at the session after their gig at the Dakota. They expressed gratitude to Santiago for creating a space where they could let loose and improvise more freely following their regular, more-structured gig.

> play with musicians. Like that last time I played with Pete [Whitman] and those guys? For the door I think I got 5 bucks. I'm okay with that! But then you can say I'm part of the problem then because I'm doing it for no money. But on the other hand, they're our friends and it's musically challenging and I love to do it but it's gotta be enough money to fill my gas tank. Okay, I'm good. But I can't do that all the time. I play a lot of gigs that I don't really like to do but the money's good.

Later, Schmalenberger described his experience playing music in cover bands that he does not necessarily enjoy—he does not hate it, and he attempts to bring full effort into learning the language of whatever type of music he plays even if it is not his favorite. But his true love is jazz. For Schmalenberger, performing the music he loves at JCS for little money gives him a balance that allows him to tolerate the gigs he does for the good pay.

As a musician-run non-profit institution, Jazz Central provides important spiritual support to the jazz scene. It also provides steady gigs, but most of them do not pay well, if anything at all. Rather, the reliability of gigs and open environment that allows musicians of all levels to foster their skills and hone their craft provides relief from the otherwise unforgiving grind of making a living as a musician. In other contexts, such as at the Black Dog, musicians actively consider the best way to reach new clientele and expand the audience for those who listen to jazz. Though JCS certainly welcomes newcomer listeners to jazz, its stated purpose is more for those who are already insiders. JCS allows musicians to take a break from the material concerns of having to make concessions for their audience and instead allows them reach into their training and creative impulses and experiment with new sounds in the company of their peers and the most dedicated audience members. The institutional support provided by JCS, facilitated through a collection of arts grants that JCS receives, allows for this kind of abstraction of

jazz, even if temporarily, from material concerns. At the same time, as a non-profit with educational missions, JCS provides support for other music non-profits and high school and college jazz bands to facilitate musical training, especially for populations without adequate resources, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Though educational and cultural support for musicians is important, this is not enough by itself; without, at minimum, adequate financial backing, most of the cities' prime musicians would not be able to continue playing jazz music. For some, teaching affords them the opportunities to be flexible when choosing gigs that may offer much creative fulfillment but no financial reward. For others, they seek support through arts grants, ranging from piecemeal offerings to more prestigious awards, that allow them to prioritize their art.

Grant Funding

Grant money has allowed Jazz Central to continue its operations, though as Santiago stated, most of JCS's money comes not from public funds but from private donations. This is mostly true for the TC jazz scene at large: grants of a few thousand dollars may help with the costs of running a series or allow a prominent musician to focus their energies on creating new works, but very few musicians are fortunate enough to receive this kind of funding. What's more, though funding can help prop up certain series, the most prominent jazz series in the TC happen without any grant money at all, but rather recoup their costs through cover charges, encouraged tip donations, or in the case of Steve Kenny, through the organizer's own pocket.

However, what little grant money that does exist still creates a better situation for artists in the Twin Cities than most cities with a substantial jazz scene, as many TC jazz musicians profess. Minnesota in general is lauded by musicians there for its state support for the arts through public funding and philanthropic efforts. The principal public sources for which jazz musicians apply for funding include the state of Minnesota's Legacy Amendment,[66] specifically the Arts & Culture Heritage Fund, an amendment that passed in 2008 and which is expected to raise through sales tax revenue more than $1.2 billion for the arts over a 25 year period;[67] the Minnesota State Arts Board, which was established as the Minnesota Arts Society in 1903 and now works in conjunction with the Arts & Culture Heritage Fund; and the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, which seeks to improve arts access in the Twin Cities metro area. The primary private sources of funding for the arts include the Jerome Foundation, a private foundation which awards grants and fellowships to non-profit organizations and artists in Minnesota and New York City; the McKnight Foundation, a private foundation offering artist fellowships and arts grants specifically for the state of Minnesota; and the American Composers' Forum, which receives funding from the aforementioned organizations, in particular the McKnight Foundation through its McKnight Composer Fellowship.

[66] The full name is the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, as 33% of the funds go toward clean water efforts, 33% toward outdoor heritage, 19.75% toward arts and culture, and 14.25% to parks and trails.

[67] This data comes from the Legacy Amendment's website (http://www.legacy.leg.mn/funds/arts-cultural-heritage-fund).

Generally, musicians consider the availability of grants for arts in the Twin Cities to be encouraging of more original music. For instance, Zacc Harris spoke about the positive effect the Legacy Amendment had on his Jazz at Studio Z series:

> [The Legacy Amendment] absolutely has led to a lot of different new groups and opportunities for more creative music. Going back to the Artist's Quarter, we've done the Jazz at Studio Z thing for our 5th season. So that's 50 shows about that we've put on. And of those 50 shows I would say less than half would have ever occurred at the Artist's Quarter.

Harris references the Artist's Quarter, a jazz club that closed in late 2013 and which he would describe as the TC's only "100% jazz club" that is still missed for that reason. But whereas the AQ would generally book music closer to what one would expect when they hear the term "jazz club," Harris was interested in playing original music that did not adhere so strictly to conventional jazz. Harris described the AQ as "kind of a boys' club" that was "not an easy place for people to get into," with only one of his groups, the Atlantis Quartet, being consistently booked there. For Harris, then, musicians who receive their funding through an arts funding organization have more freedom to perform experimental music than might be expected at a typical jazz club, which has to concern itself with making enough profit to keep its doors open.

Bassist Chris Bates, who has received multiple McKnight Fellowships,[68] expressed that though he would continue to compose and perform in the manner that he does regardless of whether he was awarded money for it, the fellowships do serve as important validation for him. They also motivate him to produce higher quality work so

[68] One was a McKnight Composer Fellowship, awarded in 1999 for Bates' compositions for the trio Motion Poets. The other was a McKnight Artist Fellowship, awarded in 2015 for Bates work with the Atlantis Quartet.

that he can be in the running for an award. Moreover, these fellowships encourage Bates to take a step back and reflect on the big picture of his artistic vision, rather than simply be "clawing through to the next thing." He considered grant writing to be another skillset that jazz musicians should develop in order to be successful. Bates' sentiments coincide with those expressed by many TC jazz musicians: that their passion for performing and composing is strong enough that they will continue to do it no matter the incentive. But while the funding awarded by arts fellowships and grants provides an important subsidy for musicians, organizations, and jazz series, perhaps more valuable to the jazz culture in the TC is the prestige value they offer when musicians feel that their work is valued even if the market does not convey that value economically.

There are some instances, however, where the loss of grant money has led to certain projects to cease completely. In 2017, Jazz at Studio Z, the series run by Zacc Harris, was not awarded the grant that they had received for the prior six years. This caused the series to be discontinued for the 2017-18 season, with assurances from Harris that they would apply for funding again in the following year.[69] The Jazz at Studio Z series typically booked some of the Twin Cities' top bands in addition to occasional national artists, who would require a higher booking fee. JASZ also hosted an annual one-day winter jazz festival with a relatively marginal cover charge. All this occurred in a space designed for listening, with rows of chairs facing the stage and with minimal refreshments offered. It is unsurprising, then, that the loss of that source of revenue

[69] This was expressed in a Jazz at Studio Z email newsletter. The series did resume concerts for 2018-19.

would cause at least the temporary end of the series.[70] To compensate for the loss of JASZ, Harris began curating weekly Friday night shows at Crooner's Supper Club, a series called Late Night Jazz in the Dunsmore. This series took on a more typical jazz club model, with a cover charge that would be added to the bills of dining patrons, who could also order food and drinks.

Like many institutions in the Twin Cities jazz scene, arts grants organizations provide a semblance of stability that can subsidize musicians' creative lifestyles, but by themselves they are hardly enough to keep the scene going economically. Though musicians consider the grant culture that exists in the TC to be a distinguishing feature of the TC jazz scene and arts culture in Minnesota more generally, most individual musicians will not be fortunate to receive those kinds of public and private grant funds. The organizations that do receive funding might disperse that funding to musicians in indirect ways—by having their band play at a jazz series for a respectable booking fee that is made possible through grant funding—but by and large, musicians need to find other ways to make money. Some pursue day jobs outside of music entirely, but many make much of their living by teaching at secondary and higher education institutions.

High School Institutions

Jazz in the Twin Cities metro area does not just occur at the local jazz clubs, pop-up series, or festivals, but also at the many high schools and universities that have jazz

[70] Another musician, Steve Sandberg, told me of a group he performed with in the late 1980s and early '90s called ImpOrch. This was a collective oriented around free improvisation which would also bring in nationally renowned free improvisers every spring to hold weeks-long residencies with the group. After ImpOrch lost its Jerome Foundation funding, however, it disbanded, and such a large-scale free improvisation collective has rarely, if ever, been seen in the Twin Cities since.

ensembles filled with student musicians. As I touched on in the previous chapter, many of the TC's best jazz musicians had originally taken up jazz at one of the metro area's local high schools. Two of the scene's leaders, brothers Chris Bates and JT Bates, have credited their interest in jazz to their father, Don Bates, a longtime music instructor at Hopkins High School in Minnetonka, a suburb in the West Metro of Minneapolis. Saxophonist Michael Lewis, who now mostly tours nationally with rock bands like Bon Iver and Arcade Fire but who was originally a part of multiple influential TC trios (Happy Apple and Fat Kid Wednesdays), also has a father, Greg Lewis, who has taught music at Minnetonka High School. Both of these educators, in addition to many others across the TC, can claim influence on the kinds of young musicians who enter the TC jazz scene at young ages.

Young instrumentalists who come up in the TC jazz scene are more often linked to a private instructor on their individual instrument, continuing a long tradition of informal master-apprentice relationship between instrumentalists in jazz (Berliner 1994). However, young musicians' public-school music teachers can also prove key to shaping their interest in jazz. This is particularly true of schools that have strong and large music programs, especially in the West Metro of Minneapolis. Some of these high schools, such as Eden Prairie High School, boast multiple jazz big bands, with performances by the top band that resemble the quality offered by some collegiate ensembles. In one instance, I attended one of these high school performances at Eden Prairie High School, which also featured commissioned compositions by Chris Bates, who performed with the student jazz band alongside fellow professional musicians JT Bates, Brandon Wozniak, and

others. In this case, an established connection between an active jazz performer on the scene and a high school jazz band allowed the latter to play more challenging material than a high school jazz band would typically perform. It also allowed the featured performer, Chris Bates, to mentor younger student musicians and premier new works while getting paid a commission.

Though the music education situation at wealthier high schools, such as those in the outer suburbs, facilitates a productive mentoring of the next generation of jazz musicians, uneven distribution in how public funding is allocated to public schools, and specifically arts programs, has produced inequalities between urban school districts and suburban ones. Though the suburbs have been shown to be steadily diversifying in terms of race and ethnicity, public schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul have become the most segregated they have been since the 1980s (Webster and Hargarten 2015). Reports also reveal that Minnesota is the lowest of its neighboring states in terms of achievement gap between white students and students of color (Magan 2014).[71] Additionally, though reports indicate that Minnesota's public requirements for arts education are stronger than most states, still half of secondary schools do not meet the minimum requirement of three arts related courses due to budget cuts (Sheeran 2012). Schools in some districts can make up for budget cuts with non-district funding (58% of schools), such as through property taxes (Sheeran 2012), but funding through property taxes places more of a

[71] State data on student achievement revealed that white students scored 30% than "black, Hispanic and American Indian classmates" on reading and math proficiency tests and 15% better than Asian classmates on reading tests (Magan 2014). However, this data is not disaggregated for varieties within certain racial groups (e.g. African American or Somali American, etc.).

burden on low income families and is not enough to achieve equitable achievement in lower-income districts (Olson 2018). Though data on arts education does not well account for race or ethnicity, the disparity in funding has anecdotally resulted in schools with strong music programs—that is, at least one dedicated jazz band, and in some cases more than one—tending to be majority white, while schools that lack them are predominantly non-white.[72]

Naturally, this disparity has trickled down to the jazz scene, where most young students coming from local high schools are white or white presenting, an observation some jazz musicians have made. While some schools like Eden Prairie High School in the west Metro of Minneapolis have multiple jazz bands, and regularly produce the next tier 4 jazz musician eager to sit in at the jam session, high schools from historically African American communities such as North Minneapolis are less represented. The same is true of schools in districts with a large immigrant or refugee population, including the Twin Cities' large Somali American and Hmong American populations (in addition to other East African and Southeast Asian communities), who, as a result, mostly lack representation in the jazz scene.

[72] Additionally, data on artists' lofts in the Twin Cities has shown that the population living in subsidized housing for artists is more white than that of the cities more generally (Melo 2016). For instance, the A-Mills Artists' Loft on the St. Anthony Main section of the Mississippi River (formerly the center of Minneapolis's milling district; A-Mills is a former Pillsbury factory) only contains 14% people of color (86% white) out of 251 apartments, despite the city of Minneapolis being 40% non-white. Similar lofts in St. Paul (also 40% non-white) were found to be between 80-92% white. Though the lofts are partially government subsidized and are technically designated as "affordable housing," they are still too expensive to be affordable for many non-white artists, a University of Minnesota report indicated (Melo 2016). For comparison, non-artist loft subsidized housing in Minneapolis contains only 20% white households.

More generally, inequity in access to Minnesota's arts and culture (for which the state is often praised), has been a source of contention by Black activist organizations in the Twin Cities. Nekima Levy-Pounds, head of the Minneapolis NAACP from 2015 to 2016 and a Minneapolis mayoral candidate in 2017, has challenged the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for its lack of non-white representation and its lack of attention to inequities in park access between white and non-white communities (Brandt 2016). While some activists target public board administrators in hopes of affecting change there, others seek to redress the lack of cultural programming for lower income communities through the forming of non-profit organizations. One such group is the Twin Cities Mobile Jazz Project (TCMJP), which sends musician-teachers to city high schools to run after school music programs. The TCMJP also provides free outdoor concerts in Minneapolis's public parks, especially in North and South Minneapolis. For the TCMJP, jazz as a music style is not necessarily always emphasized, but rather the organization draws its inspiration from Dizzy Gillespie's mobile jazz projects which launched in Harlem in the 1940s. For instance, after school programming might involve the use of iPads or computers for creating music as part of a large lesson on digital technology in music. In this sense, jazz is invoked in the name of the organization for its association with advocacy for equal rights, rather than for its musical properties. At one outdoor concert in a South Minneapolis park, a local jazz piano trio was followed by a teenager performing a DJ set of classic soul hits by artists like Stevie Wonder and Earth, Wind & Fire.

Jazz Central Studios, which is itself a non-profit organization, occasionally hosts fundraiser events for other music non-profits in the Twin Cities. For instance, I attended in March of 2016 a fundraiser for Hopewell Music, the only music school (offering private lessons and ensemble classes) located in the underserved neighborhood of North Minneapolis. Per pamphlets provided by Hopewell at the fundraiser, the school, which was then in its fifth year, served 225 students, 75% of whom were below the poverty line. Hopewell offers a sliding scale for lessons, with most prices hovering around $20 per lesson but with discounts and scholarships available for students in financial need. Hopewell is designated as a non-profit, gaining its income from a variety of sources: 32% from lesson fees, 22% from foundations, 22% from individuals, 17% from government, 5% from corporations, and 3% from partners. To try to create more stability in their staff of private music teachers, Hopewell offers a modest hourly rate of $12 for teachers rather than rely entirely on volunteers in the hopes of reducing teacher turnover. At the time of the fundraiser, Hopewell had recently moved to a more central location in North Minneapolis to facilitate better access for students who rely on the public bus system. The fundraiser hosted at JCS was titled “Duke and Donuts,” as it featured student bands performing Duke Ellington songs with donuts served afterwards for a $22 cover charge to go toward Hopewell.

Universities

In addition to the local high schools that inject youthful energy into the scene, local universities are an important backbone to the TC jazz scene. These university jazz programs, including schools not just in the immediate Twin Cities metro area but those

elsewhere in Minnesota and Wisconsin, produce young TC jazz musicians while also providing teaching opportunities and a stable income for professional musicians. Of these nearby schools, the most prominent during the period of my fieldwork for jazz studies were the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis; McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul; the University of Minnesota Duluth; Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin; the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. While these institutions offer degrees in music, others, particularly community colleges and small liberal arts colleges, allow students to take jazz classes or lessons as part of a general liberal arts degree. Teaching positions and master class opportunities are provided by the many such institutions in the Twin Cities and within a short drive of the TC, including Augsburg College and Hamline University in St. Paul, St. Olaf College and Carleton College in Northfield, Winona State University, the University of Minnesota Morris, the University of Minnesota Mankato, and others. Instructors at institutions in this latter group usually work as adjunct professors teaching primarily applied lessons and ensembles.

For state universities like the University of Minnesota (U of M) and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, students who attend those universities for a music degree with a jazz emphasis are doing so because those schools are less expensive. Many students who ultimately attend the U of M or Eau Claire might have been accepted to a music program like Berklee, but chose instead to attend a more affordable school closer to home. Per Andrea Canter, this has allowed these institutions to attract students with the ability to get into prestigious music schools but who instead strengthen jazz programs

closer to the Twin Cities. While these schools may lack the prestigious name of a Berklee College of Music nationally, for TC jazz musicians, to say one attended the jazz program at Eau Claire, for example, still carries weight locally.

In considering what institutions have influence on the TC jazz scene, however, one must look beyond the immediate regional sphere, as many jazz musicians in the TC have attended programs outside of the Minnesota-Wisconsin area. Some went to, or are currently attending, institutions like Berklee College of Music, the University of Michigan, University of Illinois, University of North Texas, University of Miami, and others. In many cases, those who went out of state for school did so based on the reputation of the jazz program they attended and then returned to the TC upon completion of their bachelor's or master's degree. In other cases, musicians did not grow up in Minnesota but settled in the Twin Cities from elsewhere in the Midwest after graduating and in need of an active music scene in a less prohibitively expensive city.

When I first started preparing materials for this research project, I imagined that the role of university institutions would be central to the jazz scene in the TC and thus to my project. In my experience, it is the university jazz programs that continuously push out young musicians onto the scene, producing a supply of fresh creative talent that is not, however, met by a demand in the form of gigs. In my imagination, a local jazz scene could not exist without the continuous cultural and knowledge production of university jazz programs. I assumed that in a local jazz scene, the universities would figure centrally into musicians' conversations and into their daily lives.

Though many of my hypotheses held true to a certain extent—young musicians on the scene do mostly come trained from a 4-year jazz studies program, and it could be argued that without the stability offered by university employment that the jazz scene as it exists would not be sustainable—I quickly realized that the university was not at the center of discourse for jazz musicians in the TC. In interviewing and talking to jazz musicians, I sometimes found their answers to be underwhelming with regards to the effects of university jazz programs on the local scene. Many of my interviewees had not thought about the effects of jazz programs on the scene until I raised the question. Though many attended a jazz studies program, with many others teaching in a music program of some kind, it was not a pressing concern. Some certainly attributed the scene's vitality in part to the local programs that incubate talent (the University of Minnesota, McNally Smith, and UW-Eau Claire, principally), but most pointed to other factors first when attesting to the strength of the Minnesota jazz scene—the state and metro area's strong history of support for the arts through public funding being chief among them. The fact that universities almost exist as an afterthought in many musicians' minds is an indication that by this point, the local jazz programs have become an accepted and normalized aspect of everyday practice. For many musicians, university jazz programs are not the latest thing ruining jazz as much scholarship and journalism has sometimes cried (discussed in Chapters 2 and 5), but just another aspect of their daily lives as jazz musicians. Though I did receive answers that affirmed jazz education's importance, what I did not encounter much of was alarmism or panic about the phenomenon of jazz being formalized in educational institutions. As such, I do not seek

here to re-litigate debates on how jazz education affects jazz aesthetics or canons, which are well-trod (Ake 2012; Prouty 2013; Wilf 2014),[73] but to examine the overall effects of institutionalized jazz education on the structure of the local jazz scene.

Many TC musicians consider the TC jazz scene to have grown much in the past decade or so, a growth some attribute to the positive effect of jazz education. For instance, after noting how much the jazz scene had grown, Mac Santiago said that he felt like every time he turns around, he runs into another jazz musician with a bachelor's or master's degree from an institution like Indiana University or the University of Miami. Santiago also admired young musicians who felt they can bring their "institutional knowledge into the streets and try to create some opportunities for themselves." Like Santiago, Steve Kenny felt that the impact of the local colleges and universities was large. For one, several of Kenny's groups have been made up of either current college students, including bachelor's or master's students, or recent graduates. While introducing a band of mostly McNally Smith affiliated students at a Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog event, Kenny proclaimed that McNally Smith's influence on the TC jazz scene was so large that "it could be seen from space."

However, not all musicians agreed with the direct impact of local universities on the jazz scene, including at least one McNally professor. In an interview, Dave Schmalenberger told me that he felt McNally's influence on the jazz scene was

[73] As I explored in previous research of former jazz majors at Temple University (Neil 2014), though their university program transmitted knowledge focused on musical aesthetics and repertoire rooted in acoustic straight-ahead jazz, students felt a fair amount of creative freedom in using this knowledge in how they saw fit. However, this knowledge was often presented as abstracted from social and cultural context of the era of jazz (1940s-60s) favored by jazz education.

negligible. This was at least in part because McNally was not a jazz school, but rather a contemporary music school, and therefore suffered a reputation as a "scale mill" among serious jazz musicians. Schmalenberger also felt that a lot of older musicians were skeptical of music education in general, as they themselves did not go to school. Though Schmalenberger acknowledged that McNally helped support festivals like the Lowertown Guitar Festival and Twin Cities Jazz Festival, he said that he did know if there was "much impact at all" on typical jazz clubs like Vieux Carré or the Dakota. In follow up questions, Schmalenberger acknowledged that there are strong graduates from McNally who actively play in the TC in jazz-adjacent genres such as neo-soul or jazz fusion, but overall, he felt the school's reputation was limited with respect to conventional jazz.

As with area high schools, some felt the ability to study jazz at a university is directly connected with a musician's level of privilege. One musician admitted that had he not grown up with parents who could afford to support him through school, he would not have been able to pursue a bachelor's and master's degree in music, in addition to a career in music. Santiago also acknowledged the advantages one needs to have to be able to major in jazz:

> Generally speaking, when guys decide to play an instrument in college that means they probably had private lessons growing up and they can go that route. They're able to either get scholarships or they're able to get into departments, audition and make them. I suppose, it's more of a specialist thing.

Bassist Matt Peterson echoed similar sentiments:

> I feel like it's uncommon to find someone who's just come up without going to some big music school. It seems like a lot of the artists I know went to Berklee or New School or something. And so, it's kind of a

> privilege to get that high of an education. You have to have the money and means to do that.

Meanwhile, when asked about concerns about a barrier of entry for jazz as a result of jazz's entrance into the university, guitarist Zacc Harris pushed back against the notion that one needs to study at a university in order to make it in jazz. For him, playing on the actual gig was more important than a degree in learning how to play jazz, something that he did not feel was contingent on having a university education. Harris also felt that the opportunities offered by musicians like Steve Kenny for younger musicians to get experience playing gigs made an education not completely necessary.

Harris did acknowledge, however, that the university provided a stable income and "safety net" that benefited his career as a performer. Harris elaborated:

> For me, I'm not teaching full-time.[74] But having those teaching opportunities has been in some way a good thing because it allows me to focus my practice and playing more on the creative music that I want to do and less on having to hustle up and take every gig I can in order to make the bills. So there's something nice about having some kind of steady thing there to allow me to pursue the gigs and music that I want more. I don't have to go play wedding gigs all the time that make me not want to play guitar anymore.

For musicians like Harris, the steady income offered by university teaching facilitated musical activity are closer to a musician's true desires. Harris is not alone in recognizing that benefit; many musicians at some point in their careers have sought refuge in the university to acquire more stability, as Schmalenberger describes:

> It's interesting how I've seen a lot of people who are world class musicians, who might have some ties to somebody here in the Cities. And

[74] When I interviewed Harris in June of 2016, he was teaching part-time at two different universities: Hamline University in St. Paul and Carleton College in Northfield. By summer of 2017, he had begun teaching a music business class at a third institution, McNally Smith, in addition to increasing his load as adjunct at the other two institutions. This was on top of his regular gigs, which typically range from 3-5 nights a week, and efforts running the Twin Cities' primary jazz record label, Shifting Paradigm.

> they'll come by the school and kind of fish around like, "yeah I just wanted to find about teaching here." They want a gig. Because they're realizing they're now 49 years old. But it's like, you can't teach though. Just because you're a good player doesn't mean you can teach, at all, and you have no experience, so why would that work?

Zacc Harris also touched on the aspect of musicians who want to be hired by universities, but he felt that some universities overvalued advanced degrees over practical experience in their hiring processes:

> I think the biggest problem I have with the universities is that at a lot of the non-elite schools for jazz, you have people who are basically life-long academics teaching a music that isn't about that. Because of the requirements for a masters' or Ph.D. to be a lecturer you miss out on somebody who is an amazing player and has deep insight into those kinds of things. I'm sure that there are hundreds of applied professors that are running the big band and teaching applied lessons on their instrument and basically directing the path of these kids and their pursuit of this music who haven't actually ever played gigs or played this music outside of an academic setting.

The element of universities preferring those with advanced degrees as proof of their teaching credentials has been pointed out by several TC jazz musicians who have felt this emphasis has acted as a barrier to otherwise qualified Black performers from achieving stable teaching positions. One Black musician expressed to me that he felt one of the TC's leading higher education institutions for music had a lot of faculty with little real-world performance experience and who were not up to date on recent trends in Black music. This grievance culminated in a series of roundtables held at Jazz Central Studios in July of 2016 titled "Jazz Town Hall Forum: Black Music in the Twin Cities," hosted by Rodney Ruckus and Solomon Parham and featuring guest speakers Eric Kamau Gravatt and Aaron Janik, where the panelists addressed a host of issues facing Black musicians in the Twin Cities.

Though university teaching jobs can financially benefit experienced musicians, some musicians in the TC have expressed concern about the cost of attaining an arts degree as a student when gigs playing music are hard to come by. For instance, Dave Schmalenberger felt that the university had a responsibility to inform prospective students of the difficulty making a living playing music, though he admitted it was difficult to balance honesty with encouragement of students' dreams to make music their careers. However, Schmalenberger said he could not "live with himself" if he did not have regular check-ins with students about their education and whether the money they were spending was worth it for them.

Though not every music student may end up making a living playing music, many musicians with whom I spoke felt a lot could be gained, both for musicians and the scene at large, from a music degree regardless of one's eventual occupation. For instance, Schmalenberger mentioned that the music training provided by universities has the potential of creating future consumers of music, educated listeners who might go into higher paying occupations than that of a musician but who can give back to the scene through their support as an audience member. Additionally, Mac Santiago felt that music training offers creative thinking skills that can help one in any facet of life:

> To get all physiological about it, we talk about brain function. You know the language thing, how important that is to critical thinking and I believe any success that I've had, or even running this organization, sure my abilities as a musician let me relate to people in that way, but my ability to negotiate, organize things? I learned that through music. What's music? It's just organized sound. There's an ability to comprehend, see the big picture. Okay here's the goal, we're gonna play this tune. Take it from here.

In addition to the possible practical benefit of creating potential future consumers, Schmalenberger described how his own educational experience learning different music cultures expanded his world view in a way that otherwise might not have happened.

> I know that I was influenced greatly by much more than the music. I could have stayed in my small little Ohio, Midwestern farm town. The whole time there were no Black people in my town. One of the families who used to live on the street, I learned sometime later that they were in the Klan in Ohio. I could have lived there my whole life. So I'm glad I got to travel a bit, I'm glad I got to study music and different cultures. And met people from different cultures through music school and gigs.

In sum, the impacts of secondary and higher education in the TC jazz scene are multifold. They provide jobs for local musicians which allows them to continue making music that pushes boundaries. Students are inaugurated through local jazz programs, first in the stronger high schools, and then through universities like the University of Minnesota, McNally Smith College of Music, and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Though some instructors warn students about the risk of getting an arts degree, they still feel that there will always be a group of dedicated students who will pursue that path even while knowing the uncertain future that awaits them. At worst, these music programs have the potential of creating educated audiences who can support the latest jazz series.

Local high schools and universities in the Twin Cities act as evidence of how educational institutions enact sacralization on a local level. To attend a well-known university for jazz bestows a certain prestige upon those who rise to that level. However, as Lawrence Levine (1988) argues, sacralization also entails the removal of an art form from the working class; in this case, to study jazz at a prestigious institution requires a

certain degree of privilege that can create barriers to entry in becoming a jazz musician. While scholarships, affordable music programs, and non-profits are more available in Minnesota than in many other states, those young people who are fortunate to have strong music programs at their public high schools already have a leg up on the competition. The socioeconomically stratified nature of the Twin Cities results in a jazz scene that, due at least in part to educational inequities, is largely white. The roots of racial inequalities in the Twin Cities go beyond the jazz scene, and demographically, the Twin Cities is one of the whiter metropolitan areas in the country to begin with. However, the whiteness of the scene is evidence of both these larger societal injustices and the effects of jazz becoming more closely tied to the sanctioned institutions of civic life, particularly public education, that at best mirror larger inequalities and at worst deepen them. As Ingrid Monson argues, the structures of society are always slower to change than the efforts of locals within society, and we should expect no different of the jazz world (Monson 2009). Important efforts are being made by non-profits and individual activists to provide equitable access to music education in the Twin Cities. However, for whatever gain there might be for creative freedom that results from greater institutional support, caution is necessary to ensure that institutions do not render the music economically and educationally inaccessible to the working-class Black communities with which it has historically been associated.

Conclusion

Most musicians admit that it is difficult to make a living playing jazz. If they do succeed at making a career out of it, local musicians are not living an extravagant

lifestyle. However, whether they make it their primary career or not, many local musicians dedicate the kind of time and energy to jazz that would be required of a full-time job. What keeps these musicians going, dedicating themselves to an art form that will rarely reap financial benefit, or even much local notoriety outside of their relatively small jazz community?

To this point, we have already seen musicians like Steve Kenny and Mac Santiago profess their deep love for jazz as an art form, one which they view not as a set of stylistic markers but as an ethos that facilitates an open-minded approach to improvisation. This mindset—jazz as an art form, not a style—helps musicians stake a legitimacy for jazz that provides the music a greater importance that can not only lead to grant funding, but to a resolve in the face of small crowds and under-acknowledgement. When musicians get to talking about what the music means to them, they often take it a step further than the argument that jazz is an art form. Especially towards the end of several interviews I conducted with local musicians, many began talking about jazz in spiritual terms. For instance, Santiago described why he keeps playing jazz even as he has given up on the idea of being a touring musician:

> The thing that I dig the most about it is the human connection. It's just the sociality of being around people who have a common interest, you know? And then the idea that I can sit down and interact with somebody in sound. Bass player, piano player, and we're all kind of doing this thing that sets up a whole other level and that's something I don't know if I could live without…. It's bigger, it's this spiritual thing. And instrumental music especially. We can all sit there and analyze it and what we did here and let's try to do this here. But once everything starts to flow? And you start to get some of those intuitive connections? It's like my religion. It's the thing that gets me. It's not praying to God or Jesus or Buddha or anything like that. It's the music. It's this thing that takes me to another level. It makes life worth living.

When musicians I interviewed began talking about jazz in spiritual terms, it was often in response to questions about the precariousness of the gigging life of a musician. In this chapter, I have shown how sacralization occurs both as a result of jazz's institutionalization and as strategy for obtaining institutional support. However, sacralization in jazz is not simply a strategy of achieving funding; it is also deeply personal for musicians who have dedicated their lives toward playing a music that they literally hold sacred. For these musicians, it is important for them to keep in mind the deeper meaning playing jazz provides to their lives. One veteran musician I spoke with, drummer Jay Epstein, shared about the time he first heard John Coltrane live in concert as a teenager:

> What the Coltrane Quartet did was absolutely levitational and struck me very deeply. And the majesty and the power and the spiritual strength of what the Trane quartet was doing, it just gave me an epiphany. There are certain moments in time where you go through a very distinct and powerful turning point that you can't resist and that was mine.

Epstein, who was in his early 70s when I talked to him, said that this moment is what "touched" him, causing him to pursue a career in music. Though he admitted there was not much economic reward in committing oneself to music, Epstein said that "if you can find a way to eat your peanut butter sandwich and be happy with it, then, my god, I've had a glorious life playing just a hell of a lot of creative things for over five decades."

Sacralization, then, is an important strategy not just for acquiring institutional support, but to provide musicians with the greater purpose for doing what they do, a purpose which can keep them going when institutions and formations collapse and reform around them. It is no wonder that many speak of jazz in sacred terms; even if the money

dries up, and the audience disappears, that deeper meaning will remain. This becomes especially crucial given the instable stability of the TC jazz scene. That is, there is a prevailing sense among TC jazz scene members that the scene will continue in some form, thanks to the organizing efforts of the scene's most dedicated members, but any particular form of institutional support could disappear at any moment.

This fear became real in December of 2017, when McNally Smith College of Music announced they would be closing permanently. Instructors at McNally were informed that they would not be getting their last paycheck, while students mere semesters away from graduating would have to find alternative education plans with the fear that many of their credits would not transfer.[75] Suddenly, many of the jazz scene's most prominent musicians were without a major source of income. Their students suddenly had their education cut short, with the expectation from lenders that they would still have to pay their loans, and in the case of international students, would soon lose their student visa status. Students lost their health insurance while some also went homeless, with their university provided housing expiring on Christmas Eve (Lindeke 2018). The school's owners, Jack McNally and Doug Smith, attributed the closing to the school's failure to accrue enough funding after starting the process of transitioning to a non-profit in the preceding couple of years, though many local musicians suspected the

[75] Comments from former instructors on Facebook indicated that music performance or theory credits were accepted by nearby institutions like Augsburg College and the University of Minnesota as well as non-local music programs like Berklee. Credits more unique to McNally Smith—such as music business or production—were reported by former students to not have been accepted.

owners of financial mismanagement,[76] or at the very least, irresponsibility in handling the closing.[77] While McNally Smith's financial struggles were well-known, the sudden manner in which the school shut down was still shocking for instructors, students, and the local TC jazz community (Van Berkel 2017; Lindeke 2018).[78]

Despite the harsh circumstances of instructors' sudden unemployment, most if not all teachers still finished out the end of the quarter to proctor students' finals, assign final grades, and help graduating students receive their degrees—even while knowing they likely would not be paid for that labor. Within days, GoFundMe campaigns had been set up for struggling students, particularly international students with unexpected housing and visa costs. Additionally, semi-regular benefit concerts were held at venues like the Black Dog in late December and the early months of 2018 to help instructors receive their due compensation. In that sense, the formations of individual musicians and audience members served to recoup the institutional failings of McNally Smith. This speaks to a larger trend in the TC jazz scene: that often, individual community members' contributions and volunteer efforts are more reliable than institutional support, which comes and goes. On one hand, there is a need for more permanent institutional support,

[76] The school closed citing lack of funds despite having been gifted their downtown building, with a currently assessed value of between $13 and $19 million, for $1, in addition to receiving a $1 million financial backing. The school also did not have to pay property taxes, which were waived by the city of St. Paul, saving them roughly $500,000 a year (Lindeke 2018).

[77] Aside from one un-recorded interview with Minnesota Public Radio (Moylan 2017), McNally and Smith have refused comment on the situation (Lindeke 2018). School President Harry Chalmiers said that the school had not been profitable in two years and "ran out of time" in making the transition to a non-profit (Van Berkel 2017).

[78] A bankruptcy report filed by McNally and Smith indicated that their assets were between $10 and $50 million while their debts were only between $1 million and $10 million (Woltman 2018), raising suspicion that the school was in as dire straits as its owners proclaimed (Lindeke 2018).

which some have argued is necessary even as they acknowledge that Minnesota's grant funding culture for the arts is stronger than most states and remains a net positive for the health of the jazz scene. However, it also shows that though institutions and formations, as the products of individuals with their own motivations, are prone to failure, the holistic network of these institutions, formations, and individuals creates an overall sense of stability for the TC jazz scene. Though the strength of the TC jazz scene relative to the size of the metro area is often attributed to the institutional support the state of Minnesota provides, ultimately, it is the individuals' dedication toward jazz that allows the scene to keep going, show after show and series after series.

Chapter 5: BadBadNotGood and Jazz Blasphemy

At the very end of the last track of BadBadNotGood's first album, 2011's *BBNG,* a jazz-inflected hip-hop beat fades into a conversation between bandmates. One member asks another how he feels about "Giant Steps," referring to John Coltrane's tour de force of harmonic complexity that has become a vehicle for virtuosity at jazz jam sessions. In response, the band's drummer, Alexander Sowinski, angrily exclaims:

> Fuck that shit! Everyone's played it, it's fifty years old, it sounds like crap, write a new song, and stop playing that goddamn song! I don't care if you can fucking modulate it and change the shit up. You can play it in 7, you can play it in 9, it's fucking boring! That's what I think about "Giant Steps."

This profanity-laced rant sums up BadBadNotGood's (BBNG) irreverent feelings toward the jazz tradition—that it is outdated, confining, and irrelevant. The group of three young white men from Toronto burst onto the scene in late 2012 by denouncing their college jazz education experience, proudly calling themselves music school dropouts. Despite the group's disregard for standard jazz practices and figures, which has ostracized them from the jazz press and community, they have become a face of jazz for young music listeners previously unexposed to the genre, thanks to the band's coverage in non-jazz media. BBNG's rise in popularity is emblematic of the current popular imaginary of American jazz in the twenty-first century, wherein the genre is seen to be on life-support, crucially needing an injection of youthful energy.

As BBNG's popularity among general music listeners shows, jazz music has come to be associated among younger audiences more with art-school sophistication and institutional death than for its history of social and political activism. In order to sell

BBNG to non-jazz audiences, numerous tropes of jazz's death are repeated in the non-jazz press, including the sterilization of jazz by the university conservatory, the non-existent popularity of jazz, and the lack of innovation occurring in contemporary jazz. BBNG has also played a role in forwarding this narrative, as they on record counter the sacralization of jazz and its towering figures in ways seen as blasphemous by the jazz community while exploiting popular perceptions of jazz as needing a shot in the arm to revive itself. Despite attacking jazz, BBNG has still managed to primarily associate themselves with the genre label of jazz, fashioning themselves as standouts in a jazz landscape that is otherwise stiff and conservative.

In a popular music environment that does not regularly embrace jazz artists, the number of successful contemporary jazz musicians known to even in-the-know general music fans could be counted on one hand. When such artists do cross over to wider audiences, the manner in which they do so is worthy of examination for what it reveals about the popular imaginary of jazz, or what is considered to be jazz, among a mostly non-jazz audience. In these cases, the elephant in the room of jazz's decline in mainstream popularity is eagerly seized upon by general music publications. Even as these crossover artists are celebrated, they are done so in a way that puts down the rest of the genre and ignores the many musicians that have been making creative and forward-thinking improvised music since jazz's supposed turn to irrelevance in the 1970s.

It would be far too easy to counter narratives of jazz's decline with arguments of jazz's health, to provide endless examples of ground-breaking musicians and ensembles. This has been the temptation that many jazz critics and scholars have succumbed to when

responding to the attention that BBNG has received. To simply provide counterexamples, however, is to ignore how and why these narratives catch on among a broader non-jazz audience. Why is it that any popular coverage of a jazz or jazz-adjacent artist must reinforce notions of jazz's demise? How has the institutionalization of jazz, seemingly necessary to ensure the music's survival, created a perception of jazz as a museum music detached from popular culture? How is jazz as a genre being defined by the non-jazz publications and audiences that hold these perceptions?

This chapter examines the crossover success of BadBadNotGood to show how jazz's institutionalization has informed the reception of jazz in the popular imaginary. First, I provide an overview of BBNG's origin story to show how popular perceptions of jazz's death, particularly at the hands of university institutionalization, have been exploited by the non-jazz media to fashion the group as vanguards in a jazz world otherwise considered to be stuck in the past. Then, I analyze the backlash to BBNG among jazz critics to show how BBNG's blasphemy of institutionalized traditions in jazz caused them to be rejected by the jazz community. I close with a consideration of BBNG's strong reception among non-jazz audiences and media to argue that genre, and its discourse, is defined as much by outsiders to a particular tradition as it is by insiders with more at stake.

Background and Popular Reception of BBNG

BBNG's Origin Story

BadBadNotGood consists of Matthew Tavares on keyboards, Chester Hanson on bass, Alexander Sowinski on drums, and Leland Whitty on reeds and guitar. The four met

as undergraduate jazz studies majors at Humber College in Toronto, Canada. Originally, the group was a trio, with longtime collaborator Whitty officially joining the band to make it a quartet in 2016. The band credits their origin to their shared loved of modern hip-hop, as well as a shared distaste for the conservatory culture of the jazz studies program at Humber College. As the group became more popular, performing at national festivals and collaborating with well-known emcees and singers, they dropped out of Humber College. Nevertheless, their educational background forms the basis of most biographical descriptions in the popular press of the band.

In these press accounts, the band has an origin story that is repeated almost every time the band is newly covered by a music publication. First, the accounts describe how the band met as undergraduates at Humber College. Generally, this story is presented in a backhanded manner, emphasizing the fact the band did not enjoy their music school experience. It is then dramatized with a retelling of the band's experience in their jury performance. As BBNG tells it, the trio originally formed to work on a school assignment for Sowinksi but ended up playing hip-hop covers by Odd Future and Gucci Mane instead of jazz. BBNG then performed a medley of covers, in addition to the jazz standard "Have You Met Miss Jones?", for a jury evaluation and received a barely passing grade of 70 (Coverdale 2012). In interviews, the band seems to relish the fact that their jury performance was apparently so proactive to their professors. The band regularly recounts the fact that they barely passed, and their professors apparently found "no musical value" in their performance. For instance, a profile in *NOW Magazine* describes Sowinski as "giddy with hindsight" as he recalled that "the comments were like, 'I didn't

find anything of musical value in this performance'" (Mistry 2012). *The Guardian* repeats this story, adding "their tutors did not appreciate their contemporary take on the genre" (Cardew 2016). In this origin story, these faceless Humber College jazz professors who saw "no musical value" in BBNG's performance serve as villains in BBNG's journey to success.

However, the villainous no-name professor is quickly proven wrong when the band takes off thanks to a timely endorsement by a popular rapper and thousands of Internet strangers who find their music to contain much musical value. Following their rejection by Humber's jazz faculty, BBNG uploaded a new performance of the medley to YouTube on April 27, 2011.[79] As *Huck Magazine* describes, "The Humber faculty may not have appreciated the cross-pollination between jazz and hip hop, but when Tyler, The Creator tweeted a link to their Odd Future session it went viral" (King 2015). In his tweet a mere day after the video was uploaded, Tyler, the Creator,[80] himself a member of the rap group, Odd Future, which BBNG was covering, wrote "I Love Jazz, This Is Fucking Sick! Dave Brubrek [sic] Trio Swag" (@tylerthecreator 4/28/11). Tyler, the Creator's promotion immediately launched the group into a wider audience of Tyler, the Creator's millions of Twitter followers in addition to hip-hop listeners more generally.[81]

[79] As noted by Ted Warren, despite the band's later denouncement of jazz education, the video was filmed in a practice room at Humber College using school equipment (2012).

[80] The comma in "Tyler, The Creator" is a part of his stage name and not an editorial hiccup.

[81] Though some distinguish between hip-hop as the broader culture and rap as the musical element, I use the terms hip-hop and rap interchangeably to echo how they are generally used interchangeably in fan discourse (online message boards, Twitter conversations) to describe the music.

Finally, the origin story is completed when Tyler, the Creator himself collaborates with the group. On October 23, 2011, BBNG uploaded to their YouTube channel a performance of "Seven" with Tyler, the Creator, filmed in drummer Alex Sowinski's parents' basement. As *Huck Magazine* describes,

> After talking on Twitter, they hooked up for a series of collaborations in Alex's basement. "It didn't feel like a collaboration," Chester explains. "We were just goofing around, you know what I mean?" The videos put Badbadnotgood squarely on the map and the experience left Tyler buzzing: "I've never had a jam session in my life. Oh my god, that was the coolest shit ever… that was cool as shit. […] Fuck yeah, I'm having a moment!" (King 2015)

This experience is offered as the ultimate validation of the group despite their initial rejection by jazz school faculty. Though they may have "almost failed" their jury, just a few months later they were collaborating with one of their influences after having earned his respect through the magical channels of the Internet. As Tavares describes in *Huck Magazine,*

> We just got a tweet and it all happened. The collaborations with Tyler, The Creator or Frank Ocean weren't really planned. It wasn't like, 'Oh, we want to fuse hip hop and jazz in this crazy way', it just kind of happened. Via coincidence and Twitter we met all these crazy people." (Huck 2015)

Since going viral, BBNG has received consistent and favorable coverage from non-jazz publications such as *Rolling Stone, Vice,* and *Pitchfork* for their album releases while also continuing to build their network of collaborators. In October 2011, following the attention they received from their self-produced YouTube videos, BBNG released for free on the music streaming site Bandcamp a self-titled album (*BBNG,* also called *BBNG1*). Much like their initial jury performance, this album consists mostly of covers of hip-hop beats used by artists such as Nas, Ol Dirty Bastard, Gang Starr, and Slum

Village. The album also contains a few original compositions as well as a medley from *The Legend of Zelda* video game series. As it was offered for free download online, *BBNG* essentially functioned as a mixtape would in hip-hop culture—for promotion more than a source of revenue.[82] On April 3, 2012, BBNG released their second free album, *BBNG2*. Similarly, the album is a mix of original compositions and covers of other artists, this time including covers of tracks by non-rap artists such as My Bloody Valentine, Feist, and James Blake in addition to the jazz covers of hip-hop that the group had become known for—including songs by Kanye West, Tyler, the Creator, and Earl Sweatshirt (also of Odd Future). The band has since gone on to release two additional albums, *III* and *IV*, which contain only original compositions, in addition to one collaborative album with Ghostface Killah,[83] 2015's *Sour Soul.* On record and on stage, their collaborations have included veteran emcees Pharoahe Monch, Talib Kweli, Kool G Rap, and MF DOOM in addition to trendy non-rap artists such as Future Islands, Kaytranada, Kali Uchis, and Frank Ocean. In retellings of BBNG's origin story, the band's many collaborations with respected artists is offered as further proof of the band's success in spite of their initial rejection by jazz faculty.

It is easy to see why this origin story has become common fodder for music journalists to seize upon when writing about BBNG. For one, it is admittedly a

[82] Though as I observed in the Twin Cities jazz scene, this is how many jazz musicians feel about their CDs as well. Even if there is money charged for them (usually $10 to $15), the revenue earned through CDs would not usually be enough to make a profit after accounting for studio time, production, promotion, etc. Some musicians occasionally gave out these CDs for free, with one saying he would give them out whenever someone expressed curiosity about his band. He viewed his CDs as "expensive business cards."

[83] Ghostface Killah is a member of the Wu-Tang Clan, among the best-known rap groups of the 1990s.

compelling story: three college students who, literally overnight (or over a retweet), went from nobodies to the next big thing. The story also has a strong sense of narrative, complete with the underdog component audiences love. In addition to making for a good story, however, BBNG's origin story strikes a chord because of the ways it confirms certain assumptions in the popular imaginary about jazz: namely, that it has ceased innovating, that it is in need of fresh blood, and that its death lies in the hands of jazz education institutions.

Failures of Jazz Education

BBNG's sentiments about jazz education, though presented as groundbreaking by general music publications, are not unique at all. Rather, this type of criticism, of jazz degree programs being stuck in one era of jazz, is one that has commonly appeared in discourse on jazz education (Ake 2002; Nicholson 2005; Wilf 2014). Though BBNG's pent-up frustration expressed in interviews exposed these criticisms to new audiences, the manner in which they brought these issues to light in the mainstream media was cause for backlash in the jazz community, as will be discussed shortly.

BBNG's primary gripe with their jazz education, as expressed in interviews, is its overemphasis on past jazz styles and technical ability at the expense of more relevant popular music. For instance, Sowinski notes that the group respects their teachers and considers them to be great musicians. However, the group views the type of jazz that dominates in programs such as Humber to be stuck in the 1960s. To them, that type of jazz is not relevant to today's society— "it's not the right time and place for that music now." As Hanson says, jazz education is "like a 1960's jazz degree." Tavares acknowledges jazz's usefulness as a tool but feels that proving your technique is "kind of

irrelevant now." As he puts it, "no one really cares how well you can play your instrument. That's dead" (Marrack 2011). In another account, the band mocks one professor's dismissal of their ability, which they feel is invalidated by the professor's use of a 6-string electric bass

> There's this bass player who taught at our old school who didn't say anything to our face, but after we dropped out he posted on facebook that we "Sucksucksthissucks". Which is funny because our name is already BADBADNOTGOOD, and even more funny because he plays a 6 string electric bass.[84] (De Fretes 2013)

Here, BBNG takes aim at what they view as musical excess in jazz, represented by the two extra strings rather than the more common four-string bass. The group elaborates on how they felt their education failed to prepare them for the working world in another interview:

> "You spend four precious years doing whatever you want because you're in school, just practising your scales, when you should be practising what to do after," Tavares opines.
>
> "Most graduates are super-, super-good at playing traditional jazz," adds Hansen. "[We're] trying to bring that to a band and a creative basis instead of individual technical ability." (Mistry 2012)

Here, BBNG repeats their lack of fondness for technical ability while also making clear their priority to think about "what to do after" school, a practical skill they believe to be missing from jazz education. Additionally, both BBNG and write-ups of the band present the jazz faculty at Humber as out of touch with contemporary music. In an interview with *Now Magazine*, the keyboardist Tavares disapprovingly recalls how at jazz school, "no

[84] The band later takes additional shots at this faculty member's 6-string bass, responding to a question asking what they would buy first with a million dollars: "We would probably buy all of the 6-string electric basses in the world so we can break them or convert them back to four string basses" (De Fretes 2013).

one knows what Pitchfork media is," but "people know Downbeat Magazine, and they know what, like, John Coltrane's solo on Giant Steps (Alternate Take) sounds like" (Mistry 2012). To him, jazz professors are more concerned with the minutiae of jazz's golden era than they are with what is relevant in contemporary music.

Some jazz critics responding to BBNG acknowledged that their gripes with their education, though delivered in an aggressive manner, have some merits, particularly as they relate to modern jazz styles. For instance, David Ryshpan writes, "a lot of the profs are ill-equipped to talk about the post-Dilla rhythmic and harmonic language" (Ryshpan 2012). This refers to the late hip-hop producer J Dilla (formerly Jay Dee), whose production credits include work with A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, Common, and others. Robert Glasper, BBNG's prime point of comparison regarding hip-hop/jazz fusion, toured for a time with J Dilla. Glasper is also partially responsible for popularizing in jazz that "post-Dilla rhythmic and harmonic language" (Ryshpan 2012), which in its roughest definition consists of an unquantized or "wonky, slightly drunken-sounding funk beat" (Lewis 2016) and sample-based loops, often incorporating electric pianos and deep bass.[85] Though BBNG does not borrow as heavily from J Dilla's rhythmic language as do Glasper and other modern jazz musicians, their cover of Slum Village's "Fall in Love," a J Dilla production, as well as their performance at a J Dilla tribute concert show their indebtedness to J Dilla's influence. If a band like BBNG has such a strong interest in a musician often cited as contributing new rhythmic language to

[85] For an explanation of what are also termed "slugging" beats, see Buckner 2012.

hip-hop and jazz (Russonello 2013), it is not surprising they would grow frustrated with a jazz education that does not acknowledge the impact of an innovator like J Dilla.

Though these criticisms of jazz education are often warranted, in non-jazz write-ups of BBNG they are often extended to make broader generalizations about jazz's contemporary state, as seen in this excerpt from *NOW Magazine*:

> Jazz, a mutable music born out of black resistance, made psychedelic intrusions into the dominance of Western classical modalities, rhythms and sensibilities, but it's ossified over time. Schools churn out prodigies with genius skills and predictable reflexes. (Mistry 2012)

The notion that jazz has become "ossified over time" is presented here as fact. The "predictable reflexes" that university educated jazz musicians apparently possess is implied to be a product of such pedagogical strategies as Charlie Parker transcriptions when Sowinski is quoted as saying that learning the *Charlie Parker Omnibook* is "bullshit" because it leads to everyone playing "what Parker plays." This fear is by no means new—Charles Mingus famously named one of his compositions "If Charlie Parker Were a Gunslinger, There'd be a Whole Lot of Dead Copycats." Additionally, before jazz became institutionalized within the university, musicians regularly learned how to play by transcribing solos from record (Berliner 1994). Such methods of learning jazz are retaught in the university, but by no means originated there. However, in this account, the conservatory is presented as the culprit for jazz's ossification, with the focus on transcriptions offered as evidence.

For some non-jazz writers, the fact that the band was rejected by traditional jazz education, with its focus on old jazz standards, is in and of itself evidence that the band is doing something new. Aaron Matthews writes for *Exclaim!*

> To get here requires attitude and gumption. This moment — this seemingly instant burst of success into the world of hip-hop production — was prompted by an utter rejection of jazz education by a trio of keeners who'd pursued that very field, and in whose rejection one finds the spirit of jazz anew. (Matthews 2014)

For these critics of jazz education, part of the fault lies in the focus of jazz programs on a repertoire of jazz standards that are seen as outdated and confining. For instance, when BBNG explained how they formed, the band recounted how they "weren't too stoked" about playing old jazz standards such as "There Will Never Be Another You," choosing instead to perform a medley of rap covers, including Odd Future's "AssMilk" and Gucci Mane's "Lemonade" (De Fretes 2013). Here the rap covers BBNG performed, representing newness and vitality, are directly contrasted with the typical jazz standard, which represents an old-hat and dying tradition. In several write-ups of the band, the typical jazz standard is often presented as a foil against which BBNG operates by covering rap songs, defying expectations of a jazz band in the process. For instance, Kara-Lis Coverdale writes in her intro of the band for *Vice* that she wonders "why more jazz musicians don't cover ODB's 'Brooklyn Zoo' instead of bringing up that 'Stella by Starlight' melody over and over again" (Coverdale 2012). Here, "Stella By Starlight" is the given cliché jazz standard that one ought to never have to hear again; in another account it is "Autumn Leaves" (Matthews 2014). In either case, BBNG's jazz covers of rap beats are presented as the antidote for the crippling banality that is the standard jazz repertoire—Coverdale also writes that BBNG has done an "admirable job of kicking the jazz world's ass back into relevancy" (Coverdale 2012). The persistence of this out-of-

touch repertoire is seen as the fault of jazz university programs, which are presented as desperately needing to get with the times or lose future stars like BBNG.[86]

BBNG's opposition to jazz education as told in the popular media not only acts as a supposed indictment against the jazz education system, it apparently serves as proof of a recurring trope about jazz: that jazz is dead. In chapter 2, I discussed Nicholas Payton's proclamation of the death of jazz, which he linked to the removal of "the J-word" from other forms of Black popular music (Payton 2011a). Criticism of jazz education occurred among others participating in the ensuing conversation, but it was not Payton's central thesis. Here, it is front and center. Jazz is not simply dead because it is not as popular, or because there is less innovation occurring than in jazz's stated glory years of the 1960s—though these things are also held to be self-evident by the non-jazz press. Rather, a major reason for jazz's demise is seen to be the jazz education apparatus itself, as indicated in the framing and emphasis of these non-jazz media accounts of BBNG's success. To the non-jazz media, BBNG is evidence of the exception to the rule that "jazz is dead." To them, BBNG became successful not through their education, but by defying the norms of their jury requirements and then dropping out of school altogether.

Jazz Blows, Except for BBNG: Popular Reception of BBNG

Though BBNG has been well-received by non-jazz publications, praise of the group has often come as a backhanded compliment that denigrates jazz as a whole.

[86] This perception of jazz as being sterilized in the university was epitomized in 2015 film *Whiplash*'s setting within a fictional arts university modeled after jazz programs like those at Julliard, the New School, Berklee, and so forth. Though BBNG's emergence predates *Whiplash*, the conversation around jazz in the university has been occurring for decades. Jazz is seen in the film as operating almost solely within institutional walls, unconnected to musical and social life outside the ivory tower. Students spend their time memorizing charts and honing their ability to play fast tempos, not taught how to improvise. This perception of university jazz shown in *Whiplash* is a common trope in the popular imaginary of jazz.

Whether recounting BBNG's origin story or simply reviewing an album or live performance of the group, many of these non-jazz outlets make assertions of how BBNG is cutting edge in ways jazz normally is not. These statements range from cynical but fair criticisms of jazz's decline to outright proclamations of jazz's worthlessness. For instance, a 2012 article for *Vice* opened with the following:

> The number of times an article has been written on jazz at VICE is probably three because jazz blows. Sure there's the odd artist from decades ago that people actually still get excited about, like Miles Davis or Nina Simone or whoever. But let's face it. All of those guys are long dead and it's well past due time for some new blood up in this bitch. (Coverdale 2012)

While most non-jazz coverage of BBNG does not go so far as to say that "jazz blows," the underlying sentiment—that the old icons of jazz are long dead and new blood is needed—occurs in many of these accounts. Jazz is characterized as a music for those who are out of touch, with familiar stereotypes of cocktail lounges and mindless regurgitation of an old tradition recurring in coverage of the band.

These tropes of jazz as a lounge music for older people especially persist in accounts of BBNG's live performance. For instance, Aaron Matthews writes for *Exclaim!:*

> Coming to the stage are three young men in T-shirts and jeans, no different from nearly any other band in nearly any other venue. Crushed up against the stage are a packed crowd of artfully dishevelled teens and 20-somethings, with a smattering of aging hipsters sprinkled in. But on stage are the tools not of a DJ performance or a punk band, but the bass, drums and keyboards many would associate with a performance in a hotel lounge. (Matthews 2014)

Here, the band's youthful appearance is contrasted with the expectations set by the jazz format. The combination of bass, drums, and keyboards calls to mind hotel lounges, not a

gathering of hip young people. Matthews later continues, “Four-bar loops are extended by improvisation, but this is no paint-by-chord-changes cocktail jazz take on a rap song — instead, the performance takes off, fuelled by the crowd's voracious enthusiasm, lighting the room on fire” (Matthews 2014). Matthews also writes that BBNG’s live show is “likely the first time in a half-dozen decades that a jazz trio has inspired this kind of reaction,” referring to enthusiastic reception by young people at a jazz concert. Again, the band’s performance is contrasted with expectations people have for jazz—that it “paints by the numbers,” simply going through the motions of performing outdated standards. Another review contains the following:

> Then, at about 40 seconds in, Matty Tavares, the keyboardist, slides in with a forceful melody that assures the listener this isn’t your traditional jazz show and it’s more than okay to jump around once in a while. For some fans, that powerful, dynamic energy can be a surprise. It’s not every day that a three-piece, instrumental jazz group encourages its crowd to “turn the fuck up.” (Schonfeld 2014)

Recounting a moment of excitement in the performance, Schonfeld later writes, “Some call it a mosh pit, but this is jazz music, it’s got to be classier than a mosh pit, right?” (2014).

These accounts position BBNG as the lone innovator in a dying and conservative-minded genre, as the exception to the rule for a genre that is otherwise boring and irrelevant. For instance, A 2016 article for *The Guardian* titled “BadBadNotGood: making jazz hip (hop) again” opens with the line “BadBadNotGood aren’t your typical jazz dudes” before continuing to explain all the ways BBNG is a rare example of “jazz that’s not afraid to loosen its tie and look a bit silly” (Cardew 2016). Writing for *Exclaim!* upon BBNG’s breakout in 2011, David Dacks claims:

> Badbadnotgood are 2011's gateway drug into deeper states of consciousness. By sticking largely to modern standards — contemporary hip-hop plus the odd relevant classic — the band have gone beyond every other nu-school jazz funk power trio since Medeski Martin and Wood opened a new chapter in the form some 20 years ago. Bet on this: a trio of young, pig-mask-wearing jazz students giving away their music and focusing on videos will blaze a trail for others to follow. (Dacks 2011)

While some aspects of BBNG's approach can be acknowledged as being innovative within jazz, particularly the group's approaches to promotion and collaboration with emcees, to say that BBNG has "gone beyond every other nu-school jazz funk power trio" in the last 20 years ignores several decades of noteworthy hip-hop/jazz fusion projects, especially those by Black artists, a point made by several jazz critics and which will be discussed shortly. And while I do not mean to assert that praise of BBNG is inherently misguided, I do think the non-jazz media has displayed obvious biases against jazz. These biases can be attributed to the fact that many general music publications have not covered jazz almost entirely, with relatively few exceptions, for many years. For this reason, BBNG became some non-jazz publications' token "jazz group" to speak for all of the genre—despite the band having never gained approval by the jazz community.

Jazz Community Reception of BBNG

Initially, BBNG's rise in popularity following Tyler, The Creator's endorsement and their first Bandcamp release seemed to go unnoticed by the jazz community of critics, musicians, and serious jazz fans. By the time of their second free album release in April of 2012, BBNG's reputation among popular media outlets had grown even further, as evidenced by the increase in press coverage devoted to them. Still, the jazz community and press did not seem to take notice until an interview in April of 2012 with *NOW*

Magazine, where BBNG made several comments which angered the jazz mediasphere (Mistry 2012). Though BBNG had given other interviews prior to this one, the others did not go as far in criticizing the jazz establishment as BBNG would with *NOW*. To make matters worse, *NOW* ran the story with the headline "Toronto jazz futurists rewrite the rule book," positioning the group as vanguards in a jazz climate beholden to stiff and conservative standards of musicality. What's more, the band's continued success despite their disregard for a normative path of development in jazz caused jazz critic gatekeepers to criticize the band's musical ability and reject the band as not belonging to jazz at all. BBNG's growing clout in the popular press combined with their criticisms of valued components of the jazz tradition resulted in a backlash among jazz press from which the band still has not redeemed themselves, despite their attempts to apologize. Though BBNG's mainstream popularity has only continued to grow, they remain without the approval of the jazz community.

Though many of BBNG's comments to interviewer Anupa Mistry of *NOW* were picked apart by jazz critics, particularly their sentiments about their educational experience at Humber, what received the most ire was their thoughts on a jazz-rap fusionist they are often compared to: Robert Glasper. Tavares is quoted as saying "Fuck Robert Glasper," which Mistry writes that he says "half-seriously." Though Mistry does note that Glasper was an "early inspiration" for BBNG, the rest of the interview portion that relates to Glasper is the band dismissing his musical contributions. In addition to accusing Glasper of having an approach to hip-hop that is stuck in the '90s, BBNG expresses distaste toward Glasper's then recent album *Black Radio,* which consists of

jazz, R&B, and hip-hop fusion and a mix of originals and covers. As BBNG discusses, this includes Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit," in which the melody is sung through a vocoder by The Robert Glasper Experiment's saxophonist Casey Benjamin. In Hansen's crude description, the cover does not "have any balls."

Despite BBNG's rejection of Glasper here, there are many similarities between the two, both with regards to their musical approach and their philosophies on jazz education. BBNG attempts to make jazz relevant by turning covers of hip-hop and other forms of popular music into the new jazz standard. Glasper has professed similar desires, talking at length in an interview with *Nextbop* about the drawback of focusing too much on history and the rote learning of standards, saying "Standards ain't nothing but songs that other people wrote, so write your own songs! That's how they became who they are. That's how you get your sound, through compositions" (Wertheim 2012). Like BBNG, Glasper also lays some of the blame on jazz education, saying "I don't think they stress composition enough in schools. I think they stress learning standards too much. I think schools are making jazz a museum" (Wertheim 2012). This is nearly the exact sentiment BBNG expresses in their rant about "Giant Steps." So despite the media's positioning of BBNG as lone rebels, the sentiments they express about the over-standardization of jazz and the pitfalls of university education are regular debates within the jazz community. However, there is one key difference between BBNG and Glasper's expressed sentiments. Where Glasper offers his thoughts on the state of jazz without attacking anyone in particular, BBNG curses out their educators and their contemporaries, including in this case a musician who would appear to agree with their stance on jazz.

BBNG accuses Glasper of not having an open mind, but then in the next breath they denounce Glasper's experimentation because it lacks "balls." Worst of all, they do not just dismiss Glasper's music, but attack the musician himself when they "half-seriously" say "fuck Robert Glasper" (Mistry 2012).

Blasphemization of Jazz

BBNG's cursing of Glasper and "Giant Steps" can be read as a strategy, though likely more subconscious than intentional, for the band to position themselves in relation to jazz history and discourse, particularly relating to jazz's current status following decades of institutionalization. Though the simplest explanation for BBNG's outbursts is that they were simply three young white men with a lot of opinions, the effects of their words, in addition to causing offense to many in the jazz community, can be interpreted as a *blasphemization* of the jazz tradition. That is, BBNG blasphemes figures and practices in jazz that have come to be held as sacred within the jazz community as a way to assert a new populist, anti-elitist direction for jazz. BBNG does not engage in considered dialogue about some of their points of concern—the showiness inherent in playing "Giant Steps" in different time signatures and keys, the overemphasis on learning jazz standards—but rather makes their opinions known in an aggressive and exaggerated manner. Their criticism is much more dramatic in the way it acts as an attempted corrective to the effects of jazz's sacralization via institutionalization.

I use the term blasphemization as a direct corollary to Lawrence Levine's term sacralization (Levine 1988). As discussed in chapter 4, the movement of jazz from low to high art can be considered as a form of sacralization comparable to Western classical music. Writing about Western art music around the turn of the twentieth century, Levine

describes the process of sacralization as an emerging differentiation between low and high culture. In Western concert music, especially opera, this occurred via the establishment of norms of behavior in the concert hall and of a standardized repertoire as a way to preserve Western art music as a practice of the elites. As Western classical music became sacralized, it also had the effect of separating the amateur and the casual listener from the professional and trained appreciator. With jazz, sacralization has occurred via similar processes—the establishment of a canon of great artists, the separation of outsider from insider—though the motives for this process of sacralization have been different. For jazz, a tradition was viewed by musicians and critics as being in danger of being lost to a marketplace that was passing it by in favor of rock and pop (Prouty 2013). Jazz's survival thus depended on its establishment as a high art form, especially as a uniquely American achievement. To do so necessitated following the norms of Western art music and similar processes of sacralization. This included viewing the cultural form of jazz as a tradition that must be treated with respect and not as mere entertainment (Levine 1988, 146).[87]

The case of BBNG and their blasphemization of jazz is both a result and a contestation of the sacralization of jazz. BBNG is a result of sacralization in the way that their training began in a university music program. BBNG's initial exposure to jazz was as a high art form, not as "mere entertainment." Additionally, BBNG often treats jazz as

[87] This is not to say that any attempt to view jazz artists as sacred is following this formalizing process (the Church of John Coltrane comes to mind). Rather, sacralization in jazz in the manner I am referring to serves the purpose of earning institutional backing.

abstracted art in a way that follows the sacralization of classical music. However, BBNG contests jazz's sacralization by attempting to bring jazz closer to outsiders, to those that do not normally listen to jazz, in a way that bridges the amateur-professional divide that sacralization has entrenched. In their cursing of the high marks of the genre (i.e., "Giant Steps" and Charlie Parker solos) and in their willingness to not take the aesthetic standards of jazz seriously but rather to use them as punching bags, BBNG's blasphemization of jazz is an attempt to reverse the process of sacralization through which they originally encountered jazz as a way to remove the associations of inaccessibility and elitism that jazz has acquired by becoming institutionalized.

However, this is not to say that BBNG's endeavor, even if one assumes that their efforts are intended as I have read them, are without consequences. As mentioned, jazz's sacralization resulted from legitimate dangers of jazz's cultural history being lost and has had the positive effect of increasing jazz's cultural capital in a way that has not occurred for other African American genres. As Gregory Thomas has written, the canonization and institutionalization of jazz by Jazz at Lincoln Center resulted partially from an effort to wrestle "definitional control" of jazz from white critics and toward influential Black artists (Thomas 2002, 289). When BBNG blasphemes jazz, they may succeed in questioning the elitist status jazz now occupies and the norms that come with that, but in the process, they risk forgetting why jazz needed sacralization in the first place. Additionally, the way BBNG has built their own sound off the backs of other Black artists, such as Robert Glasper, and then, once they found success, turned around and

dismissed those same artists, echoes a long history of cultural appropriation in American popular music, as Alex Rodriguez (2012) has noted.

In other words, by attacking Glasper and "Giant Steps," BBNG denigrates Black musical values and cultural history. The band might see their statements as judgement on the music discussed and not the culture behind it, but that is exactly the point: BBNG sees "Giant Steps" and *Black Radio* only as autonomous musical material. Like many white musicians who have studied jazz through institutionalized forms of education, they have the luxury of viewing jazz only in abstract terms. To them, jazz is not viewed as a historically Black music that has been appropriated or that is in danger of losing its attachment to anti-racist activism. In mocking Glasper's affinity for '90s hip-hop,[88] BBNG does not seem to recognize the symbolism behind Glasper's attempts to connect modern jazz with other forms of Black musical achievement. As Glasper has expressed in interviews (Trammell 2013; Nakiska 2013), *Black Radio* represents an attempt to unite various forms of popular music with Black roots under one roof (an effort also initiated by Nicholas Payton, as discussed in chapter 2). By calling Glasper's attempts "fucking horrible," BBNG dismisses those for whom such a merging of various forms of Black music has personal meaning. Similarly, in ranting about "Giant Steps," BBNG disrespects a crowning achievement of a Black musical form. Though Coltrane himself designed "Giant Steps" as an abstract musical exercise (after the initial recording session,

[88] BBNG's criticism of Glasper as being stuck in the '90s is also an oversimplification—Glasper is credited with introducing the in vogue modern hip-hop grooves of J Dilla, whose creative peak occurred in the early 2000s, into jazz. Glasper has also elsewhere expressed a fondness for Lil Wayne (Regen 2016), despite BBNG claiming Glasper dislikes Lil Wayne.

he never played it again), the composition nonetheless introduced a new harmonic device into jazz theory.[89] Though BBNG was criticizing the motivation behind calling "Giant Steps" at a jam session—that is, to show off one's technical ability—and not Coltrane himself, by doing so in a reckless fashion, they caught Coltrane and Black musical achievement more broadly in the crossfire.[90]

The blasphemization of jazz, as seen through BBNG, does not simply reverse sacralization, but rather, it builds new meanings of jazz onto preexisting ones that have occurred following decades of institutionalization and its ensuing sacralization. In his study of the use of jazz in marketing campaigns, Mark Laver (2015) discusses what he calls "tropes of meaning" that have been attached to jazz. In Laver's case studies, these tropes of meaning have been affixed not by jazz artists or critics, but by advertisers. With BBNG, the tropes of meaning that accompany press coverage of the band are also created by those outside of the jazz community, but as with influential marketing campaigns, they firmly attach themselves to the popular imaginary of jazz. BBNG's blasphemization of jazz, then, attaches new tropes of meaning for jazz that include jazz's uncoolness, its irrelevance, and its death at the hands of institutions, tropes which first emerged as byproducts of sacralization in the first place. These tropes of meaning may not always be

[89] The device, which consists of rapid modulations to parallel key centers a major third apart, became known as "Coltrane changes" and has become subsumed into the harmonic vocabulary of many modern jazz players.

[90] While it would be tempting to view BBNG's bold denunciation of "Giant Steps" and Glasper as a clever marketing strategy (with the idea that all press is good press), it seems more likely they were simply speaking off the cuff without awareness of how their words might reverberate around the jazz community. For one, the band was in the earlier stages of their career and thus more inexperienced with the media. Second, the band later apologized for their statements, as will be discussed later.

flattering, or even grounded in informed knowledge of jazz communities or practices, but they exist nonetheless, and in the case of media coverage of BBNG, carry a lot of weight with the general public. However, though these tropes are commonly accepted as fact in much press coverage of the band, they are also ripe for being contested by those with more dedicated investment in jazz culture and discourse.

Jazz Critical Response

About a week after the interview with *NOW* was published, the jazz community caught wind of BBNG's derisive statements about jazz. The ensuing conversation touched on several themes that have recurred in discourse on jazz in the 2010s: the racial status of jazz, the genre label of "jazz," disrespect for tradition, and perceptions of jazz education.

The initial response was from Peter Hum writing at *Ottawa Citizen* (2012), titled "In response to some disrespectful hip-hop-jazzers and Now magazine." Hum takes exception to BBNG's suggestion that jazz education encourages studying John Coltrane and Charlie Parker in order to clone them, as well as to Mistry's claim that jazz has become "ossified." After naming several artists who he believes to be more innovative than BBNG, Hum extensively criticizes BBNG's instrumental technique:

> The meant-to-be-swinging stuff — the jazz stuff? — that follows does not feel great to me, and the flurry of notes from Tavares once again feels too much like noodling. The "chill" passage beginning with the arco bass is promising, but in place of melodic development, we get images of BBNG's apparent mascot. Drummer Sowinski's efforts that follow are the clip's high point — but I don't think Chris Dave or Mark Giuliani need to be looking over their shoulders just yet for the pig-headed competition.

> Unfortunately, Tavares begins to solo again, and the music dips.[91] (Hum 2012)

Hum concludes by writing that BBNG should not be "so dismissive of jazz and of the people who are more committed to that form of music that you were at one point interested in and purported to play." Hum also suggests that BBNG should "drop all pretense of involving jazz in a meaningful way in what they do, and apologize to people who appreciate what jazz is and know what the artistic path entails" (Hum 2012).

After Hum's post hit the jazz blogosphere, subsequent posts and comments by writers and musicians in the jazz community then thoroughly tore the group to shreds, denouncing the trio's arrogance as well as their musical ability (Rodriguez 2012; Ryshpan 2012; Warren 2012; Dean-Harris 2012a). For instance, Alex Rodriguez points out the racist undertones of an all-white trio denigrating an African American jazz tradition and dismissing the value of studying Coltrane and Parker. Rodriguez also acknowledges the mainstream press's complicity in elevating BBNG's profile while steadily ignoring contemporary Black jazz musicians who have been making jazz covers of hip-hop tracks for years while remaining respectful of the jazz tradition in which they were trained (2012). Writing about the band's desire to bring moshing to jazz, Rodriguez offers a comparison to white jazz bandleader Paul Whiteman's wish to "make a lady out

[91] About a month and a half after Hum's article, BBNG tweeted "really wish @peterhum would have come to the show we had those forms internalized, swang too hard and sounded like a metronome you feel me" (@badbadnotgood 6/2/12). The tweet was not in response to anything Hum had tweeted, but rather seems to simply be the band trolling Hum for his focus on technique in his criticism of BBNG. BBNG's suggestion that internalizing the form and swinging "too hard" would make them sound like a metronome underlies their broader belief that technique can lead to sterile sounding music. BBNG also tweeted randomly to Hum in the rest of 2012, including tweets "these beats sound amazing fuckk" (@badbadnotgood 5/22/12), "how do you feel about good production, artwork and website design in music?" (@badbadnotgood 6/13/12), and "taylor swift is heavy bruh" (@badbadnotgood 6/9/12).

of jazz," writing that BBNG instead "seem intent on pimping out the tradition instead, dragging her back into the gutter along with their misogynistic hip-hop champions Odd Future" (Rodriguez 2012).[92]

The jazz response to BBNG especially focused on the groups' lacking technical and creative ability. For instance, even as he defends the group, Brownman Ali admits "So do I like BBNG musically? Not really. Not today. Not yet" (Ali 2012). On his personal blog, Ted Warren comments, "They sound okay, but innovative? Hardly. Just because you've covered some current material? That puts them squarely in a tradition that's gone on since musicians were trying to get gigs!" (Warren 2012). On a 2013 4chan post addressing the backlash to BBNG, one comment reads,

> I never "got" BBNG. They're mediocre jazz musicians covering hip-hop beats…. They're jazz-school drop-outs and they sound like jazz-school drop-outs. They're sloppy. And arrogant. And that's the worst. (Anonymous 7/2/13 No. 37831116)

David Ryshpan, commenting on when he had seen BBNG live, provides a more specific criticism. He had felt the band had inappropriately gone into "double-time rock freakout" mode during a groove-based cover that was ill-suited to that strategy, an example of "pulling out your musical tricks because you can" (Ryshpan 2012). Though Ryshpan acknowledges that many in the crowd enjoyed this feat, he adds that "their set proved that they're a bit of a one-trick pony (or maybe a hog?) musically" (Ryshpan 2012).

[92] Rodriguez communicated to me that his post, particularly the metaphor used here, was written in an intentionally polemic style as a response to what he felt were weak and at times irresponsible defenses of BBNG by some jazz critics and commenters.

Following the attention the *NOW* interview received, educators at Humber College rebutted BBNG's characterization of their jazz education experience. Ted Quinlan, head of the guitar department at Humber, writes in response to *NOW:*

> Humber has long prided itself as having a 'real world' approach to music education. A quick glance at the faculty roster will reveal a list of many of the top working professional jazz musicians in Canada…these are not people who have a strictly academic interest in jazz. (Hum 2012)

Quinlan emphasizes Humber's encouragement of a diverse set of stylistic voices, writing that the notion "that the school is only interested in churning out a generation of bebop clones is ludicrous." Brian Dickinson, head of the keyboard department, echoes these remarks, writing that "First of all, the Humber College Music program is not what could be called a 'traditional jazz school.' There is World Music, Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, pop, funk, bluegrass, African…and the list goes on" (Hum 2012). Ted Warren, also an educator at Humber, empathizes with the group's frustrations, but writes that "cutting down people teaching at the schools just isn't smart. Those same teachers are active professionals that can help a lot if you treat them with respect" (Warren 2012). Warren also points out that the narrative seized upon by *NOW* is a commonly used one, writing "This is the sort of stuff journalists at independent weeklies love. 'Young lions inject the staid conservative Jazz scene with new life, blah, blah, blah.' Every year or so it comes along like clockwork" (Warren 2012).

Defenders of BBNG argued that they were simply young musicians running their mouth to a publication willing to exploit their outspokenness—a point even the group's detractors conceded. For example, Brownman Ali, a professional jazz trumpet player based in Toronto, posted on Facebook on March 31, 2012 to defend the band. Ali

suggests that *NOW Magazine*, which he calls "fundamentally inflammatory and sensationalistic," is to blame for taking advantage of BBNG (2012). Ali repeatedly emphasizes that BBNG is made up of kids who, partly due to their opinionated nature, have the potential to develop into innovative musicians. Ali also provides his own experience with *NOW*, saying "I was on a NOW cover once, and they printed a fraction of what I said in the 2 hour interview and I came off sounding like an arrogant prick (more than usual I mean)" (Ali 2012). Indeed, BBNG later tweeted to Anthony Dean-Harris that the comments about Glasper "came from a long discussion about his new album" and thus were likely taken out of context.

In his post, Brownman Ali also accuses those who put down the group of jealousy, saying "Let the lil motherfuckers make their music, and quit being so friggin' upset that THEY got the cover of NOW (and not you)" (2012). Though it is impossible to know the motivations of BBNG's detractors, there is something to be said for the fact that BBNG was able to succeed despite the group not being approved by the jazz community. Instead, BBNG's primary endorsers were the popular and controversial younger rapper Tyler, the Creator of the group Odd Future; the UK radio personality and tastemaker Gilles Peterson, most associated with electronic, pop, and World music; and the non-jazz media, which many jazz critic responding to the *NOW* article accused of not knowing much about jazz.[93] As such, BBNG was able to cross over into the mainstream without

[93] For instance, Hum (2012) writes that it was Peterson's assertion that BBNG was mind-blowing that blew Hum's mind, not BBNG's music. Hum also writes regarding the *NOW* profile writer, "Mistry's either really, really eager to jump on the BBNG bandwagon and put them on the pedestal reserved for innovators, regardless of the facts, or she's just clued out" (2012).

having been vetted by the jazz community according to their ability to play "Giant Steps" in all keys and odd meters—an exaggerated standard of measurement, but one that is not that far off the mark.[94] BBNG may have unfairly positioned the jazz community and jazz education as exclusively conservative; it is not that the jazz community also wants to hear the same standards over and over. However, BBNG did sense and criticize, albeit in an inflammatory way, a step on the normative path of development for a young jazz musician that is perhaps overvalued—knowledge of and ability to replicate jazz tradition. This was a step BBNG had no interest in, so they bypassed it only to be met with much consternation by the jazz community.

BBNG's Apologies

For what it's worth, BBNG has taken back most of their earlier statements that derided John Coltrane and Robert Glasper. On October 8, 2011, shortly after the release of their first free album but before the band had angered jazz critics, the band clarified their "Giant Steps" stance, tweeting "just to be clear we love john coltrane, but we love HIS versions of HIS songs #whyaretheystandards" (@badbadnotgood 10/8/11).[95] On

[94] In fact, in my personal experience as an undergraduate jazz studies major at Temple University, I took an improvisation course where this exact exercise was assigned in-class—" Giant Steps" in a randomly selected key and irregular meter (e.g. 5/4 or 7/4). Humber might not have used this exercise to evaluate their students, but it is not unlikely that BBNG would have encountered other students who flaunted that ability to perform "Giant Steps" in other keys or meters.

[95] Other tweets from the band back up their proclaimed love of John Coltrane, with the band having tweeted "Yo Coltrane Live in Seattle is the shit" (@badbadnotgood 3/11/12), "coltrane is one of the fucking greatest duhh" (@badbadnotgood 10/28/12), and "miles vs coltrane … that's dumb, they're both incredible" (@badbadnotgood 10/28/12). The band also tweeted directly, and probably ironically, to popular rappers Tyler the Creator, and Rick Ross about Coltrane. In October of 2011, they tweeted to Tyler, the Creator (the rapper who originally co-signed BBNG's cover of his song and had by this point collaborated with the band), "@fucktyler you heard In A Sentimental Mood John Coltrane and Duke Ellington? fucking beautiful shit…. and ya now we cookin'" (@badbadnotgood 10/2/11). In January of 2013, the band tweeted "wondering what @rickyrozay 's favorite Coltrane album is??" (@badbadnotgood 1/14/13).

May 31, 2013, over a year after the *NOW Magazine* controversy took over the jazz blogosphere, the band tweeted "the banter at the end of outro / glasper is super unnecessary. speaking that negatively was a bad call" (@badbadnotgood 5/31/13). Similarly, the band expressed regret for their comments regarding Robert Glasper. On March 31, 2012, as the jazz blogosphere discussion of BBNG was at its busiest, the group tweeted, "ROBERT GLASPER IS FUCKING AWESOME HE HAS MADE SOME AMAZING MUSIC WE ARE SORRY" (@badbadnotgood 3/31/12). Earlier on the same day, the band tweeted a response to Anthony Dean-Harris. Dean-Harris had tweeted "Finally getting around to reading the @badbadnotgood 'Now Toronto' piece. Other than the Glasper comments, I agree with them wholeheartedly" (@i_ADH 3/31/12). BBNG responded to Anthony Dean-Harris, tweeting "@i_ADH ya man we feel bad about those glasper comments they came from a long discussion about his new album glasper is a dope musician" (@badbadnotgood 3/31/12).

Following these apologies, BBNG seems to have made intentional choices to cease "speaking that negatively," going out of their way to express enthusiasm for other jazz artists. On May 9, 2012, over a month following the initial controversy, Patrick Jarenwattananon posted an article for NPR's *A Blog Supreme* titled "Five Jazz Piano Trios For Fans of BADBADNOTGOOD" (2012). In the article, Jarenwattananon addresses new fans of BBNG who have not been exposed to much jazz, writing "you probably heard about them from a friend or media outlet for whom jazz isn't a top priority." Other than confirming that BBNG is not well-regarded in that jazz community, Jarenwattananon refrains from any further criticism of the band or their fans, instead

using the opportunity to recommend “five other bands who think similarly, but aren't as well-known outside the jazz world.” When the article was tweeted by the account @nprmusic—not from @blogsupreme (now defunct) or Jarenwattananon’s own personal account, @patrickjaren, indicating that a different person was likely responsible for this tweet—it was phrased as “Five Jazz Piano Trios With More Swag Than @BADBADNOTGOOD” (an assertion that Jarenwattananon does not actually make in the article). Rather than take the bait, the band tweeted in response “@nprmusic we don’t stand by those old Glasper comments for a second. those artists you posted are really dope! we’re all doing our own style” (@badbadnotgood 5/9/12).

Despite the band having walked back their contentious statements, gone out of their way to speak positively about other jazz artists, and expressed a desire to move past the controversy entirely, none of the band’s denouncers in the jazz blogosphere noted that the band had in fact apologized for these statements. Only Anthony Dean-Harris, one of the few jazz critics who was receptive to the band (and gave their album a favorable review), noted their apology. Dean-Harris also suggested that the band’s denouncement of Glasper, though admittedly terse, was taken out of context (2012b). Dean-Harris argued that BBNG obviously appreciates Glasper on some level, as they had sampled him and even named him in the outro track of their first album—the band had simply not enjoyed Glasper’s latest album and disagreed with his views on hip-hop. Jarenwattananon acknowledged this point, writing further “I'm willing to bet that Glasper's organic adoption of hip-hop as a live instrumental music was a huge early inspiration, and if pressed, BBNG's members would certainly acknowledge as much” (2012).

Jazz Blogosphere Controversies

The jazz press backlash against BBNG is one of many recent moments in the jazz social mediasphere where disparaging remarks about jazz's traditionalist bent were met with uproar. With each occurrence, there is a flurry of blog posts, think pieces, and Facebook posts about the controversy at hand. Typically, these controversies are the topic of conversation in online spheres for all of a week before becoming exhausted. Though there have been several controversies which have consumed jazz social media for a brief time, a few offer direct insight as to why the BBNG controversy became such a hot button issue. As I discussed in Chapter 2, in late 2011, Nicholas Payton ignited controversy when he declared jazz, as a term and an idea, to be dead and proposed his own label for his music: Black American Music (Colligan 2011; Payton 2011). The BAM controversy revealed that many were still not comfortable discussing jazz in racial terms, as backlash to Payton indicated. In early 2013, relatively obscure jazz musician Alex Hoffman attempted to express his distaste for idol worship and neo-conservatism by posting a Facebook status update that simply read "fuck Wayne Shorter," which then went viral (Ofiaja 2013). In the 2010s, satirical takedowns of jazz culture have appeared with regularity, often falling in the category of "hipster racism" or "ironic racism" (Lehner 2014).[96] For instance, Nicholas Payton (2014) denounced a *New Yorker* profile where a white author wrote from the perspective of a fake Sonny Rollins proclaiming that

[96] Hipster or ironic racism refers to jokes made, often by educated, middle-class white people, about race under the assumption that the person making the joke is not racist. They are therefore able to make the joke because they do not actually believe what they are saying. The joke maker intends to poke fun at racists and racism, but often perpetuates racist stereotypes and Othering in the process. See West 2012.

he had wasted his life playing jazz (Gold 2014).[97] A twitter account called Jazz is the Worst became popular around 2014 by posting mocking quips, using jazz insider language and clichés, about jazz's irrelevance (Jazz is the Worst 2014).[98] For many "jazzbros," to borrow Nate Chinen's term (Chinen 2013),[99] it has become cool to hate jazz, ironically or not. While these controversies have stayed contained within the jazz community, BBNG brought their ironic hatred of jazz to a general audience. The wider exposure of these negative views of jazz seemed to force an especially defensive response from the jazz criticism community.

Shortcuts to Jazz Success

One common accusation in the jazz community's rejection of BBNG is that the band was hardly talented enough to warrant such press coverage, or to speak so confidently on the issues they were addressing. This backlash stems from BBNG's avoidance of what I call a normative path of development in contemporary jazz scenes. As I discuss in chapter 3, musicians who wish to gain full entrance into their jazz scene

[97] As Payton wrote regarding the power dynamics of a white-controlled publication satirizing a Black artist, "White people: stick to satirizing those who get your sense of humor. Leave Black people be. You've done enough over the past 500 years. Black life in a world of White oppression and supremacy is satirical enough. We don't need your help adding to it" (Payton 2014).

[98] Many musicians have appreciated Jazz is the Worst's portrayal of what they feel are accurate portrayals of the idiosyncrasies of jazz culture (see Colligan 2011). However, Dan Lehner pointed out that JITW's "jokes" about women having a built-in advantage in jazz reinforce misogyny toward female musicians, instrumentalists especially, in jazz.

[99] Chinen's definition of jazzbro is worth quoting in full: "A jazzbro-not to be confused with a jazzbo, its older taxonomical cousin-is a self-styled jazz aficionado, overwhelmingly male and usually a musician in training himself, who expresses a handful of determinative social behaviors. Among these are a migratory pattern from the practice room, where they often nest alone, to the jazz club, where they travel in packs; a compulsion to signal the awareness of any mildly startling musical detail, with muttered exclamations like the aforementioned 'Woooo'; the emphatic adjectival use of the word 'killing,' as in 'that solo was killing'; and the exploitation of jazz knowledge as a private commodity selectively put on public display. Easily mocked but only partly understood, the jazzbro should be an object of concern for anyone who claims to care about outside perceptions of jazz. Because like it or not, the jazzbro speaks for you" (Chinen 2013).

must show evidence of mastery at each stage along their development, even if their creative aspirations ultimately lie elsewhere. To follow the normative path of development in jazz is to learn the traditions, rooted in 1940s-60s acoustic jazz, that have been institutionalized within jazz from secondary to higher education, and then informally within the cultural formations of a local scene. As Gabriel Solis writes, tradition in this sense involves learning repertoire as a way to create collective memory and build cultural meaning (Solis 2008, 69). For instance, a jazz musician may not be fond of playing three-hour gigs consisting entirely of acoustic renditions of standards such as "All The Things You Are" and "My Funny Valentine," but in order to earn the approval of established musicians on the scene, the upcoming jazz musician must show that they are capable of proficiently executing such repertoire-based gigs. It is only once they have paid these dues that they will have earned the respect they need to play with musicians who have advanced to an ability to play non-repertoire gigs, including, for instance, concerts consisting entirely of original material, rhythms that do not necessarily "swing," or stylistic elements that are outside of the jazz genre. In essence, BBNG attempted to skip to the last step, to perform genre-defying music without having put in their time learning the tradition. BBNG went a step farther when they questioned the purpose of learning that tradition, as seen when they dismissed such common pedagogical tools as the *Charlie Parker Omnibook* or "Giant Steps."

Though criticisms of BBNG might not state this explicitly, I believe there is an implicit criticism in denouncements of BBNG—that the band had defiled the sacralization of jazz tradition by attempting to forego the normative path of development.

For many in the jazz community, BBNG's shortcuts were not only objectionable, but evident in their music, as detailed criticisms of their musical ability attempt to show. For some, BBNG's shortcomings offered evidence that they should have in fact stayed in school a little bit longer, the band's lack of playing ability proving the merit of the jazz education model. At the least, the band showed its age, which did not mean they did not have potential, but that the praise BBNG had received had been premature. For the average local jazz group, lack of mastery at the age of 19 would not be a big deal, but because BBNG had already reached a national audience, a correction in the form of criticism of the band's talent was needed. The backlash then seems to have stemmed from what many felt was undeserved hype for a band whose proficiency did not match the heaps of attention they had received. If BBNG's rejection of the tradition of learning standard repertoire can be read as a refusal to carry on jazz's collective memory (Solis 2008, 69), then it seems inevitable that the band would receive rebuke from those who do value that tradition and its cultural meaning.

BBNG was far from the first jazz group to question jazz's attachment to tradition, but they were perhaps the first to make their name off that denouncement of tradition and succeed as a "jazz group" despite not having played by jazz's rules of paying one's dues, showing respect for the masters of the tradition, etc. This is why some have gone even further than simply dismissing BBNG's musical value but have also questioned whether they deserve to be called "jazz" at all. For instance, in his post addressing the BBNG controversy, Alex Rodriguez implored BBNG to "leave jazz alone" (2012). Rodriguez called for "people with an investment in nurturing and supporting the jazz tradition as a

generative, positive artistic endeavor [to] firmly reject these angry white boys as readily as they claim to have rejected jazz." In the comments section of the same blog post, Rodriguez elaborated:

> If BBNG want to keep wearing pig masks and noodling modal keyboard licks, that's fine with me — it just doesn't belong in the same category as those who are really tuned into the richness of this lineage….
> Jazz, to me, is not a genre. It is a tradition, a lineage, an essence, and something that deserves to be protected from violence such as "taking it to the mosh pit" as BBNG claim to do. It's important to me to take a stand in defense of this lineage, not to say where music belongs.

For those as invested in jazz as Rodriguez, experimentation or the breaking with tradition to push new aesthetic styles is not the issue. Rather, the lack of respect for "a tradition, a lineage, an essence" is what causes critics like Rodriguez to argue that BBNG does not "belong in the same category" as those who uphold these values in jazz. Hum's earlier proposed solution that BBNG should "drop all pretense of involving jazz in a meaningful way" contains a similar suggestion: the group is not competent or respectful enough to be called jazz, so they should stop pretending to be a jazz group. The implication is clear: if BBNG does not adhere to this model of sacralization, then they do not deserve to be called jazz.

Rodriguez's call to "firmly reject these angry white boys" seems to have been heeded by the jazz community. Since the initial dust-up, the jazz community has largely moved on from discussing BBNG. The band does not receive coverage in *JazzTimes*, *DownBeat*, or jazz blogs, even as their coverage in non-jazz publications such as *Pitchfork* and *Rolling Stone* has increased. During the initial controversy in 2012, Anthony Dean-Harris wrote:

> So now we're left with the question of what are we to do with Matt, Chester, and Alex. Ultimately, we aren't going to do anything. Their new album received 20,000 downloads on the first day. They're playing Coachella next week. They played two nights at Gilles Peterson's Worldwide Awards (remember to tune in to BBC Radio 6 this Saturday for his triumphant return, by the way) this past January. Whether or not the jazz scene cares for them, they've got an audience. (Dean-Harris 2012b)

Indeed, BBNG has prospered despite the jazz community's rejection, as evidenced by increased higher profile collaborations and press coverage.[100] Though the fact that the band has succeeded as a "jazz trio" without the gatekeeping approval of jazz critics seems to have irked some in the jazz community, BBNG has largely succeeded in their attempts to bring their vision of jazz, or how they define jazz, to a wider audience.

Defining Genre in Jazz

The BBNG controversy reveals how the genre of jazz is variously defined by different parties, in this case including the jazz establishment, the non-jazz media, BBNG themselves, and BBNG's audiences. Each has competing ideas about how jazz is defined, ideas which came to clash as BBNG received notoriety among demographics that are not usually exposed to debates that are decades old in jazz discourse. Moreover, the case of BBNG shows that definitions of jazz as a genre are still in flux and are heavily informed by decades of institutionalization, as is evident in the popular perceptions of jazz that BBNG exploits. Thus far, I have discussed how the non-jazz media views jazz as revealed through their coverage of BBNG well as how the jazz press defines jazz as revealed through how they exclude BBNG from being included in that definition. I have

[100] For instance, BBNG has received production credits on two recent Kendrick Lamar projects: "Lust" from *DAMN.* (2017) and "The Ways" from *Black Panther: The Album* (2018).

not, however, discussed how BBNG sees themselves fitting into jazz, nor how their initial forays into jazz have in many ways been typical of young white musicians learning jazz. In addition to discussing BBNG's definition of jazz, in this section I consider how BBNG's audience views jazz as informed by their exposure to BBNG. Finally, I consider how all of these definitions can aid our understanding of how genre, more broadly, is defined by outsiders to a particular music style.

BBNG's Definitions of Jazz

The jazz media has painted BBNG as attackers of jazz, imploring them to "leave jazz alone." The framing of this defense assumes that jazz is being attacked from the outside, with the jazz establishment fortifying the walls of jazz to protect the tradition from further damage. But in many ways, the members of BBNG are not outsiders at all. Until they dropped out of school and began talking to the press, they had followed the normative path of development for a potential career in jazz: take up music at some point as a child or teenager, discover jazz in high school, audition for jazz programs to continue an education in music, meet like-minded musicians in college, and explore their influences to play their desired form of jazz. Prior to their breakout, the members of BBNG would have resembled many "young lions" that I encountered in the Twin Cities, as discussed in Chapter 3. Even BBNG's sentiments toward jazz orthodoxy—that it relies too heavily on standards, that it is not connected to contemporary culture—are normal for young people entering a century-old tradition and feeling the weight of that tradition bear down on their creative instincts. The manner in which BBNG expressed these sentiments

may have been brash, but the underlying sentiments themselves were by no means unusual.[101]

In addition to the jazz school path they originally took, BBNG has displayed insider knowledge in interviews and on Twitter. As mentioned, they have many times tweeted enthusiasm for John Coltrane, even naming lesser known albums of his (i.e. *Live in Seattle*) to show the depths of their appreciation. The band has also at various points listed their wide-ranging jazz influences, which include:

> Bill Evans, Eric Dolphy, Sam Rivers, Miles [Davis], [John] Coltrane and Wayne [Shorter] obviously, Art Blakey, Herbie [Hancock], Tony Williams, Sun Ra, Albert Ayler, Andrew Hill, [Charles] Mingus, [Thelonious] Monk, Grachan Moncur III. (De Fretes 2013)

Some of the biggest figures in jazz are included (Monk, Miles, and Coltrane), but so are artists who are not household names to the general public (Sam Rivers, Albert Ayler, and Grachan Moncur III). BBNG also displays insider knowledge in the way they refer to certain esteemed musicians with the common shorthand used by jazz insiders—Wayne Shorter is just "Wayne," Herbie Hancock is "Herbie," and Thelonious Monk is "Monk."

In addition to asserting their insider status by naming their jazz influences, BBNG has made attempts to expand the boundaries of what is usually considered jazz to include non-jazz artists. For instance, the band tweeted in 2011 "monk, duke, dilla, trilla, davis, cobain, koston, Curtis, davis, trane, blaine, clan and foo…. they all jazz.." (@badbadnotgood 11/7/11). Here the band attempts to link several canonical jazz greats—Monk, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Coltrane—with artists not usually viewed

[101] These themes and sentiments about jazz education were explored in my master's thesis, "Creative Agency, Musical Autonomy, and Post-Raciality in Temple University's Jazz Studies Program" (Neil 2014).

as jazz—hip-hop producer J Dilla, Kurt Cobain of Nirvana, and the rap group the Wu-Tang Clan. In another tweet, from October of 2011, the band tweeted to popular Internet rapper Lil B, saying "@LILBTHEBASEDGOD is a jazz artist. john coltrane has been doing based freestyles out his sax since the beginning. lil b has got improv down" (@badbadnotgood 10/27/11). The band's use of the term "based" follows Lil B's own lexicon, for which he has become known on the Internet. According to Lil B, "Based means being yourself. Not being scared of what people think about you. Not being afraid to do what you wanna do. Being positive" (Baker 2010). Based is also related to stream-of-consciousness, which of course is a quality associated with jazz improvisation. BBNG was likely being at least slightly tongue-in-cheek when they compared John Coltrane to Lil B, a rapper who flaunts disregard for technical virtuosity in at times cringeworthy ways, but who has nonetheless released hundreds of mixtapes of "based freestyles," fashioned himself into an Internet meme, and earned endorsements from more popular and critically accepted rappers. But BBNG still seeks to tie a canonical great of the jazz tradition to a contemporary artist popular with young people. By using Lil B's lingo, which they also sample on their first album, BBNG attempts to bring jazz closer to contemporary Internet culture in a way they feel other jazz musicians have failed, as was also reflected in their initial covers of Odd Future.

BBNG seeks to expand definitions of jazz not just through embrace of Internet culture, but through their musical aesthetics. As mentioned, the formula of jazz plus hip-hop is hardly revolutionary; Robert Glasper, the prime point of comparison, has not only sought to merge those genres for a decade prior to BBNG, but has also covered hip-hop

beats in a manner similar to BBNG.[102] Since their second album, however, BBNG has largely ceased player covers of beats. They have since moved on from what gave them initial recognition to albums and concert sets consisting almost entirely of originals. In these originals, jazz and hip-hop influences remain, especially on songs featuring extended solos. However, the band also incorporates influences from modern electronic dance music (particularly trap), as heard on "Can't Leave the Night" and "CS60" from *III* and "Lavender (feat. Kaytranada)" from *IV*, and soul music, as heard on the entirety of the *Sour Soul* collaborative album with Ghostface Killah and the vocal tracks "In Your Eyes" and "Time Moves Slow" on *IV*. In their most recent material, the band's aesthetic preferences resemble less a conventional jazz group than a studio band that might have been later sampled by hip-hop producers,[103] with some tracks featuring no improvisation at all.

When the band plays live, however, the volume and energy of their concerts resemble something closer to that of a rock show. The constant mentions in the press of

[102] BBNG does not think their manner of covering beats is equivalent to Glasper's, however. In an interview with Exclaim, Tavares commented that "He's not really interpreting them, they don't change anything but recreate the beat. When Charlie Parker plays a standard, he doesn't recreate the shitty Broadway tune" (Matthews 2011). It is true that BBNG's covers of beats use more of a solo-focused interpretation that is in a sense, truer to jazz practices of improvisation. However, Glasper is aware that his approach to playing beats might run counter to these conventional values of improvisation, commenting: "we'll play a Dilla beat for literally an hour, because it feels so good, and that's all that matters to me. I think that's harder [than playing chord changes]. It takes discipline." He continued, "I'd rather repeat something for 30 minutes than solo for 30 minutes. A lot of jazz musicians don't have that mentality, [but] my band loves to just make beats" (Russonello 2013).

[103] BBNG's turn to the aesthetic preferences of hip-hop sampling sources indicates another area in which the band aligns more with hip-hop values than jazz. As Tom Perchard has argued (2011), though lyrical references to jazz in hip-hop have most often referred to figures like John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, etc., producers who have sampled jazz in their beats have rarely included samples of these artists, but rather have preferred the sound of jazz (or jazz fusion) from the 1970s or after.

moshing at BBNG shows calls to mind punk music, even if the band does not display much of a punk musical aesthetic (though they did cover post-punk band Joy Division's "Transmission" on their first album). More crucially, however, the band displays a punk ethos in their anti-establishment attitudes and rejection of conventional values of instrumental technique. As with the narrative surrounding punk's origins, where punk is fashioned as a rejection of the indulgence of progressive rock virtuosity, BBNG rejects the value of instrumental virtuosity in jazz.

Though they are foremost associated with jazz by mainstream publications, BBNG seems to acknowledge that their lack of willingness to be virtuosos might lead those in the jazz community to not consider them jazz. For instance, in one interview, BBNG acknowledges that they are "not proficient" and as such do not try to "assume [themselves] as prolific innovators" (Hyman 2016). They are aware that they do not fit the definition of jazz for "people in the jazz community" and seem content with that, as long as they can make the music they want to make. Where earlier in their career BBNG aspired to stretch the definition of jazz, they later adopt clichés of rejecting genre labels in the name of "just playing music," perhaps as a defense mechanism against jazz critics who become offended when the band is mentioned in the same sentence as jazz. In a 2016 interview, BBNG says they "don't think of [themselves] as a jazz band," but instead sees themselves as

> Just a group of guys making music that we like and kind of just combining all of our influences to make a weird mix of stuff. Jazz is a way ... a tool that we use to play music, and the knowledge that we learned will always be there inspiring us, but the word is so loaded. People have called us a jazz band before and people take it badly if it doesn't fit their definition of jazz so ... there's just so much amazing jazz out there and pushing the

> boundaries of the music. We just like to think of ourselves as pushing the boundaries in weird music ... being creative and honest completely in what we do. (Elone 2016)

In sum, BBNG acknowledges that jazz is a "loaded" word and attempts to distance themselves from the term, but they are aware that people will call that them anyway.

BBNG's Audience's Definition of Jazz

BBNG's audience defines jazz similarly, though they might not care as much about jazz's decline. Many of BBNG's listeners have simply not paid attention to jazz at all. They did not even consider that they could like jazz until they heard BBNG. For instance, a student reviewer of BBNG's 2014 concert at the University of California, Riverside writes:

> I am not a fan of jazz. Well, I should clarify — while I don't inherently dislike it, I have never come to fully appreciate the genre or any of its multitudes of subgenres. So when the jazz band BadBadNotGood was announced to headline the free opening night of the Barn series this year, I met it with a pretty ambivalent, "Huh. Okay." A fellow DJ at KUCR was over the moon about the announcement, but I wasn't quite ready to believe the hype. Countless flying bodies and "Riverside, are you ready?!"s later, BadBadNotGood had put on one of the best Barn shows I'd ever been to, setting a high bar for excitement and engagement for future bands to take the small stage. (Rich 2014)

The reviewer, Jake Rich, goes on to marvel at the musicianship and energy displayed by the band, as well as the shock he experienced at seeing moshing at a supposed jazz show. Before the concert, Rich saw jazz and its "multitudes of subgenres" as impenetrable and something he didn't "get," in line with the trope of jazz as an overly academic music. But BBNG spoke to his interests in seeing energetic live performances of music no matter the genre, and he was taken by their performance as a result. Another audience member expressed similar sentiments to me, that he had very little prior familiarity with the group

or jazz as a whole, but that he now considers BBNG's performance to be one of the best he had ever seen at that particular venue. Indeed, as I witnessed it, BBNG's performance energy was so engrossing that during the performance, audience members began to crowd surf and swing from the rafters of the small venue, overwhelming security.

For music listeners who are not familiar with jazz, BBNG provides something they have not yet experienced with jazz: accessibility. BBNG does not require that you know all of jazz history to appreciate their music. They do not demand a trained ear to follow the logic of their solos. BBNG plays material that is familiar to their audiences, both aesthetically, in the way they incorporate EDM and modern hip-hop, and in their collaborations. Their compositions are based on short, catchy melodies and are not filled with complex sequences of harmony. There is a consistent rhythm that is usually backbeat oriented, if not outright danceable. Still, their music is not conventionally simple, as it often becomes overwhelmed with a variety of textures, rhythms, and instrumental parts. For non-jazz listeners, their music is catchy yet still offers the complexity and hipness associated with listening to jazz, as indicated in excerpts that emphasize the "classiness" of a jazz piano trio format. While BBNG is not the only group to create a more accessible form of jazz that still retains a focus on improvisation and jazz aesthetics—again, Robert Glasper's groups have done the same—they are a jazz group that has utilized the Internet to promote their music and reach younger, non-jazz audiences in a way not many jazz musicians have. Though sentiments that all of jazz is out of touch may be exaggerated, the fact that BBNG reaches so many people because of

these sentiments reveals the attitude much of the general public has towards the jazz: it is a high-brow music not meant for a lay audience.

These perceptions of jazz as a high-brow music have resulted from decades of sacralization via institutionalization, as has been discussed throughout this dissertation. In chapter 3, I discussed how institutionalization, though it provides a semblance of stability for musicians, can entrench inequality in access to jazz among racial lines. That is, jazz becomes associated with the privilege required to play it, an inaccessibility that trickles down to listener perceptions of the music. In the case of BBNG, their listeners, who often trend younger, have come of age post-Marsalis, when jazz has long been considered "America's classical music." They have likely rarely seen jazz in connection with popular culture, but rather encounter it via high school jazz bands or as a museum piece depicted in a Ken Burns documentary or music history class. Similarly, general music publications, including those that market to young people who fashion themselves as having hip music taste (i.e. *Pitchfork*), have largely not covered contemporary jazz, so these audiences do not receive much to counter their perceptions of jazz as no longer relevant. The efforts of a small but dedicated group of jazz insiders, including the critics and musicians who responded to BBNG, pale in comparison to the messages younger audiences receive about jazz from the various media they consume.[104]

[104] For instance, the NBC sitcom *Parks and Recreation* (2009-2015) includes several humorous yet unflattering depictions of jazz. One of the main characters, Ron Swanson, has an alter ego, Duke Silver, who performs smooth jazz to groups of fawning middle-aged women. In one throwaway line, series protagonist Leslie Knope wants to know about her friend's date, specifically "whether or not he hates jazz; hopefully he does." Finally, as part of a continuing gag with the local town Pawnee's public radio station, which parodies the liberal dryness of NPR, Knope introduces a segment titled "Jazz Plus Jazz Equals Jazz," which consists of two jazz recordings overlaid on top of each other. "Research shows that our listeners love

Genre as Defined by Outsiders

These contesting ideas about jazz by competing factions, including some with no real investment in jazz culture, call into question the power that insiders to a genre have in defining it. Fabian Holt (2007) provides a general framework of a genre's development, which consists of two stages: 1) a genre is founded and codified by what Holt calls "center collectivities" and then 2) a genre is modified through "further negotiations" (2007, 20). For Holt, these "center collectivities" consist of "clusters of specialized subjects," that is, insiders recognized as authorities on the genre culture at hand (2007, 21). This can include "influential fan communities, critics, record producers, and above all artists whose iconic status marks them as 'leading' figures" (2007, 21). Though Holt advocates an approach to genre that moves beyond the center, which he notes usually consists of large cities with more abundant resources, he perhaps overstates the extent to which such center collectivities determine how a genre is perceived. In this case, the boundaries of jazz as defined by the jazz establishment of influential musicians, critics, and sophisticated listeners are irrelevant when confronted by outsiders to the genre, for whom BBNG represents an ideal form of jazz. For outsiders to the genre, the definitions of an elite group of individuals have no bearing on what they determine to be jazz. At most, the boundaries as defined by center collectivities are felt to be too strictly patrolled, as evidenced by the recurring negative portrayal of the jazz faculty members who rejected BBNG's take on jazz. If the center collectivities' definition of jazz carries any weight with those outsiders, it is only to cause rejection of the norms and values of

jazz," the DJ explains to Knope after she shows disgust at hearing Benny Goodman and Miles Davis play at the same time.

jazz in favor of a group that to non-jazz listeners is unpretentious in a way rarely found in jazz.

As the case of BBNG shows, the opinions and perspectives of non-jazz audiences and media have much more bearing on how jazz is received than does the specialized knowledge of a small group of jazz insiders. Insistence on pure standards for jazz seems to only reinforce for non-jazz audiences that the jazz establishment's definition of jazz is part of the problem, not the solution. By attempting to play a form of jazz that devalues the importance of technique and respect for tradition, BBNG also presents a new form of jazz to audiences that until they heard BBNG, had not felt much reason to listen to jazz. Jazz did not speak to these audiences until BBNG made it accessible for them by using language—both in terms of modern musical aesthetics and Internet slang—that they understood. The sheer size of BBNG's audiences, as compared to the audiences of even the most popular national jazz acts, allows BBNG's attempted redefinition of jazz to at least partially succeed, even if the center collectivities of jazz would rather assert that BBNG's approach to jazz bears no authority.

BBNG is far from the first group to be labeled "jazz" in a way that angers insiders to the genre—Kenny G is infamous for jazz fans. But there are several aspects of the BBNG episode that are unique to the current state of jazz. For one, these are four young white men who, as mentioned earlier, initially followed the normative path of development for jazz. They genuinely connected with jazz and wanted to explore it further, but like many young musicians, had musical interests other than jazz. They did not hold an attachment to jazz as part of an identification with social justice issues or

cultural identity,[105] but rather saw jazz as a "musical tool"—as abstracted material. However, as part of their following the normative path, which included a university jazz education, BBNG encountered a traditionalist mindset that they felt held them back. As they came of age in an era when jazz had already long been institutionalized, and as they primarily saw jazz as a useful tool, BBNG had no attachment to the baggage of jazz history and bristled at the fact that others' attachment to tradition would limit their creativity. That frustration is not unique, but represents a larger, more common sentiment among young jazz students alienated by jazz conservatism. In contrast to most of this demographic, BBNG was given a platform to vent their frustrations, causing consternation within the jazz community.

In the process, BBNG revealed the fault lines of which values are used to define jazz. Contrary to BBNG's perceptions, musical experimentalism is not the objection, but rather the refusal to abide by jazz's standards of sacralization. In jazz's current state, there is a normative path of development that entails a healthy respect for the tradition—the masters of the art form and their aesthetic achievements that have allowed jazz to become institutionalized as America's classical music. BBNG sidestepped the normative path not through their musical approach, which is novel but hardly groundbreaking, but through their attitudes. For all of jazz's willingness to push musical boundaries, one

[105] This is not to say that BBNG does not have opinions about social causes; in some cases they have indicated through tweets that they do care about certain social justice issues. Rather, this appears separate from their interests in jazz, which BBNG has only, to my knowledge, discussed in terms of its musical value.

boundary remains firm: respect for the art form.[106] The status of jazz has long been precarious, with sources of funding and audiences coming and going. The one thing that remains, and which motivates musicians to play the music for little financial reward (see chapter 4), is the claim that jazz is a high point of artistic achievement, particularly for Black Americans. In attempting to critique the values of the jazz establishment, BBNG, in the eyes of this establishment, went too far and disrespected a sacred tradition, a sin of blasphemy for which they have been excommunicated.

For the general public, however, none of this matters. Most BBNG fans were not even aware such a controversy in the jazz community ever occurred. They do not hear the faults in BBNG's technique that jazz insiders hear. All they know is that BBNG connects with them on a musical level. To them, BBNG represents a bright future for jazz because they show concern for what regular people without jazz training want to hear. Despite the jazz establishment's rejection, BBNG shows no signs of slowing down in popularity among general audiences. BBNG will continue to represent jazz, even as the jazz community, and even the group themselves, wish that they did not speak for jazz. Put simply: BBNG is jazz if people think they are.

Conclusion

The BadBadNotGood controversy reveals that though, for many, the aesthetic standards of jazz appear to be fixed, partially via the institutionalization of jazz within university conservatory walls and other markers of high art, the debates about jazz's

[106] David Ake writes that paying homage in jazz practices is reminiscent of Raymond Williams's concept of "handing down" traditions that involves "respect and duty" (Ake 2002).

genre boundaries are far from concluded. The genre of jazz is defined according to different values, depending on who is doing the defining. For some, especially academics with an investment in jazz's themes of resistance to hegemony, the music's attachment to African American civil rights must be continually reasserted lest this history be forgotten. This is not to say that this is not a worthy endeavor, or that academics should not use their positions to advance causes they believe to make a difference in reducing oppression. However, this definition of jazz as inherently resistive, as always speaking truth to power, risks losing sight of the fact that for many, jazz is not these things and has not been for a long time. For audiences that are not jazz experts, but enjoy jazz on occasion, jazz allows them to indulge in an air of sophistication, to feel that they themselves are sophisticated listeners. Many outsiders to jazz define jazz as something that excludes them via its complexity, high art status, and obsession with insider knowledge. For young and predominantly white male musicians who pursue jazz as a university degree, jazz offers an opportunity to learn a musical language, the cultural history of which they may admire, but which was not the primary reason they were attracted to the genre. To them, jazz is defined according to its musical abstraction, but to succeed within the genre culture of jazz, they must adhere to the conventions established by the genre's gatekeepers.

These gatekeepers of jazz, that is, the influential critics, academics, and musicians that Holt calls "center collectivities," may not view their pronouncements about jazz as gatekeeping but rather as a noble cause that protects the genre from whitewashing and deracination, of which jazz is certainly in legitimate danger. But policing the borders of

jazz and seeking to banish those that do not fit certain standards, however well-intentioned these efforts are, effectively closes the walls of jazz in a way that feeds into stereotypes of jazz as out of touch and closed to the uninitiated, especially as a result of its institutionalization. Discourse about genre, then, is not simply a matter of categorization or a definition of aesthetics. It also seeks to establish which values are acceptable and which should be discouraged. For the genre culture of jazz, the values of respect for tradition and adherence to a normative path of proving one's worth are paramount. Anti-establishment attitudes are valued if they do not conflict with these values. However, this discourse can have unintended effects on how the genre is perceived and defined by those outside the genre culture, if that discourse is viewed by outsiders to be exclusionary and elitist. Additionally, the weight of efforts of a comparatively small group of insiders to define a genre pales in comparison to the perceptions of the general public. Discourse on defining jazz that does not acknowledge these perceptions, because they are unflattering or otherwise undesirable, does jazz no favors. If definitions of a genre by outsiders play as large a role as, if not larger than, the discourse of insiders in defining the genre, then it does no use to pretend that those outsider definitions do not exist, or to attempt to discredit these definitions by employing accusations of faulty aesthetic standards, lack of insider knowledge, or notions of inauthenticity. Discourse about genre, then, should not simply reproduce or refine insider arguments, but must also account for the perceptions of outsiders. A genre culture is not defined solely by those who prefer to define it, but also by those outside the culture with no real stake in it.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Though BadBadNotGood has continued to advance their profile, general music publications have moved on to a new object of obsession, becoming newly infatuated with Los Angeles saxophonist Kamasi Washington and the jazz revival he ostensibly represents. Where BBNG built their origin story on the blaspheming of the jazz tradition, including both its canonical figures and the jazz educational apparatus, Washington has built his on a deep reverence for the great masters of jazz history. Additionally, where BBNG illustrates a colorblind approach to jazz that values an autonomous approach to the music, Washington's music is deeply politicized, helped in part by his connections with rap artist Kendrick Lamar. While both artists have acted as popular gateway entries into jazz for young people previously unexposed to—or alienated by—jazz, Washington would seem to represent a more trustworthy carrier of the lone jazz torch in the mainstream press because of his respect for jazz tradition.

Given these more attractive features of Washington's career—he has established his credibility, earned respect from other jazz masters, retained a political consciousness for jazz, remained open-minded to non-jazz music, and refrained from cursing out his contemporaries—it would be easy to simply conclude that Washington is a better representative of jazz to uninitiated listeners than BBNG. However, my point here is not to simply promote Washington at the expense of BBNG. Rather, I seek to examine the narratives surrounding Washington's rise and what they reveal about the ever-changing popular imaginary of jazz. On the one hand, Washington's popularity with non-jazz audiences is still built on the jazz is dead narrative—you cannot have a "jazz revival" if

jazz was not first assumed to be dead, or at least dormant. On the other hand, if that narrative is so entrenched as to by now be assumed—where "jazz is dead" is an idea foundational to the contemporary definition of jazz itself—Washington represents an example of moving past that notion and into new territories. While some of these new territories involve reckoning with the past, it is not pure revivalism, but rather an attempt to reconcile jazz's heavily weighted legacy with the new possibilities presented by contemporary musical styles, particularly hip-hop and experimental forms of electronic dance music of the 2010s.

In this conclusion chapter, I analyze the music and press surrounding the latest big thing in jazz, Kamasi Washington, to show how jazz continues to accumulate new meanings well into the twenty first century. First, I discuss Washington's educational experience in jazz, including both at the high school and college level, to show how in this case, institutions are presented in the press as foundational to Washington's development. Second, I detail Washington's collaboration with electronic musician Flying Lotus to show how for Washington, popular music styles are as involved in the day-to-day life of being a self-identified jazz musician as playing the more conventional jazz repertoire. I then examine Washington's role in Kendrick Lamar's 2014 album *To Pimp a Butterfly* to show how his involvement in one of the more visibly politicized albums of the last decade has helped jazz recover, among a general audience, its associations with social justice activism. After that, I analyze the success of Washington's debut album *The Epic*, which, though anchored mostly in the jazz styles of the 1960s and early '70s and not featuring any overt jazz-rap fusions, was discussed in

the general music media primarily in relation to Washington's prior non-jazz collaborations. I end this chapter, and the dissertation, by considering how jazz continues to develop new meanings following several decades of its institutionalization

Kamasi Washington's Background

The catalyst for Kamasi Washington's sudden visibility as a jazz saxophonist on a national stage occurred with the release of two popular, non-jazz albums: Flying Lotus's *You're Dead!*, released in October 2014, and Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp A Butterfly*, released in March 2015. In addition to gaining him wider exposure, through these albums Washington became associated with a collective of like-minded musicians that in addition to electronic musician Flying Lotus (real name Steve Ellison) and rapper Kendrick Lamar includes bassist and vocalist Thundercat (real name Stephen Bruner) and his brother, drummer Ronald Bruner Jr.; saxophonist and producer Terrace Martin; and others within a jazz-rap-electronic nexus. The release of Washington's own *The Epic* in May 2015 gave greater exposure to Washington's homegrown crew the West Coast Get Down (WCGD), a loose collective of around seven musicians all from Los Angeles whose prominence is owed, in part, to educational initiatives meant to foster the development of young creative musicians.

As press accounts of Washington and the WCGD often note, Washington, the Bruner brothers, and their other bandmates played in high school in the Multi School Jazz Band, an afterschool program that united talented high school musicians attending magnet Los Angeles area high schools by bringing them to Locke High School in Watts (Weiner 2015a). Founded by Reggie Andrews, a high school music teacher at Locke, the

Multi School Jazz Band was a reaction to the "brain drain" in Los Angeles that poached the highest achieving young students from economically poorer neighborhoods (such as West and South Los Angeles (Cohen 2015)) and brought them to schools in higher income neighborhoods (Washington attended Alexander Hamilton High School in Culver City) (Shatz 2016). Even as he received the benefits of a better education, Washington is aware of the racial inequality of the education system in LA, telling *Pitchfork*, "This notion that I was somehow special and deserving of a more involved education was wrong. I was smart at taking tests, but I knew how smart some of my friends were; they were just smart in different ways" (Cohen 2015). He continued,

> I have friends who went through all four years of high school and didn't have one book while I had too many books to carry. The difference in the resources was flagrant, but we still take the same test to determine whether or not we get more education. (Cohen 2015)

Per the NYTimes, the experience with the Multi School Jazz Band gave Washington a sense of the cultural authority that he as a Black musician held, despite Black Americans being denied power and humanity in other aspects of society such as education and treatment by police. As Washington says, "The amazing thing is that white kids were coming down to Locke to rehearse because the band was so good and they wanted to be in it. It was kind of ironic, since we were being bused to their schools" (Shatz 2016).

The Multi School Jazz Band formed the start of a network of musicians, later known as the WCGD, with whom Washington would collaborate throughout the rest of his career—Ronald and Stephen Bruner, Terrace Martin, pianist Cameron Graves, bassist Miles Mosley, and trombonist Ryan Porter. In addition to performing after school, Washington and his peers would go to jam sessions at The World Stage in LA's Leimert

Park neighborhood, which was known as a center for the Black Arts movement (Shatz 2016). Washington's formative years also included winning first place at the John Coltrane competition alongside the Bruner brothers, where the trio met a young Steven Ellison (Flying Lotus) (Weiner 2015a).

In 1999, Washington enrolled in the jazz studies program at UCLA, from which he would graduate with a bachelor's degree in ethnomusicology in 2004. Per UCLA's student paper *The Daily Bruin*, Washington's audition with Coltrane's "Giant Steps" was so impressive to faculty member Kenny Burrell, a jazz guitarist with a career spanning to the 1950s, that Burrell immediately accepted Washington into the program (Maraccini 2016). As Burrell told the *Bruin*, "Here's the thing about great artists: They usually embody important parts of the past and the present. (Washington) was trying to forge new ground, and we could hear that in his music" (Maraccini 2016). Initially, Washington studied with jazz trumpet player, bandleader, and composer Gerald Wilson, whose band Washington would also play in. In his sophomore year, however, Washington paused his studies at UCLA to go on tour with rapper Snoop Dogg, an opportunity owed in part to Washington's earlier connection with Terrace Martin (Cohen 2015).

Throughout his experience at UCLA, Washington had the opportunity to form connections with older masters of jazz, such as Wilson and Burrell, toward whom Washington expresses reverence in interviews. As Washington told *The Daily Bruin*, Wilson taught Washington not just jazz techniques, but "a lot about being a fair person. (Wilson said) that the responsibility of a band leader includes taking care of your band"

(Maraccini 2016). Speaking of his experience playing in Wilson's band, Washington felt both a comfort and a desire to prove himself with Wilson, saying he "just wanted to do well." Wilson "was so open about it, that it didn't really feel like he was testing me" (Maraccini 2016). In addition to performing with Wilson, Washington also recorded with Burrell, who said he rarely records with students but felt something special in Washington. As Burrell said, "Kamasi is a unique person and musician, so the thing that we can offer a person like that is support in that uniqueness, because we recognize it" (Maraccini 2016).

Though UCLA should be considered an exceptional rather than an average jazz studies experience—most jazz program faculties will not include figures as well-known as Wilson or Burrell—there is something to be said for the way the program was able to institutionalize a decades old jazz-practice of forming master-apprentice type relationships. This is a practice that is not unique to UCLA, though the names might be larger. Rather, it can exist wherever jazz studies programs are found. In that sense, jazz studies programs formalize through institutional stability a practice that has been an informal component of jazz training for decades (Berliner 1994).

Through UCLA, Washington had the opportunity to make social connections with both peers and established figures that would aid his musical career.[107] This included not just other jazz musicians, but non-jazz figures as well, such as Snoop Dogg, Raphael Saadiq, Lauryn Hill, and Chaka Khan (Cohen 2015). Through these experiences,

[107] It should be noted that Washington's own prodigious talent and dedication are primarily responsible for his success. However, my point here is to illustrate how the educational system within which Washington trained helped facilitate his success.

Washington was able to build a career that incorporated jazz training and the social connections it facilitated but which also included non-jazz experiences. Additionally, Washington did not consider these experiences lesser just because they were not strictly jazz. Rather, Washington considered these non-jazz experiences to be valuable in teaching him about music that fell outside his jazz training. For instance, though Washington had played in Wilson's big band, he found Snoop Dogg to be the most challenging bandleader. As Washington told *Pitchfork* about Snoop Dogg,

> He had a sense of musical detail that just never came up in jazz. I was always getting put in these situations where all this stuff I learned in jazz didn't really apply. Jazz is like a telescope, and a lot of other music is like a microscope. (Cohen 2015)

Washington elaborated to the *New York Times* about the difference between his experience playing jazz at UCLA and playing hip-hop with Snoop Dogg, saying that with the latter, he began focusing more on the "how" rather than the "what" of his playing, specifically the articulation of notes (Shatz 2016).

Jazz-Rap Hybrids

Though Washington's stance toward hip-hop and its musical nuances may seem like the obvious position to take, jazz musicians have not always expressed appreciation for hip-hop on musical grounds. This has been largely due to Wynton Marsalis's crusading efforts to preserve a legitimacy for jazz that excluded hip-hop, which he considered to be nothing more than a concession to popular culture that disregarded quality (Porter 2002, 308). As Eric Porter has written, Marsalis gained legitimacy for jazz for upper class audiences in a way that allowed jazz to represent a respectable Black music at a time when hip-hop was viewed by white America as a threat to society (2002,

320). Though hip-hop musicians have long expressed admiration for jazz, with sampling of jazz records becoming especially popular in the early 1990s (Perchard 2011), the admiration has often been one-way due to the more musically conservative nature of jazz advanced by Marsalis in the 1980s and '90s. There have been exceptions—Ron Carter recorded with jazz-rap pioneers A Tribe Called Quest; Herbie Hancock released "Rockit," which crossed over to hip-hop audiences in the 1980s; and Wynton Marsalis's own brother Branford made hip-hop inflected jazz in the '90s with his group Buckshot LeFonque—but by and large, jazz musicians have not incorporated hip-hop as a regular part of their musical training until the last decade and a half.

This more recent internalization of hip-hop has largely been a result of the crossover popularity and influence of hip-hop producer J Dilla. As described in the previous chapter, the influence of J Dilla in jazz is at least partially attributed to Robert Glasper, who in the early 2000s worked with Dilla and several other musicians with whom Dilla was associated (The Roots, Common, Erykah Badu, Mos Def, Q-Tip, and others). Through Glasper and his bands, as well as other jazz musicians, jazz has become subsumed with what is often called "the Dilla beat," or sometimes "slugging." The Dilla beat is defined as slightly to highly unquantized beat placement (sometimes called a drunken style), eighth note divisions that are between straight and swung ("strung"), and a crisp backbeat. Like bossa nova, funk, and montuno rhythms before it, the Dilla beat has become a necessary part of the rhythmic repertoire for jazz musicians, drummers

especially.[108] It is in fact so ubiquitous in the practice rooms of young jazz students at universities that some musicians have taken to calling it "the college beat" (Lewis 2016). As drummer Rob Turner claims, this ubiquity is evidence of "how jazz musicians have thoroughly internalised the hip-hop they've grown up with" (Lewis 2016). Washington feels similarly, telling *The Guardian*:

> We've now got a whole generation of jazz musicians who have been brought up with hip-hop. We've grown up alongside rappers and DJs, we've heard this music all our life. We are as fluent in J Dilla and Dr Dre as we are in Mingus and Coltrane. (Lewis 2016)

Washington's natural fondness for hip-hop in addition to jazz—he listened to N.W.A. before he ever listened to Art Blakey (Ducker 2015)—has allowed him to take on opportunities that do not necessarily fall strictly within jazz, but which inform his jazz playing. As he told the *New York Times* about his experience with Snoop Dogg, "I started to hear music in a different way, and it changed the way I played jazz. Just playing the notes didn't do it for me anymore" (Shatz 2016). Additionally, Washington began thinking of jazz and hip-hop as closely related.

> All forms are complex once you get to a really high level, and jazz and hip-hop are so connected. In hip-hop you sample, while in jazz you take Broadway tunes and turn them into something different. They're both forms that repurpose other forms of music. (Shatz 2016)

Washington alludes to an approach that is similar to Henry Louis Gates' Signifyin(g) theory, which is defined as a "black doubled-voicedness" that "entails formal revision and an intertextual relation," or "repetition, with a signal difference" (Gates 2014, 56). As can be seen in his collaborations throughout his career, Washington's open-mindedness

[108] For a detailed breakdown of the Dilla beat, as well as a demonstration, see the YouTube tutorial from Minneapolis-based drummer Arthur "LA" Buckner (2012).

toward non-jazz forms results from his ability to see Black music forms as interconnected, a philosophy which greatly contributed to Washington's success as an artist.

You're Dead!

Washington's fondness and facility with music styles other than jazz eventually led to his connection with Flying Lotus, a Los Angeles electronic music producer known as one of the leaders of LA's "beat scene" (Ducker 2015). The beat scene is primarily defined by its musical eclecticism, but with foremost influences from J Dilla's hip-hop production styles ("wonky" or "slugging" beats) and experimental electronic music (Flying Lotus has released albums on the British record label Warp, best known for the "intelligent dance music" subgenre of the 1990s). Though some releases occur on other labels, much of the beat scene's influential albums and EPs have been put out by the record label Brainfeeder, which is also run by Flying Lotus. The beat scene is also closely associated with Low End Theory, a weekly club night in downtown Los Angeles that has featured regular appearances by Flying Lotus and other LA beat producers. In addition to referencing the scene's preference for bass frequencies, the name Low End Theory itself is a nod to A Tribe Called Quest's 1991 album *The Low End Theory*, which is widely considered to be a foundational album for jazz-rap fusion.

As much press coverage of Flying Lotus has noted, Ellison is the nephew of the late Alice Coltrane and cousin of Ravi Coltrane, a jazz saxophonist and son of Alice and John Coltrane. Though Ellison was born into a musical family, related to perhaps the foremost surname in jazz history, it was not until he met Washington and Thundercat that

Ellison even knew about the jazz activity occurring in his own city. Flying Lotus expressed to *Noisey* his reaction to encountering Washington and other players for the first time,

> How is this happening? These guys are so young and killing. No one knows about this, everybody's complaining about how jazz sucks, and then these guys who play the Piano Bar, this little bar in the middle of LA, every Wednesday and just smash. Like, what the hell, how did I not know about all this stuff? (Weiner 2015b)

Flying Lotus references here the commonly accepted notion that "jazz sucks," a trope of jazz in the popular imaginary that seems to consume even the most experimental modern musicians. It was not until Ellison encountered live jazz on his own that he began to change his assumptions about jazz. Regarding his own facility with jazz, Ellison explains "When I started hanging around people like Thundercat and Kamasi, I felt like I had more confidence to pursue [jazz]" (Weiner 2015b). Washington recounts that after Thundercat and Flying Lotus began working together (those two met at the festival South by Southwest (Frank 2011)), Washington was reminded about Flying Lotus by Thundercat, and then he ran into Flying Lotus sitting in at a jam session (the instrument Ellison was playing is not noted). After the session, Ellison asked Washington if the latter would record for Brainfeeder, Ellison's record label which to that point had primarily released electronic music albums.

Though Washington contributed saxophone to Flying Lotus's 2010 album *Cosmogramma* and his 2012 album *Until the Quiet Comes*, it was not until 2014's *You're Dead*! that Washington's role became a more explicit part of the narrative surrounding Flying Lotus's music and its relationship to jazz. Much of the press coverage devoted to

You're Dead! has stressed the album's jazz-fusion aspirations, as it features live instrumentation on about half of the album's tracks—including contributions from Washington, Thundercat, Ronald Bruner, and Herbie Hancock, among others. Due in part to these collaborations with jazz musicians and to Flying Lotus's Coltrane lineage, the album has been discussed as a possible "jazz album" by the general music media (Sundermann 2014, Ducker 2015), even as the jazz media largely did not review it (Weiner 2015b).

As Flying Lotus and Thundercat have noted, *You're Dead*! was heavily inspired by jazz-fusion keyboardist George Duke's 1975 album *The Aura Will Prevail*.

> Me and Thundercat was listening to George Duke in the car, we listened to some shit like "The Aura Shall Prevail" [sic]—a lot of crazy, fast playing stuff on it. We were like "Man, how come nobody doing shit like this? This kinda shit is crazy! Been doing this shit ages ago. Why don't we make some shit that just kills everybody? Why don't we just make some shit where when you hear it, your head just explodes." (Sundermann 2014)

Indeed, after a 30-second drone, the first track on *You're Dead!*, "Theme," descends into "crazy, fast playing stuff" that sets a stylistic tone for the rest of the album that is centered on jazz fusion. Some tracks feature electric guitar mixed with rapid drumming, while Thundercat's electric bass figures prominently throughout the album. Herbie Hancock, a pioneer in jazz-fusion himself, appears on two tracks, mostly lending textural support in the form of electric keyboard chords and short licks rather than being prominently featured as a soloist. Washington appears on four tracks, including "Moment of Hesitation" with Hancock, where he is also given songwriting credit alongside Ellison and Hancock.

When asked by *Noisey* whether *You're Dead!* should be considered a jazz album, Washington responded,

> It's an interesting question. Jazz is just a term. For me, it's a very misused term because it's either too narrow or too wide. What is jazz? If Jelly Roll Morton is jazz and John Coltrane is jazz, then how can you say that Flying Lotus isn't jazz? (Weiner 2015b)

Because his music centers on carefully arranged studio productions as opposed to strict improvisation,[109] Flying Lotus likely would not be considered a "jazz artist" in the same sense that Washington is. However, it is hard to deny the jazz influence in the album. More crucially, the album is received as, at the least, jazz-adjacent by non-jazz media publications and audiences who do not regularly listen to jazz. Where Wynton Marsalis attempted to separate jazz from both hip-hop and jazz fusion, *You're Dead!* helps bring jazz back into association with those music styles. In this sense, Flying Lotus continues the work done by hip-hop producers in valuing a specifically 1970s fusion style of jazz, associated with artists such as George Duke, that has been neglected or dismissed by gatekeepers such as Marsalis, as Tom Perchard has written about with regards to hip-hop sampling in the 1990s—he calls fusion the jazz neoclassicists' "dead zone" (2011, 297). However, where hip-hop producers referenced fusion and jazz-pop through sampling as a form of Black cultural memory (Perchard 2011), Flying Lotus and Thundercat (who covered Duke's "For Love (I Come)" on Thundercat's first album) recreate it as a style in conversation with modern forms of hip-hop and electronic music production. They also bring this style to the popular imaginary, where jazz for uninitiated listeners can mean

[109] Some of the tracks on Flying Lotus's albums, however, do include sections of musicians improvising with live instruments, including Herbie Hancock.

"some shit that just kills everybody" rather than the more common image of music played by men in suits at a cocktail hour. This is facilitated through the active involvement of jazz musicians like Washington, whose association with genre-bending musicians like Flying Lotus also benefits his own career and visibility to non-jazz listeners.

To Pimp a Butterfly

Washington's facility with hip-hop led to his eventual inclusion in Los Angeles rapper Kendrick Lamar's critically lauded album, *To Pimp a Butterfly* (*TPAB*). Once again, this connection was facilitated by Washington's high school bandmate Terrace Martin, who had been working with Lamar "since day one" (Weiner 2015a). Due to his connections with jazz musicians and hip-hop artists, Martin is to a large extent responsible for fostering the kind of revival of jazz associated with Washington, Flying Lotus, Thundercat, and so forth. Where Martin has mostly occupied an important yet background role, however, Washington has more overtly reaped the benefits of this most recent wave of jazz-rap crossover and used it to bolster his image as a solo artist and the image among the general public of contemporary jazz more broadly.

Like Washington, Martin, and Flying Lotus, Kendrick Lamar is from Los Angeles, California, a region that is also central to his identity. *TPAB* is his third studio album, the follow-up to his major label debut *Good Kid, M.A.A.D. City*, a concept album in which Lamar explored the challenges of navigating growing up in Compton. Thematically, *TPAB* features Lamar examining his own life and the pressures that come with it following his rise to fame. It also serves as an extended metaphor for the plight of a Black man in a U.S. society that both oppresses and exploits blackness, touching also

on themes of the prison institutionalization of Black men, racist policing, internalized racism, gang warfare, and depression. *TPAB* received strong critical response, not just in the favorable reviews, but in the multitude of think pieces devoted to Lamar's album.[110] For instance, Clover Hope (2015), writing for *Jezebel*, noted the "overwhelming blackness" she felt listening to and reflecting on the album shortly after its release. Micah Singleton (2015) called it a depiction of "the struggle of expressing black self-love," while also noting the multitude of Black musical influences not contained by genre that helped the album feel timeless.

Many critics quickly noted *TPAB*'s timely release in an era marked by increased attention to police murders of Black men and women especially following the events of Ferguson, Missouri. The album was grouped with recent releases from other Black artists, such as D'Angelo, Beyoncé, Flying Lotus, J. Cole, and others, that also contained a politicized edge informed by or reflecting the Black Lives Matter movement (Parham 2015, Brooks 2016). The association of *TPAB* with Black Lives Matter is especially due to the album's "Alright," a single which contained the album's most explicit reference to police violence ("And we hate Popo, wanna kill us dead in the street for sure"). "Alright" received music video treatment wherein Lamar and his friends are seen riding in an LAPD car while being physically carried by four policemen, ending with Lamar being shot down off a light post by a cop forming his fingers into a gun. Lamar also performed "Alright" at the 2015 BET awards, where he stomped on top of a police car in front of an

[110] Think piece is a term used specifically for blog posts and Internet articles that function as opinion pieces or interpretive analysis, especially as quick reactions to particularly buzzworthy moments in pop culture.

American flag backdrop, drawing the ire of Fox News' Geraldo Rivera (Billet 2015). Rivera drew exception to the lyrics depicting police as murderers, claiming that "hip-hop has done more damage to young African Americans than racism in recent years."[111]

Responding to Rivera's comments in July 2015, Lamar said, per TMZ, "How can you take a song that's about hope and turn it into hatred? The overall message is 'we're gonna be alright.' It's not the message of 'I wanna kill people'" (Geslani 2015). Indeed, "Alright" has been received as an anthem of hope, of persistence in the face of continual oppression—what one writer compared to a spiritual (Craven 2015). It has become an anthem both figuratively and literally, as "Alright" became a commonly chanted refrain at Blacks Lives Matter protests, particularly in response to police escalation of aggression at peaceful protests (Billet 2015, Coscarelli 2015, Craven 2015). This actual use of a Lamar lyric in material protests further cemented *TPAB* as an album fit for the new wave of Black political activism commonly referred to under the Black Lives Matter umbrella.

While the association of *TPAB* with political activism is made real with the "Alright" protest chants, those writing about *TPAB* also commonly name musical associations with previous eras of Black political activism—particularly 1970s funk and soul and '60s jazz (Parham 2015). However, some writers have identified *TPAB* as part of a new musical wave; Daphne Brooks, writing for *The Guardian*, calls it the "new sonic fabric of black dissent for our present-day emergency" (Brooks 2016). This new sonic fabric references past Black artists, such as Curtis Mayfield, Marvin Gaye, and others

[111] Lamar would address the controversy on his follow up album, 2017's *DAMN*., even sampling the Fox News segment on the opening track "BLOOD."

(George Clinton and Ronald Isley are featured on *TPAB*), but its primary quality is musical heterogeneity and a political sensibility fit for the present (Brooks 2016). When writers muse on the musical influences of *TPAB*, however, jazz is often mentioned first as a founding aesthetic of the album.

Though *TPAB* was not Lamar's first foray into jazz—his first album *Section 80* features a spoken word number, "Ab-Soul's Outro," recited entirely over a straight-ahead jazz instrumental, in addition to numerous other tracks that make use of jazz samples—the album made the influence most explicit, partially through the heavy involvement of Terrace Martin and the collaborators he introduced to Lamar (Robert Glasper, Thundercat, Ronald Bruner Jr., Ambrose Akinmusire, and Kamasi Washington, among others). The second track on the album, "For Free? – Interlude," features Lamar rapping rapid passages over a straight ahead, swinging jazz instrumental with nary a backbeat in sight. As Glasper told *Slate*,

> So I went over there, and it was so funny because on my record I'm not doing any straight-ahead jazz. You know, not swinging. But then the first thing I do when I walk into this hip-hop session is like straight-up, straight-ahead jazz. So that's the ironic thing. (Deshpande 2015)

Glasper also notes that when playing for this track, he thought of Lamar as a saxophone player, "like some jazz shit" (Deshpande 2015). Terrace Martin went further, calling Lamar the John Coltrane of hip-hop (Weiner 2015a). Lamar's use of Glasper and company's virtuosic jazz prowess lends "For Free? – Interlude" a jazz legitimacy that would carry through the rest of the album, especially as the track occurs toward the beginning of the album's track sequence. The rest of the album, however, uses jazz less in a traditional manner, but rather as an aesthetic absorbed into the overall sonic texture

of the album's production, as particularly heard through Terrace Martin's alto saxophone, Thundercat's bass, and Robert Glasper's piano/keyboards. Additionally, jazz informs the overall loose and improvisatory approach to recording sessions, where musicians like Glasper would come in and record some sessions for Martin and the album's team of producers to arrange later.

Though Kamasi Washington's rise to fame is commonly discussed in relation to his involvement with *TPAB*, Washington is not actually heard on the saxophone for most of the album, save for a couple tracks ("u" and "Mortal Man"). Martin's saxophone, on the other hand, is found on most tracks on the album, including the aforementioned "Alright," where he weaves in melodic lines around the cadences of the vocal delivery of Lamar and the track's producer, Pharrell Williams. As Martin describes, Washington was brought into the process at a late stage, his job being to add string arrangements as finishing touches to mostly completed tracks (Weiner 2015a). This included the final track, "Mortal Man," which contained a twist that most of the album's collaborators, as Glasper notes (Deshpande 2015), were not aware of until the album leaked on the Internet.

As the song "Mortal Man" fades out, Lamar recites a poem that had been recurring throughout the album at the end of certain tracks, with each repetition of the poem revealing new lines. At the end of "Mortal Man," Lamar completes the poem and is revealed to be reciting the poem directly to Tupac Shakur. Lamar is then heard interviewing Shakur, accomplished through clever editing of an obscure interview Shakur gave with Swedish press shortly before his death (Kramer 2015). In the interview, Shakur

speaks to the album's theme of living as a Black man in the U.S. while also speculating on a potential uprising in America, saying, "it's gonna be like Nat Turner, 1831, up in this muthafucka." Throughout the interview with Shakur, background music fades in and out, featuring the raw sessions recorded by Glasper, Martin, Washington and others. In other words, it is the jazz influence of the album—and the modern jazz sensibilities of the players featured—at its most direct and unfiltered with no further hip-hop production treatment. As this album's most extended jazz cuts occur while Shakur speaks about uprising, this track also effectively links a modern jazz sound (one featuring Dilla beats and modal playing) to revolutionary politics.

Overall, *TPAB* incorporates jazz into what is essentially a political album, one regarded as one of the foremost musical achievements of the Black Lives Matter era. In contrast to the tropes of jazz where the music is seen as having lost its edge, stifled by the conservatory and other institutional forces, *TPAB* presents jazz as integral to a new wave of political consciousness. While this association, of jazz with political activism, certainly reoccurs in the writings of academics on jazz, it has less often occurred in the popular imaginary among non-jazz listeners. If it has, jazz's political nature is seen as a relic of the 1960s, associated with the Civil Rights movement but not with current movements advocating for civil rights. While *TPAB* did not inaugurate a political sensibility for jazz in 2015—many of the jazz artists featured on *TPAB* have previously featured political statements in their music[112]—it did bring these renewed political associations attached to

[112] For instance, Ambrose Akinmusire, who lends his trumpet to *TPAB*, has a track on his 2014 album *The Imagined Savior Is Far Easier To Paint* titled "Rollcall For Those Absent," in which children recite the names of Black victims of police and vigilante murders.

modern jazz to a much wider audience. These political aspects have particularly informed the reception of Kamasi Washington, as is seen in the press surrounding the release of his album *The Epic*.

The Epic

Kamasi Washington's crossover success for non-jazz audiences seemed to occur overnight following the release of his triple album *The Epic*. Released in May of 2015, *The Epic*'s success among general music fans and publications was somewhat surprising, because the sound of the album was anchored not in jazz-rap fusion, but in acoustic jazz, with the harmonic, textural, and melodic language coming from different styles of 1960s jazz. Stylistically, *The Epic* runs the gamut from post-Coltrane modal jazz to groove-based soul-jazz featuring prominent use of the organ. Several tracks feature vocals, while the more "epic" tracks feature a string and choral section, arrangement choices which do have some precedent in prior post-bop jazz,[113] but the scale of which is certainly unusual. That is to say, *The Epic* is not necessarily an accessible listen for those unfamiliar with the canon of jazz Washington draws from, as the album bases its aesthetic canvas more on the use of odd time signatures and harmonic dissonance than fusions with popular music. Additionally, at just under three hours in length, *The Epic* is a demanding listen. Nonetheless, Washington's *The Epic* was named by many general music publications as one of the best releases of any genre for all of 2015 (including number 10 by *Pitchfork*

[113] Donald Byrd's 1964 album *A New Perspective* made use of an eight-person choir, while John Coltrane's posthumous *Infinity* album featured overdubbed strings arranged by Alice Coltrane. Alice Coltrane's own 1972 album *World Galaxy* also featured a large string section.

and number 8 by *The Guardian*). Why then, of all contemporary jazz artists, has Kamasi Washington become the next big thing in jazz for general music publications and fans?

As press coverage of *The Epic* shows, the album's aesthetic template is in many ways secondary to the narrative of Washington's career that had been established through his work with Flying Lotus and Kendrick Lamar. For instance, the short blurb previewing *Pitchfork's* review of *The Epic* positions Washington first as "a member of the studio band that composed *To Pimp a Butterfly*" before describing *The Epic* as "an extravagant love letter to (among other things): soul jazz, John Coltrane (various periods), and 1970s fusion leaders like Miles Davis and Weather Report" (Walls 2015). *The Rolling Stone* review features the subheading "A magnum opus of 21st-century jazz from a Kendrick Lamar pal" while the body text of the review mentions Lamar and Flying Lotus in the very first sentence (Hermes 2015). The *Pitchfork* reviewer, Seth Colter Walls, also notes that there is an "extra-musical truth" to *The Epic*'s success: Washington's involvement in *To Pimp a Butterfly* makes Washington "unusually well poised to secure the attention of listeners who have previously been uninterested in jazz." Walls goes on to argue that the reliance on jazz sounds of the past might even present as a paradox, given Washington's association with modern hip-hop and electronic music.

As Washington's rise to crossover fame shows, jazz is only seen in the popular imaginary as revitalized if it is presented in relation to popular music, even if the actual form of that revitalizing jazz is entrenched in a historical tradition. However, as jazz musicians become more frequent participants in popular music genres with more visible non-jazz artists, jazz's status and reputation in the popular imaginary continues to

expand. It becomes imagined, then, not simply as irrelevant, overly nostalgic high-brow art music—though it is still that to many people. Added to this definition of jazz is one that sees jazz as a music revitalized, one with a rich legacy but that is open to collaboration with contemporary popular music styles such as hip-hop and electronic music.

Of course, as some reviewers of *The Epic* have noted, it is not so much that there has not been creative jazz happening all along, but that Washington is one of the few to break through and achieve wider success. The idea of jazz being revitalized, then, is based on a half-truth—*The Epic* shows that a brand of serious jazz, steeped in canonic styles of the past, can be successful, but this type of music has been happening in local jazz scenes the whole time. Additionally, Washington's success does not necessarily entail a wider revival of modal jazz, but mostly indicates Washington's success alone, partially due to the strength of his narrative.[114] As with BadBadNotGood, I am skeptical that the attention Washington receives translates to increased attendance at local jazz shows. However, publications like *Pitchfork* do appear to have made serious efforts in recent years to review contemporary jazz albums more often and to hire writers with knowledge about jazz, a drastic change from even a few years prior, when BBNG was experiencing crossover success.

[114] It should be noted, however, that other members of The West Coast Get Down—Miles Mosley, Cameron Graves, Ronald Bruner Jr.—have released albums as leaders that have also been reviewed by general music publications.

Conclusion

In working with non-jazz artists while also championing the jazz tradition,[115] Kamasi Washington actualizes the concept of uniting Black music regardless of genre labels, a mission which Payton laid out explicitly in his manifesto, but which other Black jazz artists have also carried forth even if not using Payton's BAM umbrella term. Thus, through these recent examples of its use in music by Kendrick Lamar, Flying Lotus, and others, jazz has started to shed the strict allegiance to acoustic purity, as well as its aversion to popular music, it acquired during its process of institutionalization in the 1980s and '90s. Perhaps as jazz has become stably embedded in the walls of institutions that base their pedagogies primarily on a 1940s-60s post-bop acoustic tradition, there is less need to preserve this tradition with each live performance or recording. Rather, this tradition is now a given, providing those jazz artists less attached to that stylistic tradition as an end game more room to experiment without fear of their careers being blacklisted by jazz gatekeepers. This is facilitated through non-jazz artists who have gravitated toward jazz after recognizing its historical legacy of political activism, artists who give jazz musicians such as Washington a much wider audience than they could ever gain by sticking to the conventional boundaries of "the jazz tradition" as cemented by Marsalis in the 1980s and '90s. However, musicians like Washington do not simply abandon this tradition, but rather bring new and younger audiences into the fold by providing a gateway to jazz through hip-hop and electronic music. Artists like Washington also help

[115] In addition to Flying Lotus and Kendrick Lamar, other non-jazz artists Washington has worked with more recently include the hip-hop duo Run The Jewels, French vocal duo Ibeyi, and electronic producer Everything is Recorded.

expand how this canonic tradition is defined, even if incrementally, to include early fusion and non-jazz forms like funk and hip-hop.

This is all to say, that though institutionalization has fixed, to some degree, aspects of jazz practice—its standard repertoire and canon of great figures—and has given jazz a more stable home in the university, meanings of jazz are still accumulating. Old connotations of jazz remain—there are still many for whom jazz's political legacy reverberates strongly—but they may not be as prominent as emergent meanings. The ability of institutions to shape these meanings is strong, as can be seen in the frequent perceptions of jazz among the public that see jazz as either autonomous and colorblind or simply irrelevant. However, musicians and communities still have the power to re-shape these meanings to their liking, as seen through the efforts of leading figures like Nicholas Payton and Kamasi Washington as well as through the scene building efforts of Twin Cities jazz community members.

In this dissertation, I have shown how various parties have responded to the institutionalization of jazz. In chapter 1, I outlined academic research that has attempted to grapple with the role of institutions in cementing jazz canons and practices. In chapter 2, I showcased one prominent musician voice, Nicholas Payton, and his reaction to inequities that exist for Black musicians that institutionalization has not yet helped redress. In chapters 3 and 4, I shifted my focus to the Twin Cities jazz scene, where musicians and audience members have leveraged what institutional support does exist for jazz while also attempting, with much success, to build their own institutions. In chapter 5, I covered a young jazz group, BadBadNotGood, who threw off the confines of their

institutional training, much to the delight of general music publications and non-jazz listeners. And in this chapter, I considered an example of an emerging voice in jazz, Kamasi Washington, who employed his institutional knowledge in a manner that brought new audiences to jazz while also paying homage to those that came before him.

The effects of institutionalization on jazz, then, are multifold, depending on one's perspective and on their priorities. For those trying to make a living playing jazz, more institutional support will usually be seen as a positive. For those with deeper investment in jazz's historical meanings, including its rich legacy of attention to social causes, the concern that institutions will stifle this impetus is paramount. However, whatever side that one falls on, institutions in jazz are here to stay. The good news, despite all the alarmism on the death of jazz, is that jazz is here to stay as well. As jazz slowly emerges out of another transition phase and musicians, critics, and listeners accept jazz's status as an art form that requires institutional support, perhaps the anxieties about jazz's institutionalization detailed throughout this dissertation can begin to be reduced. There is certainly a problem of access in jazz, and those who are serious about resolving that issue would do well to uphold jazz's activist legacy and seek material solutions on a deeper structural level. There is also the problem of jazz's disconnection from popular culture, which more artists have begun to remedy as well—as jazz has become more secured in its institutional backing, the fear that jazz musicians will lose their hard-won institutional support seems to be lessening, freeing up opportunities for collaboration with popular music artists. If there is one thing that should be clear from all the people featured in this study, from the most anonymous musicians to the hottest names in jazz, it is that there

will always be new generations of listeners and musicians enticed by, and invested in, improvisatory music, whatever name it holds. And they will go to great lengths to ensure this music's survival. In that sense, jazz will never die.

So what is jazz today? The answer might be obvious, but it is many things to many different people. For some, jazz is as vital as ever, with the power to inspire resistive efforts to affect social change. To others, jazz is their means of making a living while remaining creatively fulfilled. To others still, jazz is irrelevant, with no meaning to their lives whatsoever. What jazz is not, and has never been, is one thing at one time for everyone. It will continue to be shaped by larger institutional forces, stacking new meanings as it progresses through time and reaches new ears.

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